

Social networks utilised by SME's within the tourist destinations of eastern Free State

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa the development of small tourism businesses are extremely vital for job creation and a development of a new economy. The South African tourism industry has to look at more innovative ways for marketing their products and services to develop the small tourism businesses. The arrival of web 2.0 led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services and web applications such as social networking sites. Social networking sites have encouraged new ways to communicate and share information on the web. When it comes to online networking, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social networking sites and function as online communities on the internet. Social networking sites are currently one of the applications of Web 4.0 developments. This means creation by the majority and web participation a necessity. The importance of customer engagement enablement is recognised. Operating systems are in cloud-computing. The communication medium became social media systems and people sell everything via desktop, mobile, tablets and iTV.

This study focuses on the Eastern Free State tourism destination and its development through social networks. The main aim of the study is to critically analyse the application and effective utilisation of social network site technologies within the Eastern Free State tourism industry and to explore this objective of social network applications used within the small businesses in Eastern Free State tourism industry. The empirical study was conducted by means of a field study using a structured questionnaire and interviews with key stakeholders. Data from 60 small tourism businesses were collected and a total of 55 businesses restricted to Eastern Free State Drakensberg were analysed in the process of collecting the peer-aided questionnaires. The biggest problems in the use of digital media are knowledge to develop a proper product that has measured marketing outcomes for the small business.

Key terms: Small Tourism Destination; Marketing; Web: 2.0 Technologies; Social Networking Sites; Social Networking Analysis; Digital Communication Technologies; Communication; Small Medium Enterprises, (SME); Tourism entrepreneurship; Sustainable Development.

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CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1. ORIENTATION

The arrival of web 2.0 led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services and web applications such as social networking sites. Social networking sites have encouraged new ways to communicate and share information on the web. When it comes to online networking, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social networking sites and function as online communities on the internet (Social networking, 2009:1).

The development of Business 2.0 out of Web 2.0 has encouraged some businesses to create platforms within and therefore platforms to share information. With the development of Web 2.0 into Business 2.0 it allowed the masses to connect with the masses. Companies like, Flickr, Wikipedia and YouTube moved the control from the hands of the leaders to the hands of the users. This Business 2.0 collaboration generates more information faster for a wider audience. This will have an impact on the knowledge management within a company (Building innovation, 202-203).

Enterprise 2.0 was developed by Cisco and is an extension of corporate intranet and it is sealed off for access to employees only. Cisco is using it to manage knowledge with a Wikipedia-like application and to provide training on different products and technologies. It also provides quick access to technical support staff. Enterprise 2.0 was slow to take off, due to an inability to show a return on investment and a cultural push-back by some of the engineers in Cisco. Social networks provide a soft return and it is difficult to quantify (Chen, 2012:104).

Social networking sites are one of the applications of Web 4.0 developments. The history on the transformation of the web is as follows:

- Web 1.0 content was created by few and web participation was a luxury, the software was installed on the local machine and there was limited e-commerce (Circa, 1997-2003).
- Web 2.0 content was created by many and web participation a privilege. Software local and web-based and every commodity can be purchased online via desktop or mobile phones (Circa, 2004-2006).

- Web3.0 content creation by the majority and web participation became a basic right. Social layers horizontally available and software in the cloud. E-commerce part of daily business via desktop, mobile or tablets (Circa, 2007-2011).
- Web 4.0 (circa, 2012) Meaning creation by the majority and web participation is a necessity. The importance of customer engagement enablement is recognised. Operating systems are in cloud- computing. The communication medium became social media systems and people sell everything via desktop, mobile, tablets and iTV (Larson, 2012:1).

Popular social networking sites include:

- Facebook (worldwide);
- YouTube (worldwide);
- MySpace
- Twitter
- LinkedIn;
- Nexpia;
- Bebo;
- StudiVZ;
- Second Life;
- DE cayenne; Tagged; XING; Badoo and Skyrock (parts of Europe)
- Orkut and Hi5 (South America and Central America)
- Friendster; Multiply; Orkut; Wrentch; Xiaonei and Cyworld (Asia and the Pacific Islands)

In addition, networking has been the focus of small business research. Hoang and (Antonac 2003:1) recently applied social networking for small business reasearch, it has also been applied to small tourism businesses Michael,(2007:1), (Petrillo & Swartbrooke, 2005) and (Tinsley & Lynch, 2008:163).

The uses of social network sites arrived commercially in the early 2000's and have rapidly grown in the United States of America (USA) (Skeels & Grundin, 2009:1). By late 2008, MySpace and Facebook each had over 60 million users in the USA. Furthermore, it accounted for 6% to 8% of the time users spend online. Social networks are defined as a

social structure that enables the operators of small firms to build the level of trust necessary for them to share the development of a tourism product (Lynch & Morrison, 2007:47).

The units of analysis are the Eastern Free State tourism destinations, including guesthouses, small arts and craft businesses, agro-tourism, eco-tourism and restaurants. The towns that this research destinations are located in:

- Clocolan;
- Rosenthal;
- Fiksburg;
- Clarens;
- Harismith;
- Van Reenen;
- Verkykerskop;
- Kestel; and
- Bethlehem.

The feeling of a village community is important to both tourists and entrepreneurs (Von Friedrichs & Grangsjø, 2003:1). The tourism destination, itself, is an important construct for the exploration of tourism networks. It provides a geographically bounded locality, whether at a national, regional or local level, in which economic and social interactions take place. It embraces the idea of community and within this study; community can be defined as all people living in a particular locality. This is suggestive of emotional ties and social ties, implying a degree of mutual obligation. The potentially unequal nature of these social ties is also recognised (Tinsley & Lynch, 2008:163).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Surviving and thriving as social media changes our work, our lives and our future' as explained by (Blossom, 2009:18), creates a challenging environment for organisations world-wide and more so in South Africa.

South Africa in many instances is faced with third world ideologies. Research into small tourism firms identifies familiar problems of limited resources and limited marketing and management skills (Kathleen, 2002:442) and (Lehman, 2011:1).

The development of small tourism firms are restricted by an inadequate understanding of other businesses in the sector and how to work with them. The capacity to work with other actors as a core competence of organisation and in recognition of the fact that many of the skills and resources leading to a small firms success exist outside of the firm (Daniel, 2004:798). The desirability of small tourism firms working together in form of 'co-petition' is seen in a number of studies as well as in tourism economic policy initiatives. The South of Scotland Innovation Project can assist entrepreneurs across the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway to grow their business through collaboration with other businesses, collaboration with Scotland's academic sector and sharing knowledge and expertise with peers (Targeting innovation, 2011:8).

This research focuses on the Eastern Free State tourism destination and its development through social networks.

Given the challenges stated, the broad context of social network applications and issues are derived from the problem statement and therefore, the following questions emerge, such as:

- What theoretical trends and approaches related to social network sites are in existence and how can it is applied to the South African tourism context?
- How would SME's within the tourism industry effectively utilise social networking within their organisation?
- Can social networks be developed as an official communication tool between SME's in the tourist business and the tourists between each other?
- What is the current state and impact of social networking sites uses by SME's within the tourist destination?
- In what way might social networking be utilised as a marketing tool for tourism destinations?
- Is it possible to implement social networking within a creative tourism environment?
- How can one employ social networking for new products and event development?

The above questions lead to the formulating of the specific research objectives, which will be presented in the next section.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General objective

The main aim of the study is to critically analyse the application and effective utilisation of social network site technologies within the Eastern Free State tourism industry and to explore these objectives and social network applications used within the small businesses in Eastern Free State tourism industry.

1.3.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The following secondary objectives have been identified:

- To analyse social network applications from a marketing perspective in order to develop a conceptual framework, which will enable the SME's to maximise the uses;
- To analyse applicable theories and perspectives and social network sites related issues and apply these theories and perspectives to the South African tourism business environment;
- To understand the perceptions of social network sites by the businesses;
- To critically discuss and interpret the impact of social network site application within an innovative and creative tourism industry in general and the eastern Free State tourism business environment specifically;
- To analyse the accessibility of social network technologies to SME's;
- To evaluate and discuss the possibilities for social network site utilisation within tourism destinations;
- To determine social network related impacts on the communication related to a tourism destination and the SME's within the area;
- To determine whether SME's within the tourism destination have the skill and capacity to facilitate social network sites;
- To make recommendations based on the literature review and analysis of data; and
- To develop a conceptual framework regarding social network site technology usage within the tourism destination.

1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research of this study is based on both deductive and inductive reasoning (Welman et al., 2005:28). Deductive research refer to a research in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed and tested by empirical observation, whereas deductive reasoning works from the general towards specific theories (Welman et al., 2005:28). The theories moves from a pattern that might be logical or theoretical expectation to observations that test whether the expected pattern actually occurs. Deductive reasoning will take place by means of a literature study that will firstly and briefly dissect the study. Barbie (2007:23) mentioned theories that will be presented in Chapter 2 of the final research report.

Inductive reasoning emerged from specific observations to broader generalised theories (Welman et al., 2005:34). The research aims, by engaging the triangulation of data within the empirical part of the research, to get a thorough understanding of the impact of social network site application and utilisation within the Eastern Free State tourism destination (Welman et al., 2005:143&194).

1.4.1 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The methodology employed in this study comprises two research procedures: The historical procedure and the empirical procedure.

1.4.1.1 Historical Procedure

The research will undertake a literature study to provide a theoretical overview of social network site application and utilisation within the tourism destination industry. A major limitation and obstacle to the study, is that the issue of social network sites within an organisation specifically SME's within tourism destinations, are due to the fact that it is in all its facets, under-researched. There is limited number of scientific sources in this field. However, the following sources of information were consulted:

- Internet
- Scientific databases, e.g. NEXUS, EBSCO, JSTOR and others;
- Accredited journal articles;
- Newspaper articles and press releases;
- Theses and dissertations in the field;
- Books;
- Other so-called 'grey literature' was consulted such as relevant documents (i.e.: publications, reports, departmental guidelines, sustainable reports and policies of government and companies , and others)

1.4.1.2 EMPIRICAL PROCEDURE

Within the empirical section, the study comprises three phases namely:

- Focused group interviews with identified SME's in each tourism destination within the Eastern Free State;
- In depth face-to face interviews with identified SME's in each tourism destination within the Eastern Free State; and
- Administering a measuring instrument in the format of a survey questionnaire with owners of guesthouses, small arts and craft businesses, agro-tourism, eco-tourism and restaurants.

Thus, qualitative and quantitative research paradigms were be applied. These mixed methods are useful to capture the best of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003:22).

1.5. LIMITATIONS AND OBSTACLES OF THE STUDY

A major limitation and obstacle to the study is the issue that social network site in tourism in South Africa is quite new and under-researched. There are a limited number of scientific sources available in this field, especially primary academic researched sources.

1.6. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The contribution of the study lies firstly, in its demonstration to execute research independently and knowledgeably within a master-level study. Secondly, it is anticipated that the study will generate new knowledge about social network site technologies application and utilisation within the Southern African tourism destinations. Thirdly, the major aim involves the development of a conceptual framework for such a social network site model, which can be implemented and used in other tourism destinations within Southern Africa.

1.7. CHAPTER DELINEATION

Chapter one comprises the introduction to the research, problem statement, objectives of the study, the design and methodology.

Chapter two examines the key concepts and critical discussions of literature. This will form the theoretical model for the study. The requirements for SMEs, business capital, education levels, entrepreneurship, and partnerships are explored.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology. Data collection and processing are explained. It covers the selection of the sample, the design of the questionnaires, data collecting techniques, the processing, analysis and evaluation of data as well as the validity of methods utilised.

The chapter also focuses on data analysis and interpretation through the presentation and discussion of the results. Sample profiles, tables and graphs are provided. Discussing and summarising interpretations are included.

Chapter four concludes, summarises and discusses salient points with various recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL NETWORKS UTILIZED BY SME'S WITHIN THE TOURIST DESTINATION OF THE EASTERN FREE STATE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the reader to the background of the topic and placed the topic 'utilisation of social network sites within the tourism business' and to place this research and research process in context. Critical reading of research is needed in order to establish the context and worth of the study. It is referred to as a literature review and addressed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 explores those theories indicating the different areas within which Social networking systems are used, and positively utilized by the business and tourism business environment (Brynco, 2009:18).

Exploring the Social networking sites usage by the business environment conversely, (Derven 2009:59) contributes that social networking sites have unique abilities to connect people and have potential for learning solutions. In this document there is specific reference to the applications of social networking sites for the tourism markets and destinations:

- Effective teaching and learning at tourism faculties at universities;
- Providing students and employees with appropriate and timely feedback;
- Communicating with clients and suppliers;
- Marketing, internally and externally;
- Developing effective teams;
- Ensure creativity and innovation;
- Implementing strategies and changes;
- Communicating company culture;
- Developing e- learning in tourism and business environment.

The use of Social network sites are becoming more common in companies and some people have strong objections towards the usage of social networking in company environments, due to the fact that it does take up bandwidth and storage consumption, potential legal liability, exposure to malware, decrease employee productivity and disclosure of personal and company information (Perkins, 2008:44).

E-How describes social networking as addictive and that people that spend too much time on networks can lose focus. E-How also suggests that people can also share too much information, leaking confidential information on social networks (EHow.com, 2012:1).

It is important to understand that Social networking sites are part of new technology and companies can ignore it, use policies against it, or manage it and use it to their own benefit. The apparition of the Internet has completely revolutionised the world of commerce, and therefore consumer behaviour. Recently the static web pages have given way to more interactive web pages; which led to the use of social media as an information web- based platform, where users can share ideas, thoughts, pictures, experiences. This new application of the Internet world has developed a new way of communication, which due to the high requirements of information in the tourism industry, has completely changed tourist behaviour in their search of information (Rodríguez, 2009: ii).

Furthermore, not the use of the Internet but its evolution from the traditional static websites (web 1.0) to the creation of interactive websites (web 2.0) has evolved another milestone in consumer behaviour. The need and desire to communicate is in the very nature of people and these interactive web pages or platforms allow users to participate and express themselves and tourists forms the new way of online communication. People have become busier; more stressed and immersed in a complex reality where information becomes a raw material in everyone's life. Time has become a precious item and as a result, the Internet with interactive web pages and social platforms emerges as a fast, effective and reliable way to communicate and find information. Social media platforms are built from the "collective knowledge" of consumers and are directed to other consumers (Rodríguez, 20011: 2).

Facebook, the leading social network in the world, sets up its success on social casual games that recreate a business idea that in some cases belongs to the tourism and hospitality sector (hotels, bars, restaurants, theme parks or shopping malls) where social interaction and the development of the so called 'golden mechanics' (pushing the client to repeat the action) constitutes the foundation of social business's success (Di Loreto & Gouaich, 2011:1).

Social media platforms are perceived as user-friendly and as providers of no-marketer information, thus it is not subject to marketers' bias. However, questions of subjectivity and credibility of the contents placed in those platforms have arisen as a determinant in the use of social media due to the determine factors of the writer, such as previous knowledge and experience of the tourist as a writer, and his or her knowledge in the use of ICT's and social platforms (Rodríguez, 2011: ii).

2.2 EASTERN FREE STATE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

In this study, the research was performed in the Eastern Free State as a tourism destination. The Eastern Free State spans between the borders of Mpumalanga and Lesotho as a part of the Drakensberg and Maloti mountains and is becoming a vital tourism region for both National and International tourists. The main feature focuses on the mountains and the people that inhabit it, as well as their cultures. The Drakensberg provides people with opportunities to experience a diversity of cultures, including Basotho, Zulu, Xhosa, English and Afrikaans speaking people.

The Eastern Free State offers diverse sightseeing, from dinosaur footprints to arts and craft of the highest quality, fly-fishing, renowned rock art sites, and just to enjoy the breathtaking scenery. There are ski slopes, horse trails, 4x4- and hiking trails for the adventurist tourist to enjoy. Accommodation includes graded hotels, luxury lodges, self-catering cottages and homely B&B's (Maloti Tourism, 2012:1).

2.3 SME DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE JOB CREATION ANS SUSTAINABILITY

An argument that strongly correlates with entrepreneurship for economic growth is the one of entrepreneurship to address the high unemployment level in SA. The creation of employment through new business creation or entrepreneurship is fundamental for economic growth in SA, as well as for future socio-political stability. The creation of new businesses as wealth creation is widely perceived as the answer to the economic and social challenges facing South Africa. Von Broembsen (2006:1) states:

'Given our high levels of unemployment and the indisputable relationship between unemployment and poverty, we would argue that job creation should supersede poverty alleviation, not as a national objective, but as an SME objective. Job creation in itself is the most effective, sustainable strategy within the context of SME policy that could alleviate poverty and reduce inequality.'

The country has a need for entrepreneurs in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to act as an instrument to fight against unemployment and crime, and to stimulate the economy. The development of SME's was identified by the SA government as a priority in creating jobs to solve the high unemployment rate (Von Broembsen et al., 2005: 49). Maas and Herrington (2006:43) refer to South Africa as a developing country with high rates of unemployment and low levels of formal and higher education.

The government's White Paper (DTI, 1995:5) distinguishes four categories of SME's - survivalist enterprises (income generated falls short of the minimum income standard), medium enterprises (assets of about R5-million), small enterprises (employ between 5 and 50), and micro-enterprises (involving owner, some family members and one or two employees).

The strategy report argues that employment will increase through entrepreneurial development such as tourism businesses, but for such a debate to be successful one need to look at the profile of an entrepreneur who seeks opportunities which in return creates opportunity entrepreneurship. Thus, in this strategy report, opportunity entrepreneurship is contextualized through firstly, the concepts of survivalist entrepreneurship compared to SME's and secondly the factors contributing to the creation of an entrepreneur. Integrated strategy on the promotion of entrepreneurship (DTI, 2003:5).

The strategy report argues that employment will increase through entrepreneurial development, such as tourism businesses, but for such a debate to be successful one needs to look at the profile of an entrepreneur who seeks opportunities, which in return creates opportunities. In Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Alert, Schwenke notes that for every investment in an entrepreneurial business, an average of 15 jobs is created (SME alert, 2003:2).

A well-known content-industry analyst Blossom, whose career spans over 20 years, covering marketing, research and product development management states that social media and social networking tools have changed the very DNA of Society. The way people relate to each other personally, or in community, or in enterprise simply changed.

He asked many questions to understand the meaning of social media in the current culture. According to Barack Obama, the popularity of social media and social networking is not a fad or trend; it is a realignment of the essential tools of human communication that

gives new power to individuals and institutions to change the world. His belief is that we live in a world where information and news is passed horizontally instead of the traditional pyramid process of decision making. Information consumers can add value through analysis by giving feedback through low-key participation like Social network sites, where just about everyone can participate. The power of social networking systems is just beginning to be recognized. Those who know how the system works are way ahead. He states that in all walks of life, be it business, politics or academics, people are putting it into perspective. The presidential election campaign of Barack Obama is a prime example of the way communities can be built (Brynko, 2012:18).

The tools of Web 2.0 – like blogs, wikis, Twitter and LinkedIn are in fact quickly growing in popularity among older groups, especially within the corporate class. The McKinsey Quarterly found in the study of more than 2 000 companies surveyed, 34% used blogs as communication tools for their businesses in 2008. The year before only 21% used blogs, 29% used podcasts and 28% used social networking services. Customer requisition, corporate recruiting, discussion and networking within the company itself make use of these services (McKinsey, 2012:1).

Many companies view the use of sites like Facebook as drains of productivity. Richard Ivey, a researcher at the University of Western Ontario thinks differently. An assistant professor of information systems, Nicole Haggerty, found that using Facebook and other networking sites help employees to develop stronger communication and technological skills. The employees with more experience on social networks reported higher job satisfaction and displayed better job performance. Researchers found that participants who were not well-versed in social networking did worse in e-learning environments than those who were (Ivey, 2012:1).

The development and maintenance of effective job-related social networks received even less attention according to (Hampton & Wellman, 2012) etc. Communication technology improvements have led to increased independence, productivity and inclusions for millions of people world-wide.

A variety of methods are used for establishing and maintaining social networks. Internet, e-mail and cell phones are important tools for developing, expanding, using and maintaining job related social networks. Given today's highly information rich society it may be very essential to people who rely on augmentative and alternative communication

(AAC) technologies. These technologies reduce social isolation and increase social networks for people who may not be able to travel and thus find face to face contact difficult. It also increases access, anywhere and at any time (Bryen, 2006:7).

The importance of designing, organizational capacity for handling information processing requirements must be recognized in a context of competitive pressure Wang (2003:1). Information Systems (IS) and Technologies (IT) investments are growing rapidly to fill the need for this capacity and an important management question is what effect they have on the organizational structure and performance (Barn, et al., 1995:5).

It is vital to use information technologies to enable decentralization of control and decision-taking, by facilitating the dissemination and sharing of information throughout the firm. According to Burgeron (2012:2) more collaborate co-ordination, control and communication mechanisms are required in more complex structures. That in turn requires more skills to collaborate in achieving a common goal. To improve organizational co-ordination and communication, E-mail technology can be used. The use of telecommunication is closely linked to organizational structure and culture (Rowe & Struck, 1998:3).

In the book THE Facebook Effect, David Kirkpatrick states that large-scale media was formally the province of electronic media, but the Facebook effect allowed normal individuals to broadcast. Individuals like Oscar Morales, a civil engineer on vacation who started a group on Face book against the FARC Rebel group. The group "Un Millon de Voces Contra las FARC" was launched on the 4trh of January and exactly one month later more than 10 million people around the world marched against the rebel group FARC. Facebook's software makes information viral. Facebook and Twitter, played a great role in the revolt and outcome of the mid- 2009 elections in Iran. One of the businesses that start to play a big role on Facebook is the gaming business where people can play interactive against each other. The best games are taking advantage of the Facebook effect with a result that as many as 30 million members play the games per week (Kirkpatrick, 2010:1-9).

Jarvis, a journalist was on a last train into the world trade centre 11 September 2001, just as the terrorist's jet hit the north tower. He linked to his news company and decided to

report on the events he gathered notes and interviewed the survivors calling his reports into his employer's news sites and newspapers. The next day he started a blog on 9/11 until he ran out of memories and for the first time it changed his whole outlook on media and career, resulting in writing the book *What Would Google Do?* (Jarvis, 2009:21-25).

Travel agencies or tourism bureau's Websites is a central hub for a tourism business online activity. By evaluating your site people will have an immediate idea of what your destination has to offer. It is also of vital importance to meet the future tourist on their own playing field. The purpose of social networking sites, like Twitter and Facebook, are to keep friends and family connected and serve as a communication tool. Facebook has over 300 million users, of which at least 50% logs on every day. Twitter has over 14 million visitors in the US and these users are talking about their travel experiences. Social media allows a tourism business to participate in conversations with future and past travellers on the specific destination. It provides the tourism business with a platform to place blog articles, to direct people to the sights and sounds of a destination while stretching the business brand across the web over the world (Simple Tourism, 2012:1).

2.4 SOCIAL NETWORK IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

(Gloor et al 2008:1357) introduced "collaborative innovative networks" or COINs in previous work. Wasserman & Faust, (1994) (in Gloor et al 2008) describe COINs as virtual teams of self-motivated people with a collective vision, enabled by technology that have extended well-known measures of social network structure, such as degree and betweenness centrality (Wasserman & Faust, 1994:1), with a new measure geared towards measuring virtual interaction in smaller groups – called the contribution index by Gloor et al. (2008:1294).

While teaching a graduate-level distributed course on online, collaboration co-located at three universities, insights was gained. This course's main object was to offer students an opportunity to improve their own communication behaviour when they collaborate in virtual teams to become members of a digital social network. They had to complete an innovation centered distributed project as a virtual team. Their individual and team patterns were compared, also individual and team performance in the distributed project. The distributed project consisted of analysing a distributed virtual community.

Three parts were organized:

- Students had to learn about principles of social network analysis (SNA) Wasserman & Faust, (1994:1) (in Gloor et al. 2008);
- Collaborative innovation networks; and
- Swarm creativity (Gloor, 2008:1301).

Students formed seven interdisciplinary teams in the second part, comprising three to four students from different institutions (University of Cologne, Helsinki University of Technology) and they applied the tools framework taught in part one by analysing a virtual online community. They studied rules of optimized online communication in other online communities. They were also able to identify social networking structures of high-performing teams (Gloor, 2008:1357-1364).

Communication inside the groups was active, but communication across groups was very limited and took place mainly in connection with class video-conference sessions.

This forum could ask the teachers to steer them in the right way so that everybody could benefit from participation in these discussions:

- It would improve the course;
- Establish efficient virtual collaboration; and
- It would be possible to measure the performance of the workers' knowledge assessment (Gloor et al, 2008:1357-1364).

Tourist academic and research institutions use Facebook and Twitter to gain data, sell their programmes and communicate with clients daily (TANDFSPOORT 2012:1).

2.5. SOCIAL NETWORKS UTILISE E-LEARNING

Social networking is used as a force for development in complex organizations. Social network can be used as a tool to support the interaction needs of a learner and narrowing the gap between facilitator and learner. It is real-time, inexpensive and does not have geographical barriers. Thus social networking offers exciting potential learning solutions. Social networking will also address the different learning styles of generations and individuals. One of the greater issues of skills development and talent management in organizations is to develop workplace specific skills. Most learning takes place in a classroom and is not technically linked with a job. Social networking will allow the candidate to learn and interact while working (Derven, 2009:59-60).

IBM is an example of successful corporate learning through the use of applied learning with Social networking. IBM is an electronics company and therefore the employees have the technical comfort to use the interactive tools. IBM operates in a 170 countries, and they found that e-learning is reciprocal and does not flow in one direction, therefore they can learn from their emerging markets as much as the emerging markets can learn from them. IBM representative, Hoff, emphasizes the benefits the company derives from using these tools. Issues like improving client services, the tools allow employees to market their skills and capabilities within the company and it helps to delivering information and content virtually which cuts travel cost (Derven, 2009:59-60).

In an article on Facebook it is established by Nicole Haggerty, an assistant professor in information systems, that the use of Facebook and other social networking sites might develop stronger communication and technology skills. According to Haggerty (2009;64-65) it is better to build a highway of knowledge transfer and distribute information than ban new technologies.

E-learning products, used at IBM improve sharing ideas and knowledge after formal training. People can learn from each other across generation gaps. Social networking can be used to introduce concepts and methodology before formal training starts, which cuts down on travelling cost. It informs candidates of links to resources related to new learning content. It promotes connectedness at all levels of expertise. Social networking's tagging capabilities can search and identify immediate training needs, such as communication difficulties due to organizational structure, or pattern of searches related to new policies. Social networking reinforces knowledge and sustains learning. It can be used to inform learners of coming sessions, provide links to articles, webinars, and resource related training. Facilitators can send reminders of key learning points, share different points of view, and provide best practices among training participants (Derven, 2009: 60-61).

One of the greatest applications of Social networking as tool is to utilize it as a mentoring tool. Most learning takes place on the job and therefore a mentor system can assist employees to apply newfound knowledge and skills by learning from the experienced. Mentoring is an important part of inducing young professionals into a work environment (Derven, 2009: 61).

Social networking can help to preserve organizational knowledge, create a new sense of community within the organization, determine corrective actions, build and synchronize new collaboration and use social networking as an efficiency tool (Derven, 2009:61).

“Some managers will complain that use of social networking tools will eat into productivity, but the reverse can also be true; they can be a tremendous boost to productivity, allowing people to get answers to work-related questions, as well as to build social connections, collaboration and innovation.” Ted Hoff, vice president of IBM’s Centre for learning and Development

In short, companies that use social networking sites need to ensure that they select the right type of learning and deliver the content that you can online. The company should look at quality control and feedback to improve systems and learning and identify the risk factors and how it can be mitigated. It is important to understand the limitations of the tool, like the fact that it is hard to predict what kind of connections people will make. Take several approaches rather than focusing on one to ensure a layered approach, with multiple technologies and limited investments. It is important to engage senior managers to lead and engage employees. This can be a powerful tool to build teamwork and to ensure that employees do not fear it (Derven, 2009:62-63).

Social media offers tourists the opportunity to express themselves, share contents, ideas and experiences which other tourists may use as a reference in their travel planning, and this is highly appreciated among tourists due to the high needs of information which tourists require (Rodríguez, 2009:61). In social media the consumer guides the consumer. This new media fits in people’s lives and are readily available and builds on existing behaviour (Christy & Collins, 2000:4) and (Rodríguez, 2009:62).

There is a high level of e-learning from consumer to consumer and during the English Tourism Week from the 10 to 18 March 2012, an e-seminar was presented on Social media opportunities for companies on how to access these markets and use these platforms during this tourism week. The PowerPoint presentation emphasise that mostly two thirds of the world’s internet population are visiting social networks and therefore it is wise to utilise these platform to inform and teach companies how to use these different

social platforms to maximise the company's visibility as a brand and opportunities around events at the English Tourism week (English Tourism Week, 2012:2).

2.6. SOCIAL NETWORKS AAS MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The working and business environment is slowly changing into a new era of Digital generations and only the businesses that change will have an advantage of growth. In the new era of business there is no more segmentation within businesses, there are no more geographical hierarchical or organisational barriers but new technology and communication technology makes it possible for us to work closely together. A need for leadership that will see these developments as an advantage and conglomerate, combine appropriate resources in response to these unique opportunities within social media (Cross, Borgatti & Parker, 2002:10-13).

2.6.1 Using social networks to improve company image

'The company recognises the importance of social media as a communication tool. We are committed to maintaining a good relationship with our employees, clients, suppliers and the rest of the outside world' (Targeting Innovation, 2012:7). In a study by Bhattacharya et al. (2011), on the effect of social media in Star hotels in India 73% of the respondents, suspect social media could damage a company's image and brand value. In fact they suspects only negative opinions and complaints will be published in these sites, 85% managers feels that social media is a liability. This could be due to a limited knowledge executives have of the power of social media. In a case study by Targeting innovation about the country singer Dave Carols writing songs about his horrific travel experience with an airline which he uploaded on YouTube, his first song was 'United Breaks Guitars' which was uploaded on YouTube 6 July 2009, and it went viral. In the first 23 hours, the video received 461 comments. The next night there was already 24 000 views and 12 July views had risen to 2.3 million. By 2011 the 11 million vies was reported (Targeting Innovation, 2011:8).

The story became international and finally United Airlines offered to compensate Carol. It was a little too late and Carol thankfully declined. This story became a PR disaster to United Airlines and due to the fact that there will be on-going viewing on YouTube United Airlines will always be reminded of the bad service (Targeting Innovation, 2011:8).

2.6.2 Using social networks as a cost saving measure

Members of virtual communities connect globally to share information and offer companionship. Workers can use computers at home and at workstations to communicate with colleagues and clients in other cities to have virtual meetings. This will save travel cost and allow people to have some extra time at home (Wellman et al., 1996:21).

Using social media as a marketing tool is one of the cheapest marketing options, it will only take time and effort (EHow.com, 2012:1) from a cost saving point of view for small tourism companies, social media provides the company with viral marketing which might be the best way to promote a destination or product at a low cost, just with the spread of online word, the electronic word of mouth (Rodríguez, 2009:62).

2.6.3 Establish a company culture and employee loyalty through social networking.

This leadership will realise the use of social networking systems to collaborate activity within divisions and will provide substantial insight into the inner-working of the organisation. There are restrictions, but due to the data and social networking analysis allowed organisations to strategically intervene and rectify situations. Social networking can help the flow of information and communicate the organisations values and purpose. It can help to tap into the informal structure to assist restructuring. By using groups willing to share information, a company can use this as an intervening tool (Cross et al, 2002:19-21).

These powerful visible patterns of information sharing within strategic networks can be used within the company or organisation structure to create a learning organisation. These network relationships are critical anchoring points for employees as a communication and bonding tool (Cross et al, 2002:22-25).

2.6.4 Establish better communication networks within company, clients and suppliers

In the article of Eileen Mullen on a piloting case study where NASA introduced Social Networking (SN), NASAspere to unite the workers, integrate generations and share knowledge, she explains how effective Social networking sites can be used for internal communication (Mullan, 2009:45-46). Social networking sites are also used by large

hospitals to support patient groups, to reduce workload and assist patients with problems in real time (Hawn, 2009:361-362).

Job related social networking as communication technology can be used by disabled people to erase communication difficulties. She looked at human capital deficiencies and how individuals become qualified for the job available as well as social capital involved. There are definite barriers to employment for people with disabilities (blind people can't drive). There are definite prejudice and other employment barriers amongst the disabled. A person can be very well qualified, but can only get the job if an employer knows about the person. The role of communication technologies, as it relates to the development of effective job related social networks are perceived less important. Bryen reports that according to Hampton & Welman (2001:12) as well as Howard et al. (2002:3) those communication technology improvements have led to the increase of productivity, independence and the inclusion of millions of people world-wide (Bryen, 2009:1-2).

In an earlier article that Bryen co-authored with Slesaransky-Poe & Baker (1996) as well as in an article of Blackstone & Berg (2003), (both in Bryen (2009:2) it was found that augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies enable people with severe disabilities to communicate and connect with employers, co-workers and other communication partners. These studies did not identify the hypothesis of linking social communication to potential job contracts and if it improved job-related networks (Bryen, 2009:2).

In Bryens' article on job-related social networks and communication technology it is apparent that the respondent's communication improved through job-related social networking. The communication is faster and gave presence to a person otherwise totally unknown. There are no barriers and people can communicate more freely (Bryen, 2009:5-7).

The use of social networks helped people to finish qualifications, and developed a gateway to job research. Instant messaging allows greater communication with clients, co-workers and friends. Further social networking allowed people to meet new customers and enlarged circles of people to communicate with. It widens the spheres of influence, decrease geographical barriers and helped disabled people to become more independent

(Bryen, 2009:5-7). In the study of the effect of social media on the Star hotels in India a relatively large number of customers, about 82% have visited the Hotel sites (both social media and hotel websites) before bookings or after the bookings to find out the opinion of previous guests. Customers and tour operators might change selection of hotels after looking at comments by guests (Bhattacharya et al., 2011:25).

2.6.5. Optimize strategic vision through social networking

Jofa (2009:27) discusses the IRS and the use of new media and how they utilized Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to launch a review on tax returns. Tom Hood, the CEO sees the association establishing social media presence as a viable tool for building business relationships. Hood was adamant that social media can be used as a strategy accelerator. It allows you to connect with people, make more relationships, and do things faster than in the past. By using social media to work for them, the result is that they have connected more people for cheaper (Jofa, 2009:27).

Hood reports that they use all kinds of different social media to meet members where they are instead of members coming to them. Hood also elaborate that CPA firms are all about people and relationships and that social media is just another dimension of relationship. It is not just about technology, but rather about the connections you make. The use of Blogs has rendered the best results for them and second to the blogs were Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The lessons they learned is that people are very creative and enjoy social media. There is also power-friending and you need to find out who's there and make the connections, to connect the connections and your network begins to grow. You need to be prepared to be flexible and aware that the social network environment is constantly changing and therefore you need to pay attention (Jofa, 2009:28).

Twitter is growing with a rapid pace and that Facebook and LinkedIn are well established and growing. Hood discussed Facebook blogs and the use of videos with a link to YouTube as a new tool to use and therefore there will be growth in video sharing more and more. Hood also advised that you start small and watch, make some friends and then begin to add to these communities. Do not throw it in all at once (Jofa, 2009:29).

2.7. OPTIMISE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Substantial advantages can be reached by organisations when they re-design their knowledge flow. Then they can operate efficiently as a network, in an ecosystem of virtual communities. A network can develop an innovative new product to recruit new members from its surrounding learning communities. Gloor et al. (2008:1300) states, that its global interest community was used as a sounding board, as well as a sales and marketing network. This was while they developed a new service for a global consulting company.

2.8. STREAMLINING PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management communication must be monitored to acquire a better quality of the project. It can result in substantial savings. Project members can reduce communication failures by using the social networks. One-way communication can be converted into two-way dialogues. Core contributors and “lurkers” can be discovered. Social networks can make team work very efficient and it unlocks the creative potential of team members. To find good ideas within the organization members must be able to visualize knowledge flow (Gloor, 2008:1357 -1364).

Social media networks are widely used to enhance event management. According to Edelstein it help attendees to connect with each other, which allow people to create networks, making friends or building brand exposure (Edelstein, 2010-1). She also mentions that social media platforms provide a unique, zero-cost marketing opportunity to expand participation beyond the conference venue. They can become part of an event without actually be there with photos, videos and other content being shared on Twitter.

You can broaden conference participation on social networks by commenting on the conference’s Facebook Page, answering questions posed by key speakers, tagging pictures and encouraging attendees to vote by ‘liking’ for the best post. A great wealth of information can be garnered by using social media during the conference, attendees leaves tips about certain speakers, share what they think about the venues, and other similar information. Organisers can address these concerns almost immediately (Edelstein, 2010-2, 3).

2.9 IMPROVE THE SALES PROCESS

Improved efficiency and productivity of sales and marketing can be reached by using social networks. Indications of productive and unproductive members of the sales and

marketing staff can be established by social network analysis. According to Bulkley and von Alstyne (2004:34), high performing sales force members communicate more with external people and average or low performers communicate less with external people. High performers make more use of communication technologies.

They found no correlation between performance and overall volume of communication. Active communicators are not necessarily high performers. Our insights correspond with their insights. We came to the conclusion that high communication volume corresponds to better execution of simple tasks (Gloor, 2008:1357-1364).

Web 2.0 (or Travel 2.0) is the current buzz words and Social networking sites in the travel industry are the trend of the present. A few of these sites are VibeAgent, Pair Up and Airtroduction, but there was not really interacting from the travel suppliers in the hotel, airline or tourism industry. It seems that KLM only recently launched a consumer –centric online that connects business people doing business in China and Africa. KLM is planning to extend it to Russia, India and has recently launched Golf as the first sport –themed social community. KLM are looking at emerging markets due to the fact that it is a growing market for entrepreneurial development and KLM offer offline club events and free transfers as a benefit for club members (Tourism Internet Marketing, 2012:2).

Club med resorts could build communities, Vacation Ownership and Private Residence Clubs. The question is, is this new wave to increase revenues by building social networking sites in travel, or is technology and internet innovatively capturing the market? (Tourism Internet Marketing, 2012:2).

2.10. Tourist and travel behaviour

The field of Consumer behaviour is a recent and young discipline which is formed by contributions of many other disciplines such as sociology and economy in order to understand the way consumers behave (Blackwell et al. 2006) and (Rodríguez, 20011:7).

It focuses on individuals making decisions about the use of their available resources like; time, money and effort, in the purchase of goods and services related to consumption. Consumer behaviour can be defined as the “processes involved when individuals or groups select or purchase (Solomon et al., 2007:7) and (Rodríguez, 20011:7).

2.10.1. Decision-making process

There are many theories on consumer behaviour. However, due to the complexity of the theories proposed, models were developed in order to understand how consumers behave. The model that is presented from Engell et al. (1968:5) cited by Williams (2002:2) and is their last version of their comprehensive model on the decision-making process in 1978. They produced one of the most important texts in the field of Consumer behaviour creating a model designed to study the purchase of high risk items, as it is the case of tourism Williams, 2002 (Rodríguez, 2009:7).



Diagram 2.1: Model of Consumer decision-making (Williams, 2002:2).

This model has been further criticised for being more descriptive than predictive Williams, (2002) (in Rodríguez, 2009:10). The model does not take into consideration the relationships which happen along the process (Rodríguez, 2009:10). However, it has to be pointed out, the fact that all models fail in being very descriptive trying just to represent the complex theories of consumer behaviour. Moreover, they are more than ten years old and little empirical research has been conducted to test them (Rodríguez, 20011:9).

In Technology in tourism a similar model for tourism behaviour connecting the process with social network marketing is proposed. The process is defined in five phases:

Phase 1: Dreaming

The web surpasses word of mouth as primary source of inspiration for tourists. Travellers use the web to search for their dream destination and tourist destinations and company's needs to ensure their brands are featured well.

Phase 2: Researching

Once prospective tourists pass the dreaming phase they narrow it down and begin their serious researching phase. The travellers are using the web and social media platform to do a detailed research, before booking. It is very important that there is ample information and assistance to help the customer through this process.

Phase 3: Booking

Online bookings continue to grow, but there is also a trend that mobile booking for Air and Hotels grew in 2011. Mobile devices like Smart-phones are developing apps (applications) to develop user friendly booking products. Google developed a click to call for companies and which will most likely result in a booking.

Phase 4: Experiencing

The most important lesson about the experiencing phase is that people continue to search and book en-route. Travellers are digitally armed to look up excursion opportunities, restaurant bookings and car service renovations. Therefore it is important for marketers to be connected to the marketing opportunity and to make it easy for the traveller to access information by in-flight, in-room services and use this opportunity to strengthen their own brand.

Phase 5: Sharing

Sharing is not the end of this process; it is shown that a person's sharing is another person's dreaming and therefore the viral effect of Social media marketing.

It seems that there is a lot of emphasis on the booking phase, which leaves an opportunity to develop the other phases (Rifai, 2011:3).

2.11. SOCIAL NETWORKING AS A MARKETING TOOL

The Facebook effect can be used as a powerful tool for marketers, providing they can figure out how to invoke it (Kirkpatrick 2010:9). Facebook started slowly, developing into a market place when companies like Coca-Cola started to use it. Facebook's long term strategy would become: Facebook would help you decide what you want while Google helped you to search for things you already decided to buy. Facebook would generate demand, the same as brand advertising that dominated television and where most of the

advertising money was spend. A brand advertisement is intended to plant a new idea in your head, the want to spend money to acquire a new item (Kirkpatrick 2011a:9).

The internet is drawing people to spend more time and Facebook is one area where millions of people can be influenced. A lot of the information created by people is inherently commercial, music, movies, books and games are part of a profile. The opportunity to interact was part of the lure for advertisers. Engagement adds leverage to the power of the internet to enable the marketer to have dialogue with a greater audience. That is different from the traditional banner ads on the internet. Microsoft started to become involved and smaller advertisers used their credit card to purchase right on Facebook (Kirkpatrick 2011a:10).

Facebook allows advertising more targeting options than normal websites due to the fact that people are willing to put enormous amounts of information out on the net about themselves, and they spend a lot of time with a wide variety of activities which creates opportunities. Normal people and design students are becoming interactively involved in product development. Mazda ask fans on Facebook page to help design a car for 2018. Mass animators working closely with Facebook to produce a five minute film called Live Music which included segments from 51 different people. Don Tapscott the author of Wikinomics and Growing up Digital says that it is not just about friendships, but that Facebook is changing the way we orchestrate capabilities in a new innovative society that creates goods and services (Kirkpatrick, 2011b:258-265).

The internet is the main source of information for tourist when travelling. Online platforms which allow tourists around the world to share their ideas, thoughts, opinions, pictures and experiences; are used frequently and social media have completely stirred up tourists' behaviours when searching for information. The new tourist emerged from the evolution of society is more experienced and sceptical in regards to marketed information sources. Social media platforms emerge as tourist-friendly platforms where contents come from the "collective intelligence" of tourists, opposed to traditional marketer-dominated sources. Therefore the tourist perceived these platforms as more reliable and trustworthy sources of information. Hence, social media platforms have the potential to be the tourists' information platform for excellence and becoming a more popular marketing medium in the tourism industry (Rodríguez, 2009:3).

How reports that social media is cheaper media to advertise due to the fact that social media allows small businesses to connect for free communicating to prospects and clients, costing nothing but their time and energy. They can post coupons to Facebook groups or run promotions on Twitter. Small tourism businesses also receive additional positive or negative feedback directly from clients (EHow.com, 2012:1).

In tourism behaviour is a complex field and therefore in order to develop a successful marketing strategy it is of importance to develop a strategy by utilising the behaviour, and social media is an excellent platform to do this. Social media gives the tourist power and therefore companies must take special care in selecting the information upload on the internet and social platforms. A negative feedback from a consumer can destroy a company (Rodríguez, 2009:62).

2.12. SOCIAL NETWORKING SYSTEMS UTILIZED IN A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Blossom, whose career spans over 20 years, covering marketing, research and product development management states that social media and social networking tools have changed the very DNA of Society. The way people relate to each other personally, or in community, or in enterprise simply changed (Brynko, 2009:18).

In the study done at the Indian star hotels the findings were that Facebook was the most social used website for corporate marketing. LinkedIn is the most preferred site for recruitment in the hospitality industry and background checks. According to the correspondents of the study, the main advantage LinkedIn has over other sites is that it gives part of what theoretical trends approaches related to SNS? Work experience and company's name. LinkedIn is the most preferred website for job applications, especially at management level (Bhattacharya et al., 2011:26).

The aim is to critically analyse the application and use of SNS within the Eastern Free State as a tourism destination and the areas of utilization in companies and institutions within the area. Given the broad themes in this literature study and the broad context in social networking systems/sites (SNS) applications and issues that derives from the problem statement questions emerge, such as:

- How would individuals or teams effectively utilize SNS with an organization?

- Can SNS be developed as an official internal communication tool within a Business or organization?
- Do companies and institutions utilize SNS as a tool?
- In what way might SNS be developed and utilized as a teaching and e-learning tool in businesses?
- Is it possible to implement SNS in a creative and innovative environment?
- How can one employ SNS for new product development?
- Can SNS be operated as an assessment and feedback tool?
- Can SNS assist in the creation of timely knowledge?
- Can SNS be used to access new markets?
- Can SNS be used to communicate with customers and suppliers?
- Can SNS be used to develop a possible database?
- Can SNS be used to derive specific industry data?
- Can SNS assist in research and the dissemination of research?
- Can SNS be utilized as a mentoring tool within a business environment?
- Is SNS of value for a business with a primary market?
- Can SNS be used by business forums to communicate events, information, knowledge, markets and skills to members?

Social Networking changed the environment we are doing business in. Our children are growing up in a digital environment where they don't talk to each other but they tweet each other. They have their own Facebook profiles or are part of groups and subgroups on Facebook and they own their own blogs. They are not customers in the old paradigm, but they are digital negotiators that are not willing to conform to other ideas, but rather than their own right to choice. They do understand the work choice and their right better than all the generations before ever had. Generation Z knows how to negotiate not only with their parents, but also with the market and product developers (Jarvis, 2009: 145-147).

Jeff Jarvis explains that advertising will always be part of our world due to the fact that companies will never reach the nirvana to create the perfect product. Google and Facebook just enlarged the platform for advertisers and developed new tools and methods for advertisers and the product developer to tap ideas, needs and wants from their markets to improve on products and services. Agencies need to become younger and regenerate

themselves. If you focus on the user the customer is not a prince but a king and that should lead to success (Jarvis, 2009:145-147).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research in the study consists of the literature review and peer-aided survey research with a quota sampling technique testing more than one population. The survey-based research design best suits the study, because each respondent needs to provide unique answers linked to his/her ability. Various stakeholders were also interviewed and results from the quantitative and qualitative designs compared.

3.1. LITRATURE REVIEW

A complete review of previous research was provided in the study in order to establish the context and worth of the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 38). Consequently, phase one of the study entailed a literature review. The text data includes relevant books, journals, newspaper articles, Internet articles, and United Nations (UN) internet articles and publications, and SA Governmental and Local Governmental publications. The purpose of the literature review was to provide a basis for scientific analysis from prior research findings on sustainability.

3.2. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The researcher administered a survey questionnaire to small business owners in Eastern Free State area. The questionnaire design sustains findings of the literature review. A random sample of small to medium sized tourism businesses and their clients were selected. Each business owner or manager was briefed on the content of the questionnaires to decrease errors in their interpretation. Research assistants were used to collect the data by means of interviewing the business owners or following up on missing or misinterpreted information. Data integrity was assured by contacting 100% of the respondents after data collection to verify if they were interviewed.

3.3. MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument was a questionnaire designed to gather information. It also served as a means to determine whether social networks were successfully utilized by the sample. Results from the analysis will determine whether these tourism businesses are contributing meaningfully to tourists' needs. The biographical section was used to obtain information of the entrepreneur's age, gender, education, culture, sex and nature of the business. Literature determined whether the utilization of social networks was useful.

3.4. DATA ANALYST

The data on the survey questionnaire was analysed using the PhStat version 2.7 for Windows. Correlations, tabulations, cross tabulations, scatter plots, and histograms are used with respect to the various aspects contained in the questionnaire.

3.5. STUDY RESULTS

In this section, the results of the empirical study are presented, by utilising descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, cross-tabulations and standard deviations.

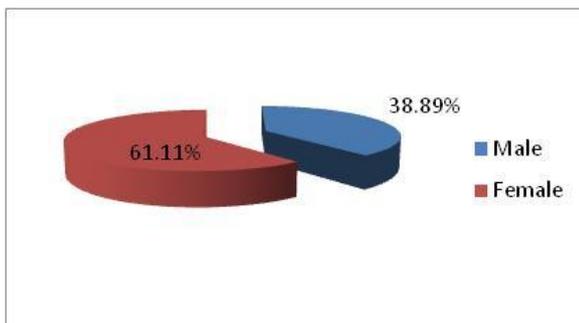
3.5.1. Descriptive statistics and frequencies

The responses to the questionnaires were analysed by using descriptive statistics and frequencies. The findings are presented in this section.

Section A: Biographical information

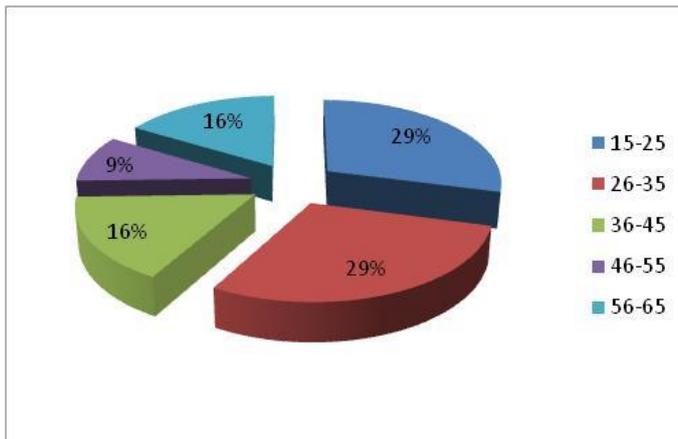
There is a significant importance to understand the relationships between the profiles of respondents. Their backgrounds and experiences play an important role in understanding the results of the survey. A total of 55 of 60 questionnaires were received after doing a roundabout road trip through the Eastern Free State. The following sections discuss the findings.

Graph 1: Sex of respondents (Question 1.1 of the questionnaire)



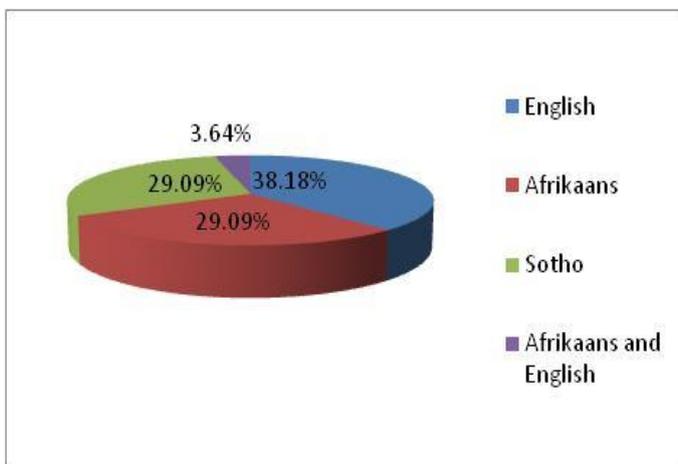
Nearly two thirds of the small tourism business owners were female. Most of tourists visiting small tourism businesses in the area were women, men only made up a third of the study population in both cases. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 2: Age of respondents (Question 1.2 of the questionnaire)



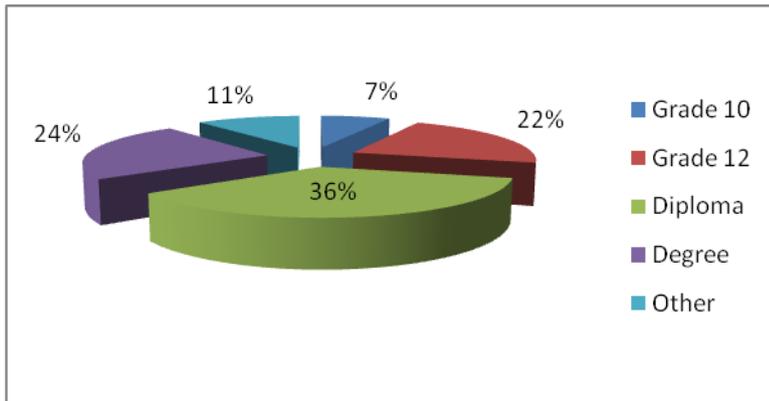
From graph 2, most tourism business owners were between 15 - 35 years old. This group formed the majority of the respondents, which was two thirds of the total respondents. Most people that were involved in business were between the ages of 36 and 55 which means that businesses are prone to be developed or managed by more experienced people.

Graph 3: Language of respondents (Question 1.3 of the questionnaire)



The majority of the respondents spoke English first language. Afrikaans and Sotho speaking respondents both made up a third of the study population. There were only about 4% of the respondents that were bilingual. It is very encouraging to see the amount of Sotho people in businesses, though most of them except 3 crafters are managers in businesses it is still an opportunity for these young previously disadvantaged South Africans to learn skills and understand day to day business requirements.

Graph 4: Qualifications of respondents (Question 1.4 of the questionnaire)

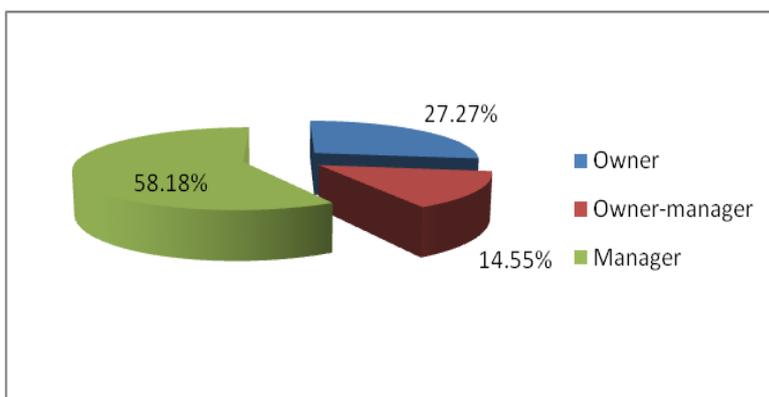


The largest group of the respondents had a diploma and a quarter had a tertiary degree. The tertiary educated respondents combined were two thirds of the sample.

Section B: Business specific information

There is a significant importance to understand the relationships between the business experience of respondents and their understanding of digital marketing and using social media as business development. Their business backgrounds and experiences play an important role in understanding the results of the survey. A total of 55 of 60 questionnaires were received after doing a roundabout road trip through the Eastern Free State. The following sections discuss the findings:

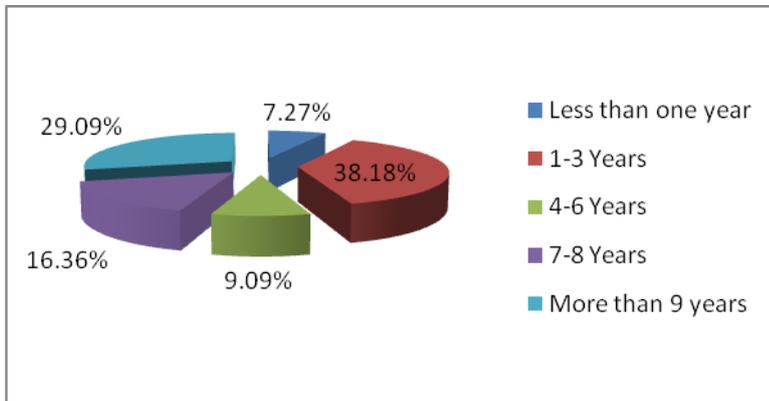
Graph 5: Type of managers (Question 2.1 of the questionnaire)



The majority of respondents were managers for an owner. The second largest group of were owners themselves managing their tourism business and the smallest group of the sample were owner-managers. I did do fieldwork going from business to business and it was evident that some of the business owners lived in other parts of the country. Sandstone-chameleon's manager said that her owner was a woman living in Klerksdorp North-west and at Disroy Guesthouse the owner lived in Heidelberg Gauteng It was quite confusing at the beginning phoning to make an appointment, due to the fact that the phone

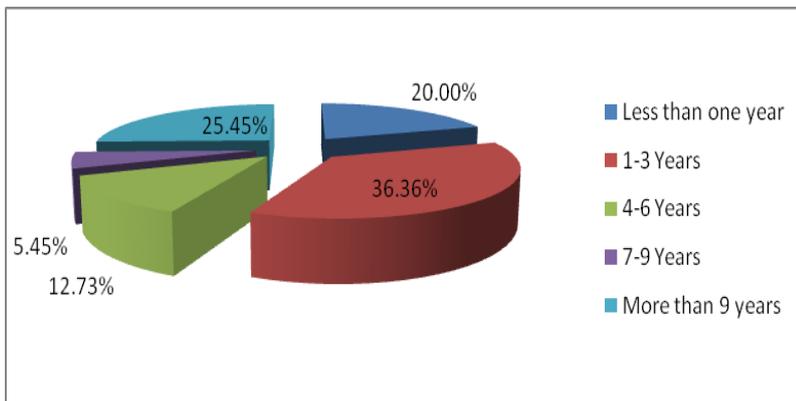
number on the advertisement was for the owner and not for the manager of the guesthouse. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 6: Years of experience of respondents (Question 2.2 of the questionnaire)



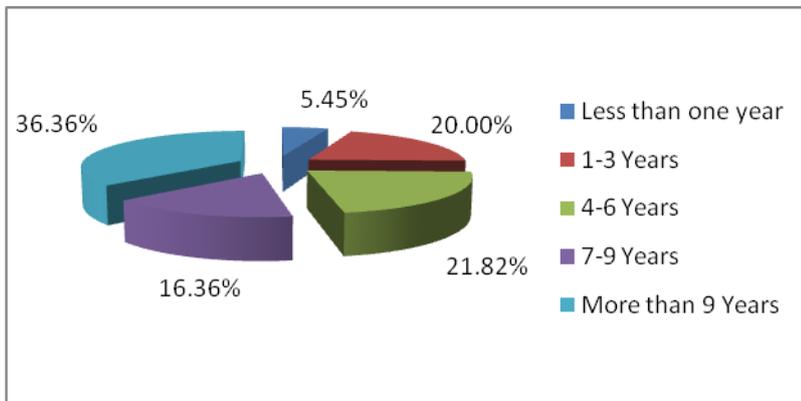
The largest group of respondents had between one and three years' experience in business and the second largest group had more than nine years' experience in business.

Graph 7: Years of marketing experience of respondents (Question 2.3 of questionnaire 1)



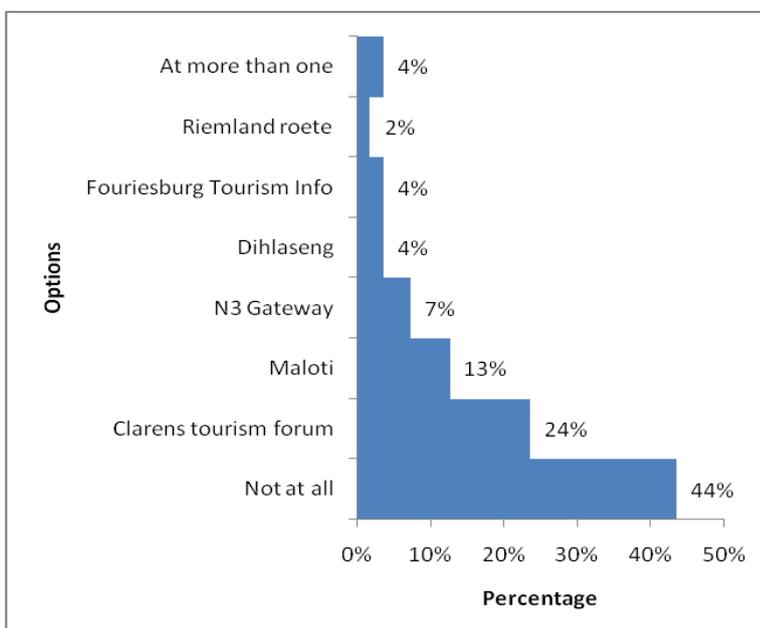
The largest group of respondents (about 40%) had between one and three years' experience in marketing and the second largest group (25%) had more than nine years' experience in marketing. The marketing experience was lower than the business experience. Digital marketing is such a specific area and in my interview with digital marketing consultant Matthew Drew he mentioned that most people are trying to do it by themselves and unfortunately the product tends to look unprofessional. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 8: Number of years the business has been operational (Question 2.4 of questionnaire 1)



The largest group of businesses (40%), were old established businesses, older than nine years and the second largest group (22%), were between four and six years in existence. 20% were between one and three years operational. The businesses in the tourism industry in the Eastern Free State are quite mature and it certainly looks as if it is quite a stable industry. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

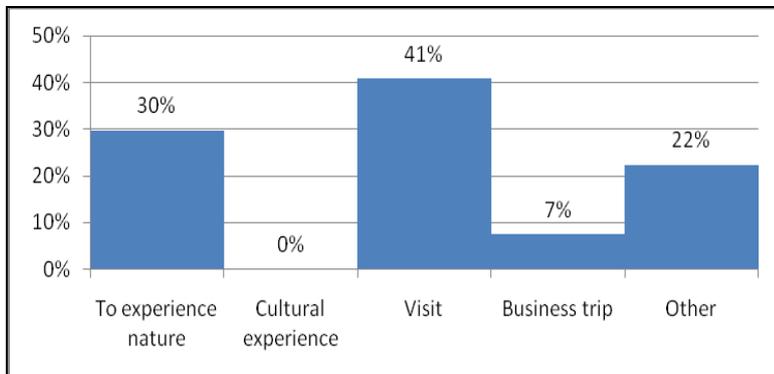
Graph 9: Businesses form part of tourism associations (Question 2.5 of questionnaire1)



The businesses that are not affiliated to any tourism forum or association are at 44% of the sample and 24% are part of the Clarens tourism forum with Maloti Drakensberg at 13%. The town Clarens and surrounding forms the greatest part of tourism businesses. Clarens

was the first town in the Eastern Free State to become popular as an artist destination..
 [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 10: Reasons for visiting the area in the sample (Question 1.3 of questionnaire 2)

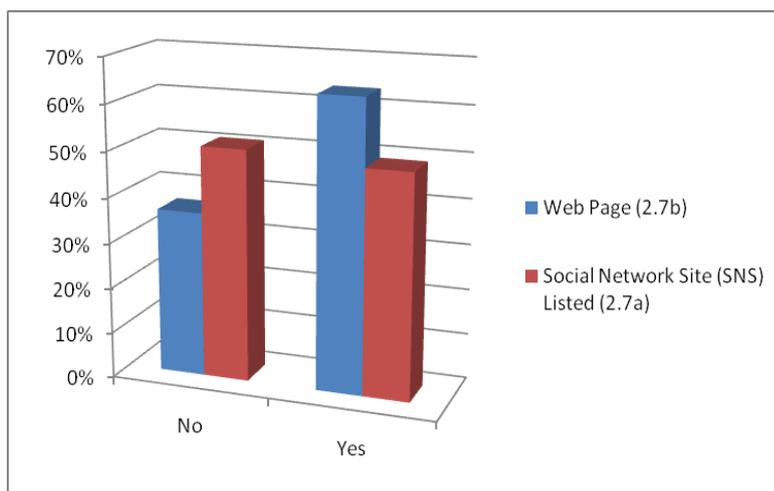


From graph 10, 30% of respondents visits was to have a nature experience, 11% visited friends and family, 7% were on a business trip and 22% came for other reasons.

55.36% of the business owners use social networks and 44.64% do not use it at all. None of the respondents made use of a blog. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

According to the owner of Oban-Farm she wanted to use it, didn't have the knowhow, others said they did not have any time. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 11: Number of tourism business owners that make use of digital marketing (Question 2.7 of questionnaire 1)



The respondents are still more prone to use webpages. 62 % of the respondents did have webpages and 48% of the respondents are using social media. None of the respondents

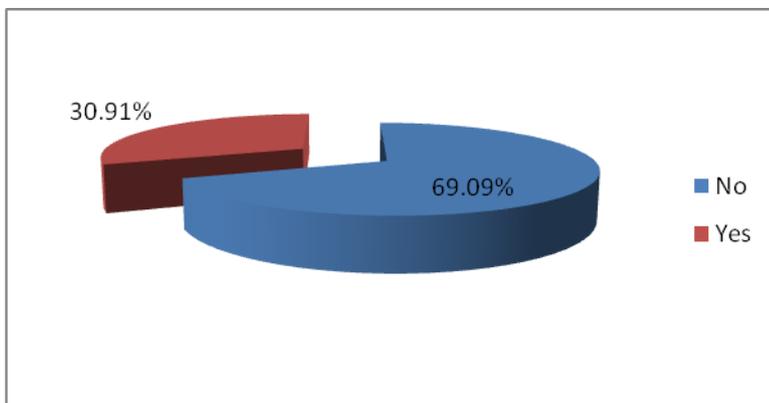
made use of a blog. According to the owner of Oban-Farm, she wanted to use blogs, but did not have the knowhow; others said they did not have any time. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

The coefficient of variation between question 2.8a and question 2.8b is 10.25%, and there are only a 10% difference between the number of respondents that make use of web designers and those that make use of professionals to set up their social networks.

60% of the respondents do not list their contact details on their social network sites. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

The number of tourists that use website, as seen in Graph 12, to find a destination made up, half of tourists interviewed, and 20% of these also visited social networks. Only a third of businesses listed their business on a website or social network.

Graph 12: Number of tourism businesses listing their social network on their website (Question 2.9 of questionnaire 1)

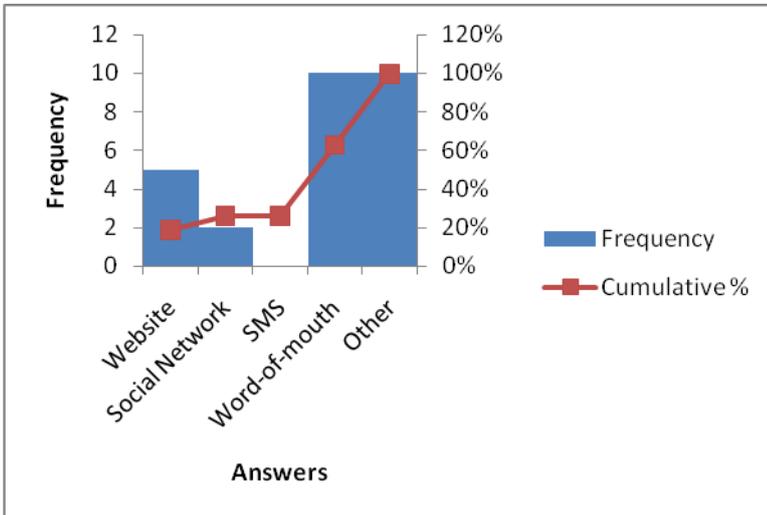


Some 60% of the respondents do not list their contact details on their social network sites. It was revealed that people tend to make do with their own web-design. According to Matthew Drew, a digital marketing consultant who works for the N3 – gateway project, it is because the web-designers are charging a lot and he believes that people should be educated in what to expect in cost- and content. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

It is quite clear if you look at the presentation of people using personal sites and the percentage of them using it for business that there is room for improvement. Again this was relevant in my interview with Mathew Drew, a digital marketing consultant that there

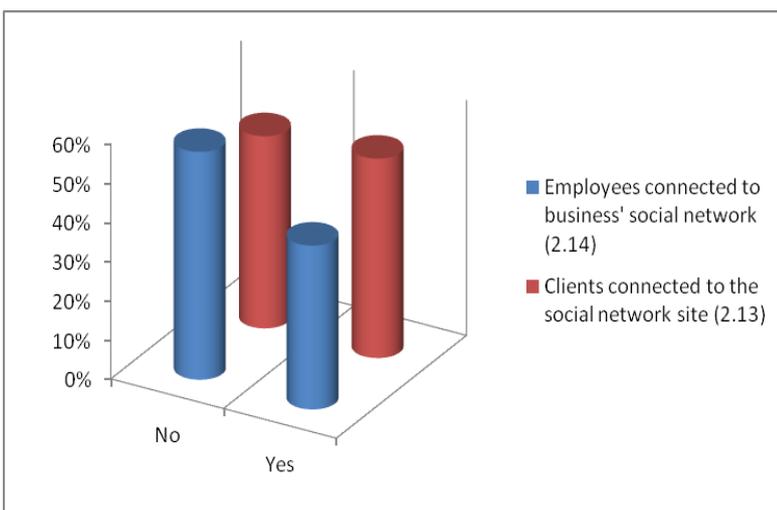
are a need for information workshops on the knowhow on the use of Digital media for the respective business owners and that Government should employ specialist people to assist in this regard. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 13: How the locations' information was obtained by tourists (Question 2.1 of questionnaire 2)



Nearly two thirds 63% of the tourism businesses' management or employees make use of a personal network site. More than half of business respondents did not take any time using a personal social network at work. 60% of tourists visited the area before [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 14: Number of respondents who connect with clients and employees on their social networks (Question 2.13 and 2.14 of questionnaire 1)



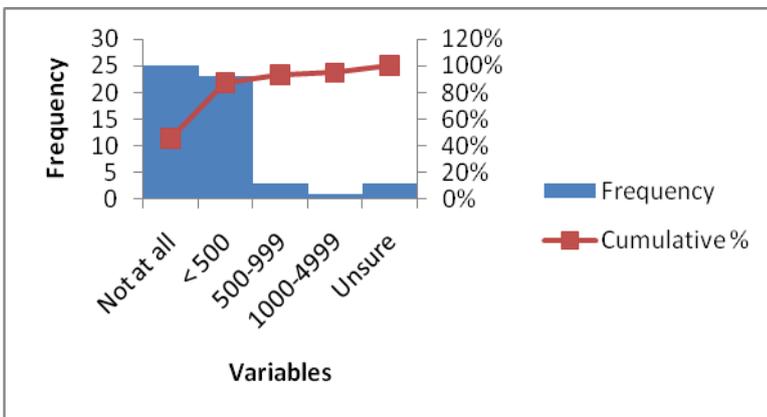
The numbers of employees connected to the companies' social network page made up only about 35%, while half of clients connected to tourism businesses through social networks.

Only 20% of the businesses had a SNS (Social Network Site) policy for their business, while only 16% of the respondents connected with suppliers on their business's social network site. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

The coefficient of variation between question 2.13 and question 2.17 is 5.82%, a SNS policy is therefore linked to whether customers are connected through the social network site.

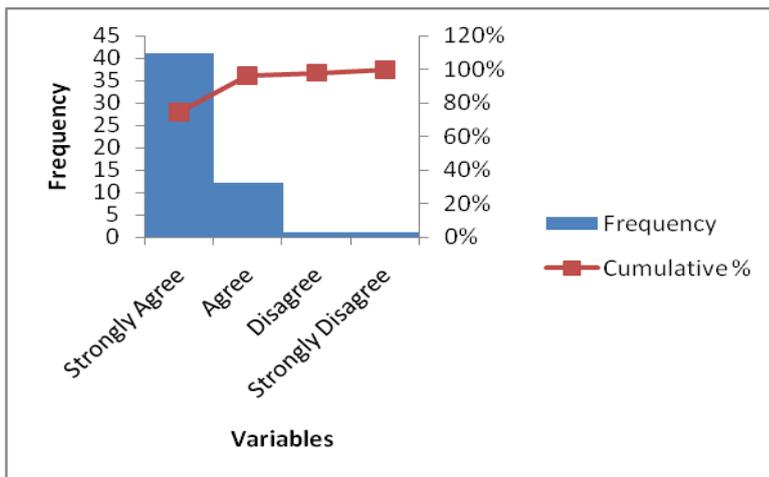
From graph 15 below, most small tourism businesses in the area had less than 500 hits per month on their sites or no hits at all.

Graph 15: Number of hits SNS sites receive in the sample (Question 2.17 of questionnaire 1)



Some 64% of the respondents strongly agree that social networks improve business communication. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 16: Number of Respondents who feel that a social networks can be utilised to inform customers of special offers (Question 3.2 of questionnaire 1)



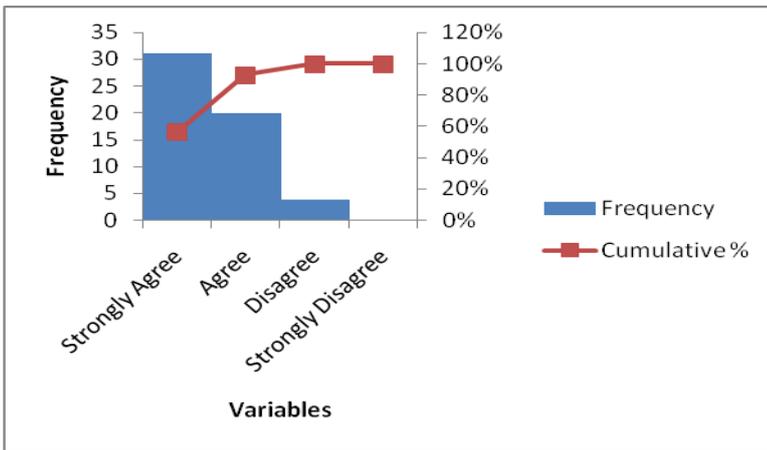
In graph 16, the majority of tourism businesses, 74%, agree strongly, and 21% agree that social networks can inform customers of special offers. We see that there is a gap in understanding the working of digital media. The respondents are aware that it is beneficial for marketing and business development, but they do not have the knowledge to exploit it for their own businesses.

56% of the respondents agree strongly and 40% of the respondents agree that social networks allow tourism businesses to communicate with new customers. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Table 1: Average time tourists spend in the area

Average days in area	3.3
Range	7 days
Outliers	None

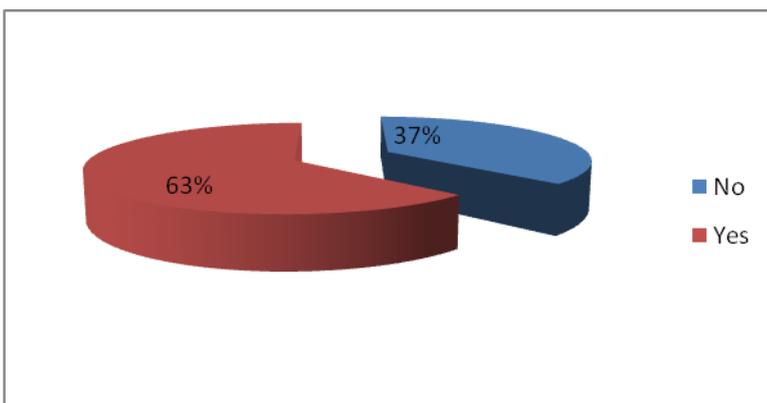
Graph 21: Number of Respondents who feel that social network sites help a tourism business to stay in touch with regular customers (Question 3.4 of questionnaire 1)



In graph 21, 56.36% of respondents agree strongly and 36.36% of respondents agree that social networks help tourism businesses to stay in touch with regular customers and these two variables have a cumulative % of 92.73%.

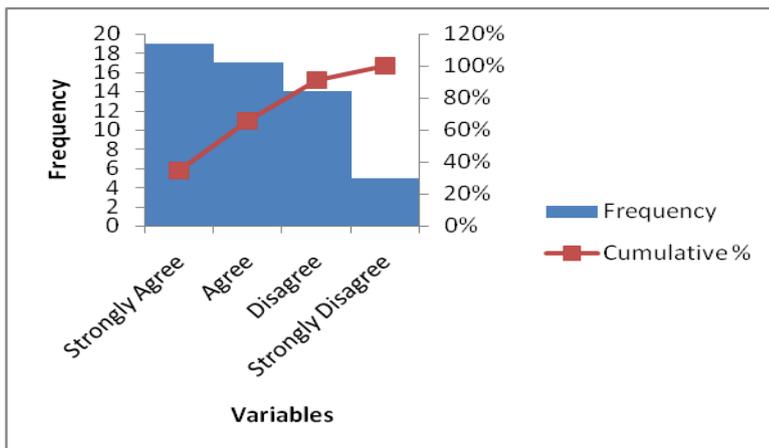
From graph 22 below, more than two thirds of tourists use social networks to plan their trips. Half of tourists in the sample can access SNS sites from their cell phones [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 22: Tourists that use social networks to plan a trip (Question 2.5 of questionnaire 2)



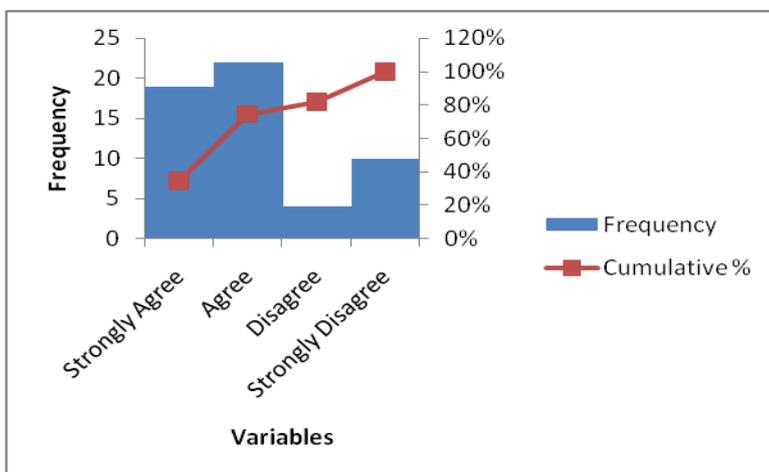
73% of tourism business owners strongly agree or agree that social networks can improve communication between them and their supplier. 65.45% of the respondents strongly agree and 30.91% of respondents agree that you can inform customers on events via social networks. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 23: Number of Respondents who feel that you need a special knowledge to start a social network site for your tourism business (Question 3.7 of questionnaire 1)



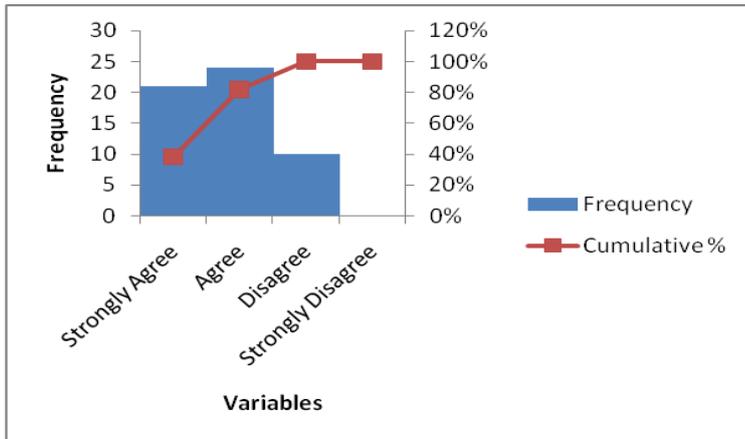
The following was found in graph 23: 34.55% strongly agree, 30.91% agree, 25.45% disagree and 9.09% strongly disagree that you need special knowledge to start a social network site for your tourism business.

Graph 25: Number of Respondents who feel that they can compile a social network site for their tourism business (Question 3.8 of questionnaire 1)



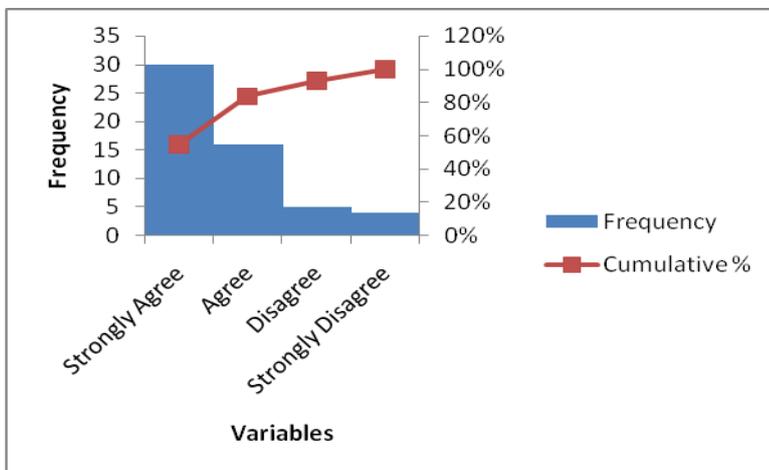
In graph 25 the respondents felt that they can compile a social network site and the percentages are as follows: 34.55% strongly agree, 40% agree, 7.27% disagree and 18.18% strongly disagree. More than 30% of respondents could not make a social network site for their business. 10% of respondents did not even know a friend with such knowledge, this data could be linked to older business owners. A quarter of small tourism businesses in the area also felt that they do not have access to contact a professional to design their social network page. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 26: Number of Respondents who feel that to develop a social network site for their tourism business, they need input from their clients (Question 3.12 of questionnaire 1)



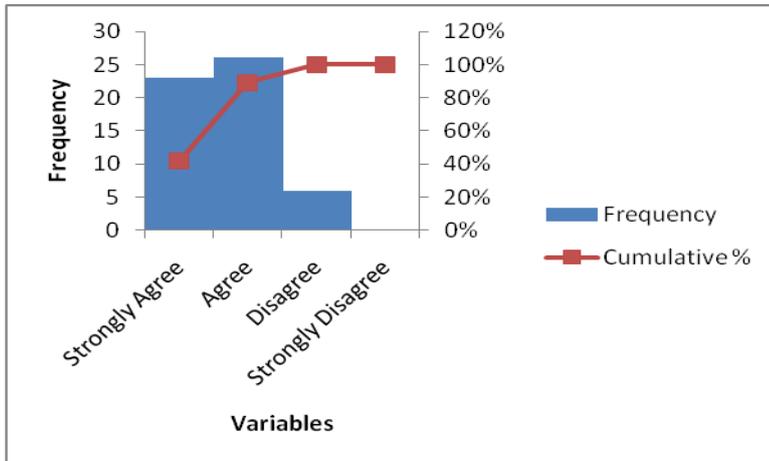
In graph 26, 43.65% of the respondents agree, 38.18% strongly agree and 18.18% disagreed that they need input from their clients to develop an social network site for their business.

Graph 27: Number of Respondents who feel that it is difficult to use a social network site (Question 3.13 of questionnaire 1)



The majority of businesses, 84%, agreed strongly or agreed that it is difficult to use a social network site. About 55% of tourism businesses in the sample felt that it is necessary to be informed on using a social network. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 28: Number of Respondents who feel that a tourism business can develop the business by making use of social networking platforms (Question 3.15 of questionnaire1)



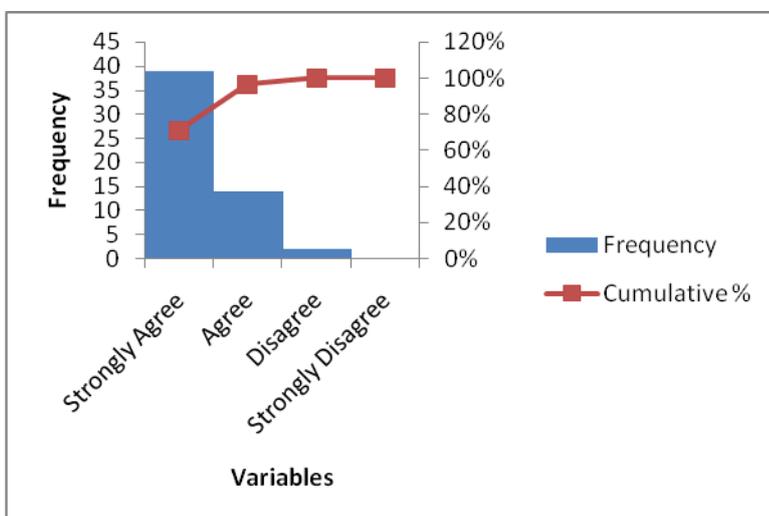
In graph 32, 41.82% strongly agreed, 47.27 agreed and only 10,91% disagreed that you can use social networks to develop your tourism businesses. The cumulative percentage of the first two variables are 89.09%.

People are very insecure on how you can use social networks to develop your business. About half of tourism businesses agree that using social networking for their business is very time consuming. 27.27% strongly agreed, 29.09% agreed, 30.91 disagreed and 12,

73% disagreed that there are no knowledge restriction when using social network sites.

[See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 29: Number of Respondents who feel that their social networking site needs to be user friendly (Question 3.19 of questionnaire 1)

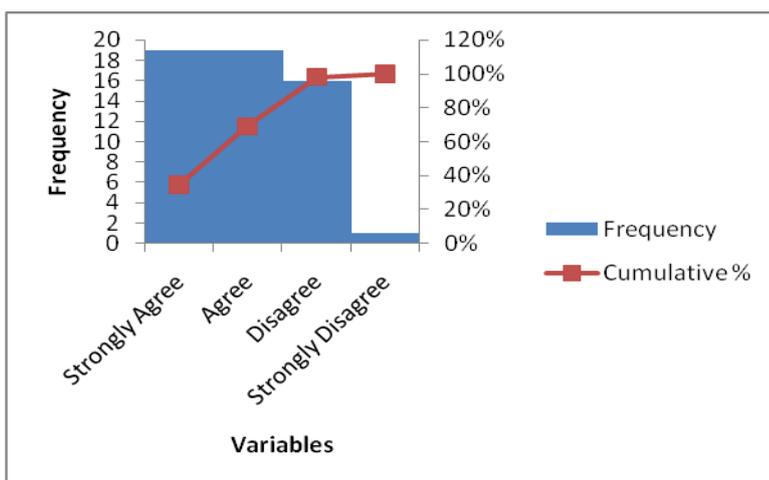


In graph 29, 96.35% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that a social media site needs to be user friendly.

Respondents do not agree that you need knowlegde to use a social network, 40% strongly felt that they had the knowledge to use social network sites to their full potential. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

There are a lot of insecurities regarding the knowledge to use and develop a social networking site and we need to address this issue. During my interview with the digital marketing consultant Matthew Drew it was quite evident that he also realised that it is an area that needs to be addressed. Mathew’s company, One Stop, are the consultants that work with tourism development and marketing on the N3- gateway which has about 1300 stakeholders and some of these stakeholders are associations like Maloti Drakensberg, Clarens tourism forum and Van Reenen Swinburne association that have their own members. Matthew’s view is that education and awareness campaigns or workshops, on what it constitutes and how much it cost to develop a tourism website for a small provider will be the answer. This will include the fundamentals of social media. The marketing strategy of the N3 gateway programme is looking at such workshops for its members.’ [See: ANNEXURE 4]

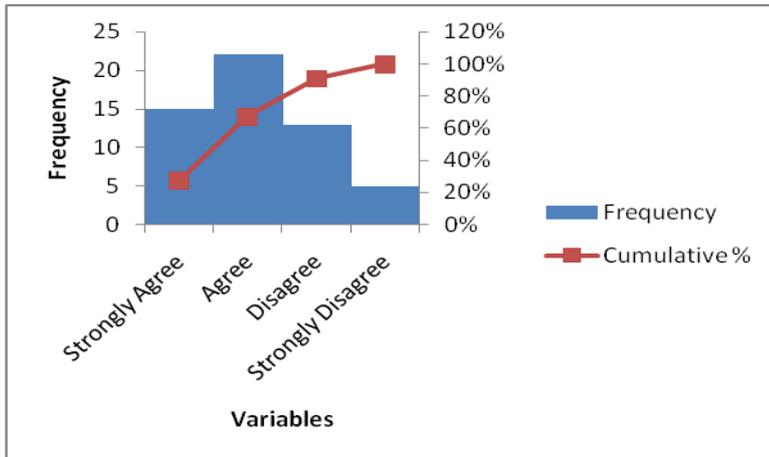
Graph 30: Number of Respondents who feel that they need additional training to utilise social networking in their tourism business (Question 3.21 of questionnaire 1)



The issues of knowledge and training are linked, 70% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the fact they need additional knowledge to develop social network pages for their business.

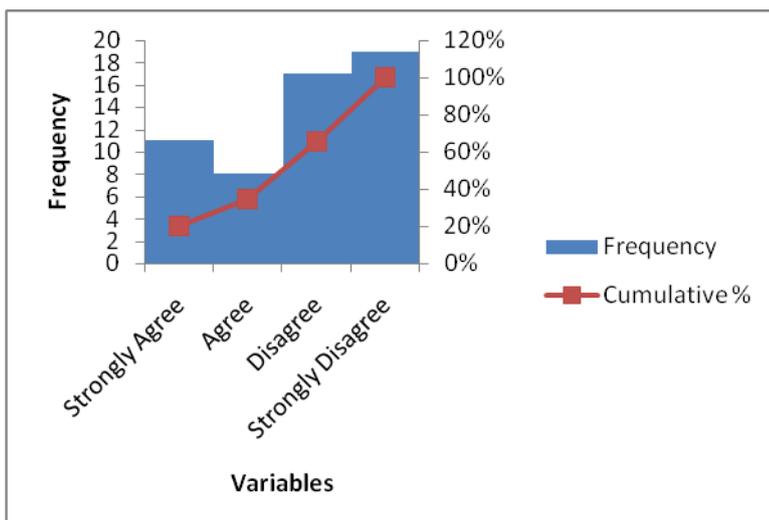
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Graph 31: Number of Respondents who feel that information on using social networks for tourism businesses is readily available (Question 3.22 of questionnaire 1)



It is evident that people do realise that social networks can be beneficial in developing markets for their business. Small tourism businesses in the sample are quite insecure about the use and information on social networks, 70% strongly agreed or agreed on having information on using social networks. A quarter of these businesses believe social networks are a waste of time. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

Graph 32: Number of Respondents who feel that the government tourism office needs to encourage tourism businesses to utilise social networks (Question 3.24 of questionnaire 1)

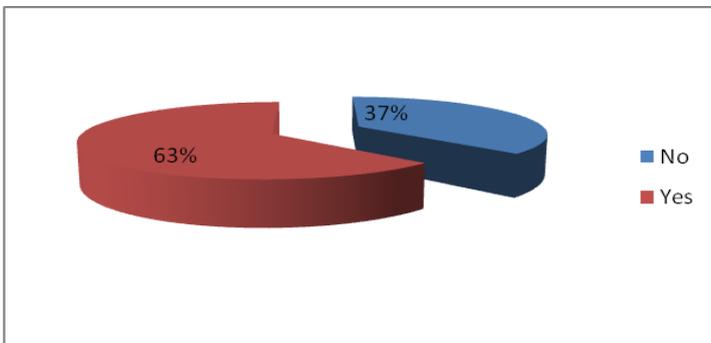


In my interview with Mathew Drew and Dave Short it was quite evident that they believed that government must concentrate on infrastructure and signage and get specialised marketing people to develop marketing products in coordination with small businesses that has real meaning. When comparing this with the quantitative information provided for by

questionnaire 1, it was found that more than 80% of businesses want support from local government to develop social networks. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

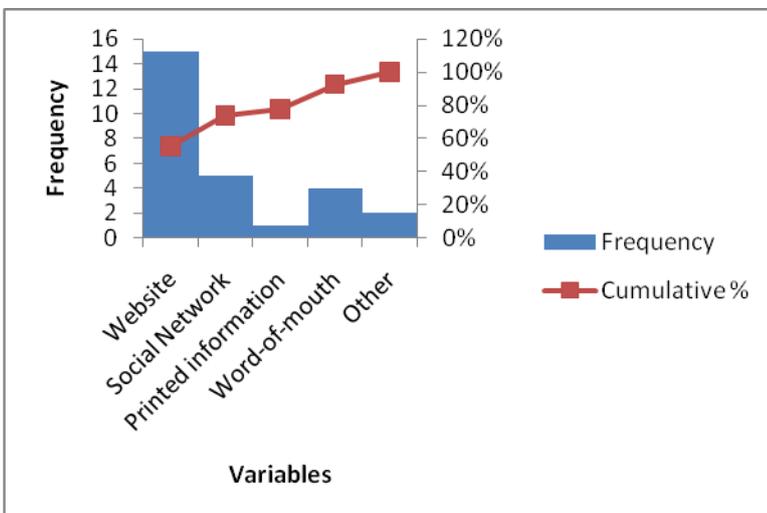
It is quite evident that the Free State Government needs to develop a strategy for the digital marketing in the tourism industry. In visiting the government district Dihlaseng office it was evident that they had not considered this medium of advertising yet. A third of respondents however felt that it was unsafe to use a social network and the same amount felt that its unethical to boost your business online [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 33: Tourists who want and do not want to be contacted on social networks
(Question 2.6 of questionnaire 2)



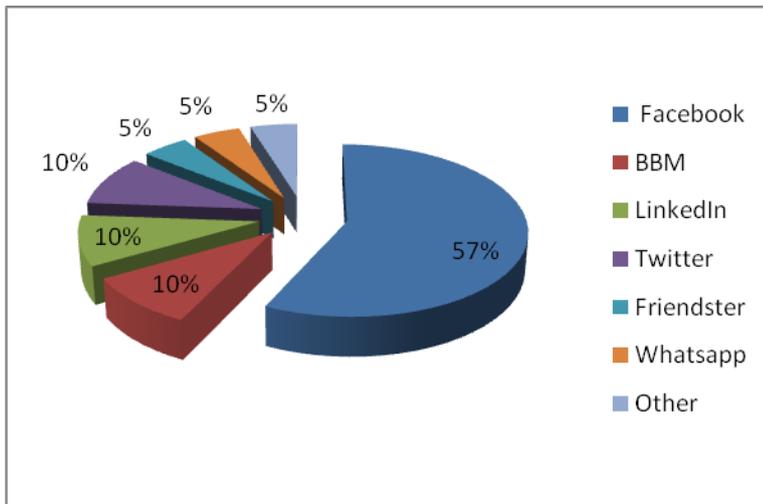
From the graph above it is evident that most tourists want to be contacted on social networks. Most tourists use websites to find an ideal destination, accomodation and excursions in the area, after which social networks make up a quarter of a deliberate vacation search.

Graph 34: Preferred marketing communication method of tourists (Question 2.9 of questionnaire 2)

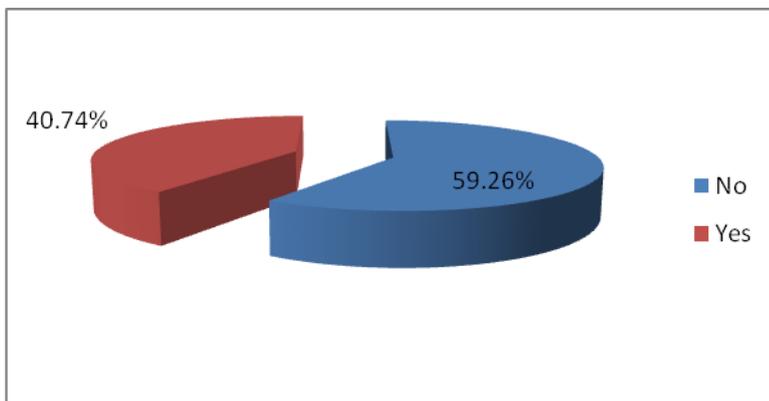


Graph 35 below, indicates the social networks used most by tourists studied. Facebook is the network that two thirds of the sample uses daily, the other networks combined make up a large portion of what tourists use.

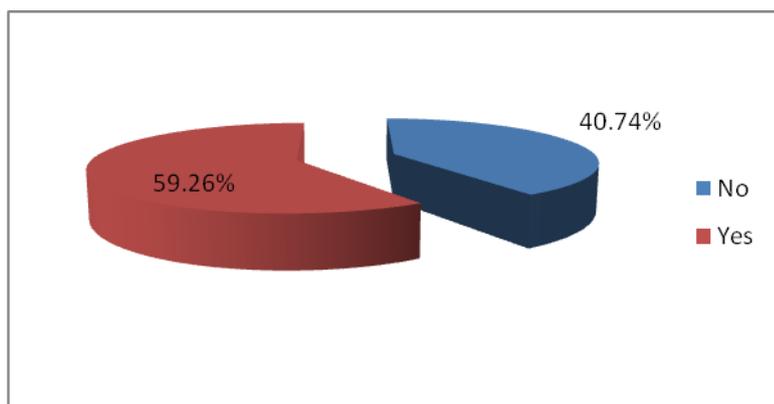
Graph 35: Types of social networks utilised by tourists visiting the area (Question 2.5 of questionnaire 2)



Graph 36: Follow-up communication on SNSs wanted by tourists for restaurant specials (Question 2.11 of questionnaire 2)



Graph 37: Follow-up communication on SNSs wanted by tourists for accommodation specials (Question 2.12 of questionnaire 2)

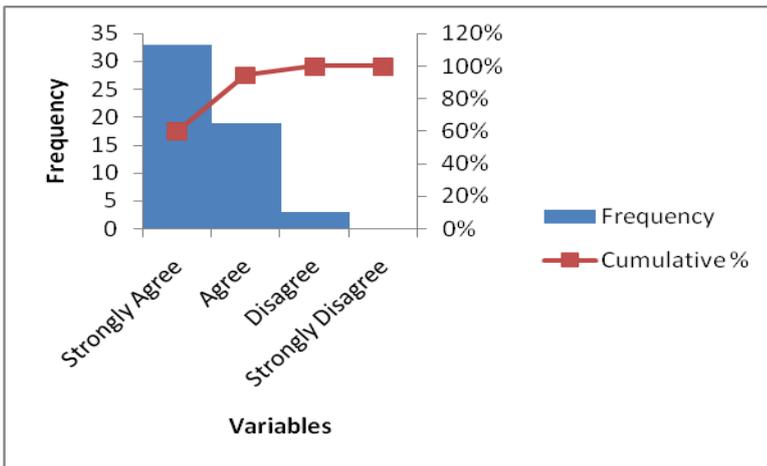


Tourists seem to have a higher need to find accommodation specials than restaurant specials, 60% of tourists in the sample. On the other hand over 40% of the tourists have a need to find information on dining online. Event management is a growing trend especially in Clarens, which saw the opportunity and stated to develop special weekends for certain niche markets. Other towns like Ficksburg with the Cherry Festival and Fouriesburg with the annual Asparagus Festival can benefit a lot, by using social media to develop markets and advertise special events. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Less than 4% of the sample disagreed on the fact that tourism businesses need to utilise their marketing strategy to develop their social networks. Respondents feel that social networks can be used to sell their products, promote tourism destinations, bring them in contact with possible new customers, share new ideas and do market research (find information on the industry). All with mostly a 94% agree rate. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

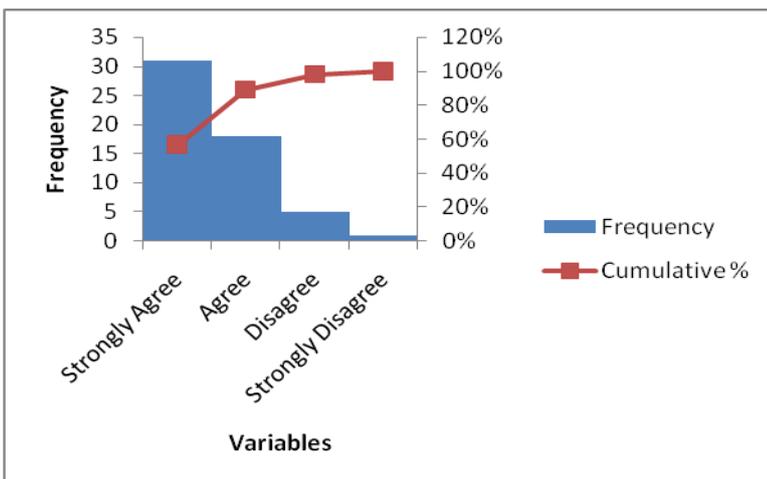
Respondents do understand that professionals are the best option to design their website, but Mathew Drew, a marketing consultant in the area said that the professionals are quite pricy and therefore are not used that much. It is vital to inform the small tourism industry on viable cost and content of digital marketing so that they have an ability to negotiate better pricing for a quality product. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 38: Number of respondents who feel that social network sites can supply clients with geographical information (Question 3.33 of questionnaire 1)



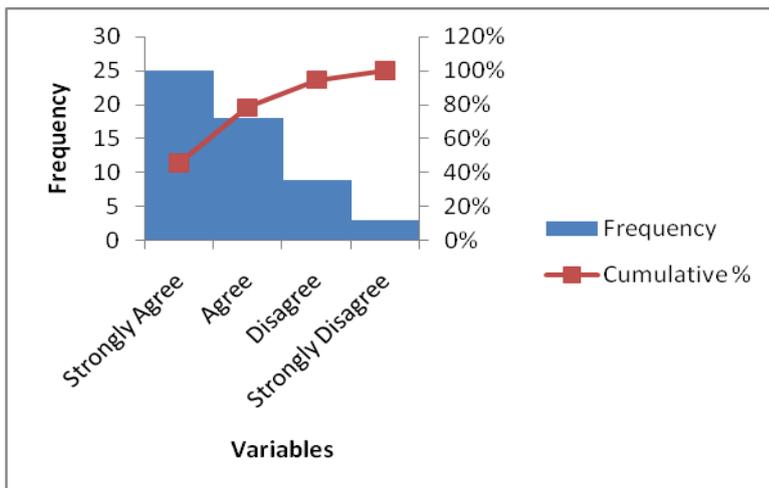
Above 60% strongly agreed, 34.55% agreed and only 5.45% disagreed that social networks can supply clients with geographical information.

Graph 39: Number of respondents who feel that marketing with social media is cheaper (Question 3.35 of questionnaire 1)



It is quite evident that most of the respondents understand the benefit of using social media instead of other media. 56.36% Of the respondents strongly agreed, 32.73% agreed, 9.09 disagreed and 1.82% stongly disagreed.

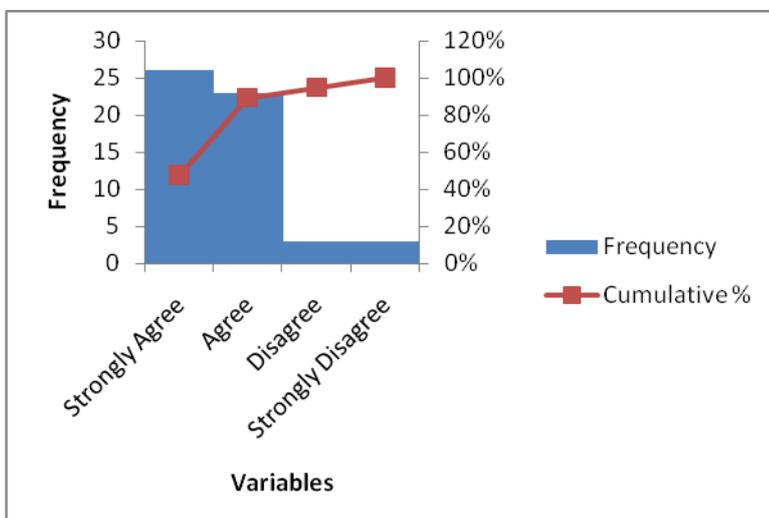
Graph 40: Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses should encourage their suppliers to use social media (Question 3.36a of questionnaire 1)



About 80% of small tourism business owners feel that it would be beneficial to encourage suppliers to use social networks. About 10% of tourism businesses disagree on encouraging cusotmers to use social networks to aquire information on tourism businesses. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

It was quite a surprise that the small businesses were quite lenient on employees and the use of social media. Few companies had social media policies and in the above statement on encouraging social media amongst their employees the results were quite positive. The results is as follow: 44% strongly agree, 33% agree, 18% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. It was also evident in section B, that the managers do not abuse this privalege. The manager of the Blou Donkie Gallery said that he would feel uncomfortable to use his personal social media at work. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 41: Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses receive a lot of new customers with social media (Question 3.37 of questionnaire 1)

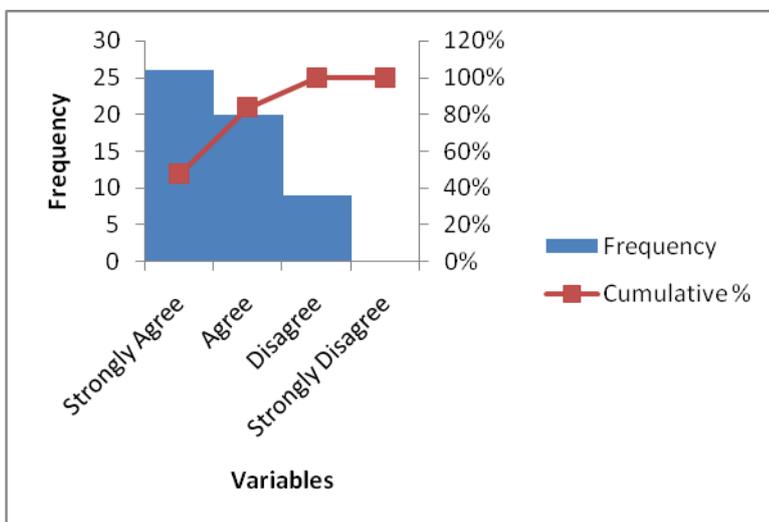


It is evident that the respondents believe you can grow your market share through social media advertising. 47.27% Strongly agreed, 41.81% agreed, 5.45% disagreed and 5.45% strongly disagreed. Results for business development, learning business and social network principles was similar to growing market share. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

32.73% of the respondents strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 18.18 disagreed and 9.09% disagreed that there were a lot of e-learning possibilities with social networks. More than 80% of businesses agreed that they can use marketing information from SNS's [See: ANNEXURE 3]

The manager of Sandstone-chameleon in Fouriesburg was very positive about the use of social media and the benefits it has for a small tourism business. 'This is one of the main networking I do in marketing for 'Sandstone-chameleon' and it works. I thought myself and the business has grown enormously since we started with electronic media. The owner who lives in Klerksdorp is positive- I discussed it with her and she allowed me to do it.' [See: ANNEXURE 4]

Graph 42: Number of respondents who are of the opinion that it is wrong to utilise a personal social network in working hours (Question 3.42 of questionnaire 1)



As in previous statements, respondents are using personal social networks at work and do not think it is wrong or unethical. From graph 42 above, 47.27% strongly agree, 36.36% agree, and only 16.36% disagreed.

The majority of respondents believe that people that use social media for their business has too much time, they do however not believe it is unethical. About half of respondents feel they can share ideas on social networks. [See: ANNEXURE 3]

There were one specific respondent from The Towerpot in Harrismith, that did comment that she do not use social media, because she values her privacy. Looking at the data this issue do have some impact on the use or no use of social media. [See: ANNEXURE 4]

3.6. SUMMARY

Businesses do see social media as a prominent communication and marketing media though they have knowledge restrictions to use it optimum. In both questionnaires it reveals that the digital marketing products do lack content that is client-specific.

There are a huge gap in understanding what digital media can do for you and how to do it. Businesses do make use of digital media, but do not use it correctly. They lose customers with badly designed digital products and they do not use the technology to their advantage, e.g. linking social media sites to the website.

In this industry, employers tend not to be too harsh on employees that use social media and in the data; it was revealed that most managers do not abuse the privilege.

There are mixed feelings on linking with suppliers and the benefit thereof. The respondents also differ on the safety and privacy issues of using social network, but it does have some influence on the use of social networks. In questionnaire 2 it is evident that tourists are using social media and that if the product development is client-specific, tourists will use it more for information. This just confirms that like in questionnaire 1 tourism businesses have not used social media to their benefit as yet, due to knowledge restrictions.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS DIRIVED FROM CONCLUTIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn regarding the specific objectives in the study. The limitations of the research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the future. This chapter, the final chapter of the study, summarises conclusions and recommendations related to findings of the literature review. Results are obtained from the statistical analysis of the research. The researcher bases his/her conclusions on these results from the research study. Recommendations based on conclusions follows as the result of research. After limitations are identified future topics of study can be seen.

The main aim of the study is to critically analyse the application and the effective utilisation of social network site technologies within the Eastern Free State tourism industry, and to explore this objective of social network applications used within the small businesses in Eastern Free State tourism industry.

Analyse social network applications from a marketing perspective in order to develop a conceptual framework, which will enable the SME's to maximise the uses. To identify perspective and social network sites related issues and apply these theories and perspectives to the South African tourism business environment. The study needs to pinpoint the perceptions that the tourism industry in the Eastern Free State hold on social network applications in their businesses.

There also needs to be a critical analysis, discussion and interpretation on the impact of social network site application within an innovative and creative tourism industry in general and the Eastern Free State tourism business environment specifically. One of the aims is to analyse the accessibility of social network technologies to SME's. The researcher needs to evaluate and discuss the possibilities for social network site utilisation and determine social network related impacts on the communication related to a tourism destination and the SME's within the area.

There also need to be information to determine whether SME's within the tourism destination have the skill and capacity to facilitate social network sites. Lastly the information will allow researcher to develop a conceptual framework regarding social network site technology usages within the Eastern Free State as a tourism destination.

4.2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results a clear conclusion can be made in regard to sustainability and utilisation of social networks within the sample. The fact is that social media have developed quite rapidly during the last few years and during the duration of my study, Web 2.0 and all its applications moved to Web 3.0 and in the beginning of 2012 Web 4.0 was implemented. Social networks are a fast growing industry and as with all new media it will take time to fully understand social media business applications and to use it to the business's advantage. Many of tourism businesses were not connected to social networks, due to the fact that they did not have the knowledge due to the fact that they were older. On the other hand most of the tourist use social networks and web searches, but did not find the available information very informative.

4.2.1. Biographical information

From the survey 1 of the respondents were older than 36 and younger than 55, which suggest that 58% of the businesses are managed and owned by more mature people. The reason of this you will find in section B of survey 1, where it is found that the largest group of businesses , existed more than nine years and the second largest group, were between four and six years in existence.

It is clear that almost two thirds of the respondents were female. There is a good balance between English, Afrikaans and Sotho although there were not a lot of Sotho business owners. There were three crafters who owned small. There was a high degree of business experience amongst the respondents, but it was a lot lower in the marketing experience category.

The most visible level of education in the data was Diplomas with Degrees and Grade 12 taking second and third place. The Businesses were very diverse and it ranged from Guesthouses, Guest farms, Arts and Craft shops. A large amount of these businesses was not affiliated to any tourism forum or association and more than half of the businesses do make use of social media. Although the respondents are still more prone to use web pages. A lot of the respondents did have web pages and less than half of the respondents are using social media. It was also found that the businesses do not make use of blog. According to the owner of Oban-Farm she wanted to use it, but didn't have the knowhow, others said they did not have any time. Nearly two thirds of the respondents make use of a personal network site. Again this was relevant in my interview with Mathew Drew, a digital

marketing consultant, that there was a need for information workshops on the know-how on the use of Digital media for the respective business owners and that Government should employ specialist people to assist in this regard.

In the second questionnaire most of the respondents were national tourists that came for a period of 3.3 days to visit the area mainly to experience nature. Most tourists came with family and friends and of them had access to social networks and this data did correspond with the first questionnaire.

Most of the employees that had personal social networks accessed them for limited time periods at work and a few of the businesses had social media policies. Only half of businesses are connected to clients, employees are however connected to the business social network page. There is room to improve this market and in the second questionnaire 66% of tourists is part of social networks and that they are willing to receive information on the region via social networks, tourism businesses in the area have not been able to make any entrance in this market. This fact suggests that the businesses use the medium in an inappropriate way and need knowledge to develop client based products.

4.2.2. Social network applications from a marketing and communication tool.

In questionnaire 1 section B, over 50% of the clients formed part of the businesses social network, though it was clear by looking at questionnaire 2, that they had no idea how to attract customers through the medium. In section B, there were several questions regarding marketing and most of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that is a great marketing tool, though a lot of these respondents believed that they needed more knowledge to compile and use a social media site to the benefit of their tourism businesses. The following was found in graph 24: 34.55% strongly agree, 30.91% agree, 25.45% disagree and 9.09% strongly disagree.

This outcome corresponds with the previous findings that respondents do believe it is beneficial to use social media, but they indicated that they lack the knowledge. The majority of businesses agreed that social networks can inform customers of special offers.

Again we look at section B and we see that there is a gap in understanding the working of digital media. The respondents are aware that it is beneficial for marketing and business development, but they do not have the knowledge to exploit it for their own businesses.

There was a lot of room to inform the small tourism businesses on how to use digital media efficiently so that they can tap into new markets. Respondents agreed that a social media site needs to be user friendly. This is one of the fundamentals of any digital media site.

There are a lot of insecurities regarding the knowledge to use and develop a social networking site and we need to address this issue. During my interview with the digital marketing consultant Matthew Drew it was quite evident that he also realised that it is an area that needs to be addressed. Mathew's company, One Stop, are the consultants that work with tourism development and marketing on the N3- gateway which has about 1300 stakeholders and some these stakeholders are associations like Maloti Drakensberg, Clarens Tourism Forum and Van Reenen Swinburne Association that have their own members. Matthew's view is: 'Education and Awareness Campaigns or Workshops, on what it constitutes and how much it cost to develop a tourism website for a small provider will be the answer. This will include the basic fundamentals of social media. The marketing strategy of the N3 gateway programme is looking at such workshops for its members.'

It is recommended that Government and Private sector sit around a table to develop a learning framework for tourism businesses, and to require the knowledge to allocate new markets through digital media. Though a lot of businesses were connected to social media and had websites these two digital mediums were not linked to each other. These should be short workshops given to these tourist providers on knowledge-based programmes how to use digital media efficiently. Tourism businesses also need to understand the cost implications so that they can have access to professional help. There should also be baseline guidelines in what the tourist as clients want in these digital media advertisements and products. National Tourism Associations can develop digital programmes to guide people through using digital media appropriately.

4.2.3. Perceptions of social network sites by the businesses.

It was quite clear that people believe that using social media is time consuming, but is not a waste of time. The statement that you sign away your privacy had very balanced answers and it is evident that some people are quite insecure and others not at all. There

were one specific respondent from The Towerpot in Harrismith, that commented that she does not use social media, because she values her privacy.

Looking at the data on safety, the issue of safety does have some impact on the use or no use of social media. Some businesses felt social media could be dangerous, but if people use it responsibly it can reduce the risk. Government can issue guidelines regarding a best practice for businesses to use social networks for marketing and business development.

The use of marketing plans and business strategy are realised by the respondents. They just need to be informed to understand the specifics of digital marketing. 80% of businesses realised that they need input from their clients to develop a social network site for their business. Again you can see that the respondents do understand the basic elements of marketing. It is only the knowledge on the effective use of digital marketing which is a shortcoming.

4.2.4. E- learning through social media

It is evident that the majority of the respondents feel that it will be beneficial to learn more about business principals via social media. Majority of respondents believe that social networks can be utilised to learn more about the tourism industry. This shows there are a lot of opportunities for e-learning channels in the small tourism industry.

4.2.5. Social network site application within an innovative and creative tourism industry.

70% of businesses indicated that they know they can inform customers on events via social networks. Event management is a growing trend especially in Clarens, which realised the opportunity and started to develop special weekends for certain niche markets. Other towns like Ficksburg with the Cherry Festival and Fouriesburg with the annual Asparagus Festival can benefit a lot by using social media to develop markets and advertise special events. It would be beneficial to use specific applications on events management for example CroudBooster or Conversocial.

Businesses need to compile the social network specifics of their immediate clients on their website and link it to social media networks like Facebook and Twitter. Within the knowledge-based seminars there can be references on software applications for specific information products.

4.2.6. The accessibility of social network technologies to SME's and their clients.

In the second and first questionnaire it seems technologically advanced phones are not used by clients that much. These new phones will gradually take over and this will change digital marketing outputs.

65% of businesses believe social networks improve communication between the business and clients. This does not correspond with the amount of businesses that are connected to social media and it seems there is a knowledge gap on the know-how and that respondents believe it can be time consuming or a security threat. None of the respondents makes use of blogs.

4.2.7. The skill and capacity to facilitate social network sites.

There are a lot of insecurities regarding the knowledge to use and develop a social networking site and we need to address this issue. Education and awareness campaigns on what it constitutes and how much it cost to develop a tourism website for a small provider will be the answer to these insecurities. This will include the basic fundamentals of social media.

4.2.8. The impact social media have in the Eastern Free State tourism.

At this moment the impact of social media is very small if you look at the tourist view. This does not mean this has to remain the same. The tourist does have an affinity to receive specific information via social media. It is also important to see that though the operators do understand that social media can be a viable tool they do not seem to understand how to use it properly. There are opportunities for digital media marketers and for e-learning systems to rectify these problems.

4.3. FUTURE RESEARCH

The study can be repeated and refined further in future research and it will be a probable exercise to do more client-need based analysis. The study of how to develop appropriate information material on the development of digital media for tourism businesses and to do product development to enhance market accessibility will also benefit the industry.

4.3.1. Limitations

Firstly, there was very limited time to complete the study and the sample size of businesses and tourists need to be larger, it was however supplemented with qualitative research and a mix of businesses and their clients' responses to get a better indication of the subject researched.

Secondly, there is limited literature available on tourism and social media.

Thirdly, the sample was widely spread out and it is both expensive and time-consuming to gather data in vast non-urban areas.

Fourthly, literature based research and data collection does not conclude whether small business improves on their sustainability or sales through social networks. There has to be implementations and follow-up research on the effect the social network presented to the businesses.

Finally, it is difficult to determine customer loyalty after retaining customers from social media and communication efforts thereafter.

4.4. SUMMARY

The literature review conducted in Chapter 2 revealed that there had been on-going in-depth studies on various independent elements that are requirements for the development of social networking sites in the tourism business.

The literature review emphasised the development of social media products and services in the innovative world and how businesses can use the digital technologies to their own advantage.

The study indicated unique challenges for the tourism industry in the use of digital media, such as social networks:

- Tourism businesses can provide better digital marketing material;
- Government and private sector need to find a framework on how to develop new markets through digital marketing;
- There need to be a structured development regarding the education of efficient use on social media and other digital marketing products;
- Small businesses need to educate themselves on the use of digital media to capture new markets and develop new products to have better information readily available that is customer driven;
- They can have unique products and services for identified gaps in the market;
- Have the potential to tap into new markets;
- They can use the medium to do market research; and
- They can utilise social media to become better communicators to their customers, employees and suppliers.

This chapter, being the final chapter, drew conclusions, made recommendations and identified areas of future research.

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ANNEXURE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Questionnaire on the utilisation of Social Media and Networks in the tourism destination of the Eastern Free State.

Thank you for taking time to compile this questionnaire, it is greatly appreciated. The questionnaire forms part of a Master's in Business Administration of the candidate A.C. Wessels at the Potchefstroom Business School of the University of North West. Specific business information will be confidential. The general statistical outcomes, will be shared with the tourism businesses that compiled this questionnaire and the Free State Government's tourism office, to ensure that Free State Government have the information to assist in developing Eastern Free State as a prime tourism destination. The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to compile.

Social media and networking sites: Social media includes web- and mobile-based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals (Facebook & Twitter etc.)

Blogging: A blog (a portmanteau of the term web log) is a discussion or information site published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete entries ("posts")

HITS: Hyperlink-Induced Topic Search (HITS) (also known as hubs and authorities) is a link analysis algorithm that rates Web pages, developed by Jon Kleinberg.

Website: A dynamically generated web page would recall various bits of information from a database and put them together in a pre-defined format to present the reader.

Links: Sites connected to each other.

SECTION A

Personal information

1.1 Gender

M	F
---	---

1.2 Age

1.3 First Language

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Sotho	3
Zulu	4
Other	5

1.4 Level of Education

Grade 10	1
Grade 12	2
Diploma	3
Degree	4
Other	5

SECTION B

Practical experience and business information

2.1 Are you the manager or owner of the business?

1.	Owner	2.	Owner- manager	3.	manager
----	-------	----	----------------	----	---------

2.2 Years' experience in business.

1)Less than 1 year	2) 1-3 years	2) 4-6 years	4) 7-8 years	5)More than 9 Years
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2.3 Years' experience in marketing.

1)Less than 1 year	2) 1-3 years	2) 4-6 years	4) 7-8 years	5)More than 9 Years
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2.4 Years the business exists.

1)Less than 1 year	2) 1-3 years	2) 4-6 years	4) 7-8 years	5)More than 9 Years
--------------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	---------------------

2.5 Currently part of a tourism association?

(I.e. Maloti tourism route)

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes please specify:

2.6 Is the business using social networks?

(Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Friendster etc.)

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please specify:

If no, why not?

2.7 Do the company have a social network sit/page?

a) Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Friendster etc.)

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, please supply names:

If no, why not?

b) Website

Yes	No
-----	----

c) Blogging site

Yes	No
-----	----

2.8 Did an employee or the owner design the:

a) Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)

Yes	No
-----	----

B) Website

Yes	No
-----	----

c) Blogging site

Yes	No
-----	----

2.9 Are the social networking sites linked to the business's website?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.10 Is your phone connected to the businesses social networking sites?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.11 Do you have a personal social network site?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.12 Do you use your personal social network site at work?

Yes	No
-----	----

b. If yes please specify how many hours per day?

1) Less than 1 hour	2) 1-3 years	2) 4-6 years	4) 7-8 years	5) More than 9 hours
---------------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	----------------------

If no, why not?

2.13 Are your clients connected to the businesses social networking sites?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.14 Are your employees connected to the businesses social networking site?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.15 Do your company have a policy for social networking use?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.16 are your suppliers linked to your social networking sites

Yes	No
-----	----

2.17 How many social networking hits does the business social network site receive per month?

Less than 500	500- 999	1 000-4 999	5 000- 9 999	More than 10 000
---------------	----------	-------------	--------------	------------------

Section c

Element ratings

<div style="text-align: center; background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 10px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">ITEM</div>	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
3.1 A social network site improves business communication.	1	2	3	4
3.2 Social networks inform can be utilised to inform customers of special offers.	1	2	3	4
3.3 Social network sites allow a tourism business to communicate with new customers.	1	2	3	4
3.4 Social network sites help a tourism business to stay in touch with old customers.	1	2	3	4
3.5 Social networks are an easy way to communicate with suppliers.	1	2	3	4
3.6 Social networks can inform customers of upcoming events.	1	2	3	4
3.7 You need a special knowledge to start a social network site for your tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.8 I can compile a social network site for my tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.9 I can ask a friend to help me compile a social network site for my business.	1	2	3	4
3.10 I can contact a professional to compile a social network for my tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.11 Planning forms the basic building blocks to develop a social network site for your tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.12 To develop a social network site for your tourism business you need input from your clients.	1	2	3	4
3.13 It is easy to use a social networking site?	1	2	3	4
3.14				

A Tourism business needs to be informed to use a social network site.				
3.15 A tourism business can develop the business by making use of social networking platforms.	1	2	3	4
3.16 Social networking is very time consuming.	1	2	3	4
3.17 There are no knowledge restrictions to use a social network site.	1	2	3	4
3.18 You need knowledge to use social networks efficiently for your tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.19 Your social networking site needs to be user friendly.	1	2	3	4
3.20 I have the knowledge to use any social networking site to its full potential.	1	2	3	4
3.21 Tourism businesses need additional training to utilise social networking for their own businesses.	1	2	3	4
3.22 Information on the use of social networking for tourism businesses is readily available.	1	2	3	4
3.23 I believe business waste their time by using social networking sites for their business.	1	2	3	4
3.24 The Government tourism office encourages tourism businesses to utilise social network.	1	2	3	4
3.25 Government needs to assist tourism businesses to develop social networking sites.	1	2	3	4
3.26 It is unsafe to use social networking sites for your tourism business.	1	2	3	4
3.27 You sign your privacy rights away the moment you open a social network site.	1	2	3	4
3.28 It is unethical to boost your own business online.	1	2	3	4
3.29 Tourism businesses need to use their marketing strategy to develop a social networking .site.	1	2	3	4
3.30 A social networking site can be used to:				
a) To sell products.	1	2	3	4
b) Promote tourism destinations.	1	2	3	4
c) Bring you in contact with possible customers.	1	2	3	4
d) Market your ideas	1	2	3	4
3.31 A social network can be utilising to share new business ideas.	1	2	3	4
3.32 A social networking site can be used to learn more about the tourism industry.	1	2	3	4
3.33 A social network can supply clients with geographical information (i.e. Maps)	1	2	3	4
3.34 Marketing on social media is different than other media.	1	2	3	4
3.35	1	2	3	4

Marketing with social media is cheaper.				
3.36. Tourism businesses should encourage:				
a) Their suppliers to use social media.	1	2	3	4
b) Their customers to use social media.	1	2	3	4
c) Their employees to use social media.	1	2	3	4
3.37. Tourism business receives:	1	2	3	4
a) A lot of new clientele through social networking.	1	2	3	4
b) New information to develop their business.	1	2	3	4
3.38 There are a lot of e- learning opportunities for tourism businesses on social media sites.	1	2	3	4
3.39 It would be beneficial for a tourism business to learn more about business principals via social networking sites.	1	2	3	4
3.40 Tourism businesses can utilise marketing information that is found on social networking sites.	1	2	3	4
3.41 I am of opinion that it is a waste of time to have a social network site for your business.	1	2	3	4
3.42. I do not think it is wrong to use your own social network site in working hours.	1	2	3	4
3.43 I believe people who use social networking sites for their business have too much time.	1	2	3	4
3.44 I use my social network site to communicate with fellow employees.	1	2	3	4
3.45 Social networking can be used to share new ideas.	1	2	3	4
3.46 It is not ethical to go on social networking sites during working hours.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your participation.

ANNEXURE 2: QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Questionnaire on the utilisation of Social Media and Networks in the tourism destination of the Eastern Free State.

SECTION A

Personal information

1.1 Gender

Male
Female

1.2 Age

--

1.3 Reason for visiting

To experience nature	1
Cultural experience	2
To visit	3
Business trip	4
Other	5

1.4 Are you travelling?

Alone	1
With friends	2
With family	3
With family & Friends	4
Other	5

1.5 Which Tourism category?

1. International	2. National	3. Local Free State
------------------	-------------	---------------------

SECTION B

2.1 How did you hear about the Eastern Free State?

Website	1
Social network (Facebook etc.)	2
SMS	3
Word of mouth	4
Other	5

2.2 Is it your first time in the Eastern Free State?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.3 Would you visit the Eastern Free State again?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.4 How many days are you visiting?

1-5 days
6-10 days
3 weeks
More than a month

NB. (If the answer to the following question 2.5 is yes, please compile the rest of section B)

2.5 Do you belong to a social network?

(Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Friendster etc.)

Yes	No
-----	----

Facebook	Whatsapp
BBM	Friendster

2.6 Would you enjoy extra information on the region via social media?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.7 Would you enjoy reading more about the region on a Blog?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.8 Do you use a smart phone that is linked to social media sites?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.9 Which is your preferential medium to receive information?

Website	1
Social network (Facebook etc.)	2
Pamphlets	3
From family & Friends	4
Other	5

2.10 Would you like to receive information about special events in the region?

Yes	No
-----	----

2.11 Would you like to receive information on restaurant specials of the region?

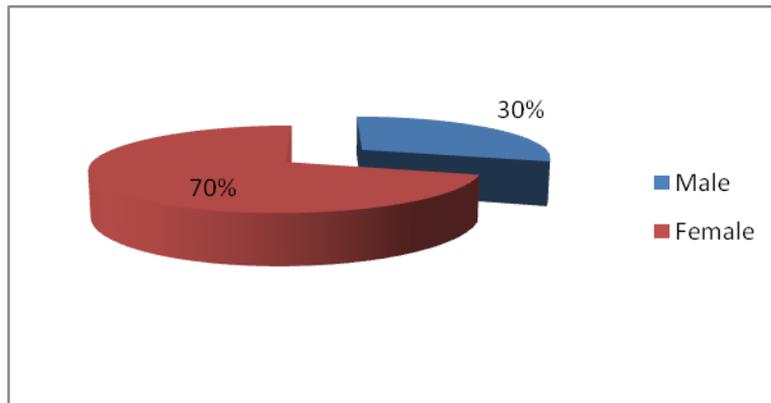
Yes	No
-----	----

2.12 Would you like to receive information on special accommodation packages of the region?

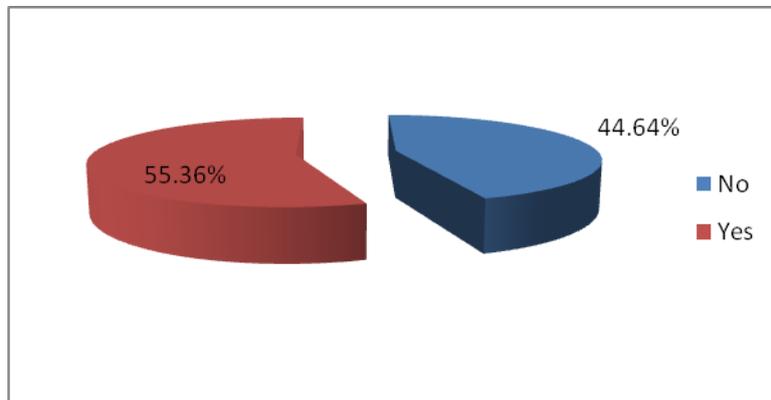
Yes	No
-----	----

Thank you for participating.

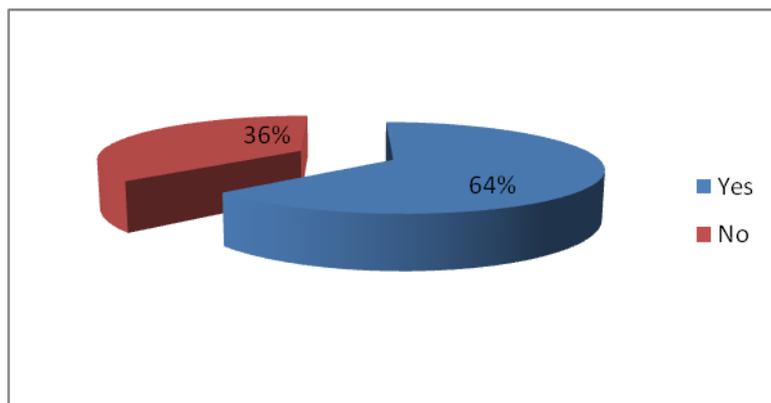
ANNEXURE 3: STATISTICAL CALCULATIONS AND TABULATIONS



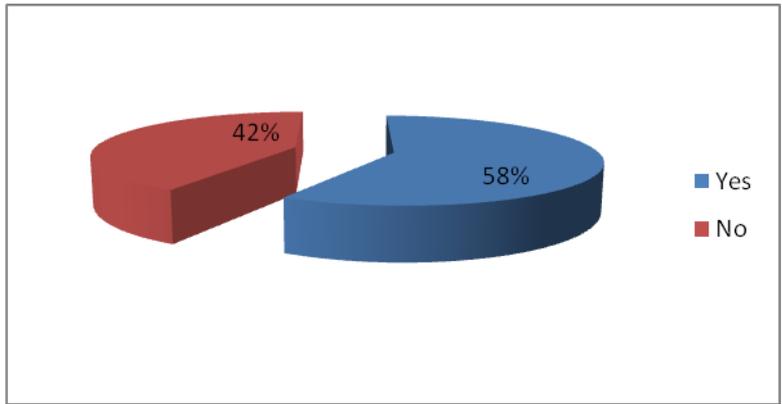
Sex of tourists (Question 1.1 of questionnaire 2)



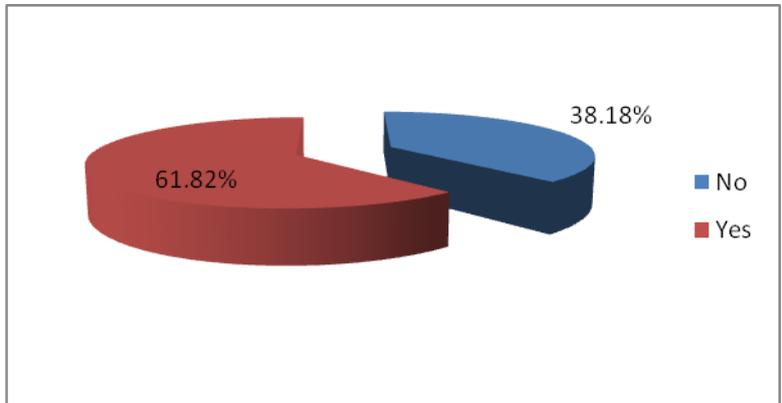
Tourism businesses that make use of social networks (Question 2.6 of questionnaire 1)



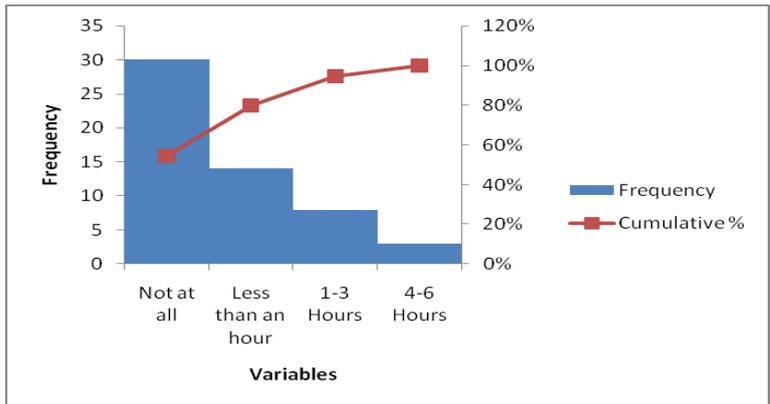
Number of respondents that make use of a professional in designing the social network page (Question 2.8a of the questionnaire)



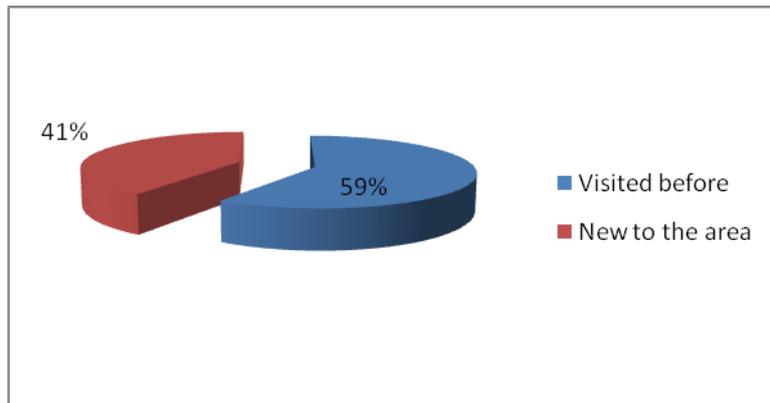
Number of respondents that make use of a professional in designing their web page (Question 2.8b of the questionnaire)



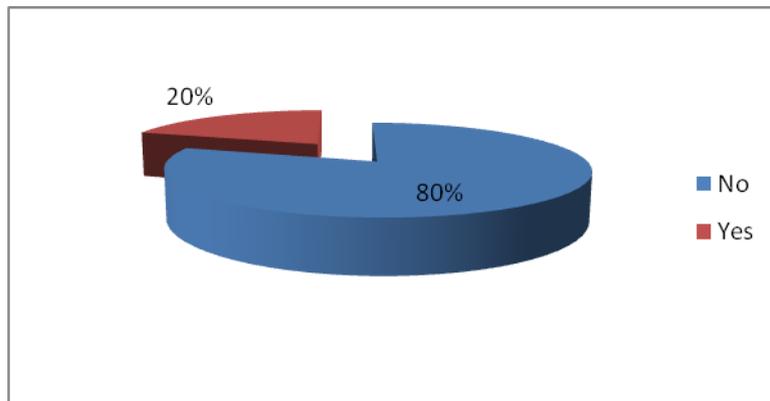
Number of businesses that make use of a personal network site (Question 2.11 of questionnaire 1)



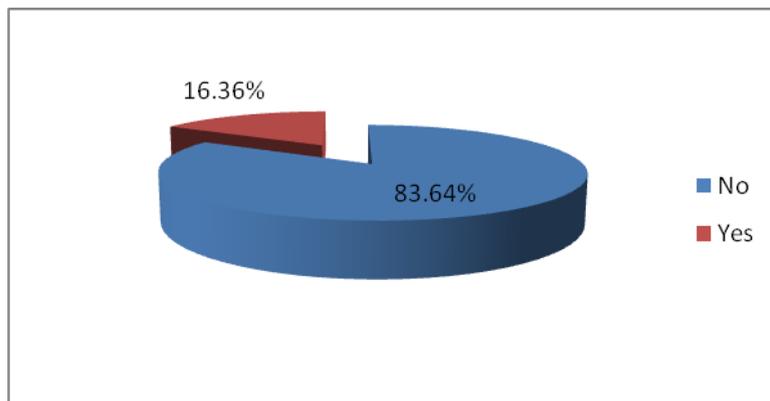
Time businesses spend on social networks at work (Question 2.12 of questionnaire 1)



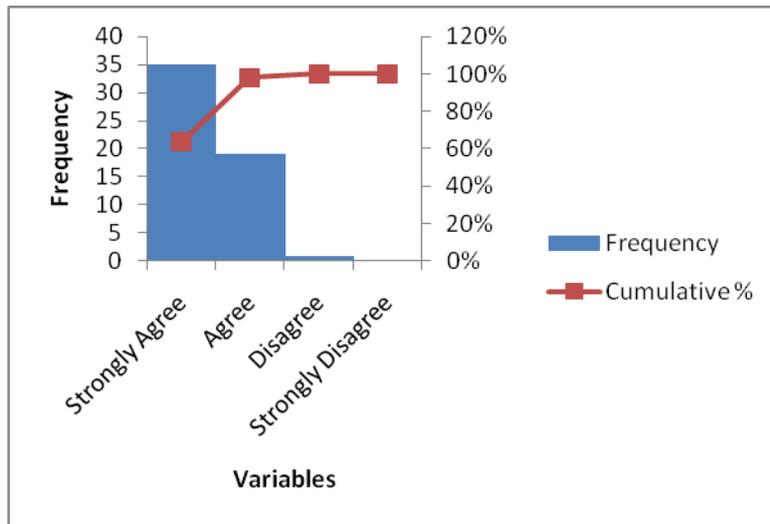
New and existing tourists (Question 2.2 of questionnaire 2)



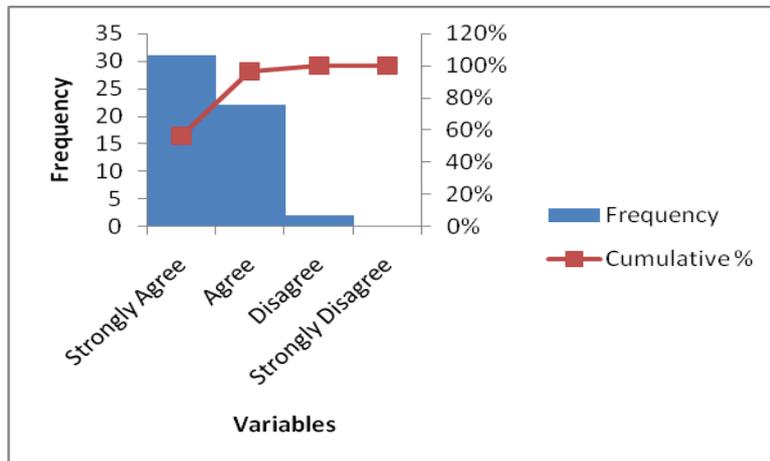
Number of respondents who have a SNS policy at their tourism business (Question 2.15 of questionnaire 1)



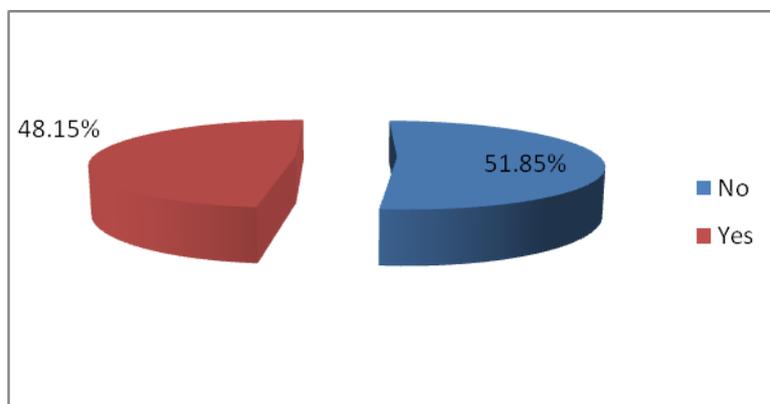
Number of respondents who have suppliers linked to the SNS (Question 2.16 of questionnaire 1)



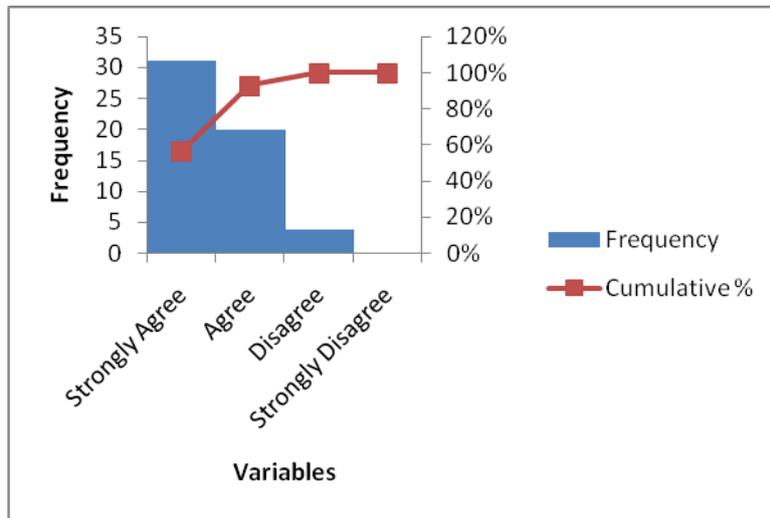
Respondents who feel that a social network site improves their business communication (Question 3.1 of questionnaire 1)



Number of Respondents who feel that social network sites allow a tourism business to communicate with new customers (Question 3.3 of questionnaire 1)

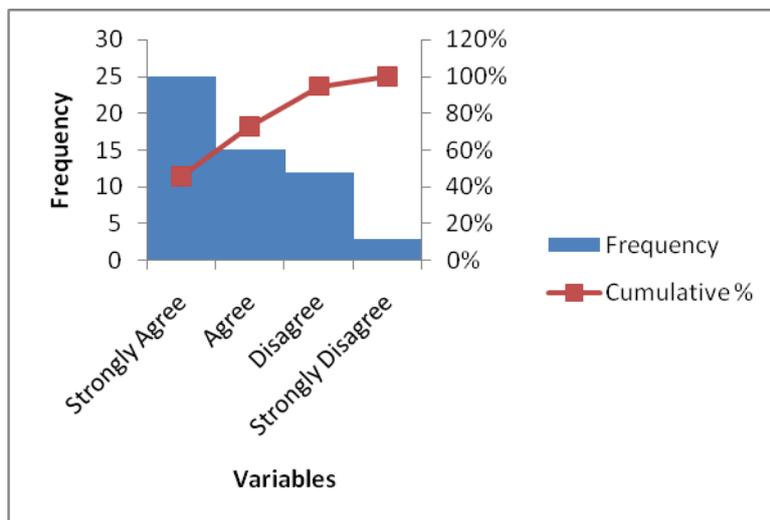


Tourists that can access SNS sites on their cell phones (Question 2.7 of questionnaire2)



Number of Respondents who feel that social network sites help a tourism business to stay in touch with regular customers (Question 3.4 of the questionnaire)

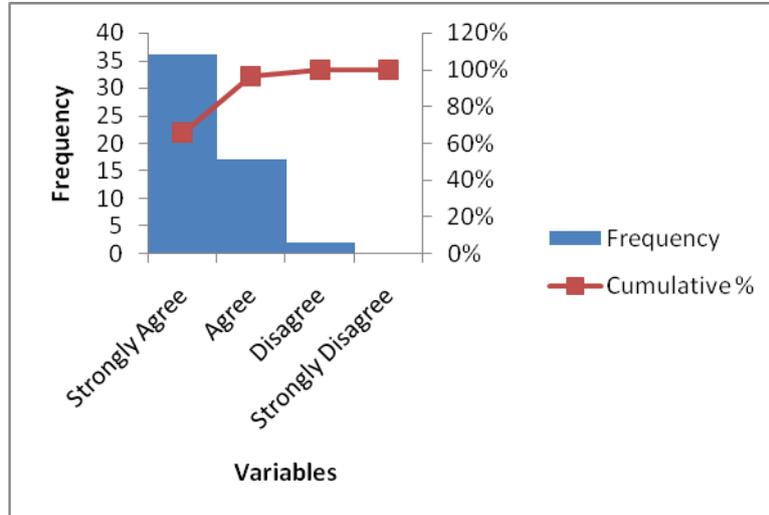
Social networks are an easy way to communicate with suppliers (3.5)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	25	45.45%	45.45%
Agree	15	27.27%	72.73%
Disagree	12	21.82%	94.55%
Strongly Disagree	3	5.45%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that social networks are an easy way to communicate with suppliers (Question 3.5 of the questionnaire)

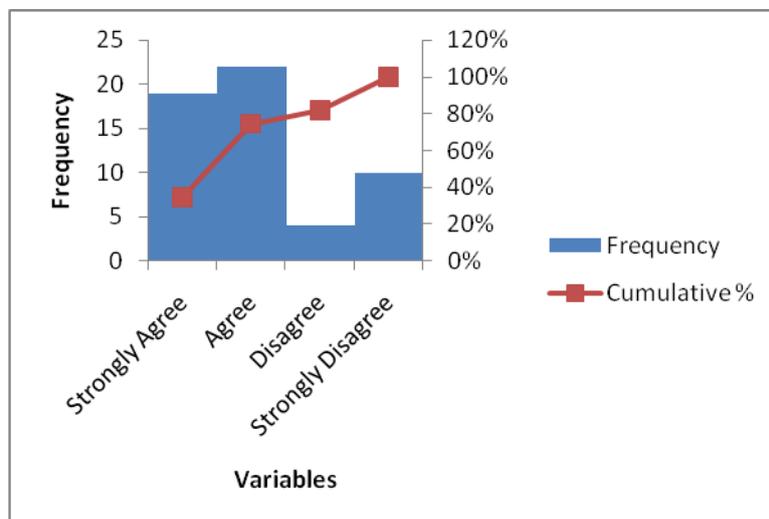
Social networks can inform customers of upcoming events (3.6)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %

Strongly Agree	36	65.45%	65.45%
Agree	17	30.91%	96.36%
Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%	100.00%



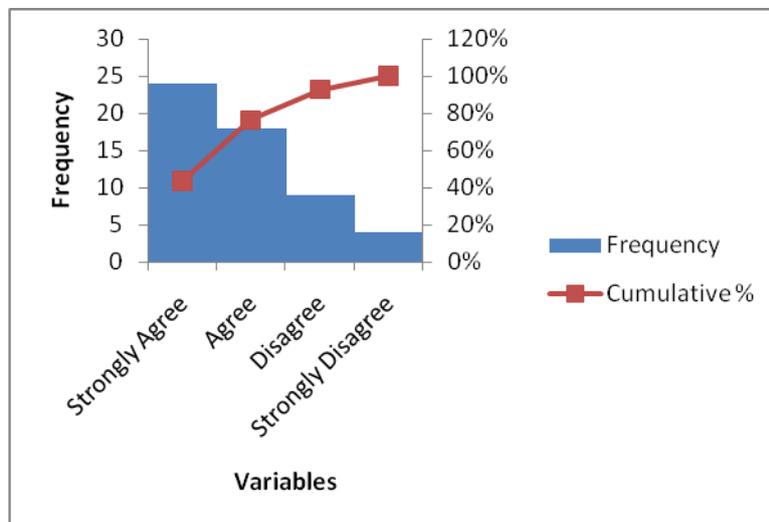
Number of Respondents who feel that social networks can inform customers of upcoming events (Question 3.6 of the questionnaire)

I can compile a social network site for my tourism business (3.8)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	19	34.55%	34.55%
Agree	22	40.00%	74.55%
Disagree	4	7.27%	81.82%
Strongly Disagree	10	18.18%	100.00%



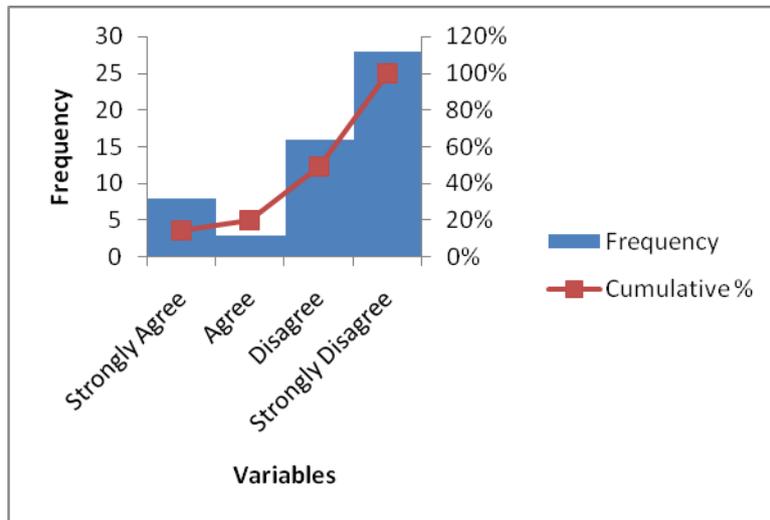
Number of Respondents who feel that can compile a social network site for their tourism business (Question 3.8 of the questionnaire)

I can contact a professional to compile a social network for my tourism business (3.10)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	24	43.64%	43.64%
Agree	18	32.73%	76.36%
Disagree	9	16.36%	92.73%
Strongly Disagree	4	7.27%	100.00%



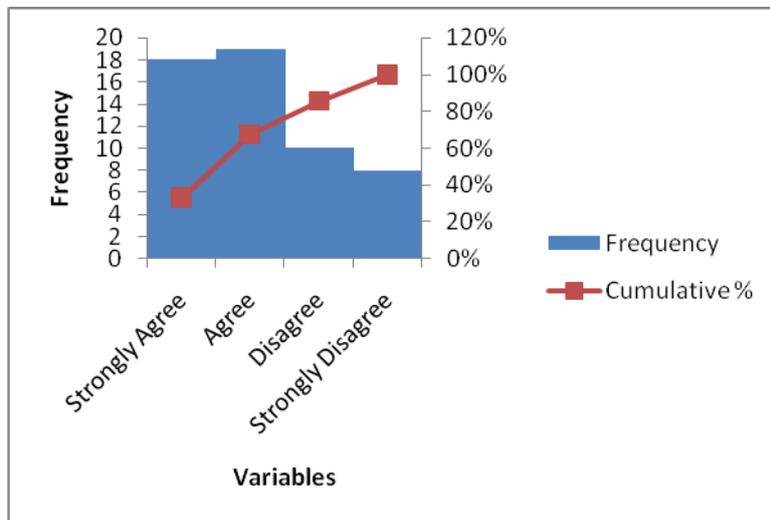
Number of Respondents that can contact a professional to compile a social network for their tourism business (Question 3.10 of the questionnaire)

A Tourism business needs to be informed on using a social network site (3.14)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	8	14.55%	14.55%
Agree	3	5.45%	20.00%
Disagree	16	29.09%	49.09%
Strongly Disagree	28	50.91%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that it a tourism business needs to be informed on using a social network site (Question 3.14 of the questionnaire)

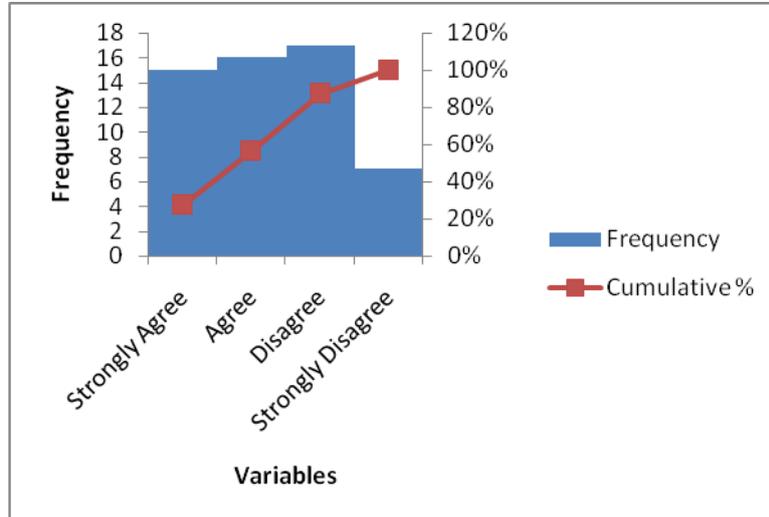
Social networking is very time consuming (3.16)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	18	32.73%	32.73%
Agree	19	34.55%	67.27%
Disagree	10	18.18%	85.45%
Strongly Disagree	8	14.55%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that social networking is very time-consuming (Question 3.16 of the questionnaire)

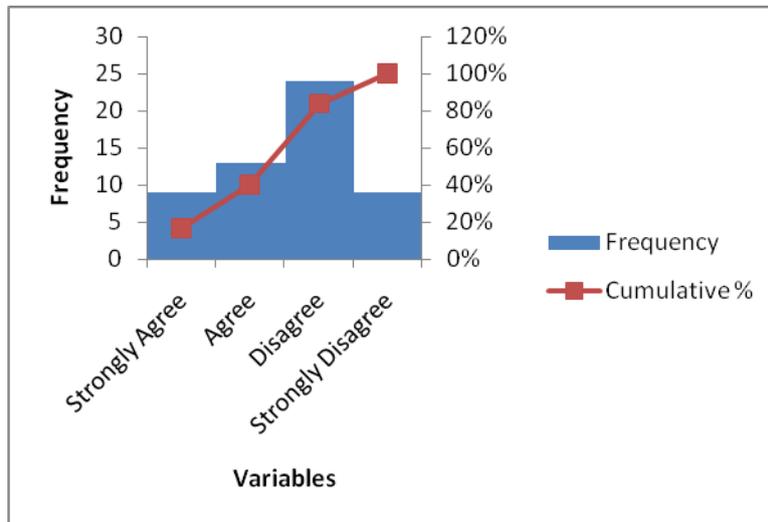
There are no knowledge restrictions to use a social network site (3.17)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %

Strongly Agree	15	27.27%	27.27%
Agree	16	29.09%	56.36%
Disagree	17	30.91%	87.27%
Strongly Disagree	7	12.73%	100.00%



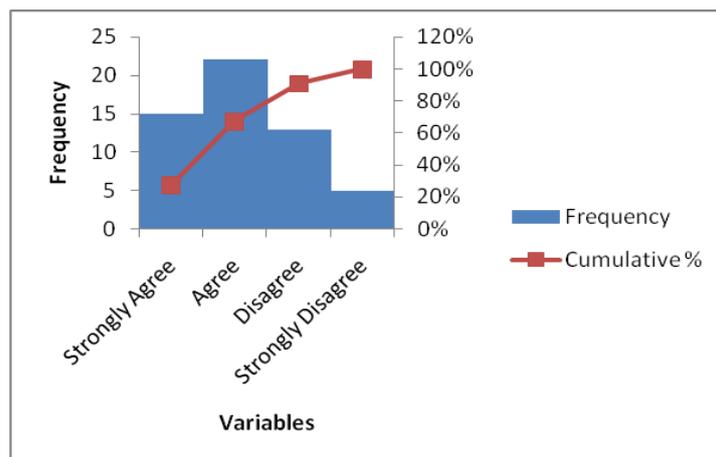
Number of Respondents who feel that there are no knowledge restrictions when using a social network site (Question 3.17 of the questionnaire)

You need knowledge to use social networks efficiently for your tourism business (3.18)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	9	16.36%	16.36%
Agree	13	23.64%	40.00%
Disagree	24	43.64%	83.64%
Strongly Disagree	9	16.36%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that a person needs knowledge to use social networks efficiently for a tourism business (Question 3.18 of the questionnaire)

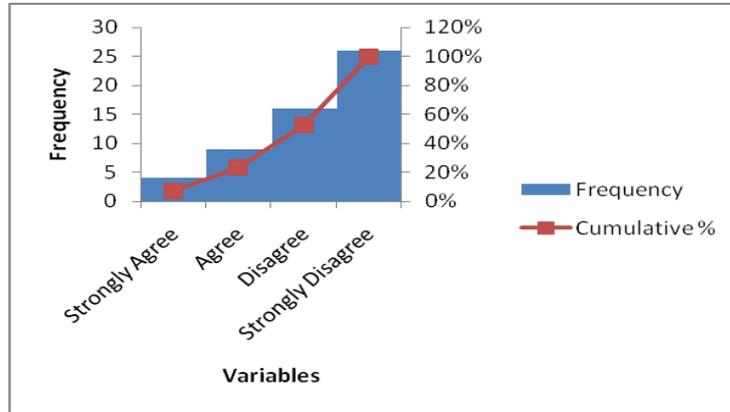
Information on the use of social networking for tourism businesses is readily available (3.22)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	15	27.27%	27.27%
Agree	22	40.00%	67.27%
Disagree	13	23.64%	90.91%
Strongly Disagree	5	9.09%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that information on using social networks for tourism businesses is readily available (Question 3.22 of the questionnaire)

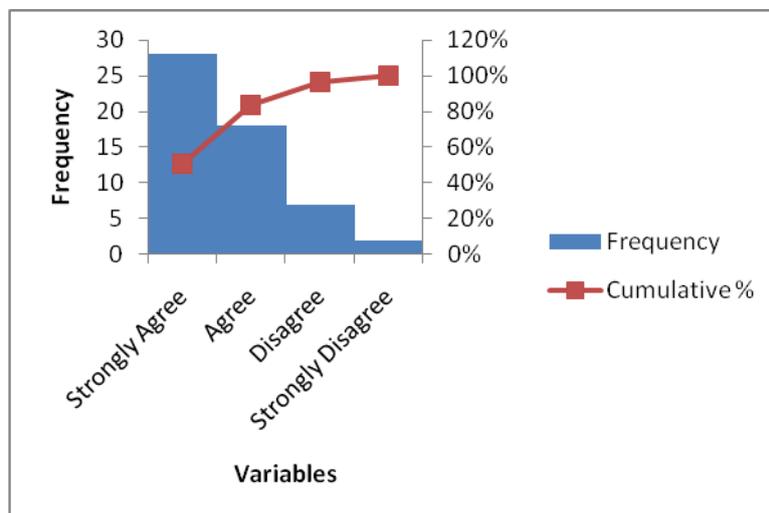
I believe business waste their time by using social networking sites for their business (3.23)	
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Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	4	7.27%	7.27%
Agree	9	16.36%	23.64%
Disagree	16	29.09%	52.73%
Strongly Disagree	26	47.27%	100.00%



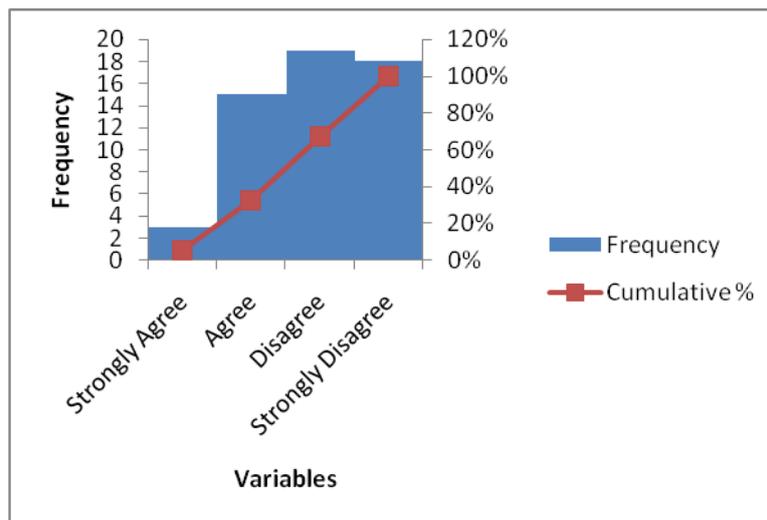
Graph 39: Number of Respondents who feel that using social networks for their tourism businesses are a waste of time (Question 3.23 of the questionnaire)

Government needs to assist tourism businesses to develop social networking sites (3.25)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	28	50.91%	50.91%
Agree	18	32.73%	83.64%
Disagree	7	12.73%	96.36%
Strongly Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%



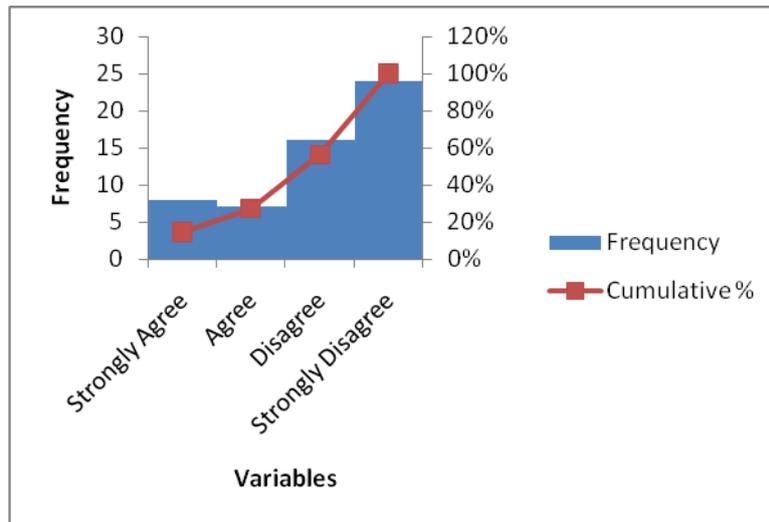
Number of Respondents who feel that the government tourism office needs to assist tourism businesses to create social network sites (Question 3.25 of the questionnaire)

It is unsafe to use social networking sites for your tourism business (3.26)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	3	5.45%	5.45%
Agree	15	27.27%	32.73%
Disagree	19	34.55%	67.27%
Strongly Disagree	18	32.73%	100.00%



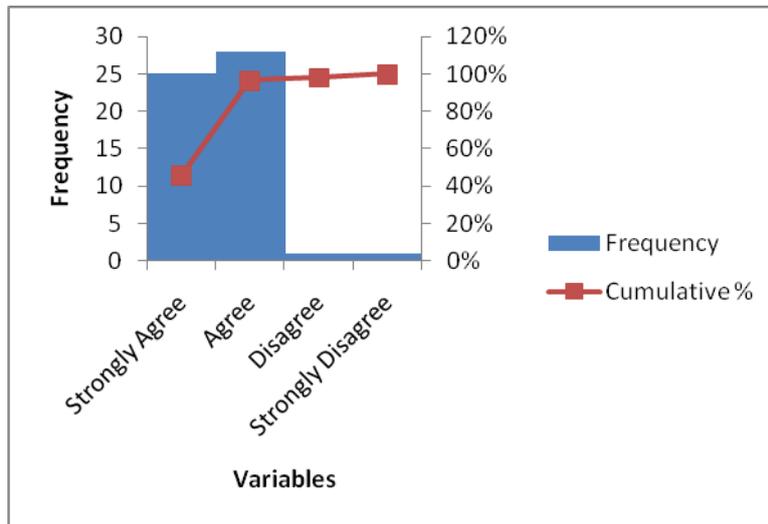
Number of Respondents who feel that it is unsafe to use social networks for their tourism business (Question 3.26 of the questionnaire)

It is unethical to boost your own business online (3.28)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	8	14.55%	14.55%
Agree	7	12.73%	27.27%
Disagree	16	29.09%	56.36%
Strongly Disagree	24	43.64%	100.00%



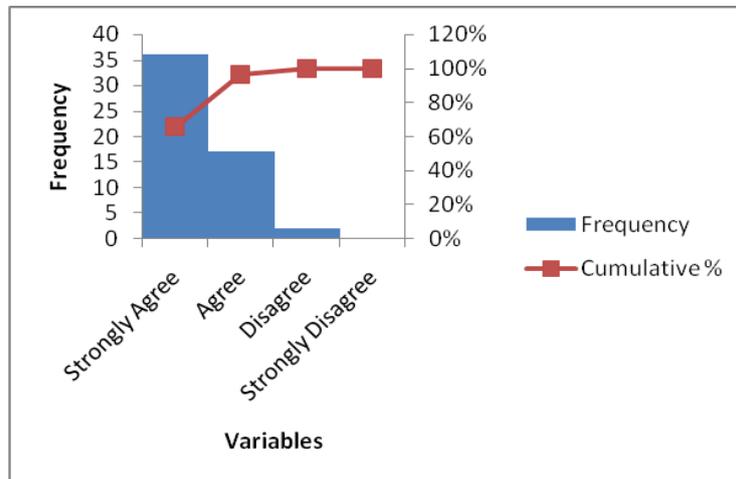
Number of Respondents who feel that it is unethical to boost your own business online
(Question 3.28 of the questionnaire)

Tourism businesses need to use their marketing strategy to develop a social networking site (3.29)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	25	45.45%	45.45%
Agree	28	50.91%	96.36%
Disagree	1	1.82%	98.18%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.82%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that tourism businesses need to use their marketing strategy to develop a social networking site (Question 3.29 of the questionnaire)

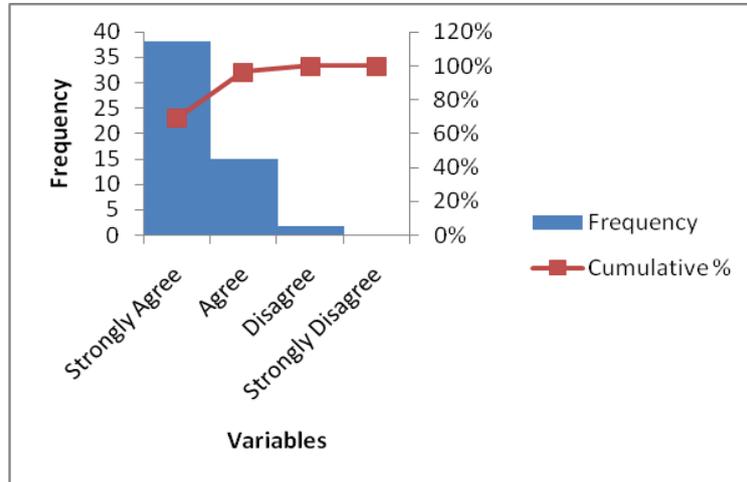
A social networking site can be used to sell products (3.30a)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	36	65.45%	65.45%
Agree	17	30.91%	96.36%
Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%	100.00%



Number of Respondents who feel that a social networking site can be used to sell products (Question 3.30a of the questionnaire)

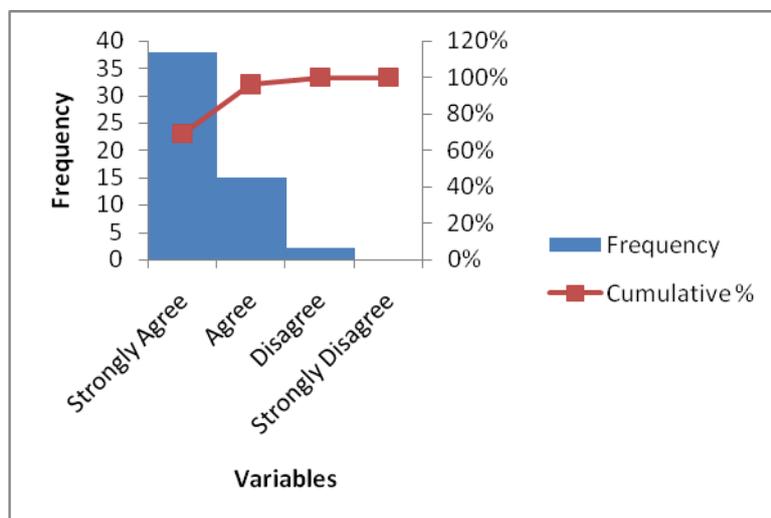
A social networking site can be used to promote tourism destinations (3.30b)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	38	69.09%	69.09%

Agree	15	27.27%	96.36%
Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%	100.00%



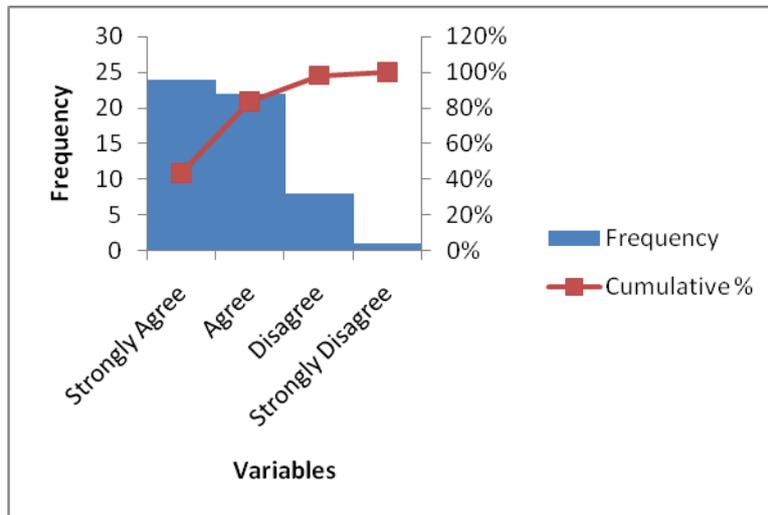
Number of Respondents who feel that a social networking site can be used to promote tourism destinations (Question 3.30b of the questionnaire)

A social networking site can be used to bring you in contact with possible customers (3.30c)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	38	69.09%	69.09%
Agree	15	27.27%	96.36%
Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%	100.00%



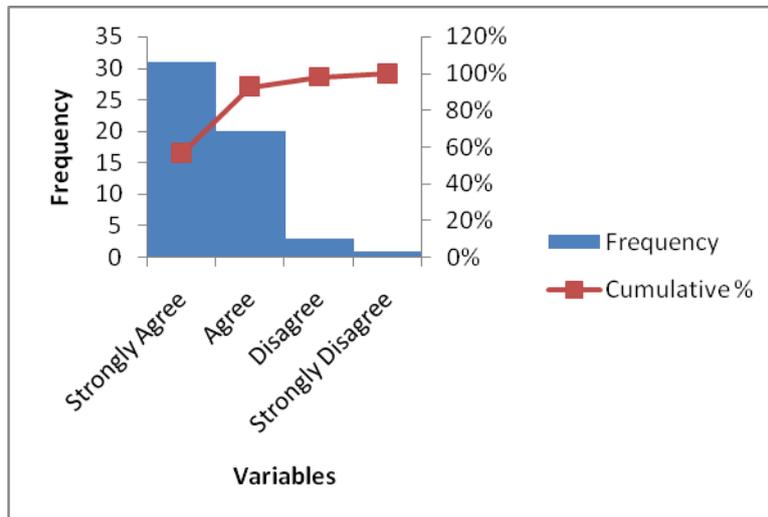
Number of Respondents who feel that a social networking site can be used to bring you in contact with possible new customers (Question 3.30c of the questionnaire)

A social network can be utilizing to share new business ideas (3.31)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	24	43.64%	43.64%
Agree	22	40.00%	83.64%
Disagree	8	14.55%	98.18%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.82%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that social networks can be utilized to share new business ideas (Question 3.31 of the questionnaire)

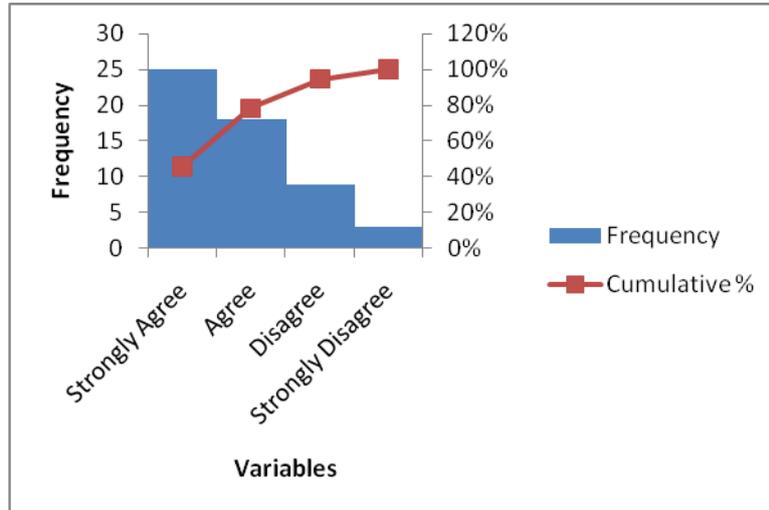
A social networking site can be used to learn more about the tourism industry (3.32)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	31	56.36%	56.36%
Agree	20	36.36%	92.73%
Disagree	3	5.45%	98.18%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.82%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that social network sites can be used to learn more about the tourism industry (Question 3.32 of the questionnaire)

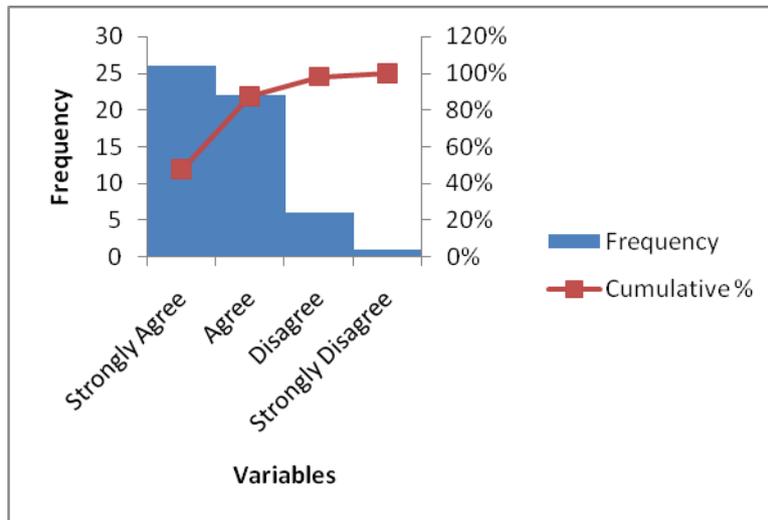
Tourism businesses should encourage their suppliers to use

social media (3.36a)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	25	45.45%	45.45%
Agree	18	32.73%	78.18%
Disagree	9	16.36%	94.55%
Strongly Disagree	3	5.45%	100.00%



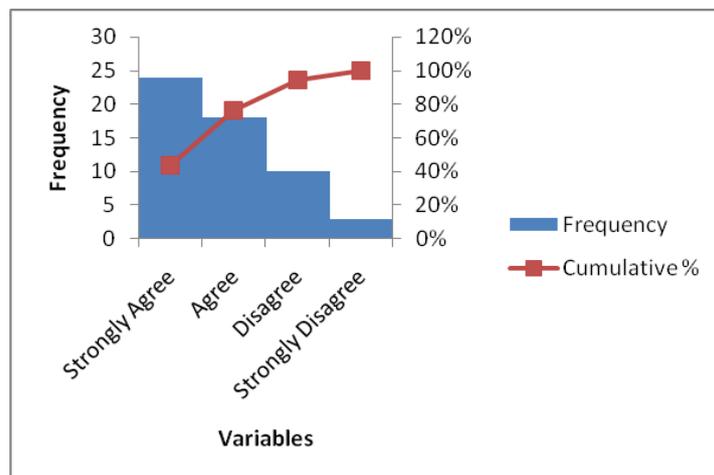
Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses should encourage their suppliers to use social media (Question 3.36a of the questionnaire)

Tourism businesses should encourage their customers to use social media (3.36b)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	26	47.27%	47.27%
Agree	22	40.00%	87.27%
Disagree	6	10.91%	98.18%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.82%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses should encourage their customers to use social media (Question 3.36b of the questionnaire)

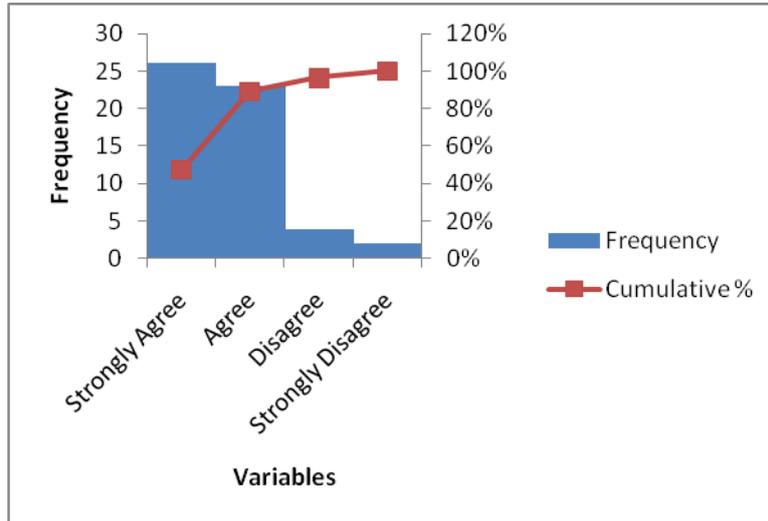
Tourism businesses should encourage their employees to use social media (3.36c)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	24	43.64%	43.64%
Agree	18	32.73%	76.36%
Disagree	10	18.18%	94.55%
Strongly Disagree	3	5.45%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses should encourage their employees to use social media (Question 3.36c of the questionnaire)

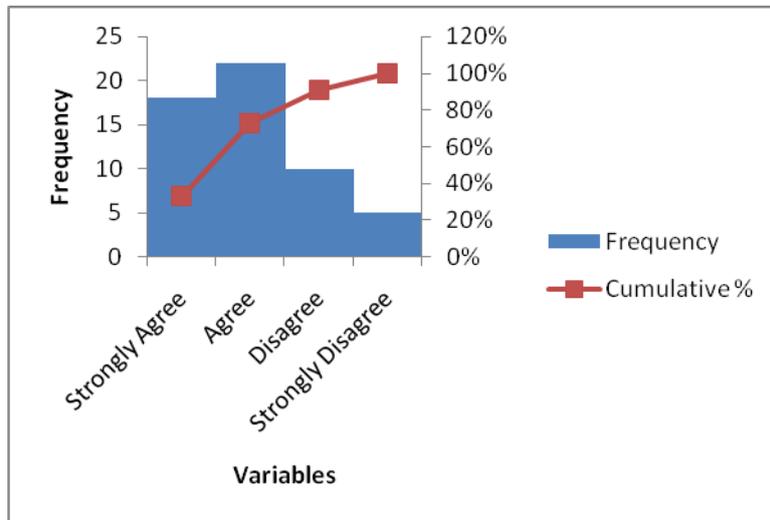
Tourism business receives new information for business

development with SNSs (3.37b)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	26	47.27%	47.27%
Agree	23	41.82%	89.09%
Disagree	4	7.27%	96.36%
Strongly Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%



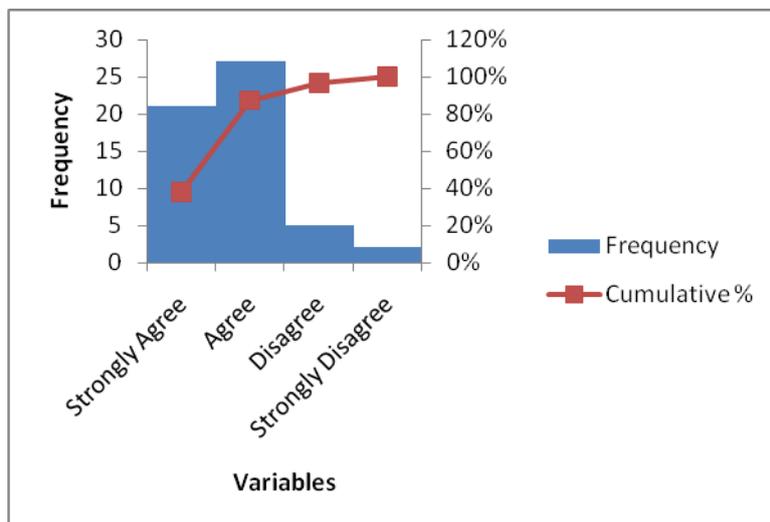
Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses receive new information for business development with SNSs (Question 3.37b of the questionnaire)

There are a lot of e-learning opportunities for tourism businesses on social media sites (3.38)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	18	32.73%	32.73%
Agree	22	40.00%	72.73%
Disagree	10	18.18%	90.91%
Strongly Disagree	5	9.09%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that there are a lot of e-learning opportunities for tourism businesses on social media sites (Question 3.38 of the questionnaire)

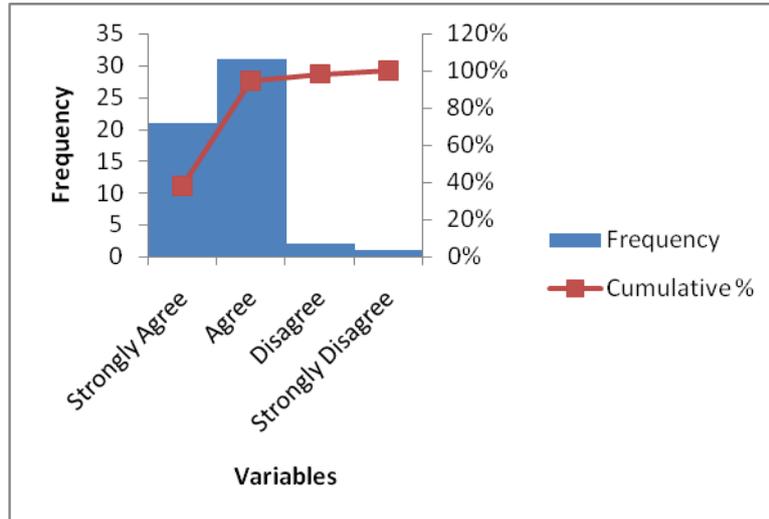
It would be beneficial for a tourism business to learn more about business principals via social networking sites (3.39)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	21	38.18%	38.18%
Agree	27	49.09%	87.27%
Disagree	5	9.09%	96.36%
Strongly Disagree	2	3.64%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that it would be beneficial for a tourism business to learn more about business principals via social networking sites (Question 3.39 of the questionnaire)

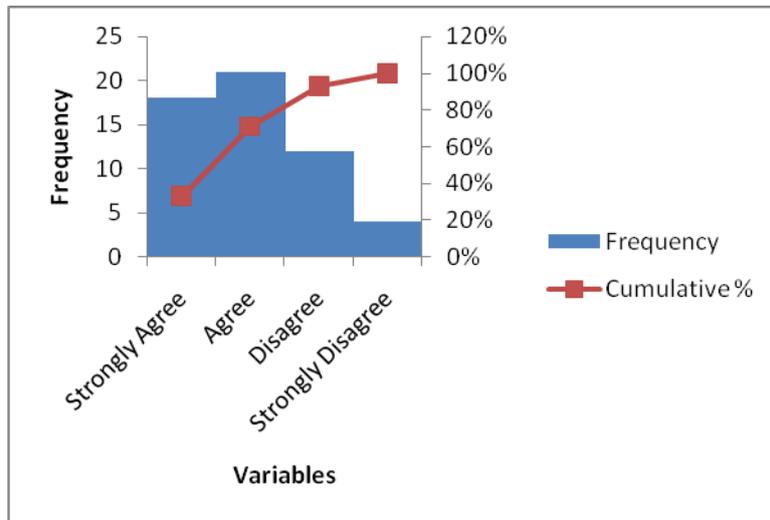
Tourism businesses can utilize marketing information that is

found on social networking sites (3.40)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	21	38.18%	38.18%
Agree	31	56.36%	94.55%
Disagree	2	3.64%	98.18%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.82%	100.00%



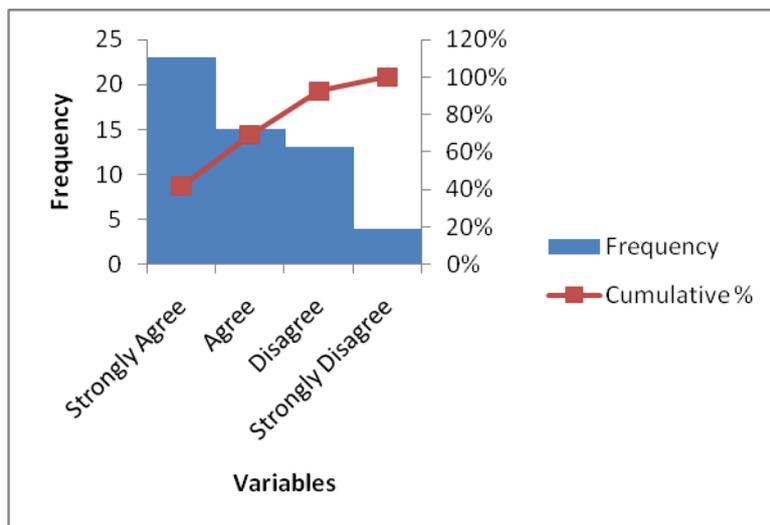
Number of respondents who feel that tourism businesses can utilize marketing information that is found on social networking sites (Question 3.40 of the questionnaire)

I believe people who use social networking sites for their business have too much time (3.43)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	18	32.73%	32.73%
Agree	21	38.18%	70.91%
Disagree	12	21.82%	92.73%
Strongly Disagree	4	7.27%	100.00%



Number of respondents who believe people who use social networking sites for their business have too much time (Question 3.43 of the questionnaire)

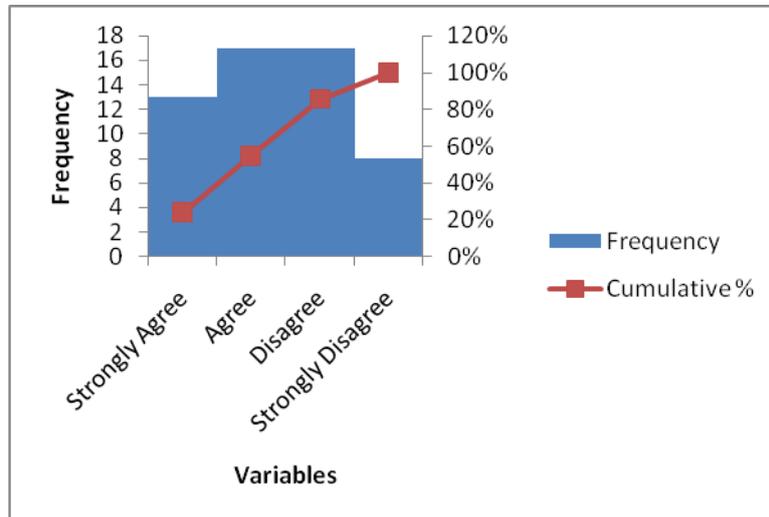
I use my social network site to communicate with fellow employees (3.44)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	23	41.82%	41.82%
Agree	15	27.27%	69.09%
Disagree	13	23.64%	92.73%
Strongly Disagree	4	7.27%	100.00%



Number of respondents who use their social network site to communicate with fellow employees (Question 3.44 of the questionnaire)

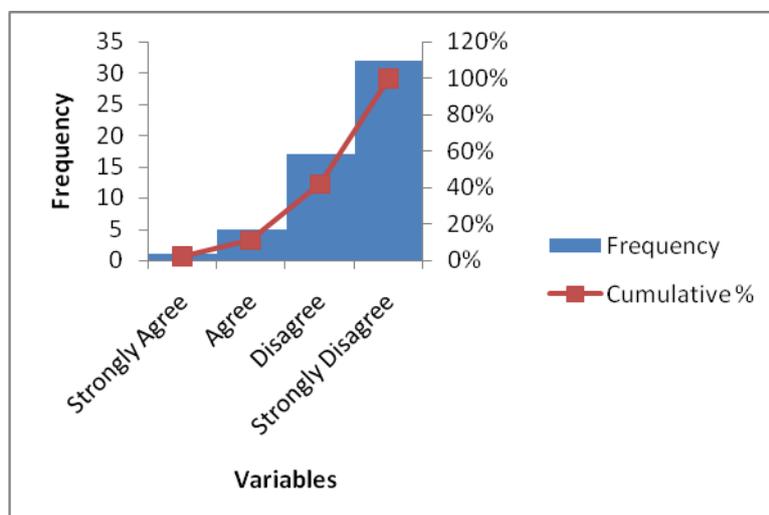
Social networking can be used to share new ideas (3.45)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	13	23.64%	23.64%
Agree	17	30.91%	54.55%
Disagree	17	30.91%	85.45%
Strongly Disagree	8	14.55%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that they can share new ideas on social networks
(Question 3.45 of the questionnaire)

It is not ethical to go on social networking sites during working hours (3.46)			
Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly Agree	1	1.82%	1.82%
Agree	5	9.09%	10.91%
Disagree	17	30.91%	41.82%
Strongly Disagree	32	58.18%	100.00%



Number of respondents who feel that is not ethical to go on social networking sites during working hours (Question 3.46 of the questionnaire)

ANNEXURE 4: QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Qualitative outcomes on the utilisation of Social Media and Networks in the tourism destination of the Eastern Free State.

The area that was covered was the N3 Gateway and the Maloti Drakensberg road in the Eastern Free State, South Africa. The researcher and one fieldworker spend a week driving from town to town to collect the information. The businesses ranged from Restaurants, B&B's, Arts and crafts shops, Deli's, Galleries, Guest farms, Agri-processing and tourism, crafters and adventure tourism.

The researcher did test the questionnaire a few weeks before doing fieldwork and due to the fact that the researcher delivered and collected the questionnaires by hand the researcher had the opportunity to do qualitative research.

The researcher delivered 60 Questionnaires to businesses of which 3 was spoiled, 2 were not completed and 1 was scanned and sends via e-mail.

Interview with Dave Short – Van Reenenen & Swinburne –N3 Gateway information Kiosk

Use of Website and Social Networks:

1) We are very interested in the use of Social Networks in the marketing of the area. The N3 gateway project hired a consultant Matthew Drew to develop the tourism website. This website is linked to organisations like: Van Reenen & Swinburne, Clarens Tourism Forum, Maloti-Drakensberg- and others. There are also links like Facebook and Twitter on this Webpage.

You must contact Matthew, he will be able to assist you better.

Do Government assist you in Marketing.

2) The problem is that government employ people to develop a catalogue and there is mostly general information with photos that does not correspond with the specific area. Then their budget is mostly to distribute in foreign countries not in South Africa. This area has a lot of drive-through tourism. The roads connect to Gauteng, KwaZulu. It's the main road to Durban and the East Coast, Bloemfontein, the North-West and the Eastern Cape. Government and the Private sector need to see this opportunity and capitalise on it.

Interview with Matthew Drew marketing consultant of the N3-Gateway

We are a marketing company specialising in Marketing of tourism and have a 3 year contract with the N3- gateway.

I wrote a new marketing strategy for the N3 gate and stakeholders, with emphasis on digital marketing and as an umbrella organisation the N3-Gateway will look at workshops, its members and how we can engage them.

I believe that digital advertising is the way to go and we had a lot of success stories in the Natal – Midlands. There are a lot of challenges in the marketing field especially with web-technology and social media. Web –practitioners make it more complicated than it is, to charge more.

My view is that Education and Awareness Campaigns or Workshops, on what it constitutes and how much it cost to develop a tourism website for a small provider will be the answer. This will include the basic fundamentals of social media. The marketing strategy of the N3 gateway programme is looking at such workshops for its members.

We are looking at e-marketing issues and trying to implement them at this moment. Specifically looking at the digital marketing that is vital to the small tourism business and the specific needs of the small business owner. Digital marketing includes the social media platforms.

Government and the N3 are only umbrellas and therefore we need to inform our members and stakeholders and assist them to develop digital media for their individual needs. Most of these self-developed websites are badly designed and it does put people off, they tend to have no specifics.

My first priority is to upgrade the N3 gateway website that it is useful and there are specifics, like for instance the fly-fishing business member must provide a map and the cost per day of the business on social networks.

There are a lot of shortcomings like: Lack of education, it is quite segmented and there is a lack of understanding. The N-3 Gateway organisation has 1300 stakeholders and they have their own members. We need to inform and talk to these people.

This is why we are looking at this Private-public positioning drive and to look at certain aspects that is beneficial for our members. Government needs to look at aspects of infrastructure, like roads and signage. We as a marketing association will look at tourism from a marketing level. We engage with stakeholders and run programmes with specific

outcomes that are private-sector driven and meaningful. We have our own researchers on the products, packaging, supplements and tour operators. We also have a researcher from Holland who did work for KZN who will do a market survey, on client demand as well as an economic assessment of the area, so we can take the baseline data to do product development with all the relevant supporting tools and choose the results.