Jimma University

Collage of Social Science and Humanities

Department of Media and Communication Studies

Specialized in Public Relation and Corporate Communication

Investigating the Practices and Challenges of Public Relations in Promoting Tourism Sites in the South-West Ethiopia Region

By: Mihiret Mitiku Lako

mihiretmitiku95@gmail.com +251-(0)-935126304

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Media and Communication of Jimma University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Corporate Communication

Jimma, Ethiopia

August, 2023

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By: Mihiret Mitiku Lako

Advisor: Daniel Taye (PhD)

Co-Advisor: Getachtew Tilahun (PhD)

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis entitled "Investigating the Practices and Challenges of Public Relations in Promoting Tourism Sites in the South-West Ethiopia Region**"** is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for this thesis have been a very acknowledged.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____/_____/____

Approval

As masters research advisors, we hear by certifying that we have read and evaluated this MA thesis prepare under by Mihiret Mitiku and examined the candidate. We recommend that the thesis is accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement for the Degree of Masters in Public Relations and Corporate Communication.

1. ……………………………….   _____   ____/_____/____

           Main advisor   Signature   Date

2. ……………………………   _____   ____/_____/____

           Co-advisor   Signature   Date

Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating the practice and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the Southwest Ethiopia Region (SWERS).. The study involved three selected zones, namely Dawro, Konta, and Kaffa. Most importantly, it investigated the major public relations activities performed by SWERS Culture, Tourism, and Sports offices as well as the government communication affairs Bureau in promoting tourism sites in the region. It also identified the practical tools for promoting tourism sites in the region and investigated the challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites. A descriptive research design that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research approaches was employed. The researcher purposefully selected 108 samples from the target populations. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were employed. The study employed closed-ended questionnaires, unstructured in-depth interviews, and document reviews as data-gathering tools. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean were computed. Qualitative data were used to triangulated the findings from the quantitative data. The study found that there was a practice of public relations in the tourism industry as well as in the communication bureau, especially in promoting tourism sites in the SWE region. The study has also identified various public relations tools, such as print media. Besides, there were executive and technician roles in public relations in their bureau for promoting tourism sites, though their effort was not found to be significant. Most of the interviewees indicated that the public relations officers were assigned without their profession and did not have managerial roles in the bureau, so they are working as technicians. In addition, public relations practitioners faced challenges that affected the promotion of tourist destination sites in the region. Finally, the study recommended that the region should pay special attention to public relations and its profession by utilizing new-age media and modern technologies as tools, offering comprehensive training programs to PR professionals, and working hard to minimize the challenges of public relations practices.

Key words: - *public relations, activities, tools, challenges, tourism, promotion.*

Acknowledgement

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ABBREVIATOINS AND ACRONYMS

IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
Ibid	In the Same Book or Piece of Writing as the One that has Just Been Mention (from Latin 'ibidem')
MCTE	Ministry of Culture and Tourism for Ethiopia
PR	Public Relations
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
SNNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWERS	South West Ethiopia Regional State
SWERSCTS	South West Ethiopia Regional State culture, Tourism, and Sport Bureau
UNECA	United Nation Economic Commission for Africa

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Public relations contribute to organizational effectiveness by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies (J. E. Grunig, 1992). Based on this statement, the effective public relations strategies are an essential component of an organization's success when they serve the public's interests and further the organization's goals. Public relations are unique methods of promoting an organization, its products, or its services by increasing visibility in the public sphere (M. A. Petrovici, 2014).

Tourism is crucial to the prosperity of many economies across the world. Tourism provides numerous advantages to host cities. Tourism boosts economic revenue, creates thousands of employment, improves a country's infrastructure, and promotes cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens (Yehia, 2019). The tourism industry has a significant impact on the growth of a country. Tourism is all about public relations, and public relations are one of the key functions of tourism agency workers (Bhatia, 2006). Tourism has developed rapidly in recent decades, and promotion and public relations have played an important role as promotional tools for the sector (Kanani, 2020).

The goal of this research is to determine how public relations can help in the development of the tourism sector, allowing tourism in the SWER Culture, Tourism and Sports Bureau, and government communication affairs bureau to become a profitable, productive, culturally and socially good activity. Public relations are more than just a necessity in the tourism industry. To address the industry's ongoing challenges, public relations should evolve into a management role, leading to a more responsible approach. According to the literature, public relations is the fifth "P" in an advertising strategy, along with product, price, position, and promotion (Wilcox et al., 2009). According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Ethiopia has untapped tourism potential (UNECA, 2015). Ethiopia has a rich historical and cultural background, as well as abundant fauna, natural attractions, and gorgeous landscapes (Teshome & Demissie, 2018).

As a result, tourism is a promising industry for Ethiopia. Ethiopia has significant domestic and international tourist potential. Nonetheless, the area's tremendous resources are underutilized. This could be due to a lack of understanding of the area's current resources

(Beza, 2017). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has prioritized the growth and management of tourism in a competitive and sustainable manner. The ministry worked with IGAD member countries in eastern Africa to produce a regional sustainable tourism master plan for 2013–2023. The master plan presents a vision for the country's sustainable tourism growth over a ten-year implementation period and includes strategic initiatives, important projects, and activities. In this regard, tourism is an essential milestone in Ethiopia's systematic growth (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017).

Nowadays, public relations are essential in the tour and travel industry. It is very difficult to attract customers and influence their needs and decisions if there is no public relations in the tourism industry. Public relations include activities that help to develop a strong public image. Impressive advertising, effective promotional strategies, and the use of well-crafted public relations maps are all components of excellent public relations (Riege & Perry, 2000). Public relations are not only limited to promoting tourism but also caring for social responsibility. The purpose of attracting tourists is not only to attract economic development or benefits to the region but also to promote tourism and public relations in order to build a sense of closeness among tourists and locals, as well as to become familiar with each culture, and so on (Kanani, 2020).

As indicated in the mission statements of the Culture, Tourism, and Sports offices as well as the Government Communication Affairs offices, public relations activities can support SWERS in fulfilling its goals, particularly in promoting the region's abundant cultural and tourism resources (annual report, 2014). Therefore, the study focused on the practice and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites at the SWERS Culture, Tourism, and Sports Offices as well as the Government Communication Affairs Offices. As a result, the researcher provides constructive, professional, and scientific recommendations for future public relations practices in tourism site promotion.

1.2 Profile of Study Area

The SWERS is one of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's eleven regional states. After a successful referendum, it was separated from the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) on November 23, 2021. This new region is made up of the Kaffa, Sheka, Bench Sheko, Dawuro, West Omo, and Konta (Otoro & Kelifa, 2021). The Southwest Ethiopian Culture, Tourism, and Sports Bureaus, as well as the Government Communication Affaires Bureaus, are one of the regional state's government bureaus. The culture, tourism, and sports bureau was established to register, research, promote, conserve, and safeguard cultural assets, historical events, and places for the development of tourist attraction sites, culture, and values (MCTE, 2017). Government Communication Affairs Bureaus were established to establish a robust communication system that will enable the creation of an information-driven society that will play a role in universal development—creating mutual understanding between the public and the government by establishing competent human resources and structures that can ensure the quality of information and fair access (GCAO, 2018).

Dawuro Zone, Tarcha Town, and Kaffa Zone, Bonga Town have regional bureaus. The region's natural and cultural attractions include some of Africa's largest and most amazing caves, a wide range of enormous forests, wonderful alpine and endemic animals, a unique color, a high population of birds, the rapture of valleys, lakes, and stone cabs, as well as many significant historical sites, a magnificent early civilization's palaces, and a number of monasteries (Otoro & Kelifa, 2021). This investigation was carried out in the Dawuro, Konta, and Kaffa zones of the region. They were in the South Nation nationality and peoples region before the new administrative boundary emerged as a region, and when the zones were there, they had the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sports as well as Government Communication Affairs office.

A wealth of resources for cultural, historical, and natural tourism can be found in these three zones. However, due to various problems, many tourist spots in the region remain unknown and have yet to receive notice. As a result, in her research, the author focuses on practical promotion work in public relations and explores previous promotion work as well as challenges in the field of public relations. These chosen zones will serve as a resource for other zones in the region. This is because the structure of the region's other three zones is identical from top to bottom, and they all use the same operating system as government entities.

1.3   Statement of the Problem

Public relations are critical to every organization's overall success. It is now a global phenomenon that people all over the world, particularly governments and business entities, see as critical to their success (Cutlip et al., 2000). Public relations is a relatively new scientific field that is rapidly evolving (J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Public relations are still in their infancy, but they are rapidly maturing due to their relevance to the success of any organization. As a result, public relations departments or communication units will be developed in both government and business organizations in order to construct an image and serve the organizations and the public's interests through public relations strategies (Theaker, 2001).

Ethiopia has untapped tourism potential, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2015). Ethiopia has a rich historical and cultural heritage, as well as wildlife resources, natural attractions, and scenic landscapes (Teshome & Demissie, 2018). As a result, tourism is a promising industry for Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a high potential for domestic and international tourism. Nonetheless, the area's potential resources are not being fully utilized. This could be due to a lack of knowledge about the area's current resources   (Beza, 2017). Hence, Public relations activities have made a significant contribution to the promotion of cultural and tourism resources to build an image for sustainable development. In this regard, public relations are critical to tourism institutions' promotional activities and communications.

The place that the researcher chose to conduct the study is the new 11th region of Ethiopia, known as the Southwest Ethiopia Regional State. This region has many cultural and historical tourism resources that can attract visitors (Otoro & Kelifa, 2021). In this study, the author looked at whether the public relations profession is sufficiently recognized or not in the region's culture, tourism, and sports bureau, as well as the government communication affairs bureau. According to (Hatherell & Bartlett, 2006) public relations is a relatively recent discipline in Ethiopia. This is particularly true for Ethiopia in promoting tourist attractions. They have many problems in the country in terms of cultural, historical, and natural resources for tourism development. According to (Kassa, 2020), Ethiopia has lagged behind other economic growth sectors in terms of tourist development, and this conectes the many problems that promote the tourism industry. In this study, the researcher investigated public relations practices in sustainable development via the SWERS by promoting the region's tourism resources and boosting the region's image.

The region's natural and cultural attractions include some of Africa's largest and most amazing caves, a wide range of enormous forests, wonderful alpine and endemic animals, a unique color palette, a high population of birds, the rapture of valleys, lakes, and stone cabs, as well as many significant historical sites, a magnificent early civilization's palaces, and a number of monasteries (Otoro & Kelifa, 2021).

The Challenges to maximizing tourism resources at the Ethiopian level include a lack of effective promotion strategies, a lack of human resources and capacity, weak institutional and legislative frameworks, industry quality and standards issues, and insufficient tourism and support infrastructure (Teshome et al., 2018; Wondirad et al., 2021). Often, these destination areas' resources do not directly benefit local residents for various reasons (Nurhssen, 2016). However, in the South-west Ethiopia region, the practice and challenge of public relations in promoting tourism sites have not been examined. Therefore, to fill this gap and provide empirical evidence, the objective of this study was to investigate the practice and challenge of public relations in promoting tourism sites in SWERS.

The government of the Southwest Ethiopia region has been doing public relations activities through various government organizations. In order to build the good image of the region, in the tourism sector as well as in other sectors, mainly the cultural tourism and sports institute as well as the government communication institute are creating public relations organizations and planning and doing public relations activities (annual report, 2014). Therefore, in this public relations work, it is important to develop the region by promoting tourism resources, identify the challenges in the operation with the support of sufficient evidence, and put solutions in place. Also, the researcher is motivated to do her research on this topic so that the region can get social, economic, and political benefits from the tourism resources by successfully promoting them. According to (Arionesei & Ivan, 2014), The tourism industry is important in terms of politics, socialization, and economic development.

On the other hand, some studies on public relations and tourism have been conducted within Ethiopia: including a case study in Ethiopia by (Mekonen, 2016) conducted the study on the role of media in tourism promotion, and the study suggested that the country should use its enormous tourism potential by designing well-organized promotion and marketing strategies to change distorted images in the international media.

Teshome et al., (2022) investigate the potential, challenges, and economic benefits of Ethiopian tourism resources and determine that achieving this potential is fraught with difficulties. This researcher discovered that problems include a lack of infrastructure and poor stakeholder coordination.The potential tourism resources of the study area need to be promoted by the tourist office using a variety of promotional tools. The authors conclude that in developing these potential tourism resources, concerned bodies must collaborate to provide basic tourism infrastructure facilities and services. Atinafu & Muuz, (2017), assessed the potential tourist features of the six South Gondar heritage sites as well as the challenges of making them available to tourists. The study also indicated that the lack of a concerted effort to give chances to travel agencies, tour operating businesses, tourist information centers, and museums was considered a barrier to travelers' access to these locations.

Yet, the aforementioned study showed that the researchers did not place a high value on the practice and challenges of the public relations department in tourism site promotion. This indicates that there is a research gap in the field, So the researcher conducts this study to fill this research gap and solve the problems.

Furthermore, the aforementioned issues demonstrate that the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the region have yet to be investigated. Thereby, the current researcher is investigated to carry out her study in this area. As a result, this study focuses on the public relations practices and challenges of Southwest Ethiopia's Culture, Tourism, and Sports Bureau as well as the Government Communication Affaires Bureau in promoting tourism sites in the region. Finally, in order to solve the problems described in the problem statement above and to better understand the issue of public relations activities and challenges in promoting tourism sites in the region, an integrated approach is needed to ensure problem-free and successful public relations. In particular, the following research questions should be given attention:

1. What are the public relations activities practiced in the study area to promote tourism sites?
2. Which tools did the public relations practitioners use to promote tourism sites in the South West Ethiopia Regional State?
3. What are the challenges of public relations that hinder the promotion of tourism sites in the region?

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study

The study's objective is to investigate the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the Southwest Ethiopia Region.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the public relations activities practiced in the region to promote tourism sites.

2. To identify the tools that public relations practitioners use to promote tourism sites in the region.

3. To find out the challenges of public relations practice in promoting tourism sites in the region.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research was carried out in the newly established region of Southwest Ethiopia, and it will make a significant contribution to the region's image and the promotion of tourism sites. Additionally, the importance of the region's PR efforts increases for both the office and the region as a whole, and it increases public awareness of the need for special government attention. Bringing people with public relations expertise to the institution, raising awareness among the parties involved about public relations work, and promoting the potential tourism spots of the region will assist in doing a good job. It helps to close the gap in the field. It will bridge the gap by promoting tourist sites, paving the way for the region's senior leaders, officials, and other stakeholders to collaborate. This study highlights the challenges and practices of public relations work in the process of promoting tourist sites in the region. Finally, this research is valuable to other academics, public relations officers, journalists, public relations students, and future researchers interested in public relations.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on investigating the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the region in the case of SWECTS offices as well as SWEGCA offices in three selected zones. The bureaus have been working on numerous functions across departments, directorates, groups, and core procedures. In the instance of selected zones, the study investigated the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the SWERS. The research looked at the bureau's PR activities in promoting tourism sites, the search for PR tools in promoting tourism sites, and the challenges of PR in promoting tourism sites. However, the analysis ignores additional organizational activities performed by other groups or departments.

Because conducting research is a time-consuming and expensive endeavor, the researcher collected samples from only selected zones' cultural and tourism departments and zonal government communication departments.

1.7   Limitations of the Study

With the undertaking of this study, the research report encountered some limitations. Some respondents were reluctant to answer the questions about public relations practices and challenges in promoting tourism sites; four respondents did not respond. If the research report had the opportunity to extract data from all participants and analyze the data, the results of the study would be comprehensive. But the number of respondents who did not fill out the questionnaire was very low, so it did not have an impact on the research report. Another limitation of this study is the lack of previous research in this area of the region. This lack of previous research in the region made it difficult to establish a baseline or compare the findings with existing data.

1.8   Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains the study's background, problem statement, research question, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is a review of literature that focuses on the concepts of public relations, the relationship between public relations and tourism, public relations promotion tools, public relations challenges, and other themes. In chapter three, the study's design, participants, sampling and sampling methodologies, data gathering instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods are described. The fourth chapter provides data analysis and discussion, and the fifth chapter contains a conclusion and recommendations.

CHPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the reviews of related literature, such as books, articles by scholars, and empirical studies that are relevant to investigating the research problems. It will help the reader understand the existing knowledge of public relations practices in promoting tourism sectors, like public relations concepts, theories, and empirical evidence in the research title. Thus, the researcher used integrative types of literature reviews to put the study into contributing to the research problems by including literature that is related to the study.

2.2 Definitions of Public Relations

There is no universally agreed definition of public relations due to the diversity of linguistic and cultural differences in the world, and the difference in practices has a great impact on its definitions. Even though there is no agreement on PR definitions, the following are frequent keywords:

> Public relations is the strategic communication that different types of organizations use to establish and maintain symbolic relationships with relevant publics many of whom are becoming increasingly culturally diverse (Smith, 2009: 439)

Public relations is a distinct management function that helps in the establishment and maintenance of mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its public; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management in staying informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes management's responsibility to serve the public interest; and assists management in staying abreast of and effectively utilizing change, service, and technology (Theaker, 2001:3).

> Public relations is the art and social science of assessing trends, projecting their implications, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action that suit the interests of both the organization and the public (Theaker, 2001:3).

Public relations is another major mass-promotion tool for building relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories, and events.

Public relations is a collection of techniques performed via press relations or a press agency for product publicity, public affairs, lobbying, investor relations, and development to gain financial or volunteer support and optimize the relationship between a company and the public. Public relations makes sure that the service organization is playing an active role in this process and can prevent negative rumors from circulating about the company or its products or services. There is no doubt to be noted that in a service company, everyone is responsible for public relations. As Kotler and Armstrong defined it, publicity is important because it is cheap, has high coverage, and comes from a reliable and independent source. On the other hand, publicity is almost uncontrollable and thus can turn out to be negative. Therefore, good relations between experienced PR people and the press are necessary (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010: 97).

According to (Theaker, 2001) PR is defined as a management function that seeks information for problem or issue identification, serves the public interest, helps management in staying abreast of and effectively utilizing change, serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends, and employs research and ethical communication techniques as its primary tools. Since there is disagreement over the origins of the historical history of public relations outlined above, scholars have varied opinions on PR definitions, and there are no internationally agreed-upon definitions of the profession. Most definitions of public relations highlight strategic communication tactics used by organizations to maintain connections with the public. The management function addresses issues through strategic communication by gathering information in the public interest.

2.3   Public Relations and Tourism

According to the literature, public relations is a strategic form of communication that focuses on obtaining the public's understanding and acceptance of the process of establishing a good relationship between an organization and the public, particularly in terms of reputation shaping and information communication (Curtin & Gaither, 2008, p.19). Public relations fosters the development of trust-based linkages between various organizations and the many categories of the public through the communication and promotion tactics that they adopt, thereby fostering interactive interactions between the various levels of society. Public relations is a discipline that focuses on reputation in order to obtain knowledge, support, and influence on public opinion and behavior (A. Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014).

Public relations represent a unique way of promoting the organization, its products, or its services, by building higher visibility in the public space. Public relations activities imply conscious, planned, and long-term efforts in building and maintaining relations of mutual trust and understating both public opinion as a whole and the different target groups (B. Van Ruler & Verčič, 2004, p.11).

Public relations in tourism are a key element of the marketing mix, which includes "general influence tools" such as media relations manifested in press tours, tourism conferences, fairs and expositions, promotional activities, and special events (Kotler, 2000, p.177). From the perspective of public relations, this entails managing communication between the company and the target public through consistent and accurate information on the various kinds of audiences (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p.6). Tourism acknowledges the diversity of the world's cultures and environment, and it promotes constructive interaction among the tourism industry, community members, and travelers (Coppola, 2010, p.51). At the same time, tourism provides an opportunity to engage with the people who produce the holiday experience, encouraging visitors to share their experiences and stories (Krippendorf, 1999, P. 15-22).

2.4 Roles of the public relations practitioner

There may be different concepts or ideas about the roles of public relations. Even though (Dozier & Broom, 1995) identified two dominant public relations roles. They are the communication manager: who is responsible for planning and managing public relations initiatives, advising management, making communications policy decisions, and overseeing implementation. The communication manager is in charge of the entire public relations program, or if they work for a major corporation, they may be in charge of one specific area, such as government or investor relations. A communication technician: is someone who does not make organizational decisions but implements public relations programs such as composing press releases, planning events, writing speeches, writing house journals, and creating web material. Practitioners are frequently in charge of the communication methods of news releases, press conferences, employee newsletters, position papers, brochure design, and media placements (Castelli, 2007).

On the other hand, (Cutlip et al., 2000), PR work is classified according to task lines. Writing and editing, media relations and placement, research, management and administration, special events, speaking, production, training, contact, and counseling are among the activities assigned to public relations practitioners, according to them. This responsibility for public relations professionals encompasses both managerial and technical responsibilities. It demonstrates that there is not a clear line between the managerial and technical functions of public relations. However, the Public Relations practitioner's role varies in different countries depending on the country's political ideology, level of economic development, degrees of activism, culture, and media system (Tench et al., 2009). In a nutshell, the two dominant roles in public relations are managerial and technical. However, there is no clear separation between the two roles. Therefore, the study suggests that public relations practitioners would have to understand their roles in practicing PR to serve both the organization's and the public's interests. The researcher understands that successful practices contribute to mutual understanding between the two actors while achieving organizational goals and serving the public interest.

2.5   Public Relations Role in Tourism

According to (Hodges, 2016), the public relations industry should be regenerated, and the significance of public relations in cultural growth should not be overlooked. Public relations has become an increasingly important tool for organizing the public and encouraging public discussion. It has played a significant impact in molding societies and cultures. Some studies on international public relations have emphasized that public relations should encourage organizations to take a more active role in social transformation (ibid.).

Public relations (PR) is a significant and primary pillar for building, developing, and sustaining the country's image as an attractive tourist destination and plays a crucial role in the promotion and affirmation of tourism and the tourist destination of the country. In the modern social-economic context, public relations are considered an important factor in the process of development and growth of tourism (Ilievska, 2018). Similarly, public relations can help the tourist public sector by promoting a positive image and a favorable attitude toward the tourism product and destinations (Smith, 2019). The explanation for this is that in the tourism industry, a positive image provides motivation to purchase a tourism product (ibid.). Public relations promotion efforts cannot be effective without adequately specialized and trained staff who can give quality services and match the client's expectations (ibid.).

2.6 Benefit of Promoting Tourism Destinations

Nowadays, the travel and tourism sector is a highly competitive market on a regional, national, and international scale. Tourism benefits well-managed tourist destinations, sales organizations or firms, and local residents as a result. Because of the competitive nature of the market, all tourists have different options and value good value for money as well as safety and security conditions. According to (Hodges, 2015), Promotion is one of the most vital elements in the marketing mix, which includes many actions to inform present or future customers about the advancement of a good product, its price, and its convenience. Promotion is one of the most effective actual marketing mix aspects for promoting tourism products and their intentions. Tourist destination promotion begins economic development through multiple networks, such as connecting to new markets and creating transportation links, enhancing the destination profile, targeting economic development through conventions and trade exhibits, and improving the quality of life (Baldemoro,2013, n.d.; Kotler, 2015). According to (Haleu, 2016), the proper collection of promotional mix elements, as well as the compatibility of tourism activities in the destination, can improve the destination's image and help to develop a brand. Promoting tourism sites can also boost the number of foreign and domestic travelers (Ly, 2013).

According to (Esu & Ebitu, 2010), the promotion of quality and global best practices in service delivery in attractions has the ability to improve the image of the destination and increase tourist traffic to the residences. Furthermore, destination promotion has the potential to generate benefits such as increasing awareness and courtesy in tourist destination attractions, distinguishing the destination and its commodity offerings from competing destinations, communicating the physical and sensitive benefits of products packaged by the destination to the market, maintaining and creating the destination's overall image and reputation, convincing tourists to visit, and increasing the length of stay (Esu & Ebitu, 2010). Arioneshi and Ivan (2014) described, these promotional efforts are known as personal selling, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations, and they are the most significant.

In general, the most significant aspect of the promotion is that it distinguishes the organization from its competitors and helps in the rapid recognition of its products and services. Aside from that, promotion is an important role in immediately demonstrating the value of our products and services to clients, and by assuring a consistent promotional and marketing strategy for customers, it helps to improve their image, profitability, and long-term success in general.

2.7 Tourism and Tourism attraction site contribution in the World

Tourism is increasingly becoming a key service industry in many developing and developed countries. Tourism development, being the world's largest industry, must develop in a sustainable manner in order to supply resources in desired destinations (Nigatu, 2016). Tourism is predicted to provide around 10% of global gross domestic product, be the largest contributor to employment worldwide, and be responsible for producing one-fourth of all new jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2021). Though Ethiopia's contribution to GDP from tourism has fluctuated substantially in recent years, it has tended to rise from 2000 to 2019, peaking at 9% in 2019 (UNE, 2020). Thus, tourism can have a positive impact on local economic growth, leading to poverty reduction in target communities and countries (Zapata et al., 2017). When tourists visit an attraction, it boosts the local economy by creating local jobs and leading to the improvement of basic facilities such as roads and telecommunications (Wondirad et al., 2021).

2.8 Tourism Site Promotional Activities and Tools

There are different kinds of promotions that help us foster and improve the destination's attractions, according to (Mill & Morrison, 2019) , there are three types of promotions that help change the consumer's behavior in the stages of buying preparation. Primarily, instructive promotions are most effective at the earlier stages of the buying process, like attention and comprehension. Secondly, convincing promotions work well at intermediate stages of the buying process, which assist with attitude, intention, and purchase. Lastly, after the first visitor's usage, service reminder promotions are effective.

Various marketing promotional methods can be used in the announcement time table for successful tourism attraction promotion of the offered product or service. Each promotional technique is suited for a specific occasion if used carefully based on the given context. A marketer or seller announces the destination's product or service through one or more promotional instruments. Advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing are the most essential promotional activities (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013). According to (Arioneshi and Ivan, 2014), advertising covers any communication that is paid for, from radio and Internet advertisements to cinema commercials, and print media. And also PR represents the situation where the communication is not directly paid for and includes press releases, sponsorship deals, exhibitions, conferences, seminars or trade fairs, and events Word-of-mouth is any informal communication about a product by ordinary people, satisfied clients or people specifically engaged to create word of mouth.

Tourist guidebooks (City, Region, or Local), compact disks with advertising, information brochures, websites, emails, radio, posters, television, press, direct mail, database, tourist information centers, and exhibits are other effective tourism promotion tools. As a result, advertising on radio and television is likely to be utilized to encourage domestic tourism (Salehi & Farahbakhsh, 2014).

According to (Zadel et al., 2016), there are several sources of information to support knowledge about the potential of a tourism destination, including promotion (advertising and brochures), the opinions of others (family/friends, travel agents), media reporting (newspapers, magazines, television news reporting, and documentaries), and popular culture (movies, literature). However, due to improved technology (the internet and electronic advertising), this method is now shown to be more effective than previous promotional channels. As a result, the Internet has become the most popular channel for tourism promotion and destination marketing. As a consequence, new tactics have been developed in order to properly leverage this new type of communication. Using the aforementioned promotional activities via various channels such as television, radio, mobile, Facebook, link done, Twitter, email, websites, Google, Viber, What's Up, Telegram, and so on, printed materials (banners, magazines, brochures, folders, and cards) are currently the most visible and significant materials for destination promotion and information dissemination.

2.9   Communication Channels

The plan must involve the development or upgrading of communication tools or tactics, such as brochures, websites, and standard press releases, at specific times of the year or around scheduled events. Each communication tool or technique that is developed should include a specific call to action that tells people what they can do to act on the message (Lee et al., 2021).

Lee et al., (2021), define these as communication tools for informing and persuading the Public.

- Press releases
- Flyers, posters, banners announcing activities
- Interviews with local officials that you organized
- New documents uploaded to the website
- Public service announcements submitted to the local radio or television stations
- Community forums or meetings organized

- Speeches by government leaders to community groups
- Visitors to your website
- Forms downloaded from your website

Public relations tools help the government sector communicate messages or provide up-to-date information. It is impossible to communicate without tools, so public relations practitioners determine the right tools to be utilized to transmit information that is simple and accessible to the public audience. To cover the entire public with the same information and messages within the appropriate time frames, the government sector should define its audience's position, demographic location, and what types of PR tools are available to all people.

2.10 Challenges of tourism site Promotion

The existence of many internal and external challenges may have an impact on the success of promotional and marketing activities. It also creates a challenge for using appropriate advertising tools in each target location, region, or area to deliver accurate information to potential tourists. Most tourist attractions in the country or region, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia, are not effectively and sufficiently promoted and marketed to potential tourists worldwide (Sisāy, 2009). Even if potential tourist attractions are endowed around the world, they could not be promoted in a strategic manner due to several challenges in destination promotion and marketing. Challenges are mainly connected with stakeholders, operators, the host community, and private and public sector tourism organizations (Marshalls, 2015). In a competitive market, tourism marketers face many challenges in convincing consumers and differentiating their destinations. The most difficult challenge is creating an effective positioning plan to promote the destination in key target markets and increase the public's awareness of the spot (Ha & Ly, 2013).

According to (Marshalls, 2015), demanding numerous procedures for promotional activities can lead the organization to carry out diverse promotional methods to deliver the message to potential tourists and encourage them to visit the destination. However, certain diversified, unpredictable, and unsteady factors such as stakeholder coordination and political, social, cultural, and economic factors that are related to pre-purchase information can interject to make the decision.

- **Lack of stakeholder involvement:** The fundamental problem of tourist destination promotional operations is a lack of mutual support and coordination among tourism stakeholders. Tourist destinations are the most difficult things to manage and market due to the difficulty of the interactions of local participants (Marshalls, 2015). Managing and marketing destinations is also challenging because of the variety of stakeholders involved in the development and fabrication of tourist products.

  According to Fyall and Leask, the destination practice is fundamentally made up of counties, resources, and amalgamations of tourist infrastructure and services that may not always belong to individuals. Even though a destination is critical to the travel and tourism industries, it is widely acknowledged to be one of the most difficult products to manage and market due to the numerous products, participants, management bodies, and individuals that work together to deliver the tourist destination product (Fyall & Leask, 2014).

- **Inadequate promotional strategy:** Inadequate promotional strategy: Tourism has become a key priority in most destination countries, and there is increasing competition among countries to attract tourists. In the face of increased global competition, developing countries lag far behind in attracting a relatively larger number of foreign tourists, due mainly to inadequate and ineffective promotional strategies of the industry due to a lack of sufficient funds, low-quality promotional materials, improper distribution, and potential tourists' perceived negative image of the country (Hasan, 2015). In fact, developing an actual positioning strategy to promote the destination in key markets and raise awareness of the destination is the most challenging responsibility (Ly, 2013).

- **Environmental problems:** environmental challenges of tourism promotion refer to natural disasters such as tidal waves that devastated Asian nations, floods, cyclones, etc. The force of nature has significant effects on the tourism industry (Marshalls, 2015). The potential negative effects that more visitors may have on the natural environment pose a challenge to tourism growth. If the enterprise is not contributing to the protection of the natural environment and cultural resources, then its resource base will collapse. The damage from the unregulated flow of tourists can lead to excessive solid waste, litter, erosion, sewage, water, and air pollution, natural habitat disturbances, tearing of the infrastructure, and environmental degradation (Degarege, 2011).

- **Political challenges:** travelers are risk-averse and do not wish to spend their vacation feeling anxious about their personal safety and security, mindful of their belongings, and wary of being ripped off (Fyall & Leask, 2006). Politics has negatively affected the tourism industry in different ways, as Marshalls (2015), described the potential international community, particularly potential investors fearing political instability when investing in tourism. Ethiopia's image on the international scene is widely associated with drought, famine, and war. The Horn of Africa is regarded as a region of instability and terrorism in general (Ali, 2016).

- **Socio-cultural challenges:** There are different sociocultural impacts that hinder promotional activities, such as epidemics, HIV/AIDS, SARS, Avian Flu, and Ebola Significantly, these diseases can derail the accessibility of tourists to a given destination (Marshalls, 2015). According to Degarege, (2011), tourism development and promotion had negative sociocultural effects on local communities and posed a threat to the quality of life of locals. These impacts include ethnic discrimination, enclave tourism, the relocation of traditional communities, the breakdown of conventional family structure and relations, an upsurge in crime and Sustainability, and prostitution. The young generations have adopted the Western Safari style of dressing and use vulgar language that is traditionally unaccepted.

- **Economic challenges:** One of the key challenges in destination promotion and marketing goes back to convincing governments and stakeholders that tourism promotion should be viewed as an investment in a destination's economic growth and community well-being, versus an expense line item for tourism promotion. The increasing number of destination choices creates different problems for the tourist destination supplier(Marshalls, 2015).

- **Lack of infrastructure:** successful tourism destination development is dependent on all parts of the supply chain, e.g., attractions, accommodation, and transport, provided by public and private sector investment. Physical infrastructure is an important factor in the tourism industry in order to develop and promote potential attractions. But if there are poor road conditions around attraction sites, it will harm the competitive position of these attractions in relation to other attractions that are more developed (Tamir, 2015).

Lack of museums, lack of services, and facilities, lack of preservation and protection of heritage, and some key tourism marketing and promotion challenges confronting the Ethiopian tourism sector, such as poor and unsatisfactory service to tourists, performing arts, entertainment services, a serious shortage in the number and type of tourist facilities,

and other local creative products, could have helped to extend visitors' stay (Andargie, 2014). In addition, these scholars described different challenges. There is a main destination for promotional and marketing activities. Challenges that hinder tourism destination promotional activities include destination management and overall administration problems: lack of trained manpower, lack of budget, bad image of the destination area in the eyes of the visitors, lack of professionals, limited availability of resources and infrastructure, lack of the tourism concept for the host community, and problems of security, which are major challenges to tourism development (ibid.).

2.11 Theoretical Framework

Scholars agree that there is no single theory that explains everything about public relations; however, public relations has developed into a field of communication based on international inquiries, particularly in the Western economy, and has developed into a research-based maturing subject with multidisciplinary characteristics. It is difficult to find indigenous public relations theories and models in Ethiopia and the southwest Ethiopia regional state. As a result, it is important to investigate how PR has been described in theories around the world and adapt beneficial ones locally. Therefore, one researcher needs to think about a number of different theoretical frameworks when he wants to study the practices of public relations in an Organization for the success of the study. Thus, as scholars have stated, there is no one theory that fully satisfies every explanation for public relations practices. Public relations practitioners have to consider various theories when they make decisions about how they can build successful relationships with their audiences (Lattimore et al., 2012). Specifically for this study, the researcher used public relations theories that focus not just on an organization but also its public as mutually dependent actors seeking mutual benefit in public relations practices and processes. As a result, the study employed two major theories: the open system theory and the excellence theory of public relations.

2.12 Systems Theory

This theoretical framework acknowledges the importance of the public and their actions. Cutlip et al., (2000), has presented a public relations (PR) open system theory. Closed systems do not adapt to their external conditions, but open systems consider the environment and adjust their business activities accordingly. Cutlip and his colleagues suggest that public relations should see itself as part of an open system. It should help the organization examine relevant environmental impacts and adapt its activities accordingly, as well as encourage external environmental changes that will help the organization.

Because social settings vary over time, public relations researchers understand the importance of environmental scanning (SWOT analysis) based on this idea. These changes require that the Organization adjust its methods or strategies in order to deal with internal and external challenges.

Furthermore, it implies that in order to obtain legitimate support for its actions, an organization needs to emphasize how to create a harmonious relationship that promotes a conducive climate for achieving its goals. As a result, public relations methods, strategies, and tactics should always be evaluated in terms of the organization's positive or negative impact on the connection between an organization and its public rather than the advantage they provide only to the organization. Understanding or overcoming such impacts through a two-way, symmetrical public relations methodology is recommended for the Organization. As a result, the study applies this theoretical framework to examine SWER PR practices and challenges.

2.13 Excellence Theory

The public relations excellence theory is a fundamental and defining assertion about what excellent public relations is. Furthermore, excellence theory is a broad public relations theory that arose from research on best practices in communication management financed by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation (L. A. Grunig et al., 2003). Grunig (2003), led an international study team of six public relations scholars who developed the excellence theory, which explains how public relations excellence is created in an organization. This idea seems to promote two-way, symmetrical communication methods as a foundation for excellent public relations. Similarly, the excellence theory of public relations focuses primarily on managerial, strategic, diversified, and ethical functions of public relations, and it recognizes the necessity of both internal and external contexts for excellent public relations activities. Excellence theory properties provide a model for the maturation of public relations theory in international contexts.

There were fourteen fundamental principles in three general areas, as originally conceived and based on an examination of public relations practices only in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom: (1) empowerment of the public relations function; (2) communicator roles; and (3) organization of the communication function and its relationship to other management functions. Freitag & Stokes, (2009), the IABC team concluded that companies are effective when they select and realize goals that are relevant to both their own self-interest and the strategic public in their environment (J. E. Grunig, 1992).

Furthermore, Grunig argues that public relations departments contribute to organizational effectiveness by helping organizations in building relationships and resolving issues between an organization and its strategic public.

They developed generic principles for excellent public relations through the study, which they later unified into 10. The 10 generic principles put forward by Grunig and his colleagues are as follows:

Public relations involvement in strategic management. It refers to an organization that engages in public relations and strategically develops programs that communicate with strategic audiences, both external and internal, that give the organization the best benefits and opportunities. Public relations empowerment in dominant coalitions or direct reporting to upper management In an effective organization, the senior public relations professional is a member of or has access to the group of senior managers with the most power. Public relations function that is integrated. All public relations functions are integrated into a single department or have a mechanism to coordinate the departments. Only in an integrated system of public relations can we develop new communication programs for changing strategic audiences. PR is a management function separate from other functions. Many organizations splinter the public relations function by making it a supporting tool for other departments such as marketing, human resources, law, or finance. When the public relations function is subordinated to other functions, it is unable to transmit communication resources from one strategic public to another as effectively as an integrated public relations function. Rather than a technician, the public relations part is led by a manager. Communication technicians are required to carry out day-to-day communication tasks. Excellent public relations, on the other hand, requires at least one senior communication manager to conceive and direct public relations programs (ibid.).

A two-way symmetrical public relations model Based on research, two-way symmetrical public relations employ communication to manage conflict and promote understanding among strategic audiences. This model is used by excellent public relations departments more than the press gentry, public information, or two-way asymmetrical models. However, in a "mixed-motive" model, they frequently blend features of the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models (ibid.). A symmetrical system of internal communication: Excellent organizations have decentralized management systems that provide employees authority and allow them to participate in decision-making. They also feature participative, symmetrical methods of internal communication with employees, which promote job satisfaction by incorporating employee goals into the organization's mission (ibid.).

Knowledge potential for the managerial function and symmetrical public relations: this refers to good programs staffed by professionals trained in the body of knowledge, engaged in professional associations, and readers of professional literature.

Diversity in all roles: This refers to excellent public relations, which includes both men and women in all roles, as well as practitioners from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (ibid.). The context for organizational excellence Excellent public relations departments are supported by participative rather than authoritarian cultures, environmental activist pressure, and organic rather than mechanical management structures (ibid.). Furthermore, the excellence thesis both describes and prescribes public relations' function in strategic management. It is a broad theory that describes how public relations services should be organized and managed to maximize value for organizations, the public, and society (Carroll, 2013).

Overall, the student realizes that the excellence theory of public relations provides the necessary insights and generic principles of how an organization becomes effective in performing public relations by compromising both the organization's and the public's interests while benefiting both actors. It additionally implies that practitioners or communicators have to utilize proper PR models to carry out their tasks and make the organization successful in interactive practices. As a result, the study used excellence theory as a framework for analyzing Organizations' public relations activities.

2.14 Conceptual Framework

In this section, the overall concepts about the research topic discussed above are summarized below. Tourism development involves many issues to take into account, including potential tourism attraction promotion and marketing activities. The most important promotional activities are advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. The study is centered on core concepts such as public relations practices and challenges in tourism resource promotion. There are different variables that directly or indirectly affect tourism resource promotion. These include political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, trained manpower, stakeholder coordination, and promotional activities and channels. These core concepts are discussed in detail in other sections of the literature review. The relationship between these parent concepts is shown in the figure of the conceptual framework below:
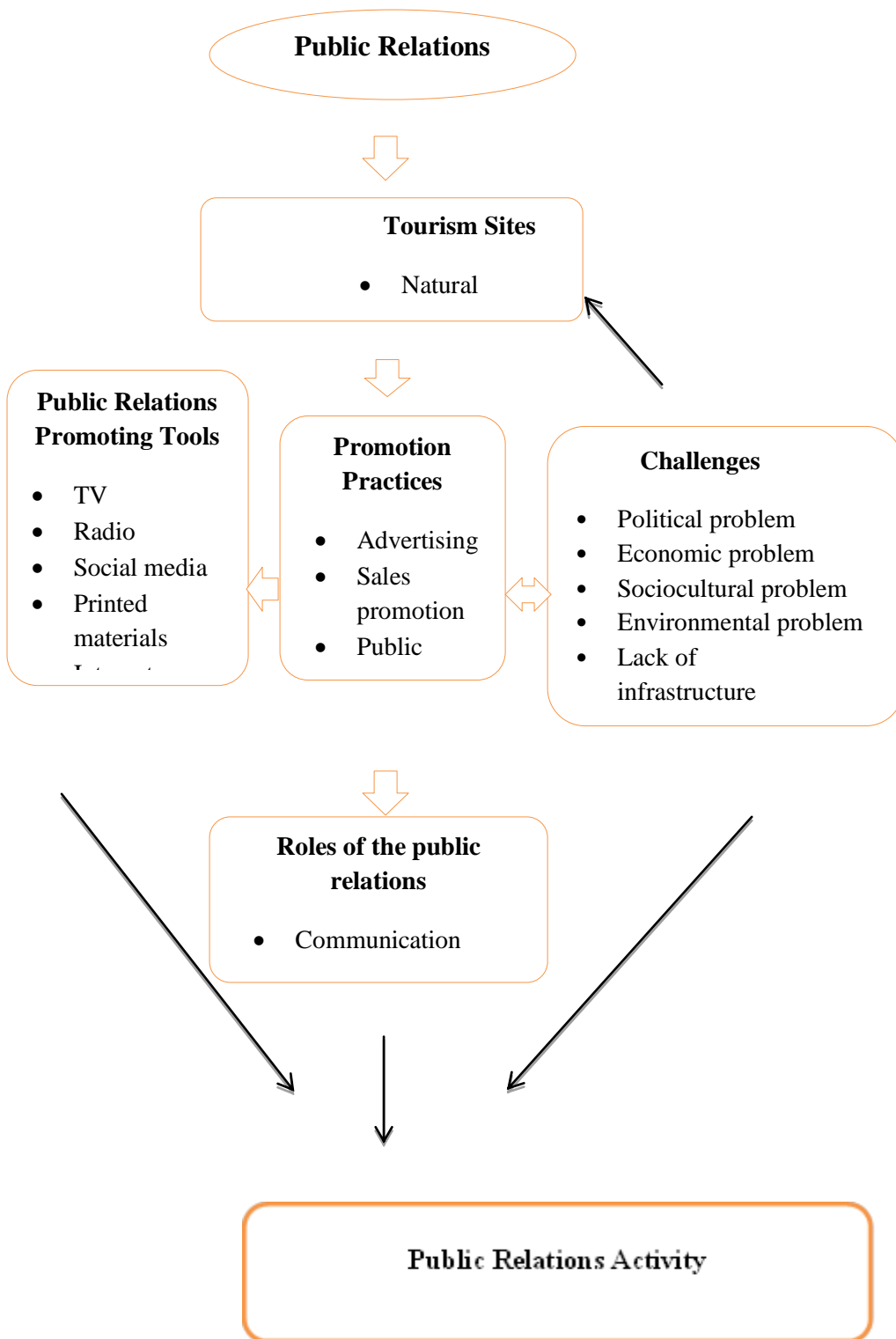
Figure 1 Conceptual Frame Work

Source: developed by the author

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodologies, data-gathering tools, sampling techniques, and procedures used to achieve the study's objective. Rajasekar, (2013), defines research methodology as the discipline of deciding how to do research. The primary goal of this research is to "investigate the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in SWERS." To answer the research question, the study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as appropriate research approaches, data sources, data gathering tools, and data analysis methods.

3.2 Research Design

This study was carried out in three distinct zones by the Southwest Ethiopia Region Culture Tourism and Sport Offices as well as Southwest Ethiopia Region Government Communication Affaires Offices. A descriptive survey research design was used for the investigation. The study employed a descriptive survey methodology with the goal of determining the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the case of SWERS selected zones, the Culture, Tourism, and Sports Department, as well as the SWERS Government Communication Affairs Office. According to (Kothari, 2004), descriptive research design is concerned with describing, recording, assessing, and reporting existing conditions. Surveys can be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory goals, according to (Babbie, 2011). So, the study employed descriptive research types from objective perspectives.

3.3 Research Approach

The investigator has conducted this study using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Mixed-methods research, with the development and perceived legitimacy of qualitative and quantitative research in the social and human sciences, employed data collection linked with both forms of data. These producers are strongly recommended to provide high data dependability, awareness of the contextual factors of the research, data gathering flexibility and openness, and a more holistic interpretation of the research challenge (Powoh, 2016).

3.3.1 Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research depends on the careful definition of the meaning of words, the development of concepts and variables, and the plotting of interrelationships. Unstructured, in-depth interviews with key informants and research respondents produced the qualitative data approaches for this study. The qualitative research approach is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, views, and behaviors. Such a study approach produces outcomes that are either non-quantitative or not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis. So, in-depth interviews are used in this investigation (Kothari, 2004:5).

3.3.2 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative data can be measured more or less accurately because it contains some form of magnitude, usually expressed in numbers. The researcher used mathematical procedures to analyze the numerical data. These were extremely simple, such as counts or percentages, or more sophisticated, such as statistical tests or mathematical models. Although some types of data, such as population counts, economic data, scientific measurements, and so on, are obviously expressed as numbers (Walliman, 2011:72), The quantitative data were collected by closed-ended questionnaires of the study and distributed to the respondents in the sample size, which is described by the quantity that helps the researcher analyze the data by frequency and percentage by using SPSS.

3.4 Target population

The study's target population was 148 individuals from the selected zones; the study area's target population is the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sports office's public relations experts, tourism promotion workers, the organization's management members, and the organization's deputy chief and chief, as well as the Department of Government Communication Affairs office's public relations experts, journalists, management members, and the organization's deputy chief and chief.

The study area's target population also includes the SWE Region Culture Tourism and Sports chief and deputy chief, public relations expert, and tourism promotion experts, as well as the SWE Regions Government Communication Affairs Bureaus chief and deputy chief, public relations expert, and journalists. These experts and managers were selected using a purposive sampling method and are expected to have the most recent data and knowledge in their offices. As a result, the total population of the study area considered was 148 persons.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling techniques

A purposive sampling technique was used to include participants in the quantitative study, and key informants were selected purposively.

3.6 Sample size determination

The SWERS Culture, Tourism, and Sports Office and the Regional Government Communication Affairs Office were investigated for their practices and challenges in promoting tourism sites in the region. The region is divided into six zones, is administered by several cities, and has three regional capitals. Out of these six zones, three zonal bureaus were selected in terms of geographical location (proximity). The researcher used these selected zones as sources. This is due to the fact that the structure of the region's other three zones is identical from top to bottom, and they all use the same operating system as government entities.

The target population of this study was 148 individuals, those are in the selected zones, the target population of the study area is the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sports office's public relations experts, tourism promotion workers, the organization management members, and the organization deputy chief and chief (66), as well as the department of Government Communication Affairs offices public relation experts, journalists, management members, and the organization deputy chief and chief (60).

Furthermore, the Regions Culture Tourism and Sports Bureau chief and deputy chief, public relation expert and tourism promotion experts (12), and the Regions Government Communication Affairs Bureau chief and deputy chief, public relation expert and journalists (10) are the target population of the study area. So, the total target population of the study area considered was 148 people. To determine the sample size for this study, the single population proportion formula was used (Yamane, 1967).

Where n= is the sample size, N= is the population size, e= is the level of precision.

$$N = \text{ Total population}$$

$$n = \text{Sample size}$$

$$e = 0.05$$

$$1 = constant$$

$$n = \textbf{\underline{108}}$$

The sample size of the study is 148 which incorporate from the target groups. Under stratified sampling, the populations are divided into sub populations or strata (Table 4.1). Furthermore, (Kothari, 2004), formula was used for proportional sample size allocation as:-

where; ni = required number of participants from each group

Nl = total population of each strata

N = total population

n = sample size of total population

3.7   Tools of data collection

The study used primary sources and secondary sources of data for the analysis. These are in-questionnaires, depth interviews and document analyses. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

3.7.1   In-depth Interview

Data for the study was collected using in-depth interviews known as expert interviews as a significant means of gathering essential information as well as supplementary information gathered through questionnaires. The purpose of this instrument is to assess the public relations activities practiced in the bureaus in promoting tourism sites in the region, the tools used by Public Relations practitioners for promoting tourism sites, and the challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the region. Hence, the researcher held interviews with the selected participants (i.e., public relations professionals and public relations managers of the selected zones and head offices of selected organizations) and took notes or records. Also, the semi-structured interview type was superbly suited for several valuable tasks, particularly when more than a few of the open-ended questions required follow-up queries. The interview guide includes ten (10) open-ended interviews prepared for key informants in culture tourism and government communication, as well as twelve (12) key informants prepared by the researcher to allow the informants to explain the practice and challenges of public relations implementation in promoting tourism sites.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

This type of data collection is very popular, especially for large inquiries. The questionnaire was one of the data collection tools used in this study. It was used to investigate the public

relations activities practiced in the bureau in promoting tourism sites in the region, identify the appropriate tools used by public relations for promoting tourism sites, and investigate the challenges of public relations work in promoting tourism sites in the region.

In this method, a questionnaire was delivered to the individuals involved with a request for answers. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale: strongly agree (1), agree (2), fairly agree (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). To triangulate the study result, the researcher prepared (20) questions on closed-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires will be administered to SWERS in three selected zones by the culture, tourism, and sports department office workers, the government communication affairs department staff, and the head offices of CTSB and GCAO. For a total of 108 sample sizes to 96 persons questionnaires were distributed to the participants and for 12 persons in-depth interviews were conducted.

3.8   Methods of Data Collection Sources

To collect data for the study, primary sources were used. There are two types of research that can be conducted: primary research and secondary research.

3.8.1   Primary source

The study collected primary data using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including a qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews. The researcher employed questionnaires to collect quantitative data from personnel of the three targeted zones cultural tourism and sports departments, as well as the government communication affairs department.

3.8.2   Secondary source

Secondary data was collected from relevant Official documents, research reports, official letters, and websites were also used as secondary sources of data to investigate the practice and challenges of public relations to promote tourism site in SWER cultural tourism and sports departments, as well as the government communication affairs department.

3.9   Data Gathering Procedure

The main procedures are: first, the instruments selected in line investigated the practices and challenges of public relations implementation in promoting tourism sites in the case of South

West Ethiopia Regional State Culture, Tourism, and Sports and the Government Communication Affairs Bureau. Before beginning data collection activities, the researcher executed certain critical actions to improve the reliability and validity of the previously indicated instruments. Also, the author performed data collection procedures such as official letters, ethics clearances, and consent forms; recruited relevant parties; visited and interviewed informants; pre-orders equipment; and arranged appointments.

3.10 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

The researcher analyzed qualitative data using thematic data analysis and quantitative data using percentages and tabulation. Quantitative data was studied using descriptive statistics such as percentages and tabulation. Analyzing qualitative data typically entails immersing oneself in the data to become familiar with it, then looking for patterns and themes, searching for various relationships between data that help the investigator understand what they have, visually displaying the information, and writing it up (Kawulich, 2015). In-depth interviews were used to obtain qualitative data, which was coded and thematically analyzed.

3.11 Review of Documents

In an effort to make this study more appropriate, credible and relevant secondary sources that were found important to the study were reviewed. Literature was also a significant source of data, primarily for chapters two and four but also for the rest of the chapters, allowing them to provide more clarification and evidence about promotional practices, challenges, resource identifications, and promotional activities and tools in the area. As a result, both published and unpublished sources were thoroughly investigated, including tourism development policy, promotion strategy, books, web pages, journal articles, dissertations and theses, reports, annual and semi-annual plans, brochures, flyers, and other various official documents (administrative and archival documents).

3.12 Reliablity and Validity

The internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, the most popular coefficient of reliability measure. Based on the analysis generated from SPSS, the value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.905, which is above the standard value suggested by Nunnally (1978) of 0.70, which is statistically considered high. So, the instrument was found to be statistically reliable

and can be used to assess Ethiopian students. Validity is the accurateness, constancy or effectiveness with which a tool measures what is proposed to measure. In this study, the instruments were primarily prepared by the researcher and discussed with tourism promotion experts who are working in culture and tourism offices. Then the instruments were also reviewed by my advisor to compromise his valuable advice for the validity of instruments.

3.13 Ethical considerations

During data collection, the researcher was provide sufficient information so that all respondents and key informants know about the purpose and procedure of the study. Due consideration was given to the culture, social norms, and values of the community. Oral consent was taken from the research participants and the confidentiality of the information is assured.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSES, PERESENTATION AND STUDY FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. The chapter presentation was guided by the study's aims and research questions. The chapter is presented in the following sections: the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the southwest Ethiopia region. Most importantly, this study set out to ascertain the major public relations activities practiced in promoting tourist destination sites in the region, the challenges of public relations in promoting tourist destination sites in the region, and the tools

of public relations that are used in promoting tourism destinations. Hence, the findings of the study are presented as follows:

Accordingly, to accomplish this task, data was collected through questionnaires as well as interviews. As mentioned in the methodological section, the questionnaire had 96 respondents. Out of these respondents, 4 questionnaires were discarded. That is, there were 92 respondents for the research. Their responses were analyzed with a statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 22.5. In order to have a comprehensive image and scrutinize the respondents' report about the study, the questionnaire data was employed. Besides, the interview items were categorized based on their themes and analyzed in terms of word description. Consequently, this section presents the findings pertinent to the study's leading research questions and its major purposes.

Table 1 Stratified Sample Size

Target population (participant)	total	$ni = n\, \dfrac{N1}{N}$	Sample size
Department of Culture, Tourism and Sports offices public relation experts, tourism promotion workers, the organization management members and the organization deputy chief and chief	66	$108 \times 66/148$	49
Department of Government Communication Affairs offices public relation exprtes,	60	$108 \times 60/148$	44

journalists, management members, and the organization deputy chief and chief			
The regions head office culture tourism and sport bruea chief and deputy chief, public relation expert and tourism promotion experts	12	$108 \times 12/148$	8
The regions head office government communication affiares bruea chief and deputy chief, public relation expert and journalists	10	$108 \times 10/148$	7
Total	148	Total=108	108

Note: where; ni = required number of participants from each group Nl = total population of each strata N = total population n = sample size of total population

Data from the questionnaire

4.2 Demographic profile of the respondents

From a total of 108 stratified sample size questionnaires distributed to respondents, 4 questionnaires were not returned; hence, 92 questionnaires were used to investigate the study's results. and the other 16 respondents were selected for in-depth interviews. As a result, 92 questionnaires were used to assess the findings of this study. Male respondents made up 62 (67.4%) of the overall sample size, while female respondents made up 30 (32.6%). The age groups of respondents were 20-29 (41.3%), 30-39 (37.0%), 40-49 (18.5%), and 50 and above (3.3%). When we look at the academic rank of the participants, we observe that the majority of them, 69 (75.0%), were or had been first-degree participants, and the least number of responses were diploma, 4 (4.3%), and Ph.D. 3 (3.3%) master's degree participants, 16 (17.4%).

In terms of area of study specialization, the majority of respondents in organizations are specialized in fields other than Public Relations or have an unrelated educational background, implying that the group of specialization for the majority of respondents was others. 33 (35.9%), followed by Language 26 (28.3%), and the least number of respondents were history and heritage management, 15 (16.3%), media and communication, 11 (12.0%), and hospitality and tourism, 7 (7.6%). This demonstrates that the majority of participants had worked for the study area organization. The majority group was the unrelated professions of specialty.

The respondents' job experience ranged from more than ten years to 30 (32.6%), from 6 to 10 years to 27 (29.6%), from 2 to 5 years to 20 (21.7%), and less than 2 years to 7 (7.6%). This indicates that the majority of participants had between 6 and 10 years of work experience. The employment categories of the respondents were experts 68 (73.9%), management members 19 (20.7%), and managers 5(5.4%), in that order. The participants in the study were workers of the study area organization, and they were thought to be a good source of information regarding the practice and challenges of public relations for promoting tourism sites.

4.3 Public Relations Activities to Promote Tourism sites

In this section, the researcher presents the findings from the survey to determine the level of agreement among respondents on public relations activities in the region aimed at promoting the tourism destination. These findings can help in identifying any gaps or areas for improvement in the tourism destination's promotion, allowing for more targeted programs to increase its attractiveness and attract more visitors. The majority of respondents, 66 (71.2%), agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "Experts use various media relations to promote tourism spots and reach a large audience." Only 15 (16.3%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the mean values of 2.21 below (Figure 3).

The outcomes of the study showed that public relations professionals in the research field use a variety of media to promote tourism destinations and reach a big audience in their efforts to promote tourism. These encounters with the media encompass broadcast, print, and social media. Some of them are national and local media, and they seek to promote tourist destinations by creating media relations through EBC, Fana, Walta, STV, community radio, FM stations, and so on.

According to key respondents, in addition to traditional media outlets, Public Relations professionals use digital platforms like websites, blogs, and social media to promote tourism destinations, enhancing reach and impact through real-time engagement and interactive storytelling.

Public Relations Activities to Promote Toursim Destinations

	Experts use various media relations to promote tourism spots and reach a large audience.	The PR department is working in coordination with the local community and stakeholders	The PR experts prepare, and distribute written editorials and manuals that promote tourism sites.	To promote tourism sites, the PR professionals organized institutional events and festivals.	The organization is conducting research to promote tourism sites.	The organization monitors national and international media
SA	29	41	34	30	22	45
A	37	29	21	23	23	21
FA	11	11	18	11	24	9
DA	8	3	12	17	11	7
SDA	7	8	7	11	12	10
Mean	2.21	2	2.32	2.52	2.65	2.09

Figure 2 PR activity to promote tourist destination

A larger majority of respondents, 70 (76.1%), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The PR is working in coordination with the local community and stakeholders to promote tourism sites in the region". Another 11 (12.0%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with mean values of 2.0 above (Figure 3). The results show that the Southwest Ethiopia region has various tourist destinations, and these tourist destinations would not exist in the area if the local community did not maintain them and institutions did not collaborate with the local community and stakeholders. The result of the study indicates that this tourist destination has been preserved and has been able to exist until today because of the culture of working together with the organization and the community. This collaborative effort has not only ensured the preservation of tourist destinations but has also contributed to their development and growth over time.

The key informants highlight the importance of continued collaboration between institutions, local communities, and stakeholders in order to sustain and further enhance these valuable tourist attractions in Southwest Ethiopia.

A greater proportion, 55 (59.5%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The PR experts prepare, and distribute written editorials and manuals that promote tourism sites in the study area". An additional 19(20.6%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with mean values of 2.32 above (Figure 3). This indicates that public relations professionals in the Southwest region prepare and distribute various editorials and manuals to promote the region's tourism destinations. Additionally, in organization the respondents have short-term and long-term plans to prepare and distribute various editorials and manuals to promote tourism destinations, but they are doing as much work as they can, even if they do not have enough budget or logistical support.

The majority, 53 (57.6%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "To promote tourism sites, the PR professionals organized institutional events and festivals.". However, 28 (or 30.5%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the mean values of 2.52 above (Figure 3). In fact, each zone of the region celebrates the New Year holiday with its own colors, history, and traditions in order to promote its man-made and natural tourism assets. For example, Dawuro Zone's "Toki-Baa", Konta Zone's "Hingcha", and Kaffa Zone's "Meshikere" annual holidays organize various traditional and modern events every year to promote their tourism assets. In addition, in the events organized by the institution itself or in other events, i.e., in various sports competitions and large governmental and non-governmental platforms, public relations professionals are promoting tourism destinations by planning and using opportunities.

The majority, 45 (48.9%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The organization is conducting research to promote tourism sites in the study area". A few 23 respondents (25%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with the mean value of 2.65 above (Figure3). The result confirms that research is being done at the institute to promote tourism destinations in the region. According to key informants, there is an independent work process in the institution where the public relations activities carried out to promote the tourism destinations in the institution where the research is conducted are conducted together with the staff of the institution and other stakeholders.

The majority, 66 (71.7%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The organization monitors national and international media to control negative reports about the region's tourism spots.". However, 17 (18.5%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the mean value of 2.09 above (Figure 3). The results show that the respondents,

public relations professionals working in the region's culture, tourism, and sports institutions, as well as government communication institutions, monitor and respond to negative media reports about the region's tourism destinations.

4.4 Tools of Public Relation to Promote Toursim Site

In this section, the researcher will present the results of the respondents' answers about what kind of promotional tools are used by public relations professionals in the region to promote the tourism destination. The majority, 45 (48.9%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: The organization uses print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations through "Newspapers". A few of the 29 (31.5%) respondents did not use it or did not use it at all, with mean values of 2.68 below (Figure 4). The outcome supported their usage of "Newspapers" to promote the tourist sites in the region. According to key informants, the newspaper used as a tool in promoting tourism sites is included in the annual, monthly, and weekly plans of the organizations, and newspaper publications of different content will be made and distributed to promote tourism destinations.

The majority, 62 (67.3%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: The organization uses print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations through "Magazines". A few 14 (15.2%) of respondents do not use it or do not use it at all, with mean values of 2.15 below (Figure 4). The findings confirmed that the institute used "Magazines" as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. Dawuros' annual magazine, for example, is called "Wonta," Kaffas' annual magazine is called "Bunno," and Kontas' annual magazine is also called "Woyta." According to key informants, this magazine preparation is included in the annual plan, and magazines are published and distributed once a year to promote tourism destinations in the study area.

The majority, 61 (66.3%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: The organization uses "others print media (Brocher, Posters, Flyers)" print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations. A few 12 (13.0%), respondents did not use it or did not use it at all, with mean values of 2.18 below (Figure 4). The results confirmed the use of "Others (Brocher, Posters, Flyers)" print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. According to key informants, apart from newspapers and magazines, there are many publications in other print media. For example, there are brochures, posters, flyers, etc. that are easy to prepare and time-saving. The key informants stated that this publication is so easy

to prepare that it will be prepared and distributed on all the platforms in the region to promote tourism destinations.

Usng Print Medias as Tourism Destinations Promoting Tool					
	Make Extensive Use	Use	Rarley Use	Doesnot Use	Doesnot Use at all	Mean
■ Newspapers	19.6	29.3	19.6	26.1	5.4	2.68
■ Magazines	38	29.3	17.4	9.8	5.4	2.15
■ Others pint medias	34.8	31.5	20.7	6.5	6.5	2.18
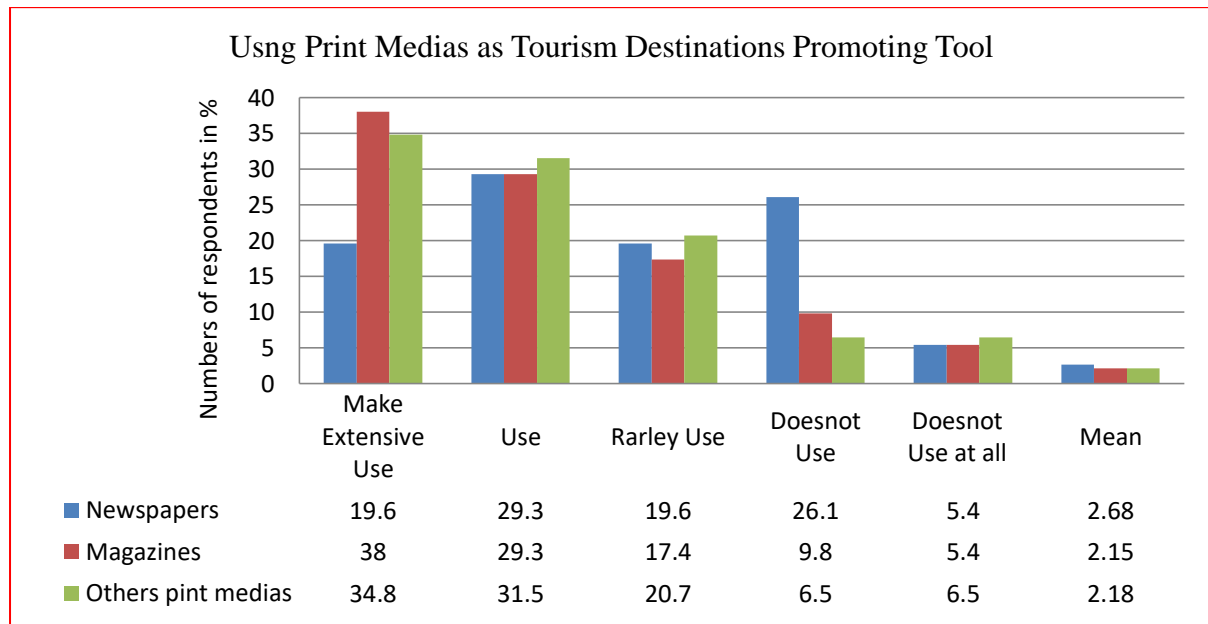
Figure 4 Print Media as Tourism Destinations Promoting Tool

The majority, 68 (74.0%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: Experts use broadcast media to promote tourism sites "Television" . A few 9 (9.8%), of respondents do not use or do not use at all, with mean values of 2.05 below (Figure 5). The results confirmed that the institution was using broadcast media, i.e., television, as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. According to key informants, since television has the potential to reach a wide audience, the region uses national and local media to promote its tourism destinations to the world, such as EBC, Fana, EBS TV, Hagare TV, South TV, the recently launched Kaffa TV, and others that are widely used.

The majority, 66 (71.7%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: Experts use broadcast media to promote tourism sites "Radio". A few 8(8.7%), respondents did not use or did not use at all, with mean values of 2.03 below (Figure 5). The results confirmed that the institution is using radio as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. According to key informants, since radio is widely listened to in our region and the stations are located in every area, for example, the Ethiopian Radio Organization, Fana FM 98.1, Waka FM 94.2, and other community radio organizations not only promote the region's tourism destinations but also create awareness for our tourism destinations in the community to be protected, key informants stated that radio is an option.

Experts use of Broadcast Medias to promote tourism sites

	Make Extensive Use	Use	Rarley Use	Doesnot Use	Doesnot Use at all	Mean
Radio	40.2	31.5	19.6	2.2	6.5	2.03
TV	37	37	16.3	3.3	6.5	2.05
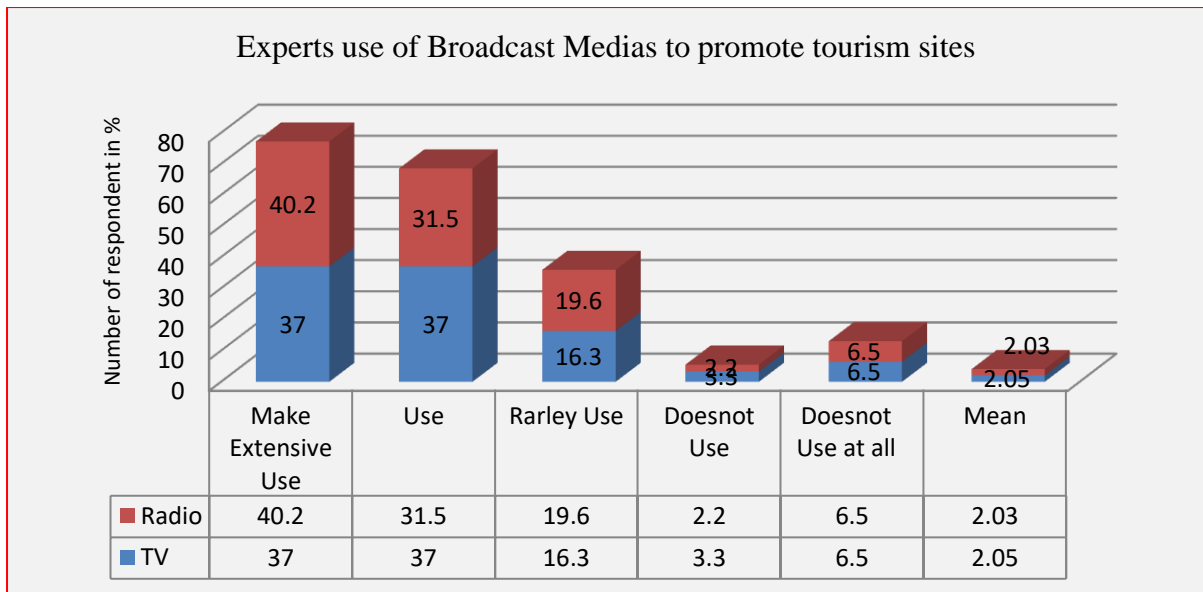
Figure 5 Broadcast Medias to promote tourism sites

The majority, 47 (51.1%), of respondents do not use or do not use at all with the statement: "The organization uses out-of-home (OOH) media to promote tourism destinations (large billboards on the streets)". A few 15 (16.3%), of respondents use or make extensive use of it, with mean values of 3.48 below (Figure 6). The question result confirmed that the institution does not use "out-of-home (OOH)" media as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. Most of the key informants stated that they do not actively use out-of-home (OOH) media to promote tourism destinations in the region.

The response ratio for organizational use of OOH media to promote tourism destinations.

- 11% Make Extensive Use
- 5% Use
- 33% Rarley Use
- 27% Doesnot Use
- 24% Doesnot Use at all

Figure 6 OOH media to promote tourism destinations

The majority, 76 (82.7%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: The professional uses social media to promote tourism sites like "Facebook" . A few 8(8.7%) of respondents do not use or do not use at all, with mean values of 1.68 below (Figure 7). The findings confirmed that the institute uses social media as a tool to promote tourism

destinations in the region. According to key informants, each of the communication, culture, and tourism offices in the region has its own Facebook page, and they use this page every day to promote the tourism destinations of the region. The key informants stated that this page is easy to use, cost-effective, can reach the followers in a short time, and is a very modern and effective platform that receives the feedback of the followers.

The majority, 66 (71.8%), of respondents use or make extensive use of the statement: The professional uses social media to promote tourism sites like "Telegram". A few 22 (23.9%) of respondents do not use or do not use at all, with mean values of 2.12 below (Figure7). The findings confirmed that the institution uses Telegram as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. According to key informants Telegram is an easy-to-use, modern tool for exchanging information and receiving feedback from followers. The key informants stated that through this telegram, institutions will create their own channels and groups to promote tourism destinations in the region.
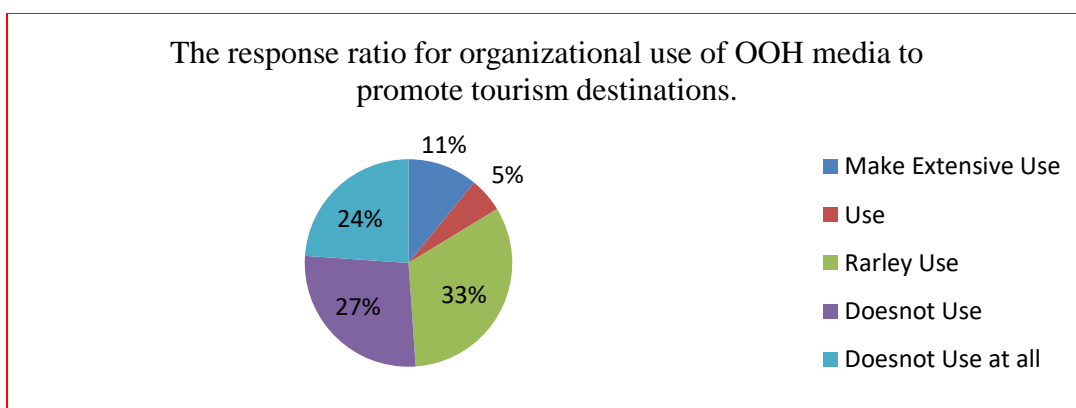
The majority, 34 (36.9%), of respondents do not use or do not use at all the statement: The professional uses social media to promote tourism sites "others social media than Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, etc.". A few 31 (33.7%) of respondents use or make extensive use of it, with mean values of 3.09 below (Figure 7). The results confirmed that "others, like Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, etc., are not using social media as a tool to promote tourism destinations in the region. Besides Facebook and Telegram as key informants, there are many types of other social media. For example, Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram, and others that work with video and image composition are preferred for promoting tourism destinations because they are very modern and attractive, but not all institutions in the region are using them in the current situation, according to the key informants.
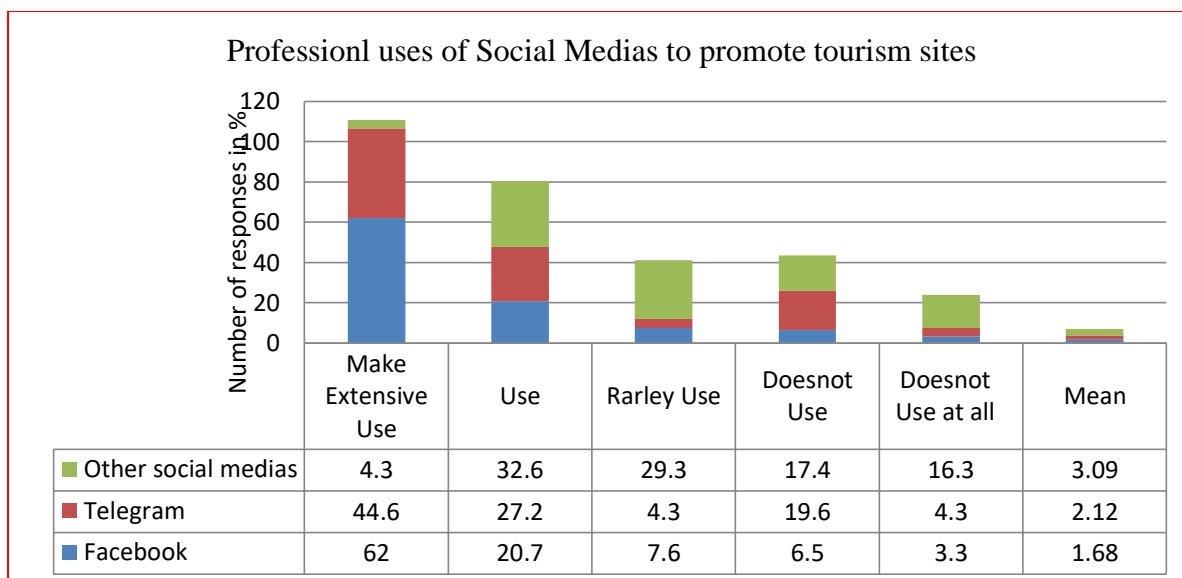
Figure 7 Social media to promote tourism sites

4.5 Challenges of Public Relations in Promoting Tourism Sites

In this section, the researcher offers the findings regarding the respondents' level of agreement regarding the challenges of public relations work in promoting a tourism destination. A greater proportion, 39 (42.4%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "PR departments are getting help from the managers in their efforts to promote the tourism sites". Another 35 (38%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with mean values of 3.00 below (Figure 8). The results indicate that experts are getting support and help from managers in their attempts to promote tourism sites. Key respondents believe that the structure would not exist in the region without the help and attention of managers because of their superiors' support for this goal. This structure, according to key informants, has a budget, an expert has been hired, leadership has been selected, and monitoring and assessments are being carried out. Furthermore, regular monitoring and assessments are carried out to verify that the structure is effective in fulfilling its goals. According to key informants, This activity is the level of support that demonstrates the significance attributed to the structure.

A greater proportion, 63 (68.5%), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "The office has a sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism places" Hardly any of the 14 (15.2%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with mean values of 3.72 below (Figure 8). More than half of those respondents disagreed that there is enough budget allocated to promote tourism hotspots in the region.

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This indicates that there is insufficient budget to promote tourism hotspots in the region. According to the main respondents, the lack of sufficient budget allocation has resulted in a shortage of manpower and limited logistic support, which in turn hinders the effective promotion of tourism resources in the region. If there had been an appropriate budget allocation, budget-related concerns such as a lack of sufficient manpower, limited logistic support, and other challenges that hinder promotion activity would not have emerged in institutions that promote tourism resources. The respondents also emphasized that the lack of adequate budget allocation has hindered the development and maintenance of tourism infrastructure, upgrading tourist attractions, modernizing promotion tools, fulfilling human resources, etc. This further limits the region's ability to attract and accommodate tourists, ultimately affecting the overall promotion of tourism sites. With adequate budget allocation, these challenges could have been addressed, leading to more effective promotion of the region's tourism potential.

Challenges of PR to Promote Tourism Sites

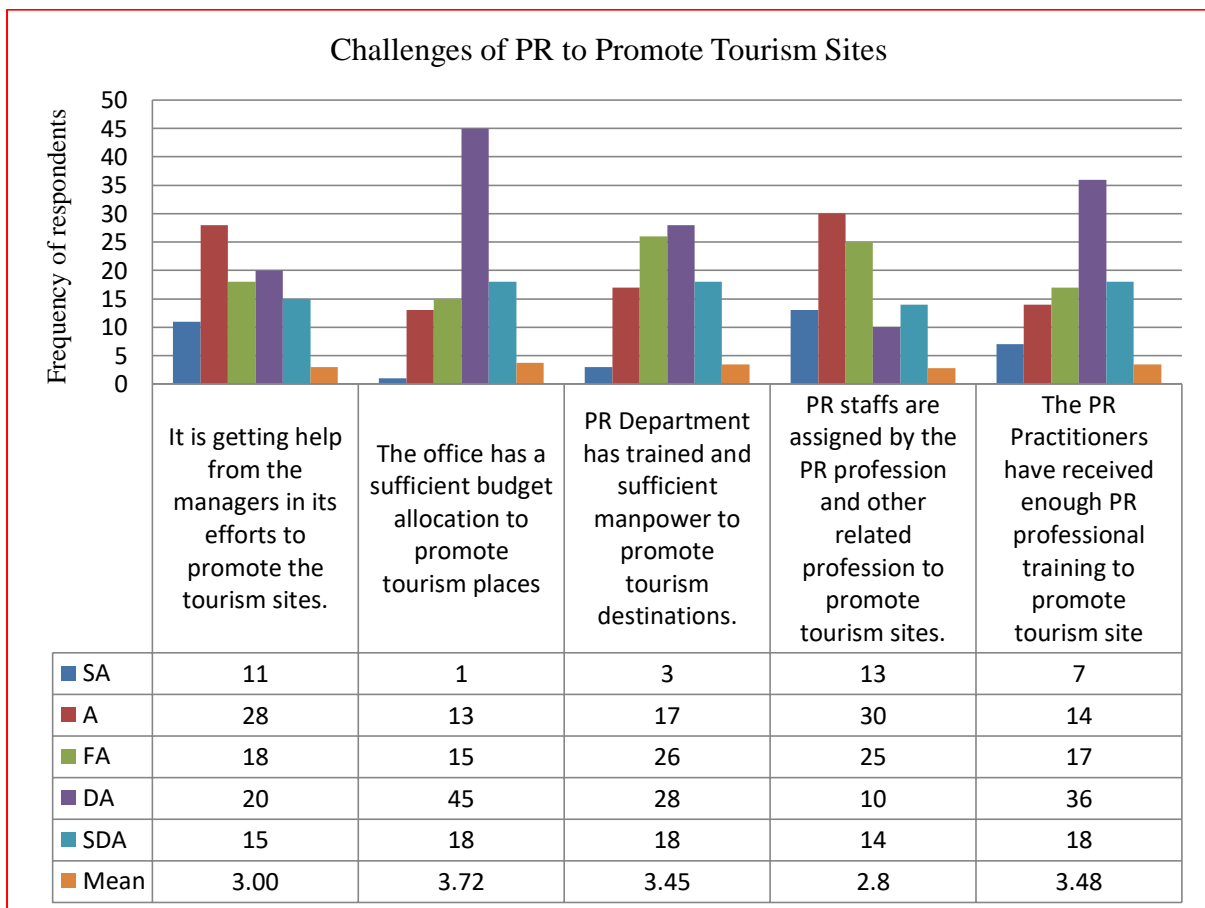|	It is getting help from the managers in its efforts to promote the tourism sites.	The office has a sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism places	PR Department has trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations.	PR staffs are assigned by the PR profession and other related profession to promote tourism sites.	The PR Practitioners have received enough PR professional training to promote tourism site
■ SA	11	1	3	13	7
■ A	28	13	17	30	14
■ FA	18	15	26	25	17
■ DA	20	45	28	10	36
■ SDA	15	18	18	14	18
■ Mean	3.00	3.72	3.45	2.8	3.48

Figure 8 Challenges of Public Relations to Promote Tourism sites

The majority, 46 (50%), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "The PR Department has trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations". Only 20 (21.8%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with mean values of 3.45 above (Figure 8). The study's findings confirmed the region's and chosen zonal institutions' lack of trained and complete human resources to promote tourism attractions. The key informants highlighted that the PR Department's limited manpower and lack of training hindered their ability to effectively promote tourism destinations. Additionally, they emphasized the need for investment in human resources to address this issue and enhance the region's tourism promotion efforts.

The majority, 43 (46.7%), of respondents, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Within your organization, public relations staff are assigned by the PR profession and other related professions to promote tourism sites". few, 24 (30.1%), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with mean values of 2.80 above (Figure 8). The results of the study show that most of the employees assigned to do public relations work in the institution and to promote tourism destinations are assigned to the public relations profession and other related professions. This indicates that the majority of organizations recognize the importance of having trained professionals in public relations and related fields to effectively promote tourism sites. It also suggests that these organizations understand the value of specialized knowledge and skills in effectively communicating with the public and promoting tourism destinations.

The majority, 54(58.7%), of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "The PR Practitioners have received enough public relations professional training to promote tourism site". Only a few 21(22.7%), of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with mean values of 3.48 above (Figure 8). This shows that there is not enough professional public relations training for PR practitioners to promote tourism destinations in the region. This result was supported by key respondents. According to the key respondents, if there had been proper professional training and support, the lack of awareness related to the profession and other challenges that hinder promotion work would not have arisen in institutions promoting tourism resources.

Data from key informants' in-depth interview

In this section of an in-depth interview for data collection, twelve (12) key informants were purposefully chosen. The region's Culture, Tourism, and Sports Bureau chief, public relations directorates, tourism site promotion directorates (3), and the region's Government Communication Affairs Bureau chief, communication directorate, and public relations directorate (3) were interviewed using unstructured interview questions. Furthermore, in the selected zones, the chiefs of the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sports (3) and the Department of Government Communication Affairs (3) were interviewed using unstructured interview questions. As a result, the data is presented and evaluated as follows:

1. In response to the question, what PR activities do your organizations undertake to promote the tourism industry in the SWE region?

   Respondent 1 stated, "Our office's PR activity is institutional image building, and when we do institutional image building, we indirectly do national image building. Then, by explaining and enlightening the public about our institution's operations and work, we will develop a positive national image. Based on the public relations activities that we conduct in our institution, we have completed the work of developing a positive regional image by promoting our potential tourism resources in the tourism sector, and we are working in a continuous effort to attract visitors from the country." Furthermore, he noted that our institution works with local businesses and organizations on a regular basis to promote the region's image.

   Respondent 5 stated that "we use various media to deliver messages and reach out to the public with new information and institutional policies. Those media are broadcast media (TV and radio), which are typically held by the government or a broadcast authority; public relations professionals simply prepare and distribute messages to tourist destinations that are broadcast. Print media is also widely employed in the department to advertise tourist attractions." Furthermore, she noted they use various pamphlets and flyers to print announcements, awareness-creation messages, and mobilization messages, and actively use social media as one of the key media outlets used in the region to promote tourism spots.

According to respondent 3, the region's diverse tourism resources are collected and broadcasted at the regional, national, and international levels using a variety of media, including radio and television shows, written publications, and YouTube. According to him, "the job of preparing and disseminating these programs in our institution is mostly public relations."

Respondents 2 and 4 stated that in addition to the above activities of PR, one of the public relations activities carried out in the region is to organize events around various topics, including the promotion of the tourism resources of the area and the region through events organized. These events aim to showcase the unique attractions and cultural heritage of the region, enticing visitors to explore its natural wonders and historical sites. Additionally, collaborating with external event organizers allows for greater exposure and reach, attracting a diverse audience and generating positive publicity for the region. So, public relations experts are promoting the tourism destinations in the region through social activities by creating awareness among the public about the tourism resources of the area, coordinating with society and other stakeholders, and working in coordination. However, the respondents said that the work done so far is not perfect and needs to be improved.

Respondent 6 stated that " the main activities of public relations are disseminating information via social media, documenting information through photographs and videos, monitoring the media, producing press releases, and organizing events to promote tourism locations." They also stated that public relations specialists play an important role in cultivating relationships with media outlets and influencers in order to assure positive coverage and exposure for tourism destinations. Furthermore, the responder stressed the need to regularly monitor and evaluate social media trends and comments in order to successfully customize public relations efforts for optimum impact.

Respondent 12 asserted that the South West Ethiopia Region's Tourism and Communication Bureau did not promote tourism destinations such as other countries through international media such as the BBC and CNN. They suggested that the Bureau look into cooperating with well-known international media outlets to promote the region's unique qualities and increase its awareness among potential tourists. Furthermore, the responder proposed that the office and professionals focus on leveraging social media platforms and digital marketing strategies to reach a big audience and effectively promote Southwest Ethiopia's tourism potential.

Respondent 8 said that "our bureau's public relations staff has handled a variety of tasks including stage facilitation, video recording, meeting photography, and publishing preparation. The majority of the publication's contents, however, were uninteresting, and the department was unable to put its theory into practice by producing a high-quality documentary to promote culture and tourism resources that associate SWER zones with their distinct tourism destinations. In order to overcome the existing gaps, I feel that the Bureau will need to practice professionally in the future."

According to responses 7 and 10, the institute is conducting research to promote tourism hotspots in the region. According to the respondents, the institute's research was done to identify special attractions and cultural heritages in the region that have the potential to attract tourists, formulate targeted marketing strategies, understand tourist choices and needs, and address other important issues, but it was insufficient.

Finally, two respondents, 11 and 9, asserted that, whether at the regional or zonal level, every public relations action is carried out at both the policy and operational levels to promote the region's tourism hotspots and create its image. News writing, event planning, press releases, management speech writing, and advertising the bureaus' operations, particularly through social media and magazine publication, are examples. Organizing public awareness campaigns and disseminating information, as well as capturing and organizing event program information Campaigning and public relations The formation of an image, social media, websites, and the notice board are all activities of PRs. The political actions delegated by top management are carried out by keeping the public informed about the region's operations and advertising the region's major events. Public relations efforts in their organizations, according to respondents, involve organizing content and processing it for national media. However, respondents state that public relations activities in the region were ineffective due to a range of challenges.

2. What public relations tools do you use to promote tourism sites in the region?

Respondents 3 and 1 stated: In public relations, we use various media tools to effectively promote tourism destinations in the region. These tools include social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, where we create engaging content and share captivating visuals to attract potential visitors. Additionally, we utilize press releases and media kits, ensuring that our tourism destinations receive extensive coverage in newspapers, magazines, and online publications.

Respondents 2 and 4 stated that public relations tools are critical for raising awareness and interest in tourism locations. It is difficult to promote and market our tourism resources without the use of public relations techniques. Our organization is striving to reach a large audience through the use of social media platforms, collaboration with other media outlets, and press releases. However, because the majority of media relations work entails expenses and there is insufficient funding for this work in the region, they believe that "not enough work has been done to promote our tourism resources."

Respondent 7 asserted that the objective of public relations is to promote the region's different cultures, arts, and natural and manmade tourism resources for research, preservation, and development with the participation of the public, government, and any other interested entities. According to respondent to accomplish this, the group uses a number of tools, such as magazines, brochures, booklets, pamphlets, short documentaries, websites, social media, and print and broadcast media for press releases and press conferences.

Respondents 6 and 5 claim we use a variety of strategies in public relations to promote tourism destinations in the region. One of the most important strategies is media relations, in which we build contacts with journalists and pitch stories about the destinations' attractions and unique traits. Furthermore, we leverage social media channels to build compelling content and reach a larger audience, leveraging influencers and user-generated material to generate buzz and enhance visibility. "However, it is not being done with the aid of the region's leaders or stakeholders in a way that produces results."

According to 8 and 11 key informants' responses, event- and process-oriented public relations practices refer to practicing mainly by focusing on events within the year such as the "Tokki be"a", "Hingicha", and "Meshkero". The practitioners have been using different public relations tools for the purpose of providing information and creating awareness on plans, implementation, government strategy, and promoting culture and tourism resources to achieve the mission and vision of the Bureau. For example, respondent 11 said, "My tasks in the organization have been preparing different publications such as brochures, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, fliers, posters, events, banners, exhibitions, short documentaries, posting on social media, developing website content, and also organizing press conferences and press releases for print and broadcast media to provide information for the public and create awareness."

Regarding public relations practices, the other respondent 10 said, "In the organization, I have been working to communicate and promote culture and tourism resources by disseminating information to the public through different public relations tools. Those are things such as press releases, social media campaigns, and organizing events. Additionally, I have also been involved in building relationships with key stakeholders, such as influencers and community leaders, to further enhance the organization's public image and reach a wider audience."

Respondent 9 also stated, "I have been practicing public relations through various publications to communicate and promote culture and tourism resources in order to make the SWER a preferred tourism destination and to conserve and develop natural resources and sacred areas through public participation." They emphasized the importance of working together to maintain the region's natural beauty and cultural legacy while also increasing its appeal as a tourism destination.

Respondent 12 stated that the bureau's public relations department identified and coordinated with government and private media (i.e., broadcast and print media) to promote cultural and natural resources in terms of media relations. Examples It include South TV, Kaffa TV, Fana Broadcasting Corporation, Ethiopia Broadcasting Corporation, Walta Television, Waka FM, and Kaffa Community Radio, among others. According to the interview, the bureau and the media have good working connections.

3. What do you think are the challenges of public relations to promote tourism sites in the SWE region?

According to respondent 6, "public relations practices are vital for the organization. However, the Bureau faced challenges such as a lack of professional human resources, a lack of sufficient budget allocation, language constraints, and public relations misunderstandings at all levels of practitioners, management, and organizations. These challenges hindered the bureau's ability to effectively communicate with the public and manage its reputation." He emphasized the need for strategic planning, training programs, and adequate resources to address these issues and enhance the Bureau's public relations efforts.

Respondent 2 stated similarly: "When I strategically evaluate public relations practices, there are many challenges, such as a lack of professional knowledge and understanding, a lack of attention given to public relations, assigning the director and practitioners without a profession, and a lack of budget." They stated that remaining current with industry

trends and obtaining specialized expertise will assist practitioners in traversing the complexities of public relations and managing the aforementioned difficulties efficiently. Furthermore, they emphasized the need to press for higher investment in public relations, as adequate budget allocation can considerably improve the effectiveness and impact of PR operations.

Furthermore, respondent 7 said, "The major challenges I have faced while practicing public relations are a lack of understanding as a practitioner, a wrong perception of public relations practices, a lack of professional capacity-building training and educational opportunities, undermining the practices, and poor attention given to public relations. These challenges have hindered the progress of public relations as a field and made it difficult for practitioners to effectively communicate the value and importance of their work." Additionally, he emphasized the need for greater recognition and support from organizations and stakeholders to address these challenges and elevate the status of public relations as a profession.

Respondents 4 and 5 also mentioned a lack of audiovisual equipment and innovative communication technology as one of their organization's PR challenges. They stated that "a lack of audiovisual equipment limits their ability to develop visually appealing and compelling content for their public relations initiatives." Furthermore, due to a lack of technology, they struggle to efficiently engage their target audience and keep up with the rapidly expanding digital environment.

Respondent 3 stated that the department intended to use various public relations tools to inform the public and promote culture and tourism resources, but that some of the tools planned were not successfully executed due to a lack of funds. Other challenges include a lack of public relations management support and a lack of clear job descriptions for each practitioner within the department.

In addition to the foregoing, respondent 8 stated that while practicing public relations to promote tourism, she encountered challenges such as interference from authority, a poor flow of information with internal and external audiences, and poor technology usage and handling. These obstacles have hampered the ability to communicate and engage with the target audience successfully. Furthermore, the authority's intervention has resulted in a disconnected and inconsistent message strategy, aggravating the difficulties in promoting tourism destinations in the SWER.

Respondent 12 further said that there was insufficient or insufficiently skilled labor, a lack of office equipment, and a lack of communication production instruments, computers, as well as video and photo cameras. "As you can see, I don't have a desktop computer or a printing machine; instead, I work on my personal laptop." The department lacks attention from upper-level officials, professional motivation, and attachment.

Similarly, according to respondent 10, the department planned for capacity-building training but has not implemented it yet, limiting opportunities for training and further education. He stated, "Because these opportunities are rare, practitioners do not receive the necessary on-the-job professional capacity-building training and further educational opportunities." Similarly, the department planned to use different instruments for public relations; however, some of them were not used due to budget constraints.

Furthermore, respondent 11 stated that there was a lack of promotion of the region's rich tourism destination locations, despite some efforts to promote the sector via social media. A shortage of specialists, a lack of cooperation among stakeholders, and other factors are to blame.

Similarly, respondent 9 indicated that they were unable to take advantage of the region's abundant tourism offerings. "Some of the reasons were: a lack of well-organized information about the region's tourist sites; a lack of infrastructure; a lack of professionals, particularly strategic marketing professionals who can run the task according to a plan; a lack of government attention; a lack of public awareness about heritage protection; a lack of museums; and a lack of budget."

4. To answer the question, what should be done to improve your organization's public relations practices in order to promote tourism sites?

Respondents 2 and 5 stated that they should empower practitioners by offering training, raising knowledge about the notion of public relations, and assigning public relations specialists and experienced practitioners in the tourism sector. Respondents also suggested developing a thorough public relations plan that includes targeted media campaigns, relationships with local influencers, and leveraging social media channels to reach a larger audience.

Respondents 7 and 4 additionally stated that strengthening media relations independently, equipping the department with necessary tools and materials, and promoting the professional freedom of the PR department also emphasized the importance of conducting thorough market research to identify target audiences and tailor communication strategies accordingly.

According to respondents 1 and 6, "there must be professional assistance, including training to improve skills, and high attention should be given both by the department and top-level management to improve public relations practices in our organization." Establishing good ties with local tourism boards and industry leaders can also help promote tourism attractions. By working with these stakeholders, the organization may successfully reach a larger audience and generate greater interest in the attractions by leveraging its knowledge and networks.

Respondents 3 and 8 stated, "The public relations practices in our organization can be improved by building the capacity of practitioners and creating understanding among the organization's departments and directorates about PR activities and values." Furthermore, having a complete social media strategy and connecting with online communities on a regular basis can help efficiently advertise our organization's tourism offers.

Respondents 9 and 12 expressed similar views on the need to enhance public relations procedures in their organizations, as follows: the activities of the PR department or directorate in their organization can be improved if PR professionals are assigned, necessary equipment is provided, collaboration is encouraged, and relationships are established among the Bureau's various departments, particularly with the PR directorate or department.

Furthermore, respondents 10 and 11 stressed the need to hold frequent training programs for public relations professionals in order to improve their abilities and expertise in promoting tourism locations. They also suggested that the firm set aside a budget for public relations efforts to ensure that promotional campaigns are carried out effectively.

The SWER Travel Tips Booklet 2022 as well as the public relations departments and Bureau's Facebook pages were reviewed. The selected zones' annual magazines "Buno, Woytta, and Wonta," as well as Flyer, brochure, sticker, and other printed items, were reviewed.

SWER Travel Tips Booklet 2022: According to the research, the SWER Travel Tips Booklet contains appropriate content that gives necessary knowledge on significant SWER cultural, natural, and man-made tourism resources. The booklet is event-focused and was released in honor of World Tourism Day 2022. The booklet's goal is to provide information for discussing and marketing SWER tourism resources in order to increase understanding and awareness. The booklet's contents are described, and it briefly provides information about the region's major tourist attractions or cultural, natural, and man-made tourism resources, as well as their respective profiles, such as distance from the local area or woreda town, location, visiting sites in the area, weather conditions (temperature, rainfall), and available accommodations and facilities.

Annual magazines: The selected zones' annual magazines are named Woytta, Buuno, and Wontta magazines (Appendix D), and their contents are presented poorly and not well organized. It contains mainly relevant content about the "Hingicha", "Tokkibe77a", and Meshikero," the selected zones' annual celebrations. However, it contains irrelevant political messages or content. Whereas the irrelevant ones included in the magazine were propaganda messages delivered from the ruling party's top zonal state authority. The above-unrelated magazine article implied that the ruling party manipulated and imposed impacts on public relations tactics.

As well, it should be mentioned that the magazine was poorly written and arranged. As a result, the public relations department would have to practice public relations in a professional manner, regardless of any political party's concerns.

Flyer, brochure, sticker, and other printed materials: The SWER brochure, flyer, sticker, and other printed material, according to the research, contain appropriate content that gives necessary knowledge on key SWER cultural, natural, and man-made tourism resources. These materials efficiently showcase SWER's distinctive features and attractions, making them essential tools for visitors looking for an immersive experience. Furthermore, the flyer is a convenient and visually appealing tool for promoting SWER's tourism products to a broader audience.

The purpose of this material is to provide information for discussing and marketing SWER tourism resources. The contents are well-detailed in images and words, and they include concise information about the region's important tourist attractions or cultural, natural, and man-made tourism resources.

Social media pages: Regarding the use of social media, the zones and regional offices selected for the study each have their own Facebook page at the institutional level (Appendix C). These Facebook pages serve as a platform for the institution to engage with its audience and share updates, events, and important information. Additionally, they provide a space for staff to connect with each other and foster a sense of community within their respective zones and regional offices. In this way, they promote the tourism resources of the region and use them to exchange pieces of information. However, the researcher observed that it does not give quick responses to commenters, shares, and likes.

4.6 Discussions

Based on the results obtained, this section presents the discussion on what the findings implied, practical indicators, possible conclusions, and recommendations. It also attempted to answer the leading research questions and showed the study's relevance to prior research and theory.

4.6.1. The Public Relations Activities in Promoting Tourism Sites.

Literature in the area of public relations and tourism studies confirms public relations practitioners' roles. For example, Castelli (2007) stated that public relations professionals may support the tourism sector by building a positive image and a favorable attitude towards tourism and, respectively, the tourism destination envisaged. Public relations activities play a crucial role in promoting tourism sites by effectively communicating the unique features and attractions of these destinations to the target audience. According to Bhatia, (2006), these activities involve creating compelling narratives, organizing press trips, and leveraging social media platforms to generate buzz and increase awareness about the tourism sites. Additionally, public relations professionals collaborate with travel influencers and journalists to secure positive media coverage, enhancing the visibility and desirability of these destinations among potential tourists. This can be achieved through various communication strategies, such as media relations, social media campaigns, and community engagement initiatives.

Additionally, Santoso & Negoro (2019), has shown that effective public relations efforts in the tourism industry can not only attract tourists but also contribute to the overall economic growth of a destination. Furthermore, Arionesei & Ivan (2014), stated that public relations in tourism are an important component of promoting the sector. which use general influence tools such as media relations reflected in press tours, tourism conferences, fairs and expositions, promotional activities, and special events. Communication can be done in a variety of ways, according to Kotler & Armstrong, (2009), including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, publicity, and public relations. This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of different public relations practices in promoting tourism sites. The researcher also investigated how these practices contribute to attracting tourists and enhancing the overall image of the destinations.

The result of the current study revealed that the observed mean score of public relations practice is greater than the expected mean score. This may indicate that there was a practice of public relations in the tourism bureau to promote tourist destination sites. Furthermore, the responses to each of the research questions confirmed that there were public relations activities, especially in the promotion of tourist destinations in the region (Figure 3). These findings suggest that the tourism bureau has been actively engaged in implementing public relations strategies to attract tourists to the region. The positive response to the research questions further supports the effectiveness of these public relations activities in promoting tourist destination sites. Therefore, it can be said that public relations activities focused on promoting tourist destinations in the region were at a good level.

Most of the key informants interviewed said that efforts were made through television programs, radio, publications, and social media to promote tourism destinations in the region. This finding is consistent with a recent study by (Arioneshi and Ivan, 2014). Public relations activities play a crucial role in promoting tourism sites. They involve creating a positive image of the destination through strategic communication and media relations. These activities include organizing press trips, hosting familiarization tours for travel journalists, and leveraging social media platforms to showcase the unique attractions and experiences offered by the tourism site. According to Ajake (2015), public relations professionals work closely with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that their voices are heard and that sustainable practices are implemented to preserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the destination.

4.6.2 Tools of Public Relations Practitioners Used to Promote Tourism Site

The literature on public relations and tourism confirms that public relations does not stand alone and uses various public relations tools to accomplish tasks. According to Mill & Morrison, (2017), the tools that Public Relations Practitioners use to promote tourism sites are diverse and ever-evolving. They utilize a combination of traditional and digital platforms to effectively reach their target audience. These may include press releases, media pitches, social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, website optimization, and strategic collaborations with travel agencies or local businesses. For example, according to Lee et al., (2021), these include newsletters, flyers, posters, event banners, public service announcements to local radio or television stations, organized community forums or meetings, visitors to your website, forms downloaded from your website, and PR tools.

They say that government sectors help deliver messages or current information and are communication tools for informing and persuading the public. Without the tools, it is not possible to communicate or promote tourism destinations. Therefore, PR specialists need to identify suitable tools that are easy and accessible to the public to disseminate information that is accessible to all, according to (Zadel et al., 2016). In addition to identifying suitable tools, PR specialists also need to ensure that the information disseminated is engaging and compelling enough to capture the attention of the public. Based on this, the current researcher has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the various tools employed in public relations to promote tourism destinations. By evaluating their effectiveness, the researcher aims to identify the most crucial tool for the region's tourism industry.

The results of this research clearly describe the tools utilized by public relations professionals in Southwest Ethiopia to promote tourism destinations. This suggests that it was most likely a tool employed by tourism office public relations experts to promote tourist destinations. In addition, the responses to each of the research questions confirmed that public relations professionals use different promotional tools, especially when promoting tourist destinations in the region. Therefore, it is known that public relations activities focus on promoting tourist destinations in the region using various tools, and the most commonly used ones are social media, print media, and broadcast media. Most of the key informants who were interviewed stated that efforts are being made to promote tourism destinations in the region through Facebook, Telegram, radio, and television, as well as print media. This finding is consistent with a study by Birhanu (2019).

According to Birhanu (2019), the tools that promote tourism destinations are television, radio, the internet, billboards, leaflets, etc.As a result, the analysis of public relations practice tools, key informant answers, and publication content revealed that the various public relations tools identified were not being used successfully. Therefore, the study confirmed the statement of Kim et al., (2018) that, in order to manage the public image and stakeholder relationships of companies and organizations, public relations practitioners should use a variety of communication tactics.

That included media releases, media events, social media accounts, fact sheets, pamphlets, annual reports, newsletters, and other materials that implied the technician role and informational model of public relations. However, the study recognized that public relations is a significant and primary pillar for building, developing, and sustaining the country's image as an attractive tourist destination and plays a crucial role in the promotion and affirmation of tourism and the country as a tourist destination.

Public relations in the tourism industry involves various strategies such as media relations, event management, and social media campaigns to create a positive perception of the destination. Additionally, effective public relations efforts can also contribute to increasing investments in the tourism sector and driving economic growth for the country. According to Santoso & Negoro, (2019), in the modern social-economic context, public relations are considered to be an important factor in the development and growth of tourism.

4.6.3. The Challenges of Public Relations in Promoting Tourism Sites

Hasan (2015), emphasized the necessity of tourism promotion in recognition of the emerging challenges posed by the growing number of tourism sites, which have placed at the disposal of a tourist a variety of attractions in abundance from a large number of competing nations. The results of the research question show that the results of public relations challenges in promoting tourist destinations are more than expected. This indicates that there are challenges in promoting tourist destinations in public relations. These are the reasons for not getting the necessary help from the managers in the efforts to promote the tourism places in the region, lack of sufficient budget allocation, lack of trained and sufficient human resources, the professionals not being assigned to the PR profession, and other related professions, the professionals not getting professional training and capacity building from time to time, and many other reasons. Therefore, we can imagine that public relations experts faced challenges that affected the promotion of tourist destinations in the region.

These challenges hindered the effective communication and marketing strategies needed to attract tourists to the region. According to Marshalls, (2015), one difficulty in using public relations to promote tourism destinations is that these destinations' potential is still unrealized, which will restrain their development and the economic gains they can bring to the surrounding areas. Besides, the findings indicate that in (Figure 8) there are challenges in public relations practices to promote tourist destinations in the region. Therefore, public relations professionals faced challenges in promoting tourist destinations in the Southwest Ethiopia region, but they tried to fulfill their duties despite these challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

It has been established that the tourism sector presents numerous development opportunities for countries (WTTC, 2020). Accordingly, the government of Ethiopia has developed a strategic plan for tourism development in the country. It has also been stated that the media, particularly public relations, have a powerful force that may make or break the tourism sector, and hence their participation in the industry is critical. This study set out to ascertain the practice and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the case of the southwest Ethiopia Region's culture, tourism, and sports bureau, as well as in the government communication affairs bureau. Accordingly, the study found that there were activities in public relations in the tourism and communication bureau, especially in promoting tourism sites in the southwest Ethiopia region. In addition to this, most of the key informants interviewed stated that there are efforts in the region to promote tourism sites in the selected zones through websites, social media, publications, broadcast media, and other promotional tools. Furthermore, this study revealed obstacles and challenges for the region's public relations sector when attempting to promote tourism attractions.

The study has identified various public relations tools such as print media, broadcast media, social media, exhibitions, websites, and others that aim to provide information to the public. The study suggested that the public relations concept is a new discipline at the Bureau, even if hitherto less attention has been paid to its progress in the organization. Most of the interviews indicated that the public relations officers were assigned without their profession and did not have managerial roles in the bureau, so they are working as technicians. Furthermore, this study revealed obstacles and challenges for the region's public relations sector when attempting to promote tourism attractions. These can be a lack of sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism sites, a lack of trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations, a lack of enough professional public relations training to promote tourism sites, a lack of awareness, a lack of equipment and resources, a lack of infrastructure, and others. Hence, we can assume that the public relations practitioners faced challenges that affected the promotion of tourist destination sites in the region.

5.2. Recommendations

The study's main goals are to investigate the practice and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the case of SWER. Hence, the following recommendations are forwarded based on the findings of the study:

❖ The region should pay special attention to public relations and its profession, and the department should be dominated by professionals and assign the right person to the right position for successful public relations practices that meet both the Bureau's and the public's interests mutually. As a result, they should pay special attention to the fact that the public relations sector plays a significant role in ensuring the effectiveness of tourism and related concerns for organizations in the Southwest Ethiopia Region. By prioritizing the hiring of professionals and ensuring they are assigned to suitable positions, the department should ensure that public relations efforts align with both the Bureau's goals and the interests of the public. This will ultimately contribute to the overall success and impact of tourism initiatives in the region.

❖ By utilizing new-age media and modern technologies as tools, the Southwest region can effectively reach a wider audience, both domestically and internationally. This will not only enhance the visibility of tourist destinations but also create a sense of trust and reliability among potential tourists, leading to increased support for these destinations. More efforts should be made in Ethiopia and the Southwest region of Ethiopia to use new-age media as promotional tools and to be assisted by modern technologies in order to be more accessible to Ethiopian and foreign tourists and to promote, protect, and encourage tourist destinations. These efforts to use promotional tools aided by modern technology serve as a source of knowledge about tourist destinations and motivate tourists to support the tourism destinations they have read about or seen.

❖ By offering comprehensive training programs, the regional Culture, Tourism, and Sports Bureau and the Government Communication Affairs Bureau should equip public relations officers with the necessary skills to excel in their roles. This will not only enhance their effectiveness in carrying out their duties but also ensure they are well-prepared to handle any challenges that may arise. Additionally, recognizing the importance of managerial and technician roles within public relations will enable these officers to actively contribute to strategic planning and successful task implementation.

❖ Professional capacity-building training and further educational opportunities should be given to practitioners to overcome their professional knowledge gaps and challenges concerning public relations and its profession. These training programs can help practitioners stay updated with the latest industry trends and best practices. Additionally, they can provide a platform for networking and knowledge-sharing among professionals in the field.

❖ The regional culture, tourism, and sports bureaus, as well as the government communication bureau, should work hard in order to minimize the challenges of public relations practices. The relevant higher governing bodies of the region should support the institution and experts by allocating enough budget, manpower, material support, and other issues that hinder the public relations activities of the region. Accordingly, it should work together with public relations officers to alleviate the challenges facing the bureau. By collaborating closely with public relations officers, the bureaus can identify and address any obstacles that may arise. This partnership will ensure a more effective and efficient resolution of challenges, ultimately enhancing the overall public relations practices of the region.

❖ Strategically, the region has to commit to professional public relations practices to strengthen the culture and tourism sectors and recognize that culture and tourism development could play a vital role in creating job opportunities and alleviating poverty, which results in the overall economic growth of the region. Therefore, public relations in the culture and tourism sectors should get strategic attention in the Bureau. By implementing effective public relations strategies, the Bureau should enhance the reputation and visibility of the region's cultural and tourism offerings. This will not only attract more visitors but also encourage investments from both domestic and international stakeholders, ultimately boosting the region's economic prosperity. Additionally, prioritizing public relations in these sectors will foster positive relationships with local communities, ensuring sustainable development and long-term success for the region's culture and tourism industries.

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Appendixes-A

Jimma University College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of Media and Communications Studies

MA in Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Questionnaire

Dear Respondents, My name is Mihiret Mitiku and I am An MA in PRCC student in the department of Media and communication studies at Jimma University. Currently I am conducting my MA thesis on Investigating the Practices and Challenges of Public Relations in Promoting Tourism Sites in the South-West Ethiopia Regional State. This questionnaire is designed to gather data for the study. The success of the study is depending on the data obtained through this questionnaire. Therefore, your cooperation is valuable in conducting this research, and I humbly request your cooperation. This questionnaire's objective is to collect primary and necessary data for the study; it will only be used for academic purposes, and your honest responses will be kept totally confidential. Therefore, please take a few minustes to complete this questionnaire and tick [√] to answer the following questions correctly.

Instruction: 1

❖ Please do not put your name or address on the questionnaire.
❖ Please tick [√] the most appropriate of your answers.
   Thank you in advance for contributing your time and information to this case*!!!*

Part A. Demographic Profile of Respondents

1. **Gender:-**   a) Male ☐   b) Female ☐

2. **Age:-**   a) 20-29 ☐   b) 30-39 ☐   c) 40-49 ☐   d) above 50 ☐

3. **Educational status:-**   a) Diploma ☐   b) Degree ☐   c) Masters ☐   d) PhD ☐
   e) others ☐

4. **Field of study specialization:-** a) Language ☐   b) Media and Communication ☐
   c) History and heritage management ☐   d) Hospitality and tourism ☐   e) other ☐

5. **Work experience:-**   a) Less than 1 year ☐   b) 2-5 years ☐   c) 5-10 years ☐
   d) 10 years and above ☐

6. **Job categories:-** a) Experts ☐   b) Management Members ☐   c) Managers ☐

Part B. Basic Question

Instruction: 2

❖ Please tick [√] under the response with the most honest and accurate answers and gives your answer according to your level of agreement.

❖ **1= Strongly agree 2= Agree 3= Fairly Agree 4= Disagree 5= Strongly disagree**

I.   Public Relations Activities in Your Organization to Promote Tourism sites…

N<u>o</u>	Descriptions	1	2	3	4	5
1	Experts use various media relations to promote tourism spots and reach a large audience.					
2	The pr department is working in coordination with the local community and stakeholders to promote tourism destinations.					
3	The Professionals in your organization prepare, and distribute written editorials and manuals that promote tourism sites.					
4	To promote tourism sites, professionals organized institutional events and festivals.					
5	Your organization is conducting research to promote tourism sites.					
6	The organization monitors national and international media to control negative reports about the region's tourism spots.					

II.   Public Relations Challenges in Your Organization to Promote Tourism Sites....

N<u>o</u>	Descriptions	1	2	3	4	5
1	It is getting help from the officials in its efforts to promote the tourism sites.					
2	The office has a sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism places					
3	PR Department has trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations.					
4	Within your organization, public relations staffs are assigned by the PR and other related profession to promote tourism sites.					
5	The PR Practitioners have received enough public relations professional training to promote tourism site					

Instruction: 3
- ❖ Please tick [√] under the response with the most honest and accurate answers and gives your answer according to your level of use.
- ❖ **1= Make extensive use of 2= Use 3 = Rarely Use 4= does not use 5 = does not use at all**

III.   Public relations tools and their effectiveness in promoting tourism sites….

No	Descriptions	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Your organization uses print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations.					
1.1	*Newspapers*					
1.2	*Magazines*					
1.3	*others*					
2.	Experts are uses broadcast medias to promote tourism sites					
2.1	*TV*					
2.2	*Radio*					
2.3	*Others*					
3.	The organization uses out of home (OOH) media to promote tourism destinations. (large billboards on the streets)					
4.	In your organization the professional uses social media to promote tourism sites					
4.1	*Facebook*					
4.2	*Telegram*					
4.5	*others*					

Jimma University College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of Media and Communications Studies

MA in Public Relations and Corporate Communications

I. **In-depth interview Guide for Top Managers of the Departments of Culture Tourism and Sport and Zonal Communications affaires**

Interview

Dear respondent's, this interview is designed to investigate the practices and challenges of public relations in promoting tourism sites in the case of SWERS. Therefore, in dealing with the following items of the interview, you kindly requested to provide genuine information about it. Your responses contribute a lot to the success of the study. I would like to assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. You should not tell your name and any identification for the interview.

I want to thank in advance for your cooperation!!!

II. **Interview with tourist office professionals**
5. What do you think about the present situation of the tourism industry in SWE region?
6. What do you think about promoting tourism in the region? How can it be developed and why is it easy or difficult to develop?
7. What kind of promoting strategies are needed to promote tourism in the region?
8. What factors affect the development of the tourism marketing of the region tourism sites?

III. **An interview for public relations professionals**
1. How do you think the region can be promoted through public relations to attract more tourists in the tourism sector?
2. What types of promotional tools do you think are effective to promoting tourism in the region?
3. How do you think public relations practitioner's activities may be improved to promote the region's tourism industry?
4. What do you think are the challenges of promoting SWE region tourism site?

Appendix-B (Amharic Version of the Questionnaire)

በጅማ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የማህበራዊ ሳይንስና ሂውማኒቲስ ኮሌጅ

የሚዲያ እና ኮሙኒኬሽን ትምህርት

በሕዝብ ግንኙነት እና በኮርፖሬሽን ግንኙነት ማስተርስ

መጠይቅ

ውድ ምላሽ ሰጪዎች፣ ስሜ ምህረተ ምትኩ እባላለሁ። በጅማ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሚዲያና ኮሙዩኒኬሽን ትምህርት ክፍል የ PRCC ተማሪ ነኝ። በአሁኑ ወቅት በደቡብ ምዕራብ ኢትዮጵያ ክልላዊ መንግስት የቱሪዝም በታዎችን በማስተዋወቅ ረገድ የህዝብ ግንኙነት አሠራሮችን እና ተግዳሮቶችን በመመርመር የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት የማጠናቀቂያ ፅሁፌን እየሠራሁ ነው። ይህ መጠይቅ የተነደፈው ለጥናቱ መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነው። የጥናቱ ስኬት በዚህ መጠይቅ በተገኘው መረጃ ላይ የተመሰረተ ነው። ስለዚህ ይህን ጥናት ለማካሄድ የእናንተ ትብብር ጠቃሚ ነውና ትብብራችሁን በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። የዚህ መጠይቅ አላማ ለጥናቱ ዋና እና አስፈላጊ መረጃዎችን መሰብሰብ ነው። ጥቅም ላይ የሚውለው ለአካዳሚክ ዓላማ ብቻ ነው፣ እና የእርስዎ ታማኝ መልሶች ሙሉ በሙሉ ሚስጥራዊ ይሆናሉ። ስለዚህ እባክዎን ይህንን መጠይቅ ለመሙላት ጥቂት ደቂቃዎችን ይውሰዱ እና የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች በትክክል ለመመለስ ትክለኛዉ ምላሽዎ ላይ [√] ይህችን ምልክት ያድርጉ።

መመሪያ: 1

- ❖ እባክዎን ስምዎን ወይም አድራሻዎን በመጠይቁ ላይ አያስቀምጡ።
- ❖ እባኮትን ከመልሶዉ መካከል በጣም ተስማሚ የሆነውን ይህችን [√] ምልክት ያድርጉ።
  በቅድሚያ ስለትብብሮዎ ከልብ አመሰግናለዉ!!!

ክፍል ሀ. የመለሾች የስነ-ሕዝብ መግለጫ

1. ጾታ:- ሀ) ወንድ ☐   ለ) ሴት ☐

2. ዕድሜ:- ሀ) 20-29 ☐   ለ) 30-39 ☐   ሐ) 40-49 ☐   መ) ከ50 በላይ ☐

3. የትምህርት ደረጃ:- ሀ) ዲፕሎማ ☐   ለ) ዲግሪ ☐   ሐ) ማስተርስ ☐   መ) ፒኤችዲ ☐   ሠ) ሌሎች ☐

4. የተማሩት የትምህርት ዝግጅት:- ሀ) ቋንቋ ☐ ለ) ሚዲያ እና ኮሙኒኬሽን ☐ ሐ) ታሪክና ቅርስ አስተዳደር ☐   መ) ሆስፒታሊትይ እና ቱሪዝም ☐   ሠ) ሌሎች ☐

5. የስራ ልምድ:- ሀ) ከ1 ዓመት በታች ☐   ለ) 2-5 ዓመት ☐   ሐ) 5-10 ዓመት ☐   መ) 10 ዓመት እና ከዚያ በላይ ☐

6. የስራ መደቦች:- ሀ) ኤክስፐርቶች ☐ ለ) የአስተዳደር አባላት ☐ ሐ) ኃላፊዎች ☐

ክፍል ለ. መሠረታዊ ጥያቄ

መመሪያ: 2

❖ እባኮትን በምላሹ ስር በጣም ታማኝ እና ትክክለኛ መልሶችን ለመምረጥ ይህችን ምልክት [√] ያድርጉ እና መልስዎን በስምምነት ደረጃ ይስጡ። የስምሚነት ደረጃ ከ1-5 ባለዉ ቁጥር ተወክሏል።

❖ 1= በጣም እስማማለሁ   2= እስማማለሁ   3= በትክክል እስማማለሁ   4= አልስማማም   5= በጣም አልስማማም

I.   የቱሪዝም መዳረሻ ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ በተቋሞዎ ውስጥ ያለው የህዝብ ግንኙነት ተግባራት...

ተ.ቁ	መግለጫዎች	1	2	3	4	5
1	በተቋሞዎ ውስጥ ባለሙያዎቹ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ እና ብዙ ተመልካቾችን ለመድረስ የተለያዩ የሚዲያ ግንኙነቶችን ይጠቀማሉ።					
2	የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍል የቱሪዝም መዳረሻዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ከአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ እና ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር በቅንጅት እየሰራ ነው።					
3	የተቋሙ ባለሙያዎች የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን የሚያስተዋውቁ የጽሑፍ አርታኢዎችን እና መመሪያዎችን ያዘጋጃሉ እና ያሰራጫሉ።					
4	የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ተቋማዊ ዝግጅቶች እና ፌስቲቫሎች ተዘጋጅተዋል።					
5	ተቋሞዎ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ጥናት እና ምርምር እያደረገ ነው።					
6	ተቋሙ ስለ ክልሉ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎች የሚሰራጩ አሉታዊ ዘገባዎችን ለመቆጣጠር ህገራዊ እና አለም አቀፍ ሚዲያዎችን ይከታተላል።					

II.   የህዝብ ግኑኝነት ክፍል በተቋሞዎ ዉስጥ የቱሪዝም ሀብቶችን በማስተዋወቅ ሥራ ላይ ያሉ ተግዳሮቶች.....

ተ.ቁ	መግለጫዎች	1	2	3	4	5
1	መ/ቤቱ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ በሚያደረገው ጥረት ከባለስልጣናት በቂ ድጋፍ እና እገዛ እያገኘ ነው።					
2	ተቋሙ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ በቂ የበጀት ድልድል አለው።					
3	የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍል የቱሪዝም መዳረሻዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ የሰለጠነ በቂ የሰው ሃይል አለው።					
4	በተቋሞዎ ውስጥ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ የተመደቡ ሠራተኞች በህዝብ ግኑኝነት እና በሌሎች ተዛማጅ ትምህርቶች የተመረቁ ናቸዉ።					
5	የተቋሙ ባለሙያዎች የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ በየጊዜዉ በቂ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ሙያዊ ስልጠናዎችን አግኝተዋል።					

መመሪያ፡ 3

❖ እባከትን በምላሹ ስር በጣም ታማኝ እና ትክክለኛ መልሶችን ለመምረጥ ይህችን ምልክት [√] ያድርጉ እና መልስዎን በአጠቃቀም ደረጃ ያስቀምጡ። የአጠቃቀም ደረጃ ከ1-5 ባለዉ ቁጥር ተወክሏል።

❖ 1= በጣም ይጠቀማል   2= ይጠቀማል   3 = አልፎ አልፎ ይጠቀማል   4= አይጠቀምም
   5 = በፍጹም አይጠቀምም

III. የህዝብ ግንኙነት መሳሪያዎች እና የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን በማስተዋቅ ረገድ ውጤታማነታቸው....

ተ.ቁ	መግለጫዎች	1	2	3	4	5
1.	የህዝብ ግኑኝነት ዘርፍ በተቋሞዎ የቱርዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ የህትመት ዉጤቶችን እንደ መሳርያ ይጠቀማል					
1.1	ጋዜጦች Newspapers					
1.2	መጽሄቶች Magazines					
1.5	ሌሎች					
2.	የህዝብ ግኑኝነት ዘርፍ በተቋሞዎ የቱርዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ብሮድካስት ሚዲያዎችን ይጠቀማል					
2.1	ቴሽ					
2.2	ሬዲዮ					
2.3	ሌሎች					
3.	የህዝብ ግኑኝነት ዘርፍ በተቋሞዎ የቱርዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ከቤት ዉጭ (OOH) ሚዲያዎችን ይጠቀማል (ጎዳናዎች ላይ ትልልቅ ማስታወቂያዎችን)					
4.	የህዝብ ግኑኝነት ዘርፍ በተቋሞዎ የቱርዝም ቦታዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ማህበራዊ ሚዲያዎችን ይጠቀማል					
4.1	ፌስ-ቡክ (Facebook)					
4.2	ቴሌ-ግራም (telegram)					
4.5	ሌሎች					

በጅማ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የማህበራዊ ሳይንስና ሂውማኒቲስ ኮሌጅ

የሚዲያ እና ኮሙኒኬሽን ትምህርት

በሕዝብ ግንኙነት እና በኮርፖሬሽን ግንኙነት ማስተርስ

ለባህል ቱሪዝም እና ስፖርት ቢሮ እንዲሁም ለመንግሥት ኮሙኒኬሽን ጉዳዮች ቢሮ ከፍተኛ አመራሮች እና ባለሙያዎች የተዘጋጀ ጥልቅ ቃለ መጠይቅ

ቃለ መጠይቅ

ውድ ምላሽ ሰጪዎች፣ ይህ ቃለ መጠይቅ የተነደፈው በ ደምኢክ ዉስጥ ያሉትን የቱሪዝም ቦታዎችን በማስተዋወቅ ረገድ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራዎችን እና ተግዳሮቶችን ለመመርመር ነው። ስለዚህ፣ ከሚከተሉት የቃለ መጠይቁ ጉዳዮች ጋር በተያያዘ፣ ስለ ጉዳዩ እውነተኛ መረጃ እንዲሰጡ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። የእርስዎ ምላሾች ለጥናቱ ስኬት ትልቅ አስተዋፅኦ አላቸዉ። ስለዚህ ምላሾቹ በሚስጥር እንዲሚጠበቁ እና ለሌላ ዓላማ እንደማይውል ላረጋግጥልዎ እፈልጋለሁ። ለቃለ መጠይቁ ስምዎን እና ማንኛውንም መታወቂያዎን መንገር የለበትም።

በቅድሚያ ስለ ትብብርዎ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ !!!

I. **ከቱሪዝም ቢሮ ባለሙያዎች ጋር የሚደረግ ቃለ ምልልስ**

1. በደምኢ ክልል ስላለው የቱሪዝም ሀብቶች ወቅታዊ ሁኔታ ምን ያስባሉ?

2. በክልሉ የቱሪዝም ሀብቶችን ስለማስተዋወቅ ምን ያስባሉ? የማስተዋወቂ ልምድ እንዴት ሊዳብር ይችላል እና ልምዱን ለማዳበር ቀላል ወይም አስቸጋሪ የሚሆነው ለምንድነው?

3. በክልሉ ቱሪዝምን ለማስተዋወቅ ምን አይነት የማስተዋወቅ ስልቶች ያስፈልጋሉ?

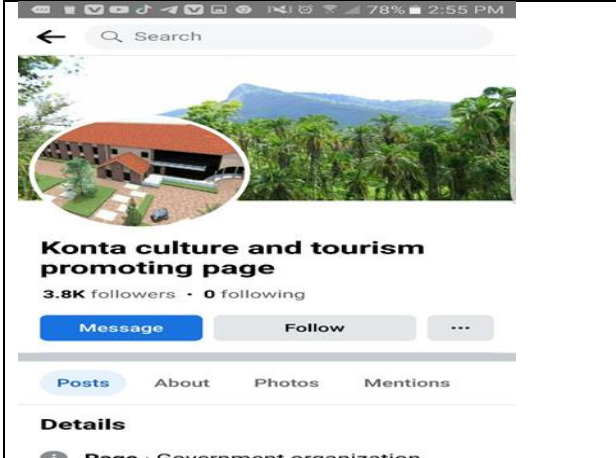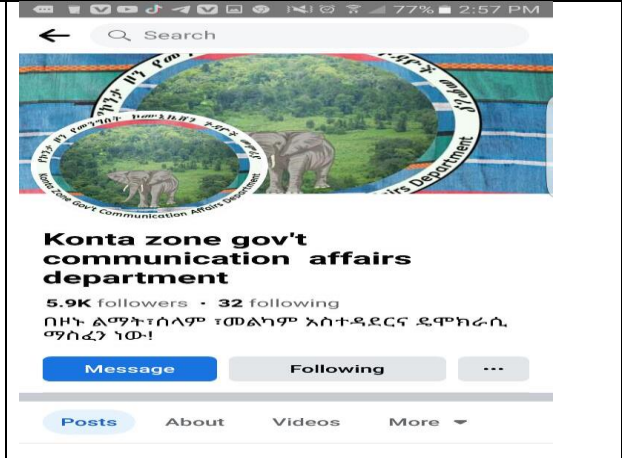4. በክልሉ የቱሪዝም ቦታዎች በማስተዋወቂ ልምድ ላይ ተጽእኖ የሚያሳድሩ ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
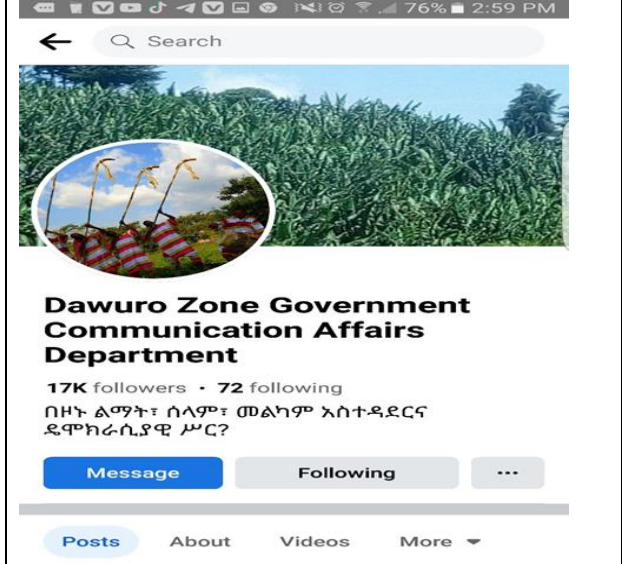
II. **ለ ህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎች የተዘጋጀ የቃለ መጠይቅ ጨብጦች**

1. በቱሪዝም ዘርፍ በርካታ ቱሪስቶችን ለመሳብ ክልሉን ማስተዋወቅ የሚቻለው እንዴት ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

2. በክልሉ የቱሪዝም መዳረሻዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ምን አይነት የማስተዋወቂያ መሳሪያዎች ውጤታማ ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

3. የክልሉን የቱሪዝም ኢንዱስትሪ ለማስተዋወቅ የባለሙያዎች ተግባራት እንዴት ሊሻል ይችላል ብለው ያስባሉ?

4. የደምኢ ክልል የቱሪዝም መዳረሻዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ ተግዳሮቶች ምንድናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

Appendix-C

Document Analysis sample pages

Facebook Pages taken

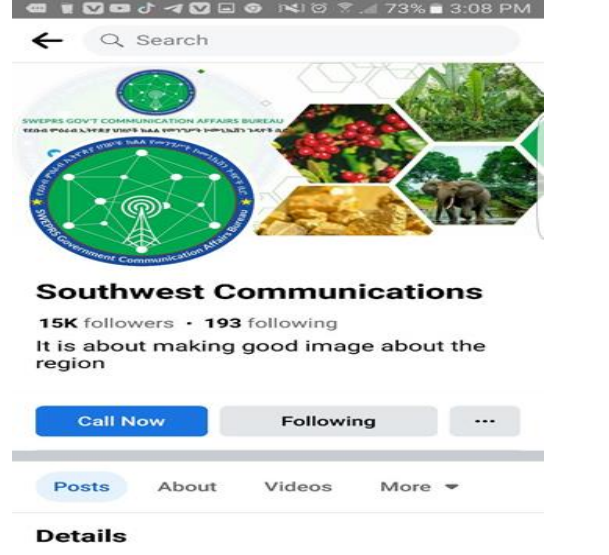| A Konta Zone Culture Tourism, and Sport Departmet Face Book Page	B. Konta Zone Government Communication Affaires Departmet Face Book Page
Kaffa Zone Culture Tourism, and Sport Departmet Face Book Page	Kaffa Zone Government Communication Affaires Departmet Face Book Page
Dawuro Zone Culture Tourism, and Sport Departmet Face Book Page	Dawuro Zone Government Communication Affaires Departmet Face Book Page

SWERS Culture Tourism, and Sport Brueau Face Book Page	SWERS Government Communication Affaires Brueau Face Book Page
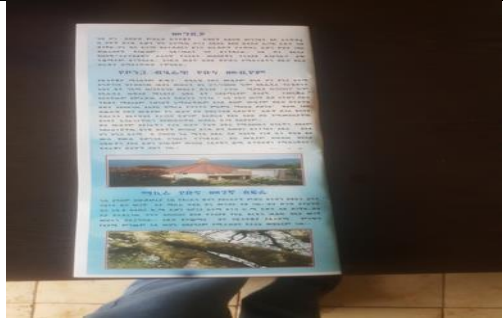
Appendex-D

Sample of Print Media as Taken

Wonta Magazine of Dawuro Zone	Buno Magazine of Kaffa Zone
Woyta Magazine of Konta Zone	**Broucher of Kaffa Zone**
Stiker of Konta Zone	**Stiker of Dawuro Zone**
Brochure of Dawuro Zone	**Poster of SWERS Culture Tourism and Sport Bruea**

Appendix-F

Photo taken during the researcher's data collection from the three zones for the research report

A, Konta zone culture tourism and sport departmet
B. konta zone government communication affaires dept.
B, Dawuro Zone Culture Tourism and Sport Department

Dawuro Zone Government Communication Department
Kaffa Zone Culture, Tourism and Sport Department
Kaffa Zone Government Communication Department

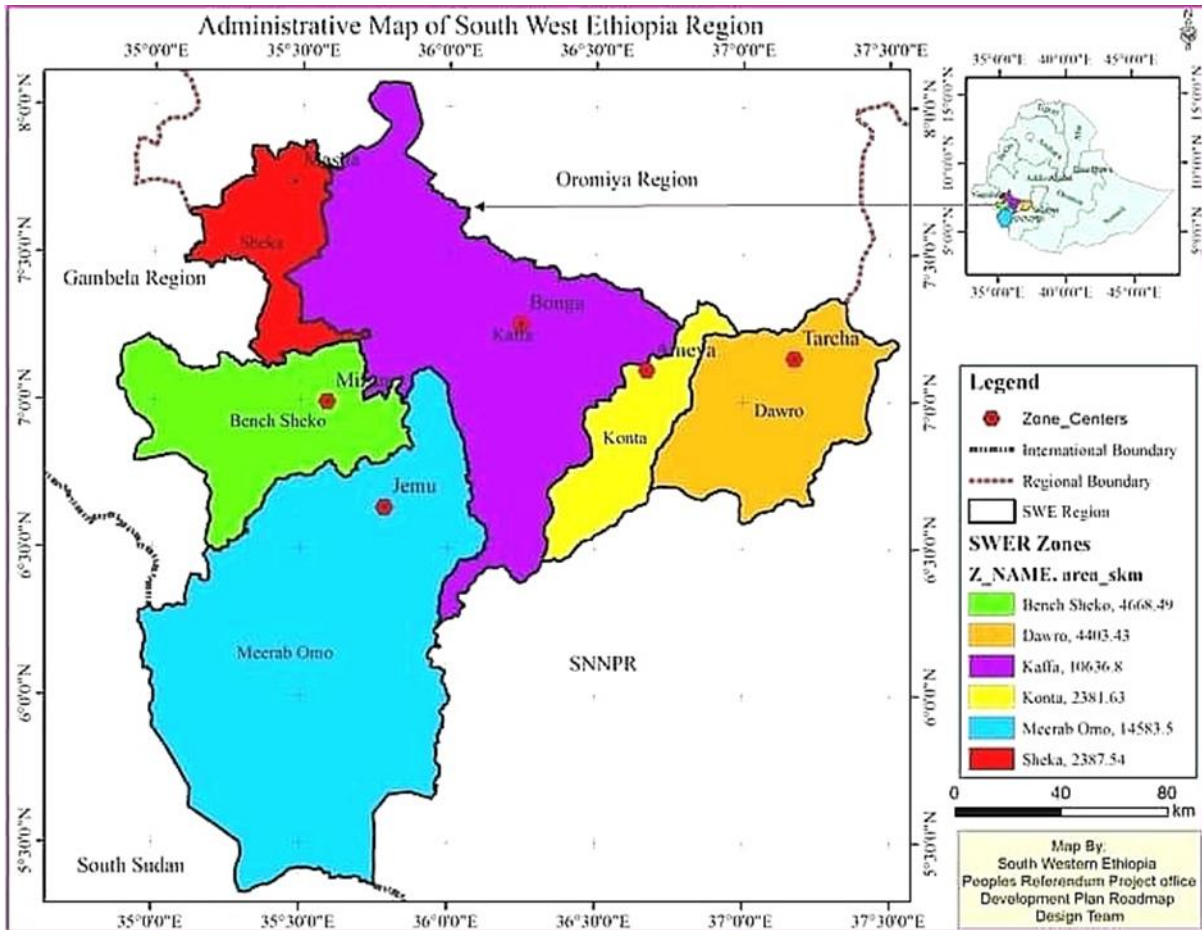| SWERS Culture, Tourism and Sport Department |
|---|
| |
| **SWERS Government Communication Department** |
| |

Appendix-G

Map of South West Ethiopia Regional State (SWERS)

Appendix-H

The Result of Spesfic Objective Data

The Public Relation Activity in Promoting Tourism Site

Variables	Response rate	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	N
Experts use various media relations to promote tourism spots and reach a large audience.	F	29.0	37.0	11.0	8.0	7.0	2.21	92
	%	31.5	40.2	12.0	8.7	7.6		
The pr department is working in coordination with the local community and stakeholders to promote tourism destinations.	F	41.0	29.0	11.0	3.0	8.0	2.00	92
	%	44.6	31.5	12.0	3.3	8.7		
The PR experts prepare, and distribute written editorials and manuals that promote tourism sites.	F	34.0	21.0	18.0	12.0	7.0	2.32	92
	%	37.0	22.8	19.6	13.0	7.6		
To promote tourism sites, the PR professionals organized institutional events and festivals.	F	30.0	23.0	11.0	17.0	11.0	2.52	92
	%	32.6	25.0	12.0	18.5	12.0		
Your organization is conducting research to promote tourism sites.	F	22.0	23.0	24.0	11.0	12.0	2.65	92
	%	23.9	25.0	26.1	12.0	13.0		
The organization monitors national and international media to control negative reports about the region's tourism spots.	F	45.0	21.0	9.0	7.0	10.0	2.09	92
	%	48.9	22.8	9.8	7.6	10.9		
Item of Means							2.297	

Note: *1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Fairly Agree, 4 = Dis Agree, 5= Strongly Disagree*

Tools of Public Relation to Promote Tourism Site in SWER

Variables	Response Rate	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	N
The organization uses print media as a tool to promote tourism destinations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newspapers	F	18	27	18	24	5	2.68	92
	%	19.6	29.3	19.6	26.1	5.4		
Magazines	F	35	27	16	9	5	2.15	92
	%	38.0	29.3	17.4	9.8	5.4		
Others	F	32	29	19	6	6	2.18	92
	%	34.8	31.5	20.7	6.5	6.5		
Experts are uses broadcast medias to promote tourism sites	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TV	F	34	34	15	3	6	2.05	92
	%	37.0	37.0	16.3	3.3	6.5		
Radio	F	37	29	18	2	6	2.03	92
	%	40.2	31.5	19.6	2.2	6.5		
The organization uses out of home (OOH) media to promote tourism destinations. (large billboards on the streets)	F	10	5	30	25	22	3.48	92
	%	10.9	5.4	32.6	27.2	23.9		
The professional uses social media to promote tourism sites	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Facebook	F	57	19	7	6	3	1.68	92
	%	62.0	20.7	7.6	6.5	3.3		
Telegram	F	41	25	4	18	4	2.12	92
	%	44.6	27.2	4.3	19.6	4.3		
Others	F	4	30	27	16	15	3.09	92
	%	4.3	32.6	29.3	17.4	16.3		

Note: 1 = Make Extensive Use, 2 = Use, 3= Rarley Use, 4 = Doesnot Use, 5= Doesnot Use at all

Challenge of public relations in promoting tourism site in SWER

variables	Response rate	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	N
It is getting help from the managers in its efforts to promote the tourism sites.	F	11.0	28.0	18.0	20.0	15.0	3.00	92
	%	12.0	30.4	19.6	21.7	16.3		
The office has a sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism places	F	1.0	13.0	15.0	45.0	18.0	3.72	92
	%	1.1	14.1	16.3	48.9	19.6		
PR Department has trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations.	F	3.0	17.0	26.0	28.0	18.0	3.45	92
	%	3.3	18.5	28.3	30.4	19.6		
Within your organization, public relations staffs are assigned by the PR profession and other related profession to promote tourism sites.	F	13.0	30.0	25.0	10.0	14.0	2.80	92
	%	14.1	32.6	27.2	10.9	15.2		
The PR Practitioners have received enough public relations professional training to promote tourism site	F	7.0	14.0	17.0	36.0	18.0	3.48	92
	%	7.6	15.2	18.5	39.1	19.6		

Note: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Fairly Agree, 4 = Dis Agree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Table 4.4 Challenge of public relations in promoting tourism site in SWER

variables	Response rate	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	N
It is getting help from the managers in its efforts to promote the tourism sites.	F	11.0	28.0	18.0	20.0	15.0	3.00	92
	%	12.0	30.4	19.6	21.7	16.3		
The office has a sufficient budget allocation to promote tourism places	F	1.0	13.0	15.0	45.0	18.0	3.72	92
	%	1.1	14.1	16.3	48.9	19.6		
PR Department has trained and sufficient manpower to promote tourism destinations.	F	3.0	17.0	26.0	28.0	18.0	3.45	92
	%	3.3	18.5	28.3	30.4	19.6		
Within your organization, public relations staffs are assigned by the PR profession and other related profession to promote tourism sites.	F	13.0	30.0	25.0	10.0	14.0	2.80	92
	%	14.1	32.6	27.2	10.9	15.2		
The PR Practitioners have received enough public relations professional training to promote tourism site	F	7.0	14.0	17.0	36.0	18.0	3.48	92
	%	7.6	15.2	18.5	39.1	19.6		

Note: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Fairly Agree, 4 = Dis Agree, 5= Strongly Disagree

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