

Exploring Domestic Tourism in Ethiopia: Trends, Prospects, Promotional Marketing, and Challenges

Berhanu Esubalew Bayih, Apar Singh



Abstract: Domestic tourism is the largest form of tourism in the world, both in terms of tourist flow and revenue. Nevertheless, relatively it is overlooked by governments and scholars of most developing countries. Consequently, this article has tried to contribute to domestic tourism scholarship by exploring domestic tourism in Ethiopia, intending to uncover the trends, prospects, promotional marketing, and challenges. The research was descriptive in its design and has utilized primary and secondary data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and reviewed archives. The primary data were gathered from 386 domestic tourists and 37 tourism experts at four different destinations. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, content, and text analysis using SPSS and Excel software programs. The result revealed that tourism in Ethiopia, in general, has been rising, but the absence of domestic tourism data at the national level weakens the generalization and was evidence to the level of attention given to the sector. Domestic tourism was found to be misconceived by most tourism experts and businesses. The result further indicated the culture of tourism in Ethiopia, domestic tourism development potentials, and its challenges. Conclusions and recommendations vital for policymakers and practitioners are also provided.

Keywords: Challenges, Domestic tourism, Ethiopia, Promotional marketing, Prospects

I. INTRODUCTION

Travel is one of the oldest phenomena in human history. Tourism in its modern form comprises the travel and stay of people to places or countries for entertainment, discovery, education, socialization, and so on. In this regard, travel for tourism reasons could be conducted within or out of a certain economic territory but out of the usual places of work or living. When tourism is conducted by residents within their own country, it refers to domestic tourism whereas if tourism comprises crossing of economic or political boundaries it would be international tourism (WTO, 2006).

Though domestic tourism may not involve long-haul trips, huge spending at luxury accommodations, consumption of sophisticated facilities, it is the dominant form of tourism in most countries in the world in terms of its size and socio-economic values (Jerenashvili, 2014). Domestic tourism constitutes the highest tourist arrivals worldwide. It represents about 77% (Co-operation & Development (OECD, 2016) to 80% of tourism arrivals (Boniface and Cooper, 1994 cited in Ghimire, 2001) and 71.2% of travel spending in 2018 worldwide (WTTC, 2019). The global domestic tourism is lead by the United States and followed by China, India, Brazil, and the United Kingdom (Bigano, et al., 2007). Following an increase of middle income earning people and the spread of globalization, travel for the pursuit of pleasure by nationals within their own country has shown significant growth in the Third World countries (Scheyvens, 2007). Though tourism development practices in developing countries have emphasized on international tourism segment, tourism at large is an amalgam of both domestic and international parts. Moreover, domestic tourism has enormous economic, political and socio-cultural benefits and tourism that ignored domestic visitors can not be sustainable, as it neglects the largest participants and contributors. Similarly, in Ethiopia hardly any series of efforts were made to encourage domestic travels and utilize its multidimensional potentials. The country has immense tourism resources and one of the largest numbers of the population for native tourism development. Meetings being organized by government offices and private businesses plus to religions are increasing travel of native peoples these days. However, the contribution of domestic tourism to the economy, the integration of peoples, unity, and nationalism remains insignificant. Research studies in tourism in general in Ethiopia are scant, and studies on the issues of domestic tourism are almost non-existent. Moreover, domestic tourism issues such as practices, benefits, potentials, promotional practices, and challenges remain blind in the country level. Consequently, this study has tried to uncover the trends, prospects, promotional marketing and constraints of domestic tourism in Ethiopia based on the data obtained from domestic tourists and tourism experts in four major tourism destinations of the country collected in the year 2018/19.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

A. Domestic tourism

Domestic tourism is the travel of residents within their own country for tourism purposes (Middleton, et al., 2009).

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Similarly, Hall & Lew (2009) defined domestic tourism as the tourism of resident tourists within the economic territory of the country of reference. Furthermore, Horner & Swarbrooke (2005) defined domestic tourism as a tourism activity when residents conduct holiday tours wholly within their own country of reference. On the other hand, domestic tourists are resident visitors traveling to places other than their usual area of residence, but within their country for not more than 12 consecutive months and for purposes other than remunerated activities in the place visited (Division, 2010).

Domestic tourism is the largest and the most significant form of tourism when compared to its international counterpart (UNWTO, 2012; Division, 2010). However, while inbound tourism has been emphasized by many countries due to its capability of generating foreign exchange as an export earner, domestic tourism was neglected both as an area of development and as an issue of research. Consequently, most country's tourism policy and scholarship have been downplayed in favor of international tourism (Saayman, Saayman, & Rhodes, 2001) and neglected domestic tourism in tourism research and development plans (Mazimhaka, 2007). However, studies revealed that domestic tourism contributions, when compared with international tourism, are as high as 60% of the overall tourism income and up to 80% of tourism arrivals (Boniface and Cooper, 1994 cited in Ghimire, 2001). Besides, several tourism scholars suggested that countries must look beyond the narrow view that concentrates only on the promotion and development of international tourism and recognize the potentials of domestic tourism for several reasons. For instance, domestic tourists are frequent travelers than international tourists (Eijgelaar, et al., 2008), and the growth of domestic tourism is steady and rarely affected by situations of the international market. Moreover, it minimizes seasonality of tourism; spread tourism activity; creates awareness (UNWTO, 2012); brings better tourist security (Mendiratta, 2011); solidarity among people (Mendiratta, 2011); sustainable development (UNWTO, 2012); retain the tourism spending within the nation; it can be developed without huge investment and so on (Som & Al-Kassem, 2013). Furthermore, providing job opportunities, rectifying the rural exodus, and revitalizing the economy, the impact of domestic tourism is dynamic for the overall economic, social, cultural and political goals of the nations (Mazimhaka, 2007; UNWTO, 2012).

B. Potentials of Domestic tourism

Domestic tourism is the dominant form of tourism with regards to the tourist arrivals and receipts worldwide, but it remains neglected from government agendas and tourism scholarships in most developing countries (Jerenashvili, 2014; Scheyvens, 2007; Mazimhaka, 2007). Nevertheless, studies revealed that the potentials of domestic tourism especially for developing countries are multidimensional and sustainable in several socio-economical dimensions. Scholars suggested governments, researchers, and tourism business sectors to prioritize domestic tourism for diversifying the country's tourism industry (Mazimhaka, 2007), for a more socially and economically sustainable development of less developed regions (Seckelmann, 2002),

in addressing the spatial uneven tourism development (Rogerson, 2015), for the recovery of the tourism industry (Bulin, 2015), for the development of non-industrialized areas to reduce economic disparities (Xu, 1999).

There are abundant of socio-economic and environmental reasons for the governments and tourism stakeholders of developing countries to focus on domestic tourism. Domestic tourism has the potential for the sustainable tourism industry and overall economic development at large (Som & Al-Kassem, 2013; Mazimhaka, 2007). Domestic tourism is also suitable for more sustainable socio-economic development because it is free from problems connected to international mass tourism such as seasonality, acculturation or anxiety, an outflow of income and external investment and so on (Som & Al-Kassem, 2013; Seckelmann, 2002). Moreover, domestic tourism does not demand huge investment and imported goods that could be an indispensable foundation for the sustainable development of regions and countries (Seckelmann, 2002).

The vibrant domestic tourism could also be used to mitigate financial outflows (Ranjanthran & Mohammed, 2010), seasonality (Kruger & Douglas, 2015), the unpredictability of the tourism industry (Okello, Kenana, & Kieti, 2012). Domestic tourism expands and diversifies the tourism industry (Mazimhaka, 2007), generates employment, enhances economic growth, and overall tourism industry development (WTO, 2006). Domestic tourism is widely recognized as an outstanding 'crisis shock-absorber' (Mazimhaka, 2007) that offset the vulnerability of international tourism to internal and external factors such as poor infrastructure, insecurity, bad press publicity. Additionally, promoting domestic tourism brings economic revenue, increases employment opportunities, generates pride in one's own country and solidarity, enhances the culture of travel among the society, and steady tourism growth and economic development (Mendiratta, 2011).

C. Domestic tourism promotion marketing

Tourism marketing is defined as "systematic and coordinated efforts exerted by the national tourist organizations and/or the tourist enterprises at international, national and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists, groups, and individuals, in 'view of the sustained tourism growth' (Raju, 2009). Hence, promotion is one of the activities that should be performed by organizations to achieve their objectives. Then, promotion can be identified as communication conducted to change the behavior of consumers towards products or services. In the case of tourism promotion comprises communications made to inform, persuade and remind potential and actual customers and make them purchase tourism products such as air tickets, bedrooms, meals, and destination package. Marketing and managing tourism destinations are not an easy task as it involves a variety of stakeholders and local participants in the production and promotion of tourism products (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). However, following the gradual increase of interest in tourism,

stiff competition among countries, and competition between tourism products and other products, the importance of tourism media has become unquestionable. Studies argue that tourism is an industry that strongly demands expertise, competencies, marketing and promotion via the help of different media types (Alhmedat, 2013). Moreover, Wang & Pizam (2011) asserted that tourism promotion and marketing activities of destinations are crucial for the better performance of the tourism industry in the environment where destinations compete for each other both in the international and national markets. Consequently, tourism media has become an essential need to serve tourists in delivering information regarding means of transportation, the location and values of tourist destinations, entertainment programs, and events, visitation time, security weather conditions and so on (Okaka, 2007).

Domestic tourism has continued to grow in Third World countries following an increase in middle-income earners in those countries (Scheyvens, 2007) and its potential to economic and socio-cultural development has become prevalent. Promotion marketing is essential for the growth of domestic tourism as it is essential for the growth of international tourism arrivals (Morupisi & Mokgalo, 2017). However, initiatives of marketing and promotion of domestic tourism in developing countries are limited and domestic tourism marketing scholarships are almost unavailable. Moreover, tourism destinations in many developing countries, in general, are not properly and successfully promoted and marketed to potential tourists (Ayalew, 2009). This is due to the existence of several challenges comprising of lack of cooperation among tourism stakeholders, shortage of budget, limited attention to the tourism industry from the government side, local communities' limited awareness about tourism, and so on (Bayih & Tola, 2017; Sewnet, 2019).

D. Challenges of domestic tourism

The development and impacts of domestic tourism are not similar across the developed and developing worlds. In the developed world, domestic tourism contributes to the highest amount of tourist arrivals and receipts. For instance, in America and Europe, the share of domestic tourism reaches about 80% of their total visitors and tourism revenues (Mazimhaka, 2007). From more than 1 billion holiday trips conducted by the European Union (EU) countries in 2010, more than 800 million trips were performed within their own countries. In short, during that specific year, EU member countries spend about 77% of their holiday tours, and more than half of their holiday budgets within their economic border (Demunter & Dimitrakopoulou, 2011). The superior performance of domestic tourism in the aforementioned and other developed countries has been attributed to availability of abundant tourism resources, strong national economy and high disposable income, paid leaves and holidays and high courage to travel or strong culture of traveling (Wen, 1997; Bigano et al., 2007; Wu, Zhu, & Xu, 2000; WTO, 2006).

On the contrary, the domestic tourism trend in developing countries has been unsatisfactory and a decrease in domestic trips despite an increase in potential tourist numbers (Rogerson, 2015). Many reasons have been found

responsible for the poorly performing of domestic tourism in developing countries which comprises a lack of administration initiatives, poor infrastructural development, lack of standards, policy-related problems, and lack of capacity building initiatives (Mazimhaka, 2007). Moreover, the biased planning and promotion of tourism towards international tourism and difficulty of tracking domestic tourism (Ghimire, 2001; Mazimhaka, 2007; Sun, Chi, & Xu, 2013; Alipour, Kilic, & Zamani, 2013) hindered its development. Besides, problems such as lack of domestic tourism scholarships (Jerenashvili, 2014; Sindiga, 1996; Scheyvens, 2007), a weak economy and low wages (Sindiga, 1996; Mazimhaka, 2007), lack of promotion and marketing are some other inhibiting factors which bottleneck the development of domestic tourism. Consequently, information or data on domestic tourism are scarce (WTO, 2006), and most peoples in developing countries remain unaware of tourism attractions of their own country.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Study area description

This study was conducted in the country found in the Horn of Africa called Ethiopia. The country is located between the 3°N and 15°N Latitude and 33°E and 48°E Longitude geographic coordinates. Relatively the country is located east of Sudan and South Sudan, south and southwest of Eritrea and Djibouti, west and southwest of Somalia and north of Kenya. The country covers a total area of 1,104,300 km² and stood 26th in the world. From the total area, approximately 1,000,000 km² is covered by land area and the remaining 104,300km² is covered by water bodies. More specifically, the data for this study was collected from the four major tourist destination towns of the country. These towns are namely the historic town of Gonder, the multiethnic hub of Hawassa, the biodiversity core of Bale and the religious and pilgrimage fortress of Lalibela.

B. Design and approach

This study is descriptive in its design and has utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The primary data was collected through questionnaires and self-administered interview questions. Whereas the secondary data was gathered from archives, tourism statistics bulletins, books, and prior studies. The data was collected from 386 domestic tourists accessed in four major tourist destinations of the country, namely Lalibela, Gondar, Hawassa and Bale. Besides, about 37 tourism experts, researchers, and tourism destination officers were interviewed.

C. Method of analysis

To reveal the domestic tourism practices in general and the trends, potentials, promotions, and challenges of domestic tourism in particular, different methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis comprising of descriptive analysis, content and text analysis were performed.

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The quantitative data were screened, coded and entered into SPSS software program and analyzed using descriptive statistics, mainly frequency, percentage, and rank. Whereas the qualitative data were analyzed using the content and text analysis methods. Results of the analyzed quantitative data were depicted in the form of tables, and figures whereas the qualitative outputs of the analysis process were narrated content-wise. The Excel software program was used for table and graph formation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Trends in domestic tourism

According to the information from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Culture and Tourism

(MoCT), the number of international tourist arrivals has shown a remarkable improvement in the last two decades. As shown in figure 1, an international tourist arrival has increased from 138,856 in 1997 to 933,344 in 2017. Similarly, international tourism receipts has boosted from 43,000,000 USD in 1997 to 3,49,44,39,936 USD in 2017. However, the nonexistence of data regarding the domestic tourism flows and its economic contributions made discussions on tourism development of the country incomplete. This absence of data r domestic tourism further indicates the level of attention given to domestic tourism by the government and tourism scholars.

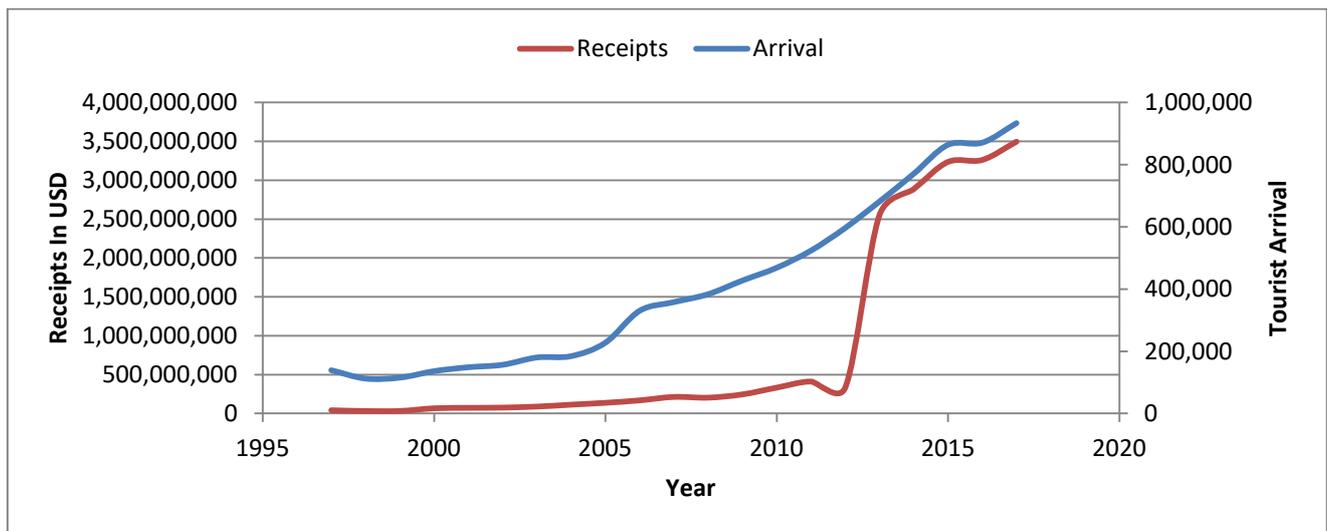


Figure 1: International tourist arrivals and receipts from 1997-2017

Source: MOCT (2016) Tourism statistics bulletin (2012-2015)

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report made on 15-03-2019, Ethiopia's tourism growth in 2018 was recorded the biggest in the world. The council added that the tourism sector during the stated period grew by 48.6% which is the largest of all countries in the world. The sectors' contribution to the economy reached 7.4 billion USD which accounts for about 9.4% of the country's total economy. The WTTC report also stated that the travel and tourism sector of Ethiopia in 2018 supported 2.2 million jobs (8.3% of total employment). This means tourism in the country accounts for one in every 11 dollars and one in every 12 of all jobs. The council argues that all improvements were driven by the superb performance of the aviation and the development of the capital, Addis Ababa, as a vibrant and rising regional center.

However, like in most developing countries, domestic tourism in Ethiopia is highly shadowed by international tourism from both the research and policy point of view. As per the report of WTTC (2017), in Ethiopia, domestic travel spending generated 31.3% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2016 which is very small compared with 68.7% for foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts. Similarly, the contribution of international tourism to the general tourism during 2018 was about 77% while the

remaining 23% goes to domestic travels (WTTC, 2019). This shows how tourism is strongly weighted to international tourism, and domestic tourism still has deprived of attention from the government and other tourism stakeholders. Furthermore, domestic tourism has not been included in most tourism bureaus' and tourism businesses' plans in the country.

B. Domestic tourism in selected areas of the country

Domestic tourism trends of different tourism destinations of the country have been assessed through an interview with key informants and a review of recorded documents. In this regard, though the data have some deficiencies and incompleteness, the destination and regional tourism bureaus were better than the ministry office at the federal level in maintaining some records of domestic travelers and receipts obtained. Domestic and international tourist flow and revenue data of selected tourism destinations particularly Lalibela, Gondar, Hawassa and Bale are discussed below.

Lalibela is a holy city which is known for its marvelous 12th century rock-hewn churches and is one of the most important tourist destinations in Ethiopia. The area is one of the most important pilgrimage centers in the country. According to data obtained from the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) culture and tourism bureau, depicted in figure 2, international tourist arrivals to the Lalibela area has increased from 5712 in 2001 to 30,260 in 2012. Similarly, domestic tourist arrival has shown high improvement from 7821 in 2007 to 174,359 in 2011. The overall tourism receipts obtained from Lalibela increased

gradually from 5,617,752 Ethiopian Birr (ETB) in 2001 to 151,244,450 ETB in 2012. From the data in figure 2, the inconsistency and incompleteness of domestic tourist flow could be noticed. Regarding the quality of data, experts argue that domestic tourist flow should have been much greater than the one indicated in the figure and suspect that the data might indicate those domestic tourists for whom tickets were issued. Whatever might be the case almost every year arrivals of domestic tourists exceeded the international counterpart.

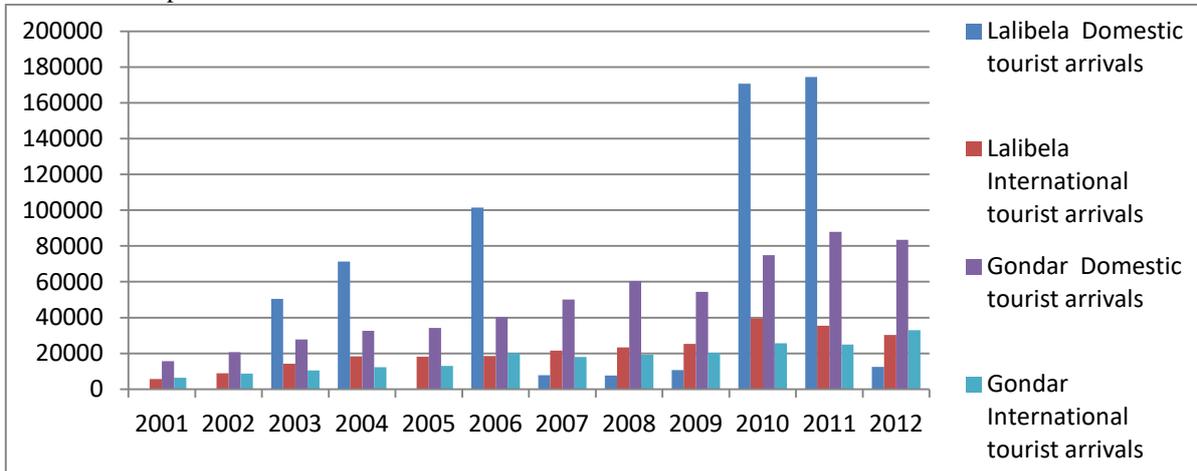


Figure 2: Domestic and international tourist arrivals of Lalibela and Gondar from 2001-2012

Source: ANRS Culture and tourism bureau

Gondar is one of the old capital cities of Ethiopia and is widely known for its 17th to 19th century historical Castles and churches. Having ample historical and cultural tourism resources, the town attracts thousands of both foreign and domestic visitors annually. According to the data obtained from the ANRS culture and tourism bureau, the number of visitors (domestic and international) has shown a dramatic step up over time. As can be seen in figure 2, the number of domestic tourist arrivals has shown a regular improvement

from 15,665 in 2001 to 83,441 in 2012 while the international tourist arrivals of the area boost up from 6,325 to 32,942 during the stated period. In the same way, the total tourism receipt has shown an increment from 4,629,900 in 2001 to 156,057,197 in the year of 2012. This data declared that domestic tourist arrivals surpass the international one. However, it was found difficult to make revenue comparisons for both destinations due to the absence of separate data.

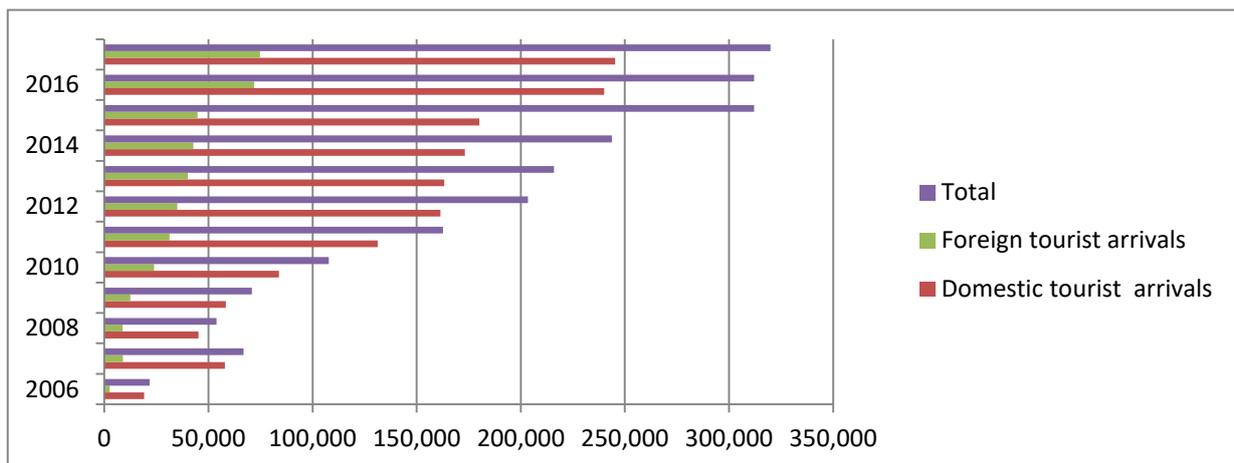


Figure 3: Domestic and international trips and receipts statistics of Hawassa and its surroundings from 2006-2017

Source: SNNP region culture, tourism and communication affairs department

Hawassa/Awassa/ is one of the most beautiful cities in Ethiopia located on the shores of Lake Awassa. Being the center of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region, situated on the shores of Lake Awassa, having several resort hotels, being the central area to travel to the

rest of Southern parts of the country, and being the hub of multiethnic peoples and culture, the city attracts many domestic and international travelers.

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According to the data obtained from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) region culture, tourism and communication affairs department, shown in figure 3, the domestic tourist arrival to Hawassa city has indicated an increase from 19,139 in 2006 to 245,303 in 2017. Similarly, the number of foreign visitors has shown an improvement in the last decade, rising from 2532 to 74,681 from 2006 to 2017.

The total revenue earned from tourism during the same period also revealed advancement from 1,529,599 to 254,341,503 ETB. As presented in the figure, the domestic tourist flow in each year was about three times greater than that of its counterpart.

The Bale area is one of the tourism resources-rich areas found in the southeast part of the country. Among others, Bale Mountains National Park, Dire Sheikh Hussein, and Sof Umer cave are the icons of the area.

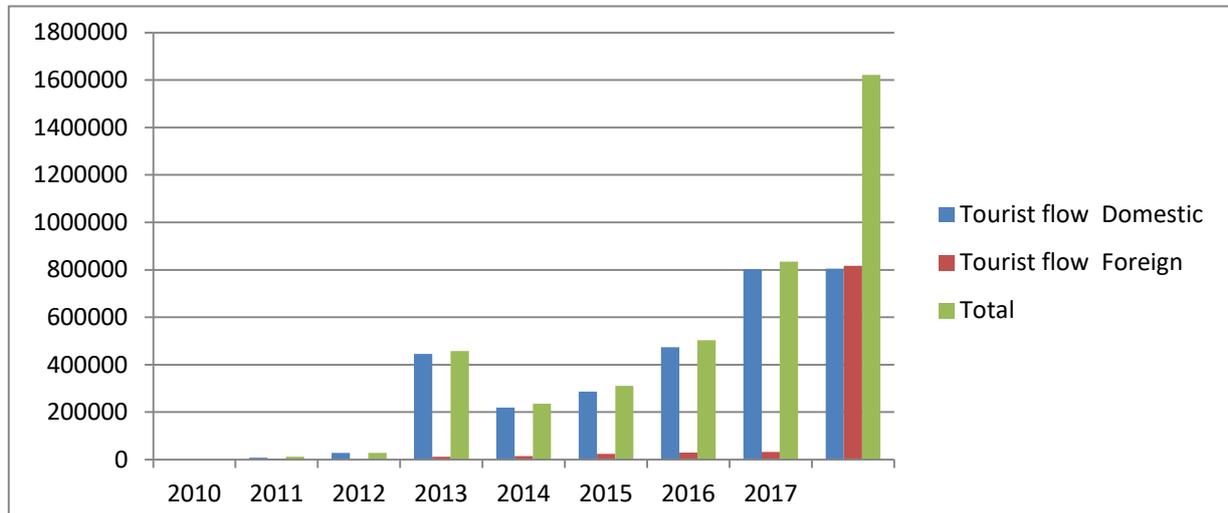


Figure 4: Foreign and domestic tourist flow of Bale Zone from the year 2010-2017

Source: Bale Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau

As depicted in Figures 4 and 5, relatively properly arranged data that distinguished the revenues obtained from domestic and international tourists were obtained from Bale Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau. According to this data, the domestic and foreign tourist arrivals have indicated a gradual increase from 7900 and 4596 to 805,000 and 817,259 in the last nine years from 2010 to 2017

respectively. Likewise, the income obtained from domestic and foreign tourists has recorded an improvement from 508,765 and 336,823 in 2010 to 170,000,000 and 245,180,000 in 2017 respectively. Based on this data, the flow of native and foreign tourists showed a similar pattern of growth and in the year 2017 foreign travelers were greater than the nationals.

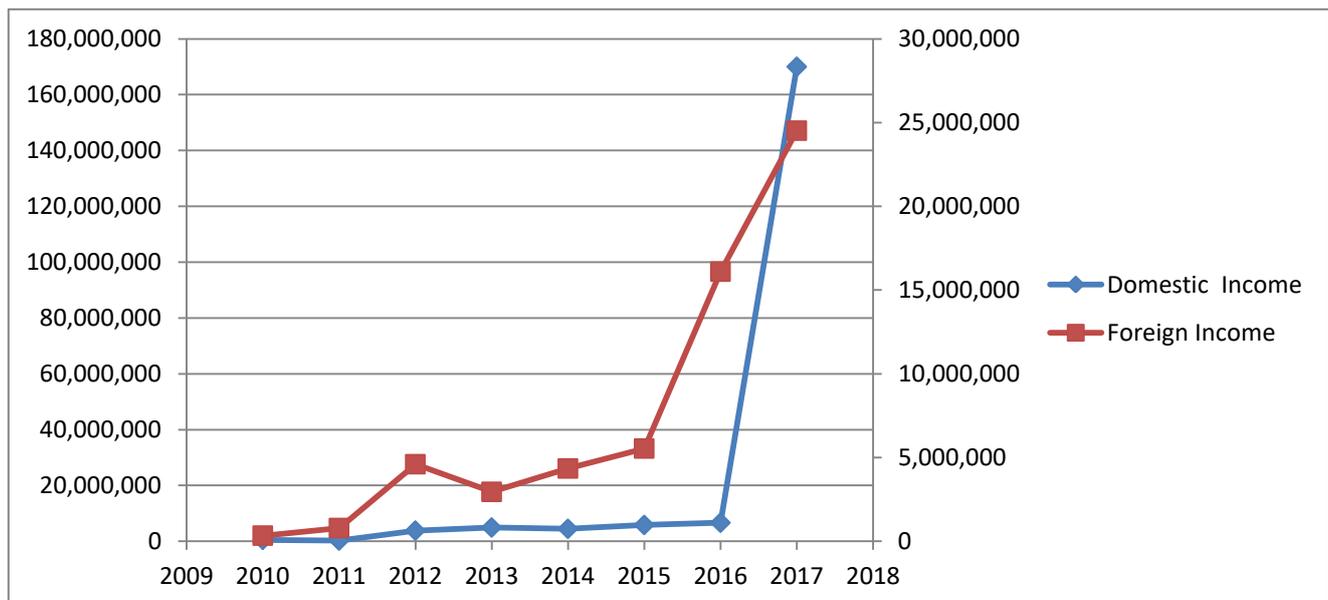


Figure 5: Domestic and international tourist revenue in Bale

Source: Bale Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau

C. Domestic versus International tourism: Experts’ perspective

In order to expose perceptions and understandings of tourism experts on domestic tourism, they were personally approached and provided with an interview checklist to evaluate domestic and foreign tourists. The tourism experts team was composed of those people who work in different tourism sectors of the country particularly hotel managers, tourism marketing experts, tour and travel organization managers, tourism officers, tour guides, destination managers, and researchers.

The results of their evaluation have appeared in figure 6.

Tourism experts preferred foreign tourists 24(64.9%) more than domestic tourists 13(35%). This might be highly connected to the higher amount of their spending at the

destination 20(54.1%) as predicted by experts. Moreover, domestic tourists 15(40.5%) were evaluated as less responsible when compared to tourists from overseas 21(56.8%). However, tourists from abroad 16(43.2%) were found less dependable due to the fact that they are highly seasonal 34(91.9%) and fewer repeat visitors according to tourism experts.

In contrast to tourists from abroad, native visitors 15(40.5%) were evaluated as less careful for the environment and orders of destination sites. Nevertheless, domestic tourists’ superior love & respect to the culture of the society 28(75.6%) of area visited, love and appreciation to the people 25(67.6%), interest to protect and conserve heritages 22(59.4%), friendliness to the local community 20(54.1%) has been recognized by experts.

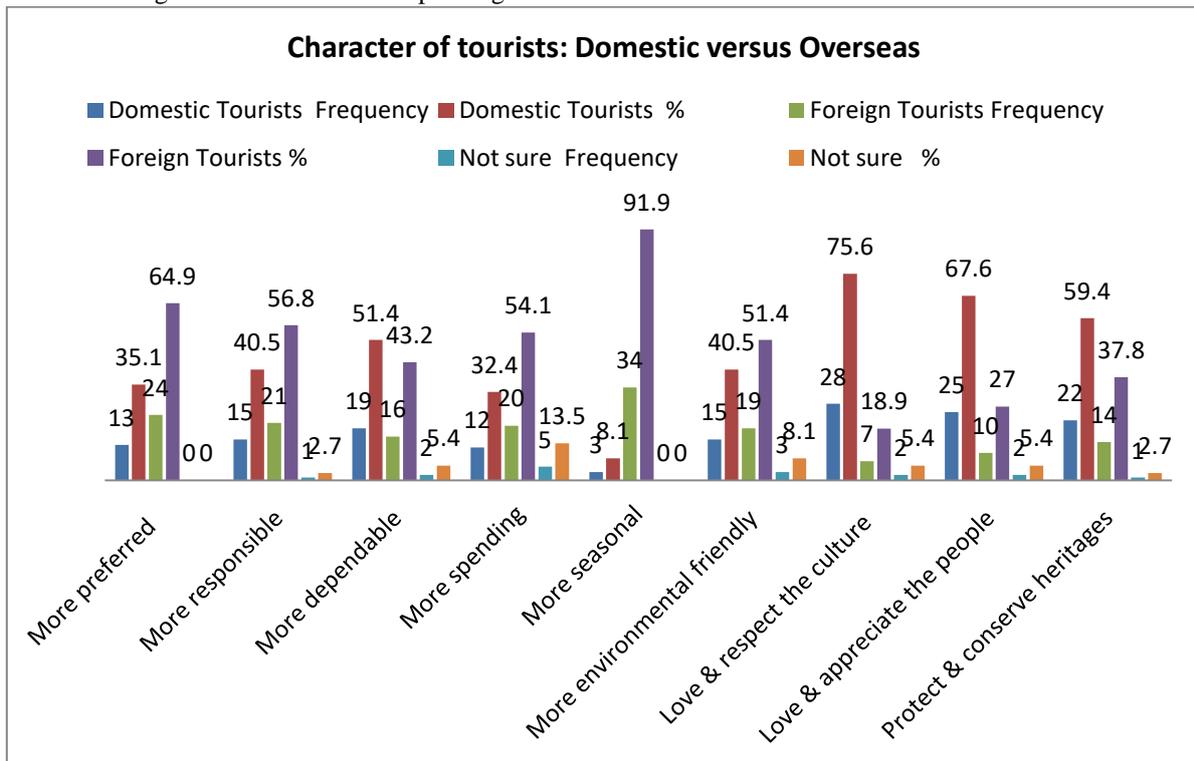


Figure: 6: Character of tourists: Domestic versus Overseas

These notions of experts could indicate the thoughts and beliefs of most tourism experts and government officials in the country. As discussed earlier, experts prioritized foreign inbound tourists over that of the domestic travelers as a customer because they are high spenders. On the contrary, domestic tourists were blamed for not being responsible and environmentally friendly, despite the suggestion of literature on domestic tourists as ‘kinder to the environment’ (Scheyvens, 2007). This indicates the perception gaps of experts on the socio-cultural and environmental values of domestic tourism.

D. Domestic tourism promotion marketing practices

The marketing activates of different tourism service providers and government offices conducted to promote domestic tourism development were assessed via the interview checklist. As can be observed in table 1, only 11 out of 19 hotels and 1 out of 3 travel and tourism offices claim for providing a discount on their products and

services, particularly to domestic visitors. Delivering quality services or prioritizing domestic tourism issues (in the case of tourism offices) was found to be performed by 9 hotels and resorts and 4 tourism offices only. Creating a family-hood relationship or friendly treatment of customers can be one of the techniques of retaining customers and the development of the sector. However, only 11 hotels and resorts and 6 other tourism offices stated that they have provided adequate attention to domestic tourism and tourists. Arrangement of different tourism events such as incentive tours to employees, organizing ‘explore your country’ clubs, arranging domestic tours, and others were performed by 3 hotels and resorts, 6 tourism offices and 1 tour and travel agency.

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On the other hand, media promotions or programs particularly to enhance domestic visitation and increase awareness of the local community were practiced only by 9 tourism sectors specifically 3 hotel and resorts, 4 tourism

offices, and 2 travel and tour companies. The worst thing is 11 tourism organizations out of the total 37 have done nothing to support domestic tourism activities in the country.

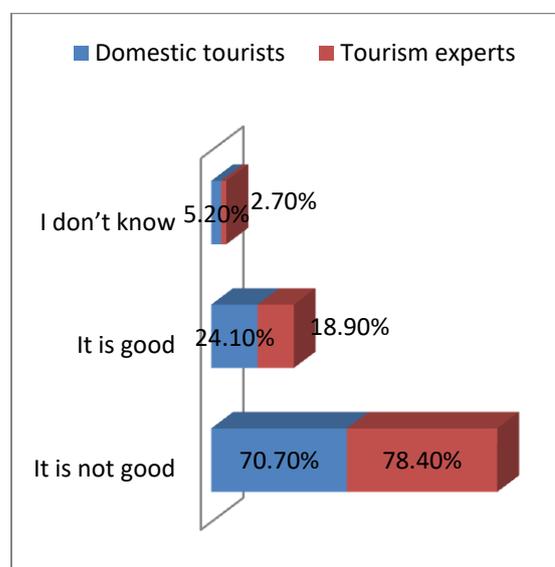
Table 1: Activities performed by tourism organizations and businesses to promote domestic tourism

Activities performed to promote domestic tourism	Hotel and /or resorts (19)	Tourism Offices(15)	Travel and Tour Agency(3)	Total	
				Frequency out of 37	Percent
Providing discounted price	11(61.1%)	-	1(5.6%)	12	32.4%
Delivering quality services /priority	9(69.2%)	4(30.8%)	-	13	35.1%
Friendly treatment	11(64.7%)	6(35.3%)	-	17	45.9%
Arranging diversified tourism activities	3(30.0%)	6(60.0%)	1(10.0%)	10	27.0%
Delivering promotions through media	3(33.3%)	4(44.4%)	2(22.2%)	9	24.3%
Done nothing so far	2(18.2%)	8(72.7%)	1(9.1%)	11	29.7%
Other	1(50.0%)	1(50.0%)		2	5.4%

Some other activities claimed to be performed by the above-mentioned tourism organizations mainly, hotels and resorts include delivering improved customer services, setting fair price for products and services, delivering unique services, designing better facilities and services, create pages on social media and release up to date information on their services and other tourism activities, providing free transportation services from Airports, providing discounts to group guests and services on credit. However, domestic tourism promotion activities of these tourism principals were poor in quality and intensity as evaluated by tourism experts. Moreover, most of the leaflets and brochures prepared by tourism offices and business organizations were written in English rather than local languages. This indicates the intensity of how public and private tourism organizations ignored domestic tourists and domestic tourism. For instance, the Ethiopian Tourism Organisation (ETO) has prepared and released short videos, flyers, brochures, and magazines to increase the awareness of the general public on major tourist destinations of the country. However, most of these promotional tools are prepared in foreign languages (English and Chinese) mainly for international tourists, and domestic tourists were not considered.

E. Domestic tourism participation and constraints

In the process to identify the cultures of Ethiopians to travel and visit tourist destinations of their own country, about 386 domestic tourists were invited to express their opinions. As can be seen in figure 7, most of the respondents 273 (70.7%) perceived that Ethiopians have a poor culture of visitation, while 93(24.1%) of them believe that Ethiopians have a good habit of visitation, and the remaining 20(5.2%) had no opinion at all.



Besides domestic tourists, about 37 tourism experts from different tourism sectors were invited to reflect their opinions on the traveling habits of natives within their own country. As shown in figure 7, 78.4% of the respondents estimated that Ethiopians have a poor habit of visiting their country. On the other hand, 18.9% of the sample tourism experts recognized as the visitation habit of Ethiopian residents is good, and the remaining 2.7% were neutral. Triangulation of the opinions of both domestic tourists and tourism experts on the travel culture of Ethiopians shows similarity. Therefore, it could be concluded that Ethiopians have a weak traveling culture specifically in their own country. Though several reasons were mentioned, this conclusion probably supports Dieke's (1991) controversial view on Africans as 'poor recreation minded'. These domestic tourists were also asked to identify factors that hinder the travel and visitation of nationals in their own country.

Accordingly, as shown in Table 2, among others, awareness problems on potential tourist destinations 203(74.4%), which probably relate to intrapersonal constraints, was ranked as the greatest problem followed by the structural constraints of high living cost of destinations 180(65.9%), and accessibility or transportation-related problems 176(64.5%) and intrapersonal problem of uneven attitudes towards visitation at large 174(63.7%). Structural hindrances such as inadequate disposable income 171(62.6%), Ethnic politics and related problems 166(60.8%), large family size 131(48%), policy-related problems 112(41%) and health-related problems 109(39.9%) were other identified problems that obstructed domestic visitations of nationals.

Alike domestic visitors, most of the experts positioned awareness problems 24(64.9%) as the biggest problem

which needs attention to improve the traveling culture of the people. Experts also mentioned low disposable income or poverty 21(56.8%), and attitude problems towards visitation 19(51.4%) as the second and third major hindering factors of the domestic tour. As far as poverty is concerned, according to the Ethiopian National Planning Commission (2017), the country's poverty index in 2015/16 was 23.5, meaning that 23.5% of the population is below the poverty line. The remaining reasons proposed by tourism experts include large family size 17(45.9%), transportation or accessibility problems 12(32.4%), expensiveness of destination products 11(29.7%), ethnic politics and related problems 10(27%), policy-related problems 7(18.9%), and health-related problems 7(18.9%).

Figure7: Culture of travel among Ethiopians

Table 2: Constraints that hinder domestic tourism participation of individuals

Why poor visitation?	Domestic Tourists			Tourism Experts			Constraint
	Frequency	%	Rank	Frequency	%	Rank	
Lack of awareness about destinations	203	74.4	1	24	64.9	1	Intrapersonal
High cost of living at destinations	180	65.9	2	11	29.7	6	Structural
Lack of transportation (accessibility)	176	64.5	3	12	32.4	5	Structural
Poor attitude towards visitation	174	63.7	4	19	51.4	3	Intrapersonal
Low disposable income (poverty)	171	62.6	5	21	56.8	2	Structural
Ethnic Politics & related problems	166	60.8	6	10	27.0	7	Structural
Large family size	131	48.0	7	17	45.9	4	Structural
Travel hindering government policy	112	41.0	8	7	18.9	8	Structural
Health related problem	109	39.9	9	7	18.9	9	Intrapersonal

According to Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey's (1991) hierarchical model of leisure constraints, most of the identified constraints lie under structural group constraints and the remaining fall under intrapersonal categories. In general, it could be concluded that the above-mentioned problems in one or another way constrained Ethiopians from participating in domestic tourism activities.

F. Potentials of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has untapped cultural and natural tourism resources and has a population of more than one hundred million. However, poverty and the poor traveling culture of society may hamper domestic tourism development in the country.

G. Tourism Resources

Ethiopia is one of the oldest independent states in the world. It is a landlocked country geographically located in the horn of Africa bordered by Djibouti, Eretria, Sudan, Kenya, and Somalia. Its geographical location and geological activities performed centuries ago endowed the country with plentiful tourism resources. In this regard, the country could be called as a land of paradox where one could find him/her self at the top of the cold mountain ranges (Simien and Bale Mountain ranges) or in the middle of the hottest place on earth with temperature exceeding 500C (Danakil Desert), under forests

jangles (Kefa Biosphere Reserve) or breathtaking waterfalls (Blue Nile waterfall), among welcoming and charming peoples or between eye-catching endemic animals (Ethiopian Wolf, Mountain Nyala, Walia Ibex, etc), inside holiest churches and monasteries or impressive mosques. This fact reflects the tourism resource endowments of the country.

H. Cultural and Natural attractions

Ethiopia has ample untapped cultural and natural tourism resources which amaze visitors. The land of Ethiopia is filled with rugged mountains, lakes, rivers, and jungle forests and savannah makes the country conducive for diverse bird species, mammals, plants, amphibians, reptiles, and other living things. The Blue Nile, the longest river in the world, the Blue Nile falls (Tisisat) and the Ras Degen Mountain are some of the most beautiful natural spectacles in Ethiopia. Moreover, according to government data, the country has 22 national parks, 4 biosphere reserves, 5 wildlife reservoirs, and 2 wildlife sanctuaries, 10 community reserve areas, and 21 controlled hunting areas. These protected areas are rich in wildlife which attracts tourists towards them. Out of these plenties of wildlife collections, the large number is endemic to the country.

More specifically, the country has 320 mammals, 926 bird, 150 fish, 240 reptile, and 320 amphibian endemic species.

The country has several remarkable tourism heritages out of which thirteen are registered in the UNESCO world heritage list. The country's cultural and historical tourism resources encompass archaeological sites, historical monuments, centuries-old palaces, obelisks, memorials, churches, monasteries, and others. Moreover, intangible tourism resources such as festivals, holidays, ceremonies, cultural practices, folk songs and peoples' way of life are other drivers of national tourism development.

Some of the most widely known cultural and historical tourism treasures of the country include the historic route heritages commonly consist of Obelisks of Axum, Rock-Hewn churches of Lalibela and the medieval period capital of Gondar. The ancient walled city of Harar, Sof Umer cave, Dire Sheikh Hussein Tana monasteries, Yeha and museums of Addis Ababa are other tourism assets of the country.

The country has also the biggest number of heritages registered in the world heritage list in Africa. Eight of these registered heritages are cultural heritages; one is natural heritage and the remaining three are intangible heritages. These heritages include Aksum, Fasil Ghebbi, Gondar region, Harar Jugol the fortified Historic town, Konso cultural landscape, Lower Valley of the Awash, Lower Valley of the Omo, Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Tiya, Simien National Park, Commemoration feast of the finding of the True Holy Cross of Christ, Fichee-Chembalaalla, New Year festival of the Sidama people, and Gada system, an indigenous democratic socio-political system of the Oromo.

I. Infrastructures

Infrastructures and superstructures are the main determinants of the tourism development of every country in the world. However, according to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness report of 2013, in terms of overall infrastructures, Ethiopia was ranked 112 from 148 countries (WEF, 2013). This implies the availability of limited infrastructures which probably constrains the tourism development of the nation. Since Ethiopia is a landlocked country and has hardly any navigable rivers, infrastructures mainly road infrastructures are the major determinants of the mobility of people. But still, the road networks of the country are very limited and poor in quality.

Nonetheless, there are certain activities and improvisations which are hopeful for domestic tourism development of the country. The outstanding performance of Ethiopian Airlines and its more than 20 domestic flight services are with no doubt prospects of domestic tourism development in the country. Besides, the Ethiopian Airport Enterprise (EAE) has planned to construct new Airports in Hawassa, Robe Goba, Shire and five other towns. The increase of internet usage, though the country is one of the least developed with internet usage less than 2.5 percent (WEF, 2013) urban areas mobile usage has shown improvement and social media are being actively used by elites. Key informants believe that internets could be a driving force to disseminate information and create awareness on domestic tourism and promote

destinations, though only for a limited portion of the population who have mobile and internet accesses.

The operational Addis Ababa-Djibouti and Addis Ababa light railway transport and the two under construction railways (Awash-Weldiya and Weldiya-Mekelle) could be other catalysts of native tourism development in the country. Moreover, the expanding road networks of the country could be another plus to the domestic tourism sector. According to the 2019 report of the United States of America (USA) Embassies abroad, Ethiopia's road network has been increasing every year. The road coverage of the country reached 126,773 kilometers (78,773 miles) as of the end of the 2017/18 fiscal year. Besides, the other 10,000 kilometers of road are planned by the Ethiopian Road Authority (ERA) to be constructed in the coming years. Further, the opening of Addis Ababa-Adama expressway and the plan to construct other similar highways that connect the capital with the different cities could have a paramount role in the development of domestic tourism. Not only the road network road transportation has also shown improvement with the commencement of special long hull buses transport services. The start of special bus services with modern buses decreased travel time besides increasing accessibility of transportation services.

J. Population

According to the United Nations (UN) data, Ethiopia's total population was estimated at 112,078,730 people as of mid of 2019. Based on this figure, the country is the second populous in Africa just next to Nigeria and the 12th populous in the world. This large number of population could be one of the most important domestic tourism prospects of the country. As shown in figure 8, the UN estimated that the largest (40%) proportion of the population was less than 14 years old and the second largest population was concentrated between 25 and 54 years old (31%). The third biggest population (21%) was estimated to be found in the age variety between 15 and 24 while the remaining 8% of the population was approximately equally divided to 55-64 and 65 and older age sections of the population.

This population estimation shows that a large proportion of the population is laid in younger age groups indicating the high birth rate and high fertility. Although this group is young and energetic, it is hardly productive and has no money for travel and even decisions to travel and where to travel are most probably made by their parents. The most active market of travel which could be considered as an opportunity for domestic tourism development in the country relies on the 52% (15-54 years old) section of the population. This age group has consisted of active, energetic, motivated and resourceful peoples. In this regard, the aforesaid group of people has a high propensity to travel than the remaining portion of the population through deficiency of disposable income (poverty) may challenge their participation in domestic tourism. Development of domestic tourism in such a nation filled with young people and untapped resources could offset the unjustly distributed national economy, highly seasonal tourism industry.

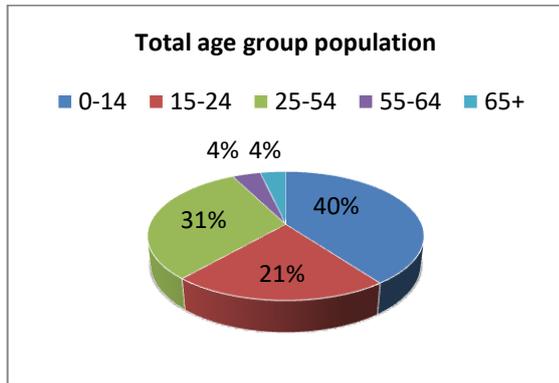


Figure 8: Ethiopian population by age (2020)

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019).

Besides its number, the religiousness of the people triggers pilgrimage travels. The strong relationship of the people to their religious identity increases celestial reasons to travel to holy religious places and festivals of their respective religions despite economic and social problems. The two dominant religions of the country namely Christianity and Islam have their respective holy places, annual festivities, and holidays. Most of the fellows of these religions travel annually to different religious places for praying, and or celebrating holidays.

The people of Ethiopia are not the same. The country has more than 80 ethnic peoples with diverse cultures and ways of life. This diversity of peoples motivates nationals to travel locally to interact and enjoy with different attributes of peoples. Therefore, the multi-ethnicity of the people could be an additional force to expand native travels in the country.

K. Challenges of Domestic tourism development in Ethiopia

The development of tourism in general and domestic tourism in particular in Ethiopia as agreed key informants is at its infant stage. Alike most developing countries in Africa, proper data, policy, and strategies on domestic tourism are non-existent in the country. Domestic tourism in the country has many more problems. Some of these problems were identified through key informant interviews and questionnaires disseminated to domestic tourist respondents. These challenges of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia include poor interest from tourism business sectors either owned by the private or governmental institutions to the domestic part of tourism and tourists, lack of attention from the government, low per capita income of the country, poor attitude of the government bodies towards domestic tourism, lack of marketing strategy for domestic tourism, poor service quality, and high cost of services at destinations.

Table 3: challenges of domestic tourism development in Ethiopia

Challenges	Domestic tourists			Tourism experts		
	Frequency	Percent	Rank	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Lack of domestic tourism promotion marketing packages	297	76.9	1	32	86.5	2
Absence of domestic tourism development and marketing policy and strategy	292	75.6	2	34	91.9	1
Lack of attention from tourism business sectors	289	74.9	3	30	81.1	3
Lack of attention from the government	280	72.5	4	27	73.0	4
Poor service quality	268	69.4	5	27	73.0	5
Poor attitude of the government bodies towards domestic tourism	266	68.9	6	24	64.9	7
Low per capita income of the country	265	68.7	7	25	67.6	6
High cost of services at destinations	255	66.1	8	19	51.4	8

As can be observed in table 3, tourism experts ranked challenges of domestic tourism almost in the same manner as domestic tourists did. Lack of domestic tourism marketing (promotion) packages was ranked as the first and the second challenge of domestic tourism development, with 297 (76.9%) and 32(86.5%) by respondents and experts respectively. The absence of domestic tourism development and marketing strategy was proposed as the second 292(75.6%) the biggest problem of the sector by respondents, while tourism experts ranked it as the first critical problem. Lack of attention from both government and private owned tourism business sectors 289(74.9%) was categorized as the third critical problem for domestic

tourism development by both respondents and tourism experts. The fourth-largest number of respondents 280(72.5%) and experts distinguished, lack of attention from government, as the other major challenge of domestic tourism development. Domestic tourist respondents and tourism experts also proposed poor service quality 268(69.4%) as the 5th major challenges of domestic tourism in the country. The remaining distinguished development challenges of domestic tourism were the poor attitude of the government bodies towards domestic tourism, low per capita income, and high cost of services at destinations.

Besides those mentioned in table 3, restroom problems, expensiveness of transportation fares (mainly Air transport), absence of budget accommodations, absence of legal framework, inadequate and fragmented statistics on domestic tourism, and antagonistic political environment of the country were some of the constraints of domestic tourism development identified by subjects of this study. In terms of challenges of domestic tourism, the findings of this paper are in line with previous studies such as Mazimhaka (2007) in the case of Rwanda, Sindiga (1996) in Kenya, Scheyvens (2007) in Samoa, and Jerenashvili (2014) in Georgia.

From this cross-sectional survey of domestic tourism challenges, it could be understood that among others, absence of domestic tourism development and marketing strategies, lack of domestic tourism marketing or promotion packages, poor attention from business sectors, and Lack of attention from the government were identified as the fundamental problem of domestic tourism development in the country. Consequently, a series of interventions by tourism stakeholders are required for successful domestic tourism development. For instance, applying marketing mixes including different promotional packages to create understanding, and motivate potential travelers would enhance the visitation habits of nationals and the development of domestic tourism. Development and marketing strategies are essential instruments that shape the advancement of the tourism sector, and with no doubt, its nonexistence can cause the opposite. The lion share of tourism activities of the country is dominated by private and government-owned tourism businesses such as Air and ground transportations, accommodation facilities, and attractions. Hence, attention from these tourism businesses to domestic tourism and tourists were recognized as an indispensable for the reason they are central to the tourism sector and tourist activities. There are hierarchical governmental structures from the federal to the *woreda* level that guides the entire tourism development of the country, and attention to domestic tourism and support to domestic tourists by these tourism offices could enhance domestic tourism development in the country. Per capita income is one of the factors that affect domestic tourism practices, and according to the National Bank of Ethiopia annual report of 2018, the country's GDP for the fiscal year 2015/16 is about 828, 765.9 USD and the per capita income reaches about 863.00 USD. This per capita income is one of the smallest (164th) in the world, and the government needs to enhance its earnings, create job opportunities and improve the wage of employees for better domestic tourism development in the country.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Domestic tourism is the largest portion of tourism all over the world and has several economic and socio-cultural potentials to enhance sustainable development. Among others, it facilitates cultural exchange, helps to build nationalism, creates a suitable environment for international tourism, supports less developed areas, and leaves with less or no cultural anxiety. However, alike in most developing countries, domestic tourism in Ethiopia has been almost forgotten as an important part of the tourism development

and area of research. Hence, this exploratory study could help to draw the attention of the government and scholars to domestic tourism and serve as a springboard for further discoveries. Ethiopia has several domestic tourism potentials comprising of its untapped natural and cultural tourism resources, the expanding infrastructure and the large, multi-ethnic, religious and young people. However, problems including the wrong attitude of the tourism experts towards domestic tourism, ignorance from the public and private organizations, the absence of domestic tourism development and promotion plans, low per capita income and others are influencing domestic tourism development in the country. The visitation culture of Ethiopians was found to be poor and the constraints of domestic tourism participation were both intrapersonal and structural. Some of these constraints include awareness problems, high cost of living at destinations, lack of accessibility, low disposable income and poor attitude towards visitation. Therefore, the significant intervention has to be done to mobilize the resources and prospects of the country, minimize the constraints of travel, and enhance domestic tourism participation for successful domestic tourism, tourism in general and overall development of the country.

Appropriate attention should be given to domestic tourism by the government and private businesses and shall be included in the developmental policy of tourism and the country at large. Scholarships on domestic tourism shall be appreciated to uncover the magnitude and values of the market, features, motivations, behavioral intentions, and natures of domestic tourism demand and supply and so on. Serious effects shall be imposed to improve the awareness and change perception of tourism bureau staff and the general public on domestic tourism through organizing events, providing training, media communications, and speeches on social gatherings such as Edir and Ekub. Domestic tourism development and marketing strategies shall be devised besides conducting an intensive destination and domestic tourism promotions via different media. Above all, cooperated efforts from all tourism stakeholders are required for sustainable domestic tourism development. To improve the poor culture of traveling of the people, the government and other stakeholders shall provide better infrastructures, support the establishment of tour clubs like 'know your country' in schools, universities, governmental offices, and private organizations, organize budget tour packages, provide incentive domestic tour for employees, organize social and youth tourism packages, and delivering better quality and periodically discounted services. Moreover, developing potential tourism destinations, expanding budget hotels and youth hostels at destination sites, improving national security would promote domestic tourism development in the country. This study is largely focused on domestic tourism development potentials and its challenges that discussions on marketing practices and problems related to domestic tourism marketing are quite shallow. Hence, future research on the same thematic area should strongly focus on factors that affect domestic tourism marketing practices.

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