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Role of Social Media in Promoting Tourism

A Case Study from Egypt
(2019-2021)

By: Eman El Sayed El Shamy

A PhD thesis presented to the Autonomous University of Barcelona

Under the supervision of:

Professor: Samy Tayie   **Professor: Maria José Recoder**

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the role of social media in promoting tourism using Egypt as a case study, by examining the topic from the perspective of international and domestic tourists (the demand side) and from the perspective of Egyptian tourism providers (the supply side).

As most of the previous studies were implemented in developed countries, it was important to extend research to developing countries. Therefore, studying a developing country like Egypt signified a valuable extension.

This study applied a mixed methods approach i.e., quantitative, and qualitative methods. Concerning the quantitative method, the study adopted a questionnaire as a tool to explore and identify the perceptions of domestic and international tourists who visited Egypt about the role of social media before, during and after their trip to Egypt and ending by an open-ended question to identify tourists' recommendations for an effective tourism promotion through social media.

The questionnaire was sent to domestic and international tourists, as by the time of the COVID pandemic domestic tourism spending in Egypt has grown to become 62% while international tourism spending became 38%, comparing to 41% domestic tourism spending and 59% international tourism spending in 2019 (WTTC,2022).

In depth interviews were conducted with fifteen of the largest travel companies in Egypt representing the private sector and the head of international campaigns and general manager of planning in Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA) representing the public sector. All interviewees agreed that they use Facebook to promote their products, and therefore, a Facebook content analysis was conducted using Kietzmann framework to explore their usage of social media. Kietzmann et al, (2011) formed a framework that classifies seven functional building blocks of social media; these blocks can help and direct marketers when setting their social media strategies.

The findings show that although Egyptian travel companies in Egypt were aware of the importance of social media especially after the COVID pandemic as the reliance on social media increased, they did not exploit its benefits. They rely on their marketing activities on Facebook only, when they should train their employees to meet international standards as they said the main challenge facing them is

high competition and market saturation. The main obstacle facing them was the existence of fake companies that take from their market share and ruin the reputation of Egypt. In consequence, they want the government to have a supervisory role over them.

Concerning the content analysis of their Facebook pages, they did not have a clear online strategy; most of their posts were commercial ads, while posts that stimulate engagement and interaction were the least. They directed their Facebook pages to domestic tourists as they did not encourage international tourists to post about their trips through groups or communities Facebook pages tabs.

Regarding Egyptian Tourism Authority, they promote Egypt using traditional way and social media, but the reliance on social media increased after the pandemic. When examining their official Facebook page, they did not seem to have an online strategy in 2019, but the situation improved in 2020 and 2021 as their brand strategy was clear; they encouraged Egyptians and foreigners to post their experiences in every place in Egypt.

From the perspective of tourists (domestic and international), an open-ended question in the questionnaire sent to them allowed to know about their recommendations for an effective tourism promotion through social media.Both domestic and international tourists recommended stopping fake products, to have transparency , to provide price lists of services and attractions, and to promote Egypt in more innovative ways such as promoting culture and local food and sharing real people experiences.

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate about the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt. Social media has made a paradigm shift, changing completely the traditional communication between travelers and companies. Social media is not only changing the way people connect online but is influencing the way they consume other media too. People are using their online social connections to filter, make discussions and evaluate news, entertainment, services, and goods they consume online and offline (Ryan,2016).

The continuous growth of the numbers of the users of social media platforms attracts the attention of marketers as it can be used in marketing tourism and as an effective tool to increase tourism sales. (Samanta &Bg,2017). The close match between the nature of tourist products being informative and the features of social media offering global reach and interaction experiences shows that social media is becoming an essential means for promoting tourism. The tourism industry should use information and communication technologies via social media applications in an intensive and continuous way as they are strong tools to contact and make relations with travelers (StepchanKova& Zhan, 2013; Khan, 2018).

Nowadays, in the era of information revolution, traditional promotion methods cannot meet or satisfy customers' needs(Palmer, 2005).Social media changed consumers from passive spectators to active participants with social networking sites serving as perfect environments for promoting products and brands(Riegner,2011; Chu & Kim, 2011).With the introduction of web 2 consumers became authors, they can create and share their own experiences and promote their favorite brands (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Vivek et al, 2012). By user generated content, creative consumers can influence and inspire others through their individual experiences (Kohli et al, 2015).

In the light of digital expansion, consumers have witnessed a change in their daily life consumption and buying behavior. They have been more dynamic and interactive on social media (Berrada, 2017; Sigala, 2016). Recently the interactivity of social media allows the promotion of customer interactions, connections, and engagement (Sigala,2016; Samanta &Bg,2017). The fast growth in sophisticated customers who need specific and interactive products places huge demand on the tourism industry to take advantage of the information technology revolution.

1.2 Justification of the Research

One of the country's most important economic sectors in Egypt is the travel and tourism industry. Egypt as a developing country benefit from tourism through the generation of foreign currency, creation of jobs (employment) and developing the infrastructure construction. In Egypt, tourism is considered as the main source of national income as it helps to combat unemployment and relieve poverty (El Nagar& Derbali,2020). The total travel and tourism contribution to GDP in 2019 was 8.8% and 9.2% to total employment (WTTC,2021).

Egypt is distinguished by the diversity of its tourism, considered as a must-see destination and one of the strongest brands in the Middle East (Avraham,2016). The country is a destination that suits all budgets, leading in cultural tourism, coming 22nd globally, ranking 38th in terms of world heritage cultural sites and the third in price competitiveness (TTCR,2019).

After the 2011 revolution the travel industry suffered periods of ups and downs in international tourists' arrivals. After the protests the country saw the overthrow of two governments. This is strongly mirrored by the decreasing number of tourists since the Arab spring, followed by a disaster in 2015 as a plane crashed due to a terrorist attack in Sinai Peninsula resulting in imposing bans by many Europeans countries that are considered the main sender of tourists in Egypt.

Although the year 2019 number of tourists showed a significant improvement, the number fell again in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic and travel restrictions.
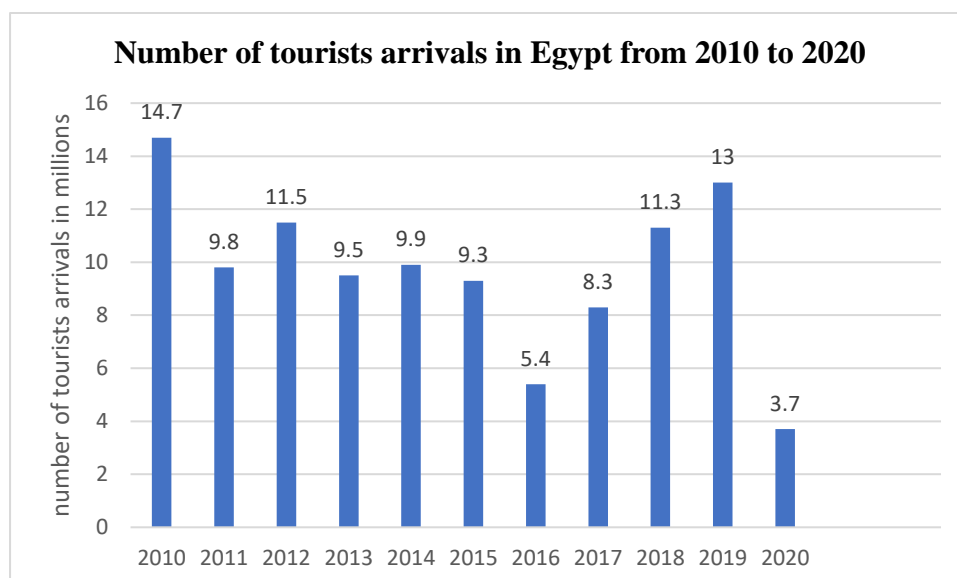
Figure1:1: Number of tourist's arrivals in Egypt from 2010 to 2020

Source: (Statista, 2021)
https://www.statista.com/statistics/970638/egypt-tourist-arrivals/

A new military government established itself in Egypt, but internal stability was not apparent to the external viewer. Therefore, to restore its image, Egypt needs to be successfully promoted in targeted markets. By adopting strategies associated with social media, destinations can succeed in promoting themselves and be differentiated from their competitors. (Királová et al, 2015).

After the 2011 revolution, the number of internet users rose from 14.3 million in 2010 to 57,1 million in 2021 with 51,5 million social media active users (49% of the overall population), with Facebook remaining the most popular social media network. See figure (1,2) & figure (1,3).

Number of social media users in Egypt as of December 2021, by platform (in millions)

Platform	Value
Facebook	52.6102
Messenger	46.1233
Instagram	15.9032
Linkedinn	6.434

y-axis: number of users in millions (0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60)
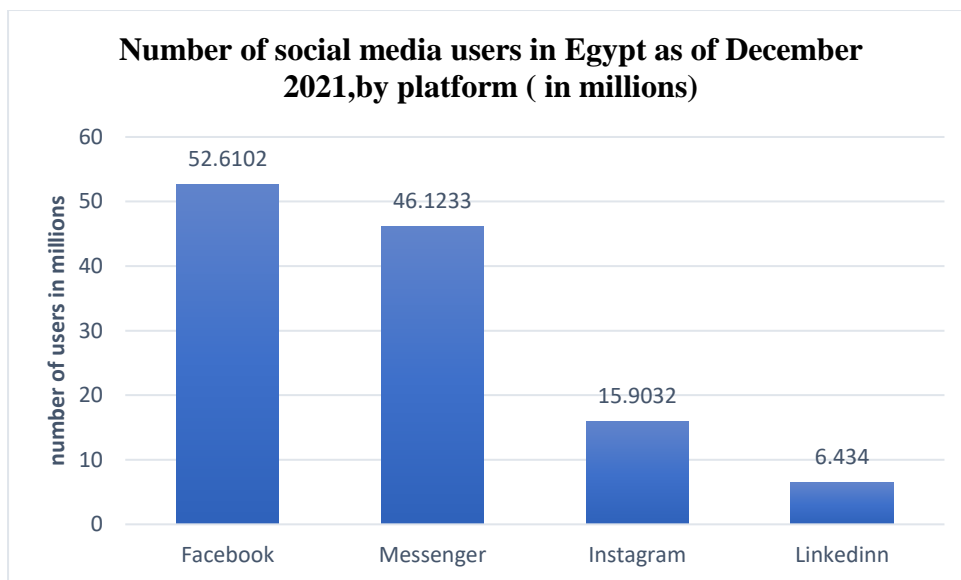
Figure 1:2: Number of social media users in Egypt as of December 2021, by platform

Source: (statista,2022)
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1263755/social-media-users-by-platform-in-egypt/#:
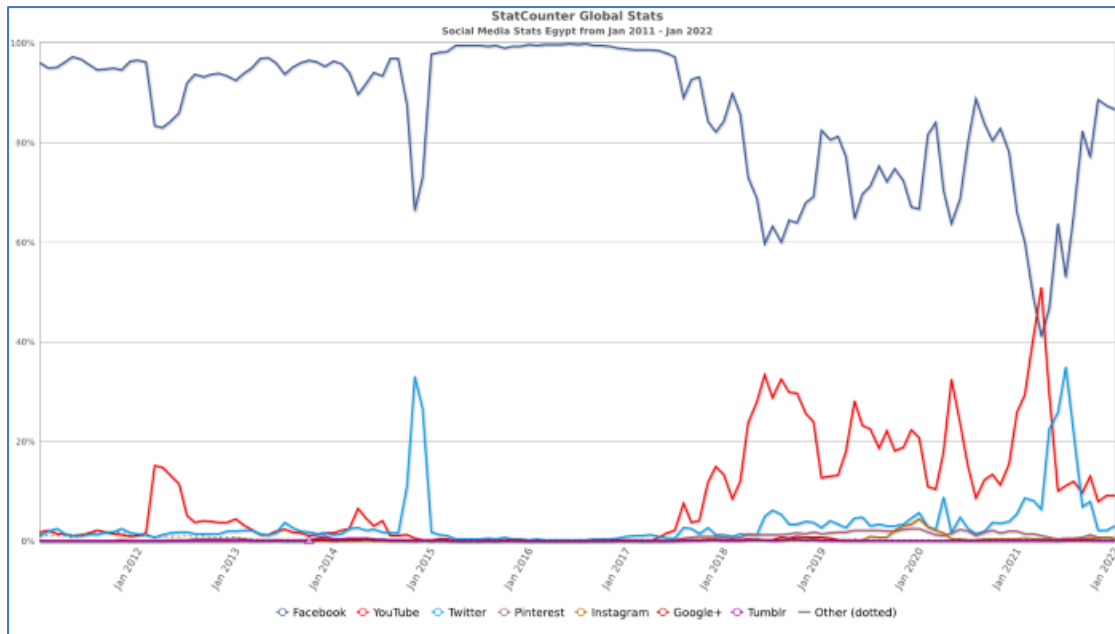
Figure 1:3:Social media stats Egypt from January 2011 to January 2022

By using a mixed method approach, the researcher aims to investigate the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt to gain in depth understanding of such phenomenon. Thus, exploring the role of social media will certainly provide clear and valuable information to help improve the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Egypt, and propose recommendations.

The researcher conducted semi structured interviews with 15 of the largest travel agents in Egypt representing the private sector (supply side) and the head of international campaigns and general manager of planning in the Egyptian tourism authority which is the entity responsible for promoting the country (public sector).

By performing a content analysis of official Facebook pages of 5 of the travel agents from the previous qualitative sample (selected according to the highest number of followers in their Facebook pages), the researcher aims to identify the following; how Egyptian travel agents and Egyptian tourism authority promote Egypt through social media; to what extent they are exploiting their Facebook pages to reach their target markets; and whether they use these pages for targeting domestic or international tourists or both.

Concerning the demand side, 413 questionnaires were sent to tourists who have visited Egypt) to identify the views of international and Egyptian travelers regarding the benefits of the use of social media in their travel and also identify their opinions about Egyptian social media platforms related to tourism.

213 questionnaires were sent to international tourists (65.6 % in the sample are Europeans) as European countries are considered the main source of tourists in

Egypt (See figure 1,4). Two hundred questionnaires were sent to domestic tourists (Egyptians), as by the time of the pandemic and flight bans, domestic tourism gained special importance.

Domestic tourism spending in Egypt represented 41% while international tourism spending represented 59% in 2019. However, the situation changed in 2021; domestic tourism spending has grown to become 62% compared to international spending which became 38% (WTTC, 2022).

Number of tourists arrivals 2019-2020 by region of origin (in millions)

Region	2019	2020
Europeans	8.38	2.31
Arabs	3.17	0.92
Americans	0.55	0.17
Others	0.93	0.28
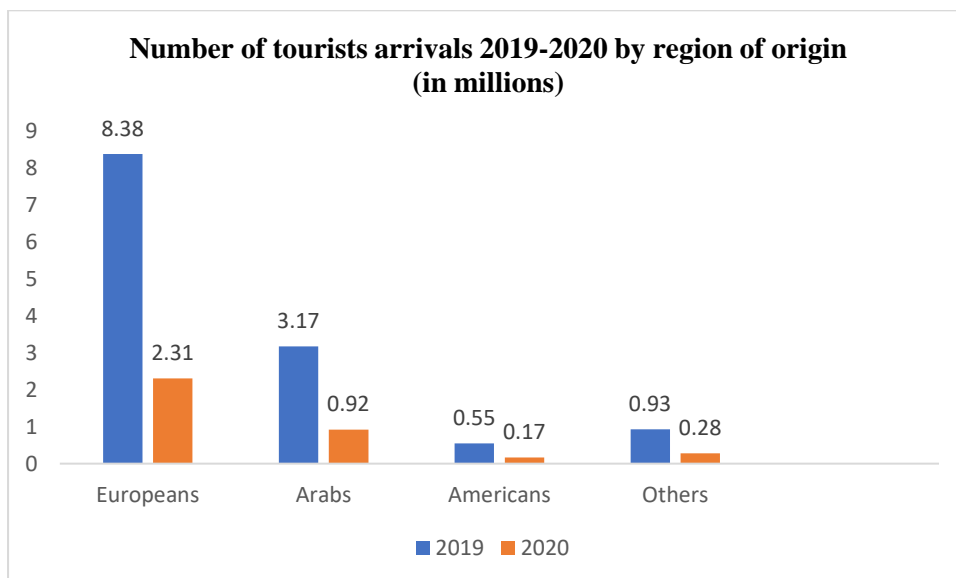
Figure1:4: Number of tourists arrivals 2019-2020 by region of origin

Source:https://www.statista.com/statistics/999378/egypt-tourist-arrivals-by-region-of-origin

1.3 Egypt as a Case Study and the Gap found in Literature:

Egypt has been chosen in this exploratory study for several reasons:

First, it is the native country of the researcher in consequences. It facilitated the meeting of participants in the qualitative procedure as the interviewees were Egyptians. Second, most previous studies were conducted in developed countries, and it is important to extend research to developing countries. Therefore, studying a developing country like Egypt signified a valuable extension. Third, there is a

lack of studies in the Egyptian library. Most studies are focusing on the internet in general and its adoption by Egyptian companies.

Regarding the methodology, studies are quantitative focusing either on the demand side (tourists) (Bakr et. al, 2013; Azzaz, & Elabban, 2018) or on the supply side (by sending questionnaires) (Marzouk, 2016; Ezzat & Rady, 2018; Saad et al, 2014)

No content analysis of Egyptian travel companies Facebook pages was found, only content analysis of Egyptian tourism authority official website and accounts.

Fourth, Egypt is one of the top countries worldwide in terms of tourism growth potential. According to the world travel and tourism council and Oxford Group, tourism sector has historically played a vital role in the economy, with is total contribution to GDP growing from 8.5% in 1988 to a high of 19.5% in 2007.

Fifth, Egypt has a varied and distinctive tourism portfolio that could lead to a significant increase in the tourists' inflow if properly promoted over social media.

1.4 The Research Problem:

The research problem statement is:

What is the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt?

To answer this question, the researcher conducted exploratory research. This kind of study is concerned with discovering new phenomenon, which was not examined before. In this type of study, we rely on questions rather than hypotheses (Tayie, 2017).

Depending on the usefulness of the exploratory studies for social research and as the researcher wants to define and investigate the problem more clearly, exploration can uncover troubles or difficulties Egypt should avoid and propose recommendations to consider.

1.5 Research Objectives:

The main objective of this research is to examine the role of social media in promoting Egyptian tourism and to determine the effectiveness of social media as a communication mechanism in the tourism industry.

General research objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt from the supply side, both private and public sector.
2. To know the challenges that face the private and public sector when adopting social media.

3. To investigate the role of social media in promoting Egypt (from the demand side) by identifying the views of international and Egyptian travelers of the benefits of the use of social media in their travel and by also identifying their opinions about Egyptian social media platforms related to tourism.

4. To propose recommendations for public and private sectors to improve their use of social media in the field of tourism promotion.

By answering the research questions, the researcher aims to reach research objectives.
Research questions are as follows:

1. How do owners and managers of Egyptian travel agents promote Egypt as a travel destination?

2. How do managers in ETA promote Egypt through social media?

3. What are the challenges facing travel companies when adopting social media?

4. What are the recommendations and strategies to improve their usage of social media?

5. How do tourists visiting Egypt refer to social media when searching for information or taking their decision and how do they perceive Egyptian social platforms which are specialized in promoting tourism?

6. What are the recommendations of tourists who have visited Egypt and Egyptian tourists for an effective tourism promotion via social media?

1.6 Thesis Outline:

1. Chapter One:

This chapter presents an overview of the research. It covers an introduction of the research, addresses the justification of the research and the existing gaps in literature. The research aims and objectives, the problem statement and the research questions are presented. Finally, it demonstrates the outline of the thesis.

2. Chapter Two:

This chapter deals with the research methodology implemented in this research as well as the strategy applied to reach the main goals and objectives of the research.

3. Chapter Three:

This chapter begins by discussing the theories related to social media in the field of promotion, followed by discussing promotion and branding of destinations in the digital era, a literature review about social media and tourism in a global context and ending with presenting a literature review of social media and tourism in an Egyptian context.

4. Chapter Four:

This chapter focuses on the qualitative work conducted in this research. This consists of 15 semi structured interviews with owners and managers of Egyptian travel agencies as well as a semi structured interview with the head of international campaign and general manager for planning in the Egyptian tourism authority (ETA), which is the body responsible for promoting tourism in Egypt. It ends with a thematic analysis.

5. Chapter Five:

This chapter focuses on the quantitative work conducted in this research through an SPSS analysis of 413 questionnaires sent to international tourists as well as Egyptian tourists.

6. Chapter Six:

This chapter discusses the results of a small scale of content analysis conducted on Facebook pages of Egyptian travel agents as well as official Facebook page of the Egyptian tourism authority, and that is by using Kietzmann framework to analyze the FB contents. The reason behind choosing Facebook instead of other social media platforms is presented in this chapter.

7. Chapter Seven:

This chapter discusses the main findings of the research as well as the conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter Two

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the methodology adopted in this research but in the beginning the researcher will present the philosophy behind the methods and research design chosen.

In this chapter the research approach, strategy, sample chosen as well as the methods applied to collect data to answer the research questions and reach the research objectives were presented.

2.2 Research Philosophy

Understanding the research philosophy is necessary for knowing how to deal with a research project (Shannon-baker, 2016). The implementation of a suitable research philosophy helps the researcher to get a strategy and decide the methods to perform the research (Saunders et. al, 2015).

Research philosophy is also recognized as the research paradigm (M Kansi & Acheampong, 2012). The research paradigm refers to the set of philosophical beliefs that define the worldview of the researcher (Liacolin et al, 2011).

Based on epistemology (knowledge), ontology (reality) and methodology, various research paradigms result (Cuba and Liacolin, 1994).

- Research Ontology:

Meriam-Webster dictionary defines ontology as "a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relations of being." In simple words, ontology is the study of being it concentrates on the nature of reality. Ontological philosophy has two essential viewpoints: objectivism and subjectivism.

Objectivism is also known as positivism—an ontological situation that considers that a social phenomenon can happen and be seen without the intervention of social actors.

Positivists consider social phenomenon like natural science; they generate hypotheses and tested them by direct observation (Marsh, D and Furlong E, 2002). They usually depend on quantitative methods to generalize the results.

Subjectivism is also known as interpretivism or social constructivism. It is a philosophical thought that believes that social phenomenon is an individual investigation, and that the researcher builds his knowledge with the help of informants. This belief is the opposite of positivism as it suggests that the truth is not objective but can be determined through engagement of people or with the help of participants.

The aim of constructivist research is to study the behavior of social actors instead of generalizing causes and effects. They believe that social phenomenon cannot be examined through absolute observation as they see the real world as socially constructed (Newman, 2000). Constructivists believe in subjectivity and see human creatures as the key influencer of social phenomenon (Creswell, 2003).

- Research Epistemology:

While ontology is about the nature of the phenomenon, epistemology is about the methods for understanding it. According to Wasik (2016), epistemology is an investigation about how humans obtain or seek knowledge.

There are two main approaches in obtaining knowledge, one of them focuses on statistics and that is the positivist approach. The other approach is the subjectivist approach which focuses on changing aspects of human understandings.

- Research Methodology

Research methodology is a comprehensive process requiring gathering, examining, and interpreting data using three methods, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (William, 2002). This study selected mixed methods to collect data.

- Research Paradigm

There are four main research paradigms:

Positivism:

In this research philosophy the researcher evaluates the world in an objective way and separates himself from his personal point of view (Creswell, 2013). This paradigm always associates with quantitative methods and focuses on generalizability.

Interpretivism:

This philosophy is the opposite of positivism, as it states that the social world can be understood in a subjective manner. The research depends on what the researcher's interests are (Zukauskas et. al, 2018).

Pragmatism:

Pragmatism is a philosophical foundation for the mixed method approach (Creswell, 2014). Its plans are to generate real solutions to social problems (Shannon-Baker, 2016). The pragmatic approach requires qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather data (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Realism:

Realism is a philosophical belief that postulates that there are real world objects aside from human experience. In other words, reality is seen as objective (Eastwood et. al, 2014).

The following table cited from Ganiyu et. al (2020) helps to understand research paradigms in social sciences.

Table 2-1 : Research paradigms and philosophy summary

	Ontology – nature of reality	**Epistemology** – what constitutes acceptable knowledge	**Axiology** – role of value
Positivism	External, objective and independent of social actors	Focus on causality and law like generalisation, reducing phenomenon to simplest elements	Research is value-free. Researcher independent of the data and maintain objective stance.
Interpretivism	Subjectivism: socially constructed reality with multiple changes	Focus on details of situation, realities behind these details, subjective meanings motivating actions	Research is value-bound. Researcher cannot be separated from the research, hence, subjective.
Realism	Objectivism: reality exist independent of human thought and belief but interpreted through social conditioning	Focus on explaining within context or contexts.	Research is value laden. Researcher is biased by world views, cultural experiences and upbringing.
Pragmatism	External, multiple, view chosen that best answers research question	Relativism: combining different perspectives to help interpret the data.	Values play a large role in interpreting results, researcher adopting both objective and subjective points of view.

Source: Ganiyu and Egbu (2018).

Considering the research questions and objectives of the thesis, pragmatism is the best choice, as the researcher aims to investigate the role of social media in promoting tourism by examining the problem from both supply and demand side. By adopting mixed methods i.e., qualitative, and quantitative (see chapter 2.6) the researcher aims to gain in depth understanding about the phenomenon, while positivism is needed for the demand side as to detect the perceptions of domestic and international tourists who visited Egypt.

On the other hand, interpretivism is necessary for the supply side as it help to understand the perceptions and opinions of tourism providers in Egypt. The mixture of positivism and interpretivism offers a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

2.3 Research Approach

This research applied a triangular approach i.e., both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. Triangulation has been extensively used in social sciences and is defined as the use of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, (Kelle & Ezberger, 2004). Triangulation is the study of the same phenomenon using multiple methods to increase study credibility (Thurmond, 2001). It is used mostly in researching the less explored or unexplored research problems, consequently the researcher can create more data and get an understandable and a clearer image of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2002).

By using Triangulation, the researcher should produce more information on diverse levels, which means generating more knowledge that cannot be obtained through using one approach and eventually promoting quality in research (Flick, 2008). On the other hand, this combination or triangular research methodology approach is built on the belief that no research methodology is free from errors and therefore recommends that the researcher should examine his problem from as many diverse methodological viewpoints as possible (Denzin, 1977). Consequently, there are many advantages from applying mixed methods as the researcher can offer a more complete illustration of the investigated phenomenon by using one method to prove findings from other methods.

In this research triangulation is significant as first it helps the researcher to gain in depth understanding from both supply and demand side. The field of marketing and promotion is mainly concerned about the demand side i.e., consumer needs and preferences (in this case tourists), thus it is important to take their opinions into consideration. Second, through comparing the findings of quantitative and qualitative results the researcher can define areas of resemblances and differences that lead to clarification.

2.4 Research Strategy:

Based on the nature of the research the researcher chose a mixed approach, the exploratory strategy best suits the present research. As by answering the research questions, it can provide us with a good understanding of the role of social media in promoting tourism and how it can be used as an effective marketing tool. Exploratory research is applied when there is not enough knowledge or information can clearly define a problem or a phenomenon (Saunders et al, 2007).

Table 2-2: Research objectives, questions and methods applied.

Research objectives	Research questions	Methods
To investigate the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egyptian travel companies (supply side, private)	How do owners and managers of Egyptian travel companies promote Egypt as a travel destination?	In depth interviews + content analysis
To investigate the role of social media in promoting tourism (supply side, public)	How do managers in ETA promote Egypt through social media?	In depth interview + content analysis
To know the challenges that face the private sector when adopting social media	What are the challenges facing travel companies when adopting social media?	In depth interview
To propose recommendations for public and private sectors	What are the recommendations and strategies to improve their usage of social media?	In depth interview + questionnaires
To investigate the role of social media in promoting Egypt (from the demand side)	How do tourists visiting Egypt refer to social media when searching for information or taking their decision and how do they perceive Egyptian social platforms which are specialized in promoting tourism? What are their recommendations and suggestions for an effective tourism promotion using social media?	Questionnaires

Regarding the qualitative research method, it differs from its quantitative counterpart as it provides us with deep understanding of the phenomenon and how it happens. This type of research enables the researcher to find new ideas and discovering behaviours, attitudes, and directions and to recognize the factors influencing these attitudes and decisions.

In this research 15 semi structured interviews were conducted with the largest Egyptian companies as well as an interview with the head of international campaign and general planning in the Egyptian tourism authority which is the body responsible for promoting tourism in Egypt. According to Tayie, (2017), this kind of interviews depends on a small sample as they allow the researcher to obtain a great amount of information. When conducting the interview, the researcher can ask different questions depending on the interviewers' answers and in this way the researcher can come with deep and full understanding of the situation.

Moreover, by doing a content analysis of the Facebook pages of five travel companies selected from the previous sample according to the greatest number of followers, and a content analysis of the official Facebook page of Egyptian tourism authority, the researcher aims to answer the first and second research questions. Content analysis is differentiated from other types of social sciences research that the collection of data does not need people as it is collected from a very wide scope of recorded texts either oral like speeches and interviews, written like books, magazines, and newspapers or visual like TV. The researcher can get more information about how they promote their travel products and services, by associating that to Kietzmann framework of the seven building blocks of social media.

Using the quantitative approach is also significant in this research, as it can support the qualitative data through sending questionnaires to international and domestic tourists to investigate about their use of social media before, during and after their trip and to know about their recommendations for an effective tourism promotion via social media.

This study also uses Egypt as a case study. According to Zainal (2007), a case study allows to investigate and examine the data closely and in a deep manner within a specific context. Case study research indicates an analysis of population, experiences, organizations, or other systems which are studied from various perceptions by one or more methods (Thomas, 2011; Crow et. al, 2011). Moreover, a case study has the benefit of acquiring a complete picture of the phenomenon from which to obtain investigative understanding (Thomas and Myers, 2015).

2.5 Research Methods:

Diverse research methods were implemented over the procedure of collecting data: interviews, questionnaires, and content analysis.

The next table presents the data collection methods that the researcher has used in this research.

Table 2-3: Features and strengths of methods applied.

Method	Features	Specifications and points of strength
Semi-structured interviews	The researcher has a list of questions, although he can ask for more clarification and get more information from participants.	Get in depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Get closer to the participants and knowing their opinions and points of view. (Holloway & Galvin, 2016) It is a flexible method.
Questionnaires	They are designed based on the variables or research questions of the study.	Having a big number of respondents that allows generalizability of the results
Content analysis	Collection of data does not need people. The researcher does not influence the information he analyses, so it remains the same before and after conducting the study.	Less biased, more accurate

2.6 Quantitative Research Method:

As stated above, the purpose of the employed quantitative research method is to detect the demand side perceptions, thoughts, and behaviour (Nardi, 2018). This study requires large number of respondents and different opinions from the demand side which cannot be achieved through a qualitative method.

It is important to make sure that the number of people surveyed is reasonably large and that they are considered as a representative sample (Saunders et. al, 2015, Nardi, 2018).

2.6.1Data Collection Tools:

the present study is concerned to explore the role of social media in promoting tourism using Egypt as a case study, a questionnaire was used to collect demand side data while in depth interviews were conducted with the supply side.

2.6.2 Survey:

This study adopted a self-completion questionnaire as a tool to explore and identify the perceptions of domestic and international tourists who visited Egypt about the role of social media before, during and after their trip to Egypt and ending by an open-ended question to identify tourists' recommendations for an effective tourism promotion through social media.

2.6.3 Sampling and Population:

Finding the representative population of the study and sampling procedures are necessary before data collection (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the target population for the quantitative work is domestic and international tourists who visited Egypt. When performing research, it is essential to choose respondents who truly represent the population (Wilmot, 2005; Hinton, 2014). For this research nonprobability sampling technique was chosen,

A purposive sample of international and domestic tourists who visited Egypt.

A purposive sample is a non-probability sample technique based on the researcher's judgement about some suitable attributes required by the sampling members (De Leeuw et. al, 2008). The purpose of the purposive sampling is to focus on the specific attributes of a population that are of interest to the researcher and that best allow him to answer the research questions (Bryman and Teevan, 2005; Saunders et. al, 2015).

2.6.4 Response Rate for the Questionnaire:

It was very difficult to contact international tourists during this period in hotels or airports due to safety measures, in consequences the researcher contacted the travel companies selected from the qualitative sample in September 2021 to send them the questionnaires which in their turn send them to tourists through what app. Unfortunately, 60 questionnaires only were received, from which 7 questionnaires were excluded due to missing data and 40 questionnaires were considered as a pilot study to ensure reliability and validity.

The researcher decided to send the questionnaires through a well-known platform in scientific research called poll fish. In October 2021, 100 valid questionnaires were collected and in February 2022, 100 valid questionnaires were received.

Regarding domestic tourism, 200 valid questionnaires were received in February 2022 through what app and Facebook.

The researcher conducted a pilot study on 40 international tourists and 40 domestic tourists to ensure reliability and validity. Piloting study enable the researcher to detect any weakly worded questions or that might have shown bias to the researcher (Wimmer and Dominick, 2010).

2.6.5 Reliability for Survey Measurements:

To reach a high level of reliability the research utilised a mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) in data collection.

Moreover, the study used Cronbach's alpha to ensure reliability for survey measurements. According to Wong (2013), the lower value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 but in exploratory research it can be lowered to reach 0.6.

Table (2.4) & (2.5) summarize the outcomes of internal reliability of the scales using Cronbach alpha where the values are 0.802 for domestic tourists and 0.853 for international tourists.   This is above 0.7 meaning that the results and the items in the scale are reliable.

Table (2.4) reliability statistics for Egyptians tourists

Table 2.4: Reliability statistics for Egyptians tourists

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	0.736	3
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	0.852	6
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	0.812	4
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	0.849	3

	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Total	**0.802**	**16**

Table 2-5: Reliability statistics for international tourists

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	0.761	3
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	0.781	6
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	0.883	4
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	0.839	3
Total	**0.853**	**16**

2.6.6 Statistical Methods Used in Quantitative Data Analysis:

As already stated, the questionnaires were addressed to domestic and international tourists who visited Egypt. Statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 23 were employed to analyse the quantitative data. The research used descriptive statistics to define demographics and categorical characteristics of the study population in terms of frequencies and percentages.

The table below presents the statistical methods applied in the quantitative study.

Table 2-6: Statistical Methods Applied

Statistical test name	Use for
Descriptive statistics	To illustrate the data in form of frequencies and percentages
T test	To compare mean scores of studied groups (domestic and international tourists)
Chi square test	To identify difference between studied groups
Pearson correlation	To detect the strength of correlation between variables

2.7 Qualitative Research Method:

2.7.1 Sampling Selection Method:

A purposive sample is the most suitable for the qualitative work as it is used when a specific group of people is chosen because the group members can offer information that could not be gained by other sampling techniques (Gray, 2016). In this study, a purposive sample of 15 owners and managers of the largest travel companies Category A in Egypt were selected.

According to ETTA (Egyptian travel agents association) and the Egyptian ministry of tourism, there are three categories of travel companies in Egypt. Category A companies are the largest companies that are responsible for organizing packages and its all-related items for groups and individuals inside and outside Egypt and can-do planned packages of other tour operators. Category B are companies responsible for selling transportation tickets either by air or land or water and moving tourists lug gages. Category C are companies that operate transportation means by air, land, or water. In this research, Category A companies are chosen in this sample for the purpose of this study as they are engaged in many activities related to tourism.

The interviews conducted were in three positions: the general manager, the tourism manager, and the owner of the company (In some cases, the owner is also the general manager). These positions are the most important in companies as they are from the first staff of decision making.

The table below presents the interviewees names and their positions.

Table 2-7: Interviewees Profiles

Travel Company	Interviewee Name	Position
ElMasreya El Daweleya	Mahmoud Abdel Gellil	General manager
Beach Tours	Morad Mehelba	Branch manager
Family Tours	Asser Moussa	Chairman and owner
Snob Travel	Mariam Hamouda	Chairman and owner
Meir Travel	Nader Nabieh	Branch manager
Banna Tours	Ashraf Gaber	Tourism manager
Kadmar Travel	Eman Ezzat	General manager

Travel Company	Interviewee Name	Position
A Travel	Essam Aly	Chairman and owner
Sondos travel	Montasser Omar	Chairman and owner
Unorage travel	Eslam Ibrahim	Tourism manager
Ramasside tours	Mohamed Yossef	Chairman and owner
Alex City	Hany Tawfiq	Chairman and owner
Tishoury Tours	Mina Samir	Branch manager
Grand Egypt	Azza Reda	Branch manager

Concerning the public sector which is represented by the Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA) who is the body responsible for promoting Egypt, the researcher conducted the interview with Mrs. Suzan Mostafa, the head of international campaign and the general manager for planning in Egyptian tourism authority (ETA).

2.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Process:

The interviews were conducted from October 2020 to April 2020. Before conducting the interview, the researcher requested the permission of every participant before making an appointment with him. All questions and objectives were clarified to each participant. They were informed that their information would be confidential and used only for scientific research.

The researcher spent about one hour with each interviewee and made sure that respondents answer all questions, and all interviews were recorded, Tran scripted and translated. The method of data analysis was carried out manually using thematic analysis technique.

A thematic analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data, a method for identifying and analyzing patterns and themes (O'Reilly et. al, 2013; Gray, 2014). The first stage is to become familiar with the data gathered through listening to the recorded interviews several times. An essential part of this step is writing down the verbal data into written form which helps the researcher to familiarize and make sense of the data gathered. The next step is coming up with codes to allow an overview of the most important points and meanings through the data, after which comes identifying patterns and themes. Each theme was analyzed extensively with regards to the research questions.

As an ethical consideration, it was necessary to explain that, at the beginning of the interview, the participants were reminded about the nature of the study, the aim of the interview, and the privacy of information to be collected. Additionally,

verbal authorization was taken to record the interview. All interviewees were assured that their names, positions, and all information provided would be used for academic purposes only.

2.8 Facebook pages content analysis:

In this study the researcher uses qualitative content analysis by collecting and gathering a large amount of data and associating it to a honeycomb framework of social media.

Facebook was chosen due to several reasons:

1. From a global perspective, Facebook is the most popular network with 2.910 billion monthly users (Statista, January 2022).
2. From an Egyptian perspective, also Facebook is the most popular social media platform with 52.6 million users (Statista, December2021)
3. Regarding our field of investigation, when the researcher asked the owners and managers of the Egyptian travel companies about the most social media platform, they used to promote their products and services, they all replied by one answer which is Facebook.
4. Additionally, when the researcher received a document from the Egyptian tourism authority, it was obvious that Facebook has a special position as the authority has 16 Facebook pages accounts targeting several countries. On the other hand, the authority has one account on YouTube, one account on Instagram and two accounts only on twitter, a VK account to target Russia and a Weibo account for China.

The table below represents a document received from Mrs. Suzan Mostafa the head of international campaign and general manager for planning in Egyptian tourism authority (ETA) showing their social media accounts.

Table 2-8: Facebook pages of Egyptian tourism authority

Default Page	facebook.com/experienceegypt/		Denmark Pakistan Philippines
Experience Egypt (UA - Ukrainian)	facebook.com/ua.experienceegypt/		Ukraine

Experience Egypt (SE - Swedish)	facebook.com/se.experienceegypt/		Sweden
Experience Egypt (IN)	facebook.com/in.experienceegypt/		India
Experience Egypt (GB)	facebook.com/uk.experienceegypt/		All regions in United Kingdom
Experience Egypt (US, CA - English)	facebook.com/us.experienceegypt/		All English-speaking regions in Canada All regions and all languages in the United States in all regions
Experience Egypt (JP)	facebook.com/jp.experienceegypt/		Japan
Experience Egypt (MX, ES, AR)	facebook.com/es.experienceegypt/		Argentina Mexico Spain
Experience Egypt (CZ)	facebook.com/Cz.experienceegypt/		Czech Republic
Experience Egypt (FR - French, TN – French)	facebook.com/fr.experienceegypt/		All regions in Canada except British Columbia for French Belgium Morocco Tunisia Algeria France
Experience Egypt (IT)	facebook.com/it.experiencegypt/		Italy
Experience Egypt (PL)	facebook.com/pl.Experienceegypt/		Poland
Experience Egypt (EG)	facebook.com/eg.ExperienceEgypt/		Egypt
مصر بداية الحكاية (SA, JO, AE, ...)	facebook.com/ar.experienceegypt/		Algeria Morocco Tunisia Jordan Kuwait Saudi Arabia United Arab Emirates
Experience Egypt (DE, CH, AT)	facebook.com/de.experienceegypt/		Austria Germany

Experience Egypt (RU, KZ, BY)	facebook.com/ru.experienceegypt/		Belarus
			Kazakhstan
			Russia

Youtube   Experience Egypt https://www.youtube.com/user/egypt
Instagram Experienceegypt https://www.instagram.com/experienceegypt/
Twitter : هي دي مصر https://twitter.com/ar_experienceeg
          Experience Egypt   https://twitter.com/ExperienceEgypt

Russia

VK   Experience Egypt | Открой для себя Египет   https://vk.com/public186941095

China Weibo 埃及驻华使馆旅游处https://weibo.com/etab?is_all=1
          Wechat

5. On the other hand, according to Statista (https://www.statista.com/statistics/999378/egypt-tourist-arrivals-by-region-of-origin/), the highest number of tourist arrivals in Egypt were from European countries. Facebook is the most used social media platform in Europe, according to (global stats, 2022) (https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/europe)

2.8.1 Content analysis method

Content analysis is considered one of the most valuable research techniques used by social researchers. As a term content analysis was defined by Webster's dictionary in 1961 as "the analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (e.g., a book or a film) through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect."

Today, due to the evolution and progress of technology and the existence of many different media of communications, contemporary content analysis has empirical and exploratory characteristics. The researcher analyses many forms and sources of data to understand what people want to say via their message. Messages in the digital era are formed according to the medium or channel used by the sender.

Contemporary content analysis is not only concerned with writing, but also telephone converted writing messages into sound and television converted visual messages. In the digital era we have electronic messages.

The idea of systems appeared with the progress of technology and the evolution of communication networks and the emergence of web 2 or social media. Social media allows two ways of communication. The consumer has an active role in transmitting messages instead of their ordinary passive role as a receiver only. It is the time of interactivity and engagement, in other words, a revolution in communication technology.

According to Krippendroff, (2004) defines content analysis as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use." By the term "meaningful matter "this definition indicates it is not a matter of written messages but also images photos, maps, sounds and even numerical records.

2.8.2 Advantages of Content Analysis Method

Content analysis is differentiated from other types of social sciences research that the collection of data does not need people as it is gathered from a very wide scope of recorded texts either oral like speeches and interviews, written like books, magazines, and newspapers or visual like TV. On the other hand, the researcher does not influence the information they analyze, so it remains the same before and after conducting the study. The absence of direct contact with people can reduce the probability of self-interference of the human source providing the information so it reduces errors and subjectivity.

In this research and specifically when we talk about social media and tourism in the digital era, it is important for travel companies, either private or public to engage and have a communication strategy when promoting their products and services.

According to Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013), users engage with a brand Facebook page either by posting content on the wall (according to the communication policy of the firm), commenting on a current post shared by the admin of the page, displaying interest by pressing the like button or sharing the post on his personal profile wall. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), companies should be active, effective, honest, simple, and interesting when developing relationships with their customers online.

2.8.3 Honeycomb framework of social media

Kietzmann et. al (2011) formed a framework that classifies 7 functional building blocks of social media, these blocks can help and direct marketers when setting their social media strategies.

These blocks consisted of 7 functional blocks which mean that each block has a task or utility and allows us to examine a specific facet of social media user experience and its suggestions for firms.

These 7 functional building blocks are presented below:

1-Identiy functional block:

To be able to communicate with customers a company should have a profile on social networks with the company details and services. Through this block the firm can present its identity such as information, name, location, and the firm can express its beliefs, likings, and thoughts.

The social identity theory introduced by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979 explains the behavior of individuals in their groups and among groups. This theory presents different strategies to enhance social identity. The strategy of individual mobility notes that if an individual in a group finds another group that matches their goals and objectives, they will leave this group and go to the other one which helps them to reach his goals. Every company or organization should monitor the behavior of its users or customers to help them reach their goals and become loyal to the company instead of switching to another company.

Social creativity is another strategy that states that a company must be creative and differentiated from others, for example giving exclusive offers to its customers. The third strategy is the social competition strategy. The company can achieve this strategy through productivity and enhancing teamwork.

2- Conversation Functional Block.

Conversation is the exchange of opinions and ideas between two or more members or between customers and the company or organization. The conversation block shows how a firm can start and manipulate conversations. Conversation analysis is a method to study social engagement between people either nonverbal or verbal communication.

3- Sharing Functional Block.

Sharing can be exchanging goods or resources, and it can be sharing information. People or social media users share posts that are interesting for them or related to their likings or preferences. In this research sharing also represents how firms can share and help society without profit, for example offering discounts, initiatives in the form of hashtags or even sharing advice, helpful tips, and useful

information. Sometimes the success of touristic programs depends on sharing and giving role in the society as that can make customers trust the company.

4- Presence Functional Building Block

The presence of the company can be achieved through many ways, for example the frequency of postings, quick responds to customer complaints, sharing live events, or even it can be detected by the number of followers.

5-Relationships Functional Building Block

According to Kietzmann et. al, (2011) the relationships building blocks is the most important block for the company to achieve success on Facebook. The company can build relationships with customers through encouraging conversations, sharing information or meetings.

6-Reputation Functional Building Block

The reputation of the company can be established due to its presence online and sharing activities that serve and help society. It can be detected also through the number of followers and helpful reviews about the company.

7-Groups Functional Building Block

On Facebook, users can form communities when they like the same brand. Tourist companies can profit from these groups from their interaction as they can create user generated content.

2.8.4. Sample of the study

The content of Facebook pages of 5 of the biggest travel companies in Egypt were selected from the qualitative sample according to the highest number of followers. The table below represents the name of each company, date of creation and number of Facebook followers in December 2021.

Table 2-9: Companies according to number of Facebook pages followers.

Name of the company	Number of followers in thousands	Date of FB page creation
Tishoury	547,789	2012
Ramasside Tours	171.150	2013
Kadmar Travel	66,936	2013
Family Tours	39,186	2012
A Travel	31,977	2012
Banna Travel	30,659	2015
Sondos Travel	30,352	2020
Unorage	26,222	2012

Alex city Travel	14,576	2010
Beach Tours	11,800	2014
Travel Lounge	10,740	2013
El Massreya El Dawleya	4,822	2015
Meir Travel	1,383	2014
Grand Egypt	1,358	2018
Snob Travel	764	2016

(Examined in December 2021)

According to the highest number of followers, Kadmar company, Family Tours, Tishoury Tours, Ramasside Tours and A travel Facebook pages were selected.

2.8.5 Study Tool or Instrument

The researcher will analyze each company's official Facebook page according to the tabs and wall contents using content analysis sheets.

The study aims to explore in depth online engagement (likes, comments, shares) in Facebook pages of travel companies in Egypt using the honeycomb model for social media of functionality by Kietzmann et. al (2011) as a theoretical framework. Each page will be analyzed according to the tabs and wall content, monitoring 12 months of data from June to September 2019 (before the COVID pandemic), from March to June 2020 (During Flight Ban) and from June to September 2021.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Brand Promotion in the Age of social media

A brand is defined by Philip Kotler as "a name, term, sign, or symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product." (Armstrong et. al,2014). Seth Godin linked the brand with stories, memories, expectations, relationships that persuade the consumer to make a purchase decision or to prefer one product or service over another (Godin, 2009)

After clients, brands are regarded as the most important asset for an organization (Al Haddad, 2015). A brand is the sum of tangible and intangible elements that distinguish the product in a consumer's mind (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2008). Brands have been used to certify the differentiation of products or services offered by several competitors. (Pappie and Quester, 2017).

3.1.1 Destination Branding

Destination branding is a modern concept used by destinations and employing marketing activities to generate an image, logo or symbol recognized by tourists (Farjan and Hongyi, 2015). To achieve competitive advantage in the tourism market, marketers make use of destination branding as a method of strategic planning (Aziz et. al, 2014). The competitive advantage of a destination is identified as the ability of the destination to generate a touristic experience and create value tourist products that distinguish its resources and retain its position in the tourist market (Modica & Uysal, 2016).

Branding a destination is regarded as a complex process as a touristic stakeholder participating (Tang and Abosedra, 2016) (Rinaldi etal,2016). Promoting a destination needs promotion efforts to get a positive and pleasant image of the destination in the mind of potential tourists (Kaurav et al, 2015). The destination image is created in tourists' minds and impacts their decision-making process (Ekinci, 2003). Marketing activities are essential to produce a positive image that characterizes destinations in tourists' minds and affect visiting destinations (Blain et al, 2005).

Destinations deal with many challenges when branding such as political problems, and external environmental concerns that should be addressed to be successful (Pike et. al, 2016). Political instability can cause a negative brand image and decrease the flow of travellers (Yap and Saha, 2013).

Traditionally, destination branding was made and managed by destination marketing organizations (Blain et al, 2005). Though, the arrival and development of the internet has transformed the environment changing the marketing mix (Dev et al, 2010).

3.1.2. Social Media and the Shift in Brand Promotion:

A new golden era of branding prospered because of the appearance of social networks and that represents a challenge for companies due to the requirement for creativity to position themselves with a stress on confidence and loyalty to the brand.

A very varied range of products existed in various markets and the consumers are becoming more demanding (TrachuckT et al, 2021). Consequently, branding is being more customer oriented. A participative and interactive approach to branding began as consumers interact with brands generating their own contents (Christodoulides, 2019).

There is a main shift in branding because of the emergence of web 2 as the balance of power has been changing (Arnhold, 2010). Web 2 technology allows independent consumer generated contents to be created such as texts and audio-visuals materials. Many consumer brands turn to consumer-to-consumer marketing methods in recent years because of the continuous growth and popularity of social media. One such method, user generated branding (UGB) is defined as "the strategic and operative management of brands related to user generated contents to achieve brand goals" (Arnhold, 2010).

Being an indicator for the rising importance of brand related user generated contents is the evolution of social media. Social media marketing performs a remarkable role in changing the buying behaviour of the consumer and can be a great tool for brand promotion if employed regularly (Tudua and Jashi, 2015).

Elena, B et. al (2020) stated that the introduction of modern technologies radically alters the consumer market of goods and services in three stages as indicated in the following figure.

Primary digitalization (1970-2000)
- Markets filled with homogeneous products
- Technollogicaly limited
- Branding through advantages and features of the product in exihibitions,special events ,billboards etc
- Since 1992 , branding through platforms in the internet to attract consumers

Virtualization (2000-2010)
- Global spread of the internet and mobile communication
- Branding through features of the product and through storytelling
- Online environment beside TV and traditional method.

Digitalization since 2015
- Direct influence of social media on consumer behaviour
- Ful ldigital brand marketing
- traditional methods direct the consumer to websites or social media .

Figure 3:1: Three stages of branding according to Elena, B et al (2020)

3.2 Social media and Theoretical background

While there are several definitions of social media in recent literature, it is essential to report that these definitions do not contradict one another but instead they deliver us a more complete and understandable definition. Merriam Webster (2011) defines social media as "forms of electronic communications through which users create online communities to share information, ideas and other content." Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content".

In this case, two concepts started to arise: web 2 and user generated content (UGC). Web 2 is considered a revolution in the technology applied while UGC is the media contents shared by internet users. Therefore, now consumers play an active role instead of their passive role before the introduction of web 2.

41

Traditionally, customers spent time on the internet to read contents and subjects that serve them to buy products and services. Today, customers are using social media to generate their own opinions and contents, discuss, argue other contents, and share their experiences. This represents a "social media phenomenon" that can affect firm's sales, reputation, and existence (Kietzmann et al, 2011)

Regarding user generated content there is not yet a formal definition, some researchers define it as media contents that users create to share information and their opinions with other users (Tang, Fang &Wang, 2014) (Krumm et. al, 2008). This definition limits user generated contents motivation to sharing information and opinions neglecting or ignoring other motivations. A substantial feature of UGC is that it is created without commercial motivation or profit (Arnold, 2010). Kaplan and Haelein (2010) and Naab & Sehl (2017) highlighted that UGC must be publicized in Cyber space.

Accordingly, social media has become a vital web application tool to the brand, and it offers the opportunities to online advertising by facilitating viral marketing and developing the product by the emergence of online communities and marketing intelligence through assessment of the user's feedback and reviews (Cvijikj& Michahelles,2013).

Social media provides the brands with opportunities to interact directly and be engaged with the audiences through many platforms and to know about their needs, interests and experiences as these interactions give opportunities to advertisers to get timely insights on the behaviour of customers (Jacobson et. al, 2020). Marketers use social media to generate positive word of mouth and reviews about brands (Tuten &Solomon, 2017). Statistically, the 2022 global digital insight report reveals that there is a double-digit growth in social media users reaching 4.62 billion, about 58.4% of the population (Digital report, 2022)

The figure below represents the growth of social media users in the last decade in the world.
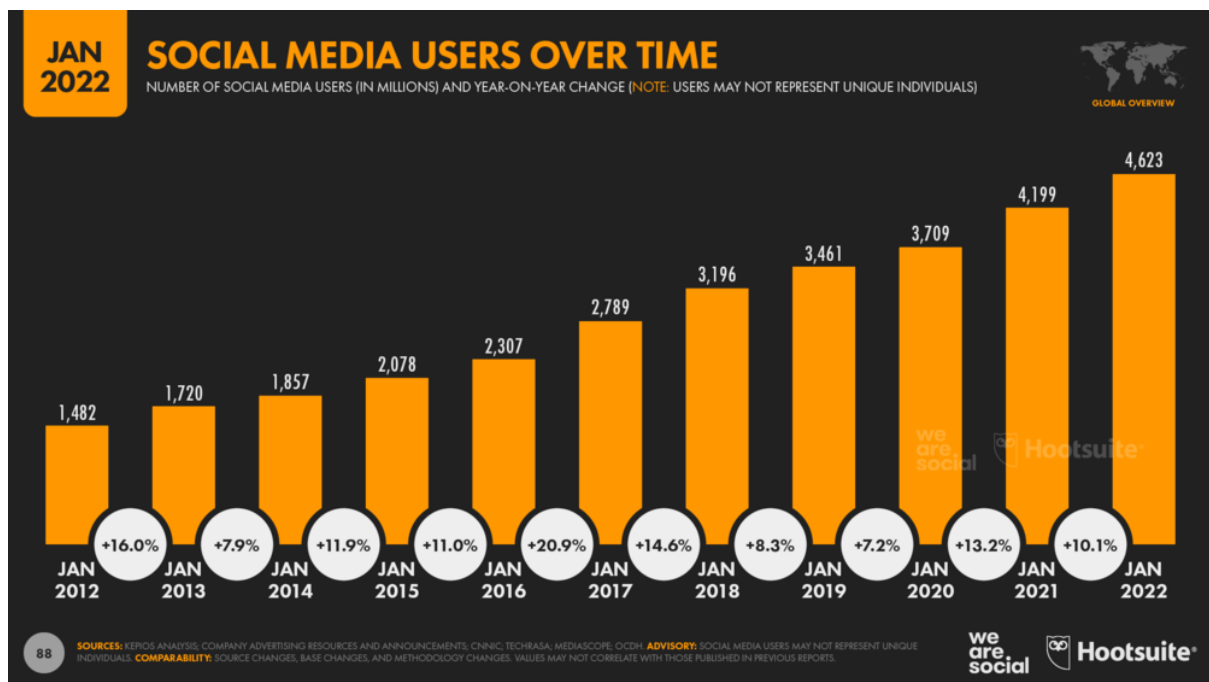
Figure 3:2:The growth of social media users in the last decade in the world

Based on that, social media is of great importance to any brand, but it needs to be effectively managed to obtain its benefits. Social media is different from traditional marketing by allowing engagement and interaction, moreover social media platforms are free, and any brand or business can join it.

3.2.1 Types of social media

This research is concerned about social media used by companies to market their products and communicate with customers. First most social media used globally are shown, after that most used social media platforms in Egypt are presented.

The figure below (3.3) represents the most preferred platforms globally. It is worth noting that YouTube is the second platform coming after Facebook but is considered a video sharing site instead of a real time interaction site to engage customers or make relationships.
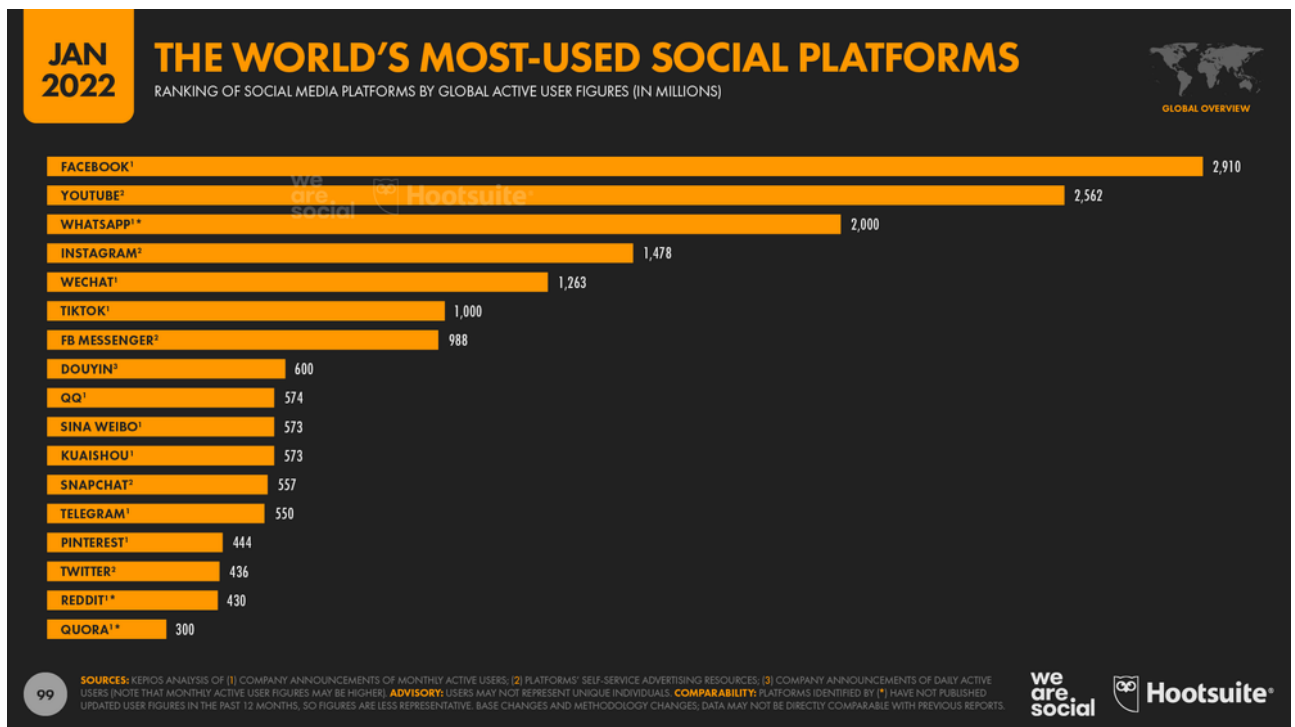
Figure 3:3: The world's most used social platforms (January 2022)

Types of social media relevant to this thesis are presented in the following section:

- **Facebook**

Facebook is the most popular network site all over the world with 2.910.000 monthly active users. Facebook started 2004 as for college students but has grown across the world. It is considered one of the easiest ways to find destination related information through its pages.

Rahman, (2017) used secondary resources such as journals and eBooks with the aim to study how Facebook is used for touristic promotion. The study concludes that by sharing travel experiences, consumers are inspired so it is a good way to promote tourist's destinations using Facebook. Also, the study concluded that it is very beneficial for marketers to use Facebook to create awareness and desire so they should be active on Facebook pages,

On the other hand, to competitive companies should measure multiple metrics such as Facebook insights and Facebook ads. Trihas, (2011) through a content analysis of Facebook pages of European national organizations showed that Facebook enables travellers to play active role by sharing their travel and experiences. The study shed the light on the importance of FB as a real time communication and that NTOs still focusing on using FB in the pre stage of their

travel ignoring the importance of FB during their travels as real time communication tool.

Another study by (Mariani M et al, 2018) examined Facebook pages of some NTOs (China, Turkey, Germany, US, Spain, UK, France, Mexico, Italy, and Russia). The result showed that every organization has its own approach and strategy on Facebook and that the more the NTOs posted visual contents the more tourists were engaged. The study also shed the light on the importance of visual contents as they have a remarkable power in promotion and have a positive relationship with engagement.

Besides visual contents, the study proves a positive relationship between posting during weekend and engagement while there is a negative relationship between posting in the evening and engagement.

The study also recommends the national government organizations to improve their usage of social media tools especially Facebook (Onder, et.al, 2020)

- **Instagram**

Although Instagram was created by Kevin Systron and Mike Krieger in 2010, the number of users grew incredibly. Facebook acquired Instagram inApril2012, when comparing the growth rate between Facebook and Instagram, we can see that Instagram continued to grow by23% while Facebook grew onlyby3%. (Digital trends, 2013).

According to Statista, Instagram continued to grow, in April 2019 it grew by 16% and in the same year, by June 2019 its growth rate was 14.6%. In 2022 Instagram users were about 1486000 active users. Instagram is a user-friendly mobile application that depends on visual methods and photo elicitation techniques such as editing and improving the picture quality before sharing.

Smart phones facilitate travelers in expressing their experiences through digital representation as they can upload quickly and easily their photos to social media platforms (Wang et. al, 2012).

Also front facing cameras and selfy sticks allow tourists to take photos easily and in a satisfactory manner with an attractive background and surrounding environment. It is considered the most useful channel for travel content creators, as travelers are attracted by photos that motivate them and drive them to visit these destinations (Kiderra, 2019). Photographs are the medium of capturing reality, as stated by (Stepchentiva, 2013). When a tourist experiences a trip using his mobile camera and shares it, it is a reality message issued to others. By

sharing his photos, they will spread across social media platforms creating word of mouth.

Bronner and Hoog (2011) stated that destination brands can be created through comments about products and services posted on Instagram. Many researchers stated that tourists perceive contents shared by other travelers to be more credible and trustworthy than information shared via traditional marketers (Xiang and Gretel, 2010) (Rossides and Buhalis, 2010).

Also, many researchers highlighted the distinguishable capabilities of Instagram as a tool of photo sharing that can be used effectively in advertising, marketing, and as a promotional tool (Bronne & Dehoog, 2011) (Abbott et al, 2013) (Stepchenkiva&Zhan,2013) (Fatanietal,2015).

The hashtag, location and explore tabs in Instagram enable users to browse many travel photos posted by others so they can see places and many attractions and decide whether they are worth to visit or not.

Travellers' photos are trustworthy source of information, in contrast with photos gotten from professionals that cannot match the reality with the actual location.

On the other hand, organizations can know about their competitors through hashtags. The algorithm of the explore page in Instagram is formulated upon individual interests so destinations will be addressed to targeted audiences and not randomly.

Gretzel, (2016) in his study about the visual turn in social media marketing stated that changes in social media landscape due to many technologies developments as visual stake an essential role and not a complementary role in marketing communications. Visuals are always playing an essential role in tourism experience (Scarlis,2013).

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the influence of Instagram on generation Y. According to Bolton et al (2013), young consumers like to post and share their photos on Instagram as they are technology savers.

The adoption and use of tourism technologies is amazingly simple for them as they are born with the introduction of technology.

- **Tik Tok**

Tik Tok is one of the fastest social media platforms that has appealed to young audiences particularly generation Z (born from1995 to 2010) as it allows them to create, share and edit short videos with high editing techniques and adding latest

music trends (Statista,2021). It is important to note the influence of this young generation on their family during planning their trips and in the next years they will organize and plan their own trips by themselves.

With the continuous growth of mobile technology, consumer consumption and behaviour changed, they are not satisfied by texts and images as they are attracted to user generated content videos.

In this case, creative music short videos software like TikTok built with strong algorithms and human body detection technology can be able to meet their expectations and satisfy their needs.

And the most used social media platforms in Egypt are shown in the next table.

Table 3-1: Egypt population, number of social media users and most preferred platforms by percentage

Year	Population	Active social media users	Most used social media platforms by percentage
January 2019	100.3 million	40 million	Facebook: 89% Instagram 62%
January 2020	101.3 million	42 million	Facebook 91% Instagram 68% Tik Tok 24%
January 2021	103.3 million	49 million	Facebook 80.6% Instagram 65.2% Tik Tok 36.4%

Source:https://datareportal.com/digital-in-egypt

It is worth noting that Tik Tok started to appear   in   Egypt in 2020 and has a remarkable growth rate from January 2020 to January 2021.

3.3 Theories Related to social media in the Field of Promotion.

There are several theories that can be referenced in promoting products.

3.3.1 User and gratification theory.

User and gratification theory supposes that spectators' members have power when using media, as they have an active role in incorporating media in their own lives. UGT emerged in the 1940's by the psychologist Hertzog (1944) who uses the term "gratifications" to describe precise needs or requirements reported by audiences when listening to radio programs. Afterward, many researchers become concerned by the reasons behind engaging audiences in different types of media. Gratification theory supposes that users are interested to engage in media through their desires for entertainment, information, rewards and making relationships. This theory may help to understand the role of social media content in engaging consumers or travellers and making them loyal as they can promote their own brands.

In social media a brand achieved its goal by delivering gratification or value to engage customers and build relationships with them (Malthouse etal,2013) Based on UGT viewpoint social media content can be classified into four main groups: information, entertainment, remunerative and relational.

Information. One of the key gratifications that motivate consumers to contribute to online communities is their want for direct information from their brands or companies. Information seeking is converted into engagement in forms of likes, sharing and comments.

Entertainment means how media content is enjoyable for users i.e., fulfilling their hedonic needs.

Remuneration refers to the reward or incentive expected by the consumers when engaging with social media.

When talking about remuneration, we should talk also about social exchange theory. This theory by George Homans addressed the behaviour of people during their **interaction** and proposes that people measure the benefits and risks from their relationships and when risks overweight profits, they leave this relationship.

This theory has been criticized as it explains social exchange from one angle only, which is mutual benefit, neglecting other angles such as emotion and intellectual participation. It also neglected the social experiences of individuals and their impact on the exchange process.

The nature of the tourist product needs an excessive quantity of information i.e., no barriers for information as it is intangible and cannot be experienced before purchase and that is fits perfectly with the shift of the traditional paradigm. Pine and Gilmore (1999) challenged the belief of old and traditional business model

that states that the main goal of an organization is to create tangible products and services and defend organizations from competitors by creating organizations limits or borders. Changing the value proposition includes user experience in delivering value.

3.3.2Psychological Ownership Theory

As people attitudes and behaviour changed when they feel connected or having strong relationship, researchers realized the importance of this theory in many fields such as organization commitment and employees' behaviour. By fulfilling the feeling of ownership, organizations can gain loyal customers who in their turn can generate user generated content by sharing images and posts when using the organizations services.

Encouraging user generated content is a primary way to create a connection between a user and a brand. Namasirayam (2004) stated that in services clients feel the ownership when they can affect the service provider, i.e., to change the service according to their preferences and choices, and as a result, consumers felt satisfied and that lead to the feel of ownership. Involving customers to choose or improve products can lead to ownership or loyalty. On the other hand, consumers felt connected to the companies when the company identity is like their values. Pierce et. al (2003) stated that to motivate customers, those latter should feel at home and psychologically attached as this feeling can lead to a strong and continuous relationship.

In this digital environment with many alternatives, loyal customers generate word of mouth and are competitive resistance as they will not switch to other competitive brands.

Research by Karahanna, et al (2015) stated that in social media environment several behaviours exist that can accelerate the development of psychological ownership as consumers in the online environment can be motivated by publishing self-related contents (user generated contents), making reviews, or evaluating products. Consequently, these researchers suggested that consumers who are encouraged by a need for psychological ownership could be more expected to use social media.

A study by Chen (2016) , with the aim to explore the effect of psychological ownership on customer engagement procedure and loyalty in online social media context , by sending questionnaires to members of well-known social media platforms in Taiwan , they found that psychological ownership is the key to the success of customer engagement and lead to long terms loyalty in terms of

continuous   usage and suggest that social media managers could increase the feeling of ownership by using rewards, discounts and incentives

Colleen & Scott (2018) demonstrated in their article that regardless of the intangible nature of digital technologies, consumers can experience psychological ownership and propose that some situations can reduce the feeling of psychological ownership while in others this feeling can increase. They explain that in task-oriented situations such as when consumers search for specific information, marketers can manage the communications and that consequently can lead to reducing the consumers psychological ownership, while in situations oriented to recreation or pleasure, consumers were motivated and more engaged and their psychological ownership increased. They also concluded that enabling psychological ownership among consumers is a way of engaging them in the establishment of a sustainable source of competitive advantage.

Kumar & Nayak (2019) explored the role of psychological ownership towards the destinations in tourism by sending survey questionnaires to tourists in India and found a positive relationship between the sense of psychological ownership and the intention to revisit and recommend the destinations.

Zhang, (2020) explored the psychological ownership phenomenon in an online brand community by applying a mixed approach and found that consumers psychological ownership toward the online brand community can positively impact their relationship and commitment to the community and improve their brand attachment.

3.4 Social media and Tourism

Before the introduction of web 2, travellers used the internet to read contents to get more information about products and services i.e., they had a passive role but with social media they can create their own contents that can be used to promote their own brands as they can influence companies' reputations. To profit from this phenomenon and remaining competitive, firms should not ignore the impact of social media and utilize it to the best.

Social media exerts a remarkable role in promoting destinations, as through experiences shared by travellers, organizations obtain feedback and improve their marketing strategies.

Zeng &Gerritsen (2014), in their article, review and analyse research articles that are related to social media and tourism from 2007 till 2011. Based on content analysis of the analysed articles from two contexts: consumers and suppliers sides points of view they found that to be competitive, organizations should consider

the strategic importance of social media and they should not depend on traditional media in marketing their tourism products as social media plays not only a good role in information search but also it can be used as an effective marketing tool.

On the other hand, they suggest a comprehensive marketing strategy for every destination on social media is best utilized in customization tourist products as it can target special customers or tourists according to their needs rather than considering or targeting social media users in general.

Buhalis & Law (2008) review and analyse articles on e-tourism in the past twenty years and conclude that by the introduction of web 2 the tourism market has changed completely for tourism organizations, tourists become more knowledgeable and experienced so organizations should adopt and manage their strategies to deliver value to them.

This new emerging sophisticated tourist is searching for an exclusive offer or value for his money and time, so to achieve success and competitiveness, organizations should understand his needs and customize products according to that.

This new consumer or tourist challenges the role of intermediaries as he can directly interact with suppliers.

On the other hand, this study emphasizes the role of virtual travel communities' contents in improving tourism organizations offerings by understanding customers' point of satisfaction and their behaviour.

Ten years after this publication, in 2018, Navio-Marco J, et. al conducted a critical narrative review and used Buhalis & Law article as a mandatory reference. Their aim was to detect the changes in e-tourism over these years.

They conclude that it is necessary to all stakeholders in the tourism sector to understand tourists' behaviour.

As due to advanced technology, many options are now available to tourists who are considered not only as consumers of tourism products but as managers for their own business models. They produce and develop their activities due to the increase of their digital literacy. This article noted that millennials have great digital skills. This study also insists on the concept of personalization of tourism products as every tourist has different motives and needs.

On the other hand, this research shades a light on the arrival of the prosumer like Airbnb super host. AlWahaibi et al, (2015) indicates that social media is a cost-effective tool for marketing products and services.

51

During the last decade, the growth and popularity of social media applications give a new way or method for organizations in promoting tourism destinations. Roque & Raposo (2016) indicate that with the new communication paradigm destinations marketing organizations (DMOS) must face many challenges. Social media tools are used both by tourists (Demand side), and tourism organizations (Supply side).

Amaro et. al (2016) has stated that travellers use social media during three phases: before, during and after the trip.

<u>Before the trip</u>: As tourism product is risky, expensive and cannot be examined before consumption, as tourists are located far from their travel destinations, so it is difficult to evaluate the product before the actual experience. In this context, information search decreases uncertainty. Tourists' sites provide them with tools, ideas, accommodations, and many options.

Travelers in this stage depend on User Generated Content to evaluate the product. Number of studies have found that travellers reviews not only provide tourists with information but also hedonic feelings by adding inspiration and fun to the trip (Gretzel & You, 2008) (Para López et al, 2012) (Gretzel, You & Purifoy, 2007).

Chung & Buhalis (2008) found that users of travel reviews comments (ex-trip advisors) joined in the online community activities not only in search for information but also for hedonic purposes.

So before travelling tourists consumed social media rather than producing, they are searching and reading but not participated.

<u>During the trip</u>: During this stage travellers participating by sharing experiences and producing comments and reviews.

<u>Post trip</u>: It is the stage of posting information by tourists regarding their trips in form of texts, photos or pictures and videos. It is the stage of Social Media production. Social Media in tourism is about promoting tourists' products and building relationships with travellers.

In this way, travel agencies should be adapted to innovative environment; their development should be parallel with the development of tourism to be competitive.

The phenomenon of digitalization requires special and immediate activities through implementing of the information technology (IT) in their internal

organization and the best use of digital tools, tourist agencies can stimulate tourists to participate in information and promotional activities.

Nestroka (2006) states that the development of travel agents is related to the market conditions in tourism industry as they appear on the tourist market to mediate between those offering services and those seeking services.

As travel mediators between the service providers and the customers, they always organize and arrange tourism services and products. Social Media tools help them to create and manage services and develop relationships with their clients. In this dynamic environment, social media help travel agencies to improve their reputation by improving the quality of services and promotion of tourism products.

According to Tsang, Lai, and Law (2010), tourist agencies not only serve as a channel to promote information but enabling visualization of tourist products and services through videoclips and graphical message.

On the other hand, social media can be used as management tool by analysing User Generated Content.

By analysing the data from several media platforms, tourism providers or marketers can improve understanding the behaviour of tourists and target them according to their needs and wants.

3.5. Tourism in an Egyptian Context:

Egypt is an African country which is characterized by the diversity of its tourism types: cultural, historical, religious, therapeutic, environment, beaches, safari, and tourism conferences. Besides the amazing Nile River, Egypt has beaches along the red seacoast (Sharm El Sheikh, Marsah Allam, Dahab etc.) and along the Mediterranean Sea (Alexandria, Marsah Matrouh a n d t h e N o r t h coast).

Leading in cultural tourism coming 22nd Globally (TTCI,2019) as Egypt has had one of the Seven Wonders of the World and hosts the most famous heritage sites in the world, helping it rank 38th in terms of world heritage cultural sites and fourth regarding cultural tourism online searches.

The country has long been regarded as a prime destination for nature-based activities such as beach resorts with price competitiveness (the third, according to TTCR, 2019) that means that Egypt is considered a destination that suits all budget, so it attracts tourists seeking inexpensive vacations.

Egypt has developed communication services like cell phones, according to TTCR, it was ranked 46 in mobile coverage.

Easy internet access enables people to reach information from different sources including social media that is also used by organizations and government to promote their destinations and services.

Tourism is recognized as one of the key sectors of development in all Egypt and an essential source of income, jobs, and wealth creation.

According to WTTC (2020) annual research, travel and tourism are responsible for9.7% of all Egypt's employment, providing 2.490.000 million jobs and 9.3% of its gross domestic product.

A study by Rouby (2019) aims to evaluate and analyse Egypt as competitive destination versus other destinations in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). The study is based on the TTCR, 2017 and a PESTLE analysis.

This study revealed that Egypt has moved faster to enhance its position and has the potential and resources like price competitiveness, cultural and natural resources that can enhance its competitiveness in the region.

By doing a descriptive and PESTEL analysis the researcher conclude that Egypt has an insufficient tourism promotion as Egypt has special and unique culture and traditions that can be branded and positioned in a better way, on the other hand the researcher also mentioned that small and medium tourism enterprises should be supported by the government.

This study suggested three strategies that have been expressed by (Porter,1980):

Cost leadership strategy: this strategy can suit Egypt as it is ranked the first among MENA region in price competitiveness and third all over the world (TTCI, 2019).

Differentiation strategy: To be competitive, the destination must differentiate itself by showing unique characteristics and resources to offer to tourists.

This strategy suits also Egypt as Egypt has unique cultural attributes as it is ranked 22nd all over the world in cultural tourism (TTCI,2019). Concentration strategies that could be achieved by focusing on niche markets.

The researcher suggests that Egypt can use one or more of these strategies.

Note: pestle analysis is an acronym for the following factors (political, economic, social, and cultural, technological, environment and legal.), by analyzing these factors key macro-economic factors that might affect success or failure of the industry can be identified and that help in making strategic decisions. (Alanzi S, 2018).

3.5.1Tourism in Egypt after 2011revolution (ups and downs)

According to Statista, number of tourists visiting Egypt in 2010 was 14.05 million and dropped to 9.5 million in 2011 due to the Egyptian revolution and the political unrest, also in 2015 the tourism sector was facing a disaster due to a Russian plane crashedkilling224people onboard.

In 2016 number of tourists fell to reach 5.26 million as many European countries-imposed travel bans to Sinai Peninsula in Egypt including Germany, UK and Russia which are considered the main sender of tourists in Egypt.

According to Statista, number of German tourists' arrivals during November 2016 was 75 thousand down from 105 thousand during November of the previous year.

The tourism minister tried to recover Egypt's image and launched many digital campaigns but promotion of Egypt as a touristic destination faced many challenges in this tough environment as tourist's confidence about Egypt was very weak.

As illustrated above, Egypt has a history of terrorism and political unrest.

There are a series of incidents from 2011 revolution (Arab spring), as before the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, there were many violent accidents between security forces, protestors, and supporters of Mubarak.

Many countries including Germany, Japan, UK, and US announced that travel to Egypt is unsafe and warned their citizens (CNN,2011).

The Egyptian economy was affected severely as many flights and reservations were cancelled.

According to Capmas (2012), European's tourists represent 75.9% of international tourists in Egypt.

Before the revolution 11.770.000 Europeans tourists visited Egypt. In 2011the number dropped to 7.211.000. That means a decline of 3.966.000.

After that, Arab represents 14.2% of international tourists' arrivals, before 2011revolution they were 2092000 Arab tourists but after the revolution their number dropped to became1802000 in 2011 leaving a decline of 290000tourists.

In this period people employed in tourism and business owners were severely affected as tourism is responsible for12.9%of total employment. (WTTC,2014).

Although tourist arrivals fell by nearly the third in comparison to the previous year, Egypt succeeded to bounce back to some extent in 2012. Number of tourist's arrivals in 2012 according to Statista was 11.5 million tourists.

As some tourist products in Egypt are physically insulated from political unrest as there are some isolated resorts along the red sea from political disturbances.

Moreover, Egypt has an excellent price competitiveness as it ranked the third (TTCR,2019) So, Egypt is differentiated by its low prices for hotels, air tickets and other attractions fees in comparison to other countries.

This situation helped the tourism sector in this period to revive and recover.

The number fell again in 2013 as President Morsi was removed by Egyptian armed forces in response to Egyptian people's desire.

In 2015 a catastrophe happened when a Russian plane crashed in Sinai Peninsula after a terrorism act killing 224 tourists inside.

Followed by a death of an Italian student as his body was found holding torture marks. All these events painted a bad picture and perception about Egypt.

In 2015 Egypt took the 13th Place globally with a value of 6.50 according to the global terrorism index (GTI) which access163 country rankings according to the impact of terrorism from 0 (no impact) to10 (highest impact).

The value increased to reach 7.33 in 2016 and finally decreased in 2020 to reach6.42.

In 2016, following the Russian plane crush, flights from Sharm El Sheikh were banned by important markets such as Germany, UK, Italy, and Belgium.

According to CAPMAS the decline in the number of tourists is due to the absence of Russian tourists and other countries like Germany and UK, the number of western Europe declined by 35,2% and tourists from the middle east fell by 28.6%(CAPMAS,2016).

After this disturbance period, the tourism period in Egypt has experience consistent growth.

International tourist arrivals have shown double digit growth in 2017and2018. In 2018, Egypt ranked the world's fast growing tourist destination according to UNWTO. New strategies were set to reform the tourism sector and to market Egypt as a safe destination to improve its image abroad.

According to Oxford group, Egypt's tourism industry has demonstrated rapid growth since the decline that followed 2011 revolution. Since 2019, the ministry of tourism (MOT) merged with the ministry of antiquities (MOTA) changing the structure of Egypt's tourism sector considerably. Merging the two ministries was more than developing Egypt's antiquities and tourism; the goal is to move the country travel industry away from the more traditional sun and sand offering. As a result of these strategies Egypt received the safe travels stamp among 100destinations from WTTC in 2020, theses stamps were given to those countries that are considered safe to restore confidence in travellers (Egypt Independent, 2020)

Egypt welcomed 13.6 million tourists in 2019 (UNWTO,2020).

Table 3-2: Number of tourist arrivals, receipts and % of GNP (growth national product)

Year	Number of tourists	Receipts	% Of GNP	Receipts per tourist
2019	13.03 m	14.26 bn $	4.7 %	1,094 $
2018	11.35 m	12.70 bn $	5.1 %	1,120 $
2017	8.29 m	8.64 bn $	3.7 %	1,041 $
2016	5.40 m	3.31 bn $	0.99 %	612 $
2015	9.33 m	6.90 bn $	2.1 %	739 $
2014	9.88m	7.98bn$	2.6%	8.8 $
2013	9.46 m	6.75 bn $	2.3 %	713 $
2012	11.53 m	10.82 bn $	3.9 %	939 $
2011	9.85 m	9.33 bn $	4.0 %	948 $
2010	14.73 m	13.63 bn $	6.2 %	925 $

Source: https://www.worlddata.info/africa/egypt/tourism.php

3.5.2 social media and tourism in Egypt

Egypt is considered one of the most populated countries in the Middle East and its population is equivalent to 1.31% of the total world population. According to

Data reportal, (2022) the population of Egypt is approximately 105.2 million in January 2022.

Egypt's media landscape has seen many challenges since 2011 revolution.

Although TV is still the most known media in every Egyptian house, digital media has seen a great growth and many organizations started to change their traditional models by using digital services to gain high reach.

Citizens in several Arab countries including Egypt started to use social media at the time of Arab spring to express their rights and freedom.

They communicate their real time images and up to date information across social media sites.

According to World Bank (2012), number of internet users had risen to 21691776 in 2011 while it was 8million in 2005.

Usage of social media in Egypt continues to grow, according to Digital 2022 report number of social media users in Egypt reached 51.45 million in January 2022.

In 2020 Statista conducted a global consumer survey in Egypt and the result was that 83% of Egyptians used Facebook, 80% use WhatsApp, 61% use snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, while 33% usetwitterand10%useTripAdvisor.

The Egyptian tourism authority began to use social media campaigns since December 2015, as after the terrorist attack in Sinai, resulting of killing 224 tourists on board, number of tourists fell terribly, and Egypt needed to restore its image and revive the tourism sector. This campaign was launched in more than 4 years through collaboration between Egyptian tourism authority and the international advertising agency J Walter Thompson (JWT) trying to revive tourism in Egypt.

The campaign uses the hashtag this is Egypt. Egyptians use the hashtag to present their own country. With the start of # this is Egypt, normal Egyptians and those who are loving the country could present to the world their personal experiences and to show what they value about the country in social media platforms. The campaign won golden and silver awards and JWT won the Effie award that is given to companies that operate in the middle east with the most effective communicative ideas and advertising efforts,

In 2019 there was another partnership with major branding and media companies: Beautiful Destinations, Isobar Expedia, and CNN to launch a global tourism

campaign through TV, digital and social media campaign. The diversification of media platforms is the key pillar of Egypt tourism reform program.

Concerning previous studies about social media and tourism in Egypt, as it is said previously there are a lack of articles concerning this subject.

Bakr et al (2013) conducted a study to investigate the role of social sites in promoting Egypt as an international destination by distributing questionnaires to tourists visiting Egypt to know their opinions about the role of social media when purchasing Egyptian tourism products.

The study concludes that social media especially Facebook has a remarkable role in promoting tourism.

The researcher suggests that the Egyptian minister of tourism should be a memberofinternationalsitespecializedinplanningtripssothattouristscanchoosetheir tripsto Egypt and recommend the support from all specialized ministries and tourism associations to promote Egypt more effectively through social media using videos and photos.

And finally, this study shed the light on the need of trained skilful human resources that can deal effectively using social media.

Marzouk (2016) with the aim to investigate the usage of social media marketing from organizations perspective in Egypt used a quantitative method by sending questionnaires through emails of 541 different manufacturing firms across Egypt which use social media and at least has one brand or product in social media platform.

The study concludes that respondents in this chosen sample used social media the most for communication and promotion.

Although they are aware of the importance of social media especially in brand awareness and sales performance, the study recommended marketing managers in Egypt to develop a social media strategy for better communication, deeper relationship, and interaction with their customers and moreover they should include social media as a part of their training programs.

Amara (2017) investigated how cultural events in Egypt can contribute to destination branding by conducting in-depth interviews with key stockholders working on public Egyptian tourism and cultural authorities. She found that respondents' opinions agreed that events play the role of an advertising strategy that can generate and preserve awareness of the destination; she also

recommended to develop a high-quality program of public cultural events to promote the profile and image of Egypt as a tourist destination.

Azzaz and Elabban (2018) in their research about social media in promoting heritage sites in Egypt, used a quantitative analysis by sending an online survey to fans or followers of El Muizz Street Facebook pages.

El Muizz Street is the oldest street in Cairo that contains many architectural treasures and Islamic mosques.

The tourists who visit El Muizz Street shed the light on the importance of social media, the comments and engagement in Facebook pages in increasing number of visitors to El Muizz Street as it allows them to experience and trust the place.

On the other hand, the researcher concluded that the role of social media in promoting heritages sites in Egypt should receive more attention from scholars, tourism authorities responsible for promoting Egypt and ministry of tourism.

This research also highlighted the role of social media in promoting domestic tourism especially during crisis as most of El Muizz Street visitors are local.

Abdelmonsef et al (2019) studied the Egyptian Tourism Authority's social media content management by means of key performance indicators (KPIs) to make a comparison between contents from ETA's social media platforms and those of Egyptian tourism authorities' competitors. By sending questionnaires to ETA officials, they found that ETA did not have an online strategy, and the ETA officials have a lack of awareness about how to manage social media contents.

El Emam & Kamel, (2021) draw attention to the role that Egyptian cuisine plays in destination promotion by sending questionnaires to tourists who ate Egyptian food in Cairo's five-star hotels and found that tourists enjoyed the Egyptian cuisine during their trip in Egypt. Moreover, they found a strong positive relation between the acceptance of Egyptian local cuisine and destination promotion. They recommended that Egyptian tourism officials' marketing plans should include local dishes as essential touristic products and Egyptian tourism companies' programs should include local meals when organising their trip programs to international tourists.

Chapter Four

Tourism companies and social media in Egypt

4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomenon by discussing the qualitative data that characterizes the supply side views. As explained before in the methodology chapter, in depth interviews were conducted with 15 owners and managers of the largest travel companies in Egypt representing the supply side (private sector), while another in depth interview was conducted with the head of international campaign and general manager of planning in Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA).

The thematic analysis of the interviews provides evidence that can be used to answer the first three research questions.

1. How do owners and managers of Egyptian travel agents promote Egypt as a travel destination?

2. How do managers in ETA promote Egypt through social media?

3. What are the challenges facing travel companies when adopting social media?

This chapter begins with an overview of categories of travel agents in Egypt and governmental tourism institutions. Then the profile of interviewees is presented, followed by a thematic analysis that provides the opinions of respondents, their use of social media, the benefits they gain and the barriers that faced them.

The questions of the interviews with Egyptian companies are in the Appendix (1) of the thesis. The questions in the interviews with the Egyptian Tourism

Authority 'head of international campaigns and general manager of planning are in the Appendix (2) of the thesis.

Categories of Travel Companies in Egypt

According to ETTA (Egyptian Travel Agents Association) and the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, there are three categories of travel companies in Egypt.

Category A: the largest companies, those are responsible for organizing packages and its all-related items for groups and individuals inside and outside Egypt and can-do planned packages of other tour operators.

Category B: companies responsible for selling transportation tickets either by air or land or water and moving tourists lug gages.

Category C: companies that operate transportation means by air, land, or water.

In this research, Category A companies are chosen in this sample (see table 4.1).

Governmental Tourism Institutions in Egypt

Under the Ministry of Tourism there are two main authorities responsible for tourism development. These organizations are the Egyptian Development Authority and the Egyptian Tourism Authority.

a) <u>Tourism Development Authority (TDA**)**</u>
This organization is responsible for the management and exploiting lands allocated for tourism development. TDA sets and implements rules for tourism plans and investments by providing lands and facilitating admission to loans for developing infrastructure projects.

b) <u>Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA)</u>
The main goal of this institution is to promote Egypt as a touristic destination and that is by:

- Joining international conferences and exhibitions.
- Developing a website and social media accounts to promote Egypt.
- Organizing promotional campaigns in various international media.
- Promoting Egypt as a conference destination.

It is worth noting that while TDA is responsible for the development of the tourism sector at local level through plans and investments, ETA is responsible for marketing Egypt as a touristic destination and by consequences, increasing tourism arrivals.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

A purposive sample of 15 owners and managers of the largest travel companies Category A in Egypt were selected. The sample included 11males and 4 females. It is obvious from the above that companies are selected using category criteria to ensure that they are responsible for inbound and outbound tourism and all services related to tourism. Also, the researcher was keen to choose companies with a long tourism history, as in the table below the date of creation of each company will be presented.

The interviews conducted were with three positions: the General Manager, the Tourism Manager the owner of the company, who in 6 cases was also the general manager (chairman). Name of each interviewee and his/her position was shown in the table (2.7) in the methodology chapter. The positions of the interviewees are the most important in the companies as they are from the first staff of decision making.

It is obvious that purposive sample is the most suitable in this study, as by their experiences and position, interviewees provide information and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Gray, 2014). Also, semi structured interviews allow participants to talk in depth and in a subjective manner about their experience (Austin & Sulton, 2014).

Table 4-1: Representing the name of each company, date of creation, its location and number of employees.

Name of the company	Date of creation	Location	Number of employees
Masreya El Daweleya	1982	Alexandria	28
Beach Travel	1983	Alexandria	25
Family Tours	1984	Cairo, Alexandria, Dubai, and USA	250
Snob Travel	1986	Alexandria	25
Meir Travel	1990	Cairo, Alexandria, Asyout and Sohag	70
Banna Tours	2001	Alexandria and Cairo	90
Kadmar Travel	2003	Cairo and Alexandria	94
A Travel	2006	Alexandria and Cairo	138
Sondos Tours	2006	Alexandria	32
Unorage Tours	2008	Alexandria	30
Ramasside Tours	2008	Cairo, Luxor, and Alexandria	68
Alex City Travel	2009	Alexandria	28
Tishoury tours	2009	Alexandria, Cairo, and Cyprus	220
Grand Egypt	2009	Alexandria and Menia	28
Travel Lounge	2009	Alexandria	26

Concerning the interviewee of Egyptian Tourism Authority, the researcher conducted the interview with Mrs. Susan Mostafa. She is an important person who holds the prestigious position of the head of international campaigns and general manager of planning.

At the beginning of the interview, the participants were reminded about the nature of the study, the aim of the interview, and the privacy of information to be collected. Additionally, verbal authorization was taken to record the interview. The respondents did not seem to object to mentioning the names of the companies, or even their names or their positions.

4.3 Data Collection

Questions of the interview were written in English and revised by the supervisor then translated into Arabic and revised by academic professors. The first step after that was to contact the chairman/general manager/tourism manager to obtain his / her agreement to participate in the study and consequently to arrange a meeting date.

Interview with Egyptian travel companies were conducted from October 2020 till April2021. Interview with the general manger of planning and head of international campaign in ETA was conducted in October 2021. Each interview included only one meeting and lasted between one hour and one hour and half. All interviews were tape recorded and field notes were taken.

4.4 Thematic Data Analysis Process

Bakken (2018) defined data analysis as the method of converting the data into findings that requires working with data, categorizing it and breaking it in convenient units, seeking for patterns. The qualitative work in this research depends on a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows qualitative data to be presented in a descriptive way, a process for analyzing patterns and themes (O'Reilly et. al, 2013). Thematic methods can generate an understanding and insightful analysis to answer research questions (Bag, 2017).

The first stage is to become familiar with the data gathered through listening to the recorded interviews several times. The method of data analysis was conducted manually which increased familiarity with the data and helped the researcher to make comparison between the interviews. An essential part of this step is writing down the verbal data into written form which helps the researcher to familiarize and make meaning of the data collected.

The next step was coming up with codes to allow an overview of the most important points and meanings through the data, after which comes identifying patterns and themes. The theme is a result of coding, classification, evaluating and analyzing (AlHaidari, 2017).
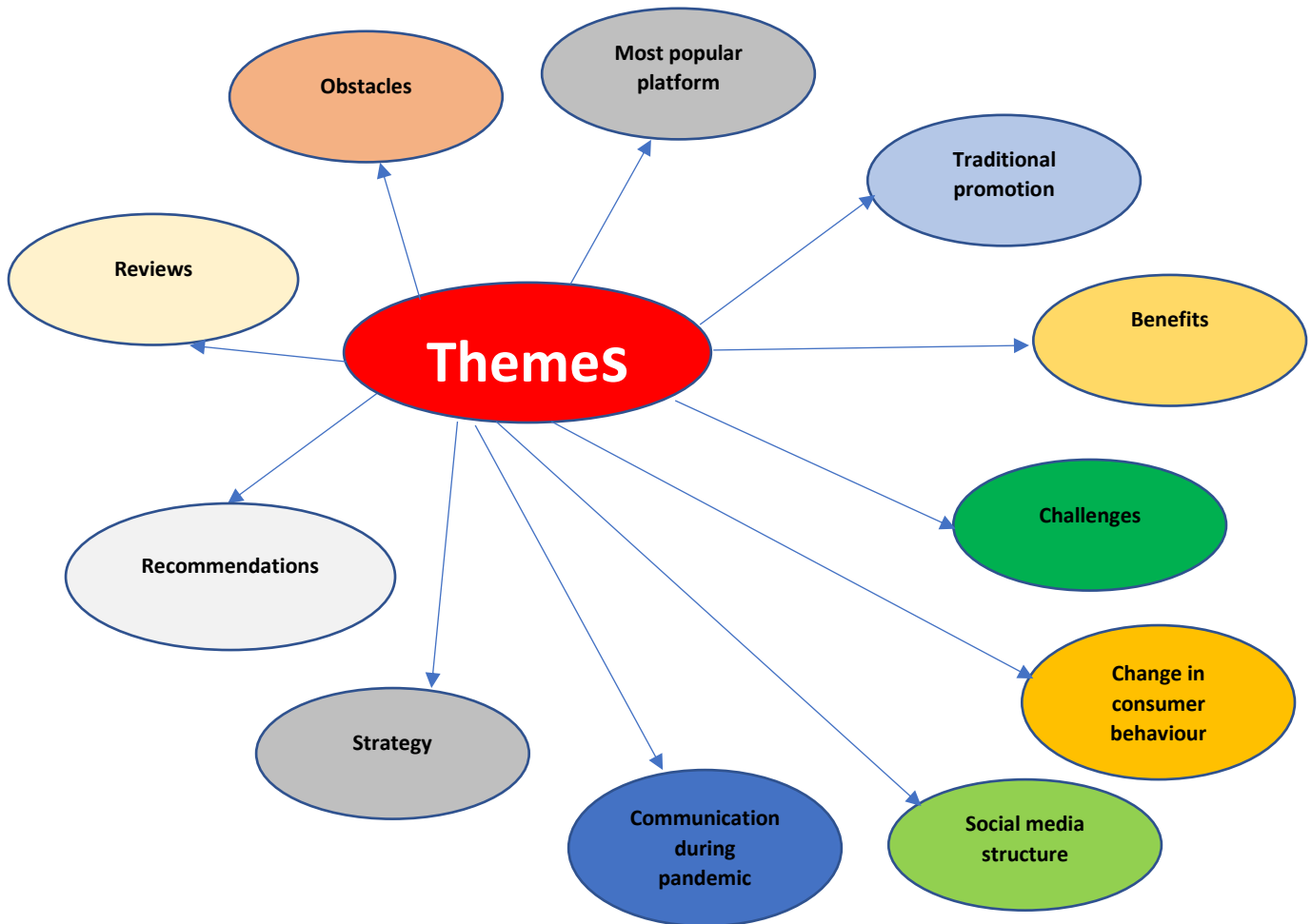
Figure 4:1: Themes identification

Each theme was analyzed extensively regarding the research questions.

Table 4-2: Thematic analysis

Theme	Meaning	Evidence (quotes)
Most popular platform	Refer to Facebook. All the interviews mentioned it as they think this platform suits all tourists.	Facebook sure, Facebook (all companies). Instagram does not suit all cultures and generations. (2 companies)

Traditional promotion	Refers to TV, radio and newspapers commercials also brochures	TV and newspaper expensive (All) Complementary role For B2B marketing (8 companies) ineffective (7 companies)
Benefits	Refers to benefits gained in promoting through social media either tangible or intangible	increasing number of clients, reaching more customers in minimum time, consequently, lead to increase sales
Challenges	Refers to challenges facing travel companies when promoting their products through social media	competition from international sites like booking.com Market saturation and high competition
Obstacles	Obstacles facing travel companies when promoting their products through social media	Fake companies take advantage of our market share. Ruin the reputation of Egyptian travel companies untrust
Change in Consumer behavior.	Refers to the change in consumer behavior after the pandemic.	They prefer to contact us through social media. Avoid face to face meetings for hygienic purposes
Social media structure	Department specialized for promoting products to tourists through social media.	Own department (6 out of 15) Outsourcing (4 out of 15) No department but ever employee (5 out of 15)
Reviews	Refers to comments of travelers about tourism products and services either bad or good or by rating it through social media platforms	Especially important When looking for hotels or restaurants when organizing trips To improve our services
Strategy	Setting plans when promoting through social media to reach company objective	We must know our target audiences. When and how to target them
Communication during pandemic	Refers to posting through social media to establish relationships even if there are no flights or trips.	We post to entertain customers and inform them for ex about announcements. It is an opportunity to engage. Stopping our campaigns and posts
Recommendations	Refers to advice that the government must take into consideration regarding social media promotion	Supervisory role Promoting Egypt in more innovative way

1) Most popular platform.

The first theme is about the "most used social media platform", which refers to Facebook as when the interviewees were asked if they have accounts on social media, all respond with yes, they do and mention it. Although all the companies have accounts on Instagram and twitter, they did not take them into consideration

when talking about promoting their products through social media as they are not active on them. The researcher concluded that they focused on Facebook when promoting their products or services. Two companies mentioned Instagram, but they did not prefer it as they think that this Platform does not suit all cultures and all generations.

2) Traditional promotion.

The second theme was about whether they still promote their products using traditional ways like brochures or newspapers. 8 companies out of 15 considered traditional ways of promotion playing a complementary role as it is important for B2B meeting, when dealing with large companies that need to know about their profiles, CV or even some trips they had organized before.

On the other hand, they use also in some cases traditional ways as some Egyptian clients are not familiar with or interested in social media and prefer to come to their company and meet the staff face to face, although this kind of clients has changed his mind and behavior after COVID Pandemic as now it is safer for him to deal with the internet rather than coming to the company.

The other companies (7 companies) state that promoting through newspapers is expensive and useless as most tourists deal with social media rather than traditional ways. These companies depend completely on social media, ignoring the traditional ways of promoting tourism.

On the other hand, all interviewees agree that promoting Egypt through social media will be more effective as every client now has a mobile and spend the most of his time in social media so it will be possible to reach them easily.

They also mention social media in motivating people to travel, all interviewees think social media motivates people and inspire them through shared trips or videos that directly address their senses, and this does not exist in traditional ways of promotion.
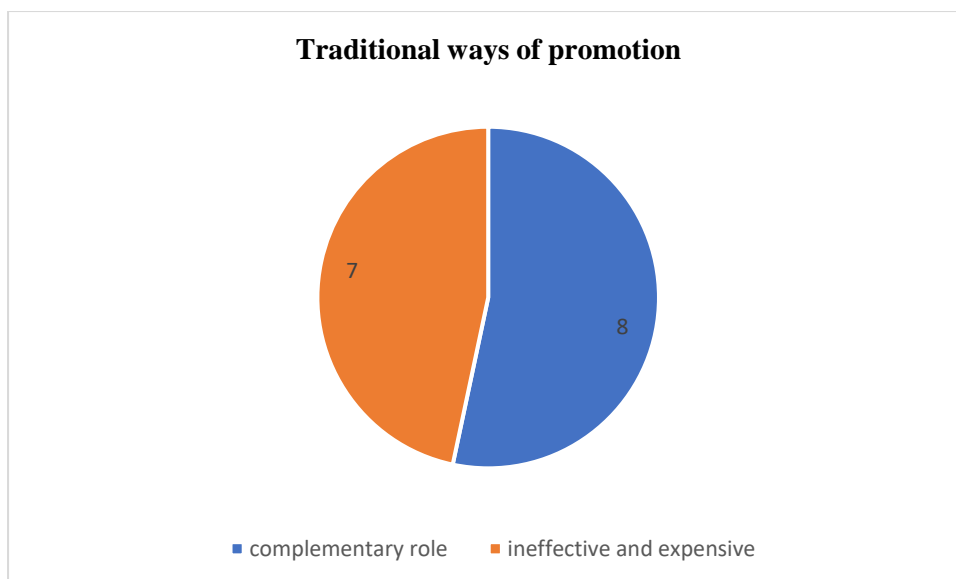
Figure 4:2: Perceptions of Egyptian travel companies about traditional promotion

3) Benefits

The third theme answers when the researcher asked the interviewees about the benefits they gain from the promotion through social media, and that was increasing the number of clients, reaching more customers easily with minimum time and that finally lead to increase sales.

Social networks have the capability to support interaction between travel agents and tourists that is guiding to build relationships with customers, gain their loyalty, in their turn customers rate the company or suggesting it to their friends and family through sharing their experiences online. They said that social media is a great tool to increase visibility and awareness about the company, show pictures and videos about offers and trips in a cost-effective way. On the other hand, through social media interaction companies can get feedback about the opinions and suggestions of their customers and that can lead to product improvement.

4) Challenges

The fourth theme is about the challenges they face when dealing with social media. All the interviewees talk about competition as international sites like booking .com offer trips at competitive prices. They said that in this competitive environment, companies should understand well the needs of their customers and differentiate their products from competitors to achieve value.

As for the successive technological changes and the challenges they present, they need to achieve a competitive advantage and take advantage of the opportunities

available to maintain customers, as well as attract new customers and build strong relationships with them.

To be innovative and effectively manage their presence, some companies outsource and deal with marketing agencies, but it represented challenges for them as it is expensive so maybe they can try to improve their employees and train them to cut the cost of outsourcing. On the other hand, two companies talked about internet issues, like the coverage and speed of the internet.

5) Obstacles

The fifth theme, when the interviewees were asked about the obstacles they face when promoting their products through social media, all the interviewees mentioned the existence of fake companies that give offers and trips with minimum price (unreal offers). These companies take from their market share and at the same time ruin the reputation of Egyptian travel agents as that lead to distrust and may ruin the reputation of Egypt in general. These unlicensed entities cause major disasters, including the loss of state funds, which are gathered through different taxes and fees.

They said that the presence of Facebook pages that promote travel reservations and are not associated with a specific tourist office represents a disaster as consumers are attracted to the low prices that they see on these pages and do not know that he deals with fake offers.

Dealing with these pages harms the customer and the travel companies alike, as the customer may be cheated either with fake airline tickets, or a travel plan that is not identical with the thing he was waiting for, or he may even arrive at the hotel and find that his reservation is cancelled.

6) Change in Consumer Behavior

The sixth theme refers to the change in consumer behavior after COVID pandemic. The interviewees mentioned that before the pandemic there was a consumer who preferred to come and meet the staff face to face but after the pandemic this kind disappeared or became rare due to hygienic purposes.

Before the pandemic, many customers contacted them through telephones to organize meetings or they came directly to their offices to see the companies' brochures or to talk face to face about offers and trips. After the pandemic and because of staying for prolonged periods in front of social media, the customer has moved from just an ordinary consumer to becoming a stakeholder. They share opinions and suggestions; they can even promote the destination through interactions in social networks.

7) Social Media Structure

The seventh theme reveals that four out of fifteen companies deal with a marketing agency (outsourcing) that is specialized to follow their pages on social media and market for their products. They mentioned booster bees and interface agencies which are agencies located in Egypt. They think it is more effective to promote through an agency specialized in promotion.

One company dealt with marketing agency (outsourcing) but stopped dealing with them as they found it expensive, and this company found that promoting through their own employees is more effective as they are under control of the company and will send the message the same way the company wanted.

6 companies out of 15 have a social media marketing department in the company without the need for outsourcing.

5 companies out of 15 do not have a social media marketing department as they think every employee should know how to deal and promote through social media.

On the other hand, about the recruiting of employees all the interviewees agreed that it is necessary for the employee to be aware of technology and specially dealing with social media, and if not, the next step is to train them with their colleagues to become more professional.

Table 4-3: Egyptian companies social media structure.

Have social media department	Don't have social media department	Outsource
Family Tours	Meir Travel	Travel Lounge
Kadmar Travel	Ramasside Tours	A Travel
Beach Travel	Alex City Travel	Anourage Tours
Banna Tours	ElMassreya El Dawelya	Sondos Tours
Tishoury Tours	Grand Egypt	
Snob Travel		

8) Reviews

The eighth theme, when the interviewees were asked about the importance of reviews made by tourists in their personal account or the companies' account and if they are useful for them to improve or develop their products, all companies found reviews important to understand the needs of their clients and if something did not go the right way as to improve it in order to make the client more satisfied

On the other hand, they found reviews important when organizing their trips as they can search for comfortable hotels and even destinations through these reviews and recommendations.

9) Strategy

The ninth theme is about strategy and how they prepare for it. Although all the interviews agreed that setting a strategy is necessary as sending campaigns on social media depend on knowing the target audiences and how and when to send them campaigns, only companies that deal with marketing agencies let the agency set and prepare strategies and manage their social media pages.

All the companies depend on their strategy on Facebook, they talk about posting more interesting trips especially during holiday times but eight of them still used traditional ways of promotion as they believe it can have a complementary role especially through attending conferences and exhibitions.

They think that their social media strategy suits domestic tourism but regarding international tourists they think that contacting tour operators from foreign countries is the best way to reach tourists.

They also think that in this case social media has a role as they contact tour operators through social media and in their turn, tour operators present tourism products and programs to tourists through social media.

10) Communication during pandemic

The tenth theme reveals that 10 companies out of 15 stopped their campaigns and did not communicate with their clients on social media during the pandemic and believe the pandemic has a negative influence on social media marketing. 5 companies thought that it was an opportunity to communicate with their clients through social media as they could not communicate face to face. Besides, many customers wanted to be notified about airline announcements or refunds.

10 companies

Ineffective
useless

5 companies

Making relationships
Reassuring customers
Important
announcements
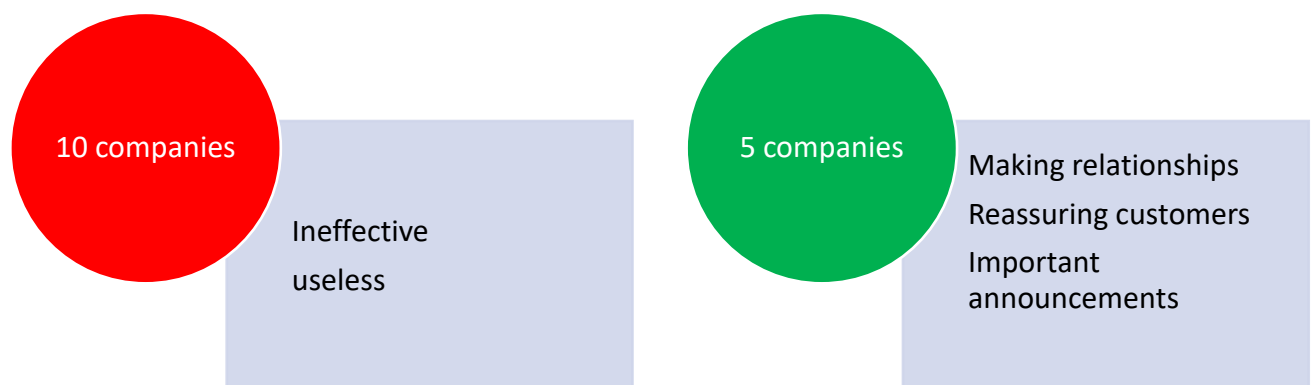
Figure 4:3 Perceptions of Egyptian travel companies about communication during pandemic.

11) Recommendations

The eleventh theme was about their recommendations for the government and private sector. All interviewees recommended that the government has a supervisory role over fake companies that cheat tourists, which harms Egypt's reputation, and affects the economy of the country as they do not pay taxes.

The government, minister of tourism and antiquities and Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA), should support the private sector and especially concerning these safety issues as many fake travel companies exist in the online environment taking from the market share of tourism companies, dealing with tourists and that may ruin the reputation of Egypt.

They mentioned that a good step was taken by the government a few months ago when a rule was issued to write the company license number when issuing advertisements on social media. On the other hand, the state must make contracts with well-known advertising companies to advertise Egypt using modern and effective ways.

Concerning social media accounts of Egyptian tourism authority (ETA), all interviewees stated that they do not promote Egypt in a good way and the employees of ETA should be aware of dealing with social media in a better manner. Concerning the private sector, the recommendations were to focus more on social media to keep up with technology and to gain competitive advantage.

4.5 In depth interview (public sector)

The researcher conducted an interview with Mrs. Suzanne Mostafa the head of international campaign and general manager of planning in Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA).

The starting question was about ETA social media accounts. The answer was that they have one account on YouTube, one on Instagram, two accounts on Twitter, a Vk account to target Russia, a Weibo to target China and 16 Facebook pages in 14 different languages. See table (2.8) in the methodology chapter.

It was obvious that Facebook has a special importance as Mrs. Suzanne said, "We have Facebook pages with fourteen different languages to target both domestic and international tourists."

Regarding the ways used to encourage tourists to communicate and engage through social media, the answer was "We use direct communication through Facebook pages, through competition and through paid advertising'.

When asking about if they still use traditional promotions, and if promoting Egypt using traditional ways of promotion is more effective or through social media platforms the answer was "both traditional and digital promotion are effective. In some markets like the Arab market, we use traditional promotion like TV satellite. Also, in European countries we still promote through TV channels and exhibitions.'

Concerning the importance of social media and the benefits gained from using it in promotion, they state that social media is an effective promotion tool saying that "social media allow direct interaction and reaching tourists with minimum time'.

About their social media strategy, they used brand strategy focusing on Facebook, "Definitely setting a strategy is very important, we have set a brand strategy to brand each governorate in Egypt, campaigns in 14 different languages were launched through Facebook to brand and highlight the beauty of 27 governorates of Egypt".

When asked if they have employees able to deal with such technology, the answer was that they have qualified employees. "We have about 500 employees and we have a department called digital promotion which consists of six employees that can deal with social media, but in order to meet international standards we make partnerships with international media agencies like Expedia Group, CNN, and McCann which is a US advertising agency."

The final question was about the effect of COVID pandemic on digital promotion especially social media, the answer was: "due to corona virus people stayed at home for a long time and social media helped them to communicate and spend their time everything become online. Consequently, the reliance on social media in promotion increased after the pandemic."

Chapter Five

The perception of tourists about Egypt
and its social media

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and research findings of the questionnaire using SPSS software version 23. It begins with a general overview of the sample as there are two groups: Egyptian tourists and international tourists. The questionnaire sent to them was the same, but one question was excluded from the questionnaire sent to domestic tourists from the demographic section which is "What is your nationality?" as they were all Egyptians.

This chapter is divided into three parts: The first part is the analysis and findings of the questionnaire sent to Egyptian tourists (domestic tourists). The second part is the analysis and findings of the questionnaire sent to foreign tourists (see appendix 3) and the third part is the about a comparison between two groups of tourists (domestic and foreign) using t test and chi square tests.

5.2 Overview of the Chosen Sample

As stated in chapter two, the purpose of the quantitative research method is to identify the perceptions and behaviour of the demand side (Nardi, 2018).

The aim of the research is to investigate the role of social media in promoting Egypt (from the demand side) to answer the research questions:

- How do tourists visiting Egypt refer to social media when searching for information or taking their decision and how they perceive Egyptian social platforms which are specialized in promoting tourism?
- What are their recommendations and suggestions for an effective tourism promotion using social media?

The sample chosen is a purposive sample of 200 Egyptian tourists and 213 international tourists. In this research domestic tourists (Egyptians) were chosen as by the time of corona virus and flight bans, domestic tourism gained special importance.

Domestic tourism spending in Egypt represented 41% while international tourism spending represented 59% in 2019, but the situation changed in 2020 domestic

tourism spending grew to become 65% comparing to international spending which became 35% (WTTC, 2020).

Regarding foreign tourists, it was very difficult to contact international tourists during this period in hotels or airports due to safety measures (See (2.6.4) in chapter two).

5.3 Descriptive Analysis for Egyptian Tourists
5.3.1 Reliability and validity statistics for Egyptians tourists

The study used Cronbach's alpha to ensure reliability for survey measurements. According to Wong (2013), the lower value for Cronbach 's alpha is 0.70 but in exploratory research it can be lowered to reach 0.6.

Table (5.1) summarizes the outcomes of internal reliability of the scales using Cronbach alpha where the values are: 0.802 for all items in the questionnaire, with 0.736 as minimum value and 0.852 as maximum value. This means that the general reliability is high for the total items of the questionnaire, and this indicates that the questionnaire enjoys a high degree of reliability and can be relied upon in the field application of the study.

Table 5-1: Reliability Statistics for Egyptian tourists

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	0.736	3
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	0.852	6
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	0.812	4
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	0.849	3
Total	**0.802**	**16**

- ▪ **Validity statistics for Egyptian tourists.**

The validity of the internal questionnaire was verified by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores of each of the items that belongs to each section and the total correlation of every section.

Table 5-2: Validity statistics for Egyptian tourists

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	r	P
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	**0.756***	**<0.001***
I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	0.842*	<0.001*
I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	0.788*	<0.001*
When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable	0.852*	<0.001*
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	**0.818***	**<0.001***
When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I found social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	0.893*	<0.001*
I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	0.712*	<0.001*
Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	0.859*	<0.001*
I trust information about the destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	0.884*	<0.001*
I trust information about the destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	0.869*	<0.001*
I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	0.589	0.001*
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	**0.459***	**0.021***
It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family	0.738*	<0.001*
I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	0.797*	<0.001*
When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use Egyptian networks without any difficulties	0.817*	<0.001*
I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	0.861*	<0.001*
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	**0.578**	**0.001***
After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	0.804*	<0.001*
After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	0.907*	<0.001*
After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	0.934*	<0.001*

r: Pearson coefficient   *: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05

Table (5.2) shows that all Pearson correlation coefficient between all items of the same section and the total degree of every section is statistically significant.

5.3.2 Analysis of demographics and categorical characteristics of Egyptian tourists

The demographic characteristics of domestic tourists in this research were determined by a set of questions in the beginning of the questionnaire regarding the respondents' age, gender, level of education.

Summary of the demographic characteristics is represented in table (5.3)

Table 5.3 : Demographic characteristics of Egyptian tourists

Q		Egyptians (n = 200)	
		No.	%
1	**What is your age?**		
	From 15 – 20	6	3.0
	From 21 – 30	27	13.5
	From 31 – 40	38	19.0
	From 41 – 50	51	25.5
	50 and over	78	39.0
2	**Gender**		
	Male	145	72.5
	Female	55	27.5
3	**Level of education**		
	Undergraduate	8	4.0
	Bachelor's degree	73	36.5
	Postgraduate	119	59.5

Table (5.3) shows that 39% of the respondents were aged 50 and over followed by 25.5% of respondents who were aged between 41 and 50. Males represent (72.5%) while females represent (27.5%) of the sample. It does not mean that men in Egypt travel more than women, as simply this percentage is due to the number of people responding to the questionnaire. The level of education shows that (59.5%) are postgraduate, followed by bachelor's degree (36.5%). This means that the largest number were qualified.

Table 5-4 : Categorical characteristics about respondents

4	**When was your last trip to Egypt?**		
	<1 year	48	24.0
	1 – <5 years	125	62.5
	5 – <10 years	20	10.0
	≥10 years	7	3.5
5	**What is your favorite social media platform in which you share your photos and travel experiences?**		
	Facebook	155	77.5
	Twitter	2	1.0
	Instagram	43	21.5
6	**In which language do you consult social media?**		
	Arabic	115	57.5
	English	61	30.5
	Both Arabic and English	19	9.5
	Other	5	2.5
7	**Frequency of vacation**		
	Once a year	86	43.0
	More than one in a year	101	50.5
	Biennially	13	6.5
8	**General place of vacation**		
	Domestic	136	68.0
	Abroad	9	4.5
	Domestic and abroad	55	27.5

As shown in table (5.4) most respondents (62.5%) had their last trip from one to five years ago, while 24% of the respondents experienced their last trip one year ago. According to that most respondents have experienced trips in Egypt in recent years. Most respondents (77.5%) chose Facebook as their favourite social media platform followed by Instagram (21.5%).

When consulting social media, most of the respondents (57.5%) use Arabic language, followed by 30.5% who use English language. Regarding the frequency

of vacation 50.5% of respondents travel more than one a year followed by 43% travel once a year.

On the other hand, when asking about their general place of vacation, most respondents (68%) chose domestic, meaning that their perceptions and opinions about Egypt are reliable.

5.3.3 Descriptive analysis to explore the attitude of Egyptian tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts.

In the table below a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media account

Table 5-5: Distribution of the studied Egyptians according to section 2: exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts (n=200)

Q	Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	Egyptians (n = 200)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	16	8.0	14	7.0	75	37.5	82	41.0	13	6.5	3.31 ± 0.98	**Neither**
2	I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	17	8.5	42	21.0	56	28.0	70	35.0	15	7.5	3.12 ± 1.09	**Neither**
3	When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful and reliable	5	2.5	20	10.0	61	30.5	103	51.5	11	5.5	3.4 8 ± 0.84	**Agree**

Table (5.5) shows that the highest level was awarded to the third item which is: when searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable with mean 3.4 and standard deviation 0.84.

This is followed by the first item which is: I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private with mean 3.31 and standard deviation 0.98.

And finally, the second item: I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company with mean 3.12 and standard deviation 1.09.

5.3.4 Descriptive analysis of Egyptian tourists according to exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip:

Table 5-6: Distribution of the studied Egyptians according to section 3: Exploring behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip.

Q	Exploring Behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	6	3.0	24	12.0	55	27.5	100	50.0	15	7.5	3.47 ± 0.91	**Agree**
2	I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	2	1.0	20	10.0	51	25.5	103	51.5	24	12.0	3.64 ± 0.86	**Agree**
3	Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	2	1.0	14	7.0	42	21.0	121	60.5	21	10.5	3.73 ± 0.78	**Agree**
4	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	7	3.5	35	17.5	88	44.0	65	32.5	5	2.5	3.44 ± 0.87	**Agree**
5	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	4	2.0	24	12.0	68	34.0	89	44.5	15	7.5	3.13 ± 0.85	**Neither**
6	I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	8	4.0	53	26.5	60	30.0	66	33.0	13	6.5	3.12 ± 1.0	**Neither**

Table (5.6) shows that the highest level was awarded to the third item which is: Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travellers helped me to choose my destination with mean 3.73 and standard deviation 0.78.

This is followed by the second item which is: I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks with mean 3.64 and standard deviation 0.86.

This is further followed by the first item which is: When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision with mean 3.47 and standard deviation 0.91,

After that comes the fourth item which is I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination with mean 3.44 and standard deviation 0.87.

The fifth item is: I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination with mean 3.13 and standard deviation 0.85.

The last item is I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one with mean 3.12 and standard deviation 1.

5.3.5 Descriptive analysis of Egyptian tourists through exploring their behaviour towards social media during their trip.

Table 5-7: Distribution of the studied Egyptians according to Section 4: Exploring behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip.

Q	Exploring behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family	4	2.0	15	7.5	23	11.5	109	54.5	49	24.5	3.92 ± 0.92	**Agree**
2	I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	3	1.5	14	7.0	34	17.0	126	63.0	23	11.5	3.76 ± 0.80	**Agree**
3	When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use an Egyptian network without any difficulties	7	3.5	31	15.5	58	29.0	91	45.5	13	6.5	3.36 ± 0.94	**Neither**
4	I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	7	3.5	48	24.0	69	34.5	68	34.0	8	4.0	3.11 ± 0.93	**Neither**

Table (5.7) shows that the highest level was awarded to the first item which is: It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family with mean 3.92 and standard deviation 0.92.

This followed by the second item which is: I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information with mean 3.76 and standard deviation 0.80.

The third item is: When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use Egyptian network without any difficulties with mean 3.36 and standard deviation 0.94.

The last item is I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place) with mean 3.11 and standard deviation 0.93.

5.3.6 Descriptive analysis of Egyptian tourists through exploring their behaviour towards social media after their trip.

Table 5-8: Distribution of the studied Egyptians according to Section 5: Exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip.

Q	Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	4	2.0	43	21.5	45	22.5	98	49.0	10	5.0	3.34 ± 0.94	Neither
2	After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	5	2.5	47	23.5	55	27.5	73	36.5	20	10.0	3.28 ± 1.01	Neither
3	After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	8	4.0	34	17.0	83	41.5	71	35.5	4	2.0	3.15 ± 0.86	Neither

Table (5.8) shows that the highest level was awarded to the first item which is: After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travellers with mean 3.34 and standard deviation 0.94.

This was followed by the second item which is: After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations with mean 3.28 and standard deviation 1.01.

The last item was: After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts with mean 3.15 and standard deviation 0.86.

5.3.7 Recommendations of Egyptians tourists for an effective tourism promotion through social media

The last question is an open-ended question that allows tourists to express their opinions suggestions and recommendations for an effective tourism promotion via social media.

Table 5.9: Distribution of the studied Egyptians according to recommendations for an effective tourism promotion in Egypt (n=200)

What are your recommendations for an effective tourism promotion of Egypt via social media platforms	No.	%
Transparency and honesty	28	14.0
Effectively using communication platforms to raise awareness in terms of dealing with tourists, whether Egyptians or foreigners	23	11.5
I don't have any suggestions	15	7.5
Relying more on the opinions of those who visited the places that are evaluated in the announcement of the place	8	4.0
Providing distinguished offers in terms of services and prices	8	4.0
more ads on social media and other media	4	2.0
The use of various foreign languages and promotional tourism programs that familiarize foreigners with tourist attractions	4	2.0
Showing the features in a positive way to entice the person to visit the place	3	1.5
Creating official pages and clarifying the features of each site supported by images and videos	3	1.5
Methods must be updated, and the new generation should be addressed in a modern fashion and technology	3	1.5
Making price list for the places and more price offers	2	1.0
Attention to good treatment and not to take advantage of tourists	2	1.0
Providing domestic flights at a low price	2	1.0
Everything is fine	1	0.5
More details about Egyptian museums and other places to visit, in Egypt and real culture	1	0.5
No suggestions	1	0.5
Special services	1	0.5
Creating trusted websites for touristic places in Egypt and visitors feedback	1	0.5
Trip advisor	1	0.5
Targeting specific groups	1	0.5
Oversight by the Ministry of Tourism to ensure credibility and good pricing	1	0.5

What are your recommendations for an effective tourism promotion of Egypt via social media platforms	No.	%
Prepare a work team that has the appropriate skills to spread all the services provided in all transparency and can listen well to the tourist with the change of our old image in a nice and appropriate manner with the modern development	1	0.5
Advertisements for every tourist area in Egypt, because so far places are unknown, despite their beauty	1	0.5
Direct and indirect contact with the companies organizing tourism and through the Ministry of Tourism and Travel in all parts of the country to promote tourism in Egypt	1	0.5
Interest in filming and actual display of tourist and family places through videos that do not exceed one minute and publish them through specialists as paid advertisements in foreign countries	1	0.5
Attention to spreading the positives in the tourist areas	1	0.5
Attention to showing beauty in places	1	0.5
Attention to indoor swimming and making more attractive shows	1	0.5
Interest in historical tourism	1	0.5
Paying attention to pictures, especially for non-traditional places	1	0.5
Attention to placing reviews of places by visitors	1	0.5
Focusing on advertising on credible sites such as the trip advisor	1	0.5
Focusing on recreational tourism more than archaeology tourism. If the new generation would choose between Dubai and its malls and parties and the atmosphere of tourism based on entertainment and shopping and between a trip in Egypt that includes museums, monuments, and landmarks	1	0.5
The best tourism promotion that people are attracted to is the continuous offers for trips and price reductions, and thus competition between companies	1	0.5
Promoting medical tourism	1	0.5
Promotion with realistic pictures of tourism promotion	1	0.5
The respectful dealings of the Egyptian street man with the tourist, whether an Egyptian or foreign tourist, the cleanliness of public places, ease of transportation	1	0.5
Appearing civilized in front of tourists and not being taken advantage of by some people	1	0.5
Photographing the tourist places and landscapes in each governorate separately and promoting them through the pages of the Ministry of Tourism so that the tourist has an opinion about each governorate and its distinctive places	1	0.5
More publishing pictures of tourist places and honourable destinations for Egypt	1	0.5
Safety	1	0.5
If transportation is easy and affordable, prices are appropriate and discounted	1	0.5
Developing a unified tourism strategy during the coming period to be implemented in the targeted tourist markets at the present time considering the emerging crisis of the Corona virus,	1	0.5
More interest in unknown tourist places	1	0.5

What are your recommendations for an effective tourism promotion of Egypt via social media platforms	No.	%
The Ministry of Tourism's interest in introducing tourist sites	1	0.5
I recommend it as one of the means, but electronic platforms alone are not convincing	1	0.5
Reduced prices for domestic tourism	1	0.5
Photographing the best places and making ads showing the best tourist places	1	0.5
Photographing tourist places and advertising campaigns by Egyptian and foreign celebrities for tourist places, with offers and discounts for trips	1	0.5
Activating the role of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, Antiquities and Foreign Affairs through cooperation and marketing for all Egyptian and tourist places, cities, and attractions in the Egyptian state as a whole	1	0.5
Being with government agencies to gain the confidence of insiders	1	0.5
Activating domestic tourism programs and then spread impressions on a wide field to inform foreigners of the possibilities and advantages of tourism in Egypt	1	0.5
Clarifying the most important tourist places that have Egyptian antiquities, places that have a wonderful nature, and the delivery of Egyptian civilization to tourists through the Library of Alexandria, which includes a number of documentaries	1	0.5
Providing appropriate and smooth advertising materials	1	0.5
New, effective, and fast spreading campaigns	1	0.5
Attracting tourists with promotional offers for trips and stays	1	0.5
Good treatment and control of travel and accommodation prices	1	0.5
The story of the history of the pharaohs with accompanying pictures of the Egyptian Museum and the antiquities of Luxor and Aswan	1	0.5
Government tourism campaigns	1	0.5
Paid advertising campaigns run by marketing professionals	1	0.5

Table (5.9) shows that most respondents (14%) recommended honesty and transparency and that is related probably to offers and prices.

This is followed by 11.5% that recommend using communication platforms in an effective way to raise awareness in terms of dealing with tourists, whether Egyptians or foreigners, while 8 % recommended relying more on the opinions of those who visited the places and providing distinguished offers in terms of services and prices.

Some recommendations were directed to the ministry of tourism such as: activating the role of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, Antiquities and foreign affairs through cooperation and marketing for all Egyptian and tourist places,

cities and attractions in the Egyptian state as a whole , photographing the tourist places and landscapes in each governorate separately and promoting them through the pages of the Ministry of Tourism so that the tourist has an opinion about each governorate and its distinctive places, and developing a unified tourism strategy during the coming period to be implemented in the targeted tourist markets at the present time considering the emerging crisis of the Corona virus.

5.4 Descriptive Analysis for International Tourists

5.4.1 Reliability and validity statistics for international tourists

The study used Cronbach's alpha to ensure reliability for survey measurements. Table (5.10) summarizes the outcomes of internal reliability of the scales using Cronbach alpha where the values are 0.853 for all items in the questionnaire, with as minimum value 0,761 and as maximum value 0.883. This means that the general reliability is high for the total items of the questionnaire, and this indicates that the questionnaire enjoys a high degree of reliability and can be relied upon in the field application of the study.

Table 5.10: Reliability Statistics for international tourists.

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	0.761	3
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	0.781	6
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	0.883	4
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	0.839	3
Total	**0.853**	**16**

- ▪ **Validity Statistics for International tourists**

The validity of the internal questionnaire was verified by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores of each item that belongs to each section and the total correlation of every section.

Table 5.11: Validity Statistics for International Tourists.

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	r	P
Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	**0.814***	**<0.001***
I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	0.842*	<0.001*
I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	0.864*	<0.001*
When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable	0.822*	<0.001*
Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	**0.874***	**<0.001***
When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I found social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	0.736*	<0.001*
I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	0.774*	<0.001*
Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	0.693*	<0.001*
I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	0.619*	0.001*
I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	0.566*	0.003*
I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	0.818*	<0.001*
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	**0.587***	**0.002***
It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family	0.714*	<0.001*
I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	0.969*	<0.001*
When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use an Egyptian network without any difficulties	0.926*	<0.001*
I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	0.872*	<0.001*
Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	**0.485***	**0.014***
After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	0.842*	<0.001*
After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	0.886*	<0.001*
After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	0.900*	<0.001*

r: Pearson coefficient

*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05

Table (5.11) shows that all Pearson correlation coefficient between all items of the same section and the total degree of every section is statistically significant.

5.4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of International Tourists

The demographic characteristics of international tourists in this research were determined by a set of questions in the beginning of the questionnaire regarding the respondents age, gender, level of education and nationality.

Summary of the demographic characteristics is represented in table (5.12)

Table 5.12: Distribution of the studied international tourists according to demographic data (n=213)

Q		Not Egyptians (n = 213)	
		No.	%
1	**What is your age?**		
	From 15 – 20	14	6.6
	From 21 – 30	79	37.1
	From 31 – 40	66	31.0
	From 41 – 50	27	12.7
	50 and over	27	12.7
2	**Gender**		
	Male	122	57.3
	Female	91	42.7
3	**Level of education**		
	Undergraduate	115	54.0
	Bachelor's degree	40	18.8
	Postgraduate	58	27.2
4	**Nationality**		
	American	55	25.8
	British	56	26.3
	Italian	29	13.6
	Spanish	17	8.0
	Romanian	16	7.5
	French	11	5.2
	German	5	2.3
	Libya	3	1.4
	Russian	3	1.4
	Deutsch	2	0.9
	Greek	2	0.9
	Irish	2	0.9
	Saudi Arabia	2	0.9
	Latin America	4	1.9
	Australia	1	0.5
	Belgium	1	0.5
	Georgian	1	0.5
	Chinese	1	0.5
	Kuwaiti	1	0.5
	Nigeria	1	0.5

Table (5.12) shows that 37.1% are aged from 21 to 30 years and 31% are between 31 and 40 years, regarding the gender 57.3% are male while 42.7% are female. The level of education varied as 54% are undergraduate, 27.2% are postgraduate while 18.8% have a bachelor's degree. Most of the respondents (68.4%) are Europeans, followed by 25.8% Americans.

Table 5.12: Distribution of the studied international tourists according to categorical data (n=213)

Q		Not Egyptians (n = 213)	
		No.	%
5	**When was your last trip to Egypt?**		
	<1 year	23	10.8
	1 – <5 years	134	62.9
	5 – <10 years	42	19.7
	≥10 years	14	6.6
6	**What is your favorite social media platform in which you share your photos and travel experiences?**		
	Facebook	166	77.9
	Twitter	7	3.3
	Instagram	37	17.4
	Tik Tok	2	0.9
	WhatsApp	1	0.5
7	**In which language do you consult social media?**		
	Arabic	4	1.9
	English	158	74.2
	Both Arabic and English	2	0.9
	Other	49	23.0
8	**Frequency of vacation**		
	Once a year	101	47.4
	More than one in a year	101	47.4
	Biennially	11	5.2
9	**General place of vacation**		
	Domestic	26	12.2
	Abroad	52	24.4
	Domestic and abroad	135	63.4

As shown in the table (5.13), when asked the respondents about their last trip in Egypt 62.9% responded by: between one to five years. Accordingly, most respondents have experienced trips in Egypt from recent years. Concerning their favourite social media platform, most respondents replied by Facebook (77.9%) followed by Instagram (17.4%). Most of the respondents (74.2%) use English when consulting social media. Regarding the frequency of vacation: (47.4%) of respondents travel once a year followed by the same percentage (47.4%) who travel more than once a year. On the other hand, when asked about their general place of vacation, most respondents experience domestic and abroad trips (63.4%), which means that their perceptions and opinions about Egypt are reliable.

5.4.3 Descriptive analysis to explore the attitude of international tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts.

Table 5.13: Distribution of the studied international tourists according to exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts (n=213)

Q	Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	Not Egyptians (n = 213)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	6	2.8	9	4.2	56	26.3	97	45.5	45	21.1	3.78 ± 0.92	**Agree**
2	I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	12	5.6	49	23.0	45	21.1	68	31.9	39	18.3	3.34 ± 1.18	**Neither**
3	When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable	7	3.3	13	6.1	48	22.5	67	31.5	78	36.6	3.92 ± 1.06	**Agree**

Table (5.14) shows that the highest level was awarded to the third item which is: When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable with mean 3.92 and standard deviation 1.06.

This is followed by the first item which is: I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt with mean 3.78 and standard deviation 0.92.

Finally, the second item which is: I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company with mean 3.34 and standard deviation 1.18.

5.4.4 Descriptive analysis of international tourists according to exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip

Table 5.14: Distribution of the studied group of international tourists according to section 3. Exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip (n=213)

Q	Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	Not Egyptians (n = 213)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	5	2.3	10	4.7	36	16.9	115	54.0	47	22.1	3.89 ± 0.88	**Agree**
2	I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	4	1.9	18	8.5	43	20.2	103	48.4	45	21.1	3.78 ± 0.94	**Agree**
3	Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	3	1.4	17	8.0	23	10.8	110	51.6	60	28.2	3.97 ± 0.92	**Agree**
4	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	8	3.8	14	6.6	47	22.1	75	35.2	69	32.4	3.90 ± 0.95	**Agree**
5	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	3	1.4	12	5.6	53	24.9	80	37.6	65	30.5	3.86 ± 1.06	**Agree**
6	I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	5	2.3	36	16.9	78	36.6	53	24.9	41	19.2	3.42 ± 1.05	**Agree**

Table 5.15 shows that the highest level was awarded to the third item which is: Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travellers helped me to choose my destination with mean 3.97 and standard deviation 0.92.

This was followed by the fourth item which is: I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination with mean 3.90 and standard deviation 0.95.

This was further followed by the first item which is: When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision with mean 3.89 and standard deviation 0.88.

Then comes the fifth item which is: I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination with mean 3.86 and standard deviation 1.06.

The last item is I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one with mean 3.42 and standard deviation 1.05.

5.4.5 Descriptive analysis of international tourists according to exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media during their trip:

Table 5.15: Distribution of the studied group international tourists according to Section 4: Exploring behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip (n=213)

Q	Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	Not Egyptians (n = 213)										Mean ± SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family	5	2.3	11	5.2	35	16.4	82	38.5	80	37.6	4.04 ± 0.98	Agree
2	I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	1	0.5	8	3.8	28	13.1	106	49.8	70	32.9	4.11 ± 0.80	Agree

3	When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use an Egyptian network without any difficulties	8	3.8	19	8.9	53	24.9	89	41.8	44	20.7	3.67 ± 1.02	Agree
4	I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	2	0.9	18	8.5	41	19.2	89	41.8	63	29.6	3.91 ± 0.95	Agree

Table (5.16) shows that the highest level was awarded to the second item which is: I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information with mean 4.11 and standard deviation 0.80.

This was followed by the first item which is: It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family with mean 4.04 and standard deviation 0.94.

After that comes the fourth item which is: I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place) with mean 3.91 and standard deviation 0.95.

Following that is the third item which is: When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use Egyptian network without any difficulties with mean 3.67 and standard deviation 1.02.

5.4.6 Descriptive analysis of international tourists according to exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media after their trip:

Table 5-16: Distribution of the studied international tourists according to Section 5- Exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip (n=213)

Q	Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	Not Egyptians (n = 213)										Mean ±SD.	Level
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	2	0.9	5	2.3	21	9.9	93	43.7	92	43.2	4.26 ± 0.80	Agree
2	After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	2	0.9	10	4.7	36	16.9	101	47.4	64	30.0	4.01 ± 0.86	Agree
3	After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	10	4.7	36	16.9	55	25.8	75	35.2	37	17.4	3.44 ± 1.10	Agree

Table (5.17) shows that the highest level was awarded to the first item which is: After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travellers with mean 4.26 and standard deviation 0.80.

After that comes the second item which is: after my trip I always post reviews and evaluations with mean 4.01 and standard deviation 0.86.

This was followed by the third item: After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts with mean 3.44 and standard deviation 1.10.

5.4.7 Recommendations of international tourists for an effective tourism promotion through social media

Table 5-17: Distribution of the studied international tourists according to recommendations for an effective tourism promotion in Egypt (n=200)

	No.	%
More ads on social media	49	23
No suggestions	26	12.2
More details about Egyptian museums all places to visit, in Egypt and real culture	16	7.5
Add more security on websites	8	3.8
I don't know	8	3.8
Disagree	7	3.3
Make price list for the places and more price offers	7	3.3
Be more honest	4	1.9
I recommend good offers for airlines and transportations	4	1.9
Good quality service	3	1.4
It is suggested that hygiene should be done well	3	1.4

	No.	%
The promotion should be in my language	3	1.4
Everything is fine	2	0.9
I suggest that more support be given to tourism	2	0.9
Strongly agree	2	0.9
There are a lot	2	0.9
A great place to visit	1	0.5
All-inclusive vacation	1	0.5
Amazing country	1	0.5
Beautiful	1	0.5
Egypt is a nice destination of tourism choice	1	0.5
Egypt is so beautiful and great history and sightseeing.	1	0.5
Excellent experience and awesome views	1	0.5
Good service	1	0.5
Great yes	1	0.5
History and local food	1	0.5
I did not like Egypt	1	0.5
I think it's very good	1	0.5
I think to explore all of city and country. Egypt is beautiful to visit	1	0.5
I think we need more promotions, and free Wi-Fi on all hotels in Egypt	1	0.5
I usually recommend the daily news Egypt for any kind of tourism when I am asked about it	1	0.5
I visit Egypt for the places are so beautiful	1	0.5
I would highly recommend it	1	0.5
Images	1	0.5
Is the best in the world	1	0.5
It's kind of ok	1	0.5
It's to always stay in contact with the world	1	0.5
Its amazing and appealing	1	0.5
Just how positive an experience the whole thing is.	1	0.5
kids friendly	1	0.5
likely to visit with family	1	0.5
Look around to see what people said was good and go there	1	0.5
Lots of photos with the resort and details about the provided services	1	0.5
Love it	1	0.5
Maintain the environmental hygiene of tourist attractions	1	0.5
Nice pictures	1	0.5
Plan and be prepared	1	0.5
Plan it very well	1	0.5
Quality	1	0.5
Respect the Culture	1	0.5

Table 5-18: Distribution of the studied Not Egyptians according to recommendations for an effective tourism promotion in Egypt (n=200)

	No.	%
Sharing Beautiful and high-quality pictures of touristic sites that are appealing	1	0.5
Short clips on Tik Tok	1	0.5
Should be a great idea creating a forum of People Who travel to Egypt	1	0.5
Showing how easy it is to move around and seeing the sights	1	0.5
To be more effective	1	0.5
Something that shows clips of real people's holidays not staged ones	1	0.5
Speak to a lot of people before	1	0.5
Stop usual trade of fake products	1	0.5
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
The total environment process was clear and fair.	1	0.5
The tourist board	1	0.5
They are many	1	0.5
To follow who you booked the holiday for	1	0.5
To keep walking positively like this and promote their beautiful country	1	0.5
To promote the beautiful pyramids	1	0.5
To promote much more places, people traditions and gastronomy	1	0.5
To trust only good persons	1	0.5
Transparency in offers	1	0.5
Trust All your information and your bookings	1	0.5
Try to show different experiences and places, not the usual ones but others	1	0.5
Use high quality images of restaurants and tourist attractions and how to get to them	1	0.5
Use it wisely	1	0.5
Very effective	1	0.5
Very good	1	0.5
Very good country a lot of mystery	1	0.5
Very informative	1	0.5
Very interesting	1	0.5
Very recommended	1	0.5
Visible presence	1	0.5
Visit the pyramids	1	0.5
Visual experiences of other persons.	1	0.5
Showing the beauty of the country	1	0.5
yes, that's a great idea	1	0.5

Table (5.18) shows that international tourists recommend more ads on social media (23%), showing more details about places such as museums and showing real culture (7.5%), history and local food (0.5%), people traditions and gastronomy (0.5%) , showing visual experiences of others (1%) and using high quality images of restaurants and tourist attractions and how to get to them

(0.5%), creating price lists for places and price offers (3.3%), and providing good offers for airline and transportation (1.9%).

Tourists seem to be unhappy about deception and cheating as they recommend to be more honest (1.9%) and stop fake products (0.5%) showing transparency in offers (0,5%), trusting only good persons (0.5%), increasing trust in information provided and bookings (0.5%) and adding more security on websites (3.8%).

Table 5-19: Comparison between the two studied groups according to demographic and categorical data

Q		Egyptians (n = 200)		Not Egyptians (n = 213)		χ^2	P
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	**What is your age?**						
	From 15 – 20	6	3.0	14	6.6	68.062*	<0.001*
	From 21 – 30	27	13.5	79	37.1		
	From 31 – 40	38	19.0	66	31.0		
	From 41 – 50	51	25.5	27	12.7		
	50 and over	78	39.0	27	12.7		
2	**Gender**						
	Male	145	72.5	122	57.3	10.459*	0.001*
	Female	55	27.5	91	42.7		
3	**Level of education**						
	Undergraduate	8	4.0	115	54.0	123.454*	<0.001*
	Bachelor's degree	73	36.5	40	18.8		
	Postgraduate	119	59.5	58	27.2		
4	**When was your last trip to Egypt?**						
	<1 year	48	24.0	23	10.8	18.865*	<0.001*
	1 – <5 years	125	62.5	134	62.9		
	5 – <10 years	20	10.0	42	19.7		
	≥10 years	7	3.5	14	6.6		

χ^2: **Chi square test**

p: p value for comparing between the studied group.

Table 5-20: Comparison between the two studied groups according to demographic and categorical data "continue".

Q		Egyptians (n = 200)		Not Egyptians (n = 213)		χ^2	P
		No.	%	No.	%		
6	**What is your favorite social media platform in which you share your photos and travel experiences?**						
	Facebook	155	77.5	166	77.9	5.464	0.158
	Twitter	2	1.0	7	3.3		
	Instagram	43	21.5	37	17.4		
	TikTok			2	0.9		
	WhatsApp			1	0.5		
7	**In which language do you consult social media?**						
	Arabic	115	57.5	4	1.9	195.900*	<0.001*
	English	61	30.5	158	74.2		
	Both Arabic and English	19	9.5	2	0.9		
	Other	5	2.5	49	23.0		
8	**Frequency of vacation**						
	Once a year	86	43.0	101	47.4	0.962	0.618
	More than one in a year	101	50.5	101	47.4		
	Biennially	13	6.5	11	5.2		
9	**General place of vacation**						
	Domestic	136	68.0	26	12.2	138.415*	<0.001*
	Abroad	9	4.5	52	24.4		
	Domestic and abroad	55	27.5	135	63.4		

χ^2: **Chi square test**

p value for comparing between the studied group*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05

Table (5.20) shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the studied two groups (Egyptian and international tourists in age, gender, level of education) as p value $p \leq 0.05$. But no statistically significant difference between the studied two groups is detected regarding the favourite social media platform which is Facebook as p value =0.158. There is also not statistically significance

difference detected in the frequency of vacation between the two groups as P value=0.618.

Table 5-21: Comparison between the two studied groups according to exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts.

Q	Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	Egyptians (n = 200)										International tourists (n = 213)										χ^2	p
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	16	8.0	14	7.0	75	37.5	82	41.0	13	6.5	6	2.8	9	4.2	56	26.3	97	45.5	45	21.1	26.918*	<0.001*
2	I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	17	8.5	42	21.0	56	28.0	70	35.0	15	7.5	12	5.6	49	23.0	45	21.1	68	31.9	39	18.3	12.898*	0.012*
3	When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable	5	2.5	20	10.0	61	30.5	103	51.5	11	5.5	7	3.3	13	6.1	48	22.5	67	31.5	78	36.6	61.082*	<0.001*

χ^2: **Chi square test**

p: p value for comparing between the studied groups.

*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05
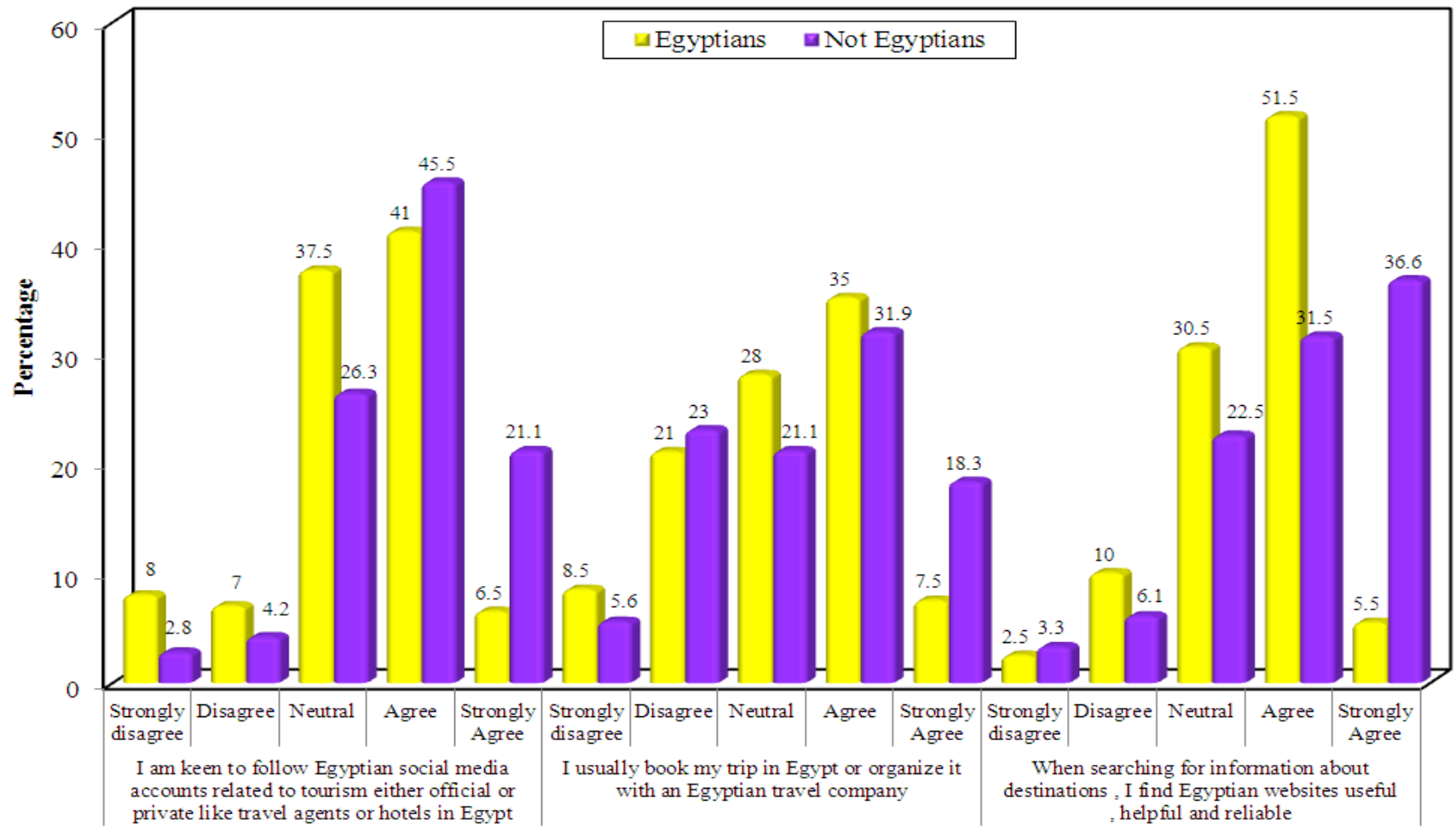
Figure 5:1: Comparison between the two studied groups according to exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts.

The table (5.21) & Figure (5.1) show statistically significant differences between the two studied groups in the three items concerning the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts.

Table 5-22: Comparison between the two studied groups according to Exploring Behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip.

Q	Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										International tourists (n = 213)										χ^2	p
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	6	3.0	24	12.0	55	27.5	100	50.0	15	7.5	5	2.3	10	4.7	36	16.9	115	54.0	47	22.1	27.003*	<0.001*
2	I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	2	1.0	20	10.0	51	25.5	103	51.5	24	12.0	4	1.9	18	8.5	43	20.2	103	48.4	45	21.1	7.442	0.114
3	Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	2	1.0	14	7.0	42	21.0	121	60.5	21	10.5	3	1.4	17	8.0	23	10.8	110	51.6	60	28.2	24.961*	<0.001*
4	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	7	3.5	35	17.5	88	44.0	65	32.5	5	2.5	8	3.8	14	6.6	47	22.1	75	35.2	69	32.4	77.251*	<0.001*
5	I trust information about a destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	4	2.0	24	12.0	68	34.0	89	44.5	15	7.5	3	1.4	12	5.6	53	24.9	80	37.6	65	30.5	37.359*	<0.001*
6	I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	8	4.0	53	26.5	60	30.0	66	33.0	13	6.5	5	2.3	36	16.9	78	36.6	53	24.9	41	19.2	21.838*	<0.001*

χ^2: **Chi square test**   p: p value for comparing between the studied groups   *: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05
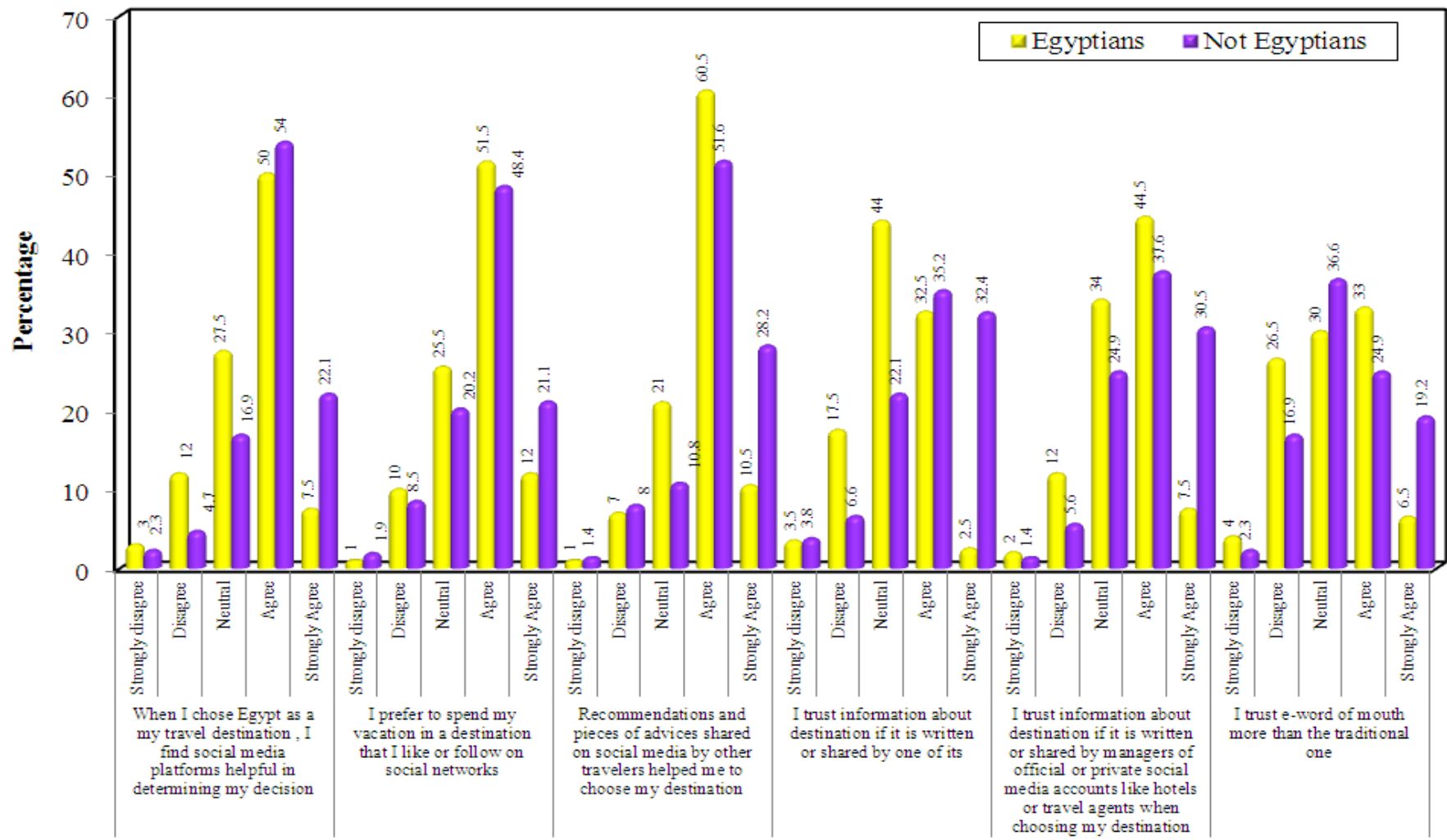
Figure5:2: Comparison between the two studied groups according to Section 3: Exploring behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip.

The table (5.22) and Figure (5.2) show there are statistically significant differences between the two groups in all items concerning the behaviour of tourists on social media before their trip except for the second item which is: I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks as P value was 0.114.

Table 5-23: Comparison between the two studied groups according to Section 3: Exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip.

Q	Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										Not Egyptians (n = 213)										χ^2	p
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	It is important for me to use social media during my trip in order to stay connected to friends and family	4	2.0	15	7.5	23	11.5	109	54.5	49	24.5	5	2.3	11	5.2	35	16.4	82	38.5	80	37.6	14.080[*]	0.007[*]
2	I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	3	1.5	14	7.0	34	17.0	126	63.0	23	11.5	1	0.5	8	3.8	28	13.1	106	49.8	70	32.9	28.313[*]	<0.001[*]
3	When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use an Egyptian network without any difficulties	7	3.5	31	15.5	58	29.0	91	45.5	13	6.5	8	3.8	19	8.9	53	24.9	89	41.8	44	20.7	19.664[*]	0.001[*]
4	I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	7	3.5	48	24.0	69	34.5	68	34.0	8	4.0	2	0.9	18	8.5	41	19.2	89	41.8	63	29.6	68.615[*]	<0.001[*]

χ^2: **Chi square test**

p: p value for comparing between the studied groups*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05.
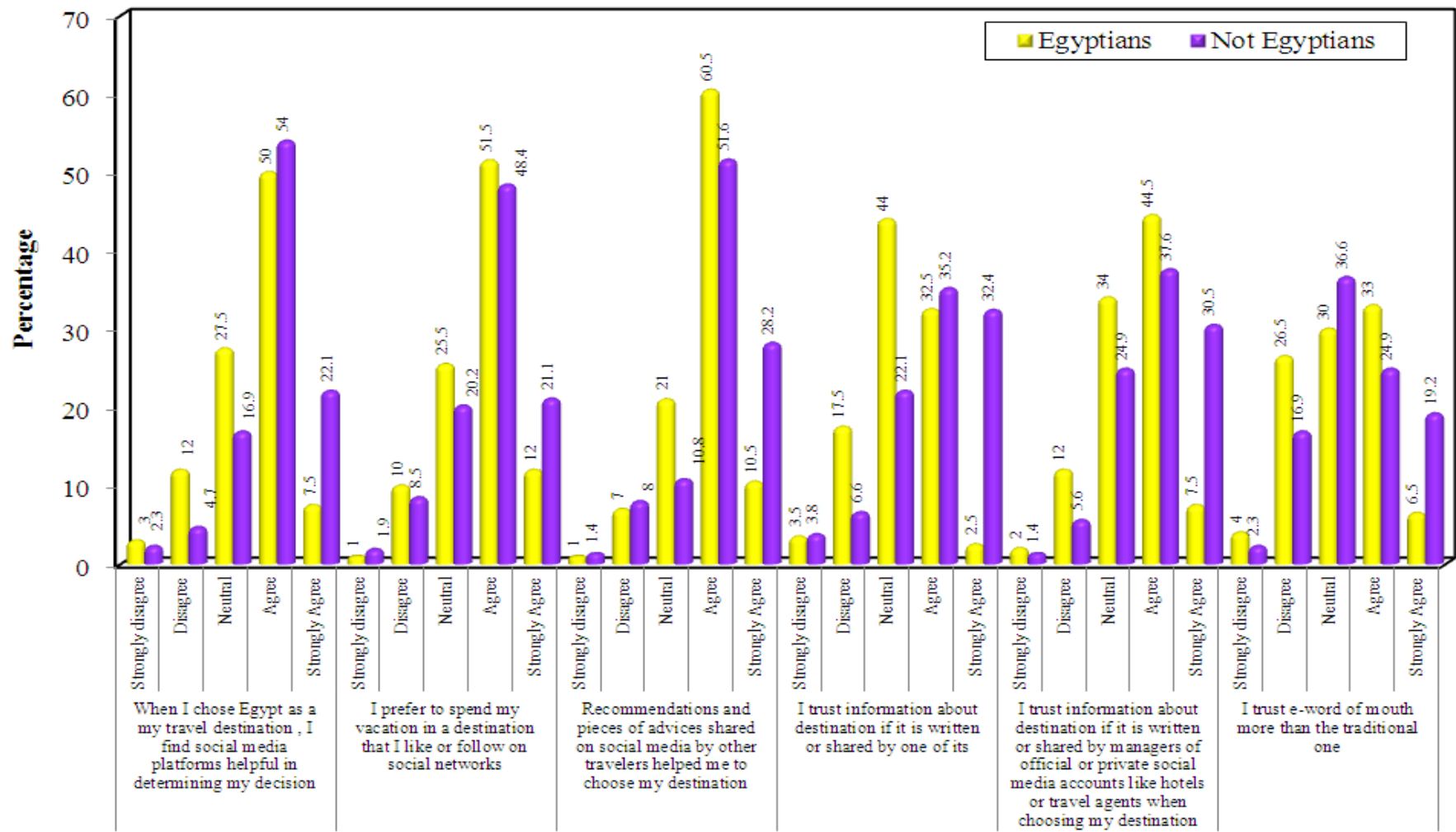
Figure 5:3: Comparison between the two studied groups according to Section 3: Exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip.

The table (5.23) and figure (5.3) show there are statistically significant differences in all items concerning the behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip as P value was ≤ 0.05.

Table 5-24:Comparison between the two studied groups according to Section 4- Exploring behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip.

Q	Exploring the behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	Egyptians (n = 200)										Not Egyptians (n = 213)										χ^2	p
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1	After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	4	2.0	43	21.5	45	22.5	98	49.0	10	5.0	2	0.9	5	2.3	21	9.9	93	43.7	92	43.2	105.225*	<0.001*
2	After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	5	2.5	47	23.5	55	27.5	73	36.5	20	10.0	2	0.9	10	4.7	36	16.9	101	47.4	64	30.0	56.470*	<0.001*
3	After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	8	4.0	34	17.0	83	41.5	71	35.5	4	2.0	10	4.7	36	16.9	55	25.8	75	35.2	37	17.4	32.254*	<0.001*

χ^2: **Chi square test**

p: p value for comparing between the studied groups.

*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05
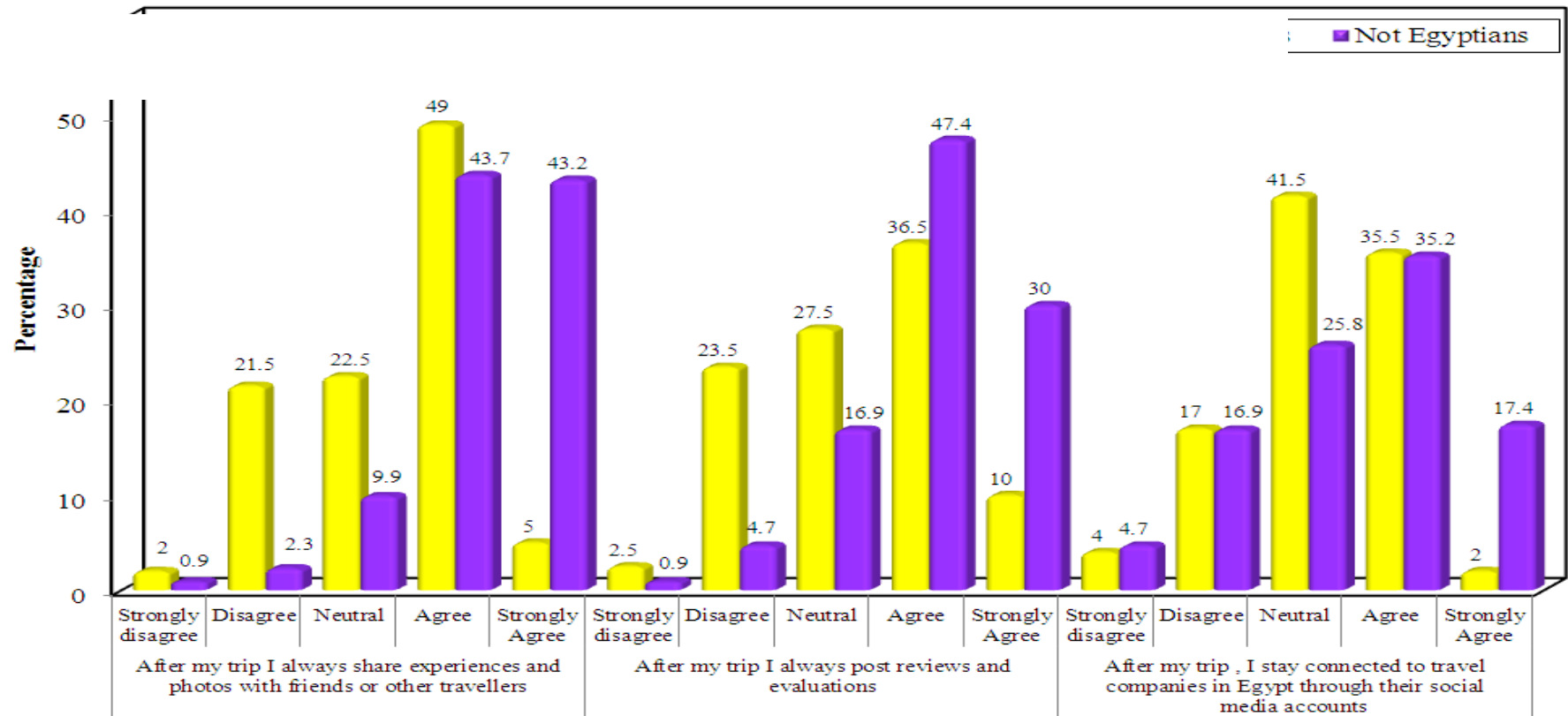
Figure 5-4: Comparison between the two studied groups according to Section 4- Exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip.

The table (5.24) & figure (5.4) show statistically significant differences between the two groups in all items concerning behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip.

Table 5-25: Comparison between the two studied groups according to score of roles of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt.

	Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt	Egyptians (n = 200) Mean ± SD.	Not Egyptians (n = 213) Mean ± SD.	T	p
	Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts	**3.30 ± 0.72**	**3.68 ± 0.81**	**5.018***	**<0.001***
1	I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or hotels in Egypt	3.31 ± 0.98	3.78 ± 0.92	5.001*	<0.001*
2	I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company	3.12 ± 1.09	3.34 ± 1.18	1.991*	0.047*
3	When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable	3.48 ± 0.84	3.92 ± 1.06	4.727*	<0.001*
	Exploring the behavior of travelers on social media before their trip	**3.42 ± 0.55**	**3.80 ± 0.61**	**6.680***	**<0.001***
1	When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision	3.47 ± 0.91	3.89 ± 0.88	4.732*	<0.001*
2	I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks	3.64 ± 0.86	3.78 ± 0.94	1.683	0.093
3	Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travelers helped me to choose my destination	3.73 ± 0.78	3.97 ± 0.92	2.936*	0.004*
4	I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination	3.44 ± 0.87	3.90 ± 0.95	5.192*	<0.001*
5	I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination	3.13 ± 0.85	3.86 ± 1.06	7.710*	<0.001*
6	I trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one	3.12 ± 1.0	3.42 ± 1.05	2.986*	0.003*
	Exploring behavior of tourists towards social media during their trip	**3.54 ± 0.52**	**3.93 ± 0.69**	**6.562***	**<0.001***
1	It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family	3.92 ± 0.92	4.04 ± 0.98	1.258	0.209
2	I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information	3.76 ± 0.80	4.11 ± 0.80	4.401*	<0.001*
3	When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use Egyptian. network without any difficulties	3.36 ± 0.94	3.67 ± 1.02	3.167*	0.002*
4	I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)	3.11 ± 0.93	3.91 ± 0.95	8.571*	<0.001*
	Exploring behavior of tourists towards social media after their trip	**3.25 ± 0.67**	**3.90 ± 0.70**	**9.594***	**<0.001***
1	After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travelers	3.34 ± 0.94	4.26 ± 0.80	10.721*	<0.001*
2	After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations	3.28 ± 1.01	4.01 ± 0.86	7.851*	<0.001*
3	After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts	3.15 ± 0.86	3.44 ± 1.10	2.998*	0.003*
	Total	**3.40 ± 0.44**	**3.83 ± 0.57**	**8.676***	**<0.001***

SD: **Standard deviation**   **t: Student t-test***: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05.

Table (5.25) shows that when T test is used to compare between the mean and standard deviation of the two studied groups, it is obvious that all items are statistically different except for the second item concerning exploring the behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip, which is: I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks as P value was 0.093.

No statistical difference was found concerning the first item in exploring the behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip, which is: It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family as P value was 0.209. This clarifies the importance of social media for the two studied groups when choosing their destination and during their trip as these items take the level of Agree for the two studied groups.

Chapter Six

Content Analysis of Egyptian tourism companies and Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA) Facebook pages

6.1Introduction

In this chapter the researcher conducted a content analysis on Egyptian travel companies and ETA Facebook pages. This content analysis consists of five travel companies Facebook pages chosen from the previous sample in the qualitative work. It is a purposive sample that was chosen according to the highest number of Facebook followers. This content analysis addresses the first and second research questions which are:

- How do owners and managers of Egyptian travel agents promote Egypt as a travel destination?
- How do managers in ETA promote Egypt through social media?

The chapter begins by a descriptive analysis of each travel company Facebook page (tabs, and wall posts contents) followed by a descriptive analysis of the official Facebook page of Egyptian tourism authority (tabs and wall contents).

6.2 Data Analysis

In this study the unit of analysis was Facebook posts, number of likes, shares, and comments on Facebook posts. To determine the units of analysis quantitative data provided by Facebook on the actual companies Facebook pages was obtained. Data was gathered from five Egyptian travel companies Facebook pages, selected from the previous qualitative sample according to the highest number of followers (examined in December 2021). See table (2.9) in chapter two.

Each page was analyzed according to the tabs and wall contents and then associated to the seven building blocks of social media. These social media blocks are used in different contributions depending on the type and goals of the company.

Tourism companies promote tourism products that are intangible, risky as they are expensive and cannot be examined before purchase. On the other hand, when a tourist purchases a trip abroad, he also buys a strange environment with new geographical characteristics, new culture, new atmosphere, which makes it high risky product.

To decrease uncertainty, tourism companies should provide tourists with valuable content, showing their identity in a good manner (identity and reputations blocks), be present by sharing posts to engage customers and stimulate conversations (present, sharing and conversations blocks),to be present in live events (presence block), making groups or communities of travelers that can share their experiences with the company and write reviews (Groups and reputation blocks)and all these activities to make and maintain relationships with their customers (relationships blocks).

The data was collected by registering the number of posts, type of posts, number of likes, shares, and comments. These posts were gathered and manually categorized monitoring 12 months of data from June to September 2019 (before COVID pandemic), from March to June 2020 (during flight ban) and from June to September 2021.

After gathering all posts, they were categorized into types of posts.

The researcher coded the texts under analysis and later another coder (that was trained to establish intercoder reliability) coded the same content again to check reliability.

Types of posts and their association to the seven building blocks of social media:

Table 6-1: Type of posting and its association to seven building blocks of social media

Type of posting	Association to seven building blocks of social media
Product ads (Travel abroad)	It is a commercial ad in the form of a photo of the destination with the details and price of the trip to raise awareness and to promote trips outside Egypt and can be related to sharing commercial contents
Product ads (Domestic or local travel)	It is a commercial ad to promote trips inside Egypt in the form of a photo representing the place with the details and price of the trip and can be related to sharing commercial type of content.
General information, advice, greetings	It is a social or relational post related to relationships blocks since by sharing useful information and advice, consumers felt attached to the company especially during flight bans (COVID pandemic) as they were keen to know about important announcements and useful advice. Also sharing greetings on some occasions contributes to making connections and feelings between the consumer and the company away from commercial tendencies.

Type of posting	Association to seven building blocks of social media
Information with call for involvement	It is a type of post to allow conversations, for example the company delivers information about a place or a trip and call for a comment from their customers to know their opinion or about a trip and ask them for a comment if they want to book. And that can be related to the conversation building block of social media.
Contests/sweepstakes	It is a type of rewarding post (renumeration), it is especially important to raise awareness and `make engagement and can be related to conversation block.
Live events/ live videos	This type of posts is related to presence block, it also related to identity block as running notable events give the company a favorable identity.
Promotions, coupons offer, discounts	It is a type of renumeration or sales promotion post and can lead to conversations and engagement
General questions to involve	This type of post stimulates engagement and can be related to conversations blocks.
Informative videos	Sharing information in the form of videos can lead to more attention and awareness and can stimulate conversations,

6.3 Analysis of companies' profiles and tabs

Five companies were analysed according to their profiles and tabs provided in their Facebook pages: Family tours, Kadmar Travel, Tishoury Tours, A Travel and Ramasside Tours.

6.3.1 Family Tours

Family Tours is an Egyptian travel company that offers various travelling service since 1984. Since December 2012, it has become Lufthansa city center franchise, with influential suppliers and international deals. It has branches in Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt, Dubai, and USA.

Table 6-2: Family tours tabs and their association to seven building blocks of social media

Tab types	Tabs contents
About	Includes information about the company, website link, link to Instagram, contact information: telephone and mobile numbers. Number of likes: 38520 likes Number of followers: 39209 followers.
Reviews	4.9 star based on 160 persons opinions
Services	Booking tickets for airplanes, trains, events Hotels booking, villas etc.

	Religious trips (Haj and Umrah) Limo services Helping in issuing visas and travel insurance
Videos	The last video was in November 2021about the history of Family Tours (37 years of experience). It is the most liked video with 20 likes but only two comments and a Facebook and Instagram link. In 202 during flight ban 3 videos about hygienic procedures to ensure safety
Photos	Includes 18 cover photos and 12 profile pictures, also it includes trips albums, last album was in 25/1/2020 about Singapore trips and includes 32 photos about members of the trip
Shop	All company products are presented. Every product (trip) with its details, price with a photo representing each trip and written in English language. For ex Plan your next holiday For reservation call (phone number) and message (messenger).
Instagram	A link to Instagram profile 296 posts and 3226 followers.
Community	The last post was in August 2021 from Indian group that has sixty-four likes and 8 comments between the members of the trip. On 19 July 2021, a post from someone to thank family tours about a trip and family tours respond by the emoji love. During the flight ban: two posts only. In March 2020, an event about Arabi Kitchen tagging Family tours and receives one like. In June 2020 Avanti sterilization company makes a post to talk about one of its products (11 comments, 35 likes and one share). On 8 July 2020 a video by one of the family tours staff members showing safety procedures and family tours members wearing masks. Receives one comment by one of the customers greetings the company for its new opening.
Events	No upcoming events. Only three previous occasions Two events in 2018 One event in 2016
Fundraising campaigns	No fundraisings campaigns found

From the about tab, service and shop tabs, the company presents itself, its services, exclusive offers, and prices to the audiences and that was associated to identity functional building block of social media.

In the review tab, reviews about the company are presented as well as the rate of the company, which is associated to the reputation functional block of social media and the ability of the company to make relations with its clients on consequences they rate the company (relationship functional building block)

The event tabs can tell us about if the company shares live events. This is associated with the presence building block of social media. It is clear from the table (6.2) that there are no live events in the period of the study as the tab includes three past events from 2016 and 2018. The community tab tells us about the experience of travelers through their posts, but they are very few.

The fundraising campaigns tab is associated with the sharing nonprofit posts that present good reputation for the company but unfortunately. The tab exists with no campaigns. It is worth noting that in every company some tabs are present, but they do not utilize them. Thus, every tab will be analyzed to know if the company utilizes it to the best.

Photos and videos were associated to sharing blocks of social, media, depending on the type of photos and videos, if they stimulate engagement and conversations and that will be clear when analyzing the type of posts (wall contents) in the descriptive analysis.

6.3.2Kadmar Travel

Kadmar is one of the leading travel companies in Egypt established in 2003. It is a member of Kadmar group that started in 1983 and consists of Kadmar shipping and EGL (Egyptian global logistics).

Kadmar Travel joined Lufthansa city center which is an international organization in Frankfurt Germany. Kadmar is member of IATA (international air transport aviation), ETAA (Egyptian travel agents association), UFTAA (Universal federation of travel agents' association) organizations. Kadmar has Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and twitter accounts on social media. The head offices are in Alexandria and Cairo.

The table below analyzes Kadmar Facebook page tabs and associates them with seven functional building blocks of social media.

Table 6-3:Kadmar Travel tabs analysis

Tab types	Tabs contents
About	The company presents itself as a member of ETAA, UFTAA and IATA international organizations. With a strong management team that can deal with many languages. With a mission to deliver to its customers more than they expect.
Review	Ratings:4.6 out of 5 based on the opinion of 97 people
Services	Kadmar offers many specialized services such as honeymoon packages, business travel, cruises, transportation, airline tickets and special travel services for handicapped who need special assistance while travelling
Photos	19 cover photos and 12 profile pictures

	Photos about trips(ads), greetings are also posted with Arabic and English languages
Videos	It is worth noting that kadmar broadcasted live videos from the company during the pandemic about sanitizing process in the company and its rental houses (July 2020)
	The company also broadcasted a series of live videos about Islamic spirits to reassure its clients during pandemic (April 2020)
	In 2019 the company broadcasts two videos to announce its partnership with Lufthansa city center.
	Also, it has the most popular video with 48 likes about a religious event.
	In 2021 the company was keen to broadcast the royal parade which is a great Egyptian event.

Kadmar presents itself as a member of the Kadmar group that has a long history with travel (experience) offering many specialized services in the about and service tabs. (Identity block of social media). The company does not allow public posting, but it has a public group with 3.9 members for discussion. There are ninety-seven reviews only which mean that the company should make more relations with its customers and encourage them to talk about their experiences with the company (Reputation and relationships blocks). The photos and videos posts will be analyzed according to the time set in the research in the descriptive analysis.

6.3.3 Tishoury Tours

It is an Egyptian travel company that offers a wide range of services to tourists worldwide. It is a member of IATA organization and is certified by ISO 9001 Certificate (Applicable Quality Standards). The company specializes in organizing charter flights. Its main branches are in Alexandria, Cairo, and Cyprus branch. Tishoury has Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and twitter accounts on social media.

Table 6-4: Tishoury Tours tabs analysis

Tab types	Tabs contents
About	The company presents itself as one of the most prestigious companies, has the biggest name in charter flights with special prices and offers
Events	No recent or upcoming events
	Only four events, one in 2020, 2018, 2015 and 2014
Group	Group created in May 2020: it is a public group with 308.4K followers that allow hotels to post their offers and people to interact with them
Reviews	The company has 4 /5 rate based on 744 people
Community	No public posts are found.

	Only posts from the companies
Photos	39 cover photos
	9 cover photos
	2 albums, each album contains 3, 4 photos respectively
Services	Tishoury presents itself as a leading company in local and foreign tourism.
	This tab has a link to messenger for booking an appointment.

The company presents itself through the about and services tabs (identity block of social media). The presence in events is extremely low. The company created a group to allow hotels to post their offers and engage with customers (groups and conversations blocks). Tishoury is rated according to 744 people (relationships and reputation blocks). The company does not utilize the community tab as no public posts are found.

6.3.4A Travel

A travel offers a diverse of travel services both domestic and international, and it is certified by IATA. It is one of the largest travel agencies in Egypt with head offices in Alexandria and Cairo. It has Facebook and Instagram accounts on social media.

Table 6-5: A Travel tabs

Tab types	Tabs contents
About	The company presents itself as an excellent travel agency with strong partners with best hotels like four seasons and ritz Carlton hotel and best automotive manufacturers that provides the best quality of coaches
Reviews	4.5 out of 5 based on 31 people opinions
Stores	Map of Egypt showing the stores of A travel in Alexandria and Egypt with telephone numbers and address
Events	No upcoming events
	Only one event in 2019
Community	Nothing to show
Photos	Cover photo 39 items
	Profile pictures 12 items
Videos	Last two videos are two years ago

The company presents itself and its services through about and stores tabs (Identity block). Only one event exists in the event tab (presence block). Reviews are very few (reputation and relationships blocks). Also the community tab is not utilized (groups and conversations blocks).

6.3.5 Ramasside Tours

Ramasside is a leading travel agency in Egypt that received the UNWTO (United Nations of World Tourism Organization) award for innovation. The company has accounts on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Its head offices are in Cairo, Luxor, and Alexandria

Table 6-6: Ramasside tours tabs.

Tab types	Tabs contents
About	The company presents itself as a leading company receiving UNWTO award for innovation
Reviews	4 stars according to436 reviews
Photos	16 profile pictures 21 cover photos
Videos	36 videos one year ago 1video two years ago 21 videos 3 years ago 82 videos 4 years ago 46 videos 5 years ago 1 video 7 years ago
Community	Not used
Groups	Private group created in 2020 with 63 members. Staff only group with 77 members
Events	Last event in 2020 Past events: 6 events in 2016 One event in 2015 One event in 2014

The company presents itself through the about tab (identity block); community tab is not utilized; events are very few and a groups tab existed with a private and a staff group to allow conversations (groups and conversations blocks).

From the previous tabs analysis, it is worth noting that there are some tabs that are created by the companies but not utilized such as events tab (Kadmar, A Travel, Ramasside, Tishoury); the tabs show no upcoming events with two or three past events from three or four years ago, which means that the presence of the companies in live events is not utilized in an effective way.

Community tabs are found in A travel, Tishoury and Ramasside tours but not utilized.

Groups tab is a tab that allows conversations and engagement as tourists can form communities and groups to share their trips and experiences and that allows engagement and conversations but unfortunately is found in three companies only (Tishoury, Kadmar and Ramasside**.)**

Each company is rated according to a few reviews, which means that the relationship of the company with its customers is not managed effectively and that can consequently affect the reputation of the company.

It is worth noting that posts are in Arabic and English and theses pages targeted Egyptian tourists. Travel managers said before in the qualitative interviews that they contact foreign tour operators of other countries and in their turn, they contact their customers (international tourists).

6.4 Descriptive Analysis of Types of Posts

Five Facebook pages were explored for the duration of 12 months: from June to September 2019 (before the COVID pandemic), from March to June (during flight bans) and from June to September (2021).

Tables showing the number of posts, total likes and shares against each company's post and followed by another table showing descriptive summary statistics are presented below.

Table 6-7: Product ad abroad

	2019				2020				2021			
	Product ad abroad	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Product ad abroad	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Product ad abroad	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	4	5265	36	28	12(first part of March)	58	10	46	2	28	7	24
Kadmar travel	3	448	27	29	1	852	20	42	4	9	6	17
Tishourytours	88	39000	400	250	0	0	0	28	74	42	500	193
A Travel	2	9	11	18	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	24
Ramasside	2	110	3	38	0	0	0	11	2	101	4	36

Table 6-8:Product ad abroad statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**Product ad abroad**	5	2.0	88.0	19.8
	N of likes	5	9.0	39000.0	8966.4
	N of shares	5	3.0	400.0	95.4
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.6
2020	**Product ad abroad**	5	0	12.0	6.5
	N of likes	5	0	852.0	455.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	20.0	15.0
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	**Product ad abroad**	5	2.0	74.0	17.0
	N of likes	5	1	101.0	36.2
	N of shares	5	2	500.0	103.8
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

This type of post is an ad or commercial post promoting trips abroad. Its mean was 19.8 in 2019 i.e., before COVID pandemic and it decreased to reach 6.5 in 2020 and that is due to flight bans during this period. After that in 2021 the mean increased to 17 as companies restarted their trips abroad again.

Approximately 28.9% of posts are commercials ads abroad in 2021.

The number of likes mean in 2019 was (8966.4) higher than in 2021 (36.2) may be because after the pandemic customers preferred to travel locally and have some precautionary measures to trust travelling abroad again.

Table 6-9:Product ad local

	2019				2020				2021			
	Product ad local	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Product ad local	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Product ad local	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	3	42	4	28	4	455	35	46	7	1032	13	24
Kadmar travel	9	2014	41	28	2	0	0	42	10	74	25	17
Tishoury tours	80	30000	360	250	0	0	0	28	84	49300	470	193
A travel	3	18	9	18	0	0	0	3	5	25	8	24
Ramasside	18	136	6	38	3	0	0	11	23	176	7	36

Table 6-10:Product ad local statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Product ad local	5	3.0	80.0	22.6
	N of likes	5	18	30000.0	6442.0
	N of shares	5	4.0	360.0	84.0
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	Product ad local	5	0.0	4.0	3.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	455.0	227.5
	N of shares	5	0.0	35.0	17.5
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	Product ad local	5	5.0	84.0	25.8
	N of likes	5	25.0	49300	10121.4
	N of shares	5	7.0	470.0	104.6
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

This type of post is an ad or commercial post promoting trips locally (inside Egypt). Its mean was 22.6 in 2019 i.e., before the COVID pandemic and it decreased to reach 3 in 2020 and that is due to flight bans during this period. After that in 2021 the mean increased to 25.8 as companies restarted their trips again and constituted 43.8% of total posts.

The number of likes mean in 2019 was (6442) and increased in 2021 (10121.4) maybe because after the pandemic customers preferred to travel locally instead of travelling abroad.

And as a result, the number of shares mean in 2019 was 84 and increased in 2021 to reach 104.6.

Table 6-11:General information, advice greetings

	2019				2020				2021			
	General information, advice greetings	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	General information, advice greetings	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	General information, advice greetings	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	8	64	24	28	17	423	45	46	2	35	0	24
Kadmar travel	6	52	2	28	29	59	21	42	2	8	0	17
Tishoury tours	11	1500	43	250	22	1600	23	28	11	1.7	55	193
A travel	3	26	1	18	3	35	0	3	2	31	5	24
Ramasside	8	12	0	38	3	22	0	11	3	1	0	36

Table 6-12:General information, advice greetings statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**General information, advice greetings**	5	3.0	11.0	7.2
	N of likes	5	12.0	1500.0	330.8
	N of shares	5	0.0	43.0	14.0
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	**General information, advice greetings**	5	3.0	29.0	23.0
	N of likes	5	22.0	423.0	241.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	45.0	33.0
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2021	**General information, advice greetings**	**5**	2.0	11.0	4.0
	N of likes	**5**	1.0	35.0	15.34
	N of shares	**5**	0.0	55.0	12.0
	Total posts	**5**	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

This type of post is related to conversations and relationships building blocks of social media; the mean was 7.2 in 2019, increased to 23 in 2020, as this type of post is essential during pandemic to not cut the relation between companies and their customers. Companies also after the pandemic should stimulate their customers and engage with them through this kind of posts but unfortunately it decreased again in 2021 to 4 representing 6.8% of total posts.

In 2019, the means of likes, and shares were (330.8,14) respectively, then in 2020 were (241,33) respectively after that they decreased to reach (15.34,12) in 2021.

Table 6-13:Information with call for involvement

	2019				**2020**				**2021**			
	Information with call for involvement	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Information with call for involvement**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Information with call for involvement**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**
Family tours	12	129	6	28	3	13	1	46	12	35	0	24
Kadmar travel	3	24	8	28	7	25	12	42	1	1	12	17
Tishoury tours	32	5000	100	250	22	0	0	28	39	5800	110	193
A travel	9	31	12	18	0	0	0	3	9	42	16	24
Ramasside	10	0	0	38	5	0	0	11	8	31	1	36

Table 6-14:Information with call for involvement statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**Information with call for involvement**	5	3.0	32.0	13.2
	N of likes	5	0.0	5000.0	1036.8
	N of shares	5	0.0	100.0	25.2
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	**Information with call for involvement**	5	0.0	22.0	5.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	25.0	19.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	12.0	6.5
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	**Information with call for involvement**	5	1.0	39.0	13.8
	N of likes	5	1.0	5800.0	1181.8
	N of shares	5	0.0	110.0	27.8
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

Information with call for involvement posts stimulate conversations and relationships, the mean was 13.2 in 2019, decreased to reach 5 in 2020 and then increased again, in 2021 to e 13.8. The same happens consequently in number of likes and shares.

This type of post is very important as it motivates the customers to involve and engage but unfortunately it represents 23.4% of all posts in 2021.

Table 6-15:Contests /sweepstakes statistics

	2019				2020				2021			
	Contest/ sweepstakes	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Contest / sweepstakes**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Contest/ sweepstakes**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**
Family tours	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	46	0	0	0	24
Kadmar travel	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	42	0	0	0	17
Tishoury tours	32	207	0	250	0	0	0	28	39	308	0	193
A travel	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	24
Ramasside	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	36

Table 6-16:Contests /sweepstakes statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Contest /sweepstakes	5	0.0	32.0	6.4
	N of likes	5	0.0	207.0	41.4
	N of shares	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	Contest /sweepstakes	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	Contest /sweepstakes	5	0.0	39.0	7.8
	N of likes	5	0.0	308.0	61.6
	N of shares	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

Although one company only (Tishoury tours) shares this type of post, but it was identified from the posts categories due to its importance as a renumeration post that stimulates conversations, awareness, and relationships in such medium (social media) and to recommend this type of post to companies when setting their social media strategies.

Customers preferred this type of posts as in 2019 mean likes was 41.4 and increased to reach 61.6 in 2021.

Table 6-17:Live events live videos.

	2019				2020				2021			
	Live events, live videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Live events, live videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Live events, live videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	46	1	0	0	24
Kadmar travel	2	0	0	28	3	0	0	42	0	0	0	17
Tishoury tours	4	0	0	250	0	0	0	28	6	0	0	193
A travel	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	24
Ramasside	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	36

Table 6-18:Live events live videos statistics.

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**Live events, live videos**	**5**	0.0	4.0	1.2
	N of likes	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of shares	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	**5**	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	**Live events, live videos**	**5**	0.0	3.0	1.5
	N of likes	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of shares	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	**5**	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	**Live events, live videos**	**5**	0.0	6.0	1.4
	N of likes	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of shares	**5**	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	**5**	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

Although live events and live videos are essential for the presence, identity, and relationships of the companies, two companies only shared this type of posts (Tishoury family and Kadmar) with mean (1.2) in 2019 then increase to 1.5 in 2020 and decreased again to 1.4 in 2021.

Table 6-19:Promotions coupons offer, discounts.

	2019				2020				2021			
	Promotions coupons offer, discounts	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Promotions coupons offer, discounts**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**	**Promotions coupons offer, discounts**	**N of likes**	**N of shares**	**Total posts**
Family tours	1	42	7	28	0	0	0	46	0	0	0	24
Kadmar travel	2	0	0	28	0	0	0	42	0	0	0	17
Tishoury tours	30	42100	700	250	0	0	0	28	36	43400	888	193
A travel	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	24
Ramasside	4	10	0	38	4	0	0	11	5	21	0	36

Table 6-20:Promotions coupons offer, discounts statistics.

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**Promotions coupons offer, discounts**	5	0.0	30.0	7.4
	N of likes	5	0.0	42100.0	8430.4
	N of shares	5	0.0	700.0	141.4
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	**Promotions coupons offer, discounts**	5	0.0	4.0	0.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	**Promotions coupons offer, discounts**	5	0.0	36.0	8.2
	N of likes	5	0.0	43400.0	8684.2
	N of shares	5	0.0	888.0	177.6
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

Promotions coupons offer discounts are a renumeration type of posts that stimulates engagement and conversations.

The mean was 8.2 in 2019, no posts in 2020 and in 2021the mean raised to 8.2 consisting13.9 % of all posts, this kind of post is favorable for customers as number of likes mean increased from 8430.4 in 2019 to 8684.2 in 2021, also mean's shares was 141.4 in 2019 and increased to 177.6 in 2021.

Table 6-21:General questions to involve.

	2019				2020				2021			
	General questions to involve	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	General questions to involve	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	General questions to involve	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	0	0	0	28	6	70	2	46	0	0	0	24
Kadmar travel	3	80	6	28	0	0	0	42	0	7	3	17
Tishoury tours	0	0	0	250	0	0	0	28	1	0	0	193
A travel	1	5	3	18	0	0	0	3	6	10	7	24
Ramasside	1	0	0	38	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	36

Table 6-22:General questions to involve statistics.

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	**General questions to involve**	5	0.0	3.0	1.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	80.0	17.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	6.0	1.8
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	72.4
2020	**General questions to involve**	5	0.0	6.0	3.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	70.0	35.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	2.0	1.0
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	**General questions to involve**	5	0.0	6.0	1.4
	N of likes	5	0.0	10.0	3.4
	N of shares	5	0.0	7.0	2.0
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

General questions to involve are related to conversations and relationships building blocks. The mean was 1 in 2019 then increased to 3 in 2020 and unfortunately decreased again in 2021 to 1.4.

Only three companies (Kadmar, A travel, Ramasside) posted this type of posts in 2019; one company (Family tours) in 2020 and in 2021 two companies (Tishoury and A travel) posted general questions to involve posts.

Table 6-23:Informative videos

	2019				2020				2021			
	Informative videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Informative videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts	Informative videos	N of likes	N of shares	Total posts
Family tours	0	0	0	28	4	58	17	46	0	0	0	24
Kadmar travel	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	42	0	0	0	17
Tishoury tours	5	32	8	250	6	99	30	28	8	90	10	193
A travel	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	24
Ramasside	1	0	0	38	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	36

Table 6-24:Informative videos statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Informative videos	5	0.0	5.0	1.2
	N of likes	5	0.0	32.0	6.4
	N of shares	5	0.0	8.0	1.6
	Total posts	5	18.0	250.0	74.2
2020	Informative videos	5	0.0	6.0	2.0
	N of likes	5	0.0	58.0	29.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	17.0	8.5
	Total posts	5	3.0	46.0	26.0
2021	Informative videos	5	0.0	8.0	1.6
	N of likes	5	0.0	90.0	18.0
	N of shares	5	0.0	10.0	2.0
	Total posts	5	17.0	193.0	58.8

Interpretation

Informative videos are related to sharing information in the form of videos to stimulate conversations and relationships. In 2019 and 2020 two companies only, and in 2021 one company only (Tishoury), posted this type of posts. The mean in 2019 was 1.2 and increase in 2020: 2 but decreased again in 2021: 1.6.

Regarding likes in 2019 the mean was 6.4 and increased in 2020 to 29, then decreased again in 2021 to become 18. Shares mean in 2019 was 1.6 then increased in 2020: 8.5 and then decreased again to 2 in 2021.

6.5 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Comments.

Comments were organized into three categories:

1. Positive comments or responding to greetings.
2. Questions (general comments, about trip details).
3. Comments about contests or responding to general questions.

The following tables show a descriptive analysis of the three types of comments.

Table 6-25 :Positive comments or responding to greetings.

	Positive comments (2019) From June to September	Positive comments (2020) From March to June	Positive comments (2021) From June to September
Family tours	5	51	35
Kadmar travel	0	39	21
Tishoury tours	300	998	356
A travel	6	9	8
Ramasside	5	7	4

Table 6-26:Positive comments or responding to greetings statistics.

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Positive comments From June to September	5	0.0	300.0	63.2
2020	Positive comments From march to June	5	7.0	998.0	220.8
2021	Positive comments From June to September	5	4.0	356.0	84.8

Interpretation

Positive comments in 2020 had the highest mean (220.8) as by the time-of-flight bans companies focused on greetings posts or announcements to reassure their customers, followed by 2021 as the mean was 84.8 and finally the least mean was in 2019: 63.2.

Table 6-27:Questions (general comments, about trip details

	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics 2019 from June to September	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics from March to June 2020	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics from June to September
Family tours	200	65	95
Kadmar travel	266	30	72
Tishoury tours	12200	0	15200
A travel	22	0	52
Ramasside	44	0	95

Table 6-28:Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics from June to September	5	22.0	12200.0	2546.4
2020	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics from March to June	5	0.0	65.0	19.0
2021	Questions (general comments, about trip details) statistics from June to September	5	52.0	15200.0	3102.8

Interpretation

This type of comments had the highest mean in 2019 and 2021 respectively: 2546.4 and 3102.8. Customers asked about trip details, but it decreased in 2020: 19 due to flight bans.

Table 6-29:Comments about contests or responding to general questions.

	Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics. 2019 from June to September	Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics from March to June 2020	Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics from June to September 2021
Family tours	0	79	82
Kadmar travel	0	50	55
Tishoury tours	989	500	1090
A travel	0	0	12
Ramasside	0	0	11

Table 6-30:Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics.

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
2019	Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics. from June to September	5	0.0	989.0	197.8
2020	Comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics from March to June	5	0.0	500.0	125.8
2021	comments about contests or responding to general questions statistics from June to September	5	11.0	1090.0	250.0

Interpretation

This type of comments is found in one company only in 2019, three companies in 2020 and all five companies in 2021. This type of comments had the highest mean (250) in 2021 than in 2019: 197.8 and in 2020: 125.8. Contests or asking customers general questions stimulate engagement and relationships with customers.

6.6 Experience Egypt Facebook Page Content Analysis

Experience Egypt is the official page of the Egyptian tourism authority in Egypt.
It was created in July 2013, with 447K followers (examined in December 2021). Its objective is to promote Egypt as a touristic destination and to highlight the aesthetic characteristics of Egypt to become the main and essential destination for every tourist.

Table 6-31: Tabs analysis and their association to seven functional building blocks of social media

Tab types	Tab contents	Tabs association to seven functional building blocks of social media
About	Includes the goal behind the creation of this page, contact information: website link, email link, two Instagram accounts links, one you tube account	Identity The page presents itself as managers or specialists whom their role is to highlight the beauty of every place in Egypt
Photos	35 cover photos and 10 profile pictures Tagged photos and albums including trips with travelers in Egypt	Sharing photos of every place in Egypt (presence and sharing blocks)
Videos	Includes promotional videos about Egypt	Sharing videos about Egypt and its attractions (sharing and presence block)
Mentions	Allows people to post	Allowing conversations Also, it is associated to reputation block
Groups	Experience Egypt club: public group created in 2018 with 2.1K members, in which they can upload their pictures in Egypt. Also, there are 8 groups in other languages to target: France, Poland, Germany, Austria, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Sweden, Italy, and UK.	Conversations groups
Events	Only 3 past events in 2014, 2015 and 2016	Very few events Presence block
Music	No artists to show	
Questions	No activity to show	
Check inns.	Two check inns in July 2021 in Hurghada (Egyptian resort)	
Sports	No sports to show	
Films	No films to show	

Tab types	Tab contents	Tabs association to seven functional building blocks of social media
live	Two lives videos One video one year ago and the other 3 years ago	Few live videos (presence)
Tv programs	No tv programs to show	

From the previous tabs analysis, it is worth noting that there are some tabs showing no activities on them such as mentions, music, questions, sports, films and tv programs. On the other hand, groups tab is utilized in 9 groups targeting different countries in their own languages and allowing travelers to upload photos about their travel experiences in Egypt. The events tab shows no upcoming events and 3 past events from 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. Live tab shows two lives only one year and three years ago.

Regarding types of posts, posts were gathered manually and categorized into 14 types of posts. The following tables shows the number of each post, number of likes and shares against every type of post, through twelve months: from June to September 2019, from March to June 2020 and from June to September 2021.

Table 6-32: Type of posts and its association to seven building blocks of social media

Type of posting	From June to September 2019	From march to June 2020 (During flight ban)	From June to September2021	Association to 7 building blocks
General information, advice, greetings	4	35	3	Conversations relationships
Contests/sweepstakes			1	Conversations relationships
Live events/ live videos		7		Presence
General questions to involve		1	4	Conversations relationships
Photo of Egypt by fans or followers			1	Reputation relationships
3d virtual tour		21		Presence Conversations
Informative videos		10	2	Conversations Relationships
Videos showing attractions. (Video gif)	4	18	23	Conversations
Video from ambassadors'			23	Reputation Relationships

Type of posting	From June to September 2019	From march to June 2020 (During flight ban)	From June to September2021	Association to 7 building blocks
travelers and celebrities				
Photos showing attractions	8	43	21	Identity Conversations
Photos with call for involvement		10	13	Conversations Relationships
Offers, promotions			1	Conversations Relationships
Videos shared by travelers (credit)showing every city in Egypt			29	Reputation relationships
Updating profile picture		2	1	Identity

Interpretation

There were new types of posts that emerged in 2020 and continued to be shared in 2021, such as general questions, and these were one post in 2020 and four posts in 2021. Informative videos were ten videos in 2020 and two videos in 2021. Photos with call for involvement were ten in 2020 and thirteen in 2021. Profile picture was updated twice in 2010 and once in 2021. 3D virtual tour posts appeared only in 2020 as during flight bans this kind of post allowed the fans of the page to discover every destination in Egypt through their home as a type of entertainment or informative tour, experience Egypt shared 21 3D tour in 2020. Also, seven life events were shared during 2020.

There were type of posts that appeared only in 2021 such as 23 videos from ambassadors, travelers and celebrities talking about their visits and experiences in Egypt as well as 29 videos shared by travelers showing every city in Egypt and that is a part of branding by destination strategy adopted by Egyptian Tourism Authority. One post about offers and promotions was shared also during this period.

Regarding other posts, it is obvious that the focus and importance of social media increased from pandemic time as video gifs posts showing attractions were four posts in 2019, 18 in 2020 and increased to reach 23 posts in 2021.

Photos sharing attractions were 8 posts in 2019, 43 in 2020 and 21 in 2021.

Regarding general information, advice and greetings, this type of post was shared mostly in 2020: 35 posts than in 2019: 4 posts only and in 2021: 3 posts only.

As by the time of corona, consumers need to be reassured throw announcements, useful tips or advice and companies shared this kind of post to not lose their relations with their customers.

Table 6-33:likes and shares against every type of post.

Type of posting	Number of likes and shares from June to September 2019	Number of likes and shares from march to June 2020	Number of likes and shares from June to September 2021
General information's advice, greetings	137 likes 125 shares	1 357 likes 298 shares	173 likes 19 shares
Contests/sweepstakes			337 likes 4 shares
Live events/ live videos		1168 likes. 1 052 shares	
General questions to involve		38 likes 7 shares	19672 likes 138 shares
Photo of Egypt by fans or followers			
3d virtual tour		1207 likes. 580 shares	
Informative videos		76229 likes 1289 shares	39 likes 8 shares
Videos showing attractions. (Video gif)	33 likes 13 shares	3561 likes 491 shares shares	398 428 shares 8125 likes
Video from ambassadors' travelers and celebrities			1250 likes. 602 shares
Photos showing attractions	268 likes 37 shares	1816 likes. 379 shares	72000 likes 1425 shares
Photos with call for involvement		300 likes 26 shares	101109 likes 762 shares
Offers, promotions			18 likes 1 share
Videos shared by travelers (credit) showing every city in Egypt			26739 likes 2430 shares
Updating profile picture		302 likes 8 shares	497 likes

Interpretation

In 2019 photos showing attractions posts had the highest number of likes (268 likes) followed by general advice information and greetings with 137 likes and finally videos showing attractions with 33 likes. The highest sharing post was general advice and greetings with 125 shares.

In 2020 informative videos posts had the highest number of likes with 76229 likes and followed by video gifs posts with 3561 likes, general advice, and greetings with 1357 likes and 3D virtual tours with 1207 likes.

In 2021 photos with call for involvement posts had the highest number of likes which is 101109 likes. Followed by showing attractions posts with 72000 likes, videos shared by travelers had 26739 likes, general questions to involve posts had 19672 likes.

Analysis of Comments in Experience Egypt Facebook Page

The following table presents comments gathered from experience Egypt Facebook page and categorized into four types.

1. Positive comments or responding to greetings.
2. Negative comments about price
3. Responding to questions that require involvement or contests.
4. Suggestions or asking for more details.

Table 6-34: Type of comments in Experience Egypt page

Nature of comments	From June to September 2019	From march to June 2020	From June to September 2021
Positive comments or responding to greeting	6	4581	5071
Negative comments about price			52
Responding to questions that require to involve or contests		181	2277
Suggestions or asking for more details		71	735

Interpretation

In 2019 there were only six positive comments. In 2020, 4587 positive comments were gathered, 181 comments responding to questions that require involvement and 71 comments suggesting or asking for more details.

In 2021, there were 5071 positive comments, 52 negative comments about prices, 2277 comments responding to questions that require involvement, and735 comments about suggestions or asking for more details.

From this analysis, it is obvious that the highest number of engagements and comments were in 2021.

Chapter Seven

Discussion & Conclusions

7.1 Introduction:

This chapter reviews and triangulates the research findings in chapter four, five and six and links them to the literature review and that is to understand the role of social media in tourism promotion in Egypt and to provide recommendations to public and private sectors that can help to develop their usage of social media in the field of tourism promotion.

7.2 Supply Side Findings:

In this research, in depth interviews were conducted with owners and managers of fifteen of the largest Egyptian travel companies representing the private sector and head of international campaigns and general manager of planning in Egyptian Tourism Authority representing public sector. In addition, a content analysis of five Facebook pages of Egyptian travel companies selected from the previous qualitative according to the highest number of followers was conducted.

Concerning Egyptian travel companies, all interviewees mentioned that the most used platforms are Facebook. Although Facebook is the most used platform in the world and in Egypt, but focusing only one main platform such as Facebook can reduce the possibility of reaching new audiences. Failure to create contents into different platforms such as Instagram and TikTok means missing out on making or delivering marketing message to other customers who can choose these platforms. As said in the literature review, number of Instagram users grew incredibly (high growth rate).

On the other hand, many researchers highlighted the capabilities of Instagram as a tool of photo sharing that can be used effectively in advertising, marketing and as a promotional tool (Bronne & Dehoog, 2011) (Abott et. al, 2011) (Stepchenkiva & Khan,2013) (Fatanietal,2015).

TikTok also is one of the fastest social media platforms that has appealed to young audiences (generation Z); it can create short videos with strong algorithm that can be able to meet the changing consumer behaviour with the continuous growth of mobile technology. It is worth noting that Tik Tok started to appear in Egypt in 2020 and has a remarkable growth rate from January 2020 to January 2021. See table (3.1) in chapter 3.

Regarding the behaviour of consumer after pandemic, there is a new kind of consumer that avoid face to face meetings and prefer to contact the companies online. Due to the pandemic people stayed long time at home and do everything online. As a result, this

change in consumer behaviour make the reliance on social media more than before pandemic.

During the pandemic, some companies stop their activities on social media as they think it is useless while others continued by sharing advice, information, even greetings during occasions as they think it is very important to not lose their relationships with their customers.

Social media is about relationships, is not just for selling products as said in the literature review, when talking about the importance of psychological ownership theory people attitudes and behaviour changed when they feel connected or having strong relationship. By fulfilling the feeling of ownership, organizations can gain loyal customers who in their turn can generate user generated content by sharing images and posts when using the organizations services.

The main challenges facing them is high competition, as the market is saturated with travel companies that promote their products with distinguished offers so they must present their products by adding value to this customer who have many choices. On the other hand, they also face competition from famous sites like booking .com which present many offers and deals to the customer.

The research done by Chen C (2016) suggests that social media managers could increase the feeling of ownership by using rewards, discounts, and incentives. It is clear from the content analysis, that the least number of posts were promotions and discounts offer and one company only post contests and sweepstakes.

As said previously in the literature review, in social media a brand achieved its goal by delivering gratification or value to engage customers and build relationships with them. (Malthouse et al, 2013). One of the four main contents in user and gratification theory is renumeration that refers to the reward or incentive expected by the consumers when engaging with social media. By ignoring renumeration contents, Egyptian companies missed opportunities to deliver value and achieve their goals.

Posts like information with call for involvement and general questions to involve are very few, most posts were about product ads. This means that they do not make effort regarding increasing the psychological ownership and engagement of their customers, as Colleen P & Scott D, (2018) demonstrated that in situations oriented to specific information that can be managed by marketers the psychological ownership of consumers decreased while in situations oriented to recreation or pleasure, consumers were motivated and more engaged and their psychological ownership increased.

On the other hand, if the competition is very high, they should be present through live events and that is not achieved when examining events tab in their Facebook pages.

Regarding the reviews, travel companies in Egypt think that reviews help them to organize their trips when looking for example for best hotels but they didn't realize the importance of reviews for the reputation of their companies such as making relationships with their customers that in consequences will rate them and write reviews or sharing their experiences with the company and that is obvious in the content analysis of their Facebook pages as each company is rated according to few number of reviews.

As said in the literature review a number of studies found that travellers' reviews not only provide tourists with information but also hedonic feelings by adding inspiration and fun to the trips (Para Lopezetal, 2012) (Gretzel, you, & Purifoy, 2007) (Gretzel & you, 2018). The main obstacle facing them is the existence of fake companies, so they recommend the government to have a supervisory role.

Regarding their social media structure, six companies have social media departments, four companies outsource, and five companies think that every employee in the company should know how to deal with social media.

With the development of technology and for the need to have a competitive advantage in this high demanding environment with many alternatives, this research agrees with Bakr et al (2013) which recommend the need of trained skilful human resources that deal effectively with social media. And that is also to cut off the expenses of outsourcing and to always cope with technology.

Concerning Egyptian tourism authority, they focus on Facebook to target domestic and international tourists; they have Facebook pages in 14 languages. They have a digital department which consists of six employees but to meet international standards they make partnerships with international agencies,

Egypt as a developing country need to cut off the extra expenses. Thus, instead of outsourcing, they can train their employees to have a skilful staff that can deal effectively with social media and be adapted to innovative environment, their development should be matching with the advance of technology and tourism to be competitive.

About their strategy they adopt brand strategy, when comparing their strategies in 2019, 2020 and 2021 through the content analysis of their Facebook pages, this research agree with Abdel Monsef et al (2018) that demonstrate that ETA has not a clear online strategy in 2019 as they need to have smart objectives and to improve their social media usage but the situation changed in 2020 as during pandemic new posts emerged like

informative videos , general questions to involve and 3d virtual tours that allow tourists to explore everything about Egypt while staying safe at home .

In 2021 their brand strategy is obvious through videos from ambassadors and celebrities about everything in Egypt and videos from Egyptians talking about every governorate in Egypt, and the highest number of engagement and comments were in 2021.

7.3Perceptions of demand side findings:

Facebook is the most used platform by international tourists (77.9%) followed by Instagram (17.4%).

The same for Egyptians, as (77.5%) chose Facebook followed by Instagram (21.5%).

Before their trip both domestic and international tourists agree that pieces of advice shared on social media by other travellers helped them to choose their destination that emphasizes the importance of user generated contents.

And that agree with Amaro et al (2016) that stated that before their trip, travellers use social media to search for information to decrease uncertainty, so they use user generated contents to help them to evaluate products.

Both domestic and international tourists trust the information about destinations when it is shared by one of its visitors than by managers or marketers which also clarify the importance of user generated contents and reviews written by travellers, and that agree with other researchers (Xiang & Gretzel,2010) (Rossides and Buhalis ,2010) who stated that tourists perceive contents shared by other travellers more credible and trustworthy than information shared via traditional marketers.

During the trip domestic tourists use social media to stay connected to family and friends (the highest mean) while international tourists usually use social media to find holiday related information.

After their trip, domestic tourists always share their experiences and photos with their friends while regarding international tourists the highest mean was awarded to posting reviews and evaluations, in consequences Egyptians companies should encourage their international tourists to post reviews about their trips in Egypt through communities or groups tabs in their Facebook pages.

As said in the literature review virtual travel communities help to improve tourism organizations offerings by understanding customers point of satisfaction and their behaviour. (Buhalis D & LawR , 2008).

Although international tourists agree that they trust electronic word of mouth than traditional one, Egyptians tourists show a neutral level regarding that, and that may be due to the collectivism nature of Egyptian society which make the reliance on the opinions of family is more important.

About their recommendations for an effective tourism promotion via social media, both domestic and international tourists recommend price and offers transparency and to stop fake products,

Domestic tourists recommend relying more on the opinions of those who visited the places, more details about Egyptians museums and all places in Egypt.

They also want more offers and price reductions.

International tourists recommend more ads on social media and to be promoted with their own language, showing attractive places, and talking about culture and gastronomy.

When talking about gastronomy and its relation to tourism promotion, research done by El Emam & Kamel (2021) highlight the role that the Egyptian cuisine plays in destination promotion and recommends Egypt tourist officials and tourism companies in Egypt to make greater efforts to promote Egyptian local food.

7.4 Research findings and linked to the research objectives.

The research intended to accomplish four objectives and answer six questions.

This section reviews how these questions have been answered and how research objectives have been reached.

- **Question 1:** How do owners and managers of Egyptian travel agents promote Egypt as a travel destination?

Objective: To investigate about the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt from the supply side, private sector.

This objective was addressed through in-depth interviews and content analysis.

The study revealed that although Egyptian travel companies know the importance of social media in helping them reaching more customers in minimum time especially after corona pandemic as consumer behaviour changed and the reliance on social media increased, they rely only on Facebook to market for their activities ignoring other platforms.

These Facebook pages are addressed mainly to Egyptians as they contact foreigners through foreign tour operators and in their turn these tour operators use social media to contact their customers.

When examining their Facebook pages, they didn't utilize communities and groups tab, although they can make communities of international tourists and groups showing their experiences and trips to Egypt.

They realize the importance of reviews only when organizing their trips to look for best hotels and services as they didn't encourage their customers to write reviews as every company is rated according to very few reviews.

Their presence is very low through live events as they didn't utilize their events tabs.

Most posts ads presenting their local and abroad trips, they didn't focus on posts to improve engagement like entertainment or renumeration posts.

- **Question2:** How do managers in ETA promote Egypt through social media?

Objective: investigate about the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt from the supply side, public sector

The objective is addressed through in-depth interviews and content analysis.

ETA use traditional and digital methods to promote Egypt but the reliance on social media increased after pandemic,

They adopt brand strategy and by examining their Facebook page and comparing between 2019, 2020 and 2021, they didn't seem to have a clear online strategy in 2019 but the situation improves in 2020 and in 2021 their brand strategy is clear through videos from ambassadors and celebrities talking about their experience as well as videos by Egyptians talking about every governorate in Egypt.

The authority allows every tourist to post about his experience to Egypt through 8 groups in different languages.

They are some tabs like music, and tv programs that are not utilized but if used it will improve their social media usage.

They have six employees dedicated to online promotion, but they make partnerships with international media so if they train their employees to meet international standards it will be better as Egypt is a developing country should rationalize its expenses.

- **Question three:** What are the challenges facing travel companies when adopting social media?

Objective: To know about challenges that face the private and public sector when adopting social media.

The objective is addressed through in-depth interviews.

The main challenge facing public and private sector is high competition.

In consequences they should try to always cope with technology to meet the need of the new sophisticated customer in this digital environment saturated with many alternatives and offers.

- **Question four:** What are the recommendations and strategies to improve their usage of social media?

Objective: To propose recommendations for public and private sector to improve their use of social media in the field of tourism promotion.

Recommendations are obtained from the interviews, content analysis and questionnaires i.e., from demand and supply side perceptions and presented in the next section (7.5)

- **Question five:** How do tourists visiting Egypt refer to social media when searching for information or taking their decision and how they perceive Egyptian social platforms which are specialized in promoting tourism?

Objective: To investigate about the role of social media in promoting Egypt (from the demand side) by identifying the views of international and Egyptians travellers to the benefits of use social media in their travel and by also identifying their opinions about Egyptian social media platforms related to tourism.

The objective is addressed through questionnaire sent to international and domestic tourists.

The demand side in this research is divided into two groups international and domestic tourists.

Although Egyptian tourists agree that when searching for information, they find Egyptian websites useful, they have many recommendations that should be taken into consideration.

Before their trip, recommendations and pieces of advice shared by other travellers helped them to determine their decision.

During their trip they use social media to stay connected to their family and friends and to find holiday related information.

After their trip they show a neutral level of agreement towards sharing their experiences or writing reviews and evaluations.

Regarding international tourists, although they find Egyptians social media accounts related to tourism helpful, they also have many recommendations that should be taken into consideration.

Before their trip, recommendations and pieces of advice shared by other travellers helped them to choose their destination,

During their trip, the use social media to find holiday related information, to stay connected to their friends and family and they also post reviews and evaluations.

After their trip they always share their experiences on social media and post reviews and evaluations.

- ▪ **Question six:** What are the recommendations of tourists who have visited Egypt and Egyptian tourists for an effective tourism promotion via social media.

Objective: To investigate about the role of social media in promoting Egypt (from the demand side).

The objective is addressed through an opened ended question in the questionnaire sent to domestic and international tourists.

Both domestic and international tourists recommend stopping fake products, to have transparency and to make price lists of services and attractions.

To promote Egypt in more innovative ways such as promoting culture and local food and sharing real people experiences.

7.5Recommendations:
This study explores the role of social media in promoting tourism in an Egyptian context to know the perceptions of demand and supply side to gain knowledge about the current

situation and to propose recommendations that can improve the usage of public and private sector in the field of tourism promotion.

Concerning private sector:

Egyptian tourism companies should make efforts to encourage their customers (domestic or international) to post user generated contents and reviews about their trips to Egypt and that can be through allowing tourists to share their trips in communities and groups tabs that can lead to improve conversations and engagement as customers in digital era are the main promotors of their brands.

They should have a clear strategy when promoting their products and don't rely only on ads posts that consist of trips details, it is not about selling only, social media is about making relationships, conversations, and engagement.

Utilizing all Facebook tabs effectively, be present in live events, and post more entertainment and renumeration posts like contests, offers and discounts.

Egypt is distinguished not only by its attractions, but it is considered a destination with price competitiveness that suits all budgets, may be a differentiation strategy can be implemented to deliver value and competitive advantage to customers.

Training their employees to have a skilful staff capable to cope with technology and competition.

Don't rely only on Facebook only for marketing their products to not miss the opportunities and capabilities of other platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Regarding Egyptian Tourism Authority they have been improving after pandemic as the reliance on social media increased and setting a strategy to brand every governorate in Egypt

But they should make more efforts for example through competition, contests, making a calendar showing live events and by utilizing all Facebook tabs.

They have also to brand Egypt in more innovative way, for example food tourism has become a new kind of tourism because of the continuous shift in tourists needs adding on that the strength of competition between destinations.

Food is considered a method for marketing the culture and identity of the destination.

In consequences, it is recommended to include local dishes when promoting Egypt through social media,

The government should have a supervisory role over fake companies that exist in social media environment taking from the market share of Egyptian travel companies and ruining their reputation.

They must find or train human resources capable to deal with this competitive social media environment without the need to outsource as Egypt is a developing country that should rationalize its expenses.

Activate the role of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and antiquities through cooperation and marketing for all Egyptian and tourist cities attractions in Egypt through the pages of the Ministry of Tourism or making a platform presenting all Egyptian travel companies offers under his supervision.

Finally, this can be accomplished by active collaboration among all Egypt stakeholders to apply strategies and policies to prevent many challenges.

7.6limitations and further research directions:

The present study has some limitations, which represent an opportunity for further research.

First, this study was done during the boom of corona pandemic, and it was very difficult to contact tourists, in consequences the questionnaire was sent via poll fish which is a well-known platform, but in further research reaching tourists may be easier and a larger sample can be reached or by contacting tourists face to face through focus groups.

Second, the content analysis doesn't not allow to compare Facebook pages with other platforms as Egyptian companies rely on Facebook in their marketing activities, may be after corona pandemic, the reliance on social media will increase gradually so it is important to monitor their activities in other platforms and to make a comparison, between them.

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Appendix (1)

In Depth Interview Questions with Egyptian travel companies

1. Does your company have a social media account?

2. What are the most social media platforms you use to reach your customers?

3. Are you still communicating with traditional promotional methods such as brochures?

4. From your point of view, can social media be used as an effective tool or communication channel?

5. One of the most important roles of tourism and travel companies is to motivate people to travel, do you think the social media helped you?

6. What are the benefits the company get from using social media?

7. Do you think that travel agents or tourism companies have become aware of the role of social media?

8. What are the most challenging they face when using technology or social media?

9. For company, are electronic devices available to facilitate communications and reservations?

10. When hiring employees, are you looking for an employee that are aware about using technology?

11. Do you have a special department in your company to deal with social media?

12. Do you think reviews from customers in social media help you to know more about your customers and then to improve your services according to their desires?

13. Do you think you succeed to reach your customers through social media?

14. From your point of view, does the use of social media need an effective strategy?

15. How do you plan to develop your use of social media in the future?

16. What recommendations do you have for the public sector and for the private sector in this area?

17. From your point of view to what extent Corona pandemic affected digital promotion especially through social media?

18. Do you think social media will have an effective role in promoting Egypt after Corona Pandemic?

Appendix (2)

In Depth interview questions with Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA)

1- What are the number of social media accounts that the establishment is joining?

2- Do you use them equally or you prefer one than other?

3- Do you target domestic or international tourists through these social media accounts?

4- Do you encourage tourists to communicate through social media? and do you get benefit from their opinions?

5- Do you still use traditional way of promotion?

6- Do you think promoting Egypt using traditional way of promotion is more effective or through social media?

7- What are the benefits you gained from your usage of social media?

8- Do you think promotion through social media need a strategy?

9- What about ETA employees, are they having the ability to deal with social media in a professional way or do you think it is a challenge for them?

10-Do you think official social media accounts in Egypt match the international accounts?

11-What is the effect of Corona Pandemic on digital promotion especially social media?

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

Role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt

Hello,

You are invited to participate in this questionnaire which is considered a tool to get a better understanding of tourists' perceptions about the role of social media in promoting tourism in Egypt.

The data collected will be used in PhD research and your responses will be strictly confidential.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

The questionnaire consists of six sections.

The first section is about demographic and categorical characteristics of participants.

The second section is about the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian social media accounts. The third, fourth and fifth sections consisted of questions to explore the participants usage of social media before, during and after their trip, and finally the sixth section is about tourists' recommendations.

Section 1:

1-What is your age?

Mark only one oval.

from 15-20
From 21 to 30
from 31 -40
from 41-50
50 and over

2-Gender

Mark only one oval.

Male
 Female

3-level of education

Check all that apply.
Undergraduate
Bachelor's degree
 Postgraduate

4-What is your Nationality?

5-When was your last trip to Egypt?

6-What is your favourite social media platform in which you share your photos and travel experiences?

7-In which language do you consult social media?

8-Frequency of vacation

Mark only one oval.

Once a year

More than one in a year

Biennially

9-General Place of Vacation

Mark only one oval.

Domestic
Abroad
Domestic and Abroad

Section 2-Exploring the attitude of tourists towards Egyptian *social* media accounts.

1-I am keen to follow Egyptian social media accounts related to tourism either official or private like travel agents or Hotels in Egypt.

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

2-I usually book my trip in Egypt or organize it with an Egyptian travel company

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3-When searching for information about destinations, I find Egyptian websites useful, helpful, and reliable

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Section 3: Exploring Behaviour of travellers on social media before their trip.

1-When I chose Egypt as my travel destination, I find social media platforms helpful in determining my decision

Mark only one oval.
Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

2- I prefer to spend my vacation in a destination that I like or follow-on social networks

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

3-Recommendations and pieces of advice shared on social media by other travellers helped me to choose my destination

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

4- I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by one of its visitors through social media when deciding to choose my destination

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

5- I trust information about destination if it is written or shared by managers of official or private social media accounts like hotels or travel agents when choosing my destination
Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

6-1 trust electronic word of mouth more than the traditional one
Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

Section 4: Exploring behaviour of tourists towards social media during their trip.

1- It is important for me to use social media during my trip to stay connected to friends and family

Mark only one oval.
Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

2- I usually use social media tools during my trip to find holiday related information

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

3-When posting or using social media during my trip in Egypt, I use Egyptian network without any difficulties

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

4-I usually post reviews on social media during my trip (either positive or negative depending on my experience with the product or place)

Mark only one oval.
Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

Section 5- Exploring behaviour of tourists towards social media after their trip.

1-After my trip I always share experiences and photos with friends or other travellers
Mark only one oval.
Strongly disagree.

 Disagree

Neutral

 Agree

Strongly Agree

2-After my trip I always post reviews and evaluations

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree.

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3-After my trip, I stay connected to travel companies in Egypt through their social media accounts

Mark only one oval.
Strongly disagree.

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Section 6: This section is about tourists' recommendations.

What are your recommendations for an effective tourism promotion of Egypt through social media platforms?