TOURISTS' INFORMATION QUERIES IN ONLINE TRAVEL FORUMS:

A Comparative Analysis of Visitors to Tanzania and South Korea

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TOURISTS' INFORMATION QUERIES IN ONLINE TRAVEL FORUMS:

A Comparative Analysis of Visitors to Tanzania and South Korea

By

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A dissertation submitted in (partial) Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Business Administration (Marketing) of the University of Dar es Salaam

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the University of Dar es Salaam the dissertation titled: **Tourists' Information Queries in Online Travel Forums: a Comparative Analysis of Visitors to Tanzania and South Korea**, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration (Marketing) of the University of Dar es Salaam.

…….

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Supervisor

Date 2020.07.22

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I, **Godlisten Malisa**, declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other university for similar or any other degree award.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely mother Apael O. Macha, my beautiful wife Wema S. Lwila, and the entire family for the love, prayers, encouragement, and support.

ABSTRACT

A person visiting a destination needs information about the place to better have a well-planned trip and satisfied with the trip. This study attempts to examine tourists' information queries in online travel forums by comparing USA visitors to Tanzania and those to South Korea. The study examined and compared travel information needs (functional and hedonic), the number of replies to information needs, and the duration of membership in travel forums of USA visitors to Tanzania and South Korea. Data were collected through content analysis. For empirical examination; posts for queries on Tanzania and South Korea made by USA visitors that were posted in the TripAdvisor travel forum between 1st May 2019 and 31st July 2019 were collected (n=200) and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative content analysis was employed to capture the numerical data and thematic content analysis dealt with major themes in the query posts. The results reveal that there was no statistical significance with regards to travel information needs sought before traveling, duration of membership in the travel forum, and planning horizon. However, the USA tourists show differences concerning the number of replies, their level of the contributor, and the number of words with USA tourists coming to Tanzania having a greater number of replies and number of words as well as being at a higher level of contributor compared to those going to South Korea. USA tourists show differences concerning themes; amenities are motivated by souvenirs and need for communication services for visitors to Tanzania and South Korea. Itinerary focuses on trip plans driven by seasons of viewing wild attractions in Tanzania, and trip plans are motivated by cultural attractions in South Korea. Accessibility is driven by the need for service providers for intra-destination movements in Tanzania, and visitors to South Korea are motivated by the connection between the attractions. USA visitors to Tanzania are motivated to experience wildlife attractions and cultural attractions to South Korea. Accommodation in Tanzania is more of a remote place to stay and well-connected places to lodge near attractions for visitors to South Korea. The results suggest that DMOs managers and marketers in tourism promotion agencies have to increase visibility on travel forums to provide authentic and credible information to potential visitors. DMO managers should focus much on tourists' primary information needs – functional needs because they significantly contribute to travel plans decisions. The online information searching behavior, travel and hospitality forums, social media, and mobile applications use in Tanzania still need more analytical studies to come up with results that may aid in improving marketing strategies to grab the global tourists' market hence increase the number of visitors.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

$:	United States of America Dollar sign
4As:	Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation, and Amenities
AMT:	Asian Millennial Travellers
DMOs:	Destination Marketing Organizations
DMZ:	Demilitarized Zone
GSM:	Global System for Mobile Communications
KAL:	Korean Air
KTO:	Korea Tourism Organization
MBA:	Master of Business Administration
NBS:	National Bureau of Statistics
SD:	Standard Deviation
SIM:	Subscriber Identity Module
SK:	South Korea
Stdev:	Standard Deviation
TCL:	Travel Career Ladder model
TZ:	Tanzania
US:	United States
USA:	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Information needs are important in tourists' process of deciding on choosing a particular destination for a visit. The tourists' information needs are as well significant to business firms in the tourism industry (Leung et al. 2013). It is through understanding tourists' information needs that destination marketing organizations can strategically customize tourism products' messages to target specific tourists to influence their decisions (Pantano & Di Pietro, 2013). In the process where tourists are working so hard to obtain the right information, destination marketers can use this opportunity to influence tourists' destination choice decisions. The tourists' information search behavior as noted by Jani (2018) is made of multiple components such as 'sources of information, acquisition of information concerning travel time, the extent of information search, and information needs.

Potential visitors' search behavior varies from the type of information needs they seek about different destinations. Hwang et al. (2013) claim that information needs sought by tourists before traveling consists of several types which include; functional information needs, hedonic, innovation, aesthetic, and sign information needs. Jani (2018), Hwang et al. (2013), and Stoddard et al. (2012) described functional information needs to have a primary role of aiding tourists in the decision-making process. As functional information needs signify the primary role of information needs for tourists, it is comprised of three major elements which are; knowledge, risk reduction, and efficiency travel information needs (Jani, 2018; and Hwang et al., 2013). Often, when tourists plan for a trip as described by Luo et al. (2004) they are concerned about functional informational needs because this type has an important influence on perception and choice of destinations. On the other hand, Lee and Andereck (2016) explained hedonic information needs as having a role to help tourists to look for information purposely for fulfilling leisure, pleasure, and

enjoyment experiences including fun, social status, symbolic, and entertainment reasons.

Other types of information needs; innovation, aesthetics, and sign are there to support primary information needs during information searching (Hwang et al., 2013; and Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1994). Despite having several types of information needs, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) have identified the two dominating categories which are functional and hedonic information needs. This study adopted this school of thought and focused on functional and hedonic information needs during data collection and analysis of the tourists' information needs queries in an online travel forum.

Online travel forums play an important role in providing more information to travelers about destinations sought to be visited. It is also an avenue where destination marketers can study tourists' information needs seeking behaviors and act accordingly with the destination's right information to influence their destination choice decisions in their favor. Tourists are relying much on online sources like travel forums during information seeking. Duffy (2015) described travel forums as social media platforms where every individual has room to share or request information from other participants. These travel forums are trusted and valued by many people because they provide authentic and credible information gathered from people's opinions about destinations (Savolainen, 2011). TripAdvisor, for example, is the world's biggest online travel forum connecting millions of people every day and providing tourism-related information globally (Edwards et al., 2017). Tourists planning to visit destinations needs information about the place to better have a well-planned trip (Jani et al., 2013). During the planning process, a tourist may consult online travel forums to obtain the right information. To fulfill the information needs seeking, the tourist can rely on comments, opinions and views of other participants in travel forums like, TripAdvisor, because as noted by Edwards et al. (2017) and Savolainen (2011); contributors may be participants who have knowledge, experience or are experts of the destination characterized by a sense of trustworthy (Cakar, 2018; and Jani et al., 2013).

User-generated content in online travel forums has attracted several research studies with many focusing on understanding tourists' information needs seeking behaviors. Comments, reviews, posts, replies, participants' profiles, help votes, planning horizon, are some of the many elements used for analysis in studies on online travel forums (Stamolampros et al., 2018; Edwards et al., 2017; Duffy, 2015; Jani et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2013; and Savolainen, 2011, 2012). It is because user-generated content has proven to be authentic, credible, and most trusted by participants, therefore, be relied upon much by travel planners. Thus, due to the incremental use of user-generated content by tourists, destination marketers have an opportunity to create an active presence in online forums. Active presence includes providing the right information about their destination hence influencing tourists' decisions in their favor. Hence, the need for undertaking this research work which was focusing on examining tourists' information needs queries in an online travel forum - TripAdvisor, through a comparative analysis of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Online travel forum reviews form an important source of information for both travelers and firms in the tourism industry. The reviews aid travelers to mitigate their perceptions of risk and uncertainty before engaging in the service encounter and as such represent an important predictor of purchase decisions (Stamolampros et al., 2018). Several studies on online information searching have focused on user-generated-content on online travel forums such as reviews, recommendations, help votes, postings, comments, and replies of the queries made by potential travelers without controlling the country of origin of the inquirer. Controlling the country of origin is important because the country's culture can influence the behaviors of group members. For instance, Messner (2020) on comparing travelers from different countries noted those from individualistic cultures tended to post more and their posts being longer than their counterparts. Controlling the country of origin of the visitors has a significant value in understanding specific visitors' behaviors concerning the travel information needs sought about different destinations. Jani, et

al., (2013) suggested the need for conducting a comparative study on information needs focusing on one specific source market seeking travel information from two different destinations. In addressing this knowledge need, this study examined tourists' information queries in online travel forums by comparing visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. Main Objective

This study examines the tourists' information queries in online travel forums by comparing visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are described below as follows:

i. To compare the travel information needs (functional and hedonic) of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea.
ii. To compare the number of replies of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea.
iii. To compare the duration of membership in the travel forum of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study is significant in several ways. After the completion of the study following well-presented research data, the researcher was able to fulfill the partial academic requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA). Also, this research work adds value to academia as a base of knowledge for other researchers who would like to expand on this topic to a broader perspective. The findings of this study, moreover, are significant to DMOs especially Tanzanian ones because there is a huge need for these organizations to better understand travelers' information search behavior.

Today, the internet has changed the traditional medium of communication especially the traditional word-of-mouth to electronic-word-of-mouth which plays a significant role in travel decisions. Because online travel forums allow the participants to share,

exchange, discuss and freely connect to information relating to the topic in hand even though they may not personally know each other. Therefore, Tanzanian DMOs with the help of this study can learn important findings from TripAdvisor which is the world's number one online travel forum, and take a position to utilize this forum for the betterment of promoting tourism products in our country hence increasing the number of visitors.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This study acknowledges the impressive efforts of the previous studies on user-generated-content in online travel forums in understanding travelers' information needs during the travel planning process. Further, the study concedes with other studies by Jani (2018); Pantano and Pietro (2013) and Hwang et al. (2013), that despite their contributions in understanding the tourists' information needs – the functional and hedonic needs, the studies have helped in laying down a narrowed foundation for the current study by focusing on single-source market of tourists seeking travel information between two different destinations. Therefore, this chapter begins with defining key terms, then theoretical framework, empirical review: - information needs, replying queries in online travel forum, and experience in social media, and finalizes with a knowledge gap.

2.2. Definition of Key Terms

The main concepts used in this study are Information needs, TripAdvisor, Destination, and Marketing.

2.2.1. Information needs

Information needs can be explained as a motivation that pushes tourists to look for travel-related information (Jani, 2018). It is the knowledge gap that a customer has to lead to not be able to fulfill the present objective (Hwang et al., 2013). Also, Savolainen (2011b) explained information needs as the purposive seeking for information as a result of a need to fulfill a certain objective. In the process of seeking, the individual may rely on traditional information sources such as newspapers or libraries or with computer-based systems like the online system such as the worldwide web. This study adopted all the definitions because they suffice the intention of the researcher in describing information needs.

2.2.2. TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is the largest networking site focusing on tourism and travel, where tourists can write and share their reviews and experiences (Neuhofer & Maurer, 2018; Smith et al., 2012). The main types of contents presented in TripAdvisor are tourists' reviews of tourism products and most of the contents are created by the users (Smith et al., 2012; Miguens et al., 2008; Neuhofer & Maurer, 2018). Other travelers can rely on these personal reviews when planning a trip. This study used both explanations about TripAdvisor.

2.2.3. Destination

A destination is a geographical area comprising of all the services and infrastructure essential for the stay of a specific visitor or tourism segment (Beritelli, 2009). A destination could be an entire country (as may be perceived by marketers) or a single national park, or a historical building within a country.

2.2.4. Marketing

Marketing, according to Kottler and Amstrong (2012), is defined as "the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving the best and its designs and promotes the appropriate products and services."

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This section is built on theory and models applied to this study. This research work adopted one theory and two models; Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, Theory of Cognitive Distance, and Travel Career Ladder model.

2.3.1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory was developed by a researcher Geert Hofstede (1980) to determine various dimensions in which national cultures differ. It is a framework researcher use to study cultural differences across countries and determine various means that business is conducted across diverse cultures. It is therefore used to differentiate between various national cultures, the dimensions of

culture, and their effects on business scenery. Hofstede provided six dimensions of culture which are used to rank countries accordingly. Those cultural dimensions are; Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term versus Short-term Orientation, and Restraint versus Indulgence. These six dimensions of cultures are elaborated below where Hofstede (2011) put it in this way:

Power distance is the dimension that has to do with “the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality”. By this statement, Hofstede meant the extent to which members who are less powerful in a society accept that power is not equally distributed. The dimension can be assessed regarding societies with high power distance and those with low power distance. For the societies which exercise high power distance, like China and many African states, less powerful people in the society accept a hierarchical form of order, with existing of any form of inequality and less powerful members cannot demand justice. In the low power distance societies, a kind of democratic form of order is in place as every member including less powerful ones, struggles much to equalize power and where exists inequalities, members demand justice. Individualism/ Collectivism refers to “the integration of individuals into primary groups”. In the individualism dimension, people are likely to care for themselves and very closer members like families not including others such as relatives. While collectivism is in such a way that people can anticipate that a member of a society can take care of himself, his close family members, and other relatives even if they are not much bound together. The United States of America is described as the most individualistic nation among others in the world. On the other hand, African states practice collectivism dimension.

Uncertainty Avoidance is linked to the degree of pressure in a society in the aspect of a future that no one knows anything about it. Masculinity/ Femininity refers to the separation of sensitive roles between women and men in society. Some societies associate masculinity with features like fearless, hardworking, and tolerance, while feminism features corporation, caring, weak, modesty. Long Term/ Short Term Orientation, is a dimension that people choose to focus their efforts regarding the

future, present, and or the past. Indulgence/ Restraint, it is a dimension centered on people's satisfaction concerning enjoying life while controlling basic human needs.

Since this study focused on studying the single-source market of tourists such as USA visitors, according to Hofstede (2011), the USA is regarded as the most individualistic nation in the world. Therefore, the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions theory is important to this study because the theory helps in understanding the individualistic cultures of USA visitors and its influence on the information needs sought before traveling to Tanzania and South Korea. It provides a significant way to compare and establish similarities and differences regarding information needs inquired by USA visitors to the two destinations. To put it simply, the theory helps to understand the influence of USA cultures on information needs sought before travel between two different destinations, Tanzania and South Korea.

2.3.2. Theory of Cognitive Distance

The cognitive distance framework was long-established and used by some researchers to study tourists' behaviors on destinations choice by looking at the actual distance of the destinations and the cognitive distance constructed in the minds of the tourists. Cognitive distance has been defined by researchers, Ankomah et al. (1995, 1996); Ankomah and Crompton (1992) as "people's beliefs about distances between places in large scale-spaces that are far apart and not visible from each other." It is the mental depiction of actual distance shaped by an individual's general life experiences, social and cultural backgrounds. The cognitive distance framework suggests that when tourists appraise the effect of distance on their travel-decisions; destinations will be positioned in a comparatively better or worse situation concerning distance than the actual existence.

If cognitive distance approximations are significantly greater than the actual distance, then the perceived additional distance may be a reason in people deciding not to opt for a certain destination. Significant research results have reported that cognitive distance estimations meaningfully contrast from actual distance measures. Cognitive distance is an important factor in destination marketing because there are a cause and effect relationship between cognitive distance and destination choice. An

important aspect of this relationship is that, when a destination is in the top preference of the tourists, they tend to underestimate the actual distance to a destination.

On the other hand, tourists would prefer a particular destination because of underestimating the cognitive distance. Thus, the role of destination marketers in this regard is to influence the cognitive distance evaluations, to reduce the negative effects of such estimations partake on destination choice. This theoretical framework was adopted in the current study since two different destinations – Tanzania and South Korea, which might have almost similar actual distance, are in comparison with regards to American visitors planning trips to the two nations. The framework helps the researcher to understand and explain factors behind a similar or different number of replies to information needs in travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea, such as the influence of cognitive and actual distances.

2.3.3 The Travel Career Ladder (TCL) Model

The travel career ladder model was initially developed by Pearce (1988). The development of this model was prior influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs model. The TCL model looks at changing motivations to travel over time. In essence that, as tourists gain more experiences their motivations also change to more self-actualization. In this model, past tourism experience influences motivations to seek travel information needs. The higher the experience, the tourists will be seeking more of self-actualization sort of information. Self-actualization is not possible to be attained by young tourists with less travel experience. This model as it has multiple motives helps in the understanding of travelers' motivations to travel. The model has five needs levels through which the tourists' travel motivations do change due to the accumulated travel experience all through their lifetime (Wong & Musa, 2014). These five needs levels are mentioned as physiological, safety or security, relationship, self-esteem or development, and fulfillment.

This model helps this study in the understanding experience of tourists on social media by looking into the duration of membership on travel forums. That the duration of membership of tourists in the travel forums (shorter or longer duration),

tourists tend to have different motives of information needs seeking. Duration of membership in social media may influence tourists' number of query posts, reviews made, helpful votes, and planning horizon of a trip. For instance, tourists who have a longer duration of membership in travel forums are believed to have written many reviews, possessing higher numbers of helpful votes, and taking shorter time in planning horizon than new members and others with a shorter duration in travel forums.

2.4. Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to thoroughly go through research studies related to this topic to add weight to the current study. This section reviewed studies on tourists' information needs, the replying on social media, and the duration of membership in social media.

2.4.1. Tourists Information Needs

Internet applications for several years have transformed the way trip planners learn, communicate, and create new knowledge (Luo et al., 2004). Travel planners are very much concerned about getting the right information from reliable sources to satisfy their information needs about potential destinations. Information needs are considered a significant determinant to tourists underlying travel plans and decisions to visit a particular destination. To the DMOs, a better understanding of tourists' information needs behavior is to better design appropriate marketing strategies for selling tourism products (Hwang et al., 2013). In describing information needs, Jani (2018), argued that it a motivation that pushes the tourists to look for travel-related information. Hwang et al., (2013); Savolainen (2011b) put it as the knowledge gap that a customer has lead to not be able to satisfy the present objective, therefore, seeking for information purposely to fulfill that objective.

In the process of travel planning, as noted by Choudhary and Gangotia (2017); Gorman (2004); information needs seeking plays a significant role in tourism arrangements as the potential traveler demands for proper information. Gitelson and Crompton (1993); Hwang et al., (2002); Jani (2018) described information search behavior as including various components like sources of information used, time of

information acquisition concerning travel time, the extent of information search, and information needs. So, the question is how information needs are explained in the literature. In the tourism industry as argued by various scholars (Jani, 2018; Edwards et al., 2017) a better understanding of consumer behavior is the result of a thorough understanding of their information needs. In this case, the understanding of information needs helps to define the forces such as cultural backgrounds underlying travelers' behavior to search for information.

2.4.1.1. Categories of Tourists Information Needs

2.4.1.2. Functional Information Needs

Scholars, Jani (2018), Hirschman, and Holbrook (1982) argued that functional information needs are the basic tourists' information needs also regarded as the primary information needs which are centered on assisting tourists to make decisions regarding prior preparations for traveling. As argued by some researchers, Jani (2018), Hwang et al. (2013), Stoddard et al. (2012), functional information needs are made up of three key important sub-information needs such as knowledge, risk reduction, and efficiency information needs. Knowledge information needs are described as those that elicit and acquire just an understanding of an issue without making an instantaneous usage of the acquired information to make a decision (Jani, 2018; Hwang et al. 2013). On the other hand, risk or uncertainty reduction information needs to entail the intent to reduce anticipated and unanticipated negative consequences that the travelers may encounter (Jani, 2018). Furthermore, efficiency travel information needs are driven by the tourists' need to economize resources with less waste of other resources like time, effort, and money (Hwang et al., 2013).

2.4.1.3. Hedonic Information Needs

When tourists search for information that is purposely for fulfilling the needs for pleasure, leisure and enjoyment, researchers Stoddard et al. 2012; Jani, 2018; Hwang et al., 2013, explained this as hedonic information needs. Although functional needs play the primary role in influencing tourists' travel decision-making, hedonic information needs to go beyond the primary needs (Lee & Andereck, 2016). The argument is that hedonic information needs are described as

the perspectives which propose information search can be a ‘pleasurable leisure experience’ itself. It was also found that information search is not only used to find useful information, people also search for fun, entertainment, social status and symbolic reasons (Li et al., 2009; Miao et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2013). A hedonic stance is not intended to substitute the functional decision-making standpoint, but to capture the pleasurable aspect of information search. The hedonic perspective views consumers as pleasure seekers engaged in activities that elicit amusement, enjoyment, excitement, fun, and sensory stimulation (Lee & Andereck, 2016).

Another information need is the need for aesthetics. The nature of aesthetic experiences and objects differs from functional needs in that it is abstract and subjective. Aesthetic value can be verbal and visual, real, and imaginary. Information is viewed as a stimulus to visual thinking, imagery, and envisioning of a place that is real and obtainable. Fantasizing, the act of producing multisensory images not drawn directly from personal experience is yet another form of mental phenomena. Thus, aesthetic information need appears to describe two dimensions: stimuli for imagery and for fantasizing (Lee & Andereck, 2016; Lee et al, 2011; Vogt et al., 1994).

Moreover, the aesthetic information can have a great impact on the hedonic information search behavior. For instance, Lee and Andereck (2016) suggested that as individuals are getting engaged in multiple sensory modalities such as texts, photos, and visual information, it can stimulate multisensory mental images, and then the evoked mental imagery has a positive influence on the consumer’s hedonic experience. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2011) found that experiencing mental imagery elicited by the sensory information or photos (i.e., aesthetic information) leads to a stronger attitude toward a destination; in other words, it suggests that having run a simulation-like scenario in one’s mind is important in the process of travel decision making.

2.4.2. Replying on Online Travel Forums

Online travel forums are full of millions of reviews which increases the cognitive costs of travelers. So, travelers are cautious when wanting to evaluate the quality of online reviews to reduce all the risks related to the information searching process

(Lee et al., 2011). This is in line with the fact that prominent online travel forums contain millions of reviews from many users every day, making searching for appropriate information increasing thinking costs and viewed as an overwhelming task to the travelers. According to TripAdvisor (2017), the forum currently averages 390 million monthly unique visitors and has amassed 435 million reviews and opinions. This is an indicator that when a traveler shares a query, the number of replies to the posts may come from as many global users as possible so sorting out relevant information becomes a confusing, difficult, and tiresome task. Indeed, this is the reason that when travelers are searching for information to make travel decisions, they are prone to follow an expert suggestion (Liu & Park, 2015). Reply provided by an expert is considered to be more valuable and have higher motivation on travelers' attitudes toward the product and purchase intentions than non-expert reply (Liu & Park, 2015).

Besides, Edwards et al. (2017) postulated that members of a local community can camouflage as local experts and serve as ambassadors of a destination by replying to travelers' queries in online travel forums. Liu & Park (2015) stressed that the indication of an expert message is determined by number elements such as; evaluation of the level of competence and knowledge that a message carries with regards to specific topics of interest. Indeed, Weiss et al. (2008) added that the evaluation of repliers' expertise has to be looked upon several elements such as past behaviors including the number of posts made, number of reviews written, number of responses to others' queries, number of helpful responses and their opinions of the current query in hand. When travelers seek replies by a high level of expertise users, tend to have a higher perception of the usefulness of the information (Cheung et al. 2008). This is one of the reasons that travel forums like TripAdvisor® on the contributors' profile appear to have attributes such as level of the contributor, posts made, reviews, helpful votes, trips made, and experience on the forum (TripAdvisor, 2017).

2.4.3. Duration of membership of tourists in online travel forums

Social media such as travel forums provide opportunities for potential users to sign up for memberships on the platform to enjoy some kind of benefits or privileges. A member, according to Pedersen and Smithson (2010) is somebody who sees themselves and is recognized by others, as "belonging" to the site. Travel forums make it easier for tourists to acquire information, maintain and deepen relations, and come into contact with like-minded people that they never could have met (Wang & Davidson, 2010). The success of this aspect depends on membership and duration they stay in the travel forums to positively contribute to various issues like commentary, writing reviews, making posts, asking questions, providing answers and sharing opinions (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). On many social media platforms like travel forums, membership is free of charge. Anyone can become a member and enjoy posting reviews, photos, ask and provide answers to questions in the forums, and make own trip-planning files (TripAdvisor, 2017). When a person is done setting up a membership account, he/she can be able to put some details on the profile for other members to know a little bit about the member. The duration of membership in the travel forum is made of features like places traveled favorite destinations and the user profile which contains a lot of information.

2.4.3.1. Attributes of the duration of the membership

2.4.3.2. Level of contributor

In the travel forums such as TripAdvisor, the level of the contributor is described as starting from the lowest level 1, 2, 3 ways up to the highest level 6. The level of contributor in the forum means that the member has been contributing to the forum in different forms such as writing reviews, posting pictures, videos, providing support to other members' queries, writing travel articles, rating others, and many more (TripAdvisor, 2017). For each kind of thing a member contributes to, it carries some kind of weight measured in points. Each task or a thing to do differs from another in terms of what points a member can earn when he/she does it. For example, in TripAdvisor, when a member contributes by writing a review or by creating a travel article and gets published – he earns 100 points per each item. To get to a level 1 as a contributor, a member must have reached a total of 300 points. In level 2 –

total of 500 points, level 3 – 1,000 points, level 4 – 2,500 points, level 5 – 5,000 points, and level 6 – 10,000 points. In recognition of the contributor's helpfulness or usefulness, the forum provides badges as a means to acknowledge members' knowledge and expertise. To reach the highest level means that the duration of membership in the forums is longer and travel experience is high as well. Although the level of contributor seems a big thing, it does not contain any monetary value. The levels are purposely for appreciating efforts of the members in keeping alive the forums.

2.4.3.3. Planning horizon

Planning horizon according to Gitelson and Crompton (1993); Jani and Nguni (2016) involves the time used to organize a trip to a destination of choice. The planning horizon may be linked to some factors that lead to either short or long trip planning. The study by Gitelson and Crompton (1993), found that the planning horizon was linked to three travel orientations. For instance, for those who were keen to have 'a well-planned trip' they were more probable to start their travel planning much earlier in advance. For those travelers who were concerned about seeking excitement and activities to do, they planned well in advance. The planning horizon may also be influenced by the nature of the destination to be visited. For tourists excited about visiting new destinations the planning horizon is likely to take longer planning because new destinations require more information than previously visited ones.

2.5. Empirical Studies

The section reviews studies and their findings related to this topic and critically establish the existing relationship among the researchers. Thus, the section ends with a knowledge gap.

2.5.1. World related studies

Online information searching based on popular travel forums like TripAdvisor which rely on user-generated content such as posts, reviews, comments, and helpful votes, attract research attention as the internet has paved an advanced and cost-effective way of communication. It is through this advanced media that potential travelers create, post, consume, exchange, access, and disseminate tourism and travel-related

information globally. User-generated content in online forums has attracted many scholars. A study by Cakar (2018) on ‘experiences of visitors to Gallipoli, a nostalgia-themed dark tourism destination’ focused on examining and understanding the experiences of visitors to Gallipoli, through content analysis of their online comments, reviews, and posts made on TripAdvisor. Another study by Oriade and Robinson (2019) on ‘prosuming tourist information: asking questions on TripAdvisor’ used a qualitative method for data collection relying on query postings and answers/replies on TripAdvisor travel forum made by 10 U.K. destinations. This study concluded that the social media/ travel forums are very important in the travel and tourism industry as interactions among the users pave a new way of experiences. The previous study’s suggestion collides with that of Xiang and Gretzel (2010), adding that TripAdvisor is viewed as an important social media platform that offers wide-ranging travel information. This has also pushed scholars to study tourists’ behaviors like the intention to use the forums. Muñoz-Leiva et al. (2012) in the study ‘generalizing user behavior in online travel sites through the Travel 2.0 website acceptance model’ chose TripAdvisor as one among their case studies.

Other studies have tried to explore deeper in understanding the cultural influence of inquirer on the reviews made. For example, Litvin (2019), his study was on ‘Hofstede, cultural differences, and TripAdvisor hotel reviews’. The study used TripAdvisor hotel reviews, ratings, and comments from different nations to establish their link with the national culture. Messner (2020), in his study on ‘cultural and individual differences in online reviews’ which also looked into postings of reviews in online forums, aimed at exploring the link between national culture and posting of reviews. The sample was drawn from online reviews from 26 countries of airline passengers and hotel guests from 46 countries. The study concluded that tourists from individualistic cultures are more probable to post reviews, and their reviews are longer. This goes hand in hand when a traveler is highly involved in the services or products he has purchased.

Hwang et al. (2013) in their study on ‘analyzing international tourists' functional information needs’ concluded by blowing a call for DMOs to proceed to assess

tourists' information needs so that they can provide customized travel information suitable for the potential travelers' needs. Luo et al., (2004) in their study about 'information search behavior and tourist characteristics' accolade that DMOs can take advantage of the internet – online travel sites to deliver appropriate messages to potential tourists through a clear understanding of their information needs search behavior. Litvin (2019) complements by pressing on the need for DMOs to conduct their studies by examining tourists' travel information needs queries directed to their destination.

2.5.2. Tanzania Related Studies

In the study by Jani and Hwang (2011) on 'user-generated destination image through weblogs' used content analysis to analyze posts extracted from the travel forum Lonely Planet. Another study by Jani et al. (2013) on 'query titles in travel forums: nature and impacts on responses', the scholars used user-generated contents such as inquiry titles in online travel forum, and content analysis was employed to examine thread titles for posts on South Korea and Japan. Studies on tourist's information need behavior in Tanzania context are very limited despite their importance to the destination marketing organizations. Wilson (2014) in the study on 'impact of travel information search behavior on the image of Tanzania as a tourist destination' concluded that information search behaviors have a substantial effect on the destination image.

2.6. Knowledge Gap

So far, the question of tourists' information needs has attracted several academic studies. Some researchers have conducted comparative analysis studies especially for destinations within the same region, possessing almost similar characteristics (Hwang et al., 2013) by relying on user-generated content in online forums. Others have focused on analyzing tourists' information needs in multiple countries in online travel forums through reviews, postings, comments, user profiles, and many more. Despite the increased interest in the topic, little empirical studies in the tourism industry have focused on capturing single-source market information needs thought before traveling to two different destinations. A study of this kind is important as the national culture of the inquirer may influence the information needs. As noted by

Messner (2020) that those from individualistic nations tend to write longer reviews. Studies of this kind are significant in aiding DMOs to have a better understanding of the tourists' information needs behaviors as influenced by their culture to formulate the right information to influence tourists' decisions in their favor. Hence a need for a comparative study on different destinations using the same source market. Therefore, this study by using content analysis, examined tourists' information needs queries in an online travel forum - TripAdvisor through a comparative analysis of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The problem that this study sought to address was tourists' information needs queries in online travel forums through a comparative analysis of Tanzania and South Korea. Understanding tourists' information searching behavior in online travel forums and related platforms is significant to DMOs that marketing strategies to influence more visitors. This chapter presents in detail the methods used in this study. The methods that follow, together with their techniques and procedures, were applied in examining tourists' information needs queries in an online travel forum between Tanzania and South Korea.

3.2. Research Approach

This study was conducted through mixed methods (pragmatic approach) where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used.

3.3. Research Design

According to Creswell (2003), a research design is the process of research, from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative. The main purpose of the research design as explained by Blaikie (2000) is to make the research design decision overt to ensure that the decisions are firm with each other. Furthermore, Blaikie (ibid) elaborate that, the research design must be able to allow for precarious evaluation of the individual design elements and the inclusive research design before significant work embarks. Thus, to successfully undertake this study, the content analysis was used. The basic reason was that; this study relied on the user-generated content in an online travel forum. To examine tourists' information needs queries in an online travel forum, content analysis was applied to analyze queries posted on TripAdvisor by potential tourists who were planning to visit Tanzania and South Korea. Content analysis is considered a system used to analyze text by counting a specific theme or examining the significance demonstrated by images (Simeon et al., 2017). Also, content analysis is an adaptable tool for analyzing text-based data (Cavanagh, 1997). This method allows examining comments through the analysis of recorded or written

documents and the collection of words into categories (Simeon et al., 2017). In this study, content analysis was used as it captures information in its natural settings and to minimize biases of self-reporting (Jani et al., 2013).

3.4. Area of Study

The study was conducted based on online reviews posted by potential tourists from the United States of America focusing on the threads regarding Tanzania and South Korea as target destination countries. The United States of America was chosen under this study due to its importance in the Tanzania tourism market. According to NBS (2018), International Visitors' Exit Survey Report of 2017 and The Citizen (2018) newspaper, online edition, of July 16, 2018, the USA is Tanzania's top source market for tourists. Among the top 15 source markets for tourists for the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America accounted for 13.2 percent leading on the top (NBS, 2018). On the other hand, South Korea was chosen for comparison purposes because is a booming destination for international tourists, as data show that in 2017 the country received 13,335,758 international tourists (Export.gov, 2018).

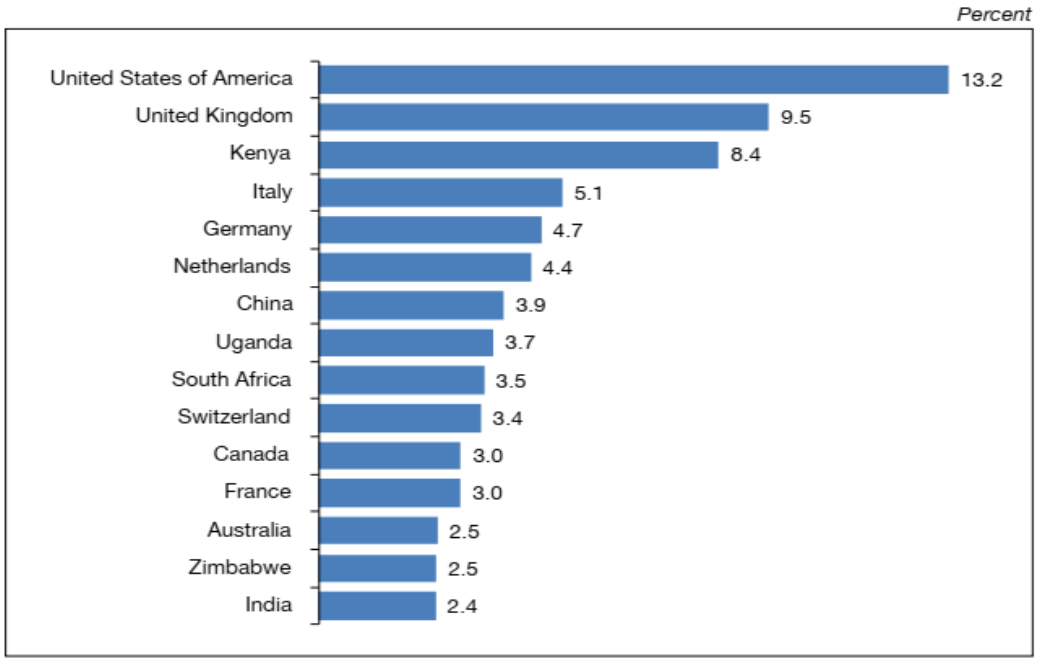


Figure 3.1. Top 15 tourists source markets for the United Republic of Tanzania. (Source: An extract from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) International Visitors' Exit Survey Report 2017 published in 2018).

3.5. The population of the Study

The population of this study involved American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea who posted their queries about these destinations on TripAdvisor travel forum.

3.6. Sampling Methods

The study selected the United States of America visitors to Tanzania and South Korea because they contribute much to the tourism sectors of these two destinations. The two countries, Tanzania and South Korea were selected for this study because they are both globally recognized tourists' destinations. Tanzania is very famous for its nature tourists' attractions while South Korea offers cultural tourists' attractions. However, South Korea is doing best in the tourism industry, Tanzania has a lesson to learn.

3.7. Sample Size

This study involved 100 query posts/titles of American visitors to Tanzania, and 100 query titles/posts of American visitors to South Korea forum obtained from the latest date of 31st July 2019 moving backward to 1st May 2019, making a total of 200 query posts. The researcher selected posts which only related to travel for pleasure and leisure, for posts made by non-pleasure tourists for instance traveling for business meetings, postings on job searching, education, and health purposes were ignored.

3.8. Variables and their description

The variables used in this study during data collection, analysis, and presentation were:

3.8.1. Travel Information Needs

The variable comprised of two major categories adopted by the researcher in this study. The categories are Functional Information Needs and Hedonic Information Needs. For the functional information needs, three sub-information needs which were studied are; functional needs for knowledge, functional needs for risk reduction, and functional needs for efficiency.

3.8.2. Duration of membership in travel forum

The variable was centered on visitors' profiles in the travel forums by looking at the number of months/years a visitor has been a member of the travel forum. The duration of membership did count even for a visitor who had like a month since registered as a member in the travel forum. The visitors' profiles were also studied by looking at other variables such as;

3.8.2.1. Level of contributor

In the travel forums, contributors/ visitors had levels indicated on their profiles particularly for those with some significant experience in the social media/travel forum. The level of a contributor is starting at a lower level 1 to the highest level 6. What these levels mean is that for a visitor who has contributed less in the travel forum such as posting pictures, writing a review, travel article, posting a video; earn fewer points. Each contribution made by a visitor is quantified in terms of points that carry different weights. For instance, writing a review earns a visitor 100 points. To achieve a level 1 of a contributor; a visitor should have earned a total of 300 points. For level 2 – 500 points, level 3 – 1000 points, level 4 – 2,500 points, level 5 – 5,000 points, and level 6 – 10,000 points.

3.8.2.2. Planning horizon

This variable captured time allocated by tourists to plan or arrange their trips to the potential destinations. In the travel forum, the planning horizon was captured in terms of weeks as the smallest unit of measurement because some visitors did plan their trips within a week.

3.8.2.3. Number of reviews and helpful votes

These variables looked into the reviews made by a potential tourist, and how helpful the contributor has been to other participants in the travel forum which was measured by votes made by other participants benefited from this contributor. It was important to include this variable as the duration of membership in travel forum matters in the number of reviews made and helpful votes gained.

3.8.2.4. Number of posts and words count

The variables captured the total number of posts the visitor has made since the first day he/she become a member of the travel forum. For word count, the variable was linked to the current query post made on the two destinations, where the number of words and lines were counted and recorded.

3.9. Methods of Data Collection

This study employed a content review method for collecting the required data. Data were collected from online posts made by USA visitors to Tanzania and South Korea tourists' destinations. The posts were collected through the online travel forum website TripAdvisor that can be reached through their link https://www.tripadvisor.com (Simeon et al., 2017). The data were collected from the posts that only based on information needs inquired with regards to the travel planning process. The TripAdvisor source for data was selected because previous evidence shows that it is the world's largest travel forum frequently used by international tourists planning for trips in different destinations around the world (Duffy, 2015). Also, Oriade and Robinson (2018) also pointed out that TripAdvisor is the most popular travel forum in the world today, and collecting data from this popular travel platform helps coming up with findings that would have practical importance.

The process of data collection began by the researcher using a laptop enhanced with internet access to open Google search engine and type TripAdvisor, where the official website of the forum appeared on the top list of Google search. The research proceeded by clicking the link to open the website. In the TripAdvisor forum home, a list of various links was seen on the upper tab with links of services like; hotels, things to do, restaurants, flights, vacation rentals, cruises, and more. The researcher opened the 'more' link, resulting in the birth of 7 more options to visit, where the link for 'travel forum' was listed the second from the top. Then, the researcher opened the 'travel forum' link where he chose to open 'Africa Forums' and later 'Asia Forums' respectively. In the 'Africa Forums', the researcher selected **'**Tanzania**'** which at the time data was extracted had a total number of 27,748 topics

with 220,101 posts. This forum was displayed and titled ‘Tanzania Travel Forum’. This process was similarly done to the South Korea travel forum, where at the time the data were extracted the forum had 25,789 topics and 198,520 posts. Thereafter, the researcher looked at a long list of various topics from different participants in the travel forum. The researcher picked recent inquiries from USA potential tourists to Tanzania and then turned to the South Korea forum. The researcher began by sampling ten (10) query posts from each destination posted between July 31, 2019, and May 1, 2019. The 10 sampled posts were purposely for trial as this task was also done by the second independent researcher. The researcher then consulted the second independent researcher to check for consistency and reaching a concise consensus between the two. This process was repeated four times until the researcher obtained a total sample of 200 query posts. The researcher ensured that queries that did not match to leisure, like traveling for business, work, education, and health purposes were ignored.

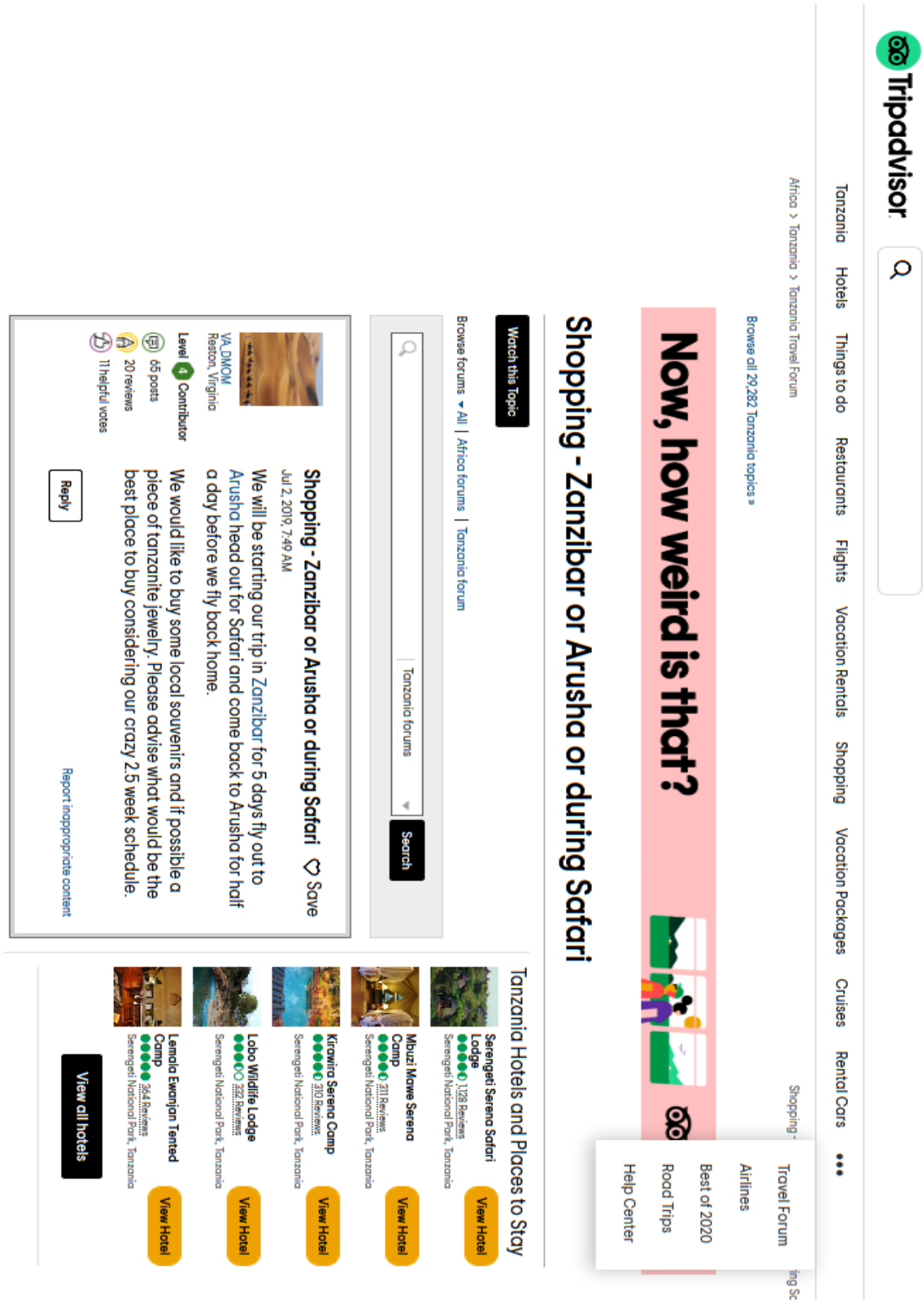


Figure 3. 2. A screenshot of a query post by a USA tourist to Tanzania forum on TripAdvisor. Source: Data collection extracted from TripAdvisor (May-July 2019).

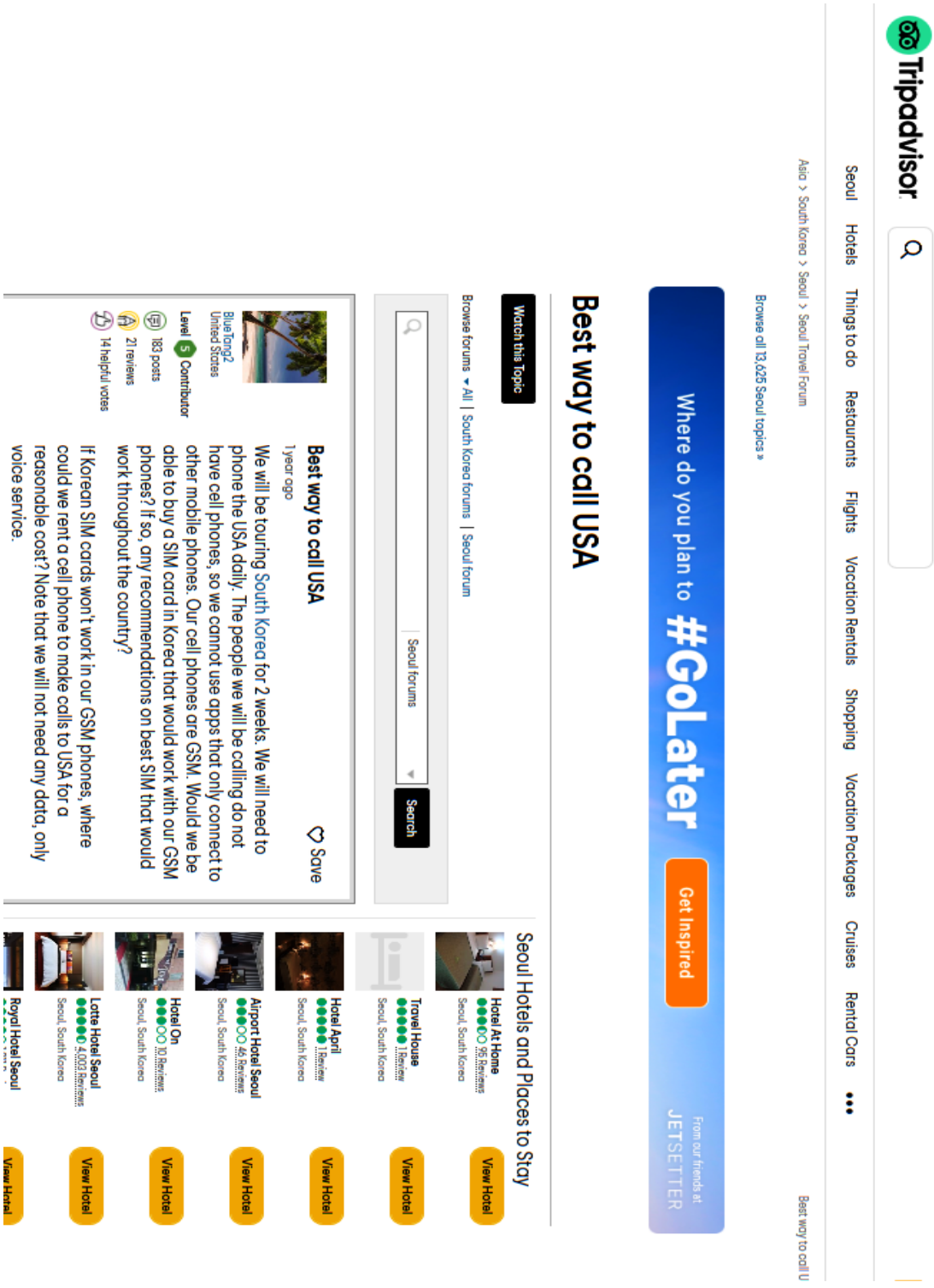


Figure 3. 3. A screenshot of a query post by a USA tourist to the South Korea forum on TripAdvisor. Source: Data collection extracted from TripAdvisor (May-July 2019).

During this process, the researcher downloaded all the relevant inquiries and saved them in a separate file in Microsoft word document, later for analysis. Furthermore, the researcher coded the data by identifying the themes related to information needs in question specifically those related to functional needs for knowledge, risk reduction, efficiency needs, hedonic needs, and the number of replies to the respective inquiry. Other attributes such as level of the contributor, number of reviews, and number of posts, word count, planning horizon number of helpful votes which all contributed to the duration of membership in travel forum were coded and analyzed. The researcher created tables for scrutinizing the data until reached its fullness and establish categories for description of the data appropriately. To ensure the reliability of the data, two independent human coders were involved in the data analysis process (Cakar, 2018).

3.10. Methods of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis. Cavanagh (1997) explained content analysis as an adaptable tool for analyzing text-based data. It is a method that may be used with either qualitative or quantitative data and in an inductive or deductive way (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Each query title and replies, as a unit of analysis, were read three times, details are jolted down, and then coded. The codes were then entered into the SPSS program ready for automatic report generation.

The process of analyzing data was conducted using quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic content analysis. The quantitative content analysis captured all the three objectives in parts that dealt with numbers. Qualitative thematic content analysis dealt with major themes in the visitors' posts. Themes that emerged and the words which were mostly used by potential tourists were checked by the two coders, to establish a meaningful agreement. The two coders were also involved in verifying the extracted most used themes and keywords by the researcher. The coded data were subjected to a set of statistical analyses such as the Chi-Square test to establish the relationship between Tanzania and South Korea concerning the number of information needs queries made by the USA potential tourists in the online travel forum – TripAdvisor.

3.11. Methods of Data Presentation and Assessment

The data presentation for content analysis was made through descriptions. All the themes were presented thoroughly through descriptions and some tables were used to capture answers to the three research questions with regards to the objectives laid earlier. Some tables were also included purposely to display the statistical analysis.

3.12. Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained research permits from the University of Dar es Salaam, which allowed him to go for data collection. The researcher was not required to obtain any consent from the USA potential tourists' participants on TripAdvisor since the forum is an open source for public consumption. Of course, this aspect does not provide the researcher with a moral authority to misuse with the sources of data anyhow. Names and any related details about the tourists were treated with high care of confidentiality. The researcher did not by any reason suppress, falsify, or invent any information and this research work was taken through ant-plagiarism university mechanism and the report is attached.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The exercise of content analysis was managed in the field through a variety of methodologies mentioned in the previous chapter. This chapter, divided into two parts, progresses with the presentations, analysis of the data as obtained through quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic content analysis, and ends up with a discussion of the findings.

4.2. Data Profile

The study's data were gathered from the world's biggest online travel forum, TripAdvisor. The data were downloaded from the online travel forum covering a timeline of between 1st May 2019 and 31st July 2019. Data were gathered from query posts made by the United States America potential visitors to Tanzania and South Korea destinations respectively.

4.3. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.3.1. Comparing the travel information needs (functional and hedonic) of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

The study aims to find out the relationship between travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination the tourist is going. To achieve this objective, cross-tabulation was done. Travel information needs composing of functional needs (knowledge, risk reduction, and efficiency) and hedonic needs crossed with the destination (Tanzania and South Korea). The findings indicate that there is no significant difference between travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination the tourist is going. The results indicate that query titles that focused on functional needs for knowledge between Tanzania and South Korea counted 50 and 55. Functional needs for risk reduction between the two destinations counted 7 and 6. Also, functional information needs for efficiency counted 25 and 27. Hedonic information needs type counted 18 and 12 respectively.

The results prompted the researcher to further attempt a statistical test to find out any statistically significant relationship between travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination the tourist is going.

For the researcher to achieve the statistical test, the use of Chi-Square tests of independence was necessary. This is because; Chi-Square tests of independence are used to determine any significant relationship between two nominal (categorical) variables. In the case of this study, the two nominal variables were travel information needs (functional knowledge, efficiency, risk, and hedonic needs), and the destination the tourists is going (Tanzania and South Korea). The finding from Pearson Chi-Square tests shows that the value is 1.592 and the significant difference is 0.661 which indicates that the researcher should reject the study's null hypothesis. It is because the chance of committing a type 1 error is greater than 5%. This means that there is no relationship between the destination the tourist is going and the type of information needs sought before traveling.

4.3.2. Comparing the number of replies of American tourists to Tanzania and South Korea.

This objective aimed at examining the comparison of the number of replies of American tourists to Tanzania and South Korea. The finding indicates that, mean for the number of replies of American tourists to travel information needs of Tanzania destination is (mean=5.99) while for that of South Korea destination is (mean=4.22). According to the finding, the mean number of replies of American tourists to travel information needs of Tanzania destination is higher as compared to the mean number of replies to South Korea.

The researcher further wanted to conduct a statistical test to compare the means of the two independent groups which are the number of replies, and destinations. This test aimed to determine if there was statistical evidence that the associated population means were significantly different. For the researcher to achieve this task, independent sample t-tests for equality of means was employed. The results from the independent t-test for equality of means indicates that (t=2.675, Significance= 0.008) where the level of confidence was 95%. This finding means that the mean number of

replies for Tanzania is significantly higher as compared to the mean number of replies for South Korea because the chance of committing type1 error is less than 5%.

4.3.3. Comparing the duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

This is the third objective which aimed at examining the duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea. The finding indicates that, mean for the duration of membership of American visitors to Tanzania destination is (mean=100.57, SD=47.647) while that of South Korea destination is (mean=90.32, SD=50.055). According to this finding, the mean duration of membership in the travel forum of visitors coming to Tanzania's destination is higher compared to its counterpart South Korea's destination.

Under this objective, the researcher also conducted a statistical test to compare the means of the two independent groups which were duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors, and destinations. This test aimed to determine if there was statistical evidence that the associated population means were significantly different. For the researcher to achieve this task, independent sample t-tests for equality of means was employed. The results from the independent t-test for equality of means in table 1 indicate that (t = 1.483, significance = 0.140) where the level of confidence was 95%. This finding means that the mean duration of membership in the travel forum of visitors to Tanzania is not significantly higher as compared to the mean of experience of visitors to South Korea's destination. It is because the chance of committing a type 1 error is greater than a 5% level of significance. However, the American tourists show differences concerning their level of contributor where the mean for the level of the contributor of USAn tourists coming to Tanzania was (mean= 4.57, SD=1.367) and (mean= 4.10, SD= 1.635) for South Korea. Results from the independent t-test for equality of means in table 1 indicate that (t=1.948, significance = 0.025) where the level of confidence was 95%.

USA visitors to Tanzania were having a greater number of words as well as being at a higher level of contributor compared to those going to Korea. The mean for the

number of words of American visitors to Tanzania was (mean= 108.39, SD= 78.258) as compared to (mean= 87.95, SD= 62.157) for South Korea. Independent t-test for equality of means indicates that (t=2.045, significance = 0.193) where the level of confidence was 95%. The mean for the planning horizon of USA visitors to Tanzania took a long time with (mean = 16.15, SD=25.339) than of USA visitors to South Korea with (mean = 12.64, SD=16.907). From the independent sample t-test for equality of means, it indicates that the planning horizon (t= 0.770, significance = 0.267) where the level of confidence was 95%.

Table 4. 1 Tourist's Information Needs

Variable		**Frequency**		**Stdev.**	**X2 [t-value]**
		Destination			
		TZ	**SK**		
Tourists information needs categories	Functional Knowledge	50	55		1.592
	Functional Risk	7	6		
	Functional Efficiency	25	27		
	Hedonic	18	12		
Number of Replies	Tanzania	5.99		5.508	[2.675***]
	South Korea	4.22		3.667	
Level of Contributor	Tanzania	4.57		1.367	[1.948*]
	South Korea	4.10		1.635	
Duration of membership	Tanzania	100.57		47.647	[1.483]
	South Korea	90.32		50.055	
Planning horizon	Tanzania	16.15		25.339	[.770]
	South Korea	12.64		16.907	
Number of Words	Tanzania	108.39		78.258	[2.045*]
	South Korea	87.95		62.157	

Source: Quantitative data analysis of query posts (2019)

Table 1 shows the descriptive and inferential tests for the study main variables. The results show American tourists coming to Tanzania and those going to Korea to lack statistical significance to information needs, duration of membership in TripAdvisor, and their planning horizon. However, the USA tourists show differences in the number of replies, their level of the contributor, and the number of words with USA tourists coming to Tanzania having a greater number of replies and number of words as well as being at a higher level of contributor compared to those going to Korea.

4.3.4. Description of the five tourism components as analyzed through qualitative thematic content analysis

The researcher further explored the tourists' travel information needs about the 4As of tourism infrastructure and compared them between the two destinations. The 4As of tourism infrastructure are; attraction, accommodation, amenities, and accessibility. To capture more information, another tourism component 'itinerary' which seemed important to this study was added to the list. This is making a total of five (5) tourism components for analysis. The five (5) tourism components were analyzed through qualitative thematic content analysis. The findings of the qualitative thematic content analysis are described below, and the components are arranged in order of which received a greater number of queries to the least ones.

4.3.4.1. Amenities

The findings of this study show that the 'amenities' theme dominated the tourists' queries for both Tanzania and South Korea. Although this theme prevails over others in the two destinations, tourists who planned for a trip to Tanzania, souvenirs took a significant part in their shopping activities. In one query by a visitor to Tanzania forum, the inquirer wrote:

> *"We will be starting our trip in Zanzibar for 5 days fly out to Arusha head out for Safari and come back to Arusha for half a day before we fly back home. We would like to buy some local souvenirs and if possible, a piece of Tanzanite jewellery. Please advise what would be the best place to buy considering our crazy 2.5-week schedule."*

For the tourists to make the shopping experience more efficient in the destination country, they seemed concerned about having a large sum of money with them so as they would not run out of cash while on safari. An example of such a query that shows a sense of being cautious with the amount of money is described by this inquirer's post:

> *"I would probably edge this up to $50 per person to be safe. It sounds like I wouldn't want to run out- there's nowhere to get more, right? And I'm thinking we'll do a lot of laundry and drink a fair amount of wine, beer, sodas, etc. Of course, we'll want to tip appropriately, as well. So, this is a lot of cash to walk around with. $200 per day for the four of us, 9 days, that's $1800 in cash. We also need our visas and*

> *our airport departure taxes, which sounds like another $600 total. Is everyone really walking around with this much cash? I know we can keep it with us and generally practice safety precautions, but yikes that's a lot."*

While souvenirs took a larger part of amenities for visitors planned for a trip to Tanzania, on the contrary, those planned to visit South Korea seemed to put their focus on communication services. The visitors were interested to find out easy means of communicating and linking up with their families back in the home country to stay in touch while far away. One poster wrote:

> *"We will be touring South Korea for 2 weeks. We will need to phone the USA daily. The people we will be calling do not have cell phones, so we cannot use apps that only connect to other mobile phones. Our cell phones are GSM. Would we be able to buy a SIM card in Korea that would work with our GSM phones? If so, any recommendations on best SIM that would work throughout the country? If Korean SIM cards won't work in our GSM phones, where could we rent a cell phone to make calls to USA for a reasonable cost? Note that we will not need any data, only voice service. Thanks in advance for your help."*

4.3.4.2. Itinerary

Itinerary emerged the second important theme in terms of the number of visitors whose posts were directed towards it. In the two destinations itinerary comes next to amenities theme in terms of inquiries. Travelers whose plan was to visit Tanzania destination seem to plan their trip basing on the season and a motive to viewing the wildlife attraction. The length of stay in the wildlife attraction parks appeared an important subject matter to the visitors. During the planning process, when travelers find out that they have an extra free or idle day, they try as much as possible to fill it up with additional safari to another wildlife attraction. In one of the postings a visitor wrote:

> *"This will be our first Safari in Tanzania and we did South Africa last year. We pretty much have everything finalized but needed help deciding itinerary. We decided to go early March because of the calving season and we know the best area is NDUTU. Need to decide whether to stay for 3 nights in Ndutu OR should we add an extra night in Central Serengeti which would split our trip to 2 nights in each area. Will 2 days be enough in Ndutu or should we just do all 3 days*

> *there? Don't know if staying in Central Seregeti 1 more night is a good trade off. We also have an option to stay 2 nights in the Ngorongoro crater but if we stay 2 nights there it will shorten our stay in Central Serengeti to only 1 day while still keeping 3 days at Ndutu. Thanks for your feedback!"*

On the contrary, this study reveals that itinerary for travelers planning for a trip to South Korea seemed to be driven by a motive to visit cultural attractions. Since visiting cultural attractions is not just a single activity, itinerary plans include a space for accommodating additional activities that add value to a pleasurable stay. Travelers take into account well-connected places close to their lodging when deciding about additional activities. Though connectedness between cultural attractions and where tourists lodge seemed important, travelers also were cautious about finding an economical place to stay by taking into consideration important aspects such as clean and safe accommodations. A visitor in this forum wrote a post reading:

> *"I'm planning a trip to South Korea for early June with my wife and two teenagers, for about ten days. In addition to Seoul and the DMZ, we are interested in scenic natural beauty, natural landmarks, hiking, outdoors, good food, and getting away from crowds. We are not interested in luxury hotels— anything clean and safe is fine. We'd like to relax for a few days on the beach— any recommendations for a secluded beach resort? (I know Korea is not famous for beaches.) Big plus if it is possible to rent a small sailboat, kayaks, or surfboards nearby, if there is interesting seafood near the beach, or beautiful hiking nearby. Any other ideas for scenic beauty— are there any temples in the mountains that would make for an interesting visit? Other ideas? Thanks in advance for any help!"*

4.3.4.3. Accessibility

The theme, accessibility emerged as the third among the five as of visitors' queries regarding the two destinations. Visitors planning for a trip to Tanzania seemed to look for service providers to make their intra-destination movements more efficient. The intra-destination movement in Tanzania is more likely to be procured as a bundle over the holiday. Thus, visitors seem also to have in mind the economical

budget to be put in place when procuring an intra-destination bundle. This theme is elaborated by an example of one visitor post reading:

> *"Hi, can anyone recommend a good company where we can arrange a vehicle (Suzuki Grand Vitara or similar) with a driver for a week in December. We are staying in Kiwengwa and would basically like to have a vehicle at our disposal during the day for sightseeing, shopping, excursions, etc. Ideally, we would like to have the vehicle and driver meet us at the airport and then drop us off there when we are ready to leave. I have e-mailed several companies that advertise that they have drivers available, but none of them have responded to my inquiries, Thanks."*

On the contrary, things were a bit different for visitors to South Korea. The intra-destination movements were more of a connection between the attractions. Visitors were interested in easy ways (means of transport) to link between the attractions. A visitor to this forum wrote:

> *"What is the best way to get from the Gwangalli beach area to Gyeongju? I see mention of a train from Haeundae Beach but I can't figure out where the station is? I am comfortable taking the local bus or subway to a train or bus terminal. We do have some luggage but not a lot."*

4.3.4.4. Attractions

The findings of this study indicate that attractions theme appeared the fourth in terms of the number of visitors' queries between the two destinations. In Tanzania, the main attraction seemed to be wildlife. For tourists planning for a trip to this destination, the primary motive is to experience wildlife. The duration as to when should they trip to Tanzania seemed to matter a lot so that they achieve the best experience of the wildlife attractions. Following the season for traveling, tourists are willing to pay for a safari which will result in a suitable opportunity of seeing the wildlife. Since visiting season matters to tourists, wildlife attractions in Tanzania appear to be needing enough time for traveling from one to another attraction. It is not an all-in-one-day visit. Travelers are interested in a convenient time to view the wildlife on their own rather than jumping into group tours. They are valuing every single minute of their time, so any aspect that may result in unpleasant wildlife

viewing experience is well thought of. So, tourists' main information-seeking motive about attractions is the means of accessing attractions. Some means of accessing the wildlife attractions offer better viewing experience though seem not cost-effective. So, travellers are quite conscious about minimizing the risk to spend a large sum of money yet missing wildlife experience. An example of a visitor to this forum wrote:

> *"We have decided to narrow our safari down to these two places. We have been on safari in the Masai Mara in Kenya, so decided to skip the Serengeti this trip because our primary reason for going there would be to see the Wildebeest Migration. I've read that it may not be possible during the time of year we are coming which is early October. What will wild life viewing be like during that time of year in Tarangire and Ngorongoro crater? How many days should we allow for each park without being rushed?"*

On the contrary, cultural tourism seems to be the main attraction pulling travelers to South Korea. The main information-seeking motive about the attractions is the means of accessing it. Accessing cultural attractions involve the tourist to spend their energy and time as it is more of mechanical tasks. The drive behind tourists visiting this destination is more of religious motives. The motive to visit cultural attractions such as temples appears to drive travelers to value group tours. The group tours appear to be very significant to the tourists as it offers them companionship that motivates each tourist to fully utilize their energy and time doing the manual tasks in accessing the attractions. Group tours prove its importance as they may be the main way for tourists to getting detailed information about the attractions from tour guides. Accessing the cultural attractions is driven by the connection among them and entrance access which appears to be easy and travelers can spend less time connecting multiple cultural attractions. An example of a visitor to this forum wrote:

> *"I would like to visit Tapsa temple. I am concerned that the hike might be very steep. Will probably visits in June. I have seen pictures of a row of little praying statues. I would like to know the location of the statues-- at the beginning, middle, or end of the hike. I don't want to keep my group from enjoying the entire temple. I'm just wondering what I'll see if I don't walk all the way. Thank you."*

4.3.4.5. Acc ommodation

The findings of this study also show that the accommodation theme counted the fifth in terms of the number of visitors' queries between the two destinations. In Tanzania, travelers seem to quest for places of stay which are located in remote areas. In the remote places of stay, the preferable means of accommodation that tourists appear to be interested in are tented camps. Since accommodation is mainly in the remote areas, tourists are likely to include in their trip plans a higher budget to cover for the entire stay. It is also shown that planning for accommodation in remote places seems to be associated with finding the best points/locations that offer a spectacular closer view of the wildlife. During the accommodation planning process, the tented camps in the remote places offer family accommodation packages that include children less than 18 years. An example of a visitor to this forum wrote:

> *"We're considering a stay at KubuKubu in the Serengeti. While we think the lodge itself looks great, from looking at the map it appears to be somewhat close to the main road thru the Central Serengeti as wellas other camps. We've been on safari before, and one of the things we loved was feeling like we were really out in the wilderness. Does anyone who's stayed at KubuKubu know if you can actually see any other lodges from KubuKubu? What about the main road-can you see it?"*

Although accommodation theme counted similar in both destinations, travelers planning for a trip to South Korea seem to prefer staying in well-connected accommodations than remote places. In this destination, hotels connected closer to attractions were the most inquired for accommodation. For travelers who plan for family trips, hotels in South Korea seem not to offer family accommodation packages that include children less than 18 years. An example of a visitor to this forum wrote:

> ***"****I'm an older solo female traveller who will be spending 4.5 post conference days in Seoul third week of June. I have a cancellable res at the Sunbee in Insadong. The Nine Tree across from Myeong-Dong station and the Metro a little north are also appealing. Priorities are easy transportation both around town and back to airport, a location easy to return to while shopping or sightseeing, and bang for the buck. The Sunbee seems to be a little more remote from stations and I'm not sure where the closest KAL limo bus stop is. However, it's*

hard to tell from map exactly how far, how hilly, how much traffic, etc. Can anyone advise on relative merits of these hotels (and if you have a better idea, I'm all ears)"

Table 4. 2 Major themes from thematic content analysis

Concept	Country	Verbatim	Category
Amenities	Tanzania	Shopping jewelry e.g. Tanzanite	Souvenirs
	South Korea	Cell-phone services	Communication services
Itinerary	Tanzania	Wild safari tours in national parks	Trip plans are driven by the season of viewing attractions
	South Korea	Activities to do near attractions and lodging	Trip plans driven by cultural attractions motives.
Accessibility	Tanzania	Vehicles for transport services	Service providers for intra-destination movements
	South Korea	Easy means of transports linking the attractions	The connection between the attractions
Attractions	Tanzania	Wildebeest migration	A motive to experience wildlife
	South Korea	Visiting Temples	The motive to experience cultural attractions
Accommodation	Tanzania	Tented camps	Remote places to stay/ lodging
	South Korea	Hotels closer to attractions	Well-connected places to lodge near attractions

Source: Thematic content analysis of query posts (2019)

Table 2 shows the qualitative thematic content analysis of the five (5) main themes of this study. The results show American tourists coming to Tanzania and those going to Korea to have differences in motives behind the themes. American visitors coming to Tanzania their amenities seemed to be motivated by a need for souvenirs such as shopping unique items like Tanzanite jewelry, while South Korea visitors seemed to focus on communication services like cell phone services for calling back home. Itinerary for American visitors coming to Tanzania was driven by plans going together with seasons of viewing the attractions such as wild safari tours in national parks, while visitors to Korea their trip plans were driven by cultural attractions motives like activities to do near attractions and lodging. Accessibility in Tanzania was more of service providers for intra-destination movements such as procuring vehicles for transport services, while in South Korea; connections between the

attractions like easy means of transports linking the attractions seemed to matter most.

USA visitors to Tanzania seemed to be attracted by a motive to experience wildlife attractions like wildebeest migration, while in South Korea; they were driven by a motive to experience cultural attractions like religious temples. Accommodation for USA visitors to Tanzania was driven by a motive to stay in remote places/lodges like tented camps while visitors to South Korea seemed were interested in staying in well-connected places to lodge near attractions and were motivated to ask for hotels near attractions.

4.4. Discussion of the Findings

4.4.1 Tourists' information needs (functional and hedonic) of American tourists to Tanzania and South Korea as compared.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory proposed that the USA is the most individualistic nation (Hofstede, 2011) which means that the individualistic culture influences the existing finding that no significant difference in travel information needs seeking before traveling and the destination the tourist is going. Thus, the finding is in line with the fact that the tourist source market (USA) possesses similar and have the same cultural characteristics which do not affect their information-seeking behavior before traveling to two different destinations. It means that no matter the geographical boundaries of the two destinations, culture has a huge influence on tourists' information needs seeking behaviors. Other possible reasons include; developments in the information and communication technologies that have resulted in simplified mediums of disseminating and accessing information at a fingertip in a matter of few seconds (Tham et al., 2013; Liu and Park, 2015).

For instance, a couple of decades ago sources such as guidebooks, consulting professional destination experts, and depending on word-of-mouth comments and reviews from relatives, friends, and close people, (Duffy, 2015) were the dominant forms which helped travelers acquire travel information. Today, travelers are more informed and empowered than ever before, with multiple sources of information that

brings the world into their hands. This informed and empowered generation of travelers (Schegg and Fux, 2010) has been possible due to the easy and simplified availability of internet-powered mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Through these devices, travelers could search and acquire information about destinations of his/her choice before traveling (pre-travel planning), during traveling, and when he/she is at the destination in a hassle-free and cost-effective way.

Another reason for the existence of no significant differences between the travel information needs seeking before traveling and the destination the tourist is going can be explained by the availability, simplified, and cost-effective transporting systems. The global airline transportation business has furthered the growth of the travel and hospitality industry in several ways. Among the ways is the increasing number of international tourists' visits to different destinations around the globe. For instance, NBS (2018) International Visitors' Exit Survey Report shows that Tanzania received a higher number of international tourists rounded about 1.5 million where the United States listed as a major source. On the other hand, as noted in a report by Statista, (2019) South Korea in the same year received a total of 15 million international tourists. In this way, experienced travelers are helpful when making reviews about the destinations and spearheading the word-of-mouth that in turn is relied much upon by travel planners (Jani et al., 2013). The finding concurs with Litvin (2019), who found the national culture to influence tourists to travel planning.

4.4.2. Discussion on the number of replies of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea when compared.

The cognitive distance theoretical framework (Ankomah et al., 1995, 1996; Ankomah & Crompton, 1992) suggests that if cognitive distance approximations are significantly greater than the actual distance, then the perceived additional distance may be a reason in people deciding not to opt for a certain destination. The cognitive distance framework is supporting the existing significantly higher number of replies to the travel information needs of Tanzania as compared to South Korea. Since Tanzania is a long-haul destination as compared to South Korea. It is possible that USA visitors cognitively think that the actual distance between Tanzania and South

Korea is very huge in a way of choosing to visit South Korea frequently. According to the cognitive distance theory when a destination is in the top preference of the tourists, they tend to underestimate the actual distance to a destination. On the other hand, tourists would prefer a particular destination because of underestimating the cognitive distance (Ankomah et al., 1995, 1996). While, for instance, the difference in direct flight hours between the two destinations is like 3 hours (Travelmath, 2019). It means that South Korea may attract more USA visitors because they have a negative perception of the actual distance from the USA to Tanzania while in favor of South Korea. Since long-haul destinations (Tanzania) are far way reachable, USA visitors may also have limited knowledge of the destination. Thus, prompting intensive information searching, Tan and Chen (2012), would result in a greater number of replies. The greater number of replies is an indicator for the need for enough information about Tanzania especially knowledge information needs, Hwang et al., (2013) that would reduce risks that may occur at later travel stages due to the unfamiliarity with the destination. It is important for destination marketers in this regard to influence the cognitive distance evaluations, to reduce the negative effects caused by these evaluations which hinder decisions on destination choice.

Besides, the expensiveness of the famous Tanzania Safari Tourism attracts many replies regarding information needs. Understandably, planning for safari tourism in Tanzania is pretty expensive than doing cultural tourism in South Korea. Thus, visitors inquiring information about Tanzania are likely to receive many replies because every contributor is trying to help the potential traveler in minimizing potential risks which will severely hurt the whole budget allocated for the safari tour. Since safari tourism is expensive, it also takes longer planning time in setting out proper itineraries. It involves much of wild safaris in distant attractions such as national parks which are not well connected. Unlike cultural tourism in South Korea that offers easy access to the attractions that even a passer-by could make a quick decision on which attraction to make a short tour at less cost. This is evident as Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) (2018) on its marketing messages showed that in one day a tourist can visit at least four (4) different attractions. This makes cultural

tourism in South Korea possess minimum risks as compare with the safari tour. Decisions to take a cultural tour are not the same as the safari tour.

4.4.3. Discussion on the duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

The mean duration of membership in the travel forum of USA visitors to Tanzania is not significantly higher as compared to that of visitors to South Korea, as well as their planning horizon. However, the American tourists show differences in their level of the contributor, and the number of words with USA tourists coming to Tanzania having a greater number of words as well as being at a higher level of contributor compared to those going to Korea.

According to the Travel Career Ladder model by Pearce (1988), the more experience on social media a tourist has like in travel forums may influence travel information needs seeking. The duration of membership as captured in this study is not statistically significant between Tanzania and South Korea because the study focused on a single source market as proposed by Jani (2018), USA, which is possible to have similarities in terms of duration of membership and planning horizon. On the other hand, the level of contributor and number of words statistical significance might show that USA visitors to Tanzania are matured and this might reflect the exotic nature of Tanzania as a destination compared to Korea. As previous studies have noted, there are conflicting results on consumer online information behavior on social media within the same cultural background (Barbro et al., 2020).

Destinations image might also influence a similar duration of membership in travel forums between Tanzania and South Korea. The perceived image of a destination is governed by a recognizable positive image that has been built in the minds of the tourists. Marino (2008) adds that several factors that influence the positive image of a destination include, the natural and cultural attractions of the destinations, political, economic, and technological environment. Besides, media and internet, experience in the destination, perceived risks, and reports on previous travel experiences in other destinations. Since Tanzania is a nature-based destination Jani (2018), and South Korea is a cultural-based tourist destination, these two destinations attract tourists

from diverse experiences. Due to the image that these two destinations hold in the market, first time visitors would choose to visit and even the revisiting tourists would again make the decision to travel to these destinations.

4.4.4. Discussion on the tourism travel components

The travel components investigated under this study included the 4As of tourism infrastructure which included; attraction, accessibility, accommodation, amenities, and an addition of another component of the itinerary of which some of these themes were borrowed from Arsal et al. (2010) seven themes.

This study's findings show that tourism travel components of visitors to Tanzania did differ from those of visitors to South Korea. For instance, the component of amenities for visitors planned for a visit to Tanzania was motivated by a need for shopping souvenirs while their counterpart South Korea's visitors were more focused on the need for communication services. The reason that underlies this difference is that Tanzania is well known for its nature type of tourism and safari tours, Jani (2018), which also includes the presence of many shops that sell unique souvenirs. Most of the shops which are located in all tourist cities are perceived to target specifically international visitors particularly whites. It is perceived so because most of the items sold in these shops are made by indigenous from local raw materials, the fact that gives them a unique difference to stand out in the market. In this case, international visitors are interested in shopping souvenirs from Tanzania for their lovers because of the uniqueness of the items which are not found in home countries and are subject to be likable. On the other hand, USA visitors to South Korea are interested in communication services because they want to keep communicating with their loved ones as South Korea does not differ much with the United States of America.

Another tourism travel component that provided interesting findings in this study is accessibility. Visitors to Tanzania are more interested in intra-destination which is more likely to be procured as a bundle over the holiday. This is because transport vehicles are privately owned and operated. Also, safari tours take more than a single day for a visitor to get the best experience and gain enough satisfaction. Contrary to South Korea where attractions are well connected therefore tourists have options to

choose the easier way of reaching the attraction site. Cultural attractions are easily accessible, a single day is big enough for a visitor to tour at least 4 different attraction sites (KTO, 2018).

Moreover, attraction as another tourism travel component has attracted different travel motives among the two destinations. For visitors planning for a safari tour to Tanzania, were motivated by a need to experience wildlife attractions, while those going to South Korea were motivated by a need to visit cultural attractions especially temples as driven by a religious motive. This difference is based on the fact that Tanzania is a nature-based travel destination and South Korea is a culturally-based destination. Information searching behavior for visitors to Tanzania is governed by more of cognitive processing (Jani, 2018) while visitors who search for information on cultural attractions are driven by affective information searching. Itinerary for USA visitors coming to Tanzania was driven by plans going together with seasons of viewing the attractions such as wild safari tours in national parks, while visitors to South Korea their trip plans were driven by cultural attractions motives like activities to do near attractions and lodging.

Many USA visitors to Tanzania are vacationers' hence needing quite places to stay. Therefore they opt for remote accommodations. For those going to South Korea, they feel as being in the USA due to its level of development.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOURISTS' INFORMATION NEEDS QUERIES

5.1. Introduction

The interesting findings of this study on examining tourists' information need queries in an online travel forum were that there was no significant difference between travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination the tourist was going. The findings also showed that the mean number of replies to travel information needs of American visitors to Tanzania was higher than that of South Korea's destination. Further, findings revealed that the mean duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania is not significantly higher as compared to its counterpart South Korea. Subsequently, following long presentations, analyses, and discussions in the previous chapter, this chapter is a summary of the major findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

5.2. Summary of the Major Findings

This subsection offers a summary of the major findings to answer directly the research questions laid before.

5.2.1. Comparing tourists' information needs (functional and hedonic) of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea.

The first research question that was posed in this study was on how comparing was tourists' information needs (functional and hedonic) of American tourists to Tanzania and South Korea. The findings indicate that no significant relationship between the destination the tourist is going and the type of information needs to be sought before traveling. The cross-tabulation yielded findings that indicated that statistically, no evidence shows any significant difference between travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination (Tanzania or South Korea) the tourist was going. Even after statistical testing of the analyzed data between Tanzania and South Korea, they showed no relationship. Individualistic culture influence

explains why there are no significant differences in travel information needs sought before traveling and the destination the tourist is going. Other factors are such as the developments in the information and communication technologies that provide easy access to information about destinations including the co-production of online content which is facilitated by the availability of internet services, the growth of social media, mobile applications, and online travel forums.

5.2.2. Comparing the number of replies of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea

The second research question that was posed in this study was on how comparing was the number of replies of USA tourists to Tanzania and South Korea. The findings revealed that the mean number of replies to travel information needs of USA tourists to Tanzania was significantly higher compared with visitors to South Korea. Tanzania is a long-haul destination about which American tourists are likely to have limited knowledge thus the number of replies was higher. South Korea a more developed world than Tanzania, has managed to advertise its tourism industry and thus USA tourists are likely to have more knowledge of tourist destinations thus the low number of replies.

5.2.3. Comparing the duration of membership in the travel forum of American visitors to Tanzania and South Korea.

The third research question of this study was on how comparing was the duration of membership in the travel forum of USA visitors to Tanzania and South Korea. The mean duration of membership in the travel forum and planning horizon of USA visitors to Tanzania is not significantly higher than visitors to South Korea. However, the USA tourists concerning their level of contributor and number of words, those coming to Tanzania have a greater number of words as well as being at a higher level of contributor compared to those going to Korea. The more experience on social media a tourist has like in travel forums, the more the tourist is likely to be influenced by travel information needs seeking. More of the USA tourists that inquired information about Tanzania destination come from those in higher levels of contributor while those to South Korea, more of them were of lower levels of the

contributor. Generally, that means matured tourists are more likely to visit Tanzania, having visited a more developed world like South Korea, while the immature ones or beginners are likely to visit South Korea meaning that Tanzania is a second choice tourist destination. USA visitors to Tanzania are matured and this reflects the exotic nature of Tanzania as a destination compared to Korea, as previous studies had also noted conflicting results on consumer online information behavior on social media within the same cultural background.

5.2.4. Tourists travel components

The thematic analysis of the 4As (attractions, accessibility accommodation, and amenities) where this study added another theme “I” (itinerary) revealed that USA tourists coming to Tanzania and those going to Korea have differences in motives behind. USA visitors to Tanzania seemed to be attracted by a motive to experience wildlife attractions like wildebeest migration, while in Korea; they were driven by a motive to experience cultural attractions like religious temples. Accessibility in Tanzania was more of service providers for intra-destination movements such as procuring vehicles for transport services, while in South Korea; connections between the attractions like easy means of transports linking the attractions seemed to matter more. Accommodation for USA visitors to Tanzania was driven by a motive to stay in remote places/lodges like tented camps, while visitors to South Korea seemed interested in staying in well-connected places to lodge near attractions and was motivated to ask for hotels near attractions. Amenities of USA visitors coming to Tanzania seemed to be motivated by a need for souvenirs such as shopping unique items like Tanzanite jewelry, while South Korea visitors seemed to focus on communication services like cell phone services e.g. for calling back home. Moreover, the itinerary for USA visitors coming to Tanzania was driven by plans going together with seasons of viewing the attractions such as wild safari tours in national parks while visitors to South Korea have their trip plans driven by cultural attractions motives like activities to do near attractions and lodging.

5.3. Conclusion

The results from the current study indicate USA tourists to different destinations have insignificant differences in information search behaviors in the electronic platforms, particularly social media. Tourists inquiring about Tanzania seem to be 'matured' as they are of higher level in terms of their status as contributors indicating they have contributed much on the platform compared to their counterparts going to Korea. The number of replies and words is higher for tourists visiting Tanzania than Korea which reflects the exotic nature (where a tourist has to dig information) of Tanzania as a destination compared to South Korea.

This is to say that, a single source market e.g. USA tourists, is characterized by an individualistic culture that influences the information needs seeking before traveling to different destinations. The difference in destinations does not provide statistical evidence that the information needs of a single source market will be different. Therefore, the cultural background of a tourist's single-source market is an important asset for understanding tourists' information needs behaviors.

5.4. Study Recommendations

Understanding tourists' travel behaviors in today's tourism and travel business is very important in making proper marketing strategies that will influence more numbers of visitors to the destination. Online travel forums such as TripAdvisor and the like have played a significant role in tourists' information searching behaviors. The travel forums and other social media of the like are being relied on by millions of travel planners. This is because they are regarded as trustworthy, credible, and offer authentic information as to compare with messages from commercials. It is because of the power the electronic word-of-mouth offers that outwash messages from commercials.

5.4.1. Destination Marketing Organizations and Tour Operators

There is a pressing call for destination marketing organizations and other tourism promotion agencies to formulate strategies to exploit the use of TripAdvisor and related platforms. Destination marketing managers and tourism products and services marketers must put forward plans to increase visibility on travel forums to consistently providing authentic, credible, and commanding information that will

help tourists' travel decision plans hence selecting a destination. This study has shown that information needs such as functional needs are the primary needs to be dealt with because they have a huge impact on the travel plans decisions. It is a call to DMO managers to concentrate and layout messages which will cater to fulfilling functional information needs such as knowledge, risk, and efficiency needs. Of course, they should not ignore hedonic needs as they are supportive of the primary needs. To achieve the above marketing plans, DMO managers need to have a huge online presence, especially in the world's recognized travel and hospitality forums. In this way major queries that require expert opinion can be easily solved, hence aiding potential tourists in reducing information searching workload that sometimes may lead to confusion due to larger quantities of information. Mistake to create an active and live presence in online travel forums can lead to several setbacks. A noticeable setback is that; a potential traveler may choose to visit another destination that was not in his/her plans when he/she finds difficulties in getting the right information hence making proper travel decisions. Of course, online travel forums and other online sources provide volumes of information from different sources from all over the world. So, in this case, potential travelers may go for destinations or tourism products and services that its information searching process offers fewer difficulties.

5.4.2. Researchers and Academicians

This study opens doors for more challenges from researchers and academicians as far as online travel forums and other social media platforms are concerned. The areas of online information searching behavior, travel and hospitality forums, social media, and mobile applications use in Tanzania and Africa still need more analytical studies to come up with findings that may aid in improving our marketing strategies to grab the global tourist market. How, for example, was South Korea able to attract more than 15 million international tourists in the year 2018? Why is this small nation doing the best in the global tourism business? Scholars should concentrate on potential travelers' information searching behaviors while acknowledging the voluminous benefits of online media, social media, and increasing research interest

in mobile applications. Moreover, scholars may also concentrate on specific nations that offer a possibility for a large number of tourists like China and other Asian nations. Key areas of interest here are the types of information queries about Tanzania. More specific researches are hereby recommended on Asian Millennial Travellers (AMT) as they are said to travel and spend much while caring more about independent tours than group packages.

5.5. Limitations of the Study

Content analysis is an objective methodology but its findings were limited only to the frameworks of the categories and definitions used by the researcher. Wimmer and Dominic (2011) pointed out that such would not check the reality for what was found could not be compared to the real world. This is an opportunity for further studies to supplement by integrating other techniques like interviews which will help to interrogate and interpret content analysis findings. The study relied on data gathered from online travel forum, in this way the tourists' individual variables such as demographics and socio-cultural, were not captured to complement the finding

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Sheet for Thematic Content Analysis of South Korea visitors' data

THEMES	SUB THEMES	VERBATIM ""
ATTRACTIONS 15	-JSA (Panmunjom) -Museums -Museums -DMZ tour -Festivals and others -Fashion Festivals -National Park -Museums -Museums and cultural villages -Museums/Cultural -River -City visits -Museums and Cultural -Museums	"*I would like to visit Tapsa temple. I am concerned that the hike might be very steep. Will probably visit in June. I have seen pictures of a row of little praying statues. I would like to know the location of the statues-- at the beginning, middle, or end of the hike. I don't want to keep my group from enjoying all of the temple. I'm just wondering what I'll see if I don't walk all the way. Thank you.*" "*I will have two days in Seoul (12/24 and 12/25/19) and plan to visit both Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeokgung Palace. How should I do it if I want to do both on the same day? Do I have to book the tickets in advance? What is the possibility that I will not be able to get the tickets at the door for the palaces and the Secret Garden? Would like to join the tours if possible. Thanks in advance.* *Ye*"
ACCESSIBILITY - 22	-Transport – uber/taxi/lyft/shuttle and customs - checking out -Transport – Bus -Renting a car -Transport – Bus -Travel updated information -Transport – bus/train lines & navigation language -Transport – private driver/chauffer -Seoullo&017 -Transport – train -Transport – bus vs train -Transport – train -Transport – bus -Transport – flight -Transport Stations -Transport – train	"*What is the best way to get from the Gwangalli beach area to Gyeongju? I see mention of a train from Haeundae Beach but I can't figure out where the station is? I am comfortable taking the local bus or subway to a train or bus terminal. We do have some luggage but not a lot.*" "*After visiting Gyeongbokgung, what is the best way to go to see the Blue House? Thanks in advance. Ye*" "*I am planning to take bus 6001 from Incheon airport to Namdaemun Market. Where will the bus stop? Close to exit 1 of Hoehyeon station? Thanks*"

	-Transport – flight -Transport -Transport –flight -Transport – bus and taxi -Transport – bus -	
ACCOMMODATION 5	-Hotel -Place/ neighbourhood to stay -Hotel than Airbnb -Hotel -Hotel -	"*I'm an older solo female traveler who will be spending 4.5 post conference days in Seoul third week of June. I have a cancellable res at the Sunbee in Insadong. The Nine Tree across from Myeong-Dong station and the Metro a little north are also appealing. Priorities are easy transportation both around town and back to airport, a location easy to return to while shopping or sightseeing, and bang for the buck. The Sunbee seems to be a little more remote from stations and I'm not sure where the closest KAL limo bus stop is. However, it's hard to tell from map exactly how far, how hilly, how much traffic, etc. Can anyone advise on relative merits of these hotels (and if you have a better idea, I'm all ears).*" "*Is it standard for the hotels to charge for a 3rd person if it's a small child? I understand there's a charge for a 3rd person if it's a full-size adult. But what about if it's a small child? I'm tempted to make the reservation for 2 adults and then just pay the fee when I get to Korea. Seems unreasonable.*"
AMENITIES 34	-Navigation Apps -Metal knitting needles -Shopping knock offs -Clearing passports -Shopping -Sightseeing -Carrying food -Luggage storage services -Using cellphone -Tour and purchase of tickets -Street performers -Sim card -Discover Seoul Pass -Cave and Peak hike -Vaccination -Tour guide -Currency exchange -Free showers -Masks -Passes -Weather	"*We will be touring South Korea for 2 weeks. We will need to phone the USA daily. The people we will be calling do not have cell phones, so we cannot use apps that only connect to other mobile phones. Our cell phones are GSM. Would we be able to buy a SIM card in Korea that would work with our GSM phones? If so, any recommendations on best SIM that would work throughout the country?* *If Korean SIM cards won't work in our GSM phones, where could we rent a cell phone to make calls to USA for a reasonable cost? Note that we will not need any data, only voice service.* *Thanks in advance for your help.*" "*Just wondering if I should pay the international rate of 10.00 a day if I use my cell phone when in Korea? Or should I look into buying a sim card or something like that so I can use my US Cell phone? However, I want to surf and use my phone like I do in the*

	-Sightseeing -Night Life New Year's Eve -Hiking -Sim-card -Sightseeing -ATM -Shopping -Money -Tour guide -Shopping -Phone call services -jimjilbang -	*United states care free. Since I have unlimited everything (talk, text, data). Thank you for any suggestions"*
ITINERARY 24	-Tour company -New activity ideas -Other places to trip around -6-day plan in Seoul-places to visit -Days to spend, places to stay and eat -Tour guide vs self-guide -Suggestion for where to go, eat and transport -One-day activity plan -Activity, place to eat/shop and amusement parks -Activity for a day trip -Ideas for places to make stop over -Planning for public transport -Things to do in 12 hours -Re-visiting vs places to stay for a week -Plan for 9 days -Cancellation of trip -Group tour plans -Things to do indoor -Must dos -Planning 2-day trip for various attractions -Activity suggestions	*"I'm planning a trip to South Korea for early June with my wife and two teenagers, for about ten days. In addition to Seoul and the DMZ, we are interested in scenic natural beauty, natural landmarks, hiking, outdoors, good food, and getting away from crowds. We are not interested in luxury hotels— anything clean and safe is fine. We'd like to relax for a few days on the beach— any recommendations for a secluded beach resort? (I know Korea is not famous for beaches.) Big plus if it is possible to rent a small sailboat, kayaks, or surfboards nearby, if there is interesting seafood near the beach, or beautiful hiking nearby. Any other ideas for scenic beauty— are there any temples in the mountains that would make for an interesting visit? Other ideas? Thanks in advance for any help!* *"*

APPENDIX 2

Sheet for Thematic Content Analysis of Tanzania visitors' data

BORROWED THEMES	SUB THEMES	VERBATIM ""
ATTRACTIONS 14	-Wildebeest migration. -Migration from the Hot Air Balloon. -Kilimanjaro and animals -Prison Island (beach tour) -Spice Farm -Cultural attraction (TZ authentic foods & beverages) -Wild animals -Prison Island (Tortoise) -Waterfalls and coffee tour -Wildebeest migration -Park/ Game Drives -Wildebeest migration -Rock art climb -Mountain - Kilimanjaro	"*We have decided to narrow our safari down to these two places. We have been on safari in the Masai Mara in Kenya, so decided to skip the Serengeti this trip because our primary reason for going there would be to see the Wildebeest Migration. I've read that it may not be possible during the time of year we are coming which is early October. What will wild life viewing be like during that time of year in Tarangine and Ngoroghoro crater? How many days should we allow for each park without being rushed?*" *"I am wondering how the migration is going this year and would we have a decent chance of seeing the migration from the Hot Air Balloon Oct 2/3? It's not an inexpensive activity and there are 3 of us - we're booked - but currently rethinking if the $$$ will be worth it as we've been told it needs to be booked and pre-paid 30days in advance and no refunds. Appreciate any advice – guidance."*
ACCESSIBILITY 17	-Transport – renting a car/cab -Hotel that does day passes for their pool or beach access. -Transport-Uber availability -Transport – ferry -Transport – car hire with driver -Transport – drive versus flight -Transport – flight -Transport – Uber -Transport – flight -Transport – shuttle bus -Transport – speedboats -Transport – speedboat vs flight -Transport – flight -Transport – Hot air balloon ride -Transport – Bus -Transport – rental car -Transport – Bus	"*Hi- Can anyone recommend a good company where we can arrange a vehicle (Suzuki Grand Vitara or similar) with a driver for a week in December. We are staying in Kiwengwa and would basically like to have a vehicle at our disposal during the day for sightseeing, shopping, excursions, etc. Ideally, we would like to have the vehicle and driver meet us at the airport and then drop us off there when we are ready to leave. I have e-mailed several companies that advertise that they have drivers available, but none of them have responded to my inquiries, Thanks*" "*How much does a speedboat from kigoma to mahale cost for two people? We will need it in mid-September unless the Liemba repair is finished early"*

ACCOMMODATION 5	-Cost efficient beach lodge (Kendwa). -Hotel at or near Stone Town -Tented camps -Tented camps -Lodge – safety concerns -	"*We're considering a stay at KubuKubu in the Serengeti. While we think the lodge itself looks great, from looking at the map it appears to be somewhat close to the main road thru the Central Serengeti as well as other camps. We've been on safari before, and one of the things we loved was feeling like we were really out in the wildnerness. Does anyone who's stayed at KubuKubu know if you can actually see any other lodges from KubuKubu? What about the main road-can you see it?*" "*We are considering a Safari in March and are torn between LemalaNdutu and Chaka tented camps for the Ndutu part of our trip (we also plan to stay in the Central Serengeti as well as Ngorongoro). Both look nice online. Lemala looks slightly nicer, but we're comfortable with either in that regard. It's more the intangibles that are hard to figure out. Chaka camp is a bit less expensive, so it seems there must be a tradeoff. One thing I'm wondering is whether the more expensive camps generally get referential location (these are mobile camps). Anyone know how this works and whether some camps get the better spots? Also, we will be traveling with our kids (ages 10 and 12 at the time of the trip). Both offer family accommodations. Does one have a more family friendly vibe/attitude than the other? Appreciate any feedback!"*
AMENITIES 37	-Tanzania Visa. -Tanzania e-Visa -Buying pink gym shoes for night time and the game drives. -Making bookings for a safari and Kilimanjaro climb using TripAdvisor -Tanzania visa and duration of stay -Type of camera to take for safari -Tripod for landscape & night sky photos -Lens selection for trip to TZ -Scuba Diving -Tipping -Visas -Money transfer	"*We will be starting our trip in Zanzibar for 5 days fly out to Arusha head out for Safari and come back to Arusha for half a day before we fly back home. We would like to buy some local souvenirs and if possible, a piece of tanzanite jewelry. Please advise what would be the best place to buy considering our crazy 2.5-week schedule.*" "*Hi- We will visit Tanzania for a 10 day safari (really 9 full days) in August with our two teens (ages 14 and 15). Our tour operator's website says to plan $30-40 per person, per day in cash for incidentals, including guide tips, other tips, drinks, and laundry. All but one day of our meals is included in the safari cost already paid. I would probably edge this*

	-Shopping -Bathroom -Credit cards -Currency for use -Tanzanian Visa -Online Visa Application -E-Visa for Tanzania -Tanzania Visa -Weather – trekking Mt. Kilimanjaro -Cellphone services -Battery packs -Bathroom -Scuba Diving -Sunsets -Cellphone services in parks -Bike tours -Tipping -Mobile data services -Trip Insurance -Visa and Yellow Fever Vaccine -Cellular data plan - communication -Yellow fever proof -Money – cash -Money – cash -Sight seeing	*up to $50 per person to be safe. It sounds like I wouldn't want to run out- there's nowhere to get more, right? And I'm thinking we'll do a lot of laundry and drink a fair amount of wine, beer, sodas, etc. Of course, we'll want to tip appropriately, as well.* *So, this is a lot of cash to walk around with. $200 per day for the four of us, 9 days, that's $1800 in cash. We also need our visas and our airport departure taxes, which sounds like another $600 total. Is everyone really walking around with this much cash? I know we can keep it with us and generally practice safety precautions, but yikes that's a lot."*
ITINERARY 27	-Deciding between Northern and Central Serengeti -Northern safari trips leaving from Arusha, either 4 or 5 days. -Safari experience can one get for maximum US $500-600 per person a day. -To do in one extra day. -Choosing where to spend 3 nights in Serengeti. -Putting together a safari for one week -Deciding on days of stay in Ndutu vs Central Serengeti -Sixth day at Ndutu for Wild animals -Planning a Safari -What to do in two days -Lowering the itinerary costs *-More information on proposed plan* -Meeting locals – visiting new places and hangout *-More information on proposed plan* -Poaching and dam building concerns -1-day trip plan near Arusha - Choosing between migration	"*This will be our first Safari in Tanzania and we did South Africa last year. We pretty much have everything finalized but needed help deciding itinerary. We decided to go early March because of the calving season and we know the best area is NDUTU. Need to decide whether to stay for 3 nights in Ndutu OR should we add an extra night in Central Serengeti which would split our trip to 2 nights in each area. Will 2 days be enough in Ndutu or should we just do all 3 days there? Don't know if staying in Central Seregeti 1 more night is a good trade off. We also have an option to stay 2 nights in the Ngorongoro crater but if we stay 2 nights there it will shorten our stay in Central Serengeti to only 1 day while still keeping 3 days at Ndutu. Thanks for your feedback!*"

	and park tour -Things to bring -Booking – self or using TO -Bag weight requirements -Information on crater drive plan -One day excursions -Plans for down time – games/books -Best routes plan to save time and money -Items to pack/buy -Choosing suitable camps/accommodation -Safe travel plans/ avoiding diseases and terrorism risks	