

Destination Narratives in a Pandemic: Comparing the Social Media Posts of Kenyan and Tanzania Tourism Boards

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Destination Narratives in a Pandemic: Comparing the Social Media Posts of Kenyan and
Tanzania Tourism Boards

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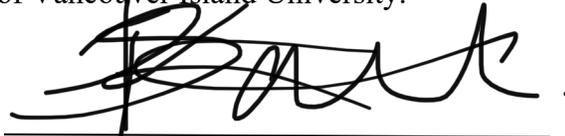
Declarations

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Patricia Kayaga

Abstract

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) play a vital role in managing the reputation of their destination with visitors, particularly during and after a crisis. To manage their image, DMOs create and share narratives that tell others how their destination differs from competitors. These narratives are usually employed throughout the course of a crisis with a goal of reducing the impacts on the tourism industry. Managing the destination narrative can also be used as an effective approach to recover from the effects of the disaster.

This comparative research explored the destination narratives created and shared, via social media posts, by the Kenya Tourism Board and Tanzania Tourism Board during the first 6 ½ months of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study employed content analysis as a research method to analyze texts and images from the DMOs' social media platforms.

The findings of the research revealed a partial alignment between the narratives shared by the DMOs and the crisis management model (Haigh, 2018). However, the KTB had strong narratives that aligned with globally recommended crisis management strategies with messages indicating that Kenya is taking the pandemic seriously; whereas the TTB had a weak narrative compared to Kenya, and it did not reflect global crisis management strategies pertaining to the COVID 19 pandemic. The findings also indicated that both destinations still prioritized the promotion of their destinations' resources to the potential visitors throughout the course of the study period.

The findings of this study illustrated that the TTB has limited control and influence on the destination narrative of Tanzania; therefore, it is recommended that both the DMO structure and the resourcing of the DMO be reviewed. While the KTB was found to be much more engaged with the development of Kenya's destination narrative, it is also recommended that the structure of the DMO system be reviewed so as to allow for greater representation of the diverse tourism products available.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Global travel and tourism are vulnerable to major shocks that impact both the economic value of the industry as well as how potential visitors view host countries (Balakrishnan, 2011; WTO, 2011). These shocks range from man-made to natural disasters / crises. Events like the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had immediate and significant impacts on world travel and in this, the USA experienced a drop in the number of international visitor's arrival due to the safety concerns about air travel (Cornwell & Roberts, 2010, Bonham et al., 2006). The attack caused monetary and job losses across the globe - US airlines had a loss of 5 billion dollars and 8000 jobs within the industry (Bysyuk, 2010; Ito & Lee, 2005). The Indian Ocean tsunami took both humanitarian and economic tolls and left environmental and medical threats (Ramalanjaona, 2011). The disaster led to 230,000 deaths from 14 affected countries, over 1.7 million people were displaced and 9.9 billion estimates of the damages properties and infrastructure, among other devastating impacts on the coastal regions of countries in the Indian Ocean, with a direct and long-lasting effect to the tourism industry (Sharpley, 2005; Press, 2014; Reid, 2020). And the Ebola outbreak in West Africa 2014 to 2016 impacted all travel in Africa due to misinformation of Africa being one country that sadly affected the entire continent (Jamal & Budke, 2020; Maphanga & Henama, 2019). The epidemic prompted a drop of the number of visitors, by 50% in Sierra Leone the subsequent drop in the GDPs by 16% and social economic impacts to the affected areas, neither arrival or tourism spending in these areas has returned to the pre-epidemic numbers (WTTC, 2018). Countries far from the affected areas i.e Kenya, also experienced a drop in international tourists' arrivals by 7.7% in 2014.

East Africa is particularly vulnerable to shocks that results in the issuing of travel restrictions by source countries and the termination of flights to the affected areas (Maphanga & Henama, 2019); this can be compounded in countries like Tanzania and Kenya where there is a limited domestic travel market (Melubo, 2020; Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). This vulnerability became more evident as the East African tourism industry was devastated by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Pre-pandemic, the direct effect of tourism on African countries GDPs, was higher than the global average, making the economic importance of the industry a central characteristic of much of

the continent (Daly & Gereffi, 2018). In 2018, the tourism industry in East African countries, the third most visited region in Africa, exceeded both the global (6.5%) and continental (8.6%) GDP averages. For example, tourism contributed 8.8% of Kenya's GDP and 11.7% Tanzania's GDP (WTTC, 2019). Further, the WTTC (2019) indicated that the East Africa region was reliant on foreign visitors, as their spending was a major economic engine for development within that region. The reliance on international visitors, and their tendency to view Africa as a homogenous single state (Maphanga & Henama, 2019), results in the need for national destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to create and manage the narratives that distinguish them from other regional and continental destinations (Neuhofer & Buhalis, 2014).

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to high levels of anxiety in all aspects of the tourism industry (e.g., supply and demand). The large-scale quarantines, travel restrictions, and social distancing measures led to the sharp fall in consumer and business expenditures, a situation which created an economic recession globally (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020). During the different phases of the global crisis, destinations have managed both domestic and international tourism differently (Muragu et al., 2021; Shobowale, 2021), including the development of narratives shared over their social media. The focus of this study was on the East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania, as destinations that depend heavily on tourism, and used their national DMOs as means of sharing their evolving narratives during the pandemic. This was important as the narratives promote the destination in order to better connect the supply and demand aspects of tourism to maximize the use of destination resources (Pike & Page, 2014). Thus, the purpose of this study was to compare the destination narratives shared by the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) and Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) during the period prior to the pandemic (December 1, 2019 – March 11, 2020) and throughout the first six and half months of the pandemic (March 12, – September 30 2020).

Destination Narrative

According to Lichrou et al., (2008), destination narratives are defined as, “the means through which a place is constructed, a framework for the understanding of marketing and consumption processes in general” (p. 35). Narratives are created through telling stories that distinguish destinations from each other in terms of products and experiences offered in an attempt to attract their market. The stories created by the destination around their products are a frame

for appreciation of the dynamic and multifaceted nature of places, and they evolve or change based on the nature of the products being promoted, which provides additional insights for place marketers (Lichrou et al., 2010). According to Akkucuk and Ata (2019) the image and narratives of a destination act as the critical influencer for destination choice by visitors.

Destination narrative is closely aligned with creating a destination brand and visitors' attachment to place (Grillot, 2007). Arguably the most well-known example of this relationship was the "what happens here, stays here" market branding campaign for Las Vegas, USA. As Shankman (2013) noted, this long running brand was created based on the narrative of Las Vegas as a destination for freedom; freedom to leave your worries behind and freedom to do or be anything you would like. In contrast, both Kenya and Tanzania have built their current brand identities around the natural wonders they offer (Daly & Gereffi, 2018; Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2015), specifically, Magical Kenya and Tanzania Unforgettable. However, what is not as clear is how the KTB and TTB are using their social media marketing to create and manage narratives that support these brands and how the narratives were altered or reinforced in response to the global pandemic.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing through social media channels is a commonly used strategy for sharing information (Van Dijck, 2013; Edosomwan, et al., 2011). Pike and Page (2014), argued that "the marketing and promotion of destinations is now a ubiquitous activity, aided by the rise in new technological innovations such as social media..." (p.6). Destinations can now actively create content for diverse audiences and to market different experiences that they offer (Akkucuk, & Ata, 2019). To do this, destinations weave imagery and messaging into a narrative, mostly done via social media, that contributes to building a positive destination image (Molina et al., 2010). However, not all destinations have harnessed the opportunity that social media provides to the same degree (Foris et al., 2020; Pike & Page, 2014). It has been noted that in addition to creating and managing the destination narrative and brand, social media also provides DMOs an opportunity to speak directly to its visitors (Foris et al., 2020; Gretzel, 2015). This can be particularly important during times of crisis or responding to threats to the destination image and narrative. To explore this, the aim of this study was to compare KTB's and TTB's use of social

media posts during the initial stages of the pandemic, as a means of managing the destination narrative and reputation during a time of crisis.

Crisis Management

According to WTO (2011), crisis management is termed as procedures or approaches taken to mitigate or cope with a crisis situation (p.5). The different procedures and/ approaches taken are usually employed when severe pressure falls upon organizations and limit their abilities to deliver products or services and consumers' ability to enjoy those offerings (Zaremba, 2014). An important factor in crisis management is that crises have distinct phases that require different messaging (Stephens & Ford, 2015). The crisis management model includes four phases that DMOs may consider responding to: (a) preparedness, (b) response, (c) recovery, and (d) mitigation (Baird, 2010; Haigh, 2018; Ritchie 2004). The messaging within these phases would be dictated by the nature and extent of the crisis (Ritchie, 2004).

To the frustration of tourism industry stakeholders, large-scale natural and human- induced crises are increasing in frequency and impact; thus, DMOs have an integral role in crisis management in order to sustain tourism as a strong economic input for their nations (Todman-Lewis, 2017; Varghese & Paul, 2014). Communication with visitors currently in the country, as well as future and potential visitors, falls to the DMOs as tourists are generally overlooked in local crisis management (Borzyszkowski, 2013). As this communication is necessarily immediate in nature, social media channels provide DMOs with a cost effective and easily controlled and managed outlet for their messaging (Baruah, 2012; Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012). However, as noted previously not all destinations have harnessed the potential of social media to the same degree (Alizadeh & Isa, 2015; Pike & Page, 2014). Thus, this study compared the use of social media channels by the KTB and TTB for managing information about the pandemic crisis and their destination narratives.

Context of Research

This study focused on the countries of Kenya and Tanzania, the two largest countries and economies in East Africa. The tourism industry in these destinations is formed around the same tourism products (i.e., wildlife tourism and coastal tourism) and even share the famous Serengeti ecosystem (Shah & Krhoda, 2018). Tourism is not only a vehicle for social- economic

development, but also a vehicle for poverty alleviation, revenue generation and conservation of wildlife resources (Nibigira, 2019; Okello, & Novelli 2014). Despite having the same tourism products, the growth and evolution of the tourism industry in these destinations has been quite different. Factors that may have contributed to the differential growth of the industry in each country includes; (a) tourism product diversification, (b) standards of services, (c) political stability, and (d) infrastructure development (Okello, & Novelli 2014). Other factors that may have contributed to the growth and evolution of the tourism industry may be the colonial past of the destinations. As McKercher & Decosta noted, the impact of colonization and post-colonial attitudes towards tourism may have impacts on the growth and development of the tourism industry in different destinations. The difference in the general growth and evolution of the tourism industry is evidenced by the World Economic Forum's (2019) tourism competitiveness rankings which list Kenya as 82nd and Tanzania as 95th out of the 140 countries reviewed.

The tourism market for Kenya and Tanzania is more reliant on Europe, the United States, China and India (Christie et al, 2013) as a result of a limited domestic travel market (Melubo, 2020; Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). Therefore, the devastating impacts of the pandemic on the source market countries is worth noting.

Kenya

Kenya is the second largest East African country with a total area of 580,367 km². The country's economy is highly dependent on tourism (8.8% GDP) which is third to agriculture (26.0 % GDP) and industry (16.4% GDP). Kenya's tourist attractions vary from safaris through game parks to beautiful beaches on the coast, offering captivating cultural and historical surroundings including picturesque old Arab towns and the remnants of 16th century Portuguese settlements (Appiah & Gates, 2010; East Africa Living Encyclopedia, n.d.). Tourism within Kenya began while still a British Colony and it remained a significant economic contributor and growth sector after independence (Appiah & Gates, 2010; East Africa Living Encyclopedia, n.d).

Most visitors to Kenya come primarily to see its varied wildlife, and in particular, the large concentrations of elephant, giraffe, antelope, and zebra (Appiah & Gates 2010; East Africa Living Encyclopedia n.d; McKercher & Decosta, 2007). With strong wildlife management policies and numerous national parks, conservancies, and game reserves (World Economic Forum 2019 ranked

Kenya 18th for natural resources in the World Travel and Competitive Index), Kenya has a strong reputation for delivering world-class safari experiences (Region, 2010; Uppink et al., 2019). A strength of the safari tourism industry is its dispersion throughout the country (Region, 2010), and the availability of experiences within the capital of Nairobi (e.g., Nairobi National Park) in addition to the well documented Maasai Mara (Bhandari, 2014; Kwadha, 2009). In 2019, Kenya's world ranking in the world travel and tourism competitiveness index was 82nd but 5th within Africa (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The Kenya Tourism board (KTB) is a national DMO, tasked by the government to promote and manage Kenya's destination image. According to Lugongo et al., 2021, KTB responsible for destination marketing of Kenya domestically and internationally, with an annual budget of KES 643.0 million for 2020/2021, (approx. USD 5.95 million). The marketing and promotion activities held by KTB among other factors has led to increased numbers of tourism arrivals from 1.61 million 2010 to 2.05 million in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2020). As shown in Figure 1, tourism arrivals in Kenya dropped from 2013 to 2015 as a result of both the Westgate Mall terror attack (2013) and the Ebola crisis (2014– 2016). In 2018 and 2019 there was a strong rebound with arrivals exceeding pre-crisis levels; however, the impacts of the pandemic are clearly evident in the 2020 arrival numbers (Faria, 2021). The results of Kenya's Tourism Exit Survey revealed that in 2019 most international visitors came from the United States, United Kingdom, and Italy accounting for 37.8% of all international arrivals (Tourism Research Institute, 2019; Figure 2).

Figure 1

International Visitors' Arrivals in Kenya from 2010 to 2020 (in 1000s)

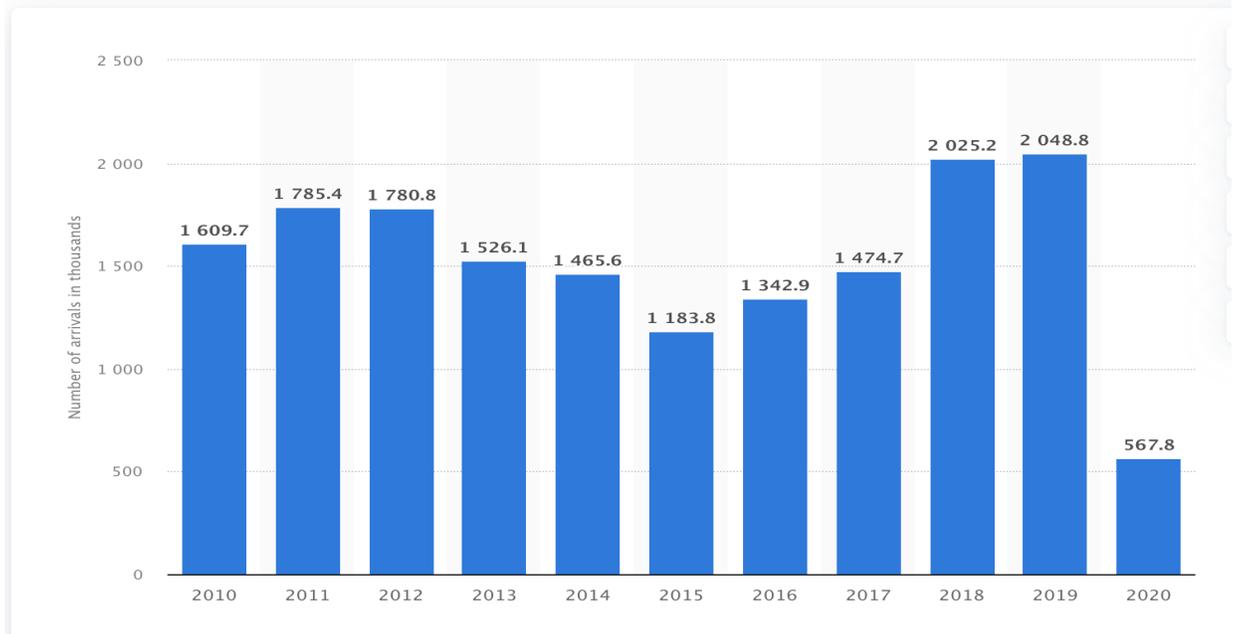
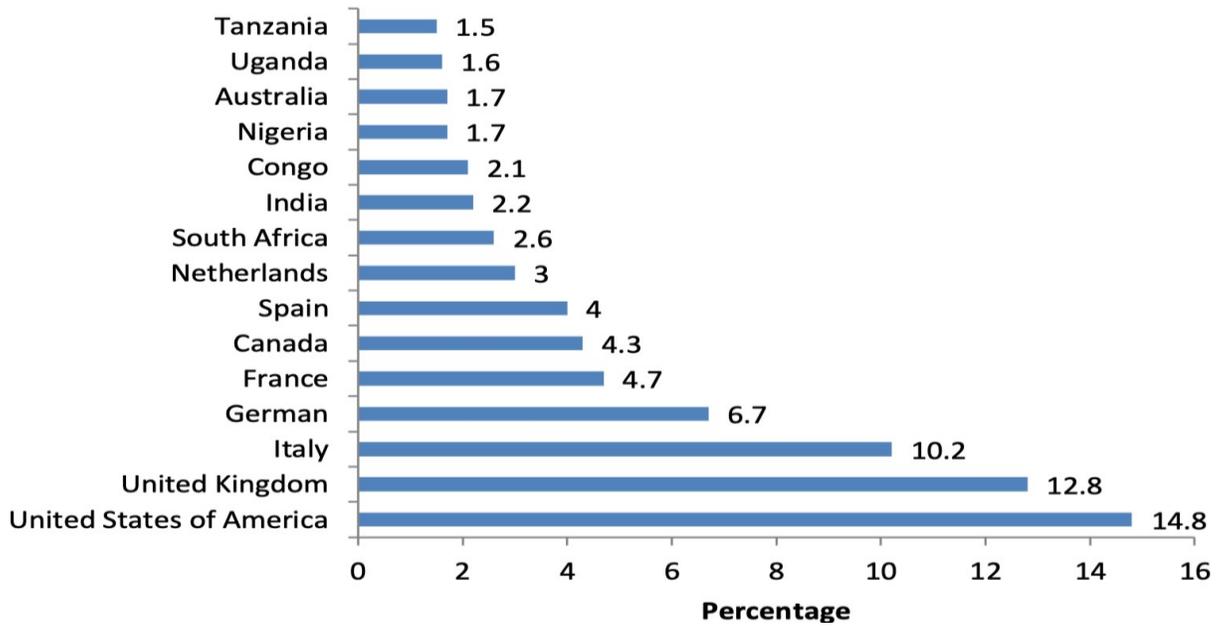


Figure 2

Tourists Source Country by Origin in Kenya



Tanzania

Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa with a total area of 947,303 km². In 2019 tourism accounted for 11.7% of the GDP, agriculture (28.7%) and industry (25.1%) being top contributors. The tourism system in Tanzania is endowed with a variety of tourist attractions from natural wonders of the world like Ngorongoro Crater to the birth of mankind in Olduvai Gorge, the Arab culture on Zanzibar and Africa's tallest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro (Assets, 2015). The primary tourism product is wildlife safaris, within the Northern Tourism Circuit (includes Ngorongoro Conservation Areas, Kilimanjaro and Serengeti National Parks) being the most popular tourism route (Faria, 2021).

Tanzania's vast system of protected areas provides a strong foundation for nature-based tourism development. With over 36% of its landmass in parks and protected areas (Gizachew et al., 2020), World Economic Forum (2019) ranked Tanzania 12th globally in its competitiveness related to natural resources for tourism. Okello and Novelli (2014) argued that Tanzania stands out as one of the most competitive Sub-Saharan Africa destinations, in large part due to the vast number of parks, forest reserves, and game reserves. In contrast, it has also been argued that Tanzania lags behind other regional competitors on the development of infrastructure, health and hygiene, safety, and Information and communication Technology (ICT) preparedness (Marchat & Verdier-Chouchane, 2017; Novelli, et al., 2020). In 2019, Tanzania's world ranking in the world travel and tourism competitiveness index was 95^d but 8th within Africa (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The responsibility for the development and management of the tourism industry in Tanzania is held by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT). As a government body it has a wide range of investments in various tourist resources and industry projects. The marketing and promotion of the tourism products under the MNRT is managed by the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) which functions as a national level DMO. However, the TTB works in collaboration with the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) in marketing the national parks of Tanzania as the country's main attraction (Tanzania National Parks, 2019). The TTB as a national body with a function of promoting Tanzania as a tourism destination is under-resourced. According to the Tourism Master Plan of 2012 the TTB does not have enough manpower and funding for the proper functioning. As it receives USD 1.75 million annually for personal and administrative costs and about USD1.3 million remains for marketing and promotion activities. This was also noted in

the Tanzania budget highlight of 2021, that despite the allocation of TZS 571.6 billion (approx. USD 2.46 Billion) none of it is allocated for marketing and promotion functions (Nchimbi, 2021). There has been a tremendous increase in the number of tourists in Tanzania from 783, 000 visitors in 2010 to 1.5 M visitors in 2019. During this time Tanzania experienced a 51.3% increase in international arrivals According to the Statistics for Development (2018), the United States, Kenya, United Kingdom and Germany were among the major source countries of international visitors to Tanzania (Figure 4). It was further noted that majority of the visitors from Kenya came for visiting friends and relatives and not for leisure travel.

Figure 3

The Number of International Arrivals in Tanzania (2010 -2019)

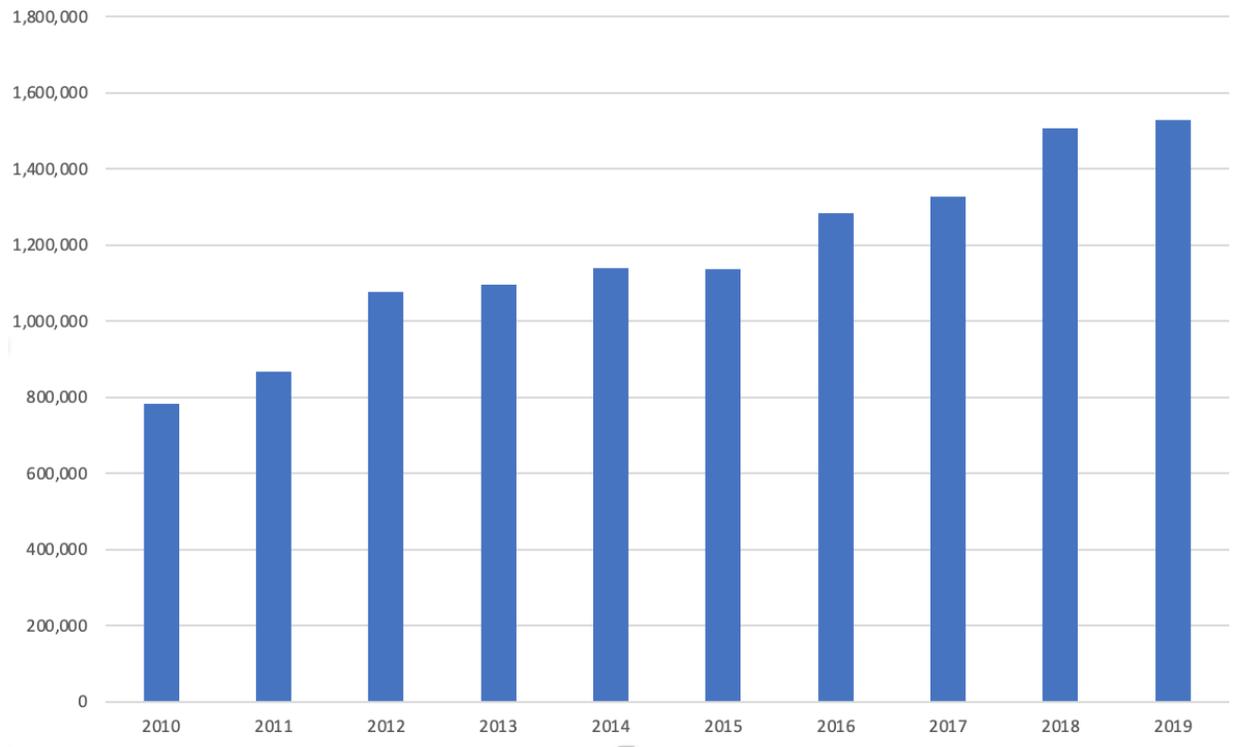
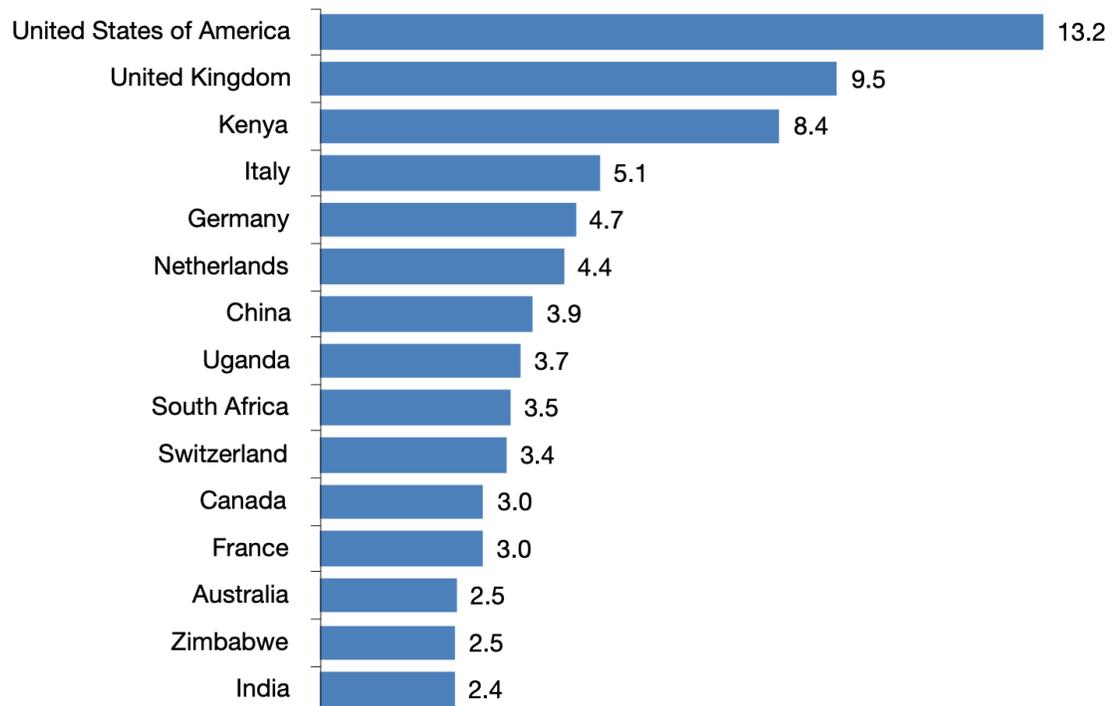


Figure 4

The Top 15 International Tourist Arrivals in Tanzania by Country (in %)



Kenya and Tanzania COVID-19 Background

According to UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (2020) the COVID 19 pandemic marked a 22% decline in tourist arrivals in the first three months of the year for most destinations globally. Arrivals in March dropped sharply by 57% following the start of a lockdown in many countries, in particular the source market countries for the tourists. A widespread introduction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders that put a stop to people’s movements (WTO, 2019). This turned into a loss of 67 million international tourists’ arrivals and about US\$80 billion in receipts (exports from tourism). Kenya and Tanzania, like other countries in the world, were also hit by the pandemic. Leading to major decline in tourists’ arrivals affecting the economic values of the destinations (Table 1).

According to Daily nation magazine (2020), in response to the pandemic the government of Kenya restricted public gathering (i.e., closer of school, government and private workers worked from home). Travel restriction were kept in place followed by border closures and different forms of lockdowns. Further restriction and measures were kept in place in response to level of threats that pandemic posed (Ministry of Health, 2020). In contrast Tanzania was the only East African country where the reporting of non-

government COVID 19 related news was considered criminal offense. After the late president Magufuli alleged false reporting's from the national laboratory, and banned the release of COVID -19 data since April, making Tanzania the only country in the world besides North Korea that doesn't release the statistics (Bloomberg, 2021).

Table 1

Kenya and Tanzania Changes in GDP and Tourist Arrivals After COVID 19 Pandemic

Country	GDP		Tourist arrivals	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Kenya	8.1%	4.2%	2,048,800	567,800
Tanzania	10.7%	5.3%	1,527,000	437,000

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research was to compare the destination narratives created and managed by the KTB and TTB during the 2 ½ months prior to the pandemic and the first 6 ½ months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, as social media is a primary and immediate communication channel used during crises, this study focused on the messaging shared through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The research was guided by following questions:

- What were the destination narratives created by the KTB and TTB prior to the pandemic?
- How did the destination narrative evolve during the first six months of the crisis?
- How did the social media posts of Kenyan and Tanzanian national tourism authorities align with the four phases of crisis management?

Introduction to the Thesis

The remaining thesis document is organized into four chapters. Chapter two providing a review of literature on theories and concepts used to inform the study. Chapter three outlines the research methods including the sampling and data collection process. Chapter four presents the findings and chapter five includes a discussion of the findings, provides recommendations, and addresses limitations of this research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of literature to provide a foundation of understanding of the theories and concepts that informed this research. Specifically, literature related to the following areas was reviewed: (a) consumer behavior, (b) destination image and narrative, and (c) crisis management. A summary of how the literature informed the research ends this chapter.

Consumer Behavior

As this study explored the development of destination narratives in Tanzania and Kenya, it was important to consider first the nature of consumer behavior, and how this relates to marketing and destination narratives. Moutinho (2007), argued that consumer behavior describes the ways that customers find and utilize information related to potential purchases and/or to the evaluation of those purchases. He further noted that the nature of product and services influence an individual's behavior towards the search and purchase of different products in the market.

According to Familmaleki et al., (2015) these factors are (a) cultural, (b) social and religion, (c) personal, and (d) psychological, and they influence the dynamic interaction between the consumer and supplier of the products or services.

Marketing and promotion efforts are a set of tools for communication about products and services, with an aim of persuading a purchase (Familmaleki et al., 2015). The ultimate goal of promotion is to convey the benefits of the product or service so as to maintain existing customers while attracting new customers (Familmaleki et al., 2015; Shamsi & Khan, 2018). However, the needs of different markets require different promotion strategies and the use of different communication channels (Herriott, 1997).

Ernest (2015) argued that the global expansion of internet capacity and the development of social media platforms has resulted in businesses being able to promote and sell their products and services to expanding markets. He further noted that social media, as means for information exchange and interaction, has resulted in a more reciprocal relationship between the businesses and purchases. Social media has become an essential source of information to evaluate products and services prior to a purchase decision as well as an important way of sharing their evaluation of their purchases (Ernest, 2015; Sangurde, 2019). Pitnana and Pitanatri (2016) argue that within

tourism, effective marketing and promotion activities are mostly done via multiple social media channels due to the easy access it provides to the consumers in different markets.

The Consumer Experience in Tourism

The categorization of tourism as an experiential product, it is important to understand visitors' experience by destination when marketing and promoting their destinations. The visitor experience (i.e., consumer experience) has become a vital element of managing tourism for economic sustainability (Murray et al., 2010). Given the complex and sometimes contested definition of 'tourism experience', it has been argued that there is no single definition (Murray et al., 2010). Murray et al., (2014), acknowledged that visitor experiences are constructed through a number of different processes including; (a) emotional and social inclusion, (b) supportive environments, (c) active involvement, and (d) memorable engagement. They further noted that within social science and marketing management approaches, a 'peak experience' is achieved when all elements are present. Similarly, Akkus et al, (2016 as cited in Sestad, 2007) stated visitor experiences are highly influenced by what the individual is seeking to gain. They further suggested that visitors often seek out both the novel and the familiar in the attempt to achieve their desired outcome. In contrast, Li (2000) argued that tourism experiences are a marketing construct that describes the design and implementation of multi-functional entertainment for consumers.

Yuniawati and Ridwanudin (2015) stated that experience should be viewed as three distinct phases; (a) anticipation, (b) experience, and (c) reflection. Within this perspective, anticipation includes information gathering, evaluation, and the decision to purchase. The experience, which has also been described as consisting of multiple phases (Duerden, 2015; Yuniawati & Ridwanudin, 2015), tends to refer to the onsite experience that the visitor has purchased. The reflection phase of this model refers the active engagement with the memories (e.g., photos, social media posts) and or artifacts purchased (i.e., souvenirs) post trip, and typically involves an evaluation (formal or informal) of the experience (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Graburn, 2001; Li, 2000; Yuniawati & Ridwanudin, 2015).

Nickerson (2006) noted that a visitor experience should provide a link between the visitor, the products or services, and the destination. Cutler and Carmichael (2010) highlighted that a destination's promotion of its products and services are essential in influencing a potential

visitor's decision to travel and purchase. For a destination to influence visitors' purchase decisions, they need to understand consumer behavior (Praveenkumar, 2015) in relation to the three phases of experience. Thus, as Cutler and Carmichael (2010) argued, the recent growth of social media has allowed destinations to hear directly from visitors about their experiences (i.e., they can view social media posts) and also what those visitors were expecting from their experiences. Social media has also become an important tool for destinations to communicate directly with both potential and existing visitor markets (Kiráľová & Pavlíčka, 2015; Roque & Raposo, 2016).

Digital Marketing in Tourism

The exploration of the development of destination narratives by DMOs and the role digital marketing has played in this development make the understanding of digital marketing an essential aspect in relation to the promotion of these destinations. According to Buhalis and Law (2008), tourism operators' and destinations' relationships with their consumers have changed dramatically with the expansion of the internet. Pitana and Pitanatri (2016) noted, that significant changes in the promotion, selling, booking, and purchasing of tourism experiences have occurred due to the billions of people actively using the internet and its associated tools (e.g., social media and e-commerce). They further argued that digital media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) have provided destinations and tourism operators communication channels for targeting their audiences more effectively due to social media profiles.

Pitana and Pitanatri (2016) have argued, that digital marketing has become vital for destination marketing organizations (DMO) as it allows for a larger global reach while also being more personalized to specific markets. Pike and Page (2014) have noted that the marketing of destinations has become ubiquitous in large part due to the use of social media by DMOs. Destinations use social media to weave imagery and messaging into a narrative that builds a positive destination image (Molina et al., 2010). However, Jashi (2015) stated that destinations need to share accurate information via social media to gain loyal, and long-term customers.

Destination Image and Narrative

The desire for novel experiences is one of the influential factors for people to travel (Yuniawati & Ridwanudin, 2015). While push factors influence individuals' decision to travel or not (Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Subadra et al., 2019), it is the stories told about a destination and the image that potential visitors have of that destination, that ultimately pull visitors to a particular location (Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Subadra et al., 2019). Thus, understanding these concepts (i.e., destination image and destination narratives) are vital to the work of DMOs in promoting their location and differentiating themselves from competitors.

Reynolds (1965, as cited in Govers et al., 2007) described the formation of a destination's image as a mental construct, developed from a flood of information, i.e., (a) promotion (advertising and brochures), (b) people's opinions (family/friends, travel agents), (c) media reporting (newspapers, social media posts, magazines, television news reporting and documentaries), and (d) popular culture (motion pictures, and literature). Furthermore, Melo et al., (2016) argued that with the increased competitiveness amongst destinations the image of the destination created is vital to distinguish themselves from their competitors and attract visitors. While there are other factors that impact on tourists' decision making, the positive image presented by DMOs is an important persuasive element influencing their behavior and therefore determining a destination's likelihood for success (Lopes, 2011; Melo et al., 2016). As Govers et al., (2007) noted that destination image is equivalent to destination reputation and Lopes (2011) argued, that a destination's reputation is a combination of the narrative created by the DMO and how well the visitors' experience matched the narrative shared.

Lichrou et al., (2008) noted that the narratives of different destinations were created through the telling of stories about products that distinguish one destination from another. The creation and evolution of the information shared in the form of a narrative, is an essential element for the creation of a positive or attractive destination image (Gallarza et al. 2002; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). Thus, the ongoing development of narratives leads to the creation of positive destination image and provides a platform for destination reputation management (Morgan, et al., 2011).

In essence a destination is created by the continually evolving narratives (Meethan, 1996), which are generated through "media such as documents, books, social media posts and

brochures, but also spoken, visual and non-verbal media” (Stokowski, 2002, p.372). Thus, the notion of place being defined by a narrative is a useful conceptual tool for tourism destination marketing, highlighting the intangible dimension of place and marketing’s role in the creation of the place’s symbolic meanings (Lichrou et al., 2008). Once a destination has a positive image displayed it is easy for consumers of these products to spot them which in turn acts as an external motivational factor for them to decide whether to travel or not travel to these destinations. Therefore, it is important that DMOs work to manage and control their own narratives to reduce risks to their destination image and reputation. For example, “What happens here, stays here” market branding campaign for Las Vegas, USA. As Shankman (2013) noted, this long running brand was created based on the narrative of Las Vegas as a destination for freedom; freedom to leave your worries behind and freedom to do or be anything you would like. As in the prior example of Las Vegas, the use of brand marketing campaigns tends to provide persuasive communication to the visitors or intended consumers while also creating a positive image for the destination (Huang, & Lin, 2017).

Crisis Management

The increase of disasters and their effect on global travel and tourism call for the understanding of the measures and approaches necessary for the creation and development of destination narrative by DMOs. Bryant (2005) and Gurtner (2007) noted that the threat of natural disasters and human induced crises initiates the need for the crisis management strategies. This encompasses activities done by governments, organizations, and individuals towards reducing the risks of a disaster (Baird, 2010). Furthermore, Haigh (2018) noted that disaster management is an ongoing process for governments, and organizations or businesses, divided into two phases: pre-disaster phase and post-disaster phase. He also stated that during these phases the different initiatives to prepare, cope, and recover from the disaster are established. Thus, the importance of disaster management as an ongoing cyclical process results from its ability to encourage a holistic approach to disaster management, and illustrate the relationship between disasters and a destination's development (Haigh, 2018; Ritchie, 2004).

Disaster management can be further divided into four phases; (a) mitigation, (b) preparedness, (c) response, and (d) recovery. With mitigation and preparedness ideally occurring

before a disaster and response and recovery taking place once a disaster occurs. While presented as a cyclical model, Haigh (2018) and Ritchie (2004) have argued that a destination's progression through the model in the exact order as sometimes the phases overlap and the progression depends significantly on the magnitude of the disaster.

The mitigation phase is focused on minimizing the effects of potential disasters (e.g., through public education or vulnerability analysis). Researchers have argued that mitigation is the critical foundational phase, meant to eliminate or reduce the impacts of a disaster or crisis on a destination. They have also noted that within the mitigation phase, governments, organizations, and individuals seek to reduce the effects of the compounding cycle of disaster damage, while also designing long-term strategies and activities meant to reduce the impacts of unavoidable disasters (Baird, 2010; Haigh, 2018; Ritchie, 2014; Technology, 2008).

Preparedness involves planning how to respond to inevitable disasters (e.g., having preparedness plans, doing emergency exercises/training, or developing warning systems). It has been argued that the preparedness activities are necessary when the mitigation measures are not successful in the prevention of a disaster. The preparedness phase is a continuous process involving governments, organizations, and individuals in the planning, training, practicing, and improving of operational capabilities of a destination for effective response to disasters or crises (Baird, 2010; Haigh, 2018; Ritchie, 2014; Technology, 2008).

Response involves efforts to minimize the hazards and impacts created by a disaster. For example, search and rescue looking for missing people, or emergency/disaster relief agencies (e.g., Red Cross) assisting with logistics and providing medical services (Baird, 2010; Haigh, 2018; Ritchie, 2014; Technology, 2008). Researchers agree that the response phase follows the start of a disaster, when emergency assistance is provided and action to support the affected community members. Baird (2010) suggested that this phase can include short-term recovery, such as steps taken to relocate displaced residents or the reopening of some community/business operations; however, full recovery is the next phase of the cycle. He further noted that the response phase seeks to reduce further possibilities of secondary damages and to speed up recovery.

The recovery phase can be viewed as returning back to normal. Progression through this phase can include activities that target short-term, medium-term, and long-term recovery with the intent of returning to normal operations or an improved quality of life. (Baird, 2010; Government of

BC, 2016) Figure 5 illustrates the cyclical disaster management model by Alfonso Gonzalez-Herrero and Cornelius Pratt in 1996.

Take the case of one of the worst natural disasters in history, the 2004 tsunami crisis in Thailand. Though the disaster was unexpected, neighboring communities, governments and international organizations responded quickly to the disaster (Nidhiprabha, 2007). In the immediate aftermath of the event, local authorities focused on providing basic shelter, food, and medical aid to those affected by the disaster; search and rescue missions were launched for survivors stuck on remote beaches and throughout small islands (Nidhiprabha, 2007). A mass international effort was launched after the tsunami to support the reconstruction of the country. The government set aside \$112 million for tsunami relief, of which 76% was allocated for emergency relief and mitigation measures which included the long-term awareness of the disaster and its associated risks as well as the implementation of some physical measures to limit the damage of the future tsunami (Nidhiprabha, 2007; Norwegian Geotechnical Institute, 2006; Srivichai et al 2007). 14 % of the relief funds were directed to the recovery of the tourism industry. The initial relief effort was generally regarded as successful, given the unpredictability of the disaster (Nidhiprabha, 2007).

Figure 5

Disaster Management Model



The actions and activities conducted in each phase depend on the nature of the disaster that

has occurred, for example, disease, earthquake, floods, volcanic eruption, war or any other (Gurtner, 2007; Pagaria & Kumar, 2020). Disaster management in the context of the tourism industry focuses on restoring the destination's image which is usually impacted by the crisis (Gurtner, 2007). Thus, the communication from and about a destination during a disaster or crisis becomes an important aspect of its management of the destination's image and reputation (Ritchie et al., 2004).

Jaques, (2007) and launge et al (2009) noted that the weakness of the model is its linearity, with an assumption that activities occur sequentially leading to some form resolution by managers or DMOs based on their understanding. Haigh (2018) and Ritchie (2004) suggested that the four phases in the circle do not always appear sequentially they can overlap based on the nature and duration of the crisis. The model signifies that competing issues are dealt with sequentially although in reality they are often dealt with simultaneously, and sometimes even at different phases of the process. (Bigelow et al 1993 as noted by Jaques, 2007), concluded that "issues do not necessarily follow a linear, sequential path; rather they follow paths that are reflective of the intensity and diversity of the value and interests those stakeholders bring to an issue and of the complex interaction among... factors". Thus, it is important to understand the crisis and its variable to effective management.

Crisis Management and DMOs

Banyai, (2009) noted that destination image results from the combination of visitors' past experiences, media stories about the destination, and the marketing narratives shared by DMOs. Vargas Sánchez (2018) noted that during crisis situations destination images can be eroded, and the effects may last for a long period of time. He also argued that media coverage during the crisis situation in destination is important for DMOs. McCaul (2014) noted, that social media channels have proven to be of a great value to destinations, not only in promotion and image creation but also as a way of sharing news. He further noted that social media channels are a powerful tool for mobilizing relief efforts and confirming reports from the ground during a crisis.

Destination image is also an essential element to be considered during the crisis phase and the post crisis phase of any destination. Gomis-López and González-Reverté (2020) noted that digital media provides space for DMOs to share their strategies for management during a

crisis and after a crisis. DMOs strategies towards destinations recovering from the crisis, to save their affected economy, need to incorporate different strategies for different audiences (Avraham, 2015).

The role of marketing communications in rebuilding a destination's image is unquestionable (Lehto, Douglas & Park 2008). Communication with tourism markets can have distinct goals, from reducing misunderstandings about the scale of the disaster (small or big) and the restoration of confidence and trust in the destination, to decreasing perceptions of risk and restoring the destination's image. Minar, (2019) noted that it is essential to engage modern crisis precautions involving digital media for the destination image recovery through narratives after a crisis situation. Borzyszkowski, (2013) noted that the narrative created and shared by the DMOs provides destination positioning during unprecedented times of a crisis. He further noted that the created narrative provides a platform for sharing the crisis management strategies of a destination, which may improve the competitiveness positioning of a destination among others. Thus, the communication in the form of a narrative for crisis management by DMOs usually has a goal of rebuilding the consumers' confidence and attracting visitors back to the destination (Upadhya, 2014).

Summary

Negrusa and Coros (2016) argued that DMOs have an integral role in connecting the supply and demand aspect of tourism, while also ensuring the effective use of destination resources and managing visitors' satisfaction. Therefore, the marketing and communication activities undertaken by DMOs shape the image of a destination, which in turn reflect on the destination's reputation from a visitor experience perspective.

The increased use of digital media by individuals has resulted in its expanded use as a marketing tool for DMOs. This has led to DMOs having to pay more attention to what they share and the channels they use (Pitana and Pitanatri 2016). Ultimately DMOs are trying to influence the purchasing decisions of visitors (Matiza & Oni, 2014) and social media has proven to be an essential part of this.

Blackman and Ritchie (2008) have argued that DMOs play a crucial role on behalf of the destination through managing crisis communication and promoting the recovery of the market

after the crisis. For example, DMOs have an integral role in providing the destination narrative and correcting miscommunication and misperceptions about their destination. These efforts are focused on protecting the destination image and reputation.

The literature reviewed suggests that not all destinations will approach the same crisis in the same way; therefore, they move through the crisis management phases in different ways. Additionally, messages shared during the same timeframe are likely differ based upon the approach that the destination, and the DMO, takes on managing the crisis. Therefore, this study focused on the social media communications of two DMOs within the East Africa Region, to compare the narratives shared during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research explored the narratives and alignment with the crisis management model (Haigh, 2018)

Chapter Three: Methods

The purpose of this study was to compare the destination narratives created and managed by the KTB and TTB during 2 ½ months prior to the pandemic and the first 6 ½ months of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Moreover, as social media is a primary and immediate communication channel used during crises, this study focused on the messaging shared through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The comparative case study approach of the two destinations is adopted as a means of understanding the similarities and differences in responding to the pandemic, and also to explore how they managed their destination narratives via social media at the national level after the outbreak of the COVID 19.

The study employed qualitative case study approach that is exploratory in nature and follows an abductive approach- “a form of synthetic inferences through which meaningful underlying patterns of selected phenomena are recognized to comprehend a complex reality and expand knowledge” (Mirza et al., 2014 p.1981). It involves the identification of codes and categories as it supports deductive and inductive sourced evidence (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Lipscomb, 2012 p. 244-245).

Study Design

The study utilized a content analysis approach to better understand the narratives shared by the KTB and TTB during the pandemic. Content analysis was an appropriate choice as it allows for inferences to be made from images and texts (Hays et al, 2013). The scope of the study was limited to social media posted between December 2019 and September 2020 so as to cover a short pre-pandemic phase as well as the first six months of the pandemic. This start of time frame preceded a dramatic ceasing of global tourism due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ended after both countries had reopened to international visitation (Kucheran, 2020; Kenya Travel Restrictions, 2020). This also allowed for the application of the crisis management model (Zamoum & Gorpe, 2018) as a framework for understanding how the narratives created by the KTB and TTB evolved over time.

Population

This research focused on the social media accounts of the KTB and TTB. The study population included all the videos and images posted on YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook from December 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020. Table 2 illustrates the total number of posts made during the study timeframe by the KTB and TTB on each platform. Table 3 indicated the total number of followers that each DMO has on each platform.

Table 2

Total Number of Social Media Posts by DMO and Platform

Country	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Twitter	Total Posts
Kenya	616	449	170	716	1951
Tanzania	139	110	19	179	447

Table 3

Number of Followers or Subscribers for Each Social Media Platform.

Country	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
Kenya	94.7k	351.1k	289k	10.3k
Tanzania	42.7k	9,874	98,748	5.51k

The followers or subscribers of these social media accounts are not necessarily unique followers.

Sampling

This study utilized a purposeful sampling technique (Tongco, 2007) which focused on posts directly related to the promotion of tourism and the destination in either Swahili or English. Posts shared by the DMOs that were not directly related to the creation of their destination's narrative (e.g., holiday wishes) were excluded. When the same posts were shared on multiple platforms only one instance of the post was included in the final data set. The resulting data set included 869 posts by the KTB and 186 posts by the TTB.

Data Collection

To collect the social media posts that only included images and text, a screenshot (photo) of the posts were taken and the files were labeled by platform and date. Data from posts on Twitter,

Facebook, and Instagram that included videos without speaking were collected using a two-step process including taking a screenshot to collect the associated text and downloading the videos. Data from videos posted to all platforms that included voice content were transcribed; however, videos from YouTube were not downloaded.

Researcher Positionality

I am a proud Tanzanian and Christian with strong beliefs, so I bring that position to my research. I have a Bachelor of Wildlife Management and Tourism from the College of African Wildlife Management and am passionate about the potential for tourism to improve the lives of Tanzanians. Therefore, I have strong beliefs about what the TTB should be doing to promote tourism growth in Tanzania.

Tanzania and Kenya are good neighbors; however, when it comes to tourism marketing the two countries are very competitive. It can be frustrating that the Kenyan tourism industry is routinely reported as being more advanced than that of Tanzania. Further, when Kenya advertises their country using images of Mount Kilimanjaro, which is in Tanzania, it is annoying. I believe that our parks and protected areas are superior to those of Kenya; however, I also acknowledge that our tourism resources are ultimately the same, but Kenya has taken greater advantage of theirs.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the destination narratives created by the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) and the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB), with a particular focus on messages shared during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter shares the findings of the abductive data analysis of social media posts made by the (KTB) and the (TTB). In the following sections, the data analysis process is described and the findings of the study are presented. The findings about the destination narrative are presented by country (Kenya followed by Tanzania) before a comparative summary is presented.

Analysis

The data included in analysis were social media posts (videos, images, and text) made by the KTB (n=869) and the TTB (n=186) via Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Table 4) between the dates of December 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. However, identical posts made on multiple platforms were only included once in the analysis. To prepare the data for analysis all the videos with spoken words were transcribed, while images and associated text were collected using screen capture (i.e., a picture of the post was taken) before being imported into NVivo version 12. Each image and video were labeled according to the source and date of posting.

Analysis was conducted using a multi-stage coding process that was guided by the research questions which focus on destination narrative. The initial stage analysis included sorting data into four temporal periods (a) pre-pandemic, (b) early days of the pandemic, (c) preparing for reopening, and (d) reopening. The second stage analysis involved coding data into different categories within each temporal period. The final stage was to examine the different categories and identify the themes that were found in each destination's social media posts.

Findings

The sample for this study included KTB and TTB social media posts on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube that spoke directly to tourism (i.e., generic holiday announcements were excluded) or the COVID-19 pandemic. Identical posts made on multiple platforms were only included once (KTB n=183 identical posts on Facebook and Instagram;

TTB n=23 identical posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). Table 4 identifies the number of posts made by the KTB and the TTB from each platform that were included in the analysis.

Table 4

Number of Posts Made Per Platform

	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube	Total
Kenya Total	335	289	65	180	869
Pre-pandemic	56	80	0	9	145
Early days of the pandemic	13	16	0	8	37
Preparing for reopening	151	98	31	27	307
Reopening	115	95	34	136	380
Tanzania Total	75	70	22	19	186
Pre-pandemic	17	34	7	5	63
Early days of the pandemic	5	9	0	0	14
Preparing for reopening	10	3	3	9	25
Reopening	43	24	12	5	84

Note; Identical posts that appeared on multiple platforms were only included as a single post.

Evolving Destination Narratives

Storylines are the themed promotional campaigns that are used to highlight particular products or services. When storylines are combined, they form a narrative about the destination. The destination narrative is thus the sum of all the storylines shared and is the means through which the idea of place is constructed (Rickly-Boyd, 2009 P.261; Li Y, 2014). In this section the narratives created and shared by Kenya and Tanzania during the four different phases of the pandemic are presented which also align with the phases of the crisis management cycle.

The four temporal period considered in the study were the Pre-Pandemic phase from December 1, 2019 – March 11, 2020. The Early Days of the Pandemic phase occurred between March 12 – March 30, 2020, after the WHO declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic and the countries started taking action to minimize the spread of the disease and risks there within.

The Preparing for Reopening phase was where the timelines for the two countries diverged; with Kenya staying in this phase from April 1 – June 30, 2020 while Tanzania ended it earlier (April 1 – May 20, 2020). During this phase the countries communicated their different strategies of how they planned to re-open, as well as scripting their own narratives about why travelers / visitors would want to come visit the countries after reopening. The final phase examined was the re-opening phase which occurred from July 1 – September 30, 2020 for Kenya and May 21 – September 30, 2020 for Tanzania. Figure 6 illustrates the different timeline of the four temporal periods for Kenya while Figure 7 presents the same for Tanzania.

Figure 6

Pandemic Crisis Management Timeline for Kenya

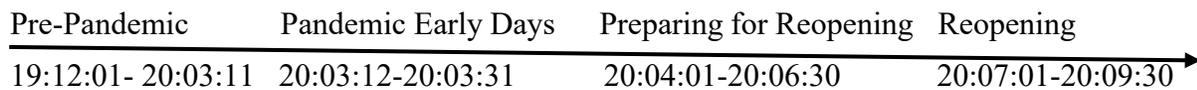
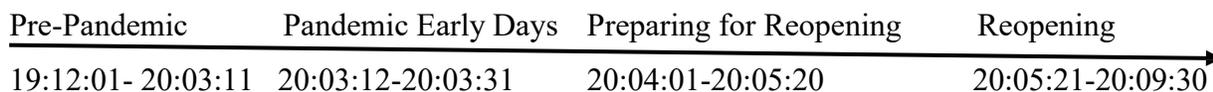


Figure 7

Pandemic Crisis Management Timeline for Tanzania



Pre-Pandemic - Kenya

The pre-pandemic phase of December 1, 2019 to March 11, 2020 was a period when the KTB focused on the advertising and promotion of their tourism products under normal operating circumstances. The narrative created during this phase by the KTB was that Kenya, a world-class destination for adventure and nature-based safari tourism, commands an offering of the highest-quality experiences and unique value for every type of visitor. This narrative was supported by five different storylines, as follows:

The first storyline presented by the KTB was Kenya's access to raw nature – that of wild environments, untamed landscapes, undisturbed ecosystems, unspoiled vistas and undeveloped

spaces. The KTB showcased the diverse array of landscapes that Kenya possesses - from arid inland savannahs, to temperate alpine mountain-scapes, to lush coastal rainforests and white sand beaches. By advertising their access to these environments, the KTB reinforced exclusive opportunities for getting away from the masses of humanity and the pace of modern life to relax, gain unique perspective and enjoy nature as it was meant to be. This storyline had 43 posts with 29,882 likes and views.

There is nothing better than gazing up into the twinkling Kenyan skies before falling asleep. The Losaba star beds sit on the wheels which are rolled out onto raised wooden platforms so that guests can sleep under the endless stars with sweeping views over an undulating valley and a permanent waterhole frequented by resident wildlife. (Instagram February 27, 2020). This storyline communicated that for nature-lovers as well as those looking to get away from it all Kenya offers exclusive access to both the abundance and solitude that mother nature offers on her own. The figures below describe this story line.

Figure 8

Access to Raw Nature (Instagram December 6, 2019)

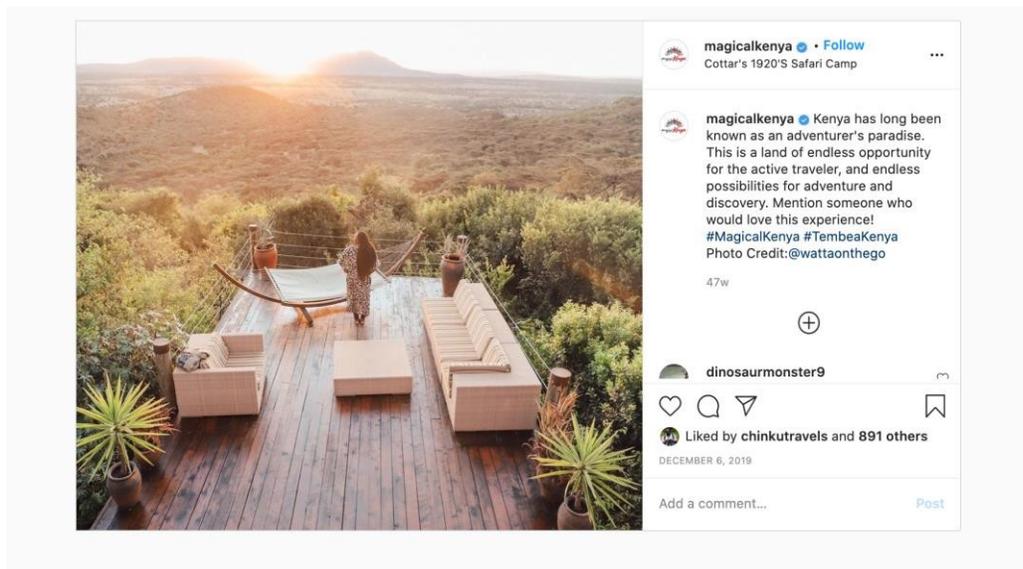


Figure 9

The Wild Environment of Kenya (Instagram December 2, 2019)



Figure 10

The Mountains in Kenya (twitter Jan 19, 2020)



Figure 11

Scenic Views (Instagram March 1, 2020)



Figure 12

The Beach Sides (Twitter 22, January 2020)



Figure 13

Rippling Waters (Twitter January 6, 2020)



The second storyline communicated by the KTB during the pre-pandemic phase showcased Kenya's diverse tourism product mix, offering opportunities for many different types of adventure in inland safari environments, rich ocean environments as well as in urban ones (n=20 with 15,320 likes and views). This storyline showcased the variety of experiences available while travelling in Kenya, diversifying the destination's product mix between inland safari, urban and the oceanside adventure, showing that travel in Kenya is not only about land-based safaris. This indicates how Kenya includes multiple unspoiled sceneries and diverse activities. *"Come to magical watamu and learn kitesurfing and variety of adventurous water sport activities"* (Twitter, January 27, 2020); *"Whether you are in the mood for couples cycling or a scenic hike #makeverydayvalentineday."* (Twitter February 14, 2020). Kenya reinforces that they have a variety of opportunities for visitors to relax and enjoy diverse experiences

Figure 14

Diving Experiences (Instagram January 6, 2020)

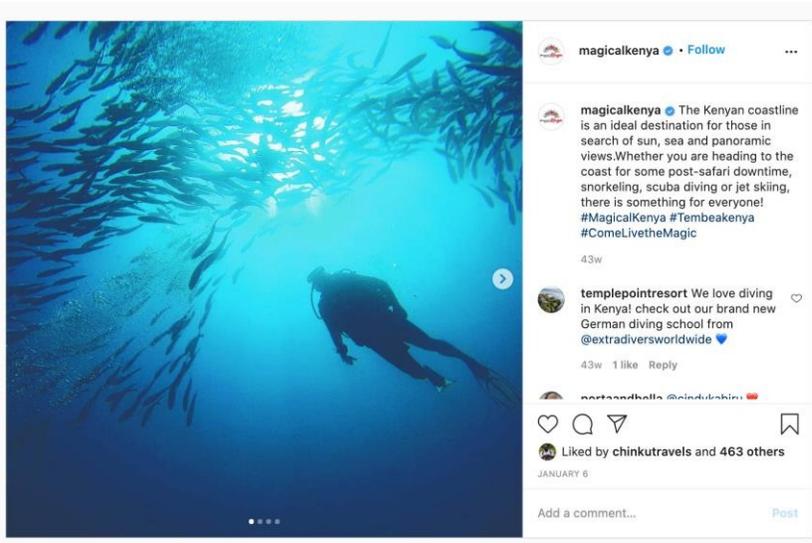


Figure 15

Alternative Adventures (Twitter February 2, 2020)



Figure 16

Diving with the Marine Life (Twitter January 20, 2020)



The third storyline communicated by the KTB showcase the exclusivity of their offerings. In that, the majority of posts featured few if any people in it and those that did highlighted one or two people set in luxury overlooking expanses of nature. This reinforced the messaging that what they were offering was not crowded mass-tourism, but rather exclusive opportunities for a limited number of people to experience something few get to see yet most people dream of. The storyline had 28 posts with 38,223 likes and views.

Figure 17

Expanses of Nature (Instagram March 5, 2020)

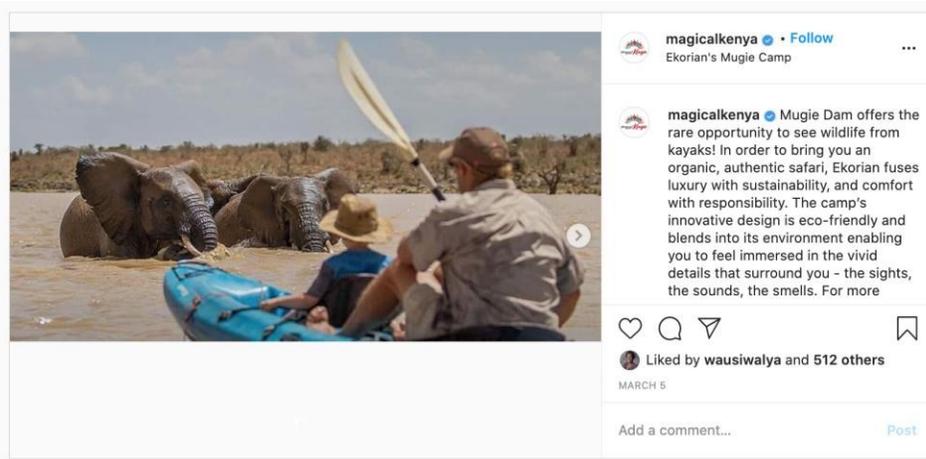


Figure 18

Exclusive Experiences (Twitter February 24, 2020)



The fourth storyline communicated by the KTB during this phase showcased opportunities for unique, authentic cultural connection and contribution at a local community level. Posts in this vein focused on opportunities for visitors to interact with both contemporary and traditional cultures, and generally described opportunities for meaningful community engagement. The KTB showcased visitors connecting with local communities, sharing experiences with community members, learning about local cultures and contributing value to the ‘social good,’ as signature experiences offering unique value within the destination. *“This experience allows you to connect*

with the local community Kenyan women, grandmas and families as you immerse yourself in their lives and gain authentic insight into Kenyan culture that tourists rarely experience” (Twitter December 23, 2019). This showed that within Kenya’s tourism offerings are authentic cultural opportunities for learning, connection and contribution, unique to the cultures found within the destination. The storyline had 14 posts with 13,202 likes and views

Figure 19

Cultural Connect (Instagram January 2, 2020)



Figure 20

Warm and Vibrant Traditions (Instagram January 2, 2020)



Figure 21

One Horizon (Instagram January 2, 2020)



Figure 22

Traditional Culture (Twitter February 22, 2020)



The fifth and final storyline communicated by the KTB during the pre-pandemic period showcased Kenya's top-tier wildlife safaris, featuring posts of abundant wildlife in unspoiled landscape views, exclusive opportunities to see the biggest herds, mega faunas and largest concentrations of key wildlife species of interest to their target markets, a diverse portfolio of unique visitor experiences offered as well as exclusive, luxurious amenities in the isolation of raw nature. This storyline communicated that for the nature-loving adventure seeker on the hunt for the biggest, best and most abundant safari offerings, nowhere else will you find better value and more unique experiences than in Kenya. The storyline had 39 posts and 20,791 likes and view

Figure 23

Wildlife Concentrations (Instagram March 3, 2020)

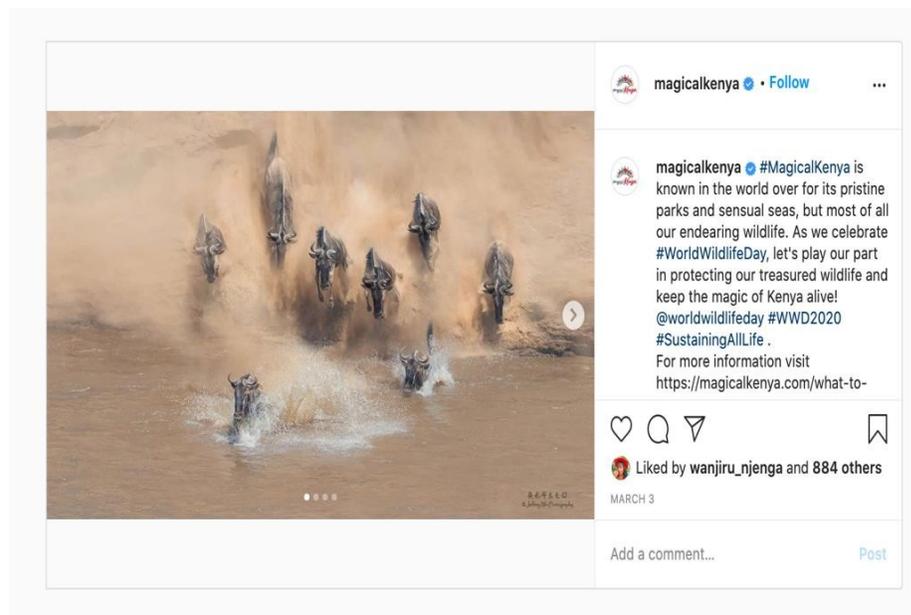


Figure 24

Safari Experiences (twitter January 4,2020)



Figure 25

Beautiful Birds (Twitter January 3, 2020)



Figure 26

The Big Five (Twitters February 8, 2020)



Table 5

Total Number Likes per Platform per Storyline

Kenya Storyline (n= #posts)	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Access to un spoilt nature (n=43)	24,753	4,288	841	29,882
Wildlife (n=39)	18,564	1,873	354	20,791
Exclusivity (n= 28)	15,799	1,521	112	38,223
Product mix (n=20)	14,392	690	238	15,320
Cultural connection (n=14)	12,801	223	178	13,202
Total	86,309	8,595	1,723	117,418

Note; Facebook had no posts and follower’s engagement as their posts appeared on multiple platforms and were only included once.

Pre-Pandemic - Tanzania

For Tanzania the pre-pandemic phase of December 1, 2019 to March 11, 2020 was a period when the TTB focused on the promotion of their destination and tourism products under normal operating circumstances. The narrative during this time was that Tanzania is a modern, legitimate and well-developed player on the international tourism stage who possesses a diverse mix of unique, high-value offerings, and allows travelers to access these offerings from the comforts of modern convenience. This narrative was created by four different storylines, as follows.

The first storyline for the TTB during the pre-pandemic phase showcased Tanzania’s displays of their tourism products on big international tourism stages and both the recognition and legitimacy derived from this. Many posts were based around business and tourism development (n=9 with 1,370 likes and views), where the selling of their tourism products globally as well as their displays at major international conventions were a representation of how well organized the destination was. These efforts were made to reinforce the storyline that Tanzania is recognized on big tourism stages globally and in this way is shown to be a modern, legitimate destination possessing valuable offerings, reassuring government stakeholders and travelers alike.

Figure 27

Tourism Expo (Twitter January 23, 2020)



Figure 28

International Platforms (Twitter February 12, 2020)



Figure 29

Stakeholder Participation (Twitter February 12, 2020)



The second storyline for the TTB during the pre-pandemic phase was their offering of convenient access to a diverse mix of nature-based experiences. In this regard, much focused effort was put on displays of beauty in their natural wild spaces (n=18 with 2,420 likes and views). Posts showcased nature explorations in the richness of the wilderness as well as adventure opportunities within accessible nature reserve destinations. They also showcased a variety of undisturbed natural landscapes ranging from oceanside, savanna plain, lakeside to tropical rainforests. This variety reinforced the storyline that Tanzania offers a diverse mix of both product and environmental offerings for travelers, and that while travelers visit, they can take in many different types of experiences.

The beauty in #tanzaniaunforgettable lies both onland and as well as underwater. Known for some of the best diving sites in the world like #zanzibar #mafia the coral reefs and marine life within the country are not only beautiful but also undisturbed. Karibu Tanzania. (TTB; Twitter -February 27, 2020).

Figure 30

Untamed Nature (Instagram February 11, 2020)



Figure 31

River Rufiji (Instagram February 27, 2020)



Figure 32

River Rufiji (Twitter January 28, 2020)



Figure 33

Beautiful Sunsets (Facebook December 3, 2019).



The third storyline presented by the TTB focused on the large wildlife populations native to Tanzania, both on land and in the ocean (n= 21 with 3,572 likes and views). Posts spoke to the biodiversity of the area and the abundance of many key species for wildlife safari tourism across the country. This showed that visitors to Tanzania can expect to see a wide range of animals in their natural habitat, as well as expect high concentrations of these animals within the undisturbed and protected nature reserves and national parks.

Figure 34

Wildlife Abundances (Twitter January 21, 2020)



Figure 35

Unforgettable Memories (Twitter; February 24, 2020)



Figure 36

Tanzania Giraffe (Twitter March 4, 2020)



Figure 37

Marine Life (Twitter; January 27, 2020)



The fourth storyline communicated by the TTB during the pre-pandemic phase showcased their modern adventure offerings that combined the natural abundance of the land with man-made ways of interacting with nature that allow visitors to enjoy their time in a way that a less developed destination cannot offer. Posts in this storyline showed exclusive, alternative adventure experiences (n=6 with 842 likes and views) in the unbridled beauty of nature and convenient points of access to desirable locations. The emphasis was on man-made ways of interacting with nature - whether it be skydiving, ballooning, diving or ziplining - highlighting the diverse types of adventures offered to the visitors of the country. This educated potential visitors to the wealth of experience types available to suit every taste.

Figure 38

Balloon Safari (Twitter March 13, 2020)



Figure 39

Zip Line Experiences (Twitter March 10, 2020)



Figure 40

Hiking Adventures (Twitter march 9, 2020)



Thus, the narrative created by these storylines was Tanzania's attempt to show that they are a modern, legitimate and well-developed player on the international tourism stage who

possesses a diverse mix of unique, high-value offerings, and allow travelers to access these offerings from the comforts of relative modern convenience. The meaning contained within messages are only those deciphered within the eye of the viewer, so regardless of the frequency of posts, the attempts at storyline and narrative creation do still add up to storylines and narratives, just not those with as much relative strength as those shared with much greater frequency by other DMOs.

Table 6

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Tanzania Storylines (# of posts)	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Wildlife (n=21)	95	2,550	351	576	3,572
Wild spaces (n=18)	37	1,654	298	431	2,420
Legitimacy (n=9)	63	1,230	77	0	1,370
Modern adventures (n=6)	63	728	51	0	842
Total	236	5,952	732	1,284	8,204

Comparison of the Pre-Pandemic Phase

The pre-pandemic phase was the time when both destinations had the same timeline - December 1, 2019 to March 11, 2020. During this phase both destinations had narratives that were focused on the promotion of tourism products within their countries. The main difference between the two destinations was that in Kenya, the KTB created a narrative focused on the highest-quality experiences offerings, unique value and diverse experience types available for every type of visitor in Kenya. This narrative was strong and well emphasized based on the frequency of posts shared across social media platforms. In Tanzania, however, the TTBs narrative spot-lit Tanzania as a modern, legitimate and well-developed player on the international tourism stage who possesses a diverse mix of unique, high-value offerings, and allow travelers to access these offerings from the comforts of relative modern convenience. This narrative doesn't stand as strongly for the potential customers based on the frequency of the posting within the given time frame. During the pre-pandemic phase, the KTB communicated by social media a total of 145 posts with more follower's engagement from Instagram which had 86,309 likes and views. This contributed to the strengthen

of their narrative and storylines whileTTB had 63 posts with a total of 8204 like and views from Facebook, Instagram, twitter and YouTube, which were less than follower’s engagement in KTB on a single platform which made their storyline weak due to the low frequencies and followers’ engagement of emphasis. Duringthis phase none of the destinations changed their narrative or acknowledged the presence of the COVID – 19 pandemic threats in the marketing and promotion messaging. The number of the storylines is not a direct reflection; the total number of posts as a single post may represent morethan one storyline as shown below.

Table 7

Comparing Pre-Pandemic Storylines and Narrative

Kenya Storyline (# of posts)	Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to unspoilt nature(n=43) ● Wildlife (n=39) ● Exclusivity (n= 28) ● Product mix (n=20) ● Cultural connection(n=14) 	Kenya is a world-class destination for adventure and nature-based safari tourism, offering the highest-quality experiences,and unique value for every type of visitor (n= 145).
<p>Tanzania Storylines (# ofposts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wildlife (n=21) ● Wild spaces (n=18) ● Legitimacy (n=9) ● Modern adventures(n=6) 	<p>Narrative</p> <p>Tanzania is a modern, legitimate and well-developed player onthe international tourism stage who possesses a diverse mix of unique, high-value offerings, and offers these experiences withcomfort of modern convenience (n=63).</p>

Early Days of the Pandemic phase in Kenya

The early days of the pandemic phase was the time immediately following when the novel Coronavirus was declared as a world pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). During this phase KTB shared a narrative that Kenya is a safe, caring and responsible destination with many attractions to be excited about for future visits. This narrative was supported by two storylines based on safety protocols and safari tourism as described below.

The first storyline created by the KTBs social media communications was largely focused on safety protocols (n=26 with 25,138 likes and views). This highlighted mitigation and preparedness strategies which included different protocols for ensuring hygiene in different facilities to ensure the safety of the visitors and service providers before the country's closure or lockdown. These preparedness strategies not only focused on visitors but also on the locals as a means of showing that they were taking the safety issue seriously and they were prepared to make sure that everyone stayed safe. However, these measures were also enforced in the recreational facilities through maintaining a high level of hygiene and safety for travelers and locals alike by taking necessary precautions and maintaining high standards. This storyline communicated to its social media viewers that Kenya's tourism facilities in particular were adhering to the most stringent national standards on hygiene practices and as such were able to ensure the highest level of safety for all visitors. This storyline also showcased the way in which hospitality facilities were continuing to be used while also illustrating how through this they were ensuring the safety of guests and the general public by following all health measures and protocols emphasized by the authorities as a means of controlling the spread of the novel Coronavirus. These communications showed the KTB's awareness and sensitivity to the importance of Kenya's hospitality facilities as a part of their tourism and overall economy by communicating that they remain a safe place to visit, while at the same time showcasing Kenya's level of care by ensuring that these facilities met the safety needs of their users.

Figure 41

Mitigation and Preparedness (Twitter March 22, 2020)



Figure 42

Safety Procedures (Twitter march 23, 2020)



Figure 43

Preparedness Strategies (Twitter March 18, 2020)



Figure 44

Hygiene Measures (Twitter March 23, 2020)



The second storyline with a focus on safety protocols during this time was based on the messaging surrounding “Stay home and travel tomorrow,” to support the strategies and steps emphasized by the UNWTO to minimize the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic (n=20 with 17,423 like and views). This storyline surrounding the responsible limitation of travel was reinforced by Kenya as a means of reducing movements among people to reduce the spread of the pandemic and keeping the general public safe.

Figure 45

Travel Tomorrow (Instagram March 25, 2020)



Figure 46

Unprecedented Times (Twitter March 28, 2020)



Figure 47

Stay Home (Twitter March 31, 2020)



The final storyline shared by the KTB during this phase presented their safari tourism products – the unique, luxurious, exclusive and world class amenities, unspoiled and abundant nature experiences and diverse adventure offerings - but with the messaging “the magic awaits.” The storyline created here was that despite the global challenges going on, Kenya’s beautiful attractions were still intact, the magical experiences of the destination await in anticipation of future visitors and when it is safe to travel again, Kenya will be ready to receive all those who visit. This storyline served as a reminder to their target market about all the experiences inherent in the destination, creating desire and anticipation for the experiences that their products offered. The change in messaging in KTBs social media communications to “The Magic Awaits” after the COVID pandemic declaration showed the Kenya cares for the suppliers and customers by putting a pause on the tourism activities but also responding to their situation and pivoting their messaging but at least initially, it did not have any focus on safety or responsibility. This storyline carried on throughout the entire ‘Early Days of the Pandemic’ phase. KTB had a total number of 25 posts and 30,211 like and views.

Figure 48

Breathtaking Waterfalls (Twitter March 27, 2020)



Figure 49

The Magic Awaits (Twitter March 29, 2020)



Figure 50

Magic Awaits (Instagram March 28, 2020)



Figure 51

Adventure Awaits (YouTube March 28, 2020)



Figure 52

Adventure Awaits (YouTube March 28, 2020)



Table 8

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Kenya storyline (# of posts)	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Safari tourism (n=25)	13,589	570	16,052	30,211
Safety protocols (n=20)	7,192	439	9,801	17,423
Before lockdown (n=11)	4,220	239	7,765	22,224
Stay home (n=9)	1,329	355	1,230	2,914
Total	26,330	1,603	34,848	72,772

Note: Facebook had no posts and follower's engagement as their posts appeared on multiple platforms and were only included once.

Early Days of the Pandemic Phase in Tanzania

The early days of the pandemic phase in Tanzania, like in Kenya, was initiated when COVID-19 was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). During this phase the TTB's narrative placed an emphasis on the safety and unity of travelers and locals enduring the pandemic alike, while at the same time stoking anticipation for what awaits visitors once they could travel again. The narrative was created around three different storylines surrounding responsible / limited travel, a call to save the tourism industry as well as unique levels of access to incomparable natural phenomena, as follows:

The first storyline was predominantly focused on wildlife safaris (n=11 with 13,929 likes and views). The messages were based on wild spaces and experiences that visitors would get within Tanzania -continuation of the original marketing and promotional messaging from the pre-pandemic phase. These posts showcased the abundance of the wilderness as well as adventurous experiences available within the accessible nature reserves, which are unique and exceptional within the world. These abundant protected areas were shown to be a result of the continuous commitment in the protection and preservation of the natural landscape and wide range of

biodiversity within them. In these posts the TTB reinforced the storyline that they offer unique access to natural spaces and experiences within the destination that cannot compare to any other in the world. Unique in this study to the messaging of the TTB were communications that visitors should not cancel their trips but rather postpone them for the future, showing TTB's encouragement of retention of as much value for the industry as possible in order to withstand the economic shock of COVID-19.

Figure 53

Wilderness Experience (Twitter March 15, 2020)



Figure 54

The Game Drives (Twitter march 24, 2020)



Figure 55

Tree Top Experience (Instagram March 14, 2020)



Figure 56

Skydiving in Zanzibar (Twitter March 13, 2020)



The other storyline shared by the TTB during this phase of the pandemic was immediate, strong messaging stressing the limitation of travel but also emphasizing responsible travel and the practice of basic hygiene to prevent or limit the spread of pandemic (n= 5 with 8,022 likes and views).

It's time for all of us to UNITE, think of OTHERS and be KIND, TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY and PRACTICE basic HYGIENE to prevent the spread of #CORONAVIRUS. Follow the guidelines by the responsible authorities to ensure your HEALTH AND SAFETY. TOURISM IS LIFE, WE SHALL OVERCOME. (TTB; Twitter-march 19th 2020)

In combination with messaging emphasizing safety was messaging around saving the tourism industry since a large part of Tanzania's economy depends on tourism for prosperity and survival. Generally, in the early days of the pandemic this storyline created by the TTB to the general public was all about unity, togetherness and recognizing that it was not safe travel, but also to stay strong and safe.

Figure 57

Stay Home (Instagram March 30, 2020)



Figure 58

Solidarity (Twitter March 24, 2020)



Table 9

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Tanzania storyline (# of posts)	Instagram	Twitter	Total
Wildlife safari (n=11)	1,066	109	1,175
Safety protocols (n=5)	3,303	59	3,362
Total	4,369	168	4,537

Note: Facebook and YouTube had no posts and follower's engagement as their posts appeared on multiple platforms and were only included once.

Comparison of Early Days of the Pandemic

The 'Early Days of the Pandemic' phase was another time frame when the destinations shared the same timeline – being March 12, 2020 to March 30, 2020. During this phase both destinations' communications were emphasizing the safety of visitors in their facilities, although this was communicated through slightly different approaches while showing different capacities within the destinations. During this time KTBs created and shared a narrative portraying how safe, caring and responsible Kenya was with how much to be excited about for future visits. However, the narrative that the TTB created through their storylines during this time emphasized the safety and unity of travelers and locals enduring the pandemic alike, while at the same time stoking anticipation for what awaits visitors once they can travel again. This shows the commonality between the destinations where safety of people is taken more seriously than the monetary gains from tourism. The early days of the pandemic phases KTB had a total of 37 posts with 42,561 views and likes on Instagram, YouTube and Twitter on messaging's pertaining health and safety protocols, indicating a high engagement from their followers. TTB had 14 posts with a total of 3362 likes and views on messaging pertaining to health safety. The number of posts are not a direct reflection of the total number of storylines shown below as a single post may represent more than one storyline.

Table 10

Comparing Early Days Narrative and Storylines

Kenya storylines (# of posts)	Narrative
Safari tourism products (n=25)	Kenya is a safe, caring and responsible destination with many attractions to be excited about for future visits (n= 37).
Safety protocols (n=20)	
Before lockdown (n=11)	
Stay home (n=9)	
Tanzania storyline (# of posts)	Narrative
Wildlife safaris (n=11)	Responsible / limited travel, a call to save the tourism industry as well as unique levels of access to incomparable natural phenomena (n=14).
Safety protocols (n=5)	

Preparing for reopening Kenya

The preparation for reopening phase of April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020. The narrative during this time surrounds the relevance of tourism to everyone, the pride the country has in its industry and the hope the country retains for its future. This narrative is supported by six storylines as described below.

The first storyline shared by the KTB during the preparing for reopening phase was based on creating anticipation for the return of safari tourism (n=184, with 79,235 likes and views). This was created by showcasing the best of their exclusive adventures to natural unspoiled spaces as well as abundant wildlife. The storyline indicates that Kenya is a land of diverse adventure potential and is a destination worthy of dreams for future travel, as was highlighted by the CN Travelers, “Magical Kenya ranked amongst the world top destinations campaign keeping us dreaming of travel during COVID 19” (Twitter April 30, 2020). The anticipation and dreaming of travel were emphasized by the number of activities that Kenya has to offer including golfing and helicopter safaris, among others, but all these adventures were communicated to be available again when it becomes safe to travel – i.e. “The Magic Awaits.” The storyline was created in order to increase the desire and anticipation of the target market for its products

Figure 59

Ol kinyei Conservancy (Twitter April 28, 2020)

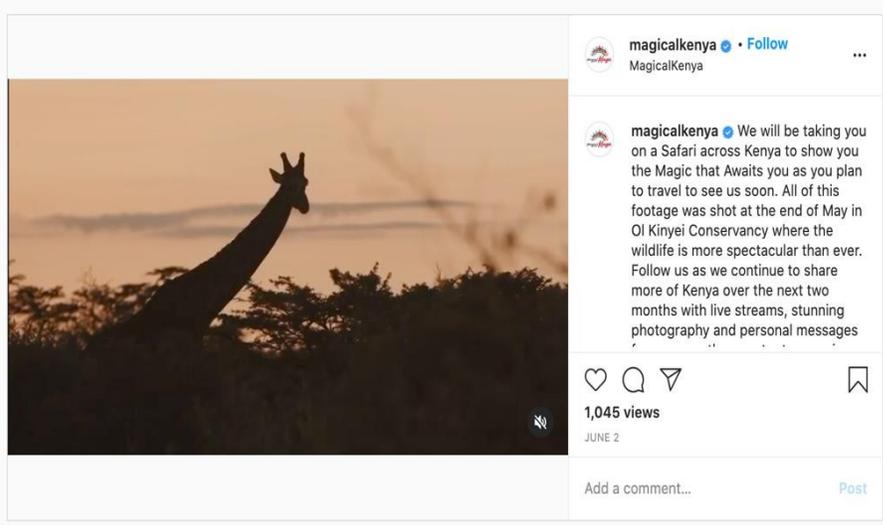


Figure 60

Abundance of Wildlife (Twitter April 7, 2020)

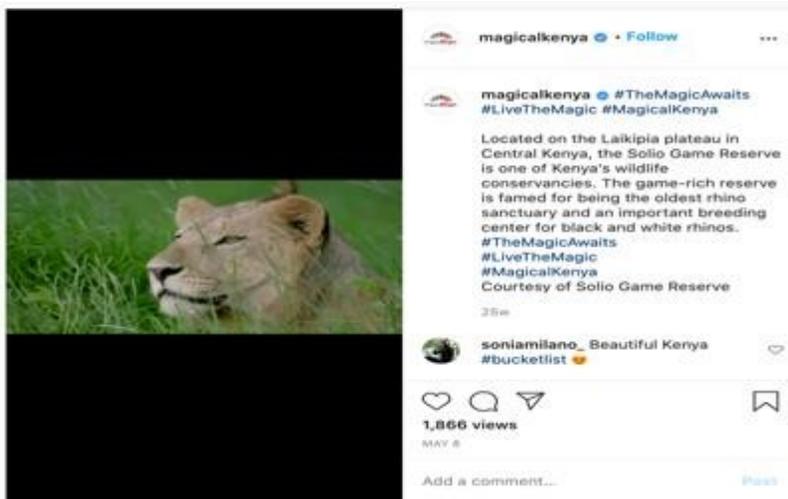


Figure 61

Alternative Experiences (Facebook May 14, 2020)

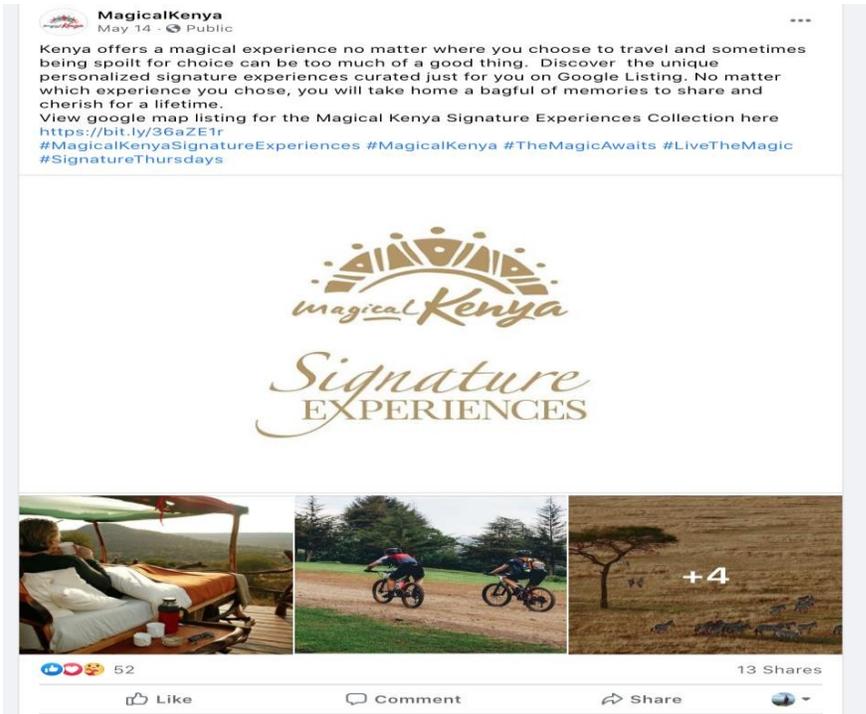


Figure 62

The Beauty of Lake Naivasha (Instagram June 3, 2020)



The second storyline shared by the KTB was based on the health and safety protocols (n=92 with 52,791 likes and views), accompanied by the “Stay Home and Travel Tomorrow” campaign, a communications strategy encouraging responsible behavior to minimize the spread of the pandemic, “Our history and culture are embedded in the stark pillars of Fort Jesus, symbolizing the strength that we possess as a community. As we stay home and stay safe, remember #The Magic Awaits” (KTB; Twitter -April 6, 2020). This storyline showed that Kenya cares more about the safety of the people than the monetary gains from the tourism which was temporarily closer and thus, destinations’ magical experiences were waiting in anticipation of its future visitors.

Figure 63

Stay Home and Stay Safe (Twitter April 28, 2020)



Figure 64

Safety Protocols (Twitter April 28, 2020)



Figure 65

Encouraging Responsible Behavior (Twitter April 27, 2020)



The third storyline shared by the KTB was based around highlighting the steps taken to train different stakeholders in the tourism industry on how to recover from the effects and impacts of the pandemic (n= 6 with 7,389 likes and views). This was one of the steps for tourism recovery for building confidence in the industry, the visitors and in industry partners, while emphasizing the importance of the tourism industry for the destination, as different individuals and groups are taking part in the conversation of how the industry will recover from the effect of the pandemic. This was shown in the post, “*We are inviting you to a webinar hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife to discuss the available strategies for consideration for tourism recovery.*” (KTB; Twitter- may 11, 2020)

Figure 66

Measures and Recovery Pathway (Facebook June 30, 2020)



Figure 67

Tourism Recovery (Twitter May 14, 2020)



The fourth storyline shared by the KTB in this phase was based on the illustration of the efforts made by the Kenyan tourism and hospitality industry as well as other non-governmental organizations which provided unequivocal support in the fight against the COVID 19 pandemic through their donations and assistance (n=10 with 5386 likes and views). This storyline emphasized that the tourism industry cares about local citizens by providing them with their basic needs and support to the health workers during the hard times, while also emphasizing that the well-being of their citizens is as important as tourism recovery.

Figure 68

Support for Frontline Workers (Twitter May 22, 2020)

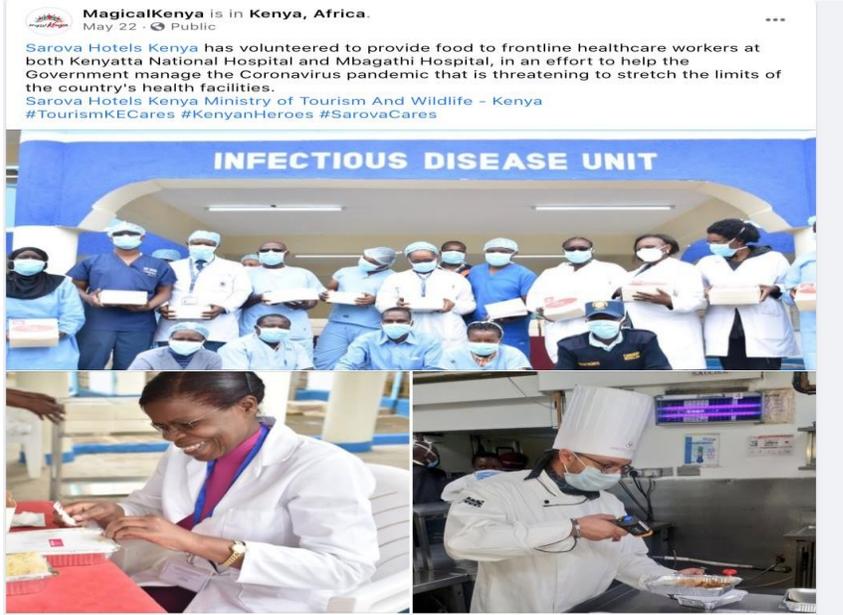


Figure 69

Generous Donations (Twitter May 22, 2020)



Figure 70

Wonderful Donations (Facebook May 21, 2020)



Figure 71

Tourism Industry Support (Facebook May 23, 2020)



The fifth storyline shared by the KTB focused on their agro-tourism as part of their tourism product suite (n= 13 with 30,321like and views). The storyline is focused on the man-made and modified landscape uses, by showcasing different tea and flower plantations and their beautiful landscapes and terrain. This showcased another side of Kenya's picturesque beauty - this time a man-made one. The storyline shown here is based on the acknowledgement of the land use modifications which are still used for tourism, and yet as industries on their own supporting the economy of the country. Kenya used these modified landscapes as another form of tourism product which is historical, educational and unique in terms of the client experience from other tourism products it offers.

Figure 72

Flower Plantations (Instagram June 1, 2020)



Figure 73

Tea Plantations (Instagram April 5, 2020)



The sixth storyline shared by the KTB was focused on the conservation and preservation of the natural environment (n=18 with 60,321 likes and views). These communications highly emphasized stepping up and putting an end to the illegal trading of wild animals, as well as efforts to reduce pollution. This storyline communicates the importance of natural wildlife heritage to Kenya as a destination as well as to the world, *“It is expensive to rid protected areas of plastics after exposure, excess plastic pollution leads to decreased animal population which in turn reduces tourism, significantly impacting our economy”* (KTB; Twitter -June 5, 2020). This storyline also recognized the efforts made by other countries towards the conservation of biodiversity and the banning of the illegal trade of animals, *“Kenya welcomes the ban imposed on the use of pangolins as traditional Chinese medicines. The ban is a major boost to Kenya’s effort to preserve its wildlife heritage”* (KTB; Twitter -June 13, 2020). The narrative reinforces togetherness in the matters concerning conservation and sustainability of the resources.

Figure 74

Excess Plastic Pollution (Instagram June 5, 2020)



Figure 75

Single Use of Plastic (Twitter June 5, 2020)



Table 11

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Kenya storylines (# of posts)	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Anticipation for safari tourism (184)	1,256	54,839	3,671	34,469	94,235
Health and safety (92)	9,741	49,597	2,828	10,872	72,791
Conservation (18)	934	8,335	3,581	8,851	60,321
Agro tourism (13)	1,037	16,832	2,209	10,243	30,321
Support to community (10)	2,594	924	1,198	670	5,386
Building confidence (n=6)	140	348	2,389	4,512	7,389
Total	17, 702	128,875	15,876	69,617	270,443

Preparing for the Reopening Phase for Tanzania

The Preparing to Re-Opening phase in Tanzania was as an extension of the Early Days of the Pandemic, from April 1, 2020 to May 20, 2020. During this phase the TTBs narrative emphasized the value of their natural resources, the importance of the tourism industry within their country, their readiness to receive visitors, and promotional messages of their competitiveness within the industry. The narrative emphasized country awareness of the richness it possesses, bound by external restrictions and urgently awaiting the return of their key economic driver (tourism). This narrative was emphasized by two storylines mainly focused on wildlife safaris and the health and safety protocols as described below.

The first storyline that the TTB shared during this phase predominantly focused on wildlife safaris (n= 17 with 20,612 likes and views). Which was all about the natural and unspoiled protected areas and vast biodiversity found in Tanzania. This reinforces the value, authenticity, and the uniqueness of the rich biodiversity and unspoiled natural landscapes found in Tanzania, mostly focused on the big famous and national parks and reserves that can be found around the country. Thus, the general message created around these protected areas were exploration, discoveries and best of the best unlike any other in the world, *“Discover the #Tanzania best kept secrets. #SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK. The best national park in #africa”* (TTB; Twitter may 7, 2020).

This storyline is not different from other phases but it was a continuation of their promotional activities that highlights the nature and beauty of their products which are unique in the world.

Figure 76

Global Geopark (Twitter April 22,2020)



Figure 77

The Great Lakes (Instagram April 29, 2020)

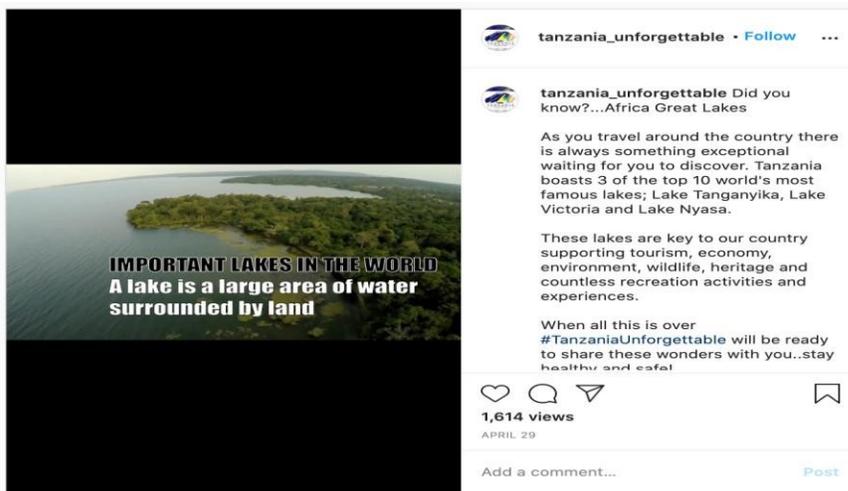


Figure 78

The Serengeti National Park (Facebook May 1, 2020)



The second storyline was focused on health and safety (n=8 with 8,305 likes and views) in facilities and the steps that Tanzania was taking to make it safer for people to travel.

Communications included messages of hope, unity and resilience, encouraging people to stay home, while promising that the country will be ready to receive visitors again once it is safe,

“OUR WORLD is not the same and we are not the same WITHOUT YOU. But have faith and look out for each other. we shall rise up again, TOGETHER! And #Tanzania will be ready to receive you and show you its #unforgettable Wonders” (TTB; Twitter April 2, 2020).

The messaging also reinforced the importance of tourism to the country by putting an emphasis on slogans of protecting the industry (“Save Tourism”). They were also showcasing how responsible and caring the destination is by emphasizing on the safety of all people.

Figure 79

Tanzania will be Ready (Instagram April 1, 2020)



Table 12

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Tanzania storyline (# of posts)	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Wildlife safari (n=17)	209	12,530	194	13,064	25,997
Health and safety (n=8)	82	3,012	109	17,037	25,411
Total	291	15,542	303	30,101	51,408

Comparison for the Preparing to Reopen Phase.

Kenya and Tanzania had different timelines for the Preparation for Reopening phase during the COVID 19 pandemic. For Kenya this phase was from April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020 with a total number of 307 posts and for Tanzania was April 1, 2020 to May 20, 2020 with a total number of 25 posts.

The KTB during this phase had a general narrative surrounding the relevance of tourism to everyone, the pride the country has in its industry and the hope the country retains for its future. KTB storylines focused on health and safety for the general public, conservation and sustainability of the ecosystem, and promotion of tourism products which showed the diverse

adventure opportunities available. They communicated that these products offer an incredible experience, but one that can only be enjoyed when it is safe to travel again. They also showcased how much the tourism industry cares for local communities by providing generous and necessary donations. Lastly, they showed the KTB helping the tourism industry prepare for recovery while restoring stakeholder confidence through the conducting of different industry webinars.

In Tanzania, however, the TTB's narrative was of a country aware of the richness it possesses, bound by external restrictions yet urgently awaiting the return of their key economic driver. This was highlighted by messages of unity, togetherness and resilience during the unprecedented times, emphasizing that people should stay safe. But also, they focused on the marketing and promotion of the tourism products with a focus on wildlife and the unspoiled landscapes found in the northern tourism circuits.

During this period KTBs messaging on health and safety had 72,791 views and likes from the posts obtained from the four-social media and TTB had 25,411 views and likes. This indicates that there was a good response from followers and subscribers on the messaging pertaining to the health and safety presented to the general public by both DMOs although at different capacity.

Table 13

Comparing Preparing to Reopen Phase Narrative and Storylines

Kenya storylines (# of posts)	Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anticipation for safari tourism (n=184) ● Health and safety (n=92) ● Conservation (n=18) ● Agrotourism (n=13) ● Support to community (n=10) ● Building confidence (n=6) 	Relevance of tourism to everyone, the pride the country has in its industry and the hope the country retains for its future (n=307).
Tanzania storylines (# of posts)	Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wildlife safari (n=17) ● Health and safety (n=8) 	Country awareness of the richness it possesses, bound by external restrictions, and urgently awaiting the return of tourism, their key economic driver (n=25).

Reopening Phase in Kenya

The reopening phase in Kenya occurred from July 1 to September 30, 2020. During this phase KTBS narrative was two-fold: a rallying call for its citizens to get behind and support the rebirth of the tourism industry - citing its importance, relevance and value to the country as well as factors indicating that the rebirth was proceeding – while also announcing to the world that Kenya was open for business, offered a safe option for travel and all the while still held all the value, beauty and magic it was known for. This narrative was presented by the three storylines which includes: tourism recovery, health and safety, nature based and safari tourism, as described below.

The first storyline shared by KTB was on tourism recovery. This storyline was divided into three parts the first being tourism recovery at domestic level (n=30 with 31,181 likes and views) which was emphasized by the resumption of the domestic flights and support for domestic tourism within the destination, “*Let’s all support domestic tourism and domestic travel. CS @tunajibu resumption of domestic flights.*” (KTB; Twitter -July 16, 2020). This storyline reinforced the value

and experience that Kenyans can enjoy and be proud of based on the present natural unspoiled landscapes and wilderness which are unique to the destination such as the great wildebeest migration at the Maasai Mara, by providing the accessibilities to these tourism honey pots. The KTB also highlighted the famous world-record holding marathon runner Eliud Kipchoge as an appointed celebrity ambassador for domestic tourism, and in this he was shown taking part in the signature Magical Kenya experiences by visiting different conservancies alongside other Kenyans.

Figure 80

Resumption of Domestic Flights (Twitter July 17, 2020)



Figure 81

Reconnecting (Twitter July 17, 2020)



Figure 82

Opening Ways for the Economy (Facebook July 15, 2020)



The second part under tourism recovery was the support for local service providers who were going about the reopening of hospitality facilities in different parts of Kenya (n=5 with 1,207 likes and views). The reopening of these facilities was supported by the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Najib Balala, who took part in the promotion and support of local business, showed what responsible tourism operations under ‘the new normal’ looked like and argued that Kenyans should support their Kenyan neighbors as a means of saving their economy and ensuring the flow of money.

Figure 83

Reopening (Instagram September 17, 2020)



Figure 84

Supporting Businesses (Instagram September 17, 2020)



The last tourism recovery part presented by the KTB was the resumption of international tourism (n=7, with 2,798 likes and views) and welcoming of international visitors to Kenya on August 1st, 2020. *“We extend our warmth as we welcome @Lufthansa and @British_Airways back to our skies. All arriving visitors will once again experience Kenya’s magic.”* (KTB; Twitter - august 1, 2020). These communications were meant to alert international travelers that Kenya was now ready to receive visitors and once again deliver on their brand promise of Magical Experiences. This storyline reinforced that Kenya was an organized, caring, and responsible destination focused on revival and rebirth of tourism and the economy but by starting domestically and then internationally.

Figure 85

International Reopening (Twitter August 2, 2020)



The second storyline was focused on the health and safety of the people (n=102 with 55,075 likes and views). This storyline was showcased in all three parts of the tourism recovery (i.e., domestic tourism recovery and international tourism recovery), where proper health protocols were ensured as a means of keeping people safe, *“Safety protocols are in place in all the airports to ensure #safeTravels as you get aboard. It is all systems go at Wilson airport that largely serves domestic flights #TheMagicAwaits you! #MagicalKenya.”* (KTB; Twitter- July 19, 2020). The same level of protocol and precautions was also emphasized during the reopening of the local

business where much attention to the health protocols was strongly kept in line by the authorities as a means of ensuring safety of the service providers and the visitors in these facilities. The messaging around these storylines tells that despite the monetary gains or benefits to be harvested by the resumption of different activities Kenya still cares about the health and safety of all people (i.e., locals and visitors).

Figure 86

Safe Travels (Twitter July 1, 2020)



Figure 87

Safety Protocols (Twitter July 8, 2020)



Figure 88

Safety and Tourism (Twitter September 3, 2020)

Kenya's Health and Safety protocols is a major boost to tourism and business travel into the country - Forbes.



Figure 89

Health and Safety Protocols (Twitter August 1, 2020)



Figure 90

Kenya Authentic Safari Destination (Twitter August 9, 2020)

The Great Wildebeest Migration is one of the largest animal migration in the world. This year, we are privileged to have marathon world record holder @Eliudkipchoge witness this spectacular phenomenon that has put Kenya on the global map as an authentic safari destination.



The last storyline shared by the KTB reinforced the experience, serenity, beauty and greatness of Kenyan safari tourism products (n= 207 with 123,725 views and likes). This storyline in this phase was not vastly different from that in previous phases but rather was a continuation of the promotion of the destination’s strengths. In this however, the promotion also featured access to nature conservancies delivered in a sustainable way, “Green technology in Kenya with electric vehicles for carbon neutral near silent game with minimal disturbances to wildlife are used on #magicalkenyalive” (Instagram, 2020); and different oceanic wildlife experience that one can enjoy, “The humpback whale migration on the Kenyan coast is a magical sight to behold.it is more thrilling to watch magnificent animals with young calves jump out of the water” (Instagram august 22, 2020).

Figure 91

Wildlife Migration (Twitter August 9, 2020)

The Great Wildebeest Migration is one of the largest animal migration in the world. This year, we are privileged to have marathon world record holder @Eliudkipchoge witness this spectacular phenomenon that has put Kenya on the global map as an authentic safari destination.



5:31 AM · Aug 9, 2020 · Twitter for Android

Figure 92

Wildlife Gatherings (Instagram July 13, 2020)



Figure 93

Wilds of Kenya (Twitter September 9, 2020)



Table 14

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Kenya storyline (# of posts)	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Safari tourism product (n=207)	4,820	71,926	3,214	53,765	133,725
Health and safety (n=102)	5,219	53,172	2,542	18,142	79,075
Domestic recovery (n=30)	120	10,796	1,230	19,035	31,181
Local business (n=5)	49	207	98	853	1,207
International recovery (n=7)	671	498	564	1,065	2,798
Total	8,879	136,599	142,247	92,860	247,986

Tanzania in the Reopening Phase

The re-opening phase in Tanzania occurred from May 20, 2020 to September 30, 2020. During this phase the TTBs narrative was two-fold: first it spoke that the country is ready to safely welcome tourism back into the country and offers incredible value to the tourists and visitors who travel there. Secondly it told Tanzanians that they are in this together and should experience their great tourist offerings – both to support the industry and to celebrate the great experiences available at their doorsteps. These narratives were created by two storylines with a focus on safari tourism, tourism recovery and health and safety as described below;

The first storyline shared by the TTB emphasized the unbridled beauty of their natural spaces, wide diversity of wildlife and unspoiled landscapes (n= 54 with 32,534 likes and views). This storyline was part of the continuous promotion of the tourism products that Tanzania has in different parts of the country. This storyline aims at sharing the great value in biodiversity that is a result of the prolonged commitments in protection and conservation of the natural spaces. With all these things in place different adventures and great experiences can be derived which mark the unforgettable experience unique to other destinations.

Figure 95

Lake Manyara (Instagram September 3, 2020)



Figure 96

The Bowl that Never Fills (Instagram September 9, 2020)



Figure 97

Large Wildlife (Instagram August 19, 2020)



Figure 98

Big Adventures (Twitter August 24, 2020)



The second storyline shared by the TTB focused mainly on the messaging around tourism recovery(n=23) which was divided into two parts. This firstly encouraged international visitors to travel to Tanzania by announcing the re-opening of the border which was previously closed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, *“Tanzania opens up the skies and prepares to receive tourists.”* (Twitter May 21, 2020) (n=15 with 8,778 likes and views). This storyline aimed at showing the world that Tanzania has everything under control and that it is safe for people to travel to the destination, to receive the unforgettable experience they were promised, *“Unforgettable experience is what we promised to give you once in our beautiful country following the SOPs put in place, we not only aim at fulfilling this promise but also exceeding your expectations. Tanzania is ready, Karibu Tanzania.”*

Figure 99

Open and Ready (Instagram June 1, 2020)



Figure 100

Tanzania is Ready (Instagram July 3, 2020)

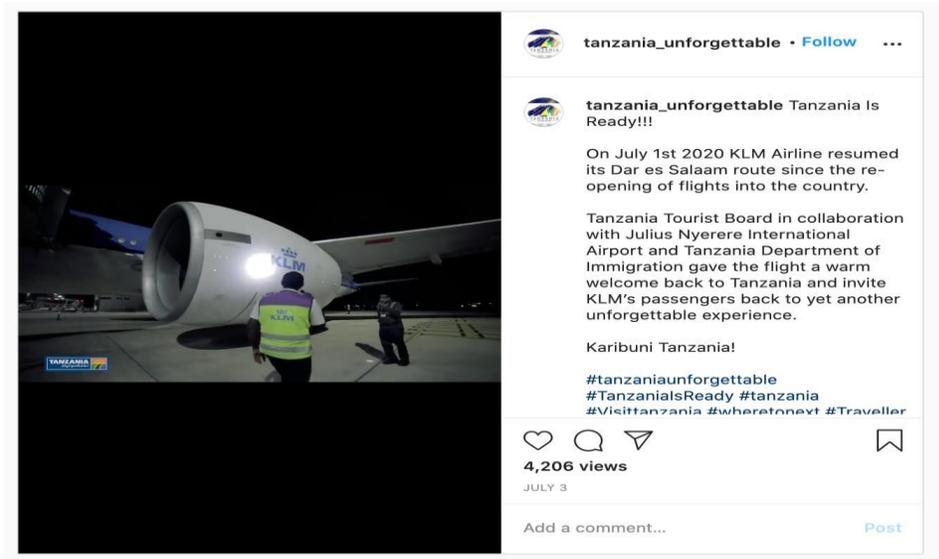


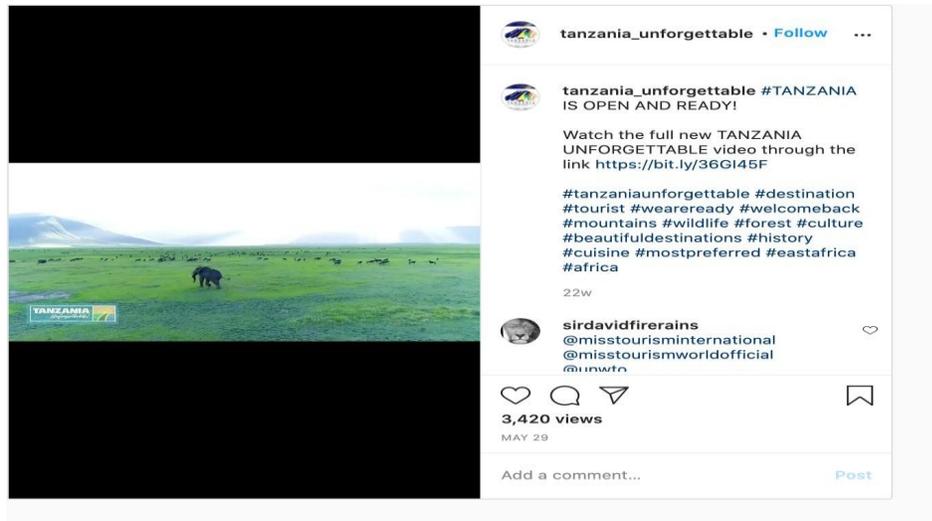
Figure 101

Tanzania Opens Up Skies (Twitter May 21, 2020)



Figure 102

Tanzania Ready and Open (Instagram May 29, 2020)



Secondly the focus was on domestic tourism recovery (n=8 with 2511 likes and views). The messaging around this was aimed at encouraging the locals to visit different tourist points in Tanzania as they do not require a visa or passport to travel to these destinations. The tourism industry also lowered the prices of some of the accommodation facilities as a means of attracting more domestic visitors in the different recreational facilities and also boosting the tourism recovery from the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic in the destination. The storyline here was meant to deliver a message to the local Tanzanians that domestic tourism is an important part of tourism recovery, but also, they should get to see and visit the unforgettable experiences that people travel long distances from around the world to come see. The government also contributed to enabling accessibility and affordability for all Tanzanians to enjoy the unforgettable experiences where possible (TTB; Instagram – august 27, 2020).

Figure 103

Travel Without a Passport (Instagram June 11, 2020)



Figure 104

Domestic Tourism (Twitter August 27, 2020)



The last storyline was focused on health and safety (n=15 with 18,062 likes and views). This was showcased during the tourism recovery where they showcased their readiness and willingness to receive international visitors, which also included the proper health measures and safety protocols in place and compliant to ensure the safety of both their visitors and service providers. This storyline was shared as early as May 21, 2020 and continued in the messaging emphasizing unity, togetherness and resilience during the unprecedented time of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Figure 105

Standard Procedures (Instagram July 16, 2020)



Figure 106

Safe Travel (Twitter August 10, 2020)



Figure 107

Tanzania is Safe (Instagram July 23, 2020))



Table 15

Total Number of Likes per Platform per Storyline

Tanzania storylines	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Total
Safari tourism products (n=54)	1,644	17,091	212	13,587	32,534
International recovery (n=15)	872	5,704	12	2,190	8,778
Health and safety (n=15)	405	7,429	0	10,228	18,062
Domestic recovery (n=8)	121	1,695	25	670	2,511
Total	3,042	31,919	249	26,675	61,885

Comparison of Reopening Phase

The reopening phase for Kenya and Tanzania were different in several ways such as the time in which they reopened, and for whom the destination was open to during these phase timelines. In Kenya, the reopening occurred from July to September 2020, where the reopening was first for the locals and was then followed by the reopening for the international visitors. Kenya's narrative during this time was two-fold: a rallying call for its citizens to get behind and support the rebirth of the tourism industry - citing its importance, relevance and value to the country as well as factors indicating that the rebirth was proceeding – while also announcing to the world that Kenya was open for business, offered a safe option for travel and all the while still held all the value, beauty and magic it was known for. In Tanzania the reopening timeline was from May 21, to September 30, 2020, which was a month and half before Kenya's reopening. This reopening was predominantly focused on international visitors by May 21, 2020. The local reopening within Tanzania was not highlighted in the data. The TTB had a total number of 84 posts and KTB had a total number of 380 posts in this phase.

During the reopening phase the two destinations had similarities in the storylines and narrative that they shared. Posts during this phase were accompanied by storylines of safety, the beautiful natural space, wildlife, great tourism experiences and value for the tourism participants. The readiness and safety protocols in both destinations were emphasized along with the warm welcome of visitors back into the country and offers of incredible value to the tourists and visitors who travel there. Lastly, there was much emphasis on the great experiences inherent in the tourist offerings of both destinations – both with an aim to support the industry while celebrating the great

experiences available at their doorsteps.

This temporal period indicated that KTB was taking control of their narrative which supported the level of engagement that they had from the viewer and subscribers from the four social media platforms (like and views = 247,986). TTB had 61,885 views in all four social media posts despite the fact the TTB had the longest reopening period compared to KTB.

Table 16

Comparing Reopening Phase Narrative and Storylines

Kenya storyline (# of posts)	Narrative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safari tourism products (n=207) ● Health and safety (n=102) ● Tourism recovery (n=42) ● Domestic recovery (n=30) ● Local business (n=5) ● International recovery (n=7) 	<p>Rallying call for its citizens to support the rebirth of the tourism industry - citing its importance, relevance and value to the country, while also announcing to the world that Kenya was open for business, offered a safe option for travel, and still held all the beauty and magic it was known for (n=380).</p>
<p>Tanzania storylines (# of posts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safari tourism products (n=54) ● Tourism recovery (n=23) ● International recovery (n=15) ● Health and safety (n= 15) ● Domestic recovery (n=8) 	<p>Narrative</p> <p>The country is ready to safely welcome tourism back into the country and offers incredible value to the tourists and visitors who travel there. - Tanzanians should experience their great tourist offerings – both to support the industry and to celebrate the great experiences available at their doorsteps (n=84).</p>

Summary

Kenya and Tanzania are the two strongest tourism economies in East Africa. Each feature sensational landscapes and abundance of wildlife, resulting in near identical tourism contexts which may hinder a tourists' ability to distinguish between them. The existing similarities in the tourism products, provides the perfect ground for comparison on how the national DMOs presented their destination narratives, during the pandemic, in relation to the crisis management cycle.

The findings revealed that Kenya had a stronger digital presence based on the number of posts (n=869) and the level of engagement found within the posts shared during the study period in comparison to Tanzania (n=186). The KTB used all four social media platforms more than the TTB did, in every phase of crisis management studied. Table 17 provides a side-by-side comparison of the destination narratives created by the KTB and TTB during each phase of crisis.

Table 17

Narrative Comparisons by Crisis Management Phase

Crisis phase	Kenya	Tanzania
Pre-pandemic	Kenya is a world-class destination for adventure and nature-based safari tourism, offering of the highest-quality experiences, and unique value for every type of visitor (n= 145).	Tanzania is a modern, legitimate and well-developed player on the international tourism stage who possesses a diverse mix of unique, high-value offerings, and offers these experiences with comfort of modern convenience (n=63).
Early days of the pandemic	Kenya is a safe, caring and responsible destination with many attractions to be excited about for future visits (n= 37).	Responsible / limited travel, a call to save the tourism industry as well as unique levels of access to incomparable natural phenomena (n=14).
Preparing for reopening	Relevance of tourism to everyone, the pride the country has in its industry and the hope the country retains for its future (n=307).	Country awareness of the richness it possesses, bound by external restrictions, and urgently awaiting the return of tourism, their key economic driver (n=25).
Reopening	Rallying call for its citizens to support the rebirth of the tourism industry - citing its importance, relevance and value to the country, while also announcing to the world that Kenya was open for business, offered a safe option for travel, and still held all the beauty and magic it was known for (n=380).	The country is ready to safely welcome tourism back into the country and offers incredible value to the tourists and visitors who travel there. - Tanzanians should experience their great tourist offerings – both to support the industry and to celebrate the great experiences available at their doorsteps (n=84).

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study compared the destination narratives created and managed by the KTB and TTB during the 2 ½ months prior (December 1st 2019 - 11th march 2020) to the pandemic and the first 6 ½ months (March 12 – September 30, 2020) of the COVID-19 pandemic. As social media tends to be the primary and immediate communication channel used during a crisis, this study focused on the messaging shared through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The following research questions guided the research design, data collection, and data analysis process.

- What were the destination narratives created by the KTB and TTB prior to the pandemic?
- How did the destination narratives evolve during the first six months of the crisis?
- How did the social media posts of the Kenyan and Tanzanian national tourism authorities align with the four phases of crisis management?

This chapter discusses the findings and positions them within existing literature on the use of social media to create destination narratives and the management of destination narratives during a crisis. This is followed by recommendations for the KTB, TTB, and other DMOs, acknowledgements of the limitations of this study, and areas for future research.

Destination Narratives

The findings revealed that Kenya had a stronger digital presence with substantially more posts made during the study period as well as higher levels of follower's engagement on each platform. As a result, it is probable that the strength of the narratives shared by KTB were stronger and had more impact than those shared by the TTB. The findings of this study suggested that the KTB was more focused on contributing to their destination image than was the TTB.

Prior to the pandemic, KTB and TTB shared a similar narrative that wholly focused on the promotion of their destinations. Whereas the KTB's narrative was focused on the beauty and magic of the experiences they offer to visitors, the TTB focused on their most popular tourism products (i.e., wildlife safaris in the northern circuit). Della Corte (2012) noted that the focus of providing product in the form of experience is a crucial factor for tourism industry competitiveness, in order for the DMOs to meet different experiential demands of tourists in the market. This highlights the significant shift in the way products are sold but also points out that the non-experiential products fall behind the abrupt growth and changes of the market demands.

Despite rising incidents of COVID-19 in other countries (China December 2019, Italy January 2020; Malaysia January 2020; Norway in February 2020; France in February 2020), the findings indicate that neither destination attempted to change their narrative until it was necessary after the global shutdown of travel.

Walters and Clulow, 2010 noted that one of the major roles of DMOs is to present the destinations in the most appealing way in the market. However, they face a challenge in anticipating sudden changes of markets during disastrous events (i.e., COVID- 19). Ritchie (2004) argued that despite the fact that different disastrous events cannot be stopped, it is possible for the impacts to be limited. During the pandemic period distinct approaches were taken by the KTB and TTB as to messaging related to the pandemic. The TTB's approach during the pandemic was to acknowledge the temporary shut-down of global tourism due to health and safety concerns. However, once they reopened their borders and airports in mid-May (while most regional and global destinations remained closed) the TTB largely ignored the pandemic. This was consistent with messages released by the national government under the leadership of the late Tanzanian President Dr. John P. Magufuli, who insisted that Tanzania was COVID free due to the power of prayer (Buguzi, 2021). It was noted by Ritchie (2004) and Faulkner (2001) that leadership is a crucial role required within organizations to provide guidance through the times of crisis, highlighting the role played by the leaders in the controlling or managing of approaches used to limit the impacts of a crisis in a destination.

Contrasting the approach taken by the TTB, the KTB focused much of their social media messaging on highlighting pandemic related health and hygiene safety protocols. While working to reassure residents and potential visitors that Kenyan tourism operators were focused on safety, the KTB also worked to develop anticipation for future travel. A distinct difference between the pre-pandemic and during the pandemic posts is that KTB initially acknowledged that it was not yet safe to travel. Once they began reopening the country to travel, the KTB also took a phased approach, using its social media to signal local reopening, then regional reopening and finally global reopening. A final distinction between the two countries was that the KTB continued its narrative of being a safe and responsible destination through to the end the study period by maintaining its promotion of COVID-19 health and hygiene protocols.

Destination Narrative and Crisis Management

There are different frameworks that suggest the roles of DMOs and other stakeholders in destination crisis / disaster management, such as the framework used by Hystad and Keller (2008). This is beyond the scope of our study but the use of the crisis management model which provides the description of a crisis life cycle through different phases of a crisis provides an insight into how destination narratives change and evolve at different times. Stephens and Ford (2015) noted that an important factor in crisis management is that crises have distinct phases that require different messaging. Ritchie (2004) further noted that the different messaging in which are detected by the nature and extent of the crisis.

The findings suggested that both destinations developed and changed their narratives during the pandemic, but they differed in how their narratives aligned with the phases of the crisis management model. The narratives shared during the pre-pandemic phase did not align with the model. Neither DMO acknowledged the developing global crisis, despite their reliance on Italy and China, the early epicenters of the pandemic, as important source markets for visitors (Faria, 2021; Travel & tourism, 2021).

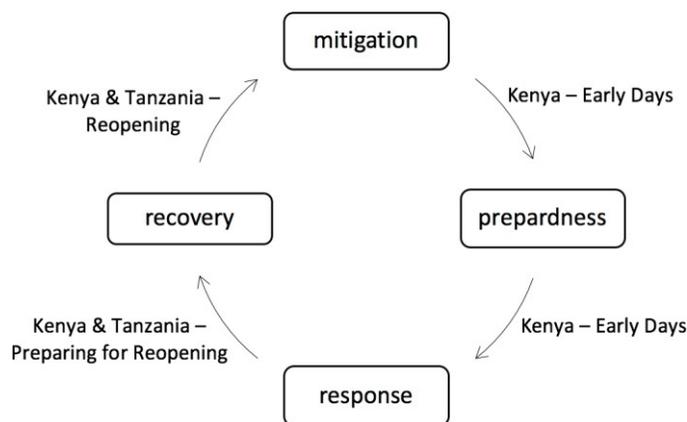
Once the pandemic was declared, the KTB began its messaging about COVID immediately. This may be due to the fact that Kenya had developed mitigation and preparedness strategies by early February 2020 (Aluga, 2020). This may be articulated from the lessons learnt from the effects of the Ebola epidemic in west Africa where Kenya among other African countries were affected economically and had to adopt different approaches to limit the damage (Songwe, 2015). Additionally, during the pandemic the national government had taken the steps to close its borders to any country experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks, within days of the pandemic being announced. In contrast, the TTB began its messaging related to COVID-19 two-weeks after the pandemic had been declared, and the national government took fewer mitigation steps in those early days (Mohammed & Miriri, 2020).

The narratives created by the KTB aligned with all four phases of the crisis management model; whereas the narratives created by the TTB only aligned with the response and recovery phases (see Figure 109). Wilks & Moore (2004) noted that it is not easy for a destination to develop plans and put strategies in place for a crisis. They further noted that the development of some plans and strategies for crisis management is important for a destination, as it provides them with time and resources to respond to the impact of the crisis. Upadhy (2014) argued that the role played by

DMOs in creating and sustaining a positive destination image depended on the initial efforts made by national governments. Governments initiate crisis management strategies, which are then adapted by the DMOs through the narratives shared that maintain the destinations' image and reputation. Armstrong and Ritchie (2008) further noted that it is important to have crisis management strategies in place to control the negative publicity about the destination during a crisis, which may have an effect on the destination image and reputation when recovering from a crisis.

Figure 109

Temporal Period Alignment with Each Crisis Management Phase



The emphasis placed by the KTB on narratives about health and safety measures, targeted at both locals and visitors, fit within the mitigation and preparedness phases of crisis management. This conclusion is supported by the Government of BC (2016) and Baird (2010), who note that mitigation and preparedness strategies are proactive steps taken to prevent or reduce the impacts of a crisis. The importance of these narratives to the KTB was evidenced by the frequency and number of posts that the KTB made about health and hygiene, as compared to those that focused on maintaining awareness of Kenya's ability to offer magical tourism experiences. In contrast, the TTB did not have any social posts related to these phases of the crisis management model.

The KTB continued this strategy into the preparing for reopening and reopening phases,

which most closely aligned with the response and recovery stages of the crisis management model. The TTB also shared narratives that addressed the pandemic within these stages of crisis management. Both DMOs created narratives focused on staying home and travelling later during the response phase; however, as Tanzania reopened tourism operations well before most countries (Toubes et al., 2021), this narrative was quickly replaced by the TTB.

Due the timeframe of this study as well as the prolonged nature of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., it is still ongoing), it is only possible to speak of short-term recovery within the crisis management model. During the recovery phase, the TTB initially created a narrative that highlighted their safety protocols, but this soon gave way to a return to pre-pandemic messaging. In contrast, the KTB continued its health and hygiene messaging in addition to its pre-pandemic narratives. Thus, their social media posts reinforced the narrative of Kenya as a safe and responsible destination, in addition to being a place for magical experiences. Tanzania's narrative largely ignored the potential impacts of COVID-19 on citizens or visitors and focused more on the economic contribution of tourism.

Conclusions

Lone and Ahmad (2020) acknowledged that the immediate actions of some African governments regarding the pandemic will provide a greater chance for recovery after the crisis. The research presented in this thesis revealed not only differences in the narratives shared by the KTB and TTB, but it also highlighted the differences in approach to the pandemic. Shobowale (2021) has argued that Tanzania's COVID-19 denial may lead to the destruction of the destination's image and reputation with potential visitors. Compounding this issue is that Kenya's promotion of a health and hygiene focused narrative, will increase their competitive advantage in this area. The document prepared by Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife (2020) noted that KTB developed recovery approaches for the tourism industry to solve the immediate impact and future impact, which will support domestic, regional and overseas market during and after Pandemic. Additionally, the KTB focus on safety may reduce the competitive advantage that Tanzania had prior to the pandemic (World Economic Forum, 2019). This could be problematic for the TTB as Cochrane (2021) has argued that destinations will need to ensure that their post-pandemic narratives incorporate messages of safety in addition to the of the tourism experiences offered if they hope to recover.

The tourism literature is clear, a destination's narrative is central to the promotion of its products (Lichrou et al., 2008), influencing consumer decisions (Familmaleki et al., 2015; Shamsi & Khan, 2018), and shaping its external reputation (Lopes, 2011; Melo et al., 2016). Further, the importance of using social media to create, share, and manage a destination's narrative cannot be understated, as it is the promotional channel that allows for the best interaction between hosts and potential guests (Pitana & Pitanatri, 2016). Accordingly, Yang et al., (2021) and Schroeder et al., (2013) noted social media plays a crucial role in informing and changing visitors' purchase decisions between the products offered by the affected destination. However, Pike and Page (2014) have also noted that not all destinations have fully utilized socialmedia for this purpose. The research presented in this thesis clearly illustrated that the KTB had a much higher use of social media than did the TTB and that it was much more focused on creating a strong narrative. Walters and Mair (2010), noted that destination sharing of messaging in the form of narratives is crucial during and after a crisis for maintaining the relationship with current and potential future visitors. However, Weighill and Drope (2015) and Ritchie (2004) argued that if a destination does not actively work to manage its own narrative, then it ultimatelyallows other sources (e.g., visitors, news media, its competitors) to define the narrative. Thus, it can be concluded that the KTB is likely to have a stronger influence on the narrative of Kenya asa destination than does the TTB on the narrative of Tanzania as a destination.

Recommendations and Implications for Practice

Based on the research presented in this thesis it is clear that KTB has fully embraced the potential of social media to create, share, and manage its destination's image through the use of narratives. Unfortunately, it was also clear that TTB has not fully harnessed the potential of social media in tourism marketing, nor have they actively tried to create a strong destination narrative. Therefore, it is recommended that the TTB invest in developing a social media strategyso that they can better control their own narrative.

It is not always possible to have strategies for dealing with unexpected crises (Wilks & Moore 2004); however, DMOs need to have general plans for how they will manage their destination's narrative during periods of crisis. This may be achieved by actively engaging with crisis management communication strategies while also continuing to build anticipation for future

visitation. The KTB provided a good example of communicating the seriousness of the pandemic and efforts to reduce its impacts while also showcasing the magical experiences that await.

The Kenya and Tanzania both should individually form structured levels of DMOs ranging from national level to regional levels and local levels with the agenda of promoting tourism at all levels. The lower levels of DMOs should be a reflection of the national DMOs in terms of the uniformity of narrative sharing.

Limitations of Research

This research was based only on the national DMOs of Kenya and Tanzania, ignoring all other influences on their destination narratives. For example, the pandemic responses of national governments, news media, and international NGO reporting (e.g., UN World Health Organization) were not included in analysis. Hence, the destination narratives presented by the KTB and the TTB may differ significantly from the narratives that potential visitors believe about each country. As well, the level of follower engagement with the narratives shared by KTB and TTB was only focused on single posts that appeared on multiple platforms.

During the writing of this thesis the President of Tanzania, Dr. John Magufuli, passed away and was replaced by Dr. Samia Suluhu. Her approach has been aligned with the World Health Organization's (WHO) and therefore it is possible that this change will help to mitigate some of the potential damage to Tanzania's destination image.

Finally, this study focused on the start of what has turned out to be a prolonged global crisis that is still impacting travel and tourism. The WHO (2021) has noted that the African continent is experiencing another wave of unchecked community transmission and limited progress in vaccinations. Therefore, the post-pandemic destination narratives of Kenya and Tanzania are yet to be defined.

Future Research

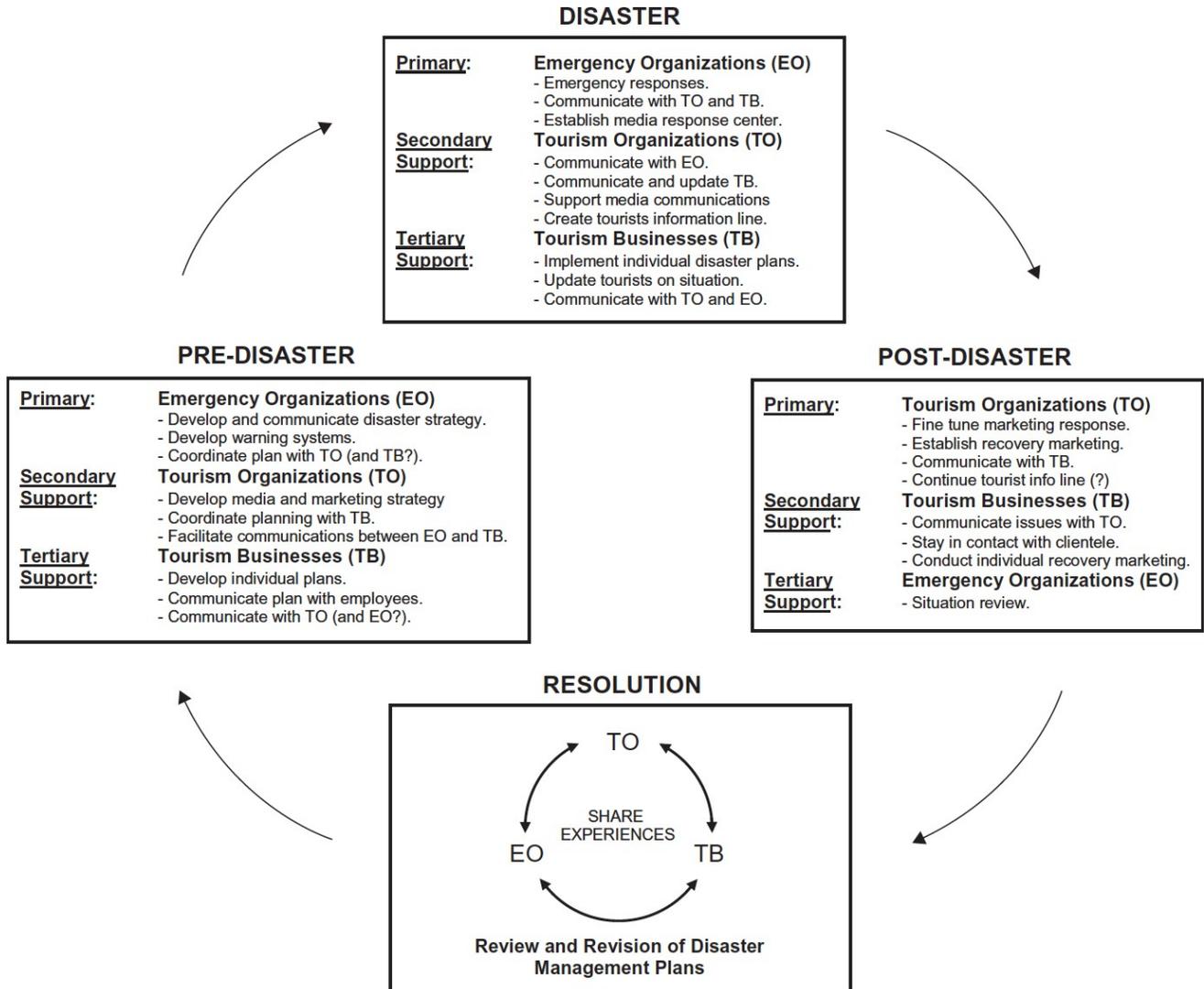
This research was conducted during a very limited time frame within a prolonged crisis, so the work should be extended further to see how the destination narratives developed or evolved further. Additional research that includes multiple communication channels (e.g., news media, print advertising, and visitor created content) would also help reveal a more detailed

understanding of each destinations' image. Similarly, consumer focused research would be useful to determine how the efforts of the KTB and TTB worked to influence and develop visitors' perception of their destinations' reputations.

The further studies should also consider the use of the tourism disaster management framework. Which incorporates the various roles played by stakeholders in the management of a disaster in the pre- and post-disaster period for the long-term recovery of the tourism destinations at local, regional and national levels (see Figure 110). Suggesting a top-down management approach provides a platform for managing the negative image and reputation of the destination but also provides a road map for future promotional strategies.

Figure 110

Destination Tourism Disaster Management Cycle



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