Social Media and Tourism Development in Grenada: A Phenomenological Study

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Declaration

I declare that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. This thesis is the result of my own independent work.

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Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of Grenadian tourism practitioners, the impact social media has on their businesses, and any challenges that they may face in using social media.

The research studies the perspectives and experiences of 17 service providers and five individuals who occupy various strategic roles within the tourism associations and organisations on the island of Grenada. This qualitative approach provides rich and deep data that is presented in this thesis. Recommendations are developed which could be used by service providers and policy makers to use social media to improve Grenada's tourism products.

This study concludes that service providers understand the immense benefits that social media could bring to their businesses. However, there are barriers that prevent the optimal use and adoption of social media. These barriers include time, inadequate finances, and a lack of dedicated personnel to manage social media platforms. This study uses an interpretative phenomenological approach with semi-structured interviews, and several contributions to academic knowledge and practice emerge. This study contributes to academic knowledge on the use of social media from the perspective of a small island-state that is at a developing stage. In addition, there are several implications for practice, including a strong appeal for the differentiation of Grenada's tourism products to better compete in the regional and global marketplace.

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This thesis is dedicated to the glory of God and my dreams.

List of Acronyms

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CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organisation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
MP3	Moving Picture Experts Group Layer-3 Audio
NEWLO	New Life Organisation
PO	Psychological Ownership Theory
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SPT	Social Penetration Theory
TAMCC	T A Marryshow Community College
UGC	User Generated Content
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollars
XCD	Eastern Caribbean Dollars

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Summary

This chapter provides an overview of this interpretative phenomenological study. The chapter begins by discussing the aim, the research objectives, the motivation, and the justification for undertaking this research. The chapter continues by exploring the research gap, research approach, and the implications of the study. Finally, the structure of the thesis concludes this chapter.

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

Tourism is critical to the economic growth of Grenada. Historically, Grenada's economy has been driven by agriculture. Cocoa, nutmeg, and bananas are the predominant export crops. The state of Grenada comprises three islands; the largest island is also called Grenada, and the two other smaller islands bear the names Carriacou and Petite Martinique respectively. Fondly known as the Isle of Spice, Grenada is the world's second largest exporter of nutmeg and holds 20% of the market according to the World Bank (2003). The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Fact Book confirms that the official language is English, and the island covers 344 square kilometres (133 square miles). Grenada's location in the Caribbean can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Map of the Caribbean. Source: Tripsavvy-Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-SA-3.0

According to the Grenada Real Estate Market Report 2018, which was published by local real estate agency Century 21, Grenada's population is 103, 352. The mainland of Grenada is divided into six parishes while Carriacou and Petite Martinique each also count as a parish. This report provided a description of each parish, the population, and the relevant economic opportunities. Table 1 below summarises the findings of this report.

Parish	Population	Parish Summary Description	Opportunities
St George	37,057	Hub of Tourism and Commerce	Commercial Development
St David	11,486	Southern parish, deep water bay, beaches	Affordable housing for St George workforce, boutique resort
St John	8,591	Eco-tourism, agriculture, and cocoa estate	Lush, rural, and agriculture
St Andrew	24,749	Commercial development, affordable housing	The 'Big Parish' with the largest landmass and second largest population
St Mark	3,994	Lush, rural, and agriculture	Eco-tourism, agriculture, cocoa estate
St Patrick	10,674	Northernmost parish, breadbasket	Marina development, boutique resort, and eco-tourism
Carriacou	6,081	Sister Isles, world-class maritime activities	Marine development, boutique resort
Petite Martinique	900		
	103,532		

Table 1: Grenada Parish Summary

The aim of this interpretative phenomenological study is

To explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in

Grenada.

The research objectives are

- To explore previous researchers' findings on the use of social media within the tourism sector.

- To identify key challenges that tourism practitioners face when implementing social media marketing strategies within their businesses in Grenada.

- To explore the impact that social media marketing could have on tourism and tourism businesses in Grenada.

- To develop recommendations for service providers and policy makers to improve Grenada's tourism product using social media.

1.3 Motivation and Justification

Tourism became increasingly important for Caribbean islands like Grenada due to a dispute called the *Banana Trade War* (Barfield, 2003). This dispute was between the European Union (EU) and the United States. The trade war resulted in Caribbean states such as Grenada losing preferential access to trade with the EU markets, particularly for bananas, Grenada's main export crop. Grenada, like many other Caribbean states, was previously a British colony. Once preferential access to the EU markets was removed, exporting bananas became extremely unprofitable for Caribbean island states like Grenada (Payne, 2006). Tourism emerged as the sector to fill the gap caused by the decline in agricultural exports.

An extensive assessment called the *Tourism Master Plan* was conducted on Grenada's tourism sector, dated December 1997. This plan was prepared for the Government of Grenada by a team of consultants sponsored by the Organisation of American States. The team reviewed the tourism sector over a 10 year period from 1986 to 1995. This plan highlighted several features of the sector. First, it explained that Grenada had not attracted foreign investment in the accommodation sector. Foreign investment was not discouraged, but the Grenada Hotel Association preferred to maintain local majority control of hotels and guest houses. This meant that the growth of the accommodation sector was mainly fuelled by local developers, leading to smaller units with limited facilities. Second, the average growth rate of visitor expenditure was over 9% for the decade. However, cruise expenditure was considerably less than stayover visitor expenditure. This plan also confirmed that based on a study conducted in 1988, cruise passenger spending was XCD$66 (USD$24). Third, duty free and other shopping facilities remained undeveloped. However, informal vending increased, and there were over 175 registered vendors and several unlicensed vendors. These unlicensed vendors have been blamed for visitor harassment at beaches and other attractions. Fourth, there was a growth in ancillary services over the decade, especially within the restaurant sector, which consisted of almost 50 independent facilities. Finally, the entertainment sector was limited, although there were developments at the Concord Falls and Royal Mt Carmel Falls attractions. Challenges at attraction sites included management maintenance, adequate sales facilities, and refreshment centres.

The year after the *Tourism Master Plan* was published, McElroy and de Albuquerque (1998) found that Grenada's tourism sector was behind that of other small Caribbean island states. Though this research is now out-dated, the

literature search did not produce any other study that could provide a comparison of Grenada's tourism sector with its Caribbean counterparts. This tourism penetration index of 20 Caribbean islands ranked Grenada as the third least-penetrated Caribbean island; Dominica and St Vincent were ranked number one and two respectively. The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world and has a high degree of competition because all islands are able to provide tourists from the US market with vacations that are filled with warm weather and pristine beaches (Clayton, 2009). Miller and Henthorne (2007) have described the Caribbean tourism region as competitive and complex. Grenada's tourism has suffered by comparison to other Caribbean islands due to its unstable political history, including a revolution that led to the assassination of the then-Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. The US invaded the island in 1983 and restored peace. Tourism growth suffered due to the island's communist government and its strong ties to Cuba and Soviet states. As a result, investors were uncertain about whether the island was safe for development, which led to a 25% decrease in tourism trade between 1979 and 1982 (Sharpe, 1993). In June 1990, American Airlines made its inaugural flight to the island, and tour operators and cruise ships finally added the destination as part of their offerings (Sharpe, 1993).

A previous study on hospitality in Grenada by McDonald and Hopkin (2003) identified several shortcomings in the education of hospitality students in Grenada. First, the image of the hospitality industry was poor, and the sector was described with expressions such as "pots and pans" and "last resort", hindering talented young persons from viewing opportunities in tourism as desirable. Second, stakeholders in the accommodation sector stated that the curriculum provided by the two key tertiary institutions was inadequate to meet

the human resources demands of the sector. The two institutions are the New Life Organisation (NEWLO), which is a vocational training centre for youths, and the local college, T A Marryshow Community College (TAMCC). McDonald (2002) believed that the programmes on offer should be less theoretical and more practical and tourism-specific to ensure that students acquire the appropriate skills demanded by the sector.

The Grenada Tourism Authority stated during its Pure Talk episodes on Grenada's market niches that 11,000 direct and indirect jobs were created from tourism in 2015. Visitor spending was XCD$392 million (USD$145 million), and the main market niches were nature, soft adventure, diving, yachting, sailing, cruising, and romance. In 1986 and 1995, visitor expenditure in tourism was XCD$58.56 million (USD$21.69) and XCD$143.16 million (USD$53.02) respectively. In the budget statement for 2017 that was presented to the House of Representatives, Grenada's Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Dr Keith C Mitchell, highlighted that tourism contributes in excess of 25% to gross domestic product (GDP) and as much as 5,000 direct jobs to the economy. He also emphasised the Government of Grenada's commitment to investing more in marketing the destination to increase visitor arrivals, with a strong focus on social media as the vehicle to drive the marketing plan. Future plans to attract more visitors to the island included an increase in airlifts with Jet Blue's new mint service, construction at the Maurice Bishop International Airport, and an inaugural dive festival. The budget presentation in 2018 further confirmed the importance of tourism to Grenada; 11 major private sector development projects and an increase in the budget by 15% were announced in 2017, and the Prime Minister specifically highlighted that social media was the tool to drive Grenada's tourism development.

Academic literature supports the importance of social media as a vehicle to drive the tourism product of a destination. According to Kiralova and Pavliceka (2015), the internet has revolutionised tourism destinations. Online reviews, pictures, videos, and online marketing are bringing destinations closer to visitors regardless of their location. In addition, these researchers stated that online information is a form of competitive advantage in the global tourism market. However, the only destinations that will reap great rewards are those that can provide the fastest information at the lowest costs and connect to readers. Nowadays, potential tourists tend to view user generated content (UGC) as a more trustworthy source of information than commercially generated messages, such as those found on official destination websites (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

Rogerson (2005) identified that "as an economic sector, one of the most distinguishing features of tourism is the overwhelming pre-eminence of small scale entrepreneurship" (p.628). As a result, the sector is characterised by businesses with poor business models Zhang and Morrison (2007) and the "fragility of smallness" (Morrison & Conway, 2007). Despite these shortcomings, small businesses have remained a significant feature of the tourism industry (Morrison, Carlsen & Weber, 2010). Defining small business is ambiguous because the definition can vary from country to industry. Extending the work of Thomas (2000), Morrison and Conway (2007) propose that small businesses could be defined based on quantifiable factors. These factors include "number of employees and family members, market share, level of operation, management style and structure and ownership configuration" (p.49). This study uses number of employees to define the size of touris m businesses.

The above aim and research objectives were selected based on the importance of tourism to Grenada and the country's choice of social media as the engine to drive Grenada's tourism marketing.

1.4 Grenada's Tourism Landscape

According to the December 1997 *Grenada Tourism Master Plan*, an airport survey conducted by Austin Greene (1993) identified negative views of Grenada's tourism product, such as inadequate infrastructure; vendor harassment; slow processing at custom inspection; difficulties in the clearance procedures at the sea port; and poor quality and variety of craft, sanitary facilities, and amenities on beaches. On the other hand, the island was deemed as safe, and Grenadians were described as friendly and hospitable.

Grenada is a small and developing island state, which means it comes with its own unique challenges. McElroy (2006) defined an island destination as having a population of fewer than one million persons in less than 5000 km^2. Islands such as Grenada are challenged by its size, small population, limited resources, location, and vulnerability to natural disasters such as hurricanes. Several authors have expressed development constraints that islands experience due to their size such as diseconomies of scale Knox (1967) and the challenges that policy makers can face in attaining consensus due to close family ties (Benedict,1967). In summarising islands states, Campbell (2009) described them as sites of vulnerability while Selwyn (1975) noted that location and remoteness made trade costly. Royle (2001) stated that "small islands are fragile natural systems. Their size and scale make them also problematic in physical terms for human occupation" (p.39).

Grenada's economic vulnerability as a small island state was experienced after the severe destruction of the island due to Hurricane Ivan on September 7th, 2004. In an article published on September 23rd, 2009, World Bank confirmed that the category three storm caused devastation to the tune of over USD$900 million, which is more than twice the country's GDP. World Bank also concluded that the hurricane damaged over 80% of the country's building structures, and only two of the 75 public schools remained intact. In addition, the article stated that damage was also sustained in the health sector; Princess Alice, the second largest hospital on the island, was almost completely destroyed. Approximately 80% of the power distribution grid was lost, and nearly 70% of the tourism infrastructure was deemed uninhabitable. The agriculture sector was also severely damaged by widespread devastation to the nutmeg crop. It takes seven to 10 years for a nutmeg tree to start producing fruit.

Despite these challenges, Croes (2006) highlighted that tourism provides advantages in overcoming the smallness of an island in three main ways. The first advantage is the provision of an avenue to overcome insufficient market demand, resulting in greater economies of scale and efficiency. This leads to lower unit costs. Second, the stimulation of local production and competition, thus creating better price levels and quality of goods and services. Third, tourism by its very nature can raise the standard of living and quality of life for residents in a small island state.

The Grenada Tourism Authority, the statutory arm responsible for implementing tourism plans and strategies, profiled an ideal Grenadian visitor in August, 2016. This study described a typical Grenadian visitor as a well-educated professional baby boomer from a western country who is aged 44 to 62 and is

visiting Grenada for the first time. Visitors are usually couples in search of a well-planned and unique vacation experience at a hotel. This visitor has an interest in activities such as visiting natural, historical, cultural, culinary, and adventure-filled attractions. The ideal visitor will spend about XCD$522 per day (USD$193 per day) and has a high probability of being a repeat visitor to the island.

Table 2 below presents trending statistics from the local tourism authority from 2009 to 2016. These statistics demonstrate that Grenada's tourism growth has been inconsistent. The US continues to be the dominant market for incoming air passengers, followed by the United Kingdom (UK). Cruise ship arrivals contribute a significant source of incoming tourists to the island; the cruise arrivals consistently account for more than half of the tourism arrivals from 2009 to 2016. These statistics align with industry trends that suggest that cruises are the fastest growing tourism segment (Ajagunna, Pinnock & Amode, 2017). In 2016, cruise ship arrivals comprised 66% of total visitor arrivals, which is a decline from 74% in 2009. This may be due to the increase in airlifts to the island after the introduction of carrier Jet Blue and American Airlines' daily offering of flights to the island instead of every other day.

VISITOR ARRIVAL METHODS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
By Air	102,448	98,399	107,003	105,270	105,984	125,224	132,547	135,359
By Sea (yacht)	16,962	21,153	18,860	20,060	22,163	24,650	22,115	20,220
Total Stay over Arrivals	**119,410**	**119,552**	**125,863**	**125,330**	**128,147**	**149,874**	**154,662**	**155,579**
By Cruise Ship	**342,871**	**335,029**	**309,564**	**242,757**	**197,308**	**235,140**	**280,518**	**314,913**
Same Day Visitors	2,829	2,448	1,571	2,341	1,729	1,660	1,579	3,270
TOTAL	**465,110**	**457,029**	**436,998**	**370,428**	**327,184**	**386,674**	**436,759**	**473,762**
% Change (All Visitors)		-1.74%	-4.38%	-15.23%	-11.67%	**18.18%**	12.95%	8.47%
USA	19,997	19,804	22,589	25,225	29,288	35,145	40,914	45,304
Canada	6,040	6,138	6,492	7,103	9,039	13,229	10,790	10,723
United Kingdom	26,935	25,780	27,078	24,367	20,478	23,285	24,681	24,104
Germany	2,298	2,136	2,013	1,307	717	1,911	2,377	2,032
Other Europe	4,706	5,047	5,156	5,562	4,555	6,012	5,531	4,746
Caribbean	24,878	22,456	25,525	23,911	23,794	21,790	22,364	23,113
Grenadians Residing Abroad	13,861	13,469	14,862	14,744	14,991	16,442	18,261	21,265
All Others	3,733	3,569	3,288	3,051	3,122	7,410	7,629	4,072
TOTAL	**102,448**	**98,399**	**107,003**	**105,270**	**105,984**	**125,224**	**132,547**	**135,359**

Table 2: Grenada Visitor Arrival Statistics from 2009 to 2016

1.5 Research Gap

The literature review identified several gaps which are investigated in this study. Firstly, psychological ownership (PO) theory was the framework selected for this study. There has been a call by Hulland, Thompson & Smith (2015) for this theory to be used in an online environment instead of an offline environment. Studies in the literature that have used PO to date have focussed on the implications of PO in an organisational context (Avey, Avolio, Crossley & Luthans, 2009; Mayhew, Ashkanasy, Bramble & Gardner, 2007), restaurant environment Asatryan and Oh (2008), or a tourist attraction (Lee, Kim, Graeffe & Chi, 2013). The literature contained no evidence on the implications of PO in a small island state.

The literature search also revealed that prior studies were conducted on the use of social media within the tourism sector in other countries. For example, Mizrachi and Sellito (2015) completed eight case studies on small tourism enterprises in Australia. The findings indicate that the use of social media, particularly Facebook, was sub-optimal even with early adopters, strategy development, and implementation. Researchers Roult, Gaudette, Auger & Adjizian (2016) examined the use of social media by tourism businesses in Quebec, Canada. Over 2,000 tourism enterprises were surveyed for the study. The findings revealed that companies were aware of the significance of information communication technology (ICT) to their businesses. However, financial, human, geographical, and training issues slow down the adoption process. Another study by Jones, Borgan & Ulusoy (2014) examined the use of social media in Maine, USA. Though some of the businesses in the study extended beyond the tourism sector, tourism was described as a key economic activity of Maine. Businesses in this study could be operating in a similar environment to Grenada as the region where the study was undertaken was rural, underserved and struggling economically. Similar findings of lack of skill and knowledge were challenges faced by these businesses using social media. This present study seeks to address a research gap by examining the use of social media within a small island state.

Finally, limited research has been undertaken on Grenada's tourism sector specifically as seen in the literature. Previous researchers have examined the strength of supply chains between local farmers and hotels Thomas-Francois, Joppe & Von Massow (2017) , hospitality education on the island McDonald and Hopkin (2003) and cultural and heritage tourism in Carriacou (Montero, 2015).

No research was found on social media or its use in marketing in Grenada specifically. This study attempts to bridge this gap giving a voice to service providers within the sector as well as to various persons who serve in strategic capacities within tourism associations and organisations.

The key purpose of the study is to understand the lived experiences of tourism practitioners, the impact that social media has on their businesses, and any challenges that they may face in using social media. This understanding will assist to develop recommendations to improve the use of social media as a vehicle to drive tourism development in Grenada. This thesis will discuss recommendations based on the analysed data; these recommendations may be used by policy makers and service providers to implement various measures to improve Grenada's tourism development using social media.

1.6 Research Approach

To achieve the aim and objectives, the philosophical viewpoint of this researcher was considered. This study conforms to a constructivist ontological orientation, has an interpretivist epistemological orientation, and an inductive approach to the generation of theory. Hence, a qualitative inquiry was undertaken.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data. The questions were derived from the review of key themes in the literature. A pilot study was initially completed to test these questions prior to the main study. Seventeen service providers from various tourism niches from each parish were interviewed for this study to provide an operational perspective on how social media is used within the tourism industry. In addition, five stakeholders who serve in various strategic

roles within the tourism sector were interviewed. Their strategic views were also incorporated into the study. These respondents were referred to as elite participants.

Data was analysed manually, which allowed for greater interaction with the information, and in accordance with Colazzi (1978), who outlined five stages to analysing data. Several themes emerged from this analysis which is discussed in the findings chapter of the study.

1.7 Implications of the Research

This research explores the experiences of tourism practitioners who have used social media in Grenada and contributes to the body of knowledge in this field. This study was conducted on a small and developing island state, and several of the barriers to the use and adoption of social media were similar to those encountered by research undertaken in larger countries. The research has several implications for practitioners as it provides recommendations that service providers and policy makers can consider implementing to support and improve Grenada's tourism product. This study makes a strong appeal to strategic tourism practitioners to differentiate their tourism product to better compete in a regional and global market place.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis comprises six chapters and several appendices. This chapter provides a general overview of the study. Chapter 2 synthesises the literature on social media and tourism, which shapes the theoretical framework of the research. Psychological ownership theory, which is grounded in the belief that people have an innate need to possess, was the selected framework. Chapter 3 describes the research philosophy, design and approach. A qualitative inquiry

was undertaken, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Chapter 4 introduces the themes that emerged from the data. Data was gathered from 17 service providers and five elite participants who held various strategic roles within the tourism industry. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of data and its relevance within existing tourism literature. Chapter 6 concludes by providing insight on the contributions to knowledge and practice and discussing whether the research questions have been addressed. This chapter also presents the limitations of the study and opportunities for future research.

1.9 Summary

This chapter provides the context of this study. The aim and objectives of the study have been presented, as well as the importance of tourism to Grenada, a small and developing island state. The thesis structure has also been outlined. The next chapter synthesises the literature on social media and tourism development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the relevant literature on social media and tourism development. First, the chapter discusses the literature review approach and strategy. It then goes on to examine the origin of tourism, tourism development in the Caribbean, and the motivations to travel. Next, the chapter reviews the various theoretical frameworks that can be used to study and understand social media according to (Sigala, Christou & Gretzel, 2012). The PO theory was selected as the framework for this research. The chapter concludes by justifying why PO theory was the chosen theory to ground this study.

2.2 Literature Review Approach

A critical review of the literature on social media and tourism development was conducted to understand the academic views in both areas. Keywords and search terms were used to identify published research articles in Edinburgh Napier University's online library database. Long tail keywords were used as the research progressed. Grey literature was also sourced from other areas such as Grenada national budgets, *Grenada's Master Tourism Plan*, and visitor arrival statistics to gain a deeper insight into the tourism landscape, both historical and current. Table 3 below demonstrates the keywords that were used for this literature review.

Research Area	Keywords
Tourism Development	Origin
	History
	In the Caribbean
	In small island states
	In Grenada
	Economic Impact
Social Media	Definitions
	Social networking sites
	Why people use social media
	Impact of social media use on psychological ownership
Theories of Social Media	
	Psychological Ownership Theory
	Social Exchange Theory
	Social Penetration Theory
	McLuhan Theory
	Social Network Theory
	Criticisms of theories of social media
Travel	Definition of tourists
	Why people travel
	The use of social media by travellers
Tourism	The use of social media in tourism
	How do destination managers use social media
	Tourism and small island states

Table 3: Literature Review Approach

2.3 Literature Review Strategy

The keywords in Table 3 were used to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the literature review. Articles such as AB/Inform, Science Direct, Pro Quest, and Emerald Publications were carefully reviewed to ensure that the sources were credible. The journal articles were also checked to ensure that they were

not out-dated and subject to peer-review. Grenada's national budgets and other grey literature materials such as political party manifestos and statistics from the Grenada Tourism Authority were reviewed because Grenada's general elections were held during the period of the research. On March 13th, 2018, the ruling party, the New National Party, retained political power in the country.

Microsoft Excel was used to create a literature review grid which recorded the findings of the review. Once the appropriate literature was identified, it was entered into the literature review grid, which recorded details of the date, possible location of the literature in the review, article author, year the article was published, author of the citation, name of the article, and the citation. Microsoft Excel was helpful as it enabled the data to be easily sorted with filters. From this process, research gaps were identified that were used to create semi-structured interview questions. Not all the data gathered during this process was utilised to produce this review.

This chapter will next examine the findings of the literature review, starting with the origin of tourism. The chapter then proceeds to explore tourism development in the Caribbean and the motivations to travel.

2.4 Definitions of Tourism

Tourism has its origins in religion. According to Wikipedia, the word 'holiday' originates from the old English word 'haligdaeg', which comprises the words 'halig' (holy) and 'daeg' (day); together, they refer to a special religious day. In modern use, this means any special day of rest or relaxation as opposed to normal days away from work or school. This has led researchers to refer to tourists as pilgrims, mainly due to the religious origin of the word 'holiday'.

The definition of a tourist can be traced to that of an international tourist, or 'foreign tourist' as termed by the League of Nations Committee of Statistical Experts (McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 1994). This 1937 definition required someone to visit a country in which they did not reside for at least 24 hours before they were designated as a 'foreign tourist'. People who stayed in a country for less than 24 hours were labelled as 'excursionists'. This definition is still in use today. Cohen (1972) identified four types of tourist. First, the organised mass tourist is the least adventurous and maintains a confined environment throughout his trip such as taking a guided tour in an air conditioned bus. Second, the individual mass tourist is similar to the organised mass tourist except that this tourist has more control in terms of planning tours for example and is committed to a group. Next, the explorer is the tourist who usually plans a solo trip and goes off the beaten track. The explorer integrates into local customs and cultures but maintains regular routines of his native way of life. Last, the drifter is the tourist who fully immerses himself into the local culture and customs living with locals and usually taking some type of local job. The drifter has no fixed travel schedule. Alternatively, Cook (1975) summarised tourists into the following categories: international versus domestic; time away from home; mode of transportation; purpose of trip; miles travelled; or a combination of any of the above.

Over the years, there have been many definitions of tourism provided by several researchers. Leiper (1981) defined tourism as "an open system of five elements interacting with broader environments, the human element, tourists; three geographical elements: generating region, transit route and destination region; and an economic element, the tourist industry" (p.74). On the other hand, Jafari (1977), defined tourism as "the study of man away from his usual

habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs and of the impacts that both he and the industry have on the host sociocultural, economic and physical environment" (p.8). Thereafter, Smith (1989) further explained that the foundation of tourism rest in three key elements. Therefore,

tourism = leisure time + discretionary income + positive local sanctions

Smith (1989) outlined that there are five types of tourism being ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental and recreational.One of the main challenges that the early researchers experienced in defining tourism was perceiving leisure or pleasure as legitimate pursuits, especially due to sentiments rooted in Christian theology. Tourism had to overcome the challenge of leisure being viewed as idleness before it could be deemed to be a viable economic activity.

2.5 Tourism Development in the Caribbean

Tourism development became increasingly important to Grenada after the preferential trade of bananas ended with EU nations. In academic literature, tourism development has been viewed as a process of physical change. Noronha (1976) outlined the three key stages of tourism development as discovery, development, and institutionalisation. On the other hand, Butler (1980) identified six stages of tourism development: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation. Additionally, Miossec (1976) has also modelled tourism development with respect to physical change.

While Grenada's tourism development has been slow because of its distinctive political history, other islands in the Caribbean have been able to implement successful tourism strategies. One Caribbean island state that has achieved significant growth in tourism is the island of Aruba. Aruba is a small Dutch island

state with a population of 115,120, according to the CIA Fact Book. Its location in the Caribbean is depicted in Figure 1 (in Chapter 1) relative to Grenada. Vanegas and Croes (2000) found that tourism was of less significance to the economy of Aruba prior to 1985, due to its booming oil refinery sector at the time. However, when the oil refinery which contributed about 25% to Aruba's GDP closed in 1985, tourism emerged as the industry that filled the gap (Ridderstaat, 2007). Aruba was able to transform its economy to be worth a solid USD$2 billion, which supports the argument made by Croes and Vanegas (2008) that "systematic allocation of resources to stimulate and promote tourism is necessary to sustain tourism as an engine of growth and development" (p.102). Tourism has also been profitable to other destinations such as Antigua and Barbuda (Schubert, Brida & Risso, 2011). These researchers analysed tourism data in Antigua and Barbuda from 1970 to 2008 and found that an increase in international tourism has had a positive impact on economic growth. Antigua and Barbuda's location relative to Grenada is also highlighted in Figure 1 in Chapter 1.

Despite the marked success of some Caribbean destinations, other researchers have criticised the tourism development strategies of Caribbean island states. McElroy (2004) has highlighted that the tourism industry mirrors the fragile nature of one crop agriculture, such as bananas while Mullings (2004) has explained that the expansion of tourism in the Caribbean is driven largely by international brands. In many islands, these hotels are all-inclusive, which means that apart from wages that are paid to unskilled employees and government taxes, not much revenue trickles into the hands of local vendors because visitors make their purchases from shops within the hotel that are in most cases also owned by the hotel. Similar sentiments were expressed by

Pattullo (2005) who stated that beaches have become part of the tourism industry rather than part of local life, which has social implications while Mycoo (2006) who reviewed the tourism policies in Barbados found that they were unsuitable for long-term sustainable tourism development.

Wood (2000) highlighted that for the past 20 years, cruise tourism has been the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry. The Caribbean accounts for 50% of the global market share, measured by vessel calls and passenger count (Ajagunna et al., 2017). However, several questions have been raised regarding the value of cruise tourism and whether most of the gains go to cruise liners instead of the destinations. Although it is out-dated, the only Caribbean research that was identified in the literature on cruise tourism was conducted by Dann and Porter (1997) in Barbados. These researchers found that land-based tourists spent more money than cruise passengers in the island. This study revealed that land-based visitors were spending an average of USD$1,100 while cruise ship passengers were spending USD$95 per visit. However, this finding should be qualified because a land-based visitor spends significantly more time in the destination than a cruise passenger. In examining the cruise industry in Croatia, Marusic, Horak & Tomljenovic (2007) concluded that it is not easy to estimate the economic contribution of cruise ship visits. The literature has proposed a plethora of approaches and methods to evaluate the impact of the cruise industry.

Festivals such as annual carnivals and music festivals are popular as Caribbean tourism products. Researchers Anderson and Getz (2009) have classified festivals as a diversified tourism product while Rivera, Semrad & Croes (2016) believed that festivals could possibly draw visitors to an island if properly scheduled during the tourism low season. These prior studies suggest

that music has psychological benefits that give festival attendees a strong sense of belonging, which is an antecedent to the formation of PO. Packer and Ballantyne (2011) developed a model through qualitative research of young people aged 18-30 which found that music festivals create common ground on which the social experience and the festival experience are built. A strong sense of connection is fostered among participants of music festivals.

Dark tourism is an area in the sector that is underdeveloped in the Caribbean despite its significant presence in tourism literature. Research has demonstrated that tourists visited dark places such as concentration camps Podoshen and Hunt (2011), terrorism sites Sturken (2007), Holocaust sites Lennon and Foley (2000), and death camps (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011). Lennon and Foley (2000) described dark tourism as sites that are associated with death, disaster, and depravity. Tourists have been drawn to these sites for a variety of reasons. As an example, Biran et al. (2011) conducted a study of tourist experiences at Auschwitz in Poland that found that the motivations for visiting the site included the aspiration of learning and understanding the history, the desire to see the site, and the interest in visiting the site itself. Death was the least relevant reason which motivated tourists to visit Auschwitz.

2.6 Motivations to Travel

Towner (1995) has traced the history of tourism to the elites of ancient Greece and Rome. In Rome, the elites travelled for pleasure and culture (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In the 13th and 14th centuries, pilgrimages evolved to entail a mixture of travel for religious, pleasure, and cultural reasons (Urry & Larsen, 2011). By the 15th century, this pattern of travel had changed to regular tours from Venice to the Holy Land. According to Urry and Larsen (2011), the Grand Tour was fully

established by the end of the 17th century for the elites, which later extended to the sons of the middle class by the late 18th century.

Urry (2007) also asserted that in modern societies, being a tourist is associated with social status and is deemed to be necessary for good health and a cosmopolitan outlook. To further understand why an individual visits a destination, Urry and Larsen (2011) focussed their study on western tourists' experiences when they visit other destinations. They coined the term 'tourism gaze', which can be traced back to 1840. Tourism gaze refers to the destinations that individuals visit because of the anticipation built up by television, technology, and magazines. The tourist is seen as a kind of contemporary pilgrim who seeks authenticity in other times and places away from everyday life. Urry and Larsen (2011) believed that gazes can be constructed through difference and that all tourists look at "difference" differently. The tourist gaze can take many forms. History, society, social class, gender, and ethnicity are some of the factors that can affect the gaze. These factors lead to many variations on the gaze.

Other authors have outlined differing motives to travel. MacCannell (1989) has presented a different perspective to Urry and Larsen (2011); MacCannell believed that seeking authenticity is the key motive to travel. He described tourists as modern pilgrims who seek authenticity in other places and times. Souvenirs are a key part of pilgrimages as they are reminders of authenticity in that place or time. On the other hand, Cohen (1979) had a different viewpoint. He believed that some tourists seek authentic experiences but many others seek entertainment. The need for authenticity differs based on the level of alienation in society. Persons in highly alienated cultures tend to seek authenticity more than those in less alienated cultures.

Nevertheless, social media, where people share their travel experiences via web 2.0, is a key vehicle that drives the tourism gaze and motivates travel in modern societies. The growing use of social network sites has allowed people to construct their own personal profiles and present a rich set of information about themselves (Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles & Franz, 2015). Nielson (2010) conducted research which indicates that Americans are spending 25% more of their internet time on social media sites. Social media is predominantly used after vacations to share experiences (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2011). This can lead to individuals comparing their lives to the experiences of others, which motivates them to take similar vacations. The need for human beings to compare aligns with the social comparison theory of Festinger (1954). This theory states that people tend to compare their own abilities and opinions to those of others because there is an inherent need for self-evaluation. There is a unidirectional drive upward (p.124). Individuals tend to apply pressure to themselves so that they can catch up with their superiors. Better achievements are highly desirable in most societies.

2.7 Technology and the Tourism Sector

The growth in technology has changed the way that service providers and tourism practitioners market their businesses, products and services. In summarising the digitalisation of the travel and tourism sector, Thakran and Verma (2013) grouped the development into four different time periods. These were the global distribution era, the internet era, the SoLoMo era and the hybrid era. The evolution of technology changed the tourism sector with the introduction of the global distribution systems during the 1960s (Minazzi, 2015). These systems allowed travel operators to connect with each other which

created the central reservation systems (CRS). As a result, travel services and reservations was available for travel agents.

This was followed by the internet era in the 1990's. During this time period, travel providers developed their own websites which enabled them to have direct interactions with travellers and hence new online intermediaries entered the market (Thakran & Verma, 2013). The web eliminated geographical barriers that existed between global brands and local independent hotels and small airlines. The term SoLoMo era stands for social, location and mobile based applications which has transformed the tourism industry. Advancement in technology has led to the emergence of social and online communities such as TripAdvisor and Facebook. In 2008, TripAdvisor became the world's largest travel community (Thakran & Verma, 2013). Social media became popular within the travel space. The year 2013 marked the start of the hybrid era which the experts coined the year of three screens being the computer, tablets and smartphones. In this era travel suppliers invest in direct channels and provide customised services to consumers.

2.8 Social Media

This section explores the critical views surrounding the definitions of social media, the benefits of using social media marketing, the challenges and impact of implementing social media marketing strategies in tourism and other businesses.

2.8.1 Social Media Definitions and the Creation of Social Media Strategies

Several researchers have coined various ways of defining social media (Cohen, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kim, Kim & Kim, 2010). Cohen (2011) summarised 30 different definitions of social media from different perspectives.

The key features included in these definitions were that social media is comprised of online tools, applications, platforms, and media, and therefore depends on information technology. Social media comprises peer-to-peer communication channels which enable the interactive web's content creation; collaboration and exchange by participants and the public; and facets which introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organisations, communities, and individuals. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and facilitate user-generated content. According to Kim et al. (2010), social media is an information system in which users disseminate and collect information to and from other users. The definition by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) was used in this study as it encompasses the various social platforms and mediums that tourism practitioners can use to market their business, from social networking sites such as Facebook to third party websites such as TripAdvisor.

In investigating how social media marketing strategies are created, Minazzi (2015) detailed that there are four consecutive steps. These are social media presence, social media projects, call to action and social media customer relationship management (CRM). The first stage of a social media strategy is social media presence where companies work on brand awareness and content creation. Content is generally informational and promotional. The firm creates a website and has a presence on usually one social media platform. Due to its dominance, Facebook is this social networking site. The next stage is called social media projects which involve the expansion to other social media platforms. Communication at this stage is usually two-way. Companies develop their own blogs and use various social media platforms to interact with users.

Thirdly, social media is used as a tool to drive call to action. Companies seek to collaborate with other businesses and drive customers to shop online. As an example, a hotel may add "book now" capability to social media platforms. The fourth approach social CRM is where social media and business strategy is fully integrated. Social media use entails customer profiling and examining opportunities and threats in the marketplace.

2.8.2 Benefits of Using Social Media Marketing

A review of the literature on the usage of social media marketing reveals that businesses recognise its immense value (Dholakia & Durnham, 2010; Mathwick 2002; Rishika, Kumar, Janakiraman & Bezawada, 2013). Mathwick's (2002) study suggests that customers who are actively involved in communications with the business are more likely to make purchases from the business. Dholakia and Durnham (2010) found that customers increase store visits per month after becoming Facebook fans of a retailer and are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth than non-fans while Rishika et al.(2013) concluded that customer participation in a firm's social media site leads to an increase in the frequency of customer visits. This participation is especially impactful when there is a high level of activities in the social media site. Despite these positive sentiments, Fournier and Avery (2011) described brands using social media marketing as party crashers since the web was not created to sell products but to connect people.

Several examples were presented in the literature where tourism and businesses in other sectors benefitted from using social media marketing. Howison, Finger and Hauschka (2015) conducted a research on the use of social media by a sample of tourism operators in Dunedin, New Zealand. These

researchers conducted 79 semi-structured interviews as their primary method of data collection. 287 tourism operators were also surveyed with only 26 responses received; an uptake of 9%. Online documentation analysis of 10 websites of tourism operators was administered. The results revealed that 63% of tourism operators used social media marketing to sell their products online. The respondents who were interviewed benefitted from using social media to build relationships (33%), for promotions (30%) and for information (18%). 5% of these operators used social media for feedback from customers. On the other hand, the findings of the survey revealed that the main purpose of operators using social media was to maintain an online profile (27%), gaining new customers (15%), interacting with customers (15%), increasing awareness (12%) and promoting products (8%).

Similar benefits were expressed by Mizrachi and Sellito (2015) who conducted eight semi-structured interviews with owners/managers who run the Facebook pages of their tourism businesses in Australia. The interview questions were generally on Facebook strategy, tracking and monitoring Facebook activity and the development of a content plan. The results indicate that five participants main purpose for social media was to reduce advertising spend. Facebook was used as a tool to communicate with past and future guests. Other participants used Facebook pages as an alternative to official websites as developing and maintaining a website was viewed as burdensome.

In investigating the use of social media in the UK, Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides (2011) examined 1,000 business to business organisations (B2B) using mailed questionnaire. Various sectors were targeted which included manufacturing and agriculture. The questionnaires sought to capture the extent of usage of social networking sites by SMEs (small medium enterprises),

barriers and benefits of usage as well as understanding metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of social networking sites in supporting brand objectives. 102 effective responses were received. The findings revealed that 77% of B2B SMEs used Facebook as a platform to meet their target audience. LinkedIn was the second most popular social networking site used. SMEs also had a presence on more than one social networking sites. Companies used social networking sites for a number of reasons: 91% used social networking sites to attract new customers, 86% to cultivate relationships with their audience, 82% to increase brand awareness, 82% to communicate the brand online, 46% for receiving feedback and 14% for interacting with suppliers. 73 % of B2B SMEs indicated that they were not using social networking sites to support their brand strategies. 61% indicated that social networking sites were not important for their industries. 44% were unsure as to whether or how social networking sites can help their brand.

Exploring the benefits of social media use on small businesses in Maine, USA, Jones et al. (2014) identified tourism as the key economic activity of Maine. Five in-depth interviews were carried out on small businesses with four of these businesses operating within the tourism sector. In addition, 26 other small businesses were surveyed. The findings demonstrated web pages and social media help businesses attract more customers for free or for a relatively lower cost compared to conventional media. According to Law, Leung & Buhalis (2009), websites of tourism organisations do not have any commercial significance. However, they could enlarge sales at least up to 33%, whether customers' advice related to internet sites will be taken into consideration. Furthermore, webpages and social media create better awareness, increased web search for the business, developing better relations with customers,

increased and repeat sales. In addition, businesses were able to engage with customers more frequently. The findings also revealed that 74% of respondents believed that social media can help businesses collaborate more effectively. All of the respondents reveal that having a website is very important to success. 90% believed that Facebook was significant while 38% saw value in using Twitter. E-newsletters were deemed as important.

The benefits of using social media marketing was investigated by Rambe (2017) in South Africa using 123 questionnaires on small and medium sized tourism businesses.The findings revealed that 82.9% of the businesses used social media. Businesses benefitted from the use of social media primarily by attracting new customers (47%) and marketing of products and services (17%). Other benefits included listening to customers, feedback, building credibility and networking. 62% of the businesses used social networking sites as key part of social media technologies in their businesses. Less than 2% of the sample relied on blogging. Alternatively, Roult et al. (2016) examined the feedback of 2,393 tourism businesses in Quebec, Canada. These businesses understood the importance of social media to their growth and development. Businesses also viewed social media as priviledged opportunities for loyalty, awareness and interaction with customers. Facebook and YouTube were the most popular social media platforms. 62% of the companies in the sample used social media. 84% of these participants explained that the main reason for the use of social media was to share information about their products and services. 36% confirmed that they use social media to present promotion offers.

The use of social media among 32 small pizzerias in the USA were reviewed by (He, Wang & Zha, 2014). The findings demonstrated that businesses in this study prefer Facebook as a social media application. Case studies were used

for the collection of data as well as secondary sources such as blog posts, websites, presentations, and industry reports. Facebook was predominantly used by the pizzerias, of which 56% had an official website in addition to a Facebook page. Three of these accounts were abandoned for more than one year without updates, seven accounts were periodically updated once every three months or more, and seven accounts were active. On the other hand, 14 pizzerias did not have a website. Only three pizzerias utilised Twitter, which was updated on a daily or weekly basis. Only one pizzeria had a YouTube channel and Pinterest account. The importance of Pinterest as an advertising tool was underscored by Phillip, Miller & McQuarrie (2014) while studying twenty Pinterest boards that were owned by females. They found that users of Pinterest were not oriented like users on other social networking sites such as Facebook; instead, these users were interacting with themselves, which is more effective at discovering consumer's preferences. According to He, Wang, Chen & Zha (2015), small businesses should only start with one social media network such as Facebook, Twitter, instead of spreading their resources thinly across multiple social media networks.

The literature also highlighted several instances where businesses used social media to showcase corporate social responsibility content on business' social media pages as it was pivotal in building customer loyalty and trust (He, Wang & Zha, 2014; McCorkindale, 2010; Shu & Chuang, 2011). Both community relations and corporate social responsibility were fundamental for some of the pizzerias in the study conducted by (He et al., 2014). As a result, these pizzerias were more successful in gaining customers. The researchers also noted that three pizzerias received high praise and appreciation from Facebook followers for supporting local community activities and helping local kids with

special needs. In addition, Mc Corkindale (2010) advised companies to integrate community building or social responsibility activities in their social media pages. Shu and Chang (2011) believed that social media sites should provide users with entertainment and greater social involvement in addition to selling product or services.

Businesses can also benefit by using social media for crowdfunding. Padgett and Rolston (2014) defined crowdfunding as the use of social media to raise monies for varied purposes such as special projects or charitable activities. However, these researchers highlighted several ethical issues surrounding the use of social media to raise funds. First, the entrepreneur may have too much cash too soon, which could result in misappropriation. Second, there is growing legal concern over what investors are entitled to when the venture becomes lucrative. Prior studies by Agrawal, Catalini & Goldfarb (2015) as well as Davidson and Poor (2014) deemed that the nature of the relationship between the project creator and the funder is a significant factor in determining whether a person participates in crowd funding.

Businesses also benefitted from using social media by leveraging the power of social media influencers. Ge and Gretzel (2018) have argued that social media influencers in tourism studies have been overlooked. In defining the term social media influences, Freberg, Graham, Mc Gaughey, & Freberg (2011) stated that influencers are independent third party endorsers who shape follower attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media. Blogs can be a powerful source of "word of mouth" while also being and a source of negative influence from unsatisfied customers (Thevenot, 2007). Alternatively, Christou (2015) have described influencers as online persons who can be trusted based on their reputation, predictability, and competence. The

impact that social media influencers have on their audience within the travel industry was reviewed by (Magno & Cassia, 2018). Based on a sample of 129 respondents who were consistent users of a travel blog, the followers' intentions to conform to the suggestions of travel bloggers depended on the quality of the blogger's information and the blogger's trustworthiness. Furthermore, using influencers as an advertising tool is cost effective and can lead to increased business (Liu et al., 2015). Building an online business community was also viewed as desirable by businesses. Qu and Lee (2011) noted that participation in online travel communities created a sense of belonging, which is an antecedent of PO, which is the theory that grounds this study. Wagner, Wenzel, Wagner & Koch (2017) viewed online communities as strategic assets because they allow businesses to predict threats and seize opportunities.Communities can also be built via apps in the travel and tourism domain for information, two way sharing capabilities, context awareness, the internet of things and tagging (Dickson et al., 2014).

Third party review sites such as TripAdvisor were seen as useful within the tourism industry. Previous studies by Akehurst (2009), Gretzel and Yoo (2008) Vermeulen and Seegers (2009), Wirtz and Chew (2002) found that TripAdvisor was seen as a reputable source of information when compared to other sources of information by visitors. Hospitality and travel related products have the attributes of intangibility, perishability, variability and inseparability according to Kotler and Armstrong (2010) thus making TripAdvisor reviews a valuable source of information for tourists when making a purchasing decision. The influence of user reviews were also underscored by Klein (1998) particularly for experience goods as their quality is often unknown before consumption. Hence tourists prefer to explore user generated content before purchasing a vacation (Neirotti,

Raguseo & Paolucci, 2016). While examining bed and breakfast providers in New Zealand Prayag, Hall & Wood (2018) found that there were four clusters of perceptions of TripAdvisor reviews. These clusters were neutrals, detesters, supporters and apprehensives. Businesses who were categorised as neutrals understood the importance of reviews and the value that these can add to their businesses. However, the feedback was only moderately implemented into the operations of the business. Apprehensives were categorised as those who are fearful of user generated content due to the damaging effect that a poor review can have on the reputation of the business. Supporters are those providers where reviews play a significant role in assisting in identifying areas of their business that could be improved. Positive reviews are a motivating factor to improve skills while negative reviews acts as a driver to work harder. Finally, detesters are those businesses that despise the power that users hold in generating content. This group does not see online reviews as a relevant aspect of their business and do not rely on them to grow their business.

Email marketing strategies is one of the most effective marketing activities involved in building a brand, improving relationships with customers, getting new contacts and promoting the sales of a company (Hudak, Kianickova & Madlenak, 2017). These researchers also defined email marketing as a targeted sending of commercial and non-commercial messages to a detailed list of receivers respective e-mail addresses. Hudak et al. (2017) identified that there are three important metrics which should be used to measure successful email marketing campaigns. These are delivery rate, open rate and click-through rate. According to Enache (2018), electronic commerce or e-commerce consists primarily of the distributing, buying, selling, marketing and servicing of products or services over electronic systems such as the internet and other

computer networks. Abou-Shouk and Lim (2010) have proposed a four stage model of e-commerce adoption with two main levels. The model identified these two main levels as: low level and advanced level e-commerce practices. The low level can be further subdivided into two phases: static versus interactive websites, while the advanced level includes an additional two phases of electronic transaction and electronic integration.

Wresch and Fraser (2011) conducted a longitudinal study on ecommerce with 23 companies in five countries in the Caribbean. These countries were Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Jamaica. The niches were tourism, trade and investment promotion. Eight of the businesses operating in 2004 were either out of business in 2008 or had stopped their e-commerce efforts. Generally the participants had significant learning and experience with information systems. However, none had formal training in information systems. The findings revealed that most significant barriers managers faced in adopting ecommerce in their businesses were banking services and logistical support. Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks (2013) investigated the key drivers and adoption of e commerce in small tourism businesses in Egypt. The findings revealed that the key drivers of adoption are competitors' pressures, suppliers' pressures, adaptation to technology changes, globalisation issues and ensuring the survival of travel agents.

2.8.3 The Challenges of Implementing Social Media Marketing

Though social media adoption has been widespread, the literature presented several barriers to the adoption of social media, especially by smaller businesses. In exploring the use of student mentors in overcoming barriers to the use of social media within small tourism businesses, Schaffer (2015) found

that the main barriers to respondents' active use of social media was lack of skill (67%), lack of knowledge (55%), lack of time (44%) and lack of money (11%). The format of study was a student-based, work-integrated learning project. These were not internship project whereby students work in an organisation or business for an extended period of time. However, students worked with business owners/managers. 98% of the business in the study had less than 10 employees and were from a profit and non-for-profit organisation. 43% of the participants were accommodation providers and 14% were in the tours/ transportation niche. 57% of the businesses indicated that these barriers were reduced due to the involvement in this project.

Similar challenges were found by Rambe (2017) in researching small and medium tourism enterprises in South Africa. Lack of expertise and dedicated resources were challenges which tourism business faced in this region. Approximately 60% of these businesses confirmed that social media was handled by the manager/owner. Only 8% of the businesses revealed that a social media technology specialist was employed. Employees managed social media sites in 14% of the businesses. 15% of the persons in the sample rated their knowledge of social media at a beginner level. Approximately 10% viewed their staff knowledge of social media as advanced. Looking into the use of social media marketing in the Hong Kong hotel industry, Chan and Guillet (2011) used secondary data was used from a variety of online sources. 23 social media sites were reviewed. Twitter (56.7%) and Facebook (53.7%) were the most widely used platform in the hotel industry. Hotels marketed on Facebook extensively due to the differences in the two platforms. Twitter is a microblog with a limited number of words for each message. YouTube (38.8%), Flickr (26.9%) and Trip Advisor (23.9%) were popularly used social media sites

in the hotel industry. Only 15 out of the 67 hotels used blogs for marketing. The study highlighted seven major problems that hotels faced in using social media marketing: - a) lack of interaction between hotels and customers b).lack of commitment to sustain social media marketing efforts c) problems encountered in accessing hotels' social media sites d) inability to use social media to disclose organisational identity e) unresponsiveness to guests f) inaccurate content and use of language g) lack of communication between different business levels.

Challenges were also uncovered by Michaelidou et al. (2011) from studying 1,000 business to business (B2B) organisations in the UK using social networking sites. 61% of the businesses in the sample indicated that social networking sites were not important for their brand strategies. On the other hand, 44% were unsure as to whether or how social networking sites could help their brands. Other barriers experienced were unfamiliarity on the part of staff, limited staff technical skills, increased investment of time, firms themselves lacked experience, expertise and resources to adapt to social networking sites. Almost identical drawbacks were found by Jones et al. (2014) in their study of tourism businesses in Maine, USA. The key constraint expressed by participants was that maintaining a website takes time and knowledge. Managers have limited resources in terms of staff, money and time. The study also showed that some businesses recognise that there is the need to increase awareness but are not sure how to do it. Creating original and interesting content takes time and dedication.

Roult et al. (2016) who researched 2,393 tourism organisations in Quebec, Canada found that 38% of the sample did not use social media. Lack of time was cited as the main reason among businesses that does not use social

media. Other businesses indicated that the organisation does not justify a presence in different media while some businesses believe in the relevance and usefulness of social media but do not have the human resources to manage these networks. The management of their websites and use of social media significantly differ due to the financial capacity of the organisations, geographical locations, as well as size and their human resources. Tourism businesses that used social media the least were mainly new and smaller in size in the sample.

2.8.4 The Impact of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing leads to returns of all kinds (Romero, 2011). It has revolutionised the consumer buying process Hudson and Thal (2013) as well as shape the way that consumers think (Fisher, 2009). Businesses are attracted to participating in social media because their competitors are already doing it (Fisher, 2009). Seven approaches have been proposed in the literature by Kumar and Mirchandani (2012) when evaluating social media success. Businesses should a) monitor the conversations b) identify influential individuals who can spread messages c) identify the factors shared by influential individuals d) locate those potential influencers whose interests relevant to the campaign e) recruit those influencers with interests relevant to the campaign to talk about the company's product/service f) incentivise those influencers to spread positive word of mouth about the product or service g) recap the rewards from increasingly effective social media campaigns.

A key factor which affects whether the impact of social media marketing can be positive in a firm depends on if the business has achieved social maturity (Kane, Palmer, Phillips & Kiron, 2014). These authors indicated that social

maturity involves business process transformation not just using social tools and technologies in the enterprise. It usually starts in marketing and extends to other areas of the business. Firms that are socially mature is characterised as having social media as part of its marketing, innovation, leadership and operations. Platforms performance as well as financial and operational metrics used to measure the results of marketing campaigns. Data collected is analysed and integrated into processes. There is a clear social business leader usually at the senior level of the firm. Social business can help the organisation expand across geographies. This however comes with its unique set of challenges (Kane et al., 2014).

To measure the effective use of social media, Murdough (2013) identified three pillars of social media measurement. These are reach, discussions and outcomes. Reach involves monitoring the quantity and mentions and quality of authors. Discussions is critical to adding value to the audience and cultivating relationships through conversation. Brands can therefore influence the topics of perceptions of its audience. Outcomes examine the impact of engagement such as lead generation and sales. Similar factors were used by Hays, Page & Buhalis (2013) to measure the success of the use of social media within destination management organisations. These authors found that social media efforts were measured based on audience size, the degree of customer engagement and customer sentiment.

A hot topic among marketers when is comes to social media is its return on investment. A bone of contention was the term used by Fisher (2009) to describe the debate on return on investment among marketers. This is due to both the spread of social media use and tremendous budget cuts that businesses are expected to make in tough financial times. Furthermore, Fisher

(2009) also expressed a view shared by Jason Falls in Social Media Explorer that return on investment should not be used to measure social media because social media is not about sales and market share but about people. In exploring the return on investment in a non-profit organisation, Romero (2011) suggested that the analysis based on a) the consumption by previous users can be compared with that of current arrivals on the network b) comparison can be made between the behaviour of a user prior to following us on social media after doing so c) the extent to which the success of new development, events has improved after being communicated in social networks can be measured d) the influence of brand perception on users' consumption and that extent to which the new media have changed this perception can be measured. A fundamental challenge involved in measuring the impact of social media is that marketing managers understand its importance according to Hoffman and Fodor (2010), however, senior leaders who do not fully understand social media and its power want to see numbers. Hoffman and Fodor (2010) believed that effective social media marketing can have positive impact on brand awareness, brand engagement and word of mouth. For example, a blogger could measure brand awareness by the number of unique visits, brand engagement by the average length of time on site and word of mouth by number of likes. The views of marketers on measuring the success of social media strategies using return on investment could be divided into three camps: the deniers, the definers and the dedicated (Fisher, 2009). The deniers are the group who are not interested in measuring return on investment, the definers are those who focus on a large benchmark such as click through rate and the dedicated is the group that understands the importance of taking a 360 degree approach and consider

several measures such as web analytics, buzz monitoring and community management listening.

Reviewing the impact that social media has had in previous tourism studies, Howison et al. (2015) when examining the impact of social media marketing among tourism operators interviewed in Dunedin, New Zealand, 57% identified that online marketing as a success factor for their business. Furthermore, 20% indicated that online marketing was equally as important as traditional marketing. There were some tourism operators who do not believe that online marketing is important for their business to succeed. Examining how service providers used social media in Maine, USA, Jones et al. (2014) found that 90-95% of respondents believed that social media had a huge or moderate impact on bringing target market tourists to the area. Approximately 74% believed that social media can help businesses collaborate more effectively. 100% of participants viewed that having a website is important to success. Facebook and Twitter were viewed as valuable by 90% and 38% of the participants respectively. Email newsletters were also perceived as necessary. Mizrachi and Sellito (2015) conducted eight case studies on small tourism businesses in Australia and found that service providers understood the impact of Facebook on business, but employed it without a clear plan to achieve long terms sales and marketing goals. Nair (2011) found that Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms are being treated as mediums that can easily draw fans.

While investigating Scottish SME's who use social media McCann and Barlow (2014), found that the main reasons for using social media was to raise awareness of the company's products and services, building relationships and driving the business forward. However, 65% of the company indicated that they did not measure the benefits gained from using social media. 35% of

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respondents who confimed that they measured the benefits of using social media confirmed that they reviewed qualitative and quantitative factors. These included number of bookings and referrals, sources of traffic, brand awareness, number of likes and comments. One participant revealed that while they use qualitative measures more than quantitiatve ones, that it was hard to confirm if they resulted directly in sales. Another participant expressed that relationship building was critical to the use of social media and not just sales. According to McCann and Barlow (2014), to gain the maximum benefit from social media and fully realise its optimal impact, a strategic approach is important to ensure that business objectives are achieved. Hassan, Nadzim & Shiratuddin (2015) indicated that without a proper strategy or goal, marketing efforts might not be worthwhile. Hence, small businesses need to employ the right strategy when using social media. These researchers have suggested that the widely-known marketing model AIDA (awareness, interest, desire, action) could be extended for use among small businesses. Awareness refers to how to attract customers or drive awareness of new and current products; interest refers to how to create interest in customers to know more about products or services; desire refers to how to ensure that customers have a desire to own or purchase the products or services that meet their needs, wants, and interests; finally, action refers to ensuring that customers take action to make the decision to purchase the products or services.

2.9 Theories of Social Media

This section explains the various theoretical frameworks of social media as outlined by (Sigala et al., 2012). These frameworks are social exchange theory, social penetration theory, social network analysis, psychological ownership theory, and McLuhan's media theory. This section also proceeds to discuss

each theory in detail as well as the relevant criticisms. The section concludes with a justification of PO theory as the chosen theory to ground this study.

2.9.1 Social Exchange Theory

According to Thibaut and Kelley (1952) and Emerson (1976), social exchange theory (SET) examines the exchange of rewards and costs to analyse the value of the outcome from different situations for an individual or group. This definition was further supported by Homans (1961) and Zafirvoski (2005), who believed that all social life can be treated as an exchange of tangible and intangible rewards and resources between actors. This behaviour will continue in any environment where mutual advantage exists (Zafirvoski, 2005 p. 3). As Kaynak and Marandu (2006) stated, "all relationships have give and take"(p.229).

Sigala et al. (2012) argued that the theory was best summarised by Homans (1958) when he wrote the following:

> Social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones such as symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them. The process of Influence tends to work out at equilibrium to balance in the exchanges. For a person in an exchange, what he gives may be a cost to him, just as what he gets may be a reward and his behaviour changes less as the difference of the two, profit tends to a maximum. (p.606)

Using a tourism lens, Sutton (1967) argues that SET is the encounter between the host community and the guests "may provide either an opportunity for rewarding and satisfying exchanges, or it may stimulate and reinforce impulses to exploitation on the part of the host" (p.221). SET as defined by Andereck,

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Valentine, Knopf & Vogt (2005) is individuals' attitudes towards tourism and subsequent level of support of their own development. The level of development will be evaluated based on the outcomes of tourism for themselves and their communities.

Social exchange theory has been used extensively after the work of Ap (1992). Ap (1992) was one of the first researchers to apply this theory to tourism and believed that it was an ideal theoretical framework for use. Several researchers have utilised SET as a framework in tourism studies. Pizam (1978) has explored the relationship between residents' attitudes towards tourism and their economic dependency. The findings confirmed the existence of SET; residents employed in the tourism sector expressed more positive attitudes towards tourism than those not employed in the sector. Milman and Pizam's (1988) findings also supported SET by indicating that residents who were employed in the sector tended to be more supportive than those not employed in the sector. Similar results were observed by Caneday and Zeiger (1991) and (King, Pizam & Milman, 1993). Andereck et al. (2005) reported the impact of community tourism using SET. They observed that residents found many positive and negative impacts. Economically, tourism was beneficial. These researchers found that participants who benefitted from tourism had a more positive attitude towards the industry than those who were less dependent on it, which confirms SET. Other researchers have applied SET to casino development, which is a spin off industry of tourism development. Perdue, Long & Kang (1995) have confirmed that personal benefits were strongly correlated with a person's support of gambling and its positive impacts such as job creation.

Social exchange theory has been criticised on the basis that it assumes that there is a positive relationship between benefit and support (Chen & Raab,

2012). Getz's (1994) study in Scotland Spey Valley found increased negative attitudes towards tourism development, suggesting that the benefits either did not match expectations or that the benefits from tourism had declined. Social exchange theory has also been criticised from the perspective of distance to attractions, which affects residents' perception of the benefits of tourism. Pearce (1980) and Sheldon and Var (1984) confirmed that residents who live in rural areas view tourism less favourably than those in urban areas. Keogh (1990) also supported this view in his study of a small development in New Brunswick, Canada. Keogh (1990) concluded that those living closest to the attraction had strong feelings towards tourism. William and Lawson (2001) also supported the distance factor in their examination of 10 New Zealand towns, which found that those living near the attractions viewed them less favourably. Jurowski and Gursoy (2003) demonstrated the existence of SET in their study and that distance had a significant impact on how costs and benefits are evaluated. For example, Jurowski and Gursoy (2003) demonstrated that when recreational resources in the community were often used by the tourists, the residents felt more negatively about tourism than those who lived further away.

Other researchers have argued that SET is an insufficient framework to explain residents' attitudes towards tourism. Although Ap (1992) supports the use of SET as a framework, he noted that there is a significant distinction between attitude and perception, and these words are used interchangeably within the SET framework. The theory does not highlight the circumstances under which a resident might have a positive attitude towards tourism (Ap, 1992; Andereck et al., 2005; Coulson, Mac Laren, Mc Kenzie & O' Gorman, 2014; Ward & Berno, 2011). Sharpley (2014) explained that the basis of SET is that both parties must

agree to be involved in the process. However, interactions with tourists by residents in tourism destinations are usually involuntary and unintentional.

Ward and Berno (2011) suggested that SET should be combined with other theories such as the integrated threat theory Stephan and Stephan (1996) and the contact hypothesis. Other researchers such as Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Kock & Ramayah (2015) used a revised version of SET to examine residents' perception of the development of new World Heritage Site in Lenggong Valley, Malaysia. Cropanzo and Mitchell (2005) revised SET to focus on six rules, namely reciprocity, rationality, altruism, group gain, status, and consistency and competition for use in tourism research.

Researchers have also criticised SET for the lack of development of factors such as trust and power. Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2011) have argued that these factors should feature more strongly in the literature:

> The core ideas of trust and power that comprise the SET have yet to be adequately integrated in a single framework in research on community responses to tourism. Test of the SET as well as its application by researchers investigating residents' attitudes have been based on an incomplete specified set of ideas, leaving out important theoretical constructs relevant to the theory (p. 966).

Wrong (1979) defined power as the ability of one actor to influence the behaviour of another actor. Studies reveal that more powerful residents viewed tourism in a positive light. Kayat (2002) studied tourism development in Langkawi, Malaysia and witnessed this result, as did Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2011) in Grand Baie, Mauritius.

2.9.2 Social Network Analysis

According to Musial and Kazienko (2012), the social network analysis was first coined by J. A. Barnes (1954) and has been used in the study of sociology, anthropology, geography, social psychology, computer science, and organisational studies. According to Wasserman and Faust (1994), social network theory views the community of individuals as connected actors and uses mathematical models to study its structure, development, and evolution. Scott, Cooper & Baggio (2008) stated that the mathematical analysis of networks is considered to have begun with Leonhard Euler's paper of 1736, where he proposed a formulation of the renowned Konigsberg Bridge Problem. Classic sociologist Mitchell (1973) has also identified three ways of perceiving social network links: exchange, communication, and social.

An understanding of the meaning of nodes, links, and actors is important in social network theory. Nodes or actors are entities, persons, organisations, or events. Links are the relationships between actors. Networks are the patterns that are formed from the combination of all actors and links within the system. According to Timur and Getz (2008), networks have characteristics. For example, networks may be dense, which means they have many links, or sparse, which means the opposite. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that highly dense networks result in efficient communication and enhanced diffusion of norms across networks. A central position within a network indicates the amount of power obtained through the structure and the capacity to access information and other members (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Centrality is a key measure in social network theory. Freeman (1979) defined "closeness centrality" as an actor's ability to independently access all other members of the

network and "betweenness centrality" as measuring the frequency with which an actor falls on the paths between pairs of other actors.

Several researchers have underscored the importance of networks, especially within the tourism sector due to its competitive nature (Bickerdyke, 1996; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Scott et al., 2008; Wang & Xiang, 2007). Wang and Xiang (2007) have argued that size and the small budgets available in many destinations make collaboration and networks critical for the survival of these businesses. Porter (1990) posited that networking is a key strategy that businesses use to gain competitive advantage.

Stokowski (1994) first used social network theory as a theoretical lens in tourism studies to examine tourist behaviour and the relationships between tourist groups. Thereafter, several other researchers have used social network analysis in tourism studies (Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010; Novelli, Schmitz & Spencer, 2006; Pavlovich, 2003). Pavlovich (2003) has used social network analysis to research the dynamics of networks in New Zealand. Pavlovich (2003) examined the evolution and transformation of the Waitomo Caves and compared network structures as well as destinations in publications in the years 1910, 1986, and 2000 to understand the inter-organisational relationships and partnerships between actors in the destination. This network developed the competitiveness of tourism in Waitomo caves. Novelli et al. (2006) have researched the development of East Sussex, UK into a healthy lifestyle destination and found cooperation among different actors in small and medium sized enterprises. This led to improved quality of service and co-marketing activities as well as shared involvement in annual events. On the other hand, Erkus-Ozturk and Eraydin (2010) have studied tourism in Antalya, which is Turkey's most dense tourism area. The study demonstrated significant

networking in Antalya among private firms, the community, and organisations, confirming the importance of networking in building tourism in Antalya, Turkey.

Network analysis is important to understanding the structure and cohesiveness of destinations (Scott et al., 2008). The fragmented nature of tourism destinations and the perception of delivering one product have favoured the development of destination management organisations (Sainaghi, 2005). This was also supported by Pittinsky and Simon (2007 p. 586), who stated that leadership plays a critical role in encouraging efficient and productive collaboration. Timur and Getz (2008) used social network analysis to examine destination stakeholder relationships in the urban destinations of Calgary, Victoria, and San Francisco. The researchers found that the bodies with the highest centrality in urban destinations were local government, destination marketing organisations, and other stakeholders with access to or possession of critical resources. Destination marketing organisations are perceived to hold the greatest legitimacy and have power over others regarding destination development. Borgatti, Mehra, Brass & Labianca (2009) identified four reasons why network ties form: similarities such as of location, membership, and attitude; social relations such as kinship, friendship, and liking or knowing an actor; interactions such as support and trade; and flows such as information and resources.

The increased use of the internet has led to some social networks existing online. Musial and Kazienko (2012) indicated that there is a difference between networks in an online and offline environment. Tran, Jeeva & Pourabedin (2016) studied a tour operator named Halong Glory in Hanoi and a single deluxe tour package in Halong Bay. The researchers investigated web links between tour operators and travel agencies, which indicated little connection via

the internet; therefore, online social networks were still underdeveloped in this study.

Hall (2005) defined a network as "an arrangement of interorganisation cooperation and collaboration" (p.179). While networks do form and there are several examples stated above where they were beneficial to the firms involved, in reality there are many times when inter-firm relationships fail, and in some instances, networks never exist. Gunn (1977) was one of the first researchers to highlight the lack of public-private collaboration in tourism planning, which she considers to be important to sustainable development. Corte and Aria (2014) sampled 200 firms in Naples and Sorrento in Italy and confirmed the existence of three clusters with varying degrees of inter-firm collaboration, ranging from high to medium to zero. The lack of trust is the key factor that contributes to the failure of networks or to the actors neglecting to form networks. Lewicki, Mc Allister & Bies (1998 p.439) defined distrust as a confident negative expectation regarding conduct, while trust is a confident positive expectation. Della Corte's (2009) model identified relational problems as the main reason for network failure. This model proposes that "the personal attitudes and moral approaches of local firm's leaders, their history and reliability as well as their experiences with inter-firm collaboration can help reduce initial distrust in inter-organisational relationships and lead to more stable cooperation frameworks"(p.416). Della Corte and Aria (2014) believed that destination management organisations can create effective governance structures that can overcome the trust obstacle, which appears to be a hindrance to collaboration between tourism businesses.

According to Tinsley and Lynch (2001), network characteristics in smaller firms are different from larger ones and should be considered separately. Limited research has been conducted to date on small tourism firm networks and their

contribution to destination development (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001). Lowe (1988) has posited that social networks such as customers, employees, and marketing channels were treated as extended family members and not contacts. Previous studies on small firm networks have been criticised by Curran, Jarvis, Blackman & Black (1993) as being "over-reliant upon quantitative research approaches" (p.13). The approaches taken in these studies provided more information on the frequency of contact than on the content of the communication within the network (Curran et al., 1993). The researchers have further argued that "networks are best seen as primarily cultural phenomena, that is, as sets of meanings, norms and expectations usually linked with behavioural correlates of various kinds" (p.13). This position was supported by Lynch, Halcro, Johns, Buick & Gillham (2000), who stated the following:

> An advantage of investigating networks and networking from a cultural perspective is that it enables capturing of actors' networks through behavioural identification thus permitting mapping. In addition, such a perspective allows the investigator to focus on the values, attitudes and beliefs determining those behaviours. Mapping alone would only describe networks rather than leading to an understanding from an actors' perspective (p.117).

2.9.3 Social Penetration Theory

According to Altman and Taylor (1973) argued that relationships "develop through time in a systematic and predictable fashion" and it "involves different levels of intimacy of exchange or degree of social penetration" (p.3). Altman and Taylor (1973) have also indicated that the development of interpersonal relationships takes four steps: orientation, exploratory affective exchange, full

affective exchange, and stable exchange. Orientation is the first stage of interaction, where conversations are usually cautious and limited to public topics. Exploratory affective exchange is when relationships are courteous, friendly, and relaxed. Full affective exchange is when relationships have grown, and persons have become more comfortable with deep sharing and initiating details such as private life stories with each other. Stable exchange is the final stage of relationship development where individuals can easily understand and predict each other behaviours. Relationships rarely reach this stage of oneness. The meta-analysis conducted by Collins and Miller (1984) indicated that people who disclose more are more likeable, that people disclose more to the people they like, and when people disclose more to certain persons, they like them more afterwards.

Social penetration theory is sometimes called the onion theory of personality because layers are penetrated as time passes and intimacy grows (Baack, Fogliasso & Harris, 2000). As the person receives more positive reinforcement over time from interaction with another, then the relationship with that individual grows, and more information is disclosed, particularly personal and intimate information (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Tang and Wang (2012) explored bloggers' self-disclosure on their blogs versus self-disclosure in the real world. Using SPT as the theoretical framework, the researchers found that bloggers seem to be aware of the risks of extensive disclosure on their blogs and are willing to disclose their interests and experiences rather than personal and money matters.

Social penetration theory has been criticised because its key assumption is that relationships follow a specific pattern of people becoming more open with one another over a period of time. In addition, relationships also operate in cycles

where individuals may engage in more distant styles of communication or break off constant contact. Altman and Taylor (1973) stated that psychological dangers can emerge when people are open with one another, such as mutual intrusion, increased vulnerability and exposure, and the potential for loss of individuality and dignity.

2.9.4 McLuhan Media Theory

McLuhan (1964) coined the concept of the global village. McLuhan (1964) believed that the global village is the global world where distance has lost its importance. The global village is a society that is driven by social media, where social relations are similar to pre-industrial communities. McLuhan (1964) viewed the media as an extension of man having a direct impact on psyche and mental structures. McLuhan (1964) coined the famous quote "the media is the message". The global village embraces global communication and faded the distinctions between public and private as well as work and leisure time.

Levinson (2001) has criticised McLuhan's work because his ideas were written in an era before television. Television has not caused the development of the global village because it has left consumers in the role of being a passive consumer, which means that they consume whatever content is presented to them.

2.9.5 Psychological Ownership Theory

Psychological ownership theory is grounded in the notion that people have an innate need to possess (Burk, 1900; Porteous, 1976). Scholarly literature on human beings and ownership dates to psychologist William James (1890), who wrote the following:

A man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his

body and his cloths and his house, his wife, and children his land,

his yacht and his bank account …. His reputation and works, if

they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die,

he feels cast down. (p.291)

Similar views were expressed by Belk (1988), whose work was rooted in material possessions. He argued that possessions are a major contributor to and reflections of individual consumer identities. Belk (1988) also posited that "knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possessions as part of ourselves" (p.139). McDougall (1923) has argued that instincts play a major role in what is collected. Sartre (1969) believed that "to have" is one of the most important categories of human existence. Psychological ownership begins during childhood. Issacs (1933) observed children expressing possessions towards nursery rhymes and songs; they stated that the rhymes and songs were "theirs" if they heard them first and that no one else had a right to sing or hear them without their permission.

Psychological ownership is defined as a state where a person feels as though the object, material or immaterial, or part of it, is theirs (Pierre, Kostova & Dirks, 2003). Psychological ownership can exist in the absence of legal ownership (Jussila, Tarkiainen, Sarstedt & Hair, 2015; Pierre, O' Driscoll & Coghlan, 2004; Rousseau & Shperling, 2003). This was supported by Peck and Shu (2009), who have argued that merely touching a product increases perceived ownership. Weil (1952) observed that frequent associations with an object give a rise to a feeling of ownership. He strengthened this claim with the example of how ownership feelings could develop between a garden and a gardener.

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Brasel and Gips (2013) summarised ownership well when they posited that ownership is a fluid concept of which actual product ownership is only one type.

According to Folse, Moulard & Raggio (2012), PO is different from the construct of Strahilevitz and Loewenstein (1998). Their focus was on how the duration of either past or current ownership affects the valuation of objects. The researchers did not specifically examine the possessiveness phenomenon that occurs when one does not actually own or possess the desired target. Psychological ownership is also different from option attachment or prefactual ownership, according to the authors' work on consumer decision making (Carmon, Wertenbroch & Zeelenberg, 2003). Psychological ownership should not be confused with the endowment effect, which is based on loss aversion and concerns the possessive feeling that occurs from an object when it is in someone's control (Thaler, 1980).

The Three Routes of Psychological Ownership (PO)

Extending the earlier work of Belk (1988), Dittmar (1992), and Furby (1978), Pierre et al. (2003) theorised that PO is driven by the three human motives of efficacy and effectance, having a place, and self-identification. Efficacy and effectance refers to an individual's possessions providing control to the holder thus serving as a source of competence, usefulness and productiveness (Pierre, Kostova & Dirks, 2001). Having a place refers to an individuals' need to possess a certain territory or space as a home to dwell in (Pierre et al., 2001). Self-identity can be viewed from three angles: coming to know the self, which is an individual's need to define and learn about the self (Pierre et al., 2003); expressing self-identity, which is an individual's need to communicate their identity to others (Pierre et al., 2003); and maintaining continuity of self-identity,

which is an individual's need to maintain an emotional connection between self-identity and their past (Pierre et al., 2003).

Efficacy and Effectance

White (1959) stated that effectance was the desire to interact effectively with one's environment. White (1959) believed that the ability to control one's environment gives rise to feelings of efficacy and pleasure as both stem from 'being the cause'. White (1959) was further supported by Dittmar (1992), who argued that gaining control is one of the key drivers of psychological ownership and achieving desired outcomes through possessions. Human beings desire to experience efficacy and control; this desire leads them to seek control over objects in their individual environment or space (Beggan, 1991; Dittmar, 1992). Possessions provide individuals with effectance and feelings of competence (Furby, 1978; Isaacs, 1933; Porteous, 1976).

Self Identity

Dittmar (1992) argued that possessions provide an individual with a sense of identity and are interpreted through one's system of meaning. Dittmar (1994) also indicated that in everyday life, material possessions are expressive symbols of social standing, personal qualities, attitudes, and beliefs. She gave the example of a car, which not only provides transportation but also symbolises the owner's freedom and independence. Niederland and Sholevar (1981) found many young American males valued their cars as a key part of their extended selves and egos. On the other hand, Belk (1988) posited that the loss of possessions can translate into the loss of the self. This was supported by Goffman (1961), who found that individuals in homes for the aged, mental

hospitals, prisons, and boarding schools experienced the loss of the self due to being deprived of money, freedom, and other personal possessions. Researchers have also identified the loss of self in victims of natural disasters. McLeod (1984) found that persons who lost possessions through a mudslide went through grief that was similar to losing a loved one and took many months to recover. Erikson (1976) found similar findings in a study on the Buffalo Creek Flood.

Having a Place

Kron (1983) argued that individuals need a fixed place where they can structure their daily lives, and a home is a place that provides this. Home is "my place" and provides an individual with a level of comfort and security (Porteous, 1976). Having a place is also referred to as having a sense of belonging. Duncan (1981) defined a sense of belonging as the feeling of being at home and the sense of affinity that is often expressed through the target of ownership. Yuval - Davis (2006) defined belonging as an emotional attachment to "feeling at home". Dreyfus (1991) suggested that people may even 'feel at home' toward immaterial objects such as language skills. May (2013) posited that a sense of belonging entails a sense of identification with attachment to cultures, people, places, and material objects. A sense of belonging also includes the experience of being at ease and in harmony with oneself and the relevant social, cultural, relational, and material contexts. Heidegger (1967) argued that a sense of belonging is the concept of "being in the world and is part of the sense of existence in and connection to the surrounding world.

A tourist's sense of belonging may take the form of a visitor feeling like they are a part of the community that they visit. McMillan and Chavis (1986) developed

one of the most quoted theories: the psychological sense of community. This theory consists of four areas:

- Membership means a feeling of belonging and identification of being a part of a community;

- Influence is a bi-directional concept;

- Integration and fulfilment of needs are necessary for a community to maintain a positive sense of togetherness;

- Shared emotional connection is based on a sense of shared history as well as identification with the community and refers to the bonds that are developed over time through positive interaction with other community members.

Creating a sense of place can serve to create competitive advantage, because tourists who are attached to a destination are more likely to return to that destination despite other offerings (Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010).

Stimulation

Psychological ownership theory was further enhanced by the work of Pierre and Jussila (2011), who argued that stimulation is an additional route through which PO is formed. This was rooted in the work of Gardner (1990) and Scott (1966), who are two activation theorists who posited that individuals have a need for activation and stimulation. Pierre and Jussila (2011) stated that human nature includes a territorial need for stimulation, which can explain why objects fall within an individual's orbit. Pierre and Jussila (2011) explained that

> Human beings are motivated to seek stimulation to meet their "arousal requirements". This is why they do not always remain

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with their comfort zone with their current possessions, instead

frequently seeking out and taking on new and different ones and

at times abandoning the possessions that they have (p. 48).

2.9.5.1 Psychological Ownership Theory and Social Media

Psychological ownership theory in social media studies is still in its infancy.

Several researchers have contributed to the knowledge of social media and PO

(Karahanna, Xu & Zhang, 2015; Lee & Chen, 2011; Xu, Turel & Yuan, 2012;

Zhao, Chen & Wang, 2016). Lee and Chen (2011) have observed that individual

intentions to participate in a virtual world were directly related to their sense of

ownership to that world. In addition, Xu et al.(2012) have argued that individuals

use online gameplay to fulfil their need to build relationships with other game

players and master the game. In investigating relationship between PO and the

use of social media, Karahanna et al.(2015) found that the individual need for

PO motivates the use of social media, and engaging in such use fulfils these

needs. A recent contribution to PO theory and social media by Zhao et al.,

(2016) is that social influence can act as a critical driver of PO in an online

setting, thus extending the work previously done by (Pierre et al., 2003). Zhao

et al. (2016) defined social influence as the extent to which individuals believed

that they should use online social media. These researchers believed that social

influence should be added to the work proposed by initial researchers of PO.

Hulland et al. (2015) suggested that the target attributes posited by Jussila et al.

(2015) can be used to understand how consumers are drawn to different

platforms and how each platform satisfies a different attribute of individual PO

needs.

2.9.5.2 Limitations of Psychological Ownership Theory

Despite the many reasons to consider PO as an ideal theoretical framework for this study, this theory has several limitations. First, the theory is built on the notion that more is better. Julissa et al.(2015) suggested that the more of a particular attribute that a product or service has, such as attractiveness, the greater the potential for the development of PO. Over time, this flattens out, and the target may no longer serve ownership motives after the ownership motives of efficacy, self-identity, and belonging are satisfied. The theory to date has yet to account for this.

In addition, according to Jussila et al. (2015), time is another issue that requires attention in PO theory. It is not clear how long it takes for someone to develop PO sentiments towards an object; in tourism, for example, it is not clear how long it takes for a tourist to develop a sense of ownership or feelings of home towards a destination. The theory does not address this issue, nor the issue of whether a feeling of ownership lasts forever once it has been developed. These gaps need to be addressed so that PO can become a complete theory. Pierre et al. (2001) have argued that the longer the period of time spent with the object, the greater likelihood that a sense of ownership will develop. Furby (1980) argued that in every instance, different variables may play a role in the speed and strength in creating a sense of possession.

The theory also does not address when and where PO develops and suggests that PO develops over time rather than instantly, as is the case for formal physical ownership (Jussila et al., 2015). These researchers also suggest that variables such as intensity of association are likely to affect the speed and strength of the formation of PO. There are situations where no PO may develop

at all. This may arise in instances where the products or services are complex (Fuchs, Prandelli & Schreir, 2010). If a product or service is complex, and customers are required to develop skills to utilise it, then the customer may not learn the necessary skill, and no PO develops. Someone who has a fear of flying, for example, may not develop a sense of PO to a destination even if they see an advertisement of the destination on social media because they may never experience it.

Julissa et al. (2015) have also criticised the PO theory for placing too much emphasis on goods rather than services. Due to the intangibility of services, more work needs to be done to understand how PO develops for service products. Psychological ownership theory is also still in its infancy Julissa et al. (2015); therefore, many of the antecedents and implications have not been studied and tested in different settings. Most of the research to date on PO has been limited to understanding employee relationships in organisations and has not extended to other sectors such as tourism and hospitality.

Psychological ownership does not explain why a target may be dispossessed. Hulland et al. (2015) suggest that future research should consider whether there is a limit on how much PO an individual can manage and how the theory can be extended or changed to accommodate dispossessions. An example was discussed by Hulland et al. (2015) of an individual who signs up for Facebook due to an initial need. However due to technical difficulties over time, the individual abandons Facebook and consumes LinkedIn instead. Some individuals may even visit other networks and share their negative experiences. Currently, PO theory does not address these scenarios.

2.1.0 Justification for Theoretical Framework Selection

Selecting a theory for the study was considered through a process of self-reflection by this researcher. Social penetration theory was the first theory that was rejected because this researcher's desire was not to understand the process of disclosure as it relates to social media. This method would have been appropriate if the study was considering how an individual goes through the process of self-disclosure on social networking sites.

McLuhan's media theory was the next to be eliminated because the theory focussed more on the message as the media, rather than as a medium that can be used to bring a buyer and seller together. This researcher also felt that the theory was very narrow and did not provide the requisite depth to review how social media can impact the marketing of a destination. The next rejected theory was social network theory. This researcher rejected this theory as it was inappropriate for answering the research question. This study was not designed to address how networks between tourism firms in Grenada exist or the formation of tourism networks in Grenada. This topic would nonetheless be a good focus area for another study as there is a need for further research on small tourism firm networks and destination development (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001).

After eliminating three of the theories, PO and SET remained under consideration. Social exchange theory was eliminated even though it is an economics theory that addresses supply and demand. It was rejected because this study focuses on how social media could be used as a bridge to join consumers to a destination, rather than how residents feel about an attraction or how Grenadians feel about decisions on tourism sites or hotel projects and the

attendant rewards and costs to the residents. Social exchange theory is mainly concerned with what is being exchanged, namely costs and rewards, for the development of tourism.

This researcher selected PO theory because several researchers have used PO theory, especially in organisational behaviour studies (Avey et al., 2009; Barki, Pare & Sicotte, 2008; Chi & Han, 2008; Drusat & Kubzansky, 1995; Mayhew et al., 2007; Pierce, O' Driscoll & Coghlan, 2004; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). In organisational behaviour theory, Peters (1988) has discovered that Harley-Davidson made its successful turn-around because of the emergence of feelings of ownership among its employees. Drusat and Kubzansky (1995) have argued that granting formal ownership of corporate shares is one important way to change the relationship the employees have with their employing organisation. When employees become owners, employees will think and behave like owners. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) found a positive relationship between PO, employee job satisfaction, and work commitment. Chi and Hans (2008) have found that employee ownership resulted in positive PO because employees were able to participate in profit sharing and decision making. Avey et al. (2009) also found that employees who felt like owners had better work attitudes, commitment, and job satisfaction. Brown (1989) believed that PO will be paramount to organisational competitiveness in the 21st century.

The application of PO to the tourism and hospitality sector is still underdeveloped in the literature. Hence, this researcher believes that this gap is an opportunity for this study to make a significant contribution to theory and practice. Asatryan and Oh (2008) have used PO to examine how customers form PO towards a restaurant. The model incorporated the antecedents of PO and examined practical consequences such as relationship intentions, word of

mouth communications, competitive resistance, and willingness to pay. The study indicated that there is a positive relationship between PO and customer loyalty. In addition, Lee et al. (2013) applied the PO theory to the tourism and outdoor recreational sector in Korea to estimate hikers' willingness to pay for the preservation of the Jeju Olle Trail, which is located on Jeju Island. This trail is one of the largest and most famous tourist landmarks in Korea. The researchers used an onsite data collection method of questionnaires to demonstrate that hikers' PO amplifies their willingness to pay more in an outdoor tourism setting. In a consumer behaviour context, Fuchs et al. (2010) found that empowered customers who were involved in product selection had more positive PO with the final product than customers who were not empowered in the product selection process. Peck and Shu (2009) have found that merely touching an object results in an increase in perceived ownership of that object. Chang, Chiang & Han (2012) have found that PO can make consumers feel brand ownership.

This researcher also selected PO theory to support the call that several previous researchers have made for further use of the theory. Van Dyne and Pierre (2004) have called for PO to be extended to technology research rather than limiting the theory to organisational behaviour research, as used by many previous researchers. Hulland et al. (2015) study, titled *Exploring Unchartered Waters*, called for more studies to utilise PO in social media and to move PO from an offline to an online environment.

In addition, Hulland et al. (2015) have emphasised that PO theory should be used because marketing and economics researchers have relied heavily on the endowment effect, which indicates that consumer value of an object increases once the consumer takes ownership of it. These researchers also claim that PO

is a much broader and all-encompassing lens which can be used to view ownership. Jussila et al. (2015) have stated that PO is still in its infancy in market research and have indicated that future researchers should use PO to close some of the gaps that exist in the literature and contribute to the development of this theory. Julissa et al. (2015) suggested that PO theory could be used in consumer studies, for example, to understand customers' buying decisions and whether these decisions are part of the extended self. Asatryan and Oh (2008) have also encouraged future researchers to expand and apply PO to other hospitality settings. For example, researchers can consider whether customers develop feelings of possessiveness towards hotels based on their homelike sense of belonging. In addition, Belk (2013) has called for the extension of his theory of the extended self, which was rooted mainly in material possessions in a digital world. Belk (2013) suggested "that the current wave of digital technologies is fundamentally changing consumer behaviour in ways that have significant implications for the formulation of the extended self. It is time for an update" (p.477).

Belk (2013) has posited that when his theory of the extended self was first created in 1988, personal computers existed, but technology such as web cams, web pages, and social media did not exist. Belk (2013) has argued that five new factors must be considered to understand the self, the nature of possessions, and relationships in a digital world. These factors are dematerialisation, re-embodiment, sharing, co-construction of self, and distributed memory. Dematerialisation refers to the changes to possessions caused by the digital world. Data is now held on devices, which makes information such as videos, music, and photos invisible. There is evidence that consumers can also become attached to virtual goods. Lehdonvirta (2012) has

reported that virtual goods are valued possessions for cybercriminals who attempt to hack into games and steal possessions for resale. The next factor is re-embodiment, which refers to the fact that many possessions and humans have lost their forms, which can be seen from the creation of avatars. Sharing has been around for a long time, but digital devices assist to share more and wider than ever before (Belk, 2010). More is disclosed online than ever before, and because of the instant feedback that people now receive, people have become a co-constructed version of self in the digital age (Belk, 2013). Belk (1991) describes distributed memory, which refers to when non-digital objects that form a part of the extended self are often able to provide a sense of past through their association with events and people. However, the digital world contains many devices that can archive memories. Tian and Belk (2005) noted that memory devices in the workplace are 'prosthetic' technological extensions of self, such as computers, phone contact lists, calendars, files, and calculators.

Hulland et al. (2015) have argued that PO can be appropriately applied by marketing and economics researchers to an online environment. They believe that PO is a framework that has the potential to assist to understand other areas, such as how and why consumers engage in negative behaviour in online groups and virtual communities. Social media has brought about crimes such as cyberbullying and trolling, and PO can assist to understand why these negative behaviours may arise. According to Hulland et al. (2015), PO theory suggests that this negative behaviour may be motivated by a desire to claim ownership of virtual spaces. Jussila et al.(2015) have also indicated that PO theory can be extended to understand how firms should manage the discontinuation of a product, product line, or online community. Understanding a sense of ownership

can enable managers to deal with any potential backlash from changes made in the market.

2.11 Literature Review Gap

Based on the findings in the literature, this study will address several gaps. These gaps and areas for investigation are highlighted on tables 4 and 5 below respectively.

Key Authors	Theme	Literature Review Gap	Area for Investigation
Karahanna et al. (2015)	Use of social media	The researchers indicate that the use of social media aids in the fulfillment of PO needs by individuals.	How can a visitor using social media lead to the creation of PO feelings towards Grenada?
Hulland et al. (2015); Jussila et al. (2015); Karahanna et al. (2015); Van Dyne and Pierre (2004)	Extension of the use of Psychological Ownership Theory (PO) to an online environment	The lack of PO use in a social media environment; PO was primarily used in offline studies; PO use in social media studies is in its infancy.	How is social media used as a tool to drive tourism development in Grenada using PO theory as the theoretical lens of the study?
Tran et al. (2016)	Online social networks	Online social networks are underdeveloped when the researchers reviewed networks in Halong Bay, Vietnam.	Do tourism operators in Grenada collaborate? Do tourism operators collaborate online?
Urry and Larsen (2011)	What causes a tourist to visit a particular destination	To understand what makes a tourist gaze on Grenada. What makes the destination unique?	Why do tourists visit Grenada? What features makes the destination appealing to visitors?
Asatrayan and Oh(2008)	How is PO Created	Researchers examined how PO is developed in restaurant setting and found that PO can lead to competitive resistance and willingness to pay.	What consequences can occur if tourists develop PO towards Grenada?
Mizrachi and Sellito (2015)	Social Media Strategy	These authors indicated that businesses implemented social media marketing without a clear plan to achieve long term sales and marketing goals.	Do tourism businesses in Grenada have a social media marketing strategy?

Table 4 : Literature Review Gap Summary

Key Authors	Theme	Literature Review Gap	Area for Investigation
Hoffman and Fodor (2010)	Impact of social media on a business	The challenges involved in measuring the impact of social media is that marketing managers understand its importance. However, senior leaders who do not understand its importance prefer to see numbers.	What are the impacts that social media has on tourism businesses in Grenada?
He et al.(2014); Michaelidou et al.(2011); Roult et al. (2016)	Use of social media by businesses	These researchers detailed the benefits these businesses experienced from using social media. Facebook was the popular medium in all these studies.	How do businesses use social media and which mediums were dominant in these businesses. In addition, what opportunities are available to businesses that use social media?
Howison et al.(2015); Jones et al. (2014)	Social Media Role in the business	These studies all showed that social media played a strategic role in the businesses. Howison et al. (2015) found that 57% of businesses identified online marketing as a success factor. Jones et al. (2014) found that social media had a huge or moderate impact in bringing tourists to Maine, USA.	Does tourism businesses in Grenada believe that social media adds strategic value to their businesses?
Ridderstaat (2007)	Tourism Development in Grenada	Aruba was able to transform its economy to a solid USD$2 billion industry since the closure of the oil refinery in 1985.	How can Grenada improve its tourism development in the future?

Table 5 : Literature Review Gap Summary

2.1.2 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed PO, the theory that will underpin this study. This theory explains why persons develop ownership feelings to goods, services, material, and immaterial objects. It also explains three key routes which drive the formation of PO in individuals: effectance and efficacy, self- identity, and having a place. The chapter also considered stimulation as an additional route that has been posited by (Pierce & Jussila , 2011).

The extensive use of PO theory in organisational behaviour studies, coupled with the calls made by several researchers for the use, modification, and extension of the theory in marketing and economics research, make PO highly appropriate for extension to social media and its use within the tourism sector for marketing. Other alternative theories to understanding social media were also presented, such as SET, social penetration theory, McLuhan's media theory, and social network theory.

The following chapter explores the philosophical underpinnings of the study and outlines the research design, research methodology, and research methods. The chapter also reviews lessons that were learnt from the pilot study and how these lessons will impact the methods and methodology of the main study. The chapter concludes with the data analysis procedure and the strengths and limitations of the research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, PO theory was presented as the theoretical framework of this study. This chapter outlines and explains the research methodology. It presents the philosophical underpinnings for the research design, method, and methodology used in preparing this research. The chapter is divided in several sections. First, the research aim and questions are re-stated because they are the bedrock of the study. The chapter then discusses the research philosophy and the rationale for undertaking phenomenological qualitative research. Following this, the chapter explores the ethical consideration of the data collection and data analysis processes of the main study. The chapter concludes with a justification for the rejection of computer software during data analysis.

3.2 Research Aim and Research Questions

Before proceeding into the discussion of research philosophy, it is important to reflect on the aim and objectives of this study. The aim of the study was to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. The research objectives of the thesis were as follows:

- To explore the perceptions of previous researchers on the use of social media within the tourism sector
- To identify key challenges that tourism practitioners face when implementing social media marketing strategies within their businesses in Grenada

- To explore the impact that social media marketing could have on tourism and tourism businesses in Grenada

- To develop recommendations for service providers and policy makers to improve Grenada's tourism product using social media

Four research questions arose from the literature review:

- What are the experiences of service providers who have used social media in Grenada?

- What are the key challenges facing service providers when implementing social media strategies in their businesses?

- What are the perceptions that tourism practitioners have of Grenada's tourism product?

- How do service providers understand the importance of social media advertising to their businesses?

The upcoming sections explore the study's research philosophy, research approach, and research design.

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), the research philosophy adopted by a researcher contains critical assumptions of how the researcher views the world. These in turn influence the research method, research methodology, data collection, and data analysis strategies. Several authors have supported this influence in academic literature (Crotty, 1998; Huff 2009). Crotty (1998) has summarised this by stating that "justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about the reality that we bring to our work. To ask about these

assumptions is to ask about our theoretical perspective" (p.2). This world view or set of belief systems that guides a researcher in their work is known as a research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). All scientific inquiry is based on a particular paradigm. Kuhn (1970) considered paradigm in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and defined it as a "disciplinary matrix". Disciplinary because it refers the common possessions of the practitioners of a particular discipline; matrix because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts each requiring further specification. Furthermore, Slevitch (2011) described a paradigm as a set of shared beliefs to which a particular discipline adheres. Once chosen, the selected research paradigm acts as a "set of lenses" for the researcher. It allows the researcher to view the fieldwork based on a set of assumptions (Burke, 2007). There are two research paradigms (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002). The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism and the qualitative paradigm is based on interpretivism. Burnell and Morgan (1979) explained that social science can be conceptualised based on four set of assumptions. These assumptions are ontology, epistemology and human nature (axiology). This has a direct impact on the research methodology.

Ontology is the study of reality or things that comprise reality. Reality as stated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) is a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our volition. Therefore, Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that the ontological question is what the form is and nature of reality and what is there that can be known about it. There are two branches of ontology being objectivism and constructivism. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2011), objectivism assumes that the social world has existence independently of people, their actions and their activities. Objectivist view ontology as social reality having an independent existence outside the

knower or researcher. On the other hand, constructivism assumes that the social actors produce social reality through social interaction. This means that they also can change their views and understandings of social reality through interaction.

Blaikie (1993 p.6-7) stated that epistemology presents a view on and justification for what can be regarded as knowledge, what can be known, and what criteria such knowledge must satisfy to qualify as knowledge instead of beliefs. Therefore, the epistemological question is what the nature of the relationship between the knower is or would-be knower and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The word epistemology comes from the Greek "episteme" which means knowledge, and "logos" which means study. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), knowledge is the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics. Positivism is the epistemological position that applies the principles of natural sciences to understand social reality. Matthews and Ross (2010) highlighted the following features of positivism:

- Only knowledge observed by the senses is considered as knowledge
- Knowledge is based on what is observed and recorded rather than subjective interpretations
- Data is collected to test an existing theory
- The researcher is objective and does not influence the data and its findings in any way

Interpretivism is an epistemology that views people and the objects of natural sciences as different. Researchers must therefore understand the subject

matter in action. Matthews and Ross (2010) defined interpretivist approach as having the following features:

- Knowledge collected through people's understandings and interpretations
- Presenting different perspectives on how people interpret the social world
- The researcher generates theory from the data collected
- The researcher studies the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants

According to Matthews and Ross (2010 p.29), realism is an epistemological approach that asserts that knowledge of a social phenomenon is based on what can be directly observed and recorded as well as "hidden" structures and mechanisms whose effects can be observed. This is also referred to as naive realism. According to Bryman (2016), critical realism distinguishes between objects which are the focus of enquiries and the terms used to account for them. Unlike positivists, knowledge may not be directly traceable to observations but can still be recorded as findings since their effects are observable. Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgements about value. Heron (1996) stated that our values are the guiding reason of all human action and further highlighted that there is the possibility of a researcher writing a statement of personal value in relation to a research topic.

There is a relationship between theory and research which is a factor that must be considered by researchers when undertaking scientific research (Bryman, 2016). The researcher posited that this is not an easy process because the researcher must determine the form of theory and whether the data is being

collected to test or to build theories which are known as deductive and inductive approaches respectively. The deductive approach to determining the relationship means that the researcher uses theory as the foundation to come up with the research hypothesis, which determines how and what data is collected. The findings are used to confirm or reject the hypothesis. The revision of the theory is then considered. On the other hand, the inductive approach generates theory from the findings and observations in the study.

3.3 Research Approach

Determining the research approach required much reflection by this researcher on the aim and objectives of the study. From an ontological perspective, the tourism industry is dynamic and is guided by several stakeholders and social actors ranging from taxi drivers, tour operators, hoteliers, bus drivers, tourists, government, and even the general populace. Therefore, there are multiple realities and multiple truths. The experience of a tourist in any destination can be unpredictable and independent of any one social actor such as the government or a destination management organisation. Social actors such as the government and destination management organisations are heavily involved in packaging and promoting the tourism product and rely on the feedback of various stakeholders and visitors. There are constant changes, product development, product launches, and product refinement due to the consistent interaction among all the actors within the tourist ecosystem. Hence, this researcher adopted a constructivist ontological position for this study, constructing what reality is and what truth is from the perspective of several actors.

This researcher reflected on the epistemological position by considering the aim of the study, which was to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. Upon careful consideration, this researcher decided that the research was exploratory by nature, which, according to Matthews and Ross (2010), allows the researcher to use questions like "what, who, where" and "when". This study seeks to understand how social media is used and how it impacts the day-to-day operations of service providers. Therefore in order to understand what is knowledge, the perspectives of service providers and other tourism practitioners will need to be interpreted. According to Sale et al. (2002) the investigator and the object of research are linked so that the findings are mutually created. This researcher therefore chose to adopt an interpretivist epistemological position which allowed this researcher to probe and understand the tourism sector by engaging with the participants.

This researcher's lack of practical working experience within the tourism industry influenced the approach of the study. A methodology such as a survey may not provide the same richness of information that having a discussion with a tourism practitioner would. Due to this reason, semi-structured interviews which favoured in-depth probing seemed to be the most suitable method to meet research objectives by obtaining details of the experiences of service providers and elite participants. Completing the literature review revealed that there were few prior studies on Grenada's tourism industry. In addition, several of the studies that were discovered were dated. This constraint meant that adopting a deductive approach to theory in this research would have been impossible. An inductive approach was therefore the only way that this researcher would have been able to use the findings in the study to generate theory from the research. The nature of the businesses in the study was also

considered in the determination of the research approach. Businesses within the tourism sector in Grenada are small, and owners are involved in the day-to-day operations of the business. Hence, there were concerns around whether the practitioners would have sufficient free time during the data collection phase. Interviews seemed to be the best approach to penetrate the world of the participants and understand how tourism works and how social media is used.

In accordance with the constructivist ontological position and interpretivist epistemological perspective, a purposeful sample of practitioners across the tourism sector was viewed as the best approach to interpret and understand the lived experiences of the participants. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data; the interviews involved open-ended questions that were created to glean the experiences of the participants. The research questions were derived from the literature review conducted in Chapter 2.

3.4 Research Design

Bryman (2016) has suggested that when designing research strategy, it is critical to consider fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches, even though their differences could be ambiguous. Bryman (2016) further asserted that quantitative studies can be represented as deductive in nature and have a positivist epistemological position and objectivist ontological perspective. On the other hand, qualitative studies are inductive, generate theory from the collected data, and take an interpretivist epistemological position and constructivist ontological position. This is represented in Table 6 below.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological Position	Natural science model, particularly positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological Position	Objectivism	Constructionism

Table 6: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Bryman, 2016)

This study conforms to a constructivist ontological orientation, has an interpretivist epistemological orientation, and has an inductive approach in which theory is generated. Hence, a qualitative inquiry was selected as the most suitable research methodology for this study.

Crotty (1998), whose work has many similarities to Bryman's (2016), believed that when designing any study, a researcher must consider the following four factors: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method. These four factors are presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Crotty's (1998) four steps for research design

Epistemology
- Interpretivism

Theoretical Perspective
- Interpretivisim
- Multiiple participants
- Understanding

Research Methodology
- Qualitative Inquiry
- Phenomenology
- Interpretative Phenomenological Approach
- Inductive Analysis

Research Methods
- Semi-structured Interview
- Open ended questions
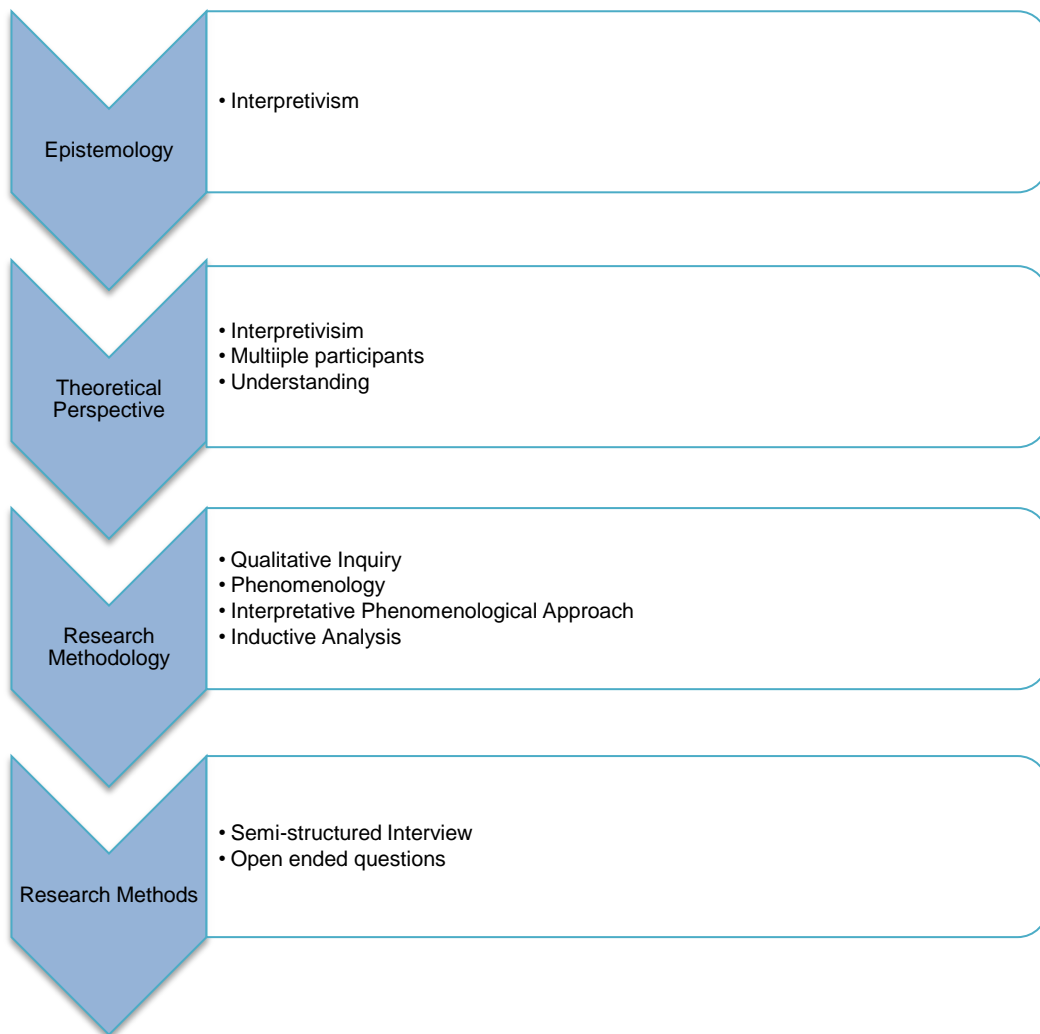
In answer to these questions presented by Crotty (1998) and considering the previously discussed work of Bryman (2016), this researcher aligned with an interpretivist epistemology, an interpretivist theoretical perspective, and a qualitative methodology. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the research method because they enable the researcher to flexibly probe and glean rich and detailed information from the participants.

3.5 Research Methodology

A qualitative inquiry was adopted for this study due to the interpretivist epistemological orientation and constructivist ontological position of this researcher as well as the limited previous literature, which only allowed for an inductive approach. Phenomenology was the type of qualitative approach selected. This section also discusses the different types of safeguards used within the study to ensure that there was methodological rigour and why grounded theory was rejected as the research methodology. The selected method will also be reviewed. This section concludes with the ethical considerations that underlie the main study.

3.5.1 Qualitative Approach

Several researchers have provided definitions of qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined qualitative research as follows:

> Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of

the meanings people being to them (p.3).

Qualitative studies tend to favour a loose form of data and a flexible form of data collection. This can be helpful when the researcher is unable to produce numerical data for a study and must depend solely on the lived experiences of others. Guba and Lincoln (1989) have developed four criteria which they believe are important to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. On the other hand, Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) have described qualitative inquiries as 'time-consuming, labour-intensive and both imaginatively and emotionally demanding' (p.42). Creswell and Poth's (2017) book, titled *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, identified five approaches to all qualitative inquiries: grounded theory, ethnography, case study, narrative research, and phenomenology. This study selected a phenomenological approach.

3.5.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology became a philosophy in Germany before World War I. According to Van Manen (1990), phenomenology refers both to things themselves and getting down to the most important matters. He also believed that phenomenology was a lived experience. Based on the literature review, this philosophy has provided methodological structure for more research in nursing than tourism (Crotty, 1996). Curtin (2006) argued that phenomenology aims to gain a deeper understanding of nature and meaning of our experiences.

There are two main philosophies of thought in phenomenology: the approach of Heidegger or Husserl. Husserl believed in the essence of phenomena, which exists independently of conscious experience but could only be revealed

through the examination of experiences. Researchers utilising this philosophy seek answers to the questions of the world and the objects within it. On the other hand, researchers that assume a Heideggerian philosophy must seek for the understanding of being. There are four key concepts in Heidegger's phenomenology. These are being in the world, forestructures, time, and space. Other philosophical perspectives on phenomenology have emerged from researchers such as Gadamer, Van Manen, and Merleu-Ponty.

Phenomenology has advantages over other forms of qualitative inquiry because it provides a step-by-step process of analysing the collected data that is more structured than other mediums. For example, Moustakas (1994) has provided a step-by-step guide to researchers, especially novice researchers, on how data should be analysed. Phenomenology is also participant-oriented in that it gives the participants an overall voice in the study. While phenomenology is becoming more popular in tourism studies (Curtin, 2006; Hayllar & Griffin, 2005; Jamal & Stronza, 2008; Pons, 2003), using this methodology does present certain challenges. Bracketing personal experiences out of the study can be difficult because the analysis always incorporates the researcher's axiological perspective (Van Manen, 1990, 2014). In addition, finding all the participants who have had similar lived experiences could be difficult and time consuming for the researcher. To agree with this researcher's epistemological position of interpretivism (see Figure 2 above), the research methodology will take on an interpretative approach. Hence, an interpretative phenomenological methodology was used in this study.

3.5.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Smith et al. (2009), three of the most recognised researchers of IPA, have stated that IPA examines how participants understand major life experiences. These researchers also emphasised that this method is effective at unravelling participant experiences at great depths when the sample is small and homogeneous. According to Yardley, (2000), IPA is confirmed to meet the evaluation criteria of rigour and transparency. Nevertheless, IPA has been criticised since it is still a relatively new research tool (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Brocki and Wearden (2006) have raised concerns that the approach does not provide clear guidance on the interaction between researcher and participant. The analysis process of IPA is very subjective, which raises concerns about its validity (Golsworthy & Coyle, 2001).

Despite these criticisms, IPA was selected for this study because of the following methodological strengths:

- Willig (2001) indicated that IPA allows greater creativity and freedom than other approaches

- Smith (2004) highlighted that IPA has clear guidelines for analysing data which is beneficial to new researchers.

- Smith and Osborn (2003) described IPA as "especially useful when one is concerned with complexity, process or novelty" (p. 53).

3.5.4 Rejected Methodology - Grounded Theory

Initially, grounded theory was one qualitative inquiry that was being considered for this study. Grounded theory allows the researcher to start the research with a broad aim and recruit participants with varied experiences of the phenomena until theoretical saturation is achieved, which is the point at which no new data

can be collected. There are similarities between grounded theory and phenomenology. Both theories allow the researcher to explore and understand the phenomena from the lived experiences of participants. In addition, both theories allow the researcher to take an interpretivist approach.

Nevertheless, even though grounded theory may have been a research approach with advantages for this study, it was rejected. This researcher did not aim to generate new theory; the aim was to understand how social media is used by tourism practitioners through their lived experiences. Furthermore, both Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory favoured a more positivist epistemology. For this reason, grounded theory was rejected.

3.5.5 Methodological Rigour

Qualitative inquiry requires methodological rigour due to its subjective nature. Yardley (2000) has identified four broad factors that should be used in assessing quality in qualitative studies. These are sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance.

The following were the checks undertaken in this study to ensure methodological rigour.

Members' check: All participants except one respondent confirmed the final transcription for inclusion into this study. A sentence was included in the participant letter which stated that the respondent opted not to review the data to be included in the main study. This was signed by this elite participant. This step ensured that the information that this researcher used was accurate, complete, and error-free. There were two instances where there were changes

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to the transcribed document, and one instance where the participant asked that three lines be fully removed from the transcript.

Supervisors' review: The UK-based university supervisors were unfamiliar with Grenada, its tourism sector, and the participants in the study. They provided an external review of the interview questions, data collection, and data analysis strategies utilised in this study.

Triangulation: This was the final approach used to ensure methodological rigour, and this researcher employed this technique by keeping reflective diary entries during the study and making notes after each participant interview.

3.6 Research Method

Creswell (2016) has identified four data collection methods to be used in qualitative inquiry. These methods are interviews, observation, documents, and audio-visual materials. He further underscored that documents and audio-visual materials are often used in combination with interviews and observations. From the outset, semi-structured interviews were chosen to collect data for this study. Semi-structured interviews were recommended by Smith and Osborn (2003) as the best method for IPA studies. Smith (2004) has also cautioned against the use of focus groups and stated that IPA is "committed to the detailed exploration of personal experience" (p.50). Focus groups were not considered as it would have been a challenge to bring all the participants together. Interviews were defined by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) as where "knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p.4).

Qualitative interviewing is not without its challenges. Postgraduate students were interviewed in a study conducted by (Roulston, de Marrais & Lewis, 2003).

These students expressed that they experienced challenges during the interviews, such as unexpected participant behaviour, dealing with sensitive issues, and developing transcriptions. Interviewing can also be overwhelming for a novice researcher who may encounter audio recording challenges during interview (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Suoinen and Jokinen (2005) have examined persuasion in social work interviewing and have stated that interviewing is not simply a matter of asking questions and receiving answers; it is also a complicated search for a shared understanding. These researchers have also asserted that subtle responsiveness and the intertwining of persuasive devices can make the outcome of the conversation highly unpredictable.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is especially important in phenomenological studies because the subjects are people and their lived experiences are the core of the research. The ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human research subjects consist of three basic principles: beneficence, respect for persons, and justice.

The main principle of beneficence is guided by the statement 'do not harm', which is important to ensure in every research. As part of the research design, this researcher obtained approval from Edinburgh Napier University's ethics committee. Due care and diligence was taken to meet the requirements of Edinburgh Napier University and tourism stakeholders in the study by ensuring that there were no threats to reliability and the security of data. This researcher also reinforced that participation was completely voluntary and that anyone was free to withdraw participation at any time.

In terms of respect for persons, this researcher gave the participants the option of when to schedule the interview and showed up on time to every appointment. Participation and consent forms were presented to the participants prior to the interview to ensure that they were comfortable. It was communicated prior to the interview that the interview would be recorded. When reporting on the findings of the study, care was taken to ensure that the identity of the participants would remain anonymous. This was especially important because Grenada is a very small island, and certain phrases or examples may make it easy to indirectly identify the participant (Bell, 2005).

In terms of justice, participants were informed in a manner consistent with IPA studies that there were no right or wrong answers. The researcher always asked questions by using the phrase 'in your opinion'. All interviews were held on the premises of the participant with the exception of two Skype interviews, which ensured that the participants did not have to commute to another venue and that they were comfortable and relaxed in their day-to-day environment.

3.8 Data Collection

This section examines the sample strategy as well as the findings from the pilot study. It then explores the main study's data collection and data analysis processes. This section also discusses how the data was reviewed and the profile of the participants in the study. The section concludes with the strengths and limitations of the study as well as a justification for the rejection of computer software during data analysis.

3.8.1 Sample Strategy

Creswell (2013) has argued that in selecting a sample of participants for phenomenological studies "it is essential that all participants have similar lived

experience of the phenomenon being studied" (p.155). Smith et al. (2009) have also supported the use of purposeful sampling in IPA research. Several authors believed that all types of sampling are purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990; Sandelowski, 1995). Patton (2015) has stated the following:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry; studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding. (p.264)

Yin (2011) had a similar definition and stated that purposeful sampling is the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study based on their ability to add richness to the study as well as the relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions.

In qualitative inquiries, data saturation is critical to ensure that an adequate sample size is used in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse, 2007; Sandelowski, 1995). The adequate sample size is the point at which collecting more data will not add any new findings to the research. However, according to Van Manen (2014 p.353), data saturation is irrelevant to phenomenology. Van Manen (2014) believed that the terms "qualitative sampling" and "data saturation" were not applicable to phenomenology.

Several authors have suggested appropriate benchmarks for phenomenological studies. Creswell (1998 p.64) has suggested five to 25 benchmarks while Morse (1994 p.225) stated at least six. Colaizzi (1978 p. 58), whose approach was adopted to analyse the data in this research, utilised 12 participants in his study.

Turpin et al. (1997) have recommended six to eight as an appropriate size for IPA studies because that range allows the researcher to examine the similarities and differences between participants. Polkinghorne (1989) has recommended that phenomenological researchers should interview between five to 10 participants who have all experienced similar phenomena. Forrester, Barton-Gooden, Pitter & Lindo (2015) have utilised a sample size of six participants in a study of the Caribbean island of Jamaica; phenomenology was used to explore the lived experience of adolescents with sickle cell disease.

Smith and Osborn (2003) noted that in "IPA sample size depends on a number of factors and there is no right sample size" (p.54). Upon discussion with the university supervisors, it was agreed that a minimum of 15 service providers and five elite tourism practitioners would qualify as the subjects for this phenomenological study. This was in line with the view of many of the authors as per the above discussion.

3.8.2 Participation Selection Process

Care was taken to ensure that the selected tourism practitioners were appropriate and suitable to provide the rich data required for this study. In phenomenological studies, it is essential that the participants all have similar lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). The following are the criteria for participant selection for the study:

- Participant must be employed or a business owner and currently working within the tourism sector in Grenada.
- The respondent or the business activity that the participant is involved in must be using some form of social media as part of its regular

operations. Hence, tourism business that does not use social media will be excluded from the sample.

- Persons working within international hotel chains such as Radisson and Sandals were omitted because this researcher assumed that their marketing activities could be influenced by overseas head offices.

The snowballing technique was used in one instance. One potential respondent declined to participate in the study because he was transitioning from tourism to another field. However, he recommended an ideal participant who was used as an elite interviewee. Denscombe (1997) defined the snowballing technique as the process of referencing one person to the next in research.

Participants were selected through a six step process. First, the Grenada telephone directory was used to compile a list of the businesses that are currently engaged in the tourism sector in Grenada. The names and telephone numbers of these businesses were entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet. Second, this researcher then searched Facebook, which is the most popular social media medium used by businesses in Grenada, to confirm whether the business is actively using social media. Third, businesses that were identified as not using social media were removed from this listing. Fourth, calls were made to the remaining businesses that sought to confirm whether they were willing to participate in the study. Fifth, businesses who confirmed that they were willing to participate were sent a formal email after a telephone conversation that explained what the study is about. Last, persons who confirmed that they were willing to participate were sent the official participant letter and consent form.

An initial pilot study was conducted in April and May 2016 on one participant who was the organiser of a local festival. An additional pilot with semi-structured interviews was completed in October 2017 due to the changes in the aim, which led to changes in the literature review and research questions. Upon discussion with the supervisors, this researcher crafted two different types of interview questions. Aside from questions for service providers, there were also elite interview questions which this researcher directed to persons who were service providers who were also holding various roles in different organisations and associations within the tourism sector. After obtaining the supervisors' agreement, the decision was to conduct this pilot using two service providers only, due to the size of the island and the limited amount of potential elite participants.

Two participants who held different roles within the tourism sector on the island were interviewed for the second pilot. The pilot study only utilised two persons to ensure that as many respondents as possible were available for the main study. The participants in the pilot study were not included in the main study because there were alterations to the interview questions based on the feedback from the pilot.

The pilot study was useful for testing the research methodology, data collection, and data analysis processes prior to the main study. The pilot study yielded many lessons that this researcher was able to implement in the main study. First, this researcher was a novice to research, which meant that the pilot study was a valuable opportunity to practice. The recorder, which was purchased and used for the original pilot study, did not work well during the subsequent pilot interview in October 2017, which led this researcher to abandon this approach. A password-protected Samsung Galaxy Note 4 that was owned by the

researcher was used to record the interviews moving forward. This worked out well for the October 2017 pilot and was used to record all the interviews for the main study.

Another key benefit of the pilot study was that it highlighted weaknesses in the interview questions. The interview questions were then modified to include phrases such as "if so what". Other minor enhancements were also made to add clarity to the questions in the study, such as the word "tourism" in question 12. Additional questions that were not initially included in the pilot study were added. One question which both participants said was repetitive was removed for the main study. A copy of the final interview questions is included in appendices A and B below. These questions were divided into three targeted subject areas:

- General opening questions which extracted information on the organisation, its length of time in operation, and its size. These questions were designed to properly position each participant
- The understanding and use of social media by the organisation
- Grenada's general tourism product

3.8.3 Profiles of Participants

This section provides details on the profiles of tourism service providers who provided an operational view of the sector and elite respondents who provided a strategic perspective of Grenada's tourism industry. Elite participants were selected based on the following requirements:

- Respondent ability to provide a strategic view on Grenada's tourism sector

- Participants with 10 years of experience working within the tourism sector

- In the absence of the requisite years of experience, participants must be currently employed in a strategic role within the Grenada's tourism sector.

- Participants must be currently serving or have previously served in various related tourism boards and associations on the island.

This researcher selected at least one service provider from each of the six parishes on the island. In addition, one participant was interviewed via Skype from Carriacou, which is the bigger of Grenada's two Grenadine islands. There were no participants from the Petite Martinique, which is the smaller of the Grenadine islands. Almost half of participants were from St George, the main parish of Grenada's commercial and tourism activities. There was one participant whose manager was based overseas. This participant was also interviewed via Skype. Nineteen service providers and six elite participants were interviewed for this study. After the completion of the member's check process, 17 service providers and five elite participants provided confirmation of the interview transcripts, which were included as the final research findings. The unconfirmed data was removed from the analysis process. All face-to-face interviews were conducted at the various offices of the participants. This was more convenient and provided a relaxed atmosphere for the respondents. The number of employees was the benchmark used as a gauge for the size of the businesses in this study. In certain instances, respondents provided an approximation of the number of employees in the absence of specific information. Table 7 below provides an overview of service providers and elite participants in the study.

Participant Number	Type of Participant	Type of Business	Number of Employees	Dedicated Personnel
1	Service provider	Tour Operator	Three full time; one part time	No
2	Service provider	Accomodation provider	Over 100 full time	Yes
3	Service provider	Accomodation provider	Four full time; two part time; three seasonal	No
4	Service provider + Elite Participant	Tour Operator	Three full time	No
5	Service provider + Elite Participant	Accomodation provider	Approximately 50 full time	No
6	Service provider + Elite Participant	Tour Operator	Six full time	No
7	Service provider	Tour Operator	Seven full time	No
8	Service provider	Tour Operator	Fewer than 10	No
9	Service provider	Manufacturer	88 full time; 12 part time	No
10	Service provider	Manufacturer	23 full time	No
11	Service provider	Tour Operator	15 full time	No
12	Service provider	Accomodation provider	30 full time	Yes
13	Service provider	Accomodation provider	Two full time; one part time	No
14	Service provider	Accomodation provider	Four full time	No
15	Service provider	Accomodation provider	12 full time	No
16	Service provider	Accomodation provider	Five full time; two part time	No
17	Service provider	Manufacturer	Three full time	No
18	Elite participant	Publishing and project development	Not applicable	Not applicable
19	Elite participant	E Business services	Not applicable	Not applicable

Table 7 : Overview of service providers and elite participants

3.9 Main Study- Data Collection

Five stages were used during data collection process.

Stage 1

After the successful identification and selection of candidates, and their willingness to participate in the study was secured, an introductory email was sent to explain more about what the project was about and to highlight that audio recording would be required during the interview process. This email also stated that participation was voluntary. Most persons who were contacted were willing to participate. Companies who did not participate mainly refused due to time constraints. There were two instances of prospective respondents resigning, which meant that new candidates needed to be sourced as the companies were working on filling these vacancies during the data collection period. In most cases, the final confirmation of the date and time of the interview was made during the telephone call.

Only one participant requested that the questions be sent in advance of the interview but failed to review them prior to the interview. One potential participant was removed from the study because the participant requested the questions in advance but replied with one-sentence responses instead of confirming a time for the interview. This researcher made the decision to remove the participant as this was a diversion from the other participants in the study.

One unexpected finding during participation identification was that the general manager of one of the service providers resided abroad, which meant that this researcher needed to use Skype to collect the data. Skype was also used to collect data from the participant who resided on Carriacou; access to the island

from Grenada was either by a small 8-seater airplane or a daily sea ferry. A copy of the moving picture experts group layer-3 audio (MP3) Skype recorder 4.36 free edition was downloaded to the Hewlett Packard Notebook, which was password protected to facilitate the secure collection of data via Skype. Both participants were sent the forms in advance and confirmed their participation via email ahead of the Skype call. An explanation of the study was also provided over the telephone. At the start of the interview process, this researcher conducted an advertisement on the site Fiverr.com to source for transcription services. In the advertisement, this researcher highlighted that the person must not be a national of any island in the Caribbean to ensure anonymity.

Stage 2

Participant letters and consent forms were printed the day before the interview in each case. This researcher stuck to this process to avoid any delays due to printer challenges on the day of the interview. The participant was called again to reconfirm the appointment on the day of the interview. Three participants rescheduled due to unexpected business demands on the day of the interview. There was one elite participant who opted not to review the transcribed document and stated so prior to the interview. An insertion was made in the participant letter which stated that the participant voluntarily declined to review the transcribed document.

Stage 3

Prior to attending the interview, this researcher ensured that the interview questions, signed participation letter, signed consent form, a notebook, pen, and the Samsung Note 4 were packed. This researcher also confirmed that the Samsung Note 4 was fully charged. A test of the voice recorder was done prior to each interview. In the case of the Skype interview, a suitable place was in

this researcher's home, and the environment was prepared prior to the call to avoid any disruptions.

Stage 4

At the start of the interview, this researcher repeated what the study was about and explained the participation letter and consent form before presenting the printed form for the participant to read and sign off on. Creswell (2013) posited that "it is important in phenomenological research study endeavour to obtain participants' written permission" (p.154). Interviews generally lasted between 30 minutes to one hour. There was one interview which lasted over 75 minutes. However, this participant occupied several different roles, participated in many different tourism activities on the island, and was eager to share about these experiences.

This researcher was very mindful to be quiet during the interviews; and spoke only to ask the question or provide further clarity if required. According to Smith et al. (2009), it is important to bracket preconceptions during interviews to "enable participants to express their concerns and make their claims on their own terms" (p.42). Smith and Osborn (2003) have recommended the use of "minimal probes" (p.63). This researcher made notes of things that jumped out during the interview process. At the end of the interview, this researcher thanked the participant for their time and stated that the transcribed document would be emailed for review.

Stage 5

Once this researcher arrived home after the interview, the audio data was uploaded in an audio recording folder that was saved on a Hewlett Packard Notebook which is owned and used solely by this researcher. This device was protected with a password that was only known by this researcher. The data

was unavailable to anyone in the researcher's home environment. A participant number was assigned to each person randomly based on the order of the interview, and the file was saved with the participant number and a letter as the filename. The transcription process was time-consuming and labour-intensive. Three transcriptionists were hired from the site Fiverr.com, and the quality of the transcription varied. No additional person had access to the transcription data other than the participant, this researcher, and the university supervisors.

3.10 Data Review

Data review was conducted by both this researcher and the participant. Turnaround time and quality varied for each transcriptionist. One of the transcriptionists fell ill during the week before the transcripts were due, which delayed three transcripts by an additional five days. However, the transcribed documents were generally available within three to five days. This researcher transcribed two interviews independently, which took three days each to transcribe.

After the documents were returned, this researcher cross-checked them against the audio recordings. Corrections were made where applicable. There were instances where this researcher listened to some portions repeatedly, especially where the participant spoke quickly or where there were differences in accents. Common mistakes made by the transcriptionist included the mis-spelling of the names of places such as Carriacou and Grenada, which were not familiar to the African and Indian transcriptionists. Where the quality of the transcription was poor, this researcher made the required changes. This was time consuming and required great attention to detail to ensure that the data was accurate and clear.

This researcher also reviewed the transcribed document multiple times and on different days to ensure completeness.

Once the transcription was completed, the reviewed document was emailed to the participant to let them know that they were free to make any changes that they deemed necessary. Most of the participants agreed with the transcribed document. Two participants made clarifications and another two participants asked that a few sentences be removed from the analysis process.

The finalised transcript was returned via email to this researcher for analysis for the study. Most of the participants were very responsive on email. However, follow-up emails and calls were made to participants once they were in possession of the transcripts for over two weeks.

3.11 Data Analysis

The literature revealed several data analysis approaches from different phenomenologists, including Giorgi (1985), Van Kaam (1966), Colaizzi (1978), and Moustakas (1994). This researcher selected the work of Colaizzi (1978), based on the interpretative nature of the research objectives and the need to rely on the experiences of the participants for the collection and analysis of the data. Colaizzi (1978) argued that his goal as a phenomenologist was to accurately describe the phenomena as seen through the eyes of the participants. He believed that dialogue was key and asking the right questions was fundamental to getting the appropriate feedback from the participants.

Colaizzi (1978) outlined the following steps which were used to analyse the data collected in this study. It is paramount to note that Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis only uses the data that was collected from the study.

Transcribing Audio Files

As stated in the section above, audio files were transcribed using the services of personnel from the site Fiverr.com. These transcriptions were done verbatim. This researcher transcribed two interviews independently, and these interviews were transcribed verbatim, which included repeated words as well as 'ummmms' and 'ahhhs'. The finalised transcribed document was sent to each participant via email for confirmation. Only confirmed transcripts were included in the study. Unconfirmed transcripts were removed from the analysis process. Based on Colaizzi's (1978) model, the transcription does not need to be verbatim as long as the essence of the interview was communicated in the transcription.

Extracting Significant Statements

The data review process was a critical step, especially because transcription was performed by a third party in all cases except two. During the data review, the transcribed document was checked and rechecked against the recorded interview to ensure its accuracy. Thus, this researcher became well-acquainted with the contents of each recording.

Significant statements were highlighted in red on each of the participant approved transcripts. A Microsoft Word document was created that compiled the significant statements of each participant.

Create Formulated Meanings

At this stage, this researcher decided to write the meaning of each of the extracted statements on a piece of paper. This researcher felt that it would be better to handwrite the meanings individually.

Group Formulated Meanings into Theme Clusters

Highlighting was used on the handwritten document. Green was used in instances where there were similarities in answers between participants, and orange was used for unique answers and responses that jumped out as different. This researcher began recognising consistency across the data sets. This researcher spread out the handwritten sheets of paper on the floor in a spare room which was reserved for this study. This gave this researcher greater visibility of the data. Themes began to emerge. These themes were handwritten on a separate sheet of paper that was then typed into another Microsoft Word document.

Developing an Exhaustive Description

A list was created in the document containing the themes; this list described the different meanings of the various themes.

Interpretation

The list with the themes was validated by comparing the themes to the finalised and approved participant's transcript.

Identifying the Phenomenon

This researcher used the description list and examined the participants' approved and finalised documents. This researcher found direct quotations and supporting statements from the examples, stories, and experiences of the participants that could support the extracted themes.

3.12 Rejection of the Use of Computer Software

There are many advantages of using computer software, such as the arguments presented by Woods and Roberts (2000) regarding the ability to handle large data sets, make notations, and conduct speedy and convenient

coding. Smith et al. (2009) have made no clear recommendations on whether computer software must be applied to the analysis of data in IPA studies. However, authors such as Clarke (2009) favour manual analysis; they indicate that manual coding assists the researcher to develop a more intimate feel of the data that would not be achieved with computer software. This researcher made the decision to reject the use of computer software for this study.

3.13 Strengths and Limitations of Research

A major strength of the study is that this researcher was afforded the opportunity to sit and discuss the tourism industry with different practitioners within the Grenadian tourism sector. In many instances apart from the audio recording, some businesses were willing to share stories about how they grew, and owners shared their passions for the projects they were involved in and future dreams for their businesses. This gave this researcher, who never worked in the tourism sector, greater insight and understanding into how the sector functions, how the practitioners use social media, and some of the challenges that these providers experience on a day-to-day basis.

Another advantage of this research is that the study also encompassed several different businesses within the tourism sector. Participants from every parish in Grenada and a practitioner from Carriacou were interviewed, which gave the research geographical scope. In addition, based on the number of employees, these businesses varied in size and were at different phases in their development. In addition, elite participants who occupied various strategic roles within the sector were able to provide a high-level perspective on Grenada's tourism sector.

This researcher is an outsider who has never worked in the tourism sector. This presented a key advantage as this researcher had no knowledge of the sector except as an observer. Sprague (2005) has identified that one key challenge faced by insider researchers is an assumed understanding between the participants and the researcher.

The UK-based supervisors who were involved in the process have never been to Grenada, which meant that the project was reviewed by trained practitioners who were unfamiliar with the island and with the practitioners within the Grenadian tourism space. This led to more unbiased and accurate feedback. The supervisors also audited the process of this researcher's data collection and data analysis.

Only one participant requested the questions prior to the interview, which meant that participant's responses constituted their opinion at the time of the interview. This participant even confessed later that due to job commitments, the questions were not reviewed prior to the meeting, which meant that all the responses were neither learnt responses nor carefully planned and calculated. This arguably improves the authenticity of the collected data.

While this study has its strengths, there were also limitations. The interviews were all conducted at the participants' place of work, such as the conference rooms and offices. This meant that they may have been more guarded in their responses than if they were in a more neutral or relaxed setting away from their office, managers, and other colleagues.

In IPA studies, the researcher is both the researcher and a participant (Reid et al., 2005). This means that the researcher must gather the data while also being on the interpretative end to analyse the data to extract various themes. In this

present study, this researcher noted various perceptions in a reflective diary about the tourism sector in Grenada prior to the data collection. Noticing these perceptions can assist to bracket out preconceptions about the industry. Continuous reflection was performed throughout the data collection to ensure that researcher bias was removed from the study.

Skype was utilised for two of the interviews in the study, meaning that the participants and this researcher were not in the same physical space. This occurred because the two participants were not on the main island of Grenada. The benefit of using Skype is that it allowed access to these participants quickly and at an affordable cost. Using face to face interviews only would have excluded these participants from the study especially the perspective of the participant from Carriacou. On the other hand, conducting a mixture of face to face interviews and Skype interviews does have its limitations. With Skype interviews, there is no formal meeting of participant and interviewer. This means that the opportunity is lost to develop rapport which may have limited free communication and hence the depth of the data disclosed. In addition, during Skype interviews only the upper body is visible on screen which prevents the interviewer from reading cues from other parts of the body. Internet connectivity challenges were encountered during one of the Skype interviews and the call dropped thus causing a break in the interview for about two minutes. The interview resumed without any further issues. Holt (2010) and Stephens (2007) found that while the collected data was comparable in terms of quality and relevance to the research question, telephone interviewing does affect the building of rapport and interviewers' responsiveness because interviewers are unable to read interviewees' visual cues. Despite these limitations of using a

mixture of Skype interviews in the study, the duration of the two Skype interviews was comparable to that of face-to-face interviews.

3.14 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research philosophy, design, methodology, and method of the study. The research adopts an IPA approach and uses semi-structured interviews to gather the lived experiences of tourism practitioners in Grenada who use social media for business. Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth feedback from the participants in the study. A total of 25 participants were interviewed and were assured of confidentiality. Each participant provided written consent for the study. No computer software was used to analyse this data. The next chapter presents the results of the data.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the philosophical underpinnings of the study in detail. This chapter presents the findings of the research to achieve the aim of this study which is to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. Nineteen service providers from different niches and from various geographical parishes throughout Grenada were interviewed to gain an operational overview of the tourism sector. Seventeen service providers confirmed their transcripts. Hence, only the information from these respondents was included in this analysis. Additionally, six individuals were interviewed who, at the time of the research, occupied roles within various associations and key organisations on the island. These six interviews were conducted to obtain a more strategic understanding of social media and its overall use within Grenada's tourism sector. These respondents are referred to as elite participants. Only five of these participants confirmed their transcripts. Hence, only the information from these respondents was included in this analysis. Although two interviews were completed as part of the pilot study for this research, these findings were omitted because there were subsequent changes to the interview questions that were ultimately used in the main study. Seven key themes emerged from the data and will be described with quotations from individual interviews. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings that were derived from the service providers and the elite participants.

4.2 Geographical Distribution of Participants

Participants were selected from each of the six parishes in Grenada. Table 1 in Chapter 1 provided a summary of the population, a description of each parish, and potential opportunities for development. St George is the largest parish which is the hub of tourism and commerce; it is the parish from which 47% of the participants were interviewed. Buses which are privately owned connect persons between parishes. Carriacou can be accessed via a small eight-seater aircraft and a ferry service which operates daily. Petite Martinique can only be accessed via ferry service, which also operates daily. One practitioner was selected from Carriacou and was interviewed via Skype. There were no participants from Petite Martinique.

Figure 3: Map of Grenada and its associated Grenadine islands, Carriacou and Petite Martinique
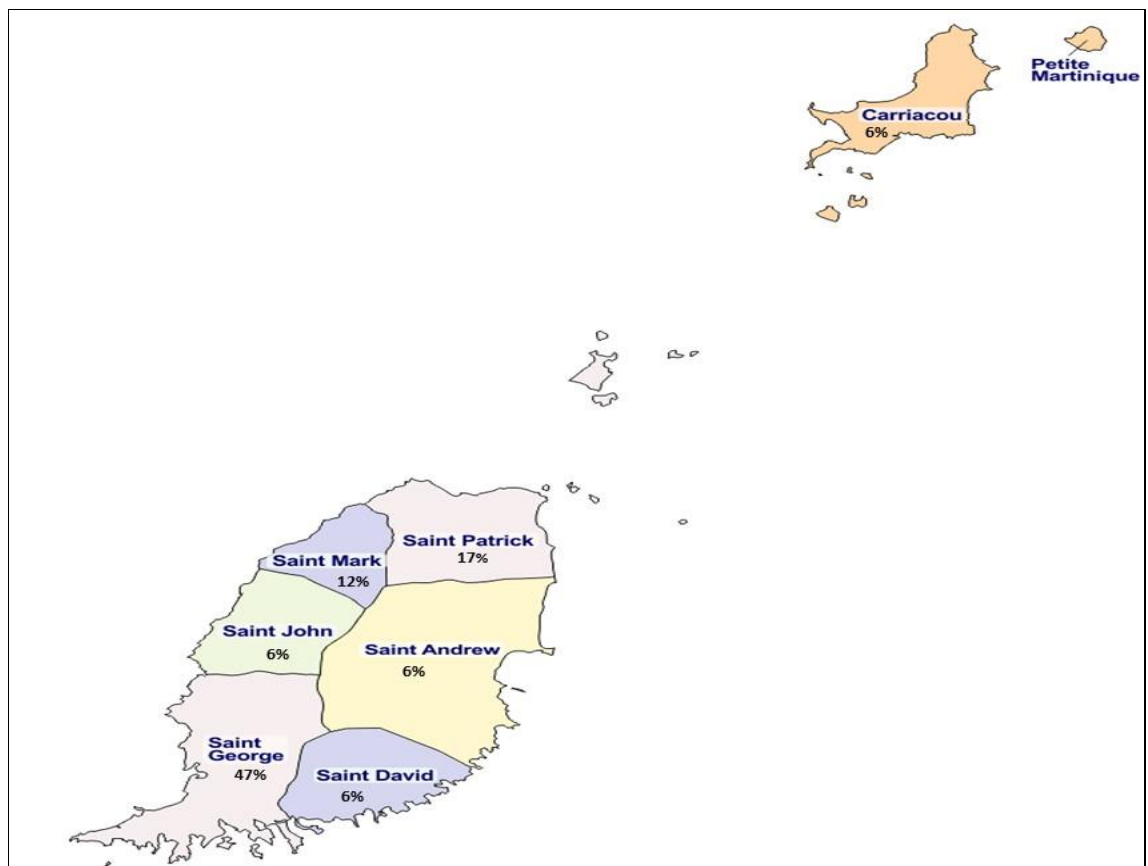
The size of the businesses in the sample varied, as measured by the number of employees. One service provider employed over 100 persons while another employed over 50 persons. All the other respondents employed fewer than 50 employees in their operations. Only two service providers employed personnel who were dedicated to social media marketing for their operations. This function within the other businesses were performed by the general manager and owner or persons who carried out other functions within the businesses. To maintain the confidentiality of the businesses, other measures of size such as revenue or turnover were disregarded due to the small size of the island.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Nineteen service providers and six elite participants were selected and interviewed for this study. A total of 22 transcripts were approved, which were manually analysed using a model developed by Colaizzi (1978). Seven key themes emerged:

- Usage of social media

- Defining Grenada's tourism product

- The significance of networking

- Opportunities to improve the use of social media in Grenada's tourism sector

- The implementation of marketing strategy

- The impact of social media use among practitioners

- The formation of PO towards Grenada

There are inconsistencies in the number of quotes allocated to each participant. This is due to the level of experience of each participant on the subject matter. Participants with few quotations tended to be smaller businesses with a limited

use of social media. Participants 13, 6, 2, and 16 were afforded the most quotations. Each theme will be discussed in the above order in the following sections.

4.4 Section 1: Usage of Social Media

Service providers used social media to fulfil various business requirements.

> We use them to stay in the minds of our client, our guest, so that we are part of their everyday world and so that when they decide where they are going to holiday or spend their leisure time that they may consider us. We will be at the forefront of our customer's mind. We also do it to expand our market share (Participant 12).

> I do Facebook promotions consistently and I select my target audiences which are United States, Canada, and the UK. Those are the primary target areas that we focus on because we are so far across the southern Caribbean. We had a few tourists from Australia, but primarily our guests, about 70% comes from the US market, another maybe 20 – 25% coming from Canada, and the rest coming from Europe (Participant 13).

As can be seen from the above quotations, businesses use social media predominantly for advertising, building community, and driving awareness of Grenada and their businesses. All of the service providers in the study used Facebook as a social media platform.

Figure 4: Use of Social Media Platforms among Service Providers

	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Twitter	Snapchat	TripAdvisor	Website
1	✓	✓					✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3	✓					✓	✓
4	✓					✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
7	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
8	✓	✓				✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	✓			✓		✓	✓
11	✓	✓				✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
13	✓	✓				✓	✓
14	✓	✓				✓	✓
15	✓					✓	✓
16	✓					✓	✓
17	✓					✓	

Instagram and Twitter proved to be next most popular social networking platform at 65% and 41% respectively. Figure 4 summarises the social media platforms used by each of the 17 service providers except for Flickr, which was only used by participant 9. Pinterest and Google+ which was only used by participants 2 and 12 respectively. The participants also recognised the need to have a company website. All participants had a company website except for one practitioner who delayed implementation due to financial reasons. One service provider expressed the need to complete a website revamp because the current site was not mobile responsive. This was especially problematic because a review of website analytics revealed that 85% of the visitors were accessing the site via mobile rather than desktop. Six of the websites in the study utilised blogging as a means of engaging with visitors to its website. However, these blogs were not regularly updated. The opportunity to join an

email list was used by four participants in the study. This researcher was unable to sign into the email services on one of these four websites. Generally, there was information to contact the company such as a phone number and an email address. Only three service providers incorporated the use of chat bots to support customer service.

> We selected 4 bloggers who got to visit and experience our business. These bloggers in turn wrote a blog post marketing what we do to their audiences. We also sponsored a giveaway to each of their audiences (Participant 2).

Participant 2 incorporated the use of local bloggers as part of its social media marketing strategy. This business reached out to four local bloggers, gave them complimentary use of their services in exchange for promoting the business to their audiences through a written blog post and other social media content. Complimentary services were given to bloggers which they used as giveaways. Participant 2 expressed that the approach of using bloggers as influencers is uncommon among local tourism businesses.

> Facebook is still some sort of a benchmark that is out there. Almost everyone has a Facebook account or knows someone who has one (Participant 13).

> Basically, Facebook and Instagram are very useful in reaching customers. So it is very, very effective (Participant 14).

Facebook was selected by all, presumably due to its global reach. Given that Facebook was the social media platform that was prevalent among participants in the study, an analysis of the number of entries was conducted to gauge the

frequency of the entries for 2017. Figure 5 below is a summation of these findings.

Figure 5: Facebook Post by Participant
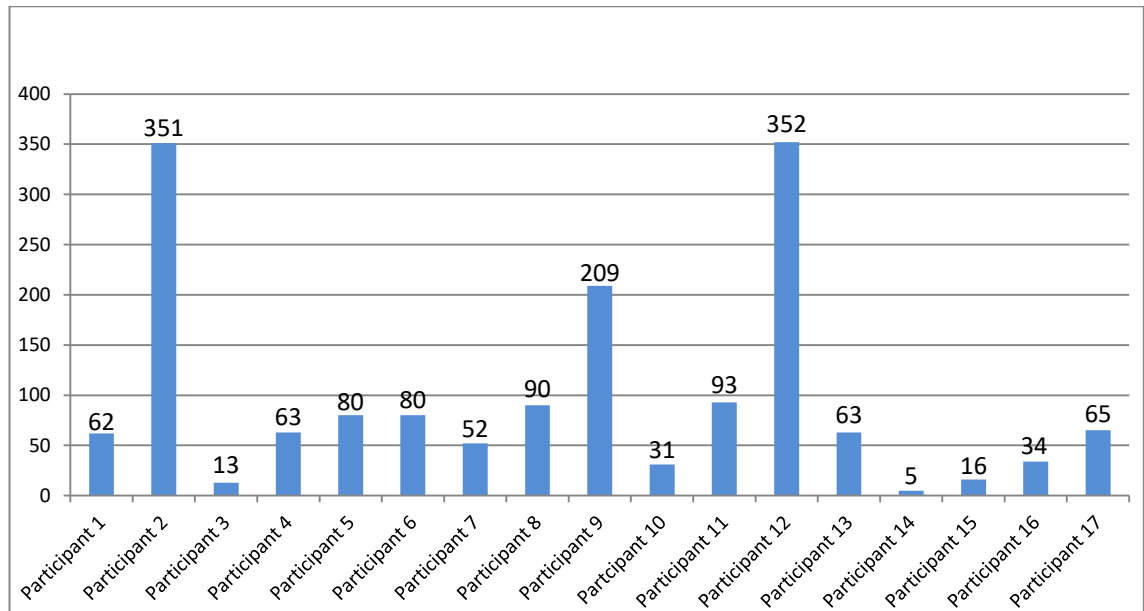
Service providers who employed dedicated social media personnel reported a higher frequency of Facebook updates as compared to businesses with no such dedicated personnel. Businesses that had Facebook pages with a high level of inactivity employed personnel who were responsible for social media in addition to other functions within the business such as waiter, front desk, bartending, and housekeeping. There were instances where the general manager or the owner took on the responsibility to complete this task. During peak and busy periods and with the other demands of business, it seems unlikely that updating Facebook could have been prioritised. Renovations during the year could have accounted for the reduced number of posts by participant 3. This finding will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The size of Facebook pages varied considerably over the sample. Only one respondent had more than 10,000 followers. 71% of the sample had Facebook pages with less 5,000 followers. There were four pages with more than 5,000

followers. In addition, there were four pages with less than 1,000 fans. A comparison of the two participants with the largest number of posts indicated that one had a Facebook page with greater than 10,000 followers while the other did not.

Certain service providers also used social media in unusual ways within their businesses.

> People suggested that we crowd fund. We did not even know anything about crowd funding. We researched and began crowd funding to get monies needed for our business.   Most of the funding about 60%-80% of the money came from fans of our Facebook page (Participant 17).

Participant 17 stated that Facebook was pivotal in communicating with fans about the progress of their business. Upon experiencing financial challenges during the start-up stage of their project, the entrepreneurs shared with their online community the possibility that the project may be abandoned.   The Facebook community recommended crowd funding as a means to raise the resources required to keep the business afloat. The crowd funding venture was successful with a significant proportion of the contribution coming from Facebook fans. Social media was also used by other businesses to share with their followers the various philanthropic projects. These philanthropic activities generally took the form of community related and environmental projects.

> Honestly, I think local businesses are dependent on TripAdvisor. You do not have to manage TripAdvisor. Customers write reviews

about your products and services. I think that is the number one

medium for businesses (Participant 2).

TripAdvisor was utilised by all the businesses in the study with the exception of participant 1. This provides evidence that service providers view this third party review site as a critical component of their online presence. Obtaining a positive review on social media was highly desired by the respondents because it could drive revenue and tourists rely on reviews to make buying decisions. Several practitioners displayed TripAdvisor certificates of excellence on their websites or had a TripAdvisor banner that showed off the ratings of previous visitors to the business. Excellent TripAdvisor reviews were deemed as extremely valuable because they were authored by an external party who was sharing the experience of using the service, which adds third party credibility. In some instances, the fact that the businesses had impressive reviews on TripAdvisor was cited as a reason why the service of the business was used.

Generally, the views of both service providers and elite participants were mixed on their perception of how social media was used by service providers island-wide.

I think people are beginning to see the benefits of using social

media to really drive their businesses especially in tourism. While

some have mastered the art, others I would say are fledgling or

need some sort of support to reap the benefits of using social

media to leverage their businesses (Participant 19).

I think a lot of the local businesses are slowly beginning to

understand the impact of it. Let us use businesses my size as an

example. A lot of them still are on the old way of doing their business, you know, they tell friends. So, I think they are starting to understand the impact of getting someone who will could help them develop their presence on social media platforms (Participant 13).

Some service providers opined that a few were using social media well while others stated that it was being used sub-optimally. On the other hand, elite participants believed that service providers were only on the verge of discovering how vital social media could be to their businesses and that current use was still insignificant and ineffective. Third party sites with trusted reviews such as TripAdvisor were more popular with service practitioners than other social media platforms where consistent content creation is required. Participant 7 indicated that education was a barrier to the use of social media by many businesses. This was due to the fact that a number of owners of tourism businesses are senior in age. Interestingly, one practitioner argued that to truly understand where Grenada is in terms of social media use, comparison must be made to another island state, rather than restricting the approach to an examination of how social media is used among service providers in Grenada. This will be an exciting area for future research: the extension of this project by comparing the use and impact of social media with the situation in another Caribbean island.

4.5 Section 2: Defining Grenada's Tourism Product

The participants shared some areas that they felt were exceptionally unique to the island.

Well, Grenada has a good name out there as a safe place, with friendly people, and that has been there for a lot, a lot of years (Participant 4).

I think that our historical sites are a lot more unique than most places. We have three forts around town. From on top when you look down those buildings, it has this unique look to it that is different from all the other Caribbean islands (Participant 7).

Our quality of music in terms of the soca is rising and is being recognised. Right now, we have Teddy Rhymes who is a local guy writing for Machel in Trinidad (Participant 2).

We have not packaged the revolution at all. Let me put it this way, it was unique enough that the big universities in the United States of America, I believe either Harvard or Yale talk about the revolution during lectures (Participant 7).

The Grenadians are top notch, I mean compared to any other. The tourists will not know that when they travel, but they will experience it while they are here (Participant 16).

Chocolate! This is the chocolate destination of the region, somebody needs to get it. I have said it so many times and somebody needs to get it. I am not even going to say it again (Participant 17).

Some other features of Grenada's tourism product that were deemed to be extraordinary were the Bianca Sea, which is the largest shipwrecked underwater dive site offered in the Caribbean, and the natural beauty of

Grenada's beaches and waterfalls. One participant passionately expressed the need for strategic branding around chocolate. Participant 8 who is a tour operator expressed that visitors were impressed with our chocolate and the variety of chocolate products that we have that separates us from neighbouring islands. Participant 12 echoed similar sentiments on chocolate stating that it can appeal to a lot of people as a luxurious product.

There were also more out-of-the-ordinary responses such Grenada's music, activities on Hog Island, the Grenadine islands, the revolution, and 'Jab Jab', which is a form of masquerading during the carnival season. Participant 7 indicated that the revolution was taught in Ivy League Universities in the USA. This has the potential to spark the interest of many American tourists especially those with a love for history to visit the destination. Another practitioner who is an accommodation provider corroborated this claim by sharing this example. When inquiry was of the origin of the guest at the hotel, the participant discovered that the guest was from Arizona which is not usually a popular state of origin for USA visitors. This tourist indicated that they heard about Grenada because of the revolution many years ago and have decided to visit. Grenada's soca music was also noted as an exceptional part of its tourism product with artistes creating music composition for popular artistes in neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago.

Despite the extraordinary features of Grenada's tourism products, other respondents shared concerns.

> If we do not differentiate ourselves from our neighbours, what we
> are doing is piling in. We are sheep. So, coming back to it, social
> media, print, it does not make a difference. If you do not have the

uniqueness in your property, in your plant, social media is a waste

of time. Ultimately, if you do not perfect your plant, social media

will not make a difference (Participant 18).

Elite participants felt that the tourism strategy needs to be refined and clearly

defined. Until this process is completed, Grenada will not reap the maximum

benefit from social media unless focus is first placed on finding its distinct

competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The profiles of visitors varied across niches and respondents.

I would say the ages for people who use our products are

basically from a toddler up to the eldest person that you could find.

Gender is across the board for both male and female.

Geographical origin is the entire world (Participant 10)!

I would say 50 plus, both genders, usually couples. So, I would

say higher education, fairly good income, and seasoned travellers.

It's hard to actually confirm, but I would say the British are our

main travellers (Participant 16).

Among the persons who used the services of the businesses in the study, there

were differences in professional status, geographic background, and gender.

4.6 Section 3: The Significance of Networking

A large majority of participants, (94%) collaborated with other local tourism

businesses. As previously stated in Chapter 2, Hall (2005) defined network as

'an arrangement of inter-organisation cooperation and collaboration' (p.179). In

addition, 65% of the sample indicated that they collaborated with others on social media.

> It is still not the way it is supposed to be because in Grenada, and not only in Grenada I guess in other islands too, but people are very guarded about their businesses (Participant 4).

> When I say no, I do not mean so in an overall sense. I mean we can do much more together (Participant 7).

> Not that we have sat down and have a strategy, but I like other people or other businesses' Facebook site or website. When I see something I repost. I always repost activities of divers. It is not that outspoken but we all re-share when we see something that is nice and brings attention to the island (Participant 16).

Collaboration was informal and took the form of retweeting or sharing information or images from other companies which particiapnts felt were captivating or would also be enjoyed by their audience. There was some evidence of a lack of trust among the participants, which may be an explanation as to why strategic networking was limited.

4.7 Section 4: Opportunities to Improve the Use of Social Media in Grenada's Tourism Sector

Section 4 begins by exploring the opportunities to improve the use of social media in Grenada's tourism sector. It continues to examine opportunities to develop Grenada's tourism product in the upcoming sub-section.

Respondents shared their experiences of several untapped opportunities to improve the use of social media in their businesses.

> We have not been going live at all on Facebook but I know that this may be huge for us (Participant 1).
> We are going to be incorporating some social media influencers in Grenada as part of our social media marketing (Participant 1).

> My new goal is to start a YouTube channel and that will be my next tool to use to help with our strategy for the upcoming year (Participant 8).
> I think I am leveraging most of it, but maybe in the off-season that is where I am going to look to identify if my social media marketing is tapping into the slow period (Participant 13).

> We have not used Snapchat, and Snapchat nowadays it's a go. You snap a photo, you put it up, everyone sees, and everybody wants to visit. We are also considering the use of Instagram (Participant 3).

Service providers were keen to expand their use of other social media platforms, with the most prevalent choices being Instagram and YouTube. Participant 1 highlighted the use of local influencers as part of the future strategy of the business as local influencers can help the business access new audiences. Others believed that developing strategies to expand the use of existing platforms could be further leveraged by their businesses, for example by posting more on the current platforms and utilising other features such as Facebook Live. One of the participants who operated a smaller business in the sample felt that there were no further opportunities to exploit due to the small

size of his business. Another commented that their focus was to deliver quality service and not necessarily to expand the number of persons using their services. In these instances, expanding and increasing the use of social media was not their main business priority.

4.7.1 Section 4: Opportunities to Develop Grenada's Tourism Sector

Various opinions emerged on how Grenada can best exploit social media to further develop its tourism product. Suggestions included more aggressive production of quality content around local festivals, such as the annual carnival and music festival on the island, because social media is all about content creation. Participant 13 was also considering using social media more aggressively in the low tourism season to stem fluctuations in the revenue of the business. This is an interesting area for future research as social media may be a tool to use to reach audiences who may prefer to visit during shoulder seasons. App development was deemed important because it could provide a central place for visitors to easily access quality content and information about the island. Despite these suggestions on how social media can be used to further develop Grenada's tourism product, participant 6 shared the following concern.

> I think Grenada has too much. I mean, it's got lovely people, it's very safe and friendly, it's got rain forest, it's got beautiful beaches, it's got lovely hikes, it's got scuba diving, it's got snorkeling, it's got a cruise ship terminal, it has authentic capital, it has this, it has that. So suddenly how do you wrap that up into one thing (Participant 6)!

Diverse recommendations were offered on the potential niches and strategies that should be considered in creating a national development plan for the future.

> I believe Grenada should consider a no cruising ships strategy. I think the value of Grenada would go up and more people will be attracted to the island (Participant 5).

> Music is also a very very very good connection to make people visit Grenada (Participant 5).

> One of the unique things that we have is that we have been always known as the spice isle of the Caribbean. Now, there are other islands that do spices but as a culmination, we are probably one of the islands that have more spices per capita that produce among the highest quality agro-products and spices. Agro tourism fits in nicely with heritage tourism which fits in nicely with flora and fauna tourism (Participant 18).

Participant 5 believed, as can be seen from the above quotation, that the government should consider a land-based tourism strategy as opposed to simultaneous cruise ship and land-based strategy. This was presented as a way for Grenada to differentiate itself: by focusing on tourists who prefer to spend 3 to 5 days on an island, rather than cruise tourism, which was viewed as unsustainable. Other Caribbean islands that have bigger shopping malls and better infrastructure such as Barbados were viewed to be fierce competitors in the cruise tourism niche. In addition, this participant believed that a strategy around music should be considered as it has proven to be a medium that connects persons to the island. This participant who is an accommodation provider shared a story of a guest who was motivated to book a trip to Grenada

based on a song that he heard about the island. 2018 marked the third year of Grenada's music festival which was held in April. This festival drew local, regional and international artistes over a three days festival weekend.

Agri-tourism was also suggested as an ideal niche for Grenada as the destination is well known for its spices. Participant 18 believed that this niche is a perfect fit for Grenada since it provides a good marriage between heritage tourism and agriculture which can incorporate the activities of local businesses such as Belmont Estate and River Antoine. Belmont Estate is a plantation that grows and manufactures cocoa and chocolate. This plantation also has a museum and restaurant. River Antoine was established in 1785 and is a distillery with the oldest working water wheel in the Caribbean. This participant passionately expressed that relying on niches that are similar to that of the other Caribbean islands such as diving or promoting our beaches is insufficient if Grenada want to stand out in a competitive marketplace. The suggestion was also made that Grenada should consider increasing the volume of spices produced not necessarily to raise the amount of exports but for branding purposes so that spices will visibly stand out when a tourist visits the island.

> Grenada is still a little bit behind in terms of internet capabilities. I think our primary internet provider here in Grenada needs to make it a bit more attractive for businesses like myself to use fibre-optic coaxial cable. It's still at a very high premium price (Participant 13).

Participant 13 stated that internet capability is one of the things that will improve the use of social media within the tourism sector. Guests from abroad are expecting high quality internet capabilities. Participant 8 who is a tour operator

shared similar sentiments. Lack of access to Wifi hotspots at tourism sites may mean that visitors do not share videos and photos in real time. Some tourists may forget to share images thereafter.

Local and international social actors who could positively impact Grenada's tourism product were suggested. The Ministry of Tourism and the Grenada Tourism Authority were viewed to be critical from a policy creation and implementation perspective. Another recommendation was the use of specialists such as Rohit Talwar. Rohit Talwar is the founder of the FuturesScapes project, which provides advisory services to governments and businesses on how to understand and create their future by developing growth strategies and predicting emerging risks. To realise progress quickly, it is important for a carefully selected body to be set up that can direct the plan creation process efficiently. Participant 6 suggested the following:

> Keep the advisory group small, maybe five people. The trouble
> with Grenada, and I have seen it time and time again, every time
> we want to do something, we include everybody which hinders
> productivity(Participant 6).

One participant stated that government's involvement was paramount in driving the use of social media.

> From a Ministry of Tourism stand point, they generally again need
> to step away from extremely traditional ways of doing things and
> become more tech savvy and understanding how to put it out
> there. At the school level, that is the next generation and push it to
> the ones that are there (Participant 18).

It was also shared that due to the importance of tourism to Grenada, public education should be carried out to ensure that its use is effective. It was also expressed that Grenada's national development plan needed to clearly define its true distinct advantage before any social media strategy could be effective.

4.8 Section 5: The Implementation of Marketing Strategy

Less than half of the sample (41%) confirmed that their business had a social media strategy as part of its marketing plan. Of those who responded positively, it was clear that the strategy was undocumented and unofficial.

> We do not really have a strategic social media plan. It is mainly a feeling as I go along. Basically, we do not have a meeting where we sit down and talk about social media (Participant 2).

> I am sorry to disappoint you but I do not have a good answer on that. No, there is really no marketing plan (Participant 16).

The participants who responded negatively cited business size as the reason for not having a strategy. In addition to examining marketing strategy, the study also examined the role that social media played in the development of Grenada's tourism product.

> I think it plays a valuable role in developing Grenada's product because without social media, products cannot be really seen overseas (Participant 10).

> Nobody yet has actually proved to me that if I took all my social media down tomorrow, I do not think I will lose any business. It is a nice to have and it is also nice to also have icing on the cake. In my opinion, the cake is what sells you. It is your reputation. Social

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media should be just a few little borders around the edge that just makes it nice and just give that extra little touch (Participant 6).

Two participants indicated that they had very little knowledge and were unable to comment fully, while another echoed similar sentiments to participant 6 above: that social media should be seen as value-added rather than strategic development.

Nevertheless, despite these opinions on the strategic contribution of social media to Grenada's overall tourism product and the lack of strategic planning, 82% of the sample confirmed that social media played a strategic role in their individual businesses.

I do not know when we did the last traditional print advertising, it has completely changed. Of course, you have to be in Discover Grenada but everything else is completely social media. Print media is out. You have to be present on social media and digital marketing (Participant 5).

Social media plays a strategic role in my business as without it there is nothing to share and nothing to show. I would not have gotten the buzz that I have received as a new business. The pictures and videos entice people to visit. Social media is an integral part of introducing people to my business (Participant 8).

As can be seen from the quotations above, social media was viewed as strategic to service providers as it provides them with an affordable way of reaching new audience and staying in touch with existing customers. In certain

instances, service providers created campaigns and promotions specifically created for their online community.

4.9 Section 6: The Impact of Social Media Use among Practitioners

Participant responses on how social media has impacted their businesses have been diverse.

> The fact that we are living in this era right now where we do not need to have to go through a middleman to connect the customers anymore; I do not need radio, I do not need a newspaper, or I do not need print, I do not need television! Customers are on social media, they are on the Internet! It is free to sign up! It's free (Participant 1).

> Social media has boosted our business. Also, we received some feedback, well, constructive criticism I would say. It was not anything that would break us, but help us to improve our business processes. So, basically it is a very good medium to use for customer feedback and generally for our business (Participant 3).

> In our marketing, we try to appeal to young people. However, older persons tend to visit. Sometimes the people who come here have not seen our activities on social networking sites but it is through Expedia, Trip Advisor, repeats and word of mouth that they come (Participant 2).

Hard Question! No, I cannot really say that I can fully confirm how much impact it has had. But it does have impact, yes, but to gauge it, to say that I know that I was getting a certain percentage more visitors? Now, that is difficult to measure and I do not do surveys (Participant 16).

Social media is almost immeasurable. The only time I can measure something is when customers react to an offer. For example if I post an advertisement or special promotion and persons take up the offer. I measure that (Participant 2).

Some participants believed that social media has positively impacted their businesses by providing a cost-effective means of advertising, creating a community where they can connect with previous customers, and driving awareness through electronic word-of-mouth. On the other hand, other participants indicated that it was difficult to identify what these impacts were, since it is tough to measure the results of the various social media campaigns.

Measures to mitigate the negative impacts of social media were seen to be difficult to control and implement. This was also viewed as a significant problem for a small and tourism-dependent destination such as Grenada, where domestic problems such as crime will be viewed by a global audience when shared via social media. Education was viewed as a vital tool to sensitise the public to potential negative impacts on the tourism sector that result from activities such as sharing potentially problematic domestic issues online.

4.10 Section 7: The Formation of Psychological Ownership Towards Grenada

Participants provided a range of responses on how individuals can develop one of the antecedents of PO, which is a sense of belonging. According to Duncan (1981), a sense of belonging is the feeling of being at home and a sense of affinity expressed towards a target of ownership. From a tourist's perspective, a sense of belonging could be feeling as if they were a part of the community in the country that they have visited. McMillan and Chavis (1986) have developed one of the most quoted theories: the psychological sense of community. This theory consists of four areas: the members' feelings of belonging and identification as being part of a community, influence as a bi-directional concept, integration as being important for the community to maintain a sense of togetherness, and shared emotional connection based on a sense of shared history and identification. Therefore, in the case of a destination, the development of PO will lead to visitors developing feelings of attachment to the place.

> Social media is all about sharing experiences and so, if we encourage guests to share their experiences online by taking a picture or a video online then fond memories of Grenada may linger. So, if you freeze the moment then, when you look at it, you will always remember what experience you had (Participant 9).

> People have got the opportunity to say what they like or dislike about a property or a business or whatever. Social media could be a double-edged sword. Businesses today must ensure that they

maintain a high quality service at all times as one mishap could

result in a negative feedback posted online (Participant 15).

Service providers stated that feelings of attachment could occur using social media because it gives guests the incentives to post, share feedback, and build communities and interactions. Sharing experiences through pictures and videos using the popular hashtag from the Grenada Tourism Authority, *#FreetoWonder*, could help visitors to develop feelings of attachment to Grenada.

Participant 11 had a different viewpoint on the use of social media to create feelings of attachment to a destination:

> Well I think social media itself will not do that. I think what social
>
> media offers now is the ability to record and snap reactions. I think
>
> somebody taking away a positive feeling of an experience here in
>
> Grenada is because somebody worked really hard, be it night,
>
> day, week, to prepare for guests to come out for tourists to come
>
> (Participant 11).

As can be seen from the above quotation, this participant believed that the use of social media alone will not create attachments. Instead, it is positive interactions with the service providers and others that will assist to develop feelings of attachment.

> The only thing is if they do not understand the cultural significance
>
> of a particular festival, or a particular photo, or a particular
>
> character let's say in our carnival. This may result in the individual

not sharing the photo in the right light or in a poor cultural context

(Participant 19).

Participant 19 stated that there are parts of Grenada's culture such as characters in carnival which one may deem as controversial. If these are shared in an inappropriate context or if the recipient does not grasp the meaning of the image, then no PO may develop towards the destination. In fact the perception of the island could be negative.

Another participant shared a different viewpoint:

I think we have become a society where we like putting notches

on our belt. We like racking more experiences that we have gotten

in our life (Participant 18).

Participant 18 felt that feelings of attachment to a place may not develop as a result of social media because modern tourists are more concerned with gaining new experiences and visiting as many places as possible. Social media is a tool to display or show off experiences instead of a means by which feelings of attachment to a destination can be developed.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has described the rich and varied meanings and experiences of service providers and elite participants with respect to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. The feedback from 17 service providers was analysed, which generated seven themes. Additionally, responses were gleaned from five persons who held various strategic roles within tourism associations and organisations in Grenada. Based on their understanding of Grenada's tourism product, these respondents were

considered to be elite participants. The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of these findings in relation to the research questions of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings and the emergent themes to understand the lived experiences of Grenadian service practitioners who use social media, to explore the impact of social media on local tourism businesses, and to provide recommendations that policy makers and service providers can use to develop Grenada's tourism product. The chapter is divided into eight sections and begins by reviewing the purpose of the research. The chapter then interprets each of the seven themes which emerged from the data; the themes will be presented sequentially as outlined in the previous chapter.

5.2 Purpose of the Research

The aim of this research was to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. Previous research conducted by McElroy and deAlbuquerque (1998) has confirmed that, based on a tourism penetration index, Grenada was the third least tourist-penetrated destination as compared to 20 other Caribbean islands. Dominica and St Vincent were the first and second least penetrated destinations respectively. Tourism is critical to the livelihood of this small island state; more than a quarter of Grenada's GDP is fuelled by tourism. This thesis used an interpretative phenomenological approach to understand how service providers are using social media and its impact on businesses as well as to provide recommendations that service providers and policy makers can use to improve Grenada's tourism product.

The research objectives were:

- To explore previous researchers' findings on the use of social media within the tourism sector.

- To identify key challenges that tourism practitioners face when implementing social media marketing strategies within their businesses in Grenada.

- To explore the impact that social media marketing could have on tourism and tourism businesses in Grenada.

- To develop recommendations for service providers and policy makers to improve Grenada's tourism product using social media.

A review of the literature uncovered ten major gaps which were then further investigated. Interview questions were created based on these gaps. Seven key themes emerged from the literature which will be discussed in upcoming sections. Table 8 and 9 below provides a summary of the literature review gap, interview questions and key finding that emerged in this study.

Literature Review Gap	Interview Questions	Key Findings
The researchers indicate that the use of social media aids in the fulfillment of PO needs by individuals.	How can social media be used in visitor interactions to develop feelings of ownership, belonginess or homeness?	Encouraging visitors to share pictures and videos online using hashtags developed by the Tourism Authority can help develop feelings of attachment.
The lack of PO use in a social media environment, PO was primarily used in offline studies and PO use in social media studies is in its infancy were gaps identified in the literature.	What are your thoughts on how local tourism businesses are using social media to market Grenada?	Elite respondents believed that service providers were only on the verge of discovering the importance of social media to their businesses.
Online social networks are underdeveloped in Halong Bay, Vietnam.	1) Does your business collaborate with any other local tourism businesses? 1b) Is there collaboration on social media among local tourism businesses?	94% of the sample collaborated with other local businesses. However, online collaboration was unofficial and limited to sharing a photo, video or retweeting content.
Urry and Larsen (2011) coined the term the tourism gaze which is a key reason why a tourist visit a destination.	1) Why do you think people visit Grenada? 2) What attractions/ amenities that Grenada has which you believe differentiates it from other Caribbean islands? 3) What the opportunities that Grenada can best exploit to develop its tourism product using social media?	The safety of the island, historical sites, friendly people and chocolate were named as attributes that make the island unique. The revolution and chocolate were stated as key differentiators.
Asatrayan and Oh (2008) examined how PO is developed in restaurant setting and found that PO can lead to competitive resistance and willingness to pay.	What advantages and disadvantages can emerge if tourists develop a feeling of ownership towards Grenada through social media?	Respondents generally explained that positive attachment to the destination could develop by sharing pictures and videos. However, certain images in Grenada's art form can be misinterpreted. Without proper explanation, no PO could develop in these instances.

Table 8: Summary of link between literature review gap, interview questions and key findings

Literature Review Gap	Interview Questions	Key Findings
Businesses implemented social media marketing without a clear goal.	Does your company have a social media strategy as part of its marketing plan?	41% of the participants confirmed that their business had a social media strategy as part of its marketing plan.
The challenge involved in measuring the impact of social media is that marketing managers understand its importance. However, senior leaders who do not understand its importance prefer to see numbers.	What are some of the impacts that social media has had on your business?	Participants view on the impact of social media varied. Some believed that social media had a positive impact on their business as a cost effective means of advertising and driving electronic word-of-mouth. Other respondents indicated that it was difficult to identify the impacts due to the challenge in measuring the results of social media marketing.
The literature revealed several benefits that businesses enjoyed as a result of using social media. Facebook was the dominant platform used by these businesses.	1) How does your business use social media? 2) Why were the mediums selected to market the business chosen over other mediums? 3) What are some of the opportunities that you think businesses can leverage using social media?	Businesses used social media for advertising, building community, driving awareness of Grenada and their businesses. Facebook was used by all the participants. Instagram and Twitter were the next most popular platforms at 65% and 41% respectively.
Jones et al. (2014) found that social media had a huge or moderate impact in bringing tourists to Maine, USA.	Do social media play a strategic role in your business? If so, what?	82% of the sample confirmed that social media played a strategic role in their individual businesses.
Aruba was able to transform its economy to a solid USD$2 billion industry since the closure of the oil refinery in 1985.	1) What factors and who are the social actors that should be considered in crafting a national tourism development strategy using social media? 2) What role do you think Government needs to play in driving tourism development?	Several suggestions were presented as ideal strategies for Grenada to pursue for tourism development. There was a strong appeal for differentiation so as to stand out in the marketplace. Government's role was seen as critical to drive education. Participant 6 recommended that any advisory board to develop tourism should be kept small.

Table 9: Summary of link between literature review gap, interview questions and key findings

5.3 Section 1: Usage of Social Media

The results of this study confirm that Grenadian tourism businesses understand the immense importance of social media in supporting their businesses' sales and marketing. Consistent with the findings in the literature (Howison et al., 2015; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Rambe, 2017), service providers relied on social media to build brand awareness of their product and services; communicate to prospective customers; and drive sales of products and services by creating and sharing videos, images, and written content. In addition, elite participants viewed social media as a cost-effective advertising medium that is beneficial to businesses in the tourism sector.

While the above uses of social media were prevalent among all service providers, the present study found that only a handful of respondents used their social media platforms in extraordinary ways. For example, certain service providers used social media to share their many philanthropic activities with their followers, such as partnering with local associations that undertook community-related projects or other environmental initiatives. The importance of incorporating corporate social responsibility in social media platforms was emphasised by several authors in the literature, who pointed out that such incorporation helps to build customer loyalty and trust (He et al., 2014; McCorkindale, 2010; Shu & Chuang, 2011). Another service practitioner used Facebook to run a successful crowdfunding venture. This respondent experienced financial challenges during the start-up phase of operations because they were bootstrapping, but were able to reach out to Facebook followers who became patrons. The growth of the Facebook page was organic, and the fans on the page were all persons who had previous interaction with the service provider. This interviewee explained that several of the followers

provided encouragement via Facebook, which persuaded the entrepreneurs to persist and believe in the viability of their project. Sufficient funds were raised to keep the business open with 60%-80% of the monies coming from Facebook fans. This finding supported the work of Agrawal et al. (2015) and Davidson and Poor (2014), who deemed that the nature of relationship between the project creator and the funder was a significant factor in determining whether a person participates in crowdfunding. This disruptive method of fundraising could be a solution that more service providers leverage through social networking sites to raise funds for expansion and other projects.

The findings indicated that businesses relied primarily on Facebook as the main social media channel. This was mainly due to Facebook's widespread acceptance, and practitioners believing that it was the key benchmark to have if their business had any social media presence at all. Similar findings were discovered in other studies of small businesses, which found Facebook to be the platform of choice (He et al., 2014; Mizrachi & Sellito, 2015; Roult et al., 2016). Instagram and Twitter were the next most preferred social networking sites being used by 65% and 41% of service providers respectively. While tourism practitioners have rolled out their social media activities on Facebook, which is the most favoured social networking site globally, they have been slow to migrate to other newer channels. Hence, these businesses have a significant opportunity to further drive social media marketing and reach untapped audiences by expanding their presence on other social media channels. TripAdvisor was used by nearly every service provider and in some cases these reviews were cited as a reason why visitors used their services. The importance of TripAdvisor reviews were underscored by Neirotti et al. (2016) who stated that tourists prefer to rely on user generated content before making

a purchasing decision as opposed to information from a destination tourism organisation.

Though limiting the use of social media networking sites initially to one main platform such as Facebook is consistent with the view presented in the literature by He et al. (2015), service providers who do so are eliminating the possibility of reaching new audiences. These new customers may prefer to consume online content on alternative platforms or in another format. In this study, only two service providers used newer platforms such as Pinterest. Phillip et al. (2014) have highlighted that users of Pinterest are not other-oriented like users on social networking sites like Facebook. Instead, Pinterest users interact with themselves, which is useful for discovering consumer's preferences. Furthermore, some practitioners highlighted that older customers tend to use Facebook while younger persons favour more recent social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. Failure to migrate content creation and distribution to newer platforms may mean missing out on getting the marketing message to younger customers or gathering marketing intelligence from audiences who favour these platforms.

Company websites were viewed as critical tools to provide information to prospective customers, and social media was used to drive traffic back to the website so that visitors could view all the offerings of the business. This finding is in line with Law et al. (2009), who have highlighted that the presence of websites can lead to increased business for tourism organisations. Jones et al. (2014) also found that their study that 100% of participants viewed having a website as critical to their success. The sole participant without a website understood the value of having one, but was delaying implementation due to a lack of financial resources to hire a web designer. A review of each of the

company's websites revealed that they were static and not interactive; only three respondents utilised up-to-date artificial intelligence tools such as chat bots to support customer service.

The findings also revealed the limited use of influencers by service providers. Christou (2015) described influencers as online persons who could be trusted based on their reputation, predictability, and competence. Two respondents relied on the power of influencers' blogs to promote their businesses to different audiences. One influencer hosted a giveaway that was donated to by the service practitioner. Furthermore, two service practitioners expressed an interest in using the voices of others as a medium to reach wider audiences in the future. Influencer marketing presents another underrated opportunity that service providers can capitalise on to drive social media marketing. Participant 2 also supported this by highlighting that the use of bloggers was uncommon among service providers. Though Ge and Gretzel (2018) have argued that social media influencers in tourism studies have been overlooked, Liu et al. (2015) have confirmed that there are positive impacts of using social media influencers. These benefits include driving advertising, increase business and an affordable way to reach new audiences.

There were several businesses in the sample that were family-owned and small, which indicates that they were small businesses. This is consistent with the view that small size is a common trait among businesses within the tourism sector (Morrison et al., 2010). Small businesses have their unique challenges. In this study, service providers shared some of the challenges that they faced when implementing social media advertising strategies in their businesses. These challenges included a lack of financial resources, inadequate human resource personnel, and a lack of skill to manage social media platforms.

Similar barriers to the adoption of social media were faced by businesses in studies conducted by (Michaelidou et al., 2011; Roult et al., 2016; Schaffer, 2015).

5.4 Section 2: Defining Grenada's Tourism Product

Elite participants expressed the urgent need to define and refine Grenada's tourism product as an initial step prior to the implementation of any social media tourism strategies. Only after this process was completed could social media marketing be strategic and targeted so that the island could attract its ideal visitors. Service providers perceived that Grenada's safety, friendly people, chocolate, and dive spots were some of the key assets of the local tourism product. Grenada's reputation as a safe island with friendly people matched the perception held by tourists as described in the *Master Tourism Plan* dated December 1997. The profile's description of the ideal Grenadian visitors was consistent with the description of the ideal Grenadian visitor as outlined in Chapter 1. There were a few practitioners whose customer profiles did not match the ideal Grenadian visitor, but this was minimal.

5.5 Section 3: The Significance of Networking

Discussions about networking confirmed that firms viewed collaboration as a critical aspect of their business. Firms worked with other service providers on various events and business referrals. The research identified that booking referrals were common among accommodation providers, and hotels also referred guests to a tour operator. There was little evidence of strategic collaboration among service providers on social media; existing cooperation was limited to the unofficial re-posting, retweeting, tagging, or re-sharing of

photos or videos. This finding endorsed the work of Tran et al. (2016), who found limited use of online networks when investigating collaboration among tour operators in Halong Bay, Vietnam. The findings suggest that lack of trust was a key issue. This may be a reason why firms are hesitant to collaborate, especially since businesses are small, resources are limited, and the local market is competitive. Policy makers could be the bridge to manage some form of strategic online networks between service practitioners that would allow collaboration to be mutually beneficial. For example, service providers could consider online collaboration in the form of linking content that could be beneficial to improving search engine optimisation. Service providers could also consider planned and strategic online cross-promotion of products and services.

5.6 Section 4: Opportunities to Improve the Use of Social Media in Grenada's Tourism Sector

Several unexploited possibilities emerged from the data that described how social media could be better employed in the tourism sector. One participant was adamant that a better content creation strategy was paramount. Service providers could immediately review how they were using the various social media channels and optimise content creation processes. All the service providers in the study used Facebook as the main social networking site. However, not all practitioners have optimised the use of this platform. Incorporating other functionalities such as Facebook Live and Facebook Group as part of a strategy to drive engagement with followers and build a community could help businesses make optimum use of Facebook. The view expressed by He et al. (2015) was that small businesses should start with only one social media network, such as Facebook or Twitter, instead of spreading their

resources thinly across multiple social media networks. This recommendation supports the view that it is important to ensure that all features of social media channels are properly optimised before exploring other platforms. It is critical for service providers to master each platform before adopting another. However, it is equally as essential to be aware of when saturation is achieved on a platform so that new channels can be accessed to reach new audiences.

Building community is critical, especially online, as these groups can add intangible value to an organisation and be a source of significant competitive advantage. A business now has direct contact with a group of customers and supporters who are engaged. Online communities can be viewed as strategic assets to businesses because they allow them to sense opportunities and threats (Wagner et al., 2017). Furthermore, Qu and Lee (2011) stated that the creation of a sense of belonging, an antecedent of PO, as one of the benefits of participation in travel online communities. Service providers should consider creating opportunities for building communities and strengthening relationships with followers, which can translate into revenue and a fan base of loyal and engaged followers. In addition, bloggers could be employed as a means of reaching new audiences.

It was clear from the discussions that practitioners had a desire to expand into other mediums, particularly Instagram and YouTube, as a part of the plan to use social networking sites in the future. This findings is similar to that of Mizrachi and Sellitto (2015) who also found plans to increase social networking channels in their study of small tourism businesses in Australia. One such site that businesses could exploit which was not mentioned by any participant considering expansion was the use of Pinterest to reach new and wider audiences. Currently, 12% of the service practitioners in the sample utilised

Pinterest in their businesses. Pinterest is one of the newer image-based popular social networking sites.

The strategic use of email marketing by service providers is an important opportunity that businesses must capitalise on. Only four of the respondents had this function available on their site, and attempts to sign up failed on the websites of one of the participants. Email marketing strategies is one of the most effective marketing activities involved in building a brand, improving relationships with customers, getting new contacts and promoting the sales of a company(Hudak et al., 2017). This approach is a more direct approach to interacting with customers than social networking platforms; once traffic is funnelled via an email service provider, the business can reach potential customers at any time. In addition, social networking sites can change their algorithms at any time, which can throttle organic reach on social media. Furthermore, Jones et al. (2014) viewed email newletters as necessary.

In addition to improving the use of social networking sites, one practitioner suggested that app development should also be explored to interact with customers. The importance of apps within the tourism sector was identified by Dickson et al. (2014) who shared that apps should be used by travel and tourism domain for information, two-way sharing capabilities, context awareness, the internet of things, and tagging.

5.7 Section 5: The Implementation of Marketing Strategy and the Impact of Social Media Use among Practitioners

Service providers had varied views on how social media impacted their businesses. Some underscored the positive impact that social media has had on their businesses, such as allowing them to reach customers at an affordable

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cost. Similar views were expressed by various researchers such as Jones et al. (2014) who found that 90-95% of respondents who shared that social media had a huge or moderate impact on bringing target market tourists to the area in Maine, USA. In addition, Howison et al. (2015) when reviewing the use of social media by tourism operators in Dunedin, New Zealand identified that 57% of the sample viewed online marketing as a key success factor. On the other hand, there were service providers who did not believe that social media had an impact on their business. These practitioners viewed social media as a value enhancing tool that they can use and described social media as the icing on the cake. Without an excellent product and service delivery, social media marketing will do more harm than good. This finding is similar to the views expressed by certain tourism operators in New Zealand where Howison et al. (2015) indicated that some tourism operators did not believe that online marketing was important to their business success. Similar sentiments were shared among UK businesses as Michaelidou et al. (2011) also indicated that 61% of businesses in the sample indicated that social networking sites were not important for their brand strategies.

Various practitioners were uncertain as to the true value and impact of social media, due to its lack of measurability. A clear example of the incalculability of social media was presented by an accommodation provider, who indicated that their marketing messages were tailored to a type of a younger customer avatar. However, the actual profile of the customer who ultimately made a booking did not match the marketing message. This inconsistency between the users of the social media platforms and customer avatars could raise the issue of advertisements on social networking sites possibly not reaching the ideal customer avatar that is willing and able to buy the service.

Businesses in the study did not have a social media plan; when they indicated that there was a plan, it was undocumented. Similar findings were stated by Mizrachi and Sellito (2015), who have conducted eight case studies on small tourism businesses in Australia. They found that service providers understood the impact of Facebook on the business, but employed this tool without a clear plan associated with achieving long-term sales and marketing goals. The lack of clear measurement of the gains of social media was found by McCann and Barlow (2014) in their study as 65% of the sample indicated that they did not measure the benefits gained from using social media. In this study, some of the smaller businesses in the sample believed that documentation was unnecessary due to the size of the business and the practitioner knowing what is required. However, the lack of effective planning around what tool to use; whether there were new social media platforms to be considered; or what posts had higher engagement, which could lead to creation spin-off posts are all opportunities which could be missed without a clear social media strategy. The lack of a documented strategy may translate into no documented business targets. As a result, assessing the impact of social media on the business may be impossible. According to McCann and Barlow (2014), to gain the maximum benefit from social media and fully realise its optimal impact, a strategic approach is important to ensure that business objectives are achieved. (Hassan et al. (2015) identified the lack of strategy among small businesses that use social media and suggested that the widely known marketing model AIDA (awareness, interest, desire, action) could address this gap and be extended for use among small businesses. Service providers in Grenada could consider adopting the AIDA model because it is a useful framework that will allow tourism

businesses to create strategy and structure the implementation of social media to better gauge impact.

5.8 Section 6: The Formation of Psychological Ownership towards Grenada

Generally, respondents felt that the use of social media could have a positive impact on the tourism sector in Grenada because feelings of attachment towards the destination could develop. A sense of belonging is one of the antecedents of PO, the theory that grounds this study. Sharing photos and videos and writing reviews were believed to contribute to feelings of attachment. This finding is in agreement with the views of Karahanna et al.(2015) who stated that the fulfilment of individual PO needs lies in the use of social media. Individual needs pertaining to PO motivate them to use social media and engaging in the use of social media fulfils these needs. The local tourism authority also encouraged the sharing of videos with campaigns such as #*FreetoWonder*, where visitors are urged to share images of their experiences on the island with the hashtag. Creating a sense of place can create competitive advantage because tourists who are attached to a destination are more likely to return to that destination despite other offerings (Yuksel et al., 2010).

In spite of several respondents who believed that social media can lead to feelings of attachment towards Grenada, two elite respondents shared differing views: the use of social media may not create feelings of attachment. One participant stated that sharing photos online may help to create a sense of belonging when the viewer or the person taking the photo makes an appropriate interpretation of the essence of the image. For example, Grenada has differing types of traditional art forms that can be subject to misinterpretation if the

tourists who share the image do not provide proper explanation and context of the significance of the image. Viewers who make wrong interpretations of the essence of the image could develop a negative perception towards the destination both on the part of the tourists and those who view the picture. In this instance, no PO is created.

Another elite practitioner also expressed that the modern traveller is more interested in the collection of experiences. A positive experience in Grenada may be viewed as another great achievement to share with friends and family, as opposed to creating any significant attachment to the destination. Such travellers are motivated to visit new destinations as a symbol of accomplishment, and no sense of belonging will be attained. This view is contrary to that of PO theory and is in line with the limitation of the theory as expressed by Julissa et al. (2015) regarding the idea of more is better. This limitation of the theory assumes that the more attractive a product or service, the greater the potential for development of PO. In the case of a destination, the use of social media does not guarantee feelings of attachment, especially in instances where the traveller's motive is geared towards having an experience, as is the case for new tourists. Urry (2007) shared similar sentiments and stated that in modern societies, being a tourist is associated with social status and is necessary for good health and a cosmopolitan outlook. In these instances, use of social media may not create repeat visitors to the destination.

5.9 Summary

This chapter interpreted the findings of the study, which were derived from interviews of service practitioners and elite participants within Grenada's tourism sector. Seven themes emerged from the data which were each

discussed above, including the implications of the finding. The subsequent chapter is the final chapter of this study. This chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, areas for future research, and limitations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the contribution that this research makes to knowledge and practice. It also identifies opportunities for future research. This chapter concludes with the limitations of the study.

6.2 Achievement of the Research Aim

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada. The research accomplished this through four research questions:

- What are the experiences of service providers who have used social media in Grenada?

- What are the key challenges facing service providers when implementing social media strategies in their businesses?

- What are the perceptions that tourism practitioners have of Grenada's tourism product?

- How do service providers understand the importance of social media advertising to their businesses?

The aim of the study has been achieved because recommendations have been made for policy makers and service practitioners to improve the use of social media marketing for the strategic development of tourism in Grenada. The above research questions were crafted after the conduct of a literature review. Those questions guided this study's exploration of the views and lived experiences of service providers regarding how they employed social media and their perceptions of how it impacted their businesses. In addition, five interviews were conducted to obtain the strategic perspective of persons who

served on various tourism associations, some of which did not provide a direct tourism service. These elite participants were able to add further depth and knowledge to how social media was being used within Grenada's tourism sector. The findings of the study suggested seven themes, which were later discussed along with recommendations to service providers and policy makers on how Grenada's tourism product could be improved using social media. Areas for future research were also identified, which will be discussed in a subsequent section.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This research explored the lived experiences of Grenadian tourism practitioners who used social media. The findings of the study are similar to many of the themes in the literature on how social media is used by service providers, the barriers to its effective adoption, and which social networking sites are predominant. This is a very topical area, and this research adds to this body of work. On the other hand, this study is unique because few studies have been undertaken on the tourism sector in small and developing island states in the Caribbean. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the lived experiences and impact on tourism businesses that use social media in Grenada, which, barring the cultural differences among the islands, could be used to understand the sector in other Caribbean islands. In addition, the study adds value by considering the perspectives not only of the service providers but also of the various persons who serve in tourism associations on the island, which provided a strategic perspective of the tourism sector.

This study also answers the call for the application of PO theory in the tourism and hospitality sector, an application that is still underdeveloped in the literature.

Furthermore, researchers have called for the use of PO to be extended to technology research Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) and in offline and online research environments (Hulland et al., 2015).

6.4 Contribution to Practice

This study has implications for practice because it provides recommendations for service providers and policy makers to better support and improve Grenada's tourism product. It also constitutes a strong call for Grenada to define and differentiate its tourism product if it wishes to compete in a difficult regional and global marketplace. A niche needs to be identified for Grenada to dominate; only then should aggressive marketing on social media be undertaken, which could increase visitor arrivals and drive sustained economic growth. In addition, this study provides evidence of how Grenada's tourism businesses are using social media, which gives clear insight into where those businesses are now, and what barriers they face in adopting social media as part of their day-to-day operations. This study highlights the positive outcomes as well as the struggles of practitioners. It also provides evidence on the perceived impact of social media on these businesses.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

In IPA studies, the researcher is both the researcher and a participant (Reid et al., 2005). This means that the researcher is gathering the data but must also be on the interpretative end and analyse the data to extract various themes. To reduce this problem, this researcher maintained a reflective diary. Member's checks were also conducted on all transcribed documents prior to the completion of the analysis to ensure their accuracy.

The findings of this study were restricted because the study was conducted cross-sectionally, which meant that this researcher only contacted the participants once. A longitudinal study could yield a different result if participants were observed over an extended period. This could provide different evidence on how social media was used and its impact. Nevertheless, the semi-structured interview method allowed this researcher to probe and ask open-ended questions, which provided deep and rich data that enabled an understanding of the tourism sector and how social media was used.

Qualitative studies on a whole have its limitations as they are subjective and are based on participants lived experiences. Quantitative research is based on numerical data which is factual and difficult to misinterpret than qualitative data. However, several quality techniques were employed in this study to ensure that methodological rigour was achieved. Firstly, all participants reviewed and approved their transcript before inclusion in the analysis. Secondly, the supervisors who were both UK-based reviewed the transcripts and lastly triangulation was achieved by the researcher maintaining a reflective diary throughout the process.

Finally, this study provides evidence on how social media was used, its impacts, and recommendations for a small developing island in the Caribbean. Few studies have been undertaken on tourism in the Caribbean and specifically on the use of social media. Applying the findings of this study to other Caribbean island states must be done with extreme caution due to cultural and political differences.

6.6 Future Research

Several areas have emerged as possibilities for future research. First, a comparative study could be conducted using another Caribbean island which is about the same size of Grenada, such as St Vincent and the Grenadines, or even a destination that has more visitor arrivals, such as St Lucia. According to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) (2018), St Lucia had a record breaking 11% in tourism arrivals in 2017, with 386,127 land-based visitors and 669,217 cruise passengers. This is the highest among the CTO member countries. A comparative study of social media use by service providers in St Lucia versus Grenada would be very instructive. This could provide even deeper insight on how the use of social media in Grenada compares to an island of a similar size or that has a greater number of tourism arrivals. This feedback could be used as part of the local strategy to improve the use of social media among tourism practitioners and provide a benchmark for the progress of local tourism businesses in this area.

Further research could be explored using an alternative theory of social media such as the social network theory. Several businesses highlighted how they collaborated with various other tourism businesses, especially through business referrals. One participant indicated that collaboration was especially critical for small businesses. These collaborations were mainly offline, and any online collaboration was unofficial and limited to sharing and reposting content. Perhaps further research could consider strategies for social media collaboration among local service providers and the potential benefits of such collaboration.

This study only considered service providers who were current users of social media. During the participant selection process, there was one potential participant who did not use social media, and this prospective participant was therefore excluded from the study. A further study could consider how small firms are adopting social media into their businesses in Grenada, which could possibly uncover more barriers to the use of social media by small firms. Such a study could also explore how the government could support these businesses.

The use of social media in reducing seasonality among service providers in Grenada could be a rich topic for future research. Vanegas and Croes (2003) have identified seasonality as a key issue facing small island states. A longitudinal study could be conducted on guesthouses that analyses the impact that social media has on bookings during the low tourism season. Further implications for revenue could be assessed by selecting a destination such as Trinidad that has targeted promotions for Grenada's slow season.

6.7 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strategically Define Grenada's Tourism Niches

Considerable criticism of the lack of distinctiveness of the tourism product was voiced throughout the data collection process, despite the current marketing niches and the positive attributes of the destination, such as magnificent beaches, friendly people, and the safety of the island. Although these niches have been able to drive the current visitor numbers, practitioners believed that further distinctiveness would significantly improve the competitiveness of the product in a tough regional and global marketplace. Several suggestions were presented by participants on potential niches that policy makers could explore. First, Grenada should consider packaging the revolution which is unique to the

island and it is taught in Ivy League Universities in the USA which could further spark interest by many American tourists especially those with a love for history to visit the destination. Another practitioner supported this claim as a possible focus niche idea stating that a guest utilising their services confirmed that they always wanted to visit Grenada after hearing about the revolution. Research has shown that tourists visited dark places such as concentration camps Podoshen and Hunt (2011), terrorism sites, Sturken (2007), Holocaust sites, Lennon and Foley (2000) and death camps (Biran et al., 2011). This area is often called dark tourism and could be a possible niche that Grenada could market for tourism growth opportunities.

Second, which will ultimately be a political decision and require much analysis to assess its economic impact is for Grenada to focus on land base tourism only and not cruise tourism as it is the belief that cruise tourism is not sustainable and Grenada is not able to effectively compete with other Caribbean destination like Barbados with its huge shopping malls. Visitor arrival trends show that more than 50% of arrivals on the island come from cruise ships (see figure 2, chapter 1). In 2016, cruise tourism accounted for 66% of Grenada's tourism arrivals which is a significant share of its visitor arrivals which if Grenada decides to move away from this form of tourism, could mean a significant economic impact. This is in line with worldwide trend that the cruise niche is the fastest growing tourism segment (Ajagunna et al., 2017). However, there have been several questions raised about the value of cruise tourism and whether the majority of the gains go to cruise liners as opposed to the destination. Though out-dated, the only Caribbean research identified in the literature on the cruise tourism by Dann and Porter (1997) in Barbados somewhat supports this suggestion in that the land base tourists spends more money in island than a

cruise passenger. However, this finding could be subject criticisms as a land based visitor spends a lot more time in the destination than a cruise passenger. While Grenada could craft a strategy focussing on visitors over forty years of age, couples, a professional visitor who spends seven days on island who is likely to spend more time in the destination than a cruise passenger would require careful analysis before implementing. Possibly a better strategy would be to aggressively increase the land base tourism targeting destination with newer airlift routes to the destination to cushion the possible effects of a sudden deterioration of the cruise ship sector.

Third, agri-tourism was recommended as the perfect niche for Grenada since it is already known for its spices. When compared to other destination within the Caribbean, spices is where Grenada stands out in terms of its volume and quality. As an example one participant suggested that Grenada should increase the amount of spices produced not necessarily to increase the sale of spices in the world market which could be a lucrative by-product of this strategy but for branding purposes so that visitors can see the spices more visibly all around the island and hence spices will stand out in a visitors mind about the destination. Grenada has also been increasing its appeal on the international market to chocolate lovers and several participants identified chocolate as a unique feature of Grenada's tourism product. One participant was very passionate about chocolate and believed if the policymakers do not take the necessary steps to market and brand Grenada as the chocolate destination of the Caribbean, that the destination will be left behind as bigger Caribbean nations are also producers of chocolate with neighbouring Trinidad entering the chocolate production niche with its decline in oil prices. Grenada could possibly lose this competitive edge of having first mover advantage if it does not act fast

as the larger destinations may have bigger marketing budgets which can quickly drown out Grenada's voice in the market place with an aggressive above the line marketing campaign.

Last, music was seen as a niche that can be effective which could increase visitors coming to the island. Grenada's music was identified as one of its uniqueness in its tourism product with soca genre getting recognition in other Caribbean islands. 2018 marked the third year of Grenada's music festival held in April which is drawing more local, regional and international artistes over a three days festival weekend. Rivera et al. (2016) believed that festivals could possibly draw visitors to an island if properly positioned during the tourism low season.

To address this concern, policy makers should audit current niches for distinctiveness and seek to uncover where Grenada's competitive advantage truly lies. Only then will social media marketing be able to target the ideal customer and will have maximum impact.

Recommendation 2: Support for Small Tourism Businesses

Several barriers to the optimal use of social media by tourism businesses resulted in a lack of consistency in marketing among service providers. The absence of dedicated personnel was also a key factor which distinguished the businesses who utilised social media more frequently. Policy makers could consider the provision of support to smaller business to encourage the use of social media. Alternatively, support could be provided through a mentorship programme at tertiary institutions, or other programmes such as the Imani programme, to support small tourism businesses that are at the fledgling stage of implementing social media in their businesses. The Government of Grenada

has instituted The New Imani Programme which is an initiative aimed at training young people so that they can get various skills necessary for the workforce McDonald and Hopkin (2003) have identified the lack of skills among new tourism graduates in Grenada. A mentoring programme could provide hands-on working experience for tourism students while enhancing the use of social media because the younger students are generally more technologically savvy. These students can share knowledge of how to use social media platforms with service providers.

In addition to overcoming the lack of dedicated personnel to carry out social media activities, a mentorship programme can also aid in dealing with the knowledge gap of practitioners on social media. One participant emphasised that business owners in the tourism sector tend to be older and may not have the required skill to effectively utilise social media. Schaffer (2015) found student business mentoring programme to be beneficial with 40% of the respondents saying that they learned how to use social media more effectively. Respondents also stated more confident using social media with the majority implementing this new knowledge in their business. Students also gained work experience which could solve problem of lack of skill identified in tourism graduates by (McDonald & Hopkin, 2003).

Policy makers could also consider hiring consultants for a period that can up skill tourism businesses by undertaking social media training programmes. Networking could also be encouraged especially in instances where collaboration could be beneficial to each of the businesses involved. Despite the fact that the findings revealed lack of trust among service providers, Della Corte and Aria (2014) believed that destination management organisation can create

effective governance structure which can overcome the trust obstacle which appears to be a hindrance to collaboration within tourism businesses.

Data access was also identified as one way that the government could help to develop the use of social media within the tourism industry. One participant explained that more live broadcasting of tourist experiences would take place if data was more readily available, especially in the rural areas. Many users of social media prefer sharing experiences in real time. A lack of data may reduce the sharing of content by tourists to their communities. One participant highlighted that fibre optics are still very expensive, which makes it difficult to facilitate a level of data that can match what is available in other destinations.

Recommendation Three: Creation of a National Plan

During the data collection process the most up to date national tourism plan discovered was dated December 1997. Creation of an updated master plan perhaps could be a task that policy makers could explore based on the fact that social media was not a key part of destination marketing in 1997. One participant emphasised the importance of keeping any board nominated small to avoid bottle necks and to ensure progress. The Ministry of Tourism and Grenada Tourism Authority role will be fundamental in crafting the plan. Another participant believed that international expertise should be enlisted to ensure that international best practices are incorporated into any such plan which should comprehensive beginning at the school level. At the latter part of this research, the Government was preparing the National Sustainable Development plan to guide Grenada's development priorities over the 15 year period from 2020-2035.

6.8 Final Thoughts

To conclude this study, the aim of the study is worth recapping:

> To explore how social media marketing can be used to drive tourism in Grenada.

This study achieved its aim by completing an in-depth review of the tourism literature, using PO theory to ground this study, outlining and justifying the selection of a qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interview questions to drive the data collection process, analysing the data using Colaizzi's (1978) model, and interpreting the implications of the resultant seven themes. The thesis also provided contributions to academic knowledge and practical recommendations to enhance Grenada's tourism product; these contributions will assist future research to examine social media adoption and use. The thesis concluded by providing areas for future research which may benefit Grenada, improve the body of academic knowledge, and provide further clarity on the use and impact of social media in a small and developing island state.

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Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Questions Service Providers

General Opening Questions

1. What is your current role (Company name not required), type of organisation and how long have you been employed in that role?

2. What has your involvement been in the tourism sector to date?

3. Can you give me an indication of the size of your organization based on the number of employees (Fulltime, part time, seasonal)?

4. Is there any member of your team dedicated solely to social media marketing?

Understanding and Use of Social Media

5. How does your company use social media? (Feel free to elaborate on the mediums that are used and also on various campaigns).

6. Why were those mediums selected to market your business over other mediums?

7. What are some of the impacts that social media has had on your business?

8. Does your company have a social media strategy as part of its marketing plan? If possible, can you share how your company intends to use social media in the future?

Grenada Tourism Product

9. From your perspective, why do you think people visit Grenada?

 b).   In your opinion, why do you think they visit/ or use the services of your business?

10. Can you provide details of the age, gender, geographic origin and motivation of visitors that utilizes the service of your company?

11. In your opinion, what attractions/ amenities that Grenada has which you believe differentiates it from other Caribbean Islands?

12. What are your thoughts on how local tourism businesses are using social media to market Grenada?

13. What are some of the opportunities you think that your business can leverage using social media?

b). Which ones are the easiest and why you have not leverage these to date

14. How can social media be used in visitor interactions to develop feelings of ownership, belonginess or homeness?

15. From your point of view, does social media play a strategic role in developing Grenada's tourism product? If so, what ?

      b. Does social media play a strategic role in your business? If so, what?

16. Is there any collaboration between local tourism businesses?

      a. Does your business collaborate with any other local tourism businesses?

      b. Is there collaboration on social media among local tourism businesses?

17. Is there anything else you will like to share in relation to social media and its use by your organisation?

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview question for elite participants

1. What are your thoughts on how local tourism businesses are using social media to market Grenada?

2. How can social media be used in visitor interactions to develop feelings of ownership, belongingness or homeness?

3. What advantages and disadvantages can emerge if tourists develop a feeling of ownership towards Grenada through social media?

4. What are the opportunities that Grenada can best exploit to develop its tourism product using social media?

Future Tourism Development

5. What factors should be considered in crafting a national tourism development strategy using social media?

6. Who are the social actors that you believe can contribute to the creation of a national tourism development strategy using social media.

7. What role do you think the Government needs to play in using social media to drive tourism development?

8. You may be aware that social media has its negative as well as its positive impacts. Do you have any ideas on how the negative impacts of social media can be mitigated as part of Grenada's overall tourism development strategy?

Closing Question

9. Is there anything else that you will like to share concerning social media and its role in the future development of Grenada's tourism product?

Participant Invitational Letter

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Rachel Brathwaite and I am a doctoral student at Edinburgh Napier University. As part of my studies, I am required to produce a thesis study exploring the use of social media in tourism advertising- The case of Grenada. I am seeking volunteers who are actively involved in Grenada's tourism sector and I will be delighted if you can share your experiences to enrich the study.

Data will be collected using semi structured interview questions which should not take more than 1 hour of your time. The questions will be sent to you before the interview. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable responding to any of these, you can opt for these to be removed. I will be collecting the data personally and will also make notes during the interview and immediately afterwards in a journal. The interview will also be audio taped to ensure that I can review the interview contents seamlessly.

The researcher will take due care and diligence to ensure that your identity is kept anonymous. In no way during this study will your name be mentioned. The audio tape and any notes collected will be stored in a locked draw and will be destroyed at the end of the study which is expected to be by June 2018. There is however the possibility that the researcher may produce a journal article at the end of the study based on the findings.

The audio taped data will be transcribed at the by an external person outside of Grenada using Fiverr.com to further ensure anonymity. A copy of this transcript will be sent to you to cross check after the interview. You can expect to receive this document within 2 weeks after the interview.

This study has been ethically approved by the University and the information obtained would be treated in the strictest confidence as outlined in the University's code of ethics. You are free to withdraw at any stage during or after the interview process without providing an explanation.

Kindly sign and date the attached consent form if you are willing and able to participate.

Yours faithfully,

……………………………..

Ms. Rachel Brathwaite

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

<u>Consent Letter</u>

I have read and understood all the information provided above in the participant invitational letter. I fully understand that the information obtained by me during this research whether by field notes or interview will be kept confidential and secured. Only the information signed off in the final draft will be included in the thesis.

I fully understand that I am under no obligation to participate and I am free to withdraw at any time during the process without explanation.

I am 18 years or older and I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant   Signature of the Researcher

…………………………………….   …………………………………………

 Date:-……………………………….

Appendix E: Research Methodology Checklist

- Contact participant via email or mobile phone to establish contact. Explain the nature of the study including topic, proposed length of the interview and also that the meeting will be audio taped and get verbal consent.
- Meet with participant at agreed meeting place- most of the interviews will be at the participant's office. If not available, then meeting will be at agreed quiet restaurant in the city.
- Layout participant invitational letter, consent form and interview question guide on the desk.
- Set up the recorder with a test being done prior to the interview. Ensure that spare batteries are available for each interview.
- Verbal remind participant of the voluntary nature of the study and his/ her right to withdraw at any time.
- Explain to participant the nature of the study and ensure that the participant understands what the study is about.
- Ask the participant to read the participant invitational letter and the consent form.
- Test the audio recorder again while participants are signing participant invitational letter and consent form.
- Officially greet the participant and thank him/ her for participating in the study. The participant will not be asked to state their names. However, they will be asked about their involvement in the tourism sector to date.
- Conduct the interview as per interview guide questions in Appendix A.
- Make notes during the interview process
- Thank the participant for his/her time
- Turn off the audio recorder
- Pack up papers and confirm that transcription should be received approximately within 2-4 weeks thereafter.

After the Interview- At home

- Import the audio file from the recorder to the computer. The interview was saved according to the number of the participant in the interview process. For example, the first interview was saved as interview 1, 2, 3 etc to ensure confidentiality.
- Send the file across to the transcriber on Fiverr.com and confirm delivery date
- Update reflective diary with comments and points from the interview
- Open the file with the transcribed document from Fiverr.com
- Review the audio recording again and thereafter compare the contents of the recording with the transcribed document

- Run spell check and correct any grammatical errors
- Save the final version of the transcription in a folder created for this on my laptop
- Send copy of the interview to the participant via email for email confirmation to proceed with analysis.