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IMPROVING THE DEPLOYMENT MODEL OF MODERN ELECTRONIC MARKETING METHODS FOR THE CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

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SUMMARY

Traditional business models that used to govern the operations of travel and tourism businesses, defined in a rigid way their functional areas and the relationships among them. The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has driven the transformation of these business models into novel destination marketing models.

National Tourism Organisations' task of managing the process of destination marketing has been augmented with the advent of electronic marketing methods. The complexity of managing the diverse interests of the multiplicity of the stakeholders involved in destination marketing has been extended by the novel electronic communication channels that have been introduced. This has made the need of establishing an explicit model for managing the process of destination marketing more imperative than ever before.

Recognising the need for explicitly managing the process of destination marketing for the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO), an integrated marketing model has been developed to guide the management of the destination's marketing process. The key for optimising the destination's marketing processes is the successful implementation of the model through the integration of traditional with electronic marketing activities.

The model is founded upon the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and expectations and facilitates the satisfaction of the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations. Moreover, it reflects on the CTO's existing marketing services, the Cyprus tourism industry's eMarketing deployment and European NTOs' eMarketing deployment level. The utter objective that is aimed to be achieved through the implementation of the developed model is the improvement of Cyprus' competitiveness as a tourism destination worldwide.

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CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by introducing the research context and background. Next, the role and the position of the researcher are introduced. Finally, the research contribution of this doctoral research project is presented.

1.1 Research Context

According to the World Travel Monitor (2007), during the year 2006, global overnight trips increased by 6.3% in comparison to 2005. People's improved affluence in relation to liberalisation of travel restrictions promotes the weakening of international travel boundaries. International travel is expected to grow and reach over 1.56 billion tourist arrivals by the year 2020 (WTO, 2006).

Furthermore, the World Travel Monitor (2007), reports that in year 2006 expenditure reached 753 billion Euros, 7% increase over the previous year. However, the importance of travel goes beyond purely economic benefits. Social, political and educational reflections among people who engage in international travel are of vital importance.

Recognising the importance of both economic and non-economic benefits that the growth of the global tourism industry brings along, National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) are expected to promote their tourist products and services. NTOs' efficient promotion mechanisms will result into the effective communication of their marketing offer to their target market (Fill, 2002).

The Internet provides a unique and powerful communication platform that has driven the traditional marketing communication methods used for promoting a

tourism destination into a new era. Online marketing communication methods enable the effective exchange of information between the seller and the customer towards reaching the intended marketing outcome (Chaffey, 2003).

Online travel sales increased by 24% from 2006 to 2007 to reach 49.4 billion Euros in the European market in 2007. This amounted to 19.4% of the global market, up from 39.7 billion Euros or 16% in 2006. The UK accounted for 30% of the European online travel market in 2007, with Germany in the second place at 19%. The direct sellers accounted for 65% of online sales in the European market in 2007 and intermediaries for 35%. The types of services purchased online were mostly Air Travel (57%), Accommodation (17%) and Packaged Tours (15%) (Marcussen, 2008).

An increasing number of businesses from all commerce areas deploy online marketing tools for promoting their products and services on the Internet. While travel is the Internet's second largest commerce area (Frew, 2005; Buhalis, 2003), National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) like the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) have been slow to utilise the potential offered benefits. Through the utilisation of the Internet, NTOs would be permanently available to their markets towards developing a global distribution channel.

Authors stress (Frew, 2005; Buhalis, 2003) that it is gradually being recognised that each and every destination in the world will somehow develop its Internet presence and will undertake some eMarketing activities. EMarketing tools and techniques application in the tourism industry have not received much attention by either academic studies or authors. Authors state (Lace, 2004; Buhalis, 2003) that the characteristics of successful management of new media within the context of marketing communications receive scant attention in academic literature. The majority of academic studies regarding marketing on the Internet in the tourism industry focused on the use of the IT for destinations and the Internet as a means of global communication medium (Buhalis, 2003).

The 2001 report issued by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO): 'E-Business for Tourism: Practical Guidelines for Tourism Destinations and Businesses', was a very important publication that referred to the future application of a number of online marketing techniques that could be used at that time by the NTOs. The WTO (2001) noted the potential and the importance of online marketing communication techniques for NTOs and issued guidelines on some of the techniques that were available.

Furthermore, the Handbook on eMarketing for Tourism Destinations issued by the European Travel Commission (ETC) in 2008 (ETC, 2008) illustrates in a practical manner the steps that NTOs should follow to effectively utilise eMarketing activities for promoting their destination.

The objectives of the strategic role of online marketing communications are encapsulated in the objectives associated with a Web presence and e-Business (Rowley, 2001). Hence, for the purpose of this research project it is important to explore the recent developments in online marketing communication techniques in relation to the methods of deployment of these techniques in the tourism industry for yielding the utmost benefits for the Cyprus Tourism Organisation.

1.2 Research Background

Destination marketing is an ongoing management process of creating, communicating and delivering value to customers by the various stakeholders involved in a destination's tourism management process (Buhalis, 2003). The process involves the anticipation and recognition of customers' expectations and their satisfaction, providing in parallel for the stakeholders' interests (Sigala, 2004).

Destination marketing is characterised by inherent difficulties which are derived from the complexity of managing the diverse interests of the multiplicity of the stakeholders involved (Rowley, 2001). National Tourism

Organisations (NTOs) have traditionally managed the process of destination marketing by dictating the rules and policies that guided the stakeholders' operations (Rodriguez, 2003).

With the advent of electronic marketing, the management of the destination marketing process has been transformed augmenting the task of its management by NTOs. This change has led to the development of novel destination marketing models, intended to manage the increased complexity of the process (Hass, 2005).

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) recognising the importance and the benefits that the efficient management of the destination marketing process brings along has developed a relevant eMarketing strategy (CTO, 2005). The eMarketing strategy defines the path that should be followed by the CTO and its partners for marketing Cyprus through new media and by using modern marketing techniques to provide tourists with all the information and services they require. The eMarketing strategy sets the framework that will guide the CTO's actions towards the utilisation of the available online marketing communication methods for maximising their potential return for Cyprus. Its primary objectives involve:

- The enrichment of the CTO's worldwide marketing activities and their effectiveness and
- The improvement of the Organisation's support and services to its partners that would consequently improve their abilities in promoting of Cyprus.

The deployment of eMarketing methods by the CTO aims at facilitating travel and tourism by adequately supporting the individuals' online searching and booking experience. Through the formulation of well-defined eMarketing processes, the CTO plans to provide the individual traveller and the travel organiser an exceptional online searching and booking experience that will involve the facilitation of every step of the tourism buying process (Briggs, 2001), which consists of the following stages:

1. Aspire (The dream – reason to visit)
2. Inspire (The instigation – encouragement and verification to visit)
3. Illustrate (The product – demonstration to visit)
4. Simplify (The accessibility – simple to visit)
5. Book (The purchase – value to visit)
6. Experience (The travel – live the visit)
7. Post-Experience (The Follow-up – re-assurance of the visit)
8. Revisit (The Return – recursive visit)

The successful implementation of the eMarketing strategy will enable the CTO to extend its overall marketing activities in an attempt to maximise its channel reach and focused promotion through integrated marketing campaigns. Through the optimisation of its marketing effectiveness, by successfully utilising eMarketing methods in accordance to traditional marketing activities, CTO aims at achieving its strategic objectives.

1.3 Role and Position of the Researcher

The responsibility of managing the implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy involves the application of knowledge and abilities towards the realisation of the CTO's eMarketing vision and objectives. My work role places me in a unique position to contribute to and influence many of the policies adopted by other institutions involved in the management and implementation of eMarketing tools and techniques in the Cyprus tourism industry.

As the eMarketing strategy implementation coordinator at the CTO, I will have to ensure that the people involved are committed to the realisation of the projects and that they will be working as a team towards embracing success. During the process, my role requires that I manage an intradepartmental group of individuals with diverse academic and professional backgrounds. The involvement of people from various departments requires that additionally to the reporting to my manager, the director of the marketing department, I will

have to inform the other departmental managers of the evolution of the projects.

Performing the role of a doctoral researcher in parallel to my work duties entails a great amount of personal discipline and determination to the successful completion of the doctoral research project while not sacrificing workplace commitments. My doctoral researcher role involves the investigation of modern eMarketing methods implementation case studies and other related research towards the critical appraisal of the CTO's eMarketing strategy implementation methodology.

Performing the role of a researcher through my doctoral research project, while directing change through my role at the CTO, requires that I reflect on my research work towards optimising the CTO's eMarketing strategy implementation for the purpose of maximising the potential impact of eMarketing methods. By constantly investigating the evolution of eMarketing methods deployment in the global tourism industry and their usage patterns by online visitors in relation to the continuous evaluation of the level of utilisation of eMarketing methods by the CTO I will be able to formulate an optimised model for implementing the CTO's eMarketing strategy.

1.4 Research Project Contribution

This doctoral research project entails the investigation of modern eMarketing methods implementation case studies and related research. The results of this investigation will be evaluated against the CTO's eMarketing strategy (CTO, 2005) propositions towards reaching an optimal model for the deployment of these propositions for the Cyprus tourism industry.

Through the optimisation of the process of implementing the CTO's eMarketing strategy the benefits to be realised involve the:

- Improvement of communication efficiency among the CTO and its customers.
- Enhancement of the CTO's brand image.
- Enrichment of customer service through eMarketing channels.
- Facilitation of customer profiling and the achievement of relationship marketing.
- Improvement of knowledge distribution across the Cyprus tourism industry.
- Reinforcement of tourist loyalty as a result of increased tourist satisfaction.

The adoption of this doctoral research project's findings, by the CTO, will enable the optimised implementation of modern eMarketing communication methods across the organisation and the Cyprus tourism industry. This will have a positive impact on the improvement of Cyprus as a tourism destination, which will be achieved by upgrading the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing activities worldwide.

The contribution of this doctoral research project will be reflected on the sustainable socio-economic developments that the implementation of the proposed integrated tourism marketing model will bring along. The CTO, by closely monitoring and fine-tuning the performance of its marketing activities, will realise real-time customer segmentation, facilitating customer experience optimisation throughout the tourism buying process. This will have a direct impact on the tourism product development processes and the quality of the offered services, reinforcing Cyprus' competitive position in the relevant tourism markets.

The benefits for Cyprus will be reflected on the impact on people living on the island (locals and tourists). The target audience of this doctoral research project is the whole of the Cyprus tourism industry, as the successful achievement of the project's objectives will enable the enrichment of Cyprus's marketing mix towards reinforcing Cyprus' competitive position as a tourism destination.

CHAPTER 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE

This chapter begins by defining the research aim and objectives. The establishment of the theoretical framework that will guide the researcher for conducting the research is then presented. Next, the concept of destination marketing is introduced, followed by a discussion on electronic Marketing models. Finally, the impact of electronic Marketing model deployment on the CTO's marketing environment is identified, followed by the formulation of a conceptual electronic Marketing model for the CTO.

2.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this doctoral research project involves the enrichment of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation's marketing activities towards augmenting the competitiveness of Cyprus as a tourism destination worldwide.

The specific objectives of this doctoral research project involve:

- The development of a theoretical framework for the derivation of logical sense of the relationships among the underlying factors regarding the CTO's eMarketing strategy implementation.
- The development of an eMarketing Model for supporting the process of eMarketing strategy implementation by the CTO,
- The integration of eMarketing processes into traditional marketing processes for maximising the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing efforts worldwide,
- The facilitation of the sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism industry through the deployment of eMarketing methods.

Through the attainment of the objectives stated above, the process of implementing the CTO's eMarketing strategy will be optimised. This will result in the maximisation of the impact of eMarketing methods on the CTO's overall Marketing efforts.

This doctoral research project proposes that the CTO's eMarketing model effectiveness is based upon the extent to which the specific variables identified in the theoretical framework, which follows, will be implemented. The assessment of the impact of these variables defines the construct of interest for this doctoral research project.

In order to meet the objectives of the project, a comprehensive collection, review and analysis of a multiplicity of primary and secondary data sources will be performed.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides the foundation for conducting research. It offers the conceptual model towards deriving logical sense of the relationships among factors that have been identified as important to the research problem (Sekaran, 2000). For the purpose of this doctoral research project, a number of variables that are considered relevant to the research problem were identified based on an exploratory research. These variables are illustrated below.

The dependent variables (DV) for this doctoral research project include:
1. The CTO's online visitors / customers' satisfaction,
2. The CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations,
3. The CTO's marketing executives' mindset,
4. The CTO's marketing executives' expectations.

The independent variables (IV) for this doctoral research project include:

1. The specific eMarketing Dimensions defined for this doctoral research project,
2. The CTO's online visitors / customer's level of Internet experience,
3. The CTO's online visitors / customer's demographics,
4. The European NTOs' eMarketing models deployment,
5. The Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment,
6. The CTO's current marketing services,
7. The CTO's marketing executives' aspiration and planning.

The above variables and their relationships put together a theoretical framework relevant to meeting the objectives of this doctoral research project for the utter achievement of the CTO's eMarketing model effectiveness. Figure 2.1 presents in a schematic way the theoretical framework that will guide the researcher in this doctoral research project. This figure illustrates that the CTO's online visitors / customers' satisfaction and expectations as well as the CTO's marketing executives' mind-set and expectations are the dependent variables (DV) and that their variances are explained by the independent variables (IV). The connecting lines between the entities in this diagram illustrate the relationships among them and the direction of the arrows depicts the cause effect relationship between them.

The research constructs developed for this doctoral research project, namely, the CTO's online visitors / customers' satisfaction, the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations, the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and the CTO's marketing executives' expectations were underpinned by a number of theories. An investigation into these theories is presented in Appendix 8.

The emergence of electronic communication systems has driven to the evolution of customers, into visitors of online services. For the purpose of understanding the behaviour of online visitors / customers' expectations and satisfaction on the Internet, a combination of marketing theories and information systems approaches were considered (Anderson & Srinivasan 2003; Ilsever, et al., 2006; Feinberg & Kadam 2002; Khalifa & Liu 2003; Yang & Peterson 2004).

Marketing research is concerned with the behavioural attributes of online visitors / customers such as their expectations and perceptions. These are derived from the management of online visitors / customers' satisfaction levels, service quality, and price-value relationship (Oliver, 1997; Woodruff & Gardial 1996; Anderson & Srinivasan 2003; Ilsever, et al., 2006; Feinberg & Kadam 2002; Khalifa & Liu 2003; Yang & Peterson 2004). The integrated marketing and information systems approach, focuses both on behavioural aspects and systems characteristics such as website design, ease of navigation, information accuracy, security and privacy, customer service quality and product or service quality (Strauss, et al., 2005; Anderson & Srinivasan 2003; Ilsever, et al., 2006; Feinberg & Kadam 2002; Khalifa & Liu 2003; Yang & Peterson 2004).

For the purpose of acquiring information about the marketing and systems' characteristics of the constructs under investigation, ten specific eMarketing dimensions have been developed through the adaptation of theories from marketing and information systems perspectives, which are presented in Appendix 8.

The eMarketing dimensions defined will facilitate the analysis of the relevant data that will be collected for the purpose of deriving meaningful conclusions for the research constructs that were put forward for this doctoral research project.

The CTO's eMarketing model effectiveness is the utter objective of this doctoral research project which will only be achieved through the optimisation of the eMarketing variables that are involved in the proposed theoretical framework.

Independent Variables

eMarketing Dimensions:
- ❑ Channel Integration
- ❑ Customer Service Quality
- ❑ Ease of Navigation
- ❑ Information Quality
- ❑ Online Community
- ❑ Online Security and Trust
- ❑ Order Fulfilment Level
- ❑ Perceived value
- ❑ Personalisation
- ❑ Product or Service Range

CTO's online visitors/customers' demographics and level of internet experience

European NTO's eMarketing models deployment

Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment

CTO's Marketing services

CTO's marketing executives' aspiration and planning

Cause

Dependent Variables

CTO's online visitors/customers' satisfaction

CTO's online visitors/customers' expectations

CTO's marketing executives' mindset

CTO's marketing executives' expectations

Objective

CTO's eMarketing model effectiveness

Effect

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework *(Source: Developed for this doctoral research project)*

2.3 Destination Marketing

The process of marketing a tourism destination involves the increase of the destination market share with consistent and detailed attention to the enhancement of the quality associated with tourism growth. The improvement of quality is often expressed through moving away from mass tourism with low expenditure and profit margins per visitor, and focusing towards 'high yield' tourism with high per capita spending (Tianz, 2003).

For National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) to achieve their multifaceted goals, they need to formulate their strategies based on the knowledge derived from their stakeholders' requirements. Kotler et al. (1999) proposed a model, comprising of the five primary reference points identified below, which facilitates the process of destination marketing planning:

A. **The tourist**: Understanding the tourist needs and desired experience from a destination is the key to enable successful relationship marketing.
B. **The destination**: The successful management of the set of available products and services that create the total experience and value proposition to the tourist distinguish a successful destination.
C. **Tourism services suppliers**: The management of independent suppliers of tourism services and the implementation of policies to sustain their interdependencies will provide mutual benefits and long-term economic returns.
D. **The local population (citizens)**: The satisfaction of the long-term needs and wants of the local population will sustain the destination's development.
E. **The public-private interest coordinator**: The coordination and facilitation of the interests of both the public and private sectors through effective communication will enable the destination's economic growth.

While many authors (Frew, 2005; Buhalis, 2003) have provided a multiplicity of perspectives on the tasks required for guiding the process of destination marketing planning, the above conceptual model facilitates the exploration of

the criteria that contribute to the successful attainment of multi-stakeholder goals, which are often the norm for NTOs marketing planning.

Destination marketing optimisation will lead to the attainment of best practices that will drive the destination to develop innovative experiences for tourists, which will enable its sustainable development with a focus on developing 'high yield' niche markets that will ensure optimal returns on tourism investment (Gronroos, 1997).

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation recognising the fast changing global tourism environment that leads to increasing competition and customer value consciousness, has reconsidered its traditional business model (CTO, 2005). The increasing world volatility and the fast changing customer behaviour has driven the CTO to focus into new product development.

The emergence of new destinations that offer a similar tourism product to Cyprus, as well as the provision of better value by comparable destinations has driven the CTO to reposition Cyprus as a tourism destination. Having as the key driver the motivation of the island's key markets the CTO has focused on market segmentation and product development in an attempt to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience.

Towards achieving the objective of improving the island's competitiveness, the CTO recognised the need for innovation through information and Communication technologies (ICT) deployment and continuous human resource development (CTO, 2006). Having established a firm eMarketing strategy, the CTO will be able to guide all industry segments' actions towards facilitating enhanced communication and distribution of the Cyprus tourism product.

2.4 EMarketing Models

2.4.1 EMarketing Global Deployment Models

Modern eMarketing deployment models provide organisations the capacity to utilise ICT for achieving their strategic marketing objectives. Through the selection of the most appropriate eMarketing methods, organisations can maximise their reach towards their customers and business partners, while facilitating their internal processes (Philips, 2003).

The process of establishing the eMarketing deployment model for an organisation is comprised by four basic steps (Osterwalder, 2002):

1. The first step involves the definition of the products or services that the organisation offers which deliver a considerable value to its customers.
2. The organisation's value networks need then to be defined. These identify the organisation's partners and internal structures that are necessary to create value to the organisation's products or services.
3. The third step of the process involves the recognition and the definition of the organisation's customers and the channel structures that the organisation shall deploy to service them.
4. Finally, the organisation's revenue model that will describe the specific techniques through which the organisation will generate income needs to be defined.

An organisation can establish its eMarketing deployment model based on the four steps identified and maintain it by continuously evaluating its marketing environment based on the above process (Rayport & Jaworski 2001).

Organisational eMarketing deployment models evolve continuously and can be categorised in many different ways (Timmers, 1998; Eisenmann, 2002). While categorising eMarketing deployment models is a challenge, below a logical approach to their categorisation is presented (Rappa, 2005):

A. **Brokerage Model**: The brokerage model describes organisations that have as their core business the facilitation of transactions between buyers and sellers (Law & Huang 2003). Broker organisations provide the necessary tools for enabling the successful performance and completion of such transactions in business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), and customer-to-customer (C2C) markets. The revenue model of broker organisations is usually commission based on transactions. An example of a broker organisation is paypal.com.

B. **Advertising Model**: The advertising model describes organisations that have as their core business the distribution and broadcasting of advertising messages to customers (Novak & Hoffman 2000). Advertising organisations distribute and broadcast advertising messages that are relevant to the viewers' requested information mixed with other content and services. The revenue model of advertising organisations is usually commission based on the viewer reach/response of the advertising messages. An example of an advertising organisation is doubleclick.com.

C. **Infomediary Model**: The infomediary model (information intermediaries) describes organisations that have as their core business the collection and analysis of customers and/or producers/products data. Infomediary organisations collect and analyse customers' data that are related to their consumption habits as well as producers/products' data towards assisting buyers and/or sellers understand a given market (Hagel & Singer 1999). The revenue model of infomediary organisations is usually commission based on the provided information validity and value to target marketing campaigns (for producers), and the information usefulness when considering a purchase (for customers). An example of an infomediary organisation is overture.com.

D. **Merchant Model**: The merchant model describes organisations that have as their core business the sale and distribution of goods and services (Handfield & Nichols 2002). Merchant organisations provide the necessary tools for enabling the sale and distribution of goods and services through

e-shops and/or e-auctions in business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), and customer-to-customer (C2C) markets. The revenue model of broker organisations is usually commission based on sales. An example of a broker organisation is amazon.com.

E. **Manufacturer (Direct) Model**: The manufacturer or 'direct model' describes organisations that utilise ICT to reach customers directly, completely overriding the distribution channel (Stewart, 2002). Manufacturer organisations are characterised by efficiency, improved customer service, and a better understanding of customer preferences. The revenue model of manufacturer organisations is usually commission based on transactions. An example of a manufacturer organisation is dell.com.

F. **Affiliate Model**: The affiliate model describes organisations that provide the opportunity for customers to link-through and purchase their products or services from a number of affiliated web sites (Fiore & Collins 2001). An affiliated web site is one that facilitates the purchase by enabling the customer to click-through to the affiliate organisation. The revenue model of affiliate organisations is usually commission based on transactions or 'click-throughs'. An example of an affiliate organisation is ebay.com.

G. **Community Model**: The community model describes organisations that have as their core business the creation of virtual communities for contributing to the achievement of a common goal (Kim, 2000). Community organisations are based on their user's loyalty that contribute to the organisation's operations by delivering content in various forms. The revenue model of community organisations is usually contribution based. An example of a community organisation is wikipedia.com.

H. **Subscription Model**: The subscription model describes organisations that charge their users a subscription to their offered services (Kauffman, 2007). Subscription-based organisations offer levelled services to their customers based on varied subscription fees. The revenue model of

subscription-based organisations is usually a combination of subscription based and advertising. An example of a subscription-based organisation is date.com.

I. **Utility Model**: The utility model describes organisations that charge their customers for the services they receive on an on-demand basis (Malhotra, 2000). Utility organisations provide metered services that are based on actual usage rates. The revenue model of utility organisations is based on actual usage of the provided services. An example of a subscription-based organisation is skype.com.

An organisation can implement one or a combination of the above eMarketing deployment models towards achieving its strategic marketing objectives (Bradley, 2003). However, since organisational eMarketing deployment models evolve continuously, an organisation should constantly revise its deployment model by regularly evaluating its marketing environment.

2.4.2 EMarketing Models in Travel and Tourism

The travel and tourism industry, being highly dynamic by its nature, requires the deployment of eMarketing models to efficiently promote and distribute products and services towards satisfying particular customer needs. The intangible nature of the travel and tourism product in relation to its sensitivity to internal and external environmental threats have driven travel and tourism organisations to adopt ICT to enhance their marketing activities (Kotler et al., 2006).

The deployment of eMarketing models in the travel and tourism industry followed the trend of developing brochure-like web sites, replicating the organisation's offline marketing brochures. However, travel and tourism organisations soon realised the value of ICT to facilitate their business operations either in business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-customer (B2C) markets (Sigala, 2004).

Traditionally, travel and tourism organisations models were grouped into five major functional categories that supported the tourism buying process (Law et al., 2003). These models along with example organisations are presented in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Traditional travel and tourism organisations' models

Organisation Model	Example Organisation
Tourism Product Management	National and Regional Tourism Organisations
Travel and Tourism Organisers	Travel Agents and Tour Operators
Transportation Providers	Airlines, Car Rentals, etc.
Accommodation Providers	Hotels, Villas, Apartments, etc.
Food and Entertainment Providers	Restaurants, Bars, etc.

The relationship between these models was very well defined and difficult to yield. However, the advent of ICT has led to the evolution of the way traditional travel and tourism organisations supported the tourism buying process and has driven travel and tourism organisations to employ robust eMarketing models for achieving their strategic marketing objectives (Rodriguez, 2003). This change has led to the formation of novel travel and tourism organisation models augmenting the tourism buying process.

Since travel and tourism eMarketing models continuously advance and in view of the fact that they can be categorised in many different ways (Demetriades & Baltas 2003), below a functional approach to their categorisation is presented:

A. **Destination Management Organisation (DMO) Model:** The DMO model describes organisations that have as their core business the management of the tourism product - National and Regional Tourism Organisations (Schaumann, 2005). NTO's, starting with their natural requirement to

distribute up to date information, have utilised ICT to augment the process of knowledge management (Mertins, et al., 2003). Through the deployment of ICT, NTO's have managed to capture information, share and distribute it across their partners and customers and create knowledge for utilising it towards achieving their marketing objectives (Liautaud, et al., 2001). An example of a DMO is visitbritain.com.

B. **Low-Cost Airline Model:** The low-cost airline model describes flight transportation providers that provide airline tickets at low prices in exchange for eliminating many traditional passenger services (Driver, 2001). Low cost airlines are characterised by operational efficiency and usually provide a single passenger class and a simple fare scheme. Low cost airlines requirement for operational efficiency has driven the evolution of traditional Electronic Distribution Systems (EDS) into Global Distribution Systems (GDS). GDS have enabled the distribution of unreserved seating to B2B and B2C markets in real time (Mintel, 2003). An example of a low-cost airline is easyjet.com.

C. **Online Travel Intermediary Model:** This model describes organisations that manage and distribute travel and tourism products and services by combining them to provide packaged holidays (Buhalis & Licata 2002). The inherent requirement of Online Travel Intermediaries for up to date information for product availability and pricing as well as the perishability of the travel and tourism products and services has driven the extension of Global Distribution Systems (GDS) to support direct distribution of travel and tourism products and services across B2B and B2C markets. Modern GDS facilitate real-time, dynamic distribution of travel and tourism products and services across the world. An example of an Online Travel Intermediary is expedia.com.

D. **Travel Search Engine (TSE) Model:** The TSE model describes organisations that focus on the facilitation of the tourism buying process through the provision of specialised tools for helping customers search, compare, select and purchase the most fit for purpose travel and tourism

products and services. TSE's deploy modern ICT to facilitate transactions in business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), and customer-to-customer (C2C) markets. By totally supporting the tourism buying process (Briggs, 2001), TSE's can achieve the tangibilisation of travel and tourism products and services (Shostack, 1977). An example of a TSE organisation is sidestep.com.

While in the past travel and tourism organisations questioned the need of eMarketing models deployment, today the question that needs to be answered is how to optimise the deployment of eMarketing models to survive competition and maximise the benefits out of their utilisation. Today's dynamic tourism market drives travel and tourism organisations to implement the above eMarketing models in diverse ways, in an attempt to stay competitive and maximise their market share (Law, et al., 2003). In an environment where customers' needs are constantly changing based on the availability of relevant up to date information travel and tourism organisations need to devise novel processes to support the augmented tourism buying process.

2.5 Impact of EMarketing Deployment on the CTO's Marketing Model

2.5.1 CTO's EMarketing Strategy Deployment Framework

The CTO, as the Cyprus National Tourism Organisation, is the principal body responsible for the Cyprus tourism product management. Having as its core business function the marketing of the Cyprus tourism product, the CTO needs to effectively deploy market intelligence towards the efficient attainment of its strategic marketing objectives.

The approach that was followed for establishing the CTO's eMarketing strategy was a holistic one. That enabled the foundation of awareness of strategic opportunities that will lead to the inception of effective and sustainable business processes to support the generation and distribution of knowledge, across the CTO's partners and customers.

The CTO's eMarketing strategy focuses in transforming the CTO into a knowledge-driven organisation. Through the optimisation of electronic channel deployment the CTO will act as a knowledge hub for its partners and individual tourists, enabling interactive internal and external communication.

Following the establishment of the CTO's eMarketing strategy, an action plan has been formulated that set out the path to be followed for the successful deployment of the strategy proposals. The eMarketing strategy required the foundation of an eMarketing unit to direct and control the successful realisation of the action plan.

Based on the strategy proposals, the CTO has established an eMarketing unit that was instructed to effectively manage the introduction of the action plan. The eMarketing unit is comprised by a number of individuals with complimentary knowledge and expertise in relevant subject areas. Through the utilisation of their skills, the members of the eMarketing unit will achieve optimised realisation of the strategy action plan.

The implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy action plan will depend upon the successful deployment of the relevant eMarketing applications. The relevant period of eMarketing applications deployment for the current doctorate project is the first two years within which the eMarketing applications are planned to be implemented (Machlouzarides, 2006).

The business processes that should be introduced by the CTO to sustain the execution of the proposed eMarketing actions should be based on metrics for evaluating the results at each stage of the eMarketing process implementation. In contrast to the difficulty in evaluating traditional marketing activities outcomes, the effectiveness of eMarketing activities can be continuously monitored and ad hoc corrective measures can be taken to enhance their effectiveness.

2.5.2 Conceptual EMarketing Model for the CTO

The challenge encountered by the CTO, in the process of formulating its marketing action plan, is finding the correct balance between traditional and modern marketing channels. The implementation of a well-balanced marketing action plan that will involve the exploitation of traditional as well as modern marketing channels will significantly enhance the process of achieving the CTO's marketing objectives.

Modern eMarketing channels should be deployed that should reflect on the benefits of alternative eMarketing models (Briggs, 2001; Kotler, et al., 2006; Chaffey, et al., 2005; Schwede, 2007) to enable the process of identifying and analysing target market demands and distributing quality products and services to satisfy those demands providing customer value in pursue of customer satisfaction.

The distinguishing feature that eMarketing channels provide in contrast to traditional ones is the wealth of information that can be generated during the process that can be deployed to enhance the effectiveness of the channels at the velocity at which everything moves. Consequently, eMarketing enabled marketing processes can be constantly managed in an efficient manner towards achieving a competitive advantage.

The CTO may deploy alternative eMarketing models (Rowley, 2001) to optimise its marketing processes (Borden, 1964; Bitner, et al., 1990; Lauterborn, 1990; Ohmae, 1991), by facilitating relationships with customers in pursue of sustainable tourism development. Customer interaction with the CTO's eMarketing channels can be managed through the identification and analysis of the individual behaviour and preferences thus providing a unique experience at every point of contact.

The ability of the CTO to analyse, segment and target customers in real time through the deployment of eMarketing methods will enable the provision of unique customer experiences, engaging customers, leading into strong

customer relationships. Operating within the strategic market – product segments (CTO, 2004), the CTO can further segment customers based on their behavioural and preference patterns.

Customers interacting with the CTO through the eMarketing channels may be segmented based on their (Hass, 2005):

1. Accessibility; Ease to reach them efficiently,
2. Differential; Responsiveness differences to different marketing mix,
3. Actionability; Product or service availability for segment,
4. Measurability; Ease to measure their size and purchasing power,
5. Substantial; Size and profitability of the segment.

Segmenting customers based on the above criteria will enable the CTO to formulate and define specific customer profiles, which will lead to personalised interaction. Deploying the possessed knowledge about the specific customer segments, the CTO can continually refine the marketing mix at a segment level and provide a customised interaction experience at an individual segment level.

The analysis of the information about customer interaction through the multiplicity of eMarketing channels will enable the CTO to continuously refine individual segment profiles in an attempt to enhance customer interaction. The outcome of the above process will be the generation and management of strong customer relationships towards achieving the CTO's marketing objectives.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the analysis of the CTO's existing marketing model and the opportunities available for the CTO to extend this model through the deployment of modern eMarketing methods. The literature reveals that modern eMarketing methods offer numerous opportunities for extending the CTO's existing marketing model in a multiplicity of dimensions.

This chapter goes beyond the bare analysis of the facts about the CTO's existing marketing model and puts together a framework for the deployment of modern eMarketing methods at the CTO. This is achieved by identifying the impact of eMarketing deployment on the existing marketing model, followed by an attempt to outline a conceptual eMarketing model for the CTO.

Based on the outcomes of the analysis performed in this chapter the following conclusions can be drawn at this stage:

A. The implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy should be encouraged,

B. The successful deployment of modern eMarketing methods will enable the achievement of the CTO's strategic objectives,

C. The establishment of an appropriate eMarketing deployment model will facilitate the effectiveness of the eMarketing methods that will be introduced.

This chapter has confirmed the significance of the study topic and justifies the conducting of this project. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology to be followed in conducting this doctoral research project.

CHAPTER 3:   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research philosophy and methods selection process is illustrated followed by the justification of the paradigm and methodology that were considered for meeting the aim and objectives of this doctoral research project. The research approach and design adopted are then discussed followed by the justification of the data collection techniques employed for analysing the research topic. A rationalisation of the data analysis approaches adopted along with the statistical techniques used is performed, followed by an identification of the data collection and sample selection tools deployed. Finally, a discussion on the research project's ethical issues is performed.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The vast diversity of research methods and data analysis techniques, have presented a challenge for the selection of the most appropriate one(s) for performing this doctoral research project. These had a direct impact on the selection of the appropriate research methodologies for performing a valid research (quantitative and qualitative) based on a selection of the most appropriate research methods.

A number of underlying paradigms are available for aiding the process of selection of the underlying research philosophy (Veal, 1997). For the purpose of this doctoral research project three distinct categories were examined based on the underlying research philosophies. These categories are:

A. **Interpretive**: During interpretive research study it is attempted to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. This research category can be distinguished from other kinds of research

by the underlying philosophical assumptions that guide the work (Myers, 1997).

B. **Critical**: During critical research study it is attempted to focus on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, towards eliminating the causes of alienation and domination. Critical social theory has as its main goal the improvement of the human condition. It is focused on interpretation and explanation rather than on social transformation (Habermas, 1972).

C. **Positivist**: During positivist research study it is attempted to test theory, in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. Positivist theory assumes that reality is objectively given and can be described by measurable properties that are independent of the observer-researcher and his/her instruments (Remenyi, et al., 1998).

All three philosophical categories can be applied to the qualitative research. In the case of quantitative research the interpretive and critical positions are not meaningful. The reason for this is that the positivist philosophy relies on a number of different scientific methods that can generate numerical and alphanumeric figures.

3.2 Research Methods

Following the selection of the various philosophical perspectives that can be applied to qualitative and quantitative research, a number of research methods were examined. Through the examination of a number of research methods a selection of the most appropriate one(s), to the doctoral research project's scope, was performed. The selection of the research method(s) had a direct impact on the way the proposed research was performed. Research methods' examination and selection provided the means through which a transition from the underlying philosophical assumptions to the research design and data collection was facilitated.

3.3 Justification of Paradigm and Methodology

Trochim (2006) describes a 'paradigm' to be a holistic approach underlying a research methodology. A paradigm reflects the philosophy of knowledge or how knowledge is reached, while methodology focuses on the actual practices performed to reach knowledge. The fundamental paradigm that is relevant to this doctoral research project can be categorised as post-positivist, or what is also known as realism (Hunt, 2003). Realism refers to an external reality that cannot be known perfectly. In other words realism deals with reality that no one can claim to have perfect knowledge of, what contributes to customers' satisfaction.

This doctoral research project proposes that data are collected and analysed from various sources and that they incorporate complex interdependencies which are interpreted through descriptive and inferential analysis techniques (Zikmund, 2000; Hair, et al., 2003). Drawn from the literature pertaining to the subjects under study, several propositions are established and tested using the causal method. These propositions aim to investigate the relationships between:

    A. Online visitors/customers' satisfaction and expectations,

    B. CTO's marketing executives' mindset and expectations.

Realism proposes that a reality can be determined through the triangulation of the cognition processes which include elements from different epistemological approaches (Hunt, 2003). Hence, meaning may be constructed using a combination of data (qualitative and quantitative) towards contributing to the formation of a new reality that will elicit important themes, for the development of theory.

Five types of triangulation have been considered for the purpose of this doctoral research project, which are:

1. Data triangulation: the use of a variety of sources of data in a study,
2. Investigator triangulation: several researchers or observers are used,

3. Theory triangulation: various theoretical perspectives are used to interpret the data,

4. Methodological triangulation: the use of multiple strategies within a method or different methods to study a single problem,

5. Interdisciplinary triangulation: use of different disciplines to broaden understanding of method and substance.

For the purpose of achieving objectivity, for this doctoral research project's outcomes, data triangulation was deemed appropriate and was used across multiple data sources. While perfect objectivity can never be achieved, the researcher through triangulation managed to approach it. Specifically, data triangulation was used:

A. To check statements of fact of what happened and when, using accounts by different people and supporting documentation,

B. To obtain a variety of data by capturing a wide range of perspectives from different participants, by the comparison of sets of data and by basing emergent theory on constant comparison

Investigator triangulation was not used since a single researcher conducted all data analysis processes. Theory triangulation was deemed redundant as the outcome relies on the theoretical sensitivity of the single researcher. Methodological triangulation was also not required during the research process as the goal was to generate theory, not to test it. Finally, Interdisciplinary triangulation was not used as interviewees were members of the same discipline – Marketing.

3.4 Research Approach

This doctoral research project utilised a range of research approaches to investigate the task of attaining the main research objectives. The underlying approach that guided the application of research methods was the action research. Through this research approach a thorough examination of all possible sources of information was performed that enabled the process of

reflection towards the derivation of knowledge for the purpose of reaching optimum results.

Through the deployment of the action research approach the researcher seeks to improve the current CTO's marketing practices. The researcher's dual role of "worker" and researcher facilitated his ability to apply his expertise and knowledge to analyse the problem situation. The action research approach promoted the establishment of a clear definition of the perceived problem situation. This guided the researcher to formulate the most appropriate solution approaches for resolving the perceived problem situation. As a result the researcher will be in a position to implement change as proposed from the analysis performed.

The iterative nature of the action research approach facilitated the identification and clarification of the perceived problem situation. Furthermore, it will guide the implementation of the most appropriate change for improving the perceived problem situation. Through the facilitation of the activities of testing and evaluation the impact of change on the initial environment will be determined.

The deployment of action research as the underlying approach that guided the application of research methods in this doctoral research project will enable the successful achievement of the stated project's objectives by focusing on the improvement of workplace's practices. Having this as a principle, action research guided the proposed doctoral research project's approach.

3.5 Research Design

Following the establishment of a paradigm and a research approach, the development of an appropriate research design was pursued. A research design is defined as "…*a set of advance decisions that makes up the master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information*" (Burns & Bush 2002). Formulating an appropriate

research design is essential for the determination of the type of the data to be collected, the data collection technique, the sampling methodology, and the schedule of the project (Hair, et al., 2003). The essence of research design lies in its capacity to aid the alignment of the planned methodology to the research problems (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004).

The vast diversity of available research designs can be classified into three categories: exploratory, descriptive and causal (Aaker, et al., 2000). In order to meet the objectives of this doctoral research project a three-step research design was deployed for facilitating the analysis of a combination of primary and secondary data through qualitative and quantitative data.

Stage A – Exploratory Research: Firstly, for the purpose of developing initial insights as well as providing direction for any further research necessary (Malhotra, 1999), exploratory research was conducted. Exploratory research is the foundation of a good study (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004) and it is normally flexible, unstructured and qualitative (Burns & Bush 2002).

Aiming at analysing the CTO's current marketing communication methods, an extensive study of the available documentation of the existing procedures that are being followed in carrying out the department's functions was performed. The analysis of the CTO's existing marketing procedures aided the process of understanding the department's function for the purpose of analysing the CTO's current marketing communication methods.

Following the analysis of the CTO's current marketing communication methods, an examination of the current situation in the Cyprus tourism industry regarding the deployment of eMarketing communication methods by individual tourism firms and organised associations was performed. This was achieved through an extensive analysis of the information residing in the CTO's databases.

Further to the above analyses, the CTO's Marketing Department executives' insights were reflected through an experience survey which was conducted

with key personnel from the CTO's Marketing Department. The purpose of the survey was the acquisition of holistic knowledge about the subject matter. In this doctoral research project, interviews with four executives from the CTO's Marketing Department (the Director of the department and senior executives) were conducted. The interviews which were based on a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 1) were conducted in February 2007 and were completed in approximately one week.

Finally, for the purpose of understanding the CTO's eMarketing users' behavioural trends, an investigation into actual (historical) user requests from the CTO through its web sites was performed. Towards the achievement of a more comprehensive understanding of the CTO's eMarketing users' behaviour, a statistical analysis of the CTO's website usage based on historical data was then carried out.

The outcome of the exploratory research study facilitated the understanding of the project's research context, which underpinned the evolution of consequent research in this doctoral research project.

Stage B – Descriptive Research: Having gained the relevant knowledge required for proceeding with this doctoral research project, descriptive research was conducted next. Descriptive research differs from exploratory research as it is more rigid, pre-planned and structured, and is typically based on a large sample of the population being studied (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004). The purpose of descriptive research is to describe specific characteristics of phenomena as well as to identify the frequency of occurrence of phenomena on a sample population. Additionally, it supports the derivation of data that facilitate the identification of relationships or associations between two variables (Aaker, et al., 2000).

Descriptive research designs are considered by many researchers to be quantitative in nature (Burns & Bush 2002). Two basic techniques of descriptive research are defined in the literature: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Their main difference is that cross-sectional studies collect

information from a sample of the population at only one point in time, while the longitudinal examine the same sample of population over a period of time (Malhotra, 1999). In cross-sectional study, which is also referred to as a sample survey, the sample population is required to respond to a set of standardised and structured questions about their behaviour, attitudes, demographic and lifestyle characteristics (Hair, et al., 2003).

For the purpose of this doctoral research project, a cross sectional study was deployed, aiming at describing the characteristics and requirements of the CTO's eMarketing users. An online survey was conducted on the CTO's Portal based on a structured questionnaire (Appendix 2), which took place during the months December 2007 until April 2008 and run for approximately five months. The outcome of the descriptive research study facilitated the process of understanding of the CTO's eMarketing users' characteristics and requirements.

Stage C – Causal Research: Following the descriptive study, causal research was conducted. In descriptive studies the relationship between two variables may be observed, however without providing any information for examining cause and effect relationships (Malhotra, 1999). Causal research is more fitted for the purpose of investigating the functional relationship between the causal factors and the effect predicted on the marketing performance variable (Hair, et al., 2003). This study concerns the causal relationships between the CTO's eMarketing offered services and user satisfaction in contrast to the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and expectations.

By evaluating the CTO's eMarketing offered services, in relation to the user requirements that resulted from the online survey performed during the previous stage it was possible to measure the actual user satisfaction, and as a result derive their requirements, out of the CTO's eMarketing offered services.

Finally, to enable the comparison of the CTO's eMarketing offered services with European NTO's eMarketing offered services, an investigation of case

studies available on European NTO's eMarketing communication methods implementation was performed.

The outcome of the causal research study aided the process of making causal inferences about relationships between research variables (Parasuraman, 1991), through the generation of the necessary type of evidence. Table 3.1 illustrates the research design deployed for this doctoral research project.

Through the utilisation of the above three-step research design it was aimed to gather the required information in order to:

1. Identify the CTO's current marketing communication procedures,
2. Examine the current situation in the Cyprus tourism industry regarding the deployment of eMarketing communication methods by individual tourism firms and organised associations,
3. Determine the expectations and needs of actual users of eMarketing communication methods,
4. Determine the CTO's marketing executives relevant mindset and expectations and
5. Analyse the CTO's eMarketing models deployment and contrast it to the European NTO's.

By reflecting on the results, an optimal model for the deployment of the CTO's eMarketing strategy propositions will be recommended towards maximising the impact of modern eMarketing methods on the CTO's overall marketing efforts. In Appendix 3 the research design conceptual framework that was developed for the purpose of this doctoral research project and submitted as part of DPS4825, is illustrated.

Through this doctorate research project I aim to add value to the business operations of the CTO through demonstrating my capabilities that are the expected learning outcomes for a Level 5 project (DPS 5200). Continuous life-long learning is my aim through critical self-appraisal and self directed study through my everyday experience in working with a range of multifaceted organisational issues.

Table 3.1: Research Design

Exploratory Research	Descriptive Research	Causal Research
Technique: Extensive study of the available documentation of the existing procedures that are being followed in carrying out the CTO's Marketing department's functions. **Aim**: Identify the CTO's current marketing communication procedures.	**Technique**: Online survey through a structured questionnaire. **Aim**: Determine the characteristics and requirements of actual users of eMarketing communication methods.	**Technique**: Evaluation of the CTO's eMarketing offered services, in relation to the user requirements that resulted from the online survey. **Aim**: Determine the satisfaction of actual users out of the usage of eMarketing communication methods.
Technique: Extensive analysis of the information residing in the CTO's databases regarding the deployment of eMarketing communication methods by individual tourism firms and organised associations. **Aim**: Examine the current situation in the Cyprus tourism industry regarding the deployment of eMarketing communication methods.		**Technique**: Investigation of case studies available on European NTO's eMarketing communication methods implementation to enable the comparison of the CTO's eMarketing offered services with European NTO's eMarketing offered services. **Aim**: Analyse the CTO's eMarketing models deployment and contrast it to the European NTOs.
Technique: Interviews (semi-structured questionnaire) with key personnel from the CTO's Marketing Department. **Aim**: Determine the CTO's marketing executives' relevant mindset and expectations.		
Technique: Statistical analysis of web user behaviour. **Aim**: Determine the expectations of actual users of eMarketing communication methods.		

3.6 Data collection and modelling techniques

A number of data collection techniques were utilised for this doctoral research project for the purpose of collecting the required data towards deriving knowledge about the:

- CTO's current marketing activities,
- Level of deployment of eMarketing communication methods in the Cyprus tourism industry,
- Expectations and satisfaction levels of CTO's customers using eMarketing communication methods,
- Actual "Experience" of eMarketing communication methods deployment in similar contexts,
- Mindset and expectations of the CTO's marketing executives.

For aiding the process of deriving knowledge out of the data collected, the production of a data model was required, through the utilisation of an appropriate data modelling technique. A data model describes the structure of the data within a given domain and as a result, the underlying structure of the domain itself. Through the use of an appropriate conceptual data model one can describe the semantics (collection of assertions about the nature of the information that is used) of a given domain.

Different data modelling techniques may be used to model a domain. For the purpose of this doctoral research project the Systems Dynamics (SD) modelling technique was utilised. SD was originally developed by Forrester (1961) as a specific systems modelling approach. However, it soon proved to be extremely useful in organisational policy foundation where the focus is on problems or issues that are characterised by complexity, uncertainty, inter-related sub-problems and recursive dependencies.

One of the SD's strengths is acquiring complex feedback loops. Typically, an SD model is developed using a two-stage approach. First, a Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) is established and second, the CLD is converted into a stock-flow form. A basic advantage of CLDs over other modelling approaches is

their simplicity. CLDs are based on very simple modelling constructs allowing policy-makers to be involved in modelling workings without requiring much training. On the other hand, stock-flow models, which enable a wide variety of complex simulations to be modelled, are rather a more complex approach and can be implemented using sophisticated software packages.

The purpose of this doctoral research project is to examine the cause and effect relationships between the studied variables, hence CLDs were deemed appropriate. CLDs are based on one very simple construct, where A and B are variables connected by an arrow indicating that A has some sort of causal effect on B. The arrow can be annotated with either a "+" or a "-", where the former indicates that the two variables move in the same direction and the latter shows that these variables move in opposite directions.

A detailed illustration of the research constructs, the variables and the operationalisation of the variables utilised for this doctoral research project is performed in appendices 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5.

3.6.1 Secondary Research

Secondary research is necessary for establishing the relevant background for primary research (Sekaran, 2000). For the purpose of establishing an appropriate background for this doctoral research project, a thorough examination of available documentation and structured data sources was performed, to enable the derivation of knowledge about current practices. The utilisation of secondary data facilitated industry specific analysis for deducing reasoning that provided the means for comparative investigation. Secondary research involved:

1. Extensive study of existing documentation and structured data sources,
2. Investigation of case studies and relevant articles,
3. Analysis of eMarketing application into similar contexts.

Since secondary research is based on data that have been collected for other purposes, it is not valid for the rationale of this doctoral research project. Hence, for the purpose of deriving valid results, primary research was also carried out.

3.6.2 Primary Research

Primary research involves the collection of original data specifically collected using an accepted research methodology for the requirements of this doctoral research project (Gill & Johnson 2002; Veal, 1997). Marketing research approaches for the collection of primary data include observation, surveys and experiments (Kotler & Armstrong 2004). Primary research involved:

1. Interviews using semi-structured questionnaires,
2. Survey using structured questionnaire,

3.6.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were the means by which the communication between the researcher and the responders within the CTO was managed (Gill & Johnson 2002). A number of typologies of categorising interviews are available, based on the questionnaire type deployed, however the most common is one that categorises interviews to structured, semistructured and unstructured (Saunders et al, 2000).

For the purpose of this doctoral research project, interviews with four executives from the CTO's Marketing Department (the Director of the department and senior executives) were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews provided the means through which information relevant to the specific context was gathered through flexible questioning layout. Specifically, the interviews addressed the following issues:

1. What are CTO's marketing executives' mindsets and to what extent do the current CTO marketing communication procedures and the Cyprus

tourism industry's eMarketing methods deployment influence them (Sarasvathy, et al., 1998)?

2. What are the CTO's marketing executives' expectations and to what extend are they satisfied?

In addressing the research issues specified, a number of research propositions were put forward:

A. CTO's marketing executives' mindset is a function of the current CTO marketing communication procedures, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment and the European NTO's eMarketing models deployment.

B. CTO's marketing executives' expectations is a function of aspiration and planning (Selten, 1998).

3.6.2.2 Online Survey

When conducting a survey, respondents may be asked verbally, in writing or via electronic means different types of questions regarding their behaviour, attitudes, demographic and lifestyle characteristics (Malhotra, 1999). Typically, in a standard questionnaire the questions are standard, and they are asked in a prearranged order (structured).

Online surveys are increasingly becoming one of the most widely used method for primary data collection regarding people's preferences and expectations for products and services that are marketed online. For the purpose of this doctoral research project an online survey was conducted on the CTO's Portal, which was directed to the CTO's online visitors / customers.

An online survey was selected because it was the most appropriate primary research approach for the scope of this doctoral research project since it provided a direct, efficient, and effective communication channel with the target population, while allowing anonymous survey participation.

The survey was based on a structured questionnaire, the deployment of which facilitated the collection of context specific data that aimed at discovering and understanding the CTO's online visitors / customer's expectations. Specifically, the survey addressed the following issues:

1. What are CTO's online visitors / customer's expectations and to what extent do their demographics, knowledge and level of Internet experience influence their expectations?

2. To what extend are CTO's online visitors / customer's expectations satisfied?

In addressing the research issues specified, a number of research propositions were put forward:

A. Expectations, is a function of demographics, knowledge, and experience.

B. Satisfaction is a function of Product or Service range, Order fulfilment level, Customer service quality, Information quality, Ease of navigation, Online security and trust, Perceived value, Personalisation, Online community, Channel integration.

3.6.2.3 Questionnaire

A. Measurement scale: As this doctoral research project aims to determine eMarketing users' requirements, multiple-item scales were deemed appropriate for deploying in both questionnaires (interviews and online survey) of this research as it is frequently used in marketing research to measure attitudes (Parasuraman, 1991). The deployment of a multi-item scale ensured that the overall score, which was a composite of several observed scores, was a reliable reflection of the underlying true scores (Hayes, 1998).

Three types of measurement scales were used for the purpose of this doctoral research project: nominal, ordinal and interval. Nominal scales aided the identification of responses where no numeric values were involved (Kinnear,

et al., 1993). For example, respondents were asked to select the location from which they access the Internet.

As a tool for ranking eMarketing users' tenure, age group and income level ordinal scales were used. These scales were then assumed to be interval scales, as is commonly practiced in social science research (Perry & Brown 1998). Interval scales were also deployed to measure the subjective characteristics of respondents, such as their attitudes in relation to perceived satisfaction. Interval scales were deployed due to their unique capacity to arrange the objects in a specified order as well as due to their ability to measure the distance between the differences in response ratings (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004).

B. Question content and wording: The questions included in both questionnaires (interviews and online survey) were simple, short, comprehensible and closed in their majority. As a principle, ambiguous, vague, estimation, generalisation, leading, double barrelled and presumptuous questions were avoided (Burns & Bush 2002).

C. Response format: In the online survey, for the purpose of gathering information relevant to respondents' demographics and Internet behaviour, dichotomous closed questions were used. In both questionnaires (interviews and online survey) labelled scale response format was used for the purpose of gathering information regarding respondents' expectations.

Labelled scale response format was deployed since apart from the simplicity to administer and code in further statistical analysis (Burns & Bush 2002), it is also appropriate for marketing research since it allows the respondent to respond to attitudinal questions in varying degrees that describes the dimensions being studied (Aaker, et al., 2000).

For this doctoral research project, labelled Likert scales were deemed appropriate to measure responses. The reasons that guided the deployment of Likert scales were (Malhotra, 1999):

- Its capacity to yield higher reliability coefficients with fewer items than the scales developed using other methods,

- Its extensive deployment in market research in both marketing and social science,

- Its ability to accurately reflect respondent opinion under study,

- Its power to provide measures of association through increasing the spread of variance of responses.

The number of scale points used was based on a generally accepted principle that opinions can be captured best with five to seven point scale (Aaker, et al., 2000). As a result a five-point scale was deployed in both questionnaires (interviews and online survey).

D. Sequence of questions: Simple, non critical questions were asked first followed by opinion-sought questions. The questionnaire used for the interviews was made up of two parts while the online survey questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of demographic information such as a respondent's age group and income level. The second part consisted of general information about a respondent's Internet behaviour. These questions included respondent's access location, number of years using the Internet, types of Internet activities and time spent during a week using the Internet. The third part was designed to assess the attributes affecting respondent's perception on eMarketing requirements and satisfaction. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on the various dimensions of the variables being studied.

E. Questionnaire Pre-Testing: Prior to conducting the interviews and the online survey, the questionnaires were pre-tested to ensure that questions would elicit the responses required and uncover ambiguous wording or errors (Burns & Bush 2002). The pre-testing was carried out by deploying three colleagues at the CTO who were asked to review the questions and give their opinions in pursuit for content validity. After the review process, the questionnaires were ready to be deployed.

F. Questionnaire distribution and administration: The online survey questionnaire was distributed through the CTO's web Portal to the target audience through a banner that was displayed on the portal pages inviting users to evaluate the portal's features. The administration of the questionnaire was performed through the portal's web content management system available to the researcher at all times. The interview questionnaire was distributed on personal meetings the researcher had with the interviewees during which the interview session was carried out.

G. Sampling: The sampling process of the research involved a selection of a sufficient number of elements from the population and based on the data collected and inference of the characteristics was made (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004). The sampling process was comprised by the following steps (Malhotra, 1999):

1. Population: The target population of the online survey was defined as individuals using the CTO's internet Portal during the period the survey was conducted. The target population of the interviews was key executives from the CTO's Marketing Department.

2. Sampling frame: Based on the definition of the target population the sampling frame for the online survey was drawn from the individuals using the CTO's internet Portal during the period the survey was conducted, while for the case of the interviews the Director of the marketing department and senior executives were selected.

3. Sampling method: While all sampling methods are prone to bias, in probability sampling, bias is deemed to occur when the respondents list is arranged in a systematic pattern (Zikmund, 2000). For this doctoral research project, in order to minimise the sampling bias, the questionnaire respondents were a random sample of the portal users.

4. Sample size: Following the sampling method selection, the determination of the sample size of this doctoral research project was performed. The required

sample size depends on factors such as the proposed data analysis techniques, financial and access to sampling frame (Malhotra, 1999). Relevant research shows that at least 300 responses are considered reasonable, 500 as very good and 1000 as excellent (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001). Therefore it was decided to target a total of 1000 respondents in the online survey.

5. Sample selection: During this phase a detailed specification of all the steps discussed above was performed (Malhotra, 1999). For this doctoral research project, it was decided that all respondents from the target population would be selected until the required sample size of 1000 respondents was reached.

Following the above series of steps for the purpose of optimising the sampling process, the researcher proceeded to set up the reliability and validity tests of the instrument. For the purpose of testing the reliability of the measurement scale for data with a multidimensional structure, Cronbach alpha was deployed. Cronbach's alpha was used as a coefficient to measure the homogeneity among the set of items under consideration. While homogeneity values vary from 0 to 1, an acceptable reliability should produce at least a coefficient value of 0.70 (Hair, et al., 1995). Using a statistical analysis software package, SPSS, the data were tested for reliability and yielded a high Cronbach alpha score (0.85).

Content validity was performed next, through the determination of the variables defined and deployed at previous stages (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004). For this doctoral research project the dimensions of variables were identified from the marketing literature. Subsequently, opinions from marketing experts were sought to provide relevant inputs adding to what have been identified from the literature. Further, three colleagues at the CTO were requested to review a list of measurement scale in a questionnaire format at the pre-testing stage.

During the stage of construct validity testing the extent to which the constructs hypothetically relate to one another to measure a concept based on the

theories underlying the research (Zikmund, 2000) were demonstrated. For the purpose of this doctoral research project, factor analysis was performed to measure the dimensions of a concept as well as to identify which items were appropriate for each dimension. Then, a confirmatory factor analysis was applied for the purpose of testing the potential relationships among variables. Moreover, in order to achieve convergent discriminant validity the correlation matrix and inter-construct correlation were analysed (Malhotra, 1999).

The above approach that was deployed to manage the process of conducting primary data collection through questionnaires maintained that the most suitable data was collected for the purpose of this doctoral research project.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed for the purpose of deducing explanation and understanding based on the relevant data types. Data analysis involved steps such as coding the responses, cleaning, screening the data and selecting the appropriate data analysis strategy (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004).

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed using a number of quantitative statistical analysis techniques. The statistical analyses that were deployed included statistical description and statistical inference. Through the use of these statistical analyses, the attributes of the sample were described based on tables (i.e. frequency tables), plots (i.e. scatter diagrams and histograms) and numerical indexes (i.e. mean and standard deviation). In particular, quantitative data were analysed using inferential or inductive statistics and more specifically descriptive statistics techniques. By deploying these techniques the generalisation from the group under consideration to a larger group was facilitated through tests of statistical significance.

Through the utilisation of a number of methods including (Zikmund, 2000) percentages, numerical counts or frequencies, measures of central tendency (mean, mode, median) and measure of variability (range, standard deviation, variance), quantitative data were analysed for the purpose of deducing reasoning using SPSS statistical analysis software.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Since this doctoral research project aimed at exploring the perceptions of participants about the research domain an exploratory qualitative approach was considered appropriate.

The analysis of qualitative data was preceded by an evaluation of the nature and value of the specific data collected. Specifically, qualitative data were analysed based on a four-step data analysis methodology (Saunders, et al., 2000). Through data categorisation, unitisation, relationship recognition and categorisation, hypothesis development, testing and evaluation valid conclusions were reached. The above methodology facilitated data comprehension and management towards reaching valid conclusions.

Through the utilisation of content analysis technique useful knowledge about the specific context was deduced towards the facilitation of the attainment of this doctoral research project's objectives. An extended illustration of the outcomes that were generated from the qualitative data analysis is performed in section 4.1 of Chapter 4.

3.7.3 Data analysis strategy

The first step in setting up the data analysis strategy to be followed was the selection of the approach for the coding of the responses. During this task the identification, classification and assignment of a numeric or character symbol to data was performed. For this doctoral research project most of the

responses were pre-coded except for a number of questions, which required post-coding. Taken from the list of responses, a number corresponding to each particular selection was given. Once this process was completed, the data were entered to a statistical analysis software package, for performing the next steps of the data analysis strategy.

The process of cleaning and screening data followed, which incorporated inconsistency and missing responses checks (Malhotra, 1999). Having removed data with missing responses the sample reached was 518, which as explained in Section 3.6.2.4(G) is considered as a very good sample size and adequate for attaining this doctoral research project's objectives.

The final step in the data analysis strategy was to select the appropriate statistical analysis technique. For performing this task the research problem, objectives, characteristics of data and the underlying properties of the statistical techniques were considered (Malhotra, 1999). For the purpose of achieving the aim and objectives of this doctoral research project, descriptive and inferential analyses were applied.

Descriptive analysis refers to the transformation of raw data into a form that would provide information to describe a set of factors in a situation that will make them easily understood and interpreted (Zikmund, 2000). Through descriptive analysis meaning is attached to data through frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation measures.

Inferential analysis refers to the cause-effect relationships between variables. The following inferential analysis techniques were deployed for this doctoral research project:

- Correlation analysis: Using the Pearson correlation coefficient, correlation analysis was used to test the existence of relationships between the variables under study.
- Factor Analysis: For the purpose of identifying the common items of an underlying dimension, or the 'factor' (Hair, et al., 2003) an exploratory factor analysis was performed. As a result of identifying the 'factors'

involved, large numbers of variables can be reduced to a more manageable number.

3.8 Insider research and Ethical issues

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical issues came to surface when considering the planning of research that was conducted in a business context by a member of the organisation (i.e. an "insider"). These include:

1. The nature of the information of interest; who "owns" the information, and who can "release" it for the research purposes requested,
2. The nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants who were involved in the research,
3. The nature and extent of the level of informed consent and freedom to choose about participating in events that were part of "normal" work, that at a later stage were included in the research,
4. The nature and extent of anonymity and confidentiality of participants involved in the research.

Further to the above issues, "insider" research, also run the risk to encounter problems due to unexpected and potentially negative or even dangerous outcomes for organisations and individuals. As Ernie Stringer (2004) said: "*It is insufficient, from my perspective, to merely obtain informed consent, then leave research participants out of the process. As I describe in my own texts (Stringer, 2004), member checking of research procedures need to be an ongoing aspect of the process, so that participants get to check data related to their own inputs, the analysed data, and the draft reports. In this way, they are able to ensure that their perspective or experience is not misrepresented, or framed in ways that may be harmful to them in some way.*"

The consideration of all the relevant issues associated with "insider" research towards carrying it out ethically was of vital importance. The result of this consideration was the derivation of useful findings, outcomes and applications for the CTO.

3.8.2 Role of "insider" researcher

An essential question during the design of an insider research project is: Does this involve "organisational data" and/or data about individuals? Organisational data can be considered to be "business data", which would include information related to organisational goals and measures (e.g. budget, market projections, etc.). Information about individuals may be 'personally identifiable' information about aspects of behaviour, demographic or other characteristics.

Hence, organisational data can be considered to be aggregated data, where the individual data from customers or employees involved cannot be personally identifiable. Organisational data was of interest at an aggregated level so that it did not require individual details to be included in the research. In this way general trends based on populations of interest or large samples was examined.

It was important to distinguish between data that was historical, current, or to be collected in the future. Permission to analyse further historical data was simpler to acquire and deal with since it was easier to specify what data to request, how it was going to be analysed, and to what extend. It was also simpler to get permission when it was clearly stated what would be released and for what purpose.

The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were major concerns when there was a workgroup involved. In this case consent was not considered as a single-occurrence event, as this was an ongoing process.

The data collection and analysis conducted in everyday business and management as part of normal work roles in an organisation could be considered to be less intrusive than a research exercise carried out on the records of the organisation. Organisational data can be collected in accordance to the laws and codes of ethics. If during research analysis patterns are revealed about information trends that may be of wider interest to the professional community it is difficult to refuse publication of these findings.

Some issues that were considered regarding role and task ambiguity of doing insider research are:

A. **Role conflict**: When organisation members speak to an insider researcher 'in confidence' it may not be clear if they are talking to them only as a researcher or also in their organisational role. After all, the insider researcher is the same person when she walks into another room and performs another role. He can't ignore what he was told and it may have an impact on his decision-making (Lane, 1970).

   For this doctoral research project, the risk of role conflict was managed by always considering and communicating the purpose for which the data was collected. Special attention was given to the process of filtering and analysis of data collected so that the outcome was not biased (Mohr & Puck 2007).

B. **Backlash**: When an employee of an organisation puts on the mantle (or hat) of a researcher he may give himself permission to take on a role that is different to the way he would normally behave. This may be a useful approach, to try to look with 'fresh eyes'. However, it may also be viewed as acting 'out of character'. The degree of professional distance that may be able to be taken while wearing the researcher's mantle may give the insider researcher a different perspective on her organisation, culture, politics and roles. She may be tempted to talk to other members of the organisation from this position, perhaps to point out the fact that "the Emperor has no clothes" (Andersen, 1837). In other words point out some

things that cannot be discussed while having the 'worker' mantle on. An insider researcher should be careful because the research mantle may seem magical since it may reveal shocking insight information. Thus the insider researcher should be cautious of the risks she takes when performing her research.

C. **Sensibility**: Often, information about what happens inside an organisation may need to stay within that organisation. Also, sometimes, certain work within some roles may need to be kept to that role and out of the domain of research. During the insider research, the researcher should consider the issue of sensibility; Is it possible for the organisation and the researcher to proceed with the project? Are there any alternatives? What other issues should be considered? The extent to which answers to such questions can be provided facilitate the degree of the project's sensibility (Roberts, 2003).

For this doctoral research project, sensibility was addressed through the continuous official acknowledgment of the necessity of the project for the CTO, in view of the volatility of environmental variables impacting on the CTO's marketing strategy.

3.9 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the research philosophy, methods and design that were considered for meeting the aim and objectives of this doctoral research project were portrayed. The abundance of underlying paradigms available, aided the process of selection of the underlying research philosophy. Following the selection of the underlying research philosophy, the research methods and data analysis techniques employed were justified.

The selection of the data collection techniques deployed for analysing the research topic followed. At this stage a review of the data collection techniques utilised was performed, which was followed by a review of the data

analysis strategy adopted.   Different approaches for coding, cleaning and statistical analysis of responses were examined for achieving valid results.

An illustration of the statistical analysis techniques used was performed next, in relation to the data collection and sample selection tools deployed. Finally, the relevant ethical considerations of this doctoral research project were discussed.

CHAPTER 4:   PROJECT ACTIVITY

This chapter presents the steps followed during the data analysis that was performed for this doctoral research project. The project activity is divided into two main areas. Firstly, the qualitative data analysis actions performed are presented followed by the quantitative data analysis. Each of the two main data analysis areas is comprised by a number of research techniques deployed following the research design as it was defined in the previous chapter (research methodology). Through this chapter the researcher aims at demonstrating the data analysis techniques employed for analysing the research topic. At the end of the chapter the issues presented are linked through a summary.

4.1 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data that were analysed for the purpose of this Doctoral Research Project are related to the:
- CTO's Marketing services,
- Cyprus Tourism Industry's EMarketing Deployment and
- European NTOs' EMarketing Deployment.

Data were first collected from various sources regarding the above topics, categorised and unitised. Identification of relationships among the different data sets was then performed followed by categorisation, analysis and evaluation until valid conclusions were reached. Through the deployment of the above methodology, information was managed and comprehended towards the realisation of valid conclusions.

4.1.1 CTO's marketing services

The CTO's marketing services are arranged in three main areas, namely, Market Services, Marketing Services and Information Services. The set up of these services is directly related to the CTO's marketing department's management structure.

A. Market Services: The Market Services business unit has the responsibility of managing the marketing activities carried out at the target markets through the CTO's offices abroad or through the central office. To achieve the objectives related to its responsibility, the market services business unit is organised into two main business areas, namely Exhibitions and Hospitality, and Local Markets.

Exhibitions and Hospitality business area has the responsibility of managing the participation of the CTO and other industry partners to tourist exhibitions and other specialised fairs, as well as the organisation of promotional activities such as Cyprus weeks, Cyprus presentations, seminars, workshops and road-shows. It is also responsible for managing the provision of hospitality to tourism professionals, travel journalists, V.I.P's and opinion leaders.

Local Markets business area has the responsibility of coordinating the marketing activities of the CTO's offices abroad and for facilitating the efficient communication of the product offering to the different target markets. Among its primary tasks is the creation and monitoring of the implementation of the CTO's offices abroad annual marketing action plan. Through the successful implementation of the CTO's offices abroad marketing action plan, the Market Services business unit facilitates to a great extend the realisation of the CTO's marketing department's aims and objectives.

B. Marketing Services: The Marketing Services business unit is responsible for managing the:

- Inception and implementation of traditional as well as online advertising campaigns,
- Implementation of the eMarketing strategy,
- Production of brochures and other media publications,

To achieve the objectives related to its responsibilities, the marketing services business unit is organised into four main business areas, namely Advertising, Electronic Marketing, Special Interest and Publications.

Advertising business area has the responsibility of the requirements specification, execution monitoring and results evaluation of generic marketing campaigns at the CTO's target markets. The management of the successful implementation of generic marketing campaigns is a key component to the attainment of the CTO's marketing department's aims and objectives.

Electronic Marketing business area has the responsibility of managing the implementation of the relevant strategy (CTO, 2005), which involves the integration into the CTO's marketing processes of modern marketing methods and techniques. The successful introduction of electronic marketing methods has a direct impact on the achievement of the relevant strategy's objectives as well as on the CTO's overall marketing strategy (CTO, 2004).

Special Interest business area has the responsibility of managing the marketing activities of the special interest products as these are defined in the relevant strategy (CTO, 2004). These marketing activities involve the participation in specialised exhibitions, the setup and monitoring of specialised advertising campaigns and the production of specialised publications. The work performed by this business area is integral to the achievement of the CTO's strategy aims and objectives (CTO, 2004).

Publications business area has the responsibility of managing the production of brochures and other media publications and for maintaining them in stock for satisfying the needs of the CTO's offices and their partners worldwide.

C. Information Services: The Information Services business unit has the responsibility of managing the provision of tourism information through the network of information offices across Cyprus. Providing information to tourists while in Cyprus facilitates and supports the CTO's customers while they enjoy their holidays. Moreover, it enables the establishment of a firm connection with them for better understanding their expectations in the process of optimising the offered products and services for maintaining high satisfaction levels. The information gathered through this interaction facilitates the provision of valuable feedback to the other two business units of the department. This information supports the department's knowledge management processes towards the optimisation of the organisation's marketing activities.

The efficiency of the CTO's marketing services is of principal importance for the successful accomplishment of the departmental strategy's aims and objectives as well as for the maintenance of the sustainability and growth of the Cyprus tourism industry. Therefore, the development and realisation of the departmental objectives through the generation of the most appropriate marketing plan will enable the CTO to promote the effective attainment of its strategic goals (CTO, 2004).

4.1.2 Tourism industry's EMarketing deployment

Despite the fact that the Cyprus tourism industry has been long established it is still based on small – medium companies (SME's), a factor that hinders its dynamism to adopt new marketing models (Kotler, et al., 2006). Additionally, accommodation establishments in Cyprus have traditionally used as their main distribution channel the tour operators (who book their rooms early in the season), resulting in low investment in alternative distribution channels. The above mentioned characteristics of the tourism industry are considered as an obstacle to the introduction of modern marketing techniques.

Cyprus was ranked 24th, out of 130 countries, in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2008 (World Economic Forum, 2008) scoring 4.9 out of 7. In particular, regarding the industry's ICT infrastructure indicator, Cyprus was ranked 37th, scoring only 3.7 out of 7.

Based on data residing on the CTO's databases, only 64% of the licensed accommodation establishments have an email address while only 53% have a website. The disappointing numbers regarding the accommodation establishments' ICT infrastructure can be explained based on the aforementioned characteristics.

The results of a survey carried out for the e-business watch (EC, 2006) illustrated that on the totality of the Cyprus tourism sector, which is comprised by Accommodation, Restaurants and catering services, and Travel Agencies and Tour Operators, 82% had internet access (EU average 93%), while only 42% of them had broadband internet access (EU average 69%).

With the advent of electronic distribution channels, visitors are searching and booking online customising their packages according to their individual needs (Wang & Fesenmaier 2006). An accommodation establishment that does not have an online presence will fail to even be presented as an option to the visitor and as a result it will be omitted.

In an era that being online is not enough, tourism enterprises in Cyprus need to establish strong online presence through online marketing campaigns and modern distribution strategies (Marcussen, 2008). The industry's nature, however, along with the scarcity in availability of qualified labour make this a very hard task for tourism enterprises in Cyprus to perform. Cyprus was ranked 112th regarding the availability of qualified labour in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2008 (World Economic Forum, 2008) scoring 4.7 out of 7.

The seriousness of the situation was recognised by the Cyprus government which recently established at the Cyprus University of Technology the

department of Tourism and Hotel Management where higher level education will be provided to individuals for entering the tourism industry.

Following a CTO's initiative, a number of regional and thematic tourism boards have been established in an attempt to resolve the industry's inherent problems. These tourism boards will be funded by the CTO and are expected to resolve many of the industry problems that are related to the limitations mentioned above.

Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism has published a subsidisation scheme through which SME's may receive funding for introducing ICT at three different levels. The first level involves the introduction of basic ICT to the SME's, while the second level involves the establishment of a web presence. The third level involves the introduction of business management applications as well as electronic commerce solutions.

Furthermore, research and development projects that are funded by the European Union's Structural Funds, the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation and other funding organisations are continuously undertaken by various institutions around Cyprus to promote the industry's dynamism towards adopting new marketing models.

Through the actions taken, the tourism industry's competitive levels are expected to evolve and develop to an extent that will reflect its overall maturity standards.

4.1.3 European NTOs' EMarketing deployment

For the purpose of this Doctoral Research Project an attempt to present the degree of electronic Marketing model deployment by a number of European NTOs is attempted. International research (World Economic Forum 2007, 2008; EC 2007, 2008) illustrates the degree of electronic Marketing model deployment by European NTOs. By studying the deployment levels as well as

the individual NTO's strategic direction for developing electronic Marketing methods and procedures, the researcher aims to identify best practices and arising trends towards formulating an optimised electronic Marketing implementation model for the CTO.

The selection of the countries to be analysed was performed based on the degree of electronic Marketing methods diffusion as well as their readiness to implement modern marketing models. Namely, the selected countries are Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and UK.

4.1.3.1 Austria

Modern marketing techniques such as behaviour marketing and relationship marketing are being deployed throughout Austria's tourism industry through the implementation of effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems which focus on the identification of customer online behaviour towards the attainment of customer loyalty. This is facilitated through the deployment of online processes for identifying and analysing the customer needs for the purpose of developing the appropriate products and services for satisfying these needs. Austria's customer-centric electronic Marketing model aims at analysing online customer behaviour (i.e. time spent by customers interacting with the online channels, click-behaviour analysis, search terms analysis, products and services acquisition) through the deployment of appropriate analysis models towards organising and presenting to the customer the most suitable offering that will satisfy his or her needs. The Destination Management System (DMS) that manages the Austrian online offered services is considered to be state of the art (BMWA, 2005) and was presented as a new generation prototype for implementing ICT in the tourism industry (Pröll & Retschitzegger 2000).

4.1.3.2 Denmark

Having implemented the first destination management systems of the 80's, Denmark is traditionally one of the most advanced European countries in the area of e-tourism. This is particularly reflected on the Danish tourism businesses, who participate in national and international e-tourism projects. The Danish Tourist Board (DTB), through the establishment of its web portal, www.visitdemark.com, aims to promote the country's tourism product and infuse its brand image to the world. The DTB portal has been recognised to be a best practice in regards to its content quality, functionality and design (Ifibl, 2002; EC 2007). Through the portal, the DTB provides a personalised experience to the user by facilitating a unique user experience. The DTB also participates in the Scandinavian Tourist Board (STB), where along with Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland it develops innovative e-tourism initiatives.

4.1.3.3 France

Being a major global tourism destination, France has traditionally been among the leading counties in the field of tourism research and development. Through the involvement of a large number of stakeholders within the tourism industry, France has managed to develop leisure as well as business tourism by deploying a distributed model of tourism services marketing. As a result of this decentralised marketing model, electronic Marketing activities have also been distributed to the various stakeholders. This has facilitated the empowerment of the industry and has enabled individual stakeholders to create and implement strategic plans for introducing distinctive electronic marketing applications (Iau, 2007). The French national tourism portal integrates these applications into an easily accessible interactive online tool for facilitating customer needs. Through the portal customers can explore, select, organise and purchase personalised services that have been dynamically put together based on their individual needs (EC, 2002).

4.1.3.4 Germany

Since 1999, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), the responsible body for promoting the country's tourism, has focused on promoting the destination through joint marketing efforts with the industry (ITU, 2006). Emphasis has been given to electronic marketing activities promoting e-tourism services for facilitating the effective promotion and distribution of the tourist product. Through the establishment of strong industry links (tour operators, etc) the GNTB has managed to establish a sound representation in multiple online channels (GNTB, 2007) communicating in this way its product offering to its target markets. By capturing and analysing information about customer trends and preferences, the GNTB has managed to derive valuable knowledge that aided product development and market segmentation. This, in turn, has enabled GNTB to focus its marketing activities on promoting the proper products to the appropriate market segments, satisfying in this way to the highest degree customer requirements.

4.1.3.5 Netherlands

Having the title of the best ICT infrastructure country in Europe (EC, 2008), the Netherlands have been among the first countries to adopt modern marketing concepts in the tourism industry. Reflecting on market research indicators about current tourism trends, the Netherlands through the National Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC) have introduced modern marketing applications for efficiently supporting the promotion and distribution of their tourism product to individual tourists and organised groups. Particular attention has been given to the development of tools to support the promotion and distribution of custom-built travel services for leisure as well as business tourists. Through their work on mobile and satellite tourism services they have managed to create unique applications to support individual tourist needs across the time and place dimensions (NOST, 2005). These services have been made available through mobile devices and provided "smart" information relevant to the visitor's interests, preferences, location and time. On top of

maximising the visitor's travel experience, these applications facilitated the increase of visitors' location awareness providing helpful feedback information to the NBTC. Information to lead to valuable knowledge towards understanding visitors' behaviour in relation to their interests and preferences and support the country's future marketing processes.

4.1.3.6 Spain

Through a highly structured organisation which is governed by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, Spain has managed to successfully develop ICT infrastructure and relevant human resource capability development projects. Through the Instituto de Turismo de España (TURESPAÑA), which has the responsibility for managing the country's tourism product, Spain has implemented a tourist portal (www.spain.info) which is the main electronic channel of electronic communication between the country and its perspective tourists. The portal provides personalised information to the user based on a unique model that analyses the user's online behaviour. The portal also facilitates the communication among TURESPAÑA and other local tourism authorities supporting in this way their marketing processes. The development of the portal as well as of supporting subsystems was the outcome of relevant strategies that were set in place by the ministry and cooperating organisations. These strategies are continuously being evaluated and updated based on international developments in the tourism industry, always aiming at the efficient communication and distribution of the tourism product to the relevant target markets.

4.1.3.7 Switzerland

The supervising body for Switzerland's promotional tourism activities is the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. However the management of Switzerland's marketing activities is performed by a public company, the Switzerland Tourism (ST). The ST is a commercial marketing company with

clear customer and market focus, which is reflected on its managerial structure. The responsibility for electronic marketing activities (that involve online promotional activities, sales and information provision) has been assigned to the Switzerland Travel Centre (STC). In the STC the ST in cooperation with a number of other private companies promote and distribute the Swiss tourism product and services through their portal published at www.myswitzerland.com. The business model described above has arisen from the country's unique social, cultural, business and political environment, which has promoted entrepreneurship and privatisation in the sector of national tourism management. This business model has proven to be very successful as the case of Switzerland has been referenced as a best practice of public – private partnership for marketing a tourism destination (EC, 2007). Especially concerning the development and implementation of electronic marketing methods, where the above model has been demonstrated to be of very high quality and efficiency.

4.1.3.8 UK

The UK's national tourism organisation (VisitBritain) has emerged as a result of the merger of the English Tourism Council and the British Tourism Authority. VisitBritain has strategic alliances with national and regional bodies for achieving its primary objectives which involve tourism product marketing and development. Several plans and strategies have been developed towards achieving its objectives, with electronic marketing activities accounting to fifty percent of the total marketing budget (DTI, 2005). Through the introduction of a number of targeted web portals, VisitBritain has managed to focus and serve successfully alternative target markets. Through its main portal (www.visitbritain.com), VisitBritain has managed to generate fifteen percent of its total income (ETC 2002). In addition to the variety of tools, available through the different portals, for tourists to organise and plan their trips to the UK, VisitBritain offers useful tools and ideas for its partners to manage and market their products and services. The aforementioned successful results are based on the development and implementation of a national strategy

which aims at bridging the digital gap among the UK's citizens and covers the areas of education, infrastructure creation and human resource capabilities advancement.

The results of the qualitative data analysis performed, namely the:

- CTO's Marketing services,
- Cyprus Tourism Industry EMarketing Deployment and
- European NTOs' EMarketing Deployment,

will guide the researcher towards formulating an optimised electronic marketing model for the CTO.

4.2 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data that were analysed for the purpose of this Doctoral Research Project are related to the:

- CTO's marketing executives' insights,
- CTO's online visitors / customers' behaviour and
- CTO's online visitors / customers' characteristics and requirements.

4.2.1 Interviews: CTO's marketing executives' insights

The CTO's marketing executives' insights were assessed at this stage through a questionnaire that aimed at identifying the CTO's marketing department's executives' vision about the direction and scope of eMarketing methods deployment at the CTO. The questions of the questionnaire that was used for the interviews with the CTO's marketing executives, along with their corresponding responses are illustrated in Appendix 4.4.

All interviews were conducted in the English language and lasted half an hour each on average. The researcher kept written records of the interviews and spent time after each interview to re-build it as it was actually done. The use of the English language and the written records did not cause any limitations

in terms of loss of data and misunderstandings between the interviewer and the interviewees (Usunier, 2000).

The outcomes from the CTO's marketing executives' insights interviews were very important for further analysis and derivation of valuable outcomes. The theoretical framework established in Chapter 1 classified the CTO's executives' mindset and expectations as dependent variables for this doctoral research project having great significance to the final resulting propositions, which are thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2.2 CTO's online visitors / customers' behaviour

The CTO's online visitors / customers' behaviour that follows refers to the first year of operation of the Cyprus Tourism Organisations' new web portal that was launched in December 2007 at www.visitcyprus.com.

During its first year of operation the portal has been visited by nearly one million people (unique visitors). The average time spent by each visitor on the portal was four minutes, while on average, each visitor viewed six pages.

The majority of the visits (30%) originated from the UK, Germany (15%) and Russia (10%), followed by United Arab Emirates (8%) and Cyprus (5%). Visits from USA (2%), France (2%), Ireland (2%), Sweden (2%), Finland (2%), Italy (2%), and Greece (2%) followed, while the rest 18% of the visits originated from other European countries and over 150 other countries. Figure 4.1 illustrates the portal's visits in a graphical way.
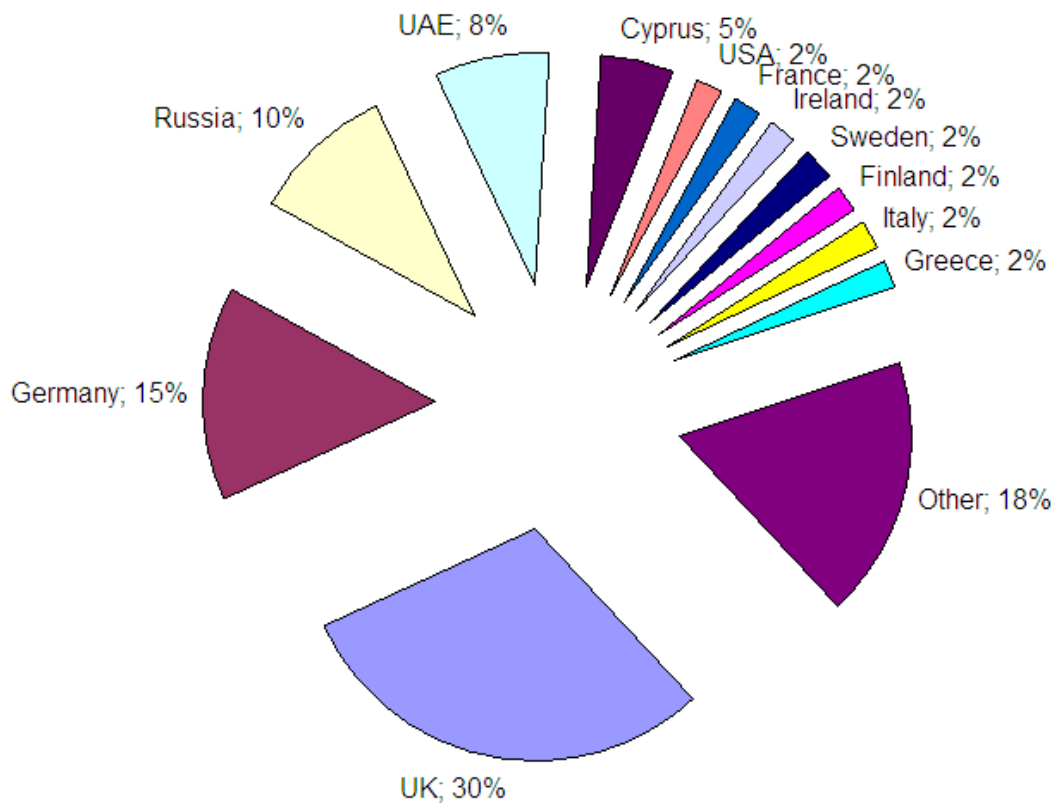
Figure 4.1: Portal's visits

A remarkable 75% of the portal visitors reached the portal directly (i.e. not directed to the portal from a search engine or a link on another website). The remaining of the portal visitors were driven to the portal through search engines (15%) and links from other websites (10%).

The top keywords used by visitors in search engines to reach the portal were "Cyprus" (58%), "Cyprus Tourism" (7%), "Visit Cyprus" (2%), "Cyprus Tourist Board" (1.5%), "Cyprus Tourism Organisation" (1%), "Cyprus Tourist Information" (1%), "Cyprus Tourist" (0.5%), "CTO Cyprus" (0.5%) and "Love Cyprus" (0.5%). The remaining 28% of the portal visitors that were driven to the portal through search engines used over 3000 other keywords.

With the total number of page views reaching to five million, three million of which unique, the portal has received a vast number of traffic during the first year of its life. The portal's "Accommodation" page received the most of the

unique views (15%) followed by "Sun and Sea" (8.5%), "Multimedia Experience" (6.5%), "Weather" (6%) and "Getting to Cyprus" (5%) page. The remaining pages of the portal received the rest 59% of the unique views. Figure 4.2 illustrates the portal's page views in a graphical way.
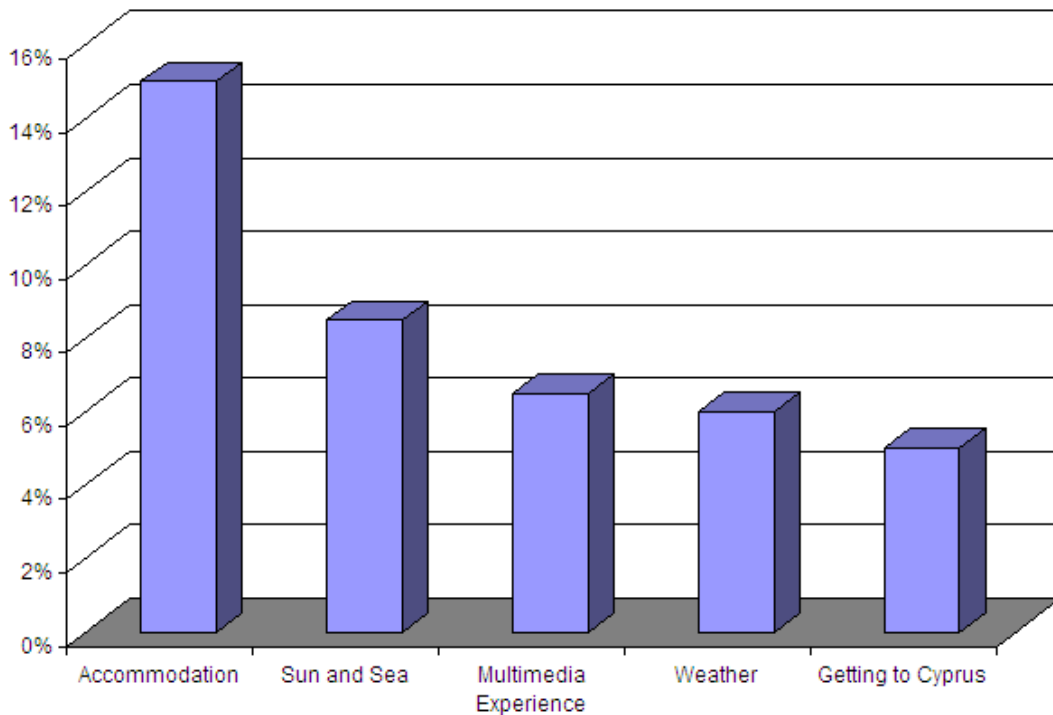
Figure 4.2: **Portal's page views**

Over twenty thousand visitors have registered through the portal to receive newsletters and to use the added value services offered to the registered portal visitors. Most of the registered visitors (90%) have used the "Travel Planner" application, while 55% have used the "My Travel Guide" application.

The usage of the portal peaked during June counting 13% of the total number of unique visitors, followed by April (11%) and May (11%). July followed with 9.5% and January with 8.5%. August was ranked next with 8%, while during the months of September, October and November the usage reached 7%. During December, February and March the usage of the portal was relatively lower (6%). Figure 4.3 illustrates the portal's usage in a graphical way.
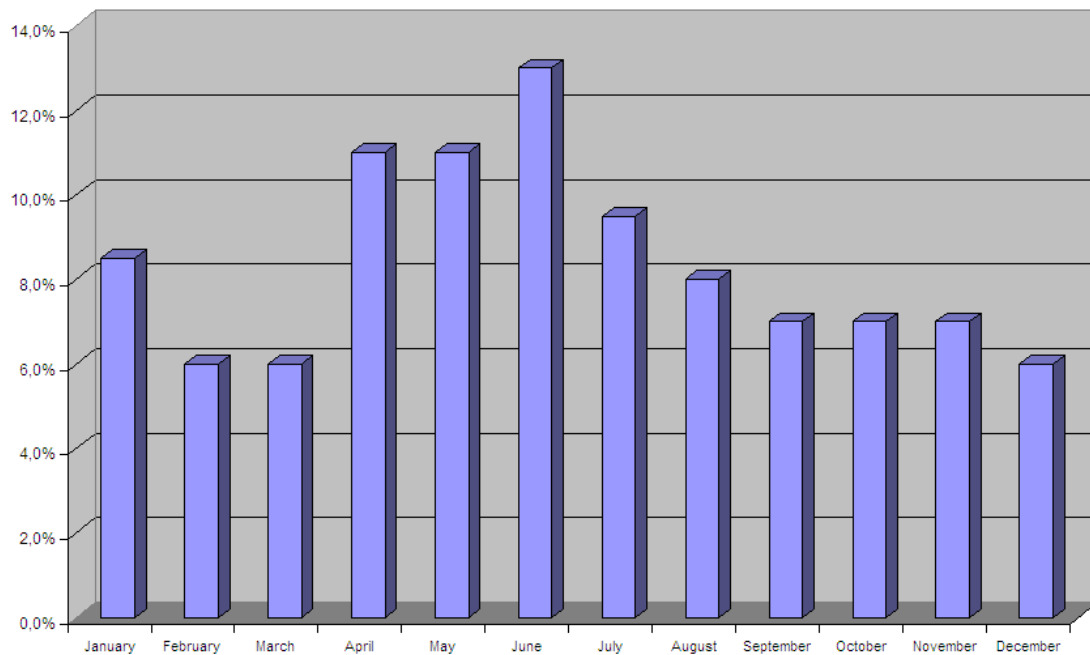
Figure 4.3: Portal's usage

The days of the week that the portal received the most visitors were Monday (17%) and Tuesday (16.5%) followed by Wednesday (15%) and Thursday (14.5%). On Friday (13.5%) and Sunday (13%) the portal received less visits, while the least visits were on Saturday (10.5%).

The times of the day during which the portal received the most visitors (80%) were from 10 am until 10 pm (GMT), peaking at 12 pm until 02 pm (21%).

The numbers presented above indicate that the portals' users are mostly Europeans that know the web address of the portal and have visited the portal at least once. They mostly visit the portal during the months of April to July during working days and during daytime for finding "sun and sea" places and accommodation.

4.2.3 Online Survey: CTO's online visitors / customers' characteristics

The CTO's online visitors / customers' characteristics were assessed at this stage through an online questionnaire that aimed at determining their expectations and satisfaction levels. The questions that made up the online questionnaire along with the CTO's online visitors / customers' responses are illustrated in Appendix 4.1.

As users assimilate technology, in this case the Internet, they tend to have higher expectations towards the technology (Strauss, et al., 2005). As businesses that use the Internet expand, Internet technology serves as a primary marketing channel. This doctoral research project aims to examine the different levels of service expectations of experienced users and within demographic segments.

In particular, since today there are more educated and experienced Internet users than before, firms need to fully comprehend the level of their expectations since the more experienced users are with a technology, the higher their expectations of service (Geissler, 2001). Although there are other demographic factors (such as martial status and occupation), this study focuses on four factors, namely gender, age, income level and education level.

4.2.3.1 Data cleaning and screening

Prior to analysing the quantitative data gathered for the case of the online survey, it was required that the raw data were cleaned and screened. During the process of cleaning and screening of raw data, issues such as the accuracy of the data input, missing observations and outliers as well as distribution issues such as normality are being discussed (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

For the purpose of attaining accuracy of the data input in the SPSS statistical software, a colleague at the CTO helped to enter the data of the total of 1000 (100%) respondents that completed the online survey.

The first step that followed the data input was the screening of data sets. This action was conducted through an examination of basic descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. During this process, a detection of values that were out of range or improperly coded was performed, followed by a frequency test run for every variable to detect illegal or missing responses (Hair, et al., 2003). This resulted into the detection of 482 cases of the completed questionnaires that were found to be unusable because of missing responses. Specifically, after a detailed examination of the data set, it was revealed that the incomplete responses were due to the failure of respondents to answer questions in Section B (Respondents Internet Experience) and Section C (Respondents Requirements) of the questionnaire. As a result of the incomplete responses further analysis of these responses was deemed inappropriate and they were discarded.

Following the detection of the incomplete responses, these were discarded resulting in a total of 518 usable responses. The process that was followed for discarding the incomplete responses is known as casewise deletion (Malhotra, 1999). The objective of the process was to maintain consistency of the records collected to be analysed through the inclusion of only cases with complete records. As a result of the removal of incomplete records, the total number of cases left was substantially smaller than the original sample size. However the number of 518 cases was more than adequate for performing the subsequent analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

An alternative approach to casewise deletion is the approach of pairwise deletion where only the missing responses of the variables involved in a particular computation are excluded. In the process of pairwise deletion all possible cases for each calculation are deployed resulting in inconsistencies in the effective sample size of different analyses. Hence, results may be derived from different sample sizes. However, this characteristic of pairwise

deletion may potentially cause out-of-range correlations or covariances during multivariate analysis techniques with grouped data (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

A technique for complementing the above methods, for the purpose of analysing missing responses, is imputation. This technique involves pattern matching which replaces "a missing observation with a score from another case with similar profile of scores across variables" (Kline, 1998). Imputation was not deemed appropriate and was not performed for this doctoral research project since in the results of the online survey, the missing responses involved failure of the respondents to answer significant sections of questions which could not be complemented. Moreover, imputation was not deemed appropriate as the resulting population of responses was big enough for valid results to be produced.

Having handled the missing responses, the management of outliers (observations that are numerically distant from the rest of the data) came next. Outliers may be caused from (Hair, et al., 2003):
1. Incorrect data entry,
2. Inclusion of missing values in calculations,
3. Sampling error for cases that are not representative of the population,
4. Extreme combinations of values across variables of the population.

Since in the results of the online survey for this doctoral research project there is no way of checking outliers of the first type, the researcher assumed that no outliers of that type were present. On the contrary, while in the results no outliers were caused from the second and third outlier types identified above, some cases with the fourth type of outliers were recognised.

Observations with a value further away than the ranges of the distribution were selected to be outliers (Acuna & Rodriguez 2005). During the process of outlier detection, it was found that all detected cases were extreme; they either strongly agreed or strongly disagreed to the interval scaled statements. Since the online survey's aim and objectives involve describing the

characteristics and requirements of the CTO's eMarketing users, it was deemed normal to have outliers appearing in the data set as individual user's characteristics and requirements may vary to a great extend. Therefore, for the purpose of avoiding the risk of generalising the results, it was decided that the detected outliers were retained (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

An assessment of data normality was performed next to check the assumption that all data have a multivariate normal distribution (Knott, 2004). In multivariate normality both the distributions of an individual variable as well as those of combinations of variables are included. This assumption facilitates significance testing through the deployment of t-tests, χ^2 (chi-squared) tests and f statistics (Malhotra, 1999), which were used in the analysis of the results.

Based on the results of the tests performed on the observed variables, it was concluded that multivariate normality appeared to generally exist.

4.2.3.2 Descriptive Analysis

The stage of descriptive analysis of data sets followed that of data cleaning and screening. At this stage, descriptive statistics were deployed for the purpose of describing the interval-scaled variables used in the online survey as well as for the interviews performed for this doctoral research project. Descriptive statistics techniques used included the identification of the minimum, maximum, mean, range, standard deviation and variance of the data.

For the case of the online survey, while the values of minimum and maximum measurements ranged from 1 to 5, the mean values for the variables of the respondents' requirements were not away from the population's mean. These results indicate that the population shares similar expectations regarding the provision of eMarketing services by the CTO. Additionally, the fact that most

of the standard deviation measurements were less than 1.00, revealed that the variations of the population's opinions were small.

Range and variance values also presented contradicting measurements, with range values of variables appearing large, unlike variance values. These results suggest greater variation or dispersion in the process (Sekaran, 2000).

4.2.3.3 Correlation

Descriptive analysis was followed by correlation analysis where the existence of relationships between the variables under study was examined (Hair, et al., 2003). Using the Pearson correlation coefficient, correlation analysis was performed to test the bivariate relationships between measured and latent variables.

The Pearson correlation matrix that was obtained for the interval-scaled variables illustrated that most of the linear relationships reported were in the expected direction and significantly correlated. A summary of the results of these processes is presented in Appendix 4.6.

While the Pearson correlation coefficient was deployed for interval-scaled variables, the Spearman ρ rank coefficient (Craig, 2002) was used to test the relationships between demographic non-parametric variables. Namely, the variables which were examined using the Spearman ρ rank coefficient were gender, age and education as well as Internet behaviour variables; online registration, online shopping and online travel-related booking. The results of the tests revealed that these non-parametric variables were related in the expected direction.

4.2.3.4 CTO's online visitors / customers' demographics

The respondents' profile was analysed using frequency distributions on the variables gender, age, education, income and country of residence. Appendix 4.1 presents a summary of all the cases' frequency distributions. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.

Respondents' gender was almost evenly split with 52.1% male and 47.9% female respondents. Most of the respondents were within the age ranges of 21 to 30 years (27.8%), 31 to 40 years (23.7%) and 41 to 50 years (20.1%). The age range of 51 to 60 years was next with 15.4%, followed by the age range of over 60 years with 8.7%. The least respondents (4.2%) were in the age range of under 20 years.

The education level of most respondents was University (47.5%), followed by College (29.3%). Only 2.1% of the respondents had Primary School education level and 21% High School. Around a third (33.4%) of the respondents had an income level 1,001 to 2,500 Euro, while 27.6% had an income level 2,501 to 5,000 Euro. A 18.3% of the respondents had an income level of under 1,000 Euro, while 12.4% had an income level over 7,500 Euro. Only an 8.3% of the respondents had an income level of 5,001 to 7,500 Euro.

Most (30.1%) of the respondents had U.K as a country of residence. Smaller groups came from Cyprus (12.2%), Belgium (4.4%), Germany (3.7%), Sweden (3.7%), USA (3.4%) and a large number of other countries (42.6%), which are impossible to list at this point.

4.2.3.5 CTO's online visitors / customers' Internet experience

The respondents' Internet experience was analysed based on their experiences, activities and characteristics in Internet related applications (Internet Browsing, Email and Chat) and online transactions (Online registration, Online Shopping and Online travel-related booking). A summary

of the results of respondents' Internet experience is presented in Appendix 4.1. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.

In responding to the question about the 'Average Weekly number of Hours spent Online', 31.5% answered 'Under 10 hours' while 31.1% answered '11 to 20 hours'. A 18.3% replied that they spend '21 to 30 hours', a 6.2% replied '31 to 40 hours', and a 12.9% replied 'Over 40 hours'.

Interestingly, 53.7% of the respondents were experienced Internet users with over 7 years of experience in using the Internet. A 19.5% of the responders had 5 to 7 years of experience in using the Internet, while 14.9% had 3 to 5 years and 9.3% 1 to 3 years. Finally, only 2.7% of the respondents were not experienced Internet users as they had under 1 year of experience in using the Internet.

Finding out that 48.5% of the respondents browse the World Wide Web frequently (daily) was no surprise based on their responses of the previous two questions. Moreover, it was discovered that 38.2% browse the World Wide Web very frequently (every few hours), while only 7.9% sometimes (once a week). On the contrary, only 3.1% of the respondents browse the World Wide Web rarely (once a month) and 2.3% have never before browsed the World Wide Web.

Email usage among the respondents followed the trends set by the previous question with 48.5% of the respondents using their email frequently (daily) and 41.3% very frequently (every few hours). A 7.7% of the responders use their email sometimes (once a week), while 1.5% rarely (once a month) use their email and 1% have never used email.

It was interesting to discover that while respondents seem to be heavy users of Internet applications such as World Wide Web browsing and email, they are not as heavy users in regards to Internet chat. The survey revealed that a

number of 38.4% of the respondents have never used a chat application, while 17.6% use one rarely (once a month). A 16% use chat sometimes (once a week), followed by 18.5% heavy chatters who chat frequently (daily) and 9.5% who chat very frequently (every few hours).

Following the question regarding respondents' Internet applications' experience, the respondents' habits regarding online transactions relevant to the aim and objectives of this doctoral research project were examined.

Firstly, respondents' online registration habits were examined revealing a number of 24.1% of the responders performing online registrations frequently (once a week) and a number of 7.1% very frequently (daily). On the other hand a number of 16.4% of the responders were found to rarely (once a year) perform online registrations and a number of 44.4% sometimes (once a month). Finally it was found out that only a number of 7.9% never perform online registrations.

Respondents' online shopping habits investigation followed, revealing a more conservative attitude by the respondents in relation to their online registration habits. Only a 2.7% of the respondents shop online very frequently (daily), while a 14.5% shop online frequently (once a week). The numbers climb (45.9%) for the options sometimes (once a month) and rarely (once a year) 19.9%, while only a 17% of the respondents never shop online.

The respondents' answers regarding their habits for online travel-related booking were very interesting since they revealed that a 37.3% of the respondents, book travel-related services online sometimes (once a month) and an 8.1% frequently (once a week). Interestingly enough, it was shown that 40.5% of the responders rarely (once a year) book travel-related services online and 3.9% very frequently (daily). Lastly, only a 10.2% of the respondents never book travel-related services online.

From the results presented above regarding the respondents Internet experience analysed based on their experiences, activities and characteristics

in Internet related applications (Internet Browsing, Email and Chat) and online transactions (Online registration, Online Shopping and Online travel-related booking), the following conclusions about the overall majority of the respondents can be derived:

1. They are experienced Internet users,
2. They use a multiplicity of Internet applications in their everyday life,
3. They frequently perform online business transactions.

As a result, it can be inferred that the respondents have sufficient knowledge of the Internet, which makes them appropriate candidates for participating in this doctoral research project's research.

4.2.3.6 CTO's online visitors / customers' requirements

Research propositions developed for this doctoral research project were tested at this stage using statistical analysis techniques. Based on a combination of marketing theories and information systems approaches, respondents' expectations and satisfaction levels were assessed by deploying Correlation Analysis and Factor Analysis techniques in measuring and validating the relationships between variables. A summary of the results of these processes that are relevant to the respondents' expectations and satisfaction levels is presented in Appendices 4.6 and 4.7. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.

In responding to the question about the 'How did you reach www.visitcyprus.com', 34.6% answered 'Using a search engine' while 23.4% answered 'Through a link from another website'. A 16.0% replied 'I typed the website address directly'', a 13.5% replied 'Through an advertisement on another website', and a 10.8% replied 'It is in my favourites list'. Finally, a 1.7% replied 'It is currently my browser homepage'.

The purpose of the respondents' visit was then assessed through the question 'Why are you visiting the Cyprus Tourism Organisation Official Portal

(www.visitcyprus.com)?'. A significant percentage of the respondents (37.8%) replied that they have 'Already decided to visit Cyprus and look for specific information', while a 29.7% answered 'Considering of visiting Cyprus and seek information about the country'. A 7.7% replied that they are 'Already in Cyprus and wish to check available services', a 5.0% replied 'Already know where I am going in Cyprus and wish to make an online reservation' and 3.1% replied 'Do not intend to travel to Cyprus but seek information about Cyprus'. Lastly, a 16.6% replied that their visit was for 'Other Reasons'.

Following the question on the purpose of their visit, respondents were asked 'What kind of information are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?'. In this question respondents could indicate multiple responses. 'Places to visit' was the response that ranked first with 66.4%, followed by 'Things to do' with a 57.9% and 'Events' with a 46.9%. A 36.3% replied 'Accommodation', a 29.5% 'How to Travel to Cyprus' and a 25.7% 'Transportation in Cyprus'. A 24.9% replied 'Other' and a 14.9% replied 'Health, Legal and Safety'.

In responding to the question 'Were you able to find the information you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?' 72.4% replied 'Yes' while 27.6% replied 'No'.

The respondents' answers regarding 'How would you describe your opinion about the available information on www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following' were very interesting since they revealed the following:

- A 48.3% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Information Clarity (The ease with which the information was understood.)', while a 14.5% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 5.4% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.6% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 27.2% have *Neutral* opinion.

- Interestingly enough, it was shown that 46.7% responded to have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Usefulness of Information (To what degree the information was useful for the purpose of the visit.)', while an 11.6% have

a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 6.8% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 5.4% a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 29.5% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ A 44.0% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Information Structure (How well the information fit together)', while a 12.9% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 6.9% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.6% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 31.5% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ Regarding the 'Information Accuracy (How accurate is the information in relation to reality.)' a 44.0% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion, while an 11.0% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 4.6% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.3% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 37.1% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ A 43.1% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Information Focus (The degree to which information was targeted to fit requirements.)', while a 10.6% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. An 8.1% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.2% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 34.0% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ Lastly, regarding the 'Bias of Information (The extent to which the information is opinionated.)' a 34.0% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion, while a 10.0% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 5.0% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.1% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 46.9% have *Neutral* opinion.

The next question that respondents were asked was 'What kind of online services are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?'. In this question respondents could indicate multiple responses. The response that ranked first was 'Maps' with a 55.6%, followed by 'Travel Planner' with a 46.1% and 'Weather' with a 44.4%. A 29.2% replied 'Other', a 27.8% 'Online Booking' and a 20.3% 'Newsletter'. A 16.6% replied 'Online Brochure builder' and a 6.8% replied 'Blog'.

In responding to the question 'Were you able to find the online services you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?' 67.8% replied 'Yes' while 32.2% replied 'No'.

The respondents' answers on 'How would you describe your overall opinion of www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following' are presented below:

- The 'Portal Accessibility (The ease with which the features were understood.)' received the most *Favourable* responses, 47.5%, and 14.7% *Very Favourable* responses. A 6.0% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.5% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 28.4% have *Neutral* opinion.

- A 41.3% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Portal Design Look (The professionalism of the Portal visual design; layout, font, white space, images, colour schemes, etc.)', while a 19.7% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 5.0% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.9% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 30.1% have *Neutral* opinion.

- A 44.6% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Portal Functionality (How well the Portal performs.)', while a 13.1% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 5.2% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.9% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 33.2% have *Neutral* opinion.

- Regarding the 'Name Recognition and Reputation (The degree to which the name is credible and trusted.)' a 41.7% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion, while a 15.6% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 4.4% have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 2.7% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 35.5% have *Neutral* opinion.

- A 34.7% of the respondents have a *Favourable* opinion on the 'Customer Service (To what degree customers' requests can be serviced.)', while a 10.6% have a *Very Favourable* opinion. A 6.0% have an *Unfavourable*

opinion, while a 3.9% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 44.8% have *Neutral* opinion.

In responding to the question 'Has/have your visit(s) to www.visitcyprus.com inspired you to visit or discover Cyprus?' 75.1% replied 'Yes' while 24.9% replied 'No'.

The impact on the respondents' decision to visit a country was then assessed through the question 'How would you describe the overall impact of the following media on you decision to visit or discover a country?'. The responses are presented below:

- 'The Internet' received the most *Very Favourable* responses, 25.3%, and 43.1% *Favourable* responses. A 1.9% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.1% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 26.6% have *Neutral* opinion.

- 'Travel Brochure / Book' received 16.2% *Very Favourable* responses and the most *Favourable* responses, 46.7%. A 4.1% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 2.7% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 30.3% have *Neutral* opinion.

- 'TV Advertisement' received 17.4% *Very Favourable* responses and 33.8% Favourable responses. A 6.6% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.7% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 38.6% have *Neutral* opinion.

- 'Travel Agent / Tour Operator' received 10.6% *Very Favourable* responses and 34.7% *Favourable responses*. A 5.2% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 3.9% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 45.6% have *Neutral* opinion.

- 'Newspaper / Periodical Advertisement' received 8.5% *Very Favourable* responses and 36.1% *Favourable* responses. A 5.6% of the respondents

have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.2% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 45.6% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ 'Tourism Exhibition' received 11.8% *Very Favourable* responses and 32.0% *Favourable* responses. A 6.2% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.1% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 45.9% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ 'Local Customer Service Office' received 9.1% *Very Favourable* responses and 27.0% *Favourable* responses. A 5.4% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 4.6% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 53.9% have *Neutral* opinion.

▪ 'Radio Advertisement' received the least *Very Favourable* responses, 4.6%, and the least *Favourable* responses, 21.2%. A 12.5% of the respondents have an *Unfavourable* opinion, while a 6.8% have a *Very Unfavourable* opinion. A 54.8% have *Neutral* opinion.

The final question requested the respondents' email address. An 83.6% provided their email addresses while a 16.4% did not.

The results from the online survey demonstrate some useful insights regarding the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations and satisfaction levels depending on their demographics and internet experience.

The results presented above regarding the respondents' expectations and satisfaction levels were very significant for the completion of this doctoral research project's data analysis. In chapter 5 the project findings are presented by reflecting on the data analysis presented here.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the steps followed during the data analysis that was performed for this doctoral research project were illustrated. The presentation of the qualitative data analysis areas were first covered to analyse the relevant issues of the CTO's Marketing services, CTO's web users' behaviour, Cyprus Tourism Industry EMarketing Deployment, and European NTOs' EMarketing Deployment.

The quantitative data analysis areas analysed were then presented depicting the results of the CTO's marketing executives' insights interviews and those of the online survey. The analytical illustration of the project activity represents the rigorous work performed during the course of this doctoral research project for reaching valid results.

Each of the two main data analysis areas was comprised by a number of research techniques deployed following the research design as it was defined in the previous chapter (research methodology). The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate the data analysis techniques employed for analysing the research topic.

CHAPTER 5:   PROJECT FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the doctoral research project based on the data analysis techniques deployed. The presentation of the findings is based on the research propositions, previously put forward. The chapter begins by presenting an analysis of the derived results on the defined variables, reflecting on the doctoral research project's constructs. A series of relevant conclusions are then presented based on the analysis of the results. Next, an evaluation of the findings regarding the two major roles that influenced the research results, namely the CTO's online visitors / customers and the CTO's marketing executives, is performed. Finally, an eMarketing model for the CTO is illustrated. At the end of the chapter the issues presented are linked through a summary.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This section presents a discussion of the findings of each of the research propositions put forward by this doctoral research project, namely:

A. CTO's online visitors / customers' Expectations, is a function of demographics, knowledge, and experience.
B. CTO's online visitors / customers' Satisfaction is a function of Product or Service range, Order fulfilment level, Customer service quality, Information quality, Ease of navigation, Online security and trust, Perceived value, Personalisation, Online community, Channel integration.
C. CTO's marketing executives' mindset is a function of the current CTO marketing communication procedures, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment and the European NTOs' eMarketing models deployment.

D. CTO's marketing executives' expectations is a function of aspiration and planning.

The first consideration was to measure the salient dimensions of the research constructs developed, namely: the CTO's online visitors / customers' satisfaction, the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations, the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and the CTO's marketing executives' expectations.

The analysis of the collected data relevant to the defined variables along with the measurement of the eMarketing dimensions defined, lead to valid conclusions about the research constructs defined.

5.1.1 The CTO's online visitors / customers

The results of this doctoral research project support the proposition that the CTO's online visitors / customers' Expectations, is a function of demographics, knowledge, and experience. Specifically, it has been observed from the analysis of the online survey's results that customers' expectations levels differ depending on age, education level and income. Particularly, respondents above 30 years of age, University graduates, earning more than 2,500 Euros a month were identified to have higher expectations in regards to product and service range. Efficient customer service was also indicated to be of high importance to this group of customers. Moreover, receiving consistent messages across multiple communication channels is imperative in improving this particular respondent group's satisfaction. Since the CTO wishes to target this customer segment it should evaluate its performance with regards to the attributes of the responses of this particular respondent group more closely.

Furthermore, based on this doctoral research project online survey's results, some useful insights regarding the customers' expectations levels depending on their internet experience level (hours spent online, years of internet experience and online application usage) were revealed. Specifically, it has

been observed that more experienced users tend to seek more value from Internet services. This is reasonable due to the eagerness of experienced internet users to search and switch between alternative websites (Koufaris, et al., 2002).

From the results of this doctoral research project the proposition that the CTO's online visitors / customers' satisfaction assessment depends on Product or Service range, Order fulfilment level, Customer service quality, Information quality, Ease of navigation, Online security and trust, Perceived value, Personalisation, Online community, Channel integration is supported.

To satisfy its online customers, the CTO must focus on these criteria of services. The first criterion where the online survey illustrated to be weak for the CTO's online services, Customer service quality, should be given a top priority since it is the first contact point for customers with the destination. When one finds difficulty in communicating with the customer service she would immediately make an adverse evaluation about the destination's service performance. In a highly competitive environment such as the Internet, this unpleasant experience (leading to dissatisfaction) would leave the destination losing not only one potential customer but perhaps many more, due to "word of mouth" or "word of mouse" which is prevalent on the Internet. Hence, the CTO is advised to provide customer service and help desk facilities through its eMarketing channels.

Next, the Information quality should be another important attribute the CTO should be concerned about. Since eMarketing methods are based on Internet technology, which by nature enables real time communication, the relevancy, accuracy and timeliness of information should be of top priority. Electronic marketing communication that pertain information that does not fulfil the above requirements will be inefficient. Moreover, ease of navigation for the customer to be able to locate easily the required information is also vital.

Other dimensions that were found to have a significant impact on customers' satisfaction were ease of navigation, and order fulfilment level. Online security

and trust has been proved to be the key dimension that leads to customers repeat visits (stickiness), while customer satisfaction depends significantly on perceived value and personalisation. The CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations and satisfaction levels indicate the way forward for the CTO in its pursue for optimising its marketing activities towards the attainment of enhanced customer satisfaction.

Generally, online customers are impatient (Geissler, 2001), hence loading speed of the portal, as well as simplicity of use and accessibility are critical. This doctoral research project reveals that Perceived value of a product or service can be attributed to variables such as convenience (Reichheld & Schefter 2000) and value-added services and does not depend only on price.

In order to be competitive, the CTO should strive for added value in its offerings. Providing facilities such as updatable booking, keeping and tracking a record of customer history of purchases or activities, facilitating customisation and understanding of customer's specific needs and preferences, enhances customer's perceived value thus increases satisfaction.

However, the CTO should be aware that customers are continuously looking for value and their assessment changes as the standard of service offerings in the market changes. That is, a feature which is regarded as value added today may be a common basic feature that is available on every site in the future. Therefore, in order to remain competitive and become the destination of choice the CTO must constantly work at evaluating its offering towards upgrading its services to enhance customers' perceived value. Otherwise customers may switch to competitors.

Electronic communication channels lack the interpersonal face-to-face interaction between service providers and customers, and hence can increase the sense of fear of the unknown. The CTO is encouraged to provide discussion group facilities on its portal allowing customers to share ideas and exchange opinions about products and services. Having an online community

brings long-term benefits to the CTO in that customers who become "attached" to other members may find it difficult to switch to other portals (Winer, 2001), hence leading to retention.

Moreover, information shared on the CTO's portal may be analysed for enabling the CTO to enhance its knowledge about customers' perceptions. The utilisation of the acquired knowledge will facilitate the maximisation of the CTO's marketing performance by optimising the destination's product and service offering.

Undoubtedly, electronic communication channels form a new medium of commerce which attracts different types of customers than that of traditional shopping channels. As a result, customers using electronic communication channels seek different characteristics in a product or service, than those that merely satisfy them, in order to entice them to return. As electronic communication channels are ubiquitous, they play a significant role in real time communication and information sharing. Personalisation level, rewards, channel integration as well as building and maintaining effective online communities are key drivers for electronic communication channels' customer satisfaction and retention.

The CTO is advised to adopt high security measures to ensure customer's financial information and other personal details are kept safe and confidential. This can be achieved through the provision of third party seal of trust, site verification, as well as clearly defined privacy policy and terms and conditions of purchase or subscription.

Finally, the CTO should invest its resources in enabling personalisation of products and services. Given the self-service nature of eMarketing services, customers will feel empowered and in control when they are provided with a choice to design a product or service as they want it to be. Indeed, through personalisation, the CTO may use the information captured with regards to individual preferences and history to target marketing campaigns and custom product offerings.

5.1.1.1 Dimensions of the CTO's online visitors / customers' research constructs

A. Online visitors / customers' Expectations construct

It is evident from the results obtained from the analysis of the variables constituting the dimensions of the above construct (defined in Appendices 4.2 and 4.3) that Online visitors / customers' Expectations is assessed on demographics, knowledge, and experience. A Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) representation of the above construct is illustrated in Figure 5.1.
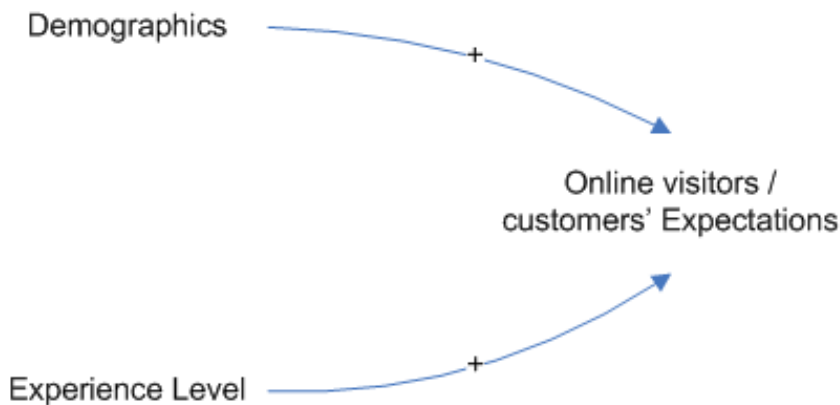
Figure 5.1: Expectations construct Causal Loop Diagram

1. **Demographics:** This research found that there was a very small difference on the gender distribution among the CTO's online visitors / customers, while most of them indicated their age group to be in the range of 21 to 50. Most of the CTO's online visitors / customers are University or College graduates, while around half of them have a gross monthly income in the range of 1,001 to 5,000 Euros. The results suggest that approximately one third of the portal's visitors come from the UK, while the distribution of the rest of the visitors range among a large number of countries mainly European and the US. Apparently, the aforementioned findings regarding the demographics of the CTO's online visitors / customers provide a sound basis for the identification of their expectations.

Figure 5.2 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 depicts the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
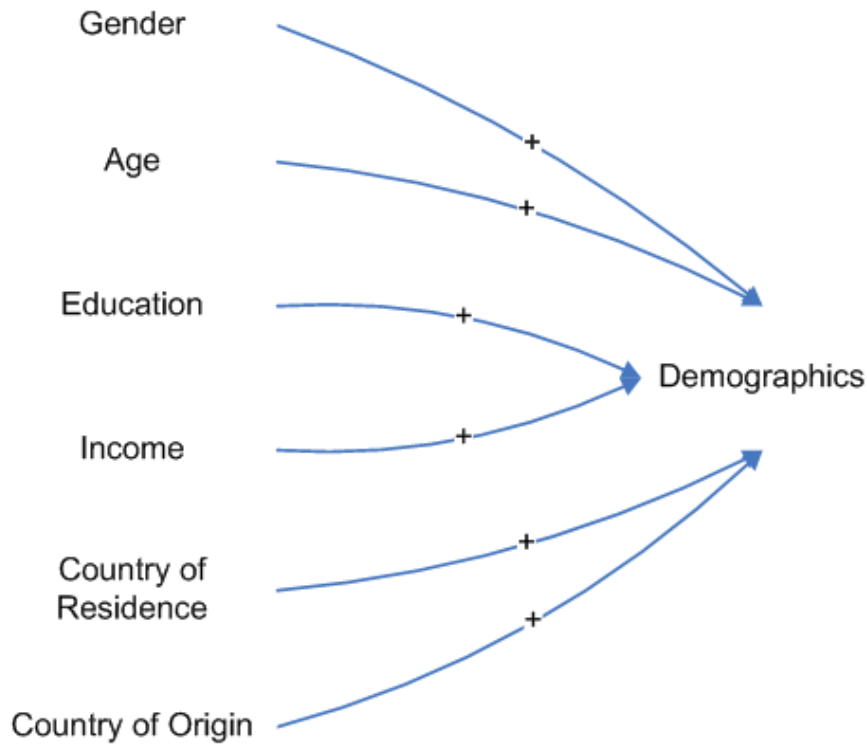
Figure 5.2: Demographics dimension Causal Loop Diagram

2. **Experience Level:** This research found that most of the CTO's online visitors / customers spend less than 20 hours online per week, while their majority have more than five years of Internet experience. That experience is translated into using the world wide web and email daily, while never using online chat. Additionally, the CTO's online visitors / customers register online and shop online once a month while most book travel related services online once a year and an additional comparatively high percentage once a month. The realisation of the CTO's online visitors / customers' experience level provides valuable insight towards the identification of their expectations. Figure 5.3 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
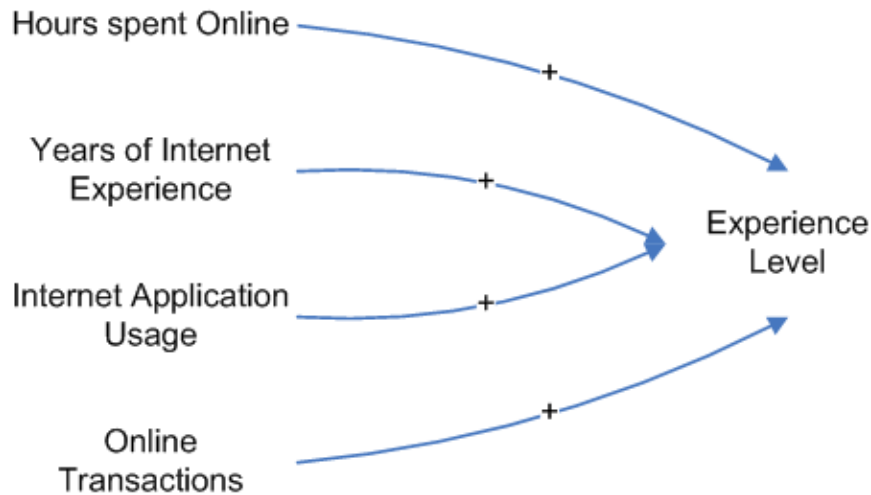
Figure 5.3: **Experience level dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

The results obtained from the analysis of the variables constituting the dimensions of the CTO's online visitors / customers' Expectations construct suggest that customers' expectations are influenced from their demographic and experience variations. Thus, this finding provides support for the relevant proposition put forward by this doctoral research project.

B. Online visitors / customers' Satisfaction construct

It is evident from the results obtained from the analysis of the variables constituting the dimensions of the above construct (defined in Appendices 4.2 and 4.3) that that Online visitors / customers' Satisfaction is assessed on Product or Service range, Order fulfilment level, Customer service quality, Information quality, Ease of navigation, Online security and trust, Perceived value, Personalisation, Online community, Channel integration. Figure 5.4 presents a CLD model of the above construct.

Figure 5.4: Online visitors / customers' Satisfaction construct Causal Loop Diagram

1. **Product or service range:** The results from this research illustrated that the CTO's online visitors / customers are looking for relevant product information and online services to satisfy their expectations. In Table 5.1 the research findings regarding the online visitors / customers' information

and services requirements and the most popular portal pages are illustrated.

Table 5.1: Online visitors / customers' product or service range requirements

Information requirements	Services requirements	Most popular portal pages
Places to visit (66.4%)	Maps (55.6%)	Accommodation (15%)
Things to do (57.9%)	Travel Planner (46.1%)	Sun and Sea (8.5%)
Events (46.9%)	Weather (44.4%)	Multimedia Experience (6.5%)
Accommodation (36.3%)	Other (29.2%)	Weather (6%)
How to travel to Cyprus (29.5%)	Online Booking (27.8%)	Getting to Cyprus (5%)

By contrasting the results collected through the different methods (online survey, web user behaviour), the researcher can conclude that the requirements of the CTO's online visitors / customers regarding the product or service range are mostly satisfied through the products and services available on the portal. However, the CTO's online visitors / customers' requirement for an online booking service is not currently supported by the portal.

Figure 5.5 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
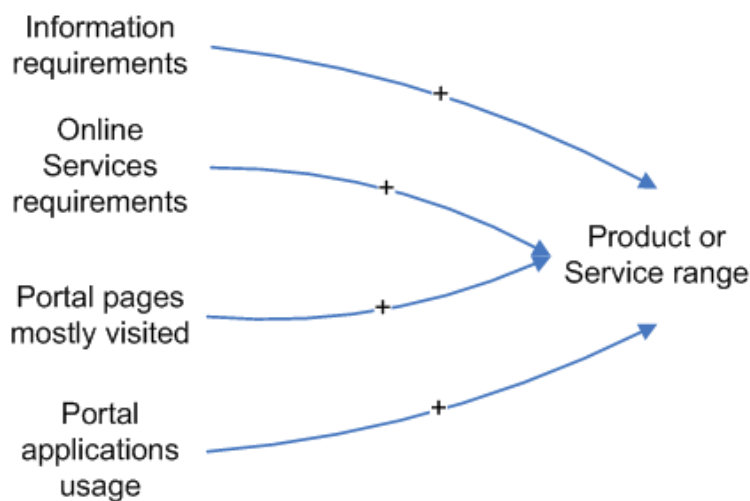

Figure 5.5: Product or service range dimension Causal Loop Diagram

2. **Order fulfilment level**: The results for this dimension illustrated that the CTO's online visitors / customers are mostly satisfied by the availability of required information and services, while they have an overall favourable opinion regarding the functionality of the portal. Figure 5.6 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
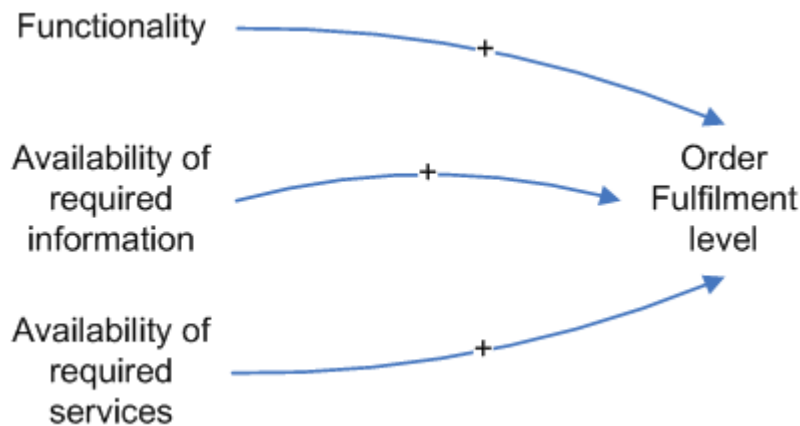
Figure 5.6: **Order fulfilment level dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

The findings suggest that the CTO's online visitors / customers are mostly satisfied from the information and services available on the portal.

3. **Customer service quality**: The overall opinion of the CTO's online visitors / customers to this dimension is neutral to favourable indicating average levels satisfaction of customer's expectations. Figure 5.7 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.


Figure 5.7: **Customer service quality dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

4. **Information quality**: The satisfaction levels of the CTO's online visitors / customers to this dimension are relatively high as the variables that make this dimension returned favourable results. Figure 5.8 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.

Figure 5.8: **Information quality dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

5. **Ease of navigation**: The favourable results for the variables of accessibility and design and look demonstrated the high satisfaction levels of the CTO's online visitors / customers to this dimension. Furthermore, the high value of the average time spent on the portal in relation to the average number of pages visited by each visitor, reaffirms the high satisfaction levels of the CTO's online visitors / customers to this dimension. Figure 5.9 presents a CLD model for the above dimension.

Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
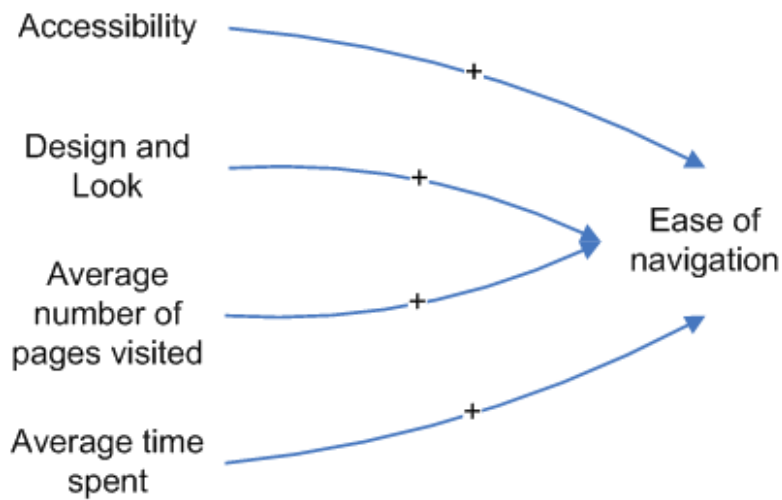
Figure 5.9: Ease of navigation dimension Causal Loop Diagram

6. **Online security and trust**: The results regarding this dimension illustrated very high satisfaction levels indicating the high level of confidence and trust of the CTO's online visitors / customers towards the organisations eMarketing channels. Figure 5.10 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
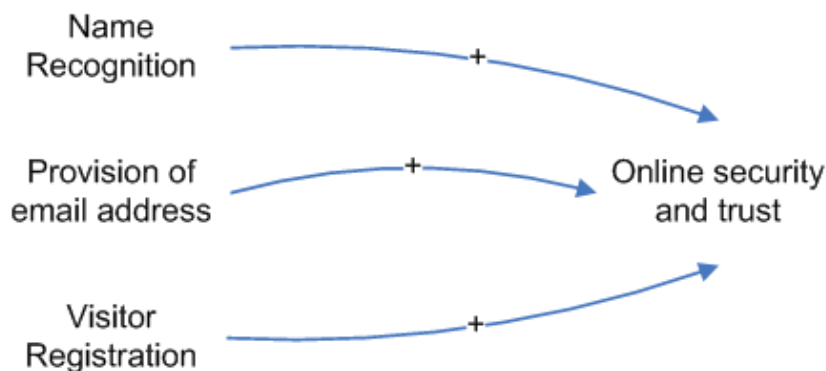
Figure 5.10: Online security and trust dimension Causal Loop Diagram

7. **Perceived value**: The results of the assessment of the value that the CTO's online visitors / customers get from the use of the CTO's portal were positive demonstrating the high level of perceived value the CTO's online visitors / customers get from the use of the organisations eMarketing channels. Figure 5.11 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.


Figure 5.11: Perceived value dimension Causal Loop Diagram

8. **Personalisation**: The research results relating to this dimension suggest that the CTO's eMarketing services are reached through search engines or through links from other websites or even directly. On the other hand the reasons behind visiting the portal range from the requirement for specific information to general country information. Through the analysis of the web user behaviour data a broader image of how users reached the portal has been established. The analysis of the relevant data provided specific results regarding the visitors' sources. These results along with the online survey's results are illustrated in Table 5.2 listed in order of importance based on the online survey's results.

Table 5.2: Online visitors / customers' personalisation requirements

Alternative ways to reach the portal	Visitor responses on how they reached the portal	Web user behaviour data on how they reached the portal
Link from other website (includes: advertisements)	36.9%	10%
Search Engines	34.6%	15%
Directly (includes: favourites, homepage)	28.5%	75%

Furthermore, through the analysis of the web user behaviour data the specific keywords that were used by visitors to reach the portal through search engines have been collected as well as the periodicity (Month/Day/Time) of the portal visits. While the results presented above that are relevant to the alternative ways visitors reached the portal are conflicting among the two different data collection methods some common conclusions can be drawn that relate to online visitors / customers personalisation requirements:

a. Most of the visitors that reached the portal either directly or through search engines were looking specifically for Cyprus.
b. The portal's traffic was distributed evenly through the year peaking during the months of April, May and June.
c. Most of the portal's visits occurred from Monday to Friday, while during weekends traffic is lower.
d. During the day, most of the traffic was distributed from noon until midnight.
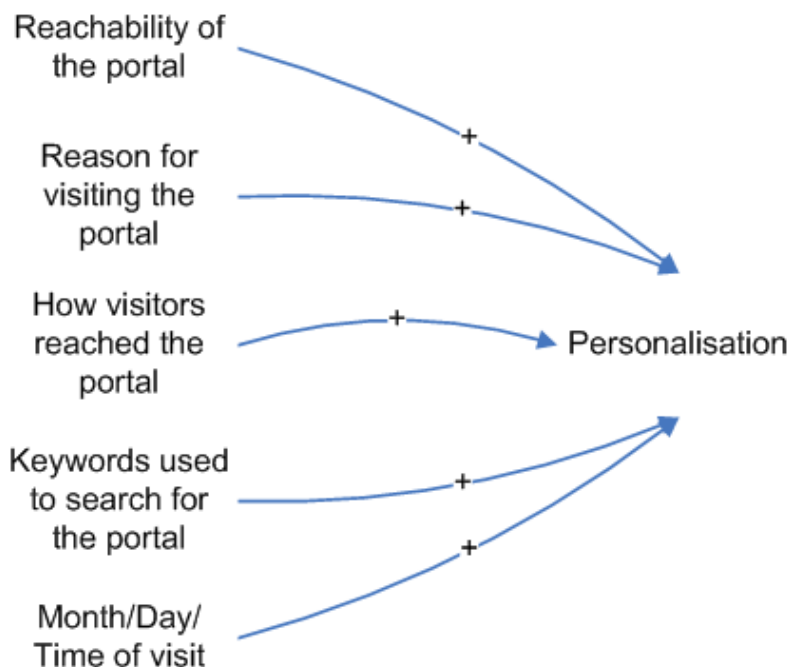
Figure 5.12: **Personalisation dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

The above conclusions suggest that the CTO's online visitors / customers personalisation requirements relate directly with their identification of the need of travelling to Cyprus and their conceptual processes of satisfying that need through the exploration of the available product offering.

Figure 5.12 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
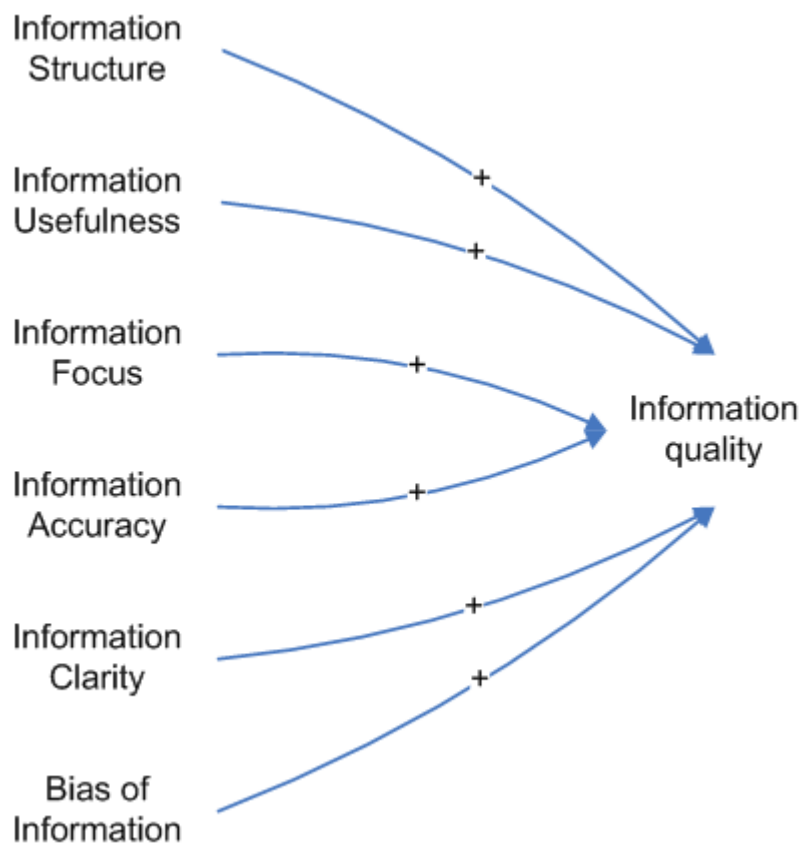
9. **Online community**: The research results illustrated that the CTO's online visitors / customers give low value to this dimension. Figure 5.13 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
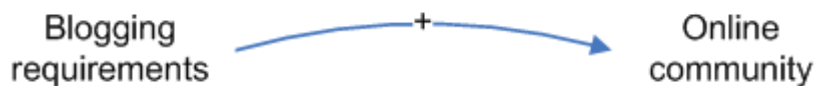

Figure 5.13: Online community dimension Causal Loop Diagram

10. **Channel integration**: The extent to which the overall impact of different media have on the CTO's online visitors / customers' decision to visit a country were assessed for this dimension. The results revealed that the most valuable media in regard to this dimension are the Internet and Travel Brochures/Books. The fact that the Internet is the most influential of all media on the CTO's online visitors / customers' decision to visit a country is supported by the number of total visitors of the portal during its first year of operation, which, based on the web user behaviour data, it nearly reached one million people. Figure 5.14 presents a CLD model for the above dimension. Appendix 5 illustrates the results of the relevant variables in a graphical way.
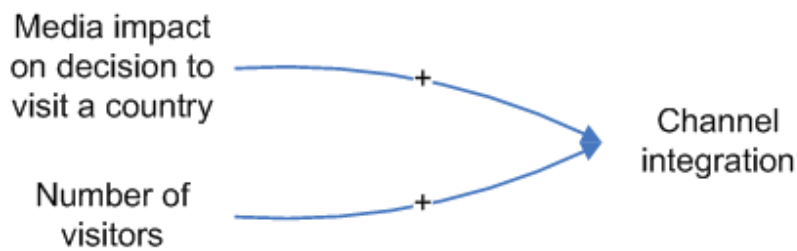
**Figure 5.14**: Channel integration dimension Causal Loop Diagram

The results tend to agree with the findings of similar studies in eCommerce (Anderson & Srinivasan 2003; Feinberg & Kadam 2002; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Khalifa & Liu 2003) and eTourism (Alegre & Cladera 2006; ETC 2002, 2008; Ifibl 2002; Sigala 2004).

5.1.2 The CTO's marketing executives

The results of this doctoral research project support the proposition that the CTO's marketing executives' expectations is a function of aspiration and planning.

The CTO's marketing executives' expectations from the deployment of eMarketing methods involve the enhancement of the destination's competitiveness through the enhancement of organisational marketing procedures. The confidence that has been illustrated by the CTO's marketing executives regarding the facilitation of customer segmentation and targeting for enhancing customer service quality through eMarketing methods establish the need for eMarketing methods implementation.

The CTO's marketing executives' expectations regarding the research dimensions defined were very significant towards the identification of an appropriate model for the implementation of the outcomes of this doctoral research project.

5.1.2.1 Dimensions of the CTO's marketing executives' research constructs

A. Marketing executives' Mindset construct

As stated in the research propositions developed for this doctoral research project, 'mindset is a function of the current CTO marketing communication procedures, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment and the European NTO's eMarketing models deployment. Figure 5.15 presents a CLD model of the above construct.
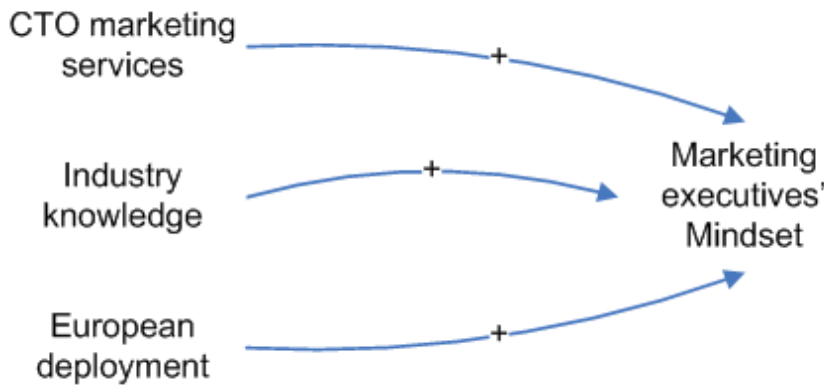
Figure 5.15: **Marketing executives' mindset construct Causal Loop Diagram**

Mindset refers to the identification and establishment of a common conceptual background among the CTO's marketing executives, regarding eMarketing methods deployment, based on environmental variables. The results obtained from the analysis of the variables constituting the dimensions of the above construct (defined in Appendix 4.5) facilitated the derivation of the following conclusions:

1. **CTO's marketing services:** The organisation of the CTO's marketing services has the potential of fully supporting the integration of relevant eMarketing models and procedures. The structure of the Marketing department is oriented towards the efficient support of the business services performed by the department. EMarketing procedures can be

integrated into the existing processes of the department to enable interactivity, on demand availability and flexibility transforming these processes to facilitate the Department's efficiency. The establishment and operation of an eMarketing unit which is responsible for the diffusion of eMarketing tools and techniques throughout the organisation has given the required momentum that was needed to support a more energetic adoption of eMarketing models by the CTO. Through the utilisation of the appropriate organisational resources the eMarketing unit is expected to grow so as to gain the capacity and authority required to coordinate the utilisation of eMarketing methods for attaining the organisation's strategic goals. Figure 5.16 presents a CLD model for the above variable.
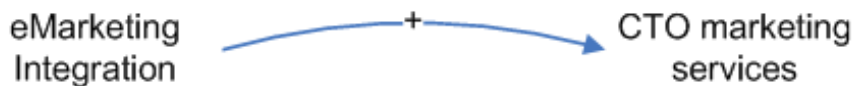
Figure 5.16: **CTO marketing services dimension Causal Loop Diagram**

2. **Cyprus Tourism Industry eMarketing Deployment:** The Cyprus tourism industry readiness for the introduction of eMarketing models is low due to the low levels of ICT adoption. Additionally, the Cyprus tourism industry capacity for the introduction of eMarketing models is low as a result of its nature (SME's). Further to the initiatives provided through the participation of tourism businesses into relevant projects, for the purpose of enabling the industry to implement eMarketing models, the CTO should provide appropriate incentives for the industry for encouraging cooperative efforts among tourism businesses. By promoting cooperation among tourism businesses, the CTO can implement innovative eMarketing methods that will provide a unique new business environment for the tourism industry to utilise. In this way, competitive eMarketing models can be implemented for the totality of the industry or specialised sub-segments. Through such incentives the whole of the industry can be benefited for achieving long

term sustainability and growth. Figure 5.17 presents a CLD model for the above variable.
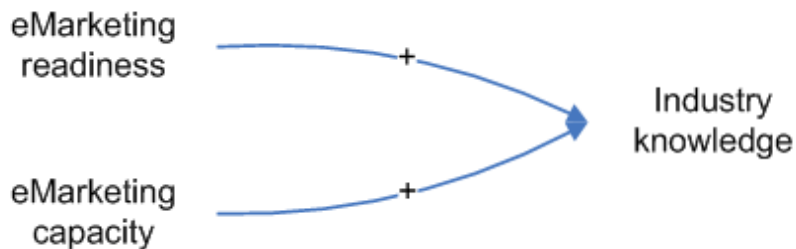
Figure 5.17: Industry knowledge dimension Causal Loop Diagram

3. **European NTOs' eMarketing deployment:** The European NTOs' eMarketing deployment analysis performed, facilitated the derivation of valuable outcomes relevant to the construct under consideration. Variances have been observed among the different NTOs regarding their business models involving diverse degree of industry participation into eMarketing activities and projects as well as the approach and emphasis given to different applications and systems development and implementation. On the contrary, similarities have been observed regarding the overall objectives of the NTOs' eMarketing strategies and the marketing processes integration for the enablement of eMarketing models. All of the NTOs under consideration had relevant eMarketing strategies in place and implemented them in some degree. Through their relevant strategies, NTOs aim at enabling eMarketing services for acquiring knowledge for their customers that will facilitate their future marketing activities. A key finding relevant to the implementation of eMarketing models by the NTOs is the fact that they all deploy eMarketing activities towards enhancing their overall marketing activities efficiency. This is achieved through the effective communication of their branding and product offering and the efficient distribution of their products and services through eMarketing channels to their customers. A common characteristic featured by all NTOs under consideration is that they analyse the

information gathered through their online marketing channels to derive valuable knowledge about their customer preferences and needs for developing and customising products and services to satisfy these needs. Variable degrees of analyses are performed among different NTOs depending on the stakeholders' objectives involved. A common analysis characteristic relates to relationship marketing and behavioural targeting. This analysis takes into consideration the customers' characteristics and online behaviour in regards to product requirements and builds specific target group profiles for targeting groups having common characteristics in a more effective way. Targeting involves the development of specialised products and services that aim at satisfying specific customer groups' preferences and requirements. By managing to satisfy the specific customer groups' needs, customer loyalty among members of these groups is realised. Through strong online presence, NTOs manage to create strategic alliances with industry partners towards providing their customers with a range of product options based on their preferences as well as other environmental parameters. In this way, NTOs manage to provide personalised services that can be customised by the customers into dynamic packages. As a result, NTOs promote and support their county's tourism industry and promote entrepreneurship and private tourism investments. Figure 5.18 presents a CLD model for the above variable.
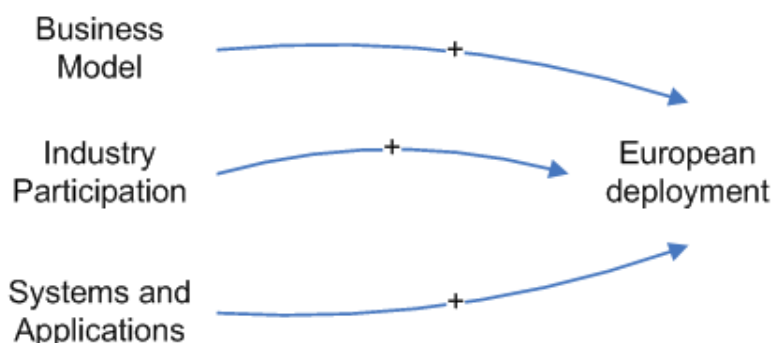
Figure 5.18: European deployment dimension Causal Loop Diagram

B. Marketing executives' Expectations construct

As stated in the research propositions developed for this doctoral research project, 'expectations, is a function of aspiration and planning'. Figure 5.19 presents a CLD model of the above construct.
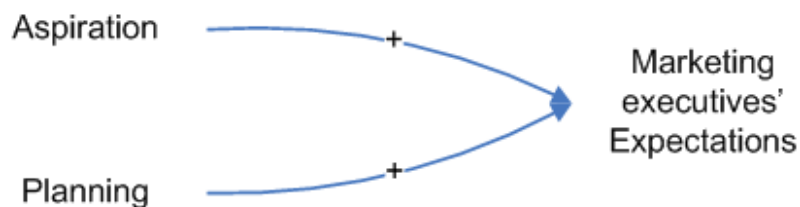
Figure 5.19: **Marketing executives' expectations construct Causal Loop Diagram**

The results obtained from the analysis of the variables constituting the dimensions of the above construct (defined in Appendix 4.5) facilitated the derivation of the following conclusions:

1. **Aspiration:** Aspiration (Selten, 1998) refers to bounded rational decision making within a discrete goal space. The objects in the goal space represent aspiration levels for a diversity of goals. The decision for planning for action is determined by reasonable systematic procedures and not optimising functions. For the purpose of this doctoral research project aspiration is used as a variable for measuring the CTO's marketing executives expectation construct through a series of parameters derived from the interviews performed. Figure 5.20 presents a CLD model for the above variable. Appendix 4.4 illustrates the responses collected for the parameters of the above variable.

Figure 5.20: Aspiration dimension Causal Loop Diagram

a) <u>CTO's objectives by eMarketing methods deployment</u>: The results from the interviews illustrated that the CTO is expected to attain an array of objectives through eMarketing methods deployment. These objectives involve the enhancement of the destination's competitiveness through the attainment of efficient organisational marketing procedures and the

facilitation of customer segmentation and targeting for enhancing customer service quality. The CTO's marketing executives' responses to this parameter illustrate that their relevant aspiration levels are highly integrated with the overall departmental objectives in a way that the eMarketing objectives will enable the attainment of the overall marketing objectives.

b) Contribution of eMarketing methods to the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods: While the CTO's marketing executives' responses to this parameter indicated some variances, the overall expectation of the contribution of eMarketing methods to the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods that can be derived is very high. The high aspiration levels that were portrayed by the CTO's marketing executives regarding this parameter indicate the expected significance of eMarketing methods contribution to the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods.

c) Impact of eMarketing methods on the attainment of Marketing objectives: The expected impact of eMarketing methods on the attainment of Marketing objectives by the CTO's marketing executives was unanimously indicated to be very high. These results confirm the CTO's marketing executives' high expectation levels from eMarketing methods deployment.

d) Likeliness that eMarketing methods will drive the CTO's next generation marketing methods: The responses of the CTO's marketing executives to this parameter illustrated their moderate confidence that eMarketing methods will drive the CTO's next generation of marketing methods. While all four executives indicated that they expect eMarketing methods to drive the CTO's next generation of marketing methods their aspiration levels were not very high.

e) Adoption of eMarketing methods: The CTO's marketing executives responded unanimously that the CTO should adopt eMarketing

methods. The very high aspiration levels of this parameter confirm the CTO's marketing executives' high expectation levels from eMarketing methods adoption.

f) <u>Reduction of marketing costs through the adoption of eMarketing methods</u>: The responses of the CTO's marketing executives to this parameter illustrated their moderate confidence that the adoption of eMarketing methods will reduce CTO's marketing costs. While all four executives indicated that they expect reduction of marketing costs through the adoption of eMarketing methods their aspiration levels were not very high.

g) <u>Promotion of commercial tourism-related products and services online</u>: The results for this parameter illustrated the CTO's marketing executives moderate confidence for the CTO to promote online commercial tourism related products and services. The fact that three out of the four executives indicated that the CTO should promote tourism-related products and services online suggests that their aspiration levels were not very high.

h) <u>Provision of online booking facilities</u>: The results for this parameter illustrated the CTO's marketing executives' reluctance for the CTO to provide online booking facilities. Specifically, the fact that only two out the four executives have a favourable attitude towards the provision of online booking facilities by the CTO indicate a neutral aspiration towards this parameter.

i) <u>Adoption of an online revenue model to finance eMarketing methods</u>: The results for this parameter illustrated the CTO's marketing executives' moderate confidence for the CTO to adopt an online revenue model to finance eMarketing methods. The fact that three out of the four executives indicated that the CTO should adopt an online revenue model to finance eMarketing methods suggests that their aspiration levels were not very high.

j) Serve B2B markets online: The responses of the CTO's marketing executives to this parameter illustrated their favourable attitude towards the CTO serving the B2B markets online. The very high aspiration levels of this parameter are evident by the very high expectation levels by three out of the four executives.

2. **Planning:** Planning refers to the CTO's marketing executives' expectations on the eMarketing actions that need to be performed by the CTO. For the purpose of this doctoral research project planning is used as a variable for measuring the CTO's marketing executives expectation construct through a series of parameters derived from the interviews performed. Figure 5.21 presents a CLD model for the above variable. Appendix 4.4 illustrates the responses collected for the   parameters   of the above variable.
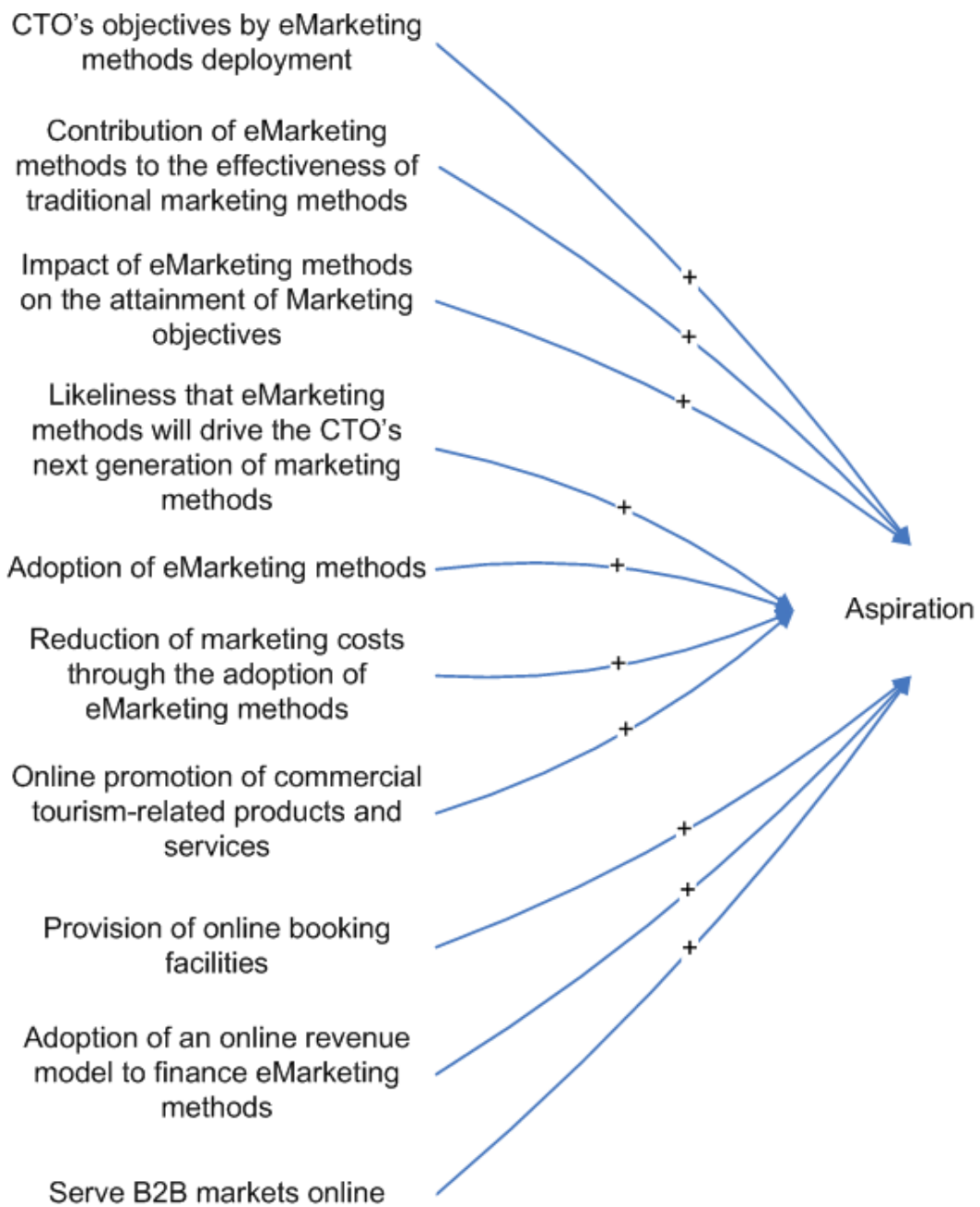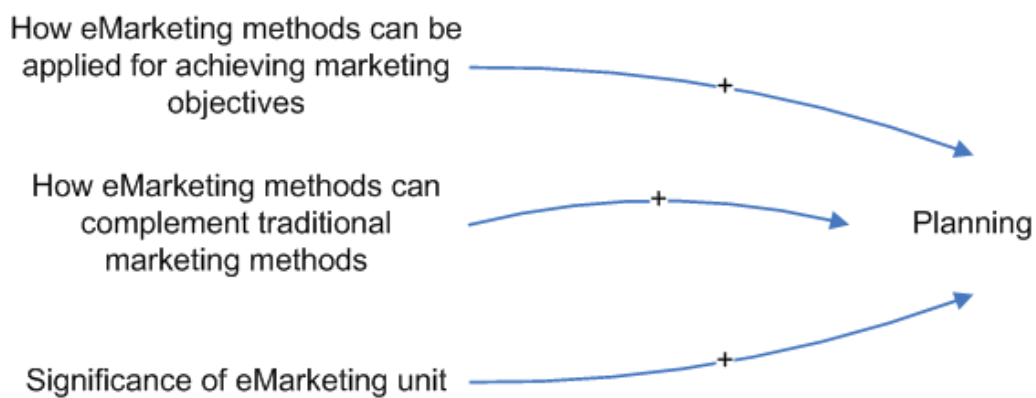

Figure 5.21: Planning dimension Causal Loop Diagram

a) How eMarketing methods can be applied for achieving objectives: The CTO's marketing executives' responses to this parameter facilitated the derivation of a number of specific proposals for the ways that eMarketing methods can be applied to achieve the objectives stated in question one of the interview. Particularly, the CTO's marketing executives' responses entail the application of eMarketing methods for

enabling the interactivity of marketing channels towards facilitating service personalisation and customer segmentation based on behavioural attributes. The CTO's marketing executives' responses to this parameter illustrated that their relevant aspiration levels are closely related with the CTO's eMarketing strategy towards the attainment of the organisation's marketing objectives.

b) How eMarketing methods can complement traditional marketing methods: The responses of the CTO's marketing executives to this parameter returned valuable feedback on the ways that eMarketing methods can complement each of the traditional marketing methods performed by the CTO. Specifically, the CTO's marketing executives' responses to this parameter facilitated the derivation of specific proposals regarding the contribution of eMarketing methods to the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods. These proposals will guide the researcher towards the establishment of a finite set of actions that the CTO should undertake to augment its traditional marketing methods deployment.

c) Significance of an eMarketing unit: The CTO's marketing executives responded unanimously that the establishment and staffing of an eMarketing unit is very significant for the attainment of the CTO's eMarketing objectives. The very high aspiration levels of this parameter are evident by the very high significance levels attributed by all four executives.

The CTO's eMarketing model effectiveness optimisation will be determined from the extent to which the eMarketing dimensions will be implemented. The implementation of these dimensions will depend upon the outcomes of the analysis of the variables. The impact of these variables defines the construct of interest for this doctoral research project.

5.2 Evaluation of Findings

Based on the analysis and the discussion of the results of the data collected for the current research project, the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations were identified and their satisfaction levels were measured. Moreover, the CTO's marketing executives' mindset was determined and their expectations were recorded. An evaluation of these results is attempted at this stage.

5.2.1 The CTO's online visitors / customers

Based on the analysis and the discussion of the results of the quantitative data collected through the online survey and the portal's usage statistics, the expectations and satisfaction levels of the CTO's online visitors / customers were identified. An evaluation of these results follows.

The CTO's online visitors / customers are members of both genders. Most of them are in the age range of 21 to 50, University or College graduates and earn a gross monthly income of 1,001 to 5,000 Euros. Around one third of them are UK residents while the majority of the rest are Europeans and US residents.

Most of them spend less than 20 hours per week online while their majority have more than 5 years of Internet experience. A great majority of them register and shop online for travel related services.

Most of them have reached the CTO Portal by typing the address directly, while a small percentage were directed to the portal through a link from another website, or through a search engine, mainly searching for 'Cyprus' related words or phrases.

Around two thirds of them have visited the portal only once, browsing through six pages on average and spending on the portal an average time of four

minutes. They mostly visit the portal on working days, from 10am to 10pm, during the months of June, April, May, July and January.

Around one third of them have already decided to visit Cyprus and the reason for visiting the portal is to look for specific information. Another one third of them is considering of visiting Cyprus and seeks information about the country on the portal.

The kind of information they are looking for on the portal includes places to visit, things to do, information on events, accommodation and how to travel to and around Cyprus. They are also in search of maps of the island, a travel planner, weather services and online booking facilities.

For around two thirds of them, their visit to the portal has provided them with the information and services they were looking for. More than half of them were satisfied by the information clarity, usefulness, structure, accuracy and focus and with the portal's accessibility, design look, functionality and credibility. On the other hand, they are not satisfied or dissatisfied by information bias and customer service on the portal.

Most of them actually visited the portal's pages on Accommodation, Sun and Sea, Multimedia Experience, Weather and Getting to Cyprus.

Nearly two thirds of them base their decision to visit or discover a country on information found on the Internet or a Travel Brochure / Book.

Around two thirds of them have been inspired to visit or discover Cyprus through their visit to the portal.

Based on the evaluation of the results of the expectations and satisfaction levels of the CTO's online visitors / customers presented above some very interesting conclusions can be derived:

1. Most of the portal visitors know the portal's web address and access it directly at least once during the process of decision making for visiting a destination.

2. During their visit on the portal they are looking for specific product information (places to visit, things to do, events) as well as for tourism services (accommodation, transportation) relevant to 'Sun and Sea' products, which most of them are searching for.

3. They expect to find on the portal relevant applications (maps, travel planner, online booking) that will help them organise their visit to the island.

4. They are mostly satisfied by the information's quality and credibility as well as the portal's functionality and design. However they would expect a better customer service and less biased information.

5. Most of them base their decision to visit or discover a country on information found on the internet while for most, their visit to the portal has inspired them to visit or discover Cyprus.

5.2.2 The CTO's marketing executives

Based on the analysis and the discussion of the results of the quantitative data collected through the interviews and the qualitative data collected for the CTO's Marketing services, the Cyprus Tourism Industry and the European NTOs' EMarketing Deployment, the CTO's marketing executives' expectations and mindset were determined. An evaluation of these results follows.

The CTO's marketing executives manage the organisation's marketing department's services, which are arranged into three main business areas, namely, Market Services, Marketing Services and Information Services. Within these three main business areas they manage a range of activities including advertising, promotion, sales support and distribution, public relations, market analysis and segmentation, personal selling, publications and information provision and direct marketing.

The flexibility of the department's procedures allows the CTO's marketing executives to be very optimistic regarding the extent to which eMarketing methods may contribute to the effectiveness of the department's activities. Specifically, they believe that the department's marketing activities can be complemented though the deployment of a series of eMarketing methods towards the attainment of the organisation's marketing objectives.

Specifically, they all share the view that the marketing activities currently performed by the department can evolve to become more effective through the implementation of specific eMarketing methods. They also believe that the CTO should serve B2B markets online to support the industry's eMarketing readiness and capacity weaknesses.

Even though they work within an industry where ICT deployment levels and eMarketing investment are low compared to European Union's relevant averages, they expect eMarketing to have a very high impact on the attainment of the Organisation's marketing objectives. Specifically, they believe that eMarketing methods deployment by the CTO should aim at enhancing the marketing procedures towards staying competitive and keeping up with market forces through enabling personalised service provision and by developing explicit processes for measuring marketing campaigns' effectiveness.

They all agree that the CTO would be able to reduce marketing costs through the adoption of eMarketing methods, however their opinions vary in regards to whether the CTO should promote commercial tourism-related products and services online, whether the CTO should provide online booking facilities, and whether CTO should adopt an online revenue model to finance eMarketing methods.

Finally, they consider the establishment and staffing of an eMarketing unit very significant towards the attainment of the eMarketing objectives, while they expect eMarketing methods to drive the CTO's next generation of marketing methods. Their mindset is influenced by the European levels of

eMarketing deployment regarding the business models deployed, the industry participation and the systems and applications that are in place supporting relationship marketing and behavioural targeting.

Based on the evaluation of the results of the mindset and expectation levels of the CTO's marketing executives presented above some very interesting conclusions can be derived:

1. The CTO's marketing executives consider that eMarketing methods can be integrated into existing marketing procedures to enhance their effectiveness.
2. They have explicit and unambiguous expectations from the implementation of eMarketing methods, which involve the optimisation of marketing activities.
3. They believe that the CTO should serve B2B markets online to support the industry's eMarketing readiness and capacity weaknesses.
4. They have some reservations as to whether the CTO to should be involved in commercial activities and whether CTO should adopt an online revenue model to finance eMarketing methods.
5. They expect eMarketing methods to drive the CTO's next generation of marketing methods and they consider the establishment and staffing of an eMarketing unit very significant towards the attainment of the eMarketing objectives.

5.3 An EMarketing Model for the CTO

Reflecting on the results of the analysis of the relevant data to the research constructs defined and following the evaluation of a number of alternative eMarketing models (Briggs, 2001; Kotler, et al., 2006; Chaffey, et al., 2005; Schwede, 2007), the researcher has concluded that the most appropriate approach that should be followed for the development of an eMarketing model for the CTO is a combined one. Hence, the researcher in his attempt to capture and represent to the best possible extent the CTO's eMarketing

model, has encompassed traditional as well as modern marketing models like the 'four P' model (Borden, 1964), the 'seven P' model (Bitner, et al., 1990), the 'AIDA' model (Rowley, 2001), the 'three C' model (Ohmae, 1991) and the 'four C' model (Lauterborn, 1990). As a result, the developed model manages to address all the aspects of the eMarketing process that are relevant to the current doctoral research project. Moreover, the proposed model encompasses both the customer's perspective and the CTO's perspective at every stage, the specific eMarketing activities that the CTO should employ as well as the attention factors that should guide the successful deployment of these activities. Figure 5.22 presents the eMarketing model developed by the researcher for the purpose of this doctoral research project.

	Customer's Perspective	CTO's Perspective	eMarketing Activities	Attention Factors
Stage 1 – Instigate	Recognise the need and get interested in a product or service	Promote products or services to attract customers	Addressable eMarketing activities to enable interactivity with the customer	Target market selection, Transmission of the correct message
Stage 2 – Engage	Seek specific product or service information and answer specific questions	Provide and distribute explicit product or service information	Contextual eMarketing activities, Thematic content creation and distribution	Communicate appropriate information, Avoid information overload
Stage 3 – Convert	Look for guidance on how to purchase, Complete purchase	Provide help and support throughout the purchase process	Online booking and customer support facilities	Business model selection, Simplicity and Security
Stage 4 – Support	Expect Order confirmation and support information, Receive Order	Facilitate Order fulfilment, monitoring, customisation, Product or service warranty	Customer Care services through interactive real-time communication	Trained, multilingual customer service employees, Customer segmentation
Stage 5 – Retain	Receive post purchase communication, Product or service news and promotions	Personalised communication, Targeted offers, Relationship marketing	New product or service development, Behavioural targeting, Relationship marketing	Customer profiling, Need generation, Value adding services

Figure 5.22: **The CTO's eMarketing model** *(Source: Developed for this doctoral research project)*

The implementation of the model aims at setting the framework for the optimal execution of specific eMarketing actions within the existing marketing environment towards the attainment of the objectives put forward by this doctoral research project. A detailed illustration of the model's stages follows.

Stage 1 – Instigate: The first stage of the model captures the beginning of the customer buying process that deals with awareness. The customer at this stage recognises the need to acquire a product or service and gets interested into that product or service. During this stage the CTO is expected to promote its products and services to reach and attract the customer.

The CTO should employ addressable and viral eMarketing activities (Russell & Keith 2000) at this stage through the placement of interactive banner and video advertisements, interstitials and sponsorships to expose the customer to relevant products and services and to enable interactivity with the brand in real time. The more the customers sympathise with the destination and the product offering the more they can identify products or services that will satisfy their expectations. The selection of the appropriate target market as well as the transmission of the correct message are of critical importance at this stage as the channelling of the customer to the next stage is highly dependable upon these two factors.

Stage 2 – Engage: At the second stage the customer's attention has been 'grabbed' and the customer begins to search for information about the product or service in the available information space. The customer at this stage is trying to answer her questions about the product or service under consideration towards formulating specific requirements (product characteristics, price, convenience etc) about her needs. Moreover, the customer seeks specific information about the provider(s) of the product or service under consideration and evaluates the opportunity cost of not choosing the next best alternative. The CTO at this stage is expected to provide explicit information about the available products and services and distribute this information to the appropriate online channels.

The CTO should employ contextual eMarketing activities such as behavioural targeting through its portal, as well as search marketing (organic or paid) and location based search to facilitate the process of relevant information supply to the customer. Additionally the CTO should employ thematic web content creation and distribution through third party websites (community marketing, customer feedback and review, etc) aiming at maximum customer reach. The richness of information provided (online brochures, multimedia guided tours, etc) as well as the degree of interactivity of the online tools, in relation to the development of alternative value propositions (Kotler, et al., 1999) based on customer behaviour analysis, will be the deciding factor that will guide the customer's choice. The result, for the CTO, of successfully supporting the customer through this stage will be the selection of Cyprus as the anticipated destination. The communication of the appropriate information to the customer and the avoidance of information overload are the attention factors of this stage.

Stage 3 – Convert: When the customer arrives at the third stage she is ready for buying the selected product or service. Having answered all the questions around the relevant product or service and as a result having all the required knowledge around it, the customer at this stage seeks guidance on how to purchase the selected product or service. The CTO's online tools should provide the required functionality and support to guide the customer through the online purchasing process.

The CTO should provide the means through which the customer will be able to complete this stage in the simplest possible way by offering help and support throughout the process, aiming at providing a positive experience for the customer. The existence of online booking facilities on the CTO's portal would enable the customer to complete this stage in the most natural way. The attention factors of this stage involve the selection and establishment of the appropriate business model that will facilitate the satisfaction of individual customer's needs through the availability of an assortment of products and services at competitive prices, with simple and secure booking procedures.

Stage 4 – Support: Once the order has been placed, the customer seeks cognitive closure and affirmation (Choi, et al., 2008) through relevant information that should be provided by the CTO that is relevant to the specific product or service that was purchased. The customer expects to receive an order number or additional relevant product or service information as well as warranty and other supporting information. Once the customer receives the product or service she will expect to have all the information required to use the product for the anticipated purpose and as a result receive a positive experience. The CTO is expected to support the process through the provision of feedback and support information during this stage as well as through the availability of appropriate online processes for the customer to be able to monitor the progress of the order as well as provide relevant cross-selling offers.

The CTO should employ online customer care services such as online call centres and chats, as well as knowledge bases that will provide relevant feedback in real time for supporting the customer throughout this stage. The intangible nature of the tourism products and services that will be offered through the CTO's online channels make the task of the CTO at this stage more challenging since the provision of order and tracking numbers is not appropriate in this case. Instead, a booking confirmation number should be provided which would enable the identification of the order into the system and allow the customer to modify the order as well as receive other relevant product offers (cross selling). This will be possible through the deployment of an online Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that will match the customer's preferences to the available products and services based on an analysis of the customer's requirements and characteristics. The availability of a CRM system will also promote new product and service development since it will enable the identification of specific customer requirements that have not been anticipated. This in turn will enable behavioural targeting and segmentation.

The CTO should give special attention to the availability of specially trained employees for the provision of customer support services in a multilingual

environment. Moreover, special attention should be given to the development of appropriate models for customer profiling towards optimising the processes of customer behavioural targeting and segmentation.

Stage 5 – Retain: During the final stage of this model the customer expects to receive post purchase communication from the destination for completing the buying process's cognitive stages of cognitive closure and affirmation (Choi, et al., 2008). Moreover, if the customer requested so, she will expect to receive periodically, news and promotions about the destination's products and services. Additionally, the customer will expect to have the appropriate facilities that will enable the provision of feedback ratings relevant to the products or services purchased. For facilitating this customer need, the CTO should initiate customer communities and online thematic clubs for customers to participate, share experiences and join events.

The CTO, through the post sale communication with the customer should provide more personalised messages and product offers that should fit to the customer profile. Through this communication, the CTO will manage to create new needs to the customer in order to drive her to repeat the buying process. This will lead to customer loyalty and will ideally drive the customer into an infinite process where she will satisfy her needs through the destination's products and services.

The CTO, through the analysis of the information that will be collected from the applications that will be in place, will be able to identify the customers' requirements and expectations towards the development of explicit value propositions that will satisfy these requirements and expectations. The development of the customer value propositions will be facilitated by the CTO's iterative processes of product development optimisation and service quality management. By continuously communicating in a personalised way the value propositions available for customers, the CTO will manage to generate new needs to the customers and as a result increase customer loyalty. This will be achieved through relationship marketing activities that will be deployed through a CRM system that will be in place.

The attention factors of this stage involve the communication of personalised messages based on generated customer profiles, which will manage to attract customers and generate new needs, and not the transmission of generic product promotions which will be similar to other destinations offerings and have price as the main comparison variable.

The eMarketing model presented above captures the processes that are inherently present into a customer online buying process and the CTO's perspective in relation to the market variables. Moreover, it comprises the proposed marketing activities that are expected to be in place by the CTO to support the process along with the attention factors that need to be considered.

The deployment of an eMarketing model by the CTO that will support the customer buying process is necessary as the market forces guide the travel industry towards that direction. Through the deployment of the proposed model the CTO will manage to optimise its eMarketing activities following a structured approach, for satisfying the needs of its customers. The failure of the CTO to implement an eMarketing model will lead to customer frustration with high potential losses to the destination Cyprus, placing it in an inferior competitive position, resulting in a competitive disadvantage.

The suggested eMarketing model provides a seamless link from customer need generation to customer loyalty, facilitating a rich customer experience throughout the process. In parallel, the potentials offered for explicit measurement of the eMarketing activities' outcomes at each stage, enable the continuous evaluation and improvement of the techniques deployed. The employment of the suggested model by the CTO will support the successful satisfaction of its customers' expectations, while managing to sustain the CTO's marketing executives' mindset, fulfilling in parallel their expectations.

5.4 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the findings of the doctoral research project based on the data analysis techniques deployed were illustrated. The presentation of the findings was based on the research propositions put forward at an earlier stage of the project.

An analysis of the results derived from the defined variables was presented at the beginning of the chapter. The analysis was based on the doctoral research project's constructs as these were defined in previous chapters. A series of relevant conclusions that were founded upon the analysis of the results of the defined variables were then presented.

Next, an evaluation of the findings that were relevant to CTO's online visitors / customers and the CTO's marketing executives, was carried out. Finally, an eMarketing model for the CTO was put forward. The aim of this chapter was to illustrate the findings of the doctoral research project based on the data analysis techniques deployed for analysing the research topic.

In the next chapter the impact that the proposed eMarketing model is expected to have on the CTO, that is relevant to the attainment of this doctoral research project aims is illustrated.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the impact that the eMarketing model proposed in this doctoral research project is expected to have on the CTO that is relevant to the attainment of this doctoral research project aims. Furthermore, this chapter concludes the work performed for this doctoral research project through the illustration of a combined view of the findings of the data analysis methods deployed, in order to facilitate the process of understanding the project's results.

The chapter begins by presenting the conclusions and recommendations that are relevant to the specific objectives set. It then moves on elaborating on the integration of marketing activities towards the optimisation of the CTO's marketing processes. Next an illustration of an integrated marketing model for the CTO is performed, which is based on the preceding discussion.

The personal and professional reflections of the researcher during the project are then presented followed by a discussion on the inherent limitations of this doctoral research project as well as future directions of research. Finally, the issues presented are linked through a summary of the chapter.

6.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

This doctoral research project examined the role of eMarketing methods implementation towards reaching an optimal model for the Cyprus Tourism Organisation. The overall aim of this doctoral research project involved the enrichment of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation's marketing activities towards augmenting the competitiveness of Cyprus as a tourism destination worldwide.

The specific objectives of this doctoral research project were:

- The development of a theoretical framework for the derivation of logical sense of the relationships among the underlying factors regarding the CTO's eMarketing strategy implementation.
- The development of an eMarketing Model for supporting the process of eMarketing strategy implementation by the CTO,
- The integration of eMarketing processes into traditional marketing processes for maximising the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing efforts worldwide,
- The facilitation of the sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism industry through the deployment of eMarketing methods.

To meet these objectives, an eMarketing model was developed, which was founded upon the project's findings. The model development was relevant to the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and expectations and the CTO's online visitors / customers' expectations. Moreover, the model reflects on the CTO's existing marketing services, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing deployment and European NTOs' eMarketing deployment level.

The deployment of the developed eMarketing model will optimise the implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy propositions. The utilisation of the eMarketing model developed, by the CTO, will facilitate the efficiency of its marketing methods by adequately supporting customer's experience at every step of the tourism buying process.

The adoption of this doctoral research project's findings by the CTO will enable the optimised implementation of modern eMarketing communication methods across the organisation and the Cyprus tourism industry. This will have a positive impact on the sustainable development of Cyprus as a tourism destination, which will be achieved through the improvement of the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing activities worldwide.

The results of this doctoral research project have specific implications for the CTO in regards to the implementation model of its eMarketing strategy. This doctoral research project identifies the key attributes into which the CTO should invest resources towards the enrichment of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation's marketing activities.

The implications that this doctoral research project has on the CTO, relate directly to the expected impact of the project outcomes that are relevant to the specific objectives set. By reflecting on the eMarketing model developed in this doctoral research project, a number of implications are evident that when implemented will achieve the desired outcomes. In pursuing the paradigm proposed by the eMarketing model developed for this doctoral research project, the CTO will manage to gain comprehensive understanding of customer expectations that will enable new strategic directions for facilitating their satisfaction. As a result of the optimised deployment of eMarketing activities, a positive impact will be observed on the sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism industry.

This doctoral research project is premised on the belief that in a highly competitive business environment, the only way forward for the CTO is maximising the effectiveness of its marketing efforts worldwide. This could only be achieved through the integration of eMarketing processes into traditional marketing processes for enabling the:

- Improvement of the CTO's communication efficiency with its customers.
- Enhancement of the CTO's brand image.
- Enrichment of customer service through eMarketing channels.
- Facilitation of customer profiling and the achievement of relationship marketing.
- Improvement of knowledge distribution across the Cyprus tourism industry.
- Reinforcement of tourist loyalty as a result of increased customer satisfaction.

The interactive nature of eMarketing activities will assist the CTO in the process of identifying customers' preferences for delivering value adding services in the process of building long term relationships with them. The optimisation of the process of eMarketing strategy implementation by the CTO will enhance customer satisfaction, towards achieving retention and loyalty.

Additionally, the initiation of customer loyalty schemes which will be supported by the CRM and online booking systems can lead to effectively maintaining valuable customer accounts. This will facilitate Cyprus's tourism product and service differentiation towards personalising the offering to its customers making the notion of "one product fits all" irrelevant. The successful implementation of the eMarketing strategy based on the proposed model, will enable the attainment of on-demand, customised and dynamic product creation achieving a "one product or service to one customer" marketing strategy. As a result, customer value will be enhanced, facilitating the sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism industry.

In the process of pursuing a customer orientation strategy, the CTO is advised to segment customers according to their value to the organisation as to cost effectively implement the organisation's retention strategies. Keeping and serving the right customers requires a good understanding of customers' preferences and delivering value depending on their needs and wants. An understanding of customers' variances on demographic and experience variables will provide insights for the CTO's marketing executives in planning and implementing effective customer acquisition and retention strategies. Segmentation of customers should be connected to customer behaviour profiling in order to derive knowledge of the range of values that are expected to be delivered to groups of customers or individuals.

The results of the research performed for this doctoral research project suggest that the optimisation of the CTO's marketing activities involves the integration of traditional with electronic marketing processes in a holistic attempt towards understanding customers' expectations and facilitating the process of their satisfaction. The shift in customer behaviour and expectations

makes the need for the deployment of the results of this doctoral research project's outcomes a necessity for the CTO. Customers expect now, more than ever before, a tourism destination to offer them with customised product and service offerings that will match their expectations. The destinations that manage to maximise the satisfaction levels of customers' expectations, and support the customers throughout the buying process, will be the ones to survive the competition and realise maximum benefits. The destinations that fail to satisfy the customers expectations will be left behind with devastating consequences.

The changes in customer behaviour and expectations have resulted from the abundance and dynamism of information that is available online. Information about a product or service may be published online, reviewed, rated and distributed by customers who are interacting online and share their experiences across the time and space dimensions. Therefore a destination that wants to successfully satisfy customers' expectations needs to have a strong presence across the communication channels that customers use to exchange information.

Through these modern communication enabling facilities, customers are empowered to discuss their travel experiences and to share their opinions about destinations with the rest of the world. In this dynamic environment, destinations' product offerings are analysed and the best offerings become prevalent. Therefore, destinations can no longer hide their weaknesses from their customers and cannot promote their products and services faking the truth. The truth is the most prevalent characteristic of customer generated communications and it will be widespread regardless of the effort the destination may try to put to stop it.

Considering the realities of modern communication enabling facilities mentioned above, the CTO should set as its first priority the development of its tourist products and services, since any weaknesses will be widely communicated among customers regardless of the amount of money spend on marketing those products and services.

Serious care should also be taken to the harmonisation of the messages that are transmitted to the customers through alternative communication channels. Communication procedures have changed and are no longer one way. The customers expect to interact with the destination to receive personalised service that will make them feel important. Therefore, any interaction with the customers should be monitored and customised so as to facilitate personalised communication towards the maximisation of customer satisfaction.

During this period of unprecedented economic downturn that the world is facing, the CTO should focus on customer empowerment through their dynamic involvement in the destination's product development processes. Only through the utilisation of electronic communication channels it will be possible for the CTO to achieve efficient customer involvement, which will provide for the dynamic development of products and services matching customer expectations for maximising their satisfaction. Moreover, in order to facilitate the empowerment of the customers, the CTO's communication channels should be able to provide the customers with the help and support they require to understand the products and services characteristics in order to be able to appreciate them and identify in them their satisfaction qualities that will lead them to complete the buying process.

Finally, the CTO's employees should be trained so as to be able to understand the customers' expectations and engage towards providing customer services that will satisfy the customers and drive them through the buying process in the most pleasant possible way.

Electronic Marketing channels are perceived as fast, enabling real time access to information and processes, and allowing some level of control, thus expectations of eMarketing services are higher compared to the traditional channels. This doctoral research project emphasises that the CTO in its endeavour to satisfy its online customers, it should understand well the dimensions that will help them maintain high satisfaction levels. Although

basic traditional marketing principles apply to the electronic marketing environment as well, the differences in customer behaviour that emerge as a result of interactive nature of the eMarketing channels should be recognised.

During the process of implementing its eMarketing strategy, the CTO should continuously evaluate the outcomes against the relevant objectives to ensure its effective implementation. Reconsidering value adding services and understanding customers' current needs as well as anticipating their future needs are among the critical criteria that need to be assessed in order to stay competitive in the modern marketplace. Therefore a key factor for the successful attainment of the CTO's strategic objectives is the synchronisation of the eMarketing activities with the traditional marketing activities.

Based on this, the CTO is advised to focus on integrating its marketing efforts for efficiently targeting its customers. Hence, the CTO's marketing plans should involve a comprehensive approach that will lead to customer engagement through a combination of integrated marketing activities. This will drive the CTO towards serving the customer's preferences more efficiently and will enable new strategic directions for benefiting the CTO from enduring customers' relationships.

Through the integration of its marketing processes the CTO will manage to establish a common knowledge repository which will enable the derivation of valuable conclusions about understanding customers' preferences and segmenting them according to their value to the organisation. The integration of knowledge management models with the CTO's strategic objectives will enable the execution, management and monitoring of holistic marketing campaigns across alternative communication channels that will enable interaction with the customers in an attempt to satisfy their varying needs at a personalised level.

A well integrated eMarketing model will not be effective unless the CTO fully understands and observes the drivers of customer satisfaction. This doctoral research project contributes in identifying the e-satisfaction dimension.

Indeed, on the Internet, customers who are dissatisfied may easily switch to another provider thus customers must at least be satisfied with the services before making their decisions to revisit. Thereafter, other variables such as service quality, perceived value and trust will influence their intention to revisit and/or to remain loyal.

Through enabling the provision of integrated marketing services to the customers, the CTO will manage to improve customer satisfaction and in extent build long lasting relationships with customers towards gaining a competitive edge. Table 6.1 illustrates this doctoral research project's conclusions and recommendations in relation to the relevant project findings and research propositions.

Table 6.1: Conclusions and recommendations in relation to the relevant project findings and research propositions

Research Proposition	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
CTO's online visitors / customers' Expectations, is a function of demographics, knowledge, and experience.	1. Customers' expectations levels differ depending on demographics. 2. Customers' expectations levels differ depending on experience level.	Customers have evolved into visitors of electronic services. The CTO should create visitors / customers' profiles based on their demographics, knowledge, and experience in order to better understand their expectations.	The CTO should segment visitors / customers according to their expectations to be able to target / service each one of them by optimising its offered products and services.
CTO's online visitors / customers' Satisfaction is a function of Product or Service range, Order fulfilment level, Customer service quality, Information quality, Ease of navigation, Online security and trust, Perceived value, Personalisation, Online community, Channel integration.	1. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Product or Service range. 2. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Order fulfilment level. 3. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Customer service quality. 4. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Information quality. 5. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Ease of navigation. 6. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Online security and trust. 7. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Perceived value. 8. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Personalisation. 9. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Online community. 10. Customers' satisfaction levels depend on Channel integration.	High levels of visitors / customers' satisfaction from the use of the CTO's electronic services facilitate the optimisation of customer experience with the destination. The performance outcomes of the visitors / customers' satisfaction variables by the CTO's electronic services provide for the development of long term relationships between the destination and its customers. As a result of the establishment of long term relationships, increased repeat business of the customers with the destination is achieved resulting in customer loyalty. Hence, visitors / customers' satisfaction is an antecedent of retention, which leads to maximising the destination's marketing processes profitability and in extent enables the attainment of a competitive edge.	The CTO should utilise electronic marketing to communicate with its customers at every stage of the buying process. Electronic marketing model deployment optimisation will enable the CTO to create the means through which customers will interact with the destination to customise the offering to their individual preferences and guide them towards the completion of the transaction providing personalised support during the process. Customers' satisfaction will be facilitated by the alternative electronic marketing methods that will be deployed, which will enable real time interaction of the customer with the destination in order to maximise satisfaction at every point of contact. Real time customer support will be achieved by the optimised implementation of the variables involved to enable a "one product or service to one customer" marketing strategy.

Research Proposition	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
CTO's marketing executives' mindset is a function of the current CTO marketing communication procedures, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment and the European NTOs' eMarketing models deployment.	1. Marketing executives' mindset depends upon the CTO marketing communication procedures. 2. Marketing executives' mindset depends upon the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing methods deployment. 3. Marketing executives' mindset depends upon the European NTOs' eMarketing models deployment.	Marketing executives believe that the CTO's marketing communication procedures have the potential of fully supporting the integration of relevant eMarketing models towards the attainment of the CTO's strategic objectives. The Cyprus tourism industry's limitation in engaging into electronic marketing activities hinders the maximisation of the potential benefits. The advancement of European NTO's in the area of electronic marketing methods implementation imposes the need for the CTO to optimise its eMarketing implementation model.	The eMarketing unit should be provided with the required authority to manage and coordinate the optimisation of the CTO's eMarketing implementation model throughout the totality of the Cyprus tourism industry. This will enable the enrichment of the CTO's marketing activities towards augmenting the competitiveness of Cyprus as a tourism destination worldwide.
CTO's marketing executives' expectations is a function of aspiration and planning.	1. Marketing executives' expectations differ depending on their aspiration levels. 2. Marketing executives' expectations differ depending on their planning capacities.	Marketing executives have high expectations from the deployment of eMarketing methods. They believe that the integration of electronic and traditional marketing methods will leverage the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing processes.	The CTO will be able to optimise its marketing processes by integrating electronic and traditional marketing processes. This will maximise the effectiveness of the CTO's marketing efforts worldwide and facilitate the sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism industry.

6.2 Marketing Model Integration

Given the discussion above, this doctoral research project concludes with an integration analysis of the eMarketing model presented in Chapter 5 with traditional marketing activities carried out at the CTO for optimising the organisation's marketing processes.

In order for the CTO to integrate traditional marketing activities with eMarketing activities, it needs to follow the eMarketing model developed in this doctoral research project to implement marketing plans that utilise a well-managed combination of online and offline channels to communicate with its customers. In Figure 6.1 the concept of the CTO's marketing model integration is depicted. An illustration of the stages of the model follows.
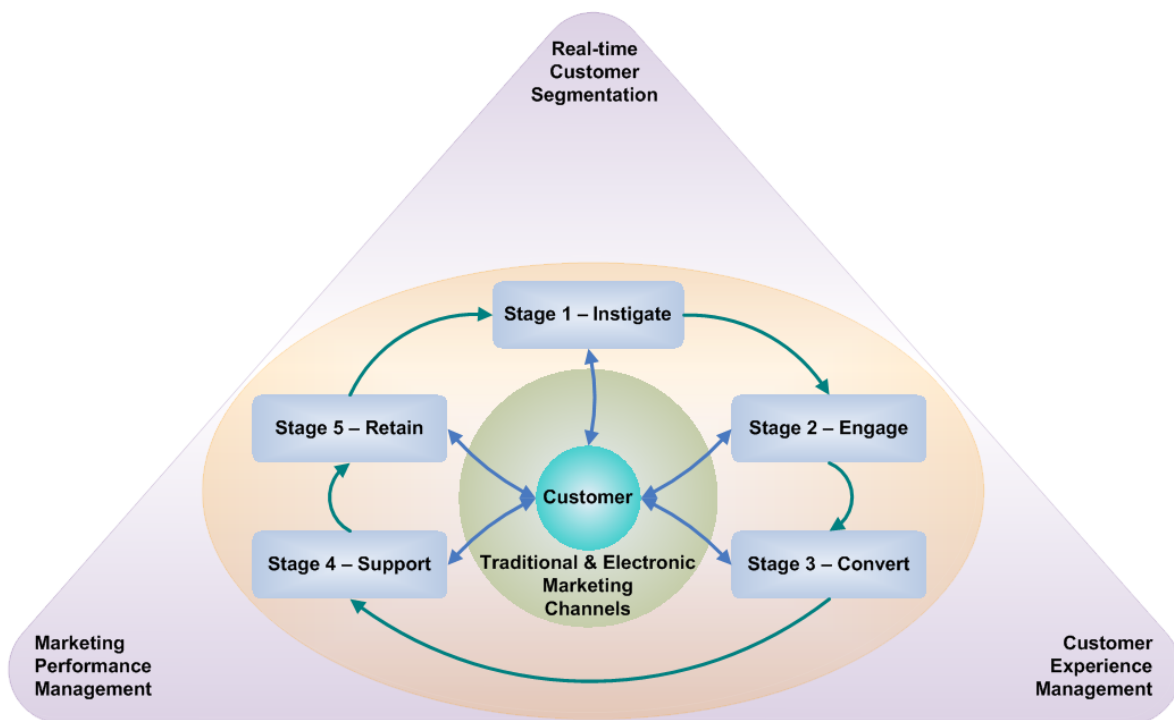
Figure 6.1: **The CTO's Integrated Marketing model** *(Developed for this doctoral research project)*

A. Instigate & Engage: Within the context of the first two stages of the model which aim at creating customer awareness and generating sales leads, both offline and online channels should be deployed complementing each other. Traditional marketing activities such as generic advertising campaigns tourism fairs, workshops and road shows as well as familiarisation and hospitality trips of tourism professionals, may be deployed in combination with electronic content distribution and interactive online rich media advertising towards the attainment of efficient interactive communication with customers.

The integrated marketing approach will facilitate the successful creation of customer awareness for satisfying their specific needs and as a result develop new sales demand. In heading towards this direction, the CTO should deploy addressable online advertising activities that should aim at serving the correct message to the appropriate target market at the right time, based on the target market's behavioural attributes. Furthermore, the CTO should set up a content distribution strategy that will guide its activities towards coordinating content creation and distribution across different communication channels across the time and place dimensions for maximising the intended message's impact.

Through the successful integration of traditional and electronic marketing activities for the first two stages of the model, the CTO will manage to increase customer response rates which will lead to maximising the number of customers that engage and move to the next stage of the process, with better possibilities of sales lead generation.

B. Convert & Support: As the customer moves to the next two stages of the model, the CTO is expected to provide online and offline support to guide the customer through the sales process and to facilitate order fulfilment. Through the provision of a call centre that should be available in both an offline and an online environment as well as through the availability of online help and support services on the CTO's portal, the satisfaction of customers' expectations will be facilitated resulting in the successful completion of the purchase process.

Cross selling facilities aiming at enticing customers with specific product or service offers that are relevant to the individual customer's profile should be offered at this stage through online communication channels. The analysis of the individual customer's behaviours and characteristics, in relation to the purchased products and services, though relevant customer relationship models, will enable the optimisation of cross selling services, which will aim at enhancing the customer's experience with the destination.

The quality of customer service during the process is guided by the availability of bookable products and services in an online booking system within the organisation's online portal. Additionally, the provision of supporting applications that will assist the customers in the process of organising their visit is of critical importance. The quality of communication during the process is guided by information accuracy, completeness and timeliness as well as by the security measures established for ensuring that customer transactions involved are completely safe and carried out as smoothly as possible.

During the visit of the customers to the destination the CTO is expected to provide customer care and support services. Through the provision of traditional and electronic customer support services the CTO will manage to maintain close contact with the customers in its attempt to anticipate and satisfy their expectations. This will be possible through the analysis of the relevant customers' information to derive their individual preferences and employ the appropriate procedures to support them across the time and place dimensions.

By employing relevant applications that can support individual customer's expectations across the time and place dimensions, the CTO will manage to maximise its customers' travel experience by facilitating the satisfaction of their needs throughout their visit. Through the deployment of proximity marketing activities (BLIP, 2005) the CTO will manage to communicate with its customers across the time and place dimensions, based on their behavioural attributes. The utilisation of these applications will enable the

derivation of valuable knowledge towards understanding customers' behaviour in relation to their interests and preferences. The combination of this knowledge with the knowledge about the customers' online and offline behaviour during the buying process will enable the implementation of advanced customer segmentation strategies by the CTO in an attempt to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience.

As a result, the contribution of valuable feedback in the destination's product development processes will be made possible. This will enable the customisation of the offered products and services to satisfy the specific customer segments' requirements. The realisation of a close relationship among the CTO's product development and marketing services will result to the optimisation of the CTO's marketing processes, augmenting the competitiveness of Cyprus as a tourism destination worldwide.

C. Retain: During the final stage of the model the CTO should carry out post purchase communication with the customers in the form of online satisfaction surveys in an attempt to recognise the degree of customer satisfaction through the provided services and identify any product or service weaknesses. Through the collection and analysis of the results gathered by these surveys the CTO will be able to derive valuable conclusions about the customers' expectations and their corresponding satisfaction levels for taking the relevant corrective measures in the product development as well as the service quality standards.

The proposed model is underpinned by three foundations, namely, Marketing Performance Management, Customer Experience Management and Real-time Customer Segmentation. The CTO will be able to optimise its integrated marketing model through closely monitoring these three underpinning factors. Failure to manage these factors will have adverse results on the effectiveness of the model negatively impacting the optimisation of the organisation's marketing processes.

The need for marketing performance management is now becoming more obvious than ever since there is a direct relationship between measurability and profitability, which is becoming more evident through eMarketing techniques. The deployment of accurate metrics that will measure the performance of the CTO's marketing activities at every stage of the model as well as collectively throughout the lifetime of a customer, will determine the CTO's marketing model effectiveness.

Managing the customer experience throughout the stages of the model will leverage customer satisfaction towards building and sustaining long lasting relationships. This will be possible through the design and delivery of products and services that will match customers' expectations. Through the successful attainment of customer experience management the CTO will optimise the processes of customer acquisition and retention that will enable the establishment of long lasting relationships with the customers.

Real-time customer segmentation will enable the effective management of customer targeting throughout the stages of the model. By analysing the information resulting from every interaction with the customer, the CTO will manage to customise its product offering to satisfy the customer's expectations. The knowledge that will result from this analysis will facilitate the definition of new customer segments as well as the evolution of existing ones towards the attainment of more targeted and efficient marketing activities.

The successful management of the model's underpinning factors will enable the successful implementation of an integrated marketing model for the CTO that will enhance customer satisfaction and facilitate the development of long lasting relationships with customers.

The key for optimising the CTO's marketing processes is the successful integration of traditional marketing activities with eMarketing activities based on the model proposed in this doctoral research project. The implementation of the suggested model, which is based on the outcomes of this doctoral research project, facilitates the satisfaction of the CTO's online visitors /

customer' expectations, while it is founded upon the CTO's marketing executives' mindset and expectations. Moreover, it reflects on the CTO's existing marketing services, the Cyprus tourism industry eMarketing deployment and European NTO's eMarketing deployment.

6.3 Reflections on personal and professional journey during the project

During the period of my work for this doctoral research project I aimed at achieving the maximum possible outcomes from the research study that I have undertaken and in parallel apply all the knowledge gathered to my workplace for enhancing the implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy for the benefit of Cyprus as a tourism destination.

My research work has been a great enabler for my practice in helping me understand the bigger picture of things that took place around me in my work environment and made me focus on maximising the benefits that my work could bring upon on the CTO's marketing activities. My everyday work on the implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy enabled me to better understand the direction that the industry should follow towards enabling modern marketing models that will facilitate efficient interaction with the customers in order to maximise the impact of my research work.

Reflecting on the progress of my research as well as my professional work during the period of this doctoral research project I realise the degree of knowledge that I have achieved to develop through the iterative knowledge management process that I followed, which involved the steps of collecting, selecting, reflecting and projecting knowledge towards the successful realisation of my personal goals. Goals, directly related with the successful accomplishment of this doctoral research project's aims, as well as the optimised implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy.

Through my doctoral research and professional work I came to realise the ways that eMarketing may be deployed towards adding value to the CTO's

marketing processes and as a result facilitate the attainment of the organisation's marketing objectives. The result of my work aims at optimising the process of eMarketing strategy implementation by the CTO, in an attempt of augmenting the competitiveness of Cyprus as a tourism destination worldwide.

I hope that the results of my work will create the expected impact on the CTO's processes and that it will facilitate the sustainable development of Cyprus as a tourism destination for the benefit of all the people that live on or visit the island.

6.4 Limitations and directions for future research

During the course of this doctoral research project a series of questions have arisen that are interesting for future investigation and which cannot be answered by the work performed as they are outside the scope of the current project. These questions involve:

- The investigation of ways through which customer relationships can be catered for online for attaining customer engagement (Galbreath, 2002),
- The analysis of customer loyalty determinants and their provision through eMarketing channels (Anderson & Srinivasan 2003),
- The realisation of the eMarketing model presented through the implementation of relevant eMarketing tools (Russell & Keith 2000),
- The maintenance of customer databases for deriving knowledge that will facilitate customer retention (Winer, 2001),
- The exploration of new customer satisfaction determinants for implementing advanced customer segmentation strategies (Hass, 2005).

This doctoral research project is concerned with the optimisation of the implementation of the CTO's eMarketing strategy. Although the CTO is advised to adopt the proposals of this doctoral research project, the expected benefits may vary depending on the implementation scale. A relatively small destination like Cyprus may not be able to fully utilise the potential of the

eMarketing model developed due to constraints in resources. Hence, eMarketing implementation in various business scenarios merits further investigation.

Moreover, while this doctoral research project assumes a positive relationship between eMarketing and satisfaction, eMarketing features may have changed rapidly since the point of time this study was conducted. Therefore additional research may be necessary to incorporate other factors of eMarketing not included in this doctoral research project.

In this doctoral research project, respondents were asked to fill out a web-based survey and try to concurrently assess their reactions to the CTO portal's features while they were interacting with the portal. This study could be improved if a paper-based survey was conducted to recollect respondent's past experiences on the features that influenced their repeat visits behaviour. Therefore, another possible direction for further research might be to use a paper-based survey. Additionally, as the growth of Internet transactions in the business-to-business sector is escalating, studies designed to investigate the relationships between eMarketing and customer satisfaction, in a business-to-business environment may well be worthwhile.

The results of this doctoral research project may be applied to other countries with similar levels of eMarketing deployment in the tourism industry or to other industries and business environments. Potential areas of study are whether other factors of eMarketing, which influence assessment of satisfaction, can be identified in regions where customers' behaviour may differ depending on culture, beliefs and technology acceptance level. Therefore, before conclusions and implications can be made to other countries, further research should be conducted.

6.5 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter the expected impact that the eMarketing model proposed in this doctoral research project is expected to have on the CTO was depicted. Furthermore, in this chapter the work performed for this doctoral research project was illustrated, manifesting the findings of the data analysis methods deployed, in an attempt to conclude the work and facilitate the process of understanding the project's results.

A presentation of the conclusions and recommendations that are relevant to the specific objectives set was performed at the beginning of the chapter, followed by an elaboration on the integration of marketing activities towards the optimisation of the CTO's marketing processes. Next an illustration of an integrated marketing model for the CTO was performed, based on the former discussion.

The personal and professional reflections of the researcher during the project were then presented followed by a discussion on the inherent limitations of this doctoral research project as well as future directions of research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Questionnaire on EMarketing Methods Deployment by the CTO

Name:

Position:

Department:

Date:

1. What do you believe should be the objectives of e-marketing methods deployment by the CTO?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Suggest how e-marketing methods can be applied so that the CTO can achieve the objectives stated above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Below there is a list of the marketing methods currently being deployed by the CTO. Please indicate the extend to which you expect e-marketing methods to contribute to the effectiveness of each of the following methods:

	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
Advertising					
Promotion					
Sales support and Distribution					
Public Relations					
Market Analysis and Segmentation					
Personal Selling					
Publications and Information provision					
Direct Marketing					

4. How do you believe e-marketing methods can complement each of the marketing methods below towards the attainment of the overall CTO's marketing objectives?

Advertising _____
                                     _____

Promotion _____
                                     _____

Sales support and Distribution _____
                                     _____

Public Relations _____
                                     _____

Market Analysis and Segmentation _____
                                     _____

Personal Selling _____
                                     _____

Publications and Information provision _____
                                     _____

Direct Marketing _____
                                     _____

5. What impact do you expect the utilisation of e-marketing methods to have on the attainment of the CTO's overall marketing objectives?

Very High	
High	
Neutral	
Low	
Very Low	

6. How likely do you consider e-marketing methods can drive the CTO's next generation marketing methods?

Very Likely	
Likely	
Neutral	
Unlikely	
Very Unlikely	

7. How would you describe your overall opinion about each of the following statements:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable
CTO should adopt e-marketing methods					
CTO would be able to reduce marketing costs through the adoption of e-marketing methods					
CTO should promote commercial tourism-related products and services online					
CTO should provide online booking facilities					
CTO should adopt an online revenue model to finance e-marketing methods					
CTO should serve B2B markets online					

8. How significant do you consider the establishment and staffing of an e-Marketing unit towards attaining the objectives of e-marketing methods by the CTO?

Very Significant	
Significant	
Neutral	
Insignificant	
Very Insignificant	

Thank you

Appendix 2

Online Questionnaire on CTO EMarketing Users' Requirements

Part A: Respondent's Demographic Information

1. Please indicate your Gender:
    - Male
    - Female

2. Please indicate your Age:
    - Under 20 years
    - 21 to 30 years
    - 31 to 40 years
    - 41 to 50 years
    - 51 to 60 years
    - Over 60 years

3. Please indicate your highest attained Education Level:
    - Primary School
    - High School
    - College
    - University

4. Please indicate your Gross Monthly Income:
    - Under 1,000 Euro
    - 1,001 to 2,500 Euro
    - 2,501 to 5,000 Euro
    - 5,001 to 7,500 Euro
    - Over 7,500 Euro

5. Please indicate your Country of Residence:

(List of Countries)

6. Please indicate your average Weekly number of Hours spent Online:
    - Under 10 hours
    - 11 to 20 hours
    - 21 to 30 hours
    - 31 to 40 hours
    - Over 40 hours

7. Please indicate your Internet Experience:
    - Under 1 year
    - 1 to 3 years
    - 3 to 5 years
    - 5 to 7 years
    - Over 7 years

8. Please indicate how often you use the following Internet Applications:

(i) World Wide Web (Internet Browsing)
    - Never
    - Rarely (Once a month)
    - Sometimes (Once a week)
    - Frequently (Daily)
    - Very Frequently (Every few hours)

(ii) Email
    - Never
    - Rarely (Once a month)
    - Sometimes (Once a week)
    - Frequently (Daily)
    - Very Frequently (Every few hours)

(iii) Chat
    - Never
    - Rarely (Once a month)
    - Sometimes (Once a week)
    - Frequently (Daily)
    - Very Frequently (Every few hours)

9. Please indicate how often you perform the following online transactions:

(i) Online registration
    - Never
    - Rarely (Once a year)
    - Sometimes (Once a month)
    - Frequently (Once a week)

- Very Frequently (Daily)

(ii) Online shopping
- Never
- Rarely (Once a year)
- Sometimes (Once a month)
- Frequently (Once a week)
- Very Frequently (Daily)

(iii) Online travel-related booking
- Never
- Rarely (Once a year)
- Sometimes (Once a month)
- Frequently (Once a week)
- Very Frequently (Daily)

Part C: Respondent's Requirements

10. How did you reach www.visitcyprus.com ?
- I typed the website address directly
- Through a link from another website
- Through an advertisement on another website
- It is currently my browser homepage
- It is in my favourites list
- Using a search engine (Select from a list)

11. Why are you visiting the Cyprus Tourism Organisation Official Portal (www.visitcyprus.com)?
- Considering of visiting Cyprus and seek information about the country
- Already decided to visit Cyprus and look for specific information
- Already know where I am going in Cyprus and wish to make an online reservation
- Already in Cyprus and you wish to check available services
- Do not intend to travel to Cyprus but seek information about Cyprus
- Other reasons

12. What kind of information are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com ?
- How to travel to Cyprus
- Accommodation
- Things to do
- Places to visit
- Events
- Transportation in Cyprus
- Health, Legal and Safety
- Other (Please specify)

13. Were you able to find the information you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com ?

     - Yes
     - No

14. How would you describe your opinion about the available information on www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable
Information Structure (How well the information fit together.)					
Usefulness of Information (To what degree the information was useful for the purpose of the visit.)					
Information Focus (The degree to which information was targeted to fit requirements.)					
Information Accuracy (How accurate is the information in relation to reality.)					
Information Clarity (The ease with which the information was understood.)					
Bias of Information (The extent to which the information is opinionated.)					

15. What kind of online services are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com ?

     - Online booking
     - Travel planner
     - Maps
     - Newsletter

- Weather
- Customised brochure builder
- Blog
- Other (Please specify)

16. Were you able to find the online services you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com ?

- Yes
- No

17. How would you describe your overall opinion of www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable
Customer Service (To what degree customers' requests can be serviced.)					
Name Recognition and Reputation (The degree to which the name is credible and trusted.)					
Portal Functionality (How well the Portal performs.)					
Portal Accessibility (The ease with which the features were understood.)					
Portal Design Look (The professionalism of the Portal visual design; layout, font, white space, images, colour schemes,etc.)					

18.   Has/have your visit(s) to www.visitcyprus.com inspired you to visit or discover Cyprus?
- Yes
- No

19. How would you describe the overall impact of the following media on you decision to visit or discover a country:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable
Travel Brochure / Book					
Internet					
Newspaper / Periodical Advertisement					
Radio Advertisement					
TV Advertisement					
Tourism exhibition					
Travel Agent / Tour Operator					
Local customer service Office					

That was the last question. Thank you for taking part in this online survey. For considering your input, a valid email address is required. Please provide your email address:

Email: ………………………………………………………………………………

Providing an email address is necessary for the purpose of achieving best results out of the survey. Please be assured that this information will only be used for this survey and it will be treated as strictly confidential.

Please be informed that participation in the survey is open to anyone, regardless of computer expertise, age, etc. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the survey at any time they choose.

The results of this survey will be coded in such a way that participant's identity will not be physically attached to the final data that will be produced. While the results of this survey may be published or reported to government agencies, funding agencies, or scientific groups, participant's identity will not be associated in any way with any published results.

Research Design Conceptual Framework
(*Source: Developed for this doctoral research project*)

	eMarketing Research	
Perspective	**Focus**	**Reflecting**
CTO Marketing Strategy CTO eMarketing Strategy CTO Marketing procedures	Dynamics of eMarketing environment in tourism eMarketing deployment in the Cyprus tourism industry Cyprus tourism Target Markets	eMarketing tourism trends European NTO's eMarketing activities CTO Strategic Plan for tourism

Outcomes of the eMarketing Optimisation

> ➢ Implications for CTO eMarketing actions
> ➢ Implications on the Cyprus tourism industry
> ➢ Impact on the offered tourism services
> ➢ Implications for the CTO Marketing Strategy

Results

Sustainable development of the Cyprus tourism product

Appendix 4.1

Online Survey Results

Frequency of Respondent Profile (N=518)

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender		
	- Male	270	52.1
	- Female	248	47.9
2.	Age		
	- Under 20 years	22	4.2
	- 21 to 30 years	144	27.8
	- 31 to 40 years	123	23.7
	- 41 to 50 years	104	20.1
	- 51 to 60 years	80	15.4
	- Over 60 years	45	8.7
3.	Education		
	- Primary School	11	2.1
	- High School	109	21
	- College	152	29.3
	- University	246	47.5
4.	Income		
	Under 1,000 Euro	95	18.3
	1,001 to 2,500 Euro	173	33.4
	2,501 to 5,000 Euro	143	27.6
	5,001 to 7,500 Euro	43	8.3
	Over 7,500 Euro	64	12.4
5.	Country of Residence		
	- UK	156	30.1
	- Cyprus	63	12.2
	- Belgium	23	4.4
	- Germany	19	3.7
	- Sweden	19	3.7
	- USA	17	3.3
	- Other Countries	221	42.6
6.	Weekly number of Hours spent Online		
	- Under 10 hours	163	31.5
	- 11 to 20 hours	161	31.1
	- 21 to 30 hours	95	18.3
	- 31 to 40 hours	32	6.2
	- Over 40 hours	67	12.9

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
7.	Internet Experience		
	- Under 1 year	14	2.7
	- 1 to 3 years	48	9.3
	- 3 to 5 years	77	14.9
	- 5 to 7 years	101	19.5
	- Over 7 years	278	53.7

No.	Use of Internet Applications	Never		Rarely (Once a month)		Sometimes (Once a week)		Frequently (Daily)		Very Frequently (Every few hours)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
8.	- World Wide Web (Internet Browsing)	12	2.3	16	3.1	41	7.9	251	48.5	198	38.2
	- Email	5	1	8	1.5	40	7.7	251	48.5	214	41.3
	- Chat	199	38.4	91	17.6	83	16	96	18.5	49	9.5

No.	Online Transactions	Never		Rarely (Once a year)		Sometimes (Once a month)		Frequently (Once a week)		Very Frequently (Daily)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
9.	- Online Registration	41	7.9	85	16.4	230	44.4	125	24.1	37	7.1
	- Online Shopping	88	17	103	19.9	238	45.9	75	14.5	14	2.7
	- Online travel-related booking	53	10.2	210	40.5	193	37.3	42	8.1	20	3.9

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
10.	How they reached www.visitcyprus.com		
	- Using a search engine	179	34.6
	- Through a link from another website	121	23.4
	- Typed the website address directly	83	16.0
	- Through an advertisement on another website	70	13.5
	- It is in the favorites list	56	10.8
	- It is currently the browser homepage	9	1.7
11.	Reason for visiting the Cyprus Tourism Organisation Official Portal		
	- Already decided to visit Cyprus and look for specific information	196	37.8
	- Considering of visiting Cyprus and seek information about the country	154	29.7
	- Other reasons	86	16.6
	- Already in Cyprus and wish to check available services	40	7.7
	- Already know where I am going in Cyprus and wish to make an online reservation	26	5.0
	- Do not intend to travel to Cyprus but seek	16	3.1

No.	Variable											
	information about Cyprus											
12.	Kind of information looking for at www.visitcyprus.com											
	- *Places to visit*		344								66.4	
	- *Things to do*		300								57.9	
	- *Events*		243								46.9	
	- *Accommodation*		188								36.3	
	- *How to travel to Cyprus*		153								29.5	
	- *Transportation in Cyprus*		133								25.7	
	- *Other*		129								24.9	
	- *Health, Legal and Safety*		77								14.9	
13.	Found the information looking for at www.visitcyprus.com											
	- *Yes*		375								72.4	
	- *No*		143								27.6	

No.	Opinion about the available information on www.visitcyprus.com	Very Unfavorable		Unfavorable		Neutral		Favourable		Very Favourable	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
14.	- *Information Clarity*	24	4.6	28	5.4	141	27.2	250	48.3	75	14.5
	- *Usefulness of Information*	28	5.4	35	6.8	153	29.5	242	46.7	60	11.6
	- *Information Structure*	24	4.6	36	6.9	163	31.5	228	44.0	67	12.9
	- *Information Accuracy*	17	3.3	24	4.6	192	37.1	228	44.0	57	11.0
	- *Information Focus*	22	4.2	42	8.1	176	34.0	223	43.1	55	10.6
	- *Bias of Information*	21	4.1	26	5.0	243	46.9	176	34.0	52	10.0

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
15.	Kind of online services looking for at www.visitcyprus.com		
	- *Maps*	288	55.6
	- *Travel planner*	239	46.1
	- *Weather*	230	44.4
	- *Other*	151	29.2
	- *Online booking*	144	27.8
	- *Newsletter*	105	20.3
	- *Customised brochure builder*	86	16.6
	- *Blog*	35	6.8
16.	Found the online services looking for at www.visitcyprus.com		
	- *Yes*	351	67.8
	- *No*	167	32.2

No.	Overall opinion of www.visitcyprus.com	Very Unfavorable		Unfavorable		Neutral		Favourable		Very Favourable	
17.		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
	- *Portal Accessibility*	18	3.5	31	6.0	147	28.4	246	47.5	76	14.7
	- *Portal Design Look*	20	3.9	26	5.0	156	30.1	214	41.3	102	19.7
	- *Portal Functionality*	20	3.9	27	5.2	172	33.2	231	44.6	68	13.1
	- *Name Recognition and Reputation*	14	2.7	23	4.4	184	35.5	216	41.7	81	15.6
	- *Customer Service*	20	3.9	31	6.0	232	44.8	180	34.7	55	10.6

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18.	Inspired to visit or discover Cyprus by the visit(s) to www.visitcyprus.com		
	- *Yes*	389	75.1
	- *No*	129	24.9

No.	Overall impact of the following media on the decision to visit or discover a country	Very Unfavorable		Unfavorable		Neutral		Favourable		Very Favourable	
19.		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
	- *The Internet*	16	3.1	10	1.9	138	26.6	223	43.1	131	25.3
	- *Travel Brochure / Book*	14	2.7	21	4.1	157	30.3	242	46.7	84	16.2
	- *TV Advertisement*	19	3.7	34	6.6	200	38.6	175	33.8	90	17.4
	- *Travel Agent / Tour Operator*	20	3.9	27	5.2	236	45.6	180	34.7	55	10.6
	- *Newspaper / Periodical Advertisement*	22	4.2	29	5.6	236	45.6	187	36.1	44	8.5
	- *Tourism Exhibition*	21	4.1	32	6.2	238	45.9	166	32.0	61	11.8
	- *Local Customer Service Office*	24	4.6	28	5.4	279	53.9	140	27.0	47	9.1
	- *Radio Advertisement*	35	6.8	65	12.5	284	54.8	110	21.2	24	4.6

No.	Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
20.	Provide email address		
	- *Yes*	433	83.6
	- *No*	85	16.4

Appendix 4.2

Research Constructs, Variables and Operationalisation of Variables for the Online Survey

Construct	Variable	Operationalisation of Variable
A. Online visitors / customers' <u>Expectations</u> construct	Demographic (D)	• Gender (question 1) • Age (question 2) • Education (question 3) • Income (question 4) • Location (question 5)
	Experience Level (EL)	• Hours spent online (question 6) • Years of Internet Experience (question 7) • Application Usage (question 8) • Online Transactions (question 9)
B. Online visitors / customers' <u>Satisfaction</u> construct	Product or Service range (PS)	• Information requirements (question 12) • Online services requirements (question 15)
	Order fulfilment level (OR)	• Functionality (question 17c) • Availability of required information (question 13) • Availability of required services (question 16)
	Customer service quality (CS)	• Customer Service requirements (question 17a)
	Information quality (IQ)	• Information Structure (question 14a) • Information Usefulness (question 14b) • Information Focus (question 14c) • Information Accuracy (question 14d) • Information Clarity (question 14e) • Bias of Information (question 14f)
	Ease of navigation (EN)	• Accessibility (question 17.e) • Design and Look (question 17f)
	Online security and trust (OS)	• Name Recognition (question 17b) • Provision of email address (question 20)
	Perceived Value (PV)	• Inspired to visit Cyprus (question 18)
	Personalisation (PE)	• Reachability of visitcyprus.com (question 10) • Reason for visiting visitcyprus.com (question 11)
	Online community (OC)	• Blogging requirements (question 15g)
	Channel integration (CI)	• Media impact on decision to visit a country (question 19)

Appendix 4.3

Research Constructs, Variables and Operationalisation of Variables for Web User Behaviour

Construct	Variable	Operationalisation of Variable
C. Online visitors / customers' Expectations construct	Demographic (D)	• Country of origin
D. Online visitors / customers' Satisfaction construct	Product or Service range (PS)	• Pages mostly visited • Portal applications usage
	Ease of navigation (EN)	• Average Number of pages visited by each visitor • Average Time spent by each visitor
	Online security and trust (OS)	• Visitor Registration
	Personalisation (PE)	• How visitors reached the portal • Keywords used to reach through search engines • Month/Day/Time of visit
	Channel integration (CI)	• Number of visitors

1. What do you believe should be the objectives of e-marketing methods deployment by the CTO?

a. Stay competitive by enhancing the marketing procedures to keep up with market forces,

b. Improve information and service provision procedures,

c. Improve visibility and targeting through alternative parallel marketing channels,

d. Facilitate pro-activeness and responsiveness to market changes,

e. Enhance product promotion strategies through flexible distribution and pricing models,

f. Augment knowledge management procedures for facilitating customer targeting and segmentation towards achieving better customer service,

g. Facilitate the information acquisition and management processes.

2. Suggest how e-marketing methods can be applied so that the CTO can achieve the objectives stated above

a. Convert information into valuable knowledge and disseminate knowledge to CTO Offices and partners worldwide to aid the decision making process,

b. Facilitate synergism in partnerships to maximise the potential impact of marketing activities,

c. Establish new communication channels to enhance the flexibility and capacity of marketing actions,

d. Establish more explicit procedures for measuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns,

e. Enable interactivity with customers to facilitate service personalisation,

f. Enable segmentation based on behavioural trends,

g. Provide the means to reach specific markets/segments.

3. Below there is a list of the marketing methods currently being deployed by the CTO. Please indicate the extend to which you expect eMarketing methods to contribute to the effectiveness of each of the following methods:

	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
Advertising	0	0	25%	0	75%
Promotion	0	0	0	25%	75%
Sales support and Distribution	0	0	0	0	100%
Public Relations	0	0	0	50%	50%
Market Analysis and Segmentation	0	0	0	25%	75%
Personal Selling	0	0	25%	25%	50%
Publications and Information provision	0	0	0	0	100%
Direct Marketing	0	0	0	25%	75%

4. How do you believe e-marketing methods can complement each of the marketing methods below towards the attainment of the overall CTO's marketing objectives?

A. **Advertising**:
   a. Through online advertising more effective targeting and segmentation to specialised groups can be achieved through explicit scheduling and monitoring of advertisements.
   b. Overall advertising campaigns' results can be augmented through the use of rich media advertisements.

c. By monitoring the behaviour of web users visiting online interactive advertisements valuable feedback will be gathered to enhance overall advertising campaigns.

d. Online advertising will expand traditional advertising channels' reach.

B. **Promotion**:

a. E-marketing allows for efficient and flexible promotional activities through fast responsiveness to un-programmed happenings.

b. Thematic promotions can be targeted directly to focus groups.

c. Alternative aspects of product offering can be promoted through e-marketing methods for reviewing market receptiveness and fine tuning overall promotional activities.

d. New product launching activities can be performed through electronic channels for explicit evaluation of results.

C. **Sales Support and Distribution**:

a. Provide customers with direct access to product offering through seamless connectivity to product suppliers' distribution systems.

b. Facilitate communication and cooperation among partners through centrally administered product distribution solutions.

c. Offer sales management support to special interest industry groups.

d. Enhance profit margins for tourist businesses by facilitating direct distribution of their tourist product to customers.

D. **Public Relations**:

a. Achieve improved targeting through electronic communication.

b. Enable easier access to relevant information according to individual's needs.

c. Manage and promote common mindset among PR partners across the world through a common communication platform.

d. Promote cooperation among partners to facilitate incentive-based joint activities.

E. **Market Analysis and Segmentation**:
   a. Optimise market–oriented information collection and analysis for assisting the processes of product customisation and customer segmentation.
   b. Identify and assess the degree of customer satisfaction for improving product development processes.
   c. Organise market intelligence and implement the most appropriate marketing methods to target the correct market segments.
   d. Achieve marketing objectives efficiently through the communication of key knowledge acquired by market analysis.

F. **Personal Selling**:
   a. Through the provision of online booking facilities the product offering can be communicated more effectively to customers who can be served more efficiently.
   b. Analysis of the customer preferences will lead to better product offering.
   c. Online product customisation procedures available for customers will enhance customer experience.
   d. Exploit market environmental forces to distribute the most appropriate product to the most appropriate market.

G. **Publications and Information Provision**:
   a. Replace conventional media with new electronic media to increase efficiency, reach, and impact.
   b. Facilitate publication and distribution of information in real time without delays and obstacles to react to environmental opportunities and threats.
   c. Improved information quality through efficient updating processes.
   d. Custom, personalised brochure builder for dynamic publication production to fit particular purpose.

H. **Direct Marketing**:

a. Facilitate the communication process to transmit messages that empower market image and product positioning.

b. Enable direct and unambiguous communication with customers regarding product offerings.

c. Cater for customer requirements and needs by facilitating interactive communication.

d. Achieve more targeted and more effective communication based on target market characteristics.

5. What impact do you expect the utilisation of e-marketing methods to have on the attainment of the CTO's overall marketing objectives?

Very High	100%
High	0
Neutral	0
Low	0
Very Low	0

6. How likely do you consider e-marketing methods can drive the CTO's next generation marketing methods?

Very Likely	25%
Likely	75%
Neutral	0
Unlikely	0
Very Unlikely	0

7. How would you describe your overall opinion about each of the following statements?

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable
CTO should adopt e-marketing methods	0	0	0	0	100%
CTO would be able to reduce marketing costs through the adoption of e-marketing methods	0	0	0	50%	50%
CTO should promote commercial tourism-related products and services online	0	0	25%	50%	25%
CTO should provide online booking facilities	25%	0	25%	25%	25%
CTO should adopt an online revenue model to finance e-marketing methods	0	25%	0	50%	25%
CTO should serve B2B markets online	0	0	0	25%	75%

8. How significant do you consider the establishment and staffing of an e-Marketing unit towards attaining the objectives of e-marketing methods by the CTO?

Very Significant	100%
Significant	0
Neutral	0
Insignificant	0
Very Insignificant	0

Research Constructs, Variables and Operationalisation of Variables for the CTO Marketing Executives' Interviews, CTO marketing procedures, Cyprus Tourism Industry eMarketing methods deployment, European NTO's EMarketing Models Deployment

Construct	Variable	Operationalisation of Variable
E. Marketing executives' Mindset construct	CTO marketing services	• eMarketing Integration
	Industry Knowledge	• eMarketing Readiness • eMarketing Capacity
	European Deployment	• Business Model • Industry Participation • Systems and Applications
F. Marketing executives' Expectations construct	Aspiration	• CTO's objectives by eMarketing methods deployment (question 1) • Contribution of eMarketing methods to the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods (question 3) • Impact of eMarketing methods on the attainment of Marketing objectives (question 5) • Likeliness that eMarketing methods will drive the CTO's next generation marketing methods (question 6) • Adoption of eMarketing methods (question 7a) • Reduction of marketing costs through the adoption of e-marketing methods (question 7b) • Promotion of commercial tourism-related products and services online (question 7c) • Provision of online booking facilities (question 7d) • Adoption of an online revenue model to finance e-marketing methods (question 7e) • Serve B2B markets online (question 7f)
	Planning	• How eMarketing methods can be applied for achieving objectives (question 2) • How eMarketing methods can complement traditional marketing methods (question 4) • Significance of an eMarketing unit (question 8)

Appendix 4.6

Correlation Analysis

	UseWWW	UseEmail	UseChat	OnlineReg	OnlineShop	OnlineBook	VisitWebsiteHow	VisitWebsiteWhy	AbleToFindInfo	InfoStructure	InfoUseful	InfoFocus
UseWWW	1,000	,546	,286	,440	,283	,224	-,002	,093	,027	,129	,119	,089
UseEmail	,546	1,000	,279	,270	,213	,181	-,019	,094	,043	,135	,107	,101
UseChat	,286	,279	1,000	,316	,097	,192	,030	,099	,023	,038	,012	,033
OnlineReg	,440	,270	,316	1,000	,497	,468	-,004	,032	,044	,048	,052	,028
OnlineShop	,283	,213	,097	,497	1,000	,438	,010	-,003	-,015	,037	,079	,063
OnlineBook	,224	,181	,192	,468	,438	1,000	,032	-,054	,083	,012	,038	,051
VisitWebsiteHow	-,002	-,019	,030	-,004	,010	,032	1,000	-,024	-,001	-,078	-,049	,003
VisitWebsiteWhy	,093	,094	,099	,032	-,003	-,054	-,024	1,000	-,005	,038	,068	,037
AbleToFindInfo	,027	,043	,023	,044	-,015	,083	-,001	-,005	1,000	-,376	-,476	-,406
InfoStructure	,129	,135	,038	,048	,037	,012	-,078	,038	-,376	1,000	,761	,763
InfoUseful	,119	,107	,012	,052	,079	,038	-,049	,068	-,476	,761	1,000	,813
InfoFocus	,089	,101	,033	,028	,063	,051	,003	,037	-,406	,763	,813	1,000
InfoAccuracy	,148	,105	,063	,061	,076	,054	,005	,039	-,329	,737	,749	,761
InfoClarity	,133	,099	,057	,067	,093	,032	,002	,028	-,369	,781	,777	,785
InfoBias	,146	,103	,085	,054	,017	,063	-,057	,020	-,290	,653	,653	,692
AbleToFindServices	,053	,032	,036	-,010	-,013	,047	,003	-,039	,674	-,372	-,449	-,430
CustomerServiceOp	,070	,056	,073	,035	,050	,037	,026	,047	-,353	,665	,685	,680
NameRecOp	,168	,132	,070	,105	,114	,082	,039	,023	-,200	,579	,584	,589
PortalFuncOp	,114	,093	,030	,056	,065	,049	,012	,006	-,300	,654	,662	,633
PortalAccOpp	,110	,110	-,034	,072	,082	,067	,021	,023	-,339	,708	,703	,672
PortalLookOp	,110	,098	,066	,070	,049	,045	,046	-,009	-,214	,620	,588	,624
VisitCyprus	,030	,062	,027	,054	-,005	,084	-,026	-,004	,413	-,331	-,393	-,374
TravelBrochureImpact	,148	,147	-,004	,095	,095	,057	,039	,008	-,130	,383	,395	,434
InternetImpact	,208	,169	,056	,095	,078	,064	-,001	,070	-,188	,400	,373	,432
NewspaperImpact	,066	,047	-,002	-,001	-,014	,005	,008	-,013	-,175	,346	,347	,381
RadioAdvImpact	,040	,045	,051	,027	-,018	,020	-,010	,018	-,152	,372	,322	,354
TVAdvImpact	,139	,127	,101	,051	,053	,045	-,006	,045	-,098	,396	,333	,362
TourExImpact	,082	,073	,119	,054	-,036	,054	-,016	,034	-,137	,343	,295	,370
TAToImpact	,071	,076	-,014	,039	-,005	,070	,027	-,018	-,168	,370	,340	,395
LocalCSImpact	,060	,077	,044	,046	-,027	,084	,023	,023	-,140	,328	,334	,368

	InfoAccuracy	InfoClarity	InfoBias	AbleToFindServices	CustomerServiceOp	NameRecOp	PortalFuncOp	PortalAccOpp	PortalLookOp	VisitCyprus
UseWWW	,148	,133	,146	,053	,070	,168	,114	,110	,110	,030
UseEmail	,105	,099	,103	,032	,056	,132	,093	,110	,098	,062
UseChat	,063	,057	,085	,036	,073	,070	,030	-,034	,066	,027
OnlineReg	,061	,067	,054	-,010	,035	,105	,056	,072	,070	,054
OnlineShop	,076	,093	,017	-,013	,050	,114	,065	,082	,049	-,005
OnlineBook	,054	,032	,063	,047	,037	,082	,049	,067	,045	,084
VisitWebsiteHow	,005	,002	-,057	,003	,026	,039	,012	,021	,046	-,026
VisitWebsiteWhy	,039	,028	,020	-,039	,047	,023	,006	,023	-,009	-,004
AbleToFindInfo	-,329	-,369	-,290	,674	-,353	-,200	-,300	-,339	-,214	,413
InfoStructure	,737	,781	,653	-,372	,665	,579	,654	,708	,620	-,331
InfoUseful	,749	,777	,653	-,449	,685	,584	,662	,703	,588	-,393
InfoFocus	,761	,785	,692	-,430	,680	,589	,633	,672	,624	-,374
InfoAccuracy	1,000	,757	,692	-,349	,651	,638	,652	,640	,591	-,296
InfoClarity	,757	1,000	,663	-,357	,624	,591	,643	,693	,639	-,354
InfoBias	,692	,663	1,000	-,300	,616	,569	,532	,565	,493	-,246
AbleToFindServices	-,349	-,357	-,300	1,000	-,398	-,280	-,341	-,366	-,261	,424
CustomerServiceOp	,651	,624	,616	-,398	1,000	,661	,714	,728	,635	-,340
NameRecOp	,638	,591	,569	-,280	,661	1,000	,702	,710	,714	-,277
PortalFuncOp	,652	,643	,532	-,341	,714	,702	1,000	,780	,737	-,300
PortalAccOpp	,640	,693	,565	-,366	,728	,710	,780	1,000	,747	-,331
PortalLookOp	,591	,639	,493	-,261	,635	,714	,737	,747	1,000	-,320
VisitCyprus	-,296	-,354	-,246	,424	-,340	-,277	-,300	-,331	-,320	1,000
TravelBrochureImpact	,460	,429	,405	-,152	,398	,476	,407	,425	,407	-,136
InternetImpact	,459	,425	,390	-,174	,378	,455	,436	,407	,445	-,214
NewspaperImpact	,379	,335	,389	-,123	,377	,412	,313	,342	,304	-,164
RadioAdvImpact	,333	,318	,334	-,183	,358	,325	,288	,276	,247	-,139
TVAdvImpact	,405	,343	,403	-,099	,372	,450	,337	,336	,345	-,232
TourExImpact	,359	,370	,378	-,175	,349	,416	,293	,321	,332	-,215
TAToImpact	,400	,349	,376	-,208	,388	,350	,316	,320	,316	-,183
LocalCSImpact	,353	,340	,346	-,192	,375	,385	,263	,310	,301	-,169

	TravelBrochureImpact	InternetImpact	NewspaperImpact	RadioAdvImpact	TVAdvImpact	TourExImpact	TAToImpact	LocalCSImpact
UseWWW	,148	,208	,066	,040	,139	,082	,071	,060
UseEmail	,147	,169	,047	,045	,127	,073	,076	,077
UseChat	-,004	,056	-,002	,051	,101	,119	-,014	,044
OnlineReg	,095	,095	-,001	,027	,051	,054	,039	,046
OnlineShop	,095	,078	-,014	-,018	,053	-,036	-,005	-,027
OnlineBook	,057	,064	,005	,020	,045	,054	,070	,084
VisitWebsiteHow	,039	-,001	,008	-,010	-,006	-,016	,027	,023
VisitWebsiteWhy	,008	,070	-,013	,018	,045	,034	-,018	,023
AbleToFindInfo	-,130	-,188	-,175	-,152	-,098	-,137	-,168	-,140
InfoStructure	,383	,400	,346	,372	,396	,343	,370	,328
InfoUseful	,395	,373	,347	,322	,333	,295	,340	,334
InfoFocus	,434	,432	,381	,354	,362	,370	,395	,368
InfoAccuracy	,460	,459	,379	,333	,405	,359	,400	,353
InfoClarity	,429	,425	,335	,318	,343	,370	,349	,340
InfoBias	,405	,390	,389	,334	,403	,378	,376	,346
AbleToFindServices	-,152	-,174	-,123	-,183	-,099	-,175	-,208	-,192
CustomerServiceOp	,398	,378	,377	,358	,372	,349	,388	,375
NameRecOp	,476	,455	,412	,325	,450	,416	,350	,385
PortalFuncOp	,407	,436	,313	,288	,337	,293	,316	,263
PortalAccOpp	,425	,407	,342	,276	,336	,321	,320	,310
PortalLookOp	,407	,445	,304	,247	,345	,332	,316	,301
VisitCyprus	-,136	-,214	-,164	-,139	-,232	-,215	-,183	-,169
TravelBrochureImpact	1,000	,623	,478	,366	,469	,554	,547	,475
InternetImpact	,623	1,000	,442	,318	,483	,418	,444	,383
NewspaperImpact	,478	,442	1,000	,624	,588	,510	,463	,520
RadioAdvImpact	,366	,318	,624	1,000	,483	,554	,448	,555
TVAdvImpact	,469	,483	,588	,483	1,000	,512	,441	,424
TourExImpact	,554	,418	,510	,554	,512	1,000	,516	,635
TAToImpact	,547	,444	,463	,448	,441	,516	1,000	,496
LocalCSImpact	,475	,383	,520	,555	,424	,635	,496	1,000

Appendix 4.7

Factor Analysis

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10,478	34,926	34,926	10,478	34,926	34,926
2	2,732	9,108	44,034	2,732	9,108	44,034
3	2,438	8,125	52,159	2,438	8,125	52,159
4	1,414	4,713	56,872	1,414	4,713	56,872
5	1,243	4,142	61,014	1,243	4,142	61,014
6	1,051	3,502	64,516	1,051	3,502	64,516
7	,958	3,192	67,708			
8	,913	3,045	70,753			
9	,822	2,739	73,492			
10	,741	2,470	75,962			
11	,712	2,374	78,336			
12	,634	2,115	80,451			
13	,554	1,846	82,297			
14	,512	1,705	84,003			
15	,497	1,656	85,658			
16	,466	1,553	87,211			
17	,405	1,350	88,562			
18	,376	1,254	89,816			
19	,366	1,218	91,034			
20	,359	1,197	92,231			
21	,327	1,089	93,320			
22	,308	1,028	94,348			
23	,265	,883	95,231			
24	,253	,845	96,076			
25	,232	,774	96,850			
26	,227	,756	97,605			
27	,207	,692	98,297			
28	,183	,610	98,907			
29	,175	,583	99,490			
30	,153	,510	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Scree Plot
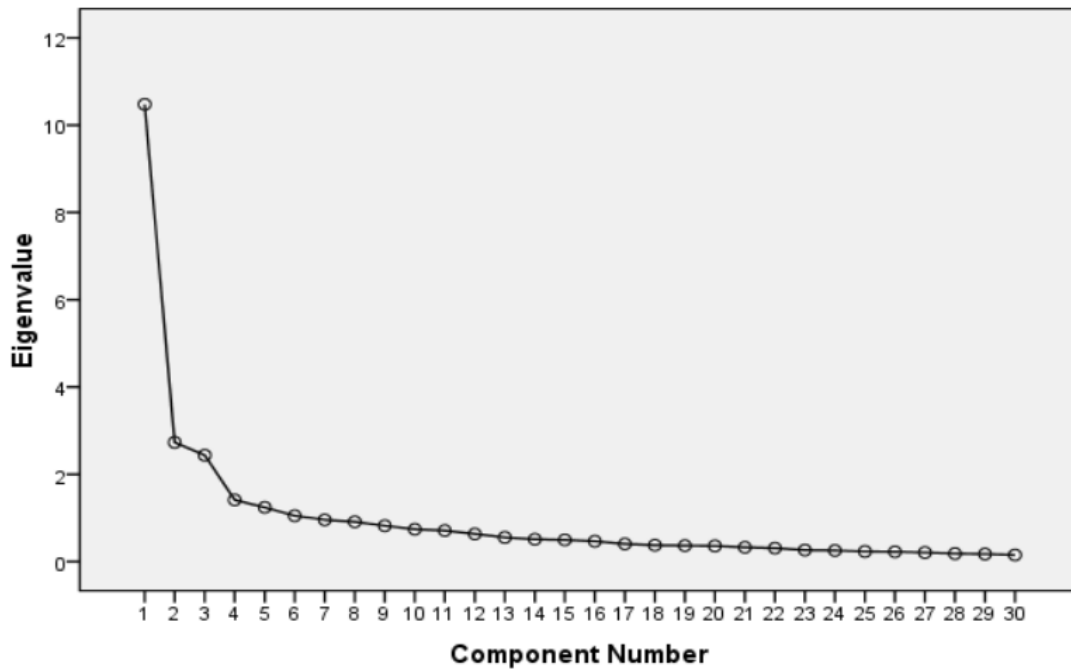
Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
UseWWW	,180	,631	-,298	-,019	,309	,071
UseEmail	,157	,557	-,238	,023	,404	,074
UseChat	,075	,450	-,186	-,103	,347	,173
OnlineReg	,100	,662	-,365	-,230	-,175	-,060
OnlineShop	,090	,503	-,393	-,226	-,380	-,108
OnlineBook	,077	,558	-,266	-,149	-,441	-,128
VisitWebsiteHow	,002	,022	,012	,010	-,261	,872
VisitWebsiteWhy	,044	,074	-,050	-,050	,584	,138
AbleToFindInfo	-,433	,373	,180	,621	-,069	-,043
InfoStructure	,823	-,131	-,183	,080	,091	-,151
InfoUseful	,827	-,180	-,247	-,036	,058	-,114
InfoFocus	,844	-,149	-,165	,006	,024	-,074
InfoAccuracy	,828	-,066	-,149	,108	,030	-,067
InfoClarity	,825	-,114	-,207	,076	,025	-,067
InfoBias	,755	-,035	-,077	,090	,081	-,170
AbleToFindServices	-,460	,352	,182	,609	-,030	-,062
CustomerServiceOp	,803	-,131	-,132	,076	-,035	,044
NameRecOp	,783	,051	-,083	,233	-,090	,111
PortalFuncOp	,783	-,110	-,225	,230	-,082	,076
PortalAccOpp	,811	-,124	-,233	,187	-,100	,053
PortalLookOp	,754	-,061	-,180	,291	-,097	,150
VisitCyprus	-,428	,301	,077	,400	-,007	-,185
TravelBrochureImpact	,632	,241	,322	,069	-,089	,078
InternetImpact	,617	,221	,203	,043	,040	,112
NewspaperImpact	,577	,154	,513	-,057	-,030	-,051
RadioAdvImpact	,530	,148	,499	-,168	,015	-,116
TVAdvImpact	,581	,243	,390	,008	,057	,012
TourExImpact	,579	,218	,505	-,129	,026	,006
TAToImpact	,568	,150	,412	-,110	-,092	,002
LocalCSImpact	,555	,189	,486	-,155	-,036	-,008
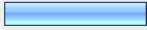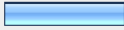
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
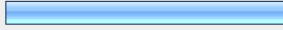
a. 6 components extracted.

Appendix 5

Online Survey Results Graphical Representation

1. Please indicate your Gender:		Response Percent	Response Count
Male		**52.1%**	270
Female		47.9%	248
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0

2. Please indicate your Age:		Response Percent	Response Count
Under 20 years		4.2%	22
21 to 30 years		**27.8%**	144
31 to 40 years		23.7%	123
41 to 50 years		20.1%	104
51 to 60 years		15.4%	80
Over 60 years		8.7%	45
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0

3. Please indicate your highest attained Education Level:		Response Percent	Response Count
Primary School		2.1%	11
High School		21.0%	109
College		29.3%	152
University		**47.5%**	246
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0

4. Please indicate your Gross Monthly Income:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Under 1,000 Euro		18.3%	95
1,001 to 2,500 Euro		**33.4%**	173
2,501 to 5,000 Euro		27.6%	143
5,001 to 7,500 Euro		8.3%	43
Over 7,500 Euro		12.4%	64
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0
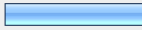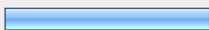
5. Please indicate your Country of Residence:

	United Kingdom	Ireland	United States of America	Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	American Samoa	Andorra
Select a Country:	**30.1% (156)**	1.9% (10)	3.3% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
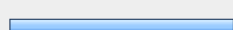
6. Please indicate your average Weekly number of Hours spent Online:

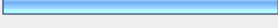|		Response Percent	Response Count
Under 10 hours		**31.5%**	163
11 to 20 hours		31.1%	161
21 to 30 hours		18.3%	95
31 to 40 hours		6.2%	32
Over 40 hours		12.9%	67
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0
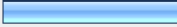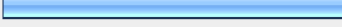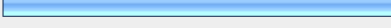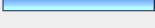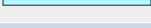
7. Please indicate your Internet Experience:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Under 1 year		2.7%	14
1 to 3 years		9.3%	48
3 to 5 years		14.9%	77
5 to 7 years		19.5%	101
Over 7 years		53.7%	278
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

8. Please indicate how often you use the following Internet Applications:

	Never	Rarely (Once a month)	Sometimes (Once a week)	Frequently (Daily)	Very Frequently (Every few hours)	Response Count
World Wide Web (Internet Browsing)	2.3% (12)	3.1% (16)	7.9% (41)	**48.5% (251)**	38.2% (198)	518
Email	1.0% (5)	1.5% (8)	7.7% (40)	**48.5% (251)**	41.3% (214)	518
Chat	**38.4% (199)**	17.6% (91)	16.0% (83)	18.5% (96)	9.5% (49)	518
					answered question	518
					skipped question	0

9. Please indicate how often you perform the following online transactions:

	Never	Rarely (Once a year)	Sometimes (Once a month)	Frequently (Once a week)	Very Frequently (Daily)	Response Count
Online registration	7.9% (41)	16.4% (85)	**44.4% (230)**	24.1% (125)	7.1% (37)	518
Online shopping	17.0% (88)	19.9% (103)	**45.9% (238)**	14.5% (75)	2.7% (14)	518
Online travel-related booking	10.2% (53)	**40.5% (210)**	37.3% (193)	8.1% (42)	3.9% (20)	518
					answered question	518
					skipped question	0
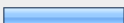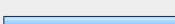
10. How did you reach www.visitcyprus.com?

		Response Percent	Response Count
I typed the website address directly		16.0%	83
Through a link from another website		23.4%	121
Through an advertisement on another website		13.5%	70
It is currently my browser homepage		1.7%	9
It is in my favourites list		10.8%	56
Using a search engine		34.6%	179
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0
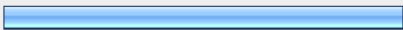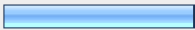
11. Why are you visiting the Cyprus Tourism Organisation Official Portal (www.visitcyprus.com)?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Considering of visiting Cyprus and seek information about the country		29.7%	154
Already decided to visit Cyprus and look for specific information		37.8%	196
Already know where I am going in Cyprus and wish to make an online reservation		5.0%	26
Already in Cyprus and you wish to check available services		7.7%	40
Do not intend to travel to Cyprus but seek information about Cyprus		3.1%	16
Other reasons		16.6%	86
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

12. What kind of information are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?

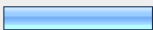|		Response Percent	Response Count
How to travel to Cyprus		29.5%	153
Accommodation		36.3%	188
Things to do		57.9%	300
Places to visit		**66.4%**	344
Events		46.9%	243
Transportation in Cyprus		25.7%	133
Health, Legal and Safety		14.9%	77
Other		24.9%	129
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

13. Were you able to find the information you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		72.4%	375
No		27.6%	143
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

14. How would you describe your opinion about the available information on www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable	Response Count
Information Structure (How well the information fit together.)	4.6% (24)	6.9% (36)	31.5% (163)	**44.0% (228)**	12.9% (67)	518
Usefulness of Information (To what degree the information was useful for the purpose of the visit.)	5.4% (28)	6.8% (35)	29.5% (153)	**46.7% (242)**	11.6% (60)	518
Information Focus (The degree to which information was targeted to fit requirements.)	4.2% (22)	8.1% (42)	34.0% (176)	**43.1% (223)**	10.6% (55)	518
Information Accuracy (How accurate is the information in relation to reality.)	3.3% (17)	4.6% (24)	37.1% (192)	**44.0% (228)**	11.0% (57)	518
Information Clarity (The ease with which the information was understood.)	4.6% (24)	5.4% (28)	27.2% (141)	**48.3% (250)**	14.5% (75)	518
Bias of Information (The extent to which the information is opinionated.)	4.1% (21)	5.0% (26)	**46.9% (243)**	34.0% (176)	10.0% (52)	518
					answered question	518
					skipped question	0

15. What kind of online services are you looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Online booking		27.8%	144
Travel planner		46.1%	239
Maps		**55.6%**	288
Newsletter		20.3%	105
Weather		44.4%	230
Customised brochure builder		16.6%	86
Blog		6.8%	35
Other		29.2%	151
		answered question	518
		skipped question	0

16. Were you able to find the online services you are looking for at www.visitcyprus.com?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		67.8%	351
No		32.2%	167
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

17. How would you describe your overall opinion of www.visitcyprus.com regarding the following:

	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable	Response Count
Customer Service (To what degree customers' requests can be serviced.)	3.9% (20)	6.0% (31)	44.8% (232)	34.7% (180)	10.6% (55)	518
Name Recognition and Reputation (The degree to which the name is credible and trusted.)	2.7% (14)	4.4% (23)	35.5% (184)	41.7% (216)	15.6% (81)	518
Portal Functionality (How well the Portal performs.)	3.9% (20)	5.2% (27)	33.2% (172)	44.6% (231)	13.1% (68)	518
Portal Accessibility (The ease with which the features were understood.)	3.5% (18)	6.0% (31)	28.4% (147)	47.5% (246)	14.7% (76)	518
Portal Design Look (The professionalism of the Portal visual design; layout, font, white space, images, colour schemes,etc.)	3.9% (20)	5.0% (26)	30.1% (156)	41.3% (214)	19.7% (102)	518
				answered question		518
				skipped question		0

18. Has/have your visit(s) to www.visitcyprus.com inspired you to visit or discover Cyprus?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		75.1%	389
No		24.9%	129
	answered question		518
	skipped question		0

19. How would you describe the overall impact of the following media on you decision to visit or discover a country?						
	Very Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Neutral	Favourable	Very Favourable	Response Count
Travel Brochure / Book	2.7% (14)	4.1% (21)	30.3% (157)	46.7% (242)	16.2% (84)	518
The Internet	3.1% (16)	1.9% (10)	26.6% (138)	43.1% (223)	25.3% (131)	518
Newspaper / Periodical Advertisement	4.2% (22)	5.6% (29)	45.6% (236)	36.1% (187)	8.5% (44)	518
Radio Advertisement	6.8% (35)	12.5% (65)	54.8% (284)	21.2% (110)	4.6% (24)	518
TV Advertisement	3.7% (19)	6.6% (34)	38.6% (200)	33.8% (175)	17.4% (90)	518
Tourism Exhibition	4.1% (21)	6.2% (32)	45.9% (238)	32.0% (166)	11.8% (61)	518
Travel Agent / Tour Operator	3.9% (20)	5.2% (27)	45.6% (236)	34.7% (180)	10.6% (55)	518
Local Customer Service Office	4.6% (24)	5.4% (28)	53.9% (279)	27.0% (140)	9.1% (47)	518
					answered question	518
					skipped question	0

20. Please provide your email address below:	
	Response Count
	433
answered question	433
skipped question	85

1 Definitions

1.1 Travel and Tourism

The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2003) defines Tourism to be the set of activities persons engage in when travelling to and staying in places away from their usual living location for a period that does not exceed one consecutive year. The purpose of travel can be for leisure, business or any other purpose that is not remunerated from within the place visited.

The above definition suggests that tourism is not equivalent to travel. While tourism always requires travel (i.e. the displacement of the individual), it also involves a specific period of stay as well as a particular purpose. Hence, travel can exist without tourism.

1.2 Marketing

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) defines Marketing to be the management process of anticipating and identifying customer requirements towards satisfying these requirements profitably. Marketing is an ongoing management process that involves a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers.

Through effective marketing, customer relationships are managed in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders.

1.3 EMarketing

Dave Chaffey (Chaffey, 2003) defines eMarketing to be the application of digital technologies that form online channels towards contributing to organisational marketing activities. EMarketing aims at facilitating the process of marketing through the deployment of alternative channels to attain profitable acquisition and retention of customers.

The application of eMarketing methods can improve organisational customer knowledge in an attempt to deliver integrated targeted communications and online services that match individual customer's needs.

2 Identification of the CTO's Marketing Model

2.1 Organisation

Cyprus is an island of scenic contrasts, with a history and culture that spans over ten thousand years. It is blessed by nature with unique beauty, ranging from forests to beaches and from traditional villages to modern cities. Its all-year-round mild climate, allows the visitor to engage in a multitude of activities from a wide range of sports, to exploring the peaceful countryside.

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) was established in 1972 as a semi-governmental organisation by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus to promote and regulate tourism in Cyprus. CTO's primary objective is the organisation and promotion of Tourism within the Republic of Cyprus as well as internationally. With its headquarters located in Nicosia, and with offices throughout Cyprus and internationally, CTO is currently employing over 300 employees in more than twenty countries.

Tourism is one of the most significant industries for the island's economy substantially contributing to the Cyprus GDP and providing jobs for over 40,000 people. The main incoming tourist market is the European Union, with the U.K being the major target market for incoming tourism.

Establishing and maintaining strong alliances with the private sector is of principal importance to the CTO. Through the realisation of strong alliances coordination and knowledge exchange is achieved at various levels. This facilitates the CTO's pursue of maximising the positive impact of tourism to the island's economy.

The marketing communications mix consists of a set of tools that can be deployed in a variety of combinations towards communicating with the target audience (Fill, 2002). Traditional marketing communication tools include (Kotler & Armstrong 2004):

- Advertising,
- Sales Promotion,
- Direct Marketing,
- Public Relations,
- Personal Selling.

The CTO is involved in a series of traditional marketing activities internationally for promoting Cyprus as a tourism destination. These activities involve:

- Generic advertising campaigns,
- Organisation of promotional activities such as Cyprus weeks, Cyprus presentations, seminars, workshops and road-shows,
- Provision of hospitality to tourism professionals, travel journalists, V.I.P's and opinion leaders and
- Participation in Tourist and other specialised fairs.

The effectiveness of the CTO's marketing activities is the primary driver of growth and profitability for the Cyprus tourism industry. Hence, the CTO is implementing a three level evaluation model to measure the outcomes of its marketing activities (WTO, 2003). The model involves:

A. The monitoring of tourism performance through analysing information regarding tourist arrivals, tourist expenditure and accommodation occupancy,

B. The measurement of attitudinal and communication data that facilitate the estimation of promotional effect causality,

C. The identification and evaluation of a number of specific, finite promotional activities that are part of the CTO's overall marketing campaign.

The successful execution of the model enables the CTO to develop the most appropriate marketing plan towards directing the efficient implementation of its marketing activities.

2.2 Strategy

Strategic Marketing involves a number of activities towards the formulation of the organisation's marketing model. The conception of the organisation's marketing strategy should be based on the definition of the overall objective of the organisation. The CTO's primary strategic marketing objective has been defined to be (CTO, 2004): "the establishment of Cyprus as a quality tourist destination which will appeal to more upscale discerning travellers, thus contributing in securing continuous improvement in the quality of life of the Island's population".

Having established the key organisational objective that will guide the organisation's marketing model, the selection of the most effective market strategy for the offering should follow. Michael Porter (Porter, 1985) has identified three generic strategies that can facilitate the effective achievement of an organisation's overall offering objective. An illustration of the three strategies follows.

A. Cost Leadership Strategy makes the assumption that an organisation can produce and market good quality products or services at a lower cost than its competitors. Having low costs the organisation will attain higher profit margins than the industry average. The requisites to support a cost leadership strategy

comprise of an on-going availability of operating capital, good process engineering skills, close management of labour, products designed for ease of manufacturing and low cost distribution.

B. *Differentiation Strategy* involves the development of a product or service that is perceived as being unique "throughout the industry". In this case, the point of prominence can be the brand image, quality of service, extent of distribution network or other industry-specific features. This exclusivity will convert to higher profit margins than the industry average. Furthermore, for differentiation strategy to be viable the organisation should employ strong marketing skills, effective product engineering and creativity.

C. *Focus Strategy* entails the targeting of a "focused" segment of the market and it is usually engaged in situations where the application of cost leadership or differentiation generic strategies is inappropriate. The foundation of the focus strategy resides on the concept of serving a particular target group in such an exceptional manner, that others will not be able to compete. This translates into the targeting of smaller market segments than others in the industry. As a result, due to low levels of competition, profit margins can be very high.

The CTO deploys the focus strategy; therefore it centres on sustainability and focuses on quality rather than on quantity towards upgrading the tourism product while securing the sustainable development of tourism in Cyprus.

Following the definition of the generic strategy to be followed by the organisation, the need for a decision on a number of related operational strategies arises. These are pricing, promotion and distribution. Cyprus's geographic position and high degree of economic development heavily influence these strategies. The CTO by examining all the internal and external environmental variables has developed a strategy that accommodates these issues. Through its distribution network in more than twenty countries throughout the world it has managed to promote Cyprus effectively offering

competitive prices for its products and services, comparable to those of competition.

These factors should be analysed initially to create the strategy and then regularly monitored for changes. If any of them change substantially the strategy should be re-evaluated. The significant changes that are being observed in the global tourism industry since the advent of eMarketing tools and techniques impose on the CTO the need for change.

The Cyprus tourism industry has been long established and has by now reached a mature stage. Looking at the broader international tourism perspectives, it is obvious that the industry is becoming more and more challenging, with competition getting intense and the needs of the educated traveller becoming increasingly more diverse and sophisticated.

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has recognised the importance of satisfying these needs. A strategic plan defining the vision, goals and strategic direction for the Tourism Sector in Cyprus for the period leading up to the year 2010 has been formulated and approved by the Government.

The strategy aims at offering value for money to the visitors, through the upgrading and differentiation of the tourist product. Through the implementation of the proposed actions, CTO has the vision for Cyprus to become "a quality tourist destination that will keep visitors satisfied with a variety of interests and activities, as well as secure and continuous improvement in the quality of the life of people" (CTO, 2004).

The basic objective of the strategy is the doubling of receipts from tourism, in real terms, by the year 2010. This objective is hoped be achieved through:
1. An increase in the per capita spending of tourists,
2. An increase in the average length of stay of tourists,
3. An increase in repeat business,
4. A more even seasonal spread of tourist arrivals,
5. An increase in the number of arrivals.

CTO, realising the difficulty towards achieving the strategy objectives in today's highly competitive tourism industry, has developed an eMarketing strategy which enabled the recognition of the importance of cross channel utilisation through new media towards enriching CTO's traditional marketing activities.

The eMarketing strategy defines the path that should be followed by the CTO and its partners for marketing Cyprus through new media and by using modern marketing techniques to provide tourists with all the information and services they require. The eMarketing strategy sets the framework that will guide the CTO's actions towards the utilisation of the available online marketing communication methods for maximising their potential return for Cyprus. Its primary objectives involve:

▪ The enrichment of the CTO's worldwide marketing activities and their effectiveness and
▪ The improvement of the Organisation's support and services to its partners that would consequently improve their abilities in promoting of Cyprus.

The deployment of eMarketing methods by the CTO aims at facilitating travel and tourism by adequately supporting the individuals' online searching and booking experience. Through the formulation of well-defined eMarketing processes, the CTO plans to provide the individual traveller and the travel organiser an exceptional online searching and booking experience that will involve the facilitation of every step of the tourism buying process (Briggs, 2001), which consists of the following stages:

9. Aspire (The dream – reason to visit)
10. Inspire (The instigation – encouragement and verification to visit)
11. Illustrate (The product – demonstration to visit)
12. Simplify (The accessibility – simple to visit)
13. Book (The purchase – value to visit)
14. Experience (The travel – live the visit)

15. Post-Experience (The Follow-up – re-assurance of the visit)
16. Revisit (The Return – recursive visit)

The successful implementation of the eMarketing strategy will enable the CTO to extend its overall marketing activities in an attempt to maximise its channel reach and focused promotion through integrated marketing campaigns. Through the optimisation of its marketing effectiveness, by successfully utilising eMarketing methods in accordance to traditional marketing activities, CTO aims at achieving its strategic objectives.

3 Characteristics of CTO's Marketing Environment

3.1 Markets

A market can be defined as a set of all actual and potential buyers of a specific product or service. Markets contain groups of individuals who share similar features and respond in similar ways to marketing-mix stimuli. Kotler (1994) defines a market as consisting of "all the potential customers sharing a particular need or want who might be willing and able to engage in exchange to satisfy that need or want".

In the European Commission's Notice on the definition of the relevant market for the purposes of Community competition law (EC, 1997), the definition of a relevant market is used to identify and define the boundaries of competition of an organisation in both the product and geographic dimensions. The term 'relevant market' combines the terms 'relevant product market' and 'relevant geographic market', which are defined as follows (EC, 1997):

▪ *'A relevant product market comprises all those products and/or services which are regarded as interchangeable or substitutable by the consumer by reason of the products' characteristics, their prices and their intended use.'*

- *'A relevant geographic market comprises the area in which the firms concerned are involved in the supply of products or services and in which the conditions of competition are sufficiently homogeneous.'*

However, an appropriately defined relevant tourism market does not only involve the 'relevant product market' and 'relevant geographic market'. A relevant tourism market definition should contain a third dimension, time. The definition of Cyprus's relevant tourism market is highly influenced on temporal characteristics as traditionally most of the tourists that visit the island, do so during the summer season.

While the time dimension can be considered to be an extension of the product dimension, i.e. supply of a product on a temporal basis, it should be incorporated in the definition of a relevant tourism market. In the CTO's Strategic Growth Plan for Tourism (CTO, 2004), the Cyprus's relevant tourism market is defined across the three dimensions having the relevant product market dimension as the basis of the definition.

The definition of the relevant product market is based on a thematic segmentation that refines the Cyprus's relevant tourism market based on the following tourism products:
- Sun and Sea Plus,
- Culture,
- Conference and Incentive,
- Nature and rural,
- Walking and Hiking,
- Sports,
- Cycling,
- Marine Sports and Yachting,
- Mega Events,
- Weddings and Honeymoons,
- Religious,
- Sea Cruises.

Having the relevant product market as the basis of defining the Cyprus's relevant tourism market, the CTO's Strategic Growth Plan for Tourism (CTO, 2004), proceeds by identifying the relevant geographic market. The definition of the relevant geographic market is based on a national segmentation classifying as high priority markets the countries:

- United Kingdom,
- Russia,
- Greece,
- Germany,
- Ireland,
- France.

In addition to the above high priority markets a number of medium and low priority geographic markets are defined in the CTO's Strategic Growth Plan for Tourism (CTO, 2004).

Given that traditionally most of the tourists that visit Cyprus do so during the summer season, a major consideration of the CTO's Strategic Growth Plan for Tourism (CTO, 2004) was the temporal dimension of the Cyprus tourism market, or the relevant temporal market.

The relevant temporal market has a direct impact or relationship on the other two dimensions in a number of ways. First, the major product identified in the relevant product market definition is the 'Sun and Sea Plus', which is highly influenced on seasonal variations (Alegre & Cladera 2006). Second, the major country identified in the relevant geographic market definition is the United Kingdom, whose outbound leisure tourism can be characterised as highly seasonal (Coshall, 2006).

As specified in the CTO's Strategic Growth Plan for Tourism (CTO, 2004), the foundation of Cyprus's relevant tourism market is the island's key product, 'Sun and Sea Plus', while the main market country is the United Kingdom. To achieve a wider temporal spread of the relevant tourism market, CTO should capitalise on these key market factors and should move on towards providing a clear and unique identity of the island's plethora of products, as they are

prioritised in the Cyprus's relevant tourism market definition, to the high priority relevant geographic market countries. In this way the relevant temporal market dimension will be overturned through extending the relevant product market as well as the relevant geographic market.

Market definition is not an end in itself. It is a key step in identifying and defining the competitive constraints acting on an organisation supplying a specific product or service. All in all, market definition provides a framework for competition analysis.

3.2 Competition

Competition analysis is an ongoing process of identifying the competitive environment that an organisation operates in towards assessing its current and potential competitors' strengths and weaknesses. Being aware of its competitive environment, an organisation can better adjust its offered products and services towards enhancing its competitive position.

In order to evaluate the challenges imposed by the competitive environment on an organisation towards improving its marketing effectiveness the McKinsey's 7S model (Peters & Waterman 1982) can be utilised. The model proposes that an organisation consists of seven elements, namely:

- **Strategy**: The direction and scope of the organisation in the long term.
- **Structure**: The organisation's functions, hierarchies, management and boundaries.
- **Systems**: Formal and informal procedures that govern everyday activity.
- **Skills**: The capabilities and competencies available within the organisation.
- **Shared values**: The values and beliefs of the organisation that guide employees' behaviour.
- **Staff**: The organisation's human resources and their development, and motivation.

- **Style**: The management approaches and the organisation's overall leadership styles.

The above seven elements are distinguished in the three so called hard S's (strategy, structure, systems) and the four soft S's (skills, shared values, staff, style). The hard elements are feasible and easy to identify. They can be found in strategy statements, corporate plans, organisational charts and other documentations.

The four soft S's however, are hardly recognisable. They are difficult to describe since capabilities, values and elements of corporate culture are continuously evolving. They are highly dependent on the people working in the organisation. Therefore it is much more difficult to plan or to influence the characteristics of the soft elements. Even though the soft factors are below the surface, they can have a great impact of the hard Strategies, Structures, and Systems of the organisation.

The 7S Model is a valuable tool towards providing the direction of an organisation as well as initiating change (Pascale, 1991). An organisation should systematically apply the 7S Model to determine the current state of each element and to compare this with the ideal state. Based on the results of this activity it will be possible for an organisation to develop action plans to achieve the intended state.

In the process of achieving their marketing objectives, organisations deploy ICT in diverse ways and extends. The early eMarketing deployment days were marked by the development of brochure-like web sites, which had as a primary purpose the representation of the organisation's products and services. These web sites were characterised by limited interaction with the users, replicating the organisation's offline marketing brochures (Chaffey et al., 2003).

Organisations soon realised the real marketing value of ICT towards reaching different groups of customers through innovative marketing methods. Modern

eMarketing deployment times involve the execution of models that provide organisations with a plethora of options towards satisfying particular customer needs through interactive and direct marketing techniques (Sargeant & West 2001).

Appendix 7

Background Research Literature

1 Soft Systems Methodology

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) is an approach to organisational process modelling. Its deployment can support organisational problem solving as well as the management of change. SSM can be applied for the analysis of complex business problem situations where contradicting views about the definition of a problem exist (i.e. Soft Problems).

The SSM approach uses social metaphors to build an understanding of human systems and to derive 'meaning'. SSM's aim is to build a metamethodology that will recognise the principal components of the problem under consideration and then select the most appropriate methodology/ies towards resolving those components. Through the SSM approach the available methodologies, their underpinning philosophies, and their embedded methods are viewed as a set of tools. The problem solver using the SSM should always use the best available tool for each part of the job (Checkland & Scholes 1990).

2 Case Study

Case study research is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2002). Case study research can be positivist, interpretive, or critical, depending upon the underlying philosophical assumptions.

Yin (2002) recommended the use of a case-study protocol as part of a carefully designed research project that would include the following sections:

A. Overview of the project (project objectives and case study issues),

B. Field procedures (credentials and access to sites),

C. Questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection),

D. Guide for the report (outline, format for the narrative).

The distinctive characteristic of case studies is their attempt to understand the complete picture of cultural systems of action. Cultural systems of action refer to sets of interrelated activities engaged in by the actors in a social situation. During case study research, the selection of cases should focus on maximising the knowledge to be gained, in the period of time available for the study.

3 Surveys

Surveys as a research approach are deployed to gather quantitative information in many fields including social science and marketing research. The focus of surveys may be on judgmental or pragmatic information depending on the specific purpose (Czaja & Johnny 2005).

The underpinning principle in designing a survey is the definition of the research quality criteria. Four criteria that are essential to passing judgment on a particular piece of survey research are:

- Rigour: Does the study systematically apply recognised best practices of survey research?
- Neutrality: Does the study observe the phenomena of interest without biasing the observations?
- Balance: Does the study use sufficient resources to demonstrate its thesis adequately, but no more than are necessary for this purpose?
- Transparency: Does the study provide all the relevant background needed for an informed assessment?

The optimisation of survey design is founded upon the evaluation of the survey based on the above criteria.

4 Ethnography

Ethnographic research has its roots in the discipline of social and cultural anthropology. When performing their research, ethnographers are required to spend a significant amount of time in the field of study. Through their interaction with their subjects of study, ethnographers seek to place the studied phenomena in their social and cultural context.

Ethnographic research is becoming an increasingly popular method for studying the Internet because of the unique way it can be used "*to develop an enriched sense of the meanings of the technology and the cultures which enable it and are enabled by it*" (Hine, 2000).

5 Action Research

Several definitions of action research are available in the literature, yet one of the most widely cited is Rapoport's (1970): "*Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework*".

The main viewpoints of the above definition are the collaborative aspect of action research and the possible ethical dilemmas that arise from its deployment. This definition also emphasises the fact that action research is aimed to broaden the knowledge of the social science community. Through this attribute the action research is differentiated from applied social science, where the objective is to put into practice social scientific knowledge but not to broaden the body of knowledge.

In contrast to traditional research (empirical) methods where researchers perform research on other people, in action research, researchers perform research on themselves. The action researcher examines her own life and/or

work, and this involves the questioning of basic truths about the behaviour of the researcher in a given context.

1. **Channel Integration:** Basic determinant of online visitor / customer satisfaction is the capacity of the Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to integrate their offline and online communication and service channels as part of their marketing strategies (Khalifa & Liu 2003). DMOs that maximise the utilisation of communication and service channels through channel matching and integration will positively influence online visitor / customer retention. The effective integration of communication and service channels by DMOs will result in hybrid retail strategies, which will in turn create consistent customer experiences driving the destination to success (Grenci & Todd 2002). For the purpose of achieving the above consistency, DMOs should integrate their customer databases making them accessible by both channels. Customer database merging leads to customer relationship building, allowing common access to information about online visitors / customers and offline customers' preferences and purchase history. This will increase the value delivered to the customers, and therefore increase their repeat buying (Reichheld & Schefter 2000).

2. **Customer Service Quality:** Online visitors / customers require continuous, practical and helpful communication with the DMOs (Grenci & Todd 2002), attributes on which they base their online product or service selection behaviour (Galbreath, 2002). Hence, DMOs should adequately provide customer services that satisfy their online visitors / customers requirements. For achieving this, DMOs should first understand their online visitors / customers' specific needs and have the capacity to manage their concerns, problems and complaints through a friendly and caring attitude (Yang & Peterson 2004).

3. **Ease of Navigation:** Ease of navigation relates the comprehensive presentation of content (Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000) with the simplicity of navigation (Yang & Peterson 2004). A successful web portal should

possess both of the characteristics above, as their combination provides the online visitor / customer with broad access to information with minimised effort. In situations where web portals are difficult to navigate, their online visitors / customers get demotivated. Visitors / customers of web portals that are well structured and present information in an organised way are satisfied and have more favourable attitudes towards the offered products or services. (Anderson & Srinivasan 2003).

4. **Information Quality:** Information quality may be defined as a reflection of its relevancy, recency, richness, consistency and understandability (Wang & Fesenmaier 2006). Information possessing the above attributes maximises the online visitors / customers' navigation efficiency and facilitates their decision making when searching for a product or service (Koufaris, et al., 2002). The availability of value-added information, like product or service reviews and recommendations from online visitors / customers, encourage positive behaviour towards the destination and may also prove to be a source of product or service differentiation (Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000).

5. **Online Community:** Online communities are formed through the existence of online groupware applications, which facilitate the electronic communication among members of variable sized groups across the time, and space dimensions. Through the existence of online communities, visitors / customers are able to create relationships with the destination and among them (Geissler, 2001). Online visitors / customers can communicate with each other and obtain online help when a product or service related problem arises. These experiences create 'stickiness' and as a result online visitors / customers are more likely to revisit the DMO's website (Strauss, et al., 2005).

6. **Online Security and Trust:** Online security is concerned with online visitors / customers' authentication, information transfer and transaction security (Khalifa & Liu 2003). Online trust refers to the process of gaining the online visitors / customers' trust, who as a result will be wiling to

transact with the DMO (Feinberg & Kadam 2002). Online visitors / customers are concerned with online security and trust when they are asked to provide their personal information. This concern increases online visitors / customers' perception of risk and if not addressed adequately by the DMO will unfavourably influence their satisfaction (Ilsever, et al., 2006). For the purpose of enhancing their online visitors / customers' feeling of confidence, the DMOs should cater for their security and clearly communicate their security policy to their online visitors / customers. This will in effect provide for increased online visitors / customers' satisfaction.

7. **Order Fulfilment Level:** Refers to delivering the correct product or service at the right time and providing adequate support for visitors / customers (Reichheld & Schefter 2000). Guiding the visitors / customers through a successful order fulfilment process will provide for the attainment of high customer satisfaction levels. The most important determinant for achieving high visitors / customers' order fulfilment levels as identified by Matzler, et al., (2008) is logistical support. Effective logistics facilitates efficient e-commerce activities for ensuring on time order delivery (Parboteeah, et al., 2007). However, if an order is delivered on time with the support from efficient logistics, online visitors / customers will still be dissatisfied, if the product received is not as per ordered. Therefore, order fulfilment should address the on time delivery of the correct product or service.

8. **Perceived value:** Perceived value may be defined as online visitors / customers' overall assessment of a product or service, following its use, based on their perceptions of benefits and costs (Churchill & Iacobucci 2004). Online visitors / customers' perceived value will guide their behaviours and attitudes as their satisfaction will depend on an evaluation of their perceived benefits attained as a result of the perceived costs compensated for acquiring the offering (Parboteeah, et al., 2007). The empowerment of online visitors / customers get from the multiplicity of options and the abundance of relevant product or service information cause a significant challenge for DMOs in the process of influencing their online visitors / customers' perceived value of their offering.

9. **Personalisation:** Personalisation, aims at the timely provision of products or services to accommodate an online visitor / customer personal needs (Reichheld & Schefter 2000). Active online visitor / customer involvement in the specification and/or design of products or services offered online is of essence to many DMOs providing non standardised products or services. This highly iterative process provides for the online visitor / customer the opportunity to select the custom product or service features that best fit her needs and for the DMO the chance to gain an insight to its visitors / customers requirements and preferences for better understanding and servicing their needs (Reichheld & Schefter 2000). This knowledge of online visitors / customers' preferences is vital to avoid the sacrifice of online visitors / customers' goodwill and maintain superior satisfaction. Personalisation is a major 'stickiness' determinant - the extent to which a DMO is able to attract online visitors / customers to use a web portal relatively longer and repeatedly (Strauss, et al., 2005). In other words, the DMO attracts online visitors / customers to come back repeatedly since it turns them into product 'makers' rather than simply product 'takers'. Through this process online visitors / customers are supporting the DMO's processes by facilitating product or service specification and design, as well as customer knowledge management services, which in turn provide value to the DMO's activities through their contribution in the marketing process (Anderson & Srinivasan 2003).

10. **Product or Service Range:** Refers to the quality characteristics of available online products or services that are related to their assortment and variety (Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000). The wider the range of products or services offered, the higher the possibility that the online visitors / customers' expectations are satisfied. The less effort required by an online visitor / customer to locate a product or service on the website the more will be the chances of being satisfied (Frew, 2005). Furthermore, the more complete, accurate, relevant and recent product information available, that may assist online visitors / customers in fulfilling their expectations, the better the chance of keeping online visitors / customers satisfied.