

Barriers on marketing tourism services and their impacts on customer awareness

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ABSTRACT

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The study aims to search and identify barriers to the customer's awareness of tourism services in hotels working in Al-Kharj city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A sample of hotel customers was taken, amounting to (500) customers to find out the quality of these services, as the quality of tourism services is an essential pillar of the competitiveness of the tourism facility in light of the market economy conditions. It is not possible to know if these services need improvement without specifying and identifying their quality levels and the customers' evaluation. The study reached a set of results; the most important of them is that there is no relationship between the customer's awareness of the tourism service and the intangibility of the services or the types of advertising message. The study recommended a set of recommendations, the most important of which is to continuously improve and develop tourism services and train workers to provide these services on modern means in the field of tourism services and using modern tourism marketing methods.

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1. Introduction

Tourism marketing is a field of modern marketing knowledge that has received great attention from writers and researchers, with being a case of service marketing, but writing in it is still important and many are unwilling to go into it due to the specialization and degree knowledge intersection between a group of scientific knowledge in marketing, cognitive and financial sciences, and behavioral sciences, which some believe that writing about tourism marketing is an attempt to inform about the vital role played by tourism marketing at the level of support and survival of the tourism sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The supervising and organizing authorities of the tourism sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have realized the importance of tourism marketing, especially with the characteristics of tourism services that are almost unique to them and no other services, as a result of which emerged as a result of data and considering that studies and researches have proven that they govern the individual choice of the Tourism facility which shows other considerations as quality of service, and how to deal with the public and after-sales services as important criteria in customer choice of the hotel and its services, given the high standard Tourism services that are characterized by their content. It was necessary for the hotel management to search for other means and methods through which it can compete and obtain better results. If the hotel service is difficult in its essence to be one of the areas of competition and highlighting the comparative advantage, the quality of this service and the method of providing it may be the way they were the only place to compete.

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Tourism marketing within tourism organizations is to carry out their activities well and ensure their growth and development by increasing their ability to bring in a greater number of business dealings, and to meet the needs and desires of customers, depending on the level of quality of the banking service provided to customers. Those who follow the reality of Saudi tourism organizations, in light of the market economy and openness to the world, find that the tourism organizations need further improvement and development in the methods of providing services, diversifying, marketing and improving their quality by using techniques to influence customers and measuring their level of satisfaction with the services provided. This study focuses on identifying the determinants of the customer's awareness of tourism services in Al-Kharj hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and ways to improve their quality.

2. Study problem

The main problem focuses on answering the following question:

- What are the most important barriers facing customers in the realization of the various hotel services that the customer receives at hotels operating in Al-Kharj city? Therefore, the following questions arise in front of us:
- What is the effect of the spoken word on the customer's awareness of the value of banking services at hotels operating in Al-Kharj?
- What is the effect of the lack of tangible service on the customer's awareness of the value of banking services at hotels operating in Al-Kharj?
- What is the effect of advertising messages on the customer's awareness of the value of banking services at hotels operating in Al-Kharj?

2.1 Study hypotheses

This study seeks to test the following hypotheses:

1. There is a relationship between the customer's awareness of the value of hotel services in the city of Al-Kharj and the tangibility of hotel services.
2. There is a relationship between the customer's awareness of the value of hotel services in the city of Al-Kharj and the word of mouth transmitted.
3. There is a relationship between the customer's awareness of the value of hotel services in Al-Kharj city and advertising messages about hotel services.

The study aims to shed light on the barriers in marketing tourism services and their impact on the realization of tourism service from the customers' point of view in Al-Kharj hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This study was conducted in the hotel sector in Al-Kharj city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study was accomplished from August 2019 to February 2020. The study examines the barriers of marketing tourism services and their impact on customers' awareness in Al-Kharj hotels. The study includes the following variables:

The dependent variable: the customer's awareness of the Tourism service in Al-Kharj city hotels.

Independent variables: Includes intangible services, advertising messages, and word of mouth spoken.

The study community consists of customers of Tourism facilities (hotels) in Al-Kharj city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The sample was randomly selected, as mounted up to (500) individuals from the study community were selected as hotel customers in Al-Kharj city. In order to test the study hypotheses and achieve its objectives, an appropriate measurement tool has been developed for this purpose (questionnaire form). The questionnaire was designed on the basis of a five-dimensional Likert scale, and the paragraphs were given weights as follows: Strongly agree: 5, Approved: 4, Neutral: 3, Opposed to: 2, Strongly opposed to: 1. The various topics related to the subject of the study, as well as books and periodicals related. The apparent honesty of the questionnaire was tested via arbitration carried out by a group of marketing specialists at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, King Saud University and King Abdulaziz University, the arbitrators' notes were taken considerably, and the form was redesigned accordingly. To verify the stability of this study, the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha parameter was used for the scale as a whole and for each variable separately. It was found that the value of the stability factor (87.198) is a high parameter and meets statistically for the purposes of scientific research, and this result indicates that this tool has stability which meets the purposes of Study. Cronbach's Alphas for Lack of Intangible Services, Word of Mouth, Advertising Messages and Realizing the Value of the Service are 0.890, 0.881, 0.849 and 0.869, respectively. In addition, the overall Cronbach's Alpha was also equal to 0.870. Fig. 1 demonstrates the structure of the proposed study.

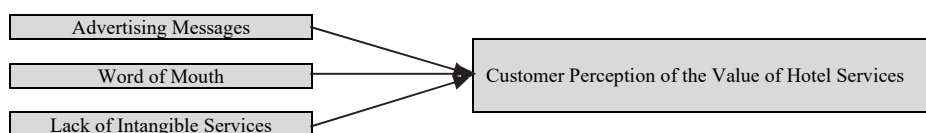


Fig. 1. The proposed study

There is a group of previous studies which dealt with the topic of tourism marketing and its impact on the quality of tourism services and achieving customers' satisfaction with them, the most important of these studies is a study of Al-Hazmi (2019) on the barriers to apply TQM in the marketing of tourism services in Al-Kharj. The study recommended applying TQM to tourism marketing programs in Al-Kharj in order to improve the quality of the services provided. Al-Hazmi (2020) addressed the dimensions of the quality of tourism services in Al-Kharj and stressed the need to improve the quality of tourism services by training workers to provide these services in a distinctive manner. Al-Hazmi (2018) recommended improving the quality of tourism services in Al-Kharj hotels and working to eliminate the barriers that stand in the way of marketing these services and building long-term relationships with customers. Shehata (2018) dealt with preparing a new strategy for tourism marketing in Egypt. It recommended the need to study the needs and desires of tourists and work to develop tourism services in accordance with these needs and desires, and stressed the need to use the internet to market tourism services and participate in tourism exhibitions and festivals in order to build continuous and everlasting relationships with customers.

The study of Bint Khamis (2017) addressed the economic impact of tourism activity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study emphasized the importance of tourism activity in the development and economy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the role of tourism activity in diversifying Saudi income sources and enhancing the balance of payments. The study of Fatima (2016) dealt with the marketing problems in Algeria. It reached the necessity of studying the tourism market and its various components and using modern methods in the marketing of tourism services, working on studying the behavior of tourists, preparing and providing a marketing mix that matches the tastes and desires of tourists and working to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism product. Daren (2017) examined the role of public relations in the development of tourism marketing and concluded the need to have specialists in public relations in the tourism field and work to employ social networks in public relations campaigns and work to increase the training of employees in the field of public relations and motivate them to work to develop the submitted advertising messages for tourists.

Al-Sharif (2017) recommended the necessity of revitalizing tourism marketing, increasing tourists' awareness, spreading tourism culture among Algerian citizens, and working on studying environmental variables and their effect on providing a distinctive marketing mix capable of satisfying the needs and desires of tourists. Asia (2018) examined the role of tourism marketing in developing the competitive advantage of hotels, as it emphasized the role of tourism marketing in achieving competitive advantage and building reputation and achieving the mental image of customers of tourism facilities by providing a distinctive marketing mix. Shamsa (2018) recommended the necessity of paying more attention to tourism marketing in the progress and development of tourism organizations by developing and providing a distinct marketing mix capable of attracting customers better than competitors and led to the role of tourism in the economic development of the country.

Saleh (2017) recommended that more attention should be paid to construct the mental image of commercial bank customers in order to enhance their awareness of the quality of services provided to them by working to enhance the word of mouth and good design for advertising messages capable of attracting customers. Jawad (2017) emphasized the necessity of marketing tourism services electronically and using modern marketing means to solve the problems and barriers of tourism marketing for tourism services. Balafir (2014) emphasized the importance of marketing the Yemeni tourism product through the use of direct marketing means when it has an impact on attracting the loyalty of tourists and the frequent visit to tourism destinations. Al-Alami (2018) emphasized the role of the media in raising its tourism marketing competence by delivering the advertising message to the target audience and creating the desired effect and attracting them to purchase tourism services. Through reviewing those previous studies, we find that they all took place in areas outside the Al-Kharj region and dealt with different sectors and services. This study is distinguished by the fact that it deals with the impact of tourism marketing barriers on the awareness of customers in Al-Kharj hotels in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3. Results

Fig. 2 shows personal characteristics of the participants.





Fig. 2. Personal characteristics of the participants

In our survey, 75% of the participants were male and the remaining 25% were female. Table 1 demonstrates the summary of the descriptive statistics.

Table 1

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the response of the study sample items to the variables of the independent and dependent study

No.	Independent variables	Mean	Sd. Devotion	Degree (Approval) *
1	The hotel provides me with all information related to its new services	4.219	1.421	High
2	The hotel management is committed to implementing its promises of the quality of the service provided	3.926	1.296	High
3	Learn about new hotel services in my own way	3.012	1.029	High
4	Learn about the new services of the hotel by visiting it	3.954	1.223	High
5	There are leaflets showing the hotel's new services	4.110	1.314	High
6	The hotel working hours are suitable, and I can contact them	4.332	1.345	High
7	The hotel provides me with clear information about its services	2.345	0.962	Low
8	Excellent customers service at the hotel	2.019	0.879	Low
9	I ask others before dealing with the hotel	3.421	1.019	High
10	There is courtesy to deal with staff at the hotel	2.014	0.869	Low
11	The hotel staff always understands my requests	4.201	1.234	High
12	The hotel services are adapted to my needs	2.135	0.984	Low
13	I dealt with the hotel because one of my friends dealt with it	4.001	1.196	High
14	My interaction with the hotel is influenced by the difference in the talk about dealing with it	4.257	1.310	High
15	I communicate my opinion about hotel services to others	4.001	1.209	High
16	The hotel provides information about its services by different means (Internet - social media - ads - publications)	4.342	1.359	High
17	The interior and exterior design of the hotel draws me to it	3.820	1.109	High
18	Means of communication with the hotel are effective	2.920	0.989	Low
19	The hotel relies on advertising campaigns to promote its services	3.562	1.098	High
20	The hotel management is keen on the effectiveness of the communication system for the dissemination and exchange of information.	3.013	1.001	High

* (1 - less than 2.8) weak, (2.8 - less than 3.6) medium, (3.6-5) high

Table 1 demonstrates the results of basic statistics on all 20 questions of the questionnaire.

3.1 The first hypothesis: The effect of tangibility of hotel services on customer's awareness

The first hypothesis of this survey investigates the relationship between customer's awareness and tangibility of hotel services. The study uses a simple regression test to perform the test and the result indicates that there was not any meaningful relationship between two variables (t -value = 6.130, Sig. = 0.000). In addition, R-Square value is equal to 0.058, which means the independent variable only describes 5.8% of the changes on the dependent variable.

3.2 The second hypothesis: The effect of word of mouth on customer's awareness

The second hypothesis of this survey investigates the relationship between word of mouth and customer's awareness of hotel services. Again, the study applies a simple regression test to perform the test and the result indicates that there was no meaningful relationship between two variables (t -value = 1.867 < 5.792). Moreover, R-Square value is equal to 0.058, which indicates the independent variable describes only 5.8% of the changes on the dependent variable.

3.3 The third hypothesis: The effect of advertising messages on customer's awareness

The last hypothesis of this survey studies the relationship between advertising messages and customer's awareness of hotel services. One more time, the study implements a simple regression test to execute the test and the result shows that there was no meaningful relationship between two variables ($t\text{-value} = 5.672 < 1.594$).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Through the analysis of the study's data and its hypotheses, we can understand that the tourism organizations in Al-Kharj Governorate should pay more attention to the tangibility of the services they provide in order to construct their image in the minds of customers, whether in terms of interior or exterior design of the tourism facility. Or, through the processes and methods of providing the tourism service, and working to prepare advertising messages in a more interesting and attractive way to attract the customers, while giving a real picture of the reality of the tourism services that are provided without exaggeration. Customers' loyalty by providing a marketing mix capable of attracting customers to the tourism facility and using modern tourism marketing methods and techniques. More attention should also be paid to training workers to properly provide tourism services to the tourism facility customers and work on the continuous development of the services provided in order to ensure their quality in order to build a competitive advantage for them that guarantees them to stay in the tourism market in the Kingdom.

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