

Investigating the Effect of Marketing Mixes Elements importance on the Tourism Industry in Meshkin Shahr

Ezzat Abdi ¹, Mohammad Hassanzadeh ², Ebrahim Esmaeli ¹

¹ Germi Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

² University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran
abdi.ezzat@yahoo.com

Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of marketing mix elements importance on tourism industry developing in Meshkin Shahr. Data for this study were collected verified structured questionnaire from sample of 131 specialists in the field of tourism, such as university lecturers, graduates in the fields of tourism and business management, and the experts working in private or governmental organizations related to tourism who are familiar enough with the region. Data were analyzed by using software SPSS-17 version by adopting the statistical techniques such a Friedman test. The findings of the study showed that all of the marketing mixes of tourism (7P) are important with different degree in Meshkin Shahr.

[Ezzat Abdi, Mohammad Hassanzadeh, Ebrahim Esmaeli. **Investigating the Effect of Marketing Mixes Elements importance on the Tourism Industry in Meshkin Shahr.** *Academ Arena* 2018;10(8):78-81]. ISSN 1553-992X (print); ISSN 2158-771X (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/academia>. 7. doi:[10.7537/marsaaj100818.07](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsaaj100818.07).

Keywords: Marketing mix elements, Tourist, Meshkin Shahr.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism industry is considered one of the biggest and most diverse industries all over the world. Many countries have taken this dynamic industry as the main source of income, job creation, equal distribution of income and wealth, raising the level of social welfare, and in general as their fundamental development factor. Tourism has many kinds of effects on societies. They can be divided into positive effects, such as economic, cultural, social, and environmental effects; and negative effects, such as exhausting resources, pollution, and causing cultural problems (Mason, 2008). Meshkin Shahr is one of the most ancient city in Iran. It is located in the north-west of Iran in Azerbaijan and its distance to Tehran is 839 kilometers. It is the nearest city to the Sabalan high mountain. The weather of this city and the district of Meshkin Shahr is moderate mountainous. It was calling: "Khiav", "Orami", "Varavi" in the past. The most important places for touring in the district of Meshkin Shahr are as following: - Hot water springs of Moiel, Eelando and Qaynarja located in the suburb of the city. Spring water of Qotur Suie located 42 kilometers to Meshkin shahr. Qahqaheh castle located 80 kilometers to Meshkin Shahr and Savalan mountain is the best attraction for tourism market in meshkin Shahr. In spite of tourism potential in this city, marketing activities is not suitable. So according the recommendation of researchers (such a Nobakht, 2009) and demand of government managers this study is organized.

Tourism marketing mixes construct the foundation of tourism marketing, since, they are a combination of the elements needed to plan and

implement the whole marketing operations. The main purpose of the present study is to find out the degree of importance of each tourism marketing mixes in Meshkin Shahr tourism industry development.

2. Literature review

Tourism researchers and scholars have proposed different models of the tourism marketing mixes to date. Middleton and Morrison, have been presented the 7 elements of tourism marketing mixes: product, price, place, and promotion (4p), and people, planning, and physical evidence (7p) (Philip,2007). In this research, these seven P's considered as tourism marketing mix elements which are discussed below:

Product: A combination of activity, experience, tangible and intangible services, commodities, and the information presented to the tourists comprise the tourism product (Lumsdon, 1997). According to Vogt and Andereck (2003) Cognitive perceptions were represented by destination knowledge and affective perceptions by destination desirability.

The correct positioning of a product will mean that the consumer can recognize it as being distinct from the competitor's product because theirs will be unique; often intangible elements are associated with the product which will allow the organization to differentiate their offerings.

Price: It is a concept to describe something which costumers pay, in practice, for the benefits they have gained from the product or the services (Lumsdon, 1997). Hossain, Md. Afjal (2002) studied attitude towards marketing mix elements of the tourism industry in Bangladesh. He reported that the perceived value of the foreign tourists relatively better than expectation.

Place or distribution channels: This includes the kinds of activities of the company which offer the commodities to the target consumers (Kotler, 1997). But, in tourism marketing the distribution channels in tourism attract the costumers to the destinations (Lumsdon, 1997). According to Philip kotler (2007) the place (distribution) in tourism is providing a guideline about different tourist spot.

Musa and Adamu (2011) found that transportation is a significant determinant of tourism development recreational and social facilities and security also play positive role to develop this industry.

Promotion: In tourism marketing, the purpose of the promotion activities is to create demand for a product. Examples of these activities are orientation tours, media advertisements, gift offerings, etc. (Lumsdon, 1997).

People: In tourism marketing, people are the service providers of the tourism industry (hosts) who are in a direct or indirect interaction with tourists (tour curators, workers in service sectors like hotels, local people, etc (Lumsdon, 1997).

Yu Wang (2006) examined some Chinese four- and five star hotels' training and development and reported that the western way of training and development may not necessarily lead to superior training effects in the Chinese context than those used by state-owned hotels.

Planning: Tourism planning is the provision of opportunities to be made accessible for the tourists in order for them to have convincing and pleasing experiences (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). The trip planning packages include, maps, attractions en route and on site, information regarding lodging, food, quality souvenirs and mementoes.

Physical evidence: In general, any observable thing is called physical evidence. Because of the fundamental principle of simultaneity of both provision and consumption in tourism industry, physical evidences are particularly important like restaurants, hotels, and nice-looking places in which things like chairs, decoration, the workers' uniform, the texture of the music, the internal and external visage, and unique landscapes of the visited places are considered as physical evidences (Lumsdon, 1997). According to Kannan, Srinivasan (2009) in Tourism the physical evidence is basically depends on travel experience, stay, and comfort.

In spite of the recognition of the positive impacts of tourism activities on the economy, the negative impacts on the destinations, their inhabitants and tourism hosts have been discussed arrigo (2008) and Buhalis, 2000 (Simone, 2009). So in marketing activities we should consider integrated approach. In

this research marketing mix and priority in meshkinshahr is studied.

3. Methodology

The study is an applied and descriptive. To fulfill the objectives of this study 131 specialists in the field of tourism, such as university lecturers, graduates in the fields of tourism and business management, and the experts working in private or governmental organizations related to tourism who are familiar enough with the region.

Since no research had been conducted in this field previously, the variance of the population was not calculated. In order to estimate the variance of the population and determine the size of the sample, first, a group of 30 people were randomly selected from the sample and the variance was calculated through the distribution of the questionnaire. Based on the variance and the volume formula, the sample size was estimated to be 131 people.

For the purpose of the study, respondents were asked to give tick marks on right side of different statements. All variables were measured on five point Likert scale. The response scales for each statement in the survey questionnaire were as: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Cronbach's alpha has been employed to investigate the questionnaire's reliability. That is, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 members of the sample and they answered it. Then, the analysis of the returned questionnaires revealed the Cronbach's alpha of 90% which shows a high level of reliability. Freedman test has been used to prioritize the results of data.

4. Research findings

According to the results (Table 1), the results obtained from the Freedman test regarding the prioritization of the elements comprising tourism marketing mixes. it can be noted that from the perspective of the members of the research sample the 32nd, 44th, and 31st elements of the questionnaire have the most effect on the improvement of the tourism industry in Meshkin Shahr. This study suggests that the physical evidences and promotion have the highest degree of importance in the success of tourism industry in Meshkin Shahr respectively.

5. Discussion

The results of the present research are generally consistent with the researches of prior research (Nobakht, 2009), but are different in the sequence of factors. It appears that the aforementioned factors are important in the development of tourism of any region, but their significance and priority differ with

regards to characteristics and potentials of each region. Generally, for implementing any type of plan we need to consider financial resources, workforce, structures and relative regulations. From the structural viewpoint, in this research physical evidence and tourism promotion are very important than other

factors. Based on Kannan, Srinivasan (2009) physical evidence is basically depends on travel experience, stay, and comfort. So in the marketing field of meshkin-shahr tourism marketing, satisfaction of present tourists should be noted for tourism organizing in meshkin-shahr.

Table 1. Importance of marketing mixes according to Freedman test

| Mean | Marketing Mixes | Importance |
|------|-------------------|------------|
| 5.88 | Physical Evidence | 1 |
| 4.97 | Promotion | 2 |
| 4.53 | People | 3 |
| 3.87 | Price | 4 |
| 3.84 | Product | 5 |
| 2.95 | Place | 6 |
| 1.98 | Planning | 7 |

Normally, beside these important items, adopting a product, price, place, people, planning makes implementing the programs feasible. It must be noted that to create such a development, we must use private sector, the government and people to make a proper move in developing tourism of the region.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the findings of this research, first, marketing mix factors are identified and sorted by their importance. In line with the results obtained from this research and their analysis, the following strategies and suggestions are offered for the institutes involved in tourism and tourism destinations' management to develop this industry as far as possible:

- 1) Especial attention to marketing in tourism industry
- 2) Creating common and systematic perspectives in all the people involved in tourism
- 3) Advertising the tourism attractions and facilities and making them known as being a different destination
- 4) Adoption of supporting, guiding, and supervision strategies for private sectors to convince them to have active presence in the tourism markets and invest in tourism infrastructures of the town
- 5) Establishing a coordinating and planning center to wholly develop the tourism activities in the region, like "Tourism development center of Meshkin Shahr" which has a coordinator and a coordinating council whose members are the managers of different sections active in the field of tourism in tourism destinations of the town.

- 6) Establishing tourism agencies in the region in order to do marketing activities and lead the tourists from other regions to Meshkin Shahr.

Corresponding Author:

Ezzat Abdi
 Germe Branch,
 Islamic Azad University, Iran
 E-mail: abdi.ezzat@yahoo.com

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8/25/2018