



The Role of Jordanian Local Community in Marketing Tourism

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Abstract

This research aims at highlighting the role of Jordanian local community in developing tourism in Jordan through collaborative efforts and encouraging the governmental agencies to attract tourists from around the world. Knowledge about tourism sites is very important in this aspect. And managing tourism marketing must be shared between the government and the local communities, especially in providing tourist jobs for the individuals who are living near the tourist's sites. The research showed that the Jordanian citizens have a good knowledge about tourism in Jordan, which helps in the development of this sector.

Key words: Marketing Tourism, Jordan, Marketing Management.

Introduction

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has defined tourism as " the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (Rowe et al, 2002).

The length of time spent by tourists in the host country, or to repeat his visit to the country itself depends on several factors, one of them is the concerted efforts of official agencies, and through non-official bodies to sustain the beautiful memories in the mind of tourists for the tourist site in particular and the country as a whole in general. This can be achieved through popular festivals and the daily coexistence with tourists by the local population, to make them feel that they are worthy to welcome them (Silva, 2004).

The Jordanian citizen must understand that tourism is one of Jordan's fastest growing industries. Historically and scenically, the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan is rich in attractions for the tourists, and Jordanian traditions are the heritage of most of the civilized world. And for many factors particularly those related to the monotheistic religions to visit Jordan became the spiritual nature. In the hills area, west of the Jordan River within the districts of Jerusalem Nablus, stand shrines sacred to the followers of monotheistic religions in the world. On the East Bank there are three internationally prized tourist sites, Petra, Wadi Rumm and Jerash, the tourist can reach all these sites easily through several roads from Amman or from other regions in Jordan.

On the other hand, Amman offers the double pleasure to modern living, in a choice of hotels approved by the ministry of tourism. We can say that Jordan is one of the countries that have antiquities, ruins and tourist sites for many cultures and religions through the history. And this paper will focus on a very important point which is do all the Jordanian citizens have a good knowledge about the tourist sites in the country? And how they use this knowledge in the marketing of tourism in Jordan.

The value of religious tourism to Jordan

Jordan is exceptionally blessed in number and concentration of its holy sites and memories. Across the countries the faithful of the three great monotheistic religions, have made their way here to follow in the steps of prophets, or visit the scene of Christ's ministry .every foot of the country has a familiar story to tell.

The visitor can read this history, either for Christians or Muslims as a culture or as a religion. For Christians, the sanctuaries of Jerusalem are held in deepest reverence, the church of the holy sepulcher in the heart of the old city was originally built by Roman emperor Constantine.

Another location is Madaba, this city, " Muslims and Christians are toiling round- the- clock to brace for Monday's much awaited visit of Pope John II as part of a pilgrimage to the holy land (Jordan Times, 2002). On the first Papal tour to the holy land in 36 years , is expected to visit the sanctuary of Siyyegne on mount Neto, near Madaba, these and others are only examples about the holy land and holy sites for Christians in Jordan. On the other hand, Jerusalem is the third holy city on earth, for Muslims after Mecca and Medina in Hejaz. Jerusalem involves, Al-Aqsa, Dome of the Rock, Al-Haram Esh Sherif and Salah Adin Minbar. The small village of Mazar, nine miles to the south of Karak, encompasses a mosque of two domes and two high minarets; this mosque was built over the tomb of Ja'afar Ibn Abu Talib, cousin of Prophet Mohammed, who was killed in the battle between Muslims and Byzantine armies. Nearby are two other domes built over the tombs of two leaders killed in the same battle, Abdullah Ibn Rawaha, and Zaid Ibn Haritha. In the Jordan valley there are several domes and tombs built for Muslim leaders, the most famous being that the great general Abu Obeidah, companion of the prophet. So, are these sites are known for the Jordanian citizens and are they interested in their religious and historical values?

Tourism in Jordan

Tourism in one of the important sectors of the Jordanian economy, as the number of arrivals to the kingdom in 2008, six million, three million of them for touristic purposes, and the total tourism revenue in the same year as adjusted three billion dollars. The tourism income in the year 1999 was not exceeding 564 million dinars. The table below shows the development of tourism sector in Jordan represented by tourism revenue for the year 2002-2009.

Years	Tourism Revenue	Years	Tourism Revenue
2002	743 million	2006	1.164 billion
2003	752.6 million	2007	1.638 billion
2004	943 million	2008	2.089 billion
2005	1 billion	2009	2.064 billion

Source: Jordanian Ministry of tourism, 2010.

Since 1998, the task of marketing the tourism product in Jordan entrusted to the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), as an independent, public private sector partnership, to benefit from the

marketing strategies for the brand, and promote Jordan tourism product, to become a preferred option in global markets. And it is known that private sector organization, whether owned by individuals, or in the form of companies, are part of the community, and, therefore, the researcher finds that the decision to establish the Jordan Tourism Board was the right decision, because it has allowed the community to participate actively in marketing tourism in Jordan.

Through examining the adopted strategies, one can find that they represent the actual directions of the Jordan tourism product in terms of the tourist purposes, cultural, natural, religious, adventurous, leisure and MICE destination (Jordan Tourism Board, Website).

Since the mission of the Jordan Tourism Board is to lead the branding, promoting and positioning of Jordan as a destination of choice, the JTB implements an integrated program of international promotional activities such as, participation in trade fairs, trade workshops, trade and consumer road shows, familiarization trips, press trip, brochure and multimedia production, and media relations. In order to achieve its goals, JTB utilizes the services of eleven offices in Europe and North America (www.visitjordan.com).

Jordanian tourist attractions vary to include, historical sites like Petra as one of the new seven wonders of the world, Jordan river, Mount Nebo, Madaba and numerous mediaeval mosques and churches, and natural locations such as, Wadi Rum, Dana nature reserves, Azraq wetland reserve and others.

In the locations such as, Umm Qais, Jerash, Al Karak, Amman and Umm Al-Jimal, where there are archeological attractive features, belonging to the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic culture. In addition to the health tourism which is focused in the Dead Sea and Maian, and the religious tourism as mentioned early. But the question that arises now is: is it sufficient to the existence of these features, for marketing tourism in Jordan?

Tourism Marketing Mix

Tourism marketing mix nowadays characterized in complexity high cost and the difficulty of selection the components. McManus (2010) has argued that the elements high cost in tourism marketing mix are: - branding, which may include brand name, product name, logo, tagline, key messages, byline and photography.

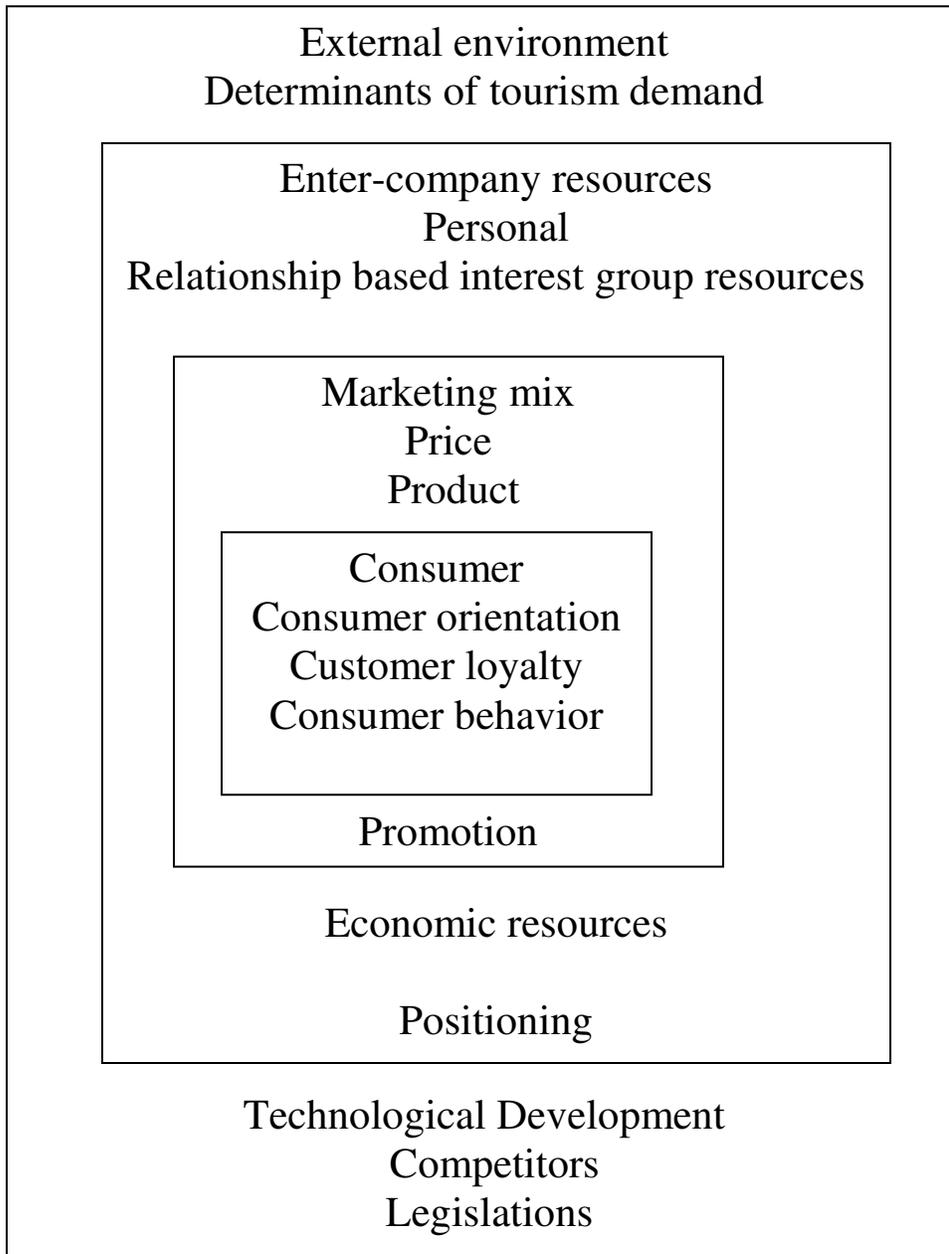
- marketing collateral (banners, brochures, flyers, signs and posters) and this includes cost such as, designing of attractive for institutional statements photography and the logos, also printing brochures cost and the cost to distribute these brochures. In this regard, some authors have suggested some means that aim to reduce the cost such as :
- employing inputs from less expensive resources
- Focus on products that do not require substantial additions, leading to cost reduction. especially the labor cost
- achieving economies of scale by high volume sales
- get attractive discount on purchases like transportation, hospitality and food (Fyall and Garrod, 2005, p.89)

Internal mix elements include for example, hospitality, guest relations, quality control, personal sales and employee morale. The external mix elements, devoted to attract new customers through offering recreational facilities, the comfortable traveling, hotels and pricing (www.tripod.com/travel-and-tourist-marketing.html). In their study entitled " using multiple sense in tourism marketing" (Isaccsson and Alakosk, 2009) pointed out that the marketing forces used by tourism organization in order to achieve a targeted level of sales in a targeted market.

And they have suggested that the tourism marketing system included the 4Ps, and economic environment, the organization resources and government legislation, which need to be technologies that can influence consumer behavior.

This technique according to (Isacsson and Alakosk, 2009) is, multisensory marketing communication; the figure below shows how this technique has main role among the tourism marketing mix in the area of touching the customer's senses.

Figure 1: Marketing System for any Organization



Source: Isacsson, Annica and Alakoski, Leena (2009), using multiple the role of local community in tourism marketing.

The community's interest in the development of tourism in the country pertains to the recognition of the members of this community that tourism contribute actively to increase their income (Forstner, 2004). In Saudi Arabia for example, Sahari (2010) indicates that there are three thousand jobs will be available in the pilgrimage season rewards of up to five thousand riyals (Alsaari, Ali, 2010). Another example from Europe in Ski seasonal jobs, professional catering experience essential as well as excellent organizational and people skills, these skills are necessary in preparing menu plans at the chalet, shopping, preparing breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner, in addition to welcoming guests and looking after them during their stay in the chalet (www.natives.co.uk).

The marketing mix for travel and tourism is a strategy that includes a package of offers that would achieve the best attraction for tourists. Depending upon who is doing the marketing, the tourism and recreation organizations adopt internal and external programs aimed at achieving different goals, the internal mix elements are offered to customers completely on site, and they are dependent upon the quality of the provided services to the visitors by the communities.

For Jordan, in a study by (Alhasant, 2010) under the title "Sociocultural impacts of tourism on the local community at Petra, Jordan". The researcher pointed out that the tourism industry in Jordan has not achieved its full potential and it seems very important for the different stakeholders to develop Jordanian tourism through multiple collaborative efforts. In this regard, governmental and non-governmental efforts must interact to achieve the potential development. And officials should be aware that the role of the community in the development of tourism would be more effective, the greater the engagement of its members in the work of tourism. Therefore the focus must be on the young people who have knowledge about the attractive locations in Jordan, and who have the appropriate level of education .especially in the filed of foreign languages.

Perhaps the most graphic evidence of the positive role played by the Jordanian community in its field of tourism is joining a number of citizens to participate in the activities performed by wild Jordan. Wild Jordan is a branded division of the Royal Society for the conservation of nature (RSCN). RSCN had adopted people-centered approach to protecting nature, where business projects are being developed to create economic and social benefits for local communities (The Royal Society for the conservation of nature, Jordan, 2008). And this makes (RSCN) responsible for socio-economic development including eco-tourism operations. Also, (RSCN) through providing jobs and revenue for local communities, has created more support from local people for conservation and provide alternatives to " harmful " land uses like grazing and hunting.

Research Methodology

Research type

This research is exploratory one, it aims to identify to what extent the Jordanian citizen, knows about archaeological and tourist sites, places of recreation, and the names and locations of sites and the benefits of curative tourism in Jordan.

Data collection

The researcher has addressed five questions to fifty respondents representing the sectors shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Data Collection Structure

Sectors	Males	Females	Total
High school students	5	5	10
Whole sellers, tourist, souvenirs	8	2	10
Public employees	6	4	10
The elderly: over sixty years	7	3	10
Taxi drivers	10	---	10
Total	36	14	50

The questions addresses to respondents.

- 1- Do you know the names of three ancient religious sites in Jordan?
- 2- Where is Ma'in Spa and why do tourists go to?
- 3- Can you mention three archaeological features exist in the capital Amman?
- 4- If a tourist asked you for the most appropriate place for rest and recreation in Jordan, where does he go?
- 5- Which city of Jordan is known as the one of the seven wonders?

Table 2 shows the right and wrong answers of the respondents.

Table 2: Respondents answering to the study questions

Categories	Question Number	Males		Females		Total	
		Right	Wrong	Right	Wrong	Right	Wrong
Students	1	4	1	2	3	6	4
	2	3	2	2	3	5	5
	3	5	-	4	1	9	1
	4	0	5	1	4	1	9
	5	4	1	5	0	9	1
Souvenirs sellers	1	7	1	0	2	7	3
	2	8	-	-	2	8	2
	3	6	2	-	2	6	4
	4	7	1	2	-	9	1
	5	8	-	2	-	10	0
Public employees	1	4	2	1	3	5	5
	2	5	1	2	2	7	3
	3	4	2	1	3	5	5
	4	6	-	3	1	9	1
	5	6	-	4	-	10	0
Elderly	1	6	1	1	2	7	3
	2	7	0	2	1	9	1
	3	5	2	0	3	5	5
	4	2	5	1	2	3	7
	5	7	0	2	1	9	1
Taxi drivers	1	9	1	-	-	9	1
	2	10	-	-	-	10	0
	3	9	1	-	-	9	1
	4	6	4	-	-	6	4
	5	8	2	-	-	8	2

Conclusion

The results suggested that students information was not bad about tourist sites in Jordan, with the exception of places of rest and recreation, because one out of ten respondents. Wholesalers of tourist souvenirs have very good information on tourism in Jordan, especially for places that sell their goods. As for public employees, their answers were correct, except for the first question and the third question, where most of them indicated the names of two out of three sites. The elderly people have perfect knowledge about historical and religious sites, but they have weak knowledge about recreation sites. And finally, taxi drivers were the best respondents for most of the questions.

Recommendations

In order to activate the role of the Jordanian communities in the development of tourism in Jordan, the researcher is presenting the following recommendations:

- 1- The Ministry of Tourism in coordination with the Ministry of Education must provide the share of school education for students, about tourism in Jordan.
- 2- The government agencies must provide adequate support for community-based organizations concerned with the protection of nature, and private sector organizations that provide different tourism services.
- 3- The theory test for bus and taxi drivers must include the names and locations of tourist sites in Jordan, especially those who will work in the tourist agencies.
- 4- The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities must coordinate with the Jordanian television and satellite channels broadcasting programs and documentaries on religions and archaeological sites in Jordan , as well as the benefits to the tourist by visiting the Dead sea, Spa Ma'in and Afra and the Gulf of Aqaba , to be broadcast these programs sound and images , and using multiple languages.

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