

Distribution Channels Strategies for Attraction of Foreign Tourists

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Abstract: Tourism has many social, cultural and environmental effects which affects domestic people, so has produced many concerns. It is anticipated that tourist will travel too much in the next 20 years because of tourism's economical and social effects. Tourism play an important role in world economy and it is expected that it get more importance in the next years. Tourism affects occupation rate, payment balance and economical stability of many countries. This industry is an application one, so that is a potential to improve occupation situation, especially for low-skilled jobs. In Tajikistan, unemployment rate is focused in this area. In addition, tourism jobs are more dispersed than the other economical divisions, so they are parallel to decentralization policy of Tajikistan. According to the experts, one of the reasons for unsuccessfulness of Tajikistan in tourism is low notice to modern tourism market. A sample of 80 active persons in tourism industry in Tajikistan for four years (2007-2010) was selected. Binomial test, Freedman variance analysis test and correlation test were used to test assumptions. The results show that Suitable distribution channels strategies affect attraction of foreign tourists.

Key words: Distribution channels • Foreign tourists • Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Those countries that stepped without planning, encountered many environmental and social problems. These problems were undesirable for tourists and domestic people and produced marketing problems and decreased economical advantages [1]. The regions that proceeded without planning for tourism development, were not able to compete with the other countries with suitable plans [2].

Experiments of other parts of world have shown that development of planned tourism industry may satisfy needs of tourists without creating significant problems [3].

Tourism plays an important economical role as one of the invisible export items in many countries. Now, after oil and automobile, tourism is the third export industry of the world [4].

Tourism experts anticipated that tourism industry will become the first export industry of the world in early of 21st century. In spite of progressive growth of tourism and its importance in economy of countries, unfortunately, the share of Tajikistan is low; and its reason is unfamiliarity of tourism organizations of Tajikistan with marketing activities, including designing marketing mixture.

Strategic planning of tourism marketing is an important subset of total strategic tourism planning [5].

The main problem to be solved in this research is that there was no strategic marketing mixture model to develop tourism in Tajikistan. This decreases success despite of many competition advantages of this country in its cultural, geographical and historical dimensions.

Research Literature

Marketing Management: Awareness for existence of a market for a product will not simplify marketing word. People often think they have enough information about marketing, because they encounter it in their trips. They have stopped in a gas station with suitable traffic signs; they have resided in road hotels; and they have used restaurants with interesting foods. These are forms of propaganda, but marketing is not propaganda. Brochure of a hotel is a propaganda but not marketing [6].

In this section, we offer some definitions for tourism marketing suggested by valid persons or organizations. England Marketing Institute suggested the following definition [7]:

“Marketing is managerial task that organize all commercial activities including evaluation, conversion of customer purchase power to an effective demand for a service or a special good to achieve profit or other goals.”

American Marketing Association defines marketing as [8]:

“Marketing is a process to plan and execute concepts such as pricing, promotion, distribution of goods, services and ideas to meet the goals of organization and customers.”

Philip Catler, the most famous expert in this field, has defined marketing as a human activity to meet needs through transaction.

William Stanton, marketing professor in Colorado University, defined marketing as [9]:

“Marketing is a complete business system that is designed for planning, pricing, promotion and distribution of high quality products to meet needs of goal market to achieve organizational goals.”

Varen Kigan, marketing professor in Pace University of USA, defined marketing as [10]:

“Marketing is the process of concentration of organizational resources and goals on environmental opportunities and needs.”

The above definitions may differ apparently, but they share the following points:

- Marketing is administration of a company by concentration on needs of customers.
- In marketing concept, meeting needs of customers is very important and is the main task to achieve profit goals of a company.

Other tasks such as production, human resources and financial affairs are done regarding marketing direction. From the operational view, marketing is a thinking method that must be noticed by management and must be the dominant idea in an organization. From the organizational view, duty of marketing department is providing marketing techniques and tools for decision-making. Therefore, marketing is a major task of management and a tool to achieve organization's goal [11].

Tourism Marketing Management: Marketing as a concept, as is applied for services and goods, is used in tourism industry. Thus, tourism marketing and general marketing are not different [12].

One of the definitions of marketing in tourism industry is:

“Marketing is philosophy of management to meet needs of tourists and provides highest profit for an organization by researches, anticipation and selection of suitable goods and services” [13].

The above definition shows that firstly, marketing is a thinking method in a situation to balance tourists' needs

and tourism organizations' needs. Secondly, this definition notices tourism researches to select goal markets. Thirdly, situation stabilization and goods life curve concepts are used to ensure supply of services and goods in tourism industry and to design desired marketing strategies and suitable programs.

Krippendorff suggested the following definition in “Tourism Marketing” book:

“Marketing is using systematic policies of tourism institutes and countries in national and international levels to meet needs of a definite group of consumers to achieve suitable profit” [14].

This definition complies with the previous ones for general marketing to meet needs of consumers as the final goal of companies.

Tourism Marketing Mixture: Marketing mixture includes all efforts and activities of a company to affect demand. Its different features have been classified by marketing experts.

Professor McCarty (1960) described 4 main elements of marketing including product, price, promotion and place (4P). Most marketing management experts accept “4P” and its elements. However, some researchers added other elements [15].

Middleton added three other elements of people, physical evidence and process, so he called it “7P”.

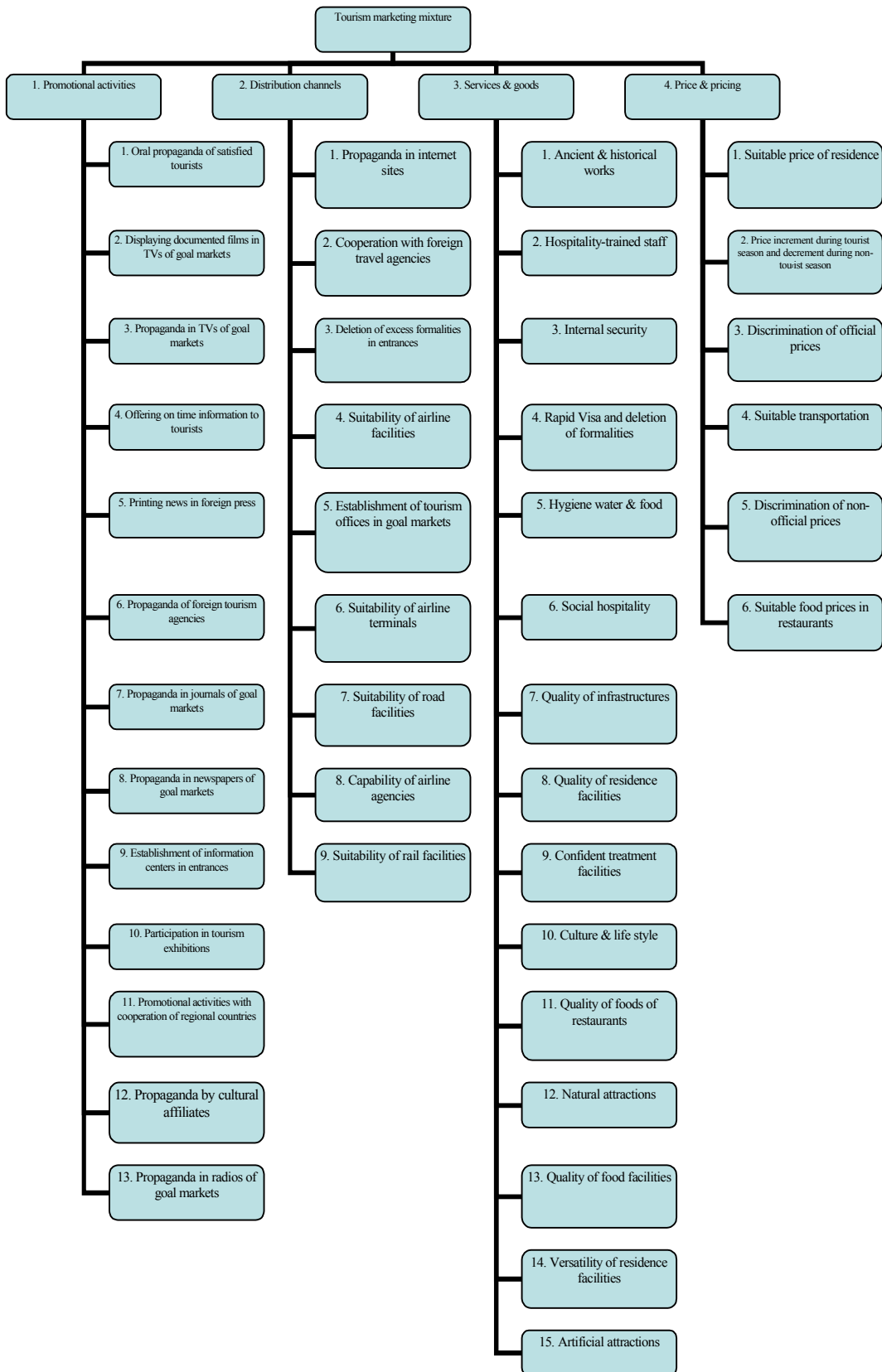
Mill & Morrison added elements of people, packaging, partnership and programming, so they called it “8P”.

Christien Gronros added element of interaction [2].

Roger Doswell added element of picture as the fifth element. According to Doswell, general picture of the region is a mental picture including place, nature and views of people. General picture is produced during time and history is effective cultural factors, fictions and epics.

As mentioned above, there is solidarity for four main elements of marketing mixture. In this research, only theoretical fundamentals of marketing mixture principle were noticed and primary data for Tajikistan market was gathered with that regard [16].

Research History: Chon Key-Sung from Virginia University defended his PhD thesis in 1991 titled “Satisfaction of tourists from destination region view”. The primary goal of this research was to study relationship between general view of a tourism region and satisfaction of tourists. This research concentrated on the following criteria for usage of recognition evaluation theory:



- Operational equivalence between expectations of tourists and their perceptions from operational features of destination region.
- Value equivalence between self-thinking of tourists and general features of a destination region.
- The degree of emotional engagement of tourists for trip purchases and their effects on their satisfaction.

Findings of this research showed that tourists' satisfaction related with operational equivalence and value equivalence. For relative power of operational equivalence and value equivalence to describe dissatisfaction of tourism, it was found that operational equivalence could better determine tourists' satisfaction than value equivalence. In addition, it was found that emotional engagement of tourists in purchase process affected satisfaction of them for a destination region. This research concluded that value equivalence approach affects increment of knowledge of tourism marketing. In addition, this research proposed self-thinking and equivalence of destination region in satisfaction process [17].

Laksitanond Prin from International University, USA, defended his thesis in 1989 titled "A comparison between different aspects of Thailand tourism marketing from the view of tourism managers, propaganda managers and five different tourist groups". In this research, firstly, domains of different types of tourism propaganda from the view of tourism and propaganda managers were studied. In addition, domain of each type was analyzed. The results showed that there were 9 important propaganda contents by view of tourism and propaganda managers. Thus, world marketing approach can be used for them. There was a difference in one propaganda message between perceptions of two groups [4].

Papadopoulos Socrates Ioannou from Bradford University, England, defended his PhD thesis titled "Economical tourism analysis out of Greece: Study of growth and structure of foreign tourism to Greece for 1960-1984 by a planning model and suggesting proposals for marketing strategies". In this research, he studied limitations of supply (residence needs and primary infrastructures), main sectors of Greece tourism sectors and growth and structure of foreign tourism for 1960-1984. He concluded that regarding to the vital importance of tourism industry in Greece, acceptance of a strategic integrated interdisciplinary tourism planning process and establishment of a duty unit can improve efficacy and share of tourism of Greece. In addition, some proposals

were offered such as establishment of a definite organization for tourism in Greece to cooperate efforts of different sectors toward tourism industry [18].

Willemse Janinc from Pretoria University, South Africa, defended his thesis titled "A customer-oriented view for tourism marketing". The researcher pointed to lack of scientific topics and researches in this area. He discussed about customer-oriented concept in marketing and its features. This research ends with a case study in Kruger National Park for customer-orientation. This experimental study showed that customer-orientation is not only one of the important prerequisites of service marketing, but also is used in world marketing [9].

Wang Philip Chuang-Ming from Pennsylvania University, USA, defended his PhD thesis titled "Study of expert views for development of regional tourism in Pennsylvania for 2000". His findings showed that commercial experts believed that state budget for promotional activities in different regions must be balanced and government must invest for development of infrastructures. These experts agreed with accumulated marketing. However, these experts had different views about subjects such as promotional activities in state level, regional tourism, future tourism growth in different areas, role of domestic entrepreneurs and evolution of tourism ideals. At the end, proposals were offered for tourism policy and future studies. In addition, it was proposed that other experts, such as professors and government authorities, be used for future studies [19].

Burke James Franklin from Minnesota University in 1986 defended his PhD thesis titled "Designing a computer system for management and evaluation of tourism marketing programs". This research was about development of a tourism computer system with cooperation of a company in Wisconsin State. The studies of Tourism Department of Wisconsin State showed that the number of tourists in this region was decreasing. In this study, they tried to improve management and evaluation of tourism marketing programs by computer technology.

A national survey of tourism organizations showed that evaluation of marketing and management databases could play an important role in general development. In this research, a computer system for management of produced information of tourism marketing sectors and evaluation of efficacy of tourism marketing programs was designed. These two areas are not well noticed in tourism marketing process [20].

Main Question of Research: Among distribution channels variables, deletion of excess formalities for entrance of tourists, suitability of airline facilities and establishment of tourism offices in goal markets are the most important factors for attraction of foreign tourists.

Execution Method of Research: Regarding to the questions and goals of this research, three methods of survey, descriptive and post-event were used.

Survey Method: One of the methods of this research is survey method. Questionnaires were used to gather data. Also face to face interviews were done, unless lack of time. The questions is following:

9 closed questions and 1 open question to test assumption
Closed questions were designed by Lickert Spectrum.

Descriptive Method: Library and field methods was used such as questionnaire, interview and observation.

Post-event Method (Cause-Comparison): If a researcher proceed to anticipate nature of difference before data gathering, the problems is expressed as an assumption. If it is possible, a researcher must try to express reverse assumption for the observed differences. Testing reverse assumptions sometimes is called "strong inference". In the cause-comparison method, base of this inference can be used to test variables that measure difference between groups.

Data Gathering: The statistical society was used to gather data.

Research Variables: The name of variables and their effects on attraction of foreign tourists are shown in the following table.

Price (Distribution Channels):

- Establishment of tourism offices in goal markets
- Propaganda in internet sites and covering goal markets
- Cooperation with foreign travel agencies in goal markets
- Capabilities of travel agencies in Tajikistan
- Suitability of airline facilities to/from Tajikistan
- Suitability of airline terminals in Tajikistan
- Suitability of road facilities in Tajikistan

- Suitability of rail facilities in Tajikistan
- Deletion of excess formalities in entrances in comparison with other countries.

Society and the Statistical Sample: Statistical society of this research includes all persons occupied in tourism industry of Tajikistan that have enough expertise. According to the discussions with Juvenile Affairs, Sport and Tourism Committee, there were about 400 tourism experts in the country which majority of them were in Doshanbeh.

In this research, random sampling was used. This method is shown in the sample. To determine the sample by ratios test or binomial test, the following formula was used:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 p \cdot q}{\epsilon^2}$$

In the above formula, regarding to confidence level 95% and error of 5%, $Z=1.96$ by caution method $p=q=0.5$. By considering similar previous researches, standard deviation is $\epsilon=0.11$. Thus, the sample number is:

$$N = \frac{(1/96)^2 \times 0/5 \times 0/5}{0/11^2} = 79/3719$$

$N \geq 80$

Thus, the sample number is 80. Therefore, 110 questionnaire were sent, which 84 questionnaires were returned and used for analysis.

Data Analysis Methods: Regarding to the method of analysis and the goal of this research, the following statistical methods were used for data analysis.

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive method was used for classification, summarization, description, interpretation and relation of data. The methods used were frequency accumulation, frequency percentage, average, median, mode, variance and standard deviation.

Inferential Statistics: Inferential statistics was used for data analysis if this research.

- Binomial test for each marketing mixture element and each component
- Freedman variance analysis test for each marketing mixture element and their variables

- Kronback’s alpha to test of reliability of measurement tool
- Frequency and percentage and charts of each marketing mixture element

Data Analysis and Test of Assumptions: Statistical assumption test is a rule to make decision about assumptions. There are two types of errors in statistical assumption test:

Error type 1: Rejection of zero assumption when this assumption is true, which is called “error type 1” and is shown by α .

Error type 2: Acceptance of zero assumption when the opposite assumption is true, which is called “error type 2” and is shown by β .

Assumptions are usually written as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : P \geq P_0 \\ H_1 : P < P_0 \end{cases}$$

Since in this research, $N > 30$, thus, normal distribution can be used.

The statistic by binomial relation is:

$$Z \approx \frac{P - P_0}{\sqrt{P \times q/n}}$$

in which,

$$P = \frac{X}{N} = \frac{\text{number of successes}}{\text{sample volume}}$$

P_0 = ratio by zero assumption

Test of Assumption: By view of experts, suitable strategies for distribution channels affect attraction of foreign tourists.

$$H_0: P \geq 60\%$$

By view of experts, suitable strategies for distribution channels do not affect attraction of foreign tourists.

$$H_1: P < 60\%$$

Test result	Error level	Sig. level	Observed probability	Test probability
H_0 : accepted	0.05	0.000	0.9735	60%

Decision: With confidence level of 95%, since observed probability is greater than test probability, H_0 is accepted. In other words, with confidence level of 95%, it can be claimed that by view of experts, suitable strategies for distribution channels affect attraction of foreign tourists.

Test of Ranks of 9 Variables of Distribution Channels: Ranks of 9 variables of distribution channels element are equal.

H_0 :

At least, one pair of ranks of 8 variables of distribution channels element is significantly different.

H_1 :

Test result	Error level	Sig. level	Freedom degree	χ^2
H_0 : rejected	0.05	0.000	8	66.8604

Decision: With confidence level of 95%, since significance level is less than error level, H_0 is rejected. The following table shows average, SD, rank of average and priority of four tourism marketing mixture elements.

Among the variables of distribution channels, deletion of excess formalities, suitability of airline terminals and establishment of tourism offices in goal markets have got the most importance for attraction of foreign tourists.

As you see, propaganda in internet sites and covering goal markets has got the first rank and cooperation with foreign travel agencies and deletion of excess formalities in entrances have got the second and third ranks. Suitability of airline terminals has got the sixth rank and establishment of tourism offices in goal markets has got the fifth rank. Thus, assumption is not confirmed.

CONCLUSION

The results show that Suitable distribution channels strategies affect attraction of foreign tourists. Ranking of 9 variables of distribution channels are shown in the following table.

Distribution channels are very important in tourism industry, because tourists must travel to destinations to use tourism services & goods and they have no idea about tourism products.

Table 1: Rank of average and priorities of variables of distribution channels

Row	Element	Average	SD	Rank of average	Priority
1	Establishment of tourism offices in goal markets	4.338	0.700	5.07	5
2	Propaganda in internet sites and covering goal markets	4.590	0.591	6.05	1
3	Cooperation with foreign travel agencies in goal markets	4.603	0.543	6.01	2
4	Capability of travel agencies of Tajikistan	4.000	0.883	4.30	8
5	Suitability of airline facilities to/from Tajikistan	4.338	0.736	5.19	4
6	Suitability of airline terminals to/from Tajikistan	4.179	0.752	4.64	6
7	Suitability of road facilities	4.143	0.756	4.39	7
8	Suitability of marine facilities	3.731	0.893	3.39	9
9	Deletion of excess formalities in entrances in comparison with similar countries	4.564	0.695	5.97	3

Table 2: Ranks of variables of distribution channels element

Row	Variable	Rank
1	Propaganda in internet and covering goal markets	1
2	Cooperation with foreign travel agencies in goal markets	2
3	Deletion of formalities in entrances in comparison with other countries	3
4	Suitability of airline facilities to/from Tajikistan	4
5	Establishment of tourism offices in goal markets	5
6	Suitability of airline terminals	6
7	Suitability of road facilities	7
8	Capability of travel agencies	8
9	Suitability of rail facilities	9

Obviously, in this case, information offered by distribution channels are very important. In this section, we analyze 9 variables of tourism distribution channels.

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