





مجلة علمية تصدر عن جامعة الباحة



ردمد (النشر الإلكاروني): ١٦٥٢-٧٤٧٢

ردمد: ۱۲۵۲-۲۱۸۹

العدد الحادي والعشرون ... ربيع الثاني ١٤٤١ هـ - ديسمبر ٢٠١٩ م

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المملكة العربية السعودية وزارة التعليم جامعة الباحة

وكالة الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي مجلة جامعة الباحة للعلوم الإنسانية تصدر عن جامعة الباحة مجلة دورية ـــ علمية ـــ محكمة

الرؤيـــة: أن تكون مجلة علمية تتميز بنشر البحوث العلمية التي تخدم أهداف التنمية الشاملة بالمملكة العربية السعودية وتسهم في تنمية القدرات البحثية لأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومن في حكمهم داخل الجامعة وخارجها.

الرسالة: تفعيل دور الجامعة في الارتقاء بمستوى الأداء البحثي لمنسوبيها بما يخدم أهداف الجامعة ويحقق أهداف التنمية المرجوة ويزيد من التفاعل البناء مع مؤسسات المجتمع المحلي والإقليمي والعالمي.

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# The Relationship Between Tourism Environment and Tourism Performance

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### **Abstract:**

Tourism is one of the most important sectors contributing to the growth of the national economy and diversifying sources of income. Tourism provides support for achieving the goals of sustainable development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in accordance with Vision 2030. Tourism stimulates private sector investment in infrastructure and tourism services, thus creating new jobs in the national economy. Al Baha area is considered one of the most popular tourist destinations for domestic tourists, especially in the summer. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between Tourism Environment (TE) and Tourism Performance (TP). Our data are obtained from are individuals who used the tourism services within a certain period. Overall, the study's findings revealed a positive relationship between TE and TP. Therefore, the conclusion is that government and service providers should put more emphasis on TE in order to have a reliable competitive advantage over regional competitors in the tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Tourism Environment, Flexibility, Outward Focus, Reflexivity, Tourism Performance.

العلاقة بين البيئة السياحية والأداء السياحي د. ياسر ياسين الأحمد الأستاذ المساعد بقسم إدارة الأعمال كلية إدارة الأعمال بجامعة الباحة

# الملخص:

يعد القطاع السياحي من أهم القطاعات التي تساهم في نمو الاقتصاد الوطني، وتنويع مصادر الدخل، حيث يوفر هذا القطاع دعماً كبيراً يساهم في تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة في المملكة العربية السياحي وفقا لرؤية ٢٠٣٠، ومن جهة أخرى فالقطاع السياحي يحفز المستثمرين في الاستثمار في البنية التحتية والخدمات السياحية نما يسهم في خلق فرص عمل جديدة في الاقتصاد الوطني، وتعد منطقة الباحة من اهم الوجهات السياحية الداخلية وخاصة في فصل الصيف، ويهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة العلاقة بين البيئة السياحية والأداء السياحية في اطار زمن معين (آخر خمس سنوات)، وكشفت نتائج الدراسة وجود علاقة إيجابية بين البيئة السياحية والأداء السياحي. لذلك نستنتج مدى أهمية دور القطاعات الحكومية المختلفة ومقدمي الخدمات السياحية بالتركيز على توفير بيئة سياحية جيدة لكي تمكنهم من التمتع بميزة تنافسية تفوق المنافسين الإقليميين في صناعة السياحة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البيئة السياحية؛ المرونة؛ التركيز الخارجي؛ الانعكاسية؛ الأداء السياحي.

#### **Introduction:**

Tourism is considered one of the most important industries contributing to the growth of the national economy, thus boosting economic capability to contribute effectively to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030, which is concerned with the achievement of economic and social development. Tourism provides an enormous number of job opportunities for Saudi youth. According to a new report from Business Monitor International (BMI), international tourism is forecasted to grow by 5.8 percent per year between the years 2018 and 2022 (Arabianbusiness.com 2018). According to BMI, the tourism sector also stands to be a major contributor to job creation, which matches the government's goal of increasing the number of jobs in the tourism sector by almost 50 percent to 1.2 million by 2020 (Arabianbusiness.com 2018). In addition, tourism contributes to the diversification of the national economy by attracting a large number of internal and external tourists.

Attracting visitors is not an easy and requires different skills and capabilities of everyone involved in the tourism industry. Tourism organizations operate in an extremely competitive sector which is characterized by continuous transformation (Wahab and Cooper 2001, Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes et al. 2007). There are different aspects to the competitiveness of the tourism industry, one contributor being social media. Technology helps tourists to become knowledgeable about their destination, which enhances their travel experience. Therefore, tourists require more options, thereby putting more challenges on tourism organizations. In addition, tourism organization competitiveness depends on the organizations' innovativeness in achieving lower costs and different services that will meet the demands of their customers and potential customers.

Decision makers involved in the tourism industry can transform challenges into opportunities. By emphasizing contextual factors and the role of the organizational environment, different researchers have established a connection between environmental factors, productivity and profitability. However, this current research attempts to address the impact of Tourism Environment (TE) on achieving high level innovation capability. Specifically, this research will use flexibility, outward focus, and reflexivity as a TE framework which can facilitate the changes, encourage and support new tourism ideas, respond to the needs of the tourists, and review the organization's strategies and processes in order to adapt to the wider environment (Patterson, West et al. 2005).

The rest of this article is organized as follows. Second, we provide a brief review of the related literature; then, we develop our hypotheses and present the model to be tested, and then we discuss data and methodology. Results are given next, followed by a discussion of the results and the conclusion in the final section.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

## **Tourism Environment (TE):**

The TE model (external focus and flexible orientation) emphasizes readiness, change, and innovation; norms and values in this model are associated with growth, resource acquisition, and creativity adaption (Patterson, West et al. 2005). Environment dimensions which may reflect this orientation are as follows: flexibility, outward focus, and reflexivity (Patterson, West et al. 2005). *Flexibility* is defined as an orientation toward change (Garrahan and Stewart 1992, King and Anderson 1995, Patterson, West et al. 2005). *Outward focus* refers to the extent to which an organization responds to the needs of the customer and the marketplace in general (Kiesler and Sproull 1982, West and Farr 1990, Patterson, West et al. 2005). Lastly, *reflexivity* is defined as attention to reviewing and reflecting upon objectives, strategies, and work processes in order to adapt to a broader environment (West, Beyerlein et al. 2000).

In this study, TE was measured using Organizational Climate Measure (OCM) (Patterson et al., 2005). Four subscales comprise OCM. However, in light of the objectives of the research, only one subscale was used for measuring the broader environment (West, Beyerlein et al. 2000).

Flexibility was measured by using 6 items (e.g., "The tourism organization is quick to respond when changes need to be made"); outward focus was measured by using 5 items (e.g., "The tourism organization is continually looking for new opportunities in the marketplace"); and reflexivity was

measured by using 5 items (e.g., "The way people work together is readily changed in order to improve performance").

# **Tourism Performance:**

# **Service Innovation:**

Innovation is vital in a global market since an organization should be able to identify new opportunities, competencies, knowledge assets, and complementary assets, all in order to accomplish sustainable, competitive advantages for the firm (Teece 2000). Many classifications of innovation have been suggested by scholars, including competence enhancing vs. competence destroying (Tushman and Anderson 1986, Gatignon, Tushman et al. 2002, Lee 2011), which is based on innovation's effect on 17 of a firm's competencies; and administrative vs. technical (Daft and Becker 1978, Kimberly and Evanisko 1981, Lee 2011), which is based on the objective of innovation adoption.

Service innovation is defined as innovation associated with the introduction of new services which incorporate substantially different technologies than the products or services currently in use, whereas incremental product innovation refers to innovation which is related to the introduction of products or services that provide new features, improvements, or benefits to existing technology in the existing market (Chandy and Tellis 1998, Herrmann, Gassmann et al. 2007, Valle and Vázquez-Bustelo 2009).

It has also been observed that service organizations innovate in ways different from the manufacturing organizations on which innovation theories have traditionally been based. Innovation in services is more employee- and customer-based. The innovations are mostly incremental and based on practical experiences (Sundbo, 1998, Coombs, 1999a, Coombs, 1999b, Boden and Miles, 1999, Metcalfe and Miles, 2000, Andersen et al., 2000, Gallouj, 2002). Service firms have traditionally not been as innovative as manufacturing firms, though they have become more innovative in the last decade (SIC, 1999).

### **RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS:**

Based on the research model shown in Figure 1, three hypotheses were developed and tested in this study.

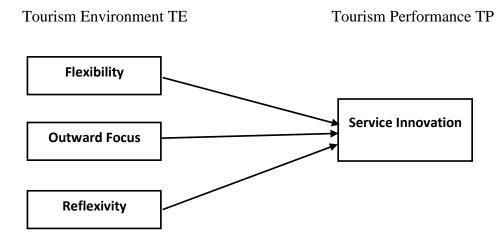


Fig. 1: Research Model

### **Tourism Environment TE:**

The environment which focuses on external and flexible orientation emphasizes readiness, change, and innovation; norms and values in this model are associated with growth, resource acquisition, and creativity adaption (Patterson, West et al. 2005, Alahmad 2016). Environment variables which may reflect this orientation are as follows: flexibility and innovation, outward focus, and reflexivity (Patterson, West et al. 2005, Alahmad 2016).

Flexibility is defined as an orientation of organizations toward change in their tourism products and services (Garrahan and Stewart 1992, King and Anderson 1995, Patterson, West et al. 2005).

The flexibility encourages employees to seek alternative solutions and to subsequently share their ideas. (Woodman, Sawyer et al. 1993) hypothesized that this kind of knowledge exchange and sharing of information is an important contextual variable in organizational innovation. Thus, organizations with flexible environments have the opportunity to create many kinds of beneficial relationships within their firm. Flexibility responds quickly to tourism needs, and it allows a tourism provider to assess new situations in such a way that will help them provide new services. Therefore, I argue that a high level of flexibility when searching for new ways of solving problems will impact tourism service innovation.

H1: There is a significant relationship between flexibility and innovative services.

Outward focus refers to the extent to which an organization responds to the needs of the consumers of tourism services (Kiesler and Sproull 1982, West and Farr 1990, Patterson, West et al. 2005). This outward focus on the tourism market allows tourism organizations to continually look for new opportunities that will help create value for the organization. (Özsomer, Calantone et al. 1997) suggest, in fact, that taking such risks, such as providing new services, will help an organization be more strategically proactive, competitive, and aggressive in the marketplace (Laforet 2008). Firms that are strategically proactive differentiate themselves from their competitors. Therefore, I argue that the more outward focus that exists in an organization environment, the more likely that the organization will be innovative, which, in turn, can impact the organization's services.

**H2:** There is a significant relationship between outward focus and innovative service.

Reflexivity is defined as attention to reviewing and reflecting upon objectives, strategies, and work processes of tourism in order to adapt to an innovative tourism environment (West, Beyerlein et al. 2000). The effect of high reflexivity, though, can also be contingent on other work factors (Shalley, Gilson et al. 2009, Urbach, Fay et al. 2010). A working environment of high reflexivity provides additional incentives for an employee to find new and inventive ways of completing tasks; this form of efficiency, then, gives the firm opportunities to introduce new services incrementally into the market; and it can, furthermore, do this more frequently than can its competitors. Therefore, I argue that with more interaction between employees, it is easier to modify objectives when the changing circumstances demand it; thus, it will help the tourism organization to provide more innovative services.

**H3:** There is a significant relationship between reflexivity and innovative service.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The present study attempts to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable by applying a reliability analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, mean analysis, and hypothesis testing. This paper is based on a survey questionnaire adopted from previous studies. The samples were randomly selected among different people who live in different areas of Saudi Arabia, both Saudi and Non-Saudi and they used tourism service in the last five years. As a general rule (Sekaran and Bougie 2016), sample sizes between 30 and 500 should be used, the number's appropriateness and effectiveness dependent on the type of sampling to be used and how the research questions will be implemented. For this research on enhancing tourism in Saudi Arabia, a sample size of 213 was used.

Male respondents comprised approximately eighty-three percent (82.6; n=176) of the sample. Female respondents represented approximately seventeen percent (17.4%; n=37) of the sample.

The majority of respondents were within the ages of 36 and 50. In fact, this age group represents more than fifty percent (53.1%; n=113) of the sample. This was then followed by an age range of between 21 and 35, representing about twenty-eight percent (28.6%; n=61) of the entire sample. The remaining samples are either more than age fifty (13.6; n=29) or less than age 20.

About thirty-six percent (36.2%; n=77) of the respondents had earned a bachelor degree. Over twenty-three percent (23.9%; n=51) of the sample had earned a doctoral degree. Just over eight percent (8.5%; n=18) of the sample had earned a master degree. The remaining part of the sample had different degrees lower than a bachelor degree.

The majority of respondents were married, representing more than ninety percent (91.5%; n=195) of the sample. This was then followed by single respondents, representing a little over seven percent (7.5 %; n=16) of the sample. The remaining samples are widowed.

The flexibility, outward focus, and reflexivity measurements were adopted (Patterson, West et al. 2005) and 6-point Likert scales were used as a measurement for the respondents, with scoring of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 6 (Strongly Disagree). The innovation instrument was borrowed (Chandy and Tellis 1998, Atuahene-Gima 2005, Subramaniam and Youndt 2005, Herrmann, Gassmann et al. 2007, Valle and Vázquez-Bustelo 2009) with a similar point Likert scale.

## **RESULTS:**

The final data used for statistical analysis was 213. The data was processed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 21.0). The majority of respondents were within the ages of 36 and 50. In fact, this age group represented more than fifty-three percent (53.1%; n=113) of the sample. This was then followed by an age range of 21-35, representing more than twenty-eight percent (28.6%; n=61) of the entire sample. Respondents aged more than fifty years old represented more than thirteen percent (13.6%; n=29). The remaining samples (4.7%; n=10) were less than twenty years old. Male respondents comprised almost eighty-three percent (82.6%; n=176) of the sample. Female respondents represented approximately seventeen percent (17.4%; n=37) of the sample. Almost thirty-six percent (36.2%; n=77) of the respondents had earned a bachelor degree. Around twenty-three percent (23.9%; n=51) of the sample had earned a doctoral degree. Just over eight percent (8.5%; n=18) of the sample had earned a master degree. The remaining part of the sample, approximately thirty-one percent (31.5%; n=67), had earned a degree that is lower than a bachelor degree. In terms of income, the majority of respondents (56.3%; n=120) earned between SAR 11,000 and 25,000 Monthly.

Regarding the reliability, mean, and standard deviation of the variables, the internal consistency reliability was measured by applying Cronbach's alpha test to assess the multi-item constructs. **Table 1** indicates the reliability, mean, and standard deviation of the main variables used. The Cronbach's alpha for each variable was above .80, which shows that a strong reliability was achieved for all the measures. In terms of mean, most were above the midpoint of one, but a closer examination reveals variations, as the standard deviation values were all above .70.

Independent variable TOE stands 57 ( $R^2$ =.57) of variance of the overall TRP, as shown in **Table 2**. The model is significant (F=92.3, p<0.005). The hypothesis testing showed results of higher flexibility ( $\beta$  =0.39 p<0.001), outward focus ( $\beta$  =0.19, p<0.05), reflexivity ( $\beta$  =0.64, p<0.001). In other words, the higher the open system factor of flexibility, outward focus, and reflexivity, the more significant the impact of the TRP. As a result, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were supported. **Table 3** shows the significant correlation between the variables.

Table 1 Reliability, Mean, Standard Deviation of the instrument

Variable	No of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Std. Deviation
Flexibility	6	0.925	1.89	0.88
Outward Focus	5	0.874	1.91	0.80
Reflexivity	5	0.915	1.88	0.79
TRP	5	0.892	1.84	0.80

Table 2 Result of Regression Analysis for Tourism Open System

Variable	Standardized Coefficient β	t	Sig.	F	F Change	$R^2$	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Constant		0.310	0.003	92.326	92.326	0.57	0.564
Flexibility	0.393	5.784	0.000				
Outward Focus	-0.195	-2.322	0.021				
Reflexivity	0.640	9.684	0.000				

**Table 3 Correlation matrix** 

	1	2	3	4
(1) Flexibility	1			
(2) Outward Focus	0.744	1		
(3) Reflexivity	0.525	0.727	1	
(4) TRP	0.583	0.562	0.704	1

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## **DISCUSSION:**

Flexibility, reflexivity, and outward focus have been shown to have a positive relationship with innovation (Davis and Milton 2000). At the same time, findings of this study showed that there was a significant relation between flexibility, outward focus, reflexivity, and service innovation. But each one of them has a different influence on service innovation.

The results show that there is a significant relationship between flexibility and innovative services ( $\beta$ =.393; t-value=5.784). This result is consistent with previous studies (Georgsdottir and Getz 2004). In other words, seeking different perspectives when a tourism organization is responding quickly to changes that need to be made can help it quickly change procedures in order to meet new conditions, solve problems, and develop new ideas, thereby helping the organization to provide substantially different services to their customers. For tourism organizations, the finding of this hypothesis sheds light on the importance of continually enhancing the way firms can look at problems, viewing them from different angles and consequently encouraging innovative thinking across the whole organization (Bass 1985).

The findings of this present study also illustrate that there is a significant relationship between outward focus and innovative service ( $\beta$ =-.195; t-value=2.322). This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies which have shown that outward focus can promote innovation (Carmen and María José 2008, Hernández-Espallardo and Delgado-Ballester 2009). It shows how the appropriate outward focus of a tourism organization is directly related to what is happening in the market place. When the organization is continually looking for new opportunities in the market place, it helps the organization to provide more innovative services to their customers.

The last dimension of an open system discussed in this paper suggests that there is a significant relationship between reflexivity and services innovation ( $\beta$ =.640; t-value=9.684). The result emphasizes the importance of the reflexivity function in a tourism organization in order to introduce new services which incorporate substantial differences from the current services. Also, reflexivity is considered an essential function related to the introduction of tourism services, helping to provide new features, improvements, or benefits to existing services. As a result, decision makers in tourism organizations should take these findings into consideration.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

As Baha is positioning itself as one of the most important tourist cities in Saudi Arabia, more efforts are required to develop and promote the industry and the issues impacting tourism growth, such as service innovation. In addition to tourism services, collaboration with the private sector is required, so the government must facilitate private sector growth. Growth in the tourism industry can contribute to the growth of the whole country and raise Saudi Arabia's profile as a country that provides innovative tourism services and products. In addition, the tourism sector also stands to be a major contributor to job creation, which is in line with the government's goal of increasing the number of jobs in the tourism sector by the year 2020, thus allowing Saudi Arabia to compete with other GCC countries that have much more established tourism sectors, countries such as Bahrain, Oman, and the UAE.

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p-ISSN: 1652 - 7189 e-ISSN: 1658 - 7472 Issue No.: 21 ... Rabi II 1441 H - December 2019 Albaha University Journal of Human Sciences Periodical - Academic - Refereed

**Published by Albaha University** 

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