The Use of Mobile Technology in the Marketing of Therapeutic Tourist Sites: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract. The main aim of this study is to provide practitioners and researchers with some insights into the users' level of smartphone marketing of therapeutic tourism with more focus on the Arab world. Marketing of therapeutic tourism has not been addressed substantially as a research area and very little research exist about the use of technologies in tourism marketing in general and the Arab world in specific. Generally, this work will contribute to the Arab behavior in the adoption of smartphone marketing in tourism research. Specifically, this study will add to the body of knowledge for the future development of smartphone marketing in the therapeutic tourism in Jordan.

Keywords: Smartphone, Therapeutic tourism, Marketing.

1. Introduction

Mobile technologies and social media have become a part of our daily lives (Al-Emran, Elsherif, & Shaalan, 2016; Al-Emran & Shaalan, 2015b, 2015a, 2017; Al Emran & Shaalan, 2014b; Salloum, Al-Emran, Monem, & Shaalan, 2018, 2017; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017a). Nowadays, the world is witnessing a noticeable development in the means and techniques of modern electronic commerce, especially with the emergence of smartphones which became employed in many sectors. Mobile had become more than using the means to encourage and attract the customer which is also possible that the transformation from the negative impression to the positive impression (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2016). According to (Tan, Lee, Lin, & Ooi, 2017), there is a relationship with an impact on tourists and mobile social means during the presentation of tourism services. So, there is the recruitment of modern electronic means in the tourism sector through various tourism companies and tourism promotion institutions, which increased competitiveness between tourism companies to provide the best offers for individuals on tourist sites until the tourists rely on tourism advertisements via mobile as a source of information and attract (Erawan, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to exert additional efforts in activating the use of mobile in the sale of tourism services for therapeutic tourist sites and increasing efforts in applying this field in future studies. Therefore, the mobile will be adopted as a new factor for the marketing of medical tourism in Jordan (Gulbahar & Yildirim, 2015). In Jordan, according to statistical reports of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan for the number of overnight tourists and visitors of one day by nationality for the last years 2014 until 2016, so there is a gradual decrease in each year as shown in Table 1.

Nationality	2016	2015	2014
Total Africa	21,646	20,672	23,286
Total America	221,592	216,044	221,899
Total Europe	530,864	510,407	642,010
Total Arab	2,313,920	2,524,822	2,931,949
Total Asia	274,601	234,815	279,845
Jordanians Residing Abroad	1,415,907	1,302,514	1,227,513
Grand Total	4,778,529	4,809,274	5,326,501

Table 1. Visitors of one day by nationality (2014-2016) (ministry of truism Jordan (http://www.mota.gov.jo/)

There is also a limited number of studies that deal with therapeutic tourist sites and medical tourism in Jordan. Knowing that Jordan is one of the leading countries in the field of medicine and has the qualifications, medical expertise, appropriate infrastructure, and many therapeutic tourist sites. In developed countries, the medical cost for therapeutic tourist is considered very high and need time for surgical operations, so this emphasizes the need to strive for the marketing of the therapeutic tourist sites in Jordan to the world in general, and not only to the neighboring countries. There are many developing countries, succeeded in promoting therapeutic tourist. For example, Asian countries like India, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore are famous for their therapeutic service and low cost (Khan & Alam, 2014). The choice of a tourist destination is no longer the same as before. This is due to the modern means of communication which created the need for mobile adoption in the marketing of therapeutic tourist in Jordan to cover the gap in the study of the decline in the number of tourists in Jordan through effective advertisements that reach the user of smartphones easily (Erawan, 2016), which in turn, the customer's attention is drawn to these smartphones through smartphone technology so that they reach web form, text messages, and smart applications (Penni, 2015).

Advertising offers various information and different ways of therapeutic tourist services on a permanent basis, which allows easy access through the presentation of various means such as websites, applications, or SMS messages. Each method has a different pattern of impact on the recipients and the creation of a picture and intellectual composition on the subject of Therapeutic tourist or declared goal in general (Penni, 2015). These methods are very effective in Jordan in the light of the proliferation of smart devices. It is considered as one of the highest rates in the world and thus, is considered as an Asian support in measuring the impact of marketing through the smartphones for Therapeutic tourist in Jordan (Wang, Park, & Fesenmaier, 2012). Thus, this increases the level of awareness and impact on the behavior of the recipient. Hence, the customer's attention is drawn to these smartphones through smartphone technology so that they reach web form, text messages, and smart applications (Penni, 2015).

2. Critical analysis of previous related studies

The literature review is the first important step before conducting any research study (Al-Emran, 2015; Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, & Kamaludin, 2018b; Al-Emran, Zaza, & Shaalan, 2015; Al-Qaysi, 2016, 2018; Al Emran & Shaalan, 2014a; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2016, 2018; Salloum, AlHamad, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2018; Zaza & Al-Emran, 2015). In this study, a rich literature review is conducted in order to give a broad picture of the topic. Tourism is one of the largest tributaries. The world economy is like industry but is considered one of the largest commercial industries. In some countries that depend on tourism as an income source, and substantial foreign exchange investment where tourism is formed, a pivotal role is played in the development of societies, economically, socially, and culturally (Ricafort, 2011). This can achieve many benefits, economic, and financial through investment in tourism in general, and therapeutic tourism in particular (Magatef, 2015). Consequently, most countries go to development plans towards the success of tourism, and diversification of tourism projects. Particularly in developing countries, to support the national economy, and to increase the economic income of those countries (Magatef, 2015). It is a common knowledge, that tourism is to get relax and enjoy. There are many types of tourism including "Religious, cultural, recreational and curative" (Connell, 2006).

2.1 The economic importance of therapeutic tourism

The medical tourism is defined as one of the types of tourism, travel for treatment or relaxation in the areas of therapeutic in the world. Such as therapeutic sites, or medical establishments modern as in developed countries (Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2016). The concept of therapeutic tourism is a relatively recent concept, has emerged new in the world in general, and in developing countries in particular such

as the middle east and Asian countries, in which, considered a tourist destination, for people looking to therapeutic services, low cost with sophisticated services (Al-Azzam, 2016). When considering the costs of medical tourism in developed countries, we find them very high such as the united states of America, European countries, and some middle east countries (Ricafort, 2011). The therapeutic services in some countries are considered high due to the population of those countries. Thus, traveling for therapeutic tourism is the best option for them (Connell, 2006).

In the present time, the therapeutic tourism is considered a source of income for countries in the middle east including Jordan. Furthermore, Jordan is a tourist country and a major destination for medical tourism (Al-Azzam, 2016). This is due to the geographical location, the diversity of tourist sites, and advanced medical services, which characterizes medical tourism in Jordan and advanced technology (Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2016). It needs to do marketing of therapeutic tourism in different ways including the progress of technology, the spread of smartphones and various applications, the ability of tourists to use this technology, internet access, and the spread of e-marketing through these applications (Al-Azzam, 2016; Magatef, 2015). Today, the smartphone users including tourists have the talent to conduct transactions, services, access information, and buy goods at any time and booking and selecting tourist places (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2012). When looking at the marketing via smartphones in general and the therapeutic tourism marketing in the middle east and specifically in Jordan (Magatef, 2015), we can find that there is a weakness in the marketing methods and tools. Despite the great potential that is provided by smartphones, the marketing methods are still used in the marketing of therapeutic tourism, limited to SMS, and on direct advertising and some applications only (Persaud & Azhar, 2012).

2.2 The marketing templates for therapeutic tourism via smartphone

In the last few years, it has been noticed that there is a significant increase in the development of smartphones (Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, Kamaludin, & AlSinani, 2018). So, that users have wider options access and browse websites including the selection of services and products (Wang et al., 2012). The smartphones have the ability to provide a variety of applications including tourist. This enables the users to identify the search options such as personal information, maps, social applications, and geographic tourist maps (Wahyudianarta & Putra, 2017). Regarding the spread of smartphones and smart applications in Jordan, Jordan came in the first globally in terms of using the internet and smartphone relative to social media application at 90% in 2016. Facebook and WhatsApp were considered the most used social network channels in Jordan with 89% (Salem, 2017).

Through a variety of applications, smartphones provide a wide range of information and options for users and diverse content. Such as images, video, conversations, and special applications, entertainment and scientific. In addition to conducting business through these applications, commensurate with their needs. Moreover, it has the ability to browse social networking sites, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (Al-Emran, 2015; Al-Emran & Malik, 2016; Al-Qaysi & Al-Emran, 2017; Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, Salloum, & Ghani, 2018; Mhamdi, Al-Emran, & Salloum, 2018; Salloum, Al-Emran, Abdallah, & Shaalan, 2017; Salloum et al., 2017; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017a, 2017b; Salloum, Mhamdi, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017), and tourism applications, easily and free of charge, in addition to unlimited browsing (Persaud & Azhar, 2012). All these factors and techniques give marketers the opportunity to expand marketing plans and integrate them with those applications. In addition to drawing joint strategies with the tourist agents through those applications, this can increase the number of tourists in countries that follow the marketing of tourism via smartphone (Persaud & Azhar, 2012). Furthermore, there is an increase of tourism awareness in tourist places, and followers of new approaches to access new tourist markets interested in therapeutic tourism (Wahyudianarta & Putra, 2017). The use of applying the GIS or tourism applications in general, in the marketing of therapeutic tourism sites, provides vast amounts of information, thus, it needs non-traditional methods in dealing with them (Bazazo, Alananzeh, & Taani, 2016).

There is a few number of studies on tourism marketing and marketing for the therapeutic site via smartphones. According to (Bazazo et al., 2016), the study discussed the use of geographic information systems through the use of smartphones in the rehabilitation of tourist sites. This system provides important information for tourist sites and services. Also, it can help in solving problems that may encounter tourists. The experience of using geographic information systems has proven success in the marketing of tourism and therapeutic areas in Jordan. The use of applications via smartphones can change the behavior of the tourist and desires. In addition to the information that these applications provide to tourists (Wang et al., 2012), they can also provide immediate information about the problems

that can be exposed to the tourist during the visit to the therapeutic places (Bazazo et al., 2016). In addition, these applications represent the source of information and data exchange for tourists, which in turn, refers to the strength and capabilities provided by smartphones through marketing across these applications (Wang et al., 2012).

2.3 The impact of smartphones on tourism

A study conducted by (Erawan, 2016) examined the tourist behavior regarding changes in privacy issues and the advent of mobile technology based on theoretical foundations. The empirical results revealed no significant role of entertainment and irritation on advertising value. This may signify the role of mobile technology nowadays in which tourists only view advertising on mobile technology as a useful information source. In addition, another study conducted by (Bazazo et al., 2016) indicated that the impact of smartphones and digital applications on tourism contributes in pushing the development of tourism wheel for tourists, increase the income for therapeutic tourism, and to achieve an increase in the growth rates for tourism sites. Specifically, it can benefit those with disabilities as it provides them with information and data to suit their needs starting with the booking process until getting the service. The use of smartphones by users is constantly increasing which in turn gives the opportunity for marketers to promote the marketing of tourism and to provide them with services. A study by (Persaud & Azhar, 2012) reflected the diversity of their choices by creating a value for their tourism needs, encourage them to engage in the marketing process, and to respect the style of customers in shopping (Persaud & Azhar, 2012).

There are new ways of marketing via smartphones and various tourism applications through the spread of modern technology and its applications in Jordan (Persaud & Azhar, 2012). Jordan contains many important locations which are valuable for their medical and therapeutic values (Matceyevsky, Hahoshen, Asna, Khafif, & Ben-Yosef, 2007). A study conducted by (Al-Azzam, 2016) identified the factors that influence the choice of hospitals in Jordan. The results showed that there was a need for efforts in creating a marketing mix across smartphone applications to achieve competitiveness in the field of medical tourism. In addition, the blended entertainment factors in the marketing plans and diversification of marketing templates are considered an important motivation for the users of applications in the selection of therapeutic tourism. According to (Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2016; Erawan, 2016), it is concluded that the attitude and subjective norms were found to be positively affecting the relationship between advertising value and subjective norms for entertainment. In view of the results of the studies and the findings of the use of smartphone applications to market therapeutic tourism, and based on the technology spread in Jordan, this can lead to the development of marketing of tourist therapeutic sites in Jordan by finding new ways to market the smartphones and applications.

3. Conclusion and recommendation

Mobile technologies and social media applications have become a part of our daily lives (Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, & Kamaludin, 2018a; Al-Emran & Salloum, 2017; Al-Maroof & Al-Emran, 2018; Malik & Al-Emran, 2018; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2017b; Salloum, Mhamdi, et al., 2017). Recently, the field of marketing has become more sophisticated due to the impact of many factors, witnessed by the marketing sector. These factors have contributed to the change of customers' and tourists thinking towards the traditional means of advertising, and accept digital means more broadly provided by smartphones in a large number of templates, advertising, entertainment, and applications. The choice of a tourist destination is no longer the same as before. This is due to the modern means of communication which created the need for a smartphone in the marketing of therapeutic tourist in Jordan which in turn, draws the customer's attention to these smartphones (Penni, 2015).

There are many ways to market via smartphones for tourists such as applications, social networking sites, and text messages (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). Each method has a different pattern of impact on the recipients and the creation of a picture and intellectual composition on the subject of therapeutic tourist. Thus, this increase the level of awareness and impact on the behavior of the recipient, and these methods are very effective in Jordan in the light of the proliferation of smart devices (Junco et al., 2011). Jordan is one of the most advanced countries in the spread of smart devices and the use of applications. A study by (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015) made a strategy for using smartphone applications as a marketing method for small business depending on the AIDA model (attention, desire, interest, and action). This model is based on taking the attention of potential customers or clients (Sloggett & Slim, 1990).

In addition to the ease of usability of these applications for their users (Tussyadiah, 2016), the Asian countries, in general, are considered the facilitator for measuring the impact of marketing through the use of smartphones for therapeutic tourist (Wang et al., 2012). Also, smartphones provide a huge source of information to their users in addition to the calling service. Besides, smartphones provide a diversity of information templates and different ways of advertising (Wang et al., 2012). Advertisers and marketers should have "the ability to be much more specific in their ad and marketing campaigns, and able to offer more related messages to changed behavioral of groups or people" (Odipo, 2016).

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