Using Online Marketing in Tourism Industry: Opportunities and Obstacles A Pilot Study in A Sample of Tourism and Travel Firms in Nineveh Governorate

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Abstract

Nowadays with the technological development witnessed by the world, marketers are trying to exploit the opportunities imposed by the evolving reality as a result of the use of modern technology while at the same time overcoming the obstacles and difficulties created by the development at present. Online marketing refers to a range of marketing activities aimed at creating value for the customer using modern technologies. And according to the fact that around 4 billion use various internet sites to complete daily transactions to realize the importance of online marketing in various sectors, one of which is the tourism sector. The online marketing in the tourism industry can help marketers to communicate with customers and show them the tourist sites and tourism services and hotels easily compared to the traditional marketing. As well as tourism is one of the industries that is most affected by online marketing. tourism and travelling companies are used online marketing in various activities in order to provide the best services to its customers. A previous research highlighted the main obstacles to online marketing in local tourism industry and the opportunities that can resolve them in the short to medium term.   In addition, this research represented comparison between traditional marketing and online marketing.   The examined sample consist of (30) tourism and traveling firms in Mosul Governorate which have been randomly selected, survey research used to collect data which has been analyzed with the help of various statistical tools and techniques. The findings show there is weakness of tourism awareness among the target audience, while the main opportunities is the steady increase in turnout in local and foreign tourism after the spread of social media sites.

Keywords: Online Marketing, Social Media

1-Introduction

Research Background

The tourism industry in the third millennium faces great challenges in light of the globalization phenomenon, and the intensification of competition between tourism companies, which are striving to gain a larger market share and therefore provide a variety of services outperforming , Several researches were discussed on tourism marketing in several fields, (Victor et.al:2017) discussed effects of online marketing on the behavior of consumers ,and they conclude that online marketing is an effective tool of communication between the marketer and the customer and has a significant impact on the behavior of the consumer through direct communication, which leads the customer to make a purchase decision. While (Bostanshirin;2014) discussed the opportunities and threats that online marketing can face it,He conclude that online marketing cannot be deployed to its full advantage, and online marketing framework informed by insights from such a consideration would guarantee its financial objectives.

While (Yasmin et,al;2014) examine differences between traditional marketing and online marketing and conclude that there are many differences between them and the advantages of online marketing can lead the company to create competitive advantage.

As (Kaur;2015) examines the basic determinants of online marketing and the importance of the same in the tourism industry, He mentioned six points- quality website, SEO, Email marketing, Presence on social media, content, mobile-friendly play a very crucial role for successful online marketing. However, through follow-up to the researcher, there was a scarcity of studies that dealt with the obstacles of online marketing in the tourism sector specifically and what are the effects of the use of online marketing in creating opportunities for the tourism companies. Therefore, the research tried to

explore the opportunities and obstacles facing the tourism sector in the era of online marketing in a sample of travel and tourism offices in Nineveh governorate. The offices spread in the city of Mosul and perform their functions through the use of the online marketing activities.

2.Research Methodology

2.1 Statement of the Problem

Local companies in various productive and service sectors face many obstacles in light of the increasing competition situation due to the opening of the domestic market to foreign investment companies as well as the development of the fields of competition through the electronic environment offered by new competitive areas unknown to most of our local companies in addition to the lack of local environment to culture Dealing with customers through the Internet, all these problems have placed a heavy burden on local companies that are facing difficult problems should be addressed, hence the search to search for the obstacles facing the use of electronic marketing in the sector Tourism to access the opportunities offered by the electronic marketing of local companies' The problem of research is thus the following questions

1- What are the main obstacles facing the tourism sector in the use of online marketing?

2 - What are the main opportunities offered by online marketing in the tourism sector, which can be used to avoid the obstacles mentioned?

2.2 Research Objectives

This research trying to determine the obstacles and opportunities of using online marketing in tourism field, and the specific objectives were to:

1. To determine the importance of online marketing on the tourism field

2. To determine the differences between traditional marketing and online marketing.

2.3 Research Importance
The results of the research will enable tourism companies to deal efficiently with online marketing in their business, as well as the possibility of providing new ideas and services that enable these companies to achieve competitive advantages to achieve excellence and create competitive advantages to be difficult to imitate by companies that adopted traditional marketing mechanisms.

2.4 Research Limitations

The sample of respondents was chosen deliberately and the main reason for limited research sample is due to the limited companies operating in the field of tourism and travel in the province of Nineveh, which depends on online marketing to completion activities, which lead to limitation of the research sample on. Which was (30) travel and tourism offices.

3-Theoretical and conceptual framework

3.1 Online Marketing Concept

(Chaffey et al. 2000) define online marketing as using different internet applications to achieve marketing goals, while (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) determine Online marketing which consists of measures and activities to promote products and services and build relationships with customers over the Internet.

But the most important definitions of online marketing which represented by (Chaffey ;2007), he defines online marketing as applying Digital technologies to perform marketing activities to making profit and to achieve customer satisfaction. Through the analysis of previous opinions it is clear that they agree that online marketing represents the use of various Internet technologies to communicate with customers in order to create renewed value and establish long-term relationship with customers.

3.2Comparisim between Traditional Marketing and Online Marketing

Traditional marketing differs from online-marketing in many areas and in all marketing activities , In order to understand the difference between them, we decided to include the fundamental differences between them, as shown in the following table:

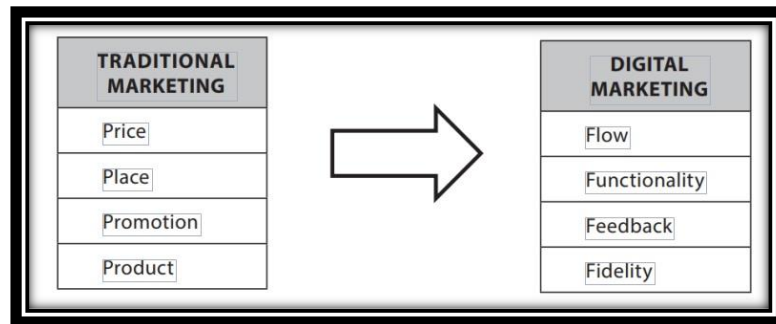| Traditional Marketing	Online Marketing
Traditional marketing includes print, broadcast, direct mail, and telephone	Online marketing includes online advertising, email marketing, social media, text messaging, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click
There is no interaction between the customers and marketers	There is a great interaction between customers and marketers contributing to creating common convictions between them
Easy to measuring marketing efficiency based on sales Indicators and market share	The results are general, comprehensive and easily measurable
Advertising in traditional marketing drains a large cost and time	Planning for ad campaigns does not take long period of time
The promotion of goods and services is complex and expensive	The promotion of goods and services is easy and low costs
Getting as many customers as possible is an indicator of the success of your marketing strategy	Getting a number of specific customers is an indicator of the success of your marketing strategy
One campaign prevails for a long time	Campaigns can be easily changed with ease and innovations can be introduced within any campaign
Limited reach to the customer due to limited number of customer technology	Wider reach to the customer because of the use of various customers technology

The impossibility of using viral marketing	The possibility of using viral marketing easily
One way conversation	Two ways conversation

Table (1) Differences Between Traditional Marketing and Online Marketing

Source/ Yasmine et.al(2015)" International Journal of Management Science And Business Administration Vol 1. No 5. April 2015., pp. 69

There are also significant differences in the level of elements used in each of them and figure (1) illustrates these differences

Figure (1) deference elements in traditional and online marketing

Source/ Escobar A(2016)" The Impact of the digital revolution in the development and market communication strategies for the LUXURY SECTOR.

Advantages of online marketing

Online marketing achieves many advantages, especially for the customer, and perhaps the most important of these advantages:(Yasmine et.al;71)

Stay updated with products or services

Marketing enables customers to stay up-to-date with all the latest developments in the product or service through web site updates on goods and services.

Greater engagement
Through online marketing, customers can interact with the company by accessing its website and view all the information related to the goods and services offered and to complete the purchase process and then express the state of satisfaction.

Easy comparison with others
 Through online marketing, the customer can compare the goods and services of the company with what the competitors offer in an easy way

24/7 Shopping

The customer can do shopping at any time during the day considering the availability of online marketing services throughout the day

Share content of the products or services

Through the social media, the customer can get integrated information as well as he can express his feelings about the goods and services to others

Apparent Pricing

Marketers offer their products prices on websites, so customers can easily see these prices and note the changes and discounts companies make to their customers.

Enables instant purchase

In online marketing the customer can purchase products if they view their specifications online directly as opposed to traditional marketing

4-Trend of Online Marketing

According to Digital, Social, and Mobile Worldwide Report (Kemp, 2015) it showed the global online marketing statistical indicators in 2015 in comparison with 2014 in percentage terms as follows:

- The number of active internet users was 3.010 billion, an increase of 21 percent

- The number of active social media accounts was 2.078 billion, an increase of 12 percent.

- The number of unique mobile users was 3.649 billion, an increase of 5percent

 - The number of active mobile social accounts was1.685 billion, an increase of 23 percent.

5- Online marketing obstacles

Many researchers agree that the obstacles to the application of online marketing in different sectors are similar and on this basis, both (Dabour;2003) and (Shdeifat; et.al2006) agree that the online obstacles are:

Low awareness of the importance of tourism at the level of large population sectors

Lack of detailed information on tour programs

Low level of facilities and services provided by tourist companies

Lack of promotional and advertising campaigns for world-class travel tours

high level of the cost of internal tourism, especially for people with limited income

The low level of training of employees in the tourism field, especially in terms of service provision and resource sustainability

Weak financing programs for the development of international tourism development.

Weak control programs responsible for the follow-up and sustainability of tourist sites

 Lack of urban regeneration and areas of conservation

Based on the above, the research will depend on the previous obstacles in the questionnaire to determine which of these obstacles are most influential from the perspective of the field

6-Online marketing Opportunities

According to (Kapoor;2017) the most important opportunities companies can get as a result of communication with customers in the online marketing are summarized as below:

Content Marketing Will Evolve

Using different websites, companies can create a real communication language with customers and then get detailed information about customer preferences

Use Of Plenty Of Big Data

Through online marketing, companies can provide customers with extensive information about the company's services and products, thus contributing to creating new value for the customer.

-Digital Workforces To Scale Business Processes

Online marketing uses modern technologies, which leads to the development of capabilities and skills of employees in those companies as a result of the use of these technologies, some of the technologies driving the digital workplace are production studio technology.

- Artificial Intelligence Making Amazing Strides

One area that will continue to proffer opportunities for transforming customer service, Artificial Intelligence is deemed to bring huge shifts in how individuals notice and interact with technology, With the help of Artificial Intelligence, marketers can able to understand the human knowledge and experience.

Social Media Grow Exponentially

Through online marketing, social relationships are created with customers, which necessitates the commitment of companies to provide facts about the company and its products and services

People-Based Marketing Is In Demand

Through online marketing, social relationships are created with customers, which necessitates the commitment of companies to provide facts about the company and its products and services

Based on the above, the opportunities mentioned will be adopted and included in the questionnaire to determine which of these opportunities are most available from the respondents' point of view.

7- Analysis and Discussion

To undertake the statistical analysis for this study, both SPSS a statistical program and Microsoft Excel software were employed. The data was Collected by questionnaire which distributed to (30) travel and tourism offices in Mosul Governorate as selected sample ,and Table (2) shows the response of members of the research sample on the obstacles facing online marketing in the tourism sector

	Obstacles	Agree %	Natural %	Dis agree %	Average relative weight %	standard deviation	Ranking of relative importance
1	Lack of knowledge about the importance of tourism	25	3	2	58	0.48	1
2	Absence of information about tour operators	24	2	4	55	0.49	2
3	Lack of facilities and services at many of the sites	22	3	5	53	0.51	3

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4	Lack of international promotional campaigns	21	3	6	51	0.52	4
5	The high cost of domestic tourism	20	2	8	49	0.55	5
6	Problems related to training staff and employees	20	1	9	48	0.56	6
7	Lack of funding for international tourism development	18	2	10	46	0.60	7
8	Lack of sustainability	16	3	11	44	0.63	8

Table(2) response of the sample to the obstacles

table 2 shows that there is a discrepancy in the views of the sample surveyed about the obstacles that they face in dealing with online marketing where the disabled person(Lack of knowledge about the importance of tourism) is ranked first and disabled (Lack of sustainability)the last rank due to weak environmental awareness in society.

In order to analyze the response of the sample to the opportunities that the electronic marketing can provide, the table (3) presents the opinions of the respondents on this axis

	Opportunities	Agree %	Natural %	Dis agree %	Average relative weight %	standard deviation	Ranking of relative importance
1	Use Of Plenty Of Big Data	27	2	1	60	0.52	1
2	People-Based Marketing Is In Demand	24	3	3	56	0.53	2
3	Artificial Intelligence Making Amazing Strides	21	3	6	54	0.55	3
4	Social Media Grow Exponentially	20	2	8	51	0.57	4
5	Digital Workforces To Scale Business Processes	20	2	8	49	0.58	5

6	Content Marketing Will Evolve	20	3	7	48	0.59	6

Table (3) response of the sample to the opportunities

Table (3) shows that there is a discrepancy in the views of the sample surveyed about the opportunities that they face in dealing with online marketing where the disabled person(Use Of Plenty Of Big Data) is ranked first and disabled (Content Marketing Will Evolve)the last rank .

Conclusions

Online marketing has become the real shift towards the digital deal between the company and its customers using the Internet technologies, which formed the international companies live and the opportunity at the same time to achieve marketing success.

Online marketing has no boundaries. Company can use any tools to achieve customer satisfaction ,especially in tourism field Which is one of the sources of excellence not at the level of companies, but at the level of countries, therefore all tourism companies should create a new value for customers by diversify the services offered and try to spread marketing awareness in the community through the means of online marketing and social media sites to seize the available marketing opportunities and overcome the obstacles that companies may face, which vary according to the different societies and the extent of their development and the level of marketing culture of the society.

And according to this research the government and all tourism companies should make extensive efforts to support the tourism sector by strengthening the infrastructure of tourism in the era online marketing as well as by spreading awareness of the importance of tourism at the individual and community level so that tourism companies to exploit the opportunities mentioned above and avoid threats associated with the nature of their work

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