

# Influential and Affective Factors of Marketing to Tourism Industry Customers in Iran with the Fuzzy Dematel Technique Approach

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to investigate the influential and influenced factors of marketing tourism industry customers in Iran with the Fuzzy Dematel Technique Approach. The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, qualitative in terms of implementation method, cross-sectional in terms of data collection time, and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection method or nature and research method. The statistical population of the study is 10 experts including researchers, academic specialists and those familiar with marketing in the tourism industry, selected to fit the validity of the model as well. The sample size was carried out with a non-random, targeted and available (judgmental) sampling method. A semi-structured interview was used to collect information. The Fuzzy Dematel Technique was used for influencing and prioritizing. The findings showed that 3 dimensions, 8 components and 41 indicators have been identified. The extracted dimensions included the service quality dimension including the components of satisfaction with tourism services, infrastructure facilities, and tourism costs; the marketing policy dimension including the components of macro-policy, planning, and management; and the tourism experiences dimension including the components of tourist feedback, tourism culture, and advertising and marketing.

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Today, perceived quality is considered an important and effective factor in the success and failure of service organizations and is one of the main concerns of tourism organization managers. Marketing researchers have always investigated the results and benefits of perceived quality dimensions. Providing the best possible quality to customers is undoubtedly an important issue for service companies in today's competitive market. Companies able to provide valuable products and services to their customers will have a significant competitive advantage (Najafizadeh & Heydari, 2016).

Research by the World Tourism Organization and other studies show that marketing is essential for the development of this industry in any country or region; but in order to attract tourists to a region, the tourism capabilities of that region must be introduced to people (Eigharloo & Behzad, 2016). According to Saei, among the factors that can develop and improve the country's tourism industry are effective marketing tools and parameters (Saei et al., 2011). Aminbeidokhti et al. (2011) also introduce the goal of tourism marketing as identifying and predicting the needs of tourists and providing facilities and creating motivation for them to visit, which will ensure tourist satisfaction and achieve organizational goals. Tabavar states that the positive effect of the two components of sales promotion and direct marketing requires more attention to them in the tourism industry (Tabavar, 2018). Kamau et al. (2015) analyzed the choice of tourist destinations by examining the marketing mix and concluded that the components of price, products and services, location, people, physical evidence, and advertising have a significant impact on determining and choosing the place of residence of local tourists. Nassimi et al. found that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of the tourism marketing mix and attitudinal loyalty, as well as between the dimensions of the tourism marketing mix and behavioral loyalty (Nassimi et al., 2019). Therefore, the main question of this research is: what are the most influential and influenced factors in marketing customers of the tourism industry in Iran using the DEMATEL technique?

### Theoretical framework

#### Tourism

Tourism is defined as a set of activities in which people travel from their place of residence to other places for recreation, relaxation, and the like. Regarding the difference between the two words tourism and exploration, it can be said that both do not have the same meaning (Pashaei et al., 2019).

#### Marketing

Marketing in the tourism industry is the anticipation of the changing needs and demands of tourists, in which customer satisfaction should be considered as the most important principle for marketers. Attention to tourism marketing began after World War II (Casillo et al., 2019). Marketing and related research are very important in the development of tourism. In implementing this, it is necessary that tourist statistics are accurately examined and its economic and financial effects are analyzed, and according to the results obtained, the necessary plans and programs are established for the development and evolution of tourism (Khalafi, 2017).

Ahmadi et al., (2022) investigated the identification of dimensions and components of marketing for customers in the Iranian tourism industry. According to the analysis carried out using the content analysis method to determine the dimensions and components of marketing for customers in the Iranian tourism industry, 3 dimensions, 8 components, and 41 indicators were identified and confirmed. Marketing dimensions include the service quality dimension,

the marketing policy dimension, and the tourism experiences dimension. Also, the components including satisfaction with tourism services, infrastructure facilities, tourism costs, macro policies, planning and management, tourist feedback, tourism culture, advertising, and marketing were identified. The results showed that all the identified indicators related to the dimensions and components of marketing for customers in the Iranian tourism industry are effective. Manavi (2022) conducted a study entitled “Investigating the Effect of Service Quality and Perceived Value on Electronic Recommendation Advertising through the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in Hotels in Gilan Province”. The results showed that service quality and perceived value have a positive and significant effect on electronic recommendation advertising, and tourist satisfaction positively mediates this relationship.

### Research Methodology

The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, qualitative in terms of implementation, cross-sectional in terms of data collection time, and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection method or nature and research method. The statistical population of the study is 10 experts, including researchers, academic specialists and those familiar with marketing in the tourism industry, selected to fit the validity of the model as well. The sample size was determined by non-random, purposeful and accessible (judgmental) sampling method. A semi-structured interview was used to collect information.

### Research Findings

The fuzzy DEMATEL technique was used for impact and prioritization. The findings showed that 3 dimensions, 8 components and 41 indicators were identified. The extracted dimensions consisted of the service quality dimension including the components of satisfaction with tourism services, infrastructure facilities, and tourism costs; the marketing policy dimension including the components of macro-policy making, planning, and management; and the tourism experiences dimension including the components of tourist feedback, tourism culture, and advertising and marketing.

### Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the effective and affected factors of tourism industry customer marketing in Iran using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique approach. This research is in line with the research of Ahmadi et al., (2022), Manavi (2022), Han & Nhung (2022), Moon & An (2022), Sotiriadis (2021), Hall & Wood (2021), Hysa et al., (2021), Sheresheva et al., (2021), Daries et al., (2021), Hesari et al., (2021), Balal (2021), and Fereydouni (2020). Sotiriadis (2021) showed that a comprehensive and multi-agency view of destination marketing or management organizations should involve the efforts of many partner organizations and individuals (stakeholders) to achieve the greatest success. He defines destination marketing as “a continuous and sequential process through which destination management researches, implements, controls and evaluates programs aimed at meeting the needs and demands of tourists, as well as the vision, goals and objectives of the destination and destination management planning. Based on the findings of the present study, the following are proposed from the perspective of service quality and its components:

- 1- The expectations and demands of tourists should be understood and the method of providing services should be in accordance with their expectations.
- 2- Services provided to customers should be prioritized in terms of importance to the customer, and the most important tourism services should be provided to customers in the best possible way.