



## The Satisfaction Level of Tourism Marketing Mix Components in Aden City: The Perspective of Residents

### Aden Şehrinde Turizm Pazarlama Karmasına İlişkin Memnuniyet Düzeyi: Yerleşiklerin Bakış Açısı

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#### ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the satisfaction level of the tourism marketing mix components in Aden city, and assessment of the satisfaction level of the city as a tourist destination by visitors. The results indicate that marketing mix components have a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction as a tourist destination except for "promotion". Marketing mix components have a significant relationship to gender except for "partnership". Price, place, and person have statistical significance between different educational groups. Price, person, and programming have statistical significance between different income levels. Aden has historical, natural, and cultural aspects that are integrated into tourism strategy. Aden's worldwide promotion as a destination should be initiated to attract foreign tourists. The availability of great convenience in travel processes in Yemen should be clearly emphasized through the media and in promotional campaigns

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#### ÖZET

Çalışma, bir turizm destinasyonu olarak Aden kentinde turizm pazarlama karması bileşenlerinin ziyaretçiler tarafından memnuniyet düzeyinin değerlendirilmesini amaçlamaktadır. Sonuçlar, pazarlama karması bileşenlerinin "tutundurma" dışında turistlerin memnuniyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Pazarlama karması bileşenleri, "ortaklık" dışında cinsiyetle anlamlı istatistiksel bir ilişkiye sahiptir. Fiyat, dağıtım ve katılımcı, farklı eğitim grupları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Gelir seviyeleri için ise fiyat, katılımcı ve programlama istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Aden'in turizm stratejisine dâhil edilmiş tarihi, doğal ve kültürel zenginlikleri vardır. Aden'in dünya çapında bir destinasyon olarak tanıtımı, yabancı turistleri çekmek için başlatılmalıdır. Yemen'de seyahat süreçlerinde büyük kolaylıkların sağlandığı medya ve tanıtım kampanyalarında açıkça vurgulanmalıdır.

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## Introduction

Tourism marketing curricula have been based for more than five consecutive decades on two main trends, namely the international tourism indicator and the supply and demand indicator in controlling the tourism and service sector. The study aims to examine the satisfaction level of the tourism marketing mix components in Aden city, and assessment of the satisfaction level as a tourist destination by visitors. Currently, there are new policies in the application of tourism marketing methods and foundations, the focus has been on the policy of countries in the industrial field and other service sectors related to air navigation and aviation, as well as large hotel chains in the world and then linking with other industries that feed the tourism sector as a whole (Karim et al.,2021). It was pointed out that tourism marketing is the movement of individuals from their usual places of residence to temporary places, that fulfills their current and future needs and desires, achieve a percentage of profitability (Yung et al.,2021). Branton (1969) and Wilson (1972) concluded that a distinction must be made between tangible and intangible features of services in process marketing (Melnic,2017). Many studies (Blois, 1974; Shostack, 1977) reached useful approaches and models related to the characteristics of the marketing mix, and they focused on workshops in service marketing mainly. The service sector occupied an important position in the global national economy, and consequently, the marketing of services enjoyed a high position in the field of international marketing. The companies achieved a large income from marketing services, especially the material services represented by airlines and hotel chains, which gave them a great competitive advantage among other service sectors (Verma, 2011). The tourism development of tourist destinations depends on the role played by tourism destination managers, marketers, and experts in setting accurate plans and strategies to implement the marketing process. (Jamal and Camargo, 2014; Donohoe, 2012).

The effectiveness of tourism companies in accomplishing their objectives is largely determined by their choice of appropriate marketing mix elements and related marketing tactics. Since each element of the tourism mix differs from other elements according to the conditions of the tourism organization, financially and competitively, tourist companies do not adopt a fixed standard for the elements of the tourism marketing mix (Othman et al., 2019). The importance of our study came about the components of the tourism marketing mix in Aden and knowing the level of tourists' awareness of these components through their use of all tourism services. There is strong agreement between the purpose of our study and other studies, continuously and for many years, many marketing scientists analyze and review all elements of the marketing mix based on 4Ps (Constantinides 2006; Moller 2006). Booms & Bitner (1981) added three other elements: physical evidence, process, and participants, in an attempt to improve the services marketing mix (Grădinaru, 2016). According to Feng & Morrison (2002), the 8Ps of the marketing mix in marketing tourism products and services are recognized. In our study, the 8Ps are examined by tourists arriving in the city of Aden.

Dann (2010) noted that there is a real absence of the concept of social marketing in the marketing mix, while both Rafiq and Ahmed (1995) and Borden (1964) focused on the usefulness of the marketing mix in the general strategy of marketing. Constantinides (2006) referred to the potential use of the marketing mix and its effective importance in global marketing. Many specialists focused on analyzing and studying the marketing mix and its relationship to the marketing process as a whole (Moller 2006). A wide gap appeared in the tourism literature, due to the scarcity of marketing research in the tourism field, especially those related to the marketing mix of tourism services (Robina-Ramírez, 2021). The descriptive-analytical method is used to analyze the data. A questionnaire is utilized to collect information. As a survey tool, the questionnaire has the advantage of collecting satisfaction data from local young people's perspectives, as well as being easily measurable and susceptible to statistical analysis and research question testing. A pool of questions and items are adopted to achieve the study's objectives and measure the questions (Riceet al.,2017). This study is distinguished as one of the rare studies that dealt with the last three components of the tourism marketing mix, which are package, programming, and partnership. The significance of this study is that it includes no clear distinction of which marketing mix components significantly influence the tourists' choice of Aden city as a tourism destination. Thus, tourism organizations in Aden can enable the implementation of a robust marketing strategy that influences the tourists' choice of Aden city as a tourism destination. More specifically this study will be conducted to reveal the following question: What is the nature of the relationship between marketing mix's components and tourists' choice of Aden city as a tourism destination? The study is characterized by being the first study of its kind in Yemen, concerning the eight elements of the tourism marketing mix.

Official and private tourism authorities exert great efforts in marketing products and services in the tourism sector on an international and local level. Those interested in the tourism business and stakeholders benefit greatly from the marketing of tourism products (Nekmahmud & Hassan, 2021). Despite all these attempts in marketing tourism services and the availability of possibilities, there is a shortcoming in presenting experimental studies in the field of the tourism marketing mix (Tölkes, 2018). Lei et al. (2014) focused on the necessity and importance of the tourism marketing mix in traveling to tourist destinations, and that tourism marketing achieves the goal set for the development of tourism development for the destinations. Hinch et al. (2016) discussed that there is little literature and research on tourism marketing and its relationship to the development of tourist destinations, it is necessary to increase these studies and benefit from their application. We fully agree in our study with what was discussed in previous studies, taking into consideration the economic and social characteristics of tourist destinations. The entire tourism experience appears in tourism marketing in the form of a unified brand rather than selling goods and services individually as is the case with intangible industrial goods (Liu and Chou, 2016). Thus, types of communication channels are used by tourism companies to promote services in different tourist destinations (Zhang and Dong, 2021).

## **Literature Review**

### **Tourism Marketing Mix**

While tracing the history of the marketing mix, we note that Neil Borden was the first to formulate the concept of the marketing mix during his speech at the American Marketing Association in 1953. Then he explained this concept formally in his article under the title "The Concept of The Marketing Mix" (Borden, 1964). Then came the scientist Jerome McCarthy (1960), who was the first to suggest the four elements of the marketing mix, as a review of the literature in this field has seen extensive use of these elements (Gordon, 2012). The Four-Ps framework calls for markets to decide on the product and its qualities, set the price, select how to distribute their product, and choose methods for promoting their product. The tourism marketing mix refers to the factors of product, pricing, promotion, and distribution (Kotler et al., 2018). In addition to the 4 Ps other elements of the tourism marketing mix that have been developed, they are the programming, package, person, and partnership (Naftali et al., 2017). The tourism marketing mix is defined as the variables that can be regulated and controlled that any tourism organization (hotel, restaurant, travel and tourism agent, transport companies, natural or human tourist sites, others) seeks to coordinate and modify to satisfy the target market and meet its needs (Rattanakitrungrueang, 2007). The tourism marketing mix is also defined as a different set of main elements that play an important role in the success of the marketing work in the tourism sector, as a result of the interactions that take place between the multi-year variables in the tourism product. These variables directly affect the design and development of the tourism product, in addition to the role of marketing functions in raising the value of the product. That is, achieving compatibility between the needs of tourists as customers with the tourist products offered in the markets (Kirant et al., 2010). The tourism marketing mix includes the eight elements that we will explain in detail in the study.

According to Armstrong and Kotler (2003), a product is defined as something that is offered to the market for use by the consumer out of a prior desire. According to a study provided by Hirankitti et al. (2009), the service provided is divided into two main pillars: the necessary services and the least needed services. In another study, Maignan et al. (2005), indicate that the product is the main pillar on which the marketing mix strategy is based, and indicated that retailers can provide strong characteristics for their product differs from the rest of other competing products. According to Borden's study (1964), product quality is a basic and necessary feature in addition to product size and design. In the tourist context, a destination is a product that consists of goods or elements, such as attractions, travel and tourism companies, or tourist facilities. There is a suggestion made by Weaver and Lawton (2010), that the greatest responsibility lies with the tour manager in controlling everything related to organizing the trip and maintaining a safe atmosphere for tourists. There is a real partnership between the government and private sectors in reducing the negative effects that may hinder tourist trips. A tour operator may create harmony between the host community and the product or destination to be visited (Pomering et al., 2011).

Cooper and Ozdil (1992) suggested that the tourism product is the most important component of the tourism marketing mix. The most important tourism products in Turkey are the natural environment, beaches, and yacht tourism, in addition to historical and cultural tourism. Baloglu and Mangalolu (2001) stated that tourist destinations should carefully assess and improve their images to be included in tour packages developed and sold by the travel intermediaries. The paper of Okumus et al. (2007) about the use of two different tourist destinations for food in their marketing activities concluded that marketing destinations through different types of foods are a smart and attractive activity for tourists. Alipour et al., (2011) reported that getting convenient information about a tourism destination via web and electronic sites has an effective role in the tourism industry in Iran. The study of Sarker et al. (2012) investigated the impact of marketing mix elements on tourists' satisfaction. Findings of the study determine that six out of seven marketing mix elements are positively related to tourists' satisfaction but the price imposed by the authority is not satisfactory to the visitors. Ukaj (2010 and 2014) studied the development of a tourist destination based on marketing activities, and marketing concept as a tool for the development of tourism in Kosovo. The results indicated that the development of tourist destinations and the development of a sustainability plan depend mainly on an effective marketing mix with its various elements. Magatef, S.G. (2015) studied the relationship between the components of the tourism marketing mix and the tourists coming to Jordan. The researcher found that the product and promotion have a strong and effective role in satisfying the tourist. Price and distribution have less strength in comparison to product and promotion among the components of the tourism marketing mix.

In the tourism marketing mix, the customer buys a series of services but leaves very little tangible value after his trip. As a result, marketing initiatives must emphasize the value of memories, facilitate access to the suite of services and add value through additional programming and other factors. The main challenge is to convince potential customers that the item they are buying offers good value for price and that the services will be as described and expected. The eight elements of tourism marketing summarize the specific approach required. Many companies market tourism products and employ marketing strategies according to these elements (Pramesti et al., 2021). The eight components of the tourism marketing mix will be explained more broadly as follows:

### **Product**

The tourism product expresses overlapping and intertwined factors of material and service resources, in addition to multiple activities. When buying this overlapping mix, it is based on buying a desire to delve into a specific experience. Thus, the tourism product can be defined as a set of various goods, services, and facilities that meet all the needs and desires of customers in their specific places of travel (Smith, 1994). As indicated by Tihi et al. (1999), products often take several forms, the most important of which are: large-benefit products, general products, potential products, expected products, fertilized products, etc. The product takes the following forms in tourism marketing, one of them is "basic product" meaning that marketing science seeks to reach the basic benefit the consumer expects from the product and to search the characteristics and features of this product.

The second one is "expected product" which is explained as the necessity of providing goods and services in the specified place so that customers can use the basic product. This product is based on the study of the target market and the type of current expectation. The other one, "extra product" is the product that is completely different and distinct from the competing product, working to enrich and support the basic product. There is also the so-called expanded product, and it expresses the physical environment while providing the service to the customer. That is, the general atmosphere surrounding the customer and its mutual interaction with the service system provided, the atmosphere contributes greatly to the tourism product and attracts the prospective customer through the messages sent and affecting his behavior (Zamlynskyi et al., 2018).

Tourism destinations are strong tourism products and refer to the place visited for a specific purpose, and fulfill the expectations of the tourist and stay there for a longer time (Um & Crompton, 1990). In this case, there are three characteristics of such a tourism product in the following: the attractiveness of the destination, the ease of access to this destination, and the longest period in the destination.

### **Price**

The price is very important in generating income for tourist establishments, so the pricing of touristic or regular products is an important point in the competitive markets. The reason for this is that the very high price is offset by a significant decrease in the general sales of tourism companies and thus negatively affects the revenues in general. Some changes greatly affect tourism products, including high competition, different tastes of tourists, and others.

Tourist establishments must provide an appropriate climate that allows them to survive under these competitive conditions. Tourism companies can be careful in defining their goals accurately to obtain a short-term profit. Prices will be determined, in turn, to make a possible profit. The more flexibility there is in the price of tourism products, the more it helps the potential tourist to visualize the price of the product in advance and the possibility of an alternative to the specific tourism product. Finally, when it comes to pricing tourism products, we have to realize the most important factors affecting the price, whether they are economic, political, or financial. Therefore, the conclusion of the above is that price is an important factor in resource allocation and choosing a specific tourism company to benefit from the available services (Buckley,2007; Nekomahmud et al.,2021).

### **Promotion**

Promotion is an important component of all comprehensive tourism products and is pursued by all companies and destinations, as a link between tourists and tour operators as well as stakeholders (Feng et al., 2004; Yuan et al., 2005). One of the benefits of effective communication between the parties in the promotional process is to increase the awareness of the product among the tourist and work to persuade them to buy specific products. (Jun & Park, 1999). There are promotional tools agreed in all studies that organizers and officials of tourism and destinations should pay close attention to, such as personalized advertising, sales promotion, and public relations, in addition to the importance of advertising in this aspect. In tourism marketing, tourism destinations adopt two types of important promotional techniques, one that focuses on social media, and another type that focuses on participation and interaction in various tourism festivals and exhibitions and attending conferences (Buhalis, 2000). From the above, it is clear to us that the goal of the tourism destinations from the promotional process is to strongly incite the tourist to try the service adopted by the destinations.

### **Place**

There is almost agreement in the studies concerned with tourism marketing, summarizing that the distribution of any tourism product is very important for the success of the marketing process for this specific product. (Smith, 1994; Pearce & Schott, 2005). Tourism distribution has intermediaries that have links to websites following global distribution systems, or that are affiliated with third parties, travel agents, wholesalers, internal operators, and sometimes direct sellers (Pearce et al., 2007). Therefore, the distribution system for tourism products has become very complex and overlapping due to the emergence of new intermediaries ( Pearce & Schott 2005). Recent trends indicate that there are two types of important applications in the distribution of tourism products: intermediation and non-intermediation. Intermediation focuses on finding new distribution channels, while non-intermediation focuses on reducing distribution channels (Kracht & Wang, 2008). Since the internet is considered an important channel for providing customers with information, it has been adopted as an important distribution channel for products, (Huang et al., 2009).

### **Person**

Persons play an active and important role during the marketing of products and services, they are an essential part of the marketing strategy (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). In the tourism experience, there is a great interaction between persons and tourists during the meeting in the tourist places. These persons may be tour guides or travel agents and employees, as their goals are always from this meeting to transform their normal dealings into long-lasting relationships with tourists (Guthrie & Anderson, 2007). These people must be carefully and accurately selected and trained because they are the cornerstone of the service provided and the first impression of the tourist. For example, tourist guides must be proficient in English language in addition to their extensive knowledge of the culture and history of the destinations they work with. Finally, the trained people will be able to build relationships and direct channels of communication with the tourist and push the latter to purchase tourism products with ease (Farrell & Oczkowski 2009; Hunt et al., 2006).

### **Package and programming**

The constant and important elements in the tourism and service marketing mix are package and programming. The package contains various attractive services for the tourist at a fixed price. The role of programming lies in preparing and designing tourism activities or special events that motivate tourists to spend more money, in addition to giving a higher price for the services provided in the package (Nishimura et al.,2007).

### **Partnership**

It means partnership with all stakeholders in the large tourism sector. We benefit from this important factor in obtaining diverse operational competencies in tourism. All partners are beneficiaries according to this concept (Feng et al., 2004). The partners in the tourism sector must be integrated within a unified strategy at work, based on a partnership model that was referred by Selin & Chavez (1995) in its five stages. The first stage focuses on the need for a common vision of all elements, joint leadership, and clear incentives during work. In the second stage, all common problems are debated. Then comes the third stage that includes clarification the goal and working to achieve it, discussing the information presented about the various decisions and the work structure. In the fourth stage, the relationship among partners is enlightened within the framework of the organizational structure of the work and linking them to a supervisory system. In the fifth stage, the outcome appears final results and appropriate programs for partners in addition to rewards for all partners.

### **Tourism destination**

The marketing mix of tourism destinations plays a major role in attracting tourists to destinations and providing distinguished services to tourists by the management of these destinations. A tourism destination consists of a group of units that together form its strengths. These are; main attractions of the destination between the natural and man-made ones, infrastructure and superstructure that emerges as a result of the contribution of the public and private sectors, the possibilities of reaching the tourism destination (land, sea, air), human resources or the human component arising from the trained manpower in the touristic destination, touristic destination regionally or globally. The mental image and characteristics that distinguish it from other touristic destinations, the cost, and price details inevitably affect tourism destinations and competitiveness (Rodriguez-Giron and Vanneste, 2019).

According to WTO, the tourism destination is defined as a geographical framework that the tourist intended for at least one night. The organization pointed out that the destinations have administrative and physical boundaries that clarify their tasks, and the tourism destination has a good mental image to stay in strong competition with the rest of the other tourism destinations. The host community is considered the most important and effective factor involved in the local tourism destinations. These destinations may form together to be larger tourism destinations. This destination takes different types and patterns in the form of a country, a tourist island, or a specific tourist area, and it may be in the form of a tourist attraction within a specific country, such as the Topkapi Palace Museum in Turkey (Madden, 2016).

Gunn (1972) pointed out two important types of image formed for tourism destinations according to the information obtained by the tourist, an unintended organic image: it represents the information obtained from television and newspapers or people living in these destinations. As for the induced and intended image, it is formed in the mind of the tourist through the wide promotion of tourism destinations by the representatives of the destinations (Lopes, 2011). Tocquer and Zins (2004) studied the cognitive factors affecting tourists towards a particular tourism destination, and the study concluded that there are four stages of developing the image. The first image is blurry and unrealistic and is formed from advertisements and oral speech before the tourist travels. The second image is the distorted image and the tourist at this stage needs to choose the destination, the time he will spend and the preferred service for him, and thus the picture is drawn in his mind will change. Then the completed or improved image is also subject to the experience of the holiday itself, through a direct experience of the tourism product or service, the image of the destination is improved and all distorted and incorrect elements are eliminated. Finally, the image results from memories, i.e. nostalgia and visiting the tourism destination again, according to a group of new images that will actually affect the decision of this tourist and re-visit again to the destination, meaning repetition of the experience (Lopes, 2011). In a study conducted by Echtner & Ritchie (1991) on the functional and psychological characteristics of tourism destinations, and the feelings formed by tourists. General functional attributes are used to describe destinations in terms of climatic changes, prices, and all accommodations in the specified destination. There are unique markers for the functional attributes of destinations such as special events, such as festivals. As for the general psychological features, they center around the tourist's friendship with the residents of the destination, a feeling of reassurance, and obtaining a good service. As for the unique psychological features, its close ties between the tourist and the place visited (Saks, 2012).

## **Tourism satisfaction**

Lots of research points to different definitions of customer satisfaction. But the most famous definition in scientific research depends on the model that was invented and developed by Oliver (1980) and states that there is no definite and certain expectation. Customer satisfaction is considered as a global standard to clarify all the differences between customer expectation and performance (Oliver, 2014; Oliver, 1980). This model assumes that most customers distinguish between expectations and assumed performance during the service utilization phase. If the service provided is consistent with the customer's expectation, satisfaction will be achieved. And if the service is contrary to expectations, then surely the customer will be dissatisfied with this service (Sari & Lestari, 2021; Kuhzady & Ghasemi, 2019).

In the field of tourism sciences, a lot of research indicates that satisfaction is a measure of the tourist's expectations before visiting the tourism destination, and useful experiences after visiting the tourism destination. That is, there is an accurate comparison between the expectations and the actual experiences of the tourists before and after visiting the destination (Turner, 2002; Wei et al., 2019; Li et al., 2011; Geeraert et al., 2021; Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2020). Through the previous concept, the tourist will compare his expectations and experiences, to come up with a clear conclusion about satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Cater et al., 2021; Alegre & Garau, 2010; Padma & Ahn, 2020). Shahijan et al. (2018) stated that tourism satisfaction is achieved based on a cognitive assessment obtained from the comprehensive information of tourists after their return from the tourism destinations.

In the study conducted by Al Muala, & Al Qurneh (2012) on a specific number of tourism destinations in Jordan, the sample included 690 international, Arab, and Jordanian tourists visiting these destinations. They indicated in their study that the product, price, persons, place, and package had a significant positive impact on the satisfaction of tourists in Jordanian destinations. This means that tourists are satisfied with the quality and prices of the services provided, in addition to the fact that the workers in the destinations are highly qualified and well-trained to deal with tourists in the specified destinations (Al Muala, 2012).

In the field of tourism and services, satisfaction is defined as a mental, and emotional state that the tourist experiences after the experience. There are no specific characteristics of satisfaction because satisfaction is subject to experience and sometimes emotions play an important role as mediators between performance and satisfaction. Bojanic (1996) discovered that there is a strong and positive relationship between the pre-mental image for the tourist and satisfaction after the experience. Another study conducted by Spinks et al (2005) revealed the effect of individual characteristics of tourists on achieving expected satisfaction in tourist destinations. The results revealed that there are statistically significant differences between tourists concerning levels of satisfaction in the levels of gender, and also between certain age groups of tourists. In the study of Alegre, J., & Garau, J. (2010) the effect of evaluation of tourism services was tested, checking the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of tourists and examining the intention of tourists to return to this destination. The results revealed that the negative experiences or the state of dissatisfaction of tourists in the destinations had a negative impact on the intention to return to the destinations and that all services in all destinations need a continuous evaluation of the services provided.

Sarker et al (2012) indicated in their study that there are tourism destinations in China that compete strongly with other destinations to attract the largest number of tourists to them. The management of these tourism destinations must maintain the levels of tourist satisfaction to the required degree because satisfaction is a reputation for this destination. Therefore, whenever there is a high knowledge about the importance of influence of marketing mix elements on the satisfaction of visitors, it will allow the operators of tourist destinations to develop a strong marketing strategy through which they achieve a high degree of satisfaction and profitability. The study included 132 students on their way to the East Lake in China, the results revealed that the price of the trip for the student or tourist was the most important sensitive element to achieve satisfaction and the intention to return to this lake. Therefore, the price is very important to determine the costs of transportation, accommodation, food, and drink, in addition to the prices related to tourist tours within the specified tourism destination, thus price is a strong competitive factor for tourism destinations to attract the largest number of visitors.

Sirikudta et al (2010) indicated that there is a need to adhere to a tourism marketing strategy, which included 400 Thai and foreign tourists visiting Chaophraya River in Bangkok, Nonthaburi, and Ayutthaya. The study focused on distribution and promotion channels. In addition to the appropriate quality of services provided to tourists, the study indicated that Thai and foreign tourists can realize a certain type of service that exceeds their expectations, thus the satisfaction of the tourist is achieved.

## Methodology

### Pilot Study (pre-test)

The pilot study used the data collected from a subset of the participants to test for the validity and reliability of the measure (Sproull, 2004). To improve the reliability of the instruments, participants were asked to comment critically on the clarity of the scales. In other words, the pilot study aimed to estimate the reaction of the potential respondents to the length, format, and content of the instruments, to ask them to comment critically on the clarity of the scales, and to improve the reliability of the instrument. Generally, a suitable size for a pilot test is around 30 cases (Malhorta *et al.*, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010), while Cooper and Schindler (2008) stated that it may range from 25 to 100 subjects. Based on this, the sample size (30 questionnaires) was suitable for a pilot test in this study. The participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire and whether or not they were easily understandable, to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding. Based on the data collected from the pilot study, the reliability of the instrument was performed. Table 1 shows the results.

The overall results of the pilot survey as seen in Table 1 are satisfactory where variables with Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7. Although it was argued by Hair *et al.* (2010) that 0.6 is the minimum acceptable level for Cronbach's alpha for any construct to possess acceptable reliability, the coefficient alpha for all constructs (i.e. product, price, place, person, package, programming, partnership, and promotion) are higher than 0.7, demonstrating that all the variables have a very good strength of relation for Cronbach's alpha.

### Sampling and Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire is utilized to collect information. As a survey tool, the questionnaire has the advantage of collecting satisfaction data from local young people's perspectives, as well as being easily measurable and susceptible to statistical analysis and research question testing. A pool of questions and items were adopted to achieve the study's objectives and measure the questions (Riceet *al.*, 2017).

The sample included all residents from local young that were enrolled within the survey and the questionnaire was distributed and recollected after the participants finished choosing the items in the survey. The sample size of 450 was sufficient for statistical analysis, forming 96% of all chosen sample sizes.

The questionnaire was being designed in two parts. The first part included questions about Aden as a destination country and the traveling experience of the participants. All questions were close-ended. The items were designed from a study presented by Ozgur (2012). The number of items related to marketing mix components is presented in Table 1. In the questionnaire, there are questions about Aden as a tourism destination and a travel experience of the members of the study sample. Through analyzing their responses to the questionnaire, we measure their level of satisfaction with the tourism marketing mix elements provided in the city of Aden.

Research outcomes were stated accordingly to the questionnaire distributed and the statistical analyses performed. Data were tested for normality using Kolmogorov- Smirnov test, Shapiro-Wilk test. Quantitative data are expressed by mean and standard deviation.

Five Likert scales were used for assessing the responses. Each of the Likert scales was coded out of 5 as the following: 5= strongly agree and is the highest rank of scale, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree, and is the lowest rank. The interpretations of the Likert scale results are: scores of 1 to 2.32 indicate low level, scores of 2.33 to 3.65 indicate the medium level and scores of 3.66 to 5 indicate high level. T-test and ANOVA were used to examine the research question. A 95% confidence interval is the conventionally accepted level for most business research and a p-value was considered to be statistically significant if it was below 0.05 & 0.01.

### Validity and Reliability Analysis

To test the reliability of the survey, Cronbach's alpha coefficient factor was measured to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire and phrases within the survey and the results are represented in Table 1. All the marketing mix items in the survey indicated reliability as the highest coefficient was 0.83 which is higher than the cut point 0.60 and so were all the other items. This means that answers to the questionnaire were consistent among the results across the different items of the survey.



**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Factor as Measured Among the Questionnaire Items

Marketing mix elements (variables)	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient factor for pilot study	Cronbach's alpha coefficient factor for study
Product	8	0.97	0.74
Price	4	0.95	0.77
Person	4	0.87	0.74
Place	4	0.88	0.66
Package	5	0.87	0.76
Programming	4	0.94	0.78
Partnership	4	0.93	0.81
Promotion	5	0.93	0.83

## Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to examine the perceived level of the tourism marketing mix components in Aden city.

RQ1. What is the perceived level of tourism products in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ2. What is the perceived level of tourism price in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ3. What is the perceived level of tourism place in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ4. What is the perceived level of tourism person in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ5. What is the perceived level of tourism package in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ6. What is the perceived level of tourism programming in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ7. What is the perceived level of tourism partnership in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ8. What is the perceived level of tourism promotion in Aden city as a tourism destination?

RQ9a. Is there a significant difference between the tourists' perception of the tourism marketing mix in Aden city according to their sex?

RQ9b. Is there a significant difference between the tourists' perception of the tourism marketing mix in Aden city according to their educational levels?

RQ9c. Is there a significant difference between the tourists' perception of the tourism marketing mix in Aden city according to their income levels?

## Findings and Discussion

The demographic variables included in the study are gender, age, educational level, nationality, occupation, and income. As represented in Table 2, most of the enrolled subjects were males with 68.2% compared to only 31.8% females, and most of the enrolled subjects were between 20-39 years of age (90.2%). In this survey, more than half of the sample had a bachelor's degree with 67.3% of the studied sample and most of the studied population were Yemeni citizens with 98.9%. Most of the enrolled participants were students at different educational levels forming 86.7% of the total surveyed group. Almost 80% of the studied group had less than 70000 Yemeni Rials income. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents are male and young people. The largest group is bachelor's degree holders and the majority of respondents have domestic tourists profile and belong to a lower-income class.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics		Number of Respondents	Percent
Gender	Male	307	68.2
	Female	143	31.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	<20	39	8.7
	20-39	406	90.2
	40-59	4	0.9
	>60	1	0.2

<i>Table 2 continues</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Level</b>	Secondary school certificate or below	45	10.0
	High school diploma or vocational school diploma	8	1.8
	Higher diploma and associate degree	66	14.7
	Bachelor's degree	303	67.3
	Higher than bachelor's degree	28	5.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	Yemeni	445	98.9
	Foreigner	5	1.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	Government/state enterprise officer	12	2.7
	Employee	24	5.3
	Student	390	86.7
	Business owner	8	1.8
	Retired	1	.2
	Others	15	3.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Income</b>	Less than 70000	358	79.6
	150000-70000	59	13.1
	250000-151000	15	3.3
	More than 250000	18	4.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Research Objectives

The first eight objectives of this study are summarized in Table 3. As seen in Table 3, only the highest and lowest rankings for each component are presented due to the limited number of tables and words, but all the items rankings are available upon request. If the mean scores are examined in terms of the perceived level of tourism product, the highest-ranking item is "Aden is a beautiful place (4.72)" and the lowest ranking item is "Accommodation services and facilities are adequate (3,52)". "Pleasure from the attractiveness of natural environment (4.27)" and "Pleasure from nightlife and entertainment (4.20) are higher than the computed mean of 3.96. The analysis shows that there is a highly significant difference (0.000), and no consensus between subjects' answers. The studied group highly accepted that Aden as a product of tourism is significantly positively perceived with the highest mean score of 3.96 among eight marketing mix components. This is similar to that reported by Sarker et al. (2012) in East Lake in China where the product was perceived as a reason to increase tourist satisfaction (p<0.001). This is similar to that reported by Magatef (2015) that the product had a strong and effective role in satisfying the tourist.

The highest-ranking item is "Price of transportation is low in Aden (3.41)" and the lowest ranking item is "Price of the packaged tour is low in Aden (3.14)". By testing the results using t-test (9.151), a highly significant difference (0.000) between the computed mean of 3.22 and the expected mean of 3 occurs and thus there is no consensus between subjects' answers. This signifies that transportation within the city is cheaper than a package tour as a whole. This was unlike that reported by Ukaj (2014), who was reported by the New York Times where Albania is qualified to be ranked the 4th from a 52 countries list including regional ones such as Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Croatia referring to its very low price besides its coasts, archaeological places, soft nature. According to Sarker et al (2012), the price was not related to tourist satisfaction in East Lake in China (p= 0.633).

The highest-ranking item is "Opportunities of travel choices are available in Aden (3.87)" and the lowest one is "Facilities provided by tour operators are good in Aden (3.35)" in the analysis of the third objective that identifies

the perceived level of tourism place. There is a highly significant difference (0.000), and thus there is no consensus between subjects' answers. Aden as a place of tourism is significantly favored with the highest positive perception. This is similar to that reported by Cooper and Ozdil, (1992), who indicate that the tourism product is the most important component of the tourism marketing mix. The most important tourism products in Turkey are the natural environment, beaches, and yacht tourism, in addition to historical and cultural tourism. Sarker et al (2012) suggested that the satisfaction of tourists was significantly related to a place called East Lake in China ( $p < 0.001$ ).

In the analysis of the perceived level of tourism person in Aden, "employees of accommodation facilities are polite toward customers (3.42)" is the highest-ranking item while "employees of destination government offices are friendly and helpful" is the lowest one. Moreover, "conformity of the employees' characteristics in transportation to professional standards (3.37)" is higher than the computed mean of 3.36 for all items. This is consistent with the study of Sarker et al (2012) that the person was significantly related to the satisfaction of tourists in East Lake in China ( $p < 0.001$ ).

The fifth objective of this study is to identify the perceived level of tourism package in Aden city. The highest-ranking item is "Possibilities of transportation are easy in Aden (3.80)" and the lowest one is "Travel insurance is available in Aden (3.14)". Additionally, two items, "Possibilities of choosing accommodation facilities are plenty (3.59)" and "Organized tour possibilities to Aden are available" are higher than the computed mean of 3.51 for all items. There is a highly significant difference (0.000) and no consensus between subjects' answers. It indicates that package service for tourism is significantly favored with the highest positive perception with three items above the computed mean of all items. Cooper et al.(1992) reported that after Turkey became a fashionable tourism destination, it was not ready to absorb an expansion in tourism, technologically, socially, and economically. The Turkish authorities did nothing to control this growth and so it outstripped the supply of both accommodation and support facilities giving a reputation for poor planning, low-quality tourism plant. Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) stated that tourist destinations should carefully assess and improve their images to be included in tour packages developed and sold by the travel intermediaries.

**Table 3.** Summary of The Perceived Level of Marketing Mix Components

Variable	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.		
Product	I1-Highest/ Aden is a beautiful city	4.72	.566		
	I6-Lowest/ Accommodation services and facilities are adequate in Aden	3.52	1.034		
Price	I10-Highest/ The price of transportation is low in Aden	3.41	1.036		
	I11-Lowest/ The price of the packaged tour is low in Aden	3.14	1.038		
Place	I13-Highest/ Opportunities of travel choices is available in Aden	3.87	1.054		
	I16-Lowest/ Facilities provided by tour operators are good in Aden	3.35	1.005		
Person	I18-Highest/ Employees' characteristics working in accommodation facility are polite toward customers in Aden	3.42	1.066		
	I20-Lowest/ Employees' characteristics working in the government offices are friendly and helpful in Aden	3.06	1.148		
Package	I23-Highest/ Possibilities of transportation is easy in Aden	3.80	1.041		
	I25-Lowest/ Travel insurance is available in Aden	3.14	1.108		
Programming	I26-Highest/ Convenience of getting information about Aden	3.63	1.176		
	I29-Lowest/ Alternative travel choices are available in Aden	3.07	1.074		
Partnership	I33-Highest/ Cooperation between agencies and government offices is complementary in Aden	3.51	1.133		
	I32-Lowest/ Convenience of visa and passport procedures are easy in Aden	2.98	1.082		
Promotion	I34-Highest/ Information about Aden is efficient	3.78	1.139		
	I38-Highest/ Effectiveness of tourism fairs is good in Aden	3.78	1.142		
	I36-Lowest/ Effectiveness of advertising and promotion are available in Aden	3.27	1.151		
Item	Mean (Std Dev)	t-test(p-value)	Item	Mean(Std Dev)	t-test (p-value)
Product	3.96/0.387	37.18(0.000*)	Package	3.51(0.816)	14.77(0.000)
Price	3.22/0.106	9.15(0.000*)	Programming	3.32(0.887)	7.84(0.000*)
Place	3.52/0.208	14.69(0.000*)	Partnership	3.20(0.881)	2.75(0.000*)
Person	3.36/0.816	9.60(0.000*)	Promotion	3.57(0.905)	12.19(0.0057)

\* indicates that it is statistically significant at 1%

Tourism programming is examined and found that the highest-ranking item is “Convenience of getting information about Aden (3.63)” is and the lowest ranking item is “Alternative travel choices are available in Aden (3.07)”. The other item, “Convenience of travel purchasing is adequate (3.33)” is also higher than the computed mean of 3.51 for all programming items and the result of the student t-test (7.84). It indicates a highly significant difference (0.000) and no consensus between subjects’ answers. It is consistent with the study of Alipour et al (2011) that reported getting convenient information about a tourism destination via web and electronic sites has an effective role in the tourism industry in Iran.

Tourism partnership is analyzed and concluded that “Cooperation between agencies and government offices is complementary in Aden (3.51)” is the highest-ranking one while “Convenience of visa and passport procedures are easy in Aden (2.98)” is the lowest item. The other two items are not above the computed mean of 3.51 for all partnership items. There is a highly significant difference (0.000) and no consensus between subjects’ answers.

The last marketing mix component, promotion is examined and found that the highest-ranking item is “Information about Aden is efficient and effectiveness of tourism fairs are good in Aden (3.78)” and the lowest ranking item is “Effectiveness of advertising and promotion activities are available in Aden (3.27)”. The results using a t-test (12.19) concluded no significant difference (0.057) and there is consensus between subjects’ answers. This is inconsistent with the study by Okumus et al. (2007) about the use of two different tourism destinations for food in their marketing activities. The results indicated that marketing destinations through different types of foods is a smart and attractive activity for tourists, and depends on long experience not only in the intended tourism destinations but also in the types of local and international foods, as well as knowledge of the social and cultural characteristics of potential tourists. The study presented distinguished discussions in the introduction of the kitchen in the marketing process of tourism destinations. Alipour et al. (2011) reported getting convenient information about a tourism destination via web and electronic sites has an effective role in the tourism industry in Iran. Sarker et al (2012) suggested that promotion is significantly related to the satisfaction of tourists in East Lake in China (p<0.001). It is clear from this study that Aden is an accepted destination city that raised to the destination image involved by its tourists. All the marketing mix components except for promotion affect the tourist's satisfaction. Thus, improvement in the marketing mix components will enhance a better tourism status for the city.

**Table 4.** Analysis of the Marketing Mix Components – Gender

	Gender	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	
Product/highest mean1	Male	307	3.93	.591	
	Female	143	4.09	.473	
Partnership/lowest mean7	Male	307	3.06	.903	
	Female	143	3.22	.824	
<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>					
	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig.(2tailed)</b>
Partnership mean7	1445	.230	-1.797	447	.073
			-1.858	301.668	.064
<b>Independent t-test for Sex</b>					
	<b>Mean Difference</b>		<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>		
Product	-.16231		.004*		
Price	-.26007		.002*		
Place	-.18237		.021**		
Person	-.29873		.000*		
Package	-.32333		.000*		
Programming	-.19354		.031**		
Partnership	-.16005		.073		
Promotion	-.44585		.000*		

\* and \*\* indicate that it is statistically significant at 1% and 5%, respectively

The first section of the ninth objective is to identify if there is a significant difference between demographic variables in the perception of the tourism marketing mix in Aden city as a tourism destination. The marketing mix components were used to assess the distribution of gender as a reflection of their perception of tourism in Aden as shown in Table 4 (only the highest and lowest rankings for each component are presented due to the limited number of tables and words).

The implication of the eight marketing mix components on gender suggested that respondents were highly agreeing to it with the highest means received for item 1 (product) with 3.93 among males and 4.09 among females. The lowest means were among item 7 (partnership) with means of 3.06 among males and 3.22 among females. Marketing mix items in this study indicated a significant relationship to gender except for partnership. The respondents shared similar tourists' perceptions for each of the marketing mix items that were generally highly agreeing according to the means except for partnership which did not show statistical significance at 5% level.

The second section of the ninth objective is the identification of the significant difference between the tourists' perception of tourism marketing mix according to their educational levels. It is examined and found that only price, place, and person had statistical significance between different educational groups among respondents (see Table 5). The educational level had an impact on the perception of tourists towards some but not all marketing mix components in Aden as a tourism destination.

Finally, of all marketing mix items in this study, the only price, person, and programming had statistical significance between different income levels among respondents according to the analysis of the third section of the ninth objective. This states that income level had an impact on the perception of tourists towards some but not all marketing mix components in Aden as a tourism destination.

**Table 5:** *Analysis of the Marketing Mix Components – Educational Level and Income*

<b>ANOVA for Educational Level</b>				
		Mean Square	F	Sig
PRICE	between groups	4.071	6.231	.000*
	within groups	.653		
PLACE	between groups	1.384	2.295	.045**
	within groups	.603		
PERSON	between groups	2.136	3.287	.006*
	within groups	0.650		
<b>ANOVA for Income</b>				
PRICE	between groups	2.795	4.127	.007*
	within groups	.677		
PERSON	between groups	3.429	5.292	.001*
	within groups	.648		
PROGRAMMING	between groups	4.616	6.061	.000*
	within groups	.762		

\* and \*\* indicate that it is statistically significant at 1% and 5%, respectively.

Concerning marketing mix components for Aden in respect to variation among gender, educational levels, and incomes all did not affect tourist perceived and satisfaction with the partnership between governmental and private services ( $p > 0.05$ ). Yet, within the different educational levels, there was no significance for perceiving products as all tourists consider that Aden is a satisfactory tourism destination and met their destination image ( $p > 0.05$ ). They thought that improving programming and partnership would have a better impact on Aden tourism and the current status though accepted yet further enhancements are necessary ( $p > 0.05$ ). All suggested that promotion did not affect their choice because Aden itself has a wide and good reputation of being a tourists resort for most local tourists ( $p > 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, concerning income, Aden as a product of tourism was universally agreed upon among all participants irrelevant of their income status ( $p > 0.05$ ). Neither different places to visit in

Aden nor packages were affected by the income of tourists ( $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, partnership and promotion were not influenced by various income levels ( $p>0.05$ ).

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The responsible authorities can benefit from the indicators of this study and pay attention to the element of promotion, which is still weak in the tourism sector in Aden. There should be an overall assessment and upgrading for the tourism strategy based on marketing mix components to enhance Aden as a destination image. Cooperation between government and private sectors must be implemented to improve services in both sectors and a responsible approach to the quality of service must be formed. Local and governmental and even public representatives must be included in the overall presentation of Aden as a tourism destination each according to their available and efficient abilities. Political disputes and upsets should be set aside and infrastructures must be improved to facilitate the adaptation of large numbers of tourists coming to Aden, especially during vacations. Based on the findings, some recommendations can be made to the tourism industry, government, and universities.

Recommendations to the government are as follows:

- Much must be done concerning person attendants for tourists, especially among governmental sectors. Workshops and frequent assessment for those in direct contact with tourists should be realized and a percentage of wages or even rewards should be given out for the best hospitality and elegance among employees.
- Travel insurances should be improved and be accessible to all customers.
- Alternative visiting sites should be enhanced in Aden not only beaches and hotels are to share most tourism activities. Aden has a historical, natural, and cultural aspect that can be integrated into tourism strategy. It can form a communicating cultural city between regional, Arab, Indian, and Western cultures.
- Yemen is being one of the easiest countries in issuing a visa and with the passports and traveling process yet many fail to figure out the easy procedures that are taken by the governmental offices and that must be clarified via media and during promotional campaigns.
- Even though promotion doesn't affect tourism in Aden among local tourists, worldwide promotion for Aden as a destination city for foreigners should be started, hand in hand with the promotion of Yemen as a whole country.
- Advertising campaigns should be conducted for the various tourist places in the city of Aden on all satellite and terrestrial channels.
- Easy, safe, and cheap means of transportation must be provided to facilitate internal mobility through the development of the city's infrastructure.
- The presence of security forces in touristic and archaeological sites must be increased to ensure the security of the tourist place from any abuse in the touristic areas.
- Supportive and volunteer activities should be supported to beautify the squares and streets surrounding tourist areas so that the enthusiasm of young people in volunteer activities should be exploited

Recommendations to the tourism industry are as follows:

- Urgent steps are to be taken to improve the accommodation services among resorts, hotels, and residency in Aden.
- Package tour prices must be reviewed in context to that provided and feasible. The reducing prices will give a chance to certain groups of tourists, such as students, large families, etc., who can have an impact on the future marketing of the city to visit the city.
- Tour operators should be encouraged to choose better facilities for tourists in exchange for a certain percentage discount to help them provide residency and greatly improve the overall quality of service.
- The prices of domestic flights and tourist hotels for Yemenis should be reduced while adhering to the rules of hygiene and order.
- Domestic tourist offers should be increased by diversifying the accommodation levels, travel days, and durations in hotels to suit all segments of society.

Recommendations to universities and academicians are as follows:

- Educational trips should be made for students to visit archaeological sites in their country and get to know closely about the civilization and culture of the city of Aden by visiting mosques, temples, and museums. This

leads to the advancement of the intellectual and cultural level of the students and instills the spirit of love and belonging to the antiquities of their country and to preserve them from vandalism or destruction.

- Tourism awareness should be raised among school and university students by including some tourist attractions in the curricula and promoting tourism culture through schools and universities.
- Ancient monuments should be developed and restored with the participation of students from the faculty of archeology and fine arts.
- Students of the faculty of archeology and fine arts should be allowed to restore old palaces, museums, and mosques under the supervision of experts and to assist ordinary workers. It provides students with a sense of belonging and hands-on training and even contributes to drop unemployment rate

Hence, we see that tourism marketing policies and procedures are the most important for placing any place on the internal or external tourism map. With the technological development and the spread of social media, the methods and means of marketing have become innovative and do not stop at the borders of traditional methods. We must encourage the population to move to visit the Yemeni tourist destinations, which are countless historical monuments, gardens, public parks, and other dazzling tourist places in Yemen.

### **Ethics Statement**

During the writing process of this study titled "The Satisfaction Level of Tourist's Marketing Mix Components in Aden City", scientific rules, ethics, and quotation rules were followed; No falsification has been made on the data collection and this study has not been sent to any other journal for evaluation.

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