

THE ROLE OF TOURISM MARKETING ON ECOTOURISM IN HIT CITY

Center of Urban & Regional Planning for Post Graduate students

S. A. Noori¹, A. K. Al-Rawi²

Abstract

Ecotourism is one of the most important tourism types that gained a prior attention to protect natural areas in term of environmental and cultural perspectives.

It preserves and protects the resources from pollution and degradation. It has become particularly important in tourism development programmes.

Accordingly, this study was aimed to evaluate the role of tourism marketing in the growth and development of ecotourism in the city of Hit and illustrate the importance of tourism promotion in the tourism sector, as well as evaluate the most important natural and human ecological attractions based on a field study as well as a diagnosis of the reality of the application of tourism marketing requirements. The results statistical analysis of the questionnaire using the statistical programme (SPSS) revealed the following: Tourism in Heat City provides 66% of the requirements for tourism marketing in Heat City and also among the high reliability of the marketing hub in the tourism sector, The study found that there is a partial application of those requirements, which requires greater will on the part of specialized entities to upgrade tourism from a mere concept to a practical exercise with positive effects on the individual and society. And then the actual expression of environmental and sustainable tourism development. and the emphasis on improving the realities of tourism marketing by the private and government sectors.

Keywords: Tourism Marketing, Ecotourism, Heat.

INTRODUCTION

The existence and development of tourism marketing was associated with the emergence of tourism as a cultural-behavioral phenomenon on the one hand, and an economic-social phenomenon on the other hand. Eco-tourism as a human activity has received great importance and consideration like never been before. Eco-tourism activities affect the economic, social, cultural, and environmental results and had a great and clear impact on the lives of societies and people in our present era.

This necessitated directing attention to the need to organize and control the marketing and promotion of these activities in order to reach the desired goals in the time and level required. As well as the need to present strong offers that present the city as an environmental tourism destination that attracts local and international tourists and re-market it as a safe and preferred tourist destination, by presenting attractive and competitive offers, whether in terms of the product

and services provided or through the prices and conditions available through an effective and integrated marketing mix.

-All given above, the following problem can be stated:

A major failure was detected in the field of tourism marketing by the tourism sector in the country. The city of Hit suffers from a lack of interest in tourism in general and ecotourism in particular, despite being an important tourist area and it was recently included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as visitors flocking to the city in large numbers.

-The research importance: it belongs to the returns that ecotourism can achieve by employing systematic marketing operations which could lead to enhance the economy and develop the city.

-Hypothesis: There is a major role for tourism marketing in the presence of eco-tourism in Hit city. Also, Promoting the tourist destination has a significant impact on increasing the number of tourists and creating their desire to know and visit the city.

-The research method and statistical tools: The analytical descriptive approach was adopted in interpreting the theoretical aspects of the books and references available in libraries and the internet, as well as data were obtained through the distribution of a questionnaire prepared for this purpose. The collected data were analyzed by relying on statistical tools that enabled us to reach the desired results.

The research objectives:

- evaluate the role of tourism marketing in the growth and development of eco-tourism in the city of Hit.
- Learn about the concept of tourism marketing and its importance in promoting tourism.
- Knowledge of the most important recent trends in tourism marketing.
- Identifying the concept of eco-tourism, which has a significant impact on the development of countries' economies.
- Identifying the types of ecotourism in the city of Hit.

Temporal duration included: The duration of the field of study from 2022-2023

And spatial boundaries: the field study of the district of Hit in the Anbar Governorate in Iraq. As for the questionnaire, it was distributed to a group of tourists from different governorates of Iraq.

The research was divided into four axes: the first axis is related to the theoretical framework and explains the most important concepts related to the study, and the second is the field framework. The elements of environmental tourism attraction and the types of ecotourism in the city of Hit were studied.

While the third axis was devoted to analyzing the questionnaire, and finally the fourth axis concerned with the most important conclusions and recommendations reached through this research.

1- Theoretical framework:

1-1 Tourism marketing Concepts.

The specialist Bartles in the field of tourism marketing identified that tourism marketing is a process targeted the tourists and aimed to secure and meet their consumption needs through

various distribution channels that interact with tourists under the pressures of the external environment in which they occur, such as:

Economic, technological, ethical, and social constraints, which aim to facilitate the flow of exchanges to the target market, are reflected in the improvement of the exchange and consumption process (Idris, 2015, p. 4).

While others defined the tourism marketing as a variety of methods for communicating information about tourism products and services from the owners of tourism companies to the public, it is also known as the administrative and technical activity carried out by tourism companies inside and outside the country in order to identify the nature of tourism markets (Atiyah, 2016, p. 49)

It is clear from these definitions that tourism marketing is a comprehensive and integrated technical and administrative activity that includes all efforts exerted to attract international and local tourists to visit international tourist areas. It aims to secure and meet their consumption needs in order to facilitate the flow of exchanges to the target market, which is reflected in the improvement of the exchange and consumption process.

1-1-1 Elements of tourism marketing:

The elements that must be included in tourism marketing are (Elias, 2002, p. 11)

Determine the tourist groups to be contacted through the tourist offices that are located in the destinations to which marketing is expected and estimate the demand among the members of these groups.

-Creating a comprehensive, detailed, and clear perception among these groups of the entity to be marketed.

- Identifying travel and tourism offices locally, regionally, or globally, and coordinating with those offices in order to receive these tourist groups.

- Determine the tourism facilities that are capable of attracting these groups, through cooperation and coordination with the tourism offices.

Providing all activities leading to satisfying the needs and satisfaction of these groups, such as ease of transportation, diversifying means of transportation, providing facilities for granting travel visas, providing accommodations, etc.

Providing the appropriate structure of transportation and communication networks.

1-1-2 tourism marketing objectives

There are several goals for tourism marketing, the most important of which are (Al-Zoubi, 2013, p. 100):

- Achieving certain rates of tourism flow (number of tourists, tourist nights, tourism revenues) during a period ranging from one to two years.
- Achieving satisfaction and satisfying the needs of tourists through improving the level of services for tourists.
- An increase in tourism income and tourist traffic.
- To expand and open new markets.
- Achieving a good reputation by providing high quality and advanced tourism services.

- There are special objectives, including:
- Monopoly of a specific tourist market.
- Providing excellent tourism services at moderate prices.

1-1-3 Characteristics of tourism marketing:

To identify the characteristics of tourism marketing, we must differentiate it from the commodity marketing, as shown in the table (1) (Al-Hadid, 2010, pp. 88-98):

Table (1). The difference between tourism marketing and commodity marketing.

No.	tourism marketing	commodity marketing
1	Raises motives and trends to achieve a well-known tourist purpose	It studies the needs and motives of buyers.
2	Depends on the tourism offer (inflexibility)	Dependence on supply (flexible and easily developed)
3	Aims to increase the rate of tourism annually	Aims to achieve a specific number of sales within a certain period of time
4	The marketing process can take place at any time	The marketing process is to achieve a temporal benefit
5	Doesn't achieve the benefit of possession, (everyone can use)	Benefit from possession
6	Direct relationship is very essential	The desire of the buyer is very necessary

Reference: I. I. H. Al-Hadid, Tourism Marketing Department, 2010, pp. 88-98.

1-1-4- Tourism marketing functions:

According to the World Tourism Organization, there are three functions of tourism marketing (kawash, 2004, p. 191):

- The communication function: which aims to attract customers who are able to pay and convince them of the suitability of tourism services with their desires.
- The development function: which is the planning and development of new products, which allows for the promotion of tourism services and making them more attractive.
- Monitoring function: this function represented in analysis through the use of various techniques and searching for and examining the results of the various promotion activities, i.e. whether these results actually reflect the use of the available tourism potential.

1-1-5 Elements of the tourism marketing mix

The tourism marketing mix consists of several elements, the importance of each of which differs among countries, according to the tourism potential and potential owned by that country. The following are the elements of the tourism marketing mix that a tourist country can rely on in marketing its product to attract tourists. The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training, Tourism Marketing, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, pg. 21

1- The tourism product: can be defined as a set of elements that are present in the state and serve as important sources of tourist attraction that it relies on to stimulate foreign tourism demand. (Sharkawy, 2008, pp. 66-67).

2- Tourism pricing: considered one of the most important elements, because tourists' decisions are greatly affected by the price of the tourist trip, as the tourist's decision is very much linked to the price of tourism services.

Although some markets care about the price side, the quality of the product as well, as the appropriate price and the appropriate quality are matched (Onis, 2016, p. 38)

3- Tourism distribution: It is all the activities that are practiced by all the relevant parties in order to provide the tourist with the spatial and temporal benefits he wants, and others, at the time and situation that is considered appropriate for him. (Onis, 2016, pp. 38-39).

4- Tourism promotion: the process of introducing the consumer to the product, its characteristics, functions, and advantages, how it is used and where it is available in the market, in addition to trying to influence the consumer, urging him, and persuading him to buy the product. It also consisted of: (Bu-daleh, 2012, p. 113):

A- The various means of advertising, including (radio, television, magazines, newspapers, cinema).

B- The various means of advertising, including (posters, flyers)

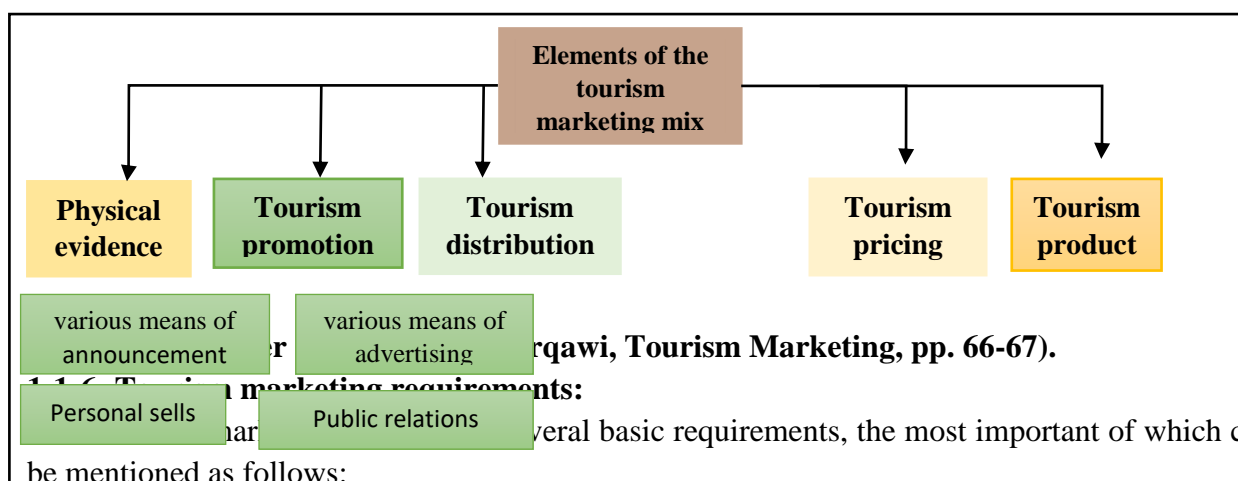
C- Public relations

d- Personal selling

5. Labor: Labor is very important in the success of the marketing mix, as they are relied upon to a large extent in providing services or selling products.

6. Physical evidence: This evidence is one of the most important ways in which products or services are provided to tourists, as it includes ways to provide comfort to customers and try to satisfy them through some services and products and striving to provide the best.

Figure (1). Tourism Marketing Elements.



1- Tourism development: Tourism development represents various programs aimed at achieving a stable and balanced increase in tourism resources and deepening and rationalizing productivity

in the tourism sector. Tourism development is based on the following elements (**Al-Sahrawi, 2012, p. 91**):

- Enhancing the stability of the institutional construction of tourism and modernizing the tourism management apparatus.
- Updating the tourism legislation system
- Developing the tourism product and preparing tourist areas to meet the requirements of the different types of tourism activity.
- Rehabilitation of human resources in the field of tourism.
- Developing promotional programs and studying the targeted tourism markets and their requirements to ensure an increase in the number of tourists.
- Allocating significant financial resources for the tourism sector.

In general, the state seeks, through tourism development, to achieve a set of goals that fall in their entirety within the framework of comprehensive development.

2- Tourism media: The media in its various forms is considered one of the important mechanisms in tourism promotion. In view of the importance of the tourism sector in the field of economic development of countries, reliance on various forms of media has become necessary, in order to attract the largest number of tourists, through the practice of marketing methods through tourism media (Hijab, 2003, p. 23).

Tourism media also contributes to educating tourists through advertisements, issuing leaflets, brochures, and tourist maps, and distributing them through travel agencies and tourism offices, through airports, or even through websites and social media (Tawfiq, 1997, p. 203). the desired goals are: -

- Identifying tourism investments and developing tourism products.
- Educating individuals in the tourism field and spreading their tourism culture.
- Highlighting the elements of tourist attractions using tourism activation tools.

3- Tourism culture: It is the individual's possession of a measure of knowledge, information, concepts, skills, attitudes, and values, which in their entirety constitute a suitable background for him to conduct rational tourism behavior towards all aspects of tourism, as well as the processes necessary for planning, organizing, and dealing with institutions, tourist places, and tourists. Tourism culture depends on providing tourist information and highlighting the importance of tourism products and how to market them, as well as methods of dealing with tourists (Zahran, 2004, p. 24).

1-1-7 Modern trends in tourism marketing: consisted of the following (**Abdul Hamid, 2006, pp. 305-325**):

- a. environmental tourism marketing
- B. E-Marketing
- c. Innovative tourism marketing
- D. Tourism marketing through the greatest destination

1-1-7-1 Environmental tourism marketing

This refers to the administrative and technical activity carried out by tourism facilities, agencies, and organizations in the foreign and domestic markets with the aim of influencing the tourism markets, to attract the largest tourism movement depending on the high level of environment in the receiving countries.

Reasons for interest in eco-tourism marketing:

- The increasing level of environmental awareness among developed tourism countries, and the increasing interest of tourist consumers in achieving environmental requirements in the areas they visit.
- The interest of different governments in environmental pollution, which was evident in the international conferences held for this purpose.
- Media openness and the great development that occurred in the various visual, audio and print media, which can convey the real situation in the tourist countries receiving tourists to different countries of the world.

2-7-1-1 E-marketing

A general term applied to the use of information and communication technology in the marketing of tourism services, when linking between sellers (tourism sector) and customers (tourists). E-mail and even the use of short text messages (SMS), etc., and this includes all known tourism operations such as tourism program offers, booking and organizing tourist trips through the Internet, and post-product services.

Types of E-tourism marketing

- Social media.
- E-mail.
- Websites and blogs.
- Photos and video broadcasting and publishing pictures such as YouTube and Instagram.

1-1-7-3 Innovative tourism marketing

This type of marketing depends on the new marketing ideas that many tourist countries around the world rely on to promote their tourism product. These ideas are many and varied, some of which are related to the use of certain slogans to make the necessary impact, and some of them are related to the strategy and method of marketing used or can be related to advanced technology. Despite the methods, at the end of the day, its roots in the creative and innovative ideas that were born because of the intense competition between countries and tourism companies, as well as the tremendous development that took place in the field of tourism marketing. Which began to be used by many tourist countries in this world.

1-1-7-4 Tourism marketing through the greatest destination

It is the integration between the tourist destination, which was later called the Mega Destination, where the tourism marketing experts in the developed tourist countries were interested in this direction, to achieve leadership in the marketing work. The idea of marketing through the greatest destination is based on finding a kind of block or close cooperation. Among a group of geographically close tourist countries, where they are linked together by strong political ties and

united by one tourist goals, and they are close culturally. In addition to the great tourist destination, which make it possible to take advantage of the comparative advantages available in each country of the greatest destination to activate marketing efforts in foreign markets and penetrate them efficiently and successfully. Marketing through this tourist block achieves better results than individual marketing at the level of each.

1-1-8- The required criteria for successful tourism marketing.

One of the most important criteria for successful tourism marketing that defines the right lines for carrying out this activity and ensuring the achievement of its objectives is as follows (Al-Ansari, Odeh, 2002, p. 80):

- 1- The tourist attraction elements: represented by the natural elements (climate, forests, geography of the earth) and man-made elements (parks, archaeological and historical areas, resorts, complexes, restaurants).
- 2- Transportation: of various types, land, sea, and air transport.
- 3- Rest stations, whether commercial ones, such as hotels or private sleeping places, such as guest houses and rental apartments.
- 4- Supporting facilities: of all kinds, such as tourism advertising, tourism management, handicrafts, banks, exchange, and transfer offices.
- 5- Infrastructure services: such as water, sewage, electricity, and communications. In addition to all these elements, the agencies implementing tourism development are usually implemented by the public sector, the private sector, or both.

1-2 The concept of eco-tourism

The researchers' opinions differed regarding the concept of ecotourism, perhaps the most prominent of which are the following:

Spalos Lascurin (The Mexican architect) preformed the first definitions of ecotourism in 1983, when he stated that "it is tourism that requires travel to natural, uncontaminated sites, with the aim of studying, appreciating, and enjoyment, in addition to having the benefit from the cultural heritage of the areas that include those sites (Saidani, 2018, p. 3) As for Tisdell's definition in 1996 in ecotourism, it is tourism that relies on living organisms and plants in the natural system. Thus, it is believed that this definition has excluded activities that focus on pioneering geographical sites to visit volcanoes or adventure tourism. (Dardakeh, 2014, p. 50). Honey (2008) also states that ecotourism "is travel to fragile, pristine, usually protected areas that strive to be low impact. Usually on a small scale. It helps educate the traveler, provide funds to preserve; in direct, and benefits economic development and political empowerment of local communities, care and respect for different cultures and human rights (Chandel, Mishra, 2016, p6).

Also, ecotourism was defined as a small market consisting of cycling and camping enthusiasts. Its importance came from the great interest in the environment worldwide, as it has become one of the fastest growing markets, especially wild areas and watching natural animal colonies (hideouts) and archaeological sites (Alwan, 2023 p10).

All given above, eco-tourism can be defined as:- A form of tourism that uses unique natural, historical, and cultural resources. Through it, many non-consumptive activities are practiced,

which enhance their preservation through proper management, and the purpose of them is to enjoy the picturesque scenery, learn about different cultures, while preserving the environment, education, and providing funds for preservation, economic development, and political empowerment of local communities.

1-2-1 Elements and principles of ecotourism:

The most important elements of ecotourism consisted of the following (Abdel-Jalil, 2014, p. 217):

1- Biological diversity, the purity of the natural environment, and the survival of rare and endangered species: Two main factors in activating ecotourism, which must be considered that the degradation of the environment limits opportunities for tourism development.

2- Achieving a balance between ecotourism and economic and social interests: Balancing between tourism and the environment on the one hand, and economic and social interests, which represent the base.

3- focusing on aesthetic features: - The more the landmarks are clean and healthy, the more tourism will flourish, as it is one of the sources of preserving the environment.

4- protecting the environmental balance resulting from the tourist behavior: Where it is represented in the tourist behavior and the pollution that may occur which related another relationship, between tourism and the environment with the concept of sustainable development, where development is considered one of the means for the advancement of man, But what happened is the exact opposite, as development became one of the means that contributed to the depletion of environmental resources and causing a damage. Many countries in the world have set several principles and standards for ecotourism, including: (Abdel-Jalil, 2014, p. (218-219)):

1- Providing specific entry points: These entrances provide tourists with comprehensive and necessary information about the tourist area and through the local community.

2- Proper management: Proper management of natural resources and biodiversity using methods.

3- Developing sharp laws: - sharp and effective laws are being put in place to accommodate the number of tourists and protect them, as well as protecting environmental sites at the same time.

4- Integrating the local community in the eco-tourism process: Integration of the population, educating them environmentally and touristically, and providing economic projects for income through the development of tourism industries and improving their living conditions.

5- Maximizing the benefits and revenues for the local population: - Where work is done to achieve the appropriate financial returns for the region or the country in which the investment is made in a manner that preserves development and future development

6- Providing accommodation for tourists: - By providing site-sensitive accommodation that does not waste local resources or destroy the environment, which provides ample opportunity for learning about the environment and sensitive exchange with local communities.

1-2-2 Elements of eco-tourism:

The establishment and prosperity of eco-tourism in any tourist destination requires elements capable of fulfilling the aspirations of tourists and feeding their curiosity in obtaining an experience of a unique character.

- 1- Scarcity: The scarce the environmental resources present in the destination, the greater the competitiveness of the environmental tourism product.
- 2- Exclusivity: Where the tourism industry began to witness tourism products (whether environmental or non-environmental) based on imitation and simulation of the original tourist sites.
- 3- The ability to reach the eco-tourism destination: in terms of the availability of appropriate transportation infrastructure, the length of the distance required to be traveled to see these environmental components, and the cost of transportation to it.
- 4- Proximity of the elements of environmental attractions to each other: The proximity of the elements of environmental attractions to other tourist attractions (archaeological, religious, historical, etc.).
- 5- Availability of Infrastructure: Provision of adequate infrastructure to serve eco-tourists without their establishment causing damage to the environmental value of the tourist destination.

1-2-3 Types of eco-tourism:

There are many types of tourism that fall under the classification of ecotourism, which can be exploited and benefited from, and are directly related to the environment, whether they are attached to nature or cultural heritage. The most important of these types are (Ghadban, 2015, p. (71-79)):

- 1- Ecological natural tourism: represented by enjoying the vital elements and systems and those provided by nature.
- 2- Climatic tourism: which means the climatic seasons and the elements, potentials and transformations they offer in summer, winter, spring and autumn.
- 3- Bio-tourism: such as the diverse botanical resources such as flowers, trees, plants, mineral water, animal, and fish resources such as birds, fish, and various marine and terrestrial organisms.
- 4- Bird-watching tourism: Watching resident and passing birds is an important new environmental tourism facility, especially in the Arab region, which is the seat of breeds for many types of birds, and there are many sites for observing the movement of migratory birds along the coast.
- 5- Stargazers tourism: it is far from the major cities and metropolises, where artificial lights can obscure the starlight, and present the skies of the Arabian deserts, especially for the desert, as it is considered a tourist attraction.
- 6- tangible cultural tourism: represented by the historical places and antiquities classified (old, i.e., 1700 years ago) and modern ones, which can be positive factors adjacent to or within the surrounding environment. Palaces or castles are often surrounded by an environment of gardens and water, and sometimes reserves for the development of environmental resources such as plants and birds. It is also possible, within certain limits, to use castles, pictures, monasteries and khans as lodges or guest houses for environmental tourists.
- 7- Intangible cultural tourism: consisted of the history, religions, and data of the local population, the nature of their societies, their living systems, their costumes, their folklore, their dialects, their languages, their rituals, their customs, and other elements that strongly attract tourists today.

8- Sports tourism and environmental or semi-environmental entertainment: including many and varied sports, such as: walking, jogging, light climbing, swimming, walking at night, walking in the snow, skiing, water skiing, kayaking, and other sports that are based on the idea of enjoying nature.

9- Environmentally friendly marine and river tourism: where this tourism is not harmful to the environment, such as swimming, diving, monitoring the marine environment etc.,

10- Camping tourism: having a stay in voluntary isolation and independence for a certain period.

11- Celebrations and events tourism: such as festivals, events, weddings, popular ceremonies, craft and food fairs, arts and so on. Cafes, restaurants, playhouses, etc

12- Tourism of permanent and seasonal museums and art galleries: It offers beautiful cultural and heritage experiences and observations and is not harmful to the environment.

13- Tourism in eco-hotels or specialized environmental or semi-environmental hospitality places: with the aim of enjoying calm and solitude, for the purpose of healing, or for educational and artistic purposes, and the traditional housing style has sometimes been popularized as a tourist attraction.

14- Tourism of environmental scientific activities: It may be permanent or for specific periods, such as acquaintance and live and anthropological participation in laboratories or in the field.

15- Traditional practices-based tourism: they are extinct, or on the way to extinction, material or immaterial.

16- Photography tourism: with its various types and its broadest scope, it has always been nature (Badadow, 2010, p. 143)

17- Agricultural tourism: It is one of the types of tourism that allows the tourist to visit a farm (an existing one) to enjoy several activities related to agricultural activity and rural life (Gharaibeh, 2012, p. 116).

18- Desert tourism: It is a type of (natural) eco-tourism, its scope is the desert, including its natural manifestations, to give a distinctive pattern of the usual lifestyles in cities and rural areas.

19- Medical tourism: Its aim is for the purposes of treatment and visiting natural areas of a therapeutic nature, whether they are sanatoriums in forests and clean air, or their sulfur mineral waters and others are for the purpose of natural treatment (Ezz El-Din, 2015, p. (183-184)).

1-2-4 Ecotourism Rules:

Eco-tourism has several rules, which are (Al-Mashhadani, 2019, p. 8):

1- Reducing the negative effects of tourism on the natural, cultural, and social resources in the tourist areas.

2- Educating tourists about the importance of preserving natural places.

3- Emphasizing the importance of responsible investment and focusing on cooperation with local authorities to meet the needs of the local population and preserve their traditions.

4 - Work to duplicate efforts to achieve material income for the host country through the use of natural local resources and human potential.

5- Relying on infrastructure that is compatible with bad conditions and preserving natural and cultural life.

6- Developing effective laws to protect the tourist and the environment at the same time

1-2-5 Ecotourism organizing criteria:

Practical procedures for organizing ecotourism have several criteria, including (Al-Gharroof, 2012, p. 13):

1. Respect the local, regional, and international laws related to environmental issues and preserving cultural heritage
2. Considering the carrying capacity.
3. Developing environmental awareness of the local population.
4. Apply transportation methods that do not pollute the environment.
5. Encouraging recycling, and organic farming.

6-2-1 Developing eco-tourism:

In order to develop the ecotourism, the following practices shall be emphasized (Al-Gharrouf, 2012, p. 123):

- 1- provide specific entry centers in the tourist sites for the purposes of organization and tourism information.
- 2- service center sufficient information through specialists in tourism guidance.
- 3- The existence of laws and regulations that control the tourism process (beginning, middle, end).
- 4- The presence of proper management to follow up the tourism process in a specialized and accurate manner.
- 5- Emphasizing the importance of environmental awareness and education and the accompanying information panels

1-2-7- Principles of ecotourism development (sustainable)

In order to achieve the goals of sustainable eco-tourism development, several basic principles must be taken into account that represent the basic pillars in planning for the development of eco-tourism. These principles are as follows (Alrawi, Laffta, 2020, p5):

- 1- Preserving Diversity: Preserving and enhancing natural, social, and cultural diversity is critical for sustainable tourism in the long term and creates a resilient base for the industry.
- 2- Supporting local economies: as it supports a wide range of local economic activities that take environmental costs and values into account and protect these economies and avoid environmental damage.
- 3- Marketing and promoting tourism responsibly: Marketing that provides tourists with complete and responsible information increases respect for the natural, social, and cultural environments of target areas and enhances customer satisfaction.
- 4- The sustainable use of resources: The preservation and sustainable use of resources (natural, social, and cultural) is of paramount importance in achieving the sustainability of tourism activity.
- 5- Reducing overconsumption of resources (waste management): this practice contributes to avoiding the long-term damage recovery costs and contributes to the quality of tourism.
- 6- tourism-planning Integration: Tourism development, which is integrated into a national and local strategic planning framework, is based on conducting environmental impact assessments, it

increases tourism's long-term viability. Integrated planning also involves good coordination and communication between the various agencies involved in making decisions affecting the area.

7- Local communities' involvement: The full participation of local communities in the tourism sector improves the quality of the tourism experience.

8- Consultation with stakeholders and the public: Consultation between planners, executives, communities, organizations, and institutions is essential if they are to work together and resolve potential conflicts of interest.

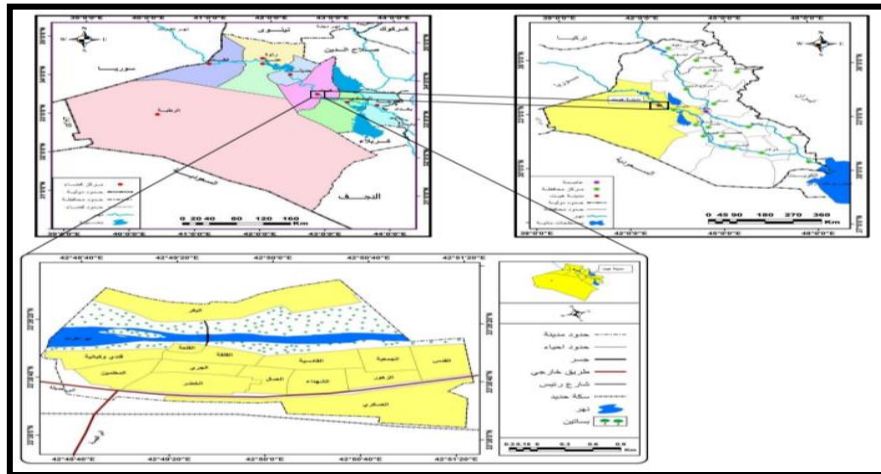
2- Field framework:

The city of Hit is considered as one of the important tourist cities in Iraq, due to its distinguished location on the Euphrates River, in addition to containing many high-temperature water sources or which are called Al-Qairiya Springs. Large numbers of tourists are attracted to it to enjoy its sounds and heat, and history, geology and archaeologists are interested in it. It is also distinguished by the loftiness of its most important symbol, which is the waterwheel, which was in the past a means of watering crops. All this contributed to making Hit an attractive tourist destination for tourists and historical researchers about that great time experienced by Hit, which is considered one of the important cities throughout ancient human history.

2-1 Location: -

The city of Hit is almost in the middle of Anbar Governorate, as it is bordered from the northwest by (Haditha district) and part of (Anah district), from the southeast by the center of the governorate (Ramadi district), and from the northeast by parts of Tharthar depression and Salah al-Din governorate, and from the south side by the district of Rutba and Nakhil (Al-Hiti, 2010, p. 15). The city of Hit is considered one of the cities with a riverine location, as it is based on the two banks of the Euphrates River at the edge of the western plateau and to the northwest of the city of Ramadi, at a latitude (33'38') north with a longitude (42'53') east. It belongs to Anbar Governorate, which is approximately 170 km away from the capital, 25 km away from the Syrian city of Albu Kamal, 60 km away from the city of Ramadi, the center of Anbar Governorate, and 72 km away from the city of Haditha (Al-Mohammadi, 2011, pp. (48-50)). In this location, it combines two different features: the desert environment and the sedimentary plain environment, as well as an urban and rural environment, as the desert ends and the sedimentary plain begins. What the city enjoys most is its direct view of the Euphrates River.

Figure (3) The location of the city of Hit in relation to Anbar Governorate



Ref. General Directorate of Survey.

2-2 The potential of attractive environmental tourism in the city of Hit:

The city of Hit has natural and human resources that can be invested to achieve qualitative places that attract local and foreign tourists, and it will have an effective economic return in the city. These resources are represented in the following:

2-2-1 Natural capabilities:

2-2-1-1 Climate: The climate is considered as one of the natural factors affecting human life, activities, lifestyle, mental capabilities in facing the environmental characteristics, in the adaptation capability. And the most important climatic factors are Temperature and rain (Al-Mohammadi, 2011, p. 11- 12). Temperatures are considered as the most influential climatic elements than the rest, as the city of Hit is characterized by moderate temperatures during the most months of the year, with a higher temperature level during the summer months, starting from the month of March and peaked in August. Which considered as a suitable weather for tourism in most seasons of the year.

Rain: - It is winter rain, and it affects majorly during the heavy raining days, this period may extend from November to March.

2-2-1-2 River islands: River islands are among the most important local natural features that are formed by natural conditions over long periods of time. Al-Hawija Island (local name in the city of Hit) represents one of the most important recreational natural resources (entertainment), which is in the middle of the Euphrates River (Mutiab, 2012, p. 24).

2-2-1-3 bitumen and sulfur springs: The city of Hit has been famous since ancient times (Mesopotamia) as an important source of bitumen, which was used by the ancient Iraqis in many of their purposes. as it has become part of the natural (tourist) potential of the city. Through the presence of cultivated areas surrounding those natural springs, whose waters were used to irrigate the natural plants that provide green lands frequented by visitors to spend beautiful times in the spring (Al-Mohammadi, 2011, p. 15).

2-2-1-4 The Cave (Umm al-Judhu') (Dahira Karst): The cave (Umm al-Judhu' (which is its local name) is located 12 km northeast of the city of Hit, on the left bank of the Euphrates River, about 10 km away from the riverbank. (5, 7 km, and therefore it requires a car to travel about (15 km) (Al-Hiti, 2001, pp. (167-165)).

2-2-1-5 The open desert lands: The desert areas are very wide, occupying almost 80% of the total area, and the rest are floodplain lands surrounding the river along its course. This large area gave the city the potential A natural attraction for tourists (Al-Mohammadi, 2011 (p.20))

2-2-1-6 The banks of the river: The environmental tourism attraction, which is represented in the geographical location of the city and its location on both banks of the Euphrates River, and the appropriate beaches as tourist destinations, is one of the most important factors that helped to invest the river for tourism and entertainment.

The city of Heat enjoys a direct and great view of the Euphrates River, which reflects a picturesque and beautiful image that is reflected in the souls of visitors as a physiological condition, bringing comfort to the soul and enjoying the fresh air, so we find the banks of the river. Like a tourist place (Al-Mohammadi, 2011, p. 26).

2-2-2 human capabilities:

2-2-2-1 The Walled Citadel: The city of Hit (the Citadel), a city that has existed for thousands of years, is one of the oldest cities in the Arab world. Without any change in its local character and splendor which was characterized by it in ancient times, The (castle) is distinguished by its clear height, as it was built on an earthen hill above the surrounding lands. It is one of the archaeological and heritage landmarks in the land of Iraq (Ghadib, 2001, p. 20).

2-2-2-2 Saadi Palace: Saadi Palace is located in the village of Al-Ataat, and there is no known date of its establishment. It is one of the most important archaeological monuments in the city (Al-Hiti, 2021, p. 255).

2-2-2-3 Al-Mamoura Lighthouse: Al-Mamoura Lighthouse is a cultural landmark indicating the antiquity, authenticity, history, and nobility of the city of Hit. The Mamoura Lighthouse, located west of the city of Hit, about 5 km away from it, is one of the important archaeological monuments in the city because of its great history. It began before the days of the Muslim wars, and it is still present today.

2-2-2-4 watermills (Norias):- The inhabitants of the Arab world, especially in Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley, used different methods of irrigation and watering crops by means of raising water, in order to irrigate agricultural lands that are higher than water levels at different levels. The inhabitants of Mesopotamia (naour), Many historical and archaeological books indicated that watermills were found in Hit since the days of the Akkadians, and that the city of Hit is the oldest city found in this region, in which they used watermills to raise water from the Euphrates River to the neighboring plains (Al-Saadi, 2001, pp. (126-128)).

Recently, the watermills were listed to the UNESCO World Heritage List in order to preserve the intangible cultural heritage under the title (the craft of watermills creation) (Al-Mohammadi, 2011, pp. (24-25)).

2-2-2-5 Cafes and restaurants: There are a few cafes and restaurants in the city of Hit, which extend along the water fronts of Euphrates River, especially the right side (Al Jazeera) and spread along the riverbank as it provides fresh air and a picturesque view that is daily visited by hikers (Jaddi, 2018, p. 43).

2-2-2-6 Religious use:

1- Al-Farouq Mosque: One of the most important places in the city of Hit is the Al-Farouq Mosque, which was built during the caliphate of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and the commander Al-Harith bin Zaid Al-Amiri commissioned its construction, and that was in the year 639 AD, and it is considered the first mosque to be built in the city. By the passing time, it was exposed to erosion by climatic changes, which required construction and restoration, once again by specialists. The mosque includes a minaret with a height of 25 meters. This mosque has remained as it is today (Al-Dulaimi, 2019, p. 23).

2- Al-Sit Nafisa Mosque: It is the second oldest mosque in Hit. It was built in at the expense of one of the ladies of Hit. She is called the (Al-Sitt Nafisa) Mosque (Al-Hiti, 2021, p. 224).

2-2-2-7 The Martyr's Museum: The Martyr Ahmed Aftan Heritage Museum is one of the cultural and social landmarks of the city of Hit. This museum is characterized by the fact that everything inside it is from the private holdings of the late "Hamid Al-Hiti", who established the museum to be a civilized face of his city, and to make it an attractive city for visitors (Al-Hiti, 2021, p. 184).

2-3 Types of ecotourism available in the region: There are eight types of environmental tourism, including:

1- Ecological natural tourism: represented by the stunning views of the river islands (Al-Hawija Island), the caves (Umm Al-Juzou' Cave), the banks of the river, the sulfur and sulfur springs, in addition to several farms.

2- Bio-tourism: represented by plant resources, animal resources, sulfuric and bituminous waters.

3- tangible cultural tourism: which is represented by the walled castle, watermills and monasteries located in the region.

4- Intangible cultural tourism: it is represented by the history, religions, and data of the local population and the nature of their societies, lifestyle, costumes, folklore, dialects, languages, and their rituals.

5- Environmentally friendly marine and river tourism: represented by boat trips in the Euphrates River.

6- Tourism of museums and permanent and seasonal art galleries: represented by the Museum of the Martyr Ahmed Aftan.

7 - Tourism of environmental scientific activities: represented by many scientific visits by faculties and researchers.

8- Photography tourism: which is represented by the tourist photographing many of the scenic landscapes available in the region.

As for the types of environmental tourism that can be available in the city of Hit, they include 9 types: (stargazing tourism in the clear sky, environmental or semi-environmental sports

and entertainment tourism, camping tourism, celebrations and events tourism, environmental hotel tourism or environmental hospitality places, specialized environmental activities, revitalization of heritage practices tourism, agricultural tourism, desert tourism and medical tourism) where all the potentials and natural ingredients are available in the city, but they have not been exploited or employed for tourism by officials.

3- Questionnaire results Analysis:

This section is concerned with field data presentation and analysis after. As tourism marketing criteria are diagnosed in the eco-tourism of the city of Hit, and to achieve this, the data was processed using the computer program (SPSS) to calculate frequencies and percentages in order to determine the interrelationship of the dimensions of the search indicators, test the research hypothesis and determine the possibility of accepting or rejecting them:

Table3. the statistical analysis of marketing tourism parameters axis.

No.	Adjusted paragraphs of each parameter	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Percentage
	First: the tourist sites			
1	The city has multiple options to be tourist areas that attract visitors and give the richness of the place through which a continuous experience can be given that depends on each other, giving the city a distinctive identity that distinguishes it from other places.	4.4	0.53	%88
	Second: transportation			
2	accessibility, represented by the direct distance between the destination's attractions and the main access road, as well as the availability of various means of transportation and the quality of roads	3.2	1.53	%64
	Third: accommodation			
3	Accommodation availability for tourists (Sustainable hotels)	2.1	2.82	%42
	Fourth: Support facilities			
4	Services and facilities provided to tourists through the availability of existing facilities and services (guideline, restaurant, bank, etc.)	3.4	1.45	%68
	Fifth: Infrastructure			
5	Providing amenities, safety, and adequate services (water - electricity - sewage networks) to ensure the greatest possible satisfaction of tourists.	3.3	1.17	%66
	Grand Avg.	3.28	1.5	%66

Ref. the researcher.

1- The response towards the tourist sites

Results recorded high responses in this parameter, representing the opinions about the strategic importance of this paragraph, and the extent of its impact on the development of tourism marketing within the city, which is consistent with the ambitious future directions to go towards tourism. Where the opinions of the respondents agreed positively with this parameter, with a general arithmetic mean (4.4), with a standard deviation (0.53), in a percentage of (88%), which reflected a high homogeneity between the respondents and their intellectual orientations regarding this parameter.

2- The response towards the transfer

The arithmetic means of the paragraphs that measure this parameter was (3.2) with a standard deviation of (1.53), in a percentage of (64%). The results revealed the importance of transportation as one of the basic requirements for tourism marketing based on scientific foundations, which enables the development of the tourist destination.

3 The response towards the shelters

The results indicated a large gap in the service provision, as the arithmetic mean was (2.1), with a standard deviation of (2.82), and a percentage of (42%). This indicates a clear shortage of shelters in the city, and the existing deficit must be filled and given priority in investment projects of the city.

4- The response towards the supportive facilities

The arithmetic mean of paragraphs of this parameter was (3.4), with a standard deviation of (1.45), and a percentage of (68%), which indicates the availability of an average percentage of supportive facilities suitable for marketing the tourist destination.

5- The response towards the infrastructure

The results of statistical revealed the agreement of the respondents with a arithmetic mean of (3.3), and a percentage of (66%), supported by a standard deviation of (1.17). This indicates that the percentage of infrastructure services provided by the tourist requires rehabilitation and development to compete the modern tourist destinations.

Therefore, it was noted that tourism in the city of Hit provides 66% of the requirements that must be established for the tourism marketing, as the respondents agreed within the research completely and with satisfactory rates peaked over two-thirds about the paragraphs explaining the requirements, and accordingly the hypothesis of the research has been approved and accepted.

Table (4). Analysis of the tourism destination promotion axis.

No.	Adjusted paragraphs of each parameter	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation	percentage
1	Are travel and tourism companies an effective advertising and propaganda interface that contributes to the dissemination of tourism advertising through the tourism programs offered to their customers?	4.1	1.19	%82
2	Is a good tourism advertisement the one that brings your interest, attention, convinces and satisfies you, and sticks in your memory and makes you think and decide to visit the tourist destination?	4.2	1.12	%84
3	Social media have contributed to tourism promotion in attracting the attention of tourists.	4.5	0.42	%90
4	I am attracted to the photos, videos, and comments posted on social media.	4.2	1.15	%84
5	Social media influencers encourage me to visit the tourist places they visit.	4.3	0.52	%86
6	Storytelling has a great impact on attracting tourists to the tourist destination.	1.6	3.2	%32
Avg.		3.8	1.52	%76

Ref: researcher.

The following results approves the second hypothesis, as the answers came about the promotion of tourist destinations and its role in tourism activity:

It has been noted that the highest role is for Paragraph No. (3) regarding the contribution of social media to the tourism promotion to attract the attention of tourists, as it came with an arithmetic mean of 4.5 and a standard deviation of (0.42), with a percentage of 90%, explaining the most important role the field of tourism promotion, followed by paragraph (5), which relates to the role of social media influencers, and it came with an arithmetic mean (4.3), a standard deviation (0.52), and a percentage of 86%. While the paragraphs (2 and 4) related to the role of good tourism advertising, pictures, videos, and comments placed by the pioneers of communication sites came in third place, with a percentage of (4.2) and a standard deviation of (1.15) with a percentage of 84%, explaining the great role that each of them plays in tourism promotion.

As for the storytelling, it had the least effect on attracting tourists to tourist destinations, as the arithmetic mean of 1.6 and a standard deviation of (3.2), with a percentage of 32%, explaining the very weak effect compared to the above paragraphs in the field of tourism promotion.

Therefore, we note the agreement of the respondents within the research completely and by a very large percentage, exceeding three-quarters of the research sample, that tourism promotion has a role in attracting visitors to eco-tourism in the city of Hit, reached 76%, and this supports the validity of the second hypothesis of the research paper.

4 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4-1 Conclusions

Among the most important results that we reached through our study, both theoretical and practical, are:

- 1- The city of Hit has important eco-tourism potentials to become one of the prominent eco-tourism cities at the local and international levels.
- 2- A clear shortage in tourism investments, whether national or foreign, and their lack of encouragement by the responsible parties.
- 3- The lack of a clear marketing policy for the tourism product, which affects the capability to compete in the international tourism market.
- 4- Lack of tourism services supporting the tourism sector, represented by restaurants, banks and tour guides, as well as the weak infrastructure of the city, which is the base of competitive environmental tourism at the level of countries.
- 5- A large deficit in the housing services to tourists (hotels), which does not allow the tourist to stay in the city for more than one day.

4-2 Recommendations

- 1- Providing methods of Advertising and tourism media, and websites that represent the interface of tourism, that reveals all programs and various information about the elements of tourist attractions available in the city of Hit.
- 2- The tourism sector must be taken care of and given importance no less than other sectors.
- 3- Preparing clear promotional policies, such as tourism plans for to be involved in the future investment plans, which may include radio programs, satellite channels and allow the citizen participation in the tourist promotion, as well as involving experts specialized in the field of tourism marketing.
- 4- allocate material and human resources for the development of the sector and the establishment of a bank specialized in transferring tourist forms, as well as providing amenities and entertainment near tourist attractions, and emphasizing the need for qualified guides for the tourism culture.
- 5- The need to provide accommodation for tourists, whether in hotels or eco-lodges, to ensure the length of the tourist's stay in the city.

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