



Evaluating Marketing Performance of Official Tourism Authorities in Minia

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Minia

Abstract

Minia is one of Northern Upper Egypt Governorates, and it has several natural and archaeological attractions that attract visitors. Despite this, Minia has not received its sufficient share of tourist movement that suits its capabilities. The current study tries to investigate the different marketing efforts of official tourism authorities directed to promote Minia attractions as well as discover the challenges that facing marketing the governorate for finding out the way to overcome them. To achieve the aims of the study a qualitative method was used. An interview was developed and directed to a sample of tourist officials in tourism authorities in Minia. The interview form was created to evaluate their marketing efforts and the challenges face their marketing performance. The main results of the study showed that there are considerable defects mainly related to official tourism authorities role. These shortages obstructed the success of tourism movement to Minia. Finally, the study presented some suggestions to develop the marketing performance of Minia official tourism authorities.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the world's largest industries which contributes gross domestic product as well as it contributes employs a large number of people around the world (Basera & Nyahunzwi, 2019). Applying marketing tools effectively is one of the main factors which can improve and influence the development of the tourism industry (Cheraghalizadeh, 2014). Tourism Marketing is a systemic adjustment of tourism firm policy at all levels; international, national, regional and local levels to meet the needs of visitors/tourists and make a profit for firms (Hujic & Salihic, 2020). Tourism marketing is used to introduce the tourist destination by carrying out various activities for putting the destination positively through promoting the tourist products in the destination to attract customers, which is known as destination marketing (Matiza & Slabbert, 2022). The official tourism authorities played a vital role in supporting tourism development of tourist areas. This includes the provision of infrastructure, developing of tourist attractions, holding events/festivals and marketing destinations. Minia Governorate is one of an important tourist destinations which has a unique archeological characteristics and several famous tourist sites. These archaeological sites combine five historical eras, and the most important of these are Malawi Museum Akhenaten Museum, Tuna Al-Jabal, Bani Hassan, Al-Ashmonin and Tell Al-Amara (General Organization for Physical Planning, 2017). The current study aims to 1) Assess the tourism marketing efforts of official tourism authorities. 2) Discover the challenges which face tourism marketing in Minia from officials point of view. 3) Propose suggestions to overcome the obstacles which face the marketing performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Tourism Marketing

The concept of tourism marketing involves two terms: marketing in general and marketing in tourism sector. Marketing can be described as an administrative process aimed at identifying, anticipating, satisfying customers' requirements and profitably. tourism marketing is used to promote tourist products. (Mwinuka, 2017).

Kazoba et al. (2016, p. 24) stated that tourism marketing can be described as "a societal and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products and services of value freely with others". Marketing involves a set of tactical tools which companies use to achieve customer desires in the targeted markets are known as the marketing mix which is "the tactical marketing tools that can controlled and combined by the company to produce the desired response in the target markets" (Azhar et al., 2019).

Tourism Marketing has several elements called the marketing mix it is essential to encourage the performance of the required behavior and help in achieving the desired marketing goals in to the target market(Reihani & Khatibzadeh, 2021). Several studies mentioned that elements of the marketing mix includes; product, price, distribution, personnel, process, physical evidence and promotion (Al-Azzam, 2016 ; Paniand et al., 2018 & Pomerling, 2017).

2.2 Tourism Marketing Efforts

Marketing efforts are concerned with the important role of marketing between producers and consumers within society, including political, economic, social and environmental systems..... etc. Marketing efforts play a dual role, not only facilitating the flow of services from producers to consumers but expanding to become two-way.

The first is about recognizing the needs and desires of consumers and providing producers with this information to develop productive plans in line with the needs of consumers, as well as identifying products from goods and services provided by producers and providing consumers with sufficient information about them to wish to buy and use them (Abd Elsamia, 2006).

For marketing effort's success it needs to identify and understand the global challenges of business, fast respond to competitors' actions and provide better consumer value. Marketing efforts should make the most of travel agency's capabilities and the marketing strategy and matches them to the requirements of tourist. Furthermore, it ought to be flexible to adapt changes of consumers' interests, desires, and choices and can identify and target new segments effectively (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). According to Manhas et al. (2016) tourism marketing efforts means "a continual process of identifying the requirements of tourists and establishing a marketing strategy to meet those requirements".

2.3 Marketing Efforts of Official Tourism Authorities

Official tourism authorities play an important role in marketing tourist destination internally and externally, Minia has two kinds of responsible official tourism bodies which are:-

- Egyptian Tourism Authority

Egyptian Tourist Authority reports to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the authority plays a major role in tourism marketing for Egyptian governorates internally and externally. And it has an important role which can be summarized in the following (Hamed, 2011):-

- Setting plans and programs specialized in promoting tourism in Egypt through the use of various attractions.
- Providing technical and marketing assistance, cooperation and contribution with tourist companies.
- Representing Egypt abroad through the authority's offices in tourist markets abroad.
- Preparing brochures, publications, and all means of advertising and tourist advertising and participating in various tourist forums (exhibitions - conferences - festivals ... etc).

Egyptian Tourism Authority Minia office implements the policy of the authority head office to stimulate tourism demand in the governorate through several tools such as publications, holding seminars, exhibitions and organizing Fame trips.

- The General Department of Tourism in Minia

The Department is under the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform. Its role is to participate in the following (Minia Governorate, 2019):-

- Preparation of tourist brochures in Arabic and English.
- Supervising tourist exhibitions held in the governorate.
- Producing publications of tourist attractions in the governorate.
- Participation in festivals and some tourism events in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.
- Holding seminars on the importance of tourism to raise tourism awareness.

- Operating trips to other governorates to stimulate domestic tourism between governorates.
- Participation in the offering of some tourist attractions in the governorate for tourism investment.
- Participation in issuing permits to establish tourist hotels in the Governorate.

The General Department of Tourism carries out several tasks specific to the tourism sector in the governorate; issuing licenses for tourism establishments, carries out the task of tourism marketing the governorate in cooperation with other tourism authorities for producing publications in multiple languages, holding of important tourism events, presenting tourist attractions of the governorate through the official page of each governorate and preparing tourism statistics of governorate.

2.4 Tourism in Minia

Minia Governorate is one of the important governorates of Northern Upper Egypt Region due to its location and mediation between the governorates. It has several unique archaeological sites. It extends 135 km along the Nile and has an area of 32,279 square kilometers and includes nine districts ie., El Adwaa, Maghagha, Beni Mazar, Matai, Samalout, Minia, Abu Korkas, Malawy and Der Mawas (Minia Governorate, 2018). Minia has a several unique archaeological sites from the time of the Pharaohs, Romans, Coptic and Islamic monuments era, it also has many natural attractions and amenities as follow:

Natural Attractions: Minia is characterized by its natural features where there are numerous rural villages and the Nile korniche, which is an important attraction for visitors and the Nile River with a length of 4,132 miles meters.

Man-Made Attractions: Minia is known as a several archaeological areas belonging to different eras the most important of these are:

1) Al-Bahnasa: It's considered one of the most important Islamic historical areas, which includes a large number of tombs and shrines of the Companions and is called Al-Baqi II, it is located about 200 km south of Cairo (El Gendi, 2015).

2) Tuna El-Gabel: It's contains Greco-Roman tombs And it has the biggest cemeteries for animals and tomb of Hermopolis, (Fassbinder et al., 2015).

3) El Ashmonein: It's located in Mallway, about 246 km from Cairo, it's contains a large number of ancient Egyptian temples such as the Temple of Thoth, Roman temples and the Basilica Church (Hemeda et al., 2019).

4) Museums: Minia has two museums the Akhnaton Museum and Melwa Museum (Minia Governorate, 2018).

5) Mosques and Churches: Minia has a several Islamic mosques; Lammatt Mosque, Al-Fawli Mosque, Al-Umrawi Mosque. It also has a number of famous monasteries; Virgin Monastery, Barsha Monastery as well as the Holy Family route to which attract many visitors (The General Department of Tourism in Minia Governorate, 2019).

Other Amenities: Minia has about 40 travel agencies and 16 hotels, there are 5, 4 and 3 stars and fixed hotels. (The General Department of Tourism in Minia Governorate, 2022).

Tourists to Minia

Despite these capabilities, the number of visitors to Minia represents a few percentages compared with the number of visitors to Egypt as shown in the following tables (Table 1&2). Additionally it is observed from the table that Minia market share is decreasing as a general. This is a considerable and vital problem which need to be analyzed and solved.

Table 1 Number of international visitors to Minia & to Egypt 2018-2022

Year	Minia	Egypt Total in millions	%
2018	3229	11.3	0.03
2019	31079	13.1	0.23
2020	3654	3.5	0.12
2021	4922	8.0	0.06
2022	15421	7.9	0.19

Source: The General Department of Tourism Minia Governorate (2023) & Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (2023).

Note from the previous table that the total percentage of visitors in previous five years a few international visitors are interested in visiting Minia. The total percentage has not exceeded approximately 0.2% from 2018 to 2022.

Following table (Table 2) who the number of Egyptian visitors who visit Minia from 2018 to 2022. The table shows a few number of domestic visitors compared with other governorates such as Luxor and Aswan despite Minia has various archaeological attractions.

Table 2 Number of domestic visitors to Minia 2018-2022

Year	Egyptians visitors to Minia
2018	83703
2019	69106
2020	180772
2021	363288
2022	359593

Source: The General Department of Tourism Minia Governorate (2023).

3. Research Methodology

The main objective of this study is evaluating the marketing efforts of official tourism authorities in Minia. Moreover, the study tries to discover the challenges facing marketing Minia and find out ways to overcome them. For fulfilling the objectives of the study a qualitative methodology was used by applying a semi-structured interview form. Face-to-face interviews were used as a communication tool to approach the respondents. The interview is means “a conversation whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee” (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 40). The semi-structured interviews were targeted a convenience sample. The sample is consisted of two persons (these two individuals are solely responsible for all marketing activities in the governorate) which are the directors of Egyptian Tourism Authority (Minia Office) and directors/tourist researchers in The General Department of Tourism in Minia.

It was presented to a group of judges ie experts and professors in tourism marketing to ensure their suitability to the objectives and questions of the study and the judges indicated their validity without making substantial amendments.

The form includes nine questions, The first question aimed to identify the extent of the interest of tour operators to organize tourist trips to the Governorate, the second and third question aimed to know the role of the Authority to encourage tourist trips to the governorate and the most used important promotional tools, while the fourth question asked about the cooperation between the authority and travel agencies or any other authorities or not and how this cooperation is if it exists. Additionally, question 5 asked about tourism demand on the governorate. Moreover, question 6 dealt with financial resources for marketing Minia and questions 7 revolves around target market segments. Finally, questions 8 and 9 asked about the challenges facing marketing to the governorate and the suggestions that contribute to overcome them.

Interviews were conducted during July 2022. The answers were analyzed qualitatively by recording the answers of each meeting and then written manually sequentially. Additionally, gathering similar comments and answers in one comment and then analysis and put a general comment and interpretation.

4. Results and Discussion

The interview includes 9 questions and the following is the analysis and discussion of these questions. This interviewees are coded as following:

I1: Director of the Egyptian Tourist Authority Minia Office.

I2: Director of the General Department of Tourism.

1. To what extent tour operators organize and promote holidays trips around Minia?

I1 & I2: *"Tour Operators do not play a vital role in marketing the governorate whether at the local or international level and there is no real concerns with promotion. Their role is limited to organize Pilgrimage & Umrah trip "*.

It is observed from the answers that tour operators do not play an obvious role in organizing or promoting trips to Minia.

2. How can you evaluate the tourist officials role to encourage domestic and international tourist visits around Minia?

I1: *" The authority trying to encourage domestic and international tourist visits to the Governorate through:*

- *Launching a promoting campaign "Know Your Country" since 2020 to stimulate tourist demand for tourist attractions in Egypt, which were free trips for school and university students, orphans, doctors and disabled.*
- *Receiving several groups of tourist from other governorates.*
- *Organizing seminars about the importance of tourist for schools and universities students to raise their awareness of tourism attractions in Egypt.*

- *Designing publicity films about tourist attractions in the region and displaying them on the official page of the Ministry on the National Day for each governorate.*
- *Cooperating with the State Ministry of Information and presenting some documentary films about Governorate in TV channels".*
- *Inviting a groups of the most famous tourist Bloggers to promote tourism types such as rural tourism and food tourism and attract their fans to visit it".*

I2: *"The Department is anxious to stimulate the tourist demand for Minia attractions and this involves:*

- *presenting the tourist attractions of the governorate on two official pages in social networking sites, one of them in Arabic and the other is in English language.*
- *Publishing brochures in Arabic, English, German and French languages.*
- *Providing tourist areas with the important services, facilities and amenities.*
- *Paving roads to tourist attractions and providing them with guided paintings".*

It is evident from the respondents answers that the organizations making some efforts to stimulate the demand for the governorate by:

organizing promotional campaigns, organizing seminars, planning tourist trips and Inviting a groups of the most famous tourist Bloggers, design documentary films, displaying attractions on its official web pages and issuing brochures in many languages such as Arabic, English, German and French and providing tourist areas with services, amenities, breaks, paving roads and establishing guides.

3. What are the most common promotional tools that used to stimulate demand for Minia?

I1& I2: *" The authorities depend on various of promotional tools such as: Traditional tools ie brochures-seminars- propaganda films- exhibitions and tourist exchanges such as the Berlin Stock Exchange..*

Smart marketing tools ie the official page of the Ministry on Face Book, The official website of Egyptian Tourist Authority (Egypt travel),The official website of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Official pages of some tourist bloggers".

The interviewees mentioned that there are several applied traditional and digital promotional tools.

4. Does the Authority cooperate with tour operators and any other partners to encourage tourism to Minia? And how?

I1: *"Yes, there is cooperation with other tourism departments, some tourism authorities in other governorate and ministries such as universities and schools, tourism authority in other governorates.*

I2: *Added The Ministry of Youth and Sports, libraries, churches, and some associations such as the Muslim Youth Association and organized trips to visit tourist attractions".*

The answers shows that the two authorities cooperating with some other authorities and ministries for organizing trips to Minia.

5. How do you assess the volume of tourist demand for Minia?

I1&I2: *Tourist demand for Minia in general is not high. However, the Holy Family and Christian Hajj trips have increased demand for visiting Minia and revived religious tourism. We noted that international demand for archaeological monuments is higher than domestic demand".*

Tourist demand is not match with attractions and capabilities of the governorate.

6. To what extent the financial support of marketing plans is sufficient?

I1: *The Department of Marketing and Promotion in the Authority. This Department is responsible for promoting governorates in cooperation with the offices of the Authority in the governorates. The budget for each governorate is allocated in coordination with this department by setting the necessary budget for each governorate and appropriate to its capabilities.*

I2: *The Department receives financial support from the administration of Governorate. Sometimes we have financial support from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities when printing publications or organizing an important event. But we need more financial sources to enhance marketing efforts and promote the tourism sector in the governorate.*

It can be said that the financial sources are insufficient to prepare the necessary marketing plans for promoting of Minia as a global famous destination.

7. What segments of visitors are targeted to visit Minia?

I1& I2:*The most targeted visitors are cultural and religious tourism pioneers especially Christians where come to Pilgrimage and visit monasteries especially Ethiopians. Additionally, we targeted German, English, Spanish, American and Australian tourists.,*

Segments of the market are divided on the basis of nationalities and tourism types only.

8. Please, identify the challenges facing tourism marketing Minia.

I1&I2: *"...In fact, there are many reasons as:*

- *Weak infrastructure of the governorates, especially roads.*
- *Limited hotel capacity*
- *low quality of services.*
- *Lack of interest of tour operators in marketing tourist attractions in the Governorate and marketing known attractions only.*
- *Discouraging tourism investments.*
- *Poor condition of tourist anchors despite their importance to Nile cruises*

- *Lack of attention of the official tourism authorities to put the Governorate in tourist map.*
- *Weakness of marketing and promotional efforts of travel agencies".*
The respondents mentioned some challenges that can be summarized in weakness of services, infrastructure and tourist facilities, as well as not putting the governorate in on the tourist map.

9. Please, would you give any suggestions and comments that could improve the marketing efforts directed to governorate?

I1: *"...there are some proposals that can promote the tourist demand in Minia such as:*

- *Increasing hotel capacity in addition to raising its efficiency.*
- *Refining tourist marinas to facilitate and increase Nile Cruises trips.*
- *Improving the infrastructure of tourist sites.*
- *Raising the efficiency of roads by paving them and providing them with guidance boards and lighting.*
- *Encouraging tourism investment to attract investors to establish tourism projects.*
- *Focusing on the human element eligible to work in the tourism sector in Minia"*

I2: *"...I propose that:*

- *The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities should putting the Governorate on the tourist map .*
- *Tour operators have to present Minia attractions to customers and motivate them for visiting.*
- *Exploiting the diversity of the tourism product in the Governorate to attract visitors, especially frequent visitors to Egypt.*
- *Encouraging tourism investment in the Governorate through the provision of all facilities and services.*
- *Improving the infrastructure of the Governorate".*

From the previous analysis of the questions addressed to the interviewees, the following is extracted:

1. Weakness of displaying Minia attractions in travel agencies' programs.
2. Lack of tourism demand for the governorates.
3. Weakness of financial resources for marketing.
4. Lack of studying the target market to attract a new segments of visitors such as pioneers of rural or safaris tourism.
5. Marketing efforts of official tourism in Minia insufficient also do not match with its capabilities.

These results achieve the three objectives of the study. The first objective: Assess the tourism marketing efforts of official tourism authorities; the second objective: Discover the challenges which face tourism marketing in Minia from officials point of view and the third objective: Propose suggestions to overcome the obstacles which face the marketing performance.

5. Conclusion

Minia has several natural and archaeological famous tourist attractions. It has archaeological monuments of various Pharaonic, Greek, Roman and Islamic eras as well as several villages and natural areas with a lot of desert areas as it extends on the Nile River. All these attractions qualify Minia to become an important tourist destination that attracts several visitors. However, Minia has not received its suitable share of tourism movement, this may be due to a number of reasons, the most important of which are marketing reasons. Therefore, This study discuss the marketing efforts of official tourism authorities in Minia.

The qualitative approach has been used by conducting interviews with tourist officials in Egyptian Tourism Authority "Minia office" and The General Department of Tourism in Minia. Through findings, the directors of the official tourism bodies point to the tourism marketing efforts are insufficient. Additionally, lack of studying and segmenting of the market based on age, gender and educational and social level, weakness of financial resources that necessary for marketing. As well as weakness of international and domestic tourist demand. Moreover, the governorate suffered from the weakness of infrastructure and some amenities, lack of tourism investment, weakness of hotels and low level of services. Thus, all these factors have significantly influenced the tourism marketing Minia.

Therefore, The study concluded pointed to some important recommendations that can increase of tourism movement to Minia and developing marketing efforts of official tourism authorities, studying the markets segments to know their needs and attract a new segments, increasing financial resources. Moreover, improving services and infrastructure, encouraging tourism investment, increasing resorts and hotels and putting Minia on tourist map as well as displaying attractions in international tourism exhibitions.

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تقييم الأداء التسويقي للهيئات السياحية الرسمية في المنيا

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المستخلص

محافظه المنيا احدى محافظات اقليم شمال الصعيد تمتلك المحافظه العديد من المعالم الاثرية لشهيرة التي ترجع الى العصور المختلفة اضافة الى المعالم الطبيعية. يهدف البحث الى تقييم الجهود التسويقية للهيئات السياحية الرسمية لمحافظه المنيا ولتحقيق ذلك تم اعداد استمارة مقابلة وتوجيهها الى المسؤولين السياحيين بالهيئات السياحية الرسمية بمحافظة المنيا (الهيئة المصرية العامة لتنشيط السياحي مكتب المنيا و الادارة العامة للسياحة بديوان عام محافظة المنيا). ولتحليل الاستمارة اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهجية الكيفية حيث تم تحليل جميع اسئلة الاستمارة بالمنهج الكيفي. توصل البحث الى عدة نتائج اهمها عدم كفاية الجهود التسويقية لمحافظه المنيا من جانب الهيئات السياحية الرسمية بالمحافظة وايضاً عدم تقسيم شرائح السوق على اساس السن او نوع او المستوى التعليمي والاجتماعي بالإضافة الى عدم كفاية المصادر المالية المخصصة للتسويق. كما تبين ايضاً عدم تركيز وزارة السياحة والآثار بوضع المعالم السياحية بمحافظة المنيا على خريطة السياحة العالمية والمعارض الدولية، ضعف البنية التحتية والطاقة الفندقية بالمحافظة. لذلك يجب على المسؤولين بقطاع السياحة التغلب على هذه المعوقات من خلال بذل مزيد من الجهود التسويقية و دراسة وتقسيم السوق الى شرائح لجذب المزيد من الزائرين وتلبية احتياجاتهم وتخصيص المزيد من الموارد المالية لازمة للتسويق للنهوض بالقطاع السياحي في المحافظة بالإضافة الى تحسين البنية التحتية وزيادة اعداد الفنادق والمنتجعات ووضع المنتجات السياحية بمحافظة المنيا على خريطة السياحة العالمية وتقديم كافة التسهيلات لجذب الاستثمار السياحي.

الكلمات الدالة

التسويق السياحي
المزيج التسويقي
الهيئات السياحية الرسمية
المنيا