

# The Impact of Internal Marketing on the Mental Image of the Tourism Program

Salem Ahmad AL-Rhaimi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Administrative and Financial Sciences, Irbid National University, Jordan

Correspondence: Salem Ahmad AL-Rhaimi, College of Administrative and Financial Sciences, Irbid National University, Jordan. E-mail: salemalrahimy@gmail.com

Received: April 12, 2015      Accepted: May 3, 2015      Online Published: May 31, 2015

doi:10.5539/ijms.v7n3p76      URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijms.v7n3p76>

## Abstract

This study aimed to identify the effect of internal marketing applications on the mental image of tourism programs in Jordan from a standpoint of directors of the travel and tourism offices. The study adopted the survey method by questionnaire to collect the data. A total of 126 respondents were analyzed using SPSS. The study showed that the tourist offices and travel use all internal marketing applications, namely: workers considered internal customers; quality of services; training and development; and the adoption of the rewards system to motivate employees. The study showed a positive impact of internal marketing to form a positive image for tourism programs offered by the travel and tourism offices. The study recommended that attention to form a good mental image and activation programs and applications of internal marketing to upgrade office performance.

**Keywords:** internal marketing, image, travel and tourism offices, Jordan

## 1. Introduction

As a result of the changes that have occurred in the markets, especially tourism, the tourist offices and travel began searching for new methods of marketing to meet the challenges resulting from these changes, and raise the marketing performance level based on internal marketing-oriented applications to the employees and not the omission of external marketing activities, customer-oriented. The internal marketing practices are important to the success of organizations as a result of its focus on the sustainable development of human resources; create good relations between all parties and actors; and encouraging them to reach a high level of performance.

The image one of important concepts that affect marketing performance, in addition to its ability to create the desires of workers and their ability to get to the outstanding performance; it reflects the mental picture carried by the individuals in their mind about the product or marketing theme, which is formed as a result of perceptions of the masses have and for companies that produce them or deal with, so the travel and tourism offices demanding the need to form a positive image of tourist programs in the minds of customers and tourists, and direct their behavior towards her.

Hence, this study was to clarify the effect of the dimensions of internal marketing on the mental image of tourism programs from the perspective of the managers of travel and tourism offices as a result of considerable importance of the tourism industry in the development of the Jordanian economy and the lives of the citizen applications.

### 1.1 Study Problem

As a result of the developments that took place in the business environment and the resulting in initiation a new marketing practices as internal marketing activities, which focuses on workers within the organization and their ability to understand and analyze the purchasing behavior of customers in the tourist markets with diversified and rapidly growing, so the problem of the study is limited in the lack of knowledge of the level of application of the internal marketing dimensions in the tourism and travel offices in Jordan, and lack of knowledge of the impact of these applications on a mental image of the Jordanian tourism product and market.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

- Understand the concept of internal marketing and its various dimensions.
- Understand the mental image dimensions of tourism programs in Jordan.
- To identify the extent of the application of internal marketing in the Jordanian tourism market.

- Knowledge of the effect of exercise of internal marketing applications on mental picture of tourism programs.

### *1.3 Study Determinants*

- The low level of some of response of the managers of tourism and travel offices to study tool.
- Use the convenience sample may sometimes limit the dissemination of the results of the study.
- This study is limited to the travel and tourism offices only despite the need to be applied in other sectors of tourism, such as hotels, restaurants and complementary sectors such as transport, security and cultural dimension which have influential impact in building the mental image of tourism programs.

### *1.4 Importance of Study*

Emanate importance of the study of the importance of the tourism sector in Jordan and its role in supplying the Jordanian economy through its contribution to the gross national product, amounting to 13%, and the force of labor, where he works in the tourism sector 48 351 employees 82.4% Jordanians (the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism 0.2014), in addition to creating a lot benefits and job opportunities for other sectors. The importance of this study, through its focus on internal marketing as one of modern applications in the field of marketing practices for upgrading the performance of the travel and tourism and staff offices, and the importance of forming a good mental picture of tourism programs in order to achieve the desired tourist demand, and help the tourism and travel offices in the adoption of internal marketing applications.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### *2.1 Internal Marketing*

Philosophy of internal marketing set out from the importance of marketing relationships those organizations seeking to establish with customers through its employees as part of the products and special services (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2010). Internal marketing based on the positive and interactive dealing with employees as is the case with external clients and consider them as internal customer receiving services from each other. Thus, the workers, especially those who deal with customers directly are the main source in the building marketing relationships through which the formation of positive mental image of the organization and its products. The concept of internal marketing appear in the early fifties of the last century by the Japanese quality managers who considered the activities of workers internal products to satisfy the needs of customers and achieve satisfaction (Shaaban, 2003), the crystallization of this concept in the marketing literature at the end of the seventies of the same century when (Perry, 1984) focus on the need to consider employees as internal customers and must satisfy their needs to ensure the achievement of the organization's goals, the concept appeared in the field of service marketing at the beginning of the eighties (Frederick & Mukesh, 2001), so the internal marketing represents the interactive relationship between the organization and its employees (Rahimi & Abu Dalbough, 2013), and is based on the base "the satisfied employee equal to the satisfied customer" (Dunmore, 2002), the satisfaction of the employees based on internal marketing activities of attracting qualified workers and the creation of suitable jobs that satisfy their needs and work to develop, motivate and keep them (Perry & Parasurman, 2000).

These activities will meet with Human Resources, which stresses the importance of attention to workers and the need for treatment in order to achieve their job satisfaction (Ballantyne, 2000), thus internal marketing activities meet with the philosophy of human resource management as a result of employees and customers interact and create consensus and harmony among them (Lings & Greenly, 2008) to ensure the quality of service production (Minar et al., 2008) and developed its performance (Yafang, 2014), reduce the unit organizational conflicts and facilitate the operations of the implementation strategies (Abdel Azim, 2008), the creation of career commitment (Farzad et al., 2008), enhance the efficiency of workers (Yang, 2015) and increase their loyalty and belonging to organizations (Bowen & Schneider, 2014), leading to the achievement of customer satisfaction (Payne, 2005).

Thus, all business organizations specially, in tourism service sectors seek to develop internal marketing strategies (AL-Ayman, 2013), depending on the achievement o employees satisfaction, which reflected positively on their dealings with customers and create positive impressions and towards the achievement of marketing objectives. The concept of internal marketing has gone through three stages: satisfaction of the employees and motivate them, and consumer-oriented, change management and implementation of strategies (Ahmad & Rafiq, 2002).

### *2.2 Mental Image*

As a result of increased competition between business organizations and the speed of access to markets has emerged the need to focus on building a positive image and instilled in the minds of stakeholders as it has a vital role in the success of the work of these organizations, and the impact on customers and staff behavior and improve their competitiveness in the market, as increases the importance of the mental image of organizations that provide

services (Smith, 2001) by creating loyal customers for these services (Plewa et al., 2015). Image is a strategic asset that will ensure survival and continuity of business organizations (Smaizien & Orzekauskas, 2006) through their ability to influence the prevailing public opinion about the various relevant aspects of the organization and factors related to its composition. When providing a positive mental picture for the organization through various media should be created a real compatibility with the actual reality of current status through its commitment to the principles of moral and social responsibility towards others (al-Jubouri, 2010). Positive image is described as treasure it difficult to obtain but easy loss (Boyle, 2002).

Mental picture reflect perceptions held by individuals from the surrounding environment with all its components, these perceptions reflected in their knowledge and experience of direct and indirect interactions of the environment which help them to live and adapt with it. It is defined as individuals impressions and perceptions that composing and holding for something (Khatib, 2011). It extends in the field of marketing to represent the mental, emotional and organic dimensions instilled in the minds of customers about the organization and its products and marketing activities in order to ensure the desired marketing behavior. A mental picture formed of three components (Ajwa, 2005):

1. Cognitive component: The information and knowledge acquired by an individual on a topic from the surrounding environment.
2. Affective component: The attitudes, feelings and emotions about a particular topic according to the joy, sadness and anger.
3. Behavioral component: The dispositions that reflect the individual trends in the various affairs of his life to satisfy his needs and desires.

Mental image includes three main types (Alsakarneh, 2012):

1. Self image: a sense of self-organization and appreciation for itself through its employees and their dealings with each other and with external publics.
2. Desired image: what the organization want to appear itself in the other view point.
3. Perceived image: the perceptions of individuals and their impressions about the organization and its products that reflect their behavior and decisions. Thus the actions are a result of perceptions that may not be true sometimes (Synder, 2000).

It is worth noting that there is an interactive relationship between the types of mental image and components and intertwines these relations to form a good picture about the organization and its products. Image is one of the most important elements which create the public's acceptance and preference for competitors and attract them to deal with it through a sense of ethical, emotional and social responsibility. Image also, capture the attention to organization products; create the right dealing with environment; and improve working conditions; clarity of vision and create a successful leadership (Cassidy, 1999). As a result of the link mental image quality perceived (Chin & Chin, 2014) and its impact on the behavior of stakeholders and their actions, the business organizations are working hard to develop the image to stimulate sales. Consolidation of goodwill may creates the identity of the workers, and strengthen ties with the community and government stakeholders and opinion leaders to ensure improved competitive advantage.

### **3. The Study Hypotheses**

There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the mental image of the tourism program. The following sub-hypotheses are provided:

1. There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the cognitive dimension of the tourism program.
2. There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the emotional dimension of the tourism program.
3. There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the behavioral dimension of the tourism program.

### **4. The Methodology of Study**

#### *4.1 Population and Sample*

The study population comprised all the managers of tourism and travel offices (679) in Jordan in 2014 (Jordanian Association of tourism and travel agents, 2015). The sample was 150 office managers who selected in a convenience sample due to lack some of the managers in response to a tool of the study, of whom 131 responded

and rejected 4 responses, thus the number of 126 questionnaires that were analyzed by 84% from the distributor. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Sample properties

Variable	categories	frequency	Ratio
<b>Gender</b>	Male	102	81%
	Female	24	19%
	Total	126	100%
<b>Age</b>	Less than 30	19	15%
	30 - 40	27	21%
	41 - 50	41	33%
	Greater than 50	39	31%
	Total	126	100%
<b>Education</b>	Secondary and less	35	28%
	Diploma	37	29%
	Bachelor	48	38%
	Graduate	6	5%
	Total	126	100%
<b>Experience (year)</b>	Less than 5	20	16%
	5 -10	32	25%
	11 - 15	34	27%
	More than 15	40	32%
	Total	126	100%

## 4.2 Sources of Data

### 4.2.1 Primary Source

Primary source structured questionnaire which included three main parts: the first attached sample characteristics, and the second attached to the elements of internal marketing (independent variable), and third dimensions attached to mental image (dependent variable). The validity of tool has been confirmed through a set of arbitrators specialists in marketing and tourism areas, and the reliability was also measured by using alpha Cronbach's coefficient, which was worth 0.831 for all items, while the value of the items of internal marketing 0.812, and items image of 0.801. These values are a good indication of the adoption of the study tool (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013)

### 4.2.2 Secondary sources

Books, periodicals and studies related to the topic.

## 4.3 Statistical Analysis Methods

The study based on descriptive and analytical approach adopted by SPSS software applications, where the use of descriptive statistics methods as frequencies and ratios to clarify the characteristics of the sample, and the means and standard deviations for the extent of concentration answers sample relating to the dimensions of internal marketing and image, as was the use of analytical statistical methods such as the analysis of simple and multiple regression for hypotheses testing, in addition to using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test the reliability of study tool.

## 5. Practical Side

### 5.1 Analysis of the Study Variables

#### 5.1.1 Internal Marketing Applications

Internal marketing applications have been relying on means and standard deviations for the extent of the application of internal marketing elements (Vrontis & Pappasolomou, 2006), which came as shown in Table 2, where the interest in ensuring that the quality of tourism programs was the first rank, and staff training and development second place, then the incentives and rewards systems, and finally dealing with employees as internal customers. All of these elements were means calculation is greater than the standard mean (3), as well as the overall average (3.797); and so it is clear that the travel and tourism offices in Jordan apply internal marketing elements.

Table 2. Internal marketing applications

Ranking	Internal Marketing	Mean	Standard deviation
4	Employee as internal customer	3.397	1.002
1	Quality assurance	4.278	0.701
2	Training and development	4.031	0.798
3	Reward system	3.482	0.985
Average		3.797	

### 5.1.2 Mental Image

Mental image has been relying on means and standard deviations to determine the mental image perceived of the tourism program, which came as shown in Table 3, which explained that the behavioral dimension is more influential in the formation of the mental image of tourism programs offered by the travel and tourism offices, followed by emotional and then cognitive dimension. The table shows that the mental image of tourism programs was perceived by office managers, where the arithmetic average for all components of the mental image and each of them is greater than the standard mean.

Table 3. Mental image dimensions of the tourism program

Ranking	Mental image dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation
3	cognitive	3.984	0.912
2	affective	4.176	0.891
1	behavioral	4.259	0.828
Average		4.14	

## 5.2 Test Hypotheses

### 5.2.1 General Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the mental image of the tourism program. The results of the simple regression analysis show the impact of the components of internal marketing combined on the mental image as in the Table 4, the presence of sympathetic relationship through the value of  $R^2$ , amounting to 0.426, which means that internal marketing, explains amounted to 0.426 of the variation in the mental image perceived for tourism programs. The value of B, which amounted to 0.492 means, the change in any one element of internal marketing will lead to a change in the mental image by 0.492. Also, the calculated value of F which equal 32.521 is more than tabulated value, as the value of the moral significance (sig) is zero. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and acceptance of the alternative that confirm the existence of a statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the mental image of the tourism program.

Table 4. Results of simple regression analysis

$R^2$	$\beta$	B	F	Sig
0.426	0.627	0.492	32.521	0.000*

\* Statistically significant at the level of  $P \leq 0.05$ .

### 5.2.2 Sub Assumptions

First: There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the cognitive component of the mental image. Multiple regression results showed, as in the Table 5 the existence of sympathetic relationship for all internal marketing factors on the cognitive component of the image, through the value of the significance (sig) for all the factors that were all less than 0.05, as were the calculated values of (t) is more than the tabulated. Thus the hypothesis is rejected and accepts the alternative one which proves statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the cognitive component of the mental image. The training and development dimension among the most influential elements in terms of the value of beta ( $\beta$ ) of \$ 0.341.

Table 5. The results of multiple regression analysis of the impact of internal marketing on the cognitive component of the mental image

Internal Marketing	$\beta$	t	Sig	Result
Employee as internal customer	0.219	3.281	0.001	reject
Quality assurance	0.227	4.252	0.000	reject
Training and development	0.341	3.821	0.000	reject
Reward system	0.256	3.761	0.023	reject

Second: There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the emotional component of the mental image.

The results of multiple regression analysis of the impact of internal marketing on emotional component of mental image, as in the Table 6 shows the presence of sympathetic relationship for all internal marketing factors on the emotional component of mental image, through the value of the significance of the moral (sig) for all the elements that were all less than 0.05, and calculated (t) values was more than its tabulation values. Thus reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative claimed that statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the emotional component of the mental image. The dimension of training and development is the most influential among the elements in terms of the beta value ( $\beta$ ) of \$ 0.456.

Table 6. The results of multiple regression analysis of the impact of internal marketing on the emotional component of the mental image

Internal Marketing	$\beta$	t	Sig	Result
Employee as internal customer	0.291	3.014	0.001	reject
Quality assurance	0.327	3.039	0.000	reject
Training and development	0.456	4.482	0.002	reject
Reward system	0.243	3.367	0.001	reject

Third: There is no statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the behavioral component of the mental image.

The results of multiple regression analysis of the impact of internal marketing on behavioral component of mental image show, as in the Table 7 the presence of sympathetic relationship for all internal marketing on the behavioral component of mental image, through the value of the significance of the moral (sig) for all dimensions, which were all less than 0.05, and calculated (t) values was more than its tabulation values. Thus reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative claimed that statistically significant effect of internal marketing on the behavioral component of mental image. The dimension of rewards is the most influential in terms of the beta value ( $\beta$ ) of \$ 0.378.

Table 7. The results of multiple regression analysis of the impact of internal marketing on the behavioral component of the mental image

Internal Marketing	$\beta$	t	Sig	Result
Employee as internal customer	0.311	3.523	0.000	reject
Quality assurance	0.298	3.465	0.002	reject
Training and development	0.276	3.621	0.003	reject
Reward system	0.378	3.448	0.000	reject

## 6. Conclusions

- The interest of travel and tourism offices in Jordan and attention to the concept of internal marketing and applications.
- Interesting in travel and tourism offices to forming the positive image in the minds of tourists about itself, as well as programs offered by them.
- The existence of a statistical effect relationship of the dimensions of internal marketing combined on an image of the programs offered by the travel and tourism offices.

- The existence of a statistical effect relationship of the dimensions of internal marketing separately on cognitive, affective and behavioral component of the mental image about tourism programs offered by the travel and tourism offices.
- That training and development in the internal marketing factor was the most influential of cognitive and affective components mental image, while the rewards were most influential on the behavioral component.

## 7. Recommendations

- ✓ Have to travel and tourism offices activate internal marketing applications in all its dimensions because of its significant role in the formation of positive mental image that contribute to achieving successes the tourism marketing programs.
- ✓ Increased interest in travel and tourism offices of the importance of creating a positive mental image about the programs offered. Because, of its importance in attracting tourists and guide their behavior toward marketing trends.
- ✓ Should those in charge of marketing activities in the travel and tourism offices understand and analyze the mental image components, and create integration between all these components to ensure the formation of a positive mental image for tourism programs.
- ✓ Interest in travel and tourism offices of training and development programs for its high proportion of impact on the cognitive and affective components of the mental image of tourism programs.
- ✓ Increasing the proportion of incentives and rewards for workers in the travel and tourism offices so as to impact on their behavior and actions.
- ✓ Conduct field studies about internal marketing applications and image on all the relevant parties of tourism activities and other organizations that provide complementary services associated with tourism business organizations.

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