

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN IMPROVING THE MENTAL IMAGE OF TOURISM COMPANIES

Prof. Dr. Alaa Abd Al Hussein Radhi

dr.alaa.rahdi@uokerbala.edu.iq

Noor Qasim Khazim

Iraq-University of Kerbala- College of Tourist Science

Department of Tourism Studies

nqasim779@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the level of relationship between marketing communications and the mental image of travel and tourism companies, and its importance emerged in the extent to which these companies adopt marketing communications as they contribute to improving the quality of service provided to customers. The research community was represented in the travel and tourism companies in the holy city of Karbala, while the research sample was represented by the managers of these companies. A field study was carried out on the practical side using the questionnaire form, and a set of statistical methods were relied upon to analyze the sample answers, which are (the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, relative importance). In customer satisfaction, and this means that it has an impact on improving the mental image of travel and tourism companies. A set of recommendations has also been reached, the most important of which is the need to increase attention to marketing communication technology in order to raise the level of tourism and travel companies and pay attention to the desires of the tourist and work to meet them.

Keywords: Marketing Communications, Mental Image, Tourism Companies.

Introduction

The use of marketing communications was and still is an important method in all tourism organizations, as it is the most effective way to disseminate the organization's ideas, products, and services to its audience. launched by the salesmen and their representatives due to the importance of these methods in attracting the attention of customers towards the products and services of the organization and raising their preference for those products and services and affecting their decision to buy them, i. The good that it creates for itself in the minds of its customers, as it is one of the pillars on which it relies, which helps it to raise its sales, thus achieving an increase in its profits, and also helps to strengthen the brand of the organization. Marketing communications help provide the organization with the information it needs about its audience through the feedback that occurs after testing and using customers for products and services. changes in customer desires. Here, it becomes clear to us that the process of communication with customers begins before the purchase process in attracting attention, then goes through the stage of purchasing products and services, and continues after the purchase

process, when customers start consuming, and the organization waits for their opinions or the issuance of any complaint.

Therefore, the researchers tried to highlight the importance of marketing communications as a good way to influence and improve the mental image of customers about tourism organizations. This research was divided into five sections: The first section dealt with the research methodology and included the research problem, its importance, objectives, hypothesis, the research community and sample, the research method and the statistical methods that were relied upon. As for the second topic, it included marketing communications (the independent variable), in which the concept of marketing communications, its objectives and importance, elements of the communication process, and forms of marketing communications were clarified. The third topic dealt with the mental image (the dependent variable) and included the concept of the mental image, its importance, types, dimensions and components. The fourth section included a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data, as it included the results of analyzing the characteristics of the sample's vocabulary and analyzing the results of the sample's answers to the questions related to the research variables (the independent variable, marketing communications) and (the dependent variable, the mental image). The fifth topic included the most important conclusions and recommendations of the research.

Section One

The Methodology

1.1 The Problem

The research problem can be determined by asking the following questions:

1. Do the surveyed companies have a clear picture of the concept of marketing communications?
2. Do the surveyed companies have sufficient knowledge of the forms of marketing communications?
3. Is the mental image of the surveyed companies enhanced as a result of their use of marketing communications?
4. Is there a relationship between marketing communications and the mental image of the surveyed companies?

1.2 The Importance of the Study

The importance of the research can be summarized through the following points:

1. Highlighting the role of marketing communications in improving the mental image of the surveyed travel and tourism companies.
2. The adoption of marketing communications by the researched travel and tourism companies contributes to improving the quality of service provided to customers, which reflects positively on enhancing and improving its mental image to the customer.
3. Work on improving the mental image, as it is the right way for travel and tourism companies to increase their sales.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The research seeks to achieve several goals, the most important of which are:

1. Diagnosing the level of adoption of marketing communications in the travel and tourism companies surveyed.
2. Determine the level of relationship between marketing communications and the mental image of the companies under study.
3. Identify the marketing activities used in the travel and tourism companies under study.
4. Diagnosing the impact of marketing communications on enhancing the mental image of the tourism and travel companies surveyed.
5. Knowing the most important forms of marketing communications that can be adopted in the marketing of tourism services with the tourism and travel companies surveyed.

1.4 The Hypotheses

The research is based on the following main hypotheses:

The first main hypothesis: - There is a significant correlation between marketing communications and mental image in travel and tourism companies.

The second main hypothesis: - There is a significant effect of marketing communications on the mental image of travel and tourism companies.

1.5 The Sample of the Study

The research community is represented by travel and tourism companies operating in the holy city of Karbala. The research sample included a sample of managers of travel and tourism companies.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

The researchers relied on the analytical descriptive approach. On the theoretical side, they relied on a group of Arabic books and literature, magazines, periodicals, scientific research, theses and university dissertations related to the subject of the current study, as well as the use of the Internet. On the field side, the researcher relied on the questionnaire.

1.7 Statistical Methods

The following statistical tools were used (arithmetic mean, standard deviation and relative importance). In order to give a statistical description and in general to the answers of the research sample on the paragraphs related to each variable, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were extracted based on the statistical program (Spss). As for the relative importance, it was extracted By dividing the arithmetic mean of each paragraph in the questionnaire by the sum of the arithmetic averages for all the paragraphs, and determine the level of the answers in light of the arithmetic averages by determining their belonging to any category and because the search questionnaire depends on the five-point Likert scale, there are five categories to which the arithmetic averages belong, and the category is determined by finding the length The range ($4=1-5$) and then divide the range by the number of categories (5) ($0.80=5/4$) and then add (0.80) to the lower limit of scale (1) or subtract from the lower limit of scale (5) and the categories are as follows :

(1-1.80 = very low, 2.60-1.81 = low, 40-2.61 = moderate, 4.20-3.41 = high, 5.0-4.21 = very high).

Section Two

Marketing Communications

Marketing communications include all means that are used to inform and persuade a target segment of people with the aim of influencing their behavior towards purchasing a specific product or service or continuing to purchase it from the same institution in the presence of competition. It should also be noted that the lack of marketing communications makes the customer ignorant and unaware of the nature of the goods and services he needs and what their benefits are for him (Diop and Al-Mustafa, 2020: 9).

2.1 The Concept of Marketing Communications

What is meant by marketing communications: - It is all the sources of communication with customers about the organization, its products or services, and it is a means to deliver specific messages to these customers, and all forms of communication related to consumers are used in that, which they can pay attention to (Awwad, 2011: 64).

As defined by (Qamar and Wafaa, 2022: 16) it is a group of businesses that the institution undertakes to introduce itself or its products in order to create good conditions for the purchase of its products by consumers.

And (Abdul-Razzaq, 2008: 37) believes that marketing communications is the process of achieving persuasive communication with customers, and forming an image of the product and the institution. It is not required to be directed to individuals only, but may be directed to institutions as well. And it depends on direct or indirect mental influence methods, that is, using the marketing communication mix.

As (Pomino and Gham, 2018: 12) see, marketing communications are an administrative process through which the company enters into a dialogue with its various audiences, and to achieve this, the organization presents a series of messages addressed to groups and individuals. This process aims to determine or re-locate the company and consolidate its commodity or service offerings to the target audience.

Below is a table showing the concept of marketing communications based on the opinions of a group of researchers and writers:-

Table No. (1) The concept of marketing communications according to the opinions of some writers and researchers

Researcher	Concept
(Najat, 2022: 5)	They are the various signals issued by the institution towards its different audiences, including consumers, distributors, suppliers, shareholders, users and public authorities.
(Drar and Al Danani, 2021: 57)	They are all the means used by organizations to convey messages, directly or indirectly, about the products and services they provide to the target audiences, with the aim of persuading them.
(Amari, 2015: 9)	It is a set of operations that involve defining the target audience and preparing a well-coordinated promotional program in order to influence the desired response from the audience.

(Al-Zoubi, 2010: 60)	It is a set of messages sent by the company and addressed to its customers with the aim of delivering information that can change their behavior in the desired direction.
(Nabil, 2009: 7)	It is a dialogue between the institution and its customers during before and during the communication process, and during and after the consumption phase.

Source: Prepared by The Researchers

From the above definitions, the researchers conclude that marketing communications are a group of complementary elements with the aim of delivering a message to the target audience that influences their purchasing decisions and directs their interest towards the institution and the goods and services it provides.

2.2 The Importance of Marketing Communications

(Karima and Souad, 2017: 219) and (Radi, 2021: 142) agreed that the importance of marketing communications can be identified as follows:

1. Importance to the public: It is represented in the following:
 - Creating desire among the public: aims to reach the feelings of customers and discover their various desires
 - Achieving the aspirations of customers: The activities of marketing communication or promotion are based on the hopes and aspirations of customers for a decent life, for example when buying a car of a certain brand, as it expresses the ease of movement, speed and other advantages that he wants, so the institution tried to build a meaning or perception of the product and the brand for its audience.
2. Importance to the institution: It is represented in the following:
 - Providing the public with the necessary information about the products and services it provides.
 - Creating knowledge for the public.
 - Arousing public interest in products and services, especially in the case of intense competition, which requires clarifying the advantages of products and services and comparing them.
 - Changing the trend and creating preference among the public towards the institution or its products and services.
 - Influencing the purchase decision.

2.3 Objectives of Marketing Communications

The objectives of marketing communications are considered an important indicator that reflects the accuracy and soundness of the performance achieved in the various aspects of the organization, and at the same time it is considered as a development for the work of marketers and media program implementers and planning for the process of choosing the appropriate promotional method .. etc., as it thus contributes to reaching the general goals set by the administration supreme institution.

Both (Belgarbi and Bouchach, 2017: 13-14) and (Nouredine, 2012: 13) agree that the objectives of marketing communications include the following:

1. Coverage: It means covering marketing communications to search for the target groups of the audience in an efficient and effective manner. This requires that there be an accurate and clear segmentation of the target market to determine the required needs and then choose the appropriate means to reach and comply with those needs and the approved means of communication. This requires a group Some of the things are:
 - Creation of Perception: It is the first and broad base upon which the subsequent steps of marketing communications are built.
 - Stimulating demand: It is represented by encouraging the public to come forward to buy the product or deal with it.
 - Setting expectations: It means that the focus is clearly on those groups that have a clear interest in the product and are expected to make the purchase.
2. Operations: They are all the procedures included in the marketing communications system that allow reaching the target groups of the public through the approved promotional activities in order to achieve the following:
 - Encouragement to try the product: This is done by presenting product models aimed at encouraging them to use the product.
 - Brand loyalty: In light of the intense competition in the markets, the consumer's experimentation of the commodity and the identification of its characteristics and characteristics through the process of marketing communication enables him to endorse the trademark of the product that he believes is compatible and responds to his needs and desires.
 - Counter promotional efforts of competitors.
3. -3Effectiveness: It is one of the most important indicators adopted in measuring the accuracy of the promotional message's delivery through marketing communications operations and in accordance with the pre-planned goals. An effective promotional program must have the following basic elements:
 - Communication planning: In order for communication to be effective and purposeful, we must put in place the planning process, as is the case with any other marketing activity carried out by the organization.
 - The recipient's need for information: In order for the message to be meaningful and of interest to the other party, it must arouse in the consumer a real need for recognition and for there to be a reaction and response.
 - Enhancing the personal image: The effectiveness of marketing communication is achieved when there is a strengthening of the personal relationship with the target party, and this relationship remains the degree of loyalty to the organization and its products, and it is therefore a real and proper interaction with the external environment of the organization and at the same time it is considered an appropriate means to control marketing work, interaction and relationship with customers.



Figure No. (1): Objectives of Marketing Communications.

Source: prepared by the researchers

2.4 Marketing Communication Elements

There is a set of elements with which the marketing communication process is completed and helps to perform it effectively and efficiently. A group of researchers agreed that the elements of marketing communications are (sender - message and message encoding - means or channel of communication - interpretation of coding - receiver - response - feedback - jamming or noise).

About fifty years ago, Harold Laswell formulated a pivotal question formula that includes and summarizes the elements of communication.

- from? Sender caller.
- What? The content of the message or content.
- for whom? the future.
- how? channel or means of communication.
- Why? Analyzing the effects or results of the communication process (feedback)

And that the sender is the starting point of the communication process, and it may be an individual or an organization that has an idea or information and wants to share it with others, and the sender has the greatest impact on the communication process. In order for the communication process to be successful, the marketing man must face three basic challenges:

- Make timely contact.
- To be contacted in pre-planned ways.
- To deliver the required message only (Al-Zoubi, 2013: 39).

As for the recipient, he is the target of the communication process and the entity or person to whom the message is directed, and receives the information sent to him about the institution, its products and services, or its ideas, translating and understanding it through receiving and interpreting the message, and determining the appropriate reaction by performing a specific behavior. And the success of the communication process is not measured by what the sender

offers, but by what the receiver does in terms of behavior. This greeting is what indicates the achievement of the goal of communication and its success (Bobbidi, 2022: 77).

The message is the essence of the communication process, as it represents the content and content of the marketing communication that the sender wants to convey to the receiver. It is the subject of communication, and includes the content of ideas, opinions, or information that is either spoken orally or written. In order for the message to be highly effective, it must attract and hold the attention of the receiver, with reference to the needs and desires of the consumer and suggesting the appropriate way to satisfy them. In addition, it must enjoy simplicity and clarity, to be understandable to the future (Ben Bouza, 2018: 53).

The message cannot be transmitted from the sender to the receiver unless it is encoded in a specific way, and encoding is the presentation of information, opinions and ideas to the receiver in the form of phrases, images or statistical data that are compatible with the ability of the receiver to understand and assimilate, and coding is considered important because it affects the receiver and his reaction towards this information (Qarziz, 2020: 35).

Also, the method used to transfer the message from the caller to the receiver must be taken into account. The means of communication vary, as it may be a personal face-to-face oral conversation or impersonal by using the telephone and others. The process of choosing the medium is an important process for the success of the communication process, as it must be subject to considerations of credibility, flexibility, cost, spread and access, and take into account the extent of the means's capacity to absorb the communication process efficiently and its compatibility with the required message. The choice of the medium or the message channel is extremely important. If the sender makes a mistake in selecting the appropriate message, it will be negative and the communication process may fail (Murad, 2015: 15-16).

Upon receiving the message and giving it a specific meaning, the receiver makes a specific response. This response may be in the form of purchasing the advertised product, or it may be represented in the consumer changing his directions, or it may appear in some physical signs such as smiling, shaking the head, or any other signal.

The feedback is that part of the responses that is measured by the sender and is considered important for the marketing man because it is the thing that shows him the success of his communications efforts. The sales process is the inquiries a company receives about its products, or the number of consumers who visit retail stores that carry their products.

The communication process is affected by jamming, which are unplanned distortions and distortions that are beyond the control of the sender, and among these distortions that hinder the receiver in understanding and receiving the message is that the individual eats during the advertisement, which can be a source of noise, as well as the reader's immersion in reading an article in a magazine on the left page In a way that makes him not see the advertisement on the opposite right page (Al-Zoubi, 2013: 40).

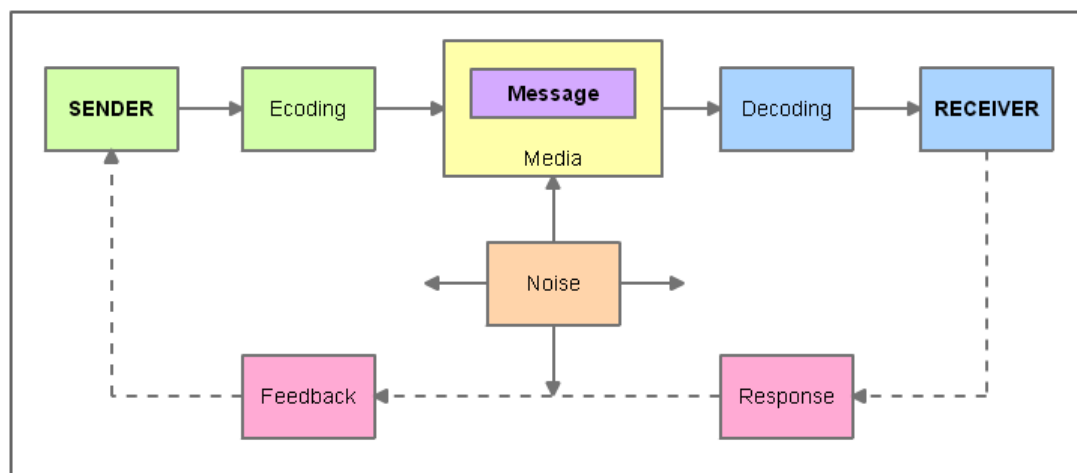


Figure No. (2): Elements of the Marketing Communication Process System.

Source: prepared by the Researcher.

2.5 Forms of Marketing Communications

There are a range of forms or types of marketing communications, which are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct selling, public relations and publicity. These forms are called (the marketing communication mix), and we will review these forms:

1. Advertising: It is the most visible form in the composition of marketing communications because it uses various media (newspapers, magazines, cinema, television, mail, even messages sent on the phone and billboards in the streets). The aim of the advertisement is to enable the advertiser to increase his sales, whether at the same prevailing price or to sell the same quantity at a price higher than the prevailing price level. In both cases, the result is an increase in the profits of the producing company. Accordingly, the characteristics of advertising are (Rasawi, 2022: 5):

- Show the personality of the advertiser.
- It is not just a display of goods.
- Has a fixed wage.
- It's impersonal efforts.

According to the opinion of (Ababsa, 26: 2014), advertising aims to achieve a main goal, which is to change the inclinations, attitudes, and behavior of potential customers to buy goods that they were not convinced of, or that there was no advertisement for them, and this is done through the following methods:

- Provide data and information about the commodity.
- Work to change desires by highlighting the advantages and benefits that accrue to the customer as a result of his purchase and use of the cough.
- Changing customers' preference for different brands, ie shifting their preference from a competing brand to the brand that is being advertised.

2. Personal selling: It is a personal communication that relies on providing information to persuade someone to buy something, and it is a basic promotional method in order to achieve an increase in sales.

Personal selling is a direct and personal contact with the audience of customers or prospective customers, in contrast to impersonal communication through advertising and sales promotion.

Therefore, personal selling has a great advantage over other marketing tools, which is flexibility and effectiveness. The sales employee is the one who is in direct contact with customers and can persuade them, meet their desires, suggest appropriate tourism programs and services, influence them and persuade them to buy (Al-Batuti, 2012: 258-259).

He believes (Al-Zoubi, 2010: 245) that there is a set of characteristics for the successful salesman, as follows:

- mental presence.
- Full knowledge.
- Enthusiasm and sincerity.
- Vitality and activity.
- Self confidence.
- Knowledge of the company's strengths and weaknesses.

Personal selling has a set of objectives that are divided into two parts, which are (qualitative and quantitative). The qualitative objectives of personal selling are as follows:

- Carry out the entire sales process.
- Serving existing consumers, ie contacting them and receiving their requests.
- Find new clients.
- Obtaining distributors' cooperation in stocking and promoting the product line.
- Inform customers on a permanent basis of changes in the commodity or marketing strategy.
- Helping customers to resell purchased goods.
- Providing customers with advice and technical assistance (especially in the case of technically complex commodities, and when designing the commodity according to the buyer's specifications).
- Assistance in training the salesmen who work for the distributors.
- Providing distributors with advice or advice regarding the various administrative problems they face.
- Collecting the necessary marketing information and submitting it to the management of the organization (Wadad, 2019: 43-44).

The quantitative objectives that can be set for this process are:

- Maintain a certain level of sales.
- Maintaining the level of sales in a way that contributes to achieving profit goals (such as selling the right mix of goods).
- Maintaining the personal selling cost within certain limits.
- Obtaining and maintaining a certain share of the market (Al-Alaq, 2009: 3).

3. Sales promotion: defined by the American Marketing Association as those marketing activities other than personal selling and advertising; which stimulate consumer purchasing and merchant effectiveness, such as exhibitions, demonstrations, and various one-off sales efforts that are not in the normal routine. Sales promotion includes short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service (Kayode, 2014: 195).

The objectives that the sales activation program seeks to achieve in selling activities and for customers, distributors and salesmen are as follows:

- ✓ Sales-related objectives: aiming to raise the organization's sales by:

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- Visiting sales volume in the short term.
 - Facing competition in the market.
 - Access to new distribution outlets.
 - Increase the market share of the organization in the short term.
 - ✓ Customer-related goals: These include the following:
 - Attracting new customers and converting customers of competing organizations to the organization's products.
 - Rewarding loyal customers for purchasing and encouraging them to return and continue purchasing.
 - Encouraging purchases in non-consumption seasons.
 - Encourage the customer to try the new product (Baaout, 2022: 58).
 - ✓ Objectives related to distributors: It includes all activation techniques directed to distributors, which aim to:
 - Increasing stock levels at distributors.
 - Developing distributors' loyalty to the company's name.
 - Encouraging distributors to deal in multiple sizes of goods and services.
 - Adding new lists of the organization's products to distributors.
 - Participation in commercial activity.
 - ✓ Objectives related to personal selling men (sales force):-
 - Increasing the motivation and interest of salesmen to sell the largest possible amount of the company's products.
 - Developing the loyalty of salesmen.
 - Encourage salesmen to increase sales to take advantage of the applied barriers system (Shaaban, 2008: 94).

4. Direct Marketing: Arafah (De Pelsmacker & others, 2013: 423) is contacting customers and prospects in a direct manner with the aim of generating an immediate and measurable response or reaction. Direct means the use of direct media such as correspondence (including emails), catalogs, telephone or brochures, and not through intermediaries such as dealers, retailers or sales personnel. Instant response can be done online (e-mail/website/social media), coupons response, phone or in-person visit by the customer to the store or retailer. In order to make direct contact with customers and prospects, a database is required, as databases can be considered as the heart of direct marketing.

There is a group of direct marketing that seeks to achieve the following (Moses, 2016: 23)

- Achieve and repeat purchase.
- Introducing and testing new products.
- Introducing a new communication and distribution channel.
- Increase consumer loyalty and satisfaction.

5. Public Relations: The International Association of Public Relations has defined it as an administrative function of a planned and continuous nature, through which the public and private establishment aims to gain and maintain the understanding, sympathy and support of those it cares about, by evaluating public opinion in order to link its policy and procedures as

much as possible. To achieve fruitful cooperation and meet public interests more efficiently through planned and disseminated information (Ayoub et al., 2016: 14).

Through the previous definition, we can know the elements of public relations, which are (Abu Osbaa, 1998: 85-86):

✓ The audience is of two types:

- Internal audience: They are all users of the organization, who can be classified according to the nature of their work or their administrative responsibilities.
- External audiences: They are customers, shareholders, community leaders, craft associations, the media, and government.
- Administrative process: This process is carried out continuously to support the administration in achieving the objectives of the institution.
- A process with a goal: Its aim is to enhance the institution's reputation with its audience and to know their opinions.
- Communication process: It is a two-way process. The first uses mass communication tools such as television and radio through communication activities such as advertising and publicity. Other means are used such as exhibitions, seminars and publications.
- Scientific process: it uses planning and the scientific research method to obtain accurate information and reliable opinions from the public.

There are a set of goals that public relations seeks to achieve, but its main goal is to support and strengthen the positive impression of the establishment as a whole on the part of its audience and the various parties dealing with it. The goals of public relations can be summarized as follows (Al-Harbi, 2012: 98).

- Introducing the public to the organization and its products in order to interest the public in them.
- Contribute to achieving the organization's marketing objectives and promoting its various products.
- Improving the relationship between the organization's senior management and employees in order to develop their sense of belonging to the organization.
- Work to establish good and good relations and gain the support and confidence of the various publics.
- Contribute to the introduction of new commodities through various media to stimulate demand and raise public interest towards them.
- Improving the relationship with the public, taking care of their complaints and working to solve them, and providing solutions to the other parties within the organization to avoid those practices that constitute a field for complaints.
- Developing the relationship with the distributors by contacting them personally and providing them with the necessary information about the organization and its products.
- Improving the impressions and beliefs that the individual has towards the organization through documentaries and informative films about the establishment and contributing to the activities of the local community.

6. Propaganda: It is a non-personal and free means of promoting goods, services, and ideas to the general public, sometimes by a well-known party. It is a news activity about the company,

and it is the free publication of matters related to the activities and policies of the organization (Zabat and Fanour, 2017: 70). Propaganda is one of the types of communication that is used as a force to control the thoughts of members of society and direct them to the direction that set them by exploiting their emotions and instincts (Al-Hilali, 2013: 199).

The characteristics of propaganda can be identified as follows (Al-Abd, 2007: 24-25):

- It presents information and publishes certain opinions and ideas after preparing and distorting them in terms of content and form in a way that serves the purposes of propaganda.
- Propaganda is a subjective expression and not an objective expression because the propaganda material is affected by the personality of the one who prepares it.
- Propaganda seeks to achieve certain objectives represented in the deliberate influence of information, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behavior in the direction intended by the proponent.
- Propaganda is characterized as the art of influence, control and urgency that seeks to encourage acceptance of the advocate's views, opinions, ideas and beliefs. It is also characterized as the art of persuading others to take a certain direction or behavior under the influence of propaganda ideas.

Propaganda has a set of goals that it seeks to achieve, and a group of researchers believe that the goal of propaganda is either a distant goal or a near goal, and among these goals (Al-Baik, 2017: 35-36):

- It is a promotional method that aims to influence the attitudes and opinions of different audiences.
- A communication process that uses the means of communication and the media without pay to convey its message in the form of a news story according to the content and the product.
- It is used to send a positive image and create a good relationship between the advertiser and the different audience groups.
- Propaganda is used to inform the audience of part of the content of the message and to leave them with the impression that it is always striving for development and updating to suit their needs.

As for the difference between publicity and advertising, it can be identified through the table below:

Table No. (2): A table showing the difference between publicity and advertising.

Propaganda	Advertising
Introducing the public to a specific event without persuading it.	Communicating information about the commodity and persuading the consumer to buy it.
Spread and broadcast at once.	It is repeated several times.
Free.	for a fee paid.
It is not intended to achieve an economic end.	It aims to achieve an economic end.
It does not have a specific audience.	have a specific audience.
The subject of the advertising message can be changed.	The subject of the advertising message cannot be changed.

Source: prepared by the researchers

Section Three

Mental Image

The concept of marketing communications appeared in the fifties of the last century, especially in the United States, and was used to express the status or status of the individual or country in public life. The appearance of the book "Developing the Image of the Establishment" by Lee Bristol in 1960 had a great impact on the spread of the image of the Establishment. A group of researchers confirmed that the mental image is linked to the individual's cognitive system, which is built through a set of previous experiences and thanks to the various elements that help build it (Al-Saffar, 2006: 119).

3.1 The Concept of Mental Image

The term mental image is a general and comprehensive term, which means an absolute mental image based on ordinary impressions of people and things. In this context, the mental image has been defined:

It is the conscious or subconscious impressions or sensations in the minds of individuals in relation to themselves or other individuals, products, names, companies, or stores, and it is an application of perception and the process by which individuals organize the meanings of the words given to them (Al-Mashhadani, 2017: 95-96).

He also defined it (Balta and Brigitte, 2022: 817) as the final product of the self-impressions that are formed by individuals and groups towards a specific person, a specific gender, a people, a system, an establishment, an organization, an institution, a local or international organization, a professional, or anything else that can have an impact on human life. These impressions are formed through direct or indirect experiences, and these experiences are linked to the emotions, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals, regardless of the validity or incorrectness of the information contained in the summary of these experiences, because they represent to their owners an honest reality through which they look at what is around them, understand it, and value it on its basis.

According to Webster's dictionary definition, a mental image refers to the mental presentation of anything that cannot be presented directly to the senses. Or it is a revival or simulation of a sensory experience associated with certain emotions, and it is also a retrieval of what memory stored or imagined what the senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell or taste perceived (Ibrahim and Noura, 2017: 112).

(Noir and Fadoul, 2020: 630) defined it as the sum of individual, independent and marketing inputs, in addition to the inputs of the tourist experience and external factors related to the elements and conditions of the tourist destination, which interact in the mind of the potential tourist to form types of images that represent in their entirety a perception of a specific region, and this affects the All stages of behavior, starting from the process of making the decision to travel to the end of the tourism experience, loyalty to the destination.

Keller defined it as the sum of brand-related perceptions that appear in the mental links stored in the consumer's memory and carry certain connotations for him. Mental connections are characterized by type, strength, uniqueness, and direction, and characteristics may be related to source and size (Sufyan and Nouredine, 2017: 31).

Below is a table showing the concept of mental image based on the opinions of a group of researchers and writers:

Table No. (3): The concept of mental image according to the opinions of a group of researchers and writers.

Researcher and year	Concept
(Taha, 2021: 81)	It is a relative psychological cognitive process with cultural origins that is based on the direct, selective awareness of the characteristics and characteristics of a subject and the formation of negative or positive trends, and the resulting behavioral directives within the framework of a specific society.
(Ahmed and Muhammad, 2020: 237)	It is a set of beliefs, ideas and impressions in the minds of individuals towards a tourist destination.
(Younis, 2019: 80)	It is the result of several sensory experiences settled in the mind of the tourist towards a specific topic or destination. It is an expression of reality, whether true or false, and appears whenever a stimulus associated with these experiences calls for it.
(Al-Mahmoud et al., 2019: 115)	They are the impressions and perceptions that customers have about the company's products and capabilities, which come from a group of influences.
(Al-Kamri and Saud, 2018: 212)	It is the impression that the individual makes about the things surrounding him affected by the information and ideas stored about them and his understanding of them. Thus, the mental image is the product of the interaction of the elements of knowledge and perception.

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

The researchers conclude from the foregoing that the mental image depends in its formation on previous experiences or on information and rumors obtained directly or indirectly, and these sources may be true or incorrect. In general, the customer's decision to buy depends on what he possesses of previous experience or information that he has heard from somewhere, and thus affects the direction of his decisions, which may be a direction represented by buying or a negative purchase represented by not buying.

3.2 The Importance of the Mental Image

The mental image of institutions in general is an important and vital factor in marketing the objectives of the institution to perform its mission, for the following reasons (Riyadh, 2019: 26):

1. Assisting the organization in attracting the best human resources.

2. Convincing the government, authorities and the masses of the importance of the institution's social role in community service.
3. Developing the public's willingness to wait before passing judgment on the institution in times of crisis.
4. Strengthening the good relations of the institution with the legislative and executive authorities in the country.
5. Assisting in persuading financial institutions and investors to invest their money in the institution.
6. Assisting in supporting the organization's marketing efforts.

According to the opinion of (Gharsi, 2015: 80) and (Khawaldia et al., 2022: 22), the most important factors influencing the success of institutions and their ability to survive and grow depend on marketing and financing. necessary for its activities; At that time, institutions will not be able to attract members of society to them, and they will not be able to market their products, services, activities, and programs, especially in light of the competition between institutions to attract the masses and gain their trust and support. No institution can give up its mental image with the public, but rather it always seeks to build a good reputation for it and thus builds an impression on the public with correct information emanating from it and not from information from other sources.

The nature of the mental image of the institution among individuals depends on the strength or weakness of the image. At the level of individuals, it is formed according to the degree of communication between them and other institutions and the extent of their interest in this institution and their influence on its activities and programs. It is possible to identify this image and measure the changes that occur in it, although these changes are often slow.

3.3 The Types of Mental Image

The mental image, as it was previously defined, is the final product of the subjective impressions that individuals or groups have about a particular person or institution. These impressions formed through direct and indirect conflicts, which are linked to the expectations, attitudes and beliefs of individuals. Regardless of the validity or incorrectness of the information included in the summary of these experiences, for their owners it represents an honest reality through which they look at what is around them and understand or appreciate it on its basis (Al-Dulaimi, 2011: 83-85).

These impressions carried by the individual came in three forms, as follows:

- ❖ Positive (supportive): The institution seeks to strengthen and maintain its continuity.
- ❖ Passive (opposition): The organization seeks to influence and change it using various methods.
- ❖ Neutral (between positive and negative): easy to influence.

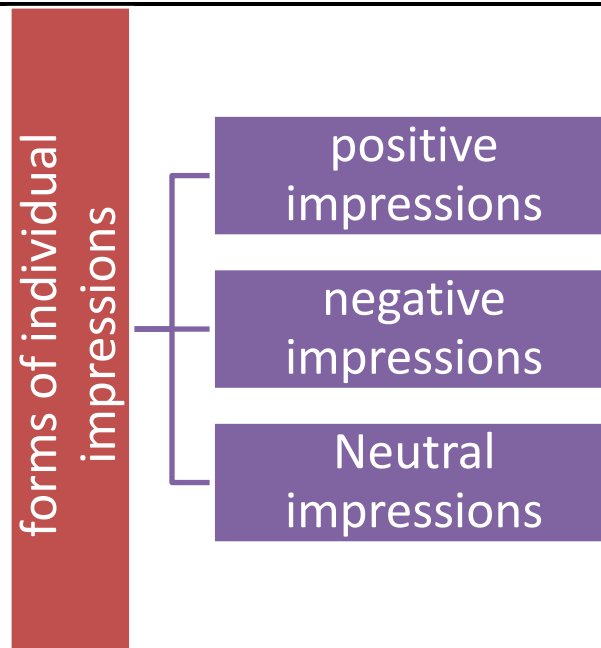


Figure 3: Forms of individual impressions.

Hence, the researchers classified the mental image into five types, and these types came as follows (Amina, 2015: 59):

1. The mirror image: it is the image through which the institution sees itself. In the sense that it is the image that the public holds towards the institution, and this image is completely different from what the officials in the institution believe, due to the lack of knowledge in the public's attitudes towards the institution.
2. The current image: It is the image in which the public sees the institution, which is based on experience and good knowledge of the institution, or it can be based on interesting information or little and incorrect data about the institution.
3. The desired image or the desired image: It is the image that the institution wants to create for itself in the minds of the public, and it is often new and unknown impressions to the public that the institution seeks to create.
4. The ideal or optimal image: It is the best image that the public can take about the institution, taking into account the competition between different organizations that seek to influence the masses.
5. The multiple image: This image occurs when the public is exposed to different representatives of the institution, each of whom gives a different impression of it. Naturally, this multiplicity does not last long, either it turns into a positive or negative image, or a combination of both, and that depends on the intensity of the influence of these actors on the audience. Negative impressions create a bad image, positive impressions create a good image, and multiple impressions create a multiple image.

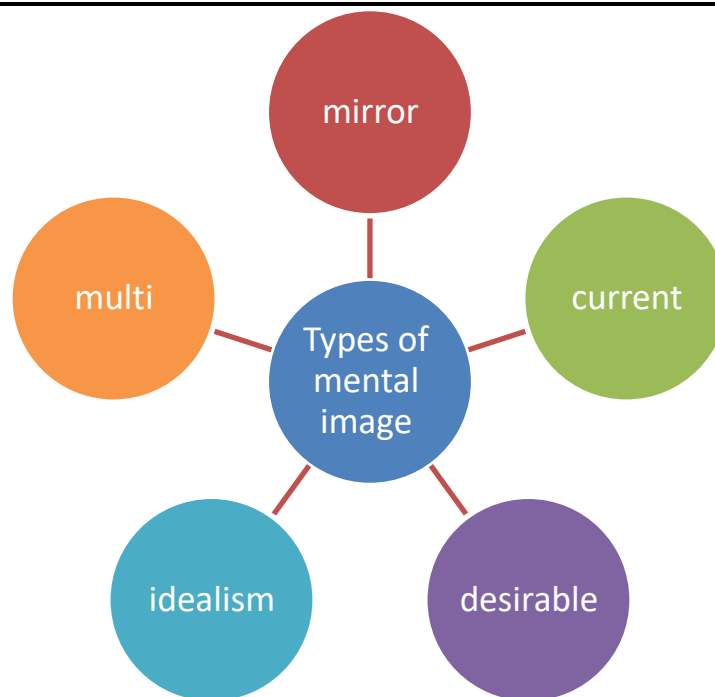


Figure 4: Types of Mental Image

Source: prepared by the researcher.

3.4 Dimensions of The Mental Image

Most researchers agreed that the mental image has three basic dimensions, and these dimensions are represented in the following (Khalaf, 2021: 84) and (Khadija and Ahlam, 2019: 70-71):

1. The cognitive dimension: It is the information, data, and beliefs that an individual has regarding the product, service, or institution. Information is considered the cornerstone on which the individual's mental image of the institution is built and is accurate according to the accuracy of the information that is obtained either directly through the environment in which he lives or indirectly through the media. Therefore, the false mental image formed by individuals is the result of Basically from the wrong information and knowledge they got. A number of studies indicate that the institution's credibility has an impact on the consumer's perception of it and the products and services it offers, because it will ultimately affect his desire and decision to buy.
2. The emotional dimension: It is the reactions of individuals or the inclination of their attitudes, positive or negative, towards the institution, product, or service. The emotional dimension is affected by a number of factors, including the limits of the availability of sources of knowledge and the characteristics of society in terms of gender and language and the extent of difference and homogeneity between them. It is also affected by the psychological state of the individual and the reflection of internal motives.
3. The behavioral dimension: This dimension represents the external direction of the trend, that is, it reflects the behavior of the individual according to the nature of the mental image he has towards the institution. The importance of the mental image is due to the fact

that it helps to predict the behavior of individuals, which is related to the direction of acceptance or rejection of the products or services provided by the institution.

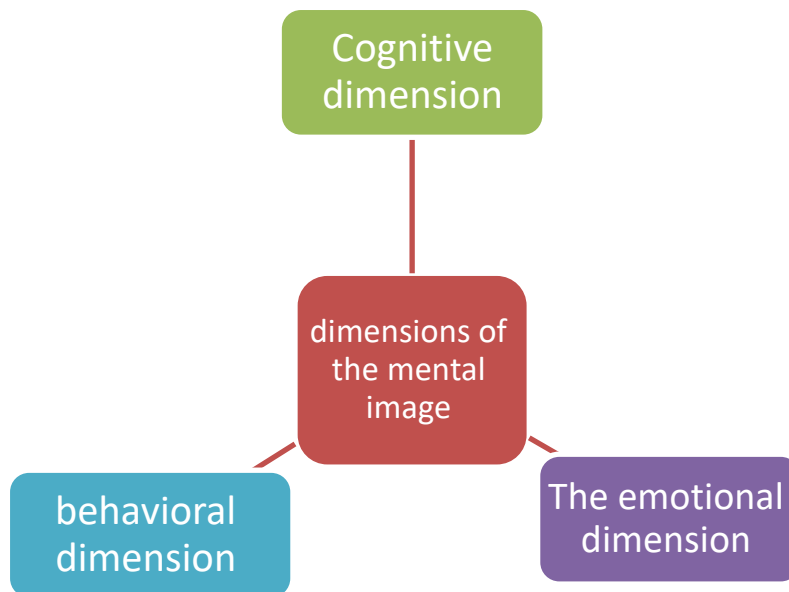


Figure No. (5): Dimensions of the Mental Image

Source: Prepared by the Researchers.

3.5 Components of The Mental Image

The sources of the mental image can be divided into two main sources: (Al-Farra, 2018: 17) and (Al-Sheikhly, 2015: 45):

1. Direct experience: It is the experience resulting from the individual's frequent contact with other individuals or with institutions or systems and laws, and this direct experience is stronger in its impact on the individual's mentality and emotions, and here comes the role of the work of public relations employees to highlight the positive image of their institutions through good job work and meeting Desires and needs of individuals.
2. Indirect experience: It is the experience resulting from what the individual hears from personal messages from his friends or the environment in which he lives, or from the media, and the events and news they transmit about the institutions, and thus, over time, a certain mental image of the individual towards the institution is generated. That is, what the individual hears is a set of impressions in his mind, which is thus the mental image.

There are a group of factors that influence the construction and formation of the mental image, and these factors may relate to the institution itself or to the customer receiving the information.

1. Personal factors: It is represented by the self-characteristics of the future, such as education, culture, etc., and the individual's self-contacts, his ability to absorb information about the institution, his degree of motivation and interest, his ability to interpret this information, and form the features of the mental image.
2. Social factors: a group of influences, which are represented in the following:
 - ❖ Primary groups are family and friends.

- ❖ Opinion leaders.
 - ❖ The culture of the society in which the individual lives.
3. Organizational factors: These factors are represented by the organization's management strategy that reflects the philosophy and culture of the organization, and the work carried out by the organization such as real business, policy and products, and the social work carried out by the organization to serve the community. In addition to the organization's communication network, which is the organization's communication with its internal and external audience. And the use of communication messages about the institution transmitted through the mass media.
4. Media factors: It is represented by the media efforts of the competing companies and their impact on the image of the institution, in addition to the media coverage and media interest in the events of the institution in the mass media and the extent of their negatives or positives.

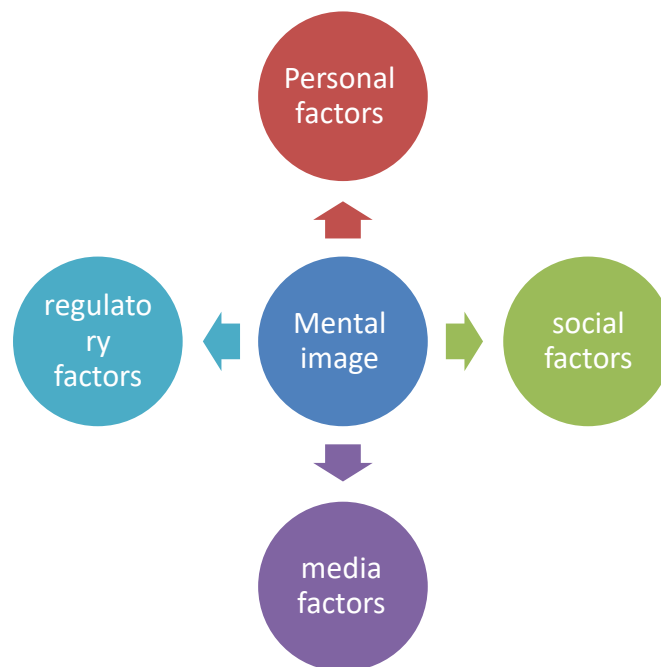


Figure No. (6): Factors Affecting the Mental Image.

Source: Prepared by the Researchers.

Both (Abu Akar, 2016: 30) and (Al-Rumaidi, 2017: 252) indicated that there is a group of elements that merge with each other to form the mental image of the institution, and these elements are as follows:

1. Brand image: It is the point of acquaintance and communication between the institution and its audience through logos and symbols that carry meanings that affect the public dealing with the institution, in addition to distinguishing the institution from other competing institutions, and the public can express their confidence and satisfaction with the institution in a way that is halal These logos and symbols.
2. The image of the organization's products and services: High-quality products and services that keep pace with changes and customers' desires affect customers' evaluation of the organization's image and efficiency.

3. The image and philosophy of the institution's management: The institution's philosophy is one of the elements affecting the formation of the public's mental image, and it strengthens the trust and safety of its audience. And the philosophy of a successful institution is one that involves successful contacts with the various parties related to the work of the institution.

4. The image of the institution as a place of work: It is represented by the work environment within the institution. The good, safe and healthy work environment for workers, the provision of social and health services, incentives and fair and distinct wages, in addition to the external and internal appearance of the institution, all of this plays a role in enhancing the positive image of the institution and enhancing the public's sense of comfort, confidence and safety towards the institution.

5. The performance of the organization's employees: It is the ability of the employees to represent the organization in a decent and honorable manner and to enjoy efficiency and speed in completing the required tasks, and the rapid response to the needs of customers enhances the confidence and safety of customers and gives positive impressions about the mental image of the institution.

6. Efficiency of corporate communications: A successful organization chooses the appropriate means of communication to address the various groups of the public, and the aim is to deliver all information to its internal and external audience accurately and quickly and to achieve the purpose of this information, which is to influence the mental image formed by individuals. Among the means of communication used by the Foundation are electronic means of communication, exhibitions, seminars and conferences.

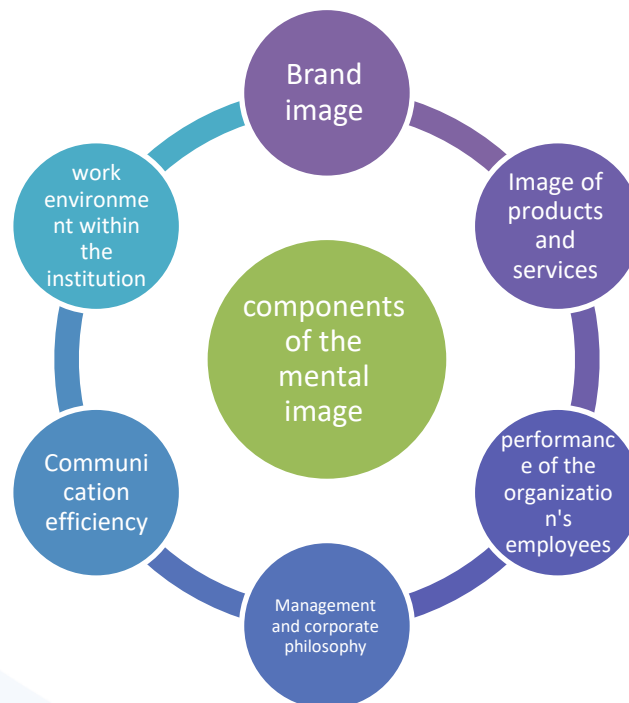


Figure 7: Components of the Mental Image

Source: Prepared by the Researchers.

Section Four

Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

The research relied on the questionnaire mainly in the research. Likert pentagonal scale was used to measure the paragraphs of the scale distributed over five paragraphs and for each paragraph weighed strongly agreed (5 degrees), agreed (4 degrees), neutral (3 degrees), disagreed (2 degrees), and did not agree severity (1 degree), and the following is an analysis of the axes of the resolution:-

4.1 The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the response of the research sample vocabulary towards the research variables (resolution paragraphs).

In this section, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and the relative importance of the research items (research variables) will be extracted: -

Table (4) The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the independent variable (Marketing Communications)

NO	Questionnaire paragraphs	average values	standard deviation	Relative importance%
1	The management of travel and tourism companies is interested in keeping abreast of technological developments in the field of marketing communications	4.27	0.63	%10
2	Travel and tourism companies depend on modern technology for the success of their marketing activities	p.93	0.80	%10
3	Travel and tourism companies adopt new and creative ideas that can be implemented in the field of marketing communications	4.39	0.72	%10
4	Travel and tourism companies believe that creativity is a necessity for their long-term survival and growth	4.45	0.61	%10
5	The ideas of managers in travel and tourism companies are characterized by rationality and creativity	4.22	0.79	%10
6	Travel and tourism companies have managers with innovative personalities who are able to develop good communication solutions	4.10	0.94	%10
7	Travel and tourism companies are keen to train and develop their human cadres to improve their ability in the field of marketing communications	4. cut	0.67	%10
8	The company has a special application through which the customer can learn about the most important services provided by it	4.02	0.74	%10
9	Travel and tourism companies focus on making integrated marketing efforts to achieve or exceed customer expectations for service	3.91	0.83	%10
10	Travel and tourism companies follow a consistent approach to work that includes developing their marketing communications	3.91	0.95	%10
	Total	41.39	7.67	%100
	Average response for all items	4.139	0.767	

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the items of the questionnaire related to the independent variable in Table No. (4) show that the trends of the research sample were positive

towards all items, because the arithmetic means of the performance of the research samples are greater than the mean of the measurement tool (the hypothetical mean equal to 3 for the five-point Likert scale), and the deviation The standard is less than half of the arithmetic mean, and the relative importance was in close and high degrees, and the level of the response, which represents the sample agreement and its consistency with the items of the questionnaire, is high, as the average response to the marketing communications variable was (4.139) and the standard deviation was (0.767), and this indicates that travel and tourism companies It makes an impact on customer satisfaction, and this means that it has an impact on improving the mental image of travel and tourism companies.

Table (5) Results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the dependent variable (Mental image)

NO	Questionnaire paragraphs	average values	standard deviation	Relative importance%
1	Customers' awareness of the travel and tourism company depends on the services and information it provides	4.50	0.64	10%
2	The level of customers' awareness of the travel and tourism company is affected by the impressions and perceptions entrenched in their minds	4.39	0.69	10%
3	The promotional means of the travel and tourism company play a major role in customers' awareness of them	4.37	0.80	10%
4	The customer is affected by the validity of the information provided by the travel and tourism company	4.39	0.66	10%
5	The customer is affected by the quality of the service provided	4.04	0.95	11%
6	Lack of deception and misleading affects the customers of the travel and tourism company and pushes them to repeat dealings with it	4.08	0.75	9%
7	The travel and tourism company's fulfillment of the customer's needs and desires prompts him to repeat dealing with it	4.20	0.67	9%
8	The interaction of the employees of the travel and tourism company with customers determines their decision to continue dealing with it	4.20	0.57	11%
9	The social acceptance enjoyed by the travel and tourism company prompts customers to repeatedly deal with it	4.18	0.69	10%
10	The travel and tourism company offers its services to its customers based on their desires	4.27	0.60	10%
	Total	42.63	7.01	100%
	Average response for all items	4.263	0.701	

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the items of the questionnaire related to the dependent variable in Table No. (5) show that the trends of the research sample were positive towards all items, because the arithmetic means of the performance of the research sample are greater than the mean of the measurement tool (the hypothetical mean equal to 3 for the five-point Likert scale), and the deviation The standard is less than half of the arithmetic mean, and the relative importance was in close and high degrees, as the average response to the mental image variable was (4.263) and the standard deviation (0.701).

4.2 Testing the research hypothesis

In this paragraph, simple linear regression was used for the purpose of testing the direct effect relationships between the dimensions of the main research variables, as well as using the coefficient of determination (R^2) to explain the effect of the independent variable on the changes that occur on the dependent variable as well as the standard regression coefficient (beta). which measures the response of the dependent variable when the independent variable changes by one standard degree. Table (6) shows the results of the impact of marketing communications (X) on improving the mental image (Y). The numbers in the table can be interpreted as follows:- Table (6) Results of the impact relationship between customer relationship management and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT										
THE DECISION	TABULAR (F) VALUE		R ²	Significance level F)(	COMPUTED VALUE (F)	Beta (b)	a			
Hypothesis acceptance H ₁	4.63		0.490	0.002	13.660	- 0.065	45332432.77			
	%95	DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE						SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE		

- The value of (B) was (-0.065), which means that changing marketing communications (X) by one unit leads to a change in improving the mental image (Y) by (0.065).
- The calculated value (F) for the simple linear regression model was (13.660), which is greater than the tabular value (F) of (4.63) at the level of significance (5%) and with a degree of freedom (1-14), and this means that the effect relationship between variables with Statistical significance.
- The value of the significance level (F) was (0.002), which is less than the significance level of 5%, which means that the results that have been reached can be relied upon by more than (99%).
- The value of the interpretation coefficient (R^2) reached (0.490), meaning that (49.6%) of the changes that occur in improving the mental image (Y) can be explained by the contribution of marketing communications (X), and the remaining percentage (50.4%) refers to other variables that were not included. current search.

- A decision was reached regarding the hypothesis of the effect of marketing communications (X) in improving the mental image (Y) that the existence hypothesis (H1) is acceptable, which states that there is a significant effect of marketing communications in improving the mental image.

Section Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 The Conclusions

1. The lack of studies that dealt with marketing communications in tourism organizations.
2. The importance of having modern marketing communications in travel and tourism companies to facilitate administrative tasks, dealings and communication with individuals, whether they are from inside or outside the organization.
3. Marketing communications make an impact on customer satisfaction, and this means that they have an impact on improving the mental image of travel and tourism companies.
4. Paying attention to the perception dimension by using various promotional means to achieve customers' awareness of the mental image of the researched travel and tourism companies, and its endeavor to adopt awareness in the field of achieving it.
5. Travel and tourism companies seek to influence their customers in order to create a beautiful and positive image of them in their minds, through their realization of the importance of the quality of services and information provided to them and not to deceive and mislead them, and the impact of this on their feelings and feelings, which will in turn affect their decision to continue with them and repeat their purchases from them.
6. The interest of the travel and tourism companies surveyed in creating motivation among their customers in order to repeat their dealings with them, through their endeavor to meet their needs and desires, and the good treatment of their employees with them, and reduce the costs of services provided to them as a result of their conviction of the importance of the economic factor in their dealings with them.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Increasing the need to pay attention to marketing communications technology in order to raise the level of travel and tourism companies, and pay attention to the wishes of the tourist and work to meet them.
2. The necessity of introducing marketing communications and how to use communication means, whether they are physical means represented by computers, devices and technical tools that are compatible with the nature of marketing companies.
3. Increasing the endeavor to create a motivation among the clients of the travel and tourism company to encourage them to repeat dealings with it, by meeting their needs and desires and preserving their privacy and safety.
4. Taking into account the opinions and reactions of customers, considering the impact on the customers of the travel and tourism company in order to create a beautiful image in their minds about it by ensuring the validity and reliability of the services and information provided to them.

5. Focusing more on increasing the company's customers' awareness of it, and working to enhance this by improving the quality of services and information provided to them and using simple and understandable promotional methods that are able to create and consolidate good impressions among the company's customers.

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