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## The Contribution of Media in Enhancing Tourism Awareness

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### Abstract

Mass media the element of success are more obvious in establishing unity of country and society that develop us towards flourished countries socially and economically .in addition to the gradual openness Iraq is depending essentially on its oil-exports as a main income after detraining their industries such as commercials and agriculture that takes too-much time, money and lab our to restore it.

That leads us to search for other sources for income such as tourism as an income if it is invested scientifically and efficiently.

became a variable in constituting the mass consciousness and their attitude toward the issues presented in the mass media day and night. These days the importance of the media springs up from their dependence on the readable, audible, the visible and audible, and the electronic mass media more than in the past.

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## Introduction

Media messages have become a significant variable in shaping public awareness and influencing audience attitudes toward the issues presented by mass media on a daily basis. The importance of media messages stems from the public's increasing reliance on print, audio, audiovisual, and digital media to a far greater extent than in the past. This shift is largely attributable to the rapid and extensive development of media technologies, which has led audiences to depend heavily on media outlets in their continuous pursuit of information about events and issues occurring around them at various levels in general, and within the tourism sector in particular.

The significance of each medium lies in its capacity to demonstrate its impact on tourism awareness through the specific characteristics and features it possesses. These characteristics may be shared among different media forms or may vary from one medium to another. Moreover, each stage of media effects theories clearly illustrates the influence of mass media on audiences, with this influence differing according to the historical period in which it

emerged, prevailing ideas, and the level of technological development—ranging from the stage of direct effects, through limited and moderate effects, to the phase of strong and effective influence.

At present, tourism is regarded as one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide, as it represents a productive sector that plays a vital role in increasing national income, improving the balance of payments, generating foreign currency revenues, creating employment opportunities, and supporting development programs. This has prompted many countries lacking a natural tourism environment to establish and develop artificial tourism projects as investment-based attractions for tourists.

Tourism—often referred to by economists as the “invisible industry”—is considered one of the most important drivers of economic prosperity due to the substantial revenues it generates for national economies, in addition to its active role in economic development. This widespread phenomenon attracts large numbers of visitors, tourists, and leisure travelers to a limited group of classified tourism destinations from across the world.

The growing interest of states in tourism activity stems primarily from the importance of tourism and its increasing role in economic, social, cultural, and media dimensions. Among these, the economic dimension is almost the most prominent, as tourism constitutes a significant proportion of national income in many countries. Consequently, numerous states have worked to develop tourism and establish the necessary foundations to ensure the advancement of this vital economic sector.

The influence of mass media on tourism is particularly evident in its focus on religious tourism, which is considered one of the most important forms of tourism. Demand for religious tourism arises from spiritual motivation and religious commitment. Religious tourism is also characterized as a sustainable form of tourism that extends throughout the entire year, whether or not a specific religious occasion is taking place, in addition to the economic returns it generates through its direct and indirect impacts.

The tourism sector occupies an advanced position within the global economy. The World Tourism Organization reported that international tourist arrivals were expected to reach one billion by 2010, with revenues increasing to approximately USD 1.55 trillion. Tourism revenues contribute about 11% of total global production and provide nearly 200 million job opportunities, equivalent to approximately 8% of total global employment. Tourism products also rank first in international trade, followed by the automotive industry, making tourism a key contributor to economic growth in developing countries. However, the contribution of tourism expenditure to gross domestic product varies widely from one country to another, depending on the size of the economy and levels of spending.

Accordingly, developing tourism awareness through various media channels is among the most important issues, as it clarifies the significance of tourism, promotes the effective investment of its substantial benefits, and reduces its negative impacts. It also helps create a favorable environment for establishing a tourism-supportive society that is aware of tourism’s value and seeks to maximize its returns.

In this context, many Islamic countries have paid particular attention to tourism awareness, given its close association with the success of tourism activity. These efforts have focused on stakeholders responsible for developing tourism awareness, including tourism

workers, official and non-official institutions, citizens, governments, and tourists. Attention has also been given to the dimensions of tourism awareness—such as tourism-related, economic, social, and cultural dimensions—as well as to the factors shaping tourism awareness, including mass media, family, educational institutions, opinion leaders, and the cultural environment.

The role of tourism is not limited to the economic dimension alone; it extends to raising cultural and social awareness and creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding among peoples worldwide. Tourism itself represents a civilizational and humanitarian message and serves as a vital means of communication between nations. It contributes to social harmony, supports the pursuit of global peace, and helps reduce barriers between states. As a dynamic movement, tourism is closely linked to the cultural and civilizational aspects of human life, functioning as a bridge for intercultural exchange and shared knowledge, and reflecting the natural outcome of societal development and rising standards of living.

Given the importance of tourism, it requires effective public relations management capable of shaping the tourism image, formulating a coherent communication message for the destination, amplifying its voice internationally, and building a positive global reputation. Tourism cannot advance or expand its markets without adopting a modern administrative philosophy in public relations in general, and tourism communication in particular.

## **Methodological Framework of the Study**

### **Research Problem**

Despite the role assigned to media within tourism institutions, this activity remains characterized by ambiguity in its concepts, objectives, and functions, which are still largely traditional in nature and do not rely on scientific foundations. This deficiency is evident in the limited use of systematic research, insufficient audience studies, weak planning of media activities, and the lack of adoption of modern and effective communication methods in engaging with audiences. Furthermore, proper evaluation of media performance is often absent. In addition, media departments within tourism institutions continue to face numerous obstacles that hinder their ability to perform their duties effectively. Accordingly, the research problem can be formulated as follows: **to identify the extent to which mass media contribute to the development of tourism awareness.**

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study derives from the significance of the topic itself. In the tourism field, media play a vital and prominent role that may exceed their importance in other sectors. This is due to the fact that tourism institutions interact with audiences of diverse cultures, opinions, and attitudes, belonging to different social groups and dispersed across various regions of the world. Moreover, tourism institutions have acquired an increasingly important role in contemporary society through the responsibilities entrusted to them, particularly in developing and organizing their relationships with relevant institutions, marketing their services and products internationally, and establishing a distinguished position among global institutions.

With the utilization of modern and advanced communication technologies, media have become more capable of translating the ideas and perspectives of senior management in tourism institutions into action, acceptance, and influence aimed at gaining public support. Media have

transcended geographical boundaries to address global audiences, placing tourism institutions on the path of international competition. In an increasingly open world shaped by communication technologies, the functions and roles of media in the tourism sector have become more significant than ever before.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify the nature of media as a communicative activity and its impact on the performance of tourism authorities and travel and tourism companies in Iraq.
2. To determine the scope of the communicative function of media within tourism authorities and to diagnose the reality of its practice through reliance on scientific foundations in the tourism communication process with institutional audiences.

### **Research Methodology**

Methodology is defined as a mode of thinking and action adopted by the researcher to organize, analyze, and present ideas in order to reach reasonable results and conclusions regarding the phenomenon under study. The choice of methodology often varies according to the nature of the phenomena and problems being examined; a method suitable for studying one phenomenon may not be appropriate for another. However, this does not entirely preclude the possibility of studying a single phenomenon using more than one scientific method. It should also be noted that certain phenomena can only be examined through specific scientific approaches (1).

In this study, the **historical method** and the **social survey method** were employed.

#### **1. Historical Method**

History represents the collective memory of societies and a fundamental source for the social sciences. It enhances the researcher's understanding of humanity and society, enriches intellectual perspectives, and provides analytical depth. Prevailing lifestyles, social systems, and complex social phenomena have their roots in the past. Therefore, any attempt to uncover the factors contributing to the emergence of these phenomena necessitates returning to the past to trace their development from inception and to identify the factors behind their transformation over time.

Sociologists cannot study, comprehend, or analyze social systems and civilizational phenomena without conducting a detailed historical analysis, as contemporary social systems and phenomena are the products of historical transformations that have shaped their present characteristics. The primary objective of employing the historical method in sociology is to arrive at general principles and laws governing the course of social phenomena and systems, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of the present and, to some extent, the prediction of the future (2).

The historical method involves a systematic engagement with historical material in light of the rules and approaches used in social research. The social researcher must move beyond the mere chronological narration of events, as this descriptive task belongs primarily to historians. Instead, the researcher seeks to identify the general principles and laws governing social phenomena, which do not occur in isolation but are the outcomes of past processes and the result of multiple interacting factors over time that have shaped their current form (3).

#### **2. Social Survey Method**

The social survey method is one of the scientific approaches concerned with uncovering relationships resulting from the interaction of multiple variables. It has been defined as a systematic attempt to analyze, interpret, record, and collect data on the current state of a social system, group, region, or a sample thereof, whether through interviews or other research tools. In this sense, the social survey is not a theoretical methodology in itself but rather a research technique used in social research to study a social phenomenon or a specific area in all its dimensions, complexities, and interconnections (4).

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## **Definition of Research Concepts Concepts and Scientific Terminology**

Defining concepts is a scientific and methodological necessity inherent in the research process, as concepts constitute the cornerstone for constructing hypotheses and theories. The concepts addressed by a researcher are often interrelated through linguistic and scientific structures that assist in the formulation and development of hypotheses and theories. At the outset of any study, the researcher must allocate a specific section to defining and clarifying the scientific concepts employed, in order to ensure clarity for both specialist and non-specialist readers and to facilitate understanding of the hypotheses, theories, and final results of the study (5).

Concepts are defined as verbal and linguistic symbols that express general ideas abstracted through scientific observation (6). They also serve as symbolic tools through which individuals express meanings and ideas for the purpose of communication. Concepts typically represent abstract characteristics shared by objects, phenomena, and events, whether natural or social (7). Concepts emerge from the generalization of a set of individual phenomena, during which thought abstracts from incidental and non-essential elements to formulate expressions that reflect the fundamental relationships underlying objects and phenomena (8).

Each scientific concept possesses both structural and functional attributes. Structural attributes refer to the ideas and descriptors that constitute the concept, whereas functional attributes refer to the roles and functions performed by the concept in facilitating the understanding of hypotheses and theories. Concepts assist individuals in achieving a deeper understanding of the surrounding reality, as the process of knowing nature and society is not a mechanical reflection in the human mind but a complex process through which concepts and laws are formulated (9).

Formulating concepts is inherently challenging, as it involves drawing highly abstract conclusions from concrete events, making their meanings difficult to convey through direct reference to specific objects, individuals, or events. Moreover, concepts underlying theoretical constructs must not only be carefully defined but also translated into observable phenomena that can yield data acceptable as indicators of those constructs (10).

### **1. Media**

In linguistic terms, *media* derives from the verb *to inform*, meaning to know, recognize, or convey information. The act of informing refers to providing others with knowledge or news (11).

Terminologically, media refers to the act of informing, reporting, or conveying information—namely, the transmission of information among individuals through an

individual or a group, such that it spreads among them and becomes a shared language for understanding, interaction, and participation (12).

In its simplest definition, media is an attempt to produce an effect. The German scholar Otto Groth defined media as the objective expression of the mentality, spirit, tendencies, and orientations of the masses simultaneously (13). This indicates that media relies on providing people with information and facts in pursuit of a central objective: the dissemination of awareness. This perspective aligns with the researcher's view that one of the primary goals of media is the promotion of awareness.

## **2. Mass Media**

Mass media are defined as the means through which information and facts are conveyed to people via newspapers, radio, television, cinema, and books. These media do not merely provide information but also play important roles in entertainment, education, guidance, and instruction (14).

Mass media have also been defined as the tools that facilitate communication between the sender of a message and its receiver, who is typically a broad local or global audience. These tools include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and websites (15). Additionally, mass media are considered cultural instruments that support or influence attitudes, promote behavioral patterns, and contribute to social integration (16).

## **3. Awareness**

Linguistically, awareness refers to the preservation and comprehension of meaning; to be aware of something means to understand, comprehend, and accept it. Awareness has also been defined as a reflective mental orientation through which individuals become conscious of themselves and their surrounding environment at varying levels of clarity and complexity. This includes awareness of one's mental and physical functions, objects, the external world, and one's identity, whether as an individual or as a member of a group (18).

Awareness thus focuses on a fundamental task: enabling individuals to know and perceive themselves and their surrounding environment. It is also understood as the outcome of complex mental and emotional processes. Thinking alone does not shape awareness; intuition, imagination, sensations, emotions, will, conscience, values, innate dispositions, life events, social systems, and surrounding conditions all contribute to its formation. This complex mixture operates in varied proportions from one individual to another, resulting in differing forms of awareness (19).

## **4. Tourism Awareness**

Tourism awareness is an indispensable necessity for all members of society, as it represents an effective means of achieving the desired benefits of tourism activity. It contributes significantly to the development of tourism in all its forms, the realization of its positive objectives, and the reduction of its negative impacts. Indicators of tourism awareness include increased media activity, intensified tourist presence, and the outcomes generated by tourism events and activities (20).

Tourism awareness has been defined as an individual's perception and understanding of tourism, its economic importance, and an appreciation of tourism development (21). It is also considered a fundamental prerequisite for marketing tourism products, as it requires marketers to raise public awareness of tourism in order to highlight its importance in economic,

social, and cultural life and its wide-ranging impacts (22). This suggests that tourism awareness is closely linked to the marketing of tourism products and to enhancing societal understanding of tourism and its significance.

## **5. Tourism**

There is no single universally agreed-upon definition of tourism, as scholars have adopted different approaches in proposing definitions. However, there is general consensus regarding the difficulty of formulating a single, comprehensive definition (23).

Tourism was redefined by the International Conference on Travel and Tourism held in Ottawa in 1991 as the activities undertaken by individuals outside their usual environment for a specified period of time, where the primary purpose of travel is to engage in various activities without earning remuneration (24).

Definitions developed by the United Nations Statistical Commission and the World Tourism Organization have largely converged, emphasizing that tourism involves activities carried out by individuals outside their usual environment for a limited period of less than one year, provided that these activities do not generate direct financial income for the traveler.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

#### **Concept of Tourism**

By nature, human beings are thinking creatures, ever since their existence on Earth, constantly reflecting on the world around them. From the earliest stages of human history, people sought to understand the nature of the universe in which they lived. As a result, ancient societies developed numerous beliefs accompanied by diverse forms of worship and ascetic practices. These rituals were performed according to specific ceremonies, at designated times and in places dedicated for that purpose (25).

Religious sentiment motivated many individuals to leave their homelands, defying dangers and sacrificing what was precious to them in order to reach sacred places. During the Middle Ages, pilgrimage journeys assumed particular importance, as international travel to holy lands increased with the spread of Christianity. Pilgrims enjoyed protection from the Church, kings, and princes, and charitable lodgings were established to provide food, drink, and shelter free of charge for poor pilgrims. These facilities were distributed at relatively short intervals along pilgrimage routes (26).

Travel activity intensified toward the end of the Middle Ages with the advent of the Renaissance and the emergence of greater political and social stability. Demand for travel to sacred places increased, transforming pilgrimage into a form of cultural enjoyment alongside its religious dimension. During this period, religious reform movements and wars brought about radical changes in pilgrimage journeys due to the loss of earlier protections and the weakening of religious fervor. As a result, religious hostels were gradually replaced by small inns and hotels offering services to travelers in exchange for monetary payment. Historians note that tourism effectively began in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, largely due to the Industrial Revolution, which brought about a mechanical transformation in human life through advances in transportation, infrastructure, and road networks. These developments led to significant changes in work patterns and lifestyles, thereby increasing demand for tourism in general and religious tourism in particular (27).

In the nineteenth century, the effects of the Industrial Revolution resonated across different parts of the world through improved living standards and quality of life. With the introduction of railways in the mid-nineteenth century, travel was no longer limited to the affluent classes; working classes were also able to travel following the introduction of regulated holidays. This period was accompanied by scientific, technological, economic, social, and political development (28).

These changes led to a growing demand for travel and the emergence of cities established for religious reasons, whose economic foundations were primarily based on religious functions. Prominent examples include the Iraqi cities of Najaf, Karbala, Al-Kadhimiya, and Samarra, where religion played a decisive role in their formation and socio-economic development through pilgrimage seasons to their sacred shrines and religious landmarks.

In the twentieth century, tourism became increasingly prominent due to the growth of domestic and international tourism, driven by increased leisure time, rising living and education standards, and the expansion of modern and rapid transportation modes such as automobiles and aviation. The emergence of international organizations concerned with organizing tourism further facilitated travel, making it more accessible and affordable. As a result of economic and social development, multiple travel motivations emerged, including religious, recreational, sports, economic, and health-related motives, with religious motivation remaining the foremost among them (29).

Since ancient times, humans have been accustomed to moving from one place to another to meet their livelihood needs. Over time, however, this movement evolved into a socio-cultural phenomenon rather than a purely economic one. Whereas mobility was initially aimed at material gain, it later became associated with psychological enjoyment, intellectual enrichment, and cultural benefit. Thus, travel evolved into tourism in its commonly recognized sense.

Researchers have not agreed upon a unified definition of tourism, resulting in a multiplicity of definitions corresponding to the number of scholars studying the subject. This divergence stems from differences in the aspects emphasized by researchers and the perspectives from which tourism is viewed. Some scholars focus on tourism's role in strengthening relations among peoples, others view it primarily as a social phenomenon, while some regard it essentially as an economic phenomenon (30).

In the nineteenth century, tourism was defined as people traveling for pleasure or business purposes and remaining away from home for at least one night (31). Tourism has also been defined as a phenomenon of the modern age arising from an increasing need for rest, a change of environment, the emergence and growth of appreciation for the beauty of nature, and the pursuit of joy and pleasure through staying in areas with distinctive characteristics. It is also associated with the growth of communication—particularly among peoples and diverse human groups—which resulted from the expansion of trade and industry (32).

## **Tourism Media**

Tourism media is considered a form of specialized media that addresses tourism-related issues and topics in detail and plays a prominent and influential role in stimulating tourism

activity. Tourism media is defined as a planned and continuous communicative activity carried out by public relations specialists with the aim of providing the public with facts, news, and information about tourism-related issues and topics in an objective manner. This is achieved through communication channels and persuasive and influential techniques to enhance tourism awareness among the public on the one hand, and to attract the largest possible number of individuals to stay away from their place of residence—whether domestically or internationally—on the other (33).

Tourism media comprises a set of purposeful activities undertaken by public relations departments within tourism institutions to create a positive tourism image of the advertised country in tourism-exporting markets, with the aim of attracting and intensifying tourism flows toward that destination. It represents the various activities carried out by public relations departments to influence public attitudes and ideas in order to attract the largest possible number of tourists through diverse publication channels, both domestically and internationally. Accordingly, the success of tourism media is measured by the volume of tourist inflows to the destination and the increase in hotel occupancy rates (34).

Tourism media addresses audiences in an objective and rational manner, employing elements of attraction and appeal in presenting tourism products or services with the aim of persuading the public and stimulating their interest in the importance and benefits of tourism for both individuals and the state. It encourages awareness of tourism attractions, promotes positive treatment of tourists, and assists them in meeting their needs. Tourism media also targets potential tourists, encouraging them to visit and attracting them to tourism products. Moreover, it conveys the policies and orientations of official bodies responsible for tourism to the public in order to achieve acceptance and support for these policies (35).

Media represents a component of the communication process through which message recipients interact within specific social contexts. It involves sharing information, mental images, and opinions, with influencing the behavior of the recipient being the ultimate objective of the communication process. A media message that does not elicit a response from the recipient cannot be considered effective communication. Response entails a change in the recipient's mental image through the information, news, and facts conveyed, as well as comprehension of their content, which in turn motivates action and response (36).

This indicates that tourism media involves disseminating accurate and reliable information in a manner that consciously and deliberately influences people, serving both institutional interests and the public good simultaneously. The primary purposes of media are enlightenment, education, and familiarizing audiences with institutions, thereby fostering understanding and participation—both of which are fundamental to gaining trust in all public relations programs (37).

Within tourism institutions, media constitutes an essential pillar that cannot be dispensed with, particularly as it represents a continuous and stable policy across all fields, especially tourism. Media activity is sustained throughout the year without interruption, whereas advertising or promotional campaigns may be intensified only during peak tourism seasons or specific events such as festivals and international exhibitions aimed at stimulating tourism activity (38).

Several additional factors have contributed to defining and establishing tourism media as an independent field. Among these factors is the transformation of the modern era into one characterized by specialization in sciences, culture, arts, literature, and media, making the need for distinction more pressing than ever. Since tourism media addresses both specialized and general audiences through specific content, objectives, and functions, it must maintain its independence from general media as a comprehensive concept.

The concept of tourism media transcends purely profit-oriented objectives, reflecting the civilizational image of the tourism destination, fostering mutual understanding and peaceful relations among peoples, promoting cultural exchange, and contributing to the advancement of individual social behavior.

### **Objectives of Tourism Media**

Media institutions employ various communication tools and methods to convey tourism-related news to domestic and international audiences. In some cases, media professionals personally deliver newsletters, magazines, and newspapers to institutions or tourists at their places of residence as an advanced approach that creates a positive impression and encourages reading and engagement, thereby increasing tourism attraction rates. Tourism media is considered successful when it succeeds in maximizing the economic and social returns of tourism activities through coordinated, planned, and cooperative efforts across multiple dimensions (39).

Tourism media is inherently goal-oriented; it is planned, structured, and programmed with clear and intentional objectives. Scholars differ in their views regarding the objectives of tourism media. Some limit these objectives to the following (40):

1. Establishing a long-term tourism tradition or habit.
2. Disseminating information related to names, costs, and events.
3. Reducing the impact of rumors, disturbances, and negative news on tourism activity.

Other researchers argue that tourism media objectives include (41):

1. Highlighting the economic and social impacts of tourism.
2. Raising the level of tourism awareness among members of society.
3. Combating and eliminating rumors.
4. Confronting external competition.

Tourism media objectives may also be identified as follows (42):

1. Preserving ancient monuments and cultural heritage and strengthening cultural and civilizational ties by providing opportunities for knowledge, arts, and shared human experience.
2. Introducing national issues, conveying facts and information, and gaining support through direct observation of humanitarian problems and issues.
3. Contributing to the formation of international relations and fostering interaction and mutual understanding among peoples.
4. Eliminating distorted and negative images, countering rumors, and correcting misconceptions.

Despite differing scholarly perspectives, there are general objectives around which tourism media efforts converge in achieving tourism attraction. These objectives include (43):

1. Presenting an appropriate tourism image of the state and highlighting its global tourism significance.
2. Increasing tourist numbers through diverse and recognized tourism attraction methods.
3. Promoting tourism awareness, emphasizing the importance of tourism and archaeological sites, preserving them, fulfilling an educational role, and reinforcing positive values.
4. Opening new markets and organizing periodic exhibitions to attract new and potential clients.
5. Granting legal legitimacy to tourism activities through the adoption of consistent policies aligned with international tourism laws.
6. Removing obstacles and distortions caused by counter-propaganda and malicious rumors.
7. Mitigating tourism-related problems arising from wars, political and economic crises, and natural disasters.
8. Encouraging repeat visits, motivating potential tourists to make travel decisions, and fostering tourism development.
9. Providing tourism audiences with information, news, media materials, and factual content related to the nature and characteristics of tourism in the country.
10. Emphasizing the international and political importance of tourism by highlighting its role in strengthening international relations and promoting global peace, given tourism's social and political role in bringing peoples closer together, particularly when tourists from different countries meet in a single destination (44).

### **Conditions for the Success of Tourism Media**

For tourism media messages to achieve success, several conditions must be met (45):

1. Appropriate taste and decorum in message content, given its engagement with diverse audiences and cultures.
2. Flexibility and creativity, as tourism media is an innovative activity requiring sound planning, refined presentation, and adaptive implementation to address competition effectively.
3. Accuracy in presenting tourism products or services, including their characteristics, features, travel programs, and all related data.
4. Reliance on the free circulation of media materials and freedom of movement, necessitating knowledge of media laws in particular and tourism laws in general.
5. Recognition that tourism media does not yield immediate results but requires persistence, effort, and resilience in the face of competition.
6. Dependence on scientific foundations and comprehensive studies of global tourism markets, including exporting and importing countries, price comparisons, and consideration of geographical location and transportation impact.
7. Understanding the characteristics of target audiences in terms of age, gender, educational level, income, customs, traditions, collective interests, and prevailing social conditions.

## **Tourism Advertising**

Humans are naturally inclined toward curiosity, a trait closely associated with travel and exploration. Media specialists exploit this instinct through advertising and promotional strategies to attract tourism enthusiasts and highlight the features, characteristics, and aesthetic appeal of tourism destinations (46).

Advertising is defined as deliberate efforts aimed at influencing others to persuade them of an idea or opinion, gain their support for a cause, individual, or organization, alter prevailing attitudes and opinions, and ultimately change individual and group behavior by creating new behavioral patterns. Intentional influence is a fundamental condition for the existence of advertising (47).

Advertising is an art that seeks to mobilize emotional forces and individual interests toward a unified direction, leading to conviction in an idea or principle that individuals might otherwise reach spontaneously through personal reasoning without pressure or coercion (48).

Like any communicative activity, advertising involves the use and exploitation of symbols to influence the audience's frame of reference and reshape stored cognitive units of beliefs, values, ideas, and attitudes that form the mental image, resulting in behavior aligned with the sender's intent and purpose (49).

Advertising may assume political, religious, or commercial forms. Tourism advertising falls under the commercial category, given that tourism is both an industry and a trade. Tourism advertising is defined as information and news materials disseminated by tourism companies, organizations, and institutions through public relations offices, carrying a tourism-oriented character aimed at influencing audiences and conveying tourism-related ideas using available promotional and dissemination tools. Such advertising often takes a news-oriented format that enhances a country's tourism strength and international standing (50).

Tourism advertising may also be defined as the dissemination of tourism-related ideas through communication channels to embed these ideas in the minds of target audiences, with the aim of stimulating tourism activity and enabling destinations to compete effectively in global tourism markets.

The emphasis on tourism advertising by media departments within tourism institutions is necessitated by the nature of tourism products, which cannot be transported to markets or sampled prior to purchase. Despite substantial investments in tourism infrastructure and services, tourism products remain geographically fixed unless illuminated and promoted through tourism advertising and communication channels.

As a form of communication activity aimed at promoting national tourism products in exporting markets, tourism advertising derives its content from the distinctive intrinsic characteristics of tourism products and consumer needs, while its form is shaped by available media technologies. Content and form are inseparable; tourism advertising represents a coherent, harmonious unit that attracts attention through its alignment with the consumer's psychological disposition (51).

Tourism advertising proceeds in the same direction as tourism media and converges with it in purpose when it adopts a transparent, persuasive approach that employs rational and objective methods to address tourists (52).

## **Tourism Promotion and Its Foundations**

Tourism promotion should be based on solid foundations and preceded by scientific studies aimed at identifying the target audience and the market to which promotional efforts are directed. This includes understanding the types of tourists being targeted and the factors that influence tourists' decisions to travel and select a tourism destination.

Tourism promotion is not merely a collection of articles, tourism films, attractive images, posters, or exhibitions; rather, it is a research-based activity grounded in sound principles and comprehensive studies of global tourism markets. It requires knowledge of the customs, traditions, and preferences of tourism-exporting societies in order to formulate promotional campaigns implemented by public relations departments in an organized and influential manner that achieves predefined objectives. Accordingly, the foundations that public relations must consider when planning tourism promotion include the following (53):

### **1. Political Foundations:**

Tourism promotion should emphasize aspects that serve the country's global standing and international reputation. This includes highlighting the tourism destination's commitment to global peace, condemnation of destructive wars and terrorism, and promotion of tourism as a tool for developing and strengthening international relations among peoples, as well as correcting misunderstandings or distorted images associated with the tourism destination.

### **2. Religious Foundations:**

Religious sentiment plays a significant role in people's lives in general. Iraq is a religiously diverse country; therefore, tourism promotion should be conducted through various approaches that respect religious sentiments and avoid provoking any group in ways that conflict with the country's religious diversity.

### **3. Social and Ethical Foundations:**

Public relations management in tourism institutions must ensure that promotional activities respect the customs, traditions, and values of the tourism destination and refrain from violating them for the sake of tourism gains, even if such gains promise substantial financial returns. This requires presenting social realities authentically to foreign tourists and clarifying the country's customs and traditions so that visitors may respect them appropriately.

Tourism promotion is fundamentally a planned and deliberate activity that seeks—through communication processes, tools, and techniques—to guide the behavior of current and potential tourism audiences toward the destination targeted by the tourism institution. This is achieved through promotional messages that attract attention and engage recipients, allowing the message to be internalized and subsequently reflected in tourists' behaviors and actions related to the content of the promotional message.

## **Objectives of Tourism Promotion**

Tourism promotion is more than a form of cultural expression; it reaches the consciousness of audiences and interacts with their thinking processes. When tourists receive an effective promotional message characterized by strong persuasive power, attention-grabbing

elements, and stimulating content, their response aligns with the objectives of the promotional campaign.

Accordingly, public relations personnel responsible for tourism promotion must possess an adequate level of knowledge and awareness that enables them to remain informed about developments in the tourism market, exercise sound judgment, and maintain continuous communication with relevant organizations, agencies, and promotional offices—particularly those involved in tourism media and publishing.

Tourism promotion relies primarily on vivid imagery that attracts tourists and motivates them to visit a destination. The core of tourism promotion lies in tourism attractions, including facilities, services, accommodation, transportation, and hospitality. Based on this, public relations management within tourism institutions can define the objectives of tourism promotion as follows (54):

1. Influencing the opinions, attitudes, and orientations of potential tourists to encourage travel decisions and stimulate desire for tourism, particularly in light of global trends indicating steady growth in tourism activity.
2. Establishing positive relationships among citizens, tourists, and tourism institutions and organizations.
3. Informing the public about tourism programs offered by travel and tourism companies and creating positive impressions regarding the facilities and services they provide.
4. Enhancing the competitive position of travel and tourism companies by creating a positive mental image of them and contributing to improved living standards through the promotion of domestic tourism, job creation, social interaction, and strengthened social ties. This also includes encouraging investment in domestic tourism projects, supporting local tourism companies, and improving domestic and international tourism transportation capacity.
5. Reducing the impact of negative aspects arising from unforeseen events, misleading propaganda, or false rumors.

### **Approaches to Tourism Promotion**

There are two principal approaches in the field of promotion:

1. **Emotional Approach:**  
This approach addresses emotional motivations and seeks to influence imagination. It is widely used in tourism promotion, particularly in leisure tourism, cultural tourism, and visits to historical and religious sites.
2. **Rational (Logical) Approach:**  
This approach presents logical reasons and factual information to persuade clients to purchase a product or service. It is typically directed toward more educated audiences.

### **Tourism Awareness**

Tourism awareness is among the most important issues related to tourism activity, as it highlights the importance of tourism in its various forms, explains how to benefit from its advantages, and contributes to minimizing its negative impacts. Consequently, countries have paid considerable attention to tourism awareness due to its direct relationship with the success

of tourism activity. This has led to a focus on the entities responsible for developing tourism awareness, including tourism workers, official and non-official institutions, citizens, governments, and tourists.

Attention has also been directed toward the dimensions of tourism awareness, which encompass tourism, economic, social, cultural, civilizational, political, security, and national dimensions. Additionally, emphasis has been placed on the factors shaping tourism awareness, including mass media (which constitutes the core focus of this study), family, school, opinion leaders, and the cultural environment.

### **Importance of Tourism Awareness**

The importance of tourism awareness lies in its role as the primary factor in shaping the tourism image of any country. According to the World Tourism Organization (1970), the success of any tourism destination requires the presence of tourism awareness and a positive tourism image. Furthermore, the second paragraph of the Manila Declaration—issued during the World Tourism Conference in 1981 under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization—emphasized the need to enhance tourism awareness at national and organizational levels, highlighting the spiritual value of tourism as a genuine force.

The success of tourism activity in any country depends largely on tourist satisfaction during their visit, underscoring the importance of tourism awareness among members of society and the need to enhance it. Research in this field has demonstrated that a significant component of tourist satisfaction results from citizens' attitudes toward foreign visitors, their hospitality, and their avoidance of exploitation (55).

Tourism awareness contributes to increased rates of repeat visitation, as tourists leave the visited country with positive impressions that encourage future visits. More importantly, tourists transmit these impressions to relatives and acquaintances, representing one of the most influential forms of promotion.

Enhancing tourism awareness ensures that everyone providing services to tourists—such as guides, information officers, taxi drivers, and others—takes pride in their work and feels satisfied with the returns of their services. This has long-term effects on tourist retention through repeat visits and positive reputation transmitted to others, thereby stimulating tourism activity (56).

Tourism awareness cannot be measured without identifying the positive elements of tourism activity—economic, cultural, social, and civilizational—and effectively communicating these elements through mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television in language and styles appropriate to varying cultural levels, thereby embedding tourism awareness in public consciousness (57).

An executive program for disseminating tourism awareness should be developed and may include the following components (58):

1. Identifying media materials to be used in spreading tourism awareness at local, regional, and global levels.
2. Determining appropriate media channels—such as newspapers, radio, television, and the internet—while focusing on aspects that shape the country's tourism image.

3. Developing a time schedule specifying optimal periods for media use to ensure effective dissemination of tourism awareness within a defined timeframe that generates positive responses from tourists.
4. Preparing a detailed budget for implementing the proposed program, specifying various components and estimated costs.

### **Entities Responsible for Developing Tourism Awareness**

Several entities are responsible for developing tourism awareness in order to improve tourism conditions and elevate them to the desired level. Each of these entities bears specific responsibilities, and their collective efforts contribute to the creation of a tourism-aware society. These entities include (59):

- a. Tourism awareness among tourism sector workers.
- b. Tourism awareness within official and non-official institutions.
- c. Tourism awareness among citizens.
- d. Tourism awareness at the governmental level.
- e. Tourism awareness among tourists.

#### **A. Tourism Awareness among Tourism Sector Workers**

Success in the tourism field depends largely on workers who interact directly with tourists, as tourism is inherently a labor-intensive industry reliant on human interaction. High-quality service delivery fosters trust in companies, hotels, restaurants, and the destination as a whole, encouraging repeat visits and loyalty while reducing marketing costs. Conversely, poor service discourages tourists from repeating the experience.

Tourism awareness among tourism workers is promoted through training and educational programs that develop academic and professional skills, as well as through exposure to international tourism experiences via media. This awareness is reflected in professional conduct, ethical standards, and appropriate interaction with tourists (60).

#### **B. Tourism Awareness within Official and Non-Official Institutions**

The intensity of tourism activity depends significantly on the level of tourism awareness among governmental and non-governmental institutions in the destination country. These entities must possess the competence, capability, and genuine desire to satisfy tourists who temporarily reside among them. Given that tourism encompasses interconnected activities—such as accommodation, transportation, dining, and communication—effective coordination among institutions is essential.

When institutions exhibit tourism awareness, they are better equipped to deliver quality services and leave positive impressions on tourists, thereby fostering pleasant memories and enhancing destination appeal (61).

#### **C. Tourism Awareness among Citizens**

Tourism awareness among citizens is reflected in their understanding of tourism development processes and their recognition of tourism's role in achieving economic prosperity and social well-being. As citizens themselves constitute a key component of the tourism product, their attitudes significantly influence the success or failure of tourism activity.

Tourism awareness among citizens emphasizes the long-term benefits of respectful interaction with tourists, appreciation of tourism's value, and preservation of tourism resources.

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It is fostered through seminars, studies, and diverse media coverage highlighting tourism's importance (62).

#### **D. Tourism Awareness at the Governmental Level**

Governments seeking tourism development must promote tourism awareness among citizens through awareness campaigns that emphasize tourism's importance and ensure high-quality reception of domestic and international tourists. Governmental tourism awareness reflects recognition of tourism's economic, social, and political benefits and is demonstrated through support, regulation, and investment in tourism development (64).

#### **E. Tourism Awareness among Tourists**

Tourists' perceptions of host communities vary depending on prior knowledge acquired through brochures, media, or previous travel experiences. Tourism awareness among tourists is manifested in their understanding and respect for local customs, traditions, and values, enabling appropriate behavior within the destination (65).

#### **Dimensions of Tourism Awareness**

Tourism awareness is based on several key dimensions:

1. **Tourism Dimension:**

Reflected in citizens' participation in domestic tourism, which enhances direct experience and deepens awareness of tourism's value and role in society (66).

2. **Economic Dimension:**

Tourism's primary impact on local communities is economic, through employment opportunities and income redistribution. Tourism is among the most income-generating service sectors, as affirmed by the World Travel and Tourism Council (67).

3. **Social Dimension:**

Tourism involves social interaction between tourists and host communities with diverse cultural backgrounds. Tourism awareness fosters positive social values, ethical behavior, and respectful interaction, shaping favorable societal images (68).

4. **Cultural Dimension:**

Tourism facilitates mutual cultural exchange between visitors and host communities, strengthening global cultural understanding and reinforcing heritage preservation. Cultural awareness is a key indicator of tourism awareness (69).

5. **Civilizational Dimension:**

Tourism is a civilizational activity based on interaction and communication among peoples. This dimension emphasizes hospitality, respect, and supportive behavior toward tourists, contributing to destination competitiveness and success (e.g., Spain).

6. **Political and Security Dimension:**

Political stability and security play a decisive role in tourism awareness, influencing tourists' perceptions of safety and their travel decisions. Tourism is highly sensitive to political and security conditions.

7. **National Dimension:**

The national dimension reflects citizens' sense of national belonging and pride, which serves as a driving force for progress and prosperity across all sectors, including

tourism. Strengthening national identity enhances tourism awareness and supports sustainable tourism development (70).

### Recommendations

1. The study recommends continuous exploration of new tourism markets through media openness toward countries worldwide and activating the role of mass media by establishing tourism companies in those countries.
2. The researcher recommends the establishment of a specialized department or unit dedicated to media activities within tourism companies, responsible for planning and implementing media strategies.
3. It is essential to intensify tourism communication with tourist-exporting countries by utilizing various communication tools, particularly television, which remains one of the most effective and widely disseminated media. This should be accompanied by the development of the national tourism website, given its importance as a key tool for tourism promotion.
4. Emphasis should be placed on organizing and participating in tourism festivals, conferences, and seminars, as these represent effective methods of tourism communication.
5. The researcher further recommends continuous efforts to identify new tourism markets through media engagement with countries of the Islamic world by establishing tourism companies in those countries.
6. It is recommended that tourism organizations provide services that meet tourists' needs and guide their behavior toward the tourism organization in ways that achieve mutual benefits for both the organization and the tourist, through appropriate offers and travel facilities.
7. Establishing continuous social interaction between tourists and tourism organizations is essential to foster tourists' sense of belonging and loyalty. This can be achieved through social media platforms, online communication, responding to inquiries, and informing tourists of updates related to policies or tourism offers.
8. It is necessary to raise awareness among tourism organization employees regarding tourists' behavioral patterns and ensure professional, respectful, and friendly التعامل with them.
9. Efforts should be made to activate a set of mechanisms aimed at guiding tourist behavior and selecting communication methods that are positive and consistent with the social values of the tourism organization.
10. The study emphasizes the importance of taking into account academic studies and research conducted by scholars concerning effective mechanisms for dealing with tourists

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