

## The travel motivation and the perceptions of Omanis towards the services provided during Al-Khareef in Dhofar

Ghadeer Al Rumhi <sup>a</sup> and Hafidh Al Riyami <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Tourism Graduate,

UTAS Nizwa, [ghadeer9alrumhi@gmail.com](mailto:ghadeer9alrumhi@gmail.com)

<sup>b</sup> Assistant professor Tourism Department,

Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, [h.alriyami@squ.edu.om](mailto:h.alriyami@squ.edu.om)

### Abstract

Oman has many attractive places that attract local, regional, and international tourists. One of the main regions in Oman is Dhofar, which is famous for its Alkhareef (monsoon) season. This season attracts local Omanis to visit Dhofar during the summer. Local Omanis are considered the main visitors to Al-Khareef every year. There is limited research looking at the travel motivation and satisfaction level of Omanis towards the services offered in Dhofar. Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap in the literature. This study has three main objectives: exploring the travel motivation of Omanis, exploring the visitor satisfaction level of services, and identifying visitors' suggestions and recommendations to improve AlKhareef in the future. An online survey was distributed for people living in Oman in October in 2022. The total number of responses was 274. The findings revealed that the main motivations for visiting Dhofar are enjoying the nice weather, spending good time with family, and leisure and recreation. Participants were very satisfied with the following areas in Dhofar, which are the attractiveness of the environment, peace and safety of the area, and the variations of tourism activities. Most of the participants recommended improving the infrastructure and superstructure in Dhofar as well as adding more activities and events.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Satisfaction, Dhofar

## Introduction

Travel and tourism play an essential role in supporting the foreign currency economy and income sources for many countries (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2017). The tourism industry has economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits, increases tourist spending, and helps to increase the economy. It also has social benefits such as providing jobs for local people. The tourism industry refers to all activity related to the short-term movement of people to locations away from where they usually live (Lickorish & Jenkins, 2007). It is one of the world's largest industries. Many countries around the world depend on the income generated from the tourism industry (Revfine, 2022).

The tourism industry includes the following sectors:

- **Transportation:** The transport sector is concerned with transporting travelers from their point of origin to their destination. It includes various transportation services such as Airline Industry, car rental, water transport, coach services, railway, and spacecraft.
- **The accommodation sector** is one of the important sectors in the tourism industry because the tourist needs to stay, sleep, and rest. There are several types of accommodations such as hotels, camping sites, guesthouses, hostels, and cruises.
- **Food and Beverage,** the tourist needs for food and beverages include restaurants, catering services, cafés, and nightclubs.
- **Entertainment:** Some tourists are traveling searching for entertainment. The tourism sector provides entertainment services that include casinos, amusement parks, shopping malls, and tours.
- **Other sectors** include Financial Services, Travel Agents, Tour operators, Online Travel Agencies, and tourism Organisations ( Revfine,2022).

Tourism service providers should provide good quality of services. Quality of service can be determined by comparing how well it meets customer expectations. Customers buy services to address their particular needs. They have criteria and expectations for either how an organization's service delivery meets their demands, consciously or unconsciously (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). A business with great service quality provides clients with services that meet or surpass their expectations.

Oman is one of the most attractive tourism destination in the Middle East, with diverse landscape including rugged mountains, windswept deserts, and boundless beaches (Outlook Travel, 2022). Oman consists of 11 governorates, which are the Musandam, Buraimi, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Muscat, Al Dhahra, Ad Dakhiliyah, North Sharqia, South Sharqia, and Dhofar. All of these governorates have a diversity of unique tourist attractions that

attract tourists from all over the world. It received more than 4 million tourists in 2023 (National Center of Information and Statistics (NCSI), 2024).

This research focuses on the Dhofar governorates. It is located in the southern part of the Sultanate of Oman and it is linked to all parts of the Sultanate through a road attached to the capital Muscat 1023 km ( Dhofar Municipality, 2022). Dhofar governorate has historic importance and a unique place in the history of Oman, ancient and modern. It is considered to be of economic and tourism importance to Oman for its natural resources include agricultural, cattle, and fishery. It is one of the main tourists' attractions for locals, regional and international tourists (Beautiful, 2022).

Many local Omanis visit Salalah During Khareef because of it is weather, the diversity of nature like mountains, deserts, seas, and beaches, and its heritage and culture. People are also attracted to different events, which organized during Alkhareef. Salalah is the main city in Dhofar and it has many services to tourists. Tourism service is any service offered to tourists, such as a service connected with accommodation, transportation, bus tours, taxis, tour guiding, vending, water sports, and food and beverage offered wholly or mainly to visitors (Study.com, 2022).

There are many Omani travel and visit Salalah during Al-khareef every year. According to the NCIS, 548334 visitors visited Khareef Salalah in 2018 (Atheer, 2018). These visitors stay at least 3 days in Dhofar, and they purchase many services such as transportations, accommodations and food and beverage. The quality of services provided in Khareef Salalah is considered an important role in gaining tourists' satisfaction and generate repeat visit and positive word of mouth. There is limited research explore the level of satisfactions of Omanis with the services provided in Khareef Salalah. There is limited research looking at the perceptions of these visitors towards the services provided to them during Khareef. In addition, there are limited studies looked at the main motivation of Omanis to visit Dhofar. There are several studies about quality of services, however, there are limited studies about quality of services provided to local tourists in Khareef Salalah. Understanding their motivation and their satisfaction level will help service providers to create the right tourism products for the tourists and generate positive word of mouth.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the travel motivation and the perceptions of Omanis towards the services provided at Khareef Salalah 2022. It has the following three objectives

- Explore visitors' satisfaction level of services provided in Dhofar
- Explore the motivation to visit Khareef Salalah
- Identify visitor's suggestions and recommendations for improving and developing tourism services provided in Salalah

This is one of the first studies to explore the motivation and perceptions of Omanis toward the quality of tourism services provided during Alkhareef in Salalah. The findings can help service providers understand visitors' motivations and their satisfaction levels with the services provided. It can also help to develop, and improve services provided by the government and private organizations in Dhofar, which will lead to increase number of tourists and increase their satisfactions levels in the future.

## **Literature Review**

### **Tourism**

Tourism can be defined as a movement away from home for short time, searching for leisure, relaxation, and pleasure (Walton, 2022). Although it has roots in classical antiquity, tourism is a by-product of contemporary social structures that emerged in Western Europe in the 17th century (Walton, 2022). There are basic components of the tourism industry, which are accommodation, transportation, food, drinks, and others, and their quality varies from one place to another.

The tourism sector has an impact on the global GDP. Tourist arrivals have increased since shortly after the Second World War in 1950. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that internationally there were around 25 million tourist arrivals in 1950. However, 68 years later this number has increased to 1.4 billion international arrivals per year. This is a 56-fold increase (Roser, 2022). After declining significantly in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the size of the worldwide tourism industry increased by almost 20% in 2021 compared to the previous year. The global tourism businesses are expected to be worth over 1.31 trillion US dollars in 2021. This amount is anticipated to increase to \$1.67 trillion in 2022, remaining below pre-pandemic levels (Statista, 2022). In Oman, the tourism sector has contributed 2.4 percent to the state GDP in 2021( Al Nassriya, 2022). This contribution is expected to increase to more than 5% in the coming 15 years.

### **Quality of Service:**

Service is considered as any action or deed that one party can provide to another. It is largely intangible and does not lead to the acquisition of any property is referred to as a service. Its creation may or may not be connected to a tangible good. On the other hand, quality is a group of qualities that consumers anticipate from goods or services. Design, performance, dependability, safety, efficiency, effectiveness, economy, and timeliness are just a few of the many elements that go into its creation. In other terms, quality refers to adherence to predetermined criteria. It also suggests a way to gauge how successfully a good or service achieves its goals.

A focus on quality is one of the essential bases for success for tourism service providers and the tourism industry in general. The best indicator of plans to repurchase is quality (Tovmasyan, 2020). Quality in tourism refers to fulfilling customer needs for products and services and their requirements and expectations, at a reasonable cost, following mutually agreed-upon contractual terms and the underlying quality determinants like safety and security, hygiene, and so forth (UNWTO, 2003). In addition, service is a more or less intangible series of activities (Shahin, 2006). Services offered by hotels, restaurants (including catering), travel agencies, tour operators, tourist guides, and other related businesses are all considered to be part of the tourism and travel industry (WTO, 2022). It is clear that tourists need quality of services and products when traveling because tourists are paying more money for the products and services to get good quality. The quality of tourist attraction services, uniqueness, and high value is the basis for tourists to revisit a destination (Rahmiati, Othman, Bakri, Ismail & Amin, 2020).

There are several definitions of service quality. Instead of "what the provider puts in," service quality is defined as "what the client receives out and is willing to" pay for" (Ducker, 1991). Parasuraman et al (1985) stated that service quality is "the degree and direction of the discrepancy between customers' perceptions and expectations" and "Perceived service quality" is "the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions, as a measurement of service quality." Therefore, the greater the service quality and client happiness, the smaller the disparity. Every consumer in any organization that provides a service has an ideal expectation of the kind of service, he/she wishes to receive. Service delivery against client expectations is a measure of service quality. In addition, businesses with good service quality are those that fulfil the expectations of their clients (Study. com, 2022). Providing high-quality service helps to reach customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is how well a company's goods or services live up to consumer expectations and it can be measured by customer satisfaction. It is one of the most significant predictors of consumer loyalty and purchasing intentions. As a result, it aids in predicting corporate income and growth (Survicate, 2022). Customer satisfaction can help in gauging how well a company's goods, services, and overall client encounter live up to client expectations. Demonstrating how well your goods or services are received by customers, represents how healthy is the organization (Franklin, 2022). In some earlier research, the level to which a service meets a customer's wants or expectations was considered a measure of service quality (Dotchin & Oakland, 1994; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990). The accessibility of tourist locations and the attractiveness of the facilities strongly influence visitors' satisfaction levels. A service's ability to meet consumer expectations is measured by its level of quality (Lewis & Booms. 1983). As a result, service quality is typically defined as the disparity between perceived service actual performance and perceived service desired performance (Bloemer et al., 1999; Kara et al., 2005). The servqual



model, developed by Parasuraman et al. in 1988, includes 22 elements across five dimensions: dependability, tangibleness, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy is considered one of the most adapted model.

Customer happiness and service quality management have a substantial relationship. Customer satisfaction factors including accessibility, information, timeliness, service delivery, accessibility to personal competency, comfortable and safe surroundings, and a pollution-free environment are of utmost importance to any hotelier in the hospitality sector. Therefore, service providers must win the respect and trust of their clients in terms of service quality and recurring business (Chang, 2008).

Past studies looked at the relationship between service quality management and customer satisfaction in different tourism services. For example, Chang (2008) explored the tour guide and customer satisfaction. Chang (2008) stated that Travelers' pleasure on tour is thought to be greatly influenced by the tour guide's attention and interactions with other people. In addition, Philemon (2015) found tourists were not satisfied with service providers in Tanzania including transportation, the health care system, restaurants and tour guidance in their travel to Tanzania. Moreover, Anastassova and Johann (2014) examined how Polish tourists felt about their vacation experiences in Bulgarian hotels. The authors found that hotels in popular summer destinations in Bulgaria provide a competitive value proposition and a favorable price/quality ratio. Additionally, the researchers stated that there is no difference between three- and four-star hotels in the average tourist's evaluation of the key qualities of the tourism offering. Standard of rooms, meals, customer service, entertainment, and price/quality relationship are among the tourism product attributes which effect tourists satisfaction.

### **Travel motivation:**

Dann (1997) stated that there are several factors motivate people to visit particular destinations, which can be divided into push or pull motivations. On one hand, the push factors are also called internal factors such as the demand for rest, recreation, escape and change daily routine. On the other hand, the pull factors which normally linked to what tourism destination offers to the tourists, which might include infrastructure and superstructure such as accommodation, transportation, restaurants and tourism activities and tourism facilities. Therefore, Yousaf, Amin and Santos, (2018) argue that tourism destinations should understand tourists push and pull factors. They stress that destinations managers should understand tourists expectations (quality of accommodation, services offered at the destinations) and try their best to over meet this expectations and make their visitors satisfied.

### **Tourism destination:**

A tourism destination draws visitors for its inherent or demonstrated natural or cultural worth, historical significance, natural or architectural beauty, and ability to provide entertainment and leisure (Global, 2022). Tourist destinations are places that have created an amalgam of tourist goods and services that are consumed under the brand name of the destination. The tourism destinations are clearly defined geographically, are recognized as distinct entities, and display several fundamental characteristics (Zygmunt 2013). A destination is a place that provides travelers with a wide range of services and amenities (Murphy et al., 2000). For development and planning activities, a comprehensive and clearly defined destination is crucial. This aids local tourism businesses and groups in properly defining and scheduling their operations and tourism activities (Saarinen, 2004).

### **Oman:**

Oman is located on the Arabian Peninsula's southeast coast, where the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea meet. The Rub al-Khali, a sandy, treeless, and mainly waterless region of the Arabian Peninsula contains a substantial portion of the country's interior. Despite being intersected by oil and gas pipelines nowadays, the area is still inhabited by Bedouin nomads. The seaside areas are much friendlier than the desolate interior. Between the ocean and the interior highlands is Oman's verdant northern coastline. Similar to the Dhofar region in the south of the nation, this lush, fertile area is well-known for its grapes, pomegranates and other crops. The northern coast is where Muscat, the capital, is located. The city combines traditional and modern architecture (Crystal, 2022).

The southern Oman governorate of Dhofar has a season of weather called "Khareef," which means "autumn" in Arabic, refers to Salalah's monsoon season instead. The English word "monsoon" is derived from the Arabic word "maowsim," which means "season." Locals and tourists alike swarm to Salalah during this season as the area's previously brown scenery is entirely changed into a stunning and lush green (Trippe, 2013). It makes the landscape turn green, surrounds the hills in white fog, and brings on nearly constant mild rain. Khareef is not the only thing Salalah is known for, Salalah is even more famous for its ancient frankincense trade, with UNESCO including several ancient settlements (Al Balid, Sumharam, Shisr, and Wadi Dawkah) in Dhofar in its World Heritage List, appropriately naming it the "Land of Frankincense". Thousands of years later, Salalah is still well known for the quality and quantity of frankincense it produces" (Trippe, 2013). Dhofar and its famous city Salalah enjoy a cool, pleasant climate that draws tourists from all over the world in contrast to the scorching heat that occurs in the rest of Oman from July to September (Culture trip, 2022). "The number of visitors to Salalah tourism season 2019 touched 766,772 recordings a decline by 7.2% compared to the 2018 season" (Observer, 2020). Visitors can find different tourist services in Dhofar, such as hotels with different stars, restaurants, tourism companies, infrastructure, and tourism facilities.

Based on previous studies, there is limited literature written about tourism in Oman in general and Dhofar in particular. There is limited research on the perceptions of Omanis towards the services provided during Khareef Salalah 2022. Hence, this study aim to fill this gap. This study can help the government and the private sector to improve and develop the quality of services, and increase visitors' satisfaction.

## Methodology

This study adapted quantitative method. This research used an online questionnaire targeting local Omanis who have visited Khareef Salalah. Thus, this study will focus on Omanis who travel to Salalah during the Khareef season. It will focus on the quality of services provided by the accommodation sector (hotels, apartments), Transportation ( roads, Airlines ), and Food and Beverage (restaurants, cafes ) as well as their motivation to visit Dhofar during Khareef 2022.

The questionnaire contains 54 questions and is divided into four sections. The first section is about general information such as age, gender, level of income, education, the number of Khareef Salalah visitors, and others. The second section is about satisfaction levels of services and the third section is about the travel motivation to Khareef Dhofar. The final section is about recommendations and suggestions. The data collection lasted for one month in October 2022. The questionnaire was distributed randomly through email, WhatsApp, and posted in X and Instagram. The total number of participants in this survey was 274. However, 12 of the participants did not answer all the questions shown in the survey and their data was removed. The SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

## Results and Analysis

### Section A: Demographic profile

The analysis of the survey indicates that almost 90% of the participants were between 21-40 years old, 64% were males, 76% were single, 83% have visited Dhofar more than twice, 80% held bachelor degree and university diploma, and the monthly income of 90% of them was less than 1000.

### Section B: Level of satisfaction

The first objective of this study was to explore the satisfaction levels of the visitors of khareef Salalah in 2022. Table 1 lists the areas where participants have a high level of satisfaction. It can be noticed that the participants were very satisfied with the environment in Dhofar. This is not supervising as the main attraction to visit Dhofar in summer is the environment and the weather. The table shows that participants were very satisfied with their visit to Dhofar and hence, they wanted to visit Dhofar again in the future as well as they will recommend others



to visit it, which were the second and fourth items listed in the table. Visitors were very satisfied with the security level in Dhofar, which scored the third in the list.

<b>Table 1 Items with a high level of satisfaction</b>		
	Item	Mean
1.	The environment and weather in Salalah is attractive	3.59
2.	Im interested to visit Khareef Salalah in the future	3.60
3.	I felt the place is peaceful and felt secure in Dhofar	3.55
4.	I will recommend other to visit Dhfar next year	3.54
5.	I will visit Khareef Salalah again	3.52
6.	I have a positive feelings about Alkhareef in Salalah	3.42
7.	Local people in Dhofar are friendly and welcome tourists	3.47
8.	I did not face any problem during my visit to Khareef Salalah	3.38
9.	This trip was enjoyable and better than expected	3.38
10.	Im satisfied with my decision to visit Khareef Salalah	3.37
11.	I have enjoyed the trip to Khareef Salalah	3.36
12.	Online booking for tickets and accommodation was easy and flexible	3.28
13.	People who were providing services were friendly	3.24

On the other hand, Table 2 presents that the participants were less satisfied with the several areas. Tourists were unhappy with accessibility to reach the tourism attractions in Dhofar, followed with the price of accommodation and service providers and thirdly the level of the infrastructure. This means there were high traffic jam in the tourists attractions. Tourists were to have to wait long time to reach the tourism attractions and events. Tourists found prices are very high and the service providers were not offer a good value of money.

<b>Table 2 Items with the lowest satisfactions level</b>		
	Item	Mean
1.	The accessibility to reach the tourists attractions	2.40
2.	The prices of hotels, restaurant and museums were reasonable	2.82
3.	The infrastructure in Dhofar were well established and with high quality	2.87
4.	The tourism services such as restaurant and hotels were high quality and reasonable priced	2.89
5.	The accommodation and tourism facilities were attractive and well designed	2.95

6.	The historical places in Dhofar were accessible	3.00
7.	There were enough information about Dhofar	3.09

### C: Motivations to visit Dhofar

The second objective of this study was to explore the motivations of Omanis to visit khareef Salalah. Table 3 presents the list of motivations with their mean scores. It can noticed tourists were motivated to visit Dhofar for the weather, spending time with family and for leisure and recreation.

Table 3 The main travel Motivations to Dhofar		
	Item	Mean
1.	Enjoying the nice weather	3.73
2.	Spending a nice time with family	3.71
3.	For leisure and recreation	3.67
4.	Getting relaxed mentally	3.64
5.	Getting away from the daily routine	3.70
6.	See new places	3.58
7.	To try new things and activities	3.49

In addition, table 4 provides the list of the lowest five motivations to visit Salalah. Tourists were less likely to visit Dhofar to build new friendships and to meet other people with the same interest.

Table 4 The lowest travel Motivations to Dhofar		
	Item	Mean
1.	Building new friendships with others	3.07
2.	Meeting people with similar interests	3.16
3.	Learning more about nature and other cultures	3.21
4.	To learn more about my self	3.23

### Section D:

The third objective of this study was to identify visitors' suggestions and recommendations for improving and developing tourism services provided in Salalah. The findings show that visitors suggested the following points to improve in Khareef Salalah:

1. The visitors wanted to see more variety of activities and events suitable for all the family members and all ages' groups in different parts of Dhofar.
2. The respondents suggested to improve the infrastructure in general and about the road transportation in particular. This shows that many visitors faced traffic jam during their visit to Dhofar.
3. Visitors also suggested to take action regarding the prices of accommodation. There should be guidelines and regulations with regards to the right price for the different types of accommodation. The visitors also emphasize that action to be taken about the prices in restaurant and museums. They also suggested to take action about the prices of the flight tickets from Muscat to Salalah.
4. The visitors also suggested to increase the number and the quality of the tourism facilities and services such as clean toilets and tourist's information center in different parts of the main tourism attractions.
5. Some visitors suggest increasing the variety of restaurants and accommodation.
6. They also suggested more innovations and creativity in events and services.

## **Conclusion and implications**

The main aim of this paper was to explore the perceptions of Omanis towards the services provided during Khareef Salalah 2022. It has three main objectives which are explore visitors' satisfaction level of services provided in Dhofar, explore the motivation to visit Khareef Salalah, identify visitors' suggestions and recommendations for improving and developing tourism services provided in Salalah.

The research used an online survey to collect the data. The survey was distributed by email and social media. The study found that Omanis were very happy with the environment and the weather in Dhofar. They also found Dhofar as peaceful and secure destination. Hence, they will recommend visiting Dhofar to other people and revisit again. The paper also found that Omanis were motivated to visit Dhofar to enjoy the weather, spend good time with their family, and for leisure and recreation purposes.

It can be noticed people are motivated to visit tourism destination because of the weather. The weather is considered one of the main pull and push factors for tourism destination. Therefore, destination marketers in Dhofar should focus on the unique weather and environment that Dhofar is offering during the Alkhareef which will help to attract more visitors. Moreover, spending time with family is considered one of main motivation for many tourists to visit Dhofar. This shows that Dhofar is promoted as family destination especially for domestic

tourists. Many locals and domestic tourists are motivated to visit Dhofar for leisure and recreation purpose. Therefore, more activities and recreation activities and facilities should be provided to tourists and their families. They should also provide several activities and events to make tourists stay longer in the tourism destination.

On the other hand, Omanis were unhappy with the transportation and accessibility to the tourism attractions. They also were unhappy with prices offered by service providers such as the accommodation sector. The paper also found that Omanis have several suggestions to improve the Dhofar Khareef in the future. The main suggestion includes more activities for all family members, improve the transportation, increase the quality of tourism facilities, and regulate the price of the accommodation providers.

This study has several limitation and delimitation. First it focused only on locals tourists visited Dhofar before covid-19. It used only online survey to collect data. Hence, future research may repeat the same research to see if there is any change of the customers satisfactions after covid-19. In addition, this study recommend future research to use interview with tourists visiting Dhofar during the Alkhareef time. This will help to provide deep information and knowledge about tourists motivations and their satisfactions. Future research may explore the differences between family segments and youth segments visiting Dhofar Monsoon season.

## References

- Al Nassriya, Z (2022). The tourism sector has contributed 2.4 per cent to the state GDP in 2021, <https://www.omanobserver.om/article/1123767/oman/tourism/tourism-sector-contributes-24-to-gdp>
- Atheer, (2018). The number of visitors to the Khareef season in Salalah exceeds one million. <https://www.atheer.om/archives/477415/%d8%b9%d8%af%d8%af-%d8%b2%d9%88%d8%a7%d8%b1-%d9%85%d9%88%d8%b3%d9%85-%d8%ae%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%81-%d8%b5%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a9-%d9%8a%d8%aa%d8%ac%d8%a7%d9%88%d8%b2-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%86%d8%b5%d9%81-%d9%85/>
- Bloemer, J., Ruyter, K. and Wetzels, M. (1999). Linking perceived service quality and service loyalty: a multidimensional perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*. 33(11/12), 1082-1106.
- Dann, G.M.S. (1977), "Anomie, Ego-Enhancement and Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4 (4), pp. 184-194.
- Dhofar Municipality.2022.Salalah City. <http://www.dm.gov.om/Pages.aspx?PGID=48&PAID=0&MID=0>
- Ducker, P. (1991). Innovation and entrepreneurship: practice and principles. Louisiana, Louisiana State University Press. [https://nibmehub.com/opac-service/pdf/read/\[Drucker-%201985\]%20Innovation%20and%20E....pdf](https://nibmehub.com/opac-service/pdf/read/[Drucker-%201985]%20Innovation%20and%20E....pdf)

- Franklin, A. (2022). What is customer satisfaction? Definition + importance <https://www.zendesk.com/blog/3-steps-achieving-customer-satisfaction-loyalty/>
- Indeed Editorial Team, (2021). Service Quality: Definition, 5 Dimensions and Implementation <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/service-quality>
- Lewis, B. R. & Mitchell, V. W. (1990). Defining and measuring the quality of customer service. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 8 (6), 11-17.
- Lickorish, L. J., & Jenkins, C. L. (2007). *Introduction to tourism*. Routledge. file:///C:/Users/hqmxv/Downloads/10.4324\_9780080495866\_previewpdf%20(4).pdf
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M., & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveler perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21, 43–52  
[https://www.academia.edu/1064913/The\\_destination\\_product\\_and\\_its\\_impact\\_on\\_traveller\\_perceptions](https://www.academia.edu/1064913/The_destination_product_and_its_impact_on_traveller_perceptions)
- NCSI, 2024, Tourism indicators, <https://www.ncsi.gov.om/Pages/IndicatorDetails.aspx?ItemID=QUTTKcDTOPaFaymsPHbVpg%3d%3d>
- Observer.2020.MUSCAT: The number of visitors to Salalah tourism season 2019 touched 766,772 recording a decline by 7.2 per cent compared to 2018 season <https://www.omanobserver.om/article/17633/Main/over-766000-visit-salalah-during-tourism-season>
- Outlook travel, (2022). Oman <https://www.outlooktravelmag.com/travel-guides/94-oman>
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. and Berry, L. (1988). SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 29-40.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083802\\_SERVQUAL\\_A\\_multiple-Item\\_Scale\\_for\\_measuring\\_consumer\\_perceptions\\_of\\_service\\_quality](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083802_SERVQUAL_A_multiple-Item_Scale_for_measuring_consumer_perceptions_of_service_quality)
- Revfine (2022). Tourism Industry: Everything You Need to Know About Tourism <https://www.revfine.com/tourism-industry/>
- Saarinen, J. (2004). Destinations in Change. The Transformation Process of Tourist. *Tourist Studies*, 4 (2), 161-79.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249628854\\_'Destinations\\_in\\_change'\\_The\\_transformation\\_processes\\_of\\_tourist\\_destinations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249628854_'Destinations_in_change'_The_transformation_processes_of_tourist_destinations)
- Scientific Reserch. Lewis, R. and Booms, B. (1983) The Marketing Aspects of Service Perspectives on Services Marketing. American Marketing Association, Chicago. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferenceID=1928989>
- Shahin A (2006) SERVQUAL and model of service quality gaps: A framework for determining and prioritizing critical factors in delivering quality services. In: Partha Sarathy V (ed.) *Service Quality-An Introduction*. Andhra Pradesh: ICFAI University Press, pp. 117–131 [\(PDF\) SERVQUAL and Model of Service Quality](#)



## Gaps: A Framework for Determining and Prioritizing Critical Factors in Delivering Quality Services (researchgate.net)

- Study.com. 2022. Service Quality: Definition & Dimensions <https://study.com/academy/lesson/service-quality-definition-dimensions.html>
- Survicate.com. 2022. Customer Satisfaction: Why It's Important in 2022 <https://survicate.com/customer-satisfaction/importance-customer-satisfaction/#toc-0>
- Walton. J. (2022), Tourism, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tourism>
- UNWTO (2003) Quality in Tourism, Sustainable Development of Tourism.

Available at: <http://sdt.unwto.org/en/content/quality-tourism> (accessed 3 March 2014).

- World Travel Organization. 2022. Tourism and travel-related services. [https://www.S.org/english/tratop\\_e/serv\\_e/tourism\\_e/tourism\\_e.htm#:~:text=Tourism%20and%20travel%2Drelated%20services%20include%20services%20provided%20by%20hotels,of%20consumers%20\(mode%202\)](https://www.S.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/tourism_e/tourism_e.htm#:~:text=Tourism%20and%20travel%2Drelated%20services%20include%20services%20provided%20by%20hotels,of%20consumers%20(mode%202))
- Yousuf, A, Amin, I and Santos, J (2018), Tourists Motivation to Travel: A Theoretical Perspective on the Existing Literature, *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 24 (1), 197-211.

### **Author Biographies**

**Ghadeer Al Rumhi** holds a bachelor's degree in Tourism Management from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences.

**Dr. Hafidh Al Riyami** is an Assistant Professor at the Tourism Department, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. He holds a doctorate in Tourism Management from UQ Business School, the University of Queensland, Australia. Prior to joining academia, he gained national and international working and training experiences in the tourism and hospitality industry. He has several publications, and he is one of the co-authors of Tourism in The Arab World Book. His research interests include Sustainable Tourism Development, Tourist Behavior, Arab/Muslim Tourism, Tourism Experience, and Risk-taking behavior.