

The Relationship between Political Conflict (2013/ 2016) and Marketing Performances of Libyan Tourism SMEs

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ABSTRACT

The current study seeks to attain the following objectives: (1) to develop a comprehensive construct to measure marketing performance of Libyan Tourism SMEs; (2) to investigate Libyan managers' attitudes towards their businesses' Marketing Performances; (3) to measure the linkage between Libyan political crisis 2013/ 2016 and marketing performances of Tourism SMEs; and (4) to introduce some key recommendations and implications for theory and practice.

In terms of research methodology, a comprehensive construct was developed based on literature review to collect the required data. A number of (15) components and (82) items were generated to capture the marketing performance domain. This construct was reviewed by a pool of (8) academicians at Management Schools of Libyan universities. Top management nominees in Libyan tourism SMEs in Benghazi City were targeted in two different occasions: the pilot-study and actual field work. A number of (65) tourism agencies, (7) hotels, (3) airlines representatives has been targeted in this research. Out of (400) questionnaires circulated, only (113) questionnaires were returned with (98) deemed valid for data analysis.

The key finding of the study is that there is evident decline in marketing performance of Libyan tourism SMEs. The Libyan Political Crisis (2013 – 2016) has negative correlation with businesses' marketing performances as well. Furthermore, demographical and institutional factors demonstrated to have no significant impact on the research results.

The key value of this research is that it is conducted under crisis circumstances, and it might be the first research to focus on measuring marketing performance of Libyan tourism businesses. Additionally, the emphasis was placed in particular on the crisis's consequence. Therefore, this article enriches international marketing literature with findings from the Arabic and North African region. Practically, the paper demonstrates the consequences of (exceptional events) political crises on tourism industry's performances. Therefore, foreign businesses, Libyan decision makers and tourism businesses' managers should take advantages from the results of this research. Finally, the paper concludes with limitations and future research.

Keywords: Marketing Performance, SMEs, Libyan Political Conflict.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Libyan Political Crisis 2013/ 2016 refer to the dispute that has erupted among the three Libyan political bodies: the elected authorized Parliament named Libyan House of Representatives, the old one called Libyan General National Congress and the newly formed body named the Presidential Council.

This conflict has developed to a grinding war reflected negatively on the State of Libya. These transformations in Libya from the Libyan Transition Council to General National Congress

to Libyan House of Representatives to the recently established body Presidential Council (2016) have occurred as a result to the failure in building the Libyan State.

The failure of General National Congress in establishing and stabilizing the Libyan state has caused several negative aspects such as lack of security, spread of chaos, close of several public and private educational institutions, delay of airlines services, inflation, decrease of liquidity and local currency's value.

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In this study, the focus was placed on the relationship between Libyan Political Crisis and marketing performances of Tourism businesses.

Reviewing the extant literature has proved that Tourism marketing is an important component of income for several economies. Similar to other important sectors, this sector can be affected by instability and bad political environment at crisis's times.

Generally speaking, the tourism marketing is considered as the most important sector that contributes in developing the economies of several countries in the world. This industry is ranked fifth of the exports of more than 80% of the countries in the world, where those countries are visited by millions of tourists every year.

According to United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO Report, 2016), the top mostly-visited cities in the world were Bangkok 21.47 million international tourists; London 19.88 million tourists; Paris 18.05 million tourists; Dubai 15.27 million tourists and New York 12.75 million tourists. In addition, the spending on tourism marketing costs huge amount of money and generates billions of revenues.

Tourism marketing is also a source of competitive advantages to numerous countries. It is an important source of national income, a source of foreign currency, employment of citizens, and reduction of inflation rate.

The tourism industry generates more than 250 billion U.S. dollars for countries in which there are potential tourism activities. In the United States alone, tourism marketing creates more than five million jobs, and slightly more in Europe. The situation in Africa is different. This continent was described as one of the fastest regional tourism in the developing world (Chaudhary, 2010). For instance, since the beginning of the first eight months of the year (2012) the rate of tourists in Africa was 6% higher than the global average 4%, which made the UNWTO increase its expectations to double the number of international tourists in Africa by 2030 to reach 134 million instead of 50 million

currently. This, in turn, reflects the importance of national and international scientific research in tourism marketing field.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

As explained above, the importance of the tourism marketing as a major component of economy is critical to both developed and developing countries, especially those that have the potential of tourism pillars such as seas, beaches, rivers, mountains, deserts, entertainment, national attractions, and services in general.

In the Arab world and the African continent especially the Middle East and North Africa, it can be noted the importance of tourism marketing in Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, and Syria, which relies heavily on tourism field as a major supplier of income. It also creates approximately millions of jobs for citizens. These countries have been affected by what is called the Arab Spring revolutions that swept through these countries recently as mentioned in the Global Competitiveness Report (Schwab, 2013).

By looking at Libya as one of the Arabic and African countries, it is observable that Libya possesses an enormous tourism wealth stretches along the country, but the governmental interest in the tourism marketing sector as one of governmental institutions is very weak as evaluated by global indicators.

Libya was ranked 104 out of 130 countries in the world, according to the World Economic Forum Ranking in 2008, and ranked 112 out of 133 countries in 2009/2010. Libya was out of rank in the years 2010 up to 2013 due to Libyan 17th of February Revolution and no data was available.

The country ranked 108 out of 148 countries in the year 2013/ 2014 and ranked 126 out of 144 countries surveyed in the year 2014/ 2015 according to the Global Competitiveness Report (Schwab, 2015).

This backwardness is due to several reasons: the sharp decline in the number of tourists, the lack of airlines services, the shortage of excellent hotels, the decrease in services' quality of local hotels, the absence of strategies for the tourism programmes and recreational services, the abuse and mistreatment of guests, the lack of reliable public transport services (Trains; Taxis; Buses), the poor communication system (Internet Services; Landlines; Mobile Phones), the absence of reliable financial services (Money Transfer; Money Exchange; Cash Machine; Visa Card Services), barriers of language etc. (Elkrghli & Elgimati, 2013).

The aforementioned motivations were a stimulating power to conduct the current paper to measure the extent to which the Libyan Political Crisis 2013/ 2016 connected with the marketing performance of Libyan tourism businesses.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The current paper aims to achieve these key objectives:

- To design a comprehensive marketing performance construct captures broader range of marketing domain.
- To determine the extent to which Libyan Political Crisis (2013 / 2016) correlated with Libyan Tourism SMEs performances from participants' perspectives;
- To determine to what extent demographical factors affect the research results;
- To determine to what extent institutional factors affect the research results;
- To put forward some theoretical and empirical implications contribute to the marketing literature and practices during crises' times from non-western countries' perspectives.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In his speech to the world in the World Tourism Day (17 / September / 2016: Tourism For All – Promoting Universal Accessibility), the United Nations Secretary- Ban Ki-moon stated that "Tourism has become a powerful economic

sector, a passport to prosperity and peace, and a transformative force improving millions of lives as almost 1.2 billion people travelling abroad each year over the world". This statement highlights the influential role of tourism on countries' economies.

The literature on political crisis effect on tourism sector has gone through significant developments in recent years. Several hospitality businesses, travel agencies and airlines companies in the world faced critical circumstances in which they experienced different crises. For instance, natural disaster of the Deadly Indian Ocean Tsunami in (2004) is a clear example of natural catastrophe. The attack of 11 September 2011 in the USA and the (2008) global economic crisis are also examples of such crises (Laws, Prideaux, and Chon, 2007, Kritayanavaj, 2009). These crises have a very significant negative effect on the marketing performance of tourism businesses.

In his study in Fiji Island, Singh (2009) found severe impact of political environment on tourism marketing efficiency in the country. The study revealed proliferation of malicious groups and political unrest. This has an impact on the image of the country, which consequently discouraged tourists to plan their visits. This also has an effect on the international relations with other countries who have been immensely contributing to the revenue from tourism industry. Ultimately, this has negatively affected the marketing efficiency.

In their studies in Thailand, Silk (2008); Chachavalpongpun, (2009); Shen, (2009) and Smeral, (2010) revealed that the political conflicts and turmoil have a severe effect on tourism industry.

In other studies, Hani (2006) and Basu, et al., (2012) outlined that the ongoing political instability in the Middle East has affected the International Tourism to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

In Turkey, Tekin (2015) examined the impacts of political and economic uncertainties on tourism market. Based on tourist arrivals and

statistics on tourist flows, the study revealed that the tourism market in Turkey is indirectly affected by the political instability and following economic crisis in Russia. Furthermore, the domestic and regional political instabilities surrounding Turkey have negatively affected the tourists' flows.

Recently, several countries in the Middle East and North Africa such as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Libya have been experienced critical crises caused sharp decline in international tourist arrivals. This, in turn, has affected the tourism marketing returns.

The previous reviewed studies have conclusively showed the impact of political crises on tourism sector performance in various countries of the world, including developing countries in Asia and Africa.

The marketing performance of tourism sector is considered one of the most important aspects that have been dramatically affected by the political and economic crises in the world.

Performance, as generally defined, is the end result of an activity (Wheelen and Hunger, 2002), and the initial interest in marketing performance was prominent in the 1960s (e.g. Sevin 1965; Feder 1965).

Reviewing the extant literature in this field demonstrated that marketing performance and its measurement is a problematic and complex issue.

Business performance monitoring provides managers with enormous ways for planning, controlling, and improving their businesses' performances. This issue is always fraught with difficulties and no agreement has been reached yet on how to perfectly measure performance using unified methods that can be used at all times (e.g. Dess and Robinson, 1984; Rhyne, 1986; Chakravarthy, 1986).

In their extensive survey, (Jimenez-Zarco, et al., 2006) reviewed the performance measurement literature. They concluded that the emphasis was

exclusively placed on the achievement of limited number of key financial measures, based on the information provided by the financial or accounting offices (e.g. Crosby and Johnson 2001; Neely et al. 2000). This has been one of the main reasons why several studies have highlighted increasing dissatisfaction with traditional methods of performance measurement (e.g. Brignall and Ballantine 1996; Ghalayini and Noble 1996). A great deal of the criticism comes from the following critical points: (1). they have short term orientation (Dekimpe and Hanssens 1999). (2). they have limited diagnostic power (Day and Wensley, 1988). (3). there is no agreement on measures that need to be used (Clark, 1999). (4). there are difficulties in making comparisons between companies (Clark, 1999). (5). they fail to measure and monitor multiple dimensions of companies' performance (Eccles, 1991).

In addition, the use of financial measurements only reflects the traditional emphasis on the accounting and financial aspects of companies' work. A wide variety of studies has also recognised the significance of non-financial measures such as customer satisfaction (Szymanski and Henard 2001), customer loyalty (Gurviesz 1997), brand equity (Keller, 1998) and human capital (Srivastava et al. 1998) as indicators of the degree of success. Therefore, interest in the analysis of intangible assets has increased considerably. This, in turn, opens the door for several new dimensions that have not yet been considered.

Furthermore, the financial measures disregard other internal and external dimensions that are essential for adapting the company to the new competitive environment. Moreover, performance is highly influenced by other environmental elements, such as market, technology, competition, customers, economic conditions, organisational learning ability...etc. Hence, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, different approaches emerged that recommended the use of marketing measurements such as market share or customer orientation as indicators of business profit or market success (e.g. Rust et al. 2000; 2003).

Additionally, the complexity of business environment in which firms operate, causes a great challenge. Hence, developing integrated systems that contain financial and non-financial measures are recommended (e.g. Waggoner et al. 1999; Yeniyurt 2003). For this reason, throughout the past three decades different methods have been established such as Strategic Measurement Analysis (SMA), Performance Measurement Questionnaire (PMQ), developed by Dixon, Nanni and Vollmann in (1990), Balanced Scorecard (BSC) proposed by Kaplan and Norton in the early (1990s).

The later has been viewed as a pioneering approach; this approach has served as a basis for the development of subsequent approaches such as those of Ittner et al. (2000), Edvinsson (2002), and Lev (2002). This method identifies the weaknesses and vagueness of previous measurement approaches, and offers a clear description of what companies should measure in order to balance the financial view. This method enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy, and translate them into action.

In earlier time (1987), Walker and Ruekert perceived that marketing literature focused on three dimensions: efficiency (sales growth, market share, effectiveness (low cost), best performance (profit, return on investment), and adaptability. In addition, Clark (1999) stated that several large businesses depend on (50 – 60) items to measure their performances. This is in line with Ambler and Roberts, (2005) argument that marketing performance is essentially a multi-dimensional construct.

After a decade, Amber and Kokkinaki (1997) reviewed (150) article of performance measurement during (1991 – 1995), and they found three common metrics out of nineteen. Financial and non-financial measures were used in the literature surveyed.

In another research, Ambler et al., (2001) developed a generalised framework of marketing measurement consists of six categories: financial, competitive, consumer behavior, consumer intermediate, direct trade

customer and innovativeness. However metrics usage is substantially moderated by size and sector, which also moderates the association between orientation and performance. Furthermore, Ambler, et al., (2004) identified 19 metrics that could be regarded as primary, and might serve as a short-list for initial selection. However, the sector was also proved to importantly moderate that selection.

In an earlier study, Clark (1999) indicated that marketing managers are dissatisfied with traditional marketing measures. This is due to the difficulty in making accurate assessment. Hence, they asked for non-financial measures to be used. This is also the recommendation of Ittner and Larker (2003), and Rajagobal (2008) who specified that businesses should not restrict the measurement process to financial measures only.

In (2003), Pond and Show reviewed (46) articles on marketing performance measurement. They found that (63%) of published papers deployed subjective assessment approach, (36%) used a combination of subjective and objective assessment methods, while the remaining (1%) studies utilized the objective assessment.

In a recent study, Osullivan, et al., (2009) suggested using the subjective assessment on condition making accurate comparisons with the closest competitor in the market. In another study in Libya, Elkrghli (2010) used objective and subjective performance assessment, and he detected strong positive correlation between them. Hence, using one of which would be sufficient to give an indication about businesses performances evaluation. These conclusions have been reached in previous research as well (Maines et al., 2002).

In summary, the literature reviewed above confirms that critical events and political crises have severe influence on marketing performance of tourism sector businesses. In addition, several approached can be used to evaluate marketing performance. Subjective and objective can be successfully used as strong positive correlation was found between them. That means using one of which would be sufficient to assess marketing

performance. Other institutional and environmental factors were noticed to have an influential impact on marketing performance as well.

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

With reference to previous studies reviewed in this research, and based on personal interviews conducted with Libyan tourism sector officials in the Eastern Region of Libyan state, the following Null Hypotheses were proposed:

- There is no relationship between the Libyan Political Crisis (2013 / 2016) and the marketing performance of tourism businesses in Libya;
- There is relationship between the Libyan Political Crisis (2013 / 2016) and the marketing performance of tourism businesses in Libya;
- There is no difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to demographical factors;
- There is difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to demographical factors;
- There is no difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to institutional factors;
- There is difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to institutional factors;
- There is no difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's effect on marketing performance according to demographical factors;
- There is difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's effect on marketing performance according to demographical factors;
- There is no difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's

effect on marketing performance according to institutional factors.

- There is difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's effect on marketing performance according to institutional factors.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, it was necessary to follow a scientific methodology corresponding with the research problem as explained below.

▪ Research Variables

Marketing performance and Libyan Political Crisis are the main variables of the study. The effect of some demographical factors (qualification; experience and organisational position) has been tested. Business size (Institutional factor) effect on research results has been examined as well in the study.

▪ Measurement & Scaling

As discussed in the literature review, measuring business performance in general and marketing performance in particular is always fraught with difficulties and no agreement has been reached yet among scholars on certain construct that should be used for all businesses (e.g. Dess and Robinson, 1984; Rhyne, 1986; Day and Wensley, 1988; Eccles 1991; Brignall and Ballantine 1996; Gurviez 1997; Srivastava et al. 1998; Dekimpe and Hanssens 1999; Clark, 1999; Neely et al. 2000; Crosby and Johnson 2001; Yenyurt 2003).

Due to the issue of confidentiality of financial data, and after extensive revision to marketing literature, a comprehensive construct was developed to measure marketing performance. This newly developed construct consists of 82 items distributed into 15 sub-components covers wide range of marketing performance aspects. These (82) items were tested in the pilot-study and purified in the actual field work and reduced to (70) items with strong internal consistency.

Additionally, the Libyan Political Crisis construct has been developed as well. The construct consists of 7 items reflects the effect of Libyan Political Crisis on Tourism Businesses' marketing performances. The full instrument was reviewed by (8) management academicians. This step was taken as an essential phase to ensure greater validity degree and reliability (Churchill, 1979).

Validity means the degree to which a measurement tool can measure what it is supposed to measure (e.g. Anastasi and Urbina, 1997; Hair, Babin, Money and Samouel, 2003;

Oluwatayo, 2012). The reliability refers to the internal consistency of questionnaire items and its ability to represent the concept to be measured and the possibility of replication (e.g. Jack and Clarke, 1998; Cavana et al., 2011).

Five-point Likert Scale has been adopted. This choice was made due to its common use in marketing research (e.g. Anderson, 2002; Hair et al, 2003; Malhotra and Peterson 2006; Dawes, 2008), and for its appropriateness to the Libyan culture. Table (1) presents the reliability analysis process.

Table (1) Reliability Analysis

Frequency	Marketing Performance Component	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Items Removed
1	Marketing Expenditure	4	0.89	-
2	Marketing Planning	6	0.84	1
3	Marketing Organisation	5	0.87	-
4	Marketing Staff	6	0.83	1
5	Marketing Mix	8	0.78	4
6	Marketing Environment Response	6	0.90	1
7	Customer Management	5	0.76	2
8	Marketing Information System	3	0.67	-
9	Marketing Technology	3	0.62	-
10	Market Segmentation	4	0.81	-
11	Purchasing & Storage Management	3	0.71	-
12	Marketing Contribution in Production Development	4	0.85	1
13	Marketing Contribution in Profit	5	0.88	2
14	Marketing Mentoring	5	0.84	-
15	Marketing Competitive Power	3	0.69	-
	Overall Marketing Performance	70	0.96	
	Libyan Political Crisis's Construct	7	0.73	-

From table (1) above it can be noticed that Cronbach's alpha values for marketing performance construct ranged from (0.67 to 0.96). These values are suitable and pass the lower acceptable level suggested in the literature (e.g. Churchill, 1979; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair, et al., 2005; Cavana et al., 2001; Shelby, 2011). Hence, all items with Cronbach's Alpha values less than (0.65) and with weak correlation less than (0.20) this procedure was taken to guarantee high degree of validity and reliability (e.g. Streiner and Norman, 2003; Rattray and Jones, 2007).

▪ Sampling

A comprehensive survey was conducted to target all tourism businesses located in Benghazi City. A number of (65) business acting in tourism, airlines and hospitality were counted. Only businesses' owners, managers and officers were targeted in the safe areas of the city, while those located in unsafe areas were inaccessible. Questionnaires were distributed through two phases: pilot study and actual field work. Using face-to-face method, the distributions process was undertaken with the help of postgraduate students at University of Benghazi and the Academy graduate students. As a precautionary procedure, (400) questionnaires were distributed. Out of this number, only (113) retrieved with (98) deemed valid for analysis.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data, it was necessary to check its nature and how it was statistically distributed. For that end, Test of Normality has been conducted. The results showed that Kolmogorov – Simirnov Test value was greater than (0.05), which means that the data of the key variables is much closer to the normal distribution.

▪ Descriptive Analysis

The next section of analysis depicts the results obtained from participants in the Libyan tourism businesses acting in Benghazi City.

Business Size

Business size is one of the key factors that might affect the research results. For that reason, businesses' data were collected and analysed in the table below.

Table (2) Businesses' Size (Number of Employees)

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage %
<50 employees	86	88
50 up to < 250 employees	6	6
≥250 employees	6	6
Total	98	100

Table 2 shows the size of tourism businesses in Benghazi. Employees' numbers were chosen as indicator for business size. The table explains that 88 % of businesses are small-sized, 6 % of businesses are medium-sized, and 6 % of businesses are large-sized. Therefore, the results are mainly relevant to small businesses acting in Benghazi City in Libya.

Participants' Qualifications

Qualification is one of the most important elements upon which the recruitment process is based especially for high-rank positions. This is the reason that leading businesses pay more attention to educational issues at work. More details can be found in Table 3.

Table (3) Participants' Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage %
Master/Ph.D.	8	8
Bachelor/High Diploma	51	52
Tertiary School	35	36
Secondary School and Less	4	4
Total	98	100

From Table 3 it can be seen that most of the participants (60.4%) hold a high degrees. This might be taken as a positive indication on the recruitment policies in place in the tourism businesses under investigation. In addition, this might increase the confidence in the data collected.

Organisational Positions

The organisational positions of participants are important elements as the views of individuals and their perceptions might be different. This difference might affect the research results. To that end, Table 4 shows the organisational positions of participants.

Table (4) Participants' Organisational Positions

Organisational Position	Frequency	Percentage %
Owner / General Manager	39	40
Manager / Director	30	31
Bureau officer	6	6
Others	23	23
Total	98	100

Table 4 shows that 77 % of participants occupy high positions in their businesses as owners and managers. Hence, they might have different views on the key issues under investigation. In addition, their organisational positions imply that their answers should be considered more valuable than any other lower-rank people at work.

Work Experience

The experience is important element that might be used as a sign of confidence indication in participants' information provided. The long experience is a good indicator of practical knowledge of the work at business. Experience will have a great impact on peoples' attitudes and practices. This issue was investigated and the results presented in Table 5.

Table (5) Participants' Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percentage %
< 5 years	42	43
5 up to < 10 years	47	48
≥ 10 years	9	9
Total	98	100

Table 5 shows that the vast majority of participants (91%) have small to moderate experience at work as their experiences did not exceed 10 years. This might not be deemed as an excellent indication of reliable information gathered from participants. In addition, this might be interpreted that the tourism sector is newly developed business and its early stages.

Marketing Performance Evaluation

The personal views of individuals at organisational positions might be different, and this might affect their perceptions towards diverse organisational issues. To that end, marketing performance was evaluated based on decision makers' views at businesses. The results are presented in table 6.

Table (6) Marketing Performance Means

Marketing Performance Component	Mean	SD
Marketing Expenditure	2.51	0.19
Marketing Planning	2.70	0.77
Marketing Organisation	2.50	0.91
Marketing Staff	2.35	0.98
Marketing Mix	3.03	0.56
Marketing Environment Response	2.68	0.84
Customer Management	3.31	0.68
Marketing Information System	3.23	0.77
Marketing Technology	2.18	0.71
Market Segmentation	2.72	0.55
Purchasing & Storage Management	2.32	0.90
Marketing Role in Production Development	2.09	0.76
Marketing Contribution in Profit	2.36	0.70
Marketing Mentoring	2.56	0.90
Marketing Competitive Power	2.55	0.57
Overall Marketing Performance	2.69	0.56

Table number (6) shows an evident decline in overall mean scores of marketing performance and its sub-components. The overall average marketing performance mean score reached (2.69) out of (5) points on Likert Scale, while the mean scores of sub-components ranged between (2.09) to (3.31). This decline reflects a decrease in marketing performance of tourism companies operating in Benghazi city.

Libyan Political Crisis Evaluation

In order to identify the impact of the Libyan political crisis on the performance of the tourism sector, a specific question was directed to the respondents as shown in the following table.

Table (7) Libyan Political Crisis Effect

Libyan Political Crisis Effect	N	Mean	SD
The Libyan Political Crisis has a negative effect on several businesses activities. To What Extent This Crisis has an Effect on Your Businesses' Marketing Performances?	98	3.76	0.64

From Table 7 above, it can be noticed that there is a degree of influence of the Libyan political crisis on the marketing performance of tourism companies under study, where the mean score of Libyan Political Crisis effect reached a relatively high score (3.76). This value reflects and confirms the negative influence of Libyan political crisis on tourism companies under investigation.

The Relationship between Libyan Political Crisis and Marketing Performance

To identify the extent to which the Libyan Political Crisis correlated with marketing performance in the targeted businesses, data collected and presented in Table 8 below.

Table (8) The Association between Libyan Political Crisis & Marketing Performance

Items	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation R	Significance
Marketing Performance	2.69	0.56	-	-
Libyan Political Crisis	3.76	0.64	-	-
The Correlation		-	- 0.48	0.000

From table (8) it can be clearly noticed that the mean score of Libyan Political Crisis' factor reached (3.76) out of (5) points on Likert Scale. This increase in the mean score illustrates the noticeable negative influence of the Libyan Political Crisis on marketing performances of Libyan tourism businesses as revealed by participants.

To increase the emphasis on research objectivity, it was reasonable to resort to Pearson correlation, which revealed significant

relationship as P-value was less than (0.05). This significance came as a result to the medium negative correlation between the two variables: marketing performance and Libyan political Crisis reached (- 0.48). This result supports the views of participants regarding the effect of the crisis on marketing practices. Hence, the first null hypothesis, which states that "there is no relationship between the Libyan political crisis and the marketing performance of Libyan tourism companies ", will be rejected.

Demographical & Institutional Factors' Effects

In order to test the effects of personal factors (qualifications, job experience and organisational positions), and the institutional

factors (the company's size measured by number of employees) on the research results, it has been necessary to resort to One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and display the results in table 9.

Table (9) Analysis of Variance

Essential Factors	Political Crisis			Marketing Performance		
	Decision	Result	P-Value	Decision	Result	P-Value
Demographical & Institutional Factors						
Qualification	Accept	No Differences	0.54	Accept	No Differences	0.06
Experience	Accept	No Differences	0.25	Accept	No Differences	0.20
Organisational Positions	Accept	No Differences	0.44	Accept	No Differences	0.09
Number of Employees	Accept	No Differences	0.83	Accept	No Differences	0.13

From table (9) above, it can be noticed that analysis of variance did not display any significant differences between participants' responses that might be attributed to demographical or institutional factors. This is due to P-values, which are greater than alpha value ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, it has not been possible to reject the remaining four null hypotheses: "There is no difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to demographical factors"; "There is no difference among participants' views regarding marketing performance of tourism businesses according to institutional factors"; "There is no difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's effect on marketing performance according to demographical factors", and finally "There is no difference among participants' views regarding the Libyan Political Crisis's effect on marketing performance according to institutional factors".

In other words, all participants at different organisational levels with their different qualifications and experiences in tourism businesses share the same attitude and perception towards the effects of the Libyan political Crisis on Marketing Performances.

8. DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS

In reference to analyses shown above, general conclusions might be drawn as follows:

Key Findings

The key findings of this research are there is an evident decline in marketing performance of tourism companies in Benghazi City. This deterioration can be attributed to the weakness in marketing practices. In addition, the decline in marketing performance can be attributed to the negative effect of the Libyan Political Crisis as evidenced in the field work of the current research. Hence, there is a negative significant correlation between the Libyan political crisis and the marketing performance of tourism businesses surveyed. This results are in line with previous research conducted in several parts of the world (e.g. Laws, Prideaux, and Chon, 2007, Silk 2008; Kritayanavaj, 2009; Singh, 2009;; Chachavalpongpun, 2009; Shen, 2009 and Smeral, 2010; Hani, 2006 and Basu, et al., 2012; Tekin, 2015).

Furthermore, no substantial differences among participants' perceptions were spotted regarding marketing performances of the responded businesses. Qualifications, organisational

possessions, and empirical experiences proved to have no effect on participants' responses. This, in fact, implies that all participants, regardless of their demographical composition, agree on the negative effects resulted by the Libyan Political Crisis. Finally, business size is confirmed to have no effect on the results of this study. This means that all targeted SMEs, regardless of their sizes and date of establishments, have been negatively affected by the Libyan Political Crisis.

Implications

The current study is of high-value for academicians and practitioners in the field of marketing for the following reasons: (1) This study can be classified within the rare Arabic and African studies dealing with marketing issues in Libya especially during crisis' time; (2) The study can be viewed on the basis of being a new contribution to the marketing literature in developing countries and transitional countries in the field of tourism marketing performance, and how it has been affected by the Libyan Political Crisis (2013/ 2016); This, in turn, highlights the importance of marketing performance dimensions investigated in this research. (3) Decision makers in the Libyan government and tourism institutions might benefit from the findings of this research to enhance marketing practices and performances; and (4) International bodies and foreign businesses (investors) interested in the Libyan tourism sector might also benefit from the results of this research. This will provide a good background about the tourism marketing practices in Libya and how the external environment has an influential impact on the marketing performance.

Limitations & Future Research

As is the case in scientific research, there is no research claiming perfection and this work is not an exception. Several challenges face researchers such as time constraints, cost and scope of study. This research has encountered some of these limitations as it has not been possible to target all tourism companies in the whole country. Tourism businesses in Benghazi

City only were included in this survey. This, in fact, means that the results might not give indications to generalise marketing challenges to the whole tourism businesses in Libya. Therefore, future work funded by the State or public research institutions might reuse the construct of the current study to target tourism companies in Libya and make a comparative study. Another intriguing future research is to use concrete financial data taken from financial statements of tourism companies to measure their financial performances and compare that with the results of this study. This intriguing future research should add to the marketing literature as no research has been done, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, using this approach in Libya. Finally, the current paper has been undertaken under crisis' conditions. Hence, several businesses could not be reached due to the state of war and instability in Benghazi City. It would be a great research opportunity to replicate this research after stabilizing the city over the coming years.

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المخلص

تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحقيق الأهداف التالية: (1). تصميم مقياس شامل لقياس الأداء التسويقي للشركات السياحية الليبية صغيرة والمتوسطة الحجم. (2). قياس اتجاهات المدراء الليبيين نحو الأداء التسويقي للشركات المُستهدفة بالدراسة. (3). قياس علاقة الأزمة السياسية الليبية (2013 – 2016م) بالأداء التسويقي للشركات السياحية الليبية صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم (4). تقديم بعض المضامين النظرية والعملية للأكاديميين والممارسين العاملة في مجال التسويق السياحي.

فيما يتعلق بمنهجية البحث، تم تصميم مقياس شامل استناداً إلى الأدبيات المنشورة في الدراسات والأبحاث المختصة بالتسويق السياحي وتقييم الأداء التسويقي. عقب ذلك تم مراجعة الاستمارة وتنقيحها وتحكيمها عن طريق عدد (8) أعضاء هيئة التدريس بأقسام إدارة الأعمال بالجامعات والأكاديميات الليبية، حيث اشتملت الاستمارة على (15) مُكوّن للأداء التسويقي تحمل ضمنها (82) عبارة لقياس الأداء التسويقي للشركات قيد الدراسة. تلى ذلك توجيه الاستمارات إلى المسؤولين بالإدارات العليا من مُلاك ومدراء ورؤساء أقسام ومن في حُكمهم على مرحلتين: الأولى في الدراسة الاستطلاعية، والثانية في الدراسة الميدانية الفعلية، حيث تم استهداف (65) وكالة سفر وسياحة، و(7) فنادق، و(3) مُمثلين عن شركات خطوط الطيران من خلال توزيع (400) استمارة استبانة، تم استلام (113) استمارة، وثبتت صلاحية (98) استمارة اعتبرت مُناسبة إحصائياً لأهداف ومنهجية البحث.

أهم نتائج الدراسة هو أن هناك انخفاضاً واضحاً في الأداء التسويقي للشركات السياحية قيد الدراسة، كما بيّنت نتائج الدراسة أن هناك علاقة سلبية بين الأزمة السياسية الليبية (2013 – 2016م) والأداء التسويقي للشركات السياحية صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم التي شملتها الدراسة الميدانية. علاوةً على ذلك، لم يُظهر أي دليل لوجود تأثير للمتغيرات الوظيفية والشخصية على نتائج البحث، وهذا يعني أن هناك اتفاق بين معظم من شملتهم الدراسة على تأثر قطاع السياحة بالأزمة السياسية في ليبيا.

من أهم مساهمات الدراسة وقيمتها العلمية (Research Value) هو أنها أُجريت في ظروف الأزمة السياسية في ليبيا، وهذه ربما تُصنّف من أوائل الدراسات التي تُجرى في مثل هذه الظروف بدراستها للأداء التسويقي للشركات السياحية صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم، ومن ثم فإن هذه الدراسة تُسهم وبشكلٍ كبيرٍ - من الناحية النظرية - في إثراء الأدب التسويقي الدولي (International Marketing Field) بعرض هذه النتائج من دولة ليبيا، كونها إحدى الدول العربية في الشمال الأفريقي. أما من الناحية العملية، فإنه قد يكون من المفيد جداً إطلاع الشركات والهيئات الأجنبية والدولية، ومُتخذي القرارات بوزارة السياحة والشركات السياحية الليبية والمُلاك ومن في حُكمهم على نتائج هذه الدراسة، والتي بيّنت - وبشكلٍ جلي - تداعيات ظروف الأزمات الاستثنائية (Crisis Times) على أداء صناعة السياحة. وأخيراً، تُختتم الورقة بعرض أهم التحديات (Limitations) التي واجهت الباحث، كما تقترح بعض الفرص البحثية المُستقبلية (Future Avenues) لتطوير هذا المجال البحثي.

الكلمات المُفتاحية: الأداء التسويقي، الشركات صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم، الأزمة السياسية الليبية.