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The geographical distribution of tourist attractions and their impact on the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality / A case study in the city of Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate

La répartition géographique des attractions touristiques et son impact sur la dimension tangible de la qualité des services touristiques / Une étude de cas dans la ville de Nasiriyah, province de Dhi Qar

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of the geographical distribution of tourist attractions on the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality in the city of Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate, by assessing the views of tourists regarding the current state of tourism services provided. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach to analyse the data and draw conclusions. 300 questionnaires were distributed to a sample of tourists; the valid responses totalled 270, representing a response rate of 90%. The results indicated that the effective distribution of tourist attractions and the availability of tangible service aspects, such as infrastructure, amenities and cleanliness, contribute to enhancing the quality of tourism services and improving tourists' satisfaction within the city.

Keywords: geographical distribution, tourist attractions, tangibility

Cette étude Cette étude a examiné l'impact de la répartition géographique des attractions touristiques sur la dimension tangible de la qualité des services touristiques dans la ville de Nassiriyah, province de Dhi Qar, en recueillant les avis des touristes sur la réalité des services proposés. L'étude s'est appuyée sur une approche descriptive et analytique pour analyser les données. 300 questionnaires ont été distribués à un échantillon de touristes ; les données valides s'élevaient à 270, soit un taux de réponse de 90 %. Les résultats ont indiqué qu'une bonne répartition des attraits touristiques et la disponibilité des aspects tangibles du service, tels que les infrastructures, les commodités et la propreté, contribuent à renforcer la qualité du service touristique et à améliorer la satisfaction des touristes.

Mots-clés : répartition géographique, attraits touristiques, tangibilité

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1. Introduction

The geographical distribution of tourist attractions is one of the key drivers of tourism demand, as it is the primary factor that prompts visitors to choose one destination over another. In light of the escalating competition between tourist destinations at both local and international levels, there is an urgent need to study these attractions and analyse their impact on the quality of tourism services, particularly in relation to the tangible dimension, which is the first thing a tourist perceives and evaluates when interacting with a tourist destination.

The city of Nasiriyah in Dhi Qar Governorate boasts exceptional tourist and cultural riches, evident in its world-class archaeological sites, most notably the Ur archaeological site, as well as its unique natural environment represented by the marshes, which have been included on UNESCO's World Heritage List. However, these outstanding assets do not automatically translate into high-quality tourism services unless they are accompanied by a tangible level of infrastructure, facilities and tangible services.

With this in mind, this study seeks to uncover the nature of the relationship between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions in the city of Nasiriyah and the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality, as this relationship has a direct impact on visitors' experience and their assessment of the destination. This research forms part of a Master's thesis entitled 'The Geographical Distribution of Tourist Attractions and Their Impact on the Quality of Tourism Services:

A Case Study in the City of Nasiriyah – Dhi Qar Governorate'

The research was organised into three main sections; the first addressed the study's methodology and procedures, the second dealt with the theoretical framework of the research variables, whilst the third was devoted to the practical aspect, data analysis and hypothesis testing. The research concluded with a set of conclusions and recommendations,

1.1 Research Problem:

Despite the diverse tourist attractions in the city of Nasiriyah, including archaeological, natural and heritage sites, there is a clear shortfall in the standard of tourism services, particularly regarding the tangible aspects of quality in terms of facilities, equipment and the general appearance of tourist reception sites. Consequently, the research problem centres on the following fundamental question:

Is there a correlation and influence between tourism attractions and the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality in the city of Nasiriyah?

Significance of the research:

The significance of the research is demonstrated through the following points:

-1 Theoretical significance: to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework regarding the concept of tourist attractions and their types, and their relationship with the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality in accordance with established measurement models

-2 Practical significance: To assist the relevant authorities in Dhi Qar Governorate in assessing the current state of their tourist attractions and evaluating their level of tangibility, thereby contributing to the formulation of effective tourism development policies

-3 Societal significance: Contributing to raising awareness of the cultural heritage of the city of Nasiriyah and transforming it into a genuine economic asset by improving the quality of services provided

-4 Academic significance: Enriching the local tourism literature with an applied study linking tourist attractions and service quality within a distinctive environmental and cultural context.

1.2 Research Objectives:

This research aims to achieve the following key objectives:

-1 To assess the current state of tourist attractions in the city of Nasiriyah, including their availability and appeal.

-2 To measure the level of tangibility in the quality of tourism services at the destinations under study.

-3 To reveal the nature of the relationship between tourist attractions and the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality.

-4 To determine the extent to which tourist attractions influence visitors' perception of tangibility.

-5 To provide practical, actionable recommendations that contribute to the development of the tourism sector in Dhi Qar Governorate.

1.3 Research Hypotheses:

Based on the research problem and objectives, the following two hypotheses can be formulated:

H_0: There is a significant correlation and effect between tourist attractions and the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality in the city of Nasiriyah.

H_1: There is no significant correlation or effect between tourist attractions and the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality in the city of Nasiriyah.

1.4 Research methodology:

The researcher adopted the descriptive-analytical approach as the most appropriate method for the nature of the study's variables, as it enables the description of the phenomenon under study, the analysis of the relationships between its variables, and the testing of the formulated

hypotheses. A questionnaire was used as the primary tool for collecting primary data from the study population.

1.5 Scope of the study:

The scope of the study can be defined as follows:

1- Spatial scope: The city of Nasiriyah – Dhi Qar Governorate, represented by its archaeological, natural and heritage tourist sites |

2- Demographic scope: Tourists visiting the city of Nasiriyah, with a sample of 270 questionnaires

3- Temporal scope: The study was conducted during the period 2025–2026

1.6 Research population and sample:

The research population consisted of tourists and visitors frequenting tourist attractions in the city of Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate, with varying occupational and residential characteristics. The aim was to identify the impact of the geographical distribution of tourist attractions on the tangibility dimension of tourism service quality.

A random sample of tourists and visitors in the city of Nasiriyah was used; 300 questionnaires were distributed to the sample, of which 270 were valid for statistical analysis, whilst 30 questionnaires were missing or invalid for analysis. Thus, the valid response rate was 90% of the total number of questionnaires distributed.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Research:

2.1 The Concept of Tourist Attractions:

Tourist attractions, and all the factors that fall within the system or field of attractions, play a fundamental role in the process of guiding tourists and determining their destination of choice, This choice may be based on attractions related to a specific location, such as the desire to see the desert or oases, for example, or on the distribution of land and water, where water constitutes an important factor in tourism through groundwater, represented by springs and wells which are used in the treatment of certain illnesses. Furthermore, human factors play a major role in the development of tourism, including cultural heritage and all the achievements of the human mind in this era, such as the construction of towers, skyscrapers, and tourist and leisure cities. Or perhaps the choice relates to a specific event, such as the desire to attend a festival, a race, an exhibition or other events. Tourist attractions are defined as: a set of elements that influence the tourist's decision-making process in choosing a destination; they constitute the attractive factors present at the destination, regardless of its size or the function for which it is renowned(Abdul-Qadir Hammad, 2007, p. 86). They are all the places, activities and experiences that possess sufficient appeal to entice visitors to travel certain distances to enjoy

them ،(Gunn, 2002, p. 39)they are the elements within the tourist destination that influence travellers' decisions and motivations to visit that destination, and include both natural and man-made attractions (Garganian, 2024, p. 87), Tourist attractions: These are the elements that form part of the tourism attraction system, drawing tourists and enticing them to engage with tourism products in the broadest sense, whether natural, historical or man-made (Daniel Y, 2006, p. 36)

2.2 Characteristics of tourist attractions

1- A tourist attraction area is characterised by its homogeneous natural features and has a distinctive brand (logo) to differentiate its tourism products and services from other types of products, even if they belong to the same group of attractions; in other words, a homogeneous tourist attraction has a distinctive and unique tourism product.

2- A tourist attraction area contains services and facilities that complement the main tourist offering and is responsible for encouraging individuals to participate in the tour; for example, the hotel itself, or the design of the restaurant and the nature of the meals served there, may be distinctive, or the location of the tourist project may be set within stunning natural surroundings and be considered a tourist attraction in its own right.

3- Some tourist attractions have developed as a result of projects with non-recreational functions; for example, the purpose of constructing artificial lakes, dams and reservoirs is to store water during the flood season until times of water scarcity, so that it can be used to irrigate agricultural land — that is, they were created for non-tourist purposes, but this does not preclude their rational use to attract tourist groups, provided that they are kept clean and the surrounding natural environment is not disturbed. The same applies to religious sites designated for spiritual and religious purposes, where the social and religious customs of many faiths do not prohibit the observation of religious rituals and rites, provided that the feelings and traditions of that community are respected. On the other hand, the increase in the number of tourist groups visiting these religious sites, resulting from steady population growth, has led to their expansion and the development of the surrounding areas, with the addition of new services and facilities (restaurants, hotels, markets, etc. etc.) to meet the modern requirements of the visiting groups. This has led to an overlap between the functions of the religious area; for example, a Muslim visitor, when purchasing goods and gifts from the commercial markets of Mecca and Medina in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or from the commercial markets of Kazimiyah, Karbala or Najaf in Iraq, a sense of spiritual reassurance and blessing (Al-Hawamdeh, 2006, pp. 141-143)

2.3 Tangibles: This refers to the process of focusing on the physical aspects associated with service delivery. A guest may evaluate a service based on the physical characteristics and

features associated with its delivery, such as physical facilities including devices, equipment, means of communication and so on, This includes the appearance of physical facilities, equipment and human resources, as well as communication equipment and devices, in addition to buildings and facilities. It also encompasses the external appearance of staff, given the impact that the inherent connection between the service and its provider has on the quality of the service delivered. This can be determined by: the external appearance of those providing the service, as well as appropriate waiting and reception areas. "This is a psychological" factor that influences whether customers return to the same service provider on subsequent visits, affects the organisation's appeal to its guests, and reflects its internal organisation (Mahboubi, 2016, p. 10)

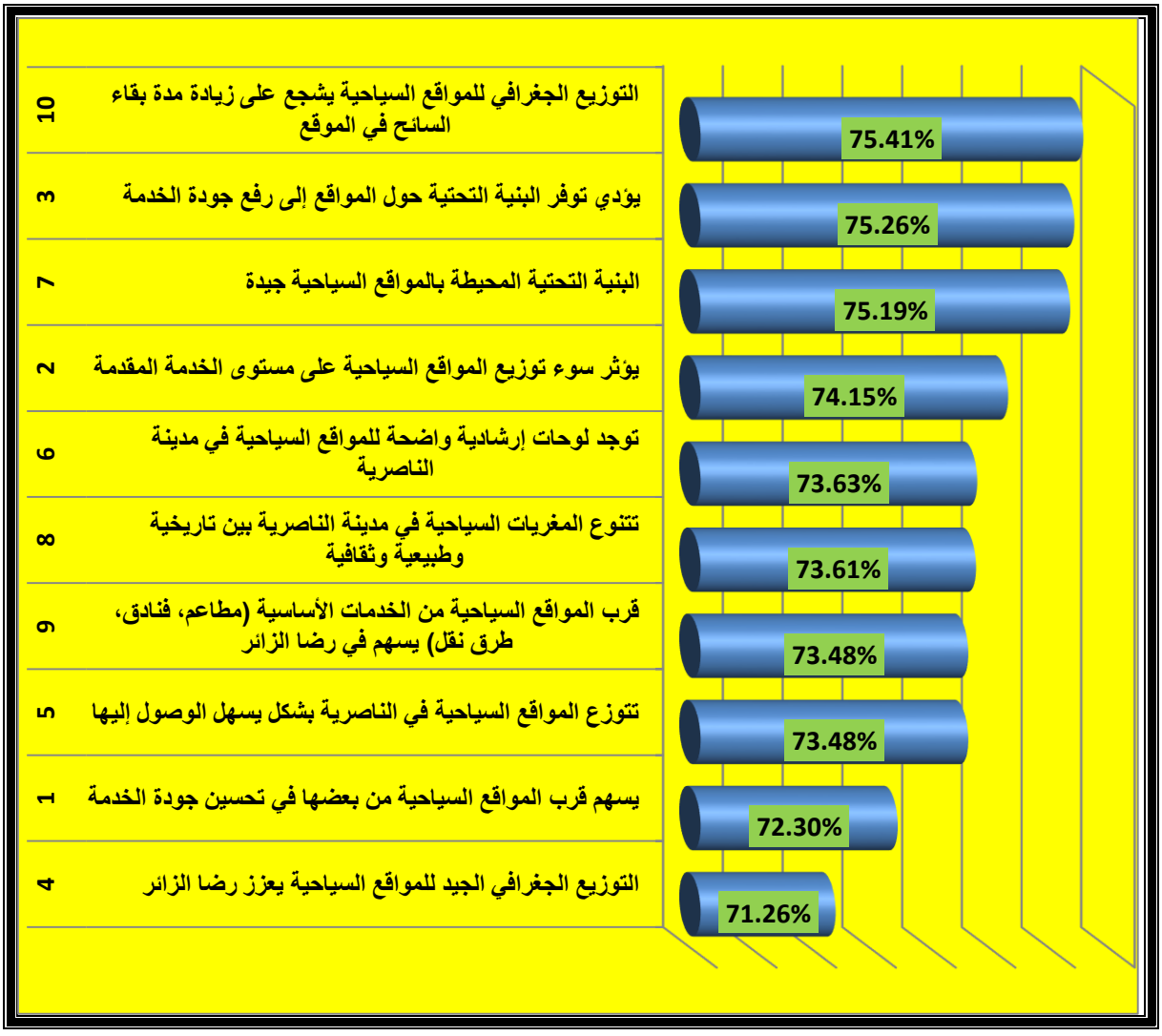
Tangibility refers to the external appearance of the organisation and the interior design, which conveys impressions of the venue's heritage and the extent to which customers are valued (Marati, 2019 , p. 133). It encompasses all material and intangible facilities, the appearance of the organisation's staff, and the means of communication that make customers feel happy and entertained (Schroeder, 2007, p. 14)

3. The Practical Framework of the Study:

1.3 Analysis of Tourist Attractions:

It can be inferred from the results of the descriptive analysis presented in Figure (1) and in accordance with data from the SPSS V29 statistical package, it is evident that the trend in the responses of the sample under study to the items of the independent variable was not coincidental, particularly as the sample's responses to the items concerning the geographical distribution of tourist attractions tended towards the agreement region, given that the result of the One-Sample Test (Value = 3) was significant, particularly as the calculated T-value was (18.565) and had a positive sign, clearly demonstrating that the mean value of the independent variable deviated from the neutral zone towards the agreement zone, with a strong response of (73.78%) , confirming that approximately three-quarters of the sample agreed on the importance of the sections devoted to the geographical distribution of tourist attractions, with a weighted arithmetic mean for the independent variable of (3.6888) and a standard deviation for the independent variable of 0.84117, indicating a certain degree of dispersion in the sample's responses regarding the geographical distribution of tourist attractions.

Figure (1): Distribution of the independent variable's values according to the severity of the sample participants' responses



2.3 Analysis of tangibility:

3.3 Descriptive analysis of tangibility:

It can be inferred from the results of the descriptive analysis presented in Table (1) and Figure (2), and in accordance with the data from the SPSS V29 statistical software, that the trend in the responses of the sample under study to the concreteness items was not coincidental, particularly as the sample's responses to these items tended towards agreement, given that the result of the One-Sample Test (Value = 3) was significant, particularly as the calculated T-value was (16.981) and was positive, clearly demonstrating that the mean value of the concreteness dimension deviated from the neutral zone, strongly tending towards agreement, with a response rate of (73.12%) This confirms that approximately three-quarters of the sample agreed on the importance of the items relating to concreteness, with a weighted arithmetic mean of (3.6561) and a standard deviation of (0.87136), indicating a certain degree of dispersion in the sample's responses regarding concreteness.

It can also be inferred from the descriptive analysis data presented in Table (1) and Figure (2) that the levels of importance of the items within the tangibility dimension ranged from the highest response level achieved by item (53) among all items in this dimension, with a response intensity of (74.22%), confirming that approximately three-quarters of the research sample agreed that the coordination of the environment surrounding the tourist site reflects the quality of the services provided there.

Whilst the results of the descriptive analysis shown in Table (1) and Figure (2) that item (54) recorded the lowest level among all tangibility items, with a response rate of (71.97%), confirming that approximately three-quarters of the research sample agreed that the provision of infrastructure (transport routes, car parks, signposts, ...) at the tourist site contributes to improving the tangible impression of the service.

Table (1): Level of sample responses to the items of the fifth dependent sub-variable

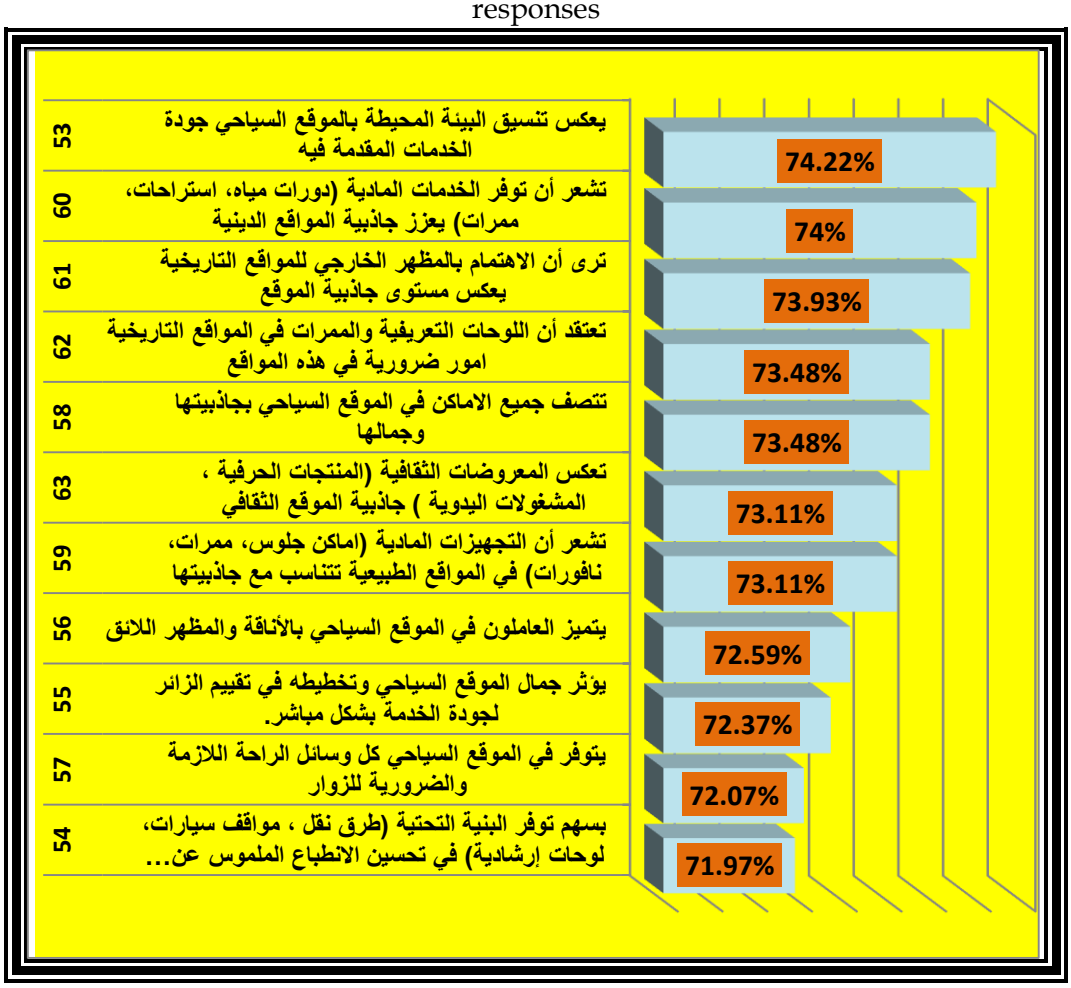
Ranking	One-Sample Test (Value = 3)			Relative importance %	Standard deviation	Weighted arithmetic mean	Items	T
	The answer points towards an area	Probability value	Value T The Calculator					
1	**The agreement**	**0.000**	**9.565**	**74.22%**	**0.88836**	**3.7111**	**The layout of the surroundings at a tourist site reflects the quality of the services provided there.**	**53**
11	**The agreement**	**0.000**	**7.673**	**71.97%**	**0.94604**	**3.5985**	**The availability of infrastructure (transport links, car parks, signposts) helps to improve the tangible impression of the service.**	**54**
9	**The agreement**	**0.000**	**7.860**	**72.37%**	**0.95967**	**3.6185**	**The beauty and layout of a tourist site directly influence visitors' assessment of service quality.**	**55**

8	The agreement	0.000	8.330	72.59%	0.90872	3.6296	Staff at the tourist site are distinguished by their elegance and professional appearance.	56
10	The agreement	0.000	8.190	72.07%	0.87786	3.6037	The tourist site provides all the necessary and essential amenities for visitors.	57
5	The agreement	0.000	9.427	73.48%	0.84159	3.6741	All the areas within the tourist site are attractive and beautiful	58
7	The agreement	0.000	8.890	73.11%	0.87843	3.6556	You feel that the physical facilities (seating areas, walkways, fountains) at natural sites are in keeping with their appeal	59
2	The agreement	0.000	9.851	74%	0.83426	3.7000	You feel that the provision of physical facilities (toilets, rest areas, walkways) enhances the appeal of religious sites	60
5	The agreement	0.000	10.131	73.93%	0.79606	3.6963	You believe that attention to the external appearance of historical sites reflects the site's level of appeal	61
4	The agreement	0.000	9.531	73.48%	0.82886	3.6741	You believe that information boards and walkways at historical sites are essential features of these sites	62
6	The agreement	0.000	9.299	73.11%	0.8251	3.6556	Cultural exhibits (crafts, handicrafts) reflect the appeal of the	63

							cultural site	
The agreement	0.000	16.981	73.12%	0.87136	3.6561	Tangibility	Y5	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the response levels of the study sample and SPSS V29

Figure (2): Distribution of the concreteness items according to the intensity of the sample participants' responses



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the response levels of the study sample and SPSS V29

3.3. Testing the research hypotheses:

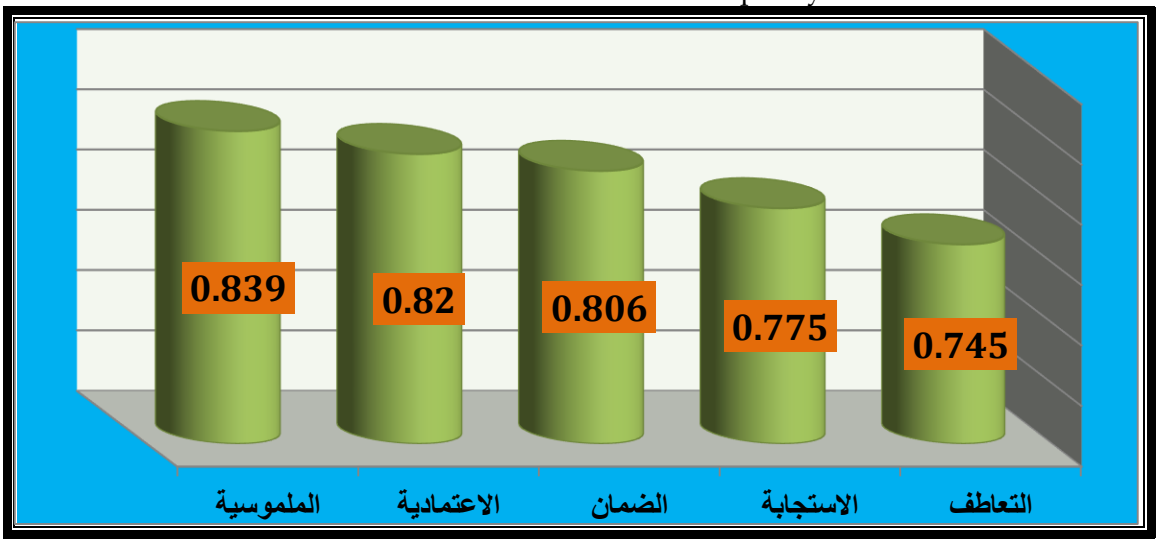
The first main hypothesis is that there is a statistically significant correlation between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and tangibility.

The correlation between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and tangibility.

The statistical test data confirm the acceptance of the fifth sub-hypothesis derived from the first main hypothesis, as the calculated Z-value (13.76062) is significant, since the corresponding probability value was recorded as (0.00), which is lower than the significance level of (5%), The simple correlation coefficient between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions (as the independent variable) and tangibility (as the fifth dependent variable) was 0.839, confirming the existence of a strong positive correlation between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and tangibility, according to the study sample.

Furthermore, the results of the correlation hypothesis testing indicate acceptance of all sub-hypotheses derived from the first main hypothesis. The data in Figure 3 also show that the geographical distribution of tourist attractions recorded the highest correlation coefficient with tangibility among all five dependent dimensions within tourism service quality, at 0.839, whilst the geographical distribution of tourist attractions recorded the lowest correlation coefficient with empathy among all five subordinate dimensions within tourism service quality, with a value of 0.745.

Figure (3): Correlation coefficients between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and dimensions of tourism service quality



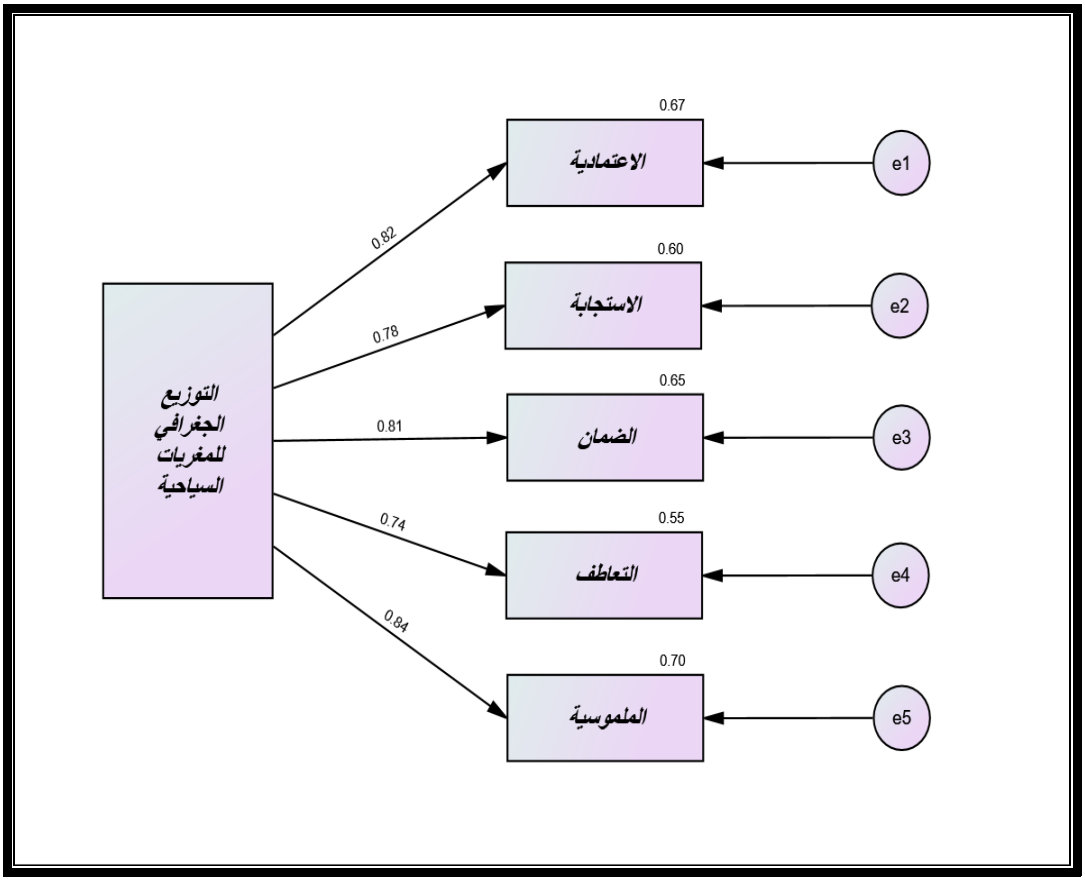
The second main hypothesis is that there is a statistically significant effect of the geographical distribution of tourist attractions on tangibility.

The effect of the geographical distribution of tourist attractions on tangibility:

The statistical test data presented in Figure (4) indicate that the fifth sub-hypothesis derived from the second main hypothesis is accepted, as the calculated F-value (638.779) is statistically significant, since the corresponding probability value was recorded as (0.00), which is lower than the significance level of (5%) , whilst the coefficient of determination (R-squared %) for the geographical distribution of tourist attractions in Al-Malmousiya was recorded as (70%),

indicating the proportion to which the geographical distribution of tourist attractions explains the changes occurring in Al-Malmousiya according to the views of the study sample.

Figure 4: Coefficients of determination for the independent variable explaining changes in the dimensions of tourism service quality



4. Conclusions and Recommendations

1.4. Conclusions:

1. There is a correlation and influence between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and the tangibility of tourism service quality in the city of Nasiriyah, indicating that the proximity and accessibility of tourist attractions have a direct impact on the standard of physical services and surrounding facilities.
2. The city of Nasiriyah possesses a rich tourism heritage, represented by world-class archaeological sites such as the Ur archaeological site, and a unique natural environment such as the Marshes of Mesopotamia, which are listed as a World Heritage Site; however, these attractions still fall short of expectations in terms of the quality of the tangible services surrounding them.

3. The geographical distribution of tourist attractions in Nasiriyah is uneven, with most concentrated in areas far from centres offering good tourist services, which weakens the tangible dimension and reduces visitor satisfaction.
4. The poor infrastructure in the areas surrounding tourist attractions constitutes a major obstacle to achieving an acceptable level of tangibility, as tourists note the decline in the quality of roads, sanitary facilities, reception areas and accommodation.
5. The tangibility dimension is closely linked to service quality and the proximity of tourist attractions to supporting logistical services such as hotels, restaurants and transport, which many of the city's tourist sites lack.
6. Natural tourist attractions such as the marshlands help to attract a wide range of visitors; however, the lack of adequate physical facilities—such as tourist boats, moorings and reception facilities—diminishes the value of the visitor's tangible experience.
7. Cultural and heritage attractions play a pivotal role in enhancing the tangible experience when combined with well-organised museums, equipped visitor centres and professional exhibition spaces, something which remains lacking in some sites in Nasiriyah.
8. There is a clear disparity in the level of tangible services between major tourist attractions, which receive a fair amount of attention, and secondary attractions, which are almost devoid of any tangible service facilities.
9. The scattered geographical distribution of tourist attractions contributes to tourist fatigue and a fragmented experience, particularly in the absence of a good road network and an organised tourist transport system linking these sites together.
10. The study's findings indicate that improving the physical infrastructure in the city of Nasiriyah requires a comprehensive development intervention that takes into account the geographical location of each tourist attraction and the services required to upgrade it in accordance with approved quality standards.

2.4. Recommendations:

1. A comprehensive geographical tourist map of the city of Nasiriyah should be drawn up, identifying the locations of all tourist attractions and classifying them according to their nature and significance, thereby enabling the relevant authorities to draw up well-considered development plans for each site individually.
2. Government and tourism authorities in Dhi Qar Governorate must invest in developing the infrastructure surrounding tourist attractions, particularly road networks, health services and reception facilities, as this has a direct impact on improving the tangible experience.
3. An integrated tourist transport system should be developed to link geographically dispersed tourist attractions with city centres, thereby facilitating access and enhancing the visitor's tangible experience.

4. Focus on upgrading the tourist sites surrounding the marshes and the archaeological site of Ur with modern, well-equipped visitor facilities, including visitor centres, car parks and rest areas, in accordance with international quality standards.
5. Encouraging the private sector to invest in areas adjacent to major tourist attractions by establishing accommodation, catering and leisure facilities of a standard commensurate with the significance of these cultural sites.
6. Conduct regular assessments of the level of tangibility across all tourist attractions, by surveying visitors and measuring their satisfaction with the available facilities and physical infrastructure, and using the results as a basis for continuous improvement.
7. Drawing on the experiences of successful tourist cities in achieving integration between the geographical distribution of tourist attractions and the system of physical services, and adapting these experiences to suit the specific characteristics of the city of Nasiriyah.
8. Work to develop the signage and guidance system in the city of Nasiriyah by installing clear directional signs in both Arabic and English to facilitate visitors' movement between tourist attractions and enhance their first tangible impression.
9. Coordinate between the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the local government in Dhi Qar to launch integrated development projects targeting tourist attractions with high potential but poor tangible services, and incorporate these into local development plans.
10. Support scientific research and field studies related to tourism in Dhi Qar Governorate, to provide accurate and up-to-date data that helps decision-makers understand the relationship between the geographical distribution of attractions and the quality of tourism services, and to improve them in a sustainable manner.

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