



Journal of Tourism & Management Research

ISSN: 2149-6528

2019 Vol. 4, Issue.2

Seasonality in Tourism: The Case of Oman

Abstract

The study aims to explore the factors influencing seasonality in tourism in Oman. The current study has primarily adopted quantitative approach. Research design incorporates the use of structured questionnaires and data was analyzed using quantitative analyses. The sample was chosen using non-probability sampling technique from a population of employees working in different travel agencies, tour operators and hotels based in Muscat. The identified factors influencing seasonality in the Sultanate of Oman have been categorized under three categories: Climatic, Personal and Policy-based. The results of the analyses have been supported by the relevant literature. Existing studies addressing seasonality in tourism have been based on European or Oceania sub-continent. The present study fills an important gap and explores the factors influencing seasonality in tourism in Oman.

Keywords: *Destination, Demand, Diverse products (services), Experience, Fluctuation, Seasonality*

JEL Classifications: O13; Z32; N15

Submitted: 27/03/2019; **Accepted:** 17/06/2019

Veena Tewari, Asstant Professor. Majan College, Post Box: 710, Ruwi. Postal Code: 112. Muscat Sultanate of Oman. Ph: 00968-24730455

Email: veenatewari@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Seasonality is a concept which is highly researched and renowned in the journals about tourism. As tourism is omnipresent, all tourism organizations and areas are affected either significantly or slightly by seasonality. Tourism as an industry is complex in terms of measurement of accurate employment in organizations. There are different causes of seasonality like natural, institutional or others (increasing the length of leisure time and its redistribution, habits, etc.). These may be precipitated by production and consumption decisions made by the various agents of the economy. The magnitude of seasonal variation and its frequency of manifestation has consequences for the development of tourism and its

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Tewari, V.

2019, Vol.4, No.2, pp.463-476. DOI:10.26465/ojtmr.2018339522

efficiency (Karamustafa & Ulama, 2010). It thus affects other sectors of the economy, which are dependent on tourism. Most of the factors, supporting seasonality in tourism are similar across the different regions of the world (Corluka et al., 2016).

Seasonality in tourism can be defined as the systematic, regular or irregular, intra-year movement caused by changes in the external environment. These may be precipitated by production and consumption decisions made by the various agents of the economy. There are different causes of seasonality like natural, institutional or others (increasing the length of leisure time and its redistribution, habits, etc.). The magnitude of seasonal variation and their frequency of manifestation has consequences on the development of tourism and its efficiency (Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2014). It thus affects other sectors of the economy, which are dependent on tourism (Diana et al., 2015). Most of the factors, supporting seasonality in tourism are similar across the different regions of the world (Petrevska, 2013). Being ubiquitous, all tourism enterprises and regions are impacted by seasonality whether severely or mildly. Seasonality causes the fluctuation in tourists and visitor numbers to a destination. Therefore, some destinations at certain times have more tourists and visitors than they are able to accommodate, while at other times, there are too few tourists and visitors to the region. Although, seasonality is widely perceived in a negative light because its effects are linked with a reduction of tourist dollars, not all effects of tourism are negative. According to Cannas (2010) many strategies are used to address the effects of seasonality. These include pricing strategies, diversifying the attraction, market diversification and seeking assistance from the government and industry bodies. Increasing the length of the tourist season and modifying timing to school holidays are other strategies. At an enterprise level, additional strategies include the recruitment of temporary staff. With the range of available strategies for addressing effects of seasonality, the selection and adoption of a strategy should be in line with the strategic plan of an enterprise or the destination for an effective result. In today's environment, such decision-making would need to include and consider social and environmental factors in addition to economic ones. Although many strategies can be transferable from one industry to another, more detailed research is necessary to investigate the individual strategies in relation to industry and impact of these strategies on different stakeholders and environment at the destination.

In this regard, since 2014 the Sultanate of Oman has placed a strong emphasis on developing the travel and tourism industry. The nation has also seen strong and sustained worldwide growth rates for few years in the tourism industry, as per yearly statement published by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2015), a global establishment of tourism sector supervisors developing tourism universally. The Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2014 reviewed that travel and tourism sector in the year 2013 has a direct contribution of Omani Riyal 983 million to the Omani economy, which calculates to 3 percent of sum total of Gross Domestic Product of Oman. The development of the travel and tourism industry has consequently resulted in the production of many jobs in the industry, eventually improving the opportunities of jobs for Omanis, which results in an optimistic impact on Oman's economy. According to reports issued by WTTC (2015), travel and tourism industry of Oman, in the year 2013 provided nearly 37,000 jobs directly which sums up to 3.3% of total jobs in the country. In 2014, it has increased to 41,000 with a percent increase of 11.4%. In the year 2013, travel and tourism industry in Oman provided 72,000 jobs and 79,500 jobs in 2014 as mentioned in the same report. It is estimated that this industry will offer 60,000 jobs directly by 2024 with an increase of 3.9% every year for the coming decade. Being one of the most important contributors to economic growth of Oman, the tourism industry has many unexplored facets to it. Factors affecting seasonality of tourism have an impact not only on inbound tourists but domestic tourists also. The present study, attempts to explore these factors and their implication for policy-makers at macro level.

2. Literature Review

Tourism is a multi-dimensional sector, numerous segments of which are unavoidably connected to many other economic segments like airlines, shipping, souvenirs shops, refreshment stands, restaurants, vending or service offering, lodging facilities like hotels, resorts, motels and even some commercial business centers. Therefore, it is a producer of both direct and indirect employments and earnings with the help of its multi component intersegment associations in various ways (De & Devi, 2010). Tourism can have diverse effects. Rudez et al. (2014) stated that an evaluation of the jobs and earning procured as a result of tourism in any country could assist in gaining knowledge about the prospective of tourism and offer support in the process of formulation of policies for speculation and other actions required for general development of tourism in the country. The tourism industry from all around the world is distinguished by its uncertain approach to investment in the 'people' resource, rigid job performances and untenable attitude to its growth (Bawm & Hagen, 2000). The same authors noted that human resource management has consequences far ahead of the operational segment in any company and it evidently affects the marketing and monetary efficiency of any organization in the tourism field.

Butler (2001) has concluded that seasonality is one of the most distinctive features of tourism and perhaps the most typical characteristic of tourism on a global basis. In fact, various papers in the field of tourism conclude that phenomenon of seasonality as a subject attracted attention of scientists and experts in the field of tourism for many years. Seasonality has been viewed as a major problem for the tourism industry and has been held responsible for creating or exacerbating a number of difficulties faced by the industry, including problems in gaining access to capital, in obtaining and holding full-time staff and for low returns on investment. Conversely, it has also been blamed for the under-utilization of these resources and facilities, often preventing tourism being accepted as a viable economic activity in many areas. It is therefore not surprising that considerable efforts have been made both by public and private sectors to attempt to reduce seasonality of destination areas through a variety of approaches. The effects of seasonality on employment in tourism destination areas has several aspects. The most frequently expressed opinion appears to be that the seasonal nature of tourism presents problems for employers, making it difficult to recruit full-time staff and to retain those (Noh, 2010).

Fernandez (2016) has argued that the occurrence of low salaries in hospitality sector is lesser in areas where the travel and tourism is more prominent. In fact, employees in the tourism sector should be motivated and provided with respectable work environment. This will improve the quality of service provided by them, thus enhancing an overall competitiveness of the tourism industry. At present Oman receives millions of tourists from hundreds of countries. These tourists can contribute towards long-term development of the Sultanate of Oman. Due to the growth of tourism industry many organizations are getting an opportunity to react to growing demand for recruitment, staffing and training, accommodation and tourist services. Even though the number of visitors are increasing year by year, most number of tourist attractions in Oman face seasonality.

2.1 *Travel Motivations and Seasonality*

According to Chung (2009), tourism demand can be described in a number of ways. Karamustafa and Ulama (2010) have stated that tourism demand refers to the count of individuals who take up a journey, or have a desire to take up a journey, to utilize tourist amenities and services at locations distant from their home and workplace. Whereas, Rudez et al. (2014) described tourism demand as the association between a person's desire to journey and their capacity to actually take up the journey and as pointed out by Chung (2009), the specialists in economics believe that tourism demand is the list of the quantity of any tourism

amenities and services that individuals desire to purchase at every particular price from a set of probable prices in a particular time period.

Commonly individuals travel with a number of motives like for holiday purposes, for visiting family and friends, for the purpose of trade, job or for sports. However holiday travel is the leading motive in the global travel industry (Brakke & Michael, 2005). Demand for tourism differs on the basis of factors relating to economy, society and politics. For example, the demand for lodging companies differs every day, every week and every month from time to time leading to the problem of seasonality. According to Spencer and Holecek (2007), seasonality in tourism is a common issue which happens in unstable ranges of significance depending on the destination. It has been argued that inside the sector, seasonality is being considered as a challenge and is usually an issue which will impact various areas (Lee et al., 2008). Tourist attractions, characteristically those which are associated with the type of weather and temperature in the location are very susceptible to regular change in demands. Similarly Weidner (2006) argued that seasonality in tourism is essential to be analyzed as it generates monetary and societal issues along with a number of negative impacts on the quality of service in the tourism sector, thus emphasizing the vitality of calculating the seasonality of tourism. Peterson (2005) suggested that one of the major problems which service organizations and managers must deal with is the seasonality from tourism. The seasonality causes, may be natural (the seasons succession, climatic conditions), the variety and the cultural values attractiveness, the frequency of events (fairs, festivals) and economic and organizational (structure of the school year and university year, holidays, increasing the length of leisure time and its redistribution, habits). Further the same study concluded that magnitude of seasonal variation and their frequency of manifestation has consequences on the development of tourism and its efficiency, as well as other sectors of the economy, branches that tourism develops in interdependence. Petrevska (2013) concluded that most of the factors, supporting seasonality in tourism are similar across the different regions of the world. Seasonality is a persistent attribute and an element impacting every part of modern tourism. Inside the tourism sector, seasonality significantly impacts the supply and demand of tourism on the basis of employment opportunity, process of tourism trade, model of travel and the inflow of tourists (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011). Goulding et al. (2004) have stated that seasonality is possibly the major obstruction to long lasting maintenance of employees in the tourism industry of various tourist destinations. They added that for many tourist destinations, tourism is not a segment of the economy which could provide long term employment chances on a yearly basis, with the exception of a small fraction of human resource who serve in the administration and marketing departments.

2.2 Climatic, Personal and Policy-Based Factors of Seasonality

There are a number of causes of seasonality of tourism. According to Butler (2001) one of the most vital factors is a natural cause. This is a cause which is not in the hands of organization; example of natural causes include temperature, precipitation, sunlight and all the elements related to climate of any destination. The second major cause is the institutional cause. These causes are somewhat in the hands of organization. They may include public holidays, school vacations, cultural events and festive seasons in the country (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011). The same study states that although seasonality in the demand for tourism transforms at a slow pace, the models of any particular tourist attraction's seasonality would transform over a period of time depending on the life span of the attraction. According to Lee et al. (2008), causes of tourism seasonality don't comprise of those elements which are related to problems in the functions like bad administration, or time specific changes in the tourist inflows as a result of predicaments like rise in petrol prices, virus outbreak, unexpected natural calamity, or terrorism. Other than natural and institutional reasons for seasonality of tourism, various

researches have investigated the effects and propositions of seasonality from the side of supply (for instance, tourist operators, workers and host country nations of any place) and also from the side of demand. The reactions to seasonal effects are usually related to three sectors: employment, expenses and amenities and ecological security (Nadal et al., 2004). In the current times, it has become more evident that the seasonality of tourism is closely associated to the approximation of prospective proposition of changes in the weather conditions. The most current issue is related to changes in global climate and the way these changes impact the inflows of visitors in the future. It is clearly understood that the changes in weather conditions is giving less assurance and has become difficult to forecast (Butler, 2001). With a general impression of the possible effects of global warming, Amelung and Viner (2006) emphasize that this inclination focuses towards hotter weather and have evaluated that high temperature may have a huge impact on the tourism sector.

There are various studies which state that there are many advantages for a business which runs seasonally (Goh & Law, 2002). Even though the economic validation of annual events, that is, the effective use of funds, prevails over the seasonal maximization on ecological and social resources, certain societies review the security of their standard of living as evenly or more vital. It is usually argued that effects of seasonality on tourism influences the temporary features of any tourist attraction. Nada et al. (2004) have stated that impacts of seasonality over tourism development differs from one organization to another. Organizations may adapt themselves or confront seasonality with proactive changes in their number of employees, duty hours or short term goals. Stevens (2002) further added that another way of considering this problem is to see the industry's reaction. It ranges from confronting seasonality or making prospective plans and policies regarding seasonality, which is like two extreme ends. Businesses which adopt seasonality are those businesses which prefer or acknowledge the situation of the seasonality of the tourism sector and accept it. For instance, certain businesses in the tourism industry may totally want to be functional only 8-12 weeks in a year. These businesses might be boosting their earnings with an occupation related to tourism just because they reside in a locality with a particular season for tourism, but may not prefer to operate throughout the year. Tosun (2002) stated that an instance of this sort of operation may be a seasonal bed and breakfast scheme. On the other side there may be service providers, related to those tourism companies which are, not by option, impacted by seasonality. These businesses might confront the seasonal character of their industry in numerous manners, focusing on expanding their period by providing offers and promotion prices to the tourists, supplementing services and events and pressurizing government to support the salaries of workers for some part of the season. Hoti et al. (2007) stated that funding the training needs for seasonal jobs should be comparatively more and, hence, there are considerable expenses closely related to the loss of skilled employees when the major functional season of tourism terminates. This can be avoided by having proper procedures to draw the trained employee back for the next year. Hence, the theory of withholding employee could be described differently as the capacity of the firm to draw the same skilled employees back every year, no matter if they are nationals of the country or foreigners (Grubb & Mason, 2001).

2.3 Tourism Trends and Factors of Seasonality in Oman

Oman initiated its process of transformation into a modern country in 1970, when Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, the current monarch of the nation, replaced Said bin Taimur, his very conventional and chauvinistic father. Since then Oman has moving towards modernization. Valeri (2009) stated that just like every nation in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), Oman has also given priority to tourism and hospitality industry, acknowledging it as the means of nation's progress and an instrument for expanding Oman's oil based economy. Over the past few years, a lot of initiatives are being made in order to develop the tourism industry through the creation of an attractive environment for commerce and trade for

foreign shareholders along with huge investment by the Omani government to develop the industry. The government has also identified the necessity to provide training and education to local Omanis for getting them ready to do jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry (Peterson, 2005).

According to Marike and Heba (2013), in the strategy perspective for advancement of economy and creation of employment, the tourism industry is given highest priority on the economic plan of Oman, and government is working very hard to develop tourism and hospitality sector of the Sultanate. Studies and learning related to the tourism and hospitality industry in Oman is at present being provided in a number of colleges and university for higher diploma certificate, bachelor and master levels. Tourism industry has only recently assumed importance in Oman and the challenge faced is to upgrade infrastructural development to successfully meet the estimated demand for tourism in Oman. This task has high support from the government of Oman as it is bringing up purposefully vital assignments which would not be offered on a large scale, high quality and within time period by a private organization without government support. For carrying out these developmental tasks, it necessitates highly capable Omani team supported by a foreign expert and investor whose organizational culture gives importance to dealing with locals, encourage innovativeness and protection of nature. The same study further stated that by the means of marketing, development of infrastructure, training of HR and providing visitor attractions, Oman is developing a tourism industry which can be sustained and also which would promote Oman's tradition and culture to foreigners.

There are a number of factors which are influencing seasonality in tourism which consequently results in unemployment in the tourism sector of the country. Kolomiets (2010) stated that the two dominant elements in seasonality of tourism could be illustrated as natural and institutional in equally the host country and origin country. Natural aspects comprises of those elements like the variations in the climate of the host and origin countries, natural calamities in the host or origin country. On the other side, institutional aspects comprises of those elements that are mainly associated with the socio-economic situation of the host or origin country and human actions. They might comprise of festive and traditional occasions in the host or origin country. Additionally tourists' preference of journey seasons, public holiday in the host or origin country, financial limitations also hold some importance. According to Paunovic & Radojevic (2014), through diversification of tourism and development of summer season tourism, ski tourism becomes only one product in the well balanced mountain DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) tourism product portfolio, thus reducing the risk of overreliance on only one tourism.

On the basis of review of literature, various factors of seasonality in tourism may be classified under three main categories. Below given is a summary and inclusions of various factors, contributing to seasonality at different locations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Past research review of climatic, personal and policy-based factors.

Climatic Factors	Personal Factors	Policy-Based Factors
Temperature (Nada & Larry, 2012)	Vacation (Recee, 2010)	Public Holidays (Nadal & Rossello, 2003)
Natural Disasters (Yu & Walsh, 2009)	Business (Agnew & Viner, 2011)	Events (Recee, 2010)
Precipitation (Petrevska, 2013)	Financial Requirements (Agnew & Viner, 2011)	
	Migration (Sharpley, 2002)	

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

As per the aim of this research, utilization of quantitative methods have provided a scope of deduction, exploration and further explanation of factors influencing seasonality in the Omani tourism industry. Quantitative approach facilitated measurement of factors and determined their reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Both primary and secondary data sources have been used to support the research aims. Sample for this research was chosen using convenience sampling technique (Saunders et al., 2009), representing around 30% of the valid population, which comprises of respondents from tourists visiting travel agencies, event management companies and hotels. While 200 structured questionnaires were distributed, 145 fully filled valid questionnaires were returned, resulting in 72.5% response rate. In addition to this, quantitative data was also collected from 30 tourist operators primarily to find out as how to minimize the impact of seasonality on local tourism industry.

As per the outcome of extensive literature review, variables affecting seasonality have been divided into 3 categories such as climatic or natural factors (NT), individual (IV) or personal factors, and policy-based (PO) factors. Closed-ended questionnaires using 5 point Likert scale were distributed to respondents in order to understand their perceptions.

Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used to accumulate information and put it in order. Initially, reliability and factor loads were checked and then mean scores were analyzed. The usage of descriptive statistics gave an opportunity to identify the strategies to handle seasonality of tourism industry.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As shown in figure 1, out of 145 tourist respondents, maximum were Indian tourist (18%), with Bangladeshis (12%) and Egyptians (11%) at the second and third place respectively. These respondents included both high and low end tourists. All the questionnaires that were distributed, 79 of them were answered by females, and 66 were answered by males. The difference between the genders is not much and therefore, it can be said that visitors to Oman are not confined to any particular gender.

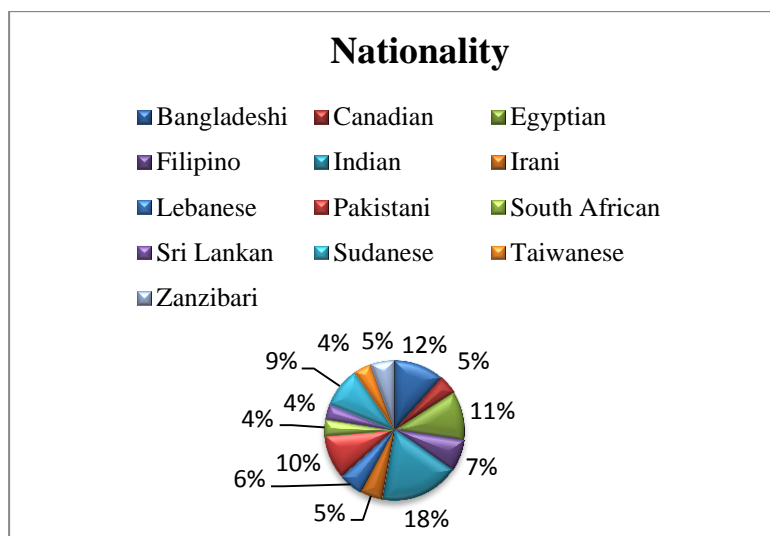


Figure 1: The nationality of respondents.

4.2 Psychometric Properties

In such studies, the Cronbach alpha coefficient is used to test reliability and calculate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Table 2 depicts that the value recommended by Nunnally (1978) is considered a threshold value of 0.70, which indicates that the scale is reliable showing internal consistency, and reduced random error rates. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement values are used to analyse the distribution of values and demonstrate the adequacy of the data collected (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The 0.50 threshold value for KMO recommended by Field (2000) has been exceeded for all variables. In addition, the Barlett test which was embarked as a spherical measure showed that the multivariate values of the distributions set were normal, $p = 0,000 (< 0.05)$, so the factor analysis of the data became appropriate (Hair et al., 1998). Thus, the data was proper for performing the factor test (Hair et al., 1998). According to Barclay et al. (1995), the threshold value is 0.50 for a factor load. Table 2 shows that all item loadings meet this criterion.

Table 2: Scale items, reliability and exploratory factor analysis results.

Scale Items	Alpha	Factor Loadings
Climatic/Natural Factors	.828	
NT1- Visiting Oman, in winters is the best.		.727
NT2- At the time of natural disaster like GONU, it was not seen suitable to visit Oman.		.813
NT3- It is better to visit Oman, during low precipitation period.		.793
Personal/Individual Factors	.811	
IV1- Summer is the best time to visit Oman, due to migratory birds.		.730
IV2- During public holidays, it's good to travel interiors of Oman.		.753
IV3- During cultural fests, it is entertaining to visit Oman.		.719
IV4- Major sports or cultural events will attract, more tourists.		.775
IV5- During vacation times, all the attractions of Oman are crowded.		.727
Policy-Based Factors	.904	
PO1- Oman is good for business purpose please write question from below here for each.		.970
PO2- Financially Oman is a cheaper option in comparison to other Gulf States, to visit.		.852
PO3- Government is promoting tourism a lot at global level.		.804

From the mean scores, which are close to 4.00 (see Table 3), it can be inferred that policy based and individual factors have significant influence on seasonality. During vacation time (IV5) or public holidays (IV2), the number of tourists increases dramatically. This is due to the fact that expat population in Oman, is mostly from India and Bangladesh. Schools and other public organizations are mostly closed at the same time in all these countries. Among the natural factors such as NT2 which is about natural disasters has the maximum impact on seasonality of tourism. From the identified policy based factors, government support and promotion (PO3) has maximum impact on seasonality.

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviations.

Item questions	Mean scores	Standard Deviation
NT1	3.987	.641
NT2	4.208	.479
NT3	3.783	.853
IV1	3.651	.846
IV2	4.356	.579
IV3	4.265	.437
IV4	4.212	.652
IV5	4.453	.756
PO1	4.132	.983
PO2	4.121	.785
PO3	4.342	.543

In addition to this, as mentioned in the beginning of literature review, organizations dealing in tourism sector have been finding it difficult to deal with seasonality patterns. On collecting data from 30 tourist operators in Oman, below given statistics, came out as result of descriptive statistical analysis (see Table 4). The seasonality in tourism can be minimized by offering various options to the customers (Shane et al., 2012). On the basis of the data collected from the tourist operators on the variety of tourism product offerings dimensions: Availability of variety of products in various destinations always attracts more tourists. Lack of variety always discourages tourists to go for travelling and thus affected the business of the tour operators in a great way. This proposition is well supported by the outcome of this study as it reveals a quite high mean score of 4.134 (see Table 4) which reveals that lack of variety of products in various places are creating serious problems for the tour operators.

Table 4: Mean scores for tourism product offerings dimensions.

Item questions	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
More profitable if I can provide variety of services.	30	3.90	.923
Customers mostly preferred diversified services.	30	4.00	.695
Hard to bring innovative items.	30	4.23	.817
Tourist destination in the region lacks variety.	30	4.27	.785
Destinations and the entertainment available mostly the same.	30	4.27	.785

It has been established that there is a positive relationship between tourist expenditure in travel package and price at which it has been offered. In other words tourist will spend more money when there are more discounts and options (Pansuwan, 2014). Thus, it concludes that customer preferences of diversified products and tour operator's business profitability increment along with variety of products are the two important variables for this dimension.

It has been emphasized that weather and climate are critical to the tourism sector worldwide. Relationship among climate, weather and tourism has been examined from the perspective of the geography of tourism and climatology. Climate and weather have an impact on tourism supply and demand (Fang & Yin, 2015). Natural disasters and precipitation are the outcome of climatic conditions. As per the result they also have an impact on the tourism activities. Each tourism destination has sub-markets and its own characteristics to offer. Vacations and festivals have also an impact on the inflow of tourist in the Sultanate. In the tourism industry psychographic segmentation plays very important role for the growth. The growth of sports tourism as an alternative form of holidays. As such, sport tourism is an alternative form of holidays which combines pleasure, leisure, nature and fitness (Stefanos & Kyriakidou, 2008).

5. Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

From the previous analysis, it can be concluded that influencing factors for seasonality in Oman can be broadly categorized into Natural, Individual and Policy-based. Further it can be observed that seasonality is one of the major negative features of Omani tourism industry. Altogether individual and policy based factors have more influence than the natural factors on the seasonality of Omani tourism industry. It can be noted that public holidays (vacations) and any sort of events mainly influence seasonality of tourism in Oman. In addition to this, there is an impact of business activities on the seasonality of tourism, as the Sultanate is in the process of growth as a commercial destination in the Middle East. Discussing the factors further, results obtained from the analysis are valid as the peak season for the hotels in the Sultanate is from December to March. However, during summers especially at the time of Khareef season (July-September), many tourists arrive in Muscat but would also like to visit Salalah.

The impact of seasonality can be minimized by offering different experiences (offerings) to the tourists. If tourists have more to choose from within the services provided by their hotel, they will stay for longer duration. Similarly tourists are likely to prefer an operator providing more variety of activities and experience. At present many tourist places have better public amenities in comparison to 5 years back. Perception of benefits to the tourists are seasonal based. Mostly, their passivity and enjoyment are not present in some particular season. However, they differ in terms of age and travel-related characteristics between seasons (Rudez et al., 2014).

As per the available statistics tourism growth in Oman has been comprehensive, even in areas outside the capital city of Muscat. While inbound tourism nearly doubled between 2005 and 2014, growth in domestic tourism was even more marked, with most indicators increasing three-fold over the past decade. Time availability with the tourists influence their overall experience. This is a result of both rising levels of disposable income for Omanis and the success of government and private sector efforts to develop facilities catering to vacationing citizens (Times of Oman, 2015). As per our result financial requirement/constraints or available budgets will control the tourist's activity with the operators and their overall decision of spending amount of time at a particular destination. This is especially true for the Sultanate, where Cultural and Wadis tourism is quite significant.

Seasonality does have an impact on tourism in the Sultanate. Present policies do address the idea of developing tourism as an alternative source of income (in addition to oil and gas) for the Sultanate. But more practical and practicable policies are still needed to be developed, to enhance the overall attractiveness of Oman Tourism. In comparison to Dubai and some other Gulf states, Oman lacks infrastructure in terms of awareness and connection to the global tourist community. Establishment and enhancement of the industry in terms of providing employment should be included in the VISION: 2040 of the Sultanate. The higher

education institutions may start more professional courses in this area and should support small businesses in this sector. This will not only help in generating employment but will boost tourism industry as a whole. Further, policy makers should think of integrating current technology with the tourism perspectives in Oman, as to come up with smart tourism destination in the Middle East.

The present study has limitations like any other research. First one is a small sample size and second one is related to sampling. Convenience sampling cannot be generalized for whole set of population. So, for further researchers it is advised to have an increased sample size as, we know that the tourism industry is dynamic and the impact of this industry is ever increasing on the economy of Oman. Moreover, sample of this research is being chosen from diverse tourists, but as the Sultanate is diversifying its sources of income, tourists from all over the world can contribute towards future growth of this sector. So, it's advisable to have data from full range of tourist base. Regarding the Sultanate, to arrive at more robust predictions for future adaptation, additional research is required to compare the results with the actual tourist numbers in different seasons.

References

- Amelung, B. and Viner, D. (2006). Mediterranean tourism: exploring the future with the tourism climatic index. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp.349-66.
- Agnew, M. D. and Viner, D. (2011). Potential Impacts of Climate Change on International Tourism. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 37-60.
- Butler, R.W. (2001). Seasonality in tourism: issues and implications In: T. Baum and S. Lundtorp (eds). *Seasonality in Tourism*. Pergamon, Amsterdam, pp.5-22.
- Brakke, M. (2005). International Tourism, Demand, and GDP Implications: A Background and Empirical Analysis. *Undergraduate Economic Review*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 3-38
- Baum, T. and Hagen, L. (2000). Responses to Seasonality: the Experience of Peripheral Destinations. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol 1, No 5, pp. 299-312.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Chung, J.Y. (2009). Seasonality in tourism: A review. *E-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, Vol. 7 No. 5, pp. 83-96.
- Cuccia, T. and Rizzo, I. (2011). Tourism Seasonality in Cultural Destination: Empirical Evidence from Sicily. *Tourism Management*, 32, pp. 589-595.
- Cerny, C.A. and Kaiser, H.F. (1977). A study of a measure of sampling adequacy for factor-analytic correlation matrices. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 43-47.
- Cannas, R. (2010). Public Policies for tourism seasonality from a territorial perspective. Cases study in Scotland and Sardinia, *PhD thesis, University of Bologna, Department of Economics, unpublished*.
- Corluka, G., Mikinac, K. and Milenkovska, A. (2016). Classification of tourist season in coastal Tourism. *UTMS Journal of Economics*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 71-83.
- De, U.K. and Devi, A. (2010). Nature based tourism, Seasonal Variation and its impact on Employment and Income: evidence from Meghalaya. *Journal of Environmental Management & Tourism*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 116.
- Diana, N., Manea, D. and Raluca, N. (2015). The Tourism Seasonality in Romania. *The Research Institute for Agriculture Economy and Rural Development. International Symposium. Agrarian Economy and Rural Development: Realities and Perspectives for Romania. Proceedings*, pp. 396-399.
- Barclay, D., Higgins, C. and Thompson, R. (1995). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach to Causal Modelling: Personal Computer Adoption and Use as an Illustration.

- Technology Studies, Special Issue on Research Methodology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1995, pp. 285-309.
- Fang, Y. and Yin, J. (2015). National Assessment of Climate Resources for Tourism Seasonality in China Using the Tourism Climate Index. *Atmosphere*, Vol. 6 No.2, pp. 183-194.
- Field, A. (2000). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS for Windows*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol 18 No. 1, pp. 39–50.
- Goulding, P.J., Baum, T.G. and Morrison, A.J. (2004). Seasonal Trading and Lifestyle Motivation: Experiences of Small Tourism Businesses in Scotland. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, Vol. 5, pp. 209-238.
- Grubb, H. and Mason, A. (2001). Long lead-time forecasting of UK air passengers by Holt-Winters methods with damped trend. *International Journal of Forecasting*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 71-82.
- Goh, C. and Law, R. (2002). Modeling and forecasting tourism demand for arrivals with stochastic non-stationary seasonality and intervention. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 499-510.
- Hoti, S., McAleer, M. and Shareef, R. (2007). Modelling international tourism and country risk spillovers for Cyprus and Malta. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 6, pp. 1472-84.
- Hair, J. F. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis*. Upper Saddle River, N.J., Prentice Hall.
- Kolomiets, A. (2010). Seasonality in Tourism Employment Case: Grecotel Kos Imperial, Kos, Greece. *Bachelor of Hospitality Management. Imatra: Saimaa University of Applied Sciences*
- Karamustafa, K. and Ulama, S. (2010). Measuring the seasonality in tourism with the comparison of different methods. *EuroMed Journal of Business*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 191-214.
- Lee, C. Seers, S.B. & Galloway, G. (2008). *Seasonality in the Tourism Industry: Impacts and Strategies*. [http://coastaltourismacademy.co.uk/uploads/CRC_Queensland_2008_Seasonality_in_the_tourism_industry_\(2\).pdf](http://coastaltourismacademy.co.uk/uploads/CRC_Queensland_2008_Seasonality_in_the_tourism_industry_(2).pdf). [Accessed on 20th April, 2015]
- Lopes, X.P., Fernandez, M.F. and Incera, A.C. (2016). The economic impact of international students in a regional economy from a tourism perspective. *Tourism economics*, Vol. 22 No.1, pp. 125.
- Marika B. & Heba A. (2013). Oman's Tourism Industry: Student Career Perceptions and Attitudes. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol No. 2, pp.232-248.
- Nadal, J., Font, A. & Rosselló, A. (2003). The Economic Determinants of Seasonal Patterns. Seasonality. *Monthly International Tourist Arrivals to the Balearic Islands. XIII Simposla Internacional De Turismo y Ocio ESADE. Barcelona.*
- Noh, E. (2010). *The effect of North Korea on South Korean tourism demand: A novel application of destination image effect*, Purdue University.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory, (2nd Ed.)*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Okech, R.N. (2011). Promoting sustainable festival events tourism: a case study of Lamu Kenya. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol 3 No. 3, pp. 193-202.
- Petrevska, B. (2013). Investigating tourism seasonality in Macedonia. *UTMS journal of economics*, Vol No. 1, pp. 37-44.

- Pansuwan, A. (2014). Determinants of Tourist Expenditure in Travel Package during Travel Fair "the 23rd Discovery Thailand 2011 and Discovery World 2011" at Impact Muang thong Thani. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, Vol 3 No. 2, pp. 281-312.
- Paunovic, I. and Radojevic, M. (2014). Towards Green Economy: Balancing Market and Seasonality of Demand Indicators in Serbian Mountain Tourism Product Development. *Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija. Biennial International Congress. Tourism & Hospitality Industry*, pp. 601-615.
- Peterson, A. (2005). The Emergence of Post-traditional Oman. Working paper, University of Durham, pp. 8–10.
- Rudez, H.N., Sedmak, G., Vodeb, K. and Bojnec, S. (2014). Season-oriented destination positioning for visitors in the Mediterranean. *Drustvena Istrazivanja*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 661-679.
- Reece, W. S. (2010). The economics of tourism. *Upper Saddle River*: Pearson Education.
- Som, A.P.M. and Al-Shqiarat, M. (2013). Effects of tourism seasonality to a highland destination: evidence from Al Bahah Province. Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Innovations in Business*, Vol 2 No. 6, pp. 630-644.
- Spencer, D. M. & Holecek, D. F. (2007). Basic characteristics of the fall tourism market. *Tourism Management*, Vol 28 No. 2, pp. 491-504.
- Streiner D. (2003). Starting at the beginning: an introduction to coefficient alpha and internal consistency. *Journal of personality assessment*. pp. 99-103.
- Stefanos, N. and Kyriakidou, N. (2008). Critical Issues in Golf Tourism Development in Greece. *The Cyprus Journal of Sciences*, Vol 6, pp. 111-123.
- Sharpley, R. (2002). Tourism: A vehicle for development? In R. Sharpley, & D. J. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues*, pp. 11–34, Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Stevens, B. (2002). As cited in Finn, M., Elliot-White, M. and Walton, M. (2000). *Tourism and Leisure Research Methods: Data Collection Analysis and Interpretation*, Longman, Harlow, 145.
- Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students (5th Edition)*. London: Pearson Education.
- Tosun, C. (2002). Host perceptions of impacts: a comparative tourism study. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 231–253. <http://www.eturbonews.com>. (Accessed on 29/2017).
- Valeri, (2009). Oman: Politics and Society. *Qaboos State*, pp. 251–9.
- Vargas-Sanchez, A., Porrás-Bueno, N. and Plaza-Mejía, M. (2014). Residents' Attitude to Tourism and Seasonality. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 53 No. 5, pp. 581.
- Weidner, S. (2006). Seasonality in tourism: a review of seasonality of hotel accommodation in New Zealand. Seminar paper, *Akademische Schriftenreihe, Bd. VI22991, GRIN Verlag, Norderstedt*.
- Yu, G., Schwartz, Z., & Walsh, J. (2009). Effects of Climate Change on the Seasonality of Weather for Tourism in Alaska. *Arctic*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 443-457. <https://timesofoman.com/article/72859>. (Accessed on 2/9/2018).

Author Biography



Veena Tewari has a PhD. in Management (MGK Vidyapeeth) and MBA (International Marketing) from the main campus of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi. She has 18 years of teaching and industry experience. This includes consultancy and research in various industries and at higher education levels in the field marketing and management. She is currently an Asst. Professor at Majan University College, Muscat. Her current research areas include consumer behaviour in services, and Corporate social responsibility.