# A study of impact of promotion mix on service quality of adventure sports companies in Delhi-NCR

## Dr.Shweta Khandelwal,

Assistant Professor, Jagannath International Management School, New Delhi.

## Dr.Pallavi Ahuja,

Assistant Professor, Jagannath International Management School, New Delhi.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Adventure sports are not the usual sports that could be played indoors or in the neighborhood park in a conventional manner. These are a popular form of fun, enjoyment, sense of achievement, adrenaline rush and various other inputs to the consumers who get indulged into them with varying backgrounds nationally as well as internationally. The portfolio of these adventure sports could be extremely diverse and it could range from river-rafting to parachuting to various other extreme forms. Over the recent decades, a sharp rise has been witnessed with respect to the demand of these adventurous sports activities across the globe. In fact, adventure tourism has grown exponentially because of the tourists' preference of engaging themselves into adventure sports and visiting locations where they could actually participate in the stipulated sports activities.

Also, with the increase in demand of such adventure sports and a lot of players entering the market, in order to survive and gain good financial returns, companies would require to perform better. This would directly imply focusing on the consumer behavior and further, maximizing their satisfaction level. This could be reflected through measurement of their service quality. The current study was conducted with the major objective of specifically examining the impact created by promotion mix involved in the mix of service marketing framework related to the adventure sports companies that were located in the geographical area of Delhi and National Capital Region on the service quality.

As per Chong (2003), the subject of marketing started from a single P, which was referred as Price in the microeconomic theory. McCarthy (1964), one of the famous marketing expert, had coined the term "marketing mix". It was even referred as the "4Ps", which was supposed as a means or tool to convert the plans created for marketing to be converted into real time action (Bennett, 1997).

Marketing Mix', a term coined by Neil Borden, and is also referred as four Marketing P's, are actually the ingredients which get combined for capturing and promoting a particular brand or product's unique selling points.

#### **Promotion**

This is a crucial and indispensable factor of marketing mix. The concept of promotions in the MM consists of 360 degrees integrated marketing communication including advertising and sales promotion. The Promotion element is dependent upon the elements of product as well as the pricing decision. In case the offered product is a new entrant in the given market, this would require promotions which can help create brand or product awareness. However, in case the product is an existing product in the market, the promotions would be required to build brand recall for sustained awareness. Moreover, the marketers know that promotions also are responsible in deciding the segmentation, targeting as well as the positioning of the company's product. Yet, the budget required for an extensive promotion may also be high. Few can view promotions as the marketing expenses. This requires to be taken in consideration during the decision-making of the costing of the product mix which indeed are interrelated and eventually affect each other in some way.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Promotion is a critical component of the Service Marketing Mix. It involves all actions initiated to advertise and promote the stipulated services & products to the target consumer segment. The CIM documented that this element can be regarded as the means of communicating what has been done by the organization and what is being offered to the consumers. It encompasses all related activities, for instance, advertising, branding, sales management, public relations, offers, demonstrations and so on. The goal of this element is to get noticed, create awareness, being appealing to the target segment, communicate standard message and most importantly give consumer a cause for choosing the stipulated product in comparison to the competitor's offering. It stated that one side communication is not an effective promotion strategy, instead, it should facilitate two-way interaction with the consumer. This would mean that it is more important to communicate the benefits the stipulated product or service would provide to the consumer instead of just communicating the key features of that product or service. This element is one of the critical components of the Marketing mix and is essential for the overall strategy. This helps an organization in creating awareness and informing the consumers about their products or services. It would include sales promotion, personal selling, advertising & public relations and direct marketing for persuading the prospect customers. Such activities influence the customer's relationship with the company and is important for the sales growth (Muchiri, 2016). This element can defined as multiple tactics and programs executed by the marketers to build awareness and information amongst the target consumer segment about the brand and its products & services. However, selling a service is never easy owing to its intangible nature. Advertising and Word of Mouth promotion are the most used methods being used for selling the services by the service organizations (Suherly, Affif, Arief, &Guterres, 2016). Promotion can also be seen as the function of information and involves encouraging and influencing the buying decision of the consumer. It can also be referred as any activity which involves creating awareness with an objective of taking forward the products or services though any of the promotion channel and reaching the end consumer. The promotional activities tend to affect the awareness, mannerism and behavior of the customer.

This element (Promotion) shares the target consumer segment with necessary and correct information that is required by them while deciding on visiting a particular location (Daniel, 2018).

It is a critical P amongst the Ps of Marketing mix, which assist in spreading information about the company's products thereby resulting in incremental sales & loyalty towards the brand. Hence this element can be seen as a tool which would ensures spread of information, improves the purchases and positively affects the process of decision making with regards to making a purchase (Išoraitė, 2016). It involves different methods like sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, public relations and so on. The strategy related to this element needs to encourage and persuade their target consumer segment to ensure incremental purchases of their product.

Service quality: Service quality is a popular term in services marketing and has actually been researched in the recent past and is gaining further momentum as we move ahead. According to Achumba (2003), a customer should actually be seen as the main point for developing any trade or industry. Thus, the significance of the customer service concept has become very active for competing in an advanced market driven environment. It has been witnessed that the difficulty level is higher in computing the SQ in the service sector such as the banking sector than to measure it in the manufacturing sector. This could be attributed to the fact the service sector is quite heterogeneous.

Technically referring, the term, service quality is indeed a comparison of the expectations of the customers with the actual performance being rendered (Jobber, 2006). Also, referring to the managerial viewpoint, service quality can be described as simply an accomplishment in return of the customer service that gets delivered by the enterprise. It further brings about a reflection from each of the service encounter. These expectations of the customers for a given service would be determined by the factors such as the recommendations or the suggestions that are received from the peers, personal needs identification along with the past experiences. This should be noted that the difference which exists amongst the service which was expected to be delivered and the service which has actually been delivered or perceived is referred to as a gap.

It was also documented by Wai- Ching Poon (2008) that the consumers' feeling of the level of satisfaction from a service actually gets generated when they compared a product's or service's perceived performance with their expectations. In situations where the performance was found to be below the expectations, there, a negative disconfirmation was found getting built that further led to the customer dissatisfaction. Contrary to this, in case the performance was found above the expectations of the customers, in that case a positive disconfirmation was examined to take place which left the customer being highly satisfied. Further, circumstances in which the performance of the service was found to exactly match the customers' expectations, in such cases, the customer was observed to be just satisfied.

According to a research study submitted by Jain, R. (2018), insights were provided with regard to the adventure travel admitting a jump of about 178% in India as per the findings from a report given by Thrillophilia. As per the details shared in the report, it was stated that the people were showing evolutionary proofs of their preferences or choice priorities in terms of travelling place for adventure. In the existing times, the travel which earlier was just used to be for leisure was now taken for the purpose of adventure as well as for offbeat experiences by the consumers. Due to this particular change in the way the consumers were then choosing the travel objective, the consumers now stay interested in having unconventional destinations for travel wherein they could experience some adventure sports. Although, Europe has most of the times been the first choice of adventure

travelers, yet, even India, in the recent years has admitted having an exponential growth in the adventure tourism sector. It was a primary research where the data was collected by Thrillophilia from 10,000 consumers and also, 1,800 industry partners for gaining information about the sudden boom in the experiential as well as the adventure travel segment of the sector of tourism. Therefore, this given study had brought a lot of insights related to adventure with regard to Indian context. Some of the prominent highlights of this study were which were marked over the data collected were that the adventure tourism as well as the activity travel market was estimated to flourish or move up at a CAGR of 17.4% from the year 2017 to the year 2023 in the context of India. It was also documented that in India, the demand for various activities as well as local experiences had grown by 178% since the year 2015. Further, it was found that there was an increase of 42% in the popularity of high-altitude regions as per the views of the adventure-sport travelers in the past 3 years. It was also brought to light that about 27% of the respondents were interested in traveling to the Himalayas for an offbeat experience. The study also brought to highlight that fact the number of solo or individual travelers had also increased by 18%. There were still some research gaps of the mentioned study. It was based on primary data, yet, it didn't involve any hypothesis testing. It was majorly focused on consumer experience and physical evidence. It didn't examine all the seven components of the marketing mix in relation with the variables of service quality. It had referred to adventure sports more from the perspective of adventure travelers. The research didn't precisely cover the area of Delhi-NCR but generally referred to Indian scenario.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is being conducted specifically to examine impact of promotion mix (marketing mix) 7 P's framework of the adventure sports companies in Delhi and National Capital Region on the service quality. The term service quality for this research has been explained as how well the services that are provided or are delivered by a stipulated company or enterprise, adventure sports companies in this case, conforms to the expectations of the clients. Data has been collected from trainers of selected adventure sports companies of Delhi ncr.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH.

- 1) To study the impact of reliability of promotion element on service quality.
- 2) To study the influence of responsiveness of promotion element on service quality.
- 3) To study the impact of timing of promotion element on service quality.
- 4) To assess the impact of media of promotion element and SQ (service quality).
- 5) To study the influence of celebrity endorsement of promotion element and SQ (service quality).

#### **HYPOTHESIS:**

H01: There isn't any meaningful correlation amongst reliability of promotion element and SQ (service quality).

H02: There isn't any meaningful correlation amongst responsiveness of promotion element and SQ (service quality).

H03: There isn't any meaningful correlation amongst timing of promotion element and service quality.

H04: There isn't any meaningful correlation amongst media of promotion element and SQ (service quality).

H05: There isn't any meaningful correlation amongst celebrity endorsement of promotion element and SQ (service quality).

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection was done basis the self-structured questionnaire. The survey was done to collect the data wherein the researcher had personally paid visits to the trainers of the mentioned companies to collect data. Data was collected from 400 trainers across 25 adventure sports companies of Delhi –NCR.

Name Of Company	No. Of Respondents (Trainers)
Great Rocksports Pvt. Ltd	27
In Me	25
Youreka Nature Campouts	26
Ed Terra	28
The Paintball Company	27
Flying Fox, Zip Adventure Tours Pvt. Ltd.	25
Adventure Nation	25
Mercury Himalayan Explorations	24
Snow Leopard Adventures	25
White Magic Adventure Travel	26
Wanderlust Adventure Sports	26
National Adventure Sports Company	23
Zip Adventure Tours	24
Indus Adventure Tourism	23
Shoot Out Zone	22
Explorars	24
TOTAL	400

## **Tools And Techniques Of Analysis**

SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) has been used for data analysis. The following techniques have been used for data analysis that has been categorized as descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The descriptive statistics basically covers the 'what is' aspects related to the problem whereas the inferential statistics aim at finding the cause and effect relationship (The Handbook of Research for Education and Technology).

Multiple regression has been applied using SPSS 22 for hypothesis testing for H01, H02, H03, H04, H05.

## **DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS**

## Frequency analysis of Trainers' Experience

Table 1 given below represents the experience of the trainers surveyed in terms of years. Maximum percentage (29.3%) of trainers surveyed had work experience of 11-15 years followed by 26.3% with experience of 5-10 years, 18% of the trainers with 16-20 years of work experience, 17.8% of trainers with up-to 5 years of experience and only 8.3% of them with more than 20 years of experience.

*Table 1- Frequency (%) analysis of trainers' experience in years* 

Trainers' Experience in Years				No. o respondent s		Cumulative %
	< 5 yrs.			71	17.8	17.8
	5-10 years	107	26.8	44.5		
T 7 11 1	11-15 years	117	29.3	73.8		
Valid	16-20 years			72	18.0	91.8
	>20 years	>20 years			8.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0			

It shows that the maximum number of trainers surveyed had work experience of 11-15 years followed by those with experience of 5-10 years, then the trainers with 16-20 years of work experience, further with trainers having up-to 5 years of experience and only 8.3% of them with more than 20 years of experience.

## Examination of Relationships between 'Promotion' element and Service Quality

The table 2 given below represents the service quality mean score which has been obtained by calculating the average of the summation of score obtained for various variable of 'Promotion' element of marketing mix and its value is 103.50 (Standard deviation = 42.07) and the highest mean score for promotion element (media) as 2.99 (standard deviation = 1.34) and the lowest mean score for promotion (reliability) as 2.95 (standard deviation = 1.32) and (responsiveness) as 2.91 (standard deviation = 1.31).

Table 2 : Descriptive analysis for Promotion variables and service quality

	Mean	Std. Deviation
service quality score	103.50	42.07
PROM1(Reliability)	2.91	1.33

PROM2(Responsiveness)	2.91	1.31	
PROM3(Timing)	2.96	1.34	
PROM4(Media)	2.99	1.34	
PROM5(Celebrity endorsements)	2.97	1.33	

Multiple regression has been used for studying the correlation among the different variables of Promotion & the overall service quality towards adventure sports companies in Delhi- NCR.

Table 2.1 given below documents the correlation between the various variables and the overall service quality. Positive correlation can be established amongst Overall SQ (SERVICE QUALITY) and PROM1 (Promotion reliability) with r=.889 and p<.05. This means that with a positive change in Promotion reliability, the overall service quality will also show positive change. Positive correlation can be established amongst Overall SQ (SERVICE QUALITY) and PROM 2 (Promotion responsiveness) with r=.920 and p<.05. This means that with a positive change in Price responsiveness, the overall service quality will also show positive change. Positive correlation can be established amongst Overall SQ (SERVICE QUALITY) and PROM3 (Promotion timing) with r=.925 and p<.05. This means that with a positive change in Promotion timing, the overall service quality will also show positive change. Positive correlation can be established amongst Overall SQ (SERVICE QUALITY) and PROM4 (Promotion media) with r=.920 and p<.05. This means that with a positive change in Promotion media, the overall service quality will also show positive change. Positive correlation can be established amongst Overall SO (SERVICE OUALITY) and PROM5 (celebrity endorsements of Promotion) with r=.905 and p<.05. This means that with a positive change in Celebrity endorsements of promotion, the overall service quality will also show positive change. So, significant positive correlation between independent variables and dependent variable.

*Table 2.1 : Correlation matrix for Promotion variables and Service quality* 

		service quality score	I (RELIA BILITY	(RESPO NSIVEN	М3	PROM 4 (MEDI	PROM5 (CELEBRI TY ENDORSE MENTS)
a 1	service quality score	1.000	.889	.920	.925	.920	.905
	PROM1	.889	1.000	.832	.795	.767	.771
	PROM2	.920	.832	1.000	.854	.801	.777
	PROM3	.925	.795	.854	1.000	.849	.799
	PROM4	.920	.767	.801	.849	1.000	.829

	PROM5	.905	.771	.777	.799	.829	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	service quality score		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	PROM1	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	PROM2	.000	.000	•	.000	.000	.000
	PROM3	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	PROM4	.000	.000	.000	.000	•	.000
	PROM5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

Using the enter method (table 2.2), we have tried to find out if the model obtained is statistically significant.

Table 2.2: Enter method for Promotion variables and SQ

## Variables Entered/Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed Method
11	PROM4, PROM5, PROM4, PROM3, PROM2b	. Enter

It has been observed that a significant model emerged (table 2.3 and table 2.4) with  $F_{5,392}$ = 4820.11, p<.05, adjusted R-Square= .982. From the adjusted r-square value we can understand that the variables of promotion in this study indeed have a contribution of 98.2% in accounting for the change in overall service quality. Also, the results are further authentic as Durbin-Watson value is greater than the R-square.

*Table 2.3 : Model summary for Promotion variables and SQ (Service Quality)* 

## Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.991a	.981	.982	5.35	1.703

a. IV's: (Constant), PROM5, PROM1, PROM3, PROM4, PROM2

b. DV: service quality score

*Table2.4: ANOVA for promotion variables and SQ (Service Quality)* 

Α	N	O	$\mathbf{V}$	A	2

Mo	odel	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	691574.90	5	138314.98	4820.11	0.001b
	Residual	11248.59	392	28.69		
	Total	702823.49	397			

a. DV: SQ

b. IV's: (Constant), PROM5, PROM1, PROM3, PROM4, PROM2

Predictor variable	Beta	p
PROM1 (Reliability)	.17	p<.05
PROM2 (Responsiveness)	.23	p<.05
PROM3 (Timing)	.20	p<.05
PROM4 (Media)	.23	p<.05
PROM5 (Celebrity endorsements)	.23	p<.05

Since, all p values are substantial at 5 percentage significance level, hence hypothesis formulated in this situation would not be accepted.

Regression equation is obtained:

## Overall Service Quality = 0.17 (PROM1) + 0.23 (PROM2) + 0.20 (PROM3) + 0.23 (PROM4) + 0.23 (PROM5)

If one unit enhancement takes place in PROM1, DV increases by 0.17 units (p<.05). When there's unit increase PROM2, DV increases by 0.23 units (p<.05). The rise in PROM3 by 1unit leads to 0.20 units increases in DV (p<.05). With one unit increase in PROM4), service quality rises by 0.23 units (p<.05). If one witnesses one unit increase in PROM5, then DV increases by 0.23 units (p<.05). H04 does not get accepted.

Significant variables are shown below (table 2.5)

*Table 2.5 : Coefficient for Promotion Variables and service quality* 

Model			Standardized Coefficients	Т	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta value		

1	(Constant)	3.28	.70		4.69	0.001
	PROM1	5.53	.39	.17	14.02	0.001
	PROM2	7.45	.45	.23	16.31	0.001
	PROM3	6.29	.46	.20	13.54	0.001
	PROM4	7.32	.43	.23	16.75	0.001
	PROM5	7.36	.39	.23	18.54	0.001

a. DV: SQ

## **Interpretation:**

## Examination of the impact of 'Promotion' element of marketing mix for adventure sports companies in Delhi- NCR on the service quality

It has been visible from the hypothesis testing that all the different variables that comprised the component of 'Promotion' showed a statistically significant impact on the SQ (Service Quality) of the adventure sports establishments in Delhi NCR. Given null hypotheses, H04 had a rejection at five percentage level of significance So, it was documented that the variables that were comprising the Promotion component, namely, reliability, responsiveness, timing, media and celebrendorsements has a major impact on the service quality. Responsiveness of promotion and media of promotion exerts more influence on service quality than other variables. This reflects that promotional team of adventure sports companies is expected to be responsive and choice of media is exerting major impact. Celebrity endorsements also reflected a reasonable positive impact on service quality. Celebrity chosen by companies to endorse products and various adventure sports holds reasonable influence. Reliability of promotion has least affect on increasing service quality hence, the component, 'Promotion' can be said to exert a positive influence on the SQ (Service Quality) of the adventure sports establishments in Delhi NCR.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promotion undoubtedly is an important decision for the adventure sports companies. The companies should choose the right blend of advertisements in newspapers, relevant magazines and social media platform. Considering the level of digital penetration, it's imperative for these companies to actively participate in digital marketing thereby reaching out to masses with the right promotional messages.
- In order to communicate the right message to the right audience, you must look at both online and offline modes for advertising, marketing and promoting your business. Such promotions can be either organic or paid. In online marketing, you should select the right SEO company to ensure higher rank in search engines when the target customer uses the internet.
- For the same, you need to find the relevant keywords for your business and ensure you use them in the content to make your product or service reach the target customers. Since, this industry

has a scope of attracting the customers of beautiful images of different landscapes and adventure sports being played by a common man, thus, such images can eb well utilized in the content.

• Celebrity endorsements is another way to build a brand of high value. The choice of the celebrity should be so made that he/she reflects traits like fitness, popularity, adventurous, risk-takers and the ones with whom the masses could relate.

It should be noted that the given recommendations would be useful for the adventure sports companies but its application may vary dependent upon the company's objectives, management, financial management, marketing vision, size of organization, resources available and various other factors

#### LIMITATIONS

This study like other studies was also marked by a number of limitations which have been presented below:

- Resource Limitation: This indeed is a limitation which is unavoidable in nature. This empirical research has been carried out with the available and accessible resources to the researcher. This study involved the filling of questionnaires by the trainers involved in providing services to the customers at limited locations. Thus, it limited the resource accessible.
- Personal bias: Any error that arises because of the personal bias is not under the control of the researcher. Thus, the responses that were provided by the respondents was according to their discretion and hence, they could only decide what kind and level of information they were interested to share. Also, the reliability of responses was dependent upon the authenticity with which the respondents had responded to the questions. Therefore, it is quite obvious to assume that there had been some degree of personal bias which might have existed in the data which was gathered.
- Confidentiality reasons: All the trainers were not very comfortable to score less the services which were being provided on the part of the company. Many of the respondents even enquired about keeping their responses confidential and not disclosing to the owners of their companies. Thus, it can be treated as a limitation where due to this discomfort the scoring given might not be absolutely as per the real picture. Also, the responses were not universal over the trainers.
- Uncontrolled variance: Some of the sources of the uncontrolled variance could be the experience of trainers being different due to difference in the kind of adventure sports being offered or the difference in the kinds of clients whom they serving. Thus, difference in such experiences would bring variations in their interpretation of the service quality being derived by the client.
- Geographical barriers: The researcher had conducted this study pertaining to the companies located in the stipulated geographical locations. As per possibility of accessibility of the researcher

to the geographical locations, this study could be conducted for a smaller area in India and couldn't be done for different states in the country which could have provided more extensive details.

- Cost constraints: This is a very practical limitation which is encountered by the researcher. Visiting different companies at different locations implied application of funds for travel, transportation, questionnaires print outs and miscellaneous expenses. Thus, completing the data collection within the allotted budget was another constraint.
- Limited number of companies: In the light of the mentioned limitations, limited number of companies could be chosen through the adopted method of sampling for this research. Choice of limited number of companies means that there were many companies in the given area that were not approached and thus, the results doesn't comprise the responses that could be obtained from the respondents of the left-out firms.
- Limited variables: Another limitation of this study is that it considered only one variables for studying the impact of the promotion mix on the service quality provided by the adventure sports companies.

#### **FUTURE SCOPE**

The current research being conducted on a novel concept which is fast spreading in India would surely have practical implications for the marketers and trainers of the adventure sports companies serving the clientele in Delhi-NCR. This empirical study is also distinctive as various studies are available for reflecting customer satisfaction and service quality with customers as the respondents. This investigation has been done to understand the viewpoint of the trainers who are actually present on the floor dealing with the clients and providing them the service product at a certain price. Theses trainers are the face of the organization to the customers. As per the service marketing triangle, employees of a company have the most important role in communicating the company to the customer and collecting customer feedback to be supplied to the management for detailed review. Hence, the parameter or base that has been taken to conduct this study serve as a distinct premise.

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