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The impact of enlightened marketing in reducing cognitive dissonance an analytical study of the opinions of a sample of customers of the travel and tourism companies in Baghdad

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Abstract

The current study aims to analyze the impact of enlightened marketing, with its various dimensions, on cognitive dissonance among customers of tourism companies in Baghdad. The importance of this topic stems from its vital role in strengthening the relationship between the customer and the service organization, by reducing the doubts and psychological distress that may arise after making a purchasing decision. The study relied on a descriptive analytical approach, and a questionnaire was used as the primary tool to collect data from a field sample within tourism companies. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods.

The results revealed a significant inverse correlation between Enlightened marketing, with its various dimensions (customer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, and societal marketing), and cognitive dissonance. The study also showed that the "customer-oriented marketing" dimension was the most influential in reducing levels of cognitive dissonance, followed by societal marketing, then innovative marketing. The study recommended the adoption of an informed marketing model that emphasizes transparency and ethical values, along with the development of tools to measure cognitive dissonance and interact with customers to enhance their satisfaction and trust in the organization.

Keywords: Enlightened marketing, cognitive dissonance, customer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, societal marketing, tourism companies

Introduction

In light of the rapid transformations taking place in the tourism services market, customers have become more aware, more selective, and more demanding in judging the quality of services and the responsiveness of institutions to their actual needs. This transformation has posed significant challenges for travel and tourism companies, particularly those operating in an environment like Baghdad, where tourism aspirations intersect with a sometimes volatile service reality. This makes customer satisfaction and their psychological and cognitive stability after purchase a critical marketing goal. In this context, the concept of "cognitive dissonance" is one of the most prominent behavioral concepts that explains the state of tension or doubt that afflicts customers after making a purchasing decision, resulting from a conflict between their previous expectations and their actual experience. The danger of this dissonance is evident in its negative impact on customer loyalty, leading to a decline in customer confidence in the organization, and potentially leading customers to make negative decisions later, such as changing providers or spreading negative impressions. In response to this challenge, "enlightened marketing" has emerged as a modern trend in marketing thought. This approach goes beyond providing or promoting services, but rather seeks to build a sustainable human relationship between the organization and its customers, based on ethical values, responsible innovation, and a socially responsible approach, with a focus on enhancing trust, transparency, and positive interaction. Enlightened marketing is not limited to achieving immediate customer satisfaction; it also seeks to achieve cognitive and psychological harmony and ensure cognitive stability after purchase. This reduces cognitive dissonance and strengthens the long-term relationship between the two parties. Hence, the importance of this study, which explores the role of enlightened marketing dimensions in reducing cognitive dissonance among customers of tourism companies in Baghdad, by analyzing the relationship between these variables and interpreting them within a realistic field context.

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Axis One: Study Methodology

1. The Study Problem: The tourism sector in Baghdad, as a sensitive service sector, faces growing challenges related to customer satisfaction and cognitive stability after the purchase or reservation process. Customers often experience feelings of hesitation or doubt after making their purchasing decision, which is known in marketing literature as "cognitive dissonance". This dissonance may result from a mismatch between customer expectations and the actual service provided, or from a lack of transparency and credibility in marketing messages. This negatively impacts customer loyalty and satisfaction, leading to a decline in trust in the tourism establishment.

In this context, enlightened marketing is presented as a modern approach based on ethical values, responsible innovation, and a socially conscious approach. It seeks to build balanced, long-term relationships with customers, based on trust, credibility, and responsiveness to their real needs.

Hence, the study's problem stems from the following main question.

Does enlightened marketing, in its various dimensions, contribute to reducing cognitive dissonance among customers of travel and tourism companies in Baghdad?

2. Significance of the study: The importance of this research stems from its addressing a contemporary topic in a service environment suffering from increasing challenges related to customer satisfaction and the stability of their purchasing decisions. This makes cognitive dissonance a real problem facing tourism companies in Baghdad. The importance of the study lies in its highlighting enlightened marketing as a modern approach based on values and responsibility, which can contribute to addressing this dissonance and mitigating its negative effects. The study also gains its importance from the scarcity of local research that has addressed the relationship between these two variables in the tourism sector. This gives it a theoretical and applied dimension that may contribute to developing marketing policies, enhancing customer confidence, and supporting the shift toward more humane and effective marketing practices.

In light of the research problem and its importance, the research objective focuses primarily on diagnosing and defining the relationship and impact between career path dimensions and organizational strength, as well as achieving the following objectives:

- Identifying the theoretical concepts related to the research variables and their sub-dimensions by presenting relevant literature.
- Providing a practical vision of the nature of the relationship and impact between the dimensions of enlightened marketing and cognitive dissonance.
- Presenting a set of proposals based on the results of the field research.

3. Study Hypotheses

The first main study hypothesis states, "there is a significant inverse correlation between enlightened marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".

The following sub-hypotheses branch out from this hypothesis:

- There is a significant inverse correlation between

customer-oriented marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.

- There is a significant inverse correlation between innovative marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.
- There is a significant inverse correlation between societal marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.

The second main study hypothesis stated, "There is a significant adverse effect of enlightened marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".

The following sub-hypotheses branch out from this hypothesis:

- There is a significant adverse effect of customer-oriented marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.
- There is a significant adverse effect of innovative marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.
- There is a significant adverse effect of Societal Marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study.

4. Data Collection Method: The researchers relied on the following two methods to study the relationship between the main and sub-variables with the aim of testing their hypotheses through data collection and analysis:

- The descriptive method:** This method was adopted by reviewing relevant literature on the research topic, including books, theses, university dissertations, periodicals, and internet research.
- The analytical method:** A questionnaire was used as the primary tool to obtain primary data, and the Likert-type method was used. The questionnaire was designed to measure the respondents' responses. The questionnaire was designed to test the research dimensions and variables in a way that is consistent with the research field environment and the individuals being researched.

Second Axis: The theoretical aspect of enlightened marketing

1. The concept of enlightened marketing

Today's enlightened companies are developing environmentally sustainable strategies in an effort to create a global economy that the planet can support indefinitely. They are responding to customer demands for more environmentally responsible products. (Kotler, *et al.*, 2020:87, Kotler, *et al.*, 2023:82) ^[26, 29]. Therefore, marketers must strive to meet the needs and desires of their target markets in ways that preserve and enhance the well-being of customers and society as a whole. The concept of enlightened marketing emphasizes social responsibility, and that a company's focus solely on the exchange relationship with customers may not be appropriate for maintaining long-term success. Rather, the marketing strategy should deliver value to customers in a way that preserves or enhances the well-being of both the customer and society (Thorat, *et al.*, 2013:7) ^[51]. In previous decades, commercial companies in the American business environment were often criticized for their short-sightedness and for exposing companies to long-term risks by pursuing the goal of

achieving short-term profits and neglecting other dimensions and goals. Therefore, companies must adopt an enlightened marketing philosophy to succeed and build long-term relationships with customers (Mislow, 1985:123)^[34]. Therefore, “enlightened marketing” seeks to address some of the criticisms directed at traditional marketing philosophies and their impact on society as a whole, including that many marketing officials in many companies are clearly motivated by profit and focus on short-term market share, which does not achieve the desired benefit in the long term. Therefore, marketers must realize how adopting an enlightened marketing philosophy may ultimately benefit the company, customers, and society in the long term (Dacko, 2008:186)^[14]. In a broad sense, enlightened marketing is based on the philosophy that a company must make good marketing decisions by considering long-term factors such as the interests and well-being of customers, the company’s long-term strategic goals, and the long-term interests of society. In the long run, according to this philosophy, a company’s marketing strategies should be customer-oriented, innovative, beneficial to society, have long-term value, and be based on a sense of the company’s mission (Idowu, 2015:214)^[20]. As for the definition of enlightened marketing, as we mentioned earlier, Kotler was the first to consider this concept. He defined it as “the philosophy that emphasizes that a company’s marketing should support the best long-term performance of the marketing system” (Kotler, *et al.*, 1999: 61, Kotler, *et al.*, 2008:586)^[27, 28]. According to the researcher’s humble knowledge of the term enlightened marketing, there are not many definitions circulating among writers and researchers. Most of them have used Kotler’s definition and the researchers who are with him, and they have added something simple to these definitions. Among these definitions that are easy for the researcher to obtain is the definition of (Thorat, *et al.*, 2013)^[51], which states: “Enlightened marketing emphasizes that the company’s mission is to identify the needs, desires, and interests of the target market and to deliver the required satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that maintains or enhances the well-being of the customer and society” (Thorat, *et al.*, 2013:7)^[51]. This is the same definition that was discussed by (Guzovski & Smoljic, 2017)^[17], as well as the definition of (Costa, 2018)^[13] which states “a concept in which the organization’s marketing strategies are always consumer-oriented and beneficial to society” (Costa, 2018:842)^[13].

2. Characteristics of enlightened marketing

There are seven essential characteristics of enlightened marketing, which are the foundation of a company’s marketing. They will enable it to enjoy marketing more, help it ensure it attracts the type of clients it enjoys working with most, and enable it to build a thriving and highly rewarding private practice. These are: (Thorat *et al.*, 2013: 5-6) (Vijayan & Sunil, 2018: 12-13, Shuber, *et al.*, 2020: 1514-1515)^[47, 51, 53].

- **Enlightened marketing is honest:** Through the integrity of enlightened marketing, customers are successfully attracted by demonstrating the highest levels of integrity. Marketing with integrity means being honest about the strengths and limitations of your services in all aspects of your marketing.
- **Enlightened marketing is authentic:** In order to

market authentically, a company needs to put its authentic self out there for customers to see and experience. Acting authentically highlights the company’s uniqueness and, as a result, attracts customers. Naturally, customers who feel they can clearly benefit from what the company has to offer.

- **Enlightened marketing has a vision:** An organization’s marketing efforts will be more successful if it has a clear vision for its practices and knows how it intends to achieve that vision. Furthermore, the more creative an organization’s vision is, the more profound and limitless it will be. It must maintain this vision throughout all marketing activities and allow it to evolve and grow.
- **Enlightened marketing is conscious:** From an enlightened marketing perspective, an organization must be conscious, i.e., aware of how marketing works as an art and a science, and make a conscious effort to learn and experiment with marketing strategies, discover what works and what doesn’t, and adjust plans accordingly.
- **Enlightened marketing demonstrates commitment and dedication:** In order to achieve the results the organization desires, it must be committed, dedicated, and prioritize its work. To this end, marketing must be taken as seriously as the service it provides to customers.
- **F Enlightenment marketing is not tied to results:** It is important for an organization to remain committed to marketing and not tied to results, regardless of the amount of marketing knowledge it has. It has, as things may not go as planned, so patience and perseverance are essential.
- **Enlightened marketing is passion:** When a company is passionate about its marketing and the services it provides, it will be more motivated to take the necessary steps to effectively build its business. Furthermore, the enthusiasm the company demonstrates will be part of what attracts customers and builds its reputation.

3. Dimensions of enlightened marketing

Enlightened marketing integrates social and environmental aspects into the entire marketing process. It includes environmental marketing, generating customer desire for environmentally friendly products and services, and includes long-term objectives such as influencing user lifestyles or policy. In addition, aspects of social responsibility are considered within societal marketing. Enlightened marketing principles such as customer focus, value, and innovation form the foundation of enlightened marketing (Grünwald, 2015:196)^[16]. In companies’ pursuit of their overall goal, enlightened marketing calls for adopting key organizational principles and philosophies, which represent the study’s dimensions of the enlightened marketing variable:

Customer-oriented marketing: The concept of “marketing” emerged as a new philosophy as a result of customer-oriented marketing. It focuses on identifying the needs of potential customers and meeting them by offering their products. According to this philosophy, the customer acts as the main focus of all company activities. Customer-oriented marketing aims to achieve profitability by meeting

customer requirements, not just achieving profitable sales (Shovkatovich, 2024: 33) ^[46]. As an enlightened marketing philosophy, it obliges the company that adopts it to view and organize marketing activities from the customer's perspective (Khan & Khan, 2006: 112) (Dacko, 2008: 186, Kotler, *et al.*, 2005: 191, Miladinovski, *et al.*, 2012: 576) ^[14, 22, 33] by making all marketing activities, such as identifying needs, developing appropriate products, pricing, distributing, and promoting them, customer-oriented (Medvedeva, 2020: 3) ^[32], as well as prioritizing customers and organizing activities. Businesses focus on their customers' needs. The goal is for the company to understand what the customer wants. This principle will lead to attractive marketing, as customers will seek out the company (Rodhiah & Valentina, 2024:6) ^[44].

From this perspective, this principle requires companies to prioritize their customers and develop products that meet their actual needs rather than trying to impose ready-made products on them. When a product is designed according to customer requirements, it contributes to creating a positive user experience that strengthens brand loyalty (Anand, *et al.*, 2023:96) ^[1]. One of the most prominent features of customer-oriented marketing is the ability to build strong and sustainable relationships with customers. This is not limited to providing products alone, but also includes continuous interaction with customers, listening to their feedback, and analyzing their needs to provide more personalized solutions (Momoh, 2020:676) ^[35].

Innovative Marketing: In rapidly evolving markets, where customers are exposed to a vast array of different advertising messages, innovative marketing has become essential and a fundamental pillar upon which countries and industrial companies rely to highlight their brands and secure a strong consumer image. This is achieved by leveraging innovative technologies and creative strategies (Sudirjo, *et al.*, 2024: 138, Khalf & Ali, 2024: 175) ^[21, 48]. Furthermore, the emergence of new forms of competition among companies increases the importance of adapting to and operating within the market and effectively utilizing innovative marketing strategies. An innovative approach in this regard serves as an important factor in ensuring companies' strategic competitiveness (Bobonievich & Makhmudovich, 2024: 54) ^[8]. Innovative marketing refers to a set of innovative processes and procedures that market and deliver new products and services to a targeted customer group. The concept of innovative marketing revolves around incorporating market research into user needs, trends, and behaviors, developing product design, offering a new product in a unique location, positioning the product in a unique way, and promoting products in an unconventional way (Waral, 2020:7, Mukif, *et al.*, 2020) ^[37, 54] described innovative marketing as a marketing approach that aims to create products that exceed and meet customer expectations, impressing them upon first use and achieving their satisfaction and loyalty to the company and its products in the medium and long term. This requires the company to continue striving to achieve performance by implementing a set of vital programs that motivate employees to exert more efforts, such as employee suggestion and participation programs, teamwork, compensation and rewards, and other similar programs and practices through which the company can stimulate performance and improve employee personal traits such as honesty, enthusiasm, participation in decision-

making, improving their relationship with managers, relying on and developing employee performance to achieve high performance, and at the same time holding employees accountable for their results. (Mukif, *et al.*, 2020:1628) ^[37].

Societal Marketing: In today's rapidly changing market environment, it has become necessary to modify the traditional marketing concept to require marketers to adhere to the principles of social responsibility in marketing their goods and services. This requires them to seek to meet the needs and desires of their target markets in ways that preserve and enhance the well-being of customers and society as a whole, more effectively and efficiently than competitors. This approach is simply known as societal marketing (Khan & Khan, 2006:509) ^[22]. Companies must support these social needs that are consistent with the growth of social welfare in the future. Socially ethical marketing must ensure the long-term benefits of "socially beneficial" goods and services without diminishing their appeal.

In the enlightened marketing model, societal marketing is considered one of the five main pillars, in addition to customer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, value marketing, and mission-based marketing. Market decisions are made taking into account not only the interests of the business and customer, but also the interests of society (Bera & Katole, 2023:41) ^[7]. The concept of societal marketing is linked to the modern approach to marketing, which is considered an enlightened marketing orientation, focusing on making socially responsible decisions while taking into account the long-term interests of the customer and the company, as well as the interests of society (Panwar, *et al.*, 2021:174) ^[41]. In other words, the concept of societal marketing can be linked to sustainable development and social responsibility, as the company makes its decisions based on three factors: customer needs and expectations, the interests of the company, and the long-term interests of society (Dacko, 2008: 186) (Kuřková, 2010: 18) ^[14, 30]. It does not focus solely on commercial activities, but extends to other areas. Adopting ethical practices that promote environmental and social sustainability. Social marketing is based on the idea that it is not enough for a company to think only about monetary exchange with customers. Rather, marketing strategies must also focus their efforts on providing value to customers in a way that improves the well-being of both the customer and society (Varma, *et al.* 2021:174) ^[52]. Although the organizational goals of social organizations differ from those of profit-seeking organizations, the principles of marketing remain the same for both (Chaddha, 2014:191) ^[10].

4. The concept of cognitive dissonance from a marketing perspective

Cognitive dissonance is a social science concept. Although it is not a modern concept, it has been applied in various research fields (Chou, 2012:200) ^[12], most notably marketing, consumer behavior research, education, and management. What supports its use in these fields is that cognitive dissonance theory is well-researched in social psychology and provides a flexible framework for explaining behavior (Padayachee, 2015:54) ^[39]. In recent years, cognitive dissonance theory has received significant attention in leading management journals for its role in the managerial decision-making process. It represents a specific

form of cognitive dissonance as a state of psychological discomfort resulting from an inconsistency between cognitive elements after purchasing a product (Li & Choudhury, 2021:4). This discomfort motivates customers to mitigate the negative state and alleviate the discomfort by reducing emotional tension, thus restoring their psychological balance (Brooksbank & Fullerton, 2020:1759) ^[9]. From a business and marketing perspective, "cognitive dissonance" is synonymous with "buyer's remorse" or "self-doubt." Cognitive dissonance, deeply rooted in social psychology, arises when customers encounter discrepancies between their initial expectations and actual experience during the pre-decision or post-purchase stages of the decision-making process (Rina, *et al.*, 2024:6768) ^[43]. In the field of marketing, cognitive dissonance appears as a state of incompatibility in purchasing behavior, because an individual may hesitate between two or more options before making a decision. When an individual purchases a product, they may fall into cognitive dissonance due to thinking about the existence of better alternatives or due to regretting missing out on another alternative (Aydin & Yilmaz, 2018: 335) ^[4]. It may appear when the monetary value of the purchased product is high or when the relative importance of the purchase is high. It is also viewed as post-purchase doubt and affects an individual's behavior, lifestyle, and store loyalty (Andotra & Pooja, 2009: 278) ^[2]. However, as we know, the process of Purchasing involves eliminating many alternatives in exchange for a specific alternative, so the more attractive the rejected decision, the more dissonant the customer will be (Parekh, 2024:638) ^[42].

Cognitive dissonance explains that buyers often find themselves in a dilemma after making a purchase (Salzberger & Koller, 2010:6) ^[45]. This concept also often reflects the psychological discomfort one may experience when choosing from among many attractive alternatives. Consequently, customers may experience purchasing anxiety, which may be reflected in all aspects of the decision-making process. Cognitive dissonance may influence customers' choices, evaluations, and behaviors (Bayraktar, 2023:513) ^[5]. Some marketing scholars have expanded the application of the theory beyond the post-purchase situation by examining the role of cognitive dissonance in broader contexts, such as service perceptions. Their view is based on the idea that cognitive dissonance can occur not only in the post-purchase situation but also at various stages of the consumption process (Kim, 2011:98) ^[23]. Marketers devote considerable attention to strategy implementation, but they are also concerned about the post-purchase phase, when customers express their preferences and opinions regarding products and services. Among the many factors that influence repeat purchases, one important aspect is the level of consonance or dissonance that occurs at the time of purchase (Rina *et al.*, 2024:67-68) ^[43]. Cognitive dissonance theory explains behavioral changes that arise from a particular customer's exposure to strong messages. This hypothesis asserts that people tend to favor decision-consistent information over decision-inconsistent information. Therefore, the effects of communication presentation on the customer's decision-making process may be limited, and a person experiencing discomfort is motivated to temporarily increase discomfort by revealing facts that expand the dissonance in order to change their behavior (Nam, 2023: 60) ^[38]. Cognitive dissonance can

help explain uncertainty at all stages of the decision-making and purchasing process, from early preparation for a future decision to the consumption stage. Of course, this does not mean that the level of cognitive dissonance must be constant over time (Koller & Salzberger, 2007:220) ^[24].

Researchers and writers have differed in their definition and description of cognitive dissonance. Some describe it as an uncomfortable tension resulting from the presence of two conflicting ideas at the same time, from experiencing seemingly conflicting phenomena, or from engaging in behavior that conflicts with one's beliefs (Graff, *et al.*, 2012:34). Others define it as a psychological discomfort that occurs when there is a discrepancy between what a person believes and information that contradicts that belief (Bolia, *et al.*, 2016:64). It refers to "the mental distress or discomfort that people experience when confronted with conflicting beliefs, ideas, or standards". (Awwad, *et al.*, 2023:4) ^[3].

5. Measuring Cognitive Dissonance

Methods for measuring cognitive dissonance have varied in the number of their components. Some are complex and repetitive, while others are short and of little use. However, studies addressing cognitive dissonance scales used in marketing have been few. Bell (1967) ^[6] first developed a cognitive dissonance scale through a study on a sample of (234) new car buyers. They were interviewed within a week of the purchase and were asked questions (Hunt, 1970: 48). Bell (1967) ^[6, 19] measured cognitive dissonance by posing questions that would reveal the respondent's feelings about their purchase decision. For example, they asked respondents about their reactions to the following types of questions: "How do you feel about your new car?" "After a person buys a new car, they usually feel a little uneasy about it; do you think you got a good deal?" "To what extent do you wonder whether you made the right decision?" "Do most people expect to get the same kind of deal I got?" Immediately after the sale, the salesperson was asked to rate the customer based on how easily they were persuaded by the above items. He then combined these two measures and categorized the participants into five categories of persuasion (Bell, 1967:13) ^[6]. Hunt (1970) ^[19] then attempted to develop a model in his study using post-purchase anxiety as a measure of dissonance experienced by customers. He also developed a scale to measure post-purchase dissonance (Montgomery & Barnes, 1993:205) (Pandey, *et al.*, 2023:9639) ^[36, 40] with questions such as, "Did you buy the 'right' brand from the 'right' store?" Participants indicated on a seven-point scale their preference for statements such as: "I should have spent more (less) time shopping for this appliance"; "There is no doubt (great doubt) in my mind about whether I should have made the purchase at this store." The statements were randomly assigned to the questionnaire to prevent attitude bias, and the scale was constructed so that lower numbers always indicated less anxiety than higher numbers. The study hypothesized that one benefit retailers might gain from providing post-transaction reassurances is that those who received the reassurances would have more positive attitudes toward the store than the control group. The five attitudes used were: merchandise convenience, store services, convenient store methods, sales staff, and location convenience. The scales were designed so that lower numbers always reflected a "more favorable" attitude than

higher numbers when viewed from the store's perspective. A second benefit retailers might gain from providing post-transaction reassurances is that customers who received the reassurances would be more willing to buy (Hunt, 1970:48) (Montgomery & Barnes, 1993:205). Menasco & Hawkins (1978)^[19, 36] used a purchase decision difficulty scale to infer the degree of dissonance arousal. This was accomplished by asking participants to indicate the number of stores visited and the number of brands being considered for purchase. Difficulty ratings (using a five-point scale) were then obtained for each store and brand decision. According to dissonance theory, a person's level of decision difficulty should reflect the decisional aspects of the alternatives under consideration (i.e., the positive attributes of the rejected alternatives versus the negative attributes of the chosen alternative). In addition, participants were asked to identify "any other factors" influencing their purchase decision and to rate the degree of decision difficulty caused by these factors. Typical responses in this area referred to the financial outlay required or other uses of the funds involved.

The research process leading to hypothesis testing consisted of (a) selecting two products, one with high involvement and the other with low involvement, (b) pretesting experimental conditions, and (c) developing and validating the construct of cognitive dissonance. Product involvement refers to the product category's specificity and does not differentiate between brands. It is the salience of one product category compared to another, and is often referred to as "product involvement" or "product importance." Previous research has proposed four possible domains of the concept of product involvement: product differentiation, familiarity, commitment, and importance. In line with this research, nine items were created to measure the four domains. Five products with varying levels of involvement were selected due to their ease of handling. Four domains exist. The first factor captures the product differentiation construct. The second factor captures the familiarity concept. The third factor captures the commitment concept, and the fourth factor captures the importance concept. The questionnaire consisted of four questions, each designed to measure a specific dimension of the concept as suggested by theory and previous research: (1) uncertainty about choice, (2) tendency to avoid negative information about the choice made, (3) tendency to gather positive information about the choice made, and (4) tendency to defend the decision by discussing it with others who had made the same decision. Responses were measured on a two-point scale, and exact responses were summed to form a 0- to 4-point index. One item on this scale, for example, was "What kind of information would you like to receive?" (select one), with two response alternatives: "Something about the positive features of the product" and "Something about the negative features of the product" (Korgaonkar & Moschis, 1982:36)^[25].

Montgomery & Barnes (1993)^[36] criticized their study of this scale because Korgaonkar & Moschis (1982)^[25] never confirmed their hypothesis because they did not factor their scale. Furthermore, their method of constructing the scale was questionable (they used single-item scales to measure each dimension), and if they had conducted a factor analysis of four items, it seems highly unlikely that they would have

found four separate dimensions, it appears that most of their items measure one dimension, "uncertainty" (Montgomery & Barnes, 1993:210)^[36]. Cognitive dissonance was then measured with a scale developed by (Sweeney JC, Hausknecht D & Soutar GN 2000)^[50] because it includes both cognitive and emotional components (Chadha, *et al.*, 2018:350)^[11]. This model is a development of the previous model (Hausknecht, Sweeney, Soutar, Johnson, 1998)^[18]. The emotional items covered a wide range in the above model, including anger, annoyance, embarrassment, guilt, depression, frustration, and unhappiness, which represent the negative end of the hedonic dimension in the psychological space of consumer emotion (Hausknecht, *et al.*, 1998:124)^[18]. According to (Sweeney, *et al.*, 2000)^[50], the content validity of the items was assessed by 12 experts in consumer behavior, who were provided with the cognitive and emotional definitions of dissonance used in the study. Items with a significantly higher mean in one dimension than the other were retained for further development. In total, 36 cognitive items and 36 emotional items were retained after this second stage (Sweeney, *et al.*, 2000:375)^[50]. Two quantitative stages were developed to refine the scale. The first aimed to reduce the initial pool, using two samples of students, for a total of 645 individuals, coming from four Australian universities, who were asked to answer a questionnaire, where they were paid To consider an important purchasing decision, involving a problematic choice between two or more comparable alternatives, 28 of the original 72 items were retained from this first phase. The second phase aimed to assess the robustness of the 28-item scale derived from the previous phase. Two samples of customers from two different types of businesses were used: a furniture store and a car radio dealer. Customers were invited to participate in the survey immediately after completing their purchase. One of the key considerations adopted by the researchers in developing the scale was the adequacy of sampling from a specific content area. The focus group method used to generate the items, followed by the use of judges to evaluate the items, supports the content validity of the scale. In the second stage of developing this scale, after measuring the reliability of this scale, the scales were severely reduced, as the intention was to develop a simplified scale with few items so that it could be used in large-scale consumer research studies, of which dissonance is only a part (Sweeney, *et al.*, 2000: 376)^[50]. According to (Khraim, 2020), a more comprehensive and simpler scale was designed after reducing the scale items by (Sweeney, Hausknecht, Soutar, 2000)^[50]. In the end, it contains 22 items to assess cognitive dissonance after purchase (Khraim, 2020: 15). The scale includes three dimensions: The emotional dimension, which refers to the lack of wisdom in purchasing and the Concern over deal dimension (Demirgüneş & Avcılar, 2017:60), is as follows: (Sweeney, *et al.*, 2000: 380)^[50].

1. **Emotional dissonance:** The psychological discomfort a person feels after a purchase decision.
2. **Lack of wisdom:** The person's recognition after the purchase that they may not have needed the product or may not have chosen the right one.
3. **Concern over deal:** The person's recognition after the purchase may indicate that they may have been influenced by their own beliefs by salespeople.

Table 1: Scale (Sweeney, Hausknecht, Soutar, 2000) ^[50]

Emotional dissonance	After I bought this product: I was in despair I resented it I felt disappointed with myself I felt scared I felt hollow I felt angry I felt uneasy I felt I'd let myself down I felt annoyed I felt frustrated I was in pain I felt depressed I felt furious with myself I felt sick I was in agony
Lack of wisdom	I wonder if I really need this product I wonder whether I should have bought anything at all I wonder if I have made the right choice I wonder if I have done the right thing in buying this Product
Concern over deal	After I bought this product I wondered if I'd been fooled After I bought this product I wondered if they had spun me a line After I bought this product I wondered whether there was something wrong with the deal I got

Source: JC Sweeney, D Hausknecht and GN Soutar, "Cognitive Dissonance after Purchase: A Multidimensional Scale," *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 17, no. 5, p. 369-385, 2000.P.P.381.

Pandey *et al.* (2023) ^[40] criticized the scale (Sweeney, J. C., Hausknecht D & Soutar GN 2000) ^[50], which is widely used in consumer behavior research, for its lack of ease of understanding for customers. It also relies heavily on the emotional-psychological dimension of the post-purchase dissonance construct, lacks the practical aspect of the construct most relevant to current customers, and is difficult

to adapt to both traditional and online shoppers. (Pandey *et al.* 2023: 9644) ^[40].

In 2006, Sweeney & Soutar (2006) ^[49] re-examined the reliability of their 2000 scale and whether it needed to be reduced. The result of this study was the reduction of the scale (Sweeney JC, Hausknecht D, Soutar GN, 2000) ^[50] to a three-dimensional scale consisting of 12 items, consisting of from the emotional dimension (5 items), interest in the transaction dimension (3 items), and wisdom in purchasing dimension (4 items) (Sweeney & Soutar, 2006:7) ^[49]. The scale was structured as containing the following items:

Table 2: Scale (Sweeney & Soutar, 2006) ^[49]

Emotional dissonance After purchasing this product:	I was in a state of despair. I felt empty. I felt frustrated. I felt depressed. I felt sick.
Lack of wisdom (I wonder if...)	I really need this product. I should have bought something at all. I made the right choice. I did the right thing in buying this product.
Concern about the deal (After purchasing the product, I wondered if...)	I was deceived. They deceived me. There was something wrong with the deal I got.

Source: JC Sweeney and GN Soutar, "A Short Form of Sweeney, Hausknecht and Soutar's Cognitive Dissonance Scale," in *Proceedings of the 20th ANZAM Conference [electronic resource]: Management: pragmatism, philosophy, priorities*, K. J. di Milia V, Ed., Lindfield, NSW: Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management, 2006, p. 1-9.P.6.

Third axis/field aspect

To describe and diagnose the research variables, the researchers used arithmetic means and standard deviations to determine the attitudes of the research community towards the research variables and dimensions, based on the

results of the statistical programme (SPSS.ver24).

1. Description and diagnosis of dimensions (enlightened marketing): This section describes and diagnoses each dimension of this variable according to the respondents' perceptions and responses, as follows:

As for the order of importance of the dimensions of the enlightened marketing variable as a whole, based on the results of the statistical analysis of each dimension of this variable, we find that the innovative marketing dimension came in first place, with a mean of (3.779), a standard deviation of (0.748), and a coefficient of variation of (19.788), as most of the sample's responses agreed on this

dimension compared to the other dimension. Then, in second place, comes the customer-oriented marketing dimension, with a mean of (3.770), a standard deviation of (0.707), and a coefficient of variation of (18.759). In

general, the overall arithmetic mean for the variable as a whole was (3.762), with a standard deviation of (0.735) and a coefficient of variation of (19.534), with a general response level of 'high,' as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Statistics of the enlightened marketing variable

T	Paragraphs	The arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of variation %	Intensity Answer.	Level The answer	Order of importance
1	Customer-orientated marketing	3.770	0.7070	18.759	75.394	High	2
2	Innovative Marketing	3.779	0.7480	19.788	75.585	High	1
3	Societal Marketing	3.737	0.7500	20.056	74.745	High	3
	Overall rate	3.762	0.7350	19.534	75.241		

2. Description and Diagnosis of (Cognitive Dissonance):

By reviewing the importance ranking of the dimensions of the cognitive dissonance variable as a whole, based on the results of the statistical analysis of each dimension, it becomes clear that the absence of wisdom dimension ranked first, with an arithmetic mean of (2.285), a standard deviation of (0.805), and a coefficient of variation of (35.220). Most of the sample's responses were in agreement

on this dimension compared to the other dimensions. Customer-oriented marketing came in second place, with an arithmetic mean of (2.253), a standard deviation of (0.792), and a coefficient of variation of (35.170). Overall, the overall arithmetic mean for the variable as a whole was (2.262), with a standard deviation of (0.798), a coefficient of variation of (35.289), and a response level of (low), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Statistics of the Cognitive Dissonance Variable

T	Paragraphs	The arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of variation %	Intensity Answer	Level the answer	Order of importance
1	Emotional dissonance	2.253	0.792	35.170	45.064	Low	2
2	Lack of wisdom	2.285	0.8050	35.220	45.691	Low	1
3	Concerns about the deal	2.249	0.7980	35.476	44.979	Low	3
	Overall rate	2.262	0.7980	35.289	45.245		

Testing and analyzing the correlation between the study variables: Through this section, the researcher seeks to test the hypotheses developed to measure the correlation between the study variables, according to each hypothesis. This determines the change between the variables and dimensions, based on the model tested, to determine the extent or strength of the correlation, whether strong, weak,

or nonexistent. Furthermore, the direction of the relationship, if present, is determined, whether it is direct or inverse. It should be noted that the value of the correlation coefficient ranges between (+1 and -1), and the direction of the relationship is determined through the sign. The value reflects or describes the magnitude and size of the correlation, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Correlation Strength Indicators

Positive Direct Relationship				
No Correlation	Acceptable Correlation	Moderate Correlation	Strong Correlation	Perfect Correlation
0	0.35-0.2	0.6-0.35	0.8-0.6	1
Negative Inverse Relationship				
No Correlation	Acceptable Correlation	Moderate Correlation	Strong Correlation	Perfect Correlation
0	-0.35-0.2	-0.6-0.35	-0.8-0.6	-1

Source: Saunders, Mark N.K., Philip Lewis, and Adrian Thornhill. 2023. Research Methods for Business Students. 9th Ed. Slovakia: Pearson p. 627.

Thus, the PERSON test was used to estimate the strength of the correlation, which is one of the most widely used statistical methods for achieving the same purpose. The application was carried out according to the study's hypotheses, as follows

Testing the first main study hypothesis, which states, "There is a significant inverse correlation between enlightened marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study". The correlation values between (enlightened marketing) and (cognitive dissonance) reached (0.898), which are statistically significant values at (0.05), indicating a negative correlation between the two variables. Therefore, the first main hypothesis of the study is accepted. Thus, it is inferred that the interest of the tourism companies under study in enlightened marketing will be reflected in

reducing cognitive dissonance by providing transparent and consistent information that enhances customer confidence, which reduces the discrepancies between their expectations and their actual experiences, and leads to more satisfactory and stable purchasing decisions. Through the above, the relationship between the dimensions of the mediating variable and the dependent variable can be tested, according to what was stated in the sub-hypotheses that emerged from the first main hypothesis, as follows:

A. Testing the sub-hypothesis of the study (1-A)

Which states: "There is a significant inverse correlation between customer-oriented marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study." Table (6) shows the correlation coefficient between customer-oriented marketing and cognitive dissonance with a value of (-0.844), which is a statistically significant value at (0.05) This indicates an inverse correlation between the two

variables, as the relationship is negative, and thus the first sub-study hypothesis, which stems from the first main hypothesis, is accepted. This indicates that the interest of the tourism companies studied in customer-oriented marketing and its enhancement will lead to reducing the cognitive dissonance of these companies.

B. Testing sub-study hypothesis (1-B), which states "There is a significant inverse correlation between innovative marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study." Table 6 shows the correlation coefficient between innovative marketing and cognitive dissonance with a value of (-0.828), a statistically significant value at (0.05), indicating an inverse correlation between the two variables, as the relationship is negative. Therefore, the second sub-study hypothesis, which stems from the first main hypothesis, is accepted. Thus, it is inferred that the interest of the tourism companies under

study in innovative marketing will lead to a reduction in cognitive dissonance among their customers.

C. Testing sub-study hypothesis (1-C), which states "There is a significant inverse correlation between societal marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study." It can be noted in Table (6), which shows the correlation coefficient between societal marketing and cognitive dissonance with a value of (-0.850), which is a statistically significant value at (0.05), indicating the inverse correlation between the two variables, as the relationship is negative, and thus the acceptance of the hypothesis of the third sub-study, which stems from the first main hypothesis. Thus, it is inferred that the interest of the tourism companies studied in societal marketing will lead to reducing cognitive dissonance among the customers of these companies.

Table 6: Results of testing the first main hypothesis




P	C.R	S.E	Estimate	Independent variable	The direction of the track	Dependent variable
***	-5.014	0.052	0.242-	Customer-orientated marketing		Cognitive dissonance
0.036	-2.097	0.053	0.109-	Innovative Marketing		Cognitive dissonance
***	-3.994	0.057	0.224-	Societal Marketing		Cognitive dissonance

Table 7: Results of testing the effect of enlightened marketing on cognitive dissonance.

Dependent variable	Dimensions of the mediating variable (enlightened marketing)	Correlation value and level of significance		Relationship direction	The power of the relationship
Cognitive Dissonance	Customer-orientated marketing	R	0.865-	Negative inverse	Powerful
		Sig	0.000		
	Innovative Marketing	R	0.833-	Negative inverse	Powerful
		Sig	0.000		
	Societal Marketing	R	0.850-	Negative inverse	Powerful
		Sig	0.000		

Testing the second main hypothesis of the study, which states: "There is a significant, inverse effect of enlightened marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".


Confirming the path stated in Table 7, which shows the study hypothesis, it was found that there is a significant inverse effect of (enlightened marketing) on (enlightened dissonance), meaning that (enlightened marketing) works to reduce (creative dissonance), based on the technical study, by an amount of (-0.898) according to the strong effect value, which indicates that any change in the variable (enlightened marketing) by one unit will work to reduce

(cooperative dissonance). (89.2%) agreed, and (C.R.) came (-39.536) with a significant value at ($p \geq 0.05$). The final conclusion agrees with the second main study hypothesis, which stated, "There is a significant inverse effect of enlightened marketing on the dissonance of inspiring scientific companies under study." The emperor then tested the apparent hypotheses of this theory as follows:

A. Imposing an experimental study (2-A)

Which reflected the text "There is a significant effect of customer-oriented marketing on the dissonance of inspiring projects", Tourism under study.

Table 8: Results of testing the impact of enlightened marketing dimensions on cognitive dissonance

P	C.R	S.E	Estimate	Independent variable	The direction of the track	Dependent variable
***	-39.536	0.025	-0.898	Enlightened Marketing		Cognitive Dissonance

It was taken from what was stated in Table 8 which shows the study hypothesis further, as it was found that there is a significant inverse effect of (customer-oriented marketing) on (creative dissonance), meaning that (customer-oriented marketing) works to reduce (entertainment dissonance) according to the study and by an amount of (-0.242) according to the value of the pressure effect, which means that any change that occurs in an alternative way (customer-oriented marketing) by one unit will work to reduce (divine dissonance) by a percentage of (24.8%) and (C.R.) came from (-5.014) and a significant value at ($P \geq 0.05$), but the

result is acceptable as a study hypothesis that is adopted by the first representative of the second main hypothesis which states "There is a significant adverse effect of customer-oriented marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".

B. Testing sub-study hypothesis (2-B), which states

There is a significant adverse effect of innovative marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study. It is noted from Table 8, which shows the trajectory of the study hypothesis referred to above, that there is a

significant inverse effect of (innovative marketing) on (cognitive dissonance), meaning that (innovative marketing) works to reduce (cognitive dissonance) according to the study sample by an amount of (-0.109) according to the standard effect value. This indicates that any change in the variable (innovative marketing) by a value of one unit will reduce (cognitive dissonance) by (10.9%). The (C.R) was (-2.097) with a significant value at ($p \geq 0.05$). With this result, the second sub-study hypothesis, which stems from the sixth main hypothesis, is accepted, which states, "There is a significant adverse effect of innovative marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".

C. Testing the sub-study hypothesis (2-C), which states

There is a significant adverse effect of Societal Marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study." It is noted from Table (8), which shows the trajectory of the aforementioned study hypothesis, that there is a significant inverse effect of (societal marketing) on (cognitive dissonance), meaning that (societal marketing) works to reduce (cognitive dissonance) according to the study sample by an amount of (-0.224) according to the standard effect value. This indicates that any change in the variable (societal marketing) by a value of one unit will reduce (cognitive dissonance) by (24.6%). The (C.R) amounted to (-3.994) with a significant value at ($P \geq 0.05$). With this result, the third sub-study hypothesis, which stems from the sixth main hypothesis, is accepted, which states, "There is a significant adverse effect of Societal Marketing on cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study".

Results

The enlightened marketing variable achieved a high level of availability in the field of study. This confirms the importance of applying its dimensions in general, and their availability on the ground from the perspective of sample members. This indicates the extent of travel and tourism companies' awareness of the ethical and developmental role of marketing practices. The high percentage is due to the results of the descriptive statistics for the enlightened marketing dimensions.

The cognitive dissonance variable achieved a low level of availability in the field of study, which indicates the effectiveness of marketing practices in reducing customers' negative feelings after the purchase process. This assessment reflects the extent of success of the companies under study in achieving harmony between marketing promises and real-life experience. The percentage of decrease was according to what was shown by the results of descriptive statistics for the dimensions of cognitive dissonance.

There is a significant correlation between enlightened marketing and cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study at the aggregate level, which is a strong inverse correlation. At the sub-dimension level, the correlations were strongly negative for all dimensions, with the highest correlation being between (customer-oriented marketing and cognitive dissonance). The study interprets these results as indicating that the practice of enlightened marketing by the companies under study, through promoting ethical values, innovation, and social responsibility, leads to narrowing the gap between customers' expectations and their actual experiences, thus reducing cognitive dissonance.

The results of the study showed the existence of a significant effect of enlightened marketing in its dimensions (customer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, societal marketing) on reducing cognitive dissonance in the tourism companies under study, as the changes in cognitive dissonance were the result of practicing the dimensions of enlightened marketing, and the dimension of customer-oriented marketing had the highest effect. Accordingly, the study adopts the conclusion that adopting the dimensions of enlightened marketing contributes to enhancing cognitive consistency among customers by fulfilling the declared values, and with regard to the effect of the dimensions of enlightened marketing on cognitive dissonance.

Suggestions

1. It is essential for tourism company managements to utilize the latest, most enlightened marketing methods globally, by adopting the values of social responsibility and innovation within an integrated human marketing framework.
2. Implementing an internal control system that contributes to early detection of cognitive dissonance among customers, working to correct negative impressions, and reducing the gap between marketing messages and real-life experience.
3. Enhancing management's interest in measuring levels of cognitive dissonance, as an indicator of customer relationship quality, and developing quantitative and qualitative measurement tools based on its cognitive dimensions (emotional dissonance, lack of wisdom, transaction anxiety).
4. Supporting companies' efforts to build an integrated marketing system characterized by transparency, interaction, and credibility, supported by a sophisticated feedback system.
5. The need to adopt a participatory marketing model that integrates customers into the formulation of certain elements of tourism services, with the aim of reducing cognitive dissonance and enhancing a sense of belonging and satisfaction.
6. Proposing the establishment of a specialized team to evaluate marketing content from an ethical perspective within the organizational structure of tourism companies, to ensure the integration of the dimensions of informed marketing into daily practices.

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