Mystery shopper as a tool to measure staff performance in Travel Agencies

Hussein Abdel Wahab Abdel Rady

Tourism Studies Dep, Faculty of Tourism & Hotels, Minia University

Abstract

Travel agencies operations rely to a great extent on measuring services quality, services delivered to their customers and measure whether staffs follow the visions of a company's service quality standards. It then creates a feedback loop that allows companies to train their staff to consistently deliver services quality. Mystery shopping is a method that utilizes industry experts to assess services presented by travel agencies operations through living the real customer experience and engaging in normal customer - staff encounters and relations, leading to final assessment to be reported to concerned administration in order to optimize the overall performance.

This paper aims to evaluate the advantages of the Mystery Shopper to measure staff performance, and assess communication skills of staffs in order to identify their weak points and define the way of Travel agencies' development. The reason is that their applied abilities are connected with customer´s total perception of offering services. To achieve that, this research employed a method of descriptive analytical methodology by using a questionnaire tool. The sample was mystery shopper in Travel agencies. 200 questionnaires were administered; only (150) returned questionnaires were valid for the statistical manipulation of data with a response rate of 75% from the total distributed questionnaires to travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan. The results of the tools were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, coefficient analysis, and spearman correlation analysis with the support of SPSS 22.0.

The research reached several results, there is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and reasons performed of mystery shopper, Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer), Mystery Telephone calls, and Mystery E-mail / Website Visit . The research recommended that Mystery Shopping objectively records travel agencies staff performance. Therefore the scope of a mystery

shopping programme must include the variety of best conditions to measure staff performance.

KEYWORDS: Mystery shopping, Mystery shopper, staff performance, Travel Agencies

Introduction

Mystery shopping is utilized in a diversity of service industries to measure service performance, as a training technique for staff, and to make certain of the protection and security of the service offered. Mystery shopping emerged as a common way of performance measurement in several industries, such as travel and tourism, healthcare, and banking. As an industry, Mystery shopper method allowed associate degree anonymous party to analyze factors such as service quality and staff abilities in the area of customer service, however, it-speedy-became a main method for studying the service market. This method is employed most often to measure sales networks (Maison, 2007). Mystery shopper can be a vital element of a company in developing and maintaining service standards. Also, it can work as a tool for assisting to hold a sustainable business model in nowadays customer driven world. Mystery shopper can take distinctive styles, but perhaps it is better to define as follows: Mystery shopper can be defined as utilize of concealed participant observers to measure a service encounter (Allison & Severt, 2012).

Research Problem

A major problem with training staff in the private and public sectors is that there are no existing methods for providing trainers with comprehensive performance knowledge that staff will see as credible evaluation of their job performance. In this research we tend to describe a tool for imparting relatively objective, well timed, and precise performance information. Moreover, the research clarifies how the effectiveness of this tool is depended on the intensity of variable interval schedules that have been demonstrated to be very effective in laboratory tests. This new method is mystery shopping. Despite the fact that mystery shopping has long been used in the service and tourism industry to evaluate the service quality presented by the company, this research is showing its effectiveness for providing performance comments to staff on a variable interval schedule. Furthermore, this research shows how the data from

mystery shoppers can be utilized by managers to overcome barriers of traditional performance evaluations.

Research Questions

The main research questions explored were:
- Is utilizing of Mystery shoppers an efficient tool of measuring and enhancing service quality?
- Is staff aware that their company utilizes Mystery shoppers?
- Is appraisal tool viewed as a motivating experience?
- Is staff aware of the criteria against which a Mystery shopper will evaluate their performance?
- Can employees recognize Mystery shoppers?
- Does the use of Mystery shoppers cause staff stress or anxiety?
- Is Mystery shopper reports utilized to reward, develop or discipline staff?

Research Aim

This research seeks to discover the role and utilization of mystery shoppers in the setting the context of customer intelligence gathering. The concept will be defined, its perceived advantages and disadvantages recognized and the effect of their use evaluated. The main aim of this research is mystery-shopping measurement has been utilized effectively to objectively evaluate whether staff follow the visions of a company's quality service. This main aim will be achieved through the analysis of empirical data collected from a questionnaire survey of mystery shopper of Travel agencies.

To achieve this aim, research attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To reveal how customers expertise and assess travel agencies services.
2. Proposing mystery shoppers interactive scoring observations checklist model.
3. Identifying mystery shopping study will be used as a diagnostic tool to identify weakness elements in travel agencies' service delivery.
4. Developing mystery shopping study will be utilized to support, develop and motivate service personnel .

5. Assessing mystery shopping study will be utilized to assess the competitiveness of travel agencies' service provision by benchmarking it in opposition of the service provision of competitors in tourism industry.

Research Significance

Mystery Shopping is marketing research tool performed by secret agents by visiting your work places, presenting an evaluation of your customer service expertise. Regularly, your business can develop its most competitive benefit by improving customer service. The most essential areas of customer service expertise are the direct interplay of your staff with your customers, regardless of whether you communicate in person or on the phone. It is difficult to evaluate this only through the customers themselves. This is what the mystery shopping program does. It allows you to monitor the customer's ability to recognize service quality and take the appropriate actions when service quality does not meet the required level. Typically, mystery shoppers are skilled and supplied with a listing of tasks and observations to take on their customer service expertise, making this assessment tool more benefit than untrained shoppers who commonly cannot remember all the information to get a clear picture of the customer's expertise. Successful companies renowned for their customer service include ongoing mystery shopping programs as a vital part of their marketing method.

Literature Review

The mystery shopper aims to assess how an enterprise responds to its customers. The idea is easy: would-be customers who have been previously trained concerning the areas to be assessed enter a business, utilize the services available as any random customer would, and report on their expertise. To make sure that a typical expertise is captured, the mystery shopper does not inform the staff of their special role. It is essential for the effectiveness of the program that staff be unaware of who the mystery shopper is. It is essential to remember that a mystery shopper assess the system, not persons.

Mystery shopper concept

Mystery shopping involves an anonymous and (as far as possible) objective person coming into a service delivery environment, monitoring happenings and collaborating in a service dealing. The mystery shopper's 'photo' experience is then documented either in writing or graphically, commonly utilizing a standard evaluation form

(Granatino et al., 2013; Peters et al., 2016). Despite the Mystery Shopper technique known and utilized global, it is little implemented. The mystery shopper is approach that goals nameless observations of the service offered from the consumer´s point of view (Liu, Su, & Chou, 2014). Mystery shopper is a popular approach to estimate standards of consumer service. Mystery shopping is becoming an accepted and highly used approach for service quality, currently utilized in a multitude of industries, consisting tourism industry (Felertagh. 2007). Mystery shopping is a tool utilized by companies to measure service quality, and staff performance (PamInCa, 2009, p.3). According to Wagnerová & Baarová (2008) Mystery shopping includes of the assessment criteria that are describe by the analysis of the job position. Mystery shopping introduces predetermined formulation related to the behaviour of staff and mystery shopper shows whether a certain type of behaviour is typical for staff or not. The essential advantage for these entities is that it offers them a very clear insight into what is happening when their customers meet their staff (Hudson et al., 2001). The Mystery Shopper Provider's Association defines mystery shopping as the practice of utilizing skilled shoppers to secretly assessment customer service, operations, staff integrity, merchandising, and service quality (Michelson, 2007). Mystery shopper defined as utilizing of skilled individuals to practice and gauge any customer service procedure, by performing as potential clients and in some way informing back on their experience in a detailed and objective approach (Hair et al., 2003; Market Research Society, 2008). According to Latham, Ford, & Tzabbar (2012) the mystery shoppers are generally hired by institutions in the service industry, and are also called "ghost, anonymous or secret customers". Via this method, managers can specifically assess requirements they would like to see measured (Sykes, 2011). Several studies indicate the contribution of this approach through better performance in a short time. Mystery shopping is a well-established methodology which was presented in the early 1940s commonly by the management to evaluate the integrity of their staff (Zikmund et al., 2009).

The Mystery Shopping method
To ensure a successful mystery shopping, it is essential that the mystery shopping method is well designed and executed (Hesselink & van der Wiele, 2003). A well designed mystery shopping method commonly contains six steps: (a) identifying the objective, (b) developing the questionnaire, (c) selecting the mystery shopper, (d)

training the mystery shopper, (e) making the results actionable, and (f) communicating and improving on the results (Van der Wiele et al., 2005).

Mystery shopping techniques

Mystery shopping feedback will be utilized as the base for Continuous enhancement Programmes and employee performance management – the method will not only recognize what requirements fixing, but can dictate and offer evidence for a programme which can support changing staff attitude and facilitate correct the problems highlighted this method offers a correct image of the expertise. Continual observing can guarantee customer satisfaction is at the highest potential level. Knowing, from an impartial point of view, that your customers are happy and receiving the best service from the staff are a few things that's vastly valuable to confirm the service succeeds (Liu, Su, & Chou, 2014). Mystery shopping techniques utilized could include:

- Mystery observation.
- Mystery Visit.
- Mystery Telephone calls
- Mystery Mail or fax
- Mystery E-mail / Website Visit.

Implementation of Mystery Shopper in Travel agencies

The way mystery shopping is implemented is rather general Latham, Ford, & Tzabbar (2012):

1. Anonymous persons are utilized as mystery shopper.
2. The mystery shopper is well trained and utilizes a predefined checklist.
3. The mystery shopper behaves such as normal customer.
4. After visiting to the service point the checklist is filled in and an assessment report is documented.
5. The assessment report and the scores on the checklist are utilized for feedback.
6. The feedback has to lead to a many of enhancement issues and actions.

Aim of Mystery Shopper in Travel agencies

Mystery shopping can be applied for numerous functions. Most of the time aim of Mystery Shopper in Travel agencies to measure service quality delivery to the customer. In this situation the mystery shopper

will be focused on the compliance to specific standards, guidelines or demands, or the mystery shopper will be instructed to position the standard of the service on a scale. If a mystery shopper is also utilized to visit not only the own service locations however also locations of competitors, benchmarking becomes a method to evaluate your own activities in opposition to those. Other aims of mystery shopping are:

- Measuring efficiency of (training) programmes (Morrison et al, 1997)
- Checking out if staff treat everyone in the same way, or trying out against discrimination (Morral, 1994; Tepper, 1994)
- The results of mystery shopping will be employed in varied method:
- Communication: the checklists make very clear what is anticipated
- Reviews make very clear what is going incorrect
- Training programmes can be optimized
- Improvement activities can be centered on problems that are necessary for the customer
- Good attitude of staff will be rewarded

Advantages of mystery shopping

- It allows the assessment of processes not outcomes, presents instantaneous answers for the questions in the actual situation and critically this assessment happens at the time of the service delivery, i.e. 'measuring the service as it unfolds' (Wilson, 1998) ;
- Mystery shopping results in increase in clients' contentment increase in the proficiency of the travel agencies, effectiveness of the procedure and to the enhancement of it defines the 'genuine desire among staff to provide excellent customer service' (Erstad, 1998);
- It collects facts, not perceptions. The mystery customer survey or checklist should emphasize objective questions with a view to collect real data, again negating another weak points of client surveys, i.e. that clients only remember their overall impression of a service and not the individual components or transactions (Wilson, 1998);
- instructional tool for training & development and It is an critical training tool in that it will be utilized to determine training requirements (Bromage, 2000);

- Reinforces effective staff / management actions with incentive-based reward systems It will be a positive, motivational tool for staff (Erstad, 1998; Zeldis,1988);
- Monitors and measures service performance (Michelson 2004), It can bring immediate service enhancement with non-stop development opportunities (CORIU, 2004).

Disadvantages of Mystery Shopping

1. It can be considered as threatening to staff, in that staff might view the utilization of mystery shoppers as management checking on their overall performance with a view to affection some form of disciplinary action, rather than as a trigger for employees training and improvement (Erstad, 1998);
2. It only reviews procedures and not their results (Wilson, 1998). This will be intricate for many services that, as has already been stated, are a combination of tangible and intangible elements.

Research Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive analytical approach, where a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a random sample of two hundred (200) of mystery shopper in Travel agencies. 150 (75%) of mystery shopper in Travel agencies were retrieved. The statistical analysis of the responses was carried out via SPSS v22.

Data Collection

Data has been collected through questionnaires that were prepared in approach that is relevant to the situation so as to decrease invalid responses. They were distributed to mystery shopper in Travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan.

Measures

To fulfill the research objective for assessing the usefulness of the Mystery Shopper to measure staff performance, and examine and evaluate communication skills of employees in order to identify their weakness and define the way of improvement in Travel agencies To achieve that, this research employed a method of descriptive analytical methodology by using a questionnaire tool, a survey consisted of seven sections is used as a data collection tool. The first section includes the Demographic profile of the mystery customer (gender, Age groups, educational level, and Income). The second section includes mystery shopper general characteristics. The third section included 9 variables representing reasons performed of mystery shopper. The fourth section included 7 variables representing Mystery shopping opinions. The fifth section included 9 variables representing Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer). The sixth section included 12 variables representing Mystery Telephone calls. The seventh section included 8 variables representing Mystery E-mail / Website Visit. The questionnaire items were anchored according to the Five-Point Likert Scale, "1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)", "2 = Disagree (D)", "3 = Neutral (N)", "4 = Agree (A)", and "5= Strongly Agree (SA)".

Data Validity

To validate the data collection instrument utilized in this study in terms of its readability, format, and ability to measure the study's constructs; the researcher distributed the questionnaire instrument to a number of mystery customer in Travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan. The questionnaire instrument was then updated and refined to reflect the comments and suggestions received by the domain experts. Moreover, the experts showed interest and interacted with the researcher concerning the questionnaire instrument which adds to its validity.

Data Reliability

The reliability of an instrument is the degree of accuracy and consistency with that it measures (Ary et al., 2002). Before proceeding with further analysis, the reliability testing was leaded in order to ensure consistent measurement across various items in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient measures this effect and ranges from 0 to 1 (Döckel, 2003). Reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable" (Nunnally, 1978). As depicted in table (1), the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability was computed for five sections. The tests indicated that the reliability coefficients for all the sections were equal 0.842 and Validity Coefficient for all the sections were equal 0.918 which indicates that the instrument is reliable for being utilized.

Table (1) Cronbach's Alpha Value for Mystery Shopper in Travel Agencies

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Validity Coefficient *
Reasons performed of mystery shopper	9	.955	.977
Mystery shopping opinions	7	.916	.957
Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer)	9	.934	.966
Mystery Telephone calls	12	.919	.959
Mystery E-mail / Website Visit	8	.929	.963
Total	45	.842	.918

* Validity coefficient = $\sqrt{}$ Reliability coefficient

In order to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the study's constructs. Cronbach's Alpha (α) measure was utilized. The scales' reliabilities were measured and the Cronbach's Alpha of all scales in Table (1) ranged from 0.916 to 0.955, and for total

questionnaire items was (0.842), this indicate an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha value for each field, whenever Cronbach's Alpha value is acceptable if it's more than (0.7). It is also evident that the validity coefficient is (91.8%) which means the reliability and validity of the study sample.

Data Analysis

To achieve the objective of this study, the researcher utilized the descriptive analytical approach. The researcher depends on utilizing The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process data statistically. The treatment included the following statistical methods:

1. Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviation (SD): To describe the characteristics of the study population of the functional variables, and to determine the responses of its members towards the study axes.
2. Cronbach's Alpha Test: To calculate the stability coefficients of the questionnaire, and the coefficient of stability of each axis of the study axes.
3. Spearman Correlation analysis.

Results and Discussion

The following part explains the results concerning the seven dimensions representing of mystery shopper in Travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan.

Descriptive analysis of Mystery shopper in Travel Agencies

In this section, the researcher relied mainly on the descriptive analysis to get the means and the standard deviations for the study constructs along with their items. The items were measured utilizing a Likert-type scale as follows.

## The First Section: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic profile of the respondents

Descriptive Features		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			
	Male	80	53.3
	Female	70	46.7
Age groups			
	18-28	60	40
	29-39	54	36
	40- 50	18.7	28
	51-59	4	2.7
	60 and above	4	2.7
Education level			
	Diploma	28	18.7
	Bachelor Degree	122	81.3
	Master Degree	0	0
	PHD degree	0	0
Income			
	Less than 1.000	82	54.6
	1.000 - 2.999	32	21.3
	3.000 - 5.999	20	13.3
	6.000 - 8.999	16	10.7
	9.000 and above	0	0

Table (2) shows the discussion of the research findings begins with a brief demographic profile of respondents in terms of gender, age groups, education level, income. 53.3% of the respondents were male whereas 46.7% of them were female, most of the respondents 40% were aged between 18 and 28 years, whereas 36% of them were aged between 29 and 39 years, and the majority of respondents had completed a bachelor's degree (81.3%). Additionally, more than 54 % of the respondents reported an income less than 1.000EGP.

The second section: mystery shopper general characteristics

The following figure shows that 100% of the study sample has already performed as a mystery shopper.
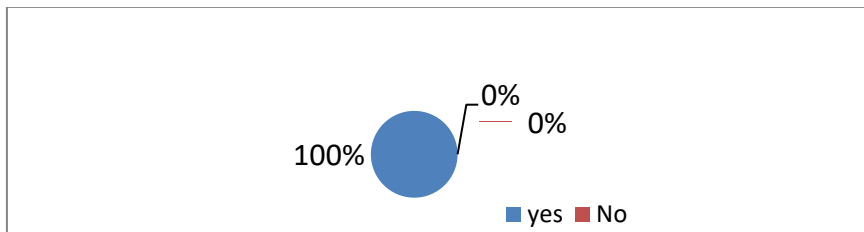
Fig 1: mystery shopper performed

30.7% of the sample of the study practiced mystery shopper from 4 to 6 times a month in hotels, 36.7% of the sample of the study practiced mystery shopper from 1 to 3 times a month in cruise line, 39.3% of the sample of the study practiced mystery shopper from 4 to 6 times a month in travel agencies, 30.7% of the sample of the study practiced mystery shopper from 1 to 3 times a month sales office in airline.
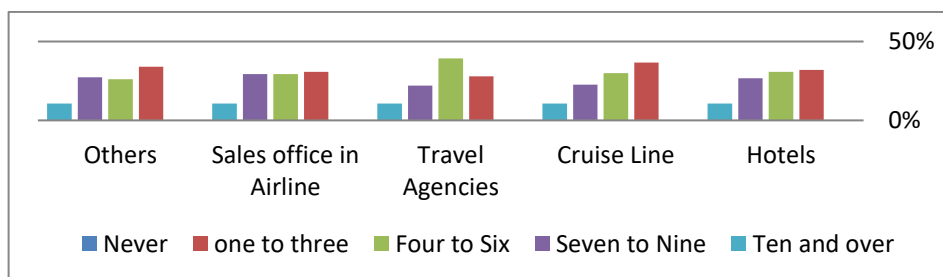
Fig 2: Number of Mystery shoppers in each category

The third section: reasons performed of mystery shopper

Table 3: Reasons performed of mystery shopper

performed mystery shopper	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	standard deviation	Rank
Enjoyment	7.3	15.3	11.3	48.7	17.3	3.58	1.162	3
Excitement	6.7	15.3	22.7	32	23.3	3.50	1.197	5
Income	14	4	30	36.7	15.3	3.35	1.210	7
learning opportunities	11.3	18	28	33.3	9.3	3.11	1.156	9
it makes me feel specials	11.3	10	22	47.3	9.3	3.33	1.139	6
to help with Training of staff	8	16	30	36.7	9.3	3.23	1.083	8
to help the companies i evaluate	9.3	10.7	14	50	16	3.53	1.163	4
to help the mystery shopping companies i represent	8.7	8.7	14.7	30	38	3.80	1.274	1
Free amenities (meals, hotels stay, etc.)	6.7	16	14.7	35.3	27.3	3.61	1.231	2

The detailed examination of the results presented in Table (3) reveals the respondents' responses pertaining to reasons performed of mystery shopper. The average score resulted with a mean of 3.45. This indicates that majority of the cases tend to mark on the high of the scale on a 1 to 5 range. However, most of the items resulted with a slightly higher mean than 3 indicating the agreeableness of the respondents on those items, as imperative reasons performed of mystery shopper. The highest mean values for reasons performed of mystery shopper emerged for the item "to help the mystery shopping companies i represent" (Mean = 3.80, standard deviation =1.274), followed by "Free amenities (meals, hotels stay, etc.)" (Mean = 3.61, standard deviation =1.231), whereas, the lowest mean value for this construct is for "learning opportunities" (Mean= 3.11, standard deviation =1.156), followed by "to help with Training of staff" (Mean= 3.23, standard deviation =1.083).

The fourth section: Mystery shopping opinions

Table 4: Mystery shopping opinions

Mystery shopping opinions	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	standard deviation	Rank
Mystery shopping is a pleasant activity	2.7	8	24	52	13.3	3.65	.905	4
Mystery shopping companies advantages from my participation	2	6	18	56	18	3.82	.868	1
The money i receive from mystery shopping influences my participation	0	5.3	37.3	30	27.3	3.79	.907	2
Mystery shopping allows me to escape from the routine of my traditional life	0	5.3	45.3	32	17.3	3.61	.834	5
I win knowledge and skills through mystery shopping	5.3	8	48	30.7	8	3.28	.920	7
The companies i evaluate travel agencies can use my mystery shopping evaluations as a training tool.	2.7	5.3	32	42	18	3.67	.923	3
i know my evaluation have an impact on the travel agencies staff evaluated	2.7	2.7	47.3	31.7	16	3.55	.868	6

Table (4) presents the means and standard deviations of Mystery shopping opinions where the means ranged between (3.82-3.28) compared with the total instrument mean for the domain (3.62) the item. "Mystery shopping companies advantages from my participation" ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (mean=3.82, standard deviation = .868) compared with the total

instrument mean and the standard deviation. The item "I win knowledge and skills through mystery shopping" ranked last reached a mean (3.28) and the standard deviation was (.920) compared with the mean and standard deviation of the total instrument.

The Fifth section: Mystery observation and visit

Table 5: Mystery observation and visit

Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	standard deviation	Rank
Travel agencies Staff suggesting alternative services, persuading visitors to do some activities	2.7	0	34.7	40.7	22	3.79	.877	9
Travel agencies staff excited to finish your transaction quickly, and Explain how to fill forms and applications	0	0	29.3	54.3	16	3.87	.662	7
Travel agencies staff provide accurate and sufficient information	0	0	30	54	16	3.86	.666	8
Travel agencies staff communicate with you in the language you spoke(English or Arabic) using smooth and understandable terms	0	0	13.3	62	24.7	4.11	.608	2
Travel agencies staff delivering of information materials, even if not required	0	0	21.3	62.7	16	3.95	.611	6

Travel agencies Staff proactive attitude: provision of additional information not specifically required	0	2.7	16.7	60	20.7	3.99	.695	4
Did you feel a difference in discriminated for any reason? Example: Did you feel discriminated against by gender?	0		24.7	48.7	26.7	4.02	.719	3
Travel agencies staff able to maintain privacy while dealing with you	0	2.7	19.3	54	24	3.98	.737	5
Has the travel agencies staff asked the service recipient if he has received the required service and the possibility of providing another service	0		16	54	30	4.14	.666	1

The detailed examination of the results presented in Table (5) reveals the respondents' responses pertaining to Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer). The average score resulted with a mean of 3.97. This indicates that majority of the cases tend to mark on the high of the scale on a 1 to 5 range. However, most of the items resulted with a slightly higher mean than 3 indicating the agreeableness of the respondents on those items, as imperative Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer. The highest mean values for Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer emerged for the item "Has the travel agencies staff asked the service recipient if he has received the required service and the possibility of providing another service" (Mean = 4.14, standard deviation =.666), followed by "Travel agencies staff communicate with you in the language you spoke(English or Arabic) using smooth and understandable terms" (Mean = 4.11, standard deviation =.608), whereas, the lowest mean value for this construct is for "Travel agencies Staff suggesting alternative services, persuading visitors to do some activities" (Mean= 3.79, standard deviation =.877), followed by "Travel agencies staff provide accurate and sufficient information" (Mean= 3.86, standard deviation =.666).

The sixth section: Mystery Telephone calls

Table 6: Mystery Telephone calls

Mystery Telephone calls	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	standard deviation	Rank
Travel agencies staffs listen to you carefully during your inquiry.	0	5.3	29.3	45.3	20	3.79	.819	12
The voice of the Travel agencies staff understandable and audible.	0	0	30	43.3	26.7	3.97	.755	3
Travel agencies staff uses formal language during the conversation.	0	2.7	26.7	50.7	20	3.88	7.50	10
Is your query solved by the Travel agencies staff you spoke with you or is it overridden to another staff?	0	2.7	24	53.3	20	3.91	.736	6
Travel agencies staff solves your problem quickly	0	0	32	37.3	30.7	3.99	.794	2
The Travel agencies staff during the conversation about the service took the initiative by asking you questions about personal characteristics in order to offer you the right service	0	5.3	32	32.7	30	3.86	.907	9
Travel agencies staff willing to answer all your questions	0	0	29.3	48	22.7	3.93	.720	5
Travel agencies staff thoroughly and professionally explain you the booking tourist	0	5.3	27.3	39.7	32.7	3.95	.903	4

programs, tourist activities, hotels, resorts and trips outside Egypt for which you inquired							
Travel agencies staff offers you other Travel agencies services other than those for which you inquired	0	0	21.3	51.3	27.3	4.06	.697	1
Travel agencies staff asks you at the end if you have some more questions	0	2.7	24	56.7	16.7	3.87	.708	8
Were you greeted by Travel agencies staff at the end of the conversation?	0	2.7	28.7	46	22.7	3.89	.782	7
Travel agencies staff you spoke with invites you to visit their office.	0	0	30	60	10	3.80	0.602	11

Table (6) presents the means and standard deviations of Mystery Telephone calls where the means ranged between (4.06-3.79) compared with the total instrument mean for the domain (3.91) the item. " Travel agencies staff offers you other Travel agencies services other than those for which you inquired" ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (mean=4.06, standard deviation = .697) compared with the total instrument mean and the standard deviation. The item "Travel agencies staffs listen to you carefully during your inquiry" ranked last reached a mean (3.79) and the standard deviation was (.819) compared with the mean and standard deviation of the total instrument.

The seventh section Mystery E-mail / Website Visit

Table 7: Mystery E-mail / Website Visit

Mystery E-mail / Website Visit.	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	standard deviation	Rank
The travel agencies website is immediately available and does not need long loading times.	0	5.3	27.3	46	21.3	3.83	.823	5
travel agencies website provide e-services to customers enabling them to Making reservations	0	2.7	29.3	24	44	4.07	.433	1
Procedure booking tourist programs, tourist activities, hotels, resorts and trips outside Egypt, etc. on travel agencies website is clearly structured and traceable.	0	8	30.7	38	23.3	3.77	.901	6
Travel agencies website operates without problems and structure is good.	0	5.3	37.3	35.3	22	3.74	.863	7
Enough information about security issues is given at this Travel agencies web site.	0	4.7	26.7	37.3	31.3	3.95	.877	3
The system enables me to get results quickly.	0	8	38	34.7	19.3	3.65	.882	8
The system gives sufficient information about the Booking tourist programs, tourist activities, accommodation, transportation and trips outside Egypt.	0	0	37.3	35.3	27.3	3.90	.801	4
Have you found the language you are comfortable with to use is available on the travel agencies website (English / Arabic)?	0	0	29.3	42.7	28	3.99	.760	2

Table (7) presents the means and standard deviations of Mystery E-mail / Website Visit where the means ranged between (4.07-3.65) compared with the total instrument mean for the domain (3.86) the item. "The system enables me to get results quickly." ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (mean=4.07, standard deviation = .433) compared with the total instrument mean and the standard deviation. The item "The system enables me to get

results quickly." ranked last reached a mean (3.65) and the standard deviation was (.882) compared with the mean and standard deviation of the total instrument.

Spearman Correlation analysis:

Table (8) Correlation between Mystery shopping opinions and reasons performed of mystery shopper

		reasons performed of mystery shopper
Mystery shopping opinions	Correlation Coefficient	.612**
	Sig.	.000

As seen in the table (8), there is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and reasons performed of mystery shopper. The value of spearman correlation coefficient was (.612** - sig = 0.000). These results showed that there is medium positive relation between Mystery shopping opinions and reasons performed of mystery shopper.

Table (9) Correlation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer

		Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer)
Mystery shopping opinions	Correlation Coefficient	.835**
	Sig.	.000

As seen in the table (9), there is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery observation and visit. The value of spearman correlation coefficient was (.835** - sig = 0.000). These results showed that there is a strong positive relation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer).

Table (10) Correlation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery Telephone calls

		Mystery Telephone calls
Mystery shopping opinions	Correlation Coefficient	.915**
	Sig.	.000

As seen in the table (10), there is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery Telephone calls. The value of spearman correlation coefficient was (.915** - sig = 0.000). These results showed that there is very strong positive relation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery Telephone calls.

Table (11) Correlation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery E-mail / Website Visit

		Mystery E-mail / Website Visit
Mystery shopping opinions	Correlation Coefficient	.935**
	Sig.	.000

As seen in the table (11), there is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery E-mail / Website Visit. The value of spearman correlation coefficient was (.935** - sig = 0.000). These results showed that there is very strong positive relation between Mystery shopping opinions and Mystery E-mail / Website Visit.

Summary and Conclusion

The Mystery Shopping (MS) method is employed in marketing research to assist in the measurement of customer service and staff performance levels and may contain both quantitative and qualitative components. Demand for reliable new research methods during the mid-twentieth century led to the appearance of a research trend known as Mystery Research. This trend was based on measuring staff performance in Travel Agencies.

This paper aims to assess the usefulness of the Mystery Shopper to measure staff performance, and examine and evaluate communication skills of employees in order to identify their weakness and define the way of improvement in Travel agencies. The sample was mystery

shopper in Travel agencies. 200 questionnaires were administered; only (150) returned questionnaires were valid for the statistical manipulation of data with a response rate of 75% from the total distributed questionnaires to travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan. Including reliability test and Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviation (SD): To describe the characteristics of the study population of the functional variables, and to determine the responses of its members towards the study axes. The following results were obtained.
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- The findings from the distributed questionnaires revealed that highest mean values for reasons performed of mystery shopper emerged for the item "to help the mystery shopping companies i represent" (Mean = 3.80, standard deviation =1.274).
- The findings from the distributed questionnaires revealed that highest mean values for Mystery shopping opinions "Mystery shopping companies advantages from my participation" ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (Mean=3.82, standard deviation = .868).
- The findings from the distributed questionnaires revealed that highest mean values for Mystery observation and visit emerged for the item "Has the travel agencies staff asked the service recipient if he has received the required service and the possibility of providing another service" (Mean = 4.14, standard deviation =.666).
- The findings from the distributed questionnaires revealed that highest mean values for Mystery Telephone calls emerged for the item " Travel agencies staff offers you other Travel agencies services other than those for which you inquired" ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (Mean=4.06, standard deviation = .697).
- The findings from the distributed questionnaires revealed that highest mean values for Mystery E-mail / Website Visit emerged for the item "The system enables me to get results quickly" (Mean=4.07, standard deviation = .433).
- There is a positive and significant relationship between Mystery shopping opinions and reasons performed of mystery shopper, Mystery observation and visit (Assess travel agencies staff provided service to customer), Mystery Telephone calls, and Mystery E-mail / Website Visit.

Recommendations

- Mystery Shopping objectively records travel agencies staff performance. Therefore the scope of a mystery shopping programme must include the variety of best conditions to measure staff performance.
- The shopping scenario must be designed to test the specific service or operational behaviour from travel agencies staff that is the topic of research. It must be realistic, and be able to be enacted convincingly by the mystery shopper.
- Travel agencies staff must be advised that their performance may be checked from time to time through mystery shopper. The objectives and intended uses of the results must be made clear to travel agencies staff.
- Travel agencies staff must be advised that bonus programmes are to be based, wholly or partly, on mystery shopping programmes.

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المتسوق الخفي كأداة لقياس أداء العاملين في شركات السياحة

ملخص البحث باللغة العربية
المتسوق الخفي أن يقوم شخص ما بأداء خدمة معينة (تسوق - خدمة) دون الإفصـاح عـن هويته كمتسوق خفي ومن ثم يقوم بملأ استمارة استبيان بعد الانتهاء من عملية التسوق؛ هـذا

الاستبيان يحتوي أسئلة وإجاباتها عبارة عن اختيارات مثل هل قام الموظف بتحيتك؟ كم المدة التي استغرقتها عمليتك لإتمامها ؟ وبعد الاجابة علي كافة الأسئلة يأخذ هذا الفرع درجة معينة نقيس بها أداءه؛ مع مراعاة أن توزيع الأسئلة والدرجات تكون حسب الأهمية. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تقييم مدي فائده المتسوق الغامض لقياس أداء الموظفين، ودراسة وتقييم مهارات الاتصال لدي الموظفين من أجل تحديد نقاط ضعفهم وتحديد طريقه التحسين في شركات السياحة. والسبب هو ان قدراتهم ترتبط مع ادراك العميل الكلي لتقديم الخدمات. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة الميدانية على المنهج الوصفى التحليلى من خلال تصميم وتوزيع استمارات الاستبانة على عينة من المتسوقين الغامضين في شركات السياحة في الأقصر وأسوان وقد تم توزيع (٢٠٠) استمارة على عينة الدراسة. وتم استبعاد (٥٠) استمارة ليصبح إجمالى الاستمارات الصحيحة المستردة (١٥٠) استمارة بمعدل استجابة ٧٥٪. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن هناك علاقة ايجابيه وهامه بين اراء المتسوق الخفي والأسباب المؤدية إلى التسوق الخفي، والمراقبة السرية والزيارة (تقييم الخدمات المقدمة من موظفي شركات السياحة الى العملاء) ، المكالمات الهاتفية، والبريد الكتروني/زيارة الموقع. وتوصى الدراسة بإخطار موظفي شركات السياحة بأنه يمكن التحقق من أدائهم من وقت لآخر من خلال المتسوق الخفي. يجب توضيح الأهداف والاستخدامات المقصودة من استخدام المتسوق الخفي لتقييم أداء موظفي شركات السياحة.

الكلمات الدالة: التسوق الخفي، المتسوق الخفي، أداء العاملين، شركات السياحة.