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EVALUATING SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Today supply chain management encompasses a set of developing tools and technologies for coordinating and optimizing key processes in manufacturing, sell and after sell services including reduction in costs, increasing quality, facilitating distribution and elevating customer satisfaction. As such supply chain management must improve coordination among its supply chain members. In the present research the quality of relationships in supply chain including communication, cooperation, commitment, dependency, coordination and trust as independent factors in supply chain management will be scrutinized. Also service quality was investigated as dependent variable. In this regard Urmia Cultural Heritage Organization was selected as research population. Research is of descriptive-explanatory nature and applied. To collect data questionnaire was used. The validity and reliability of research findings was approved by prominent methods including content and structure validity and also Cronbach's alpha. To analyze data - collected randomly- SPSS software was used. The results of analysis of research questions/hypothesis showed that different dimensions of supply chain management (communication, cooperation, commitment, dependency, coordination and trust) have meaningful effect over quality of rendered services by Urmia Cultural Heritage Organization.

Keywords: *Supply Chain Management, Service Quality Management, Tourism Industry*

INTRODUCTION

Benefiting from supply chain management organizations will be able to develop their commercial relationships through improving information exchange with raw material suppliers and distributors. Nowadays performing optimized marketing is one of the most challenging issues at the face of managers which force them to make use of modern and various techniques to achieve superior performance (Hesami, 2009). One of the organizational requirements in this regard is selecting certain and clear strategies in the ongoing processes of supply chain. These strategies put emphasis on internal and external coordination in business context to present the ultimate and best services for customers and consumers and also contribute to promotion and enhancement of any individual organizational member (Cohen and Russell, 2005). Therefore, supply chain management does its best in performance evaluation system in order to identify success, determining the rate of fulfilled needs, helping organization to understand ongoing processes, exploring new knowledge and finally improved planning (Morgan, 2007). Service is standing at the heart of any commercial activity which is requested by consumers and customers (Seyed javadin and Kimsayii, 2014). Among the influential factors to reach customer satisfaction at high levels is the quality of rendered service(s) (Kazemi and Mohajer, 2009).

On the other hand, tourism as an industry and development index is considered very important and determining factor by most of countries including Iran. This has gained much more attention both from economic and cultural prospective in recent decades. It seems that this is because tourism brings about different monetary income sources and reduces work force energy waste. As fossil energy sources are reducing day by day and the need for foreign currency in order to balance currency price and also provide economic financial sources, tourism is being considered as an industry which impacts various working contexts. Fortunately in Iran there is a good ground and context for development of this industry. Although there are lots of obvious obstacles such as decision making centers, inappropriate interpretations on tourism, lack of due knowledge on how to communicate and/or welcome coming tourists, lack of supportive regulations, inappropriate advertisement, and neglect and shortcomings in planning good

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strategies in this regard have led to insufficient and unrealistic programs. It seems that explaining and programming comprehensive strategic plans for tourism development would be a good and effective approach to revive and develop this industry and also reduce existing problems and obstacles. Also establishing an authentic organization even at the level of ministry and or presidential agency would help overcoming problems in this field. Improving citizen's general knowledge on tourism and good ways of treating tourists can promote this industry and pave the way for monetary incomes from different involving resources (Jafarian, 2007). Conducting present research organizations and entities especially those working in the domain of tourism industry would highlight the importance of supply chain management and quality of due service(s) in achieving presupposed goals. It seems that service quality management which includes the long processes between supply and consumption would be effective concerning practical goals and outcomes of service quality management. On the other hand organizations and institutions that do not value supply chain management and the quality of rendered services must not expect any enhancement and improvement in fulfilling their goals and earning monetary interests. Present research is to evaluate supply chain management and its impact on service quality management in tourism industry.

Literature Review

In the study ‘‘ Explaining the Concept and Place of Tourism Supply Chain Management’’ (2011) was conducted by Zargar *et al.*, the study was to explain the necessity and general idea of supply chain management which could be utilized and implemented by authorities in country and state regarding tourism industry. According to the results of this study because of various ranges of needs, demands and expectations in tourism industry like any other industries, there are so many different interacting and active organizations and institutions. In another study ‘‘The Role of Comprehensive Quality Management in Improving Tourism Industry’’ (2010) conducted by Ghanbari and *et al.*, the aim of the study was to investigate advantages and disadvantages of tourism industry and evaluating the role of comprehensive quality management in improving and enhancing the industry. According to the results of this study and Iran's 20 years prospective, Iran is supposed to place at the first rank in Middle East regarding its economic, social and cultural status for next decade. Also Kim (2009) resorting to previously used indexes, investigated the practical capability of supply chain in Japanese and Korean organizations' performance in different industries. The results indicated that in Japanese organizations there was a direct relationship and effect between practical capability of supply chain and competitive advantage on organizational performance and quality of rendered service (s) deriving from supply chain unity while in Korean organizations the relationship between practical capability of supply chain and competitive advantage contributes to supply chain unity and relates to general organizational performance. Tracy and *et al.*, (2005) investigated the effect of supply chain management on commercial performance in different industries of United States; direct and indirect internal to external and vice versa criteria, developing capabilities based on perceived customer values, customer loyalty, market performance and financial performance. They concluded that some capabilities have more direct relationship with high qualified goods and services which in turn contribute to a better understanding of costumers and their demands. Following above mentioned discussions related issues in this regard are presented next.

Supply Chain Management and Its Dimensions

Supply chain management tries to unify organizational units in supply chain and coordinate materials and service, information and financial procedures to provide customers' demand aiming to improve competitiveness of a supply chain (Afzare, 2004). Goals of supply chain management is focused on cost reduction, increasing liability at the face of customers, improving supply chain relationships, minimizing production cycle and improving coordination. Generally, the purpose of supply chain management is to improve supply chain efficiency in order to produce good commodity and/or service, on time and with the least cost. In fact supply chain management would result in due responsibility and finally the most profitability (Hoseini and *et al.*, 2010). Supply chain management indicates unification of related activities and also related information processes via enhancing chain relationships to achieve reliable and stable competitive advantage (Ghazanfari *et al.*, 2001).

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Supply chain management have three dimensions, namely to say; 1) coordination of internal performance (managing activities and procedures in company's back up department); 2) coordination of interactive performances (like coordination between financial support, production support and marketing); 3) coordination of activities among organizations' supply chain members which are separated legally like activities between a company and its suppliers (Feyzabadi, 1382).

- 1) Coordination of internal performance: managing activities and procedures within the domain of supportive tasks inside a company.
- 2) Coordination of interactive performances: managing activities like those of supportive ones and financial ones, backup and production, backup and marketing.
- 3) Coordination of activities among organizations' supply chain which are separated legally and put within production line. This as a distinguished factor among other two ones indicates the rate of control that the manager has over production flow to achieve coordination (Shekari *et al.*, 2006).

Main Processes of Supply Chain Management

Today information management has an important place and key role in modern ever changing world. Appropriate information cycle contributes to more effective and efficient managerial trends. Appropriate information management among partner's increases pace, accuracy, quality and other dimensions of supply chain which in turn leads to more coordination in related chain.

- Logistic management: analyzing productive systems (like automobile industry). Logistic issues compose physical dimension of supply chain. This section which includes all physical activities from raw material preparation to final product encompasses most of the activities within supply chain. In fact, logistic domain also is the basis of activities in supply chain that information is its back up tools to improve related activities.
- Relationship management: the most important factor to manage supply chain successfully is trust worthy relationship between partners inside the chain. As if partners have mutual trust in their capabilities and operations. In sum regarding the development of any uniform supply chain, expanding trust among partners and proposing trust capability for each of them is a crucial factor in achieving stable success (Ghazanfari *et al.*, 2001).

Performance Levels of Supply Chain Management

- *The Combination of Supply Chain Partners*: Supply chain is planned according to the efficiency of logistic factors and with regard to supply chain customer demands in the way that the domain of existing production and services covers customer needs based on recognizing the final related productions and/or services.
- *Establishing Cooperative Relationships*: This indicates all necessary interactions and types of partnership. Such a function expands the domain of partnership with external factor. Any change in supply chain must be informed for all partners.
- *Planning Supply Chain Based on Profitability*: Effective Supply chain management requires effective cooperation of external factors. But relationship between organizations is so problematic, regarding partners' competition; motives and the composition of partnership are of great importance.
- *Supply chain management and information*: The role of information systems in supply chain is of great importance.
- *Reducing Supply Chain Costs*: The main purpose for establishing supply chain is cost reduction. These trends are applied to increase efficiency. The main cost generating factors are lack of vivid supply chain procedure, change in internal and external organizational trends, weakness in production plans and/services, having deficient information in decision making, weakness in chain elements in relationships among supply chain partners (Mianabadi, 2010).

Management and Quality in Service Sector

Currently quality control has changed into a very useful managerial tool which includes all employees in an organization. Sometimes this control process is either called comprehensive quality control or general quality control. Whatever it may be called it means that the aim is to improve all operations in the way

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that encompasses all organizational levels from workers to managers in industrial and service areas (Golmohammadi *et al.*, 2008).

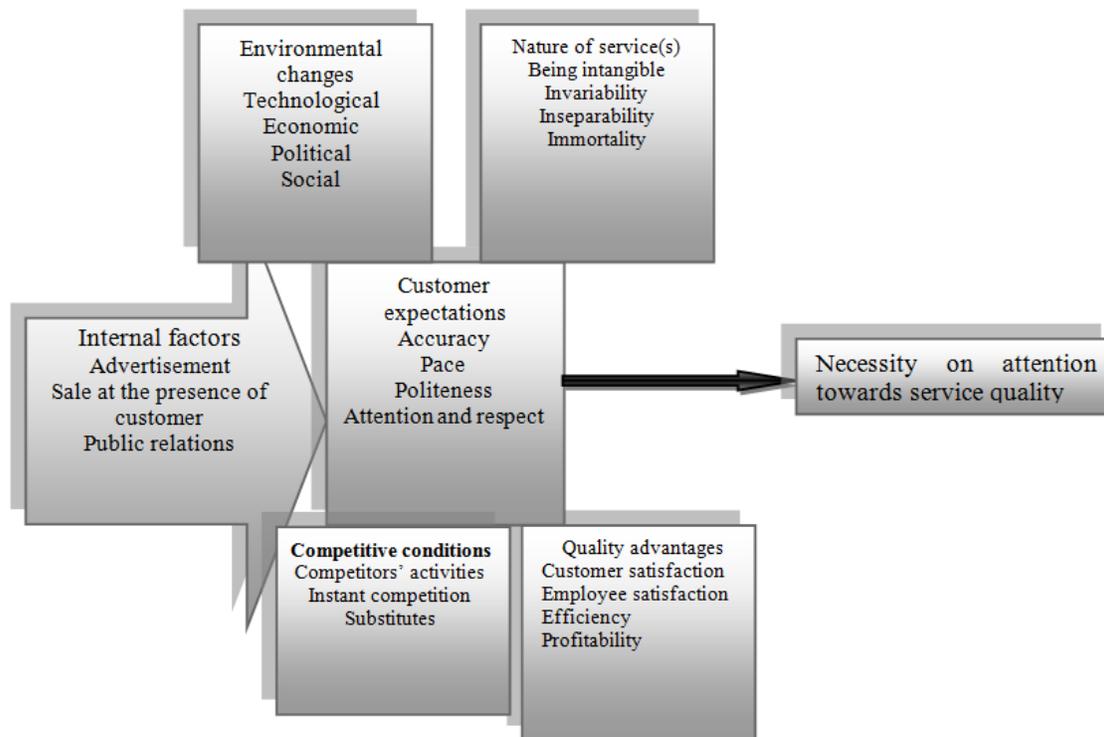


Figure 1: Attention to quality of service

Today it is clear that in order to preserve customers and obtain competitive advantage, improving service quality plays a key and vital role in organizational survivor (Alvani and Riahi, 2004). Comprehensive quality is in fact a cultural issue which changes into a practical tool. It means at first the idea of comprehensive quality must reside in employees’ minds and then such mental conception changes into operational activities as a tool for increasing organizational quality (Soltani and Poorsina, 2007).

Evaluating Service Quality

Service quality is by nature evaluative; how far appropriate service is rendered and met customers’ expectations. In most services the customer is present at the moment of service presentation i.e. what customer perceives is not limited only to the kind of service but how that very service is being rendered. On the other hand looking at quality it seems that good service stands at one end and poor service at the other end. The interface between these two ends includes different degrees of quality. Defining service quality as something beyond customer expectations we may represent the quality of perceived service(s) as follow:

$$\text{Perceived Quality} = \text{Previous Customer Expectation} + \text{Actual Process Quality} + \text{Actual Obtained Quality}$$

$$PQ = PCE + APQ + AOQ$$

- A) *Previous Customer Expectation*: What customers think of and imagine when purchasing service(s).
- B) *Actual Quality*: Actual level of rendered service that is determined and control by supplier. It should be said that service quality is determined by customer perception and not supplier perception.
- C) *Perceived Quality*: Customer’s feeling about the quality of rendered service(s) (Ghobadian *et al.*, 2003).

Managers must be aware that service quality is a profitable strategy for organizations. Therefore they must understand that investing on service quality improvement not only preserves current customers, but

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also attracts new ones and contributes to more profitability (Ghobadian *et al.*, 1994). Heskett (1994) introduces the advantages of service quality as follow:

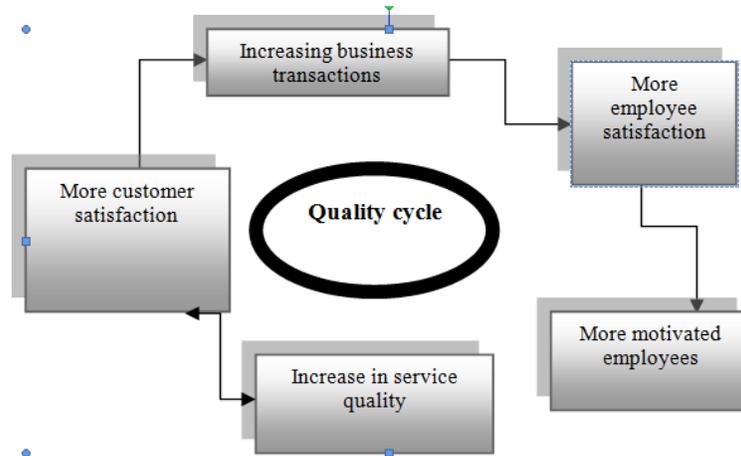


Figure 2: Service quality cycle (Hestket, 1994)

Tourism Industry

Today tourism industry is more than only an industry. It is considered as a global and social phenomenon with its very complexities. Tourism industry has a great impact over economic, social and cultural status of different countries all over the world. For example, job, regional balance, world peace enhancement, investment in cultural heritage and improving environmental contexts. Currently tourism is the core service industry including elements and activities which influence it directly and/or indirectly. Therefore, to develop tourism industry in a certain country, it requires directing related activities towards predefined tourism goals (Taheri *et al.*, 2010). In this research it is aimed to propose some approaches for promoting and enhancing tourism industry via improving tourism service quality management. Growth and development of tourism industry in Iran, as a pathway towards cutting dependency on single-product economy and differentiating and diversifying income resources, must be under much more attention than before (Ghanbari *et al.*, 2010).

Tourism Supply Chain

Vast bulk of literature about supply chain management is focus on manufacturing industries and less attention has been paid to service sector. Generally tourism supply chain is defined as a network of activities in active organizations in the field of tourism. Such activities go beyond service support to distribution and marketing of final product in certain place and for certain purpose(s) which encompasses great range of public and private partnership (Zhang *et al.*, 2009). In other words tourism supply chain includes all suppliers of all kinds of products and services that are accessible by tourists. Hence, active interaction among different tourism agencies and institutions indicate that tourism organizations are not independent anymore and related to a certain supply chain (Yang *et al.*, 2008).

Service Quality Management in Tourism Industry

Traditional view from the point of view of service management did not consider specifications of goods and/or services. The new managerial prospective defines quality as what the customer demands. Customers or service(s) receivers evaluate the received service quality according to their personal perception and expectations. Tourists just like other customers, usually pertain to some expectations before visiting a place and expect certain services while being at that very place. These expectations are the result of informal advertisement and/or formal media advertisement or whatsoever other people tell about. Of course meeting such expectations will satisfy tourists and improve related activities to attract more people (Hoseini and Saazvar, 2011). The quality of service or goods plays the foremost important

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role in satisfaction or dissatisfaction of customers. Therefore, to improve service quality you must first eliminate existing obstacles in the process of servicing in tourism industry including supply chain and supply chain management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of the present research consisted of all employees of West Azarbayjan Cultural Heritage Organization in 2014. The most important ways of data collection regarding research theoretical framework and literature review were library resources, papers, books and also internet. Also in field researches in order to collect data and do related analysis two questionnaires were used. Questionnaire of service quality management; this questionnaire was designed according to Seroquel model which evaluates five dimensions namely to say tangible, reliability, responsibility, trust and empathy factors. The questionnaire was adopted from the work of Anvari *et al.*, (2005). Supply chain management questionnaire: the questionnaire was designed according to the model proposed by Fynes *et al.*, (2005) which evaluates five dimensions of communication, commitment, cooperation, trust, coordination and dependency. Service quality management questionnaire includes 21 items and supply chain management questionnaire includes 34 items. To make the section understandable Likert’s five item ranges was used; that is one of the most common measurements. Also in the present research Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine test reliability. Therefore to measure trust capability Cronbach’s alpha along with SPSS 15 software was used. To do so a pretest consisting of 30 questions was conducted. Related data was analyzed via SPSS software and benefiting from Cronbach’s alpha to determine reliability coefficient which resulted in 957% for supply chain management and 941% for service quality management. Content validity is also validity of which composing factors of a measuring tool is evaluated. Content validity of a measuring tool depends on its composing questions. If the questions propose issues about certain characteristics and skills which the researcher wants to evaluate, related test is valid. This research also benefits from content validity to clarify its reliability. Research tool was introduced to five prominent researchers in the domain of industrial management to be evaluated for its validity and reliability. Regarding research topic and predicted goals the research is descriptive-correlation type. Collected data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics indexes included mean, variance and frequency, and in inferential statistics Pearson correlation and one-group t test were used. Then by means of Cronbach’s alpha reliability of dependent and independent variables was analyzed separately and collectively. Kolmogorov-Smirnov model was used for test normality, linear regression for proposed hypothesis and finally Freidman rating test to rate factors of independent and dependent variables.

Table 1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results

Level of meaningfulness	Df	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Variable
0/002	125	0/107	Service quality
0/015	125	0/182	Supply chain management

Table 2: Levene test for uniformity of research variables

Level of meaningfulness	Df2	Df1	Levene statistics	Variable
0/712	124	1	10/189	Supply chain management
0/537	124	1	0/145	Resource management

RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

Results

First Hypothesis Test

H₀: quality of supply chain management in tourism industry stands at average level.

H₁: quality of supply chain management in tourism industry stands higher than average level.

The next table shows one-group t test results concerning the status of supply chain management in tourism industry. According to the mentioned results the mean of 32 proposed questions related to

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concerning factor is 95/95. Also regarding presented statistics it could be said that quality of supply chain management in tourism industry stands at high level.

Table 3: analysis of the status of supply chain management in tourism industry

Level of Meaningfulness	Freedom rate	T	Variance	Mean	Amount	Variable
0/000	125	52/97	19/99	95/95	126	Supply chain management

Second Hypothesis Test

H₀: supply chain management has not a meaningful impact on service quality in tourism industry.

H₁: supply chain management has a meaningful impact on service quality in tourism industry.

To evaluate the rate of supply chain management influence as predictive variable over service quality management as main variable univariate regression was used.

As it can be seen from below table, there is a meaningful correlation between supply chain management and service quality management. Correlation coefficient square (%193) showed that 19 percent of distributions observed in service quality management is explained by supply chain management.

Table 4: Summary of research model (regression as predictor)

SEM	Square of coefficient set	correlation	Square correlation coefficient	of	Correlation coefficient	Model
7/18	0/193		0/199		0/447	1

Below mentioned table shows that calculated F for supply chain management (30/898) is meaningful. Therefore it could be said that there is a meaningful correlation between supply chain management and service quality management.

Table 5: Summary of one way variance analysis for model 1

Level of meaningfulness	F of statistics	Mean squares	of Freedom rate	Sum squares	of	Model
0/000	30/898	1593/388	1	1593/388		regression
	-	51/568	124	6394/465		remainder
	-	-	125	7987/804		Sum

In table 6 t value and its meaningfulness level shows that supply chain management variable predicts service quality management.

Table 6: sum of coefficients of supply chain management and service quality management

Level of meaningfulness	T	β	Standard error	B	model	
0/000	19/932		3/148	62/75	fixed	
0/000 *	5/559	0/447	0/032	0/179	Supply management	chain

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First Sub-Hypothesis Test

H₀: communication between members of supply chain has not a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry.

H₁: communication between members of supply chain has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry.

To analyze the impact of communication as predictive variable on service quality management as criteria variable univariate regression was used. As can be seen in table (7) there is a meaningful correlation between communication and service quality management. Correlation coefficient square (%116) showed that 19 percent of distributions observed in service quality management is explained by communication factor.

Table 7: Sum of research model (regression as predictor)

Standard error	Square of correlation coefficient set	Square of correlation coefficient	Correlation coefficient	Model
7/547	0/109	0/116	0/340	1

Below mentioned table shows that calculated F for supply chain management (16/274) is meaningful. Therefore it could be said that there is a meaningful correlation between communication factor and service quality management.

Table 8: Summary of one way variance analysis for model 1

Level of meaningfulness	F statistics	Mean squares	of Freedom rate	Sum of squares	Model
0/000	16/247	925/359	1	925/359	regression
	-	56/955	124	7062/445	remainder
	-	-	125	7987/804	sum

Discussions and Conclusion

Obtained results from first main hypothesis indicate that the level of supply chain management in tourism industry is higher than average. To test the hypothesis univariate regression was used. There was not any similar literature in this regard. But according to the results of the present study it could be said that West Azarbayjan Cultural Heritage Organization has succeeded to coordinate all activities including facilities, tasks, jobs and related marketing from suppliers to customers- including planning and managing supply and demand, providing production materials and scheduling work time. As such reliable service with low cost is accessed by customers. Therefore, tourism supply chain management is a strategy which active institutions in tourism industry utilize to maximize their competitive advantage.

Obtained results from Second main hypothesis indicate that supply chain management is effective at the face of service quality management. To test the hypothesis simple linear regression test was done, 19% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by supply chain management. And according to the value of calculated F there is a meaningful correlation between service quality management and supply chain management and supply chain management predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. According to reported results of the studies conducted by Adel *et al.*, (2007), Anvari and Mohamdrou (2004) it was understood that service quality is influential in all businesses. Stock and Lambert (1991) found out that industrial performance is below the level of customer expectations. It could be said that supply chain management as a strategic approach for service quality management has significance impact on increasing profitability rate in organization.

Obtained results from first sub-hypothesis indicate that communication and relations between supply chain members affects service quality management in tourism industry. Also 16% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by communication factor. Calculated value for F concerning communication factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management in tourism industry and communication predicts the status of service quality

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management in tourism industry. This is in accordance with lots of other findings in different related studies like Ma'aboudi *et al.*, (2009), Fynes *et al.*, (2004), Shafeei and Tarmast (2014). Therefore it could be said that effective management of supply chain and service quality requires full communication and coordinated partnership between suppliers and customers. This means information flow among chain elements which enables it to supply more efficiently.

Obtained results from second sub-hypothesis indicate that cooperation between supply chain members has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry. Also 11% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by cooperation factor. Calculated value for F regarding cooperation factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management and cooperation predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. This is in accordance with lots of other findings in different related studies like Ma'aboudi and *et al.*, (2009), Fynes *et al.*, (2004), Shafeei and Tarmast (2014). Therefore, promoting a cooperative atmosphere in tourism industry has an appropriate impact in service quality. Since cooperation is better than individual work and maximizes both economic and psychological satisfaction contributing to more commitment between supplier-customer.

Obtained results from third sub-hypothesis indicate that commitment between supply chain members has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry. Also 10% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by commitment factor. Calculated value for F regarding commitment factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management and commitment predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. Researcher could not find literature review on this issue. According to Ma'aboudi *et al.*, (2009) there is a meaningful relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. However, Poursalimi *et al.*, (2014) propose opposite findings. In their study they found out that there is no meaningful relationship between commitment in supply chain and job satisfaction in Iran Khodro agencies. It could be concluded that improving commitment in supply chain in tourism industry will contribute to enhancement of service quality.

Obtained results from Fourth sub-hypothesis indicate that coordination between supply chain members has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry. Also 20% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by coordination factor. Calculated value for F regarding coordination factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management and coordination predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. Researcher could not find due literature review concerning coordination factor in tourism industry. It could be said that coordination can be so influential in long term tourism activities. Since coordination contributes to much more cooperation in turn leads to customer satisfaction.

Obtained results from fifth sub-hypothesis indicate that dependency between supply chain members has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry. To evaluate this issue simple linear regression test was used. Also 15% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by dependency factor. Calculated value for F regarding dependency factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management and dependency predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. Ma'aboudi *et al.*, (2009) found out that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between dependency factor and customer satisfaction in textile industry. It could be said that dependency is one of the key dimensions in supply chain relations.

Obtained results from sixth sub-hypothesis indicate that trust between supply chain members has a meaningful impact on service quality management in tourism industry. Also 13% of observed distribution in service quality management is explained by trust factor. Calculated value for F regarding trust factor shows that there is a meaningful correlation between this factor and service quality management and trust predicts the status of service quality management in tourism industry. It could be said that trust plays a vital role in fulfilling duties, commitments and promises. Therefore, tourism industry is able to do what it has promised, but relying on mutual trust and liability.

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