

# **The Role of Traditional Guesthouses in Tourism Development in Oman**

**Raja Tumati**

PhD., Oman Tourism College, Tourism & Management Studies,  
([raja.tumati@otc.edu.om](mailto:raja.tumati@otc.edu.om))

**Mustafa Daskin**

**(CORRESPONDING AUTHOR)**

Assoc. Prof., Amasya University, Social Sciences Vocational School,  
([mustafa.daskin@amasya.edu.tr](mailto:mustafa.daskin@amasya.edu.tr))

**Hajer Al Hasani**

Industry Specialist, Sultanate of Oman  
([joozel33@gmail.com](mailto:joozel33@gmail.com))

**Şerif Baldıran**

PhD., Amasya University, Social Sciences Vocational School,  
([serif.baldiran@amasya.edu.tr](mailto:serif.baldiran@amasya.edu.tr))

Paradigma Akademi



# The Role of Traditional Guesthouses in Tourism Development in Oman

Raja Tumati

Mustafa Daskin  
(CORRESPONDING AUTHOR)

Hajer Al Hasani

Şerif Baldıran

ISBN: 978-625-6822-60-3

Paradigma Akademi Yayınları

Sertifika No: 69606

Paradigma Akademi Basın Yayın Dağıtım

Fetvane Sokak No: 29/A

ÇANAKKALE

e-mail: fahrigoker@gmail.com

Yayın Sorumlusu: Nevin SUR

Tasarım&Kapak: Himmet AKSOY

Matbaa

Meydan Baskı Fotokopi

Sertifika No: 70835

Kitaptaki bilgilerin her türlü sorumluluğu yazarlarına aittir.

Bu Kitap T.C. Kültür Bakanlığında alınan bandrol ve  
ISBN ile satılmaktadır. Bandrolsüz kitap almayınız.

Eylül 2023

Paradigma Akademi



# CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	iii
List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Abstract .....	vii
Chapter 1 .....	1
1. Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2 .....	5
2. Literature Review .....	5
2.1 Tourism in the world and Oman.....	5
2.2 Accommodation sector, the world, and Oman .....	7
2.3 Tourist trends in accommodation selection .....	9
2.4 Places of guesthouses in Oman .....	11
2.5 Traditional guesthouses .....	12
2.6 Omani traditional guesthouses .....	14
2.6.1 Misfah Old house .....	14
2.6.2 Misfah Heritage House.....	16
2.6.3 The Suwgra Heritage Inn (the cliff guesthouse).....	17
2.7 Traditional guesthouses in tourism development .....	18
2.8 Factors influencing tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses .....	19
2.8.1 Cultural tourism.....	23
2.9 Promotional strategies used by traditional guesthouses to reach target customers.....	24
2.10 Customer satisfaction with the services offered by traditional guesthouses.....	27

Chapter 3 .....	31
3. Research Methodology .....	31
3.1 Procedure.....	31
3.2 Sampling and Data Collection.....	31
3.3 Questionnaire and Data Analysis .....	32
 Chapter 4 .....	 33
4. Research Findings and Analysis.....	33
4.1 Descriptive Statistics .....	33
4.2 Determinant factor impacting the selection of traditional guesthouses by tourists .....	38
4.3 Promotional methods influence tourists' decisions to stay at traditional guesthouses .....	40
4.4 Social media platforms and influencers.....	41
4.5 Tourists' satisfaction with products and services offered by traditional guesthouses .....	43
4.6 Overall satisfaction and experience of tourists with traditional guesthouses in Oman.....	45
 Chapter 5 .....	 49
5. Discussion of Results .....	49
5.1 Discussion .....	49
5.1.1 Identifying factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses.....	49
5.1.2 Analyzing promotional methods used by traditional guesthouses .....	51
5.1.3 Measuring customer satisfaction with the products and services offered by traditional guesthouses.....	54
5.2 Conclusion.....	55
5.3 Recommendations .....	56
5.4 Limitations.....	58
References .....	59

## **List of Tables**

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	33
TABLE 2: DID YOU STAY IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING GUESTHOUSES? N=168.....	34
TABLE 3: NUMBER OF TIMES YOU VISITED THE GUESTHOUSES.....	36
TABLE 4: TOURIST PROFILE.....	37
TABLE 5: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TOURISTS' CHOICES OF TRADITIONAL GUESTHOUSES.....	39
TABLE 6: THE PROMOTIONAL METHODS INFLUENCE TOURISTS' DECISIONS TO STAY AT TRADITIONAL GUESTHOUSES .....	41
TABLE 7: SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS & INFLUENCERS .....	42
TABLE 8: TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY TRADITIONAL GUESTHOUSES .....	43
TABLE 9: OVERALL SATISFACTION AND EXPERIENCE OF TOURISTS WITH TRADITIONAL GUESTHOUSES IN OMAN .....	46

## **List of Figures**

FIGURE 1: MISFAT AL ABRIYEEN, OMAN: THE ANCIENT MUD VILLAGE..	14
FIGURE 2: MISFAT AL ABRIYEEN, OMAN: THE ANCIENT MUD VILLAGE..	15
FIGURE 3: MISFAH OLD VILLAGE.....	15
FIGURE 4: MISFAH HERITAGE HOUSE .....	16
FIGURE 5: THE CLIFF HOUSE, OMAN.....	17
FIGURE 6: NIZWA HERITAGE INN, NIZWA, OMAN.....	19

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of traditional guesthouses in tourism development in Oman. The aim of this study was to identify the factors that influence tourists' choice of traditional guesthouses. Besides analyzing the promotional methods used by traditional guesthouses, this study further aims to measure customer satisfaction with the products and services offered by traditional guesthouses. The research adopted a quantitative methodology and obtained data through a questionnaire administered to 168 national and international tourists at destinations in Oman. Misfah Old House is the most preferred lodging choice among tourists seeking a traditional guesthouse experience, with 68.3 percent expressing a preference for this establishment. The majority of the participants only availed themselves of the accommodation services provided by the guesthouse on a single occasion. However, a minority of respondents reported staying at guesthouses on two or three occasions, particularly at renowned guesthouses. Tourists' preference for traditional guesthouses is primarily influenced by the homely atmosphere (4.45) offered by these accommodations. Promotional strategies that garner tourist attention towards traditional guesthouses chiefly comprise social media applications, such as Instagram (4.58), which significantly influence their decision to reside therein. Tourists' satisfaction with traditional guesthouses' products and services is predominantly attributed to their ambience (4.49). A significant proportion of the participants, constituting 68.5 percent, expressed a propensity to opt for a traditional guesthouse during their forthcoming visit, thereby indicating their preference towards this type of accommodation. As a result, traditional guesthouses can be crucial to the growth of the tourism industry because they provide guests with a unique and authentic experience, boost the local economy, and foster sustainable tourism practices. It is advisable for traditional guesthouses to maintain an active

presence on popular social media channels, such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-Tok, and YouTube, owing to the demonstrated preference of the majority of respondents towards accessing these platforms. An effective engagement strategy requires prompt responsiveness to customer feedback and inquiries, the provision of relevant information, and timely notice of all promotional events and offerings.



# Chapter 1

## 1. Introduction

Today, tourism is regarded as one of the industries with the highest potential for growth and is recognized as the primary driver of economic, social, and cultural development across the globe (UNWTO, 2020). Tourism is the area's crowning achievement and is regarded as an economic sector with strong growth potential. In addition, the tourist industry is thought to support other industries and enable the growth of a destination's infrastructure (Banerjee, 2013). Accommodation is a key component of tourism products and any destination's capacity for both the value and quantity of tourism depends on the type, scope, and character of the accommodations available (Nuntsu et al., 2003). While the term "tourist accommodation" normally refers to various types of conventional hotels, the term "alternative accommodation" refers to places such as guesthouses, service flats, and business homes that offer travellers short-term paid housing. The restricted and individualized services offered with an authentic regional flair set them apart from conventional hotels (Canwell & Sutherland, 2003). Moreover, according to Canwell & Sutherland (2003), traditional guesthouses are the foundation of the hospitality sector, offering lodging and tourist services that will help tourism growth and the nation's economy.

In 2014, Oman obtained the fifth position among all Arab countries in terms of its standing as a favored destination for tourism, as stated by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI, 2014). In 2014, Oman recorded a total tourism production value of RO 1.22 billion. Inbound tourism accounted for RO 205.9 million, equivalent to 20.5% of the total value, while domestic tourism contributed RO 971.1 million, accounting for 79.5% of the total value. Between 2005

and 2014, there was a significant increase in the number of inbound tourists, doubling in quantity. However, domestic tourism witnessed a notable upsurge, with more than a tripling of figures observed in the same timeframe. The tourism sector contributed RO 724.5 million, equivalent to 2.2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014. Nevertheless, the state has an ambitious goal of attracting seven million tourists by 2040, which is expected to represent 6% of the GDP (NCSI, 2014).

The hotel sector, which is the largest and most prevalent sector because of its substantial significance, plays a crucial role in determining the future of the tourism industry (Ramukumba, 2015). Additionally, when visitors visit a tourist destination, they search for more comfortable and energizing places to stay, indicating that lodging is regarded as a basic service at the destination (Henning & Willems, 1999). There are many accommodation options for travellers, but most of them pick guesthouses and traditional homes, which are typically three or two stars and provide tourism services (Wildish et al., 2016). This indicates that, in recent years, more tourists have preferred traditional homes over hotels and resorts as their preferred accommodation. According to Canwell & Sutherland (2003), guests pick guesthouses because they make them feel at home and because they are less expensive than hotels.

Kokt et al. (2013) added that traditional homes are operated by a family, and a small number of employees operate the business. However, the success of the owners of these homes depends on their sound business judgment, acumen, and experience. Nevertheless, they may not have had any prior experience in the hospitality sector. According to Ghaderi et al. (2020), individuals typically construct guesthouses in their homes or modify their existing homes by changing amenities to meet the demands of guests. These places are used for a variety of purposes, including access to money, retirement, livelihood, or, for some people, just to pass the time. Elsayed (2019) mentioned that some individuals construct traditional guesthouses to

generate extra income and offer tourists local culture, customs, and traditions.

Al Nasser (2020) stated that innovative initiatives in Oman like traditional guesthouses or heritage homes have started to draw tourists, both local and international. These residences emphasize the distinctive environmental, historical, and cultural aspects of Oman and will help local tourists recognize the uniqueness of the nation.

There were 1029 old Omani homes and 124 historic homes in 2018. All of them are old homes once housed by residents (Al Nasser, 2020). However, people migrated to modern houses in cities with modern amenities because of the growth in the standard of living during the Renaissance. The Ministry of Tourism and Heritage in Oman anticipates increased numbers of tourists to help the country reach its 2040 target of bringing in 11 million domestic and foreign tourists. This will support increased domestic tourism, create fresh opportunities for employment for citizens, and promote economic diversification (Saundalkar, 2020). The ministry further added that a sizeable sum of money will be invested in converting old homes into heritage inns and guesthouses. The action aims to promote the sultanate's regional history and increase tourism (Saundalkar, 2020). National initiatives showing the distinct heritage, rich history, and culture of the sultanate are centered on the preservation of old dwellings, which are regarded as architectural gems that demonstrate Oman's archaeological character. According to reports, one of the ministry's key priorities is pushing (Oxford Business Group, 2019).

It is evident from the above discussion that guesthouses are important service providers in the tourism industry (Morrison, 2022). Guesthouses have become more popular in recent years as people see them as an alternative to commercial tourism. Moreover, guesthouses are situated close to other forms of tourism such as ecotourism, agrotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism. Further, the role of guesthouses in the tourism industry varies depending on their location; for example, guesthouses can be found all over the world in a variety of settings, including towns, rural areas, mountains, valleys,

coasts, and deserts. In accordance with the discussion above, the aim of this study is to investigate the contribution of traditional guesthouses to the growth of tourism in Oman. The objectives of this study were as follows:

- To identify factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses.
- To analyze promotional methods used by traditional guesthouses.
- To measure customer satisfaction with the products and services offered by traditional guesthouses.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2. Literature Review**

In recent decades, tourism has become the leading industry in many countries. The economic flow of international tourism has become a critical factor for economic growth. Furthermore, according to UNWTO (2020), tourism has become a major driver of job creation, infrastructure development, and new business development. Therefore, an increasing number of tourism destinations are investing in tourism development (Ekanayake & Long, 2012). In addition, Pedrana (2013) stated that tourism has become one of the primary engines of social and economic progress and is cited as a key factor in business development, increased export earnings, and infrastructure development. Furthermore, Massam et al. (2015) stated that many people travel to tourist destinations around the world to experience life in different cultures and traditions. To meet the needs of tourists, many major tourist attractions have emerged worldwide.

#### **2.1 Tourism in the world and Oman**

The tourism industry's largest and possibly the most significant sub-sector is accommodation. It is enormous and extremely varied (Cooper et al., 1998). Along with the transportation sector, the accommodation industry provides services for domestic, international, and regional tourists, as well as those who are based nearby. This satisfies the requirements of almost all tourism market segments (Chen & Chen, 2010; Pala & Daşkın, 2022). Tourist accommodations play a significant role in both urban and rural settings. This enables visitors to stay longer and enjoy the area's attractions while also contributing to the local economy through the purchases they make.

Arrivals of foreign visitors have surged by approximately 50% since 2010, at an average annual rise of about 5% (Deloitte, 2017). A positive economic circumstance, declining travel costs, ongoing modernization, liberalized and more extensive aviation offerings, quick access to travel products, and a variety of new destinations have all helped to support demand; however, the positive effects of favorable rates of exchange and higher spending by foreign visitors have concentrated on boosting inbound arrivals (UNWTO, 2019). Although it is anticipated that tourism will continue to develop, several factors, including shifting demographics, more connectivity, technological advancements, and a growing awareness of sustainability and inclusion, are expected to significantly alter the industry (OECD, 2018).

The importance of sustainable tourism practices is increasing in all regions. Sustainable tourism seeks to maximize economic gains while minimizing the negative effects on the surroundings, communities, and cultural heritage (Ramukumba & Ferreira, 2017). Achieving long-term sustainability entails appropriate planning, development, and the administration of tourism activities. This includes fostering environmentally responsible behaviors, aiding neighborhood communities, protecting natural resources, and honoring regional traditions (Pedrana, 2013). The COVID-19 epidemic, however, had an enormously detrimental effect on the world's tourism economy. People travel less because of travel restrictions, limitations, and concerns regarding health (Mehta et al., 2020). Many nations have implemented measures to safeguard their citizens and curb the spread of the virus by imposing international travel restrictions. During this period, the tourism industry experienced a decline in revenue due to a drop in tourist numbers, shuttering of select lodging and sightseeing options, layoffs, and financial instability (Turnšek et al., 2020). As more people are vaccinated and regulations loosen, the possibility of improving the tourism industry increases. A survey by the Overseas Leisure Group (2020) found that demand for hotels and resorts is rising among

travellers, as 72% of Americans who are exhausted of staying at home are already planning their next getaway.

Al-Azri (2014) stated that cultural and heritage tourism is one of the most popular themes in Oman. Oman is home to historical landmarks and has a rich cultural history that attracts visitors. The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the Royal Opera House, and Mutrah Souq are among the famous sites in Muscat, the country's capital. Another well-known cultural site is the historic city of Nizwa, which has a well-known fort and traditional souq. An important part of Oman's tourism strategy was the government's focus on protecting and showcasing the nation's heritage (Oman Tourism, 2015). In addition, Oman has cool places to visit people from different countries, such as nature and adventure. Oman has many beautiful places to explore, such as clean beaches, Rocky Mountains, huge deserts, and riverbeds called wadis (Al-Azri, 2014). The country uses natural resources such as mountains, caves, deserts, and the sea to attract people who like adventures (Oman Tourism, 2015). They can hike, climb, explore caves, go on a desert safari, and enjoy water sports like snorkeling and diving in the Arabian Sea. People who love adventure often like to go to places such as Jebel Shams, Wahiba Sands, and the Daymaniyat Islands. According to Kutty (2021), one of the most well-known forms of tourism in Oman is cruise tourism. Major cruise lines have now stopped in Muscat, one of the most popular cruise tourism destinations in Oman. Cruise passengers can discover Oman's attractions and take excursions to markets, historical sites, and scenic areas. The two main ports for cruise passengers in Muscat are Salalah and Port Sultan Qaboos (Prabhu, 2015).

## **2.2 Accommodation sector, the world, and Oman**

According to Ernest & Young (2015), it is predicted that the number of travellers from abroad will rise by 70% worldwide between 2013 and 2030, adding ten percent to the world's GDP by 2024. Besides, 266 million people are employed globally in the tourism industry, which contributes 9.5% of the global GDP. However, a key

component of any tourism product is accommodation. Nevertheless, accommodation is a crucial part of every tourism-related product. With an average of around a third of all travel costs, it constitutes not just the most significant and prevalent sector of the tourism economy, but also a vital part of the overall tourist experience (Cooper et al., 1998). Because choosing a type of accommodation mostly reflects the needs and desires of the tourist, the quantity and quality of the availability of accommodations significantly affect the type of travel or tourists drawn to particular destinations (Goss-Turner, 1996; Daşkın, Baldiran & Pala, 2023). However, the expansion and development of the accommodation sector in particular, as well as the success and the overall development of tourism destinations, are strongly related. For instance, the number of beds available relative to the number of travellers arriving at a location has a significant impact on occupancy rates, economic viability, employment in the industry, money invested, and the long-term capacity of accommodation businesses to maintain influence over pricing levels (Gavurova et al., 2021).

Similarly, according to Buhalis (2000), major factors in the general atmosphere or attractiveness of tourist sites include their physical accessibility, population density, and the level of quality of accommodation, as well as the degree to which these factors are balanced by the wider growth of facilities and infrastructure linked to tourism. The capacity of locations to remain viable in an ever-more competitive worldwide tourism market is directly affected by this (Chi, 2008). Furthermore, according to Murphy et al. (2000), numerous amenities such as accommodation, housing options, and dining options are thought to be important components. In particular, it has been acknowledged that accommodation services are yet another crucial element in travellers' total satisfaction with the destination and are an indicator of their willingness to return (Chen & Chen, 2010). Ultimately, the proper growth of accommodation is crucial to the success of tourist destinations.



According to the Alpen Capital Report (2022), the hospitality sector in Oman is anticipated to develop at the fastest rate in the area, or 90.9%, to reach US\$700 million by 2022. While the Sultanate of Oman continues to recover from the pandemic, the increase can be mostly attributed to a projected 49.5 percent gain in arrivals from tourists throughout the year and an inferior starting point in 2021. According to this report, the Omani government's efforts to enhance the nation's tourism environment are anticipated to be a major factor in the sector's growth. The hospitality sector in Oman is anticipated to increase by 6.3 percent annually between 2022 and 2026, exceeding US\$900 million (Arabian Business, 2023). Oman seeks to build a cluster of investments related to tourism around the sultanate to achieve its goal of earning over \$22.5 billion from tourism annually by 2040 (Muscat Daily, 2022). These include building theme parks, natural tourism destinations, aquatic centres, and entertainment hubs across the nation to promote both domestic and international travel.

### **2.3 Tourist trends in accommodation selection**

People's interests and tastes change over time, which affects how they select their travel accommodations. Many tourists have distinct preferences when picking a place to stay. These tastes are significantly influenced by many elements and situations. The initial trend in the choice of tourist lodgings was a shift towards alternative accommodations (Howe, 2017). An increasing number of people choose to stay in homes or service apartments instead of hotels for vacations. Websites such as Airbnb, HomeTogo, Expedia, and HomeAway make it simple for people who own homes to allow others to stay there for a fee (Schaap, 2017). This provides travellers with different and often cheaper options than hotels. Many people who go on trips like staying in places that feel like home, where they can have their own space and easily change their plans (Deloitte, 2017).

The second most popular trend in accommodation preference is for historical homes or petite dwellings. More tourists want to experience real and engaging activities, and where they choose to stay shows this (McCartney & Ge, 2016). Tourists believe that they can have a better experience when they stay in accommodations owned by people in the area (Narottama, 2016). They could be historic homes, lodges that take care of the environment, or guesthouses. Sometimes, even old barns were turned into places to stay. When tourists choose to stay in such places, they can learn more about the local way of life and help support the people who live there (Besculides et al., 2002). In this way, they can have a trip that feels more realistic and special.

Another trend in tourist accommodation selection is the booking of sustainable and environmentally friendly accommodations. People choose to stay in eco-friendly places when they travel. More people are caring about the environment now, so places to stay that are good for the earth are becoming more popular (Deloittee, 2023). Many travellers want to stay in places that use eco-friendly methods such as saving energy, reducing waste, using renewable resources, and helping local communities. People who care about the environment often choose to stay in eco-friendly lodges, hotels, and resorts that have been certified as environmentally friendly (Deloittee, 2023).

Finally, online booking sites and travel websites are among the main trends in tourists' selection of accommodation. Booking sites and travel websites have changed the way people find and reserve accommodations (Howe, 2017). However, the selection of a place to stay on vacation is influenced by many factors, such as travel purpose, destination, and personal profile (Schaap, 2017). Similarly, there are numerous options for accommodations, such as boutique hotels, resorts, vacation rentals, service apartments, homestays, heritage homes, and guesthouses (Deloitte, 2017). These travel websites have the benefit of enabling customers to compare costs, check feedback, and make informed choices.

Dessert camps such as Wahiba Sands attract tourists looking for unusual and immersive experiences. Desert camping is growing in popularity, with the option to stay in opulent tented campgrounds or authentic Bedouin tents (Innovative Tourism Advisors, 2015). Adventure seekers, people looking to return to nature, and people interested in experiencing the desert environment are all drawn to this trend (Bernard, 2013). Additionally, Oman has seen a rise in the popularity of eco-friendly lodgings owing to a growing awareness of sustainability. Travellers look for a lodging that emphasizes ecologically friendly practices, such as waste reduction, energy savings, and support for local communities. Some places have adopted green policies and provided eco-friendly experiences to encourage responsible travel (Al-Hashim, 2015).

Moreover, some travellers in Oman choose homestays or guesthouses to obtain real cultural experiences (Al Nasser, 2020). As they offer a chance to engage with local families, discover Omani customs and culture, and enjoy true Omani hospitality, these accommodations are usually for travellers seeking cultural immersion (Kutty, 2021). Homemade dinners and activities that highlight regional customs and practices are also frequently included. In addition to providing outdoor activities and accommodations, Oman's varied landscapes, including mountains, wadis, and coasts, make it a top choice for adventure seekers (Baporikar, 2012). Travellers wishing to engage in outdoor pursuits such as trekking, hiking, climbing rocks, snorkeling, and diving can find lodging options that include mountaintop lodges, eco-lodges, and coastal tents. These lodgings offer easy access to outdoor locations.

## **2.4 Places of guesthouses in Oman**

Many people like to visit Oman because it has beautiful scenery, an interesting history, and friendly people who welcome visitors. Although not as common as hotels, there are some places in Oman where tourists can stay in guesthouses. The first location was Muscat, the capital city. Many guesthouses in Muscat can

accommodate tourists. Many tourists like to visit places such as Mutrah and Old Muscat. In these areas, there are guesthouses that provide a real sense of Oman (Tripadvisor, 2023). The second location for guesthouses is Nizwa, where there are old forts and markets in which people sell traditional things. In this area, tourists can find many traditional guesthouses and small hotels where they can learn about the local customs and have fun visiting places like Jebel Akhdar, Misfat Al Abryn, and Jabrin Castle in Bahla. This area is where the majority of Oman's guesthouses are situated (Experience Oman, 2023).

Tourists can also find guesthouses in places called Jebel Shams. Jebel Shams is a mountain area that is like the Grand Canyon of Oman. It is popular among people who love nature and adventure. Here, people who want to go on hikes, camps, and admire stunning views can stay at the guesthouses (Expedia, 2023). After this comes Sur. Sur is a town in Oman that is famous for making old-style boats called dhows and has pretty beaches. In Sur, there are not many places to stay, but a few guesthouses can make tourists feel comfortable. Finally, Salalah is located in Oman, which is in the south. It has many plants, nice beaches with coconuts, and it rains a lot during a season called the Khareef. In Salalah, there are mostly hotels and resorts, but some guesthouses are also there for tourists who want a personal and local experience (Expedia, 2023).

## **2.5 Traditional guesthouses**

Traditional guesthouses were described as alternative accommodation options by Triarchi & Karamanis (2017), who noted that they are among the most important structures in the area because they convey the culture and heritage of the place to visitors. Ramukumba & Ferreira (2017) stated that traditional houses are separate from other houses; they are built for a specific purpose and can be offered to visitors. These houses have been converted into guesthouses where rooms and other services are provided, and guests book these houses to stay. These houses have also contributed to the

local economy (Ghaderi et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Kadi (2017), a guesthouse is an old cultural house in which one feels at home, the selection of which gives visitors a true view of their traditional life. It was built in a traditional architectural style that highlights and describes the village. Furthermore, Morrison et al. (1996) stated that those houses are in rural neighborhoods, comprising buildings 50 to 60 decades old that are sometimes hidden in the mountains.

According to Ramukumba & Ferreira (2016), traditional guesthouses are a subsector of tourist attractions because they support tourism operations and are considered a base for the tourism industry. As it is an essential component of a tourist offer, accommodation cannot exist without tourism, just as tourism cannot exist without accommodation. Bhan & Singh (2014) stated that various types of accommodation are very important in the tourism industry as they help tourists grow and choose them based on their taste and budget. Moreover, according to Belwal & Belwal (2010), guesthouses provide locals with job opportunities. In response, many countries have increased their investments in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as heritage homes, guesthouses, and lodges. Furthermore, according to Foges & Fleming (2018), tourists prefer to stay at traditional guesthouses because they offer suitable and friendly budgets. These establishments serve popular cuisine, with regional dishes reflecting the region's image. In addition, according to the UNWTO (2016), traditional guesthouses are attempting to revitalize ancient cultural traditions and regional cuisine to reflect the heritage of villages or towns.

## 2.6 Omani traditional guesthouses



**Figure 1:** Misfat Al Abriyeen, Oman: The Ancient Mud Village

### 2.6.1 Misfah Old house

The Misfah Old House (a traditional guesthouse) is situated in the Sultanate of Oman's old village of Misfat Al Abryeen, Al-Hamra, Al Dakhiliyah, and the Sultanate of Oman. Misfat Al Abryeen is an accurate description of the "living" Omani mud village founded on the Al Hamra region's mountain ridge. It is a popular destination for both local and international visitors and consists of residences, corridors of dappled passages, beautiful surroundings, and open terraces. The Misfah Old House is located approximately 137 miles from Muscat Airport and approximately 25 miles southwest of Nizwa City. The house contained 12 rooms, with eight common bathrooms. It provides traditional lodging and Omani cuisine, prepared by local families. Local Omani guides can arrange walking tours in villages and the surrounding communities. Guesthouses can

also offer hiking, horseback riding, and other on-site activities (TripAdvisor, 2023; UNWTO, 2023).



**Figure 2:** Misfat Al Abriyeen, Oman: The Ancient Mud Village

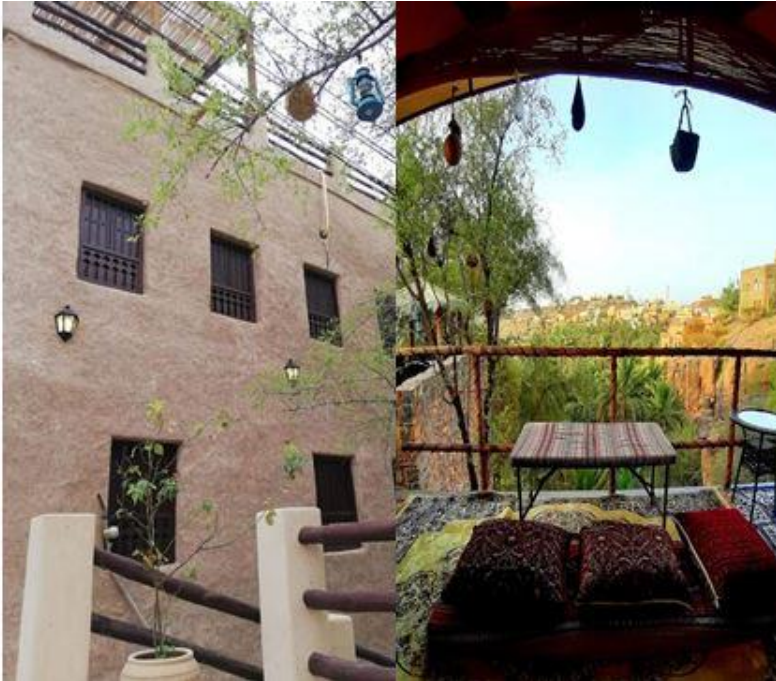


**Figure 3:** Misfat Old Village



### 2.6.2 Misfah Heritage House

The Misfah Heritage House is also located in Misfat Al Abryeen village. The house has a terrace in addition to a garden. Accommodation options at Misfah Heritage House include twin and triple rooms with a shared bathroom. Misfat Al Abriyeen village is a magnificent 500-year-old settlement on a mountainside. Owing to its reputation as one of Oman's most picturesque towns, it has become a popular tourist attraction. In fact, it has many charms, including old houses with palm fronds and mud roofs, agricultural terraces still in use by locals, a lovely wadi, several hiking opportunities, and the peace and quiet of being disconnected from major cities (Agoda, 2023; UNWTO, 2023).

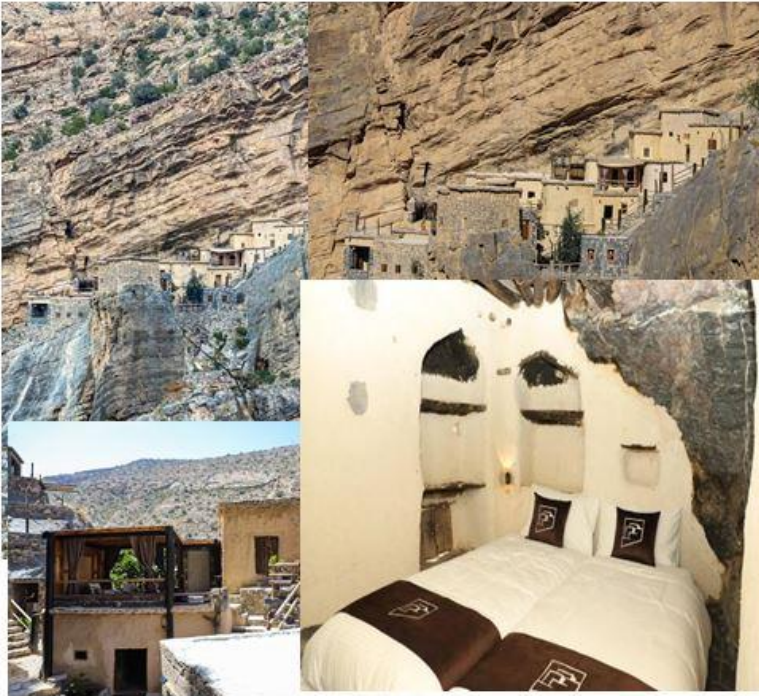


**Figure 4:** Misfah Heritage House



### 2.6.3 The Suwgra Heritage Inn (the cliff guesthouse)

It is situated in Şaqrah in the Jebel Akhdar part of Nizwa, the Sultanate of Oman. The Suwgra provides visitors with a genuine glimpse of an Omani mountain village. Every accommodation had a balcony with a mountain view, and barbeque facilities, terraces, and patios were available. Suwgra is 158 kilometres from Muscat International Airport. In the Ad Dakhiliyah Governorate of Oman, the Jebel Akhdar (Green Mountain) mountain is a section of the Al Hajar Mountain range. It is approximately 2000 meters above sea level and includes the vast Saiq Plateau, which is home to several wadis and terraces. Showers encourage perfumed Damask roses that bloom in March and are the source of the region's famed rose water, precious pomegranates, apricots, and other fruits to flourish in profusion. From December to March, lows of  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  are common, and hailstorms are frequent (Booking.com, 2023).



**Figure 5:** The Cliff House, Oman

## **2.7 Traditional guesthouses in tourism development**

Alternative lodging options, including traditional homes, have grown in importance as a means of promoting tourism because of the changes in the global economy. Owing to their importance to regional and global economies, these sectors are anticipated to become among the most significant industries (UNWTO, 2016). Poudel (2013) asserted that guesthouses influence tourism growth and that the lodging industry is crucial for creating tourist attractions that will boost and advance the nation's economic activity. On the other hand, according to Portolan (2017), traditional inns work to build amenities for visitors' comfort and provide services that satisfy them to attract visitors. Tourists contribute to the growth of tourism by spending money on guesthouses. Gu & Wong, (2010) claim that guesthouses play a significant role in the growth of the tourism industry since they offer several essential advantages to local populations by creating opportunities for employment, which boosts a nation's GDP.

On the other hand, Bhan & Singh (2014) stated that traditional guesthouses seek to develop facilities for the convenience of tourists and offer services for their satisfaction, leading to tourist attraction. When tourists spend money on guesthouses, they help to develop tourism. According to Šišara et al. (2013), guesthouses play an important role in tourism development because they provide several benefits to communities by providing employment opportunities to individuals, thereby increasing a country's economic income. According to Al Riyami (2018), Bawareq Nizwa International for Investment bought approximately four houses from owners to invest in the establishment of a heritage hotel for visitors and locals in Nizwa, Ad Dakhiliyah Governorate of Oman. After renovations, they started a traditional hotel called "Nizwa Heritage Inn." It is close to the central market and is only a two-minute walk between Nizwa Fort and Castle. As a result, the Nizwa Heritage Inn is well-situated to accommodate travellers and will enable tourists to stay close to some of the important tourist destinations in Nizwa.



**Figure 6:** Nizwa Heritage Inn, Nizwa, Oman

## **2.8 Factors influencing tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses**

Nowadays, when it comes to booking accommodation, most people want to try new and alternative places to stay. There are various types of tourism accommodations, but tourists' choices for these accommodations are determined by their tastes, habits, and purposes. According to Khosravi et al. (2014), guests choose accommodation for a variety of reasons, and understanding these reasons can help guesthouses attract tourists. Furthermore, Khosravi et al. stated that knowing the important features of guests is critical for traditional guesthouses. Similarly, Jo et al., (2014) stated that the characteristics that are important to the minds of guests when choosing accommodation options must be thoroughly researched and presented. Furthermore, Gunasekaran and Anandkumar (2012) stated that what motivates tourists to consider alternative accommodations, such as home stays and traditional guesthouses, must be thoroughly researched, and the owners of these guesthouses must entice travellers and retain their loyalty to the institution.

According to Balasubramanian & Aanchal (2017), staying in traditional houses provides tourists with a feeling of homeliness, making them feel as if they are staying in their homes. Csapó (2012)

states that traditional guesthouses help tourists interact with people from various cultures and bring together people from various nations, religions, cultures, and languages to share their experiences. According to Kimaiga (2015), some traditional guesthouses encourage guests to plan family trips to their guesthouses and visit nearby tourist attractions, driving tourists to choose guesthouses. Tourists are motivated to stay at traditional guesthouses because they provide great value and are family friendly. Therefore, many tourists choose to stay in these houses (Agyeiwaah, 2013). Moreover, according to Din & Mapjabil (2010), security is one of the most important factors for tourists, and guesthouses that provide sound security have an edge for tourists who stay with their families. Moreover, the motivation of tourists is a combination of needs and desires, which determine the extent to which tourists desire to choose guesthouses (Gu & Wong, 2010).

The motive is an indicator that explains why tourists visit specific locations. Hospitality owners should understand what their guests look for and develop strategies to attract them.

According to Gunasekaran & Anandkumar (2012), many factors encourage tourists to choose traditional guesthouses, such as flexibility in their stays, satisfaction with their ambience, and a family-friendly environment. On the other hand, Ingram (2002) mentioned that the value of money was an important factor for guesthouses, and guesthouses that provide a suitable price are in great demand, as many tourists are looking for prices that are not too expensive. Moreover, Geraghty & Conway (2016) stated that there is a higher demand for reasonably priced hospitality institutions than luxury hotels. In addition, the number of tourists visiting traditional homes has increased because these homes provide affordable prices for everyone and are not as expensive as luxury hotels (Guttentag, 2015).

According to Agyeiwaah (2013), visitors who stay in traditional guesthouses develop friendly relationships with the hosts and feel like they have a positive experience because the hosts engage them in

discussion on a personal level, which makes them feel at ease and secure. Additionally, according to Ansah (2014), visiting guesthouses on a regular basis builds an affinity between the host and visitor that results in long-lasting relationships. According to Guttentag (2015), many authors have investigated why tourists prefer traditional hospitality establishments to luxury hotels. The results showed that tourists chose traditional guesthouses because of three factors: location, the opportunity to experience local culture, and affordable prices. Al-Badil et al. (2017) stated that staying in these houses allows tourists to interact with the local population and learn stories and facts about the place, making some tourists happy. As these houses are generally situated in neighborhoods, tourists are excited to meet locals and learn about their culture and customs. Pedrana (2013) added that tourists choose traditional guesthouses because staying in such homes is a unique way to experience a new environment and culture, and tourists usually look for a genuine experience by seeing the new architecture. On the other hand, the location of a heritage house is one of the most important factors in its success, as tourists prefer to stay in traditional guesthouses in rural areas or near historical buildings. Tourists prefer quiet, comfortable, and convenient guesthouses.

Due to the fact that most traditional hotels are run and managed by locals, they help to engage and empower the community. Communities can engage in this kind of tourism directly, earning cash and job possibilities while maintaining ownership over their cultural treasures (Pedrana, 2013). Additionally, they can help neighborhood businesses and boost their economies by bringing in money for the owners. They frequently buy their food and other necessities locally, helping to promote small businesses and strengthen ties amongst neighbors (Al Lawati, 2015). Traditional guesthouses are frequently found in rural locations, aiding in the redevelopment of those communities. By drawing tourists to these locations, they can stimulate the local economy and aid in the

preservation and restoration of old homes and neighborhoods, raising the allure of the travel destination (Ramukumba, 2015).

Guesthouses that follow conventional practices frequently engage with sustainable tourism practices, including the prudent deployment of resources, waste administration, and the endorsement of responsible tourism conduct (Ramukumba & Ferreira, 2017). One potential approach to mitigating the environmental impact of tourism involves the utilization of traditional construction methods, the implementation of eco-friendly practices, and integration with the local surroundings (Al-Hashim, 2015).

Managers of traditional Omani guesthouses are always keen to understand why tourists prefer to stay at traditional guesthouses. According to Al Riyami (2018), based on a study of Nizwa's old houses, the factors that push tourists to stay in traditional Omani guesthouses are that they provide authentic experiences to visitors through tradition and culture, giving them the impression that they are living in the past. Al-Hashim (2015) agrees that improving the quality of the tourist experience is critical in the tourism industry because the industry is dependent on tourists. Originality, distinctiveness, and the opportunity to experience local culture and customs are three important factors motivating tourists to choose traditional guesthouses. Finally, when managing traditional guesthouses, they must provide unique offerings that satisfy guests. Providing high-quality products and services to visitors to win their hearts can increase profits and the market demand for traditional housing. Hüller et al. (2017) stated that visitors are satisfied when they are served local food, offered locally sourced products, sold local souvenirs, and provided with local tour guides. Additionally, Omani guesthouses should provide authentic visitor experiences to increase visitor loyalty.

The Omani government is devoted to elevating tourism in the country by integrating it into the Vision 2040 agenda. The government of Oman is actively harnessing the potential of the nation's tourism industry through innovative product development,

smart marketing, and brand promotion to maximize returns on tourism investments. Travellers seeking out unique locations—from mountains to valleys, wadis to deserts, and from coasts to lush green places—will adore Oman for its unparalleled beauty, historical past, and compassionate hospitality (Al Riyami, 2018). Oman has made a valiant effort to portray its tourist sites as top-notch Middle Eastern destinations with the slogan "Beauty has an address." The Sultanate of Oman is distinguished by its distinct heritage, culture, and history, which allow tourists to visit the country (Haque et al., 2016).

### **2.8.1 Cultural tourism**

According to Csapó (2012), cultural tourism is an activity in which people learn about other people's cultures and traditions as well as gain a direct understanding of the natural environment and places of archaeological, cultural, architectural, and other historical significance. Zadel & Bogdan (2013) stated that the fundamental goal of cultural tourism is to educate local tourists about the local culture. This can be done by examining the heritage, way of life, industries, arts, and entertainment. Additionally, it enables tourists to take part in native traditions and rituals, which comprise not only lovely cultural representations but also shared memories of singular interactions.

Moreover, according to Besculides et al. (2002), cultural tourism is a movement with a long history that encourages individuals to experience and learn about different ways of life. Additionally, the author claims that cultural tourism is a voyage intended to see historical and ancient cultural landmarks, and more especially, locations that arouse admiration and a sense of patriotism by showcasing and highlighting the accomplishments of our ancestors. Furthermore, Nadine (2012) stated that cultural tourism is a major growth industry, as many tourists are interested in learning about other cultures. Similarly, Zadel & Bogdan (2013) stated that cultural tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in many countries and regions worldwide. One of the most popular tourist activities is the

preservation of cultural heritage sites. Tourists spend most of their time visiting and experiencing archaeological and cultural sites. Commonly, guesthouses that are steeped in tradition showcase the characteristic architecture, unique design, and cultural legacy of the locality. According to Othman et al. (2013) Tourists who opt to stay at these lodgings are offered a unique prospect to engage with the local culture, which supports the conservation of customs, traditional practices, and artisanry while also cultivating gratitude for them.

## **2.9 Promotional strategies used by traditional guesthouses to reach target customers**

Tourism organizations have always used promotional strategies to persuade target customers to act. According to Leung et al (2015), competition in the hotel industry is fierce, and hospitality institutions must work hard to innovate, upgrade, and differentiate themselves from the competition. However, Zarrina (2020) stated that, along with innovation, new promotional strategies are essential in any business to build a brand, attract customers, and maintain loyalty. To stay ahead of competitors, organizations must develop strategies that are superior to those of other institutions. Similarly, Huyssteen et al. (2015) noted that promotional strategies communicate with the market or target audience. Traditional methods, such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards, and face-to-face communication, are among the most effective. In addition, Geraghty & Conway (2016) considered traditional promotional strategies to be the most appealing and credible.

According to Thwala & Slabbert (2018), traditional guesthouses employ a variety of promotional tactics, including advertising, direct marketing, and word-of-mouth. In addition, Saxena (2021) notes that the incorporation of diversified mediums such as television, radio, magazines, personal sales, and websites can be advantageous for organisations. Further, the authors have suggested that conventional guesthouses should select promotional strategies that are preferred by their intended clientele. As such, it is imperative for guesthouses to



possess proficient marketing skills in order to attract potential customers and generate sales for their offered products and services. In order to effectively reach their designated clientele, it is imperative that appropriate promotional strategies are employed. According to Andreea & Camelia (2013), promotion constitutes a crucial function for any business as it enables the introduction of products and services to potential customers. The utilization of advertising and marketing tactics, such as the distribution of informational flyers, the installation of billboards, and the establishment of promotional stalls during tourism events, serves as a highly efficient means of promoting businesses (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

However, Strydom (2013) concludes that the majority of guesthouses resort to conventional marketing channels such as television, radio, the internet, and magazines to advertise their services and products. However, Taylor (2015) argues that, given technological advancements, it is imperative for organizations to broaden their perspective on the selection of viable marketing tools. As evident from some guesthouses, websites have emerged as a vital platform leveraged to promote their products and services. According to Dwivedi et al. (2015) several guesthouses employ digital marketing strategies involving various promotional tools, including banner advertisements on Google, targeted email communication, and leveraging social media platforms, which are currently widely sought-after and efficacious methods. Correspondingly, based on the research conducted by Huyssteen et al. (2015), it can be inferred that the majority of conventional guesthouses endeavored to identify and implement the most efficacious marketing tools to enhance their customer outreach. These included online advertising, e-word of mouth, promotional emails, and guesthouses.

Taderera et al. (2014) claim that the hospitality sector in Oman uses a range of promotional methods, including social media applications, because they are affordable and easy to apply.

Social media tools such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter are used by guesthouses. Dwivedi et al., (2015) stated that guesthouses also use online advertising, such as banner ads on Google, YouTube ads, and search engine ads, which are very effective today. Finally, guesthouses must employ a variety of marketing strategies to publicize their business, draw tourists, retain demand, increase revenues, and assist in achieving niche targets (Geraghty & Conway, 2016).

Furthermore, people residing in Oman are actively aiding in the publicity of their country by means of disseminating visual content, including videos and photographs, of regions within Oman that they have explored and experienced through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The exponential rise in active users of social media tools in the Sultanate of Oman is noteworthy (Al-Badi et al., 2014). The utilization of social media as a marketing tool for products and services has garnered considerable attention in recent times, owing to its cost-effectiveness and efficacy (Al-Wahaibi et al., 2015). Consequently, numerous countries employ social media platforms as a means of managing and marketing their respective tourist destinations and related services (Al-Zedjali et al., 2014). The utilization of social media in the context of tourism has the potential to provide more comprehensive and substantiated insights, aiding tourists in their decision-making processes.

A study carried out by Leung et al. (2013) established that consumers engage with social media by means of influencers, content creators, and travel bloggers before, during, and after their journeys. According to Buhalis (2000), consumers typically exhibit enthusiasm for acquiring information on the attributes of tourism services. Such attributes may include, but are not limited to, the availability of attractions, ease of accessibility, availability of desirable amenities, package options, hotels and other alternative accommodations, various forms of recreational activities, and supplementary services that can aid in the proficient planning of their travel ventures. Similarly, Leung ET al. (2013) states that influencer marketing

requires individual influencers to disseminate promotional messages through their personal social media platforms. Therefore, the majority of influencer campaigns incorporate a content component with the intention of cultivating brand image and impacting the purchasing intentions of their followers (Abidin, 2015).

The research conducted by Chatzigeorgiou (2017) investigated the relationship between influencer endorsement marketing as a promotional strategy on social media and people's inclination to visit rural areas in Greece. This study aims to investigate the extent to which an influencer embraces rural tourism values and the level of trust of followers towards the influencer. This study revealed a significant level of dependence among consumers on influencer marketing, and this trend is anticipated to continue in the future.

## **2.10 Customer satisfaction with the services offered by traditional guesthouses**

Human resources are important for shaping the future of the hospitality industry because they contribute to productivity and provide services to guests. According to Zehrer (2009), the presence of distinctive services and products in any organization is insufficient to attract customers. Therefore, business owners should focus on implementing effective customer satisfaction policies, as they are regarded as the focal point of the institution's profit. Similarly, Herath et al. (2016) states that customer satisfaction is a business philosophy that helps create a loyal customer base. Further, Anash (2014) argues that business owners should demonstrate their strength and ability to meet customer needs by measuring the range of products and services provided by the organisation to meet customer expectations.

As stated by Parayani et al. (2010), the hospitality sector currently faces intensifying competition in terms of providing excellent service quality and fulfilling customer expectations. Hence, comprehending the necessities and preferences of guests regarding their service experience is crucial. Customer satisfaction is the only way to

determine and achieve high-quality in-service provision. This can be achieved by meeting customers' expectations and delivering services that meet their specific requirements. Service experience is measured against customer expectations as benchmarks. The quality of service is determined by how customers perceive the performance of the service provided. Not fulfilling the requirements and anticipation of customers could lead to dissatisfaction with the services provided. According to previous research, greater levels of customer satisfaction correspond to higher levels of service quality (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Herath et al. (2016) states that any type of accommodation, including guesthouses, must offer the best service, which is important in the hospitality industry. For guesthouses, emphasizing high-quality services, offering memorable experiences, and ensuring tourist satisfaction can help meet expectations. In other words, when a service is available at an acceptable quality, it creates value for the customers. Furthermore, customers may be satisfied with traditional guesthouses for several reasons. Therefore, operators should be aware of these factors and ensure that they provide products and services that satisfy their customers.

According to Tinakhat et al. (2018), tangibility, such as furniture, ambience, and the staff's elegant uniforms, makes tourists more satisfied with traditional guesthouses. In addition to the guesthouses' traditional environment and local cuisine, guests are confident in the quality of the food provided. Moreover, they were satisfied with the quality of the rooms, such as the authentic furniture. Furthermore, added reliability: when guesthouse owners promise to do something for a customer, they fulfill their promises at a specific time. To ensure successful service provision, precision and accuracy must be exercised on the first attempt. The current idea concerns the dependability of organizational members in consistently carrying out their responsibilities with precision and trustworthiness (Tinakhat et al., 2018). Third, competence: according to Parasuram et al. (1988), competence refers to the requisite level of expertise and proficiency among employees as necessary to execute the service in a

satisfactory manner. For example, if a customer encounters a problem, it must be brought to a point where it can be safely resolved. The owners of guesthouses must always take care of customers, and everyone under one roof is inspired to cooperate. Moreover, employees should offer timely services. Fourth, assurance: treating employees like customers instills confidence; employees have a passion to know the answer when asking a question of the client; the staff is courteous and respectful to customers, which has led to customer satisfaction (Herath et al., 2016). Finally, courtesy: the aspect of courtesy pertains to the manner in which staff interacts with guests, specifically how kind, respectful, thoughtful, and hospitable they are in their communication.

Several studies indicate that the dimensions mentioned, i.e., the SERVQUAL model, may not be applicable across all types of services and contexts (Carman 1990). As an illustration, Akan (1995) studied how well the SERVQUAL model fits Turkey's hospitality sector. He identified seven areas of focus: employees' professionalism and politeness; communication and transactions; physical amenities; customer knowledge and comprehension; promptness and precision of service; resolution of issues; and the correctness of hotel bookings. Therefore, it is crucial for guesthouse owners to prioritize the needs of their customers and strive to provide exceptional services in specific areas.

Moreover, Parasuram al. (1991), a correlation was elucidated by researchers between the quality of service provided and the level of satisfaction perceived by customers, as well as their proclivity to revisit the establishment and endorse its services to others. Extensive inquiries have been undertaken in the realm of service quality, revealing that a gap exists between the expectations and realities of customers with regard to hospitality (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). Numerous investigations have demonstrated that upholding an immaculate setting is essential in order to meet the lodging needs of customers, as it is regarded as a fundamental requirement for achieving their satisfaction.



## **Chapter 3**

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Procedure**

The importance of the research methodology lies in furnishing a systematic procedure to investigate a particular research issue or area of interest. Moreover, the implementation of a structured and robust study process has been found to increase the accuracy and reliability of the research outcomes (Kabir, 2016). The present investigation utilized a quantitative methodology. The aim of the quantitative methodology is to effectively quantify and measure the correlations between variables and extrapolate the results to a wider population (Kothari, 2004). Furthermore, the quantitative methodology utilizes numerical information to facilitate statistical analysis and categorization of emerging trends and patterns within the data. The adoption of such an approach could engender a less biased and more precise understanding of the phenomenon that is being examined (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

#### **3.2 Sampling and Data Collection**

The current investigation employs the methodology of simple random sampling. According to Kothari (2004), simple random sampling entails the random selection of individuals from a vast population. In accordance with the assertions posited by Bernard (2013), the process of simple random sampling entails selecting units from a given population, with each possible sample possessing an equal probability of being chosen. The study undertook the collection of primary data through the dissemination of an online questionnaire to the targeted population. Bryman & Bell (2011) noted that the use of surveys facilitated the acquisition of uniform data by guaranteeing that all respondents were presented with identical questions in a

consistent manner. The aforementioned intervention serves to mitigate the occurrence of data bias, thus enhancing the overall dependability and validity of the outcomes. Random sampling is used in this study. Random sampling is the process of randomly selecting participants from a large population. According to Bernard (2013), "simple random sampling is the method of selecting units from the population where all possible samples are equally likely to be selected." Primary data for this study were collected using an online questionnaire distributed to the study population. The surveys allowed for the collection of standard data, ensuring that all participants were asked the same questions in the same manner. This helps reduce data bias and improve the reliability of the results. Furthermore, according to Kabir (2016), surveys can be distributed to many people, increasing the sample size, and improving sample representativeness. This is especially useful for studies that aim to generalize the results to larger populations.

### **3.3 Questionnaire and Data Analysis**

The survey questionnaire has nine parts: Table 1: Demographic profile, Table 2: Did you stay in any of the following guest houses?, Table 3: How many times did you stay in the following guesthouses?, Table 4: Tourist profile, Table 5: Factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guest houses, Table 6: The promotional methods influence tourists' decisions to stay at traditional guest houses, Table 7: Social media platforms & influencers, Table 8: Tourists' satisfaction with products and services offered by traditional guest houses, and Table 9: Overall satisfaction and experience of tourists with traditional guesthouses in Oman. Descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the data using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as follows: Frequency distribution, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to determine the factors that influence tourists to choose guesthouses, their satisfaction and the promotional tools that helped them to influence their stay in guesthouses in Oman. Other relevant statistical tools were also applied to the conclusions.



## Chapter 4

### 4. Research Findings and Analysis

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic profiles. Males accounted for 64.3 percent of the population, while females accounted for 35.7 percent. Most respondents (43.5 percent) were aged between 26 and 35 years old. The next highest age group was 36–45 years (23.8%), followed by 56 years and older (13.7%) and 18–25 years (10.7%). The 46–55-year-old age group had the lowest percentage (8.3%). More than half of those surveyed (54.8%) were Omani, while 45.2 percent were not. Regarding education, the majority (58.9 percent) pursued bachelor's degrees, while the second category pursued diplomas (30.4 percent). Very few had a master's degree or higher, and only 3.6 percent had a secondary school diploma.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	108	64.3
Female	60	35.7
2. Age		
18- 25	18	10.7
26- 35	73	43.5
36- 45	40	23.8
46- 55	14	8.3
56 and above	23	13.7
3. Nationality		
Omani	92	54.8

Non-Omani	76	45.2
4. Education		
Secondary School	6	3.6
Diploma	51	30.4
Bachelors	99	58.9
Masters and abvoe	12	7.1

Table 2 shows that most respondents (68.3%) stayed in the Misfah Old House. This indicates that Misfah Old House, which is in Misfah al Abriyyin, is Oman's most well-liked guesthouse. Misfah Heritage House (56.7%) was the second-most preferred guest home among the respondents. Misfah Heritage House is also located in Misfah al-Abriyyin, a peculiar mountain village. The following are the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth most well-liked guesthouses among respondents: Bait Al Sabah Heritage Inn & Cafe (48.2%), The Suwgra Heritage Inn (42.9%), Nizwa Heritage Inn (38.1%), and Al Hamra Old House (33.3%). Very few people (4.8%) chose to stay at Mud House, Nizwa. Finally, respondents also stayed at Nizwa Inn, Antique Inn, Bait Al Harah, Al Qalah Inn, Bait Al Aqr, Bait Aljabal Hospitality Inn, and Basmat Almisfah.

**Table 2:** Did you stay in any of the following guesthouses? N=168

Description	Yes	No	Rank
Misfah Old House	<b>114 (68.3)</b>	<b>54 (31.7)</b>	<b>1</b>
Misfah Heritage House	97 (57.7)	71 (42.3)	2
Bait Al Sabah Heritage Inn & Cafe	81 (48.2)	87 (51.8)	3
The Suwgra Heritage Inn	72 (42.9)	72 (57.1)	4
Nizwa Heritage Inn	64 (38.1)	104 (61.9)	5
Al Hamra Old House	56 (33.3)	112 (66.7)	6

Al Misfah Hospitality Inn	38 (22.6)	130 (77.4)	7
Bustan Inn	19 (11.3)	149 (88.7)	8
Omani Guesthouse	11 (6.5)	157 (93.5)	9
Mud House Nizwa	8 (4.8)	162 (95.2)	10
Others: If you visit any other traditional guesthouses, please include the name here.	Nizwa Inn, Antique Inn, Bait Al Harah, Al Qalah Inn, Bait Al Aqr, Bait Aljabal Hospitality Inn, and Basmat Almisfah		

*Note: The numbers in parentheses are percentages.*

Table 3 presents the findings for the frequency of stays by respondents at traditional guesthouses: In Misfah’s old house, most people (50.9%) stayed there once, and only a small number (4.4%) stayed more than four times. In the Misfah Heritage House, nearly one-fourth of the people stayed twice, and about one-sixth stayed three times. In addition, at Bait Al Sabah Heritage Inn and Cafe, most respondents (56.8 percent) stayed there once, while only a few (6.2 percent) visited four or more times. Moreover, at the Suwgra Heritage Inn, around one out of five people stayed there two times, and about one out of seven people stayed there three times. Most people (62.5 percent) who went to the Nizwa Heritage Inn stayed there only once. Only a few people (1.5 percent) went there four or more times. Furthermore, most of the respondents who answered the survey (66.1%) stayed at the Al Hamra Old House once. Of these, 23.2 percent stayed there two times, and 10.7 percent stayed there three times. Nobody stayed there more than four times. Finally, the people who were asked to visit Bait Aljabal Hospitality Inn and Nizwa Inn three times they visited the Antique Inn and Basmat Almisfah twice. They only visited Bait Al Harah, Al Qalah Inn, and Bait Al Aqr once.

**Table 3:** Number of times you visited the guesthouses

Description	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four times & above	Total
Misfah Old House	58 (50.9)	<b>30 (26.3)</b>	<b>21 (18.4)</b>	5 (4.4)	114 (100%)
Misfah Heritage House	52 (53.6)	25 (25.8)	16 (16.5)	4 (4.1)	97 (100%)
Bait Al Sabah Heritage Inn & Cafe	46 (56.8)	20 (24.7)	10 (12.3)	<b>5 (6.2)</b>	81 (100%)
The Suwgra Heritage Inn	45 (62.5)	15 (20.8)	10 (13.9)	2 (2.8)	72 (100%)
Nizwa Heritage Inn	40 (62.5)	14 (21.9)	9 (14.1)	1 (1.5)	64 (100%)
Al Hamra Old House	37 (66.1)	13 (23.2)	6 (10.7)	0 (0)	56 (100%)
Al Misfah Hospitality Inn	<b>31 (81.6)</b>	7 (18.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	38 (100%)
Bustan Inn	15 (78.9)	4 (21.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (100%)
Omani Guesthouse	8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (100%)
Mud House Nizwa	6 (75)	2 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (100%)
Others	Bait Aljabal Hospitality Inn and Nizwa Inn were visited three times; Antique Inn and Basmat Almisfah were visited twice, whereas Bait Al Harah, Al Qalah Inn, and Bait Al Aqr were visited once by the respondents.				

*Note: The numbers in parentheses are percentages.*

Table 4 shows the tourist profile: 87.5 percent of the respondents stayed in traditional guesthouses more than once. The remaining

12.5% of respondents stated that they had stayed in traditional guesthouses more than twice. According to 70.2 percent of respondents, they stayed in traditional guesthouses with their families. The next category included 12.5% of those who resided with friends and 5.4% of those who enjoyed living alone. Finally, 11.9 percent stated others; some stated that they stayed with coworkers, whereas others did not. A total of 60.7 percent stated that they stayed one night in the guesthouse, 23.2 percent stayed two nights, and 16.1 percent stayed three or more nights. When asked how they booked the guesthouses, 19.0 percent said by phone, 28.6 percent through social media apps, and 12.5 percent through the guesthouses’ websites. 25% stated that they booked through travel review sites, 9.5% booked through travel agencies, and the rest booked through other sources. Others included walk-ins and company bookings.

**Table 4:** Tourist profile

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>1. How many times have you stayed in the traditional guesthouses in last 2 years?</b>		
<b>Once</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>55.4</b>
Twice	54	32.1
Thrice	6	3.6
Four times and above	15	8.9
<b>2. Generally, with whom do you stay in traditional guesthouses</b>		
<b>Family</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>70.2</b>
Friends	21	12.5
Alone	9	5.4
Others	21	11.9
<b>3. How many nights did you spend in the guesthouse on your most recent visit?</b>		
<b>1 Night</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>60.7</b>

2 Nights	39	23.2
3 Nights and above	27	16.1
<b>4. On your most recent visit, how did you book your guesthouse?</b>		
Through the phone	32	19.0
<b>Through Social media apps like WhatsApp and Instagram</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>28.6</b>
Through the guesthouse's website.	21	12.5
Through travel review sites such as booking.com, Expedia etc.	42	25.0
A travel agency made the reservation.	16	9.5
Others, please specify.	9	5.4

#### **4.2 Determinant factor impacting the selection of traditional guesthouses by tourists**

Table 5 reveals that the main determinant factor impacting the selection of traditional guesthouses by tourists is the characteristic of a "homely environment," with a mean score of 4.45. It can be inferred that the majority of individuals opted for reserving traditional guesthouses because of their perceived allure as a residential setting. Other important factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses are the opportunity to experience local culture and customs (4.37); furnishings and décor with a traditional aesthetic (4.29); local food, drinks, and sweets (4.11); and the convenience of staying with family (4.09). This suggests that respondents are interested in learning about the local culture and customs as well as the traditional furnishings and décor of guesthouses. Furthermore, they prefer to taste local foods, drinks, and desserts and value the convenience of staying with the family. Other factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses include affordable prices, a convenient location (i.e.,

near historical villages, cultural and heritage sites, farms, and city centers), and the guesthouse being quiet and less crowded. Furthermore, well-developed safety and security measures, as well as positive relationships with guesthouses, encourage guests to stay at traditional guesthouses. The lowest mean score for factors influencing tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses as hotels was not available (2.11), whereas the other factors with the lowest recorded values were the variety of available room types (2.19) and the possibility of interacting with locals (2.43).

**Table 5:** Factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses

Factors	Mean	SD	Rank
<b>Homely Environment.</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.813</b>	<b>1</b>
The opportunity to experience local culture and customs.	4.37	0.728	2
Furnishings and décor with a traditional aesthetic.	4.29	0.881	3
To experience local food, drinks, and sweets	4.11	0.836	4
Staying with family is convenient.	4.09	0.860	5
Offering affordable price.	3.86	0.827	6
Location (close to historical village, cultural and heritage sites, farms, and city centers).	3.77	1.072	7
The guesthouse is quiet and less crowded.	3.60	0.961	8
Safety and Security.	3.42	1.096	9
Good relations with the guesthouse operators.	3.28	1.134	10
Wanted a change or experience something different.	3.07	1.240	11
Recommended by family and friends.	2.98	1.168	12
They are more flexible and easily approachable.	2.69	1.234	13
Offering personalized service by the owner of the guesthouse and staff.	2.61	1.207	14

Online positive reviews.	2.55	1.301	15
Interaction with locals is possible.	2.43	1.216	16
Variety of room types.	2.19	1.063	17
Hotels are not available.	2.11	0.786	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>18</b>

### 4.3 Promotional methods influence tourists' decisions to stay at traditional guesthouses

Table 6 shows that promotional methods influence tourists' decisions to stay at traditional guesthouses. Respondents rated "social media apps" (4.58) with the highest mean score, which was ranked as one. This implies that most respondents learn about traditional guesthouses through social media applications. These findings are unsurprising, given that social media platforms are the primary source of information and major promotional methods for many people regarding tourism-related activities. Other important promotional methods influenced respondents to book traditional guesthouses, including social media influencers (4.41); family, friends, and colleagues (4.16); and review websites such as Booking.com and Expedia. Again, the results are in line with other studies, as many people follow social media influencers, and their decision-making is somewhat influenced by social media influencers. Furthermore, the respondents influenced traditional guesthouses from the following sources: word of mouth (3.73), guesthouses (3.54), Omani government tourism websites (3.42), travel agencies, and tour operators (3.25). Tourist information offices (2.88), airline holiday package offices (2.76), events and exhibitions (2.59), and posters and banners (2.37) were among the lowest-scoring information sources that tourists searched for before booking their stay in traditional guesthouses.



**Table 6:** The promotional methods influence tourists' decisions to stay at traditional guesthouses

Promotional Methods	Mean	SD	Rank
<b>Social media apps</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>0.839</b>	<b>1</b>
Social media Influencers	4.41	0.921	2
Family/ Friends/ Colleagues	4.16	1.165	3
Reviews websites like Booking.com, Expedia & others	4.07	0.912	4
Radio, TV, News Paper, Magazine etc.	3.89	1.190	5
Word of mouth	3.73	0.921	6
Guesthouse website	3.54	0.928	7
Omani Government Tourism Website	3.42	0.903	8
Travel agency/tour operator	3.25	0.867	9
Printed guidebooks or other books	3.08	0.906	10
Tour guides	2.93	1.102	11
Tourist Information Office	2.88	1.163	12
Airlines holiday package offices	2.76	1.095	13
Events and Exhibitions	2.59	1.123	14
Posters/Banners	2.37	0.828	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>15</b>

#### 4.4 Social media platforms and influencers

Table 7 shows the results for social media platforms and influencers. According to most respondents (39.3%), Instagram is beneficial for researching information and learning about guesthouse promotions. Furthermore, 25.0 percent searched Snapchat, and 15.5%, 13.7%, 3%, and 3.5% searched Tiktok, YouTube, Facebook, and other

platforms, respectively. According to our results, Instagram is the most widely used social networking platform. Before booking traditional guesthouses, 79.2 percent of the surveyed respondents said that they looked for information posted by social media influencers. However, 11.3 percent said they checked occasionally, and 9.5 percent said they never checked the information posted by social media influencers. This signifies that these individuals place greater emphasis on social media influencers' posts to book guesthouses.

**Table 7:** Social media platforms & Influencers

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>1. Which social media platform is best for looking up information and learning about guesthouse promotions?</b>		
Instagram	66	39.3
Snapchat	42	25.0
Tik-Tok	26	15.5
YouTube	23	13.7
Facebook	5	3.0
Others, please specify	6	3.5
<b>2. Do you search for information posted by social media influencers before booking traditional guesthouses?</b>		
Yes	133	79.2
No	16	9.5
Sometimes	19	11.3

#### 4.5 Tourists’ satisfaction with products and services offered by traditional guesthouses

Table 8 shows the results of tourists’ satisfaction with products and services offered by traditional guesthouses. "Ambience" received the highest rank with a mean score of (4.49) for tourist satisfaction with traditional guesthouses. This indicates that the respondents were extremely pleased with the ambience of the traditional guesthouses. Other high scores for tourists' satisfaction with traditional guesthouses, which were rated by respondents, included safety and security standards (4.41), variety of activities (4.360), staff appearance (4.23), traditional décor and furniture (4.19), welcome drinks and local delicacies (4.15), and the quietness of the place (4.01). Other aspects of traditional guesthouses appreciated by tourists include cleanliness, personalized services provided by staff, courtesy and respectful behavior of employees, authentic and nice food, convenient locations for reaching and exploring tourist areas, and concierge services. The lowest mean score (2.04) was received for "packed lunch and BBQ facilities were offered for outdoor trips and activities." This means there were a few guesthouses that provided packed lunches and BBQ facilities for guests who stayed in guesthouses. Other areas with the lowest mean scores for tourist satisfaction with traditional guesthouses were as follows: variety of menu options (2.87), convenient operating hours (2.64), room services available most of the day (2.48), and room size (2.20).

**Table 8:** Tourists’ satisfaction with products and services offered by traditional guesthouses

Satisfaction	Mean	SD	Rank
<b>Ambience</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>0.994</b>	<b>1</b>
Safety & Security standards	4.41	0.937	2
Provided a range of activities	4.36	0.978	3
Staff appearance	4.23	0.884	4

The Role of Traditional Guesthouses in Tourism Development in Oman

Traditional Décor and furniture	4.19	0.889	5
Welcome drinks and local delicacies were served	4.15	1.053	6
The quietness of the place	4.01	1.081	7
Cleanliness	3.96	0.972	8
Personalized service	3.82	1.236	9
Courtesy and respectful behavior of employees	3.78	1.190	10
Authentic food with great taste	3.66	1.212	11
Location is convenient	3.61	1.168	12
Concierge Services	3.52	1.113	13
Knowledge of the staff about local history and culture	3.40	1.053	14
Products and services present the best value for money	3.38	1.083	15
Equipment and facilities in the room are of high quality and performance	3.23	0.879	16
Accuracy in communication and information	3.05	0.952	17
A wide range of menu options	2.87	1.221	18
Operating hours are convenient	2.64	1.164	19
Room Service is available for most parts of the day	2.48	1.190	20
Size of the room	2.20	0.969	21
Packed lunch and BBQ facilities were offered for outdoor trips and activities	2.04	1.261	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>22</b>

#### **4.6 Overall satisfaction and experience of tourists with traditional guesthouses in Oman**

The overall satisfaction and experience of the respondents with traditional guesthouses in Oman are presented in Table 9. The majority of the respondents, 68.4 percent (48.2 highly satisfied and 20.2% very satisfied), were satisfied with the products and services offered at the guesthouse. 19% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied. However, 8.9 percent were dissatisfied, and the remaining 3.6% were completely dissatisfied. Of the respondents, 50.6% said that overall, their experience staying at traditional guesthouses was excellent. In addition, 28 percent (very good 17.3 and good 10.7) stated that their experience was satisfactory. Furthermore, 7.7 was rated as fair. However, 13.7 percent of the respondents said that their experience of staying in a traditional guesthouse was negative.

Would you stay in traditional guesthouses on your next trip? Yes, most respondents (68.5 percent) answered. While 22% said no, the remaining 9.5 percent were unsure whether they would stay. In addition, would you recommend staying in a traditional guesthouse with friends, family, or co-workers? Of the surveyed respondents, 70.2% answered yes, 17.3% answered no, and 12.5 percent answered occasionally. Frequency distribution, percentage, rank, and weighted mean were used to analyze the data.

According to this study's findings, there is a relationship between tourists' intention to return to guesthouses and their happiness with the products and services provided by traditional guesthouses. For instance, according to Table 9, 68.4% (48.2% were extremely satisfied and 20.2% were very satisfied) of respondents were pleased with the goods and services provided at guesthouses in Oman, and 68.5% stated that they would stay in a traditional guesthouse on their next trip. It is fair to assume that the majority is happy with guesthouses and services, and thus they want to return, so there is a relationship between them. Additionally, the study discovered a link between visitors' overall pleasure with traditional guesthouses and the recommendations they give to their acquaintances to stay at

traditional guesthouses. For instance, 78.6% of respondents indicated that, generally, their experience of staying at traditional guesthouses was exceptional (50.6% said it was excellent, 17.3% said it was very good, and 10.7% said it was good). As a result, 70.2% of those surveyed said they would recommend traditional guesthouses to their friends, relatives, or colleagues. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that because their overall experience with traditional guesthouses is positive, they want to recommend guesthouses to their family and friends in such a way that they are interconnected.

**Table 9:** Overall satisfaction and experience of tourists with traditional guesthouses in Oman

Description	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<b>1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the products and services offered at the traditional guesthouse?</b>		
<b>Highly Satisfied</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>48.2</b>
Very Satisfied	34	20.2
Somewhat Satisfied	32	19.0
Not Satisfied	15	8.9
Not at all Satisfied	6	3.6
<b>2. Overall, how do you rate your experience staying in the traditional guesthouse?</b>		
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>50.6</b>
Very good	29	17.3
Good	18	10.7
Fair	13	7.7
Poor	23	13.7
<b>3. During your next visit, would you stay in a traditional guesthouse?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>68.5</b>
No	37	22.0
Not sure	16	9.5

<b>4. Would you recommend staying in a traditional guesthouse to friends, family, or colleagues?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>70.2</b>
No	29	17.3
Not sure	21	12.5





# Chapter 5

## 5. Discussion of Results

### 5.1 Discussion

#### 5.1.1 Identifying factors that influence tourists' choices of traditional guesthouses

Based on the data presented in Table 5, it can be concluded that the primary determinant influencing the selection of traditional guesthouses by tourists is the provision of a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere, with "homely environment" being rated the highest at 4.45. These findings are congruent with Kadi's (2017) assertion that a guesthouse represents an antiquated cultural dwelling that provides guests with a homely experience and an opportunity to gain insight into their traditional way of life. The findings are in consonance with the research of Balasubramanian & Aanchal (2017), who postulated that the sojourn in conventional dwellings elicits a sense of belonging in visitors, thereby bestowing upon them a familial sentiment akin to that of their own homes.

According to Table 5, a significant determinant for tourists opting for a guesthouse is the prospect of immersing themselves in indigenous traditions and practices, which ranks as the second most impactful factor (4.37). These findings align with Al-Badil et al.'s (2017) assertion that residing in these homes enables tourists to engage with the indigenous population and gain knowledge of the region's historical and cultural background, thus generating a sense of contentment among certain tourists. These guesthouses are typically located in close proximity to local communities; thus, tourists often express enthusiasm for engaging with local communities and acquiring knowledge about their culture and customary practices.

The present study's findings align with those of prior research conducted by Pedrana (2013), who elucidated that tourists' preference for traditional guesthouses stems from their desire to explore novel environments and cultures in an authentic manner. Specifically, tourists tend to seek such lodgings as they afford an opportunity to appreciate the distinctive architectural qualities of new locales. The localization of a heritage house plays a pivotal role in its triumph, considering that visitors tend to favor accommodations with traditional characteristics situated in rustic locales or proximate to historic edifices. Visitors to a destination exhibit a penchant for guesthouses that provide an environment of peaceful repose, in addition to being well appointed and conveniently located. According to Al-Hashim's (2015) perspective, the presence of novelty, uniqueness, and a chance to immerse oneself in the local milieu and customs are deemed to be significant driving forces that influence tourists' selection of customary lodging accommodations. According to Kimalga's (2015) research findings, residing in such traditional houses presents a distinctive avenue for immersing oneself in foreign settings and customs, as they afford tourists the opportunity to witness indigenous architectural styles and gain authentic cultural encounters.

Hüller et al. (2017) stated that guests are fulfilled when they are served local food, offered locally sourced products, sold local souvenirs, and provided with local tour guides. In addition, Omani guesthouses ought to provide bona fide guest encounters to extend guest dependability. Similarly, Tinakhat et al. (2018) found that guesthouses' traditional environment and local cuisine make visitors sure of the quality of food provided. The results of this study are supported by the literature, as Table 5 indicates that one of the reasons visitors stay in guesthouses is to experience local cuisine, beverages, and sweets (4.11). Furthermore, according to Agyeiwaah (2013), visitors who stay in traditional guesthouses develop friendly relationships with their hosts and feel that they have a positive experience because the hosts engage them in personal discussions,

which makes them feel at ease and secure. Additionally, according to Ansah (2014), visiting guesthouses encourages a relationship between the host and the visitor that results in long-lasting relationships and frequent stays. The findings of this study are consistent with the extant literature, as evidenced by the data presented in Table 5, which indicates that an important factor influencing tourists' decision to stay in guesthouses is their positive interactions with guesthouses (with a mean score of 3.28).

### **5.1.2 Analyzing promotional methods used by traditional guesthouses**

Based on the data presented in Table 6, the promotional method that exhibited the highest degree of significance in influencing tourists' decisions to patronize traditional guesthouses was social media applications, with a mean rating of 4.58. Moreover, according to the findings presented in Table 7, when questioned about the most suitable social media platform to conduct research and gain knowledge on promotions offered by guesthouses, a significant proportion of the survey participants (i.e., 39.3%) identified Instagram as the preferred option. After Snapchat, which ranked second at 25 percent, Tik-Tok secured the third position at 15.5 percent, followed by YouTube at 13.7 percent. These findings are consistent with those of Taderera et al. (2014), who found that the hospitality industry in Oman utilizes diverse promotional strategies, including social media platforms. This approach is cost-effective and easy to implement. Guesthouses employ social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter as part of their marketing strategies. These results are also consistent with the findings reported by Al-Badi et al. (2014), who observed that individuals residing in Oman proactively supported the promotion of their country by utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to share visual content in the form of photographs and videos of various regions within Oman, which they have personally explored and experienced. The notable phenomenon of exponential growth in the utilization of social media platforms by users in the

Sultanate of Oman warrants attention in academic discourse. Additionally, according to Al-Wahaibi et al. (2015), the adoption of social media platforms as promotional instruments for commodities and services has received significant recognition in contemporary times because of its cost efficiency and effectiveness. In accordance with Al-Zedjali et al. (2014), a significant number of nations utilize social media platforms to effectively manage and promote their individual tourist destinations and associated offerings. The utilization of social media within the framework of tourism presents the potential for providing more extensive and validated insights that can assist tourists in their decision-making processes.

According to the data presented in Table 6, it can be inferred that social media influencers (4.41) were ranked as the second most noteworthy promotional approach that influenced tourists to choose traditional guesthouses as their preferred accommodation option. Furthermore, in accordance with the data provided in Table 7, individuals conducted research on content disseminated by social media influencers prior to booking conventional lodgings. An overwhelming majority of the participants (79.2 percent) affirmed such behavior, while a minority (11.3 percent) indicated occasional engagement. There is agreement between the findings of the study and the corresponding academic work. The study conducted by Leung et al. (2013) aligns with the findings that consumers interact with social media through the assistance of influencers, content creators, and travel bloggers both prior to, during, and subsequent to their travel. The results further match Abidin (2015), who indicates that the majority of influencer campaigns integrate a content element to cultivate a favorable brand image and influence the purchasing behaviours of their followers. Furthermore, Chatzigeorgiou (2017) sought to examine the degree to which an influencer incorporates rural tourism values as well as the level of trust that their followers have in the influencer in question. The results unveiled a noteworthy degree of interdependence between consumers and influencer

marketing, with a projected persistence of this trend in the foreseeable future.

According to Huyssteen et al. (2015), promotional strategies refer to various techniques employed to effectively communicate with the market or target audience. Conventional channels, such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards, and interpersonal interactions, have demonstrated a high level of efficacy. Moreover, according to Geraghty & Conway (2016), conventional promotion methods are perceived as the most attractive and trustworthy. In accordance with research conducted by Thwala & Slabbert (2018), traditional guesthouses employ a range of promotional techniques encompassing advertising, direct marketing, and word-of-mouth referrals. Similarly, according to Saxena, (2021), the utilization of various media outlets, such as television, radio, magazines, personal selling, and websites, is advantageous for businesses. As posited by the authors, conventional guesthouses should opt for promotional mechanisms that resonate with their intended clientele. Consequently, it is essential for guesthouses to possess expertise in effectively promoting their enterprises to encourage customers to purchase their offerings. It is imperative for individuals or organizations to implement efficacious promotional strategies to connect with their intended recipients. According to Andreea & Camelia (2013), promotion plays a crucial role in business operations by enabling them to inform potential customers of their offerings. This allows the introduction and promotion of products and services to be effectively communicated to the target audience. Promotional strategies involve the dissemination of flyers, the deployment of billboards, and the installation of booths at tourist destinations. These methods effectively function as viable means to advertise businesses and showcase their offerings. According to Strydom (2013), a predominant approach employed by guesthouses to advertise their services and products is through traditional media platforms that include television, radio, the Virtual World Wide Web, and magazines.

### **5.1.3 Measuring customer satisfaction with the products and services offered by traditional guesthouses**

Table 9 presents an extensive summary of the respondents' level of satisfaction with their accommodations in guesthouses. According to the survey, 48.2% of participants rated very high satisfaction, 20.2% claimed moderate happiness, and 19.0% reported low satisfaction.

Moreover, upon being queried to evaluate their collective sojourn in the conventional guesthouse, a proportion of 50.6 percent of participants rated it as excellent, 17.3 percent rated it as very good, 10.7 percent rated it as good, and 7.7 percent rated it as fair. The topic of customer satisfaction has been widely explored in the scholarly literature, with a focus on its critical significance for businesses and the benefits it can provide within an organizational context. The scholarly discourse of Parayani et al. (2010), Anash (2014), Herath et al. (2016), Chen & Chen (2010), and Zehrer (2009) suggests that contented clients serve as the most prominent supporters of commercial enterprises. Positive word-of-mouth promotion enhances our business's credibility and popularity, thereby facilitating the acquisition of new consumers. This practice results in substantial cost savings for businesses that would otherwise allocate funds to marketing and promotional strategies aimed at acquiring a new customer base.

Table 8 displays the satisfaction of visitors with standard guesthouses and services. The majority of survey respondents (ranked 1, with a mean score of 4.49) were content with the ambience of guesthouses. These findings support those in the literature. According to research conducted by Tinakhat et al. (2018), the incorporation of tangible elements such as furniture, ambience, and staff attire in traditional guesthouses has been found to have a significant impact on the satisfaction levels of tourists. Moreover, guests have a sense of assurance regarding the standard of gastronomic offerings, along with the customary ambience and regional fare of the guesthouses. In addition, the guests expressed contentment with the calibration of the accommodations, particularly appreciating the presence of authentic

furniture. In addition, with a mean rating of 4.41, guest home safety and security requirements ranked second among the tourist satisfaction factors. These findings are in line with the study conducted by Din & Mapjabil (2010), indicating that security is deemed a crucial aspect for tourists and that guesthouses that offer reliable security measures gain a competitive advantage over those that do not, particularly among families seeking accommodation. Additionally, Tinakhat et al. (2018) argue that it is imperative for guesthouse operators to prioritize the safety of their clientele. In the event that a predicament arises for a patron, prompt resolution is imperative. Furthermore, respondents were satisfied with the guesthouse staff's appearance (4.23), which was ranked at 4. Tinakhat et al. (2018) stated that consumers are content with the services and goods provided by traditional guesthouses because the staff are dressed stylishly, which in turn makes the customers happy, and because what they are receiving will be valuable. Therefore, for the majority, the choice of uniforms is significant because it reflects their culture. In addition, according to Parasuraman et al. (1988), one aspect of tangibility is that when visitors see staff members wearing neatly kept uniforms, it gives them confidence that the staff takes pride in how they look and cares about offering a top-notch experience. Consequently, hotels may experience an increase in customer satisfaction.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

When tourists travel to remote locations or historical places, guesthouses not only provide accommodations but also draw them in so that they can experience local culture. Traditional guesthouses have contributed significantly to the growth of the tourism industry (Sharpley, 2000). The true experience of the local culture and ways of life that these guesthouses offer can be a big draw for many travellers. In addition, compared with larger hotels, guest homes provide a more personalized and private experience, which may appeal to some tourists. The opportunity they offer for the growth of the regional tourism infrastructure is one of the most important

advantages of traditional guesthouses. As they are frequently modest businesses operated by locals, they might contribute to the local economy. This may result in the expansion of nearby businesses and the creation of new jobs, both of which will help the local economy. They frequently support local businesses, hire locals, and use local resources, all of which can benefit both the environment and the neighborhood. Guesthouses can contribute to the preservation of the region's natural and cultural assets for future generations by encouraging sustainable practices. As a result, traditional accommodations can be crucial to the growth of the tourism industry by providing guests with a unique and authentic experience, boosting the local economy, and fostering sustainable tourism practices.

Tourists' selection of traditional guesthouses is significantly influenced by critical factors, such as the provision of a congenial atmosphere, the chance to engage in local customs and culture, and a decorous ambiance with a traditional aesthetic. In addition, promotional techniques that sway tourists' lodging choices towards traditional guesthouses include the utilization of social media applications, including Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-Tok, and YouTube. Only a small percentage of the respondents used Facebook to make judgments about staying in traditional guest homes. Moreover, social media influencers represent a significant promotional approach that impacts tourists' decisions to sojourn at traditional guesthouses. Furthermore, tourists' satisfaction with traditional guesthouses encompasses a pleasant ambiance, the implementation of high standards of safety and security, and an array of leisure opportunities offered to guests. Finally, based on the survey findings, a significant proportion of the respondents (70.2%) would recommend lodging in a traditional guesthouse to their acquaintances, whether family, friends, or colleagues.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Given the demonstrated preference of the majority of respondents to access social media channels such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-Tok,



and YouTube, it follows that it would be advisable for traditional guesthouses to maintain an active presence on these platforms. Such an active presence would involve sharing pertinent information, promptly attending to customer inquiries and feedback, and announcing any promotional activities or offerings that may be available. A notable preference among respondents to follow social media influencers in their decision-making process suggests that traditional guesthouse operators should consider forging strategic alliances with these individuals to increase exposure and promote brand awareness among potential customers. It is imperative that guesthouse operators maintain a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere within the confines of their establishment. Furthermore, it is paramount that they facilitate opportunities for guests to immerse themselves in local culture and customs. A considerable number of participants in the study indicated that their primary motivation for selecting traditional guesthouses was based on these specific criteria. When solicited for feedback on their experience residing in the traditional guesthouse, a significant proportion of the respondent's expressed dissatisfaction. As such, it is crucial for guesthouse operators to comprehend the underlying factors that contribute to their suboptimal experience and subsequently institute remedial actions.

To keep up with the changing preferences of tourists, it is important for managers and operators of traditional guesthouses to actively engage with them on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik-Tok, and YouTube. Regular updates, communication, and prompt replies are necessary to ensure that guests are well-informed about promotions and have their queries addressed. Furthermore, the majority of travellers opt for guesthouses due to their cosy and familiar ambiance; hence, it is essential to ensure their upkeep meets high standards. Additional attention is needed to enhance the quality of room service and extend the front office hours, as travellers are dissatisfied with the current arrangements.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in Oman, in collaboration with concerned parties, needs to locate and renovate old and unused houses and transform them into accommodation facilities for travellers. Particularly near places of cultural or historical significance that attract tourists. Furthermore, the provision of guesthouse accommodations to visitors, particularly in areas lacking hotel facilities, proves to be highly beneficial, as the majority of tourists prefer to stay in guesthouses over hotels. Additionally, guesthouses possess the capacity to generate multiple employment prospects for the citizens of Oman while concurrently showcasing the country's cultural legacy and traditions to tourists. Furthermore, guesthouses promote the spirit of entrepreneurship by offering a convenient location for a variety of services that cater to the preferences and requirements of travellers. Focusing on the development of traditional guesthouses can yield significant benefits, such as boosting tourism, business prospects, and the positive image of the Sultanate of Oman.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

This study has some limitations that require further attention. The survey was completed by only 168 participants, indicating the need for future research to include larger sample sizes. In addition, the majority of the data gathering took place in Muscat, and in the future, various locations in Oman must be included over an extended period to obtain a more inclusive sample. The research focused on quantitative techniques, but upcoming investigations ought to concentrate on qualitative procedures so that a deeper understanding can be gained about the factors that encourage travellers to choose traditional guesthouses as their accommodation. Moreover, future research could also concentrate on the difficulties encountered by guesthouse proprietors and suggest strategies to overcome these challenges.

## References

- Abidin, C. (2015). Communicative Intimacies: Influencers and Perceived Inter connectedness. *A Journal of Gender, ADA New Media, and Technology*. <http://adanewmedia.org/2015/11/issue8-abidin/>.
- Agoda. (2023). *Misfah Heritage House*. <https://www.agoda.com/misfah-heritage-house/hotel/nizwa-om.html>.
- Eyewash, E. (2013). Volunteer tourists' motivations for choosing homestay in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 2(3). [http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/vol\\_2\\_3\\_article\\_7.pdf](http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/vol_2_3_article_7.pdf).
- Akan, P. (1995). Dimensions of Service Quality: A Study in Istanbul. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 5 (6), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09604529510796575>.
- Al-Azri, H. (2014). Oman, tourism. In: Jafari, J., Xiao, H. (eds) *Encyclopaedia of Tourism*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6\\_287-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6_287-1).
- Al-Badi, A. H., & Al-Qayoudhi, W. S. (2014). Adoption of Social Networks in Business: Study of Users and Potential Users in Oman. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 13(2),401-417. <https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v13i2.8457>.
- Al-Badi, A. H., & Al-Qayoudhi, W. S. (2014). Adoption of Social Networks in Business: Study of Users and Potential Users in Oman. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 13(2), 401-417. <https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v13i2.8>
- Al-Hashim, A. (2015). Embracing Sustainable Tourism in Oman: Case Study of Mirbat Settlement. *International Journal of Cultural and Digital Tourism*, 2(2).
- Al Lawati, H. (2015). Efforts to Raise Tourism Contribution to Economy. *Oman Observer Daily*. <http://omanobserver.om/efforts-to-raise-tourism-contribution-to-economy/>.
- Al Nasser, Z. (OCT 2020). Old houses preserve heritage, attract tourists. *Oman Observer*.

- <https://www.omanobserver.com/article/9127/Main/old-houses-preserve-heritage-attract-tourists>.
- Alpen Capital Report. (2022). Alpen Capital GCC Hospitality Report 2022. [https://alpencapital.com/research/2022/Alpen-Capital-GCC-Hospitality-Report-2022\\_Aug3 .pdf](https://alpencapital.com/research/2022/Alpen-Capital-GCC-Hospitality-Report-2022_Aug3.pdf).
- Al Riyami, A. (June 2018). Nizwa old houses now turn into ‘heritage hotel’. *Oman Observer*. <http://www.omanobserver.com/nizwa-old-houses-now-turn-into-heritage-hotel/>.
- Al-Wahaibi, H. A., Al-Mukhaini, E. M., Al-Badi, A. H., & Ali, S. (2015, February). A case study of the employment of social media in government agencies in Oman. In *GCC Conference and Exhibition (GCCCE), 2015 IEEE 8<sup>th</sup>*, 1-6. IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ieeegcc.2015.7060089>
- Al-Zedjali, K. H., Al-Harrasi, A. S., & Al-Badi, A. H. (2014). Motivations for Using Social Networking Sites by College Students for Educational Purposes. World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, *International Journal of Social, Behavioural, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, 8(8), 2577-2580.
- Amoah, F., Radder, L., & van Eyk, M. (2016). Perceived experience value, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions: A guesthouse experience. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies* 7(3), 419–433. DOI: 10.1108/AJEMS-10-2015-0121.
- Andreea, V. & Camelia, G. (2013). strategic marketing alternatives at agro- tourism guest houses level. *SEA - Practical Application of Science*. 1(2). [http://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/SPAS\\_2\\_3.pdf](http://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/SPAS_2_3.pdf).
- Ansah, D. (2014). Small tourism accommodation business owners in Ghana: a factor analysis of motivations and challenges. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 3(1), p.4. [http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_14\\_vol\\_3\\_1.pdf](http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_14_vol_3_1.pdf).
- Arabian Business. (2023). Oman hotel revenue hits \$190m in March, up 50%. Arabian Business. <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/industries/travel-hospitality/oman-hotel-revenue-hits-190m-in-march-up-50>.
- Balasubramanian & Aanchal (2017). Financial challenges faced by homestay owners in heritage tourism destination with special

- reference to Cochin City. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 2(6), 412-417. <https://www.multidisciplinaryjournal.net/archives/2017/vol2/issue6/2-6-34>.
- Baporikar, N. (2012). Emerging Trends in Tourism Industry in Oman. In *Global Hospitality and Tourism Management Technologies*. Hershey: *IGI Global*, 116–35.
- Banerjee, D. (2013). Role Of Hotel on Growth and Development of Tourism: A Comparative Study of The Performances of Selected Hotels in Kolkata. <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/57263/1/debaprasad%20banerjee.pdf>
- Belwal, R., & Belwal, S. (2010). Economic growth and tourism in the post oil Omani economy: A strategic analysis. *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends*, 3 (1), 165-187.
- Bernard, H. R. (2013). *Social Research. Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bernard, L. (May 2013). Muscat the focus of Oman's aggressive plan for a tourism push. *The National News*. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/muscat-the-focus-of-oman-s-aggressive-plan-for-a-tourism-push-1.657049>.
- Besculides, A., Peter, M.E.L. & Cormick J, Mc. (2002). Resident's perceptions of the cultural benefits of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 303-319.
- Bhan, S., & Singh, L. (2014). Homestay Tourism in India: Opportunities and Challenges. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 3(2). [http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_24\\_vol\\_3\\_2\\_july\\_2014.pdf](http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_24_vol_3_2_july_2014.pdf).
- Booking.com. (2023). *The Suwgra*. <https://www.booking.com/hotel/om/the-cliff-guest-house-nzw.en-gb.html>.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Buhalis, D. (2000). "Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future", *Tourism Management*, 21 (1), 97–116.
- Canwell, D., & Sutherland, J. (2003). *Leisure and Tourism*, Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

- Carman, J.M. (1990). Consumer perceptions of service quality: An assessment of the SERVQUAL dimensions. *Journal of Retailing*, 66 (1), 33-55.
- Chatzigeorgiou, C. (2017). Modelling the Impact of Social Media Influencers on Behavioural Intentions of Millennials: The Case of Tourism in Rural Areas in Greece *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 3(2), 25-29, DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1209125.
- Chen, CF., & Chen, FS. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management* 31(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008>.
- Chi, C., & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*. 29, 624–636.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Csapó, J. (2012). The Role and Importance of Cultural Tourism in Modern Tourism Industry. *Strategies for Tourism Industry - Micro and Macro Perspective*. DOI: 10.5772/38693. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224830622>.
- Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Gilbert, D., Shepherd, R., & Wanhill, S., (1998). *Tourism: Principles and Practice*, 2nd Edition. Longman, Harlow.
- Daşkın, M., Baldıran, Ş. & Pala, K. (2023). The Role of Career Satisfaction on Cooks' Intrinsic Motivation, Work Engagement and Perceived Role-Overload. *Journal of Business Research-Turk*, 15(2), 878-893.
- Deloitte. (2017). 2017 travel and hospitality outlook. <http://bit.ly/2n8K0mY>.
- Deloitte. (2023). A world in motion. Shifting consumer travel trends in 2022 and beyond. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/fr/Documents/consumer-business/Publications/wttc-consumer-trends-report-2023.pdf>

- Din, A.K.H., & Mapjabil, J. (2010). *Tourism Research in Malaysia: What, Which Way and so What?* 1<sup>st</sup> Edn., Universiti Utara Malaysia Press, Sintok, ISBN-10: 9675311568, p 365.
- Dwivedi, Y.K., Kapoor, K.K. & Chen. H. (2015). Social media marketing and advertising. *The Marketing Review*, 15(3) (2015), 289-309
- Ekanayake, E. M., & Long, A. E. (2012). Tourism Development and Economic Growth in Developing Countries. *The International Journal of Business and Finance Research*, 6(1), 51-63.
- Elsayed, S.F. (2019). “Egyptian historic hotels and heritage as a customers’ attraction”, *Egyptian Journal of Tourism Studies*, 18(1), 1-20.
- Ernest & Young (2015). Global hospitality insights: Top thoughts for 2015. <https://go.ey.com/1tW1nBM>.
- Expedia. (2023). Guest Houses in Oman. <https://www.expedia.com/Oman-Guest-Houses.d139-aaGuestHouses.Travel-Guide-Accommodation>.
- Experience Oman. (2023). A'Dakhiliyah. Home to some of the Oman's greatest attractions. <https://www.experienceoman.om/oman-region/adakhiliyah/>.
- Foges, N., & Fleming, T. (2018). *The Rough Guide to Oman*. 2nd ed. UK, Ireland, and Europe: Ingram Publisher services.
- Gavurova, B., Belas, J., Valaskova, K., Rigelsky, M., & Ivankova, V. (2021). Relations between infrastructure innovations and tourism spending in developed countries: a macroeconomic perspective. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 27(5), 1072-1094. <https://doi.org/10.3846/tede.2021.15361>.
- Geraghty, G., & Conway, A. (2016). The Study of Traditional and Non-traditional Marketing Communications: Target Marketing in the Events Sector. Paper presented at the 12th Annual *Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference*, THRIC 2016, 16th and 17th June, Limerick Institute of Technology. DOI: 10.21427/D7BV19
- Ghaderi, Z., Farashah, M.H.D.P., Aslani, E. & Hemati, B. (2020). “Managers’ perceptions of the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings as boutique hotels: insights from Iran”, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 15(6), 696-708.

- Goss-Turner, S. (1996). The accommodation sector. In: Jones, P. (Ed.), *Introduction to Hospitality Operations*. Cassell, London, pp. 21-35.
- Gunasekaran, N & Anandkumar, V. (2012). Factors of influence in choosing alternative accommodation: A study with reference to Pondicherry, a coastal heritage town. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 62, 1127-1132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.193>.
- Guttentag, D. (2015). Airbnb: Disruptive Innovation and the Rise of an Informal Tourism Accommodation Sector. *Current Issues in Tourism* 18 (12), 1192–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517696980>
- Gu, M., & Wong, P.P. (2010). Development of coastal tourism and Homestays on Dachangshan Dao, Liaoning Province, Northeast China, National University of Singapore.
- Howe, N. (2017). Hotels versus OTA's: Who is winning over millennial travellers? *Forbs Magazine*. <http://bit.ly/2B9zRFO>.
- Innovative Tourism Advisors. (2015). Sultanate of Oman, Tourism Strategy, Tourism Development Plan (The Strategy translated into a Plan). <https://andp.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Tourism%20Development%20Plan%20%28The%20Strategy%20translated%20into%20a%20Plan%20%29.pdf>
- Khosravi, S., Malek, A., & Ekiz, E. (2014). Why Tourists are Attracted to Boutique Hotels: Case of Penang Island, Malaysia. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*. 12. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281538354\\_Why\\_Tourists\\_are\\_Attracted\\_to\\_Boutique\\_Hotels\\_Case\\_of\\_Penang\\_Island\\_Malaysia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281538354_Why_Tourists_are_Attracted_to_Boutique_Hotels_Case_of_Penang_Island_Malaysia).
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K.L. (2009). *Marketing Management*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp 46, 13th ed.
- Kutty, S. (2021). Sultanate of Oman Among Top Countries to Visit in 2022. *Oman Observer*. <https://www.omanoobserver.com/article/1111656/oman/tourism/sultanate-of-oman-among-top-countries-to-visit-in-2022>.
- Haque, A., Patnaik, A.K. & Ali, M.A. (2016). Contribution of Tourism Sector to Oman's GDP. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 4(7).



- Henning, R., & Willemsse, C. (1999). *Effective guesthouse management*. Kenwyn: Juta & Co.
- Herath, H.M.R.P & Cooray, N.H.K & Perera, H.S.P. (2016). Determinants of customer satisfaction level in tourist hotel industry. *International Research Journal of Management & Humanities*, 3 (1).
- Hüller, S., Heiny, J., & Leonhäuser, IU. (2017). Linking agricultural food production and rural tourism in the Kazbegi district – A qualitative study. *Annals of Agrarian Science* 15, 40–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aasci.2017.02.004>.
- Huyssteen, N. V, Strydom, J. & Rudansky-Kloppers, S. (2015). Online marketing communication tools used by guesthouses in Pretoria, South Africa. *African Journal of Science Technology Innovation and Development* 7(4),1-10. DOI:10.1080/20421338.2015.1082371.
- Ingram, G. (2002). Motivations of farm tourism hosts and guests in the Southwest Tapestry Region, Western Australia: A phenomenological study. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 2(1), 1-12.
- Jo, W, Mi., Lee, C-Ki., & Reisinger, Y. (2014). Behavioral intentions of international visitors to the Korean hanok guesthouses: Quality, value, and satisfaction. *Annals of Tourism Research* 47, 83–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.05.003>.
- Kabir, S. M. S. (2016) *Basic Guidelines for Research: An Introductory Approach for All Disciplines*, 1st edition, Book Zone Publication, Chittagong.
- Kadi, S. (May 2017). Guest houses offer a welcoming way of discovering Lebanon. *The Arab weekly*. <https://www.hotelibanais.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/arab-weekly.pdf>
- Kimaiga, R. & Kihima, B. O. (2015). Homestay Tourist Accommodation as a Tool for Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural Communities in Kenya. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 6 (4),143-151. doi: 10.17265/2328-2169/2018.08.001.
- Kokt, D., Ras, J. & der Berg, C. V. (2013). *Basic Management Principles*. 59th ed. Bloemfontein: Sun Media Bloemfontein under the Sun Press imprint, 19-20.

- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International.
- Leung, D., Law, R., Hoof, H. van, & Buhalis, D. (2013). Social media in tourism and hospitality: A literature review. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1-2), 3–22.
- Leung, X.Y., Bai, B. & Stahura, K.A. (2015), “The marketing effectiveness of social media in the hotel industry: a comparison of Facebook and Twitter”. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 39(2), 147-169.
- Massam, B., Hrcacs, B. & Espinoza, R. (2015). *Tourism in Mexico: many faces* (Martin Prosperity Research Working Papers Series, 2015 - MPIWP – 002, Toronto, CA. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto 68pp.
- McCartney, G. & Ge, Z.Y. (2016). An examination of the pull and push factors influencing hotel selection by Chinese outbound travellers. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, 16(2), 41-59.
- Mehta, S., Saxena, T., & Purohit, N. (2020). The New Consumer Behaviour Paradigm amid COVID-19: Permanent or Transient? *Journal of Health Management*, 22(2), 1-11.
- Morrison, A. (2002). Small Hospitality Businesses: Enduring or Endangered? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. 9(1), 1-11.
- Morrison, A.M., Pearce, P.L., Moscardo, G., Nadkarni, N. & O'Leary, J.T (1996). Specialist accommodation: definition, markets served, and roles in tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 35(1), 18-26.
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M.P., & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveller perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21, 43–52.
- Muscat Daily. (Aug 2022). Hospitality industry in Oman set to record 90% growth in 2022. *Muscat Daily*. <https://www.muscatdaily.com/2022/08/08/hospitality-industry-in-om-an-set-to-record-90-growth-in-2022/>.
- Nadine, N. M. (2012). Cultural Diversification of Tourism and Their Importance. Case study: Cameroon. [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/48622/Nadine\\_Noudoum\\_biakop.pdf.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/48622/Nadine_Noudoum_biakop.pdf.pdf?sequence=1).

- Narottama, N. (2016). International Diaspora and Tourism: Recent Development of European Diaspora in Ubud. *International Tourism Conference: Promoting Cultural and Heritage Tourism*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307964131-INTERNATIONAL\\_DIASPORA\\_AND\\_TOURISM\\_RECENT\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_OF\\_EUROPEAN\\_DIASPORA\\_IN\\_UBUD\\_BALI\\_AN\\_EXPLORATORY\\_RESEARCH](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307964131-INTERNATIONAL_DIASPORA_AND_TOURISM_RECENT_DEVELOPMENT_OF_EUROPEAN_DIASPORA_IN_UBUD_BALI_AN_EXPLORATORY_RESEARCH)
- NCSI. (2014). *The reality of the Omani tourism*. Information and statistics, National Centre for Statistics and Information, Oman.
- Nuntsu, N., Tassiopoulos, D., & Haydam, N. (2003). The bed and breakfast market of Buffalo City (BC), South Africa: Present Status, Constraints and Success Factors, *Tourism Management*, 25(4), 515-522. DOI: 10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00125-0.
- OECD. (2018). "Analysing megatrends to better shape the future of tourism", OECD Tourism Papers, No. 2018/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d465eb68-en>.
- Oman Tourism. (2015). Focus on Sustainable tourism industry in Oman, Travel to Oman, Ministry of Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. <https://www.omantourism.gov.om/wps/portal/mot/tourism/oman/details!/ut/p/a0/04>.
- Othman, F., Sazali, F., & Mohammed, B. (2013). Rural and community-based tourism development in Malaysia: Prospects for homestays as social economy enterprise. *TEAM Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 10(1), 65-76.
- Oxford Business Group (2019), Oman's tourism officials taking multipronged approach to increase appeal of domestic offerings. <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/reports/oman/2019-report/economy/feeling-at-home-officials-are-taking-a-multi-pronged-approach-to-increase-the-appeal-of-domestic-offerings>.
- Overseas Leisure Group. (2020, July 10). American Express. Retrieved on 10-12-2020. <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/will-covid-19-change-customer-behavior-in-the-long-term/>.
- Pala, K. & Daşkın, M. (2022). The Role of Job Satisfaction on Organizational Citizenship Behaviours: A Preliminary Study

- from Ordu Hotel Sector/Turkey. *International Journal of Global Tourism Research*, 6(1), 1-12.
- Parasuraman, A.P, Zeithaml V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). "Servqual: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality". *Journal of Retailing*, 64 (1).
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L.L. (1991). Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 67(4).
- Parayani, K., Masoudi, A. & Cudney, E. (2010). QFD Application in Hospitality Industry-A hotel Case Study. *Quality Management Journal*, 17(1).
- Pedrana, M. (2013). "Local Economic Development Policies and Tourism. An Approach to Sustainability and Culture," Regional Science Inquiry, *Hellenic Association of Regional Scientists*, 0(1), 91-99.
- Pizam, A. & Ellis, T. (1999). Customer Satisfaction and its Measurement in Hospitality Enterprises. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(7).
- Poudel, S. (2013). The Influence of The Accommodation Sector on Tourism Development and Its Sustainability. [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/61014/Thesis\\_Final\\_SP.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/61014/Thesis_Final_SP.pdf?sequence=1).
- Portolan, A. (2017). The impact of private accommodation on economic development of tourist destination-the case of Dubrovnik-Neretva County. *Oeconomica Jadertina*, 2(1). DOI: 10.15291/oec.210.
- Prabhu, C. (2015). Homeport is Key to Oman's Cruise Tourism Industry. Interview with: Jose, M.C., CEO of Khimji Ramdas Shipping. *Oman Daily Observer*. <https://www.pressreader.com/oman/oman-daily-observer/20150630/2822781389868> 24.
- Ramukumba, T. (2015). The Contribution of Guest Houses to Economic Growth and Employment as Key Components of Local Economic Development in The Eden District Area. <http://www.secheresse.info/spip.php?article66100>.
- Ramukumba, T. & Ferreira, I.W. (2016). Contribution of guest houses to local economic development through procurement of locally produced products and services in the Eden District

- Municipality, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(2).
- Ramukumba, T. & Ferreira, I. W. (2017). Sustainable tourism: A view from guest houses in the Eden District Municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(1).
- Saundalkar, J. (March 2020). Oman Ministry of Tourism to preserve and transform ancient homes into tourist hotspots. <https://meconstructionnews.com/40243/oman-ministry-of-tourism-to-preserve-and-transform-ancient-homes-into-tourist-hotspots>.
- Saunders, M. (2007). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 4th Edn, Financial Times Prentice Hall, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow.
- Saxena, C. (2021). Effectiveness Of Advertisement: Traditional Vs. New Media. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27 (1).
- Schaap, J. (2017). These major trends are changing hospitality industry, as you know it. Hospitality Net. <http://bit.ly/2zE8nc0>.
- Sharpley, R. (2000). The influence of the accommodation sector on tourism development: lessons from Cyprus. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 19(3), 275-293. DOI: 10.1016/S0278-4319(00)00021-9.
- Šišara, J., Sladoljev, J., & Grubišić, A. (2013). The Role of Small Family Tourism Enterprises in Achieving a Quality Development of Tourism In Šibenik-Knin County as A Tourist Destination - review and research proposals. *Stručni časopis za teoriju i praksu menadžmenta*, 4(2).
- Strydom, A. (2013). *A practical guide to Guest House Management*. 59th ed. Bloemfontein: Sun Media, p 62.
- Taderera, F., Al-Nabhani, S., Bhandari, V., Kirubakaran, P. & Al Rahbi, H. (2014). Marketing Excellence: Myth or Reality in Oman. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 7(4), 195–206.
- Taylor, C. R. (2015). Creating win--win situations via advertising: new developments in digital out-of-home advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 34(2), 177-180.
- Thwala, K. C., & Slabbert, E. (2018). The Effectiveness of the Marketing Mix for Guesthouses. *African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure* 7(2).

- Tinakhat, P., Viriyachaikul, V. & Vorasingha, Y. (2018). The international guests' satisfaction about Service Quality of Guesthouse in Sukhothai. *Journal of Tourism Theory and Research*. 4 (2).
- Triarchi, E., & Karamanis, K. (2017). Alternative Tourism Development: A Theoretical Background. *World Journal of Business and Management* 3(1):35. DOI: 10.5296/ wjbm. v3i1.11198.
- Tripadvisor. (2023). *Misfah Old House*. [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel\\_Review-g3420980-d3784777-Reviews-Misfah\\_Old\\_House-Al\\_Hamra\\_Ad\\_Dakhiliyah\\_Governorate.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g3420980-d3784777-Reviews-Misfah_Old_House-Al_Hamra_Ad_Dakhiliyah_Governorate.html).
- Tripadvisor. (2023). Muscat Bed and Breakfasts. [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g1940497-c2-Muscat\\_Muscat\\_Governorate-Hotels.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g1940497-c2-Muscat_Muscat_Governorate-Hotels.html).
- Turnšek, M., Brumen, B., Rangus, M., Gorenak, M., Mekinc, J., & Štuhec, T. L. (2020). Perceived Threat of COVID-19 and Future Travel Avoidance: Results from an Early Convenient Sample in Slovenia. *Academica Turistica*. 13(1), 2-17.
- UNWTO. (2016). World Tourism Organization, Case Studies of Traditional Cultural Accommodations in the Republic of Korea, Japan, and China. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284417407>.
- UNWTO, (2019). International Tourism Highlights 2019, Edition World Tourism Organization Madrid. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152>.
- UNWTO. (2020). World Tourism Organization. International tourism highlights. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284422456>.
- UNWTO. (2023). World Tourism Organization. Best Tourism Villages, Misfat Al Abriyeen, Oman. <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages/misfat-al-abriyeen/>
- Wildish, B., Kearns, R., & Collins, D. (2016). At home away from home: Visitor accommodation and place attachment. *Ann. Leis. Res.* 19, 117–133.
- Zadel, Z., & Bogdan, S. (2013). Economic Impact of Cultural Tourism. *UTMS Journal of Economics* 4 (3), 355–366.

- Zarrina, M. (2020). The Importance of Marketing Strategies in The Hotel Industry. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business, Arts and Science*, 5 (2): 66-74. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831533>.
- Zehrer, A. (2009). Service experience and service design – concepts and application in tourism SMEs. *Managing Service Quality*, 19 (3), 332-349.