

Factors Affecting Tourist Satisfaction: A Study in Sylhet Region

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the largest growing industries around the world and it has a great role to the GDP in Bangladesh. This paper investigates the core factors that can influence satisfaction level of tourists with specific reference to tourism industry in Bangladesh. Satisfied tourists will revisit the place and they will provide positive word-of-mouth. So it is indispensable to identify which factors around the tour destinations have impact on overall satisfaction of tourists. In carrying out this research, primary data have been collected from 428 tourists of different tourism spots in Sylhet region using structured questionnaire. It is found in the study that the tourists' satisfaction greatly depends on natural beauty, transportation and accommodation facilities, safety and security, and costs. This study reveals that tourist satisfaction depends on a complex process where the role of every actor is fundamental and those actors should be harmonized with each other. Furthermore, this study allows identifying the current strengths and weaknesses of tourism services in Sylhet which may reflect the overall scenario of Bangladesh.

Keywords

Satisfaction, tourism industry, word-of-mouth, tour destinations

Introduction

Tourism is an emerging industry around the world and thus in Bangladesh. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was BDT296.6bn (1.9% of total GDP) in 2014, and is forecast to rise by 5.9% in 2015, and to rise by 6.1% pa, from 2015-2025, to

BDT566.3bn (2.0% of total GDP) in 2025. In 2014 Travel & Tourism directly supported 903,500 jobs (1.6% of total employment). This is expected to rise by 2.1% in 2015 and rise by 1.4% pa to 1,062,000 jobs (1.5% of total employment) in 2025 (travel and tourism, Economic Impact, 2015). Bangladesh has a great potential to become one of the market leaders since it has the perfect combination of natural beauty, environment and resources. This study will find out the factors that affect tourism satisfaction. The outcome of the study will detect the problem areas and give direction to improve tourist satisfaction, thus maximizing revenue.

This study is an endeavor of analyzing the factors of tourist satisfaction where we have considered Sylhet division as sample area. Satisfaction has been analyzed by tourism researchers within a variety of dimensions of tourist trips. The main goals of these studies are to identify factors of satisfaction with tourist product-elements, often with the purpose of suggesting tourists' It consists of many aspects, such as deciding with whom to travel, what destination to travel to, where to buy the product, etc. This period includes getting information about these aspects as well. Planning is crucial.

The journey, from leaving home to return, consists of a series of elements, including infrastructural aspects, activity amenities, as well as service elements: transportation, hotel, restaurants, types of activity, number of activities, service level in general, specific activities, the nature/surroundings, travel party, food, etc. After the journey all these elements are viewed as possible influences on overall satisfaction (with the destination) and subsequently on the intention to re-visit and communicate via positive word of mouth. Overall tourist satisfaction with the visited destination is presented as "a state" which is affected by antecedents such as inner motivation for travelling, tourist behavior and satisfaction with trip-related elements.

Tourist satisfaction should be understood by those involved in tourist activities and should serve as a basis for assessing the performance of products and service destination (Noe and Uysal, 1997; Schofield, 2000). Furthermore, an understanding of the different needs of tour groups can help provide appropriate services to enhance their satisfaction at all levels of service. For example, the price factor is not a major factor in shaping the overall satisfaction level for all the tourists. Accommodation and food factors are significant to the entire satisfaction of North America, while the "pull" factor is significant for the European and Asian tourist visitors. Moreover, culture is significant for tourists from Oceania (Hui et al. 2007). Thus service providers such as tour guides should pay attention to the relevant characteristics that might be very important to certain tourist groups managed by them. Based on the existence of such differences, Hui et al. (2007) suggested that Singapore should adopt a balanced approach to satisfy the differing tourists' needs and requirements.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are,

1. To identify the factors that affect tourist satisfaction in Sylhet region.
2. To find out the degree of influence of these factors on tourist satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

Population and sampling design:

The data were collected from different tourism spots of Sylhet division from January, 2016 to April, 201. The sample size was 428 and sampling method adopted was a combination of Judgmental and convenience.

Sample characteristics:

The respondents were chosen irrespective of gender, age, income, education, occupation, religion, location. All the interviewed respondents were tourist in Sylhet.

Instrumentation:

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed to identify the factors that affect tourist satisfaction. A five point scale of strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) strongly disagree (1) were used to measure the responses for the respondents.

Data analysis:

Collected data were analyzed through factor analysis and regression. Statistical software SPSS-17.0 was used for data analysis.

Reliability:

Table-1 shows the reliability of variables, which were used in this research. Cronbach's Alpha describes the internal consistency of the instrument. Here the alpha value is found 0.749 which represents an excellent internal consistency among the variables.

Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the selected factors and the tourists' satisfaction.

H_A: There is a significant relationship between the selected factors and the tourists' satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism industry is important as it plays an important role in the economy of developing and developed countries. Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt constantly to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses. Leading researchers have recognized the important of tourism products: "Misunderstanding of the tourism product is often a constraint in a smoothly functioning tourism system". Tourism product development includes information services, transportations, accommodations, and attraction (Gunn, 2006). The tourism product is described as a series of determinants from variable destinations, which produce an output for tourists. The model consists of a hierarchy of five elements: the physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement. As described in this research, the physical plant is the core of the tourism product, which includes the natural resources, fixed properties (such as accommodations), accessibility, acceptable environmental quality, good

weather, and appropriate numbers of other tourist (Smith, 2000). Tourist satisfaction is a measure of how tourism products and services supplied by a company of the tourism system meet or surpass expectation of tourist. In the tourism context the concept of tourist satisfaction is particularly relevant as well as difficult to deal with as the tourist product is “complex” by definition (Smith, 2000).

Satisfaction is the evaluation of the performance of the overall services provided by the firm received by the customer (Skogland & Siguaw, 2001). Satisfaction is an important factor to be taken into account by the customer in deciding whether to continue a purchase or otherwise. Satisfaction results when performance exceeds the requirements (Bitner, 1990). On the other hand, when the requirements exceed the performance, dissatisfaction will result (Parasumaran et al. 1990). From a tourism perspective, the same concept applies to tourists because tourists are also subscribers to the services provided. Thus, their decision to visit again also depends on the satisfaction factor. In the discussion of the concept of tourist satisfaction, another term often used is travel satisfaction, which is a result of a tourist’s satisfaction after their own experience or the experience of a product or service provided (Gunderson et al., 1996; Heide et al., 1999; Heung, 2000).

Tourist satisfaction can be analyzed as a relationship between the sacrifices and rewards he expects in terms of time, cost or effort and value received (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Tourists compare their present destination with other alternative or past experience (Yoon & Usal, 2005). Tourist satisfaction with a particular destination may be the result of multiple factors, including the expectations generated before and during the trip, as well as the tourist’s perception of service received. Tourist satisfaction reflects both a cognitive and an emotional phenomenon (Bigne & Andreu 2004). The analysis of the causes of that generate satisfaction is much scarcer. Among the different types of antecedents that influence tourist satisfaction, a great deal of analysis has been directed towards the attributes of the service offering.

The literature reveals that the level of tourist satisfaction with a particular trip is the result of different factors (Peter & Olson, 1996) which are generally assessed as a composition between the tourist’s perception of products and services he receives and the expectations generated before and during his trip (Barsky & Labagh 1992; Bigne & Andreu, 2004; Chon & Olsen, 1991). Most studies on tourist satisfaction focus on measurement techniques and types of variables related to customer satisfaction (Noe and Uysal 1997; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1993). Tourist satisfaction is defined as post-consumption evaluation concerning a specific product or service (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991), and proposed to be one of the key judgments that tourists make regarding a tourism service. Hence, it is a well-established, long-standing focus marketer attention (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002).

Tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Pearce (2008) defined tourism entertainment as structured and managed situations designed for a predominantly visitor audience, which include cultural shows, dance performances, theme park presentations, fun guided tours, and film and video presentations tailored exclusively for visitors. Choosing a holiday destination is a rational process involving different factors (McGehee, Loker-Murphy & Uysal): the tourist feels the need to travel and looks for a “product” which initially may offer the greatest satisfaction to

fulfill that need. In such a process, the tourist feels 'pushed' by internal and emotional factors, as well as attracted by the characteristics of the destination and the availability of activities (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). The distinction between overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction is discussed as important, given that overall satisfaction is based on the overall experience, not just a single feature of the product (Spreng, Mackenzie & Olashavsky 1996). Tourists' satisfaction with a destination may reflect a type of tourist overall satisfaction with a journey, while satisfaction with transport, travelling party, accommodation, activities performed while staying at the destination, etc., could impact upon the total judgment of a trip to a particular destination. Many reasons cause tourists to be satisfied with their trip or journey, including the quality of the services provided, such as infrastructure, security, cleanliness, natural situation, consumer protection and easily obtained (Handszuh, 1995). According to Cornin & Taylor (1992), and Ekinci & Riley (1998) quality of service is part of the process which leads to the formation of the overall satisfaction. With reference to the tourism sector, a review of the literature on motivation reveals that people travel because they are "pushed" into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and "pulled" by the external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Uysal and Jurowski, 1994). Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991), for instance, study satisfaction with cultural tours, while Hsieh, O'Leary and Morrison (1994) study differences among packaged and non-packaged tours. Other researchers focus on satisfaction with certain aspects of a tour, e.g. hotels (Saleh and Ryan 1992; Heide, Grønhaug & Engset 1999). Tourists' shopping satisfaction is studied by Reisinger and Turner (2002). In addition, physical factors, such as the destination product performance and psychological equipment products, such as meaningful destination are also factors that translate to satisfaction and loyalty of travel destination (Uysal & Noe, 2003). Chi & Qu (2008) chose 33 destination items to measure tourist satisfaction, and distinguished seven key factors: lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility. According to some authors (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999) some attributes can contribute to the real destination competitiveness. These attributes refer to the variables that influence the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of tourists during their vacation.

The three most important satisfaction attributes relating to intention to re-visit are the level of overall satisfaction, satisfaction with destination airport services and satisfaction with local transport services, respectively. Kozak (2003) measures tourist satisfaction with multiple destination attributes and subsequent intention to repeat visitation and recommend to others among four different groups of tourists visiting two different destinations (Cherry & Ordenez, 2003). The selection of tourist's decisions and behaviors depend on three stages such as before the journey, tourist experience at the destination and tourist experience at the spot. A highly competitive market, being able to offer an attractive tourist destination implies having a deep understanding of the motives that lead tourist to make their choice among the different alternative available, as well as of the degree of satisfaction obtained with the services provided (Jang & Feng, 2007).

One of the most relevant research issues for the tourist sector is to analyze why people travel and what they expect from their destination (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), i.e.; what are the motive behind the trip. Consumer behavior literature states that need and motivation are interrelated (Witt & Wright, 2006). A series of research has tried to classify the main attributes of any particular destination (Kale & Weir, 1986). Such items include climate, culture, architecture,

transport, entertainment or cost. Danahar and Arweiler (1996) established that, although the experience associated with items relating to transport and accommodation affects the degree of tourist satisfaction, positive tourist feedback focused mainly on outdoor activities. The results of the Kozak (2003) study show that overall tourist satisfaction, the intention to recommend and the intention to repeat visit, are affected by multiple attributes and differ from one customer group- and from one destination to another. This implies further empirical testing of tourists with different nationalities visiting a variety of destinations.

Satisfied tourists tend to communicate their positive experience to others (word of mouth) and they tend to buy the product repeatedly (re-buy) (e.g. Barsky 1992; Beeho and Prentice 1997; Hallowell 1996; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; Pizam 1994; Ross 1993).

According to (Truong and D. Foster 2006) positive attributes refers to characteristics conveying favorable impressions about the destination, whereas negative attributes are those doing the opposite. As (Yoon & M. Uysal, 2005) both positive as well as negative destination attributes are important in evaluating the holiday experiences. Moreover, (Tribe & Snaith, 1998) pointed out that the negative attributes can provide unfavorable effects on holiday satisfaction.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

From the literature review and personal observation researchers found out fifteen variables which may significantly influence the tourists' satisfaction. Fifteen statements were designed on variables found from literature review. Factor analysis was conducted on those 15 variables.

Demographic profile:

Data was collected from 428 tourists from different tour destinations in Sylhet region. During collecting responses of tourists regarding tour satisfaction their demographic details also collected. The demographic description of the respondents is presented in table-2.

Factor analysis:

To find out the key factors influence the tourists' satisfaction factor analysis has been performed. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a commonly used method for grouping the variables under few unrelated factors. Variables with a factor loading of higher than 0.5 are grouped under a factor. A factor loading is the correlation between the original variable with the specific factor and the key to understanding the nature of that particular factor (Debasish 2004).

For conducting factor analysis confirming sampling adequacy is necessary. There are a few methods to detect sampling adequacy. From the table -3 it is observed that KMO is 0.708 that is more than the required value of 0.50. It indicates that there is no error in 70.8% of the sample and in remaining 29.2%, there may be some sort of error. So it can be conclude that the present sample is adequate for conducting factor analysis (Barkus, Yavorsky, & Foster, 2006; Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Table-3 also present the result of Bartlett's test of sphere city. Bartlett's test of sphere city indicates the strength of relationship among the variables. We may assume the following hypothesis:

H_0 : There is no significant correlation among the factors affecting tourist satisfaction.

H_1 : There is significant correlation among the factors affecting tourist satisfaction.

The value of Chi-square test (1015.947 with significance level 0.000) signifies the rejection of null hypothesis. It means that the population correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

There is significant correlation among the factors that affect tourist satisfaction.

Since the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirm factorability, researchers proceed for factor analysis.

The summary of the factor analysis has been presented in table-4. By performing factor analysis among 15 variables 5 factors were categorized. The first factor, i.e. transportation and safety has an eigen value of 3.359. Since this is greater than 1.0, it explains more variance than a single variable, in fact 3.359 times as much. This factor explains 22.392% of total variance. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.779 which represent a good the internal consistency of data within the factor. The second factor extracted is natural and environmental beauty. The eigen value of this factor is 1.670. This factor is accounted for 11.137% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha value 0.5524 represents passable internal consistency of data. The third factor that affects the tourist satisfaction is accommodation facility. This factor is accounted for 9.401% of the total variance. The alpha value 0.6748 represents a good internal consistency. The fourth factor extracted is food and local inhabitant's behavior which is accounted for a handsome figure of variance (7.657). The last factor that affects tourist satisfaction is cost of accommodation which explains 7.154% of the total variance. All of these five factors are accounted for 57.740% of the total variance.

Regression analysis:

Regression analysis is a powerful and flexible method for analyzing associative relationship between dependent variable and independent variable. Here the regression analysis is done to determine how much of the variation in tourist satisfaction can be explained by five extracted factors.

Table-5 represents the modes summary of regression analysis. In this table R is the multiple correlations co-efficient, its value is 0.752. R^2 is a statistical measure of how close the data are to the fitted regression line. It is also known as the coefficient of determination, or the coefficient of multiple determinations for multiple regressions. The value of R^2 is 0.565, which means that 56.5% of the total variance in tourist satisfaction has been 'explained' by predictor variables.

The F -ratio in the **ANOVA** table (table-6) tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(5, 369) = 24.836, p < .0005$ (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

Unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with an independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant. From table-7 considering overall satisfaction as dependent variable and Cost of accommodation, Foods and Inhabitants' behavior, Accommodation facility, Natural environment and beauty, Transportation and safety as independent variable following regression equation may be developed:

$$Y = 4.091 + 0.204(\text{Transportation and safety}) + 0.151(\text{Natural environment and beauty}) + 0.128(\text{Accommodation facility}) + 0.157(\text{Foods and Inhabitants' behavior}) - 0.041(\text{Cost of accommodation}) + \text{error term}$$

Here, Y = Tourist satisfaction level in Sylhet region

CONCLUSION

Tourism can provide an immense contribution to the economy of Bangladesh. It shapes the socio-cultural and economic condition of local inhabitants. So it is worthy to know which factors affect tourist satisfaction. This study identified the factors which may influence the tourist satisfaction. The findings of this study can be used by the tour operators, government tourism authorities and other concerned parties in their strategy formulation.

This study focuses only on the intangible and tangible factors of tourism destination. However, further researches can be conducted to measure the influence of psychographic variables on tourist satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Table-1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.749	16

Table-2: Demographic description of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	276	64.5	64.5
	Female	152	35.5	100.0
	Total	428	100.0	
Age	15-20 years	45	10.5	10.5
	21-25 years	177	41.4	51.9
	26-30 years	83	19.4	71.3
	30-35 years	69	16.1	87.4
	36-40 years	27	6.3	93.7
	Above 40 years	27	6.3	100.0
	Total	428	100.0	
Marital status	Single	246	57.5	57.5
	Married	182	42.5	100.0
	Total	428	100.0	
Education level	SSC	30	7.0	7.0
	HSC	99	23.1	30.1
	Honors	170	39.7	69.9
	Masters	74	17.3	87.1
	Others	55	12.9	100.0
	Total	428	100.0	
Occupation	Business	71	16.6	16.6
	Service	93	21.7	38.3
	Student	183	42.8	81.1
	House wife	43	10.0	91.1
	Others	38	8.9	100.0
	Total	428	100.0	
Monthly family income	less than tk. 10000	81	18.9	19.2
	above tk. 10000-20000	68	15.9	35.4
	above tk. 20000-30000	98	22.9	58.7
	above tk. 30000-40000	67	15.7	74.6
	above tk. 40000-50000	49	11.4	86.2
	above tk. 50000	58	13.6	100.0
	Total	421	98.4	
	Missing	7	1.6	
Total	428	100.0		

Table-3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.708
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1015.947
	df	105
	Sig.	.000

Table-4: Rotated Component Matrix

	Transportation and safety	Natural environment and beauty	Accommodation facility	Foods and Inhabitants' behavior	Cost of accommodation
Transportation system	0.708				
Condition of roads	0.706				
Personal safety and security	0.684				
Washroom/toilet/changing room	0.565				
Information adequacy	0.510				
Relaxing environment		0.724			
Natural beauty		0.669			
Air quality		0.551			
Historical and religious places		0.454			
Condition of rooms and other facilities of hotel			0.828		
Services in hotels			0.775		
Behavior and cordiality of local people				0.663	
Quality of foods and beverages				0.661	
Price of foods and beverages				0.639	
Cost of accommodations/hotels					0.767
<i>Initial Eigenvalues</i>	<i>3.359</i>	<i>1.670</i>	<i>1.410</i>	<i>1.149</i>	<i>1.073</i>
<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>22.392</i>	<i>11.137</i>	<i>9.401</i>	<i>7.657</i>	<i>7.154</i>
<i>Reliability</i>	<i>0.779</i>	<i>0.5524</i>	<i>0.6748</i>	<i>0.5089</i>	

Table -5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.752a	0.565	0.555	0.36765

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cost of accommodation, Foods and Inhabitants' behavior, Accommodation facility, Natural environment and beauty, Transportation and safety

Table-6: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	40.014	5	8.003	24.836	0.000a
	Residual	118.903	369	0.322		
	Total	158.917	374			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cost of accommodation, Foods and Inhabitants' behavior, Accommodation facility, Natural environment and beauty, Transportation and safety

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	Total	158.917	374			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cost of accommodation, Foods and Inhabitants' behavior, Accommodation facility, Natural environment and beauty, Transportation and safety

b. Dependent Variable: Your overall satisfaction regarding Sylhet.

Table-7: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.091	0.029		139.549	.000
	Transportation and safety	0.204	0.029	.313	6.958	.000
	Natural environment and beauty	0.151	0.029	.231	5.133	.000
	Accommodation facility	0.128	0.029	.196	4.347	.000
	Foods and Inhabitants' behavior	0.157	0.029	.241	5.348	.000
	Cost of accommodation	-0.041	0.029	-.063	-1.389	.166

a. Dependent Variable: Your overall satisfaction regarding Sylhet.