

MAPPING TOURIST SATISFACTION AND REVISIT INTENTIONS: A STUDY OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

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Abstract

Tourists' satisfaction relies on a host of antecedents. Since tourism is considered as an integrated system interconnected and interdependent on services like accommodation, transportation, catering, travel intermediaries retailing etc, therefore, tourists overall satisfaction is affected by each component. Researchers have devoted considerable efforts to understand what comprises tourist satisfaction. Nonetheless far from unanimity different authors have reported different explanations. Yet it has been widely reported that a satisfied tourist can turn out to be an ambassador who conveys his/her favourable experience to others and also revisits the destination. The present study mainly focuses on the interplay between satisfaction and revisit intentions. To address the objectives of the study we surveyed a sample of 545 domestic tourists who visited world-famous Kashmir. Among the multitude of antecedents the tourists have hailed the friendliness and helpfulness of Kashmiri people. This underscores the historical evidence about the unbeatable hospitality of people of the Kashmir. The tourists have expressed significant high intention to revisit the valley and therefore the possibility that these tourists would convince their near ones to visit the valley through positive word of mouth.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Revisit Intentions, Hospitality, Kashmir

Introduction

Every customer be it a tourists, at the time of pre-arrival some expectations with regard to the type and quality of services that particular destination would has offer him/her. These expectations are not formed in vacuum, the main source of these expectations are the customer oriented/targeted advertisements, commercials, brochures, mass-media and other informal sources like word of mouth. Based on the expectations and the actual services offered one can arrive at a decision about the satisfaction of the tourists. To simplify the same, the actual experience should exceed the level or magnitude of the initial expectations so as to conclude that the customer is satisfied. However, in case the felt/perceived/actual experience is less than the expected it indicates that the customers/tourists have not been satisfied.

Tourist satisfaction has been operationalized through different perspectives. For example Oliver (1981) notes that tourist satisfaction is the perception or evaluation of the services experienced at a destination post visit. Similarly Kotler and Armstrong (2005) found that the researchers have mostly relied on feelings/experiences/perceptions of customers, the authors also believe that pre visit expectations and post visit experiences of a particular product or services would determine the state of customer satisfaction. Others have also operationalized satisfaction as a function of consumer perceptions.

Nonetheless, tourist satisfaction determines emotional/psychological state of a tourist which is developed post visit which in most of the cases determines to what extent the said tourist intends to revisit and convey a positive word of mouth experience about a particular destination (Um & Chon,

2006; Westbrook & Olive, 1991). It is the expression of overall pleasure derived by a tourist post visit (Chen & Tsai, 2007). It is the affective component of attitude about a product or service (Yuan & Jang, 2008). Previous studies have established that satisfaction has a significant influence on the consumer's loyalty to a product and service. Therefore, satisfaction would positively influence a post-purchase behaviour and hence the chances of repurchase in the future.

Baker and Crompton (2000) argue that satisfaction has a noticeable impact on tourist's revisit intention. Tourist expectations are created by an efficient promotional mix by marketing managers to influence potential tourists. The initial expectations later on have a significant influence on destination evaluation. Numerous other studies have confirmed that besides satisfaction previous experience which results in a positive word of mouth conveyed to relatives and colleagues leads to repeat visits (Cole, Crompton & Willson, 2002; Meng, Tepanon & Uysal, 2008; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Meng, Liang & Yang, 2011). Further, the satisfaction rating by tourists is summation of overall experience of a tourist about a designated destination (Anderson, Fornell & Lehman, 1994). Therefore, tourist's satisfaction enhances the probability of revisit intention.

Like other products tourism products have been found to affect the attitude of its end users subsequently the satisfaction derived contributes to loyalty for the destination visited (See for example Pritchard & Howard, 1997; Bramwell, 1998) and Oppermann, (2000) claims that a memorable experience develops a revisit intention besides a positive word of mouth recommendation to others.

In tourism literature various researchers and authors have found a link between tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions and is being considered as an important research topic. The reasons being that customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction act as driving force that shapes the customers' attitudes and behaviour in the future, therefore determines their considered opinion about future visits also (Cole, Crompton & Willson, 2002, Bowen & Clarke, 2002, Cole & Illum, 2006). These future behavioural intentions have named as conative loyalty, which forms a part of the loyalty model as reported by Oliver (1999). Conative loyalty has been described as customers' loyalty that is accompanied by a desire to intend an action (Blut, Evanschitzky, Vogel & Ahlert, 2007). Some studies on tourism research have also talked about the numerous proxies of future behavioural intentions. Further, in a study conducted on rural heritage festival in Missouri, U.S Cole and Illum (2006) in an attempt to assess the influence of service quality on behavioural intentions used positive things about the destination and revisit the destination in the future. However, other researchers like (Prayag, 2009; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Bigne et al, 2008) are of the opinion that the applicable proxies of future behavioural intentions, include word-of-mouth and revisit intentions.

Many research studies have been conducted to ascertain key forerunners of revisit intention. See for example Petrick et al., (2001). Notably Kozak, (2001) claimed that it was satisfaction, others like (Jang & Feng, 2007) believe that it was novelty seeking, for Chi & QU (2008) destination image determines revisit intentions. Similarly (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) included motivation besides satisfaction. Others like Petrick et al., (2001), believed that perceived value could predict revisit intentions, while as Chen & Gursoy (2001) stressed on safety of the tourists at the destination. Camp et al (2010) claim that tourists consider their past vacation experience for a revisit decision and (Kozak, 2001) argue that it was overall satisfaction of the tourists that leads to revisit intention.

With regard to measurement of tourist satisfaction especially satisfaction regarding a particular

destination researches see for example (Oliver, 1997; Yoon & Uysal 2005), have used variables like overall satisfaction, performance, expectation, and positive recommendation. Others like, Chi and Qu (2008, p.624) have reported that instead of tourist satisfaction customer loyalty is being used to assess tourist satisfaction reasons being that customer loyalty could better determine and predict the actual behaviour. Similarly others like Chen and Tsai (2007) conclude that loyalty towards a particular destination is in away more robust predictor of customer satisfaction which significantly contributes towards the revisit intentions of a tourist.

Although some of the contemporary researchers like Jang and Feng (2007) are of the view that determinants of revisit intentions as a subject of research is well documented in the extant literature, however the present was conducted to validate the earlier established link in the Indian context therefore is expected to contribute towards the existing literature.

In this backdrop the present study made an attempt to assess the influence domestic tourist satisfaction on their revisit intentions with special reference to Kashmir as tourist destination. The available literature presents a plethora of research evidences that satisfaction or as argued by some that it is customer loyalty that significantly affects the intentions to revisit a destination. Further, it has been also noted that a satisfied customer or a loyal customer not only intends to revisit the destination but also recommends the destination to his/her nears and dears. In case a tourist does so, such behaviour has been referred to as customer loyalty (see for e.g. Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005; Chi and Qu, 2008).

However, researchers like Um et al. (2006) state that revisit intention has been considered as a proxy of satisfaction rather than a trigger for revisit decision making process. In contradiction Kozak (2001) consider the level of satisfaction as one of the most pivotal and robust variable that explains revisit intention.

Most of the recent studies have agreed upon the fact that the variables like tourist satisfaction, loyalty and revisit intention have strong relationship (Yoon & Usal, 2005; Awadzi & Panda, 2007), however some of them like (Um et al., 2006) have criticised and negated the positive link between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

Researchers have been curious about the factors that boost to revisit intention as a result the variable under study has remained a favourite research topic among researchers. Despite the substantial number of studies conducted on the subject under study, the topic continues to enjoy the attraction and attention of the scholars and practitioners who intend to answer the research questions like why people undertake repeat visits and what makes them to repeat visits. This paper makes a maiden attempt to gauge the dimensions which are associated with international tourist satisfaction and revisit intention using the Kashmir as the contextual study setting. Based on the literature review, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1 Domestic tourists visiting Kashmir are significantly satisfied.

H2 Revisit Intentions among the Tourists are very significant.

H3 Satisfaction significantly influences Revisit Intentions of domestic Tourists.

Methods

The study used primary data for testing the hypotheses. Population for the study constituted the

population who visited the Kashmir during December 2016 and January 2017. The sampling unit was a domestic tourist. To collect data the study employed convenience sampling technique for collecting the data. Sample for the study was chosen to be 600 tourists in consultation with academic and industrial experts. Accordingly 600 questionnaires were administered among the respondents visiting the tourist destinations like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Yusmarg, Manasbal, and Srinagar. Satisfaction was measured using friendliness of local people, satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels and satisfaction with activities(cultural shows, shikara ride) and attractions (lakes, water bodies, hill stations) and safety and security during the visit. Data collected from the field was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23).

Sample description

A total of 545 domestic tourists (Male-337 and Female-208) were found suitable for the analysis. Data cases with missing data more than 10% were eliminated, and for cases lesser than 10%, median replacement method was employed (Gaskin & Lynch, 2003). The respondents were in the age group ranging from 20-30, 30-40 and above. Around 95% belonged to the age group of 30-40 years having more than 60,000 monthly incomes. Around 61% had earned bachelor's degree with 22% having masters. Most of the tourists have a stay span of 4 to 7 days in the Kashmir valley. Other demographic characteristics of the sampling organisation are given in the **Table 1**.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of Sample and Travel Features

Gender	Female: 38.2 %; Male: 61.8%
Age	>20: 3.4%; 20–30:18.5%; 30–40:30.8%; 40-50:26.5%; 50-60:16.2%; above 60:4.6%
Educational Qualification	UG: 22.8%; Graduate: 38.2%; PG: 31.6%; Others: 7.4%
Marital Status	Married: 79.5%; Single: 20.5%
Occupation	Employed: 22.8%; Retired: 18.2%; Unemployed: 32.2%; others: 16%
Type of Lodging	Hotel: 16. 2%; House Boat: 26.2%; JKTDCHut: 43.3%; Guest House: 9.3%
Length of Stay	3dyas: 0.6%; 4days: 30.5%; 5days: 33.9%; 6days: 28%; 7days: 4.6%
Mode of Travel	Air: 68.4%; Road: 31.6%
Type of Trip	Package Tour: 67.5%; Independent Travel: 32.5%
Tourist Type	Individuals: 9.1%; 52.7%; Friends: 38.2%
Purpose of Visit	Vacation/Leisure: 46.7%; Honey Moon'15.4%; Pilgrimage: 10.8%; Meetings/Conferences: 23.1%; Adventure: 2.8%

Results and Discussion

In order to test the H1 and H2, we conducted one-sample t-test of the variables under reference. The results of the test are presented in the **Table 2**.

Table 2 : One sample t-test (Test value 3.5)

Satisfaction	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	p
Satisfaction with friendliness of local people	545	4.78	1.776	.076	16.851	.000
Satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels	545	3.94	1.947	.083	5.312	.000
Satisfaction with safety and security	545	3.88	1.911	.082	4.606	.000
Revisit intentions	545	4.22	1.959	.084	8.628	.000

The data in the table shows that respondents have expressed high satisfaction with the friendliness of local people with a mean score of 4.78 (SD 1.776). Satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels has a mean score of 3.94 (SD 1.947) and Satisfaction with safety and security has mean score of 3.88 (SD 1.911). Importantly respondents have expressed higher revisit intentions with a mean score of 4.22 (SD 1.952). One sample t-test reveals that all the constructs are statistically significant at 5 percent significant level ($t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.000$). Therefore we accept H1 and H2. In order to test the H4 we conducted correlation analysis and subsequently regression analysis. The results of correlation analysis is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3 : Correlations Analysis

Variables		Satisfaction with friendliness of local people	Satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels	Satisfaction with safety and security	Revisit intentions
Satisfaction with friendliness of local people	Pearson Correlation	1	.467**	.487**	.574**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	621	621	621	621
Satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels	Pearson Correlation	.467**	1	.525**	.455**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	621	621	621	621
Satisfaction with safety and security	Pearson Correlation	.487**	.525**	1	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	621	621	621	621
Revisit intentions	Pearson Correlation	.574**	.455**	.601**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	621	621	621	621

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation reveals that revisit intention is positively correlated with the satisfaction level of the respondent. All the three satisfaction variables are statistically significant at 0.01 levels. The results reveal that the data is fit for regression analysis. The regression analysis is presented in the following tables.

The data in **Table 4** reveals a correlation coefficient of 68 percent. R-squared on the other hand is .47 percent. It means that the independent variable explain 47 percent of the variance of the dependent variable.

Table 4 : Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686 ^a	.471	.469	.92557
a. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction 1, Satisfaction 2, Satisfaction 3				

Subsequently we tested the goodness of fit of the model using ANOVA. The analysis reveals that model is fit for the regression. P value of 0.000 evidences that the regression coefficients valid. The results of the ANOVA are given in the **Table 5**.

Table 5 : ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	470.792	3	156.931	183.185	.000 ^a
	Residual	528.570	617	.857		
	Total	999.363	620			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Satisfaction 1, Satisfaction 2, Satisfaction 3						
b. Dependent Variable: Revisit intentions						

Table 6 shows the regression coefficient of all independent variables. Satisfaction with safety and security has highest coefficient relative to other independent variables (.385). It means that the variance 38 percent in the revisit intentions is being explained by the satisfaction with safety and security.

Table 6 : Coefficients^a

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.097	.190		.508	.611
	Satisfaction 1	.367	.037	.343	9.817	.000
	Satisfaction 2	.093	.036	.093	2.583	.010
	Satisfaction 3	.455	.043	.385	10.611	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Revisit intentions						

Satisfaction with friendliness of local people has second highest coefficient with a beta of 34 percent. Both the coefficients are statistically significant with p value lesser than 0.05. Satisfaction with local restaurant food and hotels also explains 9 percent of variance in the revisit intentions and the

coefficients is significant at 0.05 levels. Therefore we accept H3 as well.

Conclusion and Discussion

The study aimed to measure the satisfaction level of tourists and to what extent they are inclined for revisit. The study used structured questionnaire to measure the response from the targeted respondents. Around six hundred respondents were surveyed to collect the responses. In line with the hypotheses we conducted one sample t-test to measure the significance of satisfaction and revisit intentions. The results revealed that the satisfaction level and revisit intentions of the respondents are statistically significant. Subsequently regression analysis was conducted to determine the causality of revisit intentions. The study found statistically significant coefficients indicating that the revisit intentions are dependent on the satisfaction level of the respondents' first experience.

The key findings of the present study indicate that tourist perceptions which are actually a post visit experience are pivotal that determine customer satisfaction/customer loyalty and therefore must be handled proactively and professionally to develop lasting relationships. Results from this study are consistent with some past studies that conclude that satisfaction of tourists affects revisit intentions (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Choi et al., 2011). Similar results have been reported in other recent studies (Chi and Qu, 2008).

Based on the findings of the present and earlier studies, the basic infrastructure needs to be in place. The concerned agencies need to work out such prerequisites which can be done through benchmarking the famous tourist destinations around the globe. The respective state government through their professional manpower can ensure that the destination attributes like attractions are then properly highlighted through a robust and effective promotional mix which would attract potential tourists to Kashmir as their preferred destination. Customer satisfaction or customer loyalty would be an outcome of the post visit experiences which would depend on how other stakeholders like hoteliers, tour operators, shikarawals, house boat owners and others who are directly or indirectly associated with tourism discharge their obligations. A 360° appraisal needs to be conducted wherein each stakeholder needs to take a pledge that they would serve the potential tourist and therefore would make Kashmir a preferred destination. Further studies are needed to ascertain the influence of each stakeholder towards tourist satisfaction/ tourist loyalty which eventually influences revisit intentions.

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