Psychoanalysis of Tourist Satisfaction: A Case Study of Kaudiyala – Tapovan Ecotourism Zone of Uttarakhand

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to analyse the satisfaction levels of tourists' visiting Kaudiyala – Tapovan Ecotourism Zone of Uttarakhand. In particular, the paper assesses the level of overall satisfaction of tourists on six different indicated variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been applied and the research paper proposes a model using structural equation modelling (SEM) on 100 respondents from different age groups and gender. The findings of the study indicated that the tourists' were satisfied with their holiday in the study area and intended to revisit and recommend to other tourists.

Keywords: Tourist satisfaction; kaudiyala – Tapovan ecotourism zone; confirmatory factor analysis; structural equation modeling.

Introduction

In order to have a better understanding of tourist destination image, attract more tourists to a destination and increase the positive word of mouth of the destination leading to tourists revisiting/repurchasing tourism products/service, tourist satisfaction is an important factor in today's competitive tourism market. Petrick (2003) suggests that the tourist satisfaction is the most important facet for the tourism industry because of its foremost effect on the economy of the destination. The satisfied tourists generate positive reviews and have a greater frequency of repurchasing the tourism products and services (Barsky 1992; Beeho and Prentice 1997; Hallowell 1996; Kozak and Rimmington 2000; Pizam 1994; Ross 1993). Crouch and Ritchie (1999) relate tourist satisfaction with the destination attributes, including the destination attractiveness and other industry level attributes. Assessment of tourist perceptions related with the accommodation facilities, gastronomy and other tourism services are considered as the most vital factors for enhanced levels of tourist satisfaction which influences their decision to do a repurchase. From the perspective of quality management and re-buy intention, many authors have conducted research on tourist satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Gunn (1988) recognized the relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourism products or services and stated that misunderstanding of the tourism product is often a constraint in a smoothly functioning tourism system and tourist satisfaction as well. Smith (1994) described the series of determinants from tourist destination, which produce a satisfied output for tourists. He designed a model consisting the hierarchy of five elements i.e. the physical plant (natural resources, accommodation, accessibility, acceptable environmental quality and good weather), service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement. Physical plant for tourist is useful only when the tourism services are better and adequate. It also performs tourism specific tasks to meet the need and wants of tourists. Hospitality is the attitude and style in which tasks related with tourism services is performed. Freedom of choice and involvement directly involves the tourist as a part of the product. In order to have a satisfactory experience, tourist must have freedom to choose their service providers. Involvement of tourist in the tourism product is considered as an encapsulating shell because successful participation hinges on acceptable physical plant, good service, hospitality, and freedom of choice. Discomfort in the tourism services will hinder the tourist involvement, consequently limiting the quality of the tourism experience and tourist satisfaction. Middelton, Feyall and Morgan (2009) analyzed the tourist satisfaction on five different sectors in tourism, which were Hospitality, Attractions and Event, Transportation, Travel organizers and Intermediaries and Destination organization sector. In addition, Mason (2000) formulated the relationship of tourist satisfaction with the component of tourism products like Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities and Networking. Kozak & Rimmington (2000) suggested that satisfaction is the comparison of tourists' expectation before and after the consumption of tourism services. They also considered tourist satisfaction as an important tool for successful destination marketing. Pizam, Neumann & Reichel (1978) identified the importance of measuring tourist satisfaction with the tourism products related attributes of the destination because the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with one of the attributes leads to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the overall destination image. Fornell (1992) defined tourist satisfaction as an evaluation of overall purchase of tourism products and services. MacKey & Crompton (1990) also defined satisfaction in analogous way and focused on the "psychological outcome which emerges from experiencing the services". Tourist satisfaction with certain aspects of tour, e.g. hotels were analyzed by Saleh & Ryan (1992); Heide, Gronhaug & Engset (1999). Evaluation of tourist satisfaction with leisure activity was suggested by Toy, Kerstetter & Rager (2001). Chon and Olsen (1991); Danaher and Arweiler (1996); Joppe, Martin and Waalen (2001) investigated tourists' satisfaction with destinations. From the aspects of tourism products and services, "expectations" considered as an important antecedents of satisfaction (Millan and Esteban 2004; and Oliver 1997). Peter & Olson (1996) noted that tourist satisfaction is the result or the final step of a psychological process from need recognition to evaluation of experienced products.

Research Gaps

In regards with the assessment of tourist satisfaction, several researchers have focused on the destination competitiveness and or developing and applications of conceptual models. Few research

papers have analysed the tourist satisfaction of different countries around the globe, but India has been completely ignored. Several literatures were found only for the assessment of foreign tourist satisfaction and there is a pertinent need to make an analysis of the satisfaction of domestic tourists of those countries which fall within the purview of emerging economies.

Research Design

The study, through the analysis of the related literature review, uses Structural Equation Model (SEM) to construct the statistical/structural model related to tourist satisfaction. The study area is the famous tourist destination of "Kaudiyala – Tapovan Ecotourism Zone" of Uttarakhand.
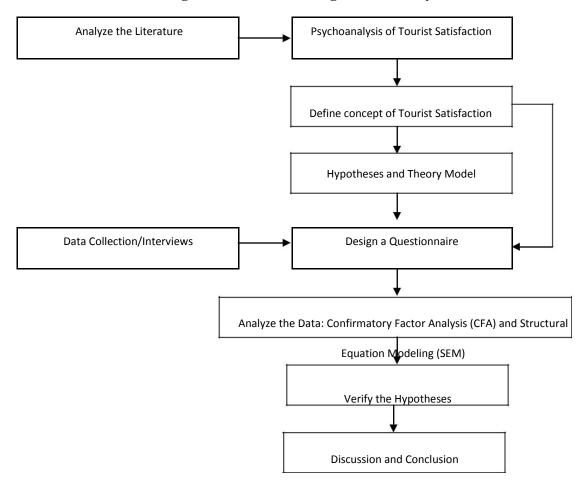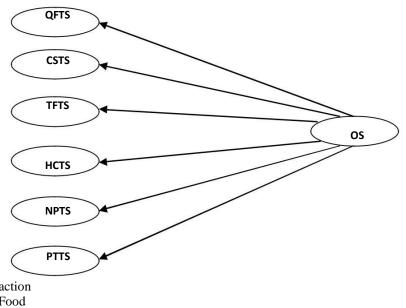
Figure 1: Research Design of the Study

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses of the Study

The conceptual Model "sets the stage" for the presentation of the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The problem statement of a paper presents the context and the issues that caused the researcher to conduct study (McGaghie et al. 2001).

In this study, through the review and analysis of the several literatures related to tourist satisfaction, a model has been constructed showing the relation among tourism products/tourism related services with overall satisfaction of the tourists. Figure 2 shows the conceptual model of this study:

Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the study

OS: Overall Satisfaction
QFTS: Quality of Food
CSTS: Cleanliness and Security
TFTS: Tourist Facilities
HCTS: Friendliness of Host Community
NPTS: Natural Places
PTTS: Price of Tourism Services

Source: Own formulation

The above model contains one exogenous latent variable of overall satisfaction and six endogenous indicated variables of different tourism related product and services. This study proposes the following one hypothesis: tourists are satisfied with the available tourism resources and services in the region.
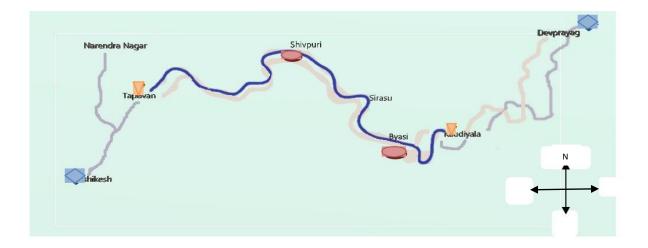
Study Area

Kaudiyala-Tapovan Ecotourism Zone situated along the Kedarnath–Badrinath National Highway (NH-58) on the river Ganges; district Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, between $30^0$04'23"– $30^0$07'34"N latitude and $78^0$30'13"-$78^0$19'48"E longitude. The total road distance of the area is 40 kms from the Yoga city of Rishikesh.

The study area is in the Shivalik range of Middle Himalayan Mountains and is home to floral species such as Sal (Shorea robusta), Kanju (Holoptelea integrifolia), Bakli (Anogeissus latifolia),

Dhauri (Longerstroemia parviflora), Bamboo species and others. The area is renowned for adventure activities such as white water river rafting, trekking, bungee jumping etc. due to the presence of mighty white Ganges, valleys and peaks. The temperature in the summer varies from 9^0 C to 30^0 C and in the winters from 3^0 C to 15^0 C. The region experiences average rainfall of 70 cm

Map 1: Map of Kaudiyala-Tapovan Ecotourism Zone (not as per exact scale
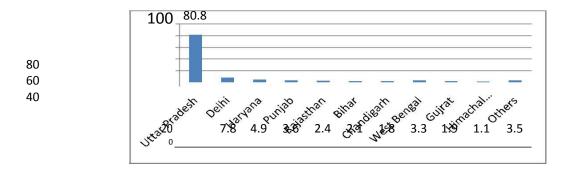

Present tourism status and tourist profile in the region

From the perspective of tourism, the study area is of utmost significance in the state of Uttarakhand. The region has been a point of attraction amongst tourists because of the availability of different forms of tourism products. Not only from India but the region has been catering to massive number of global tourists seeking Spiritualism, Adventure, Yoga and Wellness. In order to be in sync with the changing times and to compete with the global destinations in tourist receipts, the Govt. of Uttarakhand is constantly working towards the beautification and sustainable development with effective marketing of the tourist attractions of the region. As the study area is blessed with diverse tourism sites such as Ram Jhoola, Laxman Jhoola, Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Neelkanth Mahadev Temple, Beatles Ashram along with the options of activities such as adventure tourism sports in the pristine natural scenic landscapes and performing yoga and meditation in the tranquil environment, therefore the region is renowned and has been attracting tourists from all over the world.

To holistically develop tourism in the state, the Government in its tourism policy with the involvement of host community is constantly thriving towards its mission. This has been done by integrating the host community with tourism employment by organizing diverse avenues of skill development programmes and providing them with financial assistance to start their own tourism related business. Figure 3 reflects the graphical representation of the total visitor trips undertaken from other states with the study area as main destination, Uttar Pradesh recorded the maximum

number of trips (80.8 per cent of all trips), followed by Delhi (7.8 per cent) and Haryana (4.9 per cent).

Figure 3: Tourist Arrival in the study area

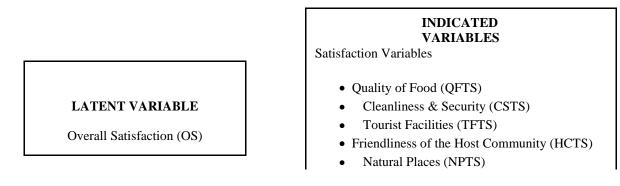Source: Regional Tourism Satellite Account (NCAER), 2016

Methodology, Data Analysis and Statistical Model

This study focused on the psychoanalysis of the factors affecting tourist satisfaction on the Kaudiyala-Tapovan Ecotourism Zone of Uttarakhand. The survey was conducted in the month of November 2017. In order to collect data, the researchers applied convenient stratified random sampling and the numbers of respondents were selected proportionally based on variables like gender, marital status, native state, companions, transportation and services facilities.

Selection of Indicated Variables

The two structure variables in the constructing model are tourists' overall satisfaction and six different tourism products/related services. Through the references several literatures related with the study of tourist satisfaction, six indicated variables were used and shown in figure 4:

Figure 4: Latent and Indicated Variables of the Model

LATENT VARIABLE	INDICATED VARIABLES
	Satisfaction Variables
Overall Satisfaction (OS)	• Quality of Food (QFTS)
	• Cleanliness & Security (CSTS)
	• Tourist Facilities (TFTS)
	• Friendliness of the Host Community (HCTS)
	• Natural Places (NPTS)

• Price of Tourism Services (PTTS)

Source: Own formulation

The respondents were distributed among the following cohorts: 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 years old. The primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaire (in English language). Questionnaire was divided into three sections. The initial section covered the demographic profile of the respondents, the second section dealt with the travel features in terms of companion, transportation facilities and services and facilities. The last section of the questionnaire included questions related tothe satisfaction of respondents and their probability of returning to the study area. The perception was analysed using 5-point Likert Scale (1=Very Dissatisfied to 5=Very Satisfied).

In this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used as a statistical model to analyze the tourist satisfaction on six different indicated variables with the help of statistical software for SEM and CFA i.e. IBM SPSS AMOS v.23. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyze structural relationship (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). SEM technique is the combination of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and is used to analyze the structural relationship between indicated variables and latent constructs (Bollen, 1989) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) specifies the number of factors required in the data and measured the relationship between indicated variables and latent variable. CFA is a tool that is used to confirm or reject the measurement model theory which allowed researchers to test specific hypothesis about the factor structure for a set of variables.

Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

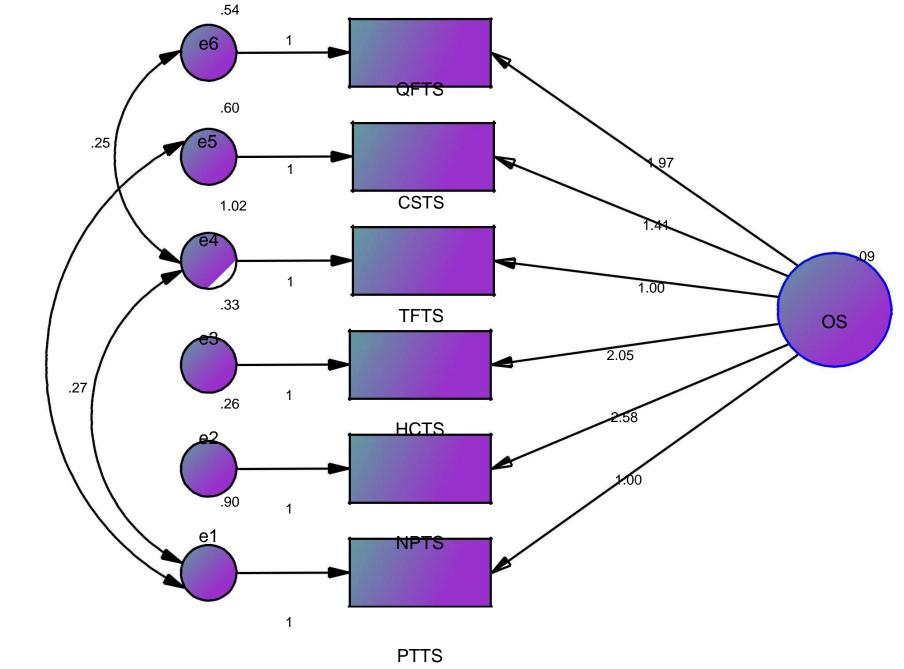The demographic characteristics of the surveyed respondents are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Statistical sample population and demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic Characteristics		Number of People	%	Demographic Characteristics		Number of People	%
Gender	Male	64	64	Companion	Family	33	33
					Friends	53	53
					Group Tour	14	14
	Female	36	36	Transportation	Bus	29	29
					Private Car	36	36

				Facilities			
					Rented Car	18	18
					Other	17	17
Age	20-30	51	51	Services and Facilities	Restaurant	36	36
					Hotel	29	29
					Shop	20	20
					Homestay	15	15
	31-40	22	22				
	41-50	16	16				
	51-60	11	11				
Marital Status	Married	35	35				
	Single	65	65				

Source: Own computed data

Figure 5: Structure Model of Tourist Satisfaction of the Region

Source: Own formulation

Analysis of Structure Model

Table 2: CMIN (Minimum value of the discrepancy function)

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	15	7.115	6	.310	1.186
Saturated model	21	.000	0		
Independence model	6	146.489	15	.000	9.766

Source: Own computed data

Table 2 reveals the Chi-Square = \CMIN value (7.115) for the degree of freedom (df) = 6 and the P = .310 (P>.05). The CMIN value is also insignificant and it indicates that data fits the model.

Table 3: RMR, GFI (Root mean square residual, Goodness of fit index)

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.028	.978	.924	.279
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.252	.618	.465	.441

Source: Own computed data

Table 3 reflects the RMR = .028 is less than .05 suggests that data fits the model and the GFI = .978 is above the threshold value of .9 and it also indicates that data fits the model of tourist satisfaction.

Table 4: Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.951	.879	.992	.979	.992
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: Own computed data

Table 4 analyses the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .992 and it is greater than the threshold value of .9 and confirms model of tourist satisfaction in the region.

Table 5: RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.043	.000	.143	.461
Independence model	.298	.255	.342	.000

Source: Own computed data

Table 5 analyses the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .043 is less than .05 and it also indicates that the data fits the tourist satisfaction model of the region.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research study has focused on explaining tourists' overall satisfaction of a destination as a consequence of a spur to revisit the place. Tourist satisfaction was considered as overall satisfaction with the tourist destination, which in turn was influenced by diverse aspects of traveling such as food, cleanliness and security, tourist facilities, natural attractions of the region, prices of tourism services and the behavior of host community.

Figure 5 and Structure Model analysis in the study reveals that the tourists in the region seemed to be generally overall satisfied (accept hypothesis) with the destination as well as six specific satisfaction indicated variables such as tourist satisfaction with the quality of food (QFTS), cleanliness and security (CSTS), tourist facilities (TFTS) like ATMs, Filling Stations etc., friendliness with the host community (HCTS), tourist satisfaction with natural places (NPTS)

and satisfaction with the prices of tourism services in the region (PTTS). "The fact that tourists have made positive judgments or claimed to be satisfied are in line with results with other studies showing a positive skewed evaluation of tourist satisfaction (Fornell et. al., 1996)".

Results also reflect that the region is also primarily affected by the tourists' satisfaction with the tourism products and tourism related services offered by the organizing side of the trip and the results confirmed the expectation. The various activities offered in the destination for tourists were indeed a motive for visiting the destination.

In conclusion, assessment of tourist satisfaction would be useful for the destination promotion and destination competitiveness as well as to improve service quality in the region. This study indicates the most influential factor, which is overall satisfaction and in preparation for the development strategy, this factor can be improved and developed to attract and satisfy not only foreign tourists but also domestic tourists. Only those important factors were considered for the study which increased tourists' satisfaction.

The outcome of this study confirmed that the region is popular among the tourists from all age groups ranging from 20-60 years. Results also demonstrated that overall, tourists were satisfied with their holidays in the Kaudiyala – Tapovan region. They intended to revisit the region and also shared the feeling of recommending the destination to others.

Limitation of the Study

Insinuations drawn here also are subject to several limitations. Firstly, this study encompasses only domestic tourists. Secondly, sample size in this study was too low and also limited by time as well as space. Finally, tourists' perceptions of climate were missing in this study. However, climate is always considered as an important factor in attracting tourism demand to the region.

The researchers are of the opinion that the results of the study would be beneficial for the tourism stakeholders of the region. The results can be studied to assess the present state of affairs by identifying the grey areas and planning and designing better tourism strategies to enhance the visitor experience in the future. The region has immense tourism potential and better tourist centric tourism strategies would not only enhance and provide holistic tourist experience but also improve the lives of the tourism stakeholders of Kaudiyala Tapovan Ecotourism Zone.

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