Tourists Satisfaction in Tourist Destination

(A Study of Tigray-Ethiopia)

Yemane Gidey (PhD Scholar**)[1]**

Research Scholar at University School of Applied Management,
Punjabi University, Patiala and Senior Lecturer at Aksum University, Aksum-Ethiopia,

Kapil Sharma (PhD)[2]

Supervisor- University School of Applied Management,
Punjabi University, Patiala, Assistant Professor,

Abstract

Making tourists experience with full of exaltation and ensuring the qualities whether leading to perceived value and satisfaction enhancement are important issues for tourism managers and destination managers in particular when designating the sustainability strategies. Further, achieving tourist satisfaction is become one of the important objectives for most tourism service businesses and organizations in today's intense completion of the tourism industry. Enhancing tourist satisfaction is believed will generate more profits and lowering marketing expenditures. Thus, the higher the rate of tourist satisfaction with the service quality, the higher the probability to perform future behavioral intentions, such as recommend to others, say positive things and revisit the destination. Cognizant this, this research was conducted at Tigray tourist destination, aimed at analyzing tourists' level of satisfaction in the destination. The study has employed primary data mainly collected from 382 usable sample tourists using a questionnaire and through interview from destination managers. To analyze the collected data SPSS-20 software was adopted and techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, ANOVAs were used. Finally, major findings and implications have also derived.

Key Words: Destination, Satisfaction, Tigray-the Open-air museum, Tourist.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Tourism Industry (Global, Africa and Ethiopian Perspective)

Tourism is not a single activity, but an agglomeration of many separate and related activities that include transport, accommodation, food and beverage services, cultural entertainment, conventions and trade fairs, sports and recreation. It can be therefore assumed that the greater the inter-sectoral linkages between the tourism sector and the other sectors, the greater the economic multiplier effects (UNECA, 2011).

Over the past six decades, tourism experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (Osman and Sentosa, 2013). The industry has grown its total contribution to GDP by 3% and increased the number of jobs by five million to 260 million. International tourist arrivals worldwide will increase by 3.3% a year from 2010 to 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030 according to UNWTO long term forecast. International tourism receipts grew by 4% in real terms in 2012, hitting a new record of US$ 1,075 billion worldwide (euro 837 billion).

In African context, "tourism a powerful development path", is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the world economy, and tourism in Africa is ripe for development, as of the report of WB in 2013. Income generated from tourism has also climbed: Receipts from hotels, tours and other attractions in 2012 amounted to over US$36 billion and directly contributed just over 2.8% to the region's GDP. Over the last five years, real GDP rose an average 4.9% – faster than the 3% global average. Despite the Ebola crisis in 2014(mainly, in West Africa), Africa's tourism arrivals still increased by 200,000 over the previous year, 2013, (Africa Tourism Monitor, 2015). According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2015), Africa's strong performance in 2014 (up 4%) makes it one of the world's fastest-growing tourist destinations, second only to Southeast Asia (up 6%).

Ethiopia, one of the two African nations never to lose its independence (never colonized), owns a proud history of African heritage and considered as the origin of mankind. Ethiopia has been chosen as the world's best tourism destination for 2015 by the European Council on Tourism and Trade (ECTT). It was chosen for its "excellent preservation of humanity landmarks" such as the ruins of the city of Aksum (Stelae) and it is home of most (more than 11) UNESCO registered world heritage sites and many on process *(*MOCT, 2016/17*).*

Despite the various adverse impacts such as the global economic downturn on tourism performance worldwide, Ethiopia as a tourist destination continues to demonstrate steady rise in the number of visitors in the year under review (2004-2013) and it was ranked 25th in 2004 and 17th in 2013 among the African destinations.

1.2 Tigray Tourism Industry: Tigray- "the Open Air Museum"

Tigray tourist destination- **"Tigray, the cradle of ancient Ethiopian civilization"**, one among the various destinations of Ethiopia, is the Alpha and Omega of Ethiopia's ancient with remarkable and fascinating history. As evidenced today by its unique pre-Christian obelisks, countless stone inscriptions, dozens of rock-hewn churches, ancient built monasteries, underground palaces and imperial tombs, Tigray was once the country's architectural workshop. It has always been the

purveyor of religious scholarship, ecclesiastical painting, Christian chants as well as administrative and political blueprints. Tigray's historical, religious and cultural wealth is as overwhelmingly rich as it is diverse. These features make Tigray a true pearl of the tourist destinations in Ethiopia. Thus, *"A journey to Tigray is a journey back to layer of history which spanned a period of three thousand years. Exotic and unique in many instances, Tigray is truly a tourist's paradise. It is simply an Open – Air Museum"*, (the open Air Magazine, 2014).

Generally, the major tourism resources of Tigray are broadly categorized in to historical attractions, heritage/ cultural and natural attractions. For administrative purpose, these major attractions are categorized into six major clusters: Mekelle, Wukro, Gheralta, Aksum, Maychew, and Humera Clusters, where this study was delimited to the first four clusters.

Table 1.1 Tourist Flows and Gains in Tigray Destination

Year		Domestic Arrivals	Percentage of Total Arrivals	Foreign Arrivals	Percentage of Total Arrivals	Receipts (in Millions) **	Total Arrivals
1992	2000	NA	NA	1632		2.80	1632
1993	2001	8333	65.4	4412	34.62	7.57	12745
1994	2002	13199	66.7	6600	33.34	16.40	19799
1995	2003	7788	50.0	7792	50.01	19.36	15580
1996	2004	14366	59.8	9666	40.22	24.02	24032
1997	2005	15709	53.1	13857	46.87	34.43	29566
1998	2006	12604	46.2	14689	53.82	36.50	27293
1999	2007	18551	54.2	15662	45.78	38.92	34213
2000	2008	20544	53.7	17744	46.34	44.00	38288
2001	2009	37148	64.6	20319	35.36	50.40	57467
2002	2010	39021	59.9	26126	40.10	66.56	65147
2003	2011	42531	59.4	29097	40.62	302.00	71628
2004	2012	39652	56.8	30135	43.18	384.00	69787
2005	2013	35779	51.2	34105	48.80	376.00	69884
2006	2014	43030	51.0	41360	49.01	570.00	84390

Source: Tigray Tourism Agency (2014)   **-receipts only from international tourists

Though it was experienced with ups and downs, both the flow of tourists and the earnings from visitors have been growing considerably from the period of 2000 onwards. As highlighted in the table, while the total number of arrivals was 65147, 71628, 69787, 69884 and 84390, the earnings from foreign visitors were $66.56, $302, $384, $376 and $570 million in the late five years, 2010-2014 respectively. This might be due to the new administration system and the open economic system in general and the federal and regional government's special focus given to the sector in particular.

As far as the percentage share of total arrivals among domestic and foreign tourists is concerning, in 2001 and 2002, the share of domestic tourists outsmarts the foreign tourists' (66 by 34) and matches

in 2003(50:50). In 2006, the share of foreign arrivals was inflated and surpasses (54:46) the domestic arrivals share. Lately, the domination of domestic visitors' share was experienced with a peak of 64% and a minimum of 53.7%. More recently, in the year 2013 and 2014 the share of domestic and foreign visitors became almost balanced, (51% by 49%). However, this is doesn't mean that, Tigray tourism destination is at its full stage. Considering the destination's tourism potential based on archeological, cultural and natural heritages rather it is at its infant stage.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Evidences

Customer satisfaction is one the most areas being researched in many tourism studies due to its importance in determining the success and the continued existence of the tourism business (Gursoy *et al.,* 2007). Generally, tourist who feels satisfied with the visit in a destination means that tourists enjoy their time while in the destination, where the satisfaction and enjoyment at a certain destination will increase the possibility of likelihood to revisit the destination in the future.

Tourist satisfaction is the measure of how a service supplied by a company meets or surpasses client's expectation. It is seen as a key performance indicator within a business and is an indication of how successful the company is at providing its products and/ or services to the market. Satisfaction is a conceptual concept and the actual happening of the state of satisfaction will vary among persons, products and services. In a competitive market, customer satisfaction is considered as s key element of business strategy (Sofique and Prosenjit, nd). Service quality and customer satisfaction concepts are clearly related since customer reaction (satisfaction or dissatisfaction) might use as a means of evaluating whether the right quality has been delivered.

Further, many reasons cause tourists to be satisfied with their travel to a specific destination, including the quality of the services provided, such as infrastructures, cleanliness, security, consumer protection, natural situation (Handszuh, 1995). Additionally, Corrin and Taylor (1992), and Ekinci and Riley (1998) also stated that quality of service as part of the process which leads to the formation of the overall satisfaction.

Oliver (1993) stated that, overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are distinct but related concepts. Attribute satisfaction has a significant, positive, and direct effect on overall satisfaction; and it captures significant amount of variation in overall satisfaction. Various satisfaction researches in tourism have indicated that tourists' satisfaction with individual attribute of the destination leads to their satisfaction with the overall destination (Hsu, 2003; Chen, *et al.,* 2008; Ross *et al.,* 2015)

During their tour, tourists experience a medley of services such as hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions, etc.; and they may evaluate each service element separately. Satisfaction with various attributes (components) of the destination leads to overall satisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Thus, overall satisfaction is a function of satisfactions with the individual attributes/ elements of all the products/services that make up the experience, such as accommodation, climate, natural environment, social environment, etc. (Pizam & Ellis, 1999).

There is little argument about consequences of tourist satisfaction. Tourist loyalty or complaint listed as the results of satisfaction. Consumer loyalty is the consumers' intention or actual behavior to repeatedly purchase certain products. Some studies have indicated that tourist loyalty is bi-dimensional, including both attitudinal commitment and behavioral revisit intention. Other studies have identified tourist satisfaction as one of the major predictors of tourist loyalty (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Repeat visits or recommendations to others are normally referred to as tourists'

loyalty in most tourism literature, which is one of the critical indicators to measure the marketing strategies (Y. Yoon, M.Uysal, 2006; Kozak and Remmington 2000). Repeat visitors not only provide a constant source of income, but may also generate positive word of mouth (Lau and McKercher, 2004). Additionally, future behavioral intentions measured differently with willingness to recommend, say positive thing and revisit the destination (Canny and Hidayat, 2012).

Although various studies have been performed, study in this regard in Ethiopia is still lacking. Therefore the purpose of this study was to determine whether socio-demographic factors and travel characteristics influence the satisfaction level of tourists in Tigray tourist destination. Finally, this study will have various marketing and managerial implications.

3. Methodology: Research Process and Design

Data were collected from 500 sample tourists both domestic and international tourists who visited one of the four major clusters (Aksum, Mekelle, Wukro, and Gheralta) in Tigray destination between August and December 2015. Tourists participating both in package tours and individual visitors were selected using convenience non-probability sampling technique to complete the questionnaire, which takes about 10 to 15 minutes to finish at different locations and times.

The final questionnaire developed based on the results of the pre-test, and pilot survey the final version of the questionnaire was developed in English and Amharic (was translated from English by official translators) versions and was administered. It encompasses five major sections like; Section 1 enquired about the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents: Sections 2 and 3 attributes of the destination comprising of 80 items that were assessed in terms of expectation (section 2) and experience (section 3) to measure the service quality. In both cases, the attributes were assessed with a five-point Likert type scale, ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Section 4 looked to measure the overall satisfaction (4 items) and loyalty of tourists (3 items). Finally, section 5 questions adopted about travel behavior of tourists at the destination (15 items).

Collected data through questionnaire were processed (edited, coded, and tabulated) and analyzed using the statistical software package of SPSS-20. Respondent's socio-demographic profiles and their travel characteristics were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and comparisons were determined using ANOVAs.

4. Results and Discussions

From the 500 total distributed questionnaires on August to December 2015, a total of 449 questionnaires were returned. Out of this, 382 were completed and used in the data analysis representing a response rate of 76.40 percent.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	222	58.4	58.4
Female	158	41.6	100.0
Total	380	100.0	
Age			
18-24	26	7.1	7.1
25-34	137	37.2	44.3
35-44	97	26.4	70.7
45-54	59	16.0	86.7
55-64	28	7.6	94.3
>=65	21	5.7	100.0
Total	368	100.0	
Marital Status			
Single	120	32.6	32.6
Married	209	56.8	89.4
Divorced	30	8.2	97.6
Others	9	2.4	100.0
Total	368	100.0	
Educational Status			
High School	7	1.9	1.9
Diploma	38	10.1	11.9
Degree	184	48.8	60.7
Masters	118	31.3	92.0
PhD	29	7.7	99.7
Others	1	.3	100.0
Total	377	100.0	
Occupation			
Public servant	83	22	22
Professional	89	23.6	45.6
Student	51	13.5	59.2
Business	52	13.8	72.9
Tourism business	67	17.8	90.7
Others	36	9.3	100
Total	377	100	
Country of Origin			
Africa	5	1.3	1.3
America	23	6.1	7.4
Asia	11	2.9	10.3
Europe	169	44.8	55.2
Local	169	44.9	100.0
Total	377	100.0	
Income			
=<200 USD	13	3.6	3.6

201-300 USD	42	11.7	15.4
301-400 USD	86	24.0	39.4
401-500 USD	53	14.8	54.2
501-600 USD	42	11.7	65.9
>=601 USD	122	34.1	100.0
Total	358	100.0	

Source: Author's Competition, 2017

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown on Table 4.1. The gender distribution of the respondents was not equal, with 222 (58.40%) male and 158 (41.60%) female respondents. This slight percentage difference between males and females was might be because of male tourists normally travelled with their spouses. The age group of the respondents was 25 to 34 years 137 (35.90%), followed by 35 to 44 years 97 (25.40%), 45 to 54 years 59 (15.40%).

As far as the status of the country of origin is concerning, respondents were asked to write their home country on the provided space in the questionnaire. Accordingly, local respondents account about 169 (44.80%) that comprises visitors from Addis Ababa city (40.83%); Tigray (27.23%); Amhara (16.57%) and SNNP, Oromia and Diredawa accounts for 6.51%, 5.92% and 2.96% respectively. Thus majority of the local tourists were from Addis Ababa and Tigray.

On the other hand, foreigner respondents accounted for 208 (55.20%) that majority of them were came from European countries(dominated by Germany, 21.90%; followed by Belgium, 12.43% ; Australia, 11.83%; France, 8.88%; UK, 8.28%; Spain, 7.10%; Russia, 5.92% and the least from Ireland and Poland accounted 1.18% each); respondents from America (USA 78.26, Canada 13.04, and Brazil 08.70); Asia(Philippines, 45.46% Israel, , Turkey, and UAE each accounted 18.18%); Africa(Kenya and RSA, 400% each and Gabon 20%).

Finally, it is possible to conclude that, majority of the foreign tourists are from Europe 81.25% followed by America 11.06%, Asia 5.29% and least from Africa, 2.40. Country wise, majority of the foreign tourists came from Germany 17.45%, followed by Belgium 09.91%, Australia 09.43% and the least is from Gabon, 0.47%. Specifically, in terms of country of origin respondents were fairly distributed with 55.20 percent foreigners and 44.80 percent local tourists.

Moreover, the income distribution in line with countries of origin, majority (40.91%) of local respondents were categorize in the range of 301 to 400 USD followed by 20.78% of them in the income range of 201 to 300 USD. Similarly, significant number, 111 (55.78%) of foreign respondents are in the income range of USD 600 and above.

4.2 Tourists' Travel Characteristics

Significant number (about three fourth) of tourists came to Tigray either for leisure and vacation or pilgrimages purpose. Business and professional tourists accounted for 12%, 10% for visiting friends and relatives, and only 5% of the respondents were visiting Tigray with the purpose of conferences, exhibition and sport events.

In terms of frequency of visiting Tigray destination, 48% were came to Tigray for their first time, 31% of them were for their second time. But 24% of the tourists were repeatedly came to Tigray for one or more reasons. For many tourists (33 percent) the source of information was advice from friends and relatives; and 28 percent of the respondents had previous visit experience cases

reflecting the importance of word of mouth recommendation and repeat visitation in both cases. 20 percent of the respondents used internet and advertisement through radio, TV and documentaries, though they were not satisfied at all with the level of information available online about Tigray, particularly the foreign visitors. 9.5 percent of the tourists used a travel agency and tour operators as their source of information. Tourists who used travel books, guides, brochures, Magazines or Newspapers constitute about 7.5 percent and 2 percent of the tourists used none of these sources.

4.3 Tourists' Overall Satisfaction in Tigray Tourist Destination

As results displayed on Fig 4.1, significant number, 150 (44.12 percent) of the respondents were not surprised by the overall services they received at the destination; rather they were disappointed at all. 127 (37.35 percent) of them have rated their overall satisfaction level as indifferent, which reflects tourists' neither satisfied nor dissatisfied in general. Conversely, 63 (18.53 percent) of the respondents have rated their overall satisfaction as satisfied. Hence, this reflecting that the mean satisfaction was marginally low.
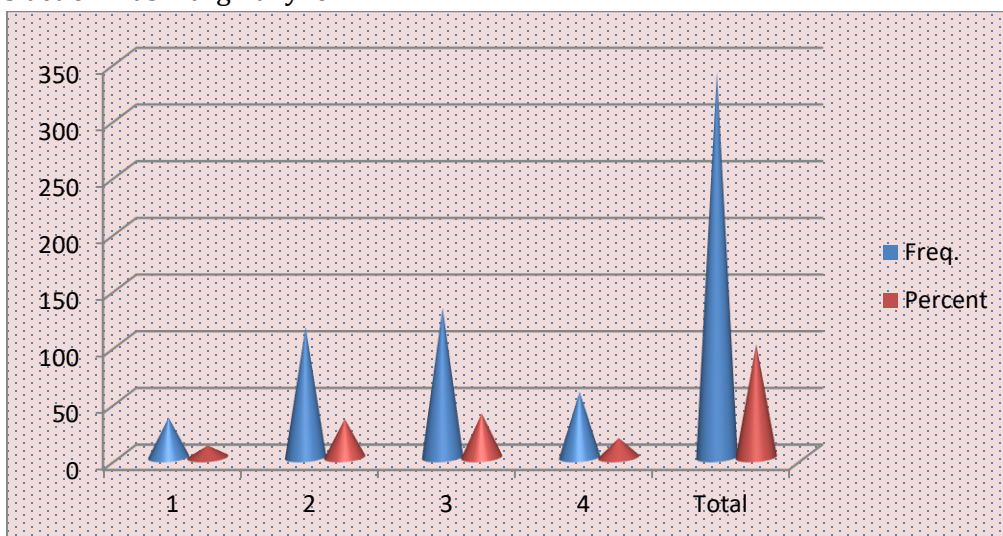

Figure 4.1: Overall Tourists' Satisfaction, 2017

4.4 Tourist Satisfaction Comparisons by Cluster

To report the status of tourists' levels of satisfaction at the study area, overall satisfaction was also analyzed at cluster level. In Aksum cluster, 66 (44.60 percent) of the tourists were confirmed as dissatisfied; 57 (38.51 percent) of them were resulted in neutral feelings and 25 (16.89 percent) were resulted in satisfied feelings in relation to their satisfaction measurement.

Large proportion (33, 71.73 percent) of respondents were dissatisfied; while 9(19.57 percent) were in the neutral state of feeling; 4 (8.70 percent) were in the state of satisfaction with reference to the overall satisfaction in Gheralta cluster. Similarly, 34 (35.05 percent) of the visitors were confirmed that they were satisfied with regard to their overall level of satisfaction; 33 (34.02 percent) of them were still unable to decide their overall level of satisfaction; and 30 (30.93 percent) were dissatisfied

in the case of Mekelle cluster. Finally, in Wukro cluster, 27 (55.10 percent) of the respondents were indifferent; while 21 (42.86 percent) were dissatisfied.
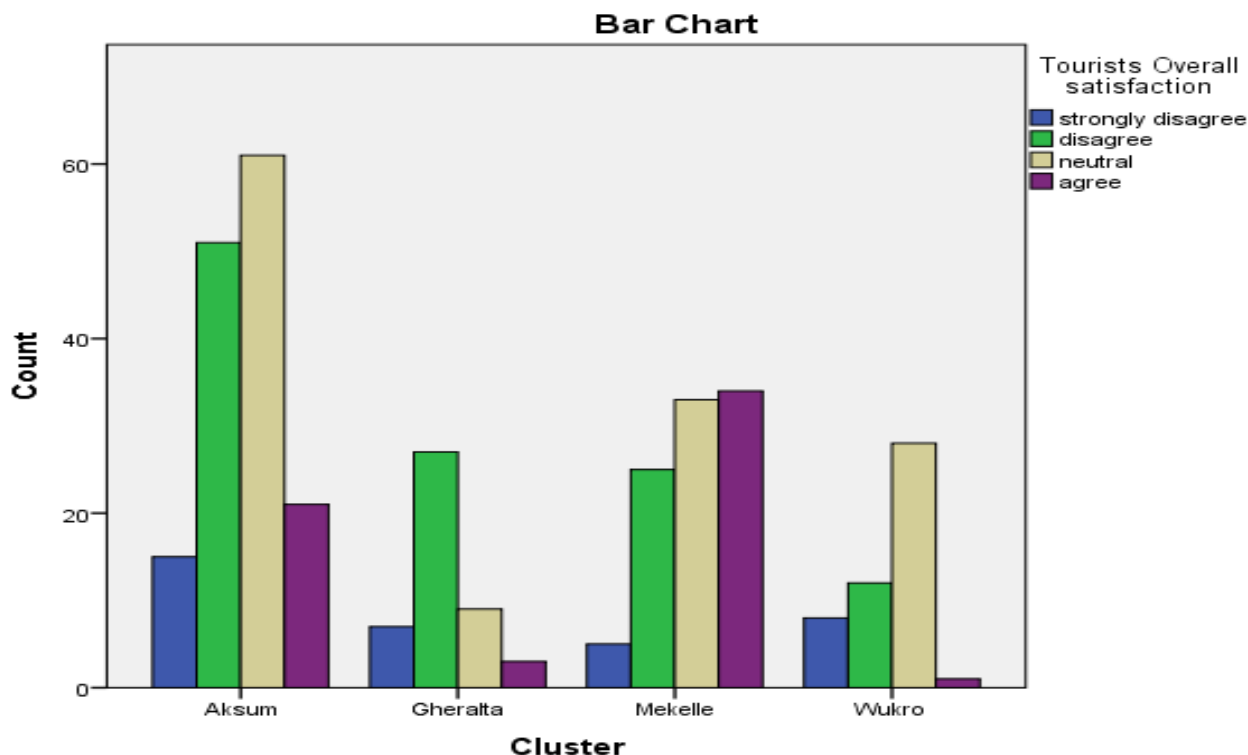

Figure 4.2: Overall Tourists' Satisfaction- Cluster wise

To determine whether the difference on tourists' overall satisfaction between clusters was statistically significant, a statistical tool One-Way ANOVA was applied.

Table 4.2: Tourists Overall Satisfaction Comparison by Cluster

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	23.909	3	7.970	11.002	.000
Within Groups	243.397	336	.724		
Total	267.306	339			

Source: Author's Computation, 2017

As shown on Table 4.2, tourists' overall satisfaction differed significantly among the four groups, $F (3,336) = 11.002$, $P = .000 < P=0.05$. Tourists were more satisfied in Mekelle cluster (M = 2.99), followed by Aksum cluster (M=2.59) and less satisfied in Gheralta cluster (M = 2.17). Furthermore, Table 4.3 displays the multiple comparisons table which presents the results of the Tukey post hoc test. The ANOVA table already stated as there was a statistically significant difference between the groups as a whole, but it didn't tell us in which cluster satisfaction differed. This multiple comparisons

table further discovers which groups clusters differed from each other. The Tukey post hoc test is generally the preferred test for conducting post hoc tests on a one-way ANOVA (Newsom, 2013).

Table 4.3: Multiple Comparisons; Tourists Overall Satisfaction

(I) cluster	(J) cluster	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mekelle	Aksum	.395*	.111	.002	.11	.68
	Wukro	.541*	.149	.002	.16	.93
	Gheralta	.816*	.152	.000	.42	1.21
Aksum	Mekelle	-.395*	.111	.002	-.68	-.11
	Wukro	.146	.140	.727	-.22	.51
	Gheralta	.421*	.144	.019	.05	.79
Wukro	Mekelle	-.541*	.149	.002	-.93	-.16
	Aksum	-.146	.140	.727	-.51	.22
	Gheralta	.275	.175	.395	-.18	.73
Gheralta	Mekelle	-.816*	.152	.000	-1.21	-.42
	Aksum	-.421*	.144	.019	-.79	-.05
	Wukro	-.275	.175	.395	-.73	.18

Source: Author's Computation, 2017   * Mean difference significant at the 0.05

The multiple comparison table, Tukey post hoc tests, indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in tourists overall satisfaction between the clusters Mekelle and Aksum (P=0.002, P<0.05); Mekelle and Wukro cluster (P=0.002, P<0.05); Mekelle and Gheralta cluster (P=0.000, P<0.05) and Aksum and Gheralta cluster (P=0.019, P=0.05). However, there were no statistical significance differences in terms of tourists overall satisfaction between the clusters Aksum and Wukro (p = 0.727, P>0.05) and Wukro and Gheralta clusters (P=0.395, P>0.05). Therefore, tourists' level of satisfaction was significantly varies among the four clusters of the destination, Mekelle, Aksum, Wukro and Gheralta.

4.5 Tourist Satisfaction Comparisons by Demographic Profiles

Tourist's level of satisfaction was also assessed in relation to age, gender, educational profile, country of residence, occupational and income status and determining whether there was a significance differences between these socio-demographic variables at the end. As shown on Table 4.4, the results of the analyses indicated that there was no significant relationship between gender and tourist satisfaction (F (1, 336) = 1.132, p = 0.288), also supported by the findings of Morajerani and Miremadi (2013); *Beqiri*, *et al.,* (2014); Mellina and Aballe (2013). In terms of the age group, the ANOVA table indicated that, there was no significant differences on tourist satisfaction based on age category (F (5, 322) =1.545, p =0.176), Chi *et al.,* (2009); (2014); Perovic *et al.* (2012). Based on marital status, the results also indicated that, there was significant differences on tourist satisfaction (F (3, 323) =6.711, P =0.000). This result was further analyzed to get insights of magnitude of the variation. According to the results of Post Hoc Tests conducted for multiple comparisons, there was a statistically significant difference on single and married groups both in terms of satisfaction and

loyalty (P=0.001). However, there was no satisfaction difference between the other categories, as also supported by Bahram *et al.,* (2014).

The ANOVA results also revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in tourist satisfaction (F (5, 329)=1.063, P=0.381) based on educational status. Similar findings were also resulted by Beqiri, *et al.,* (2014); Mykletun, *et al.,* (2001); and Chi *et al.,* 2009. Finally, results also confirmed, tourist satisfaction has no significant differences in terms of country of residence (F (3, 331) =0.474, p = 0.755), occupation (F (8, 327)=1.022, P=0.419) and income (F (5, 311) = 2.004, P =0.078), as supported by the results of Perovic *et al.* (2012) and (*Patrícia et al.,* 2006).

Table 4.4: Satisfaction Comparisons by Demographic Profiles and Travel Characteristics

Variables	ANOVA Test	Results
Gender	F = 1.132, p = 0.288	Not significant
Age group	F = 1.545, p = 0.176	Not Significant
Marital status	F = 6.711, p = 0.000*	Significant
Country	F = 0.474, p = 0.755	Not significant
Education	F = 1.063, p = 0.381	Not significant
Occupation	F = 1.022, p = 0.419	Not significant
Income	F = 2.004, p = 0.078	Not significant
Purpose of Visit	F = 0.893, p = 0.486	Not significant
Visiting Frequency	F = 3.647, p = 0.027**	Significant
Stay time	F = 5.899, p = 0.001*	Significant
Travel Companion	F = 1.511, p = 0.174	Not significant
Type of loadings	F = 0.824, p = 0.533	Not significant

Source: Author's computation, 2017   ** p< 0.01   * p< 0.05

4.6 Tourist Satisfaction Differences by Some Selected Travel Behaviours

In this sub-section, some selected tourists' travel characteristics such as purpose of visits, frequency of visit, stay time, travel companion and type of loadings on the one side (independent factors) and tourists satisfaction on the other side (dependent factor) were considered for the one-ANOVA analysis.

Relationship between Purpose of Visits and Tourists' Satisfaction

As displayed on **Table 4.4,** the ANOVA-Test indicated that tourists with different purposes of visit exhibited no significant difference in their level of satisfaction (F (5, 351) = 0.893, p = 0.486), similar findings were also reported by Wilkins (2010).

Relationship of Frequency of Visits and Stay Time with Tourists' Satisfaction

Tourists who visited the destination on different visiting frequencies (F (2, 330) = 3.647, P = 0.027) and with different stay times (F (3, 329) = 5.899, P = 0.001) have exhibited statistically significant difference in their levels of satisfaction respectively in both factors. Specifically, tourists who visited the destination for their first time were more satisfied (M=2.76) in the destination than tourists who visited the destination repeatedly (M=2.42). Finally, tourists who stayed four nights and above at the destination were more satisfied (M=2.86) than those stayed only for two nights in the same destination (M=2.36).

Relationship of Travel Companion and Type of loadings with Tourists' Satisfaction

There was no statistically significant differences between tourists who visited the destination on different travel companions in their level of satisfaction (F (6, 326) = 1.511, P = 0.174). However, in terms of type accommodations used, tourists have exhibited significant difference (F (5, 326) = 3.364, P = 0.006), thus, tourists with their own /rented residence and those their loading was on hotels were tend to be more satisfied (M=3.23) and (M=2.86) respectively than those who stayed at tourist campsite (M=2.07) in the destination.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The findings drown from this study will be of utmost assistance to the destination managers and service providers at the destination in further improving the services and image of the destination. The results described under, could also help destination managers and marketers to better understand the dimensions that better describes the destination, factors contributing to tourist satisfaction and loyalty so that they will be able to carefully deliver products and services suitable to the tourists' needs and wants. Thus, it would be advisable to the destination providers and managers to consider the practical implications of the service attributes, which may be fundamental elements in enhancing tourists' overall satisfaction and loyalty in the destination.

This study confirmed that, tourists level of satisfaction in Tigray tourist destination was marginally low (M=2.63), that is below average. This may be due to the provision of poor quality of services (below tourists' expectation) provided at the same destination as it was analyzed in the service quality section in this study. Hence, it was suggested to the destination managers and service providers at the destination to consider the implications of the destination attributes, which may be fundamental in impacting tourists' overall satisfaction.

Tourists' level of satisfaction significantly differs between the four case clusters. To this end, there is a statistically significant difference in tourists overall satisfaction between the clusters of Mekelle and Aksum; Mekelle and Wukro; Mekelle and Gheralta and Aksum and Gheralta clusters. However, there was no statistically significance differences in terms of tourists overall satisfaction between the clusters of Aksum and Wukro and Wukro and Gheralta clusters. Tourists were relatively satisfied in Mekelle cluster (M = 2.99) and more dissatisfied in Gheralta cluster (relatively with the least satisfaction mean, M = 2.17) than on the other clusters in terms of the overall satisfaction level of tourists. Since the other clusters are endowed with many countryside tourist sites, the dissatisfaction level of tourists on these clusters were may be due to the infrastructure and ancillary related

problems allied to these sites that required due attention from the officials and the community at large. Moreover, providing better information about the conditions of infrastructure, transportation, and accommodation, such as, hotels, restaurants, water quality and features of tracks could help tourists better prepare in advance for what they may encounter. Other contexts that could increase tourist satisfaction and would help visitors, accessible information centers providing information categorized as national, regional /local or cluster reports on weather conditions, local events and 'real information.

In Tigray tourist destination, Male and Female tourists with different age categories were equally satisfied. Thus, there was no statistically significance difference between Male and Female tourists and between the various age categories in terms of satisfaction of tourists in Tigray tourist destination. Similarly, tourists' level of satisfaction was not varying among the various income brackets, educational status, occupational positions and country of residence. Therefore, international and local tourists with different educational, occupational and income statuses were equally satisfied or dissatisfied on Tigray tourist destination. However, there was a significance difference between single and married tourists, in which married tourists were more satisfied with the overall services provided at the destination. Hence, the destination managers should work to make the destination the prime choice for couples.

Tourists traveling to Tigray destination with various purposes and travel companions exhibited no significant differences in their levels of satisfaction. However, there was a significant difference between first time visitors and repeated tourists in their level of satisfaction in which first time visitors were more satisfied in the destination. Similarly, tourists who stayed four and more nights were more satisfied. Thus, as the tourists' staying time increases, their level of satisfaction also increased in Tigray destination, here, the issue of adaptability and being familiar with may accelerate the satisfaction level of the visitors. Therefore, this revealed that there remaining a big assignment for the concerned bodies to strive more on extending the stay time of the visitors. Moreover, in terms of the type of accommodation they were used, tourists significantly differ in their levels of satisfaction; those tourists who stayed in their own residences and hotels were likely to be more satisfied than those who stayed on other types of loadings. Hence, to enhance otherwise to preserve the current level of tourists satisfaction with hotel loadings, the government should encourage investors to engage more on hotel industry.

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