
RELATION BETWEEN DESTINATION IMAGE AND TOURISTS' EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

In this age of tough competition, tourism destinations are facing challenges concerning tourists' perceived images throughout the globe. Tourists, being main stakeholder of the process, are focus of all those studies which claim to provide solution of it. This paper with objective of making analysis of tourist experiences with reference to destination image discusses expectation evaluation process, attractiveness measurements, destination image formulation, role of image in selection of destination and recommendations for competitive destinations.

Keywords: *Destination Image, Expectation Evaluation, Destination Selection, Image Formulation*

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INTRODUCTION

Attractiveness measurement of destination is crucial programme which depends on several presumptions. Here, it can be understood as assessment of tourist's potential demand of a particular place in which are predetermined because tourists' objectives vary. Plog's tourist continuum in term of allocentric, midcentric and psychocentric defines different nature of travelers. Expectation of a tourist can be measured at two stages of pre-visiting or after-visiting. The revisiting stage has determinations which motivate people to evaluate place accordingly. Ultimately their nature whether they are allocenteic or psychocentric play decisive role in selection of visiting sites. A qualitative research by using questionnaire can be helpful in the assessment of attractiveness. The variables can be (Gate, 1988) sanitation, accessibilities, food quality, host attitude, environment of attraction, prices level at attraction, culture and variety of sites. On other hand it can be measured by the adoption of expectation and evaluation of visitors' response regarding destination. In tourism, supply side connotes feature such as inseparability, intangibility, heterogeneity, variability. In addition to it behavior and technical functions are also associated with satisfaction level.

IMPLICATIONS OF EXPECTATION EVALUATION PROGRAM

Generally, service quality of destination is determined by the consumers' cognitive dissonance. In other words, tourists' experience can be measured on the basis of quality aspects. Tourist's experience of holiday (Ryan, 2000) can be evaluated through the implication of Likert scale. The strategic marketing plan involving research output can be designed and implement for the enhancement of destination. The private and public sector in order to make market coverage and differentiated marketing strategies, can also use research output.

R. Brent Ritchie and Michel in annals of tourism research (1978) stated that destination tourism variable can influence tourists participating and these variables comprise of cultural and social characteristics, natural, beauty and climate, sport, recreation educational facilities, shopping commercial facilities, Infrastructure, Attitude toward tourist and price level.

TOURIST BEHAVIOR AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS

In tourism system, attractions are motivation for travel; however attractions reserve some amount of expenditure because tourist spends primarily on transport, lodging, food etc. Generally, destination means plethora of attractions which invites tourist towards it and supply aspects such as shopping, entertainment, recreational facilities also significant play an important role in the

building of attractive destination. The destination selection indicates tourists' behavioral and motivational factors affecting and influence him towards decision making process.

Fundamentally, travel motivation study relates to tourists' tendencies in particular situation; Ritchie (2007) stated that we need to ask why certain group of people chooses certain holiday experiences. Ritchie (2007) identified various travel motivational factors such a self development, curiosity, love, sex, competence and understanding. Analytical view of Plog's destination continuum indicates allocentric persons tends to visits extreme destination, and psychocentric prefers exotic places, but some time these too changes their behavior as they found suitable environment and availability of discount and relaxation on particular visiting (metro destination). They change their attitude towards participation.

ROLE OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Arlin Epperson's (1983) described that push factors of pull and push forces are cause of intrinsic need assessment for tourists and pull factors indicates to destination image such as natural and man-made attractiveness. Both factors works together and influence tourist in the selection of destination. So choice of place is the result of pull and push forces and their mutual interaction. Generally, image is understood as expression of perception of specific product and place. Reynolds (1985) defined image as a perceived construct of tourist on the basis of a few selected impressions emerged in tourists' brain. As per destination image is concerned, Russell and Prat (1981) described framework of arousing vs. sleepy, pleasant vs. unpleasant, distressing vs. relaxing and exciting vs. gloomy. The above statement determines the destination's image in relative and comparative manners Further, Ryan (2010) proposed destination image as an interaction of visitors experience, promotion of visitors experience, promotion messages and actual physical and service attributes. In addition to it, these attributes vary person to person and have tendency of change. Conclusively, destination image relies primarily upon the intrinsic and extrinsic need of person which led them to create perception in terms of uniqueness and compression, Hence, destination's specific feature and promotional message such as words of mouth communication on the basis of visitor's experience as well as campaign and slogan of concerned are important aspects in the creation of belief, which lateral emerge as a new phenomena of image. Image itself is considering a product having essential elements in the success of a destination. Gunn (1972) conceptualized induced image of destination as mechanism of promotional effects. However, Nature of subject to change is based on visitor's

consumption Thus, Destination Prosperity depends on the planners, functional and technical strategies of tourism enhancement through implication and understanding imagery.

Developer has to measure the destination image and then should go for planning to reap out the tourism benefits. Moreover, image management through inclusion of positioning, improving standard and provisioning of well built infrastructure could be fruitful.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Above mentioned concept of destination image stated that tourism being a hyper sensitive product relies upon gained experience for future perspective. Hence, tourism organization and intermediaries have to come forward and should investigate experiences. As per demand perspective, destination resources qualities should be kept update and accurate because emerging dimension of tourism always change the tourist' behaviors .Modernity in accessibilities and other facilities leads to satisfaction level and enhances tourist future potentialities. At the destination level, Government should establish visitor information centre. These Primary functions should be integrated with creation of imaginary through suitable policies. The service gap should be investigated through the analysis of promised and delivered services particularly in lean season.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Conceptual model of service quality by Parasuraman, Zeithmal, and Brevity, Leonard (1985) presented the comparative results of expected and perceived service in the form of satisfaction level, and concluded that pricing also correlate to perceived service quality generally highly priced products or destinations have always the expectation of good quality that will greatly satisfy the tourist and helpful in creation of memorable experience. On other hand, lower priced destinations instead of having good scenic beauty and sites have perceived tendency of lesser satisfaction. Whenever discussion goes on creation of memorable experience on the basis of SERQVEL, pricing of the destination also should be included. Positioning is a marketing technique which could be helpful in creation of better perceptions about destination because market positioning relates to consumer's classification through the judgment of gained value by visiting of different destinations. The value in terms of quality experience, determines the cause for the study of pricing factors. Hence, costing and pricing of destinations is essential segment in the expectation evaluation process, further in this model of expectation evaluation, there is direct relation between destination prices and tourist perception such as maximum priced product are considered qualitative and having longer durability while lower priced tends to be having less

expectations in term of durability and quality. Thus Destination Management Offices and National Tourism offices as well as private planner should go for market survey and asses marketability (supply side) along with pricing strategies for the creation of memorable travelling experience.

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