

Measuring Tourist Satisfaction: A Categorical Study on Domestic Tourists in Bangladesh

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***Abstract:** The encouragement of domestic tourism is a current phenomenon of tourism industry all over the world. This study basically identifies eight variables associated with subject of domestic tourism in Bangladesh and assesses their contribution on tourists' satisfaction. The analysis shows that out of eight variables five have significant influence on the overall satisfaction of the domestic tourists. These are scenic beauty, hotel services, transportation facilities, price for tourist services, and emotional attachment with the destination. At the end few implications are extracted in the light of empirical findings to increase satisfaction of the domestic tourists.*

***Keywords:** Tourist satisfaction; Domestic tourism; Tourist services*

INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism industry is acknowledged as the single largest industry and trade sector around the world. This industry is flourishing massively. Tourism is playing an outstanding role in terms of foreign exchange earnings in many countries as well. It has exposed a tremendous growth during the past several decades. The significant development of transportation and telecommunication system, growth of travel market sectors, increasing international travel trends, availability of standardized accommodation facilities, increasing desire of people to know other communities, increased personal & family income, rising standard of living, increased paid holidays, and so on have contributed to massive increase in people's tendency to involve in travel and tourism. According to the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010) forecast about 2020, there will be 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals worldwide. These tourists will spend more than 2 trillion US dollars representing sustained average annual growth rates of 4.3 and 6.7 percent in arrivals and earnings respectively. So tourism is coming in front of the world with a new height.

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With the present state of infrastructure and facilities, tourism industry in Bangladesh has failed to attract a significant number of tourists in the country. Therefore, the concerned government authority and the private operators should take more practical measures to ensure sustaining development in this sector. By formulating effective policies and implement those carefully the country can enhance its domestic tourism that means visiting by resident tourists in the country (Goeldner, 2006). The development of domestic tourism requires sincere, relentless efforts, awareness and motivational programs (Chowdhury, 2009). If done so, it is expected that the industry would be able to fulfill the national dreams and the sector will very soon emerge as a major contributor to the economy of Bangladesh (Hossain and Nazmin, 2006). Before going to encourage the inbound tourism largely the country should encourage the domestic tourism (Graham, 2004). Avoiding resident tourists demand would be considered as premature attempts to enter into international markets (Kelly, 2006). Domestic tourism is more important to create and develop inbound tourism friendly environment (McIntosh et al., 2005) and inbound tourism can help to earn a lot of foreign exchange for a country (Ningning, 2009). Therefore encouraging domestic tourism is going a step forward to international tourism enlargement.

Bangladesh is currently going ahead in an effort to diversify its economy from traditional way to manufacturing and service sector. The Industrial Policy of 1999 has included tourism as an industry and identified it as a “Thrust Sector” considering its steady growth and sustainable development. In the National Tourism Policy 1992, tourism’s contribution to national economy and to poverty alleviation has been recognized (Morshed, former chairman BPC). Hossain et al., (2005) has identified lack of effective marketing strategies is a great obstacle of tourism development. Therefore country needs to take comprehensive plan to build up tourism sector. Understanding domestic tourist satisfaction criteria would be a diminutive effort to develop marketing strategies those are followed by comprehensive tourism plan.

As domestic tourism play significant role to the overall tourism system for a country. For that reason, this study has identified some variables those are highly contributing to the satisfaction domestic tourists in Bangladesh. By understanding those variables contributing tourist satisfaction, it is possible to develop new products those will provide continuous tourist satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is uncomplicatedly possible to identify, a significant number of research studies, articles relating to various aspects of tourism have been published home and abroad. There are many papers related to domestic tourism developed and patronized by the

national tourism organization (NTO) and private level of different destination in the world. But except few individual efforts, this is challenging to find out articles or research papers which only highlighted only domestic tourism in Bangladesh. Moreover it should be addressed that there are many papers written for finding out the potentiality and problems of tourism sector in Bangladesh. A number of national and foreign articles, papers or journals are reviewed to have some ideas regarding domestic tourism and tourist satisfaction in this study.

The development of domestic tourism is a pre-requisite for the development of international tourism because domestic tourism helps developing infrastructure in the destination country and thus welcomes inbound tourists there (Hossain and Nazmin, 2006). Hence, managing domestic tourists is very significant in this connection. India is encouraging domestic tourism and citizens are visiting different sites and attractions of different states of the country (Graham, 2004). Furthermore, by providing appropriate destination attributes can stimulate overall satisfaction levels of (domestic) tourists (Kozak and Mike 2000).

Measuring tourist satisfaction plays an important role in marketing tourism products and services (Meng et al., 2008). Menezes et al., (2009), Prideaux et al., (2008), and Kozak et al., (1999), have described that destination attributes play an significant role on tourist satisfaction. The attributes are scenic beauty (Williams et al., 2007; Hui et al., 2007; BaeHaeng, 1998; Weber, 1997; Danaher et al., 1996), hotel performance (Meng et al., 2008; Hui et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2007; Danaher et al., 1996), transportation service (Meng et al., 2008; Danaher et al., 1996), price of tourist services (Hui et al., 2007), security arrangement (Neal et al., 2008), food service (Nield et al., 2000), outdoor recreation (Danaher et al., 1996), emotional desire to visit (Williams et al., 2007), service providers behavior (Meng et al., 2008; Rimmington et al., 1998). These identified attributes are also important for the satisfaction of domestic tourists. Since satisfaction is related with various factor regarding travel and tourism services (Neal et al., 2008; Prideaux et al., 2006). So by providing desired service tourist satisfaction can be increased.

Tourist satisfaction varies with same services between residents and non-residents (Kozak, 2001) reasons are dissimilar motivations and performance evaluations (McDowall, 2010). Therefore measuring satisfaction regarding tourist services by same scale from domestic and inbound tourists would be inconsistent.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The core objective of this study is to provide an idea how tourism planners can develop sustainable tour products and/or services for the domestic tourists in Bangladesh.

This study has been conducted to elicit the following various specific objectives to support the core objective. Those are:

1. identifying the existing and potential attributes which contribute to the satisfaction of domestic tourists in Bangladesh;
2. analyzing the attributes those motivate tourists to select a particular tourist destinations in the country; and
3. providing a brief suggestion based on tourist survey on the subject of tour product development for supporting the domestic tourism expansion strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is basically descriptive in nature. Both primary data and Secondary data have been used in the study. For collecting primary data two methods are used. One is depth interview and another is individual tourist survey. Five tourism industry experts have been asked separately regarding the basis of tourist's satisfaction. And they have identified several common reasons (variables) which are directly influencing tourist satisfaction. Further the identified reasons of tourist satisfaction are reconfirmed by dependable literatures like different newspaper articles, academic journals and research reports.

For tourists satisfaction survey the respondents were selected by using non-probability judgmental sampling technique (based on occupation). The respondents of the survey were individual tourists (40% were students, 30% were employees of private and public organizations, 20% businessmen, and rest of the 10% were housewives) who were visited at least one of the tourist destinations of Bangladesh (such - Cox's Bazar, Sundarbans, Bandarabans, Kuakata, St. Martin Island etc.) with overnight stay in previous one year from the surveyed time. In total 220 tourists were approached, with at least 190 agreeing to participate and to complete in providing data on the questionnaire. Of these, some of cases were rejected due to partial fulfillment of the questionnaire thus leaving 156 useable questionnaires (completion rate is about 71%). Among these useable questionnaires merely 150 were taken for the convenience of final data analysis of this study. Therefore the sample size of the study is 150.

Personal interviewing method was used for collecting data from the respondents. The questionnaire was comprised with structured questions. There are 9 questions in the questionnaire formed by popular Likert Scale (a form of itemized rating scale). The first likert question was used for measuring the dependent variable and the rest of the eight questions were used for measuring independent variables. Initially draft questionnaire

was prepared. The initial questionnaire was pre-tested by using 30 different sample elements (respondents) and necessary rectification was made before being finalized. Nine point Likert Scale (1 represents 'fully disagree' and 9 represents 'fully agree') has been used in this data collection.

For collecting the primary data, the study was conducted during the period from October 5, 2010 to January 31, 2011. In addition, the study covered various published & unpublished materials on the subject to fulfill the research requirements.

For data analysis, the selected dependent variable is *overall Satisfaction regarding Domestic Tour* (Y) and corresponding independent variable (X_i) are given below:

X_1 = Rich Scenic Beauty

X_2 = Quality Hotel Services

X_3 = Comfortable Transportation Facilities

X_4 = Reasonable Price for Tourist Services

X_5 = Strong Security System

X_6 = Available Recreational Amenities

X_7 = Emotional Attachment with the Destination

X_8 = Service Providers Entertaining Attitude

The dependent variable 'overall Satisfaction regarding Domestic Tour' (Y) basically has measured how the tourist is satisfied or dissatisfied after having a tour in any place in Bangladesh. Moreover the independent variables, X_i are used for identifying their contribution to influence the dependent variable, Y (Malhotra, 2006). In this study Regression analysis, one of the statistical tools has been used. The data analyses have been conducted by using SPSS (16.5).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The **Table 1** presents the mean value and standard deviation of eight attributes along with the dependent variable 'Overall Satisfaction regarding Domestic Tour' from the tourists' surveyed. The mean value of the dependent variable is 5.14 which mean the domestic tourists visiting different destination in Bangladesh are getting medium level satisfaction by present offered service mix. In the table it is comprehensible that rich scenic beauty, quality hotel services, emotional attachment with the destination, are playing important role to get satisfaction of a particular domestic tour. Service providers entertaining

attitude has 5.54 score (mean value) which represents its importance in satisfaction. To raise the overall satisfaction of domestic tours the country should give attention to pricing, security and recreational amenities.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|--------|----------------|-----|
| Overall Satisfaction regarding Tour | 5.1400 | 2.27926 | 150 |
| Rich Scenic Beauty | 5.9067 | 1.90494 | 150 |
| Quality Hotel Services | 5.6333 | 1.56907 | 150 |
| Comfortable Transportation Facilities | 5.3067 | 1.75685 | 150 |
| Reasonable Price for Tourist Services | 4.2333 | 2.13446 | 150 |
| Strong Security System | 4.9067 | 1.55588 | 150 |
| Available Recreational Amenities | 4.0733 | 1.45674 | 150 |
| Emotional Attachment with the Destination | 5.5733 | 1.82579 | 150 |
| Service Providers Entertaining Attitude | 5.5400 | 2.23646 | 150 |

Source: SPSS Output

In this study it is tried to find out the degree of influence of independent variables on dependent variable by multiple regression analysis. **Table 2** shows all the coefficients of the independent variables on dependent variable, 'Overall Satisfaction regarding Tour'. Here the estimated regression equation is given in the accompanying equation.

$$Y = -3.881 + .103 X_1 + .336 X_2 + .601 X_3 + .140 X_4 + .030 X_5 + (-.007) X_6 \\ + .444 X_7 + .025 X_8$$

Table 2
Regression of ‘Overall Satisfaction regarding Tour’

| Variables | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -3.881 | .452 | | -8.578 | .000 |
| Rich Scenic Beauty | .103 | .049 | .086 | 2.095 | .038 |
| Quality Hotel Services | .336 | .086 | .232 | 3.895 | .000 |
| Comfortable Transportation Facilities | .601 | .072 | .463 | 8.345 | .000 |
| Reasonable Price for Tourist Services | .140 | .049 | .131 | 2.858 | .005 |
| Strong Security System | .030 | .071 | .020 | .418 | .677 |
| Available Recreational Amenities | -.007 | .064 | -.004 | -.106 | .916 |
| Emotional Attachment with the Destination | .444 | .075 | .356 | 5.915 | .000 |
| Service Providers Entertaining Attitude | .025 | .052 | .025 | .486 | .628 |

Source: SPSS Output

In **Table 2** the coefficients of ‘Quality Hotel Services’ (X_2), ‘Comfortable Transportation Facilities’ (X_3), ‘Reasonable Price for Tourist Services’ (X_4), and ‘Emotional Attachment with the Destination’ (X_7) are statistically arrived at as 1% level of significant while ‘Rich Scenic Beauty’ (X_1) is estimated at 5% level of significant. This implies that ensuring quality hotel services, comfortable transportation facilities, reasonable price for tourist services, emotional attachment with the destination and rich scenic beauty, each of the variables is positively influencing the tourist satisfaction. Their positive signs of the

coefficients indicate that they are positively influencing the domestic tourist satisfaction. That is an increase of these variables will increase the tourist satisfaction. The direct contribution could be explained by the discussed five independent variables on dependent variable. But it does not say that there is no contribution of the other independent variables.

Table 3
Model Summary

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| .906(a) | .821 | .811 | .99044 |

Source: SPSS Output

The **Table 3** shows that the estimated model has high adjusted R^2 value indicating good fit of the data to the multiple regression model. The summary of the estimated multiple regression model show the value of R^2 is .821 and adjusted R Square is .811. About 82% of the total variability in the tourist satisfaction can be explained by the estimated model.

Table 4
ANOVA

| Sources of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression | 635.744 | 8 | 79.468 | 81.010 | .000 |
| Residual | 138.316 | 141 | .981 | | |
| Total | 774.060 | 149 | | | |

Source: SPSS Output

Since the overall F-test shows (**Table 4**) significant effect so this is rational to find the effect of the individual variable that is all independent variables effect on dependent variable, overall satisfaction regarding domestic tour. So it may say the estimated multiple regression model is fit for in this study. Overall acceptability of the ' β_i ' has been tested by Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which also shows the acceptability of the model.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

After reviewing the findings of this study it can be stated that the present travel and tourism attributes are not sufficient for delivering more satisfaction to more tourists. As this study just highlighting the needs and wants of domestic tourist in Bangladesh, therefore some propositions are given on the selected attributes derived from qualitative research.

1. Natural attractiveness is very much essential to satisfy domestic tourists (Buhalis, 1999). However, Bangladesh is facing more tourists during peak period in popular tourist destinations beyond their capacity. So the natural beauty of the country is falling in threat. Preserving existing natures and discovering new natural scenic beauty for the tourists can ensure continuous escalation of tourist satisfaction. By maintaining aesthetics in developing infrastructure and tourism superstructure, following proper waste management system, managing carrying capacity, educating tourists about destination use, increasing highway tree plantation, the country can safeguard natural beauty.
2. Hotel service quality can play important role to amplify satisfaction of domestic tourists. Tourists want to receive new dimension of hospitality from the lodging providers. By providing staff training, pursuing standard norms and values in hotel operation, following hygiene management laws, the hotels can offer new shape of services which would increase tourist satisfaction. At the same time number of hotels should be increased in popular location to meet growing domestic demand.
3. The transportation facilities should be perfect and less time consuming to stimulate satisfaction. The chosen destinations transportation system must be smooth and hassle free. Unfriendly transportation system can put off tourism activities of any country. By launching comfortable vehicles, developing smooth highways, byways, and feeder roads towards destination, the DMO (Destination Management Organization) can offer more satisfaction.

4. Reasonable price of various tourist services and products is essential. Very often high price makes the domestic tourists dissatisfied. Value pricing can be suitable for tourists but demand based pricing is good for tourism marketers.
5. Security is a minor concern for the domestic tourists in Bangladesh. Because people feel less risk to travel. But some of the beach areas, hills and byways are suffering from adequate security at night. The Government is managing tourist security by regular laws and enforcement department. By introducing tourist police, lighting system and check post close to the destination, the Government can increase tourist security.
6. Recreational amenities should be developed in the existing spots as well as newly selected spots for encouraging domestic tourism. The appropriate recreational facilities are indispensable such theme parks, boating, water skiing, marine rides, and so on.
7. To create emotional attachment with the destination, the service providers need to ensure personalized service to the tourists so that they enjoy good feelings and positive word of mouth. Overall satisfaction has a significant influence on word-of-mouth referrals and intention to revisit the destination (Hutchinson et al., 2010). According to Yoon et al., (2005) destination managers should establish a higher tourist satisfaction level to create positive post-purchase tourist behavior, in order to improve and sustain destination competitiveness.
8. Service providers (such waiter, room attendant, bellboy etc.) attitude to serve can provide superior experience which is essential to increase satisfaction. Every tour product and service supplier should provide superior experience which can increase the wish of traveling and destination loyalty (Yoon et al., 2005).

Without these eight selected areas, the tour and travel marketers could arrange of cultural programs, offer enough and exclusive tourist products, develop peripheral products and facilities to complement core products, improve and controlling the quality of products and services, and facilities, building and maintaining relationships among the service providers, removing misconceptions and enhancing image of destinations, undertake enough and effective marketing promotional activities, developing promotional plans aiming at benefits sought by the tourists, opening branches and information counters in the source countries, allowing more discounts and offering other incentives, development of professional efficiency, are important for encouraging domestic tourist satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has recognized the most important attributes regarding satisfaction of domestic tourists in Bangladesh. Here just present satisfaction level domestic tourist is measured against the available service attributes of the destination. And few attributes are proved themselves as direct contributors in satisfaction. Thus the connected bodies can take measures to stimulate satisfaction by those attributes. Another thing is that the needs domestic tourist and inbound tourist are not identical. Same type of product and service mix will not satisfy them equally. Constructing of tour products should follow local tourists' preferences first, and then inbound tourist preferences. Likewise this study is suggesting domestic tourism for subsequent inbound tourism to ensure efficiency and to foreign exchange earnings. Finally development of international tourism can be ensured by resolving the many obstacles for domestic tourism.

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