
TOURISTS SATISFACTION WITH GOA AS A HOLIDAY DESTINATION

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Abstract

Tourist's satisfaction with a holiday destination is the key to its success and also determines the behavioural intentions of the tourists to revisit. The satisfaction of the tourists with the destination always remained a crucial topic for research, however, there has been a very limited investigation done on beach destinations in India. This paper is an attempt to identify the destination satisfaction attributes for the tourists in the State of Goa also called as the beach capital of India. A questionnaire based survey was conducted with a sample of 285 tourists visited Goa and stayed in different hotels and resorts. The results revealed overall satisfaction except with few destination attributes. The study will be useful for the destination marketing organisations to frame a suitable strategy for the overall satisfaction of the tourists in Goa.

Keywords: Satisfaction, destination attributes destination marketing, behavioural intentions

Introduction

In today's globalised tourism market, competitive edge over other destinations can be made only through repeat visitation which emanates from the satisfaction of the tourists with the destination. Key to the destination competitiveness is its attractions and the satisfaction of the visitors (Abreu-Novais, Ruhanen, & Arcodia, 2015). Barsky, 1992 states that tourist's satisfaction comes out from the comparison of expected and delivered service offerings at a destination. Presence of tourism can be recognised because of attractions (Gunn in Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996)). Today, the attractions of a destination are foreseen by the travellers which create a visual arousal amongst them to visit a particular destination. Moreover, the attractions alone cannot be cited as the reason to travel but the provision of supporting tourist facilities also club together for creating a complete intangible tourism experience (Tourism Research Group in Kim (2001)).

Overall tourist's satisfaction and the destination attributes have a positive and strong relationship, where elements of satisfaction includes attractive appeal, accessibility, supporting infrastructure, gastronomy, health & tour guide service (Agrawal,2017). Albayrak, 2018 states that the overall tourist satisfaction is significantly linked with the basic attributes of services offered such as shopping facilities, gastronomic offerings, tour guide services, transportation and site seeing.

The purpose of this study is to assess the satisfaction of tourists with the destination attributes along with the overall satisfaction during their holiday in Goa. The results of the study will further help the destination stakeholders and the industry to fill out the gaps in the perception and expectations of the tourists if any to achieve continuous patronage of the tourists to this wonderful destination renowned for its beaches and heritage architecture.

The State of Goa as the case study:

A place often referred to as the ‘Beach capital of India’, Goa is having fascinating and incredible diversity of tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage. It is an awesome place for tourists surrounded by Arabian Sea on the west and having an area of 3702 square kilometres with Western Ghats in the east. The weather in Goa remains pleasant throughout the year attracting large number of tourists from all over the globe (Goa Tourism Policy, 2020). The economy of Goa relies upon tourism and more than 40% of the population is connected with tourism. The government of Goa perceives it to be the most favoured destination in India for the tourists having high spending capacity and a superlative tourist destination in the world by 2030. The prime agency involved in the growth, development and promotion of tourism in Goa is “Goa Tourism development Corporation” (GTDC).

Table 1: Tourist arrivals in Goa from 2017 till August, 2020

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2017	6895234	890459	7785693
2018	7081559	933841	8015400
2019	7127287	9371 13	8064400
2020 (till August)	876358	282022	1158380

Source: Tourist Arrival Statistics, Dept. of Tourism, Goa

There is no dearth of accommodation facilities in Goa having a variety of hotels, guest houses, resorts which can suit to every kind of tourist having low to high budget ranging from five star deluxe hotels to private houses and lodges on rent. The peak tourist season is in December to February near Christmas and every Goan is in festive mood at that time celebrating and hosting tourists from across the world. When it comes to food the cuisine of Goa is having lot of influence related with its culture and heritage from Portuguese, Hindus and of course the modern cuisines from all over the world. Since Goa is having huge tourist arrivals, there is a dire need for the satisfaction of tourists during their holidays and travel which in turn will generate revenue and help to boost tourism in the state.

It is essential to ensure tourist satisfaction as the satisfied tourists always have an intention to revisit and recommend others whereas the unsatisfied tourist will spread negativity and will not go for repeat visit (Jani & Han, 2011). It is evident from the previous studies that the satisfaction of tourists with a destination is the outcome of several factors derived out of comparison between the perceptions and the expectations of the tourists about the services and products offered at the place during travel (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Chon & Olsen, 1991). Therefore it is important that if Goa wants to maintain its competitive edge over other destinations the satisfaction of the tourists and their holiday experience must exceed the expectations so that the graph of revisit and growth of tourist arrivals keep rising. Although several studies have been undertaken for analysing customer satisfaction during their visit to many destinations in terms of facilities, cuisine, accommodation and other aspects but relatively there is a limited research done particularly to assess the holiday experience of tourists in Goa which is one of the favourite tourist destination in India for the tourists across the world.

Literature review:

Globalisation has led to the increase in competition among destinations all over the globe and every tourist place is looking to offer some distinctive and peculiar experiences (UNWTO, 2017). Due to the acceleration in the experience economy, tourists are passionate about getting some memorable and long lasting experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

The notion of tourist satisfaction was first developed by Pizam (1978) and resulted in the comparison of expectations of tourists ahead of their travel with the experiences encountered at the destination.

Satisfaction of tourists is of utmost importance as it is associated with the destination choice (Ahmed, 1991), consumption of services and products and also the intention to revisit the place (Stevens, 1992; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Numerous studies have investigated customer satisfaction and it has been linked with service quality (Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985; Grönroos, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Tourist satisfaction is all about the pre purchase expectations and post purchase perception drawn out of the experience (Kotler, 1999).

Satisfaction of tourists at a destination has an impact on their behavioural intentions and it has a great affect on destination choice along with consumption of services and products (Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010; Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). Satisfaction of tourists enhances the revisit intention and also promotes recommendation to others for visiting the destination (Han and Hyun 2015)). Various studies in the literature cite a strong relationship of satisfaction with holiday experience and destination loyalty (i.e. Bramwell, 1998; Prentice and Andersen, 2000; Um et al, 2006; Meleddu et al, 2015).

Researchers have pointed out various natural resources like beaches, natural attractions, climatic conditions, culture, heritage and local traditions as the elements for the satisfaction of the tourists. Other alluring features contributing towards tourist satisfaction includes accessibility of the place, cuisine, restaurants, accommodation facilities, safety and security, entertainment services, health and tourist guide services (Agrawal, 2017). According to Albayrak (2018), the most important destination attributes like food, shopping facilities, tour guide and transportation have a strong impact on tourist satisfaction. It is through the tourist satisfaction that we can understand the performance of the destination and the tourist destination has more loyal and repeat visits if they understand the attributes which satisfies the tourists (McMullan, R., & O'Neill, M. 2010).

The satisfaction is the result of the experience encountered by the tourist and the evaluation of the value delivered at the destination by the service provider (Kao et al., 2008). Researchers have a viewpoint that the feeling of satisfaction stems out of the cognitive and emotional elements of the tourists experience with a destination (Del Bosque & Martin, 2008; Oliver, 1993; Wang, Zhang, Gu & Zhen, 2009). Satisfaction of tourists with a destination is basically a composite evaluation of several features and characteristics (Wang et al., 2009). Satisfaction must be evaluated through multidimensional approach as it includes number of variables and also it is heterogeneous in nature due to the involvement of human element (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

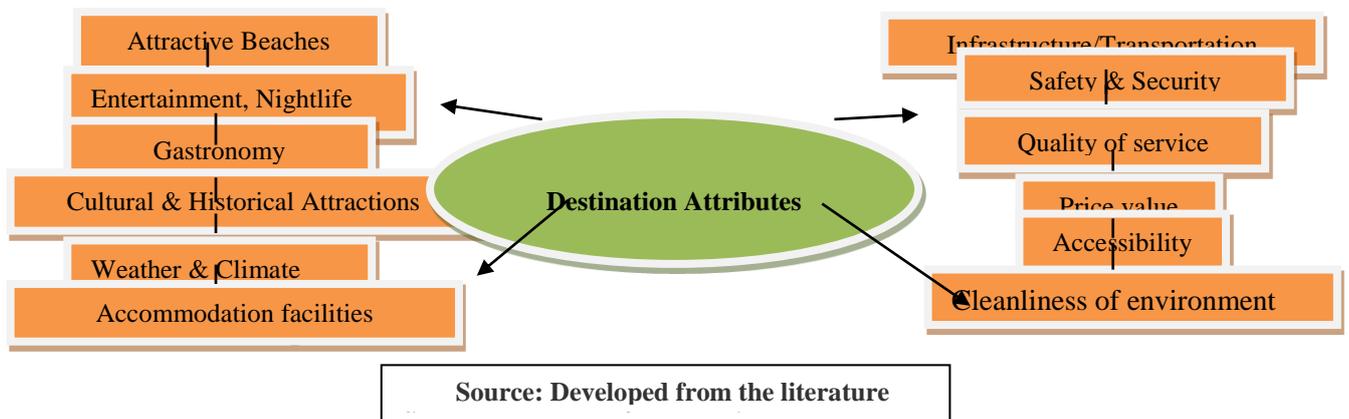
Several researchers point out that destination attributes must be evaluated by the management (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; De Nisco et al., 2015; Della Corte, Sciarelli, Cascella & Del Gaudio, 2015; Do Valle et al., 2006; Gnanapala, 2015; Pawaskars & Goel, 2017), but there seems to be lot of ambiguity as to what attributes should be considered for an integrated evaluation of tourist satisfaction (Dwyer et al., 2016; Rašovska, Kubickova & Ryglova, 2021). Various studies have been conducted by evaluating different destination attributes at varied locations. Several attributes which are prominent includes cuisine, climate and environment, accommodation, attraction faculties as per the individuality of the destination (Albayrak, Caber, Gonzales-Rodriguez & Aksu, 2018; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008; Djeri, Stamenković, Blešić, Miličević & Ivkov, 2018; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Meng et al., 2008; Pizam, Neumann & Reichel, 1978; Rajesh, 2013; Ragavan et al., 2014).

The destination attributes vary as per the destination and personality characteristics of the tourists and there seems to be an ongoing debate for measuring tourist satisfaction stage or timing (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Studies reveal comparison of pre holiday expectations and post holiday perceptions (Duke and Persia, 1996; Kerrie Littlejohn, Mark D. Needham, Brian W. Szuster & Evan J. Jordan, 2016).

Holiday satisfaction measurement instrument (HOLSAT), developed by Tribe and Snaith (1998) is an extension of preceding SERVQUAL instrument and emphasises exclusively on holiday satisfaction elements of tourists. HOLSAT instrument assiduously tries to identify the fundamental holiday elements along with their satisfaction elements. HOLSAT analyses the perspective of tourists towards these elements which further creates satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A vital feature of HOLSAT is to assess the positive and negative elements in the overall holiday experience of the tourists with a destination. In other words HOLSAT is a connection between tourist’s perception during experience and their expectation before the experience.

Methodology

A quantitative method was employed to collect data for the present study. A survey questionnaire was used to conduct this study between June and December 2021. Questionnaire based survey was conducted as it is suitable to reach the respondents in a convenient way especially when they are geographically dispersed and also involves relatively low cost. Questionnaire containing 12 statements were distributed to 300 respondents where they were asked to rate it on a five point Likert scale. Convenience sampling method was adopted to approach the respondents during their check-out in various different hotels and resorts of Goa. The statements were based on the previous studies related to destination attributes and satisfaction of the tourists.



Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 285 were found usable for the research with a response rate of 95%. Table:1 illustrates the nationality and state of residence of the tourists and it was observed that maximum tourists came from Delhi (15.7%) followed by West Bengal (13.3%), United States of America (12.2%), Punjab (11.9%), Uttar Pradesh (9.1%), France (8.4%), Jammu & Kashmir (7.3%), United kingdom (5.9%), Italy (5.6%), Uttarakhand (4.9%).

The accommodation data states that 47.7% of the tourists stayed in four star hotels of Goa followed by 29.1% in five star hotels, 14.7% in three star hotels and 8.4% of the tourists stayed in Resort properties. Length of stay for the majority of the tourists was 5-10 days (47.7%), followed by more than 10 days (35.7%) and less than 5 days (16.4%).

Leisure for visiting Goa (89.4%) remained the major purpose of visit for the tourists followed by visiting friends and relatives (6.3%) and for business it was (4.2%). First time visitors to Goa were (65.9%) and the remaining were repeat visitors with varied frequency of travel.

Table: 1 Travel characteristics of the tourists Descriptive statistics (n=285)

		Frequency	Percentage
Country/State of respondents	Gujarat	15	5.26
	Punjab	34	11.92
	Delhi	45	15.78

	Uttar Pradesh	26	9.1
	West Bengal	38	13.3
	Jammu & Kashmir	21	7.36
	Uttarakhand	14	4.9
	United Kingdom	17	5.9
	Italy	16	5.6
	United States of America	35	12.2
	France	24	8.4
Accommodation at Goa	Three Star hotel	42	14.7
	Four Star hotel	136	47.7
	Five Star hotel	83	29.1
	Resort	24	8.4
Length of stay	Less than 5 days	47	16.4
	5-10 days	136	47.7
	More than 10 days	102	35.7
Purpose of visit	Leisure	255	89.4
	Visiting Friends and Relatives	18	6.3
	Business	12	4.2
Number of visits	1	188	65.9
	2	45	15.7
	3-4	18	6.3
	5-7	22	7.7
	More than 7	12	4.2

Table: 1 shows travel characteristics of the tourists with regard to their country/ state of residence, accommodation, length of stay, purpose of visit and number of visits.

Tourists were asked to rate their expectations about the destination attributes on a Likert Scale (1 strongly disagree - 5 strongly agree). The highest mean value related to “Cleanliness of environment”, “Accessibility”, “Attractive Beaches”, “Entertainment, nightlife”, “Price value”, “Accommodation facilities”, “Quality of service”, “Safety and security”, “Gastronomy”, “Infrastructure/Transportation”, “Climate and weather”, “Cultural and Historical attractions” with mean values of expectations 4.24, 4.12, 3.78, 3.65, 3.65, 3.52, 3.46, 3.27, 2.71, 2.71, 2.63 and 2.53 respectively. The lowest mean value of expectation obtained was 2.53 for Cultural and Historical attractions (Table: 2).

Table: 2 Performance and Expectation Mean and Gap scores

Sr.no.	Destination Attributes	Performance Mean (P)	Expectation Mean (E)	Gap scores	t-values	P value
1	Attractive Beaches	4.36	3.78	+0.58	2.714	0.021*
2	Entertainment, nightlife	4.17	3.65	+0.52	3.252	0.037*
3	Gastronomy	3.92	2.71	+1.21	3.167	0.041*
4	Cultural and Historical attractions	3.76	2.53	+1.23	4.201	0.037*
5	Climate and weather	3.84	2.63	+1.21	2.812	0.044*
6	Accommodation facilities	4.15	3.52	+0.63	3.167	0.035*

7	Infrastructure/Transportation	3.83	2.71	+1.12	3.255	0.026*
8	Safety and security	2.54	3.27	-0.73	-2.765	0.035*
9	Quality of service	4.23	3.46	+0.77	3.124	0.042*
10	Price value	2.71	3.65	+0.88	-2.124	0.037*
11	Accessibility	3.17	4.12	-0.95	-2.732	0.002*
12	Cleanliness of environment	3.55	4.24	-0.69	-3.123	0.017*

Table: 2 also reveal the performance of the destination attributes as perceived by the tourists during their visit to Goa. The expectation and performance mean scores for all the 12 destination attributes are shown in the above table and additionally a paired-sample t-test was run to evaluate the significant differences among the performance and expectation scores.

In the above Table no: 2 paired t-test results showed that mean of performance score (4.36) with respect to attractive beaches was significant ($t=2.714$; $p=0.021<0.05$) higher than the mean of expectation score (3.78). Since Goa is known for its beaches, the positive gap score between the expectation and performance implied satisfaction among the tourists. The second attribute results show that the performance score (4.17) pertaining to nightlife and entertainment was significant ($t=3.252$; $p=0.037<0.05$) which is higher than the mean score of expectation (3.65). The positivity in the gap score indicates higher satisfaction of tourists with the nightlife and entertainment in Goa. Results of third attribute of holiday destination satisfaction which is gastronomy of the place indicate that the mean score of performance (3.92) was significant ($t=3.167$; $p=0.041<0.05$) and is higher than the expectation mean score (2.71) implying positive satisfaction of tourists with the culinary offerings of the place. Fourth attribute of Cultural and Historical attractions also shows significant results of the performance mean score (3.76) where ($t=4.201$; $p=0.037<0.05$) it is higher than the expectation mean score (2.53) and implies that the tourists were satisfied with the cultural and historical attractions of the destination. Results of the fifth attribute of climate and weather indicate that the mean score of performance (3.84) was significant ($t=2.812$; $p=0.044<0.05$) and is higher than the expectation mean score (2.63) which reveals that the tourists were satisfied with the climatic and weather conditions of the place. Results of the next attribute of accommodation facilities which is considered as an important element of tourists satisfaction with a destination shows that the mean score of performance (4.15) was significant ($t=3.167$; $p=0.035<0.05$) and is higher than the expectation mean score (3.52) indicating a higher satisfaction of tourists with their stay at the destination. Results of the seventh attribute of Infrastructure/Transportation shows that the mean score of performance (3.83) was significant ($t=3.255$; $p=0.026<0.05$) and is higher than the expectation mean score (2.71) indicating a higher satisfaction of tourists.

Results pertaining to the attribute of safety and security at the destination show that the mean score of the performance (2.54) was significantly insignificant ($t=-2.765$; $p=0.035<0.05$) and is less than the expectation mean score (3.27) implying dissatisfaction of tourists with the safety and security attribute. The quality of service attribute showed the mean score of performance (4.23) which is significant ($t=3.124$; $p=0.042<0.05$) and is higher than the expectation mean score (3.46) indicating a higher satisfaction of tourists with the quality of service attribute during their visit. The price value attribute mean score of the performance (2.71) which was significantly insignificant ($t=-2.124$; $p=0.037<0.05$) and comes out to be less than the expectation score (3.65) and indicates dissatisfaction of the tourists towards the price value offered at the destination. The Accessibility attribute had a mean score of the performance (3.17) which was significantly insignificant ($t=-2.732$; $p=0.002<0.05$)

with the mean score of expectation (4.12) implying that the tourists were not satisfied with the accessibility attribute.

The twelfth attribute of Cleanliness of environment with the mean score of performance (3.55) was significantly insignificant ($t=-3.123$; $p=0.017<0.05$) compared with the mean score of expectation (4.24) indicating dissatisfaction of tourists with the cleanliness.

Conclusion:

The study is about the satisfaction of the tourists with their visit to the most famous destination of India, Goa which is considered as the beach capital of India. The study measured the performance attributes of the destination from the tourist's perspective.

The findings of the study reveals that the tourists who visited Goa were satisfied with the destination attributes and offerings except Safety and security, Price value, Accessibility and Cleanliness of environment where the results indicate that a little dissatisfaction occurred among the tourists therefore the destination managers must ensure to work on improving tourists satisfaction by addressing these issues and taking all necessary measures. A more focussed approach towards the recruitment and training of service personnel is required by the hotels and tourist organisations for providing efficient and satisfactory hospitality and services. This research contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a better understanding about the gaps in the performance and expectations of the tourists and hence it also gives an insight view to the destination organisations to look into these gaps and make adequate arrangements to meet the expectations of the tourists in the future. An effective marketing strategy should be evolved according to the tourists expectations and more emphasis should be put on the attributes which created little dissatisfaction to the tourists.

Future studies on the motivations of the tourists and the effect of satisfactions on their repeat visit or behavioural intentions can be conducted to investigate the overall satisfaction.

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