

A Cohesive Analysis of Factors Affecting the Tourist Destination Image of Delhi

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Abstract

Economies all over the world are moving towards a focus on services. Tourism has emerged as a major contributor to economies all over the world. This is why specific focus is being placed on tourism, as Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) concentrate their efforts on tourism. India has been one of the countries where the share of tourism in national income has steadily been increasing. As the national capital, the city of Delhi has a major role to play in the tourist inflow to the country, as well as within the country. Successful tourism marketing requires that the concepts of tourist destination and underlying factors are comprehended in detail. An analysis of the available, pertinent literature on the area shows the manner in which numerous factors come together to form the image of a tourist destination. In fact, it needs to be understood that image formation may be done differently for different consumers. This further necessitates a detailed study of the factors influencing tourist destination image.

Keywords: Tourism, Destination Image

Table 1: International Tourist Arrivals in Major Regions of the World (2013)

Region	Number of International Tourists Arrived (million)	% change/ Growth over 2012	% age Share in Number of International Tourists Arrived
Africa	55.9	5.6	5.1
Americas	168.3	3.4	15.5
Asia and the Pacific	248.7	6.5	22.9
Europe	565.0	4.8	52.0
Middle East	48.8	-0.6	4.5

Source: (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, Market Research Division, 2013)

In India alone, the tourism sector has been contributing more than 6% to the country's GDP ever since 2003 (Knoema World Atlas, 2014). According to *World Travel and Tourism Council*, India will be a tourism hotspot from 2009-2018, having the highest 10-year growth potential. (Corporate Professionals, 2011).

Introduction

Overtime, tourism has come about to be one of those sectors of the world economy, which have bounced back after facing many odds. This is because the sector has exhibited positive growth all over the world. As observed by Deshwal (2015), the tourism sector contributes approximately 10% to the world's GDP and employs one-tenth of the world's work force. Table 1 provides a glimpse of the growth in tourist arrivals the world- over.

Table 2: Contribution of Tourism Sector to GDP of India

Year	% age of GDP
2003	8.8
2004	8.7
2005	7.0
2006	7.1
2007	7.2
2008	7.2

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Year	% age of GDP
2009	6.7
2010	6.5
2011	6.6
2012	6.5
2013	6.6

Source: (Knoema World Atlas, 2014)

Having gone through various iterations, the most widely utilized definition of tourism today is the one given by the World Tourism Organization. According to this definition, ‘Tourism comprises of the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes’ (Williams, 2004). More recently, Leighton (2013) introduces the concept of ‘staycations’ or ‘daycations’, which are much different from tourism.

Tourism destinations may be natural or man-made, i.e., constructed. In other words, the destination is just a place or even a meaningful location. It consists of a bundle of tangible and intangible, and thus may be seen as a product or a brand. A tourist destination may even be viewed as a mix of products and services consumed under the same name.. The image is an important notion for products and services alike. In this sense, the image has also been defined by Aaker and Biel (2013) as the overall impression of an offering, as received by consumers. For every tourist destination, there exists an image as has been planned by the planning organizations. In tourism jargon, these organizations or establishments have been given the nomenclature of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). At the outset, the DMO plans carefully about the destination’s tourism offerings. The image of the destination is contingent upon a number of factors. These may include, but not be limited to: -

- Culture and heritage
- Buildings and architecture

- Natural endowments
- Availability of salient activities/ events, such as medicine and healthcare services, theatre, fairs etc.
- Food and beverage
- Famous personalities
- Behaviour of local people
- Behaviour of tourism intermediaries

During a visit, the tourist is likely to interact with a number of intermediaries. Each of these interactions is an experience in itself, which leads to the formation of perception. As highlighted by Zeithaml et al. (2008), the consumer of a service is in a position to form an opinion or judgment or perception regarding the entire service or particular aspects of the same. This explains the propensity of a tourist to perceive each transaction separately, as compared to the cumulative tourism experience.

Delhi is a city whose historical roots date back to the times of the Mahabharata when the city was known as Indraprastha. As the national capital of the country, the city assumes importance as centre of various activities.

The Govt. of India’s Ministry of Tourism gives interesting figures about Delhi tourism in its Tourism Statistics 2010, summarized in table 3.

For the city of Delhi, the DMOs include the Ministry of Tourism of the Govt. of India, the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) and the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Together, they are responsible for delivering the tourism offering to consumers.

Objectives

The following objectives have been defined for the study

- To review the factors which contribute towards the

Table 3: Tourist Arrivals in Delhi (2013)

<i>Foreign tourist arrivals in Delhi</i>	<i>2.30 million</i>	<i>Domestic tourist arrivals in Delhi</i>	<i>2.02 million</i>
Percentage share of foreign tourist arrivals in India	11.5	Percentage share of domestic tourist arrivals	1.77
Rank (among 29 states) for foreign tourist arrivals in India	3	Rank (among 29 states) for domestic tourist arrivals in India	14

Source: India Tourism Statistics (2013)

image of a tourist destination

- To find out the association between various factors determining tourist destination image of Delhi
- To understand the perception of Delhi as a tourist destination, across genders

Further, the following hypotheses have been formulated: -

H_{01} = All components contributing towards the tourist destination image of Delhi work independently for image formation by tourists

H_{02} = Both men and women perceive the factors determining tourist destination image of Delhi in a similar manner

Methods

The research approach followed towards this paper may be described as follows: -

- Types of data: Both secondary and primary data have been used for achievement of the above- listed objectives.
- Sources of data: The secondary data has been drawn from sources such as journals, reports, books, magazines and the internet, while primary data has been collected from tourists in Delhi.
- Type of Research: The research is a combination of exploratory and descriptive types of research. Secondary sources of data have been reviewed extensively. The empirical study carried out has been descriptive in nature.
- The study has been conducted in the city of Delhi. A total of 150 respondents were approached.
- Research instrument: A structured questionnaire was used to gather the information from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of three sections. Section 1 gathers information about the frequency of visits of the respondent and certain demographics such as age and gender. Section 2 seeks detailed information about the perception of the respondent about the tourist destination image of Delhi. This section is sub- divided into five parts for, viz., Access point to Delhi, Accommodation in Delhi, Attractions and Activities in Delhi, Amenities and Facilities in Delhi; and, Agencies and Offices in Delhi. Each part deals with a different aspect of Delhi as a tourist

destination. Section 3 concludes the questionnaire by getting overall information about the perception of the respondent regarding the holistic image of Delhi, followed by asking for suggestions towards improvement of tourist experience in the city.

- The data collected was coded and tabulated, keeping it in context with the objectives of study. Descriptives including Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated. Correlation analysis and *t*- test for comparison of independent samples were applied in order to achieve the objectives. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0 for windows.

Reliability of data thus collected was checked using Cronbach's alpha which is calculated through SPSS (values are given in the table below). It is imperative to learn that higher value of Cronbach's alpha shows high internal consistency which is considered as best method of examining reliability.

Table 4: Value of Cronbach's Alpha for Constructs in the Questionnaire

Construct	No. of statements	Cronbach's Alpha
Accessibility	12	0.878
Accommodation	6	0.879
Attractions and Activities	10	0.811
Amenities	15	0.888
Agencies and Offices	10	0.919

Source: Field Survey

Values of Cronbach's Alpha indicate that the internal consistency between the respective groups of constructs is acceptable for the scale so- formed.

Literature Review

Holloway (2002) drew the line between products and services, when he specified tourism as a service. He elaborated that tourism embodies various features of services such as difference in quality with respect to time and clientele; and, production and consumption at the same time. Further, Qirci, Theodhori and Elmazi (2011) go further to define tourism as a mix of products and services, which fall under a destination. The tourist is into a continuous exchange of services and experiences with many other stakeholders.

The Tourist Destination Image

Table 5: Types of Destination Image and Factors Influencing Them

<i>Type of Image/ Determining factors</i>	<i>Received Image/ Semiotic Image</i>	<i>Projected Image/ Discursive Image</i>	
		Organic Image	Induced Image
Meaning	Image as perceived by the consumer	Image as projected by DMOs	Image as projected by destination marketing efforts
Factors Influencing Image	Stimulus factors, External factors, Personal characteristics of consumers (social and psychological parameters), time of consumption	Unbiased sources: Word of mouth, available literature, documentaries etc.	Efforts of tourism intermediaries and service providers

Source: Kokosalabis et al. (2006)

The concept of ‘place image’ draws from various disciplines such as international business, international relations, tourism, culture studies, geography etc. (Tiwari and Bose, 2013). When establishments related to place marketing make efforts to enhance their market share, it is known as ‘place marketing’ or ‘civic boosterism’ (Metaxas, 2009). Thus, a tourist destination may be a continent, a country, a state/ province, a city, or even a village (Manhas and Dogra, 2013).

The Determinants of Tourist Destination Image

Tourist destination image and the underlying perceptions are said to be made of organic and induced sources (Pike, Bianchi, Kerr and Patti, 2010). Also, there is a received image and a projected image of a destination. These have been differentiated by Kokosalakis, Bagnall, Selby and Burns (2006).

In any case, both functional and psychological characteristics of a destination determine its overall image (Upadhyaya, 2012).

As per Baksi (2014), the image of a tourist destination is formed by its attractions, the accessibility, availability of amenities, activities and ancillary services. On the other hand, Lyngdoh (2013) provides destination image to be made up of the cultural and natural environment of a place, facilities for recreation and entertainment etc. Navickas and Malakauskaite (2009) discover a relationship between tourism offerings and the competitiveness of a place. This competitiveness is enhanced by the natural as well as artificial environment of a place. According to de Carlo, Canali, Pritchard and Morgan (2009), a number of factors are important in formation of destination image. These factors range from basic information for tourists, to means

of transport, accommodation, environmental conditions, facilities for shopping etc. As per Dmitrovic, Velbar, Kolr, Brencic, Ograjensek and Zabkar (2009), the period of a tourist’s stay in a place, and the experience attained during these stays leads to the formation of an image of the place. Apart from the factors mentioned above, Tasci (2007) suggests that the demographic characteristics of tourists may also lead to image formation. These characteristics include age, income, occupation etc.

Culture has always served as one of the pillars of tourism in any region (Holloway, 2002; Banerjee, 2008; Dmitrovic et al., 2009; Leaver and Schmidt, 2009; Elliott, Spence and Casakin, 2011; Fernandes, 2011; Cellini and Cuccia, 2013; Cristina, 2013). One of the growing forms of tourism is food-based tourism or culinary tourism. Apart from being recognized as a distinct tourism paradigm, food has been seen as adding extra value to the image of a destination (Oers, 2011; Chen, 2013; Tsai, 2013). Tourism has spread across a huge range of media options. Films and television are the leading channels of communication for the sector. The way a place is shown on electronic print through cinema, may lead to the reinforcement of destination image. A new image may also be formed in this way (Bolan and Williams, 2008; Mitchell and Stewart, 2012). Information about products and services has always been needed by consumers, and tourism is no exception. In fact, the information so-gathered leads to the formation of a destination image (Murphy, Mascardo and Beckendorff, 2007; Sarma, 2007). The advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in tourism has been emphasized by Elena and Andrea (2013). The use of ICTs has been applied by many destinations to enhance tourist experience (Prideaux, 2005; Dabas and Manaktola, 2007; Hudson and Ritchie, 2009). Larson (2008) directs attention to one of the factors which tourist destination

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

Variable(s)	Male (N= 82)		Female (N= 55)		Total (N= 137)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accessibility	3.64	0.72	3.73	0.64	3.67	0.67
Accommodation	3.71	0.67	3.56	0.66	3.65	0.67
Attractions and Activities	3.80	0.63	3.96	0.57	3.87	0.61
Amenities and Facilities	3.82	0.61	3.83	0.55	3.83	0.58
Agencies and Offices	3.13	0.80	3.17	0.68	3.15	0.75

Source: SPSS Output

studies have missed out on. He says that price is definitely a determining factor for image formation of a destination. Further, he suggests that the Consumer Price Index needs to be compared to the Tourist Price Index. Pavlic, Perucic and Portolan (2011) also submit that tourists seek more value from a tourist experience as compared to what they have invested in it. The importance of exchange rates as basis of comparison has been highlighted by Yap (2012). However, he concludes that tourists tend to forget price volatility in the long- run, thus mitigating any effect on foreign tourist arrivals.

Larson (2008) sees urban tourism as a lucrative form of new- age tourism. Even Hankinson (2012) has highlighted that buildings and other urbanized venues may lead to formation of a positive destination image. Talking about venues, Jin, Bauer and Weber (2009) have particularly mentioned about the capability of cities to serve as venues for exhibitions and events. Being a service, the role of frontline employees and complaint resolution is very important for tourism. This has been specifically mentioned for image formation, by Asad and Lockyer (2010). Since terrorism has invaded the tourism space, a number of studies have discussed the importance of safety in tourism. Aschauer (2009) provides a prelude to such studies saying that tourists get frightened with the information about terrorist attacks which may have occurred at a place. Presence of war, unstable government, language incompatibility etc. lead to the perception of risk (Bhat, 2013). In fact, safety and security have been said to be the most important factors for the formation of destination image. Thus, confidence towards travel safety needs to be built in consumers (Wichasin and Dounghummes, 2014). The tourism sector is a wide and intricate network of many service providers and stakeholders, which work together towards the delivery of the product (Baksi, 2014; Baggio, Scott and Cooper, 2010).

This means that the unity with which all service providers offer the tourism product at a destination translates into the image as perceived by the consumers. Strong networks and relationships among stakeholders at a destination lead to destination cohesion through conformity, acceptable action and inclusion (Presenza and Cipollina, 2008).

Results

An analysis of the descriptive statistics (given in Table 4) yields some findings from the study. Considering the calibration of the 5- point Likert scale used in the study, it may be safely inferred that all respondents have expressed a positive perception regarding the aspects of tourism in Delhi. Here, male respondents are most appreciative of the Amenities and Facilities provided in the city; whereas female tourists favour the Attractions and Activities more. Overall, the maximum intra- group differences are seen to be present in the case of the perception regarding Agencies and Offices.

H_{01} = All factors contributing towards the tourist destination image of Delhi work independently for image formation by tourists

Table 7 shows the coefficients of correlation (r) between the various components of the tourist destination image of Delhi. It may be seen that the coefficients so- obtained are all significant at 0.001 level of significance (r is significant, $p < .001$). Thus, each of these components may be said to move or covary in the same direction. This leads us to reject the null hypothesis H_{01} . We may infer that the factors contributing towards formation of a tourist destination image of Delhi move in the same direction, and have a strong positive relationship with each- other, such that any change in one of them is accompanied by a change in the same direction in the other factors as well.

Table 7: Correlation between Components of Tourist Destination Image

Variables	Accessibility	Accommodation	Attractions and Activities	Amenities	Agencies and Offices
Accessibility	1	0.633	0.506	0.617	0.596
Accommodation	0.633	1	0.470	0.516	0.423
Attractions and Activities	0.506	0.470	1	0.735	.658
Amenities	.617	0.516	0.735	1	0.690
Agencies and Offices	0.596	0.423	0.658	0.690	1

Source: SPSS Output

H_{02} = Both men and women perceive the factors determining tourist destination image of Delhi in a similar manner.

In order to test the above- mentioned hypothesis, the t- test for comparison of means of two independent samples has been applied. Results of the test are summarized below: -

Table 8: t- test for Comparison of Tourist Perception of Male and Female Tourists

Variables	t- statistic
Accessibility	- 0.764
Accommodation	1.289
Attractions and Activities	- 1.473
Amenities	- 0.043
Agencies and Offices	- 0.294

Source: SPSS Output

Based on the above table, we may interpret the results in the following manner: -

- There is a significant difference in the perceptions held by male and female tourists regarding the Accessibility in Delhi ($t = - 0.764, p < 0.01$).
- Both male and female tourists in Delhi perceive in a similar manner regarding the Accommodation available in the city ($t = 1.289, p < 0.01$).
- There is a significant difference in the perceptions held by male and female tourists regarding the Attractions and Activities in Delhi ($t = - 1.473, p < 0.01$).
- There is a significant difference in the perceptions held by male and female tourists regarding the Amenities and Facilities in Delhi ($t = - 0.043, p < 0.01$).
- There is a significant difference in the perceptions held by male and female tourists regarding the

Agencies and Offices in Delhi ($t = - 0.294, p < 0.01$).

Discussion and Managerial Implications

The tourist is the mainstay of the tourism experience. It is the core around which destination management organizations build up experiences. This is quite an uphill task, considering the varying needs and preferences of consumers. Tourist destinations are places where all requirements of consumers to so as to engage all senses, and leave an impact. This alone may maximize the 'takeaways' from a destination. It may be seen from the results of the study that tourism in Delhi is sought as a concerted 'whole' by tourists. All factors leading to formation of a destination image are dependent on each-other. In other words, it may be said that no one factor can work in isolation. For example, if a tourist feels good about the amenities which the city offers, he is also likely to have a good opinion about the tourist attractions, the accommodation available, the people etc. It may even be said that one bad experience of a visitor, on any front during his visit may cast a bad impact on other experiences as well.

For all stakeholders of tourism, especially customers, the destination should be defined in such a way that they see it as it is intended to be marketed. However, the results of the study clearly indicate that a difference in the offerings needs to be made for male and female tourists. Marketers need to analyze how they would provide different offerings in tourism. It may be an analysis of the tangibility- intangibility quotient of an offering, the pricing, the ancillary services etc. In order to flourish, destinations must be made to deliver distinctive, compelling, memorable and rewarding experiences to all their target audiences. Image formation and expectation should be explored separately for different groups, at least as per gender.

Conclusions

Tourism in Delhi is one of the main activities of the city. It has made a definite place in the social as well as economic spheres of the city. A large number of domestic as well as international tourists visit the city for a number of reasons. However, whatever be the reason for the visit, tourists expect the city to provide a 'wholesome' tourism experience, in terms of the various offerings. It may be conveniently inferred that each aspect of the tourism experience is a 'critical incident' which may lead to tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction, further leading to positive or negative word of mouth or an impact on future visitation to the city. Thus, a concerted approach towards managing the image of the destination is required. One of the ways in which a 'difference' may be made to the city's tourism offering is to innovatively design the services for male and female consumers. This stems from the results of the study which indicate a difference in the importance placed by male and female tourists on various aspects of tourism.

Directions for Further Research

The present study has been an attempt to understand certain basics of tourism, with a small sample size. Increasing the number of respondents will add to the richness of the results of the study. Apart from this, smaller destinations within cities- such as individual monuments etc. may be studied, in order to know the detailed perception held by consumers. The relationship between perceptions held by various tourism stakeholders might also be looked at. Since tourist destinations are frequented by people from various backgrounds, studies may also be carried out for different demographic groups of tourists.

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