

RISK PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS AT WORLD HERITAGE SITES: A CASE STUDY OF AJANTA CAVES, MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the impact of crises and resultant risk perception of tourist on their travel intentions at the world heritage site of Ajanta in Maharashtra by using quantitative method. A taxonomy of underlying factors of risk perception such as travel risk, destination risk and safety concerns along with the risk types such as financial, health, physical, crime, terrorism, social, psychological and natural disasters risks are studied in detail. Factor analysis was used to measure internal risk perception. The effect of information sources such as mass media, advertising etc. in respect to external risk perception are studied in detail. This study would be helpful to decrease risk perception of tourist by developing different strategies which could be adopted by the various stakeholders of tourism industry, in and around Ajanta caves for sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Risk Perceived, Safety, Crime, Ajanta

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been an integral part of Indian culture & tradition. Tourism industry is the most vibrant tertiary activity and a multibillion industry in India. Tourism in India has grown in leaps and bounds over the years, with each region of India contributing something to its splendour and exuberance. It is a treasure house of cultural and traditional embellishes as reflected in its artefact, scenic beauties of the river, sea and mountains, thus enabling it to gain a prestige in the international arena.

It is a generally accepted truth and practice that tourism as a development based industry has to protect and support the tourist that are visiting any particular destination. Some of the protection has to be achieved by making assurances that tourism crime, and lapses in safety and security in all tourist destinations are not allowed to occur. When an international tourist make a plan to visit a certain destination he collect information from various sources such as Mass Media, i.e. TV News Paper, Internet, Travel reviews i.e. Online Travel Communities, Books, and Travel advisories etc about the warnings to travel a particular country.

Tourists usually choose to travel to safe and secure destination and usually avoid high risk destination. Different countries and regions are vulnerable to a variety of natural and human-induced risks and safety challenges. These have direct bearing on the travel risk perception of the tourists, especially international, in their destination decision-making process. To examine this, the Ajanta Caves, a World Heritage Site and also a popular destination in Maharashtra has been selected for this study. The tourist arrival figures for five years have been compiled and provided in Table 1. In general, considerable variations can be observed in the arrivals of both domestic and foreign tourists, and the general pattern is a declining trend.

Table 1: Ajanta Caves Tourist Arrivals

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
2012	4,26,851	28,062
2013	3,89,894	25,997
2014	3,71,928	24,398
2015	4,12,971	23,121
2016	3,99,854	22,469

Source: Archaeological Survey of India

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the study, Yang, Ling E., & Nair V. (2014) has reviewed 46 selected articles dealing with the multidimensional concept of risk in tourism. Their findings are categorized into four main broad themes: (i) The concept of risk, safety and security, (ii) The research trend in risk in tourism, (iii) The definitions and antecedents of perceived risk and (iv) Risk as positive elements. These existing literature comprise conceptual studies and cases examining various dimensions of the risk perception on tourism industry.

A quantitative research conducted at Malaysia (Garg A. (2015)) focuses on the study of tourist generally who avoids nations or areas of high crime rates or political instability. Accordingly, tourist gathered information from various sources, word of mouth, different forms of media, guides books, internet, mass media, tour operators, talking to friends and relatives to form perception of particular destination. The questionnaire was distributed and collected from 169 respondents. In this study cultural difference, mass media influence, tourist decision making and risk perception was studied. Result of the study suggested that safety, peace and stability are major concerns for tourists while choosing their travel destination. The gap of the research study is limited only on cultural and mass media influence.

Seven factor have been identified in risk perception studies viz. health, political instability, terrorism, strange food, cultural barriers, nation's political and religious dogma, and crime. A random sample of US-born young adults were surveyed. The classification of international tourist is to be made according to degree of novelty. Three way ANOVAs quantitative method is used (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). Its major limitation was that only US-born young, adults are surveyed and lacked a cross-nationality coverage.

Another study in Sub-Saharan region of african continent established that the crime related incidents, health care problems, education and poverty that deter to tourist form choosing travel destination at Sub-Saharan region (Neumayer, 2011). In this study convenience sampling was chosen to gain more variety of response from online base questionnaire survey which was conducted among 800 respondents from social networking website i.e. "face book". In this study safety and security, risk perception of Sub-Saharan region, external communication channels, motivation and risk threshold are considered in detail. The limitation of this study is related to an age group of 15 to 20 years of young population.

This study was conducted in New York City area on the effect of perceived risk on travel intention during the period of aftershock incident of September 11, 2001 tragedy on World Trade Centre at United State of America (Floyd, Gibson, Grey & Thapa, 2007). In this study safety concern,

perceived social risk, travel experiences are studied in detail. The survey queried respondents on past trip and future travel intention, risk perception, information search and socio-demographic characteristics. The total of 365 out of 1,647 respondents was participated in the study. The various types of risk are measured. The impact of this incident was on tourist arrival and foreign exchange earnings. The president Mr. Bush had made major shift in foreign policy and recovery systems.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It has been intimated earlier that tourism related tragedies can affect the economy of any country and particularly those of the study area that is Maharashtra. This is particularly so because tourism is a fast growing industry and it generates a lot of money in country's economy. In India major incidences such as 1993 serial 12 bomb blast at Mumbai, 2006 Mumbai train bomb blast, 2008 Taj Hotel terrorist attack, 2013 Uttarakhand flood, 2014 Jammu and Kashmir flood, has badly affected the economy of country and tourist arrival in India. Other reasons were contagious diseases such as dengue, chickengunya and swine flu.

In today's scenario foreign affairs policy are changing swiftly and widely i.e. for examples, the newly elected USA president Mr. Triumph has change the foreign policy of USA, due to this change of foreign policy, USA visa have become very complicated. This has affected on tourism industry and foreign exchange earnings. As a result of this tourists were more aware about risk perception while choosing their destination. This study would be helpful to decrease risk perception of tourist by developing different strategies which could be adopted by the various stakeholders of tourism industry, in and around Ajanta caves for sustainable tourism development.

Given this, the objective of this study has been set to examine the risk perception of tourists to India in the context of the world heritage site of Ajanta, Maharashtra. Specific research questions being investigated are:

1. What risks did the tourists perceive of when they planned for visiting Ajanta?
2. What external factors have the most influence on forming risk perception when it came to Ajanta?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To meet the objectives of the present study data was collected mainly at the primary level and results were reported. The sample consisted of International tourist at Ajanta Caves, who were given a set of questionnaire and a five level Likert scale was included to study their risk perception. The present paper has been divided into three sections. The first section

focuses on the analyses of types of risks in respect to internal risk perceived by International Tourists at Ajanta Caves such as Financial, Health, Physical, Crime, Terrorism, Social, Psychological and Natural Disaster. The second section also focuses on the Internal Risk Perception of International tourist on Travel Risk, Destination Risk, Safety Concern, and International Travel versus Domestic Travel. The third section focuses on the External Perception of International tourist with the help of various information sources such as Mass Media, Friends and Relatives, Formal Education, Traveller Review, Books and Literature, Self Experience, Travel Agent and Tour Operator, Guide Books, Advertising, Promotional Brochures and others.

DATA COLLECTION

Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data comprised of academic, reference books, research journals, magazines, newspapers etc. Data related to tourist arrivals will be collected from ASI officials, the Publication of various International organizations such as World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Tourism Government of India and Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation. Specific to primary data, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered the same to 147 foreign tourists visited Ajanta Caves.

DATA CODING

The collected data was transformed into codes and was entered into the SPSS 16.0 for analysis. The data was actually coded before entering into the SPSS. Only open-ended questions were left uncoded. To analysis the types of risk perception is measured in 5 - point Likert scale coded as 1 = very high, 2 = high, 3 = moderate, 4 = low, 5 = very low. To analyse external risk perception the information sources are coded as 0 = No, 1= Yes. The internal risk perception is measured in the order of the likert 5- points measurement scale are coded as the 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

ANALYSIS

The analysis was conducted on different types of risk, which analyses by frequency and percentage method. The analysis

of internal risk perception was made by using the factorial method. The external risk perception was analysed by using multiple choice option in SPSS.

Table 2: Types of Risks

No.	Types of Risk	Mean	SD
1.	Financial Risk	3.1064	0.98321
2.	Health Risk	3.1064	0.93795
3.	Physical Risk	3.1489	0.95505
4.	Crime Risk	3.2979	0.88256
5.	Terrorism Risk	3.48894	0.99722
6.	Social Risk	3.2766	0.97138
7.	Psychological Risk	3.4255	0.92653
8.	Natural Disaster Risk	4.2979	5.87521

Note: Each risk types was measured on a 5-PointLikert Scale

The highest level of risk has been given to Natural Disaster (4.2979). This has been followed by Terrorism Risk (3.48895) and Psychological Risk (3.4255). The mean value for Crime Risk is of 3.2979 and mean value for Social Risk is of 3.2766 (Table-2). The Financial Risk, Health Risk and Physical Risk are of mean value 3.1064, 3.1064 and 3.1489 respectively. Though the table shows the level of risk varies for each attribute, all the mean values ≥ 3.1 which signifies the level of each attributes of risk.

Analysis on Internal Risk Perception of International Tourists

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.572
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	295.686
	Df	78
	Sig.	.000

In Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.572 which indicate factor analysis is appropriate. The high values (between 0.5 and 1.0) indicate factor analysis is appropriate which measure desirable sampling. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was Significant ($P < 0.001$) indicated sufficient correlations among selected variables.

Table 4: Communalities

I feel nervous about travelling right now	1.000	.864
Travelling is risky now	1.000	.876
Because of terrorism, visit to many tourist destination shall be avoided	1.000	.714
I feel very comfortable right now	1.000	.598
Travel to natural areas such as world heritage site is not risky	1.000	.685

I feel nervous about travelling right now	1.000	.864
Trip to natural area scenic attraction are safe right now	1.000	.760
Vacation travel is perfectly safe	1.000	.655
Visiting art galleries museum are safe tourist activities	1.000	.373
Safety is most important attribute a destination can offer	1.000	.677
Safety is serious consideration when choosing a travel destination	1.000	.748
Additional security measures at airport make travelling safe	1.000	.666
International travel is just as safe as domestic travel	1.000	.788
Domestic travel is just risky as international travel	1.000	.829

Note :- Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

From the Table 4 shows the application of principle components analysis to internal risk perceptions under communality for each variable, is 1.0 as unities as were inserted in the diagonal of the correlation matrix.

From Table No. 5 According to criterion, factors with Eigen values less than 1 are rejected. Based on the above table only 4 factors had greater than 1.0. These factors explained 71.03% of the variance in the data, which is good sign.

EXTRACTION METHOD

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Factor / Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.663	28.176	28.176	3.663	28.176	28.176	3.064	23.572	23.572
2	2.410	18.537	46.713	2.410	18.537	46.713	2.575	19.805	43.378
3	1.968	15.142	61.855	1.968	15.142	61.855	1.800	13.849	57.227
4	1.194	9.181	71.036	1.194	9.181	71.036	1.795	13.809	71.036
5	.925	7.119	78.155						
6	.757	5.826	83.981						
7	.569	4.380	88.361						
8	.479	3.682	92.043						
9	.339	2.611	94.654						
10	.282	2.172	96.826						
11	.211	1.620	98.446						
12	.136	1.049	99.494						
13	.066	.506	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

From Table-6, the rotated factor matrix, notify that from component 1, variable no.'s 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have loadings of 0.708,

0.759, 0.851, 0.800 and 0.587 respectively. This suggests that component 1 is a combination of 5 original variables, which are:

- I feel very comfortable travelling right now.
- Travels to natural areas such as world heritages sites are not risky.

- Trips to natural areas such as world heritage site are not risky.
- Vacation travel is perfectly safe.
- Visiting art galleries /museum are safe tourist activities.

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix

Variable No.	Factors	Component			
		1	2	3	4
1	I feel nervous about travelling right now	-.116	.918	.086	.000
2.	Travelling is risky now	-.140	.925	-.015	-.031
3.	Because of terrorism, visit to many tourist destination shall be avoided	-.049	.841	.032	-.063
4.	I feel very comfortable travelling right now	.708	-.128	.148	-.243
5.	Travel to natural areas such as world heritages sites are not risky	.759	-.184	.274	-.009
6.	Trips to natural areas such as world heritage site are not risky	.851	-.124	.122	-.076
7.	Vacation travel is perfectly safe	.800	.101	.071	.013
8.	Visiting art galleries /museum are safe tourist activities	.587	-.090	-.054	.128
9.	Safety is most important attribute a destination can offer	.123	-.043	-.185	.791
10.	Safety is a serious consideration when choosing a travel destination	-.393	.093	.091	.759
11.	Additional security measures at airports make travelling safe	.060	-.168	.369	.706
12.	International travel is just as safe as domestic travel	.254	-.068	.848	-.006
13.	Domestic travel is just as risky as international travel	.073	.204	.880	.091

Note: - Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization a Rotation Converged in 5 iterations

In this case, the combination of 5 original variables of component 1 is named as Factor 1: Travel and Destination Risk. Component 2 comprise variable no's 1, 2 and 3 and have loadings of 0.918, 0.925 and 0.841 respectively. This suggests that component 2 is a combination of 3 original variables, which are:

- I feel nervous about travelling right now.
- Travelling is risky now.
- Because of terrorism, visit to many tourist destination shall be avoided.

In this case the combination of 3 original variable of component 2 is named as Factor 2: Travel Risk. Component 3 has variable no's 11, 12 and 13 have loadings of 0.369, 0.848, and 0.880 respectively. This suggests that component 3 is a combination of 3 original variables, which are:

- Additional security measures at airports make travelling safe.
- International travel is just as safe as domestic travel.
- Domestic travel is just as risky as international travel.

In this case the combination of 3 original variable of component 3 is named as Factor 3: Safety Concern and International Travel versus Domestic Travel. Component 4, variable no's 9, 10, and 11 have loadings of 0.791, 0.759 and 0.706 respectively. This suggests that component 4 is a combination of 3 original variables.

It can be observed that Rotated Matrix Component is more interrelated with each other. From the above factor analysis, tourists perceive the Internal Risk, when they think of the world heritage site of Ajanta as per Objective and Research Question 1.

From the table 7 represents information sources risks in perception of tourist about safety and security.

Following information source have high influence on risk perception of tourists:

- Mass media (16.3%),
- Friends and Relatives, Books and Literature (15.6%)
- Self Experience and Guide Books (11.6%),
- Advertising Promotional Brochures (10.2%)

ANALYSIS ON EXTERNAL RISK PERCEPTION

Table 7: External Risk Perception

Sr. No	Information Sources	Responses		
		Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)	Percent of Cases
A.	Mass Media	24	16.3%	52.2%
B.	Friends and Relatives	23	15.6%	50.0%
C.	Formal Education	3	2.0%	6.5%
D.	Traveller Reviews	14	9.5%	30.4%
E.	Book and Literature	23	15.6%	50.0%
F.	Self Experience	17	11.6%	37.0%
G.	Travel Agents and Tour Operators	10	6.8%	21.7%
H.	Guide Books	17	11.6%	37.0%
I.	Advertising Promotional Brochures	15	10.2%	32.6%
J.	Others		0.7%	2.2%
	Total	147	100.0%	319.6%

Other information sources like Traveller Reviews (9.5%), Travel agents and Tour Operators (6.8%) Formals Education (2.0) has less influence on tourist risk perceptions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlighted that from the analysis of the internal risk perception at Ajanta caves, firstly, international tourist perceive highest level of risk for natural disaster followed by terrorism & psychological risk. The other types of risk have moderate level of risk perception. Secondly, as of the analysis of the internal risk perception it is found that the factors such as, travel risk, destination risk, international travel risk and domestic travel risk are perceived by international tourist when they choose to travel at world heritage site of Ajanta. In the external risk perception, from the analysis it is found that the information source of mass media, friends and relatives, books and literature are performing vital role, for creating safety and security among international tourist.

This study has shown importance of travel safety, travel risk perception and how it affects tourist decision making. The global travel will increase when there is cheap travel commodities. As in analysis, advertising and promotional brochure is at very low level. Therefore persuasive advertising technique should increase swiftly. The persuasive advertising will increase tourist willingness to travel. The travel industry should organise persuasive advertising campaign, recovery campaign of any past shocking incident, if previously it had taken place. Tourism planners should be aware of which risk might caused stress among tourist. Marketers should develop the different types of marketing strategies for recuperating tourist destination.

This practical implication of the study is for Tourism Industry, the Central Government and State Government,

Police Administration, Local Authorities, Law Enforcement Agencies, the Department of Archaeological Survey of India, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Defence, Security Agencies, Environment preserving Government Organisation and Non-Government Organisation, and every citizen of India should take proper steps to renovate and promote tourist destination of India.

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