

Using Preferred Destination Attributes to Segment the Religious Tourists, Visiting Sacred Cities

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Abstract *The current article is an attempt to create the clusters within the subsegments of the religious tourists and compare their preferences for destination attributes. This research permits management professionals to determine groups of prospective tourists having specific preferences and needs for religious tourism. Hence the aim of the study is to apply cluster analysis and conjoint analysis to religious tourists' preferences related to destination attributes across religious cities. The study has been exploratory in nature. However, the preliminary study was administered by conducting personal interviews which were held with people from different backgrounds and experience to confirm the attributes and attribute levels (consumer preferences) identified through literature review. These attributes were later used to perform conjoint analysis. These identified attributes and attribute levels from the preliminary study and literature review were included in the exploratory study which was a survey-based field study and the data was analysed using the method of conjoint and cluster analysis. The study is one of its kind to combine the application of conjoint analysis and cluster analysis to evaluate the preferences and the choice set among the sub segments of religious tourism viz. cultural tourist, religious travel tourist and spiritual tourist across specific tourist destinations.*

Keywords: *Religious Tourism, Conjoint Analysis, Cluster Analysis, Destination Attributes, Cultural Tourists, Religious Travel, Spiritual Tourists*

INTRODUCTION

United Nations and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development often define Religious tourism of comprising both dynamic component in terms of a journey as well as a static component with reference to temporary stay in a place which is not their usual residing place. Both these components relate to the change in environment, with respect to at least a limited time period. And this change is only for the personal interest and not for any professional interest. Travelling for religious purpose is not a new phenomenon, it has always been one of the vital objective for any journeys and is mostly considered as one of the oldest form of non-economic travel (Jackowski & Smith, 1992). It has been observed that millions of tourists have been travelling every year to various religious destinations around the globe, which

belong to both ancient and modern origin (Jackowski, 1992). Majority of these tourists belong to Christians, Muslims, and Hindus. In recent decades religious and spiritual travel has become prevalent and propagated by occupying a significant space in international tourism (Holmberg, 1993; Bywater, 1994; Olsen & Timothy 2006; San Filippo, 2001).

With specific reference to India, a domestic survey conducted in 2002-2003 by the Indian Tourism ministry, Government of India, religious travel for various religious drive was one of the most substantial constituents in the domestic tourism. There were around 100 million tourist who had travelled to various religious destinations. These visits ranged from short term by middle- and upper-income groups to one day trips for religious purpose. Around 50% of these trips were of package tours (NCAER, 2003, p. 33). It has been projected by IBEF- India Brand Equity Foundation that the

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contribution of overall tourism and travel sector towards Indian economy is going to upsurge from US\$234.03bn (Rs 15.24 trillion) in 2018 to US\$492.21bn (Rs 32.05 trillion) in 2028. And this increase accounts for enormous potential in religious tourism, which might evolve as one of the major sectors within tourism industry in India. IBEF had also highlighted that religious tourism is one of the largest untapped market for Indian tourism.

In India, religious tourism has largely evolved from the tradition of pilgrimage. Though the drive, inspiration, and spirit of this endure to be religious, but the journey also parades touristic features. The religious tourists have been travelling to many sacred destinations in search of enlightenment and truth (Vuconic, 1996). Their objective is not luxurious stay but internal joy. However, there are various other travel motives which have been identified in the literature, some of them being learning about customs, physiological motivators for the enjoyment of food and accommodation, social motivators like visiting friends and family and fantasy motivators for escaping from the regular routine (Murphy, 1985). Other than the motives, selection of the appropriate destination is an intricate process where most of the choices are found to be inter-related and are multi-faceted (Garcia, Garcia & Consolacion, 2014).

As speculated by Haq et al., in 2008, religious tourism looks to be a newer academic area of study but has not been a new phenomenon and has recently attracted many researchers globally. The evolving trend towards the exploration of spirituality by the religious tourists can be explored by studying the tourism segment known as religious tourism and all its sub segments: cultural, spiritual and religious travel.

Hence, the current article is an attempt to create the clusters within the subsegments of the religious tourists and compare their preferences for destination attributes. This research permits management professionals to determine groups of prospective tourists having specific preferences and needs for religious tourism. In this manner, a segmentation based on the consumers' preferences consents professionals and researchers to identify information about the market, thereby developing marketing strategies that are most appropriate to each cluster recognized in the market. The main objective of the present paper is to apply cluster analysis to expectations of religious tourists associated to destination attributes of religious cities.

The paper is organized in six sections. The first section, literature review, provides an overview of the religious tourism and its three sub segments. This section also identifies the potential destination attributes for religious tourism globally and examines their relevance for the Indian context. The second section introduces the research objective by detailing the rationale of the present study. After defining

the rationale, the paper will highlight the methodology adopted for the study and the relevant findings. Later in the fifth section authors have attempted to define and give nomenclature to the clusters identified for subsegments of religious tourism based on their preferences for destination attributes. In the last section the limitations and future scope has been elaborated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review Based on Practices at Various Destinations

In northern Portugal, the main motivation for the tourists was 'holidaying' (sun and beach, city trip, touring holiday, cultural holiday, mountain recreation, health/sport etc.) followed by visit to tourist attraction places (cultural visit, shopping, visiting friends and family, excursion, visiting a spa, business, festival, nature etc.) or may be a visit for cultural heritage and prefer staying in their own home and would book their itinerary directly without prior reservations. Additionally, a small percentage preferred visits for pilgrimage purposes (Richards & Fernandes, 2007).

For the contemporary Chinese society, religious tourism has been rising due to economic, cultural and social phenomenon which is also due to the spurt of secularization of pilgrimage traveling in China. The main motivation here is the protection and sustainable development of its religious cultural wealth which has become a precious cultural resource in China (Zhang, M., Huang, L., Wang, J. H., Liu, J., Jie, Y. G., & Lai, X. 2007).

Visiting sacred sites that are associated with cult, mysterious spirituality and special revelations are the main aims of the religious tourism in Slovakia. Visits on pilgrimages to shrines have been a part of the cultural history of Europe. They believe in offering tours and pilgrimages to scared churches, monuments, chapels, Calvary crosses etc (Svoboda, Salgovicova & Polakovic, 2013).

In India, primarily amongst the Hindu religious tradition, 'tirtha yatra' has been a religiously motivated pilgrimage journey practised. This is the act of seeing and being seen which is termed as 'darshana' of the deity and the saints and seeking their blessings. Pilgrimage in India is mostly an expression of culture, vacation and leisure tourism for inner peace and satisfaction like the Braj Yatra, Vrindavan, Vaishnodevi, Kumbh mela etc (Shinde, K. 2008).

Amongst the Christians as well, across the world, the roman catholic church has a major influence on the development of Christianity where pilgrims travel to Europe, Vatican in the church and visit to Jerusalem as well. Jerusalem is sacred to not only the Christians, but also Judaism and

Islam. The pilgrims visit to religious shrines at different places for their anniversaries, vacations, travel with their religious groups within the framework of the travel and tour itinerary. Thus, ideas of the religious gatherings, movement and the organization help in the understanding of the ideas, beliefs and values of the various religious tourism activities (Vukonic, 2006).

The city of Allahabad attracts tourists from all over the world which is the populous district for sporting activities like the Indira Marathon and has rich history and hosts various cultural events like the 'Kumbh Mela'. Additionally, places like Agra, Varanasi, Mathura are tourist destinations for their regional value and cultural heritage (Chadha & Onkar, 2015).

Allahabad, Ayodhya, Bodh Gaya (Buddhist monastery and temple), the Sarnath (sacred place for the Buddhist), Varanasi (sacred place for Hinduism), Champaner-Pavagadh (UNESCO world heritage site) and few heritage sites in India which has both iconic and historic ethnographic landscape layers.

In a study conducted by Chand, 2010, the various motivational determinants which the non-resident Indian visitors preferred the most amongst the different religious centers in India are cultural immersion, religious attraction and novelty whilst the least important factors were family togetherness or seeking for meeting friendship goals.

In the Indian context, In North India, pilgrimage represents the oldest forms of religious tourism which encourages people's participation, social and spiritual enhancement, local benefits etc. (Shinde, 2008). The typical representations that exist in Hindu religion explaining intra-religion involve Vrindavan and Rishikesh (north India), Tuljapur (western India) and Shegaon (western India). Thus, tourist involve in multi-layered cultural and religious exchange reinforcing recreational (leisure) activities (Okumus, Kar, Bilim & Shunde, 2015).

Challenges of Religious Destinations Worldwide

Creating awareness on the safety and risks that faces religious events is necessary to be identified on a global scale. The organizers of these events are concerned of the various safety issues, health issues, food safety, linguistic challenges, accommodation conditions, medical facilities and natural disasters especially in Egypt, Italy, India, Israel, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia countries which contain sacred sites (Korstanje, Raj & Griffin, 2018). In Iran, the major challenge has been the political economy and its bureaucratic

government structure amidst its socio-cultural perspectives, economic and religious characteristics (Chianeh, Chiappa & Ghasemi, 2018). Improving the law an order of the various tourist destinations, establishing code of ethics, promoting the significance of the traditions and the festivals through media, infrastructural facilities, education of the destination operations/managers and the tourists is very essential across various sites in Pakistan (Arshad, Iqbal & Muhammad, 2018). Visits to protected areas in India which is termed as nature based tourism is the biggest challenge in India and hence managing the tourists, the land use and resource use is an utmost important ecosystem service and needs support to conserve (Karanth & DeFries, 2010). Poor transport facilities, lack of attention by the Government, absence of tourism product development innovations, pollution, absence of effective promotions and marketing, conservation of wild-life, terrorism and low number of tourists visiting were a few hindrances faced across Ethiopia (Gedecho, 2014).

Religious Tourism

The contemporary travel pattern by travellers to various religious destinations has been used in theory and practice as Religious tourism. Such destinations preferred by any religious tourism is generally a sacred site, a pilgrimage site or a religious heritage site. The motivation for such tourists could be sacred inspiration or cultural and recreational factors. These factors have been rigorously studied by Timothy and Olsen, 2006. However, such studies have been given due importance in the past also. In the year 1996 Lickorish and Kershaw, had discussed that sometimes it is difficult not in control of the tourist to visit such religious sites. He may get influenced by the sentiments of the family members or friends. The existence of expectation of some kind of spiritual experience during such visits have also been highlighted by Turner and Turner, 1973. Not only spiritual expectations but it might also be related with family vacation or any other social and cultural reasons (Andriotis, 2009; Nolan & Nolan 1992; Rinschede, 1992). Hence it can be said that religious tourism is not only related with religious reasons but it may include non-religious tourists also who may want to have recreational activities like sporting activities, secular shrines, festivals and sites, sacred mountains and islands, archaeological sites, war graves and memorials etc. (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Olsen, 2013, Mu et al., 2007). The evidence of religious tourists searching for internal peace and happiness in such visits have also been discussed by many researchers (Kim, 2014, Tribe, 2009). She confirmed that the expectation of self-growth or self-development is also satisfied though such tourism. And this area has been given importance as a subject area in the realm of tourism industry (Phukan, Rahman & Devdutt, 2012).

Hence, considering the expectations of the religious tourists in so many different facets, Shinde 2010 had considered religious tourism having three different segments cultural, religious travel and spiritual tourism. The same definition for religious tourism was also explained by Nolan and Nolan (1992). According to Nolan and Nolan (1992) there are three related submarkets that can be identified within religious tourism. These are spiritual tourism, religious travel and cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is related with the experience of different culture that the tourists wish to derive by being part of various religious festivals or religious performances. Spiritual Tourism has all together a different objective for travelling. It relates to acquiring enlightenment and elevating ones physical, mental and emotional energies. religious travel includes all the travel which is related to performing rituals required as part of organized religion (Singh, 2004). These are generally the domestic travellers who are active religious practitioners.

The expectations and experiences from the destination sites being visited by all these different religious tourists might be different. There are several studies that have focussed on the experiences of their tourist's destination place to create the delightful service experience. According to Xin & Yang, 2017 these experiences could be associated with leisure, acceptance of new culture or relief. Such experiences can also be enhanced by having accessibility to all areas of the site, friendly and helpful attendants, good quality displays and exhibits and good directional signage boards (Olsen, 2013). The expectation of such religious tourists is not only related to religious objectives but they also seek guidance and support from tour operators and guide. Not only this, they also have apprehensions about payment gateways, security, quality standards of the accommodation and availability of many recreational activities (Aggarwal et al., 2008). The experience of the tourists have been enhanced many folds with the invention and adoption of technology in this industry (Jauhari & Sanjeev, 2010; Gupta & Gulla, 2010).

Hence, based on the literature which supports the fact that religious tourists travel to various religious destinations not only for religious or spiritual reasons but with many other expectations and gain experiences, thus it becomes imperative to understand the attributes of destinations that would be preferred by different segments of religious tourists (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). In the past there has been research by Aslan et al. (2009) to identify the clusters of such religious tourists by adopting analytical approach. They had defined the clusters as vacationers, cultural tourist and religious tourists. Recently in 2018 Ana Ramaris had also adopted the similar approach using K means cluster for creating the clusters. and defined the segments based

on travel behaviour, demographics, destination assessment satisfaction and loyalty. The segments identified were 'conventional cultural tourists', 'spontaneous cultural tourists' and 'absorptive cultural tourists' A similar approach is proposed for the present study.

A well accepted choice modelling methodology termed as conjoint analysis has been adopted in past to identify the destination attributes with respect to preferences of the tourists (Louviere & Timmermans, 1990; Pizam et al., 1999; Feather, Hellerstein & Tomasi, 1995). The concept of "Utility" as theorised by Bernoulli in 1954 is employed in conjoint analysis. This conception of Utility describes the overall satisfaction accomplished by the consumption of any product. The preferences and choices to be measured are ranked by the tourists based on their predilections (Kucukusta & Guillet, 2014). Conjoint analysis concept has been adopted to analyse the usage of recreational sites and the impact of the tourist destination, its desirability and the attraction choice along with the residents' attitude towards tourism (Thyne et al., 2006; Lindberg et al., 1999). This tool was found to be an effective as it helps in avoiding any kind of response bias by not asking any direct questions, instead focusing on asking questions related to overall product and not the attributes separately (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 1998). It also prevents the multicollinearity issue (Thyne et al., 2006). Conjoint analysis is not only a method used for accumulating the preferences and intent to buy but also helps in simulating the reaction of consumers towards any changes in product (Green et al., 2001). Usually the consumers use their judgements or impressions in evaluating the choices and giving their preferences for final choice of the product attributes. This final choice is the total utility attained by the customer where-in their needs and wants are fulfilled not by the goods themselves but by the characteristics of the goods and services (Kucukusta & Guillet, 2014). Based on the consumers preferences identified through conjoint analysis these consumers can be classified into various homogeneous groups by combining both the tools, conjoint and cluster analysis (Picón, 2004; Varela, Picón & Braña, 2004). With respect to the religious tourists, destination attributes are critically important which is the amalgamation of different elements that affect tourists preferences for various destinations. Some of the identified attributes could be safety activities, beautiful landscape, cultural exchange, shopping opportunities, cost & value etc. This determines the visitor's future behaviour in terms of revisit or word of mouth publicity (Kim, 2014). Hence studying these attributes becomes important for religious tourism. Table 1 lists down the potential destination attributes for the overall religious tourism.

Table 1: The Potential Destination Attributes that Affect Religious Tourism

Construct Attributes	Relevant Literature
Hospitality	Kim, 2014
Infrastructure	Kim, 2014; Suh, Y.K. and McAvoy, L., 2005
Environmental Management	Kim, 2014
Accessibility	Kim, 2014; Garcia, et al., 2014; Olsen, 2013; Tripathi et al., 2010
Physiography & Climate	Kim, 2014; Lopes et al., 2009
Quality Of Service	Kim, 2014; Aggarwal et al., 2008; Suh et al., 2005
Cultural Offer	Kim, 2014; Xin & Yang, 2017; Lopes et al., 2009; Suh et al., 2005
Place Attachment	Kim, 2014
Information	Garcia, et al., 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010
Security & Safety	Garcia, et al., 2014; Kim, 2014; Tripathi, S. N. and Siddiqui, M. H., 2010
Destination Choice	Garcia, et al., 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010; Lopes et al., 2009
Complaint Redressal	Garcia, et al., 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010
Value For Money	Garcia, et al., 2014; Kim, 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010; Lopes et al., 2009
Special Events & Festivals	Kim, 2014; Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Olsen, 2013
Leisure & Recreational Activities	Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Olsen, 2013; Xin & Yang, 2017; Aggarwal et al., 2008; Tribe, 2009; Lopes et al., 2009; Suh et al., 2005
Salvation, Relief	Xin & Yang, 2017; Aggarwal et al., 2008; Tribe, 2009
Gain Experience	Xin & Yang, 2017
Health	Xin & Yang, 2017
Exposure	Tribe, 2009
Shopping Opportunities	Kim, 2014; Suh, Y. K. and McAvoy, L., 2005
Unique Sites	Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Olsen, 2013; Suh, Y. K. and McAvoy, L., 2005

Hence, the extensive literature review has been adopted to identify the destination attributes for the overall religious tourists. However, the present study aims to adopt conjoint analysis to identify the destination attributes relevant for each subsegment of religious tourism, cultural tourists, spiritual tourist and religious traveller. The rationale for the current study has been discussed in the next section.

RESEARCH SCOPE

In the year 1992, Rinschede had defined Religious tourism as a explicit type of tourism where the members are inspired to undertake tourism primarily for religious motives. They are motivated in such a way that all the participants are connected either loosely or closely with holiday making (Tomasi, 2002, p. 19). Tyrakowski, 1994, had given his perspective towards destinations for religious tourism. According to him these destinations can be categorized as pilgrimage sites, religious heritage sites or sacred sites. Generally, the motivation for such trips are the deciding factor for the destination, and the various leisure and holiday activities are the supplementary associated with such travel. Hence, to consider religious tourism as part of overall tourism industry there is significance importance of tour operators, tour

packages related to leisure activities alongside pilgrimage (Tomasi, 2002; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). According to Nolan and Nolan (1992) there are three related submarkets that can be identified within religious tourism. These are spiritual tourism, religious travel and cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is related with the experience of different culture that the tourists wish to derive by being part of various religious festivals or religious performances. In the Indian context one such religious festival is Kumbh Mela. This Mela is organized in a rotation of around 10 years along the banks of rivers: Ganga-Yamuna-Sarasvati (Allahabad), Ganga (Haridwar), Godavari (Nashik), and Shipra (Ujjain). In order to have efficient management of these festivals many government agencies, private tour operators are engaged in the promotion of these events and the overall administration. Spiritual Tourism has all together a different objective for travelling. It relates to acquiring enlightenment and elevating ones physical, mental and emotional energies. It helps in improving one's mind, spirit and body by connecting all of them together. Hence, self-development is the focus of any spiritual tourist.

Even in this sub segment of religious tourism many formal agencies and institutions (ashrams) of many spiritual gurus and specialised tour operators are involved to attract the

spiritual tourists. They develop packages like spiritual healing. In India, there are some known spiritual ashrams like The Art of Living Ashram in Bangalore, Osho Ashram in Pune, Sahaj Yog in Bangalore, Pune etc. Lastly the religious travel includes all the travel which is related to performing rituals required as part of organized religion (Singh, 2004). These are generally the domestic travellers who are active religious practitioners. This is in fact one of the largest components in religious tourism (Gupta, 1999). Some of the cities prevalent for religious travel in India are Vrindavan, Mata Vaishnodevi etc.

Hence, with reference to Nolan and Nolan (1992) definition of subsegments of religious tourism, the main objective of the present paper is to categorize the religious tourists' preferences allied with destination attributes of cities, related with cultural tourism, spiritual tourism and religious travel. The study aims to adopt conjoint and cluster analysis to identify destination attributes relevant for each segment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork for this study was conducted among the tourists who have been to various cities in India which are associated with cultural tourism across cities in Allahabad, Ujjain, Haridwar and Nashik; Spiritual tourism across cities in Bangalore and Pune, and for religious travel, across the city of Vrindavan. The study was administered between May 2019 and February 2020. A non-probabilistic Convenience sampling method has been adopted for the study. This is an accepted non probability sampling that can be applied in research (Etikan et al., 2016). The reason for selecting this sample is availability of these respondents to the researchers, and lower cost. However, the results obtained through such results cannot be generalised on entire population of India, this does not obstruct the objective of this paper to highlight different segments of religious tourists by applying the selected approach in Indian scenario.

The qualifying question for the participants was that, they should have been associated with any of the subsegments and should have visited the above-mentioned cities as cultural tourist or spiritual tourist or religious traveller at least once in lifetime. However, the preliminary study was administered by conducting personal interviews which were held with people from different backgrounds and experience to confirm the attributes and attribute levels

(consumer preferences) identified through literature review which would later be required to perform conjoint analysis. The participants selected for the interview were experts in the domain of tourism industry and academics. These participants have been a religious tourist at least once in their lifetime. They discussed in detail their experiences and expectations both positive and negative from various occasions and perspectives. These identified attributes and attribute levels from the preliminary study and literature review were included in the exploratory study which was a survey-based field study and the data was analysed using the method of conjoint and cluster analysis.

Justification for the Methodology

Lopes et al., 2009 indicated that the combined usage of cluster analysis and conjoint analysis has several advantages in market segmentation to understand tourist preferences. The procedure allows to provide a detailed and robust information towards evaluating tourists' real preferences using conjoint and allows subject grouping based on these preferences/ attributes. The authors have also deliberated that this method of having competitive advantage to develop marketing strategies suiting consumer preferences is a much better form (Lopes et al., 2009). Segmenting the tourist population into homogenous segments and groups provides a basis for effective marketing mix development and an effective way to plan and assess the tourist sector (Mallou et al., 2004). Conjoint analysis involving identifying the attribute and attribute levels helps identifying the characteristics of tourist attitude towards tourist behaviour (Lopes et al., 2009). This method would also help to avoid response bias as the tool has an advantage of collecting information indirectly (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 1998). Conjoint analysis would also help in understanding consumer preferences and ultimately help in grouping the consumers into homogenous groups (Picón, 2004). There are three main steps for conducting Conjoint Analysis which are: Determination of the attributes (1st step); Assigning of related levels (2nd step) & Compilations of the profiles of the attributes (3rd step) (Van Der Pol & Ryan, 1996). As first step towards Conjoint analysis, the attributes were recognized based on the extensive literature review and preliminary study. Table 2 depicts the attribute and attribute levels acknowledged as important by the Interviews and literature review overall for religious tourism.

Table 2: Attributes and Attribute Levels for the Study

Attributes	Attribute Levels	Source
Information	Electronic Media	● Garcia, et al., 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010, Exploratory study
	Word of mouth	
	Tour operator	
Security	Luggage Safety	● Garcia, et al., 2014; Kim, 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010, ● Exploratory study
	Medical Insurance	
	Family Safety	
Divine_Goal	Peace of mind	● Exploratory study
	Religious rituals	
	Internal joy	
Complaint_Redressal	Ombudsman	● Garcia, et al., 2014; Tripathi et al., 2010, -Exploratory study
	Feedback form	
	Govt.officials/Tourism dept.	
Accommodation	Ashram	● Kim, 2014; Suh, Y. K. and McAvoy, L., 2005, ● Exploratory study
	Hotel	
Recreational_activities	Celebration of festivals	● Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Olsen, 2013; Xin & Yang, 2017; Aggarwal et al., 2008; Tribe, 2009; Lopes et al,2009; Suh, Y.K. and McAvoy, L., 2005 ● Exploratory study
	Cultural dance	
	Cultural Music	

After careful selection of attributes and levels was done, six attributes with each having 3 levels was identified. The possible outcomes of various combinations would be $3*3*3*3*3*2=486$ profiles. Ranking all these variables in an efficient manner is a challenge for researchers. Hence as suggested by Hair et al., 2006; and Green in 1974, fractional factorial design has been considered for the study to get the combinations relevant for the study. The calculations of fractional factorial design for the study was done through SPSS 20.0 version. A special class of fractional design orthogonal arrays which is adopted for the study. The assumption being that most of the interactions available in stimuli have been negligible. It permits for effective estimate of all main effects of interest (Kuhfeld, Tobias & Garratt 1994; Green, Krieger & Wind 2001). The orthogonal arrays (orthoplan) generated 18 combinations and hence tourists had to gauge the questionnaires which consisted of 18 combinations.

For the empirical study, Metric Conjoint Analysis was used. For finding out the preferences of the sample respondents, the respondents were needed to offer preference ranking for the tourism package as defined by the 18 combinations. The respondents were requested to rank the 18 combinations from being the most favoured to the least favoured. The most favoured combination was asked to be ranked at 1 while the least favoured combination was asked to be ranked at 18.

The survey questionnaire was closed ended. The questionnaire had 18 combinations for rating the consumers' preferences. The questionnaire also had questions that were

related to behavioural and demographic information of the tourists. Of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed 391 were found to be complete in all respects. As per the study conducted by Akaah et al., 1988; the sample size which is less than 100 are most suitable for conjoint analysis (SPSS, 1994). Further, in collaboration with the research objective of identifying the preferred destination attributes for the three sub-segments the sample was divided into three sample groups. Sample 1 consisted of respondents who had visited any of the cities Allahabad/Haridwar/Ujjain/Nashik for the purpose of cultural tourism at least once in lifetime. Sample 2 comprised of respondents who had visited any of the spiritual ashrams in any case once in the lifetime. Sample 3 encompassed of respondents who had done religious travel to city like Vrindavan as a minimum once in lifetime. Based on this segmentation total respondents in each subsegment were: Cultural tourists: 146, Spiritual tourists: 119, and religious travellers: 126.

Hence, the collected sample size of above 100 was considered as acceptable for each of the subsegment in the study. The information was gathered from tourists at various religious places and hotels in Allahabad/Haridwar/Ujjain/Nashik. The sample had representation from various demographic characteristics based on age, marital status, gender, profession, and monthly household income. These demographics were selected for the study based on the previous research in the similar context (Tripathi et al., 2010, Lopsi & Jesus, 2009). Table 3 gives the demographic profile of the sample.

Table 3: Demographic Profiling of Respondents (Overall Sample)

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	<25	23	5.88
	25-35	87	22.25
	36-45	113	28.90
	>45	168	42.96
Marital Status	Married	368	94.11
	Single	23	5.88
Gender	Female	183	46.80
	Male	208	53.19
Profession	Self employed	85	21.73
	Services/job	123	31.45
	others	183	46.80
Monthly Household Income	< 50K	112	28.64
	50K to 1 Lac	102	26.08
	> 1 Lac	177	45.26

FINDINGS

Conjoint analysis will help in forming the preferences for market-based segmentation for which hierarchical cluster analysis was administered. Based on the dendrogram, it revealed that 2 clusters were formed for each of the subsegments: Cultural tourists, Spiritual tourists and religious travellers. All the six clusters were

separately analysed using the above defined conjoint methodology.

The conjoint analysis results for the *subsegment cultural tourists* indicated the correlation values Pearson's R = 0.852; Kendall's tau = 0.699 for cluster 1; and Pearson's R = 0.822; Kendall's tau = 0.612 for cluster 2. The results of this analysis in terms of the utilities of the attribute levels across the total clusters is shown Table 4.

Table 4: Conjoint Analysis Results for Clusters (Cultural Tourists)

Attributes	Importance Values Cluster 1	Importance Values Cluster 2	Attribute Levels	Utility Estimate Cluster 1	Utility Estimate Cluster 2
Information	6.556	6.924	Electronic Media	-.141	-.194
			Word of mouth	-.122	.012
			Tour operator	.263	.182
Security	13.293	15.846	Luggage Safety	.019	-.023
			Medical Insurance	.400	.442
			Family Safety	-.419	-.419
Divine_Goal	31.820	33.333	Peace of mind	1.222	1.147
			Religious rituals	-.737	-.663
			Internal joy	-.485	-.484
Complaint_Redressal	14.436	14.061	Ombudsman	-.415	-.318
			Feedback form	-.059	-.128
			Govt.officials/Tourism dept.	.474	.446
Accommodation	2.436	2.570	Ashram	.075	.070
			Hotel	-.075	-.070
Recreational_activities	31.459	27.266	Cultural Music	-.063	-.039
			Cultural dance	1.000	.760
			Celebration of festivals	-.937	-.721
(Constant)				9.475	9.477

The third step of conjoint analysis is the compilation of the profiles of the various attributes. Determining the preferred attribute levels and the attributes relative importance was attained by utilizing part worths or utility scores. The contribution of all the levels of attributes in comparison to overall evaluation was measured using the utility scores. Higher the range, higher will be the importance score and therefore higher will be the importance of the attribute (Portinga et al 2003). Hence the basic model in conjoint analysis would be $y = b_1(\text{attribute 1}) + b_2(\text{attribute 2}) + b_3(\text{attribute 3}) + b_4(\text{attribute 4}) + b_5(\text{attribute 5}) + b_6(\text{attribute 6}) + c + e$, where y is the preferences of the tourism combinations, while e is the error term and b_1 is the beta weights. Thus, the most preferred combination by cluster 1 is: $0.263 + 0.400 + 1.222 + 0.474 + 0.075 + 1.00 + 9.475 = 13.172$. i.e. the most preferred combination is: tour operator (information), medical

insurance (security), peace of mind (Divine goal), Feedback form (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and cultural dance (Recreational activities). And the most preferred combination by cluster 2 is: $0.182 + 0.442 + 1.147 + 0.446 + 0.070 + 0.760 + 9.477 = 12.524$. i.e. the most preferred combination is: electronic media (information), medical insurance (security), peace of mind (Divine goal), Government officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), ashram (accommodation) and cultural dance (Recreational activities).

The conjoint analysis results for the *subsegment religious travellers* indicated the correlation values Pearson's $R = 0.885$; Kendall's tau = 0.608 for cluster 1; and Pearson's $R = 0.892$; Kendall's tau = 0.647 for cluster 2. The results of this analysis in terms of the utilities of the attribute levels across the total clusters is shown Table 5.

Table 5: Conjoint Analysis Results for Clusters (Religious Travellers)

Attributes	Importance Values Cluster 1	Importance Values Cluster 2	Attribute Levels	Utility Estimate Cluster 1	Utility Estimate Cluster 2
Information	16.592	14.437	Electronic Media	.750	.695
			Word of mouth	-1.072	-.684
			Tour operator	.322	-.011
Security	24.278	24.606	Luggage Safety	1.159	1.018
			Medical Insurance	.348	.316
			Family Safety	-1.507	-1.333
Divine_Goal	7.686	6.383	Peace of mind	.185	.057
			Religious rituals	.330	.277
			Internal joy	-.514	-.333
Complaint_Redressal	18.440	18.445	Ombudsman	-.243	-.365
			Feedback form	-.891	-.699
			Govt.officials/Tourism dept.	1.134	1.064
Accommodation	13.211	15.643	Ashram	.726	.747
			Hotel	-.726	-.747
Recreational_activities	19.792	20.486	Cultural Music	.986	.901
			Cultural dance	.203	.156
			Celebration of festivals	-1.188	-1.057
(Constant)				9.258	9.251

Based on the third step of conjoint analysis, as mentioned above, the most preferred combination by cluster 1 is: $0.750 + 1.159 + 0.330 + 1.134 + 0.726 + 0.986 + 9.258 = 14.343$. i.e. the most preferred combination is: electronic media (information), luggage safety (security), religious rituals (Divine goal), Govt.officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and cultural music (Recreational activities). And the most preferred combination by cluster 2 is: $0.695 + 1.018 + 0.277 + 1.064 + 0.747 + 0.901 + 9.251 = 13.953$. i.e. the most preferred combination

is: electronic media (information), luggage safety (security), religious rituals (Divine goal), Govt.officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and cultural music (Recreational activities).

The conjoint analysis results for the *subsegment spiritual tourists* indicated the correlation values Pearson's $R = 0.910$; Kendall's tau = 0.748 for cluster 1; and Pearson's $R = 0.912$; Kendall's tau = 0.734 for cluster 2. The results of this analysis in terms of the utilities of the attribute levels across the total clusters is shown Table 6.

Table 6: Conjoint Analysis Results for Clusters (Spiritual Tourists)

Attributes	Importance Values Cluster 1	Importance Values Cluster 2	Attribute Levels	Utility Estimate Cluster 2	Utility Estimate Cluster 1
Information	15.739	14.100	Electronic Media	.960	.816
			Word of mouth	-.886	-.819
			Tour operator	-.074	.004
Security	29.293	26.426	Luggage Safety	1.556	1.404
			Medical Insurance	.324	.255
			Family Safety	-1.880	-1.660
Divine_Goal	7.896	9.145	Peace of mind	-.080	-0.084
			Religious rituals	.503	-.074
			Internal joy	-.423	.567
Recreational_activities	22.213	24.285	Cultural Music	.204	-.493
			Celebration of festival	-1.404	.177
			Cultural dance	1.201	-1.496
Accommodation	5.724	6.652	Ashram	.336	1.319
			Hotel	-.336	.386
Complaint_Redressal	19.134	19.391	Ombudsman	1.194	-.386
			Feedback form	-.145	1.209
			Govt.officials/Tourism dept. s	-1.049	-.170
(Constant)				9.388	9.371

Based on the mentioned above methodology, the most preferred combination by cluster 1 is: $0.960+1.556+0.503+1.201+0.336+1.194+9.388 = 15.138$. i.e. the most preferred combination is: electronic media (information), luggage safety (security), religious rituals (Divine goal), Govt.officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and cultural music (Recreational activities). And the most preferred combination by cluster 2 is: $0.816+1.404+0.567+0.177+1.319+1.209+9.371=14.863$. i.e. the most preferred combination is: tour operator (information), luggage safety (security), internal joy (Divine goal), feedback form. (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and celebration of festivals (Recreational activities).

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The authors have also delved into further gaining insights into the market segments and clusters formed within the identified two clusters across each of the three groups viz. Cultural tourists, Religious travel tourists and Spiritual Tourists which are enunciated below:

‘Cultural Tourists

Both the clusters under ‘cultural tourists’, prefer fulfilling their divine goal of life. Their experience with divine goal in mind keeps them motivated as they visit tourist destinations to attain peace of mind. Additionally, this segment prefers ‘recreational activities’ viz. cultural dance, cultural music and celebration of various festivals. The outcome is in sync with Aggarwal et al., 2008, where tourists look for the experiences involving recreational facilities involving local cultural festivities. Thus, divine goal and recreational activities are the prime motives for the associates in this segment of ‘cultural tourist’. These associates who travel to satisfy their cultural motives also gave importance to providing their family with the security by providing them with medical insurance facilities while they travel. The members of cultural tourist group are not much concerned with the accommodation facilities at the religious destination places and the kind of information available through media/tour operator or word of mouth. Thus, in a nutshell, these members are highly intrigued by availability of recreational activities and divine goal which is consistent with authors Andriotis, 2009; Nolan and Nolan 1992; Rinschede, 1992 who indicated that there are several

motivations that may not be linked with spiritual reasons but may be closely connected with social and cultural reasons. The most preferred combination for both the clusters is electronic media (information), medical insurance (security), peace of mind (Divine goal), Government officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), ashram (accommodation) and cultural dance (Recreational activities). Hence authors suggest that marketers need have different clusters within cultural tourists.

‘Religious Travel Tourists’

These tourists who visit destinations for religious purposes gave paramount importance towards providing security for their families through the facilities of medical insurance and availability of their luggage safety. This is consistent with the study conducted by Tripathi et al., 2010. Additionally, these associates also are highly concerned of other attributes which includes Information (through electronic media), Complaint redressal (through government officials/tourism dept.), Accommodation (at the Ashram) and recreational activities (by means of cultural music and cultural dance) which is in sync with the study conducted by Aggarwal, 2008. This group gave the least priority to divine goal attainment while travelling for religious purposes. This finding was not consistent with the study conducted by Shinde, 2010 w.r.t religious tourism. The most preferred combination for both the clusters is electronic media (information), luggage safety (security), religious rituals (Divine goal), Govt.officials/Tourism dept. (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and cultural music (Recreational activities). Hence authors suggest that marketers need not identify sub clusters within religious travel tourists.

‘Spiritual Tourists’

Travellers also expect some kind of spiritual experience during these religious tours and see this as an opportunity to collaborate with other fellow travellers (Turner & Turner, 1973). As seen in literature, spiritual motivation also includes non-religious tourists’ expectations such as sightseeing and recreation (Mu et al., 2007). This is the trend seen in the current study where the members of the group are intrigued primarily by security (towards luggage safety) and recreational activities (Cultural dance and cultural music). Further-on, the visitors were more reliant on addressing their issues and complaints through ombudsman who would guarantee to resolve their complaints than government officials. Both the clusters of the spiritual tourists have highest importance for security and recreational activities. But cluster one has the most preferred combination is electronic media (information), luggage safety (security), religious rituals (Divine goal), Ombudsman (Complaint redressal),

Ashram (accommodation) and cultural music (Recreational activities). For cluster 2: the most preferred combination is: tour operator (information), luggage safety (security), internal joy (Divine goal), feedback form (Complaint redressal), Ashram (accommodation) and celebration of festivals (Recreational activities). Among all the attributes, Accommodation facilities was the least preferred choice for the spiritual tourists. Hence authors propose the spiritual tourists can be segmented in two different clusters of which one cluster has the preference for religious rituals as divine goal and cultural music for recreational activity and they prefer govt officials for compliant redressal. Whereas the other cluster depicted preference for internal joy for divine goal and celebration of festivals for recreational activities and they prefer feedback form for complaint redressal.

In a nutshell, based on the utilities and importance values identified of the various clusters across the three groups viz. cultural tourists, religious travel tourists and spiritual tourists, specific consumer groups can be targeted for determining a suitable niche market. Conjoint analysis and cluster analysis provide extremely interesting business research and academic research opportunities which could also deliver interesting ideas for marketers (Koo et al., 1999). These designs and clusters would support marketers in identifying the demand for newer religious packages and solutions in terms of brochures, newsletters etc. (Huertas-Garcia et al., 2014). The current paper also recognises that among the market segments there are erratic tastes and preferences in addition to differences in responses w.r.t the combination of attributes rather than merely analysing demographic profiles of the respondents. From the management perspective, this study would empower tourism officials with pertinent information about the preferences of cultural, religious travel and spiritual tourists which would help in bridging the gap between the services that are provided by the service provider and the desired services of the tourists by designing customized tourism packages. In nutshell, the analysis of this study will facilitate in formulating the preference of attributes for religious tourism industry at large. The adopted Conjoint analysis methodology would allow marketers to identify the customer preferences, based on this they would be able to group the consumers into homogenous segments (having similar preferences). The private and Government sector should work seriously with an assurance to progress India, as the most attractive religious tourist destination in the world.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

Future researchers may identify additional variables like the location of the hotel, price of the religious tourism package, accessibility, quality of the room, availability of clean drinking water etc. which were not considered as potentially

relevant items. Future research scholars may inspect the pragmatism of promoting certain product features in everyday practice, such as stimulating an ultimate tourism package by having a detailed analysis of the clusters using demographic characteristics. Thematic analysis that captures consumers' religious, cultural and spiritual experiences can be analysed by future scholars to get a closer perspective of the religious phenomenon.

The authors felt that it is challenging to develop combinations with more than three levels of product characteristics per product attribute as it would be difficult for respondents to respond to the standardized questionnaires if the number of levels increased. Additionally, due to limited manpower support and resources available, convenience sampling method was assumed for data collection which may not be a representative sample.

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