

Investigating the Dimensions of Destination Image and its Impact on Destination Loyalty: A Study of Jammu as a Tourist Destination

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Abstract *Tourism industry has a significant impact on the overall growth and development of any region, which in turn has made tourism an important economic activity. Nowadays most of the tourist destinations are facing stiff competition and tourists visiting these destinations are influenced by many factors including the image of a destination. To achieve this many promotional activities are carried out by destination marketers to improve the perceived image of destination to win a pool of highly satisfied customers and then converting them into a loyal customer so as to pull more tourists and improve their satisfaction. If a destination can identify and satisfy the needs and wants of tourist, tourist will probably make repeat visitation and spread positive word of mouth and publicity. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the impact of destination image on destination Loyalty from a tourist perspective. The study adopts questionnaire survey with 347 tourists through convenience and simple random sampling. Regression analysis is employed to find the association between the variables. The result of the proposed model confirms that there is a positive correlation and relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. The paper also gives us an insight of the loyalty of tourist towards a destination which is very important for destination managers and services providers in creating a positive Image of a destination. Designing meaningful strategies will further play a very significant role in evaluation of Jammu as a destination with touristic potential. The study concluded that the tourists who visit Jammu are satisfied and willing to revisit and recommend it.*

Keywords: *Destination Image, Tourist Destination, Destination Loyalty and Tourism Potential*

INTRODUCTION

The Tourism sector of India has been a one among the major contributors to the economy. Tourism industry act as a catalyst in boosting the economy of country in many ways, these include addition of more employment opportunities in tourism sector, contributing in increasing the growth rate of GDP, providing a good opportunity for service delivery mechanism and finally increase in the profit margin of stakeholders associated with tourism sector (Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2008). The capacity of tourism industry to offer competitive business advantage has led to an emergence of the concept destination tourism as brand equity which act as a tool to interpret the potential effects of the various marketing strategies that the firm uses to draw leverages from both the perspectives i.e., financial and customer based. The

argument is further strengthened by the fact that the concept of destination branding stems from the consumers place in a brand, which acts as a driving force for incremental financial gains to the firm. Tourism industry has been earning lots of revenue in the recent past and has been a sector which is growing at a very rapid pace. Not only in India the tourism industry has been important and a major source of income for many countries across the globe. Many countries have been purely dependent on the revenue generated from tourism industry. The importance of tourism industry in the present scenario is evident from the fact that WTO in 2007 has predicted that the tourism industry will grow annually at the rate of 4.5% from the period between 2008-2018.

Recent studies have also suggested that tourism is going to become the rapidly growing industry in the coming decade. Many authors are of view that the global tourism is going

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to expand rapidly and coming years are going to witness lots of advancement and innovations in respect to the way tourism is carried throughout the world (Miller et al., 2010). The World Travel and Tourism Council verified that Indian tourism industry made ₹16.91 lakh crore (US\$240 billion) or 9.2% of India's GDP in 2018 and maintained 42.673 million occupations, 8.1% of its hard and fast work. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 ranked India 34th out of 140 countries, all things considered. India improved its rank by 6 spots over the 2017 report which was the best improvement among the top 25% of countries ranked. The tourism industry of India has been one of the leading role players in terms of contribution towards growth of the country's economy. The role of tourism industry of India also becomes much important due to its wide range and versatility in imparting tourism to the customers. The tourism industry has not only been an important role player in terms of revenue generation but also has been an important factor in building a good image of the country around the globe. Among the diverse service Tourism sector has a wider scope of applications mainly due to complex nature of the tourism as a service, which in consequence affects the consumer decision-making process in tourism (Keller, 2003). The sector is also important as it occupies a prominent position mainly due to its higher socio-economic relevance especially in context of developing economies like India.

Within the ambit of major tourist destinations of India, Jammu and Kashmir is an affluent growing market, which has been able to attract the tourist for all the purposes, be it Pilgrimage, Heritage, Golf, Adventure, Culture, Eco Tourism etc. As far as the scope of the tourism in Jammu Kashmir is concerned, it is of high relevance because there is a huge potential of tourism in all the region of Union Territory that is Jammu and Kashmir. Of these Jammu has been able to build a brand in tourist destination on both aspects as pilgrimage and also for leisure and recreation purposes. Thus, regardless of its essence for any sector, Tourism Destination has great relevance in both researches as well as in resolving operational issues involved in tourism destination marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The way the tourism industry of India satisfies the customers especially the foreign customers, the way the services are imparted to these tourists visiting India has built a good brand image of tourism sector of India across the globe. The tourist destinations in India are rated very high and regarded as one of the best tourist destinations around the world mainly due to high level of satisfaction among foreign tourists. The other reason for attractiveness for Indian tourist destination is regarded to its high level of service

delivery and high degree of satisfaction among the tourists. Destination awareness is a key and basic component of destination value which is been regularly neglected (Aaker, 1996). The sector is also important as it occupies a prominent position mainly due to its higher socio-economic relevance especially in context of developing economies like India. Further, the competitiveness and dynamism involved in the tourism industry also demands the regular and continuous assessment and monitoring with regard to awareness, desires, needs, expectations, and preferences of the tourist (Bhagat & Chauhan, 2021). Within the ambit of major tourist destinations of India, Jammu and Kashmir is an affluent growing market, which has been able to attract the tourist for all the purposes namely, pilgrimage, heritage, golf, adventure, culture, eco-tourism etc. The scope of the tourism in UT of Jammu and Kashmir is of high relevance because there is a huge potential of tourism in all the region of state that is Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

One of the critical issues to be addressed by the marketer is how to build a brand in terms of creating a positive and powerful image of the destinations. Brand Image is measured in terms of how customers rate attributes to the brand association that is linked to consumer memory of the destination which influences evaluation towards the brand (Pike, 2010). Brands with a strong image create an impressive outlook of a destination in the minds of consumers (Keller 2003). This will further build up the reputation of a destination which will have a positive impact on buying behaviour of a tourist (Gordon et al., 1993; McEnally & De Chernatony, 1999). Destination Image estimates traveller impression of destination Identity. One of the basic issues to be addressed by the advertiser is the manner by which to assemble a brand as far as making a positive and amazing image of the destination. Brand Image is estimated as far as how customer rate ascribes to the brand affiliation that is connected to buyer memory of the destination which impacts assessment towards the brand. Brands with a solid image make a great viewpoint of a destination in the minds of tourists (Lee et al., 2011). The destination image is of importance in tourism research spheres and has been "defined as expressions of awareness, prejudices, impressions, imaginations and emotional thoughts toward a particular place" (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). It includes a natural image, moulded by a person's experiences and induced image, formed by prompted data from outer sources, for example, advancement and promoting (Baloglu, 2000). Destination image as positive from different ventures is the idea of presentation, creation and utilization of products and enterprises in the friendly and convenience manner. The image is a key component in the promotion of tourism destinations, since what differentiates one destination from another is a key to its prosperity (Carballo Fuentes, 2015).

Loyalty is seen as the most important driver of performance and in tourism, to build customer loyalty, a positive attitude backed with the unique and favourable tourists experience leads to the loyalty intentions. In true sense it reflects long term intention to revert in the time since the prior visit (Dai et al., 2017). Customer loyalty is of focal significance to associations considering as the best possible resources (Chauhan & Bhagat, 2018). Destination Loyalty is viewed as the most significant driver of execution and in the tourism industry, to build customer loyalty, a positive attitude backed with the unique and favourable tourists experience leads to the loyalty intentions. Loyalty comprehends buyers' disposition and the connection that a customer has to a brand prompting the positive attitude towards a particular brand and repurchase aims (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The subsets within the domain of loyalty from the tourism and hospitality perspective focus on behavioural and attitudinal aspect leading to positive feeling towards a destination (Lee, 2013).

There has been considerable research on image and is considered as an important component in enhancing destination loyalty (Boo et al., 2009). A positive Image offers benefits like high Loyalty to Destination which in turn helps in building Destination Equity (Cai, 2002). Destination Image relates to evaluation and selection process in consumer purchase behaviour (Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002) and has a significant effect on visitors' intention to visit the destination and likewise recommend to others. Previous research suggests a positive relationship between a destination image and destination loyalty (Topsomer et al., 2012). The study carried out by Choi et al. (2011) on Russian tourists in Korea that destination image had an impact on destination loyalty. In other words, Destination Image has a significant effect on Destination Loyalty (Yang et al., 2015; Boo et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2015). As a result, managers always strategize appropriate image building to influence customer purchase intention to address loyalty issues. Since customer perceived image plays an important role in creating customer loyalty (Boo et al., 2009), Destination image is expected to affect customer loyalty significantly by adding value for consumers. Further, the relationship between the two is also confirmed by (Rios et al., 2019; Aaker 1991) that says that loyalty can be influenced by the perceived image. Moreover (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015) further indicate that perceived image and brand loyalty have a high connection, as these both positively influence consumer towards choosing tourist destinations.

RESEARCH GAP

Majority of studies have examined the relationship between the dimensions of Customer Based Brand loyalty in Tourism

out of which most of them have focused on new world countries, namely, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and the United States of America (USA) (Casadesus et al., 2010; Scherrer et al., 2009). Moreover, the literature on brand loyalty, although substantial, it is largely fragmented and inconclusive (Wynne et al., 2001). Ironically, there are few studies that have investigated the relationship between image and loyalty in context of Tourism destinations of India. Thus, the study in this area owing to the lack of a significant body of literature regarding this topic is remarkable because local, regional, and national institutions and governments are increasingly adopting a proactive approach in building strong brand loyalty for their tourism destinations to draw strategic competitive advantages. The need for the present study arises due to the growing volumes of tourism activities in recent times. The market scenario in Jammu offers tremendous growth prospects for tourism and related services with increasing levels of tourists. The select Study area of Jammu, due to its huge resource potential mainly for pilgrimage tourism needs to adopt sustainable tourism development model wherein Tourist based Brand loyalty management can be strategic input therein. Based on the extensive literature reviewed, it is hypothesized that Destination Image positively influences Destination Loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

The data is numerical and analysed by using statistical tools to answer research question and to examine the research hypothesis. The study examines that the tourist Destination loyalty depends upon positive destination Image. the research adopts questionnaire survey with tourist spending their holidays in Jammu. Survey was conducted with 347 respondents visiting Jammu. The study employed both primary and secondary data. The questionnaire comprises of three main sections. The First section was developed to identify the tourist demographics and travelling related characteristics. The second section was employed to identify tourist perception about Image. The third section was employed to identify tourist perception about Loyalty. Respondents comprised of 347 tourists visiting Jammu throughout the country. The scale used for measuring the responses was based on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 denote strongly disagree and 7 denote strongly agree. The secondary data was collected through journals, books, magazines, published papers and websites. The sampling technique used was a combination of Convenience and simple random sampling. The data used for this analysis were from tourist visiting Jammu. A descriptive research design was adopted that utilized quantitative technique for data collection. The analysis was done by designing a questionnaire. Regression analysis are employed to find the association between dependent and independent variable.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

On basis of data collected and inferences drawn from the above literature following hypotheses was formulated.

H1: *Destination image has a positive relationship with Destination loyalty towards tourists visiting Jammu region.*

After formulating the hypothesis, the statement was administered to Cronbach alpha test. The reliability and validity of scales used in measurement, the reliability used for the scales came out to be 0.839 for destination image and 0.848 for destination loyalty which shows all the scales used in the research are reliable.

Table 1: Analysis and Results Profiles of Respondents (Tourists)

Variables	N	%	Variables	N	%
Gender			Family Income		
Male	191	45	Less than 20000	0	0
Female	151	43.5	20001 - 40000	97	27.9
Transgender	05	1			
			40001- 60000	153	44
			Above 60000	97	27.9
Travel Purpose			Education		
Business	6	2	Undergraduate	3	3
Adventure	54	7	Graduate	209	60
Vacation	217	62.5	Postgraduates	96	21
Education	14	4	Professional	39	9
Pilgrimage	56	16	Others	0	0
Others	0	0			
Occupation					
Student	6	1.7			

Variables	N	%	Variables	N	%
Self Employed	187	53.8			
Govt. Employee	108	31.1			
Corporate	26	7.4			
Any Other	20	5.7			

The profile of the potential tourist has been discussed on the basis of their respective percentage values which are summarized in the Table 1. Out of the total 347 potential tourist The Gender description of potential tourist reveals that the male respondents figured highest 191(55%) than their female counterparts 151(43.5%) followed by transgender 05(1). Majority of respondents are Graduate 209(60%) followed by Post Graduate 96(21%), followed by professional 39(9%), and in the last under graduate 3(3%). The Family income of the respondents were 153(44%) ranged from (40,001-60,000), Followed by 20,001-40,000 ranged 97(24%), followed by above 60,000 were 97(27%). Out of total 347 respondents 187(53.8%) were self-employed, followed by Govt. Employee 108(31%), followed by corporate 26(7%), followed by others 20(5.7%) and in the last were students 6(1.72%). The Travel purpose of the respondents were on the basis of vacation 217(62.5%), followed by pilgrimage 56(16%), followed by adventure 54(7%), followed by education 14(4%), followed by Business 6(2%).

The study was further administered to EFA to reduce the data into different factors. On applying EFA to data the KMO value comes out is .926. The high KMO value shows that the data is appropriate for applying factor analysis. The results show that all the factors obtained have been found valid. The results of EFA show that the data can be categorized into three factors which are Infrastructure, Cost Effectiveness, and Appeal. The results of EFA also show that the factors extracted from EFA leads to explaining 69.51% of variance (Table 2).

Table 2

Dimension	Variable	FL	C	EV	VE	CA
DI1 (Infrastructure)	D14	0.699	0.550	6.676	30.109	.939
	D16	0.724	0.607			
	D19	0.769	0.692			
	D111	0.793	0.680			
	D112	0.801	0.788			
	D113	0.787	0.667			
	D17	0.841	0.777			
	D118	0.661	0.573			
DI2 (Cost-Effectiveness)	D11	0.754	0.681	5.144	25.992	.948
	D13	0.839	0.830			
	D15	0.765	0.729			
	D17	0.793	0.748			
	D110	0.838	0.820			

Dimension	Variable	FL	C	EV	VE	CA
DI3 (Appeal)	DI21	0.735	0.715	2.968	13.410	.894
	DI23	0.755	0.703			
	DI2	0.744	0.794			
	DI8	0.678	0.681			
	DI14	0.745	0.680			
	DI16	0.747	0.696			
				Total Variance = 69.512%		

CORRELATION MATRIX

The correlation between different constructs of the study has been studied through correlation matrix. The

correlations between variables have been found to have a significant and positive correlation between factors extracted (Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Constructs	DI1 (Infrastructure)	DI2 (Cost-Effectiveness)	DI3 (Appeal)
DI1 (Infrastructure)	1		
DI2 (Cost-Effectiveness)	.726	1	
DI3 (Appeal)	.737	.841	1

The factors were further studied through regression analysis to see the effect of independent variables on dependent variable, after analysing the factors it was found out that destination image has positive influence on destination loyalty of tourists while choosing destination. The R² value comes out to be .614 which shows that 61.4% of destination loyalty is explained by destination image (Table 4).

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.578 ^a	.614	.612	1.505

a. Predictors: (Constant), DI

Based on the analysis following regression has been formulated to see the effect destination image on destination loyalty.

$$DL = 2.312 + .652DI1 + .123DI2 + .780DI3$$

Where: DL = Destination Loyalty

DI1 = Destination Image (Infrastructure)

DI2 = Destination Image (Cost Effectiveness)

DI3 = Destination Image (Appeal)

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research depict that destination image has a greater effect on destination loyalty while choosing a tourist destination. Image of the tourist place plays a vital role while going for deciding which destination to visit. The findings also reveal that destination image and destination loyalty play a positive role while looking for a tourist destination. The research also shows that both destination image and destination loyalty have positive correlation regarding the selection of tourist destinations. Although destination loyalty helps in developing positive intention towards the tourist place but one cannot ignore image of the tourist spot which plays an important role in deciding while selecting a particular tourist destination. This signifies that consumer having positive image of the tourist destination are more loyal and willing to visit the tourist destination on regular basis. These findings suggest that the image of destination must be kept in mind by the promoting agency which is considered as essential by consumers and then only go for segmenting and targeting of tourists. The marketer must make serious efforts to make all the information available to the tourists, which will further persuade the tourist to visit the place and develop a positive image of the tourist place and which in return will help in building the loyalty among tourist. The tourist must be targeted in such a way that image and loyalty combinable affect the tourists

in positive manner while selecting the tourist destination. Strategies must be made in such a manner that bridges the gap between image and loyalty and leads to enhancing the attractiveness of the tourist destination. The study possesses few limitations which are, firstly the study focuses only on the tourist of Jammu region, so the study does not represent whole set of target customers. This limitation can also be considered as a future area for research in which whole set of population is considered. The second limitation is that it considers only a small set of tourists but in future research can be carried on at a very broader level to make the suggestions more appropriate and applicable to larger set of population. The last and final limitation is that the study has been done keeping in mind only image and loyalty in future more variables can be integrated to study the overall effect of variables on the attractiveness of the tourist destination.

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