

Relationship between Tour Operators and Tourists towards Development of Tourism in India - A Study on Mysore District, Karnataka

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the fast moving businesses in the world. Due to different reasons, people plan for tour for getting some different exposure in the environment. This study focus on how tour operators and tourists build relation for development of tourism industry. Tour operators and tour guides are major stakeholders during production and operation of organized package tours. However, the relationship between them received little attention in tourism literature. This study intends to identify the dimensions of the relationship between the two parties and importance attained to different guiding roles both by tour operators and guides. It also explores the attitude gaps between tour operators and guides on various guiding attributes. Numerous differences in perceptions were identified regarding importance attained to foreign language skills, group cohesion, holiday experience creation, entertainment, representation skills, contract compliance, image creation, itinerary compliance and identification with tour operators.

Keywords: Tour operators; Tourists; Development strategies; Tourism activities; Public responses about tour operators; Contribution of tour operators

Introduction

Tourism is one of the important sectors of economic development in a country. World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as the sum total of "The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited" [1]. Tourism creates new jobs, determines a country's economic growth by triggering the infrastructure development. Tourism has many stakeholders apart from the tour operators who directly benefit by it. The tour operator is a person who provides the required information, and also plans and co-ordinates the travel details with in tandem with various agencies to create packages or services. The tour operator may or may not necessarily have the product desired by his customer, in which case he acts as an intermediary to prepare a package to meet the needs of the traveller. In fact, a tour operator plays an important role in organizing explorations. We must remember here that tour operators have been in existence ever since the people wanted to explore new areas, to go on pilgrimage or on trade expeditions, either individually or in groups. The tourist experience includes a bundle of services and products consumed at the destination and interactions with the host community. The main tourism services are accommodation, travel, tour operating, tour guide services, transportation, catering, recreation and tourist attractions. Package tours, composed of various components of these services, form a significant segment of the organized travel market. Tour operators and tour guides are important stakeholders in the production and consumption of organized trips, respectively. The tour guide is usually a local who leads visitors to tourist spaces and interprets the sites visited. In organized cultural tourism, the guide is accountable for a favorable holiday experience.

Tourism is made up of the following concepts

Traveller: the person who used to travel in ancient period for various special purposes like hunting, food etc., are called as traveller.

Tourists: persons who travelled in a mass and later individually started to be called tourists.

Tour: when man became modern, the concept of tour came. It is the concept of a mass of people travelling together in a package.

Tourism: a composite term which contains traveler, tour, tourist, entrepreneurs, intermediaries, suppliers, producer, demand creator, demanders etc., Various other activities etc. are also included which has relation with tourism either directly or indirectly.

Concept of Tour Operator

An organization, firm or company which buys individual travel components, separately from their suppliers and combines them into a package tour, which is sold with their own price tag to the public directly or through middlemen is called a tour operator. More precisely, tour operators are mainly responsible for delivering and performing the services specified in a given package tour. They can provide these services themselves as some have their own cars and coaches, hotels and other travel related services or can obtain these from other suppliers. That is why they are called manufacturers of tourism products. The tour operating or travel agency business came into existence in England in 1841 when Thomas Cook organized a trip to take 570 fellow members of a temperance society from London to Loughborough. Thomas Cook had realized that the bulk use of transport and accommodation could reduce the cost of the tour and increase the demand. At the time of Thomas Cook's death in 1892, the business of his agency included three major aspects of travel selling tours that is banking, foreign currency exchange and shipping. Thomas Cook became the first tour operator in the world, organizing excursions on a full time basis. Thomas Cook established travel agencies and introduced the hotel coupon and the

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reveler cheques. He also invented charter trips and packaged holidays to sell to the middle class people. Thomas Cook became the founder of the travel agency business.

Review of Literatures

Tour operators recognize their responsibility for the negative impacts of tourism, as they are the ones who determine where tourists may go and which facilities they use [2]. Today a large number of tour operators have taken a more proactive attitude and have started to develop environmental policies and plans.

Budeanu identifies that role of tour operators will be promoted by many international organizations, industry associations and governmental bodies have started to investigate the role of tour operators in the industry and screen their current efforts to reduce the impacts of their activities [3]. In response, tour operators have taken several initiatives to evaluate impacts and improve performance of their tourism activities. Tour operators have started to recognize their responsibility for the negative impacts of tourism, since they are the ones who determine where many tourists go and which facilities they use.

Cochrane tries to indicate tourists are often unaware of the impacts they may be causing during their holidays. Tourists also may not see the impacts they are causing, because most of the negative impacts of tourism are the result of the accumulation of many small impacts over time [4]. The design and management of sustainable holiday packages including the assessment of various components of a tour, from accommodation to transport services to excursions, in order to determine their potential environmental, social and economic impacts, minimize negative impacts and maximize positive benefits to the environment and local communities and destination economy.

Cladera analyzed that the importance of perceived quality for the tourist's formation of loyalty to tour operator may be an indicator of the change in the tourist consumer toward the "new tourism" concept, it enhances the attraction of tourists towards the destinations which positively effects on the economic activities of the country [5].

Persoon adding up the points by saying, there is a few international initiatives to improve the sustainability of tourism sector have been initiated by non-governmental organizations and tour operators. It indicates only limited number of tour operators are providing maximum services to the tourists with the concept of organized unit [6].

Mamhoori identified that our Operator is a business that combines two or more travel services (e.g., transport, accommodation, catering, entertainment, and sightseeing) and sells them either through travel agencies or directly to final consumers as a single product called 'a package tour' [7]. The tour operators offer a packaged combination of transport, accommodation and services and have very significant roles to play as travel intermediaries that link local tourism suppliers with overseas tour operators.

Statement of the problem

Tourism activities are made up of various stakeholders but these stakeholders are pessimistic in nature. The reason about the statement indicates that, stakeholders of tourism like tour operators, tourists, travel agents, guides are mainly focusing on the monetary benefits from tourism activities. Even these stakeholders are depends on tourism, they ignoring the developing activities of tourism. The literature tells that there is less relationship among the tour operators and tourists.

This indicates that, tour operator's services are not reaching to the tourists in handful manner. In order to reach them, tour operators have to increase their services of tourism.

Need for the study

Tourism over the years has grown to be the world's largest and fastest growing industry. Even in Karnataka, tourism plays a vital role in the economic activities. Karnataka has many tourism destinations, but tourists are not aware of those destinations. So there is a need of tour operators for the purpose of providing information to the tourists. This will create an opportunity for building the relationship among the tour operators and tourists.

Tour operators are the most important players in the tourism industry. A large part of tourists prefer package tours developed and offered by tour operators. The tour operators are also linked to influence the activities of other stakeholders such as, transport companies, hotels, tourist guides etc. It is thus clear that tour operators form the central point in the performance of tourism sector [8]. Tour operators are the main link between the tourists and other stake holders. Therefore there is a need to evaluate the role played by the tour operators.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the relationship among tour operators and tourists
2. To evaluate the services provided by tour operators to the tourists
3. To study the contribution of tour operators and tourists towards development of tourism industry.

Hypotheses of the study

H_0 : The role of tour operators is unfavorably perceived by stake holders of Mysore

H_1 : The role of tour operators is favourably perceived by stake holders of Mysore

Research Methodology

To study the relationship among tour operators and tourists researcher depends on primary data like questionnaires are prepared and taken their feedback. Through the oral interview process some data are gathered to check whether positive or negative relations are build among tour operators and tourists. 100 tour operators, 30 Government tourism department employers, 30 recognized hotels, 200 public and 200 tourists were selected to identify their relations in tourism activities [9].

Chi-square test, one sample t- test and Cramer's rule were used in the study to test the hypothesis.

Testing of hypothesis

As public is one of the stake holders of tourism, the average total mean score obtained (Mean 34.8100) on the issue of "The role of tour operators is favourably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district" were verified against the average expected mean value of 33, one sample t test revealed a significant difference between average expected and observed mean values. t value of 5.141 was found to be significant at 0.000 levels. Further, it is clear that the observed mean values were significantly higher than the average expected mean values. Public as one of the stake holders has perceived the role of tour operators favorably (Tables 1-3 and Figure 1).

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	230	3.41	1.267	0.084
2	230	3.32	1.301	0.086
3	230	3.15	1.381	0.091
4	230	3.01	1.373	0.091
5	230	3.11	1.366	0.09
6	230	3.13	1.363	0.09
7	230	3.11	1.385	0.091
8	230	3.13	1.367	0.09
9	30	3.37	1.299	0.237
10	30	3.3	1.208	0.221
11	30	3.37	1.326	0.242
12	30	3.1	1.322	0.241
13	30	3.13	1.332	0.243
14	260	3.07	1.345	0.083
15	260	3.07	1.333	0.083
16	260	3.1	1.345	0.083
17	400	3.08	1.371	0.069
18	400	3.1	1.352	0.068

Source: Primary data.

Table 1: Result of one-sample statistics-hypothesis.

Type of Respondents	N	Mean obtained	Std. Deviation	Mean expected	t	P
Public	200	34.81	5.00491	33	5.141	0

Table 2: Results on public respondents.

Type of Respondents	N	Mean obtained	Std. Deviation	Mean expected	t	P
Hotels	30	40.2667	2.77841	39	2.497	0

Table 3: Results on hotels' respondents.

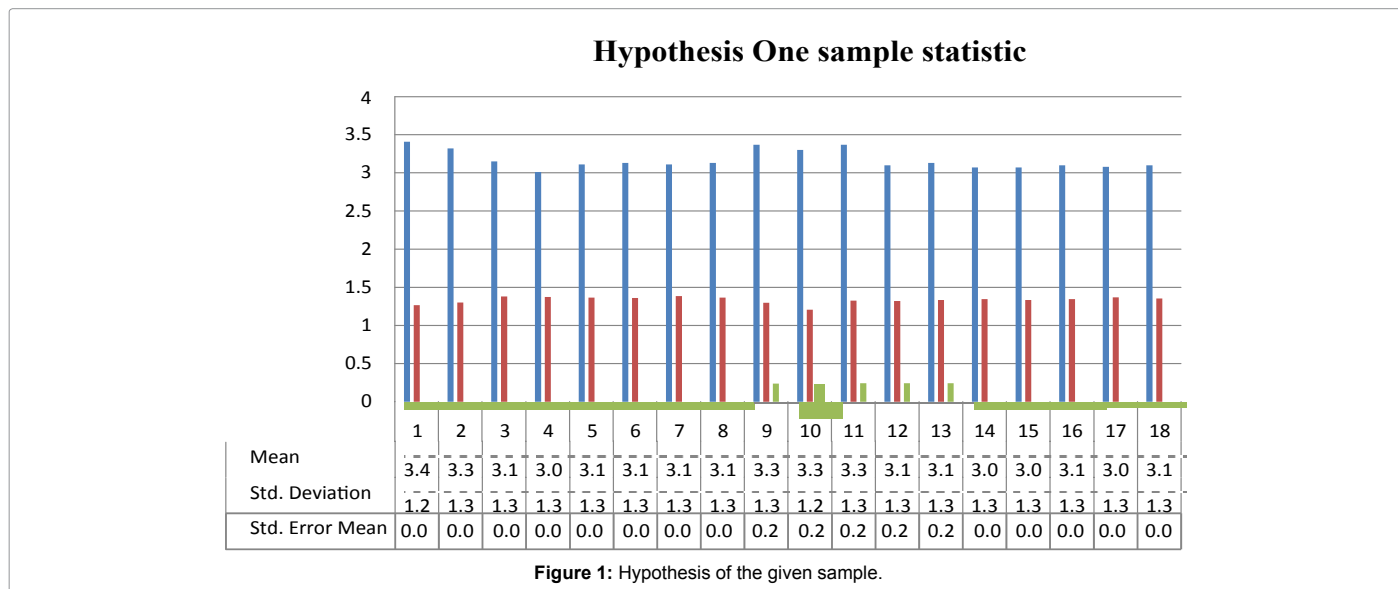


Figure 1: Hypothesis of the given sample.

By considering hotels as one of the stake holders of tourism, the average total mean score obtained (Mean 40.2667) on the issue of “The role of tour operators is favourably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district” were verified against the average expected mean value of 39, one sample t test revealed a significant difference between average expected and observed mean values. t value of 2.497 was found to be significant at 0.000 levels. Further, it is clear that the observed mean values were significantly higher than the average expected mean values. Hotel as one of the stake holders has perceived the role of tour operators favorably (Table 4).

By considering government department employees as one the stake holder of tourism activities, the average total mean score obtained (Mean 8.7667) from Government department employees on the issue of “The role of tour operators is favourably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district” were verified against the average expected mean value of 9, one sample t test revealed a non-significant difference between average expected and observed mean values. t value of -0.76286 was found to be significant at 0.000 levels. Further, it is clear that the observed mean values were significantly lesser than the average expected mean values. A government department employee as one of

the stake holders has perceived the role of tour operators un-favorably (Table 5).

The average total mean score obtained (Mean 25.3652) from both Public and hotels in Mysore districts on the issue of “The role of tour operators is favorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district” were verified against the average expected mean value of 24, one sample t test revealed a significant difference between average expected and observed mean values. t value of 4.820 was found to be significant at 0.000 levels. Further, it is clear that the observed mean values were significantly higher than the average expected mean values. Both public and hotels of Mysore and Dakshina Kannada districts as the stake holders have perceived the role of tour operators favorably (Table 6).

By considering the domestic and international tourists as the stake holders of tourism sector, the average total mean score obtained (Mean 6.1775) from both Domestic and International tourists in Mysore district on the issue of “The role of tour operators is favorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district” were verified against the average expected mean value of 6, one sample t test revealed a significant difference between average expected and observed mean values. t value of 1.895 was found to be significant at 0.00 levels. Further, it is clear that the observed mean values were significantly higher than the average expected mean values. Both Domestic and International tourists in Mysore district as the stake holders have perceived the role of tour operators favorably [10,11].

H₀: The role of tour operators is unfavorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district.

H₁: The role of tour operators is favorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district.

On the whole, Public, Hotels, Government department employees, Domestic and International tourists are taken as stake holders of tourism activities. The statistical data reveals that there is significant difference between the averages expected and observed mean values. Except Government department employees, all the stake holders have given a positive opinion regarding the role of tour operators in Mysore district.

H₀ formulated as “The role of tour operators is unfavorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district” is rejected since test statistics revealed a significant value.

H₁ formulated as “The role of tour operators is favorably perceived by other stake holders of Mysore district.” is accepted since which has specific value where it has higher level of favorably perceiving the role of tour operators in Mysore district from among the stake holders.

The above results show that when there is good relationship among the tour operators and tourists there will be a development process in

the tourism industry. To build the good relation with tourists, tour operators has to provide the tourism services in a wider manner means with precaution plans.

Findings

1. Only 35 percent of tour operators’ respondents agree with the statement that the state tourism policy is favorable on the basis of tour operator’s services. Over 65 percent of respondents not agree with the statement. New tourism services have emerged due to policy changes by state government which leads to development of tourism. In Karnataka, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has the right to formulate the various policies on the issues of tourism activities. DOT must joins with KSTDC for the improvement of tourism sector in Karnataka state.
2. About 60 percent of tour operators’ respondents agree with the statement that the state tourism rules, regulations associated with transportation, accommodations and such other facilities. Only 40 percent of respondents do not agree with the statement [12]. The statutory organizations are formulating the policies on the working condition of tour operators. As tour operators are one of the stake holders of tourism, the statutory organizations has to make and adopt proper guidelines and policies on the basis of various services of tour operators like transportation, accommodation, sightseeing and such other facilities.
3. Commonly 50 percent of tour operators’ respondents agree with the statement that the role of tour operator is very important in fulfillment of the objectives of state tourism policy. Another 50 percent of respondents against to the statement. As tour operators are one of the stake holders of tourism activities, their role is very important in the development of tourism sector. Various organized sectors are concentrating on development of tourism activities.
4. Majority 60 percent of tour operators’ respondents agree with the statement that tourism policies which are framed by state create a conducive environment for tour operator which leads to enlargement of tourism sector. The remaining 40 percent of respondents are against to the statement. State tourism policies are not up to the requirement of tour operators. It has been identified that, many of the tour operators are against the policies and guidelines which are framed by the government.
5. Equally 50 percent of tour operators’ respondents agreed with the statement that tourism services are negatively affected due to frequent changes in policy and regulations of government. Remaining 50 percent of respondents against to the statement. Tour operating agencies have to switch over from old regulations to new regulations according the state government

Type of Respondents	N	Mean obtained	Std. Deviation	Mean expected	t	P
Government Department Employee	30	8.7667	1.67504	9	-0.76286	0.000

Table 4: Results on government department employee's respondents.

Type of Respondents	N	Mean obtained	Std. Deviation	Mean expected	t	P
Public and Hotels	230	25.3652	4.29548	24	4.82	0

Table 5: Results on public and hotel respondents.

Type of Respondents	N	Mean obtained	Std. Deviation	Mean expected	t	P
Domestic and International Tourists	400	6.1775	1.87344	6	1.895	0

Table 6: Results on domestic and international tourists' respondents.

as well as central government. In these situations, the changes of policies and regulations affect negatively on the performance of the tour operators.

Conclusion

Relationship is one of the heterogeneous concept. It depends on how people react and behave in the various actions. It varies person to person on their views. In the present context, tourism is an important phenomenon of every country. Some countries are introducing its importance through their tourism destinations. In order to promote the tourism destinations there is a requirement of tour operators. There is a direct link between tourism and tourists and the relationship of tourism and tourists has been built strongly with the help of tour operators. As tour operators are service providers to tourists, they are supposed to arrange the different tour packages, book flight, train and bus tickets, book hotels for accommodations, serve as guide, satisfy the needs of the tourists. When tourists are satisfied with the services provided by the tour operators, automatically they arrange the same type of tour operators in their next visit. So positive relationship among the tour operators and tourists will effect on the developing process of tourism industry.

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Sl. No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	1	0.851**	0.928**	0.890**	0.649**	0.599**	0.523**	0.485**	0.461**	0.490**	0.472**	-0.229**	0.226**	0.435**	0.385**
2		1	0.866**	0.860**	0.715**	0.672**	0.654**	0.561**	0.410**	0.437**	0.450**	-0.173*	0.191**	0.520**	0.471**
3			1	0.894**	0.710**	0.611**	0.546**	0.459**	0.423**	0.414**	0.494**	-0.179*	0.134	0.392**	0.367**
4				1	0.724**	0.654**	0.578**	0.556**	0.348**	0.389**	0.450**	-0.236**	0.131	0.496**	0.455**
5					1	0.828**	0.755**	0.658**	0.410**	0.514**	0.462**	0.042	0.220**	0.641**	0.580**
6						1	0.830**	0.726**	0.423**	0.662**	0.421**	-0.033	0.390**	0.750**	0.666**
7							1	0.832**	0.510**	0.693**	0.483**	0.076	0.388**	0.754**	0.732**
8								1	0.494**	0.699**	0.596**	0.047	0.484**	0.822**	0.737**
9									1	0.762**	0.326**	0.269**	0.455**	0.517**	0.517**
10										1	0.420**	0.085	0.578**	0.666**	0.655**
11											1	0.071	0.350**	0.410**	0.378**
12												1	0.204**	-0.049	0.192**
13													1	0.679**	0.696**
14														1	0.827**
15															1

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Source: Research by the author.

Table 2: Correlation matrix.

