Perception and Satisfaction of Tourist towards the Bihar as a Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT

Tourist satisfaction has been touted as a way to boost a destination's competitiveness. In order to gain a better understanding of tourists towards the Bihar as a tourism destination, present is a case study of Bihar, with the goal of identifying the underlying dimensions of tourists' satisfaction, determining whether tourists can be divided into distinct segments, and examining the significant differences between segments and socio-demographic and travel arrangement characteristics. Three clusters emerged from a segmentation procedure based on destination dimensions: the 'Higher-Satisfied,' the 'In-Betweeners,' and the 'Lower-Satisfied.' The study's implications and conclusions are discussed in relation to future marketing of Bihar tourism.

Keywords: Perception; Satisfaction; Tourism; Bihar; Tourist destination

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Bihar state is beset by issues. The author's general opinion is that Bihar is at a mature stage of development. There are three main reasons for Bihar's tourism industry's current poor performance. First, between 2018 and 2021, the number of visitors arriving by plane decreased by 6.56 percent. Second, various hoteliers have expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that average daily rates have been flat or declining for several years. Many of these issues are the result of tour operators' policies of putting intense pressure on Bihar hoteliers to keep prices low and treating Bihar as a low-cost destination in order to maintain high profit margins. Bihar is one of the off-beat destinations in the country that truly deserves our attention [1-3].

Culturally diverse and historically prosperous, replete with religions and home to many forest reserves, Bihar is one of the off-beat destinations in the country that truly deserves our attention. For many years, it has remained an underrated tourist destination in India [2]. Bihar, which is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Vihara,' which means religious community, has a glorious history in India. Patna, the state capital, is well-known, and places like Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Vaishali, Rajgir, Pawapuri, and Kesaria are among the top-rated tourist destinations in Bihar.

As you are all aware, the Buddha began his path to enlightenment in Bihar. Lord Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under a bodhi tree here, making it one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. The spot is marked by the magnificent Mahabodhi Temple, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. If you're looking for some peace and quiet, this is the place to go. There are numerous Buddhist monasteries and temples in Bodhgaya, each with its own architectural style. Take a look at them while you're here [4,5].

Although tourism research in Bihar has focused on most of the industry's issues, such as seasonality, reliance on tour operators, low profitability, and increased competition, the overall satisfaction of incoming tourists as an underlying cause of the state's current poor performance has not been investigated.

The extensive ruins of Nalanda University, located 90 kilometres from Patna, date back to the fifth century, making it one of the world's oldest universities. In 2016, it was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site [6]. Nalanda, as you may know, was a significant Buddhist learning centre with an estimated 10,000 monks and students. It lasted until the twelfth century, when Muslim invaders ransacked it and set fire to its library. More than nine million manuscripts are thought to have been destroyed, according to reports.

Rajgir is home to the Vishwa Shanti Stupa, also known as the World Peace Pagoda. It is one of India's seven Peace Pagodas and a true example of Japanese-style architecture [7-9]. The pagoda was completed in 1969 and contains four Buddha statues, one for each of the four major stages of Buddha's life: birth, enlightenment, teaching, and death. It's a must-see.

Vikramashila, along with Nalanda, was one of India's two most important centres of learning during the Pala Empire. Around 1193, it was allegedly destroyed by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji's forces. It is well worth the trip to see these ruins [10].

The annual Sonepur Mela in Bihar, for example, is a vibrant rural fair that combines spirituality, animal trading, and entertainment. A carnival unlike any other is created by street magicians, religious gurus and tantriks, pilgrims, snack stalls, handicrafts, rides, circus performers, martial artists, and dancers [11,12]. It is held in November and December and attracts visitors from all over Asia.

Litti Chokha in Bihar is a well-known name. These are made with wheat and sattu and kneaded into small balls that are spicy and cooked in ghee.

Explore the ruins of Navlakha palace

- Experience the Chhath festival

- Shop for Madhubani art

- See a Chhau dance performance

- Explore Emperor Sher Shah Suri's mausoleum

- Besides, you can also savour kebabs, litti chokha, Bihari boti, Bihari chicken masala, sattu paratha (parathas stuffed with roasted gram flour) and much more [13-15].

Satisfaction is an important concept to grasp when studying tourism behaviour. As a result, according to various authors, it is critical for all travel destinations to investigate satisfaction levels because satisfaction is "destination-determined" and formed by experiences. Decision makers can better identify visitor markets that offer growth opportunities, develop the types of touristic products most in demand by their main consumer groups, and formulate appropriate strategies to maximize tourism yields by using this data as a baseline from which to build and tailor marketing promotions [16,17].

To gain a better understanding of tourists' satisfaction, present study used Bihar as a tourist destination for the study, with the goal of identifying the underlying dimensions of tourists' satisfaction, determining whether tourists can be classified into distinct segments, and examining the significant differences between segments and sociodemographic and travel arrangement characteristics [18].

Tourist satisfaction measurement and segmentation research

Tourist destinations have come to be thought of as products on offer, as settings for economic, sociocultural, and environmental activities [14]. Accommodation, food and beverage purchases, excursions, shopping, participation in recreational and sport activities, entertainment, and so on are all part of these products. All of these sub-products, when combined, make up the vacation package that most tourists purchase [19-23]. As a result, a destination is defined as "a cluster of attractions and related tourist facilities and services that a tourist or tour group chooses to visit or that providers choose to promote". However, dissatisfaction can be expressed if any of the destination attributes perform poorly.

Many authors have conducted market segmentation research in the travel industry. The majority of these studies have focused on sociodemographic factors, with vacationers with lower income and education, as well as those in older age groups, expressing higher levels of vacation satisfaction [24].

Since country of origin has been universally used as a basis for collecting and interpreting tourism data, segmentation of visitors has often been based on their geographic origin. The author discovered that National travellers wanted more entertainment facilities, while their international travellers were more concerned with the hotels' facilities [25,26]. Other studies have discovered that various travel arrangement characteristics, such as previous visits, length of stay, and travel group size, can explain tourist satisfaction levels. In comparison to the lowest grades of accommodations, tourists rated the dimensions of service quality higher in four and five-star accommodations [27-30].

METHODOLOGY

The research described in this paper focuses on tourists' satisfaction while visiting Bihar as a tourist destination.

Sampling

Sampling was done with the help of Tourists who visited Bihar earlier and responded in Google form questionnaire. Data were collected from Tourists departing from Patna and Gaya Station between June and October 2021 made up the study's population [31-33]. While waiting at the station, tourists were asked to fill out a survey. Before passengers boarded, all questionnaires were returned, whether completed or not. Questionnaires that were either incomplete or had an excessive amount of missing data were excluded from further analysis. With a response rate of 60%, from the 200 distributed. 91 of the 200 questionnaires were completed during the high season (15th July to 15th August) and 29 during the low season (20th September up to 10th October).

Survey instrument

Each destination may have its own unique characteristics. Tourists who are satisfied in one destination may be dissatisfied in another depending on the attributes of each destination [34]. As a result, traditional satisfaction scales are ineffective when comparing destinations. As a result, a satisfaction scale for the specific attributes of the Bihar tourism product had to be developed, based on previous research as well.

Tourists were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 20-item, 5-point Likert scale. From highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied.

A literature review was conducted to ensure content validity, and experts were asked to judge whether the survey instrument covered the range they would expect. A pilot test with five tourists was used as an additional method to ensure a proper and broad flow of questioning [35-37].

Data analysis

The statistical package for the social sciences was used to perform a number of statistical procedures for this paper. Calculating univariate statistics like frequencies, means, and standard deviations was the first step. The analysis of factors and clusters was the next step. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy was used to determine the validity of the data before conducting

cluster and factor analyses [38,39]. The test yielded a value of 0.918, indicating that the number of variables and sample sizes were both appropriate for factor and cluster analyses. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the scale's reliability. Cronbach's alpha was.9393, exceeding Nunnaly's suggested minimum of 0.80 and indicating that the scale's internal consistency reliability was satisfactory.

The 20 statements were grouped using Principal Component Analysis with a Varimax rotation to find the underlying constructs associated with tourist satisfaction [32]. The criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 was used to determine the number of factors. Loadings of an absolute value of 0.45 or more were considered in the factor model in order to load the variables sufficiently and because it was appropriate for the number of variables and sample size.

The 20 satisfaction variables were used in a K-means cluster analysis to divide the sample into meaningful sub-groups. The researcher chooses the number of clusters in a K-means analysis, and cases are grouped into the cluster with the closest centre [37]. Three, four, and five cluster solutions were investigated in this case. In terms of respondent differentiation and cluster interpretation, the three-cluster solution was chosen as the most viable. After clusters were identified, their key characteristics were examined, and they were given names by comparing the mean responses and the Likert Scale ratings for each question. ANOVA tests were used to pinpoint the differences in data composition between the clusters.

The ANOVA tests revealed that all of the items were significant. However, because the clusters were chosen to maximise the differences among cases in different clusters, the F-tests should only be used for descriptive purposes and not to test the hypothesis that the cluster means are equal [40,41].

To determine the strength of the relationship, profile the clusters socio-demographically, and identify travel arrangement preferences and favourable behavioural intentions, cross tabulations with two tests were used, and Cramer's V was calculated. Responses to open-ended questions were coded as nominal variables and then converted to multiple response crosstabulations. It was not possible to statistically test differences in response because there is no statistical test appropriate for multiple response crosstabulations.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results in relation to the 20 satisfaction statements' responses. The 20 statements are listed in descending order, starting with the highest mean and ending with the lowest. The statement 'feelings of personal safety and security' received the highest level of satisfaction, followed by the statement 'availability of restaurants.' The statement 'availability of facilities and services at destination railway station, on the other hand, was slightly below the mid-point [42]. In general, tourists in the sample expressed high levels of overall satisfaction with their trip to Bihar.

Tourist satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors

Principal factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used to condense the 38 items into fewer, more manageable factors. The criterion of eigenvalues equal to or greater than 1.00 led to the discovery of nine factors that explained 60.1 percent of the variance. Three variables failed to meet the 0.45 cut-off point because they did not load in any factor. 'Signage (directions),' 'availability of space on beaches,' and 'distance between the resort and the destination railway station' were the variables [42,43]. All of the variables had acceptable alpha levels. As shown in Table 2, the factor solution extracted the factors in order of their importance, starting with the largest and best combinations and working down to smaller ones.

The first factor was dubbed 'tourist product,' because it was made up of variables assessing tourists' satisfaction with the availability of various dimensions of the tourist product on offer. Although the tourist product factor explains the most variance (28.3%), this does not negate the importance of the second factor, which has the variables with the highest loadings, ranging from.791 to.740, indicating a high interrelationship of the variables. This factor, labelled 'Railway station,' explained 5.7 percent of the variance and was composed primarily of variables related to services provided at the destination railway station.

The third factor, which explained 5.2 percent of the variance, was dubbed "host attitude" because three of the four variables loaded in this factor were related to local residents' and employees' attitudes toward tourists. One thing to keep in mind is that the least significant variable in this factor, which deals with feelings of personal safety and security and shows that tourists associate safety and security with host attitudes, is worth mentioning. The remaining six factors each accounted for a small percentage

Table 1: Overall responses to satisfaction statements.

S.No.	Particulars	Mean	Std. deviation
1	Feelings of personal safety and security	5.82	1.13
2	Availability of restaurants	5.76	1.18
3	Friendliness of local residents	5.67	1.32
4	Cleanliness of accommodation	5.33	1.5
5	Attractiveness of natural environment	5.32	1.3
6	Attitude of local shopkeepers and staff	5.29	1.35
7	Availability of shopping facilities	5.27	1.43
8	Quality of food	5.24	1.3
9	Level of language communication	5.22	1.47
10	Quality standard of accommodation	5.17	1.76
11	Availability of museums and historical places	5.14	1.48
12	Availability of daily tour services	5.12	1.42
13	Availability of health services	5.06	1.49
14	Comfort of local transport services	5	1.36
15	Taxi services	4.98	1.38
16	Value for money	4.92	1.4
17	Level of hygiene and sanitation	4.89	1.44
18	Attitude of local drivers	4.85	1.48
19	Cleanliness	4.83	1.49
20	Existence of information Centres	4.81	1.53

Table 2: Satisfaction factors.

S.No.	Particulars	Factors loadings	Eigen value	Variance explained	Alpha
1	Feelings of personal safety and security	0.701	10.75	28.3	0.85
2	Availability of restaurants	0.685			
3	Friendliness of local residents	0.679			
4	Cleanliness of accommodation	0.643			
5	Attractiveness of natural environment	0.609			
6	Attitude of local shopkeepers and staff	0.574	2.18	5.7	0.81
7	Availability of shopping facilities	0.562			
8	Quality of food	0.791			
9	Level of language communication	0.761			
10	Quality standard of accommodation	0.740			
11	Availability of museums and historical places	0.675	2	5.2	0.76
12	Availability of daily tour services	0.684			
13	Availability of health services	0.690			
14	Comfort of local transport services	0.567			
15	Taxi services	0.543			
16	Value for money	0.778	1.71	4.5	0.77
17	Level of hygiene and sanitation	0.738			
18	Attitude of local drivers	0.629			
19	Cleanliness	0.570			
20	Existence of information centres	0.860			

Table 3: Mean scores of clusters.

S.No.	Particulars	F ratio	DF1 within groups
1	Feelings of personal safety and security	149.861	815
2	Availability of restaurants	116.975	803
3	Friendliness of local residents	189.975	815
4	Cleanliness of accommodation	127.632	825
5	Attractiveness of natural environment	97.126	788
6	Attitude of local shopkeepers and staff	188.95	809
7	Availability of shopping facilities	61.837	802
8	Quality of food	156.615	785
9	Level of language communication	90.817	799
10	Quality standard of accommodation	70.922	803
11	Availability of museums and historical places	137.686	820
12	Availability of daily tour services	155.907	766
13	Availability of health services	128.191	826
14	Comfort of local transport services	132.316	753
15	Taxi services	102.317	678
16	Value for money	119.158	666
17	Level of hygiene and sanitation	106.533	561
18	Attitude of local drivers	111.413	740
19	Cleanliness	86.533	782
20	Existence of information centers	65.444	606

of variability (less than 5%), and were labelled according to the characteristics of their composing variables (Tables 1 and 2).

Tourists are divided into three groups

Tourists were segmented using cluster analysis based on their levels of satisfaction. The mean satisfaction scores for each item were calculated to demarcate and label the clusters. The three clusters were given names based on their responses to the table statements: 'Higher-Satisfied,' 'In-Betweeners,' and 'Lower-Satisfied.' The means of each satisfaction statement are listed in Table 3 by cluster group.

Based on Table 3 and depicts the mean scores of each cluster diagrammatically. The statement numbers are the numbers on the horizontal axis. The differences between the cluster groups are the focus of the table. The following is a description of each cluster.

Cluster 1: The first cluster (N=61) accounts for 50.833% of the total sample. The 'Higher-Satisfied' cluster is named after its members' high levels of satisfaction from their vacation in Bihar. This cluster had the highest mean value of the three clusters for each of the satisfaction statements [43]. The statement 'feelings of personal safety and security' received the most positive responses, followed by the statement 'friendliness of local residents,' with only the statements 'value for money' and' signage (directions)' scoring below the middle of the 5-point Likert scale.

Cluster 2: The second cluster is the most populous in the sample, accounting for 80.33 percent of the total (N=97). Respondents in this cluster were labelled 'In-Betweeners' because they were in between the other two clusters in all satisfaction statements. With the exception of four statements, their satisfaction was above the mid-point for all of them, with the statement 'availability of facilities and services at destination railway station receiving the lowest satisfaction ratings.

Cluster 3: This is the smallest cluster, accounting for only 24% of the total sample (N=29). This cluster had the lowest mean values of all three clusters, so it was labelled 'Lower-Satisfied.' In more detail, respondents rated 16 of the 20 statements below, but close to, the mid-point. The statement 'availability of facilities and services at destination railway station' received the lowest level of satisfaction, while the statement 'availability of restaurants' received the highest.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide an interesting starting point for a discussion of the overall current state of the Bihar tourism industry, particularly as it relates to the states poor performance as evidenced by official statistics and previous research. Given the high levels of satisfaction and the fact that nearly 75% of respondents said they would return to Bihar and more than 90% said they would recommend these vacation experiences to others, it is unlikely that the number of tourists visiting Bihar will decline [44].

To summarize, segmenting tourists based on their responses may help destination marketers evaluate tourists' satisfaction levels and design future marketing strategies. Real progress in marketing research, on the other hand, is contingent on a better understanding of the factors that underpin these patterns. In Bihar, for example, limited previous comparative studies have not revealed whether tourist satisfaction varies from hotel to hotel. As a result, it might be useful to expand this research by conducting surveys in various locations of Bihar in order to see if there are any differences or similarities that could lead to the conclusion that there are common characteristics among hotels, allowing policy implications to be suggested for specific hotel [45]. It's also worth noting that each destination has its own set of characteristics, so tourists who are satisfied in one location may not be satisfied in another. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be applied to other destinations.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this research focused on visitors to the Patna as a tourist destination. However, questions may arise about the extent to which individual hotel managers and marketers are aware of their guests' satisfaction. As a result, managers and marketers of individual properties should keep track of their guests' needs and satisfactions in order to tailor marketing strategies to their needs.

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