

MEASURING THE SATISFACTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS: A STUDY IN BENGALURU & MYSURU CITIES OF KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights about HOLSAT Model which argues that the measurement of different attributes of tourist satisfaction can be categorized into 5 broad dimensions. It is called “FIVE As”, viz. (1) attractions (2) activities (3) accessibility (4) accommodation, and (5) amenity. The Major Strength of this Model is that it utilizes & modifies the previous work in the areas of tourist satisfaction to develop a credible research instrument. The present study uses this Model in the measurement of satisfaction level of tourist traveling to the Bengaluru and Mysuru region of Karnataka. The Present Study was conducted with the following objectives to measure the satisfaction level of foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru and Mysuru; to compare the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting these places; and to identify the determinants that contributes to the tourist satisfaction by employing the HOLSAT Model. Suitable Statistical tools were applied and the study has revealed certain key areas sought by the tourists that will be helpful for promoting Bengaluru & Mysuru regions of Karnataka as the tourist’s destination. It provides relevant input for the development of Karnataka tourism.

KEY WORDS: HOLSAT Model, Attributes, Foreign tourists.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is defined as a short-term movement of people to areas some distance from their normal place of residence in order to indulge in pleasurable activities. It is the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction among tourists, business suppliers, host governments, host communities, origin governments, universities, community colleges, and non-governmental organizations throughout the process of attracting, transporting, hosting and managing of the tourists and other visitors (Weave and Lawton, 2002). Satisfaction is a key judgment made by customers about products or services and can heavily influence the success of a business (Bowen and Clarke, 2002). Tourism is an experience made up of many inter-related components and thus tourist satisfaction with a destination can be considered a cumulative measure of total consumption and purchase experience over time (Haber and Lerner, 1998). The development, survival, success and failure of tourism ventures depend largely upon the satisfaction of customers (Haber and Lerner, 1998). The growing complexity and competitiveness of the global marketplace makes it imperative for destinations to promote a strong, positive image as they are more likely to be chosen by tourists (Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978b; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). In order to create and maintain a favourable image it is important that the satisfaction levels of tourists at a destination are monitored. Positive experiences can encourage repeat visitation (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000) and attract positive word-of-mouth communication (Ross, 1993; Beeho and Prentice, 1997). The spread of word-of-mouth recommendation is considered the most effective means to market and promote a destination (Söderlund, 1998). Thus, ensuring the satisfaction of tourists can increase the competitiveness of a destination and influence the decision-making process of potential tourists. Furthermore, monitoring tourist satisfaction can help detect problems with a destination and enable action to be taken before a major crisis occurs. It is widely agreed in the literature that favourable tourist perceptions are positively related to customer loyalty and patronage, which is important for the long-term economic success of a destination (Akama and Kieti, 2003). Destinations must be effectively managed and all individual products

and services that make up the tourism product must be considered in the formation and marketing of an overall positive image (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Tourism marketers strive to ensure the optimal positioning of a destination in a highly competitive marketplace (Beerli and Martin, 2004), although most destination-positioning strategies do not take into account cross-cultural differences, which exist within the tourism market. Culture encompasses an entire set of implicit, widely shared values, beliefs, expectations and traditions that characterize a particular social unit (Pizam and Jeong, 1996). The influence of national cultural characteristics on determining tourist satisfaction levels has not been given much consideration in the literature. However, cross-cultural studies (Pizam and Sussman, 1995; Pizam and Jeong, 1996; Kozak, 2001) indicate that satisfaction levels, tourist behaviour and tourist perceptions of a destination or service business may vary according to countries of origin.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

There is much literature on different aspects of consumer satisfaction in tourism as well as an increase in literature on tourist satisfaction with domestic or international holiday destinations (Pizam and Milman, 1993; Weber, 1997). Tourism is a distinct service experience and the tourism product is made up of many different components. When investigating overall satisfaction with a tourist destination the individual products and services need to be identified and measured as levels of satisfaction with one attribute can affect overall tourist satisfaction (Pizam et al., 1978; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000).

Tourist satisfaction is critical for a destination's survival and success. Overall satisfaction with a tourist destination is strongly linked to intention to return and positive word-of-mouth communication, as demonstrated by research by Ross (1993). This is supported by a more recent study by Kozak and Rimmington (2000), which indicates that satisfied tourists are more likely to recommend the destination to friends and family. However, Kozak and Rimmington (2000) purport that repeat business may not be as significant to the tourism industry as it is for other businesses as many tourists look for different holiday experiences regardless of satisfaction levels with a destination. This is supported by Moutinho (cited in Turner et al., 2001), who states that although extremely dissatisfied tourists may decide to change a destination for their holiday, satisfied tourists do not necessarily visit the same place again. However, these authors tend to refer to tourists traveling abroad and repeat visitation may therefore be more significant for domestic tourism. Furthermore, even though the effect of satisfaction on repeat visitation may not be profound for some destinations, research shows that it does influence customer loyalty and patronage and can therefore contribute to a destination's economic success (Akama and Kieti, 2003). The measurement of tourist satisfaction therefore has important implications for destination managers.

Bengaluru(Bangalore) lies in the southeast of the South Indian state of Karnataka. It is in the heart of the Mysuru Plateau (a region of the larger Precambrian Deccan Plateau) at an average elevation of 900 m (2,953 ft). The majority of the city of Bangalore lies in the Bangalore Urban district of Karnataka and the surrounding rural areas are a part of the Bangalore Rural district. The Government of Karnataka has carved out the new district of Ramanagara from the old Bangalore Rural district. The topology of Bangalore is generally flat, though the western parts of the city are hilly. The highest point is Vidyaranyaapura Doddabettahalli , which is 962 metres (3,156 feet) and is situated to the north-west of the city. No major rivers run through the city, although the Arkavathi and South Pennar cross paths at the Nandi Hills, 60 kilometres (37 miles) to the north. River Vrishabhavathi, a minor tributary of the Arkavathi, arises within the city at Basavanagudi and flows through the city. Mysuru(Mysuru) is the southern-most city of Karnataka, and is a neighbouring city of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south, flanked by the state cities Mercara, Chamarajanagara, and Mandya. People in and around Mysuru extensively use Kannada as medium of language. Mysuru has several lakes, such as the Kukkarahalli, the Karanji, and the Lingambudhi lakes. Mysuru has The Biggest 'Walk-Through Aviary' called Karanji Lake in India. The city is located between two rivers: the Kaveri River that flows through the north of the city and the Kabini River, a tributary of the Kaveri, that lies to the south.

Various researchers have conducted studies on the factors influencing perceived destination image. Scott et al. (1978) and Hunt (1975) demonstrate that distance from the destination affects image formation. They conclude that destination images are likely to be more realistic and stronger if people live close by, as they are more likely to have visited the area and to have been exposed to information about the destination. Based on this deduction, it can be assumed that domestic tourists are less likely to have extreme ratings of satisfaction with a destination than their international counterparts as their holiday experiences are likely to correspond more with their post-trip images. Destination image is also influenced by the characteristics of an individual, such as, age, gender, education, occupation, and social class (Beerli and Martin, 2004). An individual's personal characteristics and circumstances heavily influence the perceptive processes related to the selection, organization and interpretation of incoming information in order to create an image (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Thus, individuals develop their own personal perceived images of tourist destinations. This emphasizes the need to take into account the personal characteristics and circumstances of respondents when measuring tourists' perceptions of a destination. Due to the association of destination image with satisfaction, the methods used to measure perceived destination image are similar to those used to measure tourist satisfaction with a destination. Key attributes that affect destination image are likely to affect levels of satisfaction with a destination and it is therefore important to review the measurements of destination image proposed in the literature.

HOLSAT (HOLIDAY SATISFACTION MODEL)

The HOLSAT is a model developed by Tribe and Snaith (1998). It specifically tackles the issue of traveler's expectations which are examined prior to the arrival at the destination & compared to the actual level of satisfaction experienced after the holiday. It compares the performance of a wide range of the holiday attributes against a holiday-maker's expectations as a means of evaluating satisfaction with a particular holiday destination or experience. This approach overcomes some of the limitations of other models in dealing with the concept of holiday satisfaction. The HOLSAT differs from the previous models while measuring satisfaction as the relationship between the performance and the prior expectation rather than the performance alone (SERVPERF, Cronin and Taylor, 1914), or performance relative to the best quality (an absolute) (SERVQUAL, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988). This Model argues that the measurement of different attributes of tourist satisfaction can be categorized into 5 broad dimensions. It is called "FIVE As", viz. (1) attractions (2) activities (3) accessibility (4) accommodation, and (5) amenity. The Major Strength of this Model is that it utilizes & modifies the previous work in the areas of tourist satisfaction to develop a credible research instrument. The present study uses the Model in the measurement of satisfaction level of tourist traveling to the Bengaluru and Mysuru region of Karnataka.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The Present Study was conducted with the following objectives

- To measure the satisfaction level of foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru and Mysuru;
- To compare the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting these places; and
- To identify the determinants that contributes to the tourist satisfaction by employing the HOLSAT Model.
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HYPOTHESES:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the expectation scores and the actual service rendered scores of the foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the expectation scores and the actual service rendered scores of the foreign tourists visiting Mysuru.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Nature of the Study: The Study has been designed as descriptive as well as empirical one, based on the survey method. The Study seeks to describe the state of affairs as it is and collects the first hand information from the respondents. The data for the study was collected from the Primary resources, with the help of a Standardized Questionnaire. The Study aims to investigate the satisfaction level of the tourists from foreign countries visiting Bengaluru & Mysuru and to identify the variables that contribute to the tourist satisfaction, by employing the HOLSAT methodology. More than 200 questionnaires were distributed to foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru & Mysuru each, but only 89 & 93 filled in questionnaires were received respectively, which make the size of the sample for the study. The questionnaire schedule includes 25 key variables spanning 5 broad dimensions of the HOLSAT model. The Key variables were identified after a thorough analysis of literature pertaining to the tourist satisfaction, expectation and perceptions were recorded on a 5-point likert's scale. Expectation scores were distributed from '1' very low to '5' very high. The actual service rendered scores were distributed from '1' very dissatisfied to '5' very satisfied. Statistical tools such as Mean, Standard Deviation were used to ascertain the expectations and perception of the respondents. The Paired t-test was used to test the hypothetical relationship between the variables.

Respondent's Profile: The demographic profile of the respondents is given in **Table 1**.

Bengaluru: According to the age, While 12 tourists fell under the group of 21 to 30 years, 34 tourists belong to the group of 31-40 years, 27 belongs to the group of 41 to 50 years & 16 were 51 years & above. The Sample consisted of 47 male & 42 female respondents. The Table also shows the number of visits made by the tourists to the destination. 74 tourists visited for first time, 11 traveled for second time & 4 had earlier made more than 2 visits to the destination. Media & friends were the major motivational factors for the tourists to visit the destination. Majority of tourists comes from Central Asia region to visit the destination.

Mysuru: According to the age, While 21 tourists fell under the group of 21 to 30 years, 39 tourists belong to the group of 31-40 years, 22 belongs to the group of 41 to 50 years & 11 were 51 years & above. The Sample consisted of 52 male & 41 female respondents. The Table also shows the number of visits made by the tourists to the destination. 54 tourists visited for first time, 23 traveled for second time & 16 had earlier made more than 2 visits to the destination. Media & friends were the major motivational factors for the tourists to visit the destination. Majority of tourists comes from Western region to visit the destination.

TABLE 1 : RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

Variables	Respondent's Number		Percentage		Cumulative %	
	BGL	MYS	BGL	MYS	BGL	MYS
AGE group in yrs						
21-30	12	21	14	22	14	22
31-40	34	39	38	42	52	64
41-50	27	22	30	24	82	88
51 & above	16	11	18	12	100	100
Total	89	93	100	100		
Gender						
Male	47	52	53	56	53	56
Female	42	41	47	44	100	100
Total	89	93	100	100		
Number of Visits						
One	74	54	83	58	83	58
Two	11	23	12	25	95	83
More than 2	4	16	5	17	100	100
Total	89	93	100	100		
Motivational Factor						
Friends	17	23	19	25	19	25
Media	34	53	38	56	57	81
Past Experience	12	7	14	8	71	89
Any other	26	10	29	11	100	100
Total	89	93	100	100		
Country/Region						
Western	14	41	16	44	16	44
Eastern	17	16	19	17	35	61
Central Asia	37	13	41	14	76	75
Others	21	23	24	25	100	100
Total	89	93	100	100		

Source: Primary Data

BGL- Bengaluru, MYS -Mysuru

TABLE 2: SATISFACTION OF THE BENGALURU TOURISTS (ACCORDING TO GAP SCORE HOLSAT MODEL)

Service Attributes	Experience		Actual Services Rendered		GAP Score
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.Food quality	3.42	1.253	3.220	0.985	-0.200
2.Eating facility	3.31	1.034	2.710	1.324	-0.600
3.Behaviour of the service provider	3.22	0.957	3.200	0.901	-0.020
4.Availability of food at reasonable price	3.49	0.961	3.580	1.076	0.090
5. Quality of accommodation at the Destination	3.14	0.943	2.880	0.873	-0.260
6.Adequate washroom facilities	3.35	1.114	3.000	1.127	-0.350
7.Wide choice in the selection of accommodation	3.41	1.305	3.780	1.002	0.370
8.Quality of local transportation	2.79	0.974	2.680	0.895	-0.110
9.Convenient location of the destination	3.22	0.896	2.830	0.977	-0.390
10.Availability of the Shopping facility	3.14	1.147	3.400	1.265	0.260
11.Availability of Communication Infrastructure	3.08	1.108	3.290	1.012	0.210
12.Cleanliness	3.12	1.003	2.950	0.983	-0.170
13.Sufficient Access to drinking water	3.03	0.965	2.710	0.929	-0.320
14.Adequate Safety & Security facilities in the destination	3.30	1.085	3.470	1.264	0.170
15.Adequate Space for Vehicle Parking	2.56	0.764	3.700	1.014	1.140
16.Availability of tourist guide	3.20	0.938	3.110	0.784	-0.090
17.Friendliness of the local people	4.13	1.153	3.050	1.112	-1.080
18.Climatic Conditions	3.06	0.845	3.280	1.214	0.220
19.Uniqueness of the destination	3.47	1.172	3.170	0.984	-0.300
20.Availability of Hospital Facilities	3.14	1.137	3.020	0.879	-0.120
21.Culture,Cultural activities & events	3.05	1.203	2.770	0.657	-0.280
22. Relaxed Atmosphere in the destination	2.97	1.016	3.120	0.715	0.150
23.Availability of tourist info in local info centers	3.20	1.072	3.060	0.852	-0.140
24. Destination plan (Display of Sign Boards)	3.02	1.012	3.270	1.076	0.250
25. Courteousness & Helpfulness of the Authorities & Staff in the destination	3.15	1.255	2.860	0.968	-0.290

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 3: SATISFACTION OF THE MYSURU TOURISTS (ACCORDING TO GAP SCORE HOLSAT MODEL)

Service Attributes	Experience		Actual Services Rendered		GAP Score
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.Food quality	3.100	0.946	3.760	1.273	0.660
2.Eating facility	3.700	1.037	3.200	1.003	-0.500
3.Behaviour of the service provider	3.070	1.275	3.350	1.196	0.280
4.Availability of food at reasonable price	2.650	0.846	2.930	0.783	0.280
5. Quality of accommodation at the Destination	2.961	0.937	3.350	1.258	0.389
6.Adequate washroom facilities	3.118	1.116	3.550	0.973	0.441
7.Wide choice in the selection of accommodation	2.882	0.821	3.190	1.149	0.311
8.Quality of local transportation	3.204	1.339	2.419	0.682	-0.785
9.Convenient location of the destination	2.920	0.746	3.387	1.110	0.467
10.Availability of the Shopping facility	3.279	1.023	3.139	0.918	-0.140
11.Availability of Communication Infrastructure	3.032	0.998	3.311	1.064	0.279
12.Cleanliness	4.053	1.115	3.258	0.770	-0.795
13.Sufficient Access to drinking water	2.397	0.687	2.978	0.938	0.581
14.Adequate Safety & Security facilities in the destination	3.011	0.974	3.660	1.273	0.649
15.Adequate Space for Vehicle Parking	3.548	1.036	2.640	0.938	-0.908
16.Availability of tourist guide	3.700	1.365	2.440	0.941	-1.260
17.Friendliness of the local people	3.043	1.074	3.460	1.384	0.417
18.Climatic Conditions	2.978	0.926	2.950	0.795	-0.028
19.Uniqueness of the destination	2.913	0.846	3.440	0.906	0.527
20.Availability of Hospital Facilities	3.344	0.987	2.709	0.617	-0.635
21.Culture,Cultural activities & events	3.709	1.296	3.204	0.824	-0.505
22. Relaxed Atmosphere in the destination	2.870	0.795	3.440	1.005	0.570
23.Availability of tourist info in local info centers	2.838	0.872	2.505	0.755	-0.333
24. Destination plan (Display of Sign Boards)	2.690	0.869	3.354	0.820	0.664
25. Courteousness & Helpfulness of the Authorities & Staff in the destination	2.820	1.187	3.688	1.036	0.868

Source: Primary Data

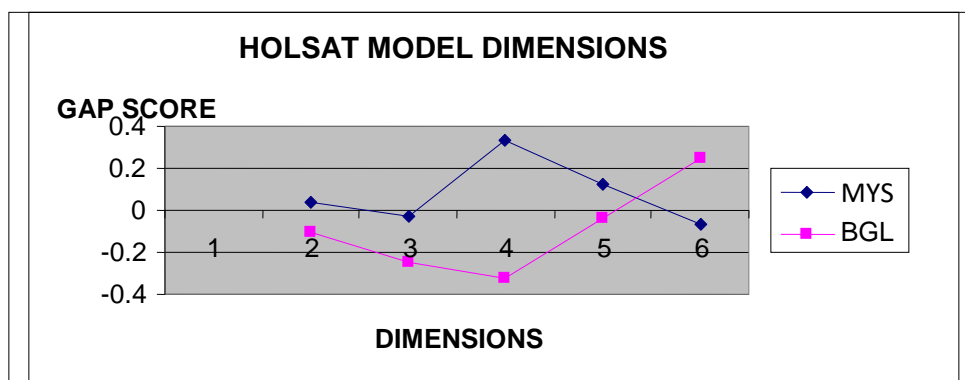


TABLE 4: Analysis of Bengaluru Tourists (Dimensions of HOLSAT Model)

Dimensions	No. of attributes	Experience		Actual Service Rendered		GAP Score
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Attractions	5	3.258	0.160	3.15	0.097	-0.108
Activities	5	3.305	0.252	3.05	0.334	-0.247
Accessibility	5	3.344	0.399	3.02	0.163	-0.320
Accommodation	5	3.220	0.133	3.18	0.330	-0.040
Amenities	5	2.960	0.264	3.21	0.396	0.250

TABLE 5: Analysis of Mysuru Tourists (Dimensions of HOLSAT Model)

Dimensions	No. of attributes	Experience		Actual Service Rendered		GAP Score
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Attractions	5	3.0350	0.1770	3.0730	0.463	0.038
Activities	5	3.0990	0.3541	3.0680	0.367	-0.031
Accessibility	5	3.0350	0.3523	3.3660	0.429	0.331
Accommodation	5	3.2090	0.4290	3.3340	0.124	0.125
Amenities	5	3.1890	0.4617	3.1240	0.331	-0.065

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: SECTION I:

As per **Table 2**, In the case of Bengaluru Tourists, they were satisfied with availability of the shopping facility, communication infrastructure, adequate safety & security facilities in the destination, destination plan and vehicle parking. They were not satisfied with food quality, eating facility, climatic conditions, sufficient access to drinking water and availability of hospital facilities.

As per **Table 3**, In the case of Mysuru Tourists, they were satisfied with food quality, eating facility, quality of accommodation, access to drinking water and safety & security facilities in the destination. They were not satisfied with the availability of tourist guide, vehicle parking, climatic conditions, hospital facilities and cleanliness.

SECTION II: HOLSAT RESULTS:

Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists: Dimensions of the HOLSAT Model

This gives more meaningful insights into the satisfaction level for the foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru & Mysuru. The 25 attributes identified for the study can be categorized into 5 dimensions of the HOLSAT Model. **Table 4** depicts that four out of Five dimensions get negative scores and others get positive scores in the case of Bengaluru and 2 dimensions have negative scores, others got positive scores in the case of Mysuru as per **Table 5**. To put it in other way, the tourists were satisfied with only the 'amenities', the other dimensions of the Model do not appear to provide satisfaction to the tourists, since their gap scores are negative in the case of Bengaluru, Mysuru tourists were satisfied with attraction, access & accommodation of the HOLSAT Model. The other dimensions 'activities' & 'amenities' did not provide satisfaction to tourists since their gap scores are negative.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

For testing the first null hypothesis, we analyzed the data using the paired 't' test taking the scores of the expectation & the actual service rendered from foreign tourist visiting Bengaluru at 0.05 level of significance.

Results of Paired t-test

Mean	Standard Deviation	t
-0.0744	0.2069	-1.7979

Thus we reject the first null hypothesis H_{01} & conclude that there is significant difference between the expectation scores and the actual service rendered scores of the foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru.

For testing the second null hypothesis, we analyzed the data using the paired 't' test taking the scores of the expectation & the actual service rendered from foreign tourist visiting Mysuru at 0.05 level of significance.

Results of Paired t-test

Mean	Standard Deviation	t
0.0598	0.6010	0.4975

Thus we accept the second null hypothesis H_{02} & conclude that there is no significant difference between the expectation scores and the actual service rendered scores of the foreign tourists visiting Mysuru.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The study has revealed certain key areas sought by the tourists that will be helpful for promoting Bengaluru & Mysuru regions of Karnataka as the tourist's destination. It provides relevant input for the development of tourism. The overall tourist perception (pre-trip expectations & the actual performance) and their satisfaction level have strong practical & policy implications for target marketing, product development and management. Needless to reiterate, providing satisfactory experience to foreign tourists is extremely important for building a good image of Karnataka in the World. Tourism service providers should ensure that their foreign tourists travel experiences in Karnataka are satisfactory. They should consider how to provide added value to the customer experience in order to secure a larger share in this vast emerging tourism market.

CONCLUSION:

The perception of the foreign tourists of Bengaluru as a tourist centre has been poorer than their expectations. The reasons include the non-availability of well trained tourist guide, non-cooperation of local people, polluted environment, unfavorable climatic conditions, lack of infrastructure & super structure for providing right information to the tourists, lack of hospital facility, and certain other services. The foreign tourists visiting Mysuru generally hold a positive view because of better attractions, accessibility and accommodation. From the study it is found that the tourists were generally satisfied with the holiday characteristics of Mysuru in comparison to Bengaluru. The good experiences reported by the tourists & the significance level of satisfaction of foreign travelers indicate that Mysuru has a great potential to offer to tourists.

LIMITATIONS & DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Major limitation of the study is the usual sample size. The results of the study surely will improve with a larger sample with respect to the research setting, it is to be noted that most of the data was collected at a single point in time. The result may vary for different profile of tourists. The population (foreign tourist) used in this study is a heterogeneous group that presumably has greater than average cognitive capabilities. Hence, there is an obvious need to replicate this study using the sample with common demographic profile to extend generalisability of results. While this study reveals the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Bengaluru & Mysuru cities, there are several areas and places which need future research.

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