

Emerging Research Areas In Tourism Marketing – A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

Tourism marketing is the coordinated and systematic execution of policies by private or state-owned tourist undertakings at local, national or international level to gain the satisfaction of the wants of identifiable consumer groups. Tourism is the rising sector and is growing at decent pace throughout the globe; as travelling is getting cheaper and is increasing exponentially. Tourism will be backbone of global economy in future. The purpose of this paper is to understand essential elements of tourism marketing of services. The paper reviews the existing literature on tourism marketing and also reviews key elements that will have a huge significance and scope in future of tourism marketing research. The paper will discuss role of strategic management, consumer behaviour, e-commerce and etc in future of tourism marketing. The paper will give insight to future directions for research in tourism marketing that will have implications to educational institutions, tourism firms, destination management organisations and other stakeholders.

Keywords: Marketing, research, tourism, future trends, development.

Introduction

The tourism industry across the globe changing, the travel is getting cheaper, accessibility across the globe is increasing and most of developing economies are focusing on making tourism cornerstone of their economy. The industry is one of biggest people-moving pursuit on the earth and is also among one of biggest growing industries. According to **UNWTO World Tourism Barometer** the tourist arrival across the world increased by 7% and is predicted to grow by 4-5% in the year 2018. Till 19th century the travel activities for leisure was mostly confined to elite class of the society, but then the rise in information technology communication (ICT) gave a significant rise to the travelling of the people and also with invention of rail transport in parts of United Kingdom increased travel movements.

There is a paradigm shift in tourism across the globe. Millennial also known as generation Y is the largest and youngest generation present with high disposable income and they have started dominating the travel and tourism trends. Being the largest generation to date, they are going to be vital part of clientele base and can emerge as the largest market in tourism and travel in future. The tourism travel in the times of baby boomers or generation X remained confined to leisure, recreation, business but with the emergence and active participation of

generation in tourism the earlier tourism activities changed to adventure and other new forms of tourism like eco tourism, rural tourism, sports tourism, dark tourism and other forms of tourism. According to the US Forbes report of Cecilia Rodriguez on 21st April 2014 80% of decisions related to travel are dominated by the women and there is a handsome rise in solo female travellers across the world. As per the solo travel record of 2014, 72% women in America opted for solo adventure trips and the number is increasing significantly and the solo travelling is emerging as the new market in tourism with a huge potential.

The trends in tourism and travel industry are constantly changing. People are travelling to experience new things like food, culture, responsible, photography, business meetings and other forms of tourism. The accurate understanding and prediction of tourism trends in the industry is very essential to manage and maintain the industry effectively and efficiently. The sustenance of the industry to a large extent is dependent upon the recognition of future trends in the industry. Travel and tourism is at the forefront of ICT implementation and adaptation of advanced technology but the changes in technology are so dynamic that there is need of thorough research and in-depth study. **Breakey & Smith** suggested that the emergence of degree programs in tourism has witnessed a natural growth curve which was at slow pace in beginning but maintained a decent pace after 1970's.

The optimum yield or efficient output is the goal of all the industries in the world. The increase in sales, cost control, better quality of services and products is the key for industries to flourish, and the fact hold same for tourism, travel and hospitality industry. Tourism industry to a major extent relies on the manpower for the better yield. The competition in the industry is increasing globally and there is strong demand for sophisticated services which makes the training and education a key variable in development and promotion of the industry. The nodal agency for development and promotion of tourism in India i.e. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is taking a wide range of initiatives for improving education, training, skill development and capacity building courses and programs in tourism.

Over past couple of decades India has been one of favoured tourist spots and the focus is given to the tourism education both theoretical and practical components. In India the tourism education at beginning was launched in 1970's with a diploma programmes and the subject gained significant importance and popularity. It was then various universities came with graduate and Post Graduate courses in tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India came up with the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) an autonomous body in Gwalior to enhance the tourism education throughout India. The IITTM is one of the most prestigious institutes to offer tourism education in India. The institution provides students platform for education, research, training and sustainable management of tourism. The IITTM has various campuses in different parts of India offering under-graduate, post-graduate, doctoral degrees and various diplomas in tourism and travel management. Post-graduate programme in tourism was first introduced by Kurukshetra University, HP University, HNB Garwal University, Jammu University and Bundelkhand University in India. The launch of tourism courses was successful and almost all management universities followed same and started offering courses on tourism education.

The diversification in tourism industry is now a focus for practitioners, policy makers, researchers and other stakeholder **Benur and Barnwell (2015)**. The most of the

diversifications emerged from European countries. The tourism businesses are diversifying; there is a frequent emergence of new players in the industry. The role of tour operators and travel agents are increasing significantly and there is a growing competition within the industry. The tourists in earlier times travelled for leisure and recreation but the trend now is changing, the tourist want changes, they demand customised or tailored tourism products. This paradigm shift in tourist behaviour is to be understood by the tourism players or the service providers. In order to be in competition, understanding the changing scenario and to give tourist a better enhanced experience as per his need and wants, the proper research is required. To understand the dynamics of changing trends and behaviour the stakeholders need go through a proper channel of research work in tourism. The dynamic change in the industry and to predict the future trends in tourism gives a wide range of academic research in the field of tourism and travel. The academic significance of tourism has helped in creating the professional knowledge and supported in acquiring the practical skills to enhance the service delivery system in the industry. The fact tourism being service and labour-intensive industry makes it important to identify the key areas where research in future is needed to keep the industry flourishing.

Review of Literature

The tourism industry is versatile sector which has multidisciplinary fields **Jafari (1977)**. The most of the disciplines linked with tourism like economics, recreation, anthropology, geography etc have influenced the empirical and conceptual foundations of tourism research studies **Jafari and Aaser 1988, Myer and Justice(2002)**. The tourism studies is mostly part of syllabus at higher education as it contributes to the society **Bashraf and Al Saleh, (2013)** Tourism research in recent past has seen increased focus in business management and administration **O'Leary, Lehto, Cheng, and Oh 2004; Xiao, (2004)**. According to **Goeldner (1988) and Cooper et al. (1994)** tourism is new and emerging subject and the formal education in colleges and universities about the subject is increasing, but the knowledge is not rightly disseminated. **Cooper et al (1994)** gives three ways by which study of the tourism is developed as a pure academic subject, (i) through trainings (ii) afterward courses/degrees in business and management and (iii) studying tourism with different approaches like Geography, linguistics, and sociology. **Hefce (2001)** comments that the tourism industry prefers hospitality graduates over the candidates graduated from other fields. **Bagri and Babu (2009)** say that tourism education is one of main factors for tourism development. As per **Bharadwaj (2002)** it's vital/key to give right education in line of creating professionalism which is considered important for development of tourism. **Amoah and Baum (1997)** highlighted a major issue of lack of standardization and uniformity in courses creating the dilemma in the minds of students. **Hawkins & Hunt (1987)** stated the subject of tourism must be taken as emerging profession and should be supported by certificate programs to frame commonly accepted ethical principles and also to create body of knowledge.

The review of tourism journal publications, **O'Leary et al. (2004)** stated that the tourism marketing research is one of most studied topic, other most studied topic found as per the report were management, motivation etc. It is evident that tourism marketing is most focused and important topic in tourism research.

Rationale of the study

As there is positive rise and continue growth in the industry which in turn gives a huge scope of diversified research areas in tourism studies. The research areas in tourism can't be overlooked, the dynamic rise and the emerging approach in travelling across the globe makes tourism research important. The research in tourism and travel will help in understanding how to harness and enhance the positives while minimizing negatives or disadvantages. Tourism being a multidisciplinary subjects and therefore can be researched from many approaches. The researches in tourism falls under various categories like anthropology and sociologists where the cultural impacts, cultural homogeneity, host guest relations and etc is studied, the ecologists examine the impacts of tourism and travel on different components of atmosphere while as economists investigate the monetary implications of tourism on the economic development. But in the recent times there is a focus on the holistic approach by blending these interdisciplinary approaches for the research purpose.

Across the globe the tourism industry brings benefits like money, tourism jobs, benefits locals, lifts the standard of destination and etc, India over past decade has realised ample profits from the industry. The number of foreign tourist Arrivals is increasing and the industry is contributing well to the economy of the country. India is at 14th rank in context of tourism contribution to the GDP of country. The direct economic benefits are realised by the hotels, transporters, retail tourism attraction shops, entertainment venues and others whereas the indirect benefits of increase in tourists arrivals are development of infrastructure, employment, enhancement of education and etc. As per the World Travel and Tourism Council (2014) the travel and tourism is predicted to increase from 9.5% of GDP to 10.3% in 2014. The sector contributes 6.8% in GDP of India and also investment in tourism creates far more jobs as compare to same investment in other sectors. According to Planning Commission report 2007 tourism creates 89 jobs in hospitality, where as 45 jobs in agriculture and 13 in manufacturing for the same investment. India being the growing economy with an ample scope of tourism because of its vast tourism resources makes tourism a prime variable in developing the country's economy. Therefore there is more need of research in the field to create towards development, marketing and promotion of tourism.

There is need of developing tourism education and research for enhancement, better working of tourism and meeting the tourist needs. There is a need of creating professional, skilled and semi-skilled manpower in the industry for hosting and catering of tourists. This gives rise and importance to tourism education and research. Tourism is the growing industry and there is the dearth of faculty resources and researchers in the field with a huge vacuum of higher positions in academics. Recognition of tourism education in this part of the world has been of most significant concern. The prime institutions for tourism and hospitality education are regularly organising conferences, seminars, workshops etc for promotion and up-lifting the tourism. For the successful implementation of any programme in higher education there must be proper structure meeting both current and future need. The country is yet to have Centre of Excellence for Research in Tourism and Hospitality. One of the most important aspects/areas to be researched in this field is tourism marketing research. It becomes necessary to highlight the areas of research that are required to be addressed so that more refined and specific understanding is developed about where the tourism industry is heading and what are the ways

that will help the academicians, tourism policy makers and analysts to develop a better understanding of tourism marketing.

Objectives

1. To understand the significance of tourism research.
2. To review the tourism education scenario in India.
3. To study the future potential research areas effective for marketing of tourism services.

Research Methodology

This paper attempts to theoretically review studies conducted by researchers and practices followed by organizations. Secondary data was the main source for data collection. The secondary data was collected from reports, journals and magazines. Data was also collected by surfing the net and the relevant websites.

Findings of the study

Strategic Marketing: The success and the sustenance of the tourism service providers in this high growing competition need a strategic approach. The strategic marketing is to be adopted by the tourism service providers to strategically respond to the challenges and make viable decision keeping in view the present scenario of the market so that the service providers gain the competitive advantage over the competitors. The tourism firms and destination management organisations require reforming their policies strategically so that they are responsive to changes in market.

The recent studies reveal market orientation in tourism and travel services is emerging as trending topic in tourism marketing research. The various subsectors of tourism and travel like airlines, tour operators, resorts, hotels and etc are focusing on market orientation in order to get better knowledge of strategic approach and its importance in enhancing tourism service performance. The travel and tourism service providers make a strategic approach and planning to handle the competition from competitors, maintaining customer loyalty and promotion of their ventures. According to **Riege & Perry (2000)** strategic approaches have been of great use to tourism industry; they proposed 3 strategic approaches which can be developed in tourism. The approaches were customer-oriented approach, trade-oriented approach and the competitor-oriented approach. The customer-oriented approach was based on adopting different marketing strategies depending upon the conditions in the market. The 2nd approach proposed by the Riege & Perry focused on the competition that helps in development of the tourism market. The 3rd and the last approach was related to the intermediaries in the trade and which is more relevant to tourism and travel, as this approach focuses on distribution channels and the distribution channels hold significance in the travel and trade. The authors recommended these approaches to tourism players to adapt for better performance but however model couldn't be tested or examined in the subsectors of tourism industry.

As the part of strategic marketing, the most widely discussed issue in the tourism marketing is the marketing orientation. The marketing orientation is researched in context of antecedents and consequences with its conceptualisation and operationalization; for instance, the Chinese tourism industry found in external factors such as political condition, government rules and

regulations and in internal factors like marketing and managerial capabilities and significant impact on its market orientation. As per various conducted by the Tsiotsou (2010) in the tourism sectors of Greece and Lithuania, mostly focusing on hotels finds that among the 3 components of market orientation only customer orientation is directly related tourism organizations whereas inter-functional coordination and competitor orientation are indirect determinants. Since market orientation and its components are becoming one of the vital topics in tourism performance and at the same time it is an emerging topic in tourism marketing research. The tourism and travel industry are the vast area and research on market orientation in context to various sub-sectors like airlines, mice companies, travel agencies and etc. gives a great scope for research and will also lead to better performances.

Further the future area of research in tourism marketing can be consumer relationship marketing as it compromises of strategic orientation of travel business and gives a research framework for retaining the customers. The industrial stalwarts take a strategic approach after a thorough investigation in order to survive the competition and retain the customers. The relationship marketing theoretically explains customers the process of decision-making process which not only considers the logics but also includes emotions such as loyalty, trust, commitment and etc. as they are the base of relationship marketing Morais and Zillifro (2003). The most widely topics researched in relationship marketing usually were focus on behavior of consumer or how the features of a particular organization are perceived by the customers. Sui and Baloglu (2003) studies the behavior of Casino bar members and at the same time Black and Parks (2003) studied the satisfaction of customers as an antecedent of loyalty. The consumers' familiarity McIntosh (2002), the firm's reputation in relation to dependability and corporate image Christou (2003) and the degree of market orientation Kim et al. (2006), have been investigated as antecedent of relationship marketing. The most of these studies on the loyalty and consider it as main outcome of relationship marketing and neglected other factors like customer value, word of mouth and purchase of intentions. Thus, further research is required on the other antecedents of loyalty such as personality, love and etc. The other areas under strategic marketing that can be researched is Experiential Marketing.

Brand Management: Branding in a literal term is sort of strategy to differentiate one product or company from each other. The travel tourism industry uses variety of different brands which are used in tourism marketing from tour companies, travel agencies, tourism products to tourist destinations, Hudson and Ritchie (2009). There are wide areas and endless scope in brand management where tourism research can be undertaken. In branding the most important concept is brand equity which refers to added value to the name of the product and its attributes include symbols, reputation, symbols and etc. As far as tourism is concerned financial-based equity and customer-based equity have not been extensively researched in tourism marketing literature which is emerging as the future research area in tourism marketing. According to Keller et al. (2008) the researchers in tourism should investigate the actual implementation of strategic brand management process by tourism service providers; he further gives stress on four steps that must be extensively researched. The four areas are as follows:

- i. Establishing brand positioning.
- ii. Implementation of brand marketing campaigns.

- iii. Interpreting and evaluating campaigns of brand marketing.
- iv. Sustaining brand equity.

Further most of the researchers suggest that the tourism researchers should give focus to two most important branding strategies i.e. brand extension and co-branding. Skimmer (2008) argues that in order to check how successful marketing campaign is, it is very important to assess if the brand image is perceived by the consumers of tourism products and services and also the visitors of the destination in same manner. This gives a scope of refining and reviewing the research methodologies that are used at present for the for-investigation tourism brand effectiveness. The gaps in how to effectively measure destination branding and performance needs to be fulfilled, Frias et al. (2007). There must be longitudinal approach for measuring the performance to evaluate the long-term impact of tourism marketing and branding. The wide range of tourism stakeholders must be involved for monitoring of destination marketing and they should also make efforts to focus on brand image as the stakeholders possess different ideas and perspectives about tourism branding, Hudson (2008). Further the research is needed on framing the models that will help these stakeholders to actually understand relationship between marketing and branding of a particular tourism product or destination. Lot of work is still required to be done on immediate basis as even today there is no scale or measuring instrument that can measure destination image. Also there is very less research that differentiates destination image and other concepts of tourism branding.

E-commerce and Technology: The concept of E-business and E-commerce has greatly become an integral part of every business and is seen as the strong catalyst for development in every field. The integration information and communication technology (ICT) has given a revolution in all the businesses, as with the implementation of ICT the outcomes of business have enhanced. The tourism and travel business across the globe are witnessing the frequent change due to the globalization, evolution of new technology, economic recession and more competition. Tourism and travel are one of those businesses that are at the top in adaptation of ICT. The use of technology has facilitated tourism and travel business in spreading the network and helps in reaching the wider range of customers. The e-services has helped tourism service providers in offering the customized services and also helps in staying in competition and gives them competitive edge. The E-commerce has to a greater extent helped in marketing of tourism and travel services as it helps in creating the distribution channels. Even though the tourism industry is very pro-active in adopting to new technology but various studies show that the technologies are still not fully exploited. The reasons for under-exploitation or less utilization of technology gives a scope for research. The internet, ICT and its relation with tourism has a wide scope of research as many studies reveal that various sub-sectors of tourism has not seen this technology in a positive way. The research's must be carried to study the level of degree up to which ICT has positively impacted the sub-sectors. Due to the lack of literature, investigating impact of e-commerce and technology on tourism performance is an emerging area of tourism marketing research. The advancement of technology has been convenient for the tourism as there is betterment in the quality of products, easy availability of information, less transaction fee and etc. The technology to greater extent jeopardized the working of traditional travel agencies and they have been threatened by the various other distribution

channels. The researches can help the traditional tourism service providers to overcome the threats/ challenges and can also help in creating new and innovative business models. As of now there is very little research and models that can help in minimizing these gaps.

Consumer Behaviour: Mattila (2004) highlights that the wide range topic of tourism marketing research. A study about involvement and sentiments of behaviour of tourists is under progress and conceptualization stage and different authors are giving different approaches. According to Isaac (2008) the area of consumer behaviour is prerequisite to get an idea to understand the strategies to sell and develop tourism products more effectively. Soscia (2013) in his study says that sentiments and emotions of tourist are the most vital and critical cornerstone of consumer behaviour research. Although there are significant gaps in understanding the tourist emotions and their involvement in connection to touristic experience that need to fulfilled. The emotional construct is growing and emerging research topic because of its practical and theoretical attributes, Alexandris et al. (2012). Global consumption of tourism itself means that there are variety of products people are influenced by, since pattern of consumption is changing across the world and wide range of people are classified as middle-class in the developing nations are actually the people who can afford to travel. The changing scenario of travellers, tourism industry, hotel industry means that there is further scope of research in how the behaviour or decision-making process of consumer is changing, Louviers et al. (2003). The consumers do not remain same with their taste age also grows which create a change in what is to be offered to the consumer; for example, Moschis et al. (2003) suggested research is required about the difference of response in mature and young consumers when they are given incentives. Kim and Geistfeld (2003) found that there will be rise in demand for full service restaurant's due to aging consumers and also focused about research on demographic variable of consumers. There is a research scope in customer loyalty for tourism and travel companies and also more examination is required on how consumers adapt to the change, Poria and Oppewal (2003). One of the emerging areas for consumer behavior research in tourism marketing is to study the cross-cultural difference in overall tourism market. As per the study of Mueller et al. (2003) different travelers have different beliefs and ideas of services offered, the study was later supported by Phrebensen et al. (2003) where he stated that consumer behavior, perception and ideas differ due the individual characteristics and ethnic background and this can be an interesting area of research. The research can be carried on ethnic minorities which can be a tourism product in future. Dolnicar and Leisch (2003) and Chen and Uysal (2003) carried a study on the vacation patterns with an ethnic point of view as one of the segmentation factors and it can be a further research direction. The changing consumer habits can be studied and also there is research scope in identifying the extent of change in various generations of populations.

Human Resource Development/management: The human resource development may be a new term but it's the old concept as the are traced from the initial and early forms of training usually referred as vocational studies which was offered by apprenticeship system in US un 18th century, Miller (1987) and Nadler (1989). The advent in technology, globalisation, changes in market, quality commitment, workforce change, cost control and etc became the base for

development of Human Resource in the organisations. The change in trends became a challenge and also opened a window of opportunity for various businesses to achieve a competitive advantage by building a multi-skilled, committed and flexible workforce, Yadapadithaya PS. (1998). The management of human resources is full-fledged process and complex system. The system involves task management and ensures the right number and framework of employees; its understanding skills, interest, competence and their behaviour so as to gain the competitive edge and organizational success, Bahtiiarevic (2014). Tourism is a growing economic activity and the industry is generating large number of jobs across the globe, the success of the industry to large extent s depend on the man force in the industry. The quality, skills and the professionalism of the employees is an area of focus and creates an endless scope of research in the development of human resource. The industry has witnessed difficulties in maintaining the human resource, the studies and research of human resource management and development in context of quality service providence is an important area of research which will benefit the industry. The importance of HRM research is realised in tourism industry there is a need of studies on Human Resource mobilization that will include developing framework, methods of skill enhancement, competency and etc.

The HRM is diversifying and now all the organizations are focusing on strategic human resource management referred as SHRM and often seen as branch of HRM. It primarily means linking human capital with the goals and objectives of an organization based on strategies for improving the performance of business, nurturing the organizational culture, promoting and welcoming the innovations, Truss Gratton (1994). SHRM is featured by certain characters that makes its role crucial in labour intensive industries tourism and hospitality. SHRM plays a significant role in changing business environment which creates enormous space for research. There are visible gaps in tourism and hospitality among the employer and employee, as per the International Labour Organization, the top-level executives in tourism and hospitality organizations generally believe the high turn over in the industry is because of transient workforce and the industry is facing difficulty in retaining the staff, on the other hand the employees believe that the low pay scale is the main reason for switching over which actually shows the human resource in tourism and hospitality is somehow under-developed. Therefore, in order to close this gap, there can be a huge potential research trend in tourism industry on the employment fitness, Kristof A (1996)

Conclusion

The tourism industry is growing rapidly through out and over the years there has been rigour towards the research in tourism, the research helps in being updated with the dynamics of the industry and helps to create a better medium for development. The above study has discussed various topics which demand the research activity or that can be future research area directions in the tourism, travel and hospitality industry. The research is already going on in the areas discussed but there is further scope in these areas where research can be conducted. Important areas in context to tourism were highlighted as emerging or trending areas of research in tourism. There are various studies or literature linking tourism and marketing or tourism and management. In this chapter more, focus has been given to marketing planning and development but there is growing demand and need to give attention towards interdisciplinary

research in tourism. There is dearth in research connecting tourism to fields HRM, strategic marketing, entrepreneurship and etc, huge research scope is in linking such fields to tourism as they play a dominating role development and marketing of tourism. The technology is changing rapidly and the role of technology is significant in tourism as sub sectors of tourism like travel agencies, tour operators, reservation counters and etc are totally dependent on technology thus creating a room for ample research in technology and tourism. Future research wont only helps tourism development but will also be of a great use to stakeholders in the industry as based research's they will frame future strategies and policies to enhance the industry. The research agendas must be crystal clear so that the research conducted is more relevant and useful to managers and stalwarts of the industry. As per the present study the literature reviewed it is apparent that more rigour and longitudinal perspectives are to be studied to understand the causal relations.

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