

Sustainable Tourism Marketing in Digital Era

Dr. Niyat Shetty

Assistant Professor, Sasmira's Business School

ABSTRACT

In today's digital era of marketing, where seller and buyer need not meet for the transaction to take place, there is a deviation as far as tourism industry is working. In order to build a sustainable business model, it is very important to understand the psyche of a tourist and all the factors that determine a purchase of a tour. Digitalization in tourism is a mere tool which could facilitate the marketing process. But, primary task of a tourism marketer is to unearth the basic need requirements and the reason for a tourist to undertake a trip.

So with an objective to provide solution to these problems which every tourism marketer faces, this research paper unlocks some questions related to the consumer behavior habits of a tourist. There may be various factors that determine the motive of the trip undertaken by the tourists. Unless this purchase motive is learnt, it becomes very difficult to the marketer to promote or pitch in the right trip to the right person. Digitalization is a mere tool; it can backfire if the message hit the wrong target group of consumers. So, mapping the needs of the tourists with the correct solution becomes inevitable in today's digital era.

This paper basically understands the association relationship between the demographic factors of the tourists like age, location and occupation affecting the different parameters of the Tourism. These parameters gauged for the research purpose would be the source of information, features of attraction in a tourist destination and the preferred season of the trip. Once the association between these demographic factors and its effects on the tourism is determined, it will help a lot to the entire Tourism industry to plan and customize its packages targeting to the right consumer group, with the help of Digitalization.

Keywords: Tourism, Sustainable tourism, demographics, rural tourism, tourism marketing

INTRODUCTION

Today, in the world the tourism industry is the fastest and largest growing industry in the world. In today's digital era, where the seller and buyer has not personal connection and the transaction is made on the click of the mouse, it is still very important to know and understand the basic need and the consumer behavior of tourists. Tourism is one of the most flourishing industries all over India, especially in Gujarat where it is one of the sectors where tremendous growth is being identified and to be explored in near future.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

For any sector to grow, it is very important to gauge or foresee the trends in the industry. What are the tourist customer profiles? From where do they get the information about the tourist destinations of Gujarat? Do the tastes and preferences about the destination differ according to the demographic profiles or whether it is common for all people? This paper would throw light on the effects of demographic factors on the tastes and preferences and the source of information used by the tourists to tour Gujarat.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research paper are enlisted as below:

- a. To know the current traffic trends in Gujarat Tourism
- b. To study the impact of demographic factors of the tourists on the source of information tourists refer in selecting destination
- c. To analyze the relationship between the demographic factors of the tourists and the taste and preferences of the tourists.
- d. To know the association between the demographic factors of the tourists and the preferred season of a tour.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The null hypotheses for my study are as follows:

- a. H01: There is no association between the age of the tourist and the source of information referred in selecting the destination

- b. H02: There is no association between the location of the tourist and the source of information referred in selecting the destination
- c. H03: There is no association between the occupation of the tourist and the source of information referred in selecting the destination
- d. H04: There is no association between the age of the tourist and the features of attraction in a tourist place.
- e. H05: There is no association between the location of the tourist and the features of attraction in a tourist place.
- f. H06: There is no association between the occupation of the tourist and the features of attraction in a tourist place.
- g. H07: There is no association between preferred season to tour Gujarat and region of the tourists.
- h. H08: There is no association between preferred season to tour Gujarat and occupation of the tourists.
- i. H09: There is no association between preferred season to tour Gujarat and location of the tourists.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research conducted used a descriptive research design, which is typically more formal and structured than exploratory research. A Survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire tested for reliability and data was collected throughout Gujarat.

SAMPLING METHOD

A total sample size of 500 was selected for the research. Survey was conducted at 8 different places like Diu, Mandvi, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Dwarka, Somnath, Gir Forest and Polo Forest. Stratified random sampling was used to collect data through structured questionnaire across eight strata as follows:

Tourist Destination	Sample size
Ahmedabad	80
Vadodara	70
Diu	60
Mandvi	60
Somnath	60
Dwarka	60
Gir Forest	60
Polo Forest	50
TOTAL	500

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

For the analysis of the data collected and for the hypothesis testing, SPSS software was used. Chi- Square was chosen as the tool for data analysis and the following trends can be deduced.

- a. There is a Relation between Age of the Tourists and the Source of Information for the tourist place.
- b. There is a Relation between Occupation of the Tourist and Source of Information for the tourist place.
- c. There is a relation between Location of Tourists and Source of Information for the tourist place.
- d. There is a Relation between the Age of the Tourist and Features of Attraction in a Tourist Place
- e. There is a Relation between Occupation of the tourists and the Features of attraction in a tourist place.
- f. There is a Relation between location of the Tourists and the Features of attraction in a tourist place.
- g. There is a Relationship between Occupation and the Season preferred to Tour Gujarat.
- h. There is a Relationship between Location of the tourists and the Season preferred to Tour Gujarat.
- i. There is a Relationship between the Region the tourist belongs to and the Preferred Season of Touring Gujarat.

1. THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN AGE OF THE TOURISTS AND THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE TOURIST PLACE.

Crosstab						
Age_Group		source_of_informationQue4				Total
		Friends/Relatives	Internet	Newspaper	TV advertisement	
Elderly	Count	100	47	1	15	163
	Expected Count	85.1	61.0	.7	16.3	163.0
Middle	Count	124	48	0	25	197
	Expected Count	102.8	73.7	.8	19.7	197.0
Young	Count	37	92	1	10	140
	Expected Count	73.1	52.4	.6	14.0	140.0
Total	Count	261	187	2	50	500
	Expected Count	261.0	187.0	2.0	50.0	500.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	p-value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	70.932 ^a	6	.000	Rejected

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between Age Group and Source of Information of the tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. Elderly people got the information for their touring places from Friends and Relatives.
2. Middle Aged people got the information for their touring places from TV advertisements.
3. Young people got the information for their touring places from Internet.
4. Newspaper is not an effective tool as a source of information for the tourists.

2. THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN OCCUPATION OF THE TOURIST AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE TOURIST PLACE.

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	P - value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	18.116 ^a	9	.034	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between Occupation and Source of Information for the tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. Business people got the information for their touring places from TV Advertisements.
2. Professional and Retired people got the information from Friends and Relatives.
3. Service people got the information for their touring places from Internet.
4. Newspaper is not an effective tool as a source of information for the tourists.

3. THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN LOCATION OF TOURISTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE TOURIST PLACE.

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	p- value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	24.699 ^a	9	.003	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between Location of Tourists and Source of Information for the tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. People from North got the information for their touring places from TV Advertisements.
2. Tourists from North East Region got the information from Friends and Relatives.

3. Tourists from Gujarat and South Region got the information for their touring places from Internet.
4. Newspaper is not an effective tool as a source of information for the tourists.
4. **THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN THE AGE OF THE TOURIST AND FEATURES OF ATTRACTION IN A TOURIST PLACE**

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	p- value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	119.086 ^a	6	.000	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between Age Group and the Features of attraction in a tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. Elderly people are attracted mostly towards Religion as a feature in a tourist place.
2. Middle Aged people are looking for Rural Tourism as the most attracted feature in a tourist place.
3. Young people are attracted towards Beaches and Adventure in a tourist place.

5. **THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN OCCUPATION OF THE TOURISTS AND THE FEATURES OF ATTRACTION IN A TOURIST PLACE.**

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	P - value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	126.424 ^a	9	.000	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between the Occupation of the tourists and the Features of attraction in a tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. Retired people are attracted mostly towards Religion as a feature in a tourist place.
2. Professional people are looking for Rural Tourism as the most attracted feature in a tourist place.
3. Business People are attracted towards tourist places with Beaches.
4. Service People look for Adventure as a main attraction in touring a place.

6. **THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN LOCATION OF THE TOURISTS AND THE FEATURES OF ATTRACTION IN A TOURIST PLACE.**

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	P - value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	329.257 ^a	9	.000	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between the location of the Tourists and the Features of attraction in a tourist place.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

1. Tourists from South Region are attracted mostly towards Religion as a feature in a tourist place.
2. Tourists from Gujarat generally prefer Rural Tourism as the most attracted feature in a tourist place.
3. Tourists from North East Region are attracted towards tourist places with Beaches.
4. Tourists from North look for Adventure and Beaches as a main attraction in touring a place.

7. **THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND THE SEASON PREFERRED TO TOUR GUJARAT.**

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Df	p-value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	29.296 ^a	9	.001	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between the Occupation of the Tourists and the season planned to tour Gujarat.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Business Community Tourists plan to take Gujarat tour in summers.
2. Professionals would prefer Off-Season time to visit Gujarat.
3. Retired people would generally prefer Christmas and off-season period to tour Gujarat.
4. Tourists belonging to the Service Class prefer Diwali and summers for touring Gujarat.

8. THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCATION OF THE TOURISTS AND THE SEASON PREFERRED TO TOUR GUJARAT.

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	p-value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	20.515 ^a	9	.015	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between the Location of the Tourists and the season planned to tour Gujarat.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Local Tourist generally prefer to visit places in summers
2. Tourists from North Region prefer Christmas to tour Gujarat
3. Tourists from North East generally prefer Off Season to tour Gujarat.
4. Tourists from South prefer Diwali time to tour Gujarat.

9. THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REGION THE TOURIST BELONGS TO AND THE PREFERRED SEASON OF TOURING GUJARAT.

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Df	p-value	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	9.443 ^a	3	.024	REJECTED

Since p-value is less than 0.05 test is rejected.

Conclusion of test is there is association between the Region to which the tourist belongs and the preferred Season of Touring Gujarat.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Tourists from the rural region generally prefer Diwali and Christmas to tour Gujarat.
2. Tourists from the urban region generally prefer Off-Season time to tour Gujarat.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. People from North and North East Region generally prefer Beaches in Gujarat, hence the marketing plan should be such that beaches should be highlighted in the marketing campaign of Gujarat tourism in those regions.
2. Elderly people generally prefer Religion as the base reason for Touring Gujarat. So while approaching elder age group, Religion Tourism should be considered.
3. Business People generally undertake Gujarat Tours for relaxation; hence more places/ resorts with more luxury amenities should be developed to give the tourists THE relaxation experience.
4. Tourism marketing should also consider the mode of media used to promote their tourist activities as the findings of the study concluded that people belonging to the different age, occupation and location respond to the different media options as the source of information for selecting their destination.
5. Urban Region tourists prefer Off Season for travel. An offbeat holiday package in between the season times could always fetch urban customers for tourism marketers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Anil Varma. (2010). "Emerging Trends in Tourism", The ICFAI University Press.
2. A report on emerging tourism markets – the coming economic boom by UN WorldTourism Organization released on June 6th 2008.
3. BatraG.S.and A.S Chawla (1995) (ed.) Tourism Management: A Global Perspective, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi.
4. Cowling R. Ecotourism: What is it and What can it Mean for conservation
5. Dr. H. Ramakrishna. (2011). "Marketing of Tourism Products in Karnataka: PolicyImplications", Indian Journal of Marketing, pp.38-45.
6. Gunn, Clare and VarTurgut (2002) Tourism Planning: Basic Concepts, Cases: Fourth Edition New York
7. Honey, Martha S. : Ecotourism's impact on Environment, 1999
8. Proceeding/Project Report No. 21, July 1996, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai.
9. Redefining Tourism - Experiences and Insights from Rural India, Tourism Projects in India by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India / UNDP India 2008
10. www.gujarattourism.com