

ANALYSIS OF TOURIST SATISFACTION AND DESTINATION LOYALTY: A STUDY OF DACHIGAM NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract: *Tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty are indispensable tools which are used to measure the tourist's attitude concerning the destination. Loyalty is concerned with the likelihood of a customer returning, making referrals, providing strong word-of-mouth, as well as providing references and publicity. The aim of the study was to analyse the tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty of tourist visiting Dachigam National Park. The data has been collected through a well designed questionnaire using 5-point likert Scale from 130 respondents, selected by adopting simple random sampling technique. The data analysis is based on the suitable statistical tools. The result of the study indicated that most of the tourists were satisfied and willing to revisit again.*

Key Words: *Satisfaction, Loyalty, Dachigam, Tourism.*

Introduction

Since their establishment, national parks have played an important role as tourist attractions in many countries. As argued by Butler and Boyd (2000), "tourism has been strongly associated with national parks from the earliest days of their establishment and is often placed firmly in legislation and park policies as a major function of parks systems". The development of national parks dates back to a century and a quarter. By the middle of the nineteenth century, there were concerns over the impact of human settlement and its expansion on the natural landscape as well as on its inhabitants. There was a growing interest in the design and preservation of landscape. Subsequently, a need was felt and realized to have open natural areas for the purpose of relaxation for people. These factors were influential in the establishment of the forerunner of the national parks, the Yosemite Park in 1864 (Huth, 1972 cited in Butler & Boyd, 2000) was the first national park, the Yellowstone was established in 1872 (Butler & Boyd, 2000). A few years later, Banff National Park was established in Canada. There were a number of other factors that were involved in the establishment of these early parks, and "two of the major influences were directly related to tourism and recreation" (Butler & Boyd, 2000). First, the growing need for space to be set aside for relaxation. Second, the perceived economic benefits that could accrue to these newly established parks from the development of tourism.

Review of Literature

Although the characteristics of the natural environment are considered to be a primary element for nature-based recreation, certain man-made facilities are essential to enhance or complement the natural attraction (Cocklin et al., 1990). Similarly, a visit to a national park is not just about a visit to the park; the surroundings of the park and the provision of tourism facilities and services do have an effect on the visitor experience and there is an increasing demand among visitors for additional infrastructural facilities and services in and around the protected areas (Buckley, 2004; Westcott, 1993). As Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001) point out, visitor experience in wildlife tourism is affected by certain manageable service variables (e.g. skills possessed by the guide and the design and comfort of facilities) that also affect visitor's perception of quality. As with other types of tourism, wildlife tourism in parks and protected areas require facilities, amenities and services alongside to meet the needs of visitors.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the tourist satisfaction level based on different attributes as well as overall tourist's satisfaction in Dachigam National Park.
- To measure the destination loyalty in terms of tourist's intention to revisit and willingness to recommend Dachigam National Park to others.

Research Methodology

The present study was conducted at Dachigam National Park in Srinagar. The study is based on both primary as well as secondary sources. Secondary data sources were used to provide a theoretical framework for the study. The primary data collected by a self administered questionnaire based on five point Likert scale (highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied). The questionnaire is divided in to three parts. The first part consist of socio-demographic features of tourists, the secondary part record the level of tourist satisfaction based on different set of attributes and third part consisted of destination loyalty of tourists visited Dachigam National Park Srinagar, Kashmir. The respondents for the study were tourists, who visited Dachigam National Park from February 2017 to November 2017. The questionnaire was distributed to 150 tourists but only 130 respondents completely filled up the questionnaire and the same were used for the study. The collected data was analyzed with the help of suitable statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and ranking method etc. The result of the study highlighted thorough tables in a more efficient manner.

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Table: 1

Gender		No. of Visit	
Male	89	First Visit	92
Female	41	Revisit	38
Age		Source of Information	
18-25	27	Friends/relatives	42
26-33	52	TV and Radio	18
33-40	29	Internet	31
Above 40	22	Tour guide/travel agent	39
Education		Occupation	
High school or less	18	Student	23
Sr. Secondary	23	Service person	37
Graduate	52	Business person	41
Post Graduate or above	37	Other	29
Marital Status		Co-tourist	
Single	46	Alone	32
Married	84	Accompanied	98
Time spend in Park		Transport Used	
1 hours or less	13	Public Transport	34
2-3 hours	47	Taxi or Cab	69
More than 3 hours	70	Self driven vehicle	27

Data Analysis

Table: 2 Tourist Satisfaction.

Attributes		Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Dachigam national park is an interesting place to visit.	4.31	0.72	1
2.	Convenient parking space.	3.85	0.89	8
3.	Convenient opening hours.	4.03	0.83	6
4.	Suitable entrance fee structure.	4.04	0.94	5
5.	Cleanliness of the facilities provided.	3.76	1.00	10
6.	Clear sign posting and directions.	3.99	0.72	7
7.	Providing unique experience.	4.27	0.73	4
8.	Efficient reception desk.	3.69	0.96	11
9.	Easy to find the location of the park.	4.27	0.73	2
10.	Attention is paid towards the protection of animals.	3.67	1.08	12
11.	Safety is provided by wild life employees to tourists.	2.70	1.13	13
12.	Availability of public utilities & facilities inside the park.	2.42	1.20	15
13.	Dachigam national park is easily accessible.	4.25	0.77	3
14.	Satisfied with the environment provided to wild life.	3.80	0.95	9
15.	Information readily available.	2.41	1.30	14

Table: 3 Destination Loyalty of Tourist.

Variables	Mean	SD
Revisit	4.17	0.69
Recommend to others	4.09	0.76

Conclusion and Suggestions

The results revealed the variation in satisfaction of tourists visited Dachigam National Park based on different attribute. Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made: First, improve upon less satisfactory areas. The attempt should be made to offer a unique travel experience to tourists by offering them additional services and facilities. Although the results show that tourists were satisfied with their visit and they were likely to revisit and recommend museum to others. The relevant stakeholders must be aware that the nature of the tourism industry makes it difficult for customers to remain loyal, and must not take such loyalty for granted.

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