



Tourism

A STUDY OF TOURIST EXPERIENCE WITH THE SERVICES OF ACCOMMODATION AT HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT Accommodation is one of the major components of tourism industry. This paper is an empirical study based upon tourist experience with the accommodation services in three districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla, Kangra, and Kullu. For this purpose, a total number of 180 tourists are selected and with the help of both questionnaire and interview research tools, their experiences about accommodation services are elaborated. The aim of the present paper is to investigate the accommodation services based on the tourist experience in order to develop the quality of accommodation services at Himachal Pradesh.

KEYWORDS : Himachal Pradesh, Accommodation, Tourist, Services, HPTDC.

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a world known destination for all reasons in all seasons. Tourism in this prominent destination offers tourists an atypical chance to experience many tourism activities. Every year a large number of tourists i.e. International as well as domestic, make decision to visit Himachal Pradesh. With the concerning of visiting a legion tourists from the destination, accommodation services have significant role to make an excellent experience and unforgettable mesmerizes for visitors. Moreover, having an excellent experience about accommodation may cause to extent the stay duration of visitors in any destination. In Himachal Pradesh, there are 2604 Hotel/Guest House, and also 787 Home Stay Units registered by the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation. As this research paper is about accommodation services in Shimla, Kangra, and Kullu, list of accommodation and bed capacity/number of rooms are shown in Table No.1.

No.	District	No. of Hotels/ Guest Houses	No. of Rooms						Bed Capacity
			BR	DBR	OR	S	BR	Total	
1	Shimla	450	268	5955	340	294	26	6683	13772
2	Kangra	433	74	4218	36	159	75	4762	9751
3	Kullu	685	71	9503	20	921	0	10715	22974
	Total	1568	413	19676	396	1374	101	22160	46497

Source: Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation

Out of entire numbers of accommodations at whole Himachal Pradesh, around 60 hotels having 1098 rooms and 2240 beds run and manage by the commercial body of Himachal Pradesh tourism named HPTDC (Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation). Accommodation network run by HPTDC spread into four circuit as follows:

- (a) Satluj Circuit including two parts as A- (Shimla, Chail, Naldehra, Parwanoo, Swarghat, Bilaspur, Barog, Kasauli, Paonta Sahib, Renukaji) and B- (Narkanda, Rampur, Sarahan, Rohru, Kharapathar). (b) Beas Circuit (Rewalsar, Kullu, Manali, Naggar, Manikaran). (c) Dhauladhar Circuit including two parts as A- (Palampur, Joginder Nagar, Dharamsala, Mcleod Ganj, Jwalaji, Hamirpur, Chintpurni) and B- (Chamba, Khajjair, Dalhousie). (d) Tribal Circuit (Kalpa, Kaza, Keylong).

Review of Literature

In order to have a picture of the topic, some studies on accommodation services have been done as follows:

Shifera Bekele and Apar Singh (2015), in this study the SERVPERF model applied to evaluate the perceived service quality of the industry. The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty in Ethiopian hotel industry. It was indicated that all dimensions of service quality have positive and significant correlation with customer loyalty in which tangibility, assurance, empathy and responsiveness have the

highest correlation respectively. Therefore, the Ethiopian hotel industry should give greater attention to improve tangibility, assurance, empathy and responsiveness dimensions so as to enhance the overall service quality of the industry. Moreover, hotel industry employees and management are expected to improve service quality provision since customer loyalty was highly related with service quality dimensions than other factors in Ethiopian hotel industry environment.

Ming-Hsu Chang, Hsiao-I Hou, and Dung-Chun Tsai (2015), this study evaluated the effects of price framing and restrictions of pre-selling accommodation coupons on customer perceptions. Those perceptions would be expected to affect consumer behaviours, such as purchasing intention, satisfaction, and loyalty. Based on the conclusion of this paper, price framing and restrictions on pre-selling accommodation coupons influenced customer perceptions in different ways under different conditions. Time-related restriction on coupons caused customers to have low perceptions of service quality, regardless of price framing. Under the discount of a coupon displayed as a “% off” condition, customers had higher hotel image perceptions than with a coupon with no restriction. Customers perceived performance risk in opposite ways when the discount of the coupon was displayed with different framing. From a managerial standpoint, the design of accommodation pre-selling coupons influenced customer perceptions.

Moses Ahomka Yeboah (2015), this study focused to determine whether three-Star hotels in Elmina-Ghana, merited the rating as regards the innovative capabilities of its managers. Four innovation types: product, process, marketing and organization were measured. Results showed that the managers of these hotels were highly innovative with process and organisation as the highest and least practiced innovation types respectively. It is therefore suggestive that these hoteliers strive to sell current hotel experience to clients. It was recommended that the hoteliers must continually seek to offer personalized, friendly and sociable services, which will make their guests enjoy patronizing their facilities. The managers of Elmina Beach Resort and Coconut Grove Hotels must avoid the mistake of focusing too much on the interior design to the neglect of providing quality service to their guests. The emphasis must be on offering personalized, friendly and sociable services, which would make their guests enjoy their stay in the facilities. Engaged customers have a higher level of trust and commitment to the hotel, which strengthens their loyalty.

Table No.2 Descriptive analysis about H.P. Accommodation experience

Accommodation	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent
	180	1.72	5.00	3.79	0.47	75.75

These hoteliers must utilize current technology and social media to deliver a more customized experience⁶.

Objectives of the Study

- i) To study the general status of accommodation at Himachal Pradesh.

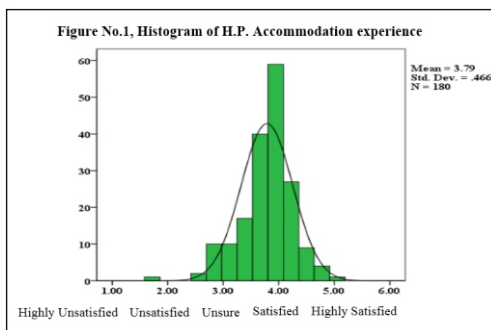
ii) To investigate tourist experience about accommodation services at Himachal Pradesh.

Research Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary. Primary data collected through questionnaire and interview research tools too. The sample size of the study is 180 international as well as domestic tourists. In this research, non-proportional judgment quota sampling method is used to determine the 180 tourists who visited three districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla, Kangra, and Kullu on the year 2016-17. Secondary data are collected from annual reports, literature and other relevant dependable sources from the department of tourism and civil aviation as well as HPTDC. SPSS version 24 is used for the purpose of analysis. Factor analysis and 'One-sample t test' are the statistical tools used.

Finding and Result

In order to investigate the level of tourist experience about H.P. Accommodation, a structured questionnaire was designed based on five Likert scale i.e. (1= Highly Unsatisfied, 2=Unsatisfied, 3=Unsure, 4=Satisfied, 5=Highly Satisfied). The below information has drawn as follows:



Source: Primary data

From the presented data (Table No.2) it has noticed that entirely 180 tourists were responded to questions related to accommodation experience e.g. the value of the accommodation, accessibility of the accommodation, facilities of the accommodation, range and number of accommodation, safety of the accommodation, behaviour of the officials at the reception, level of knowledge of the officials at the reception office, quality of telecommunication, facilities for children, availability of luxury hotels, availability of budget hotels, tariff structure of the hotel rooms, general upkeep of the hotel rooms, etc. It is clearly shows that the minimum response is 1.72 and maximum response is 5. Moreover, the static of standard deviation is 0.47, the mean of data distribution is 3.79, and the mean percentage of satisfaction is 75.75.

According to Figure No.1, it has been found that the shape is roughly symmetrical. It can be seen that there are more scores between 3 (Unsure) and 5 (Highly satisfied) than 1 (Highly Unsatisfied) and 3 (Unsure), moreover as clearly indicates, the most scores fall on 4 (Satisfied).

To investigate the experience of tourists about accommodation services, one-sample t test is applied and the Table No.3, summarizes the result of the test. As the table indicates, since the significant level of test (Sig.) is less than 0.05 and the amount of test statistic t is positive ($t=6.512$), therefore, it can be concluded that overall tourist have a positive experience regarding the accommodation services at Himachal Pradesh.

Table No.3 One sample t test to investigate the experience of tourists about accommodation services		
	t	Sig. (1-tailed)
Tourist's experience about accommodation services	6.512	<0.001

Source: Primary data

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the result of the present study, it can be concluded that the majority of tourists had a positive and satisfied experience about accommodation services during their stay at Himachal Pradesh. But

some points should be considered by the government to enhance the quality of services in this part.

- All hotels, guest houses, and home stay units must be registered by government to make their services in a legal way and based on latest standards. The existence of HPTDC as commercial body of tourism can be considered as an important source of accommodation services too, but many accommodation units are not certified by HPTDC.
- The department of tourism and HPTDC should organize regular training courses for the staff of accommodation units on the basis of latest accommodation services standards.
- Hoteliers should avoid to put fake photos of their accommodation units on the web site to solicit business and sales talk for customers.
- It's better to offer fixed tariff to costumers during a year, to avoid recuperate of slack season in business by doing so.
- For more local involvement in tourism activities specially in rural area, government may consider specific programmes for those locals who want to accommodate tourists in their local homes, through giving facilities, loans, and organizing related training courses to them.
- Improving access for all may be considered by stakeholders. It means all services such as accommodation should be access for all people without any discrimination. For instance, hoteliers should envision facilities for disable people who use wheelchair. It is obvious that good physical access can also benefit other categories, such as families with small children. Some other examples of accessibility can be defined as access to public transport, layout of buildings and sites, and the provision of effective information to such groups.

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