



Promoting Religious Tourism in Pakistan: Empirical Evidence from Sikh Pilgrims Visiting Pakistan

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Promoting,
Religious Tourism,
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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed at promoting religious tourism in Pakistan by finding out the prevalent weaknesses in the marketing mix of Religious Tourism in Pakistan. The research was quantitative in nature. Data was collected from a sample of 357 Sikh Pilgrims on a five-point Likert scaled questionnaire. Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to measure the hypothesized relationship b/w dependent and independent variables and validity of the construct. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was used to check the hypothesized influence of marketing mix on religious tourist satisfaction. Findings of the study revealed that product and price have significant positive effect; promotion has significant negative effect whereas placement has insignificant negative effect on pilgrims' satisfaction. Strategies were recommended for enhancement of Marketing Mix of religious tourism in Pakistan that might help promote tourism in the country thereby making it a main source of revenue for it. The study is an addition to the existing knowledge as it comprehensively discusses religious tourism especially Sikhism in the context of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Religion is an important demographic attribute that puts a major influence on tourist's choice and preference for a destination (Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008). Therefore, paying attention to this kind of tourism can make it a largest supporting industry of the country through direct and indirect investment as well as income earnings. The socio-economic remunerations created by tourism are warranted by the revenues that are generated from a number of investments in this segment, particularly important for developing and less developed countries (Megatef, 2015). Dolnicar and Ender (2000) also suggest examining this market segment as it represents the utmost profitable market segment, being unconditional to hot or cold weather and more spending on the part of religious tourists.

Pakistan is one of the world's top tourism destinations having a diversity of adventurous, scenic and cultural heritage attractions (The British Backpacker Society, 2018). But due to pathetic governance and lack of proper marketing strategies, tourism flops to reach its possible level, leading to degeneration of multiple channels of revenue from it (Ashley, Brine, Lehr & Wilde, 2007). In comparison to the total GDP of developed countries and tourism contribution to it, Pakistan lags much behind than these. As stated by Faiz and Nigwar (2018), for numerous reasons, Pakistan has failed to avail socio-economic benefits of tourism. The share of Pakistan's travel and tourism to its GDP is just 2.8% compared to other developed countries of the world where it is about

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30%. Pakistan's GDP and its balance of payments can be improved by identifying the prevalent weaknesses in tourism sector and designing effective marketing strategies.

Since far, limited work is found to be done in the field of cultural tourism marketing, hence the present research intends to comprehensively define the marketing mix factors for religious tourism after an extensive study of literature. Furthermore, religious tourism especially of Sikhism is studied which is still unexplored in the context of Pakistan.

Cultural Tourism

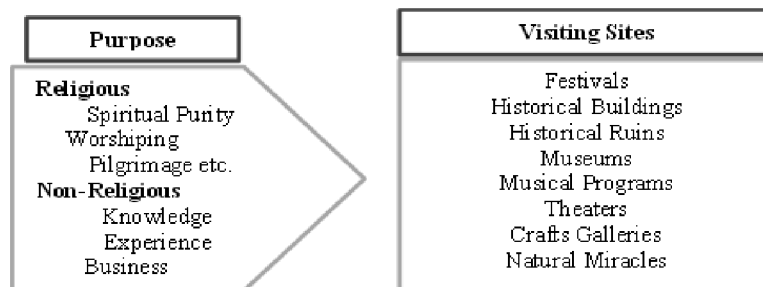
Cultural tourism has been defined as travel of people with intentions to learn arts, go to cultural carnivals, visit historical monuments and pilgrimages etc. (The World Tourism Organization, 1985; Tighe, 1991; Boyd, 2002; Leslie & Sigala, 2005 & Getz, 2008) The basic motivation of tourist in cultural tourism is to visit cultural attractions of a country e.g. museums, musical events, auditoriums, handiworks and religious actions like pilgrimages etc. It is amongst the expeditiously growing industries of the world and is flourishing rapidly. Majority of the states are endeavoring to achieve competitive advantage through maintaining and developing their cultural sites (OECD, 2009).

Religious Tourism: A Special kind of Cultural Tourism

Religious tourism is defined by Raj & Morpeth (2007) as a distinctive type of cultural tourism rooted on religious beliefs, environments and encompasses specific actions e.g. venerating, religious sightseeing, praying etc by religious believers. According to Blackwell (2007) religious tourism involves a list of places and associated services, visited for both religious and irreligious purposes. As far as religious sites are concerned, Shackley (2003) puts them into three categories, namely;

- 1- Unusual miracles associated with holy waters, sacred mountains, transcripts, islands, orchards;
- 2- Buildings, places and events of religious importance; and
- 3- Holy sites associated with any important incident(s).

This concept is presented in the following figure. 1.



Source: World Tourism Organization (1985), Tighe (1991), Goodrich (1997), Boyd (2002), Shackley(2003) , Leslie & Sigala (2005), Raj & Morpeth (2007) & Petroman et.al. (2013).

Figure:1. Religious Tourism as a Special kind of Cultural Tourism

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the prevalent weaknesses in the marketing mix of Religious Tourism in Pakistan.
- To suggest suitable marketing strategies that will promote tourism in Pakistan.

Religious Tourism Sites of Sikh Pilgrims in Pakistan

The land of Pakistan owes the ruminants of different historical religious sites. One of which is the Sikhism. Every year, a large number of local as well as foreign Sikh Yatris visit Pakistan to perform their pilgrimage (Toppa, 2017).

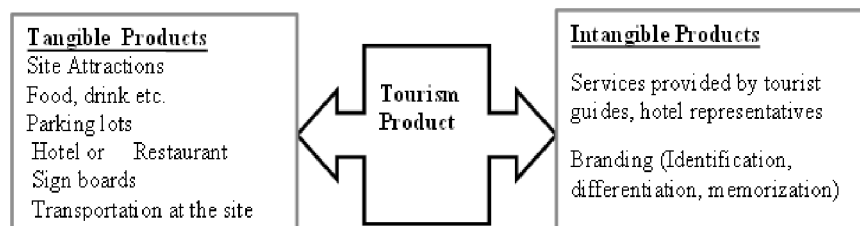
The two most important religious sites for Sikhs in Pakistan are Nankana Sahib (Lahore) and Gurdwara Panja Sahib (Hassanabdal). “Nankana Sahib” is of prodigious regard and veneration for Sikh Yatris. Every year a large number of Sikh pilgrims visit their religiously sacred sites i.e. Nankana Sahib and Hasan Abdal in Pakistan (Roche, 2016). Nankana Sahib is the birth place of Guru Nanak and total nine Gurdwaras exist in Nankana Sahib, associated with different events of the life of Guru Nanak. Therefore, Nankana Sahib is much adorable for Sikh community (“5 Most Visited”, 2014).

The other holy place for Sikh pilgrims is Hasan Abdal where a hand printed rock of Guru Nanak is lying in Gurdwara built at the site where Baba Nanak once stayed (Hussain, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Product

Unlike other tangible products, tourism includes both tangible and intangible products and services i.e. the site visited; its physical beauty; hotels, shops, and parking lots at the site; ease of access; tour guides and other utility services etc. The concept of dividing tourism product into tangible and intangible categories is given by Loannides (1998) who expresses it as quite different product as instead of a single product created or sold in segregation, a set of goods along with services are supplied to satisfy a tourist’s needs i.e., basic facilities, site visited, service provisions by guides and hotel staff etc. Conversely, Brass (1997) defined two main components of tourism product i.e. the main site/attraction and the services. The site/attractions may be man-made or natural for example museum, shrine, scenery, etc. while the services may contain lodging, transportation, car parks etc. and adds that blending of the two gives the final intangible tourism product.

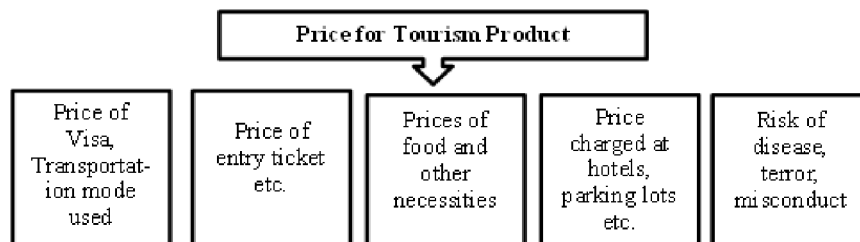


Source: Middleton (1979), Middleton (1994), Brass (1997), Loannides (1998), Tourism Australia (2012), Morgan, Pitchard & Pride (2004) & Ritchie and Ritchie (1998)

Figure:2.Components of Tourism Product

Price

Price for any product is the total of money charged by the seller for consuming or using the product. (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). For the product of tourism, it is categorized as i.e. prices in the form of money which is paid for the destination entry, any donations to local and environmental causes and non-monetary prices like time spent in reaching to the destination and any sort of risk confronted during the trip (Sran, 2014). The risks faced by a tourist might include physical harm caused by any disease, misbehavior or terror (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006).

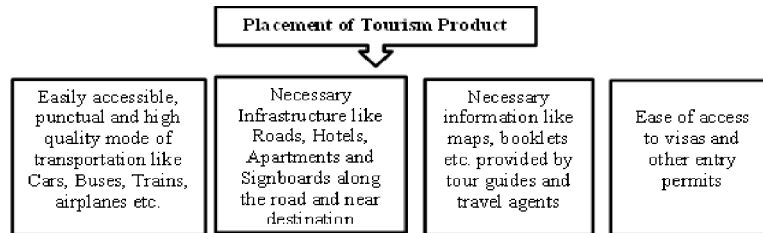


Source: Fyall & Garrod (2005), Fuchs & Reichel (2006) & Sran (2014)

Figure:3. Components of Price Mix for Tourism Product

Placement

Placement is the process of delivering the product to customers including different organizations that constitute a distribution channel. The organizations work interdependently and provide any product for use to customers. The whole process of placement is aimed at supplying the desired amount and value of a product at the exact place, time and cost to the target customer (Buhalis, 2000).



Source: McKercher (1998), Buhalis (2000), Prideaux (2000) & Sran (2014).

Figure.4. Components of Placement Mix

The components of placement are transportation facility i.e. railways, road, airlines; infrastructure with hotels, motels and shops along the road as well as accessibility of travel guides and agents by tourists during travel to give them required guidance and other provisions(Sran, 2014).

Promotion

Being experiential in nature, the tourism product cannot be evaluated prior to its purchase but only during and after the consumption. Therefore, strong promotional efforts are necessary to fully exploit the tourism potential. The promotion mix consists of five types of promotional activities, all designed for accomplishing the overall objective of the organization (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2008). These are presented in figure.5.

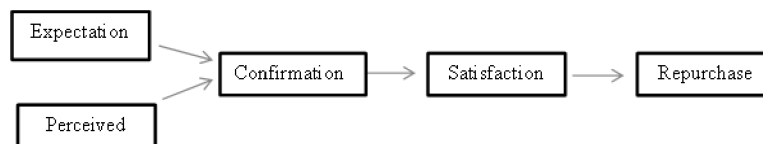


Source: Pedersen (2002), Hayward (2000), Getz (2008), Kotler, Bowen & Makens (2008) & Mangold & Faulds (2009)

Figure.5. Components of Promotion Mix

Satisfaction of Tourists

Satisfaction of tourists is the net difference between what customers expect and actually experience at the end of their visit to a tourism site (Lovelock, Patterson & Walker, 2001). Oliver (1980) forwarded the “Expectation-Confirmation Theory” which is used to find the extent of satisfaction. It states that before purchasing a product or service every consumer builds some expectations about it. The degree of satisfaction is found by the degree to which consumer’s perceptions match with expectations. Greater the perceptions than expectations, more will be the consumer satisfied.



Source: Oliver (1980)

Figure.6. Expectation-Confirmation Theory

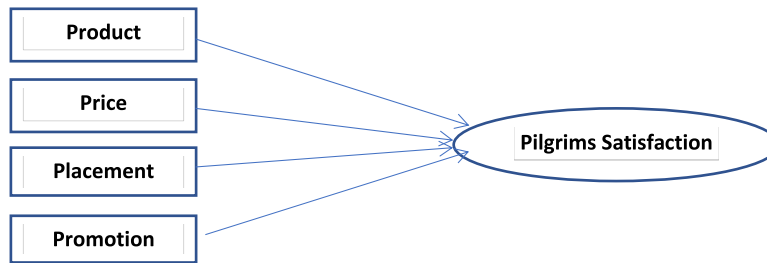


Figure.7. Theoretical Framework

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses for the study are stated as following;

- H₁: Religious tourism product significantly effects satisfaction of Religious tourist.
- H₂: Religious tourism price significantly effects satisfaction of Religious tourist.
- H₃: Religious tourism placement significantly effects satisfaction of Religious tourist.
- H₄: Religious tourism promotion significantly effects satisfaction of Religious tourist.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology adopted for the study is discussed as under.

Positivism/Post-positivism paradigm

The current study uses positivist/post-positivist paradigm. The main aim of this paper was to find the strength of relationships between dependent and independent variables and promoting religious tourism in Pakistan by finding out the prevalent weaknesses in the marketing mix. The present research is based on the philosophy of positivism which Saunders et al. (2009) describes as a philosophy in which deductions are made by the researcher on the basis of an already proven model, makes hypotheses and then tests these hypotheses with any possibility of acceptance or rejection. The marketing mix theory proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981) is used as the underpinning theory in this study which states that for service firms, effectively designing of marketing mix in a satisfied customer (tourist in this case).

	POSITIVIST/ POSTPOSITIVIST PARADIGM
Reason for doing the research	To discover laws that are generalizable and govern the universe
Philosophical underpinnings	Informed mainly by realism, idealism and critical realism
Ontological assumptions	One reality, knowable within probability
Methodology	Quantitative; correlational; quasi-experimental; experimental; causal comparative; survey
Techniques of gathering data	Mainly questionnaires, observations, tests and experiments

Figure:8. Selecting a Research Approach: Paradigm, Methodology and Methods

Research Design

The research design refers to the blueprint and overall strategy chosen for a study to integrate its various components in a coherent and rational manner. This ensures that the research problem is effectively addressed (De Vaus, 2001).

Causal Design

The study employs a causal research design intended to promoting religious tourism in Pakistan by finding out the rampant weaknesses in the marketing mix of Religious Tourism in Pakistan. The marketing mix factors i.e. product, price, placement and promotion are taken as independent variables(IVs) whereas, satisfaction of religious tourists as dependent variable (DV).

Population of Sikh Pilgrims

Unfortunately, there is no official database website in Pakistan that may contain a record of the specific number of tourists to each tourism site. However, according to Roche (2016), in the year 2016, 3,316 Sikh Pilgrims visited Pakistan for offering their pilgrimage. Therefore, the population of Sikh Pilgrims was 3,316 Sikh Yatris.

Sampling

Convenience sampling was employed in the present study due to the limitation of difficulty in approach to Sikh Pilgrims, as intense security was ensured for them by the government of Pakistan.

Sample Size Determination

By using Yamane (1967) formula sample size was calculated. With $p = 0.05$ at a 95% confidence interval level, n = Sample Size, N = Total Population Size, and e = Level of Accuracy, the resulting size of sample is;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2} = \frac{3316}{1 + 3316 * (.05)^2} = 357$$

The calculated sample size of Sikh Pilgrims was 357.

Data Collection

Data was collected from a sample of 357 Sikh Pilgrims on a five-point Likert scaled questionnaires. First part of questionnaire consisted of questions related to demographics and second part consisted of questions based on independent and dependent variables, some of which were adopted from the research study of Megatef (2015), while others were adapted from Yilmaz and Bititci (2006); Al-Debi and Mustafa (2014); and Agarwal (2010).

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Out of 357 questionnaires distributed, 327 were found completely filled. Data retrieved from questionnaires was then analyzed.

Reliability of the study

Reliability of the study was checked by using the metrics of Cronbach's Alpha which according to Gaur & Gaur (2009) is the most reliable tool for measuring reliability of the scale. George and Malleery (2003) and Hair et al. (2006) suggest that value of Alpha should be greater than 0.7 for being ideal.

Table: 1. Summary of Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha) of Pilot Study

Variables	No. of items per variable	Alpha Coefficient
Product	17	0.710
Price	11	0.824
Placement	07	0.774
Promotion	10	0.731
Satisfaction	11	0.817

The results of reliability test for the pilot-study of current research confirmed the consistency of items in the instrument (questionnaire). The reliability coefficient alpha values for all of the five variables namely; product, price, placement, promotion and satisfaction were higher than (0.7) level of acceptability. Hence, the results suggested that the questionnaire was a reliable instrument for measurement.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics include the total number (n) of responding Pilgrims, the Minimum and Maximum values, the Mean values and the Standard Deviation (SD) of responses.

Table: 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sikh Pilgrims

Variable Name	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Product	327	1.00	3.33	2.1682	.65837
Price	327	1.00	3.00	2.3028	.47070
Placement	327	1.33	2.00	1.7044	.13668
Promotion	327	1.00	3.25	2.1808	.45370
Satisfaction	327	1.25	3.75	2.6781	.70371

The results indicated that the Minimum value of responses for dependent variable i.e. Satisfaction is 1.25 and Maximum value of 3.75 with a Mean of 2.6781 and SD is 0.70371. Minimum value of Product is 1.00 and a Maximum value of 3.33, the Mean value is 2.1682 and SD is 0.65837. Minimum value of Price is 1.00 and Maximum value is 3.00, Mean is 2.3028 and SD is .47070. Placement has the smallest value of 1.33 with Maximum value of 2.00, Mean is 1.7044 and SD is 0.13668. Promotion has the smallest value of 1.00 with Maximum value of 3.25, Mean is 2.1808 and SD is 0.45370.

Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA & CFA)

EFA is used when the main dimensions of a theory or model are explored by the researcher himself from a somewhat huge set of underlying constructs, usually denoted by a collection of items and has no expectations of the number or nature of the variables. As questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies, therefore, EFA was done. Whereas, CFA is a form of structural equation modeling in which the researcher tests a proposed theory or model. CFA helps the researcher to test the hypothesis whether a relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct(s) exists (Thompson, 2004).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

As most of the constructs of variables of marketing mix were created from literature review, therefore, EFA was done by using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test to measure the appropriateness of data for Factor Analysis. It is used to measure that sample is adequate for each variable included in the model and also for the whole model.

Table:3. KMO and BTS measures of Sample Adequacy

Constructs	KMO	BTS	Sig.
Product	.896	1298.64	***
Price	.926	524.90	***
Placement	.924	547.78	***
Promotion	.819	832.112	***
Satisfaction	.812	1355.21	***

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structure Equation Modeling (SEM)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was tested and structural equation model (SEM) was used to measure construct validity. For testing the model fitness, seven fit indices that included χ^2/df , GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, RMSR and RMSEA were measured.

Table: 4. Measures of Model Fit or Fit Index Cut off Values

Measures of Model Fit or Fit index	Suggested values
Chi-square/ degrees of freedom = χ^2/df	<3
Goodness-of-Fit Index =GFI	>0.9
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index =AGFI	>0.8
Normed Fit Index =NFI	>0.90
Comparative Fit Index= CFI	>0.90
Root Mean Square Error of Residuals= RMSR	<0.1
Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation=RMSEA	<0.08

Source: Usluel, Askar, and Bas (2008)

SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that is used to estimate parameters for a network of linear equations. It is used to test model fitness of a “hypothesized casual” framework (Stein et.al., 2012) This section focuses on testing every single construct for CFA to determine whether the observed data fits the scale and structural model.

The underlying model represents the CFA and the seven “Fit Indices” for the Factor Model of Product.

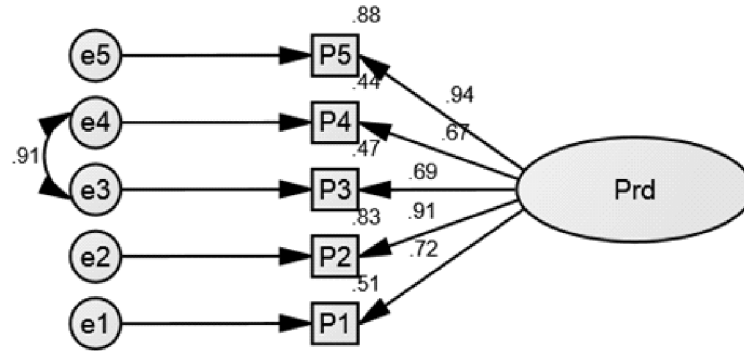


Figure:9. Factor Model of Product

Table: 5. Fit Indices for the Factor Model of Product

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
1.329	.054	.987	.989	.988	.032

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

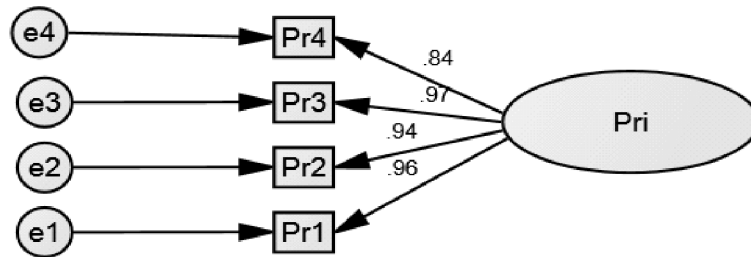


Figure:10. Factor Model of Price

Table: 6. Fit Indices for the Factor Model of Price

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
1.935	.051	.978	.981	.979	.054

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

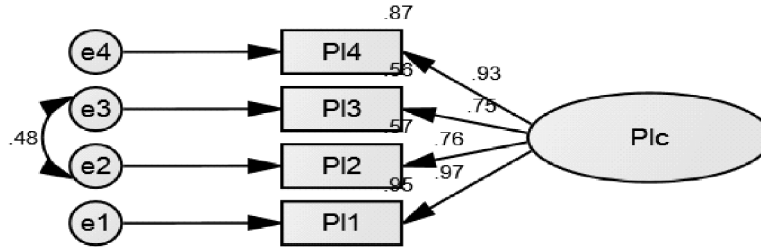


Figure: 11. Factor Model of Placement

Table: 7. Fit Indices for the Factor Model of Placement

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
2.450	.058	.996	.987	.976	.058

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

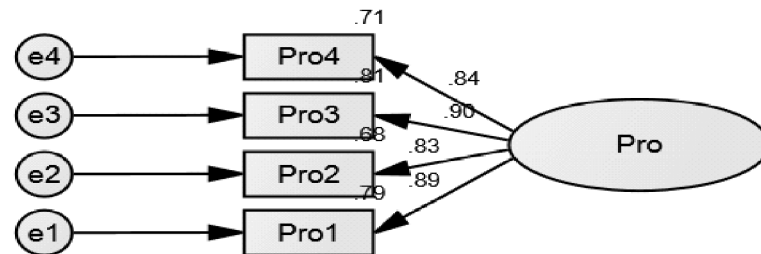


Figure: 12. Factor Model of Promotion

Table: 8. Fit Indices for the Factor Model of Promotion

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
2.268	.01	.985	.987	.982	.08

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

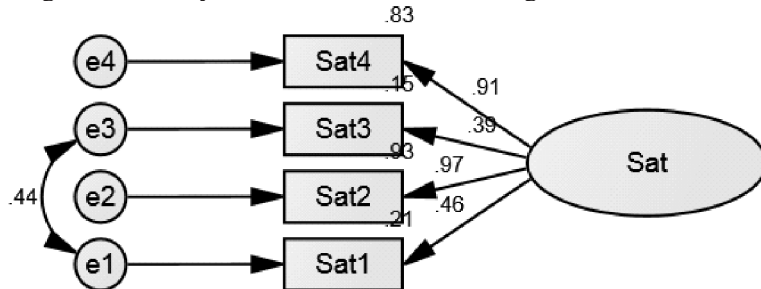


Figure:13. Factor Model of Satisfaction

Table: 9. Fit Indices for the Factor Model of Satisfaction

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
2.068	.0105	.973	.974	.968	.012

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

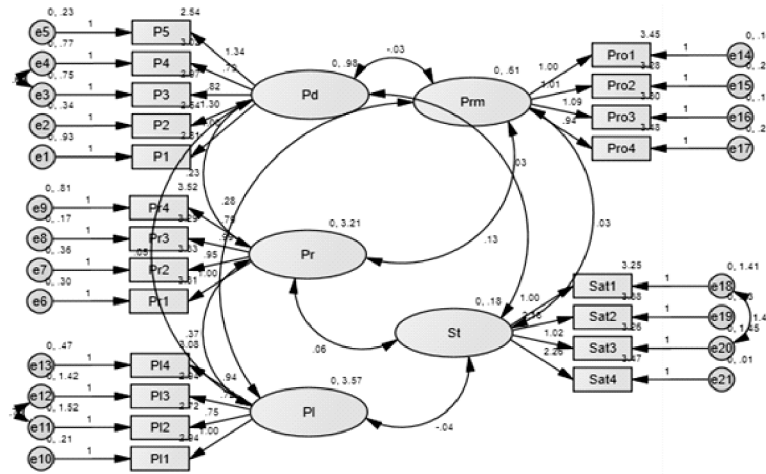


Figure 14. Overall Factor Model of Product, Price, Placement, Promotion and Satisfaction.

Table 10. Fit Indices for the Overall Factor Model of Product, Price, Placement, Promotion and Satisfaction

CMIN/DF	SRMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
1.544	.0397	.964	.987	.984	.041

The values of NFI, AGFI, RMSEA, GFI, RMSR, CFI and X2/d.f. in the above table depict that these were all among the desired range which clearly demonstrate that the model is good fit.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Following figure and table shows the result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Sikh Pilgrims with Independent Variables i.e. Product, Price, Placement, Promotion and Dependent Variable Satisfaction.

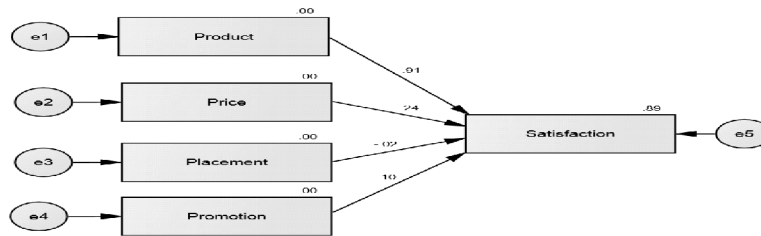


Figure 15. Multiple Regression Analysis of Religious Tourists

Table 11. Regression Weights: Group number 1-Default mode(Sikh Pilgrims)

	Estimate	S.E.	t	P
Satisfaction <--- Product	0.905	0.030	32.089	.000
Satisfaction <--- Price	0.238	0.044	8.087	.000
Satisfaction <--- Placement	-0.018	0.094	-1.00	.318
Satisfaction <--- Promotion	-0.104	0.016	-2.651	.008

$R = 0.821$, $R^2 = 0.774$, $F = 683.484$, Sig. F Change = 0.000

The regression coefficient $R=0.821(82.1\%)$ depicts the prevalence of relationship between dependent and independent variables. The value of R^2 (coefficient of determination) $=0.774(77.4\%)$ depicts 77.4% variation in tourist satisfaction (dependent variable) by Product, Price, Placement and Promotion (independent variables). The $F = 683.484$ and $Sig = 0.000$ indicate the overall statistical significance of regression model, its validity and fitness.

The statistical values indicate that the product of religious tourism significantly and positively effects the tourist satisfaction with $\beta = 0.905$, $t = 32.089$ and $p < .05$. The price also significantly and positively effects the tourist satisfaction with $\beta = 0.238$, $t = 8.087$ and $p < .05$ whereas placement has a negative but insignificant effect on tourist satisfaction with $\beta = -0.018$, $t = -1.00$ and $p > .05$. The variable Promotion significantly and negatively effects the satisfaction of religious tourists with $\beta = 0.104$, $t = -2.651$ and

Table: 12. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Sikh Pilgrims

S.No	Hypotheses	Accept/Reject
1	Product has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction	Accept
2	Price has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction	Accept
3	Placement has an insignificant negative effect on tourist satisfaction	Reject
4	Promotion has a significant negative effect on tourist satisfaction	Accept

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Multiple Linear Regression analysis of Sikh Pilgrims between i.e. Product, Price, Placement, Promotion (independent variables) and satisfaction (dependent variable) was conducted. The statistical values depicted that Product has a significant effect on pilgrims' Satisfaction. Therefore, H1 was accepted. The beta coefficient for variable product is $\beta=0.91$ which is the highest of all other variables showing a comparatively stronger effect on tourist satisfaction. It means that for every one unit increase in the variable product, the religious tourist satisfaction increases by 0.91 units. On the basis of items retained in exploratory factor analysis and the value of beta coefficient for the variable product, it is found that these sites are quite attractive for the religious tourists. The reason for this attraction is not only the religious sentiments and affection of Sikh pilgrims for these sites but their love for the land of Pakistan. It is verified by the comments of the pilgrims visting Pakistan as one of the pilgrim named Dilmir Singh Bajwa aged 60-years narrated that his parents who were born and raised in Jhelum (a city of Pakistan) shared many stories with him and his family members about their home town before they passed away. He exclaimed with grief that before his father died, he yearned to visit Jhelum but unfortunately was unable to get a visa and pay a visit to Pakistan. He further adds that his father requested him and his family that they must visit Pakistan in their lives if they succeeded in winning this opportunity (Haider, 2015).

The variable Price showed a significant effect on Pilgrims' Satisfaction. Therefore, H2 was accepted. The β coefficient value of 0.238 means that for every 1 unit change in price there is a 0.238 unit increase in tourist satisfaction. The significant positive relationship with tourist satisfaction means that tourist satisfaction is positively related with the prices of transportation, entry prices and other utility products.

The variable placement has an insignificant negative effect on religious tourist satisfaction with a β value of -0.018. Therefore, H3 was rejected. Opponent to the theory of marketing that supports a positive relationship between placement and tourist satisfaction, the negative relationship in this research reveals that the religious tourists were not satisfied with the placement of tourism product. This is because the Sikh pilgrims (religious tourists) were restricted only to the Gurdwaras in Lahore and Hassanabdal under intense security and were not allowed to visit anywhere else in Pakistan. One of the pilgrims named Karanveer was worried that he might not be able to visit his village and recall his memories of childhood before passing from this world. He further added that it looked impossible because visa limitations by the government of Pakistan restricted them to visit their religious sites only during their stay (Haider, 2015).

The promotion has a significant negative effect on Pilgrims' satisfaction with β coefficient value of 0.475 which means that a one unit increase in promotion brings 0.104 decrease in tourist satisfaction. Therefore, H4 is accepted. Being a part of their culture, their wish for pilgrimage to the Sikh religious sites in Pakistan, passes from one generation to the other. The Sikh community transfers their rituals and history of forefathers to their upcoming generations. Moreover, apart from the existing tension between Pakistan and India, a large number of Sikhs from the neighboring country visited Pakistan to attend the annual festival at Gurdawara Panja Sahib in Hassanabdal. The highly satisfied Sikh pilgrims on their return from Pakistan create a good word of mouth

which might result in good promotion of religious tourism in Pakistan (“Besakhi Festival”, 2018). The significant negative effect of promotion on satisfaction of religious tourists reveals a weakness in promotional activities. Unfortunately, foreigners are shown a horrible picture of Pakistan and its people. The message conveyed to tourists is that Pakistan is a country of terrorism and blasts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The religious tourism product should be more developed and differentiated by attracting more investments from local as well as foreign investors.

Highly secure and peaceful environment may induce more tourist arrivals, as placement was restricted only to “Gurdwaras” due to risk of any terrorism incident and political tensions between Pakistan and India.

Pakistan Tourism Corporation should make use of the emerging trends in promotional activities around the globe. It should invest heavily in advertisements, showing a peaceful and loving nature of Pakistan and its people. As suggested by Lovelock (2011), useful information and advice should be communicated to tourists in order to reduce the fear of insecurity or perceived risk. Good relationship with previous tourists should be maintained through keeping contacts with them and greeting them on different occasions like religious events, etc. Sales promotion activities should be done through sufficient discounts on special occasions to Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus and other communities. Moreover, internet blogs and social media should be used for enhancing a good publicity of different sites of Pakistan.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This research is cross-sectional in its nature; longitudinal research should also be conducted to detect any positive or negative changes in tourism marketing of Pakistan. A qualitative study that may involve policy makers, government officials and tourists could also be conducted. The present study was confined to one kind of religious tourists i.e. Sikh Pilgrims. Similar studies may be conducted involving other religious tourists like Buddhists, Hindus and others who have their religious sites located in Pakistan. Research may be conducted that involves the moderating role of risk of terrorism.

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