

# Measuring Domestic Tourist Satisfaction at Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** Customer satisfaction is extremely important in the service based business especially in tourism sector. The factors that influence tourist satisfaction are likely to help in developing strategies to maximize tourist satisfaction and profitability of tourism business. The aim of this very paper is to investigate the influence of sociodemographic characteristics on the level of tourist satisfaction with the tourist attractions. The destination of the study was chosen the tourist capital of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar, the most popular and visited place in the country. Quantitative method was chosen for the study. The primary data was collected from the tourists visiting Cox's Bazar through questionnaire which was used to measure the tourist satisfaction through ANOVA model. The secondary data was collected from articles, journals and online resources. The analysis of collected data was carried out through various statistical techniques. A hypotheses testing is undertaken on the data to verify the dimensionality and reliability of the scale used to measure the customer satisfaction. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 22 software packages were used in this study. The study revealed that there are positive relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics of the tourists and Overall Satisfaction. The findings of the study may be useful to the policy makers and destination planners to produce effective plan that will help the business planners to reset the service setup at the destination and guide them for effective tourist segments.

**Keywords:** Cox's Bazar, Tourist Characteristics, Tourist Satisfaction.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the single fourth largest and fastest growing industry (Davenport & Davenport 2006; Hemmati & Koehler 2000) of the world in terms of employment generation and contribution to national GDP (WTTC 2013). Currently, travel and tourism share 9% of global GDP and have generated over 260 million jobs in 2012(WTTC 2013).

### 1.1 Overview of the destination, Cox's Bazar Sea Beach:

Bangladesh is a small deltaic riverine country located in South Asia and bordered by India (West, North and north east), Myanmar (South East), and Bay of Bengal (on the South). To many, Bangladesh possesses tremendous natural and cultural resource for the development of tourism industries. Bangladesh has the world longest 120km unbroken sea beach sloping here down to the blue water of the Bay of Bengal in Cox's Bazar. Its uniqueness also lies in the natural beauty having an uninterrupted smooth-sandy sea shore along with silvery waves and high tides on the one side and a chain of green deep forested hills, artful pagodas, colourful tribal people, etc. running parallel to the beach and making a picturesque background on the back side. All these appeals made Cox's Bazar as one of the most attractive tourist destination in the world.

### 1.2 Objective and scope of the study:

The central objective of this study is in better understanding about how tourist satisfaction on tourist attractions is influenced by the individual characteristics of each tourist. To accomplish this purpose, the study has covered the following specific objectives.

1. To analyze the socio demographic characteristics of the sample tourists visiting Cox's Bazar, and
2. To find out the influence of individual tourist characteristics on their level of satisfaction.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In competitive market economy, much attention has been given to the concept of consumer satisfaction measurement (Oliver, 1989; Churchill & Sutprenant, 1982; Fronell, 1992; Ibrahim & Gill, 2005; and Vela'zquez et al., 2011) since success in business is explicitly determined by customer satisfaction and thereby achieving loyalty. Empirical studies suggest satisfaction is the delightful and fulfillment response of consumers (Oliver, 1997). If certain product or services meet consumer expectations, then satisfaction is achieved and consumer further retains the services. On the other hand, if product quality fails to meet buyer demand, then dissatisfaction causes the consumer not to buy or recommend the products further, resulting in business failure. Assessing customer satisfaction compared with product performance and feedback received from customers can help managers improve their service performance (Fornell, 1992).

In the consumer satisfaction study, tourist satisfaction and loyalty were intensively examined by researcher since satisfaction and loyalty are the key determinant of the success of tourism (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Eusebio & Viera, 2011; Song et al., 2011; McGehee, Locker-Murphy & Uysal, 1996). In tourism-related industries, overall tourist satisfaction encompass as many integrated service satisfaction process (Leiper, 1990) including tourist pre-experience and post experience process (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Chon & Olsen, 1991) as well as the cognitive and emotional aspect of tourist also influences satisfaction process (Oliver 1993; Yu & Dean, 2001).

Based on the aforementioned, this study measured satisfaction level of tourists to Cox's Bazar using seven sociodemographic variables, as described in study method section. The destination attributes as accessibility, accommodation, architecture, arts, atmosphere, climate, culture, expensiveness, festivals, food, galleries, handicraft, historical building, information system and museum are rated here in the study for measure the overall tourist satisfaction.

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework of the study:

The central objective of this study is in better understanding about how tourist satisfaction on tourist attractions is influenced by the individual characteristics of each tourist. The study would like to measure satisfaction level depending on demographic characteristics of the tourist's age, gender, origin, marital status. Also the researcher will measure the satisfaction on scenic beauty, hotel services, transportation, food services, recreation facilities, safety and security of the destination through depicted framework.

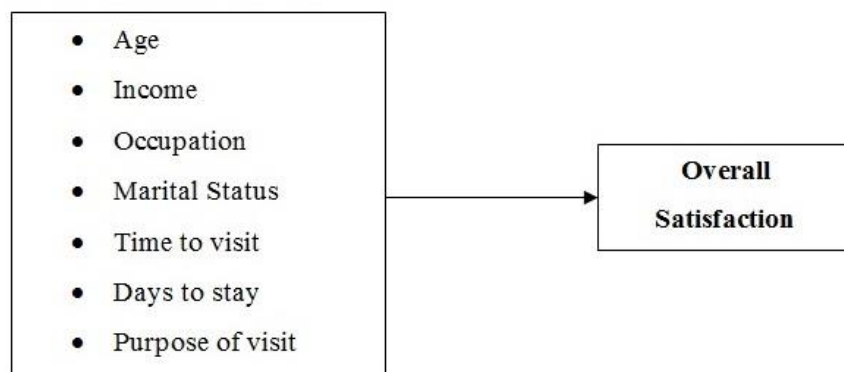


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### 2.2 Hypotheses of Study:

This study is conducted to explore the tourist satisfaction with Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh historical/cultural destination. Furthermore, it analyzes historical/cultural destination attributes and investigates tourist characteristics affected to tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the hypotheses are as follows:

The specific hypotheses for this study are as follows;

+H<sub>1</sub> = There is a positive relationship between age and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>2</sub> = There is a positive relationship between income and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>3</sub> = There is a positive relationship between occupation and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>4</sub> = There is a positive relationship between marital status and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>5</sub> = There is a positive relationship between time to visit and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>6</sub> = There is a positive relationship between days to stay and Overall Satisfaction.

+H<sub>7</sub> = There is a positive relationship between purpose of visit and Overall Satisfaction.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach for the research study is “Descriptive Research” by using quantitative method. According to Patel and Davidson (1991), quantitative research methods are methods for analyzing numeric information in the form of statistical methods. The data for the study were collected by means of a questionnaire survey using self-administrated questionnaires (Song et al., 2011; Yu & Goulden, 2006) which were distributed to 120 tourists at tourist locations (from Laboni to Kolatoli sea beach area) in Cox’s Bazar during the peak time in October and November 2015. These questions aimed to obtain information about respondent’s sociodemographic characteristics and opinion of the 19 travel attributes.

Beginning with the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their socio-economic and demographic characteristics including gender, age, occupation, monthly income, district of origin and other travel-related facts. Tourist satisfaction will be quantified using a 5 point Likert-type scale. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfactions and dissatisfaction level for nineteen selected attributes on five point Likert-type ordinal scale, where midpoint refers to modestly satisfied and 1 and 5 indicate highest dissatisfaction and greatest satisfaction, respectively (Eusebio & Vieira, 2011; Meng, Tepanon & Uysal, 2008; Neal & Gursory, 2008; Yu & Goulden, 2006; O’Neill et al., 2010).

The aim of the research is to measure the domestic tourist satisfaction at Cox’s Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh. This chapter, thus, represents how to approach the objectives of the research. The chapter is consisted of following parts, namely:

- Research Paradigm
- Target Population and Sample Size
- Research Design
- Data Collection

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm:

Quantitative researchers attempts to use a variety of well-defined research design that involve deductive logic or reasoning by means of analyzing data under a prescribed theory or conceptual framework. Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) has mentioned some instances of quantitative research methods as survey, correlational, experimental and quasi-experimental research.

In the present study primarily relies on the collection and analysis of primary data collected through questionnaire surveys. The questionnaire survey was designed to collect information to answer the objectives and the research questions of the study. For the questionnaire to be effective, the questions needs to be focused on obtaining answers to the research topic studied recently and determined that questionnaire is the suitable way to reach different participants at a low cost. This type of research is used to explain phenomena of a given situation by collecting numerical data and then data are analyzed by statistical methods (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2000).

#### 3.2 Target Population and Sample size:

The target population of the survey is the Bangladeshi travelers who chose Cox’s Bazar as the vacation destination. It has considered the tourists who visited Cox’s Bazar both individually and who participate in package tour with different purposes.

Sample size is referred to the number of elements included in a research. The data for the study was collected by means of a questionnaire survey using self-administrated questionnaires (Song et.al. 2001; Yu & Goulden, 2006) were distributed to 120 domestic tourists at the tourist location in Cox's Bazar during November to December, 2015. In total 120 tourists were approached, with at least 110 agreeing to participate and to complete in providing data on the questionnaire. Of these, some of cases were rejected due to partial fulfillment of the questionnaire thus leaving 93 useable questionnaires. Therefore the sample size of the study is 93.

Formula

**Determine Sample Size**

Confidence Level:  95%  99%

Confidence Interval:

Population:

Sample size needed:

**Figure 2: Sample Size Calculator**

Thus there are approximately 400 respondents both domestic and international tourists will be chosen to investigate their motivation to visit Cox's Bazar with an allowable error of sampling at 0.05.

For the purpose of the study satisfaction was measured on a 5 point Likert scale where 1= highly satisfied and 5= least satisfied. The questions of the questionnaire attempted to measure the satisfaction towards the service and destination.

### 3.3 Research Design:

This research is carried out through survey method. In survey method research, participants answer questions administered through interviews or questionnaires. After participants answer the questions, researchers describe the responses given. A questionnaire acts as an important channel to compile primary data in most of the quantitative research (Hsu et al., 2008). In the paper, questionnaire was used as the main instrument to measure the satisfaction of domestic tourists to visit Cox's Bazar. It has been designed on the basis of the comprehensive literature review including inbound and outbound tourists travelling to a specific destination in around the world. At the beginning, the questionnaire was designed in English. Then it was translated into Bangla for the easy understandability of domestic tourists. The questionnaire used here consists of 2 parts focusing general respondent information (demographic variables) and service variables of the destination that will focus tourist's satisfaction level when travelling Cox's Bazar. A face validity method was used to test whether all the questions were clear enough and easy to understand. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was applied to test the reliability of the questionnaire.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure:

In order to test the clarity of the questionnaire face validity was checked. Soon after the questions are modified a pilot test will be taken place to obtain feedback on the appropriateness and clarity of the questions included in the questionnaire. Thus, the researcher could make sure to confirm the clarity and understandability. To test the reliability of the questionnaire the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was applied.

The data collection process was conducted at the beach destination district of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh to measure tourist satisfaction through questionnaire. Every year a large number of tourists from home and abroad come to visit the beach. The respondents of the questionnaire were the domestic tourists who come to visit the destination. The researcher will cover both the independent tourists and tour groups to answer the questionnaire. During the data collection procedure checking validity is a vital issue as it is very important to check the related findings in the literature review. In order to make sure the respondents understand and fill up the questionnaire correctly, before the survey, the investigator explained clearly each part to the individual. Ruengvisrsh (2011) stated that the completeness of the content, clarification of the language and relevance to the issue are vital to examine.

According to Ticehurst and Veal (2000) quantitative method can be conducted both by investigator completed and respondent-completed. In this study the type of the questionnaire was interviewer –administered. By this way the researcher could cover the all the content and avoid some skip or incomplete answer. After being filled accurately all the questionnaire was rechecked in order to minimize the misunderstanding, skip information or questions and to make sure that all of them were absolutely valid.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of collected data was carried out through various statistical techniques. A hypotheses testing is undertaken on the data to verify the dimensionality and reliability of the scale used to measure the customer satisfaction. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 22 software packages were used in this study.

**Table 1. The frequency and percentage of respondents classified by Gender**

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	48	40.86
	Female	45	59.14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3 shows the gender distribution of the respondents, which is the sample group in this study. There are female respondents more than male respondents, a total of 48 male respondents or 40.86% and a total of 45 female respondents or 59.14%.

**Table 2. The frequency and percentage of respondents classified by Age**

Age		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Under 18	0	0
	18-32	20	21.50
	33-47	58	62.37
	48-62	13	13.98
	62 Upper	2	2.15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Above table shows that sample tourists who are the age level of 33-47 years of age has a greater tendency of the visiting at the destination, followed by the age group 21.50% ( 18-32), 13.98% (48-62) and 2.15% (62 & Above). The result shows that middle aged group has a greater tendency to visit Cox's Bazar.

#### 4.1 Test of the Hypotheses:

The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 22 methodology was used to test the hypotheses. Based on the values computed through the software it represent that the theoretical model fit the data well.

##### 4.1.1 Age and Overall Satisfaction:

Hypothesis  $H_1$  states that there is a positive relationship between age and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.033). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between age and Overall Satisfaction.

##### 4.1.2 Income and Overall Satisfaction:

Hypothesis  $H_2$  states that there is a positive relationship between income and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.029). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between income and Overall Satisfaction.

##### 4.1.3 Occupation and Overall Satisfaction:

Hypothesis  $H_3$  states that there is a positive relationship between occupation and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.026). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between occupation and Overall Satisfaction.

**4.1.4 Marital status and Overall Satisfaction:**

Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> states that there is a positive relationship between marital status and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.002). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between marital status and Overall Satisfaction.

**4.1.5 Time to visit and Overall Satisfaction:**

Hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> states that there is a positive relationship between time to visit and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.027). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between time to visit and Overall Satisfaction.

**4.1.6 Days to stay and Overall Satisfaction:**

Hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> states that there is a positive relationship between days to stay and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.019). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between days to stay and Overall Satisfaction.

**4.1.7 Purpose of visit and Overall Satisfaction:**

Hypothesis H<sub>7</sub> states that there is a positive relationship between purpose of visit and Overall Satisfaction. The hypothesis supported by the data because contribution to the overall satisfaction has taken positive value (+ 0.044). Therefore developed hypothesis can be accepted. It means that there is a positive relationship between purpose of visit and Overall Satisfaction.

**4.2 Results of the Analysis:**

In this part of the study one-way ANOVA test were applied to determine whether there was a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and demography. As a result of the analysis the researcher selects the overall satisfaction which is significant relationship between demographic characteristics.

**Table. ANOVA Results**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	66.410	30	2.214	1.741	.033
	Within Groups	78.837	62	1.272		
	Total	145.247	92			
Income	Between Groups	41.219	30	1.374	1.774	.029
	Within Groups	48.029	62	.775		
	Total	89.247	92			
Occupation	Between Groups	33.709	30	1.124	1.798	.026
	Within Groups	38.742	62	.625		
	Total	72.452	92			
Marital Status	Between Groups	15.345	30	.511	2.416	.002
	Within Groups	13.128	62	.212		
	Total	28.473	92			
Times to visit	Between Groups	27.063	30	.902	1.793	.027
	Within Groups	31.195	62	.503		
	Total	58.258	92			
Days to stay	Between Groups	9.116	30	.304	1.875	.019
	Within Groups	10.045	62	.162		
	Total	19.161	92			
Purpose of visit	Between Groups	25.961	30	.865	1.671	.044
	Within Groups	32.104	62	.518		
	Total	58.065	92			

According to the result of the ANOVA test performed in order to determine whether there existed significant differences between participants with respect to the overall satisfaction in terms of the participant's perception of refectory demography characteristics and overall satisfaction, it was found that overall satisfaction have different perception of demography characteristics. For this research the result we see that overall satisfaction of Cox's Bazar.

### Perception of Sample Tourists:

The above table shows that sample tourists are very satisfied on food availability and service

Perception Regarding	Mean (under five point scale)
Accessibility	2.9462
Accommodations	1.5914
Architecture	3.0215
Arts (music/dance)	1.9355
Atmosphere/people	2.7204
Climate/Weather	1.8817
Cultural house/villages	2.0108
Expensiveness	1.9140
Festivals/events	2.8925
Food	2.0645
Galleries	1.3763
Guides	1.8495
Handicrafts	1.8602
Historical buildings	2.1398
Information center	2.3333
Museums	1.5914
Shopping places	1.5806
Tour packages	1.7204
Traditional scenery	1.7634

The above table shows that visited tourists are very satisfied on Architecture (3.02) and Accessibility (2.94) followed by Festival (2.89), Atmosphere (2.72), Information center (2.33), Historical building (2.13), Food (2.06), Cultural houses (2.01), Arts (1.93), Expensiveness (1.91), Climate (1.88), Handicraft (1.86), Guides (1.84), Traditional scenery (1.76), Tour packages (1.72), Accommodation (1.59), Museums (1.59), Shopping Places (1.58) and Galleries (1.37).

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are likely to assist the business of tourist suppliers such as hotels, motels, Transport Companies of Cox's Bazar basically for selecting target and market segmentation. The needs and wants always vary according to the tourist characteristics. In the light of the findings of this study, management of tourist product suppliers could be able to provide more individualized services and thus ensure maximum satisfaction for their guests. Marketer can add varying ingredients to stimulate the level of satisfaction of different tourist segments. In the same way, all age group tourists are not satisfied by same services. So age groups should consider providing differentiated services. The first hypothesis of the study age helps understand that tourist satisfaction has positive relevance to the age of an individual tourist. The second hypothesis on income shows that personal satisfaction factors of tourists has positive relationship. Information on occupation and marital status also implies a positive relationship with the tourist satisfaction. These results depicts that tourist's satisfaction has significantly positive impact on the above mentioned demographic characteristics. The last three hypotheses; time of visit, days to stay and purpose of visit amplify different approaches for different segments to the satisfaction agenda of the tourists.

### 5.1 Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research shows that the individual tourist characteristics like age, Income, occupation, marital status, time to visit, days to stay and purpose of visit do influence the tourist's perception of satisfaction. The study provides a useful contribution as there are very few studies on satisfaction with tourist attractions in Bangladesh. These findings may assist the tourist organizations operating in Bangladesh to be aware that they need to adopt different strategies for the different demographic (age, income, occupation and marital status) and geographic (origin) segments in their markets.

Thus the tourists can be made more satisfied and the Destination Management Organizations (DMO) in Bangladesh can ensure repeat visits of the tourists. Tourists firms in Bangladesh will be able to match their supply arrangements with the needs and requirements of their tourist guests. This research will also contribute to the development of a reliable instrument to measure tourist satisfaction, which may assist in the development of an industry benchmark. Finally, improvements in satisfaction of tourists will result in having a forward step to the sustainability of tourism development in Bangladesh.

## 5.2 Future Research:

This research is not different from other researches in terms of limitations. However, future studies should build on this research effort by folding in additional vacation travel decisions such as whether to travel, when to travel, and duration of stay within a larger population of domestic tourists. The shifting of socio-demographic changes can impact on traveler's perceptions and preference. Thus, the study of this socio-demographic impact on their satisfaction can build a complete picture of their travel behavior and decision-making process. Additionally, using a country as unit of destination choice can provide benefits of country-level actions to improve tourism industry. Thus, future research can also include international tourists in their study to compare and contrast the satisfaction. By doing so, specific marketing strategies can be utilized to specific market segmentation and as a result, Bangladesh can regenerate tourism revenues to further develop the country.

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