Exploring Tourist Satisfaction In The Homestays of Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study of Tawang District

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Abstract

For visitors staying in such accommodation, homestay services are essential to fulfilling their expectations. This paper explores how the quality of Homestay tourism services influences tourist satisfaction. Using the "Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh" as its focal point, the research attempts to comprehend the association between several homestay service qualities and visitor happiness in 2023. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, yielding 100 usable responses from tourists staying local Homestays. Three dimensions of Homestay services- Accommodation and Environment, Amenities, and Services were used to measure tourist satisfaction. The reliability test indicated high reliability for both independent and dependent variables. The findings suggest that the quality of Homestay services positively impacts tourist satisfaction, with higher quality leading to increased satisfaction. These insights will be beneficial to Homestay operators and policymakers in the state.

Keyword: Homestay services, service quality, tourist satisfaction, Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh..

INTRODUCTION

Tourists, businesses, and the environment or community where this industry operates can all be considered as the component of tourism. Analysing the relationships between various components of the system is necessary to comprehend the effects of tourism on locals (Williams & Lawson, 2001)**.** The travel and leisure industry is referred to as the tourism sector. It is among the industries with the fastest rates of growth in the world and significantly boosts the economic well-being of both the national and local economies (Chin et al., 2014).

A common definition of homestay is a kind of accommodation and hospitality in which guests stay in a local's home in the place they are visiting. According to (Lynch, 1999), Homestay sector describes all forms of lodging offered in private homes where host and their family if applicable reside and share common areas with visitors. Bed and breakfast in private homes and farm stays are two instances of this kind of lodging. The concept of homestay varies from nation to nation. Examples include cultural homestays in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, farm stays in Australia, educational homestays in Japan and South Korea, recreational homestays in South Africa, and urban homestays in Singapore (Hamzah, 2008). Homestay tourism offers clean, cozy, and reasonably priced lodging and meals in an effort to draw visitors from the bustling metropolis to a rural town with natural surroundings (Gangotia, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Homestay is often used in conjunction with various other Community Based Tourism (CBT) pursuits including "hiking, camping, bird watching, cultural performances, and festivals" in order to provide a steady income for the local

community and produce fulfilling cultural and interpersonal experiences (Bhalla et al., 2016). The host communities benefit monetarily from the commodification of the environment and culture, which increases their market value in response to visitor demand (Bhan & Singh, 2014). In Arunachal Pradesh, Homestay refers to lodging offered to visitors in an already existing, customary private residence that is owned by a resident. The operator ought to be living there and overseeing the business. Any improvements done for guests' comfort must adhere to the classic style (Dutta, 2015).

(Parasuraman et al., 1988) created SERVQUAL, a 22-item tool used to measure consumer perceptions of service quality in retail and service enterprises along five dimensions: empathy, certainty, responsiveness, tangibleness, and dependability. The efficacy of a certain leisure service provider, including the travel industry is measured by the quality of its services, Therefore, the standards of the services offered has a significant impact on the process of delivering such services (Al-Ababneh, 2013). It is the extent to which a client's requirements and expectations are fulfilled (Ismail et al., 2016).

When evaluating goods or services after a purchase, satisfaction is defined as the act of meeting one's wants and desires (Albattat et al., 2017). (Ismail et al., 2016) assert that satisfied customers generate favorable word-of-mouth recommendations, repeat business, and referrals, all of which have an impact on the financial success of suppliers involved in the tourism sector. In their research, (Su et al., 2016) discovered that service quality fully mediates the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. The favorable correlation between customer satisfaction and service quality is well recognized. Put another way, the quality of a hotel's material and non-material offerings affects not just the patrons' degree of happiness but also their future behavior and loyalty (Sekulic & Mandaric, 2014).

The impact of the homestay service interaction on visitor satisfaction was examined by (Voon et al., 2022) using eight components of the homestay tourism experience: "atmosphere, lodging, food and drink, culture, guide service, cleanliness, accessibility, and general services". The findings demonstrate how the quality of services obtained affects visitor happiness. (Al-Laymoun et al., 2020) used SERVQUAL dimensions to investigate the connection between visitor satisfaction and service quality in homestay. The results show that the quality of the facilities and services offered meets the expectations of the visitors.

OBJECTIVES

I. To Understand the demographic characteristics of the study sample.
II. To Examine the impact of Quality of Homestay Attributes on Tourist Satisfaction

PROPOSED MODEL
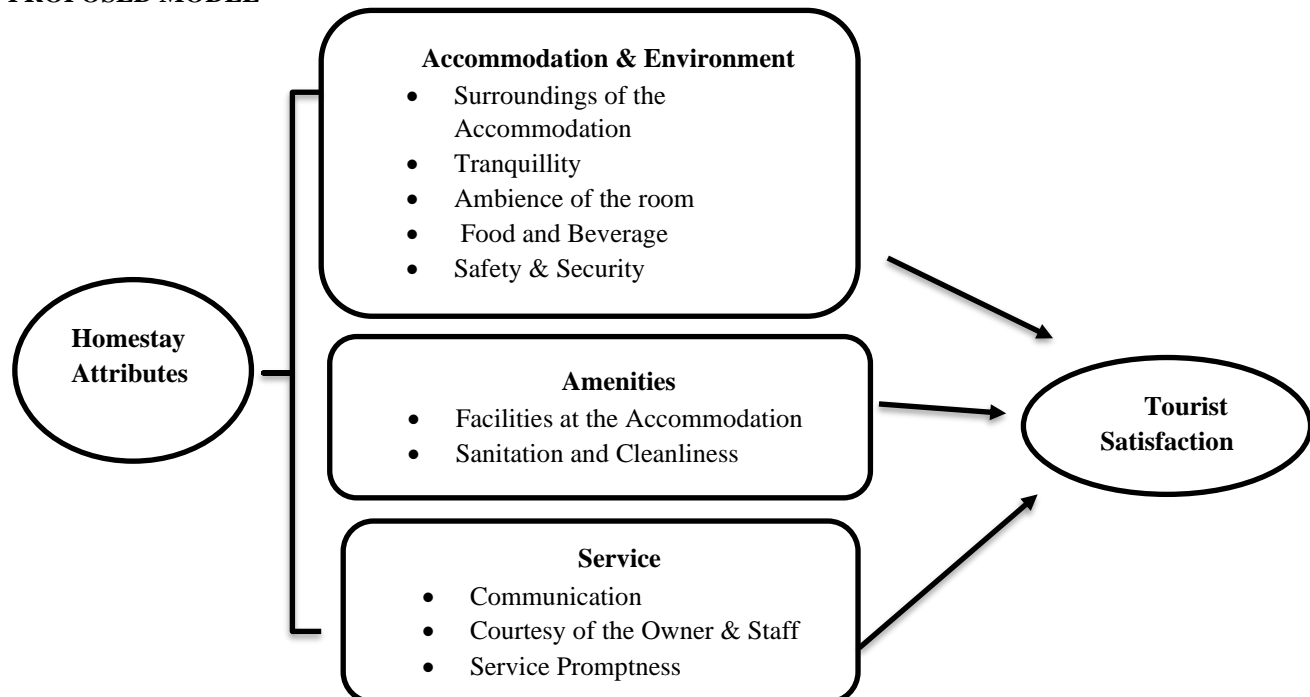
HYPOTHESIS

1 Main Hypothesis-

H_0- Tourist satisfaction is not much impacted by the quality of the homestay features.

2 Secondary Hypotheses-

H_{01}- Tourist satisfaction is not much impacted by the accommodations and environment (environment, food and beverage, tranquility, ambience, safety, and security).

H_{02}- There is no significant impact of the Amenities (Facilities, Sanitation & Cleanliness) on Tourist Satisfaction.

H_{03}- The services (courtesy, communication, and promptness) had no discernible effect on visitor satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The study's methodology is both descriptive and analytical. To achieve the goals of the research, secondary and primary information were both employed. In 2023, the research was carried out in the Arunachal Pradesh district of Tawang. A non-probability convenience sampling technique has been used for designing the sample. A total of 100 domestic tourists who were staying in the Homestays of the district were selected for the study. The state tourist agency, published journals, publications, the internet, and other sources provided secondary data, while a well-structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data. Statistical tools like frequency, percentage, multiple regression, etc., are used to analyse the collected data.

Using the 5-point Likert type scale, a self-report questionnaire of 12 questions was created based on the elements of the Homestay experience model and three important dimensions: Lodging & Environment, Amenities, and Service from the body of existing research. These items include the following:

1. Amenities was measured with 2 items.
2. Accommodation & Environment was measured with 5 items.
3. Tourist satisfaction was measured with 2 items.
4. Service was measured with 3 items.

Table 1 indicates high reliability for all the variables. The lowest reliability was observed in the variables of Accommodation & Environment (0.826) while the highest reliability was observed in the variables of Service (0.890) and Tourist Satisfaction (0.890).

Table 1: Reliability Test

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Accommodation & Environment	5	0.826
Amenities	2	0.891
Service	3	0.890
Tourist Satisfaction	2	0.890

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

Located in the westernmost region of Arunachal Pradesh, Tawang is a stunning district that shares borders with Bhutan to the west and China to the north. The Monpa tribe is the major inhabitants in the region with a population of 49,977 "(*Tawang District Population Census 2011-2021, Arunachal Pradesh Literacy Sex Ratio and Density*, *2011.*)". Tawang officially became the part of India after the Simla Agreement of 1914, however the region was controlled by Tibetan Administration till 1951(Shukla, 2012). The region is well known for Tawang Monastery, snow-capped mountains, rivers, and lakes. One can reach Tawang via tourist circuit Tezpur-Bhalukpong-Bomdila-Tawang.
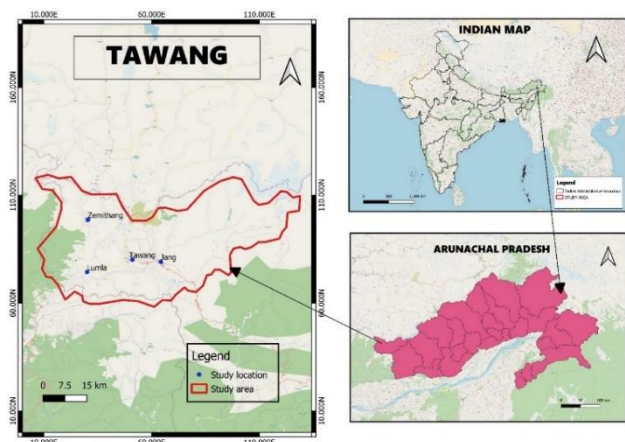

Figure 1: Study Area Map

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage %
Gender	Male	56
	Female	44
Age Group	Below 25 Years	17
	25-35 Years	54
	36-45 Years	21
	46-55 Years	4

	Above 56 Years	4
Education Qualifications	Primary	2
	Secondary	3
	Higher Secondary	13
	Graduate	39
	Post Graduate & above	43
Occupation	Student	10
	Service	27
	Professional	39
	Business	13
	Retired	4
	Housewife	5
	Other	2
Annual Income	Less than Rs 5 Lakh	29
	Rs 5-10 Lakh	43
	Rs 11-15 Lakh	12
	Rs 16-20 Lakh	8
	Above Rs 20 Lakh	8
Purpose of Visit	Honeymoon	1
	Family Visit	10
	Culture and Heritage	22
	Eco-Tourism	9
	Leisure	28
	Adventure	17
	Official Visit	8
	Academic Visit	1
	Other	4

The different tourist demographics are shown in Table 2. The representation of male tourists (56%) and female tourists (44%) are evenly divided. Majority (54%) falls under the age group 25-35 years, 43% of the tourists have an education qualification of Postgraduate & above, the occupation of the majority (39%) is Professional, followed by Service (27%). Most tourists (43 %) fall under the annual income group Rs 5-10 lakh. 28 % of the tourists visited the destination for Leisure, followed by Culture & Heritage (22%) and Adventure (17%).

2. Regression Analysis

To figure out how each independent variable relates to visitor satisfaction, a number of regression analyses are carried out.

H$_{01}$- There is no significant impact of the Accommodation & Environment (Surroundings, Tranquility, Ambience, Food & Beverage, Safety & Security) on Tourist Satisfaction.

Table 3: Impact of Environment and Accommodation on Visitor Satisfaction Using Linear Regression

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction					
	R	R^2	F	β	T Value	P Value
Accommodation & Environment	0.767	0.588	139.959	0.913	11.830	<.001

Table 3 confirms that Accommodation & Environment has a strong positive relationship to tourist satisfaction as the correlation coefficients R is 0.767. The F value 139.959 and P value <0.001 suggest the presence of relationship. Moreover, the R^2 (0.588) indicates that Accommodation & Environment explains 58.8 % of the variance in tourist satisfaction. The Alternate Hypothesis is therefore accepted and the Null Hypothesis is condemned.

H$_{02}$- There is no significant impact of the Amenities (Facilities, Sanitation & Cleanliness) on Tourist Satisfaction.

Table 4: Linear Regression to Assess Amenities' Effect on Visitors Satisfaction

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction					
	R	R^2	F	β	t Value	P Value
Amenities	0.818	0.670	198.880	0.740	14.102	<.001

According to the aforementioned regression analysis, amenities and visitor happiness are strongly correlated "(R = 0.818, P <0.001)". Additionally, the facilities account for 67% "(R2 = 0.670)" of the variation in visitor satisfaction. As a result, the Null hypothesis is rejected.

H$_{03}$- Tourist satisfaction is not much impacted by the services (courtesy, communication, and promptness).

Table 5: Linear Regression for Service's Effect on Tourist's Satisfaction

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction					
	R	R^2	F	β	t Value	P Value
Service	0.862	0.743	282.970	0.831	16.822	<.001

According to Table 5's "correlation coefficients (R = 0.862)", service and visitor satisfaction are strongly positively correlated. Service accounts for 74.3% of the variation in tourist satisfaction, according to the R2 (0.743). This leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and the rejection of the null hypothesis.

H$_0$- There is no significant impact of the Quality of Homestay Attributes (Accommodation & Environment, Amenities, Service) on Tourist Satisfaction.

Table 5: Impact of Homestay Features on Tourist Satisfaction Using Multiple Linear Regression

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction					
	R	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t Value**	**P Value**
Service	0.862	0.743	282.970	0.831	16.822	<.001
Amenities	0.888	0.789	181.411	0.324	4.613	

The findings of the "multiple linear regression analysis" used to examine the relationship between tourist satisfaction and the quality of homestay attributes are shown in Table 5. The correlation coefficient R (0.862) and (0.888) suggest a strong positive relationship to tourist satisfaction. The service's R2 score (0.743) also shows that homestay attributes account for 74.3% of the variation in tourist satisfaction. The attribute amenities (R^2= 0.789) also explain 78.9% of the variance in tourist satisfaction. This leads to accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

In the Tawang region in Arunachal Pradesh, the current research investigates the connection between visitor pleasure and the calibre of homestay features. The findings of the research show a favourable correlation between tourist satisfaction and the calibre of homestay features. This study validates that improving the quality of Homestay attributes can lead to increased satisfaction among tourists.

The study results will benefit Homestay operators and other Tourism organizations in the study area by allowing them to assess their current performance level and plan future marketing and management initiatives. Researchers in the future could broaden the scope of the study and include more factors to determine the full extent to which homestay tourism influences tourists in the state.

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