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Relationship Marketing in Indian Tourism Industry-A tourist perception of Hoteliers and Travel agents

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Abstract

Every day all over the world, innumerable people make their travel plans for a pleasure or business related trip. The trip may be for short or long duration, for the forthcoming weekend, or for a longer holiday sometime during the coming year. Visas are applied for, flights are reserved, accommodation is booked, cars are rented, train tickets are purchased, itineraries are planned and the World Wide Web is surfed for travel-related information and availability of seats. Thousands of people are working round-the-clock to provide these services and interact with the traveller, while another couple of thousands work behind the scenes to help the traveller have a safe and memorable holiday. All these people form a part of one of the largest industry in the world _the tourism industry. A tourist is a temporary visitor to a place, who leaves their usual place of residence and work to have a change from their usual routine for a short time; they may stay at a place atleast lets say for 24 hours. With such a short duration posing to be a challenge to all the service intermediaries rendering tourism service to the tourists, it becomes important for them to deliver the best in whatever ways they can. Service intermediaries must work in total coordination, in perfect and healthy relationship with each other making sure the ultimate service delivery delights the tourist. In this study we would be considering two such intermediaries having direct contact with the tourists, i.e., Travel agency and the Hotels. The tourist's perception of the travel agents and the hoteliers would be identified bringing to light various factors that are crucial for achieving successful tourism partnerships.

Keywords: *Relationship marketing, channel intermediaries, Hoteliers, travel agency, Tourist perception, service experience, tourism partnerships.*

1. Introduction

Tourism has been declared as one of the world's largest industries today. The number of tourists and the industry itself had shown a phenomenal growth over the past few decades. The word 'tourism' does not only mean international travel for leisure or travel by air, but has a much wider scope. Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the place where they normally live and work and includes the activities they indulge in at the destinations as well as all facilities and services specially created to meet their needs. Tourism does not only mean travelling to a particular destination but also includes all activities undertaken during the stay. The Tourism industry is a vast industry made up of businesses and organisations that provide goods and services to meet the distinctive needs of tourists. These businesses and organisations are related to virtually all areas of the economy making tourism a very huge industry. The tourism industry comprises many sectors or sub-industries such as the hospitality industry, transport industry, attractions, and entertainment. All these sectors are interconnected and integrated; they work with one another to some extent in providing goods and services as their survival depends on each other. The tourism industry is the outcome of the combined efforts of various sub-industries or sectors which provide tourism-related services; large multinational companies, small business houses, and individuals working as guides at tourist spots, all constitute the tourism industry. Some of the constituents are located at the destination itself, such as hotels, attractions, guides, shops, local transport, etc. The main constituents of the tourism industry consists of transport industry, hospitality industry, entertainment industry, travel agents and tour operators, guides and escorts, tourism organisations.

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the services sector in India. Tourism in India is a potential game changer. It is a sun rise industry, an employment generator, a significant source of foreign exchange for the country and an economic activity that helps local and host communities. The value of the brand to the consumer, the growth in emerging markets, the importance of consumer-facing technology, and development and retention of human capital have helped shape the tourism industry over the

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past five years .The travel and tourism sector has developed into an industry with an annual economic report (direct, indirect and induced) of around US\$ 6.5 trillion worldwide. The global hotel industry generates approximately between US\$ 400-500 billion in revenue each year, one third of that revenue is attributable to the United States. The tourism and hospitality sector is among the top 15 sectors in India to attract the highest foreign direct investment (FDI). During the period April 2000-February 2015, this sector attracted around US\$ 7,862.08 million of FDI, according to the data released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

Literature Review

1. *Jennifer.H. Laing, Aggie Wegner., et al (2008)*, in their study titled 'Identifying success factors behind partnerships for managing recreation and tourism in urban fringe', speaking about the relationships between urban fringe parks , government agencies, tourism industry and community groups in Australia , claimed that support and leadership, commitment to power sharing, willingness to adapt to changing conditions were the most important features that help in building stronger tourism partnerships.
2. *Liang.J, Wegner .A.,et al(2007)*, in their study titled 'Developing effective partnerships for facilitating sustainable protected area tourism', opined that tourism partnerships can be categorized as partner related factors, process related factors, context related. Partner related factors include leadership, openness to change; process related factors relates to levels of commitment and trust; context related factors includes adequacy of organisational support, legal framework and administrative arrangements, all these factors jointly form a successful tourism partnership.
3. *Boonajseevee (2005)*, in his study titled 'Relationship marketing: Loyalty intentions in new era of Thai bank marketing' claimed that loyalty is a primary goal of relationship marketing, and sometimes is equated with the relationship marketing concept itself.
4. *Selvam. M, Babu. M., et al (2004)* in their study titled 'Tourists Satisfaction-A Study of Tiruchirappally District, Tamil Nadu' the major findings of the study revealed that , Tourism is an industry continually dealing with people. Hence tourism needs continuous cordial human relationships. The travel agents, tourist guides, the hoteliers, etc. are jointly and severally responsible for creating a situation that develops good human relations.
5. *Kim & Cha, (2002)*, conducted research on the topic 'Effects of relationship marketing on repeat purchase and word of mouth' the findings of the study revealed that the increasing emphasis on relationship marketing is based on the assumption that, establishing committed tourist relationships leads to positive tourist satisfaction, loyalty, words of mouth, and recreational demand in association with the festivals.
6. *Sheth and Parvatiyar (1994)*, in their study titled 'Case for Relationship Marketing: Issues in Relating the Approach to Tourism Partnerships', state that relationship marketing is the understanding, explanation and management of the on-going collaborative business relationship between suppliers.
7. *Morgan and Hunt (1994)* pointed out that all relationship marketing activities tend to establish, develop and maintain successful relation exchange.

8. *Shani and Chalasani (1992)*, in their study titled 'Exploiting niches using relationship marketing, define relationship marketing as "an integrated effort to identify, maintain, and build up a network with individual consumers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time" .

Objectives

1. To analyze the relationship that exists between Tourists, Travel agents and Hoteliers in the Tourism industry.
2. To evaluate the factors influencing the process of tourism partnerships.

Methodology

The descriptive research method is followed in the present research to describe and analyze the relationships that exists between tourists, hoteliers and travel agency in the tourism Industry in Mysore district of Karnataka. Tourists visiting Karnataka were interviewed and their responses were sought from 120 tourists. Factor analysis technique was used to identify the components factors that are crucial for establishing successful relationships among tourists, hoteliers and travel agents.

Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is based on the proposition that it is less expensive to keep the Customers that you already have than to acquire new Customers. Attracting a new customer will keep the business headed in a successful direction but an equal amount of attention and resources should be devoted to keeping the current customers. Relationships are extremely important resource for organisations, irrespective of the activities they are engaged in, this resource is an important one that facilitates all the other activities of the organisation at ease. Especially in the tourism industry, relationships established by the organisations are essential because of the peculiarities of the product offered to the clients, as well as of the particular needs and wants of the customers. Relationships in tourism industry gain prominence mainly because the product cannot be tried and effectively evaluated before the purchase and the risks perceived by the tourists are considerably high. A good product or service should back a good relationship, a relationship that is a mutual give and take.

One of the unique features of the tourism industry that differentiates it from the rest is its composition. Tourism industry comprises of different types of organisations working together to deliver one fine quality experience to its tourists. It comprises of: 1) Travel organisers (i.e. tour operators, wholesale and retail travel agents), 2) Transport companies (i.e. airlines, road transport and shipping companies), 3) Accommodation companies (i.e. hotels, motels, apartments), 4) Food and beverage companies (i.e. restaurants, cafeterias, catering), 4) Leisure and recreational companies (i.e. Theme parks, casinos, art galleries). Along with all these companies we also have co-ordinators of tourism industry (i.e.government tourist agencies and associations of tourist organisations).

Although these companies operate independently and frequently compete with each other, they all form part of an overall system, in which all organisations interacting with a traveller must work appropriately in order to provide the traveller with a pleasant overall experience. [Gee, Makens and

Choy (1989), Howell (1993), Angelo and Vladimir (1994), Middleton (1994)].

We often see that the owners and the managers of the hospitality companies underestimate the importance of aforementioned interrelationships when considering how their company is going to attract customers, as it depends not only on its individual marketing efforts but also on the strategies and actions of other tourist companies.

The Hoteliers

Travellers and tourists need lodging for rest, sleep, luggage storage, etc. while they are on a tour. Roadside inns were built for weary travellers during the primitive times. Today, the hospitality industry is one of the top 10 largest industries and is growing by leaps and bounds to meet the demands of the increasing volume of tourists. Accommodation in the form of low budget lodges to world-class luxury hotels is available at all major tourists' destinations to provide a home away from home experience to the travelling public. The elements of a strong relationship between a hotel company and its travel agencies include communication, trust, and making clear as to who does what. Hotels are an important component of the tourism product. They contribute in the overall tourism experience through the standards of facilities and services offered by them. Generally speaking, the accommodation or lodging sector is associated with hotels, motels, motor inns, resorts and other establishments including condominium hotels etc. According to World Tourism Organisation (1995:60), all these establishments are typified as being arranged in rooms, in number exceeding a specified minimum, as coming under a common management, as providing certain services, including room service, daily bed-making and cleaning of sanitary facilities, as grouped in classes and categories according to the facilities and services provided, and are not falling into the category of specialised establishments. Coltman (1989), defines a term hotel as anything from a ten-room boarding house to a building with a thousand or more rooms, convention and meeting facilities, recreation facilities such as swimming pools and twenty – four-hour room service, along with several restaurants with various types of entertainment. Individual hotel properties can also be classified based on their operating arrangement. The individual hotel chains can operate in the form of management contracts, franchising, referral and joint venture. Hotels are also classified based on the different price levels charged; they may be economy or budget hotels, mid-price or first class hotels, and high price or luxury hotels. Based on their clientele hotels can also be classified as business hotels and leisure hotels.

The Travel Agent

Travel agents act as intermediaries serving between the various service providers and travel consumers. They sell and may, at times, market the products and services provided by the suppliers such as hotels, transport operators, airlines, railways, cruise operators, etc. The travel agents play an important role in the development and promotion of travel sales. They put together all the components of the tourism product and sell them to the tourist. They put together all the components of the tourism product and sell them to the tourist. The travel agent thus organises the travel for the consumer. Travel agents are also referred to as 'travel consultants', 'travel counsellors', and sometimes even 'tour operators'. Travel agents' serve as a link between the travel suppliers and the tourists. Hence a travel agency is like a retail

store, with a uniqueness; that it serves on behalf of both the suppliers and the consumers. For example, a client walks into a travel agency for booking a tour, the travel agency after getting an initial booking amount from the client will book the air tickets/rail tickets, arrange for a pick-up from the airport/railway station, make reservation at the hotel, book a vehicle for sightseeing, etc. Thus the travel agent has not only served as the tourists but also given business to the airlines/railways, transport operator, hotel, etc. Each and every tourist does not have the time to book and arrange for the travel and the suppliers also cannot get in touch with every potential customer. That is why the services of a travel agent are considered important. The travel agent should be aware of the various hotels available at the tourist destinations. He should keep himself updated on the different category of hotels, types of rooms, tariff plans, extra bed charges, taxes, meal rates, etc. There are different tariff plans as per the season i.e. regular, season, off-season, and weekend tariff. Some hotels offer special rates to corporate. Discounted rates are given to groups depending on the size of the group. After determining the route of the itinerary the travel agent's next important task is to contact the hotels at the destination to check the availability of rooms for the anticipated number of guests. The tour planner should know the exact number of people travelling, so as to calculate the cost of the accommodation.

Data Analysis

Perceived value of a tourism package and the quality of tourists relationship with travel agency and a hotelier

The fundamental object of the study of relationship marketing is how long-term relationships are created and maintained. In this sense, the study of tourist behaviour and the mechanisms that lead them to be loyal to a travel agency are a key element. The relationship quality with a travel agency can be seen as a mega-construct made up of other key components that reflect the overall nature of a relationship between a travel agency and tourists and an hotelier (Henning-Thurau *et al.*, 2002). Gummesson (1987) considers relationship quality to be the quality of interaction between a customer and a supplier, and it can be interpreted in terms of accumulated value. Other authors have defined relationship quality as the 'degree of appropriateness of a relationship to fulfill the needs of the customer associated with the relationship' (Henning-Thurau and Klee, 1997: 751). Therefore, relationship quality can be considered a fundamental aspect of the formation of the attitude towards the travel agency. From the standpoint of the experiential view, relationship quality is not only cognitive, but also affective. The tourist does not only make a rational analysis of the relationship; his/her emotions and feelings also play a fundamental role in the relationship quality. Moreover, relationship quality is of a subjective nature, not only because of the different interpretation each of the parties may make, but also because of its dynamic character. According to Raval and Grönroos (1996) relationship quality varies over time, so that during the first stages of a relationship the value of each transaction is of great importance, whereas in more mature stages of the relationship the relationship quality is what counts. Thus, the tourists' expectations evolve from a predominance of transactional factors towards a greater emphasis on relational variables.

Table 1: Factors/Indicators/Tourists Perspective Of Travel Agency	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. a) Trust_1)The Trave agent chosen should have positive reputation and is professional enough	-	.672	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. a) Trust_2)You are treated in a sense of fair mindedness and are cared sincerely	-	.806	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. a) Trust_3)The service provided by the travel agency is consistent as it guarantees	-	.719	-	-	.501
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. a) Trust_4)The historical success (performance) of the Travel agency is one of the major reason influencing your choice of a service provider	-	.588	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _b) Commitment_1)The Travel Agency has always been courteous and friendly to you	.721	-	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _b) Commitment_2)You have a sense of loyalty towards your travel agency	.778	-	.455	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _b) Commitment_3)Your have always felt at ease with your travel agency	.665	-	.735	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _b) Commitment_4)You are committed to stay with a travel agency your family has been dealing with from long	-	-	-	-	.504
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _d) Conflict handling_4)The Travel Agency can avoid the same problem if it takes place twice	-	.510	-	.514	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _e) Relationship Quaity_1)You feel comfortable about the security your Travel Agency offers you	-	.847	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _e) Relationship Quaity_2)Your personal information is protected adequately	-	.653	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _e) Relationship Quaity_4)You feel extra cared when being a prestigious customer	.453	.663	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _f) Satisfaction_1)The service offerd by the travel agency was packaged well and moderately priced	.721	-	-	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _f) Satisfaction_2)Your travel agency offers you the best Service packages keeping in mind the latest trends in the market	.778	-	.455	-	-
Relationship with your TRAVEL AGENCY, measured on a 5 point likert scale. _f) Satisfaction_3)Your travel agency is up to date and willing to accept new advancements in technology where needed	.665	-	.735	-	-

Table 1.1: Factor Loading Of Various Factors Pertaining To Tourits Relationship With The Travel Agency

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.889	31.312	31.312	6.889	31.312	31.312
2	4.720	21.453	52.764	4.720	21.453	52.764
3	2.572	11.693	64.457	2.572	11.693	64.457
4	1.498	6.809	71.266	1.498	6.809	71.266
5	1.398	6.356	77.622	1.398	6.356	77.622
6	1.277	5.806	83.429	1.277	5.806	83.429
7	.972	4.418	87.846			
8	.825	3.751	91.597			
9	.632	2.872	94.469			
10	.450	2.047	96.516			
11	.254	1.155	97.671			
12	.161	.730	98.401			
13	.137	.624	99.025			
14	.111	.503	99.528			
15	.066	.301	99.829			
16	.022	.098	99.927			
17	.013	.057	99.984			
18	.003	.013	99.998			
19	.000	.002	100.000			
20	1.000E-013	1.002E-013	100.000			
21	-1.001E-013	-1.004E-013	100.000			
22	-1.002E. -013	-1.008E-013	100.000			

Table 2: Factors/Indicators/Tourists Perspective Of Hoteliers	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._d) Conflict handing_1)The Hotel can resolve your problems in case there is a dispute	.790	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._c)Communication_2)The information provided by the Hotel is trustworthy	.736	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._d) Conflict handing_4)The Hotel can avoid the same problem if it takes place twice	.706	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._c)Communication_1)You can easily acquire necessary information	.690	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._c)Communication_3)The use of technology for free flow of information is helpful	.665	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._e) Quaity of service_4)You feel extra cared when being a prestigious customer	-	.502	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._a)Trust_4)The historical success (performance) of the Hotel is one of the major reason influencing your choice of a service provider	.621	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._d) Conflict handing_2)The Hotel can resolve your conflicts within the expected time.	.607	-	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._a)Trust_3)The service provided by the hotel is consistent as it guarantees	-	.820	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._e) Quaity of service_2)Your personal information is protected adequately	-	.807	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._a)Trust_1)The Hotel chosen should have positive reputation and is professional enough	-	.798	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._e) Quaity of service_1)You feel comfortable about the security your Hotel offers you	-	.706	-	.472
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._a)Trust_2)You are treated in a sense of fair mindedness and are cared sincerely	-	.694	-	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._a)COMMITMENT_3)You feel a sense of loyalty towards your hotelier	-	-	.662	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._f)SATISFACTION_4)Your Hotel is up to date and willing to accept new advancements in technology where needed	-	-	.662	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._e) Quaity of service_3)The e-services offered by the Hotel is extensive	-	-	.504	-
Relationship with your HOTELIER, measured on a 5 point likert scale._d)Conflict handing_3)Every complaint should be handled wholeheartedly in a positive and active manner	-	-	.564	-

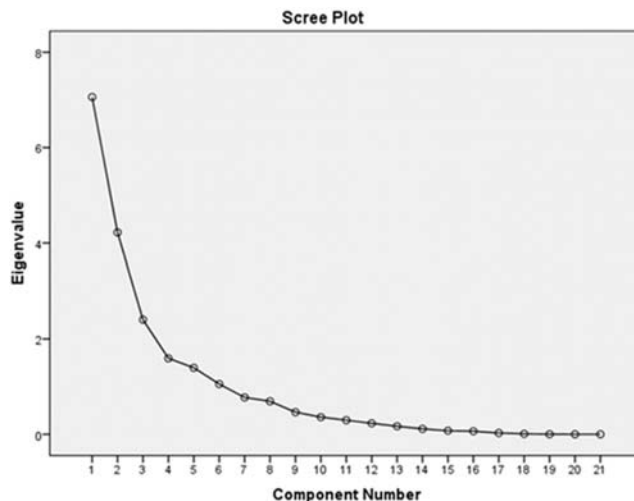
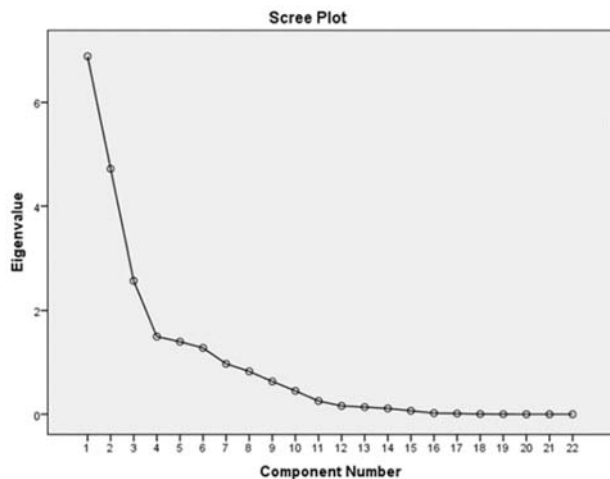


Table 2.1: Factor Loading Of Various Factors Pertaining To Tourists Relationship with the Hoteliers

Component	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.059	33.612	33.612	7.059	33.612	33.612
2	4.221	20.100	53.712	4.221	20.100	53.712
3	2.404	11.450	65.162	2.404	11.450	65.162
4	1.594	7.589	72.751	1.594	7.589	72.751
5	1.395	6.642	79.393	1.395	6.642	79.393
6	1.054	5.020	84.413	1.054	5.020	84.413
7	.773	3.681	88.094			
8	.692	3.294	91.389			
9	.464	2.210	93.599			
10	.360	1.715	95.314			
11	.296	1.407	96.721			
12	.231	1.100	97.821			
13	.168	.799	98.620			
14	.114	.542	99.162			
15	.074	.354	99.516			
16	.064	.306	99.822			
17	.027	.129	99.951			
18	.009	.044	99.995			
19	.001	.005	100.000			
20	1.002E-013	1.022E-15	100.000			
21	1.000E-013	1.124E-16	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor Loading Of Various Factors Pertaining To Tourist Relationship with the Travel Agency: [Refer Table 1, 1.1 and Fig.1]

The factor loading here indicates the scores which are obtained from various factors that constitute relationship marketing. The various factors includes, trust, commitment, conflict handling, relationship quality and satisfaction. Out of the 22 statements administered to the respondents (tourists) 6 most important factors that represents all these statements were found out. The scree plot shown above in Fig1 depicts the Eigen values of all the factors ranging from 1.277 to 6.889 which is the total value of all the components. The Eigen values are seen diminishing gradually for every succeeding component gradually after certain point or let's say component. Based on the factor loadings sought from the factor analysis, we have six components which are of high importance, the remaining factors with less than Eigen values less than one is eliminated.

Table 1.2 shows that the initial Eigen values of all the components and the percentage of the variance and thus

cumulative percentages. The extraction sum of squared loadings shows us that the components chosen i.e. the first six components can be explained upto 83.429%, which means to say that the relationship of the tourists with travel agency, is based on the following factors; viz., Trust, Commitment, Conflict handling, Relationship quality and satisfaction; and their relationships with each other can be explained well upto 83.429%.

In table 1, we can see that the factor 'commitment' and 'trust' has the maximum loadings which has been highlighted more than five times under different components, [here we have not taken the sixth component as it not got the permissible limit of loadings], proving it to be the most important factors in determining the relationship between the tourists and the travel agency. Secondly, we see 'satisfaction' appearing four times under different components, followed by relationship quality three times and conflict handling appearing two times, all these based on its repeated higher factor loadings. Now placing the factors in the order of their importance we can say that trust and commitment are the most important factors that

determine the relationship between tourists and travel agents followed by satisfaction, relationship quality and conflict handling.

Factor Loading Of Various Factors Pertaining To Tourist Relationship with the Hoteliers: [Refer Table. 2, 2.1 and Fig.2]

The factor loading here indicates the scores which are obtained from various factors that constitute relationship marketing. The various factors includes, trust, commitment, communication, conflict handling, quality of service, and satisfaction. Out of the 21 statements administered to the respondents (tourists) 6 most important factors that represent all these statements were found out. The scree plot shown above in Fig1 depicts the Eigen values of all the factors ranging from 1.054 to 7.059 which is the total value of all the components. The Eigen values are seen diminishing gradually for every succeeding component gradually after certain point or let's say component. Based on the factor loadings sought from the factor analysis, we have six components which are of high importance, the remaining factors with less than Eigen values less than one is eliminated.

Table 2.2 shows that the initial Eigen values of all the components and the percentage of the variance and thus cumulative percentages. The extraction sum of squared loadings shows us that the components chosen i.e. the first six components can be explained Upto 84.413%, which means to say that the relationship of the tourists with travel agency, is based on the following factors; viz., Trust, Commitment, Communication, Conflict handling, Quality of service and satisfaction; and their relationships with each other can be explained well Upto 84.413%.

In table 2, we can see that the factor 'quality of service' has the maximum loadings which has been highlighted more than five times under different components [here we have not taken the fifth and the sixth component as it not got the permissible limit of loadings], proving it to be the most important factors in determining the relationship between the tourists and the Hoteliers. Secondly, we see 'conflict handling and trust' appearing four times under different components, followed by communication three times and commitment appearing once; all these based on its repeated higher factor loadings. Now placing the factors in the order of their importance we can say that quality of service rendered by the hotels is the most important factors that determine the relationship between tourists and hoteliers followed by conflict handling capability of the hoteliers and the level of trust that the hoteliers gain from their service over a period of time, communication quality the hoteliers and the tourist have and the commitment that is shown by the hotelier towards the tourists.

Commitment: is acknowledged to be an essential component of successful long-term relationships (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). In relationship marketing literature, commitment between partners in an exchange is recognized as a key precursor to the attainment of desirable behavioral outcomes. For example, commitment is positively associated with trust (de Ruyter et al., 2001; Ranaweera and future intentions (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999), and resistance to change (Pritchard et al., 1999. Morgan and Hunt (1994) consider that the commitment–trust tandem is the indivisible axis that leads to

the efficiency, productivity and effectiveness of relationships. The basis for maintaining relationships is the keeping of promises, so that if a promise is not fulfilled the tourist will not repeat the purchase of a product or the consumption of a service, so the relationship will come to an end. Some authors consider that commitment

is the highest level of relational bond (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987). Commitment between the parties arises when one of them considers that its relationship with the other is so important that it is worthwhile making the maximum effort to maintain it indefinitely (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Gundlach *et al.*, 1995; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Trust

Together with commitment, the other key element for the travel agency/hoteliers to be able to maintain long-term relationships is the tourist's trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It is necessary for the tourist to feel trust in the travel agency, since according to Morgan and Hunt (1994) it is the basic element that will permit the promises and the relationships to be established and maintained (Bitner, 1995; Berry, 1995). Trust implies that the good intentions of the travel agency are not questioned by the tourist, that the promises made do not generate uncertainties in the purchaser and that the communication between the parties is honest open and frequent (Czepiel, 1990). Trust has been defined as 'an individual's general expectation as to whether another's word can be trusted' (Rotter, 1967). At a general level, it is accepted that trust is composed of two major dimensions: honesty (belief that the travel agency will keep its word and that it has the capacity to do so) and benevolence (belief that the travel agency is interested in the tourist's wellbeing) (Doney and Cannon, 1997; Ganesan and Hess, 1997; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Moorman *et al.*, 1993; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Singh and Sir desh mukh, 2000). In this sense, trust is an eminently affective construct because it is based on two dimensions with a strong emotional component

Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1999) this is a definition based on what the tourist does, and not on its psychological meaning. He therefore proposes 'satisfaction is defined as pleasurable fulfilment' (Oliver, 1997, 1999). That is, the tourist senses that consumption fulfils some need, desire, goal or so forth and that this fulfilment is pleasurable. Thus, satisfaction is the tourist's sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure. This view of satisfaction reflects on the one hand its cognitive nature (exercise in comparing expectations and performance) and on the other its affective nature (associated feeling of pleasure) (Bigné and Andreu, 2004). In the case of satisfaction with a travel agency, the tourist values the degree of pleasurable fulfilment of his needs and wishes, including the full range of goods or services offered by the travel agency and its evolution over time. Satisfaction depends on the experience of using the products or services.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the relationship marketing and analyses the relationship between hotelier, tourists and travel agents .The travel agency and hoteliers must provide value fundamentally through the quality of the tourism packages and the professionalism of its personnel, without losing sight of the price of the tourism package. But at transaction level, it is also important for the travel agency and hotels to try to

monitor emotional aspects relating to the enjoyment of the tourism package and relating to the time spent in the travel agency during the process of the decision to buy. These cognitive and affective aspects are key factors in achieving the satisfaction of the tourist. When it comes to the tourist's perception of their relationship with the travel agency they give more importance to 'trust' and 'commitment'; trust in terms of the service they deliver being consistent and guarantees what it promises, commitment in terms of having a strong sense of loyalty towards the travel agency, followed by 'satisfaction' in terms of the service product being packaged well and moderately priced, the travel agency offers packages keeping in mind the latest technology etc. When we speak about the tourist's perception of their relationship with the hotels, we see that the tourists consider 'quality of the service' highly important than the other factors, quality of service let's say like a feeling of being cared for very well as a prestigious customer, a sense of security etc. Second important factor being 'conflict handling capability' of the hoteliers in terms of hotels being able to handle all conflicts positively and with ease, Next in the list being, 'communication quality' maintained by the hoteliers in terms of use of latest technology for communication adopted, full-fledged and free flow of access to information etc. These factors if given importance and prioritised rightly will facilitate in strengthening the relationships between the travel agency, hotels and tourists. Hence communication, mutual trust and transparency can be better maintained if the players in tourism industry can collaborate and innovatively use information technology to facilitate the increase of competitiveness of both hotels and travel agents

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