UNESCO's WORLD HERITAGE SITE KALKA SHIMLA RAILWAY

A study of the satisfaction level of foreign tourists.

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Abstract: The paper determines the satisfaction levels of foreign travelers, travelling on Kalka-Shimla railway. Satisfaction is a mental condition which tells about the degree of fulfillment provided by the goods and services and this analysis provides an important insight of a traveler's intention and their loyalty. It measures how products or services supplied by a service provider meet or surpass a customer's expectations, it helps service providers with a measure that they can use to manage and improve their services. The outcomes and discussion are based on the studies conducted among foreign travelers; with use of quantitative methods which revealed that strategic actions are required to improve services and facilities in Kalka Shimla railway.

Keywords: Foreign Tourists, Railway, Satisfaction, Foreign, Awareness, Services.

Introduction

Transportation is the soul of tourism, both complement each other. One can't think of tourism without transportation. It is a vital component of tourism which plays a significant role in growth of tourism business. The origin of transportation dates back to 3500 BC when the wheel was invented and during the industrial revolution the first modern highway was developed. In 17th & 18th century new modes of transportation were invented such as bicycles, trains, trams, airplanes and motor cars. Modern rail transport commenced with steam locomotives in the early 19th century in Great Britain. The concept of railways was first introduced in India in the year 1832 and the first train ran Red Hills to Chintadripet Bridge in 1837 for transporting granite stones for road building work by Sir Arthur Cotton in Madras. Then in 1853 between Bombay (Bori Bunder) and Thane on 16th April with 14 carriage hauled by three steam locomotives for about 34 kilometers carrying 400 people by Great Indian Peninsular Railway.

Indian Railways, the premier transport organization of the country is the second largest rail network in Asia (after China) and second largest under one management. Indian Railways owns a total route length of 67,956 kilometers and runs about a total of one lac passenger trains and 8,479 freight trains daily, As of march 2020. It carries nearly 23 million passengers every day and transports over 2.65 million tons of freight daily. The HeadQuarters of the Indian Railways is in New Delhi. Indian Railways is controlled by the Government of India through the Ministry of Railways. At present, there are 18 zones and 72 divisions in the Indian Railways. Indian Railways has identified model stations for the provision of upgraded passenger amenities.

In India, There are five trains running on the narrow gauge and three of them Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway and Kalka-Shimla railway have been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Matheran Hill railway and Kangra Valley railway are other trains in operation. The Kalka-Shimla railway is running on 762mm gauge from Kalka city of Haryana to capital city of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla for a total distance of 95.66 Km (59.44mi). Before this KSR was built the only way to connect the summer capital of the Indian sub-continent of the East India company was via village cart way. The construction of the railway line started by the Delhi-Ambala-Kalka railway company in 1898 and was completed in 1903 with 103 tunnels, 919 curves and 864 bridges; most of the bridges are multi-arched. The height of the railway line varies from 565 meters above sea level in Kalka to 2076 meters in Shimla. This railway line was added to the list of UNESCO's World Heritage sites on 10th july 2008 under mountain railways of India.

Literature Review

Previously there was much research done on the satisfaction of visitors and tourists and few of them are related to the studies based on the experiences of railway journeys. Firstly **Khan, S. Z. (2010)** documented in depthly the kalka shimla railways, later **Pryce, J., Chaiechi, T., & Bhati, A. (2013)** worked on visitor interest on heritage railways of asia and found that operators of heritage railway attractions need to engage a variety of initiatives to meet the needs of the leisure market and continue to attract visitors. Such information will inform continued optimism in the conservation of heritage railways for all stakeholders.

In particular **Thijs and Staes (2008)** suggests that there should be a common platform for the interchange of opinions, experiences and good practices to improve the performance, effectiveness and standard of Indian railway. In a similar study **Hanif, Hafeez and Riaz (2010)** worked on the Indian railways and brought in the factors which are responsible for creating satisfaction among customers for a better Indian railway and also brought their importance into light. **Abbasi, Khalid, Azam and Riaz (2010)** also have acknowledged customer outlooks regarding the services. The most dynamic verb in the terminology of customer satisfaction

is 'to improve'. Hence like other industries the railway is also realizing the significance of customer oriented attitudes with the integrated goal in terms of customer satisfaction. In a study based on Shimla **Kumar (2016)** investigated tourist satisfaction with all attributes of a destination and found no significant difference between male and female tourists and suggested improving service quality.

So after finding that there is no such research previously done on Kalka Shimla Railways we took this initiative to fill this gap by conducting this study on satisfaction level of foreign tourists.

Objectives of study

The main objectives are as under:

● To measure the foreign traveler's satisfaction in regard to the services provided by Kalka-Shimla Railway.
● To measure the foreign traveler's awareness in regard to the services provided by Kalka-Shimla Railway.

Significance of study

This study of the satisfaction level of foreign tourists traveling on UNESCO's World Heritage Site Kalka Shimla Railway will help railway authorities to maintain international standards in these toy trains. This study will explore the unexplored aspects of this research area. As this railway route connects Shimla a major tourist destination of India so these toy trains can attract more foreigners to Kalka Shimla Railway, these foreigners are high expenditure travellers and this will contribute more to the economy and boost Himachal Pradesh Tourism.

Sampling Design & Methodology

The present study is confined to Kalka-Shimla Mountaineering Railway Zone. The study is based on primary data collected through well prepared and structured questionnaires which was designed on the basis of research background and pre tested to check for clarity of statement. The 102 foreign respondents for the study were picked by means of a random sampling method as per the convenience of language, time frame and availability of resources. Ms. Excel is used for data interpretation of findings.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data are used in the present study. The required primary data are collected using pre-tested and well structured questionnaires from the respondents who understood the english language. The questionnaire was conducted on the basis of 1 per individual. The secondary data is collected through Yearly reports of the Ministry of Railways and various public domains.

Period of the study

The required primary data have been collected through a survey made on railway foreign tourists from August 2018 to August 2019.

Quantification of data to measure the satisfaction level

A list of 39 statements relating to the existing railway services and facilities has been constructed which is categorized as below:
● Section A - deals with satisfaction level of foreign tourists in context with 11 facilities and services in Train.
● Section B - deals with Satisfaction level of foreign tourists in context with 18 services and facilities on Stations.
● Section C - deals with General Awareness level of foreign tourists with 10 basic services and facilities apart from above mentioned but offered by Indian Railways.

By applying item analysis technique, Rensis Likert's summated 5-point scaling technique ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied has been used. If a passenger is highly satisfied with the statement, a scale value of 5 is assigned, scale value of 4 is assigned if his response is satisfied, 3 if it is average, 2 if dissatisfied and 1 if the passenger is highly dissatisfied. The total score for each passenger from all the 11 &18 Statements (Section A-B) are calculated using the above scoring procedure.
To identify the awareness level of the passengers about the services offered by the Indian Railways, 10 statements are included. If a passenger is Aware of the statement, a scale value of 1 is assigned; scale value of 0 is assigned if his response is not aware. The total score for each passenger from all 10 statements are calculated by using the above scoring procedure.

Categorization of the Foreign Tourist by Satisfaction & Awareness Score

Section – A
Satisfaction level of foreign tourist in context with services and facilities in Toy Train

Question	Highly Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Average (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Highly Dissatisfied (%)	Mean	S.D
Duration	14.71%	46.08%	16.67%	13.73%	8.82%	3.44	1.165
Punctuality	18.63%	20.59%	14.71%	33.33%	12.75%	2.99	1.346
Personal Security	24.51%	49.02%	20.59%	5.88%	0.00%	3.92	.829
Cleanliness	7.84%	24.51%	30.39%	24.51%	12.75%	2.90	1.148
Capacity	11.76%	32.35%	37.25%	16.67%	1.96%	3.35	.961
Comfort	6.86%	23.53%	32.35%	26.47%	10.78%	2.89	1.098
[1]Assistance to PWD*	7.84%	14.71%	56.86%	15.69%	4.90%	3.05	.905
Safety	3.92%	14.71%	64.71%	13.73%	2.94%	3.03	.751
Electricity	10.78%	46.08%	34.31%	7.84%	0.98%	3.58	.826
Ventilation	15.69%	48.04%	31.37%	2.94%	1.96%	3.73	.834
Train connections	23.53%	34.31%	31.37%	6.86%	3.92%	3.67	1.037

Table 1

Table-1 reveals the distribution of 102 respondents in percentage by their experience of services and facilities available in trains with mean and standard deviation of Kalka Shimla Railways during journey.

Highlights

On the basis of 5 point scoring of services and facilities in toy train out of total 102 such respondents 12.75% are Highly dissatisfied with Punctuality and Cleanliness which is highest in comparison to any other attribute listed and for these results Indian co-passenger and railway administration might be responsible, but on the other hand, 24.51% and 23.53% respondents are Highly satisfied with Personal Security on board and Train connections from Kalka railway station respectively and credit for such positive results can be given to lower crime rate in Himachal Pradesh and also railway administration who provided with trains to many other major cities from Kalka Junction.

Section – B

Satisfaction level of tourist in context with services and facilities on Railway Stations

Question	Highly Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Average (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Highly Dissatisfied (%)	Mean	S.D
Connectivity with other modes	11.76%	40.20%	44.12%	3.92%	0.00%	3.60	.748
Banking / ATM	0.00%	10.78%	78.43%	9.80%	0.98%	2.99	.497
Tourist Information Centre	0.00%	14.71%	76.47%	7.84%	0.98%	3.05	.515
Ease of buying tickets	5.88%	24.51%	60.78%	6.86%	1.96%	3.25	.754
Cleanliness	15.69%	33.33%	32.35%	9.80%	8.82%	3.37	1.134
Security	10.78%	33.33%	46.08%	9.80%	0.00%	3.45	.816
Portage and Coolie	7.84%	16.67%	74.51%	0.98%	0.00%	3.31	.629
Waiting/retiring/ lodging	5.88%	29.41%	57.84%	5.88%	0.98%	3.33	.722
Information of train status	9.80%	36.27%	45.10%	5.88%	2.94%	3.44	.863
Power supply	4.90%	16.67%	64.71%	12.75%	0.98%	3.12	.722
Wi-fi/ internet	0.98%	8.82%	68.63%	15.69%	5.88%	2.83	.705
Digital Display	4.90%	28.43%	57.84%	8.82%	0.00%	3.29	.698
Eating facility	10.78%	23.53%	46.08%	10.78%	8.82%	3.17	1.054
Public utilities	3.92%	16.67%	40.20%	22.55%	16.67%	2.69	1.062

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[1] PWD - Person with DIsabilities or Differently abled.

Clarity of announcement	14.71%	39.22%	29.41%	12.75%	3.92%	3.48	1.022
Staff Behavior	31.37%	48.04%	17.65%	2.94%	0.00%	4.08	.780
Staff knowledge	21.57%	26.47%	49.02%	1.96%	0.98%	3.66	.873
Appearance of railway employees	31.37%	46.08%	20.59%	1.96%	0.00%	4.07	.774

Table 2

Table-2 reveals the distribution of 102 respondents in percentage by their experience of services and facilities with mean and standard deviation available on stations of Kalka Shimla Railway route.

Highlights

From the response above it is clearly visible that foreigners traveling on Kalka-Shimla Railway are Highly satisfied with Staff by their Behavior, Knowledge and Appearance 31.37% , 21.57% and 31.37% scored for these respectively. On the other hand, Public Utilities is rated Highly dissatisfied by 16.67% which is way higher than any other attribute listed for facilities at Railway stations.

Section – C

Awareness level of foreign tourist in context with services and facilities offered by KSR

Question	High level %	Low level %	Mean	S.D
Passenger Helpline Number	4.9	95.10	.05	.217
Reservation display chart	18.63	81.37	.19	.391
E ticketing	21.57	78.43	.22	.413
Travel insurance	15.69	84.31	.16	.365
Cancellation policy	12.75	87.25	.13	.335
First aid box	7.84	92.16	.08	.270
Doctors on demand	3.92	96.08	.04	.195
Compensation	2.94	97.06	.03	.170
Auto upgradation	3.92	96.08	.04	.195
Complaint handling	7.84	92.16	.08	.270

Table 3

Table-3 reveals the distribution of 102 respondents in number and percentage by their awareness level of every service and facilities offered by Kalka Shimla Railway with mean and standard deviation respectively.

Conclusion and Suggestions

On the basis of this study in relation to satisfaction and awareness level of foreign tourists traveling on this Kalka Shimla Toy trains it is found that railway need to advance their quality of services presented in journey and stations also as most of the foreign tourists rated average level of satisfaction as they travelled for the first time and they didn't notice many of the facilities because they were having quality time with co passengers whilst enjoying this picturesque journey in Himalayan Mountains of Himachal Pradesh.

In toy trains since the majority of foreign tourists are Europeans, the provision of special facilities, like introducing European and English cuisines on the railway menu, appointment of coach attendants who are fluent in English languages are needed. Tourists, traveling for the first time expect this train providing vintage appearance as this is UNESCO's Heritage site so it is suggested to maintain the vintage decorum by using steam engines and re-furnishing interiors, appropriate arrangements for assisting senior citizens should be made, apart from Himalayan Queen rail connections should be improvised with punctuality so that tourists don't leave this journey in between. Cleanliness is a significant issue at both stations and in trains. Also consistent check is recommended to maintain hygiene at toilets, seating areas, entry gates and window panels. Toilets in trains are so small in size that some of the travelers wait for stations to use public utilities. This needs to be made spacious according to their physique. Except 'Shivalik Deluxe Express' seats need to be renovated by cushioning headrest and seat pitch should be enhanced. Safety switches are needed to be highlighted and installation of fire extinguishers required so in case of emergency it can be used. Apart from Hindi, Sign Boards should be given in English language also so foreign tourists can understand.

On stations it is suggested to provide foreign exchange and banking facilities even after entering railway stations because ATM machines outside station premises are not noticeable enough every time. Tourist information centers should be open 24x7 or at least when trains are operational so foreigners can get help if needed. Cleanliness at stations is not satisfactory enough so separate Bins are required to be installed for recyclable and non-recyclable trash, entry of stray dogs must be restricted by fencing or other means, Public utilities are needed to be cleaned after every train departure. Waiting rooms made for passengers should serve with movies of English and local language both so in case of train delay foreign tourists can also enjoy and number of Power supply plugs should be increased for charging electronic devices. The Wi-Fi facility provided by the railway is not used by most of foreign travelers as they are not aware about this and also there are no sign boards to inform and update about this facility at Shimla railway station. Eating outlets should also serve some English food for foreign travelers with proper hygiene. Announcements over loudspeakers

are not much clear because of the poor condition of loudspeakers and that leads to further inconvenience to foreign tourists. If the railway works well on these suggestions to maintain good quality of services and facilities, then all the foreign travelers rated average on satisfaction level will definitely move up to satisfied and highly satisfied.

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