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Title

IDENTIFICATION OF DECISION PARAMETERS INFLUENCING DESTINATION CHOICES OF INDIAN DOMESTIC TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT:

Travel behaviour analysis requires an understanding of the preferences of travellers, especially in case of leisure travel, which is characterised by heterogeneity and multiplicity of destinations. Factors associated with destination, travel and traveller's psychology influence the destination choice further. This paper identifies the latent constructs influencing destination choices of domestic tourists, categorised by their associative value of destination and income groups. The results indicate that aspects associated with 'safety and comfort', and 'pre-decision' influence the destination preferences of travellers at all destination types. Social restrictions and destination attributes are found to be value-specific. The level of importance associated with these factors are found to be distinctly different from one another. The income groups considered are also found to have distinct differences in their destination preferences. Economics and comfort related aspects, pre-decision as well destination-specific attributes are found to vary significantly across the income groups. Based on the results, the study emphasises the need for segmentation of tourists with respect to destination values and income levels for better tourism management strategies.

Keywords: Destination choice, domestic tourists, Latent constructs, Leisure value, Income.

INTRODUCTION:

Travel has always stemmed from the need to access locations so as to derive space, time and quality utilities from travel. Among the various trip purposes, trips for leisure constitute a major share of travel. Taylor (1989), as reported in Rao et al., (1992), has categorised leisure travel as (1) Visit to friends and relatives (2) Close-to-home leisure trip (3) Touring vacation (4) City trip (5) Outdoor vacation (6) Resort vacation (7) Cruise and (8) Trip to theme park or exhibition. Leisure travel differs from utility travel in the degree of discretion exercised by the traveller in decisions like whether to travel or not, and when, where and how to travel (Guiver et al., 2008).

Studies on travel behaviour have indicated that, one of the important decisions that the tourist takes, pertains to the choice of a destination for leisure travel. Destination choice is a complex decision, which is based upon a number of correlated and complex attributes. This necessitates

the need for a thorough understanding of the factors influencing the choice of a destination. Leisure destinations can be viewed as comprising of a number of activities, services and products such as entertainment, accommodation, food etc. It is observed that the variation in the individuals' tastes, reflected in the attitudes and perceptions regarding the attributes of the destination also influence the choice of a destination (Milman and Pizam, 1995, Baker and Crompton, 2000; Jang et. al., 2009; Yoon and Uysal, 2005, Lam and Hsu, 2006). Telisman-Kosuta (1999) as quoted in Kim (1998) emphasised that the tourists' decision is not only determined by the destination's potential for performance but also by the perception of the destination by the tourist. Thus evaluation of leisure destination has been found to have an influence on the choice of a destination (Keane, 1997). Moreover, it is well known that socio-demographics also play a major role in the destination selection process (Guinn 1980, Fish and Waggle 1996, Reece 2003). Davies and Mangan (1992) studied the influence of income on holiday expenditure and found that expenditure on holiday is elastic and elasticity varies among different income groups. Pizam and Mansfield (1999) have suggested that segmentation variables like income have a strong bearing on the decision making process of tourists, which needs further exploration and research, as it would help in the development of decisions on product decisions, price structures and promotional campaigns. The evaluation of service quality of tourist activity domains with reference to value for money had been explored by Weiermair and Fuchs (1999). They suggested that price and income related explanations have a major role in the decision making process of tourists with respect to the destination chosen as well as the facilities availed at the destination. Since expenditure on holiday is dependent on income, and expenditure is an attribute of the destination, it is plausible to assume that income groups perceive destinations differently. Sung et al., (2001) suggested that the segmentation of leisure travel market should be taken up on the basis of household and trip characteristics and they observed that income had a significant impact on a household's leisure trip making decision. Alegre and Juaneda (2006) analysed the motivating factors for tourist expenditure, which included repeat visitation, knowledge about the place and quality of service. These studies indicated that income has a significant influence on selection process of tourists, with respect to the choice of destinations, as well as, the facilities availed at the destination.

Although market studies on tourism gave much attention to foreign tourists and their perceptions regarding the destinations, domestic tourist market is often ignored. The attitudes and

perceptions of the domestic tourists have not been given much importance by the researchers. India, one of the emerging economies of the world, has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of domestic tourist visits from 66.67 million in 1991 740 million in 2010 (www. indiastat.com, accessed on 6th July 2011). This has given the impetus to undertake studies pertaining to preferences of domestic tourists towards the destinations. Moreover, the influence of income on the destination preferences also needs to be explored as the per-capita income of India has increased over the years from INR 40,141 in 2008-2009 to INR 44,345 in 2009-2010 (1 $ = INR 45.42, Jan 2011). Shukla et al., (2005) have emphasised the growing clout of the emerging 'middle class' citizens, having greater disposable income than before. It can be safely presumed that the increased purchasing power of the people translates into the pursuit of leisure and allied products, which make the motivation for the research more worthwhile.

While, income is found to have an influence on the decision process of tourists, the influence of the inherent values associated with a destination on the destination preferences has not been explored. In this study, it is hypothesised that values associated with a destination also influence the destination preferences, with respect to the nature of activities. Moreover, owing to spatial variability associated with leisure locations and the contrast in their inherent nature, there is a need to study tourists' preferences of destinations having varied leisure values. In addition, on account of the increased importance being accorded to domestic tourism by Government of India, the need for taking up this study as an academic exercise is also justified. The effect of household income on destination preferences of domestic tourists was studied by classifying them into three classes on the basis of their monthly household income as Lower Income Group (LIG) (< INR 20,000), Middle Income Group (MIG) (INR 20,001- INR 75,000) and High Income Group (HIG) (> INR 75,001). This would give an insight into the influence of economic status of a traveller on destination preferences. The results would go a long way in understanding the preferences of domestic tourists of different socio-economic groups, thereby aiding in the planning and management of destinations.

METHODOLOGY:

Study Locations

The study was taken up at six different tourist cities in India. The leisure values associated with the cities were classified as historical and cultural heritage, religious and water fronts. Figure1 shows the location of the chosen leisure destinations. Tirupati and twin cities of Haridwar and Rishikesh have a religious character. Tirupati is a holy shrine of hindu God, 'Venkateswara', situated atop the holy hill of Tirumala in the Andhra Pradesh state of India. Temple towns of Hardwar and Rishikesh are located on the banks of river Ganges in the Uttarakhand state of India. Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh state and Delhi, the capital of India, are associated with historical and heritage monuments. Goa, the smallest state in India and Kochi, situated in the state of Kerala, are famous for their beaches and waterfronts. All these destinations have been selected due to their large tourist potential and being well known for the same within India and abroad.

Figure 1: Location of study cities

Study Instrument

The study instrument was a self administered questionnaire consisting of questions pertaining to the choice of a destination for leisure trip and socio-demographic data. The attributes influencing the choice of a destination were identified on the basis of a review of previous studies. Table 1 compiles the attributes, which influence the choice of a destination by tourists, and considered by different researchers.

Table 1: Destination attributes identified by previous researchers

Researcher/s	Study Context	Attributes considered
Scott et al (1978)	Evaluation of destination attributes for studying destination selection process of tourists visiting Massachusetts	Scenic quality, condition of roads, degree of commercialisation, degree of relaxing atmosphere, climate, quantity of attractions, quality of accommodations, friendliness of people.
Ferrario (1979)	Identifying the tourism product and evaluating value of tourism market	Scenery and landscape, natural vegetation, sports amenities, shopping facilities, social life. Night life entertainment
Witter (1985)	Examining attitudes towards a resort area	Sports facilities, culture and history, scenic beauty, Attitude of local people, relaxation potential, cuisine, entertainment, suitable accommodation
Haahti(1986)	Determining the position of Finland in terms of selected choice criteria and in a psychological space	Accessibility, good value for money, facilities for sports and activities, peaceful and quiet environment, friendly and hospitable people, beautiful scenery
Middleton (1989)	Examining components of the tourism product	Destination attractiveness, destination image, destination facilities, price, accessibility
Gartner (1989)	Identification of destination attributes using Multidimensional scaling	Outdoor life, sightseeing, historical sites, cultural sites, night life, natural environment
Um and Crompton (1992)	Exploring inhibitors and facilitators in formulating destination choice sets by travellers	Cost of travel, accessibility, climate, outdoor recreation, meet people with different life style, time spent in the destination, safety, attractiveness
Etchner and	Examining the concept of	Tourist activities, historical sites, scenery, shopping facilities, sports activities, accommodation, costs/

Richie(1993)	destination image	price levels, hospitality, family oriented atmosphere, quality of service
Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996)	Examining image of tourist attractions in Kuwait	Recreational activities like music, theatre, culture of the place, food and entertainment, parks, nightlife, museums.
Vina and Ford (2001)	Identifying factors that determine the propensity for cruise vacation	Vacation duration, itinerary of trip, accessibility, cost of vacation, gaming availability
Beerli and Martin (2004)	Identifying factors that form the post-visit image of a destination	Climate, infrastructure such as transport services, tourist infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, sightseeing locations, political and economic factors, safety, prices, language barrier, atmosphere of the place
Apostolakis and Jaffry (2005)	Choice modelling of heritage attractions	Advertisement attributes, congestion attribute, restaurants and accommodation, entertainment facilities for children, price charged at the destination.
Govers et al., (2007)	Measurement of destination image	Climate, accommodation, shopping facilities, comfort, and water fronts.

Based on the applicability of the identified attributes to Indian cultural milieu, 19 attributes were identified and were categorised under heads like social aspects of the traveller, destination related, travel related and miscellaneous. These are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Attributes identified for the present study

Aspects related to	Attributes
Social	Number of days that are available for the trip; Budget available in hand for the trip; Number of aged or children in the family; Presence of known persons at the destination
Destination	Climate of a place; Comfortable and affordable stay;

	Availability of desirable cuisine; Personal safety at destination; Other leisure locations nearby; Information about the place; Presence of sightseeing locations
Travel	Direct connectivity; Availability of affordable travel modes; Comfort and convenience during travel; Distance from home; Safety during travel
Miscellaneous	Shopping facilities; Entertainment facilities; Language barrier

The attribute 'number of days available for the trip' relates to the time available to the traveller to undertake the trip while the 'budget available in hand for the trip' is indicative of their economic resourcefulness and spending powers. Indian families usually comprise of the parents of the wife/ husband as well as children and their presence in the family significantly influences the choice of a destination. This was examined by considering the dimension 'number of aged or children in the family'. Visits to friends and relatives form an important aspect of leisure trip and it is presumed that 'presence of known persons' may give additional motivation for selecting a destination. The attributes encompassing destination related aspects pertain to the general environment at the destination with reference to the physical comfort (climate, comfortable stay and desirable cuisine) and safety (personal safety at a destination), as well as, the presence of additional leisure locations in the vicinity of the chosen destination, thereby improving the money utility of the trip. Cuisine and affordable stay relates to the infrastructure facilities at a destination. The travel related attributes were chosen to consider aspects like accessibility (direct connectivity, affordable travel modes), travel impedance, comfort (comfort and convenience of travel) and safety during travel, as well as, the psychological barrier to trip making like distance from home. The miscellaneous aspects included attributes which related to the presence of

attractions at the destinations (shopping and entertainment facilities) as well as consideration for language of the place for ease of communication with the local people. Some of the attributes considered by previous researchers such as 'night life entertainment', 'outdoor life', 'night life' and 'gaming availability' have not been considered in this study, as they do not have much relevance in the Indian cultural milieu and have not been reported to have any significant influence on domestic tourists' decision making in Indian context. All the above attributes were presented to a traveller as a rating exercise. They were asked to rate the factors on a 5 point likert type scale with '1' representing 'extremely unimportant' and '5' as 'extremely important'. The level of importance accorded to each of the above dimensions by the travellers would give an indication of the relative importance attributed to the dimension that could influence the choice of a destination. The socio-demographic profile was also ascertained with the aid of questions such as monthly family income, family composition and vehicle ownership.

Sample Size

Domestic tourists were contacted at leisure locations within the study city, subjective that that they were not a resident of that city where the survey is conducted and would spend at least a night in the city. The sample size required for the study was calculated using Equation (1)

$$n \geq \frac{q}{pa^2}\left[\varphi^{-1}\left(1-\frac{\alpha}{2}\right)\right]^2 \quad (1)$$

Where

n is the minimum acceptable sample size;

p is the proportion of choice in the population;

α is the Confidence interval (0.05);

a is the level of allowable deviation in percentage (0.1);

$\varphi^{-1}\left(1-\frac{\alpha}{2}\right)$ is the inverse cumulative distribution function of a standard normal variate;

q is equal to (1-p).

The minimum sample size required was calculated as 223. Taking into consideration of inconsistent responses and inconsistency checking, 300 tourists were interviewed at each of the study cities and the data was used for final analysis. The final sample size after data scrutiny and

inconsistency checking were 575, 599 and 583 for religious, water front and historical heritage destinations respectively. The sample sizes are 223, 1344 and 185 for LIG, MIG and HIG categories respectively.

Analysis Procedure

The data analysis was taken up using the software package, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16.0). The latent constructs were identified using principal axis factoring method with Kaiser normalisation. Oblimin rotation was then performed to identify the pertinent factors. Oblimin rotation was chosen as the factors are expected to be correlated since they are associated with human psychology. Factors having eigen values less than 1.0 were not processed further because these factors are equivalent to a single variable (Tucker et al., 1969). Moreover the feasibility of each factor was determined using several other criteria. Only items with factor loadings greater than 0.5 and above were retained (Kim and Mueller, 1978). For retaining an item within a factor, the criteria that a difference of at least 0.10 between the item's loading with its factor and between factor loadings under each of the other factors was used (Nie et al., 1975). Each dimension was further subjected to a reliability checking using Cronbach's alpha value. Items that reduced the reliability of a dimension were not considered for further analysis. Only those factor dimensions with Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.50 were considered acceptable for further analysis.

In order to see if there is any significant difference between the identified factors, the average of the scores for the identified factors was compared. If the criteria of normality and homogeneity of variance are satisfied, parametric tests can be used for comparison of factor scores. For data sets which violate the normality and homogeneity of variance criterion, non-parametric tests like Kruskal – Wallis test and Mann- Whitney test were used for factor score comparison. The Kruskal- Wallis test is based on ranking of data (Field, 2005). In this test, the scores were ordered from lowest to highest ignoring the group to which they belong to and the lowest score is assigned a rank of 1 and so on. Using the ranking of the scores that fall into a group, the ranks were added and if the sum of ranks for each group is denoted by R_i, where 'i' denotes a particular group, the test statistic is computed as given by equation (2).

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{i=1}^{i=k} \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} - 3(N+1) \qquad (2)$$

Where

N is the total sample size

k is the number of groups

n_i is the sample size of a particular group

The test statistic was compared to the critical value from a chi-square distribution having (k-1) degrees of freedom where k is the number of groups.

The Mann- Whitney test, which is the non-parametric alternative of the independent t- test, consists of ranking the entire data set, ignoring the group to which they belong to and the test statistic 'U' is computed as given by Equation (3)

$$U = N_1 \times N_2 + \frac{N_1(N_1+1)}{2} - R_1 \quad (3)$$

Where

N_1 is the sample size of Group 1

N_2 is the sample seize of Group 2

R_1 is the sum of ranks of Group 1.

To test if there is an ordered pattern to the medians of the groups being compared, the Jonckheere-Terpstra test was used. The groups were ordered in the way the medians were expected to change. In the present study, it was expected that the medians will show an increasing trend in the order of religious, historical heritage and water front destinations respectively. For analysis, the factor scores were arranged in the ascending order and groups were ordered in the way the medians are expected to decrease. Starting from the first, the count of number of scores bigger than the one under consideration was found and the sum of all the counts was calculated as U_{ij}. The test statistic was calculated as given by equation (4).

$$J = \sum_{i<j}^{k} U_{ij} \quad (4)$$

This test statistic was compared to standard normal distribution value having parameters, $\bar{J}$ and σ_j, which were computed as given by equation (5) and equation (6) respectively.

$$\bar{J} = \frac{N^2 - \sum n_k^2}{4} \quad (5)$$

$$\sigma_j = \sqrt{\frac{1}{72}[N^2(2N+3) - \sum n_k^2(2n_k+3)]} \quad (6)$$

Where 'N' is the total sample size and 'n_k' is the sample size of group k. The z-score was calculated using the mean and standard deviation using equation (7).

$$z = \frac{J - \bar{J}}{\sigma_j} \quad (7)$$

$|z|$ is evaluated against the one-tailed critical value of the standard normal distribution. A positive value of z indicated that medians ascend across groups while negative value indicated that medians descend across groups.

ANALYSIS OF DESTINATION PREFERENCES:

For identification of latent constructs that make up the destination choice preferences of tourists, factor analysis of the data was done. This is explained in the subsequent sections.

Factor Analysis of Preferences for locations

In order to determine the appropriateness of the factoring procedure for the available sample size, the Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) statistic was used. The KMO statistic for the data sets for destinations having religious, water fronts and historical and cultural heritage values were 0.81, 0.71 and 0.78 respectively, which is termed as 'good' by Kaiser (1974). The probability associated with Bartlett's test gave a value of 0.00 for all the three data sets, which is less than 0.05, indicating that factor analysis was possible. The determinant values of the sample correlation matrix were 0.038, 0.030 and 0.06, respectively for religious, water fronts and historical and cultural heritage destinations. These values were greater than 0.0001, indicating that singularity or multicollinearity does not exist in the data. The diagonal values of the anti-image correlation matrix were greater than 0.5, indicating that all the 19 dimensions could be retained for factor analysis.

The identified factors from the results of factor analysis are shown in Table 3. The factors were named on the basis of the nature of the predominant dimensions loaded onto each factor. Four significant factors were identified for religious and water front destinations and three factors were identified for historical and cultural heritage destination. The results indicated that safety

and some form of comfort considerations were given prime importance by the travellers to all the three destination types. This is indicative of the fact that, in spite of the nature of the activities at a destination, travellers look forward to a hassle free and comfortable travel and stay at the destination. This is significant in the light of the fact that even at a religious destination, safety and comfort are given due prominence by the travellers during their decision making process. It is to note that comfort sought by the traveller at a religious and water front destination locations is psycho-physical in nature. This comprises of dimensions like convenience and affordability from which the psychological comfort is being derived at both types of destinations. The physical comfort is derived by considering dimension like climate of a place, of both types of locations, and connectivity of a place specific to water front destinations. Comfort derived at a historical and cultural heritage destination was only related to travel attribute. Destination specific factors such as entertainment and shopping facilities, and language of a place are found influencing the travellers' preferences at destinations having religious and historical heritage values. No such second level consideration is found influencing travellers' preferences at a water front location. It may be default entertainment options available at such locations, which are not restricted by the point whether the traveller knows the language of that place or not. Social and personal restrictions such as the presence of aged or children in the family and presence of known persons at the destination are found to influence the destination preferences of travellers at destinations having religious and water front values. It is interesting to note that travellers also gave preference to the availability of desirable cuisine at a water front destination under social and personal restrictions. It may be because good number of travellers is vegetarian or there are others who are looking to explore water body food. Consideration has been given to pre-decision factor such as the days and budget available for the trip, which is found to influence the destination preference of travellers at all the destinations. Travellers are also looking for presence of additional sightseeing locations, which can be visited along with the water front destination.

Table 3: Identified factors influencing preferences of tourists at differently valued destinations

Religious		Historical and Cultural Heritage		Water fronts	
Factor	**Loaded Attributes**	**Factor**	**Loaded Attributes**	**Factor**	**Loaded Attributes**
Safety and Comfort (Psycho-physical) (20.99; 3.99; 0.71)	Personal safety at destination (0.78) Safety during travel (0.69) Comfort and convenience of travel (0.62) Comfortable and affordable stay (0.57) Climate of a place (0.50)	*Safety and Comfort* (travel) (17.72; 3.37; 0.65)	Personal safety at destination (0.75) Safety during travel (0.73) Comfort and convenience of travel (0.61)	*Comfort (Psycho-physical) and Safety* (20.02; 3.80; 0.71)	Comfort and convenience of travel (0.66) Safety during travel (0.66) Comfortable and affordable stay (0.64) Direct connectivity (0.61) Climate of a place (0.53) Personal safety at destination (0.53)
Destination specific (9.14; 0.74; 0.52)	Entertainment facilities (0.71) Language Barrier (0.69) Shopping Facilities (0.65)	*Destination specific* (11.71; 2.22; 0.61)	Language Barrier (0.77) Entertainment facilities (0.64) Shopping facilities (0.52) Direct connectivity (0.51)	-	-
Social Restrictions (7.87;1.49;0.55)	No. of aged or children in the family (0.80) Presence of known persons at destination (0.62)	*Psycho-physical Comfort* (7.34; 1.40; 0.56)	Climate of a place (0.70) Comfortable and affordable stay (0.70) Availability of desirable cuisine (0.60)	*Social and personal restrictions* (7.56; 1.44; 0.53)	No. of aged or children in the family (0.82) Presence of known persons at destination (0.65) Availability of desirable cuisine (0.61)
Pre-decision (5.38; 1.02; 0.57)	Budget available in hand for the trip (0.73) No. of days that are available for the trip (0.69)	*Pre-decision* (6.28; 1.19; 0.56)	Budget available in hand for the trip (0.76) No. of days that are available for the trip (0.72)	*Pre-decision* (6.02; 1.14; 0.50)	Budget available in hand for the trip (0.83) No. of days that are available for the trip (0.58) Presence of sightseeing locations (0.50)

Note: The values adjacent to the factors are variance explained, Eigen value and Cronbach's alpha value respectively. The values in the brackets adjacent to the dimensions indicate the loadings.

After the identification of the latent constructs, the statistical testing of the hypothesis that there is significant difference between the scores accorded to the various identified factors was taken up. The hypothesis testing was done with respect to two latent constructs namely 'safety and comfort' and 'pre-decision' are common for all destinations. The mean scores of 'destination-specific' factor for religious and historical heritage destination and of 'social restrictions' between religious and water front destination were also compared The mean scores of the factors were subjected to tests for normality and homogeneity of variance, so as to identify the suitability of testing procedure. The factor scores for 'safety and comfort' for the religious, historical heritage and water front destinations, $D(574) = 0.13$, $p<0.05$; $D(582) = 0.12$. $p<0.05$; and $D(598) = 0.18$, $p<0.05$ respectively were significantly non-normal. 'D' represents the K-S test statistic and the numbers within brackets indicate the degrees of freedom. The homogeneity of variance of the scores of 'safety and comfort' factor was checked using Levene's test. For 'safety and comfort' factor, the variances were significantly different, $F(2, 1751) = 4.36$, $p<0.05$. 'F' represents the Levene's test statistic and the numbers within brackets indicate the degrees of freedom. The factor scores for 'pre-decision' for the religious, historical heritage and water front destinations, $D(574) = 0.19$, $p<0.05$; $D(582) = 0.15$, $p<0.05$; and $D(598) = 0.19$, $p<0.05$ respectively were significantly non-normal. For 'pre-decision' factor, the variances were significantly different, $F(2, 1751) = 23.10$, $p<0.05$. The factor scores for 'destination-specific' factor for religious and historical heritage destination, $D(574) = 0.14$, $p<0.05$ and $D(582) = 0.105$, $p<0.05$ were significantly non-normal. The Levene's test result, $F(1,1154) = 0.208$, $p>0.05$, indicated that the variances were not significantly different implying that there is homogeneity of variance. The factor scores for 'social restrictions' factor for religious and water front destinations are non-normal, $D(574) = 0.154$, $p<0.05$ and $D(598) = 0.123$, $p<0.05$, were significantly non-normal. However, the condition of homogeneity of variance existed as indicated by the Levene's test statistic, $F(1, 1170) = 0.255$, $p>0.05$.

Since the data was non-normal and there is no homogeneity of variance, non-parametric test called Kruskal- Wallis test was used for comparison of test scores for 'safety and comfort' and 'pre-decision' factors. The results are shown in Table 4. The Jonckheere-Terpstra test revealed a significant trend in the data: as leisure activity at a destination increased, the 'safety and comfort' factor scores increased, $J = 584700$, $z = 6.25$. Since the z value is greater than 1.65 and is positive, it indicated that there is an ordered pattern of the factor scores across the destinations.

In case of the scores for pre-decision factor, the trend of factor scores showed an increasing trend with respect to type of leisure activity, J = 569600, z = 4.98. The results indicate that median value of the scores showed an ascending trend across the destinations as hypothesised, with the highest score at water front destination and the least at religious destination. The comparison of scores for 'destination –specific' and 'social restrictions' was done using the Mann- Whitney test since the data sets were non-normal, in spite of the fact that homogeneity of variance exists between the scores for the groups under consideration. The results indicated that there was significant influence of the nature of destination on factor scores of the identified latent constructs.

Table 4: Results of Non-parametric tests

Factor	Comparison	Test	Test Result
Safety and comfort	Religious × Historical heritage × Water front	Kruskal-Wallis	H(2)=92.99; p<0.05
Pre-decision	Religious × Historical heritage × Water front	Kruskal-Wallis	H(2)=25.83; p<0.05
Destination-specific	Religious × Historical heritage	Mann-Whitney	U=112600; p<0.05
Social Restrictions	Religious × Water front	Mann-Whitney	U=145800; p<0.05

Factor Analysis of Preferred Dimensions by Income Levels:

In order to identify decision parameters governing the destination preferences of domestic tourists, they were classified by monthly household income, as Lower Income Group (LIG), Middle Income Group (MIG) and High Income Group (HIG). To test the appropriateness of factoring procedure, the K-M-O statistic was computed. The K-M-O statistic was 0.73 and 0.79 for LIG and MIG data sets, and 0.62 for HIG, which could be termed as 'good' and 'mediocre' respectively by Kaiser (1974). The probability associated with Bartlett's test was less than 0.05,

for all the three data sets, indicating that factor analysis was possible. The determinant of the sample correlation matrix for LIG, MIG and HIG were 0.017, 0.064 and 0.031, indicating towards the absence of singularity in the data sample. The diagonal elements of the anti-image correlation matrix were greater than 0.5, signifying that all the identified dimensions could be retained for further analysis.

The results of factor analysis are shown in Table 5. Five, four and three significant factors were identified for LIG, MIG and HIG categories respectively. Dimensions related to comfort, economics and safety at destination and during travel were found to influence the choices made by all the three income groups. It is to note that MIG category of travellers gave importance to comfort (with some emphasis to stay related economics), whereas , LIG category of travellers associate economics of stay and travel to comfort, and HIG category gave more importance to safety in association with comfort. The significance of economic aspect for LIG category and safety aspect for HIG category is quite obvious. Destination specific dimensions such as shopping facilities, entertainment facilities, language barrier and presence of leisure locations were also found to influence the destination preferences. LIG category looks more for entertainment facilities at the destination (maximising output from investment); MIG category finds language barriers as higher destination impediment in association with entertainment facilities; and HIG category looks for shopping potential more at destination (more purchasing power) in association with a potential of additional locations that can be visited from that destination (again indicating towards money effect i.e. money and place utility). Social restrictive dimensions such as the presence of aged or children in the family and presence of known persons at the destination were found to be significant for LIG and MIG category only. Additionally, MIG category also looks for availability of desirable cuisine. The reduced importance of these factors for the HIG category may be accounted to the fact that they are financially more capable of attending to the comforts of the elderly and children and hence their presence does not inhibit the travel preferences of the tourists. Similarly, presence of a known person at a destination has no economic significance for the HIG category travellers as compared to the other two categories. Pre-decision dimensions like budget in hand for the trip and days available were found to be significant for all the income groups. LIG category of travellers has given consideration to safety aspect separately but with least of the loading, which incidentally is

missing in the preferences of MIG category and is accorded highest importance by HIG category.

The hypothesis regarding the difference in scores was tested with respect to 'comfort and economics', 'destination – specific' and 'pre-decision' factors, which were found influencing all categories. The tests for normality and homogeneity of variance were carried out. The scores for 'comfort and economics' for LIG, MIG and HIG, D (223) =0.123, $p<0.05$; D (1344) =0.173, $p<0.05$; and D (185) = 0.149, $p<0.05$ were non-normal in nature. The variances of the three groups F (2, 1749) = 20.192, $p<0.05$ were significantly different from each other. The scores for the 'destination-specific' factor for three income groups, D (223) =0.16, $p<0.05$; D (1344) =0.115, $p<0.05$; and D (185) = 0.166, $p<0.05$ were non-normal in nature. The variances of the three groups, F (2, 1749) = 5.98, $p<0.05$ were significantly different from each other. The scores for 'pre-decision' factor for the three income levels, D (223) =0.228, $p<0.05$; D (1344) =0.179, $p<0.05$; and D (185) = 0.198, $p<0.05$, respectively were found non-normal in nature. The variances of the three groups, F (2, 1749) = 0.198, $p < 0.05$, were significantly different from each other. Since the normality and homogeneity of variance criteria has been violated, non-parametric tests were used to test the hypothesis regarding the difference between scores of the three factors.

Since the data was non-parametric in nature, the Kruskal- Wallis test was used to test the hypothesis regarding the difference in scores. The effect of income on the factor scores was significant for the 'comfort and economics' factor, H (2) = 106.2, $p<0.05$. The Jonckheere-Terpstra test revealed a significant trend in the data: as income level increased, the scores for 'comfort and economics' factor also increased, J =390500, z = 10.73. Since the z value was greater than 1.65 and was positive, it indicated that there is an ordered pattern of the factor scores across the destinations. The same trend was observed for 'destination-specific' scores as well. In case of 'destination-specific' factor, the scores were significantly different, H (2) = 52.50, $p<0.05$ and the trend in median values was also confirmed by the Jonckheere-Terpstra, J = 348500, z = 5.995. However, in case of 'pre-decision' factor also, the scores were not significantly different for the income groups, H (2) = 5.998, ns. However, the computed value of z was equal to 0.3, indicating an increasing trend in median values for the three income groups.

The hypothesis regarding the difference in scores for 'Social Restrictions' factor for LIG and MIG categories was tested. The scores for the 'social restrictions' factor for LIG and MIG categories, D (223) = 0.135, $p<0.05$ and D (1344)=0.08, $p<0.05$ were non-normal. The variances of the two groups, $F(1,1565) = 20.54$, $p<0.05$ were significantly different from each other. Due to violation of normality and homogeneity of variance, the Mann- Whitney test was used for comparison. The test result, U= 138100, $p>0.05$, indicated that there was no significant difference between the 'social restrictions' factor between LIG and MIG groups.

Table 5: Identified factors influencing destination preferences for income groups

LIG		MIG		HIG	
Factor	**Loaded Attributes**	**Factor**	**Loaded Attributes**	**Factor**	**Loaded Attributes**
Comfort and Economics (20.34; 3.86; 0.72)	Comfortable and affordable stay (0.67) Climate of a place (0.63) Availability of affordable travel modes (0.62) Direct connectivity (0.60) Comfort and convenience of travel (0.50)	*Comfort and economics* (19.43 ;3.69; 0.59)	Climate of a place (0.72) Comfortable and affordable stay (0.66)	*Safety and Comfort* (15.88; 3.02; 0.68)	Personal safety at destination (0.78) Safety during travel (0.72) Comfort and convenience of travel (0.69) Comfortable and affordable stay (0.53)
Destination specific (10.07;1.90;0.55)	Entertainment facilities (0.88) Shopping facilities (0.68)	*Destination specific (9.35; 1.78; 0.51)*	Language barrier (0.71) Entertainment facilities (0.67) Shopping facilities (0.64)	*Destination specific* (12.19; 3.32; 0.65)	Shopping facilities (0.79) Other leisure locations nearby (0.72) Entertainment facilities (0.69)
Social Restrictions (7.35;1.40;0.55)	No. of aged or children in family (0.55) Presence of known persons at destination (0.74)	*Social and personal restrictions* (7.07; 1.34; 0.53)	Presence of known persons at destination (0.71) No. of aged or children in family (0.70) Availability of desirable cuisine (0.52) Distance from home (0.52)	-	-
Pre-decision (6.02; 1.04; 0.51)	No. of days that are available for the trip (0.82) Budget available in hand for the trip (0.65)	*Pre-decision* (5.92; 1.13; 0.54)	Budget available in hand for the trip (0.83) No. of days that are available for the trip (0.74)	*Pre-decision* (6.29; 1.20; 0.53)	Budget available in hand for the trip (0.85) No. of days that are available for the trip (0.77)
Safety aspects (5.69; 1.08; 0.69)	Personal safety at destination (0.75) Availability of desirable cuisine (0.75) Safety during travel (0.60)	-	-	-	-

Note: The values adjacent to the factors are variance explained, Eigen value and Cronbach's alpha value respectively. The values in the brackets adjacent to the dimensions indicate the loadings.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

This study is aimed at identifying the factors influencing preferences of domestic tourists, who are categorised with respect to their income levels, as well as, for destinations having different leisure values. The methodology adopted was found working well in identifying the latent factors which affect the decisions of the travellers. The identified latent constructs associated with destination preferences indicate that safety and comfort during travel are predominant factors influencing the travellers' decisions, irrespective of the value of a destination. The travellers are found attaching psychological and physical value to the stay at a destination which is having religious or waterfront value. A higher importance (loading) for the dimension 'safety at destination' is observed for destination having historical heritage value or religious value, when compared to waterfront destination. Pre-decision factors such as budget and days available for the trip, which are associated with socio-economic characteristics of the traveller, are found to be significant at all destination types. Another interesting aspect is the relatively higher loading given to the dimension 'budget available in hand for the trip', at water front destination and lowest at religious location. This could be attributed to relatively higher expenses incurred for accommodation and food, at such destinations whereas, for religious travellers, such issues may not be crucial. Travellers visiting a waterfront destination are found giving importance to the presence of additional sightseeing locations. Destination- specific attributes are found important at religious and historical heritage destinations. Social and personal restrictions, especially the presence of aged or children in a family, are found to highly influencing the destination preferences at religious and water front destinations.

In case of income groups, LIG travellers have given higher importance to affordability, with respect to accommodation as well as travel. This is in consonance with their socio-economic status. In case of HIG travellers, safety related to destination and travel are adjudged important in combination to aspects related to comfort during travel and stay. Moreover, a higher loading is associated with 'comfort and convenience of travel' dimension in case of HIG travellers. All the income groups are found to accord importance to entertainment and shopping facilities, even at religious destinations, indicating that a travel other than daily travel is essentially looked upon as a chance for enjoyment, even if it is undertaken with a motive like visit to a religious destination. HIG travellers have accorded highest importance to shopping whereas LIG travellers have given

quite high importance to entertainment. Pre-decision factors such as budget and days available for the trip influence the destination choice of all the income groups. The importance given to budget by the HIG indicates that economic aspects are given consideration by all income groups, unlike popular perception that HIG does not attach much importance to monetary considerations. Rather. Due to limited resources, LIG travellers have given higher importance to days available than the budget indicating optimisation of resources.

The hypothesis testing regarding the difference in the factor scores with respect to factor scores indicated that there is significant difference between the factor scores at the three destinations, indicating that value associated with a destination have a significant influence on destination preferences. The scores of the 'safety and comfort' are found to be different for the destinations, implying that nature of services that are to be provided at the destinations should cater to the expected preference levels of the tourists. Moreover, the importance accorded to 'pre-decision' factor also varied with the type of destination, and statistical testing indicated relatively higher scores for water front destinations compared to historical heritage and religious destinations. This implies that budgetary considerations are more important for pure recreational trips. Income categorisation of tourist population is emphasised by the study results as distinct differences are observed between the 'comfort and economics' and 'destination-specific' factors for the income groups considered. However, the scores of the 'pre-decision' and 'social restrictions', factors have not been found to be significant for the income groups indicating that budgetary considerations and social obligations are weighed equally by all income groups. This implies that the travellers' disposable income and social commitments influence the destination preference, irrespective of their income level.

The results of the study indicate that, although the latent aspects pertaining to the choice of a destination type are similar in nature for leisure type considered, their level of significance is found to vary considerably. This implies that 'value-wise' destination promotion strategies are to be formulated for revisitation possibilities. Although the trip purpose is leisure in general, the nature of activities at the destination is found to significantly influence the destination preferences, as the tourists vary in their expectation level with respect to the leisure type. Income groups are also found to significantly differ in their destination preferences, even while having similar latent constructs. These identified factors would help in formulating policies that would

aid in the improvement of the 'image' of the destination which is a function of the attitudes and perceptions of the tourists. Moreover, the results can be used as an input into behavioural models that would help to predict the mode and destination choosing behaviour of tourists. The segmentation of domestic tourism market with respect to income level and leisure values is emphasised in this context.

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