



Beyond Sightseeing

How Destination Factors Shape Well-being

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry has been considered the most dynamic, promising, and quickly growing sector in recent years. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization states that locations on Earth designated as global heritage sites must be conserved for the benefit of future generations, given their extraordinary significance to all humanity. This study aims to understand how destination tourism stimulators (fascination, image, and destination source credibility) affect well-being (hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being) in the context of cultural heritage. This research looks at a theoretical framework to investigate the factors that drive tourism destinations and affect people's well-being. The findings reveal that destination tourism stimulators comprising destination fascination, image, and source credibility impact hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being. The results will help destination managers, marketers, and companies who want to encourage visitors for their well-being and the tourism destinations' ability to generate income.

Keywords: Heritage Tourism, Destination Fascination, Destination Image, Destination Source Credibility, Hedonic Well-being, Eudaimonic Well-being

INTRODUCTION

Services are fundamental to all economic activity in developed and developing economies worldwide (Kandampully et al., 2023). Personalized customer service is prioritized over operation-based services in various locations, including shops, hotels, hospitals, schools, and commercial transit (Fam et al., 2023). The travel and tourism sector fits within this group, given the range and regularity of its interactions with visitors and its understanding of their interests, attitudes, and preferences (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). India's tourism industry is now one of the key development drivers and fastest-growing services sector in the world economy, employing over 225 million people and making about 11% of GDP (Rather et al., 2020; Jena & Dwivedi, 2023). Due to the enormous growth in domestic tourism, the nation's rich history and diversity have been preserved (Jena & Dwivedi, 2023). India's GDP share is 5.9%, and its contribution to travel and tourism is USD 199.6 billion (Statista, 2023). According to

WTTC, India's GDP will expand at a 7.8% yearly average rate during the next 10 years in the travel and tourism sector. Furthermore, it is expected to grow by 6.7% per year and contribute 9.2% of GDP with US\$ 488 billion, India's travel and tourism sector (IBEF, 2024).

The travel and tourism industry are one of the most significant sectors of the Indian economy. Every year, many foreign tourists choose India as their destination. The percentage of international visitors who have arrived has grown during the previous 10 years (Arshad et al., 2023; Annual Report, 2019–20). India is widely known for its hospitality, varied lifestyles, extensive cultural heritage, and distinctive landscape (Arshad et al., 2023; Annual Report, 2019–20). It is strongly advised that developing countries investigate historic tourism. However, landmark tourism offers many more benefits than financial gain (Kar et al., 2022; Xiang & Wall, 2005). India has many prospective tourists due to its varied geography, natural beauty sites, and

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rich cultural and historical past (Rather et al., 2020). A significant movement has emerged in modern times to prioritize the preservation of urban heritage, recognizing historic townscapes' historical and emotive value (Kar et al., 2022; Hakala et al., 2011). India is recognized as a popular travel destination that offers a variety of experiences and attracts a substantial number of tourists from across the globe and a considerable number of local visitors (Dixit, 2020).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization states that locations on Earth designated as global heritage sites must be conserved for the benefit and admiration of future generations due to their extraordinary significance to all people (UNESCO, 2024). Heritage is made up of artifacts, monuments, collections of buildings, locations, and museums that have been assigned various symbolic, social, historical, artistic, scientific, and anthropological importance, and it includes visiting various physical and intangible cultural locations, with museums usually drawing the most significant number of people (UNESCO, 2024). The idea of individuals traveling outside of their typical surroundings and being compelled to visit cultural tourism locations to satisfy their cultural requirements by obtaining information and experiences is known as cultural tourism. Besides cultural heritage comprising commonplace objects, architectural patterns, natural landscapes, and artistic creations, everyone gains from preserving physical culture, including theater, human memory, language, music, ritual, and dance performances (Silverman & Ruggles, 2007).

Promoting tourism is a common strategy to support regional development focused on natural and cultural resources (Giliberto & Labadi, 2023). Marketers may improve the visitor experience by identifying the elements that lead to well-being. Cultural innovation is an approach that Heritage tourism destinations employ more to strengthen their competitive advantage and market vibrancy. The travel industry can use this research as a roadmap to understand the factors influencing tourists' well-being at historical sites. The study is important because it goes beyond theoretical analysis and can be used in practice by destination marketing companies looking to engage and satisfy their guest base effectively. This study explores aspects such as destination fascination, destination image, and

destination source credibility that affect well-being in historical tourism. The research offers valuable insights for destination marketing firms to attract visitors who have visited heritage sites by examining how these elements affect their well-being. This study emphasizes improving well-being, which is essential for society and academic experts. There has been much research on tourism (Janjua & Krishnapillai, 2023; Nowacki et al., 2023; Jena & Dwivedi, 2023; Anuj et al., 2023; Yap et al., 2023) and destination marketing (Matiza & Slabbert, 2024), but few studies have been done on cultural and heritage tourism (Ranwa, 2022; Thakur et al., 2021) related to destination tourism stimulators and well-being. Previous studies (Lee, 2023; Girish et al., 2021; Qiu, 2023) focused on the association between destination fascination, image, and source credibility. Based on these studies, hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being are proposed as the outcome variables to explore further whether and how the interaction between destination tourism stimulators affects well-being. Most of the research has been conducted on destination-related factors (destination fascination, destination image, destination source credibility) and investigated the impact of these variables on the well-being of tourists with hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Thus, there is scope for studying variables such as destination fascination, image, source credibility, and their relationships with hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being considering cultural heritage tourism. Driven by these observed gaps in the literature, this study attempts to provide a conceptual framework that explains the effects of destination fascination, image, and source credibility on the well-being of the world cultural heritage sites of the northern Indian state. The present study examines the effect of destination tourism stimulators (fascination, image, source credibility) on well-being (hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Tourism Stimulators

Destination Fascination

The terms "destination" and "fascination" make up Destination Fascination (DF), with the latter term being crucial to attention restoration theory (Berto et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2017; Kaplan, 1995). According

to attention restoration theory, restorative activities boost interest or low-effort attention, making it easier to regain adaptive resources and allowing one to stop and think. On the other hand, remaining in non-restorative environments demands concentrated attention and negatively affects one's psychophysical health, performance, and mood (Berto et al., 2008). The capacity to pursue hobbies, explore environmental complexities, and interpret the world in one's unique manner are characteristics of fascination (Shen & Wang, 2023). Additionally, extremes in a "soft-hard" axis might be fascinating. Consequently, there are two categories of interest: the "hard" interest in observing motor racing and the "soft" interest in taking a stroll in a natural setting (Kaplan, 1995). Discussions concerning the relationships between people and their environment are where the concept of destination attraction first emerged and proposed six characteristics of DF: mystique, richness, attractiveness, uniqueness, fitness, and friendliness (Liu et al., 2017).

Destination Image

A Destination Image (DI) aggregates emotive concepts and multifaceted emotions. When selecting a place to visit or not, one's perspective is crucial (Girish et al., 2021). Based on supply and demand perspectives, DI may be divided into projected and received pictures. A projected image is a destination-based concept that draws attention to a site's tourism features and benefits. Conversely, the received picture is the visitor's internal representation of a location (Li et al., 2023). However, the destination image is on a multifaceted scale that has received widespread support in tourism research due to its bi- or tri-dimensional structures Trang et al. (2023) being two-dimensional, Crompton (1979). A destination's image consists of two primary components: emotive and cognitive. Lever et al. (2023) arouse feelings and visions about the location in a visitor's mind. A person's destination picture is fashioned by many organic (produced by people) and induced (made by DMOs) sources. A traveler's subjective perceptions of a location are referred to as their affective image, while their ideas and thoughts about it are combined to form their cognitive picture (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Zhou et al., 2023). A conative image, or the behavioral reaction to a location, is part of the tri-dimensional destination image concept (Chen et al., 2014; Trang et al., 2023).

Destination Source Credibility

The extent to which a person may think that the destination's administration is capable and prepared to keep its promises for a particular place is known as the destination source's credibility (Girish et al., 2021). Most of the time, extrinsic cues are utilized to assess trustworthiness. Examples of these cues are the cost of a product, the way it is marketed or sold, and the presence of guarantees, which can serve as markers (Loureiro, 2017; Girish et al., 2021). Qiu et al. (2023) analyzed the connection between tourists' environmentally conscious behavior at locations of global cultural heritage and the reliability of the sources they use when traveling. Similarly, Veasna et al. (2013) investigate how the destination source's credibility impacts visitor pleasure at heritage sites. When assessing someone's willingness to travel, the source's credibility becomes essential (Yılmazdoğan et al., 2021). Likewise, Su et al. (2018) discovered that the destination's reputation positively influences tourists' place attachment. Tsai (2012) revealed a strong correlation between tourists' confidence in the place and their affective attachment and location dependency.

Well-being

Hedonic Well-being

Hedonic well-being refers to consumers' enjoyment, well-being, and good times from eating organic food (Issock et al., 2023; Su et al., 2020; Venhoeven et al., 2013). The basic definition of hedonic well-being is the experience of positive emotional states (like happiness) and life satisfaction (Shenkman et al., 2023). Happiness is commonly described as positive without adverse effects (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Filep et al., 2024). The components of positive emotions are included in positive hedonic well-being, which emphasizes people's experiences of happiness and life satisfaction. On the other hand, the concept of opposing hedonic well-being centers on unfavorable emotions and discontent, such as depressive, anxious, and worried sensations (Methi et al., 2024).

Eudaimonic Well-being

Eudaimonic well-being pertains to the consequences of personal well-being. It involves the pursuit of morality, self-actualization, human growth, and the

degree to which a person believes their functioning is entirely achievable. The main goals of travelers seeking authenticity are to learn more about the world, themselves, and their position in it and become more self-aware (Rahmani et al., 2018). The subjective feelings connected to eudaimonia or leading a moral life in the quest for human greatness led to phenomenological experiences such as energy, self-actualization, and personal expressiveness. Fundamentally, eudaimonic well-being means doing challenging but meaningful things, especially those that require much work, are motivated by charity, and are focused on the greater good (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Methi et al., 2024).

Physical Well-being

Physical well-being is the state in which one can carry out physical activities and fulfill social obligations without being hindered by physical limitations, physical discomfort, or biological health indicators (Capio et al., 2014). This physical engagement creates a more comprehensive experience by coordinating cultural exploration with individual wellness desires. As a result, tourism to cultural sites can provide a forum for encouraging well-being and physical activity among various communities. A more comprehensive understanding of people’s well-being requires considering their impression of their physical health, which relates to how healthy they feel. During adolescence, this emotion is caused by the interplay between early childhood development and specific biological and social changes that come with puberty (Lise et al., 2024; Sawyer et al., 2012).

Social Well-being

Social Well-Being (SW) assesses an individual’s position and function within society. SW represents positive social functioning and consists of the conceptual elements of social acceptability, social integration, social coherence, social contribution, and social actualization (Keyes, 2003; Sirgy, 2021). Previous research has shown that higher levels of personal well-being are associated with better social well-being indices and that lower levels harm others (Joshanloo, 2024; Williams, 2009; Martela & Ryan, 2020). SW is defined as the caliber of social interactions, and a sense of belonging is important. By developing social bonds and resilience, bonding with

the care receiver and support groups, and building relationships, providing care may also catalyze social well-being (Pinquart et al., 2011; Methi et al., 2024).

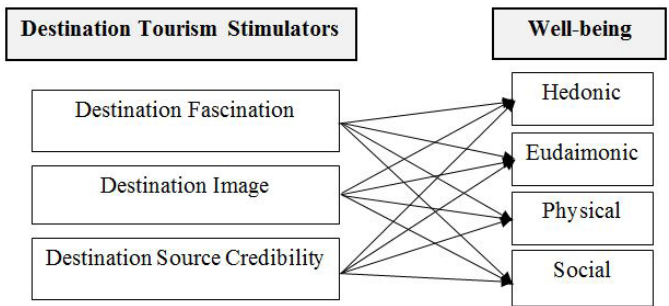


Figure 1 Antecedents of Well-being
Source: Author’s Compilation

DISCUSSION

The study aims to understand how destination tourism stimulators affect well-being in the context of cultural heritage. As a result, the researcher chooses Destination Tourism Stimulators (DTS) as an independent variable. The DTS consists of three variables that determine its purpose. These variables are destination fascination, destination image, and destination source credibility. Similarly, well-being comprises four variables that measure its purpose. These variables are hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being. Each of these variables has been analyzed from previous studies, and the results indicate that destination fascination and destination image have a positive impact on the hedonic well-being of tourists (MacMillen, 2015; Chen, Huang et al., 2017; Su et al., 2020; Lee, 2023; Shafiee & Es-Haghi, 2017). According to Vinzenz et al. (2019), consumer well-being is evoked by positive, emotive advertising for sustainable goods and services. Offering delightful and unforgettable travel experiences through leisure, discovery, and cultural immersion raises enjoyment, pleasure, and good feelings. Additionally, results indicate that destination fascination positively impacts the eudaimonic well-being of tourists (Bertella, 2017; Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015; Kim & Yang, 2021; Løvoll, 2019; Lee, 2023). Customer well-being describes how consumers view a brand’s contributions to improving their standard of living. In addition to seeking superior goods and services, customers aim to have distinctive personal experiences (Hwang & Lyu, 2015; Su et al., 2023). Through encouraging experiences of personal development, fulfillment, and deep cultural or

environmental connections, enhancing people's sense of meaning in life can promote personal well-being through memories (Su et al., 2023). Moreover, previous findings found that physically and psychologically departing from ordinary tasks and obtaining adequate mental energy require a stimulating environment (Liu et al., 2017). According to Taleporos & McCabe (2002), an individual's psychological experiences, sentiments, and attitudes regarding the shape, purpose, look, and desirability of their bodies, all of which are impacted by both personal and external factors combined to produce the way they view themselves. However, individuals in high-risk locations require expert guidance and physical and psychological preparedness. Sustaining their health and well-being requires accurate information (Zakaria & Mustaffa, 2014; Nasir, Zainah & Khairuddin, 2012; Zuhaida & Maznisham, 2009) as encouraging people to take part in active travel, such as hiking or sightseeing, which improves physical fitness and general health. In addition, a previous study found that destination fascination, image, and source credibility have a positive impact on the social well-being of tourists (Beardon & Hunter, 2001; Welsch & Kuhling, 2018; Liang et al., 2021) because they foster positive beliefs that promote social interactions and emotional bonds, which eventually enhance communal well-being and overall life pleasure.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Theoretical Implications

This study aims to understand how destination tourism stimulators (fascination, image, and destination source credibility) affect well-being (hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being) in the context of cultural heritage and are pivotal for advancing academic discourse and practical strategies. Researchers may develop a curriculum that prepares future professionals to tackle issues in the heritage tourism sector by highlighting the value of sustainable tourism practices and cultural heritage preservation. Furthermore, theoretical discussion can highlight moral issues with cultural heritage portrayed in travel advertising, encouraging lawful, civilized interaction with local customs and communities. To ensure the long-term sustainability and integrity of tourist destinations with cultural heritage, this theoretical framework aids in

the formulation of sustainable tourism initiatives that balance financial advantages, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Significant interaction with cultural heritage sites enhances tourists' educational and cultural experiences while advancing the local community's well-being connected to these historic locations.

Managerial Implications

By offering a variety of cultures and experiences that last a lifetime, genuine destination fascination enhances visitors' well-being. Marketing managers can increase visitor pleasure and loyalty by emphasizing these cultural aspects, promoting tourism's long-term growth and positive perceptions of the location. Marketing managers must actively improve visitor experiences and perceptions to foster positive engagement and long-term tourism growth. Positive perceptions of a place that arouses curiosity and provides satisfying experiences that meet expectations impact people's desire to visit. The reliability of destination sources on cultural heritage significantly influences tourists and destination marketing managers. While visitors learn from real-life interactions that foster cultural awareness and general well-being, managers must maintain truthful and courteous representations to foster trust and increase visitor pleasure.

CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study explores the relationships between destination tourism stimulators and the well-being of tourists towards cultural heritage tourism. The study found that visitors' positive hedonic, eudaimonic, physical, and social well-being is influenced by destination fascination, image, and source credibility. This study suggests that fascination enables tourists to achieve their objectives and feel good while visiting cultural heritage sites. Furthermore, the study demonstrates how the destination's image stimulates visitors' mental perception of cultural heritage settings, promoting personal growth and enjoyment. Moreover, the research improves the destination's reputation through the need to develop visitors' cognitive abilities to get reliable information about the destination subsequently. In addition, the findings also highlighted how important it is for tourists' well-being to be considered when

predicting their future behavior when it comes to cultural heritage tourism.

Future research may focus on how visitors' emotional connections to heritage sites shaped by destination images and fascination affect their overall well-being. The impact of source credibility, such as reputable tour guides or culturally genuine media, on tourists' perceptions and emotional pleasure would be a crucial field of research. Researchers could investigate whether immersive experiences at heritage sites both virtual and physical enhance psychological well-being by promoting a more profound sense of cultural identity, belonging, or healing, particularly for people who have ancestors or other personal ties to the location. Cross-cultural comparisons may also shed light on how different cultural origins impact the relationship between historical tourism and mental health, providing insights into both universal and culturally particular patterns in how heritage tourism impacts visitors.

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