



E-ISSN: 2706-9591
P-ISSN: 2706-9583
IJTHM 2021; 3(1): 43-47
Received: 20-11-2020
Accepted: 22-12-2020

Engdu Gebrewold
Assistant Professor,
Department of Tourism
Management, Collage of
Business and Economics,
University of Gondar,
Ethiopia, Ethiopia

Ashenafi Getachew
Lecture, Department of
Tourism Management, Collage
of Business and Economics,
Assosa University in Ethiopia,
Ethiopia

Tourist expectation towards memorable tourism experience: The case of Gondar city, Ethiopia

Engdu Gebrewold and Ashenafi Getachew

Abstract

Modern tourism has transformed from the holiday industry to the experience industry in the experience economy creating memorable tourism experience is the ultimate goal of destinations to be competent. The process of tourist experience creation starts from expectation creation, tourist experience expectations are the output of interaction of tourists and tourism systems before the trip. Tourist expectations are an important factor for tourism experience and tourism activities. Since tourism experience expectation is essential for actual experience creation the issue must be studied for the success of destinations. The objective of this study was to assess tourists' expectations towards memorable tourism experience in Gondar city. A sample survey was carried out among the members of a convenient sample of 338 tourists to Gondar. The study used descriptive quantitative research approach. Data collection was done through questionnaires. Frequency, percentage, the average mean, one way ANOVA, and independent t-test, was employed. The researchers used seven points of Memorable Tourism Experience scale to measure tourist's expectation; as a result the research indicates that tourist who visited Gondar had less expectation compared to other destination. Tourists had higher expectation in Hedonism, Local culture, Meaningfulness and Knowledge than Novelty, Refreshment and Involvement. Gender and age also had important impact on tourist expectation, female tourists and based on age youth tourists had higher experience expectation. Hence, this study strongly recommends, re-creating and re-arranging itineraries with a plenty of worthy experience based on age and gender. And promote the destination by using technology to create better experience.

Keywords: Experience, expectation, gondar, memorable

Introduction

Modern tourism has transformed from the "holiday industry" to "experience industry", which is reflected in a constant increase in the number of tourists seeking a dynamic holiday, with more adventure and sports activities (Živković and Brdar, 2015) ^[11]. As much of the literature on the tourist experience highlights the importance of motivations and expectations as being related to the overall evaluation of the experience of a destination (Prayag and Ryan, 2002) ^[7]. Experience expectations are the output between tourists and tourism systems before the trip. Tourist expectations are an important factor for tourism experience and tourism activities. If tourist have low expectations, it is less likely that they will go to a certain destination or take part in a certain activity. Different kinds of interaction occur before the trip for example, tourist brochures or virtual experiences can result in tourist experience expectations, as well as different advertising effects, which in turn influence tourists' actual traveling decisions (Chiou, Wan, Lee, 2008) ^[1].

Tourism experience, in the planning stage before the trip, tourists anticipate possible events through expectations, while during the processes tourists will have different perceptions of events, and after the trip they will have memories. These three factors expectations, perceptions, and memories connect the entire processes of the trip, which then creates the tourist experience (Sheng and Chen, 2013) ^[8].

An expectation can be defined as the individual's ability to anticipate, to form beliefs about and to predict future events and states (Maddux, 1999) ^[6]. Then much of the literature on the tourist experience highlights the importance of motivations and expectations as being related to the overall evaluation of the experience of a destination. Motivation is understood as the personal factors which influence the overall assessment of travel (Prayag and Ryan, 2002) ^[7]. Tourists experience start with their expectation, from the initial, in the planning stage before the trip, tourists anticipate possible events through expectations, while during the processes tourists will have different perceptions of events, and after the trip they will have memories.

Corresponding Author:
Engdu Gebrewold
Assistant Professor,
Department of Tourism
Management, Collage of
Business and Economics,
University of Gondar,
Ethiopia, Ethiopia

These three factors (expectations, perceptions, and memories) connect the entire processes of the trip, which then creates the tourist experience, and may even influence other tourists' expectations for the same or different types of trips (Sheng & Chen, 2013) ^[8].

If expectations of experiences are met or exceeded, then satisfaction will occur. Dissatisfaction occurs when experiences do not meet expectations (Song, Lee, Park, Hwang & Reisinger, 2015) ^[9].

Tourist experience expectations are the output between tourists and tourism systems before the trip. Different kinds of interaction occur; for example, tourist brochures or virtual experiences can result in tourist experience expectations, as well as different advertising effects, which in turn influence tourists' actual traveling decisions (Chiou, Wan and Lee, 2008) ^[1].

Most studies on tourist experience used memorable tourism experiences scale of Kim (2009) ^[5] model as a standing stone for their study to measure tourists experience in the destinations, in this study the researchers used MTE scale of Kim (2009) ^[5] and Sheng and Chen (2013) ^[8] measurement tool for tourist experience expectation.

Objective

The objective of this article was to assess tourists' expectations towards their experience in Gondar city.

Method

Sample Size Determination

Target population of the study was international tourists who visited Gondar from April to July of 2019. The total population of the study is unknown because the population of this study is tourists who visit Gondar in 2019 and it is impossible to know how many tourists will come in those months. To determine the sample size of the study the researcher used Cochran's Formula for the unknown population (Cochran, 1977).

$$((1.96)^2 \times .5(.5)) / (.05)^2$$

$$(3.8416 \times .25) / .0025$$

$$.9604 / .0025$$

$$384.16 = 385 \text{ respondents were needed}$$

Sampling Techniques

The researcher used Convenience sampling for quantitative data, the reason to choose the proposed method was due to the time constraint and availability of respondents. This type of sampling is suitable for studies limited by geography and time, it gives the advantage of easy accessibility, geographical proximity, and availability at a given time (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016) ^[2].

Data Collection Instrument

In order to get precise information on expectation, the researchers have used MTE scale which is designed by Kim (2009) ^[5], tourist experience expectations questionnaire development and text narrative analysis questions which was set by Sheng and Chen (2013) to measure study variables appropriately.

Validity and Reliability

The survey instrument employed for the purposes of evaluating the study variable is adapted from different measurement scale, those measurement scales are tested and

used redundantly by different scholars. In addition to this, to evaluate the adopted tool reliability and validity the researchers conduct a pilot test. After pilot test, this study conducted reliability analysis and examined the internal consistency of the factors of tourist experience expectations by using Cronbach α scales.

Table 1: Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics		
Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Tourist Expectation	.938	44

Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data have been coded and entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) latest version 23 for the analysis. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean), and inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA) were used.

Results and Interpretation

Tourist responses from questionnaires and qualitative data from document analysis are interpreted in this chapter, out of the distributed 385 questionnaires, the numbers of returned and valid for analysis were 338.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender distribution		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	160	47.3
Female	178	52.7
Total	338	100.0

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the respondents (52.7%) were female tourists and (47.3%) were male, this data rivaled that female tourists have slightly greater in number than male tourists.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Age distribution		
	Frequency	Percent
18- 25	34	10.1
26 – 35	111	32.8
36 – 47	75	22.2
48 – 59	46	13.6
Over 60	72	21.3
Total	338	100.0

Youth (26-35) tourists outnumbered all other age groups participants. Since the sampling frame was designed to acquire data from international tourists, respondent's age group was varied in age range. An analysis of the age of the respondents indicates that 10.1% of the sample falls into the range of 18-25, 32.8% of the respondents were in the range of 26 – 35, and 22.2% of respondents were in the range of 36 – 47, 13.6 of respondents were 48 – 59 and seniors (over 60) respondents cover the rest 21.3%.

4.4 Tourist Expectation across Gender

Independent sample t-test conducted to comparing level of expectation of tourist towards tourism experience between male and female tourists, the result shows that there is a significant mean difference between male and female tourists.

Table 4: t-test Across Gender

Variables	Gender								
	Male					Female			
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	df	t	sig.
Hedonism	160	3.24	.778	178	3.45	.451	336	-3.1	.001
Novelty	160	3.03	.954	178	3.29	.478	336	-3.2	.000
Local Culture	160	3.33	.839	178	3.43	.497	336	-1.3	.000
Refreshment	160	3.15	.933	178	3.40	.523	336	-3.1	.162
Meaningfulness	160	3.32	1.017	178	3.30	.650	336	.20	.000
Involvement	160	3.06	.944	178	3.19	.518	336	-1.6	.045
Knowledge	160	3.22	1.014	178	3.44	.689	336	-2.4	.101

The results from the t tests showed that significant gender differences. As shown in Table 4, the mean scores for the female participants was significantly higher than the mean scores for the male participants in regard to the hedonism, local culture, novelty, involvement, and knowledge factors. The only factor which male respondents had higher mean was meaningfulness. The test was done between female ($N=178$) and male ($N=160$) tourists who visited Gondar, and female tourists had higher expectation than male except Meaningfulness and male tourists had high expectation for Meaningfulness experience.

For instance there was a significant difference experience expectation between male ($M=3.24$, $SD=.778$) and females ($M=3.45$, $SD=.451$) in hedonism; ($t(336) = -3.112, p<.05$). Tourist expectation for novelty also had grate variance, there was a significant difference in the scores for females

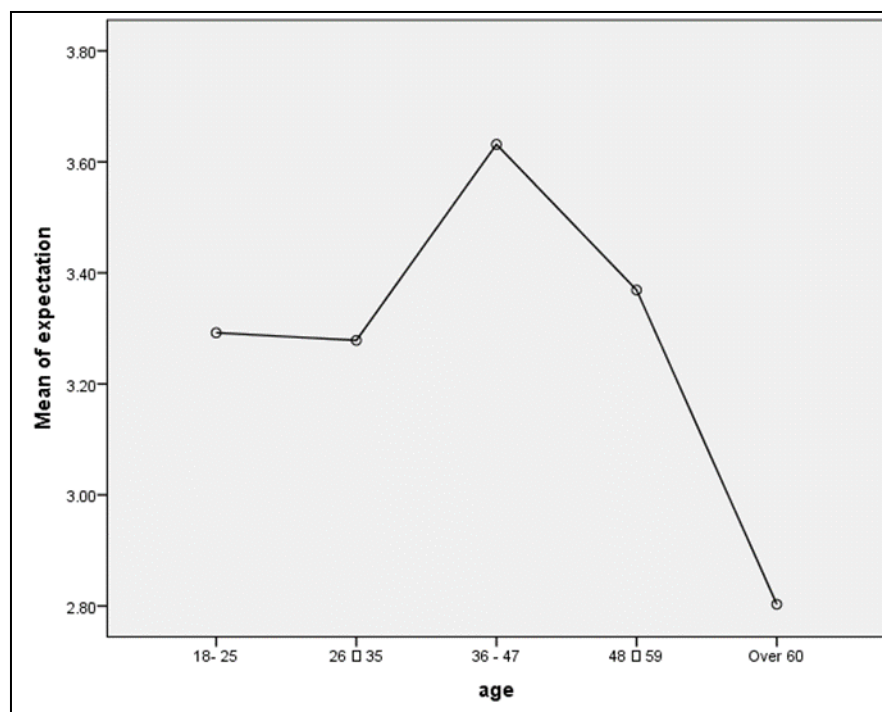
($M=3.29, SD=.478$) and males ($M=3.03, SD=.954$); ($t(336) = -3.233, p<.05$).

4.5 Tourist Expectation across Age.

Table 5: Tourist Expectation across Age.

One way- ANOVA					
Age	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
18- 25	34	3.29	.322	20.21	.000
26 -35	111	3.27	.364		
36 – 47	75	3.63	.656		
48 – 59	46	3.36	.297		
Over 60	72	2.80	.864		
Total	338	3.26	.628		

ANOVA was computed to see whether there is a significant difference between tourist expectations among different age groups of tourists. The result indicated that there is significant mean difference between tourists age group ($F=20.21, P<0.05$). Tourists age group 18- 25, 26-35, 36 – 47, 48 – 59, Over 60. According to the finding there was a significant difference in the mean of different age group, 18-25($M=3.29, N=34, SD=.322$), 26-35 ($M=3.27, N=111, SD=.364$), and 36-47 ($M=3.63, N=75, SD=.656$), 48-59 ($M=3.36, N=46, SD=.297$) and over 60 ($M=2.80, N=72, SD=.864$). These results suggest that age really does have a significant difference. Specifically, results suggest that, tourists from 36 - 47 age group have high expectation for MTE than others.

**Fig 1:** Tourist Expectation across Age chart

Expectation Difference about MTE in Gender and Age of Tourists

Number of studies has discussed gender differences in tourism, many focused on aspects of tourism development (Harvey *et al.*, 1995) [4]. The t-test results indicated that female respondents had higher mean scores across all the expectation factors than male respondents. The rank of the importance of the motivation factors was slightly different

between the two groups. Male respondents gave high expectation for meaningfulness, whereas female respondents put other variables as the most important. One of the reasons men and women may want different things from a tourism experience is that; they are 'getting away from' different things in the home environment (Swain, 1995) [10].

T-test was conducted to see whether gender had significant differences in tourist expectation or not, and the findings show that, there is significant mean difference between male and female, female participants had significantly higher expectation than the mean tourists had in hedonic, local culture, novelty, involvement, and knowledge experiences. From this finding, it is possible to conclude that female tourist had higher expectation than male tourists who visit Gondar.

Age was also another important factor for tourists' expectation, tourists' from 36 - 47 age group have high expectation than others when they come to Gondar and tourists whose age is over 60 had low expectation. This finding shows that, adult tourists have high expectation for MTE than the seniors. This is also supported by Gibson (1994) [3] study called "active sport tourism: who participates?" Reported that the preference of tourist roles changes by age. Some roles as the 'Action Seeker' and the 'Thrill Seeker' decrease in preference with age while the 'Anthropologist' and the 'Organized Mass tourist' increase in preference with age. Other roles such as the 'Escapist' and the 'Independent Mass tourist' remain constant in preference regardless of age.

Correlations							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hedonism	1						
Novelty	.755**	1					
Local culture	.619**	.748**	1				
Refreshment	.611**	.783**	.737**	1			
Meaningfulness	.458**	.630**	.795**	.651**	1		
Involvement	.652**	.715**	.672**	.738**	.540**	1	
Knowledge	.348**	.605**	.621**	.557**	.734**	.495**	1
**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Correlation was conducted to see the relationship of variables, as Cohen and Holliday (1982) suggest the following: 0.19 and below is very low; 0.20 to 0.39 is low; 0.40 to 0.69 is modest; 0.70 to 0.89 is high; and 0.90 to 1 is very high. Based on this the relationship is moderate positive relationship.

Based on the Cohen and Holliday rating no variable had very low relationship and Knowledge with Hedonism has low correlation, Hedonism with Meaningfulness, Involvement, Refreshment and Local culture; Novelty with Meaningfulness and Knowledge; Local culture with Involvement and Knowledge; Refreshment with Meaningfulness and Knowledge; Meaningfulness with Involvement and Involvement with Knowledge had modest Correlation and other variables had high Correlation.

In general tourist expectation in Gondar is comparatively lower this may be due to less or no promotional activities according to Biruk (2012) marketing and promotion is an essential tool to reach the potential visitors, But except an efforts were being made by the private sectors mainly the tour operators, based in Gondar city and Addis Ababa, in promoting the city as a visitors destination, the local government did not do an adequate and appropriate marketing and promotional activities yet.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study the researchers suggest:

- Promotional activities must be done by government to create tourist expectation for the destination.

- Using technology such as virtual reality and imaging technology, web-based promotion to increase tourists desire to visit the destination should be done by both private and public sectors.
- City administrative should participate in international trade fairs and other promotional activities will help to promote the destination for potential customers.
- Tour operators and travel agency should include new experiences in their itinerary and promote it well.
- Tour operators and travel agency should offer different choice itinerary with unique experience.
- Tour programs which are conducted by public or private companies should consider age and gender the target market.
- Destination management (site managers) need to develop proper signage, at least in two languages, to increase the satisfaction of visitors and avoid any confusion, appropriate and compatible signage describing about the where to go, what to see and how to visit, has to be established nearby the attractions in the city of Gondar and inside each attractions site.
- City administrative should appreciate investors to invest in the experiential tourism sector such as traditional night clubs, coach rental, and traditional dress in and around churches for rent or sales.
- Tourist information centers appropriate and necessary promotional materials like folders, brochures, visitors' maps, guide books, etc. should be kept and supplied whenever visitors want.
- City administrative should engage Small and Medium Enterprises in the fabrication of authentic souvenirs and crafts.
- Traditional night clubs should demonstrate authentic culture, unique culinary experience, and better hospitality to increase tourist satisfaction.
- Finally, it is recommended that all stakeholders should work together to increase tourist experience in the destination.

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