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Assessing the effect of marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction: insights from Bangladesh

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Abstract: The tourism industry has grown to be a significant contributor to a country's economic growth. Therefore, the core intent of this study was to assess the effect of the marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction in the contexts of Bangladesh. PLS-SEM method implied that tourists' satisfaction was significantly and positively influenced by four factors, i.e., product, price, process, and physical evidence. The hypothetical result highlights that destination marketers or policymakers can implement into their marketing strategy and take into consideration the factors of tourists' satisfaction which has been proposed in this study to make Bangladesh a 'Hotspot' destinations

whilst providing quality tourists experience. Tourism, being a service industry ‘quality of service’ does matter, and whilst marketing mix plays an imperative role in providing quality services. For policymakers and stakeholders in Bangladesh, this study provides insights on the impact of marketing mix aspects on eminence tourists’ experience.

Keywords: destinations; marketing mix (7P’s); tourists’ satisfaction; structural equation modelling; partial least square structural equation modelling; PLS-SEM; Bangladesh.

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1 Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the most significant economic phenomena of the 21st century. Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that refers to the movement of people from one country or region to another for personal, business, or professional reasons. These individuals are referred to as visitors (they may be tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents), and tourism refers to their activities, some of which entail tourism expenditure (UNWTO, 2008). Tourism, as described by the UNWTO (2007), includes leisure travel and all associated facilities. Tourism encompasses leisure and business travel, as well as the philosophy and practice of touring, the business of attracting, hosting, and entertaining visitors, and the business of running tours (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). According to LinkBC (2008),

“Someone who travels at least 80 km from his or her home for at least 24 hours, for business or leisure or other reasons”. Tourism destination consists not only of a stand-alone product but also of a collection of various characteristics of tourism destinations being measured by travellers to make visiting or revisiting decision (Framke, 2002). A country's economy is said to be driven mostly by tourism activities. Besides, the world economy is also mainly influenced by the growth and development of the tourism sector (Pantouvakis, 2013). The tourism industry is momentous as it plays a vigorous role in the economy of evolving and developed countries. In recent decades, the definition of tourism has advanced and it is now widely accepted that it involves a dynamic aspect, a static aspect, and economic significance (Vanhove, 2005).

Therefore, tourists' behaviour should be closely monitored to sustain and grow this industry. Various internal and external factors may influence the loyalty and re-visit intention of tourists. The inspection is to validate ties between the picture of the destination, the level of service, superficial meaning, satisfaction and loyalty (Ohm and Supinit, 2012). Marketers are to focus on carefully crafted tourism marketing activities to reap maximum outputs. As detected by Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), tourism marketing is an essential part of services marketing and is driven by activities that are intangible rather than physical. Besides, various goods and services also comprise multifaceted tourism products in different doings. Research of Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) found that image of a firm in the mind of the tourists can be formed from various sources including advertising and public relations, word of mouth, tourist experience when consuming goods and services offered by the firm. They also found that the hotel's positive reputation contributes to a stronger intention of repurchasing and applauding it to others. So, in persuading a company's marketing efforts, the image has a primary role (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). According to Khan et al. (2018), stakeholders want to see more spending by the private sector in the growth of tourism and infrastructure, and fiscal, environmental and social factors affect the development of tourist industries. A successful marketing mix approach is crucial to help marketers meet their aims, create demand for their products and present a fair picture of their destinations. Tourists' destinations with interesting sights and a simple business position can put themselves in the minds of visitors. Tourism markets are primarily determined by tourism offerings and demand and marketing play an important role in putting the commodity of a destination on the market as a strategic force (Cirikovic, 2014).

Bangladesh is a country in the Asian region with a strong tourism potential. Since a long time, Bangladesh has been a popular tourist destination. However, in terms of international tourism, her status is currently insignificant. Bangladesh tourism is beset by a slew of issues, including a lack of a marketing plan. The country can gain more foreign currency by employing niche market strategies because Bangladesh is endowed with four main tourism products: beaches, forests, hills and islands, historical sites, and archaeology (Sarker and Begum, 2013). Tourist arrivals and earnings in Bangladesh are rising. As a result, the employment of more creative staff in tourism management, as well as promotional steps, will significantly boost tourism growth. Better amenities, cost-effective methods, technical advances, and effective and highly productive tourism facilities will encourage more domestic and international tourists to visit the country's tourist attractions (Ali and Parvin, 2010). The significance of tourism in Bangladesh, as well as its benefits for socioeconomic growth. Tourism benefits include GDP contribution, job growth, foreign currency earnings, infrastructure development,

investment opportunities, poverty alleviation, government earnings, and cultural development (Redwan, 2014). Tourism marketing is an integrated attempt to satisfy visitors by providing the best facilities possible. It is a device used to convert potential tourists into real tourists. It is the most secure way to create demand and grow the market (Musa, 2013). The expansion of the service sector would hasten our economic growth. The study developed some competitive strategies in light of Vision 2021, resulting in long-term economic development (Sandip, 2014).

Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore how tourists' satisfaction was affected by the marketing mix in the perspectives of ten hotspot destinations in Bangladesh. Specific objectives are: first, to assess the aspects of the marketing mix (7P's) in the contexts of tourism; second, to detect measurement items related to 7P's of marketing and tourists' satisfaction; and finally, to evaluate the extent to which satisfaction of Bangladeshi tourists is influenced by marketing mix.

After reviewing most related literature of marketing mix (7P's), it is clear that maximum researchers tried to measure the impact of marketing mix on tourists' intention, choosing destinations, satisfaction, and sustainability from the contexts of inbound and outbound tourists in overall scenario of the country tourism, but this research has been tried to focus on Bangladeshi domestic tourists satisfaction of selected ten hotspot destinations which remained as an unexplored field. Therefore, this research provides an insights on the influence of marketing mix in eminence domestic tourists' experience, which will help to policy makers and stakeholders to formulate better marketing strategies in Bangladesh, as well as to the research field.

The research paper is allocated into several sections. Initially, the literature review is provided based on a past study. Secondly, the conceptual model and hypotheses development have been demonstrated. Thirdly, research methodologies which are applied to the current research are described. Fourthly, the paper is presented with the findings and interpretations. Fifthly, the discussions, conclusion and implications section incorporates the consequences of present research and its linkups with the previous studies. At the end of the segment, the shortcomings and potential directions of the research are stated.

2 Literature review

The marketing mix is a set of controlled marketing instruments that marketers utilise to achieve marketing goals (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). McCarthy (1960) proposed four parts of the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. As a result of the adaptation of the original marketing mix for services, researchers have built more tailored marketing mix frameworks for specific service conditions, such as tourism marketing (Pomering et al., 2011). As a result, Booms and Bitner (1964) expanded the marketing mix by including three new P's for service sectors: people, process, and physical evidence.

Customers' satisfaction is classified into two types: transactional satisfaction and overall satisfaction (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). Overall satisfaction, according to Eid and El-Gohary (2015), "emphasises diverse criteria of comparison and feedback from initial service performance, the emotional quality of contentment, which captures the defining

tone of consumers' satisfaction." Sarker et al. (2012) further stated that tourists' satisfaction relates to the emotional state of mind following a tourism encounter. It is clear from previous research that service marketing mix aspects have a considerable impact on customers' satisfaction (Yelkur, 2000) and service brand equity (Rajh and Ozretić Došen, 2009).

2.1 Tourists' satisfaction

Tourists' satisfaction is remarkably important in the service-based organisations which operate particularly in the tourism sector (Hayat and Supinitis, 2016). One of the noteworthy aspects of tourism is to secure tourists' satisfaction which affects tourists' choice of destination, revisit intention and consumptions of tourism products and services (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). According to Chen (2008), tourists' satisfaction suggests an emotional principle that includes prosperity and a positive feeling that derives from expectation and is anticipated from goods and services.

2.2 Marketing mix

Kotler (2007) notes that marketing for tourism service elements, also known as four P's marketing, is strongly driven by marketing mix elements. The typical product, price, place and promotion are the elements of the marketing mix. However, in a service agency like the tourism industry, there are also three other components (for example, people, process and physical evidence). These 7P's provide a succinct, generic summary of marketing activities for services (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Therefore, all seven P's are known to be the instruments of the tourism marketing mix in the current report.

2.2.1 Product

According to Kotler (2007), the product is something that is presented to the consumers for purchase, attention, selling or use and to meet the needs and wants of consumers. The tourism product may be demarcated as the combination of tourists' fascinations. The tourism products have to be measured to disclose consumers' requirement. The place the tourists' product occupies in the tourists minds are termed as product positioning which is one of the critical aims for any tourism organisation (Kotler, 2007). In the marketing mix, the product is defined as what is available on the market for mention, achievement and use that may meet the requirements. The product may involve a facility, place, entity, physical object, or even a concept (Fakhimi et al., 2011). Tourism marketing is a mix of advantages or characteristics for current and future visitors (Taherdoost et al., 2014).

2.2.2 Price

Price helps to cash in money to the company and is considered one of the vital tools of marketing mix elements (Goi, 2009). Price is the cash value of goods or services paid to companies by consumers (Kotler, 2007). Hossain's (1999) study of the foreign tourists' attitude to marketing mixes revealed that foreign tourists' superficial value abstractly exceeds anticipation. Value is the difference between what customers get and what

customers give. Price serves as an external clue to judge tourism product quality and the higher the prices, the more the quality perceived by the customers (Kim and Hyun, 2011). Price governs the competition between a destination and other destinations and involves the cost of transportation to and from a destination, lodging, housing and tour facilities (UNWTO, 2007).

2.2.3 Place

Place refers to the way by which a product reach or distribute to the end consumers (Kotler, 2007). Place or distribution methods should prioritise customers' convenience which is crucial to augment brand image and better performance of the companies in the market. Transportation is a crucial aspect of tourism development. Other factors such as entertainment, social services and security also promote the development of the tourism industry (Musa and Adamu, 2011). Place decisions are critical as service has characteristics of simultaneous production and consumption and place provides all information of tourists, rivalry, promotion action, and marketing job (Copley, 2004). The place in tourism offers instructions on many tourists' place (Kotler, 2007). Hirankitti et al. (2009) describes the place like the comfort of access which tourists relate to a service such as location and distribution.

2.2.4 Promotion

Promotions have developed an indispensable feature in the service marketing mix. Promotion means the activities that are undertaken by the marketers to encourage and convince the customers for buying the products or services (Kotler, 2007). By utilising different promotional strategies, companies attempt to communicate features and characteristics of products or services to the customers and achieve marketing objectives. To meet their advertisement and marketing goals, businesses combine many methods, including advertising, personal sales, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing (Kotler, 2007). While running promotional activities, organisations should consider the monetary costs of promotion, the number of tourists who will be exposed to the promotion and their reactions to the proposition (Wearne, 2001). Promotional activities build associations with tourists to notify or influence tourists' attitude or behaviour. The promotion is used to inform future tourists of goods and encourage tourists to visit particular tourist destinations (Khazaei and Baloe, 2011).

2.2.5 People

Service experiences are the consequence of synergies among organisations, related processes, service employees and their customers. In the service sector, both customers and employees have a significant role in creating service development and eventually results in value creation and ensuring satisfaction. In terms of customer behaviour, quality management and personal sales in the hospitality sector, the people or human capital play a major role (Kotler, 2007). The aspect remarks to the tourism staffs who harvest and supply the service. Tourists' received intimate experiences with the workers at the site and the interactions have a direct influence on tourism's view of the standard of service (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996).

Table 1 Recent literature on marketing mix (2011–2020)

Author(s)	Year	Study variables		Setting	Major findings and implications
		Independent variable (s)	Dependent variable		
Hossain et al.	2020	Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence.	Purchase intention of university students	Bangladesh	The analysis showed that the purchasing intent was significantly influenced by four of the seven elements (e.g. product, price, people and process). It provides ideas on how the marketing mix for university students should be planned for bank service marketers.
Rahman et al.	2019	Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence.	Tourist satisfaction	Bangladesh	All the elements except promotion significantly related to tourists' satisfaction. It has a contribution to decision-makers in understanding factors affecting tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
Balhmathan and Rajadurai	2019	Green product, price, promotion, place.	Purchasing decision	Malaysia	Marketing mix except price element had a positive impact on buying decision. Marketers and producers will be benefited from this study by realizing and redefining marketing mix approaches to meet the worldwide sustainability aims. Companies can implement policies for attracting consumers to make green acquisitions.
Yalo et al.	2019	Product, price, promotion, place.	SMEs Performance	Nigeria	While distribution has a major and positive effect on sales performance, pricing also has a strong and positive impact on company profitability. The paper suggests that owners of SMEs should focus more on distribution approach and pricing strategy and less on promotional approaches to endure sales and the profitability performance of enterprises.
Sudari et al.	2019	Product, price, place, promotion.	Customer loyalty through customer satisfaction	Malaysia	Customer loyalty has been significantly affected by all factors through customer satisfaction. The paper indicates that food and beverage SMEs should put greater focus on maintaining sustainable and fair rates for consumer loyalty.
Rahmah et al.	2018	Brand equity, marketing mix (7p's), lifestyle.	Purchase decision	Indonesia	To build the reputation and image in the world around consumers, managers can highlight good brand equity, solid marketing mixed tactics that involve price, people, process, physical and understanding of the existing consumer lifestyle.
Azhar et al.	2018	Marketing mix, service quality.	Tourists' satisfaction and loyalty	Indonesia	The significant and positive influence of marketing mix and service quality on tourists' satisfaction. Tourists' satisfaction also significantly influenced customer loyalty. It suggests improving service quality by focusing on public services to achieve sufficient customer loyalty and amplified tourists' visits.
Hossain and Khan	2018	Green product, price, promotion, place.	Consumers' buying decisions	Bangladesh	Product and promotion elements had a significant and positive impact on consumers buying decisions. The research may help tourism development along with determining the visiting decisions. The significant factors identified in this study should be focused to favourably affect consumer buying patterns.
Elvinda et al.	2018	Product satisfaction, price satisfaction, place satisfaction, promotion satisfaction.	Consumer purchase intention	Indonesia	All the elements had a significant influence on consumer purchase intention. Based on the outcomes of the research, to enhance the marketing mix satisfaction it is recommended to the manufacturers some things as that is to set the product features following consumer anticipations to consumers feel gratified by accumulating new colours on the current products, products have dark colours; accumulating new designs that attract consumers; add a picture on the helmet to attract more consumers.

Table 1 Recent literature on marketing mix (2011–2020) (continued)

Author(s)	Study variables		Setting	Major findings and implications
	Year	Independent variable (s) Dependent variable		
Sobari et al.	2017	The marketing mix (7p's), information, selection of halal tourism destination.	Indonesia	Halal tourism and the marketing mix of people and physical evidence influence the satisfaction of the tourist, which ultimately influences the loyalty of visitors. The study shows that Muslim tourists need a kind of valid and precise information to identify tourism destination. The Muslim tourist satisfaction will affect the loyalty of tourists, at the end they will revisit and give the suggestion of the highlights to others.
Alhaser et al.	2017	Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence, subjective norms.	Palestine	Customers' satisfaction in Islamic banks was positively and significantly influenced by marketing mix and subjective norms. This paper suggests that religious and spiritual marketing approaches like Islamic marketing strategy should be followed as customer satisfaction is driven by human values, marketing culture and Islamic rules and regulation.
Dahmiri et al.	2017	The service marketing mix (7p's), service quality.	Indonesia	Students' satisfaction was significantly related do to service marketing mix and service quality. Whereas, factors of service quality were more dominant elements in influencing students' satisfaction in Jambi University. It is recommended to the leader of Jambi University to take development phases to the service marketing mix and service quality to develop student's satisfaction.
Nugroho and Irena	2017	Product, price, place, promotion, customer characteristics (cultural, social and personal influences), psychological factors.	Indonesia	The marketing mix (product), consumers' characteristics (social influences), and psychological factors had a simultaneously significant influence on brand purchase intention. It contributed towards both the marketing theory (marketing mix elements) and consumer behaviour theory (consumer characteristics and psychological factors).
Weerasiri and Maldeniya	2016	Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.	Sri Lanka	All the factors have a major effect on the purchasing intention of the automobile sector by the consumer. The scholars recommend to develop customer touchpoints and to improve efficiency and speedy procedures.
Kadhim et al.	2016	Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.	Malaysia	Results revealed that the elements of the marketing mix and customer satisfaction for tourism services were strongly and positively connected. The results of the research are supportive of the tourism industry in specific and the worldwide tourism industry in general to emphasis on the development of actual elements as they have an important effect on satisfaction towards tourism.
Gujral et al.	2016	Product/unique selling proposition, price, location of outlet, promotion.	South Africa	Business strategy of SMME requires the implementation of the marketing mix and online marketing. Preferred messages can be easily reached to the target audience through online marketing. The research suggests for marketers to identify the significance of embracing and engaging an integrated marketing strategy.

Table 1 Recent literature on marketing mix (2011–2020) (continued)

Author(s)	Year	Study variables		Setting	Major findings and implications
		Independent variable (s)	Dependent variable		
Indumathi and Dawood	2016	Product, price, place, promotion.	Consumer buying behaviour in organic product	India	All the factors had a significant impact on consumer buying behaviour in an organic product. The paper will be beneficial for organic product stores. Recognition of the elements will aid the store holders and industrial approaches to take advantage of these effects in a way that will accomplish both the consumers and marketers. The paper can be formulated approaches and aided progress the store and the agriculturalists at large.
Payson and Karunanithy	2016	Product, price, place, promotion.	Buying behaviour	Sri Lanka	The significant and positive relationship between marketing mix and consumers' perception and buying behaviour. A significant suggestion of the result is that there is a need for looking at other important aspects to impact consumer perception and buying behaviour to make it better.
Nouri and Soltani	2015	Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.	Buying holiday homes	Cyprus	All the independent variables were significantly and positively associated with tourists' decisions to buy holiday homes. It is recommended that more attention should be paid to the appropriate application of marketing philosophies in the tourism industry. Marketing is the vital pillar of tourism and a necessary condition for its growth. So, the practice of marketing methods and skills in several areas of tourism and the selection of professional managers in this area seem to be needed.
Nguyen et al.	2015	Product, competitive price, shopping convenience, promotion, atmosphere, personnel.	Consumer food buying behaviour	Vietnam	All the elements except product factor had a significant and positive influence on the consumer buying decision. These results add to the literature relating to retail marketing and had marketing implications for taking the movement into supermarkets and enhancing sales.
Magatef	2015	Product, price, promotion, place (distribution).	Satisfaction of foreign tourists	Jordan	Product and promotion had the strongest influence on foreign tourists' satisfaction. Marketing mix elements should be applied and improved in the tourists' area to generate more customer satisfaction.
Anelia et al.	2015	Product, price, promotion, distribution.	Purchase decision and customer satisfaction	Indonesia	All the factors had a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. The company have to maintain and increase customer satisfaction because it is influenced by purchase decision. This study can also assess the company's marketing approach that has been done by the company.
Wongleedee	2015	Demographic factors, attitudes towards the marketing mix (4p's), attitudes towards product mix.	Purchasing behaviour for community products	Thailand	Consumers' attitudes towards the marketing mix factors of price, sellers and place had a significant and positive impact on purchasing behaviour in terms of the purchasing frequency. The higher buying frequency level leads to more revisits to shop at traditional markets.
Ismail et al.	2015	Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.	Customer satisfaction	Sri Lanka	Customer satisfaction was influenced significantly by all the factors of the marketing mix. The paper has recommendations for service organizations to achieve customer satisfaction and meet customers' needs by utilizing proper service marketing mix strategy.

Table 1 Recent literature on marketing mix (2011–2020) (continued)

Author(s)	Year	Study variables		Setting	Major findings and implications
		Independent variable (s)	Dependent variable		
Pourdehghan	2015	Products, price, channel of distribution, promotional activities, satisfaction, trust.	Brand loyalty	Iran	Brand loyalty was significantly influenced by product, price, distribution channels and promotional activities. Besides, satisfaction and trust significantly mediate the relationship between tourism marketing mix and brand loyalty.
Ahmed and Rahman	2015	Product, price, place, promotion.	Customer satisfaction	Malaysia	All the marketing mix elements significantly lead to customer satisfaction in the context of Islamic marketing. It is recommended to follow a cooperation and moderation stance to ensure satisfaction for both sellers and customers.
Kamau et al.	2015	Product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people.	Choice of accommodation	Kenya	Choice of accommodation in tourist destinations was significantly influenced by all the mix elements. This study helps players in the travel and hotel industry to provide a clear understanding of the local tourist so that they can focus on marketing approaches and mixes to meet the demands of several market divisions.
Murshid et al.	2014	Product, price, place, promotion.	Physicians' satisfaction	Malaysia	industry to be more positive in planning their marketing approaches and programs.
Alhadid and Zu'bi	2014	Product, price, place, promotion.	Company reputation	Jordan	All the marketing strategies had a significant and positive impact on company reputation. The study recommended that manufacturers of Jordanian vegetable oil focus more on marketing strategies as regards the impact on the company's reputation.
Prakash et al.	2014	Product, price, place, promotion.	Customer and long term growth	India	All the marketing strategies had a significant and positive impact on the customer and long term growth. Nowadays, a world where there is a solid competition between the firms to contest in the worldwide market it is authoritative for the firms to implement such marketing strategies practice that can be beneficial for both the clients, environment and can realise dividends to the firms.
Ebitu	2014	Marketing strategies (market dominance, marketing mix, innovative marketing, market development and expansion, corporate social responsibility).	Consumer' satisfaction	Nigeria	Marketing strategies were significantly and positively related to customer satisfaction. The paper suggests that UniCem should maintain the current strategic level and develop other marketing strategies such as total quality management for maintaining its cement quality, providing discounts on building and sustaining customers' loyalty, and building customer-friendly outlets to keep many small consumers directly in touch.
Dmour et al.	2013	Product, price, place, promotion, process, physical evidence and people.	Customer-based brand equity	Jordan	The components of the services marketing mix were associated significantly with brand equity based on the customer. Through the conception and development of relevant branding approaches, strong customer-based brand equity can be secured.

Table 1 Recent literature on marketing mix (2011–2020) (continued)

Author(s)	Year	Study variables		Setting	Major findings and implications
		Independent variable (s)	Dependent variable		
Adewale et al.	2013	Product, Promotion, Place, Price, packaging, after-sales service.	Business performance	Nigeria	Business performance in term of profitability was significantly influenced by all the independent variables. Several suggestions are made for SMEs including manufacturing quality products, imposing competitive prices, positioning suitably, using attractive packaging, after-sale services and other functional aids to customers.
Weng and Run	2013	Personal values, Preference of sales promotion methods	Behavioural intention and purchase satisfaction	Malaysia	The intent and satisfaction of the customer with all product forms is affected significantly by the choice of sales promotion methods. The study suggests that managers determine the characteristics of goods while choosing effective tactics and advertising strategies for improved separation of the market and targeting.
Sarker et al.	2012	Product, price, place, promotion, process, physical evidence and people.	Tourists' satisfaction	Bangladesh	All the factors except price element had a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction. It has got implications for policymakers regarding the future development of tourism activities.
Muala and Qurneh	2012	Product, price, place, promotion, process, physical evidence and personnel.	Loyalty through tourists satisfaction	Jordan	Significant factors that lead to satisfaction and loyalty were product, price, personnel, and place. It is recommended that domestic tourism strategy will explore the appropriate pricing conditions to enhance the worldwide tourism market share for Jordan. The emergence of the private sector with the ability to improve tourism places creates the area more competitive.
Satit et al.	2012	Product, price, place and promotion	Customer decision making towards travel agents	Indonesia	Customer decision making was significantly associated with product and prices. The research suggests that travel agents should follow the strategic recommendations proposed from the findings.
Pomeroy et al.	2011	Product, price, promotion, place, participants, process, physical evidence, partnership, packaging, programming.	Sustainable tourism	Australia	It proposes important reasons contributing to the creation and testing of a sustainable tourism marketing model that will deliberate on sustainability at each point of the planning process. The three key aspects, fiscal, environmental and socio-cultural, were modelled in all the marketing elements used in this research.

2.2.6 *Process*

The process consists of a series of activities during the service consumption period. The tourism process consists of activities, including the preparation of trips and the anticipation of journeys, remembrance, packages of travel planning. The tour plans cover maps, pathways and knowledge about accommodation, food, souvenirs and mementoes (Kannan, 2009). Applause should be given to the tourism and hospitality sectors by their use of ICTs and the adoption of existing technologies such as social networks to engage with consumers. ICT has been applied smartly and cost-effectively, requiring fewer staffs (Khan and Hossain, 2018). The process identifies the accumulation of the service, its actual procedures, the mechanisms and flow of activity, including the distribution of the service. Tourism products encompass tangible product features like goods which must be valued, sponsored and disseminated.

2.2.7 *Physical evidence*

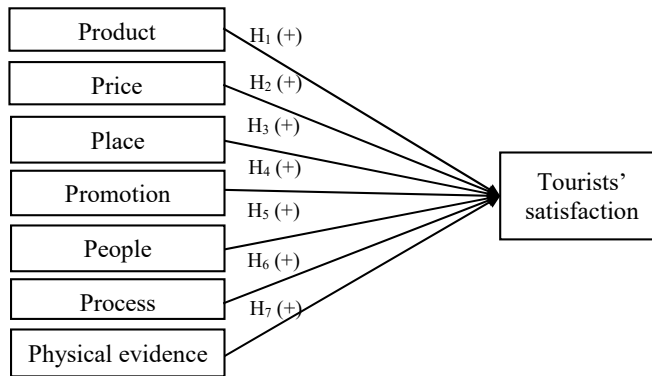
Services are intangible and therefore, consumers frequently rely on visible cues or physical signs to determine the service before it is bought and to measure their satisfaction with the service during and after use. In tourism, the physical evidence fundamentally depends on transportable experience, visit and relaxation (Kannan, 2009). The ecological embellishment and design pointedly influence the tourists' perception of the service (Shostack, 1977). The services' cap that is the atmosphere, the contextual music, orchestra facilities, and the physical schema of service capability are all components of the service experience; the presence of the employees may have a crucial influence on tourists' fulfilment and the service's experience (Rust et al., 1996).

The 7P's helps tourism industry to review and outline important topics that affect the marketing of its products and services and is often now mentioned to as the 7P's framework for the tourism marketing mix in the choosing tourism destinations, satisfaction, and retention perspectives. Table 1 gives a discussion of some current and most important articles on the 2011 to 2020 marketing mix.

3 **Conceptual model and hypotheses development**

In this research, there are seven independent variables (marketing mix) and one dependent variable (tourists' satisfaction) have recognised. Based on the previous literatures and discussions, the conceptual model (Figure 1) and research hypotheses (from H1 to H7) have been developed.

- H1 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by product.
- H2 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by price.
- H3 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by place.
- H4 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by promotion.
- H5 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by people.
- H6 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by process.
- H7 Tourists' satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by physical evidence.

Figure 1 Conceptual model

4 Research methods

4.1 Data collection and sampling method

Samples of the current study consisted of a total of 246 tourists' who visited at least once to any of the selected ten tourism destinations in the country. Data were collected using purposive sampling method. The survey using a structured questionnaire was conducted by personal interview which was also applied in other studies as well (Rahman et al., 2019; Sarker et al., 2012). The data collection was performed from August to December 2019. From a total of 246 responses, 235 responses were considered for statistical analysis while the rest of the 11 questionnaires were discarded because of incomplete information. The sample was consisted of 74% male and 26% female respondents and their maximum age level 20–40 years (67%), occupation status business (53%). Most of the respondents (65%) visited first-time and their purpose of the visit was tourism (75%). Respondents were the tourists of selected ten tourism destinations consisting of Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, Ahsan Manzil, Lalbag Fort, National Martyrs Memorial, Sundarban, Shat Gambuj mosque, the Shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal, Jaflong, and Srimongol. These destinations are popular and hotspot areas in Bangladesh (Beautiful Bangladesh, 2019).

4.2 Measurement instrument

Valid and reliable measurement items were adopted to measure the latent variables, e.g., tourism marketing mix, from the pertinent literature including Magatef (2015), Akroush and Al-Dmour (2006), as illustrated in Table 2. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections where the first section included general information about the participants, such as sex, age and work status, visiting times, intention and selection of destinations. The second and third sections included questions relating to the tourism marketing mix and the satisfaction of tourists. The Likert scale of 5 points, which ranged from strong disagreement to strong agreement, asked participants to show their agreement or disagreement on each question. A pretest was conducted on 15 respondents before the questionnaire was finalised.

Table 2 Constructs and measurement items

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Measurement items</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Sources</i>
Product	The beauty of natural sites	Jordan	Magatef (2015).
	Diversity of tourist sites		
	Personal safety and security		
Price	Prices reflect the quality of services		
	Reasonable tourist sites		
	Suitable entry prices to places		
Place	Access to easy and convenient		
	Adequate transportation to move		
	Available support services		
Promotion	Sufficient online information		
	Package tour offering		
	Tourism marketing campaigns		
People	Caring and cooperative personnel	Jordan	Akroush and Al-Dmour (2006).
	Well-trained personnel		
Process	Easy, quick and immediate		
	Free of errors		
	Confidentiality and committed service		
Physical evidence	Infrastructure available		
	Quality of accommodation		
	Sports facilities and recreational instruments		
Tourists' satisfaction	Tourists revisit in places	Jordan	Magatef (2015).
	Tourists recommend friends to visit places		
	Tourists' are satisfied with a visit to Bangladesh as a tourism destination		

4.3 Plan of data analysis

A partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach was used to analyse survey results and validate the suggested theories. Before conducting PLS-SEM, appropriate preliminary analyses including descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis), collinearity statistics (e.g., tolerance and VIF) were conducted to verify the multicollinearity of the independent variables. Moreover, unidimensionality and convergent validity were established by factor loading, and average variance extracted (AVE) respectively. Via the score of Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability (CR), the reliability of the scale items was established. Likewise, Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) were used to check the discriminant validity of the latent variables. The capacity of exogenous constructs is often evaluated by the determination coefficient (R^2).

SmartPLS is a useful tool in management science for calculating, developing, and validating models. The model describes causal mechanisms, empirically validates theoretical theories, and employs predictive steps. SmartPLS is a second-generation SEM

technique (Fuchs, 2011; Chin, 2010). SmartPLS provides the path model, which can explain the relationship between variables and indicators. The downside is the ambiguity of truth, which may not be perfectly represented in a model. There are always prejudices, and there is no such thing as perfect validity. Models are flawed and incomplete because they must deal with the complexities of the real world (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2004; Chin, 2010). With this method, the scientist checks the hypotheses and urges for the confirmed or unconfirmed hypotheses to provide a result (Nitzl, 2010). One downside is that the model must be evaluated using the r-squares of the various dependent and mediating variables. This makes comparing the model to other models more complicated (Shackman, 2013). SmartPLS must classify reliability and validity using less statistical approaches than covariance constructs. That is why resampling techniques, such as bootstrapping, are used to obtain knowledge about the model's validity and reliability. This is a drawback, but with a larger sample size, this disadvantage is minimised (Fuchs, 2011).

5 Findings and analysis

5.1 Descriptive statistics analysis

The centre of a distribution is indicated by the mean or central tendency (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, the deviation of the data or observation from the mean or central point can be measured by the standard deviation (Malhotra, 2010). The shape of the distribution is generally determined by Kurtosis and skewness (Hair et al., 2019). The results of descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness were illustrated in Table 3. Mean statistic indicated that all the constructs had a mean value above 3.0 whereas process generated the highest mean of 4.0369. Besides, the product had the lowest mean value of 3.2851. Skewness and kurtosis values were close to 0 indicating that the distributions of the data related to the study variables follow normality assumption.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>		<i>Kurtosis</i>	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. error</i>
Product	235	3.2851	0.88597	-0.059	0.159	-0.457	0.316
Price	235	3.3220	1.03264	-0.064	0.159	-0.645	0.316
Place	235	3.6284	1.01178	-0.956	0.159	0.739	0.316
Promotion	235	3.5305	0.83170	-0.281	0.159	0.004	0.316
People	235	3.8383	0.91604	-0.552	0.159	-0.208	0.316
Process	235	4.0369	0.73675	-0.623	0.159	0.830	0.316
Physical evidence	235	3.6326	0.93663	-0.369	0.159	-0.138	0.316
Tourists' satisfaction	235	3.8142	0.83489	-0.466	0.159	-0.068	0.316

5.2 Multicollinearity test

According to Hair et al. (2019), the estimated path coefficients can be affected if the exogenous constructs are highly correlated among themselves. Among various methods, variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance level are commonly used to assess any presence of multicollinearity. As recommended by Hair et al. (2019), VIF should be less than 5 and tolerance should be more than above 0.10. As illustrated in Table 4, all VIF and tolerance values did not cross the recommended threshold levels and thus, no such multicollinearity was there.

Table 4 Collinearity statistics

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Collinearity statistics</i>	
	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
Product	0.523	1.912
Price	0.423	2.363
Place	0.787	1.271
Promotion	0.394	2.536
People	0.478	2.093
Process	0.464	2.154
Physical evidence	0.471	2.125

5.3 Measurement model analysis (outer model)

Hair et al. (2019) delineate that “measurement model is a component of a theoretical path model that contains the indicators and their relationships with the constructs; also called the outer model in PLS-SEM.” To check whether the items are loaded on their respective constructs, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used (Hair et al., 2019). For conducting structural equation modelling, SmartPLS software package version 3.0 had been used (Ringle et al., 2015).

5.3.1 Assessment of unidimensionality

Unidimensionality elements of constructs indicate that each measurement item has an acceptable level of factor loading with the respective latent construct. As recommended by Hair et al. (2019), each construct should have measurement items with a minimum factor loading of 0.70. As illustrated in Table 5, only the item promotion3 has a factor loading of 0.633. However, as it is close to 0.70, the item has been retained. Therefore, the unidimensionality of the measurement model has been established.

5.3.2 Construct reliability tests

Construct reliability indicates the reliability of the internal consistency of each latent construct. The alpha of Cronbach and CR are among the most common approaches used to determine the construct’s reliability. The recommended scores of reliability value are equal to or above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Table 5 showed that all the CR and Cronbach’s alpha values except promotion (0.660), and people (0.643) fall within the acceptable level and thus, the constructs are reliable for further analyses.

5.3.3 Convergent validity tests

The values of the AVE above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019) were used to explain the convergent validity of the latent construct. The AVE value of 0.50 or higher suggests that the latent factors account for around 50% or more of the variation in the observed items. All the AVE values were, accordingly, appropriate and therefore valid for further study, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Measurement model summary

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Product	Product1	0.733	0.744	0.854	0.662
	Product2	0.864			
	Product3	0.837			
Price	Price1	0.834	0.780	0.872	0.694
	Price2	0.812			
	Price3	0.852			
Place	Place1	0.896	0.807	0.884	0.717
	Place2	0.796			
	Place3	0.846			
Promotion	Promotion1	0.839	0.660	0.817	0.602
	Promotion2	0.838			
	Promotion3	0.633			
People	People1	0.871	0.643	0.848	0.737
	People2	0.845			
Process	Process1	0.822	0.722	0.843	0.642
	Process2	0.796			
	Process3	0.786			
Physical evidence	Physical evidence1	0.789	0.769	0.867	0.685
	Physical evidence2	0.884			
	Physical evidence3	0.807			
Tourists' satisfaction	Satisfaction1	0.848	0.801	0.883	0.715
	Satisfaction2	0.851			
	Satisfaction3	0.838			

5.3.4 Discriminant validity tests

Discriminant validity ensures that no large inter construct correlation and cross-loading exist among the latent constructs. The square root of AVE and correlation coefficients among the constructs are compared to create discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). The square roots of AVE shown diagonally are greater than the inter-construct similarities shown off-diagonally, as seen in Table 6. Thus, the discriminant validity is obtained for the research constructs.

Table 6 Discriminant validity assessment: Fornell-Larcker criterion

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Physical evidence</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Price</i>
People	0.858			
Physical evidence	0.566	0.828		
Place	0.356	0.353	0.847	
Price	0.555	0.608	0.417	0.833
Process	0.647	0.573	0.406	0.580
Product	0.489	0.590	0.275	0.594
Promotion	0.595	0.574	0.396	0.677
Tourists' satisfaction	0.616	0.704	0.406	0.664
<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Product</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Tourists' satisfaction</i>
People				
Physical evidence				
Place				
Price				
Process	0.801			
Product	0.416	0.813		
Promotion	0.596	0.579	0.776	
Tourists' satisfaction	0.632	0.605	0.645	0.846

Table 7 HTMT

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Physical evidence</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Product</i>	<i>Promotion</i>
People							
Physical evidence	0.798						
Place	0.473	0.427					
Price	0.770	0.775	0.498				
Process	0.951	0.759	0.518	0.765			
Product	0.699	0.775	0.338	0.759	0.558		
Promotion	0.923	0.816	0.525	0.954	0.861	0.831	
Tourists' satisfaction	0.855	0.891	0.486	0.828	0.829	0.773	0.888

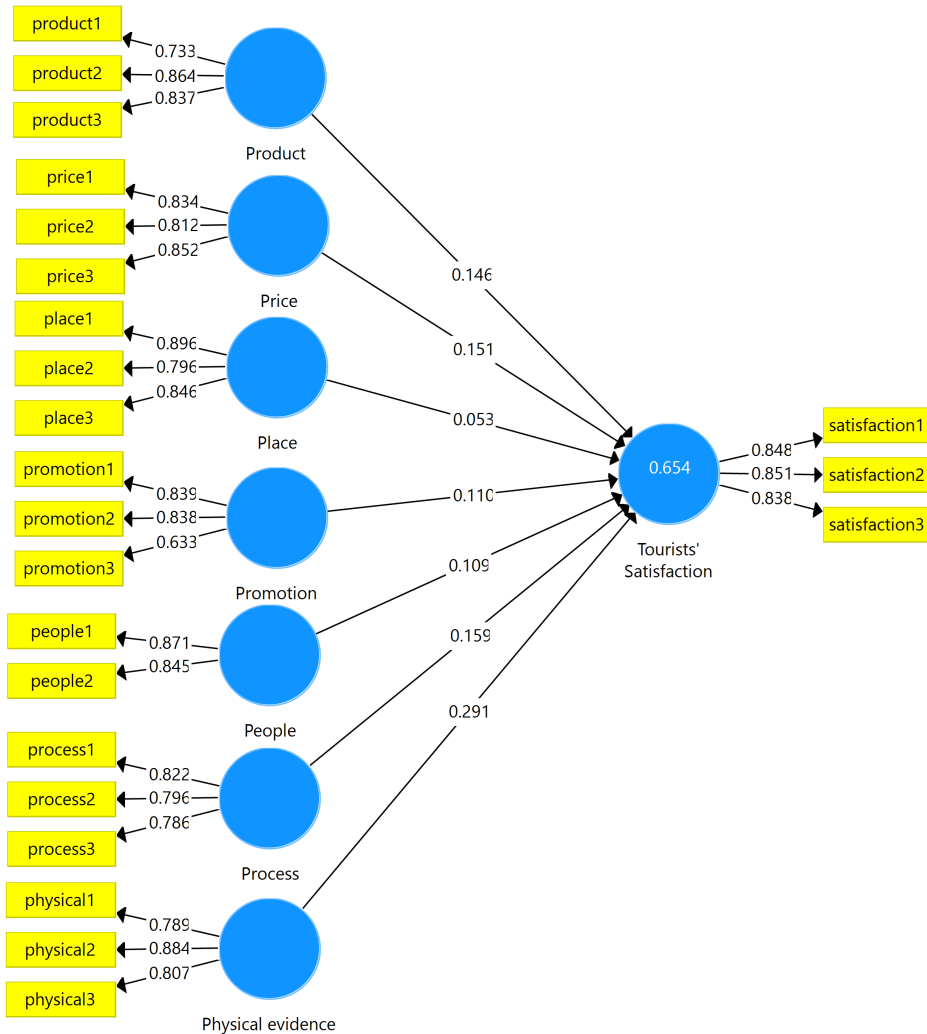
Discriminant validity in PLS-SEM can also be determined by another measure called HTMT criterion. HTMT measures true correlations between two constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The highest HTMT value suggested is 0.90 and over 0.90 reveals lack of discriminatory validity (Hair et al., 2019). Table 7 showed that except HTMT value among process and people (0.951), promotion and people (0.923), promotion and price (0.954), all other values are below 0.90 and therefore, discriminant validity is ensured.

5.4 Structural model analysis (inner model)

After testing and validating the full measurement model, the structural model has to be assessed (Hair et al., 2019). The decision regarding acceptance and rejection of the

proposed hypotheses through significant and insignificant relationship can be determined by structural model analysis (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Byrne, 2013). A bootstrapping procedure with a subsample of 500 had been applied in this current study for estimation of the model (Ringle et al., 2015).

Figure 2 Structural model (see online version for colours)



The structural model analysis consists of the paths, path coefficients (β), t value, p values and results of the path coefficients. To test the formulated hypotheses, a two-tailed t-test was adopted where the level of significance was 5%. If the measured t-value is greater than the critical value of 1.96, the coefficients would be statistically significant. Table 8 and Figure 2, the results found that the path coefficients of four latent constructs including product, price, process and the physical evidence had a significant and positive impact on tourists' satisfaction at $p < 0.05$. Hypotheses H1, H2, H6, and H7 were accepted. However, the other three elements, e.g., place, promotion, people had no

significant positive influence on tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, H3, H4, and H5 were rejected. The largest path coefficient ($\beta = 0.291$) of physical evidence indicated that if the physical evidence is increased by one standard deviation unit, the satisfaction of tourists would possibly increase by 0.291 standard deviation unit provided that all other independent factors remain unchanged.

Table 8 Structural model analysis

<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path coefficients (β)</i>	<i>T statistics</i>	<i>P values</i>	<i>Impact</i>
H1 Product -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.146	2.143	0.033*	Accepted
H2 Price -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.151	2.223	0.027*	Accepted
H3 Place -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.053	1.363	0.174	Rejected
H4 Promotion -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.110	1.434	0.152	Rejected
H5 People -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.109	1.670	0.096	Rejected
H6 Process -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.159	2.340	0.020*	Accepted
H7 Physical evidence -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.291	4.671	0.000*	Accepted

Notes: $p < 0.05$, based on the two-tailed test; $t = 1.96$.

6 Discussion

In Bangladeshi setting, the study aimed at understanding the impact of the marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction towards tourism destinations. It had been found that most of the researchers explored the influence of marketing mix elements on purchase intention, behavioural intention, satisfaction, purchase decision, loyalty, choice of accommodation in destinations, and sustainability (Rahman et al., 2019; Sobari et al., 2017; Pomeroy et al., 2011). However, there was less focus and thus few studies into the influence of the marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction in Bangladesh.

The results indicated a significant impact of the product, price, process, and physical evidence on the satisfaction of tourists. On the other hand, a significant association was not found between place, promotion, people and tourists' satisfaction. Among all the elements of the marketing mix, physical evidence was the most important driver ($\beta_7 = 0.291$). This result was in line with Rahman et al. (2019) who noted that physical evidence did have a significant effect. However, the opposite result demonstrated by Hossain et al. (2020) as physical evidence was not found to have a significant impact on intention. Among all the elements of the marketing mix, the place was the least insignificant driver ($\beta_3 = 0.053$). This finding was in line with Hossain et al. (2020) who found that place of service marketing mix did not significantly affect the intention of the consumers. However, the opposite result demonstrated by Rahman et al. (2019) as the place was found to have a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction. The price was the important factor which was in line with Hossain et al. (2020), who found that price factor had a positive influence on intention, but the significant effect of price was not consistent with Sarker et al. (2012) and Bathmathan and Rajadurai (2019) who investigated that marketing mix except price had a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. The promotion was the insignificant factor which was consistent with Rahman et al. (2019) who found

significant effects of all marketing mix factors on tourists' satisfaction except promotion. The significant effect of the product was not compatible with Nguyen et al. (2015), who found that decision and satisfaction were substantially and positively affected by all elements of the marketing mix except the product. People variable was the insignificant factor which was not consistent with Hossain et al. (2020) and Rahman et al. (2019) who found a significant association between people and tourists' satisfaction, and likewise process was the significant factor which was not consistent with Hossain et al. (2020), who found that process had an insignificant influence on satisfaction, but the significant influence of process was consistent with Rahman et al. (2019) and Sarkar et al. (2012) who found that process had a significant influence on tourists' satisfaction.

7 Conclusions, limitations and direction for future research

Bangladesh is a country of natural wonders and the centre of attraction for visitors who are defined as the person switching from one place to another to fulfil their desires and wishes (Zulfikar, 1998). Several reasons for which people like to visit country including recreational, business, religious, and cultural, sports, joining conference and seminar and so forth. There are plenty of stunning beaches, religious attractions, archaeological sites, valleys, islands, trees and the jungles as well as many historic spots in Bangladesh to flourish. Preserving sites and developing vital facilities to draw visitors from numerous regions of the country and of foreign countries is now very necessary (Latif et al., 2016). The study aimed at exploring how the marketing mix affect tourists in Bangladesh and the findings reveal that the satisfaction of tourists has been influenced by four factors. Conversely, three elements had an insignificant relationship with tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, the findings of the assessment can be created consciousness among the all stakeholders about tourists' satisfaction related to marketing mix, as well as in the research area. Directors of Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) might be thoughtful suitable in developing the plan for applying marketing strategies of tourists' satisfaction in hotspot destinations in Bangladesh. Since the results indicated that significant impact was found with product, price, process, and physical evidence on the satisfaction of tourists' and significant association was not found between place, promotion, people and tourists' satisfaction it is not only important for the government official to look into it for further strategy planning but also small to mid-sized organisations, managers, consultants from tourism industry should consider this result for their business planning. Because this study was directly conducted on the tourists' and from the very hotspot of Bangladesh tourist attractions, hence it might help making a good policy for future tourism businesses and activities.

The research has been demonstrated the marketing mix (7P's) of satisfaction towards the tourism destinations. However, the study has also some limitations. First of all, it is difficult to generalise results using a non-probability (purposive) sampling method which may not represent the true population. It is recommended that the probability sampling method be used in future studies to improve the generalisation of the population. Secondly, owing to sampling areas including 10 chosen hotspot destinations, the data may not be the true representation of the overall judgment of the Bangladeshi tourists. Third, the present research considers the satisfaction towards the tourism sector in the case of Bangladeshi tourists, thus ignores tourists from abroad. Fourthly, a small group of 235 visitors with at least one visit to the selected destinations in Bangladesh was

considered. A broader sample size, including domestic and international visitors, should be included in the expanded version of this research. Finally, the reliability of the measurement scales used to measure promotion and people showed Cronbach's alpha of fewer than 0.7 (0.660, 0.643). The data were analysed by smartPLS, the limitation is the complexity of the reality which could be not demonstrated perfectly in a model. The items for these two aspects will then be modified for better reliability in future studies. However, the research discussion also shows whether the variable is product or physical evidence different studies shows different impacts, if somewhere a variable shows a significant effect with the same variable it shows insignificant effect. Future research can include diverse respondent segments to get comprehensive results.

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