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Image of Cox's Bazar Beach as a Tourist Destination: An Investigation

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Abstract: *The study is conducted about Cox's Bazar beach- a prime tourist spot of Bangladesh. The purpose of the study is to assess the image of Cox's Bazar beach perceived by tourists. The study is based on replies to 310 questionnaires and the secondary data. The factor analysis is conducted to create correlated variable composites from the original attributes. The result of the study states that the visitors identified six factors, which are "natural beauty and restful atmosphere" "hygiene and sanitation" "security and accommodation quality" "hospitality and information" "emergency and caring facility" and "shopping facility". Multiple regression analysis is conducted and the results reveal that hygiene and sanitation, and accommodation and security are important that influenced overall tourist image towards Cox's Bazar beach.*

Keywords: Beach tourism, Destination image, Tangible and intangible attribute, Factor analysis, Cox's Bazar beach.

1. Introduction

Today, the destination image has become a strategic weapon and competitive advantage in the tourism industry: it plays a crucial role in the description, promotion, distribution, amalgamation, organization and delivery of the destinations' product. Beyond doubt, a positive image of a destination supports tourists' decision-making process. Moreover, positive image is responsible for 'awareness' and 'evoked' sets. Consequently, it serves as a differentiating factor among the competing destinations (Pikkemaat 2002; Sonmez & Sirakaya 2002). Image is the opinion of the people about an object, an institution or a person. (Okay 2005). From this point of view, image which consists of objective enlightenment level, impressions, prejudices, dreams, expectations, emotions and thoughts, are the determinants in tourists' choosing their holiday destinations. Further, image is supposed to have cognitive, affective and co native components (Baloglu & Bringberg 1997; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Gartner 1993; Tarakçıoglu & Aydın 2003). According to these assumptions, image is the total of the consumers' impressions, beliefs and opinions about a destination and is a comprehensive and emotional process (Baloglu& Bringberg 1997:11). In terms of improving and marketing tourism, image is an important factor that affects the demand. Each destination has an image, and some can have a stronger image than others. In order to develop a competitive position, it is important to create and transmit a favorable image to potential tourists in target markets (Birgit 2004). The destination marketers need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their tourism area, as it is important to the travelers' images of that destination. Destination images influence tourists' travel decision making and behavior towards a destination as well as

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satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience. Therefore, perceived images are the basis of the evaluation or selection process and thus provide the link between motivations and destination selection (O'Leary & Deegan 2003). Therefore, image can be considered a push and a pull factor to motivate people towards a specific destination. The prime objective of the study is to measure the image of Cox's Bazar beach as a destination from the tourists' perspective. The study also aims at finding the factors that play vital role to develop overall image of Cox's Bazar beach as a destination.

Cox's Bazar is the tourist capital of Bangladesh. It has economic as well as social value in the country. From different literature it is clear that there are many studies have been conducted on tourism potentialities, tourism facilities, tourism development plan as well as problems and prospects in Bangladesh. So far researchers of this study didn't find any rich study conducted in this field covering the existing image of beach tourism in Bangladesh specially Cox's Bazar as the longest sea beach of the world as well as tourist destination. This is a sharp research gap. Present study is an ample step towards covering this gap. The findings of the study will help to policy makers, marketers, service providers as well as concerned authority to identify the target market and market needs as well as to differentiate services for them. The findings may also be helpful to policy makers, planners of Government and other related bodies of Tourism. Moreover, the literature of this field will be enriched.

The first section of the paper deals with introduction followed by an overview of Cox's Bazar and findings from some relevant literature. It then presents the conceptual framework, hypotheses and methodology of the study. Finally, the findings of the study are discussed in several sub-sections followed by implications for managers and then conclusion of the article.

2. An Overview of Cox's Bazar as a Tourist Destination

Cox's Bazar beach of Bangladesh is the world's longest sea beach. It is the tourist hub having 120 km beach slopping gently down to the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal against the picturesque background of a chain of hill covered with deep green forests. This type of smooth and straight sea beach is hardly seen in any place of the world. Miles of golden sands, towering cliffs, surfing waves, rare conch shells, and delightful seafood are the specialties of Cox's Bazar beach. Every year a large number of tourists from home and abroad come to visit this beach for enjoyment. Now Cox's Bazar has 154 restaurants for food supply to the tourists and each of them employs on average 22 assistants. The total figure of assistants stands for 3388 persons. Then for tourists Cox's Bazar has 220 hotels and guest houses, and each employs on average 20 people and thus the total account is 4400. Again altogether Cox's Bazar tourism registers 54 tour operators and guide houses in which on average 15 persons work in each company and thus total figure is 810 persons working in the tour operators. Again on average 5000 construction workers are doing and maintaining family by building hotels, motels and guesthouses and so on. Many local people including students are working as tourist guides, doing junk business, rent-a-car business, land business, opening departmental stores, hiring umbrella on the sea beach locally known as 'kit-kot', driving small playing vehicles on the beach locally known as 'z-ski' and so on. A large number of people are also involved in fishing and collecting seafood and sea products for their livelihood. Around altogether 10000 people are working in the tourism sector in Cox's Bazar and each person maintains a family of 6 persons, then this

tourism industry is giving food to the 60000 people (Saleh *2010).* Now the major source of economy of Cox's Bazar is tourism. From general observation, it is understood that tourism has brought a big change in this area. On economic front, the local community and other stakeholders like investors, hoteliers, tour operators, developers and so on are getting benefits and its economy is quite good compared to other backward area.

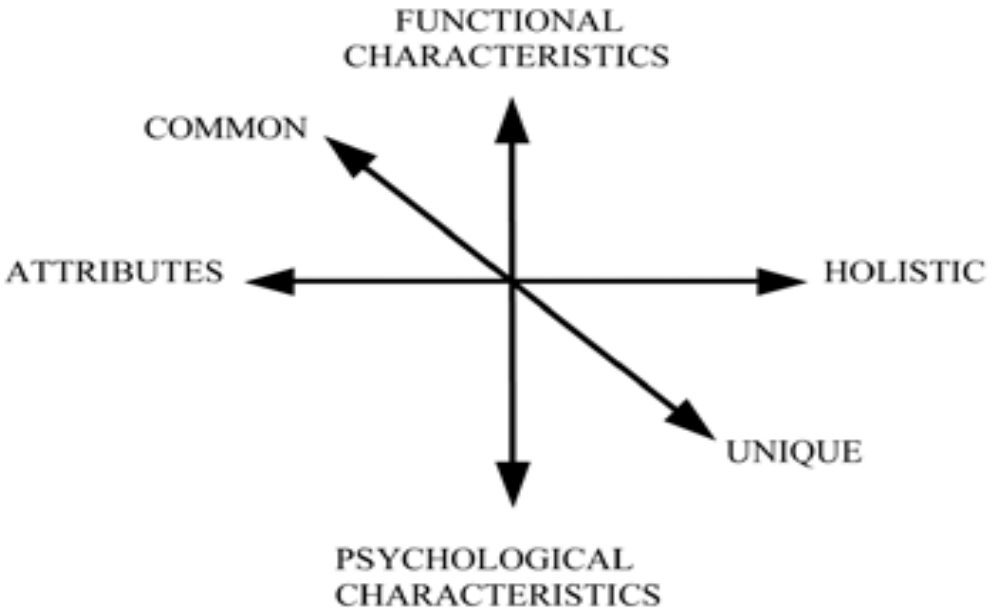
3. Literature Review

Analyzing destination image has become an important strand of tourism research within the past two decades (Chon 1990; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Dagostar& Isotalo 1992; Crompton & Ankomah 1993; Milman & Pizam 1995; Dann 1996; MacKay & Fesenmaier 1997; Murphy & Pritchard 1997; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Baloglu & Mangaloglu 2001; Pike 2002; Sonmez & Sirakaya 2002; Peters & Pikkemaat 2003). The most frequently cited definition of a destination image is delivered by Crompton (1979), who stated that 'an image may be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination' (Gallarza & Saura 2002). Focusing on destination determined image factors and following thereby Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) ground-breaking work on the measurement of destination images tangible (functional) and intangible (psychological) attributes of a destination can be distinguished: while tangible attributes are characteristics of an image which are directly observable (or measurable) intangible attributes are less tangible and more difficult to observe (and measure). Khan and Haque (2006), Islam and Nazrul (2004), Hasan (1992), others studies conducted by Hossain and Firozzaman (2003), Alam and Shamsuddoha (2003), Shamsuddoha (2005), Hossain (2006), Lincoln (2008). These studies focused that the significance of tourism is viewed from many angles like economic, social, cultural, political, etc. Azam, et al, conducted a study on factors affecting to choose Bangladesh as a tourist destination. The study shows that service quality, natural beauty, security and shopping facility are statistically significant in explaining the intention to select a tour destination in Bangladesh. Another study conducted by Sofique and Parveen (2009) and Ahammed (2010) directly relating to Cox's Bazar tourism regarding economic and socio-cultural effect of tourism.

4. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The measurement of destination image has been of great interest to both, tourism researchers and practitioners. There is a wide agreement among various authors on the research on the image of a tourism destination conducted by Hunt 1971; Lawson and Niven 1994; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Fakeye and Crompton 1991; Gallarza, Gil and Calderon 2002; Reilly 1990. Among others, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, 2003) contributed greatly to the conceptualization of tourism destination image, by acknowledging the existence of three axes/dimensions which supported the image of any destination (the functional/psychological, the common/unique, and the holistic/attribute axes). The framework for the destination image, using the attribute-functional and holistic-psychological continuums (as noted by Echtner and Ritchie 2003), is presented in Fig.1.

Fig. 1: The components of destinations image (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; p.37-48)



This framework suggests that a destination image include the perceptions of individual functional common attributes (e.g. price level, climate, transportation, infrastructure, type of accommodation, etc.) and psychological common attributes (e.g. safe place, friendly local people, quality of service, fame, etc.). On the other hand, image of destination can include unique features and events e.g. the functional holistic images are based on measurable characteristics, such as a mental picture of the physical characteristics (hills, villages) and the psychological holistic images concern about feelings towards the overall impressions of the atmosphere or mood of a particular destination (Echtner & Ritchie 2003). As stated by Martineau (1958), an image consists of functional characteristics (tangible aspects/ directly observable) and psychological characteristics (intangible aspects/ indirectly observable), and both these components play a critical role in the determining the image. This conceptualization of image, developed by Echtner and Ritchie (2003), was adapted in the present study to measure the tourists' images of sea beach destinations. Other studies which had also adapted this concept were conducted by Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) and Grosspietsch (2006). In order to measure the image of the Cox's Bazar beach destinations 23 attributes were adapted from the previous studies by Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001), Beerli and Martin (2004), Ibrahim and Gill (2005), Pike and Ryan (2004), Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002), with specific destination characteristics. Demographic variables (which include gender, marital status, age, education level, occupation and monthly income) were used to provide additional information of the respondents. The theory of consumer behavior for a service sector points out that customers' perceptions, choice behavior, buying behavior and levels of satisfaction are influenced by the customer's background, characteristics and external stimuli (Fornell 1992).

5. Hypothesis of the Study

H1: Ho: No difference exists between derived image factors in relation to tourists' demographic characteristics.
H2: Ho: No differences exist between image attributes and the overall image of tourists towards Cox's Bazar beach.

6. Methodology of the Study

The study carried out in Cox's Bazar beach area. The present study is exploratory as well as descriptive in nature, because different methods of both types of research were used. The study area was selected purposively considering socio-economic importance of the beach. All tourists are target population and population nature is known and measurable in size. Simple Random Sampling technique was used to select sample and sample size was 320 (usable 310).

A structured questionnaire was constructed using a Likert type scale (5 point scale, 5 being very good and 1 being very bad). Primary data were collected through personal interview and secondary data were collected from relevant research report and publications, newspapers, books, journals and websites. Appropriate statistical analyzes such as frequencies, descriptive, analysis of Variance, Principle components analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The factor analysis was conducted to create correlated variable composites from the total attributes. The multiple regression analysis was used to finds the causal relation between dependent and independent variable. These statistical analyzes were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 19) software.

7. Discussions and Findings of the Study

7.1 Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile

Tables 01 provide the respondents' information. Out of a total of 310 respondents listed for analysis, 249 (80.3%) were female and 61 (19.7%) were male. Data were collected from different age group. Large group of respondents were from 15-29 (58.7%) age group, followed by 30-44 (33.9%) age group.

Table 1: Respondents Socio-Demographic Profile

Descriptions	N	(%)	Descriptions	N	(%)
Respondents' Gender:			**Respondents' occupation:**		
Male	249	80.3	Student	101	32.6
Female	61	19.7	Businessman	86	27.7
Total	310	100.0	Govt. job	28	9.0
Respondents' Age:			Private Job	76	24.5
Below 15	09	2.9	Social worker	6	1.9
15-29	182	58.7	Others	13	4.2
30-44	105	33.9	Total	310	100.0
44-60	10	3.2	**Respondents' Marital status:**		
Above 60	4	1.3	Unmarried	158	51.0
Total	310	100.0	Newly married	54	17.4
Respondents' Education:			Divorced	29	9.4
Illiterate	12	3.9	Married without child	15	4.8
Below SSC	29	9.4	Married with child	51	16.5
Up to HSC	84	27.1	Child not dependent	2	.6
Graduate	130	41.9	Total	309	99.7
Post Graduate	52	16.8	Missing	1	.3
Others	2	.6	Total	310	100
Total	309	99.7			
Missing	1	.3			
Total	310	100.0			
Monthly Income:					
Below 10,000	34	11.0			
10,000-30,000	93	30.0			
31,000-50,000	47	15.2			
51,000-70,000	39	12.6			
Above 71,000	24	7.7			
no income	73	23.5			
Total	310	100.0			
Total	310	100			

Source: Field survey

Surprisingly, highest 41.9% of the respondents have completed graduation level followed by 27.1% secondary level. In addition, 32.6% respondents were students, where as 27.7% respondents answered that they are businessman, followed by 24.5% are private job holder and 9% are government service holder and others category includes self employed in different profession at the time of the survey. Respondents listed 7.7% of their income more than Taka 71,000, and highest 30 % have income range 10,000-30,000, 15.2% have 31,000-50,000 Taka per month and 23.5% respondents have no income and dependent to family income. The sample distribution

provides a clear idea that male, young with graduate education and business people are the main visitors at Cox's Bazar beach.

7.1.1 The Identification of Image for Cox's Bazar beach as Destination

The table 2 revealed that out of 23 attributes only four attributes had highest mean score <(M=4.00) and 14 attributes scored 3 and 5 attributes had the lowest score <3.

Table 2: Shows the image score given to the attributes by the tourists

Attributes	N	Result		
		Mean	SD	V
Natural attractions of the beach	308	4.47	0.64	0.41
Scenery and views of the beach area	302	4.47	0.63	0.40
Scenery of sunset	306	4.16	0.82	0.67
Enjoying sea waves	306	4.00	0.91	0.83
Service quality of residential hotels	306	3.42	0.77	0.60
Service quality of transportations	307	3.39	0.82	0.68
Local people behavior and hospitality towards tourists	305	3.36	0.95	0.91
Road quality in the spot area	306	3.32	0.61	0.37
Financial, physical and other safety and security	303	3.31	1.10	1.22
Food quality at restaurants	298	3.25	0.83	0.69
Price of Accommodations	302	3.25	1.02	1.05
Service quality of restaurants	305	3.19	0.86	0.74
Local product, sea products shopping facilities	306	3.17	0.78	0.62
Easy , relaxed and noise free environment	305	3.16	1.00	1.00
Swimming, surfing, and boating facilities	305	3.15	1.10	1.21
Pollution free nature and environment	305	3.12	1.07	1.15
Available information about Cox's Bazar	306	3.08	1.07	1.15
Amalgamation views of sea, sky and hills	304	3.00	0.96	0.93
Cleanliness of public areas nearest the beach	306	2.63	0.90	0.81
Watch tower facility for enjoying sea view and	304	2.44	1.09	1.19
Tourist caring facility such as personal care, child care	306	2.38	0.89	0.80
Public and Private toilet facilities nearest the beach	307	2.37	0.99	0.98
Emergency service such as lifeboat, ambulance, fast aid	306	2.17	0.80	0.65

Source: SPSS output of primary data

The highest mean score with respect to image measurement occurred in the case of item- natural attraction and scenery and views of the beach area (M=4.47), followed by the scenery of sunset (M=4.16) and Enjoying sea waves (M=4.00) and lowest image attributes was emergency service such as lifeboat, ambulance, fast aid (M=2.17). Image attributes mean scores below 2.75 are interpreted as poor; scores between 2.75 to 3.25 indicated average; scores 3.25 to 4.00 were interpreted as good and above 4.00 excellent (Birgit, 2004).

7.1.2 Tourist's Perception towards Overall Image with the Cox's Bazar Beach

Respondents were also questioned about their perception on overall image of Cox's Bazar beach. The results are summarized in Table 3. From the research findings, 36.36% of the respondents indicated that they are very good, 49.03% are good, 11.04% are as usual, and 3.57% of the respondents expressed bad. No respondents are highly dissatisfied. The mean value of respondents' overall image was 4.09, which tended toward the high end of the scale at 5 point scale. This suggests that the Cox's Bazar beach carried good image to the tourists as a whole.

Table 3: Tourists' perceptions on overall image of Cox's Bazar beach (N=308)

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very good	112	36.36	36.36
Good	151	49.03	85.39
As usual	34	11.04	96.43
Bad	11	3.57	100
Very bad	0	00	
Total	308	100	

Source: Field survey result
Note: Overall image mean ranges from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good)

7.1.3 Dimensions of Destination Image of Cox's Bazar beach

After identifying the importance degree of the image attributes by the tourists, the authors tried to group them under some factors by employing "Factor Analysis" through SPSS 19.0. Factor Analysis was undertaken to identify the underlying dimensions for the image of Cox's Bazar beach as a destination and create correlated variable composites from the original 23 attributes and to identify a smaller set of dimensions, or factors that explain most of the variances between the attributes. The derived factor scores are then applied in subsequent regression analysis. In this study, factors are retained only if they had values greater than or equal to 1.0 of eigenvalue and a factor loading > 0.4. The principal components factor method was used to generate the initial solution. The overall significance of the correlation matrix was 0.000, with a Bartlett test of sphericity value of 1565.16 with degree of freedom 253. The statistical probability and the test indicated that there was a significant correlation between the variables, and the use of factor analysis was appropriate. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin overall measure of sampling adequacy was 0.781, which was meritorious (Hair, Anderson, and Black 1999).

Table 4 illustrates the results of the factor analysis. The eigenvalues suggested that six-factor solution explained 62.66% of the overall variance before the rotation. From the varimax-rotated factor matrix, six factors with 23 variables were defined that loaded most heavily on them (loading >0.4). The communality of each variable ranged from 0.461 to 0.850. To test the reliability and internal consistency of each factor, the Cronbach's alpha of each was determined. The results showed that the alpha coefficients ranged from 0.638 to 0.863 for the six factors. The results were considered more than reliable, since 0.50 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Nunnally, 1967).

Table 4: Factor Analysis Result

Factors relating to Image	Factor Loading	ommunalities	Results
Factor 1: Natural Beauty and Restful Atmosphere			
Scenery and views of the beach	.857	.810	genvalue 5.05
Natural attractions of the beach	.817	.725	Variance explained (%) 21.97
Scenery of sunset	.789	.644	
Enjoying sea waves	.698	.598	Cronbach's alpha α = .863
Pollution free nature and environment	.548	.572	
Amalgamation views of sea, sky and hills	.525	.720	Number of items 07
Easy, relaxed and noise free environment	.516	.767	
Factor 2: Hygiene and Sanitation			
Watch tower facility for enjoying sea view	.775	.697	genvalue 3.68
Public and Private toilet facilities nearest the beach	.758	.663	Variance explained (%) 16.01
Cleanliness of public areas nearest the beach	.695	.570	Cronbach's alpha α = .773
Service quality of restaurants	.543	.623	Number of items 04
Factor 3: Security and Accommodation Quality			
Financial, physical and other safety and security	.735	.645	genvalue 1.93
Price of the accommodation	.730	.561	ariance explained %) 8.43
Service quality of residential hotels	.591	.500	ronbach's alpha 18
Service quality of transportations	.578	.461	umber of items 05
Swimming, surfing, and boating facilities	.534	.630	
Factor 4:Hospitality and Information			
Local people behavior and hospitality towards tourists	.680	.522	genvalue 1.33
Information source about cox's Bazar	.531	.540	Variance explained (%) 5.81
Food quality at restaurants	.471	.477	Cronbach's alpha α = .638
			Number of items 03
Factor 5: Emergency and Caring Facility			
Tourist caring facility such as personal care, child care etc.	.856	.822	genvalue 1.23
			Variance explained (%) 5.34
Emergency service such as lifeboat, ambulance, fast aid service	.839	.85	Cronbach's alpha α =.777
			Number of items 02

Factor 6: Shopping facility			
Road quality in the spot area	.694	.516	genvalue 1.17 Variance explained (%) 5.10
Local product, sea products shopping facilities	.649	.503	Cronbach's alpha α = .644 Number of items 03

Source: SPSS output of primary data

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis,
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: p =0.000 (x2 = 1565.16, df = 253), KMO= 0.781

Factor 1 was labeled as ***Natural Beauty and Restful Atmosphere*** which consisted of seven items namely scenery and views of the beach, natural attractions of the beach, scenery of sunset, enjoying sea waves, pollution free nature and environment, amalgamation views of sea, sky and hills and easy, relaxed and noise free environment. This factor explains 21.97 percent of the variance in the data with an eigenvalue of 5.05. (α = 0.863).

Factor 2 was termed as ***Hygiene and Sanitation*** for 16.01percent of the variance with an eigenvalue of 3.68 this factor is loaded with four items with relation to watch tower facility for enjoying sea view, public and private toilet facilities nearest the beach, cleanliness of public areas nearest the beach and service quality of restaurants. (α = 0.773).

Factor 3 (α = 0.818) was named as ***Security and Quality of Accommodation*** consisting of five items namely financial, physical and other safety and security, price of the accommodation, service quality of residential hotels, service quality of transportations and swimming, surfing, and boating facilities. This factor accounts for 8.43 percent of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.93.

Factor 4 with an eigenvalue of 1.33 and 5.81 percent of the variance is called ***Hospitality and Information*** is classified into three activities namely local people behavior and hospitality towards tourists, information source about cox's Bazar and food quality at restaurants. (α = 0.638).

Factor 5 was labeled as ***Emergency and Caring Facility*** which accounted for 5.34 percent of the variance and 1.23 eigenvalue. This factor consisted of two factors viz. tourist caring facility such as personal care, child care etc. and emergency service such as lifeboat, ambulance, and fast aid service. (α = 0.777).

Factor 6 named as ***Shopping facility*** which consisted of road quality in the spot area and local product, sea products shopping facilities. This factor accounted for 5.10 percent of the variance with 1.17 eigenvalue (α = 0.644).

The tourist agreed that under each dimension the selected attributes were a decision to build image of Cox's Bazar beach as a tourist destination, but in different degrees of agreement. The results of the factor analysis underline somehow a differentiation between tangible (Functional characteristics) and intangible (Psychological

characteristics) image building factors as suggested by Echtner & Ritchie (1993). Whereas factor 2 (hygiene and sanitation), factor 3 (security and accommodation quality), factor 5 (emergency and caring facility) and factor 6 (shopping facility) include more tangible items which all together constitute the core elements of any destination product bundle, factor 1 (natural beauty and restful atmosphere) and factor 4 (hospitality and information) contain the more intangible items of a tourism product.

7.1.4 Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile and Image Perception Behavior

H1: Ho: No difference exists between derived image factors in relation to tourists' demographic characteristics.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze hypothesis 1 and to determine whether there were differences among derived factors with respect to demographic characteristics. Table 5 shows image perception mean based on the different categories and ANOVA results for customers' demographics.

Table 5: Image result by tourist' socio-demographic characteristics

Variable	Result	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Gender	F value	1.455	2.845	3.243	5.022	.000	3.530
	Sig. (p)	.229	.093	.073	**.026****	.983	.062
Age	F value	.748	1.752	2.649	1.341	.353	4.692
	Sig. (p)	.560	.140	.034	.256	.842	**.001****
Education Level	F value	2.179	.569	2.982	3.065	.492	1.473
	Sig. (p)	**.058***	.723	**.013****	**.011****	.782	.200
Marital Status	F value	.524	2.054	1.746	.765	1.526	4.310
	Sig. (p)	.758	.073	.126	.576	.183	**.001****
Occupation	F value	1.348	3.181	5.217	1.033	1.442	2.677
	Sig. (p)	.254	**.015****	**.001****	.391	.222	**.033****
Monthly Income	F value	.805	1.172	1.729	1.524	1.409	1.468
	Sig. (p)	.547	.324	.130	.184	.223	.202

Significance difference at .05

The results of ANOVA showed that the tourist gender differed only on Factor 4, *Hospitality and information* (F = 5.02, p = 0.026). The females associate the highest mean score (M = 3.44). On the other hand, male provided the lowest mean score (M=3.17). For other factors male and female do not show significance difference. On

the other hand respondents age differed only on Factor 6, Shopping facilities (F = 4.69, p = 0.001). The age group above 60 provided the lowest association mean score (M = 2.75) and lower age group provided the highest mean score (M=4.00). Considering the education level, respondents' image perception varies on the factor 1 (F = 2.179, p = 0.058) factor 3 (F = 2.982, p = 0.013).and factor 4 (F = 3.065, p = 0.011). Graduate education holder hold positive image on factor 3 and factor 4 and lower educated respondent expressed lower image on mentioned factors. Respondents image perception differ based on their marital status only on Factor 6, *shopping facilities* (F = 4.310, p = 0.001). The newly married couple provided the highest mean score (M=3.37). On the other hand, married without child provided the lowest mean score (M = 2.95). The table 5 shows that the respondents image perception differ based on their occupation on Factor 2 (F = 3.18, p = 0.015) and factor 3 (F = 5.21, p = 0.001). Govt. service holders hold poor (M=2.33) and private service holder hold (M=2.55) high image on factor 2 and government (M=3.20) and private service holders hold (M=2.98) reverse opinion on factor 3. Both case students hold more positive image than others occupational group. The respondents' income result showed that based on income level image perception does not differ on any factors. Respondent's income level shows more balance perception than other factors.

The results explained that respondents' gender, age, education, marital status and occupation have significant difference and respondents' income has no difference on the image perception of different facilities and services of beach tourism specially Cox's Bazar beach. Thus, hypothesis 1 has been rejected.

7.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

H2: Ho: No differences exist between image attributes and the overall image of tourists towards Cox's Bazar beach.

In order to reveal more support for hypothesis 1, regression analysis were used in the current study to test and explain the casual relationship between variables. The multiple linear regression procedure was employed because it provided the most accurate interpretation of the independent variables and it helps to assess whether the identified independent variables exerted a significant influence on satisfaction.

The six independent variables were expressed in terms of the standardized factor scores (beta coefficients). The significant factors that remained in the regression equation were shown in order of importance based on the beta coefficients. The dependent variable, tourists' overall image, was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale and was used as a surrogate indicator of tourists' evaluation of the perception in the Cox's Bazar beach.

The equation for tourists' overall image perception was expressed in the following specification:

$$Y_s = \beta 0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \varepsilon_i$$

Where,

Ys = tourists' overall image with Cox's Bazar beach
β0 = constant (coefficient of intercept)
X_1 = Natural Beauty and Restful Atmosphere

X_2 = Hygiene and Sanitation
X_3 = Security and Accommodation quality
X_4 = Hospitality and Information
X_5 = Emergency and Caring Facility
X_6 = Shopping facility
$\varepsilon_{i=}$ Disturbance term/ Error term
B_1,…, B8 = regression coefficient of Factor 1 to Factor 6.

Table 6 showed the results of the regression analysis. Vavra (1995) and Johnston (1995) hypothesized that the importance of image attributes can be gained by a multiple linear regression of the single image statements of the attributes against the overall image score. To predict the goodness-of-fit of the regression model, the multiple correlation coefficients (R), coefficient of determination (R2), and F ratio are examined. The R of the independent variables (six factors, x1 to x6) and the dependent variable (overall image) is 0.449, which shows that the visitors had positive and moderate correlations of overall image with the six dimensions of beach experience. The R^2 is 0.201, suggesting that more than 20% of the variation of visitors' overall image could be explained by the six factors. The F ratio is 8.41 showing whether the results of the regression model could have occurred by chance. The p value is 0.000, which is considered as highly significant. The regression model achieved a level of goodness-of-fit of about 20% in predicting the variance of tourists' overall image perception in relation to the six factors, as measured by the above –mentioned R, R^2, and F ratio. In other words, at least one of the six factors is important in contributing to develop overall level image of Cox's Bazar beach.

Table 6: Regression Results of Overall Image based on the Dimensions

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
.449(a)	.201	.178	.691

Analysis of variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.(p)
Regression	24.109	6	4.018	8.411	.000(a)
Residual	95.543	200	.478		
Total	119.652	206			

Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.036	.407		4.999	.000
Factor 1	.115	.083	.097	1.388	.167
Factor 2	.178	.081	.173	2.199	.029*
Factor 3	.296	.094	.259	3.147	.002**
Factor 4	.039	.091	.035	.428	.669
Factor 5	.044	.069	.046	.630	.530
Factor 6	.011	.098	.009	.114	.909

* represents p <0.05

In the regression analysis, the beta coefficients can be used to explain the relative importance of each of the six dimensions (independent variables) in contributing to the variance in visitors' overall image perception (dependent variable). As far as the relative importance of the six dimensioned is concerned, Factor 3 (Security and Quality of Accommodation: beta=0.259, p=0.002) has the highest contribution and carries heaviest weight for tourists' overall image building factors, followed by Factor 2 (Hygiene and Sanitation: beta=-0.173, p=0.029). There are strong relationships between these two factors and visitors' overall satisfaction. The results showed that a one-unit increase in facility with the Security and Quality of Accommodation factor would lead to a 0.259 unit increase in overall image of Cox's Bazar beach as tourist destination other variables being held constant. In conclusion, all underlying dimensions are not equally significant. Thus, the results of multiple regression analysis reject hypothesis 2, that there is no difference exist between the sea beach image factors and the overall image of tourists. So, hypothesis 2 has been rejected.

8. Implications and Conclusion

The present study is providing some special suggestions according to the findings to build strong image of Cox's Bazar as a tourists' destination. The study shows that tourists hold positive perception as well as negative perceptions towards some image attributes of Cox's Bazar beach. Therefore, managers of this destination should take necessary steps to improve the current services and facilities provided at the beach tourism in the effort to change and increase the perception of the tourists, and thus further heighten their interest in visiting these places in the future.

The findings of the current research suggest that there is a statistically significant difference in respondents' image perception with respect to their demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, occupation and education. Therefore, differentiated marketing strategies should be stressed and executed by the relevant parties. Key players in the beach tourism-tour operators and stakeholders have pursued successful positioning strategies, which have been driven, by effective market segmentation and brand management.

In addition, the findings of this study have a number of important implications, particularly for the practitioners in tourism industry, government and non-governmental organizations, as well as other market players for planning and marketing in the

industry. The study shows that overall image perceptions of tourists towards Cox's Bazar are good [Table-4]. The results of the study also revealed that even if six factors have a significant relationship with the overall image development of Cox's Bazar and F2 (hygiene and sanitation) and F3 (security and accommodation quality) were more important factors that influenced overall tourist image development than other factors [Table-4]. This finding can be useful to the planners and marketers of Sea beach tourism at Cox's Bazar in formulating strategies to maintain or enhance their competitiveness.

Therefore, tourism managers and marketers should provide quality service with ***security and accommodation quality factor*** such as financial, physical and other safety and security, price and service quality of accommodations, various types of beach activities and ***hygiene and sanitation*** **factor,** namely, public and private toilet facilities nearest the beach, cleanliness of public areas nearest the beach, watch tower facility for enjoying sea view and waves. In planning these facilities, identity and biodiversity of the area must be considered, since tourists pay great attention to feel the nature of sea areas. Thus, any future infrastructure development should be properly planned and implemented to avoid its negative impacts on the beach area. In addition, those people involved in the development of this tourist destination have to contribute more in terms of their creativity to produce a variety of unique products which could attract the tourists.

Hence, above suggestions are hoped to assist both managers and marketers of Cox's Bazar beach as a destination in Bangladesh to gain a better understanding of the different perceptions shared by the local and foreign tourists, and thus implement more strategic marketing decisions. Therefore, this study is considered as making a new contribution in terms of a better understanding of the destination image, with specific reference to the beach tourism in the country. This has also been confirmed by other studies, which had chosen the concept underlying the image. This study carried out on Cox's Bazar beach destination is important for further studies in similar destinations. The researchers were solely depending on the information provided by their respondents to judge the viability of their findings. Due to time and financial limitations, survey was conducted for this study on 2 weeks period and sample size was 320. Current study recommends that future study can be conducted on the same area with large sample.

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