

UNDERSTANDING SOUVENIR AS AN ESSENTIAL INSTRUMENT FOR GUIDING TOURISTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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<p>Article Info:</p> <p>Received: 22-11-2018 Revised: 28-11-2018 Accepted: 15-12-2018</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Souvenir</i> <i>Shopping</i> <i>Tourists</i></p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Souvenir acts as an essential instrument for guiding tourists. Souvenirs are a tangible part of the tourism experience. Souvenirs provide an excellent opportunity to potential worldwide advertising and potentially lucrative economic activity. On the one hand, it has an emotional value attached with it that can help to relate people, moments, feelings, phases, locations or situations together and on the other saves their experiences and memories. Effective souvenir is one which has its uniqueness and thus, provides competitive advantage to others dealing in the similar product line. The given paper is an attempt mainly to understand the importance of souvenirs in tourism sector. It also highlights various suggestive strategies for promotion of souvenirs among tourists.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

India has an annual inflow of more than 8.8 million foreign tourists (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). There are various factors including natural beauty, rich culture and heritage, diversity of products, cost of travel, ethnicity, food and climate that attracts foreign tourist to India. Be it the snow-covered mountains in the Himalayas, beautiful beaches in Goa and Orissa, back waters in Kerala, colorful deserts in Rajasthan, and tropical lush green forests, all these dimensions attract the foreign tourists to India. The diversity in region, religion, climate, traditions and languages has always been a point of curiosity for the people coming from the foreign countries. So are India's ethnic and exclusive handicraft and souvenir products, which are admired by the inbound tourists. Purchase of Indian souvenir is a common phenomenon generally noticed among the inbound tourists. As per the survey conducted by Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India (2001), it was found that the foreign tourists had spent Rs. 29851 million on the purchase of handicraft items, which constituted 44% of the

total handicraft exports, signifying that international tourists are interested in shopping during travel.

Lundberg (1990) presupposes the possibility that the urge to shop may be as much a human instinct as the nesting behavior in some animals. Many people find it very pleasurable to hunt bargains, to spend, and to go to a different place. This is especially true if going somewhere different entails traveling abroad, as this adds intrigue and fascination to a trip. Many people find it attractive to experience cultural differences, spend foreign currency, and eat exotic foods. Shopping abroad is popular, as there is often a different and more alluring selection of merchandise than can be found in the shopper's home community.

Shopping as a travel activity has become increasingly important to the tourism industry due to its substantial economic contribution to the retail trade in various tourism markets around the world (Jansen-Verbeke, 1987). The importance of tourism shopping is widely recognized despite the fact that little is known about the actual behavior and expectations of tourists (Jansen-Verbeke, 1991).

Although not normally considered as a primary motive for travel, shopping is probably an essential element in tourist experience (Jansen-Verbeke, 1991; Kent, Shock, & Snow, 1983). Shopping is seldom mentioned as the primary motive for undertaking a trip, however it is a common and preferred tourist activity in many destinations (Cook, 1995; Jansen-Verbeke, 1991; Timmothy & Butler, 1995). Kent, Shock, and Snow (1983) made the argument that when tourists were asked what was important as a reason to travel; shopping was not among the list of answers. However when tourists were asked the activities they participated in while traveling, shopping was almost always included. This finding is supported by Timothy and Butler (1995) who reported that shopping was the preferred activity in many tourist destinations. According to Kent, Shock, and Shaw (1983) shopping is a pleasurable experience for millions of travellers. Tourism shopping is often associated with symbolic consumption; material goods can reinforce the sense of self and provide a storehouse of memories from past experiences (Anderson & Littrell, 1995; Belk, 1988; Gordon, 1986; Littrell, 1990; Littrell, Anderson, & Brown 1993). These findings suggest that for some people shopping is the main reason for traveling, which is sometimes humorously referred as "Suitcase Tourism".

Considering to the global trend, the importance of tourism shopping is widely recognized as a niche market of tourism because it is one of the primary sources of tourism income. Among various tangible items, souvenirs seem to be attractive objects to visitors. Since the beginning of travel, souvenirs have been central to the tourist experience. Shopping

is a major tourist activity (Fairhurst, Costello, & Holmes 2007; Kim & Littrell 2001), with souvenir purchases forming a significant component of the shopping expenditure (Littrell et al., 1994; Lehto et al., 1994; Fairhurst, Costello, & Holmes 2007). The purchase of mementoes and handicrafts is an established behaviours associated with many activities, including travel and other leisure activities. Few people will take a vacation without acquiring some form of evidence to tangibilize the experiences gained (Gordon, 1986; Littrell et al., 1994).

Selling souvenirs has always been part of the tourism experience and contributes to the viability of the retail trade in many tourist destination areas (Jansen-Verbeke, 1991). Since India has a rich cultural heritage with each state being distinct, the capacity of Indian producers to generate diverse handicraft products is tremendous. Further, the people living in the rural areas of the respective states are engaged in the production of these handicrafts. Almost all areas of the country are affected by tourism directly or even indirectly, as tourism become one of the largest industries, in terms of revenue generated, products and services. There are opportunities for Indian locals to generate a greater money flow from the tourists through the sale of handicrafts.

Local Handicrafts have been the object of desire for most travellers. Handicrafts represent, among other things, local culture and heritage. The possession of hand-made item, therefore, symbolizes attachment to the host society. Nothing perhaps, can exhibit the tourists' visit to the destination better than a hand-made product, which is often termed authentic. Many tourists are on the look out for an authentic item to buy as handicrafts.

The conventional way of buying handicrafts is from the place you visit or through the handicrafts emporiums in your own region. The handicrafts remind one of the experiences he has had while he was out for vacations and can relive those memories just by having a look at the handicrafts. People generally buy handicrafts either to keep them at home or to gift to their friends and family members. Several research studies have found close linkages between nationality, cultural characteristics, and the type of crafts purchased by tourists. Various studies illustrate the socio-cultural obligations of some societies, e.g. in Japanese culture, gift giving is one of the unique and important asset of their life. It is a cultural obligation for Japanese Tourists to bring home appropriate gifts for friends or the family members who were at home, brought from the place of visit.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The word souvenir originates from Middle French from (se) souvenir (de) meaning “to remember”, which again comes from the Latin word subvenire meaning “to come up, come to mind” (Hoven & Eggen, 2005). Souvenirs are a tangible part of the tourism experience. Souvenirs provide an excellent opportunity to potential worldwide advertising and potentially lucrative economic activity. Hitchcock and Teague (2002) defined Souvenirs as the material counterpart of travels, events, relationships and memories of all kinds and a Souvenir’s “function is to store or stimulate memories”.

In the study of Hoven and Eggen in 2005, they found that the definition of Souvenir is unable to be definitely defined. This is because the souvenir’s definitions come from people’s, psychologies and the variety of people’s opinions. Three definitions were selected by the focus group in their study as:

- A souvenir is something which has emotional value to you
- A souvenir symbolizes a relation between people, moments, feelings, phases, locations or situations
- A souvenir is something with which someone can consciously evoke memories.

Gordon (1986) constructed the first typology of souvenirs. Five classifications of Souvenirs were identified: pictorial image, piece-of-the-rock, symbolic shorthand, markers, and local products. Pictorial images were souvenirs that allowed the pictorial subject to move through space and communicate a fantasy reality to an otherwise humdrum existence. The pictorial image (e.g., picture postcards) was sent to someone other than the tourist or kept by the tourist as a snapshot. Piece-of-the-rock Souvenirs were considered items gathered from nature to represent the non-urban environment (e.g., pinecones, seashells, and rocks). Symbolic shorthand Souvenirs were manufactured objects that evoked a shorthand code, or message, about the place it come from, such as a miniature Eiffel Tower. Symbolic shorthand items were often functional allowing the symbol of an extraordinary experience to be used during ordinary life. Markers (e.g., T-shirts) were inscribed with words that located them to a certain place or time. Local product Souvenirs (e.g., food and clothing) were made from materials indigenous to a specific area.

Various studies have shown close connection between heritage tourism and shopping, arguing that cultural tourists have a higher propensity to shop for souvenirs and other consumer items than many other types of tourists (Getz, 1993; Jansen Verbake, 1990; Timothy, 2011).

Handicrafts may be mass-produced goods or expensive handmade items (Blundell, 1993). The mix of handicraft products available to tourists is not universal. Commodities targeted to the handicraft trade include, but are not limited to, mass-produced items and figurines; arts and crafts (Turner & Reisinger 2001); gem stones; jewelry (Turner & Reisinger 2001); leather goods; housewares; objects that depict wildlife and nature; markers (e.g., plates, mugs, tea towels, and T-shirts) depicting by word, picture or symbol the place represented by the handicraft (Blundell 1993; Gordon 1986); antiques (Grado, Strauss, & Lord 1997); collectibles (Michael 2002); clothing (Asplet & Cooper 2000; Turner & Reisinger 2001); postcards (Markwick 2001); and local products such as foods and clothing (Gordon 1986).

The proposed definition of handicrafts by EPCH is as follows “Item or product produced through skills that are manual, with or without mechanical or electrical or other processes, which appeals to the eye, due to the characteristics of being artistic or aesthetic or creative or ethnic or being representative of cultural or religious or social symbols or practices, whether traditional or contemporary. These items or products may or may not have a functional utility and can be used as a decorative item or gift”.

According to Appadurai (1986) authentic objects are made by the people they represent; and nothing can, therefore be more authentic than the crafts of the region. The usefulness factor, displayability of the handicraft back at home, depiction of local culture, history, replicas of famous attractions of the region, uniqueness of the product, preference for local artisans, attitude of tourists appealing colour, and design, ease of packing and carrying, presence of logo and name depicted on the crafts are also considered while deciding on the variables for measuring authenticity (Littrell, 1994, Kim & Littrell, 2001; Shenhav-Keller, 1995). Table 1 is summary of some papers.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the importance of souvenirs in tourism sector. How these souvenirs can be of use for the host population and what social and economical affect it can have over the tourists as well as host population.

2. To suggest strategies for promotion of souvenirs among tourists so as to use it a tool for attracting more tourists to the respective destinations, which would lead to multiple benefits like enhancing the employability and living standards of the host population. The strategies thus suggested would also give directions to the retailers and promoters of these souvenirs so as to have the maximum result of their efforts.

Table 1. Summary of Some Papers

Authors (Year)	Sample Source	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Findings
Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carson (2001), JR	College students	Usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, navigaton, convenience, and suitability	Attitude towards shopping	Results support the differential importance of immersive, hedonic aspects of the new media as well as the more traditional utilitarian motivations. Also, navigation convenience, and suitability of the electronic environment to personally examining products were found to be important predictors of online shopping attitudes.
Cowart and Goldsmith (2007), IJCS	College students	Conciousness, impulsivemess, over-choice	Shopping frequency, spending	Conciousness, hedonistic shopping, impulsiveness, and brand loyalty were positively correlated with online apparel shopping. Price sensitivity was negatively correlated with online spending
Dash and Saji (2007), IJCM	Adult consumers	Perceived usefulness, trust, perceived risk, self efficacy, social presence	Intentions to transact	The consumer self-efficacy and Web site social presence affect rust, perceived usefulness, and perceived risk in the online customers, and in turn positively influence the customers, and in turn positively influence the customer's intention to purchase products online.
Garbarino and Strailevitz (2004), JBR	College students	Gender with Web usage as covariate. No recommendation, recommendation by a friend, and by two friends.	Perceived Risk Effectiveness of receiving a recommendation from a friend	Women perceive a higher level of risk in online purchasing than do men and having a site recommended by a friend lends to both a greater reduction of perceived risk and a stronger increase in willingness to buy online among women than among men.
Hansen (2008), IJCS	Adult consumers	Values, perceived social influence, perceived behaviour control	Willingness to buy	Consumers may link personal values to attitudes toward online grocery buying but this relation may be moderated by whether the consumer previously has carried out an online purchase on an online grocery purchase.
Koering (2003), PM	College students	High/low service documentation strategy and the type of visual tangible cues	Perceived satisfaction attitude, patronage intent, recall, and perceived risk	The documentation strategy is effective for increasing the tangibility of services and elicits more positive evaluations of the service and the Web site, higher unaided recall and higher loyalty.
Kuhlmeier and Knight (2005), IMR	Consumers	Internet productivity, Internet experience	Perceived Risk, purchase likelihood	The extent of ongoing Internet usage, long term experience, and perceived risk are important antecedents to purchasing goods via the internet.
Zhang, Prybutok, and Strutton (2007), JMTP	College students	Subjective norms, gender	Purchase intentions, consumer impulsivity, actual purchase	Gender differences exist with respect to purchase intention, consumer impulsivity, and frequency of purchase.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for obtaining the given objectives is mainly secondary in nature. The secondary data has been collected after reviewing various research papers, articles, local and national newspapers and many organizations on websites like World Travel and Tourism Council, United Nations World Tourism Organization, Ministry of Tourism-Government of India, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation, Directorate of Tourism, Jammu and Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir (J&K). Jammu & Kashmir is an important tourist destination and has been a place of attraction for tourists since centuries. The lush green forests, sweet springs, perennial rivers, picturesque alpine scenery and pleasant climate of Kashmir valley, has remained an internationally acclaimed tourist destination, whereas Jammu region is attracting a large number of pilgrim tourists and the important destination has been Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine at Katra. Ladakh region, the moon land has been a much sought-after destination, especially for the foreign tourists and is famous for adventure tourism. The tourism tag has always placed the State of J&K in the limelight at the national level as well as international level. During last few years, the tourist arrivals to the three regions of the State are presented as under:

Table 2 - Tourist Arrivals in Jammu and Kashmir

Tourist Arrivals/Year	Inbound Tourists	Domestic Tourists	Total No. of Tourists
2015-2016	58,568	91,45,016	92,03,584
2016-2017	63,207	94,14,579	94,77,786

(Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)

5. SOUVENIR AND TOURISM

Shopping, as a major tourist activity, is a crucial part of the travel experience (Kozak, 2016) and represents a large component of visitor spending (Lloyd, Yip, & Luk, 2011). Hence shopping has become a significant source of revenue for many tourism destinations (Wong, 2013). Souvenirs account for a significant share of overall shopping expenditure (Turner & Reisinger, 2001). Previous studies have explored souvenir shopping from various perspectives, including motivations of shoppers (Kong & Chang, 2016), the meaning of souvenirs (Collins-Kreiner & Zins, 2011), tourist and retailer authenticity and souvenirs (Trinh et al., 2014). However, little research has been found that investigates tourists' souvenir shopping behavior in the context of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Souvenirs are universally associated with tourism as a commercially produced tangible item specifically purchased to remind tourists' of intangible experiences of place (Swanson &

Horridge, 2006). Apart from its significant commercial value, souvenirs, as a means to transmit the culture and history of a destination to tourists, also have a symbolic value (Litirell et al., 1994). Hence, souvenirs are playing an important role in sustaining tourism development given the commercial, cultural and historical significance of souvenirs (Tosun, Temizkan, Timothy & Fyall, 2007).

Souvenir shopping behavior has drawn both researchers and practitioners' attention due to the significance of souvenirs for destinations and tourists, and still retains importance despite the growth of photograph taking and the roles of social media as recollections of holiday-making.

Swanson and Horridge (2004) in their study examined the relationships between travel motivation and souvenir consumption. An eight part mail questionnaire was developed to assess the importance of travel activities, souvenir products, product attributes, and store attributes to domestic tourists. The researchers developed a LISREL model and showed that activities including art and craft fairs and festivals had a positive impact on handicraft products, product attributes and store attributes. The study found out that there is a positive relationship between travel activities and handicraft purchase. It also indicated that travel activities influenced store attributes which comprise location, promotion, image and sales associates, and price and selection. The study focused on future research addressing handicraft consumption in other states of the country. Future research should devise for certain methods wherein the response can be taken from the respondents while they are in the destination to determine if their response to handicraft consumption differs while travelling as the data was collected from the tourists when they had returned to their home after completing their travel.

Hugh and Wilkins (2010) in their research highlight the main importance of the souvenir as evidence of the experience as well as the roles of memory and as gifts. The researchers carried out focus group interviews to further understand souvenir purchase behaviour and the result of it was used in creating scale to be used in the quantitative part of the research. The qualitative data derived from the focus group research indicated that a relationship between the purchase motivations and the type of souvenir purchased. The research supported the previous research that women tend to purchase handicrafts more frequently than men (Littrell, Anderson, and Brown 1993) across most dimensions of souvenirs. The research also showed evidence of the importance of authenticity for souvenir purchases. The importance of ethnic connection to the handicraft was clearly evident in both the qualitative and quantitative results. The findings in relation to purchase motivations

provide important understanding of consumer behaviour. There is strong support found for the role of handicraft as gifts, with this support being higher in the case of women. The researchers advised for future research by extending the research to other countries, especially to Non-western countries, as the research was focused on respondents from only one country.

The handicrafts industries are of particular interest since handmade articles constitute ideal souvenirs and, if widely produced, may act as powerful tourist attractions. At the same time, the performance of the craft industries is dependent on tourism in terms of tourist arrivals, expenditure, length of stay and so forth.

6. CONCLUSION

Thus, it has been clear that souvenir acts as an essential instrument for guiding tourist. On the one hand, it has an emotional value attached with it that can help to relate people, moments, feelings, phases, locations or situations together and on the other saves their experiences and memories. It can help the sellers to understand the needs and preferences of the customers in a better way. Effective souvenir is one which has its uniqueness and thus, provides competitive advantage to others dealing in the similar product line.

7. PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTION OF SOUVENIRS

- One of the key features of an effective souvenir is to understand its customers to its best i.e. customer base. The need and wants of the customers can be identified and sell the products accordingly. This will certainly increase the sales when you focus on selling desirable products better suited to your specific customer base.
- One of the best ways to increase the sales of souvenir is not to sell souvenirs only rather they should engage shoppers in other products as well. In the sense one can provide them with the feeling of closeness by engaging with shoppers. This can also be done by engaging the employees with the customers and identifying their needs and wants.
- Another way is to promote the multi things at a single point of time which can be easily done with the help of souvenir. The customer should experience their purchase as smart purchase.
- The souvenir should clearly differentiate the offering from the competitors having the similar products. It should clearly depict the unique collection possessed by you and thus, provide competitive edge to others as well.

- The customer should value your customer as it offers them the cheap and best solutions to their wants and preferences. Affordable price and best quality can be the USP of your souvenir.

8. FUTURE RESEARCH

The future research will be carried out on the post purchase consumption of the souvenir and about the satisfaction level of the consumers having bought the product either for themselves or for gifting it to someone else.

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