



The Effect of Marketing Mix (7Ps') on Tourists' Satisfaction: A Study on Cumilla

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Abstract

Tourism is a fast growing and multidimensional industry and it becomes an increasingly important sector in Bangladesh. The main intent of this study is to examine the effect of marketing mix (7Ps) elements on tourist's satisfaction. The data of this paper were collected by using structured questionnaire from sample of 50 people from Cumilla district of Bangladesh. Data were analyzed with the help of software SPSS-22 version by using the statistical techniques correlation and regression. The findings of the study showed that five out of seven marketing mix elements were positively related to tourist's satisfaction but the promotional activities and tourism process of Cumilla were not satisfactory to the tourist's. So some recommendations have been given for future improvement and to position this place in the heart of tourist's destination.

Key words: Tourists' Satisfaction, Marketing Mix, 7Ps', Cumilla, Bangladesh.

Introduction

The role of tourism in earning revenues from home and abroad has long been recognized in many developing countries like Bangladesh. But, Tourism requires to attract tourists by providing marketing services and facilities. It is primary duty for any business to satisfy its customer according to their needs (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml,

1990; Peterson & Wilson, 1992). Consumer satisfaction is particularly important to service industry like tourism (Matear, Osbourne, Garret & Gray, 2002; Oliver, 1994; Otto & Brent Richie, 1996; Pearce & Moscardo, 1998; Sparks, 2000) as there is a strong relationship between consumer satisfaction and service profitability (Bolton & Drew, 1994; Hill, 1996). Tourists' Satisfaction regarding of any destination is largely affected by the marketing activities of that place and tourism marketing depends on successful implementation of strategies for each marketing mix elements.

The relationship between marketing mix and customer satisfaction is highly expressed among researchers (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007; Mohammed et al. 2012; Cengiz & Yayla, 2007; Wang et al., 2012 and Semeer, 2009). Rafiq and Ahmad (1995) suggested to use 7Ps framework as the extension to the 4Ps framework. The 7Ps of marketing mix have been considered to have a significant impact on marketing for the sectors that are engaging with service to customers (Borden, 1984; Addmour and Ayish, 2005).

Cumilla is one of the ancient city and a palace with lots of tourist attractions. But, perhaps it fails to attract tourist, more specifically repeat tourist due to lack of satisfaction of tourists. So, this study aims to improve and develop the sector of tourism of Cumilla and raise its profile. From this approach, this study came to identify the extent of satisfaction of the tourists coming to Cumilla on tourism marketing mix (7Ps) elements, and the effect on tourism in Cumilla.

Major Tourist Attractions in Cumilla

There are lots of tourist attractions found in Cumilla. These are almost 10% of all tourist attractions listed in Chittagong Division. Cumilla District is a district of Bangladesh located about 100 kilometers south east of capital city Dhaka. Within Cumilla there are many attractions like historical places, natural beauty, innovative food, clothing and hand crafted products those can attract a huge number of people about this place. The major types of tourist attractions listed in Cumilla.

Archeological heritage, Historical places & landmarks	Muras	Mosques and temples	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shalban Bihar • Mainimati Ruins • Hatiabhanga Fort (Daudkandi) • Pashchimgaon Nawab Bari (Kursheed Munzi) • Palace of king Bhoj • Rani Kuthir • Maynamati War Cemetery • Ramnagar Elongated Math • Hasnabad Math • Harimangal Math • Ranir Banglar Pahar • Mainamati Museum • Dharmasagar • Palace of Maynamoti Rani • Ananda Bazar Palace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rupban Mura • Itakhola Mura • Satera Ratna Mura • Charendra Mura • Kotila Mura 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shah Shuja Mosque • Chandi Mura Temple • Jagannath Dev temple • Gonaighar Baitul Azgar • Sat Gomboj Jame Masjid • Shaitsala Jami Mosque 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) • Bank of Gomti • Dharmasagar • Panch Pir Majar • Magic Paradise Park (Amusement park) • Birchandra Public Library and Auditorium • Rosh Malai of Matri Bhandar • Khadi

Cumilla is flourished with many tourism places if it would be possible to understand the condition and effect of each marketing mix element to the tourists' satisfaction then it would be possible to increase the number of visitors or tourists in Cumilla.

Literature review

Marketing mix is the variables to be monitored by the company to satisfy the groups targeted (Cannon, et al, 2008). Marketing mix consists of all the things that a company can do to influence the demand for its products (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). Kotler, Philip (2007) considered four P's as marketing mix which has significant impact on marketing for tourism services. These marketing mix elements are Product, Price, Place and Promotion. In case of service organization and industry, he added extra three P's. These are: people, physical evidence and process. In this research, these seven P's considered as tourism marketing mix (Morrison, 1996) elements which are highlighted below:

3.1.1. Product

Kotler and Armstrong (2006) says a product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. As for services, according to Verma and Singh (2017) as cited in Işoraitè (2016) defined product "as a physical product or service to the consumer for which consumer is willing to pay". In the study, Ljiljana Stanković and Suzana Đukić (2009) examined tourist destination management and found that innovative and well co-coordinated tourism products is exceedingly important for tourism regions and satisfaction of tourists. Therefore, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H1: Product has positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.2. Price

Kotler and Armstrong (2007) said, price is the amount of money customers have to pay to obtain the product. Işoraitè (2016) argued that "price is perceived as the only element of the marketing mix, generating revenue and the most important customer satisfaction and loyalty factor". So, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H2: Price has positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.3. Place

According to Kotler (2007) the place (distribution) in tourism is providing a guideline about different tourist spot. It also provide the appropriate tour time and

distances from various spot, give ideas of different travel routes, selecting attractions and support facilities along different travel routes, and informing potential tourists'(customers) about alternative travel routes. Inconvenience location or palace for the customers lead to dissatisfaction among the customers which further influence the organization in negative way (Niharika, 2015). This statement is also supported by the previous researches (Kadhim et al., 2016; Bawa et al., 2013; Alipour et al., 2018; Wahab et al., 2016). So, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H3: Place has positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.4. Promotion

Promotion is an activity that highlights the products or services to customers (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015). Marketing communication mix (Promotion mix) consists of the specific blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools that the company uses to pursue its advertising and marketing objective (Kotler 2007). The previous studies also show the linkage between promotion and customer satisfaction (Bawa et al., 2013; Kadhim et al., 2016; Wahab et al., 2016; Verma and Singh, 2017; Alipour et al., 2018). Therefore, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H4: Promotion has positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.5. People

According to Kotler (2007), the focal point in the hospitality sector is people's behavior, quality control, and personal selling. Zeithaml et al. (2006) identified that people are the key stakeholders such as customer, another customer, firm's personnel who actively involved in buying and selling of tourism product. Reid and Bojanic, (2010) narrate in their study, the attitude, skill, and appearance of personnel is important of to ensure overall satisfaction (Amin & Islam, 2017). Therefore, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H5: People have positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.6. Process

According to Kannan, Srinivasan (2009) the process in Tourism include, (a) trip planning and anticipation, (b) travel to the site/area, (c) recollection, (d) trip

planning packages. Well designed processes make services convenient to the tourists (Rodriguez, 2013). This enhances the tourist's confidence and satisfaction largely. So, therefore, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H6: Processes have positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.7. Physical evidence

According to Kannan, Srinivasan (2009) in tourism the physical evidence is basically depends on travel experience, stay and comfort. Physical Evidence is that which can be easily associated with the product by the customer. As the tourism product is highly intangible, the place, the decor, the people, and everything else in the tourism office may be related to the experience in store. For example, when tourists visit a historic place for the first time, they carry home not only the memories of beautiful structure, but they also remember all other factors like transport facilities available, the surrounding markets, the people's behavior, etc. as one whole experience. Sarker, Wang Aimin, Sumayya Begum (2012) found the positive relationship between physical evidence and satisfaction of tourist's. Therefore, the study may propose a hypothesis-

H7: Physical evidence has positive effects on Tourists' Satisfaction.

3.1.8. Tourists' satisfaction

Khadka and Maharjan (2017) pointed out that customer satisfaction is dynamic and relative. In tourism, satisfaction is a tourist's emotional state of mind after an experience. Oliver (1997) suggested that customer satisfaction is a fulfillment of response from tourist satisfaction on overall experience with the given destination. Customer satisfaction plays a significant role in the survival and growth of tourism product and services (Gursoy et al., 2003; Mawa, 2018).

3.1.9. Relationship between marketing mix elements and tourists' satisfaction

Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products of values with each other (Kotler, 2005).

Yelkur (2000) found that the critical elements in the services marketing mix influence and positively effects customer satisfaction. Therefore the result of our study supported the argument that there is a positive correlation between marketing mix and customer satisfaction. In the study of Al Muala & Al Qurneh (2012) showed that products had a significant effect on tourist satisfactions, while prices, people and processes had no significant effect on tourist satisfactions. On the other hand, the results of the study by Megatef (2015) concluded that all elements of the marketing mix had a very strong effect on tourist satisfactions. The findings of the studies conducted by Rasyid et.al. (2017), Teviana et.al (2017) and Ismail et.al (2015) were also exhibited that marketing mix had an effect on tourist satisfactions. Muhammad et al. (2018) conducted a study to reveal the relationship between marketing mix and tourist's satisfaction. The results showed that the marketing mix had a positive and significant effect on tourist's satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of marketing mix elements on tourist satisfaction. Besides that, the study also attempts to address the associated problems and possible solutions regarding the tourism of cumilla.

Methodology

Descriptive research has been conducted for this study. Data have been collected from primary sources by using the personal interview with using close ended questionnaire. Five point Likert scale has used to construct questions where each statement stands for: 1= Very dissatisfied, 2= Somewhat dissatisfied, 3= Neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 4= Somewhat satisfied, 5= Very satisfied. 50 respondents of tourists to Cumilla were surveyed through convenience sampling method. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation and Regression analysis were employed to analyze the collected data from the survey.

Proposed Model & Hypotheses

In this study, there are 7 independent variables (7 Ps) and single dependent variable (Tourists' satisfaction) have identified. Based on the previous literatures and discussions, the following theoretical framework and

research hypotheses have been developed.

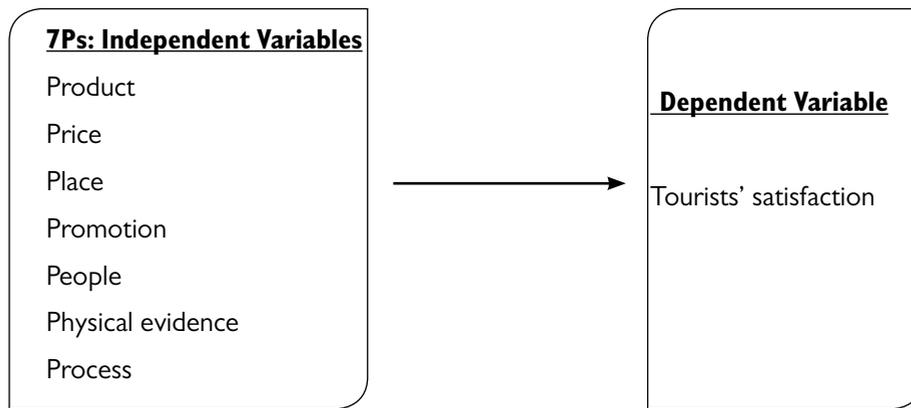


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the research

To know about the effect of tourism marketing mix elements on overall tourists' satisfaction, the following equation has been used:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7$$

Where,

Y= Tourists' satisfaction, α =constant, X1=Product, X2=price, X3= place, X4= promotion, X5=people, X6=process and X7=physical evidence.

To achieve the objectives of the study mentioned in the previous section, the following hypotheses (based on literature review) are tested:

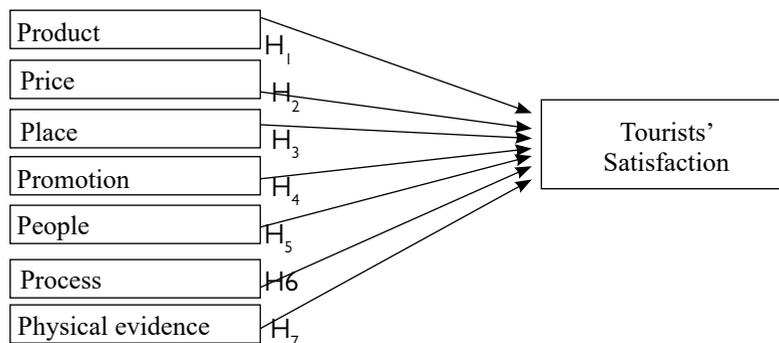


Figure 2: Hypotheses of the study

Analysis and Discussion

Background of Respondents

The following table shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of 50 respondents' majority of the respondents (54 percent) are male, where as 46 percent are female. Highest number of respondents are Service holder (34 percent), 24 percent respondents are Business person, 20 percent are students and 22 percent are others. Majority of the respondents are about the age of 22 years to 29 years and the table also reveals that majority of the respondents are from Cumilla (54 percent) and 46 percent respondents are from other districts.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	27	54.0
Female	23	46.0
Total	50	100.0
Occupation		
Student	10	20.0
Service Holder	17	34.0
Business Person	12	24.0
Others	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0
Age Group		
16-21	13	26.0
22-29	25	50.0
30-35	3	6.0
35-41	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0
Region of Respondents		
Cumilla	27	54.0
Other district	23	46.0
Total	50	100.0

Descriptive statistics of the variables

According to mean score (Discussed by ranked of mean scores), Mean value of satisfaction level of product is 4.28, which lies in satisfied category & the standard deviation are 0.49652. Mean score for physical evidence is 3.6800, which lies in somewhat satisfied category of respondent response & the standard deviation is 0.47121. Mean value for price is 3.6400, which lies in somewhat satisfied & the standard deviation are 0.52528. Promotion's mean value is 2.9000 & the standard deviation is 0.88641. Satisfaction level on place lies in neither satisfied nor dissatisfied category nor here the mean value is 2.6200 & the standard deviation is 0.60238. Again the mean value is 1.8800 for process & the standard deviation is 0.59385. And finally, the mean value of people is 1.7600, which lies in somewhat dissatisfied category of customer response & the standard deviation are 0.47638.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Individual Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction level on Product	4.2800	.49652
Satisfaction level on Physical evidence	3.6800	.47121
Satisfaction level on Price	3.6400	.52528
Satisfaction level on Promotion	2.9000	.88641
Satisfaction level on Place	2.6200	.60238
Satisfaction level on Process	1.8800	.59385
Satisfaction level on People	1.7600	.47638

Regression Analysis

Using variables from the questionnaire a regression analysis have been conducted on the basis of feedback from respondents. Here "Tourists' satisfaction" has been used as the dependent variable and the other constructs

(Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence) have been considered to be the independent variables. The purpose of the regression analysis is to measure the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Now, we can assess the impact of each independent variables (Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence) on dependent variable (Tourist's satisfaction) by testing the assumed hypotheses.

Product: There is a significant correlation exists between product and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .546** and the significance level is less than .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means, variety of tourism products of Cumilla is significantly affect tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For product in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=2.799$ at significance level .008 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant positive relationship between independent and dependent variable. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So, Product and Tourist Satisfaction are positively related to each other.

Price: There is a significant correlation exists between price and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .560** and the significance level is less than .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means expenses connected to visit different places of Cumilla is significantly affect tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For price in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=2.478$ at significance level .017 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant positive relationship between independent and dependent variable. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So Price and Tourist Satisfaction are positively related to each other.

Place: There is a significant correlation exists between place and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .484** and the significance level is less than .01 which is the

standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means guide line available to visit different places of Cumilla is significantly affect tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For place in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=2.187$ at significance level .034 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant positive relationship between independent and dependent variable. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So Place and Tourist Satisfaction are positively related to each other.

Promotion: There is a significant correlation exists between promotion and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .472** and the significance level is .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means promotional activities significantly affect tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For place in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=.932$ at significance level .356 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant relationship between independent and dependent variable but the relationship is not positive. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is rejected. So Promotion and Tourist's Satisfaction are not positively related to each other.

People: There is a significant correlation exists between people and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .473** and the significance level is .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means hospitality from different people of this destination is significantly affect tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For people in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=2.668$ at significance level .011 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant positive relationship between independent and dependent variable. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So People and Tourist Satisfaction are positively related to each other.

Process: There is a significant correlation exists between process and tourists' satisfaction. In the table

given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .457** and the significance level is .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means tourism process of Cumilla is significantly affects tourist's satisfaction (Appendix-A). For process in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=1.734$ at significance level of .090 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant relationship between independent and dependent variable but the relationship is not positive. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is rejected. So Process and Tourist's Satisfaction are not positively related to each other.

Physical evidence: There is a significant correlation exists between physical evidence and tourists' satisfaction. In the table given below we can see the correlation coefficient is .514** and the significance level is less than .01 which is the standard of Pearson's correlation method. That means physical evidence of Cumilla is significantly affects tourists' satisfaction (Appendix-A). For physical evidence in the coefficient table the calculated value of $t=2.357$ at significance level .023 which is significant at the level of 0.05 and the critical value of $t=1.6766$ (Appendix-B) is the evident of significant positive relationship between independent and dependent variable. Therefore with the basis of this result it can be inferred with confidence that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So, physical evidence has positive effects on tourist's satisfaction.

Major Findings

The finding of this study (Regression analysis) indicates that the product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence has significant effect on tourist's satisfaction. But all the elements don't have positive effect on satisfaction according to linear regression tourists became satisfied by experiencing the quality, price, place, people and physical evidence of Cumilla (As accepting the alternative hypotheses of H1, H2, H3, H5 & H7) but they are not satisfied with the promotional activities and delivery process of tourism products (As rejecting the alternative hypotheses of H4 & H6). Most of the respondents are dissatisfied about promotional activities and tourism process of Cumilla.

Table 3: Decision of Hypothesis testing

Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable	Significance Level (P Value)	Hypothesis	Result of Hypothesis
Product	Tourists' Satisfaction	.008	H1	Accept
Price	Tourists' Satisfaction	.017	H2	Accept
Place	Tourists' Satisfaction	.034	H3	Accept
Promotion	Tourists' Satisfaction	.356	H4	Reject
People	Tourists' Satisfaction	.011	H5	Accept
Process	Tourists' Satisfaction	.090	H6	Reject
Physical Evidence	Tourists' Satisfaction	.023	H7	Accept

Recommendations

According to most of the visitors there are many tourism attractions in Cumilla. Visiting different places of Cumilla is not very expensive and not very difficult but the tourism authority of Cumilla has to increase facilities to give

tourists proper guideline about different places. The promotional activities in Cumilla are very poor. The people of Cumilla are sincere to the tourists but still, there are needed to have professional tour guides at tourism spots. In addition to that, the tourism process of Cumilla is needed to be redesigned. Physical evidences connected to visit places means transportation, accommodation, food and shopping facilities are quite good though still there is option to improve a bit. These are the things that the tour operators and concern authorities of government can do to achieve Tourists' satisfaction.

Conclusion

Tourism industry can be a handy tool of alleviating poverty and improve the standard of living by maximizing the satisfaction of tourist in any region (Tooman, 1997; Emaad, 2007). For the growth of the tourists' satisfaction, satisfaction with all marketing mix elements is very important. Though Cumilla is enriched with tourism elements like historical places, archeological sites, natural beauty, the promotional activities of Cumilla is very poor and most of the respondents are dissatisfied with the tourism delivery process of this destination. That's why this destination is failed to attract the visitors after having a good amount of tourism elements. At present, the tourist satisfaction with Cumilla is 'somewhat dissatisfied'; it can be upgraded to the next 'high' level if proper management with respect to promotional activities and tour operation process are applied. Similarly, it can be expected that in the other areas of tourism—such as restaurant, transportation, recreation and amusement – if adequate care is taken especially with respect to service quality, the growth in the tourism industry of Cumilla would simply be a matter of time. Based on the results of the study showed that except two (Promotion and process) had a positive and significant effect on tourist's satisfaction in Cumilla. Therefore, if the better implementation of these two marketing mix, it will increase tourists satisfaction and eventually that will bring a positive synergy for economic and social development of Cumilla.

Research limitations

Research has conducted in only one district in Bangladesh and sample size is small. So the result may vary in wide range. Future studies should consider

these limitations and take other mediators role in tourist satisfaction. As it was confined with specific district's tourism, so it may not generalize to rest of the country.

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A: Correlation Analysis

7 P's		Pearson Correlation with Tourists' Satisfaction
Product	Correlation	.546
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Price	Correlation	.560
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Place	Correlation	.484
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Promotion	Correlation	.472
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
People	Correlation	.473
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Process	Correlation	.457
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Physical evidence	Correlation	.514
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

B: Regression Analysis**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.845 ^a	.714	.666	.40875

a. Predictors: (Constant), physical evidence, place, people, process, product, promotion, price

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	17.483	7	2.498	14.949	.000 ^a
Residual	7.017	42	.167		
Total	24.500	49			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Physical evidence, Place, People, Process, Product, Promotion, Price

b. Dependent Variable: tourists' satisfaction

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-2.857	.654		-4.367	.000
Product	.364	.130	.256	2.799	.008
Price	.329	.133	.245	2.478	.017
Place	.231	.106	.197	2.187	.034
promotion	.073	.078	.092	.932	.356
People	.360	.135	.243	2.668	.011
Process	.188	.109	.158	1.734	.090
Physical Evidence	.324	.137	.216	2.357	.023

a. Dependent Variable: tourists'