

Determination of the Difference in Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Homestay Travelers and General Tourists in Sikkim and their Influence on the Environmental Motivations

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Abstract

Introduction: Homestay tourism has emerged as a new addition to the tourism accommodation industry across the world. In India, the state of Sikkim is very popular in attracting homestay tourists because the state actively promotes ecotourism and cultural tourism which in turn also helps the local communities to get employment and generate additional income

Purpose: The primary aim of the current study is to develop a framework to examine the difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of homestay travellers and general tourists and determine the influence of these socio-demographic characteristics on their environmental motivations.

Methodology: A mixed-method approach has been employed to address the objectives. Primary data has been collected from general and homestay tourists in Sikkim through self-developed survey-based questionnaires. Descriptive statistics has been used to analyze the data.

Findings: The findings suggest that there is a significant difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of homestay travellers and general tourists in Sikkim, such as gender, age group, marital status, education level, and income, and that environmental motivations such as ecocentrism, sustainability, Global self-identity, and Altruism are more prevalent among homestay tourists.

Research Originality: This study will be helpful in identifying the various environmental motivational factors that drive tourists with different socio-demographic characteristics to choose homestay accommodations over general accommodations.

Keywords: tourists, homestay tourism, other tourists, Sikkim tourism, socio-demographic characteristics, environmental motivations, ecotourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered to be an important phenomenon in terms of both society and culture in recent times. There exist different tourist groups that choose different tourist products which include both “tourist attractions and accommodation facilities” (Zhao et al., 2020). The decision making of different groups of tourists depends upon a number of factors and among them “social class” is a significant influencing factor. A person's social class is determined by his or her socioeconomic standing, which includes demographic traits such as gender, age, marital status, education, income level, and so on. These characteristics have a clustering effect that results in different perceived values of diverse social classes which affect the choice and behaviour of these individuals towards the kind of accommodation they would like to stay put in (Fei & He, 2020). Tourism is not only related to consumer behaviour but is also a primary means of building and affirming a social position. Therefore, it has been observed that these demographic factors have a significant impact on the participation of tourists (Batabyal, 2015). Income is a major factor in tourism as high-income groups with lesser economic considerations choose accommodation facilities like homestays.

Homestay tourism has emerged as a new addition to the tourism accommodation industry across the world. It is primarily defined as a “type of accommodation in which visitors stay in the homes of local residents” (Agyeiwaah, 2019). It is a type of accommodation for tourists which emphasizes environmental-related tourism and community-based tourism in which tourists live with their friends and families in rural areas of a state and get treated by the host families as their own families as they involve them in their daily life experiences (Ahmad et al., 2014). In India, there has been an increasing demand for homestay accommodations, especially in the northeastern states due to their scenic beauty and facilities for traditional homestays. Among the northeastern states of India, Sikkim is very popular in attracting homestay tourists because the state actively promotes ecotourism and cultural tourism which in turn also helps the local communities to get employment and generate additional income (Mitra et al., 2015). In Sikkim homestays have in a way helped in empowering the local

community by making optimal use of their resources and also taking care of them (Yadav et al). Since the homestays in Sikkim provide rich and valuable experiences to the tourists, over the years there has been an increasing number of tourists who chose homestay accommodations in that state. In terms of environmental motivations, the homestay tourists in Sikkim. Agyeiwaah et al. (2013) also observed that homestay tourists are more environmentally motivated as compared to other tourists which triggers them to choose homestay facilities that provide them with quality services and activities that contribute to the “care and preservation” of the environment. . The preservation of the environment was, therefore, one of the major motivations for individuals to choose homestay facilities.

However, there exists a lack of literature that explains the influence of differences in socio-demographic characteristics of homestay tourists and other tourists in their motivations to choose homestay facilities. Therefore, this study is concerned with homestay tourists and their socio-demographic characteristics but is different from existing literature on one aspect as it focuses on the tourists’ environmental motivations.

2. AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of the current study is to develop a framework to examine the difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of homestay travellers and general tourists and determine the influence of these socio-demographic characteristics on their environmental motivations.

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to accomplish the above aim, the study will focus on addressing the following objectives:

1. To examine the difference between the socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age group, marital status, place, education level, profession and income of the homestay travellers and general tourists in Sikkim.
2. To determine the influence of the socio-demographic characteristics of the homestay travelers and general tourists of Sikkim on their environmental motivations such as ecocentricity, sustainability, global self-identity and altruism.
3. To explore the extent to which these socio-demographic factors affect the overall satisfaction of the homestay tourists and general tourists during their stay.
4. To measure the tourists’ expectations of the service quality that they received in any Homestay program.
5. To develop a framework that can figure out the gaps in homestay tourism in Sikkim and find possible ways to address them.

2.2 Research Questions

1. What is the difference between the socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age group, marital status, place, education level, profession and income of the homestay travelers and general tourists in Sikkim?
2. How do the socio-demographic characteristics of the homestay travelers and general tourists of Sikkim influence their environmental motivations such as ecocentricity, sustainability, global self-identity and altruism?
3. To what extent do these socio-demographic factors affect the overall satisfaction of the tourists during their stay?
4. What are the tourists’ expectations of the service quality that they received in any Homestay program?
5. What are the gaps in homestay tourism in Sikkim and how can they be addressed?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SCENARIO OF HOMESTAY TOURISM IN SIKKIM

Over the years one of the strongest motivations for tourists has become their interest in the natural environment and cultural heritage, arts, history, language, etc. In Sikkim, the “Sikkim Himalayan Homestay” is a UNESCO project which aims at the development of Cultural tourism and Ecotourism in the Mountainous region of Central and South Asia.” (Yadav et al.). The primary aim of the project is the promotion of “community-based tourism” while assisting local communities to fully benefit from the economic opportunities of tourism. Moreover, the cultural heritage and natural environment for future generations can be protected through homestay tourism as tourists along with local communities indulge in meeting these goals. UNESCO has chosen nine places for this project in Sikkim which offer “untouched wealth of nature and authentic Sikkimese lifestyle (Cajee, 2014). According to Chaudhary & Lama (2014), around 80 to 120 tourists visit these homestays annually both from India as well as other countries. The marketing and promotion of these homestays are done by the Government of Sikkim as well as a third party that closely monitors the service quality of these homestays.

3.2 HIGHLIGHTING THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH HOMESTAY TOURISTS AND GENERAL TOURISTS

The socio-demographic characteristics of tourists offer key information for tourism management, developing a marketing strategy as well as products especially in “nature-based or protected areas. Socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education level and income play a major role in motivating tourists to choose the kind of accommodation they wish to stay in while travelling (Ma et al., 2018). With regard to age, it has been observed that older people are usually less interested in choosing homestay accommodations and that the “novelty” factor is higher among middle-aged tourists. Younger aged people are more motivated towards recreational activities, enjoying nature as well as culture and “social seeking” as a result of which the tendency of choosing homestay accommodation is more among this group of tourists. In terms of income, higher-income group individuals are more likely to choose homestay accommodations as they have fewer economic considerations whereas lower-income tourists tend to choose general accommodations. Furthermore, educated individuals are more concerned about the environment and cultural heritage as a result of which they tend to choose homestays (Amin & Ibrahim, 2015).

3.3 OUTLINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOTIVATIONS OF HOMESTAY TOURISTS IN SIKKIM

Ecotourism has become one of the major sectors of the tourism industry which has advantages for both the community as well as tourists. In Sikkim Ecotourism is a key aspect and one of the major goals of the homestay project (Sherpa & Suklabaidya, 2021). Thapa & Malini (2017) stated that the fundamental environmental motivations of homestay tourism include “valued benefits of ecotourism, the importance of conservation and protection of the natural environment through various activities, geological and biological attraction, etc. The activities of ecotourism which are closely related to the protected area and offer appropriate opportunities for education and recreation to the tourists as well as the local communities is also yet another factor that motivates tourists to choose homestays. The various dimensions of ecotourism such as conservation of natural resources, preservation of culture, and sustainability are some of the major factors that trigger homestay tourism (Udunuwara & Amandakoon, 2020).

3.4 RESEARCH GAP

Despite highlighting the major socio-demographic characteristics of general and homestay tourists and environmental motivations that drive individuals to choose homestay accommodations there are some gaps in the literature. There exist various other environmental motivational factors that drive tourists to choose homestay accommodations which have not been considered in the existing literature and need to be addressed in future research. Furthermore, tourists are not always environmentally motivated to choose homestay accommodations and there exist various other social, cultural, economic and political factors that trigger their choice which needs to be addressed in future studies in this field.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology delineates the manner in which the research aims and objectives of the study are addressed using various procedures and methods. The various methodology components used in the research process are discussed in this section. The present study follows a mixed research approach and therefore uses both the qualitative and quantitative research methods in the course of the study. In line with this, the study follows a positivist research paradigm to offer an explanation of the outcomes of quantitative research. Moreover, the study uses a descriptive research design as its objective is to identify the characteristics, trends, categories, etc of the general and homestay tourists in Sikkim. In addition, the reasoning approach that has been used in the study is a deductive redesign approach as the study begins with a general description of the tourism industry and tourist community as a whole and then moves to specific conclusions regarding the homestay and general tourists in the current context. The data for the current study have been collected through a survey that has been carried out among homestay tourists and general tourists visiting the state of Sikkim located in the Northeast region of India.

The data have been acquired using a self-developed questionnaire to determine the various socio-demographic characteristics, environmental motivations, satisfaction levels and enjoyment levels of the tourists who visit the state. Two different questionnaires were developed for obtaining the information; one for the general tourists and one for homestay tourists, to get a better insight into the characteristics and different other aspects of the tourists. The responses of the respondents on their satisfaction level and the impact of diverse factors on the overall enjoyment of the tourists at the homestay have been obtained on a “5-point Likert scale, where 1 denoted lowest and 5 denoted highest in terms of the level of

satisfaction and impact of enjoyment respectively. Information regarding the environmental motivations of the tourists has also been obtained using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 denoted strongly agree and 5 denoted strongly disagree. The questionnaires have been designed to gather information so as to be able to address the different objectives of the study. Each construct included many tasks to elicit important information from participants.

The population considered in this study is the entire population of tourists who visit Sikkim and the sample of general and homestay tourists has been selected using the stratified probability sampling technique. For the current study, 1000 respondents have been approached for data collection, out of which a total of 918 respondents, had responded which still provides a better margin of error for the study. Out of the 918 respondents, 212 are homestay tourists and 706 are general tourists. Hence the size of the sample of the current study is proper to evaluate the construct and the research model. The data analysis in the study has been conducted using the SPSS software through different statistical tools and techniques such as frequency distribution, Chi-square test, and regression analysis was used to derive the results of the study.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This portion of the empirical research covers the various empirical findings that were produced by testing the hypotheses utilising numerous levels of statistical analysis. It describes the primary conclusions obtained after using the data analysis procedures and seeks to expound on these empirical findings. For better comprehension, statistical findings are mostly presented in the form of expressive tables and charts. The study's findings are classified specifically to satisfy the study's pre-defined objectives in a simple manner. In this part, the quantitative analysis findings will be thoroughly examined and explained.

Demographic profile

The following section represents and discusses the demographic profile of the respondents generated through frequency distribution. From the results, it has been observed that out of the total 706 general tourists 70.3% of the respondents are males and out of the 212 homestay tourists, 74.5% of the respondents are also males which indicated that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were males. In terms of marital status, it has been observed that out of the 683 general tourists, 60.5% of the respondents are married and out of the 212 homestay tourists the 49.5% of the respondents are married. This indicated that the majority of the tourists from both groups are married although in the case of honest tourists the percentage of married and single respondents was almost equal as the percentage of single respondents are 49.1%. With regard to age, it has been observed that 681 general tourists, 50.9% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 26 to 40 and out of the 181 homestay tourists 42.9% of the respondents belonged to the age of 26 to 40 which indicated that the majority of the tourists from both the groups who participated in the study belonged to the middle age group. In terms of education, it has been found that out of the 665 general tourists, 46.7% of the respondents are educated up to graduate level while out of the 212 homestay tourists, 84.0% of the respondents are educated up to postgraduate level and above. This indicated that the majority of the general tourists are graduates while the majority of the homestay tourists are postgraduates. With regard to accompaniment, out of the 677 general tourists, it has been observed that 48.7% of the respondents are accompanied by family members and in terms of homestay tourism, 29.7% of the respondents are accompanied by their spouses. This indicated that the majority of the general tourists are accompanied by their families and the majority of the homestay tourists are accompanied by their spouses during their visit to Sikkim. The income data revealed that out of the 617 general tourists 36.5% of the respondents have an income level below 3 lakhs and out of the 212 homestay tourists 50.9% of them have an income level between 9 to 12 lakhs which indicated that the income level of the majority of the homestay tourists is higher than that of the general tourists.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses developed to carry out the study have been validated using statistical tools and procedures.

A one-sample chi-square test has been used to test the hypotheses. The present study will help in comparing the observed results with the expected results. The purpose of the test is to understand whether the difference between the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis is due to chance or due to the existence of a relationship between the variables being studied.

Hypothesis 1: The demographic characteristics (gender, age- group, marital status, education level, income) of home-stay travellers differ from those of general tourists.

1) **H01:** There is no significant difference across gender for general and homestay tourists

The one-sample binomial test revealed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant difference across gender for general and homestay tourists as is observed from the difference in the percentage of males and female tourists between the general and homestay tourists.

2) **H01:** There is no significant difference across Marital Status for general and homestay tourists

The one sample Chi-square test showed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exist significant differences across marital status for general and homestay tourists as is evident from the difference in the percentages of married, single, divorcee/widower tourists between the general and homestay tourists.

3) **H01:** There is no significant difference across ages for general and homestay tourists

The one sample Chi-square test showed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exist significant differences across ages for general and homestay tourists as is evident from the vast differences in the percentages across age groups between the general and homestay tourists.

4) **H01:** There is no significant difference across education for general and homestay tourists

The one sample Chi-square test showed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exist significant differences across education for general and homestay tourists as is evident from the vast differences in the percentages across levels of education between the general and homestay tourists.

5) **H01:** There is no significant difference across accompaniment for general and homestay tourists

The one sample Chi-square test showed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exist significant differences across accompaniment for general and homestay tourists as is evident from the vast differences in the percentages across types of accompaniment (spouse, family, friend and alone) between the general and homestay tourists.

6) **H01:** There is no significant difference across income for general and homestay tourists

The one sample Chi-square test showed that the p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exist significant differences across income for general and homestay tourists as is evident from the substantial differences in the percentages across levels of income between the general and homestay tourists.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics illustrate the characteristics of the data set and describe that the variables in the study are dependent on the level of measurement that has been utilized. In this study, the descriptive statistics of the different environmental motivation factors such as ecocentrism, sustainability, global self-identity and altruism of the general and homestay tourists have been analyzed and interpreted. Furthermore, the one-sample t-test has been conducted to compare the mean values of the two groups, that is, the general tourists and homestay tourists and determine if the Homestay Tourist falls in the Ecocentric, Sustainability, Global Self Identity and Altruism category.

| Independent sample t-test (General Vs Homestay Tourist) | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Type | | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value | p-value |
| Ecototal | General | 10.17 | 2.86 | 5.21 | 0 |
| | Homestay | 11.36 | 2.96 | | |
| Sustotal | General | 12.19 | 2.75 | 13.11 | 0 |
| | Homestay | 15.31 | 3.12 | | |
| Globaltotal | General | 25.73 | 4.97 | 23.2 | 0 |
| | Homestay | 34.51 | 4.80 | | |
| Altrutotal | General | 16.56 | 2.78 | 10.02 | 0 |
| | Homestay | 18.56 | 2.48 | | |

Table 1: Independent sample t-test (General Vs Homestay tourists)

Ecocentrism

From the above table 1, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism the mean value is 11.36 for homestay tourists and 10.17 for general tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for homestay tourists. The higher mean value indicates that ecocentrism as an environmental motivation is higher for homestay tourists in Sikkim as compared to general tourists. The higher standard deviation of 2.96 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of homestay tourists.

Sustainability

From the above table 1, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability the mean value is 15.31 for homestay tourists and 12.19 for general tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for homestay tourists. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability as an environmental motivation is higher for homestay tourists in Sikkim as compared to general tourists. The higher standard deviation of 3.12 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of homestay tourists.

Global self-identity

From the above table 1, it has been observed that in terms of Global self-identity the mean value is 34.51 for homestay tourists and 25.73 for general tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for homestay tourists. The higher mean value indicates that global self-identity as an environmental motivation is higher for homestay tourists in Sikkim as compared to general tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 4.80 as compared to 4.97 of general tourists indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of homestay tourists.

Altruism

From the above table 1, it has been observed that in terms of altruism the mean value is 18.56 for homestay tourists and 16.56 for general tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for homestay tourists. The higher mean value indicates that altruism as an environmental motivation is higher for homestay tourists in Sikkim as compared to general tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.48 as compared to 2.78 of general tourists indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of homestay tourists.

Therefore it is evident from the above that the different variables of environmental motivations are higher for homestay tourists.

Hypotheses

7) **H01:** There is no significant difference across eco-centric scores for general and homestay tourists

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 1, it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism is 5.21 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is less than 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant difference for ecocentrism score of general tourists and homestay tourists.

8) **H01:** There is no significant difference across sustainability importance scores for general and homestay tourists

From the independent sample t-test in above table 1, it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability is 13.11 which is above

1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is less than 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant difference for sustainability importance score of general tourists and homestay tourists.

9) H01: There is no significant difference across global self-identity scores for general and homestay tourists

From the independent sample t-test in above table 1, it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity is 23.2 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is less than 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant difference for global self-identity score of general tourists and homestay tourists.

10)H01:There is no significant difference across Altruism scores for general and homestay tourists

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 1 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism is 10.02 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is less than 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant difference for the altruism score of general tourists and homestay tourists.

| Independent sample t-test: Gender | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value | p-value |
| Ecototal | Male | 10.48 | 2.926 | 0.654 | 0.512 |
| | Female | 10.34 | 2.938 | | |
| Sustotal | Male | 12.99 | 3.205 | 1.32 | 0.168 |
| | Female | 12.69 | 2.916 | | |
| Globaltotal | Male | 27.86 | 6.383 | 0.969 | 0.333 |
| | Female | 27.44 | 5.611 | | |
| Altrutotal | Male | 17.00 | 2.892 | 0.243 | 0.808 |
| | Female | 17.05 | 2.734 | | |

Table 2: Independent sample t-test: Gender

Ecocentrism across gender

From table 2, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism across gender the mean value is 10.34 for female tourists and 10.48 for male tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for male tourists. The higher mean value indicates that the ecocentrism score as an environmental motivation is higher for males tourists in Sikkim as compared to female tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.926 as compared to 2.938 of female tourists indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of male tourists.

Sustainability across gender

From table 2, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability across gender the mean value is 12.69 for female tourists and 12.99 for male tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for male tourists. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability score as an environmental motivation is higher for male tourists in Sikkim as compared to female tourists. The higher standard deviation of 3.205 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of male tourists.

Global self-identity across gender

From table 2, it has been observed that in terms of global self-identity across gender the mean value is 27.44 for female tourists and 27.86 for male tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for male tourists. The higher mean value indicates that the global self-identity score as an environmental motivation is higher for male tourists in Sikkim as compared to female tourists. The higher standard deviation of 5.611 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of male tourists.

Altruism across gender

From table 2, it has been observed that in terms of altruism across gender the mean value is 17.05 for female tourists and 17.00 for male tourists which reveals that the mean value is higher for female tourists. The higher mean value indicates that altruism score as an environmental motivation is higher for female tourists in Sikkim as compared to male tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.734 as compared to 2.892 of male tourists indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of female tourists.

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses are the influence of the different socio-demographic characteristics of the general and homestay tourists on their ecocentric, sustainability, global self-identity and altruism scores.

11)**H01:** There is no significant difference for eco-centric scores across gender

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 2 it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism across gender is 0.654 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.512 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant gender-based difference for ecocentrism score of the tourists.

12)**H01:** There is no significant difference for sustainability importance score across gender

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 2 it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability across gender is 1.32 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.168 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant gender-based difference for sustainability score of the tourists.

13)**H01:** There is no significant difference for global self-identity score across gender

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 2 it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity across gender is 0.969 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.333 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant gender-based difference for global self-identity score of the tourists.

14)**H01:** There is no significant difference for Altruism score across gender

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 2 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism across gender is 0.243 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.808 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant gender-based difference for altruism score of the tourists.

| Independent sample t-test: Marital Status | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | F-value | p-value |
| Ecototal | Married | 10.43 | 2.879 | 0.581 | 0.627 |
| | Single | 10.54 | 2.940 | | |
| | Divorcee/widowers | 9.45 | 4.108 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Sustotal | Married | 12.93 | 3.026 | 0.731 | 0.533 |
| | Single | 12.95 | 3.254 | | |
| | Divorcee/widowers | 12.09 | 2.700 | | |
| Globaltotal | Married | 27.60 | 6.043 | 1.076 | 0.358 |
| | Single | 28.09 | 6.497 | | |
| | Divorcee/widowers | 27.45 | 5.854 | | |
| Altrutotal | Married | 16.91 | 2.880 | 0.686 | 0.561 |
| | Single | 17.18 | 2.849 | | |
| | Divorcee/widowers | 17.09 | 2.844 | | |

Table 3: Independent sample t-test: Marital status

Ecocentrism across marital status

From table 3, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism across marital status the mean value is highest for single tourists at 10.54. The higher mean value indicates that the ecocentrism score as an environmental motivation is highest for single tourists as compared to married and divorced tourists in Sikkim. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.940 indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of single tourists.

Sustainability across marital status

From table 3, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability across marital status the mean value is the highest for single tourists at 12.95. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability score as an environmental motivation is highest for single tourists as compared to married and divorced tourists in Sikkim. The higher standard deviation of 3.254 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of single tourists.

Global self-identity across marital status

From table 3, it has been observed that in terms of global self-identity across marital status the mean value is the highest for single tourists at 28.09. The higher mean value indicates that the global self-identity score as an environmental motivation is highest for single tourists as compared to married and divorced tourists in Sikkim. The higher standard deviation of 6.497 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of single tourists.

Altruism across marital status

From table 3, it has been observed that in terms of altruism across marital status the mean value is the highest for single tourists at 17.18. The higher mean value indicates that the altruism score as an environmental motivation is highest for single tourists as compared to married and divorced tourists in Sikkim. The higher standard deviation of 2.849 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of single tourists.

Hypotheses:

15)H01: There is no significant difference for eco-centric score across Marital status

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 3 it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism across marital status is 0.581 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.627 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant marital status based difference for ecocentrism score of the tourists.

16)H01: There is no significant difference for sustainability importance score across Marital status

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 3 it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability across marital status is 0.731 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.533 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant marital status based difference for sustainability score of the tourists.

17)H01: There is no significant difference for global self-identity score across Marital status.

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 3 it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity across marital status is 1.076 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.358 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant marital status-based difference for global self-identity score of the tourists.

18)H01: There is no significant difference for Altruism score across Marital status

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 3 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism across marital status is 0.686 which is below 1.96 and the p-value is 0.561 which is above 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected which states that there does not exist a significant marital status-based difference for altruism score of the tourists.

| Independent sample t-test: Age | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | F-value | P-value |
| Ecototal | Below 25 | 10.02 | 2.824 | 3.47 | 0.008 |
| | 26-40 | 10.51 | 2.962 | | |
| | 41-55 | 10.88 | 2.926 | | |
| | 56-70 | 10.37 | 2.543 | | |
| Sustotal | Below 25 | 12.30 | 2.853 | 2.909 | 0.021 |
| | 26-40 | 12.88 | 3.131 | | |
| | 41-55 | 13.28 | 3.408 | | |
| | 56-70 | 13.40 | 2.922 | | |
| Globaltotal | Below 25 | 25.99 | 5.965 | 8.751 | 0 |
| | 26-40 | 27.47 | 6.057 | | |
| | 41-55 | 29.05 | 6.445 | | |
| | 56-70 | 30.19 | 5.819 | | |
| Altrutotal | Below 25 | 16.51 | 2.919 | 2.263 | 0.061 |
| | 26-40 | 17.02 | 2.919 | | |
| | 41-55 | 17.38 | 2.839 | | |
| | 56-70 | 17.18 | 2.214 | | |

Table 4: Independent sample t-test: Age

Ecocentrism across age

From table 4, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism across age the mean value is highest for the age group 41-55 at 10.88. The higher mean value indicates that ecocentrism score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists of this age group as compared to other age groups. The higher standard deviation of 2.926 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broader range in the case of tourists belonging to this age group.

Sustainability across age

From table 4, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability cross-age the mean value is highest for the age group 56-70 at 13.40. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists of this age group as compared to other age groups. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.922 as compared to other age groups indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of tourists belonging to this age group.

Global self-identity across age

From table 4, it has been observed that in terms of global self-identity across age the mean value is highest for the age group 56-70 at 30.19. The higher mean value indicates that the global self-identity score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists of this age group as compared to other age groups. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 5.819 as compared to other age groups indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of tourists belonging to this age group.

Altruism across age

From table 4, it has been observed that in terms of altruism across age the mean value is highest for the age group 41-55 at 17.38. The higher mean value indicates that the altruism score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists of this age group as compared to other age groups. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.839 as compared to other age groups indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of tourists belonging to this age group.

Hypotheses:

19) H01: There is no significant difference for eco-centric scores across age.

From the independent sample t-test in the above table 4 it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism across age is 3.47 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0.008 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant age-based difference for ecocentrism score of the tourists.

20) H01: There is no significant difference in sustainability importance score across age.

From table 4 it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability across age is 2.909 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0.021 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant age-based difference for sustainability score of the tourists.

21) **H01:** There is no significant difference for global self-identity score across age

From table 4 it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity across age is 8.751 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant age-based difference for global self-identity score of the tourists.

22) **H01:** There is no significant difference for Altruism score across education

From table 4 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism across age is 2.263 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0.061 which is more or less equal to 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant age-based difference for altruism score of the tourists.

| Independent sample t-test: Education | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | F-value | p-value |
| Ecototal | School | 9.83 | 3.311 | 5.75 | 0.001 |
| | Graduate | 10.28 | 2.947 | | |
| | Post graduate and above | 10.90 | 2.752 | | |
| Sustotal | School | 11.95 | 2.682 | 24.116 | 0 |
| | Graduate | 12.21 | 3.014 | | |
| | Post graduate and above | 13.87 | 3.184 | | |
| Globaltotal | School | 26.47 | 5.544 | 23.204 | 0 |
| | Graduate | 26.25 | 5.428 | | |
| | Post graduate and above | 29.70 | 6.566 | | |
| Altrutotal | School | 16.28 | 3.268 | 10.175 | 0 |
| | Graduate | 16.73 | 2.827 | | |
| | Post graduate and above | 17.60 | 2.608 | | |

Table 5: Independent sample t-test: Education

Ecocentrism across education

From table 5, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism across education the mean value is highest for the education level of postgraduate and above at 10.90. The higher mean value indicates that ecocentrism score as an environmental motivation is highest for postgraduate and above tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.752 as compared to other education levels indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of postgraduate and above tourists.

Sustainability across education

From table 5, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability across education the mean value is highest for the education level of postgraduate and above at 13.87. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability score as an environmental motivation is highest for postgraduate and above tourists. The higher standard deviation of 3.184 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broad range in the case of postgraduate and above tourists.

Global self-identity across education

From table 5, it has been observed that in terms of global self-identity across education the mean value is highest for the education level of postgraduate and above at 29.70. The higher mean value indicates that the global self-identity score as an environmental motivation is highest for postgraduate and above tourists. The higher standard deviation of 6.566 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broad range in the case of postgraduate and above tourists.

Altruism across education

From table 5, it has been observed that in terms of altruism across education the mean value is highest for the education level of postgraduate and above at 17.60. The higher mean value indicates that altruism score as an environmental

motivation is highest for postgraduate and above tourists. However, a relatively lower standard deviation of 2.608 as compared to other education levels indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of postgraduate and above tourists.

Hypotheses

23) H01: There is no significant difference for eco-centric scores across education

From table 5 it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism across education is 5.75 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0.001 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant education-based difference for ecocentrism score of the tourists.

24) H01: There is no significant difference for sustainability importance score across education

From table 5 it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability across education is 24.116 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant education-based difference for sustainability score of the tourists.

25) H01: There is no significant difference for global self-identity score across education

From table 5 it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity across education is 23.204 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant education-based difference for global self-identity score of the tourists.

26) H01: There is no significant difference for Altruism score across education

From table 5 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism across education is 10.175 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant education based difference for altruism score of the tourists.

| Descriptives | | | | | |
|--------------|----------|-------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | F-value | p-value |
| Ecototal | Below 3 | 9.66 | 2.897 | 5.49 | 0 |
| | 3-6 | 10.67 | 2.786 | | |
| | 6-9 | 10.61 | 2.742 | | |
| | 9-12 | 11.17 | 2.947 | | |
| | Above 12 | 10.67 | 2.875 | | |
| Sustotal | Below 3 | 12.11 | 2.702 | 9.203 | 0 |
| | 3-6 | 12.60 | 2.719 | | |
| | 6-9 | 12.92 | 3.058 | | |
| | 9-12 | 14.05 | 3.474 | | |
| | Above 12 | 13.93 | 3.670 | | |
| Globaltotal | Below 3 | 25.78 | 5.167 | 14.739 | 0 |
| | 3-6 | 26.81 | 5.106 | | |
| | 6-9 | 28.65 | 6.363 | | |
| | 9-12 | 30.69 | 6.704 | | |
| | Above 12 | 29.49 | 6.835 | | |
| Altrutotal | Below 3 | 16.52 | 2.948 | 3.311 | 0.003 |
| | 3-6 | 16.87 | 2.738 | | |
| | 6-9 | 16.96 | 3.137 | | |
| | 9-12 | 17.58 | 2.708 | | |
| | Above 12 | 17.68 | 2.648 | | |

Table 6: Independent sample t-test: Income

Ecocentrism across income

From table 6, it has been observed that in terms of ecocentrism across income the mean value is highest for the income level of 3 to 6 as well as above 12 at 10.67. The higher mean value indicates that the ecocentrism score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists with income levels between 3 to 6 and above 12. The standard deviation of above 12 is 2.875 and 3 to 6 is 2.786 therefore values of the variable are spread out over a broad range in the case of tourists with income above 12.

Sustainability across income

From table 6, it has been observed that in terms of sustainability across income the mean value is highest for the income level of 9 to 12 at 14.05. The higher mean value indicates that sustainability score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists with income levels between 9 to 12. The higher standard deviation of 3.474 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broad range in the case of tourists with income between 9 to 12.

Global self-identity across income

From table 6, it has been observed that in terms of global self-identity across income the mean value is highest for the income level of 9 to 12 at 30.69. The higher mean value indicates that the global self-identity score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists with an income level between 9 to 12. The higher standard deviation of 6.704 indicates that the values of the variable are spread out over a broad range in the case of tourists with income between 9 to 12.

Altruism across income

From table 6, it has been observed that in terms of altruism across income the mean value is highest for the income level of above 12 at 17.68. The higher mean value indicates that altruism score as an environmental motivation is highest for tourists with income levels between 9 to 12. However, the lower standard deviation of 2.708 indicates that the values of the variable are clustered around the mean in the case of tourists with income between 9 to 12.

Hypotheses:

27) **H01:** There is no significant difference for eco-centric scores across income

From table 6 it can be seen that the t-value for ecocentrism across income is 5.49 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant income-based difference for ecocentrism score of the tourists.

28) **H01:** There is no significant difference for sustainability importance score across income

From table 6 it can be seen that the t-value for sustainability across income is 9.203 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant income-based difference for sustainability score of the tourists.

29) **H01:** There is no significant difference for global self-identity score across income

From table 6 it can be seen that the t-value for global self-identity across income is 14.739 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant income-based difference for global self-identity score of the tourists.

30) **H01:** There is no significant difference for Altruism score across income

From table 6 it can be seen that the t-value for altruism across income is 3.311 which is above 1.96 and the p-value is 0.003 which is below 0.05 and therefore it signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there exists a significant income-based difference for altruism score of the tourists.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the difference between the socio-demographic characteristics of homestay travellers and general tourists and determine the influence of these socio-demographic characteristics on their environmental motivations.

The quantitative analyses conducted in this study have addressed each and every objective to explain the relevance of the outcomes derived. Firstly the results verified that there indeed exists a significant difference between the socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age group, marital status, education level, and income of the homestay travellers and general tourists in Sikkim. This is evident from the first hypothesis which stated that the demographic characteristics (gender, age- group, marital status, education level, income) of home-stay travellers differ from those of general tourists. In line with this Zhao et al. (2020) stated the demands and needs of the general tourists differ from that of homestay tourists as the majority of the former group belong to the middle class while the majority of the latter group belong to the high-income group of the society. Research also suggested that more educated people tend to opt for homestay settings as they are more

interested in understanding nature and are more environmentally motivated as a result of which they choose to spend time in homestays during vacations that offer a variety of options to nurture their surroundings (Samsudin & Maliki, 2015). The results of this study also verified that environmental motivations such as ecocentrism, sustainability, Global self-identity and Altruism are more among homestay tourists. The homestay tourists are more motivated towards the preservation of the environment as a result of which they choose homestays over general lodging hotels. The increasing demand for homestays is therefore primarily attributed to the recent global emergence of the need for sustainability of the environment and greater interest and consciousness towards environmental concerns (Karki et al., 2019). This study is therefore an initiative towards targeting a particular niche in homestay tourism and developing strategies for its promotion. This study will help in identifying a market for homestay products. However, the study has certain limitations. The sample size used in the study is not sufficient for generalizations as a result of which it is recommended that future studies consider large sample sizes to examine the influence of environmental motivations for choosing homestay. Furthermore, there are various other factors that motivate tourists towards choosing homestays apart from environmental factors which should be considered in future research in this field.