Chapter 20

Modeling Tourists’ Opinions Using RIDIT Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter we have attempted to use “Relative to an Identified Distribution” (RIDIT) algorithms based modelling for analysing real-time empirical data relating to tourists’ attitude and preference for a better understanding of the tourists’ motivation and behaviour. RIDIT approach for evaluating the factors that influence tourist behaviour is not a very common approach in tourism sector. This chapter on modelling tourists’ opinions and perceptions with RIDIT analysis would try to guide the empirical research in the domains of hospitality, tourism and travel research and analytics process in generating Optimized research outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism is considered as one of the largest and fastest growing industries (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008; Cooper & Hall, 2008) and it is also strongly influencing the world GDP, employment, exports and taxes (Kay, 2003; Koc, 2004; Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008). World Travel & Tourism industry has contributed US$7.6 trillion (9.8% of global GDP) and created 277 million jobs (1 in 11 jobs) directly or indirectly in 2014 (UNWTO, 2015). According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, it has been expressed that international tourists (overnight visitors) reached 1,138 million in 2014 with the growth rate of 4.7%, which is 51 million more than in 2013. Tourism is not only a social phenomenon it is also a big business (Cohen, 1979; Krippendorf 1986). Hence, growing popularity of global tourism demands proper destination marketing (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Murphy et al., 2007). To achieve this, tourism marketers nowadays need to apply modern branding techniques and effective positioning strategies (Hosany et al., 2006; Skinner, 2008; Hankinson, 2009; Hanna & Rowley, 2011) for motivating the prospective tourists and that it would also be helpful to cope up with current unstable and changing conditions.

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competitive tourism marketing environment (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Pike et al., 2004). Pike (2009) established that 70% of worldwide travellers visit only 10 countries and the remaining countries are struggling to attract the outstanding 30% of the total international arrivals (Morgan et al., 2003). This is not just the problem of destination marketing but also the problem of understanding the tourists’ insights and preferences. Not only in the product market but also in the tourism sector tastes and preferences vary. Tourists are not completely the similar in nature; they have different set of needs, motivations and preferences relating to their ideal vacation. Tourists are heterogeneous in nature (Dolnicar, 2008), so it is very essential to project the different tourists’ destination brands with proper tourism marketing initiatives to attract the different prospective tourist segments (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Hankinson, 2005; Mowle & Merrilees, 2005; Wood, 2007; Campo-Martinez et al., 2010). In this context the judgement of tourists’ preferences and attitudes (George, 2003; March & Woodside, 2005) are necessary to achieve the equilibrium in tourism marketing. In better understanding the travel behaviour, it is important to know how the key attributes and factors relating to destination brand influence tourist choices (March & Woodside, 2005; Holloway, 2004). Various researchers have argued that tourist motivations analysis helps in better understanding of travel behaviour (Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; Law, Cheung & Lo, 2004; Correia et al., 2006; Saayman, et al., 2009). Hence travel motivation and behaviour are considered as the important fields in tourism marketing research literature (Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lam & Hsu, 2006). The prediction of travel motivation and behaviour play a significant role in tourism marketing domain, in order to generate more demand and also this to help in tourists marketing decisions (Holloway, 2004; March & Woodside, 2005; Decrop, 2006; Smallman et al., 2010). “In order to understand tourists’ behaviour, researchers have considered the primary data relating to tourists’ assertiveness, attitudes, interest perceptions, behavioural changes, intentions, and knowledge. These types of tourists’ data and information are frequently measured and gathered by using Likert scale (as cited by Wu, 2007 in Likert, 1932; Fink, 1995; Fink et al., 1998; Peterson, 2000; Alexandrov, 2010; Boone et al., 2012).” Instead of commonly used statistical approaches for Likert scale data examining, we have used RIDIT algorithms based modelling in analysing the tourists’ opinions and preferences.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Section-II deals with brief review of literature.
- Section-III deals with the Existing technique of Likert scale data analysis.
- Section-IV deals with the use of RIDIT analysis in optimizing empirical research outcome.
- Section-V is concerned with RIDIT Algorithm.
- Section-VI deals with data analysis with RIDIT model.
- In Section-VII results and discussion are being discussed.
- Section-VIII deals issues with conclusion and recommendations.

It is expected that this chapter would motivate the budding researchers in applying the RIDIT algorithms based modelling for getting deeper understanding of the minds of the prospective tourists.

**BACKGROUND**

One of the key requirements in tourism research is to identify components which are having high individual contributions to tourists’ perceptions and destination selection behaviour. Here the concept of