

INFLUENCES ON SOUVENIR BUYING INTENTIONS OF TOURISTS IN CRAFTS-RICH REGIONS

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Souvenirs provide a tangible evidence of the travel experience. Souvenir purchase has been considered as an important component of tourism shopping. This has implications for tourism marketers and local artisans of regions that have a significant repertoire of traditional handicrafts/handloom products and may be regarded as craft-rich regions. The primary purpose of this study is to examine the souvenir purchase intentions of tourist segments to one such region - Northeast India. It aims to assess whether the intention to purchase souvenirs differs according to the type of tourist. The influence of travel motivations, activity preferences, demographics and certain trip-related factors on souvenir purchase intentions is examined. Using factor-cluster segmentation approach, three motive-based segments and three activity-based segments have been derived. Findings indicate that these segments differ with respect to purchase of souvenir. However, among the demographic and trip-related factors examined, only age and travel frequency are found to have an influence on intentions to purchase souvenirs. Tourism retailers of the region could benefit from such knowledge and may develop travel packages/ tour itineraries to cater to the interests of specific segments of tourists.

souvenir purchase, travel motivations, activity preferences, factor-cluster segmentation, northeast India

INTRODUCTION

An important component of the tourism experience is the activity of shopping, which is widely regarded as one of the most popular activities for tourists (Timothy and Butler, 1995; Lehto et al., 2004; Littrell, 2004; Rosenbaum and Spears, 2006; Hu and Yu, 2007). Notably, shopping as an activity has been considered to be attractive for both tourists and host communities. Shopping is a source of pleasure and excitement for the tourists, provides them an incentive to travel and contributes positively to the tourism experience. It may be noted that for some travelers, shopping may be the primary purpose of the trip while for others, shopping in the context of the overall trip acts as an attractor but is not necessarily the main attraction (Carmichael and Smith, 2004). In fact, shopping may be a major motivation for some types of travel such as cross-border trips (Carmichael and Smith, 2004; Kim and Littrell, 1999). For the host communities, it may help to create a retail industry, which serves as a source of employment for local residents, and can create or support a cottage industry for handicrafts and souvenirs (Carmichael and Smith, 2004). Shopping has also been seen to represent a significant part of the travel expenditure incurred by tourists (Tosun et al., 2007; Josiam et al., 2004; Kim and Littrell, 1999; Wong and Law, 2003; Yu and Littrell, 2005).

Thus, tourism marketers would benefit from having more knowledge about tourists who visit the area, what draws them and what retail opportunities they present. Hence, tourism shopping represents an interesting and relevant area of research that has the potential to contribute significant insights into the overall travel behavior of tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of tourism shopping literature

Though humans have made shopping trips since olden times, yet in recent years shopping is increasingly becoming an important element in trips that are primarily of a leisure or tourism nature. In keeping with this trend, a growing body of literature has been devoted to the discussion of various dimensions of shopping in the context of the tourism phenomenon. Some studies have examined the shopping preferences and shopping behavior of tourists (eg. Lehto et al., 2004; Rosenbaum and Spears, 2006), others have explored the role of shopping in destination choice (e.g. Moscardo, 2004), or souvenir purchase behavior (e.g. Kim and Littrell, 1999; Swanson and Horridge, 2004).

It has been observed that the possession of travel souvenirs is very important to tourists as “tangible evidence of the travel experience” (Kim and Littrell, 1999; Littrell et al., 1994; Anderson and Littrell, 1995; Swanson, 2004). In her study investigating the symbolic significance of textile crafts for tourists, Littrell (1990) developed profiles of tourists based on the meaning they attach to their most valued textile craft purchases during travel. A souvenir is a reminder of some special moments, people, places and events. Bringing home a souvenir enables a tourist to capture or suspend in time an otherwise intangible experience. There may be a number of reasons that prompt a tourist to collect souvenirs of the places visited. Cultural influences could be one such reason. An interesting example happens to be the gift-giving traditions followed in Japan and Korea. The traditional custom of bringing back souvenirs as gifts for family and friends upon returning from a vacation is referred to as ‘omiyage’ in Japanese and ‘sunmul’ in Korean. In both these countries souvenir gifts reciprocate help received (in cash) from friends and relatives before embarking on a trip (Park, 2000).

Some studies have also explored various aspects of souvenir purchase behavior. Issues examined in these studies are: factors influencing purchase of souvenirs, shopping orientations and souvenir consumption (Park, 2000, Swanson and Horridge, 2004); souvenir purchasing behavior of tourists (Kim and Littrell, 1999); assessing retailers’ knowledge of souvenir purchasing behavior (Swanson, 2004); examining the dimensionality of traveler’s craft selection criteria (Hu and Yu, 2007); and developing tourist profiles/typologies based on souvenir purchase (Littrell et al., 1994; Fairhurst, 2007).

However, studies dealing with the issue of souvenir purchase are relatively few. Besides, few studies have examined the influences of demographic variables on souvenir buying intentions. Kim and Littrell (1999) had noted the absence of studies that examined the predictive relationship between age and souvenir-purchasing behavior. They had pointed out the need for future studies to explore the effect of demographics on such behavior. Swanson and Horridge (2004) in examining this issue found in their study that no relationships existed between tourist demographics and souvenir consumption. They, however, cautioned that further investigation is required to determine if the product category of souvenirs resists demographic segmentation. Further, it may be noted that the

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majority of the studies on souvenir purchase have been conducted in the context of the United States of America.

Thus, it is felt that there is a need to delve into souvenir purchase behavior in other geographical settings particularly those regions that have a wide variety of traditional arts and crafts. This could be important from the point of view of crafts-rich regions since purchase of mementos by tourists is expected to greatly benefit local craftsmen. It may also be interesting to examine the basic souvenir buying habits of tourists – there may be some who always take home some souvenir of the places visited while others rarely do it. Why does this happen? What could be the factors that influence the buying intentions of leisure travelers? Do travelers with varying motivations for traveling display equal interest in shopping during a trip, particularly, shopping for souvenirs? Also, in line with the tourism style based study of Littrel et al. (1994) could we explore the souvenir-buying intentions of empirically derived segments of tourists using a combination of variables such as motivations and activity preferences? Does travel frequency have any influence on such intentions i.e. could it be that frequent travelers display greater interest in shopping or otherwise? What about other trip-related factors? Do demographics have any influence on buying intentions? The present study attempts to look at some of these issues as it assesses the souvenir buying intentions of tourists to one unique region of India which is considered to be a crafts haven – Northeast India.

Arts and Crafts of Northeast India

Situated in the eastern most corner of India, the Northeast region traditionally comprises of seven states namely - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Geographically, this triangular shaped region has a unique situation. It is bounded by China to the North, Bangladesh to the South West, Bhutan to the North West and Myanmar to the East, with a thin land corridor – the Siliguri Corridor linking it to the rest of India. Thus, 98 percent of its borders are international borders with only two percent being connected to mainland India. Therefore, the states of this region are viewed as one entity and are collectively referred to as the Northeastern region. This relatively remote region can boast of a vibrant culture that has been shaped by a number of indigenous tribes each of which has its distinct identity, traditions and unique lifestyles. This apart, Northeast India represents an important part of the Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot (Myers, 2001). The region has diverse habitats, which support a variety of flora, fauna and avian life. With its pristine surroundings, varied nature and wildlife attractions, historical and cultural attractions as well as opportunities for adventure sports, Northeast India indeed has tremendous tourism potential.

The Northeastern region occupies a place of pride in the traditional arts and crafts scenario by virtue of the unmatched craftsmanship and splendor of the various handicrafts and handloom products developed here. The handicrafts of this region include cane furniture, basketwork, mats, woodcarvings, pottery, artistic textiles, bell metal artwork, brass metal craft and so on (Sarma, 2008). Each state has a specialty of its own. For instance, Assam is reputed for its handloom and handicraft products. It is specially known for its silk, particularly the golden colored natural muga silk. Also, the various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are skilled in weaving and mask making. In Manipur too, weaving is a time-honored occupation and Manipuri hand woven textiles are indeed special. Nagaland is famous for its unique dress and traditional weapons. Particularly, the Naga shawl is reputed for its workmanship and sheer warmth. Tripura too has an excellent tradition in cane and bamboo craft, textile and woodcarving. Northeast India has ample tourism resources, and thus immense potential for the development of tourism.

It is also blessed with a variety of traditional handicrafts and handloom products. In keeping with the importance of shopping as part of the overall tourism experience and the significance of souvenir purchase in the shopping experience of tourists, it would be worthwhile to examine tourists to the region in the context of souvenir purchase.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The present study tries to gain an understanding of the souvenir buying intentions of travelers to Northeast India. Broadly, it seeks to explore whether the intention to purchase souvenirs differs according to the type of tourist. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To ascertain whether motivation-based and activity-based tourist segments differ in their souvenir purchase intentions.
2. To determine the influence of demographic and trip-related factors on tourists' souvenir purchase intentions.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of achieving the above-stated objective of obtaining some preliminary insights into the souvenir buying habits of different segments of tourists visiting Northeast India, the present study utilizes primary data that had been collected through a sample survey (n=509) of tourists in Northeast India. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. The items included in the questionnaire were based on review of relevant literature. To derive the traveler segments, 24 traveler motivations and 22 activities were used, which were measured using 5-point scales. The list of traveler motivations and activity preferences has been provided in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 3 : List of Travel Motivations

1. Get away from everyday life/routine	13. Be recognized as a well-traveled person
2. Spend some time with the family/ do something with the family	14. To indulge in things that I do not normally do
3. To rest and relax	15. Be close to nature
4. To know the unknown	16. To do nothing
5. To do exciting things	17. To visit places that I have always wanted to see
6. To have fun	18. To enjoy independence
7. Enjoy the sound and smell of nature	19. To have an authentic experience
8. Explore new places	20. To meet new people
9. Be with others who enjoy the same thing	21. Improve my health
10. Experience tranquility/solitude	22. Improve my knowledge
11. To have entertainment	23. Experience different cultures and ways of life
12. See wildlife, birds and flowers that I don't normally see	24. See unusual things

Source: Loker-Murphy (1996), Bieger and Laesser (2002), Fodness (1994), and Sirakaya et al. (2003).

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Table 4 : List of Activity Preferences

1. Visiting villages and typical rural areas	13. Bird watching
2. Trying local foods and drinks	14. Camping
3. Taking photographs/videos etc	15. Rafting
4. To engage in physical activities/keep fit	16. Trekking
5. Fishing	17. Exploration of caves
6. Climbing/hiking	18. Mountain biking
7. Nightlife and entertainment	19. Motorcycling
8. Shopping for local arts and crafts	20. Golfing/tennis
9. Jungle exploring	21. Shopping
10. Mountain climbing	22. Sunbathing
11. Paragliding	
12. Nature trips/Safaris	

Source: Jeffrey and Xie (1995), Sung et al., (1997), Choi and Tsang (1999), Hsieh et al. (1992).

The question that gauges the souvenir buying habits of respondents in this study enquires whether the respondent likes to take home some souvenir of the places visited. It utilizes a 4-point interval scale, with the options 'yes, always', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never'. Further, in order to fulfill the objectives of the study demographic variables such as age, marital status and gender as well as some travel/trip-related factors like travel frequency, trip duration and travel experience have been included. The sample tourists were selected through judgment sampling with the basic aim of interviewing the tourists coming from outside the region. The samples were interviewed in 7 locations of the region which were selected based on the popularity among tourists. It may be noted that Guwahati and Dibrugarh happen to be the only major cities which connect northeast India with the rest of the world by air and train and hence it would be possible to draw the sample from there. Thus, the locations are: Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Kaziranga National Park, Majuli, Nameri National Park, Shillong and Tezpur.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Deriving the segments

The data has been analyzed using SPSS for Windows. In order to derive motivation-based and activity-based segments, the present study employs a two-step process. According to this methodology the variables are first reduced using factor analysis. As a second step the reduced factors are run through cluster analysis with an aim to assign cluster-wise sample preferences to the new (reduced) factors. In factor analysis Principal Component was used as the extraction method with Varimax Rotation. While analyzing the data for cluster analysis, a combination of hierarchical and non-hierarchical (k-means) clustering procedures has been used. It has been noted that using both approaches, hierarchical and non-hierarchical cluster analysis, has been proven to be more reliable than using only one method in defining resultant clusters, because these two techniques complement each other's benefits (Kang et al., 2003). A Principal Component Analysis was run on all the 24 motivation statements. Only those factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted. This resulted in 5 factors, which explained 61.8 % of the total variance. This is acceptable since it has been recommended that the factors extracted should account for at least 60 percent of the total variance (Malhotra, 2004, Hair et al., 1998, Boyd et al., 1985). Next, two measures have been used to assess whether the factor analysis is appropriate. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy has been used to measure the appropriateness of the factor model. Here, the value obtained is

0.921, which is considered satisfactory indicating that the data are appropriate for Factor Analysis (Malhotra, 2004). In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (used to examine the hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated in the population is significant ($p = 0.00$) implying that the correlation matrix is not orthogonal and is, therefore, appropriate for factoring. In order to assess reliability, reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) has been computed for each factor. Hotelling's T-squared Test was used to verify that all items on the scale do not have the same mean. All factors with a reliability coefficient above 0.6 were considered to be acceptable in this study, as 0.6 is considered to be the lower limit of acceptability (Hair et al., 1998). Two factors (factors 4 and 5) were deleted from further analysis due to poor reliability. The final list of three factors is provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Final Factors – Motivations

Fun and Excitement	Loadings	Novel Experiences	Loadings
To do exciting things	0.78	To meet new people	0.76
Be with others who enjoy the same thing	0.66	To know the unknown	0.74
Experience tranquility/solitude	0.65	Experience different cultures and ways of life	0.71
To have fun	0.64		0.66
To enjoy independence	0.63	To have an authentic experience	0.65
Enjoy the sound and smell of nature	0.51	Explore new places	0.46
To indulge in things that I normally do not do	0.50	Improve my knowledge	0.5
To visit places that I have always wanted to see	0.42	See unusual things	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.839	Cronbach's Alpha	0.861
Family Retreat	Loadings		
To rest and relax	0.77		
Spend some time with family/do something with the family	0.73		
Get away from everyday life/routine	0.66		
To have entertainment	0.34		
Cronbach's Alpha	0.662		

Thereafter, scores have been calculated for these factors so as to use them as inputs for the Cluster Analysis. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis using Ward's method with the Squared Euclidean distance (as a measure of similarity) is used as the first step. An examination of the agglomeration schedule suggested the existence of three clusters. Then, a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis was run wherein a three-cluster solution was prespecified. Three clusters were derived. The final clusters thus obtained have been named according to the relative importance placed by the clusters on each of the factors as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Final Cluster Centers

	Cluster		
	Escapers	Novelty and Excitement	Motivated
Fun and Excitement	1.47	2.12	3.24
Novel Experiences	1.53	3.55	3.82
Family Retreat	2.05	1.60	3.79

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Similarly, the process is repeated for the 22 activity statements. In the case of the factor analysis related to the activity items, five factors are derived which explained 58.3% of the total variance. The KMO value was 0.929 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity being significant, the factor model is considered appropriate. The reliability co-efficient being above 0.5 in each case, all the five factors are retained for further analysis. Here again, the hierarchical cluster analysis suggested the existence of three clusters and accordingly a Quick Cluster was run pre-specifying three clusters. The final list of five factors and the three clusters have been provided in tables 7 and 8. A brief description of the motive-based segments as well as the activity-based segments follows:

Motive-based segments

(a) Escapers (n=176):

This group has the lowest scores on the attributes 'Fun and Excitement' and 'Novel Experiences' across all the segments. This means that these travelers are least motivated by these two dimensions. However, they do attach some importance to the factor 'family retreat' (to rest and relax, spend some time with family/do something with the family and get away from everyday life/routine). Thus it may be said that this group comprises travelers who do not have any special motivation for travel. They just wish to move away from monotonous schedules and spend a relaxing time in the company of their families.

Table 7: Final Factors- Activity Preferences

Active Adventure	Loadings	Sporting Activities	Loadings
Camping	0.76	Golfing/tennis	0.68
Rafting	0.76	Motorcycling	0.64
Climbing/hiking	0.68		
Mountain climbing	0.67		
Paragliding	0.64		
Mountain biking	0.57		
Trekking	0.5		
To engage in physical activities/keep fit	0.49		
Fishing	0.48		
Nightlife and entertainment	0.46		
Exploration of caves	0.45		
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.854</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.646</i>
Nature trips	Loadings	Shopping	Loadings
Bird watching	0.68	Shopping	0.78
Nature trips/Safaris	0.67	Shopping for local	0.71
Jungle exploring	0.60	arts and crafts	
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.706</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.594</i>
Local Cuisine and Culture	Loadings		
Trying local food and drinks	0.80		
Visiting villages and typical rural areas	0.73		
Taking photographs/videos etc.	0.45		
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>0.588</i>		

(b) Novelty and Excitement Seekers (n=136):

The second segment (smallest in size) includes travelers who place high importance on having novel experiences. They do not appear interested in 'family retreat' even though they have better scores on 'fun and excitement'. Thus, this group of people are motivated by an inherent desire 'to meet new people, to know the unknown, to experience different

cultures and ways of life, to have an authentic experience, explore new places, improve my knowledge and see unusual things’. They wish to have new and exciting experiences during their leisure trips. So, in comparison to the first segment, they do seem interested in traveling particularly as it affords them the opportunity to have diverse experiences with new people and places.

(c) Motivated Vacationers (n=197):

This is the largest segment. Of the three segments, this is the one that places the highest importance on all the motivation dimensions. Apparently this is a group of highly motivated people that places a premium on novel experiences but is driven by the factors ‘family retreat’ and ‘fun and excitement’ as well. The urge to travel to new and exciting places, to spend some quality time with their families and to experience the joy of doing exciting things in the company of like-minded people – all these seem to attract travelers in this segment.

Activity-based segments

(a) Cultural Experience Seekers (n=178):

This group has the highest scores on the dimension ‘local cuisine and culture’ across all the segments. Thus they seem to display great interest in activities such as trying local food and drinks, visiting villages and typical rural areas and taking photographs/videos etc. They also have reasonably high scores on the factor ‘nature trips’ and thus prefers activities such as bird watching, nature trips/safaris and jungle exploring. They do not appear to attach much importance on the other dimensions. Therefore, if we consider the activity preferences of this group of travelers, then we may say that they seek cultural experiences when they travel and also look for opportunities to appreciate nature.

(b) Passive Travelers (n=203):

The second segment (which is the largest) displays the least interest on all the five dimensions across all the segments. They only show some interest on ‘nature trips’ (though the lowest among the three segments). Hence, they appear to represent a passive group of travelers who are least interested in any activity during trips.

Table 8: Final Cluster Centers

	Cluster		
	Cultural Experience Seekers	Passive Travelers	Shopping Enthusiasts
Active Adventure	1.81	1.25	2.87
Sporting Activities	1.12	1.05	2.07
Nature trips	3.39	2.03	3.92
Shopping	2.07	1.80	3.96
Local Cuisine and Culture	3.91	1.89	3.76

(c) Shopping Enthusiasts (n=128):

This is the smallest among the three segments. These travelers have the highest score on all the dimensions (except ‘local cuisine and culture’) across all the segments. Interestingly, out of all the factors, they attach the highest importance to ‘shopping’. However, they have reasonably good scores on ‘nature trips’ and ‘local cuisine and

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culture’ as well. Hence this segment includes people who love a variety of activities during leisure trips. They enjoy a range of activities which include: shopping, shopping for local arts and crafts, bird watching, nature trips/safaris and jungle exploring, trying local food and drinks, visiting villages and typical rural areas and taking photographs/videos, and adventurous activities such as camping, rafting, mountain climbing, paragliding and so on. It may be said that this segment comprises active travelers who enjoy trips that provide them with ample opportunities for shopping, exploring nature, experiencing local culture and other adventure sports.

Souvenir purchase intentions of segments

In order to assess whether empirically-derived traveler segments differ in their souvenir purchase intentions, one-way ANOVA was employed to test for significant differences between the segments.

Table 9 shows that the null hypothesis is rejected (at .05 level of significance) which indicates that preference towards buying souvenirs varies significantly across the motivation segments. Further, tests for violations of the equal variances assumption were made using the Levene Test. Since the test of homogeneity of variances could not establish homogeneous variance, the Bonferroni post-hoc test has been examined. Thereafter, descriptive statistics (shown in Table 10) have been examined.

Table 9: ANOVA - Motivation Segments and Souvenir Buying

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.102	2	2.551	4.355	.013
Within Groups	296.391	506	.586		
Total	301.493	508			

The post-hoc analysis has revealed that segments 1 & 3 and segments 2 & 3 are significantly different with regard to souvenir purchase intentions whereas segments 1 & 2 have no such differences. As the responses to the variable ‘taking home souvenirs’ were indicated on the scale (1=yes, always, 2=sometimes, 3 =rarely, 4=never), therefore, a lower mean score would indicate a higher interest in souvenir buying. An examination of the average scores (Table 10) shows that motive-segment 3 has a much higher inclination for purchase of souvenirs compared to segment 1. Likewise, segment 3 also has a higher preference for souvenir purchase compared to segment 2. Thus, motive-segment 3 has greater interest in souvenirs whereas segments 1 and 2 are similar in their preferences.

Table 10: ANOVA – Motive Segments and Souvenir Buying

Segment	Mean (scores between 1-4)
1	1.8068
2	1.8015
3	1.5990
Total	1.7250

Similarly, in the case of activity segments, the ANOVA table (Table 11) shows that (hypothesis rejected at 0.05 level of significance) that preferences vary significantly across segments. The test of homogeneity of variances could not establish homogeneous

variance. An examination of the Bonferroni post hoc test reveals that segments 1 & 3 as well as segments 2 & 3 have significant differences in preference for taking home souvenirs.

Table 11: ANOVA - Activity Segments and Souvenir Buying

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.444	2	9.222	16.486	.000
Within Groups	283.049	506	.559		
Total	301.493	508			

As noted earlier, based on the coding of the variable ‘taking home souvenirs’ a lower mean score would indicate a higher interest in souvenir buying. On this basis, after examining Table 12, we may infer that segment 3 has a significantly higher preference for buying souvenirs than segment 2 and an even greater preference compared to segment 1. Segments 1 & 2 do not display significant differences with regard to souvenir purchase.

Table 12: ANOVA - Activity Segments and Souvenir Buying

Segment	Mean (scores between 1-4)
1	1.7753
2	1.8818
3	1.4063
Total	1.7250

Thus, the above analysis shows that empirically derived segments display significant differences in preference for buying souvenirs.

Profiles for Motive-based Segments

To identify profiles of the segments, cross-tabulation analysis has been used. Based on Pearson’s chi-square tests, it has been found that significant differences (at the .05 significance level) exist between the motive-based segments on three variables viz. age, trip duration and travel frequency.

Age: The majority of respondents in the segment ‘Escapers’ were found to be in the age group 26-35, those within ‘Novelty and Excitement Seekers’ were mostly within the group 56-65 years while the ‘Motivated Travelers’ comprised mostly of people in the age groups 26-35 and 36-45 years.

Trip Duration: As far as trip duration is concerned, for both the segments ‘Escapers’ and ‘Novelty and Excitement Seekers’, respondents had stayed for 8-15 days and those belonging to the segment ‘Motivated Travelers’ had stayed for 3-7 days in Northeast India.

Travel Frequency: Again, a higher proportion of travelers in the segment ‘Escapers’ were relatively less frequent travelers compared to those in the groups ‘Novelty and Excitement Seekers’ and ‘Motivated Travelers’. Further, among the ‘Escapers’, people mostly indicated ‘once a year’ whereas the ‘Novelty and Excitement Seekers’ were relatively more (the majority indicated ‘at least twice a year’). However, compared to the

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other two segments, the group ‘Motivated Travelers’ comprised the most frequent travelers, where the majority had ticked the option ‘more than twice a year’.

Profiles of Activity-based Segments

Similarly, profiles were delineated for the activity-based segments of travelers. Here again, the segments exhibited significant differences with regard to the variables age, trip duration and travel frequency.

Age: As regards age, it has been found that a higher proportion of travelers among the ‘Cultural Experience Seekers’ were within the range 56-65 years, while most of those within the group ‘Passive Travelers’ were in the category 36-45 years. The segment ‘Shopping Enthusiasts’, however, comprises relatively younger people in the age range 26-35 years.

Trip Duration: With regard to trip duration, it has been seen that the ‘Cultural Experience Seekers’ and the ‘Passive Travelers’ are similar. Both these groups mostly prefer to spend 8-15 days in the destination visited whereas the majority of ‘Shopping Enthusiasts’ would prefer to spend fewer days i.e. 3-7 days on a trip.

Travel Frequency: As far as travel frequency is concerned, within the ‘Shopping Enthusiasts’ a higher proportion usually travel very frequently (more than twice a year) whereas the ‘Passive Travelers’ are comparatively less frequent travelers who mostly travel once a year. Compared to the second segment, the ‘Cultural Experience Seekers’ are relatively more frequent travelers, the majority of who indicated ‘at least twice a year’ and ‘more than twice a year’.

Influence of demographics on souvenir buying intentions

In order to assess the influence of demographic factors on souvenir purchase intentions of tourists, chi-square tests were used. Table 13 shows that significant differences (at the .05 significance level) exist related to souvenir purchase intentions on the variable ‘age’ while no statistical differences were found on the variables ‘gender’ and ‘marital status’.

Table 13: Pearson’s Chi-square for Trip-related variables

Socio-economic and Demographic variables	Pearson’s Chi Square	Sig.
Age	31.019	.009
Gender	20.237	.163
Marital Status	10.853	.093

Table 14: Age and Souvenir Buying

Age	Yes, always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
18-25	26 (38.2%)	28(41.2%)	10(14.7%)	4(5.9%)	68
26-35	46(41.1%)	48(42.9%)	16(14.3%)	2(1.8%)	112
36-45	41(38.7%)	55(51.9%)	6(5.7%)	4(3.8%)	106
46-55	49(56.2%)	27(31.0%)	9(10.3%)	2(2.3%)	87
56-65	43(44.8%)	38(39.6%)	13(13.5%)	2(2.1%)	96
Over 65	21(53.8%)	14(35.9%)	4(10.3%)	-	39
Total	226	210	58	14	508

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate column-wise percentages

It may be observed from Table 14 that as far as souvenir purchase is concerned, the majority of people in the age groups 46-55 years, 56-65 years and over 65 years have indicated ‘yes, always’ when inquired about whether they like to take back souvenirs of

the places visited. On the other hand, people in the age groups 18-25 years, 26-35 years and 36-45 years have indicated 'sometimes' in response to the same question. This is interesting since it seems to suggest that people who are older i.e. over the age of 45 years are more inclined towards purchase of souvenirs whereas people below that age are comparatively less interested in carrying back souvenirs.

Influence of travel/trip-related factors on souvenir buying intentions

An attempt is then made to examine the influence of Travel/Trip-related variables on souvenir buying intentions of tourists. For the purpose, Chi-square tests were used. It may be observed from Table 15 that significant relationship differences (at the .05 significance level) is found between souvenir purchase intentions and the variable 'travel frequency'. However, no statistical differences were found on the variables 'trip duration' and 'travel experience'.

Table 15: Pearson's Chi-square for Trip-related variables

Travel/trip-related variables	Pearson's Chi Square	Sig.
Trip Duration	11.919	.218
Travel Frequency	19.931	.018
Travel Experience	19.675	.073

Table 16: Travel Frequency and Souvenir Buying

Travel frequency	Yes, always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
More than twice a year	80 (51.3%)	54(34.6%)	16(10.3%)	6(3.85%)	156
At least twice a year	52 (39.4%)	59(44.7%)	15(11.4%)	6(4.5%)	132
Once a year	58(38.7%)	70(46.7%)	21(14.0%)	1(.06%)	150
Once every 2-3 years	15(36.5%)	24(58.5%)	2(4.9%)	-	41
Even less frequent	9(32.1%)	14(50.0%)	4(14.3%)	1(2.7%)	28
Total	214	221	58	14	507

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate column-wise percentages

Table 16 shows that very frequent travelers i.e. people who travel more than twice a year have greater interest in buying souvenirs as the majority of people in this category have indicated 'yes, always' when asked about their inclination to buy souvenirs while people in the other categories have mostly indicated 'sometimes' in relation to the same question.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

One of the activities that may be engaged in by travelers on visiting a destination is shopping for something that they could take home as a souvenir of the trip. This would serve as a memory of the trip, and would enable them to exhibit these in their homes. It may be thus be useful to understand how likely tourists are to take back some souvenirs so that marketers may gauge their interest towards purchasing local products, particularly, local arts, crafts and handicrafts; while visiting the destination. Since Northeast India has a variety of indigenous arts, handicrafts and textiles, which are authentic and unique, it would be beneficial for the local people and players connected to the tourism industry if visitors to the region display a high interest in souvenir buying.

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The results derived from the study points to the existence of distinct segments among tourists traveling to the destination in question based on a variety of travel motivations and activity preferences. Three motive-based segments (Escapers, Novelty and Excitement Seekers, and Motivated Vacationers) and three activity-based segments (Cultural Experience Seekers, Passive Travelers and Shopping Enthusiasts) could be identified as a result of the analysis. Further, these segments also appear to differ with respect to their souvenir purchasing behavior. This is important from the point of view of tourism marketers and retailers of Northeast India, as this would necessitate adoption of slightly or significantly different marketing approaches for these segments.

From the point of view of traveler motivations, one of the segments (Motivated Travelers) may warrant special attention from destination marketers due to the fact that it is not only the largest (of the three segments) comprising highly motivated people, but also displays a higher interest in souvenir purchase compared to the remaining segments. Marketers may bear in mind that these travelers have an urge to explore the unknown, spend time in the company of like-minded people and wish to have exciting experiences. They are highly motivated by opportunities for meeting new people, knowing the unknown, experiencing different cultures and ways of life, experiencing authenticity, exploring new places, improving knowledge and seeing unusual things. The destination under study (Northeast India) with its diverse set of tourism offerings definitely has the potential to satisfy such visitors. And what is significant, both from the point of view of marketers and artisans, is that this segment also displays a high interest in souvenir purchase. Thus, to attract this group of travelers, tourism marketers may design special travel packages that takes into account their special motivations and also provides ample opportunities to shop for local arts and crafts.

Further, on trying to delineate their profiles, it was found that this group mostly comprises people from the age categories 26-35 years and 36-45 years, they appear to be more frequent travelers compared to the other segments since most of them prefer to travel more than twice a year. Notably, they prefer to have shorter trips (mostly of 3-7 days duration). Thus, the 'Motivated Travelers' appear to travel often, even though, such trips are of shorter duration. Such information regarding this segment may be incorporated into the destination marketing and promotional efforts by marketers of the region.

As far as the activity-based segments are concerned, it is interesting to note that the segment that attaches the highest importance to the factor 'shopping' (which includes shopping, shopping for local arts and crafts) namely, the Shopping Enthusiasts, also displays the highest interest in purchasing souvenirs compared to the two other segments. Even though this is the smallest segment, yet, this may be a lucrative niche group simply because they have such an interest in shopping particularly for local arts. Such an interest would be a boon for crafts-rich regions like Northeast India. So, in designing tour itineraries for them, it is important to include destinations that showcase such handicrafts and handloom products. The destination being probed with its vast repertoire of attractive crafts would have interesting tour options for such visitors. Moreover special attention may be given to the other activity preferences of such travelers to give them a complete travel experience. Apart from shopping, they enjoy a range of activities which include: bird watching, nature trips/safaris and jungle exploring, trying local food and drinks, visiting villages and typical rural areas and taking photographs/videos, and adventurous activities such as camping, rafting, mountain climbing, paragliding and so on. Northeast India has varied attractions with its numerous national parks/wildlife sanctuaries; variety

of flora, fauna and avian life as well tremendous opportunities for adventure sports may represent an interesting travel destination for this segment of 'active' travelers. On examining their profiles, it has been observed that the Shopping Enthusiasts are mostly younger people (in the age range 26-35 years), they prefer to stay for fewer days in the destination visited but show an inclination to travel very frequently (more than twice a year). Destination marketers may find such information useful in designing appropriate marketing strategies to target this lucrative group.

Moreover, in keeping with the second objective, an effort was made to examine the influence the effect of demographics and select travel/trip-related variables on souvenir purchase intentions. While other demographic variables have not been found to influence such intentions, age does have an influence on the souvenir buying habits of travelers. Interestingly, relatively older people i.e. people over the age of 45 years have been found to show greater interest in purchasing souvenirs during leisure trips. This may have an important implication for marketers who could make special efforts to attract such travelers to the region and also make available special facilities and tour itineraries that would enable such travelers to shop for local handicrafts and handloom products of the region. What has also emerged from the study is the finding that very frequent travelers (who travel more than twice a year) have exhibited higher interest in souvenir trips. So, tourism marketers of the region may be interested to pursue such travelers to visit the region.

However, it may be noted that future studies in this and similar regions may examine the purchase intentions of visitors in relation to specific categories/items of souvenir products. For example, in the context of Northeast India tourism retailers may be interested to gain an understanding of preferences for specific souvenir products such as traditional textiles, cane and bamboo products and so on. This study represents a preliminary effort.

It may be significant not only from the perspective of tourism marketers but also the local artisans who could hope to improve their incomes through their indigenous craft items that may be marketed as attractive souvenirs to the interested tourist segments. This may serve as an encouragement for artisans and tourism retailers and in turn contribute towards destination development efforts as well the economic development of the region. It may be suggested that further exploratory and descriptive research be carried out in the region to explore specific dimensions of souvenir purchase behavior in greater detail so as to provide valuable insights to the tourism marketers and artisans of the region.

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Auxiliary

Table 1: Tourism Shopping Literature

Study	Study area	Purpose/Objectives
Kent et al., 1983	Tourist-visitors to Atlanta, US	Demonstrates that shopping is a popular tourist activity
Timothy & Butler, 1995	Canadian cross-border shoppers	Examines the role of cross-border shopping in tourism
Mak et al., 1999	Taiwanese visitors to Hong Kong	Examines travelers' perceptions of their shopping experiences
Wong & Law, 2003	International tourists to Hong Kong	Explores travelers' expectations and perceptions
Snepenger et al., 2003	Tourists and residents of Bozeman, US	Investigates tourists and residents' use of shopping space
Moscardo, 2004	International and domestic tourists in Queensland, Australia	Studies shopping as a factor in destination choice
Lehto et al., 2004	Taiwanese outbound travelers	Examines tourists' shopping preferences and behaviors in relation to their socio-demographic and trip attributes
Oh et al., 2004	US tourists	Examines the effectiveness of age, gender, and trip typology as predictor variables for tourists' shopping behavior
Carmichael & Smith, 2004	Canadian domestic travelers	Investigates the role and importance of domestic rural shopping market in Canada and provides a description of the characteristics of rural shoppers
Littrell et al., 2004	Senior travelers, US	Aims at developing profiles of senior travelers based on their preferred travel activities
Josium et al., 2005	Tourist shoppers in metropolitan areas of US	Examines how the involvement construct could be used as a tool to segment tourists at a shopping center
Rosenbaum & Spears, 2006	Japanese tourists to Hawaii	To examine shopping behavior among Japanese tourists
Rosenbaum & Spears, 2006	Japanese tourists to Hawaii	To explore demographic, motivation and consumption behaviors among Japanese tourists
Tosun et al., 2007	Tourists in Cappadocia, Turkey	Examines the tourist experience of shopping and tourist perceptions of shopping attributes

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Table 2: Literature on Souvenir Purchase Behavior

Study	Study area	Purpose/Objectives
Littrell et al., 1994	Tourists in US	To develop profiles of tourists based on their souvenir buying and preferred travel activities
Anderson & Littrell, 1995	Women tourists from Iowa, US	To investigate if women tourists fit either the liberal or the cultural ideologies of gender and how they vary in souvenir purchases and whether they bought authentic souvenirs
Kim & Littrell, 1999	Female tourists to Mexico	To better understand international tourists travel and souvenir-purchasing behavior in order to predict their intention to purchase souvenirs
Park, 2000	Japanese and Korean tourists	To investigate various social and cultural factors influencing the purchase of souvenirs by tourists in Japan and Korea to make predictions about tourists' souvenir purchasing behavior in the future
Swanson, 2004	Retailers in south-western region of US	To assess retailers' knowledge of tourists' souvenir purchasing behavior
Swanson & Horridge, 2004	Tourists to US states	To analyze tourist travel motivations to determine if they influence souvenir consumption
Yu & Littrell, 2003	US tourists	To examine the relationships between travel activities, beliefs about authenticity of crafts and about craft product features, attitudes toward shopping experiences, and intention to purchase at product- and process-oriented shopping venues
Yu & Littrell, 2005	US tourists	To explore key factors that influence tourists' shopping orientations for handicrafts
Hu & Yu, 2007	Travelers in US	To examine the dimensionality of travelers' craft selection criteria and to segment the market based on travelers' craft selection criteria and shopping involvement
Fairhurst, 2007	Potential visitors to Tennessee, US	To determine tourist typologies and if differences exist with souvenir purchases, sources of information used by tourists to select a place to shop, and shopping behavior

