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The Role of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators in the Development of the Tourism Sector: An Empirical Study on Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of travel agencies and tour operators in growing Bangladesh's tourism industry. Using a mixed-method approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data, this study brings to light the evidence of some contributions of these agencies in tourist promotion, customer satisfaction enhancement, and local livelihood development in the country. Analysis of the results in this study was done using SPSS 25 and MS Excel 2019. The findings show the reliability result using the Cronbach's Alpha technique is .874 and the p-value=.000. Further, the study reveals that travel agencies and tour operators play an important role in designing personalized travel packages using digital platforms while promoting sustainable tourism practices. But, still, some challenges such as legal barriers, poor infrastructure and competition from online travel agencies(OTAs) exist for them. This study ends with policy guidelines for internal stakeholders and policymakers to establish a sustainable environment for growth within the tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered a very important sector, for economic growth, cultural exchanges, and employment generation worldwide (UNWTO, 2022). Bangladesh's tourism sector is progressively flourishing due to diverse natural scenarios, rich cultural past, and historical sites (Hassan *et al.*, 2021). Tourist destinations of the country are the longest sea beach in the world, Cox's Bazar, the Sundarbans mangrove forest, a UNESCO World heritage site, and the archaeological sites Mahasthangarh and Paharpur (Rahman & Akter, 2020). In spite of this potential, the industry is suffering due to several problems including lack of infrastructure, nonexistence of international marketing, and poor policy implementations (Islam *et al.*, 2019). Travel agents and tour operators have a greater role in mitigating the challenges faced by the tourism industry. They broker the tourists and service providers, provide the packages, guide the tours, and strive for trouble-free travel (Sharif & Karim, 2021). Such operators deeply contribute to the development of the industry through sustainable tourism, customer satisfaction, and accessibility to tourist destinations (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2018). In addition, through wisely devised marketing campaigns, they will generate employment, boost the local economy, and hopefully attract foreign tourists (Rahman *et al.*, 2022). Only now is the role of travel and tour operators being acknowledged in Bangladesh, with both governmental and private sectors collaborating for the advancement of the tourism industry (BPC, 2021). The demand for customized travel experiences and digital tourism services has quickly evolved and further transformed the industry where operators employ new technology for effective customer interaction (Kabir & Hossain,

2020). The sector is continuing to suffer, however, from regulatory constraints, safety issues, and competition with unregulated and informal service providers (Ahmed & Sultana, 2019). Any effort geared towards addressing the role of travel and tour operators in the development of tourism in Bangladesh will be useful in tailoring workable policies and strategies to enhance a sustainable and competitive tourist industry. This study tries to identify the contributions of travel and tour operators in Bangladesh, examine the challenges faced by them, and suggest ways to maximize their contributions toward the tourism industry. The focus is on their role in tourism marketing, destination management, and service delivery for the purpose of providing useful insights to the policymakers, industry stakeholders, and the academia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Incorporated as part of the economy and culture of a country, tourism works very dynamically as an important ingredient to economic growth and cultural development in many countries such a Bangladesh. Travel and tour operators act as a middle man to create the facilitation of related tourism activities and assist in the development of infrastructure, marketing, and service quality enhancement (Buhalis, 2000). While designing travel packages, promoting destinations, and delivery of travel services, travel and tour operators play a significant role in the tourism industry (Holloway & Humphreys, 2019). They act as a channel through which tourists access tourism offers provided by hotels, airlines, and local attractions (Cooper, 2020). However, the growing number of domestic and international visitors has led to a much more pronounced role that travel agencies and tour operators play in Bangladesh (Islam & Carlsen,

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2012). Tour operators are playing important parts in the marketing and promotion of Bangladesh as a tourism destination. Marketing tools like digital campaigns, social media promotions, and attendance at international tourism expos have helped them draw tourists (Kotler *et al.*, 2018). Travel agencies and the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) now work together to strengthen the country's image as a hot destination for travels (Chowdhury & Ahmed, 2015). Tourism contributes significantly to the economy of Bangladesh, and travel operators intermediate the flow of economic benefits derived from job creation, revenue generation, and foreign exchange earnings (UNWTO, 2021). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2020), tourism contributed approximately 4.4% to GDP in 2019, and travel agencies played a vital role in tourism spending and business growth. Specific effective facilities such as transportation, accommodation, and tour management services are essential for the success of the tourism industry (Page, 2019). Travel operators also work with local businesses to improve touring infrastructure in Bangladesh in destination areas such as Cox's Bazar, the Sundarbans, and Sylhet (Rahman & Shil, 2016). On the other hand, their alliances with airlines and hotels await fruitful results in service quality and customer satisfaction (Ghimire, 2013). The tour and travel operators in Bangladesh, despite being contributors towards tourism growth in the country, however, still face some challenges; lack of proper infrastructure, regulatory challenges, and seasonal nature of tourism demand, as characteristics of such an industry (Hossain, 2017). The competition posed by digitalization and online travel agencies (OTAs) compels these operators to update their business models (Kim *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the role of travel and tour operators towards tourism development in Bangladesh is multi-dimensional including marketing and promotion, as well as infrastructure development, and economic contribution. The only thing needed is overcoming the challenges like the regulatory ones and the technological disruptions to see sustainability in the growth of this sector.

Research Gap

Several studies worldwide have examined the role of travel agencies and tour operators. But there are no studies in Bangladesh Specially empirical based with theoretical overview. As such, the present study is on the role of travel agencies and tour operators in the development of the tourism sector in Bangladesh.

Research Objectives

- To explain about the travel agencies, online travel agencies, domestic and international travel agencies, etc..
- To investigate the role of the travel agencies and tour operators in the development of the tourism sector in Bangladesh.

Theoretical Overview

Tourism

Today, tourism is one of the most dynamic and rapidly

growing industries that contributes to the economic growth of most countries in the world (Hossain *et al.*, 2025). In the present era, tourism is also regarded as one of the vital sectors of the economy and serves as a leisure-time activity (Hossain *et al.*, 2025). The tourism sector contributed to world GDP in the sum of \$8.9 trillion in the year 2019, about 10.3% of the world economy (WTTC, 2020). This means that one in every ten jobs in the world can be found here. To drive the point home, some pretty big numbers apply to just one market. In terms of foreign exchange income generation, tourism works as a key engine, making this currency into the bloodline flowing from international tourists toward the developing countries, which eventually reduces poverty and enhances gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Also, tourism attract international tourism to provide pure foods (Hossain *et al.*, 2025). With the COVID-19 pandemic, this vulnerability has become sharply visible to many economies whose performance is heavily dependent on tourism, as the pandemic curtails their influx of visitors (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). The maximum magnitude of contraction suffered by almost all countries in the last 50 years, measured in various scales of contraction studies from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), indicate an economic slump of travel-enabled countries down to 12% in their GDP. From carbon emissions to pollution and habitat loss, tourism influences the environment to a great extent due to air travel (Lenzen *et al.*, 2018), accommodation, and recreation.

Travel agency

The travel agency should be considered as the mediating agency between the traveler and the service provider in the tourism industry. Thus, the travel agency will plan and book a trip for the tourists along with custom-made travel packages that match their convenience and budget (Kotler *et al.*, 2018). In Bangladesh, travel agencies play an important role in the development of tourism by marketing local products such as Cox's Bazar, the Sundarbans, and Sylhet (Rahman & Shil, 2016). They organize visa services, ticketing, and travel insurance as part of their operation, thus facilitating travel aspirations of Bangladeshis towards international destinations (Holloway & Humphreys, 2019). Many travel agencies in Bangladesh now have online booking integrations due to digitalization to remain competitive in the market (Kim *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, problems like regulatory constraints, underdeveloped infrastructure, and competition with OTAs threaten the traditional travel agencies, which are now expected to forge alternative paths for sustainable growth.

Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)

The nature of travel planning and booking has changed with Online Travel Agencies. These independent platforms, such as Expedia or Booking.com or Agoda, work as a one-stop shop for travelers to find and request competing prices on flight and hotel rates, plus car rental

services, or even all that vacation packages offer (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). They utilize the latest and greatest technological advances together with future-sounding artificial intelligence and big data concepts to provide easy one-to-one recommendations and facilitate the booking with increased efficacy and effectiveness to make travel planning really convenient and fast (Gretzel *et al.*, 2015).

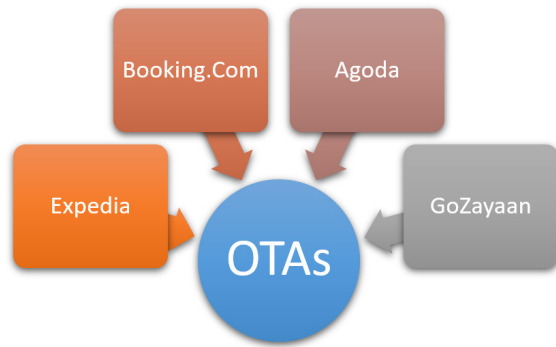


Figure 1: Online Travel Agencies
Source: Developed by Md. Soban Hossain

The principal merit of using OTAs is that these websites have the capability to offer options from various service providers in an aggregated form so that travelers can view prices and services available in real time (Tussyadiah, 2020). The empowerment of such customers to thus take informed options almost always results in savings when travelling and better travelling experiences. OTAs also provide customer reviews and ratings, enabling visitors to review services before booking (Leung, 2019). The features have very significantly impacted consumer trust and satisfaction.

All the same, there are challenges for OTAs, such as very high commissions charged to hotels and other service providers that it may have strained the relationship with suppliers (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). OTAs rule the travel industry as they have wide reach and easy interfaces; even in developing markets, for example, Bangladesh, they are emerging with newer ones, like GoZayaan, that give local service in competitive prices to growing online travel demand (Chowdhury, 2022).

Domestic Travel Agencies

Bangladesh is one of the countries having thousands of domestic travel agencies through which they offer the services available throughout the country in relation to how it goes for its travelers such as flight bookings, hotel reservations, and special tours. Below is an overview of some of the domestic travel agencies in Bangladesh

1. goFLY Limited: Presently, it has been more than seven years since goFLY Limited has extended its wings to be a travel agency of repute in Dhaka and across Bangladesh. Constantly, personal trip planning, price transparency, and totality in customer service is what they do best. Budgeted flights, tailor-made travel packages, exclusive family vacation trips, and corporate travel have been offered by them.

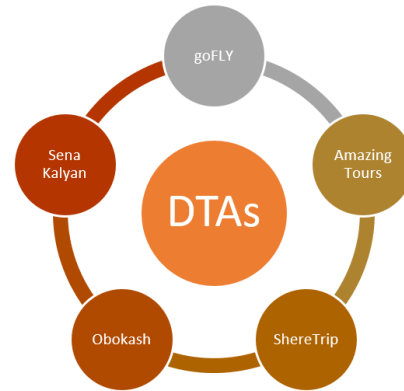


Figure 2: Domestic Travel Agencies
Source: Developed by Md. Soban Hossain

2. Amazing Tours: Amazing Tours Bangladesh was established in 2009 and is one of the leading Tour Operators in Bangladesh. They are members of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) and provide international and domestic tour packages, visa processing, and air ticket booking services.

3. ShareTrip: ShareTrip is one of the best-known travel agencies online in Bangladesh which provides air tickets booking, hotels reservation, and full tour packages. The user-friendly site allows travelers to connect directly with major airlines and hotels for any travel arrangements within Bangladesh or abroad.

4. Obokash: Hajj and Umrah Packages are the specialties of Obokash, one of the best travel agencies in Bangladesh for processing visas, and international holiday packages at low rates, and for ensuring a choreless and painless travel procedure for all travelers.

5. Sena Kalyan: Travels and Tours-Bangladesh Armed Forces mainly own an NDA with World-Class Operations for Sena Kalyan Travels & Tours under Charitable Trust the Sena Kalyan Sangstha. Founded in 2015, it offered ticketing and tour package operation.

International Travel Agencies

Some IT agencies truly concentrate on linking prospective travelers with diverse things like flights, accommodation, car rentals, and tour packages. Thus, these agencies have gone global by catering to an array of segments and preferences. Here is an outline of some famous international travel agencies.

1. Trip.com Group: Trip.com Group was established in 1999 and it became one of the world's largest and most influential online travel service providers. The headquarters' city is Shanghai and in China, with several famous brands including: Trip.com, Ctrip, Skyscanner, Qunar, Travix, and MakeMyTrip. They operate in almost all countries, Trip.com Group provides such services in 30 languages and operates in 39 countries over a vast customer base. Trip.com Group works with over 1.7 million hotels worldwide, making it possible to provide accommodation from luxury resorts to budget stays.



Figure 3: International travel agencies
Source: Developed by Md. Soban Hossain

The Group also collaborates with more than 600 airlines to make effortless flight bookings via international and domestic routes. Added to this, Trip.com Group connects travelers to more than 560,000 tourist attractions and hence completes the travel cycle. The company houses the technologies - AI for customer service, dynamic pricing, and a super user-friendly booking platform for an overall enriching experience of convenience for its clients.

2. eDreams ODIGEO: eDreams ODIGEO is among the top five online travel firms in Europe with its diverse brands that include among others, eDreams, Opodo, GO Voyages, Travellink, and Liligo. Other travel services for which the brands have been established are air tickets, hotels, vehicles, and packages for vacation, thus meeting a wider demand from clients.

eDreams ODIGEO has always been very pioneering in the industry of online travel in Europe. eDreams was the first Internet-based travel company in Europe and the first online travel agency in Spain. On the other hand, Opodo was born to be a joint venture of nine major European airlines, enhancing the credibility of the Company in the travel market. With this in mind, having a strong footprint in over 40 countries and millions of users around the world, eDreams ODIGEO continues to innovate through "AI-driven personalization, subscription-based travel services, and mobile-first solutions for more efficient and accessible travel planning."

3. eSky Group: The eSky group is a Polish company which began operations in 2004 and now, has quickly gained speed in becoming a front-runner in travel technology reaching out to more than 50 markets of Europe, America, and Africa. Currently, it provides the necessities of travel services under its chief brands: eSky, eDestinos, and, its latest addition, Thomas Cook.

Dynamic holidays and city break packages are eSky Group's specialty which consolidates the purchase of flights, accommodation, and travel insurance into a single booking process. It also provides independent sales involving airline tickets and hotel bookings. eSky Group did gross revenues of more than €800 million in the year 2024 and catered to approximately 3.3 million clientele abroad. The company employs the method of

data-driven AI-recommendation engine and strategic partnerships with airlines and hotel chains that ensure competitive pricing and delighting the customer.

4. Booking Holdings: Booking Holdings is the live wire in the travel supply arena. The company is present in more than 220 countries and territories. It has a plethora of well-known brands as part of its portfolio, such as these:

a) Booking.com: One of the largest accommodation platforms leading the online world, it offers a comprehensive range of accommodation from luxury hotels and apartments to unique stays like treehouses and even igloos.

b) Priceline: It is a travel service provider for the US market with discounted airfare, hotel, and car rental services.

c) Agoda: This is the region's leading travel platform arising from Asia-Pacific in accommodation, flight, and airport transfer activities.

5. Expedia Group: Expedia Group is the world's most diversified travel technology company. Its brands span across an enormous range of travel brands that service all types of travelers. Some include:

a) Expedia: A travel booking site combining all the required services - flights, hotels, car rentals, and vacation packages.

b) Hotels.com: An exclusive hotel Booker worldwide with thousands of accommodation listings.

c) Vacasa: Travel rental services that connect travelers with all sorts of different home rental through countries.

5. TUI Group: TUI Group is a large multinational company dealing in tourism and travel services and has its headquarters in Germany. One of the largest fully integrated tourism groups in the world, TUI offers a complete travel experience through its over several business segments comprising:

a) Tour Operators: TUI organizes a wide variety of holidays and several hundred guided international tours, all catering to individual customer needs.

b) Travel Agency: Most of its travel agency networks are found in Europe, making it easy for a lot of customers to plan their trips.

c) Airlines: Another subsidiary is TUI Airways. Other airlines under the TUI umbrella are TUI fly.

d) Hotels and Resorts: The company owns and operates a varied portfolio of hotels and resorts worldwide, so they can always guarantee the best accommodations available.

e) Cruises: TUI Group offers vacations at sea with a number of different brands tailored to different wishes for budget to luxury cruises.

International And Domestic Operators

Tour operators are the very backbone of the travel industry, being its organizing and facilitating agents in any travel experience for the individual or group. Their broad classification consists of international and domestic operators. Each essentially caters to a different market segment and preference.

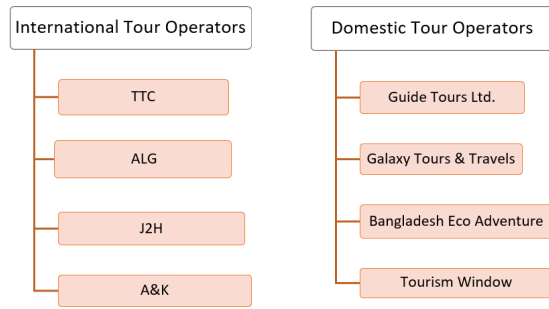


Figure 4: International and Domestic Operators

Source: Developed by Md. Sohan Hossain

International Tour Operators

1. The Travel Corporation (TTC): The Travel Corporation is a global travel company, founded in 1920, and with headquarters in Cypress, California, and Bermuda. TTC has associated different brands, including Contiki, Uniworld, and Trafalgar Tours. Those brands together provide travel experiences ranging from guided tours to luxury river cruises. The ownership of TTC had a big shift in July 2024 when it was acquired by Apollo Private Equity.

2. Apple Leisure Group (ALG): Apple Leisure Group since 1969 commenced its parenthood of the American travel and hospitality conglomerate voyager- packaged travel and resort management in Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East. ALG includes well-known name subsidiaries such as Apple Vacations, Travel Impressions, and AMResorts. So, presently, A Glorious Road was acquired by Hyatt Hotels Corporation in November 2021, thus broadening the skylight in HACC's footprint in the luxury all-inclusive hotel market.

3. Jet2holidays: Jet2holidays is a name synonymous with value for money holidaying on sun-splashed sands in the Mediterranean. These are all-in-one packages that include air travel, overnight accommodation in a hotel or resort, and possibly also provision for transfers between the hotel and the airport. The same pledge by Jet2holidays to make flights less expensive, along with good service for customers, has created a popular brand associatively for sun-chasing vacationers.

4. Abercrombie & Kent (A&K): Abercrombie & Kent designs and organizes luxury tours worldwide, offering tailored trips where the traveler will have behind-the-scenes access to some of the most elite experiences found on the globe. Itineraries made by Abercrombie & Kent increase the both unique and immersive experiences designed to thrill the most discerning of travelers.

Domestic Tour Operators

1. Guide Tours Ltd.: Founded in 1989, Guide Tours Ltd. happens to be one of the earliest tour operators in Bangladesh. It offers services such as guided tours, adventure and eco-tourism tours. Among the things for which they have developed enormous expertise is arranging river cruises into the largest mangrove forest

of the world, the Sundarbans.

2. Galaxy Tours & Travels: It is in Dhaka with domestic travel packages, which span all cultural, historical, and natural places in Bangladesh. It offers services such as city touring, wildlife excursion, and beach holidays, which are suitable for single persons and groups.

3. Bangladesh Eco Adventure: Bangladesh Eco Adventure's specialty is offering eco-friendly tourism. They aim for sustainable travel experiences with a focus on country's richness in biodiverse features. Trekking, bird watching, and community tourism activities are the types of activities offered, promoting conservation and benefiting communities at the same time.

4. Tourism Window: Tourism Window is a company based in Dhaka that offers several domestic tour packages, including cultural, adventure, and beach tours, and it aims to provide personalized services so that all tours in Bangladesh become memorable ones.

Products of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators

Travel agencies and tour operators offer a wide range of services and products in favor of different types of travelers. Such services embrace air and water transport, lodgings, as well as travel services for business travelers. The following discussion presents an overview of some of the major elements and their importance in the travel industry.

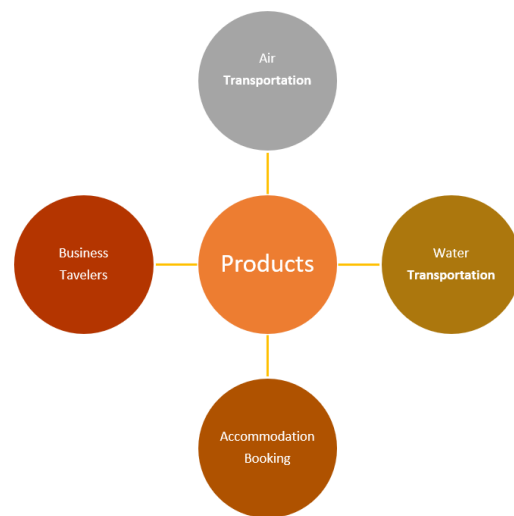


Figure 5: Products of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators

Source: Developed by Md. Sohan Hossain

Air Transportation: Air transport is one of the major products of travel agencies and tour operators. They ease airline bookings for travelers so that they can access the desired location comfortably and quickly. These agencies may have options on economy, business, and first-class tickets depending on preferences and budgets by clients. Flight may be included in the package tours by tour operators which facilitate the customers' travel experience (Cheng & Teo, 2020).

For a business traveler, the flight options will mainly be on flexibility, time efficiency, and premium services. Priority

boarding, access to lounges and more legroom are some benefits for business-class travelers. Also, special pricing and loyalty programs can be offered to corporate clients in order to reward their travel frequency (Cheng & Teo, 2020).

Water transport: Water transport is another one of the top products especially for travelers interested in cruise vacations or something similar. Bookings that travel agencies facilitate are for cruises, ferries, and private yacht charters for leisure tourists. To leisure tourists, cruises offer the combined effect of transport and entertainment because of the onboard amenities like dining, recreation, and excursions. Package tour operators can sell the cruise together with accommodation and shore excursions as part of an overall vacation package (Heung & Chu, 2015).

Water transport probably does not have much business travel associated with it but would still be relevant at times for specific business events or corporate retreats held on board cruise ships or on private vessels. Sophisticated corporate high-level business meetings and conferences being held on cruise ships are growing in popularity as they provide an exclusive and luxurious venue for corporate networking and relaxation (Heung & Chu, 2015).

Accommodation booking: Accommodation booking is one major product that is both travel agency and tour operator services. These services allow a variety of accommodation-from budget hostels to luxury hotels and resorts-old age for all visitors. Most of the time, accommodation is inclusive of package tours, whose bookings are already done to facilitate tourists' easy experience while staying (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2019).

Accommodations intended for travelers in business have been adapted for the professionalism of the travelers with priorities such as closeness to the business centers, meeting facilities, and high-speed internet. Business people generally prefer accommodation venues that promise comfort, convenience, and amenities that encourage productivity-parallel provisions such as 24h room service, business lounges, and fitness centers (Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2019).

Business travel: Travelbingm is often put to use in Business travel products that cater to the unique needs of corporate clients. These essentially include the business necessities such as airport transfers, customized itineraries for business visits, concierge services, and special arrangements for meetings and conferences. Business travel packages, as defined, should always account for other avenues, including flight options able to provide flexibility, premium style of accommodation, and VIP services like private car hire, airport lounge access, and dedicated customer care (Baker & Crompton, 2021).

For travel agencies, business travelers are most often served by creating tailor-making packages that give priority to time efficiency, productivity, and comfort. These packages often include flexible booking arrangements, emergency assistance, and a loyalty scheme rewarding

frequent business travelers. Customized corporate group travel offered by tour operators for conferences, incentive trips, or team-building activities is also (Baker & Crompton, 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is mainly descriptive and aims at a thorough understanding of the subject matter. This study collects qualitative and quantitative data, thus allowing greater multifaceted analysis of the research topic. Data collection involves utilizing both primary and secondary sources. The collection of primary data was facilitated through Google Forms. In this research, we used Likert scale questions where 1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree. As the data analysis tools using SPSS 25 and MS Excel 2019 to provide the findings of this study. It also included secondary studies as the methodological basis for research. The authors reviewed and analyzed various existing literature, such as research articles, journals, and books, BTB, ATAB, IATA, highlighting the role of the Travel Agencies and Tour Operators in Bangladesh.

Variables of research

Dependent variable Y: Travel Agencies and Tour operators significantly contribute to the overall development of the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Independent variables

X1: Tour operators in Bangladesh often create customized packages to suit the needs of international tourists.

X2: The online presence of travel agencies in Bangladesh helps in attracting international tourists.

X3: Social media platforms are effectively used by travel agencies to promote Bangladesh's tourism industry.

X4: Travel and tour operators in Bangladesh follow sustainable tourism practices.

X5: Tour operators educate tourists about the environmental impact of their travel decisions.

X6: Travel agencies in Bangladesh use modern marketing strategies to attract tourists.

X7: Travel and tour operators contribute significantly to the local economy of Bangladesh.

Multiple variables have been used to determine the dependent variable: "Tour operators in Bangladesh often create customized packages to suit the needs of international tourists." (Y). The independent variables (X1 to X7) are determined to figure out their role in impacting the dependent variable (Y). As a statistical tool, the study was used for analysis. A survey questionnaire was developed to gather data from the population. Only 140 respondents took part in the survey. The survey questionnaire was sent to domestic tourists who traveled to different tourist locations and attractions in Bangladesh. The following table summarizes the demographic profiles of respondents:

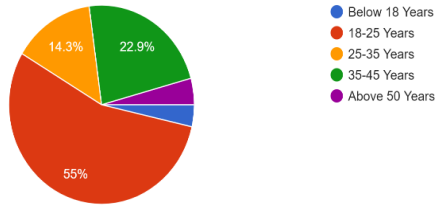


Figure 6: Age of respondents

The figure 6, represent the finding the frequency and proportion of respondents' ages. Analysis of the figure indicates that below 18 is 5 (3.6%), 19-25 is 77 (55%), 26-35 is 20 (14.3%), 36-45 is 32 (22.9%) and 50-up is 6 (4.3%). The total number of respondents is 140.

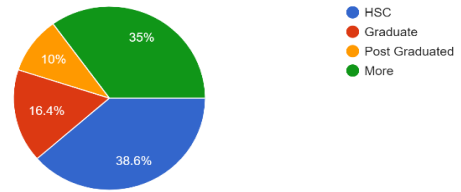


Figure 9: Educational Qualification

The figure 9, represents the frequency and proportion of respondents' educational qualifications. Analysis of the figure indicates that HSC is 54 (38.6%), graduate is 23, post graduate 14, and more is 49 (35%). The total number of respondents is 140.

2. Gender of Respondent
140 responses

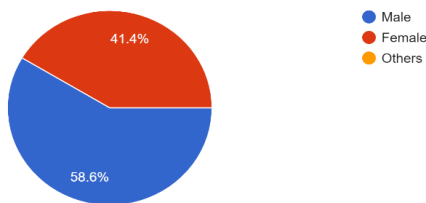


Figure 7: Gender of respondents

The figure 7, represents the finding the frequency and proportion of respondents' genders. Analysis of the figure indicates that males are 82 (58.6%) and females are 58 (41.4%). The total number of respondents is 140

5. Occupation of Respondent
140 responses

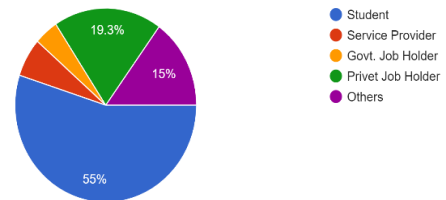


Figure 10: Occupation of respondents

The figure 10, represent the frequency and proportion of respondents' occupation. Analysis of the figure indicates that student are 77 (55%), the service provider is 9, Govt. Job Holder is 6, Privet Job Holder is 27 and others are 21 (15%). The total number of respondents is 140.

3. Marital Status of Respondent
140 responses

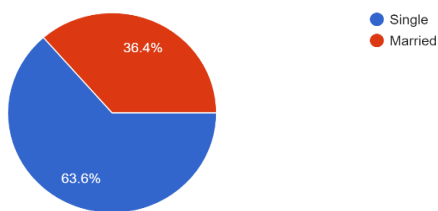


Figure 8: Marital Status of respondents

The figure 8, represents the finding the frequency and proportion of respondents' marital status. Analysis of the figure indicates that single is 89 (63.6%) and married is 51 (36.4%). The total number of respondents is 140.

6. Monthly income of the Respondent in BDT
140 responses

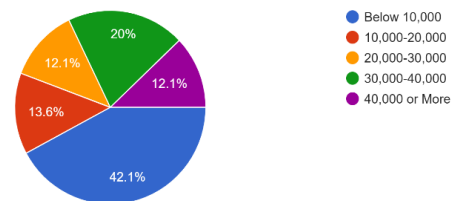


Figure 11: Income of respondents

The table 11, represent the frequency and proportion of respondents' income. Analysis of the figure indicates that below 10,000 is 59 (42.1%); 10,000-20,000 is 19; 20,000-

30,000 is 17; 30,000-40,000 is 28 and 40,000 or more is 17 (12.1%). The total number of respondents is 140.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Reliability Test (Using Cronbach’s Alpha Technique)

The dependent variable “Travel Agencies and Tour operators significantly contribute to the overall development of the tourism industry in Bangladesh.” served as the basis of data collection. “SPSS 25” was used to evaluate the collected data from the respondents. The relevance of the data was evaluated by utilizing the Cronbach’s alpha statistics obtained from processing the data set. The following shows reliability analysis through the technique of Cronbach Alpha:

Table 1: Reliability Analysis. Using Cronbach’s Alpha technique (SPSS 25).

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.874	.874	8

The Cronbach’s Alpha test was employed to calculate and confirm the consistency of the items (Zikmund & Babin, 2020). A Cronbach’s Alpha score of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable for any exploratory study to ensure the reliability of the data (Malhotra, 2010). As per the results of the study, the reliability score of the 10 items identified stands at .874, indicating that the data is highly reliable.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is a term that refers to measures that describe and present data meaningfully such that the underlying information is much easier to interpret. Among measures of central tendency, the Mean or average method is more popular for indicating the center of distribution (Malhotra, 2010). Standard deviation is a term used to observe how the data varies from the mean value (Boone & Boone, 2012). They represent 5-Point Scale mean Classification.

Table 3, It was a table of descriptive statistics that aimed to communicate the mean and standard deviation estimates for the variables. The study has been seen that the mean value of the dependent variable (Y) is 4.41. The value indicates Travel Agencies and Tour operators significantly contribute to the overall development of the

Table 2: five (5) Point Scale Mean Classification

Sl.	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	1.00-1.80	Very Low / Strongly Disagree
2	1.81-2.60	Low / Disagree
3	2.61-3.40	Moderate / Neural
4	3.41-4.20	High / Agree
5	4.21-5.00	Very High / Strongly Agree

Source: Boone and Boone, (2012)

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (SPSS 25)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Y	4.41	.840	140
X1	4.53	.724	140
X2	4.08	.730	140
X3	4.44	.732	140
X4	4.14	.691	140
X5	4.50	.694	140
X6	4.38	.909	140
X7	4.46	.753	140

tourism industry in Bangladesh. The mean value of other variables such as

X1: Tour operators in Bangladesh often create customized packages to suit the needs of international tourists is 4.53 that indicates strongly agree with statement.

X2: The online presence of travel agencies in Bangladesh helps in attracting international tourists is 4.08 that indicates agree with statement.

X3: Social media platforms are effectively used by travel agencies to promote Bangladesh’s tourism industry is 4.44 that indicates strongly agree with statement.

X4: Travel and tour operators in Bangladesh follow sustainable tourism practices is 4.14 that indicates agree with statement.

X5: Tour operators educate tourists about the environmental impact of their travel decisions is 4.50 that indicates strongly agree with statement.

X6: Travel agencies in Bangladesh use modern marketing strategies to attract tourists is 4.38 that indicates strongly agree with statement.

X7: Travel and tour operators contribute significantly to the local economy of Bangladesh is 4.46 that indicates strongly agree with statement.

ANOVA test

Table 4: ANOVA test (SPSS 25)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.424	7	6.203	15.012	.000b
	Residual	54.547	132	.413		
	Total	97.971	139			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X7, X2, X3, X4, X5, X1, X6

Dependent Variable

Significantly contribute to the overall development of the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Predictors: (Constant)

X1: Tour operators in Bangladesh often create customized packages to suit the needs of international tourists.

X2: The online presence of travel agencies in Bangladesh helps in attracting international tourists.

X3: Social media platforms are effectively used by travel agencies to promote Bangladesh's tourism industry.

X4: Travel and tour operators in Bangladesh follow sustainable tourism practices.

X5: Tour operators educate tourists about the environmental impact of their travel decisions.

X6: Travel agencies in Bangladesh use modern marketing strategies to attract tourists.

X7: Travel and tour operators contribute significantly to the local economy of Bangladesh.

In the table 4, We shall proceed to determine if there is any relationship between the dependent and independent variables by carrying out a variance test on the variables included in the model. The statistical proof at a 95% confidence level (p -value = .000) vouches for the model's significant nature. Also, because $p < 0.05$, the model is significant, indicating that at least one of the independent variables (X1 to X7) has a significant relationship with X8.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of travel agencies and tour operators in Bangladesh's tourism industry. The position of the tour operating company or travel agent in the Bangladesh tourism industry is also claimed by the mean high scores of such items as provision of customized packages (X1: 4.53), online presence (X2: 4.08), and sustainable practice (X4: 4.14). They perform extremely well both the requirements of local as well as foreign tourists. Social media (X3: 4.44) and modern marketing practices (X6: 4.38) also speak volumes about how adaptable these operators are in a world digitalizing very fast. Much emphasis is placed on educating tourists on being sensitive to the environment (X5: 4.50) and a lot of contribution to the local economy (X7: 4.46) in the sense of recommending travel habits to tourists. Nonetheless, it has some limitations including poor infrastructure, regulatory limitations, and competition with OTAs. The above-mentioned issues are a hindrance to the attainment of complete optimum utilization of potential power that travel agencies and tour operators can deliver for tourism growth. ANOVA test results (p -value = .000) found that there existed a significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, i.e., that these were related to each other to drive the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Contribution

This paper has contribute the empirical evidence to literature concerning the roles played by travel agencies and tour operators in the tourism sector in Bangladesh. It examines how all of these components can make tourism develop through tailored service, digital transformation, and sustainability practices. The implications will be useful to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and academics trying to understand the dynamics of this emerging market tourist industry-Bangladesh.

Recommendations

a) Infrastructure Development: The government now needs to invest in all transport, accommodation, and other tourism-related infrastructure improvements to ensure an overall improvement in the tourist experience.

b) Regulatory Reforms: This regulation streamlining and regulatory burden relieving will help travel agencies and tour operators run their businesses efficiently.

c) Digital Transformation: This will allow traditional travel agencies to shift to an online platform and embrace new technologies and platforms for superior competitiveness and visibility.

d) Sustainable Tourism Practices: There should be further initiation of sustainable tourism programs such as green tour and community-based tourism by policymakers to provide better value to the environment and economy.

e) Increased Marketing and Promotion: The international marketing of Bangladesh as a travel destination should be further enhanced through more collaboration between the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) and travel agencies.

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CONCLUSION

The present study emphasizes the importance of travel agencies and tour operators to the growth of the tourism sector in Bangladesh. Their role in packaging customized travel plans, using digital platforms, and promoting sustainable tourism practices is key for the industry's growth. However, issues that need to be tackled include competing against OTAs, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory constraints. By applying all the proposed actions, Bangladesh can generate a sustainable and competitive tourism industry that supports the economy and the environment.

Limitation and Future Research Directions

The limited size of 140 respondents in the study sample could not well represent all the diversities, so wider and more diverse sample sizes should be included in future

studies, covering both domestic and international tourist samples and much more towards a comprehensive understanding of the tourism sector.

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