



The State Of Qualitative Tourism Research In Indian Context

Dinesh Chandra Soni Sr. Lecturer (IT), Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, Pusa, New Delhi-110012, India. Email: dcsoni@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research examines qualitative tourism research in India through a lens which shows that Indian scholars lag behind international developments. Indian tourism studies are classified by applying Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) "Moments of Qualitative Research" framework which reveals methodological trends alongside disciplinary boundaries. The research shows quantitative methods are widely chosen by scholars but institutions oppose qualitative approaches while training in qualitative methods remains insufficient. The research supports multiple research methods together with academic backing and interdisciplinary teamwork to improve qualitative research within tourism studies in Indian academia.

Keywords: Qualitative tourism research, Indian tourism studies, interpretivist approach, research methodologies, tourism academia, interdisciplinary research, methodological trends, qualitative analysis, tourism policy, academic publishing.

INTRODUCTION

The study of tourism in India relies mainly on quantitative methods for analyzing statistical data about tourist movement combined with economic effects and demand projections. The Indian tourism research field demonstrates qualitative methods through investigations of cultural experiences combined with studies of socio-economic effects and host-guest relationships alongside ethnographic findings. Recent studies in tourism literature demonstrate increasing interest in understanding tourist perceptions alongside their behavioural patterns and destination narratives thus encouraging qualitative research methods. The interpretivist paradigm stands as an underutilized research approach in the field. Research about tourism at the global level embraces qualitative approaches to study cultural experiences and host-guest interactions and socio-economic changes but Indian tourism research maintains its focus on positivist frameworks.

The research aims to understand the state of qualitative tourism research in India through an assessment of major tourism publications which determines advancing trends and measures how well qualitative methodologies fit into Indian tourism scholarship. This paper interprets Indian tourism studies through Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) "Moments of Qualitative Research" framework to demonstrate paradigmatic classifications and document academic preferences for methods and publishing patterns. This research project establishes foundation information about qualitative research in Indian tourism while examining both challenges and growth prospects for its expansion. The goal of this research work supports an equilibrium between research methods by promoting qualitative methods to enhance understanding of tourism phenomena in India.

The acceptance and application of qualitative research methods within tourism studies have gradually improved during the past years yet they still face inconsistent reception specifically in India. The qualitative research in tourism creates vital opportunities in developing soft sciences by letting researchers dive into intricate social and cultural dynamics. Tourism researchers should abandon strict positivist approaches because interpretivist approaches enable them to document the detailed experiences of both tourists and local communities. Qualitative research faces strong resistance from some parties because they believe it lacks the necessary elements of generalization and scientific method.

Decrop (1999) demonstrated how triangulation improves qualitative tourism research credibility by using multiple qualitative approaches for better findings validity. He stated that qualitative methods bring about deeper comprehension of tourist behaviours and decision pathways when they are used correctly. The study by Phillimore and Goodson (2004) examined qualitative research ontology and epistemology in tourism by focusing on researcher-participant co-constructed knowledge through subjective interpretations. Through their research the authors demonstrated that ethnography and phenomenology together with discourse analysis reveal insights which quantitative approaches tend to miss.

The research by Dwyer et al. (2012) conducted an extensive analysis of qualitative vs. quantitative methods in tourism research and demonstrated how qualitative techniques excel at studying new market trends and cultural encounters and consumer emotional behaviour. The research authors explained that quantitative methods currently rule tourism research yet qualitative approaches become essential for understanding complex context-dependent situations. According to Walle (1997) tourism research must expand beyond positivist traditions because qualitative methods deliver both enhanced adaptability and extensive industrial challenge comprehension.

The qualitative research methods in tourism by stressing the importance of methodological development in their paper. Academic researchers can tackle important matters of identity and authenticity and sociocultural tourism impacts through qualitative research methods according to their assertion. Qualitative studies face difficulties from methodological criticism which restricts their widespread use in traditional tourism research.

The value of qualitative tourism research in India has been confirmed yet its full potential remains underexplored. Academic research shows a preference for quantitative approaches because they provide statistical generalizations beyond deep contextual analysis. The research gap calls for stronger advocacy of qualitative research methods alongside a transition toward pluralistic methodologies within Indian tourism studies.

Aim and Objectives

Aim:

This study aims to evaluate the state of qualitative tourism research in India by analyzing its prevalence, methodological approaches, and scholarly reception.

Objectives

1. To assess the extent and evolution of qualitative research in Indian tourism studies by analysing major academic publications and identifying prevailing methodological trends.
2. To explore the challenges and barriers limiting the adoption of qualitative research in Indian tourism academia and suggest strategies for broader acceptance and application of interpretivist methodologies.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has qualitative research evolved in Indian tourism studies, and what are the prevailing methodological trends in major academic publications?
2. What challenges and barriers limit the adoption of qualitative research in Indian tourism academia, and how can interpretivist methodologies be more widely accepted and applied?

METHODOLOGY

The research uses a qualitative method to evaluate qualitative tourism research activities in India. Qualitative research methods provide an ideal framework for understanding phenomena because they use interpretive naturalistic approaches according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) in tourism research analysis. A qualitative methodology suits the study purpose of understanding qualitative research developments in India because it enables researchers to study academic literature and theoretical frameworks while providing needed flexibility to explore publication trends.

The research analyses major tourism publications in India through content analysis to detect changes in academic discourse along with methodological patterns. The research methodology conforms with constructivist principles because knowledge emerges through social interactions within specific contexts. The study uses pattern analysis to organize Indian tourism research into qualitative moments according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) so researchers can evaluate qualitative methods in academic tourism studies.

A quantitative methodology proved inappropriate for this study because statistical generalizability does not support the investigation of epistemological and methodological changes in tourism research. Surveys along with numerical data would fail to deliver essential insights regarding theoretical foundations and disciplinary preferences as well as research barriers in Indian qualitative research. The study does not rely on mixed-methods analysis because its main goal is to conduct a critical review of qualitative research through descriptive and thematic evaluation.

This research demands a qualitative methodological framework to achieve comprehensive exploration of the forces that affect qualitative tourism research in India.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Research on qualitative tourism in India demonstrates both major trends and disciplinary patterns as well as methodological challenges. Major tourism publications show quantitative research controls Indian tourism studies while qualitative research remains minimal in published works. Tourism academia as a whole currently favors positivist methodologies because researchers value their scientific rigor and statistical reliability according to Dwyer et al. (2012). The growing acceptance of qualitative approaches in global tourism research has not permeated Indian tourism academia which continues to follow a quantitative approach through select journals that accept qualitative research.

The research classifies Indian qualitative tourism studies according to methodological positions through the application of Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) Moments of Qualitative Research framework. Most Indian tourism research employing qualitative methods stays confined to the first two moments of qualitative research methodology by conducting traditional ethnographic

studies and structured qualitative techniques and post-positivist approaches. Research on the third, fourth and fifth moments of qualitative research receives minimal attention from Indian scholars. The adoption of postmodern qualitative approaches and narrative methodologies and critical theories remains scarce among Indian tourism scholars even though these research methods are commonly used in global tourism research (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

The research field of Indian tourism demonstrates a distinct separation between fields of study. Research from sociology anthropology and cultural studies represents most qualitative methods but business management and hospitality scholars conduct most quantitative studies. The research pattern follows worldwide trends because applied tourism journals emphasize data-based research which uses statistical results instead of interpretive findings. Institutional biases and funding preferences alongside academic training practices in business and management often create a preference for quantitative research methods (Walle, 1997).

The research establishes key reasons that prevent Indian tourism academics from adopting qualitative research methods. The barriers to qualitative research adoption exist because researchers display methodological skepticism while lacking exposure to qualitative methods and having insufficient academic training in interpretive research methodologies. The preference for quantitative research methods at numerous Indian universities results in insufficient faculty knowledge and institutional backing for qualitative tourism research. The funding community and policy makers demonstrate a preference for quantitative studies because they believe these studies have better utility for industry decisions and policy development.

The growing adoption of triangulation methods described by Decrop (1999) along with contextual analysis demonstrates that Indian tourism research is moving toward a pluralistic methodological approach. The growth of qualitative tourism research in India needs academic recognition combined with interdisciplinary connections and better publication prospects for research scholars. Research about tourism will gain more comprehensive understanding of human experiences and cultural changes and destination dynamics when methodological diversity is encouraged.

DISCUSSION

The research results support the study objective which assessed qualitative tourism research in India through its restricted usage alongside disciplinary preferences and methodological obstacles. Major academic publications demonstrate quantitative research as the leading method in Indian tourism studies while qualitative methodologies remain underutilized. The findings validate the main research purpose to measure qualitative research adoption within Indian tourism academia. Most Indian tourism research focuses on Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) first and second Moments of Qualitative Research while showing minimal use of critical and postmodern approaches.

The research demonstrates that sociologists and anthropologists perform most qualitative work yet business and management scholars choose to use quantitative approaches. The research results support the second objective to determine obstacles against qualitative research adoption in Indian tourism academia. The main obstacles to qualitative research adoption in Indian tourism academia stem from methodological skepticism and insufficient training combined with limited institutional backing.

The methodological pluralism trend becomes more likely based on the growing adoption of triangulation methods alongside contextual qualitative research. The field of qualitative research in Indian tourism studies needs academic approval as well as interdisciplinary partnerships and institutional backing to progress forward. The research outlines main obstacles which prevent Indian tourism academics from adopting qualitative methods alongside their reluctance to embrace new methodologies and their lack of training and insufficient institutional support. The successful elimination of these obstacles demands academic approval alongside interdisciplinary teamwork and enhanced institutional backing of qualitative research methods.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings demonstrate that Indian tourism academics have shown minimal interest in using qualitative methods because most studies still use quantitative approaches. The research suggests that qualitative studies have gained some acceptance yet remain unused because of institutional preferences and insufficient training and statistical generalization requirements. The majority of qualitative studies in Indian tourism research stay confined to the initial and secondary stages of qualitative inquiry because critical and advocacy-based approaches are barely utilized. The discipline-based split continues to exist since sociologists and anthropologists produce most qualitative research while business and management scholars choose quantitative methods.

Multiple recommendations exist to boost the acceptance of qualitative research methods. Research methods based on qualitative approaches must be integrated into doctoral programs at Indian universities through formal training programs in ethnographic methods as well as discourse and narrative analysis. The academic journals should support mixed-method approaches to promote methodological pluralism in research. Institutions together with funding agencies need to direct funds toward qualitative research projects so interpretivist studies obtain sufficient support.

Theoretical Implications

The research adds value to current discussions about qualitative research methods in tourism studies while focusing on the Indian market. This research classifies Indian tourism studies through Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) framework in order to recognize underdeveloped methods and limited use of advanced qualitative research paradigms. The research reveals disciplinary imbalances which demand interdisciplinary methodological cooperation.

Practical Implications

The tourism industry needs practitioners to understand how qualitative information helps them understand guest interactions with culture and how destinations evolve. Tourism policies and business strategies that depend on statistical projections gain valuable depth by qualitative research because it reveals traveller motivations, perceptions and behavioural patterns which enhance service delivery and marketing effectiveness.

Limitations and Future Research

The research faces a limitation because it exclusively depends on secondary sources instead of conducting interviews with tourism researchers working within India. Additional research

needs to include direct interviews or survey questions directed at Indian tourism scholars to understand their thoughts about qualitative research difficulties. The comparison of Indian qualitative tourism research methods with international practices would help reveal new understanding of methodological problems. Research should explore the effects of qualitative studies on industry choices by evaluating their contribution to sustainable tourism policies and development strategies.

REFERENCES

1. Decrop, A., (1999) Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism management*, 20(1), pp.157-161.
2. Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., (1996) Handbook of qualitative research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 28(2), p.132.
3. Dwyer, L., Gill, A. and Seetaram, N. eds., (2012) Handbook of research methods in tourism: Quantitative and qualitative approaches. Edward Elgar Publishing.
4. Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L., (2004) Qualitative research in tourism. *Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*. Routledge, London and New York.
5. Walle, A.H., (1997) Quantitative versus qualitative tourism research. *Annals of tourism research*, 24(3), pp.524-536.