






Tourist perceptions of tourism destinations choice and loyalty: A perspective on developing sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

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Tourist perception refers to the emotional and psychological evaluations that tourists form as a result of their encounters with the destination, including its attractions, people, culture, and services. It can significantly influence tourism destination choice and loyalty, which means returning to the same destination or recommending it to others. The primary objective of this research endeavor is to investigate the perspectives held by tourists regarding their selection of destinations and their loyalty towards these destinations. The study specifically concentrates on the advancement of sustainable rural tourism within the context of Bangladesh. The study was based on quantitative methods, the study's premise, and many statistical measurements, such as descriptive statistics, validity, reliability, regression analysis, and the study's hypothesis. The results of the study indicate that the main determinants of tourist site selection and revisiting the tourist spots are based on the dynamic service qualities and availability of basic facilities at the tourist spots, as well as the higher propensity to reenter rural tourist places and localities. The implications for stakeholders encompass the necessity of allocating resources to develop quality services, enhance the basic facilities in tourist spots, and develop comprehensive marketing strategies aimed at promoting rural areas as attractive tourist destinations. This research makes a valuable contribution to the creation of effective strategies for sustainable development in the rural tourism industry of Bangladesh by examining tourist attitudes.

Contribution/Originality: Prior studies predominantly examined the overall perceptions of tourists and their selection of destinations, with minimal attention given to rural tourism, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. This study addressed the lack of research that integrates tourist perceptions, destination selection, and loyalty to promote sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourist sector in Bangladesh possesses considerable untapped potential, particularly in rural regions. Tourism has been recognized as a significant sector for economic growth, especially in developing countries (Ekanayake & Long, 2012; Samimi, Sadeghi, & Sadeghi, 2011; Wang & Liu, 2020). In the specific context of Bangladesh, it is evident that the tourism sector possesses significant potential for making substantial contributions to both local and national economies. However, it is essential to note that a considerable portion of this potential remains unexplored (Das & Chakraborty, 2012; Hafsa, 2020; Kumar, Zulkifli, & Ray, 2023). Rural tourism is

gaining prominence as a financially viable and environmentally sustainable variant of tourism that has the potential to uplift local communities (Gannon, 1994). Despite its potential, there is a noticeable gap in the research on how tourists consider rural destinations in Bangladesh and how these impressions impact their selection and loyalty to these destinations. Understanding the significance of tourist impressions holds significant importance for multiple reasons.

According to Haarhoff (2018), the utilization of this approach allows destination managers and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of their plans by tailoring them more precisely. Furthermore, it is important to note that perceptions have a significant role in shaping the decisions and loyalty of tourists, which in turn have a crucial impact on the overall sustainability of tourism destinations (An & Alarcon, 2020; Daniloska & Hadzi NM, 2015; Gnanapala, 2015). Ultimately, the improvement of the visitor experience in rural regions has the potential to contribute to a more balanced allocation of tourism advantages, consequently facilitating the reduction of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development (Zapata, Hall, Lindo, & Vanderschaeghe, 2011). Additionally, the rural tourism sector in Bangladesh encounters distinct obstacles, including deficiencies in infrastructure, restricted marketing efforts, and inadequate management (Rahman, Muneem, Avi, & Sobhan, 2018). The aforementioned issues frequently influence the attitudes of tourists in an unfavorable manner, dissuading them from returning to or endorsing the places to others (Ahmed & Jahan, 2013).

The current scenario underscores the importance of comprehensively grasping tourists' perspectives on rural tourism locations in Bangladesh. This understanding will not only aid in addressing these difficulties but also foster the long-term viability of rural tourism. Furthermore, the inquiry into the sustainability of rural tourism is intricately linked with the notion of responsible tourism. As evidenced in various developing countries, unregulated tourism has the potential to result in adverse environmental impacts, the erosion of cultural assets, and turmoil in society (Kumar, Bagchi, & Ray, 2021; Leslie, 2012; Rahman et al., 2018). Therefore, gaining insight into the perspectives of tourists has the potential to shed light on strategies for promoting responsible tourism, thereby ensuring that the positive impacts of tourism are distributed to the local community and environment (Blackstock, White, McCrum, Scott, & Hunter, 2008). Moreover, the importance of rural tourism in Bangladesh is of great relevance, particularly when considering its socioeconomic implications. Nair and Hussain (2013) suggest that rural tourism has the potential to enhance income diversification among local communities, thereby reducing their reliance on conventional sectors such as agriculture or fishing, which are frequently susceptible to environmental shifts and market volatility (Lo, Ramayah, & Hui, 2014). An area that has received limited attention in the current body of literature pertains to the influence of digital platforms and social media on the formation of tourists' views (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, 2016; Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019). The rapid and extensive influence of digital platforms has the potential to greatly magnify both favorable and unfavorable views, thereby playing a vital role in comprehending the factors that influence tourists' selection and continued loyalty towards rural tourism locations in Bangladesh (Mim, Hasan, Hossain, & Khan, 2022). Additionally, cultural and historical influences are also significant variables to consider. The presence of a diverse cultural legacy and notable historical sites in rural areas of Bangladesh can serve as influential catalysts for the development of tourism (Islam, Hossain, & Noor, 2017). Nevertheless, there has been limited research conducted on the opinions of tourists regarding these factors and their influence on destination selection and loyalty, particularly within the context of Bangladesh.

This study seeks to investigate the perceptions of tourists regarding tourism locations in rural Bangladesh and the subsequent impact of these beliefs on their decision-making and loyalty. The need for more research in this area is due to the paucity of current academic literature, which acknowledges the importance of rural tourism in promoting sustainable development in Bangladesh. This study has the potential to offer significant insights for stakeholders in order to enhance tourism planning and management strategies that are specifically designed to address the distinctive challenges and opportunities present in rural Bangladesh.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The decision-making process for choosing a destination is complex and subject to both internal and external influences. Personal preferences, cultural backgrounds, previous travel experiences, and destination image all play a role in shaping tourist perceptions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). For rural tourism, natural beauty, authenticity, tranquilly, and unique cultural experiences often emerge as significant pull factors (Roberts & Hall, 2001). The rise of responsible tourism and a growing consciousness about sustainability have also led tourists to seek out destinations that prioritize these values. In fact, Tapper (2001) suggested that tourists are willing to pay more for sustainable tourism experiences that reduce environmental impact and benefit local communities. According to Garg (2013), safety and security concerns are crucial factors in a tourist's final selection. He discovered that isolated incidents, or a string of them, could discredit travelers' impressions of a place. The safety, security, and overall appeal of these locations are all diminished as a result of these events and conditions. Psychology, sociology, criminology, and marketing are just a few of the fields that have recognized the value of looking into how people view potential dangers when traveling. Most tourists consider earthquakes, tsunamis, terrorist attacks, and swine flu to be threats, according to the survey. According to the findings, travelers prioritize a destination's level of safety, tranquilly, and stability when making their vacation plans. Haarhoff (2018) found that destination image plays a pivotal role in influencing buying decisions during the destination-choice process, as well as defining the overall appeal of a destination. The destination image encompasses the amalgamation of perceptual perceptions, knowledge, emotional feelings, and overall impressions that a visitor possesses regarding a specific place. This study discovered two factors that influence destination image. The various traits and characteristics that a place possesses, as well as the knowledge that tourists have of the place, all affect how people perceive it. These elements are commonly referred to as external factors. Additionally, internal factors like personal motivation, prior experiences, attitudes, and expectations have an impact on the image-development process. A positive perspective plays a crucial role in shaping the destination image, which subsequently influences tourist satisfaction and ultimately leads to destination loyalty.

Yeung (2009) showed that food safety is important for the image of destination. The occurrence of food-borne illnesses during vacations has a detrimental impact on the overall image of the place and significantly influences the decision-making process of tourists when it comes to choosing their holiday destinations. De Urioste-Stone, Scaccia, and Howe-Poteet (2015) conducted an investigation into the many perspectives on the effects of climate change on individuals involved in the tourist industry and articulated that climate change indeed has an impact on tourism. Weather conditions play a crucial role in shaping the preferences of travelers when it comes to selecting their destinations. Alegre and Cladera (2009) have conducted a comprehensive review of the existing literature on tourist intentions, with a particular emphasis on the components that contribute to the determination of behavioral intention. Therefore, Prayag, Hosany, and Odeh (2013) noted that the investigation of behavioral intentions continues to be a crucial topic in the field of tourism research, as it signifies the loyalty of tourists. Ahmed, Azam, and Bose (2010) and Isa and Ramli (2014) found that recent empirical research has examined the intentions of travelers to either visit or revisit a particular site. Furthermore, the authors Sun, Chi, and Xu (2013); Kim and Brown (2012); and Rajaratnam, Nair, Sharif, and Munikrishnan (2015) express their eagerness to endorse the destination to a wider audience. There are two primary elements that have an impact on individuals' intentions to choose a tourism destination. These factors are categorized as either motivating or pulling stimulus factors or psychological or personal factors. Motivating or pulling factors refer to certain characteristics that compel tourists to fulfill their demands, including the destination image, services, and entertainment facilities (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Psychological aspects encompass various elements such as the environmental attitude, incentives of tourists to engage in travel, word-of-mouth communication, and prior knowledge, inclinations, and satisfaction (Venkatesh, 2006). According to Alegre and Cladera (2009), the perception of service quality has been identified as a strong predictor of variations in both behavioral intentions and intentions related to choice or purchase. The function of

tourists' travel plans in destination selection is of great importance in the field of tourism marketing as it contributes to the generation of demand and aids visitors in their decision-making process (Ahmed et al., 2010; Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Kumar, Akter, & Paul, 2022). Hence, it is vital to possess sufficient knowledge and comprehension regarding the determinants that impact visitor intention in order to formulate and execute strategies and policies effectively. This, in turn, will foster an upsurge in the demand for tourism. Hence, this study extensively investigates the four overarching components that influence tourist behavioral intentions, namely destination image, motivation, perceived quality, and word-of-mouth communication. Ahmed et al. (2010) conducted a study to investigate the impact of nine distinct variables on tourists' inclination to engage in tourism activities, specifically focusing on aspects such as service quality, natural aesthetics, familiarity with the destination, convenient accommodation, adventurous opportunities, safety and security, efficient transportation, provision of safe and high-quality food, and availability of shopping facilities. The findings of the study indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between service quality, natural beauty, security and safety, shopping facilities, and the desire to select a tour location. Contentment, perceived value, and the caliber of the overall experience are a few factors that have a significant impact on the development of loyalty (Chi, 2012; Nandi, Kumar, & Azevedo, 2022).

The concept of loyalty within the tourism industry pertains to the inclination of tourists to revisit a certain destination or encourage others to do so (Oppermann, 2000). The predominant body of study mostly centers on the examination of tourist perceptions and destination selection in a general sense, with less attention given to the investigation of these phenomena within the unique context of rural tourism. A significant portion of the existing literature pertaining to visitor loyalty mostly draws upon insights derived from industrialized nations or well-established tourist sites. Insufficient scholarly investigation has been conducted on the subject of loyalty within emerging nations, with a particular dearth of studies pertaining to Bangladesh. A notable deficiency exists within the existing body of literature about the absence of an integrated framework that encompasses tourist perceptions, destination selection, and loyalty, specifically aimed at fostering sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh. This study focused on how tourist perceptions and destination choices affect loyalty, specifically in the context of rural tourism in Bangladesh.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to assess tourist perceptions on destination choice and loyalty for developing sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh.

- To ascertain the tourist perception of sustainable rural tourism.
- To identify the important factors to help develop sustainable rural tourism.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₁: Destination images have a favorable impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

H₂: Dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on the destination.

H₃: Dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on the enhancement of fundamental facilities in tourist spots.

H₄: Dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on ensuring the tourist spot's security and safety measures.

H₅: Dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

H₆: Fundamental facilities have a favorable impact on the destination image.

H₇: Fundamental facilities have a favorable impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

H₈: Security and safety measures have a favorable impact on ensuring fundamental facilities.

H₉: Security and safety measures have a positive impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative methods to achieve its analytical objectives. The data was gathered through simple random sampling. The research incorporated both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection involved a survey questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, interviews, and observations. Secondary data was compiled from relevant books, journals, articles, seminar papers, publications from national and international research organizations, reports from various tourism sectors, and public records and statistics. The researchers collected each data type separately. Tourists in the tourism industry were the study's participants. The sample size was determined using Yamane (1967) simplified formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size (Population = 10,000), and e is the level of precision ($\pm 5\%$). The minimum sample size stood at: $n = \frac{10,000}{1 + 10,000(0.05)^2} = 385$.

The population size is "N," the sample size is "n," and the level of accuracy is "e." Respondents from seven districts—Khulna, Jessore, Bagerhat, Kushita, Jhenaida, Maherpur, and Chuadanga—completed a total of 550 structured questionnaires. Ten (10) popular rural tourist destinations were randomly selected. All tourist spots are situated in rural areas of every district. The study's premise, many statistical measurements, such as descriptive statistics, validity, reliability, regression analysis, and the study's hypothesis, were all proven using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares) software.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The respondent profiles and findings of various analyses based on the respondents' opinions acquired through the questionnaire are used in the analysis and interpretation of this study.

Table 1. Respondents' profile.

Particulars	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	418	76.0
	Female	132	24.0
Age	18 to 24 years	168	30.5
	25 to 34 years	349	63.5
	35 to 44 years	22	4.0
	45 to 54 years	6	1.1
	55 to older	5	.9
Occupation	Government service	77	14.0
	Private service	126	22.9
	Business	17	3.1
	Students and others	330	60.0
Educational qualification	Ph.D. and master	245	44.5
	Graduate	179	32.5
	Under graduate	126	22.9

Source: Field survey.

The demographics of the respondents are displayed in Table 1, with 24% female and 76% male. The majority of the respondents were aged between 25 - 34 years (63.5%). The majority of respondents were students, and other professions made up 60%. Out of 550 respondents, 44.5% (245) were Ph.D. and Master's degree holders.

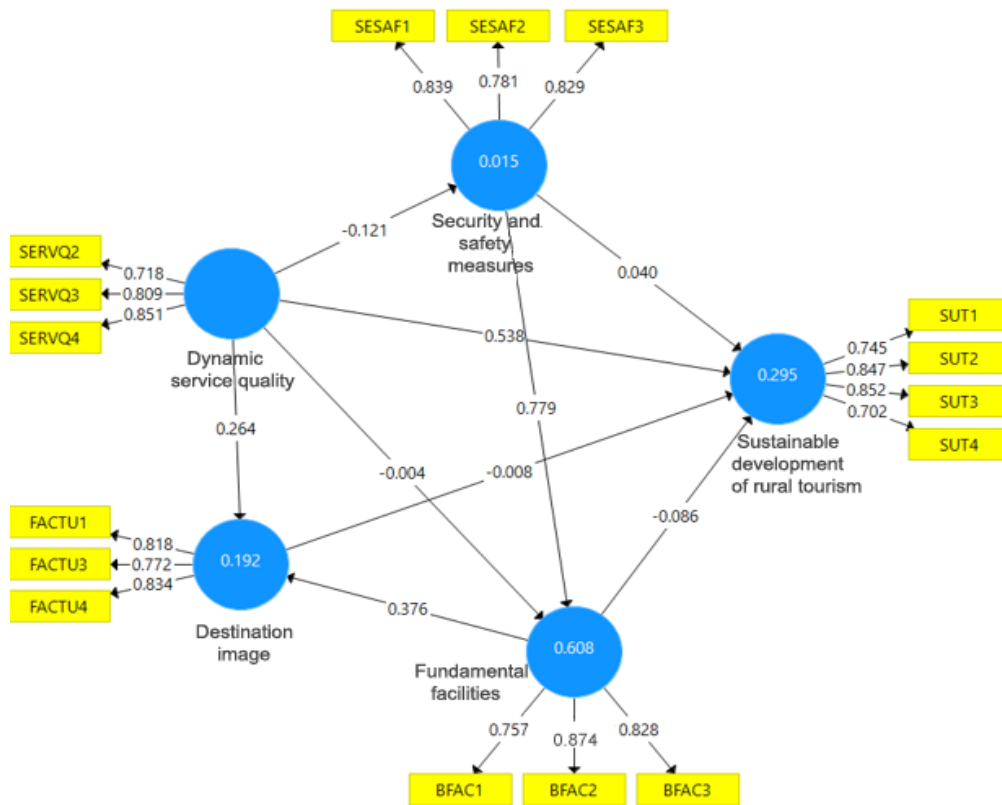


Figure 1. Research structural model.

The variable sustainable development of rural tourism (SUT) is made up of four independent factors, which can be seen in Figure 1 These are security and safety measures (SESAF), dynamic service quality (SERVQ), destination image (FACTU), and basic facilities (BFAC). All factor loadings are greater than 0.70.

Table 2. Measurement model of construct reliability and validity.

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Destination image	0.736	0.744	0.850	0.653
Dynamic service quality	0.706	0.721	0.836	0.631
Fundamental facilities	0.757	0.770	0.861	0.674
Security and safety measures	0.753	0.764	0.857	0.667
Sustainable development of rural tourism	0.797	0.818	0.868	0.623

Table 2 represents the internal consistency of the capacity instrument evaluated in the study's smart PLS technique (structural equation modeling). It is challenging to interpret Cronbach's alpha since there is no agreement on the appropriate range of acceptance. Commonly, a range of 0.70 or greater is considered appropriate for Cronbach's alpha (Nunnally, 1978). But in an advanced study, the calculation of suitable values can range from 0.70 to 0.90 (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). The value of composite reliability (CR) is 0.70 or higher than 0.70, and the value of average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.50 or higher than 0.50. Both values are acceptable. The findings indicate that composite reliability values are shown (0.850, 0.836, 0.861, 0.857, and 0.868). The average values of the average variance extracted are 0.653, 0.631, 0.674, 0.667, and 0.623. The results support the assertion that convergent validity has been established.

Table 3. Fornell- Larcker criterion discriminant validity.

Construct	Destination image	Dynamic service quality	Fundamental facilities	Security and safety measures	Sustainable development of rural tourism
Destination image	0.808				
Dynamic service quality	0.227	0.794			
Fundamental facilities	0.350	-0.099	0.821		
Security and safety measures	0.267	-0.121	0.780	0.817	
Sustainable development of rural tourism	0.095	0.540	-0.111	-0.094	0.789

According to Cheung and Lee (2010), discriminant validity is the extent to which the measures do not reflect other ideas. According to Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, and Chong (2017), discriminant validity can be used in PLS path modeling to verify that a reflective notion has the strongest correlations by using its own indicators. Roemer, Schubert, and Henseler (2021) advise applying the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) approach to determine discriminant validity. However, Table 3 shows the HTMT calculation values are (0.808; 0.794; 0.821; 0.817; & 0.789) lower than 0.90, so it can be concluded that the discriminant validity of two thinking conceptions has been established.

Table 4. Goodness of model fit.

Construct	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.077	0.077
d_ ULS	0.814	0.814
d_ G	0.294	0.294
Chi-square	946.694	946.687
NFI	0.718	0.718

Table 4 presents the precise overall model fit measures (i.e., d_ ULS and d_ G) in the inference statistics for the bootstrap-based test. A value less than 0.10 or 0.08 in a more conservative version (see Hu and Bentler (1999)) is considered a good fit. Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) describe the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) as a way to measure how well a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) model fits the data. It can be used to keep the model from being misdefined. In this model, the SRMR value is 0.077. It is usually an acceptable fit.

Consequently, the Non-normed fit index (NFI) results in values between 0 and 1. The closer the NFI is to 1, the better the fit. Lohmöller and Lohmöller (1989) provide detailed information on the NFI computation of PLS path models. In this model, the value is 0.718. It is usually an acceptable fit.

Table 5 demonstrates that the H1: Destination image has a favorable impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism, which is contrary to ($t = 0.228$, $p = 0.410$). In this case, the result indicates the acceptance of a null hypothesis. It means that destination image does not have a favorable impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry. Again, dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on creating a destination image, which is supported by H2 ($t = 7.268$, $p < 0.0001$). So, the result indicates the acceptance of an alternative hypothesis. It indicates that dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on creating a destination image. However, dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on enhancing fundamental facilities, as supported by H3 ($t = 0.148$, $p < 0.449$). The result supports the acceptance of the null hypothesis. It means that dynamic service quality has no favorable impact on enhancing fundamental facilities. H4 ($t = 2.727$, $p = 0.003$), on the other hand, supports the idea that dynamic service quality has a positive impact on security and safety measures in tourist areas. It indicates the acceptance of an alternative hypothesis. It means that dynamic service quality positively influences tourist spot

security and safety measures. Moreover, dynamic service quality has a positive impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism, as supported by H5: ($t = 12.553$, $p < 0.0001$).

Table 5. Hypothesis testing of the study.

Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Comment
H1: Destination image -> Sustainable Development of rural tourism	-0.008	-0.010	0.035	0.228	0.410	Not supported
H2: Dynamic service quality -> Destination image	0.264	0.268	0.036	7.268	0.000	Supported
H3: Dynamic service quality -> Fundamental facilities	-0.004	-0.005	0.029	0.148	0.441	Not supported
H4: Dynamic service quality -> Security and safety measures	-0.121	-0.125	0.044	2.727	0.003	Supported
H5: Dynamic service quality -> Sustainable development of rural tourism	0.538	0.543	0.043	12.553	0.000	Supported
H6: Fundamental facilities -> Destination image	0.376	0.377	0.041	9.237	0.000	Supported
H7: Fundamental facilities -> Sustainable development of rural tourism	-0.086	-0.084	0.058	1.467	0.071	Supported
H8: Security and safety measures -> Fundamental facilities	0.779	0.780	0.016	47.518	0.000	Supported
H9: Security and safety measures -> Sustainable development of rural tourism	0.040	0.040	0.055	0.715	0.237	Not supported

The result signifies the acceptance of an alternative hypothesis. It designates that dynamic service quality has a positive impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism. Then again, fundamental facilities have positively helped to create a destination image, as supported by H6 ($t = 9.237$, $p < 0.0001$). The results support the alternative hypothesis. It indicates that fundamental facilities help create a destination image. Nevertheless, fundamental facilities have a favorable impact on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry, as supported by H7 ($t = 1.467$, $p < 0.071$). The result supports the alternative hypothesis at a 10% level of significance. It indicates that fundamental facilities help create sustainable development in the rural tourism industry. Yet, security and safety measures have a positive impact on fundamental facilities, as supported by H8: ($t = 47.518$, $p < 0.0001$). The result supports the alternative. It indicates that security and safety measures have a positive impact on ensuring fundamental facilities. Lastly, security and safety measures favorable to the sustainable development of rural tourism are not supported by H9 ($t = 0.715$, $p < 0.237$). The result does not support the alternative hypothesis. It means that security and safety measures have no favorable impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

After the analysis of the data, the study found that the destination image did not significantly affect sustainable rural tourism, so it may be beneficial to focus on other aspects that directly contribute to sustainability. Dynamic service quality has a favorable impact on creating a destination's image and on tourist spots' security and safety measures. However, it does not significantly impact the enhancement of fundamental facilities. Dynamic service quality has a positive impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism. It has a multi-faceted concept; therefore, efforts should be made to understand which aspects specifically affect destination image and safety measures. Fundamental facilities have a positive effect on creating a destination image and also on the sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

Given the importance of fundamental facilities, it may be useful to conduct further research to understand what aspects (e.g., sanitation, lodging) are most impactful. Investments in fundamental facilities such as clean water, restrooms, and lodging should be prioritized. Security and safety measures have a positive impact on fundamental facilities but do not have a favorable impact on the sustainable development of rural tourism. Although security measures improve fundamental facilities, their lack of impact on sustainability suggests that they should be part of a broader, more comprehensive strategy.

In addition to enhancing security measures, policies should aim for a holistic approach that includes other factors like community engagement and environmental conservation to truly impact sustainable rural tourism.

8. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the complexities of visitor perceptions and their significant impact on the advancement of sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh. The comprehensive examination and empirical evidence offer useful insights into the underlying processes that influence tourists' decision-making and loyalty towards rural places. The study confirms the importance of comprehending tourist perspectives within the framework of rural tourism. The perception of the location, the caliber of the services provided, the ease of access to facilities, and the breadth of safety precautions taken all play a role in how tourists make decisions. This study shows the critical role that dynamic service quality plays in the creation of a positive destination image. On the other hand, a positive perception might draw tourists.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance for rural tourism locations to prioritize the improvement of service quality in order to prosper. The emergence of fundamental amenities plays a crucial role in shaping a destination's image and promoting the sustainable growth of rural tourism. The provision of easily accessible services, such as clean water, washroom facilities, and hotel options, significantly influences the perceptions and overall pleasure of travelers.

The impact of security and safety measures on the entire sustainability of rural tourism is complex and multifaceted, with substantial implications for core facilities. It is imperative for policymakers to embrace a holistic strategy that incorporates security measures within wider plans aimed at fostering sustainable rural tourism growth.

So, the complexity of visitor decision-making processes and their significant impact on rural tourism. The statement underscores the importance of developing customized approaches that take into consideration the distinct attributes of rural destinations in Bangladesh. The involvement of policymakers, stakeholders, and academics in collaborative endeavors is crucial for the advancement of knowledge, the implementation of localized studies, and the ongoing adaptation of policies to foster sustainable development in rural tourism. The pursuit of sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh is an ongoing process of exploration and adjustment. This study serves as a foundational basis for future research and activities, with the aim of promoting the sustainable development of rural tourism while simultaneously preserving the cultural and ecological assets of the country in question.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 represent the variables used in questionnaire.

Appendix 1. Variables used in questionnaire.

Construct	Code	Variables
Fundamental facilities	BFAC1	Food services.
	BFAC2	Health & medical services.
	BFAC3	Wash room & toilet facilities.
Destination image	FACTU1	Tourist spot attractions.
	FACTU3	Tourist spot cleanness.
	FACTU4	Recreation opportunities.
Dynamic service quality	SERVQ2	Innovation and new thinking by concerned authorities help sustainable tourism development.
	SERVQ3	The most crucial component for a tourist attraction is service quality.
	SERVQ4	A good tourist destination must have access to attractions for visitors.
Security and safety measures	SESAF1	Security & safety
	SESAF2	Local people's attitude
	SESAF3	Emergency services
Sustainable development of rural tourism	SUT1	Local people get economic and social benefits from community tourism.
	SUT2	Sustainable tourism boosts the local population's economy.
	SUT3	The local population has more jobs thanks to sustainable tourism.
	SUT4	The positive effects of sustainable tourism are seen on the environment and cultural heritage.

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