

Pilgrimage Sites of the Rohilkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh and the Hotel Industry: A Pilgrim-Perception Analysis

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Cite This Paper as: Pankaj, Dr.Indraneel Bose (2026) Pilgrimage Sites of the Rohilkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh and the Hotel Industry: A Pilgrim-Perception Analysis The Journal Of African Development L, Vol.7, No.1, 128-138

KEYWORDS

pilgrimage tourism; Rohilkhand; hotel industry; religious sites; pilgrim perception; Uttar Pradesh; SPSS analysis; Likert scale

ABSTRACT

Tourism, which involves traveling to holy places is one of the most ancient means of transportation in India, but the sacred landscape of Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh is still under-documented in the hospitality literature. The present paper has taken up the subject of the role of the hotel industry in pilgrimage tourism to study the key pilgrimage sites of Rohilkhand and perception of the pilgrims in respect to these sites. The structured questionnaire comprising of twelve 5-point Likert items was administered to 300 pilgrims at Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, Rampur and Pilibhit. Data were analysed using SPSS style analysis which is reliability test (Cronbach's alpha), exploratory factor analysis, one sample t-test, independent samples t-test, one way ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regression. Three dimensions were found (Site richness, accessibility and amenities, promotion and hotel linkage; cumulative variance = 65.3%). In support of H1, the pilgrims rated site richness significantly higher than neutral ($M = 3.88$, $p < .001$), but accessibility and amenities were only marginally higher than neutral ($M = 3.10$). Women rated accessibility and amenities as lower than men ($p = .009$) and overall satisfaction was not different across religion and the three dimensions together accounted for 45.4% of the variance in overall satisfaction. The results showed that the pilgrimage capital of Rohilkhand is acknowledged but inadequately served and the hotels, promotion and basic amenities are the levers that can change the pilgrimage source into a satisfied and repeat pilgrim

1. INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage tourism is a type of tourism that involves travelling to holy sites for religious or spiritual purposes, and is one of the oldest forms of tourism. In addition to the spiritual needs it fulfills, it also helps in establishing the destination economy by providing accommodation, transportation, food and guiding services and creates cultural exchange between pilgrims from different backgrounds (Raj & Morpeth, 2007; Sinha, 2012). The practice is rooted in a dense sacred geography of shrines, dargahs, temples, ashramas, churches and monasteries, which has been described across religions (Sharma, 2012; Jones & Ryan, 2007). Rohilkhand is a region in the north-western part of Uttar Pradesh, consisting of the districts and cities of Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, Rampur and Pilibhit. Known as the upper Ganges plain, it lies along the regional upper Ganges and is a multi-layered region with a Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Christian and Buddhist heritage (Khan, 2014). The Dargah of Ala Hazrat, Trivati Nath and Alakhnath temples, Jagannath Temple and St Alphonsus Cathedral are located in Bareilly; the city of Badaun is known for its Sufi saints; the Sai Temple, Parshvanath Digambar Jain Mandir and Jama Masjid are in Moradabad and the Raghunath Temple, Lavi trade fair are in Rampur. Pilibhit adds the Gauri Shankar Temple and a tiger reserve that links spiritual and ecological tourism (Sharma, 2016). Yet, this tradition, although widely recognized, is not usually followed in the region itself. National and regional studies focus on Varanasi, Ayodhya, Mathura and Vrindavan (Gupta, 2010; Gupta & Nair, 2021; Chauhan, 2016) and the evidence for the Rohilkhand is limited to a few studies on Bareilly and Pilibhit (Ahmad, 2013; Rai, 2018; Sharma, 2016). In the meantime, numerous hotels and guesthouses have sprung up around the major shrines (Jaiswal, 2015), and their ability to accommodate pilgrims will depend on the status of knowledge, access, equipment and promotion of the shrines themselves.

The study, therefore, focuses on the key pilgrimage sites of Rohilkhand region from the demand side which can be of relevance to the hotel industry: evaluation of the significance and number of these sites, ease and amenity of access,...

1. promotion and accommodation around these sites by the pilgrims who actually visit these sites. Four contributions follow. Firstly, the paper implements site perception as a twelve item Likert instrument. Second, it confirms a three dimensional perception. Third, it examines four hypotheses related to site richness, gender, religion and satisfaction. Fourth, it converts the results into priorities for hoteliers and destination managers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Pilgrimage Tourism And The Socio-Economic Landscape

Tourism is an important and vast industry in India and pilgrimage tourism is an integral part of it, which contributes to revenue generation and employment generation in the country (Sinha, 2012; Kumar, 2019). Further, Gupta and Bhardwaj (2018) document a continuing trend of growth due to improved infrastructure facilities and government efforts, while Kumar and Smith (2022) consider sacred spaces to be both economic and sociological assets. Research on individual temples has been done which has established that pilgrimage affects the incomes of the residents of the temples, services provided by them, and the use of land (Addanki & Parashar, 2023); and Gupta and Nair (2021) have demonstrated how the image of a temple can be reconstructed by active management in Vrindavan. The above-mentioned Himalayan evidence suggests that there are common constraints for pilgrimage growth, especially transport, services, and environmental pressure (Bathla et al., 2024). In the light of this literature, the challenge that persists is the quality of the visit, as Shinde (2007) has documented at a pilgrimage centre (overcrowding and inadequate facilities) and Singh and Rana (2014) and Singh (2020) have identified similar issues in Uttar Pradesh and India.

2.2 Rohilkhand: heritage, sites and economy

Khan (2014) says that Rohilkhand is culturally rich and demographically diverse while Sharma (2016) mentions Dargah-e-Aala Hazrat in Bareilly and the Gauri Shankar Temple in Pilibhit as important places. Ahmad (2013) and Rai (2018) attempt to associate religious tourism in Bareilly with economic development in the area while Chauhan (2016) provides a bird's eye view of pilgrim tourism in Uttar Pradesh. Such regional circuits are discussed in the wider Indian context in general works on sacred sites and holy places (Smith, 2019; Kapoor, 2018; Mehta, 2017; Sharma, 2015; Bhatia, 2002). Combined these sources indicate that there are significant numbers of sites of heritage value in the region. However, they do not include questions about the number and variety of sites as sufficient to the pilgrim's perception. This is the motivation for the first hypothesis.

H1: Pilgrims' perception of site richness (number, faith diversity, heritage value and recognition) is significantly above the neutral scale midpoint.

2.3 Accessibility, amenities and the role of hotels

The happiness of the pilgrim is based on what is around the shrine. According to Jaiswal (2015) some accommodation facilities are responsible for access to pilgrimage in Rohilkhand and the budget hotel and guest house segment has made pilgrimages more affordable. Hotels provide direct and indirect employment and indulge in procuring locally (Dasgupta, 2017; Ghosh, 2019). However, their performance is limited due to seasonality (Pandey, 2019) and competition, which requires a continuous improvement in service (Singh, 2020). Verma (2020) finds that sustainable practices are present in hotels in Pilibhit, Kumar (2021) examines the importance of digital marketing, and Mishra (2020) states that public private partnerships are a way of improving infrastructure and services. The attributes of safety and sanitation and crowd management are not neutral attributes—groups of visitors, and especially women, are likely to experience them differently. We therefore propose:

H2: Men and women differ significantly in their perception of accessibility and amenities at the pilgrimage sites.

2.4 Inclusiveness of the sacred landscape

Hindu temples, Sufi shrines, a Jain temple and a cathedral are part of the Rohilkhand sites, some of which are themselves markers of shared heritage, like the Lakshmi Narayan Temple constructed by a Muslim patron (Khan, 2014; Smith, 2020). When the sacred landscape is truly plural, the pilgrims of its various faiths should see its splendor in like language. Hence:

H3: Perception of site richness does not differ significantly across the religions of the respondents.

2.5 Drivers of satisfaction and conceptual framework

The key measure that matters to hoteliers is satisfaction, and from that comes advocacy, which leads to repeat visits and referrals. Based on literature review above, three factors are expected to contribute to the success; richness of the site portfolio (Jaiswal, 2015; Kumar, 2021; Mishra, 2020; Shinde, 2007); access and amenities; promotion and accommodation to connect sites with hotels and circuits (Jaiswal, 2015; Kumar, 2021; Mishra, 2020; Shinde, 2007). The result is the framework shown in Figure 1, and the final hypothesis is presented.

H4: Site richness, accessibility and amenities, and promotion and hotel linkage each have a significant positive effect on overall pilgrim satisfaction.

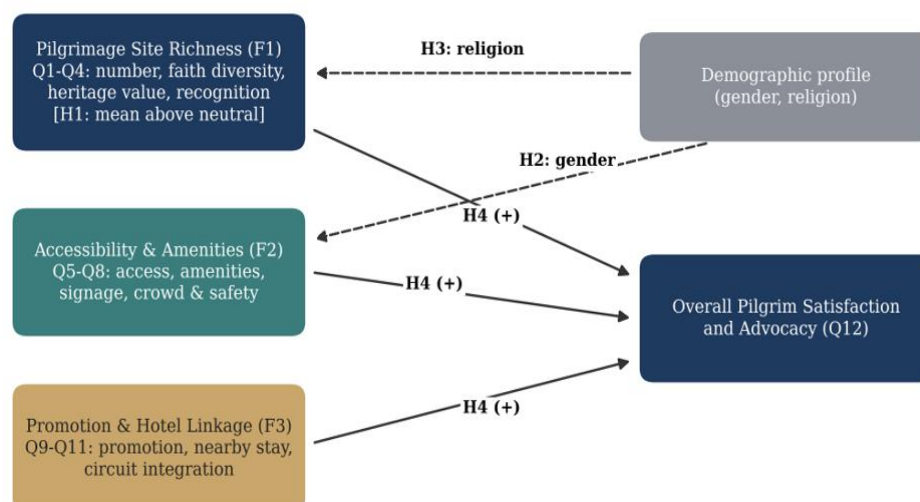


Figure 1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and study area

A cross sectional descriptive and analytical survey design was used. The paper presents the pilgrim survey which aims to study the key pilgrimage sites in Rohilkhand region and to test the hypothesis that the Rohilkhand region has a good number of pilgrimage sites along with three hypothesis as supplementary. The study area is the five Rohilkhand centres of Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, Rampur and Pilibhit.

3.2 Sample and sampling

According to the synopsis, the sample of pilgrims should at least be 300, the number resulted after the convenience sampling at religious sites and nearby hotels. The last sample consists of 300 individuals distributed in the districts as Bareilly (120), Moradabad (60), Pilibhit (50), Badaun (40) and Rampur (30). There were adult visitors to a religious or spiritual site who were asked to respond. All participation was anonymous, all respondents were asked for informed consent, and all respondents were able to opt out of the study at any time during the study, consistent with the ethical requirements of the synopsis.

3.3 Instrument

There were two sections of the questionnaire. Part A had eight demographic and visit characteristics, namely, gender, age, religion, education, household income in a month, place from which the visit was made, frequency of visit and the district visited. Part B consisted of 12 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Site richness questions (Q1-Q4); Accessibility and Amenities (Q5-Q8); Promotion and hotel linkage (Q9-Q11); Overall satisfaction and advocacy (Q12). The wording of each item is given in Table 2.

3.4 Data analysis

The analyses used in SPSS were performed in the following order: (i) frequencies for the demographic profile, (ii) item descriptives (skewness and kurtosis), (iii) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) and Bartlett's test, to determine dimensionality, (iv) one-sample t-test against neutral value of 3 for H1, (v) independent-samples t-test with Levene's test for H2, (vi) one-way ANOVA for H3, and (vii) Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression for H4. The significance level: 5%. The average of the scores on the items is the construct score. Along with significance tests, effect sizes (Cohen's d and eta squared) are reported.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 and Figure 2 summarise the sample. The figures for men were 57.3% while for women the figure was 42.7%. The majority of the respondents were between the age of 25-44 (53.7%) and 78.0% of them were graduates or post graduates. Two of the largest religions in the area were Hinduism (56.7%) and Islam (29.0%) which is reflected by the predominant shrines in the region, with Christianity and other religious groups belonging to Jain, Buddhist and Sikh faiths combined representing 14.3%. 28% of pilgrims hails from within Rohilkhand, 36% from the rest of UP and 36% from other states while 31.0% were first timers. Bareilly had 40% of the interviews as it is home to significant shrines.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 300)

Variable / category	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	172	57.3
Female	128	42.7
Age (years)		
Below 25	42	14.0
25-34	81	27.0
35-44	80	26.7
45-54	60	20.0
55 and above	37	12.3
Religion		
Hindu	170	56.7
Muslim	87	29.0
Christian	15	5.0
Others (Jain/Buddhist/Sikh)	28	9.3
Education		
Up to higher secondary	66	22.0
Graduate	132	44.0
Postgraduate and above	102	34.0
Monthly household income (INR)		
Below 20,000	72	24.0
20,000-40,000	99	33.0
40,001-60,000	72	24.0
Above 60,000	57	19.0
Place of origin		
Within Rohilkhand	84	28.0
Rest of Uttar Pradesh	108	36.0
Other states	108	36.0
Frequency of visit		
First visit	93	31.0
2-3 visits	123	41.0
4 or more visits	84	28.0
District visited		
Bareilly	120	40.0
Moradabad	60	20.0
Badaun	40	13.3
Rampur	30	10.0
Pilibhit	50	16.7

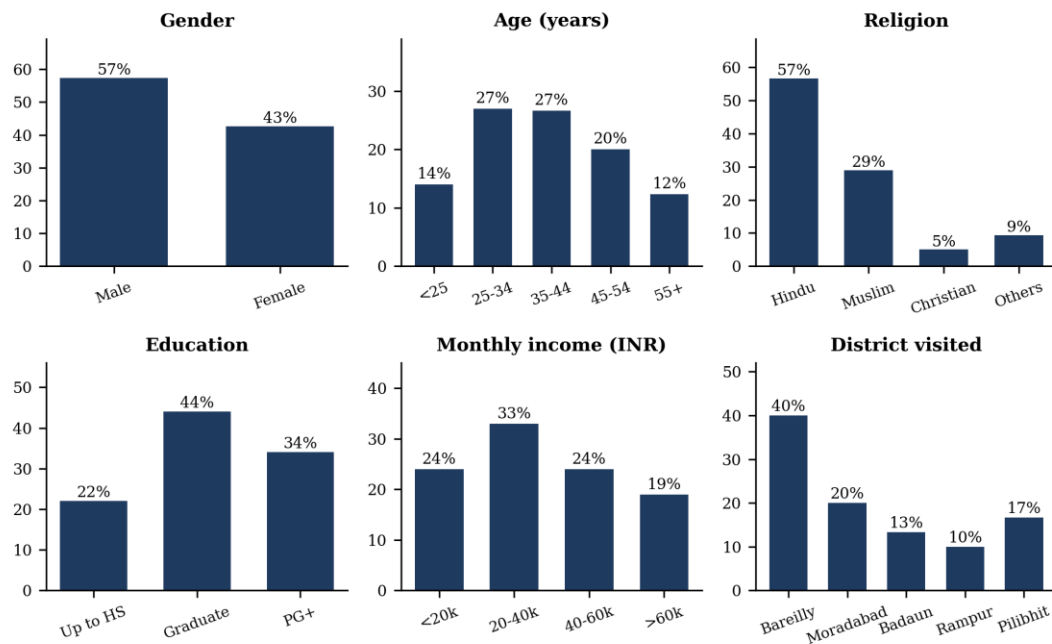


Figure 2. Demographic profile of respondents (percent of N = 300)

4.2 Descriptive analysis of Likert items

The results on an item level are displayed in Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4.

Table 2. Item-wise descriptive statistics

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Skew.	Kurt.	% Agree (4-5)	% Disagree (1-2)
Q1	Rohilkhand has a good number of pilgrimage sites	3.81	0.91	-0.40	-0.49	66.0	8.7
Q2	The sites represent diverse faiths and traditions	3.94	0.94	-0.58	-0.32	70.0	7.7
Q3	The sites hold high historical and cultural value	4.08	0.90	-0.74	0.03	75.3	5.0
Q4	The sites are well known among pilgrims beyond the region	3.69	1.01	-0.37	-0.53	58.7	12.3
Q5	The sites are easily accessible by road and rail	3.30	1.02	-0.16	-0.45	42.7	21.0
Q6	Drinking water, sanitation and basic amenities are adequate	2.95	0.97	0.00	-0.26	27.0	30.3
Q7	Signage and information about the sites are adequate	2.99	0.96	0.24	-0.54	29.7	33.7
Q8	Crowd management and safety arrangements are satisfactory	3.14	0.95	-0.13	-0.49	37.7	25.7
Q9	Tourism promotion of the sites is adequate	3.38	0.97	-0.08	-0.41	43.7	16.7
Q10	Quality accommodation is available near the sites	3.60	0.96	-0.24	-0.38	53.7	11.3
Q11	The sites are integrated into pilgrimage circuits and packages	3.41	1.01	-0.16	-0.55	47.0	18.3
Q12	Overall, I am satisfied and would recommend these sites	3.58	0.92	-0.21	-0.33	53.3	10.7

Note: Scale 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; N = 300 for all items.

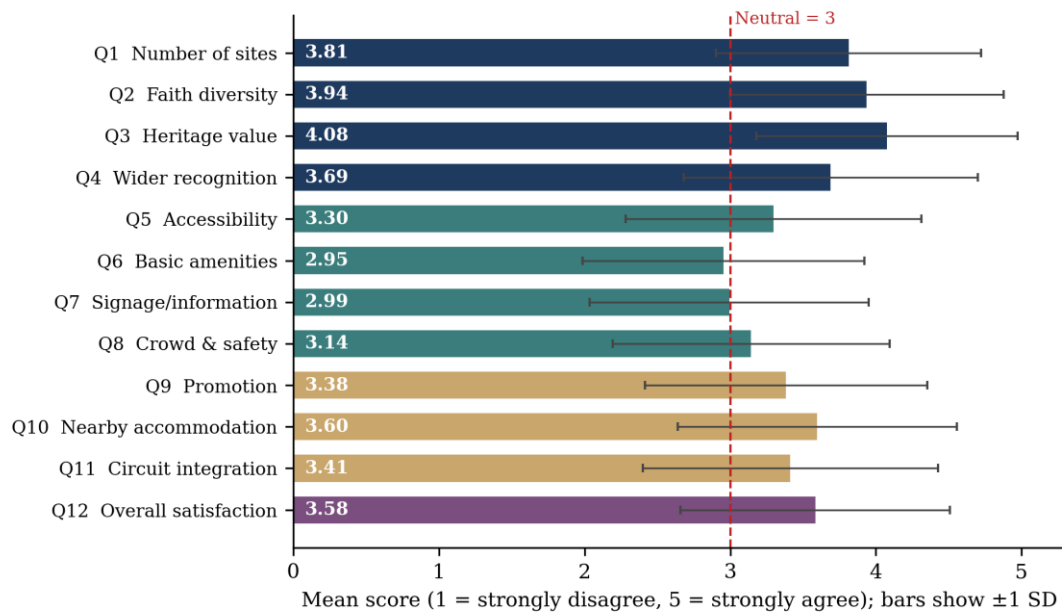


Figure 3. Mean scores of the twelve Likert items

The range of all twelve means is 4.08 – 2.95. The respondents were most favourable on the sites regarding their heritage value (Q3, M = 4.08; 75.3% agreement) and their faith diversity (Q2, M = 3.94), and least favourable on basic amenities (Q6, M = 2.95; 30.3% disagreement) and signage (Q7, M = 2.99). These extremes are shaded by nearby accommodation (Q10, M = 3.60) and circuit integration (Q11, M = 3.41). The skewness and kurtosis values are all within ± 1 , which means the data are reasonably normal for the parametric tests used later.

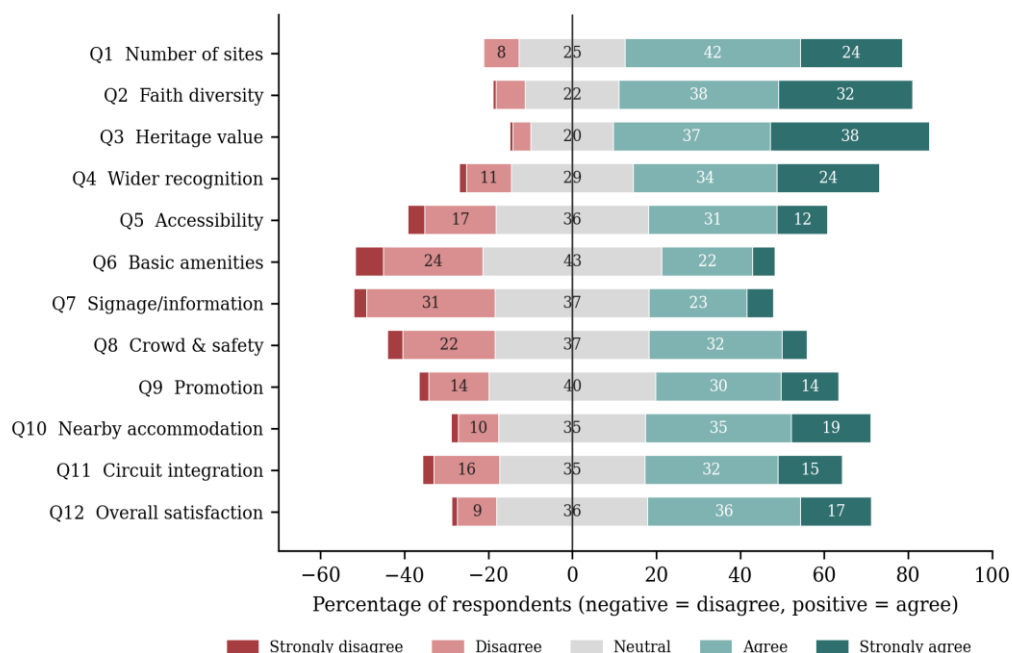


Figure 4. Response distribution of the twelve Likert items (percent)

4.3 Reliability and dimensionality

The correlation matrix of Q1-Q11 was suitable for factoring (KMO = 0.832; Bartlett's chi-square = 1085.5, df = 55, $p < .001$). The results of the PCA with varimax rotation were three components with eigenvalues greater than one (3.85, 1.93

and 1.40) that account for 65.3% of the variance. There was no cross-loading or any item loaded at .70 or higher on the intended component that exceeded .23 (Table 3). All of the 12 item scale (0.837) and the separate scales for site richness (0.833), accessibility and amenities (0.806) and promotion and hotel linkage (0.725) were above the .70 threshold.

Table 3. Factor loadings (varimax rotated), communalities and reliability

Item	F1 Site richness	F2 Access & amenities	F3 Promotion & hotel	Communality
Q1 Number of sites	0.799	0.193	0.128	0.693
Q2 Faith diversity	0.819	0.069	0.078	0.682
Q3 Heritage value	0.791	0.083	0.107	0.644
Q4 Wider recognition	0.808	0.066	0.075	0.662
Q5 Accessibility	0.044	0.808	0.118	0.669
Q6 Basic amenities	0.142	0.734	0.219	0.607
Q7 Signage and information	0.164	0.753	0.085	0.601
Q8 Crowd management and safety	0.099	0.805	0.108	0.669
Q9 Promotion	0.012	0.198	0.800	0.680
Q10 Nearby accommodation	0.174	0.095	0.737	0.582
Q11 Circuit integration	0.161	0.114	0.808	0.692
Eigenvalue (rotated SS loadings)	2.702	2.522	1.956	
% of variance	24.6	22.9	17.8	65.3 (cum.)
Cronbach's alpha	0.833	0.806	0.725	0.812 (11 items)

Note: Extraction: principal components. KMO = 0.832; Bartlett $\chi^2(55) = 1085.5$, $p < .001$. Q12 (overall satisfaction) is analysed as the outcome variable.

4.4 Hypothesis testing

H1: Site richness against the neutral value

Table 4 shows each construct to be compared to the scale midpoint value of 3. Site richness has a mean of 3.88 (SD = 0.77), significantly above neutral, $t(299) = 19.84$, $p < .001$, with a large effect ($d = 1.15$). H1 is supported. The extent to which the promotion and hotel linkage is favourable is also high ($M = 3.46$, $d = 0.59$). By contrast, accessibility and amenities is just above neutral ($M = 3.10$, $p = 0.031$, $d = 0.12$), a difference that is statistically significant, but not practically meaningful.

Table 4. One-sample t-test against the neutral value of 3 (H1)

Construct	Mean	SD	t (df = 299)	p	Mean diff.	95% CI	Cohen's d
Pilgrimage site richness	3.88	0.77	19.84	< .001	0.88	[0.79, 0.97]	1.15
Accessibility and amenities	3.10	0.77	2.16	.031	0.10	[0.01, 0.18]	0.12
Promotion and hotel linkage	3.46	0.79	10.22	< .001	0.46	[0.38, 0.55]	0.59
Overall satisfaction	3.58	0.92	10.94	< .001	0.58	[0.48, 0.69]	0.63

Note: Test value = 3. Construct scores are item means.

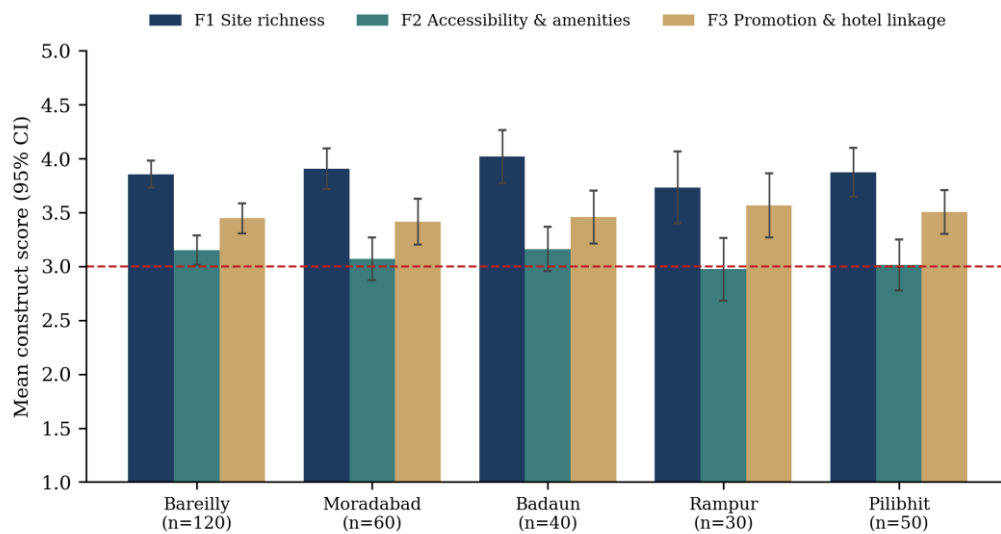


Figure 5. Construct means by district visited with 95% confidence intervals (dashed line = neutral value)

H2: Gender differences

The equal variances test was conducted on all constructs and showed that there was not a significant difference ($p > .05$). As Table 5 shows, men ($M = 3.20$) rated accessibility and amenities higher than women ($M = 2.96$), $t(298) = 2.65$, $p = 0.009$, with a mean difference of 0.24 (95% CI [0.06, 0.41]) and a small-to-moderate effect ($d = 0.31$). No gender difference is observed with regard to site richness or with regard to the promotion and hotel linkage. H2 is supported.

Table 5. Independent-samples t-test by gender (H2)

Construct	Male (n = 172) M (SD)	Female (n = 128) M (SD)	Levene F (p)	t (df = 298)	p	Mean diff. [95% CI]	D
Site richness	3.90 (0.78)	3.85 (0.76)	0.48 (.491)	0.57	.566	0.05 [-0.12, 0.23]	0.07
Accessibility and amenities	3.20 (0.78)	2.96 (0.75)	0.20 (.653)	2.65	.009	0.24 [0.06, 0.41]	0.31
Promotion and hotel linkage	3.45 (0.78)	3.48 (0.80)	0.34 (.560)	-0.33	.743	-0.03 [-0.21, 0.15]	-0.04

Note: Two-tailed tests; equal variances assumed on the basis of Levene's test.

H3: Differences across religions

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a difference in site richness between the four groups, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other-faith ($M = 3.92, 3.87, 3.62$ and 3.78 , respectively). The difference was not significant, $F(3, 296) = 0.94$, $p = 0.420$, $\eta^2 = 0.009$ (Table 6). The level of accessibility and promotion also did not differ based on religion. Thus, the shared sense of sacred richness of the region is accepted as a null hypothesis, and the interpretation does not differ among religions.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA by religion (H3)

Construct	SS between	SS within	df (b, w)	F	p	η^2
Site richness	1.668	174.514	3, 296	0.943	.420	0.009
Accessibility and amenities	0.258	178.689	3, 296	0.142	.934	0.001
Promotion and hotel linkage	1.071	184.217	3, 296	0.574	.633	0.006

Note: Levene's test non-significant for all constructs ($p > .05$); post-hoc tests were therefore not required.

H4: Correlation and regression

Table 7. Pearson correlation matrix of constructs

Construct	F1	F2	F3	Q12
F1 Site richness	1			
F2 Access & amenities	0.277**	1		
F3 Promotion & hotel	0.277**	0.347**	1	
Q12 Satisfaction	0.469**	0.517**	0.490**	1

Note: $p < .01$ (two-tailed). $N = 300$.

All constructs are positively and significantly correlated (Table 7) and the three antecedents are moderately inter-correlated ($r = 0.28 - 0.35$). The multiple regression in Table 8 is significant, $F(3, 296) = 81.97$, $p < .001$, with $R^2 = 0.454$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.448$). Each antecedent has a significant positive effect: accessibility and amenities ($\beta = 0.333$), site richness ($\beta = 0.296$) and promotion and hotel linkage ($\beta = 0.292$). Multicollinearity and autocorrelation are not a problem as the variance inflation factors are less than 1.2 and Durbin-Watson is 1.90. H4 is supported.

Table 8. Multiple regression predicting overall satisfaction (Q12) (H4)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	-0.215	0.250		-0.86	.392	
F1 Site richness	0.356	0.055	0.296	6.48	< .001	1.13
F2 Access & amenities	0.398	0.056	0.333	7.13	< .001	1.18
F3 Promotion & hotel	0.342	0.055	0.292	6.24	< .001	1.18

Note: $R^2 = 0.454$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.448$; $F(3, 296) = 81.97$, $p < .001$; Durbin-Watson = 1.90.

Summary of hypothesis tests

H1 (site richness above neutral): supported. H2 (gender difference in accessibility and amenities): supported. H3 (no religious difference in site richness): retained. H4 (three antecedents predict satisfaction): supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The contrast of assets and services is the main result. Pilgrims highly agree with the synopsis hypothesis that the region has a reasonable number of pilgrimage centres ($M = 3.88$), and on the descriptive literature it has a positive attitude towards the heritage of the area (Khan, 2014; Sharma, 2016; Chauhan, 2016). However, the same pilgrims are not very far from neutral in their views on accessibility and amenities ($M = 3.10$) and score below the midpoint for basic amenities and signage at item level. This replicates the overcrowding and poor facilities identified by Shinde (2007) at a pilgrimage centre and links to poor infrastructure observed by Bathla et al. (2024) and Singh and Rana (2014) on a regional level. Gender gap in accessibility and amenities ($d = 0.31$) is the most policy-relevant of the group differences. The most gender-specific are the items sanitation, safety and crowd management, with the result indicating that Rohilkhand's sites are perceived less comfortable for women, despite having other perceptions of site similar. Views on site richness are the same across religious groups, pointing in the other direction: the plural character of the landscape – the presence of Hindu temples, Sufi shrines, Jain and Christian places of worship – seems to be understood across faiths. For those in the hotel business, that means that multi-faith and inclusive branding is believable and does not have to appeal only to one community.

A managerial reading is added to the regression. What pilgrims find (site richness, $\beta = 0.30$); how they access and utilize the sites ($\beta = 0.33$); and how it is promoted and housed ($\beta = 0.29$) are equally important factors that explain satisfaction. The dimension with the lowest ratings is accessibility and amenities for which the largest coefficient is found, which means that improvement in that dimension has the highest marginal return. The presence of budget hotels and guesthouses, as reported by Jaiswal (2015), and the benefits of employment and local sourcing, as mentioned by Dasgupta (2017) and Ghosh (2019), were reflected in the moderately positive views of pilgrims with regard to the nearby accommodation (Q10, $M = 3.60$) and circuit integration (Q11, $M = 3.41$). Promotion was rated modestly only (Q9, $M = 3.38$), confirming the argument of digital marketing (Kumar, 2021) and the role of public-private partnership for infrastructure and services (Mishra, 2020). The seasonal and competitive situation (Pandey, 2019; Singh, 2020) will also curb the investment of hotels without any assistance, further emphasizing the need for a partnership.

6. CONCLUSION

The study finds that the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh has a definite tourism potential for pilgrimage as well as hotel industry development. Pilgrims had a strong sense of the diversity of religious sites, cultural diversity and historical

significance of the area, evidenced by the high mean score for site richness. But other basic facilities like accessibility, sanitation, signage and safety were comparatively lower-rated, suggesting that the tourism infrastructure has not grown in the same manner as the religious assets in the area. Overall, there is a noticeable difference in perception of accessibility and amenities between men and women, which also indicates increased need for making facilities more inclusive, especially in terms of safety and comfort for women pilgrims. On the other hand, the lack of significant differences among the religious groups shows that the pilgrimage scenario in Rohilkhand has a multi-faith character that is known by visitors from different religious groups in general. The regression results also indicate that the site richness, accessibility and amenities, and promotion and hotel linkage are significant factors affecting overall pilgrim satisfaction. Thus, enhancements to transport links, sanitation, information infrastructure, crowd management, and digital marketing and quality hotel offerings can bolster the pilgrimage experience. The promotion of tourism in greater cooperation among the tourism industry, local administration, religious institutions and hotel operators can make Rohilkhand a more structured, accessible and competitive tourist attraction.

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