



A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON SATISFACTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS IN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Tourism is seen as an engine of development, catalyst to economic prosperity of a country. Tourism refreshes the mind, brings happiness, relaxation, enjoyment and gives new experience to the tourists. Tourism ensures an all round growth through economic multiplier effect which percolates to various stake-holding sectors like the airlines, railways, surface transport, cruises, hotels, telecommunication and so on. The explanatory factor analysis has identified the assurance, responsiveness, reliability; tangibility and responsibility which are the prominent service quality dimensions for domestic tourism. The regression analysis shows that the service quality dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability and responsibility have the positive impact on satisfaction of domestic tourists. It is necessary to be a kind of co-operation between tourism departments and tourism private sector in the fields of tourism safety and tourism crisis management for improving TServiceQuality in Tamil Nadu.

Key Words: *Exploratory Factor Analysis, Regression, Service Quality, Tourists.*

Introduction

Tourism is seen as an engine of development, catalyst to economic prosperity of a country. Tourism refreshes the mind, brings happiness, relaxation, enjoyment and gives new experience to the tourists. Tourism ensures an all round growth through economic multiplier effect which percolates to various stake-holding sectors like the airlines, railways, surface transport, cruises, hotels, telecommunication and so on. Tourism is not only a growth engine but also an employment generator. The importance of tourism as a creator of job opportunities can be understood from the fact that in India every one million invested in tourism creates 47.50 jobs directly and around 85-90 jobs indirectly. Tourism is an important sector of Indian economy and contributes substantially in the country's Foreign Exchange Earnings. FEEs from tourism, in terms of rupees, during 2014 was Rs.94,673 crore, with a growth of 19.80 %. The domestic tourist visits during the year 2013 are 945 million, showing a growth of 13.86%.

From a service sector, tourism has emerged as a leading export industry like the Gems and Jewellery Industry, Information Technology and Engineering Products. Therefore, priority is accorded by both Central and State governments to give a major fillip to tourism sector. A new thrust is being given for providing tourist infrastructure of international standard and marketing of destinations. Tourism in the past was regarded as a religious or leisure activity. Now, the improved connectivity, quality roads and easy access to tourist attractions and e-booking have made travel easier. Monotony of work, stressful lifestyle, and desire to explore new places have necessitated travel and tourism. The free trade and open-sky aviation policies have also contributed to tourism growth. The pace of growth in recent times has left the infrastructural facilities and availability of human resources lagging behind, thereby leaving a challenge to match the growth and have futuristic and perspective plans in place.

Tamil Nadu is a state in the south-eastern part of the Indian Peninsula. One of the four Dravidian states of India, it has had more than 4,000 years of continuous cultural history. Tamil Nadu has some of the most remarkable temple architecture in the country, and a living tradition of music, dance, folk arts and fine arts. Tamil Nadu is well renowned for its temple towns and heritage sites, hill stations, waterfalls, national parks, local cuisine and the fabulous wildlife and scenic beauty. The state boasts the second largest tourism industry in India with an annual growth rate of 18%. Tamil Nadu occupied the second slot in the country in terms of domestic as well as foreign arrivals. With this backdrop, the present study is attempted to identify the service quality dimensions and its impact on satisfaction of domestic tourists in Tamil Nadu.

Model And Hypothesis

The model and hypothesis for the present study is as follows

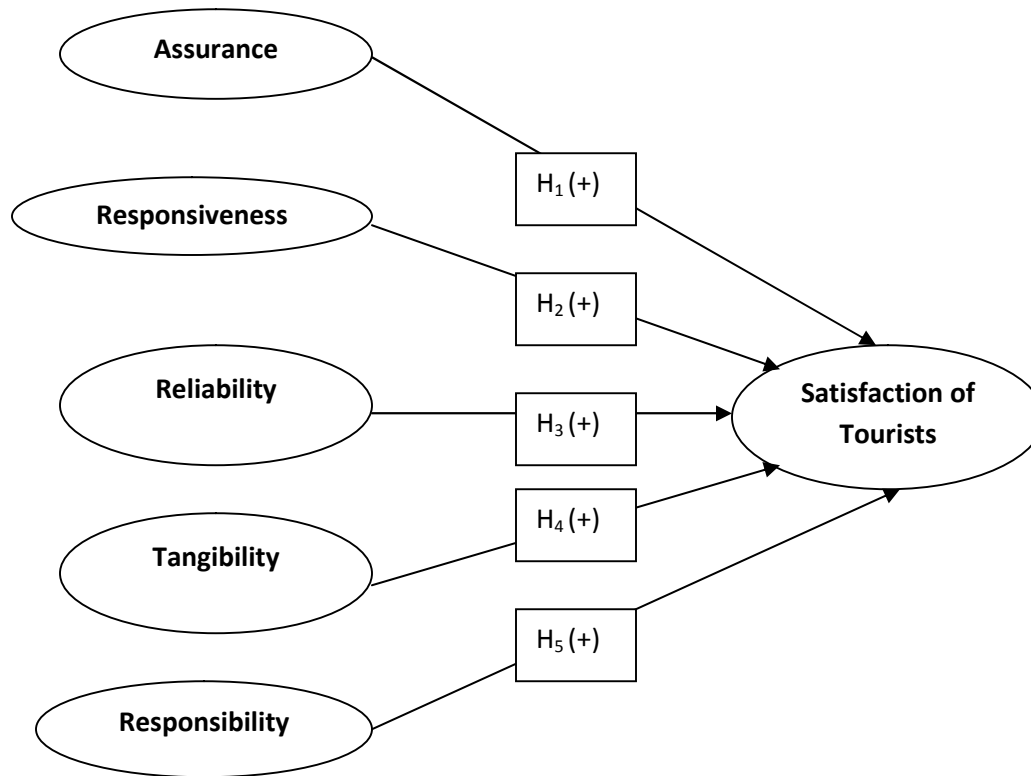


Figure 1 , Research Model of Service Quality in Domestic Tourism

Research Methodology

Among the different states in Indian tourism map, the Tamil Nadu state has been purposively selected for the present study. 300 domestic tourists have been selected by adopting random sampling technique and the data and information pertain to the year 2015-2016. In terms of measurement scale, service quality items for domestic tourism are measured in the form of five point Likert scale.

In order to understand the socio-economic status of domestic tourists, frequency and percentage analysis are carried out. In order to identify the service quality dimensions for domestic tourism, exploratory factor analysis has been employed. In order to examine the impact of service quality dimensions on satisfaction of domestic tourists, multiple linear regression model has been employed.

Results And Discussion

Socio-Economic Status Of Domestic Tourists

The socio-economic status of domestic tourists was analyzed and the results are presented in Table 1. The results show that about 67.33 per cent of the domestic tourists are males while the rest of 32.67 per cent of them are females. The results indicate that about 71.33 per cent of the domestic tourists are married and the rest of 28.67 per cent of them are unmarried.

It is observed that about 46.00 per cent of the domestic tourists belong to the age group of 31-40 years followed by 21-30 years (35.33 per cent), more than 40 years (11.67 per cent) and less than 20 years (7.00 per cent). It is clear that about 42.00 per cent of the domestic tourists are graduates followed by higher secondary education (28.00 per cent), post graduation (17.33 per cent) and secondary education (12.67 per cent).

It is apparent that about 40.67 per cent of domestic tourists are employed in Government sector followed by private sector (26.33 per cent), business (18.67 per cent) and MNCs (14.33 per cent). The results reveal that about 44.67 per cent of the domestic tourists belong to the monthly income group of Rs.15,001 – Rs.20,000 followed by below Rs.15,000 (26.33 per cent), Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000 (16.00 per cent) and above Rs.30,000 (13.00 per cent).

Table 1, Socio-Economic Status of Domestic Tourists

Personal Profile	Domestic Tourists (N = 300)		Personal Profile	Domestic Tourists (N = 300)	
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	202	67.33	Married	214	71.33
Female	98	32.67	Unmarried	86	28.67
Age Group			Educational Qualification		
Below 20 years	21	7.00	Secondary	38	12.67
21 – 30 years	106	35.33	Higher Secondary	84	28.00
31 – 40 years	138	46.00	Graduation	126	42.00
Above 40 years	35	11.67	Post Graduation	52	17.33
Occupation			Monthly Income		
Business	56	18.67	Below Rs.15,000	79	26.33
Government	122	40.67	Rs.15,001 – Rs.20,000	134	44.67
Private	79	26.33	Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	48	16.00
MNCs	43	14.33	Above Rs.30,000	39	13.00

Source: Primary Data

Identification of Service Quality Dimensions For Domestic Tourism

In order to identify the service quality dimensions for domestic tourism, exploratory factor analysis has been employed. The principal component method of factor analysis was carried out with Eigen values greater than one through Varimax Rotation and the results obtained through rotated component matrix are presented in Table 2. The results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO test) measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.710) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-square Value = 0.0012; Significance = 0.000) indicates that the factor analysis method is appropriate.

There are five independent groups which are extracted accounting for a total of 72.12 per cent of variations on 19 service quality items. Each of the five factors contributes to 19.87 per cent, 16.59 per cent, 13.94 per cent, 11.40 per cent and 10.32 per cent respectively.

Table 2, Factors Affecting Service Quality In Domestic Tourism-Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor	Item	Rotated Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% of Variation	Factor Name
I	Being served by the appropriate personnel	0.80	1.96	19.87	Assurance
	Fluent and understandable communication with tourists	0.76			
	Experienced and competent tour and hotel escorts	-0.70			
	Reinforcement of tourists' confidence	0.80			
II	Prompt response to tourists' requests	0.76	1.84	16.59	Responsiveness
	Provision of information on local entertainment	-0.70			
	Willingness to help tourists; and advice on how to use free time	0.66			
	Provision of adequate information about the service delivered	0.59			
III	Meeting the tour schedule	0.72	1.62	13.94	Reliability
	Keeping promises	0.68			
	No sudden increase in tour cost	-0.64			

	Insisting on error-free service	0.82			
IV	Availability of information documents and notes	-0.74	1.25	11.40	Tangibility
	Physical appearance of tour and hotel escorts	0.62			
	Appealing accommodation facilities	-0.70			
	Modern and technologically relevant vehicles	0.68			
V	Pleasant, friendly personnel	0.63	1.14	10.32	Responsibility
	Understanding of specific needs	0.72			
	Cultivation of friendly relationship	0.62			
	Cumulative % of Variation	-	-	72.12	-
	Cronbach's Alpha	-	-	-	0.84

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Factor - I: From the table, it is inferred that out of 19 service quality items, four variables have their high, relatively tightly grouped factor loadings on factor - I and it accounts for 19.87 per cent of the variance.

This factor consists of:

- Being served by the appropriate personnel (0.80)
- Fluent and understandable communication with tourists (0.76)
- Experienced and competent tour and hotel escorts (0.70)
- Reinforcement of tourists' confidence (0.80)

Hence, this factor is named as "**ASSURANCE**".

Factor - II: is formed with the following items and it contributes to 16.59 per cent of variance.

- Prompt response to tourists' requests (0.76)
- Provision of information on local entertainment (-0.70)
- Willingness to help tourists; and advice on how to use free time (0.66)
- Provision of adequate information about the service delivered (0.59)

These four variables are named as "**RESPONSIVENESS**".

Factor - III: This factor includes the following variable and it accounts 13.94 per cent of variation.

- Meeting the tour schedule (0.72)
- Keeping promises (0.68)
- No sudden increase in tour cost (-0.64)
- Insisting on error-free service (0.82)

These four variables are named as "**RELIABILITY**".

Factor - IV: This factor is formed with the following items and it contributes to 11.40 per cent of variation.

- Availability of information documents and notes (-0.74)
- Physical appearance of tour and hotel escorts (0.62)
- Appealing accommodation facilities (-0.70)
- Modern and technologically relevant vehicles (0.68)

These four variables are named as "**TANGIBILITY**".

Factor - V: This factor includes the following variables and it accounts for 10.32 per cent of variation.

- Pleasant, friendly personnel (0.63)

- Understanding of specific needs (0.72)
- Cultivation of friendly relationship (0.62)

These three variables are named as “**RESPONSIBILITY**”.

It is inferred that assurance, responsiveness, reliability, tangibility and responsibility are the service quality dimensions for domestic tourism.

Impact of Service Quality Dimensions On Satisfaction of Domestic Tourists

In order to examine the impact of service quality dimensions on satisfaction of domestic tourists, the multiple linear regression model has been employed and the results are presented in Table 3. In this regression model, tourist satisfaction is considered as dependent variable and service quality dimensions are included as independent variables.

Table 3, Impact Of Service Quality Dimensions On Tourist Satisfaction - Multiple Regression

Service Quality Dimensions	Regression Co-efficients	t - Value	Sig.
Constant	14.164**	6.960	.000
Assurance (X ₁)	3.124**	6.524	.000
Responsiveness (X ₂)	4.136**	6.312	.000
Reliability (X ₃)	4.260**	6.248	.000
Tangibility (X ₄)	1.924	1.126	.524
Responsibility (X ₅)	4.132**	6.454	.000
R ²	0.69	-	-
Adjusted R ²	0.67	-	-
F	16.327	-	0.00
N	300	-	-

Note: ** Significance at one per cent level

It is apparent that there is a strong relationship between service quality dimensions and tourist satisfaction in domestic tourism. The adjusted R² is 0.67 indicating that the regression model is good fit and it indicates that about 67.00 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable of tourist satisfaction is explained by the independent variables of service quality dimensions. The regression model indicates a good fit (F - Value = 16.327 and P - Value = 0.00) between service quality dimensions and tourist satisfaction.

The results show that the service quality dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability and responsibility have the positive impact on satisfaction of domestic tourists at one per cent level of significance. Hence, the null hypotheses of H₁, H₂, H₃ and H₄ are accepted but H₅ is rejected.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis shows that more than two-third of the domestic tourists are males. Most of the domestic tourists are married and the majority of them are middle-age groups. Most of the domestic tourists are graduates and are Government servants. Besides, the majority of the domestic tourists belong to the monthly income group of Rs.15,001 – Rs.20,000. The explanatory factor analysis identified the assurance, responsiveness, reliability; tangibility and responsibility are the service quality dimensions for domestic tourism. The regression analysis shows that the service quality dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability and responsibility have the positive impact on satisfaction of domestic tourists.

Hence, the state tourism department and service providers of tourism should concentrate and improve the service quality dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability and responsibility in order to attract more domestic tourists and in turn it would increase the both direct and indirect employment and revenue generation. It is apparent that state tourism sector needs to gain and maintain a competitive advantage if they are to survive in this highly competitive tourism sector in India. It is imperative to state tourism department should frequently assess their tourist’s perceptions of service quality and develop appropriate policies to meet their tourists’ needs. It is necessary to be a kind of co-operation between tourism departments and tourism private sector in the fields of tourism safety and tourism crisis management for improving TServQual in Tamil Nadu.



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