Tactful Management

A STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI

Alan Vijay. A
Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration ,
Madurai Akmaraj University, Madurai.

ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is a fascinating and ever changing industry. The Tourism Industry includes everything that a traveler does on a trip – eat, sleep, party, attend a conference, rent a car, take a taxi, shop, change foreign currency etc. It means that all of the economic activities of farmers, fishermen, cooks, shopkeepers, bartenders, tour guides, banks, hotels, carnival bands, entertainers, electricians, customs, immigration and literally every job that impacts directly or indirectly on tourism are all part of the tourism value chain. This study aims to investigate the foreign tourists' satisfaction in Madurai. The results from this research show that there is a positive relationship between Tourists' perception of service quality, tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty.

KEYWORDS :tourists' satisfaction, service quality, destination loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction part of Madurai by Wikipedia starts as "Madurai is the administrative headquarters of Madurai District in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The recorded history of the city goes back to the 3rd century B.C, being mentioned by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to India, and Kautilya, a minister of the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya". The city is believed to be of significant antiquity and has been ruled, at different times, by the Early Pandyas, Medieval Cholas, Later

Cholas, Later Pandyas, Madurai Sultanate, Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayaks, Chanda Sahib, Carnatic kingdom, and the British. The city has a number of historical monuments, the Meenakshi Amman Temple and TirumalaiNayak Palace being the most prominent among them. The city celebrates several festivals, the most important being the annual 10-day MeenakshiTirukalyanam festival (also called Chithirai festival), celebrated during April–May, that attracts 1 million visitors. Madurai is also known for Jallikattu, the annual bull taming event celebrated along with the Thai Pongal festival, organised in villages outside the city.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Ministry of Tourism in India reported in 2011 that tourism contributed 6.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Tourism was also responsible for 8.48 percent of the country's total employment. This translated to roughly 53 million jobs and recorded earnings of approximately $10.43 billion. These positive numbers contributed to a growth rate of 24.3 percent compared to previous years. High perceived service quality and tourist satisfaction has been proven to result in increased return rates of customers to a tourism destination. Developing repeated businesses through high quality and satisfaction is critical in destination development. Considering the paramount importance of tourist satisfaction, the present study has been undertaken to measure the tourism service quality and its impact on tourists' satisfaction is measured among the free individual travel tourist in Madurai. The result of this study will guide tourism administrators to make policy decisions to improve tourists' satisfaction and better destination experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In present tourism environment, customer satisfaction has been recognized as an important determinant of success and survival of an organization. When organizations had achieved its desired service level of service quality, organizations must then seek to achieve customer satisfaction. Since customers' satisfaction is so important, the provision of good quality customer service has become a major concern for all tourism service providers. Failure to pay attention to customer perception and satisfaction variables may result in customers' negative evaluation of services. It may lead to un favorable word-of-mouth (Choi & Chu,2000). But if travelers, who are satisfied with the service experience are likely to be repeat customers, to be loyal user, to disseminate positive word-of mouth communications to others (Shu, Crompton &Wilson, 2002).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the demographic profile of Tourists visiting Madurai
2. To understand foreign tourists' satisfactions in Madurai
3. To understand the relationship between Tourism Service Quality Perception and its impact on tourist satisfaction and their loyalty towards the destination (Madurai)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A five point Likert's Scale type Interview Schedule was used to collect the data. The primary data were collected from the Tourists, who visited and experienced the services of any one of the Tourism destination in Madurai. The tourists were selected on the basis of Convenient Sampling Method. The researcher took 200 respondents as sample size. Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation and Karl Pearson Co-efficient of Correlation were used as tools for data analysis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Other than Time and Money constraints, this study is focused only on FIT Travelers. The perception of GIT travelers may vary from the findings of this study. So, the results cannot be generalized.

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFICATION

Based on the Gender, there is 68.4% (106) of Male respondents and 31.4% (94) of Female respondents out of 200 are representing the sample. 33.4% of the respondents are belonging to occupation of doing trade or business and 54% of the respondents are employed in some organizations. About 68.80 of the respondents are belonging to the annual income group are Rs.1000001 to 25, 00000. 32% of the respondents are Post Graduates and 49% of the respondents are Undergraduates.

DATA ANALYSIS

Twenty five attributes related to Tourism Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty were analyzed using Arithmetic Mean and Standard deviation. The result is presented below in the Table 1.1.

TABLE1.1. Tourism Quality Analysis

S.No	Tourism Quality Determinants	Perception Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1	Availability of Reservation facilities	3.83	0.89
2	Accessibility to the location	3.98	-0.56
3	Availability of Air Transport Facilities	4.01	0.34
4	Quality of Airport services	3.84	0.50
5	Transportation availability for tourism destinations	3.55	0.21
6	Cleanliness of buses and vehicles used for transportation	3.14.	0.98
4	Availability of choice of accommodation	4.01	0.89
8	Quality consciousness by the accommodation service providers.	3.99	0.84
9	The prices for accommodation are worthy	4.03	0.32
10	The menu has a good variety of items	4.24	0.44
11	The quality of food is excellent	3.46	1.01
12	Employees are friendly ,courteous and attentive	3.86	0.89
13	The pricing of services is fair and worthy	4.01	0.42
14	The Tourist locations are clean and well maintained	2.12	0.13
15	The Tour Guide has specialized knowledge of the tour subject	4.44	0.06
16	The Tour Guide's Knowledge of foreign languages	4.34	0.11
14	Availability of guide maps in the location	4.48	0.53
18	Availability of entertainment and other facilities	4.56	0.20
19	The local people were friendly and supportive	3.48	0.91
20	Feeling of security in the destination	4.24	0.24
21	Availability different antique items	4.01	0.31
22	Availability of duty free shops	3.98	0.36
23	Facilities for shopping	4.21	0.34
24	My level of satisfaction in the Destination	4.11	0.61
25	Possibility of coming to this destination once again	4.34	0.20
26	Overall Tourism Service Quality Score	3.94	0.11

The most satisfying Tourism Service Quality determinants are Availability of guide maps in the

location (6.48), Availability of entertainment and other facilities (6.56),   The Tour Guides specialized knowledge of the tour subject (6.44) and The Tour Guides Knowledge of foreign languages (6.34). The least satisfied Tourism Service Quality determinants are tourist location cleanliness and maintenance (4.12), cleanliness of buses and vehicles used for transportation (5.14), The quality of food (5.46) and transportation availability to tourism destinations (5.55).

The relationship between Tourism Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Repetition Intensity

The tourism service quality determinants 1to 26 were calculated as a new variable named overall Tourism Service Quality. By using SPSS, the Pearson Co-efficient of correlation is calculated. The result is presented in the following Table 1.2.

S.No	Name of the Variable	Karl Pearson Correlation Co-efficient	P Value
1	Overall Tourism Service Quality- Level of Tourist Satisfaction	0.711	0.000*
2	Overall Tourism Service Quality- Possibility of Coming to this destination once again	0.659	0.000*
3	Level of Tourist Satisfaction - Possibility of Coming to this destination once again	0.678	0.000*

* Denotes significant at 5 % Level.

From the above table it is inferred that there is a strong positive correlation between overall tourism service quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist intention for revisit to tourism destination.

CONCLUSION

This research article has analyzed the tourists' perception on Tourism service quality and its relationship with tourists' satisfaction and loyalty behavior in Madurai. There is an urgent need to improve the tourist locations cleanliness and maintenance, improvement in the cleanliness of buses and vehicles used for transportation, ensuring quality in the food served in the eateries and transportation availability to tourism destinations. The quality in tourism services will increasingly become the pivotal determinant of survival of a tourism destination. Tourism destinations hoping to garner an enduring competitive advantage must develop their own standard of superior customer service, keeping in the mind that customer service is the core component of success. Therefore, the role of Local Administration initiatives towards improving the tourism quality is a vital one for sustainable tourism.

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