AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF TOURIST SATISFACTION OF THE ATHENS OF THE EAST (MADURAI)

Dr. S. Rajamohan, Professor, Alagappa Institute of Management, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India

S. Shyam Sundar, Assistant Professor, AR School of Business, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract: *The purpose of the study is to identify the factors influencing tourist Satisfaction of Madurai. Satisfaction of the tourists is the most important for tourism and hospitality, it is not only for tourism business survival and also provide good image of destination and creating tourist demand for the particular destination , decrease in satisfaction of the tourist may lead tourist downfall of the particular destination. Tourist satisfaction level speaks about the complex of the tourist product and it is quality such as pleasure and recreation, accommodation, food and beverages, transport facilities, amenities and tourism facilitators. Tourist service providers play a vital role on tourist satisfaction. Without support of these tourism products a tourist cannot enjoy the fruitful trip. This research also provides practical insights to measure which of the factors highly influence the satisfaction of the Madurai tourists.*

Key words: Satisfaction, Service Providers, Tourist.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has the potential to stimulate other economic factors through its forward and backward connections with a host of sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, transport, hospitality, education, health, banking, and so on. Expenditure on tourism induces a chain of transactions which requires supply of goods and services from these associated sectors. The consumption demand, originate from tourist expenditure also creates more employment and creates a multiplier effect on the economy. The tourism service providers' main responsibility is to provide recreational facilities, accommodation facilities, hygienic food availability, short travel transportation and some other amenities like currency exchange, guide facilities, shopping facility and safety provisions. The recreational facilities and safety conditions at a place promote the stay of the tourists. Even one day extension of tourist stay has been created multiplier benefit to the business society. Tourist satisfaction plays a vital role for tourism and hospitality business for its long term sustainability. Satisfaction of the

tourist reveals the standard of the tourist product services and the potential of the tourist destination.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess factors influencing the satisfaction of the tourist.
2. To appraise the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards service providers.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research, data are gathered through interviews and questionnaires; questions and answers are based on the Likert scale. In the study examining tourist satisfaction, 385 questionnaires are distributed among the statistical community and obtained responses are analyzed by SPSS software. Disproportionate stratified random sampling technique is used

TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY –DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

Satisfaction of the tourist is a yardstick to measure the tourists positive and negative thought towards tourism destination. The negative thought of tourists are influenced by the tourism industry and tourism service providers. From the tourism service providers point of view, it is very important to know why tourists select or not select Madurai and how the tourists think about the place and their trip. Madurai offers a variety of products and services to attract tourists. The satisfied tourists only continue their visit unless or otherwise they could cut short the trip and return back to home. In order to find out the tourists' satisfaction level towards tourism facilitators' services and their tourism services such as pleasure and recreation facilities, accommodation, food and beverages, transport facilities and amenities, the discriminant analysis has been used.

The tourists are classified into three clusters based on the level of satisfaction they have visited to Madurai. The three identified clusters are satisfied clusters, dissatisfied clusters and they have no opinion on their visit. The next primary question is whether the identified clusters are genuine and each cluster differs from the other significantly and both satisfaction levels play a role in separating tourists into three segments. For this purpose, reliability of the cluster classification and its stability across the samples has to be verified.

TABLE: 1 TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – CLUSTER CLASSIFICATION VALIDITY

Classification Results[a]			Predicted Group Membership			Total
Level of Satisfaction			Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion	
Original	Count	Satisfied	151	72	48	271
		Dissatisfied	15	31	12	58
		No opinion	14	11	31	56
	%	Satisfied	55.7	26.6	17.7	100.0
		Dissatisfied	25.9	53.4	20.7	100.0
		No opinion	25.0	19.6	55.4	100.0
a. 55.3% of original grouped cases correctly classified.						

Source: Primary Data

The discriminant analysis shows that 55.3 percent of classification of clusters is correct and reliable. Therefore, the factors chosen for cluster classification are valid and reliable differentiators / discriminators.

TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – EIGEN VALUES

The Eigen value is the ratio, it shows the ratio of 'between-groups sum of squares' and 'within-groups sum of squares'. It has been used to find out corresponds of the groups' means.

TABLE: 2 TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – EIGEN VALUES

Function	Eigen value	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage	Canonical Correlation
1	.097[a]	77.0	77.0	0.798
2	.029[a]	23.0	100.0	0.168
a. First 2 canonical discriminant functions were used in the analysis.				

Source: Primary Data

The Eigen value is the ratio of 'between-groups sum of squares' and 'within-groups sum of squares'. The largest Eigen value corresponds to the maximum spread of the groups' means. Small Eigen accounts for very little of the total dispersion. The canonical correlation is a tool used to measure the association between discriminant functions and satisfaction. The Wilks Lambda table indicates that both canonical correlations are significant.

Model Fitness

The discriminate model developed is fit because the canonical correlation (0.798) is more than 0.6 out of two model generated, Model one is better than model two due to the highest canonical correlation.

Model Reliability and Significance

The Discriminate model may be built with the dependent and independent variables. The multiple Discriminate model one developed is found to be reliable and significant (P value 0.000 < 0.05) at 5 percent level of significance.

TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – WILKS' LAMBDA

The Wilks Lambda has been used to measure the association between discriminant functions of Madurai tourism industry and tourists satisfaction. Table 3 indicates that Wilks' lambda along with the degrees of freedom to determine the degree of significance.

TABLE: 3 TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – WILKS' LAMBDA

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	d.f	Sig.
1 through 2	.886	46.126	12	.000
2	.972	10.873	5	.045

Source: Primary Data

Wilks' lambda for the first function is 0.886 which indicates that the group means are different in the first function and Wilks lambda for second function is 0.972 which also indicates that group means are different but not to the extent of the first function. A chi-square transformation of Wilks' lambda is used along with the degrees of freedom to determine the degree of significance. The significance value is small for the first function which is 0.000. It indicates that group means differ very much significantly in the first function. The Chi-square value for the second function is 10.873 which are significant by 0.045 levels.

TABLE: 4 TOURISTS SATISFACTION IN THE MADURAI TOURISM INDUSTRY – SIGNIFICANCE OF VARIABLES IN REGRESSION MODEL

Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients		
Preference Based on Tourist Satisfaction Measure	Function	
	1	2
Pleasure and Recreation	0.283	0.817
Accommodation	0.166	-0.493
Food and Beverages	-0.237	-0.295
Transport Facilities	0.761	0.348
Amenities	0.584	0.741
Tourism Facilitators	-0.672	0.434
(Constant)	-2.948	-4.872
Unstandardized coefficients		

Source: Primary Data

As there are three categories, two functions can be formed in the canonical discriminant function coefficients, the table contains co-efficient for the variables. The two domain functions can be written by using co-efficients in the table. The functions are :

$$Z = a + w1 + w2 + w3 + w4 + w5 + w6$$

$$Z = -2.948 + .283 + .166 + -.237 + .761 + .584 + -.672$$

Where a= Constant, w1 = Pleasure and Recreation Facilities, w2 = Accommodation, w3 = Food and Beverages, w4 =Transportation Facilities, w5 = Amenities, w6 = Tourism Facilitators

The model reveals that, the classification of groups is highly influenced by transportations facilities (0.761) than other variables.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GENDER AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF RESPONDENTS TOWARDS SERVICE PROVIDERS - CHI SQUARE TEST

The gender of the tourists plays an important role in tourism. Tourism can be effectively planned only when the tourism authorities and tourism service providers of a state know in detail about the demographic factors of the tourists. It is a generally accepted concept that the touring spirit of a person is decided by their gender. Male respondents are mostly like to travel from place to place to take pleasure in nature's beauty, business trip, adventure tour and so on, but females may be not interested to travel. In order to find out tourist level of satisfaction towards services providers, chi-square test has been used. The chi-square test is one of the simplest and most widely used non-parametric test. Out of all the personal factors, gender plays a vital role because selection of tourist destination is highly influenced by the gender. Out of all the personal factors, gender plays a vital role because selection of tourist destination is highly influenced by the gender.

To test the association between gender and opinion about the level satisfaction of service providers services, Chi-square is used by taking opinion as dependent factor and gender of the respondents as independent factor. Hence the levels of satisfaction of the respondents are measured through ordinary scale and their gender is measured as categorical scale. The null hypothesis is that, there is no association between gender and level of satisfaction of respondents towards service providers.

TABLE: 5 GENDER AND THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Gender	Level of Satisfaction			Total	Chi-square value	P Value	Remarks
	Low	Medium	High				
Male	54	140	53	247			
Female	13	85	40	138	10.319	0.006	Significant
Total	**67**	**225**	**93**	**385**			

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 shows the significant association between the gender and level of satisfaction towards the service providers services in the study area of Madurai. From the chi-square test it is learnt that a significant level of 0.006(P value) has been obtained. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 per cent level of significance and there is association between gender and level of satisfaction towards service providers services. Moreover, Females expectation normally high compare with male.

CONCLUSION

The tourist services providers play a vital role in tourism, as a tourist feels comfortable when their visit depends upon the services provided by them. Tourist's entry to exit in a destination has created plenty of jobs and business opportunities in tourism allied sector such as accommodation, food services, transport, recreation, entertainment and so on in tourist destination. The present study revealed that the transportation facilities has played the most important tourists satisfaction influencing factor apart from that pleasure and recreation, accommodation, food and beverages and amenities . So the tourism facilitators and service providers concentration on the above basic factors could be increased tourist duration of the visit and it leads to destination income too.

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