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Tourist Attitudes, Perception and Satisfaction Towards Destination Image and Loyalty, in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract:

Tourist attitudes, perceptions, and satisfaction play an important role in shaping destination image and developing destination loyalty. Tourists form perceptions of a destination based on factors such as its attractions, culture, hospitality, safety, infrastructure, service quality, and overall travel experience. Positive attitudes and favourable perceptions can increase tourist satisfaction, while a satisfying experience can strengthen the destination's image in the minds of visitors. When tourists are satisfied with their experience, they are more likely to revisit the destination and recommend it to others, thereby developing destination loyalty. Therefore, understanding the relationship between tourist attitudes, perception, satisfaction, destination image, and loyalty is essential for tourism destinations seeking to improve visitor experiences, attract repeat tourists, and maintain a competitive position in the tourism market. For the purpose of this study only 300 respondents were selected through convenience sampling method through survey method, from the tourists who visited Tiruchirappalli. SPSS Package was used to adopt tools such as Percentage analysis, Chi square, student "t" test, Pearson correlation and Factor Analysis to test the variables.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, tourist's attraction, destination attributes etc.

JEL Classifications: M310, N01, O1,Q01.

1. Introduction

Tourism has become an important contributor to economic development, employment generation, cultural exchange, and regional growth. In an increasingly competitive tourism industry, the success of a destination depends not only on its natural and cultural attractions but also on how tourists perceive and evaluate their overall experience. Destination image is an important factor that influences tourists' attitudes, expectations, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. A positive destination image can create favourable perceptions among tourists and encourage them to choose, revisit, and recommend a particular destination. Similarly, tourist satisfaction reflects the extent to which the actual travel experience meets or exceeds visitors' expectations. Satisfied tourists are more likely to develop loyalty towards a destination through repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Therefore, examining tourist attitudes, perceptions, and satisfaction towards destination image and loyalty is essential for understanding tourist behaviour and for helping tourism managers and destination authorities develop effective strategies to enhance visitor experiences and build long-term destination loyalty.

2. Significance of the study

The study on tourist attitudes, perception, satisfaction, destination image, and loyalty is significant because it provides a better understanding of the factors that influence tourists' decisions and behavioural intentions. The findings of the study can help tourism authorities and destination managers identify tourists' expectations, preferences, and areas of dissatisfaction, enabling them to improve tourism products, services, facilities, and destination image. A positive destination image and high level of tourist satisfaction can encourage repeat visits and positive recommendations, contributing to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry. The study can also benefit tourism businesses such as hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, restaurants, and other service providers by helping them understand tourist needs and improve service quality. Furthermore, the study may serve as a

useful reference for researchers, students, and academics conducting future studies related to destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Overall, the study can contribute to improving tourist experiences and strengthening the competitiveness and long-term development of tourism destinations..

3. Statement of the Problem

The tourism industry is becoming increasingly competitive, making it important for destinations to understand the factors that influence tourists' choices, satisfaction, and loyalty. Although destinations may have attractive natural resources, cultural attractions, facilities, and services, tourists may develop different perceptions and attitudes based on their experiences. A negative or unclear destination image may affect tourist satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of revisiting or recommending the destination to others. Similarly, even when tourists have positive perceptions of a destination, dissatisfaction with service quality, accessibility, safety, accommodation, or other tourism-related facilities may negatively influence their loyalty. The major problem addressed in this study is the need to understand how tourist attitudes, perceptions, and satisfaction influence destination image and destination loyalty. There is a need to identify whether a favourable destination image and satisfying tourist experience encourage visitors to revisit the destination and recommend it to others. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between tourist attitudes, perception, satisfaction, destination image, and loyalty, and to identify the factors that contribute to positive tourist experiences and long-term loyalty towards the destination. The findings may provide useful information for tourism authorities, destination managers, and tourism service providers to develop strategies for improving destination image, enhancing tourist satisfaction, and encouraging repeat visitation.

4. Review of Literature

Recent studies from 2020 onwards have highlighted the importance of destination image, tourist perception, attitudes, and satisfaction in determining tourists' behavioural intentions. Destination image is considered an important factor influencing tourists' destination choice, expectations, and overall travel experience. A positive image created through attractions, accessibility, hospitality, safety, service quality, and cultural experiences can improve tourists' perceptions and satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic further changed tourists' attitudes towards destinations, with health, hygiene, safety, sustainability, and crowd management becoming increasingly important in destination evaluation. Studies during the post-pandemic period have also indicated that tourists' perceptions are influenced by both their direct experiences and information obtained through social media, online reviews, and other digital platforms. Thus, destination image has become a multidimensional concept involving both cognitive and emotional evaluations of a destination. Research during 2020–2026 also emphasizes the strong relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Satisfied tourists are more likely to revisit a destination, recommend it to friends and relatives, share positive experiences online, and develop a long-term preference for the destination. Tourist attitudes and perceptions can influence satisfaction, while satisfaction acts as an important link between destination image and loyalty. The literature further suggests that service quality, perceived value, authenticity, environmental sustainability, destination safety, and memorable tourism experiences can strengthen this relationship. Therefore, understanding the interaction between destination image, tourist attitudes, perception, satisfaction, and loyalty is essential for improving destination competitiveness and developing effective tourism management strategies. The existing literature provides a strong foundation for examining these relationships during the changing tourism environment of 2020–2026.

5. Objectives of the study

Following are the framed objectives of the study:

- To examine the Tourist attitudes toward destination image
- To analyse the impact of Destination Image Perception and Tourist satisfaction on Destination Loyalty level of the tourist's attraction.

6. Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis:** There is no association between marital status and length of stay.
- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** Gender has no effect on companion
- **Null hypothesis:** There is no correlation between Monthly Income and Cost.

7. Research methodology

This is a descriptive study as the Tourist attitudes toward destination image and the impact of Destination Image Perception and Tourist satisfaction on Destination Loyalty level of the tourist's attraction. Convenience sampling method has been followed for collecting primary data. The well developed questionnaire was adminstered to the sample respondents for the purpose of the study the sample size is determined as 300 sample respondents. Statitiscal tools used like Percentage Analysis, Cross Tabulation, Chi-Square test, Student's, t test, Pearson Correlation and Factor Analysis. Secondary data were collected from books, journals and websites.

8. Limitations of the study

Following are the limitations of the study:

1. This study is limited only to the Tourist attitudes toward destination image and the impact of destination image perception and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty level of the tourist's attraction.
2. The results of the study may not cover other rural or semi-urban regions of the district. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalized.
3. Some respondents may provide unclear or incomplete information in response to certain questions. This might have introduced bias and affected the accuracy of the findings.

9. Analysis And Interpretations Of The Study

For the purpose of this study a sample of 300 respondents have been selected for the analysis and interpretations of the data. The demographic factors such as age, gender, educational qualification, marital status occupation, monthly income family type and number of dependents have been considered**.**

a. Demographic Profile - Frequency Distribution

1. Table showing demographic profile of the sample respondents

Demographic factor	**Particulars**	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Age	26 to 50	142	47.3
Gender	Male	192	64.0
Marital status	Married	199	66.3
Educational qualification	Degree and Diploma	135	45.0
Occupation	Private	119	39.7
Monthly income	Rs 50,001 to Rs 1,00,000	92	30.7
Family type	Nuclear family	154	51.3
Number of dependents	3 to 4	157	52.3
Native	Tamil Nadu	94	31.3

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts the percentage analysis of 300 sample respondents based on their demographic profile such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, family type, number of dependents and native. The results show that majority 47.3% (142) of the sample respondents age group is 26 years to 50 years, 64.0% (192) of the sample respondents are male, 66.3% (199) of the sample respondents are married, 45.0% (135) of the sample respondents educational qualification is degree and diploma, 39.7% (119) sample respondents are private employee, 30.7% (92) of the sample respondents monthly income is Rs 50,001 to Rs 1,00,000, 51.3% (154) of the sample respondents belongs to nuclear family, 52.3% (157) of the sample respondents have 3 to 4 dependents in their family and 31.3% (94) of the sample respondents native is Tamil Nadu.

b. Cross Tabulation on Age and Time spent in tourist spot Cross tabulation on Age and Time spent in tourist spot

Age	**Time spent in tourist spot**			**Total**
	Less than 1 hour	**1 to 2 hours**	**More than 2 hours**	
Up to 25	27	52	31	110
	24.5%	47.3%	28.2%	100.0%
26-50	33	**84**	25	142
	23.2%	**59.2%**	17.6%	100.0%
Above 51	20	18	10	48
	41.7%	37.5%	20.8%	100.0%
Total	80	154	66	300
	26.7%	51.3%	22.0%	100.0%

Source: Computed from Primary data

Inferences:

From the above table it can be inferred that 24.5 percent of respondents whose age is Up to 25 years spent less than 1 hour in the tourist spot, 47.3 percent spent 1 to 2 hours and 28.2 spent more than 2 hours. 23.2 percent of respondents whose age is 26 to 50 years spent less than 1 hour in the tourist spot, 59.2 percent spent 1 to 2 hours and 17.6 spent more than 2 hours. 41.7 percent of respondents whose age is above 51 years spent less than 1 hour in the tourist spot, 37.5 percent spent 1 to 2 hours and 20.8 percent spent more than 2 hours. From this it can be concluded that majority (i.e.) 59.2 percent of respondents whose age is between 26 to 50 years spent 1 to 2 hours in the tourist spot.

c. Chi-square test is a statistical method used to determine whether there is a significant association or relationship between two categorical variables. It compares the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies to determine whether the difference is statistically significant.

Chi square test on Marital Status and Length of stay

Null Hypothesis: There is no association between marital status and length of stay.

Marital Status And Length Of Stay - (Chi-Square Test)

Marital Status	Length of stay			Total	Chi-Square Value	'P' Value
	Less than a week	1 week	Above 1 week			
Married	53 (26.6%) [60.9%]	101 (50.8%) [71.6%]	45 (22.6%) [62.5%]	199 (100.0%) [66.3%]	**3.388a**	**0.184>0.05** Df= 2**
Unmarried	34 (33.7%) [39.1%]	40 (39.6%) [28.4%]	27 (26.7%) [37.5%]	101 (100.0%) [33.7%]		
Total	87 (29.0%) [100.0%]	141 (47.0%) [100.0%]	72 (24.0%) [100.0%]	300 (100.0%) [100.0%]		

Source: Primary Data

1. The value within ( ) refers to Row percentage

2. The value within [ ] refers to Column percentage

3. **Denotes significant level at 5% level.

The above table explains the results of association between the marital status and length of stay. Among 199 sample respondents who are married, 53 (26.6%) sample respondents stays less than a week, 101 (50.8%) stays 1 week and 45 (22.6%) stays above 1 week. Among 101 sample respondents who are unmarried, 34 (33.7%) sample respondents stays less than a week, 40 (39.6%) stays 1 week and 27 (26.7%) stays above 1 week. Thus, among 300 (100%) sample respondents 141 (47.0%) stays 1 week followed by 87 (29.0%) stays less than a week and 72 (24.0%) of the sample respondents stays above 1 week. The calculated Pearson Chi-Square test value is 3.388 which is lesser than the table value 5.991 with the degrees of freedom 2, and the Chi-square test shows that the significance value is 0.184, which is greater than 0.05. Hence, the Chi-square value is not significant at 0.05 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected, so that there is no association between marital status and length of stay.

d. Independent sample t-test on Gender and Companion

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Gender has no effect on companion

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Companion	Male	192	2.21	.975	.070
	Female	108	2.45	1.036	.100

Independent Samples Test						
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Companion	Equal variances assumed	1.633	.202	-2.045	298	.042
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.011	210.961	.046

Source: Computed from Primary data

Inferences:

Table 1 gives the mean and standard deviation of the companion who are male is 2.21 and .975. The mean and standard deviation of the companion who are female is 2.45 and 1.036. Table 2 gives the results of independent sample "t" test, which show a significance value of .042, which is lesser than 0.05, which infers that the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, we can conclude that Gender has effect on companion.

e. Pearson Correlation between Monthly Income and Cost

Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis: There is no correlation between Monthly Income and Cost.

Correlation between Monthly Income and Cost

	Pearson Correlation r value	P value	Mean	Standard deviation
Monthly Income			2.23	1.011
Cost	.193**	.001	2.05	.919

Source: Computed from primary data

Inferences:

The mean and standard deviation of monthly income is 2.23 and 1.011 and the cost is 2.05 and .919. The Pearson correlation r value is .193 and the significance 2 tailed p value is .001. It is lesser than .05. We can accept the alternate hypothesis and can be inferred that there is a correlation between monthly income and cost.

f. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to identify the underlying factors or dimensions that explain relationships among a set of variables. It helps reduce a large number of variables into a smaller number of meaningful factors for easier interpretation.

Factor analysis on Tourist attitudes toward destination image

Data collected from 300 sample tourists were subjected to principal component factor analysis with Varimax Rotation by using the criterion that factors with eigen value greater than 1.00 were retained. Loadings exceeding 0.4 were considered for determining factors.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square)	.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.818

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used for testing the appropriateness of the factor model. The test is based on a chi square transformation of the determinant of the correlation matrix. The chi-square value shows that the variables are appropriate for factor analysis. A higher value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic indicates (0.818) and a significance value of 0.000 chi square value reflects that the sample is adequate to explain the correlation between the pairs of variables with the other variables.

Table Statement loadings of Tourist attitudes toward destination image for the Varimax Rotated principal-components (N=300 tourists)

Factors	**Loading**	**Eigen value**	**% of variance**
Factor 1			
I prefer to avoid visiting parks and campgrounds at this time.	.962	4.331	66.836
Safety is the primary consideration when selecting a travel destination.	.958		
The destination has a peaceful atmosphere.	.955		
The destination is not suitable for travel at this time.	.859		
Ensuring safety is my main concern when choosing a destination.	.843		
Factor 2			
Among my friends, I have a broader awareness of different vacation destinations.	.691	1.674	59.548
The destination is not suitable for recreation at this time.	.584		
I have extensive knowledge of vacation destinations compared to many frequent travellers.	.501		
Factor 3			
I believe traveling within Tamil Nadu carries the same physical health risks as interstate travel within India.	.751	1.346	52.188
Visiting natural scenic attractions is currently a safer travel option.	.639		
Factor 4			
I am more familiar than most people with a wide range of vacation options.	.761	1.202	44.402
I usually take a long time before I begin evaluating a decision.	.657		
Factor 5			
Tourists should be cautious about travelling to destinations impacted by natural disasters.	.723	1.083	36.326
I am concerned about travelling at this time because it may pose health risks.	.680		

Factor 6			
The destination remains appealing to visitors.	.793	1.058	26.879
I am not comfortable traveling at this time because of potential health risks.	.479		

The above table shows the various factors, item loadings, eigen value and percentage of variance explained by each factor.

Factor Analysis yielded six factors accounting for 66.836% of total variance. Factor 1 consists of 5 items and explained 66.836% of the total variance. Among the 6 factors, factor 1 explains the maximum variance and is the most important which influence the tourist attitudes toward destination image. In factor 1, **tourists prefer to avoid visiting parks and campgrounds at this time** is the important item. Factor 2 consists of 3 statements, of these, **Among their friends, tourist have a broader awareness of different vacation destinations** is the most important item. Factor 3 consists of 2 statements, of these, **tourists believe traveling within Tamil Nadu carries the same physical health risks as interstate travel within India** is the most important item. Factor 4 consists of 2 statements, of these, **They are more familiar than most people with a wide range of vacation options** is the most important item. Factor 5 consists of 2 statements, of these, **Tourists should be cautious about travelling to destinations impacted by natural disasters** is the most important item. Factor 6 consists of 2 statements, of these, **The destination remains appealing to visitors** is the most important item.

Factor analysis on Impact of Destination Image Perception and Tourist satisfaction on Destination Loyalty

Data collected from 300 sample tourists were subjected to principal component factor analysis with Varimax Rotation by using the criterion that factors with eigen value greater than 1.00 were retained. Loadings exceeding 0.3 were considered for determining factors.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square)	.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.755

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used for testing the appropriateness of the factor model. The test is based on a chi square transformation of the determinant of the correlation matrix. The chi-square value shows that the variables are appropriate for factor analysis. A higher value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic indicates (0.755) and a significance value of 0.000 chi square value reflects that the sample is adequate to explain the correlation between the pairs of variables with the other variables.

Table Statement Loadings Of Impact Of Destination Image Perception And Tourist Satisfaction On Destination Loyalty For The Varimax Rotated Principal-Components (N=300 Tourists)

Factors	**Loading**	**Eigen value**	**% of variance**
Factor 1			
Fulfilment of expectations through the actual experience.	.959	4.457	63.782
I am satisfied with my travel experience.	.955		
I am satisfied with my travel experience.	.953		
Appealing.	.853		
I plan to join the tour again in the future.	.843		

Factor 2			
I am likely to revisit this destination in the future.	.962	2.432	58.726
I will promote the destination on social media platforms.	.958		
Factor 3			
Accommodation availability and standards.	.709	1.662	53.024
I will spread positive word-of-mouth about the tour.	.502		
Cultural diversity.	.459		
Fascinating.	.492		
Factor 4			
Ease of reaching the destination.	.752	1.482	47.303
Public perception of the destination	.572		
I intend to revisit Tiruchirappalli City and join the tour again in the future.	.427		
I intend to recommend the tour to others.	.420		
Factor 5			
Engaging.	.799	1.278	41.393
Novelty of the destination	.325		
Factor 6			
Standard of services offered.	.685	1.212	35.052
Sites of cultural and historical significance.	.655		
Factor 7			
Stress-free.	.703	1.111	28.062
I will inform others about the attractions of this destination.	.533		
Factor 8			
Overall satisfaction with the travel experience.	.764	1.036	18.818
Tiruchirappalli City met my prior expectations.	.478		

The above table shows the various factors, item loadings, eigen value and percentage of variance explained by each factor. Factor Analysis yielded eight factors accounting for 63.782% of total variance. Factor 1 consists of 5 items and explained 63.782% of the total variance. Among the 6 factors, factor 1 explains the maximum variance and is the most important which influence the impact of destination image perception and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty. In factor 1, **Fulfilment of expectations through the actual experience** is the important item. Factor 2 consists of 2 statements, of these, **Tourists likely to revisit this destination in the future** is the most important item. Factor 3 consists of 4 statements, of these, **Accommodation availability and standards** is the most important item. Factor 4 consists of 4 statements, of these, **Ease of reaching the destination** is the most important item. Factor 5 consists of 2 statements, of these, **Engaging** is the most important item. Factor 6 consists of 2 statements, of these, **Standard of services offered** is the most important item. Factor 7 consists of 2

statements, of these, **Stress-free** is the most important item. Factor 8 consists of 2 statements, of these, **Overall satisfaction with the travel experience** is the most important item.

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that tourist attitudes, perceptions, and satisfaction play an important role in shaping destination image and developing destination loyalty. A positive perception of a destination, together with satisfactory experiences, can create a favourable destination image and encourage tourists to revisit and recommend the destination to others. Factors such as the quality of tourism services, attractions, hospitality, safety, accessibility, and overall travel experience contribute significantly to tourist satisfaction. Therefore, tourism authorities and destination managers should focus on improving service quality, maintaining attractive facilities, understanding tourist expectations, and creating memorable experiences. Strengthening destination image and tourist satisfaction can ultimately increase repeat visitation, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term loyalty, contributing to the sustainable growth and competitiveness of the destination.

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