

A STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY AND SATISFACTION OF TOURISTS TOWARDS RELIGIOUS TOUR OPERATORS IN CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Quality of service is the most important aspect for tourists to make decision for their visits and travel plans and preference of tour operators among alternatives especially in religious tourism. The findings explicate that significant difference is there among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists. Reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility are significantly and positively impacting satisfaction of tourists. Thus, religious tour operators should communicate preciously to tourists and they must give full confidence to tourists and they should improve their capabilities for giving services effectively to tourists. Besides, religious tour operators should have the best interest of tourists at heart and they must understand exact requirements of tourists. Furthermore, tour operators should provide services exactly as they assured and they must give services as required by tourists and they should ready to help tourists in all the times.

Keywords: *Tourists, Tour Operators, Satisfaction, Service Quality*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tour operators are playing a major role in promotion of tourism and hotel industries and they provide a variety of services to different segments of tourists and majority of them are service orientated (Xu and Chan, 2010). Tour operators arrange different types of tours throughout the year (Chand, 2003) in India and they put and they put enormous efforts for it (Heung and Chu, 2000). The comprehensive tour marketing is creating huge profits and representing big segment of tourism industry in India (Chand and Katou, 2012). In order to capture this segment, it is essential to discover and anticipate requirements of tourists and their choice that has be deal by tour operators (Lo and Lam, 2004).

In a stiff competitive tour operating sector, service is one of the significant component for attaining competitive advantages in a sustainable means (Wang et al 2000). Tour operators provide a bundle of services to tourists in the most efficient ways to make them comfortable and happy during tours (Atilgan et al 2003). Actually, quality of service is the most important aspect for tourists to make decision for their visits and travel plans and preference of tour operators among

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alternatives (Bowie and Chang, 2005) and it affects their satisfaction (Osman and Sentosa, 2013) and loyalty (Campo and Yagüe, 2000) especially in religious tourism. Therefore, it is important to study service quality and satisfaction of tourists towards religious tour operators.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chand (2010) stated that tangibility, assurance, empathy, reliability and responsiveness of tour agencies were positively and significantly related with satisfaction among tourists. Mayr and Zins (2011) found that services and their quality, behaviour and responsiveness of tour operations and service experience of tourists were significantly influencing satisfaction of tourists. Brunner-Sperdin et al (2012) concluded that services, commitment, responsibility, reliability, efficiency of services and additional features of tour operators were affecting satisfaction among tourists.

Meng et al (2013) revealed that friendliness, behaviour, amenities and local tour arrangements of tour operators were significantly and positively influencing satisfaction of tourists. Chand and Ashish (2014) indicated that reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles of tour operators were positively and significantly affecting satisfaction of tourists. Roshia and Kaur (2015) showed that tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy had positive and significant impact on satisfaction among tourists.

Ilic et al (2016) found that services and their qualities, responsiveness, reliability and assurance of tour agencies had significant and positive influence on satisfaction of tourists. Mmutle and Shonhe (2017) concluded tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and assurance of tour agencies were significantly impacting satisfaction of tourists. Puri and Singh (2018) revealed that responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability and tangibility were positively influencing satisfaction of customers of tourism. Manimekalai (2019) indicated services, quality of services, accommodation and amenities were significantly affecting satisfaction of tourists during visit to tourism places.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To study service quality of religious tour operators from tourists' point of view.
- ii) To find difference among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists.
- iii) To assess impact of service quality religious of tour operators on satisfaction of tourists.

IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- i) There is no significant difference among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists..
- ii) There is no significant impact of service quality religious of tour operators on satisfaction of tourists.

V. METHODOLOGY

The current study is carried out in Chennai city. Tourists are selected by using convenience sampling method. Data are collected from 250 tourists who visited religious places namely Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Karaikudi, Palani,

Srivilliputtur, Tirunelveli, Rameshwaram and Thiruchendur through structured questionnaire. Demographic profile of tourists is studied by using percentages and service quality of religious tour operators from tourists' point of view is examined through mean and standard deviation. Difference among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists is found by applying ANOVA and t-tests. Impact of service quality religious of tour operators on satisfaction of tourists is assessed by employing regression analysis.

VI. RESULTS

6.1.DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TOURISTS

The demographic profile of tourists is given in Table-1. Larger number of tourists is female (57.60 per cent) and most of tourists in between 41 – 50 years old (31.60 per cent). Higher number of tourists are under graduates (32.80 per cent) and majority of tourists earn monthly income of Rs.35,001 – Rs.45,000 (33.60 per cent). Maximum number of tourists is in married status (79.20 per cent) and higher portion of tourists own nuclear family (76.40 per cent).

Table-1. Demographic Profile of Tourists

Demographic Profile	Number	%
Gender		
Male	106	42.40
Female	144	57.60
Age		
21 – 30 years	38	15.20
31 – 40 years	62	24.80
41 – 50 years	79	31.60
51 – 60 years	71	28.40
Education		
Higher Secondary	45	18.00
Diploma	65	26.00
Under Graduation	82	32.80
Post Graduation	58	23.20
Monthly Income		

Less than Rs.25,000	49	19.60
Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000	67	26.80
Rs.35,001 – Rs.45,000	84	33.60
More than Rs.45,000	50	20.00
Marital Status		
Married	198	79.20
Unmarried	52	20.80
Type of Family		
Nuclear	193	76.40
Joint	57	22.80

6.2. SERVICE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS TOUR OPERATORS

The service quality of religious tour operators from tourists' point of view is given below as.

6.2.1. TANGIBILITY

The tangibility of religious tour operators is given in Table-2.

Table-2. Tangibility

Tangibility	Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious tour operators are easily accessible	3.94	0.84
Religious tour operators offer superior quality of food	3.90	0.87
Religious tour operators are highly professionals	3.79	0.94
Religious tour operators communicate preciously	3.37	0.99
Religious tour operators give services in suitable times	3.87	0.91

The tourists are agreed with religious tour operators are easily accessible, religious tour operators offer superior quality of food, religious tour operators are highly professionals and religious tour operators give services in suitable times, while, they are neutral with religious tour operators communicate preciously.

6.2.2. ASSURANCE

The assurance of religious tour operators is given in Table-3.

Table-3. Assurance

Assurance	Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious tour operators give full confidence to tourists	3.24	1.08
Religious tour operators assure safety of services to tourists	3.85	0.93
Religious tour operators have potential for giving services effectively	3.39	1.05
Religious tour operators are behaving decently	3.82	0.95
Religious tour operators provide adequate security to tourists	3.77	0.98

The tourists are agreed with religious tour operators assure safety of services to tourists, religious tour operators are behaving decently and religious tour operators provide adequate security to tourists, while, they are neutral with religious tour operators give full confidence to tourists and religious tour operators have potential for giving services effectively.

6.2.3. EMPATHY

The empathy of religious tour operators is given inTable-4.

Table-4. Empathy

Empathy	Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious tour operators show personal interest on tourists	3.80	0.94
Religious tour operators take care of needs of tourists	3.83	0.92
Religious tour operators have the best interest of tourists at heart	3.34	1.06
Religious tour operators understand exact requirements of tourists	3.36	1.02
Religious tour operators inform when they provide services to tourists	3.75	0.98

The tourists are agreed with religious tour operators show personal interest on tourists, religious tour operators take care of needs of tourists and religious tour operators inform when they provide services to tourists, while, they are neutral with religious tour operators have the best interest of tourists at heart and religious tour operators understand exact requirements of tourists.

6.2.4. RELIABILITY

The reliability of religious tour operators is given inTable-5.

Table-5. Reliability

Reliability	Mean	Standard Deviation
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Religious tour operators provide services exactly as they assured	3.31	1.11
Religious tour operators are responsible for solving problems in services	3.86	0.94
Religious tour operators offer competent services	3.81	0.97
Religious tour operators give services as required by tourists	3.40	1.08
Religious tour operators provide services timely	3.78	1.03

The tourists are agreed with religious tour operators are responsible for solving problems in services, religious tour operators offer competent services and religious tour operators provide services timely, while, they are neutral with religious tour operators provide services exactly as they assured and religious tour operators give services as required by tourists.

6.2.5. RESPONSIVENESS

The responsiveness of religious tour operators is given in Table-6.

Table-6. Responsiveness

Responsiveness	Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious tour operators are prompt in giving services to tourists	3.92	0.93
Religious tour operators are ready to help tourists in all the times	3.35	1.05
Religious tour operators offer correct services in first time	3.88	0.96
Religious tour operators give proper response to tourists	3.84	1.02

The tourists are agreed with religious tour operators are prompt in giving services to tourists, religious tour operators offer correct services in first time and religious tour operators give proper response to tourists, while, they are neutral with religious tour operators are ready to help tourists in all the times.

6.3. SERVICE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS TOUR OPERATORS AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TOURISTS

ANOVA and t-tests are employed to find difference among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists and the results are given in Table-7.

Table-7. Difference among Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Demographic Profile of Tourists

Particulars	F-Value / t-Value	Significance
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Gender	4.638** (t-value)	.000
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Age	6.164**	.000

	(F-value)	
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Education	6.475** (F-value)	.000
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Monthly Income	6.240** (F-value)	.000
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Marital Status	4.249** (t-value)	.000
Service Quality of Religious Tour Operators and Type of Family	4.816** (t-value)	.000

** Significant at 1 % level

The F and t values are significant and these elucidate that significant difference exists among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists.

6.4. IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY OF TOUR OPERATORS ON SATISFACTION OF TOURISTS

Multiple regression analysis is applied to assess impact of service quality of tour operators on satisfaction of tourists and the result is given in Table-8. R^2 is 0.60 and adjusted R^2 is 0.58 and these indicate the regression model is in good fit. F-value is 27.061 and it implies the model is significant.

Table-8. Impact of Service Quality of Tour Operators on Satisfaction of Tourists

Service Quality	Partial Regression Coefficients	t-Value	Significance
Constant	1.026**	12.076	.000
Tangibility (X_1)	.271**	6.565	.000
Assurance (X_2)	.310**	7.492	.000
Empathy (X_3)	.335**	7.878	.000
Reliability (X_4)	.422**	8.501	.000
Responsiveness (X_5)	.404**	8.079	.000
R^2	0.60	-	-
Adjusted R^2	0.58	-	-

F	27.061**	-	.000
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** Significant at 1 % level

Reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility have significant and positive impact on satisfaction of tourists.

VII. CONCLUSION

The results of this study elucidate that significant difference is there among service quality of religious tour operators and demographic profile of tourists. Reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility are significantly and positively impacting satisfaction of tourists. Thus, religious tour operators should communicate precisely to tourists and they must give full confidence to tourists and they should improve their capabilities for giving services effectively to tourists. Besides, religious tour operators should have the best interest of tourists at heart and they must understand exact requirements of tourists. Furthermore, tour operators should provide services exactly as they assured and they must give services as required by tourists and they should ready to help tourists in all the times.

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