

## **Key Factors Influencing Tourists' Satisfaction and Retention in Dindigul District**

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### **Abstract**

The tourism industry plays a crucial role in the global economy by generating employment, supporting exports, and promoting worldwide prosperity. It has significant potential to boost local economies as well. India, with its diverse landscapes, cuisines, heritage, adventure opportunities, wildlife, and culture, has become a popular destination for both international and domestic tourists in recent years. Tourism involves more than just increased travel; it also encompasses the development of infrastructure, such as hotels, resorts, and transportation networks, and the promotion of destinations through marketing and cultural exchanges.

Recognizing the economic potential of tourism, governments and organizations have made strategic investments and formulated policies to enhance the tourist experience while preserving cultural and natural heritage. Overall, the development of tourism is a dynamic and multifaceted process that continues to shape economies, cultures, and environments worldwide. To identify the issues and key

factors influencing the tourism sector, this paper analyzes tourists' satisfaction level and retention based on personal factors. The study is based on primary data collected from tourists who visited various spots in Dindigul district, with a total of 112 samples collected.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Tourist satisfaction, Retention

## **I.INTRODUCTION**

Since ancient times, travel and tourism have been significant social activities for humans. The desire to explore new places and experience a change of scenery has been present throughout history. Travel has been an integral part of human existence since early human roamed vast distances in search of food and clothing for survival. Over the ages, people have traveled for trade, religious purposes, economic prosperity, conflict, migration, and other compelling motivations.

India, with its diverse landscapes, cultures, cuisines, heritage, adventure opportunities, wildlife, and traditions, has become one of the leading countries in terms of international tourism expenditure. According to the IBEF's 2021 report on the Growth of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, travel and tourism are two of the largest industries in India, contributing approximately US\$ 178 billion to the country's GDP.

This article is designed to find the how the key factors such Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation, Affordability, Safety and security and personal factors such as income, age and etc., impact on tourists' satisfaction and their revisiting decision

Tourism activity begins with attractions. A place or destination must have some appeal to attract tourists. Attractions are considered the most influential of all the components and can make or break a destination. Accessibility or Transportation is an essential component of the tourism system, as it creates a link between the market source and the destination. Accommodation is one of the most crucial aspects of a destination. Any traveler looking to visit a destination would first seek accommodation that suits their needs, providing food, beverage services, and resting facilities. Affordability involves considering the costs associated with traveling, accommodation, food activities and other tour related expenses.

Safety and security are the crucial aspect of tourism as they directly impact the experience and well-being of travellers. Other than this the personal factor such as age, income are also influence tourist revisit intention.

The study focuses on Dindigul district, located in central Tamil Nadu, bounded by Trichy, Karur, Tirupur, Sivaganga, Madurai, Coimbatore, and Theni districts. The district headquarters is Dindigul town, located 420 km from Chennai. Dindigul has a history dating back 2000 years and has been ruled by various South Indian kingdoms. It boasts many tourist attractions, including ancient temples, Dindigul Fort, hill stations, and Begampur Mosque. The smart city proposal for Dindigul aims to develop a new bus stand, flyover, and medical college to improve infrastructure and amenities. This paper focuses on the tourist spots in Dindigul district, with information from the district tourist development office indicating there are 15 tourist places in the district.

### **Literature Review**

According to Cronin and Brady (2000), customer satisfaction has attracted a lot of attention in the literature dedicated to this area due to its potential influence over the behavior of consumers and their retention. Consumer satisfaction has been defined in several forms, from cognitive or affective approaches to other that indicate the specific or accumulative character of the transaction. Kozak & Rimmington (2000) expressed that tourist satisfaction is vital for marketing the tourism destination successfully because it persuades the selection of attraction, the using up of the services in the destination, and their intent to return. Studies from the tourism literature proved that overall satisfaction of tourists and their intention to revisit are partially determined by their assessment of various aspects of the tourism product. (Sirakaya et al, 2004) described that measuring and managing customer satisfaction in tourism destination is crucial for the survival, development and success. (Devi, Sobhana V, 2015) expressed that Tourism industry is widely promoted as a means of economic development, both government of India and state government of Tamil Nadu have taken several initiatives to exploit their potential tourism sites. As a result of various promotional campaigns such as Incredible India, Mahabalipuram Dance Festival etc, played a major role in receiving tourist arrivals to Mahabalipuram. This study tries to assess the satisfaction of tourists and their retention ideas

### **Objectives of Study**

1. To study the characteristic features of tourists' satisfaction level
2. To investigate the tourists' preference among various tourist spots in the district
3. To determine the tourists' satisfaction and the factors influence tourist retention.

## Research Methodology

### Hypothesis:

- $H_1$  = There is no significant relationship between age of tourists' and their idea of retention

### Sample Size:

- 112 respondents were being considered for research

### Type of Data:

1. Primary Data has been collected through questionnaire.
2. Secondary Data has been used in the form of different research articles and reports.

## Limitations of STUDY

- Due to time constraints, the research included only 112 respondents.
- The study's responses were collected from tourists visiting Kodaikanal, sirumalai, rock fort and dams in Dindigul District.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

Different techniques such as percentage method and Chi-square test has been used. The research has been done by conducting a primary research with the help of questionnaire with the sample size of 112 respondents.

**Table no 1: Description of Respondents**

Variables	Characteristics	No of Respondents (112)	Percentage- 100%
Age	under25	32	28.57
	26 - 35	27	24.11
	36 - 45	34	30.36
	46& above	19	16.96
Gender	Male	74	60.07
	Female	38	33.93
Trip detail	Group	49	43.75
	Individual	27	24.11
	Couple	36	32.14
Annual Income	< Rs 250000	47	41.96
	Rs 250001 & above	65	58.04

From the above statistics it is revealed that most of respondents are in age category 36 to 45 which is 30.36% and another 28.57% are from age category of under 25. From the data 38% of respondents are female while 74% are males. 43.75% of respondents are group tourists, 24.11% are individuals while rest 32.14% are couples. Maximum respondents have family income above Rs.25000

**Table no 2: Tourists expectation and Satisfaction with Mean calculation**

Factors	Expectatio n (mean)	Satisfactio n (mean)	Mean differenc e	Results
Attraction	3.83	3.91	0.08	Satisfactory
Accessibility	4.16	3.86	-0.3	Dissatisfacto ry
Accommodati on	2.90	3.52	0.62	Satisfactory
Affordability	3.62	3.51	-0.11	Dissatisfacto ry
Safety and security	2.62	3.24	0.6	Satisfactory

In this Table no.2 , “satisfying” is defined as those factors with satisfaction scores above expectation scores (positive mean difference) Results indicate that tourists are satisfied with three factors of the destination such as Attraction, Accommodation and Safety and security.

**Table no 3: Destinations visited by tourists during their trip with mean and ranking**

Destinations	Mean	Rank
Kodaikanal	0.89	1
Sirumalai	0.24	2
Rock fort	0.19	3
Kamarajar sagar Dam	0.11	4

In this Table no.3, calculation provide a ranking of the tourist spots based on the mean number of tourists visiting the destinations in which Kodaikanal is the top tourist destination, followed by Sirumalai, Rock Fort, and Kamarajar sagar Dam.

**Table no 4: Showing the satisfaction level of tourists in related with destination related factors**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Highly Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Highly dissatisfied</b>
Attraction	44	35	17	11	05
Accessibility	38	40	20	9	05
Accommodation	32	34	19	15	12
Affordability	27	33	29	16	7
Safety and Security	31	25	20	12	24

**Table no 5: Tourists who preferred to revisit the destination based on age (personal factor)**

<b>Choice / Age</b>	<b>under25</b>	<b>26 - 35</b>	<b>36 - 45</b>	<b>46&amp; above</b>	<b>Total</b>
Agree	23	17	26	06	72
Disagree	09	10	08	13	40
Total	32	27	34	19	112

Degree of freedom is 3

According to this table no. 3, 80of the respondents select and prefer the tourist spot by considering the affordability while its clear other 32% of the tourists are not preferring tourist spots on the basis of affordability.

#### - Hypothesis testing

Chi-square test is one of the simplest and most widely used tests for significance of the difference between the observed frequencies and expected frequencies obtained from some hypothetical universe. The Chi-square is calculated by the following equation:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

The **H1** for this study is “There is no significant relationship between age of the tourists and idea of retention”but in the analysis the calculated value of  $\chi^2$  (11.87) with 3 degree of freedom is higher than the table value of  $\chi^2$  (7.815)at 0.05 significance level.Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So it's concluded that statistically there is significant relationship between age and tourist retention.

## **II.CONCLUSION**

The study found that while the tourists' pre-visit expectations about attractions, Accommodation, safety, and security were met, the tourists were not satisfied with accessibility and affordability. Accessibility features like reliable transit and other important factors like cost are also important in boosting the percentage of visitors who return.However, personal characteristics like age are also not deterring tourists from travelling to the location. Therefore, it is determined that focussing more on the accessibility and affordability of tourist locations will contribute to an increase in visitors.

### **Scope for Further Research**

The present study is consumer oriented and has measured only the satisfaction level and retention idea of the tourists concerning personal and few important factors facilities. As there will be different opinion for domestic and foreign tourist, the problems faced by both the tourists and their needs are suggested for further research.

### **Suggestions**

With the last section of questionnaire, there have been certain suggestions mentioned by the respondents in terms of what role should government play in terms of promoting entrepreneurship.

- Majority of the respondents have recommended that government should regularly maintain and repair the playing things available in the tourist spots and parks.
- Cleanliness of the tourist spots to be ensured by the competent authority.

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