



## A STUDY ON CUSTOMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS TOUR ORGANISED BY AGENTS

**S.Hema Rani**

*Ph.D (Part-time Research Scholar), PSG College of Arts and Science,  
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India*

**Dr.K.M.Chinnadorai**

*Principal, Hindusthan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil  
Nadu, India*

### ABSTRACT

**KEYWORDS:**  
*Tourism, religious tour,  
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tour.*

*Tourism is considered as an intangible product which cannot be transferred from one customer to another. Customer relies on the pre-purchase information to make his decision because he has no option to inspect, see, compare or try out the product before head. The demand for tourism marketing fluctuates depending on the seasons and convenience of the customer. Tourist agents provide wide range of packages among which cultural and religious tour packages are much popular and attract more customers. Frequent and regular tour packages throughout the year that the travel agents arrange are considered as pilgrimage tours, which do not specifically depend on seasons. This study tries to find the satisfaction level and the problems faced by the customers who prefer tour packages for their visit to various locations provided by the agents. The result as such shows that the customers feel comfortable and economic when they take up tour package than arranging the tour by themselves.*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the source and host countries, in some cases being of vital importance. Tourism brings in large amounts of income into a local economy in the form of payment for goods and services needed by tourists, accounting for 30% of the world's trade of services, and 6% of overall exports of goods and services. It also creates opportunities for employment in the service sector of the economy associated with tourism.

Academics have defined mass tourism as travel by groups on pre-scheduled tours, usually under the organization of tourism professionals. This form of tourism developed during the second half of the 19th century in the United Kingdom and was pioneered by Thomas Cook. Cook took advantage of Europe's rapidly expanding railway network and established a company that offered affordable day trip excursions to the masses, in addition to longer holidays to Continental Europe, India, Asia and the Western Hemisphere which attracted wealthier customers. By the 1890s over 20,000 tourists per year used Thomas Cook & Son.

The relationship between tourism companies, transportation operators and hotels is a central feature of mass tourism. Cook was able to offer prices that were below the publicly advertised price because his company purchased large numbers of tickets from railroads. One contemporary form of mass tourism, package tourism, still incorporates the

partnership between these three groups. Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a traveler's engagement with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life.

A travel agency is a private retailer or public service that provides travel and tourism related services to the public on behalf of suppliers such as activities, airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, hotels, railways, travel insurance, and package tours. In addition to dealing with ordinary tourists, most travel agencies have a separate department devoted to making travel arrangements for business travelers; some travel agencies specialize in commercial and business travel only. There are also travel agencies that serve as general sales agents for foreign travel companies, allowing them to have offices in countries other than where their headquarters are located. With general public access to the Internet since the mid-1990s, many airlines and other travel companies began to sell directly to passengers. As a consequence, airlines no longer needed to pay the commissions to travel agents on each ticket sold. Since 1997, travel agencies have gradually been dis-intermediated, by the reduction in costs caused by removing layers from the package holiday distribution network. However, travel agents remain dominant in some areas such as cruise vacations where they represent 77% of bookings and 73% of packaged travel.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Tourism image, evaluation variables and after purchase behaviour: inter-relationship<sup>1</sup>

*Author links open overlay*

*panel J. Enrique Bigné<sup>a</sup>, M. Isabel Sánchez<sup>b</sup>, Javier Sánchez<sup>c</sup>*

Numerous authors have pointed out the influence of tourism image on consumer behaviour. Tourism image will also exercise some influence on the quality perceived by tourists and on the satisfaction obtained from the holiday experience. This paper focuses on the relationship between the image of a destination as perceived by tourists and their behavioural intentions, and between that same image and the post-purchase evaluation of the stay. We will also examine the relationship between quality and satisfaction and between these variables and the tourist's behaviour variables. We place the accent on a joint analysis of these relationships, using a structural equation model. The results of the empirical study show that tourism image is a direct antecedent of perceived quality, satisfaction, intention to return and willingness to recommend the destination. The role of image as a key factor in destination marketing is thus confirmed. With reference to the other relationships, on the one hand, it is confirmed that quality has a positive influence on satisfaction and intention to return and that satisfaction determines the willingness to recommend the destination. However, the influence of quality on 'willingness to recommend' and the influence of satisfaction on 'intention to return' cannot be corroborated. In this sense, further research could be necessary.

### Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism Development: a Literature Review with Implications for Tourism Planning<sup>2</sup>

*Rich Harrill*

*Georgia Institute of Technology's Economic Development Institute, Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS)*

Planners are increasingly turning to tourism as a viable economic development strategy, as many communities experience industrial restructuring. Consequently, many residents are exposed to tourism for the first time, whereas established destinations experience increasing volumes of tourists. Planners are now challenged with understanding how the public perceives tourism in order to gain local support for tourism projects and initiatives. By exploring the literature on resident attitudes toward tourism development, this article examines (1) resident attitudes toward tourism in relation to socioeconomic factors; (2) spatial factors; (3) economic dependency; (4) resident and community typologies; (5) measuring residents' attitudes toward tourism development; and (6) theoretical perspectives such as community attachment, social exchange theory, and growth machine theory. This literature review provides planners with a basis for initiating citizen participation processes related to tourism issues and identifying groups of people concerned about, or opposed to, tourism planning and development in their communities.

### An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: a structural model<sup>3</sup>

*Author links open overlay panel Yooshik Yoon<sup>a</sup>, Muzaffer Uysal<sup>b</sup>*

This study offers an integrated approach to understanding tourist motivation and attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among the push and pull motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The research model investigates the relevant relationships

among the constructs by using a structural equation modeling approach. Consequently, destination managers should establish a higher tourist satisfaction level to create positive post-purchase tourist behavior, in order to improve and sustain destination competitiveness.

## OBJECTIVES

This study is to determine the existing practices of customers towards availing cultural and religious tour organized by agents, their satisfaction and the problems faced by them in the tour arranged.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The area of the study was chosen by the researcher and an interview schedule was prepared on the basis of the objectives. The questions included in the interview schedule were multiple choice questions to avoid any subjective bias and simple percentage analysis has been adopted in the study. The respondents were instructed to tick the appropriate box for each question. The survey was conducted for 100 respondents at Coimbatore city

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- **Personal factors of the respondents**

The result shows that out of the total respondents taken for study, Majority (56%) of the respondents are male, most (43%) of them are in the age group of 25 years – 45 years, majority (64%) of them are married, majority (44%) of them are graduates, most (53%) of them are employees and majority (38%) of them are at the income level of above Rs.40,000

- **Existing practices of customers towards availing Cultural & Religious tour**

The result shows that out of the total respondents taken for study, Majority (71%) of the respondents prefer cultural tour organized by the agents, most (42%) of them feel that the tour organized by the agents is economical, majority (54%) of the respondents takes up different tour package with different places, majority (59%) of them prefer to go for tour with their family, most (63%) of them prefer two to three days of tour, most (67%) of them do not go for tour on special occasions.

- **Customer satisfaction towards Cultural & Religious tour attended**

Most of the customers are highly satisfied with the price, convenience, hospitality, food, timing and safety in cultural and religious tour arranged by the agents.

- **Problems faced by the respondents in Cultural & Religious tour**

The result shows that out of the total respondents taken for study, majority (78%) of the respondents have not faced any problem in the cultural and religious tour organized by the agents, out of the remaining respondents who faced problems majority (28%) of them faced problem with the places planned by the agents and majority (54%) of them feel that the agent responded to their complaints and feedbacks.

**SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The agents organizing tours can give regular updates through messages throughout the tour. The tour agents can offer seasonal discounts who take up regular tour packages. The agents can provide more than one guide for the tour organized. The agents can make special provisions for those customers who take up tour with children. The agents can also make special arrangements for the senior citizens during the tour. The agents can improve the system of availing prasadam at most places during tour visit. The agents can organize the tour with time for shopping during the tour. The agents must be prior updated with the traffic and road conditions. The agents can make arrangements for regular post-tour updates to the customers regarding special functions and celebrations at the places covered in tour packages. Concluding most customer prefer tour packages provided by the agents than arranging and booking on their own. They consider agents reduce various risks during the entire travel and also are able to take to places in the nearby location covered in the package.

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