

The impact of Service Proportion on Pilgrimage Tourist Devotional Value Creation through the mediation effect of Satisfaction – A Study with special reference to temples in Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu

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Abstract

Pilgrimage tourism is the part of modern day tourism. India is the illustrious country known for its pilgrimage tourism in the globe. The historical Vedic and epics advocated and promulgates the value of various pilgrimage destinations in India. The pilgrimage visit is believed as part of life time achievement and also panacea for life issues. But at the same time, an influx of tourist for pilgrimage needs a comprehensive service proportion. In modern day tourism practices, the visit of local, domestic and international tourist for pilgrimages are increasing phenomenally but at the same time, a comprehensive service marketing practices are required to attract and patronize the tourist to visit different pilgrimage destination in order to obtain the devotional value. This article aims to address the influence of service marketing practices towards the pilgrimage tourist devotional value creation through the mediation effect of satisfaction with special reference to Kanchipuram District in Tamilnadu, India. The service marketing practices were explored from depth and informal interviews, the identified variables are grouped into underlined service proportion related factors and it's influenced on tourist value creation via through tourist satisfaction were validated using structural equation model with the help of AMOS 21.0.

Key words

Pilgrimage Tourism, Service Marketing Proportion, Devotional Value Creation and Tourist Satisfaction

Introduction

Tourism is the form of recreation and relaxation which helps the human to overcome their physical as well as psychological stress. According to United Nations World Tourism Organizations (UNWTO) Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.

It is the system of learning about new things in our surroundings. It is the opportunity to make an individual to know more information and share their feelings with nature, fellow human beings and other forms of living creation. The tourism of various forms ranging from adventure, nature, pilgrimage is always traditional and enduring. The movement of human being from one place to another place on special occasion happens since ancient time in the universe. In most of the the times, the purpose of movement may be for business, trade and devotion. But in modern days, the tourism happens for education, recreation, healthcare, adventurism, business trip, family relaxation and so on. But majority of the tourism in the world happens either for the purpose of devotion or recreation. The purpose of tourism made by tourist expects them to carry some values and which can be obtained through satisfying their travelling, safety, security and environmental support needs. In this aspect pilgrimage tourism is the old and enduring practices engaged by the visitors throughout the world. There are certain countries in the globe which are preferred by the tourist to go for pilgrimage tourism. The purpose of pilgrimage tourism claimed by the visitors to see and know about the devotional location, do pariharams, obtain devotional and ritual benefits and even for some tourist it has become an ambition of achievement on their life time. The process of pilgrimage happens since from ancient history where in which the tourist uses to travel with in domestic country as well to host countries. Even though the modern tourism practices performed by domestic and international tourist, but the value for pilgrimage tourism increases consistently over a period of time.

Pilgrimage tourism is ritual and cultural exchanges within and across the countries. In India, through pilgrimage tourism, the destination values, architectural symbols, world renowned ritual practices are being transformed to other part of the world. The growth of technology, advent of globalization, free flow trade, services exploration and fast growth of media are supporting to attract pilgrimage tourist in India. In pilgrimage tourism, south India especially Tamilnadu attracts domestic and foreign tourist consistently every year because of scattered world renowned temples. The temples in Tamilnadu elaborate ritual values, devotional beliefs, architectural and monumental outlook, and so on. The advent of internet increases the patronization of tourist from international and national background.. In addition to that the historical evidences of many temples in Tamilnadu percolate its identity for pariharam (problems in life are relieved), janma vimochanam (value for incarnation) and sabavimochanam (free from reincarnation). There are unique temples like on land, river, mountain and forest are attracting tourist with more trust and pilgrimage values.

But at the same time, the spread of different forms of tourism along with devotional and ritual induce the tourist to have a visit as tourism package where in which they try to combine all forms of tourism values like devotional, information, recreation, adventures and entertainment and so on. In this aspect, the temples need to promote its ritual values and also to retain its service value of devotion as well spirituality. In this aspect, the temples need to offer effective service proportion practices that will give tourist satisfaction as well as to extend the pilgrimage values. In this aspect, the components of service marketing practices need to be incorporated with commercial dimension for tourist patronage as well as retention.

Kanchipuram is one of the world renowned tourism locations since from ancient days in India. It is the unique tourism cluster in India where in which the span of tourisms like pilgrimage cum devotional, educational, adventures, cultural heritage and entertainment are annexure. It is the location in India which attracts huge foreign tourist to know about the cultural, heritage and archeological values of temples and patronize consistent domestic tourist visits for its devotional and ritual tourism values. The growth of technology, social media and online sources in the age of information gives comprehensive historical background of this location to the rest of the world; the real time experience of visitors shared with their fellow counterparts attracts the tourist visit to this destination. The scattered devotional values, minimum days of stay while visiting encourages the temples in Kanchipuram District to concentrate on service marketing proportion in a professional ways. The efforts of Department of tourism and state government to promote tourism sustainability of this destination, the urge of bringing commercial validity of this place by professional business bodies, the need of promoting eco tourism insist on comprehensive service marketing practices for tourist satisfaction as well as to deliver real time devotional values to the tourist during their pilgrimage

Statement of the problem

Pilgrimage tourism in India is consistently increasing in very recent periods. The attraction of domestic and foreign tourist for devotional tourism gives an opportunity for India to explore its cultural, traditional, ritual and epic values to the tourist and their belonging destination. The temples especially in south India attract the clients for devotional tourism. But it has to articulate other service entities namely ambience, clean environment, commercial viability, real time experience, transportation and connectivity. In addition to that, they need to brand its values in order to attract the tourist either for commercial benefits or for exploring tradition and culture. Kanchipuram is one of the renowned devotional tourism destinations in south India and very particularly in Tamilnadu need to encourage professional service marketing mix practices for tourism value creation and to drive tourist satisfaction.

Objectives

1. To explore the factors constituting the service proportion in pilgrimage tourism
2. To verify the influence of service proportion components on tourist satisfaction and value creation.
3. To prescribe a tested model for service proportion components in pilgrimage tourism

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant influence of service proportion components on tourist satisfaction
2. There is a significant influence of tourist satisfaction on their acquired devotional values.
3. Tourist satisfaction significantly mediates service marketing proportion and tourist acquired value

Literature Evidences

Religious tourism is the pioneer form of tourism which has begun almost with the dawn of humanity. Pillai (2010) said that tourism is customized product which has significance in configuration and nature of service provided. In tourism success depends on ideal mix of marketing tools. Addmour and Ayish (2005) identified that seven Ps of marketing mix have significant effect on providing service to customers. WTTC (2003) suggested tourism is diverse collection of services and products that are delivered to visitors. Tourist destination management found that innovation and customized products are two important factors for tourism (Ljiljana et al 2009). Another important factor is product line which means various products offered to the tourist at the time of service in destination. Seaton and Bennett (2004) revealed that location create a competitive edge to tourism services. The benefits of tourist are realized in the location where service takes place. The most sensitive in marketing mix is pricing decision because of variability of service offered. Saxena (2002) observed that price is significant factor that helps to create values about the service offered. Payne (2002) resulted that promotion add tangibility to services and makes customer to evaluate process of service offer. Gronroos (2001) said that service industry has no product it is on interactive process. The process in services is modalities by which services are offered and generated to the customers. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) suggested that physical evidence represents the “Servicescape” where the customer interacts or the service is delivered with the service providers. Bisht (2010) concluded that effective management of service process enhances the customer satisfaction and results in favorable words of mouth. Sarker, Aimin, & Begum (2012) emphasized on effects of marketing mix elements on satisfying tourist. Marketing mix has positive and significant effect on satisfaction by increasing visitors. Faris Abdullah kadhim et al. (2016) resulted that there is a significant positive relationship among the seven elements of marketing mix and customer satisfaction. Muhammad Jufri Rasyid (2017) revealed that marketing mix has positive significant effect to the satisfaction of tourists. In the study it is proved that optimal marketing mix increase the tourist satisfaction. Yazid (2003) opined that marketing mix satisfy the target consumers. Payne (2000) further states that service products, service availability and location, services, promotions, people, processes, customer service can be utilized, to satisfy the consumer.

VRS Model for Service Proportion Components in Pilgrimage Tourism

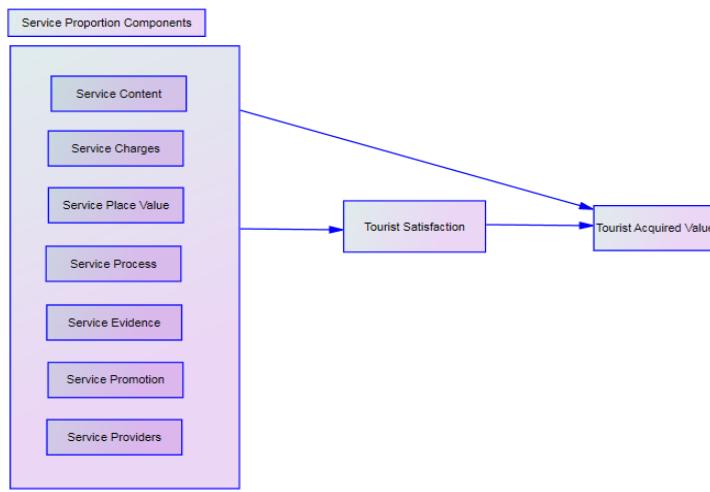


Figure 1
Conceptual Model

Methodology

The study was undertaken at Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu. The temples with the background of for devotion, parihara, pilgrimage, archeology, ritual , and entertainment background in and around Kanchipuram District were taken for the study. The study population comprises domestic and international tourist. The local district tourists were also included in the study. The study period was between July 2018 to August 2018. The sampling unit comprises tourist with heterogeneous backgrounds (in terms of age, gender, educational background, location background and so on). The respondents for the study were selected through convenience sampling. The primary data was collected through personal interview with support of pre structured questionnaire. The collected data were cleaned for its data purification and missing values identification. The finalized data were analyzed through SPSS 19.0 for uni variant analysis in order to understand the personal background of tourist and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for variable reduction to explore factors constituting service marketing components, tourist satisfaction and tourist accrued values.

Initially an informal and judgmental interview was conducted among the various stakeholders (temple priest, local bodies, governing body members and commercial people) to understand the pilgrimage tourism practices in the study location. Based on the outcome of interaction 82 items were identified related to service proportion components. The collected variables were further discussed with experience priest of different temples, academic and field experts. There were some variable which found to be irrelevant and repeated were removed from the content. There were around 52 items or variables were retained for data collection purposes. Initially 60 respondents and other stakeholders were contacted with reframed items in the form of questionnaire with suitable scaling. The obtained responses were tested for its validity as well as reliability. The required validity and reliability were obtained (cronbach alpha value 0.844 through test – retest pattern). The basic requirement of satisfaction of reliability permitted to undertake further data collection process.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.844	52

Source: Computed Primary Data

Sample Size Determination

The required sample size for the study was arrived through proportion method since the sample nature is infinite. An initial probing was carried out among the 70 tourists namely international (27), national (32) and local (11). There were two statements probed with the above said respondents (Are you getting real devotional values and Are you satisfied about the facilities during your visit). The obtained responses for two statements is Yes (50%) and No (50%) were applied in the below given formula to determine the sample size

$$n = Z^2 p.q/(SE)^2 = 385$$

The standard sample estimation for infinite population is around 385, but as for this present study is concerned, the visit of tourist population increases consistently which is estimated around 8 lakhs in the year 2012 (an average of 50,000 to 70,000 increase per annum according to the survey report Tamilnadu Tourism Development Corporation). In accordance to that, the calculated sample size will not deliver precision accuracy. In order to obtain the incremental proportion of sample representation to explore the better fit of the model, it was decided to increase the sample size as 846.

Instrument Design

The questionnaire comprised two parts. The first part covers the personal and location background of respondents. The second part comprised various aspects focus to explore service proportion related aspects, satisfaction and value creation. The responses were measured through Likert scale (for example Background of temples are historical and life worthy) and which measured through the interval scale namely strongly disagree to strongly agree. The obtained responses were further verified for its reliability and which also gave the same r value of 0.844. The obtained responses for 52 variables were explored for factor identification through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) through SPSS 19.0 version. The outcome of exploratory factor analysis identified nine factors namely service content (4 items), service charges (4 items), service promotion (3 items), service place value (3 items), ambience (3 items), service providers (4 items), process (4 items), tourist satisfaction (3 items) and tourist value creation (acquired value- 3 items). Subsequently, the obtained

factors are modeled for structural equation and path goal purposes. The structural equation model helped to validate the conceptual model. The exogenous constructs like service content, service charges, service promotion, service place value, ambience, service providers and process tested for its significant influence on tourist satisfaction (first order endogenous) and subsequently the significant influence of tourist satisfaction on tourist acquired value (second order endogenous). In addition to that the model also validated the indirect influence of service marketing constitutes on tourist acquired value and where in which tourist satisfaction kept as mediator. . The below table shows the extracted items along with the underlined factors.

Sample Characteristics

The sample representation of this study comprises heterogeneous population, in terms of their age 32 percent belong to less than 40 age group, 38 percent between 41 to 50 and 30 percent represents above 50 age group. Among the respondents, 41 percent are male and 59 percent are female. Regarding their occupational background 23 percent are employed, 28 percent are performing own business, 11 percent are students and 38 percent are homemakers and other categories. The nativity background of sample respondents inclines that 47 percent comes from other states in India, 29 percent represents other districts in Tamilnadu and remaining 24 percent are international tourist. In terms of visiting frequency 57 percent are revisiting and 43 percent are visiting for first time.

Table 2

Sl. No	Factor	Items (or) Variables	Factor Loadin g	Reliabilit y	Converge nt Validity	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Discrimina nt Validity
1	Tourist Acquired Value	My visit really makes me to feel worthwhile and everlasting memories	.889	.806	0.87	0.71	0.812
2		Employee of temples are well trained and courteous	.875	.804			
3		Visit of Kanchipuram temple makes me to feel a divine power	.865	.806			
4		Employees are approachable	.860	.794			
5		Employees are capable of speaking domestic and foreign language	.845	.796			
6		Visits of temple give me religious faith and ritual values	.702	.795			
7	Service Evidence	Operating time of temples are convenient and adequate	.858	.797	0.84	0.72	0.839
8		Temple surroundings are protected with security	.840	.793			
9		Important temple are connected by frequent train	.823	.798			

		and road facility					
10	Service Process	There are renowned archeological temples available at Kanchipuram	.888	.808	0.87	0.76	0.721
11		Temple visits in Kanchipuram gives post relief for various issues	.860	.807			
12		Temples in Kanchipuram carries social and devotional values	.855	.806			
13	Service Content	Visit of temples at kachipuram makes me to feel medical and scientific value of these destination	.868	.801	0.82	0.67	0.893
14		Visit help me to learn cultural values and vedic powers	.831	.802			
15		I would like to see other uncovered temple in Kanchipuram	.747	.800			
16	Service charges	Temples are charging affordable price for darshan	.875	.805	0.84	0.69	0.736
17		Temples are maintained with ritual values and religious faith	.804	.808			
18		Over cost of visting important temple is optimum	.752	.812			
19		The spending for temples visits are optimum	.778	.834			
20	Tourist Satisfaction	Nominal charges are claimed for pooja's, archana's and parihar	.941	.806	0.92	0.84	0.834
21		shops in and around the temple sell the items at affordable cost	.913	.803			
22		Temple location are easy to reach	.893	.805			
23	Service Providers	Adequate darshan time is given for each visitors	.909	.798	0.88	0.74	0.857
24		Every temple comprise suitable manpower	.905	.800			
25		Registration process for special darshan and pooja are very simple	.765	.799			
26		The temple employees are courteous and listening our needs	.782	.778			
27	Service Promotion	Background of temples are historical and lifeworthy	.893	.801	0.84	0.71	0.743
28		Temples are constructed with natural effect and value of science	.875	.809			
29		There are value centered temple at Kanchipuram	.755	.806			

30	Service place value	Priest service in temple are highly intellectual and well know ledged in vedas	.819	.805	0.82	0.67	0.888
31		Mantra's chanted in temple reflect positive vibration	.816	.804			
32		It reflects historical monuments and heritages	.823	0.897			

Source: Computed Primary Data

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Structural Equation Model)

The extracted items from EFA were grouped under the constructs namely service content (4 items), service charges (4 items) , service promotion (3 items) , service place value (3 items), ambience (3 items) , service providers (4 items) , process (4 items), tourist satisfaction (3 items) and tourist value creation (acquired value- 3 items) were conceptualized as a hypothesis model where in which the service related factors were taken an exogenous variables and its direct influence on tourist satisfaction, indirect influence on tourist acquired value as well as direct influence of tourist satisfaction on tourist acquired value and mediating role of tourist satisfaction between service mix aspects and tourist acquired value were taken for confirmatory factor analysis via structural equation and path models.

Initially all constructs with loaded items were tested for its unidimensionality and in which the items with standardized regression weight more than 0.7 and squared multiple correlation value more than 0.4 were retained. The extracted measured items from EFA under the underlined constructs were retained (since all items shown standardized regression weight more than 0.7 and squared multiple correlation 0.4) for confirmatory factor analysis.

In order to fit the constructs for the model under model testing, measurement fit was tested. Under the measurement fit the required fit indices were obtained (annexure in the table 3), the structural equation as well path goal model were framed and tested. The fit indices results shown in the below table meets the prescribed standard of fit indices more than or equal to 0.90 and error approximation is less than 0.08 as well as $CMIN/DF < 5$ indicates the data fit the model and further permit the hypothesized model for structural equation as well path goal processes.

Model Fit Indices of the Measurement Model

Table 3

Index of Fit	Chi-square (df)	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSE A
Prescribed	-	$\leq 2 - 5.0$	≥ 0.90	> 0.80	≥ 0.95	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08
Obtained Value	1090.738 (369)	2.956	0.917	0.896	0.925	0.949	0.940	0.949	0.049

Source: Computed Primary Data

Measurement Fit Model

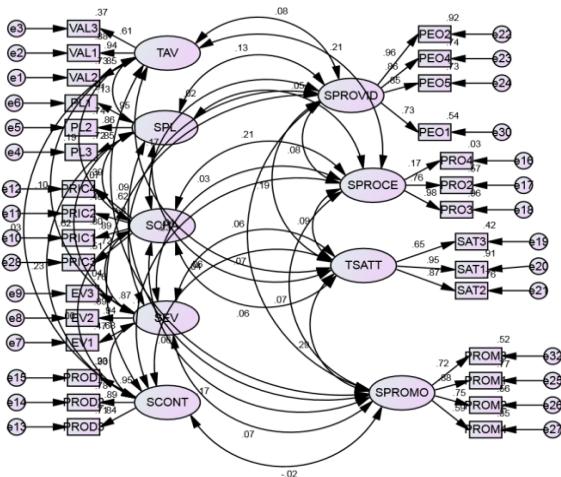


Figure 2
Measurement Model

Note: TAV- Tourist Acquired Value, SPL- Service Place Location Value, SC- Service Charges, SEV- Service Evidences, SCONT- Service Content, SPROVID- Service Providers, SPROCE- Service Process, TSATT- Tourist Satisfaction, SPROMO- Service Promotion

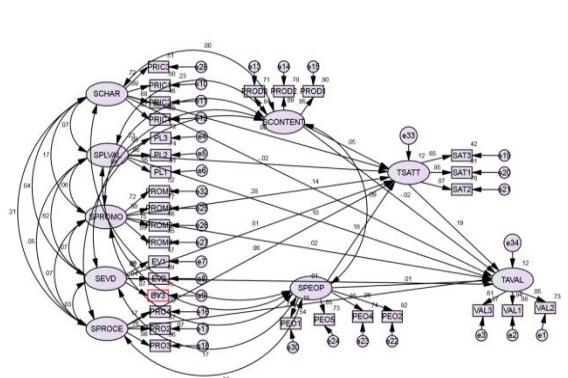


Figure 3
SEM

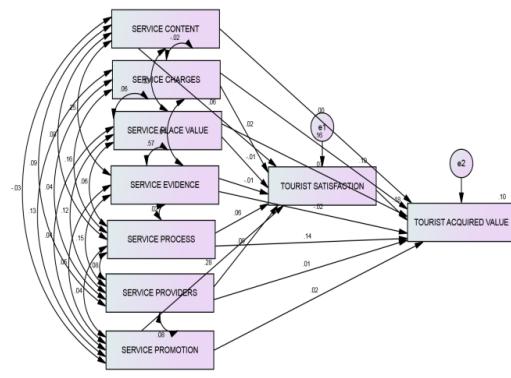


Figure 4
Path Diagram

Note: TAV- Tourist Acquired Value, SPL- Service Place Location Value, SC- Service Charges, SEV- Service Evidences, SCONT- Service Content, SPROVID- Service Providers, SPROCE- Service Process, TSATT- Tourist Satisfaction, SPROMO- Service Promotion

Note:

The present model developed by the researchers is tested and undergone validity and reliability of constructs as well as scales. The model is suitable for undertaking research and further studies in the field of pilgrimage tourism with special reference to marketing influx. The prescribed model is labeled as VRS Model (an exclusive model for Pilgrimage tourism related service proportion mix)

Result and Discussion

The measurement model after pooling all the constructs and find its fit validity (since all the fit indices were obtained), the structural equation model and path model were explored and tested. The purpose of structural equation model and path model is to test the hypotheses of impact of service marketing proportion adopted by temples on tourist satisfaction (direct), tourist acquired value (indirect) and as well as the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction between service marketing proportion and tourist acquired value. The below table shows the outcome of hypotheses tested through path goal model.

Table 5

Hypotheses	path			Standardized β	SE	CR	P	Result
H1: There is a significant direct influence of service content on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Content	.031	.019	1.617	.106	Not supported
H2: There is a significant direct influence of service charges on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Charges	.019	.038	.510	.610	Not supported
H3: There is a significant direct influence of service place value on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Place Value	-.004	.024	-.158	.875	Not supported
H4: There is a significant direct influence of service evidence on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Evidence	-.005	.023	-.209	.835	Not supported
H5: There is a significant direct influence of service process on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Process	.051	.031	1.657	.097 **	Supported
H6: There is a significant direct influence of service providers on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Providers	.053	.021	2.567	.010 ***	Supported
H7: There is a significant direct influence of service promotion on tourist satisfaction	Tourist Satisfaction	<---	Service Promotion	.290	.036	8.119	***	Supported
H8: There is a significant direct influence of tourist satisfaction on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Tourist Satisfaction	.175	.034	5.222	***	Supported
H9: There is a significant indirect influence of service content on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Content	.001	.018	.037	.971	Not supported

H10: There is a significant indirect influence of service charges on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Charges	.163	.036	4.534	***	Supported
H11: There is a significant indirect influence of service evidence on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Evidence	-.011	.022	-.500	.617	Not supported
H12: There is a significant indirect influence of service place value on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Place Value	.039	.023	1.670	.095* *	Supported
H13: There is a significant indirect influence of service process on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Process	.120	.030	4.074	***	Supported
H14: There is a significant indirect influence of service providers on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Providers	.005	.020	.247	.805	Not supported
H15: There is a significant indirect influence of service promotion on tourist acquired value	Tourist Acquired Value	<---	Service Promotion	.016	.035	.457	.648	Not supported

Source: Computed Primary Data, *** - significant at 5% level, **- 10% level of significance

Table 6 -Standardized Indirect Effects - Two Tailed Significance (BC) (Group number 1 - Default Model)

Attributes	Service providers	Service Promotion	Service Evidence	Service Process	Service place value	Service Charges	Service content
Tourist Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Acquired Value	.016	.003	.751	.028	.846	.531	.061*

Note: *- at 10% level

Regarding the mediation effect of tourist satisfaction between service proportion and tourist acquired value, its partly mediates with respect to service provider, service promotion, service process and service content and completely mediates with respect to service evidence and service place value

Table 5 highlights the outcome of path goal model. Regarding the direct effect of service proportion components on customer satisfaction, it is observe that service process, providers and promotion have significant impact on tourist satisfaction and where as other components like service content, evidence, charges and service place values did not have significant impact. In terms of the indirect influence of service proportion components on tourist acquired value it is evident that service charges, process and service place value have significant role and where in which other components did not significant influence indirectly on tourist acquired value. It is also observe that tourist satisfaction has direct impact on tourist acquired value. It is also observed a partial mediation of tourist satisfaction between service proportion components and tourist acquired value in terms of service content, evidence, promotion and service providers. Regarding the direct impact of service proportion components on tourist satisfaction the direct influence is around 0.030 to 0.034 (standardized beta estimates (β) and regarding the indirect influence of service proportion components on tourist acquired value it is around 0.030 to 0.036 (standardized beta (β) estimates). The impact of tourist satisfaction on tourist acquired value is 0.034.

Conclusion and Implications

The study of service proportion components on tourist satisfaction and tourist acquired values with special reference to devotional cum pilgrimage tourism at Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu, India designed to understand the causal relationship between service marketing mix components namely service content, charges, evidence, promotion, providers, place value and process on tourist satisfaction and tourist acquired value. The path model outlines that there is direct impact of service providers, process and promotion on tourist satisfaction. The service charges, process and place value have significant indirect influence on tourist acquired value. In addition to that it is found that there is a strong and positive influence of tourist satisfaction on acquired value. Subsequently tourist satisfaction partly mediates with respect to providers, process, promotion and content. It completely mediates with respect to service evidence, charges and place value.

Kanchipuram is becoming one among the illustrious tourism destination in very recent period in India and it is an unique tourism hub with multifaceted tourism background like devotion, entertainment, culture and archeological. But the core tourism viability of this place is pilgrimage, so the temples need to concentrate more on service proportion components. The integrated action from service providers, local bodies, state, and central government along with commercial entity concentrate more on service promotion and service process in order to delights the tourist and provide them the real devotional value.

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