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FACTORS AFFECTING SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY

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Abstract

The COVID-19-induced recession has severely hurt the tourism sector. This study emphasises the potential contribution of sustainable tourism R&D to the long-term viability of the hotel industry. The main findings show how travel's economic and cultural value is impacted by the spread of COVID-19. The decision to take a vacation is influenced by a variety of psychological factors as well as the traveler's situation and intended location. The main goals of this study are to understand how tourists feel about eco-friendly vacations and to identify the factors that influence the growth of this kind of tourism. To determine the factors that were most strongly connected with a desire to engage in this type of travel, structural equation models were used to analyse the attitudes, motivations, and perceptions of tourists towards the advantages of sustainable tourism development.

KEYWORDS: *Tourism; Factors; Sustainability; Hospitality; Travel; Travelers.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is a fascinating destination for history fans and cultural vultures because it is home to one of the oldest Civilizations in the world. The cruise, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, eco-tourism, movie, rural, and religious subdivisions of India's travel and tourism industry all have significant growth potential. India attracts tourists from all over the world who want to experience the nation's many distinctive and fascinating sights and sounds.

The future of the travel and tourist business is in serious doubt as a result of the recent Corona virus epidemic. As a result, there is currently an unprecedented worldwide economic, health, and social catastrophe. As hotels stay vacant, flights are cancelled, and nations throughout the world apply travel restrictions, the travel and tourist industry has suffered greatly. There has never been a pandemic that poses a larger threat to the tourism sector. People prefer to conserve more money and spend less on useless products during economic downturns, whether they are local, national, or worldwide. Since it affects both domestic and foreign travellers, the COVID-19 outbreak represents a significant concern for the tourism sector. Everyone is expected to put their health and safety above their travel plans as a matter of course. People tend to remain indoors during a pandemic because they think their houses are safer than public places. Tourists will only congregate in less busy locations that are likewise pristine because personal cleanliness is so important. The populace will be more selective than ever in their upcoming travels. Out of fear, people will quit using public transportation and start driving themselves to work. Comparatively speaking, India's ranking of 105th out of 140 nations in the 2019 World Economic Forum report on health and hygiene is less than ideal. This implies that efforts to promote travel and draw in tourists will need to be stepped up.

A thorough grasp of the people who could be interested in those activities is necessary for producing, advertising, and selling in tourist areas. Businesses can improve the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns by learning more about the vacation preferences of their target market. Knowing when clients will contact you would make it possible to allocate resources more carefully and target your advertising. Companies will also learn tips on how to persuade customers to purchase the upgraded versions of their goods and services, which is a benefit. It goes without saying that creating successful advertising campaigns requires a thorough understanding of customer behaviours.

The environment, the tourism industry, the people who live there, and the opportunities they offer are all interconnected, and there are mutual influences between the environment and related problems in the tourism industry as well as to the country as a whole. As a result, it is imperative to take the right steps toward its development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study, Ciacci et al. go into further detail about environmental issues in addition to logistics and infrastructure (2021). Experts concur that a strong connection between environmental protection, logistical improvement, and infrastructure development is essential for a successful Sustainable Tourism plan, despite the fact that both objective and subjective factors have an impact on environmental quality.

The success of the tourism business depends on security issues including hotel hygiene standards and privacy, according to both Jiang and Wen (2020) and Kourgiantakis et al. (2021). Additionally, it can be inferred that consumers favour impersonal tourism, such as ecotourism and adventure tourism.

Khan (2020) suggested the idea of "physical distance tourism" as a solution to

make people feel comfortable while still utilising tourism services in his assessment of the tourism sector from an ecological point of view.

Jones and Comfort (2020) offer a thorough review of the travel sector, including how the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted consumer spending and strategies for sustainability. Mobility is a crucial idea in tourism studies and is frequently used to refer to the capacity to freely move from one location to another.

The implications of COVID-19 on the tourist industry have been studied in studies on everything from post-pandemic travel plans to forecasts of future consumer behaviour. If tourism growth is allowed to continue unchecked, the distinctive personality and natural resources of each sensitive tourist site are in danger. The quality of the local environment has a significant impact on the local tourism industry, yet this industry may be jeopardised by the region's rising visitor appeal. As a result, it's critical to promote long-term growth in the region (Vazhakkatte Thazhathethil) (2020).

Pre- and post-pandemic attitudes and travel intentions have been thoroughly analysed by Li et al. (2021). The writers reach the following judgements: (1) Intra-pandemic perception is important for post-pandemic travel intention; and (2) post-pandemic travel behaviour differs greatly from intention.

Chen et al. came to similar conclusions about the impact of the pandemic on customer perception and post-crisis tourism products (2020). Many people are likely to stay closer to home in the wake of the outbreak because they have changed their minds about travelling due to the psychological risks that flying entails.

In order to draw conclusions and provide advice for the tourism industry and government, Sigala (2020) examined the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on

tourism income during three stages (response, recovery, and reset).

Only if the needs of its paying customers are prioritised can a successful tourism industry be sustained. The intention is for visitors to constantly remember your website. It is crucial that they are informed about environmental issues and actively promote eco-friendly travel. Any "green" tourism product must strike a balance between the requirements of communities, businesses, and visitors from both the present and the future. The term "green" can be used to describe any of the tourist industry's different subdivisions, regardless of how large or small, urban or rural it may be (Chin et al. 2018).

Ecotourism and an expanding economy are indissolubly related. The travel industry is now universally regarded as a successful business venture, according to Mai and Pham (2017). Simply put, eco-friendly travel is profitable and a healthy economy are both great for the tourism industry. The growth of ecotourism is seen as an essential instrument for the economic and social well-being of all communities and as a wonderful opportunity to assist develop the workforce of the future (Seifi and Ghobadi, 2017).

According to Mohaidin et al., a tourist's attitude toward the environment is one of the psychological elements that influences whether or not they decide to travel to a sustainable place (2017).

Pham and Khin (2015) placed economic growth above environmental preservation for a brief period of time. Given that tourism is Vietnam's main economic engine, it requires thoughtful strategies for long-term growth. Due to this, the tourism sector is now largely regarded as a vital economic engine that can only expand through making use of the significant value of its diverse range of resource types.

This tactic was employed by the responsible tourism mission in Kerala, and it assisted other regions in maximising the

benefits of RT (Responsible tourist) initiatives. The mission is primarily concerned with maintaining a level financial, social, and environmental playing field, which is why it fervently supports the "triple bottom line" idea. In addition to fostering local development and eradicating poverty, responsible tourism promotes sustainable growth and green economic principles. As a result of the mission's efforts, farmers, traditional artisans, and marginalised people will all profit financially and socially. It turns out that this was a pretty clever idea that garnered many accolades. Many different scholarly viewpoints have been used to analyse Kumarakom's efforts to develop a sustainable tourism business (Chettiparamb and Kokkranikal 2012).

Research objectives:

- To review and identify factors affecting to develop tourism sustainably.
- To determine the impact of factors on sustainable tourism development.

Research hypothesis:

H1: Economic aspects related to tourism significantly influences sustainable tourism development.

H2: Socio-cultural aspects related to tourism significantly influences sustainable tourism development.

H3: Management aspects related to tourism significantly influences sustainable tourism development.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic details (N=217)

Measures	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	123	57
	Female	94	43
Age	Below 24 years	43	20
	25-34 years	137	63
	35-44 years	31	15

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Respondents

The purpose of this quantitative empirical study was to investigate the environmental, social, and economic issues that affect the sustainability of tourism in South India. Using a purposive selection method, 217 people were polled at 6 major tourist destinations in the cities of southern India to help shape the development of a model for sustainable tourism in the country.

A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to evaluate each questionnaire item.

Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha were all run on the data in SPSS version 26. In addition, a SEM model was implemented in AMOS to examine how three tourism-related factors affect the growth of ecotourism.

Measures:

After reviewing the relevant literature, we decided to employ a preexisting scale for the research variables in this study. The tourism-related components utilised in the study were selected using data collected by GSTC. (2017) and Sitepu et al (2019).

The dependent variable (sustainable tourism development) was measured using three items derived from the research of Delgado & López (2018) and Sitepu et al. (2019).

	45-54 years	5	2
Education qualification	High school	24	11
	Bachelor's degree	115	53
	Master's degree	59	27
	Professional degree	20	9

Source: Primary survey

4.1 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation and eigenvalues greater than one was used to conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

KMO's "Kaiser-Myer-Olkin" test value was 0.899, and Bartlett's test value was statistically significant, hence the sample size was adequate. The 15 items were reduced to 4 factors using the Eigen value criteria, which can account for 84.13

percent of the total variance. We only looked at the items with loadings higher than 0.7. The results shown on the screen graphic also validated the extraction of four factors with Eigen values greater than 1.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the dependability of the scale. Table 2 displays the alpha values for the various constructs, and since all of them are greater than 0.7 (the cutoff for validity), it is clear that the dependability of the scale is high.

Table 2: Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha value:

Variables	Items	Items loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Economic aspects	Support for community	.868	0.924
	Tourism awareness and education	.864	
	Local community participation	.949	
	Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade	.856	
Socio-cultural aspects	Attraction protection	.892	0.901
	Cultural heritage protection	.900	
	Intellectual property	.887	
	Visitor behavior	.878	
Management aspects	Sustainability standards	.914	0.865
	Crisis and emergency management	.882	
	Sustainability standards	.919	
	Destination management organization	.922	

Sustainable tourism development	The community is aware of the importance of sustainable tourism	.909	0.915
	Seen a lot of environmentally friendly tourism events	.853	
	There are regional long-term plans that involve stakeholders	.894	

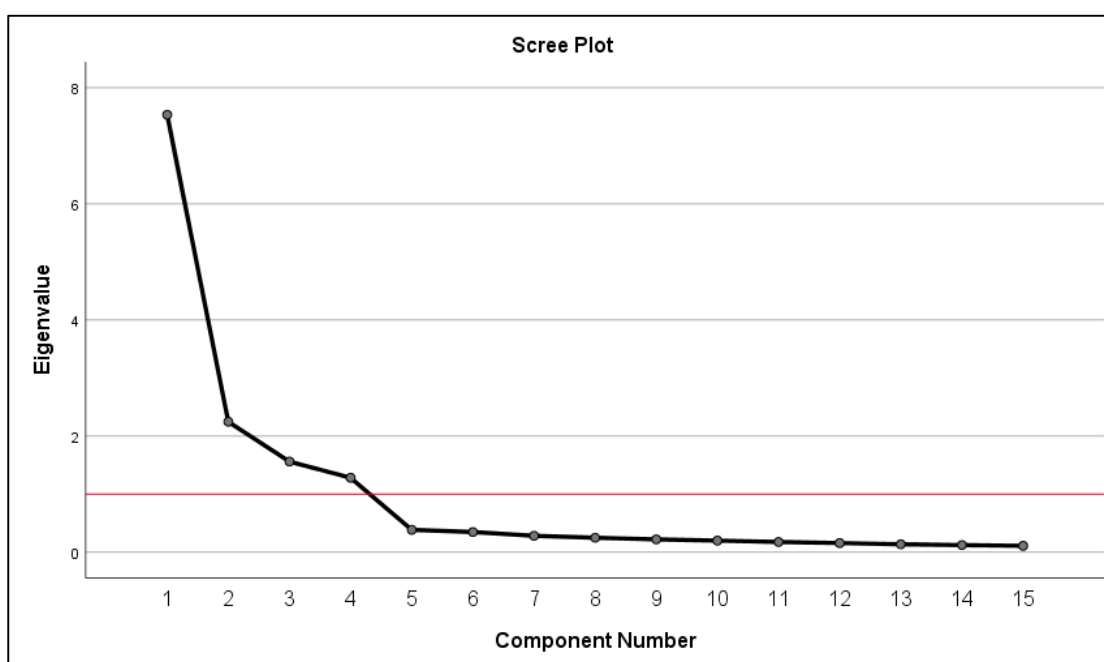


Figure 1: Scree diagram of factor extraction

Structural Model

Before testing the results of the hypotheses, the researcher examined the adaptability of the structural model using AMOS version 24.0, and **Figure 3** shows the results. For the prediction of the goodness-of-fit index of the model, the results were expressed as follows: Chi-squares =138.402, DF =84, CMIN/DF =1.648, CFI = 0.983, GFI = 0.923, AGFI = 0.889, NFI = 0.955, TLI = 0.977, and RMSEA = 0.055. The good indicators such as CFI, GFI TLI all are having value above the threshold of 0.9 indicating good model fit and bad indicator

index RMSEA is also below of 0.08 supporting overall good fit of the proposed structural model.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the regression analysis are detailed in Table 3. To test the hypotheses, the study used critical ratio or T values above 1.96 and the path having p values <0.05 will be considered as significant. After referring table 3 and figure 2, the results confirmed that economic aspects or benefits gained through tourism positively

influences sustainable tourism development ($\beta = 0.373$, $p = 0.000$) as p value < 0.05 ; thus, H1 was supported, and the impact is significant.

The results also revealed that socio-cultural aspects of tourism are leading to influence sustainable tourism development significantly with $\beta = 0.219$, $p = 0.001$. As the CR value 3.223 is above table value of 1.96 and p value less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance confirmed the acceptance of hypothesis H2.

Finally, the sustainable tourism development is also affected by

management aspects positively. The β value (0.0186) of this path is lowest one compared to above two paths, but it is significant as p value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.016$). Therefore, hypothesis H3 was accepted which state significant influence of management aspect on sustainable tourism development.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.41 indicate that 41% of variance in sustainable tourism development is explained by three predictors mainly: economic, socio-culture and management aspects of tourism.

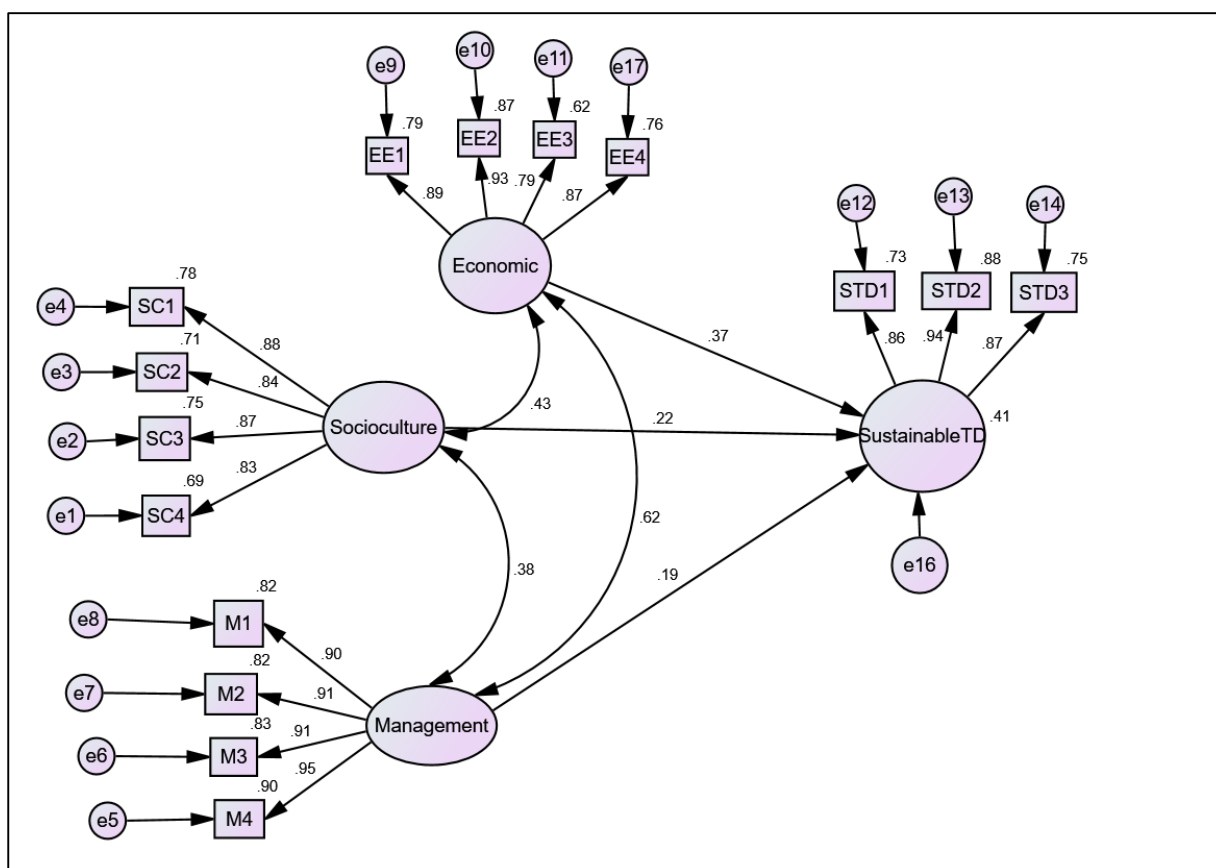


Figure 2: Structure Model

Note: Sustainable TD: Sustainable tourism development.

Hypotheses	Outcome variables		Causal Variables	SE.	CR.	P	Path coefficient	Result
H1	Sustainable tourism development	←	Economic	0.087	4.535	0.000	0.373	Accepted
H2	Sustainable tourism development	←	Socio-cultural	0.062	3.223	0.001	0.219	Accepted
H3	Sustainable tourism development	←	Management	0.073	2.418	0.016	0.186	Accepted

Table 3: Path coefficients of the Structural model

Note: SE; Standard error, CR; Critical ratio, Path coefficient: Standardized regression weights and p: probability of significance.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research was to identify the aspects of tourism that have the greatest bearing on long-term sustainability. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of economics, society/culture, and management on ecotourism development. In this study, we employed quantitative methods of data collecting and analysis, such as structural equation modelling. The results of the inquiry are in line with the alternative explanation.

However, all three factors have a considerable impact on the expansion of sustainable tourism, with standardised regression weights indicating that economic advantages achieved from tourism in a specific city have the biggest impact. In their respective studies, Sitepu et al. (2019) and Uslu et al. (2020) came to similar conclusions.

If a city or destination is serious about growing sustainable tourism, it must take into account all of the factors that influence the business.

Financial benefits to locals as a result of tourist expansion are found to be the single

most important predictor of sustainable tourism development. If a government wants to attract tourists, it needs to offer costs that are competitive with those of other countries.

For both cultural and practical reasons, local governments must keep a close eye on the travel agency business. Developing a tourist industry requires careful forethought over the long term if ancient buildings, religious practises, traditional dress, and other cultural artefacts are to be safeguarded. When done right, sustainable tourism is a technique of preserving cultural practises for future generations through the moral and systematic management of society's limited resources.

Businesses in the T&T (Travel and Tourism) industries need to take the first step towards recovery by learning about the T&T (Travel and Tourism) customer, their concerns, and their specific aim in reinventing themselves in the face of the crisis. Businesses in T&T would do well to focus on perfecting solutions that help customers relax and unwind from the stresses of daily life. This calls for creative problem-solving strategies and a solid familiarity with the challenges faced by the

intended audience. Better security at hotels, airports, and other tourist attractions; capitalising on the uptick in interest in domestic and international travel; and manufacturing cheaper products are all possibilities for reviving a struggling economy. If businesses in T&T wish to ease the minds of their anxious customers, they will need to reevaluate their approaches to customer service. One strategy for doing so is to give loyalty programme participants access to timely updates and a unique selling proposition in the travel and tourism industry. Maintaining and expanding your network of potential customers is more crucial than ever.

This study lays the groundwork for future research into the development of the tourism industry, the outcomes of COVID-19, and their effects on local communities. Future scholars will have a better notion of how to apply sustainable tourism practises if they learn from the blunders of those already working in the area. Before extrapolating the concept to a global scale, it was important to understand the effects of responsible tourism in specific locations. More research into the connections between ecotourism and responsible travel would be fascinating.

6. LIMITATIONS

This paper was written for destination marketers and crisis managers everywhere, not only those in countries going through a similar situation. The data gathered for this paper's analysis of the South Indian market can be utilised as a standard against which other market studies in India or elsewhere can be measured. The long-term effects of the pandemic on people's propensity to travel after COVID-19 has passed are crucial to think about, as this study only looks at a single moment in time. These findings further stress the need of studying tourist tastes and behaviour in future studies of sustainable tourism.

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