

SATISFACTION OF VISITORS REGARDING THEME PARKS - A STUDY IN ERODE CITY

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Abstract: As the tourism industry has a significant impact in the economy of different nations in the world. In the modern worldwide tourist reality, its growth is accompanied by the need for more rational, more co-ordinated and more efficient management of resources that contribute to the formation of tourist product. Theme park attraction has able to improve destination image, enhance tourism, benefit the economy and provide education, recreation and entertainment opportunity for people. Other than that, theme park offer employability opportunity for local residence to sustain the country and accelerates the country economic growth. It provides services such as accommodation, online booking services, night entertainment, activities and transportation services other than the rides, performances, retail outlets, food and beverage services. The present study has been undertaken to analyse the visitors' satisfaction and problems in Erode city regarding theme parks. The most famous theme parks selected for the study include Black Thunder, KovaiKondattam, Maharaja theme park, Chill Out, Athisayam and Wonderla.

INTRODUCTION

Theme park has gradually evolved into a major type of tourist attraction. For certain location, it is the main reason for visitations. Theme parks have grown rapidly in number and importance during the last decades. Now-a-days competition in the theme park industry is growing tremendously. Not only in terms of an increasing number of parks, but also relative to other uses of leisure time such as those created by the introduction of new technologies like multimedia. The visitors are becoming more selective in terms of both the destinations they choose to visit and the activities they want to undertake once they have arrived at the destination. Design and construction of such successful theme park requires outstanding creativity and professional knowledge of logistics and operational requirements. The visitors' satisfaction level determines their visit and re-visit propensity. In this aspect, the study has made an attempt to analyse the visitors' level of satisfaction and problems towards theme parks analysed by using Chi-Square Test and Weighted Average Score Ranking Analysis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's world of rapidly changing technology, visitors' preferences are also characterized by just changes. To meet this changing environment, the theme park industry has to constantly innovate and understand the latest visitors' needs and wants. Visitors' behaviour provides invaluable guidelines to marketers on new technological development which they explore. The growing rate and sustainability of the theme park industry is affected by the attendance of the visitors.

Today, almost every theme park organization is facing the marketing challenges in business environment due to the basic characteristics of services. A growing number of theme park industries now find themselves competing in the national and international environment. Hence, it has become the duty of the theme park management has concern to know the visitors' satisfaction. Based on the above background, the present study has made an attempt to analyse the visitors' satisfaction in Erode city regarding theme parks. This study provides answer for the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of satisfaction of the respondents towards theme parks?
- 2) What are the problems faced by the respondents towards theme parks?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- ❖ To know the visitors' level of satisfaction regarding theme parks.
- ❖ To identify the problems faced by the visitors regarding theme parks.
- ❖ To offer suitable suggestions based on the study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study has been undertaken to examine the visitors' satisfaction in Erode city regarding theme parks. The scope of the study is restricted with the objectives of studying the visitors' satisfaction and problems faced by the respondents regarding theme parks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study on visitors' satisfaction regarding theme parks has been limited to the respondents located in Erode city only. In order to realise the objectives, the primary data is used. The required primary data have been collected through a survey method from the respondents during the period of April 2017 to July 2017. Besides the primary data, the secondary data were also collected from various sources like newspapers, magazines and websites to make highlights on theme parks. The convenient sampling technique was employed in the selection of the sample. The number of items selected from the total population constitutes the sample size. Sample of 200 respondents were selected to carry out the present study in Erode city. The collected primary data has been analysed by applying important statistical tools such as Chi-square Test and Weighted Average Score Ranking Technique.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The result and the analysis made in this study depends fully on the information given by the respondents.
- ❖ The data given by the respondents are limited to their own perception, opinion, emotion, knowledge, feelings and awareness.
- ❖ The data collected for the studies are quantitative being subject to personal bias of the respondents.
- ❖ Due to time constraint, the sample size was limited to 200 respondents and the findings might not be applicable to the total population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the findings of the study:

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS

THEME PARKS – CHI – SQUARE TEST

A comprehensive interview schedule is defined to collect the data from the sample respondents. RensisLikert's method of summated ratings is applied to find out the aggregate satisfaction level of the respondents by considering 15 attributes which are identified as significant.

The sample respondents are called to respond to each attributes relating to satisfaction of the theme park, using 5 point scale ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied.

TOTAL SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

To measure the satisfaction level of the respondents, a three point scale has been adopted. Further, the respondents are classified into low level, medium level and high level. It is shown in the following Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1
TOTAL SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

Satisfaction level	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Low level	29	14.5
Medium level	124	62
High level	47	23.5
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

The survey has revealed that out of 200 respondents, 14.5per cent of the respondents' satisfaction level is low, 62 per cent of the respondents have medium level of satisfaction and remaining 23.5 per cent of the respondents' satisfaction level is high.

Hence, the majority (62%) of the respondents fall under medium level of satisfaction towards theme parks.

VISITORS' LEVEL OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS THEME PARKS –

CHI – SQUARE TEST

Generally, satisfaction level with regard to any service depends upon the socio economic factors, which has been identified as gender, age, educational qualification, occupational status, income level and area of residence.

To examine the association between satisfaction level and independent variables, the following null hypotheses has been framed.

Ho: There is no significant association between various independent variables (Gender, Age, Educational qualification, Occupational status, Income level, Area of residence) and satisfaction level of the respondents towards theme parks.

This hypotheses has been tested with Chi-square Test at 5 per cent level of significance. It is shown in the following Table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2
SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS: CHI-SQUARE TEST

Variable	Level of significant	Degrees of freedom	Table value	Calculated value	Rejected/ Accepted
Gender	5%	2	5.991	3.166	Accepted
Age	5%	6	12.592	11.263	Accepted
Educational Qualification	5%	6	12.592	11.339	Accepted
Occupational Status	5%	8	15.5	17.096	Rejected
Monthly Family Income	5%	4	9.488	24.775	Rejected
Area of Residence	5%	4	9.488	2.379	Accepted

There is no significant association between gender, age, educational qualification, area of residence and satisfaction level of the respondents towards theme parks.

There is a close significant association between occupational status, monthly family income and satisfaction level of the respondents towards theme parks.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS THEMEPARKS

The problems faced by the respondents towards theme parks is then analysed by applying weighted average score ranking technique. It is shown in Table 1.3.

TABLE 1.3

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS THEME PARKS –WEIGHTED AVERAGE SCORE RANKING ANALYSIS

From the analysis, the majority of the respondents are facing problems towards theme park is inadequate parking facilities, thieves and non-easy accessibility.

Weighted score points(w)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total Score (ΣWX)	Weighted Average Score (\bar{X}_w)	Rank
RANK		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI			
FACTORS															
High cost	X	11	7	13	16	8	9	13	17	30	45	31	890	13.48	XI
	WX	121	70	117	128	56	54	65	68	90	90	31			
Over crowd	X	9	12	5	19	21	9	20	22	22	24	37	956	14.48	X
	WX	99	120	45	152	147	54	100	88	66	48	37			
Unfriendliness of the staff	X	21	10	19	17	27	25	17	21	14	13	16	1230	18.64	VI
	WX	231	100	171	136	189	150	85	84	42	26	16			
Lack of cleanliness	X	10	24	23	19	22	14	22	20	17	14	15	1231	18.65	V
	WX	110	240	207	152	154	84	110	80	51	28	15			
Inconvenient visiting time	X	16	24	19	16	18	15	17	12	19	19	25	1184	17.94	VII
	WX	176	240	171	128	126	90	85	48	57	38	25			
Water contamination	X	21	15	13	16	13	21	17	13	24	21	26	1120	16.97	IX
	WX	231	150	117	128	91	126	85	52	72	42	26			
Unhealthy foods	X	13	19	22	21	15	18	16	16	19	24	17	1178	17.85	VIII
	WX	143	190	198	168	105	108	80	64	57	48	17			
Thieves	X	24	22	22	24	19	15	20	22	16	10	6	1359	20.59	II
	WX	264	220	198	192	133	90	100	88	48	20	6			
Non-easy accessibility of the theme park	X	24	21	28	16	15	27	17	17	18	8	9	1353	20.50	III
	WX	264	210	252	128	105	162	85	68	54	16	9			
Inadequate parking facilities	X	25	27	18	22	20	26	21	12	7	11	11	1386	21.00	I
	WX	275	270	162	176	140	156	105	48	21	22	11			
Difficulty in understanding signs	X	26	19	18	14	22	21	20	28	14	11	7	1313	19.89	IV
	WX	286	190	162	112	154	126	100	112	42	22	7			
Total		200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200			

SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ It is found from the analysis, the majority of the respondents have medium level of satisfaction towards theme parks. Hence, it is suggested that, in order to get high level of satisfaction the management of theme parks should bring additional rides with low cost, improving personal safety and providing food at reasonable price with high quality.
- ❖ The study reveals that the majority of the respondents are facing the problem of inadequate parking facilities. Hence, it is suggested that theme parks management should provide adequate parking facilities and also feedback system must be made effective for knowing the grievances of the visitors and may take remedial measures to satisfy them.
- ❖ It is also suggested that the management of theme parks should concentrate more in providing better quality of entertainment services, providing good water facilities and modern entertainment facilities, to attract the target visitors.

CONCLUSION

Theme parks are the main motivator for tourists to visit the city where they are located and attract such visitors to an atmosphere of amusement, entertainment and new experiences. The study revealed that the most of the respondents have medium level of satisfaction towards theme parks. It can be concluded that the high quality of services and continuous quality improvement in the services of theme parks will definitely bring immense success to the theme parks and better services always attract more visitors. However, the better understanding of the specific perceptions of visitors is one of the essential factors that can contribute to the better business of the theme parks.

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