

A Study On The Tourism Intentions Of Booking Agencies With Reference To Coimbatore City

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How to cite this article: Shanghavi . C,U. Vani (2024) A Study On The Tourism Intentions Of Booking Agencies With Reference To Coimbatore City. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 27351-27356

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the tourism intentions of booking agencies operating in Coimbatore City, focusing on the factors influencing their decision-making processes and client preferences. Through a comprehensive survey and qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, were identified with the primary motivations, challenges and trends shaping the tourism sector in the urban area. The findings reveal that local culture, infrastructure, digital transformation and customer service quality significantly impact the booking agencies' strategies and outcomes. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of tailored marketing approaches and the adoption of new technologies in enhancing competitive advantage. The insights gained from this research can aid policymakers and industry professionals in formulating strategies to boost tourism growth and improve service standards in Coimbatore City.

Keywords: *Tourism intentions, Booking agencies, Coimbatore City, Customer preferences, Digital transformation, Marketing strategies, Competitive advantage, Tourism growth.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a significant economic driver worldwide and cities like Coimbatore are increasingly recognizing its potential for growth and development. Booking agencies serve as pivotal entities within this ecosystem, facilitating the interaction between tourists and local tourism offerings. Understanding the intentions and strategies of booking agencies in Coimbatore City is crucial for optimizing tourism management and enhancing visitor experiences. This study aims to delve into the factors influencing booking agencies' decisions, including cultural attractions, infrastructure development, technological advancements and evolving customer preferences. By examining these dynamics, the study seeks to provide insights that can inform policymakers and industry stakeholders on how to effectively harness Coimbatore's tourism potential while addressing pertinent challenges.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Role of Booking Agencies in Tourism: Booking agencies play a crucial role in facilitating tourism by connecting travelers with various services such as accommodations, transportation, and activities (Smith, 2018). Their effectiveness in promoting destinations and managing customer expectations is pivotal for tourism development.

Factors Influencing Tourism Intentions: Studies have highlighted several factors that influence the intentions of booking agencies in promoting tourism. These include destination attractiveness, ease of access, cultural richness, and economic viability (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). Understanding these factors is essential for devising effective tourism strategies.

Impact of Digital Transformation: The advent of digital platforms and technologies has significantly transformed the operations of booking agencies. Digital tools such as online booking systems, social media marketing and personalized customer interactions have become integral to their business models (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Customer Preferences and Behavior: Customer preferences play a crucial role in shaping the strategies of booking agencies. Research indicates that modern travelers prioritize experiences, authenticity, and convenience, influencing booking decisions and service offerings (Kim & Lee, 2018).

Local Culture and Tourism Promotion: The promotion of local culture and heritage is a key strategy employed by booking agencies to attract tourists. Cultural authenticity and unique experiences often serve as major selling points in destination marketing (Richards & Wilson, 2007).

Challenges in Tourism Management: Booking agencies face various challenges in managing tourism effectively. These include competition from online travel agencies, fluctuating demand, regulatory issues, and sustainability concerns (Faulkner & Russell, 2000).

Infrastructure Development: The availability and quality of infrastructure, including transportation networks and hospitality facilities, significantly influence tourism development. Adequate infrastructure supports tourism growth by enhancing accessibility and visitor satisfaction (Song & Li, 2008).

Sustainable Tourism Practices: Increasingly, booking agencies are adopting sustainable tourism practices to mitigate environmental impacts and support local communities. Sustainable tourism initiatives can enhance destination attractiveness and contribute to long-term tourism sustainability (Hall, 2010).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growing importance of tourism in Coimbatore City, there remains a need to understand the specific intentions and decision-making processes of booking agencies operating within the region. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the factors that influence booking agencies' choices in promoting tourism services. Key areas of interest include how cultural attractions, infrastructural developments, technological advancements, and customer preferences impact their strategies. By uncovering these dynamics, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can guide stakeholders in enhancing tourism management strategies and improving overall visitor experiences in Coimbatore City.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on exploring the tourism intentions of booking agencies specifically within Coimbatore City. It aims to investigate the factors influencing their decision-making processes, including but not limited to cultural attractions, infrastructure development, digital advancements and evolving customer preferences. The study utilizes surveys and qualitative interviews to gather insights from key stakeholders within the booking agencies operating in Coimbatore. While the primary focus is on understanding the intentions of booking agencies, the study also aims to provide recommendations that can contribute to enhancing tourism strategies and experiences in Coimbatore City.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the primary factors influencing the tourism intentions of booking agencies operating in Coimbatore City.
2. To examine how cultural attractions and local infrastructure impact the strategic decisions of booking agencies in promoting tourism services.
3. To assess the role of technological advancements and digital platforms in shaping booking agencies' approaches to tourism management.
4. To provide recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of tourism strategies implemented by booking agencies in Coimbatore City, aimed at improving overall visitor experiences and fostering sustainable tourism growth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research: The research is descriptive in nature, aiming to comprehensively explore the tourism intentions of booking agencies in Coimbatore City.

Source of Data Collection:

Primary Data: Questionnaires were administered to booking agency managers and staff to gather firsthand insights into their tourism intentions and decision-making processes.

Secondary Data: Information was gathered from websites, journals and official tourism reports to supplement

and validate findings from primary data sources.

Sampling Method: Simple random sampling was employed to ensure that every booking agency in Coimbatore City has an equal chance of being selected for participation in the study.

Sample Size: 150 booking agencies operating within Coimbatore City were chosen for the study

Tools Used for the Study:

Percentage Analysis: To analyze the distribution of responses and preferences among booking agencies.

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize the data collected from questionnaires and secondary sources.

One-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance): To compare the means of different groups of booking agencies based on factors such as size, years of operation and types of services offered.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

❑ Sampling Bias: Despite using simple random sampling, certain booking agencies may choose not to participate, potentially biasing the results.

❑ Limited Generalizability: Findings may not be fully generalizable beyond Coimbatore City due to regional variations in tourism infrastructure, culture and market dynamics.

❑ Data Reliability: The accuracy and reliability of data obtained from secondary sources such as websites and journals may vary, affecting the overall robustness of the study.

❑ Response Bias: Responses to the questionnaire may be influenced by respondent bias or the subjective interpretations of questions, potentially skewing the findings.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

		Frequency	Percent
Type of Booking Agency	Online travel agency (OTA)	44	29.3
	Traditional brick-and-mortar travel agency	44	29.3
	Tour operator	44	29.3
	Other	18	12.0
Location of Booking Agency	Coimbatore City	94	62.7
	Specify exact location within Coimbatore City	56	37.3
Years in Operation	Less than 1 year	33	22.0
	1-3 years	54	36.0
	4-6 years	37	24.7
	7-10 years	26	17.3
Number of Employees	1-5	48	32.0
	6-10	45	30.0
	11-20	36	24.0
	More than 20	21	14.0
Annual Turnover	Less than Rs. 50,000	49	32.7
	Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 100,000	36	24.0
	Rs. 100,000 – Rs. 500,000	45	30.0
	Rs. 500,000 – Rs. 1,000,000	12	8.0
	More than Rs. 1,000,000	8	5.3
Total		150	100

Interpretation:

From the above table it is evident that, 29.3% of respondents each belong to the online travel agencies (OTAs), traditional, brick-and-mortar agencies and tour operators, 62.7% of booking agencies are located within

Coimbatore, 36% of the booking agents have been operating for 1-3 years with 1 - 5 employees and their turnover is between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.5,00,000.

Descriptive Statistics for Factors Influencing Tourism Intentions of Booking Agencies

	Mean	SD
The attractiveness of Coimbatore City as a tourist destination influences our decision to promote it to clients.	2.50	1.330
The quality and variety of local cultural attractions (e.g., festivals, historical sites) impact our tourism promotion strategies	2.39	1.169
Ease of access and transportation infrastructure in Coimbatore City are significant factors in our tourism offerings	2.88	1.375
The availability and quality of accommodation options (hotels, guesthouses) influence our tourism packages.	2.37	1.184
Digital marketing and online presence play a crucial role in reaching our target audience for tourism services in Coimbatore City	3.17	1.512

INTERPRETATION:

From the above table it is clear that, digital marketing and online presence play a crucial role in reaching our target audience for tourism services in Coimbatore City (Mean score of 3.17) followed by ease of access and transportation infrastructure in Coimbatore are significant factors in our tourism offerings (Mean score of 2.88) as the factors influencing tourism intentions of booking agencies

Descriptive Statistics for Impact of Cultural Attractions and Local Infrastructure on Tourism Promotion

	Mean	SD
The uniqueness and variety of cultural attractions in Coimbatore City influence our decision to include it in our tourism offerings.	2.75	1.352
The availability of well-maintained infrastructure (roads, public transportation) in Coimbatore City positively impacts our ability to promote it as a tourist destination	2.87	1.317
Investments in improving cultural attractions in Coimbatore City would enhance our interest in developing new tourism packages.	2.56	1.358
The accessibility of cultural attractions in Coimbatore City influences our tourists' satisfaction and overall experience	2.75	1.285
Local government support and initiatives to preserve and promote cultural heritage in Coimbatore City are important considerations in our tourism strategies.	3.39	1.320

The data reveals that agencies perceive the uniqueness and variety of cultural attractions in Coimbatore City moderately positively (mean = 2.75, SD = 1.352), indicating these attractions play a notable role in their decision-making processes regarding tourism offerings. Similarly, the availability of well-maintained infrastructure, including roads and public transportation, also holds significant influence (mean = 2.87, SD = 1.317), suggesting that good infrastructure positively contributes to agencies' ability to promote the city as a tourist destination.

Regarding investments in improving cultural attractions, the mean score indicates a somewhat neutral stance (mean = 2.56, SD = 1.358), implying that while agencies recognize the potential benefits, it may not currently strongly influence their interest in developing new tourism packages.

The accessibility of cultural attractions shows a moderate influence on tourists' satisfaction and overall experience (mean = 2.75, SD = 1.285), underscoring its importance in enhancing visitor experiences in Coimbatore City.

Interestingly, local government support and initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage emerge as the most influential factor (mean = 3.39, SD = 1.320). This indicates that agencies place significant value on governmental efforts, viewing them as crucial for shaping their tourism strategies in the city.

Descriptive Statistics for Role of Technological Advancements and Digital Platforms in Tourism Management

	N	Mean	SD
Digital platforms (e.g., websites, mobile apps) are crucial for promoting and selling tourism services offered by our booking agency.	150	3.29	1.339
The use of online booking systems enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of our tourism management processes.	150	2.98	1.195
Social media marketing plays a significant role in reaching and engaging our target audience for tourism services.	150	3.09	1.070
Customer relationship management (CRM) software helps us personalize our services and improve customer satisfaction	150	3.14	1.199
Technological innovations (e.g., AI, VR) have the potential to enhance the immersive experience of our tourism offerings in Coimbatore City.	150	2.11	.913

INTERPRETATION:

The data shows that digital platforms (e.g., websites, mobile apps) are crucial for promoting and selling tourism services offered by our booking agency (Mean score 3.29) subsequently customer relationship management (CRM) software helps us personalize our services and improve customer satisfaction as the role of technological advancements and digital platforms in tourism management.

Comparisons between various dimension (Type of Booking Agency)

ANOVA

		N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Factors Influencing Tourism Intentions of Booking Agencies	Online travel agency (OTA)	44	2.51	0.665	1.459	.228
	Traditional brick-and-mortar travel agency	44	2.68	0.801		
	Tour operator	44	2.68	0.739		
	Other	18	2.92	0.471		
	Total	150	2.66	0.714		
Impact of Cultural Attractions and Local Infrastructure on Tourism Promotion	Online travel agency (OTA)	44	2.80	0.546	2.002	.116
	Traditional brick-and-mortar travel agency	44	2.81	0.693		
	Tour operator	44	3.05	0.561		
	Other	18	2.71	0.599		
	Total	150	2.86	0.609		
Role of Technological Advancements and Digital Platforms in Tourism Management	Online travel agency (OTA)	44	3.11	0.724	2.628	.053
	Traditional brick-and-mortar travel agency	44	2.73	0.706		
	Tour operator	44	2.95	0.492		
	Other	18	2.87	0.617		
	Total	150	2.92	0.656		

INTERPRETATION:

The factors influencing tourism intentions, OTAs, traditional agencies and tour operators show mean scores of 2.51, 2.68 and 2.68 respectively. The agencies categorized as "Other" have a slightly higher mean of 2.92, suggesting they may place a comparatively stronger emphasis on these factors. However, the ANOVA results ($F = 1.459$, $Sig = 0.228$) for factors influencing tourism intentions of booking agencies and impact of cultural attractions and local infrastructure on tourism promotion results ($F=2.002$, $Sig = .116$) and role of technological advancements and digital platforms in tourism management ($F=2.628$, $Sig=.053$)

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, following suggestions are given

Digital presence

It is suggested that booking agencies in Coimbatore City should focus on enhancing their digital presence and leveraging online booking systems and social media marketing to reach a wider audience effectively.

Technological innovation

Booking agencies should also consider adopting technological innovations like AI and VR to offer unique and immersive experiences and continue to optimize customer relationship management (CRM) software to personalize services and improve customer satisfaction. Collaboration among agencies, local businesses, and cultural institutions can further enhance tourism promotion strategies, leading to comprehensive and attractive tourism packages.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals a balanced distribution of booking agencies in Coimbatore City, encompassing online travel agencies, traditional brick-and-mortar travel agencies and tour operators. Majority of these agencies have modest annual turnovers, highlighting their growing phase.

The government support for cultural heritage preservation emerges as a key factor influencing tourism promotion strategies. The critical role of digital platforms, online booking systems, social media marketing, and CRM software is evident in shaping tourism management strategies.

Although there are variations in perceptions of factors influencing tourism intentions and technological advancements among different types of agencies, these differences are generally not statistically significant. This suggests a shared perspective across the industry, with potential nuances that warrant further exploration.

Understanding these insights is essential for stakeholders aiming to enhance tourism offerings and infrastructure in Coimbatore City. Effective leveraging of technology and strategic investments in cultural and infrastructural development can significantly boost the attractiveness and competitiveness of Coimbatore as a prime tourist destination.

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