

SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH

Faculty	:	School of Commerce and Management
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Abstract within 300 words:

India's rich history of cultural heritage plays a remarkable place in the domain of heritage tourism globally. Heritage tourism protects and promotes historical and cultural sites, monuments and museums by involving the local community to develop a connection and sense of pride that makes them responsible. Throughout the decades, India has managed to preserve its heritage and cultural diversity, making the country an ideal destination to explore ancient history. Mahabalipuram once known as the "land of seven pagodas" served as an important place of classical Monuments in India, the monolithic architecture and cave temples. This place served as a seaport during the 7th century of the Pallava dynasty as it is located close to the sea, and tremendous artistic wealth attracts many visitors worldwide. Shore temple, rock-cut caves, monolithic architecture, temples, Krishna butter ball, strives of different structures, and bas-reliefs are so artistic and sheer creative. The study was carried out in two phases. Phase I was conducted as a pilot study at Pallava dynasty heritage destination Kanchipuram which helped in identifying the factors for measuring the heritage destination image. Phase II was conducted at Mahabalipuram, where data is collected with a structured questionnaire from visitors. The study identified the socioeconomic profile of visitors and its relationship with the study attributes factors of destination image, visitor satisfaction and Constructs for destination loyalty for sustainable heritage tourism development in Mahabalipuram. The findings from the SEM has given an overview of the factors contributing to the development of destination image to promote heritage tourism of Mahabalipuram, which may help the tourism service providers in identifying the priority areas for better tourism management and conservation of the heritage destination for the future generation. The study provides ample scope and opportunities towards heritage tourism development in Mahabalipuram for sustainable income generation.

Key Words: Heritage tourism, Pallava dynasty, destination image, visitor satisfaction, destination loyalty, sustainable tourism development.

i) Major objectives :

- Understand the demographic profile and travel pattern of the visitors of Mahabalipuram heritage destination.
- Identify the influence of socio-economic and tripography characteristics on destination image, visitor satisfaction, and destination loyalty.
- Assess the perception of visitors on destination image, service quality, perceived value, visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty.
- Study the relationship between selected demographic variables with the factors of destination image, service quality, perceived value, visitor satisfaction, and destination loyalty in Mahabalipuram.
- Develop a holistic destination loyalty model for heritage tourism development in Mahabalipuram using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

ii) Hypothesis:

H1- More favorable the destination image, higher the perceived service quality.

H2- More favorable the destination image, higher the perceived value.

H3- More favorable the destination image, higher the overall satisfaction.

H4-Service quality has a direct positive effect on overall satisfaction.

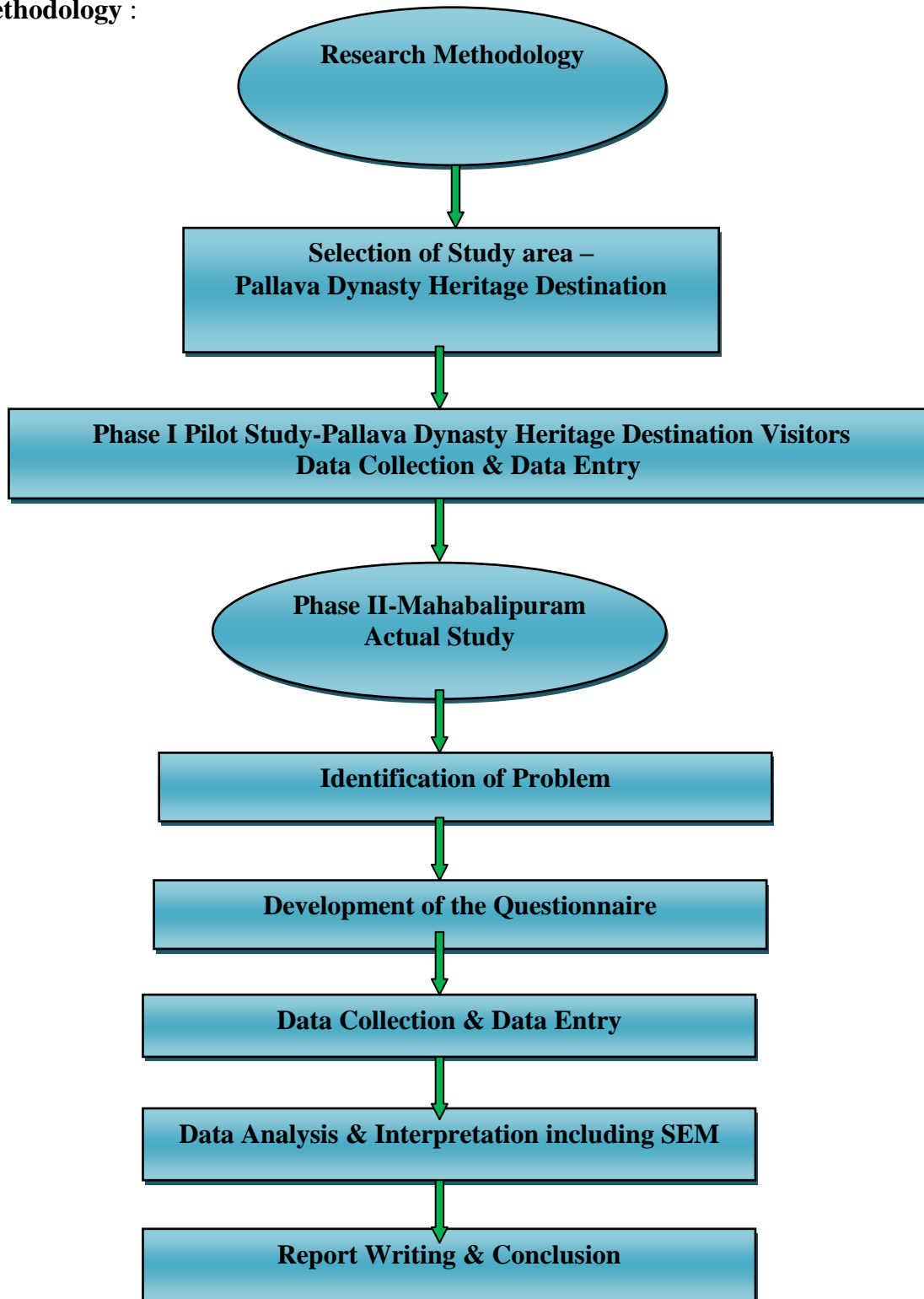
H5-Service quality has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

H6-Perceived value is a direct antecedent of overall satisfaction.

H7-Perceived value is a direct antecedent of destination loyalty.

H8-Tourist satisfaction has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

iii) Methodology :



iv) Findings:

The primary objectives of this study were to investigate and develop a theoretical relationship among destination image, service quality and perceived value and to empirically test the constructs that are likely to affect tourist satisfaction, which in turn influence destination loyalty. The SEM analysis supported the existence of statistically significant relationships between study constructs. It is evident that overall satisfaction of tourists was affected by perceptions of service quality and perceived value, which is directly influenced by perceived destination image and destination loyalty was in turn influenced by overall satisfaction. These findings confirm some previous studies (Bigne et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2005; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Kim et al., 2012). The current study results revealed that visitors prefer to visit the destination with their family (5.79 percent) for vacation (52 percent), revealing that the purpose of choosing a destination is to spend quality time with children for vacation. The results of the present study are consistent with past studies that the destination image not only influences the decision-making process but also conditions post decision-making behavior of tourists (Bigne et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Kim et al., 2012).

Perceived service quality is an immediate antecedent of satisfaction and affects destination loyalty both directly and indirectly through satisfaction as a moderating variable. The findings are consistent with past studies (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Castro et al., 2007; Shonk and Chelladurai, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2012). Hence service quality measurement and improvement are essential aspects for those wishing to enhance destination loyalty. The present study also measured perceived service quality, referring to employee-performance-based quality and product-based quality experiences.

The results of the present study are consistent with prior studies (Woodruff, 1997; Cronin et al., 2000; Eggert and Ulaga, 2002; Lee et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2012) in that the perceived value affected customer satisfaction, which in turn influenced destination loyalty. These findings indicate that the respondents considered visiting Mahabalipuram to be a valuable and correct decision, which is likely to affect their travel satisfaction level expressed for the heritage destination Mahabalipuram.

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