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Destination and Purpose Denominations in Developing Tourist Relationship Management (TRM) Framework

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Abstract

Conventional relationship management frameworks, namely Customer Relationship Management has been inadequate to explain the critical dyadic relationship between the tourists and the tourism service providers, although the dimensions of the same are relevant enough to lend partial support to understand the relationship. There seems to be some missing factors, still unexplored, which may be pivotal in understanding this relationship. This study attempts to develop a tourist relationship management (TRM) framework by assimilating assorted dimensions. The basic foundation of the TRM framework will be rested on customer relationship management (CRM) model with justified addition of dimensions compatible to tourism dynamics. The study used survey method, with adequate justification of sampling & scaling procedures and factor-constructs measurements, to identify and assess the significance of 'destination' and 'purpose or motivation to travel' as decisive elements in the relationship architecture. The study confirmed convergence of dimensions to justify TRM framework with adequate internal reliability and validity of the scale. The default model also holds good to lend support to the theoretical findings.

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Introduction

With the increase in the significance of Tourism as a major contributing source to the enhancement of nation's GDP, the academic researchers too has started to get involved in identifying its nature, dynamics, dimensions and effects. Tourism has been observed as the aggregate of interactions and relationships between tourists, business houses, host governments and administration and host communities (McIntosh and Goeldner, 1984). As a service sector, tourism has its own criticalities which assume significant proportion while perceiving quality associated with it. The intensive dyadic encounter between a host of tourist-service-providers and the tourists, often, does not allow the services to be homogenized. These, rather heterogeneous, services create ambiguity in perceiving quality of services received from specific tourist-service-providers. But, identifying the perceived tourist service quality becomes imperative as it was empirically tested to be antecedent to tourist satisfaction (short-term effects) and destination loyalty (long-term effects). From the late 1990s the hospitality and tourism sector started using the philosophy of customer relationship management (CRM) as it proved to be a proactive business process to understand the tourists (customers), segment the tourists on the basis of their psychographic determinants and to design integrated communication with the same. CRM was adopted by the tourism sector with an apprehension that it will help maintain a linear relationship between perceived service quality-tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. But in most of the cases it was found that the conventional CRM dimensions failed to facilitate the relationship.

The inbound tourism in India registered 6.31 million (5.78 million in 2010) tourists visiting with an annual growth of 9.2% (India Tourism Statistics, 2011, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). This huge influx of tourists boosted the foreign exchange earnings to 77591 crores (in INR terms) with an annual growth rate of 19.6% (India Tourism Statistics, 2011, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). This phenomenal growth rate has catapulted India's share in international tourist arrivals (0.64%), India's rank in world tourist arrivals (38), India's share in international tourism receipts (1.61%) and India's rank in world tourism receipts (as per RBI estimates—17) (India Tourism Statistics, 2011, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). The reason for this boom can be attributed to a number of factors namely burgeoning Indian middle class, growth of high-spending foreign tourists, augmentation in communication system-both physical and virtual, infrastructure & super structure and the initiatives taken up by the state governments to showcase their individual states as tourist destinations, thereby building up the brands (Gujarat, Odissa, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh etc. are some of the major branded tourism destinations). A study conducted by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in the area of development perspective of eco and rural tourism indicated that it registered highest employment and investment ratio. Study conducted by McKinsey also revealed that medical tourism has the potentiality to generate as much as 100 billion in INR by the end of 2012. India's cultural and natural heritage is truly incredible. The brand title 'Incredible India' not only projects India as a tourist destination but also promotes the nation as a potential export and investment hub.

'Yatra Visawam Bhavati Ekanidam' – where the whole world meets in one nest. Rabindranath Tagore, India's first Nobel laureate, wanted Santiniketan to be that spot, where the whole world would settle, forgetting illusory geographical boundaries. Little wonder then that India's nodal authority Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) submitted Santiniketan as its official entry this year for UNESCO's list on World Heritage Sites. ASI has submitted the dossier on Santiniketan to UNESCO's world heritage centre in Paris, and has received a letter from the body, saying the dossier received is as per operational guidelines. Santiniketan has emerged as a tourist destination with updated facilities and amenities with regard to hospitality industry and allied services. The cultural events like Pous Mela, Basantotsav, Magh Mela draw huge influx of domestic as well as international tourist. With the changing dynamics of quality perception of services related to tourism, the expectation and zone of tolerance have also been modified.

The objectives of this study was (a) to identify the dimensions of Tourist Relationship Management (TRM) by modifying the existing dimensions of CRM and introducing new dimensions in the context of tourism industry, (b) to examine the convergence of the identified TRM dimensions and (c) to test the robustness of the proposed research model.

Review of Literature

Relationship marketing has emerged as a critical strategic route to maximize value proposition from both service providers and recipients. Customer relationship management (CRM), an offshoot and spin-off to relationship marketing, has been observed as a continuous paradigmatic shift in managing relationship with customers by identifying the changing notions of customer attitudes, perceptions and behavioural manifestations in the context of their apprehension and expectation to be served as (Peppers and Rogers, 2004). Conceptually, CRM evolved from three basic foundations of marketing management: (a) customer orientation, (b) relationship marketing and (c) database marketing (Yim et al, 2004). Adoption, practice and implementation of CRM gained momentum among academicians and corporate houses (Gruen et al, 2000; Rigby and Ledingham, 2004; Srivastava et al, 1999; Thomas et al, 2004). CRM has been widely used by the sales personnel in augmenting their relationship with the customers (Widmier et al, 2002) to improve sales forecasting, lead management and customization (Rigby and Ledingham, 2004). Inspite of its wide application, CRM, lacked a cohesive definition and identification of its dimensions. Yim (2002) provided some conceptual clarity of CRM by synthesizing the literatures (Crosby and Johnson, 2001; Fox and Stead, 2001; Ryals and Knox, 2001) pertaining to marketing, technology and management and came out with four key focal areas: (a) strategy, (b) people, (c) processes and (d) technology. Day (2003) confirmed that the key focal factors identified by Yim (2002) can create a synergistic relationship value when they work in unison (rather than in isolate), thereby conforming to the objective and realm of CRM. Study of extant literatures revealed that implementation of CRM necessarily involved four specific activities: (a) focusing on key customers

(Schmid and Weber, 1998; Srivastava et al, 1999; Sheth et al, 2000; Ryals and Knox, 2001; Armstrong and Kotler, 2003; Vandermerwe, 2004; Srinivasan et al, 2002, Jain and Singh, 2002) which encompassed the view of a customer-centric organizational structure with dyadic interactive points targeted towards identification of key or valued customers through lifetime value computations, (b) organizing around CRM (Brown, 2000; Homburg et al, 2000; Ahmed and Rafique, 2003) which emphasized on customer-centric organizational functions with an objective to ensure value proposition to customers, (c) managing knowledge (Peppard, 2000; , Freeland, 2003; Stefanou et al, 2003; Stringfellow et al, 2004, Yim et al, 2004; Plessis and Boon, 2004; Brohman et al, 2003) whereby customer-information are effectively transformed into customer-knowledge and disseminated across the organizational hierarchy which will equip salespeople with better understanding of customers' requirements and (d) adopting CRM-based technology (Butler, 2000; Pepperd, 2000; Vrechopoulos, 2004; Widmier et al, 2002) to optimize communication with customers, accurate service delivery with back-up and supportive information, managing customer-knowledge by data warehousing and data mining and providing customized services.

However, there has been a dearth of research in identifying these CRM dimensions in the context of tourism industry. CRM philosophy was adopted by the tourism sector as it allowed them to be more proactive in predicting the changing line of customer demands and allowed them to realize the extent to which they can customize their service offer with adequate differentiation. Jain and Jain (2006) delved into CRM practices of hotels in central India to measure the effectiveness against factors like: value proposition, recognition, customer orientation, reliability, relationship orientation, credibility, customization, personalization and gestures. Apart from the conventional and accepted dimensions of CRM certain other dimensions are required to create a holistic tourist relationship management (TRM) framework. Amongst the traditional dimensions of CRM technology has been apprehended to play a critical role in shaping the relationship between the tourists and the TSPs. Application of electronic commerce in tourism has been well recognized (Werthner and Ricci, 2004) and its success has been attributed to security and user-friendliness (Kim, 2004). The access to information over virtual network has created a 'SWARM' model, replacing the legacy of linear mono-TSP-tourist transactions, whereby tourists have multiple information sets to find out the exact TSP. Cloud computing has opened up whole new avenues for TSPs to introduce shared network in tourism ecosystem, thereby, creating and delivering added values for the tourists (Cheng, 2012).

Literature hinted that destination competitiveness can be one of the critical components of a modified relationship management framework which would be compatible to the tourism industry and may be nomenclated as Tourist Relationship Management (TRM). The gradual transition of 'hard tourism' into futuristic 'soft tourism' (Table-1) has catapulted the relationship management integration with the basic operational aspects.

Table-1: Transition of Tourist Demand Pattern: Hard Tourism to Soft-Tourism

Hard tourism	Soft tourism
Package tours	Individual touring
Short-term residences	Long-term residences
Model of one big travel during holidays	Model of two shorter travels during a year
Predetermined tour schedule	Customized tour schedule
Comfort and passivity	Activity and effort
Travels and attractions	New experiences and higher quality
Sense of superiority, demonstration effect	Respect and relationship
Lack of knowledge about destination	Knowledge about destination
Imported life style and behaviour	Lifestyle following local population
Purchases	Gifts
Freely available mass souvenirs	Individual & customized souvenirs
Lack of interest in language of destination	Studying local language
Fast transport and frequent moves	Less importance of moving speed
Curiosity	Tact
Expectation of comfort	Comfort is not essential
Distance between client and tourist staff	Good relationship with tourist staff

Source: Ostrowski S., Krippendorfa, J. (1983)

Studies observed that formulation of relationship strategies followed an analytical planning and destination competitiveness which will allow firms to stay ahead of its competitors and to ensure destination sustainability (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000a & 2000b; Mihalic, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Flagestad and Hope, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Heath and Wall, 1992; Bordas, 1994; Pearce, 1997). Poon (1993) observed that tourist satisfaction can be achieved with proper strategic initiatives to build destination image and that destination competitiveness can be ensured by virtue of organized form of interactions with tourists.

Destination has been apprehended to be pivotal in nurturing relationship between tourism service providers and tourists as Buhalis (2000) listed six major components of tourism attractions towards evaluating tourism destination:

a. Attraction - natural, man-made, artificial, purpose-built, heritage, special events
b. Accessibility – transportation system, terminals & vehicles
c. Amenities – accommodations, catering facilities, retailing
d. Available packages – prearranged packages by intermediaries and principals
e. Activities – activities related to tourism products
f. Ancillary services – banks, telecommunications, hospitals etc.

In addition to destination, 'purpose or motivation to travel' is expected to play an important role in the relationship between the tourism service providers and

tourists as it is likely to influence major strategic imperatives in managing personalized relationships. Literature revealed a number of issues pertaining to travel purpose and linked it with motivation for travelling sighting satisfying need hierarchy (Maslow, 1954, 1970; Burns and Holden, 1995; Hudson, 1999). Leisure and vacation have been identified as two major purposes of travelling and were linked to satisfying self actualization needs (Miller and Morrison, 2002) and self esteem needs (Pearce, 1993). Pearce (1993) identified five levels of travel purpose hierarchy: relaxation, stimulation, relationship, development and fulfillment. Brown (2010) also identified purpose of travelling as a major deterministic factor in strategizing tourism packages while analyisng volunteer tourism facets. Dann (1977) and later supported by Crompton (1979) identified seven 'Push & Pull' factors driving travelling: (i) escape from perceived mundane environment, (ii) exploration and evaluation of self, (iii) relaxation, (iv) prestige, (v) regression, (vi) enhancement of kinship relationships and (vii) novelty and education. Purpose of travelling allows the service providers to understand the psychogenic profiles of the visitors thereby assist them to prepare the blueprint to establish a dyadic relationship. Towards understanding the motivational pattern of the tourists to undertake a tour-plan, cognitive science can provide with major inputs. Cognition and emotion both have been observed to franchise significant impact on the evaluation of servicescape with respect to hospitality and tourism industry (Lin, 2004). Cognitive competence is likely to contribute significant input towards developing dimensionality for TRM, particularly to understand the purpose and motivation to travel which articulates relationship strategies adopted by the TSPs and as it encompasses both internalized and institutionalized behaviours of tourists which in long run may affect the relationship between the same and the TSPs. Sofiyabadi et al (2012) was of the opinion that increase and promotion of emotional intelligence levels in TRM team will lead to comprehension and understanding of one's sentiments and emotion.

Research Gap Identified

Extant literature did not provide much inputs regarding compatibility of relationship management dimensions in tourism perspective. Added or modified dimensions of CRM were not identified to address the relationship dynamics in tourism. Tourist Relationship Management (TRM) framework will be a whole new development for the study.

Hypothesis Development

A single hypothesis was developed to assess relationship between the identified dimensions of TRM:

H_1: Dimensional correlation exists in the proposed TRM framework.

Proposed Research (Default) Model

The proposed research (default) model focuses on convergence of the proposed TRM dimensions (Fig.1)

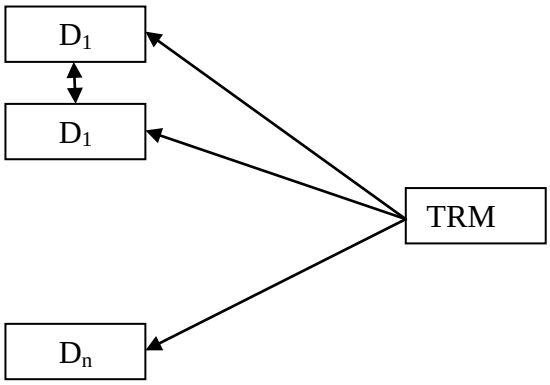

Fig.1- Proposed Research Model

Methodology

The study was conducted in two phases. A structured questionnaire was developed to obtain the primary data. Phase-I involved a pilot study to refine the test instrument with rectification of question ambiguity, refinement of research protocol and confirmation of scale reliability was given special emphasis (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). 20 respondents representing tourists of assorted demography and academicians were included to conduct the pilot study through focus group interview technique. Cronbach's α coefficient (>0.7) established scale reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The refined survey instrument focused on collecting data with regard to relationship management initiated and deployed by the service providers A 7 point Likert scale (Alkibisi and Lind, 2011) was used to generate response. Service employees of the rank of managers, relationship executives etc. were interviewed. Convenience sampling was used. As many as 546 personnel associated with assorted tourism services in Santiniketan and its adjoining tourist areas were interviewed.

Factor Constructs Measurement

The TRM dimensions were scaled on items, initially developed by Yim et al (2004) to dimensionalize CRM, which were adequately modified to suit tourism platform. The additional constructs to make relationship management compatible with tourism imperatives on the basis of destination and purpose of visit were created after extensive study of literature, with 5 and 6 items respectively and were tested for internal reliability and validity.

Reliability and Validity

To examine the internal reliability and validity of the constructs, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was deployed using principal axis factoring procedure with orthogonal rotation through VARIMAX process. Cronbach's α was obtained to test the reliability of the data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was done for sample adequacy and Barlett's sphericity test was conducted. Cronbach's α coefficient (>0.7) established scale reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The scales used in this study were adapted from established existing measures that have been applied and validated in numerous tourism studies. In addition, the validity of the measurement scales was also assessed via the confirmatory factor analysis. The convergent validity of the scales were measured by tests of composite reliability (CR)

and average variance extracted (AVE). Higher CR and AVE values indicate higher convergent reliability of the measurement. The Discriminant validity is established when the AVE values exceed the square of the correlations between each pair of latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Finally, LISREL 8.80 programme was used to conduct the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was applied to estimate the CFA models.

Data Analysis and İnterpretation

The results of the EFA were displayed in Table-2. The Cronbach's Coefficient alpha was found significant enough, as it measure >.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) for all constructs and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the internal consistency of the instruments used were adequate. Each accepted construct displayed acceptable construct reliability with estimates well over .6 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and William, 1998). Further to this the average variance extracted (AVE) surpassed minimum requirement of .5 (Haier et al., 1998). The KMO measure of sample adequacy (0.798) indicated a high-shared variance and a relatively low uniqueness in variance (Kaiser and Cerny, 1979). Barlett's sphericity test (Chi-square=673.571, df= 89, p<0.001) indicated that the distribution is ellipsoid and amenable to data reduction (Cooper and Schindler, 1998).

Table-2: Measurement of Reliability and Validity of the Variables

Items	FL	t	α	AVE
Tourist Relationship Management (TRM) items				
Our organization establishes and monitors customer-centric performance standards at all tourist touch points (TRMD1)	0.699	22.981	.914	0.874
Our organization has established clear business goals related to tourist acquisition, development, retention and reactivation. (TRMD2)	0.687	21.087	.914	0.874
Our organization has the sales and marketing expertise and resources to succeed in TRM (TRMD3)	0.671	19.001	.914	0.874
Our employee training programme has been designed to develop the skills required for acquiring and deepening tourist relationships. (TRMD4)	0.718	25.671	.914	0.874
Employee performance is measured and rewarded based on meeting tourist needs and on successfully serving the tourist. (TRMD5)	0.679	18.762	.914	0.874
Our organizational structure has been designed to foster tourist centricity. (TRMD6)	0.681	19.002	.914	0.874
Our organization commits time and resources to manage tourist relationships. (TRMD7)	0.669	17.401	.914	0.874
Our organization has apt softwares to serve our tourists. (TRMD8)	0.652	15.204	.914	0.874
Our organization has required hardwares to serve our tourists. (TRMD9)	0.672	18.110	.914	0.874
Our organization has the proper technical personnel to provide technical support to our relationship management executives. (TRMD10)	0.691	20.028	.914	0.874
Our organization maintains a comprehensive database of our tourists. (TRMD11)	0.701	22.918	.914	0.874
Individual tourist information is available at every point of contact (TRMD12)	0.684	19.278	.914	0.874
Our organization provides customized services to our valued and key tourists. (TRMD13)	0.664	17.217	.914	0.874
Our organization communicates with key tourists to customize our offerings on demand. (TRMD14)	0.631	14.283	.914	0.874
Our organization makes an effort to find out what the key tourist requirements are (TRMD15)	0.679	19.005	.914	0.874
Our employees make coordinated efforts to deliver customize service once a tourist places a demand for such service (TRMD16)	0.702	20.098	.914	0.874
Each and every employee of our organization treats tourists with great care. (TRMD17)	0.617	14.562	.914	0.874
Our organization provides channels to enable ongoing two-way communication between our key tourists and us. (TRMD18)	0.629	15.672	.914	0.874
Our tourists can expect exactly when services will be performed (TRMD19)	0.718	25.091	.914	0.874
Our organization fully understands the requirements of our key tourists and us. (TRMD20)	0.663	18.782	.914	0.874
Our organization maintains the database of major destination attractions for our key tourists. (TRMD21)	0.687	19.871	.914	0.874
Our organization facilitates tourists in accessing the major destination attractions. (TRMD22)	0.624	15.214	.914	0.874
Our organization provides requisite amenities to ensure safe visit for tourists to destinations. (TRMD23)	0.609	14.009	.914	0.874
Our organization provides adequate packages that cover smooth and hassle-free destination visits. (TRMD24)	0.672	18.918	.914	0.874
Our organization arranges activity supports for tourists as per destination requirements. (TRMD25)	0.711	23.091	.914	0.874
Our organization has networked to provide ancillary services to tourists. (TRMD26)	0.709	22.738	.914	0.874
Our organization understands the purpose of visit of tourists and provides services accordingly. (TRMD27)	0.724	26.198	.914	0.874
Our organization has resources to match the purpose of tourist visits. (TRMD28)	0.694	20.018	.914	0.874
Our organization has necessary tie-ups and networks to synchronize with the purpose of visit of tourists. (TRMD29)	0.648	16.552	.914	0.874
Our employees understand the psychology of the tourists behind the purpose of visit. (TRMD30)	0.665	18.783	.914	0.874
KMO			0.798	
Barlett's Test of sphericity	**Chi-square (χ^2)**		673.571	
	df		89	
	Sig.		.000	

** FL: factor loadings, t: t-value, α: Cronbach's α, AVE: average variance extracted

The dimensions of perceived tourist service quality (PTSQ) and CRM have been nomenclated as per the component-wise factor loadings in Table-3.

Table-3: Identified Dimensions of TRM

Sl	Variable	Items as per factor loadings post EFA	Dimension name
1	Tourist Relationship Management	TRMD1 – TRMD7	Organizing around TRM (TRMO)
2		TRMD8 – TRMD12	Integrating TRM technology (TRMT)
3		TRMD13 – TRMD17	Key tourist focus (KFT)
4		TRMD18 – TRMD20	Managing tourist knowledge (TKM)
5		TRMD 21- TRMD26	Destination denomination (DD)
6		TRMD 27 – TRMD 30	Purpose denomination (PD)

The path-analysis using LISREL-9.1 (Fig.2) confirms the convergence of the observed variables (TRMO, TRMT, KFT, TKM, DD & PD) and the latent variable [(Tourist Relationship Management (TRMD)] confirming the fact that the identified dimensions of tourist relationship management are adequate to justify the reliability and validity of the same.

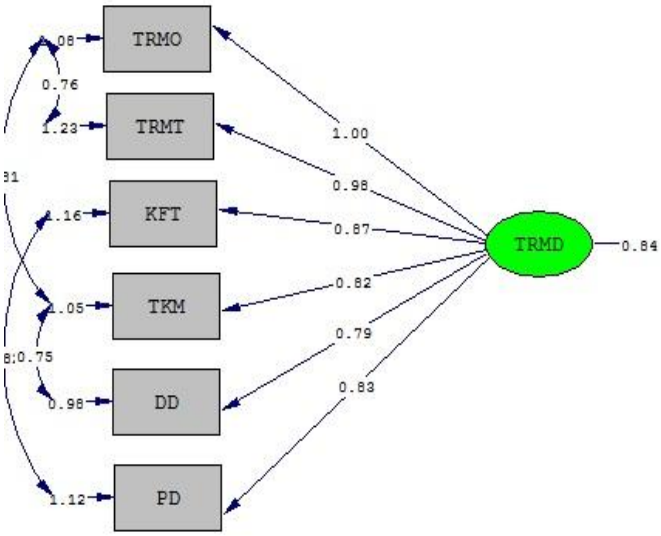

Fig.2: Path Analysis Depicting Observed and Latent Variables

To test correlationship between the identified dimensions of TRM, bivariate correlation was deployed. The mean response score was obtained for each of the variable across the items loaded in EFA for each individual tourist and later on summated and averaged to obtain the composite mean score for each variable. The results of the bivariate correlation analysis were displayed in Table-4. The results revealed strong and significant dimensional correlationship: (i) TRMO and KFT (r=.173**, p<.001), (ii) KFT and TRMT (r=.116**, p<.001), (iii) TKM and TRMO (r=.254**, p<.001), (iv) TKM and TRMT (r=.132**, p<.001), (v) DD and TRMO (r=.137**, p<.001), (vi) DD and KFT (r=.222**, p<.001), (vii) DD and TKM (r=.209**, p<.001), (viii) PD and TRMO (r=.332**, p<.001), (ix) PD and TRMT (r=.285**, p<.001), (x) PD and KFT (r=.173**, p<.001) and (xi) PD and TKM (r=.139**, p<.001). Moderately positive relationship was observed between (i) TRMT and TRMO (r=.098*, p<.005), (ii) TKM and KFT (r=.073*, p<.005), (iii) DD and TRMT (r=.082*, p<.001) and (iv) PD and DD (r=.088*, p<.005).

Table-4: Bivariate Correlation Between Perceived Tourist Service Quality (PTSQ), Tourist Satisfaction (TS) and Destination Loyalty (DL)

		TRMO	TRMT	KFT	TKM	DD	PD
TRMO	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	51.765					
	Covariance	.673					
	N	546					
TRMT	Pearson Correlation	098*	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002					
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	42.112	49.287				
	Covariance	5.882	7.009				
	N	546	546				
KFT	Pearson Correlation	.173**	.116**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	47.482	56.193	116.036			
	Covariance	.783	.971	8.194			
	N	546	546	546			
TKM	Pearson Correlation	.254**	.132**	.073*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003			
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	41.229	49.321	67.009	97.764		
	Covariance	.654	.776	.964	6.296		
	N	546	546	546	546		
DD	Pearson Correlation	.137**	.082*	.222**	.209**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.000	.000		
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	44.322	51.098	55.543	72.783	87.982	
	Covariance	.594	.645	.987	3.278	7.987	
	N	546	546	546	546	546	
PD	Pearson Correlation	.332**	.285**	.173**	.139**	.088*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	48.983	59.096	68.562	77.834	91.983	98.712
	Covariance	.554	.671	.818	.897	.927	1.872
	N	546	546	546	546	546	546

** Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to assess the convergence, discriminant validity and dimensionality for each construct to determine whether all the 30 items (Table-1) measure the construct adequately as they had been assigned for. LISREL 9.90 programme was used to conduct

the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was applied to estimate the CFA models. A number of fit-statistics were obtained (Table-5) for the default (proposed) model. The comparative fit indices namely CFI (0.979), NFI (0.983) and TLI (0.975) were found significant enough to accept the fitness of the default (proposed) model (Schreiber et al, 2006). The Parsimonious fit indices (PNFI=0.701, PCFI=0.764, PGFI=0.729) also confirmed robustness of the model and indicated an absolute fit (Schreiber et al, 2006). The GFI (0.982) and AGFI (0.979) scores for all the constructs were found to be consistently >.900 indicating that a significant proportion of the variance in the sample variance-covariance matrix is accounted for by the model and a good fit has been achieved (Hair et al, 1998; Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996; Hulland et. al, 1996; Kline, 1998; Holmes-Smith, 2002, Byrne, 2001). The CFI value (0.979) for all the constructs were obtained as > .900 which indicated an acceptable fit to the data (Bentler, 1992). The expected cross-validation index was found to be small enough (ECVI=0.0024) to confirm the superiority of the default model to the saturated and independence model. The RMSEA value obtained (0.053) is < 0.08 for an adequate model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The RMR value (0.002) is small enough (close to 0.00) to assure a robust-fit of the model. The SRMR value was also indicative of good fit (0.0287 which is ≤□.08) (Schreiber et al, 2006, Anglim, 2007). The probability value of Chi-square (χ^2=98.09, df=51, p=0.000) is more than the conventional 0.05 level (P=0.02) indicating an absolute fit of the model to the data and the χ^2/df value is ≤ 2 (1.92) suggesting its usefulness to justify the default model as the nested model.

Table-5: Fit Indices for the Default Model

Absolute predictive fit				Comparative fit			Parsimonious fit			Others				
χ^2	Df	P	ECVI	NFI	TLI	CFI	PNFI	PCFI	PGFI	GFI	AGFI	RMR	SRMR	RMSEA
98.09	51	0.01	0.0024	0.983	0.975	0.979	0.701	0.764	0.729	0.982	0.979	0.002	0.0287	0.053

To construct the nomoloical network structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the nomological validity of the proposed research model. Composite TRM dimensional scores across individual items were obtained by summating the ratings on the scale provided in the survey instrument items which were used as indicators of their latent version.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the relationship among the constructs. All the 24 paths drawn were found to be significant at both p<0.01 and p<0.05 levels. The research model holds well (Fig.3) as the fit-indices supported adequately the model fit to the data. The double-curved arrows indicated correlation between the exogenous and endogenous observed variables which was found significant. The residual variables (error variances) are indicated by ϵ_1, ϵ_2, ϵ_3, etc. The regression weights are represented by λ. The relationship between the exogenous variables was represented by β. One of the factor loading was fixed to '1' to provide the latent factors an interpretable scale (Hox & Bechger).

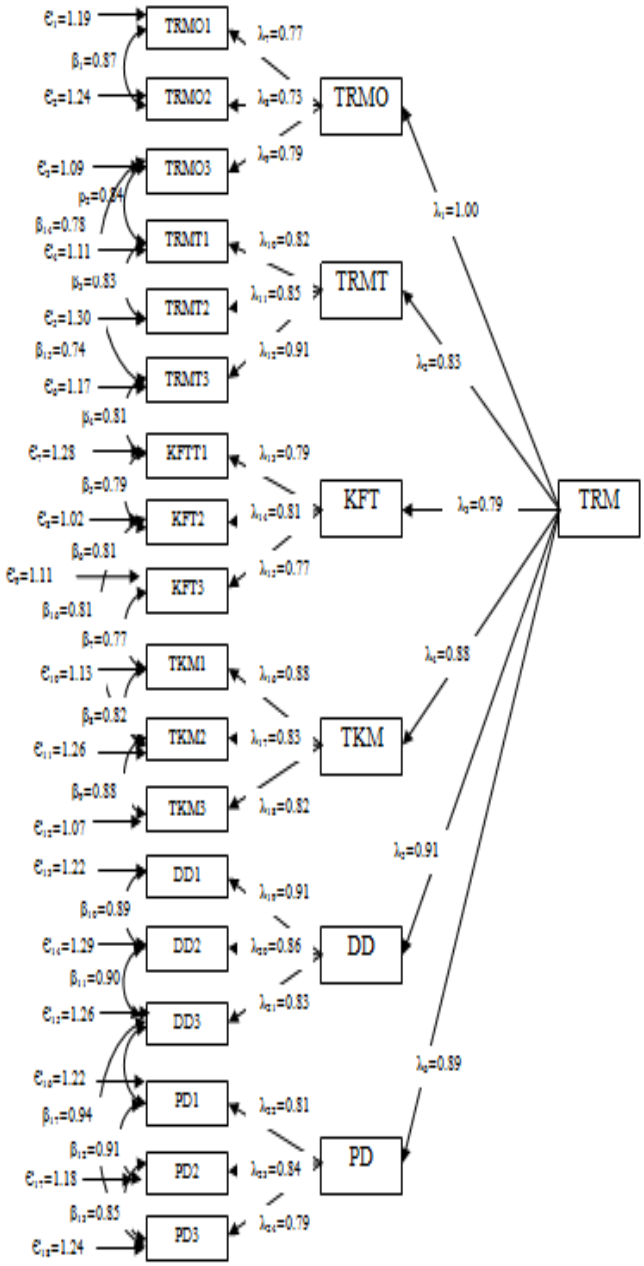

Fig.3: Structural Model Showing the Path Analysis

Implications for Theories and Practice

The present study shall expand the research domain pertaining to relationship management and its implications and shall add up to the extant literature by providing the foundation of tourism relationship management framework (TRM), an offshoot to customer relationship management model, with validated dimensions like destination denomination and purpose denomination.

The tourism phenomenon in Santiniketan is not new, but it has changed its dynamics with the rapid change in demographic, psychographic, cultural and ethnic factors. With the communication system to the destination improving by leaps and bounds the influx of tourist has also increased. The increased flow of assorted tourist from both domestic and foreign origin forced a complete metamorphosis of the

hospitality and tourism map of Santiniketan. The hotels, restaurants, tour-arrangers and other down-the-line service providers underwent a serious make-over as they updated themselves to meet the specific demand and quality perception of both domestic and foreign tourist. The tourism service providers in Santiniketan are well aware about the tourist behaviour based on the destination dynamics and purpose of their visit. Technology has played a pivotal role towards allowing the tourists to avail services on virtual platform. The results ensured that the tourism services provided by the hoteliers, restauranters, logistic-service providers, tour-arrangers etc. at Santiniketan were well absorbed by the tourist and they were satisfied. It was revealed that the perceived tourist service quality was instrumental in assuring tourist satisfaction which subsequently was found to have a positive effect on destination loyalty. The hospitality industry as a whole in Santiniketan was found acceptable by the tourists who were visiting on the occasion of cultural and ethnic events like Pous Mela, Basantotsav etc. in terms of service quality and they have expressed their intention of revisiting the destination and promoting the destination to other tourists.

The study had managerial implication as the changing rural psychogeodemography of Santiniketan may pose challenges to the managers of tourism service providers to analyse tourist demand and personalize tourism products accordingly. TRM framework is likely to provide tourism managers with analytics to segregate tourists on the basis of identified dimensions particularly the destination denomination and purpose denomination which will enable them to strategise their approach towards satisfying the tourists.

The study had geographical limitations as it has been restricted to Santiniketan in West Bengal, which in future, can be widened to obtain a more generalized conclusion. Future extrapolations of the study can be done by considering other service variables into consideration namely impact of servicescape, perceived service recovery etc.

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