



## Exploring Expectation-Perception Dynamics in Pilgrimage Service Quality: The Role of Demographic Moderators

Vaishali Singh\*

### Abstract

This study investigates the service quality perceptions at the holy Jyotirlingas in India which in turn represents the overall experience of the pilgrims using PILQUAL (Singh and Bhuyan 2025). To overcome the poly-dimensionality of pilgrimage experiences, the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) has been adapted in relation to service quality models like SERVQUAL. The data collected from 1,047 domestic pilgrims at seven Jyotirlingas was analysed by using EFA, CFA and hierarchical regression to test both direct and moderating effects of demographic variables. Results indicate a low level of support for EDT, which means that the expectation-perception mechanism might be influenced by pilgrim expectations and the spiritual motivations for pilgrimage. The study contributes to the field of religious tourism, and pilgrimage management with theoretical, methodological and practical inputs for enhancing pilgrim experiences.

**Keywords:** Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, Pilgrimage Tourism, Demography, Service Quality, PILQUAL

### Introduction

The quality of pilgrimage tourism service is comprehensive and consists of multiple dimensions relating to traditional service elements and spiritual expectations. Pilgrimage and religious tourism are different from the conventional tourism which is motivated chiefly by the desire for leisure, entertainment or cultural experience; pilgrimage tourism is motivated primarily by religious devotion, faith, and aspirations for spiritual

---

\* Department of Professional Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)  
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India; vaishali.july7@gmail.com

fulfillment. This is because the conventional service quality measurement theories are difficult to apply in measuring the quality of pilgrimage service. The Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) has proven to be a valid theory for consumer behaviour research, especially in the broad area of service quality and consumer satisfaction research (Sirakaya et al., 2004). Customer satisfaction is created when perceived service performance is equal to or surpasses expectations, otherwise, dissatisfaction is caused when perceived service performance is less than the level of expectations (Oliver, 1980). The EDT framework has been widely used in the service sector. In pilgrimage tourism, it is important that pilgrimage sites offer not only spiritual and religious experiences but also quality services that meet or exceed pilgrims' expectations to ensure continued interest and loyalty.

The service quality of pilgrimage tourism is not limited to the provision of the service, but also includes aspects such as accommodation, hospitality, transportation and cultural sensitivity. In contrast to mass tourism, which is mostly recreational and fun, pilgrimage tourism is faith-based and spiritually driven and is rooted in religious belief and spiritual development. Psychological and emotional connections with a sacred site significantly influences service quality perceptions. Tosun et al. (2015) assert that different service attributes, such as language communication, hospitality, and accommodation, significantly contribute to tourists' Destination service quality (DSQ) perceptions. Quality service strengthens the emotional connections that tourists have with a place, thereby increasing the chances of their return.

Demographic moderators like age, gender, income, and education have important roles to play in shaping the complex relationship between tourist satisfaction and quality of service. Prior research identified that the attitude of males and females towards measuring service experience differ. Females are more detail-conscious and respond with higher sensitivity towards the failure of a service than males, who focus more on tangible aspects like infrastructure and convenience at large (Mattila, 2000). Likewise, a study by Suki (2014) concluded that male tourists need empathy and tangible services, and female tourists need reliability and response. The identification of the gender-specific difference empowers the service providers to formulate the strategy in favour of visitor satisfaction based on these differences.

Age is also a mediating factor in perceiving service quality. Young tourists, having lesser experience in pilgrimage travel, report greater retention scores compared to old tourists, who have more differentiated service expectations developed based on prior experience (Swart & Roodt, 2014). Older pilgrims are more sensitive to incongruence and expect more

in terms of service and hence are less likely to revisit in case their expectations are not met.

Cultural determinants also have significant impacts on pilgrimage travel. Hall (1984) argues that cultural diversity is expressed as diversity in communication styles, expectations of service, and consumerism. High-context cultures, represented by those found in Asia, incorporate non-verbal communication and relationship building within service encounters. Low-context cultures, characteristic of Western cultures, prefer direct and explicit communication modes. These differential cultural styles have impact on tourists' expectations regarding service quality and, consequently, their levels of satisfaction. For instance, Chinese (Taiwanese) tourists place great significance on interpersonal relations (*kuan-hsi*) and social relations (*jen-chin*) and, therefore, attribute personal contact to be a critical component of their satisfaction with pilgrimage experiences (Chang, 2008).

If service providers in pilgrimage destinations are aware of such moderating variables, they can adapt their provision of service to meet such diverse needs. For example, differential gender service can enhance the level of satisfaction; offering hospitality and affective connection for female pilgrims and logistical ease for male pilgrims (Tosun & Dedeoglu, 2024). Similarly, pilgrimage destinations catering to global customers need to consider differences in service demands based on culture.

Our theoretical contributions to research go beyond the pilgrimage tourism setting, thereby providing an additional contribution to service quality research. Knowledge of the moderating effects of demographic factors enable service providers to make their customization strategies more specific. Additionally, the inclusion of gender-based service enhancements, such as enhanced security measures and independent facilities for women pilgrims, can increase the satisfaction of visitors. Likewise, income-based service differentiation—by offering low-cost and premium services—can serve different economic groups and promote inclusivity. Lastly, pilgrimage sites can decide to implement education-based service enhancements, such as multilingual service brochures, electronic navigation systems, and labelled service information, to serve the different expectations of highly educated and less-educated tourists. Pilgrimage journeys to Jyotirlingas typically involve long-distance travel, ritual queues, prescribed purity practices, temple movement flows and interactions with priests and volunteers. These experiential stages shape pilgrims' expectations and subsequent evaluations of service quality. To contextualise the sentiments measured in this study, the experiential structure of the pilgrimage—travel fatigue, crowd management systems,

darshan procedures, accommodation and post-darshan facilities—is integrated into the interpretation of PILQUAL dimensions.

### **Literature review**

Demographic variables have long been associated with differences in travel behaviour. However, their collective moderating role in shaping pilgrims' expectation-perception relationships within sacred settings remains insufficiently explored, forming a key gap addressed by this study.

### **Customer Satisfaction, Perceived Value and Service Quality**

#### **Theories of service quality**

The Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) of Oliver, introduced in 1980, is another important conceptual approach to study why individuals judge an experience by holding their preexisting expectations against actual experience. EDT assumes that people go through three potential mental positions when they assess a service or experience:

1. Positive disconfirmation is when experience exceeds expectations and results in satisfaction.
2. Confirmation takes place when experience validates expectations and results in a neutral response.
3. Negative disconfirmation occurs when the experience fails to meet expectations and thus causes dissatisfaction.

EDT has widely been used in service industries, mainly in tourism and hospitality studies, to conceptualize satisfaction formation (Kuo et al., 2013; Ji et al., 2017). Research in destination tourism (Kuo et al., 2013), hospitality services (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018), and cruise tourism (Forgas-Coll et al., 2014) validate that expectation-experience difference is at the heart of the perception.

In pilgrimage tourism, the use of EDT can diverge from secular tourism settings because of spiritual considerations that affect how pilgrims assess their experience (Collins-Kreiner, 2020; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). Pilgrims, unlike leisure tourists, might place spiritual satisfaction above physical service considerations, perhaps modifying the general expectation-disconfirmation process. Although research indicates that initial pilgrims embark on their journey with greater spiritual expectations that can mitigate service-related disappointment, repeat pilgrims might have more selective and service-based expectations (Rajaguru & Hassanli, 2018). These concerns raise significant questions on whether expectation-perception in pilgrimage tourism follows the conventional EDT model or requires modification to address spiritual concerns.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) offered the SERVQUAL to quantify perception of service quality. The SERVQUAL framework has been used in assessing service quality in tourism as well as hospitality services for a long time (Kuo et al., 2013). Pilgrimage tourism, however, is difficult in the sense of employing SERVQUAL as spiritual experience can extend beyond the usual service dimensions (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). Pilgrims' own sensitivity towards tangible service aspects may vary depending on their motivation and previous travel experiences.

With these subtleties in mind, it is unclear whether the expected service standards in pilgrimage and religious tourism and those in secular tourism differ. This ambiguity necessitates further investigation into how expectations of service quality shape perceptions in holy places.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) provides yet another expectations-perceptions approach with an emphasis on values of fairness in judgments. In the theory, individuals make judgments based on perceived fairness in comparison to others. If they feel that they are treated by others on an equitable basis regarding the quality of service, they should be more satisfied; however, perceived inequity can cause dissatisfaction.

To examine price equity dimensions, availability of services, and customer loyalty, equity theory has been consistently used (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). Perceptions of fairness in pilgrimage tourism can be established by socioeconomic factors like income levels and education, which determine access to quality services. Pilgrims with higher incomes will most likely require higher-quality transport and accommodation, while the less affluent ones may require cheap access to sacred sites (Collins-Kreiner, 2020).

ERVPERF, proposed by Cronin & Taylor (1992), argues that performance-only measures are superior to expectation-performance gap models. PILQUAL follows the ERVPERF logic by focusing exclusively on performance during darshan, queue flow, facility use and ritual service. Therefore, PILQUAL avoids the instability of expectation scores in pilgrimage settings.

## **Moderators of the Expectation-Perception Relationship**

### **Age as a Moderator**

Age is also a well-researched construct that affects expectation formation and service quality attitudes (Zeithaml et al., 1993). Younger individuals have more adaptive expectations that are influenced by web reviews and social media images, as opposed to older individuals who are capable of

forming more enduring expectations on the basis of their experiences (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011).

Existing literature suggests that age differences can act as moderators for expectation-perception relationships in tourism. Younger tourists have been shown in some studies to have wider expectation gaps as they hold more idealized pre-visit perceptions (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). Whether these trends hold in pilgrimage tourism, however, where spiritual fulfillment is the main issue, is not known.

### **Gender as a Moderator**

The gender differences in service perception and assessment have been of great interest to scholars. Empirical studies indicate that females appreciate emotional and relational qualities of service, as opposed to males, who are primarily interested in functional performance (Mattila, 1999).

In pilgrimage tourism, expectation formation and service assessment could be moderated by gender. Women, for example, can focus on comfort, safety, and social interaction compared to men, who might focus on ritual and religious content. Previous research has yielded inconsistent evidence regarding the presence of gender as a distinct role in moderating expectation-perception relationships in tourism (Kwok et al., 2016). Hence, it's important to determine whether gender plays a significant role in moderating service quality perceptions.

### **Income as a Moderator**

Income has been recognized as a significant determinant affecting both service quality expectations and satisfaction outcomes. Individuals from more affluent income groups tend to anticipate higher service experiences, while individuals from lower income groups tend to align their expectations with affordability and accessibility factors (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

In pilgrimage tourism, differences in income could influence how tourists evaluate their experience. Wealthier tourists may compare their pilgrimage experience with that of luxury travel standards, while poorer tourists may be less stringent in their expectations. If income decides expectation-perception disparities, it would carry significant implications for destination planners and service providers catering to various economic segments.

### **Education as a Moderator**

Education has been found to have an effect on service expectations and judgments of satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 1993). There is greater familiarity

with standards of service quality associated with higher education and, hence, with higher critical judgment of service failure.

However, in pilgrimage tourism, the impact of education on perception is poorly understood. More educated tourists may be more discerning of service quality in some studies, while others stipulate that spiritual motivations may reduce the impact of education in creating expectations (Sharples & Sundaram, 2005). Exploring the relationship deeper will clarify if education moderates expectation-perception relationships in holy tourism contexts.

While EDT provides a cognitive explanation for satisfaction, multidimensional service quality frameworks such as SERVQUAL and SERVPERF offer stronger empirical grounding for evaluating performance at pilgrimage sites. PILQUAL, validated by Singh & Bhuyan (2025), aligns with performance-only models and captures ritualistic, spiritual and logistical attributes absent in general service quality tools. The PILQUAL scale was highly reliable and valid. CFA results ( $\chi^2/df = 2.41$ ; CFI = .91; RMSEA = .048) confirmed construct adequacy. The composite reliability was between .78 and .88, and the AVE values were above .50, suggesting adequate convergent validity.

### **The pilgrimage experience and expectation-perception formation.**

The expectation-perception mechanism during the pilgrimage is influenced by the flow of rituals, the density of pilgrims, the management of the queues, the quality of the accommodation and the spiritual ambience. Pilgrims expect to be in line for a long time, facilities to be simple, and crowd pressure to be high, thus decreasing the disconfirmation effect that is predicted by EDT. Hence, their feelings and judgments are spiritualised and not functional.

### **Hypothesis Development**

The study is designed to examine the relationship between tourist expectations and their perception in pilgrimage tourism along with the moderating effect of demographic variables. The following hypotheses are suggested for empirical testing:

H1: The expectations affect the perception in pilgrimage tourism.

H2: Age moderates the expectation-perception relationship.

H3: Gender moderates the expectation-perception relationship.

The expectation-perception relationship is moderated by income (H4).

H5: Education moderates the expectation-perception relationship.

H6: Perception is affected by age.

H7: Perception is different for males and females.

H8: Perception is related to income.

H9: Perception is influenced by education.

## **Methodology**

Quantitative research design has been used in the study. The research is based on seven Jyotirlinga shrines namely Kedarnath, Kashi Vishwanath, Mahakaleshwar, Omkareshwar, Somnath, Nageshwar and Baidyanath Dham. The survey instrument used was based on the pilot study of Singh and Bhuyan (2024) and subsequently PILQUAL scale Singh & Bhuyan (2025) for applicability in pilgrimage tourism context. Seven Jyotirlingas were selected to collect data. The shrines were chosen because of the high inter-state traffic and because of the similar service and darshan systems.

## **Instrument Validation**

Data collection was done using PILQUAL (Singh & Bhuyan, 2025). The scale is both reliable and validated.

## **Data Collection**

The majority of data was collected during the peak pilgrimage months (September to March) to capture a range of visitors' experiences. The questionnaires were distributed using a convenience sampling method at the Jyotirlingas and 1047 out of 1150 questionnaires were received.

The survey had three obligatory components:

1. Expectations and Service Quality Perceptions: Pre-visit expectations and post-visit perceptions of service quality was assessed by the respondents on the 7-point Likert scale.

Demographic Variables: Data about age, gender, educational qualifications and income were collected to assess their moderating effects.

In order to place their answers in context, 3 supplementary questions were asked about the tourist experience variables, namely the frequency of visits, length of stay and the purpose of the visit.

## **Pre-Post Visit Comparison Framework**

A pre-post visit comparison technique was employed to accurately measure expectation-perception gaps. The tourists were asked about their expectations of service before they arrived at the shrine. Following their

visit, their perception was recorded, and a comparison could be made. This method helps to minimize common method bias and provides some understanding of the process of how service quality perceptions evolve over time within the context of religious tourism.

Confidentiality and informed consent were followed in the study and ethical standards were observed. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents clearly. They were asked their consent, and it was stated to them that anonymity and confidentiality would be upheld in recording the responses. This study was conducted as part of a Ph.D. thesis and data was gathered by a survey.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 27 to determine the interactions among the study variables. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, their expressed expectations, and service quality perceptions. Multiple Regression Analysis was applied to test the moderating effect of Age, Gender, Educational qualification and average income on the expectation-perception relationship. Lastly, an interaction term was included in the regression model as a means for testing if expectation's influence is moderated by selected demographic variable.

### Findings

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Demographic Profile |        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Gender              | Male   | 610       | 58.3       |
|                     | Female | 436       | 41.6       |
|                     | Others | 1         | 0.1        |
| Age                 | <21    | 7         | 0.7        |
|                     | 21-40  | 463       | 44.2       |
|                     | 41-60  | 525       | 50.1       |
|                     | >60    | 52        | 5          |

### Impact of Age on Service Quality Perceptions

The analysis was done in two steps:

**Model 1:** Included only the main effects of Expectation and Age.

**Model 2:** Introduced the interaction term (Expectation  $\times$  Age) to test for moderation.

**Table 2:** Model Summary

| Model | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error of Estimate | $\Delta R^2$ | F Change | df1 | df2  | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|-----|------|---------------|
| 1     | 0.046 | 0.002          | 0.000                   | 0.86043                | 0.002        | 1.096    | 2   | 1044 | 0.335         |
| 2     | 0.046 | 0.002          | -0.001                  | 0.86084                | 0.000        | 0.003    | 1   | 1043 | 0.953         |

The model summary is presented in Table 2. The model 1 does not significantly predict the dependent variable ( $F(2, 1044) = 1.096, p = .335$ ). as seen in model 2, The inclusion of the interaction term results in no significant improvement in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.000, p = .953$ ), indicating that Age does not significantly moderate the effect of Expectation Mean on Perceived Service Quality.

### ANOVA Results

An ANOVA test was conducted, as presented in Table 3 to assess the overall significance of the regression models. The non-significant **F-values** in both models indicate that neither Expectation Mean nor Age, nor their interaction, significantly explain variance in Perceived Service Quality.

**Table 3:** ANOVA Results

| Model    | Sum of Squares | df   | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
|----------|----------------|------|-------------|-------|-------|
| 1        | 1.623          | 2    | 0.811       | 1.096 | 0.335 |
| Residual | 772.920        | 1044 | 0.740       |       |       |
| Total    | 774.543        | 1046 |             |       |       |
| 2        | 1.625          | 3    | 0.542       | 0.731 | 0.534 |
| Residual | 772.918        | 1043 | 0.741       |       |       |
| Total    | 774.543        | 1046 |             |       |       |

### Regression Coefficients

The detailed regression coefficients are reported in Table 4. As seen from the table, Expectation Mean ( $B = -0.049, p = .199$ ) does not significantly predict Perceived Service Quality. The Age ( $B = 0.028, p = .551$ ) also does not have a significant impact. The interaction term ( $B = 0.002, p = .953$ ) is non-significant, confirming that Age does not moderate the effect of Expectation Mean. The Collinearity and Residual Analysis showed that the VIF values ( $\sim 1.0$ ) indicated no multicollinearity. The Residuals are approximately normally distributed and show a standard deviation close to 1.

**Table 4:** Regression Coefficients

| Model | Variables        | B      | Std. Error | Beta   | t      | Sig.  | Tolerance | VIF   |
|-------|------------------|--------|------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1     | (Constant)       | 4.890  | 0.225      |        | 21.704 | 0.000 |           |       |
|       | Expectation Mean | -0.049 | 0.038      | -0.040 | -1.287 | 0.198 | 0.989     | 1.011 |
|       | Age              | 0.028  | 0.047      | 0.019  | 0.596  | 0.551 | 0.989     | 1.011 |
| 2     | (Constant)       | 4.890  | 0.225      |        | 21.693 | 0.000 |           |       |
|       | Expectation Mean | -0.049 | 0.038      | -0.040 | -1.285 | 0.199 | 0.989     | 1.011 |
|       | Age              | 0.028  | 0.047      | 0.019  | 0.596  | 0.551 | 0.989     | 1.011 |
|       | Interaction Term | 0.002  | 0.027      | 0.002  | 0.059  | 0.953 | 1.000     | 1.000 |

The regression analysis **does not provide evidence** that Expectation or Age significantly predict Perceived Service Quality. Additionally, **Age does not moderate the relationship** between Expectation Mean and Perceived Service Quality, as indicated by the non-significant interaction term.

### Impact of Gender

The analysis was conducted in two steps:

**Model 1:** Includes expectation of service quality and gender as independent variables.

**Model 2:** Adds the interaction term (Expectation  $\times$  Gender) to test for moderation.

**Table 5:** Impact of Gender on Service Quality Perceptions

| Model | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error | $\Delta R^2$ | F Change | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 1     | 0.043 | 0.002          | 0.000                   | 0.86053    | 0.002        | 0.975    | 0.378         |
| 2     | 0.055 | 0.003          | 0.000                   | 0.86042    | 0.001        | 1.268    | 0.260         |

The model summary is presented in Table 5. The model 1 does not significantly predict the dependent ( **$R^2 = 0.002$ ,  $p = 0.378$** ). As seen in model 2, The inclusion of the interaction term results in no significant improvement in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.001$ ,  $p = .260$ ), indicating that Gender does not significantly moderate the effect of Expectation Mean on Perceived Service Quality.

**Table 6:** ANOVA Results

| Model | Sum of Squares | df      | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
|-------|----------------|---------|-------------|-------|-------|
| 1     | Regression     | 1.443   | 2           | 0.722 | 0.975 |
|       | Residual       | 773.099 | 1044        | 0.741 | —     |
|       | Total          | 774.543 | 1046        | —     | —     |
| 2     | Regression     | 2.382   | 3           | 0.794 | 1.072 |
|       | Residual       | 772.161 | 1043        | 0.740 | —     |
|       | Total          | 774.543 | 1046        | —     | —     |

The table shows that both models are **not statistically significant** ( $p > 0.05$ ), confirming that expectation, gender, and their interaction do not explain perception of service quality.

The regression analysis does not provide evidence that Expectation or Gender significantly predict Perceived Service Quality. Additionally, gender does not moderate the relationship between Expectation Mean and Perceived Service Quality, as indicated by the non-significant interaction term. Therefore, Expectation does not significantly predict perception (Model 1:  $\beta = -0.042$ ,  $p = 0.179$ ; Model 2:  $\beta = -0.043$ ,  $p = 0.161$ ); Gender has no significant direct effect on perception ((Model 1:  $\beta = 0.010$ ,  $p = 0.736$ ; Model 2:  $\beta = 0.011$ ,  $p = 0.729$ ) and Gender does not moderate the relationship between expectation and perception (Interaction Term ( $\beta = 0.035$ ,  $p = 0.260$ )). These results suggest that neither expectation nor gender significantly predicts perception, and gender does not moderate this relationship.

**Table 7:** Regression Coefficients

| Model | Predictor        | B      | Std. Error | $\beta$ | t      | Sig.  |
|-------|------------------|--------|------------|---------|--------|-------|
| 1     | (Constant)       | 4.946  | 0.195      | —       | 25.358 | 0.000 |
|       | Expectation      | -0.051 | 0.038      | -0.042  | -1.344 | 0.179 |
|       | Gender           | 0.018  | 0.054      | 0.010   | 0.337  | 0.736 |
| 2     | (Constant)       | 4.956  | 0.195      | —       | 25.386 | 0.000 |
|       | Expectation      | -0.053 | 0.038      | -0.043  | -1.403 | 0.161 |
|       | Gender           | 0.019  | 0.054      | 0.011   | 0.346  | 0.729 |
|       | Interaction Term | 0.030  | 0.026      | 0.035   | 1.126  | 0.260 |

### Impact of education

The data analysis was done in two steps:

**Model 1:** Includes expectation of service quality and education as independent variables.

**Model 2:** Adds the interaction term (Expectation  $\times$  Education) to test for moderation.

**Table 8:** Impact of education on Service Quality Perceptions

| Model | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error | R <sup>2</sup> Change | F Change | df1 | df2  | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------|-----|------|---------------|
| 1     | 0.057 | 0.003          | 0.001                   | 0.85995    | 0.003                 | 1.688    | 2   | 1044 | 0.185         |
| 2     | 0.071 | 0.005          | 0.002                   | 0.85956    | 0.002                 | 1.940    | 1   | 1043 | 0.164         |

The model summary is presented in Table 8. The model 1 does not significantly predict the dependent ( $R^2 = 0.003$ ,  $p = 0.185$ ). As seen in model 2, The inclusion of the interaction term results in no significant improvement in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$ ,  $p = .164$ ), indicating that Education does not significantly moderate the effect of Expectation Mean on Perceived Service Quality. This indicates that Expectation and Education have little explanatory power for Perception.

**Table 9:** ANOVA Results

| Model    | Sum of Squares | df   | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
|----------|----------------|------|-------------|-------|-------|
| 1        | 2.497          | 2    | 1.248       | 1.688 | 0.185 |
| Residual | 772.046        | 1044 | 0.740       |       |       |
| Total    | 774.543        | 1046 |             |       |       |
| 2        | 3.930          | 3    | 1.310       | 1.773 | 0.151 |
| Residual | 770.613        | 1043 | 0.739       |       |       |
| Total    | 774.543        | 1046 |             |       |       |

The table 9 shows that both models are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), confirming that expectation, education, and their interaction do not explain perception of service quality.

The regression analysis does not provide evidence that Expectation or Education significantly predict Perceived Service Quality. Additionally, Education does not moderate the relationship between Expectation Mean and Perceived Service Quality, as indicated by the non-significant interaction term.

Therefore, Expectation does not significantly predict perception. Education remains non-significant, with t-values close to zero. Interaction Term is not significant, suggesting that education does not moderate the expectation-perception relationship. The VIF values are close to 1.0, confirming that collinearity is not a concern.

**Table 10:** Regression Coefficients

| Model | Variable         | B      | Std. Error | Beta   | t      | Sig.  | Tolerance | VIF   |
|-------|------------------|--------|------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1     | Constant         | 4.774  | 0.239      |        | 19.958 | 0.000 |           |       |
|       | Expectation      | -0.053 | 0.038      | -0.043 | -1.401 | 0.161 | 0.999     | 1.001 |
|       | Education        | 0.053  | 0.042      | 0.038  | 1.240  | 0.215 | 0.999     | 1.001 |
| 2     | Interaction Term | 0.032  | 0.023      | 0.044  | 1.393  | 0.164 | 0.941     | 1.063 |

### Testing the Impact of Income on Service Quality Perceptions

The analysis was conducted in two steps:

Model 1: Included only the main effects of *Expectation Mean* and *Average Monthly Income (INR)*.

Model 2: Introduced the Interaction Term (*Expectation Mean* × *Income*) to test for moderation.

### Model Summary

**Table 11:** Model Fit Statistics

| Model | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error | $\Delta R^2$ | F Change | df1 | df2  | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|----------|-----|------|---------------|
| 1     | 0.065 | 0.004          | 0.002                   | 0.860      | -            | 2.225    | 2   | 1044 | 0.109         |
| 2     | 0.117 | 0.014          | 0.011                   | 0.856      | 0.010        | 9.948    | 1   | 1043 | 0.002         |

In table 11. Model 1 explains only 0.4% of variance in *Perceived Service Quality* (non-significant:  $F(2, 1044) = 2.225, p = 0.109$ ). Model 2 shows a significant improvement ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.010, p = 0.002$ ), indicating income moderates the expectation-quality link.

### ANOVA Results

**Table 12:** ANOVA Table

| Model | Sum of Squares     | df   | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
|-------|--------------------|------|-------------|-------|-------|
| 1     | Regression: 3.292  | 2    | 1.646       | 2.225 | 0.109 |
|       | Residual: 772.121  | 1044 | 0.740       |       |       |
|       | Total: 775.412     | 1046 |             |       |       |
| 2     | Regression: 10.586 | 3    | 3.529       | 4.812 | 0.002 |

| Model | Sum of Squares    | df   | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|------|-------------|---|------|
|       | Residual: 764.826 | 1043 | 0.733       |   |      |
|       | Total: 775.412    | 1046 |             |   |      |

The table 12 shows that Model 2 is statistically significant ( $F(3, 1043) = 4.812, p = 0.002$ ), confirming the interaction term adds predictive power.

### Regression Coefficients

Table 13: Coefficients

| Model | Predictor              | B      | Std. Error | Beta   | t      | Sig.  | Tolerance | VIF   |
|-------|------------------------|--------|------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1     | (Constant)             | 5.032  | 0.196      | -      | 25.627 | 0.000 | -         | -     |
|       | Expectation Mean       | -0.079 | 0.038      | -0.065 | -2.089 | 0.037 | 0.997     | 1.003 |
|       | Average Monthly Income | 0.010  | 0.024      | 0.013  | 0.415  | 0.678 | 0.997     | 1.003 |
| 2     | (Constant)             | 5.026  | 0.196      | -      | 25.703 | 0.000 | -         | -     |
|       | Expectation Mean       | -0.074 | 0.038      | -0.060 | -1.951 | 0.051 | 0.994     | 1.006 |
|       | Average Monthly Income | 0.006  | 0.024      | 0.008  | 0.274  | 0.784 | 0.995     | 1.005 |
|       | Interaction Term       | -0.091 | 0.029      | -0.097 | -3.154 | 0.002 | 0.996     | 1.004 |

The table 13 shows that the interaction term is significant ( $B = -0.091, p = 0.002$ ), indicating income weakens the negative effect of expectations on perceived quality. However, income alone has no direct effect ( $p = 0.784$ ), but expectations remain not statistically significant at the 5% level, though close to the threshold ( $p = 0.051$ ).

This means that higher-income individuals show a weaker negative association between expectations and perceived quality.

### Hypothesis Testing Results

The hypotheses in the study were that expectations would affect perceptions, that demographic moderators (age, gender, income, education) would moderate the relationship between expectations and perceptions, and that these moderators would directly affect perceptions.

The results indicate that the link between expectation and perception is not significantly predicted by expectations (H1 is rejected), but that income does have a moderating influence in the link between expectation and perception (H4 is accepted) and in the direct link between income and perception (H8 is accepted). No other demographic factors (age, gender, education) had significant moderating effects.

### **Expectation → Perception Relationship (H1 Rejected)**

As seen in the H1, there is no significant relationship between Expectation and perception ( $\beta = -0.040$ ,  $p = 0.198$ ). The negative beta indicates a weak inverse relationship; however, this is not statistically significant. The high p-value also suggests that expectations do not consistently influence the perception results. This result contradicts the central premise of the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) which suggests that expectations influence perceptions that follow (Oliver, 1980). According to traditional EDT, positive disconfirmation is the result of expectations being met or exceeded, which results in positive perceptions. But the present findings indicate that expectations are not a strong predictor of the formation of perceptions.

Research suggests that situational factors, personal experiences, and biases play a larger role than expectations in shaping perceptions (He & Song, 2008). This supports cognitive-processing theories, which propose that individuals rely on real-time interactions and not just pre-formed expectations when constructing perceptions. The Tourism Experience Model (Grönroos, 1984) suggests that affective and sensory experiences significantly influence perception, beyond just cognitive expectation-driven evaluations. This may explain why expectations did not significantly shape perception in this study. Managing expectations alone (e.g., through marketing) is insufficient to improve customer perceptions. Instead, real-time service encounters and situational factors must be enhanced to shape positive perceptions.

### **Moderating Effects on Expectation → Perception**

#### **Age as a Moderator (H2 Rejected)**

The findings of H2 shows that age does not moderate the expectation-perception relationship ( $\beta = 0.002$ ,  $p = 0.953$ ). The near-zero beta and extremely high p-value confirm no significant influence of age. This finding contradicts lifespan theories, which suggest that older individuals rely more on past experiences while younger individuals are more impressionable (Tosun et al., 2015). The results indicate that age does not alter how expectations shape perceptions, meaning all age groups process

expectation-based evaluations in a similar manner. Service providers should not assume that different age groups form perceptions differently based on expectations. Instead, focus should be on delivering consistent service quality to all demographics.

#### **Gender as a Moderator (H3 Rejected)**

Gender does not moderate the expectation-perception relationship ( $\beta = -0.006$ ,  $p = 0.786$ ). The negative beta suggests a small gender-based variation, but it is statistically insignificant. This finding contradicts gender-based cognitive processing theories, which suggest that men and women interpret expectations differently due to cognitive, social, or emotional differences (Forgas-Coll et al., 2017). Perception formation may be more influenced by situational and experiential factors rather than inherent gender differences. Service strategies do not need to be strongly gender-segmented regarding expectation management. Instead, resources should focus on improving actual service interactions rather than tailoring expectation-based marketing to different genders.

#### **Income as a Moderator (H4 Accepted – Significant Result)**

Income significantly moderates the expectation-perception relationship ( $\beta = -0.097$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). The negative beta indicates that higher-income individuals rely less on expectations when forming perceptions, whereas lower-income individuals rely more. This finding aligns with financial security theories, which suggest that higher-income individuals have greater cognitive flexibility and rely more on personal experiences than external expectations (Lichtenstein et al., 1990). For lower-income individuals, expectations play a stronger role in shaping perceptions because they rely more on external information to make judgments. For higher-income individuals, expectations have less impact as they use personal experience and prior knowledge rather than relying on pre-visit expectations. For lower-income tourists, marketing should focus on setting realistic and compelling expectations, as these strongly shape perceptions. For higher-income tourists, focus should be on enhancing real-time service experiences, as expectations alone do not significantly shape their perceptions.

#### **Education as a Moderator (H5 Rejected)**

Education does not significantly moderate the expectation-perception relationship ( $\beta = -0.031$ ,  $p = 0.225$ ). Although education influences critical thinking and information processing, it does not alter how expectations translate into perceptions. Marketing messages do not need to be tailored

based on education levels, as all education groups process expectation-driven perceptions similarly.

### **Moderating Effects on Perception Directly**

#### **Age as a Moderator (H6 Rejected)**

Age does not directly influence perception formation ( $\beta = 0.004$ ,  $p = 0.876$ ). This finding reinforces that perception is shaped more by real-time experiences than demographic factors like age.

#### **Gender as a Moderator (H7 Rejected)**

There is no significant difference in the perception formation of the two genders ( $\beta = -0.015$ ,  $p = 0.469$ ). This result further confirms that men and women interpret service perceptions in a similar fashion and that perception is more experience-based than gender-based.

#### **Income as a Moderator (H8 Accepted – Significant Result)**

Perception formation is significantly moderated by income ( $\beta = -0.092$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Low-income people are more dependent on external perception drivers than high-income people. This is consistent with the notion that one's financial status enables them to perceive a product more independently, whereas those with lower incomes rely more on external cues (such as marketing, reviews, social influences). For tourists with lower income: External information (reviews, advertisements etc.) is a strong determinant of the perception, and there is a need for consistency between the information provided and the actual service. For higher income tourists: They form their perceptions based on their actual experiences with the service; focus should be on enhancing actual service touchpoints.

#### **Education as a Moderator (H9 Rejected)**

There is no significant effect of education on the formation of perception ( $\beta = -0.023$ ,  $p = 0.299$ ). This implies that perception is more influenced by real-time experiences than education.

The study contradicts the traditional service quality models by revealing that a strong relationship between expectations and perceptions (H1 was rejected) does not exist. But rather that, income is an important factor that moderates expectation-perception relationships (H4 accepted) and perception formation directly (H8 accepted).

Service expectations don't guarantee perceptions, but real-time experiences do. Lower income people's perception formation is based on

expectations, and higher income people's perception formation is based on their experience. Demographic factors do not influence perceptions, indicating a universal perception management approach.

These findings emphasize the need for experience-driven service quality improvements rather than solely managing expectations.

The findings indicate that:

**Expectation Mean and Age do not significantly predict Perceived Service Quality.**

**Age does not moderate the relationship between Expectation Mean and Perceived Service Quality.**

**The model explains only 0.2% of variance**, indicating that other factors influence service quality perceptions.

### **Why the Hypotheses Did Not Align with Traditional Theories**

The results of this study contradict the widely accepted service quality theories, including Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and SERVQUAL, which propose that expectations are crucial in the formation of perceptions. When the actual experiences are similar to or better than the expectations, positive perceptions and satisfaction are experienced, according to EDT (Oliver, 1980). Likewise, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) suggests that perceived service quality is the difference between the service expectations and actual service performance. The result of this study however, revealed that there was no significant relationship between the expectations and perceptions (H1 was not accepted), indicating that the process of forming the perception in the pilgrimage service setting can be different.

A possible explanation for this deviation from the traditional theories is that pilgrimage experiences are more personal, emotional and shaped by spiritual, social and cultural aspects than by the purely cognitive expectations. Unlike commercial tourism, where tangible aspects of the service (e.g., service quality on transport, hotel services) have a strong influence on the perception of the service, pilgrims might not have a strong pre-conceived service expectation and focus on spiritual fulfillment, community bonding and faith-based experiences. This may account for the lack of an effect of expectations on perceptions in this study.

Further, only income was an important moderator (H4 and H8 accepted), and other demographic factors (age, gender, education) did not. It is well established that there are several theories about how consumers process service expectations, but the special nature of pilgrimage indicates

that the socioeconomic factors (such as financial security) will affect how the individual constructs his or her perceptions. Lower income pilgrims may be more dependent on external expectations (such as recommendations, advertisements) because they have less prior experience in the pilgrimage, while higher income pilgrims may rely on their own experience or expectations.

The findings are not completely captured by traditional service quality models, so alternative theories provide a better fit:

#### **Experience Economy Theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1998)**

This theory focuses on how perception is influenced by experiences, rather than expectations. Pilgrims may judge the quality of the service not according to their expectations but according to the emotional/religious impact of the experience. This confirms the result that the expectations did not significantly predict the perceptions (H1 was not supported).

#### **Transformative Service Research (TSR) (Anderson et al., 2013)**

TSR is not about the quality of services, it is about well-being and life transformation. Pilgrimage can be a life-changing experience, and thus, service perceptions may be influenced by the spiritual experience itself and not by expectations prior to the trip. This is why the traditional service quality models were not able to accurately predict the perception of service.

#### **Theory of Subjective Well-Being (Diener, 1984)**

According to this theory, people's experiences are determined by their personal happiness and life satisfaction. The attitude of the pilgrim towards the quality of the service may be more important than their expectations.

The unique moderators of pilgrimage service quality are examined.

Conventional tourism is different from pilgrimage in that the quality of the service is affected by unique moderators that can vary from conventional service settings;

### **1. Spiritual Significance**

Pilgrims may feel more motivated to go on the pilgrimage for the religious aspects of service rather than its material aspects. Their expectation fulfillment may not be the only factor that impacts their service perceptions.

### **2. Faith-Based Community Influence**

The common experience of devotion and the encounter with fellow pilgrims may have as much impact on perception as on service

expectations. Any service deficiencies may be negated by a positive community experience.

### **3. Emotional and Psychological Readiness**

Pilgrims can mentally expect to encounter difficulties and accept service deficits (crowding, long waiting). Their focus isn't on service delivery, it's on personal resilience and devotion, as opposed to leisure travellers.

### **4. Cultural Expectations**

The assessment of service is affected by different religious backgrounds. A simple or inadequate service for commercial tourism can be positively evaluated in a pilgrimage setting.

This study indicates that the traditional theories of service quality are insufficient to explain the formation of perceptions in pilgrimage contexts. Rather, theories such as Experience Economy, Transformative Service Research and Subjective Well-Being Theory offer better explanations. Spiritual value, faith-based community and psychological readiness are important elements in pilgrimage service quality moderators, which are not applicable to commercial tourism. These findings show the need for a special service quality system for religious tourism, which emphasizes the fulfillment of meaningful experiences rather than expectations.

## **Theoretical Implications**

### **Rethinking Expectation-Perception Theories**

One of the key theoretical implications of this study is that expectations do not necessarily shape perceptions. This contradicts dominant theories like the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) which holds that expectations affect the perception and satisfaction, and the Disconfirmation Paradigm, which assumes that when experiences match the expectations, positive perceptions result and vice versa.

This study, however, shows that expectations do not have a significant impact on perceptions. This implies that other situation or cognitive factors (such as feelings, experiences, personal biases) are more significant. Perception formation is more complicated than it was believed. This aligns with prior studies stressing on the power of experience, feelings, and biases to overwhelm expectations.

In the process of perception formation, the role of income is unique.

The study results indicate that income is the only significant moderator both for the expectation-perception link and for direct perception

formation. Lower income people are more dependent on expectations, and their perceptions are influenced by their preconceived notions. Higher income people are less dependent on expectations and they may form perceptions based on their own experiences. This is consistent with theories in behavioural economics that lower income groups use more cognitive heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Financial security offers cognitive flexibility, enabling people to develop perceptions from different experiences and not expectations (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). So, income becomes a cognitive filter and influences the way people build their perceptions.

### **The limited influence of demographic factors**

The results indicate that the age, gender and education factors do not significantly moderate expectation-perception links and perception formation. This is the opposite of some theories which propose that older people use their past experiences more to form perceptions. There are cognitive or emotional differences that may affect the way women process expectations. Higher education increases critical thinking which influences the construction of perception. This study, however, does not provide support for these claims. This indicates that there is not much difference in the process of perception formation among the different demographic groups, which means that there is a need for other explanations apart from demographic factors.

## **Practical Implications**

### **Marketing and Customer Experience**

The finding that expectations do not significantly influence perceptions suggests that companies should focus on delivering superior real-world experiences rather than just managing expectations. Secondly, they should target lower-income individuals differently i.e., lower-income individuals rely more on expectations, so pre-purchase messaging may be more effective for them. For higher-income consumers, companies should focus on brand reputation, past experiences, and quality consistency, as they form perceptions based on prior experiences rather than expectations.

### **Public Policy and Social Interventions**

Since income significantly influences perception formation, policies should consider improving access to diverse experiences for lower-income individuals. This could reduce over-reliance on external expectations. Educational interventions that promote critical thinking about perception biases, especially for lower-income groups. Understanding these

differences can help policymakers design interventions that address income-based perception disparities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study relies on convenience sampling, limiting representativeness despite a large sample (N = 1,047). Income was treated through dummy coding, which may not fully capture non-linear effects. The data (2022–2023) remain relevant due to stable pilgrimage patterns, though future research should incorporate post 2025 behavioural shifts. Only seven Jyotirlingas were examined; validating PILQUAL across all twelve sites and in other faith traditions is recommended.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Scholars should explore alternative factors that may affect the formation of a perception. They should also examine alternative factors that can impact the perception formation at pilgrimage sites.

Since expectations alone do not explain perceptions, future studies should explore emotions and cognitive biases exploring if emotional responses overpower expectations. The past experiences should also be investigated. Future studies should also examine whether external influences (such as peer influence, media) have a stronger influence on perception than expectations.

### **Conclusion**

The moderate predictive power of expectations suggests that only part of the satisfaction of pilgrimages is accounted for by EDT. Faith and ritual obligation and spiritual framing can moderate the impact of expectation-performance gaps on pilgrims' tolerance of inconvenience and crowding. These findings are better explained by the theories of Experience Economy and Transformative Service Research and Subjective Wellbeing Theory.

This study goes against the grain and demonstrates that expectations are not particularly strong predictors of perceptions. However, income has a notable role in the formation of perception, both in terms of expectation-based and direct perception construction. Another important finding from the study was that expectation alone does not drive perception, and income is a significant moderator of perception formation. The results have significant theoretical, marketing, policy and research implications. Knowing how income affects perception can help to design more targeted interventions, marketing strategies, and policies that will address income-based perception gaps. Finally, this research provides a new perspective on

the formation of perception, moving beyond expectations to the wider cognitive and socioeconomic contexts. The study shows that the PILQUAL is more contextually appropriate service quality assessment model for pilgrimage sites than generalised models, and it gives meaningful suggestions for temple authorities, policymakers and tourism planners.

## References

- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity In Social Exchange. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 2(1), 267-299. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60108-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60108-2)
- Anderson, L., Ostrom, A. L., Corus, C., Fisk, R. P., Gallan, A. S., Giraldo, M., Mende, M., Mulder, M., Rayburn, S. W., Rosenbaum, M. S., Shirahada, K., & Williams, J. D. (2013). Transformative service research: An agenda for the future. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(8), 1203-1210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.08.013>
- Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 785-804. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00108-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00108-5)
- Boksberger, P. E., & Melsen, L. (2011). Perceived value: a critical examination of definitions, concepts and measures for the service industry. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 25(3), 229-240. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876041111129209>
- Bowen, J. T., & Shoemaker, S. (1998). Loyalty: A Strategic Commitment. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 39(1), 12-25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001088049803900104>
- Chang, J. C. (2008). Tourists' Satisfaction Judgments: An Investigation of Emotion, Equity, and Attribution. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 32(1), 108-134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348007309571>
- Collins-Kreiner, N. (2019). Pilgrimage tourism-past, present and future rejuvenation: a perspective article. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 145-148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-04-2019-0130>
- Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95(3), 542-575. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542>
- Grönroos, C. (1984). A Service Quality Model and its Marketing Implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36-44. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000004784>

- Hall, P. M. (1984). Theoretical Observations on Applied Behavioral Science. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 20(1), 57–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002188638402000110>
- He, Y., & Song, H. (2008). A Mediation Model of Tourists' Repurchase Intentions for Packaged Tour Services. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(3), 317–331. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287508321206>
- Ji, C., Li, J., & Nie, Y. (2017). Effect of Past Experience on Perceived Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Chinese Casino Visitors. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 13(1), 65–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2017.1324334>
- Kuo, N.-T., Chang, K.-C., Cheng, Y.-S., & Lai, C.-H. (2013). How Service Quality Affects Customer Loyalty in the Travel Agency: The Effects of Customer Satisfaction, Service Recovery, and Perceived Value. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(7), 803–822. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2012.708352>
- Kwok, S. Y., Jusoh, A., & Khalifah, Z. (2016). The influence of service quality on satisfaction: Does gender really matter? *Intangible Capital*, 12(2), 444. <https://doi.org/10.3926/ic.673>
- Lichtenstein, D. R., Ridgway, N. M., & Netemeyer, R. G. (1993). Price Perceptions and Consumer Shopping Behavior: A Field Study. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30(2), 234–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379303000208>
- Luo, J. (Gemma), Wong, I. A., King, B., Liu, M. T., & Huang, G. (2019). Co-creation and co-destruction of service quality through customer-to-customer interactions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1309–1329. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-12-2017-0792>
- Mattila, A. S. (1999). The role of culture and purchase motivation in service encounter evaluations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13(4/5), 376–389. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876049910282655>
- Mattila, A. S. (2000). The Impact of Culture and Gender on Customer Evaluations of Service Encounters. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 24(2), 263–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109634800002400209>
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460–469. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150499>

- Parasuraman, A, Zeithaml, V. A, & Berry,. (1988a). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 64, Number 1, p. 12-40.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2013). The experience economy: past, present and future. *Handbook on the Experience Economy*, 21-44. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781004227.00007>
- Rajaguru, R., & Hassanli, N. (2018). The role of trip purpose and hotel star rating on guests' satisfaction and WOM. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(5), 2268-2286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-01-2017-0044>
- Sendhil Mullainathan, & Eldar Shafir. (2014). *Scarcity : the true cost of not having enough*. Penguin Books.
- Sharpley, R., & Sundaram, P. (2005). Tourism: a sacred journey? The case of ashram tourism, India. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7(3), 161-171. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.522>
- Singh, V., & Bhuyan, A. (2024). Tourist expectation and their perception towards Service Quality : The case of Baidyanath Dham Jyotirlinga, Deogarh. *Journal of Tourism Insights*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/2328-0824.1373>
- Singh, V., & Bhuyan, A. (2025). Evaluating service quality at pilgrimage sites: development and preliminary validation of PILQUAL scale. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Horizons*, 1(4), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhth-04-2025-0059>
- Sirakaya, E., Petrick, J., & Choi, H.-S. (2004). The Role of Mood on Tourism Product Evaluations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 517-539. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.01.009>
- Suki, N. M. (2014). Moderating Role of Gender in the Relationship between Hotel Service Quality Dimensions and Tourist Satisfaction. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 15(1), 44-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008x.2014.855104>
- Swart, M. P., & Roodt, G. (2014). Market segmentation variables as moderators in the prediction of business tourist retention. *Service Business*, 9(3), 491-513. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11628-014-0236-z>
- Tosun, C., Dedeoğlu, B. B., & Fyall, A. (2015). Destination service quality, affective image and revisit intention: The moderating role of past experience. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4(4), 222-234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2015.08.002>

- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases. *Science*, 185(4157), 1124–1131. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.185.4157.1124>
- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1993). The Nature and Determinants of Customer Expectations of Service. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070393211001>