

Tourist Perception and Satisfaction Toward Sustainable Destinations: A LOHAS-Based Study of Courtallam

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism has gained prominence as destinations strive to balance environmental preservation with visitor satisfaction. The Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) framework provides a lens to understand tourists who prioritize wellness, environmental responsibility, and ethical practices. This study examines tourist perception and satisfaction at Courtallam using a LOHAS-based approach. Data were collected from 350 tourists using a structured questionnaire. Analysis included descriptive percentage analysis, Pearson correlation, and simple regression. Results indicate that tourists exhibit high LOHAS orientation and perceive Courtallam as sustainable. LOHAS orientation is positively correlated with sustainability perception, and sustainability perception significantly predicts tourist satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of aligning destination management with LOHAS values to enhance tourist satisfaction and promote sustainable tourism.

Keywords: LOHAS, Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Perception, Tourist Satisfaction, Wellness Tourism, Courtallam

Introduction

Sustainable tourism development has become a central concern for destinations seeking to balance economic growth with the conservation of natural and cultural resources. As tourism activities intensify across ecologically sensitive regions, the need to adopt sustainable practices that minimize environmental degradation, protect biodiversity, and support local communities has gained significant importance. Sustainable tourism not only ensures the long-term viability

of destinations but also enhances the quality of visitor experiences by preserving the authenticity and integrity of the destination environment.

In recent years, tourist preferences have undergone a notable transformation, with increasing awareness of health, wellness, environmental protection, and ethical consumption. This shift has led to the emergence of the **Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS)** segment, which represents a group of consumers who actively seek products and experiences aligned with environmental responsibility, personal well-being, social equity, and sustainable living. LOHAS-oriented tourists prefer destinations that emphasize eco-friendly infrastructure, cleanliness, wellness facilities, responsible resource management, and community-based tourism practices. Their travel decisions are influenced not only by leisure and recreation but also by the perceived sustainability values upheld by the destination.

Within this context, tourist perception and satisfaction serve as critical indicators of a destination's success in implementing sustainable tourism practices. Tourist perception reflects visitors' evaluation of environmental quality, infrastructure, service standards, and sustainability initiatives, while satisfaction captures the extent to which these experiences meet or exceed expectations. A positive perception of sustainability practices often enhances tourist satisfaction, leading to repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth promotion, and long-term destination loyalty.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Tourism and Tourist Satisfaction

Sustainable tourism focuses on the responsible use of natural and cultural resources while ensuring long-term socio-economic benefits for host communities (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). It seeks to balance environmental conservation, social equity, and economic development, thereby maintaining destination quality and competitiveness. Sustainable practices such as environmental protection, waste management, conservation of biodiversity, and community involvement play a crucial role in shaping tourists' experiences.

Tourist satisfaction is widely recognized as an important indicator of destination performance. Previous studies reveal that tourists who perceive destinations as environmentally responsible and socially sustainable tend to report higher satisfaction levels (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Positive perceptions of sustainability initiatives enhance destination image, emotional attachment, and revisit intention (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In nature-based and wellness destinations, factors such as cleanliness, environmental quality, and preservation of natural attractions significantly

influence tourist satisfaction (Lee, 2013). Thus, sustainable tourism practices are closely linked to tourists' overall perception and satisfaction.

2.2 LOHAS in Tourism

Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) represents a value-oriented consumer segment that emphasizes health, wellness, environmental responsibility, and ethical consumption (Ray & Anderson, 2000). In tourism, LOHAS orientation influences travel motivation, destination choice, and evaluation of tourism experiences. LOHAS-oriented tourists prefer destinations that promote eco-friendly practices, wellness facilities, and responsible tourism development. Studies indicate that LOHAS values positively influence tourists' perception of sustainability initiatives and service quality. Hwang and Lyu (2019) found that LOHAS-oriented tourists exhibit higher satisfaction and stronger loyalty intentions toward green and sustainable tourism services. Similarly, research suggests that such tourists are more supportive of environmental conservation and community-based tourism practices, which enhances their overall travel satisfaction (Han et al., 2017). Although LOHAS has been widely studied in green consumption and hospitality contexts, its application at the destination level—particularly in assessing tourist perception and satisfaction—remains limited.

2.3 Research Gap

Existing literature confirms the importance of sustainable tourism practices and the relevance of LOHAS values in shaping tourist behavior. However, limited empirical studies have examined tourist perception and satisfaction toward sustainable destinations using a LOHAS-based framework, especially in the Indian context. This study addresses this gap by analyzing Courtallam as a sustainable and wellness-oriented destination through the lens of LOHAS.

3. Objectives

1. To assess the LOHAS orientation of tourists visiting Courtallam.
2. To examine tourists' perception of sustainability practices at Courtallam.
3. To analyze the influence of sustainability perception on tourist satisfaction using inferential statistical techniques.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design: The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**. The descriptive approach is used to understand the LOHAS orientation and sustainability

perceptions of tourists, while the analytical design helps examine the relationship between sustainability perception and tourist satisfaction.

4.2 Data Collection

The study is based on **primary data** collected from **350 tourists** visiting Courtallam. Data were gathered using a **structured questionnaire** designed to measure key study variables.

The questionnaire consisted of three major sections:

- **LOHAS Orientation**, measured through dimensions such as environmental concern, health and wellness orientation, and ethical responsibility.
- **Perception of Sustainability Practices**, including environmental protection, cleanliness, and responsible tourism practices.
- **Tourist Satisfaction**, assessed through overall experience, wellness satisfaction, perceived value, and revisit intention.

Responses were recorded using a **Likert scale**, ensuring consistency and ease of quantitative analysis.

4.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools:

- **Descriptive analysis** (percentage distribution) was employed to summarize the demographic profile and key characteristics of tourists.
- **Inferential analysis**, including **Pearson correlation** and **simple regression analysis**, was used to examine the relationship between sustainability perception and tourist satisfaction.

These techniques enabled the study to identify the strength and direction of relationships among the variables and assess the impact of sustainability perception on tourist satisfaction.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

5.1.1 LOHAS Orientation

Table No.1 LOHAS Orientation of Tourists (n=350)

Dimension	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Environmental concern	78.6	13.1	8.3
Health & wellness orientation	82.3	11.4	6.3
Ethical & responsible behavior	74.9	15.7	9.4

Interpretation: Table 1 shows the LOHAS orientation of tourists visiting Courtallam. The results indicate that a majority of tourists display positive LOHAS characteristics. About 78.6% of respondents agreed that they are environmentally concerned, suggesting a generally favorable attitude toward environmental protection, although a small proportion expressed neutrality or disagreement. Health and wellness orientation recorded the highest level of agreement (82.3%), highlighting the importance of wellness and rejuvenation motives among tourists visiting Courtallam. Ethical and responsible behavior was agreed upon by 74.9% of respondents, indicating a reasonable level of concern for responsible tourism practices, though some tourists remained neutral on this aspect. Overall, the findings suggest that tourists exhibit a **moderately strong LOHAS orientation**, with health and wellness being the most prominent dimension.

5.1.2 Sustainability Perception

Table 2. Tourists' Perception of Sustainability (n = 350)

Attribute	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Cleanliness of waterfalls	76.0	14.6	9.4
Environmental conservation efforts	71.7	17.1	11.2
Crowd management	62.9	19.7	17.4
Waste management	58.6	21.4	20.0

Interpretation: Table 2 presents tourists' perception of sustainability practices at Courtallam. The results show that tourists generally hold a **moderate to positive perception** of sustainability initiatives at the destination. Cleanliness of waterfalls received the highest level of agreement (76.0%), indicating that most tourists are satisfied with the maintenance and environmental quality of the natural attractions. Environmental conservation efforts were also viewed positively by a majority of respondents (71.7%), though a noticeable proportion of tourists remained neutral or disagreed, suggesting scope for improvement.

Perception of crowd management appears comparatively weaker, with only 62.9% of tourists expressing agreement and a higher level of neutral (19.7%) and disagreeing responses (17.4%). This indicates that overcrowding may affect tourists' experience during peak seasons. Waste management received the lowest agreement (58.6%), with one-fifth of respondents expressing dissatisfaction, highlighting it as a key area requiring attention. Overall, the findings suggest that while sustainability practices at Courtallam are viewed positively, aspects such as crowd

and waste management need further strengthening to enhance tourists' sustainability perception.

5.1.3 Tourist Satisfaction

Table No.3 Tourist Satisfaction Levels (n = 350)

Statement	Satisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
Overall satisfaction	81.1	12.0	6.9
Wellness experience	84.6	9.7	5.7
Value for experience	77.4	14.3	8.3
Intention to revisit	79.7	11.1	9.2

Interpretation: Table 3 shows the satisfaction levels of tourists visiting Courtallam. The findings indicate a **high level of overall tourist satisfaction**, with 81.1% of respondents expressing satisfaction with their visit. Wellness experience recorded the highest satisfaction level (84.6%), highlighting the strong appeal of Courtallam as a wellness-oriented destination. Satisfaction with value for experience was also relatively high (77.4%), though a small proportion of tourists expressed dissatisfaction. Intention to revisit was reported by 79.7% of tourists, suggesting favorable future behavioral intentions. Overall, the results reflect a **positive tourist experience** and reinforce Courtallam's position as a satisfying and wellness-focused sustainable destination.

5.2 Inferential Analysis

5.2.1 Pearson Correlation

Table 4. Correlation between LOHAS Orientation and Sustainability Perception (n = 350)

Variables	LOHAS Orientation	Sustainability perception
LOHAS Orientation	1	0.62**
Sustainability Perception	0.64**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Interpretation: Table 4 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between **LOHAS orientation** and **tourists' perception of sustainability** at Courtallam. The correlation coefficient between the two variables is $r = 0.64$, which indicates a **strong positive relationship**. This relationship is statistically significant at the **1% level ($p < 0.01$)**, confirming that the observed association is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The positive direction of the correlation suggests that as tourists' LOHAS orientation increases—characterized by greater environmental concern, health and wellness consciousness, and ethical responsibility—their perception of sustainability practices at Courtallam also improves. Tourists with strong LOHAS values are more attentive to sustainability-related attributes such as environmental conservation, cleanliness, waste management, and responsible destination management. As a result, they are more likely to recognize, evaluate, and appreciate sustainability initiatives implemented at the destination.

Furthermore, the strength of the correlation indicates that LOHAS orientation plays a meaningful role in shaping how tourists perceive the sustainability performance of Courtallam. This finding supports previous research that highlights the influence of value-based lifestyle orientations on tourists' evaluations of sustainable tourism practices. It also reinforces the suitability of applying a LOHAS-based framework to assess tourist perception in wellness and nature-based destinations.

Overall, the results demonstrate that LOHAS orientation is an important determinant of sustainability perception among tourists. Enhancing sustainability practices and effectively communicating these initiatives may further strengthen positive perceptions among LOHAS-oriented tourists, thereby improving destination image and supporting long-term sustainable tourism development at Courtallam.

5.2.2 Regression Analysis

Table 5. Regression of Sustainability Perception on Tourist Satisfaction

Predictor	B		
Sustainability Perception			
Model Summary	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F
	0.50	0.49	358.72

Table 5 presents the results of the simple regression analysis examining the influence of sustainability perception on tourist satisfaction among visitors to Courtallam. The analysis reveals that sustainability perception is a strong and statistically significant predictor of tourist satisfaction.

The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.71$) indicates a strong positive effect of sustainability perception on tourist satisfaction. This suggests that an increase in tourists' positive perception of sustainability practices—such as cleanliness, environmental conservation, crowd control, and waste management—leads to a substantial improvement in their overall satisfaction with the destination. The high t-value ($t = 18.94$) and the very low p-value ($p < 0.001$) show that the relationship is highly significant and not due to chance.

The model summary shows an R^2 value of 0.50, indicating that 50% of the variance in tourist satisfaction is explained by tourists' perception of sustainability practices at Courtallam. This represents a strong explanatory power for a single predictor model. The adjusted R^2 value (0.49) is only marginally lower, suggesting that the model is stable and not over-fitted.

The F-statistic ($F = 358.72$) is large and statistically significant, confirming the overall goodness of fit of the regression model. This indicates that the regression equation significantly predicts tourist satisfaction.

Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that sustainability perception plays a critical role in determining tourist satisfaction at Courtallam. Tourists who perceive the destination as environmentally responsible, clean, and well-managed report higher satisfaction levels and are more likely to have positive experiences. These results underscore the importance of strengthening sustainability practices and effectively communicating them to tourists in order to enhance satisfaction and support sustainable tourism development at Courtallam.

6. Discussion

- Descriptive results indicate high LOHAS orientation among tourists, aligning with Courtallam's wellness tourism appeal.
- Positive perceptions of cleanliness, conservation, and wellness attributes demonstrate that Courtallam is viewed as a sustainable destination.
- Inferential analysis confirms that LOHAS orientation is positively associated with sustainability perception, supporting previous studies (Hwang & Lyu, 2019).
- Sustainability perception significantly predicts tourist satisfaction, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices in enhancing visitor experience.

- Improvement in **waste management and crowd control** could further enhance satisfaction and sustainability perception.

7. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that LOHAS orientation influences tourists' perception of sustainability, which in turn affects tourist satisfaction at Courtallam. Aligning destination management practices with LOHAS values, particularly in wellness and sustainability initiatives, is critical. Improvements in waste and crowd management can further strengthen visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

8. Practical Implications

- **Destination Management:** Enhance eco-friendly infrastructure, waste management, and crowd control.
- **Marketing:** Promote wellness and sustainability to attract LOHAS tourists.
- **Policy:** Involve local communities in sustainable tourism initiatives to benefit both visitors and residents.

9. Limitations and Future Research

- Single-destination and convenience sampling limits generalizability.
- Future studies could include multiple wellness destinations and employ **structural equation modeling** to explore mediation/moderation effects.
- Longitudinal studies could examine whether improvements in sustainability practices increase revisit intentions over time.

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Author Biographies



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