

RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26524/jms.16.24>

A Study on UX Factors of Tourists at En-ooru, a Popular Eco-tourism Destination in Wayanad of Kerala

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Abstract

Eco-tourism is a prominent branch within tourism studies, deserving close attention given its potential to attract visitors from across the world and to generate income for the local economy. Designing effective marketing strategies that inform and motivate tourists to visit eco-tourism destinations requires a clear understanding of the factors that genuinely shape visitor satisfaction. This article investigates the user experience (UX) factors relevant to eco-tourism, using En-ooru, a tribal heritage village and eco-tourism project situated in the Wayanad district of Kerala and promoted by the Government of Kerala, as the empirical setting. The study has two objectives: first, to examine tourists' experience at En-ooru across a range of factors, and second, to assess visitors' overall UX and to compare the relative contribution of these factors to it. Relevant literature was reviewed to identify existing trends in the field, and primary data were collected from 100 visitors through a structured questionnaire administered on a purposive sampling basis. Descriptive analysis, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression were used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that, among the factors examined, experience with the tribal huts and with the food cuisines available at En-ooru are the only two with a statistically significant association with visitors' overall experience, and that visitors' ratings differ significantly across the various factors assessed. Given the cross-sectional, single-site nature of the sample, these findings should be read as patterns observed among the 100 respondents studied rather than as generalisable claims about eco-tourism visitors as a whole.

Keywords: Eco-Tourism; User Experience (UX); Tribal Heritage Tourism; En-Ooru; Wayanad; Visitor Satisfaction.

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How to cite this article: Shareef A P, Dr. M A Shakila Banu, Anagha A S, A Study on UX Factors of Tourists at En-ooru, a Popular Eco-tourism Destination in Wayanad of Kerala, Journal of Management and Science, 16(2) 2026 70-75. Retrieved from <https://jmseleyon.com/index.php/jms/article/view/964>

Received: 2 April 2026 **Revised:** 30 April 2026 **Accepted:** 11 June 2026 **Published:** 30 June 2026

Background of the Study

Wayanad is a well-liked tourist spot that encourages eco-friendliness. It is a popular destination for vacationers, history buffs, and environmental enthusiasts, owing to its abundant biodiversity and breathtaking scenery. Visitors to Wayanad who engage in eco-tourism gain a deeper understanding of conservation, since ecotourism places equal emphasis on leisure and learning. It also gives local inhabitants, notably the tribal communities, an opportunity to earn a livelihood,

and is regarded as a major source of social, economic, and environmental benefit for the region ([Karmic Tourism, n.d.](#)). For travellers, the destination's appeal lies in the presence of the Western Ghats, dense forests, rich wildlife, and abundant opportunities for outdoor activity, alongside panoramic natural beauty, mountain ranges, green valleys and a distinctive topography and climate. Ecotourism has been gaining wider popularity in recent years, and Wayanad is well positioned to benefit from this trend.

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En-ooru, which literally means “my village”, is a tribal heritage village developed as a government project for tourists. Located in Vythiri town in the Wayanad district of Kerala, it is described as the first tribal heritage village of its kind, opened to the public on 4th June 2022 ([Kerala Tourism, 2022](#)). Spread over 25 acres on the slope of a hillock, the project has since become one of the notable attractions on the Wayanad tourist circuit and is administered by the tribal communities of the area. Its principal aim is to give visitors an opportunity to learn about the heritage and culture of the tribal people while promoting eco-tourism more broadly. The village includes a tribal market, food outlets, a tribal emporium, and a tribal colony, and is supported by the Kerala Tourism Board. Beyond its tourism function, the project is intended to generate direct and indirect employment, provide the tribal community with a permanent marketplace for their produce and craft, preserve traditional knowledge on food processing, and impart training in organic farming, positioning it as a model for community-based tourism development in the state ([Babu Paul, n.d.](#)).

Significance of the Study

Tourists visiting eco-tourism destinations are drawn by a range of interests, including the presence of wildlife, favourable climatic conditions, lush green surroundings, hilly landscapes, and waterfalls; such interests are widely recognised as important motivators for eco-tourism visitation ([Poyamoli, 2007](#)). En-ooru combines many of these features and, in addition, offers visitors direct exposure to the culture and lifestyle of tribal communities through its traditional huts and tribal products, which are among its principal attractions. This research examines UX factors relevant to eco-tourists generally and evaluates them specifically in the context of En-ooru, comparing the relative influence of these factors on visitor experience. As an empirical study, it is intended to contribute to the existing literature and to inform policymakers, particularly since En-ooru is a government initiative and the state tourism department may use such findings in planning further development. Community-based eco-tourism of this kind is also relevant to the broader goals of balanced regional growth and the economic upliftment of historically disadvantaged communities, and sustainable, profitable models of tourism of this sort have long been recognised as important to regional development ([Aparna Raj, 1999](#)). The study is intended to be of practical use to the wider business

ecosystem connected with En-ooru in shaping future plans.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the experience of tourists at En-ooru based on different factors.
2. To understand the overall UX of visitors to En-ooru and to compare the factors contributing to it.

Review of Literature

[Vaja \(2021\)](#) emphasises that eco-tourism is an environmentally sensitive form of tourism that supports local communities and economic development without compromising local culture, and argues that administrators must give eco-tourism destinations the same marketing attention as other tourism products. [Mohd Arman et al. \(2022\)](#) note that the participation of indigenous communities in eco-tourism can create outcomes that benefit both government and indigenous communities alike; drawing on the Community-Based Eco-Tourism initiative at the Periyar Tiger Reserve, they suggest this model of involving indigenous communities could be extended to other wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in India while safeguarding sustainability and biodiversity. [Chaudhuri \(2017\)](#) similarly observes that the “Kerala model” of tourism, distinguished by the state's emphasis on responsible tourism practices, offers a template that other Indian states could adopt. [Carvache-Franco et al. \(2019\)](#) find that local flora, fauna, and historic sites are important draws for travellers, with the opportunity to enjoy natural beauty and to learn about local traditions cited as the primary motivation for visiting Kerala. [Sana et al. \(2023\)](#) suggest that future research should focus on the motivations and decision-making processes of eco-tourists and the factors shaping their satisfaction and loyalty, and highlight a further need for research into the social and cultural impacts of ecotourism, including tourist-community interactions and ecotourism's potential contribution to sustainable development. [Chang-Franw and Chun \(2014\)](#) discuss human-computer interaction (HCI) design considerations for technology applied to eco-tourism, arguing that usability, information architecture, and interaction design are UX factors that warrant redesign in this context. [Mercy Anandaraj \(2015\)](#) observes that eco-tourism is among the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry, with its appeal resting on local culture, wilderness experiences, and opportunities for personal growth.

Methodology of Research

The study is empirical in nature, drawing on a sample of 100 visitors to En-ooru selected through purposive sampling. A structured questionnaire, administered as a Google Form, was used to collect first-hand data on respondents' demographic profile, visiting pattern, and experience of En-ooru; items relating to experience were assessed using a five-

point Likert scale. Relevant secondary data were drawn from research articles, books, and websites. The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression, carried out in jamovi ([The jamovi project, 2022](#)), which in turn uses R as its underlying statistical engine ([R Core Team, 2021](#)).

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Responses to Various Factors of UX

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Climate Conditions	0	1	21	43	35
Landscape	0	1	5	57	37
Beauty of nature	0	1	2	38	59
Transportation to En – ooru	3	13	34	38	12
Transportation within En – ooru premises	3	16	42	26	13
Cost of transportation within En – ooru	1	4	22	64	9
Parking facilities	3	9	26	55	7
Tribal huts	0	1	6	42	51
Pathways and grass fixing	0	3	19	35	43
Staff support	2	3	23	51	21
Food cuisines at En – ooru	1	2	16	61	20
Entry ticketing	1	3	19	68	9
Overall experience	0	1	15	52	32

As shown in Table 1, more than three-quarters of visitors reported being either satisfied or highly satisfied with the climatic conditions of the area, with the remainder largely neutral. Natural beauty emerged as one of the most highly rated attractions of En-ooru. Ratings for transportation, both to and within En-ooru, were comparatively lower, suggesting scope for improvement. The site is well connected by road, but visitors travelling from further afield would benefit from clearer information on transport modes and timings. Private vehicles are not permitted within the eco-tourism area itself, and parking provision is limited; during festival seasons and holidays this has reportedly led to vehicles queuing along both sides of the main road, at times causing congestion. Charges for movement within the premises were rated as reasonable by most respondents, without indicating strong enthusiasm either way. Tribal huts were rated as a distinctive attraction, resembling authentic tribal dwellings and serving as a visible symbol of heritage; most visitors reported photographing and enjoying

these huts as a way of engaging with tribal culture, and this factor appears to contribute substantially to the project's appeal both within and beyond the state. More than three-quarters of visitors were satisfied or highly satisfied with pathways and grass maintenance, with roughly one-quarter expressing no strong opinion. Staff support was rated positively by most visitors, though with a similar share neutral, suggesting that further improvements here could still add value. Food cuisines were well received, and enhancing their presentation and variety may further strengthen the visitor experience. Entry ticketing did not emerge as a notable concern in the data, though periodic review of pricing in light of visitor feedback would help administrators calibrate charges appropriately. Overall, 32% of visitors reported being highly satisfied and a further 52% satisfied with their experience at En-ooru.

Results of ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	203.43	12	16.95	28.41	0	1.76
Within Groups	760.32	1274	0.60			
Total	963.75	1286				

H0: There is no significant difference between the various factors affecting visitors' experience.

Since the p-value is below 0.05 ($F(12, 1274) = 28.41$, $p < .001$), the null hypothesis is rejected,

indicating a statistically significant difference in visitors' ratings across the various factors affecting their experience.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	239.98	99	2.42	4.01	0	1.38
Within Groups	665.17	1100	0.60			
Total	905.15	1199				

H0: There is no significant difference between individual responses within the various factors affecting visitors' experience.

Since the p-value is below 0.05 ($F(99, 1100)$

$= 4.01$, $p < .001$), the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating statistically significant variation among individual responses within the factors affecting visitors' experience.

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**Model Coefficients — Overall Experience**

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Lower (99%)	Upper (99%)	t	p
Intercept	-0.6626	0.4885	-1.9495	0.6243	-1.356	0.179
EXP_Clim	0.0507	0.0911	-0.1892	0.2905	0.557	0.579
EXP_Ldscp	0.2376	0.1256	-0.0933	0.5685	1.891	0.062
EXP_Btntr	0.0408	0.1317	-0.3061	0.3877	0.310	0.757
Exp_Trans	0.0602	0.1204	-0.2570	0.3774	0.500	0.618
Exp_TrnsEn	-0.0245	0.1237	-0.3503	0.3014	-0.198	0.844
Exp_Trnscst	0.1725	0.0994	-0.0892	0.4343	1.737	0.086
Exp_Prkg	0.0154	0.0781	-0.1903	0.2211	0.198	0.844
Exp_Trhbts	0.3273	0.1106	0.0359	0.6188	2.959	0.004
Exp_Way&Grs	-0.1680	0.0960	-0.4210	0.0850	-1.749	0.084
Exp_Stfsup	0.0911	0.0842	-0.1307	0.3129	1.082	0.282
Exp_Fd	0.2948	0.0964	0.0409	0.5486	3.059	0.003
Exp_EntrTckt	-0.0471	0.1007	-0.3124	0.2183	-0.467	0.641

H0: None of the individual factors has a significant relationship with visitors' overall experience.

Across the thirteen predictors examined, the null hypothesis is not rejected for eleven of them; only experience with tribal huts ($p = .004$) and experience with food cuisines ($p = .003$) show a statistically significant association with overall experience at

the 5% level, and both relationships are positive. The regression equation, reproducing the coefficients exactly as estimated (including sign), is:

$$\text{OverAll_Exp} = -0.6626 + 0.0507(\text{EXP_Clim}) + 0.2376(\text{EXP_Ldscp}) + 0.0408(\text{EXP_Btntr}) + 0.0602(\text{Exp_Trans}) - 0.0245(\text{Exp_TrnsEn}) + 0.1725(\text{Exp_Trnscst}) + 0.0154(\text{Exp_Prkg}) + 0.3273(\text{Exp_Trhbts}) - 0.1680(\text{Exp_Way\&Grs}) +$$

$0.0911(\text{Exp_Stfsup}) + 0.2948(\text{Exp_Fd}) - 0.0471(\text{Exp_EntrTckt})$

These results should be interpreted with some caution, as several of the experience items are likely to be correlated with one another, which can inflate standard errors and make individual coefficients less stable; the model is also based on a single cross-sectional survey, so the relationships identified are associative rather than causal. With that caveat, the analysis suggests that among the factors considered, experience with tribal huts and with food cuisines are the two most consistently and significantly related to visitors' overall experience of En-ooru within this sample.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the factors shaping tourists' experience at En-ooru and to assess their relative contribution to overall visitor satisfaction. The descriptive results indicate broadly favourable ratings across most factors, with natural beauty, landscape, and the tribal huts standing out as particularly well received, while transportation and parking were rated comparatively lower. The ANOVA results confirm that visitors' ratings differ significantly both across the different factors and among individual respondents within those factors. The regression analysis indicates that, of the thirteen factors examined, only experience with tribal huts and with food cuisines show a statistically significant positive association with overall experience in this sample. This suggests that, within the specific context of En-ooru, the distinctiveness of the tribal huts and the quality of the food offering may be disproportionately important to how visitors evaluate their overall visit, relative to more conventional infrastructure factors such as transportation, parking, or ticketing. These findings should be treated as indicative of patterns among the 100 respondents surveyed rather than as definitive or generalisable conclusions about eco-tourism visitors more broadly, for the reasons discussed in the following section.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

This study examines only the visitor experience dimension of En-ooru; it does not evaluate the broader socio-economic impact of community-based eco-tourism projects, nor does it assess business-side benefits, both of which would require a more multidimensional approach. As no single, established UX measurement model exists for eco-tourism in the literature, the researchers drew on multiple studies to assemble a composite set of relevant factors;

development of a more standardised model would benefit future research in similar contexts. The sample was selected using purposive, non-probability sampling and was limited to 100 visitors at a single destination; this restricts the extent to which findings can be generalised to eco-tourism visitors at other sites, or even to the broader population of En-ooru's visitors, and results should be read as descriptive of this sample rather than as population-level estimates. Data were self-reported and collected at a single point in time via an online questionnaire, which may be subject to social-desirability and common-method bias, since the same instrument and respondents were used for both the predictor and outcome measures in the regression analysis; this also means the design is cross-sectional and cannot establish the direction of causality between experience factors and overall satisfaction, nor capture how experience may vary by season or over repeat visits. Demography is a factor known to differentiate tourists' experiences, but this study did not incorporate demographic variables as controls or moderators; future research could usefully examine how experience varies by visitor age, origin, travel group composition, or prior familiarity with tribal culture. Given the correlation likely present among several of the experience items used as regression predictors, future studies may also benefit from formally testing for multicollinearity, or from using a smaller set of theoretically derived composite factors, before drawing conclusions about the relative importance of individual predictors. Larger, randomly sampled, and multi-site studies, ideally incorporating longitudinal or repeat-visit data, would help establish how far the present findings extend beyond En-ooru.

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