Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in Tourism: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in tourism has drawn significant attention for both practitioners and academicians as it is the key factor in winning market share in the tourism industry. The aim of this paper is to present a systematic research of the literature on the topic of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in tourism, highlighting the role of both the antecedents and the consequences of satisfaction that have been included in previous research.

Methodology: The systematic literature review (SLR) of articles that have been published related to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in tourism from various journals from 1990 up to 2018.

Findings: The result of this study revealed that service quality is the most important antecedents of satisfaction in tourism. Meanwhile, the consequences are mainly characterized by loyalty. Nevertheless, the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty does not seem always so linear, as there are customers who revisit to the tourist destination, while others prefer to visit to new destinations despite, they were satisfied.

Practical implications: It is expected that this study will provide a better understanding of satisfaction towards a tourist destination, so marketing strategy can be composed and implemented in order to increase tourist satisfaction. This article can be as reference for future studies on satisfaction and customer behavioral intentions in tourism.

Keywords: Antecedents, Behavioral Intention, Consequences, Satisfaction, Tourist, Tourism

Introduction

In an effort to understand the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, researchers have located and reported on the separate factors that influence the association between these two constructs. Satisfaction is an important element to maintain long term relationships with customers. Dmitrovic et al. (2009) stated that the increase of tourist satisfaction can lead to an increase in revenue and profit for service providers. Forozia et al. (2013) in his research proved that customer satisfaction is the main factor that encourages tourism businesses to find success and advantage in the competition. Therefore, recognizing and understanding the cognitive and behavioral consequences of satisfaction has important implications for management purposes. The role of customer satisfaction is very significant and is a major factor to influence customer behavioral intentions. Hence, it is important to know the factors that affect tourist satisfaction. Many types of research on the antecedents of tourist satisfaction and its consequences after visiting a tourist destination have been done. However, the factors forming the customer satisfaction is still debated by researchers (Xia et al., 2009) and evaluation of tourist satisfaction needs to be measured in many dimensions (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).
Campo and Yague (2009) indicated that the effect of antecedents and consequences on customer satisfaction is still an issue under debate in academic literature. Line and Runyan (2012) reviewed the hospitality marketing research published in four top hospitality journals for the 2008-2010 period with the aim of identifying significant trends and gaps in the literature, and find that while customer satisfaction is still a widely researched topic, a unifying theory of customer satisfaction is with a definitive model that includes all the antecedents and consequences is still elusive. The accurate identification of the causal relationship between the antecedences and consequences of customer satisfaction in tourism has proven to be an enormous challenge for many researchers who pioneered this area of research (Sanchez-Rebull et al., 2018).

This article seeks to provide a more comprehensive insight into the indicators that make up satisfaction and its consequences. By understanding the relationship between the critical elements for tourism destination development, the managers of tourism organization would make better and more effective decisions with more efficient use of resources. This paper conducts a literature review from several theoretical references and research articles. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide empirical guidance on factors that influence satisfaction and its consequences on customer behavioral intentions in tourism based on a systematic literature review.

**Literature Review**

**Tourist Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and a pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and or service (Chi & Qu, 2008). Customer satisfaction is typically defined as a post-consumption evaluative judgment concerning a specific product or service (Gundersen et al., 1996). Customer satisfaction is a result of a client’s perception of the value received (Rojas, 2010; Vazifehdoost et al. 2014). Customer satisfaction is an individual situation linked with a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment (Czepiel & Rosenberg, 1977; Martin et al., 2008). Customer satisfaction is an effect of different economic categories like profits and revenues (Duverger 2012; Oliver, 1980). Satisfaction is created by the comparison of the customer’s expectation before and after consumption. Kirillova and Udalova (2013) explain that satisfaction expresses the emotional and subjective state of the consumer linked with their needs. Customer satisfaction is a popular theme of research in different social and economic sectors. Table 1 presents a summary of the different sectors that have been investigated in the tourism industry.

| Sectors                                | Authors                                      |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Accommodation                          | Liang et al., 2018                          |
| Agrotourism                            | Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2009                  |
| Air transports                         | Ginieis et al., 2012                        |
| Cruise tourism                         | Hwang & Han, 2014; Zhang et al., 2015        |
| Customers’ satisfaction attributes     | Ali & Amin, 2014; Motlagh et al., 2013       |
| Examination of food tourist’s          | Kim et al., 2011                            |
| Destination festival                   | Hsieh, 2012                                 |
| Guiding activity                       | Mackenzie & Kerr, 2014                      |
| Hotel                                  | Amissah, 2013; Forozia et al., 2013; Jani and |
| Hospitality enterprises                | Barsky, 1992; Choi & Chu, 2001               |
| Mass adventure tourism                 | Buckley et al., 2014                        |
| Restaurant                             | Omar et al., 2016                           |
| Rural tourism                          | Osman and Sentosa, 2013; Loureiro, 2010;     |
|                                        | Loureiro and Gonzalez, 2018; Pujiastuti et al. |
| Service quality in tourism             | Gallarza et al., 2013; Parasuraman et al., 1985 |
There are still many discussions over the particularities and the essence of satisfaction in tourism, and even the satisfaction concept itself. Based on previous research regarding tourism destination, it is known that customer satisfaction in tourism industry recognized as one of the key judgments that consumers make with regard to a tourism service (Rathnayake, 2015). Therefore customer satisfaction plays a critical role in the success of many tourist sectors (Campo & Yagüe, 2009; Chang, 2008; Sahli & Nowak, 2007).

Antecedents of Tourist Satisfaction

The antecedent variables of tourist satisfaction are still debated as a predictor of traveler’s satisfaction. Aliman et al. (2012) and Xia et al. (2009) used four variables as antecedents of satisfaction which are traveler expectations, perceived quality, an image of the destination, and perceived value and found the factors to directly affect tourist satisfaction. Sadeh et al. (2012) used three variables as antecedents of satisfaction which are tourists’ expectations, an image of the destination, and perceived value. In other words, tourist satisfaction is directly affected by the tourist expectation (Xia et al., 2009) and perceived value (Huang and Su, 2010; Chen and Chen, 2010). Some studies have also found that the relationship between quality and customer satisfaction is partially mediated by perceived value (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Murray & Howat, 2002). Previous studies showed service quality is a key to improve customer satisfaction. Knutson (1998) revealed that room cleanliness and comfort, convenience and location, prompt service safety and security and friendliness of employee are important to guests. Atkinson (1988) found out that cleanliness, security, value for money and courtesy of staff determine customer satisfaction Barsky and Lagagh (1992) stated that employee attitude, location and rooms are likely to influence travelers’ satisfaction. A survey conducted by Akan (1995) indicated that the primary determinants of hotel guest satisfaction are the behavior of Employees, cleanliness, and timelines. Customer loyalty measures the degree of commitment based on obligation or consumer preferences and degree of satisfaction. Choi and Chu (2001) concluded that staff quality, room qualities, and value are the top three hotel factors that determine travelers’ satisfaction.

Behavioral Intentions

Zeithaml et al. (1996) presented a model of intentions can be captured with repurchase intentions, word of mouth, loyalty, complaining behavior, and price sensitivity. High service quality often leads to favorable behavioral intentions while a low service quality tends to lead to unfavorable intentions. Behavioral intentions can be categorized as favorable or unfavorable. Favorable Behavioral intentions represent conative loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010) and include positive word of mouth (recommendation), paying a price premium, spending more money with the company, and remaining loyal. Prior studies operationalize behavioral intentions using three variables: intention to return, willingness to recommend, and word of mouth. Burton et al. (2003) stated that customer experience is related to intentions. The more positive the customer’s experience, the more likely he or she is willing to reuse the service. Favorable intentions frequently represent customer’s conative loyalty. Customer loyalty is an important goal in the consumer marketing community as it is a key component for company sustainability. Measuring loyalty can provide a better understanding of customer retention. Retaining existing customers usually has a much lower associated cost than winning new ones. Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely to recommend friends, relatives or other potential customers to a product/service by acting as free word-of-mouth advertising agents (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).
The relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions in tourism

In the context of tourism, tourist satisfaction is important because it has implications on the sustainability of tourist loyalty which defines the tourism destination. Olorunniwo et al. (2006) stated that although the direct effect of service quality on behavioral intention is significant, the indirect effect (with satisfaction playing a mediating role) is a stronger driver for the behavioral intention in the context of the service factory. Therefore, the main consequence of satisfaction is loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Customer loyalty measures the degree of commitment based on obligation or consumer preferences, and degree of satisfaction. The increase in tourist satisfaction can lead to increased profits and revenues for service providers. Satisfaction has important implications for management purposes: hence the main consequence of tourist satisfaction is the loyalty that is manifested in repeat purchase behavior, willingness to pay a higher price, willingness to recommend the destination to others (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigne et al., 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) as well as an increase in brand equity.

Methodology

The accurate identification of the causal relationship between antecedences and consequences customer satisfaction in the tourism area has proven to be a great challenge for many researchers and need to be more investigated for the following reasons: firstly, customer satisfaction determinants and consequences in tourism are not systematically investigated; and secondly, there still does not appear to be a consensus regarding the list of customer satisfaction determinants and consequences in tourism. The analysis is based on the systematic literature review (SLR) of previous articles on antecedents of customer satisfaction and its consequences on behavioral intentions in the tourism industry. According to Sanchez-Rebull (2018), SLR methodology helps to systematically summarize the previously-published literature and allows researchers to reproduce or to repeat the search carried out on the same or on other topics. Tranfield et al. (2003) and Thorpe et al. (2005) established the criteria for applying SLR to the field of business management and administration. SLR is useful for practitioners and managers because it helps to develop a reliable knowledge base by accumulating knowledge from a range of studies.

The SLR is based on the five steps proposed by Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016). The first stage to establish the investigation period which was from 1990 to 2018. The starting point of the analysis on satisfaction in service has been selected, the analysis is also limited to articles written in English. A set of criteria for keyword selection has been proposed and combined in the search, in order to find an adequate representative sample of articles that deal with the subject of the paper. The search is therefore based on the following set: satisfaction, behavioral (behavioral) intentions, guest, tourist, tourism, antecedents, determinants, consequences, variables of satisfaction in tourism and satisfaction in tourism, literature review. The search was carried out for keywords, title, abstract and keywords of articles. The second stage to identify the relevant studies. The third stage was based on the relevancy of each article was determined according to the number of citations as these may be considered as a proxy indicator of quality. A selection of the 100 most cited was obtained in order to provide a more detailed analysis. The fourth stage was to create a list of the main information contained in the articles (authors, year of publication, the variable of the antecedents and/or consequences studied. The Fifth Stage provided the main findings of the SLR.

Discussion

Satisfaction with a tourist destination is the pleasure felt by the tourist, resulting in the ability of the trip experience to fulfill the tourist’s desires, expectations and needs in relation to the trip. Based on the main constructs found in the SLR, the explanation of the comprehensive model used to analyze the role of the constructs, it showed that
service quality is a key factor to tourist satisfaction, and the relationship between tourist satisfaction and loyalty does not seem to be linear as there are tourists who prefer to visit new destinations despite being satisfied with a holiday destination. The antecedents and consequences of satisfaction on tourist behavioral intentions are summarized on the Table 2.

### Table 2

**Antecedents and consequences satisfaction on tourist behavioral intentions**

| Authors               | Year | Antecedents                          | Consequences                        |
|-----------------------|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Perovic               | 2018 | Experience                           | Revisit intention                   |
| Abdullah and Lui      | 2018 | Service quality                      | Revisit intention                   |
| Sthapit               | 2018 | Product quality                      | Revisit intention                   |
| Sanchez-Rebull et al. | 2018 | Emotions, Service quality            | Loyalty                             |
| Nadarajah et al.      | 2017 | Service quality                      | Trust, revisit intention            |
| Pujiastuti et al.     | 2017 | service quality                      | Revisit intention                   |
| Rajaratnam & Nair     | 2015 | Destination quality, Service quality | Revisit intention, WOM              |
| Han and Hyun          | 2015 | Perceived quality, the trust of the staff | Not included                       |
| Hultman et al.        | 2015 | Destination personality, positive word of mouth, | Positive word of mouth, revisit intentions |
| Ho and Lee            | 2015 | Quality, trust                       | Not included                        |
| Lu et al.             | 2015 | Service quality                      | Not included                        |
| Buckley et al.        | 2014 | Safety                               | Not included                        |
| Wang et al.           | 2014 | Not included                         | Trust, Revisit intentions           |
| Guiry and Scott       | 2013 | Expectation, experience, quality     | Not included                        |
| Jani and Han          | 2013 | Personality, social comparison, consumption emotions | Loyalty                             |
| Kuo et al.            | 2013 | Service quality, service recovery, perceived value | Loyalty                             |
| Sadeh et al.          | 2012 | Expectation, perceived value, destination image | Loyalty, tourist complain, loyalty, repurchase intention |
| Bradley and Sparks    | 2012 | Not included                         | Loyalty, repurchase intention       |
| Bulchand- Gidumal     | 2011 | Room service quality, quality of the Wi-Fi | Not included                       |
| Kim et al.            | 2011 | Perceived value                      | Revisit intention                   |
| Loureiro              | 2010 | Quality, accommodation               | Not included                        |
| Huang and Su          | 2010 | Perceived value                      | Not included                        |
| Chen and Chen         | 2010 | Experienced quality, perceived value | Revisit intention                   |
Xia et al. 2009  | Expectation, perceived quality, perceived value, destination image | Loyalty, tourist complain
Loureiro & Gonzalez 2008 | perceived quality, trust | Loyalty
Chi & Qu 2008 | Destination image | Loyalty
Chen and Tsai 2007 | Destination image, perceived value | Revisit intention, WOM
Junek et al. 2006 | previous visits, accommodation | Not included
Yoo & Uysal 2005 | Motivation | Loyalty
Kang et al. 2004 | Quality, creativeness, unexpected services, encounter performance | Not included
Knutson 1998 | Room, location, service quality, security | Not included
Akan 1995 | Employees, cleanliness, and timelines | Not included

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2019

Conclusion
In order to successfully operate a tourist destination that gives customers a satisfactory experience, the manager of the destination need to understand what tourists want and how they assess the destination quality. Behavioral intentions can be seen when a customer decides to remain with or defect from the company. The systematic literature review gives descriptives for various antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction from past studies. The studies undertaken reveal that service quality is the most important antecedents of satisfaction in tourism. Meanwhile, the consequences are mainly characterized by the intention to return, willingness to recommend, and spread positive word of mouth. Using the SLR, it is established the consequences in tourism have appeared more recently than references made to the topic with respect to antecedents. However, there are still many outstanding questions that need to be addressed in the future. There are many subsectors that are imbricated in the process that creates customer satisfaction within a specific tourism-based experience, and some results from one sub-sector cannot immediately be applied to others. There still does not appear to be a consensus regarding the best selection of customer satisfaction antecedents and consequences with regard to tourism, and only a limited number of studies combine customer antecedents and consequences in tourism together in their investigations with the use of a generalized and comprehensive approach. Thus, the main contribution of this paper is to present an overview of antecedents and consequences customer satisfaction in tourism and based on the systematic literature review model.

Future Research
This paper is analyzed based on a systematic literature review (SLR) of previous publications and this can be used for further investigation on any other topics of research interest. More attention needs to be applied on the future research on the specificity of customer satisfaction in tourism characteristics by refining scales and methods in each sub-sector and on each segment that may be of interest for researchers. This article provides several starting points for practitioners and researchers when investigating customer satisfaction in tourism and its potential antecedents and consequences. However, this study is not exempt from limitations, as only articles in English during the 1990-2018 period have been investigated.

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