Tourist experience at port and town: assessing cruiser satisfaction during self-organized onshore excursions at Lautoka Port, Fiji, in 2018–2019

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ABSTRACT

Fiji is regarded as a South Pacific paradise; it attracts many tourists and cruisers desirous of a one-of-a-kind, memorable and long-lasting experience. The archipelago has witnessed an unprecedented rate of development in the cruise industry in the last decade, with an increase in the number of cruise liners as well as cruisers, especially those who take a halt for less than a half-day at a port and thus gain experience as tourists in Fiji. Cruisers opt for either pre-booked tours (booking made before disembarking) or self-organized excursions. Their experience during self-organized excursions at Fiji ports has not been studied so far. This study attempts to fill in this research gap. The study carries out a statistical analysis of the empirical data on cruisers' feedback on onshore experiences. This data was collected through a questionnaire survey of 369 cruisers who enjoyed self-organized excursions at Lautoka port anytime between December 2018 and April 2019. The study uses a Likert-type scale to measure cruiser's satisfaction; it carries out principal component analysis with Varimax Kaiser normalization and SPSS (demo); it further uses a factor analysis model to make observations. The results of this study indicate that cruiser satisfaction and behaviour are positively or adversely affected by many socio-cultural and economic factors. The study puts forward some constructive suggestions to achieve high satisfaction among cruisers.

1. Introduction

Between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the cruise tourism industry was one of the booming sectors in the worldwide travel and tourism industry. Cruise travel includes the transportation of passengers from one place to another via "floating hotels" or "floating resorts," which have noticed tremendous and extraordinary growth in the past few decades (Dowling, 2006). Such hotels are considered a destination within themselves, and they have outshined land-based resorts and theme parks in many regions. Cruise travel is a niche market in the tourism industry; it entails visiting many countries and cities in a short period of time while staying in a self-contained luxury hotel that floats and transports the tourist to exotic locations. It provides several onboard entertainment services, onshore activities and services at halt points.

Cruise Lines International Association in 2019 Cruise Travel Trends and State of the Cruise Industry Outlook Report expected 30 million passengers to cruise in the following year. In 2017, the North American region had remained the most significant source market that contributed 50% of total global passengers, followed by Europe (25%) and the rest of the world (25%) (CLIA, 2019). The cruise market differs according to the socio-economic characteristics of travellers (Ehtiyar, 2016). Expected travel experiences and travel costs play a significant role in planning cruise holidays. Leisure tourism shows potential for growth in the Pacific Islands though only a small number of tourists possess enough resources to cruise. The small proportion of the population with resources (McKee and Chase, 2003) constitutes only 2% of the worldwide total leisure tourists. However, there has been a massive increase in cruise vacations between 1990 and 2009 (Brida et al., 2012a, b). In the recent decade, the demand for new cruise ports has outpaced the demand for formerly popular locations. This trend has increased the importance of ports and acts as a determinant of cruise itineraries (Pallis, 2015).

Since 2010, Fiji's cruise industry has witnessed tremendous growth in annual arrivals. The growing popularity of sailing in Australia and New Zealand has boosted the demand for cruises to Fiji (Ministry of Industry,
Trade & Tourism, 2017; MITF & IFC, 2019). Interestingly, Fiji set a new national record with the arrival of 184,425 and 187,890 cruisers in Fiji in 2017 and 2018, respectively. The year 2019 bore witness to a fall on account of the COVID-19 pandemic; only 74,537 cruisers came to Fiji. Cruisers’ inclination to halt in Fiji for eight to ten hours has generated a large sum of earnings for the country’s tourism industry and local service providers. These cruisers are divided into two categories: those who come onshore to enjoy pre-booked trips and those who make self-organized excursions. There is a dearth of research on international cruise liners and cruisers’ level of satisfaction during their independent onshore excursions in Fiji.

This paper contributes to the existing literature by going beyond the antecedent studies on cruisers’ onboard experiences and their experience during pre-booked onshore excursions; it focuses on the tourists’ self-organized or independent onshore excursions at Lautoka port, Fiji. This analysis expands our knowledge of cruisers’ experiences at the port and a nearby market (in Lautoka town); it helps us to identify the attributes of cruiser satisfaction, explore the relationship between the amount of time spent in the town and cruisers’ expenditure patterns and study the probability of recommendation as a post-consumption value. The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- To study cruiser satisfaction during self-organized onshore excursions at Lautoka Port, Fiji, between December 2018–April 2019;
- To identify and assess indicators for cruiser satisfaction and factors responsible for cruiser satisfaction in on-site situations within the port-town/city framework;
- To ascertain the relationship between cruisers’ spending patterns and time spent at the port of call;
- To explore the probability of recommendation to family/friends as a post-consumption value.

The paper is divided into many sections. The section after the introduction discusses the literature review on cruiser satisfaction, followed by an introduction to the study area and a brief explanation of the discourse of cruise tourism in Fiji. The subsequent section focuses on research methodology. After that, research findings, observations, a discussion leading to suggestions and a conclusion are presented.

2. Literature review

Most of the research on tourist satisfaction in the cruise industry is analyzed considering two aspects: the first is related to tourist satisfaction on board and the second is related to tourist satisfaction at the port of call. Services and products at Cruisers’ port-of-call points could have a major impact on cruiser satisfaction, expenditure patterns and intention to return and recommend the destination to others. Cruise passengers’ expenditure also includes those costs that are not part of the cruise travel. Dwyer and Forsyth (1998) state that such expenditure is on accommodation, meals, local tours and attractions, beverages and shopping. Cruisers’ onshore activities involve exploring infrastructure and resources and enjoying tourism services, dining, cruise terminals, leisure shopping, etc (Sun et al., 2019).

There has been extant literature that asserts that the level of cruiser satisfaction during the halt is influenced by their onshore experiences. Satisfied cruisers may decide to repeat visits with the intention of returning as independent land tourists (Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2010; Gabe et al., 2006; Silvestre et al., 2008), whereas dissatisfied tourists may not intend to return (Petrick et al., 2006). Destination satisfaction positively influences the probability of destination recommendation to relatives/friends/family upon return (Brida and Coletti, 2012; Brida et al., 2012a; Brida and Scuderi, 2013; Silvestre et al., 2008). Cruisers choose a specific cruise keeping in view onshore excursions (Henthorne, 2000) and their satisfaction is based on a port-city-town’s attractions, followed by their impressions of cleanliness, safety, and hospitality (Silvestre et al., 2008). Word of Mouth publicity (WOM) or recommendations by earlier visitors is a dependable source of information for prospective tourists (Chi and Qu, 2008; Duman and Mattila, 2005). After having a positive experience at the port, cruisers tend to endorse it through positive WoM publicity (Petrick et al., 2006; Silvestre et al., 2008). The behaviour and attitude of cruisers have been studied, with an emphasis on their spending habits and goals (Gabe et al., 2006; Hosany and Witham, 2010; Miller and Grazer, 2003), age, occupation, nationality, level of income, travel companies and time spent away from the ship (Brida et al., 2012a, b; Sun et al., 2019; Gabe et al., 2006; Hosany and Witham, 2010). Hosany and Witham (2010) have applied Pine and Gilmore (1998) framework of satisfaction, postulating the highest dimensions of cruisers’ onboard satisfaction. The tourist’s intention to recommend the destination is directly influenced by aesthetics, amusement, schooling and escapism.

Most of the cruise research is based on cruiser satisfaction on board, but cruiser satisfaction at the port of call or halt points still remains an area of potential research. The cruise literature mentions the conditions that influence cruise companies to select a cruise port on the basis of site conditions of the port, i.e., physical factors of significant importance (such as port infrastructures and superstructures, harbor attributes, port and cruise services, amenities in nearby towns (McCalla, 1998)) and situation conditions, i.e., physical and cultural characteristics (such as closeness to markets, the port region’s desirability for cruising, sea connections, land or air connections and day trip attractions (Lekakou et al., 2009)). Unique geographical locations, climate, traffic conditions, tourism resources and cruise terminals, according to Wang et al. (2014), are important variables in deciding destinations for international cruise ships. Among them, traffic conditions and tourist attractions are relatively more significant factors. In order to achieve a high level of satisfaction among tourists, cruise companies try to be innovative by choosing attractive halt ports for stay. Such ports can be changed in light of the feedback on cruiser satisfaction. According to Lekakou et al. (2009), tourist amenities, cruise reception capacity, safety, urban tourist services and traffic connectivity capacity significantly influence cruise companies’ choice of homeport. On the basis of their research, they have given the cruise industry a criterion-based selection framework that includes 12 categories with 81 factors. In the framework, site characteristics include natural port features, port effectiveness, port operations, port infrastructure, passenger port services, cruise ship port services, port service cost, city amenities and political factors. On the other hand, situation characteristics include the availability of multimodal transportation, activity in tourist regions and accessibility to marketplaces. However, site and situation elements have not been applied to assess cruiser satisfaction during independent onshore excursions. The present study fills in this research lacuna.

The purchase of a guided excursion package plays a crucial part in cruise satisfaction. Cruise companies enhance their full-service package by offering well-structured excursion options (Peisley, 2003). These excursions encompass a variety of activities such as adventures, general tours, landscape and seascape tours, heritage tours, wildlife tours and cultural tours, all of which contribute to the destination’s overall image (Johnson, 2006). Onshore guided tour packages focus on scenic, historical or cultural attractions; they are managed by a specialist local tour operator and marketed as a package that includes on-site transportation.

Mostly, cruisers’ stay at the port of call is short (Henthorne, 2006). In the organized excursion, cruisers mostly find 4–8 h to explore the key attractions that positively affect their perception of the halt point (Petrick, 2005). Guided excursions reduce the risk of onshore problems, optimize the time spent onshore and encourage satisfied cruisers to do the shopping. Satisfied tourists are more likely to return or suggest the location to friends and family after guided tours. As a result, there is a link between cruiser satisfaction and their actions, such as spending patterns, the chance of returning and giving WoM publicity (Parola et al., 2014). Because of the limited time spent ashore, the chance of returning on a land-based vacation may be higher to explore those aspects that were missed out during the earlier short visit (Parola et al., 2014) (Hui...
et al., 2007). Extended onshore stay tends to increase the possibility of the recommendation of the tourist place to friends and relatives, as cruisers, in this case, have a lot of time at their disposal to visit highlights of the town and gain positive experiences (Parola et al., 2014).

There is a scarcity of literature to assess cruiser satisfaction during self-organized onshore excursions at Fiji’s ports (mostly Suva, Lautoka, Dravuni Island, Savusavu and Denerau). This study does not include cruiser satisfaction derived from onboard experiences but onshore experiences at Lautoka port, Western Viti Levu, Fiji, during independent excursions. This is the second most favourite port to witness cruisers’ experiences at Lautoka port, and its proximity to Nadi International airport (25 km) and the tourism hub of Denerau port (35 km) with international resort chains helps it attract big cruise liners to halt. Cruise liners mostly berth at Lautoka port at 8.00 am and depart at 5.00 pm, so cruisers make their way to Lautoka town (2 km away). It is highly valuable to assess cruisers’ experiences and satisfaction levels.

3. Study area

3.1. Challenges of Fiji’s tourism

Fiji is described as the ‘lands of smiles’. Desai (1973) and Harrison and Pratt (2010) state that Fiji’s tourism became the highest foreign exchange earner between the 1960s and 2010, but the political instability induced by the coups of 1987, 2000 and 2006 has resulted in a drop in tourism (Kundra et al., 2021). According to Hall (1996), geographic isolation, limited terrestrial resources and infrastructure, limited landmass and mineral resources and weak industrial growth are all issues that Fiji faces. Tourism is a risky business in this country due to an unpredictable political situation. Land use issues, a lack of fresh capital and investment, limited air capacity, a lack of distinctive selling factors and environmental deterioration are among the other issues. Most of the tourism projects started in Fiji are foreign-owned (Levett and McNally, 2003), and they are highly vulnerable to climatic change (Becken, 2004). Despite these impediments, Fiji’s cruise tourism has noticed enormous growth during the last decade.

3.2. Cruise tourism

In recent times, cruise tourism has been seen as an industry with ‘high yield and little impact’ at ‘ports-of-call’ in the Pacific islands nations (Cheer, 2006; Mihajlov, 2012). As regards Fiji, cruise tourism operators’ contribution toward local advancement under corporate social responsibility is yet to be ascertained due to the paucity of independent external assessments. However, Fiji Tourism’s national tourism strategy for 2021 focuses on the cruise industry keeping in view worldwide expansion in the cruise industry and the potential social and economic benefits it brings to the country. Cruise companies, their passengers and crew spent FJ$44.2 million (US$21.4 million) in Fiji in 2018, according to MITT and IFCs Assessment of the Economic Impact of Cruise Tourism in Fiji (2019). Each port of stop on a cruise ship journey generates an average of FJ$305, 000 (US$147,000) in spending, and on average, each cruise ship passenger spends FJ$90 (US$44). Cruise passengers spend an average of FJ$118 per day in Lautoka, FJ$104 in Suva, FJS$102 in Denarau, FJS$56 in Savusavu and FJS$3 on Dravuni Island (MITT & IFC, 2019). The cruise tourism business contributed 0.66 percent of Fiji’s GDP in 2018. However, this report is primarily based on a survey of cruisers who opted for pre-booked tours. Cruiser satisfaction during self-organized onshore excursions is yet to be assessed, compared and analyzed.

There was a rise in the arrival of cruisers in Fiji between 2015 and 2018 due to the application of the Pacific Cruise Tourism Development Strategy (PCTDS, 2015–2019) by the South Pacific Cruise Alliance (SPCA) in coordination with the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO). Furthermore, the Fijian government has proposed the Fiji Tourism 2021 Plan, which focuses on improving the port infrastructure for cruise tourism and emphasises the necessity of ensuring that the ports are conducive to the expansion of the cruise industry. Figure 1 shows the number of cruisers that came to Fiji in each quarter between 2013 and 2019. It reveals that the highest number of cruisers came in 2017, i.e., 184,425 and in 2018, i.e., 187,890. Due to it, Fiji earned 10.4 and 11.4 FJD million in 2017 and 2018, respectively. However, there was a fall in number and earnings in 2019.

Under the FT 2021 plan, the Fiji government is dedicated to carrying out maintenance of jetties and building floating pontoons at Lautoka and it shall also try to develop a special cruise ship terminal in the future and ensure to provide fuel with considerable quality standards and portable water supply. The cruise liners docking at Queen Wharf of Lautoka give an opportunity to cruisers to explore the shore for a half-day. Around seventy percent of cruisers disembark here and visit Lautoka port. Cruise liners’ maximum visits are noted in January–March and October–December, whereas cruise liners’ minimum visits are noted in April–June and July–September. However, the low arrival quarters noticed the visits of a high number of cruise liners in 2017 and 2018. Despite the South Pacific’s susceptibility to cyclones from November to April, cruise visits are at a high rate during this time and at a low rate during the cooler mid-year season from May to October.

During independent onshore excursions at Lautoka Port, cruisers face numerous issues, including getting competitive prices, expensive port services, hospitality that falls short of international standards, harassment by local tour operators, a lack of tourist attractions, a lack of protected markets near the wharf and the lack of proper tourist information desks. They mostly move towards a close-by market in Lautoka town during the halt. This practice eventuates in overcrowding, traffic congestion, difficulty in visitor management and environmental issues. Sometimes safety is
also compromised. Some cases of a lot of hassle to and assaults on tourists by sword sellers, shopkeepers and taxi drivers have also been reported. Such untoward incidents tarnish Fiji’s image and create a sense of fear among potential visitors (Narayan, 2000). Therefore, tourist satisfaction should be ensured by eradicating the hurdles and enhancing the potentiality of cruise halt points to attract prospective cruisers.

4. Methodology

The questionnaire-based survey was conducted to record 369 cruise passengers’ feedback before their return to the cruise ship. The survey was conducted at two places in Lautoka town and one at the port. The research is based on the random sampling method. Regarding the sample size, as proposed by Roscoe (1975 cited in Sekaran and Bougie, 2016), the rule of thumb is that a sample size of more than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate. The survey was carried out with the help of two research assistants and the principal author. This questionnaire was written in the English language and the responses were entered in the Google forms. The questionnaire survey was designed in light of the site and situation framework to study cruiser satisfaction. As a part of ethical approval, an official approval to conduct research in Fiji was taken from the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, Fiji Islands, before conducting the research. The consent was obtained from the participants before recording their responses.

The questionnaire comprised 15 questions, which can be arranged into four sections. The first section collected demographic information, such as nationality, gender and age. The second section asked the respondents to share their experience with the self-guided trip through eight questions with the options ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” on a five-point Likert-type scale. The third section contained questions about the visitors’ expenditure behaviour: how much the visitors had spent onboard per day and the places they liked the most. In the fourth section, the cruisers were asked to indicate their dissatisfaction with the problems they faced during the trip.

A number of statistical procedures are carried out in this paper by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) version 15.0. First, where applicable, univariate statistics (frequency distributions, percentages, standard deviations, and means) are calculated. Second, satisfaction measures are pooled in one model to uncover the underlying constructs linked with cruise passengers, with each using principal component analysis with Varimax with Kaiser normalization. The criterion of eigenvalues larger than 1 is used to calculate the number of factors. In order to load heavily enough in the Kaiser normalisation, the number of variables and the sample size are evaluated. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test of sample adequacy is used to determine the validity of each model’s data prior to factor analysis. The values of Cronbach’s alphas are from 0.782 for satisfaction, thereby indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability for scales. The secondary sources used in the work include the government tourism reports and statistical works, consultancy reports, reports by the Ministry of Tourism Development, reports published in local newspapers, research books, journals and theses.

5. Research findings

5.1. Observation 1

The sample consisted of 49.1% male and 50.9% female respondents. More than 34.4% of the respondents were Americans (including citizens from the USA, Canada, South America, Mexico and Caribbean Islands); 24.1% were Europeans (from the UK, France, Italy and Germany); 21.7% were from the Pacific region; 15.4% were Australians; 4.1% were Asian and about less than 1% were African. The research findings are reflected in Table 2.

Overall, a total of 58% of the tourists were from America and European countries. Most of them were there for leisure and showed a higher purchasing power as compared to the tourists from other nations. 58% of the tourists were satisfied with their halt and 62% spent more than 100 FJD, mostly on handicrafts, clothing, food and beverages. This trend shows the strong opportunities to capitalize on their spending. It is the need of the hour to improve cruiser experience and provide Fiji traders better access to the cruise market. The tourists from Australia and the Pacific regions were 36%, constituting a 1/3 section of the total tourists.

More than 66% of the tourist travellers were 51 years old or older; their comfort and ease are very important to them during the city tour. It reflects that this section of senior or mature cruisers, mostly couples,

| Table 2. Profile of independent cruisers at lautoka port between December 2018 and April 2019. |
| --- |
| Gender | Female | 188 | 50.9 |
|        | Male   | 181  | 49.1 |
| Total  | 369    | 100.0 |
| Nationality | African | 1  | .3 |
|           | American | 127 | 34.4 |
|           | Asia   | 15   | 4.1 |
|           | Australian | 57 | 15.4 |
|           | Europe | 89   | 24.1 |
|           | Pacific Region | 80 | 21.7 |
| Total    | 369    | 100.0 |
| Age      | 16–20 | 10   | 2.7 |
|          | 21–30 | 24   | 6.5 |
|          | 31–40 | 47   | 12.7 |
|          | 41–50 | 43   | 11.7 |
|          | 51–60 | 75   | 20.3 |
|          | 61–70 | 111  | 30.1 |
|          | 71–80 | 52   | 14.1 |
|          | 80+   | 5    | 1.4 |
| Total    | 369   | 100.0 |

| Spending | below 20 FJD | 25 | 6.8 |
|          | 20–50 FJD | 48 | 13.0 |
|          | 50–100 FJD | 65 | 17.6 |
|          | 100–200 FJD | 124 | 33.6 |
|          | 200+ FJD | 107 | 29.0 |
| Total    | 369   | 100.0 |

[Conversion Rate FJD 2.11 = 1 USD].

Source: Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.

| KMO and Bartlett’s Test | .850 |
|-------------------------|------|
| Kaiser-Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .850 |
| Reliability Statistics |      |
| Cronbach’s Alpha | .786 |
| Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items | .786 |
| N of Items | 8 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity |      |
| Approx. Chi-Square | 839.727 |
| df | 36 |
| Sig. | .000 |

Source: Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.
preferred to go for self-organized excursions. These senior cruisers want access to hygienic public toilets, low floor tour buses and places not prone to bad weather and protection from harassment by chasing beggars and street vendors.

5.2. Observation 2

It is crucial to evaluate cruise passengers’ satisfaction levels in light of various destination attributes since satisfaction is ‘destination-determined’. It is generated by experiences (Crompton, 1979; Schneider and Sonmez, 1999). One section of the questionnaire recorded cruisers’ experiences based on their satisfaction through eight questions with the options ranging from “Totally disagree” to “Strongly agree” on the five-point Likert-type scale. It was found that most of the cruisers were either satisfied or strongly satisfied or neutral. Out of 5 on the scale, over 3 means that more than 60% of the respondents showed satisfaction in Table 3. The standard deviation represents the degree of deviation from averages.

The following are the research findings (Table 3):

1. 63.1% of the cruisers were satisfied with sanitation, cleanliness and infrastructure in Lautoka town, and they could attract other cruisers. On the other hand, only 10.6% were not satisfied with these. The results reflect that most of the cruisers would recommend the town as a tourist spot to prospective cruisers. The sanitation, cleanliness and infrastructure in Lautoka town can attract other cruisers.

2. About 58% of the respondents enjoyed their stay in Lautoka town, whereas only 13.6% were not satisfied with their stay. It reflects a higher percentage of cruisers who were satisfied with their stay.

3. About 50% of them agreed that they would recommend a friend and/or an acquaintance to visit Lautoka on a cruise. On the other hand, 17% of the participants were unwilling to recommend it.

4. About 47.2% of the visitors were satisfied with the port facilities during their stay; only 16.8% were not satisfied. It represents a high percentage of those who were satisfied. However, there is wide scope for improvement.

5. 5% of the visitors were very confident to manage their trip at Lautoka without any help. On the other hand, 17% of the participants were unwilling to recommend it.

6. Only 29% of the tourists thought that the local city was not very enthusiastic about welcoming visitors. It is a psychological issue and there is a correlation between visitor’s spending behaviour and their perception of their welcome; if visitors do not feel special while visiting the port or town, they will be low on satisfaction and their spending behaviour will be negatively affected.

7. As per Wang et al. (2014), tourist attractions act as the most crucial factor that decides cruiser satisfaction during onshore tourism.

### Table 3. Mean ranking of the overall responses to satisfaction statements of onshore self-excursion cruisers at Lautoka port between December 2018 and April 2019.

| S.no. | Questions                                                                 | Satisfaction | Neutral | Dissatisfaction | Total | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|-----------------|-------|------|---------------|
| 1.    | I think sanitation, cleanliness and infrastructure in Lautoka town can attract other cruisers | 19.2 | 43.9 | 25.5 | 9.5 | 1.1 | 100 | 3.73 | .920 |
| 2.    | Did you enjoy your halt in Lautoka town? | 18.2 | 40.1 | 28.21 | 12.2 | 1.4 | 100 | 3.62 | .963 |
| 3.    | I would recommend my friend and known to visit Lautoka on cruise | 25.2 | 24.9 | 32.8 | 15.4 | 1.6 | 100 | 3.52 | 1.137 |
| 4.    | I am satisfied with the experiences of port facilities during halt | 11.4 | 35.8 | 36.0 | 15.7 | 1.1 | 100 | 3.41 | .922 |
| 5.    | I think the facilities at Lautoka port are of international standard | 8.4 | 23.3 | 32.2 | 20.6 | 15.5 | 100 | 3.21 | 1.295 |
| 6.    | I am very confident to manage my trip at Lautoka without any help | 11.1 | 27.4 | 31.2 | 20.3 | 10.1 | 100 | 3.09 | 1.148 |
| 7.    | I think the welcome of cruisers was the best in comparison to other islands | 5.1 | 24.7 | 48.5 | 14.6 | 7.0 | 100 | 3.07 | .942 |
| 8.    | Are there enough sightseeing places to visit during your halt at Lautoka | 8.9 | 26.8 | 27.4 | 29.8 | 7.0 | 100 | 3.01 | 1.105 |

**Source:** Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.

### Table 4. Total variance of onshore self-excursion cruisers at Lautoka port between December 2018 and April 2019.

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|           | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 3.386 | 42.319 | 42.319 | 3.386 | 42.319 | 42.319 | 3.077 | 38.467 | 38.467 |
| 2         | 1.023 | 12.791 | 55.110 | 1.023 | 12.791 | 55.110 | 1.331 | 16.643 | 55.110 |
| 3         | .930  | 11.625 | 66.735 | .930  | 11.625 | 66.735 | .930  | 11.625 | 66.735 |
| 4         | .750  | 9.376  | 76.111 | .750  | 9.376  | 76.111 | .750  | 9.376  | 76.111 |
| 5         | .650  | 8.125  | 84.236 | .650  | 8.125  | 84.236 | .650  | 8.125  | 84.236 |
| 6         | .452  | 5.653  | 90.889 | .452  | 5.653  | 90.889 | .452  | 5.653  | 90.889 |
| 7         | .422  | 5.280  | 95.169 | .422  | 5.280  | 95.169 | .422  | 5.280  | 95.169 |
| 8         | .387  | 4.831  | 100.000 | .387  | 4.831  | 100.000 | .387  | 4.831  | 100.000 |

**Source:** Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.
programmes. This study shows that 35% of the tourists believed that there was a scarcity of sightseeing places/attractions at Lautoka, while around 37% disagreed with this view.

The survey data shows negative feedback in response to question numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8 with a mean less than 3.25, whereas the responses to questions 1–4 show positive feedback or a high level of cruiser satisfaction. Table 4 explains the variance of the questions asked in section 2.

In all these cases, the loading to the factors of each variable is greater than 0.55, so all the variables are presented. Factors 1 and 2 explain more than 55.1% of the total variance, and each factor explains almost half of the explained variances: 38.46% and 16.643%, which are the first and second factors, respectively (Table 5).

It is notable that the first factor makes a group with all the variables having a mean higher than 3.21 and a lower mean consists of the second factor (Table 5). The sample mean of Table 3 is related to the two factors, explaining 55.11% of the total variance. Thus, the two factors indicate tourist satisfaction. On the one hand, the first factor captures the items that satisfied the tourists’ expectations about sanitation, cleanliness and infrastructure in Lautoka town, enjoyment at the halt and the port facilities. The second factor captures the items which, according to the tourists, were unsatisfactory. The negative feedback is regarding the facilities at Lautoka port, difficulty to manage the self-excursion, unappealing welcome and lack of sightseeing places in Lautoka. Some reformatory policies should be adopted to ensure cleanliness, provide world-class facilities, set up tourist information centres with proper signboards and provide shuttle service at the port free of cost. Cruise management companies should organize appealing, welcoming ceremonies for visitors and develop potential tourist sites near the town for cruisers. Combining all these attributes is essential to give cruisers deep and tremendous satisfaction.

5.3. Observation 3: expenditure assessment

Cruise ships halt approximately for 8–10 h at Lautoka port. Since their visit is brief, the majority of independent onshore excursions bring money through local transportation, food and beverages and the sale of jewellery, clothes, souvenirs, artefact and handicrafts. Sometimes, there is incidental shopping. More than 62% of the visitors spent more than 100 + FJD during their visit (Table 6). The demand capacity of the place has potential for growth. Despite the hurdles, the expenditure incurred by the tourists shows their positive behaviour as buyers. This expenditure can be enhanced by providing self-guided radio services with nominal competitive charges, reducing entry fees for sightseeing attractions near Lautoka town and promoting local products like clothes and handicrafts.

The preceding research stated that the longer cruisers remain in the town/vendor’s shop, the more money they spend. Besides, the friendly behaviour of vendors has a positive impact on cruisers’ behaviour as buyers (Henthorne, 2000). This relationship backs up long-held local ideas that tourists will not buy unless they visit local stores and that the longer they spend in these establishments, the more money they spend. This is true for all other cruise locations as well (Douglas and Douglas, 2006). The cruisers who spent less than 50 dollars are shown in Table 7, and 80% of the cruisers, the major part of the sample, returned to the port in a short time phase of 2–4 h as per the timings recorded at the time of getting feedback at the port.

From Table 6, it is clear that around 20% (19.80%) of the cruisers spent less than 50 FJD. If they are included with the cruisers who spent less than 100 FJD, they constitute 38% of the total cruisers.

The data reflects that 90% of the people faced the same set of problems during their visits. Such problems discouraged them from spending lavishly. Problems related to commuting, lack of shopping avenues, shortage of food and beverage outlets (restaurants, bars, cafes, hotels and malls) and unavailability of Wi-Fi are major problems of the cruisers who relatively spent a very small amount of money. Cruisers’ expenditure and satisfaction are interrelated; heavy expenditure is likely to incur when cruiser satisfaction is high and cruisers spend more time in the town. Expenditure will rise only when a variety of options among goods and qualitative services are offered to cruisers.

5.4. Observation 4

A separate question was asked in the survey regarding the problems faced by the cruisers during their halt and the results in Table 8 highlight the feedback.

Question no. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 highlight major hurdles that turned off the cruisers, and resulantly, their satisfaction was low during the halt.

Table 5. Variables with higher contributions to each factor during onshore independent excursion at lautoka port between December 2018 and April 2019.

| Factor 1: Positive Outcome | Eigenvalue | Percentage of variance rotated |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| I would recommend my friend and known to visit Lautoka town on cruise halt | 3.077 | 38.467% |
| I am satisfied with the experiences of port facilities during the halt | .801 | |
| Did you enjoy your halt in Lautoka? | .748 | |
| I think sanitation, cleanliness and infrastructure in Lautoka can attract other cruisers | .656 | |

| Factor 2: Negative Outcome | Eigenvalue | Percentage of variance rotated |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| I am very confident to manage my trip at Lautoka town without any help | 1.331 | 16.643% |
| I think the welcome of cruisers was the best in comparison to other islanders | .758 | |
| Are there enough sightseeing places to visit during your halt at Lautoka | .668 | |
| I think the facilities at Lautoka port are of international standard | .660 | |

Notes: Extraction method: principal component analysis; rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization; total percentage of explained variance 55.110 percent; this table illustrates the main variables suggested for factor analysis for each component, as well as the percentage of inertia, which indicates which factors best explain the variability of the original data.

Source: Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.

Table 6. Money (FJD) spent onshore self-organized excursion at lautoka port between December 2018 and April 2019.

| Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid below 20 FJD | 25 | 6.8 | 6.8 | |
| 20-50 FJD | 48 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 19.8 |
| 50-100 FJD | 65 | 17.6 | 17.6 | 37.4 |
| 100-200 FJD | 124 | 33.6 | 33.6 | 71.0 |
| 200+ FJD | 107 | 29.0 | 29.0 | 100.0 |

Total | 369 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.
The study applies the established indicators of cruisers’ onshore satisfaction to the present research to develop a framework based on the most appropriate attributes of site (port) and situation (town) that decide cruiser satisfaction during independent onshore excursions. In total, 12 attributes are identified, and they are further correlated with time spent at the port of call and the expenditure patterns of tourists. Ensuring cruiser satisfaction in light of these attributes can enhance the post-consumption value in the form of recommendations to family/friends, independent explorations through the land in the future and WoM publicity. This framework of cruise satisfaction shall be valuable for policymakers, destination managers, local government, cruiser liner companies, tourism associations and all other tourism-related stakeholders. Many of these attributes are taken from previous researches (Lekakou et al., 2009). Site and situation characteristics are altered to develop the port and city framework (Table 10). The research findings suggest that both port and town/city attributes carry equal importance, as the port attributes are given equal weightage at par with the town/city attributes.

**Some constructive suggestions**

1. Conduct traditional welcome and see-off ceremonies at the port

A warm welcome to cruisers at the port makes their experience memorable. Fiji has a rich traditional culture, heritage value and friendly hospitality that can be displayed by extending a grand traditional welcome to cruisers. The research results show that a high level of cruiser dissatisfaction takes birth from their dull welcome or lackadaisical reception. Cruisers make a comparison of this attribute of reception at the port under-study with the reception at different halt points. Many studies recommend that a memorable reception and see-off ceremonies will influence cruiser satisfaction positively. However, some researchers consider it to be less significant from the national perspective (Seidl et al., 2006).

2. Provide free and comfortable commuting from the port to the town

Cruisers’ highest dissatisfaction is seen with regard to the unavailability of commuting services between the port and the town. The research posits that the cruisers get dissatisfied when they make arrangements of their own to visit the nearest market in Lautoka town. In the absence of a free shuttle from the port to the town, they take a lot of time to walk down to the town in the absence of proper information and signboards. The lack of guidance and security increases dissatisfaction among them. The connectivity and accessibility to the town are major concerns. Overcharging and any fraud methods adopted by private taxi or minibus drivers increase dissatisfaction. The current commuting services lack international standards, and they are operated with a limited number of trips that are not sufficient. Easy access to tourist attractions also plays a vital role in cruiser satisfaction. Frequent free commuting services between Lautoka port and the town should be provided by the government in collaboration with local tourist administrators, shipping companies and local businessmen to ease commuting. It will give tourists extra time to spend in Lautoka town for the shopping.

3. Extend services and infrastructure for cruisers at Lautoka port.

There is immense scope for improvement in the services at Lautoka port. Cruisers expect world-class services at the port. The percentage of the cruisers who are satisfied with the services at the port is fifty percent, and this percentage can be increased by providing tourist information centers, conducive ambience, a healthy environment, hygienic toilet facilities, snacks and beverages bars and resorts for relaxation. A single window system to address cruisers’ concerns and grievances can be of great help.

4. Provide quality onshore activities and increase tourist attractions

According to the results, the lack of diversity of tourist attractions at Lautoka town is one of the causes of dissatisfaction among the cruisers. Since limited onshore options are available in Lautoka town, there is a

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**Table 7. Problems Faced by the Cruisers [73/369 who Spent Below 50 FJD] between December 2018 and April 2019.**

| S.No | Sub Variable of Factor 2 | Frequency | Percent |
|------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1.   | Commuting/public transport| 25        | 34.24   |
| 2.   | Shopping                  | 19        | 26.02   |
| 3.   | Food Experience           | 08        | 10.95   |
| 4.   | WiFi Hot Spots and Internet Connectivity | 09 | 12.32 |
| 5.   | Public toilets            | 05        | 6.84    |
| 6.   | Lack of security, Beggars and Touts | 04 | 5.47 |
| 7.   | Very hot climate          | 02        | 2.76    |
| 8.   | No problem                | 01        | 1.36    |
| Total|                          | 73        | 100     |

**Source:** Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.

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**Table 8. Cruisers’ Problems during the halt at Lautoka Port between December 2018 and April 2019.**

| S.No | Sub Variable of Factor 2                      | Frequency | Percent |
|------|------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1.   | Commuting/public transport                    | 117       | 31.7    |
| 2.   | Shopping/aggressive behaviour of vendor       | 76        | 20.6    |
| 3.   | WIFI Hot Spots and Internet Connectivity      | 46        | 12.5    |
| 4.   | Food Experience                               | 44        | 11.9    |
| 5.   | Public toilets                                | 40        | 10.8    |
| 6.   | Lack of Security, Beggars and Touts           | 23        | 6.1     |
| 7.   | Poor Infrastructure and Road Conditions       | 4         | 1.1     |
| 8.   | No tour guides and Maps, and shortage of sightseeing places at Lautoka | 8 | 2.2 |
| 9.   | Very hot/humid climate                        | 6         | 1.6     |
| 10.  | No problem                                    | 3         | .8      |
| Total|                                           | 369       | 100.0   |

**Source:** Analyzed by the researchers on the basis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey.
demand for high-quality onshore products and services. The scarcity of onshore activities should be eradicated by providing entertainment or cultural attractions and sights (representing the culture and heritage of Fiji), organizing beach and water activities and promoting green tourism, religious places, adventure spots, ecotourism and historical attractions. The local authorities should diversify attractions at the port so that the port can outshine its closest competing port, i.e., Vanuatu port (Scheyvens and Russell 2013; Eijiro 2019).

(5) Ensure effective pricing for services and products

Cruisers during independent onshore excursions are more concerned about pricing in comparison to cruisers who opt for pre-booked excursions. The results exhibit that the groups with the lowest expenditure were highly unsatisfied with commuting and public transport services; besides, they remained unsupervised at the halt point. This made them highly vulnerable compared to the cruisers who took pre-booked excursions to avoid misinformation, disinformation and cheating. The results show that dissatisfaction increases if the place has a shortage of money exchangers or an excess of shopkeepers who overcharge while keeping in view prices being charged at other places of halt.

(6) Increase in shopping options and improvement in market behaviour

Another factor responsible for low expenditure in Lautoka town is the lack of diverse shopping options at the port and the town. This is a considerable concern for independent onshore cruisers, as one of their prime objectives is to explore the nearby market to shop at competitive prices. The results show that the lack of shopping options is aggravated on Sundays, as most of the shops remain closed in the town on that day. This leads to high dissatisfaction. Aggressive or manipulative market behaviour (by street vendors/shopkeepers) towards cruisers should be looked into and tourists should not be compelled to buy things, or they should not be overcharged and sold duplicate products. Cruiser satisfaction can be increased by diversifying shopping options, ensuring the opening of a good number of shops on the day of halt and curbing manipulative and unpalatable behaviour of shopkeepers.

(7) Extend cruisers’ time of stay at the port to enhance expenditure patterns.

This study posits that insufficient time spent at a halt point reduces expenditure and leads to low satisfaction among cruisers. Providing a free shuttle service during the stay of tourists at the port can increase the time spent at the town. It can eventually surge expenditure. Timely,
hassle-free clearance of cruisers from the Customs and Immigration Cell at the port can save cruisers’ time and they can afford to spend extra time to shop.

(8) Efforts to increase cruiser satisfaction at the halt will lead to post-consumption satisfaction.

The above-mentioned theoretical and managerial implications will assist in achieving cruisers’ positive experience and generate revenues for the particular port, town and nation. It is significant to mention here that cruise tourism does not only provide immediate economic benefit to the port but also help in promoting tourist attractions among cruisers from varied nationalities, who may return via other means of transportation as land tourists. The study shows that the overall quality of products and services provided at the (site) port and the (situation) town during the halt can impact cruiser satisfaction positively, increasing the post-consumption value in the form of recommendations to friends, WOM publicity and revisit. Although the post-consumption value is high for Lautoka when it comes to making recommendations to friends/family/relatives to visit, this value can be suppressed if other negative attributes are not effectively dealt with. The probability of dissatisfaction among the cruisers understudy is higher than that of those cruisers who opt for pre-booked tours, as independent cruisers are more vulnerable without supervision. The study also received negative feedback in the form of a large number of comments from many unsatisfied independent cruisers about their bitter experience during their stay in Fiji. Such criticism eventually reduces the post-consumption value.

The limitation of the research is that it is based on a survey that was carried out at one port of Fiji at a particular point in time. Future research can expand the area as well as the time frame of this research to assess international cruisers’ experiences during self-organized onshore excursions.

7. Conclusion

Cruise satisfaction is essential for the retention and expansion of any cruise market. The slogan of Fiji tourism- ‘Fiji…Where Happiness Finds You!’- can be realistic and effective only when tourists get positive and valuable experiences at the port (site) and the town (sight), and they feel satisfied and leave the place with beautiful indelible memories. Satisfied tourists have more probability of returning to the port; they appear to be willing to recommend the place to friends/family/relatives. Moreover, the study reflects the correlation between the time spent at a port and the expenditure pattern. Any disappointing or disturbing factor at the port and the town can negatively influence cruiser satisfaction. Thus, a unique experience through qualitative services and competitive prices can be achieved by eradicating the highlighted impediments by the local city council, market vendors, local administration, destination managers, policymakers, cruiser companies and tourism ministry. If these impediments are not paid attention to, then the port may lose its charm when policymakers, cruiser companies and tourism ministry. If these impediments are not effectively dealt with. The probability of dissatisfaction among the cruisers understudy is higher than that of those cruisers who opt for pre-booked tours, as independent cruisers are more vulnerable without supervision. The study also received negative feedback in the form of a large number of comments from many unsatisfied independent cruisers about their bitter experience during their stay in Fiji. Such criticism eventually reduces the post-consumption value.

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Declarations

Author contribution statement

Dr. Sakul Kundra: Conceived and designed the experiments;Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Dr. Shailendra Singh Kushwah & Dr. Nakul Kundra: Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Prof. Unaiai Nabobo-Baba, Dr. Mumtaz Alam & Dr. Mohammad Afsar Alam 3 - Analyzed and interpreted the data.

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Data availability statement

Data will be made available on request.

Declaration of interests statement

Dr. Mumtaz Alam is an Associate Editor for Helioyn.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

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