

An Assessment of Tourist Satisfaction: A Review of Some Precursors and Consequences

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Abstract: This paper aims to review the relationships and assessment of some important precursors (drivers) and consequences related to tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is important and is considered at the forefront of the success of the tourism business. A document analysis approach has been used to track the precursors (drivers) and the consequences of tourist satisfaction from the literature. The review shows that emotions, service quality, previous visit, and internet accessibility are important precursors while customer loyalty, revenue growth, and corporate goodwill come up as important consequences. The offered conceptual framework and research propositions in the current study are quite helpful to conduct future analytical assessment and evaluation. The suggested drivers and consequences are also beneficial for managers to improve the outlook of businesses as policy options. Limitations and future research directions are discussed at the end part of the paper.

Keywords: tourism, tourist satisfaction, literature review, precursors, consequences

1. Introduction

The role and importance of tourism are increasing in the contemporary era, and it emerged as a fascinating aspect of our lives. The dynamic growing numbers are evidence of the fact, as total international tourist arrivals reached up to 1.4 million and international tourism receipts touched the record level of US\$ 1451 billion in the year 2018 (World Tourism Organization, 2019). Tourism is a significant force for economic growth and provides unique opportunities for less-developed countries (Crotti & Misrahi, 2017). According to Eraqi (2006), tourism as a highly competitive sector cannot rely only on prices and promotions for competitiveness, so new objectives should be considered and quality-oriented policies should be adopted. Therefore, tourist satisfaction is a much-concerned issue in the tourism industry and widely studied in the tourism literature (Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Wu, 2007). In this perspective, tourist satisfaction can play a vital role in the success of the tourism industry (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995).

Truong & Foster (2006), argued that the tourist satisfaction can be described as the conformity between the tourist's expectations and characteristics of the destinations. From this point of view, tourist satisfaction can be determined by subjective factors (needs and emotions of tourists) and objective factors (product and service features). Therefore, tourist satisfaction cannot be defined with consensus and homogeneously and no consensus exists in the literature (Sanchez-Rebull, Rudchenko, & Martin, 2018).

The role of tourist satisfaction in the success of tourist destination has been argued repeatedly that tourist satisfaction is a driver for revisit and recommendation to others as well as refers to the tourist loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011). The studies also show that loyalty might be affective, cognitive or conative in its nature (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). As a matter of fact, the maximum levels of tourist satisfaction can be linked to tourist on one hand, and to the destination environment on the other hand (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008).

In addition, the tourist satisfaction can be due to emotional enjoyment, the perception about the image of destination and perception about the quality of provided services (De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2010). Therefore, the tourist satisfaction concept could be regarded as a combination of the qualities of a tourist destination and the perceptions by the tourists (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007). Notwithstanding, there is extensive literature on tourism and tourist satisfaction, however, there is a lack of consensus about the factors of tourist satisfaction and resultant consequences.

Keeping in view the aforementioned perspective, this study aims to highlight the important drivers of tourist satisfaction in detail along with the discussion of the impact on tourist satisfaction and their resultant consequences through a review of previous related works. Additionally, the partial goal of this research is to develop a conceptual framework and research propositions for future analytic assessment and evaluation.

From a theoretical perspective, this study will discover the consistencies of research construct related to the theme of this research under study. Whilst the managerial contribution will be beneficial to practitioners and policymakers to take inspiration from the proposed model that could help to boost the sector from the medium to long-term sustainability.

The rest of the paper has been organized as follows. The second section deals with the theoretical background of the precursors (drivers) as well as the resultant consequences of tourist satisfaction. The third section represents the development of a conceptual framework and research propositions. The fourth section gives the methodological part exploited in the present study. The fifth section provides the study implications to theory and practice. Finally, the sixth section recapitulates the study with the conclusion, limitations, and suggestions for future research directions.

2. Theoretical background of the precursors and consequences of tourist satisfaction

2.1 Definition of constructs

- **Tourism and Tourist:** Every type of travel cannot be regarded as tourism. According to Medlik (2003), “Tourism has a connotation of leisure travel and tends to be synonymous with vacations. This is also reflected in dictionaries, which commonly refer to tourism as travel for pleasure, or business usage. Most of the personnel involved in the sector, interpret tourism in terms of the products they sell and the markets they serve”. However, World Tourism Organization (1995) gave a very specific definition of concept tourism, “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes”. Whilst the term tourist refers to the person who travels for fun or pleasure, and exchange of culture, away from normal residential region among others (IGI Global, 2019).
- **Tourist Satisfaction:** Tourist satisfaction is subjective in nature and is based on the feelings and opinions of the tourist. This complexity and multi-dimensionality make it difficult to define in a straight way (Smith, 1994). Primarily, tourist satisfaction can be defined as the difference between pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences, which can result in gratification and satisfaction or displeasure and dissatisfaction (Chen & Chen, 2010). Therefore, the judgments of the tourists play a key role with regard to the tourism service and subsequently in its success (Rathnayake, 2015).
- **Tourist Destination and Tourist Attraction:** The terms tourism destination and tourist attraction look synonyms and might be confusing for some people. However, these terms are somehow synonymous with having a technical difference. A place of interest that tourists visit due to its inheritance, natural or cultural and historical value is known as a tourist attraction. While Beirman (2003), opined that a tourist destination is a town or city which is significantly dependent on the revenues from tourists and markets itself as a tourist place to entice tourists. Most likely, a tourist destination contains one or more tourist attractions.

2.2 Precursors and consequences of tourist satisfaction

2.2.1 Precursors

- **Emotions:** Emotions in the literature are positive or negative thoughts or feelings that individuals or person exhibit. One of the most important and widely discussed drivers in the literature is emotions or positive emotions has a direct relationship with the tourist satisfaction (Sanchez-Rebull, Rudchenko, & Martin, 2018). Abubakar and Mavondo (2014) used the driver, emotions, to analyse and isolate the factors which contribute to satisfaction and recommendation. Brunner-Sperdin et al. (2012) measured tourist satisfaction related to the emotions. Similarly; Chang (2008), Faullant et al. (2008), Gountas and Gountas (2006), Magnini et al. (2011), Mason and Paggiaro (2012), Moon et al. (2015), Richard and Zhang (2012), and, William and Soutar (2009) also used emotions for analysis as the main driver of tourist satisfaction.

- **Service Quality:** Service quality arises when comparing expected performance and perceived performance or actual performance of service delivery as a difference. It is regarded as one of the important drivers of tourist satisfaction is service quality (Sanchez-Rebull, Rudchenko, & Martin, 2018). Usually, service quality is measured by a multi-dimensional scale in which different factors exist. In the tourism and hospitality sector, service quality is basically based on tangible and intangible dimensions (Faullant et al., 2008; Choi & Chu, 2001; Gupta et al, 2007; Radojevic et al., 2015). Service quality exhibits a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction, that's why Chen et al. (2011) recommended the improvement of the service quality for enhancing tourist satisfaction.
- **Previous Visit:** The previous visit to a tourist attraction also entices to revisit and recommend to friends and family, depending upon their feelings and opinions. Alegre and Cladera (2009), used the previous visit as a driver to distinguish drivers of tourist intentions. Castaeda et al. (2007) analysed the previous visit to see the effect on customer satisfaction. On the parallel line, Chitty et al. (2007), Garcia-Crespo et al. (2011), Guiry and Scott (2013), Tsiotsou (2006), used the previous visit as a driver of tourist satisfaction.
- **Internet Accessibility and Wi-Fi quality:** Some authors used internet accessibility as a driver to tourist satisfaction, as internet accessibility and Wi-Fi quality also enhance tourist satisfaction. Although very fewer authors investigated internet accessibility yet it is a very important driver. Bulchand-Gidumal (2011) explored the internet and Wi-Fi as a driver to see the improvement of the hotel's ratings and customer satisfaction. Lam et al. (2014), Noorhaiza et al. (2017), and, Lee and Tussyadiah (2010) also worked and highlighted internet and Wi-Fi quality as a driver and driver of customer satisfaction in tourism.
- **Safety:** Safety and feelings of being safe and secure is another driver of tourist satisfaction. Some authors also pointed out the same fact in their work, like Buckley et al. (2014) highlighted safety as a driver to analyse the particularities of Chinese tourist satisfaction. Further, Lee et al. (2010) also focused on the importance of safety and assessed different satisfaction levels in Korea, and Yuksel (2001) used the driver, safety as well among others.

2.2.2 Consequences

- **Customer loyalty:** Customer loyalty in tourism is the most prevalent and analysed in the tourist satisfaction perspective which is normally based on several dimensions (Sanchez-Rebull et al., 2018). Among these studied dimensions in the earlier research work, include customer revisit, customer recommendation, and positive word of mouth among visitors, etc. We, therefore, reviewed these aforementioned dimensions as follows:

Customer revisit

Customer revisit may refer to the repetition or repurchase intention of a particular product/service during recurrent visits. In light of this, tourist satisfaction at some tourist attraction or destination entices the customer to revisit. Customer revisit is an important consequence of the higher level of tourist satisfaction. Chen et al. (2011) found that customer revisits enhance destinations competitiveness. Depending upon the perceived value and satisfaction, revisits intentions are more in food tourists (Kim et al. 2011). Some more authors also highlighted the same consequence of tourist satisfaction to revisit or repurchase the product or service in the tourism sector (Su et al., 2016; Tanford et al., 2012; Tiru et al. 2010; Wan & Cheng, 2011; Yuksel, 2001).

Recommendation and positive Word-of-Mouth (WoM)

A customer recommendation is a situation where a customer seeks to express positive expression about a product or service to a potential customer or buyer. This recommendation arises from the previous customer experience. Whist word-of-mouth signifies information given by some acquaintance or some other trusted source about the usefulness of a product or service (Nevada Small Business, 2019). Recommendations and positive word-of-mouth can be created by providing some free samples and consultations as well as delivering the promised and claimed quality. Previous studies also highlight the same as an important consequence of tourist satisfaction (Chen et al., 2011; Hultman et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2014; Tanford et al., 2012).

Furthermore, WoM in the literature denotes the spread of verbal and non-verbal conversation. The conversation spreads from one person to another and so on so forth. Tourist destinations are equally vulnerable towards WoM when services and expectations from these destinations are met by potential or experienced visitors.

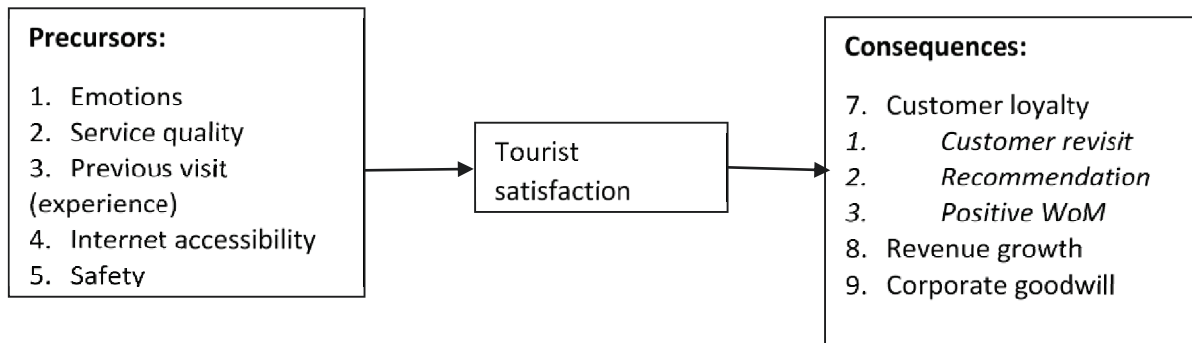
- **Revenue growth:** The tourism industry is noted to be a fast-growing subsector in the services sector in many emerging economies like India, China, and some northern African countries among others. To understand revenue growth as a consequence of Tourist satisfaction, readers are reminded to know the trajectory through which revenue mobilizations is done at the individual, firms, and the national economy. In light of this, revenue regulatory bodies (RRB) in many emerging economies equally rely largely on profitable investments in which the tourism industry cannot be overlooked. Therefore, tourist satisfaction could have a direct impact on the growth of businesses and a higher level of revenues. The same has been observed by Cugini et al. (2007) by analysing the relationship between customer satisfaction and company costs with the resulting consequence of higher and stable revenues.

The impact of money collection and revenue growth are manifold, which could be achieved by accelerating the businesses and putting the resulting impact on tax collection by the government (regulatory institutions) which consequently contributes to the higher level of GDP.

- **Corporate goodwill:** The corporate goodwill is an intangible asset for tourism businesses which improves with the higher level of tourist satisfaction. Previous studies indicate the same along with the importance of corporate goodwill and image to the business. Mohamed (2007) carried out the same type of study and analysed the influence of customer satisfaction on corporate goodwill and image and came out with the conclusion of a significant relationship. Very little research has been conducted on this relationship, and further is needed to explore this overlooked aspect.

3. Development of conceptual framework and research propositions

Having review, the relevant literature of the abovementioned theme, the present study, therefore, proposes a research model (see figure 1) carved from previous related articles so as to discover the drivers (precursors) and consequences of tourist satisfaction among experiences visitors of a particular destination. Also, adding to this model is the summary of research constructs and their respective literature sourced (see table 1).



Sources: Authors' own

Figure 1: A proposed research framework from the literature

Table 1: Summary of research construct and literature sourced

Construct	Dimensions discovered in the literature (Precursors/Drivers and Consequences)	Literature sourced
Emotions	Driver/antecedent	Chang (2008), Faullant et al. (2008), Gountas and Gountas (2006), Magnini et al. (2011), Mason and Paggiaro (2012), Moon et al. (2015), Richard and Zhang (2012), and, William and Soutar (2009).
Service quality	Driver/antecedent	Faullant et al., 2008; Choi & Chu, 2001; Gupta et al, 2007; Radojevic et al., (2015).
Previous visit (experience)	Driver/antecedent	Chitty et al. (2007), Garcia-Crespo et al. (2011), Guiry & Scott (2013), Tsiotsou (2006).
Internet accessibility	Driver/antecedent	Bulchand-Gidumal (2011).

Construct	Dimensions discovered in the literature (Precursors/Drivers and Consequences)	Literature sourced
Safety	Driver/antecedent	Buckley et al. (2014); Lee et al. (2010); Yuksel (2001).
Tourist satisfaction	Effect/ consequence	Sanchez-Rebull et al., 2018; Richard and Zhang (2012), and, William & Soutar (2009).
Customer loyalty (Customer revisit, Recommendation, and positive WoM)	Effect/ consequence	Su et al., 2016; Tanford et al., 2012; Tiru et al. 2010; Wan & Cheng, 2011; Yuksel, 2001).
Revenue growth	Effect/ consequence	Cugini et al. (2007).
Corporate goodwill	Effect/ consequence	Mohamed (2007).

3.1 Research propositions

The study further proposes eight (8) hypotheses from the proposed conceptual framework that could be empirically tested in future studies. See table 2 for the summary of the hypotheses.

Table 2: Synopsis of hypotheses from the review

H#	Independent	Dependent	Hypotheses
H1	Emotions	Tourist satisfaction	Positive emotions/feelings at a tourist destination directly predict tourist satisfaction.
H2	Service quality	Tourist satisfaction	Perceived service quality at a tourist destination directly predicts tourist satisfaction.
H3	Positive experience/Previous visit	Tourist satisfaction	A positive experience at a tourist destination directly predict tourist satisfaction.
H4	Internet accessibility	Tourist satisfaction	The availability of internet accessibility at a tourist destination directly predicts tourist satisfaction.
H5	Safety	Tourist Satisfaction	Adequate safety measures at the destination predicts tourist satisfaction
H6	Tourist satisfaction	Customer revisit	Tourist satisfaction consequently predict customer repetition (revisit) at a particular tourist destination.
H7	Tourist satisfaction	Recommendation/Positive WoM	Tourist satisfaction consequently predicts visitor's intention to recommend a particular tourist destination.
H8	Tourist satisfaction	Revenue growth	Tourist satisfaction consequently predicts revenue growth at a particular tourist destination.
H9	Tourist satisfaction	Corporate goodwill	Tourist satisfaction consequently projects the corporate image (goodwill) at a particular tourist destination.

4. Methodology: Review procedure

Regarding the present theme of the research, the execution of this study is exclusively based on the literature review. In order to achieve our study goals, we deployed a document analytic approach as the research technique for achieving the general aim of the research. Therefore, deploying documents and its related themes for the study could be seen as a simplified procedure to carry out this study, and more importantly, it is an excellent beginning point for retrieving an extant and relevant issue considering the wider coverage areas of this topic. By extension, the document (or content) analysis was premised on the bases of a high volume of the scientific manuscripts that were drawn from open-access databases such as SCOPUS, EBSCO, Thomson Reuter's Web of Science as well as Google scholar via the use of keywords search. For the purpose of a broader understanding, we identified the relations and conformity of research constructs through theme analysis. This

procedure gives the writers the due advantage of searching for relations and patterns across a variety of related articles given the interplay of the current study focus. In light of this, the method gives an extant literature a broader perspective regarding the drivers (precursors) and consequences of tourist satisfaction in the tourism industry.

Again, we deemed it reasonable to adopt a document analysis as our ultimate research method in this case since it provides a diversity of study context around this theme. In simple terms, through document analysis, important content has been simplified related to the present theme in order to attain the proposed objective of our study. Meanwhile, it is necessary to understand that the main goal of the present study is to review relevant literature with respect to the major predictors of tourist satisfaction and the resultant consequences of the tourist satisfaction identified in the tourism industry. Additionally, the partial goal is to develop a conceptual framework as indicated in Figure 1 above. However, taken into consideration an array of extant literature, other researchers alike suggested that, a research procedure of this nature (like a document or content analysis) helped to identify critical themes for a given study, which thereby extend an existing knowledge to a present study (Chidlovskii, Glance, & Grasso, 2001).

5. Implication for theory and practice

The theoretical contribution and managerial relevance is an important part of good research. From a theoretical perspective, this study highlights the important and prevalent precursors (drivers) and the consequences of tourist satisfaction. The research study offers a conceptual model for interested scholars to investigate the validity and reliability of the proposed model. Also, this review will remind scholars in this field of study (tourist satisfaction) regarding the relevant constructs found in the existing literature.

The selected precursors and consequences have important practical relevance, especially at the managerial level. The suggested drivers are helpful for managers to consider for analysis the status and impacts on their business based on tourist satisfaction. Similarly, by incorporating the consequences of tourist satisfaction into their consideration will also help to improve the outlook of their businesses in terms of service delivery. Eventually, the policies formulated in the light of precursors and consequences as well as practical implementation will put their businesses on the way of success, competitiveness and long-term growth.

6. Conclusion, limitation and future research direction

The purpose of this research was to assess tourist satisfaction and review some important precursors impacting tourist satisfaction and subsequently the consequences of tourist satisfaction on tourism businesses. Furthermore, we developed the conceptual framework and research propositions to explore these relationships in detail with the subsequent directions for future work. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a document analysis approach has been exploited to ascertain the desired drivers (Precursors) and consequences of tourist satisfaction in the existing literature. Important drivers such as emotions, service quality, previous visits, and internet accessibility are prevalent in the literature. Whilst the consequences of tourist satisfaction are less explored in the literature despite significant importance, however, customer revisit, recommendation and positive WoM, revenue growth, and corporate goodwill have been found as important consequences of tourist satisfaction in the related research studies.

No study is exempted from limitations. The current study is not an empirical inquiry to justify the proposed model regarding its validity and reliability. Therefore, it would be interesting if future researchers conduct an empirical study to test the aforementioned research model. Further, this research only considers the published research in the English language so some other drivers and consequences mentioned in the published literature of other languages might have been overlooked. Hence, the researchers having bilingual expertise can also consider published work in other languages as well for further exploration.

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