

## 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.

Table 1  
Different sectors that have been investigated in the tourism industry.

Sectors	Authors
Accommodation	Liang <i>et al.</i> , 2018
Agrotourism	Chatzigeorgiou <i>et al.</i> , 2009
Air transports	Ginieis <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Cruise tourism	Hwang & Han, 2014; Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2015
Customers' satisfaction attributes	Ali & Amin, 2014; Motlagh <i>et al.</i> , 2013
Examination of food tourist's	Kim <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Destination festival	Hsieh, 2012
Guiding activity	Mackenzie & Kerr, 2014
Hotel	Amissah, 2013; Forozia <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Jani and
Hospitality enterprises	Barsky, 1992; Choi & Chu, 2001
Mass adventure tourism	Buckley <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Restaurant	Omar <i>et al.</i> , 2016
Rural tourism	Osman and Sentosa, 2013; Loureiro, 2010; Loureiro and Gonzalez 2018; Pujiastuti <i>et al.</i>
Service quality in tourism	Gallarza <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985

Shopping destination	Choi et al., 2013; Lanfranchi et al., 2015
Sports tourism	Martin & O'Neill, 2010
Tourism companies	Moliner-Velazquez et al., 2014

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2019

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 fulfil 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**  
**period 1990-2018**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Antecedents</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Perovic	2018	Experience	Revisit intention
Abdullah and Lui	2018	Service quality	Revisit intention
Sthapit	2018	Product quality	Revisit intention
Sanchez-Rebull al.	2018	Emotions, Service quality,	Loyalty
Nadarajah et al.	2017	Service quality	Trust, revisit intention
Pujiastuti et al.	2017	service quality	Revisit intention, WOM
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
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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