

RESEARCH NOTE

THE INFLUENCE OF TRAVELERS' SATISFACTION WITH DESTINATION TERTIARY SERVICES ON LOYALTY

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This article investigates the influence of travelers' satisfaction with a destination's tertiary support services on their loyalty behavior, conceptualized as revisit intention. The study is based on data collected from 1,721 travelers to Mauritius. To have a better understanding of the influence of travelers' satisfaction with tertiary support services available at the destination on their loyalty behavior, we develop two Probit models. To control for other factors that may affect the decision of tourists to revisit Mauritius as a destination, other potential determinants of revisit intention were also included in the econometric models. Results suggest that travelers' satisfaction with tertiary support services has a significant influence on their loyalty. In particular, their satisfaction with security services and banking services are the strongest determinant of loyalty.

Key words: Satisfaction; Destination loyalty; Tertiary support services

Introduction

Travelers' satisfaction and their loyalty are critical to destination competitiveness. They are perhaps among the most studied concepts in the tourism literature (Nunkoo, Gursoy, & Ramkissoon, 2013). Although the theoretical link between travelers' satisfaction with a destination and their loyalty is well established in existing literature, a gap still remains. Most studies have conceptualized and operationalized destination satisfaction as an overall postpurchase

evaluation of the destination experience and as a unidimensional construct (Hultman, Skarmeas, Oghazi, & Beheshti, 2015). However, tourists' satisfaction is unlikely to be a unidimensional construct as it is comprised of their satisfaction with different components of a destination such as hotels, attractions, and food, and other tourism and hospitality services (Gursoy, Chen, & Chi, 2014). However, travelers' satisfaction with tertiary support services and its influence on destination loyalty remains an underresearch area in the tourism literature. Although some studies

implicitly suggest that tertiary support services, such as banking, health, and security-related ones, are important to and used by travelers at the destination (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015), researchers have largely neglected these dimensions in satisfaction and loyalty studies. In this article, we investigate the influence of travelers' satisfaction with different tertiary support services on their loyalty toward a destination. We employ an econometric approach based on a Probit model and use data collected from 1,790 travelers to Mauritius to test the model.

Satisfaction and Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as the level of commitment visitors display toward a destination (Rodger, Taplin, & Moore, 2015). In the context of tourism and hospitality, satisfaction of travelers with a destination has been found to be the most important determinant of loyalty due to its influence on the travelers' choice of destination and services, on their revisit intention, and on their word-of-mouth behaviors (Ozdemir et al., 2012). Destination satisfaction is a multidimensional construct (Ozdemir et al., 2012). However, focusing on a single dimension of a multidimensional construct that is comprised of experiences with several aspects of a destination's product does not adequately reflect the satisfaction of tourists with the destination experience. Travelers' satisfaction with the different components of the destination experience is likely to differ (Chi & Qu, 2008). Services provided to tourists at the destination can be divided into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary tourist services (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2004). Primary services include accommodations/hotels, restaurants, fast food outlets, and travel and tour services; secondary services include shopping facilities, recreational assets and entertainment, and visitor information services; and finally tertiary tourist services include health services and care, emergency and safety services, and banking and financial services (Dwyer et al., 2004). The latter type of services has been a neglected dimension in several tourist satisfaction studies.

Tourist Support Services

Tertiary support services are important to tourists' experience and influence the image of and travelers'

loyalty with the destination. The quality of hospitals, clinics, trained doctors, and the health care system in general in a destination contributes to an enhanced perception of safety and reduces the risks of travel. Health infrastructure is especially important for groups traveling with children, the elderly, and the disabled. The presence of good quality hospitals and clinics in the destination provides tourists a guarantee of safety and health during their visit. In fact, several studies (e.g., Gauci, Gerosa, & Mwalwanda, 2002) highlight the importance of health services in nurturing and promoting the tourism sector. Likewise, the banking and financial services in a destination are also an important component of a destination's product (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). In today's era of globalization, tourists rely on the banking service available at the destination to make transactions rather than carrying liquid money on them. The quality of banking services therefore is likely to be a factor contributing to the overall quality of the tourism product. Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) reported that banking services were perceived as important for travelers and they expected to receive secure transactions during their trip. Safety and security is another important dimension that impacts destination loyalty. Crotts (1996) conceptualized the elements of safety and security as political instability, probability of terrorism, crime rates, transportation safety, corruption, quality of sanitation, prevalence of disease, quality of medical services, and availability of medication. Evidence from several empirical studies has shown that the more tourists are satisfied with their destination experience, the more loyal they are likely to be with the destination (Neal & Gursoy, 2008).

Methodology

Data were collected from travelers to Mauritius using the survey method. The survey instrument comprised three main sections. The survey was carried out at the departure lounge of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, Mauritius, over a 3-month period. The questionnaire was designed in English and French. Travelers were approached and briefed about the objectives of the study. Those who were willing to participate were handed over the questionnaire and a token was provided to them as an incentive to increase participation rate. A total of

1,979 questionnaires were obtained. Two hundred and fifty-eight of them were deleted due to incomplete responses, resulting in 1,721 valid questionnaires that were used for further analysis.

Results

We utilized an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation to delineate the factors for tourist tertiary support services. We did not conduct an EFA on the other dimensions of satisfaction as these are well established in the existing literature. Therefore, only the items measuring travelers' satisfaction with the tertiary support services were subjected to the EFA with a principal component method and varimax rotation to give this construct better validity. Items with double or negative loadings and those that had a loading below 0.40 were eliminated from the analysis and the EFA was carried out again. The final results suggested the existence of three factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Factor 1, labeled as satisfaction with banking services, explained 25.75% of the variance in the scale and was found to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.935. Factor 2 was labeled as satisfaction with security services and explained 25.16% of the variance. The reliability test resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.931. Factor 3, labeled as satisfaction with the health services, explained 19.11% of the variance and had a reliability value of 0.907.

Probit Model

To test for the effect of tourist tertiary support services on destination loyalty, an econometric framework was used. The dependent variable was destination loyalty, operationalized as revisit intention. We proposed two Probit models to have a clearer understanding of the influence of travelers' satisfaction with tertiary support services on their revisit intention. In Model 1, we treat tertiary support services as a one-dimensional construct and investigated its influence on revisit intention. In the second Probit model (Model 2), we disaggregated tertiary support services into three dimensions as per the EFA results, namely satisfaction with health services, banking and financial services, and security services, and investigated their unique influence on destination loyalty. The proposed

empirical models are specified below, where SAT is the satisfaction score, DL is destination loyalty, and i represents the respondent.

Model 1: $DL_i = [SAT(\text{price})_i, SAT(\text{general infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{general infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{accommodation services})_i, SAT(\text{transportation services})_i, SAT(\text{shopping and recreational services})_i, SAT(\text{utility services and infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{tertiary support services})_i]$

Model 2: $DL_i = [SAT(\text{price})_i, SAT(\text{general infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{general infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{accommodation services})_i, SAT(\text{transportation services})_i, SAT(\text{shopping and recreational services})_i, SAT(\text{utility services and infrastructure})_i, SAT(\text{health services})_i, SAT(\text{banking and financial services})_i, SAT(\text{security services})_i]$

The reported coefficients represent the strength of the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable of the model. Of particular interest to this study is satisfaction with tourist tertiary support services. As per results presented in Table 1, the likelihood ratio chi-square of Model 1 and Model 2 were 0.002 and 0.004, respectively. These values confirm that the models fit significantly better than an empty model. In Model 1, the independent variables explained 64% of the variance in revisit intention. In this model, travelers' satisfaction with tertiary support services was found to be a significant predictor of revisit intention. In terms of the disaggregated results (Model 2), the model explained 64% of the variance in revisit intention. All the three types of tertiary support services had a significant positive influence on revisit intention. In fact, among all the potential factors influencing revisit intention, travelers' satisfaction with the security services had the strongest effect (0.63) on their revisit intention, followed by their satisfaction with the banking and financial services (0.54) and their satisfaction with the health services (0.034). Overall, the results suggest that tertiary support services play a very important role in loyalty behaviours of travelers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to investigate the influence of travelers' satisfaction with tourist support services on their revisit intention. Security was

Table 1
Probit Model Estimates

Variables	Probit Model Estimates	
	Aggregated Tertiary Support Services (N = 1,721)	Disaggregated Tertiary Support Services (N = 1,721)
Constant	0.06 (4.23)***	0.08 (3.22)***
SAT (price)	0.012 (1.11)	0.014 (1.15)
SAT (general infrastructure)	0.07 (2.32)**	0.08 (2.55)***
SAT (information services)	0.049 (2.14)**	0.044 (2.11)**
SAT (accommodation services)	0.078 (2.17)**	0.09 (2.22)**
SAT (transportation services)	0.043 (2.36)***	0.048 (2.57)***
SAT (shopping services)	0.058 (1.91)*	0.046 (1.83)*
SAT (utility services)	0.036 (2.21)**	0.042 (2.13)**
SAT (tertiary support services)	0.053 (2.05)*	
SAT (health)		0.034 (2.02)*
SAT(banking)		0.054 (2.77)***
SAT(security)		0.063 (3.12)***
R ²	0.64	0.67
Prob > ²	0.002	0.004

*Significant at 10%, **significant at 5%, ***significant at 1%.

found to have the highest influence on revisit intention. Our results confirm the arguments of several researchers who noted the importance of such services as banking, security, and health for tourism development and destination competitiveness, although most of them did not explicitly investigate their influence on revisit intention of travelers (e.g., Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015; Lin, Lai, & Zou, 2017). From a practical perspective, the study results suggest the need for destination managers and government to invest in the safety and security services of the destination. These results validate the general theoretical and empirical arguments that support services are important dimensions of tourism development.

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