ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses growing number of new destinations. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress. Nowadays, the business volume of tourism equals or even exceeds that of oil exports, food products or automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in an international trade and represents at the same time one of the main income generating sources for many emerging countries. This growth has led to an increasing diversification and competition among destinations. In order to efficiently make the benefits originating from tourism, it is imperious that tourism organizations are making efforts to enhance the quality of the services they offer. Tourism is commonly regarded as a priority and potential booster of a country’s economic development. Like other service sector industries, the tourism sector has a deep influence on the customer. Customer satisfaction has always been counted as a necessary objective in all market sectors, because of its assumed linkage that satisfied customers would repurchase the product and service, furthermore, are more likely to develop product loyalty. Satisfaction of a tourist to travel experiences contributes to destination loyalty. The degree of tourists’ loyalty to a destination is revealed in their intentions to revisit the destination and recommending the place to others. The importance of this topic resides in the fact that tourists’ positive experiences of service, products, and other resources provided by tourism destinations can produce customer retention as well as positive word-of-mouth. Thus, information about tourists’ loyalty is important to destination marketers and managers in order to sustain destination attractiveness.

This paper investigates the various attributes of destination, how visitors evaluate the quality of different facets, how satisfied they are with the tourism offers, and their loyalty intention to revisit and recommend to others. The data of the study is generated through a systematic review of existing literature on tourist satisfaction and intention loyalty. Furthermore, the study will greatly help the stakeholders and tourist organizations understand the various destination factors/attributes and their relationships that lead to satisfaction and intention loyalty.

Keywords: Tourism, Customer Satisfaction, Intention Loyalty, Service Quality
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world’s fastest growing industries as well as a major source of foreign exchange earnings and employment for many developing countries. Tourism is commonly regarded as a priority and potential booster of a country’s economic development. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (2011), Travel and Tourism is one of the world’s largest industries, contributing trillions of dollars annually to the global economy. Tourism is the service industry with the rapid growth throughout all continents of the world. The service system is provided for facilitating tourists, such as information service, transportation service, and service of travel agencies, tourist guide service, accommodation service, restaurant service, entertainment service, and system of security safeguard service. These are the bridge to link the facilities to tourists in traveling to the attractions at their choices. The results of using service and facilities including experiencing the tourist spots make the tourists be able to tell how much they are impressed and satisfied. All countries which promote tourism industry desire to develop their tourist attractions to be popular among tourists in order to benefit immensely. When referring to the word “tourism” Nowadays, we often see the foreigners carrying their cameras and walking in groups in temples, palaces, historic places, or on the beaches. Some go to see nature. These foreigners spend money for the accommodation, food, and travel cost to visit different places, purchase of antiques making the foreign currency to be used domestically. This is most likely because traveling is the way to relax from work by traveling with family, traveling to learn about the culture, and traditions, etc. When the transport facilities are convenient, traveling becomes so popular. A lot of business grows up to assist the travel of tourists such as transportation business, lodging, and food business, traveling business, and souvenir trade service to serve the tourists. There are also indirectly related businesses such as the construction of buildings, lodging, restaurants, production of agricultural products to sell to lodge and food business, production of local handicraft to serve the souvenir shops, etc. As competition has been increased among tourism destinations, tourism businesses try to build elements such as destination image and food image to promote their destinations. These businesses try to build a positive image for their customers and make them satisfied through the desired perception. As per (You, 2011) one primary objective of tourism companies is to achieve customer loyalty. Moreover, (Lin, 2006), the stiff competition in this industry has led to developments in the products and services related to tourists and tourism industry. Furthermore, the developments in the tourism industry can lead to improving the destinations’ economic level, image, and the government revenue. Thus, it is very important to attract the tourists and retain them to revisit the destination and make them loyal to the destination (Chen and Tsai, 2007). Though in order to understand the relationships between the basics which are important for the development of the tourism in a given destination, organizational managers would make better and more accurate decisions and they would be able to use the resources more efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of various elements of a destination like an environment, food, infrastructure and accessibility, culture and social, tourist leisure and entertainment and how these factors affect tourist satisfaction and intention loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Satisfaction

(Gursoy et al. 2003, 2007) studied tourist satisfaction as one of the most frequently studied topics in the hospitality and tourism industry because it plays an important role in the continued and sustained operation of any tourism business. (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000) studies a high level of customer satisfaction is likely to generate positive feedback from the customer including revisiting the tourist area, increased the purchase of products, and recommend these to others. The input of the tourists towards development and enhancement of a tourist destination is therefore essential in maintaining its competitive advantage. For example, the satisfied tourists may revisit a destination, recommend it to others. On the other hand, dissatisfied tourists may not return to the same destination and may not recommend it to others (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). (Sirakay, 2003) revealed in the study that
measuring and managing customer satisfaction is important for the survival, development, and success of the tourism business. When measuring customer satisfaction, the basic idea is that consumers reflect on their experiences and express that honestly and free of bias. For this reason, it is important for players in the industry to regularly evaluate the tourists’ perception of the visited places, as a feedback to help improve and diversify the products and services they offer. Several benefits of this activity include but are not limited to, ensuring that the tourists’ needs and expectations are met, maximizing tourist inflow and income generation.

(Chon, 1989) examined tourist satisfaction by comparing travelers’ prior images of the destination and what they actually see, feel and achieve at the destination. He reported that tourist satisfaction is the result of the relationship between tourists’ expectations about the destination based on their previous images of the destination and their evaluation of the outcome of their experience at the destination area. Rajaratnam et al. (2015) carried out a study in order to investigate the direct influence of perceived destination quality on tourist’s behavioral intentions and the indirect effect though satisfaction in Malaysia and the results revealed that perceived destination quality has a positively significant impact on satisfaction which in turn has a significant impact on behavioral intentions. It is also revealed that tourists who visited for the first time are highly satisfied with the destination attributes. Managers in tourism strive to improve the level of customer satisfaction by improving the quality of their services in the belief that this effort will create loyal visitors. Therefore, in order to achieve customer satisfaction, tourism organizations should pay more and more attention to service quality and must, first of all, know the expectations of the customers and how they can meet those expectations as customer satisfaction helps in intention loyalty and retention.

Intention Loyalty

(Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999), satisfied customers are more likely to recommend friends, relatives or other potential customers to a product/service by a free word of mouth or advertising agents. (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Oppermann, 2000) studied the degree of destination loyalty is frequently revealed in tourists’ intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it to others. (O’Brien & Jones, 1995), in the short run, loyal customers spend more with the service provider and (Reichheld & Teal, 1996), in the long run, they attract new customers by word of mouth. (Kozak, 2003) carried out a study in order to find out the relationship between tourist satisfaction and various destination attributes and the intention to revisit the destination and recommend it to others, the results revealed that overall tourist satisfaction, intention to recommend and intention to repeat visit were affected by various attributes and differ from one customer to another and from one destination to another. (Elangonan and Govindan 2013) conducted a study on tourist satisfaction in Tamil Nadu comprising a sample size of 200 tourists with two main objectives; to examine the profile of tourists, and to investigate the satisfaction level. The sampling procedure author used was convenience type sampling. The results revealed that tourists were less satisfaction with various facilities available at the destination and was also found to have the intention of revisiting the destination again in future.

Aspects of Tourist Destination

A tourist destination is a blend of tourist products, services and public goods consumed under the same brand name, thus offering the consumer an overall experience (Buhalis, 2000; Leiper, 1995). Based on previous literature, in this study, factors influencing tourist destination were classified into five dimensions, comprising environment, infrastructure & accessibility, culture and social, tourist leisure & entertainment and local food. These attributes were selected because they are the most quoted in the tourism literature (Iso-Ahola & Mannel, 1987; Cossens, 1989; Shoemaker, 1989; Fodness, 1994; Uysal, Mclellan & Syrakaya, 1996; Mohsin & Ryan, 2003).

Environment

(Kozak & Rimmington, 2000) a study in Mallorca, Spain revealed that various variables of destination attractiveness, tourist attractions, availability of English language, and facilities and services at the
destination airport were significant in determining overall tourist satisfaction. Destination attractiveness, tourist attractions and facilities, and services at the destination airport were found to have an impact on the level of overall satisfaction of the tourists. (Sukiman, Omar, Muhibudin, Yussof, & Mohamed, 2013) conducted a study on tourist satisfaction in Pahang, Malaysia. The results revealed that international tourists were highly satisfied with the cleanliness factor, meanwhile, domestic tourists are satisfied with the accessibility to the destination, shopping facilities. (Salleh et al, 2013) conducted a study on tourist satisfaction in Malaysia, and the results depicted that beautiful scenery, customs, and culture, the hospitality of the service providers, the quality of food and the friendliness of the locals are the factors that have a positive impact on overall tourist’s satisfaction.

Infrastructure and Accessibility

Accessibility may be defined as the way to reach desired destinations by means of a specific transport system. Accessibility is of great importance both from the point of view of regional development and that of social welfare. It depends to a great extent on the building of transport infrastructures and in turn influences land use and mobility (Gutierrez, 1987).

Tourist Leisure and Entertainment

Holidays can be defined as where all travel accommodation and a significant amount of food and drink, together with activities such as entertainment, trips or sports are included in a pre-paid price while booking. The all-inclusive holiday concept was first introduced in the 1940s and later re-emerged in 1930s at its inception; the all-inclusive concept was a fundamentally different holiday where a guest had to carry no form of currency. paper.(Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016) conducted a study in order to explore the key factors which have a significant impact on influencing visitors to revisit Bangkok in the near future and the study indicated that the key factors like perceived satisfaction on “accommodation”, “shopping” and “attitude”, the tourists motive of “relaxation” and food and recreation are the most significant factors in predicting the intention of tourists to revisit Bangkok.

Local Food

In tourism, food constitutes ‘psychological island of home’. For destination food suppliers, it is necessary to understand tourists’ food values such as their eating habits and make sure the foods used in catering are appropriate with tourists’ habits and customs. Hudman suggested food has become an increasingly important element in the tourist industry and up to 25% of total tourist expenditure is accounted for by foods and this number is even much higher (Hudman, 1986). Recently, in the literature on tourist destinations, more and more researchers focus on the role of food in culture and tourism (Williams, 1997; Hegarty & O’Mahony, 2001). (Jones & Jenkins, 2002), in his study considered food is not only a necessary element for tourist consumption but also an essential component of regional culture. Different kinds of food are the main purpose for tourists to travel.

Culture and Social

Visitor satisfaction is the goal that both private and public cultural tourism organizations try to achieve. (Jaafar, Tambi, Sa’adin, & Husain, 2014) conducted a study in order to explore the behavior of foreign and local tourists with world heritage site in Malaysia, confirming that most of the visitors were satisfied with accommodation, food, and beverages, trip and positive impact on revisit intention was also found out. Both the foreigners and locals were highly satisfied with the attributes at the Heritage site. (Ragavan, 2014) in his study revealed that climate and culture had a positive impact on the satisfaction of tourists, and all the demographic variables considered moderated the relationship between at least one of the travel dimensions and tourist satisfaction. Thus, cultural tourism organizations should pay attention not only to improving the quality of service attributes but also to improving the emotional and psychological reactions that visitors obtain from their service experience.
CONCLUSION

The overall focus of this research paper is to understand and to provide linkage between tourist’s satisfaction attributes (environment, infrastructure & accessibility, culture and social, leisure, food) and intention loyalty. This has been justified by above literature. As per the given conceptual framework and the said literature by various authors, I have concluded that the tourist satisfaction attributes and revisit intention will, directly and indirectly, affect the various stakeholders (local people, hoteliers, houseboat owners) and thereby helps in identifying the tourist needs and in turn, will help the said stakeholders in recognizing the destination’s strengths and weaknesses. In order to increase the inflow of tourists to the valley, we can improve the quality of various tourism offers through maximizing the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses by formulating distinctive and various competitive strategies.

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