

Tourist Satisfaction and Intention to Revisit Sun Moon Lake

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake, a popular tourist site in central Taiwan. A total of 420 questionnaires (302 valid returned questionnaires) were distributed to tourists at Sun Moon Lake. Confirmatory analyses were followed by t-test, one-way ANOVA analysis, and canonical correlation. Findings show that (1) Chinese and Taiwanese tourists have different levels and areas of satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake, where Chinese tourists present higher satisfaction with Hotel Service and Shopping Prices than Taiwanese; (2) tourists below the age of 20 present higher intention to return than tourists 21~35; and (3) tourist satisfaction affects the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake.

Keywords: *Satisfaction, Intention to revisit, Tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Research Motivations

Sun Moon Lake, a Japanese-era reservoir located in Nantou County in central Taiwan, is surrounded by lovely mountain scenery that appeals to both local and foreign tourists. It is widely considered one of Taiwan's premiere vacation spots, regularly promoted in government tourism advertizing. Because of Sun Moon Lake's importance in government tourism planning, as well as its appeal to a broad section of foreign and domestic tourists, investigation of the perceptions of tourists toward their experiences at Sun Moon Lake is a necessary basis for planning and delivering tourism products and services for the area.

Kotler (1997) argued that an individual's cheerful feeling was generated by the comparison between perceived performance and expectations. Baker and Crompton (2000) regarded satisfaction as the psychological and emotional conditions of personal experiences. Sweenty and Soutar (2001) indicated that consumer satisfaction was an emotional reaction to specific transactions which depended on the achievement of the expected products or services, on the consistency between the anticipatory reactions and the actual results. Mccollough and Gremler (2004) pointed out the effects of service guarantees on the satisfaction toward service providers presented by consumers after purchase. Berman (2005) noted the differences between customer delight and customer satisfaction, arguing that customer delight appeared when consumers actually acquired a surprising expectation. With consumer orientation and the development of the Internet, the leisure and tourism industry has become fiercely competitive, as people often measure individual demands or desires being satisfied from previous experiences (Kuo, Wang, & Chien, 2010). The need to explore the perceptions of tourists to Sun Moon Lake requirements so that service quality can satisfy the customer demands is thus a major research motivation of this study.

Appealing to tourists is a key project of marketing strategies in the tourism industry, while planning products that satisfy tourist requirements is a principle approach in attracting tourists. In this case, a key to attracting tourists appears to be the revisit intention after satisfying tourist requirements. Loyalty represents the behavior of re-purchase intention, recommending-to-others of customers, and giving praise (Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, 1985). Jones and Sasser (1995) point out that loyalty is the re-purchase intention of customers toward specific products or services. Prus and Brandt (1995) indicated that customer satisfaction prompts customer loyalty, which includes the support and trust of the customers in certain brands or businesses. Kristensen, Martensen and Gronholdt (2000) regard loyalty as customer intention to re-purchase, recommend to others, and price endurance and cross-purchasing. Kozak (2001) defined revisiting as tourists being willing to travel to other touring spots in a certain destination or in the same country. In sum, the development of tourism should emphasize tourist satisfaction and the praise resulting from the tour, which

furtherarouses the desire to revisit the touring locations. Discussing the correlations between tourist satisfaction and revisiting intention is another important motivation for this study.

Research Objectives

Based on the above motivations, the objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To investigate the effects of various background variables on tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit.
2. To research the correlations between tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake.

Terminologies

1. Satisfaction. Pfaff (1977) stated that customer satisfaction was related to various dimensions and factors and that overall satisfaction should be summed after consumers have evaluated the attributes of a product. The satisfaction scale is classified into three dimensions: Landscaping Facilities, the tourist perception of landscaping and overall sight; Hotel Service, the tourist perception of service attitudes, environmental sanitation, and security, and Shopping Prices, the tourist perception of the prices for goods, food and drink, and amusement.
2. Revisiting intentions. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1985) indicated that loyalty is the re-purchasing intentions and recommending-to-others of customers, as well as the giving of praise. The revisiting scale is divided into two dimensions: Landscape, representing the effects of landscape, recreational facilities, and ecological environment on the attraction of a given location for tourist revisits, and Touring Prices, representing the effect of prices for shopping, recreational facilities, food and drink, and accommodation, on the desire to revisit.

METHOD

Research Participants

Tourists at Sun Moon Lake from Taiwan and from China were used as the research population in this study. Using purpose sampling, questionnaires were distributed during the period July 25th to August 15th, 2010. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed and 385 copies were collected. After removing 83 invalid questionnaires, 302 effective questionnaires remained, for an effective response rate of 71.90%.

Research Tools

1. Organization of the questionnaire

The satisfaction scale for tourist satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake in this study was revised from the satisfaction scale of Kuo (2007), while the revisit intention scale for the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake was revised from Hsich (2010). The items in the two scales were constructed using a Likert's 5-point scale indicating degree of compliance: strongly agree, agree, ordinary, disagree, and strongly disagree, were given 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively. The higher the score, the higher the satisfaction and revisit Intention. The procedure for the research is stated as follows.

2. Pre-test

After constructing the scale, 265 questionnaires were distributed for a pre-test. From the 251 returned, 21 invalid questionnaires were removed, leaving 230 effective (86.79%).

3. Item analyses

For a more rigorous analysis, the criterion of internal consistency and correlation analysis method were used. The CR value for each question in the Satisfaction Scale was less than .05, and all questions were retained. For the Revisit Intention Scale, except for one item whose CR value exceeded .05 and whose correlation value was less than .30 which was deleted, all questions were retained.

4. Validity analysis

Having item analyses and factor analyses with oblique rotation, each question in Satisfaction Scale presented the factor loading up to .30, while one question in Revisit Intention Scale appeared in two factors and was deleted. The eigenvalue of each factor exceeded 1, which met the requirements of factor analyses, and the explained variances were between 60.02 and 61.41, meaning the scale presented good validity.

5. Reliability analysis

The three subscales in Satisfaction Scale showed Cronbach's α of 0.71 to 0.86, and the three subscales in Revisit Intention Scale had a Cronbach's α of 0.77 to 0.82, showing that the internal consistency of the scales was excellent.

Data Processing

The retrieved questionnaires were analyzed with SPSS for Windows 16.0, and the questions were examined using a t-test, independent measures ANOVA, and canonical correlation. The significance standard for the statistical tests in this study was set at .05.

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Tourist Satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake: Tourists from Taiwan and China

To investigate the differences in tourist satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake between tourists from Taiwan and China, the tourists were divided into Taiwanese tourists and Chinese tourists and analyzed with a t-test. Taiwanese tourists and Chinese tourists showed differences in Hotel Service and Shopping Prices (Table 1).

Table 1: t-test of tourist satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake, Taiwanese tourists and Chinese tourists

Item	Taiwanese tourists	Chinese tourists (n=167)	t	p
	(n=135)			
	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Landscaping Facilities	3.81(.58)	3.91(.56)	-1.64	.10
Hotel Service	3.51(.62)	3.76(.59)	-3.54*	.01
Shopping Prices	3.65 (.58)	3.85 (.45)	-3.34*	.01

*p<.05

Table 1 shows that Taiwanese tourists and Chinese tourists were different in their perceptions of Hotel Service and Shopping Prices at Sun Moon Lake. Chinese tourists presented higher satisfaction with Hotel Service and Shopping Prices than Taiwanese tourists. Herson, Nitecki and Altman (1999) stated that customer satisfaction should contain two parts, (1) servers with direct contact, toward whom customers presented their satisfaction, and (2) overall service, which was based on the previous experiences of customers and their satisfaction with the servers. Kotler (2000) further indicated that customer satisfaction was the pleasant or disappointed feelings from the comparisons between customers' perceived performance of the products and individual product expectations. Satisfaction is affected by perceived performance and expectations. When the perceived performance of the product or service is lower than the customer expectation, customers are not satisfied. Conversely, when the perceived performance conforms to or is higher than expectations, customers would be satisfied or very satisfied. Tsiros and Vikas (2000) regarded customer satisfaction as an emotional reaction to the comparison between expected performance and actual performance. Customer satisfaction is the realization response of consumers, a feeling with thresholds of extents. In this case, Chinese tourists perceptions of service quality and goods prices are higher than those of Taiwanese tourists, while Taiwanese tourists expected higher Hotel Service quality and lower Shopping Prices.

Comparisons of the Intention to Revisit Sun Moon Lake Between Different Age Groups

To investigate the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake among various age groups, respondents were divided into five age groups, Below 20, 21~35, 36~50, 51~65, and above 66. The differences were discussed investigated using a one-way ANOVA (Table 2).

Table 2 Variance analyses of the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake across different age groups

Factor	Landscape			Touring Prices	
	N	M	SD	M	SD
Background variables					
Below 20(1)	33	3.34	.49	3.87	.61
21~35 (2)	50	3.31	.44	3.49	.54

36~50 (3)	100	3.68	.42	3.73	.52
51~65 (4)	74	3.47	.51	3.78	.54
Above 66 (5)	45	3.57	.58	3.66	.56
F		2.25		3.32*	
P		.06		.01	
Post hoc comparison				1>2	

*p<.05

According to Table 2, the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake is different across various age groups. Tourists below 20 years of age appear to have higher intention to revisit than those aged 21~35. Jacoby (1994) proposed that the benefits of customer loyalty were (1) customer purchase and promotion increasing business revenue and market share, (2) cost reduction, and (3) staff job satisfaction increase. Prus and Brandt (1995) indicated that customer satisfaction would prompt customer loyalty, which included customer support and trust in the brand or the business. Kristensen, Martensen and Gronholdt (2000) regarded loyalty as the customer intention to re-purchase and recommend to others, as well as price endurance and cross-purchase. Griffin (2002) argued that loyalty consisted of the behaviors or attitudes of willingness to purchase the products or other services of the business and to constantly re-purchase, willingness to praise the business, and immunity to the promotions of other businesses. He further indicated that customer loyalty could save expenditures and create long-term and continuous profits for businesses; and, the profits brought from loyalty were extended and cumulative. According to the above statements of scholars on loyalty and re-purchase intention, individuals Below 20 appeared to more strongly agree with the Touring Prices than tourists aged 21~35, and thus presented a higher intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake.

Canonical Correlation Analyses of Tourist Satisfaction and the Intention to Revisit Sun Moon Lake

This section discusses the canonical correlations between tourist satisfaction (Landscaping Facility, hotel Service, and Shopping Prices) and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake (Landscape and Touring Prices).

1. Canonical correlation path

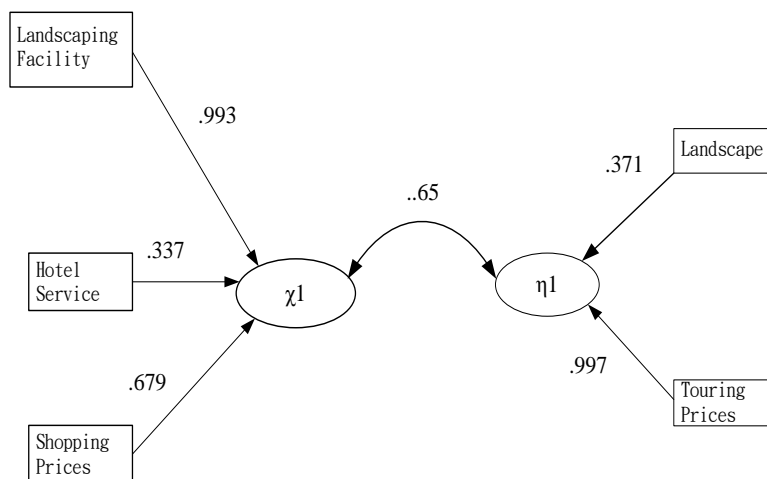


Figure 1: Canonical correlation path for tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake

2. Analyses of statistical results

(1) Canonical correlation extent analyses

Based on Table 3 and Figure 1, canonical correlation analysis was performed on the X variables of tourist satisfaction (X1=Landscaping Facility, X2=Hotel Service, X3=Shopping Prices) with Sun Moon Lake in this study and the Y variables of revisiting intentions (Y1=Landscape, Y2=Touring Prices). The findings showed that, within the three canonical factors from the X variables (χ_1 , χ_2 , χ_3) and the canonical factors from the Y variables (η_1 , η_2 , η_3), the first

canonical factors χ_1 and η_1 showed a canonical correlation .65 ($p < .05$), while the second, χ_2 and η_2 , and the third, χ_3 and η_3 , did not present significant correlations.

Table 7: Canonical correlation analyses of tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake

X variables	Canonical correlation	Y variables	Canonical correlation
Satisfaction	χ_1	Revisiting intentions	η_1
Landscaping Facility	.993	Landscape	.371
Hotel Service	.337	Touring Prices	.997
Shopping Prices	.679		
Extracted variance	56.57	Extracted variance	52.05
Percentage		Percentage	
Overlap (%)	23.68	Overlap (%)	21.79
		ρ^2	.419
		ρ	.647
		P	.01*

* $p < .05$

(2) Explained variance analyses of canonical correlation

Table 7 shows that the canonical correlation of tourism satisfaction and revisit intentions revealed one significant canonical factor. In the first canonical factors, the first canonical factor (χ_1) of the X variables could describe 64.70% ($\rho^2 = .419$) of the total variance of the first canonical factor (η_1) of the Y variables, while the first canonical factor (η_1) of the Y variables could also explain 52.05% of the Y variance, meaning that the X variables could explain 21.79% of the Y variables with the first canonical factors (χ_1 and η_1). The second and the third canonical factors did not achieve significance and are not further described.

(3) Structural correlations of canonical correlation (loading analyses)

Based on the above statistical analyses, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention consisted of three canonical factors, where 64.7% of the variance was explained by the first canonical factors. Since the second and the third canonical factors did not explain much of the variance, they were not analyzed in this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Comparisons of tourist satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake between Taiwanese tourists and Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists display higher satisfaction with Hotel Service and Shopping Prices than Taiwanese tourists.
2. Comparisons of intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake among various age groups. The intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake across different age groups shows differences on Hotel Prices. Tourists below the age of 20 present higher revisit intention than tourists aged 21~35.
3. Canonical correlation analyses of tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake. Tourist satisfaction and the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake are significantly correlated. The higher the tourist satisfaction with Sun Moon Lake, the stronger the revisit intention.
4. Suggestions
 - (1) Future researchers, using qualitative research, should explore why Taiwanese tourists have lower satisfaction with Hotel Service and Shopping Prices at Sun Moon Lake.
 - (2) Tourist satisfaction affects the intention to revisit Sun Moon Lake. For this reason, the Government should strengthen the landscape of Sun Moon Lake and constantly inspect the service quality and prices of hotels so as to enhance tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions.

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