

Factors Affecting the Customer Delight In Tourism Industry: The Case of Vietnam

Huynh Ba Thuy Dieu, MSc

Vietnam-Korea University of Information and Communications Technology
Email: Hbtdieu@vku.udn.vn

Abstract:

The topic researches the factors that affecting the customer delight in tourism industry in Viet Nam. Survey data collected from 500 tourist from over the world. The proposed research model and measurement scale were formed based on the research results of domestic and foreign authors and consultation with experts. Research results show that the factors affecting visitor delight are: service staff, customers service interaction, service availability, safety and price . From the research results, the author makes a number of recommendations for administrators in tourism in Vietnam.

Keyword: *factor, affect, customer delight, tourism, Vietnam*

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I. Introduction

In Vietnam, tourism has become one of the major sectors within the economy in recent years, with a direct GDP contribution of over nine percent in 2019. In the same year, Vietnam also welcomed a record-high number of international visitor arrivals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted Vietnam's year-on-year growth of inbound tourism while causing profound consequences for the tourism industry and related sectors. As Vietnam finally reopened its border to international tourists in 2022, tourism has been showing certain signs of recovery. According to the Google Destination Insights the number of search volume for accommodation in Vietnam, in March 2022, international search volume only reached 25 points, however, after a month, this index has increased almost 2 times at 48 points. The international search volume for tourist accommodation in Vietnam continued to grow in the following months, in May 2022 earned 78 points, up 3 times compared to March 2022 and 98 points in June 2022 and 100 points in July 2022, up 4 times compared to the period before reopening.

According to the General Statistics Office of Vietnam , International arrivals to Vietnam jumped by 4,618 percent year-on-year to 352.6 thousand in July of 2022, compared with a 3,185.8 percent growth in the prior month. July's strong figure came as Vietnam has fully opened up its tourism sector following further improvement in the COVID-19 situation and the resumption of international flights. Visitors from Asia climbed by 4,012.5 percent, namely China (291 percent), South Korea (7,285.9 percent), Japan (4,561.8 percent), Taiwan (1,803.1 percent), and Malaysia (17,798.7 percent). Also, visitors from America soared by 9,385.2 percent, mainly from the US (12,520.3 percent); while those from Europe jumped 5,237.5 percent), of which, Russia (5,460.5 percent), the UK (6,820 percent), France (10,795.6 percent), and Germany (15,643.1 percent); and visitors from Australia climbed 20,377.4 percent. Considering the first seven months of the year, arrivals surged 997.3 percent to 955 thousand.

Tourist delight has been considered as the main tool for increasing tourism destination competitiveness in globalization conditions. Tourist delight with a destination is the degree to which a tourist's assessment of the attributes of that destination exceeds his or her expectations for those attributes. There are several factors that can affect customer delight, namely, product value, service, value, personal value, image, and total customer costs consisting of monetary costs, time costs, labor costs, and thought costs (Kotler 2018).

Maintaining this level of competitiveness in the tourism industry in particular, depends on to achieve excellence in the offer and delivery of services (Johnston, 2012), which translates to not only satisfy customer's needs or customer's expectations, but also delight them. The delight construct was introduced in the literature of Relationship Marketing (RM) initially as the natural evolution of satisfaction (Torres and Kline, 2006) related to the creation of loyal attitudes in customers (Hasan et al., 2011; Torres and Kline, 2006). Delighting costumers involves aspects of physical quality (Harrington et al., 2018; Kim and Perdue, 2013) and emotions (Arora, 2012; Ouyang et al., 2017; Soscia, 2007) that create a costumers-organization connection during the experience with the service. Thus, tourism managers must pay attention to and enhance the brand image of tourist destinations that will have the maximum impact on the brand value of the destination, by building brand popularity and competitive

advantages that can be used as reasons for tourists to visit tourist destinations.

Thus, tourism managers must pay attention to and enhance the delight of tourist that will have the maximum impact on the brand value of the destination, by building quality services and competitive advantages that can be used as reasons for tourists to visit tourist destinations.

While customer satisfaction is all about providing customers with the exact product or service they desire, which makes them quite happy. On the other hand, customer delight is going on top of customer satisfaction and doing something that the customers would not have thought of even in dreams. Once the customers get more than expected, they value it even more, which results in delighting them.

Customer delight is exceeding a customer's expectations to create a positive customer experience with a product or brand. By going above and beyond to create a memorable customer experience - with things like discounts, gifts, promotions or spontaneous outreach - you can foster an emotional connection and sense of goodwill among customers that will make them more likely to be loyal to your brand long-term.

Customer delight (CD) has been conceptualized as related to customer satisfaction, but as a distinct construct. While customer satisfaction is generally regarded as exceeding one's expectations, customer delight mandates that the customer receives a positive surprise beyond his or her expectations (Berman 2005, pp. 129). More specifically, according to Oliver's (1980) expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, consumers compare their actual experience with a firm to their expectations. Hence, a state of positive disconfirmation is realized when an actual experience exceeds one's expectations (Oliver 1980; Swan and Trawick 1981). Nevertheless, expectations can be exceeded in one of the following two ways (Oliver 1989; Oliver and Winer 1987): the level of "exceedingness" falls within a normal range so that the consumer would construe the experience as better than expected, but not surprisingly so, or the level of performance is surprisingly positive—spawning customer delight. Stated differently, disconfirmation can vary with regard to the degree of unexpectedness, with high unexpectedness resulting in a surprise disconfirmation (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997).

The connection between delight and behavioral intention has mainly been examined in the service sector as opposed to product purchases because the intervening function of services can be more readily measured based on consumer patronization (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). For instance, in a study examining examples of hedonic consumption,

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) report that extremely positive, consumption-related emotions are apt to result in robust customer commitment and repurchase intentions. It is prudent to note that spawning delight among customers yields higher future expectations, thereby making it more challenging for the firm to spawn delight in a future transaction (Arnold et al. 2005).

The influence of customer delight on positive W-O-M behavior is quite strong (Berman 2005; Torres and Kline 2006). Heskett (2002) estimates that largely because of positive W-O-M, a delighted customer can generate the equivalent lifetime value of as many as 11 customers who are merely loyal. Along these lines, a J.D. Power study of electricity consumers in the United Kingdom found that 61% of delighted customers were willing to spread positive W-O-M as opposed to 45% of satisfied customers (Ockenden 2005).

According to Reichheld & Markey, the effect of achieving those objectives only 9% of the world's major firms achieve real sustainable profit and growth over 10-year period from 1999 to 2009. Customer Delight is the only kind of growth that can be sustained over the long term according to Reichheld and Markey. The authors mention that their company Bain & Company have researched and concluded that a 5% increase in customer retention could yield anywhere between 25% to 100% increase in profits.

The role of customer delight is so important for business. However, not every business understands it. Hence, it is crucial to examine what factors drive customers to delight.

II. Methodology

The design of any study begins with the selection of a topic and a research methodology. Different approaches to research encompass both theory and method. Two general approaches are widely recognized: quantitative research and qualitative research (Saunders et al, 2007). In this research, I use the statistical techniques, quantitative research will consider.

This study utilizes multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. With data collected over the period 2019-2022, I calculate three-year mean values of dependent and independent variables. For determinants related to consumers' delight, I also employ factor analysis, through the Principal Component technique, to determine a minimum number of unobservable common factors, as Hair (1995) has suggested. The minimum number of factors is extracted by using the commonly used Kaiser rule of thumb (i.e., the initial Eigen value should be greater than or equal to one). Next, the factor scores are estimated and utilized for further multivariate analysis. Since the factor scores are generated through an orthogonal transformation, they do not pose any multi-collinearity problems for the regression equation.

III. Research Data

3.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is customer delight.

3.2 Independent Variables

Various independent variables will be considered in this study, among others:

- ✓ Service staff (SS)
- ✓ Customers service interaction (CSI)
- ✓ Service availability (SA)
- ✓ Safety (SY)
- ✓ Price (PE)

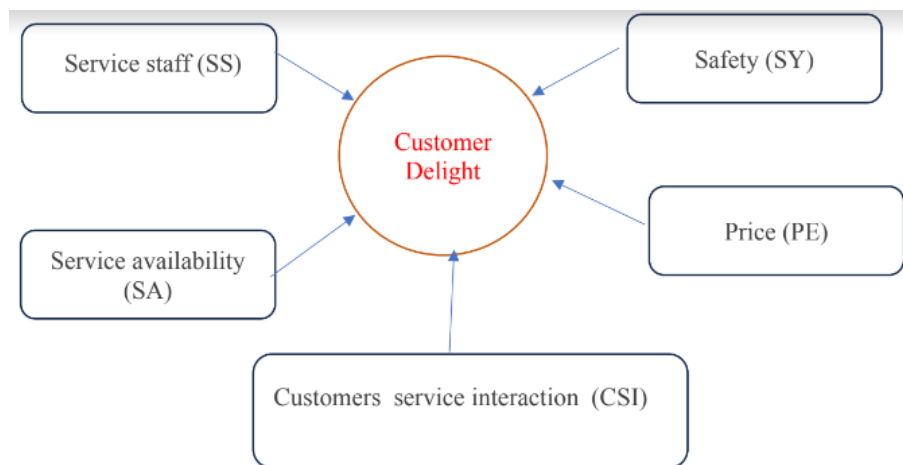


Figure 1.1: Proposal Model

3.3 Sample Selection

The sampling frame is an important procedure during the data collection process. Experienced researchers have found that only rarely is there a perfect correspondence between the sampling frame and the target population in which they are interested (Churchill 1992). Therefore, the sampling frame may not correspond perfectly to the population, but it does represent the target population. Because the population is too large for the researcher to attempt to survey all of its members, a small sample which is chosen carefully can be used to represent the population. Korea, the United States and Australia represent the largest international tourists coming to Vietnam, respectively.

For this research, I distribute 500 questionnaires to international tourists. These ones are selected from different public and private companies' employees, universities' students and professors. Based on the chosen sample, I conduct direct interviews with the consumers through email questionnaire, in order to explore their feelings when traveling to Vietnam.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Pre-testing: Be done by consulting with some professors and travel agencies and then making some modification and adjustment to the original questions.

3.4.2 Pilot testing: Be conducted with the modified questionnaire with 35 customers. In pilot testing, the Cronbach's Alpha value is calculated for reliability of each factor in questionnaire.

IV. Result

4.1 Information on research results

This is table of Demographic information of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the sample

	N	%
Age		
Between 18 and 29 years old	82	16.4
Between 30 and 49 years old	251	50.2

Between 50 and 59 years old	116	23.2
60 or more years old	51	10.2
Gender		
Male	188	37.6
Female	312	62.4
Nationality		
Korea	172	34.4
China	126	25.2
India	81	16.2
Europe	56	11.2
Other	65	13.0
Total	500	

4.2 Results of testing the reliability level and variables in the sample data set

The author processed the data through SPSS 26.0 software and obtained the results of synthesizing the Cronbach Alpha coefficient as well as the total variable correlation coefficient, testing the reliability of the independent variables, showing that the coefficients are large. more than 0.6 and all observed variables for the variables in the model, including independent and dependent variables, have reliable correlation coefficients. In addition, when analyzing the composite reliability and extracted variance, it shows that the composite reliability coefficients are all greater than 0.7 and the extracted variances of the factors are all greater than 0.5. Thus, it can be confirmed that the measurement scales have the necessary reliability.

Table 2. Summary of Cronbach Alpha coefficient results

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient</i>
Service staff (SS)	0.891
Customers service interaction (CSI)	0.874
Service availability (SA)	0.829
Safety (SY)	0.863
Price (PE)	0.825
Customer Delight (CD)	0.889

(Source: author's analysis results)

4.3 Results of exploratory factor analysis

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.946
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2863.393
	DF	213
	Sig.	.000

(Source: author's analysis results)

The results in Table 2 show that the KMO index is 0.946, very close to 1.0, which is satisfactory, showing that factor analysis is appropriate and the significance level is sig..000 is less than 0.05 which meets the requirement of statistical significance.

4.4 Results of linear regression analysis

Test the correlation coefficient (r)

The correlation coefficient indicates the direction of correlation (positive or negative).

Table 3. Correlation coefficient matrix between Correlations variables

		SS	CSI	SA	SY	PE	CD
SS	Pearson Correlation	first	.438 **	.367 **	.508 **	.436 **	.577 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N		500	500	500	500	500
CSI	Pearson Correlation		first	.264*	.219	.538 **	.457 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)			.013	.074	.000	.000
	N			500	500	500	500
SA	Pearson Correlation			first	.365 **	.275 **	.365 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)				.000	.008	.000
	N				500	500	500
SY	Pearson Correlation				first	.472 **	.505 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)					.000	.000
	N					500	500
PE	Pearson Correlation					first	.586 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)						.000
	N						500
CD	Pearson Correlation						first
	Sig. (2- tailed)						
	N						500

(Source: Analysis results through SPSS 20.0 software)

The correlation coefficient matrix shows that the correlation coefficient between the "hindering factor" and the following variables: with the variable " Service staff " (Pearson = 0.577), the variable " Customers service interaction " (Pearson = 0.457), variable "Service availability" (Pearson = 0.365), variable "Safety" (Pearson = 0.505), variable "Price" (Pearson = 0.586). Therefore, it can be initially concluded that the independent variables that can be included in the model to explain the factors affecting the recovery of the economy, including 5 independent variables, are appropriate.

Regression analysis

The results of the linear regression test are shown in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4. Linear regression test results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
first	.805 ^a	.712	.696	.63049	2.013

- a. Predictor: (Constant), SS, CSI, SA, SY, PE
- b. Dependent Variable: CD

Model	Unstandardize Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.895	.302		- 2,967	.003		
SS	.370	.085	.303	4,169	.000	.644	1,786
CSI	.284	.059	.262	4,621	.000	.833	1,501
SA	.225	.065	.185	3,249	.001	.834	1,099
SY	.222	.067	.368	3,009	.001	.712	1,010
PE	.196	.065	.339	3,056	.003	.724	1,382

The above results show that the adjusted R² coefficient has a value of 0.805. This means that the research model explains 80.5% of the variation in the dependent variable by the independent variables in the model. The VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) coefficient of the independent factors in the model all have low values and are less than 2.2 (from 1.010 to 1.786). This shows that there is no multicollinearity phenomenon between the independent variables in the model (Nguyen Dinh Tho, 2011). In addition, the coefficient Sig. of the independent factor coefficients in the model are all less than 0.05. Therefore, all 5 factors affect the dependent variable.

The standardized regression model shows a simple linear relationship between variables:

$$CD = 0.368 * SY + 0.339 * PE + 0.303 * SS + 0.262 * CSI + 0.185 * SA$$

In which the variable "Safety" has a Beta coefficient of 0.368 with a high level of statistical significance of >99.99% when the index Sig. reached 0.000; Similar to the variable "Price" with Beta coefficient of 0.339 with statistical significance level Sig. has a value of 0.000. Next is the variable "Service Staff" with Beta coefficient of 0.303 and statistical significance level Sig. is 0.001, the variable "Customers service interaction" with 2 values Beta and Sig. are 0.262 and 0.001, respectively. Finally, the variable "Service availability" with a Beta value of 0.185 has a statistical significance level of Sig. is 0.003.

V. Conclusion

The above research results show the relationship between factors that make tourists happy when traveling in Vietnam. To increase the happiness of tourists and make them come back, Vietnam needs to further strengthen safety for customers. Safety work during flights, food and even when traveling on the street. Besides, ensuring reasonable prices at tourist areas and tourist cities also creates a good impression on customers. Completely stop the situation of ripping off tourists. In addition, travel companies regularly improve the quality of service staff from tour guides, restaurant staff, drivers... all must have a welcoming attitude towards guests. From there, it will make international tourists return to Vietnam

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