

Factors Affecting Tourists' Satisfaction towards Nam Cat Tien National Park, Vietnam — A Mediation Analysis of Perceived Value

Mai Ngoc Khuong and Pham Dac Luan

Abstract—This study was conducted to identify key factors affecting tourist's perceived value as well as their satisfaction towards Cat Tien National Park. Quantitative approach was major method applied and questionnaires were delivered to 215 tourists who were visited the park. The results revealed four main factors include price, ecology and landscapes, natural atmosphere and social environment which positively influence tourists' satisfaction directly and indirectly. Also, there was a significant relationship between tourists' perceived value and tourists' satisfaction.

Index Terms—Tourists' satisfaction, tourist perceived value, Cat Tien national park, path analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a smokeless industry contributes around US\$300 billion annual revenues and create 10% of job for people in the world. Tourism development come with problems including crowding, disruption of local communities, commercial exploitation of cultural traditions and social conflict. Ecotourism stands out is the most effective way to reduce those problem and it is sustainable. Therefore, eco-tourism is the future of tourism [1].

Obviously, keeping the satisfaction of tourist is the key development of any tourism business because tourists' satisfaction can determine the success or failure of that business [2]. Moreover, [3] has proved a positive relationship between tourists' satisfaction and revisiting which promote the survival and growth of tourism business in the long term [4].

Located just 150 km from Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Cat Tien national park also is a middle point between Da Lat city and HCMC which is the concentrated point of foreigner and domestic tourists. A difference from Cuc Phuong national park, Bach Ma national park, Ba Be national park are mostly mountain, the terrain of Cat Tien national park is quite flat. Moreover, the park, located in monsoon climate and surrounded by Dong Nai river, is peaceful and an incredibly bio-diverse area of lowland tropical rainforest. In 2001 UNESCO added Cat Tien National Park to its list of biosphere reserves.

With all the reasons above, Cat Tien national park become the best destination to develop eco-tourism in Vietnam. However, the park is facing many difficulties such as the development of hotels on other side of river that has destroyed the monopoly of the park that has existed for a long time and creating an extremely competitive environment for service and accommodation. In addition, according to 23 reviews on TripAdvisor.com, which is a trustiest web guide for tourists in the world, from 2012 to 2014 Cat Tien national park had many negative reviews, tourists complained about the poor services and the low quality of the accommodation. Therefore, the question how to satisfy tourists is more important than ever.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist satisfaction is a popular topic in marketing research [5]. Unquestionably, satisfaction contributes a central role in the planning of marketable tourism products and services. It also impacts the choice of destination, consumption of products and services, and decision to return by tourists [6], [7]. Therefore, a massive amount of research in consumer behavior and tourism has been done to determine satisfaction but there is no consensus. According to [8] tourists' satisfaction is determined by measuring the expected perception of quality and the actual quality experienced by the tourists. As [9] stated that tourist's satisfaction is determined by measuring the expected perception of quality and the actual quality experienced by the tourists. In widely used, Tourists' satisfaction is a result of the comparison between tourist expectations and their experiences when experience larger than or equal expectation tourist will satisfy and reverse.

It is generally recognized that satisfaction is impacted directly by service quality. Therefore if service quality is improved then satisfaction will be improved [10]. However, recent researches have suggested that there were an enormous factors impact satisfaction and service quality was one of them [10], [11]. Following [12] measuring tourists' satisfaction in a particular destination is not purely evaluated by service quality of a number of individual service providers. There is a numerous activities and experiences do not link to specific organizations. Although different research brought out different idea, there are some main factors considered to be important to have profound impacts on tourists' satisfaction such as natural environment, social environment, green management, interpretation, price,

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Mai Ngoc Khuong and Pham Dac Luan are with the School of Business, International University, VNU-HCMC, Vietnam (e-mail: mnkhuong@hcmiu.edu.vn, phamdacluan1992@gmail.com).

accessibility, recreational activities and tourist perceived value.

In recent years, several studies in the area of tourism have done to examine the impact of tourist perceived value on different aspects of consumer behavior. The empirical study of tourist perceived value has been relatively significant in the tourism [13]. When study the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction, the result show that perceived value is often an antecedent and a key determinant of customer satisfaction [14]-[16]. According to [17] Tourist perceived value was defined as consumer's overall evaluation about the usefulness of a product based on awareness of the thing is received and the thing is given or [18] Perceived value is a cognitive-affective evaluation of tourist which happen in purchasing product or service and depend on a comparison between the benefits and costs arising out of the offer and the offers of competitors in the market and which varies with the changing situations of time, place, and situation where the assessment is made

The result of [19]-[28] (except the study of [29]) showed that the perceived value has a direct impact on satisfaction.

Natural environment includes all things that exist in nature are not made or caused by human. In the field of tourism, natural environment encompasses weather, beach, lake, mountain, desert, etc. there was an evident that tourist satisfaction was effected by natural environment [30].

Social environment includes the social relationships which created by function and interaction of local community and the contribution of local people and government to infrastructure, economic form, culture, art, religion etc. According to [31] Social environment is an importance factor in gaining the success in tourism industry. Moreover, [32] point out that tourists travel to local community that strongly support tourism by show the consistently courteous and provide vital information they feel more satisfy than those enter the towns in which local people show less of hospitality and information relative to tourism activities.

Interpretation is the emphasis on enriching personal experiences, environmental consciousness and understanding and appreciation for nature, local society, and culture [33]. As [34] found that the interpretation is an important factor of satisfaction.

Price is defined as what customers actually pay in exchange for the benefits accruing from a product or service [35]. According to [36] guest's purchasing decisions was affected by their awareness of price, and more than 50 percent of guests will switch to other companies if they experience a poor price perception. Poor price awareness also has a negative effect on satisfaction. [37] Tourist choices are affected by sustainability.

In despite of the development of tourism industry, the environment will not be affected that is the definition of green management [38]. This factor was appeared in green hotel management. However, this factor is also important for tourist at a National Park can be explained by the fact that one would expect nature tourists to be more environmentally friendly and conscious [39].

Recreational activities defined recreation contains of activities or experiences carried on within leisure, the

process of participation, or as the emotional state derived from involvement. Normally, the participant choose voluntarily because of satisfaction, pleasure or enhance creative, or because participants recognize certain personal or social values to be gained from those recreation [40]. [41]-[43] argued that in the progression of a recreation experience, the satisfaction of participant was affected by the changing of internal and external behaviors and reactions within each stage of the overall recreation experience, especially on the "live activity stage."

Accessibility was defined as the easy-to-reach desired goods, services, activities and destinations by the availability, affordability and convenience of transport facilities, information or geographic distribution of activities and destinations [44]. Reference [30] tested tourists' satisfaction with an expectation-disconfirmation paradigm. They found that eco-tourists' satisfaction was influenced by accessibility of the sites.

In order to implement all the purposes of this thesis, the study hypothesizes are following:

H1: All the factors including natural environment, social environment, interpretation, price, accessibility, green management and recreational activities is directly and positively affect tourist perceived value.

H2: All the factors including natural environment, social environment, interpretation, price, accessibility, green management and recreational activities is directly and positively affect tourist's satisfaction

H3: Tourist perceived value directly and positively affect to Tourists' Satisfaction

H4: All factors including natural environment, social environment, interpretation, price, accessibility, green management and recreational activities indirectly affect tourists' satisfaction through the mediation of perceived value.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

The purpose of this research is to determine which factor affect tourist's satisfaction in Cat Tien National Park, in order to make the research more accurate and objective the quantitative approach was chosen to be used. The convenient samples were obtained from among tourists who stayed least one night and participated some activities in core zone of the park. The questionnaire was built based on major concepts of literature and its sections including respondent profiles, factors affect tourist satisfaction and recommendation. Most of measures were based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, in which 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree".

B. Factor Analysis and Reliability

In order to test the validity of the scale, the factor analysis was applied for dependent variable which was consisted two variables including 17 items, and independent variable which was consisted seven variables including 46 items. The result The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .865 for dependent variable and .867 for independent variable. Moreover, the probability

associated in Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of dependent and independent variable is smaller than .005. According to [45], [46] to be significant, the value of KMO must equal to .60 or above and p-value smaller .005 compare with the information above lead to conclude that factor analysis is appropriate in this study.

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Given names	Number of items	Alpha
Tourist Satisfaction (TOSATIS)	6	.831
Tourist perceived value (TOPERVA)	4	.725

Using the Kaiser-Guttman's retention criterion of Eigenvalues greater than 1, two dependent factors (included 10 items) which was considered appropriate to retain for future analysis. These two factors were accumulated 55.795% of the total variance and the Cronbach's coefficients range from .725 to .831, which indicated good subscale reliability.

TABLE II: SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Given names	Number of items	Alpha
Recreational activities (RECREACT)	7	.871
Price (PRICE)	7	.867
Ecology and Landscape (ECOLAND)	4	.821
Accessibility (ACCESS)	4	.826
Energy Saving Promotion (ENSAPRO)	5	.769
Interpretation (INTERPRE)	3	.690
Social Environment (SOCIENVI)	3	.908
Natural Atmosphere (NATATMOS)	3	.811
Environment Protection (ENVIPRO)	3	.656
Accessibility Information (ACCESINFO)	3	.721

Applying the same method used in dependent variable, two independent factors including 42 items and hold 66.26% of total variance. The Cronbach's coefficients ranged from .656 to .908 which indicated good subscale reliability.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Profile of Tourists Involved in the Study

TABLE III: TOURISTS PROFILE (N=215)

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	102	47.4
	Female	113	52.6
	Total	215	100.0
Age	<18	26	12.1
	18-25	58	27.0
	26-30	47	21.9
	31-40	56	26.0
	41-60	16	7.4
	>60	12	5.6
	Total	215	100.0
Education level	High-School degree	49	22.8
	College degree	28	13.0
	Post University	43	20.0
	Vocational School	7	3.3
	Bachelor degree	88	40.9
	Total	215	100.0
Times of Visit	1	193	89.8
	2	14	6.5
	3	3	1.4
	>3	5	2.3
	Total	215	100.0
Travel with whom	Alone	19	8.8
	Friends	119	55.3
	Family	29	13.5
	Others	48	22.3
	Total	215	100.0

B. Relationship between Tourists' Satisfaction, Tourist Perceived Value and the Independent Variables

Table IV illustrated the correlation coefficients between ten independent variables and dependent variables. The highest Pearson Correlation (r) in this table is .610 which is smaller than .7. Therefore, all factors will be retained [47]. Moreover, Table IV also identifies which factors have relationship with dependent variable of tourists' satisfaction such as TOPARVA (r=.610; p<.001), with independent variables: RECREACT (r=.402), PRICE (r=.543), ECOLAND (r=.419), ENSAPRO (r=.209), ACCESS (r=.349), SOCIENVI (r=.519), INTERPRE (r=.251), NATATMOS(r=.408), ENVIPRO (r=.165), ACCESINFO (r=.389). This meant better RECREACT, ECOLAND, ENSAPRO, ACCESS, SOCIENVI, INTERPRE, NATATMOS, ENVIPRO, ACCESINFO could lead to higher tourists' satisfaction.

TABLE IV: CORRELATION BETWEEN VARIABLES

	TOSATIS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.RECREACT	.402*	1									
2.PRICE	.543*	.451*	1								
3.ECOLAND	.419*	.411*	.311*	1							
4.ENSAPRO	.209*	.299*	.413*	.151*	1						
5.ACCESS	.349*	.361*	.439*	.282*	.205*	1					
6.SOCIENVI	.519*	.449*	.529*	.405*	.333*	.255*	1				
7.INTERPRE	.251*	.370*	.430*	.262*	.308*	.315*	.332*	1			
8.NATATMOS	.408*	.432*	.288*	.591*	.183*	.213*	.443*	.200*	1		
9.ENVIPRO	.165*	.383*	.306*	.235*	.475*	.337*	.192*	.244*	.238*	1	
10.ACCESINFO	.389*	.445*	.468*	.264*	.245*	.496*	.338*	.472*	.198*	.333*	1
11.TOPERVA	.610*	.400*	.390*	.474*	.157*	.272*	.439*	.169*	.455*	.125*	.298*
Mean	3.95	3.93	3.60	4.29	3.47	3.49	4.24	3.39	4.47	3.49	3.40
SD.	.648	.648	.693	.631	.709	.777	.733	.751	.605	.73	.792

*.Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

C. Factors Directly Affect Tourists' Satisfaction

The result of simple linear regression was showed that the three out of ten independent variables of this research had direct effect in significant way on tourist's satisfaction. The results also indicated that price ($\beta = .314 > 0$ at Sig. = .000), social environment (with $\beta = .149 > 0$ at Sig. = .002) and ecology and landscapes (with $\beta = .135 > 0$ at Sig. = .049) positively affect to tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, tourists feel that the social environment, ecology and landscapes and especially price, which is the highest standardized coefficient was considered the most influence to tourist satisfaction, in positive way, it can raise their satisfaction.

The result of simple linear regression between tourists' satisfaction and tourists' perceived value show that tourist perceived value variable significantly affect to tourists' satisfaction variable at Sig. = .000, and $\beta = .610$ which conclude that tourists have had high positive perception about value and service of the park, they will feel more satisfy.

D. Indirect Effects on Tourists' Satisfaction

As [48], the independent variable's indirect effect on the dependent variable through intervening variable was the total product of independent variable's effect on the intervening variable and intervening variable's effect on the dependent variable.

From the result of multiple regression analysis between dependent variables and tourist perceived value there are 4 main factors affect tourist perceived value: PRICE ($\beta=.155$),

ECOLAND ($\beta=.230$), SOCIENVI ($\beta=.149$) and NATATMOS ($\beta=.178$). It proved that the better price, ecology and landscape, social environment, and natural atmosphere the higher tourist perceived value customer will receive.

There are four factors directly affected the intervening variable of TOPERA and then TOSATI directly caused an effect on tourists' satisfaction ($\beta = .610$). Therefore, through the intervening variable of TOPERA, the factors of price, ecology and landscape, social environment, and natural atmosphere created indirect effects on tourist satisfaction at (.095), (.143), (.091) and (.109) respectively.

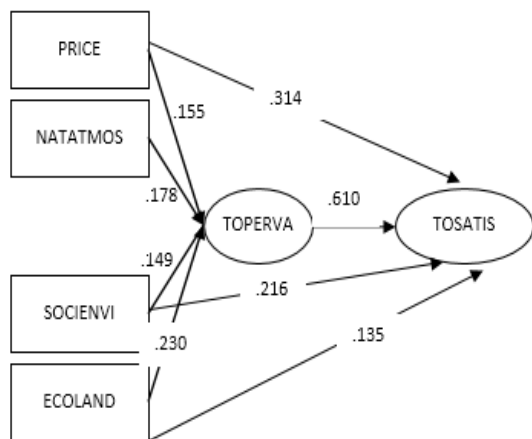


Fig. 1. Path coefficients of TOSATIS model.

E. Total Causal Effects of Tourists' Satisfaction

The table V summarizes the directly and indirectly effects of independent variables including PRICE, NATATMOS, SOCIENVI, ECOLAND and SAFSEC together with TOPERVA on TOSATIS. Moreover, all of these factors including PRICE, NATATMOS, SOCIENVI, ECOLAND and TOPERVA had positive effects on TOSATIS. According to [49] TOPERVA factor had very strong impact TOSATIS with total $\beta = .610$. Next is PRICE with total $\beta = .409$ which had a substantial effect on TOSATIS. The factor of NATATMOS, SOCIENVI and ECOLAND had moderate effects on TOSATIS with the values of β were .109, .307 and .278 respectively.

TABLE V: DIRECT, INDIRECT AND TOTAL EFFECTS

Variables	Causal effects		Total
	Direct	Indirect	
PRICE	.314	.095	.409
NATATMOS	--	.109	.109
SOCIENVI	.216	.091	.307
ECOLAND	.135	.143	.278
TOPERVA	.610	--	.610
Total	1.275	0.438	1.713

V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Discussion of Findings

Table V showed that tourist perceived value factor had the strongest effect on tourists' satisfaction. Next was price factor, followed by social environment ecology and landscapes, and natural atmosphere with the descending β values. All of these factors had positive β values, which represented for positive significant effects on tourists' satisfaction. These result results were consistent with many

preceding studies on tourists' satisfaction [19]-[28], [30]-[32], [36].

B. Recommendations for Director of Tourism Department in Cat Tien National Park

Firstly, tourists consider price of tourism products and services of the park quite high (the mean value is 3.6) thus the park should lower the price for service and product. More specifically, the price for accommodation and transportation should be lower so the price matches with the quality. Tourist prefer the rate accommodation and transportation of hotels on the other side of the river because it is lower and better quality. Moreover, the park should provide tourist more options for accommodation to attract different segments of tourists. For instance, stay more than two nights the room rate will be discounted 15%, if tourist do the wild gibbon trek the room rate will be discounted 20%. The rate of accommodation and tours in rainy season should be lower to gain more tourists because rainy is low season. The price about service and product should be public in reception area and official web page of Cat Tien Park so tourists can easily research which tour is best suited with their budget .Therefore, it can prevent local people from taking advantage of tourists.

Secondly, the park manager should mobilize all the ethnics who are living in the park and relocated them in other side of the river In addition, tourism department should keep Crocodile Lake as natural as possible and create new tours to watch the wild life while not disturbing to the animals. Moreover, the ranger manager should enforce the protection of nature including animals and plants by arranging a schedule daily monitoring and implementing the law for those people who kill the animals and deforest for money or any other purposes. Moreover, the park should create a program to help local people understand the forest and the reason we must protect the forest.

Thirdly, the park manager should keep the regulation that bans any vehicles make loud noises which will destroy the peaceful atmosphere in the park. Moreover, the park should separate the camping area from the bungalows area. The camping area usually makes loud noise and they go to sleep very late which is contrast with the bungalow area. The park should ban the Yellow Bamboo restaurant and Pheasant restaurant operate karaoke and weddings that scare the animals away.

Finally, the park manager should inform the local community the benefit of the tourism development which gains foreign currency, providing many employment opportunities for local labor and create new markets for local goods and services. More importantly, non-economic benefits which is included opportunities for cultural exchanges, enhanced community association, new skills and languages will be learned by local community. Therefore, the park can gain the supporting of local community. Providing free classes to teach English for local residents, so they can earn a better income by working for the park.

In conclusion, to do all the recommendation above, the park needs a lot of money and time. More importantly, there must be the appearance of professional, talented and well -

educated tourism operators. Therefore, the park should become a joint venture 60% government and 40% Private Corporation so the park can use money and human resource of Private Corporation there are some risks but it will revitalize the park tourism industry.

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Mai Ngoc Khuong is a lecturer and researcher of School of Business, International University, VNU-HCM. He received his bachelor degree in tourism and hospitality management, master of science degree in leisure, tourism and environment at Wageningen University, The Netherlands, and PhD degree in development management at School of Public Administration of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) Bangkok, Thailand.



Pham Dac Luan is a research assistant of School of Business Administration, International University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh.