A STUDY OF DEVELOPING

DESTINATION LOYALTY MODEL

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Developing Destination Loyalty

The link between customer satisfaction and company success has historically been a matter of faith, and numerous satisfaction studies have also supported the case (Hill and Alexander, 2000). Customer satisfaction has always been considered an essential business goal because it was assumed that satisfied customers would buy more. However, many companies have started to notice a high customer defection despite high satisfaction ratings (Taylor, 1998; Oliver, 1999). This phenomenon has prompted a number of scholars (e. g., Jones and Sasser, 1995; Reichheld, 1996; Oliver 1999) to criticize the mere satisfaction studies and call for a paradigm shift to the quest of loyalty as a strategic business goal.

As a result, satisfaction measurement has recently been displaced by the concept of customer loyalty, primarily because loyalty is seen as a better predictor of actual behavior. Two of the three measures making up most Customer Loyalty Indices (CLIs) are behavior-based, such as "likelihood to repurchase the product or service" and "likelihood to recommend a product or service to others". The third element of a CLI is usually "overall satisfaction" itself (Taylor, 1998).

The move to measure loyalty is based on a desire to better understand retention, which has a direct link to a company's bottom line. Studies have documented that a 5% increase in customer retention can generate a profit growth of 25 – 95% across a range of industries (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). In addition, retaining existing customers usually has a much lower associated costs than winning new ones (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987), so a larger proportion of the gross profit counts towards the bottom line. Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely to act as free word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising agents that informally bring networks of friends, relatives and other potential consumers to a product/service (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999). In fact, WOM referrals account for up to 60% of sales to new customers (Reicheld and Sasser, 1990). With such exceptional returns, loyalty becomes a fundamental strategic component for organizations.

However, in the context of travel and tourism, a review of literature reveals an abundance of studies on tourist satisfaction; and destination loyalty has not been thoroughly investigated (Oppermann, 2000). Therefore, it is time for practitioners and academics to conduct more studies of loyalty in order to have greater knowledge of this concept, to understand the role of customer satisfaction in developing loyalty, other non-satisfaction determinants of customer loyalty, and their interrelationships.

Understanding the determinants of customer loyalty will allow management to concentrate on the major influencing factors that lead to customer retention. A number of studies have examined the antecedents or causes of repeat purchase intensions (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Cronin, Brady, and Hult, 2000; Petrick and Backman, 2001). Results of this body of research have shown that satisfaction, quality/performance and different other variables are good predictors of customer intended loyalty. The more satisfied the customers are, the more likely they are to repurchase the product/service and to encourage others to become customers. In order to retain customers, organizations must seek to satisfy them, but a further objective must be to establish customer loyalty.

In a tourism context, satisfaction with travel experiences contributes to destination loyalty (Bramwell 1998; Oppermann 2000; Pritchard and Howard 1997). The degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Oppermann 2000). Tourists' positive experiences of service, products, and other resources provided by tourism destinations could produce repeat visits as well as positive word-of-mouth effects to friends and/or relatives. Recommendations by previous visits can be taken as the most reliable information sources for potential tourists. Recommendations to other people (word-of-mouth) are also one of the most often sought types of information for people interested in traveling.

Given the vital role of customer satisfaction, one should not be surprised that a great deal of research has been devoted to investigating the antecedents of satisfaction. Previous satisfaction research has focused predominantly on the following antecedents to consumer satisfaction: expectations (e. g., Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988), disconfirmation of expectations (e. g., Oliver 1980), performance (e. g., Churcuill and Suprenant, 1982), affect (e. g., Mano and Oliver, 1993), and equity (e. g., Tse and Wilton, 1988). Customer satisfaction / dissatisfaction (CS/D) appears to be influenced independently or in combination by these antecedents.

Most early research work focused on satisfaction at the global level (e. g., Oliver 1980). Until recently, there emerges an attribute-level conceptualization of the antecedents of satisfaction (e. g., Oliver 1993). Under an attribute-level approach, overall satisfaction is a function of attribute-level evaluations. These evaluations typically capture a significant amount of variation in overall satisfaction (e. g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Oliver 1993).

It is important in tourism to distinguish overall satisfaction from satisfaction with individual attributes. The particular characteristics of tourism have a noTable effect on tourist satisfaction (Seaton and Bennett, 1996). Beyond the generic characteristics that distinguish services from goods, such as intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1985), there are some further differences between tourism and other services. For example, Middleton and Clarke (2001) highlighted interdependence - sub-sector inter-linkage of tourism products. Tourists experience a medley of services such as hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions, etc.; and they may evaluate each service element separately. Satisfaction with various components of the destination leads to overall satisfaction (Kozak and Rimmington 2000). Therefore, overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are distinct, though related, constructs (Oliver 1993). This study focused on overall evaluation, attributes satisfaction, and the relationship between the two.

Furthermore, it has been widely acknowledged that destination image affects tourists' subjective perception, consequent behavior and destination choice (e. g., Chon 1990, 1992; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Milman and Pizan, 1995; Bigne, Sanchez, and Sanchez, 2001). Tourists' behavior is expected to be partly conditioned by the image that they have of destinations. Image will influence tourists in the process of choosing a destination, the subsequent evaluation of the trip and in their future intentions. Destination image exercises a positive influence on perceived quality and satisfaction. A positive image deriving from positive travel experiences would result in a positive evaluation of a destination. Tourist satisfaction would improve if the destination has a positive image. Destination image also affects tourists' behavioral intentions. More favorable image will lead to higher likelihood to return to the same destination.

To sum up, the following sequence could be established: destination image → tourist satisfaction → destination loyalty. Destination image is an antecedent of satisfaction. Satisfaction in turn has a positive influence on destination loyalty. In an increasingly saturated marketplace, the success of marketing destinations should be guided by a thorough analysis of destination loyalty and its interplay with tourist satisfaction and destination image. Nevertheless, the tourism studies to date have addressed and examined the constructs of image, satisfaction and loyalty independently (Bigne et al. 2001); lacking are studies discussing the causal relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty.

To bridge the gap in the destination loyalty literature, one of the main purposes of this study was to offer an integrated approach to understanding destination loyalty and examines the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. A research model was proposed and tested. The model investigated the relevant relationships among the constructs by using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The primary aim of

SEM is to explain the pattern of a series of interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously between a set of latent (unobserved) constructs, each measured by one or more manifest (observed) variables (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

Segmenting Destination Loyalty

In recent years, hospitality and tourism scholars has shown increasing interests in different market segments based on tourists' demographic profiles and travel characteristics (Sonmez and Graefe, 1999; Oppermann, 2000; Mykletum, Crotts, and Mykletun, 2001; Kim, Wei, and Ruys, 2003; Hsu, 2000, 2003). The purposes are to help destination managers develop better understanding of the specific groups of consumers in order to accommodate their distinct needs and wants, and establish efficient and effective marketing and promotion strategies. It has been widely acknowledged that there is a need for market segmentation in order to plan a consumer-oriented marketing strategy and cope with the large diversity of vacation behavior (Veen and Verhallen, 1986). Segmentation is often based on social-demographics, psychographics, behavioral characteristics, trip characteristics, or other variables of interests. One of the most common approaches is to first assign consumers to groups by using demographic and trip characteristics; and then the similarities and differences between the matching groups are analyzed.

Since many attractions and tourist destinations rely heavily on the repeat visitor segment, researchers and practitioners find it meaningful to examine the differences between first-time and repeat visitors, and the impact of previous visitation experience on tourists' image perception and future behavior. For example, Milman and Pizam (1995) empirically tested the impact of previous visitations on consumer's destination image.

They found that higher number of visits with a destination result in more positive image of the destination, and higher interests and likelihood to revisit it. A number of empirical works revealed that the number of visits to and the length of stay at a destination influence the perceived image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Chon, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993).

Previous studies also indicated a close relationship between past experiences and consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Past experiences of visiting a destination have increased tourists' intention to travel there again. For instance, Petrick and Sirakaya's empirical study (2004) suggested that repeat visitors are more satisfied with their travel experiences, and are more likely to return and spread positive WOM. Juaneda (1996) and Gyte and Phelps (1989) confirmed that repeat tourists are more likely than first-timers to return to the same destination. Oppermann (2000) found a significant relationship between previous experience and future tourist visitation behavior. Sonmez and Graefe (1998) showed that past travel experiences have a powerful influence on behavioral intentions. Chen (1998) stated that past trip experiences often influence tourists' choice behaviors directly and/or indirectly.

A few empirical studies (e. g., Gyte and Phelps, 1989; Juaneda, 1996; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Mazursky, 1989) investigated the influences of satisfaction and previous visits on the revisit probability - both previous visits and satisfaction were found to be determinants of the revisit intentions, although Kozak (2001) found that future intentions were influenced more by satisfaction than by past experience. Other researchers (McAlexander, Kim, and Roberts, 2003; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999) found that customer satisfaction affected customer loyalty depending on consumption experience. Satisfaction had a significant influence on loyalty for less experienced group, but its effect in the more experienced group was not significant, and other determinants replaced satisfaction as drivers of loyalty. They concluded that satisfaction was most effective for developing loyalty among less experienced customers.

Demographics-based research has also drawn increasing attention in the tourism and travel literature. A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of tourists' demographics on their image perceptions and destination choices; and mixed results were generated from these studies. For example, empirical studies explored relationship between the perceived image and tourists' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and country of origin (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Beerli and Martin, 2004). As for the findings, some researchers identified tourists' personal characteristics such as age and education as one of the key forces that affect destination image; while others found no relationship between tourists' demographics and their image perceptions.

Similarly, prior research showed mixed results in terms of the relationship between satisfaction / loyalty and demographics (Snyder 1991). Some studies found little difference in demographics between customers who are loyal and those who are not (Exter, 1986), for example, people's loyalty towards a brand does not vary based on their income level. Other studies found that age may influence consumer loyalty (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Older customers ($\geq$ 50 years old) tend to show higher satisfaction and loyalty than the younger group (< 50 years old) (Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Hsu, 2000).

Oh, Parks and DeMicco (2002) studied the age- and gender-based effects on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions via SEM. Their findings suggested that senior travelers ($\geq$ 55 years old) tend to develop higher satisfaction and behavioral intentions than their younger counterparts; while male and female travelers show comparable satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions. They also found that despite the mean differences in the latent constructs, the decision-making process in the structural model remains similar across age and gender groups.

Mykletun et al. (2001) tried to predict visitors' perception of a destination and revisit probability by using a number of demographic variables including age, household income, and education. They found that 1) only age is an important predictor of visitor satisfaction - senior tourists ($\geq$ 60 years old) hold the most positive evaluations of a destination compared with the younger visitor segment; and 2) age, education and income are not related to visitors' revisit probability.

Taken together, most of these previous studies are somewhat descriptive in nature by conducting only univariate or multivariate comparisons. Few researchers have investigated these tourist segments in a systematic framework. To fill the void in the travel literature, one of the main objectives of the study was to examine if various tourist groups differed in the systematic relationships depicted in the destination loyalty model, i. e., if different tourist segments formed loyalty in different ways. The focus here was on the comparison of an entire process rather than on attribute- or factor-level description.

Tourist groups based on previous visitation(s), age, gender, education and income were investigated because marketing literature has indicated that these types of variables should be included in consumer behavior research in order to segment the markets

(Gitelson and Crompton, 1984). The findings would contribute to advances in theoretical understanding of the effects of previous visitation(s) and demographics on the destination loyalty formation process.

Assessing Service Quality of a Historic Destination

The empirical data for the study was collected in a major tourism destination in the state of Arkansas – Eureka Springs. Eureka Springs is a unique city with old-world charm and European flavor. Known as "the Little Switzerland of the Ozarks", this historic city is nestled in the hills of the Ozark Mountains, encircled by two beautiful lakes and two scenic rivers. Eureka Springs began as a legend of healing among the native tribes of the region via tales of the "Medicine Spring" flowing from the hillside. Reports of the marvels of the restorative springs brought in tourists as well as people to live here. Today, the history lives on - in 2001, Eureka Springs was named one of 12 Distinctive Destinations by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For over 100 years the city has been attracting people of all ages, from all around the country. With its Victorian Architecture, narrow winding streets and the entire downtown area being listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Eureka Springs remains to be a popular resort area, though it has never conducted any type of tourist survey.

Cities blessed with history and heritages have advantages when attempting to develop their tourism products. However, in order to turn the advantages into sustainable success, historic cities need to think like a business and take a proactive role in their stewardship of the cities' tourism development. Therefore, one other main purpose of the study was to help Eureka Springs gain a better understanding of its visitors' traveling behavior, demographic profiles, visitors' aspirations, their attitudes towards traveling to

Eureka Springs, their opinions on the image of Eureka Springs as a travel destination and their perceptions of the service quality of the city's hospitality businesses. The information obtained would help the city 1) identify and preserve those assets that establish their unique identity and distinguish them from the surrounding areas; 2) pinpoint those areas that require further improvement and promotional efforts; and 3) design a more comprehensive marketing plan, and further expand the market.

The significant role of service quality in business success has been well acknowledged. High levels of service quality can help organizations achieve a competitive edge and position themselves more effectively in the marketplace (Lewis, 1993). Unfortunately, the evaluation of quality has always remained more difficult for services than for products due to the complex nature of services: heterogeneity, intangibility, and inseparability of production and consumption (Zeithaml et al., 1985). A strong body of literature has provided guidance for exploring service quality, and different instruments have been proposed for assessing this relatively elusive and abstract construct. Among them, SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, 1988), and importance-performance analysis (IPA), introduced by Martilla and James (1977) have gained the most recognition in various service contexts.

In spite of extensive usage of the SERVQUAL scale, a number of studies have questioned the efficacy of the instrument, on both empirical and theoretical grounds (e. g., Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Brown, Churchill, and Peter, 1993; Teas, 1993, 1994). These studies pointed to the unstable nature of SERVQUAL's purported five-factor structure, the inadequacies of the expectations and perceptions gap model that underlies the SERVQUAL, and the problems in the interpretation and operationalization of expectations.

Because of the problems of using SERVQUAL, importance-performance analysis (IPA) has earned popularity in a variety of fields for measuring service quality. IPA excludes the controversial 'expectations' from the analysis, and instead examines the 'importance' customers place on any given product/service attribute. It is a simple and flexible technique for analyzing consumers' attitudes towards salient product/service attributes. IPA has been used to design marketing strategies for businesses, to guide planning decisions for governments, and to evaluate the organization and management of events and programs.

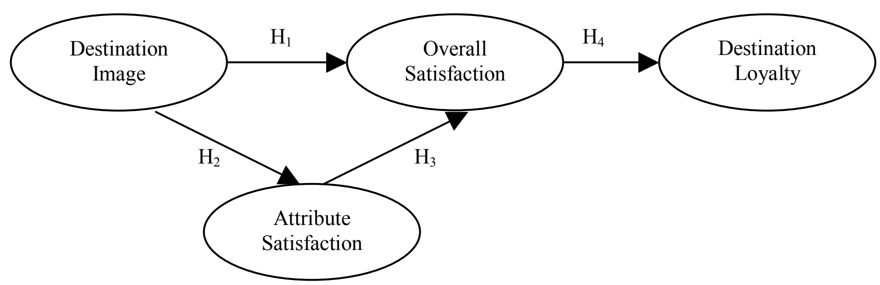
Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Objective 1: Developing and Testing Destination Loyalty Model

The first objective of the study was to develop a theoretical model of destination loyalty by examining the interrelationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. All the relationships were tested jointly using a structural equation model. Two types of conclusions could be drawn. From a destination management perspective, the importance of improving the image and tourist satisfaction could be confirmed. From the research point of view, the systematic examination of causal relationships among the constructs could facilitate a clearer understanding of the concept of destination loyalty. It was hoped that the results derived from the model would serve as the basis for the development of destination marketing strategies. In order to provide a theoretical background for the proposed model, in chapter two the author conducted a comprehensive review of literature regarding destination image, consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty.

Figure 1 depicts the hypothetical causal model that examined the structural, causal relationships among destination image, satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Hypothetically destination image influenced tourists' satisfaction with traveling experiences, which then affected destination loyalty. Each component of the model was selected based on a comprehensive literature review. The theoretical underpinning of this model was discussed in the following section.

Figure 1 Hypothetical Model for Developing Destination Loyalty



The following hypotheses were drawn in this study:

H_1: Destination image positively influenced tourists' overall satisfaction.

H_2: Destination image positively influenced tourists' attribute satisfaction.

H_3: Attribute satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction.

H_4: Attribute satisfaction positively influenced overall satisfaction.

H_5: Overall satisfaction positively influenced destination loyalty.

H_6: Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.

H_7: Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Objective 2: Comparing Destination Loyalty Model across Groups

The second objective was to investigate if the destination loyalty model varied among different tourist groups based on previous traveling experiences, age, gender, education, and income level. The findings could facilitate destination managers to carry out market segmentation, which is an essential marketing tool in today's increasingly competitive business world and has become part of the everyday thinking of tourism managers in their efforts to improve planning and productivity. By dividing the broad categories of the market into more specific component parts, managers are able to gain strategic marketing insights. This in turn allows them to direct their marketing efforts to attract and satisfy tourists more efficiently.

Previous studies found that destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty as separate constructs were affected by tourists' personal characteristics and travel characteristics (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann, 2000). However, few studies have looked into the potential differences in the systematic relationships among these constructs for various tourist groups. For market segmentation purpose, it would be of prime interest for the destination managers to see how various tourist groups develop loyalty in different ways. Therefore, in addition to examining differences across groups in *levels* of key constructs (latent means) in the destination loyalty model, this study also focused on differences in *relationships* among these constructs (structural paths) across groups. The following hypotheses were proposed:

H_8: The structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.

H_9: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.

H_{10}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' gender.

H_{11}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' gender.

H_{12}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' age.

H_{13}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' age.

H_{14}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level.

H_{15}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level.

H_{16}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level.

H_{17}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level.

Objective 3: Assessing Service Quality

The third objective of the study was to measure the quality of the services provided by the hospitality and tourism industry in Eureka Springs. Service quality has received enormous attention in the literature for the critical role it plays in distinguishing services/products and building competitive advantages. One of the most well-known and most commonly-used instruments for service quality assessment is SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). However, SERVQUAL has drawn wide criticisms in marketing literature, mainly for the psychometric properties of the instrument, its inferior predictive validity, and its use of difference scores: SERVQUAL = f (performance – expectation) (e. g., Carman, 1990; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Brown, Churchill, and Peter, 1993). As an alternative, another technique for quality assessment has garnered recognition in a plethora of service settings for its simplicity and ease of application – importance-performance analysis (IPA), introduced by Martilla and James in 1977. IPA plots customers' ratings of the importance of and their satisfaction with salient service attributes in a two-dimensional grid. The IPA grid analyzes how well an organization meets customers' concerns over important service/product attributes; and the results can be used to prioritize attributes for improvement and provide guidelines for the organization's future resource allocation decisions.

CHAPTER TWO

LIERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Overview of Travel Destination

Definition of Travel Destination

As Seaton and Bennett (1996) claimed, destination is a complex and peculiar animal. In order to understand destinations, consideration has to be given to the differing environmental, social and economic contexts around the world within which tourism destinations exist. Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1998) viewed a destination as the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourist. The travel destination, however defined geographically, provides a convenient focus for the examination of the tourist movement and its impact and significance. Indeed, the destination brings together all aspects of tourism – demand, transportation, supply, and marketing – in a useful framework. It represents the most important element of the tourism system because destinations and their images attract tourists, motivate the visits and therefore energize the whole tourism system. A destination is the catalyst link that precipitates all the industries in the tourism sector. Unless people want to go somewhere, provision for transporting them, housing them, feeding them and amusing them will be in vain (Seaton and Bennett, 1996).

Similarly, Murphy, Pritchard, and Smith (2000) thought of a destination as an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited. Hu and Ritchie (1993) considered the tourism destination as "a package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes."

Conceptualization of Travel Destination

Laws (1995) pointed out destinations have experienced dynamic and rapid changes, and as a result the understanding of the concept is also evolving. The traditional understanding of tourist destination is that it's a place where people spend their holidays; and its elements entail place, people and holiday. The more recent conceptualization of destination also includes: 1) the effects of tourist activities such as economic, social, environmental, and ecological effects; 2) managing the demand for tourism such as access, quality control, adding benefits and imagery; and 3) managing tourism effects on the destination involving setting objectives for tourism, impact and capacity analysis, planning, and zoning.

<u>Typology of Travel Destination</u>

Travel destinations range from purpose-built resorts where all the functions are focused on the dominant activity, to capital cities and entire countries where tourism is not a major, if important, feature. Laws (1995) introduced a typology which distinguishes between the main types of destination for tourists: 1) capital cities such as Athens, which are major cities that attract visitors for tourism, business, family, cultural and administrative reasons; 2) a developed traditional center such as many towns in Europe, which are long established village retained as the focus for tourism developments;

3) touring centers such as many cities in the US, which are towns with a high concentration of secondary tourist facilities and good transport links both to countries of tourist origin and to the surrounding scenic or cultural attractions; and 4) purpose-built resorts such as Disneyland, where all infrastructure and amenities are sharply focused on the business of catering to tourists' needs.

Components of Travel Destinations

According to Cooper et al. (1998), destinations comprise the core components of attractions and support services. Attractions, be they artificial features, natural features, or events, are what draw tourists to a destination; while support services and facilities, such as accommodation, food, shopping, transport, are also essential for the destination. For tourists to have satisfactory vacation experience, it is vital that the quality of each component and the delivery of the services at these destination components are reasonably uniform.

Likewise, Laws (1995) grouped the elements of tourist destinations into two categories. Primary resources include climate, ecology, cultural traditions, traditional architecture and land forms; and secondary resources are the developments introduced specifically for tourists such as hotels, catering, transport, activities and amusements. Both elements need to be in place before tourism can be supported - tourists will not be able to enjoy a destination's primary resources without the secondary facilities available.

Middleton (1988) classified the components of tourist destinations into 1) the natural and man-made attractions of an area; 2) its facilities and services; 3) the ease of access to it; 4) the images used to attract tourists to it; and 5) the total cost of the holiday.

He emphasized the interdependence of the many elements in destination systems that together form the basis of tourists' experience.

Ethos Consulting (1991) identified three main geographic characteristics of tourism: 1) the biophysical environment, further differentiated into landforms, climate, and vegetation; 2) human factors, further divided into land status and access; and 3) natural resource factors, further divided into visual resources, local recreational use, and cultural heritage, etc. Deng, King, and Bauer (2002) recognized five major components as contributing to the overall attractiveness of nature-based destinations: 1) tourism resources, including natural and cultural resources; 2) tourist facilities, subdivided into infrastructure, recreational and educational facilities; 3) accessibility, involving external and internal accessibility of the destination; 4) local communities; and 5) peripheral attractions. Handszuh (1995) stated that the core services of quality in tourism are infrastructure, safety/security, hygiene/sanitation, condition of natural environments, consumer protection, and accessibility.

Common Features of Travel Destinations

Destinations represent an amalgam, or mix of attractions and support facilities which demonstrate a number of common features. These include the fact that destinations are cultural appraisals; they are perishable because tourism is consumed where it is produced; destinations involve multiple use of tourism with other uses and to be successful the components of the amalgam need to be of equivalent quality (Cooper et al., 1998).

The amalgamation of the components of a destination comes together in many different ways, and in many different cultural, economic, and environmental contexts to create the range of destinations available. Each of these components has to be in place before tourism can be supported, i. e., the complete mix has to be present for it to work and the complete tourism experience to be delivered. This complementarity of destination components is difficult to control by destination managers given the fragmented nature of enterprise in tourism.

Destinations are cultural appraisals. Visitors have to consider a destination to be attractive and worth the investment of time and money to visit. As tastes and fashion change, so they are reflected in the destinations that tourists patronize. This means that while new opportunities are always available, there is also a constant threat to established destinations which may go out of fashion. It is thus vital to maintain the difference between the destination and the home environment through good design and management, and to avoid the development of uniform tourism landscape.

Destinations are inseparable, i. e., tourism is produced where it is consumed. Visitors have to be physically present at the destination to experience tourism. Because tourism is attracted to the unique and the fragile parts of the world, destinations are vulnerable to tourist pressure and may suffer alteration. This is exacerbated by the fact that visitor pressure is often concentrated seasonally in time and at specific popular locations. Seasonality is a major problem for many destinations, prejudicing profitability and rendering them inefficient in terms of their use of the capital assets. This is because the destination is perishable and it has a high ratio of fixed to variable costs. It is therefore imperative to ensure that market volume and characteristics are accurately forecast before construction begins.

Destinations are used not just by tourists but also by many other groups. Destination amenities serve residents and workers all year round, with tourists being temporary users. This may cause conflicts between tourists and other users. Therefore, it is important to integrate tourism activities into the local community via careful community-driven tourism planning, public campaigns, and management intervention.

Destinations are thought of as expensive or cheap and yet there is no single index for putting a precise value to them. In general perceived price is more likely to be a subjective evaluation made by tourists through an appraisal of the combination of all expected or actual expenditures made getting to and in the area relative to others, which will be affected as much by external factors as by the deliberate pricing policies of tourism suppliers.

Destination has its life cycle: 1) exploration, 2) involvement, 3) development, 4) consolidation, 5) stagnation, and 6) decline/rejuvenation. Each of the phases is associated with different levels of visitation, different kinds of visitors, and different host reactions. Destination managers should attempt to identify what stage their destination is at before planning for the future.

Theoretical Overview of Constructs in the Model

Destination Image

Three decades of research in travel and tourism has shown the significant role destination image plays in the destination selection process, and the great contribution it makes to the understanding of tourist behavior. Pike (2002) summarized some key characteristics of prior destination studies through reviewing 142 destination image papers published during the period 1973 to 2000. He found the following: 1) the most studied region was North America; 2) the most popular type of destination of interest was countries, although Oppermann (1996a) noted that growing interests in urban tourism has led to more research into imagery of cities; 3) most studies measured only one destination; 4) the type of survey respondents were quite heterogeneous – visitors, non visitors, travel experts, local residents, etc., and 5) a wide range of research interests were explored, such as the measurement of destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993), its components (Dann 1996), or factors influencing it (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997); the effect of destination image on behavioral intentions (Milman and Pizam 1995); the impact of familiarity (Dann 1996), distance (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), time (Gartner 1986), demographic variables (Baloglu 1997) on destination image, just to name a few.

Definition and Conceptualization

Although destination image is one of the most prevalent topics in the tourism literature, prior researchers (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993) pointed out that most tourism image studies had been atheoretical, and had not been successful in conceptualizing and operationalizing destination image. This is partly due to the fact that the characteristics of tourism products/services, such as its complexity (Smith 1994), multidimensionality (Gartner 1989), subjectivity (Calderon, Gil, and Gallarza 1998), and intangibility (Fakeye and Crompton 1991), make it difficult to measure the destination image construct.

In spite of its wide use in the empirical context, destination image is loosely defined and lacks a solid conceptual structure (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). As Gallarza, Gil Saura and Calderón Garcia (2002) stated, "There are almost as many definitions of image as scholars devoted to its conceptualization." For example, tourism image is defined by some researchers as an individual's overall perception or total set of impressions of a place (e. g., Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), or as the mental portrayal of a destination (e. g., Milman and Pizam, 1995). Table 1 presents some selected definitions of destination image to demonstrate its various dimensions.

Table 1 Selected Definitions of Product/Place/Destination Image

Author (s)	Definitions
Hunt (1971)	**impressions that a person or persons hold about a state in which they do not reside**
Markin (1974)	**our own personalized, internalized and conceptualized understanding of what we know**
Lawson and Bond-Bovy (1977)	**an expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific object or place**
Crompton (1979)	**the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination**
Dichter (1985)	**the concept of image describes not individual traits or qualities but the total impression and entity makes on the minds of others**
Reynolds (1985)	**The mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions. It comes into being through a creative process in which selected impressions are elaborated, embellished and ordered**
Embacher and Buttle (1989)	**comprised of the ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination under investigation; may comprise both cognitive and evaluative components**
Fakeye and Crompton (1991)	**the mental construct developed by a potential tourist on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions**
Kotler et al. (1994)	**the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a place**
Gartner (1993, 1996)	**consist of three hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative**
Santos Arrebola (1994)	**a mental representation of attributes and benefits sought of a product**
Parenteau (1995)	**a favorable or unfavorable prejudice that the audience and distributors have of the product or destination**

Source: Gallarza, Gil Saura and Calderón Garcia (2002: p. 60)

In order to better understand the concept of destination image, Gallarza et al. (2002) developed a comprehensive theoretical framework defining image in terms of its four features: complex (it is not unequivocal), multiple (in elements and processes), relativistic (subjective and generally comparative), and dynamic (varying with time and space). ‘Complexity’ underlines an analytical dimension; ‘multiplicity’ provides an action dimension; ‘relativistic’ nature translates destination image as a strategic tool; and ‘dynamic’ allows for tactical decisions based on destination image.

Destination image is complex because there are debates around its nature (collective image or uni-personal impression) and its content (components that make up the image and ways these components interact). Destination image is multiple due to its formation process (both static and dynamic) and its multidimensionality (attribute-based and/or holistic). Destination image is relativistic because it is simultaneously subjective (varies across people) and comparative (involves comparisons among various objects/destinations). Lastly, destination image is not static, but changes depend on time and space.

Components of Destination Image

Researchers generally concur that destination image represents a global impression; however, they have different opinions on the components that make up the global impression. Crompton (1979) considered destination image consists only of cognitive component. Perceptual/cognitive evaluations refer to an individual’s knowledge and beliefs about an object (an evaluation of the perceived attributes of an object). Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) described that consumers develop an overall image based on evaluations of various product/service attributes. Gartner (1986) stated that tourists’ perceptions of various destination attributes will interact to form a composite/overall image. Keown, Jacobs and Worthley (1984) empirically examined the relationship between cognitive attributes and overall image, and concluded that overall impression is dependent on individual attributes.

The most recent studies (e. g., Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary 1999a, 1999b; Walmsley and Young, 1998) tend to consider image as being formed by two closely related components: perceptive/cognitive evaluations and affective appraisals. Affective evaluations correspond to an individual's feelings towards an object. There is a general agreement that the cognitive component is an antecedent of the affective component, i. e., tourists form their feelings as a function of beliefs and opinions. In addition, the combination of these two components forms an overall or composite image of a product/brand. Baloglu and McCleary (1999a, 1999b) and Stern and Krakover (1993) showed empirically that perceptual/cognitive evaluations influence the overall image directly as well as indirectly through affective evaluations.

Still other researchers (Gartner, 1996; Dann, 1996) suggested that destination image is made up of three distinct but hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, evaluative and conative. Derived from fact, the cognitive component is viewed as the sum of beliefs and attitudes of an object leading to some internally accepted picture of its attributes (external forces, pull attributes). The affective component of image is related to motives in the sense that it is how a person feels about the object under consideration (internal forces, push attributes). It is believed that people travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal forces and pulled by external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton, 1979a; Dann, 1977). After processing external and internal stimuli of a destination, a decision is made whether or not to travel to the area. This act is the conative component, which is the action component of image, equivalent to behavior. The three components together form the travel decision process.

Attributes of Destination Image

Milman and Pizam (1995) suggested three components that constitute destination image within the cognitive context: the product (attractions), the hosts' behavior and attitude, and the environment (e. g., weather, facilities, etc.). Echner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) identified the existence of three axes along the cognitive line of destination image: the functional/psychological, the common/unique, and the holistic/attribute-based. Along the functional/psychological continuum, functional images are directly observable or measurable, while psychological images are less tangible and more difficult to observe or measure. In terms of the common-unique line, destination images can range from those perceptions based on "common" characteristics to those based on unique features or auras. In addition, destination image should be composed of perceptions of individual attributes (such as climate, accommodation facilities, and friendliness of the people, etc.) as well as more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place.

An analysis of related professional and academic papers (e. g., Baloglu and McCleary 1999a, 1999b; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner and Shen, 1992) reveals a lack of homogeneity with respect to the attributes that constitute destination image. The selection of the attributes used in a study is largely based on the attractions of each destination under study, and on the objectives of the study. Gallarza et al. (2002) selected 25 empirical destination studies that measured attribute-based image, reviewing all the attributes used in these studies and organizing the most common ones into a functional/psychological axis. They found that 'residents' receptiveness' and 'landscape and/or surroundings' were the most mentioned attributes in previous image research; and there was a balance between functional and psychological attributes being studied (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Most Commonly Used Attributes in Destination Studies

		Crompton (1979)	Goodrich (1982)	Sternquist (1985)	Haahti (1986)	Gartner and Hunt (1987)	Calantone et al. (1989)	Gartner (1989)	Embacher and Buttle (1989)	Guthrie and Gale (1991)	Ahmed (1991)	Chon (1991)	Fakeye and Crompton (1991)	Crompton et al. (1992)	Carmichael (1992)	Chon (1992)	Echtner and Ritchie (1993)	Driscoll et al. (1994)	Dadgostar and Isotalo (1995)	Muller (1995)	Eizaguirre and Laka (1996)	Schroeder (1996)	Ahmed (1996)	Oppermann (1996 a and b)	Baloglu (1997)	Baloglu and McCleary (1999)	**total**
Functional	various activities						x		x	x			x	x	x	x		x									8
	landscape, surroundings		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	19
	nature				x	x		x			x	x	x	x			x		x			x	x		x		12
	cultural attractions		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	19
	nightlife and entertainment			x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	17
	shopping facilities		x	x			x					x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		15
	information available									x			x				x										3
	sport facilities		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x			x	x		x			x	x		x	x	16
	transportation	x					x					x	x				x				x			x	x		8
	accommodation		x	x		x				x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	15
	gastronomy		x	x					x	x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	15
	price, value, cost	x			x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x		x		x		x	x	x	16
	climate	x				x			x		x		x	x			x	x		x	x			x		x	12
	relaxation vs. massific	x	x	x	x		x			x			x			x	x		x	x		x					12
	accessibility				x				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x						12
	safety		x				x					x					x	x		x	x			x	x	x	10
	social interaction								x	x				x			x	x	x			x					7
	resident's receptiveness		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	21
	originality	x			x							x		x			x	x							x		7
Psychological	service quality									x						x	x							x			4

Source: Gallarza, Gil Saura and Calderón Garcia (2002: 63)

Following an exhaustive review of the existing literature, Beerli and Martin (2004) classified all attributes influencing image assessments into nine dimensions: 1) natural resources; 2) tourist leisure and recreation; 3) natural environment; 4) general infrastructure; 5) culture, history, and art; 6) social environment; 7) tourist infrastructure; 8) political and economic factors; and 9) atmosphere of the place (see Table 2).

Table 2 Dimensions and Attributes of Destination Image

Natural Resources	**Tourist Infrastructure**
weather	accommodation
temperature	number of beds
rainfall	categories
humidity	quality
hours of sunshine	restaurants
beaches	number
quality of seawater	categories
sandy/rocky beaches	quality
length of beaches	bars, discos and clubs
overcrowding of beaches	hotels and self-catering
wealth of countryside	ease of access
protected natural reserves	excursions at destination
lakes, mountains, deserts, etc.	tourist centers
variety and uniqueness of floral and fauna	network of tourist information
General Infrastructure	**Culture, History, and Art**
development and quality of roads	festival, concerts, etc.
airports and ports	handicraft
private and public transport facilities	gastronomy
development of health services	folklore
development of telecommunications	religion
development of commercial infrastructure	museums, historical buildings, monuments, etc.
extent of building development	customs and ways of life
Atmosphere	**Natural Environment**
luxurious	beauty of the scenery
fashionable	attractiveness
good reputation	cleanliness
family-oriented	overcrowding
exotic	air and noise pollution
mystic	traffic congestion
relaxing	**Social Environment**
stressful	quality of life
fun, enjoyable	underprivileged and poverty
pleasant	language barriers
boring	hospitality and friendliness of the local residents

attractive or interesting	**Leisure and Recreation**
	golf, fishing, hunting, skiing
Political and Economic Factors	entertainment and sports activities
political stability	scuba diving, etc.
political tendencies	trekking
terrorist attacks	adventure activities
safety	theme parks
crime rate	water parks
economic development	zoos
prices	casinos
	nightlife
	shopping

Source: Beerli and Martin (2004: 659)

Factors Influencing Destination Image

Previous literature (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Beerli and Martin, 2004) revealed two key forces that influence image formation: stimulus factors (information sources, previous experience, and distribution), and personal factors (psychological and social).

Stimulus Factors

Information sources are the main stimulus factors that have an effect on the forming of cognitive perceptions and evaluations. Um and Crompton (1990) believed that individuals form perceptual/cognitive evaluation of destination attributes after being exposed to various information sources, including symbolic stimuli (promotional efforts through media), social stimuli (WOM and recommendations), and information acquired from previous visitation. Various authors (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and Lysonsky, 1989) have also established that information sources are one of the determinants of tourists' destination choice behavior.

Gartner (1993) classified the different information sources (which he termed 'image forming agents') on a continuum: (a) overt induced information - conventional advertising in the mass media; (b) covert induced information - using celebrities in the promotion activities; (c) autonomous information, including mass-media broadcasting news, documentaries, films, television programs, etc.; (d) organic information -- WOM recommendations from friends and relatives; and (e) a visit to the destination, the end point of the continuum of the image forming process.

The primary image is formed through personal experience or by actually visiting the destination. Some authors (Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Pearce, 1982 and Phelps, 1986) suggested that the destination image formed by an actual visit tends to be more realistic and complex, and it is different from the one formed through secondary sources of information. The image formed by organic, induced, and autonomous sources of information is called secondary image (Phelps, 1986). According to Beerli and Martin (2004), the secondary sources of information play a relevant and essential role in forming cognitive dimension of image. Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) indicated that the variety/amount and type of information sources influence cognitive evaluation of image.

Personal Factors

An individual's personal characteristics, or internal factors, also affect the formation of an image (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Gartner, 1993). Personal factors include the demographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, place of residence, etc.) as well as the psychological characteristics (motivations, values, personality, etc.).

It is widely agreed that motivation influences the image forming and destination choice process because it is the impelling and compelling force behind all actions (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Stabler, 1995; Um and Crompton, 1990). Motivation is "social-psychological forces that predispose an individual to opt for and participate in a tourist activity" (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a: 875). Several authors (Baloglu, 1997; Dann, 1996; Gartner, 1993) suggested that motivation is related to the affective component of image. Since the affective dimension influences the overall image, motivation may in turn directly or indirectly influence the overall image.

Most image formation and destination selection models (Stabler, 1990; Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and Lysonsky, 1989) show that personal characteristics influence the cognitive perceptions of destinations. A number of empirical studies (e. g., Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Calantone, Di Benetton, Hakam and Bojanic, 1989; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993) have been conducted to explore relationship between the perceived image and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and country of origin. Such studies have revealed mixed results: some studies found differences in the perceived image depending on all demographic variables; while others found such differences only in the cases of age and education.

Destination Image, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

It has been widely acknowledged that destination image affects tourists' subjective perception, consequent behavior and destination choice (e. g., Chon 1990, 1992; Esther and Ritchie, 1991; Stabler, 1988; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Milman and Pizan, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Woodside and Lysonsky, 1989). Tourists' behavior is expected to be partly conditioned by the image that they have of destinations. Image will influence tourists in the process of choosing a destination, the subsequent evaluation of the trip and in their future intentions.

The influence of image on destination choice process has been studied by various authors (e. g., Crompton and Ankomah, 1993; Gartner, 1989; Goodall, 1988; Stabler, 1990). It is believed that destinations with more positive images will more likely be included in the process of decision making. In addition, destination image exercises a positive influence on perceived quality and satisfaction. More favorable image will lead to higher tourist satisfaction. In turn, the evaluation of the destination experience will influence the image and modify it (Chon, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Ross, 1993). Lastly, destination image also affects the behavior intentions of tourists. For example, Court and Lupton (1997) found that the image of the destination under study positively affects visitors' intention to revisit in the future.

Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (1996) established the following sequence: image → quality → satisfaction → post-purchase behavior. In this model, image would affect how customers perceive quality - a more positive image corresponds to a higher perceived quality. Perceived quality will in turn determine the satisfaction of consumers (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, and Bryant, 1996; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000), because satisfaction is the result of customers' assessment of the perceived quality. The link between satisfaction and post-purchase behavior has been well established by prior literature (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Cronin, Brady and Hunt, 2000; Taylor and Baker, 1994; Juaneda 1996; Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Bramwell, 1998).

To test the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: *Destination image positively influence tourists' overall satisfaction.*

H2: *Destination image positively influence tourists' attribute satisfaction.*

H_3: *Attribute satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction.*

Satisfaction

The last two decades have seen a dramatic increase in consumer satisfaction research (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Companies are using customer satisfaction data to determine service/product quality and increase customer retention. Many empirical studies have documented that customer satisfaction culminates in higher customer loyalty, positive WOM recommendations, increased market share and profitability (e. g., Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987; Rust and Zahorik 1993). Therefore, consumer satisfaction is essential to corporate survival due to its substantial bottom-line financial implications as well as quality and service considerations.

Definition

Satisfaction is a complex construct that has received broad attention in the marketing literature. After thoroughly reviewing the existing literature, Giese and Cote (2000) found a lack of consensual definition of satisfaction among researchers. Some definitional inconsistencies include: 1) debate over whether satisfaction is a process or an outcome; 2) disagreement over whether satisfaction is a cognitive or affective response; 3) discrepancy over the use of designated terms for the concept: 'consumer satisfaction', 'customer satisfaction' or simply 'satisfaction'? They did identify three general components shared by the definitions in the literature: (1) consumer satisfaction is some type of response, an emotional, cognitive and/or conative judgment; (2) the response is based on an evaluation of a specific focus (expectations, product, consumption experience, etc.); (3) the response occurs at a particular time (prior to purchase, after purchase, after consumption, after extended experience, etc). Giese and Cote (2000) further proposed a framework for developing context-specific definitions of consumer satisfaction, incorporating the following essential dimensions: 1) satisfaction is a summary affective response that varies in intensity; 2) satisfaction has a time-specific point of determination and limited duration; 3) satisfaction is directed towards focal aspects of product acquisition and/or consumption. See Table 3 for some of the definitions existing in consumer satisfaction literature.

Table 3 Conceptual and Operational Definitions of 'Satisfaction'

Source	Conceptual Definition
Howard and Sheth (1969)	The buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone (p. 145)
Hunt (1977)	A kind of stepping away from an experience and evaluating it…the evaluation rendered that the experience was at least as good as it was supposed to be (p. 459)
Westbrook (1980)	Refers to the favorability of the individual's subjective evaluation of the various Outcomes and experiences associated with using or consuming the product (p. 49)
Swan, Trawick, and Carrol (1980)	A conscious evaluation or cognitive judgment that the product has performed relatively well or poorly or that the product was suitable or unsuitable for its use/purpose. Another dimension of satisfaction involves affect of feelings toward the product (p. 17).
Oliver (1981)	An evaluation of the surprise inherent in a product acquisition and/or consumption experience. In essence, the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience (p. 27).
Churchill and Surprenant (1982)	Conceptually, an outcome of purchase and use resulting from the buyer's comparison of the rewards and costs of the purchase relative to anticipated consequences. Operationally similar to attitude in that it can be assessed as a summation of satisfactions with various attributes (p. 493).
Westbrook and Reilly (1983)	An emotional response to the experiences provided by and associated with particular products or services purchased, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behavior such as shopping and buyer behavior, as well as the overall marketplace (p. 256). An emotional response triggered by a cognitive evaluative process in which the perceptions of (or beliefs about) an object, action, or condition are compared to one's values (or needs, wants, desires) (p. 493)
LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983)	Post-purchase evaluation. Cited Oliver's (1981) definition: an evaluation of the surprise inherent in a product acquisition and / or consumption experience (p. 394).
Day (1984)	The evaluative response to the current consumption event…the consumer's response in a particular consumption experience to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or some other norm of performance) and the actual performance of the product perceived after its acquisition (p. 496).
Westbrook (1987)	Global evaluative judgment about product usage/consumption (p. 260). Also cited Hunt (1977).
Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins (1987)	Conceptualized as a feeling developed from an evaluation of the use experience (p. 305)

Tse and Wilton (1988)	The consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or some norm of performance) and the actual performance of the products as perceived after its consumption (p. 204).
Westbrook and Oliver (1991)	A post-choice evaluative judgment concerning a specific purchase selection (p.84)
Oliver (1992)	A summary attribute phenomenon coexisting with other consumption emotions (p. 242).
Fornell (1992)	An overall post-purchase evaluation (p. 11).
Mano and Oliver (1993)	An attitude - like post-consumption evaluative judgment (Hunt 1977) varying along the hedonic continuum (Oliver 1989; Westbrook and Oliver 1991) (p. 454)
Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt (1994)	A transaction-specific affective response resulting from the customer's comparison of product performance to some pre-purchase standard (e. g., Hunt 1977; Oliver 1989) (p. 122)
Oliver (1997)	The consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment (p. 13).

Source: adapted from Giese and Cote: 2000, p. 5 – 8.

Antecedents of Satisfaction

Given the vital role of customer satisfaction, one should not be surprised that a great deal of research has been devoted to investigating the process by which customers form judgments about a service/product. Numerous theoretical structures have been proposed to examine the antecedents of satisfaction. In reviewing the general antecedents, outcomes, and potential moderators of customer satisfaction, Szymanski and Henard (2001) documented that previous satisfaction research has focused predominantly on the following antecedents to consumer satisfaction: expectations, disconfirmation of expectations, performance, affect, and equity. Customer satisfaction / dissatisfaction (CS/D) appears to be influenced independently or in combination by these antecedents. After conducting a meta-analysis of the mixed findings from 50 empirical studies on satisfaction, they found that 1) on average, equity and disconfirmation are most strongly related to customer satisfaction; and 2) measurement and method factors that characterize the research often moderate relationship strength between satisfaction and its antecedents and outcomes.

<u>Comparison Standards in Satisfaction Formation</u>

The pre-purchase comparison standard(s) is one of the primary drivers of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D). Consumers use comparison standards as referents to evaluate product/service performance and form disconfirmation and satisfaction judgments. Halstead (1999) reviewed the conceptualization, measurement, and empirical findings regarding the use of comparison standards in consumer satisfaction research, and identified four types of standards that have been proposed and empirically tested by prior researchers: 1) expectations; 2) experienced-based norms; 3) desires/ideals; and 4) equity.

Expectations

Expectations, defined by Oliver (1980) as predictive beliefs about a product's attribute and/or performance, has played two roles in satisfaction formation, one as direct antecedents (e. g., LaTour and Peat, 1979; Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988), one as comparative referents (e. g., Oliver 1980; Bearden and Teel 1983; LaBarbera and Mazursky 1983). Expectations are considered to have a direct influence on satisfaction levels, without any assessment of or comparison to actual performance. Expectations are aligned with the performance levels, and satisfaction is assessed based on these expectations (Oliver 1981, 1993). Consumers will assimilate satisfaction levels to expectation levels, resulting in satisfaction being high/low when expectations are high/low (Oliver, 1997).

The pioneering studies of Cardozo (1964), Miller (1977) and Anderson (1973) used the so-called expectancy disconfirmation paradigm of satisfaction, which was further developed by Oliver (1980) and became the most dominating model for early satisfaction research (e. g., Bearden and Teel 1983; LaBarbera and Mazursky 1983). Expectations are formed prior to purchase, and actual performance is then assessed with reference to expectations. The consumer will feel satisfied whenever the performance exceeds the expectations, i. e., positive disconfirmation; whereas they will be dissatisfied if the performance is worse than expectations, i. e., negative disconfirmation.

The satisfaction literature suggests consumer satisfaction may be based on different types of expectations. Miller (1977) identified four types of expectations: 1) the ideal (what can be); 2) the expected (what will be); 3) the minimum tolerable (what must be); and 4) the deserved (what should be). Day (1977) distinguished among expectations about the nature of the product or service, expectations about the costs and efforts in obtaining benefits, and expectations of social benefits or costs. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) developed separate models for service expectations: 1) the predicted (what customers believe is likely to occur); 2) the desired (what customers hope to receive); and 3) the adequate (what customers will accept).

Despite its popularity, the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm has received considerable theoretical and operational criticisms. Similar to that of SERVQUAL's operationalization of service quality, the criticisms of expectancy-disconfirmation model mainly focus on the appropriateness of the expectation scores and the gap approach. As for the use of expectations, for example, Carman (1990) distinguished between the expectations that derive from frequently used services and those which are used infrequently. Average clients are able to create useful and reliable expectations of the frequently used services; whereas the expectations generated from intermittently used services are not very reliable and cannot be very useful in any case. Other concerns include that expectations may be contaminated or modified as consumers receive more information or gain more experience with the product/service (Danaher and Mattsson, 1994; Iacobucci, Grayson, and Ostrom, 1994). As for the use of difference-score measure, previous research (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Brown et al., 1993) has identified a whole set of limitations and problems with regards to the validity and reliability of the gap approach.

Experience-based Norms

Recent research has called for a re-examination of the traditional expectations model, arguing for the use of alternative comparison standards. Woodruff, Cadotte, and Jenkins (1983) proposed a model that used experience-based norms as the consumer's standard of comparison. The authors believed that a consumer's prior experiences with an evoked set of brands are important determinants of the satisfaction process. They developed norms that are brand-based and product-based: the former refers to the typical performance of a particular brand, and the latter refers to an average performance of a group of similar brands (Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins, 1987). They found that models employing experience-based norms were better than those incorporating expectations at explaining variances in satisfaction.

Desires/ideals

Spreng and Olshavsky (1993) empirically tested an alternative comparison standard using consumer desires, and found that desires-congruency had a significant impact on satisfaction, but expectancy-disconfirmation did not. They define desires are the attributes and benefits that consumers believe will lead to higher-level values that comprise their life goals and guide their behaviors. Tse and Wilton (1988) empirically investigated different effects of multiple comparison standards (expectation-, ideal-, and equity-based) on satisfaction. The conceptualizations of their “ideal” standards (following Miller's notion of ideal expectations) are closely aligned with Spreng and Olshavsky’s (1993) idea of desires. Their results also suggested that a desired or ideal standard exerted significant influence on satisfaction.

Equity

Equity theory was proposed by some researchers as a potential comparison standard (e. g., Tse and Wilton 1988; Oliver and Swan 1989; Woodruff et al. 1991). Equity is a fair, right, or deserving judgment that consumers make in reference to what others receive (Oliver, 1997). Equity represents a normative standard based on implicit relationships between inputs (cost/investment) and outcome (anticipated rewards). Consumers are satisfied when their equity ratio of outcomes to inputs is proportionately greater than that of the referent person or group.

However, Oliver (1997) argued that equity is a process of comparison rather than a comparison standard, similar in some ways to the disconfirmation process. Although it influences satisfaction outcomes, it is not a comparison standard itself. The actual standards used in equity comparisons vary based on the individual customer. Furthermore, unlike the other three comparison standards, equity has not always been a consistently significant predictor of satisfaction (e. g., Tse and Wilton 1988). Oliver (1997) suggested that equity appears to be more influential predictor of satisfaction in interpersonal service situations (especially health care), rather than in traditional product or non-interpersonal service contexts.

Disconfirmation in Satisfaction Formation

In the satisfaction research literature, disconfirmation plays a central role in satisfaction decision. Disconfirmation derives from discrepancies between product performance and some comparison standards. It is assumed that the magnitude of the disconfirmation effect precedes satisfaction judgment. Oliver (1980) stressed that it is important to separately measure disconfirmation and the comparison standard, because the two constructs have independent, additive effects on satisfaction.

Disconfirmation has been measured as the result of subtractive functions or the subjective evaluation (Prakash and Lounsbury, 1983). The subtractive/inferred disconfirmation approach (e. g., LaTour and Peat 1979) uses the algebraic difference between performance outcome and a comparison standard. This approach requires two separate data sets corresponding to performance and comparison standard; then by computing the discrepancy between the two data sets a third variable is formed – the disconfirmation/difference score, which is used for the subsequent analysis. However, this approach induces over-specification of the CS/D model when satisfaction is modeled as the direct effects of performance (P), a comparison standard (C) and disconfirmation (P – C) simultaneously.

As an alternative approach, subjective/direct disconfirmation (e. g., Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver 1980; Tse and Wilton, 1988) uses a "better than expected – worse than expected" scale to capture the consumer's summary judgment of the discrepancy between product performance and the comparison standard. By directly measuring the disconfirmation as a distinct evaluative construct, this approach has the advantage of avoiding the confounding problem experienced by the subtractive disconfirmation approach. Previous research also showed that subjective disconfirmation has superior correlation with satisfaction (e. g., Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver 1980; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Bearden and Teel, 1983).

Oliver (1980) draws an important distinction between the two approaches. He suggests that subtractive disconfirmation may lead to an immediate satisfaction judgment, whereas subjective disconfirmation represents an intervening "distinct cognitive state resulting from the comparison process and preceding a satisfaction judgment" (p. 460).

Perceived Performance in Satisfaction Formation

Notwithstanding broad agreement about the disconfirmation model, some studies suggested that perceived performance may be crucial determinant of satisfaction evaluation. Perceived performance is defined as beliefs regarding the product attributes, levels of attributes, or outcomes (Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins, 1987). Perceived performance has generally served in the disconfirmation model as only the referent against which expectations are compared. However, there are a few studies including perceived performance in the model as a direct antecedent of satisfaction, finding a strong direct relationship between perceived performance and satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994; Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Churchill and Surprenant 1982; Tse and Wilton 1988; Oliver and Desarbo, 1988).

Erevelles and Leavitt (1992) argued that when a service/product performs well, consumers will be satisfied irrespective of any confirmation-disconfirmation effect. Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt (1994) suggested that when customer expectations have become well established, such as in the case of continuously provided services, the confirmation-disconfirmation process will not operate unless the service/product clearly underperformed. Meyer and Westerbarkey (1996) considered perceive performance to be more straightforward, convenient, and typical of the human cognitive process. In the context of tourism, Botterill's longitudinal study (1987) found that in view of the unpredictability of tourism events, highly satisfied tourists often do not have prediction/expectation of a vacation. Rather satisfaction is achieved by successful adaptation of tourists to unpredictable events.

Churchill and Surprenant (1982) demonstrated that for the durable goods, performance appears to impact CS/D directly rather than through disconfirmation. Tse and Wilton (1988) provided strong theoretical and empirical support for the superiority of a perceived performance model in which consumer satisfaction is a function of the actual performance, regardless of consumers' expectations. Oliver and Desarbo (1988) showed that a significant direct performance effect can operate together with the disconfirmation effect. Bolton and Drew (1991) also confirmed that performance impacts CS/D directly through consumer observation of product performance, and indirectly as an input to the disconfirmation comparison.

Crompton and Love (1995) empirically proved that the performance-only measure has higher reliability and validity than other approaches such as expectancy-disconfirmation. Prakash (1984) also demonstrated that the performance-only approach best predicts both overall satisfaction and future behavior. Whipple and Thach's study (1988) revealed that performance is a better indicator of future intentions than either disconfirmations or expectations.

Nonetheless, other satisfaction researchers disagree that the performance-only approach is a fruitful theoretical approach. Oliver (1989, p. 2) states, "It says little about the specific thought processes triggered by the product features. In particular, it fails to identify the mechanism by which performance is converted into a psychological reaction by the consumer."

Affect in Satisfaction Formation

It has been proposed that affect is a component of satisfaction apart from cognition (e. g., Mano and Oliver 1993; Westbrook 1987; Westbrook and Oliver 1991). These researchers identified affect as two-dimensional (positive – negative affects) and found that overall affect has a significant impact on satisfaction levels in addition to expectancy-disconfirmation effects. It is believed that emotions elicited during consumption will leave affective traces in memory, and these traces will be accessed and integrated into consumers' satisfaction assessments (Westbrook and Oliver 1991). Affect is positively related to satisfaction assessments. Affect is also proposed to have an influence on consumer behavior (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer, 1999; Liljander and Strandvik, 1997). Specifically, positive affects lead to consumers' decision to stay or continue involvement, and/or share positive experience with others; whereas negative affects will result in consumers' decisions to leave or discontinue involvement, and/or complaining behavior.

Attribute Satisfaction in Satisfaction Formation

Most early research work focused on satisfaction at the global level (e. g., Oliver 1980). Until recently, there emerges an attribute-level conceptualization of the antecedents of satisfaction (e. g., Oliver 1993). Overall satisfaction is "an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time" (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann, 1994. p. 54); while attribute satisfaction is "the consumer's subjective satisfaction judgment resulting from observations of attribute performance" (Oliver, 1993, p. 421). Under an attribute-level approach, overall satisfaction is a function of attribute-level evaluations (LaTour and Peat 1979). These evaluations typically capture a significant amount of variation in overall satisfaction (e. g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Oliver 1993).

Overall Satisfaction and Attribute Satisfaction

It is important to distinguish overall satisfaction from satisfaction with individual attributes, because attribute-specific satisfaction is not the only antecedent of overall satisfaction (Spreng, ManKenzie, and Olshavsky, 1996). Overall satisfaction is a much broader concept based on holistic evaluation after purchase (Fornell, 1992; Gnoth, 1994), not just on the sum of the individual assessments of each attribute. Thus, Oliver (1993) argues that overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are distinct, though related, constructs. Both Oliver (1993) and Spreng et al.'s (1996) empirical study suggested that attribute satisfaction had significant, positive and direct effects on overall satisfaction.

The multi-attribute model has two main advantages. First, consumers are more likely to use attributes than the overall product for making post-purchase evaluations (Gardial et al., 1994). Second, an attribute level analysis provides higher diagnostic value because specific questions can be asked about each attribute for determining if certain attributes are more critical in predicting overall satisfaction than others. Due to its higher specificity and actionability, managers have long been using multi-attribute model for making resource allocation decisions (Griffin and Hauser 1993).

Pizam and Ellis (1999) proposed that different consumer choice behavior models determine how attribute satisfaction leads to overall satisfaction. In non-weighted compensatory models, all attributes are assumed to be of equal weights. Customers make trade-offs of one attribute for another to make a decision or become satisfied, i. e., a weakness in one attribute is compensated by strength in another. In weighted compensatory models, customers also make trade-offs of attributes, but different attributes have different importance weights.

Non-compensatory models do not make trade-offs of attributes. In conjunctive non-compensatory models, consumers establish a minimum acceptable level for each attribute and make a choice or become satisfied only if each attribute equals or exceeds the established level. In disjunctive models, however, consumers establish such levels only on one or a few attributes (Lewis and Chambers, 1989). Research conducted in tourism and hospitality enterprises (Mazursky, 1989; Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988) supports the disjunctive models.

Components of Satisfaction

There is no consensus among researchers as to the classification of the elements/attributes of satisfaction. Czepiel, Soloman, Suprenant and Gutman (1985) suggest that satisfaction with a service is a function of satisfaction with two independent elements: the functional element and the service element. Reuland, Coudrey, and Fagel (1985) propose that hospitality services consist of a harmonious mixture of three elements: the material product in a narrow sense, the behavior and attitude of the employees, and the environment. Davis and Stone (1985) classify the service encounter into two elements: direct and indirect services. Lovelock (1985) also divides the service attributes into two groups: core and secondary.

Similarly, Lewis (1987) categorizes the service encounter attributes in two groups: essential and subsidiary. The essential attributes are identical to functional (Czepiel et al., 1985), product (Reuland et al., 1985), direct (Davis and Stone's, 1985), and core attributes (Lovelock, 1985). On the other hand, Lewis's subsidiary attributes are more inclusive than Czepiel et al.'s service, Davis and Stone's indirect, Lovelock's secondary attributes. The subsidiary attributes (Lewis, 1987) incorporate both the employee behavior/attitude and environment elements in Reuland et al.'s model (1985).

Chase and Hayes (1991) note that customers assume core service as an obligation for service providers. The service providers, who fail to offer customers adequate core service, are perceived as delivering inferior service and make customers dissatisfied. On the other hand, supplementary service is perceived as a plus to service quality. The lack of supplementary service may not lead to customer dissatisfaction but the presence of it results in customer satisfaction (Chase and Hayes, 1991).

Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) grouped the service attributes into four categories: satisfiers, dissatisfiers, critical and neutral. Satisfiers will secure compliments and satisfaction for good performance, but poor performance or the lack-of of them will not cause dissatisfaction or complaints. Dissatisfiers are those attributes that are more likely to earn complaints for low performance; however, an outstanding performance of these attributes will not solicit compliments and satisfaction. Critical attributes deserve special attention because they will acquire both complaints (dissatisfactions) and compliments (satisfactions), depending on the situation. Neutral attributes neither receive many compliments nor complaints, which may indicate that they are either not salient to customers or they are easily satisfied.

Other researchers argued that the service encounter attributes are situation-specific and thus cannot be classified into universal elements. For example, Fiebelkorn (1985) conducted a study at Citibank and found that overall satisfaction with Citibank is based on satisfaction with the last encounter with the bank.

Consumer Satisfaction in Travel and Tourism

In travel and tourism, as in many other service industries, the emergence, survival, development, and failure of ventures depend heavily on customer satisfaction. A review of literature in travel and recreation reveals an abundance of studies on consumer satisfaction.

<u>Definition</u>

Pizam and Ellis (1999) reviewed and discussed the topic of customer satisfaction and its application to the hospitality and tourism industries. The definitions, dimensions, and attributes of satisfaction were thoroughly discussed. Customer satisfaction is defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO: 1985) as a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service.

<u>Previous Studies of Tourism Satisfaction</u>

Many researchers have dealt with different aspects of consumer satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism industry, such as satisfaction with specific destinations (e. g., Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel 1978; Chon and Olsen 1991; Pizam and Millman, 1993; Danaher and Arweiler 1996; Qu and Li, 1997; Tribe and Snaith, 1998; Kozak and

Rimmington, 2000), specific tours (Hughes 1991; Ross and Iso-Ahola 1991; Hsieh, O'Leary, and Morrison 1994; Whipple and Thach, 1988; Hsu, 2000), tour guides (Reisinger and Waryszak, 1995), travel agencies (LeBlanc 1992; Millan and Esteban 2003), the behavior of local people (Pearce, 1980), hotels (e. g., Saleh and Ryan 1992; Ekinci and Riley 1998), restaurants (e. g., Dube, Renaghan, and Miller, 1994; Oh and Jeong, 1996), casinos (Mayer, Johnson, Hu and Chen, 1998), cruise line (Qu and Yee, 1999; Teye and Leclere, 1998), and time share (Lawton, Weaver, and Faulkner, 1998).

Different Satisfaction Measurements

Different approaches have also been applied to investigating CS/D within hospitality and tourism, such as expectation-perception gap model (Duke and Persia 1996), expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Pizam and Milman 1993), congruity model (Chon and Olsen 1991), and performance-only model (Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel 1978). Yuksel and Rimmington (1998) conducted an empirical study to examine the relative validity and reliability of six alternative measurements of customer satisfaction: 1) performance only, 2) performance weighted by importance, 3) importance minus performance, 4) subjective/direct disconfirmation, 5) subjective disconfirmation weighted by importance, and 6) subtractive/inferred disconfirmation. They concluded that performance-only model is superior to the other five alternatives in predicting customer satisfaction. Several concerns were raised regarding the classic expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm: 1) customers' tendency to consistently rate expectations higher than performance; 2) customers have fuzzy or even no expectations due to lack of experiences; 3) customer expectations are contaminated by experiences; 4) the use of difference scores results in misleading interpretations from simple arithmetic; and 5) the diagnostic ability of the direct disconfirmation scale is also questionable.

In addition, Yuksel and Rimmington (1998) found that inclusion of importance scores for weighting purpose does not make substantial improvement on the predictive power of the models; however, they pointed out that the action grid plotted with importance and performance scores has the advantage of being easily interpreTable and provides valuable information for managers striving to allocate limited resources.

Attribute Satisfaction in Tourism

Unlike material products or pure services, hospitality experience is a mixture of products and services. Therefore overall satisfaction with a hospitality experience is a function of satisfactions with the individual elements or attributes of all the products/services that make up the experience (Pizam and Ellis, 1999). Similarly, due to the multi-sector nature of tourism and the inter-dependence of the various sectors, researchers in tourism and recreation have recognized that overall satisfaction may be a multidimensional, multi-attribute concept comprising multiple sources of satisfaction (e. g., Vaske, Fedler, and Graefe, 1986; Danaher and Arweiler, 1996; Mayer et al., 1998; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Hsu, 2003). It is imperative to identify and measure satisfaction with individual component of the destination because tourists' satisfaction with the components leads to their satisfaction with the overall destination (Pizam et al. 1978).

Dimensions of Tourist Satisfaction

The quality of tourism products/services provided in a tourist destination has major influence in overall tourist satisfaction. Keane (1997) stated that tourism destinations can build high levels of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by selling premium service quality. In highly competitive environment, the reputation of a tourism destination largely depends on its perceived service quality. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, 1988, and 1991) identified five generic dimensions of service quality that must be present during the service delivery in order to generate customer satisfaction: 1) reliability -- the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately; 2) responsiveness -- the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; 3) assurance -- the knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence; 4) empathy -- the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers, and 5) tangibles -- the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.

In addition, it should be noted that overall tourist satisfaction is also affected by price and perceived value of the products and/or service. As a consequence, both price and quality are used in tandem to indicate the value of the service to the customer, where the tradeoff is between product/service quality and price (Chen, Gupta, and Rom, 1994). Keane (1997) held that since price must exceed cost in order to prevent quality deterioration, high prices may be interpreted as signals of premium quality. However, high quality does not mean maximizing profits but minimizing the likelihood of quality deterioration (Keane, 1997). Ostrowski, O'Brien, and Gordon (1993) pointed out that the higher the quality offered for the price paid, the higher will be the value as perceived by customers. They argued that competition based on pricing will only lead to temporary share gains and will do little to build and maintain customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Ostrowski et al., 1993). For a tourist destination to be competitive, not only should the tourism services/products be perceived as of a quality similar to and/or better than those of other similar destinations; but the price should also be perceived as being competitive and commensurate to the perceived value of the products/services (Stevens, 1992).

Laws (1995) stated that visitors distinguish tourist destinations from one another by identifying the variety, quality and range of activities and amenities each destination provides. Weiermair and Fuchs (1999) adopted a multi-attribute model in deciphering tourist satisfaction. They measured a range of quality dimensions such as aesthetics/appearance, security/safety, service orientation, variety/fun, and accessibility of service, in several domains of tourism activities including food and accommodation, attractions, activities, shopping, and transportation.

Previous Tourism Studies of Attribute Satisfaction

Lounsbury and Hoopes' (1985) empirical data supported that overall vacation satisfaction is a function of satisfaction with specific aspects, such as accommodation, weather, and amount of money spent, etc. Weiermair and Fuchs' study (1999) confirmed a positive linear relationship between tourists' overall satisfaction and satisfaction with each domain/dimension of Alpine ski resorts. Kozak and Rimmington (2000) demonstrated that overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of evaluating positive and negative experiences with various components of a destination. An investigation of each attribute's impact on overall satisfaction and/or future intentions helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of a destination at individual levels. Therefore, it was postulated that:

H_4: Attribute satisfaction positively influenced overall satisfaction.

Consumer Loyalty

Consumer loyalty has been considered a significant asset to an organization. Many previous loyalty studies indicated that higher customer loyalty often results in higher profitability and more stable customer basis. Loyal customers not only represent a stable source of revenue, but also act as free word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising channels that informally link networks of friends, relatives and other potential consumers to a product/service (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999). Up to 60% of sales to new customers could be attributed to WOM referrals (Reicheld and Sasser, 1990). Furthermore, it has been argued that it was five to seven times more expensive to attract new customers than to retain old ones (Rosenberg and Czepiai, 1984; Richard and Larry, 1996; Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987), and a 5% increase in customer retention rate would yield a 25 – 95% profit growth over 14 industries (Reichheld, 1996). Therefore, loyalty has been considered as one of the major driving forces in the competitive market (Dimanche and Havitz, 1994).

Definition

Consumer loyalty has generally been defined in behavioral terms as repeat purchasing frequency or relative volume of same-brand purchasing (e. g., Tellis 1988). Newman and Werbel (1973) defined loyal customers as those who re-buy a brand, consider only that brand, and do no brand-related information seeking. Hawkins, Best, and Coney (1995) defined loyalty as consumers' intentions or actual behavior to repeatedly purchase certain products or services.

Oliver's (1997, p. 392) definition of loyalty emphasizes the two different aspects of loyalty -- the behavioral and attitudinal concept: "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” Oliver (1997, p. 392) then defined loyalty at a higher level, which he termed ‘ultimate loyalty’, as those consumers who "fervently desires to re-buy a product/service, will have no other, and will pursue this quest against all odds and at all costs."

Conceptualization of Loyalty

The concept of consumer loyalty has been extensively investigated in the marketing literature (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000); with the underlying goal of understanding customers' needs and wants so as to secure repeat purchase of particular brands and products. Scholars have adopted a variety of approaches to address problems and issues surrounding customer loyalty.

Loyalty Phases

Oliver (1997) proposed that three phases of loyalty – cognitive, affective and conative - that culminates in action loyalty, or ‘action inertia’ (operationalized as repeat usage). Cognitive loyalty focuses on the brand's performance aspects, and loyalty at this phase is based on brand belief only, thus is of a shallow nature. Affective loyalty is directed toward the brand's likeableness – consumers have developed a liking or attitude toward the brand. Conative (behavioral intention) loyalty is developed after consumers experience series of positive affect toward the brand, so they want to repurchase the brand. Action loyalty is where the motivated intentions in the conative loyalty state are transformed into readiness to act. At this phase, consumers are committed to the act of repurchasing, ignoring or deflecting obstacles that might prevent the act.

New perspectives of Loyalty

Oliver (1999) went beyond the cognitive-affective-conative-action sequence and further developed the loyalty framework incorporating new issues in loyalty generation and maintenance. The framework in Table 4 illustrates the dimensions on which these new issues are based. The vertical dimension (individual fortitude) represents the degree to which consumers are committed to the brand and are able to shun themselves from competitive brands. The horizontal dimension demonstrates degrees of community and social support. The two dimensions are crossed to form four cells with the high-high cell being the apex of loyalty (immersed self-identity), and the low-low cell being the weakest form of loyalty (basic product superiority).

Product superiority (low-low cell) reflects the traditional view of loyalty as resulting from high quality and/or product superiority, and has been discussed previously in cognitive-affective-conative-action terms. Consumers with *determined self-isolation* (high consumer fortitude and low social support) wish to repurchase on the basis of determination, i. e., they desire an exclusive relation with the brand, and voluntarily detach themselves from competitive overtures.

Village envelopment (low fortitude, high social support cell) is formed in a contained environment where consumers are passive acceptors of the brand environment - they are nurtured in the use of selected and protected brands, and are provided integrated and routinely updated consumption systems. Consumers with immersed self-identity (high-high cell) find a natural match with both the product/service and its environment, and immerse their self-identity in the brand environment. This is when loyalty reaches its ultimate state: consumers want to be loyal, and the social setting wants them to be loyal, and consequently, the two become symbiotic.

Table 4 Four Loyalty Strategies

		Community/Social Support	
		Low	High
Individual Fortitude	Low	Product Superiority	Village envelopment
	High	Determined self-isolation	Immersed self-identity

Source: Oliver (1999: 38)

<u>Loyalty Typology</u>

Table 5 shows four loyalty types based on the cross classification of consumers' behavioral consistency (behavior) and psychological attachment (attitude): low loyalty, spurious loyalty, latent loyalty, and high loyalty. While empirical support for the typology has been noted in wider marketing literature (Dick and Basu, 1994), and leisure services (Selin et al. 1988, Backman and Crompton 1991b), hospitality researchers have further confirmed the application of four distinct types of loyalty in a multitude of settings (Baloglu, 2001; Pritchard and Howard, 1997).

True/high loyalty customers are characterized by strong attitudinal attachment and high behavioral patronage with a product/service, and are least vulnerable to competitive offerings. Latent loyalty customers are those who show low patronage levels in spite of a strong attitudinal attachment to the brand. This may occur because patronage barriers such as price, convenience (e. g., times available, routing), or location (e. g., ease of access, distribution) prevent them from becoming repeat customers.

Spurious/artificial loyalty customers are those who make frequent purchases yet are not emotionally attached to the brand. The high patronage level of spuriously loyal customers may be attributed to habitual buying, financial incentives, convenience, lack of alternatives, etc. Low loyalty customers refer to those exhibiting low levels of both attitudinal attachment and behavioral usage with a brand. Spurious- and low-loyalty groups are more susceptible to 'courting' from competitors, as their patronage tends to be highly volatile.

Table 5 Loyalty Typology Based on Attitude and Behavior

		Attitude	
		Low	High
Behavior	Low	Spurious Loyalty	True Loyalty
	High	Low Loyalty	Latent Loyalty

Source: Beckman and Compton (1991)

Measurement of Loyalty

A review of loyalty research by Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) categorized loyalty measurements into: (1) the behavioral approach, (2) the attitudinal approach, and (3) the composite approach. *The behavioral approach* is based on consumers' actual or reported purchasing behavior and has often been operationally characterized as sequence of purchase, proportion of purchase, and probability of purchase. However, this approach has been criticized as lacking a conceptual standpoint, and producing only the static outcome of a dynamic process (Dick and Basu 1994). Focusing on behavior alone cannot capture the reasons behind the purchases: repeat purchase may occur simply for arbitrary reasons such as price, time convenience and lack of choice, other than from any sense of loyalty or allegiance (Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Baloglu, 2002; Datta, 2003).

In *the attitudinal approach*, based on consumer brand preferences over time or purchase intentions, loyalty reflects consumers' psychological commitment to a brand, and is studied via its dimensions such as repurchasing intentions, WOM referrals, complaining behavior (Jones and Sasser, 1995; de Ruyter and Bloemer, 1998). The attitudinal measure explains an additional portion of unexplained variance that behavioral approaches do not address (Backman and Crompton, 1991). However, study attitude alone cannot determine competitive effects (e. g., multi-brand or shared loyalty), familiarity, and situational factors (Baloglu, 2002; Selin et al, 1988).

Due to the difficulties in measuring attitudinal loyalty, behavioral measures are a common approach to operationalize loyalty. Opperman (2000) suggested using only behavioral measures because measuring attitudes over a longer time period is in most cases impractical. O'Mally (1998) thought that behavioral measures provide a more realistic picture of how well a brand is doing in relation to competitors.

More recently, *the composite approach* by integrating the behavioral and attitudinal measures has been shown to be an effective way to operationalize loyalty (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Iwasaki and Havitz, 1998; Baloglu, 2002). It has been argued that customer loyalty is a multidimensional concept including both behavioral element (repeat purchases) and attitudinal element (commitment); and the use of composite measure increases the predictive power of the construct, as each variable cross-validates the nature of truly loyal relationship (Day, 1969; Dick and Basu, 1994). However, this approach has limitations in that not all the weighting or quantified scores may apply to both the behavioral and attitudinal components, which may have different measurements.

Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1994) developed a loyalty scale including dimensions such as loyalty to company, propensity to switch, willingness to pay more, external and internal response to problem. Some researchers (e. g., Taylor, 1998; Yoon and Uysal, 2003) measured consumer loyalty with three indicators: 1) likelihood to recommend a product or service to other; 2) likelihood to purchase a product or service again; and 3) overall satisfaction/feeling. Hepworth and Mateus (1994) adopted similar indices to assess loyalty, including intention to buy same product, intention to buy more product, and willingness to recommend the product to other consumers.

Antecedents of Loyalty

Understanding the determinants of customer loyalty will allow management to focus on the major influencing factors that lead to customer retention and repeat purchase. A number of studies have examined the antecedents or causes of customer loyalty (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Cronin, Brady, and Hult, 2000; Petrick and Backman, 2001). Results of this body of research have shown that satisfaction (Petrick and Norman, 2001; Cronin, Brady and Hunt, 2000), quality/performance (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Oh, 1999), and different other variables, are good predictors of customer loyalty.

Satisfaction in Loyalty Formation

It is generally believed that satisfaction leads to repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth recommendation, which are main indicators of loyalty. Marketing literature has paid much attention to the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hallowell 1996; LaBarbera and Mazursky 1983; Rust and Zahorik 1993). A number of studies have confirmed a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty/retention (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Cronin, Brady and Hunt, 2000; Taylor and Baker, 1994). If consumers are satisfied with the product/service, they are more likely to continue to purchase, and are more willing to spread positive WOM.

In tourism industry, there are empirical evidences that tourists' satisfaction is a strong indicator of their intentions to revisit and recommend the destination to other people (Yao and Chan, 1990; Ross 1993; Juaneda 1996; Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Bramwell, 1998; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Yoon and Uysal, in press). Satisfied tourists are more likely to return to the same destination, and are more willing to share their positive traveling experience with their friends and relatives. WOM recommendations are especially critical in tourism marketing because they are considered to be the most reliable, and thus are one of the most sought-after information sources for potential tourists (Yoon and Uysal, in press). However, it is important to note that the impact of satisfaction on customer loyalty is neither the same for all industries (Fornell 1992), nor the same for all destinations worldwide (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000).

Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is drawn as the following:

H_5: *Overall satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty.*

H_6: *Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.*

H_7: *Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty.*

Other Determinants

Recent research indicates that loyalty is developed in more dynamic and complex ways than reflected in the common "satisfaction builds loyalty" model (Fournier 1998; Oliver 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001). Oliver (1999), for example, suggests that satisfaction is a necessary input to loyalty behavior but there are other determinants in loyalty formation, such as personal determination and social support. "Ultimate loyalty" results from the convergence of product superiority, personal fortitude, social bonding, and their synergy.

Pritchard and Howard (1993, 1997) suggested three key antecedents to customer loyalty: performance, satisfaction, and consumer involvement. Firstly, the superiority or quality of service performance can affect a customer's loyalty (Fick and Ritchie 1991). In other words, large perceived differences in performance quality among competitive offerings increase the likelihood for brand-specific loyalty forming (McConnell 1968). Secondly, loyal customers are believed to be more satisfied than less loyal and non-loyal ones (Hawkins, Best, and Coney 1989). When a service performs well it secures consumers' satisfaction, which consequently reinforces consumer attachment (loyalty) to the service provider (Bitner 1990). Another antecedent of loyalty is consumer involvement. Several researchers (Assael 1987; Backman and Crompton 1991a) have found that higher consumer involvement in the purchase decision increases customer attachment and loyalty toward a specific service provider.

Datta's (2003) exploratory/qualitative study investigated the determinants of brand loyalty that have been suggested by previous literature, including product performance (Sheth, Mittal and Newman 1999), customer satisfaction (Kotler 1994), the level of consumer involvement (Beaty, Kahle, Homer 1988), risk (Assael, 1998), price (Keller, 1998), brand names (Soloman, Bamossy and Askegaard 1999), demographics (Schiffan and Kanuk 1997), habits and history of brand usage (Sheth et al. 1999), etc. The author concluded that the major factors influencing brand loyalty are product performance and customer satisfaction. Superior product performance leads to customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction in turn results in customer retention and repeat sales.

In addition, high satisfaction may induce an emotional affinity with the brand that creates high customer loyalty (Kotler, 1994).

Destination Loyalty

Although research reporting customer loyalty is abundant in the wider marketing field, it has received scant attention in the destination literature (Opperman, 2000). While a small number of studies have explored the issue of repeat visitation (Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998; Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Gyte and Phelps, 1989; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991) and identified preliminary tourist loyalty typologies (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Oppermann, 1997, 1999; Baloglu, 2001; Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Petrick and Sirakaya, 2004), the study of the concept of loyalty and its applications to tourism products or services has been limited.

Repeat Visitation

Many attractions and tourist destinations rely heavily on the repeat visitor segment. Recently, a number of conceptual and empirical studies have examined the differences between first-time and repeat visitors (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Gyte and Phelps, 1989; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), and the impact of previous visitation experience on future destination choice (e. g., Chon 1990; Mansfeld 1992; Crompton 1992). However, few studies actually looked into the issue of how repeat visitations affect tourists' behavior. Furthermore, it still remains unclear as to why exactly people undertake repeat visits.

Gitelson and Crompton's study (1984) was one of the earliest inquiries into the repeat visitation phenomenon. They found that repeat visitors were more likely to be seeking relaxation while new visitors were more likely to be seeking variety. In examining the role of novelty in pleasure travel, Bello and Etzel (1985) argued that people with a mundane and unexciting daily routine will seek novel trip with high arousal; whereas people with a hectic and fast-paced life will seek familiar environments that provide relaxation.

Fakeye and Crompton's (1991) reported differences in motives between non visitors, first-timers and repeat visitors. They concluded that for non-visitors and first-timers, a destination's 'pull' factors (the physical attractions of a destination) are the key motivators; whereas for repeaters, 'push' factors (an individual's social-psychological needs) are more important. In another article discussing different images held by prospective, first time, and repeat visitors, Fakeye and Crompton's (1991) suggested that visitors developed a more complex and differentiated image of a destination after they spent some time there. However, most of this image change only occurred during the first visit; subsequent repeat visits tend to reconfirm the previously-formed images.

Gitelson and Crompton (1984) identified five reasons why people return to a familiar destination: risk reduction / satisfied with particular destination; risk reduction / find same kind of people; emotional attachments to particular destination; further exploration of destination; show destination to other people. Ryan (1995) noted that repeated visitors reported a very strong identification with the destination and what it has to offer, and suggested that the high loyalty is "consistent with theories of risk aversion and the importance of past satisfactory holiday experiences in determining destination choice" (p. 210).

Most studies on tourism destination choice stressed the importance of previous experience on the destination choice process. Familiarity with a destination may produce a tendency for tourists to quickly select or reject it. They may not even look for information on other destinations for their next destination choice. Therefore, the majority of destination choice models, posited and empirically tested, included previous experience as one of the factors affecting destination awareness as well as traveler destination preferences (e. g.,, Um and Crompton 1990; Mayo and Jarvis 1981; Woodside and Lysonski 1989).

Tourist Loyalty Typology

Past research in leisure and travel fields (Backman and Crompton, 1991b; Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Baloglu, 2001) has revealed that loyalty, comprised of attitudinal and behavioral components, can be configured into four segments: high loyalty, latent loyalty, spurious loyalty, and low loyalty (also see ‘loyalty typology’ in the previous section).

Opperman (2000) proposed (though did not operationalize) a loyalty typology based largely on behavioral frequency: non-purchasers (have yet to purchase), disillusioned (first time purchasers, who had a negative experience), unsteady (first time purchasers who had a positive experience, but switch between providers), disloyal (first time purchasers who are not switchers) and somewhat loyal, loyal and very loyal (multiple visits, differentiated by frequency and intensity of previous visits).

Petrick and Sirakaya (2004) suggested that the traditional four-quadrant typology (i. e., low-spurious-latent-high loyalty) cannot be applied to all tourists’ loyalty. They operationalized loyalty typology using both attitudinal and behavioral measures as suggested by Backman and Crompton (1991a), while recognizing the vast differences between first-time and repeat visitors (Opperman, 2000). They segmented first-timers using ‘satisfaction’, while segmented repeaters using ‘attachment’. As a result, first time visitors were classified as ‘satisfied’ and ‘dissatisfied’, while repeat visitors were classified as ‘loyal’ and ‘disloyal’.

Loyalty Structural Model

Yoon and Uysal (2003) proposed a structural model testing the effects of tourist motivation (‘pull’ and ‘push’) and satisfaction on destination loyalty (operationalized as revisit and recommendation intentions). Their empirical findings revealed that motivation influences tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects destination loyalty. Satisfaction directly affects destination loyalty in a positive direction; at the meanwhile it also mediates between motivation and destination loyalty.

Baker and Crompton (2000) explored the structural relationship between quality of performance, satisfaction and behavioral intentions (operationalized as loyalty and willingness to pay more) in an empirical study. Their results suggest that performance quality has a direct effect on behavioral intentions and an indirect effect on them via satisfaction. In addition, performance quality has a stronger total effect on behavioral intentions than satisfaction does.

Bloemer and Ruyter (1998), in their examination of the structure relationships among brand loyalty, image of product, service quality, and satisfaction, concluded that image and loyalty has an indirect relationship via perceived quality; and loyalty and service quality has both a direct relationship and indirect relationship via satisfaction.

Similarly, Bigne, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2001) empirically investigated structural interrelationships among destination image, quality, satisfaction, and after-purchase behavior (operationalized as revisit and recommendation intentions). Their findings confirmed the following sequence established by previous researchers (Bloemer and Ruyter 1998; Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996): image → quality → satisfaction → post-purchase behavior. The structural equation model showed that 1) destination image not only directly affects quality, satisfaction, and future behavior; it also indirectly affects future behavior through quality and satisfaction, 2) quality has a positive influence on satisfaction and future intentions, and 3) satisfaction also directly influences post-purchase behavior.

Conceptual Framework of Developing Destination Loyalty

One of the main purposes of this study was to develop and test a theoretical model, which represented the elements contributing to the building of destination loyalty: destination image, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and familiarity. Below is a brief overview of the interrelationships of the constructs in the model.

Destination image affects tourists' subjective perception, consequent behavior and destination choice. Image will influence tourists in the process of choosing a destination, the subsequent evaluation of the trip and in their future intentions (e. g., Chon 1990, 1992; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Stabler, 1988; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Milman and Pizan, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Woodside and Lysonsky, 1989). Destination image exerts a positive influence on satisfaction: more favorable image leads to higher tourist satisfaction (Chon, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Ross, 1993). Destination image also positively affects the behavior intentions of tourists (e. g., Court and Lupton, 1997). Tourists' behavior is expected to be partly conditioned by the image that they have of destinations. The first three hypotheses tested the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction:

H_1: Destination image positively influenced tourists' overall satisfaction.

H_2: Destination image positively influenced tourists' attribute satisfaction.

H_3: Attribute satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction.

Most early research work concentrated on satisfaction at the global level (e. g., Oliver 1980). Until recently, researchers started to pay attention to attribute-level conceptualization of the antecedents of satisfaction (e. g. Oliver 1993). According to Oliver (1993), overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are distinct but related constructs. Attribute satisfaction has significant, positive and direct effects on overall satisfaction; and it capture a significant amount of variation in overall satisfaction (Oliver, 1993; Spreng et al., 1996; Bolton and Drew, 1991). Satisfaction research in tourism and recreation has indicated that tourists' satisfaction with individual component of the destination leads to their satisfaction with the overall destination (Pizam et al. 1978; Vaske, Fedler, and Graefe, 1986; Danaher and Arweiler, 1996; Mayer et al., 1998; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Hsu, 2003). Overall satisfaction with a hospitality experience is a function of satisfactions with the individual elements/attributes of all the products/services that make up the experience, such as accommodation, weather, natural environment, social environment, etc. (Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Lounsbury and Hoopes, 1985). Therefore, it was postulated that:

H_4: Attribute satisfaction positively influenced overall satisfaction.

A number of marketing studies have confirmed that consumer satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with loyalty/retention (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Cronin, Brady and Hunt, 2000; Taylor and Baker, 1994). Satisfied consumers are more likely to continue to purchase, and are more willing to spread positive WOM. It is empirically proved in tourism studies that tourists' satisfaction are strong indicators of their revisit and referral intentions (Yao and Chan, 1990; Ross 1993; Juaneda 1996; Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Bramwell, 1998; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Yoon and Uysal, in press). The more satisfied tourists are, the more likely they will return to the same destination, and the more likely they will share their positive traveling experience with their friends and relatives. Therefore, the following hypotheses were drawn as:

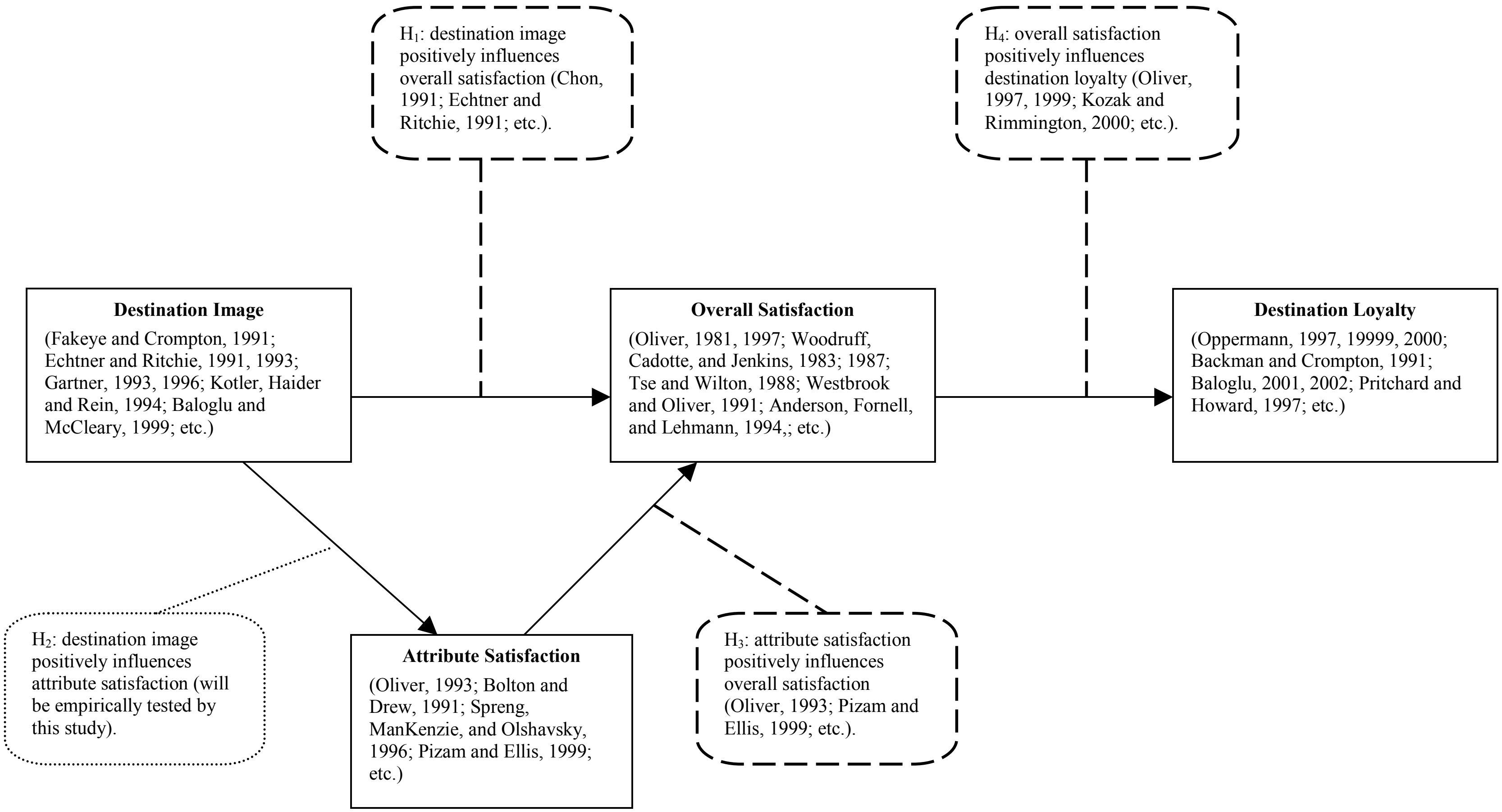
H_5: *Overall satisfaction positively influenced destination loyalty.*

H_6: *Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.*

H_7: *Overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty.*

To conclude the hypothesis discussed above, a conceptual framework for building destination loyalty was drawn (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Conceptual Framework for Developing Destination Loyalty



Destination Loyalty Model for Different Groups

The second objective of the study was to compare the destination loyalty model across various mutually exclusive tourist segments and see if different segments had different loyalty formation process. The findings would assist destination managers in market segmentation, which divides a heterogeneous market into homogeneous sub-groups. It is believed that a market is composed of subgroups of people and that each subgroup has distinct needs and wants (Kotler and McDougall, 1983). Marketers need to develop better understanding of the specific groups of consumers in order to accommodate their requirements; and market segmentation enables them to identify consumers with similar needs or characteristics. It is an effective marketing strategy that can result in more efficient and effective use of marketing and promotional dollars.

Segmentation is often based on social-demographics, psychographics, behavioral characteristics, trip characteristics, or other variables of interests. One of the most common approaches is to first assign consumers to groups by using demographic and trip characteristics; and then the differences, if any, between the matching groups are analyzed. This study examined matched tourists segments for their homogeneity, or lack of it, in developing destination loyalty based on previous travel experience(s), gender, age, education and income. These tourist segments were selected because they have drawn much notice in the tourism and hospitality literature, but few studies analyzed them in a systematic framework beyond univariate comparisons.

Previous Experience(s)' Effects on Image, Satisfaction and Loyalty

Previous visitation or direct experience with a destination is likely to modify the destination image. Some studies have investigated image modifications due to actual destination experience, and reported that previous experience can be both a positive and negative factor in image evaluation; mostly it leads to more diversified, detailed and realistic impression of a destination (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). Some studies used a longitudinal approach to study the differences between tourists' pre-trip and post-trip images (Pearce, 1982 and Phelps, 1986; Dann 1996); while others examined the image differences between visitors and non-visitors. These studies found that 1) travelers had different images before and after visiting a destination; 2) visitors and non-visitors held different images of a particular destination (Chon, 1990; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995).

A number of empirical works (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Chon, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993) demonstrated that both the number of visits to and the length of stay at a destination influence the perceived image. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) believed that higher familiarity with a destination lead to more holistic, psychological, and unique images; while lower familiarity results in images based more on attributes, functional aspects, and common features. Beerli and Martin (2004) indicated that previous visitation(s) will affect the cognitive image depending on the number of visits, the duration of visits, and the degree of involvement with the place during the stay. Milman and Pizam (1995) empirically tested the impact of consumer familiarity with a destination on the consumer's destination image and on the interest and likelihood to visit the destination. Their results indicated that higher familiarity with a destination results in more positive image of the destination, higher interests and higher likelihood to revisit it.

As for the effect of other travel characteristics on destination image, information sources were identified as the main factor (Stern and Krakover, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Beerli and Martin, 2004). Tourists' image perceptions were influenced by the exposure to various types of information sources, such as promotional efforts through media, WOM recommendations, information acquired from previous visitation, etc. (Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and Lysonsky, 1989).

Previous studies have found that past experiences are influential on satisfaction and loyalty (Mittal et al. 1999; Licata et al. 2001; Schreyer et al., 1984). With repurchase and use/consumption of a product/service, consumers are able to more accurately evaluate the product/service, and may discover new and unanticipated benefits/costs, which may affect both satisfaction and loyalty. In tourism literature, the connection between past travel experience and future travel behavior has not been explored widely, but the existing studies suggest a close relationship between past travel experience and future behavioral intentions (e. g., Sonmez and Graefe, 1998; Mazursky, 1989; Oppermann, 2000).

Oppermann (2000) empirically examined the impact of previous experience on future tourist visitation behavior, and found a significant relationship between the two variables. Sonmez and Graefe (1998) found that past travel experience appears to be a powerful influence on behavioral intentions. Individuals with past travel experience to various destinations may become more confident as a result of their experience and thus be more likely to travel back to those places of interests. It was confirmed by some researchers that repeat tourists are expected to be more likely than first-timers to choose the same destination in the future (Juaneda, 1996; Gyte and Phelps, 1989). Mazursky

(1989) stated that future travel is affected not only by the extent but also the nature of past travel experience, and personal experience may exert more influence on travel decisions than information obtained from external sources. Chen (1998) stated that it is vital to examine past trip experience that often directly and indirectly influences tourists' choice behaviors.

A few empirical studies (e. g., Gyte and Phelps, 1989; Juaneda, 1996; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000) focused on the influences of satisfaction and previous visits on the probability of returning to the same destination. Both previous visits and satisfaction were found to be determinants of the revisit intentions. Mazursky (1989) investigated the impact of past experience and satisfaction on future revisit intentions, and suggested experience-based measures in addition to tourist satisfaction as an input for estimators of future intentions to return. Kozak (2001) built a theoretical framework of future behavioral intentions based on multiple variables such as the number of previous visits, tourist overall satisfaction, and tourists' satisfaction with destination-based attributes. From the empirical data he found that future intentions were influenced more by satisfaction than by past experience.

McAlexander, Kim, and Roberts (2003) empirically explored the relative impacts of satisfaction, consumer experience, and brand community integration on customer loyalty. They found that customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty depending on consumption experience. Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty for less experienced group, but its effect in the more experienced group is not significant. For more experienced customers, brand community integration becomes more powerful than satisfaction in building customer loyalty. The authors concluded that loyalty creation is an evolutionary process driven by experience. "With experience, customers have the opportunity to develop the additional and meaningful connections of brand community that can provide a strong bond that affects satisfaction and loyalty (p. 7)". Similarly, Garbarino and Johnson (1999) found that for low relational (less experienced) customers, satisfaction has significant influence on future behavioral intention; whereas for experienced relationship-oriented customers, trust and commitment replace satisfaction as drivers of loyalty. They concluded that satisfaction is most effective for developing loyalty among less experienced low relational customers.

Based on the above studies, the following hypotheses and their sub-hypotheses were drawn:

H_5: The structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.

a. *The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*
b. *The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*
c. *The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*
d. *The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*

H_6: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.

a. *The means of destination image differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*

b. *The means of attribute satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*

c. *The means of overall satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*

d. *The means of destination loyalty differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination.*

Demographic Variables' Effects on Image, Satisfaction and Loyalty

<u>Age and Gender</u>

Age-based research has received increasing attention in the travel literature, thanks to the growing size and economic importance of the senior travel market. Previous researchers have adopted different chronological ages as a criterion for defining the senior market. Some used 50 years old and beyond to dichotomize consumers into the younger and senior (Anderson and Langmeyer; 1982; French and Fox, 1985; Tepper, 1994; Moisey and Bichis, 1999); while others regarded consumers aged 55 and above as 'senior citizens' (Shoemaker, 1988; Hsu, 2001; Oh et al., 2002). Most age-based travel research has concentrated on the sub-segmentation, motivation, constraints, and behaviors of the senior market (Zimmer, Brayler, and Searle, 1995; Lieux, Weaver, and McCleary, 1994; Kim et al. 2003). A few have studied the age effects in consumer decisions. For example, Lepsito and McCleary's empirical study (1988) concluded that age did not affect customer preference for a particular type of hotel for pleasure travel.

Moisey and Bichis (1999) found that senior and non-senior were different in their travel motivation, visitation patterns, and recreation activities.

Gender-based research has also inspired growing interests in the travel literature, as women become an increasingly important market segment in the tourism and hospitality industry. Most gender-based travel studies have focused on addressing the needs and preferences of female travelers (Bartos, 1982; Berger, 1987; Howell, Moreo and DeMicco, 1993). A few have investigated the differences between the two gender segments. For example, Crawford-Welch (1988) observed that female and male business travelers had similar consumption patterns. McCleary, Weaver, and Lan (1994) investigated if male and female business travelers employed different criteria for hotel selection and service use. They found that the two gender groups differed only at some selected attribute levels.

Oh et al. (2002) compared age and gender groups via a theory-based decision making process. They found that 1) while the young and senior travelers exhibited similar levels of expectations and perceptions of a destination, they formed different levels of satisfaction and behavioral intention -- senior travelers tended to develop higher satisfaction and behavioral intention than their younger counterparts; 2) while male and female travelers had different levels of expectations and perceptions, they showed comparable satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions; and 3) in spite of the heterogeneity at the univariate attribute or multivariate constructs level, the age and gender groups demonstrated theoretical invariance, i. e., the holistic decision-making process were similar across matching segments.

Other Demographics

A number of empirical studies (e. g., Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Calantone, Di Benetton, Hakam and Bojanic, 1989; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993) have been conducted to explore relationship between the perceived image and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and country of origin. Such studies have revealed mixed results: some studies found differences in the perceived image depending on all demographic variables; while others found such differences only in the cases of age and education.

Prior researchers also studied the effects of different demographic variables on satisfaction and loyalty (e. g., Snyder 1991). Exter (1986) found that people's loyalty towards a brand did not vary based on their demographic background. Other researchers found that age may have influence on consumer loyalty, and older customers tended to be more satisfied and loyal than younger ones (Schiffman and Kanuk 1997; Pritchard and Howard, 1997; Hsu, 2000). Mykletun et al. (2001) studied the relationship between a number of demographic variables including age, household income, and education vs. visitors' perception of a destination and revisit probability. They found that 1) none of the demographic variables (age, education and income) were significantly related to visitors' revisit probability; and 2) except for age, no other demographic variables (income and education) had any significant effect on visitor satisfaction. Senior tourists held the most positive evaluations of a destination compared with the younger visitor segment.

Based on the above studies, it was posited that:

H_7: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' gender.

a. *The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' gender.*

b. *The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' gender.*

c. *The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' gender.*

d. *The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' gender.*

H_8: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' gender.

a. *The means of destination image differed based on the tourists' gender.*

b. *The means of attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' gender.*

c. *The means of overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' gender.*

d. *The means of destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' gender.*

H_9: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' age.

a. *The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' age.*

b. *The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' age.*

c. *The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' age.*

d. *The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' age.*

H_{10}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' age.

a. *The means of destination image differed based on the tourists' age.*

b. *The means of attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' age.*

c. *The means of overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' age.*

d. *The means of destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' age.*

H_{11}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level.

a. *The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' education level.*

b. *The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' education level.*

c. *The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' education level.*

d. *The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' education level.*

H_{12}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level.

a. *The means of destination image differed based on the tourists' education level.*

b. *The means of attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' education level.*

c. *The means of overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' education level.*

d. *The means of destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' education level.*

H_{13}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level.

a. *The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' income level.*

b. *The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' income level.*

c. *The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' income level.*

d. *The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' income level.*

H_{14}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level.

a. *The means of destination image differed based on the tourists' income level.*

b. *The means of attribute satisfaction differed based on the tourists' income level.*

c. *The means of overall satisfaction differed based on the tourists' income level.*

d. *The means of destination loyalty differed based on the tourists' income level.*

Service Quality Measurement

The third objective of the study was to assess the service quality of the tourism industry in Eureka Springs. Service quality has received considerable attention in the literature due to the key role it plays in differentiating service products and building competitive edge. The two main research instruments for measuring service quality are Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) and SERVQUAL.

SERVQUAL

The most well-known service quality measurement was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, 1988), named SERVQUAL. The researchers proposed that service quality should be operationalized as a comparison between the expectations a consumer holds for a class of service providers and the relative performance of the firm on specific attributes related to quality assessments. Thus, the service quality construct was measured by separately scoring two parallel sets of twenty-two paired expectations/performance scaled items, consisting of five different dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. A quality score for each item forms as the result of the following relationship: *Service Quality = f (Performance-Expectations).*

In a subsequent publication Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) extended the SERVQUAL methodology to include importance measures for each gap comparison. They used an additional series of items that captured the importance consumers placed on each of the dimensions of service quality captured by the SERVQUAL scale. Weighted SERVQUAL scores can be obtained as follows: *Service Quality = (Perceptions-Expectations) * Importance.* The researchers suggest that difference scores for each of the 22 items in the five dimensional domains of service quality can be treated as either weighted or unweighted indices. The individual item scores can be summed-and-averaged into the five dimensions of quality; and the five factor scores can in turn be summed-and-averaged into an overall service quality score.

The SERVQUAL scale has been used in a plethora of service environments, including recreation (Crompton and Mackay 1989, Hamilton 1989, Mackay and Crompton 1988), healthcare (Brown and Swartz 1989; Woodside, Frey, and Daly 1989), and general service settings (Berry and Parasuraman 1991; Bolton and Drew 1991a, 1991b; Gronroos 1990; Heskett, Sasser, and Hart 1990; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1990). The instrument has also been applied to many practical hospitality situations. For example, it was adapted by hospitality researchers for measuring hospitality service quality, including LODGSERV (Knutson et al., 1991) and DINESERV (Stevens et al., 1995). Lee and Hing (1995) and Johns and Tyas (1996) also used SERVQUAL for measuring the satisfaction of restaurant customers and for distinguishing between the quality of different hospitality outlets. In spite of the popularity enjoyed by the SERVQUAL scale, a number of studies have questioned the efficacy of the instrument, on both empirical and theoretical grounds.

<u>Criticisms of SERVQUAL</u>

SERVQUAL has been widely criticized in the marketing literature. Several studies (e. g., Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Brown, Churchill, and Peter, 1993) pointed to the unstable nature of SERVQUAL's purported five-factor structure as only one of a number of limitations inherent in practical applications of the scale. These researchers also challenged the expectations and perceptions gap model that underlies the SERVQUAL scale, mainly the psychometric properties of the instrument and its inferior predictive validity. Other researchers such as Teas (1993, 1994) raised questions about the interpretation and operationalization of expectations.

Babakus and Boller (1992) suggested using an alternative survey-item format which captures both expectations and perceptions in single items (e. g., better than/worse than scales), and they cautioned the use of negatively-worded items in the survey instruments. Based on a multi-industry sample of consumer data, Cronin and Taylor (1992) assessed both the unweighted and importance-weighted SERQUAL and SERVPERF, and concluded that the unweighted performance-only measures (SERVPERF) appear a more appropriate conceptualization and operationalization of service quality. Brown et al. (1993) voiced concerns over the psychometric properties of the SERVQUAL scale. Based on an empirical evaluation of SERVQUAL and an alternative non-difference score measure, they concluded that the service quality construct appears best operationalized by the later, i. e., performance-only measure without expectations. Comparative studies (e. g., Crompton and Love, 1995; Cronin and Taylor, 1994) of the predictive validity between the SERVQUAL and performance-only measures have also consistently shown higher levels of predictive validity for the latter. After proposing alternative service quality frameworks comprising evaluated performance (EP) model and normed quality (NQ) model, Teas (1993) empirically tested and compared the new models and the traditional SERVQUAL. He found that the EP quality model has higher validity than the SERVQUAL scale.

Parasuraman et al. (1991) refined and reassessed the SERVQUAL technique by recommending revising the 'should' terminology in the expectations section to 'will', and changing negatively-worded items to a positive format. They cautioned that the five-factor structure implicit in the SERVQUAL scale may not be completely generalizable across service settings. To address the debates over the need for measuring customer expectations and how expectations should be measured, Parasuraman et al. (1994) developed and compared three alternative questionnaire formats including difference-score formulation and direct measures of service quality. The refined questionnaire incorporated the expanded conceptualization of expectations (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1993) to obtain scores for the measure of service superiority (MSS) and measure of service adequacy (MSA).

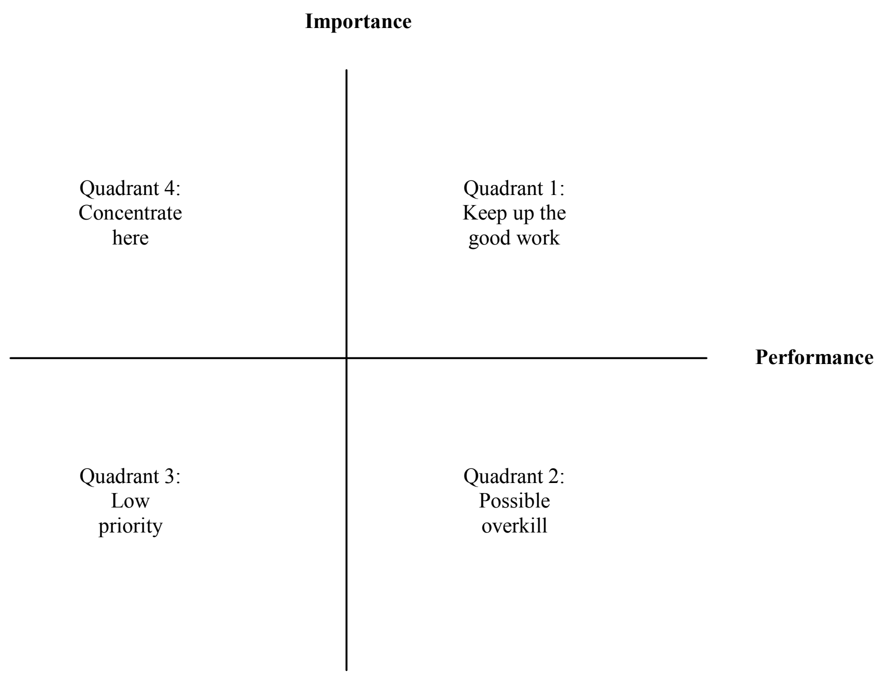
Overall, the literature does not seem to doubt the validity and reliability of the individual expectations, performance, and importance subscales per se. Rather, what has been questioned is the reliability and validity of the combined scales, i. e., the gap scores and their manipulation. Because of the problems of using SERVQUAL discussed herein, another technique for quality assessment comes into play, namely importance-performance analysis (IPA), which excludes the controversial 'expectations' from the analysis, but instead examines the 'importance' a customer places on any given product/service attribute.

Importance-performance Analysis

Due to its simplicity and ease of application, the importance-performance analysis (IPA) has gained popularity in a plethora of fields since Martilla and James (1977) introduced it as a framework for analyzing consumers' attitudes towards salient product/service attributes. It has been used to design marketing strategies for businesses, to guide planning decisions for governments, and to evaluate the organization and management of sports event and outdoor adventure programs. IPA is adaptable to various service industries, including retirement communities (e. g., Hawes, Kiser, and Rao, 1982), banking (e. g., Ennew, Reed, and Binks, 1993; Yavas and Shemwell, 1997; Joseph, McClure, and Joseph, 1999; Yeo, 2003), healthcare (e. g., Hawes and Rao, 1985; Cunningham and Gaeth, 1989; Dolinsky, 1991; Hemmasi, Strong, Taylor, 1994; Yavas and Shemwell, 2001), hospitality and tourism (e. g., Sethna, 1982; Burns, 1986; Keyt, Yavas and Riecken, 1994; Yavas and Babakus, 2003; Hudson, Hudson, and Miller, 2004), and educational services (e. g., Alberty and Mihalik, 1989; Hawes and Glisan, 1983). Being a valuable tool in a strategic marketing approach, IPA has also been applied in a number of destination image studies (Chon and Evans, 1989; Chon, Weaver and Kim, 1991; Uysal, Howard, and Jamrozy, 1991; Opperman, 1996; Go and Zhang, 1997; Joppe, Martin, and Waalen, 2001).

There are several steps involved in IPA. First is to identify a set of service/good features or attributes through a literature review and/or qualitative research techniques such as focus groups and interviews (Martilla and James, 1977). These attributes are then evaluated on the basis of how important each is to the customer, and how the service/good is perceived to be performing relative to each attribute. This evaluation is typically accomplished by surveying a sample of customers. The last step is to calculate mean importance and performance scores for each attribute. These values are then used as coordinates for plotting individual attributes on a two-dimensional matrix called the Action Grid (Blake et al., 1978), as shown in Figure 4. This matrix helps translate market research findings into action -- it is used to prescribe prioritization of attributes for improvement and can provide guidance for strategy formulation.

Figure 4 Traditional Importance-Performance Grid



Source: Martilla and James (1977:78)

The horizontal axis indicates customers' perception of a service/good's performance on a given attribute, ranging from low to high; while the vertical axis demonstrates customers' perception of the importance of the attribute from low to high. By using a central tendency (e. g., mean, median) or a rank-order measure, the attribute's performance and importance scores are plotted on the grid; each attribute is then analyzed based on which quadrant on the grid it is located at. The scaling of the axes and positioning of the quadrant boundaries of Figure 1 is somewhat arbitrary -- the focus is on the relative positioning of the various points (Martilla and James, 1977: 79).

The quadrant of each attribute point suggests a different marketing strategy as described in Figure 1. Specifically, if ratings for a particular attribute land in the upper right-hand quadrant (Q1), then one can assume that an organization is doing a good job with a highly important attribute; the strategy then is one of maintenance – of keeping up the good work. If another attribute falls in the lower left-hand quadrant (Q3), this suggests moderate performance on moderately important attribute - one might want to consider the attribute a low priority item. If a feature is located at the lower right-hand quadrant (Q2), this may be a sign of overinvestment – high performance on moderately important attribute. Lastly, attributes whose ratings fall in the upper left-hand quadrant (Q4) deserve special attention – these are highly important features with substandard performance, so organizations need to invest and improve on these features. In general, resources should be shifted from providing attributes in quadrant 2 to improving performance on attributes in quadrant 4.

IPA essentially provides an attractive snapshot of how well an organization meets customers' concerns over certain important service/product attributes, and it simultaneously offers guidelines for the organization's future resource allocation decisions.

<u>Extensions / modifications of IPA Model</u>

Although most IPA studies have applied the same techniques in different subject areas, there are researchers who have attempted to extend or modify the original IPA method in order to add more information to the model (e. g., Dolinsky, 1991; Keyt et al, 1994; Yavas and Shemwell, 2001; Slack; 1994).

Attribute Performance

Some researchers have extended the basic IPA model relating to conceptualization and measurement of attribute performance. Considering that consumer evaluations of a product do not occur in a competitive vacuum, Burns (1986) and Dolinsky (1991) added 'competitors' performance' as a third dimension to 'importance' and 'performance' of a product. As a result, one can identify eight different combinations and hence eight different situations: neglected opportunity, competitive disadvantage, competitive advantage, head-to-head competition, null opportunity, false alarm, false advantage, and false competition.

Other researchers (Keyt et al, 1994; Yavas and Shemwell, 1997) further modified the traditional IPA model by incorporating both the relative performance and determinance dimensions. Determinant attributes are those that discriminate well among competing products and directly influence consumer choice. Simultaneous consideration of four dimensions (importance, determinance, own performance, and relative performance) generates 16 outcomes that call for different strategy adjustments, including solid competitive advantage, head-to-head competition, opportunity alert, red alert, lost opportunity, competitive warning, overlooked opportunity, competitive disadvantage, latent competitive advantage, competitive watch, false security, stand by alert, competitive illusion, pseudo competitive disadvantage, null opportunity, false alarm.

In the study conducted by Slack (1994), service performance and competitor performance were taken as a composite measure by evaluating performance as being 'better than competitors', 'the same as competitors', or 'worse than competitors'. An alternative importance-performance matrix zoning was created and each zone implies very different treatment. Competitive attributes that fall in the "appropriate" zone should be considered satisfactory in the short-to-medium term. Any competitive factor in the "improve" zone will be a candidate for improvement, though not as a first priority. It is more critical to raise the performance of competitive factors in the "urgent action" zone, because these are important attributes with low performance such that business is probably being lost directly as a result. Competitive factors in "excess" area indicate that their accomplished performance is far better than necessary. Therefore, resources used to achieve such a performance could be directed to a needier factor, such as those falling in the "urgent action" area.

Yavas and Shemwell (2001) presented another modified IPA model that integrates relative performance as a weighted index. The index is calculated as: *relative performance index = importance * (own performance – relative performance)*. This modified model also results in four situations: false security / opportunity alert, competitive edge / keep up the good work, competitive disadvantage / red alert, and competitive watch / vulnerability, by defining a two-dimensional grid where the horizontal axis signifies the product's own performance from low to high and the vertical axis represents the relative performance index from low to high.

Attribute Importance

Generally, performance of attributes is recorded on an ordinal scale, with mean or median performance ratings being used for the horizontal coordinate of the IPA matrix. However, it is not always easy to come up with the vertical dimension (i. e., importance) scores for attributes. Previous studies have used different methods to obtain importance values for plotting. Most have employed simple self-stated descriptive measures, i. e., mean and median scores (e. g., Chon et al. 1991; Alberty and Mihalik, 1989; Uysal et al. 1991); while some have applied more sophisticated statistical measures incorporating correlation analysis, arguing that statistically derived attribute importance measures may more accurately relate product features to consumer perceptions than those simple descriptive measures (e. g., Neslin, 1981; O'Leary and Adams, 1982; Crompton and Duray, 1985; Fletcher, Kaiser, and Groger, 1992).

O'Leary and Adams (1982) described a method for obtaining importance scores as a composite ranking of median importance scores and Pearson correlation coefficients. Crompton and Duray (1985) compared four alternative IPA plotting methods: the self-stated methods consisting of mean and median value plots, and the statistical methods using Pearson or Spearman correlation coefficients in conjunction with median values. They found differences in plots between the self-stated methods and statistical methods, and implied the greater accuracy of the statistical methods in linking features to perceptions.

Sometimes, the importance scores are derived from importance ratings. In a study of complaint handling at a university, Dolinsky (1994) weighted the mean 'importance of complaint' scores by the number of times each complaint was registered. Yavas and Habib (1987) calculated mean importance scores, but used the ranking of the means as the importance coordinate on the IPA matrix.

At least one study did not even have a direct measure of the importance scores. Dolinsky (1991) only solicited attribute performance ratings from customers, which were regressed on scores for overall satisfaction. The proxy measure of attribute importance used was the standardized regression coefficients of each of the attribute performance in determining customers’ overall satisfaction.

Relationship between Importance and Performance

Probably one of the most significant extensions of IPA is Slack's study (1994), in which he characterized the relationship between importance and performance as *prescriptive*, i. e., attribute prioritization may be a continuous function of importance and performance, rather than some discrete categorization as implied by the traditional IPA model. There existed a prioritization trade-off between importance and performance: attributes of higher importance should have higher performance standards than attributes of low importance.

Sampson and Showalter (1999) went beyond Slack's work by theorizing and showing that the relationship between importance and performance is *causal*, i. e., importance changes as performance changes. Performance not only relates to importance in determining attribute prioritization, but the specification of importance is a function of attribute performance. Importance is a dynamic construct rather than a point estimate as indicated in the traditional IPA model.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

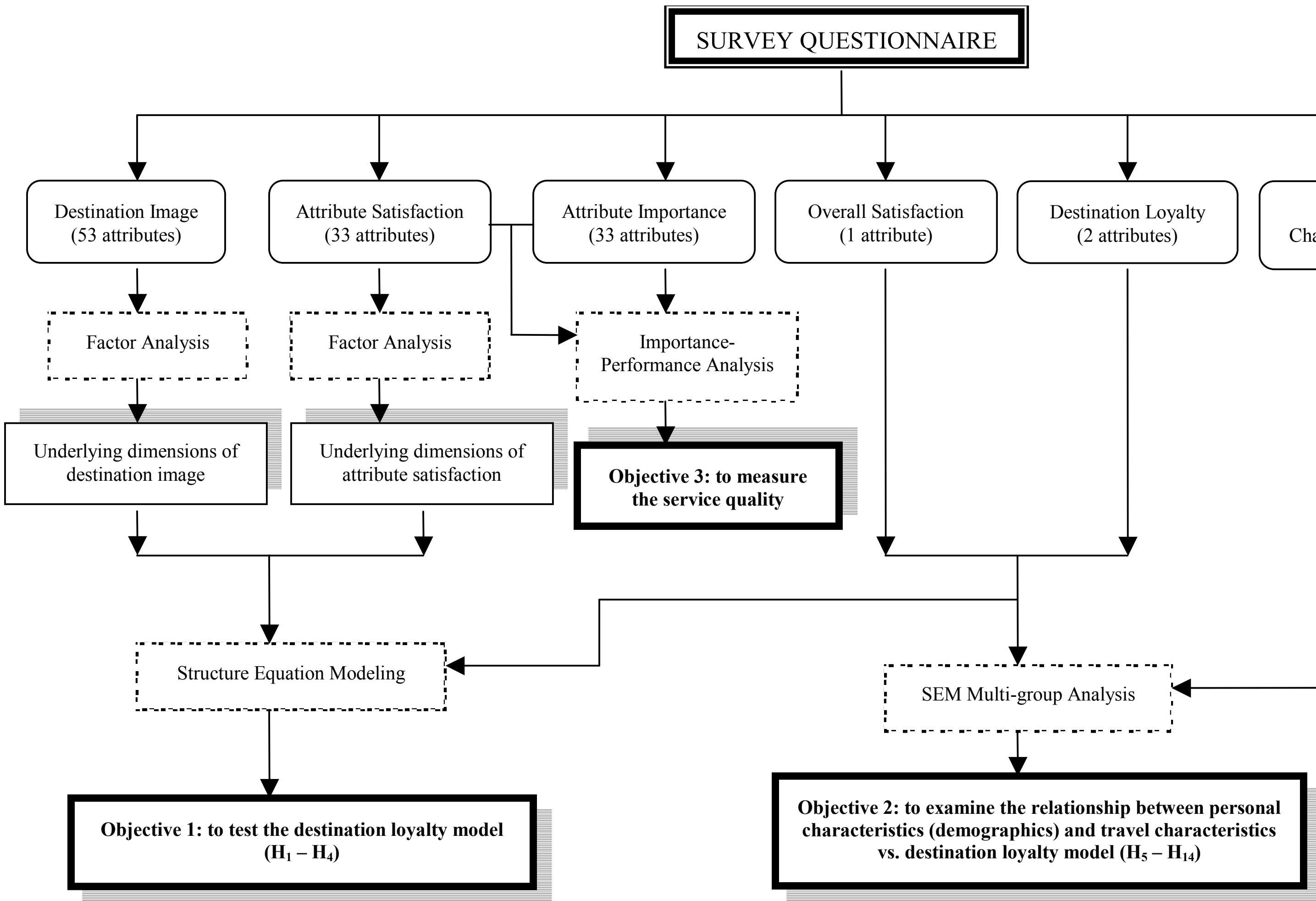
Research Design

This study employed a causal research design using a cross-sectional sample survey, aiming at developing and testing a conceptual 'destination loyalty' model, in which hypotheses were advanced and tested to confirm causal relationships. A self-administered questionnaire was developed including both structured and open-ended questions. The target population of this study was all the visitors who stopped by Eureka Springs' Welcome Center, stayed at hotels, motels, and B&B, and visited souvenir shops/art galleries during a 20-day survey period. A two-stage sampling approach including stratified proportionate sampling, and systematic random sampling (SRS) was applied.

Research Framework

Figure 5 displayed the research framework for this study. The survey instrument was designed to achieve the objectives established in Chapter one. Firstly, the questionnaire captured the main constructs in building destination loyalty model: destination image, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the causal relationships among these four constructs. Secondly, the instrument also measured tourists' travel characteristics and demographic profiles. Multiple sample analysis in SEM was conducted to examine the effects of previous traveling experiences and tourists' demographic background on destination loyalty model. Lastly, the questionnaire assessed tourists' perception of the importance level and the satisfaction level concerning a list of destination attributes. Importance-Performance Analysis was applied to investigate tourists' attitude towards salient service attributes.

Figure 5 Research Framework for Destination Loyalty Study



Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire consisted of the following major sections: questions relating to the destination image construct; questions that measured attribute satisfaction and attribute importance; question about tourists' overall satisfaction; questions that measured destination loyalty; questions designed to gather visitors' travel characteristics and demographic information.

Destination Image

The majority of destination image studies have used either structured (scale format) or unstructured (open-ended, repertory grid, etc.) measurement techniques. The studies adopting a structured measurement technique employed the semantic differential and/or Likert scale for measuring destination image (e. g., Baloglu, 1997; Gartner, 1989; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Chon, 1991). The shortcoming of the structured techniques is that they usually do not capture the "richness" of image and image items salient to individuals. To overcome this problem, some researchers have adopted unstructured techniques aimed at examining the "complex" structure of image (Dann, 1996; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; Reilly, 1990). Unstructured approach usually employs focus groups or open-ended survey questions to solicit free-form descriptions of a destination. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggested that a combination of both structured and unstructured methodologies should be utilized to capture the complex assessment of destinations. With this in mind, the survey uses a combination of structured and unstructured techniques in order to fully capture various aspects of destination image.

The third section assessed the respondent's perceived image toward Eureka Springs as a travel destination. To generate a complete list of the respondents' image perceptions, more than one technique were used, including literature review, interviews and focus groups. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) believed that by combining different techniques such as literature search, experience survey, insight-simulating examples, critical incidents, and focus groups, the likelihood of producing a complete list of items to describe the concept is increased.

During the review of the literature on destination image measurement, all the attributes used in the previous studies were recorded and grouped by the researcher into a "master list" of attributes. Focus group sessions and interviews were conducted to develop multi-item scales capturing various aspects of Eureka Springs' image as a travel destination. Individuals participating in the focus groups and interviews were drawn from various groups such as faculty and staff members, managers of hospitality and retail organizations (hotels, restaurants, and shops) at Eureka Springs, as well as marketing practitioners at Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce. For additional input, various travel literature and promotional brochures regarding Eureka Springs' tourism were reviewed. The results of the literature review, interviews and the focus group sessions were then merged to produce a more complete set of destination attributes. The last step was to have a panel of expert judges in the areas of tourism, marketing, and consumer behavior, examine the complete list of attributes to eliminate redundancies and add missing attributes. The selected 53 destination items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale where 1=*Strongly Disagree (SD)* and 7=*Strongly Agree (SA)*.

Attribute Importance and Attribute Satisfaction

To conduct importance-performance analysis (IPA), it is crucial to determine what attributes to measure; because the usefulness of IPA will be severely compromised if salient features are not included (Martilla and James, 1977). Previous literature showed considerable differences in terms of the number and nature of attributes that are considered as salient to tourist satisfaction with destinations (Chon and Evans, 1989; Chon, Weaver and Kim, 1991; Uysal, Howard, and Jamrozy, 1991; Opperman, 1996; Go and Zhang, 1997; Joppe, Martin, and Waalen, 2001). It is also debaTable whether attributes relevant to different destinations are transferable to different contexts. The attribute list in this study was developed from a comprehensive review of previous destination literature, content analysis of tourism literature, promotion brochures and websites for Eureka Springs, and the employment of qualitative research techniques such as focus group sessions, unstructured personal interviews and managerial judgment.

Destination Components

Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1998) categorized destination components into four A's: 1) Attractions, including natural and artificial sites or events; 2) Amenities including accommodation, food and beverage outlets, entertainment, retailing and other support facilities and services; 3) Access such as local transport and transport terminals; and 4) Ancillary services in the form of local organizations. Laws (1995) classified the elements of tourist destinations into primary and secondary: primary resources include climate, ecology, cultural traditions, traditional architecture and land forms; and secondary resources are the developments introduced specifically for tourists such as hotels, catering, transport, activities and amusements.

Ethos Consulting (1991) identified three main geographic characteristics of tourism: 1) the biophysical environment, further differentiated into landforms, climate, and vegetation; 2) human factors, further divided into land status and access; and 3) natural resource factors, further divided into visual resources, local recreational use, and cultural heritage, etc. Deng, King and Bauer (2002) recognized five major components as contributing to the overall attractiveness of nature-based destinations: 1) tourism resources, including natural and cultural resources; 2) tourist facilities, subdivided into infrastructure, recreational and educational facilities; 3) accessibility, involving external and internal accessibility of the destination; 4) local communities; and 5) peripheral attractions.

Middleton (1988) proposed that the components of tourist destinations could be grouped into: 1) the natural and man-made attractions of an area, 2) its facilities and services, 3) the ease of access to it, 4) the images used to attract tourists to it, and 5) the total cost of the holiday. Handszuh (1995) stated that the core services of quality in tourism are infrastructure, safety/security, hygiene/sanitation, condition of natural environments, consumer protection, and accessibility.

Satisfaction Dimensions

The quality of service attributes acts as one of causal antecedents to customer satisfaction (Otto and Ritchie, 1995; Taylor and Baker, 1994; Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994). For example, the quality of service delivery personnel (Johnson and Zinkham, 1991; Crosby and Cowles, 1986) and physical environment (Bitner, 1992) can have a direct impact on satisfaction with a service experience. Besides, a number of non-quality issues also help form satisfaction judgments (Taylor and Baker, 1994), for example, price and perceived value of services (Stevens, 1992; Keane, 1997), variety of options (Laws, 1995). Weiermair and Fuchs (1999) adopted a multi-attribute model in deciphering tourist satisfaction. They measured a range of quality dimensions such as aesthetics/appearance, security/safety, service orientation, variety/fun, and accessibility of service, in several domains of tourism activities including food and accommodation, attractions, activities, shopping, and transportation.

<u>Attribute List</u>

Drawing upon the most relevant tourism literature and destination attributes applicable to the Eureka Springs situation, an attribute list consisting of 33 items was established. The destination attributes encompassed seven domains of tourism activities: accommodation (6 items), dining (5 items), shopping (4 items), attractions (4 items), activities and events (5 items), environment (4 items), and accessibility (5 items). The choice of attributes for each domain varied with the chosen mix of the seven tourism activities. Attributes such as the variety of options, quality of products, quality of services, and price were assessed for ‘accommodation’, ‘dining’, ‘shopping’, ‘attractions’, and ‘activities and events’. For ‘environment’, features such as safety/security, cleanliness, atmosphere, and local people were evaluated; while for ‘accessibility’, elements such as transportation, parking, and travel information were rated. Along seven-point Likert-scales, tourists were asked to evaluate the importance of each tourist-attracting attribute (1 = *very unimportant* and 7 = *very important*) and their satisfaction with the same attribute (1 = *very dissatisfied* and 7 = *very satisfied*).

Overall Satisfaction

Although multiple-item scales are widely used measures of overall satisfaction, a number of studies have used a summative overall measure of satisfaction (e. g., Andreasen, 1984; Bloemer and Ruyter; Bolton and Lemon, 1999; Crosby and Taylor, 1982; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, and Bryant, 1996; Herberlein, Linz, and Ortiz, 1982; Tse and Wilton, 1988). A single overall measure of satisfaction was used in this study for its ease of use and empirical support. The respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their overall traveling experience along a 7-point Likert scale with 1 being *very dissatisfied* and with 7 being *very satisfied*.

Familiarity

Respondents were asked how many times they have visited Eureka Springs including the current trip. Four choices were provided: 1) first time, 2) two to three times, 3) four to five times, and 4) more than five times.

Destination Loyalty

Attitudinal measurement including repeat purchase intentions and WOM recommendations are most usually used to infer consumer loyalty, and are found to be the pertinent measure (Jones and Sasser, 1995; Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 1995). Prior research has shown that loyal customers are more likely to repurchase a product/service in the future (Hughes, 1995; Petrick, Morais, and Norman, 2001; Sonmez and Graefe, 1998; Petrick, 2003). This is what Oliver (1999) described as 'conative loyalty' in the cognitive-to-action loyalty chain, which is a brand-specific commitment to repurchase. Therefore, one variable which should be related to customer loyalty is intentions to repurchase.

It has also been suggested that loyal visitors are more willing to recommend the product/service to others. Loyal customers are more likely than non-loyal customers to positively discuss past service experiences, providing WOM publicity for the brand at no extra cost (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999; Petrick, 2003). In addition, good correlation has been found between consumers' repurchase intentions and positive WOM referrals (Oh, 2000; Oh and Parks, 1997). Therefore, repurchase and referral intentions make up the most Customer Loyalty Indices (CLIs) (Taylor, 1998). In this study, two single-item measures were used for assessing tourist destination loyalty as the ultimate dependent construct: tourists' intention to revisit Eureka Springs and their willingness to recommend Eureka Springs as a favorable destination to others, with 7-point Likert scale (1=*most unlikely*; 7=*most likely*).

Travel Characteristics

The travel characteristics items included the frequency of visits, purpose for the trip, length of stay, transportation modes, information sources, travel expenses, activities attended (sightseeing, shopping, dining, etc.), to name just a few. The items were derived from several studies such as Um and Crompton (1990), Gartner (1993), and Qu and Li (1997).

Personal Characteristics

The final section was devoted to collecting demographic information about the respondents, including gender, age, educational level, income, and place of residence.

Validity and Reliability

Content and Construct Validity

Validity is the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represents the concept of interest (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998). Validity of a measure can be inferred through two validity checks - content validity and construct validity. Content validity is the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific intended domain of content. The key to content validity lies in the procedures that are used to develop the instrument (Churchill, 2000). For this study, a combination of the in-depth reviews of literature, interviews and focus group sessions was conducted to ensure the inclusion of an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concepts ‘destination image’ and ‘attribute importance/satisfaction’. Then a panel of experts examined the generated list of image attributes to ensure that they adequately covered the most important aspects of the constructs. The survey instrument was sent to the tourism marketers at Eureka Springs’ Chamber of Commerce for their comments and inputs.

Construct validity, an overarching term now seen by most to encompass all forms of validity, refers to the extent to which a measure adequately assesses the theoretical concept it purports to assess (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Construct validation is a complex and on-going endeavor. Theory, research design and analysis have direct bearing on the validation process. No simple metric can be used to quantify the extent to which a measure can be described as construct valid. Researchers typically establish construct validity by correlating a measure of a construct with a number of other measures that should, theoretically, be associated with it (convergent validity) or vary independently of it (discriminant validity). For example, multi-trait multi-method (MTMM) matrix proposed by Campbell and Fiske (1959) assesses convergent and discriminant validity of measures.

The scale used in this study was adapted from established existing measures that have been applied and validated in numerous tourism studies. In addition, the validity of the measurement scale was also assessed via the confirmatory factor analysis. The convergent validity of the scale was measured by tests of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Higher CR and AVE values indicate higher convergent reliability of the measurement. The Discriminant validity is established when the AVE values exceed the square of the correlations between each pair of latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Reliability

Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 1998). Reliability is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for validity. However, since reliability is more easily determined than validity, there has been a greater emphasis on it historically for inferring the quality of measures (Pedhazur and Schmelkin, 1991). For this study, a pilot test was conducted to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The pilot sample size was determined using the confidence interval approach (details for this approach in 'sampling plan'): a sample with 80% accuracy at the 95% confidence level is calculated as n = $\frac{1.96^2(0.5*0.5)}{0.2^2}$ = 25. The first draft of the survey instrument was distributed to 50 randomly selected visitors who stayed at Eureka Springs' hotels and motels. A reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was performed to test the internal consistency of the three measurements: attribute importance (33 items), attribute satisfaction (33 items), and destination image (53 items). An alpha of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable as a good indication of reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

A total of 32 completed surveys were returned. The results of the reliability analysis showed that the scales were internally reliable: alpha = 0.925 for attribute importance, alpha = 0.918 for attribute satisfaction, and alpha = 0.963 for destination image. The alpha values well exceeded the minimum standard (0.70) suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Based on the results of the pilot test and feedback from

Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce, the final version of the survey instrument was developed.

Sampling Plan

Target Population

The target population was all the visitors who stopped by Eureka Springs Welcome Center, stayed at hotels, motels, and B & B, and visited souvenir shops / art galleries during a two-month survey period.

Sample Size

Confidence interval approach was used to determine the sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995). The formula for obtaining 95% accuracy at the 95% confidence level is:

$$n = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2(0.5*0.5)}{0.05^2} = 385$$

Where: n = sample size

z = standard error associated with chosen level of confidence (95%)

p = estimated variability in the population 50%*

q = (1 – p)

e = acceptable error $\pm$ 5% (desired accuracy 95%)

Note: * The amount of variability in the population is estimated to be 50%, which is widely used in social research (e. g., National opinion polls in the USA). From a practical standpoint, most researchers will choose the 50% level of p because it results in the most conservative sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995).

Applying this formula, the sample size was set at 385 at 95% confidence level with 95% desired accuracy. Given that on site survey generally obtains a relatively higher response rate than mail survey, the expected response rate was 50%. Assuming a response rate of 50% and an unusable rate of 10%, a total of 963 (385/0.4) people was approached to participate in the survey. Incentives such as $20 lodging discount coupons and grand prize draw of a 3-night all-inclusive vacation were offered to increase the response rate.

Sampling Approach

A two-stage sampling approach was used in this study: proportionate stratified sampling, and systematic random sampling within each stratum. Firstly, proportionate stratified sampling was applied for deciding on the strata sample size (n). Under proportionate stratified sampling, the strata sample size is made proportional to the strata population size. For example, a stratum containing 1/5 of all the population elements would account for 1/5 of the total sample observations. In this study, the sub-sample size (n or strata sample) within each survey location (stratum) was determined based on total number of visitors in each location (N or strata population) for the previous year and the total sample size determined above (963).

The next step was to select the survey participant using a Systematic Random Sampling (SRS), which involved choosing every k^{th} element after a random start. The interval size (k) for each stratum is calculated as k = N / n (strata population size / strata sample size). In this study, k was determined as 10. The procedure went like this: select a random number from 1 to 10 to start off the survey, and every 10^{th} visitor after the random start was approached.

Table 6 Two-stage Sampling Table (20-day survey period)

Locations	# of Rooms	Occupancy	Strata Pop. (N)	Proportion	Total Sample	Strata Sample (n)	k^{th}
Hotel 1	**81**	**65%**	**53**	**11.4%**	**110**	**5**	**10**
Hotel 2	**125**	**82%**	**103**	**22.2%**	**214**	**11**	**10**
Hotel 3	**81**	**92%**	**75**	**16.1%**	**155**	**8**	**10**
Hotel 4	**58**	**50%**	**29**	**6.3%**	**60**	**3**	**10**

Hotel 5	**72**	**60%**	**43**	**9.4%**	**90**	**5**	**10**
Welcome Center			**80**	**17.3%**	**167**	**8**	**10**
Other Locations			**80**	**17.3%**	**167**	**8**	**10**
Total			**462**	**100%**	**963**		

Survey Procedure

Given that the survey was conducted on site by the staffs working at the welcome center, hotels and shops, it was crucial that the staffs understood the purpose of the survey and followed the survey procedure accurately as described in the survey guidelines. Prior to conducting the survey, an orientation seminar was given to the managers of the welcome center, hotels and shops. At the seminar the managers were provided a copy of guidelines for conducting the survey. The survey guidelines stated the background of the survey, description of the questionnaire, qualification of participants for the survey, and a detailed procedure of the survey. The managers were also encouraged to ensure that the survey assistants fully understood questionnaire contents prior to distribution, and complied with survey procedure. Afterwards, a set of finalized questionnaires along with an instruction letter were sent to the survey locations according to proportionate sub sample size of each location.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics determined mean and standard deviation scores on destination image, attribute importance, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty. In addition, frequency distribution of travel behavior and visitor demographic information was analyzed.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was employed to derive the underlying dimensions of destination image and visitors' attribute satisfaction. To ensure the appropriateness of factor analysis, several assumptions need to be met (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998): 1) the data matrix has sufficient correlations of greater than 0.30 to justify the application of factor analysis; 2) the Bartlett test of sphericity provides the statistical probability of significant correlations among the variables in the entire correlation matrix; 3) the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) is another measure to quantify the appropriateness of factor analysis – an MSA below .50 is unacceptable. The criteria for the number of factors to be extracted are based on eigenvalue, percentage of variance, and significance of factor loadings. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are to be considered significant. The solution that accounts for more than 60% of the total variance is considered to be satisfactory. A variable is considered to be of practical significance and included in a factor when its loading is equal to or greater than $\pm$ 0.35 with a sample size of 250 and above (Hair et al., 1998). Rotation of factors could be either orthogonal, if factors are uncorrelated, or oblique, if factors are correlated.

In order to identify appropriate variables for subsequent application to other statistical techniques, some form of data reduction (summated scale) was employed. According to Hair et al. (1998), summated scales are preferred to factor scores for their generalizability and ease of replication. Therefore, summated scales were created for subsequent analyses in this study.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to confirm the factor structure developed from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA is primarily an exploratory technique because of the researcher's limited control over which variables (indicators) load on each factor (construct). CFA can play a confirmatory role because researchers have complete control over the specification of indicators for each construct. In addition, CFA allows for a statistical test of the goodness-of-fit for the proposed factor solution. CFA is particularly useful in the validation of scales for the measurement of specific constructs.

A variety of fit measures are available for evaluating the measurement model (Reisinger and Turner, 1998), but many of them have fallen out of favor over time. Rigdon (1998) suggested three indices that he thought deserved special attention: the chi-square statistic, the RMSEA, and the CFI. The overall chi-square statistics provides a test of whether the sample covariance matrix is equivalent to the model-implied covariance matrix, within sample error. Typical rules of thumb look for p values larger than .05 or .10. A well-known problem with chi-square statistic is its vulnerability to sample size, which has led researchers to interpret it with caution. The RMSEA attempts to minimize the impact of sample size and to shift the research focus from exact fit to approximate fit. Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggested that RMSEA values between 0 and 0.5 indicate good approximate overall fit, while values above .10 signal significant fit problem. The CFI (Bentler, 1990) was created to compare the fit of the proposed model to a 'worst case' alternative, usually a null baseline model where every measure is modeled as being uncorrelated with every other measure. CFI always ranges between 0 and 1. A well-established rule of thumb for CFI values is .90 or above for adequate fit of the model.

Once the overall model fit has been evaluated, the measurement of each construct can then be assessed for uni-dimensionality and reliability. Uni-dimensionality is an assumption underlying the calculation of reliability and is demonstrated when the indicators of a construct have acceptable fit on a single-factor (one-dimensional) model (Hair et al., 1998). The fit of the measurement model is assessed by significant indicator loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). CR and AVE represent the convergent validity of the measures. These values lie between 0 and 1: the closer to 1, the better the variable acts as an indicator of the latent construct. When the AVE of a construct is less than .50, the validity of this construct is questionable because it indicates that the variance due to measurement error is larger than the variance captured by the construct. The Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the AVE values with the square of the correlations between each pair of constructs. To satisfy the requirements for discriminant validity, the AVE values should exceed the squared correlations values (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the conceptual model that examined the antecedents of destination loyalty. SEM is a method for representing, estimating, and testing a theoretical network of (mostly) linear relations between variables, where those variables may be either directly observable or unobservable, and may only be measured imperfectly (Rigond, 1998). SEM has become a standard tool in many scientific disciplines for investigating the plausibility of theoretical models that might explain the interrelations among a set of variables.

SEM is distinguished from other multivariate techniques by two characteristics: 1) estimation of multiple and interrelated dependence relationships and 2) the ability to represent unobserved concepts in these relationships and account for measurement error in the estimation process. SEM estimates a series of separate, but interdependent, multiple regression equations simultaneously by specifying the structural model used by the statistical program. SEM also has the ability to incorporate latent variables into the analysis; this approach has both practical and theoretical justification by improving statistical estimation, better representing theoretical concepts, and accounting for measurement error (Hair et al., 1998). SEM is a generalization of both regression and factor analysis, and subsumes most linear modeling methods as ‘special cases’ (Rigdon, 1998).

Why Use SEM

SEM offers a number of advantages over other multivariate techniques. First, the method is highly flexible, allowing reciprocal relationships, allowing errors to be correlated or uncorrelated, and allowing the modeling of different types of interaction relationships or experimental effects. Second, SEM allows researchers to explicitly recognize the imperfect nature of their measures by interposing a flexible factor analytic measurement model between the measures and the traits being measured. Third, SEM is a powerful method for effectively dealing with the thorny problems of multicollinearity. Fourth, SEM offers an evocative graphical language, providing a convenient and powerful way to present complex relationships to others not familiar with SEM (Rigdon, 1998).

Application of SEM in Tourism

Although SEM has been widely used in a number of disciplines, including marketing, psychology, sociology, it has been a relatively unexplored concept in travel and tourism discipline. Tourism researchers are often faced with a set of interrelated questions, thus it has become imminent to apply SEM in tourism in order to promote quality research (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). A growing number of researchers have recently used SEM technique to assess various topics in the tourism discipline. Examples can be found in works of Getty and Thompson (1994), Vogt and Fesenmaier (1994), Gunderse, Heide, and Olsson (1996), Lindberg and Johnson (1997), Reisinger and Turner (1998 and 1999), Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002), and Yvette and Turner (1999, 2002).

How to Use SEM

Conducting SEM in an efficient, reliable and successful manner demands a systematic approach. Rigdon (1998) discussed a three-stage process that included conceptualization, execution and interpretation.

Conceptualization

In conceptualization stage, the researchers should first make sure that their research objectives are consistent with SEM and the risks and limitations of SEM are acceptable. Then the researchers must conceptualize the structure of the model, for example, will the model involve single- or multiple-group analysis? Next, the researchers should identify dependent and independent variables for the analysis. The choice of dependent variables depends on questions of managerial relevance or the contents of the data set being analyzed; whereas the choice of independent variables is far more complicated. Researchers should try to include all key predictive variables to avoid specification error. Omitting a significant variable lead to bias in assessing the importance of other variables; and adding irrelevant variables reduces model parsimony and make statistical significance testing of the independent variables less precise (Hair et al., 1998; Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

Researchers should also make certain that their structural model is identified. A necessary condition for the identification is that the number of independent parameters be less than or equal the number of elements of the sample matrix of covariance among the observed variables (Maruyama, 1998). There are some heuristics and rules of thumb available to help researchers check identification in specific situations, such as t-rule, null-b rule, 3-indicator rule, recursive rule (Bollen, 1989). Researchers also should consider the functional form of relations between the variables in the model, although SEM mainly deal with linear relations, there is emerging literature about modeling quadratic and interaction terms. It is also important for researchers to conceptualize plausible alternative models for the selected variables, in order to better understand the implications of their research findings for the primary model of interest, and obtain more diagnostic information from the analysis.

After establishing a set of structural models, researchers must then choose measures for the variables / factors. Good measures should be reliable, meaning free of random error, and valid, meaning unidimentional, with convergent and discriminant validity. As for number of measures per construct, Marsh, Hau and Balla (1996) thought that having more measures is always better, other things equal; because researchers must beware of the identification problems in the measurement model, plus with more measures per variable, researchers have the flexibility to discard measures with poor performance.

Execution

In the execution stage, researchers should first study the distribution of the data, looking for outliers and extreme levels of skew or kurtosis because these unlikely cases may bias SEM results. Researchers should also pay attention to if measures are ordinal or interval because ignoring the special attributes of the data can lead to bias in SEM statistical outputs; although Johnson and Creech (1983) and others indicated that problems are minimized when there are five or more response categories and when the data distribution is normal. One other thorny issue relating to data is the problem of missing data. There are sophisticated imputation procedures available for replacing missing values with likely values. Imputation methods outperform the traditional methods such as list-wise deletion, pair-wise deletion, and mean replacement, which can induce additional bias. Next, researchers must choose the estimation methods. The two most widely used estimation methods are the maximum likelihood method (ML) and the generalized least squares method (GLS). These two methods are rather robust even when data are moderately non-normal (Rigdon, 1998).

Interpretation

SEM analysis typically generates a variety of outputs, which must be interpreted holistically. The outputs fall into five general groups: a) estimates of the designed model parameters, b) estimates of the standard errors for the estimated parameters, 3) estimates for the proportion of variance explained (squared multiple correlations) for the dependent variables, 4) overall goodness-of-fit statistics that assess the overall consistency between the specified model and the data, and 5) diagnostics that aid in pinpointing the sources of any fit problems.

Researchers should start with evaluating the overall model fit, because if the model's fit is not acceptable, then parameter estimates may not be meaningful. There is an array of indices available for assessing model fit. Goodness-of-fit indices measure the correspondence of the actual or observed input (covariance or correlation matrix) to the matrix predicted from the proposed model. There are three types of goodness-of-fit measurement: (1) absolute fit measures; (2) incremental fit or relative measures; and (3) parsimonious fit measures.

Absolute fit measures assess only the overall model fit with no adjustment for the degree of over-fitting that might occur. Incremental fit measures compare the proposed model to another model specified by the researcher. Finally, parsimonious fit measures adjust the measures of fit to provide a comparison between models with differing numbers of estimated coefficients, the purpose being to determine the amount of fit achieved by each estimated coefficient. In order to achieve a better understanding of the acceptability of the proposed model multiple measures should be applied (Hair et al., 1998).

The absolute fit measures provide information on the extent to which the model as a whole provides an acceptable fit to the data, including:

(a) *Chi-square ratio*. A large value of Chi-square indicates a poor fit of the model to the data, while a small value of Chi-square indicates a good fit. However, the Chi-square statistic is quite sensitive in different ways to both small and large sample sizes. In addition, a chi-square test offers only a dichotomous decision strategy implied by a decision rule and cannot be used to quantify the degree of fit along a continuum with some pre-specified boundary (Hu and Bentler, 1995). Thus researchers are encouraged to complement this measure with other measures of fit in all instances.

(b) *Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)*. It measures the relative amount of variances and covariance that are accounted for by the implied model. It is a non statistical measure ranging in value from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). Higher values indicate better fit but no absolute threshold levels for acceptability have been established.

(c) *Root mean square residuals (RMR)* reflect the average amount of variances and covariance not accounted for by the model. The closer the value is to zero the better the fit is. Again no threshold level can be established. The RMR makes most sense when measures are standardized, for then they have a common metric and their residuals have parallel meaning (Maruyama, 1998).

(d) *Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)* attempts to correct for the tendency of the chi-square statistic to reject any specified model with a sufficiently large sample. Values ranging from 0.05 to 0.08 are deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 1998). An empirical examination of several measures found that the RMSEA was best suited to use in a confirmatory or competing models strategy with larger samples (Rigdon, 1996).

The incremental fit measures or relative indices assess the incremental fit of the proposed model compared to a null model (the simplest model that can be theoretically justified). Some of the commonly used indices are:

a) Type I indices directly compare the fit of two different models; for example, the normed fit index (NFI) compares fits of two different models to the same data set. The NFI is widely used but currently not recommended because it is affected by sample size and does poorly for small samples. The NFI is recommended to exceed 0.90 as indicative of a good fit for a proposed model (Maruyama, 1998).

b) Type II indices not only compare models but also include information from the expected value of the models under a central chi-square distribution; more important, these indices are much more consistent across samples sizes than are either absolute or type I indices. One prominent type II index is Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), also known as non normed fit index (NNFI). The TLI is robust across sample size changes but is not bound by 0 and 1, making it more difficult to interpret than an index like NFI (Maruyama, 1998). A second recommended type II index is incremental fit index (IFI).

c) Hu and Bentler (1998) added type III and type IV indices. Type III indices compare models including information about expected value under a non central chi-square distribution, although they have not been as widely used in the SEM literature. The Bentler fit index (BFI) and relative non-centrality index (RNI) are not bound by 0 and 1; whereas the comparative fit index (CFI) adjusts the RNI/BFI so that it falls within the range of 0 to 1, and larger values indicate higher levels of goodness-of-fit. The CFI has found to be more appropriate in a model development strategy or when a smaller sample is available (Rigdon, 1996). Type IV indices compare models while including information from other distribution forms, though at present little work has been done on these indices.

Parsimonious fit measures or adjusted indices relate goodness-of-fit of the model to the number of estimated coefficients required to achieve this level of fit. The basic objective is to assess how the models combine fit and parsimony. One of the adjusted-for-the-degrees-of-freedom measures is parsimonious goodness-of-fit index (PGFI), which takes values between 0 and 1 and the closer to unity, the better the model fit. If there is a drop in PGFI as compared to GFI, the overall fit of the model can be questioned (Hair et al., 1998). Parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI) is a modification of NFI and is mainly used to compare alternative models with different degrees of freedom. Higher values of PNFI are better, though there are no recommended levels of acceptable fit. However, when comparing between models, differences of .06 to .09 are considered to be indicative of substantial model differences (Hair et al., 1998). It should be noted that some of the model indices described above have already built in a control for parsimony, such as TLI and RMSEA.

Next researchers can move on to assess the parameter estimates and also to interpret ancillary results such as the squared multiple correlations (SMC) values and measures of indirect and total effects. Each estimated coefficients can be tested for statistical significance for the hypothesized causal relationship. The SMC for structural equations indicates the amount of variance in each endogenous latent variable accounted for by the independent variables in the relevant structural equation.

LISREL Multi-group Comparisons

Multi-sample structural equations analyses examined whether the hypothesized destination loyalty model was comparable across groups: first time and repeat tourists, and different demographic groups such as age, gender, income, and education. SEM can be used in cross-group comparisons when researchers are interested in comparing structural models in different populations, for instance, groups selected on the basis of some known or unknown selection variables, groups receiving different treatments, and control groups, etc. It allows researchers to discuss comparability of causal processes (relationships) as well as means (levels) in different populations (Maruyama, 1998).

There are different ways comparing solutions across samples. SEM is capable of simultaneously estimating a single solution across a number of samples, according to a multiple-group LISREL model with some or all parameters constrained to be equal over groups. The solution can estimate each sample separately or impose constraints across samples that force parts of the model to be fitted to a single solution. Then the fit of the solution with constraints could be compared with the fit of a solution that allowed the parameters to be estimated separately for each group. By comparing fits of different solutions researchers can draw additional inferences about overall model comparability. It should be noted that in multiple-sample comparisons covariance matrices should always be used because only such matrices can deal adequately with differences in variability across samples (Maruyama, 1998).

Measurement Equality/Invariance (ME/I)

Before comparing the structural model, researchers need to ensure that the theoretical variables in the measurement model are identical in different samples; therefore, the establishment of measurement equality/invariance (ME/I) across samples is a logical prerequisite to conducting multi-group comparison. Vandenberg and Lance (2000) proposed an integrative paradigm for conducting sequences of ME/I tests and referred to the first five of these tests as aspects of measurement invariance, and the next two as testing aspects of structural invariance:

1) an omnibus test of the equality of covariance matrices across groups (invariant covariance matrices);
2) a test of ‘configural invariance’ in which the same pattern of fixed and free factor loadings is specified for each group;
3) a test of ‘metric invariance’ in which factor loadings for like items are invariant across groups (tau equivalent);
4) a test of ‘scalar invariance’ in which intercepts of like items’ regressions on the latent variable are invariant across groups (least frequently conducted test);
5) a test of the null hypothesis that like items’ unique variance are invariant across groups;
6) an omnibus test of the equality of the latent variables’ variance/covariance matrices across groups (a complement to test of ‘metric invariance’ and test of ‘configural invariance’); and
7) a test of the null hypothesis of invariant factor means across groups.

Structural Model Comparisons

To test if a regression equation is equivalent in several populations, researchers can examine if 1) both the intercept and regression coefficients are the same in all groups (equal regressions); 2) the regression coefficients are invariant across all groups (parallel regressions); and 3) only some of the regression coefficients are equal across groups.

LISREL can also help compare means of latent variables in multi-group studies. Since a latent variable is unobservable, it does not have an intrinsic scale, thus no origin nor the unit of measurement. LISREL defined a common scale for the latent variables in all groups by assuming that the means of the latent variables are zero in one group and that the loadings of the observed variables on the latent variables are invariant over groups. Under these conditions it is possible to estimate the means of the latent variables relative to this common scale (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1995).

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA)

Importance-performance analysis assessed how tourists perceived the quality of Eureka Spring's core service competencies, and identified service quality areas that required remedial strategic actions. IPA combined measures of tourists' assessments of the importance of salient attributes and their level of satisfaction with these attributes into a two-dimensional grid. The horizontal axis indicated tourists' satisfaction with the service and service providers' performance on a given attribute, ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied (7-point Likert scale). The vertical axis represented the importance of the attribute to the tourists, ranging from very unimportant to very important (7-point Likert scale). Tourists' satisfaction and importance scores were plotted on IPA grid, which was constructed with the mean values of the importance and satisfaction attribute ratings as the crossing point. IPA generated four quadrants, each suggesting a different marketing strategy. Each attribute was assessed based on the quadrant it fell in.

Interpretations of the IPA plot followed the combination of importance and satisfaction scores of each attribute. For example, attributes that were rated high in importance and high in satisfaction suggested that Eureka Springs was doing a good job and should continue to allocate resources toward these attributes. Attributes with low importance and low satisfaction ratings indicated that these attributes might be of low priority in terms of resource allocation, and further investment might have little strategic advantage. Attributes high in importance and low in satisfaction should deserve particular attention; and Eureka Springs should invest the greatest amount of resources to improve the performance of these attributes. Last, attributes low in importance and high in satisfaction were attributes that Eureka Springs should continue to maintain but not necessarily allocate any additional resources.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Respondents' Travel and Demographic Profiles

A total of 345 questionnaires were returned which was about 90% of the targeted sample size. Table 7 showed that over 60% of the respondents were female who assumed the responsibility to fill out the questionnaire for the whole travel party. The majority of the respondents were aged between 36 and 65 (73%), with college education (75%) including 2-year, 4-year college and post-graduate education. Approximately 35% of visitors' occupation was professional and related, while around 15% of them were retired or not in the workforce, with another 13% were in management position.

Half of the respondents' annual household income ranged from \$50,000 to \$99,999, while nearly 20% of them earned \$100,000 or more each year. The average household size among respondents was 2.55 people, among whom, 0.55 was less than 18 years old and 2 people were 18 and older. Respondents were primarily from five states: Arkansas (21%), Missouri (20%), Oklahoma (18%), Texas (15%), and Kansas (6%).

Table 7 Respondents' Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
Gender			
Male	114	33.6	33.6
Female	225	66.4	100.0
Missing Value	6		

Age			
≤ 21 years old	3	0.9	0.9
22 – 35	56	16.5	17.4
36 – 50	135	39.8	57.2
51 - 65	113	33.3	90.6
> 65 years old	32	9.4	100.0
Missing Value	6		
Education			
High/vocational school	84	25.1	25.1
2 - year college	65	19.5	44.6
4 - year college	110	32.9	77.5
Masters degree	65	19.5	97.0
Doctorate degree	10	3.0	100.0
Missing Value	11		
Occupation			
Professional and related	117	34.8	34.8
Retired/not in the workforce	49	14.6	49.4
Management	45	13.4	62.8
Self – employed	32	9.5	72.3
Administrative support	22	6.5	78.8
Other 10 occupations	71	21.2	100
Missing Value	9		
Annual household income			
< $ 25,000	10	3.2	3.2
$25,000 - $49,999	88	28.3	31.5
$50,000 - $74,999	97	31.2	62.7
$75,000 - $99,999	59	19.0	81.7
≥ $100,000	57	18.3	100.0
Missing Value	34		

Table 8 revealed that one third of the visitors were on their first ever visit (33%) to Eureka Springs, indicating a healthy mix of “new” visitors and loyal, repeat visitors. Indeed, about 36% of the respondents had already made four or more trips to Eureka Springs. For the majority (82%) of the visitors, Eureka Springs was their primary destination of the trip. For those whose primary destination was not Eureka Springs, Branson was reported by the most (10%) as their final destination. As would be expected, vacation/leisure was quoted as the major purpose of the trip for the majority of the visitors (79%).

Over half of the visitors (55%) stayed at Eureka Springs for 1 – 2 days, while more than a third (37%) of them stayed longer, for 3 – 5 days. Only 6% stayed less than a day at the city. The vast majority of visitors traveled to Eureka Springs by auto only (93%). Other forms of transport used were air (4%) and motorcycle (3%). Only 6% of visitors were traveling alone. Approximately half of them (48%) traveled with their spouse, while 19% were traveling with their family and kids, and 26% with friends and relatives. The average travel party size among visitors to Eureka Springs was 2.6 people, among whom, 0.4 were less than 18 years old and 2.2 people were 18 and older.

Two key sources emerged for visitors to learn about Eureka Springs: previous trip(s) cited by 192 respondents and word-of-mouth cited by 168 respondents. The Internet (61) and travel brochures (52) were both cited by more than 50 respondents. The dominance of previous visits and word-of-mouth indicated the important role played by "informal" information sources in promoting Eureka Springs as a travel destination.

Table 8 Respondents' Travel Profile

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Frequency of visits			
First time	114	33.2	33.2
2 – 3 times	104	30.3	63.6
4 – 5 times	42	12.2	75.8
> 5 times	83	24.2	100.0
Missing Value	2		
Primary destination			
Yes	281	81.9	81.9
No	62	18.1	100.0
Missing Value	2		
Final destination			
Branson, MO	36	58.1	58.1
12 cities, AR	16	25.8	83.9

10 cities, 6 states	10	16.1	100.0
Primary purpose of visit			
Vacation/pleasure/leisure	269	78.6	78.6
Business/professional	20	5.8	84.5
Wedding/honeymoon	14	4.1	88.6
Convention/exhibition	11	3.2	91.8
En route to somewhere else	11	3.2	95.0
Attend special events	9	2.6	97.7
Visit friends/relatives	5	1.5	99.1
Shopping	3	0.9	100.0
Trip duration			
1 – 2 days	187	54.5	54.5
3 – 5 days	127	37.0	91.5
Less than 1 day	17	5.0	96.5
A week	7	2.0	98.5
Brief stop	4	1.2	99.7
More than a week	1	0.3	100.0
Missing Value	2		
Mode of transportation			
Auto only	316	92.9	92.9
Air and auto	15	4.4	97.4
Motorcycle	5	1.5	98.8
Auto and motorcycle	4	1.2	100.0
Missing Value	5		
Travel party			
With spouse	164	48.0	48.0
With friends/relatives	88	25.7	73.7
With family and kids	64	18.7	92.4
By yourself	21	6.1	98.5
With business associates	5	1.5	100.0
Missing Value	3		
Information Sources			
Previous trips	192	37.2	37.2
Word-of-mouth	168	32.6	69.8
Internet	61	11.8	81.6
Brochure	52	10.1	91.7
Advertisements	31	6.0	97.7
Welcome center	10	1.9	99.6
Travel agent	2	0.4	100.0

Underlying Dimensions of 'Attribute Satisfaction'

In order to verify the pre-specified dimensions of tourists' satisfaction, exploratory factor analysis was performed. Factor analysis helps obtain a relatively smaller number of dimensions that explain most of the variations among the satisfaction attributes. Since the researcher strongly felt that many of these constructs are correlated conceptually, a principle axis factoring using Oblimin rotation was applied. Oblique rotation assumes that factors are correlated to each other, which is more justifiable and more realistic in social sciences.

Testing Assumptions

To determine whether the data were appropriate for common factor analysis, data set was examined to ensure that assumptions were met. The correlation data matrix was inspected to ensure sufficient correlations to justify the application of factor analysis. If no substantial number of correlations greater than 0.30 exists, then factor analysis is probably inappropriate. Bartlett's test of sphericity (using a chi-square test) statistically tests for the presence of correlations among the variables; and the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) is another way to quantify the degree of inter-correlations. For data to be appropriate for factor analysis, the result of the Bartlett's test should be significant and the MSA value should be interpreted with the following guidelines: above 0.80, meritorious; 0.70 – 0.79, middling; 0.60 – 0.69, mediocre; 0.50 – 0.59, miserable; and below 0.50, unacceptable. Measure of Sampling Adequacy for each variable can be tested from the anti-image correlation matrix. Generally, the diagonals of the matrix should be at least above 0.5.

Visual inspection of the correlation matrices revealed that all correlations were significant at 0.01 level. This provides an adequate basis to proceed to the next level, the empirical examination of the overall significance of the correlation matrix. As the following Table 'KMO and Barlett's Test' showed, the Barlett test was significant at .000, and the KMO-MSA overall value was above .80, indicating that data were suitable for factor analysis. The individual MSA values of each variable were all above 0.9, well exceeding the MSA threshold value of 0.5.

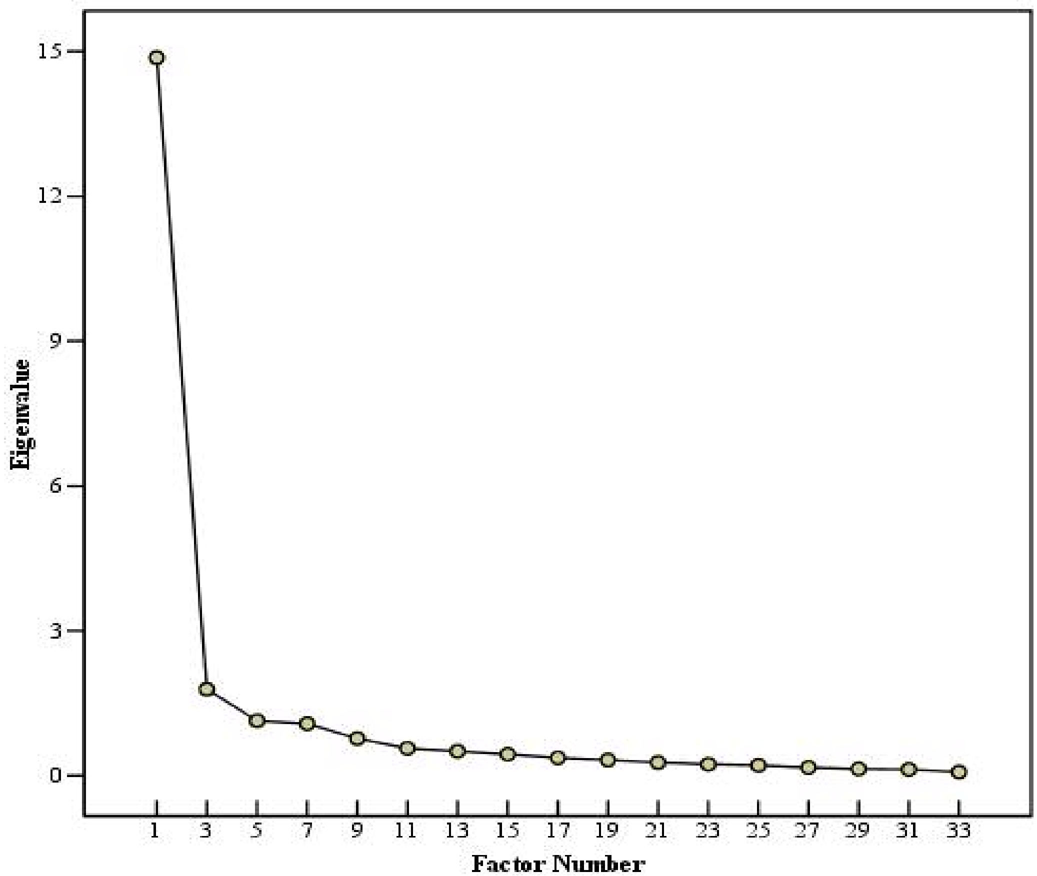
Table 9 KMO and Bartlett's Test for 'Attribute Satisfaction'

KMO - MSA	**0.924**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	5168.565
df	528
Sig.	**0.000**

Deriving Factors and Assessing Overall Fit

The criteria for the number of factors to be extracted were based on the size of eigenvalues, the percentage of variance explained, the item communalities, the scree plot, and the pattern of factor loadings. Only factors with eigenvalue equal to or greater than 1 were considered as significant. The rationale for this is that any individual factor should account for the variance of at least one single variable if it is to be retained for interpretation. To ensure practical significance for the derived factors, the solution that accounted for at least 60% of the total variance was regarded as satisfactory. A variant of the percentage of variance criterion involves selecting enough factors to achieve adequate representation for each of the variables, as indicated by the communality for each variable. The scree plot (see Figure 6) is used to visually identify the optimum number of factors to extract. The cutoff point is usually the point at which the curve first begins to straighten out. Factor loadings represent the correlation between an original variable and its factor. To be considered practically and statistically significant, loadings of 0.3 or above are required for sample size of 350 or greater (Hair et al., 1998).

Figure 6 Scree Plot for 'Attribute Satisfaction'



Seven factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 were generated, which explained about 71% of the total variance (see Table 10). The communalities varied from 0.50 to 0.92, suggesting that the variance in each original variable was reasonably explained by the seven common factors taken together. The factor loadings for the 33 variables ranged from 0.38 to 0.89, above the suggested threshold value of 0.30 for practical and statistical significance. The loadings also presented a clean and highly interpretable solution: the 33 variables loaded significantly on seven factors as the researcher conceptualized - lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility; no variables loaded significantly on more than one factor. The Cronbach's Alphas for the seven factors were robust, ranging from 0.85 to 0.91, well above the generally agreed upon lower limit of 0.60 for research at exploratory stage (Nunnally, 1979), indicating high internal consistency among the variables within each factor.

Table 10 Underlying Dimensions of 'Attribute Satisfaction'

	Eigen Value	Variance Explained	Cronbach's α	Factor Loadings	Communalities
F1 Shopping	14.87	45.06	0.85		
Quality of merchandise				0.82	0.74
Reasonable price of merchandise				0.63	0.59
Variety of shops				0.58	0.61
Friendliness of service				0.61	0.54
F2 Activities and events	2.63	8.00	0.86		
Variety of special events/festivals				0.85	0.76
Variety of spa/massage/healing options				0.72	0.55
Variety of evening entertainment				0.62	0.53
Variety of outdoor recreation				0.58	0.61
Reasonable price for activities and events				0.38	0.63
F3 Lodging	1.79	5.42	0.90		
Uniqueness of lodging				0.89	0.82
Variety of lodging options				0.80	0.72
Historic interests of lodging				0.61	0.50
Service in lodging facilities				0.53	0.71
Reasonable price of meals				0.45	0.50
Quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities				0.45	0.64
F4 Accessibility	1.59	4.82	0.91		
Availability of local parking				0.73	0.56
Convenience of local transportation				0.71	0.69
Availability of travel information				0.67	0.73
Helpfulness of welcome center				0.62	0.62
Ease of access				0.60	0.56
F5 Attractions	1.14	3.45	0.85		
Variety of historic/cultural sites				-0.73	0.92
Variety of natural attractions				-0.64	0.79
Variety of cultural options				-0.55	0.72
Reasonable price for sightseeing				-0.38	0.64
F6 Environment	1.11	3.37	0.89		
Peaceful and restful atmosphere				0.69	0.75

Cleanliness				0.65	0.77
Friendliness of local people				0.62	0.70
Safety and security				0.48	0.58
F7 Dining	1.08	3.26	0.87		
Quality of food				0.83	0.77
Variety of cuisine				0.75	0.63
Service in restaurants				0.74	0.69
Convenience of meals				0.71	0.58
Reasonable price of meals				0.62	0.62

*Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin Rotation (list-wise deletion n = 197)
*Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

As indicated in Table 10, factor one was represented by four variables depicting tourists' shopping experience, i. e., variety of shops, quality of merchandise, friendliness of service, and reasonable price of merchandise. It was hence labeled 'shopping'. Factor three explained approximately 6% of the variance, with an engenvalue of 1.9.

Factor two was converged by five items symbolizing the city's attractiveness in offering variety of outdoor recreation, healing options, evening entertainment, plus special events, and charging reasonable price for these activities and events. This factor was named 'activities and events'. Factor two represented about 4% of the total variance in the data, with an eigenvalue of 1.3.

Factor three composed of six items, all closely related to tourists' lodging experience: variety of lodging options, uniqueness of lodging, historical interest of lodging, quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities, service in lodging facilities, and reasonable price of accommodation. It was accordingly named 'lodging'. Factor three accounted for about 7% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 2.4.

Factor four was labeled 'accessibility' since the items described the accessibility of the city, including ease of access, convenience of local transportation, availability of local parking, availability of travel information, and helpfulness of welcome center. Factor four reflected around 3% of the total variance with an engenvalue of 1.1.

The five items formulating factor five introduced the city's variety of historic sites, natural attractions, plus cultural options, and reasonable price for sightseeing. It was therefore named "attractions". Factor five had an engenvalue of 1.6, accounting for around 5% of the total variance.

Factor six reflected respondents' feelings towards the travel environment, hence the name 'environment'. It included safety and security, cleanliness, peaceful atmosphere, and friendliness of local people. Approximately 4% of the variance was captured by factor six that had an engenvalue of 1.2.

Factor seven consisted of five items related to tourists' dining experience: variety of cuisine, quality of food, convenience of meals, service in restaurants, and reasonable price of meals. It was thus labeled 'dining'. Factor seven explained 42% of the variance in the data, with an eigenvalue of 13.9.

Underlying Dimensions of 'Destination Image'

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to determine the underlying dimensionality of 'destination image' by analyzing patterns of correlations among the 53 image attributes. To test the assumptions for conducting the EFA, the Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy and the Barlett's test of sphericity were examined, which were 0.933 and 0.000, respectively, suggesting that the data were suitable for factor analysis (see Table 11). Principle axis factoring extraction method with oblimin rotation was adopted because the underlying factors were more than likely to be correlated with each other.

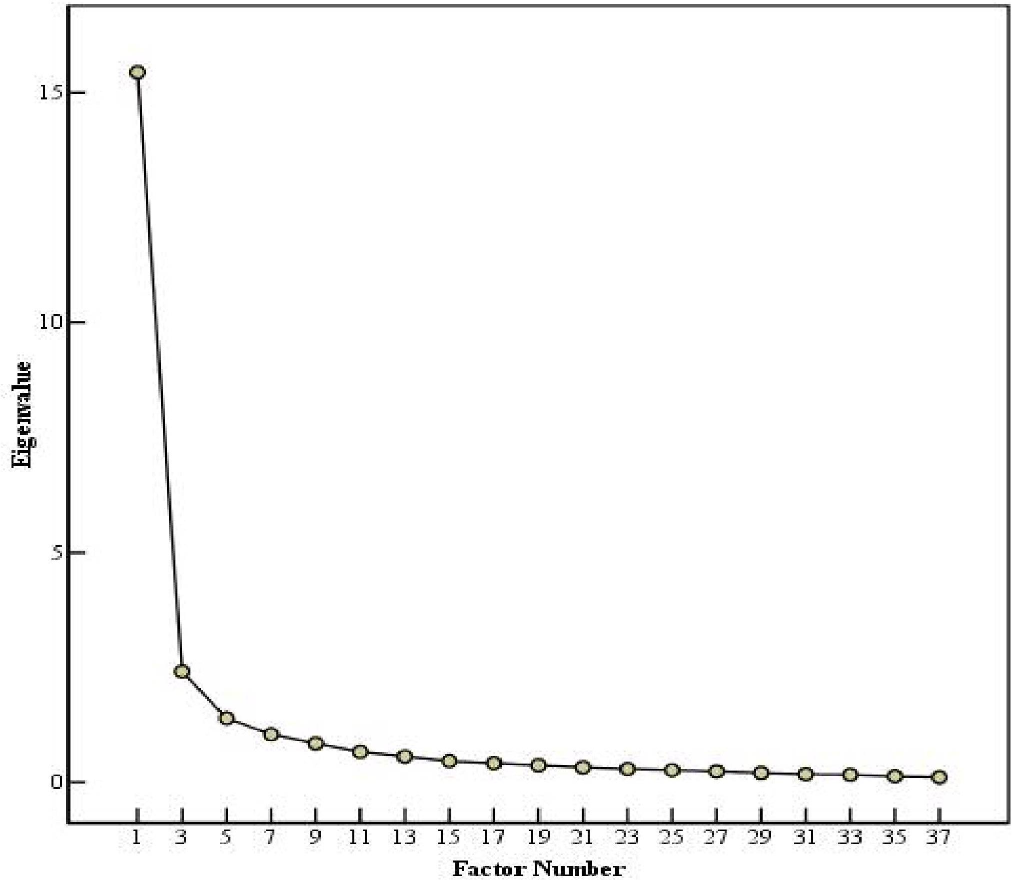
Table 11 KMO and Bartlett's Test for 'Destination Image'

KMO - MSA	**0.93**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	6,806.85
df	666
Sig.	**.000**

A range of cut-off criteria were used to determine the number of factors derived, such as eigenvalues, percentage of variance, item communalities, and factor loadings. Items with loadings lower than 0.4 and with loadings higher than 0.4 on more than one factor were eliminated (Hatcher, 1994). A nine-factor solution, with 37 variables being retained, was chosen representing approximately 75.9% of the total variance (see Table 12). Although only seven factors had eigenvalues greater than 1.0, the scree plot (see Figure 7) showed that the largest drop in % variance captured happened between nine and ten factors, suggesting that a nine-factor solution may be appropriate. Both seven-factor and nine-factor solutions were analyzed, and the loadings of the nine-factor model presented a cleaner and more interpretable solution than the seven-factor model.

The communalities of the 37 variables ranged from 0.45 to 0.90, suggesting that the variances of each original variable (from 45% to 90%) were reasonably explained by the nine-factor solution. Factor loadings of the variables ranged from 0.41 – 0.96. The Cronbach's alpha for the nine factors varied from 0.81 to 0.93, suggesting high internal consistency. The nine factors were labeled based on the core variables that constituted them.

Figure 7 Scree Plot for 'Destination Image'



As shown in Table 12, factor one 'travel environment' captured 41.74% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 15.44. It consisted of five variables: safe and secure environment, clean and tidy environment, tranquil and restful atmosphere, friendly and helpful local people, and pleasant weather.

Factor two 'natural attractions' had an eigenvalue of 3.48 and explained 9.4% of the total variance. It involved 7 variables: scenic mountains and valleys, breathtaking scenery and natural attractions, gorgeous gardens and springs, fabulous scenic drive, picturesque parks / lakes / rivers, unspoiled wilderness and fascinating wildlife, and spectacular caves and underground formations.

Factor three 'entertainment and events' included five variables: colorful nightlife, wide variety of entertainment, tempting cultural events and festivals, wide variety of shows / exhibitions / fairs, and excellent quality and fun country / western music. It accounted for 6.5% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 2.4.

Two variables were entailed in factor four 'historic attractions': vintage buildings and distinctive history and heritage. It explained 3.87% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.43.

Factor five 'infrastructure' included three variables: wide choice of accommodations, wide variety of shop facilities, and wide selection of restaurants /cuisine. It had an eigenvalue of 1.16, explaining 3.74% of the total variance.

Factor six 'accessibility' incorporated four variables: available parking downtown, easy-to-use and affordable trolley system, easy access to the area, and well-communicated traffic flow and parking information. It represented 3.14% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.16.

Three variables were encompassed in factor seven 'relaxation': great place for soothing the mind and refreshing the body, spiritual rejuvenation, and relaxing day spa and healing getaway. This factor had an eigenvalue of 1.04, reflecting 2.8% of the total variance.

Factor eight 'outdoor recreation' included four variables: 'good facilities for golfing', enormous opportunities for outdoor recreations, terrific place for hiking / picnicking / camping / hunting, exciting water sports / activities. This factor represented 2.43% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 0.9.

Factor nine 'price and value' captured 2.27% of the total variance with an engenvalue of 0.84. Four variables were contained in this factor: reasonable price for food and accommodation, good value for money, reasonable price for attractions and activities, and good bargain shopping.

Table 12 Underlying Dimensions of 'Destination Image'

	Eigen Value	Variance Explained	Cronbach's α	Factor Loadings	Communalities
F1 Travel Environment	15.44	41.74%	0.86		
safe and secure environment				0.73	0.71
clean and tidy environment				0.64	0.71
friendly and helpful local people				0.56	0.67
tranquil and restful atmosphere				0.55	0.70
pleasant weather				0.41	0.49
F2 Natural Attractions	3.48	9.40%	0.93		
scenic mountain and valleys				-0.82	0.74
breathtaking scenery and natural attractions				-0.80	0.80
gorgeous gardens and springs				-0.79	0.79
fabulous scenic drive				-0.68	0.69
picturesque parks/lakes/rivers				-0.67	0.78
unspoiled wilderness and fascinating wildlife				-0.58	0.66
spectacular caves and underground formations				-0.47	0.56
F3 Entertainment and Events	2.40	6.50%	0.90		
wide arrays of shows/exhibitions				-0.75	0.76
tempting cultural events and festivals				-0.75	0.74
excellent quality and fun country/western music				-0.74	0.69
colorful nightlife				-0.59	0.61
wide variety of entertainment				-0.58	0.65
F4 Historic Attractions	1.43	3.87%	0.83		
distinctive history and heritage				0.80	0.79
vintage buildings				0.69	0.62
F5 Infrastructure	1.39	3.74%	0.84		
wide selection of restaurants/cuisine				-0.77	0.71
wide variety of shop facilities				-0.68	0.71
wide choice of accommodations				-0.53	0.52
F6 Accessibility	1.16	3.14%	0.81		
well communicated traffic flow and parking information				0.73	0.73
available parking downtown				0.62	0.59
easy access to the area				0.56	0.59
easy-to-use and affordable trolley system				0.41	0.45

F7 Relaxation	1.04	2.80%	0.84		
relaxing day spa and healing getaway				0.70	0.68
great place for soothing the mind and refreshing the body				0.67	0.68
spiritual rejuvenation				0.66	0.68
F8 Outdoor Activities	0.90	2.43%	0.88		
exciting water sports/activities (boating, fishing, etc)				0.79	0.80
terrific place for hiking/picnicking/camping/hunting				0.64	0.69
enormous opportunities for outdoor recreation				0.45	0.66
good facilities for golfing				0.43	0.65
F9 Price and Value	0.84	2.27%	0.89		
reasonable price for food and accommodation				-0.96	0.90
good value for money				-0.70	0.76
reasonable price for attractions and activities				-0.67	0.73
good bargain shopping				-0.46	0.66

*Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin Rotation (list-wise deletion n = 238)

*Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis is primarily an exploratory technique due to its atheoretical and inductive approach to model building. This runs the risk of capitalizing on chance variation in sample composition. Since there are an almost infinite number of samples that could be drawn from a population, an inductive approach may tell more about the idiosyncrasies of the particular sample than the processes that generated the data. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of formal statistical tests and many subjective and arbitrary decision rules in EFA.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), however, can play a confirmatory role because it allows for statistical tests for the model and provides a more formal approach to examining theory-based prediction of dimensional structure. CFA is a deductive approach to model building. The researchers specify *a priori*, rather than being told, the number of factors and the relationships between items and factors. CFA allows the estimation of standard errors and the calculation of significance tests for factor loadings and other model parameters. It provides statistical measures and tests of overall or 'global' fit for the proposed factor solution. These tests assess the likelihood of obtaining the data, given the specified model. In addition, CFA provides estimates of the error variance or measurement error of each item as a measure of the underlying factors. In this study, the confirmatory factor analysis was employed to examine the viability of the factor models for 'tourist satisfaction' and 'destination image' generated from the previous exploratory factor analysis.

Dealing with Missing Data

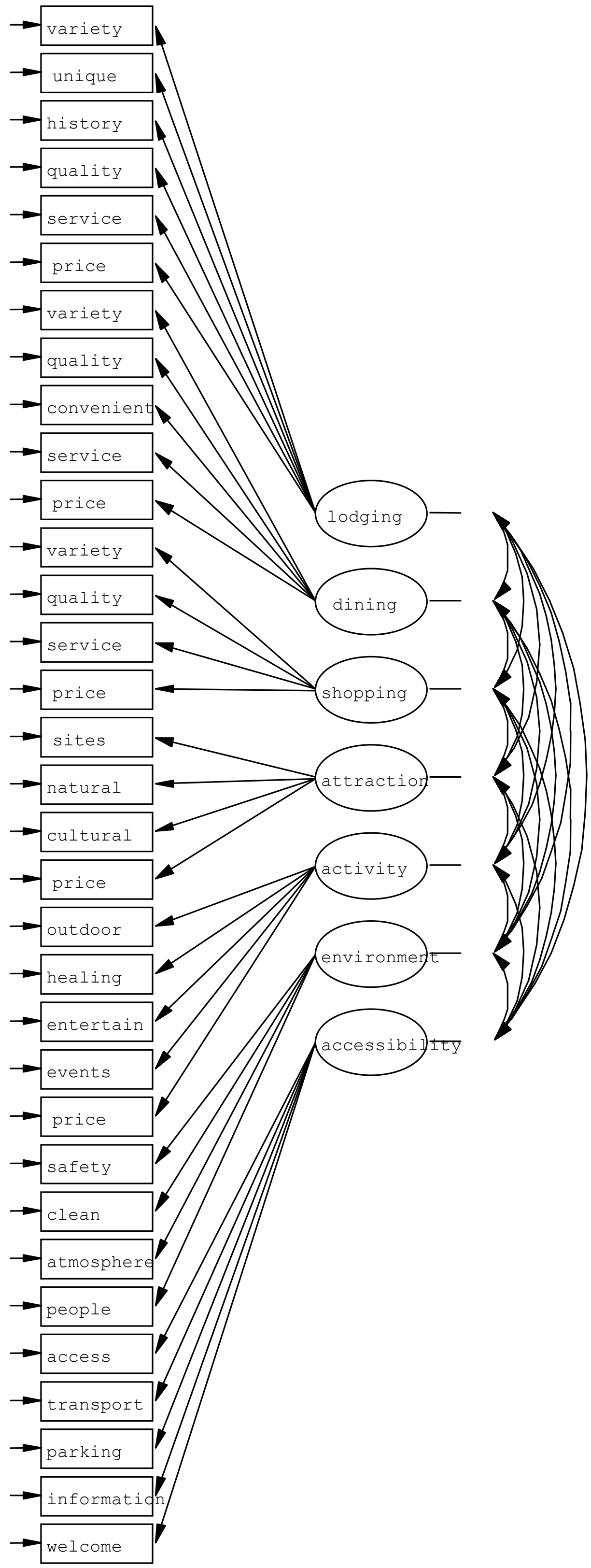
Missing data can have a profound effect on calculating the input data matrix and estimating the model. There are many methods available for 'solving' the missing data problem, including list-wise or pair-wise deletion, mean replacement, and imputation. List-wise deletion (where an entire case is deleted if any value in the case is missing) can take a tremendous toll on sample size and may include new bias. Pair-wise deletion (where each correlation or covariance is computed from all cases that have valid values for the two variables involved) can lead to input matrices behaving poorly in statistical terms, and is inconsistent with some SEM estimation method (Rigdon, 1998). One of the widely used methods for treating missing data is mean substitution, using the mean value of a variable based on all valid responses; however, there are several disadvantages of mean substitution, such as making the variance estimates invalid, distorting the actual distribution of data values, and depressing the observed correlation (Hair, et al. 1998).

Another category of remedies for handling missing data is through one of the many imputation methods (the process of estimating the missing value based on valid values of other variables and/or cases in the sample). Recent research has shown that the EM imputation method introduces the least bias into the estimated models (Brown, 1994). EM approach is an iterative two-stage method in which the E-stage makes the best possible estimates of the missing data, and then the M-stage makes estimates of the parameters (means, standard deviations, or correlations) assuming the missing data were replaced. The two-stage process continues until the change in the estimated values is negligible, which then replace the missing data (Hair, et al. 1998). For this study, all the missing values for the variables analyzed were replaced with likely values imputed from EM procedure, available in SPSS 12.0 ‘missing value analyses’.

Confirmatory Factor Model for Attribute Satisfaction

The hypothesized model posited seven factors or latent constructs: lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility, with each set of the variables acting as indicators of the separate constructs. Each of the 33 observed variables or indicators was directly affected by a unique unobserved error. Each error was uncorrelated with other errors, and all errors were uncorrelated with the unobserved factors. Since the researcher expected correlations between the factors, the factors were allowed to correlate with one another (see Figure 8). The covariance matrix was used as the input matrix to estimate the model (see Appendix Table I).

Figure 8 Confirmatory Factor Model for 'Attribute Satisfaction'



Offending Estimates

The results of the measurement model must first be examined for offending estimates, which are coefficients that exceeded acceptable limits (Hair et al., 1998). The common examples are: (1) negative error variances for any construct; (2) standardized coefficients exceeding or very close to 1.0; (3) very large standard errors associated with any estimated coefficients (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). These offending estimates must be corrected prior to evaluating the model results. No offending error variances, loadings or standard errors were found in the LISREL estimates for the measurement model; therefore the researcher can proceed to assessing the goodness-of-fit of the confirmatory factor analysis.

Overall Model Fit

The assessment of model fit starts with the overall model. In confirmatory factor analysis, overall model fit depicts the degree to which the specified indicators represent the hypothesized constructs. Three types of overall model fit measures are: (1) absolute fit measures such as Chi-square test, the goodness-of-fit (GFI) index, and the root mean residual (RMR); (2) incremental fit measures such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Normed Fit Index (NFI); and (3) parsimonious fit measures.

The absolute fit indices directly assess how well an a priori model reproduces the sample data. The incremental fit indices measure the proportionate improvement in fit by comparing a target model with a more restricted, nested baseline model. The parsimonious indices are non independent of the other two categories because some of the absolute fit and incremental fit indices have already adjusted in their formulas for the degrees of freedom, such as RMSEA and TLI. In other words, such indices are in fact already parsimonious indexes. Table 13 provided the fit measures generated from LISREL.

The first absolute fit measure is the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic. The χ^2 value (1,620 with 474 degrees of freedom) has a statistical significance level of 0.000, below the minimum level of 0.05. This statistic failed to support that the differences of the predicted and actual models are non significant. Although chi-square values did not confirm a model fit, it is generally agreed that the chi-square value should be used as a guide rather than an absolute index of fit because of its sensitivity to sample size, departures from multivariate normality, and model complexity (Anderson and Gerbin, 1984). With a sample of larger than 200, the chi square is almost always significant. Thus, many other fit indices were developed to assess the degree of congruence between the model and the data, rather than to test null hypotheses as χ^2 statistic does.

The goodness-of-fit index (GFI = 0.77) represents the overall degree of fit but this index is also very much influenced by sample size (Hu and Bentler, 1995). The root mean residual (RMR) indicated the average residuals between observed and estimated input matrices. The RMR of .079 was deemed acceptable according to Hu and Bentler (1999), who recommended a cutoff RMR value close to .08 for a relatively good fit. As a complement to the basic measures, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation was examined and found to be marginal (RMSEA = 0.086): a value of about 0.08 or less would indicate a reasonable approximate overall fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

While the absolute measures might fall within reasonable levels, the incremental fit indices were also examined to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives. The incremental fit indices are further divided into types 1, 2 and 3. According to Hu and Bentler (1995), the type-2 and type-3 indices perform much better than either the absolute fit indices or type-1 incremental indices because they are less susceptible to sample size. Some commonly used incremental fit measures are the CFI (type III), the TLI (type II), and the NFI (type I), which were 0.97, 0.96, and 0.95 respectively. These incremental fit measures well exceeded the recommended level of 0.90.

In summary, the various measures of overall model goodness-of-fit suggested an acceptable model of the hypothesized constructs, particularly considering the attenuation in the fit measures for large models and large sample sizes.

Table 13 Fit Indices for 'Attribute Satisfaction'

χ^2 with degrees of freedom	1,620.31 with 474 df (p = .000)
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.770
RMSEA	0.086
RMR	0.079
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.950
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	0.960
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.970

Measurement Model Fit

With the overall model being accepted, each of the constructs can be evaluated separately by 1) assessing the convergent validity of the constructs by examining the statistical significance of the indicator loadings and calculating the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE); and 2) assessing the discriminant validity of the constructs by inspecting the correlation (phi) matrix and comparing the AVE with the squared correlations from the phi matrix.

First, for each variable the *t* value associated with each of the loadings was significant at the 0.01 level. The results indicated that all variables were significantly related to their specified constructs, verifying the posited relationships among indictors and constructs. Next, estimates of the reliability and variance-extracted measures for each construct were assessed to see if the specified indicators were sufficient in their representation of the constructs. The results of standard loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) were shown in Table 14. The composite reliabilities ranged from 0.86 to 0.92, exceeding the suggested level of 0.70. AVE measures the amount of variance for the specified indicators captured by a construct, in relation to the variance due to random measurement error. The AVE values ranged from 0.54 to 0.73, all exceeding the minimum cutoff of 0.50. This suggested that the seven constructs explained a good amount of variance in their respective indicators taken together. The results supported the convergent validity of the scale.

Table 14 CR and AVE for 'Attribute Satisfaction'

	Std. Loading	CR*	AVE*
Lodging		0.88	0.55
variety	0.80		
uniqueness	0.79		
Historic interests	0.66		
Quality and cleanliness	0.74		
service	0.81		
price	0.67		
Dining		0.90	0.64
variety	0.79		
quality	0.85		
convenience	0.78		
service	0.82		
price	0.79		
Shopping		0.87	0.63
variety	0.80		
quality	0.88		
service	0.78		

price	0.75		
Attractions		0.92	0.74
Historic attractions	0.93		
Natural attractions	0.90		
Cultural options	0.81		
price	0.81		
Activities and Events		0.87	0.57
Outdoor recreation	0.76		
Healing options	0.72		
Evening entertainment	0.75		
Events and festivals	0.84		
price	0.76		
Environment		0.89	0.72
Safety and security	0.80		
cleanliness	0.86		
Peaceful atmosphere	0.85		
Friendly people	0.80		
Accessibility		0.86	0.56
Ease of access	0.72		
Convenience of transportation	0.78		
Local parking	0.58		
Travel information	0.87		
Welcome center	0.80		

* Note: Computation of reliability and variance extracted for each construct

$$\text{Construct reliability (CR)} = \frac{(\text{Sum of standardized loadings})^2}{(\text{Sum of standard. loadings})^2 + \text{Sum of indicator measurement error}}$$

$$\text{Variance extracted (AVE)} = \frac{\text{Sum of squared standardized loadings}}{\text{Sum of squared standard loadings} + \text{Sum of indicator measurement error}}$$

The results also offered evidence of discriminant validity. First, none of the correlations between the latent constructs were particularly large, ranging from 0.5 to 0.8 (see Table 15). Second, all squared correlations from Table 15 were less than the AVE values for the corresponding latent variables (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 15 Correlation matrix for 'Attribute Satisfaction'

	Lodging	Dining	Shopping	Attractions	Activities & event	Environment	Accessibility
Lodging	1.00						
Dining	0.60	1.00					
Shopping	0.64	0.69	1.00				
Attractions	0.60	0.59	0.80	1.00			
Activities & events	0.50	0.50	0.67	0.69	1.00		
Environment	0.74	0.65	0.66	0.62	0.52	1.00	
Accessibility	0.60	0.56	0.64	0.69	0.57	0.63	1.00

<u>Summary</u>

The overall model goodness-of-fit results and the measurement model assessments lend support for confirmation of the proposed seven-factor model for tourists' attribute satisfaction, consisting of lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility. All the 33 variables had significant loadings on the seven constructs.

For 'lodging', six variables were extracted, including variety of lodging options, uniqueness of lodging, historical interest of lodging, quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities, service in lodging facilities, and reasonable price of accommodation. For 'dining', five variables were loaded: variety of cuisine, quality of food, convenience of meals, service in restaurants, and reasonable price of meals. 'Shopping' dimension constituted four items: variety of shops, quality of merchandise, friendliness of service, and reasonable price of merchandise. Four attributes loaded onto 'attractions', including variety of historic sites, variety of natural attractions, variety of cultural options, and reasonable price for sightseeing. 'Activities and events' entailed five items: variety of outdoor recreation, variety of healing options, variety of evening entertainment, variety of special events, and reasonable price for activities and events. There were four variables grouped under 'environment', namely safety and security, cleanliness, peaceful atmosphere, and friendliness of local people. As for ‘accessibility’, five variables were extracted: ease of access, convenience of local transportation, availability of local parking, availability of travel information, and helpfulness of welcome center.

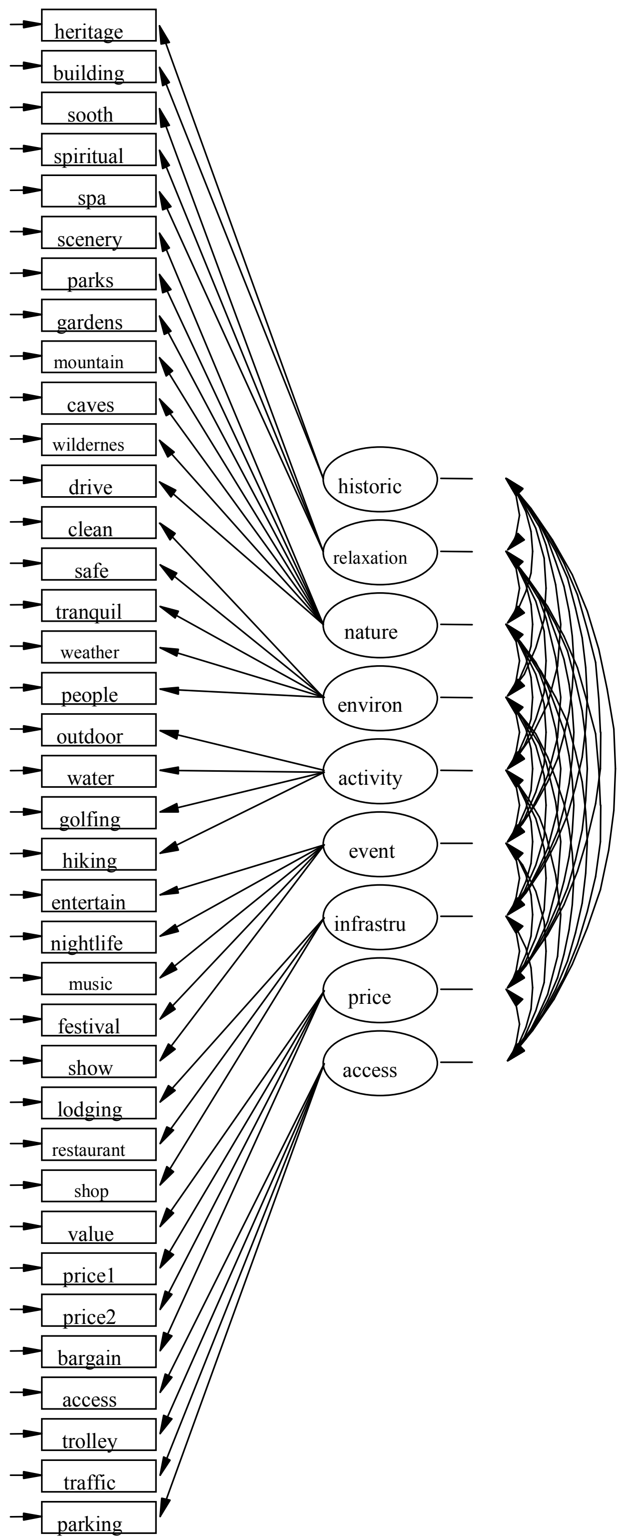
Creating Summated Scales

In order to identify appropriate variables for subsequent statistical analysis, summated scales were formed by pooling several individual variables into a single composite measure. Summated scales help overcome to some extent the measurement error inherent in all measured variables, and provide a way to represent the multiple aspects of a concept in a single measure. The objective is to increase the reliability of the measurement through multiple indicators, and to allow the researcher to obtain a more “well-rounded” perspective of a concept while maintain parsimony in the number of variables in the multivariate models (Hair et al, 1998). In this study, all of the variables loading significantly on a factor were combined and the average score of the variables was used as a replacement variable. As a result, seven new variables were created and used as manifest variables for the latent variable ‘attribute satisfaction’ in the subsequent SEM: lodging (mean = 6.0), dining (mean = 5.8), shopping (mean = 5.7), attractions (mean = 5.6), activities and events (mean = 5.2), environment (mean = 6.4), and accessibility (mean = 5.6) (1 = strongly dissatisfied and 7 = strongly satisfied).

Confirmatory Factor Model for Destination Image

The ‘destination image’ model (see Figure 9) was represented by nine latent constructs: travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, travel infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, and price and value. The 37 observed or manifest variables served as indicators of the nine constructs.

Figure 9 Confirmatory Factor Model for Destination Image



The nine constructs were hypothesized to be correlated; while the error terms of the 37 indicators were hypothesized to be uncorrelated with each other, and were also uncorrelated with the indicators. The covariance matrix was presented in the appendix Table II.

Overall Model Fit

Before evaluating the model fit, the LISREL output was scanned and no offending estimated coefficients were found. The researcher started with examining the overall model fit with several goodness-of-fit measures (Table 16). Absolute fit measures include Chi-square test, the goodness-of-fit (GFI) index, and the root mean residual (RMR). They provide information about how closely the models fitted compare to a perfect fit; however they ignore variability between data sets in how poorly any model could possibly fit.

The χ^2 value (1,645 with 593 degrees of freedom) was statistically significant at 0.000. As noted before, unless the proposed model is perfectly correct in the statistical population, the behavior of the χ^2 are very much a function of sample size; and large sample size usually leads to large χ^2 and thus rejection of the model. The goodness-of-fit index with a marginal value of 0.79 is also vulnerable to sample size. As a result, alternative fit indices less sensitive to sample sizes were employed for evaluating the model fit. The root mean residual (RMR = 0.079) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.073) were within the recommended threshold value of 0.08, indicating an acceptable level of overall fit.

Incremental fit measures assess the incremental fit of the model compared to a null model that usually specifies no relation among the constructs and variables. The

Comparative Fit Index (type III), the Tucker-Lewis Index (type II), and the Normed Fit Index (type I) had values of 0.97, 0.97, and 0.96 respectively. These incremental fit measures supported a relatively good fit of the proposed model compared with other baseline models.

Table 16 Fit Indices for 'Destination Image'

χ^2 with degrees of freedom	1,645.08 w/ 593 df (p = .000)
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.79
RMSEA	0.073
RMR	0.079
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.96
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	0.97
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.97

<u>Measurement Model Fit</u>

Next the researcher assessed the measurement of each construct for uni-dimensionality and reliability. The indicator loadings were examined and all were found to be significant at the 0.01 level, confirming the posited relationships among indictors and constructs. In addition, the construct reliability (CR) and average variance-extracted (AVE) measures for each construct were calculated (Table 17). The CR depicted the degree to which the manifest/observed variables represent the common latent construct. The CR values ranged from 0.74 to 0.93, indicating the internal consistency among the nine sets of construct indicators. AVE reflected the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct. The AVE values ranged from 0.46 to 0.66, suggesting that the indicators are representative of the latent constructs. The convergent validity for the measurement was established.

Table 17 CR and AVE for Destination Image

	Factor Loadings	CR	AVE
F1 Travel Environment		0.81	0.46
safe and secure environment	0.79		
clean and tidy environment	0.85		
friendly and helpful local people	0.75		
tranquil and restful atmosphere	0.79		
pleasant weather	0.62		
F2 Natural Attractions		0.93	0.66
scenic mountain and valleys	0.84		
breathtaking scenery and natural attractions	0.88		
gorgeous gardens and springs	0.86		
fabulous scenic drive	0.81		
picturesque parks/lakes/rivers	0.87		
unspoiled wilderness and fascinating wildlife	0.73		
spectacular caves and underground formations	0.67		
F3 Entertainment and Events		0.84	0.51
wide arrays of shows/exhibitions	0.87		
tempting cultural events and festivals	0.84		
excellent quality and fun country/western music	0.79		
colorful nightlife	0.77		
wide variety of entertainment	0.80		
F4 Historic Attractions		0.74	0.59
distinctive history and heritage	0.86		
vintage buildings	0.83		
F5 Infrastructure		0.77	0.52
wide selection of restaurants/cuisine	0.81		
wide variety of shop facilities	0.84		
wide choice of accommodations	0.74		
F6 Accessibility		0.77	0.46
well communicated traffic flow and parking information	0.82		
available parking downtown	0.71		
easy access to the area	0.76		
easy-to-use and affordable trolley system	0.69		
F7 Relaxation		0.77	0.53
relaxing day spa and healing getaway	0.82		
place for soothing the mind and refreshing the body	0.78		
spiritual rejuvenation	0.83		
F8 Outdoor Activities		0.81	0.52
exciting water sports/activities (boating, fishing, etc)	0.85		
terrific place for hiking/picnicking/camping/hunting	0.84		
enormous opportunities for outdoor recreation	0.84		

good facilities for golfing	0.77		
F9 Price and Value		0.82	0.53
reasonable price for food and accommodation	0.89		
good value for money	0.88		
reasonable price for attractions and activities	0.88		
good bargain shopping	0.75		

The discriminant validity was assessed by a visual inspection of the correlation matrix for the nine latent constructs (see Table 18), and a comparison of the squared correlations with the AVE values. The correlations between the constructs were within a reasonable range from 0.35 to 0.75, and the AVE estimates for each of the constructs exceeded the square of the correlations between the constructs. The tests supported the discriminant validity of the scale.

Table 18 Correlation Matrix for 'Destination Image'

	Travel Environment	Natural Attractions	Entertainment & Events	Historic Attractions	Infrastructure	Accessibility	Relaxation	Outdoor Activities	Price & Value
Travel Environment	1.00								
Natural Attractions	0.56	1.00							
Entertainment & Events	0.61	0.62	1.00						
Historic Attractions	0.57	0.56	0.64	1.00					
Infrastructure	0.46	0.64	0.73	0.57	1.00				
Accessibility	0.39	0.62	0.49	0.55	0.70	1.00			
Relaxation	0.53	0.52	0.54	0.67	0.54	0.67	1.00		
Outdoor Activities	0.46	0.56	0.46	0.71	0.53	0.64	0.68	1.00	
Price & Value	0.35	0.49	0.40	0.66	0.45	0.59	0.63	0.75	1.00

Summary

Confirmatory factor analysis provided support for the proposed nine-factor model for destination image. Nine composite variables were thus created and used as indicators for the latent construct 'destination image' in the subsequent SEM: travel environment (mean = 6.16), natural attractions (mean = 6.05), entertainment and events (mean = 5.10), historic attractions (mean = 6.24), travel infrastructure (mean = 5.90), accessibility (mean = 5.17), relaxation (mean = 5.46), outdoor activities (mean = 5.36), and price and value (mean = 5.47) (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

Application of SEM in Testing the Destination Loyalty Model

The main purpose of the study was to develop and test a conceptual model, which represents the elements contributing to the formation of destination loyalty. Four hypotheses were proposed based on a comprehensive review of literature. These hypotheses were tested using SEM. A seven-stage process for SEM was applied, as suggested by Hair et al. (1998).

Stage 1: Developing a Theoretically Based Model

Stage 1 focuses on the development of a theoretical model with linkages (defined causal relationships) between latent constructs, reflecting proposed hypotheses. The strength and conviction with which the researcher can assume causation between two variables lies not in the analytical methods chosen but in the theoretical justification provided to support the analyses (Hair et al., 1998). Theory provides the rationale for almost all aspects of SEM. Chapter two 'literature review' presented an elaborate discussion of the theoretical foundation for the interrelationships among the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model. In the proposed destination loyalty model, destination image influences tourists' satisfaction (both attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction), and satisfaction in turn influences tourists' destination loyalty.

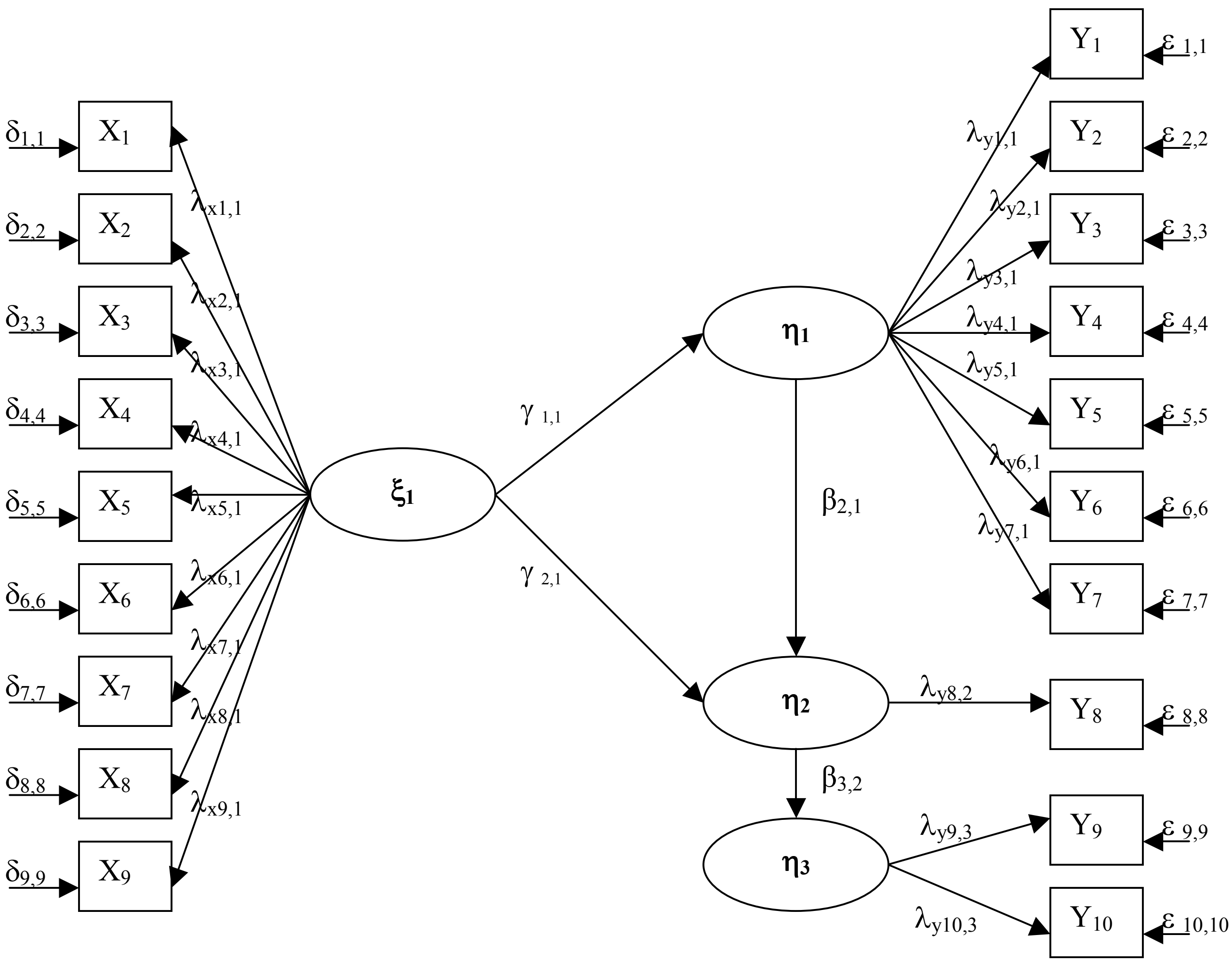
Stage 2: Constructing a Path Diagram of Causal Relationships

This stage defined exogenous and endogenous constructs and linked relationships in a path diagram. In the path diagram all predictive and associative relationships among constructs and indicators are graphically presented with arrows. A straight arrow indicates a direct causal relationship from a construct to its indicators, and direct causal-effect relationship between constructs. For instance, the direct arrow from destination image (ξ_1) to overall satisfaction (η_1) and attribute satisfaction (η_2) indicates that destination image causes attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction. Overall satisfaction was also influenced by attribute satisfaction. Overall satisfaction was then posited to be the sole predictor of destination loyalty. Destination image and attribute satisfaction could also be direct sources of destination loyalty; however, these relationships were not proposed initially, but instead were explored through the testing of alternative model specifications (competing models).

All constructs fall into two categories: exogenous and endogenous. Exogenous constructs (represented as ξ in Greek notation) are independent variables and are not caused or predicted by any other variable in a model. Endogenous constructs (represented as η in Greek notation) are predicted by other constructs and relationships contained in the model. The hypothesized model in Figure 10 contains one exogenous construct destination image (ξ_1) and three endogenous constructs: attribute satisfaction (η_1), overall satisfaction (η_2), and destination loyalty (η_3).

'Destination image' was indicated by nine composite variables derived from the previous EFA and CFA analysis: travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, travel infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, and price and value. 'Attribute satisfaction' was represented by seven composite variables, also generated from the prior EFA and CFA: lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility. 'Overall satisfaction' has a single indicator 'overall tourist satisfaction', while 'destination loyalty' was operationalized with two variables: revisit and recommend intentions.

Figure 10: Full Path Diagram Portrayal with LISREL Notations



Where;

ξ_1: Exogenous latent variable (destination image)
$X_1 \ldots\ldots X_9$: Observed measure associated with destination image: travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, travel infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, and price and value.

$\lambda_{x1,1} \ldots \lambda_{x9,1}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous latent variable (ξ) and a corresponding observed variable (X), often referred to as a factor loading.
$\delta_{1,1} \ldots \delta_{9,9}$: Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (X) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the exogenous side.
η_1: Endogenous latent variable (attribute satisfaction)
η_2: Endogenous latent variable (overall satisfaction)
η_3: Endogenous latent variable (destination loyalty)
$Y_1 \ldots\ldots Y_{10}$: Observed measure associated with endogenous latent variables: lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, accessibility, overall satisfaction, revisit, and referral.
$\lambda_{y\ 1,\ 1} \ldots \lambda_{y\ 10,\ 3}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an endogenous latent variable (η) and a corresponding observed variable (Y) – often referred to as a factor loading.
$\varepsilon_{1,1} \ldots \varepsilon_{10,10}$: Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (Y) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the endogenous side.
$\gamma_{1,1}, \gamma_{2,1}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous variable (ξ) and an endogenous variable (η).
$\beta_{2,1}, \beta_{3,2}$: Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between two endogenous variables (η).

Stage 3: Converting the Path Diagram into Equations

Stage 3 involves the formal mathematical specification of the model. This is done by translating the path diagram into a series of equations that link constructs and define the measurement model. In the structural model each endogenous construct is the dependent variable in a separate equation. The predictor variables are all constructs at the ends, or "tails" of the straight arrows leading into the endogenous variable. Table 19 illustrated this translation process for each of the path diagrams in Figure 10. Each endogenous variable (η) could be predicted by exogenous variable(s) (ξ), or by other endogenous variable(s). For each hypothesized effect, a structural coefficient (γ or β) was estimated. Also, an error term (ζ) was included for each equation, representing the sum of the effects due to specification error and random measurement error.

Table 19 Structural Model Equations for Path Diagram

Endogenous		Exogenous	Endogenous			Error
		Destination Image ξ_1	η_1	η_2	η_3	
η_1	Attribute satisfaction =	$\gamma_{11}\xi_1$ +				ζ_1
η_2	Overall satisfaction =	$\gamma_{21}\xi_1$ +	$\beta_{21}\eta_1$ +			ζ_2
η_3	Destination loyalty =			$\beta_{32}\eta_2$ +		ζ_3

A measurement model operationalizes the latent constructs via the manifest variables, and describes the way in which they are represented by these empirical indicators (manifest variables). The foundations of factor analysis are quite analogous to the measurement model. In the measurement model, factors are termed latent constructs and individual variables are termed indicators. To specify the measurement model, transition is needed from exploratory factor analysis to confirmatory mode, in which the researcher specifies which indicators (variables) define each construct (factor).

The appropriate LISREL notations and equations for the measurement model were shown in Table 20. The exogenous construct 'destination image' was measured by nine indicators. The three endogenous constructs altogether were indicated by 10 variables: 'attribute satisfaction' was represented by seven indicators and 'destination loyalty by two indicators; whereas for 'overall satisfaction' only single indicator was available, therefore it's not possible to empirically estimate the reliability, which then had to be arbitrarily set at 1.0, assuming that there was no measurement error in the indicator.

Table 20 Measurement Model Equations for Path Diagram

Exogenous Indicators (X)			Exogenous Construct		Error
X1	=	$\lambda x_{1,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{1,1}$
X2	=	$\lambda x_{2,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{2,2}$
X3	=	$\lambda x_{3,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{3,3}$
X4	=	$\lambda x_{4,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{4,4}$
X5	=	$\lambda x_{5,1}\xi_1$	ξ_1 Destination Image	+	$\delta_{5,5}$
X6	=	$\lambda x_{6,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{6,6}$
X7	=	$\lambda x_{7,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{7,7}$
X8	=	$\lambda x_{8,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{8,8}$
X9	=	$\lambda x_{9,1}\xi_1$		+	$\delta_{9,9}$
Endogenous Indicators (Y)			Endogenous Constructs		
Y1	=	$\lambda y_{1,1}\eta_1$	Attribute Satisfaction	+	$\varepsilon_{1,1}$
Y2	=	$\lambda y_{2,1}\eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{2,2}$
Y3	=	$\lambda y_{3,1}\eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{3,3}$
Y4	=	$\lambda y_{4,1}\eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{4,4}$
Y5	=	$\lambda y_{5,1}\eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{5,5}$

Y6	=	$\lambda y_{6,1}\, \eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{6,6}$
Y7	=	$\lambda y_{7,1}\, \eta_1$		+	$\varepsilon_{7,7}$
Y8	=	$\lambda y_{8,2}\, \eta_2$	Overall satisfaction	+	$\varepsilon_{8,8}$
Y9	=	$\lambda y_{9,3}\, \eta_3$	Destination Loyalty	+	$\varepsilon_{9,9}$
Y10	=	$\lambda y_{10,3}\, \eta_3$		+	$\varepsilon_{10,10}$

Stage 4: Estimating the Proposed Model

Stage 4 addresses the actual process of estimating the specified model, including the issues of inputting the data in appropriate form and selecting the estimation procedure.

An important issue in interpreting the results is the use of the variance-covariance matrix versus the correlation matrix. The covariance matrix has the advantage of providing valid comparison between different populations or samples. Interpretation of the results, however, is somewhat more difficult when using covariance because the coefficient must be interpreted in terms of units of measure for the constructs. Covariance matrix is preferred when the objective is to test a theory. As for the correlation matrix, it allows for direct comparison of the coefficient within a model. Use of correlations is appropriate when the objective of the research is only to understand the pattern of relationships between constructs, but not to explain the total variance of a construct (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, the covariance matrix (see the Appendix Table III) was used because it satisfies the assumptions of the methodology, and is the appropriate form of data for testing a series of causal relationships (Hair et al., 1998).

Sample size plays an important role in estimating and interpreting SEM results. Although there is no correct sample size for SEM, recommendations are for a size ranging between 100 and 200 (Hair et al., 1998). A sample of 200 is considered as a "critical sample size." The sample size should also be large enough when compared with the number of estimated parameters: as a rule of thumb at least 5 times the number of parameters (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). The total sample size for this study was 345, an appropriate sample size for providing valid SEM analysis and results.

There are several options available for the estimation procedures, among which MLE (maximum likelihood estimation) is the most widely employed technique in most computer programs. MLE is efficient and unbiased when the assumption of multivariate normality is met (Hair et al., 1998). MLE was used in this study for estimation of the model.

Stage 5: Assessing the Model Identification

Stage 5 involves the issue of model identification, that is, the extent to which the information provided by the data is sufficient to enable parameter estimation (Maruyama, 1998). If a model is not identified, then it is not possible to determine model parameters. A necessary condition for identification is that the number of knows should be greater than the number of unknowns (Maruyama, 1998).

The two most basic rules in association with identification issues are the rank and order conditions. The order condition is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for identification. The order condition states that the model's degrees of freedom must be greater than or equal to zero. This refers to what are termed just-identified or over-identified models. Over-identification of a parameter refers to an excess of identifying information. A model is exactly identified when each parameter is identified but none is over-identified (zero degrees of freedom). A model is over-identified when each parameter is identified and at least one parameter is over-identified (positive degrees of freedom). An over-identified model is the goal for all structural equation models. An under-identified model has at least one parameter that can not be identified (negative degrees of freedom) (Bollen, 1989).

The model must also meet the rank condition, a necessary and a sufficient condition for identification. The rank condition requires the researcher to algebraically determine if each parameter is uniquely estimated. Several heuristics such as the three-indicator rule and the recursive model rule are available (Bollen, 1989). The three-indicator rule asserts that any construct with three or more indicators will always be identified. The recursive model rule states that recursive models with identified constructs (three-indicator rule) will always be identified.

The possible symptoms of an identification problem are: (1) very large standard errors for coefficients; (2) the inability of the program to invert the information matrix; (3) impossible estimates (e. g., negative and non-significant error variances for any construct); and (4) high correlations (± 0.90 or above) among observed variables.

There are several sources for identification problems: (1) a small number of degrees of freedom – similar to the problems of over-fitting; (2) the use of reciprocal effects (two-way causal arrows between the constructs); (3) failure to fix the scale of a construct (Hair et al., 1998); (4) skew ness; (5) nonlinearity; (6) heteroscedasticity; (7) multicollinearity; (8) singularity; and (9) autocorrelation (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

The potential solutions for identification problems are to: (1) eliminate some of the estimated coefficients (deleting paths from the path diagram); (2) fix the measurement error variance of constructs if possible; (3) fix any structural coefficients that were reliably known; (4) eliminate troublesome variables, e. g.,, highly correlated variables, redundant variables, and (5) check for missing values and outliers (Hair et al., 1998).

LISREL program assessed the identification of the model and highlighted almost all problems. For this study, no identification problems were indicated. The model was over-identified with positive degrees of freedom.

Stage 6: Evaluating Goodness-of-Fit Criteria

Stage 6 relates to the assessment of the model fit using a variety of fit measures for the measurement and structural model, and supporting/rejecting the proposed hypotheses (Reisinger and Turner, 1998). LISREL program ran the assessment of both models simultaneously.

Offending Estimates

The results were first examined for nonsensical or theoretically inconsistent estimates which are coefficients that exceed acceptable limits. The three most common offending estimates are negative error variances, standardized coefficients exceeding or very close to 1.0, and very large standard errors (Hair et al., 1998). These offending estimates must be resolved before evaluating the results. Examination of the standardized results revealed no instances of any of these problems.

Overall Model Fit

Before evaluating the structural or measurement models, the overall fit of the model should be assessed to ensure that it is an adequate representation of the entire set of causal relationship (see Table 21). Goodness-of-fit indices measure the correspondence of the actual or observed covariance matrix to the covariance matrix predicted from the proposed model. Absolute fit measures assess the model fit in absolute terms (both structural and measurement models collectively). Incremental fit measures compare the proposed model to another model specified by the researcher. Parsimonious fit measures adjust the measures of fit to provide a comparison between models with differing numbers of estimated coefficients. In order to achieve a better understanding of the acceptability of the proposed model multiple measures should be applied (Hair et al., 1998).

The absolute fit measures provide information on the extent to which the model as a whole provides an acceptable fit to the data. They were evaluated by the likelihood ratio of Chi-square, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the root mean square residual (RMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

The chi-square statistic determines if the restrictive hypothesis tested can be rejected. A model is considered to have acceptable fit if the difference between the variance-covariance matrixes generated by the original data and by the hypothesized solution is small, yielding a non significant chi-square. However, the chi-square statistic is dependent on sample size and often results in a statistically significant difference when large samples, like those in the current study, are used, even when fit appears good using other indices. Despite this limitation, the chi-square was included because it is one of the most frequently used fit indices in SEM analysis. The Chi-square value of 690.67 with 149 degrees of freedom was significant at the .000 level.

The GFI is a non statistical measure ranging in value from 0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit). The GFI value of 0.81 was at a marginal acceptance level. However, due to the sensitivity of χ^2 and GFI to sample sizes and model complexity, other fit indices were also assessed to complement these two measures (Hair et al., 1998). The RMSEA provides a measure of fit that adjusts for parsimony by assessing the discrepancy per degree of freedom in the model. That is, RMSEA takes into account the number of free parameters required to achieve a given level of fit. The RMSEA value was a marginal 0.11. The RMSR represents an average of the absolute discrepancies between the observed correlation matrix and the hypothesized correlation matrix, and the closer to zero, the better the fit. The RMSR value of 0.06 was deemed acceptable.

In addition to the overall measures of fit, the incremental fit and parsimonious fit indices are needed to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). The incremental fit measures assess the incremental fit of the model compared to a baseline or null model (the simplest model that can be theoretically justified). These are: Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) or non normed fit index (NNFI), normed fit index (NFI), and comparative fit index (CFI). All the incremental fit measures exceeded the recommended level of minimum 0.90. This supported the acceptance of the proposed model (Hair et al., 1998).

Parsimonious fit measures relate goodness-of-fit of the model to the number of degrees of freedom. The parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI) value of 0.82 was considered marginally acceptable. It should be noted that some of the indices above have already built in parsimony, such as RMSEA and TLI.

Table 21 Fit Indices for Destination Loyalty Model

χ^2 with degrees of freedom	690.67 w/ 149 df (p = .0)
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.81
RMSEA	0.11
RMR	0.06
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.94
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	0.95
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.95
Parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI)	0.82

Measurement Model Fit

The measurement model provides meaning to the constructs (latent variables) in the model. Proper evaluation of the measurement model is a pre-requisite to the evaluation of the structural model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1982). The convergent validity of the measurement scale was examined via the following tests. The first step was the evaluation of the loadings of the indicators, particularly focusing on any non significant loadings that should be either deleted or transformed for better fit with the construct. Table 22 showed that all the indicator loadings were statistically significant for the proposed constructs, thus supporting the theoretical basis for assignment of indicators to each construct. In addition, each of the set of the indicators for the three constructs had fairly comparable values.

Squared multiple correlation coefficients (SMC) for the *y*- and *x*-variables indicate how well the *y*- and *x*-variables measure the latent construct, the largest amount of variance accounted for by the constructs, and the extent to which the individual variables are free from measurement error (Reisinger and Turner, 1998). They also represent the reliabilities (convergent validities) of these measures. SMCs lie between 0 and 1 (the closer to 1, the better the variable acts as an indicator of the latent construct). Table 22 revealed that the SMCs for y-variables ranged from 0.52 to 0.92 and for x-variables from 0.30 to 0.65, indicating fairly high reliability.

The construct reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) were also computed for the latent constructs (Table 22). For both CR and AVE, all three constructs surpassed the threshold value of .70 and .50, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the indicators for all three constructs were sufficient in terms of how the measurement model was specified.

Table 22 LISREL Results for Measurement Model

	Std. Loadings	SMC	CR	AVE
Exogenous: destination image			0.91	0.52
Travel Environment	0.80	0.63		
Natural Attractions	0.70	0.49		
Entertainment and Events	0.76	0.58		
Historic Attractions	0.55	0.30		
Infrastructure	0.73	0.54		
Accessibility	0.72	0.51		
Price and Value	0.81	0.65		
Outdoor Activities	0.72	0.52		
Relaxation	0.68	0.47		
Endogenous: attribute satisfaction			0.91	0.60
Lodging	0.75	0.56		
Attractions	0.84	0.71		
Shopping	0.83	0.69		
Dining	0.75	0.56		
Activities and Events	0.72	0.52		
Accessibility	0.76	0.57		
Environment	0.76	0.58		
Endogenous: destination loyalty			0.90	0.62
Revisit intention	0.84	0.70		
Recommend intention	0.96	0.92		

To examine the discriminant validity of the measurement model, the correlations among latent constructs were reviewed and high values (correlation exceeding 0.80) should be noted as an indication of a problematic level of inter-correlated constructs (Hair et al. 1998). For this study, the correlations among and between the exogenous and endogenous constructs (see Table 23) ranged from 0.71 to 0.30, indicating appropriate level of inter-correlations. The variance extracted values for the latent constructs were compared to the squared correlations between the corresponding constructs (Fornell and

Larcker, 1981), and none of the squared correlations surpassed the AVE. The above tests indicated that the discriminant validity was upheld for the measurement model.

Table 23 Correlation among Exogenous and Endogenous Constructs

	Attribute satisfaction	Overall satisfaction	Destination loyalty	Destination image
Attribute satisfaction	1.00			
Overall satisfaction	0.45	1.00		
Destination loyalty	0.30	0.66	1.00	
Destination image	0.71	0.48	0.32	1.00

<u>Structural Model Parameters</u>

The most obvious examination of the structural model involves the significance tests for the estimated coefficients (paths), which provide the basis for accepting or rejecting the proposed relationships between latent constructs. The LISREL results (Table 24) showed that all the paths proposed in the 'destination loyalty' model were statistically significant and of the appropriate direction (positive): 1) destination image positively influenced attribute satisfaction ($\gamma_{1,1} = 0.71$; $t = 11.66$); 2) destination image also positively influenced overall satisfaction ($\gamma_{2,1} = 0.29$; $t = 4.15$); 3) attribute satisfaction positively affected overall satisfaction ($\beta_{2,1} = 0.20$; $t = 2.94$); 4) overall satisfaction positively affected destination loyalty ($\beta_{3,2} = 0.74$; $t = 12.34$); and 5) attribute satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction. The hypotheses 1 - 5 could not be rejected, which proposed causal relationships among destination image, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction and destination loyalty.

The fit of the structural model was also assessed by the SMCs for structural equations, which indicate the amount of variance in each endogenous latent variable accounted for by the antecedent variables in the relevant structural equation (see Table

24). The SMC for 'attribute satisfaction' was 0.51, indicating that 51% of the variance in attribute satisfaction was explained by 'destination image'. About 25% of the uncertainties in 'overall satisfaction' was accounted for by 'destination image' and 'attribute satisfaction' (SMC = 0.25). 'Destination image', 'overall satisfaction', and 'attribute satisfaction' explained approximately 44% of the variance in 'Destination loyalty' (SMC = 0.44).

Table 24 LISREL Results for Structural Model

Endogenous		Exogenous ξ_1	Endogenous			SMC
		Destination Image	η_1	η_2	η_3	
η_1	Attribute satisfaction	$\gamma_{11} = 0.71$ (11.66)				0.51
η_2	Overall satisfaction	$\gamma_{21} = 0.29$ (4.15)	$\beta_{21} = 0.20$ (2.94)			0.25
η_3	Destination loyalty	0.00	0.00	$\beta_{32} = 0.74$ (12.34)		0.44

Note: values in parentheses are t-statistics (t critical value at 0.05 = 1.96).

Competing Models

The final approach to model assessment was to compare the proposed model M_0 (see Figure 11) with a series of competing models, which acted as alterative explanations to the proposed model M_0. The objective was to determine the best fitting model from a set of models (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, two alternative models were proposed (see Figure 12 and 13): M_1 and M_2. M_1 added the path between 'attribute satisfaction' and 'destination loyalty'. M_2 further added another path between 'destination image' and 'destination loyalty'. M_2 can be considered a saturated structural model because all parameters relating the constructs to one another were estimated; whereas M_1 was said to be nested within M_2 since in M_1 its set of freely estimated parameters is a subset of those estimated in M_2 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The researcher's theoretical model M_0 had the least estimated relationships thus it was nested within M_1 and M_2.

Figure 11 Theoretical 'Destination Loyalty' Model M_0

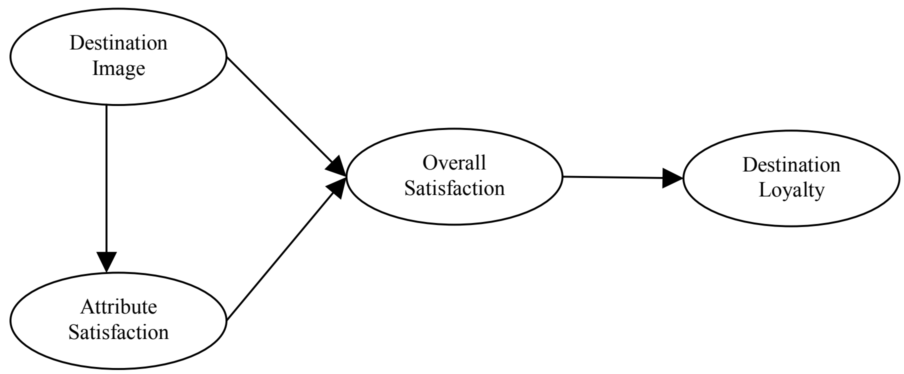


Figure 12 Competing 'Destination Loyalty' Model M_1

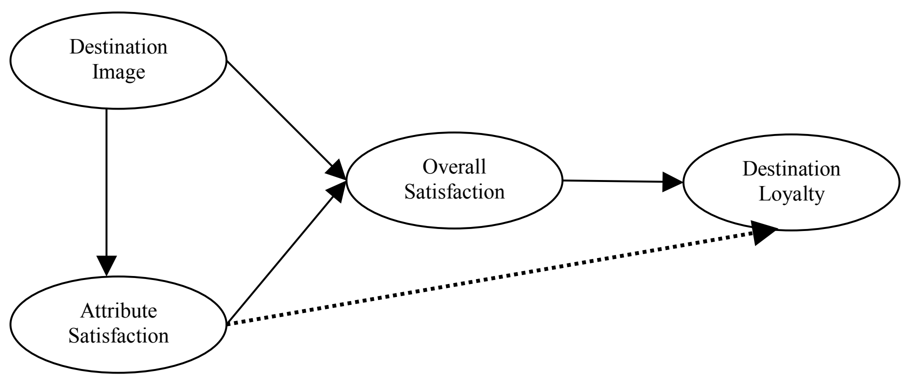
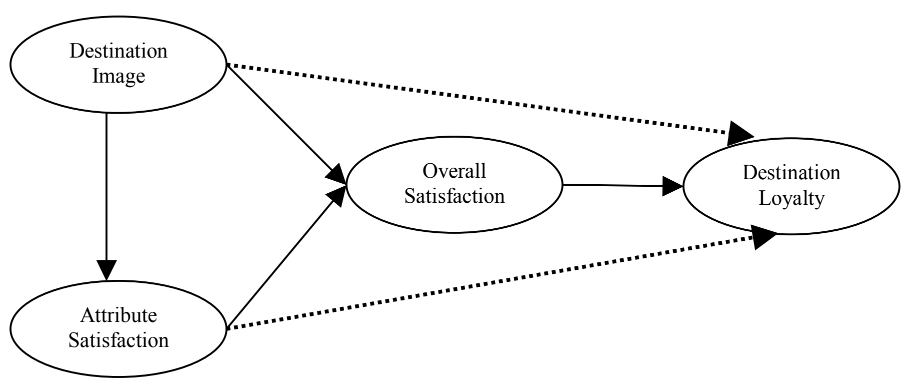


Figure 13 Competing 'Destination Loyalty' Model M_2



The sequential χ^2 difference tests (SCDTs) were performed to assess whether there were significant differences in explanation of the estimated construct covariances given by the three structural models. The χ^2 difference test examined the null hypothesis of no significant difference between two nested structural models (denoted as $M_2 - M_0 = 0$ and $M_1 - M_2 = 0$). The difference between χ^2 statistic values for nested models was itself asymptotically distributed as chi-square, with degrees of freedom equal to the difference in degrees of freedom for the two models. If the null hypothesis was upheld, the more constrained model of the two would be tentatively accepted. Below were the χ^2 difference tests for the three nested models: M_0, M_1, and M_2.

1. chi-square difference test between M_0 and M_1 (null hypothesis $M_1 - M_0 = 0$)
   i. the chi-square difference: 690.67 – 685.24 = 5.43
   ii. the degree of freedom difference: 149 – 148 = 1
   iii. the critical value of chi-square with 1 degree of freedom at .05 significance level = 3.84
   iv. Since chi-square difference > chi-square critical value, we reject the null hypothesis. M_1 was performing significantly better than the theoretical model M_0.
2. chi-square difference test between M_1 and M_2 (null hypothesis $M_1 - M_2 = 0$)
   i. the chi-square difference: 685.24 – 684.96 = 0.28
   ii. the degree of freedom difference: 148 – 147 = 1
   iii. the critical value of chi-square with 1 degree of freedom at .05 significance level = 3.84

iv. Since chi-square difference < chi-square critical value, we failed to reject the null hypothesis. M_2 was not performing significantly better than M_1.

The results of the χ^2 difference tests favored the competing model M_1 to the proposed theoretical model M_0, and M_2 also did not outperformed M_1. As another means of comparison, a set of goodness-of-fit measures were also compared to determine which of the three had the best model fit (see Table 25). The fit indices such as RMSEA, CFI and PNFI for the three competing models were almost identical, indicating that the three competing models achieved approximately the same level of model fit. Thus it was concluded that the competing model M_1 could be retained as a viable alternative for acceptance.

Table 25 Fit Indices for Nested Models

	Theoretical	**M_1**	**M_2**
Chi-square	690.67	685.24	684.96
Degree of freedom	149	148	147
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
RMR	0.062	0.056	0.056
GFI	0.81	0.81	0.81
CFI	0.95	0.95	0.95
NNFI	0.95	0.95	0.94
PNFI	0.82	0.81	0.81

To further detect the effect of adding more causal relationships (paths), it was necessary to examine the statistical significance of the parameter coefficients for the additional paths for M_1 and M_2. The causal relationship between 'attribute satisfaction' to 'destination loyalty' was significant ($\beta = 0.12$; $t = 2.32$); whereas the causal relationship from 'destination image' to 'destination loyalty' was not deemed significant ($\gamma = 0.04$; $t = 0.54$). This suggested that there should be a direct path between 'attribute satisfaction' and 'destination loyalty' as the competing model M_1 proposed. This relationship could be theoretically justified because tourists' satisfaction with various components of a destination could directly lead to their loyalty with the destination. The findings supported the full mediation role of overall satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty (H_6 could not be rejected), but failed to support the full mediation role of overall satisfaction on the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty (H_7 could not be supported).

Stage 7: Modifying the Model

Stage 7 considered whether modification to the model had to be made in the light of the results obtained at the previous stage. At this stage the analysis became exploratory in nature and findings from previous analysis were used to develop a better fitting model. The aim was to identify specification errors and produce a new model with an improved model fit (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). As model modifications were made, the researcher had to return to stage four of the seven-stage process and reevaluate the modified models.

Model respecification entails deleting or adding estimated parameters from the original model. Such modifications should be exercised with extreme care and be guided by theory. There are two categories of relationships: theoretical relationships are essential to the underlying theory and cannot be modified; whereas empirical relationships are added to provide fit to the model and thus can be modified (Hair et al., 1998). Model respecifications usually result in a series of competing models that can be assessed with the chi-square difference tests introduced in stage six.

Non-significant *t*-values give insight as to which parameters should be eliminated. However, if a theory suggests that particular parameters should be included in the model, even non-significant parameters should be retained because the non significant results may be sample specific (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1995a). In this study, SEM analysis confirmed that all the relationships in the measurement and structural models as proposed by the researcher were statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction (positive). Furthermore, the nested model analysis added insight to the theoretical model and supported a 'new' causal link between 'attribute satisfaction' and 'destination loyalty'.

Saris, Satorra, and Sörbom (1987) advocated a combination of the modification index (MI) and the expected change statistic (EC) to guide model modifications. The modification indices predict a decrease in the chi-square if a single parameter (fixed or constrained) is freed and the model is re-estimated. Associated with each modification index, there is an expected parameter change (EPC), which measures how much the parameter is expected to change, in the positive or negative direction, if it is relaxed (Saris et al., 1987). Kaplan (1990) and Saris et al. (1987) suggested that parameters with large MIs and large ECs should be set freed first. Parameters associated with large MIs and small ECs or small MIs and large ECs might reflect a sample size sensitivity problem; nevertheless, these parameters should also be freed due to the large contributions they would be expected to make to improve the model fit. Finally, parameters associated with small MIs and small ECs could be ignored. It should be stressed that model modification should not be solely based on modification indices but must have a theoretical justification before being considered (Hair et al. 1998).

According to Saris et al. (1987), the parameter with the largest MI is relaxed first if this parameter can be interpreted substantively. If it does not make sense to do so, one considers the second largest MI, and then the third, etc. A visual inspection of the MI obtained during the model estimation (see Appendix Table IV) revealed that parameters with large MI values (>10) were mainly error covariance in the measurement model. This suggested that by correlating measurement errors for exogenous (destination image) and endogenous constructs (attribute satisfaction) the model fit could be considerably improved. Table 26 showed the parameters that were chosen to be estimated because they had large MI and EC values, and could be somewhat justified for being set free. Correlated were the error terms for some of the indicators within the construct ‘attribute satisfaction’ (theta epsilon) and ‘destination image’ (theta delta). For example, within the construct ‘attribute satisfaction’, the error terms for its indicators ‘attractions’ and ‘activities and events’ were set to be correlated. Also correlated were the error terms for some of the indicators across the two latent constructs, because these measures were similar and the correlations were probably due to methods variance. For instance, ‘attractions’ for ‘attribute satisfaction’ and ‘natural attractions’ for ‘destination image’ were correlated.

Table 26 Modification Indices for Relaxed Parameters

Theta Epsilon (attribute satisfaction)			MI	EC
environment	↔	lodging	32.26	0.10
attractions	↔	activities and events	24.56	0.12
Theta Delta (destination image)			MI	EC
historic attractions	↔	natural attractions	21.88	0.11
relaxation	↔	natural attractions	19.72	0.13
outdoor activities	↔	natural attractions	71.78	0.21
outdoor activities	↔	entertainment and events	29.41	0.16
outdoor activities	↔	relaxation	17.01	0.13
Theta Epsilon		Theta Delta	MI	EC
attractions	↔	natural attractions	10.84	0.07
environment	↔	travel environment	24.61	0.07
activities and events	↔	entertainment and events	17.51	0.12

Accessibility	↔	travel accessibility	30.53	0.17
dining	↔	price and value	18.59	0.10
shopping	↔	price and value	16.95	0.08

After modifications were made, the model was reassessed and the results (see Table 27) revealed a substantial better fit with regards to every fit index except for the parsimonious fit index, because by estimating more parameters the degrees of freedom (parsimony) were also compromised. Compared with the viable model M_1, the model fit indices improved significantly for the modified model: chi-square value dropped drastically, so did RMSEA and RMR values (for these indices, smaller values indicated better fit); the GFI greatly increased, so did the incremental fit indices such as NNFI and CFI (for these indices, higher values suggested better fit).

Table 27 Comparison of Fit Indices for M_1 vs. Modified Models

	M_1	Modified
Chi-square	685.24	343.22
Degree of freedom	148	135
GFI	0.81	0.90
RMSEA	0.11	0.068
RMR	0.056	0.044
NNFI	0.95	0.98
CFI	0.95	0.98
PNFI	0.81	0.77

The solution for the modified model was examined in detail to see if the modifications produced unlikely or unacceptable values for parameter estimates. There were no offending estimates found such as insignificant or negative error variances. All the indicator loadings in the measurement model were significant and comparable to those of the original model (see Table 28).

Table 28 Comparison of Standardized loadings

	M_1	Modified
Exogenous: destination image		
Travel Environment	0.80	0.80
Natural Attractions	0.70	0.64
Entertainment and Events	0.76	0.74
Historic Attractions	0.55	0.53
Infrastructure	0.73	0.74
Accessibility	0.72	0.74
Price and Value	0.81	0.84
Outdoor Activities	0.72	0.65
Relaxation	0.68	0.64
Endogenous: attribute satisfaction		
Lodging	0.75	0.74
Attractions	0.84	0.83
Shopping	0.83	0.84
Dining	0.75	0.76
Activities and Events	0.72	0.70
Accessibility	0.76	0.75
Environment	0.76	0.74
Endogenous: destination loyalty		
Revisit intention	0.84	0.83
Recommend intention	0.96	0.96

All the parameter estimates for the structural model were also significant and similar to those of the original model, and so were the explanatory power (SMC) of the structural equations (see Table 29). After careful examination and comparison, it can be concluded that the modified model was superior to the original model and might be retained as a viable alternative model.

Table 29 Comparison of LISREL Estimates for Structural Model

M_1						
		Destination Image ξ_1	η_1	η_2	η_3	SMC
η_1	Attribute satisfaction =	0.71 (γ_{11})				0.51
η_2	Overall satisfaction =	0.29 (γ_{21})	0.20 (β_{21})			0.25
η_3	Destination loyalty =	0.00	0.12 (β_{31})	0.67 (β_{32})		0.45
Modified Model						
		Destination Image ξ_1	η_1	η_2	η_3	SMC
η_1	Attribute satisfaction =	0.72 (γ_{11})				0.51

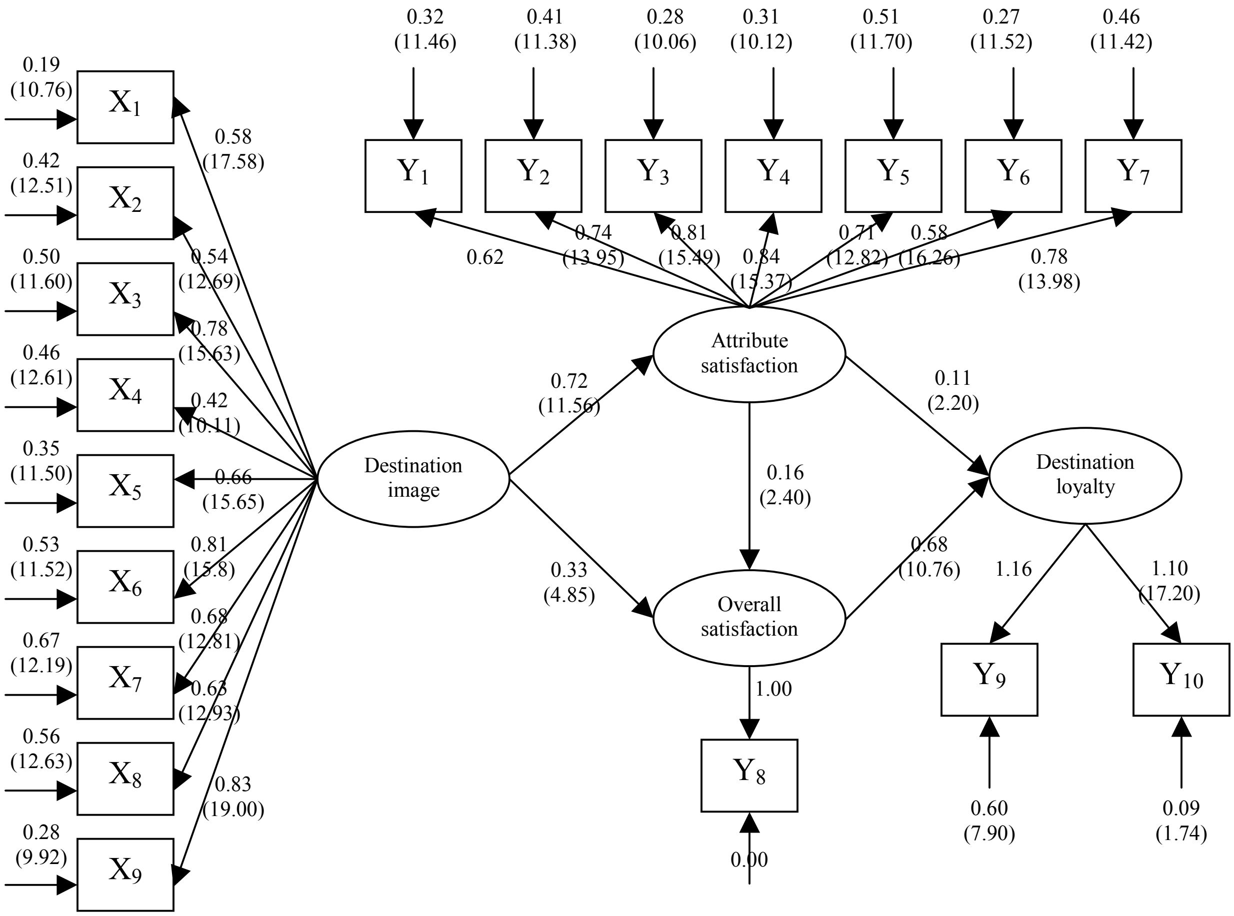
η_2	Overall satisfaction =	0.33 (γ_{21})	0.16 (β_{21})			0.27
η_3	Destination loyalty =	0.00	0.11 (β_{31})	0.68 (β_{32})		0.45

Conclusions

The seven-stage process empirically investigated a series of causal relationships with interrelated dependent (endogenous) constructs. The SEM results supported all four hypotheses (statistically significant paths) plus an added link between 'attribute satisfaction' and 'destination loyalty' (see Figure 14): 1) destination image had a positive effect on attribute satisfaction (H_1could not be rejected; $\gamma_{1,1} = 0.72$; $t = 11.56$); 2) destination image also had positive and significant influences on overall satisfaction (H_2 could not be rejected; $\gamma_{2,1} = 0.33$; $t = 4.85$); 3) attribute satisfaction had positive impacts on overall satisfaction (H_4 could not be rejected; $\beta_{2,1} = 0.16$; $t = 2.40$); 4) overall satisfaction had positive effects on destination loyalty ($\beta_{3,2} = 0.68$; $t = 10.76$); and 5) attribute satisfaction was also found to have direct and positive causal effects on destination loyalty (H_5 could not be rejected; $\beta_{3,1} = 0.11$; $t = 2.20$). As for the mediation role of attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction, H_3 and H_6 could not be rejected. H_3 posited a partial mediation role that attribute satisfaction played in the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction; and H_6 postulated a full mediation role of overall satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. H_7 could not be supported, which proposed that overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty.

The final model, even though not achieving the recommended levels of fit (especially the overall model fit indices before modifications), may represent the best available model until further research identifies improvements in theoretical relationships or measurement of the constructs.

Figure 14 Results of Destination Loyalty Model



Where:

* X_1…..X_9: travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, travel infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, and price and value
* Y_1…..Y_{10}: lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, accessibility, overall satisfaction, revisit intention, referral intention
* Values in parenthesis are t-statistics (t critical value at 0.05 level = 1.96)

Multiple Groups Analysis

Model Comparisons Based on Previous Experience(s)

It was postulated that the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination (H_5). To test this hypothesis, a multiple-groups analysis was conducted to examine the potential differences between first time and repeat visitors concerning the relationship of destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Specifically, this analysis assessed whether the five structural paths in the destination loyalty model were similar across the tourist groups. The multiple sample methodology in LISREL helps determine whether particular parameters or the entire covariance matrices are equal for different groups. Prior to comparing the structural model, however, it is necessary to examine if the theoretical variables in the measurement model were identical in the different samples.

Measurement Invariance

Measurement invariance was tested by comparing results of a confirmatory model fitting separate models for first-timers and repeat tourists. The analysis required the use of a separate covariance matrix for each sample (see Appendix Table V and VI). Initially, model coefficients were freed such that separate loading estimates and error variances were computed for each sub sample (configural invariance). This resulted in acceptable model fits to the data: the overall χ^2 = 937.12 with 298 degrees of freedom, RMSEA = 0.12, CFI = 0.94 and PNFI = 0.80. Next the model was re-estimated adding the constraint that the matrix of factor loadings remains invariant across samples (tau equivalent). The constrained model gained additional degrees of freedom at a price of worse χ^2 fit statistics: 961.89 with 313 degrees of freedom, but other fit indices such as RMSEA (0.12) and CFI (0.94) remained the same and the parsimony fit index improved (PNFI = 0.84). Lastly the model was examined with the added constraint that the matrix of error variances also remains invariant across sub samples (parallel test). This generated the most parsimonious model (the highest degrees of freedom – 331 and the highest PNFI –

0.88) with the worst χ^2 fit statistic: 1,004.73. Other fit indices were similar to that of the previous two models (see Table 30).

Table 30 Measurement Invariance Tests for First Timers and Repeaters – Fit Indices

	Configural Invariance (M_1)	Tau Equivalence (M_2)	Parallel Model (M_3)
Chi-Square	937.12	961.89	1004.73
Degrees of Freedom	298	313	331
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.12	0.12	0.12
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.91
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.80	0.84	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94

To test whether or not the constraints imposed on them were tenable, M_2 and M_3 could be nested in M_1 and the likelihood ratio difference tests could be employed by having M_1 as the baseline model. Based on the χ^2 difference test suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the constrained and unconstrained models were compared for an assessment of factor structure invariance:

1) The χ^2 difference test between configural invariance model (M_1) and tau equivalent model (M_2): null hypothesis $M_2 - M_1 = 0$
   i. the χ^2 difference: 961.89 – 937.12 = 24.77
   ii. the degree of freedom difference: 313 – 298 = 15
   iii. the critical value of χ^2 with 15 degree of freedom at .05 significance level = 25
   iv. Since χ^2 difference < χ^2 critical value, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. M_1 was not performing significantly better than M_2.
2) The χ^2 difference test between parallel model (M_3) and tau equivalent model (M_2): null hypothesis $M_2 - M_3 = 0$.

i. the chi-square difference: 1,004.73 – 961.89 = 42.84

ii. the degree of freedom difference: 331 – 313 = 18

iii. the critical value of chi-square with 18 degrees of freedom at .05 significance level = 28.87

iv. Since χ^2 difference > χ^2 critical value, we reject the null hypothesis. M_2 is performing significantly better than M_3.

The χ^2 difference statistics provided evidence that the measurement model was tau equivalent, i. e., the factor loadings were invariant across both samples but not the error variances. Table 31 showed the unstandardized estimates of the factor loadings (λ_x) and error variances (δ) for the three models.

Table 31 Measurement Invariance Tests for First Timers and Repeaters – Factor Loadings

	Configural Invariance		**Tau Equivalence**		**Parallel Model**	
Lamda X (λ_x)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Natural Attractions	1.12	0.99	1.04		1.04	
Entertainment and Events	1.40	1.42	1.40		1.41	
Historic Attractions	0.83	0.73	0.77		0.77	
Infrastructure	1.17	1.13	1.14		1.14	
Accessibility 1	1.41	1.35	1.37		1.37	
Relaxation	1.23	1.29	1.25		1.27	
Outdoor Activities	1.23	1.25	1.23		1.24	
Price and Value	1.50	1.32	1.39		1.39	
Lodging	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Dining	1.02	1.20	1.15		1.16	
Shopping	1.31	1.24	1.26		1.27	
Attractions	1.43	1.29	1.34		1.34	
Activities and Events	1.11	1.15	1.13		1.14	
Environment	0.75	1.03	0.94		0.95	
Accessibility 2	1.30	1.19	1.22		1.23	
Overall Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Revisit intention	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Recommend intention	1.09	0.84	0.94		0.96	
Theta Delta (δ)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors

Travel Environment	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19
Natural Attractions	0.33	0.40	0.33	0.40	0.38
Entertainment and Events	0.42	0.51	0.42	0.52	0.48
Historic Attractions	0.43	0.46	0.43	0.46	0.45
Infrastructure	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36
Accessibility 1	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	0.58
Relaxation	0.47	0.68	0.47	0.68	0.61
Outdoor Activities	0.36	0.52	0.36	0.53	0.47
Price and Value	0.31	0.33	0.32	0.33	0.33
Lodging	0.40	0.27	0.38	0.27	0.31
Dining	0.47	0.40	0.45	0.41	0.42
Shopping	0.33	0.27	0.34	0.27	0.30
Attractions	0.21	0.33	0.24	0.32	0.29
Activities and Events	0.47	0.46	0.49	0.46	0.47
Environment	0.30	0.24	0.29	0.25	0.26
Accessibility 2	0.45	0.44	0.46	0.44	0.45
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Revisit intention	1.04	0.28	0.91	0.36	0.57
Recommend intention	0.00	0.19	0.15	0.12	0.09

Structural Models Comparison

In this analysis, the possible invariance of the causal relationships (structural paths) leading to destination loyalty was assessed across groups. Three multiple-group structural models were tested. For each structural model, the factor structure for the two tourist groups was held tau equivalent (same factor loadings and different error variances) to assure that the constructs were being measured similarly between groups. In the first model (M_1), both the intercept and coefficients for the regression equations were allowed to vary between groups, suggesting different structural paths for the two groups. In the second model (M_2), the equality constraints were imposed on the regression coefficients but the intercept terms were freely estimated, suggesting a parallel model. In the third model (M_3), both the intercept terms and the structural paths were constrained to be equal, suggesting an equal model (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1995). Table 32 provided a summary of the LISREL parameter estimates for the three models.

Table 32 Structural Model Comparisons for First Timers and Repeaters – Parameter Estimates

	Unconstrained Model		**Parallel Model**		**Equal Model**	
Structural Coefficients	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Destination Image → Attribute Satisfaction (γ_{11})	0.71*	0.85*	0.78*		0.78*	
Destination Image → Overall Satisfaction (γ_{21})	0.31	0.60*	0.53*		0.53*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction (β_{21})	0.58*	0.20	0.27*		0.27*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{31})	0.58*	0.10	0.20*		0.19*	
Overall Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{32})	0.93*	0.66*	0.79*		0.77*	
Intercept Terms (α)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Attribute Satisfaction	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.04	0.00	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.07	0.00	
Destination Loyalty	0.00	0.35*	0.00	0.35*	0.00	

*significant at .05

The test of M_u revealed an acceptable fit to the data: χ^2 (326) = 955.21, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .11, PNFI = 0.87. The test of M_p showed increased χ^2 and degrees of freedom and comparable fit indices: χ^2 (331) = 978.28, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .14, PNFI = 0.89. The test of M_e resulted in the most parsimony but the worst overall fit: χ^2 (335) = 988.1, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .11, PNFI = 0.90. The χ^2 difference tests between these three models were as follows:

1. null hypothesis $M_p - M_u = 0$

   i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 978.28 - 955.21 = 23.07$,

   ii. Δ df = 331 – 326 = 5

   iii. $\chi^2_{.95, 5} = 11.07$

   iv. since $\Delta\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that M_u is performing significantly better than M_p

2. null hypothesis $M_e - M_u = 0$

   i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 988.1 - 955.21 = 32.89$,

   ii. $\Delta\, df = 335 - 326 = 9$

   iii. $\chi^2_{.95, 9} = 16.92$

   iv. since $\Delta\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that M_u is performing significantly better than M_e

The above analysis showed that the unconstrained model outperformed the other two models, leading to the conclusion that the structural coefficients in the model were indeed group-specific. Therefore H_5 was supported. The model-fit statistics for the three models were summarized in Table 33.

Table 33 Structural Model Comparisons for First Timers and Repeaters – Fit Indices

	Unconstrained (M_u)	Parallel (M_p)	Equal (M_e)
Chi-Square	955.21	978.28	988.10
Degrees of Freedom	326	331	335
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.87	0.89	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94

Since it was possible that only some aspects of the models were structurally different, a series of five follow-up χ^2 difference tests were conducted to determine which pair or pairs of structural coefficients were significantly different from one another. This was done by comparing the baseline model M_u (the unconstrained model specifying different structural coefficients) with five different models, each allowing only one pair of the structural paths to be invariant. The following were the χ^2 difference tests:

1. M_1 vs. M_u, where M_1 held the path from destination image to attribute satisfaction invariant between groups

    i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 957.14 – 955.21 = 1.93$,

    ii. Δ df = 327 - 326 = 1

    iii. $\chi^2_{.95, 1} = 3.84$

    iv. Since $\Delta\chi^2 < \chi^2_{crit}$, M_u is performing significantly better than $M_{1,}$ the second sub-hypothesis of H_5 was not supported. (H_{5b}: The path between destination image and attribute satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination)

    v. The path from destination image to attribute satisfaction should be identical across groups.

2. M_2 vs. $M_{u,}$ where M_2 held the path from overall satisfaction to destination loyalty the same between groups

    i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 959.94 – 955.21 = 4.73$,

    ii. Δ df = 327 - 326 = 1

    iii. $\chi^2_{.95, 1} = 3.84$

    iv. Since $\Delta\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$, M_u is performing significantly better than $M_{2,}$ the 4th sub-hypothesis of H_5 was supported. (H_{5d}: The path between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination)

3. M_3 vs. $M_{u,}$ where M_3 held the path from destination image to overall satisfaction the same between groups

    i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 956.43 – 955.21 = 1.22$,

ii. Δ df = 327 - 326 = 1

iii. $\chi^2_{.95,\,1}$ = 3.84

iv. Since $\Delta\chi^2 < \chi^2_{crit}$, M_u is not performing significantly better than $M_{3,}$ The first sub-hypothesis of H_5 was not supported. (H_{5a}: The path between destination image and overall satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination)

v. The path from destination image to overall satisfaction should be invariant across groups.

4. M_4 vs. $M_{u,}$ where M_4 held the path from attribute satisfaction to overall satisfaction the same between groups

   i. $\Delta\chi^2$ = 957.37 – 955.21 = 2.16,

   ii. Δ df = 327 - 326 = 1

   iii. $\chi^2_{.95,\,1}$ = 3.84

   iv. Since $\Delta\chi^2 < \chi^2_{crit}$, M_u is not performing significantly better than $M_{4.}$ The third sub-hypothesis of H_5 could not be supported. (H_{5c}: The path between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination)

   v. The path from attribute satisfaction to overall satisfaction should be the same between groups.

5. M_5 vs. $M_{u,}$ where M_5 held the path from attribute satisfaction to destination loyalty the same between groups

   i. $\Delta\chi^2$ = 960.84 – 955.21 = 5.63,

   ii. Δ df = 327 - 326 = 1

iii. $\chi^2_{.95,\,1} = 3.84$

iv. Since $\Delta\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$, M_u is performing significantly better than M_5, the 5th sub-hypothesis of H_5 was supported. (H_{5e}: The path between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination)

The analysis suggested that two out of the five paths were different between groups: 1) overall satisfaction → destination loyalty, and 2) attribute satisfaction → destination loyalty. The model-fit results were summarized in Table 34.

Table 34 Nested Models Comparisons for First-timers and Repeaters

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Chi-Square	957.14	959.94	956.43	957.37	960.84
Degrees of Freedom	327	327	327	327	327
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94

A constrained model (M_c) in which two paths were allowed to vary between groups reflected a significant improvement in model fit over the parallel model in which all five paths were held invariant (M_p); and this model (M_c) did not reflect a significant difference from the unconstrained model in which all five structural paths were allowed to vary (M_u). The χ^2 different tests were provided below:

1. null hypothesis $M_p - M_c = 0$

i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 978.28 - 959.17 = 19.11$,

ii. Δ df = 331 – 329 = 2

iii. $\chi^2_{.95,\,2} = 5.99$

iv. since $\Delta\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that M_c is performing significantly better than M_p

2. null hypothesis $M_c - M_u = 0$

i. $\Delta \chi^2 = 959.17 - 955.21 = 3.96$,

ii. Δ df = 329 – 326 = 3

iii. $\chi^2_{.95, 3} = 7.81$

iv. since $\Delta\chi^2 < \chi^2_{crit}$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, suggesting that M_u is not performing significantly better than M_c

It seemed that the constrained model (M_c) best combined model fit and model parsimony: χ^2 (329) = 959.17, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .11, PNFI = 0.88, and should thus be retained as the final model. In this multi-sample model three paths were held invariant (destination image → attribute satisfaction, destination image → overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction → overall satisfaction), and two paths were different across the two tourist groups (overall satisfaction → destination loyalty and attribute satisfaction → destination loyalty). The structural coefficients for the two tourist groups from this final model were presented in Figure 15 and 16.

Figure 15 Destination Loyalty Model for First Time Visitors

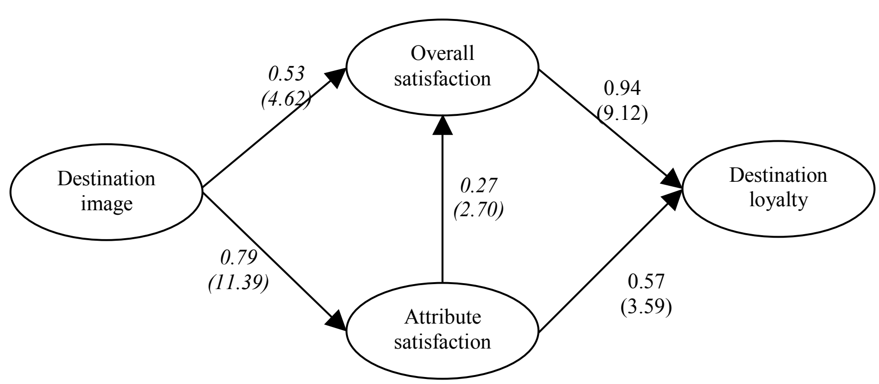
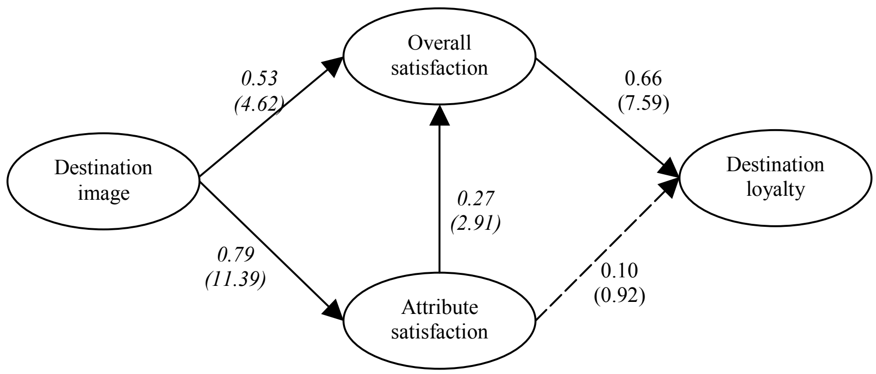


Figure 16 Destination Loyalty Model for Repeat Visitors



Note: t-values are shown in parentheses (t critical value at 0.05 level = 1.96).

The structural models showed intriguing differences between first time and repeat vacationers. For first-timers, all five structural paths were significant ($p < .05$) and in the expected direction: destination loyalty was both affected directly by attribute satisfaction and indirectly by attribute satisfaction through overall satisfaction as a mediator; destination loyalty was indirectly influenced by destination image via two mediators: overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction. For repeat tourists, all but the path between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty ($\beta_{31} = 0.10$, $p > .05$) were statistically significant: attribute satisfaction indirectly affected destination loyalty through overall satisfaction, and destination image indirectly influenced loyalty via overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction.

The main differences here were that: 1) for first time tourists, overall satisfaction only partially mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty; whereas for repeat visitors, overall satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between attribute satisfaction and destination loyalty; and 2) for the relationship between overall satisfaction and destination loyalty, the path estimate for the first timers ($\beta_{32} = 0.94$, $p > .05$) was larger in magnitude than that of repeat visitors ($\beta_{32} = 0.66$, $p > .05$), indicating that overall satisfaction had a stronger impact on first-timers' destination loyalty than on repeat visitors'.

Latent Means Comparison

It was posited that repeat visitors would have different destination image, satisfaction level (both attribute and overall satisfaction), and destination loyalty as opposed to first time visitors (H_6: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' previous experience with a destination). To test this hypothesis, the mean values of the latent constructs were compared between first time and repeat tourists.

Given that it is not possible to identify a definite origin and an intrinsic scale for latent (unobserved) variables, constraints needed to be imposed in order to define a common scale. All loadings of the observed variables on the latent constructs were constrained to be equal across groups. The four factor means were constrained to zero for the first timers (reference group), and freely estimated for the repeaters (comparison group). Overall latent mean differences for all four constructs between the groups were obtained from the unconstrained model (see Table 35): for destination image ($\kappa = 0.01$, $p>.05$), for attribute satisfaction ($\kappa = -0.03$, $p>.05$), for overall satisfaction ($\kappa = 0.07$, $p>.05$), and for destination loyalty ($\kappa = 0.42$, $p<.05$).

The results revealed that 1) repeaters held slightly more positive image, expressed marginally lower attribute satisfaction and higher overall satisfaction with the destination, however, the differences were not statistically significant, therefore the sub-hypotheses H_{6a}, H_{6b} and H_{6c} could not be supported; and 2) repeat tourists did report significantly higher destination loyalty than first-timers, thus the sub-hypothesis H_{6d} could be corroborated. It can thus be concluded that first timers and repeat tourists were alike in terms of the image perception and the satisfaction level with the destination, but they were more loyal towards the destination than first-timers. H_6 and its sub-hypotheses were partially confirmed by the findings.

Table 35 Latent Mean Comparisons between First-timers and Repeaters

	Estimated Mean			
	Destination Image	Attribute Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction	Destination Loyalty
First time (n = 114)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Repeat (n = 231)	0.01 (0.11)	-0.03 (-0.40)	0.07 (0.67)	**0.42 (2.97)**

Note: Values in parenthesis are t-statistics (t critical value at 0.05 level = 1.96)

Model Comparisons Based on Demographics

It was posited that the structural parameter estimates and the latent means of the destination loyalty model were different based on tourists' demographic characteristics, specifically, gender, age, education level and income level (H_7 - H_{14}). Multiple-groups analysis assessed the potential differences in the destination loyalty model between male vs. female, senior ($\geq$ 50 years old) vs. younger vacationers (< 50 years old), tourists with higher level of education (four-year college or above) vs. lower level of education (less than four-year college), tourists with higher household income ($\geq$ \$50,000) vs. lower household income (< \$50,000). Since the establishment of measurement invariance across groups is a prerequisite to conducting cross-group comparisons (Vandenberg and Lance, 2000), the researcher started with tests of measurement invariance across different demographic segments. The covariance matrices for the different demographic groups were presented in the appendix (Table V – XIV).

Measurement Invariance

Following the approach recommended by Vandenberg and Lance (2000) for establishing measurement invariance, three tests were conducted in the following order: 1) a test of configural invariance in which the pattern of fixed and free factor loadings is held invariant across samples; 2) a test of metric invariance (tau equivalence), in which factor loadings for like items are held identical across groups; and 3) a test of parallel model, in which both factor loadings and error variances for like items are held the same across groups. A series of χ^2 difference tests were then employed to determine whether the measurement is configural invariant, metric invariant, or parallel across groups.

The results revealed that the measurement model was tau equivalent, i. e., the factor loadings for the observed variables were invariant across the age, gender, education and income groups, but the error variances for the variables were different across groups. The χ^2 difference tests were provided in the following section, along with the fit indices generated from the multiple-groups analysis for the different demographic groups (see Table 36 - 39). The unstandardized estimates of the factor loadings (λ_x) and error variances (δ) for the four demographic segments were presented in the Appendix (Table XV – XVIII).

Gender

The χ^2 difference test between configural invariance model (M_1) and tau equivalent model (M_2) showed that although χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2 = 27.61$, Δ df = 15) is slightly larger than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 15} = 25$), but it does not exceed χ^2 critical value at .01 level ($\chi^2_{.99,\ 15} = 30.58$). Thus M_1 did not show a significantly better model fit than M_2.

The χ^2 difference test between parallel model (M_3) and tau equivalent model (M_2) revealed that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 93.45, Δ df = 18) is larger than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 18}$ = 28.87). Therefore M_2 was performing significantly better than M_3.

As a result of the above analysis, the researcher concluded that the measurement was tau equivalent across male and female, i. e., the factor loadings for the observed variables should be held invariant across groups, yet the error variances for the variables are allowed to be freely estimated.

Table 36 Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Gender – Fit Indices

	Configural Invariance	Tau Equivalence	Parallel Model
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	929.38 w / 298 df	956.99 w / 313 df	1050.44 w / 331 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.12	0.12	0.13
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.91
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.93
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.80	0.84	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94

Age

The χ^2 difference test between configural invariance model (M_1) and tau equivalent model (M_2) showed that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 21, Δ df = 15) is less than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 15}$ = 25). Hence M_1 did not have significantly better goodness of model fit than M_2.

The χ^2 difference test between parallel model (M_3) and tau equivalent model (M_2) revealed that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 188.22, Δ df = 18) is much greater than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 18}$ = 28.87), meaning that the model fit of M_2 was significantly better than that of M_3.

As a consequence of the above analysis, the researcher concluded that the measurement was tau equivalent across senior and younger vacationers, i. e., the factor loadings for the manifest variables are identical across groups, while the error variances for the variables are not the same between the two age groups.

Table 37 Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Age – Fit Indices

	Configural Invariance	Tau Equivalence	Parallel Model
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	915.07 w / 298 df	936.07 w / 313 df	1124.29 w / 331 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.12	0.11	0.12
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.90
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.93
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.80	0.84	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95	0.95	0.93

Education

The χ^2 difference test between configural invariance model (M_1) and tau equivalent model (M_2) demonstrated that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2 = 18.74$, Δ df = 15) is smaller than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 15} = 25$). This provided evidence that M_1 was not performing significantly better than M_2.

The χ^2 difference test between parallel model (M_3) and tau equivalent model (M_2) exhibited that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2 = 97.08$, Δ df = 18) is much higher than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 18} = 28.87$). This means that the goodness of model fit of M_3 worsened significantly compared with M_2.

It can thus be concluded that the measurement was tau equivalent across tourists with higher education level and lower education level, i. e., the factor loadings for the observed variables are invariant across groups, whereas the error variances for the variables remain different.

Table 38 Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Education – Fit Indices

	Configural Invariance	Tau Equivalence	Parallel Model
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	899.5 w / 298 df	918.24 w / 313 df	1015.32 w / 331 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.12
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.91
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.80	0.84	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95	0.95	0.94

Household Income

The χ^2 difference test between configural invariance model (M_1) and tau equivalent model (M_2) showed that although χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 25.87, Δ df = 15) is a little higher than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 15}$ = 25), but it does not surpass χ^2 critical value at .01 level ($\chi^2_{.99,\ 15}$ = 30.58). Thus the overall model fit of M_1 was not significantly better than that of M_2.

The χ^2 difference test between parallel model (M_3) and tau equivalent model (M_2) exhibited that χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 66.58, Δ df = 18) is larger than χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 18}$ = 28.87). Therefore M_2 did not exhibit a significantly better fit to the data than M_3.

Based on the above analysis, it was concluded that the measurement was tau equivalent across higher income group and lower income group, i. e., the factor loadings for the observed variables are the same across groups, but the error variances for the variables are different.

Table 39 Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Income – Fit Indices

	Configural Invariance	Tau Equivalence	Parallel Model
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	897.75 w / 298 df	923.62 w / 313 df	990.2 w / 331 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.12

Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.91
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.80	0.84	0.89
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95	0.95	0.94

Structural Models Comparison

After confirming the metric invariance of the measurement model, the researcher moved on to examine invariance of structural coefficients across different demographic groups. With the measurement scale being held tau equivalent, three multiple-group structural models were run in the following sequence: 1) the unconstrained model (M_u) allowed both the intercept and coefficients for the regression equations to be freely estimated across groups; 2) the parallel model (M_p) held the regression coefficients invariant across groups but the intercept terms were relaxed; and 3) the equal model (M_e) constrained both the intercept terms and the structural paths to be equal across groups. A summary of the LISREL parameter estimates for different demographic segments was provided in the Appendix (Table XIX – XXII).

A series of χ^2 difference tests were then used to examine if the structural parameter estimates were identical across groups. The findings showed that the destination loyalty model did not vary across any of the demographic groups based on gender, age, education and household income. The hypotheses H_7, H_9, H_{11}, and H_{13} were not supported. The χ^2 difference tests were presented in the following section.

Gender

The results showed that the χ^2 difference ($\Delta \chi^2 = 4.76$, Δ df = 5) between the unconstrained model and the parallel model was smaller than the χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 5} = 11.07$), suggesting that the overall goodness of model fit for M_u is not significantly better than that of $M_{p;}$ while the χ^2 difference between the parallel model and the equal model ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 14.6, Δ df = 4) was greater than the χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 4}$ = 9.49), indicating that the goodness of model fit for M_e worsened significantly than that of $M_{p.}$ The multi-sample model-fit statistics for the three models were summarized in Table 40.

Table 40 Structural Model Comparisons Based on Gender – Fit Indices

	Unconstrained (M_u)	Parallel (M_p)	Equal (M_e)
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	967.95 w / 326 df	972.71 w / 331 df	987.31 w / 335 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.87	0.89	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94

The above analysis clearly indicated that the parallel model outperformed the other two models, leading to the conclusion that the structural parameters in the destination loyalty model were invariant across the male and female segments, though the intercept terms for the regression equations were different across groups. Therefore H_7 was rejected (H_7: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' gender).

Age

The χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 6.89, Δ df = 5) between the unconstrained model and the parallel model did not exceed the χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 5}$ = 11.07), implying that M_u is not performing significantly better than $M_{p;}$ at the meanwhile the χ^2 difference between the parallel model and the equal model ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 2.47, Δ df = 4) also did not surpass the χ^2 critical value ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 4}$ = 9.49), suggesting that M_p is not performing significantly better than $M_{e.}$

It can thus be concluded that the equal model outperformed the other two models, meaning that both the intercept terms and the regression coefficients for the structural equations were invariant across the young and senior tourist groups. H_9 could not be supported (H_9: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' age). Table 41 provided the multi-sample model-fit statistics for the three competing models.

Table 41 Structural Model Comparisons Based on Age – Fit Indices

	Unconstrained (M_u)	Parallel (M_p)	Equal (M_e)
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	954.46 w / 326 df	961.35 w / 331 df	963.82 w / 335 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.88	0.89	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94

Education

Although the χ^2 difference ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 12.08, Δ df = 5) between the unconstrained model and the parallel model was slightly larger than the χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 5}$ = 11.07), it did not exceed the χ^2 critical value at .01 level ($\chi^2_{.99,\ 5}$ = 15.09). This suggested that M_u is not performing significantly better than $M_{p.}$ As for the χ^2 difference between the parallel model and the equal model ($\Delta\ \chi^2$ = 8.02, Δ df = 4), it was less than the χ^2 critical value ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 4}$ = 9.49). This indicated that M_p is not performing significantly better than $M_{e.}$ Table 42 provided the multi-sample model-fit statistics for the three competing models.

Table 42 Structural Model Comparisons Based on Education – Fit Indices

	Unconstrained (M_u)	Parallel (M_p)	Equal (M_e)
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	937.95 w / 326 df	950.03 w / 331 df	958.05 w / 335 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.94	0.94
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.88	0.89	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95	0.95	0.94

The findings demonstrated that the equal model should be retained as viable; therefore the parameter estimates for the structural model including the intercept terms and the regression coefficients were the same across the tourist groups with higher and lower education level. H_{11} was hence rejected (H_{11}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level).

Household Income

The χ^2 difference ($\Delta \chi^2 = 4.48$, Δ df = 5) between the unconstrained model and the parallel model did not surpass the χ^2 critical value at .05 level ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 5} = 11.07$), suggesting that the overall model fit of M_u did not significantly improved compared with M_p. Similarly the χ^2 difference between the parallel model and the equal model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 5.45$, Δ df = 4) did not exceed the χ^2 critical value ($\chi^2_{.95,\ 4} = 9.49$), indicating that the model fit of M_p did not improve significantly compared with M_e.

The equal model best combined model fit and parsimony and should thus be retained. The researcher concluded that both the intercept terms and the regression coefficients for the structural equations were invariant across the tourist segments with higher and lower household income. Hence H_{13} could not be supported (H_{13}: the structural paths in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level). Table 43 provided the multi-sample model-fit statistics for the three competing models.

Table 43 Structural Model Comparisons Based on Income – Fit Indices

	Unconstrained (M_u)	Parallel (M_p)	Equal (M_e)
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	925.41 w / 326 df	929.89 w / 331 df	935.34 w / 335 df
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
RMSEA	0.11	0.11	0.11
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.92	0.92	0.92
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.94	0.95	0.95
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.88	0.89	0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95	0.95	0.95

<u>Latent Means Comparison</u>

H_8, H_{10}, H_{12} and H_{14} postulated that different demographic groups would have different mean values for the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model. To test these hypotheses, the means of destination image, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty were computed for different demographic groups. To estimate the latent means, all factor loadings on the latent constructs were held invariant across groups; the latent means were set to zero for the reference group, and were unconstrained for the comparison group. Table 44 presented the latent mean comparisons for the four constructs across the demographic groups.

Table 44 Latent Mean Comparisons between Demographic Groups

	Estimated Mean			
	Destination Image	Attribute Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction	Destination Loyalty
Male (n = 114)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Female (n = 231)	**0.22 (3.46)**	0.13 (1.75)	0.02 (0.20)	0.11 (0.79)
Under 50 years old (n = 200)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
50 years old and above (n = 145)	0.05 (0.68)	-0.02 (-0.20)	0.03 (0.26)	-0.09 (-0.85)

Less than 4-year college (n = 149)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4-year college and above (n = 196)	**-0.17 (-2.29)**	-0.11 (-1.39)	0.02 (0.20)	-0.08 (-0.74)
Less than \$50,000 (n = 98)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
\$50,000 and above (n = 247)	-0.16 (-1.79)	-0.09 (-1.00)	0.05 (0.37)	-0.01 (-0.12)

Note: Values in parenthesis are t-statistics (t critical value at 0.05 level = 1.96)

Gender

The results showed that 1) female held more positive destination image ($\kappa = 0.22$, $p<.05$) than male and the difference was significant, thus the sub-hypothesis H_{8a} could be corroborated; and 2) female reported higher level of attribute satisfaction ($\kappa = 0.13$, $p>.05$), overall satisfaction ($\kappa = 0.02$, $p>.05$) and destination loyalty ($\kappa = 0.11$, $p>.05$) compared with male respondents, though the differences were not statistically significant, therefore the sub-hypotheses H_{8b}, H_{8c} and H_{8d} was not corroborated.

It can thus be concluded that male and female tourists were similarly satisfied with the products/services provided by the destination and displayed comparable loyalty towards the destination, but female had more favorable image of the destination than their male counterparts. The findings provided partial support for H_8 and its sub-hypotheses (H_8: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' gender).

Age

Between the younger (< 50 years old) and senior ($\geq$ 50 years old) tourists, there were no significant mean difference in terms of destination image ($\kappa = 0.05$, $p>.05$) attribute satisfaction ($\kappa = -0.02$, $p>.05$), overall satisfaction ($\kappa = 0.03$, $p>.05$) and destination loyalty ($\kappa = -0.09$, $p>.05$). Therefore, the researcher concluded that senior and younger travelers were homogeneous groups based on their perception of a destination, satisfaction judgment, and loyalty intentions. H_{10} and its sub-hypotheses were rejected by the findings (H_{10}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on tourists' age).

Education

Tourists with four-year college education or more had a significantly lower regards of the image of the destination (κ = -0.17, p<.05) than those with less than 4-year college education, resulting in support for H_{12a}; but their satisfaction level (attribute satisfaction κ = -0.11, p>.05; overall satisfaction κ = 0.02, p>.05) and their loyalty towards the destination (κ = -0.08, p>.05) did not vary because of their education level. Consequently H_{12b}, H_{12c} and H_{12d} were not upheld. The findings suggested that tourists with lower education level perceived the destination more favorably than those with higher education level, although their education background did not influence their satisfaction evaluation and loyalty level. H_{12} and its sub-hypotheses were partially supported (H_{12}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' education level).

Household Income

Tourists with different levels of household income (high level $\geq$ \$50,000; low level < \$50,000) did not show significant differences in their assessments of destination image (κ = -0.16, p>.05), attribute satisfaction (κ = -0.09, p>.05), overall satisfaction (κ = 0.05, p>.05) and destination loyalty (κ = -0.01, p>.05). As a result, the researcher concluded that tourists' view of a destination, their level of satisfaction and level of loyalty towards a destination did not vary based on their household income. H_{14} and its sub-hypotheses were not substantiated by the results (H_{14}: the means of the latent constructs in the destination loyalty model differed based on the tourists' income level).

Importance-Performance Analysis

Respondents were shown a list of Eureka Springs' features and activities, and were asked to indicate how important each attribute was to attract them to visit the city, and how satisfied they were with these attributes. Seven-point likert sales were used: 1) the importance scale ranged from 1 - very unimportant to 7 – very important; 2) the satisfaction scale varied from 1 - very dissatisfied to 7 - very satisfied. Altogether there were seven categories which encompassed different features and activities offered by Eureka Springs: accommodation, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment and accessibility.

Overall IPA Grid

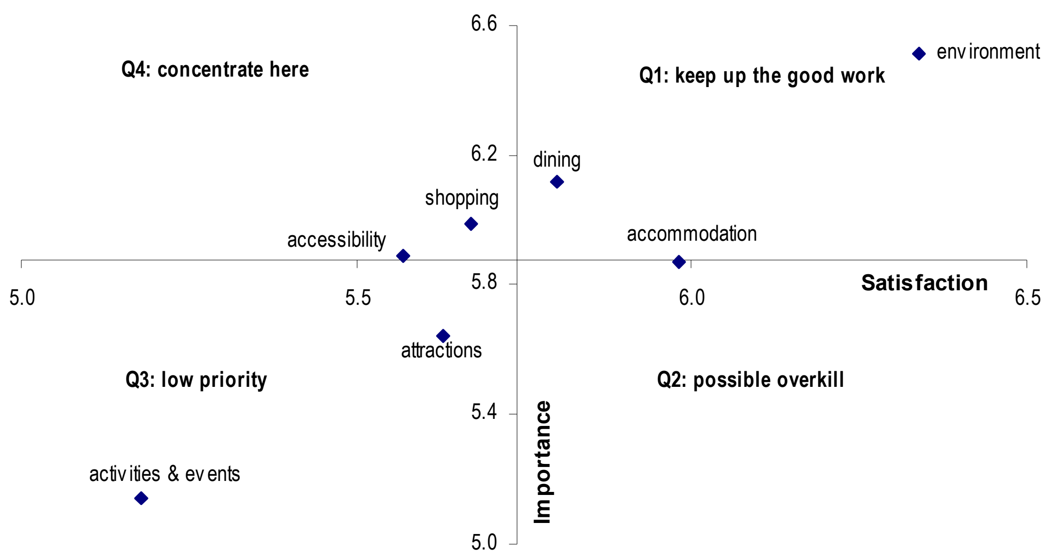
The average level of satisfaction with various aspects of the Eureka Springs experience and the average importance of these seven components were calculated for the overall sample (See Table 45). These values were then used as coordinates for plotting each component on the important-satisfaction grid.

Table 45 Importance Performance Means for Seven Destination Components

Destination Component	Importance	Satisfaction	Mean Dif.
Accommodation	5.87	5.98	0.11
Dining	6.12	5.80	-0.32
Shopping	5.99	5.67	-0.32
Attractions	5.64	5.63	-0.01
Activities and Events	5.14	5.18	0.04
Environment	6.52	6.34	-0.17
Accessibility	5.89	5.57	-0.32
Grand Mean	**5.88**	**5.74**	**-0.14**

As shown in Figure 17, the horizontal axis indicated tourists' satisfaction level of a service on a given attribute, ranging from low to high; while the vertical axis demonstrated tourists' perception of the importance level of the attribute from low to high. By using the grand means for satisfaction (5.74) and importance (5.88) as the crossing point, the satisfaction and importance scores for the seven components were plotted on the grid. Each component was then analyzed by locating the appropriate quadrant in which it fell. Components in the top left quadrant (Q4) were rated very important, but the level of satisfaction was rated below average. Components in the top right quadrant (Q1) were rated very important and the satisfaction level was above average. Components in the bottom left quadrant (Q3) were considered less important and satisfaction level was below average. Finally components in the bottom right quadrant (Q2) were rated above average on satisfaction but were rated below average on importance.

Figure 17 IPA Grid for the Seven Destination Components



The IPA grid essentially provided an attractive snapshot of how well Eureka Springs met tourists' concerns over certain important destination components, and it simultaneously offered guidelines for the city's future resource allocation decisions. Each quadrant suggested a different marketing strategy as described in Figure 6. Specifically, ratings for accommodation (importance = 5.87; satisfaction = 5.98), environment (importance = 6.52; satisfaction = 6.34) and dining (importance = 6.12; satisfaction = 5.80) landed in the upper right-hand quadrant (Q1), indicating that Eureka Springs was doing a good job with highly important destination components; the strategy then was one of maintenance – of keeping up the good work. 'Attractions' (importance = 5.64; satisfaction = 5.63) and 'activities and events' (importance = 5.14; satisfaction = 5.18) were positioned in the lower left-hand quadrant (Q3), suggesting moderate performance on moderately important components. One might want to consider the components low priority items.

No component was located at the lower right-hand quadrant (Q2), which was a sign of overinvestment – high performance on moderately important items. Lastly, 'accessibility' (importance = 5.89; satisfaction = 5.57) and 'shopping' (importance = 5.99; satisfaction = 5.67) fell in the upper left-hand quadrant (Q4), suggesting that special attention was required for these highly important destination components with substandard performance. Eureka Springs needed to invest and improve on these features. In general, resources should be shifted from providing attributes in quadrant 2 to improving performance on attributes in quadrant 4.

Individual IPA Grids

Under each of the seven destination components, there are specific attributes that reflect different aspects of the components, such as variety, quality, service, and price. Table 46 showed the mean importance and satisfaction levels for the 33 attributes. To further analyze and pinpoint where the strengths and weaknesses were for the seven destination component, seven IPA grids were plotted. For each individual grid, the mean values of the importance and satisfaction ratings for the individual attributes were computed and used as the coordinates. The grand means of importance and satisfaction levels for each component were set as the crosshairs and determined the placement of the axes on the grids (see Figures 18 – 24). Therefore the seven IPA grids had different crossing points.

Table 46 Importance Performance Means for 33 Destination Attributes

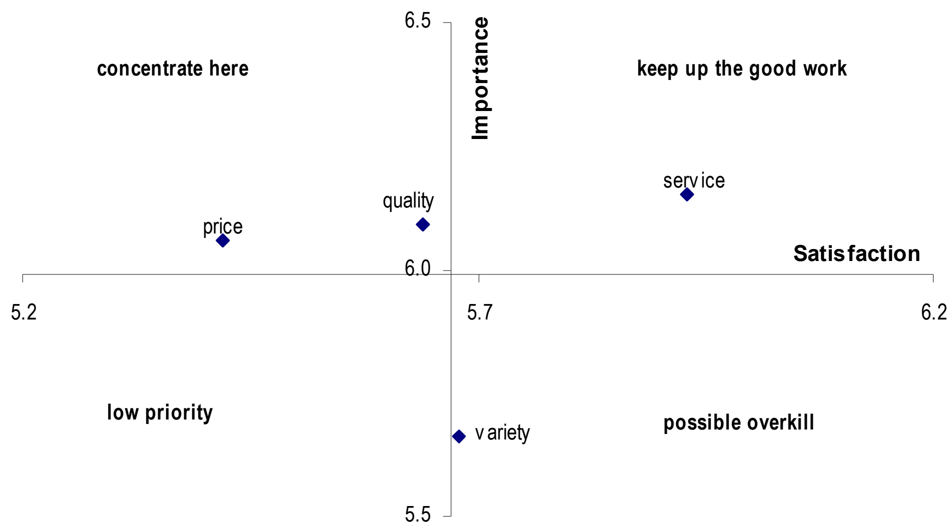
Attributes	Importance	Satisfaction	Mean Dif.
Accommodation			
Variety of lodging options	5.79	6.09	0.30
Distinctiveness/uniqueness of lodging	5.41	5.95	0.54
Historical interest of lodging	4.89	5.57	0.68
Quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities	6.56	6.14	-0.42
Service in lodging facilities	6.35	6.19	-0.16
Reasonable price of accommodation	6.23	5.95	-0.28
Grand Mean	**5.87**	**5.98**	**0.11**
Dining			
Variety of cuisine	5.81	5.66	-0.15
Quality of food	6.42	5.89	-0.53
Convenience of meals	5.93	5.71	-0.22
Service in restaurants	6.32	5.94	-0.38
Reasonable price of meals	6.12	5.81	-0.31
Grand Mean	**6.12**	**5.80**	**-0.32**
Shopping			
Variety of shops	5.66	5.68	0.02
Quality of merchandise	6.09	5.64	-0.45
Friendliness of service	6.15	5.93	-0.22
Reasonable price of merchandise	6.06	5.42	-0.64
Grand Mean	**5.99**	**5.67**	**-0.32**

Attractions			
Variety of historic/cultural sites	5.62	5.72	0.10
Variety of natural attractions	5.77	5.80	0.03
Variety of cultural options	5.33	5.38	0.05
Reasonable price for sightseeing	5.84	5.62	-0.22
Grand Mean	**5.64**	**5.63**	**-0.01**
Activities and Events			
Variety of outdoor recreation	5.13	5.27	0.14
Variety of spa/massage/healing options	4.46	5.16	0.70
Variety of evening entertainment	5.37	4.90	-0.47
Variety of special events/festivals	4.96	5.15	0.19
Reasonable price for activities and events	5.80	5.43	-0.37
Grand Mean	**5.14**	**5.18**	**0.04**
Environment			
Safety and security	6.47	6.29	-0.18
Cleanliness	6.56	6.29	-0.27
Peaceful and restful atmosphere	6.54	6.42	-0.12
Friendliness of local people	6.49	6.37	-0.12
Grand Mean	**6.52**	**6.34**	**-0.17**
Accessibility			
Ease of access	5.94	5.53	-0.41
Convenience of local transportation	5.77	5.72	-0.05
Availability of local parking	5.98	4.89	-1.09
Availability of travel information	5.94	5.85	-0.09
Helpfulness of welcome center	5.82	5.87	0.05
Grand Mean	**5.89**	**5.57**	**-0.32**

Shopping

Tourists felt that reasonable price (importance = 6.06; satisfaction = 5.42) and quality of merchandise (importance = 6.09; satisfaction = 5.64) were very important but indicated low satisfaction with these two attributes; therefore these two attributes should be given top priority in improvement effort. Tourists valued courteous service and were pleased with this element (importance = 6.15; satisfaction = 5.93); the shop owners should keep up the good work they have done in terms of providing friendly service. Tourists were happy with the variety of shops available in Eureka Springs but they only attach slight importance to this feature (importance = 5.66; satisfaction = 5.68). This may point to misused resources or misplaced priorities (see Figure 18).

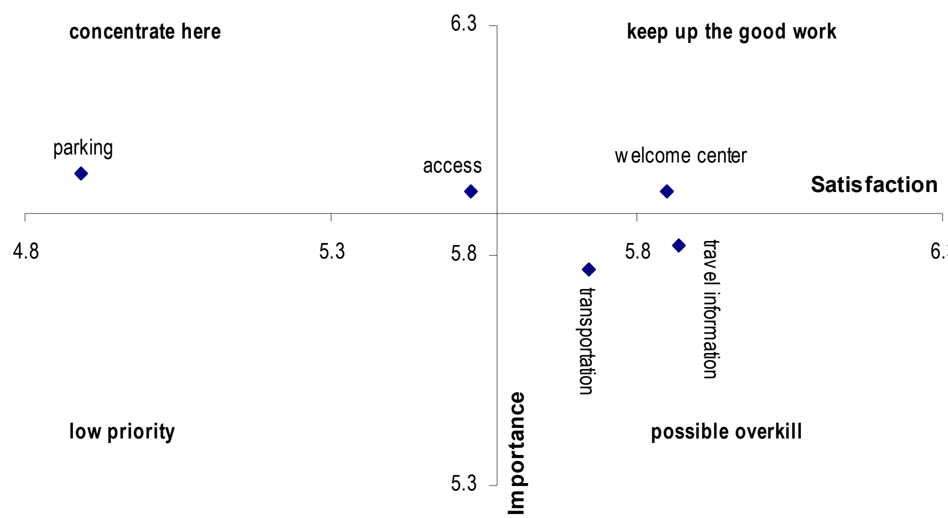
Figure 18 IPA Grid for 'Shopping'



Accessibility

As indicated in Figure 19, two attributes fell into the 'concentrate here' quadrant: tourists considered availability of local parking (importance = 5.98; satisfaction = 4.89) and ease of access (importance = 5.94; satisfaction = 5.53) very important, but were relatively less satisfied with these attributes, representing that special attention were required to improve tourists' satisfaction with these features. 'Helpfulness of the welcome center' (importance = 5.82; satisfaction = 5.87) was located in 'keep up the good work' quadrant, indicating high performance and high priority. The implication was that continued resources should be directed towards improving this attribute. 'Convenience of local transportation' (importance = 5.77; satisfaction = 5.72) and 'availability of travel information' (importance = 5.94; satisfaction = 5.85) fell into 'possible overkill' quadrant, indicating high satisfaction and relative low importance. One might consider that perhaps too much emphasis was being placed on features that are not salient to tourists.

Figure 19 IPA Grid for 'Accessibility'

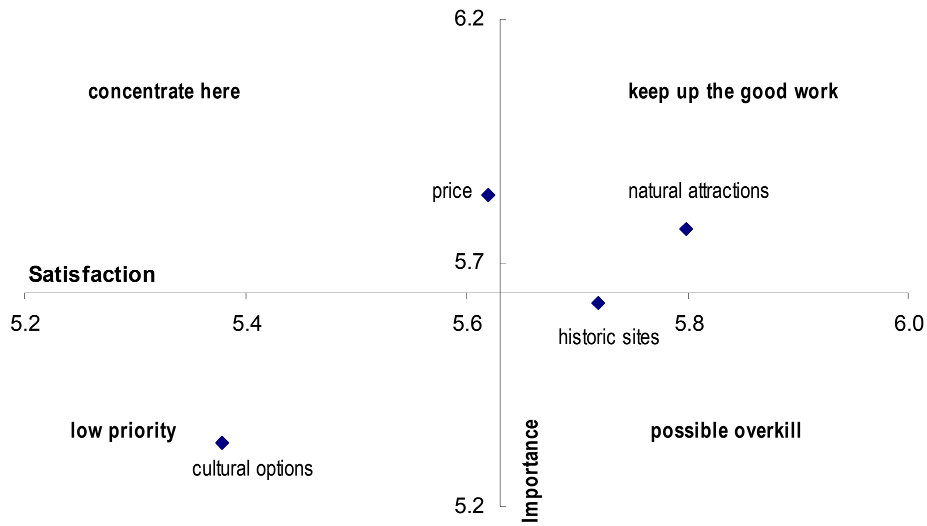


Attractions

Tourists deemed reasonable price of sightseeing (importance = 5.84; satisfaction = 5.62) particularly important, yet were less satisfied with it relative to other attributes. Destination managers in Eureka Springs should pay particular attention towards improving tourists' satisfaction with this attribute. Although tourists were only adequately satisfied with variety of cultural options (importance = 5.33; satisfaction = 5.38) in Eureka Springs, it was a low priority attribute because tourists placed relative low importance on this feature. Eureka Springs was excelling in providing variety of natural attractions (importance = 5.77; satisfaction = 5.80), which tourists perceived as very important to attract them to the city. Efforts ought to be maintained regarding this feature and marketing materials ought to emphasize it. Tourists were satisfied with the variety of historic sites available in Eureka Springs (importance = 5.62; satisfaction =

5.72), though they did not perceive this feature as important as other ‘attraction’ attributes (see Figure 20).

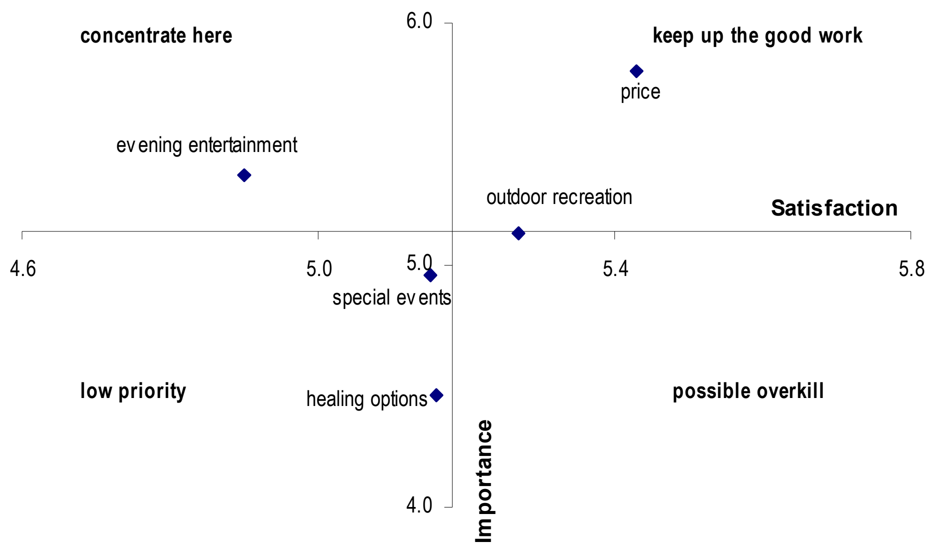
Figure 20 IPA Grid for ‘Attractions’



Activities and Events

Lack of evening entertainment was the major weakness of Eureka Springs. Variety of evening entertainment (importance = 5.37; satisfaction = 4.90) was of high importance in the destination choice decision but tourists were only moderately satisfied with this feature. It is here where major improvements were required. Variety of special events/festivals (importance = 4.96; satisfaction = 5.15) and healing options (importance = 4.46; satisfaction = 5.16) were attributes with low satisfaction level that were not salient to tourists. While important to know and to be aware of, the destination should not invest too much in them owing to their low importance. ‘Reasonable price of activities and events’ (importance = 5.80; satisfaction = 5.43) and ‘variety of outdoor activities’ (importance = 5.13; satisfaction = 5.27) were attributes of high importance that also enjoyed high satisfaction. These were the major strengths of the destination that it wanted to emphasize in promotional efforts and through which it generally wanted to keep up the good performance (see Figure 21).

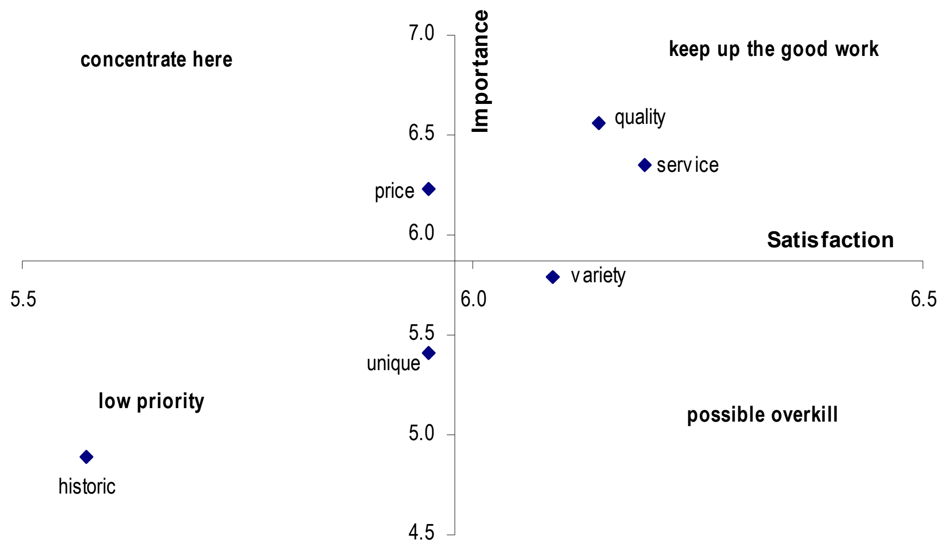
Figure 21 IPA Grid for 'Activities and events'



<u>Accommodations</u>

As depicted in Figure 22, 'reasonable price of accommodations' (importance = 6.23; satisfaction = 5.95) fell into the high importance low satisfaction quadrant, which represented priority for management action. Historical interests and uniqueness of lodging (importance = 5.41; satisfaction = 5.95) were positioned in low importance low satisfaction quadrant, indicating that no specific action needed to be taken because these were low priority attributes for tourists. 'Quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities' (importance = 6.56; satisfaction = 6.14) and 'friendliness of service' (importance = 6.35; satisfaction = 6.19) were located in high importance high satisfaction quadrant, suggesting that lodging segment in Eureka Springs was providing quality facilities and services to tourists and should keep up the good work. Variety of lodging options (importance = 5.79; satisfaction = 6.09) fell in the low importance high satisfaction quadrant, suggesting a possible over-employment of efforts and resources being spent in this attribute.

Figure 22 IPA Grid for 'Accommodations'



Environment

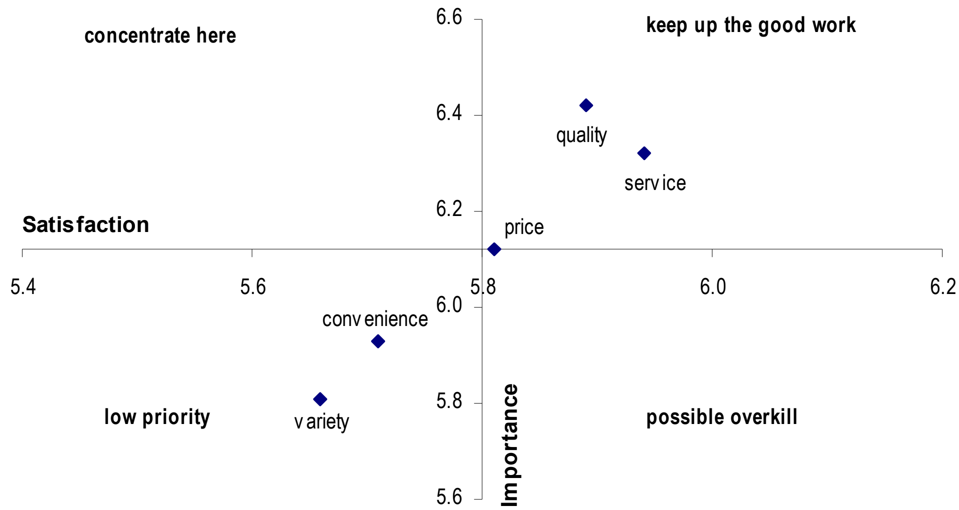
Cleanliness (importance = 6.56; satisfaction = 6.29) is an important attribute to tourists' destination choice decision, but they were less satisfied with it compared with other attributes. Eureka Springs needed to focus on improving tourists' perception of this feature. Although 'safety and security' (importance = 6.47; satisfaction = 6.29) was rated below average in terms of importance and satisfaction, it seemed unlikely that this was truly low priority item to tourists. The explanation might be that tourists took this attribute for granted. The same explanation might apply to the 'possible overkill' attribute - friendliness of local people (importance = 6.49; satisfaction = 6.37). It was difficult to justify that tourists would consider this attribute less important – they just grew accustomed to it and tended to take it for granted. Tourists regarded 'peaceful and restful atmosphere' (importance = 6.54; satisfaction = 6.42) as highly important to their destination choice decision and they were also highly satisfied with this attribute. Destination markers should stress this feature in their promotional campaign for Eureka Springs (see Figure 23).

Figure 23 IPA Grid for 'Environment'

Dining

As shown in Figure 24, three attributes lay in the 'keep up the good work' quadrant: quality of food (importance = 6.42; satisfaction = 5.89), service in restaurants (importance = 6.32; satisfaction = 5.94), and reasonable price of meals (importance = 6.12; satisfaction = 5.81). Tourists ranked these attributes high both in importance and satisfaction. Two attributes fell in 'low priority' quadrant: convenience of meals (importance = 5.93; satisfaction = 5.71) and variety of cuisine (importance = 5.81; satisfaction = 5.66). These attributes were rated relatively low in importance, and were also rated substandard in satisfaction. Due to the low salience, these attributes required no additional resources if resources were scarce and were needed more urgently in other more important areas.

Figure 24 IPA Grid for 'Dining'



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of the study was to present an integrated approach to understanding destination loyalty model and investigate the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. The study also examined whether the destination loyalty model was similar across different tourist segments based on tourists' previous traveling experience(s) and demographic background. Another purpose of the study was to measure the service quality provided by the tourism industry in Eureka Springs.

Destination Loyalty Model

In the marketing literature, although the individual constructs and concepts such as image, satisfaction and loyalty have received considerable attention, the conceptual model and empirical studies pertaining to causal relationships among those constructs have not been examined. Hence, the purpose of this analysis was to examine the relationships between the different pairs of variables as a whole, in order to determine the direction and significance of these relationships. The hypothesized structural causal model was tested by structural equation modeling (SEM), which included a test of the overall model as well as individual tests of the relationships among the latent constructs.

Theoretical Implications

The SEM analysis offered support for the statistically significant relationships between destination image and overall satisfaction (H_1), destination image and attribute satisfaction (H_2), attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction (H_3), and overall satisfaction and destination loyalty (H_4). The destination loyalty model outlined in the conceptual framework was corroborated and all hypotheses proposed held good. Therefore it can be said that tourist overall satisfaction was determined by destination image and attribute satisfaction, and destination loyalty was in turn influenced by overall satisfaction. In addition, the newly proposed path from attribute satisfaction to destination loyalty showed a significant result; thus, attribute satisfaction was also a direct antecedent of destination loyalty. The findings confirmed that tourists' loyalty was enhanced by positive destination image and high satisfaction, which was consistent with the image → satisfaction → loyalty scheme that conceptually guided this study.

The empirical results of this study provided tenable evidence that the proposed structural equation model designed to consider simultaneously destination image, overall and attribute satisfaction, and destination loyalty was acceptable. Tourism destination loyalty had causal relationships with image and satisfaction. Additionally, the attribute satisfaction separately from the overall satisfaction influenced the destination loyalty. This study makes it clear that destination image plays an essential role in achieving the loyalty of an individual, and tourists' satisfaction must be handled proactively in order to develop it into a lasting relationship beneficial to both parties. Destination image had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction as well as on destination loyalty. An improvement in the overall image of a place held by an individual increased the propensity to make a positive assessment of the stay. It also enhances his or her intention to return and to recommend it in the future. Consequently, with regard to the sequence image → satisfaction → loyalty suggested by the review of the literature, the analysis of the interrelationships as a whole confirmed the model.

In the literature, although it has been acknowledged that destination loyalty is important, little has been done to investigate its measurement, or its structural relationships with image and satisfaction. This study revealed and confirmed the existence of the critical relationships among destination image, attribute/overall satisfaction and destination loyalty. The findings suggested that it would be worthwhile for destination managers to make greater investments in their tourism destination resources, in order to continue to enhance tourists' experiences. It is believed that this study has a substantial capability for generating more precise applications related to destination behavior, especially concerning tourists' loyalty.

Managerial Implications

Destinations today are facing steep competitions and the challenges are getting greater in the years to come. Therefore it is essential to gain a better understanding of why travelers are loyal to a destination and what drives the loyalty. The major findings of this study have significant managerial implications for tourism and hospitality marketers.

First of all, the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses revealed that destination image was consisting of nine latent dimensions, and attribute satisfaction had seven underlying factors. These results could help destination marketers better understand the factors contributing to tourist satisfaction and loyalty so that they are able to carefully deliver appropriate products and services that accommodate tourists' needs and wants. Thus, it is suggested that destination suppliers and managers consider the practical implications of these latent variables, which may be fundamental elements in increasing tourists' overall satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, the SEM findings provided guidance for the success of marketing destinations. First of all, image is shown in this study to be a key factor in the hands of destination managers. It is a direct antecedent of attribute and overall satisfaction as well as a major factor in influencing destination loyalty. Therefore, destination managers must strive to improve the image tourists hold of a destination if they are to compete successfully in the competitive holiday market. Adding to the fact that once an image is formed, it is difficult to be changed; it becomes more important for destinations to present the right image and then maintain it.

Because the image that tourists hold of a destination will affect tourists' satisfaction with the travel experiences, the Word-of-mouth communication that takes place after the trips as well as the intention to return in the future, destination marketers should take a serious approach to managing the image. Although it is not possible to control all the elements contributing to the shaping of the image of a destination, it is possible to manipulate some of them such as advertising and promoting tourist attractions, organizing cultural events that appeal to tourists, administering service quality provided by tourism infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, tourist centers, etc.

Since image is modified by each new piece of information or stimulus received by an individual, one's own experience or that of friends, acquaintances or family will help establish more diversified, detailed and realistic image of a destination. Because tourists tend to rely more on this image for satisfaction evaluation and destination choice decisions, all efforts should be aimed at improving that experience. To conclude, tourism destinations must take special care of the image that they attempt to convey and the quality of the services and products that they offer, as these will affect visitors' satisfaction and their intentions for future behavior.

Secondly, destination managers should consider the role tourist satisfaction played in developing destination loyalty. It is intuitively assumed that if tourists are satisfied with their travel experiences, they are more willing to revisit a destination as well as spread positive WOM. This study provided empirical evidence supporting this assumption: satisfaction was found to directly affect destination loyalty in a positive direction. Higher tourist satisfaction will lead to higher destination loyalty, which prompts tourists to visit a destination again and/or recommend the destination to others. Therefore, destination managers should focus on establishing a high tourists' satisfaction level so as to create positive post-purchase tourist behavior and improve/sustain destination competitiveness.

Since attribute satisfaction affected destination loyalty both directly as an immediate antecedent and indirectly through overall satisfaction, its measurement and improvement are critical to destination managers. The special characteristics of tourism determine that many elements are involved in the formation of tourists' satisfaction, from the providers of specific services of accommodation, transport, leisure, among others, to the tourism information offices, the local residents, natural and artificial resources, etc. The situations become even more complicated when a single unpleasant incident leads to a negative overall evaluation, depending on how important the incident is to the tourist. Therefore, in order to achieve a high overall level of satisfaction, it is essential for all those involved to have smooth coordination and co-operation and be fully aware of the critical importance of delivering quality service/product as well as diagnosing the service quality. The appropriate destination products and services should be delivered to tourists in order to enhance destination competitiveness.

Destination Loyalty Segmentation

The effects of the following variables on destination loyalty model were investigated in this study: previous visitation and demographics including gender, age, education and income level. These tourist segments were selected because they have received much attention in the tourism and hospitality literature. The findings from the segment-specific comparisons of destination loyalty model are very meaningful and useful, especially in the absence of prior research in this particular aspect.

The Effects of Previous Experience(s)

Conclusions

The SEM multi-sample analysis examined the tourists' segments distinguished by previous visitations(s) and confirmed that past travel experience(s) had an impact on the destination loyalty model in two ways: the means of the latent variables and the structural relationships between the latent variables.

Firstly, repeat tourists have higher level of loyalty compared with first time tourists. The importance of previous experience in influencing traveler destination preferences has been reported in previous studies (e. g. Oppermann, 2000; Sonmez and Graefe, 1998). Milman and Pizam (1995) found that higher familiarity with a destination results in more positive image of the destination, higher interests and higher likelihood to revisit it. Other researchers (Juaneda, 1996; Gyte and Phelps, 1989) also verified that repeat tourists are more likely to return to the same destination than first-timers do. Since actual holiday experiences are considered as more reliable than information sought from media or friends, they provide a vital tool for tourists to make destination choice decisions. Given that tourism product is known for its intangibility and inseparability, and involves considerable expenditure and high degrees of uncertainty, prior experience and knowledge help reduce tourists' doubts and boost their confidence about the potential trip(s), resulting in greater willingness to visit the same destination again.

Secondly, previous experience(s) moderate the relationship between tourist satisfaction (both attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction) and destination loyalty: satisfaction plays more important role in leading to loyalty for first timers than for repeaters. The findings supported previous studies (McAlexander et al. 2003; Garbarino and Johnson 1999) about the influence of consumer experiences on their loyalty. These studies found that satisfaction affects loyalty based on consumer experiences; satisfaction has significant influence on loyalty for less experienced group, but not for more experienced group. For the latter, other factors serve as drivers of loyalty, such as trust and commitment.

Managerial Implications

Due to the distinctiveness of the first-timers and repeaters, these two groups may have different demands and requirements regarding the products and services offered by a destination. In addition, marketing efforts directed primarily at enticing new visitors to a destination may be entirely inappropriate for encouraging previous visitors to return. Therefore it is necessary to develop different marketing strategies and tourism activities tailored to the needs of novice and experienced travelers. The implementation of effective promotional and functional activities targeted at first-timers and repeaters requires a sound understanding of these two dissimilar groups.

This study showed that for first time visitors, satisfaction is the main determinant leading to loyalty. This amplifies the importance of first impressions, and suggests to the destination managers that priority should be placed on providing satisfying experience to first-timers. The provision of high-quality experience is the key to alluring the first-timers to return. As for repeat tourists, satisfaction is no longer the major factor in leading to loyalty. This study has not empirically investigated the special determinants for repeaters' loyalty, but other researchers have uncovered important variations in the common 'satisfaction builds loyalty' equation.

Petrick and Sirakaya (2004) found that attachment rather than satisfaction is a deciding factor for repeat tourists. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) found that trust and commitment supplant satisfaction as drivers of loyalty for repeat customers. Oliver (1999) believed that satisfaction makes important contributions to loyalty early in the ownership cycle, but as customers gain experience, a convergence of product, personal, and social forces can lead to 'ultimate loyalty'. McAlexander et al. (2003) showed that the impact of satisfaction on loyalty diminishes as customers gain experience, and brand community integration becomes more powerful in building loyalty. These findings underscore the importance of nurturing attachment, trust and commitment among repeat tourists, and encourage and support brand communities that can draw consumers into a complex web of relationships, and hence solidify their loyalty towards the destination brand.

Destination managers can consider forming clubs and other consumer communities for repeat tourists in order to keep them in the long-term engagement with the destination. For example, airlines have ‘frequent flyer programs’ and hotels have ‘frequent guest programs’, both targeting at retaining their repeat customers and ultimately winning their loyalty. Destinations can follow the similar format and bring all or some of their tourism suppliers together to initiate ‘loyal traveler’ program. This program should not be just about discount prices or first-class treatments; more importantly it should encourage emotional involvement such as friendship built around product/service consumption, and integration of product/service into extended self-concept. This will help create higher exit barriers and maintain an ongoing relationship with repeat visitors. When tourists start to identify themselves with the destination, they will surely return to the same destination over and over again.

Of course, due to the fragmentation of the tourism and hospitality industry, it will be very difficult and probably expensive to carry out a program that requires high coordinating efforts, but the returns of such program are enormous, considering that it is less costly to retain repeat visitors than to attract new customers, plus repeat tourists are more likely to remain loyal and share their positive experiences with other people thus creating free WOM advertising. That’s why many attractions and destinations rely heavily on repeat visitation, highlighting the critical importance of marketing efforts devoted to the development and maintenance of repeat clientele.

In spite of the much preached notion that repeat visitors are a positive business sign and attracting repeaters is a sound business strategy, a competitive destination should have a fine mix of both repeaters and first-timers. As Oppermann (1998) pointed out, if a destination only relies on repeat customers, its market will eventually die out as some customers ‘defect’ to other destinations, others stop traveling, and still others die of natural causes. Therefore, destinations should try to continuously attract and open up new markets in order to maintain its long-term viability. To achieve this, destinations can develop different tourism packages that appeal most effectively to different segments.

The Internet offers great opportunity for customizing destination offerings and cultivating destination loyalty. Separate web pages can be created for first-timers and repeaters, with different tourism options available for their choices. With the Internet, destination marketing organizations can easily keep track of the customer database and the reservation information. Such information is obviously instrumental in developing the most appropriate tourism product/service targeting at different tourist segments. Destination websites may also incorporate online newsletters, online chat room, and other approaches that will bring tourists together, either new or veteran, sharing their traveling experiences, discussing traveling related or unrelated problems and finding solutions. This will help establish what the above-mentioned brand community and keep tourists in a close-knit family.

The Effects of Demographics

Conclusions

The latent mean analyses offered interesting points. Travelers in different age and income segments exhibited no significant difference in their perception of the destination image, levels of satisfaction and levels of loyalty. Travelers in different gender and education segments had different levels of image perceptions: female travelers held more positive image perceptions than did male travelers, and travelers with lower level of education perceived the destination more favorably than those with higher level of education; but they formed comparable level of satisfaction and loyalty across groups. These findings reflected the mixed results generated from prior research regarding the demographic variables' effects on consumer behavior. Some researchers failed to find a relationship between any demographic variables and consumer behavior; while others found such link in the case of age. For example, several studies concluded that age did affect tourists' image perception, satisfaction evaluation and behavioral intentions (Baloglu, 1997; Oh et al. 2002; Mykletun et al. 2000; Schiffman and Kanuk 1997).

In spite of the evidenced heterogeneity in the means of some of the latent constructs, the different demographic segments demonstrated structural invariance in the theoretical model, i. e., the relationships between the latent constructs, as depicted in the destination loyalty model hypothesized in Chapter one and modified in chapter four (see Figure 12), were similar for different traveler segments. The finding showed that, although the *levels* of univariate attributes or multivariate constructs could be different for different traveler segments, as suggested by previous research and current study, the holistic loyalty formation process remained identical across demographic groups.

Implications

Several implications can be drawn. First, different levels of image perceptions lead to similar level of satisfaction and loyalty, dependent upon the traveler's gender and education. Female travelers and travelers with lower education level tended to develop higher image perceptions than did male travelers and travelers with higher education; but this did not translate into different levels of satisfaction and loyalty for these gender and education segments. Is this finding sample specific or can it be applied to the whole population? Future studies could probe into this question.

Second, regardless of their demographic background, travelers seem to develop their loyalty in the same way as posited by the destination loyalty model. This finding deserves notice from destination marketers because it suggests that basic theories of consumer loyalty could be developed that would encompass all demographic segments in a single conceptual scheme. The finding also indirectly confirmed the usefulness of the destination loyalty model in future travel research.

Lastly, demographic variables have often been used by managers to segment the market for more targeted advertising and promotion. However, ongoing research including the current one has shown that demographic variables are not a group of stable predictors of consumer behavior. Therefore, managers who have traditionally followed demographic segmentation might consider shifting their strategies to more effective ones, for example, using previous experience(s) as the segmentation criteria, which turned out to be the only significant variable affecting the destination loyalty model, as proved by this study and somewhat corroborated by previous studies. That said, it should be noted that studying age as a major variable may be a worthwhile effort, with surging research focusing on senior market finding the difference between seniors and younger travelers (Baloglu, 1997; Oh et al. 2002; Mykletun et al. 2000; Schiffman and Kanuk 1997). Therefore, further studies designed to address different age segments seem to be justifiable.

Service Quality Assessment

Importance-performance analysis helped determine how tourists perceived the quality of Eureka Spring's core service competencies, and pinpointed service quality areas that needed further improvements.

Assessing Overall Destination Components

Overall Eureka Springs had served the tourist market well, with respondents largely satisfied with different destination components (mean ratings ranging from 5.2 to 6.4). The IPA matrix helped translate market research findings into action - it could be used to prescribe prioritization of attributes for improvement and could provide guidance for strategy formulation for the travel industry in Eureka Springs.

Of the seven destination components, 'environment' (satisfaction mean = 6.348) and 'accommodation' (satisfaction mean = 5.98) and 'dining' (satisfaction mean = 5.74) emerged as the most satisfied factors, indicating that tourists held highly positive perceptions of Eureka Spring's travel environment, hotel and restaurant segments. All three components were highly important in attracting tourists to visit Eureka Springs. The environment (importance mean = 6.52), be it natural or artificial, is the most fundamental ingredient of the tourism product. A poorly-maintained travel environment could surely decrease travelers' satisfaction and damage a community's image. The accommodation (importance mean = 5.87) and dining (importance mean = 6.12) components of the destination not only provide physical shelter and sustenance, but also create the general feeling of welcome and a lasting impression of the local cuisine and produce (Cooper et al. 1998). Thus, the overall quality of accommodation and dining services are critical elements affecting tourists' satisfaction. Local tourism marketers were advised to focus on these aspects in their promotional efforts of Eureka Springs in order to capitalize on their assets.

'Accessibility' (importance mean = 5.89; satisfaction mean = 5.57) and 'Shopping' (importance mean = 5.99; satisfaction mean = 5.67) were important to tourists in their decision to travel to Eureka Springs; however, tourists were only moderately satisfied with these two components. Efficient physical and market access to a destination is one of the most important pre-requisites for the development of any destination (Cooper et al. 1998). For some categories of tourists, transport is part of leisure and the journey is at least as important as the destination itself. The geographical location of Eureka Springs constrains its ease of access, with winding and hilly roads, narrow streets and limited parking spaces. However, the city can help alleviate some of the tourists' frustrations by having clear road signs, well-communicated traffic flow and parking information. In addition, the city should keep its historic downtown – one of the main tourist draws – walkable with attractions and amenities easily accessible.

Shopping is an integral part of tourists' traveling experience, and has progressed from an associated service activity to a major attraction in its own right. Many tourists incorporate shopping time into their vacations, and regard shopping as a fulfilling form of recreation and even relaxation (Timothy and Butler, 1995; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003). In addition, souvenirs from a destination serve as reminders of past experience, and are also best gifts for friends and relatives. From the destination suppliers' point of view, tourists' shopping expenditure has a great impact on the local economy. Shopping has become the second most important source of tourist expenditures for most destinations, exceeded only by accommodations (Turner and Reisinger, 2001). As a result, it is vital for the local hospitality business to concentrate on making the shopping activity there more appealing and desirable.

Tourists were only moderately satisfied with ‘attractions’ (importance mean = 5.64; satisfaction mean = 5.63) and ‘activities and events’ (importance mean = 5.14; satisfaction mean = 5.18) but the importance ratings for these components were also marginal. This seemingly indicated that these components were low priority items in tourists’ mind. However, tourists’ attractions including natural and cultural sites provide the single most important reason for leisure tourism to a destination; events including sports activities and cultural events can be complementary activities and are frequently used to enhance the appeal and the image of a destination (Cooper et al. 1998). These components shape tourists’ experiences and evaluations, and can make or break a destination’s tourist industry. Therefore, local tourism marketers should focus on promoting the city’s attractions and events so as to improve tourists’ satisfaction with these essential tourism components.

Assessing Specific Destination Attributes

The seven individual IPA grids identified specific attributes of the destination components that performed well or required remedial efforts.

<u>Concentrate Here</u>

Attributes that fell in the ‘concentrate here’ quadrant included price and quality of merchandise (shopping), price for sightseeing (attractions), price of accommodation (accommodation), variety of evening entertainment (activities and events), cleanliness (environment), ease of access and availability of parking (accessibility). These destination attributes were considered important whereas tourists were only moderately satisfied with them, thus needed special attention from the management. This finding was somewhat confirmed by an open-ended question asking tourists what was the one thing that frustrated them most during their stay in Eureka Springs. Those categories that elicited the most responses entailed: 1) accessibility -- parking (inadequate/too expensive), heavy traffic, bad road conditions, confusing road signs; 2) activities and events -- early closing time for businesses, lack of night activities; 3) price – too pricey (shopping, sightseeing, accommodations, etc.); and 4) cleanliness of the environment.

It should be recognized that the performance of some attributes were more within the service providers' control than others. For example, price/perceived value of products/services affect customer satisfaction and can be monitored by service providers relatively easily; for a tourist destination to be successful, the price should be regarded as being competitive and commensurate to the perceived value of the products/services. One of the major complaints of Eureka Springs was its lack of night entertainment. The destination marketers could consider organizing more evening activities for the tourists, especially during the peak seasons. Examples include but not limited to concerts, evening shopping, evening city tours, etc. Tourism infrastructure, such as road conditions, parking spaces, conditions of travel environment, etc., is essential to form the basis of tourist' experience. However, to improve infrastructure requires more than just the efforts of destination managers; it needs the involvement and cooperation from various government and private entities.

Low Priority

Attributes that were located in the 'low priority' quadrant encompassed: variety of cultural options (attractions), variety of healing options and special events (activities and events), uniqueness and historic interests of lodging (accommodation), variety of cuisines and convenience of meals (dining), safety and security (environment). Tourists were moderately satisfied with these attributes but they attached relatively low importance to these features. This may indicate that these attributes are not salient to tourist's vacation experience.

For accommodation and dining, what tourists need is physical shelter and sustenance; other elaborate features such as uniqueness/historic interests of lodging, variety and convenience of meals were not on the top priority list. This conclusion should depend on segments of tourists: some tourists are particular about the type of hotel they stay and the kind of food they eat. This is reflected in the responses from the open-ended questions inquiring tourists about the reasons for lodging selection and the most frustrated thing that happened during the Eureka Springs' trip. Many tourists quoted 'like the particular lodging type' as the reason for their lodging choice. Furthermore, quite a few tourists listed 'limited dining options' as their frustration in Eureka Springs.

As for the attractions and events provided by Eureka Springs, since the city is famous for its natural attractions and historic interests, tourists were not keen on activities such as healing and cultural options, and special events/festivals that are deviant from the main draws.

For the above mentioned attributes, if resources are limited the destination managers should not invest too much on them, but should focus more on improving the performance of 'concentrate here' attributes. The exception here is the attribute 'safety and security'. Although it fell in the 'low priority' quadrant, this may be due to the fact that tourists take this destination feature for granted. Safety/security may be one of those ‘hygiene’ factors: the presence of it will not earn compliments while the lack of it will surely solicit complaints. Therefore destination managers should commit themselves to maintaining a safe and secure travel environment for the tourists.

Keep Up the Good Work and Possible Overkill

Attributes that belonged in the ‘keep up the good work’ quadrant were: service in the shops (shopping); quality, cleanliness and service in lodging facilities (accommodation); quality, service and price of dining options (dining); variety of outdoor recreation, and price for activities/events (activities and events); peaceful/restful atmosphere (environment); helpfulness of welcome center (accessibility). These are attributes that tourists valued greatly and were also highly satisfied with. Destination managers should keep up their good work and emphasize these strengths in the promotional campaign. It seemed that tourists were pleased with the service provided by different tourism segments such as the welcome center and the lodging, dining, shopping establishments. Quality service is of vital importance to the success of any organization. As competitions are inexorably growing, it is service that can make the difference between one company and the next. In the service quality battle, the overriding issue is consistency – the same degree of service quality should be delivered at all times and in all sectors of the organization; however, the fragmentation of the tourism industry makes it difficult to do so. For tourists to have satisfactory experience, the quality of many elements in the destination system needs to be reasonably uniform. This means that different destination segments need to work together in order for the complete tourism experience to be delivered.

Another category in the IPA analysis is 'possible overkill', which included: variety of shops (shopping), variety of historic sites, variety of lodging options (accommodation), friendliness of local people (environment), convenience of local transportation and availability of travel information (accessibility). These were attributes that tourists felt satisfied with but were considered less important. It appeared that tourists were not looking for variety with regards to shops, hotels, and historic sites. This may reflect the fact that tourists were tired of having to make selections among the wide array of shops, hotels and historic sites available in Eureka Springs. As for the other three attributes – people, transportation and travel information, again they might be so-called 'hygiene' factors and tourists tend to take these attributes for granted.

The above findings were supported by an open-ended question asking about what was one thing that impressed tourists the most during their stay in Eureka Springs. Those features mentioned by the most respondents included: 1) service - first-rate customer service; 2) lodging, dining and shopping - quality accommodation, great dining experience, wonderful shopping, exquisite local arts and crafts; 3) attractions - spectacular scenery, gorgeous tourist attractions, uniqueness/history; impressive architecture; 4) environment - friendly local people, peaceful and soothing environment 5) activities/events - variety of activities; and 6) accessibility - convenient trolley system.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

The results presented in this study need to be qualified in light of several limitations. First, the study was conducted in the summer, and thus findings were limited to summer travelers. Tourists who travel in different seasons may form different opinions of a destination. Seasonality restricts the generalizability of tourism research findings, and should always be taken into consideration in the interpretation stage. To overcome this limitation, future researchers could conduct similar surveys in different seasons. The surveys results can then be compared to identify similarities and differences in them.

Second, the population of this study was limited to visitors of a tourist destination in the Midwest. Therefore, the results from the study may not be generalized beyond this population. Replicating similar studies in other tourist destinations would be imperative for increasing the generalizability of these findings. In addition, the response rate in this study (36%) was relatively low as compared to other on-site tourist survey; this might lead to non response bias, which was introduced due to the under-representation of those non-respondents in the population. It was possible that only tourists who harbored favorable feelings of the city responded to the survey, whereas those unhappy tourists chose not to fill out the survey. This may result in an upward bias in responses. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the study regarding the population of interest should be used within the context of the limitations.

Third, the study's reliance on survey methodology as its primary means of data collection may limit the results due to common method bias. Furthermore, the use of self-report data in hypotheses testing may be limited in terms of reliability, although previous research shows considerable correspondence between self-report and other performance measures (Churchill, Neil, Steve, and Orville, 1985). Replication studies as well as studies using maximally dissimilar methods would lends support to the contention that the concepts and relationships measured in this study indeed exist and are stable.

Fourth, in this study only cognitive component for 'image' and 'satisfaction' were considered and hence may not have fully embraced the entire meaning of these two constructs. Since there were studies demonstrating the important effects of affective component of these constructs on consumer behavior (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a, 1999b; Bagozzi et al, 1999), future researchers could include affective evaluations of the constructs in order to gain a more complete and clearer picture.

Fifth, overall satisfaction was measured as a single item and destination loyalty consisted of two items. The use of a multiple-item measurement scale in future studies may enhance the interpretation and prediction of overall satisfaction and destination loyalty. The development of more complete and psychometrically sound measures would strengthen the reliability of findings and assist future tourism research projects with scale and theory development about tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Sixth, 'destination image', 'attribute satisfaction', and 'overall satisfaction' were studied as antecedents to destination loyalty. There might be additional factors influencing and interacting with tourists' loyalty. Future researchers are advised to investigate additional antecedents of tourist loyalty. This may lead to the uncovering of omissions and misrepresentation of the relationships tested in the current study and to further conceptual refinement and extension.

Seventh, the study does not guarantee the same results when different criteria are used to assign tourists into different demographic groups. Alternative demographic segmentation criteria should receive similar assessments for comparative purposes before drawing any definite conclusions.

Lastly, data collected from the present study were neither experimental nor longitudinal. As such, the cause-and-effect relationships reported herein should be interpreted with caution. Although SEM allows one to postulate causal relationships, the present study's model specification was based on previous research and theory, not on the actual data. As a consequence, the cause-and-effect relationships suggested by the model in this study may not represent the true causal nature of the relationships among the constructs. Future research will benefit from the collection of longitudinal data to more precisely measure change across time and the direction of causality among relationships. Ideally, this research would begin tracking tourists from one trip until the next trip. In addition, it may be useful to manipulate factors of interest experimentally, thereby enabling more definite conclusions about causal relationships to be drawn.

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APPENDICES

Eureka Springs Visitors' Survey

Please help us serve you better!

A $20 certificate off lodging when you return for the holiday season and to be registered for the grand prize of a three-night all inclusive holiday vacation to include lodging, food and entertainment

Dear Visitor,

Thank you for visiting Eureka Springs. In an effort to ensure that we meet your expectations and continually improve the value of your trip to Eureka Springs, please take a few moments to answer the following questions and leave the completed questionnaire with us.

We know how valuable your time is and appreciate your making the effort to help us improve our service by completing the questionnaire. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated, and your opinion and comments will be of great value to us to serve you better.

There will be no risk anticipated from participating in the survey. Your response will remain anonymous and completely confidential, and your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Oklahoma State University. Any questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be addressed to the IRB Executive Secretary Sharon Bacher at (405) 744-5700.

Yours truly,

Greater Eureka Springs
Chamber of Commerce
Eureka Springs, AR 72632
Phone: (479) 253-8737
Fax: (479) 253-5096

Christina Chi
School of Hospitality Administration
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
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July 2003

I. About your Trip to Eureka Springs

1. How many times have you visited Eureka Springs including this trip?
   □ First time □ 2-3 times □ 4-5 times □ More than 5 times

2. Is Eureka Springs your primary destination of this trip?

   □ Yes □ No If no, what is your final destination for this trip? Place_________State_________

3. What is the primary purpose of your trip to Eureka Springs?
   □ Vacation/pleasure □ Business/professional □ Visit friends/relatives
   □ Convention/Exhibition □ Wedding/Honeymoon □ Shopping
   □ En route to somewhere else □ Leisure
   □ Attend special events (wedding, funeral, family occasions, sports, concerts, etc.)

   Others (please specify)____

4. Why did you choose to travel on the **<u>weekdays</u>**? ***(Check all that apply)***
   □ Less expensive □ Less crowded □ Availability/flexibility of time
   □ Retired or not in work force □ Schools out □ Day of week does not matter

   Others (please specify)____

   ____

5. Usually, when do you travel on the **<u>weekdays</u>**? ***(Check all that apply)***
   □ Year-round □ Schools out □ Holidays □ Vacation leaves □ Summer only
   Others (please specify)____

6. How long do you plan to stay in Eureka Springs?
   □ Brief stop for gas, snack, restrooms, etc. □ Less than one day □ 1-2 days
   □ 3-5 days □ A week □ More than a week

7. How do you travel to Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***
   □ Auto only □ Air and Auto □ Train □ Tour bus □ Motorcycles/bicycles
   □ Taxi/limo Others (please specify)____________________________________

8. You are traveling
   □ By yourself □ with your spouse □ With your family and children
   □ With friends/relatives □ With business associates □ With a tour group

9. Including you, how many persons in your travel party are: <18 years old______≥18 years older_____

10. From where do you learn about Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***
   □ Previous trip(s) □ Internet □ Brochures/travel guidebooks
   □ Travel agent □ Word-of-mouth □ Advertisements
   □ Tourist information/welcome center Others (please specify)_______________________

11. What places other than Eureka Springs have you visited or plan to visit during this trip?

   Place 1_______________________State_________Place 2___________________State_________

   Place 3_______________________State_________Place 4 ___________________State_________

II. About your Accommodations, Dining, Shopping and Activities

1. Where do you stay during your trip in Eureka Springs?

□ Hotel □ Mid/large motel (≥ 30 rooms) □ Small motel (< 30 rooms)
□ Bed and breakfast □ Time share/vacation home/condo □ Home of friends/relatives
□ Camping ground/tent sites □ Recreational vehicle/trailer park □ Commercial cottage/cabin/suites

Why this selection? ____

____

2. Where have you dined or plan to dine during this trip in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Café/coffee shop □ Buffet □ Restaurants with ethnic themes (French, Italian, Chinese, etc.)
□ Fast food/takeaway □ Pub □ Barbeque □ Outdoor balcony
□ Casual dining/bistro □ Buffet □ Fine dining/elegant □ Deli

Other (please specify)____

3. What kinds of restaurants that you'd like to visit but are unavailable now in Eureka Springs?

____

4. Which kind of shops have you visited or plan to during this trip in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Souvenirs/gift shop □ Art and craft □ Jewelry □ Antiques/collectible
□ Delicatessen/local foods □ Gallery □ Spa shop □ Retail store
□ Apparel □ Books □ Toys □ Sports shops
□ Florist □ Beauty/wellness □ Music (records, instruments, etc.)

Others (please specify)____

5. What kinds of shops that you'd like to visit but are unavailable now in Eureka Springs?

____

6. What tourist attractions have you visited or plan to during this trip in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Historic hotels (Crescent Hotel, Basin Park Hotel) □ Historic District/Downtown
□ Victorian houses (Rosalie House, Queen Anne Mansion, etc.) □ Eureka Springs Historical Museum
□ Blue Spring Heritage Center □ Christ of the Ozarks Statue □ Thorncrown Chapel
□ New Holy Land Tour □ Sacred Arts Center □ Great Passion Play
□ Ozark Mountain Hoe Down □ Mysteries of magic □ Pine Mountain Jamboree
□ Beaver/Table Rock Lake □ Rivers/floating □ Pea Ridge National Military Park
□ Cosmic Cavern □ ESandNA Railroad □ Eureka Springs trolley ride

Others (please specify)____

7. What outdoor activities have you participated or planned to in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Swimming □ Boating – motorboat, sailboat, kayak, canoe, etc.
□ Water skiing □ Fishing □ Golfing
□ Hiking and Biking □ Horse-riding □ Birds / wildlife viewing

□ Picnicking □ Rock climbing/spelunking/caving □ City Trails/history walk

Others (please specify)____

8. Have you visited or planned to visit Eureka Springs' downtown district?

□ Yes □ No, If no, please tell us why ____

____

9. What other activities that you are looking for but are not currently available in Eureka Springs?

____

____

10. What healing options have you tried or planned to during your stay in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Spa □ Mineral bath □ Therapeutic massage □ Reflexology / foot massage

□ Facial □ Body wraps □ Aromatherapy □ Psychic adviser / astrologers

11. What special events have you attended or planned to during this trip in Eureka Springs? ***(Check all that apply)***

□ Festivals with special themes – music festival, folk festival, antique festival, Pow Wow, etc

□ Fairs/shows with special themes – car shows, arts and crafts fairs, etc.

□ Dance and comedy □ Concerts □ Live entertainments □ Theater / Performing Arts

12. Approximately how much have you (including all persons in your travel party) or planned to spend on:

Accommodation (**per day) $**________________ Dining (**per day) $**___________________________

Shopping (**total**) **$**_________________________ Attractions and activities (**total**) **$**_________________

Events (**total**) **$**___________________________ Healing (**total**) **$**_____________________________

Transportation to Eureka Springs **$**______________

III. About your Perceptions and Impressions

1. Below is a list of Eureka Springs' features and activities. Please circle only **ONE** appropriate number that indicates how important each attribute is to attract you to visit Eureka Springs, and how satisfied you are with these attributes using the following scale:

Importance: 1 - very unimportant 2 – unimportant 3 - somewhat unimportant 4 – neutral
5 - somewhat important 6 – important 7 - very important

Satisfaction: 1 - very dissatisfied 2 – dissatisfied 3 - somewhat dissatisfied 4 – neutral
5 - somewhat satisfied 6 – satisfied 7 - very satisfied

ATTRIBUTES	IMPORTANCE							SATISFACTION						
	Low	➔		Mid		➔	High	Low	➔		Mid		➔	High
Accommodation														
Variety of lodging options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Distinctiveness/uniqueness of lodging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Historical interest of lodging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality and cleanliness of lodging facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Service in lodging facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price of accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dining														
Variety of cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Convenience of meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Service in restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price of meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shopping														
Variety of shops	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of merchandise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendliness of service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price of merchandise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attractions														
Variety of historic/cultural sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variety of natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variety of cultural options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price for sightseeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Activities and Events														
Variety of outdoor recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variety of spa/massage/healing options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variety of evening entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variety of special events/festivals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price for activities and events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Environment														
Safety and security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Peaceful and restful atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendliness of local people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accessibility														
Ease of access	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Convenience of local transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Availability of local parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Availability of travel information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Helpfulness of welcome center	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Below is a list of statements assessing your perception of Eureka Springs as a travel destination. Please circle only **ONE** appropriate number that best represents your agreement with the statements on a scale of 1-7.

   1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Somewhat Disagree 4 – Neutral

   5 – Somewhat Agree 6 – Agree 7 – Strongly Agree

EUREKA SPRINGS OFFERS	**AGREEMENT**						
	Low		➔	**Mid**	➔		**High**
Distinctive history and heritage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vintage buildings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lots of attractions with Christian themes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interesting museums/exhibits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intriguing Native American/Western culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Appealing tram tour/carriage ride/train ride	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

EUREKA SPRINGS OFFERS	AGREEMENT						
	Low	➔		Mid	➔		High
Great place for soothing the mind and refreshing the body	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spiritual rejuvenation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relaxing day spa and healing getaway	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wonderful retreat from daily life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family-friendly environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good variety of activities for children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plentiful activities for both men and women	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All the necessary components to attract seniors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Romantic setting for wedding and honeymoon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Breathtaking scenery and natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Picturesque parks and lakes and rivers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gorgeous gardens and springs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Scenic mountains and valleys	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spectacular caves and underground formations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unspoiled wilderness and fascinating wildlife	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fabulous scenic drive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clean and tidy environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tranquil and restful atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pleasant weather	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly and helpful local people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Diverse community for everyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A “live and let live” openness to the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enormous opportunities for outdoor recreations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Exciting water sports/activities (boating, fishing, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good facilities for golfing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Terrific place for hiking/picnicking/camping/hunting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wide variety of entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Colorful nightlife	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Excellent quality and fun country/western music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tempting cultural events and festivals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wide array of shows/exhibitions/fairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wide choice of accommodations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wide selection of restaurants/cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wide variety of shop facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Remarkable place for antique/jewelry collectors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Exquisite local arts and crafts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price for food and accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reasonable price for attractions and activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good bargain shopping	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Easy access to the area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Easy-to-use and affordable trolley system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Well-communicated traffic flow and parking information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Available parking downtown	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Traveler-friendly tourist information/welcome center	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Availability of travel information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. How would you rate your **overall** traveling experience in Eureka Springs on a scale of 1 - 7?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. How likely that you will **visit** Eureka Springs **again** in the near future and how likely that you will **recommend** Eureka Springs to your friends and relatives for their near future trips?

	Most Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Most Likely
Likelihood of Revisiting Eureka Springs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likelihood of Recommending to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. What was one thing that impressed you most during your visit to Eureka Springs?

____

6. What was one thing that frustrated you most during your visit to Eureka Springs?

____

IV. About yourself

1. Your gender
   □ Male □ Female

2. Your age group
   □ Under 21years old □ 22 – 35 years old □ 36 – 50 years old
   □ 51 – 65 years old □ Over 65 years old

3. Your primary residence
   City______________________ State________ Country____________

4. Your highest level of education
   □ Elementary School (Grade 1-8) □ High school / vocational school □ 2-year college
   □ 4-year college □ Master's degree □ Doctorate degree

5. Your current occupation
   □ Management □ Administrative support □ Government/military
   □ Professional and related □ Farming/fishing/forestry □ Installation/maintenance/repair
   □ Transportation and related □ Sales and related □ Construction
   □ Production □ Service □ Student
   □ Self-employed □ Housewife □ Retired/not in the workforce Others (please specify)________________________________

6. Including you, how many persons are now living in your household:

   Under 18 years old__________________ 18 and older_______________________

7. Your total ***annual household income*** (Please provide your best estimate.)
   □ Under $25,000 □ $25,000 – $49,999 □ $50,000 – $74,999
   □ $75,000 - $99,999 □ $100,000 and above

Please kindly return the completed questionnaire and thank you so much for your help and cooperation!

Table I - Covariance Matrix for 'Destination Image'

	heritage	building	sooth	spiritual	spa	scenery	parks	gardens	mountain	caves	wilderness	drive	clean	safe	tranquil
heritage	0.80														
building	0.54	0.71													
sooth	0.41	0.35	1.22												
spiritual	0.46	0.38	0.95	1.79											
spa	0.50	0.45	0.97	1.23	1.84										
scenery	0.46	0.43	0.51	0.54	0.55	1.08									
parks	0.45	0.41	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.84	1.05								
gardens	0.43	0.37	0.57	0.60	0.66	0.85	0.79	1.06							
mountain	0.31	0.32	0.43	0.43	0.48	0.72	0.70	0.71	0.89						
caves	0.27	0.29	0.45	0.56	0.69	0.59	0.65	0.65	0.60	1.30					
wilderness	0.29	0.27	0.51	0.62	0.65	0.66	0.71	0.69	0.61	0.84	1.20				
drive	0.39	0.41	0.49	0.53	0.61	0.79	0.69	0.72	0.73	0.67	0.72	1.09			
clean	0.36	0.34	0.43	0.46	0.45	0.49	0.44	0.44	0.41	0.41	0.46	0.51	0.96		
safe	0.30	0.25	0.35	0.41	0.37	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.27	0.25	0.31	0.35	0.60	0.76	
tranquil	0.28	0.23	0.42	0.39	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.37	0.35	0.27	0.37	0.38	0.48	0.42	0.57
weather	0.25	0.24	0.42	0.50	0.48	0.35	0.41	0.34	0.31	0.40	0.42	0.30	0.50	0.41	0.43
people	0.27	0.26	0.31	0.36	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.41	0.37	0.30	0.36	0.40	0.53	0.45	0.35
outdoor	0.39	0.29	0.49	0.67	0.62	0.61	0.66	0.62	0.58	0.69	0.67	0.59	0.49	0.38	0.38
water	0.35	0.27	0.48	0.66	0.63	0.61	0.71	0.62	0.55	0.84	0.72	0.59	0.45	0.32	0.35
golfing	0.34	0.31	0.58	0.97	1.08	0.54	0.59	0.56	0.47	0.87	0.76	0.57	0.50	0.32	0.34
hiking	0.41	0.26	0.51	0.65	0.73	0.58	0.66	0.60	0.48	0.74	0.68	0.62	0.43	0.34	0.39
entertainment	0.35	0.30	0.49	0.71	0.63	0.47	0.43	0.49	0.36	0.54	0.52	0.49	0.54	0.39	0.39
nightlife	0.36	0.31	0.55	0.96	0.86	0.41	0.41	0.45	0.31	0.54	0.58	0.41	0.54	0.32	0.31
music	0.27	0.16	0.37	0.73	0.61	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	0.50	0.49	0.38	0.46	0.30	0.26
festival	0.38	0.31	0.60	0.76	0.69	0.49	0.47	0.49	0.42	0.52	0.52	0.49	0.49	0.33	0.38
shows	0.33	0.23	0.55	0.84	0.76	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.37	0.57	0.52	0.46	0.47	0.30	0.34
lodging	0.31	0.30	0.35	0.45	0.45	0.41	0.36	0.37	0.33	0.30	0.31	0.36	0.43	0.34	0.35
restaurant	0.39	0.31	0.42	0.54	0.61	0.44	0.43	0.44	0.35	0.31	0.32	0.39	0.48	0.37	0.41
shop	0.37	0.28	0.33	0.44	0.48	0.43	0.39	0.48	0.35	0.34	0.38	0.40	0.49	0.31	0.38
value	0.39	0.28	0.43	0.66	0.57	0.40	0.38	0.43	0.34	0.39	0.38	0.39	0.60	0.46	0.35
price1	0.35	0.28	0.37	0.54	0.51	0.42	0.38	0.39	0.30	0.35	0.31	0.38	0.54	0.45	0.39
price2	0.37	0.25	0.45	0.61	0.60	0.37	0.31	0.39	0.28	0.37	0.36	0.37	0.53	0.43	0.38
bargain	0.35	0.21	0.48	0.82	0.85	0.41	0.43	0.44	0.30	0.54	0.48	0.47	0.55	0.40	0.36
access	0.38	0.29	0.55	0.74	0.77	0.44	0.40	0.47	0.33	0.43	0.40	0.54	0.63	0.56	0.44
trolley	0.30	0.25	0.32	0.46	0.43	0.34	0.34	0.39	0.36	0.39	0.40	0.36	0.51	0.41	0.34
traffic	0.30	0.26	0.38	0.51	0.48	0.31	0.30	0.32	0.30	0.36	0.38	0.42	0.60	0.51	0.41
parking	0.16	0.14	0.48	0.68	0.62	0.34	0.28	0.37	0.18	0.43	0.47	0.30	0.52	0.42	0.33

Table I - Covariance Matrix for 'Destination Image' - Continued

	weather	people	outdoor	water	golfing	hiking	entertainment	nightlife	music	festival	shows	lodging	restaurant	shop	value	price1	price2	bargain	access	trolley	traffic	parking
weather	1.09																					
people	0.40	0.70																				
outdoor	0.48	0.39	1.20																			
water	0.36	0.28	0.95	1.40																		
golfing	0.53	0.36	0.88	1.03	1.80																	
hiking	0.45	0.34	0.90	1.04	1.06	1.45																
entertainment	0.51	0.45	0.76	0.73	0.87	0.84	1.67															
nightlife	0.53	0.44	0.76	0.73	1.08	0.74	1.39	2.14														
music	0.35	0.43	0.64	0.61	1.00	0.74	1.01	1.10	1.76													
festival	0.46	0.40	0.62	0.59	0.83	0.73	0.99	1.04	1.08	1.40												
shows	0.43	0.38	0.67	0.66	0.93	0.73	1.07	1.19	1.23	1.15	1.60											
lodging	0.38	0.30	0.43	0.36	0.47	0.40	0.51	0.48	0.45	0.52	0.52	0.83										
restaurant	0.47	0.34	0.41	0.48	0.49	0.39	0.70	0.63	0.52	0.60	0.58	0.61	1.28									
shop	0.42	0.41	0.52	0.45	0.55	0.48	0.73	0.68	0.62	0.63	0.67	0.60	0.85	1.18								
value	0.52	0.45	0.55	0.43	0.56	0.48	0.68	0.76	0.65	0.61	0.64	0.41	0.60	0.57	1.20							
price1	0.52	0.44	0.52	0.42	0.52	0.47	0.62	0.65	0.53	0.55	0.58	0.45	0.58	0.58	0.93	1.11						
price2	0.53	0.45	0.48	0.38	0.55	0.47	0.63	0.72	0.59	0.57	0.59	0.37	0.56	0.58	0.86	0.87	1.06					
bargain	0.63	0.40	0.61	0.58	0.91	0.68	0.94	1.10	0.90	0.75	0.94	0.48	0.68	0.68	1.01	0.97	0.90	1.94				
access	0.55	0.39	0.57	0.57	0.73	0.49	0.76	0.94	0.67	0.63	0.82	0.52	0.71	0.63	0.78	0.68	0.73	1.26	1.98			
trolley	0.36	0.40	0.38	0.33	0.40	0.34	0.46	0.48	0.48	0.45	0.47	0.41	0.47	0.50	0.58	0.48	0.57	0.61	0.74	1.26		
traffic	0.52	0.46	0.49	0.45	0.60	0.43	0.67	0.74	0.84	0.56	0.68	0.40	0.61	0.62	0.82	0.72	0.78	0.99	1.20	0.94	1.94	
parking	0.65	0.43	0.51	0.33	0.69	0.29	0.61	0.99	0.67	0.50	0.73	0.39	0.68	0.64	0.83	0.78	0.80	1.24	1.26	0.85	1.35	2.67

Table II - Covariance Matrix for 'Destination Image'

	l_variety	l_unique	l_historic	l_quality	l_service	l_price	d_variety	d_quality	d_convenient	d_service	d_price	s_variety	s_quality
lodging_variety	1.15												
lodging_uniqueness	0.85	1.10											
lodging_historic	0.84	0.95	1.75										
lodging_quality	0.59	0.61	0.54	1.25									
lodging_service	0.67	0.58	0.58	0.83	1.00								
lodging_price	0.54	0.51	0.59	0.62	0.60	1.08							
dining_vareity	0.50	0.43	0.42	0.41	0.43	0.40	1.43						
dining_quality	0.48	0.39	0.40	0.49	0.48	0.44	1.00	1.32					
dining_convenience	0.47	0.41	0.44	0.46	0.55	0.57	0.93	0.91	1.43				
dining_service	0.45	0.39	0.41	0.46	0.48	0.47	0.83	0.92	0.88	1.31			
dining_price	0.47	0.43	0.48	0.50	0.51	0.59	0.78	0.76	0.77	0.87	1.16		
shopping_variety	0.55	0.54	0.54	0.50	0.50	0.45	0.62	0.61	0.60	0.54	0.56	1.36	
shopping_quality	0.51	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.52	0.53	0.56	0.62	0.55	0.57	0.67	0.98	1.28
shopping_service	0.49	0.43	0.45	0.47	0.50	0.43	0.56	0.65	0.60	0.62	0.64	0.75	0.83
shopping_price	0.39	0.41	0.55	0.50	0.47	0.50	0.56	0.62	0.67	0.59	0.68	0.77	0.95
attractions_historic	0.55	0.50	0.65	0.44	0.49	0.53	0.50	0.51	0.58	0.55	0.52	0.79	0.78
attractions_natural	0.52	0.47	0.56	0.43	0.45	0.50	0.49	0.53	0.56	0.52	0.51	0.76	0.77
attractions_cultural	0.46	0.39	0.60	0.32	0.40	0.45	0.56	0.56	0.62	0.55	0.50	0.71	0.77
attractions_price	0.51	0.48	0.61	0.50	0.48	0.49	0.59	0.58	0.68	0.62	0.67	0.74	0.78
activities_outdoor	0.40	0.44	0.55	0.28	0.36	0.40	0.49	0.43	0.45	0.51	0.42	0.61	0.63
activities_healing	0.47	0.50	0.74	0.30	0.34	0.38	0.47	0.40	0.37	0.38	0.40	0.60	0.57
activities_entertainment	0.38	0.42	0.58	0.35	0.39	0.44	0.59	0.45	0.68	0.52	0.53	0.58	0.65
activities_events	0.36	0.39	0.60	0.34	0.37	0.36	0.38	0.40	0.45	0.44	0.38	0.58	0.62
activities_price	0.40	0.45	0.48	0.44	0.43	0.53	0.45	0.46	0.60	0.52	0.61	0.63	0.72
environment_safety	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.52	0.49	0.41	0.41	0.53	0.47	0.51	0.51	0.42	0.48
environment_cleanliness	0.46	0.45	0.50	0.61	0.52	0.44	0.43	0.48	0.49	0.44	0.46	0.45	0.51
environment_atmosphere	0.45	0.42	0.45	0.51	0.50	0.41	0.39	0.47	0.42	0.45	0.40	0.47	0.43
environment_people	0.39	0.36	0.39	0.41	0.45	0.34	0.44	0.53	0.53	0.61	0.48	0.45	0.51
accessibility_access	0.45	0.38	0.49	0.56	0.52	0.47	0.50	0.55	0.50	0.58	0.53	0.51	0.58
accessibility_transportation	0.49	0.44	0.56	0.65	0.55	0.51	0.49	0.53	0.48	0.45	0.50	0.60	0.61
accessibility_parking	0.35	0.38	0.54	0.66	0.55	0.60	0.48	0.39	0.46	0.27	0.54	0.48	0.58
accessibility_travel info.	0.52	0.47	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.46	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.64	0.59
accessibility_welcome center	0.40	0.41	0.51	0.41	0.42	0.39	0.51	0.50	0.44	0.40	0.48	0.62	0.52

Table II - Covariance Matrix for 'Destination Image' - continued

	s_service	s_price	att_historic	att_natural	att_cultural	att_price	act_outdoor	act_healing	act_entertain	act_events	act_price	e_safety	e_clean	atmosphere	e_people	access	transport	parking	inform	welcome
shopping_service	1.22																			
shopping_price	0.83	1.52																		
attractions_historic	0.70	0.66	1.21																	
attractions_natural	0.63	0.67	1.03	1.21																
attractions_cultural	0.68	0.72	0.99	0.93	1.39															
attractions_price	0.78	0.81	0.94	0.91	0.91	1.35														
activities_outdoor	0.57	0.60	0.76	0.81	0.86	0.69	1.55													
activities_healing	0.54	0.46	0.64	0.62	0.69	0.67	1.12	1.94												
activities_entertainment	0.63	0.71	0.68	0.65	0.76	0.75	0.94	0.93	2.03											
activities_events	0.56	0.63	0.61	0.59	0.71	0.64	0.96	1.13	1.20	1.50										
activities_price	0.72	0.84	0.72	0.68	0.67	0.86	0.75	0.77	1.02	0.88	1.34									
environment_safety	0.50	0.47	0.49	0.50	0.44	0.53	0.46	0.46	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.93								
environment_cleanliness	0.52	0.50	0.46	0.42	0.43	0.52	0.33	0.33	0.39	0.34	0.47	0.60	0.84							
environment_atmosphere	0.47	0.39	0.52	0.47	0.46	0.49	0.36	0.38	0.31	0.34	0.41	0.58	0.57	0.74						
environment_people	0.66	0.50	0.48	0.43	0.43	0.47	0.40	0.34	0.41	0.38	0.47	0.55	0.59	0.53	0.83					
accessibility_access	0.57	0.68	0.76	0.71	0.77	0.76	0.50	0.40	0.53	0.43	0.54	0.53	0.48	0.44	0.50	1.70				
accessibility_transportation	0.64	0.73	0.71	0.61	0.61	0.83	0.46	0.46	0.56	0.49	0.64	0.45	0.55	0.44	0.51	1.02	1.53			
accessibility_parking	0.50	0.67	0.52	0.42	0.64	0.63	0.39	0.45	0.92	0.57	0.64	0.40	0.48	0.35	0.34	1.13	1.11	2.68		
accessibility_travel info.	0.66	0.61	0.74	0.68	0.67	0.69	0.54	0.49	0.73	0.59	0.68	0.51	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.95	0.93	0.95	1.45	
accessibility_welcome center	0.56	0.55	0.68	0.58	0.62	0.64	0.48	0.47	0.67	0.66	0.68	0.46	0.44	0.51	0.43	0.75	0.92	0.77	1.14	1.51

Table III - Covariance Matrix for Overall Destination Loyalty Model

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions
Lodging	0.71													
Dining	0.49	0.95												
shopping	0.48	0.62	0.94											
attractions	0.49	0.59	0.72	1.01										
activities & events	0.42	0.46	0.60	0.69	0.99									
environment	0.45	0.49	0.47	0.47	0.37	0.62								
accessibility	0.51	0.52	0.61	0.68	0.56	0.48	1.06							
overall satisfaction	0.28	0.32	0.30	0.34	0.27	0.25	0.31	0.81						
revisit	0.36	0.30	0.26	0.34	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.70	1.95					
recommend	0.36	0.31	0.27	0.35	0.32	0.29	0.33	0.65	1.27	1.29				
Travel Environment	0.31	0.36	0.34	0.40	0.32	0.31	0.39	0.26	0.28	0.27	0.52			
Natural Attractions	0.26	0.25	0.24	0.39	0.31	0.22	0.31	0.26	0.41	0.28	0.37	0.73		
Entertainment & Events	0.27	0.40	0.38	0.44	0.51	0.25	0.40	0.32	0.35	0.26	0.41	0.43	1.13	
Historic Attractions	0.25	0.22	0.24	0.32	0.25	0.21	0.25	0.17	0.24	0.24	0.28	0.36	0.27	0.64
Infrastructure	0.34	0.40	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.28	0.38	0.30	0.35	0.32	0.39	0.36	0.57	0.32
Accessibility	0.37	0.48	0.43	0.48	0.44	0.32	0.61	0.38	0.31	0.31	0.46	0.37	0.65	0.26
Relaxation	0.29	0.25	0.29	0.43	0.44	0.23	0.32	0.27	0.41	0.31	0.39	0.54	0.64	0.41
Outdoor Activities	0.25	0.29	0.26	0.39	0.40	0.20	0.32	0.22	0.32	0.19	0.37	0.60	0.70	0.30
Price & Value	0.37	0.53	0.51	0.51	0.45	0.20	0.47	0.39	0.42	0.35	0.46	0.37	0.68	0.30

Table IV - Modification Indices for Destination Loyalty Model

	MI for Theta-Delta							
	environment	natural	event	historic	infrastructure	access	relaxation	out
Travel Environment	- -							
Natural Attractions	3.91	- -						
Entertainment and Events	18.98	6.44	- -					
Historic Attractions	2.99	21.88	13.41	- -				
Infrastructure	0.94	3.17	4.44	2.18	- -			
Accessibility	0.37	17.90	0.18	12.05	0.07	- -		
Relaxation	2.69	19.72	4.21	11.90	5.45	5.47	- -	
Outdoor Activities	8.38	71.78	29.41	0.42	5.94	10.78	17.01	-
Price and Value	0.34	39.38	5.60	7.89	0.00	47.55	6.6	7
	MI for Theta Epsilon							
	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activity	environment	access	Satis
lodging	- -							
dining	1.93	- -						
shopping	4.73	5.42	- -					
attractions	11.62	5.98	7.77	- -				
activities and events	4.10	11.00	0.92	24.56	- -			
environment	32.26	11.00	0.40	13.25	12.94	- -		
accessibility	1.50	5.47	1.87	0.91	0.00	0.89	- -	
satisfaction	0.39	0.90	0.52	0.00	3.14	0.04	0.10	5.
revisit	0.01	0.18	0.72	0.58	0.00	0.52	0.43	0.
recommend	3.65	0.03	0.64	0.16	0.74	0.28	0.27	1.

Table IV - Modification Indices for Destination Loyalty Model - Continued

MI for Theta-Delta-Epsilon										
	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activity	environment	access	satisfaction	revisit	recommend
Travel Environment	1.13	0.31	0.43	0.00	6.67	24.61	1.57	0.13	2.39	3.25
Natural Attractions	0.64	7.34	11.62	10.84	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.52	10.02	1.91
Entertainment and Events	9.23	0.02	0.00	0.39	17.51	5.20	0.73	0.27	1.26	4.40
Historic Attractions	3.55	1.89	0.62	2.37	0.36	0.97	0.47	4.26	0.65	4.97
Infrastructure	3.92	2.78	2.23	4.50	0.60	0.15	0.71	0.05	0.91	2.71
Accessibility	0.13	1.32	0.58	3.59	1.11	0.40	30.53	3.13	4.33	0.28
Relaxation	0.24	13.97	4.16	3.86	9.36	0.97	3.00	2.24	2.36	0.09
Outdoor Activities	0.62	1.90	7.05	1.82	7.81	3.53	1.02	2.81	6.95	7.07
Price and Value	1.45	18.59	16.95	1.19	1.58	8.21	0.36	5.08	0.12	1.00

Table IV - Modification Indices for Destination Loyalty Model - Continued

MI for Gamma			
	destination image		
attribute satisfaction	- -		
overall satisfaction	- -		
destination loyalty	3.97		
MI for Beta			
	attribute satisfaction	overall satisfaction	destination loyalty
attribute satisfaction	- -	- -	1.63
overall satisfaction	- -	- -	5.32
destination loyalty	5.34	- -	- -
MI for Psi			
	attribute satisfaction	overall satisfaction	destination loyalty
attribute satisfaction	- -		
overall satisfaction	- -	- -	
destination loyalty	1.63	5.32	- -
MI for lambda Y			
	attribute satisfaction	overall satisfaction	destination loyalty
lodging	- -	1.58	8.66
dining	- -	0.71	0.00
shopping	- -	1.47	5.60
attractions	- -	0.01	0.09
activities and events	- -	0.65	0.16
environment	- -	0.23	2.25
accessibility	- -	0.04	0.02
satisfaction	5.34	- -	5.32
revisit	0.20	- -	- -
recommend	4.13	- -	- -

Table V - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – First Timers

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.70																		
Dining	0.45	0.90																	
shopping	0.41	0.55	1.04																
attractions	0.44	0.57	0.83	1.05															
activities and events	0.32	0.32	0.67	0.73	0.98														
environment	0.36	0.47	0.40	0.38	0.28	0.53													
accessibility	0.49	0.49	0.67	0.81	0.60	0.40	1.15												
overall satisfaction	0.39	0.38	0.36	0.44	0.34	0.30	0.37	1.17											
revisit	0.55	0.55	0.43	0.63	0.57	0.46	0.62	1.17	2.96										
recommend	0.60	0.57	0.46	0.64	0.55	0.45	0.61	1.17	1.95	1.96									
Travel Environment	0.42	0.48	0.38	0.43	0.31	0.35	0.47	0.33	0.48	0.44	0.63								
Natural Attractions	0.35	0.39	0.29	0.43	0.32	0.22	0.38	0.39	0.63	0.52	0.50	0.80							
Entertainment and Events	0.37	0.46	0.44	0.54	0.46	0.25	0.47	0.37	0.61	0.53	0.51	0.54	1.17						
Historic Attractions	0.34	0.27	0.28	0.32	0.22	0.22	0.32	0.26	0.44	0.42	0.38	0.40	0.37	0.69					
Infrastructure	0.47	0.43	0.40	0.47	0.34	0.26	0.45	0.33	0.66	0.58	0.48	0.54	0.65	0.38	0.88				
Accessibility	0.44	0.46	0.42	0.48	0.40	0.31	0.61	0.43	0.73	0.61	0.56	0.53	0.86	0.39	0.55	1.33			
Relaxation	0.41	0.27	0.37	0.45	0.44	0.23	0.40	0.24	0.52	0.43	0.49	0.51	0.71	0.48	0.57	0.57	1.05		
Outdoor Activities	0.32	0.36	0.25	0.40	0.34	0.20	0.31	0.23	0.44	0.42	0.49	0.63	0.69	0.35	0.59	0.59	0.64	0.94	
Price &Value	0.50	0.59	0.55	0.61	0.43	0.35	0.56	0.50	0.81	0.69	0.62	0.57	0.83	0.45	0.62	0.99	0.70	0.66	1.17

Table VI - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Repeat Visitors

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.71																		
Dining	0.51	0.98																	
shopping	0.52	0.66	0.90																
attractions	0.52	0.59	0.66	1.00															
activities and events	0.47	0.53	0.56	0.68	1.00														
environment	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.51	0.42	0.67													
accessibility	0.53	0.54	0.58	0.62	0.55	0.53	1.02												
overall satisfaction	0.23	0.29	0.27	0.30	0.24	0.23	0.29	0.63											
revisit	0.26	0.19	0.18	0.20	0.17	0.25	0.16	0.45	1.31										
recommend	0.24	0.19	0.19	0.22	0.20	0.23	0.19	0.39	0.88	0.94									
Travel Environment	0.25	0.30	0.32	0.39	0.33	0.30	0.35	0.23	0.19	0.19	0.47								
Natural Attractions	0.22	0.18	0.21	0.38	0.31	0.22	0.29	0.19	0.27	0.15	0.31	0.70							
Entertainment and Events	0.22	0.37	0.35	0.39	0.53	0.25	0.36	0.30	0.22	0.12	0.36	0.38	1.12						
Historic Attractions	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.32	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.12	0.13	0.14	0.23	0.34	0.23	0.62					
Infrastructure	0.29	0.40	0.39	0.36	0.39	0.29	0.34	0.29	0.19	0.20	0.34	0.27	0.53	0.29	0.75				
Accessibility	0.33	0.48	0.43	0.47	0.46	0.32	0.62	0.35	0.12	0.17	0.41	0.30	0.54	0.20	0.50	1.14			
Relaxation	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.42	0.43	0.23	0.28	0.28	0.34	0.24	0.35	0.56	0.61	0.38	0.35	0.47	1.18		
Outdoor Activities	0.22	0.26	0.27	0.38	0.44	0.20	0.32	0.22	0.25	0.08	0.31	0.58	0.70	0.28	0.34	0.42	0.62	0.99	
Price & Value	0.30	0.50	0.49	0.46	0.47	0.27	0.43	0.35	0.26	0.19	0.39	0.29	0.62	0.23	0.47	0.65	0.45	0.45	0.86

Table VII - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Male

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.67																		
Dining	0.48	0.88																	
shopping	0.45	0.64	0.78																
attractions	0.50	0.57	0.56	0.98															
activities and events	0.45	0.48	0.50	0.61	1.03														
environment	0.48	0.58	0.54	0.55	0.38	0.72													
accessibility	0.47	0.52	0.54	0.60	0.43	0.58	0.96												
overall satisfaction	0.23	0.30	0.25	0.30	0.19	0.25	0.28	0.48											
revisit	0.23	0.28	0.27	0.37	0.29	0.32	0.27	0.38	1.74										
recommend	0.30	0.35	0.30	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.28	0.36	1.01	1.10									
Travel Environment	0.27	0.30	0.32	0.42	0.28	0.30	0.36	0.20	0.17	0.15	0.50								
Natural Attractions	0.17	0.08	0.10	0.28	0.13	0.13	0.24	0.16	0.55	0.18	0.30	0.88							
Entertainment and Events	0.10	0.23	0.24	0.38	0.40	0.15	0.30	0.12	0.25	0.10	0.30	0.39	0.87						
Historic Attractions	0.22	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.14	0.24	0.25	0.18	0.35	0.31	0.27	0.29	0.21	0.64					
Infrastructure	0.27	0.29	0.30	0.37	0.29	0.23	0.32	0.19	0.32	0.21	0.32	0.28	0.41	0.28	0.79				
Accessibility	0.35	0.41	0.39	0.43	0.33	0.33	0.58	0.27	0.10	0.19	0.38	0.15	0.38	0.24	0.32	1.01			
Relaxation	0.22	0.10	0.24	0.38	0.28	0.19	0.32	0.12	0.46	0.24	0.32	0.62	0.54	0.33	0.32	0.39	1.38		
Outdoor Activities	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.20	0.19	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.35	0.04	0.18	0.61	0.57	0.17	0.29	0.12	0.67	0.96	
Price & Value	0.22	0.44	0.43	0.41	0.36	0.27	0.40	0.25	0.25	0.22	0.37	0.14	0.38	0.22	0.35	0.54	0.28	0.20	0.77

Table VIII - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Female

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.72																		
Dining	0.49	1.00																	
shopping	0.49	0.62	1.01																
attractions	0.48	0.60	0.78	1.03															
activities and events	0.39	0.45	0.63	0.72	0.94														
environment	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.42	0.35	0.57													
accessibility	0.53	0.53	0.63	0.71	0.61	0.43	1.10												
overall satisfaction	0.31	0.33	0.33	0.37	0.31	0.25	0.33	0.98											
revisit	0.42	0.31	0.25	0.32	0.32	0.30	0.32	0.86	2.06										
recommend	0.38	0.29	0.25	0.35	0.29	0.26	0.34	0.80	1.41	1.39									
Travel Environment	0.32	0.39	0.34	0.38	0.33	0.31	0.39	0.29	0.33	0.32	0.52								
Natural Attractions	0.30	0.33	0.29	0.44	0.38	0.25	0.33	0.31	0.34	0.32	0.39	0.65							
Entertainment and Events	0.33	0.48	0.42	0.45	0.51	0.28	0.42	0.42	0.40	0.32	0.43	0.43	1.21						
Historic Attractions	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.33	0.28	0.18	0.25	0.16	0.19	0.20	0.27	0.38	0.28	0.64					
Infrastructure	0.38	0.46	0.43	0.40	0.39	0.31	0.40	0.35	0.36	0.38	0.41	0.39	0.63	0.33	0.78				
Accessibility	0.37	0.51	0.44	0.49	0.48	0.31	0.62	0.43	0.41	0.37	0.49	0.48	0.76	0.26	0.61	1.29			
Relaxation	0.30	0.32	0.27	0.42	0.45	0.22	0.27	0.34	0.37	0.32	0.39	0.45	0.61	0.42	0.45	0.53	0.89		
Outdoor Activities	0.33	0.40	0.33	0.46	0.47	0.26	0.40	0.29	0.29	0.25	0.44	0.56	0.71	0.34	0.46	0.64	0.53	0.93	
Price & Value	0.43	0.58	0.54	0.54	0.47	0.31	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.40	0.50	0.47	0.80	0.33	0.59	0.86	0.60	0.64	1.04

Table IX - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Young Group

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	1.00																		
Dining	0.53	1.00																	
shopping	0.52	0.60	1.00																
attractions	0.53	0.57	0.71	1.00															
activities and events	0.45	0.45	0.63	0.72	1.00														
environment	0.68	0.62	0.60	0.53	0.47	1.00													
accessibility	0.54	0.48	0.56	0.61	0.55	0.53	1.00												
overall satisfaction	0.44	0.33	0.34	0.39	0.37	0.36	0.33	1.00											
revisit	0.36	0.18	0.17	0.24	0.21	0.24	0.23	0.71	1.00										
recommend	0.45	0.28	0.26	0.34	0.30	0.31	0.32	0.76	0.85	1.00									
Travel Environment	0.57	0.53	0.49	0.56	0.50	0.61	0.52	0.45	0.38	0.44	1.00								
Natural Attractions	0.37	0.33	0.26	0.45	0.38	0.31	0.29	0.41	0.42	0.34	0.57	1.00							
Entertainment and Events	0.25	0.35	0.31	0.35	0.46	0.26	0.30	0.33	0.27	0.24	0.47	0.41	1.00						
Historic Attractions	0.41	0.37	0.33	0.44	0.39	0.36	0.31	0.31	0.24	0.28	0.52	0.48	0.31	1.00					
Infrastructure	0.47	0.50	0.42	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.39	0.42	0.32	0.40	0.62	0.41	0.59	0.43	1.00				
Accessibility	0.44	0.47	0.40	0.46	0.46	0.38	0.58	0.37	0.25	0.31	0.59	0.38	0.55	0.32	0.53	1.00			
Relaxation	0.32	0.25	0.24	0.36	0.43	0.23	0.22	0.33	0.30	0.26	0.49	0.58	0.54	0.51	0.48	0.39	1.00		
Outdoor Activities	0.27	0.31	0.23	0.36	0.42	0.23	0.28	0.26	0.27	0.20	0.49	0.74	0.61	0.33	0.45	0.44	0.60	1.00	
Price & Value	0.43	0.52	0.48	0.51	0.44	0.34	0.47	0.46	0.35	0.36	0.65	0.46	0.63	0.45	0.60	0.74	0.51	0.56	1.00

Table X - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Senior Group

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.72																		
Dining	0.55	0.89																	
shopping	0.52	0.62	0.73																
attractions	0.52	0.55	0.60	0.82															
activities and events	0.46	0.45	0.49	0.55	0.91														
environment	0.46	0.49	0.45	0.49	0.35	0.62													
accessibility	0.57	0.55	0.59	0.65	0.51	0.54	0.98												
overall satisfaction	0.23	0.37	0.29	0.31	0.18	0.26	0.32	0.87											
revisit	0.27	0.39	0.29	0.32	0.34	0.36	0.28	0.51	2.11										
recommend	0.24	0.28	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.29	0.24	0.47	1.16	1.16									
Travel Environment	0.26	0.33	0.30	0.36	0.27	0.28	0.39	0.23	0.18	0.13	0.53								
Natural Attractions	0.27	0.19	0.24	0.36	0.28	0.23	0.38	0.19	0.31	0.19	0.39	0.72							
Entertainment and Events	0.33	0.40	0.40	0.47	0.49	0.28	0.45	0.32	0.31	0.18	0.44	0.48	0.98						
Historic Attractions	0.20	0.11	0.17	0.21	0.14	0.16	0.23	0.09	0.21	0.19	0.23	0.39	0.26	0.58					
Infrastructure	0.33	0.33	0.36	0.34	0.31	0.25	0.37	0.25	0.30	0.18	0.35	0.40	0.51	0.30	0.69				
Accessibility	0.32	0.41	0.36	0.36	0.32	0.31	0.51	0.39	0.24	0.18	0.44	0.38	0.57	0.21	0.46	1.11			
Relaxation	0.28	0.20	0.30	0.41	0.36	0.25	0.38	0.20	0.34	0.26	0.39	0.52	0.61	0.34	0.33	0.53	0.98		
Outdoor Activities	0.27	0.25	0.28	0.37	0.34	0.21	0.34	0.20	0.24	0.12	0.39	0.52	0.70	0.32	0.41	0.44	0.54	0.84	
Price & Value	0.38	0.56	0.52	0.46	0.45	0.35	0.44	0.38	0.37	0.24	0.46	0.34	0.67	0.20	0.46	0.67	0.47	0.45	0.93

Table XI - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Low Education

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	1.00																		
Dining	0.56	1.00																	
shopping	0.53	0.73	1.00																
attractions	0.53	0.61	0.71	1.00															
activities and events	0.44	0.45	0.53	0.64	1.00														
environment	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.63	0.52	1.00													
accessibility	0.54	0.57	0.62	0.63	0.48	0.67	1.00												
overall satisfaction	0.33	0.39	0.27	0.36	0.30	0.36	0.38	1.00											
revisit	0.30	0.19	0.09	0.20	0.20	0.24	0.15	0.56	1.00										
recommend	0.35	0.26	0.14	0.26	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.62	0.81	1.00									
Travel Environment	0.42	0.48	0.45	0.57	0.47	0.54	0.53	0.41	0.24	0.33	1.00								
Natural Attractions	0.41	0.37	0.35	0.56	0.48	0.40	0.42	0.45	0.32	0.38	0.73	1.00							
Entertainment and Events	0.29	0.35	0.34	0.43	0.47	0.38	0.38	0.40	0.27	0.23	0.55	0.49	1.00						
Historic Attractions	0.35	0.17	0.21	0.34	0.28	0.35	0.28	0.20	0.13	0.22	0.40	0.47	0.30	1.00					
Infrastructure	0.41	0.52	0.44	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	0.46	0.33	0.39	0.62	0.56	0.61	0.42	1.00				
Accessibility	0.32	0.52	0.48	0.49	0.46	0.43	0.60	0.48	0.29	0.33	0.61	0.54	0.62	0.26	0.64	1.00			
Relaxation	0.35	0.25	0.32	0.48	0.50	0.37	0.32	0.38	0.29	0.33	0.57	0.59	0.61	0.54	0.48	0.47	1.00		
Outdoor Activities	0.32	0.38	0.36	0.54	0.47	0.34	0.38	0.38	0.28	0.24	0.61	0.70	0.64	0.38	0.52	0.59	0.59	1.00	
Price & Value	0.40	0.55	0.51	0.52	0.43	0.38	0.47	0.48	0.35	0.29	0.59	0.54	0.70	0.33	0.59	0.74	0.57	0.65	1.00

Table XII - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – High Education

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.76																		
Dining	0.52	0.94																	
shopping	0.57	0.64	1.12																
attractions	0.59	0.65	0.87	1.22															
activities and events	0.50	0.52	0.75	0.84	1.15														
environment	0.54	0.55	0.57	0.53	0.40	0.71													
accessibility	0.59	0.52	0.68	0.78	0.66	0.49	1.14												
overall satisfaction	0.31	0.27	0.36	0.38	0.29	0.25	0.28	0.70											
revisit	0.36	0.32	0.36	0.41	0.36	0.35	0.38	0.61	1.80										
recommend	0.38	0.32	0.37	0.42	0.36	0.31	0.34	0.60	1.19	1.24									
Travel Environment	0.36	0.39	0.40	0.45	0.36	0.35	0.41	0.25	0.31	0.27	0.55								
Natural Attractions	0.28	0.24	0.25	0.41	0.29	0.23	0.31	0.22	0.46	0.24	0.37	0.87							
Entertainment and Events	0.28	0.43	0.43	0.45	0.53	0.21	0.38	0.26	0.31	0.23	0.41	0.45	1.13						
Historic Attractions	0.28	0.30	0.31	0.39	0.29	0.22	0.29	0.18	0.32	0.27	0.33	0.43	0.29	0.71					
Infrastructure	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.46	0.41	0.31	0.40	0.25	0.31	0.29	0.41	0.37	0.59	0.36	0.87				
Accessibility	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.48	0.42	0.31	0.60	0.29	0.20	0.23	0.47	0.32	0.58	0.29	0.48	1.25			
Relaxation	0.32	0.28	0.32	0.45	0.45	0.22	0.33	0.23	0.44	0.28	0.43	0.64	0.67	0.45	0.47	0.53	1.40		
Outdoor Activities	0.25	0.25	0.23	0.33	0.38	0.17	0.27	0.12	0.26	0.13	0.35	0.66	0.71	0.32	0.42	0.36	0.70	1.00	
Price & Value	0.42	0.56	0.59	0.58	0.52	0.34	0.51	0.36	0.38	0.37	0.52	0.37	0.68	0.35	0.57	0.79	0.57	0.47	1.04

Table XIII - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – Low Income

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	0.58																		
Dining	0.34	0.92																	
shopping	0.34	0.54	0.72																
attractions	0.43	0.56	0.51	0.89															
activities and events	0.36	0.39	0.43	0.53	0.78														
environment	0.30	0.45	0.37	0.41	0.36	0.49													
accessibility	0.44	0.60	0.51	0.65	0.49	0.43	1.01												
overall satisfaction	0.11	0.32	0.15	0.29	0.20	0.15	0.38	1.00											
revisit	0.13	0.28	0.14	0.27	0.34	0.20	0.27	0.71	1.70										
recommend	0.22	0.36	0.18	0.31	0.35	0.25	0.43	0.75	1.21	1.34									
Travel Environment	0.20	0.31	0.27	0.33	0.26	0.23	0.36	0.24	0.20	0.24	0.43								
Natural Attractions	0.11	0.13	0.04	0.23	0.22	0.09	0.13	0.23	0.49	0.29	0.25	0.86							
Entertainment and Events	0.16	0.30	0.25	0.39	0.50	0.21	0.32	0.30	0.26	0.22	0.30	0.44	1.13						
Historic Attractions	0.16	0.14	0.17	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.18	0.11	0.18	0.23	0.21	0.24	0.18	0.54					
Infrastructure	0.26	0.39	0.26	0.30	0.30	0.21	0.30	0.24	0.32	0.31	0.35	0.25	0.61	0.23	0.87				
Accessibility	0.16	0.39	0.22	0.41	0.34	0.17	0.56	0.32	0.20	0.29	0.34	0.23	0.53	0.10	0.50	1.16			
Relaxation	0.14	0.07	0.17	0.25	0.34	0.14	0.18	0.15	0.38	0.16	0.28	0.59	0.70	0.31	0.40	0.35	1.15		
Outdoor Activities	0.11	0.14	0.10	0.26	0.28	0.10	0.17	0.20	0.37	0.18	0.27	0.76	0.68	0.20	0.42	0.34	0.70	1.09	
Price & Value	0.19	0.35	0.32	0.41	0.35	0.15	0.39	0.23	0.17	0.22	0.34	0.21	0.54	0.20	0.44	0.58	0.38	0.35	0.70

Table XIV - Covariance Matrix for Destination Loyalty Model – High Income

	lodging	dining	shopping	attractions	activities and event	environment	accessibility	overall satisfaction	revisit	recommend	travel environment	natural attractions	entertainment and events	historic attractions	infrastructure	accessibility	relaxation	outdoor activities	price and value
Lodging	1.00																		
Dining	0.63	1.00																	
shopping	0.60	0.66	1.00																
attractions	0.57	0.58	0.76	1.00															
activities and events	0.48	0.47	0.63	0.70	1.00														
environment	0.72	0.63	0.62	0.58	0.44	1.00													
accessibility	0.61	0.49	0.61	0.65	0.56	0.59	1.00												
overall satisfaction	0.47	0.38	0.41	0.42	0.34	0.42	0.32	1.00											
revisit	0.36	0.22	0.21	0.24	0.21	0.30	0.22	0.56	1.00										
recommend	0.42	0.26	0.27	0.32	0.27	0.34	0.25	0.63	0.80	1.00									
Travel Environment	0.53	0.51	0.49	0.55	0.45	0.57	0.52	0.43	0.29	0.33	1.00								
Natural Attractions	0.45	0.36	0.37	0.53	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.39	0.32	0.30	0.67	1.00							
Entertainment and Events	0.34	0.41	0.40	0.41	0.46	0.30	0.39	0.36	0.26	0.23	0.56	0.49	1.00						
Historic Attractions	0.39	0.31	0.31	0.41	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.27	0.22	0.26	0.49	0.59	0.35	1.00					
Infrastructure	0.50	0.48	0.50	0.48	0.43	0.44	0.46	0.44	0.29	0.34	0.61	0.56	0.59	0.48	1.00				
Accessibility	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.44	0.41	0.42	0.55	0.42	0.22	0.26	0.62	0.47	0.59	0.35	0.55	1.00			
Relaxation	0.38	0.30	0.31	0.45	0.43	0.30	0.34	0.35	0.28	0.30	0.54	0.59	0.55	0.51	0.46	0.48	1.00		
Outdoor Activities	0.36	0.37	0.33	0.43	0.44	0.30	0.38	0.28	0.22	0.18	0.56	0.67	0.68	0.42	0.49	0.50	0.58	1.00	
Price & Value	0.48	0.59	0.56	0.51	0.45	0.42	0.48	0.52	0.35	0.34	0.66	0.51	0.67	0.39	0.61	0.73	0.53	0.58	1.00

Table XV - Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Gender – Factor Loadings

	Configural Invariance		Tau Equivalence		Parallel Model	
Lamda X (λ_x)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Natural Attractions	0.94	1.04	1.02		1.03	
Entertainment and Events	1.14	1.44	1.37		1.38	
Historic Attractions	0.80	0.76	0.77		0.77	
Infrastructure	1.04	1.17	1.14		1.15	
Accessibility 1	1.16	1.47	1.39		1.38	
Price and Value	1.10	1.49	1.40		1.38	
Outdoor Activities	0.89	1.30	1.23		1.22	
Relaxation	1.22	1.17	1.17		1.21	
Lodging	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Attractions	1.31	1.39	1.36		1.35	
Shopping	1.25	1.32	1.28		1.27	
Dining	1.29	1.14	1.20		1.18	
Activities and Events	1.07	1.17	1.15		1.13	
Accessibility 2	1.23	1.25	1.24		1.23	
Environment	1.20	0.85	0.97		0.95	
Overall Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Revisit intention	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Recommend intention	0.94	0.94	0.94		0.94	
Theta Delta (δ)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	0.19	0.18	0.21	0.18	0.19	
Natural Attractions	0.61	0.27	0.62	0.27	0.38	
Entertainment and Events	0.47	0.50	0.45	0.51	0.48	
Historic Attractions	0.45	0.44	0.46	0.43	0.45	
Infrastructure	0.46	0.32	0.46	0.31	0.36	
Accessibility 1	0.61	0.55	0.60	0.55	0.58	
Price and Value	0.40	0.28	0.38	0.29	0.33	
Outdoor Activities	0.72	0.35	0.72	0.35	0.46	
Relaxation	0.93	0.42	0.95	0.42	0.58	
Lodging	0.27	0.34	0.27	0.33	0.31	
Attractions	0.37	0.25	0.35	0.27	0.29	
Shopping	0.22	0.32	0.22	0.33	0.30	
Dining	0.27	0.48	0.28	0.47	0.41	
Activities and Events	0.62	0.39	0.60	0.40	0.47	
Accessibility 2	0.41	0.47	0.41	0.48	0.45	
Environment	0.20	0.28	0.24	0.28	0.26	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Revisit intention	0.69	0.55	0.69	0.55	0.60	
Recommend intention	0.12	0.08	0.12	0.08	0.09	

Table XVI - Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Age – Factor Loadings

	Configural Invariance		Tau Equivalence		Parallel Model	
Lamda X (λ_x)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Natural Attractions	0.92	0.99	0.97		0.92	
Entertainment & Events	0.98	1.32	1.15		1.07	
Historic Attractions	0.79	0.63	0.72		0.71	
Infrastructure	1.01	0.96	1.00		0.97	
Accessibility 1	1.01	1.13	1.08		1.03	
Relaxation	0.92	1.10	1.01		0.97	
Outdoor Activities	0.96	1.13	1.05		0.99	
Price and Value	1.14	1.17	1.18		1.12	
Lodging	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Dining	0.99	1.11	1.05		1.04	
Shopping	1.12	1.11	1.11		1.12	
Attractions	1.16	1.15	1.16		1.16	
Activities and Events	1.05	0.95	1.01		1.01	
Environment	1.01	0.92	0.95		0.98	
Accessibility 2	1.00	1.18	1.09		1.07	
Overall Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Revisit intention	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Recommend intention	1.04	1.18	1.05		0.96	
Theta Delta (δ)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	0.38	0.20	0.40	0.19	0.30	
Natural Attractions	0.55	0.32	0.55	0.32	0.45	
Entertainment & Events	0.49	0.28	0.48	0.31	0.42	
Historic Attractions	0.67	0.42	0.68	0.42	0.57	
Infrastructure	0.46	0.32	0.47	0.31	0.40	
Accessibility 1	0.46	0.59	0.46	0.59	0.51	
Relaxation	0.55	0.49	0.54	0.50	0.52	
Outdoor Activities	0.51	0.33	0.50	0.34	0.44	
Price and Value	0.31	0.38	0.31	0.38	0.34	
Lodging	0.50	0.24	0.50	0.24	0.39	
Dining	0.49	0.32	0.48	0.32	0.42	
Shopping	0.35	0.16	0.36	0.16	0.27	
Attractions	0.30	0.20	0.30	0.20	0.26	
Activities and Events	0.43	0.49	0.44	0.49	0.46	
Environment	0.47	0.22	0.47	0.22	0.36	
Accessibility 2	0.48	0.33	0.48	0.34	0.42	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Revisit intention	0.20	1.03	0.20	0.91	0.44	
Recommend intention	0.10	-0.09	0.09	0.04	0.13	

Table XVII - Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Education – Factor Loadings

	Configural Invariance		Tau Equivalence		Parallel Model	
Lamda X (λ_x)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Natural Attractions	1.07	0.95	1.02		1.00	
Entertainment & Events	1.06	1.23	1.16		1.14	
Historic Attractions	0.67	0.78	0.75		0.72	
Infrastructure	1.04	1.07	1.07		1.03	
Accessibility 1	1.09	1.17	1.15		1.11	
Relaxation	0.99	1.22	1.10		1.11	
Outdoor Activities	1.09	1.04	1.09		1.06	
Price and Value	1.14	1.30	1.24		1.19	
Lodging	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Dining	1.09	1.07	1.09		1.09	
Shopping	1.14	1.30	1.23		1.24	
Attractions	1.17	1.37	1.28		1.30	
Activities and Events	0.95	1.17	1.07		1.09	
Environment	1.08	0.94	0.99		1.00	
Accessibility 2	1.08	1.18	1.13		1.14	
Overall Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Revisit intention	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Recommend intention	1.01	1.16	1.07		1.04	
Theta Delta (δ)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	0.38	0.18	0.40	0.18	0.28	
Natural Attractions	0.41	0.50	0.43	0.50	0.45	
Entertainment & Events	0.41	0.52	0.40	0.52	0.46	
Historic Attractions	0.76	0.46	0.77	0.46	0.59	
Infrastructure	0.44	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.43	
Accessibility 1	0.38	0.69	0.37	0.70	0.57	
Relaxation	0.49	0.80	0.49	0.81	0.65	
Outdoor Activities	0.38	0.56	0.39	0.56	0.47	
Price and Value	0.33	0.36	0.32	0.37	0.36	
Lodging	0.53	0.28	0.54	0.27	0.39	
Dining	0.40	0.41	0.40	0.40	0.41	
Shopping	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.35	0.34	
Attractions	0.30	0.35	0.29	0.37	0.32	
Activities and Events	0.54	0.52	0.53	0.54	0.52	
Environment	0.41	0.30	0.43	0.29	0.36	
Accessibility 2	0.41	0.50	0.41	0.51	0.46	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Revisit intention	0.24	0.68	0.27	0.62	0.47	
Recommend intention	0.13	-0.02	0.10	0.05	0.07	

Table XVIII Measurement Invariance Tests Based on Income – Factor Loadings

	Configural Invariance		Tau Equivalence		Parallel Model	
Lamda X (λ_x)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Natural Attractions	0.91	0.99	0.98		0.96	
Entertainment & Events	1.39	1.00	1.08		1.06	
Historic Attractions	0.57	0.77	0.72		0.71	
Infrastructure	1.15	0.99	1.03		1.00	
Accessibility 1	1.16	0.99	1.03		1.00	
Relaxation	1.19	0.91	0.97		0.96	
Outdoor Activities	1.19	0.98	1.02		1.01	
Price and Value	1.10	1.09	1.10		1.06	
Lodging	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Dining	1.21	1.02	1.07		1.05	
Shopping	1.09	1.15	1.15		1.12	
Attractions	1.31	1.15	1.20		1.17	
Activities and Events	1.07	0.98	1.02		0.99	
Environment	0.91	1.03	0.98		0.99	
Accessibility 2	1.33	1.02	1.10		1.08	
Overall Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Revisit intention	1.00	1.00	1.00		1.00	
Recommend intention	1.29	1.08	1.12		1.10	
Theta Delta (δ)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Travel Environment	0.19	0.35	0.18	0.36	0.31	
Natural Attractions	0.58	0.44	0.58	0.45	0.47	
Entertainment & Events	0.47	0.43	0.55	0.42	0.45	
Historic Attractions	0.43	0.66	0.42	0.67	0.60	
Infrastructure	0.42	0.44	0.43	0.44	0.44	
Accessibility 1	0.70	0.44	0.71	0.44	0.52	
Relaxation	0.66	0.52	0.70	0.52	0.56	
Outdoor Activities	0.61	0.45	0.64	0.45	0.49	
Price and Value	0.28	0.33	0.28	0.32	0.32	
Lodging	0.30	0.42	0.30	0.42	0.38	
Dining	0.38	0.44	0.39	0.45	0.43	
Shopping	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	0.29	
Attractions	0.26	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	
Activities and Events	0.36	0.48	0.36	0.48	0.45	
Environment	0.19	0.43	0.19	0.44	0.36	
Accessibility 2	0.36	0.44	0.40	0.43	0.42	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Revisit intention	0.67	0.27	0.56	0.29	0.36	
Recommend intention	-0.08	0.11	0.07	0.09	0.08	

Table XIX - Structural Model Comparisons Based on Gender – Parameter Estimates

	Unconstrained Model		Parallel Model		Equal Model	
Structural Coefficients	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Destination Image → Attribute Satisfaction (γ_{11})	0.87*	0.76*	0.79*		0.78*	
Destination Image → Overall Satisfaction (γ_{21})	0.31	0.61*	0.49*		0.46*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction (β_{21})	0.41*	0.26	0.34*		0.34*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{31})	0.40*	0.14	0.20*		0.21*	
Overall Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{32})	0.60*	0.83*	0.79*		0.79*	
Intercept Terms (α)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Attribute Satisfaction	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.04	0.00	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	-0.15	0.00	-0.13	0.00	
Destination Loyalty	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.07	0.00	

*significant at .05

Table XX - Structural Model Comparisons Based on Age – Parameter Estimates

	Unconstrained Model		Parallel Model		Equal Model	
Structural Coefficients	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Destination Image → Attribute Satisfaction (γ_{11})	0.74*	0.73*	0.74*		0.73*	
Destination Image → Overall Satisfaction (γ_{21})	0.52*	0.34*	0.44*		0.45*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction (β_{21})	0.30*	0.35*	0.32*		0.32*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{31})	0.06	0.21	0.10		0.10	
Overall Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{32})	0.70*	0.45*	0.64*		0.64*	
Intercept Terms (α)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Attribute Satisfaction	0.00	-0.05	0.00	-0.05	0.00	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	
Destination Loyalty	0.00	-0.09	0.00	-0.10	0.00	

*significant at .05

Table XXI - Structural Model Comparisons Based on Education – Parameter Estimates

	Unconstrained Model		Parallel Model		Equal Model	
Structural Coefficients	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Destination Image → Attribute Satisfaction (γ_{11})	0.72*	0.78*	0.75*		0.74*	
Destination Image → Overall Satisfaction (γ_{21})	0.72*	0.27*	0.45*		0.43*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction (β_{21})	0.11	0.40*	0.30*		0.30*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{31})	0.07	0.21*	0.15*		0.16*	
Overall Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{32})	0.56*	0.74*	0.62*		0.62*	
Intercept Terms (α)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Attribute Satisfaction	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.00	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.13	0.00	
Destination Loyalty	0.00	-0.07	0.00	-0.08	0.00	

*significant at .05

Table XXII - Structural Model Comparisons Based on Income – Parameter Estimates

	Unconstrained Model		Parallel Model		Equal Model	
Structural Coefficients	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Destination Image → Attribute Satisfaction (γ_{11})	0.66*	0.72*	0.70*		0.70*	
Destination Image → Overall Satisfaction (γ_{21})	0.50*	0.46*	0.47*		0.46*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction (β_{21})	0.22	0.34*	0.31*		0.32*	
Attribute Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{31})	0.30*	0.10	0.13		0.13*	
Overall Satisfaction → Destination Loyalty (β_{32})	0.62*	0.53*	0.55*		0.54*	
Intercept Terms (α)	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
Attribute Satisfaction	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.00	
Overall Satisfaction	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.15	0.00	
Destination Loyalty	0.00	-0.03	0.00	-0.03	0.00	

*significant at .05

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/13/2004

Date: Monday, July 14, 2003 IRB Application No HE041

Proposal Title: EUREKA SPRINGS VISITORS' SURVEY

Principal
Investigator(s):

Hailin Qu
201 HEWS
Stillwater, OK 74075

Gengqing Chi
89 S. University Place #3
Stillwater, OK 74075

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Gengqing Chi

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: A STUDY OF DEVELOPING DESTINATION LOYALTY MODEL

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Guangzhou Foreign Language University, Guangzhou, P. R. China; received the Master of Science degree with a major in Hospitality Administration at Oklahoma State University in December 2002; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Hospitality Administration at Oklahoma State University in July 2005.

Experience: Employed by China International Travel Service as travel administrator from 1993 to 1999; employed by Oklahoma State University, Residential Life as dining graduate assistant from 2000 to 2002; employed by Marriott International as accounting intern for summer 2001; employed by the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, OSU as teaching instructor from 2003 to 2004; employed as assistant professor by the Department of Hospitality and Restaurant Management, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville starting from Fall 2005.

Membership: the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, OSU Chapter; the International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, & Institutional Education (I-CHRIE)

Name: Gengqing Chi Date of Degree: July, 2005

Institution: Oklahoma State University Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A STUDY OF DEVELOPING DESTINATION LOYALTY MODEL

Pages in Study: 299 Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences

Scope and Method of Study: The objective of this study was to 1) develop and test a theoretical model of destination loyalty by analyzing the interrelationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty; 2) investigate if the destination loyalty model varied among different tourist groups based on previous traveling experiences, age, gender, education, and income level; and 3) measure the service quality of a historic destination. A cross-sectional sample survey was conducted. The target population was all the visitors to a historic destination located in the Mid-west US during a two-month survey period. A two-stage sampling approach including stratified proportionate sampling, and systematic random sampling (SRS) was applied. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), multiple sample analysis and importance-performance analysis (IPA) were employed for the data analysis.

Findings and Conclusions: The SEM findings supported that destination image was an antecedent of satisfaction. Satisfaction in turn had a positive influence on destination loyalty. Two types of implications were drawn. From a destination management perspective, the importance of improving the image and tourist satisfaction was confirmed. From the research point of view, the systematic examination of causal relationships among the constructs facilitated a clearer understanding of the concept of destination loyalty. It was hoped that the results derived from the model would serve as the basis for the development of destination marketing strategies. The multiple sample analysis revealed that previous experience was the only variable that affected the destination loyalty model. The findings could facilitate destination managers to carry out market segmentation, which is an essential marketing tool in today's increasingly competitive business world and has become part of the everyday thinking of tourism managers in their efforts to improve planning and productivity. The assessment of the quality of the services provided by Eureka Springs would help the city 1) identify and preserve those assets that establish their unique identity and distinguish them from the surrounding areas; 2) pinpoint those areas that require further improvement and promotional efforts; and 3) design a more comprehensive marketing plan, and further expand the market.

Advisor's Signature________________Dr. Hailin Qu____________________________