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Examining the relationships between perceived value, service quality, satisfaction, and willingness to revisit a theme park

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships between satisfaction, perceived value, and quality in their prediction of revisiting intention. Furthermore, this study applies Cronin's (2000) research model to test the relationships, and a structural model (SEM) is used to examine the hypothesized relationships. The results show that service quality has a direct effect on perceived value and satisfaction, perceived value has direct effect on satisfaction, and satisfaction has strong relation to visitors' willingness to revisit theme parks.

Keywords: *satisfaction, value, revisit, SEM*

INTRODUCTION

Most tourism managers want to know what causes tourists to return to an attraction. Mayer (2002) suggests that the service quality of theme parks plays an important role in earning revenue. Meanwhile, quality has been found to be related to satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000), perceived value (Petrick, 2004), and repurchase intentions (Palmer & O'Neill, 2003; Petrick, 2004). Previous research has also shown a positive relationship between perceived value, quality, and repurchasing (Zeithaml, 1988; Grewal et al., 1998; Oh, 1999; Cronin et al., 2000). Similarly, Cronin et al. (2000) examined the relationships between service quality, perceived value, perceived sacrifice, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. From this relationship they formed four different models for value, satisfaction, research, and an indirect model. After testing the models, the research model was found to be the most easily interpretable one.

The main purpose of this study is to this research model to examine the relationships between the service quality of theme parks, satisfaction, perceived value, and willingness to revisit. Therefore, the study is guided by the following hypotheses: (H1) Perceived sacrifice value will

have a negative influence on perceived value (Bolton & Drew, 1991); (H2) Service quality will have a positive influence on perceived value (Palmer & O'Neill, 2003); (H3) Service quality will have a positive influence on satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992); (H4) Service quality will have a positive influence on behavioral intentions (Shu et al., 2002); (H5) Perceived value will have a positive influence on behavioral intention (Choi et al., 2004); and (H6) Satisfaction will have a positive influence on behavioral intention (Cronin et al., 2000).

METHODS

The study population consists of tourists at theme parks. Since the population is difficult to determine, we used a 95% confidence level ($\alpha=0.05$) and a minimum sample size of 385. Between February 1 and April 30, 2005, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed at the front door of a theme park and 389 were (97.3%) completed.

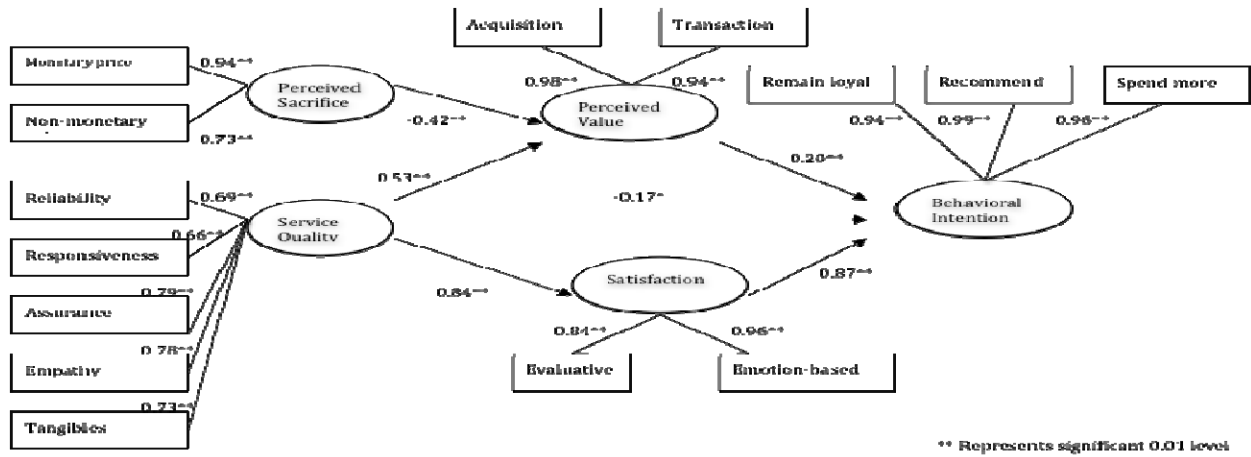
The survey questionnaire included six parts: (1) service quality based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions—reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988); (2) perceived value including measures of acquisition value and transaction value (Al-Sabbahy et al., 2004); (3) satisfaction measured as an “emotion-based” and “evaluative” sets construct (Cronin et al., 2000); (4) perceived sacrifice utilizing monetary and non-monetary prices associated with the service (Cronin et al., 2000); (5) behavioral intention operationalized as remaining loyal, recommending a service to other consumers, and spending more at the theme park (Cronin et al., 2000); and (6) demographic items.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the study consisted of three steps. These included a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the constructs, a structural equation model (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships, and a post-testing adjustment of the relationships to determine the best-fit model.

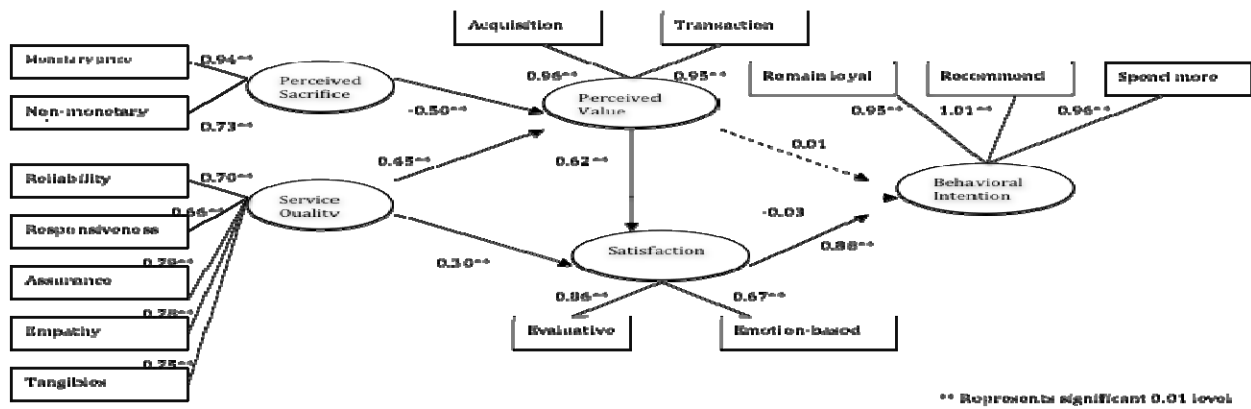
The results of the first step revealed that the five variables had adequate reliability: service quality (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.96$), perceived value (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.97$), satisfaction (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$), perceived sacrifice (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.87$), and behavioral intention (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.95$). The SE revealed that the measurement model was not an acceptable fit because the Chi-Square value was 286.442, which was not significant, under $\alpha=0.05$. Furthermore, other indices are: GFI=0.910, AGFI=0.865, NFI=0.979, NNFI=0.979, CFI=0.984, RMR=0.059, and RMSEA=0.086 (See Figure 1). Generally speaking, a good fit model satisfies the following requirements: (1) GFI, AGFI, NFI, NNFI, and CFI values should be greater than 0.9, and (2) RMR and RMSEA values should greater than 0.05. However, AGFI, RMR, and RMSEA did not satisfy these requirements, so we tried to adjust this model and find the best-fitting one.

Figure 1
Results of initial model



According to Oh (1999) and Choi et al. (2004), perceived value has a positive influence on satisfaction. For that reason, the adjusted goodness fit tests showed a Chi-Square value of 197.272. Even though the Chi-Square value is significant, GFI=0.932, the model is a good fit. Other indices, AGFI=0.897, NFI=0.985, NNFI=0.987, and CFI=0.990, are also close to or great than the ideal value of 0.9. In addition, RMR=0.032, which is not greater than 0.05. Although RMSEA=0.069, which is greater than 0.05, the adjusted model is better than the initial one (See Figure 2).

Figure 2
Results of adjusted model



Based on the research results, this study shows that quality has a direct affect on perceived value and satisfaction, and previous studies have shown the same result (Oh, 1999; Cronin et al., 2000; Choi et al., 2004). In other words, as quality of service increases, tourists perceived higher value and were more satisfied. On the other hand, results showed that service quality does not have a direct effect on behavioral intention, and is different from the results of Cronin et al. (2000). Additionally, perceived sacrifice was found to influence perceived value, perceived value influenced satisfaction, and satisfaction was found to positively influence behavioral intentions.

APPLICATION OF RESULTST

It is well known that theme parks provide not only tangible services, but also intangible services. Additionally, intangible services are important to generate high tourist satisfaction. If costumer service, attentive service quality, and accessibility of service can be provided, the willingness of tourists to return will increase. Inviting tourists to participate in events at theme parks (i.e., parades) could give tourists a different tourism experience and garner a higher perceived value. Emphasizing the differences between theme parks could strengthen competitive ability and raise satisfaction and tourists' willingness to revisit. Since theme parks attract both single and family tourists, providing for a variety of needs will raise perceived value.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the final model of this study is similar to Cronin's research model; however, it is more similar to Cronin's satisfaction model (Cronin et al., 2000). Perceived value was found to be related to service quality, and service quality and perceived sacrifice were found to be related to satisfaction. Results showed that satisfaction was related to visitors' willingness to revisit theme parks. Therefore, managers should understand current tourists' satisfaction and try to improve satisfaction.

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