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The Moderating Effects of Tourists' Characteristics and Novelty Seeking on the Relationships between Satisfaction, Revisit Intention and WOM

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the moderating effects of tourist characteristics and novelty seeking on the relationships among destination attributes, satisfaction, revisit intention and word-of-mouth (WOM). Using structural equation modeling and a multiple group analysis, the findings reveal that the effects of destination attributes on satisfaction, revisit intention and WOM do not differ across age, gender, annual income, and marital status. The results also reveal that the strength of the effect of satisfaction on revisit intention depends on levels of novelty seeking. In other words, for tourists with high novelty seeking, the effect of overall satisfaction on revisit intention is weaker than for those with low novelty seeking.

Keywords: *novelty seeking, tourist characteristics, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, WOM*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Despite an extensive investigation of the effects of satisfaction and its antecedents on revisit intention and WOM, the literature has not reached a consensus. Some studies (e.g., Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009) affirm the positive effect of satisfaction on revisit intention. Several studies (e.g., Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Um, et al., 2006), however, do not support the association between these two constructs. This study believe that one explanation for the equivocal results is that the relationship between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention is moderated by tourists' characteristics and novelty seeking. Thus, the objective of this study is to provide additional insight into the relationships among satisfaction with destination attributes, overall satisfaction, revisit intention, and WOM, with particular interest given to examining the moderating effects of tourists' characteristics and novelty seeking on these structural relationships.

LITERATURE PREVIEW

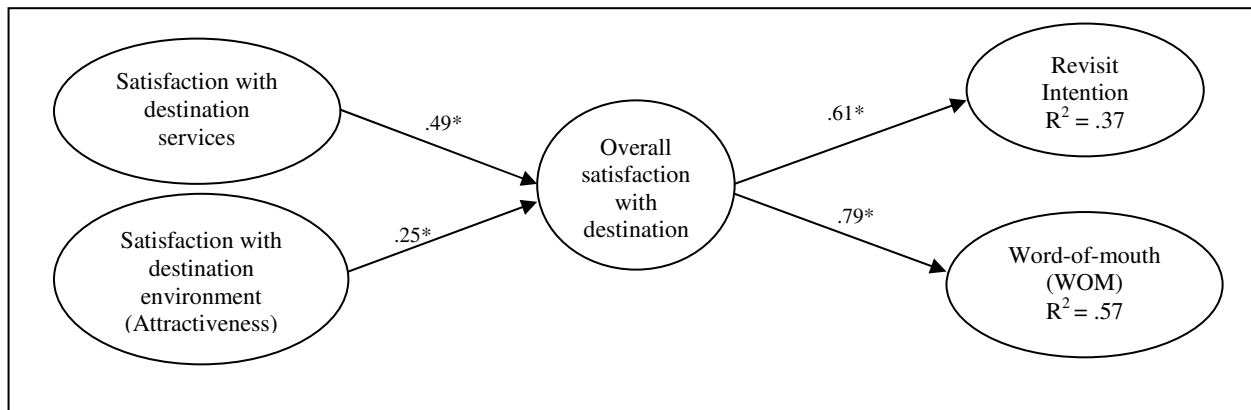
The effects of satisfaction and its antecedents on behavioral intentions have been explored by previous empirical studies. The findings have demonstrated that overall satisfaction is an antecedent of revisit intention and WOM and that increase in overall satisfaction with a

destination leads to an increase in the likelihood of revisiting the destination and spreading positive WOM (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Such relationships were moderated by tourists' characteristics, including gender, age, income, and marital status (Coil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Homburg & Giering, 2001). Thus, we hypothesized that satisfaction attributes, namely destination environment and services have and impact on revisit intention and WOM through overall satisfaction and that the relationships are moderated by tourists' characteristics. In addition, this study propose that novelty seeking may moderate the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The instrument used for this study was a self-administered survey, developed based on the literature review (Chi & Qu, 2008; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Murphy, et al., 2000; Petrick, 2002). A total of 789 completed online surveys were tested using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). The results of CFA showed that the measurement model fits the data reasonably well. In addition, the estimated coefficients of all indicators were significantly twice greater than their standard errors and the composite reliability values ranked between .7 and .9, and surpassed the threshold value of .70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), supporting the convergent validity and composite reliability of the model. The results of SEM showed that tourist satisfaction with destination environment and services has a positive influence on overall satisfaction, and such positive overall satisfaction affects revisit intention and WOM (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Results of Testing Conceptual Model



* p < .001

The moderating effects of tourists' characteristics were tested using a multiple group analysis. The Chi-square ($\Delta\chi^2$) test indicated that the moderating effects of gender and age were not significant, while the $\Delta\chi^2$ test of annual income and marital status were statically significant. This means that the structural relationships among satisfaction, revisit intention, and WOM depend on annual income and marital status. The test of the moderating effect of novelty seeking using the Latent Moderated Structural (LMS) approach showed a statistically significant effect at

the .05 level ($\beta = -0.206$, $p < .05$). This indicates that the impact of overall satisfaction on revisit intention depends on the level of novelty seeking. In other words, for tourists with high novelty seeking, the effect of overall satisfaction on revisit intention is weaker than for those with low novelty seeking.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the results of this study shows that the effects of satisfaction attributes on overall satisfaction, revisit intention, and WOM do not differ across age, gender, annual income, and marital status. However, an exception is found in the effect of satisfaction with destination environment on overall satisfaction. This effect is stronger for tourists with annual income \$50,000 or below and for married tourists than for others. The findings also shows that the impact of overall satisfaction on revisit intention depends on the degree of novelty seeking. That is, for novelty seekers, overall satisfaction with the destination does not always yield intention to revisit because these travelers seek variety and prefer to travel to new destinations (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001). From a managerial perspective, the findings might help tourism marketers set promotional packages for different types of travelers. For example, packages that offer positive experiences with the destination environment, such as attractive scenery, are more likely to appeal to married travelers.

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