

Factors That Influence Tourist Satisfaction: An Empirical Study in Pafos



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Abstract The main aim of this article is to identify the factors affecting the level of tourist satisfaction in Pafos. Namely, the study proposes that these factors are quality of services, low cost, aesthetic appeal/nature and society/culture. A questionnaire was created and a random sample of tourist was selected in order quantitative analysis to be conducted. Appropriate statistical techniques were applied to investigate among others, the factor with the largest contribution to the overall tourist satisfaction in Pafos. In addition, the tourists intention to revisit Pafos was examined and its association with their overall satisfaction.

Keywords Tourist satisfaction · Future intention · Quantitative analysis

1 Introduction

There is a large body of knowledge that investigates the factors that determine the overall tourist satisfaction and the literature on the area is definitely rich. This article will not focus on the theoretical framework of the subject but on the empirical results of the analysis. In particular a different combination of factors is employed to measure tourist satisfaction and future intention behavior with destination attributes. Namely, these factors are quality of services, low cost, aesthetic appeal/nature, society/culture.

Tourism in Cyprus is a driver of economic growth. In 2018, almost 4 million tourist arrived in Cyprus, 7.7% increase from 2017 and income from tourism accounts for more than the 15% of the country's GDP.

Cyprus has five main tourist districts Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, Nicosia and Pafos. The research will focus on the district of Pafos as the last few years, as reported by the Cyprus Statistical Services, it is the most preferred touristic area

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with the highest proportion of foreign tourists and up to now there is no reported research for the overall tourist satisfaction in Pafos.

2 Literature Review

Cyprus and to be more specific, Pafos as a tourist destination is considered a complicated destination that the last few years is in transition [1]. This transition has a lot of external factors that if mishandled can cause reduction of market efficiency. This is a risk that locals may can't afford to pay, as 15% of Cyprus GDP is at the moment produced through the tourist sector and 50% of that is being distributed into the market evenly [2]. Specifically, according to the authors [1], "Cypriot tourism has been developed within a context where serious social, political and economic pressures, demands, and changes have taken place. These forces have created severe problems, which due to the apparent stability of the sector for almost 30 years, were partially confronted by tourism policy" (p. 17). These features shaped the island's tourism trends and defined the country's tourism planning. To a lesser extent, emphasis was placed on qualitative aspects of enhancing the tourist product, such as the quality of services, the behavior of the locals towards the tourist, etc.

Moreover, Cyprus's Tourism Image till now is considered to be Sun & Sea, something that is true but it's a very small part of what Cyprus actually is today [3]. Cyprus is considered to be one of the most important Service Hub's in the Mediterranean Sea and a lot of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been introduced the past 3 years and this is also going to continue in the future [4].

In this context it is understood that tourist satisfaction is a key parameter of the tourism industry [5]. According to [6], the satisfaction of the tourist is immediately linked to the experience offered. The experience the tourist gains is what determines whether a tourist will revisit a destination [7]. There are actually many methods of approaching and analyzing the tourist experience. For example, according to [8] satisfaction can be approached by analyzing "values", "inputs" and the "active involvement of the tourist.

Moreover, according to [9] tourist satisfaction is intertwined with the destination's identity. On the other hand, satisfaction depends on the quality of the tourist product and the quality of services offered. For example, the quality of infrastructure is an issue that determines the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the tourist.

Finally, an important factor determining the satisfaction level of a tourist is the cost. What needs to be clarified first is the concept of cost, where in the case of the tourism industry it is a very complex issue. What should be understood is that the cost is determined by the type of the tourist product. Also, the cost is what determines the degree of involvement of the tourist in a series of activities during his vacation [10]. For example, many studies focused on the behavioral study of tourists choosing to stay in low-cost accommodation [11].

3 Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional survey through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire included four parts. The first part included demographic information and other related information such as age, gender, reason for visit, geographic origin, duration of visit. The second part of the questionnaire included statements related with the 4 variables under investigation. Responses were based on 5-point Likert scale from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (highest score); tourists had to rate the statements in relation with their experience of their recent visit in Pafos. The third part of the questionnaire incorporated statements related with the tourists overall satisfaction during their last visit in Pafos. The fourth and last part included questions related with the tourist future behaviour, that is the tourist intention to revisit Pafos. All statements of the questionnaire were closed-ended questions based on a 5 point-Likert scale.

The questionnaire was distributed in Pafos in two languages, both in English and Greek among randomly selected tourists visiting Pafos. The survey was conducted anonymously. In total 281 questionnaires were distributed and 277 were valid (98%). The sample included local and foreign tourists that visited Pafos between the period April to May. The participants were 44.6% men and 55.4% were women and their aged ranged from 18 up to above 58. Regarding the sample's permanent residency 24.9% were local tourists (Cypriots), 66.4% were Europeans and the rest 8.7% were coming from other countries around the world.

4 Analysis

To test for construct validity, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed on the 36 items with Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. The factor analysis was supported by Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(325) = 1319.12$, $p < .001$ and Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of .8 above the recommended value of .6. Only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained. The criteria led to a four factor solution. The first component included nine items on the Quality of Services, accounted for the 36.35% of the variance, the second component contained the nine Low Cost items, accounted for the 7.29% of the variance, the third component included ten items of the customer Aesthetic Appeal/Nature, which accounted for the 5.94% of the variance, and the forth contained the eight items related to the Culture/Society, accounted for the 4.97%. The analysis revealed that 54.55% of the variation in the 36 items can be explained using four factors (see Table 1).

All components (quality of services, low cost, aesthetic appeal/nature, society/culture) after factor analysis was performed were created by calculating the mean of the corresponding questions that refer to the respective variables. The same applies for the variables overall satisfaction and future behavior. Table 2 presents

Table 1 Factor analysis results

Item	Factor			
	I	II	III	IV
I. Quality of services				
The staff's behavior, in your place of residence	.755			
The cleanliness of your place of residence	.724			
The size of your room at the place of residence in relation to the cost of your stay	.683			
Safety and security	.623			
The service time of your orders, at restaurants you have visited in Pafos.	.612			
The overall experience that you had in Pafos related to the parameter "service quality" in Pafos	.594			
Fresh food served in the restaurants you have visited in Pafos	.567			
The quality of transportation services	.491			
The opening hours of local shops.	.423			
II. Low cost				
The cost of living in Pafos is cheap		.762		
The overall experience that you had in Pafos related to the parameter "cost" in Pafos		.755		
The prices of recreational establishments are satisfactory		.724		
The cost of your accommodation in Pafos allows you to do other activities than the one you organized		.714		
The prices in Pafos are reasonable		.691		
The total value for money		.691		
The prices of basic products (milk, water) are satisfactory		.647		
The quality of services provided in Pafos is equivalent to the cost of your stay		.600		
The prices of transportation means are satisfactory		.415		
III. Aesthetic appeal/nature				
The preservation and protection of the environment/Unspoiled nature			.669	
The preservation of the local character			.668	
The cleanliness of Pafos beaches			.667	
The overall experience that you had in Pafos related to the parameter "aesthetic appeal" in Pafos			.638	
The preservation of the architectural heritage			.633	
The beaches in Pafos			.620	
Overall cleanliness of the Pafos Municipality			.614	
The Architecture of buildings in Pafos			.503	
The natural environment of Pafos			.480	
The weather conditions throughout your stay in Pafos			.409	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Factor			
	I	II	III	IV
IV. Society/culture				
The way of life and entertainment of the locals				.752
The cultural events which are organized in Pafos				.719
The understanding of tourists needs by locals				.636
The locals responses to tourists questions				.562
The overall experience that you had in Pafos related to the parameter "society/culture" in Pafos				.551
The general attitude of locals				.545
The lively night life in Pafos				.528
The social acceptance of foreign tourists by the locals				.524

Note: Factor loadings in the same column, load on the same factor

Table 2 Coefficient alpha and descriptive statistics

	Quality of services	Low cost	Aesthetic appeal/nature	Society/culture	Overall satisfaction	Future behaviour
Coefficient alpha	0.883	0.909	0.863	0.877	0.9	0.9
Mean	4.05	3.75	3.89	3.86	3.9	4.2
Standard Deviation	0.66	0.69	0.6	0.69	0.66	0.77

descriptive statistics results for all variables of the study and internal consistency of the current sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs were above the recommended level of 0.7.

Statistical significant differences by using independent samples t-test were obtained for the overall satisfaction between local and European tourists ($t(251) = -2.56$, $p < 0.05$) with local tourists (Cypriots) being less satisfied than their European counterparts. Statistical significant differences were also obtained for the low cost rates in Pafos between local and European tourists ($t(251) = -2.83$, $p < 0.05$) where European tourists consider that Pafos has low cost rates rather than the locals. Significant differences also exist for the factor aesthetic appeal/nature ($t(251) = -2.75$, $p < 0.05$). No significant differences were found for the factors society/culture and quality of services.

Multiple regression was used to explore the relationship between overall tourist satisfaction as a dependent variable and independent variables aesthetic appeal/nature, quality of services, society/culture and low cost. All assumptions of multiple regression were satisfied and no multicollinearity exists between the variables. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is less than 10 and Tolerance is more than 0.1. The overall model was significant $R^2 = .81$, Adjusted $R^2 = .80$, $F(11,373) = 14.72$, $p < .001$ indicating a good level of prediction in the model (see Table 3). All variables were statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. The independent variable that has the largest contribution in the model was society/culture.

Table 3 Multiple Regression predicting the overall satisfaction

	B	Standard error	B	t	VIF
Constant	0.146	0.115			
Aesthetic appeal/nature*	0.181	0.037	0.180	4.8	1.9
Quality of services*	0.268	0.036	0.294	7.3	2.25
Society/culture*	0.304	0.032	0.351	9.3	1.98
Low cost*	0.211	0.032	0.241	6.5	1.90

*Note: $p < 0.05$

Table 4 Multiple Regression predicting the tourist future behaviour

	B	Standard error	B	t	VIF
Constant	-0.056	0.209		-0.267	
Aesthetic appeal/nature*	0.243	0.068	0.188	3.5	1.9
Quality of services*	0.34	0.066	0.290	5.141	2.25
Society/culture*	0.279	0.059	0.251	4.74	1.98
Low cost*	0.229	0.058	0.204	3.93	1.90

*Note: $p < 0.05$

A linear multiple regression model was estimated with dependent variable the tourist future behaviour and as independent variables the four variables under investigation nature, quality of services, society and low cost. All assumptions of the multiple regression model were satisfied and no multicollinearity exists (VIF is less than 10 and Tolerance less than 0.1). All variables were found to have a positive impact on the tourists' future intention to revisit Pafos. Table 4 shows the regression model parameter estimates. The factor quality of services has the largest contribution on the regression model.

Positive significant correlation exists between the tourism satisfaction and tourist future behavior ($r = 0.767$, $p < 0.05$). The more satisfied tourists are, the more likely to revisit Pafos. However, tourist declaring satisfied does not imply necessarily that will choose the same destination for next year. Furthermore, positive statistically significant association also exists between tourism satisfaction and low cost rates ($r = 0.7$, $p < 0.05$).

The duration of visit, based on our sample data, was separated into two groups; less than 10 days of visit and more than 10 days. Independent sample t-tests showed no statistically significant impact between the days of visit and the overall tourist satisfaction. In addition, a one-way ANOVA test showed that there was no significant main effect of age on the overall tourist satisfaction ($F(55,271) = 1.18$, $p > 0.05$).

Furthermore, the majority of our sample stated that transportation to and from touristic points of interest and the operation of a Marina would enrich the tourist product of Pafos.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

Our results are consistent with previous results in the area [7, 12]. Firstly, in this study local and foreign tourists were included, which actually give a greater extend to what should be improved and focus on, in the area of Pafos. Secondly, a different combination of attributes was used to explain tourist satisfaction. In particular, results support that the most important factor that influence tourist satisfaction visiting Pafos is the society/cultural destination attributes. Moreover, the research indicates that the most important predictor of the future intention behavior is high quality services. Furthermore our study also confirms that tourism satisfaction is associated with tourist future intention [13, 14].

Another important finding of the analysis is that local tourists are less satisfied and consider that Pafos does not have low cost rates in comparison with tourists coming from Europe.

Based on our results, more effective marketing strategies by the private and public sector should be developed to change the perception of local tourists on satisfaction at a destination level. Social media and in general technology strategies should be used as nowadays these are possible to change the competitive landscape of the tourism industry [7]. Pafos must continue offering high quality services and upgrading the touristic product in order to maintain the 15% of the country's GDP and reaches the sector's estimates of the long term potential contribution of the 25% of the GDP. As high quality services are associated with future intention to revisit Pafos, it is required that more people should be trained and specialized in the area of the tourism industry in order to promote professionalism among the area. This will have an immediate effect on the touristic product to be upgraded and substantially improved.

As tourists in general declare satisfied, government, local authorities and key stakeholders should promote even more all year-round tourism in Pafos and try to minimize the seasonality as much as possible in the tourism industry. Good deals should be given all-year round to give incentives to locals and foreigners to visit Pafos and continue developing other aspects of tourism in Pafos such religious tourism, wedding and sports and facilities tourism. All marketing strategies should focus at a destination level and further improvements should be done on the infrastructure and transportation in order to enrich the tourist product in Pafos.

Excellent tourist experience does not affect only the future intention to revisit Pafos but the willingness to recommend to other's Pafos as a tourist destination. A good tourism experience is associated with a higher probability to revisit Pafos and this gives a higher probability to the viability of the touristic enterprises in Pafos.

Future research should include data not only from a specific period of the year but all year round data as this will provide a better overview of the tourist's overall satisfaction (local and foreign). In addition, future research should focus on the investigation of the interaction between the research variables i.e. direct and indirect effects by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

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