

Customer Income and Intention to Revisit a Thematic Water Park – The Case of Tsilivi Waterpark in the Island of Zakynthos, Greece

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the case of the impact that the income has upon the revisit of a thematic park in the island of Zakynthos, Greece. The research has taken place in a sample of visitors of a theme park in Tsilivi. From the research made, it seems that surprisingly those with low-end incomes tend to revisit more frequent the park. The reason why is that those visitors may not have many alternatives while people with higher income may be able to participate in multiple leisure activities and other theme parks where they could participate and have more demands from their participation and benefits from visiting again the park.

Keywords: *income, thematic park, tourism, marketing, satisfaction, intention to revisit*

JEL Classification: L83, M31

1. Introduction

Quality of service is a very important issue in the marketing literature, since the perception of the quality of service is directly related to customer satisfaction and preservation (Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoudis & Grouios, 2004; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). In recent years, quality of service, customer satisfaction and dedication are key issues that have attracted the interest of contemporary sports marketing researchers (Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoudis & Grouios, 2004; Alexandris, Dimitriadis & Kasiara, 2001).

Business management surveys have highlighted that the cost of attracting new customers for each business is six times higher than the cost of maintaining the existing customer base (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1983), which strengthens the above perception of relationships between quality, satisfaction and devotion.

In addition, many researchers (Baker & Crompton, 2000) refer to the relationship that quality of service can have, customer satisfaction and the value consumers have to the services they are going to enjoy. Over the last few decades in the effort to measure service quality, some cautionary models have been developed. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) and later Williams (1998) developed a five-factor model called SERVQUAL. Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) presented a multi-level model. Also new models such as QUEST (Kim & Kim, 1995), CERM (Howat, Absher, Crilley & Milne, 1996) have been developed, according to the criticisms that the quality of services depends on the company providing them and SPORTSERV. Papadimitriou and Karteroliotis (2000) used QUESC to evaluate the quality of Greek gyms.

Chang and Lee (2004) have built a tool for assessing the quality of service provided by US sports centers. They used 15 general questions to measure the quality, satisfaction and intent to resume athletic participation. Regarding the case of a similar research in Greece, the questionnaire of Chang and Lee has been used from Zournatzi, Koutsellos, Pollatou and Gerodimos (2007) on their research on sport centers and the motivation of Greek consumers to use them. This has been the first time that this questionnaire was used in Greece.

Although there are a variety of models developed to assess the factors associated with quality of service and customer satisfaction, there are not enough studies that have studied the relationship between quality and satisfaction with regard to predicting the intention (Kassou, Georgiou, Zournatzi & Koustellos, 2008). Also, there are few researches that have studied the above relationship in outdoor recreational activities (Primpa, Koutouris, Alexandris & Michaelides, 2007), and to the best of our knowledge, there is no scientific study in Greece, which examines the relationship between service quality, satisfaction of participants and the intention to re-enter participation in theme parks of leisure.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theme parks

Thematic parks are special tourist infrastructure facilities located on demarcated land areas, inside or outside residential areas and offering a variety of services to visitors around one or more thematic axes. (Government Gazette 2086 B / 29-9-2009, No 16793/09). According to the same Gazette, they provide a wide range of entertainment services to visitors. They can focus on a central theme or more themes, from the fields of entertainment, spectacle, history, especially local history or economic history, mythology, tradition or modern fiction, literature, cinema, the arts, culture in general, science, technology or ecology. The architecture, design and interior design of outdoor spaces must be distinguished by high aesthetic and cultural quality. They also have to be environmentally friendly and can be linked to the central theme or the individual issues of the park. The concept of theme parks also includes aquatic parks, provided they meet the technical specifications of the theme parks.

It is one of the industries that have grown to the fullest in Europe in recent years, due to increased demand for recreation and entertainment. The best example is Eurodisney in France with over 12 million visitors a year. However, one should not forget the older, but also very popular, Blackpool Pleasure Beach in England, which attracts more than 7 million visitors each year (Modrego et al., 2000). Depending on the number of visitors per year classified as follows: a) small theme parks of up to 250,000 visitors; b) medium theme parks from 250,000 to 1,000,000 visitors; and c) large theme parks with over one million visitors.

According to a survey by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) in 2008, the total number of the largest theme parks in Europe is 308, of which only 4 are in Greece. The total number of visitors to these parks in 2008 amounted to 145.5 million, with estimated revenue of 4.3 billion euros and the number of employees reaching 47.590 people. In terms of revenue, France holds the first place with 33% of Europe's total revenue, followed by Germany and England at 17% and 14%, respectively. Countries with large revenue include Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden. These eight countries are estimated to account for 93% of total revenue and 88% of all visitors. In Greece, 4 large theme parks with a total number of visitors of 2.1 million people and an estimated revenue of 13.6 million euro, just 0.3% of the whole of Europe, were recorded. We can easily infer from the above the magnitude of the economic benefits of countries from the activity of theme parks and this alternative form of recreation.

2.2 Behavioral attitudes

Behavioral intentions, when properly analyzed, can largely predict actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996), when customers' perception of service is high, behavioral intentions are favorable and strengthen the relationship between customers and the organization. On the other hand, when service quality assessment is low, customer behavioral intentions are not favorable

and relationships with the organization are declining. Consequently, behavioral intentions are indicators that indicate whether customers will continue or discontinue their engagement with the service.

Favorable behavioral intentions include elements such as positive criticism and recommendation for services to others, payment of an extra remuneration to the business, and expression of loyalty to the organization. The unfavorable behavioral intentions are a multifaceted picture involving complaints and direct criticism of others (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). According to the model they propose, behavioral intentions include 4 dimensions: a) word of mouth (WOM), b) buying intentions, c) price sensitivity, and d) complaints.

Exploring the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and future behavioral intentions, according to Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996), is an indirect way to help clarify the interaction that exists between them. The relationship between these concepts was included in theoretical models (Bolton & Drew, 1991) and was studied in empirical studies by many researchers from the broader service area (Boulding, Karla, Staeling & Zeithaml, 1993). With a few exceptions (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), the above researchers seem to agree on one thing: the level of service quality affects the intention of customers to take business-positive actions. Measuring these positive actions is an important process that has been engaging researchers in recent years, as behavioral intentions are related to the development of loyal and committed customers.

Among the researchers who supported the relationship of quality and satisfaction with behavioral intentions are Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000), who explored the above relationship in six different industrial markets: a) sports fans, b) participants in sports c) entertainment, d) health institutes, e) long-distance transport, and f) fast food chains. The reference to intentions included three questions: a) the likelihood of repeating the service; b) the likelihood of the service being set up by a friend; and c) the likelihood of defining the service as the first choice. This model was applied and tested for suitability as a whole, but also for each type of industrial market, from which a significant correlation between quality and satisfaction was found in behavioral intentions. In the Greek case, there is Flabouras-Nietos, Zournatzi, Koustelios and Costa (2015) who have mentioned the relationship between service quality on Greek leisure parks and the intention to revisit them.

The quality of services is an important factor on all tourist activities, including the examined one which is on thematic parks. The aim of this project is to relationship between the revisit in a thematic park and the income of the visitors. This is something that has not been explored; hence this paper has a unique value. The expected results is that we will have a knowledge over how the income affects the decision of the visitor to visit again a theme park with the service quality been a crucial factor.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample of the survey was made up of 400 Greek participants of, which is a private enterprise in the theme of leisure theme parks in Zakynthos. Tsilivi waterpark 400 questionnaires were distributed to adult participants in the park and 313 (78.25%) were returned.

3.2 Instruments

Regarding the questionnaire, in order to study the quality of the services provided, the satisfaction of consumers and their intention to repeat the participation in the theme park, a questionnaire consisting of two parts was used. The first part included questions about the recording of demographic characteristics and other participants' information. In the second part was used the questionnaire of Zournatzi, Barlas and Koutselios (2007) quality, satisfaction and intention to repeat the participation (ZPH), which was translated into Greek by the Chang & Lee (2004) questionnaire, tailored to the theme park needs. This questionnaire included a total of 18 questions of which five investigate the quality of the services provided (e.g. leisure park provides reliable services), six study the satisfaction of the participants. I am satisfied with the services

provided in the recreation park) and seven are considering the intention to resume their participation. If I had to choose a recreation park again, I would choose another park). All responses were given in a Likert type seven-grade scale, from (1) "Absolutely disagree" to (7) "Absolutely agree". The questionnaire was printed on a double-sided A4 page to make it practical and easy for the participants. Regarding the income, the participants had to choose between no income, 0 -400, 400-750, 751-1200, per month in an individual bases and so on. This is one of the key parts of the questionnaire since this is the dependent variable that is going to be correlated with the independent variables which are associated with the intention to visit again the park.

3.3 Statistical analysis

The questionnaires were distributed on the participants when they entered the leisure park. The questions were clarified and the participants were asked to return back the questionnaires when they left the park. At the same time, they were informed about the scope of the research and that the research is following the code of scientific ethics, while the results obtained will be used to improve the services of the leisure parks. The completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous and lasted about 5-10 minutes. There were specially arranged spaces in the park (restaurant, café and entrance) that the participants in the survey could sit down and complete the questionnaire with calmness. The distribution of the questionnaire was done throughout the park, daily, within one week, to cover the entire opening hours of the leisure park. This has ensured the "randomness" and "representativeness" of the sample.

Regarding the statistical analysis, the paper is going to investigate the differences in the financial situation, quality of service, customer satisfaction and intention to resume participation. Regarding the effect of the economic situation on the quality of services, on customer satisfaction and the intention to re-engage, variance analyzes for one-way ANOVA were also performed.

4. Results

Tsilivi waterpark 400 questionnaires were distributed to adult participants in the park and 313 (78.25%) Of these, 272 (68%) were used in the survey due to incomplete or unreadable elements of the rest. Of the participants in the survey, 126 (46.3%) were men and 146 (53.7%) were women with an average age of 33.2 years \pm 10.25 years (range 18 - 59). Regarding their educational level, the majority of participants (n = 63) were high school graduates, 38 (16.7%) had university and 34 (15%) technological education, 31 (13.7%) had postgraduate studies, 29 Primary school graduates and 20 (8.8%) high school graduates. Of all respondents, 40% (n = 98) were unmarried and 56.3% (n = 138) married. The majority of married children had two children (48.1%), one child (23%), three children (13.3%) and many (4.4%), while 11.1% of married children did not have children.

Regarding their professional status 82 (35.7%) were private employees, 60 (26.1%) were civil servants, 53 (23%) students and 35 (15.2%) belonged to the other categories, another). Finally, with regard to their financial status, the majority (22.4%) of the participants had no income, 21% belonged to the categories with a monthly income of 400-750 € and 751-1200 €, 13.6% in the class 1201-2000 €, a 13.1 % had an income greater than 2000 € and a 8.9% less than 400 €.

From the results of the variables analysis of a factor, a statistically significant influence of the factor "economic condition" on the quality of services ($F(5, 208) = 3.457, p = .005 < .05$), customer satisfaction ($F(5, 208) = 4.633, p = .000 < .05$) and their intention to repeat participation ($F(5, 208) = 3.667, p = .003 < .05$). In order to identify statistically significant differences, the Scheffe multiple comparison test was applied and a statistically significant difference was found between the category with a monthly income of 400-750 € ($M = 6.12$) and the category with a monthly income of 751-1200 € ($M = 5.47$). The quality of the services provided ($p = .044 < .05$). Concerning the satisfaction of the participants, there was a statistically significant difference between the category with a monthly income of 400-750 € ($M = 6.20$) and the category with monthly income higher than 2000 € ($M = 5.34$) with ($p = .000 < .05$). There was also a statistically significant difference between the previous categories with ($M = 6.05$) and ($M = 5.35$) respectively and the intention to repeat the participation ($p = .003 < .05$) Based on the above mentioned results H1 is partly met, in terms that it applies only for the category of 400-750€ and of 751-1200€. Hence the hypothesis is met under conditions.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between the income of the participants and their intention to revisit the park. Besides the income the paper has examined a number of other variables. More specifically, inferential statistics have shown the highest correlation between quality and satisfaction, as is confirmed by previous studies from the gymnasium (Zournatzi, Barlas and Koutselios, 2007; Kassou et al., 2008). The statistical analysis showed a statistically significant correlation between quality and intention, as well as between satisfaction and intention with a better relationship between satisfaction and intention. The results of this research are in agreement with the results of Zournatzi, Barlas and Koutselios (2007) who, in a survey conducted by members of private gyms in Greece with the same questionnaire, found high levels of significance for both relationships, with the relationship between satisfaction and intention being more important. Chang and Lee (2004) concluded similar results in a survey of the relationship between previous concepts in private gyms in the USA, as well as Zournatzi, Koutselios, Pollatou and Gerodimos, (2007) at Greek and Cypriot sport Centers. Researchers using the same questionnaire concluded that the relationship between satisfaction and intention is stronger than the relationship between quality and intention. Quality is a factor which is often affected from the perception that consumers have over the value paid. The consumer has paid a certain amount of money; especially if he or she has a low income then the value of the money increases.

At the same time, they agree with an earlier survey of Dramitinos and Afthinos (2009) from the municipal sport centers in Greece, where they claim that the visitors have a positive view of the quality of the services provided, are satisfied with the services of the center and are willing to continue They are sporting on it. (Barlas, Mantis & Koustelios, 2010), in golf courses, outdoor recreation centers (Barlas, Mantis & Koustelios, 2006), and in the field of recreational activities such as ski resorts in water parks (Howat, Absher, Crilley, & Milne, 2008).

The quality of services, customer satisfaction and the intention to resume participation were examined in Zournatzi, Barlas and Koutselios (2007), questionnaire which was tailored according to the needs of the park. Cronbach's coefficients α , which examined the internal coherence of the questionnaire and its dimensions, fluctuated at high levels, which allows us to express the view that this questionnaire can also be successfully applied in the field of leisure. A number of researchers from the field of fitness have also highlighted the high degree of internal coherence of the factors of the questionnaire (Chang & Lee, 2004; Kassou et al. 2008). This measurement tool could be used to assess the quality of services, customer satisfaction and the intention to resume participation, both in theme parks (water park), where its implementation took place, and in other recreational parks. From the presentation of the results it can be concluded that the participants have a positive perception of the quality of the services provided to them, their satisfaction and their intention to resume participation.

Regarding the relationship of income and of the intention to re-visit the park, for the financial situation, there were differences in the three factors in the questionnaire, with people with a monthly income of 400-750 € assessing all three factors higher than those with higher monthly incomes. A possible explanation of the above could be considered that people with higher income may be able to participate in multiple leisure activities and other theme parks where they could participate and have more demands from their participation and benefits from visiting again the park.

Finally, it is important to discuss the limitations of this research. The sample was not representative for all theme parks. The survey was limited to examining a sample of only one theme park in Zakynthos. Participation in the survey was voluntary, so it was not possible to evaluate the return rate of the questionnaires. Finally, although the questionnaires were anonymous, it was not possible to ascertain the sincerity of the respondents' answers as well as the understanding of the questions from the sample of the survey.

6. Conclusions

To sum up, it should be noted that many elements that emerged from research and analysis of results could be used as a useful tool in designing and implementing leisure activities in theme parks. However, there are limitations in the current survey, because respondents were selected only by a theme park in Zakynthos, and therefore its results can not represent all participants in theme parks of recreation. For this

reason, the results can only be considered as indicative and not representative of the population of the theme parks of recreation in Greece, although the sample of the survey was not small and the data was collected in a representative way.

Regarding the relationship between income and the intention to revisit the park, it seems that surprisingly those with low-end incomes. The reason why is that those visitors may not have many alternatives while people with higher income may be able to participate in multiple leisure activities and other theme parks where they could participate and have more demands from their participation and benefits from visiting again the park.

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