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ASSESSING HOLIDAY SATISFACTION OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN TOURISTS VISITING ALANYA

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Abstract: This study attempts to explore the tourists' satisfaction within a tourism context, specifically with reference to the destination-based attributes. The study was conducted in Alanya with a sample of German and Russian tourists. Gathering data was analyzed using factor and regression analysis and t-tests. The research findings indicated that the dimension of accommodation services was the strongest predictor of the German tourists' satisfaction, followed by incoming travel agency services and facilities of Alanya. The dimension of accommodation services also was the strongest predictor of the Russian tourists' overall holiday satisfaction, followed by destination facilities and incoming travel agency services. Moreover, the mean scores of all the items within the three dimensions were above the neutral point. These results revealed that both Germans and Russians were generally satisfied with their holiday in Alanya.

Key words: Tourists' perceptions, destination attributes, tourist satisfaction, Alanya.

INTRODUCTION

Developments in international tourism have increased competitiveness among tourist destinations. Providing high quality services and maintaining tourists' satisfaction are important factors leading to the success of the destinations. It is commonly accepted

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that 'tourist satisfaction with the tourism product' is one of the most important factors in successful destination management. Wöber & Fesenmaier (2004) stated that visitor satisfaction with the tourism product is one of the variety indicators which are frequently used to measure the success in tourism destination management.

According to Fuchs and Weiermair (2004), many tourism destinations consider tourist satisfaction as one of the most important sources of their competitive advantage. As mentioned by Buhalis (2000), delight tourists by maximizing their satisfaction is one of the key strategic management objectives for destinations.

Tourist destinations include an amalgam of industries such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverage services, recreation and entertainment, and travel agencies. Tourist destinations include also public services and facilities, and physical and natural attractions. All these elements are branded together under the name of the destination (Buhalis, 2000; Poonyth, Barnes, Suich & Monamati, 2002; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Vassiliadis, 2008).

Tourism is a service industry with a particularly complex product which depends on an extremely fragmented supply. Each link in the tourism value chain (travel agencies, tour operators, carriers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, etc.) offers one element in the overall product. Together, these components determine tourists' experiences and their appreciation of the quality of the service. The tourism product for each prospective tourist is very subjective and depends heavily on his/her perceptions and expectations of the destination (Buhalis, 2000; Eraqi, 2006).

The main purpose of the study is to identify whether there are similarities and differences between satisfaction levels of two nationalities visiting Alanya. It also attempts to explore the relationship between overall holiday satisfaction with two national groups of tourists and their perceptions of destination-based attributes.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Satisfaction is the outcome of the consumer's evaluation of a service based on a comparison of their perceptions of service deliver with their prior expectations. Thus expectations, and indeed perceptions, are key components in delivering a quality service. If the operation meets the expectations, or indeed exceeds them, then customers are satisfied with the service. If they are satisfied they are more likely to become valuable customers who not only use the service again, but are positively disposed towards it and may even recommend it to others (Johnston & Clark, 2005).

Customer satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined topics in the hospitality and tourism field because it plays an important role in survival and future of any tourism products and services (Gursoy, McCleary, & Lepsito, 2003; Neal & Gursoy, 2008). Satisfaction with the tourist destination depends on the outcome of tourists' consumptions and their perceptions of tourist product. Tourist satisfaction can be defined as the tourist's emotional state after experiencing the trip (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Yüksel, 2001). Therefore, evaluating satisfaction in terms of a

traveling experience is a post-consumption process (Fornell, 1992; Kozak, 2001). In addition, assessing satisfaction can help managers to improve services (Fornell, 1992).

Satisfaction with the total holiday experience is dependent on all the links in the experience chain. Many of the links are not even located within one destination, and are thus beyond the control or even the influence of a single destination manager (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Some holiday experiences such as; taxi to airport, airport services, air travel etc. are outside of the destination could not be controlled in tourist destination. But others, such as accommodation facilities, meals, travel agency services, recreational and sports facilities, sightseeing etc. are within the destination could be controlled.

The tourism product consists of many sub products such as accommodations, catering, excursions, recreational activities, entertainment, transportation etc. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one of the components leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with overall tourism product. Therefore, it is very important to measure tourist satisfaction with each attribute of destination (Pizam, Neuman, & Reichel, 1978).

Several researchers investigate customer satisfaction in the tourism literature. In tourism satisfaction has been examined in travel agencies (Millan & Esteban, 2004; Rodriguez del Bosque, San Martin, & Collado 2006), accommodation (Choi & Chu, 2001; Heung, 2000; Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Poon & Low, 2005), and destinations (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Joppe, Martin & Waalen, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Pizam et.al., 1978; Reisinger & Turner, 2000; Rodriguez del Bosque & San Martin, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Tourists from different countries are thought to place different levels of emphasis on different aspects of service, such as safety and security, hygiene, entertainment and even employee appearance. Therefore, the differences between the levels of emphasis and the actual service received result in differences in the level of satisfaction (Yu & Goulden, 2006). In recent years, several researchers have employed cross-national/cultural comparative studies related to tourist satisfaction (Campo & Garau, 2008; Choi & Chu, 2001; Pizam & Susman; 1995; Reisinger & Turner, 2002; Richardson & Crompton, 1988; Sussman & Rashcovsky 1997; Truong & King, 2006; Yu & Goulden, 2006). Cross-national/cultural studies compare the tourist satisfaction levels of different nationalities by using either a direct or indirect method. The direct method directly asks the tourists themselves about their experience, perceptions and satisfaction levels; the indirect method asks local residents, business owners, tour guides, etc., for their perceptions of how the tourists are enjoying (or not) their experience. In general, researchers have previously employed both methods (Kozak, Bigne & Andreu, 2003; Pizam, 1999; Tuna, 2006).

In order to assess the customer satisfaction, various theories and measurement models such as 'expectancy-disconfirmation', 'importance- performance', and 'performance-only' have been used in the literature. There is still much discussion about the single best method of measuring customer satisfaction using pre- and post-experience constructs, i.e., 'expectations', 'importance' and 'performance'. Recently, the debate has centered on a comparison of single construct measurement, i.e., performance-only models and multiple construct measurements, i.e., expectation-performance and importance-performance models (Fallon & Schofield, 2003). The intuitive appeal and widespread use of the

(dis)confirmation approach i.e. the 'expectations-performance construct' and the diagnostic value of the 'importance-performance' design notwithstanding, the 'performance-only' model represents the 'winning ticket' with respect to predictive validity (Thompson & Schofield, 2007). A number of studies on tourist satisfaction have demonstrated the superiority of the 'performance-only' conceptualization over the other models (Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen & Santos, 2003; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Fallon & Schofield, 2003; Thompson & Schofield, 2007; Wang & Qu, 2006; Kozak, 2001). Therefore, in this study, tourists' perceptions of destination-based attributes and their overall holiday satisfaction were measured by performance-only model.

2. THE STUDY AREA: ALANYA

The Mediterranean coast around the province of Antalya is one of the main tourist destinations in Turkey. Together with its natural and cultural attractions, Alanya is a resort in Antalya, and it's situated in the 135 km east coast of Antalya Gulf on the Anatolian Peninsula. Following the arrivals of Germans in the late 1950s, Alanya met with tourism. In 1970s locals started to offer their residences to tourists. The east and the west of Alanya were declared as a 'tourist center' with the 'Tourism Incentive Act' in 1982. The declaration helped to increase investments demands. The total bed capacity in Alanya was 8.708 in 1988 (Soyak, 2003). Since Alanya had 67.168 beds in 631 establishments in 1996, along with the growth of tourism, the number of establishments increased to 669 in 2006 with a percentage of 6%, but, the total bed capacity increased to 147.303 with a percentage of 120% in the same period. In comparison with establishment numbers in 1996, the total bed capacity in 2006 characterizes the mass tourism oriented nature of establishments. Table 1 shows the growth of tourism in Alanya. Alanya, as one of the most important tourism destinations in Turkey received 6.9% of total tourists and provided 7.2% of total receipts in 2006 (ACCI, 2007; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). The foregoing statistical data underlines the importance of tourism in Alanya.

Table 1. The Scope of Tourism in Alanya

Years	Number of Establishments	Total Bed Capacity	Number of Foreign Tourists	Total Tourism Receipts (US$)
1996	631	67.168	592.870	481.410.440
1997	691	88.024	698.628	529.560.024
1998	715	97.453	617.312	448.785.824
1999	768	106.355	418.537	310.972.991
2000	745	104.711	677.340	557.450.820
2001	747	112.957	866.130	807.233.160
2002	768	122.663	1.029.350	961.412.900
2003	722	127.663	988.785	932.424.255
2004	748	133.361	1.133.616	1.098.473.904
2005	790	146.302	1.464.686	1.379.734.210
2006	669	147.303	1.357.554	1.212.295.722

Source: (ACCI-Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2007: 65,68)

3. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire survey method was used in the study. The first part of the instrument consisted of basic demographic profiles of the respondents. The second part of the instrument comprised 23 questions concerning tourists' perceptions of destination attributes. The literature on destination attributes provided the basis for developing a questionnaire for this study (Ball & Giakoimus, 2003; Heung, 2000; Millan & Esteban, 2004; Pizam, et.al., 1978; Sussmann & Rashcovsky, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). A 5-point Likert type scale was used in this part of the questionnaire, ranging from "completely agree" (5) to "completely disagree" (1). The final part deals with the measurement of single-item overall satisfaction with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The survey questions were discussed with hospitality industry associations and concerned managers. Thus, this result was used to improve the clarity and readability of questions.

This study was executed in three basic stages: sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The data used in this study is based on the project, namely "Alanya Tourist Profile Research 2007". Sampling design and sample size are significant subjects to statistically represent the population and to be able to suggest implications both theory and practice. Simple random sampling design was used for this survey owing to its efficiency. The sample population of the study was limited to German and Russian tourists visiting Alanya via travel agencies. In recent years, the number of Russian tourists coming to Antalya has increased remarkably, whereas the average growth rate of German tourist arrivals to Antalya has declined in the same period (Table 2). Despite the important growth in the number of Russian tourists, Germans maintain the largest group of foreign tourists visiting Antalya. These trends can be seen in Alanya, which is considered as one of the most important tourism destinations in Turkey. According to the tourist statistics obtained from Alanya Municipality, 506.398 German and 286.290 Russian tourists came to Alanya in 2006. Therefore, the study aimed to assess the holiday satisfaction with German and Russian tourists visiting Alanya.

Table 2. Number of Two Nationalities of Tourists in the Antalya Region

Years / Nationality	2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Number of Tourists	(%)	Number of Tourists	(%)	Number of Tourists	(%)	Number of Tourists	(%)
German	2.073.437	44,29	2.529.496	41,83	2.639.182	38,34	2.087.430	34,73
Russian	797.549	17,03	1.058.786	17,51	1.279.949	18,59	1.293.336	21,52
Total	2.870.986	61.32	3.558.282	59.34	3.919.131	56.93	3.380.766	56.25

Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of Antalya Culture and Tourism. 2007.

The survey was carried out between June and September 2007 which represents the high season in the area. Questionnaires were distributed to tourists via travel agencies and 875 questionnaires were returned from German and Russian tourist sample. The questionnaires were filled out by the respondents at the end of their holidays (taking a performance-only approach). The number of the sample population was rather adequately for research (Sekaran, 2000). The data obtained were analyzed by using SPSS for Windows 15.0 program. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, factor analysis, regression analysis and t-tests.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Results of the descriptive analysis indicate that 68.5% of the respondents were German and 31.5% were Russians. About 59.6% of the respondents were female and 40.4% were male. The age groups are represented 25.6% of 18-24 ages, 22.6% of 25-34 ages and 29.2% of 35-44 ages; in other words, 77.4% of respondents had consisted of young and middle age groups. 90.1% of the respondents had completed high school and above, indicating that a large proportion of the sample was well educated. About half of the respondents (50.1%) were single. When asked to indicate professions, 37.4% of the respondents reported that they were worker and 22.1% reported that they were civil servant. About half of the Germans (52.7%) had an annual income between US$ 10.000 - 40.000 and 31.1% of them earned more than US$ 50.000. About 71.7% of the Russians had an annual income between US$ 2.500 - 20.000.

4.2. Principal Component Analysis

The first stage in the analysis of the questionnaire design in respect of tourist satisfaction measurement using Likert-type scales should become the assessment of item-total correlation and reliability. This stage is significant in designing effective and valid research, as a part of the suggested qualitative measures, in order to ensure that findings are accurate and to be able to discuss further implications. Firstly, the alpha value was about .95, well above the generally agreed upon lower limit of .60 for research at exploratory stage (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Afterwards, a principal factor analysis was performed on items in order to identify dimensions. Bartlett's test of sphericity with a value of 5459.027 (p<.001) and the calculation of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistics of .93, which can be qualified as "excellent," pointed out that data seemed suitable for factor analysis. Taking the distribution of the scree plot into consideration, principal component factors with an eigenvalue of one or greater were rotated by the varimax analysis. 23 items from the factor analysis resulted in 3 factor groupings and explained 67% of the total variance. Most of the factor loadings were greater than .70, indicating a good correlation between the items and the factor grouping they represent. The Cronbach's alpha test confirms the existence of a high level of internal consistency among factor groupings. The results of the factor analysis are showed in Table 3.

Table 3. The Factor Analysis Results

Items	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained	F Value	Alpha	P
1. Factor: Destination Facilities		5.9	25.9	11.727	.92	.0001
Cleanliness of town	.76					
Safety of town	.74					
People's hospitality	.68					
Cleanliness of beaches	.73					
Lively nightlife	.69					
Rich in ancient monuments	.74					
Sufficient shopping opportunities	.70					
Sufficient recreation facilities	.76					
Easy to reach	.73					
Cheapness of town	.67					
2. Factor: Accommodation Services		4.8	21.0	34.888	.90	.0001
Cleanliness of Hotel	.77					
Hospitable staff	.78					
Safety of Hotel	.71					
Food quality	.79					
Service quality	.82					
Comfortable of Hotel	.79					
Animation and sports facilities	.64					
3. Factor: Incoming Travel Agency Services		4.6	20.0	12.143	.93	.0001
Expertise of agency	.83					
Attitudes of staff	.83					
Airport transfers	.75					
Information services	.82					
Guide services	.80					
Reservations	.74					

4.3. Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the aggregate impact of certain independent variables exerting the strongest influence in dependent variables for Germans and Russians. This analysis presents the strength of any variable in the overall model. Results of each process are reported in Table 4 for Germans and Table 5 for Russians together with the t statistics, standardized regression coefficients, and R^2 values.

Table 4 demonstrates the influence of three factor variables over the level of the Germans' overall satisfaction with their holidays. The model accounts for 22% of the variance in the dependent variable. It is observed that all the factor variables had statistically significant beta coefficients. Accommodation and incoming travel agency

services had a positive score but destination facilities had a negative score. In Table 4, accommodation services was the strongest predictor of the overall holiday satisfaction (p<.001), followed by incoming travel agency services (p<.005) and destination facilities (p<.005).

Table 4. Impacts of Factor Items on Germans' Overall Holiday Satisfaction

Variable	β	T value	Sig.
Constant		13,495	,000
Destination Facilities	-,111	-2,182	,030
Accommodation Services	,448	8,867	,000
Incoming Travel Agency Services	,118	2,272	,024
R^2=.22			

Table 5 also shows the influence of three factor variables over the level of the Russians' overall holiday satisfaction. The model accounts for 35% of the variance in the dependent variable. It is observed that all the factor variables had statistically significant beta coefficients. These variables also had a positive score. In Table 5, accommodation services was the strongest predictor of the overall holiday satisfaction (p<.001), followed by destination facilities (p<.005) and incoming travel agency services (p<.005).

Table 5. Impacts of Factor Items on Russians' Overall Holiday Satisfaction

Variable	β	T value	Sig.
Constant		5,103	,000
Destination Facilities	,151	2,303	,022
Accommodation Services	,426	6,688	,000
Incoming Travel Agency Services	,128	2,092	,038
R^2=.35			

4.4. Comparison of Means

An independent-t test was employed to investigate whether there were any statistically significant differences between German and Russian tourists' perceptions of destination-based attributes. Table 6, 7 and 8 revealed the significant differences between mean scores as to the destination facilities, accommodation services and incoming travel agency services for German and Russian tourists.

A five of the destination facilities analyzed showed significant differences between Germans and Russians. It was found that four out of the ten destination facilities were evaluated as significantly more satisfactory by the German tourists than by the Russian tourists. These were: Cleanliness of beaches, which was given a mean of 3.74 by the Germans, as opposed to 3.45 by the Russians; sufficient shopping opportunities, with a mean of 4.09 for the Germans, compared to 3.77 for the Russians; sufficient recreation facilities, with a mean of 4.02 for the Germans and 3.66 for the Russians; and cheapness of town, where the mean was 3.69 for the Germans and 3.18 for the Russians. Only one variable, "lively nightlife", was found to be more satisfied

by the Russians, with a mean of 4.11 than 3.89 by the Germans. The results of these tests, with the mean, t-value and significance calculated in each case, are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of T-Test Results for Destination Facilities

	German	Russian	t value and significance
Cleanliness of town	3.57	3.70	-1.38
Safety of town	3.70	3.73	-.28
People's hospitality	3.84	4.00	-1.70
Cleanliness of beaches	3.74	3.45	2.96*
Lively nightlife	3.89	4.11	-2.19*
Rich in ancient monuments	3.82	3.89	-.73
Sufficient shopping opportunities	4.09	3.77	3.23*
Sufficient recreation facilities	4.02	3.66	3.28*
Easy to reach	4.04	4.12	-.82
Cheapness of town	3.69	3.18	5.12*

Note: * indicates a significant difference at 95% or more

T-tests were performed for the accommodation services, as for the destination facilities and at the same level of significance. Three out of the seven variables examined were assessed as significantly different by the German and Russians. These included: Cleanliness of hotel, which was given a mean of 3.95 for the Germans, as opposed to 3.72 for the Russians; safety of hotel with a mean of 3.74 by the Germans, compared to 3.65 by the Russians; and food quality, with a mean of with a mean of 3.66 for the Germans and 3.43 for the Russians. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Summary of T-Test Results for Accommodation Services

	German	Russian	t value and significance
Cleanliness of Hotel	3.95	3.72	2.606*
Hospitable staff	3.93	4.07	-1.525
Safety of Hotel	4.03	3.65	4.049*
Food quality	3.66	3.43	2.400*
Service quality	3.72	3.58	1.590
Comfortable of Hotel	3.69	3.67	.230
Animation and sports facilities	3.62	3.53	.930

Note: * indicates a significant difference at 95% or more

It was found that four out of the six incoming travel agency services were evaluated as significantly more satisfactory by the Russian tourists than by the German tourists. These included: Expertise of agency, which was given a mean of 4.19 for the Russians, as opposed to 3.83 for the Germans; attitudes of staff, with a mean of 4.15 by the Russians, compared to 3.91 by the Germans; airport transfers, with a mean of 4.31 by the Russians, compared to 4.04 by the Germans; and reservations, with a mean of 4.22 for the Russians and 3.92 for the Germans. The results are showed in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of T-Test Results for Incoming Travel Agency Services

	German	Russian	t value and significance
Expertise of agency	3,83	4,19	-4,068*
Attitudes of Staff	3,91	4,15	-2,753*
Airport transfers	4,04	4,31	-3,186*
Information services	3,79	3,89	-,998
Guide services	3,85	3,96	-1,182
Reservations	3,92	4,22	-3,203*

Note: * indicates a significant difference at 95% or more

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to focus too much on assessing German and Russian tourists' perceptions of destination attributes and measuring their holiday satisfaction in Alanya. It does not claim to reflect the subculture of many ethnic groups' perceptions. Therefore, it is not possible to generalize the results of the study for two nationalities.

The results of the regression analysis showed that the main determinants of German tourists' holiday satisfaction were first accommodation services, followed by incoming travel agency services and destination facilities dimensions. However, the main determinants of Russian tourists' satisfaction were first accommodation services, followed by destination facilities and incoming travel agency services. This means that the essential element which had high influences on holiday satisfaction was accommodation services for both two groups.

The mean scores of all the items within the three dimensions were above the neutral point in the scale (3 = Neutral). These results showed that both German and Russian tourists were generally satisfied with their holiday. T-tests results revealed that under the dimension of destination facilities, German tourists were more likely to be satisfied with the cleanliness of beaches, sufficient shopping opportunities, sufficient recreation facilities, and cheapness of town than Russian tourists, whereas Russians were more likely to be satisfied with lively nightlife than Germans. In the meantime, being why Russian tourists were less likely to be satisfied with cheapness of town than Germans can be explained by examining their level of annual income. As we stated before, Germans had much annual income than Russians. Within the accommodation services dimension, Germans were more likely to be satisfied with cleanliness of hotel, safety of hotel and food quality than Russians. Lastly, under the incoming travel agency services dimension, Russians were more likely to be satisfied with expertise of agency, attitudes of staff, airport transfers, and reservations than Germans.

Similar to other destinations in Mediterranean, Alanya has dominantly massive tourism, which is typically based on the trio of sun, sea and sand, although it has very rich cultural and heritage attractions as well as natural beauties. The mass tourism oriented development in the Mediterranean's market shares lead to fierce competition among tourist destinations. Therefore, the above mentioned results are

important for all stakeholders, such as hotel managers, hospitality industry associations and travel agency managers in order to increase tourists' satisfaction and develop the quality of tourism product. Meanwhile, similar studies should be undertaken periodically. This will also contribute to enhance competitiveness and maintain sustainability of the attractions of Alanya in the future.

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