

Does satisfaction with package tours lead to successful vacation experiences?

Juulia Räikkönen, Department of Marketing and International Business,

Turku School of Economics at the University of Turku

Antti Honkanen, Centre for Tourism Studies, University of Eastern Finland

Author note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Juulia Räikkönen,
Department of Marketing and International Business, Turku School of Economics, FI 20014,
University of Turku, Finland, Tel: +358 2 3339 185; Fax: +358 2 481 4280; Email:
juulia.raikkonen@utu.fi

1. Introduction

The tourism industry exists in order to offer tourists extraordinary, satisfactory, valuable, and memorable experiences (e.g. Pizam, 2010; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). Nevertheless, as experiences are subjective and internal in nature, they cannot be produced by the tourism industry. Tourism organizations can create favorable prerequisites, circumstances, and environments for experience formation, but the outcome still depends on how a tourist reacts to the interaction with the event, and may differ tremendously from what was intended by the service provider (Komppula, 2005: 2006; Mossberg, 2007).

Similar to experience, value is also an elusive concept (Caru & Cova, 2003) determined by the customer (e.g. Grönroos, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Thus, measuring a vacation experience is challenging (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Jennings, 2010; Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Generally, satisfaction is considered as an outcome of an experience, even though tourists do not travel to achieve satisfaction, but to gain experiences that fulfill their needs and wants (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Despite the increasing research interest in tourism experiences (e.g. Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010), it is still somewhat unclear which components constitute a tourism experience per se and how to define the roles of, for example, eating, sleeping, and transportation, which are necessary for the journey (Quan & Wang, 2004).

On a general level, tourism experiences are influenced by elements both outside of and within an individual (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010), and by factors related to the travelers, local populations, and the products (Nickerson, 2006). Focusing more closely on the service environment or “the experiencescape”, tourism experiences are affected by the physical environment, personnel, other tourists, products/souvenirs, and the theme/story (Mossberg, 2007).

There is, however, a need for closer investigation into how, and to what extent, these different factors influence the success of a tourism experience. For instance, Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael (2010, p. 22) noted that tourism experiences need further investigation, particularly into: how experiences are influenced by i) physical and social settings, and ii) product/service attributes; iii) whether satisfaction is an appropriate measurement of experience; and iv) what the importance of internal and external factors is, in influencing quality tourism experiences. Furthermore, Walls et al. (2011, p. 20) stated that research is needed to verify or falsify the general assumption that experience factors carry equal weight in experience formation, and to determine whether a weighting system could be used to measure the importance of the different factors involved in experience formation.

This study responds to these research gaps by focusing on the role of the tour operator in the creation of package tourism experiences. The purpose is to examine how satisfaction with the different elements of a package tour affects the success of a vacation experience. The study contributes to academic research by enhancing understanding on package tourism experiences, and provides managerial implications to facilitate experience creation efforts within tourism destinations and tour operator businesses.

The literature review begins by characterizing the package tourism market and summarizing previous research on package tours. Tourism products and their influence on tourism experiences are then discussed, and attention is drawn to the evaluation of these package tourism experiences. In the methodology section, the research design, data, and analyses are described, after which, the results of the study follow. In the last section, the conclusions and contribution of the study are presented and discussed in relation to previous and future studies. Finally, managerial implications are suggested.

2. Literature review

2.1 Package tourism

This study approaches destination experiences through package tourism, which is a predominant form of outbound leisure tourism in Europe (Bastakis, Buhalis, & Butler, 2004; Buhalis & Laws, 2001). However, during the past years European tour operators have had to respond to the presumed crisis in traditional package travel by creating more individualized, diversified, and flexible packages (Bastakis et al., 2004; Bramwell, 2004; Buhalis & Laws, 2001; Casarin, 2001; Shaw & Williams, 2004). In Asia, by contrast, an increasing tourism demand has accelerated the rapid growth of the package tourism market (Chen & Hsu, 2012; Wong & Lee, 2012). Consequently, research on package tourism and tour operators seems to be currently dominated by Asian viewpoints (e.g. Chang, 2009; Heung, 2008; Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010; Jin, He, & Song, 2012; Wang, Hsieh, Chou, & Lin, 2007; Wang, Jao, Chan, & Chung, 2010; Wong & Lee, 2012; Wong & Wang, 2009) over Western viewpoints (e.g. Alegre, Cladera, & Sard, 2012; Campo & Yagüe, 2008; Davies & Downward, 2007; Koutoulas, Tsartas, Papatheodorou, & Prountzou, 2009; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008; Rosselló & Riera, 2012; Trunfio, Petruzzellis, & Nigro, 2006).

Furthermore, in the Asian context the term “group package tour” (Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000; Wang et al., 2007) is used to highlight the intense interaction between a group of tourists and their tour leader (Lee, Wilkins, & Lee, 2011). In contrast, a characteristic of the European “package tours” (Hanefors & Mossberg, 1999) or “charter tours” (Mossberg, 1995) is that tourists are left to enjoy their vacation quite independently as tour leaders are present only occasionally (e.g. during transfers and excursions). However, terms like “guided package tour” (Bowie & Chang, 2005) or “inclusive tour” (Bowen, 2001) are used in the European context to describe roundtrip-type package tours.

Adopting the European perspective, a package tour is here understood as a pre-arranged combination of accommodation, transportation, and/or other significant tourist services

(Council Directive 90/314/EEC, 1990). In Europe, the package tourism market is highly concentrated, and the Northern-European tour operators in particular have developed into massive organizations (see Budeanu, 2005) by integrating transportation services and travel retailing into their core tour-operating business (Bastakis et al. 2004). In recent years this integration has also reached tourism destination areas where tour operators have become key players by acquiring accommodation establishments and incoming tour and coach operators (Bastakis et al. 2004). At an individual business level, the tour operators' market power causes problems and conflicts, such as low prices and profit margins. However, destinations as entities are considered to benefit from tour operators, for example through the increased accessibility offered by charter flights, support for marketing and promoting the destination area, and expansion of the tourism season. In addition, tour operators often monitor the performance of the entire tourism industry, and raise issues with destination management organizations towards the improvement of the quality of destination experiences (Bastakis et al., 2004; Trunfio et al., 2006).

In Scandinavia, the competition in the package tourism market has long been fierce, and different tour operators' customers may even end up travelling on the same flight and staying in the same hotel (Mossberg, 1995; Roper, 2005). In Finland, package tourism is a common way of distributing outbound tourism (1.6 million package tours in 2010), even though the market share has decreased from 55% at the beginning of the century to 41% (Statistics Finland, 2010). Despite the stereotyped conception of the package tourist as a lower middle-class individual (Smith, 1977), a package tour is chosen for a variety of reasons (see Bastakis et al., 2004; Enoch, 1996; Laws, 1997; Sheldon & Mak, 1987; Wickens, 2002) and Finnish package tourists in fact come from all social classes (Selänniemi, 1996).

Notably, due to the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) the role of the travel agents and tour operators alike has changed considerably from providing advisory functions and transaction processing to the provision of consultative services

(Cheynel, Downes, & Legg, 2006). In the current trend of “do-it-yourself” travel arrangements, the opportunities of tour-operating business seem to lie in concentration on certain markets and tailor-made services instead of providing mere scale economies.

2.2 Experiencing tourism products

In experiential consumption and marketing, the interaction between customers and companies is central (e.g. Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999; 2003). According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) in the “second generation” experience economy value is based on the co-creation experiences. Carù and Cova (2007), in turn, outlined a continuum based on the role of customers and companies in creating experiences. Finnish package tours are likely to fall into the middle of this continuum, as tour operators provide an experiential platform by assembling the packages (e.g. Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), but eventually customers construct their own experiences by choosing which services they wish to use. Notably, the more service encounters the tourists have, the more possibilities there are for tour operators to influence their experiences (Hanefors & Mossberg, 1999; Mossberg, 1995).

Tourism experiences¹ take place in phases (Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). This is acknowledged also in Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael’s (2010) profound conceptual model of influences and outcomes of a tourism experience (Fig. 1) which thus forms a solid basis for analyzing package tourism experiences.

¹ For consistency, the term “tourism experience” (e.g. Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Nickerson, 2006) is used here, even though “tourist experience” also often appears in the literature (e.g. Komppula, 2006; Mossberg, 2007; Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryan 2002).

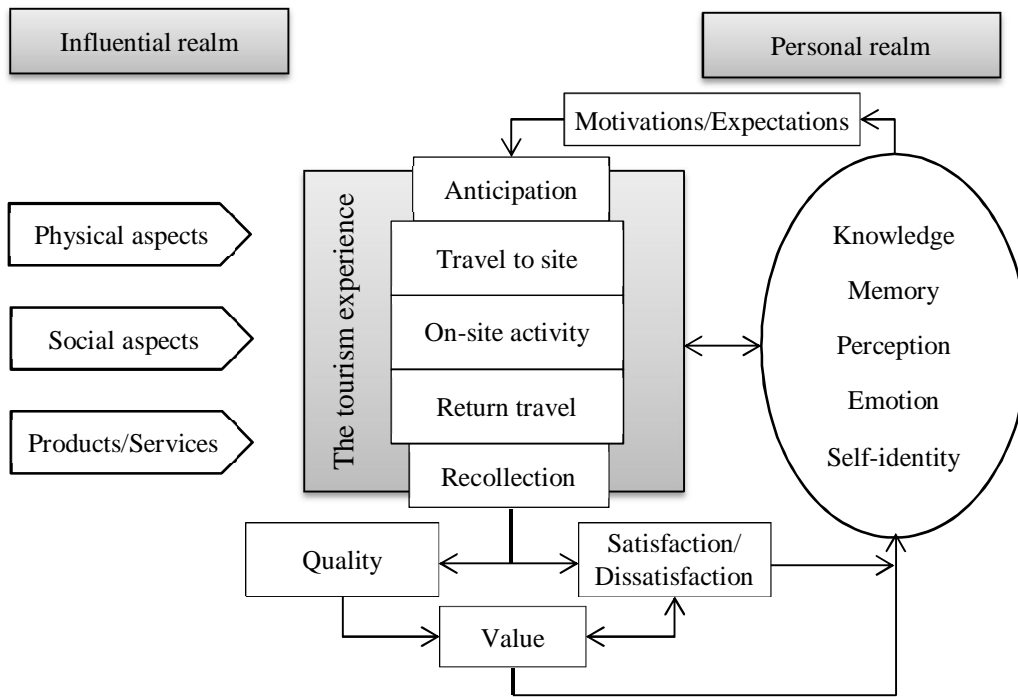


Figure 1. Conceptual model of a tourism experience (modified from Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010)

The influential realm refers to the external elements that have an impact on the tourism experience (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Physical aspects are related to physical settings, spatial characteristics, and geographical features, which are all important in understanding tourism experiences (e.g. Mossberg, 2007; Ryan, 2002). Social aspects include various social influences such as social settings, personal relationships, and interactions with personnel, other tourists, and the host population. In addition, products and services, which are at the center of this study, heavily influence the tourism experience (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

A product consists of a commodity, a service, or a combination of both. It is “the result of a production process in which added value is created” (Edvardsson, 1997, p.33). The concept of service refers to the customer’s perceptions of the process and outcome that constitute the service, form the perception of quality, and determine customer satisfaction (Edvardsson, 1997, p. 34). Instead of services, companies provide prerequisites for various

services, by which Edvardsson (1997, pp. 35–40) refers to a proposed offer based on the service concept (what is to be done for the customer), service process (activities needed to produce the service), and service system (resources required to implement the service concept and process).

Komppula (2006) applied the idea of prerequisites for services to the tourism context, and described the tourism experience product as a service package. The core of this product is the service concept, and various activity modules, such as accommodation and transportation, form the service process. The tour operators' role is to provide the best possible prerequisites for the experience: an attractive idea and description of the product, a successful service process, and a reliable, functioning service system (Komppula, 2006, p. 136).

The challenge of package tourism is that even though tour operators bundle the experience products, tourists still use services offered by multiple individual service providers. Ideally, each service is a value-adding entity, leading to increased satisfaction with the overall vacation experience (Komppula, 2006; Neal & Gursoy, 2008). To ensure this, companies must endeavor to control their service process in its entirety, even if they do not have direct control over all parts of it (Edvardsson, 1997).

The customer experiences the product within the service environment, and filters it through expectations and previous mental images of the company and corresponding products (Komppula, 2006). In the model of Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael (2010) these aspects fall into the personal realm, referring to the elements within an individual that shape the experience, e.g. knowledge, memory, perception, emotion, and self-identity. This personal realm feeds into motivation and expectations for future experiences, providing a cycle of motivation/expectation, experience, and outcome (Quinlan Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

Walls et al. (2011, p. 18) stated that a consumer experience actually is the multidimensional takeaway impression or outcome, which is affected by physical and human interaction dimensions and formed by encounters with products, services, and businesses

influencing consumption values (emotive and cognitive), satisfaction and repeat patronage. According to Komppula and Gartner (2013) this impression or outcome refers to customer value, which runs parallel to and is a major contributor to the construct of customer experience (Palmer, 2010). In Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) original model, however, an experience is evaluated purely through satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Therefore, the complementary yet distinct concepts of quality and value are here added to the model (Fig. 1) and discussed next in more detail.

2.3 Evaluating package tourism experiences

According to the common definition of service quality a "service should correspond to the customer's expectations and satisfy his needs" (Edvardsson, 1997, p. 33). The close relationship between quality and satisfaction is evident; customers are satisfied when their judgment of the service they have received equals or exceeds what they expected (Oliver, 1980).

The debate on the conceptual distinction of quality and satisfaction still continues. So far, the literature has recognized that satisfaction and quality are both subjective evaluations of a service experience, based on the comparison between perceived performance and some standard reference point (Orsingher & Marzocchi, 2003, p. 202). Satisfaction, however, is a psychological outcome emerging from a specific experience, and is at least partially linked to emotional feelings (c.f. personal realm), whereas service quality, which does not necessarily imply a personal experience, is more concerned with the attributes of the service itself and results mainly from a cognitive process (c.f. influential realm) (Orsingher & Marzocchi, 2003; Crompton & MacKay, 1989).

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in consumer value, partially replacing the more narrow concepts of quality and satisfaction (e.g. Gallarza & Gil, 2008; Gallarza & Gil Saura, 2006; Sánchez-Fernández, Ángeles Iniesta-Bonillo, & Holbrook, 2009). Holbrook

(1999, p. 5) defined consumer value as “an interactive relativistic preference experience” which refers to: 1) the interaction between a consumer and a product, 2) the simultaneously subjective, comparative, and situational nature of value, 3) preference judgments or evaluations, and 4) consumption experiences rather than mere purchasing (Holbrook, 1999, pp. 5–9; Gallarza & Gil, 2008). Academics seem to agree that quality is an antecedent of both satisfaction and value yet there are distinct viewpoints on whether satisfaction influences value or vice versa (e.g. Gallarza & Gil Saura, 2006, Sánchez, Callarisa, Rodríguez, & Moliner, 2006).

According to Komppula (2006, p. 139) tourists’ perceptions of value result from a variety of quality-related perceptions and experiences with the service provider over a period of time. Based on the ideas of Woodruff (1997), Komppula (2005) distinguished three stages of value. *Expected value* refers to the needs, goals, and purposes that underlay tourism motivations, while *perceived value* reflects perceptions and experiences before and during the service is actually being performed. Finally, *experienced value* is formed during and after the service process and reflects customer satisfaction with the received value, which is evaluated against the customer’s goals and purposes. According to Komppula and Gartner (2013), the experienced value refers to the multidimensional outcome of the trip that the traveler constructs after returning back home (Walls et al. 2011), which in this study is measured by the success of a vacation experience.

There are several studies that address the evaluation of package tourism products (e.g. Bowen, 2001; 2002; Bowie & Chang, 2005; Chang, 2009; Geva & Goldman, 1991; Heung, 2008; Huang et al., 2010; Hudson, Hudson, & Miller, 2004; Hudson & Shephard, 1998; Mossberg, 1995; Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Quiroga, 1990; Wang et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2000; Zhang & Chow, 2004). The majority of these, however, concentrate on the role of a tour leader or tour guide in determining the quality of, or satisfaction with, the package tour. For example Huang et al. (2010, p. 29) suggested that “as package tourists stay in the ‘bubble’

environment created by tour operators, their satisfaction with tour experience depends to a great extent on tour guiding and tour operator services”. Nevertheless, none of these studies explicitly define how the different components of a package tour affect the evaluation of the success of a tourism experience.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study takes a quantitative approach in examining how satisfaction with the different elements of a package tour affects the success of a vacation experience. Customer satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined topics in tourism research (Neal & Gursoy, 2008). The main instruments for measuring satisfaction are IPA (Martilla & James, 1977), an analysis focusing on both importance and performance; SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), which is based on the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm; and SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1994) measuring “performance only”.

According to Hudson et al. (2004) all three methodologies can be used in the tour-operating sector since they did not produce statistically different results in a methodological comparison. However, as the SERVQUAL dimensions (assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles) seem to be inappropriate for measuring package tours (see also Wang et al., 2007) they instead examined attributes divided into dimensions reflecting various aspects of the vacation experience. Similarly, Neal and Gursoy (2008) suggested that each stage in which the tourism industry and tourists interact should be analyzed, as overall satisfaction results from satisfaction with pre-trip services, services at the destination, and return trip services.

The design of this study is similar to Hudson et al. (2004) and Neal and Gursoy (2008). The SERVPERF approach is applied but instead of the original service quality dimensions,

the attributes were related to pre-tour services, tour operator's destination services, accommodation, environmental issues, and flights.

3.2 Data

The data was collected through a self-administrated survey questionnaire (38153 respondents). The research population was formed by customers of the largest Finnish tour operator, Suntours Ltd, during the summer season of 2005 (167928 customers). The questionnaires were distributed to the customers at the end of the vacation by tour leaders. A questionnaire was handed out to each customer who was willing to accept it, preferably at least one questionnaire per hotel room. Participation was encouraged by granting two gift vouchers worth 200 euro to two random respondents every month. Due to the lack of the exact number of distributed questionnaires, the response rate (23%) is here calculated by the total number of customers. It is noted, however, that this number also includes customers under 18 years old.

In the tour-operating sector, customer feedback is often collected through customer service questionnaires (Hudson et al., 2004). Even though these methods provide information about the customer's actual vacation experiences (Hudson et al., 2004), they are widely criticized for only providing a superficial understanding (Bowen, 2002), as well as for tour leader interferences, and shortcomings in the questionnaire design (Wang et al. 2007). In this study, the tour leader interference was reduced by advising customers to return the questionnaires after the vacation. The questionnaire, in turn, is presented next and discussed in relation to similar studies.

The questionnaire opened with questions about the respondent's demographics. The majority of the respondents were female (72%). Respondents between 45–54 years old formed the largest age group (26%), followed by 35–44 year-olds and 55–64 year-olds, both at 22% of the respondents. The youngest (under 25 years) and the oldest age groups (over 65

years) both represented 8% of the sample. The most common occupation among the respondents was official (32%), but 25% of the respondents were workers, and 14% retired. Entrepreneurs, managers, students, and the group labeled “other” each represented about 7% of the sample. In addition, a clear majority of the respondents (88%) were on a beach vacation, 11% on a city vacation, and 1% on a roundtrip.

The questionnaire then concentrated on the success of the vacation experience and satisfaction with the package tour. Some questions, such as satisfaction with the children’s club, were related to certain customers only and thus left out of the analysis. Finally, the questionnaire ended with questions about respondents’ future behavior (e.g. recommendations and future vacation interests).

The attributes included in the analysis are presented in Table 1. These attributes were rated with a five-point Likert scale (1=poor, 5 =very good,), which is considered suitable for evaluating tourism experiences as it provides an effective measure for consumer attitudes, and is easy to construct and manage (Hudson et al., 2004, Yuksel, 2001).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of attributes related to tour operator's services

Attributes	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Reception and transfer	37870	4.53	0.64
Booking service	32763	4.49	0.65
Tour leader service	35423	4.47	0.71
Return day arrangements and transfer	37240	4.46	0.73
Availability of tour leaders	31485	4.45	0.71
Information accuracy of salesperson	31949	4.40	0.72
Check-in (outbound)	37895	4.39	0.82
Location of accommodation	37767	4.37	0.81
Vacation information folder	36061	4.32	0.72
Information accuracy of brochure	36845	4.31	0.71
Accommodation service (staff)	37618	4.29	0.81
Destination information (tour leaders)	37047	4.28	0.79
Cleanliness of accommodation	37810	4.26	0.89
In-flight service from destination	35339	4.19	0.78
In-flight service to destination	37618	4.18	0.76
Accuracy of hotel description	37010	4.16	0.86
Check-in (inbound)	36130	4.12	0.95
Excursion supply	30336	4.10	0.86
Beaches and swimming conditions	31828	3.93	0.84
Environmental activities of hotel	31305	3.80	0.87
General state of environment	37294	3.74	0.90
In-flight catering from destination	35049	3.70	1.01
Waste management	34553	3.62	0.99
In-flight catering to destination	37681	3.53	1.03
Traveling comfort	37093	3.43	1.00

The attributes of this study shared common ground with similar studies (e.g. Hudson & Shephard, 1998; Hudson et al., 2004; Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Andriotis, Agiomirgianakis, & Mihiotis, 2008), yet there were also distinctions as none of these studies were focused on a single tour operator. Hudson and Shephard (1998) measured service quality at a ski resort with 97 attributes, and Hudson et al. (2004) compared measurement instruments with 146 attributes divided into 13 dimensions of experience. Andriotis et al. (2008), in turn, examined vacation experiences in Crete, and included 38 attributes, while Neal and Gursoy (2008) included nine attributes in their analysis of satisfaction with pre-trip services, services at the destination, and transit route services. The study of Wang et al. (2007), on the contrary, did concentrate on package tours and tour operators, yet only in the context of Asia. They

developed an instrument with 22 attributes for measuring package tours which, however, is not directly applicable to the European context. A detailed comparison of attributes used in this study and in similar studies is presented in Appendix 1.

3.3 Analyses

The data was analyzed with the statistical software SPSS 17.0. First, a principal components analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was conducted. The aim was to summarize the information of 25 original variables into a smaller set of new composite dimensions, and to define the fundamental constructs assumed to underlie the original variables (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001, pp. 612–615). Since imputation for missing values was not conducted, the amount of respondents declined substantially, but was still considered adequate (n=15057).

As the relationship between the dimensions of the package tour and perceived success of the vacation experience was to be examined, the component points were then analyzed in relation to the question “How successful was your Suntuour as a whole?” In the questionnaire this question was placed under the heading “Success of the vacation” and also rated with a five-point Likert scale. A regression analysis was then conducted, as it is one of the most popular methods to analyze the relationships between a single continuous dependent variable and several continuous independent variables (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2006).

The success of the vacation was here measured with a single item, which can be considered as a limitation of the study. It is acknowledged that the use of multi-item measures is highly recommended in marketing research (Churchill, 1979), yet recent research (Berqvist & Rossiter, 2007) also suggests that single-item marketing construct variables can achieve equal predictive validity to multi-item measures.

4. Results

In PCA, variables with loadings greater than 0.50 were included, and all components with an eigenvalue greater than one were retained in the solution. As a result, six clear components were identified and named according to their content (Table 2). Together, these components accounted for 62% of explained variance. To assess reliability Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the variables retained in each component and all components were considered acceptable as coefficients exceeded 0.60.

Table 2. Components of a package tour: Principal component analysis

Components	Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained %	Alpha
Tour operator's destination services		3.698	14.792	0.855
Tour leader service	0.795			
Destination information (tour leaders)	0.779			
Availability of tour leaders	0.765			
Holiday information folder	0.686			
Excursion supply	0.589			
Reception and transfer	0.560			
Return day arrangements and transfer	0.521			
Flight services		2.799	11.196	0.804
In-flight catering to destination	0.847			
In-flight catering from destination	0.846			
In-flight service from destination	0.626			
In-flight service to destination	0.615			
Traveling comfort	0.547			
Environment		2.743	10.972	0.823
General state of environment	0.830			
Waste management	0.830			
Beaches and swimming conditions	0.732			
Environmental activities of hotel	0.673			
Accommodation services		2.344	9.376	0.774
Cleanliness of accommodation	0.761			
Accommodation service (staff)	0.730			
Accuracy of hotel description	0.671			
Location of accommodation	0.514			
Pre-tour services		2.081	8.323	0.758
Information accuracy of salesperson	0.824			
Booking service	0.761			
Information accuracy of brochure	0.624			
Airport services		1.842	7.368	0.660
Check-in (outbound)	0.633			
Check-in (inbound)	0.712			

Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of sampling Adequacy = 0.914
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 155948.036; $p < 0.001$

The first component, “Destination services”, clearly emphasized the tour operator’s services in the vacation destination, and “Flight services” described the services during the flight. The third component, “Environment”, had an emphasis on issues concerning the state of the environment in the destination, while “Accommodation services” consisted of features related to the hotel, e.g. staff and cleanliness. The fifth component, “Pre-tour services”, focused on booking and accuracy of information provided by the salesperson and brochure, and finally “Airport services” included check-in services at the airport both in the tourists’ home region and the vacation destination.

Six new variables were created from the component points, and named according to the components. All variables had $n=15057$, a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1.00. These variables were analyzed in relation to the dependent variable “the success of the vacation”, the mean of which was 4.40, standard deviation 0.65, and $n=14981$. A multiple OLS-regression was chosen as a method. The unstandardized (B) and standardized coefficients (β) of the regression equations and semipartial squared correlation (sr_i^2) were calculated and are presented in Table 3 along with the descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables and correlations.

Table 3. Success of a vacation experience: adjusted main effect regression model

	Succ	Dest	Flight	Envir	Hotel	Pre-tour	Airp	B	β	sr_i^2
Dest	0.35							0.23***	0.35	0.13
Flight	0.11	0.00						0.07***	0.11	0.01
Envir	0.19	0.00	0.00					0.13***	0.19	0.04
Hotel	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.00				0.21***	0.31	0.10
Pre-tour	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			0.15***	0.23	0.05
Airp	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.06***	0.10	0.01
							Intercept	4.40***		
Means	4.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		$R=0.58***$	
Std. Dev.	0.65	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		$Adj. R^2=0.34$	

Note: *** $p<0.001$

The results of the regression model (n=14981) showed that R for regression was significantly different from zero ($F=1259.6$; $df=6$; $p<0.001$). All regression coefficients statistically differed significantly from zero, and contributed significantly to the prediction of perceived success of the vacation experience. Since independent variables were not correlated with each other, the variables did not jointly contribute to R^2 but had only unique effects. Therefore, R^2 had the same value as adjusted R^2 . Semipartial squared correlation (sr^2) was chosen as the measurement of an effect size, indicating the amount by which R^2 would be reduced if an independent variable was omitted from the equation.

Together, these six components explained 34% of the variance in the perceived success of the vacation experience (Fig. 2). The components that explained the success of the vacation most, based on semipartial squared correlations, were the destination services (13%) and the accommodation services (10%). The pre-tour services explained 5%, and the environmental issues 4%, of the variance. The flight services (1%) and the airport services (1%) explained the variance the least.

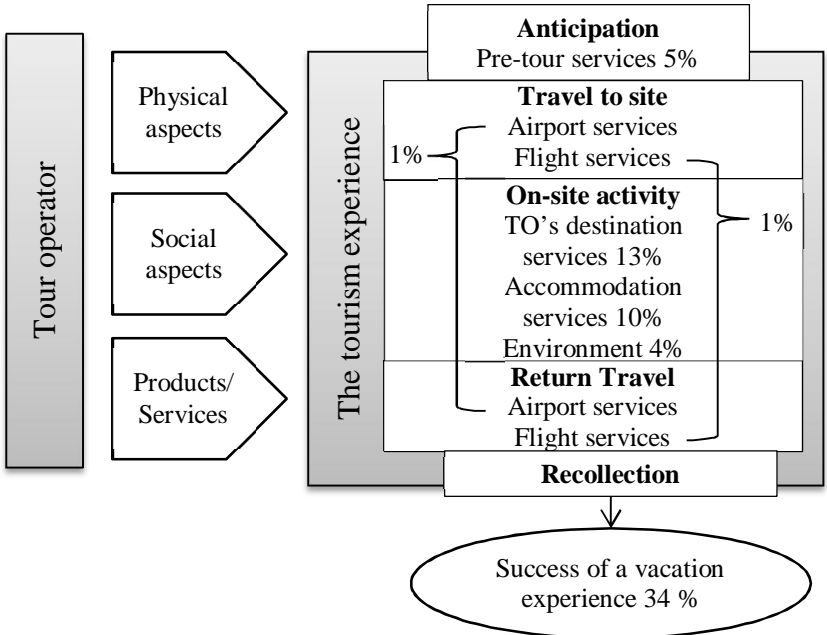


Figure 2. Effects of package tour components on the success of a vacation experience.

According to this study these six components of a package tour had a limited impact on the success of the package tourism experience. A total of 66% of variance in success of the vacation was left unexplained, which implies that a package tourism experience is composed of many elements, irrespective of the tourism product or the tour operator.

5. Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how satisfaction with the different elements of a package tour affects the success of a vacation experience. A package tour product was found to consist of at least the following components: tour operator's destination services, flight services, environment, accommodation services, pre-tour services and airport services. From these components, the tour operator's services at the destination and the accommodation services were the most important individual factors in explaining the success of a vacation experience. Also, the tour operator's pre-tour services and environmental issues seemed to be essential, but the analysis suggested that flight and airport services were the least important in explaining the success of a package tourism experience.

This study strengthened the idea that package tourism experiences are hybrid experiences that take place in phases and that satisfaction with different modules of a package tour affects the success of a vacation experience (c.f. Neal & Gursoy, 2008). The main contribution, however, was that the role of a tour operator in the creation of a successful package tourism experience is limited.

Walls et al. (2010) requested more research on whether different experience factors carry equal weight in experience formation. This study proposed that in terms of geographical settings (cf. Leiper, 1979) and phases of an experience, the modules taking place in the tourist destination region (on-site activity) are far more important than services within the tourist generating region or transit routes. The tourists purchased package tourism products for the sake of the destination, where the actual experiences would take place. Furthermore, the

different components of a package tour product were not equally important for the success of a vacation experience. Therefore, in experience formation and resource allocation, tour operators' destination services and accommodation services should be emphasized. The flight and airport services, by contrast, did not seem to influence the success of a vacation experience to a great extent, which is somewhat contradictory to previous studies (e.g. Martín-Cejas, 2006).

Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael (2010), in turn, raised questions about whether satisfaction is an appropriate measure of experiences, and the level of importance of internal and external factors in influencing tourism experiences. In previous research, Wang et al. (2010) argued that satisfaction with the tour experience depends to a great extent on tour guiding and tour operator services. Instead of satisfaction with the experience, this study concentrated on the success of a vacation experience, the variance of which was only partly explained by satisfaction with the components of a package tour. Therefore, it is suggested that focusing on satisfaction and mere external factors might not be adequate to measure the success of tourism experiences. Satisfaction is a prerequisite of experienced value but not sufficient on its own. Even if a tourist is perfectly satisfied with the tourism product and the destination, the vacation experience might still end up being unsuccessful. The experienced value seems to be more multidimensional construct than satisfaction and, therefore, future research should further examine the relationship of satisfaction and value in experience evaluation.

According to this study, the success of a vacation experience is, beside the tourism experience product, a result of various other factors and actors. These might be other services, e.g. restaurants or shopping facilities, which in some studies (e.g. Wang et al., 2000; Bowie & Chang, 2005) have been included in the package tour itself. In addition, the success of a vacation might often be removed from the product, and instead related to the traveler and the local population (Nickerson, 2006), or to something as unpredictable as the weather (Gómez

Martin, 2005). Additionally, an interesting aspect of tourism experiences is the degree of intimacy proposed by Trauer and Ryan (2005, p. 490) who stated that vacations are indeed commercial products, but what perhaps is really being purchased is time with significant others. In any case, it is clear that research that combines the elements of the influential realm (physical and social aspects, products/services) with the elements of the personal realm (knowledge, memory, perception, emotion, and self-identity) is needed in order to reveal what tourism experiences are really constructed from.

It should be further noted that another limitation for this study is that the data was collected in 2005, after which some major changes have taken place. Most significantly, the Internet has dramatically changed the market conditions of tourism organizations by supporting interactivity, and reengineering the process of developing, managing, and marketing tourism products and destinations (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The ever-increasing use of information and communication technologies impacts every phase of the experience, and thus research combining ICT and tourism experiences should be included in future research agendas.

6. Managerial implications

This study also provided some interesting managerial implications. It is essential for the package tourism industry to acknowledge that instead of passive agents reacting to stimuli, consumers are active producers of their own experiences (c.f. Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel 2002). Even though tour operators offer opportunities for experiences, and try to manage these events as well as possible, in the end the success of a vacation experience results from various elements, many of which are irrespective of the tour operator.

This, however, does not mean that tour operators cannot influence the success of vacation experiences. On the contrary, it is essential to strive for managing and controlling every service encounter in order to ensure the best possible prerequisites for experiences. It is, however, important for tour operators to understand that successful vacation experiences do

not necessarily emerge from satisfaction with the components of the package tour. Instead, the services of the tour operator should be viewed as circumstances that enable the experience formation.

Destination services form the most essential component of a package tour. As the tour leaders are to a large extent responsible for these destination services, tour operators should pay particular attention to the professional skills and attitudes of their employees (c.f. Heung 2008). It is also important that tour leaders see themselves as experience enablers, whose task is not to impose ready-made experiences, but instead to concentrate on consumers and empower them to experience whatever it is that they came to experience for.

Besides their own service processes, tour operators are at least partly responsible for the performance of their partners, including hotels and airline carriers. According to this study, it seems that the partners who are especially important are those who operate within the tourism destination, e.g. hotels and local agents. In contrast, the role of the partners related to flight and airport services appears to be more marginal.

Tour operators' customer satisfaction questionnaires and methods of analysis have previously been criticized. For example Wang et al. (2007) stated that the managerial effectiveness of customer service questionnaires is not as good as it should be. This study implied that satisfaction with certain services of the tour operator might still not reveal much about the success of a vacation experience. However, tour operators possess enormous amounts of information on their customers' vacation experiences. Ideally, cooperation between tour operators and academics could lead to both enhanced understanding of tourism experiences and improvements of the research methods and usage of customer satisfaction information (see Morgan, Anderson, & Mittal, 2005) within tour-operating businesses and tourism destinations.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge Antero Kaleva, Suntours Ltd, for cooperation; and Suzanne Collins, University of Turku, for language editing.

References

- Alegre, J., Cladera, M., & Sard, M. (2012). The evolution of British package holiday prices in the Balearic Islands 2000–2008. *Tourism Economics*, 18 (1), 59–75.
- Andriotis, K., Agiomirgianakis, G., & Mihiotis, A. (2008). Measuring tourist satisfaction: A factor-cluster segmentation approach. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 14 (3), 221–235.
- Bastakis, C., Buhalis, D., & Butler, R. (2004). The perception of small and medium sized tourism accommodation providers on the impacts of the tour operators' power in Eastern Mediterranean. *Tourism Management*, 25 (2), 151–170.
- Bergkvist, L., & Rossiter, J. R. (2007). The predictive validity of multiple-item versus single-item measures of the same constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44 (2), 175–184. doi: 10.1509/jmkr.44.2.175
- Berry, L.L., Carbone, L.P., & Haeckel, S.H. (2002). Managing the total customer experience. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 43 (3), 85–89.
- Bowen, D. (2001). Antecedents of consumer satisfaction and dis-satisfaction (CS/D) on long-haul inclusive tours: A reality check on theoretical considerations. *Tourism Management*, 22 (1), 49–61.
- Bowen, D. (2002). Research through participant observation in tourism: A creative solution to the measurement of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) among tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, 41 (August), 4–14.
- Bowie, D., & Chang, J.C. (2005). Tourist satisfaction: A view from a mixed international guided package tour. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 11 (4), 303–322.

- Bramwell, B. (2004). Mass tourism, diversification and sustainability in Southern Europe's coastal regions. In B. Bramwell (Ed.), *Coastal mass tourism. Diversification and sustainable development in Southern Europe* (pp. 1–31). Clevedon: Channel View.
- Budeanu, A. (2005). Impacts and responsibilities for sustainable tourism: a tour operator's perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 13, 89–97.
- Buhalis, D., & Laws, E. (2001). *Tourism distribution channels: practices, issues and transformations*. London: Continuum.
- Buhalis, D., & Law, R. (2008). Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet: The state of eTourism research. *Tourism Management*, 29 (4), 609–623.
- Campo, S., & Yagüe, M.J. (2008). Tourist loyalty to tour operator: Effects of price promotions and tourist effort. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46 (3), 318–326.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2003). Revisiting consumption experience: A more humble but complete view of the concept. *Marketing Theory*, 3 (2), 267–286.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2007). Consuming experiences: An introduction. In A. Carù, & B. Cova (Eds.), *Consuming experience* (pp. 3–16). London: Routledge.
- Casarin, F. (2001). Tourism distribution channels in Europe: A comparative study. In D. Buhalis, & E. Laws (Eds.), *Tourism distribution channels: practices, issues and transformations* (pp. 137–150). London: Continuum.
- Chang, J-C. (2009). Taiwanese tourists' perceptions of service quality on outbound guided package tours: A qualitative examination of the SERVAQUAL dimensions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15 (2), 165–178.
- Chen, W-Y., & Hsu, C-Y. (2012). Assessing travel business partners using the critical incident technique and the analytic hierarchy process. *Tourism Economics*, 18 (2), 295–310.

- Cheyne, J., Downes, M., & Legg, S. (2006). Travel agent vs internet: What influences travel consumer choices? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 12 (1), 41–57.
- Churchill, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16 (1), 64–73.
- Council Directive 90/314/EEC (1990). *Council Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990 on package travel, package holidays and package tours*, Available at <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31990L0314:EN:NOT>
- Crompton, J. L., & MacKay, K. J. (1989). Users' perceptions of the relative importance of service quality dimensions in selected public recreation programs. *Leisure Sciences*, 11 (4), 367–375.
- Cronin, J., & Taylor, S. (1994). SERVPERF versus SERVQUAL: Reconciling performance based and perception-minus-expectations measurement of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (1), 125–31.
- Davies, B., & Downward, P. (2007). Exploring price and non-price decision making in the UK package tour industry: Insights from small-scale travel agents and tour operators. *Tourism Management*, 28 (5), 1236–1261.
- Edvardsson, B. (1997). Quality in new service development: Key concepts and a frame of reference. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 52, 31–46.
- Enoch, Y. (1996). Contents of tour packages: A cross-cultural comparison. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23 (3), 599–616.
- Gallarza, M. G., & Gil, I. (2008). The concept of value and its dimensions: A tool for analysing tourism experiences. *Tourism Review*, 63 (3), 4–20.
- Gallarza, M. G., & Gil Saura, I. (2006). Value dimensions, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty: An investigation of university students' travel behaviour. *Tourism Management*, 27 (3), 437–452.

- Geva, A., & Goldman, A. (1991). Satisfaction measurement in guided tours. *Annals of Tourism Research, 18* (2), 177–185.
- Gómez Martín, M. B. (2005). Weather, climate and tourism: A geographical perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research, 32* (3), 571–591.
- Grönroos, C. (2000). *Service management and marketing: a customer relationship management approach*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., & Anderson, R. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis (6th edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hanefors, M., & Mossberg Larsson, L. (1999). Package tourism and customer loyalties. In A. Pizam, & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.), *Consumer Behaviour in Travel and Tourism* (pp.185–203). Binghamton NY: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Heung, V. C. S. (2008). Effects of tour leader's service quality on agency's reputation and customers' word-of-mouth. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 14* (4), 305–315.
- Holbrook, M. B. (1999). *Consumer value: A framework for analysis and research*. London: Routledge.
- Hosany, S., & Gilbert, D. (2010). Measuring tourists' emotional experiences toward hedonic holiday destinations. *Journal of Travel Research, 49* (4), 513–526.
- Huang, S., Hsu, C. H. C., & Chan, A. (2010). Tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction: A study of the package tours in Shanghai. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism, 34* (1), 3–33.
- Hudson, S., Hudson, P., & Miller, G.A. (2004). The measurement of service quality in the tour operating sector: A methodological comparison. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*, 305–312.
- Hudson, S. & Shephard, G. (1998). Measuring service quality at tourist destinations: An application of importance-performance analysis to an alpine ski resort. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 7* (3), 61–77.

- Jennings, G. (2010). Research process for evaluating quality experiences: Reflections from the “experiences” field. In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi, & J.R.B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives* (pp. 81–98). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Jin, L., He, Y., & Song, H. (2012). Service customization: To upgrade or to downgrade? An investigation of how option framing affects tourists’ choice of package-tour services. *Tourism Management*, 33 (2), 266–275.
- Komppula, R. (2005). Pursuing customer value in tourism: A rural tourism case-study. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*, 3 (2), 83–104.
- Komppula, R. (2006). Developing the quality of tourist experience product in the case of nature-based activity services. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 6 (2), 136–149.
- Komppula, R., & Gartner, W. C. (2013) Hunting as a travel experience: An auto-ethnographic study of hunting tourism in Finland and the USA. *Tourism Management*, 35 (1), 168–180.
- Koutoulas, D., Tsartas, P., Papatheodorou, A., & Prountzou, E. (2009). Understanding the tour operators’ point of view for effectively marketing a tourist destination: The case of Athens. *Tourism Today*, 9, 65–77.
- Laws, E. (1997). *Managing packaged tourism*. London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Lee, H-J., Wilkins, H., & Lee, Y-S. (2011). Feeling “protected” in mass organized group tours: A South Korean case. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, 11 (2), 131–159.
- Leiper, N. (1979). The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6 (4), 390–407.

- Martín-Cejas, R. R. (2006). Tourism service quality begins at the airport. *Tourism Management, 27* (5), 874–877.
- Martilla, J. A. & James, J. C. (1977). Importance-performance analysis. *Journal of Marketing, 41* (1), 13–17.
- Morgan, M., Lugosi, P., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2010). Introduction. In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi, & J. R. B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives* (pp. xv–xxii). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Morgan, N. A., Anderson, E. W., & Mittal, V. (2005). Understanding firm's customer satisfaction information usage. *Journal of Marketing, 69* (3), 131–151.
- Mossberg Larsson, L. (1995). Tour leaders and their importance in charter tours. *Tourism Management, 16* (6), 437–445.
- Mossberg, L. (2007). A marketing approach to tourist experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 7* (1), 59–74.
- Neal, J. D., & Gursoy, D. (2008). A multifaceted analysis of tourism satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research, 47* (1), 53–62.
- Nickerson, P. (2006). Some reflections on quality tourism experiences. In G. Jennings, & N. Nickerson (Eds.), *Quality tourism experiences* (pp. 227–235). Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., & Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications. *Journal of Travel Research, 46* (2), 119–132.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research, 17* (4), 460–469.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Value as excellence in the consumption experience. In M.B. Holbrook (Ed.), *Consumer value: A framework for analysis and research* (pp. 45–62). London: Routledge.

- Orsingher, C., & Marzocchi, G. L. (2003). Hierarchical representation of satisfactory consumer service experience. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 14* (2), 200–216.
- Palmer, A. (2010) Customer experience management: A critical review of an emerging idea. *Journal of Services Marketing, 24* (3), 196–208.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing, 49* (4), 41–50.
- Pine, J. B., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre & every business a stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Pizam, A. (2010). Creating memorable experiences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 29* (3), 343.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). *The future of competition. Co-creating unique value with customers*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Quang, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: an illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management, 25* (3), 297–305.
- Quinlan Cutler, S., & Carmichael, B. A. (2010). The dimensions of the tourist experience. In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi, & J. R. B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives* (pp. 3–26). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Quiroga, I. (1990). Characteristics of package tours in Europe. *Annals of Tourism Research, 17* (2), 185–207.
- Rewtrakunphaiboon, W., & Oppewal, H. (2008). Effects of package holiday information presentation on destination choice. *Journal of Travel Research, 47* (2), 127–136.
- Roper, A. (2005). Marketing standardisation: tour operators in the Nordic region. *European Journal of Marketing, 39* (5/6), 514–527.
- Rosselló, J., & Riera, A. (2012) Pricing European package tours: the impact of new distribution channels and low-cost airlines. *Tourism Economics, 18* (2), 265–279.

- Ryan, C. (2002). *The tourist experience (2nd edition)*. London: Continuum.
- Sánchez-Fernández, R., Ángeles Iniesta-Bonillo, M., & Holbrook, M. B. (2009). The conceptualisation and measurement of consumer value in services. *International Journal of Market Research*, 51 (1), 93–113.
- Sánchez, J., Callarisa, L., Rodríguez, R. M., & Moliner, M. A. (2006). Perceived value of the purchase of a tourism product. *Tourism Management*, 27 (3), 394–409.
- Schmitt, B. H. (1999). *Experiential marketing: How to get customers to sense, feel, think, act, and relate to your company and brands*. New York: The Free Press.
- Schmitt, B. H. (2003). *Customer experience management: A revolutionary approach to connecting with your customers*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Selänniemi, T. (1996). *Matka ikuiseen kesään - kulttuuriantropologinen näkökulma suomalaisten etelänmatkailuun*. [A journey to the eternal summer: the anthropology of Finnish sunlust tourism]. Helsinki: SKS.
- Shaw, G., & Williams, A. (2004). *Tourism and tourism spaces*. London: Sage.
- Sheldon, P. J., & Mak, J. (1987). The demand for package tours: A mode choice model. *Journal of Travel Research*, 25 (3), 13–17.
- Smith, V. L. (1977). *Anthropology of tourism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Statistics Finland (2010). *Finnish Travel Survey 2010*.
- Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2007). *Consumer behaviour in tourism (2nd edition)*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Trauer, B., & Ryan, C. (2005). Destination image, romance and place experience: An application of intimacy theory in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 26 (4), 481–491.

- Trunfio, M., Petruzellis, L., & Nigro, C. (2006). Tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy: Exploiting niche markets to increase international competitiveness. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18 (5), 426–438.
- Tung, V. W. S., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2011). Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38 (4), 1367–1386.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 86 (1), 1–17.
- Walls, A., Okumus, F., Wang, Y. C., & Kwun, D. (2011). An epistemological view of consumer experiences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30 (1), 10–21.
- Wang, K-C., Hsieh, A-T., Chou, S-H., & Lin, Y-S. (2007). GPTCCC: An instrument for measuring group package tour service. *Tourism Management*, 28 (2), 361–376.
- Wang, K-C., Hsieh, A-T., & Huan, T-C. (2000). Critical service features in group package tour: An exploratory research. *Tourism Management*, 21 (2), 177–189.
- Wang, K-C., Jao, P-C., Chan, H-C., & Chung, C-H. (2010). Group package tour leader's intrinsic risk. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37 (1), 154–179.
- Wickens, E. (2002). The sacred and the profane. A tourist typology. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (3), 834–851.
- Wong, J-Y., & Lee, W-H. (2012) Leadership through service: An exploratory study of the leadership styles of tour leaders. *Tourism Management*, 33 (5), 1112–1121.
- Wong, J-Y., & Wang, C-H. (2009). Emotional labor of the tour leaders: An exploratory study. *Tourism Management*, 30 (2), 249–259.
- Woodruff, R.B. (1997). Customer value: The next source for competitive advantage. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25 (2), 139–153.
- Yuksel, A. (2001). Managing customer satisfaction and retention: A case of tourist destinations, Turkey. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 7 (2), 153–168.

Zhang, H., & Chow, I. (2004). Application of importance-performance model in tour guides' performance: evidence from mainland Chinese outbound visitors in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 25 (1), 81–91.

Appendix 1. Attribute comparison

Attributes of this study	Relevant attributes used in similar studies
<p>Pre-trip services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booking service • Information accuracy of salesperson • Information accuracy of brochure 	<p>Hudson and Shephard, (1998) Information received before travelling; Accuracy of brochure</p> <p>Hudson et al., (2004) Waiting to go; Brochure</p> <p>Neal and Gursoy, (2008) Service quality of travel and tourism professionals (e.g. travel agents, ticket agents, hotel reservation clerks); Problem-free travel and accommodation arrangements (e.g. travel agents were knowledgeable, I was not put on hold for long periods of time)</p>
<p>Tour operator's destination services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception and transfer • Destination information (tour leaders) • Vacation information folder • Availability of tour leaders • Tour leader service • Excursion supply • Return day arrangements and transfer 	<p>Hudson and Shephard, (1998) Transport to resort; Knowledgeable staff; Informative staff; Accessible staff; Guiding services; Friendly staff; Efficient staff</p> <p>Hudson et al., (2004) Meeting the representative; Transfer to accommodation; Arrival at the accommodation; Resort activities; Departure; Transfer to the airport</p> <p>Neal and Gursoy, (2008) Comprehensive and of high quality tourist services (e.g. regarding activities, tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels); Services made the trip a richer experience; Problem-free tourist services (e.g. the hotel room reserved was available at the check-in-time, the food was acceptable)</p> <p>Wang et al., (2007) <i>Tour leader:</i> Presentation ability; Sense of responsibility; Friendliness; Interpretive ability; Professional ability; Coordination ability; Descriptions of optional tours</p>
<p>Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation service (staff) • Cleanliness of accommodation • Accuracy of hotel description • Location of accommodation 	<p>Hudson and Shephard, (1998) Quality of accommodation; Quality of staff; Information of accommodation; Structure of accommodation; Views; Atmosphere; Accessibility</p> <p>Hudson et al., (2004) Accommodation</p> <p>Neal and Gursoy, (2008) Problem-free tourist services (e.g. the hotel room reserved was available at the check-in-time, the food was acceptable)</p> <p>Andriotis et al., (2008) Quality standards of accommodation; Cleanliness of accommodation; Level of hygiene and sanitation</p> <p>Wang et al., (2007) Hotel arrangement; Good facilities; Sanitary environment; Comfortable environment</p>
<p>Environmental issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General state of environment • Beaches and swimming conditions • Waste management • Environmental activities of hotel 	<p>Andriotis et al., (2008) Environmental quality; Attractiveness of natural environment; Cleanliness of beaches and sea;</p>
<p>Flight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in (outbound) • Check-in (inbound) • In-flight catering • In-flight catering (return) • In-flight service • In-flight service (return) • Traveling comfort 	<p>Neal and Gursoy, (2008) Quality of services (e.g. flight attendants, cabin stewards, bus drivers, ticket agents); Problem-free travels (e.g. the plane seats were as reserved and comparable, we returned on time)</p> <p>Andriotis et al., (2008) Speed of check in and check-out at the destination airport</p>