

QUALITY OF CRUISE EXPERIENCE: ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

This article evaluates a conceptual model, drawn from the literature, of the quality of cruise experience based on hypothesised relationships between eight components; namely, employees, guests, service setting, and service quality as antecedents of cruise experiences, and emotions and their impact on satisfaction and future behaviour (consequences). Hypothesised relationships were further tested on the sample of 306 guests cruising on a contemporary cruise ship. The structural equation modelling was applied to verify the conceptual model and the results confirmed that employees, guests, service setting, and service quality are the antecedents of cruise experience and emotions; however, only emotions positively influenced satisfaction and future behaviour. The findings have valuable practical and theoretical contributions to the fast growing cruise tourism industry.

Key words: cruise experience, service quality, satisfaction, cruise tourism.

КВАЛИТЕТ КРУЗИНГ ИСКУСТВА: ДЕТЕРМИНАНТЕ И ПОСЛЕДИЦЕ

Апстракт

Овај чланак за предмет истраживања има процену на литератури заснованог концептуалног модела квалитета крузинг искуства и претпостављених односа између осам компонената: запослени, гости, услужна средина, квалитет услуге, као детерминанте крузинг искуства и доживљених емоција, и њиховог утицаја на целокупно задовољство и будуће понашање туриста, као последица крузинг искуства. Претпостављени односи тестирани су на узорку од 306 гостију који су боравили на савременом крузеру. Структурално моделирање употребљено је у циљу тестирања концептуалног модела и резултати су потврдили да су запослени, гости, услужна средина и квалитет услуге детерминанте крузинг искуства и доживљених емоција, док само доживљене емоције имају позитиван утицај на целокупно задовољство и будуће понашање. Резултати овог истраживања доприносе на практичан и теоретски начин развоју крузинг туризма.

Кључне речи: крузинг искуство, квалитет услуге, задовољство, крузинг туризам.

INTRODUCTION

People yearn for quality and emotionally-charged experiences. Therefore, it is not surprising that romanticised experiences arising from maritime travel have always been *pixie dust* that shrouded the riddle of the meteoric success of cruise tourism. During the period from 1990 to 2007, cruise tourism recorded extraordinary growth of 7.4% per annum (Brida, Scuderi, & Seijas, 2014). However, from 2010 to 2016, cruise tourism development slowed down significantly and currently achieves an average annual growth rate of 4.6% (Cruise Line International Association [CLIA], 2016, p. 7). Cruise tourism still enjoys the favour of the market, since demand is higher than available offerings and the principle “If you build it, they will come” (Robinson, 1989) brings significant economic benefits to cruise companies. Changes that are reflected through the transformation of the service economy to the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), as well as the noticeable slowdown in growth of cruise tourism (CLIA, 2016), require the attention of scientific researchers, tourist destinations (visited by cruise ships on their cruises), and the cruise industry as a whole.

This study’s aim is to explore in a holistic way the nature of the quality of the cruise experience, looking at its antecedents and consequences. The theory of management of the tourist experience, which is increasingly attracting the attention of scientific researchers, is a relatively young field that was formed at the beginning of the new millennium. Although scientific literature has seen an increased interest in the phenomenon of cruise tourism, as well as the concept of the tourist experience, our insight into the quality of the cruise experience and its antecedents and consequences is limited and this aspect has received insufficient consideration. Previously, researchers (Ahola, Salovuori, & Lehtonen, 2015; Brownell, 2014; Cashman, 2014; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Weaver, 2011) that have studied the cruise experience did so without any analysis of the antecedents of cruise experiences. They also very rarely included an analysis of the consequences of cruise experience.

The results obtained from this study will enhance current theory by identifying the effects of specific components; namely, employees, guests, service setting, and service quality as antecedents of the quality of cruise experience, and the consequential effects of emotions on satisfaction and future behaviour. It is the author’s hope that this study will not only fill the academic gaps of general knowledge when it comes to understanding the nature of cruise experiences, but also assist the cruise industry by demonstrating a management model for achieving high quality cruise experiences.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The concept and components of the quality of cruise experiences

Generally, the cruise experience, like any tourist experience, is a process that takes place through progressive stages: the anticipation of travel, travel planning, travelling to the destination, stay in the destination (main experience), return travel, and the memories of the experience (Clawson, 1963; Jennings, 1997; Killion, 1992). Therefore, the cruise experience can encompass the entire process, including the final outcome as well. Today, with increasing offers of tourist experiences, management of the quality of cruise experiences is an important topic in scientific and practical research. By observing the current changes in social relationships, technological achievements, the world economy, and the tourism sector, creating a quality cruise experience seems like a daunting task when you take into account that tourist experiences are subjective and differ from person to person (Jackson & Marsh, 1996). They are also complex, influenced by the level of engagement (Fave & Massimini, 2003), while versatile in meeting expected benefits (Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998). This nature of the quality of cruise experience is reminiscent of a jigsaw with many equally important, but different sized, parts which must fit together to create the total value of the tourist experience and thereby satisfy tourists. In the following subsections, the antecedents of the quality of the cruise experience (including the concept of *service theatre* and *service quality*), the mediators of quality of cruise experience (including *cruise experience* and *experienced emotions*), as well as the consequences of the quality of cruise experience (*satisfaction* and *future behaviour*) will be described.

The concept of service theatre (employees, guests and service setting). In the marketing literature, a significant number of authors have noted a theatrical nature with a hint of drama in various aspects of the service contact between users and service providers (Brownell, 2014; Goffman, 1959; Grove, Fisk, & Bitner, 1992; Grove, Fisk, & Dorsch, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; The Disney Institute & Kinni, 2011). The service itself has most commonly been described as a performance (Fisk, Grove, & Joby, 2014; Goffman, 1959; Grove et al., 1992; 1998; The Disney Institute & Kinni, 2011).

Grove et al. (1992), based on the observations of Goffman (1959), created and empirically tested an extensive framework that describes service contact as theatre. Their study provided a description of service drama which combines four key components of theatre: 1) actors – that is, service staff whose behaviour and attendance helps in determining the service; 2) the audience, who are the users of the service; 3) service setting/decor in which the service takes place; 4) the performance or the act of service (Grove et al., 1998).

Interestingly, all components of service theatre can be seen in the orchestration of cruise experience. Brownell (2014) investigated the relationship between employees and tourists on a cruise ship. Her research focused on the cruise experience resulting from the special relationship developed between tourists and service providers. The author interviewed tourists from six cruise ships and concluded that tourists interacting with service providers, while creating their own cruise experience, enacted one of the following roles: tourist as an expert, tourist as a manager, tourist as a friend, and tourist as a team member.

When looking at the role of service setting in creating the cruise experience, it is useful to recall the recent study by Ahola et al. (2015) who used social constructivism, which is the basis of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), in examining how human and non-human actors influence the creation of cruise experiences for the tourists. Ahola et al. (2015) noticed that emotions and experiences are an unexplored potential on which the cruise industry can develop its business strategies. The authors concluded that even seemingly insignificant actors can have an important impact on the cruise experience and suggested the use of the ANT approach when designing cruise ships to improve cruise experiences and loyalty of tourists. Having observed the aforementioned studies, the subsequent hypotheses were drawn to explore the concept of service theatre and its effect on service quality.

H1: Employees are positively connected to service quality.

H2: Guests are positively connected to service quality.

H3: Service setting is positively associated to service quality.

Service quality. In its simplest form, service can be described as subjective and intangible. This is why the Disney Company has created its own compass of service quality (The Disney Institute & Kinni, 2011, p. 19), which assists in not only delivering high quality service, but also in creating a platform on which the value of the tourist experience is co-created by interacting with tourists. A detailed analysis of Disney's compass of service quality outlines quality standards; namely, safety, courtesy, show, and efficiency (The Disney Institute & Kinni, 2011, p. 48).

Human beings are simultaneously fascinated and frightened by the sea (Tarlow, 2014, p. 142). This observation correlates with the findings of Brida, Pulina, Riaño, and Aguirre (2012) who noticed the importance of safety in cruise tourism by concluding that positive tourist perception of safety is an assurance of repeated visits.

The courtesy of employees is well portrayed by Inghilleri, Solomon, and Schulze (2010, p. 14) who argued that guest impressions are formed during their daily interactions with employees. Juan and Chen (2011) in their analyses of Taiwan's cruise market examined the effects on overall experience during the various stages of cruise experiences. Their study showed that during the stay at the destination, service provided by courteous cruise ship employees was most influential on the quality of the experience.

Yuksel and Yuksel (2008, p. 129) believe that efficiency is a common attribute in the context of service, as time spent in tourist facilities is of great importance for tourists, for the simple reason that tourists during their holidays are limited by time and want to use it in the most efficient manner. TNS (2011) in their exploration of awareness and cruise influencers noticed that time efficiently spent on the cruise ship played a major role in overall satisfaction of the cruise experience. In same study, the authors revealed that high quality entertainment and “show” had a positive effect on overall satisfaction. This is most likely because in organisations where show has been adopted as a quality standard, there is an interesting phenomenon where guests, as Fisk et al. (2014, p. 48) noted, get much more than what they see, because the guests are only presented with the “in front of the scene” part. Observing the importance of service quality on quality of cruise experience, we suggest the following hypotheses.

H4: The service quality is associated with cruise experience.

H5: The service quality is positively associated with emotions.

Cruise experience. The main business operation of the cruise industry is not in the transport sector or in the service sector of hospitality, but in the orchestrating experiences sector (Cashman, 2012, p. 8). Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 30) described how orchestrating experiences entails engaging the consumer, where guests can engage in several dimensions. The first dimension is the amount of guest participation, where *passive* participation is at one end of the spectrum in which consumers do not directly affect performance, while *active* participation is on the other end of the spectrum, where performance is directly affected by consumers who create the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 30). The second dimension describes connection, where at one end is *absorption*, when people are attending to something from a distance (entertainment and education), while on the other end is *immersion* (aesthetics and escapism), where the guest physically becomes part of the tourist performance (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 31). Hosany and Witham (2010) were the first authors to examine the cruise experience using the domains of experience economy (education, escapism, aesthetics, and entertainment), developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). Their results improved the theoretical conception of the tourist experience and confirmed that the cruise experience can be understood within the four dimensions of Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) experience economy.

Entertainment and education as dimensions of cruise experience can be best seen in practice on theme cruises; Weaver (2011) explored the phenomenon of theme cruises and their relation to the social concept of neotribalism. The author concluded that thematic cruises provided a cruise experience with a hint of modern and brilliant history, inspired by nostalgia. Nostalgia was the central idea used by Cashman (2014) when

he explained how the cruise industry produces surreal tourist experiences in which music as an aesthetic dimension plays a central role.

Finally, escapism was recognised by Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010) as an influential dimension of the cruise experience that has strong impact on the formation of satisfaction. Observing the impact of cruise experience on satisfaction, the following hypothesis is suggested.

H6: Cruise experience is positively linked to satisfaction.

Emotions experienced. Exceptional tourist experiences are characterised by emotional tension that arises from extraordinary events (Arnould & Price, 1993) in which such experiences ultimately provide tourists with strong emotional reactions in the form of surprise, pleasure, and enjoyment (Hanefors & Mossberg, 2003). In a study on experience in port of call, authors Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010) noticed that emotions experienced had the most influential effect on satisfaction with the cruise experience. Thus, the following hypothesis is formed.

H7: The emotions experienced are positively related to satisfaction.

Satisfaction of tourists. Like most things, satisfaction may vary between individuals based on pre-conceived expectations. We can consider, as claimed by Major and McLeay (2014, p. 234), that satisfaction affects the evaluation of the consumer experience, which can lead to loyalty. Any further discussion which does not take this attitude into consideration would be considered incomplete. Indeed, Brida et al. (2012) discovered that guests' satisfaction and loyalty towards a destination was directly impacted by satisfaction with the cruise experience. However, satisfaction with the cruise experience is not the end result, since exceptional satisfaction can also influence potential future recommendations (Petrick, 2004). With regard to such a delicate interrelation, the final hypothesis is as follows:

H8: Satisfaction is positively associated with guest's future behaviour.

Behavioural intention and loyalty of tourists (consumers). The impact of satisfaction on customers regarding their behavioural intention and loyalty has been explored by Buchanan and Gilles (1990) who reported that as consumers are more satisfied, they stay longer in interactions with the company, which is reflected in the level of retention. A retention rate of 80% means that consumers will be loyal over the next five years on average, whereas a rate of 90% increases the average loyalty to ten years. In tourism, the positive experiences of visitors, intention to come back to the same destination, and the positive effect of word-of-mouth recommendation are used to measure tourists' loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). TNS (2011) have reported that when choosing a cruise as a type of vacation, 32% of guests were influenced by positive word-of-mouth referrals and 82% of guests who were satisfied with their cruise experience are willing to have another cruise in the next three years.

METHOD

The Conceptual Model of the Quality of Cruise Experience

In this study, the conceptual model consists of exogenous variables, namely *employees*, *guests* and *service setting*, while the endogenous variables are *service quality*, *cruise experience*, *emotions*, *satisfaction* and *future behaviour* (Figure 1). We posit that the quality of cruise experience is the intermediary between the components of employees, guests, service setting, and the quality of service on the one hand (antecedents), and satisfaction and future behaviour on the other hand (consequences). Bearing in mind the adopted paradigms on which this research is based, the conceptual model of the quality of cruise experience combines the process of consistency (a post-positivist paradigm) with psycho-behavioural variables (*interpretivist* paradigm) in order to adequately explain how guests on cruise ships cognitively and emotionally assess the quality of cruise experience.

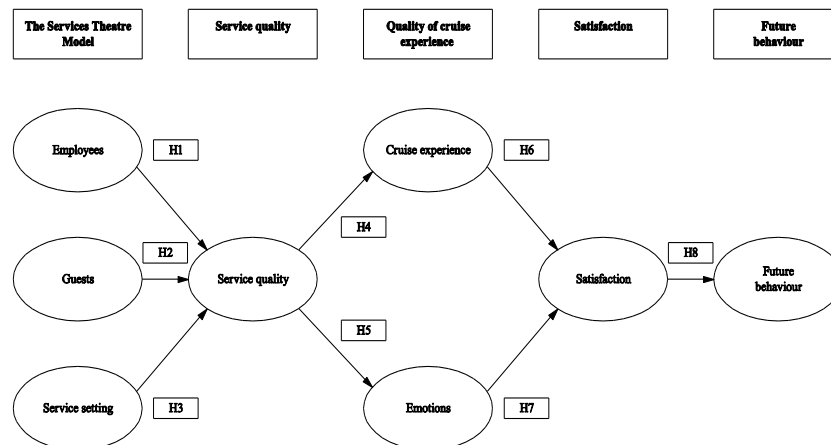


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the quality of cruise experience and hypotheses

Questionnaire Development

As there is currently no comprehensive empirically verified instrument for measuring the quality of cruise experience, the author developed a questionnaire based on *interpretivism*, grounded theory, and existing scientific literature. The questionnaire consisted of six parts. The sixth and the final part refer to the socio-demographic profile of respondents, while the first five parts were based on the following constructs: 1) model of *service theatre* with components: *employees*, *guests*, and *service setting*; 2) *service quality* with components of Disney's standards of service quality:

safety, courtesy, show, and efficiency; 3) the quality of cruise experience with components: *cruise experience* (the domains of experience economy: aesthetics, education, escapism, and entertainment) and *emotions*; 4) *satisfaction*; and 5) *future behaviour* of tourists(guests).

Some constructs were taken from existing instruments. For example, for the purposes of measuring *emotions*, the PAD scale of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) was used; the scale by Crosby and Stephens (1987) was used to measure *satisfaction*; the scale by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) was used to measure *future behaviour*. Instruments used to measure *service theatre* (with components: *employees*, *guests*, and *service setting*), *service quality* (with components: safety, courtesy, show, and efficiency) and *cruise experience* (with components: entertainment, education, aesthetics, and escapism) were specially developed based on existing scientific literature and on the basis of the multiphase approach developed by Churchill (1979). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) was measured for all components as an indicator of internal consistency and the results in Table 1 demonstrate acceptable reliability of all components.

Table 1. Results of Cronbach's coefficient alpha

Component	Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α)
Employees	0.802
Guests	0.700
Service setting	0.837
Service quality	0.928
Cruise experience	0.902
Emotions	0.756
Satisfaction	0.912
Future behaviour	0.889

Participants expressed their level of agreement with proposed statements on the Likert scale from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). Obtained data were processed using SPSS 21 and AMOS 21.

Sample Design and Data Collection

The collection of quantitative data took place from 28 May, 2016 to 17 September, 2016. Guest interviews were conducted during the last day of each cruise on the open decks of the Disney Magic cruise ship. The authors interviewed guests in an informal manner. Bearing in mind financial and time limitations, the technique of random sampling was an acceptable option. The total number of guests who were staying on the Disney Magic cruise ship during this period was 32,305. Due to the selection of a specific stage during the tourist experience (in the destination) and limited time to implement the questionnaire (last day of each cruise), the authors managed to collect 306 completed questionnaires.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of guests on the cruise ship include the total number of previous cruises on Disney cruise ships, gender, age, highest education level, place of residence, and whether they cruised with or without children (Table 2). What is interesting in this sample group is that it represents future socio-demographic characteristics of guests on cruise ships, since – as noted by CLIA (2016) –Millennials and Generation X are enjoying the cruise experience more than before.

Table 2. Sociodemographic profile of sample

Demographic variable	(n)	Valid (%)
Number of previous cruises with Disney Cruise Line		
1 time	82	26,8
2 - 3 times	126	41,2
≥4 times	98	32,0
Gender		
Male	110	35,9
Female	196	64,1
Age group		
20-29	29	9,5
30-40	131	42,8
41-50	102	33,3
51-60	31	10,1
60+	13	4,2
Highest education level		
High school (secondary school)	60	19,7
Associate degree	76	24,9
Bachelor's degree	126	41,4
Master's degree and Doctoral degrees	43	14,1
Place of residence		
North and Central America	198	64,7
Europe	96	31,4
Asia	12	3,9
Cruised with children ?		
Yes	144	47,1
No	162	52,9
(N=306)		

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

To assess the parameters of the conceptual model of the quality of cruise experience, AMOS v.21 computer software was used. Although the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks test showed that none of the variables were normally distributed, a Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimator was used for the estimation of parameters, since it is sufficiently resistant to deviations from the normal distribution that are not extreme

(Brown, 2015, p. 346). An alternative solution in AMOS would be the use of an asymptotically distribution-free estimator. However, the sample was not large enough, since the minimum required is 861 (based on the formula $n * (n + 1) / 2$) respondents in the sample. In the case of using the ML analysis with CFA, statistical tests are numerous; this study tested model fit using the following indices: Chi-square (χ^2), RMSEA, CMIN/df (χ^2/df), and CFI.

Structural Equation Modelling

The measurements of the model were evaluated on the basis of Chi-square (χ^2) test and RMSEA and its 90% confidence interval, CMIN/df, and CFI. The model is considered acceptable if the values of these indicators are within the following limits: χ^2 should be insignificant, i.e., $p > 0.05$; $RMSEA \leq 0.08$; 90% CI $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ (Browne & Cudeck, 1993); CMIN/DF between 1 and 3 (Kline, 2005); $CFI \geq 0.90$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The following values were obtained: $\chi^2 = 1793.23$, $p = 0.000$; $RMSEA = 0.068$, $LO\ 90 = 0.064$, $HI\ 90 = 0.072$; $CMIN/DF = 2.427$; $CFI = 0.886$.

On the basis of the obtained values, the general indicator χ^2 was statistically significant, suggesting that the model does not fit. However, with such a large number of degrees of freedom, χ^2 is not reliable and it is better to rely on the other indicators. RMSEA was below the limit that indicates a bad model and closer to the limit that indicates an excellent model (0.06). The same applies to the confidence interval of this indicator, which is well below the critical value of 0.08. This means that the model corresponds reasonably well to the data. CMIN/DF was within the limits that represent a good model, while the CFI was close to the lower limit of acceptability of the model. After re-specification of the model, local problem areas were not observed and therefore the model reproduces well the original matrix of variances–covariances and, therefore, is acceptable. Table 3 shows the hypothesised paths of the model of the quality of cruise experience. All hypothesised relationships are supported in the final model (figure 2) except for Hypothesis 6 (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the proposed model

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized coefficient	t	Result
H1	Employees ->Service quality	0.649	4.963	Supported
H2	Guests ->Service quality	0.172	2.746	Supported
H3	Service setting ->Service quality	0.620	7.586	Supported
H4	Service quality->Cruise experience	0.864	12.343	Supported
H5	Service quality->Emotions	0.835	10.866	Supported
H6	Cruise experience->Satisfaction	0.040	0.330	Not supported
H7	Emotions ->Satisfaction	0.895	6.559	Supported
H8	Satisfaction->Future behaviour	0.965	16.196	Supported

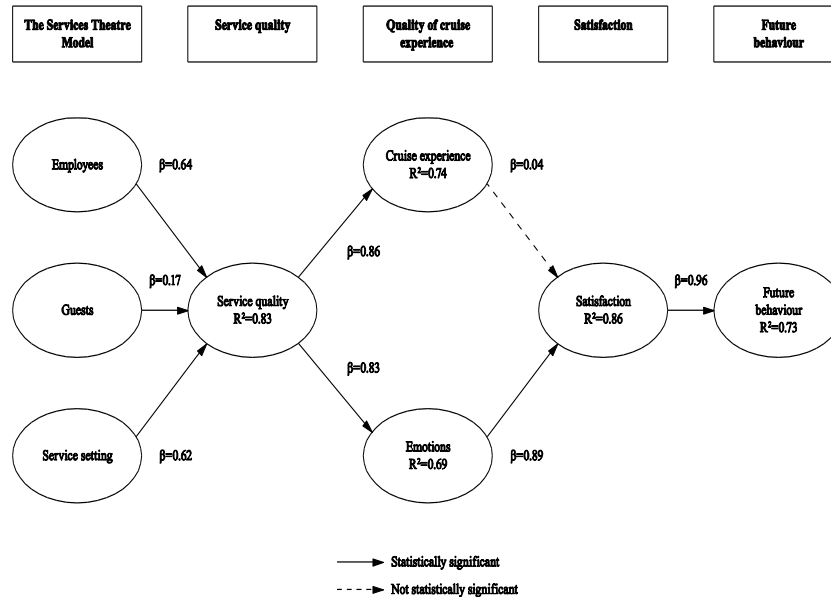


Figure 2. Results of the quality of cruise experience structural mode

Hypothesis 1 was supported as it demonstrated how socially and technically skilled employees are positively connected to service quality. Hypothesis 2 was not rejected due to the fact that it showed, through a service platform where multiple interactions take place that guests are positively connected to service quality. Hypothesis 3 suggested that a service setting is positively associated to service quality. This hypothesis was supported since it was confirmed that cruise companies are able to stage both novel (in ports of call) and familiar (inside cruise ship) environments. The cruise experience is a personal, highly-emotional, memorable event that is created on the cruise ship and visited ports of call during the multi-sensory high-quality service interactions between service providers and guests. Interestingly, while co-creating their cruise experience in active (education, and entertainment) and/or passive (escapism and aesthetics) experiences, guests are experiencing a wide range of emotions. Having said that, hypothesis 4 and 5, which predicted that service quality is associated with cruise experience and the emotions were supported. During the co-creation of their cruise experience, guests are physically and mentally separated from everyday life problems. They spend time in aesthetically pleasing surroundings where they are entertained while also gaining new knowledge. However, hypothesis 6, which suggested how cruise experience is positively linked to satisfaction, was rejected. Cruise experience is extraordinary event where aroused emotions can lead to the creation of an overall memorable experience and satisfaction. Having said that, hypothesis 7, that predicted how the experienced emotions are positively related to satisfaction, was not rejected.

A cruise ship can be seen as a service platform where experiences stimulate positive emotions that lead to satisfaction. Whereby the outcome of such interactions can lead to a guest's favourable future behaviour; such as positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat purchase. Finally, hypothesis 8, which proposed how satisfaction is positively associated with a guest's future behaviour, was supported.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this study was to understand the nature of the quality of cruise experience with a special emphasis on finding methodological procedures to test and measure its antecedents and its consequences.

Theoretical Implications

The nature of the quality of cruise experiences is a topic which has not been given much attention in scientific literature. On this basis, this study contributed to the quality of cruise experiences and development of a theory of the quality of cruise experiences. Academically, this empirical investigation of the nature of the quality of cruise experiences provides a holistic model for measuring the quality of cruise experience. Therefore, the conceptual model of the quality of cruise experiences demonstrated the positive impact of specific components (antecedents) on the quality of cruise experiences (intermediary-mediator) and partly its positive impact (Hypothesis 6 was not supported) on the satisfaction of tourists and their future behaviour (the consequences).

Managerial Implications

Since the research was conducted on a cruise ship, it can be argued that findings lend themselves towards further practical use. On this basis, we can, with certainty, say that the results of the research are of considerable managerial significance since the obtained data, research results, insights, and recommendations can be applied in practice.

Observing the components of the model of *service theatre*, it is of great importance for all managers on cruise ships to create a working atmosphere among employees where guests during their interactions with employees perceive employees as fun and professional individuals who are dedicated to their performance. Taking into consideration the influence of the guests on the quality of experience, the managers must adequately manage the flow of guests and, if they notice any unacceptable behaviour of some guests, point this out in a courteous and professional manner. Although managers of cruise ships are not able to influence the design and decor of their cruise ship, they do have a great impact on the maintenance of the service environment to enable it to communicate with guests in terms of the quality of service.

In terms of *service quality*, managers are expected to orchestrate the service scenario in such a way that exceeds guests' expectations. This requires the ability to deliver an excellent proposal for the quality of cruise experiences.

Indeed, managers can achieve quality cruise experiences by creating activities in which guests can: learn new things, satisfy their curiosity, enjoy a variety of aesthetic pleasures, gaze at visual objects, escape from everyday life and daily routines, lose themselves in time and space, have fun in organised activities, and enjoy the entertainment programme and shows. Provoking positive emotions that lead to overall satisfaction can be achieved by creating opportunities for guests to interact and experience a real-life adventure on cruises. This can be fostered by developing positive emotions such as happiness, arousal, excitement, and relaxation.

If the managers deliver *satisfaction* to their guests, they have the opportunity to enjoy benefits, such as positive word-of-mouth recommendations, where guests talk about their positive experiences to others and thus become ambassadors who promote this kind of vacation. This requires the ability to deliver, in a flawless manner, quality standards where: safety enhances the guest's sense of well-being; courtesy strengthens a pleasant atmosphere; visual appearance provides a pleasing frame to the service interaction and efficiency assists in exceeding guest's expectations.

In order to achieve the loyalty of the guests and their return to the cruise ships, managers are obliged to deliver a service that exceeds the expectations of the guests. So that guests, based on their own experience, will talk about their cruise vacation positively and warmly recommend the cruising experience to other people. However, in order to exceed the expectations of guests, a standard of their expectations must be established. Guests experience exceeding of their expectation only if they felt that they have received much more than what they paid for in terms of time and money spent. Of course, in order to achieve the loyalty for repeated purchasing of a cruise tourism product, in spite of the external influences, the value of a cruise experience must be perceived to be over-delivered.

The conceptual model of the quality of cruise experience proved to be quite good and, before any adaptation, it is necessary to test it on a more diversified population, including those who cruise with other cruise companies. In addition, it would be useful to test the model with different itineraries. It would also be useful to examine the model in another phase of the tourist experience.

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КВАЛИТЕТ КРУЗИНГ ИСКУСТВА: ДЕТЕРМИНАНТЕ И ПОСЛЕДИЦЕ

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Резиме

Циљ истраживања био је да се разуме природа квалитета крузинг искуства, са посебним освртом на изналажење методолошких поступака којима би се испитале и измериле његове детерминанте, као и његове последице. Посматрајући академски допринос истраживања, свакако се истиче емпиријско испитивање природе квалитета крузинг искуства, где се на један холистички начин приступило дескрипцији модела за мерење квалитета крузинг искуства. Према томе, можемо сматрати како је концептуални модел крузинг искуства, иако не у потпуности, ипак на врло добар начин представио и доказао позитиван утицај специфичних компонената (детерминаната) на квалитет крузинг искуства (посредник – медијатор); а затим делимично и његов позитивни утицај (хипотеза б није подржана) на целокупно задовољство туриста и њихово будуће понашање (последнице).

Пошто је истраживање спроведено на крузеру, може се сматрати како су у великој мери узети у обзир сви аспекти за даљу практичну примену. На основу тога, можемо, са великом сигурношћу, тврдити како су резултати истраживања од приличног менаџерског значаја пошто се добијени подаци, резултати истраживања, увиди и препоруке могу применити и у пракси.

Посматрајући компоненте модела услужног позоришта, од велике је важности за све менаџере на крузерима да створе радну атмосферу међу запосленима у којој гости током интеракције са запосленима перципирају запослене као забавне и професионалне индивидуе које су посвећене својој перформанси. Имајући у виду међусобни утицај гостију на квалитет услуге и доживљено искуство, пред менаџере се поставља задатак да на адекватан начин управљају протоком гостију и, уколико приметите било какво неприхватљиво понашање појединих гостију, да на исто укажу и исправе на љубазан и професионалан начин. Менаџери крузера нису у могућности да утичу на дизајн и декор крузера, тако да им само преостаје да одржавају услужну средину како би она комуницирала са гостима у погледу квалитета услуге.

У погледу квалитета услуге, од менаџера се очекује да оркестрирају услужни сценарио на такав начин да премаши очекивања гостију. Тако се долази у могућност да се испоручи изврстан предлог квалитетног крузинг искуства.

И уистину, менаџери могу постићи квалитет крузинг искуства формирањем активности у којима гости могу да: науче нове ствари, задовоље своју знатижељу, уживају у разним естетским задовољствима, посматрају визуелне магнете, по-

бегну од свакодневице и дневне рутине, изгубе се у времену и простору, забављају се у организованим активностима и уживају у забавном програму и шоуовима. Изазивање позитивних емоција које доводе до целокупног задовољства може се постићи развијањем позитивних емоција као што су: срећа, побуђеност, узбуђење, подетињеност и опуштеност.

Уколико менаџери испоруче задовољство својим гостима, долазе у прилику да уживају у наклоностима као што су позитивне усмене препоруке, где гости препричавају своја позитивна искуства другима и на тај начин постају амбасадори који промовишу овакав вид одмора. Ово захтева способности испоручивања стандарда квалитета услуге где: безбедност унапређује осећај благостања, љубазност појачава пријатну атмосферу, визуелни изглед уоквирује услужну интеракцију и ефикасност помаже у премашивању очекивања гостију.

У циљу постизања лојалности гостију и њиховог поновног доласка на крузере, дужност је менаџера да испоруче услугу која премашује очекивања гостију како би гости на основу сопственог искуства причали позитивне ствари о свом крстарењу и топло препоручили крузинг искуство другим људима. Међутим, да би се премашила очекивања гостију, морају се успоставити стандарди њихових очекивања. Гости доживљавају премашивање сопствених очекивања једино уколико сматрају да су добили далеко више него што су платили у смислу потрошеног новца и времена. Наравно, лојалност у смислу поновљене куповине производа крузинг туризма постиже се уколико се крузинг искуство доживљава као изузетно вредно искуство.

Модел квалитета крузинг искуства показао се веома добрим и, пре него што се крене у његову адаптацију, неопходно је да се модел тестира на што разноврснијој популацији, где би се укључили и гости који крстаре са другим крузинг компанијама. Поред тога, било би врло корисно тестирати модел и у условима различитих редова пловидбе. У крајњој линији, било би врло корисно испитати модел и у некој другој фази туристичког искуства.