# THE INFLUENCE OF DISSATISFIED TOURISTS' NON-BEHAVIORAL APPROACH ON OVERALL VISIT SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON MALAYSIAN DOMESTIC TOURISTS

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Citation: Patwary, A.K. & Omar, H. (2020). THE INFLUENCE OF DISSATISFIED TOURISTS' NON-BEHAVIORAL APPROACH ON OVERALL VISIT SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON MALAYSIAN DOMESTIC TOURISTS. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 32(4), 1388–1393. https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.32429-585

**Abstract:** Providing good quality of service is most basic attribute of the service industry, including tourism. Complaints by tourists actually provide opportunities for destination or business to recover from the service failures, and when the complaints are handled satisfactorily, destination or business may win tourists back. Therefore, this study aims to explore how complaint constraints influence on tourists' overall satisfaction level. In order to achieve the objectives, this study used a quantitative approach using PLS-SEM. This study revealed that overall tourists' satisfaction is influenced by limited time, unfamiliarity, limited communication, limited involvement, and positive holiday mood.

Key words: Tourists' Satisfaction, Complaint Constraints, Domestic Tourism, PLS-SEM, Tourism, Malaysia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourists do not expect any dissatisfied experiences during their visit as they pay good money and expect the same with experience. Tourists today demand a high quality of service, and their level of tolerance becomes very low when they experience low quality of products or poor services (Su and Bowen, 2001). According to Lam and Tang (2003), when the providers are not able to satisfy them, tourists might express their dissatisfaction by complaining. Thus, customer complaints are an inevitable part of the tourism industry. Nyer (2000) reveals that marketers are in agreement that tourists' complaints are defined as fruitful sources of information which will assist marketers in recognizing the origin of dissatisfaction. Those tourists are encouraged to make a complaint would contribute on the greater increase of customer satisfaction and product evaluation, in comparison with those consumers are not willing to make complain. Complaints by tourists provide opportunities for destination or business to recover from the service failures, and when the complaints are handled satisfactorily, destination or business may win tourists back. Ultimately this may encourage repeat, or even, loyal tourists (Ekiz and Au, 2011). On the other hand, when tourists choose not to make a complaint, destination, or business will not be able to make amendment or improvement and loses its competitiveness in the market (ibid, 2009). According to Hedrick et al. (2007), only a low per cent of dissatisfied tourists tends to complain about their disappointing experiences. This is supported by Best and Andreasen (1977), stated that less than 50% of the dissatisfied tourists directly complain about their problems to the service provider.

Houcutt, Mowen and Chakraborty (1997), further explained that while dissatisfaction occurs, even though tourists do not complain, sometimes they tend to come back to the same service provider or destination. The authors added that this situation, however, happens only if tourists do not have any other options in destination or hotel choice. In many instances, however, tourists would do the opposite. The study revealed that 96% of dissatisfied tourists are found to ignore that particular destination (Stephens and Gwinner, 1998). Only a small percentage of tourist make a complaint about their dissatisfying experience and approximately two-thirds of them do not make any complaint (Richins, 1982; Day and Ash, 1979). Albrecht and Zemke (1996) revealed that only 5% of dissatisfied tourists give complaints to the correspondent body. According to Furlong (1993), dissatisfied tourists usually choose not to complain about their negative experiences because their expectation is very low on getting positive feedback or satisfactory result.

The same sentiment was also given by Badghish, Stanton and Hu (2015). Thus, implying that making complaints is wasting tourists' time and effort (Day et al., 1981). However, the majority of dissatisfied tourists usually choose not to complain about their negative experiences (Christiansen and Snepenger, 2002; Cohen, 2004). Tourists' silence or not complaining could be more precarious than voicing their problems or sharing their negative experiences. Hence, understanding why tourists do not complain has become a crucial matter. Thus, it leaves a gap for the researcher to fill. Therefore, this study is conducted to understand the influence of complaint constraints on overall satisfaction among Malaysian tourists when dissatisfaction occurs with hotel services.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Tourists complaint constraints** 

## Limited time

Morello (2004) claimed that there are two categories of time: firstly, the clock time or objective time. Though Allaman et al. (2013) discussed the category of the time in their study is only clock time. According to Treisman (2013:2), the clock time can measure with definite terms, such as seconds, minutes and hours. The mental time or personal time is measured by people's preferences or their experiences in place of subjective measurement standards. People use the clock to manage the time, and that signifies the entire terms.

On the other hand, Knaap (1997) added, during the holiday, there must be a pre-determined time in terms of scheduling the activities during the tour, people are probable to miss track of their time. In this study, the concept of time used as the duration of time spent in a holiday destination. Previous literature of CCB explained that having not enough time or Limited Time is considered as one of the significant

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factors which can influence consumers' complaint behaviour (Gronhaug and Zaltman, 1981; Swanson and Kelly, 2001; TARP, 1999). According to Swanson and Kelly (2001), time limitation of tourists is an important aspect has effects to the service industry, on that place, the co-existence of consumer and service providers are generally needed. Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) mentioned that timeliness as an essential requirement to solve the problem. Time goes into consideration while dissatisfied consumers seek recovery through complaining.

#### Unfamiliarity

Soderlund (2002) defined the familiarity as the number of product-related involvements accumulated by the consumer. Day and Landon (1976, p.181) argued that "...the less knowledgeable [familiar in this instance] consumer will be less able to judge product performance and evaluate the goods and services as he consumes...also he will be unfamiliar with procedures for seeking redress and in registering complaints" (p.5). They added that geographical factors and ethnic factors could be probable reasons for discrepancy of customers' knowledge on that product (Day and Landon, 1976). In another way, the consumers may get more confidence in the familiar environment. Thus it helps in expressing their satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction clearly.

Soderlund (2002) explained that familiarity with the products can bring more ease in the process of purchasing and "provides the customer with a different frame of references for evaluations compared to a low level of familiarity" (p.863). The author further addressed that the tourists with high familiarity intend more on accepting the extreme; it could be high and low-performance functions, even others too. The possible meaning of 'low-performance event' is the high level of service failures (Soderlund, 2002).

#### **Limited communication**

Communication is an important element of human nature and particularly significant for individuals' regular social interaction. The definition of communication is given by Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) as "...The transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver via a medium, or channel, of transmission" (p.293). Auditory is considered as a medium to convey the communication, these are singing or speaking, or through physical means which are sign languages, touching, or by making eye contact.

The form of communication is classified as verbal communication (communicating through using the language, word, speaking and sound) and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication, in the form of using language, plays a major part in the process of human communication. Bonvillain (2003) defined language as "...a communicative system consisting of formal units that are integrated by processes of combining components of sound, structure and meaning" (p.7).

#### Limited involvement

In consumer behaviour research area, 'Involvement' has received vast attention. According to Sharma et al. (2010), when a consumer has more involvement with a good, service, or in a situation of consuming the products, the more likely this consumer will tend to afford resources such as money, effort and time to voice out a complaint or seeking for redress for a dissatisfactory experience.

Mittal and Lee (1989) quoted that "...involvement has played an increasingly important role in explaining consumer behaviour (and has a significant relation with) extensiveness of the decision-making process and on-going product-related behaviour such as spreading word-of-mouth to peers". Involvement requires consumers to spend extra psychological and physical effort to understand and be part of the service offered (p.363). Tourism literature reflects that there is a comparatively smaller quantity of researchers who investigated the probable effects of Limited Involvement on consumers' purchasing behaviour, except Havitz and Dimanche (1999) and Altinay (1994). Cai et al., (2004) reported that, purchasing decision of tourists' involvement is based on information preferences context of tourists'.

The conclusion is made as that involvement, and Limited Involvement plays noteworthy roles in the 'pre-trip stage' of tourists' decision-making process; the statement is supported by (Cai et al., 2004).

## Positive holiday mood

Iso-Ahola (1982) noted that the tourists' mood should be taken into consideration when analyzing tourists' behaviours. Liljander and Mattsson (2002) claimed that to understand tourists' behaviour, the psychological approach can play a vital role. According to Voase (1995), escaping from the routine is considered as one of the most basic psychological motivations behind travelling. Mill (1990) has provided the same statement that people are required to enjoy at least several days' holiday to wind down from their daily activities and to get some mental relaxation. Cohen (2004) stated that people travel to a different place to avoid common regular everyday activities, escape duties imposed upon them, get rid of tension within their life, search for recreation which is a no-work, no care, and no-thrift situation.

Similarly, most tourists think in their mind and convince themselves that holiday will bring joy and positive experience (Wood and House, 1991). Equally, leisure tourists always look to get a hassle-free travel experience, while they tend to think positively despite the difficulties they have experienced during the journey (Pearce, 1982). Therefore, "...driving pleasure from the trip is a central and non-instrumental concern for the tourist" and to do so, they "...enjoy taking it easy" (Suvantola and Gibson, 1992). This might happen due to tourists' temporary mode while visiting a place (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Suvantola, 2002).

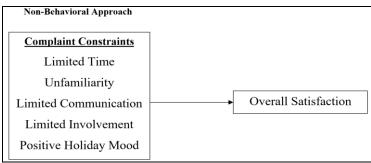


Figure 1. Research framework

#### Overall tourists satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been defined as the combination of tourists' expectation prior to travel and their subsequent experiences (Baker and Crompton, 2000). By comparison, quality refers to the service operation's 'output', i.e., the attributes of the product that are

primarily under the control of the operation (Crompton and Love, 1995). According to Oliver (1980), dissatisfaction occurs once the performance level is unable to meet a certain level of expectations. The concept of consumer satisfaction was widely debated in consumer behaviour literature during the 1980s and 1990s (Oliver, 1999). This debate has had an important resonance among tourism researchers, both conceptually and methodologically (Jamal et al., 2011; Kozak, 2001; Hassan et al., 2020). Due to multidimensional nature of tourism services (Maunier and Camelis, 2013), consumers always seek experiences that will satisfy their different needs simultaneously, while most of the needs are often effective based (Laing et al., 2014). Satisfaction is depending on the perceived difference between consumer's expectations and employee's perceived performance. Satisfaction is the individual's positive sense of experience (Rust and Oliver, 1994). It is normally measured before and after the trip in the tourism context. For instance, favourable feelings of tourists after a trip perceived as satisfaction, while experiencing an unfavourable feeling dominates the perception of dissatisfaction (Reisinger and Turner, 2003).

Based on the above discussion, this study proposed these hypotheses:

- H1: Limited-Time has a significant influence on Overall Satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia
- H2: Unfamiliarity has a significant influence on Overall Satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia
- H3: Limited Communication has a significant influence on Overall Satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia
- H4: Limited Involvement has a significant influence on Overall Satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia
- H5: Positive Holiday Mood has a significant influence on Overall Satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This is a quantitative study which seeks to investigate the influence of complaint constraints on tourists' overall visit satisfaction. In this research population defined as Malaysian tourists who have experienced dissatisfaction on hotel service during their visit. The number of domestic tourists in 2014 was 45,731,000 in overall Malaysia, and among them, 14% stayed in the hotel during their trip. As this study focused on the hotel sector, the total number of tourists were staying in the hotel in 2014 is approximately 6, 402,340. According to the study of Bloemer et al. (2002), the percentage of dissatisfied consumers is 21.35%, which is the population for this study. When the liberal assumption for the percentage of dissatisfied consumers counted following previous literature in approximately 20%, so the population size was 1,280,468, the researcher expected to get back 384 useable questionnaires from the respondents by agreeing with sampling table of Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) as they suggested, a sample size of 384 would be adequate for a population over 1 million. By using 384 as the target sample size, the true percentage in the whole population could fall within a positive or negative 5% range of the percentage obtained from the sample (Riddick and Russell, 1999). To get the information from different background, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to several places in the northern region. The researcher chose to use convenient sampling technique for distributing the questionnaires among respondents. The items comprised of tourists' complaint constraint upon their dissatisfying experiences, these items were adapted from Ekiz (2011). The items to measure overall visit satisfaction were adopted from Bhattacherjee (2001) and Oliver (1997).

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Demographic information**

Respondents' socio-demographic information provided at a glance such as age groups, gender distribution, education levels, and monthly income. Among 381 respondents, 194 (50.9%) are male and remaining 187 (49.1%) are female. This study focused on Malaysian tourists, in terms of race, Malay (53.3%), Chinese (26.8%), Indian (16.5%) and others (3.4%). For the age groups, majority of them are 31-40 years old (37.55%) followed by 21-30 (28.6%), 41-50 (24.4%), 51-60 years old (8.7%) and 61 and above (0.8%). For marital status, 62.6% of them are married, 35.4% are single, and 2.1 % of them are widows.

The results of descriptive statistics for the ultimate variables are shown in the following table. According to Ahmmed (2014), for easy interpretation of the results of descriptive analysis, the range of five-point Likert scale is classified into three equal size classes, namely low, moderate and high. These are, values of lower than  $2.33 \, [4/3+lowest \, value \, (1)]$  is treated as low; values of  $3.67 \, [highest \, value \, (5)-4/3]$  are taken as high and values between these two extreme are treated as moderate.

**Dimensions (Variables)** Mean SD Limited Time 3.3998 .79671 Unfamiliarity 3.1820 .83779 Limited Communication 3.3333 75432 3.2822 .87271 Limited Involvement Positive Holiday Mood 3.3325 76606

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for dimensions of variables

Note SD= Standard deviation

From the above table (Table 1) it is evident that mean values for Limited Time, Limited Communication, Unfamiliarity, Limited Involvement and Positive Holiday Mood fall into the range of 3.24 and 3.35. Most of the tourists did not complain due to Limited Time.

## Measurement model of the study

For evaluating construct validity and reliability of the study variables, the researcher used measurement model assessment in Smart PLS-SEM using an algorithm. Table 2 and Figure 1 below shows the results of the measurement model of this study. The outer loadings for the measurement items of the variables are in an acceptable range. For a limited time, outer loadings counted as LT1-0.876, LT2-0.889, LT3-0.857 and LT4-0.772. For limited communication, outer loadings found as Communi1-0.920, Communi 2-0.874 and Communi 3-0.758. For limited involvement, outer loadings are LI1-0.951 and LI2-0.951. Outer loadings for positive holiday mood are Mood1-0.887, Mood2-0.858 and Mood 3-669. For unfamiliarity, outer loadings counted as Unfami1-0.851, Unfami2-0.912, Unfami3-0.915 and Unfami 4-0.920. For overall satisfaction, loadings are counted as Satisfaction1-0.878, Satisfaction2-0.894, Satisfaction3-0.830 and Satisfaction 4-0.832.

Table 1 also shows the Average Values Extracted for each variable. Average Values Extracted (AVE) found as 0.722, 0.729, 0.904, 0.657, 0.810 and 0.738 for a limited time, limited communication, limited involvement, positive holiday mood, unfamiliarity, and overall satisfaction respectively. This study implemented two techniques for identifying the discriminant validity of the study, which are Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and Fornell - Larcker Criterion. Table 3 and Table 4 show the results of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and Fornell - Larcker Criterion, which indicate that discriminant validity is in considerable range to validate the constructs used in the study.

Table 2. Assessment results of the measurement model

Construct/ Associated Terms	Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Value Extracted		
Limited Time		-	0.722		
LT1	0.876				
LT2	0.889	0.912			
LT3	0.857				
LT4	0.772				
Limited Communication					
Communi1	0.920	.889	.729		
Communi2	0.874	.009			
Communi3	0.758				
Limited Involvement					
LI1	0.951	0.950	0.904		
LI2	0.951				
Positive Holiday Mood					
Mood1	0.887	0.850	0.657		
Mood2	0.858	0.830			
Mood3	0.669				
Unfamiliarity					
Unfami1	0.851		0.810		
Unfami2	0.912	0.944			
Unfami3	0.915				
Unfami4	0.920				
Overall Satisfaction					
Satisfaction1	0.878				
Satisfaction2	0.894	0.918	0.738		
Satisfaction3	0.830				
Satisfaction4	0.832				

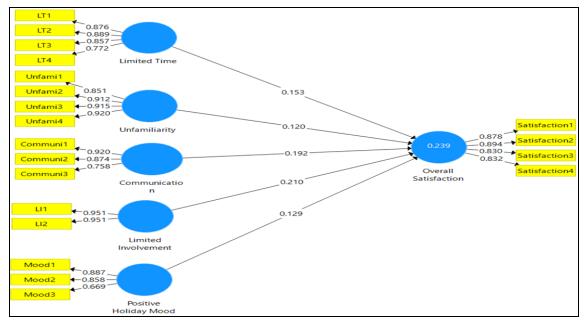


Figure 2. Measurement model of the study

Table 3. Discriminant Validity - Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

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	Communication	Intention	Limited Involvement	Limited Time	Positive Holiday Mood	Unfamiliarity
Communication						
Intention	0.386					
Limited Involvement	0.340	0.401				
Limited Time	0.190	0.255	0.103			
Positive Holiday Mood	0.142	0.263	0.199	0.094		
Unfamiliarity	0.351	0.352	0.524	0.146	0.253	

Table 4. Discriminant Validity - Fornell - Larcker Criterion

	Communication	Intention	Limited Involvement	Limited Time	Positive Holiday Mood	Unfamiliarity
Communication	0.854					
Intention	0.328	0.859				
Limited Involvement	0.296	0.357	0.951			
Limited Time	0.164	0.229	0.092	0.850		
Positive Holiday Mood	0.096	0.212	0.140	0.075	0.810	
Unfamiliarity	0.308	0.326	0.482	0.134	0.201	0.900

## Assessment of structural model of the study

The diagram in Figure 2 and Table 5 demonstrated the structural model of the study. T-values of the model are showing high efficiency in the construct. The influence of the independent variable to the dependent variable is positively significant. To find the direct effects, the

bootstrapping method was performed in Smart PLS 3. The study examined the direct relationship of Limited time, unfamiliarity, limited communication, limited involvement, positive holiday mood with overall satisfaction of the domestic tourists in Malaysia.

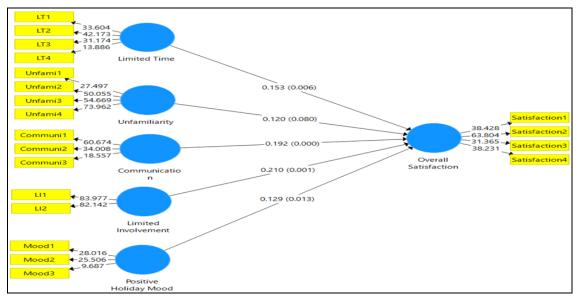


Figure 3. Structural model of the study

As shown in Table 5, the independent variables of this study limited time (T value= 3.034, p value= 0.003), unfamiliarity (T value= 1.771, p value= 0.077), limited communication (T value= 3.786, p value= 0.000), limited involvement (T value= 3.562, p value= 0.000), and positive holiday mood (T value= 2.499, p value= 0.000) have significant relationship with overall satisfaction of domestic tourists in Malaysia.

Table D. B. Bett Griden								
Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t Value	P values	Supported			
H1	Limited Time -> Overall Satisfaction	0.153	3.034	0.003	V			
H2	Unfamiliarity -> Overall Satisfaction	0.120	1.771	0.077	V			
H3	Limited Communication -> Overall Satisfaction	0.192	3.786	0.000	V			
H4	Limited Involvement -> Overall Satisfaction	0.210	3.562	0.000	V			
H5	Positive Holiday Mood -> Overall Satisfaction	0.129	2.499	0.013	V			

Table 5. Direct effects

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research revealed that tourists' complaint constraints ought to be taken into account as complaints from the tourists' present precious information regarding service quality problems, and it should be viewed as an opportunity to learn how to improve service. Although, the greatest hazard is not trying to bother to complain but rather essentially take away negative word-of-mouth publicity and business somewhere else. In this regards, Malaysian tourists are less expressive in their views and providing negative feedback could be considered as tongue-tied and complex (Ndubisi and Tam, 2007). This study also revealed that overall tourists' satisfaction of the domestic tourists is influenced by limited time, unfamiliarity, limited communication, limited involvement, and positive holiday mood. Most of the respondents who precise their reason for not complaining as Limited Time, reporting complain is time consuming and handling complaints by the service provider will take longer time in handling the complaints as the tourists used to have time limitation during their trip. The second most common reason for not complaining was Limited Communication. For that reason, hoteliers in Malaysia should not simply ignore any negative perception provided by consumers. Hoteliers should look to enhance the services and gain more knowledge about consumer complaint behaviours. More prompt and efficient consistent services to consumers will develop their customer service. A service provider should be able to learn from complaints, e.g. how to prevent similar mistakes or service failure in future and identify where and how these mistakes happened. So, hoteliers should welcome more complaints from tourists and take a step to make it easy for tourists to complain. Hoteliers should understand that no complaints from customers do not indicate a good customer's satisfaction level. In this regard, the organization must have the intuition to think any complaints positively to develop further but not to take directly as an act of conflict. To conclude, it is assumed that the research framework and information flow from this study will assist a better understanding of correspondent authorities. A better understanding of the tourists' complaint constraints (Limited Time, Unfamiliarity, Limited Communication, Limited Involvement and Positive Holiday Mood) in terms of hotel service will provide hoteliers with valuable information to increase their effectiveness in handling the operation, improving customer satisfaction and repeat patronization.

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