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MODERATING EFFECT OF GENDER ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VISITOR SATISFACTION AND VISITOR LOYALTY AND VISITOR SWITCHING BEHAVIOUR – A STUDY ON VISITORS OF BANGALORE AMUSEMENT PARKS

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Abstract

The experts in the field of marketing perceive the significance of loyalty and switching behaviour of customers to achieve the set objectives and goals of the organisation, especially in the service sector. The fast-growing entertainment and amusement industry also witness the same condition. The amusement industry is growing at almost 20% year on year throughout the world. The increased competition with the arrival of new parks in the industry has made the park managers retain their visitors. To retain any visitor the park managers has to ensure the creation of visitor satisfaction. Visitor satisfaction is one of the factors which lead to loyalty and at the same time visitor satisfaction demotivates the visitors to switch their amusement parks. Earlier researches in the field of satisfaction and loyalty emphasis to customer loyalty and factors which plays the vital role in the formation loyalty. Though many of the research in the field of loyalty and switching behaviour highlighted their importance none of them was succeeded in categorically describe the factors

Introduction:

The experts in the field of marketing perceive the significance of loyalty and switching behaviour of customers to achieve the set objectives and goals of the organisation, especially in the service sector. The fast-growing entertainment and amusement industry also witness the same condition. The amusement industry is growing at almost 20% year on year throughout the world. The increased competition with the arrival of new parks in the industry has made the park managers retain their visitors. To retain any visitor the park managers has to ensure the creation of visitor satisfaction. Visitor satisfaction is one of the factors which lead to loyalty and at the same time visitor satisfaction demotivates the visitors to switch their amusement parks. Earlier researches in the field of satisfaction and loyalty emphasis to customer loyalty and factors which plays the vital role in the formation loyalty. Though many of the research in the field of loyalty and switching behaviour highlighted their importance none of them was succeeded in categorically describe the factors responsible. It is still one of the factors which need to be tackled even today to succeed in any business.

Literature review

Enormous research has been carried out on the service industry with respect to the customer loyalty and customer switching behaviour, there is still lack of literature to explain exhaustively the influential factors responsible for. Satisfaction plays a key role in creating continuous relation with the existing service provider (Bolton R N, 1998). The lack in the field of satisfaction and loyalty research has made the organisations to fail in their efforts to retain the customers (Kumar V et al, 2013). Addition to this, there is a need to understand not only the direct relation between the satisfaction and loyalty or satisfaction and switching behaviour but also to study the moderating effect of the variables which also has their influence in the above relations (Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016).

In the highly competitive era of business the managers needs to understand the needs and wants of the customers which can satisfy them to turn back again to avail the same service from the same service provider. The creation of satisfaction in customers by meeting the expectations will help in inducing loyalty (Avinash & Vidyavathi, March 2017) and

helps in gaining competitive edge in the marketplace (Tweneboah-Koduah & Farley 2016). The research on relationship between satisfaction and loyalty by Awara & Anyadighibe (2014) suggested that customer satisfaction is a step towards building customer loyalty and leads to profitability of the firm (Bagram & Khan 2012) which in turn discourage the switching behaviour of the customers (Avinash & Vidyavathi, April 2017).

It is opined that the loyalty being the complicated aspect of the consumer behaviour which cannot be anticipated conveniently (Ganiyu et al, 2012) whereas the customer satisfaction can be conveniently anticipated (Cronin et al, 2000). The "conformity" exists between the tourist expectations and the features of the park or the destination is termed as the satisfaction (Truong and Foster, 2006). Perceived satisfaction of the customers or visitors as the case may be sustains the customer loyalty which is described as "...a deeply held commitment to re-buy or patronise a preferred product consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviours" (Pont and McQuilken, 2005). "Loyalty is concerned with the likelihood of a customer returning, making referrals, providing strong word-of-mouth, as well as providing references and publicity" (Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998).

This is unanimous that the loyal customers or visitors in the entertainment and amusement industry provide competitive advantages in the market. Hence, the term Customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in the creation of customer loyalty and their post purchase behaviour like switch. The demographic factors of the visitors to an amusement park can also help in analysing the trends in the industry. The detailed study of the demographic factors role with respect to the established or proven results will provide us the greatest insight on how to tackle the visitors based on the demographic factors. A moderator analysis is used to determine whether the relationship between two variables depends on (is moderated by) the value of a third variable.
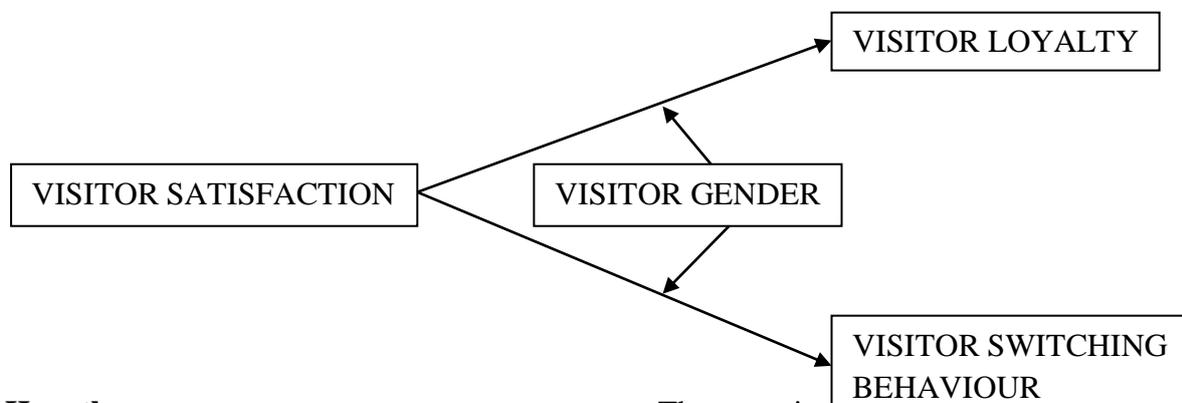
Objectives

This research is carried out to study the moderating effect on the relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty and visitor switching behaviour. Gender which is one of the demographic factors is considered to study the moderating role being played on the above-mentioned variables and on their

relation. The following two are the objectives

- ✓ To study the moderating effect of Gender on the positive relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty

- ✓ To study the moderating effect of Gender on the negative relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour.

Conceptual model

Hypotheses

H1: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the positive relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty

H2: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the negative relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative method of research in which primary data is collected from a random sample of 420 visitors of Bangalore amusement Parks.

The questionnaire was used as the data collection tool and the same was adopted from previous studies. The data was collected between June 2016 to December 2016 period from all the amusement parks in and around Bangalore.

Analysis and interpretation

The collected data were processed and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Reliability check was done using Cronbach's Alpha and it was found significant with the value 0.856. The results of the test are shown below in tables

.Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.856	.856	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VSAT	7.1312	2.540	.719	.519	.808
VLOY	7.0174	2.453	.748	.559	.780
VSB	7.0129	2.454	.719	.520	.807

From the above tables, the variables considered for the study shows a high degree of reliability. The scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.856. The alpha value above 0.7 is considered to be acceptable.

To evaluate the objectives and to test the hypotheses Dichotomous moderator analysis was performed using SPSS. The results of the research are as follows.

H1: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the positive relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty.

Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.678^a	.460	.458	.63403	.460	177.716	2	417	.000
2	.679^b	.461	.457	.63437	.001	.552	1	416	.458

a. Predictors: (Constant), normal_female, VSAT

b. Predictors: (Constant), normal_female, VSAT, VSAT_X_NFEMALE

c. Dependent Variable: VLOY

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to assess the increase in variation explained by the addition of an interaction term between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty to a main effects model. Gender did not moderate the effect of visitor satisfaction on visitor loyalty, as evidenced by an increase in total variation explained of 0.1%, which was not statistically significant (F(1, 416) = 0.552, p = .458). The value of 'p' less than 0.05 is considered significant at the 95%

confidence level. If the value of 'p' is more than 0.05 the relation is considered

non-significant.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.176	.131		8.997	.000	.919	1.433
	VSAT	.685	.036	.677	18.801	.000	.614	.757
	normal_female	.083	.069	.043	1.209	.227	-.052	.219

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to assess the statistical significance of the interaction term between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty. Data are mean ± standard error. There was not a statistically significant moderator effect of gender, as evidenced by the addition of the interaction term explaining an additional 0.1% of the total variance, p=.458. As such, the interaction term gender was dropped from the model. This new model revealed that there was a statistically significant positive linear relationship (0.685 ± 0.036) between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty (p < .0005).

Hence, the first hypothesis H1: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the positive relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty is rejected. The positive relationship between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour does not get affected by the gender of the visitor. That means the visitor gender has no moderating effect on the positive relation between visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty.

H2: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the negative relation between the visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour.

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.641[a]	.410	.408	.67701	.410	145.119	2	417	.000
2	.641[b]	.410	.406	.67782	.000	.003	1	416	.957

a. Predictors: (Constant), normal_female, VSAT

b. Predictors: (Constant), normal_female, VSAT, VSAT_X_NFEMALE

c. Dependent Variable: VSB

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to assess the increase in variation explained by the addition of an interaction term between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour to a main effects model. Gender did not moderate the effect of visitor satisfaction on visitor switching behaviour, as evidenced by an increase in total variation explained of 0.0%, which was not statistically significant $(F(1, 416) = 0.003, p = .957)$.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.269	.140		9.087	.000	.994	1.543
	VSAT	.662	.039	.640	17.012	.000	.586	.739
	normal_female	.055	.074	.028	.753	.452	-.089	.200

A hierarchical multiple regression was run to assess the statistical significance of the interaction term between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour. Data are mean ± standard error. There was not a statistically significant moderator effect of gender, as evidenced by the addition of the interaction term explaining an additional 0.0% of the total variance, p=.957. As such, the interaction term gender was dropped from the model. This new model revealed that there was a statistically significant linear relationship (0.662 ± 0.039) between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour $(p < .0005)$.

Hence, the second hypothesis H2: Gender has significantly moderating effect on the negative relation between the visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour is also rejected. That is the negative relation between visitor satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour does not depend on the whether a visitor is male or female. In other words, Gender has no moderating effect on the negative relation between visitor

satisfaction and visitor switching behaviour.

Conclusion

The major force behind this study is to analyse the moderating effect of the demographic factor gender on the relationship between visitor satisfaction, visitor loyalty and visitor switching behaviour. As per the findings, gender plays a vital role in the demographic factor analysis but has negligible or no role in moderating the relationship between the visitor satisfaction and visitor loyalty and visitor switching behaviour. Hence, the focus on gender can be discarded in the field of amusement parks study in analysing the role of gender on the variables.

Limitations & Recommendations

This study is restricted to the visitors of all the amusement parks in the vicinity of Bangalore the silicon city of the state of Karnataka. In this study, only five amusement parks were considered which were qualified to be in the list of amusement parks in Bangalore. This itself can be considered as the limitation to this research. The wide coverage of the parks and geographic location can yield an accurate result. It is recommended to collect the data from the wide geographical

area and a relatively good number of parks to get the favourable and precise results. The data was also collected randomly from 420 visitors and the data considering the business potential found to be less and hence the increase in the number of respondents may give better results to the study.

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