THE EFFECT OF TOURIST EXPECTATIONS AND TOURIST EXPERIENCES ON TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES: A CASE STUDY OF HỘI AN, VIETNAM

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Abstract

Hoi An, Vietnam is a heritage town that offers many attractions and amenities attracting many domestic and international tourists. Along with the satisfaction studies conducted in Hoi An, the concern on how tourists' expectations and experiences influence tourist satisfaction with destination attributes is not well explored. The present study determines the extent to which tourist expectations and tourist experiences affect tourist satisfaction with destination attributes; such as heritage attractions, price, people, tourist amenities, and safety. A quantitative research method was used to collect data from international and domestic tourists who had visited and stayed in Hội An, Vietnam for at least one night. Of the 275 responses received, 269 were usable. The findings indicate that tourist experiences with staff, safety, and tourist amenities had the biggest impact on tourist satisfaction in Hội An while tourist expectations did not significantly affect tourist satisfaction. This study also contributed to the strength of Hội An in the hopes that tourism stakeholders in Hội An will use these findings to take proactive steps to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of Hội An.

Keywords: Destination attributes, heritage tourism, Hội An Cultural/ Heritage destination, tourist experience, tourist satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism markets worldwide (UNESCO, 2019), of which heritage tourism, a form of cultural tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2006); is growing in popularity as well (C.-F. Chen & Chen, 2010). Being assigned as a UNESCO World Heritage Site gains a destination global attention as it indicates that it has outstanding cultural and natural attributes (Wang et al., 2015). To date, Vietnam is home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Hội An Ancient Town is a historic district in Hội An City where the buildings and architecture of the site are exceptionally well-preserved (UNESCO, 2018). However, recent statistics indicate an imbalance in the tourism sector of the heritage site. Firstly, although the number of tourist arrivals has steadily increased since the 2010s, between 2014 to 2019, more than 50% of these tourists were day-trippers (Hai, 2014; Linh, 2016, 2019a, 2019b; Nguyen & Loc, 2017). Secondly, the influx of tourists in recent years has created opportunities for petty crimes and pickpockets to thrive (Smile, 2019). Lastly, the quality of Hội An tourism is reported poor service quality (Binh, 2019; Dung, 2018). Therefore, in order to overcome these issues, stakeholders should not only focus on what Hội An can offer but on tourist needs and wants. However, prior to improving tourism planning and traditional heritage tourism products, it is vital to understand tourist experiences in Hội An and how it affects tourist satisfaction. In fact, not many have examined tourist expectations, tourist experiences, and tourist satisfaction with the attributes of Hội An. This study, thus, examined the effect of tourist experiences; in terms of heritage attractions, price, people, tourist amenities, and safety; on tourist satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Of the many explanations of the term "heritage", the most popular is that heritage is what we take over from the past, use for today and try our best to protect for future generations (Ashworth, 2003). Therefore, heritage tourism exploits both tangible and intangible factors. As heritage tourism has grown in popularity, its diverse aspects have drawn the attention of many scholars. This has led to a significant increase in studies on heritage management (Garrod & Fyall, 2000), inter-stakeholder conflicts in heritage destination management (Rahman, 2013). Tourism demand has been identified as central and crucial in developing the tourism industry as it provides destination managers with a detailed understanding of whom they are serving. The main themes include heritage tourist segmentation (Formica & Uysal, 1998; Huh et al., 2006), tourist behaviours, tourist expectations, tourist motivations, and tourist experiences (Chen & Chen, 2010; Huh & Uysal, 2004).

As is the case with the rest of the world, heritage tourism in Vietnam has become more popular in recent years as well. According to the Vietnam Tourism Product Development Strategy, the heritage tourism industry is the country's second largest attraction for international tourists after its sea-sand-sun tourism industry (Nhung, 2018). Along with this, multiple studies have examined destination management (Bui and Lee 2015), brand equity (Vinh et al., 2019), local attitudes toward tourism development (Adongo et al., 2017), and tourist perceptions of authenticity (Trinh et al., 2014).

As tourist demand is widely accepted as important in heritage tourism, studies on the subject have primarily investigated tourist motivation and segmentation (Poria et al., 2006). Not many studies have examined the correlation between tourists and the destinations that they have visited even though it plays a significant role in efficiently managing a tourist destination (Poria et al., 2006). Furthermore, although multiple studies have investigated tourist satisfaction at cultural and heritage destinations, studies evaluated tourist satisfaction using the attributes of a cultural and heritage destination are limited (Huh et al., 2006). Similarly, in Vietnam, not many studies have evaluated tourist satisfaction using the attributes of these destinations.

Measuring Tourist Satisfaction

Multiple marketing and psychology studies have examined consumer satisfaction. As such, there are conflicting opinions on the determinants of tourist satisfaction and how to accurately measure it (Oh & Parks, 1997). Of the diverse theories and models that have been proposed and empirically tested, performance only, expectation-performance, importance-performance, and expectancy-disconfirmation are the most widely accepted methods of measuring tourist satisfaction (Kozak, 2001). Of these measurement methods, the expectancy-disconfirmation model (Oliver, 1980) is the most widely accepted as it is applicable to many fields, particularly tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is measured by comparing pre-trip expectations and post-trip perceptions (Chen & Chen, 2010). According to the expectancy-disconfirmation model (Oliver, 1980), consumers buy products and services with pre-purchase expectations of how well a product or service will perform. If a product or service meets these pre-purchase expectations, satisfaction is confirmed. Conversely, if a product or service does not perform as expected, disconfirmation will occur (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). Although multiple diverse fields have used the expectancy-disconfirmation model, its formation and the correlation between its core components have been called into question (Chen, Li & Song, 2016). Multiple studies have proven that pre-trip expectations are irrelevant (Boo & Busser, 2018; Ye et al., 2019) and that post-trip experiences are only a strong predictor of satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

It is significantly challenging to measure tourist satisfaction as tourism products and services are intangible and abstract in nature. Moreover, satisfaction is dynamic and complex. Therefore, multiple dimensions should be used to more accurately measure tourist satisfaction (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). As a result, pre-trip expectations should not be completely excluded from the measurement of tourist satisfaction as it provides valuable contextual information (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Tourist satisfaction-based studies commonly use the expectancy-disconfirmation model to explain the difference between pre-trip expectations and post-trip perceptions (C.-F. Chen & Chen, 2010; Huh et al., 2006). The expectancy-disconfirmation model can also be used to measure tourist satisfaction using the attributes of a destination. As an illustration, Huh (2002) used the model to examine the correlation between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction at cultural and heritage destinations while Bi et al. (2020) employed this model as a theoretical basis to investigate consumer satisfaction towards different attributes in the hotel industry.

In Vietnam and particularly in Hội An, only a handful of studies have examined tourist satisfaction. Most of these studies used the service quality (SERVQUAL) scale to measure tourist satisfaction in different places such as in Bao Loc City (Giao et al. 2020), at a Wooden Trading Village in Hội An (Giao and Son 2015), or in Hội An Ancient Town (Giao et al. 2018). There are limited studies measure tourist satisfaction with specific destination attributes. A better understanding of tourist satisfaction will facilitate a more sustainably develop a tourism destination and there is a lack of studies that have measured tourist satisfaction using destination attributes. Thus, this present study used destination attributes to examined the extent to which tourist expectation and experience affect tourist satisfaction.

Correlation between Tourist Expectation, Experience, Destination Attributes, and Satisfaction

Satisfaction is subject to significant attention as it is a vital research area in the tourism, marketing, and psychology industry. Multiple experts have varying interpretations of satisfaction. Oliver (2014) defines satisfaction as "a consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment" and deems it to be a comparison between pre-trip expectations and post-trip experiences. As for expectation, Parasuraman et al. (1988) characterise expectations as the "desires or wants of consumers, i.e., what they feel a service provider should offer rather than would offer". According to Carman (1990), expectations of service quality comprise a "norm" that varies as each consumer has different backgrounds and needs. As other economic sectors view tourists as consumers, their tourist experiences are defined as consumer experiences. Tourist

experiences are defined as the correlation between the activities that tourists participate in at a tourism destination and the service efficiency of the destination (Quan & Wang, 2004). However, tourism providers cannot create tourist experiences but only circumstances in which tourists can create their own experiences (Mossberg, 2007). Tourist experiences are also affected by the information that they receive, their past experiences, and pre-trip expectations.

Multiple studies agree that it is effective and essential to explore consumer demands and service-related feedback to assess and enhance consumer satisfaction. Accordingly, it is important to regularly examine consumer demands, expectations, and feedback to serve them better. Expectations indirectly influence tourist satisfaction via disconfirmation with service performance (Oliver, 1980). This disconfirmation can be both positive and negative depending on real-life experiences versus consumer expectations. Sharmini Perera et al. (2015) used diverse destination dimensions, such as staff and site facilities, to investigate the expectations and perceptions of tourists at the Sigiriya World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka. The findings highlighted a lack of understanding tourist expectations, which is an essential factor when determining the success of a destination. Turner and Reisinger (1999) examined the importance of destination attributes and tourist expectations of Japanese tourists visiting Hawaii, America, and the Gold Coast, Australia based on a comparison of tourist expectations and the importance of the destination attributes, but with a priority on tourist expectations. Meanwhile, Omar et al. (2017) examined tourist satisfaction on Penang Island, Malaysia, by assessing the differences between their experiences and expectations. The study concluded that excellent tourist experiences with specific destination attributes provide a satisfactory tourist experience at the destination. Similarly, Ye et al. (2019) found that tourist experiences with destination services positively and directly influence tourism satisfaction. Therefore, extant studies have indicated that tourist experiences with destination attributes play a crucial role in increasing overall tourist satisfaction during a trip. These studies also confirm the effect of tourist experiences with destination attributes on tourist satisfaction.

Cultural and Heritage Destination Attributes
A destination is generalised as "an area with different natural attributes, features, or attractions that appeal to non-local visitors; i.e., tourists or excursionists. Past studies have used various aspects and strengths of the attributes of a destination to measure tourist satisfaction in different contextual settings. At cultural and heritage destinations, Kung (2018) examined the significant influence of tourist expectations; such as expectations with humanity, landscape, psychology, environment, and traffic; on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention at Hsinchu County Hengshan Township Bay; a cultural destination in Taiwan with a set of

17 attributes. Meanwhile, Huh et al. (2006) examined the correlation between tourist expectations, satisfaction, and four destination attributes; cultural and heritage attractions, general attractions, shopping attractions, and informational attractions; at the Historic Triangle in Virginia, America. Jusoh et al. (2015) used heritage attractions; such as traditional sites, architectural and historical buildings, music, dance, food, and local people; to examine the expectations and satisfaction of first-time and repeat tourists in Malacca, Malaysia. Some studies have used destination attributes to investigate tourist satisfaction in Vietnam. For example, Truong and Foster (2006) used attributes; such as safety, food prices, historical sites, friendly staff and locals, cheap souvenirs, and crowd attractions to name a few; to examine tourist satisfaction in Vietnam while Long and Vinh (2013) investigated the correlation between tourist expectations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty at the capital of Hanoi; a wealthy cultural destination. Khuong and Nguyen (2017) used cultural and historical sites, local food, price, safety, infrastructure, nature, entertainment, negative factors, and destination image to investigate the effect of tourist satisfaction on revisit intention. Lastly, Nhan and Dua (2019) examined the factors affecting cultural tourist satisfaction at Bac Lieu province. Therefore, it is evident that every destination has a combination of multiple attributes and unique selling points with which to promote tourism development.

METHODOLODY
Study Area: Hội An World Heritage Site
Located in Central Vietnam, Hội An Hội An; which is home to 1068 old houses (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019); is the only place in Vietnam to preserve 100% of its original buildings and architecture. When it first became a tourism destination in 1999, Hội An only welcomed 100,000 tourists. However, at present, an average of 2.3 million people visit it annually (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019). Approximately *3.22* million visited Hội An in 2017 (Hội An World Heritage Center, 2018), *4.99 million in 2018* (Linh, 2019a), *and 5.35 million in 2019* (Linh, 2019b).

A quantitative case study research design was used to examine tourist expectations as well as tourist experiences in terms of attributes; such as heritage attractions, price, local people, amenities, and safety; and their effect on tourist satisfaction in Hội An. To develop a research instrument, a set of 23 attributes were retrieved from extant studies and divided into five main categories: (1) heritage, (2) price, (3) people, (4) tourist amenities, and (5) safety (Huh et al., 2006; Jusoh et al., 2015; Khuong & Nguyen, 2017; Nhan & Dua, 2019; Perera et al., 2015; Truong & Foster, 2006; Turner & Reisinger, 1999). A 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 = *very strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, 1 = *very poor* to 5 = *excellent,* and 1 = *strongly dissatisfied (1)* to 5 = *strongly satisfied*

was used to collect the tourist expectations, tourist experiences, and tourist satisfaction of the respondents. The eligibility criteria included tourists who were above the age of 18 and had stayed in Hội An Ancient Town for at least a day in the past 6 months. The data was collected using on-site. All the respondents were first asked if they had stayed in Hội An for at least a day. Due to the constraints of time, the data collection process was terminated once 275 responses had been collected. Of this number, 269 of the responses were usable; which is 70% of the required sample size of 384. IBM® SPSS® Statistics was then used to analyse the collected data. A descriptive analysis was first conducted to determine the level of tourist satisfaction. A correlation analysis was then intentionally performed before regression to determine the extent to which tourist expectations and tourist experiences with each group of attributes affect tourist satisfaction. A multiple regression analysis was then conducted to determine the extent to which tourist expectations and tourist experiences affect overall tourist satisfaction at Hội An Ancient Town.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic features encompassing gender, age, levels of education, origin, and income. Frist, the number of females (50.6%) and males (49.4%) were accounted an even proportion of respondents. Most of respondents were from the age of 25 to 44 (78.1%) while the older groups of 45 - 54 years old (15.2%), and the above 54 years old (6.7%) were small. Undergraduate was the largest percentage of level of education (37.9%), Diploma/ Degree (23.4%), high school students (19.7%) and Master/ PhD (19.0%). Next, most of respondents were domestic tourists (84.4%).
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Table 1: Demographic information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	133	49.4
Female	136	50.6
Age (years old)		
18 -24	58	21.6
25 - 34	77	28.6
35 - 44	75	27.9
45 – 54	41	15.2
Above 54	18	6.7
Education levels		
High school	53	19.7
Undergraduate	102	37.9

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Diploma/Degree	63	23.4
Master/ PhD	51	19.0
Origin		
Southern	64	23.8
Central	71	26.4
Northern	92	34.2
Western	39	14.5
Asia	1	0.4
Africa	2	0.7

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 depicts the correlation between tourist expectations and overall tourist satisfaction as well as tourist experience and overall tourist satisfaction. The first section illustrates the correlation coefficients of tourist expectations and overall tourist satisfaction; which were insignificant as five of the six factors had $p > 0.01$ (2-tailed). More specifically, the Pearson correlation between tourist expectations and overall tourist satisfaction at heritage attractions was 0.205 and $p = 0.001 < 0.01$. Therefore, only the heritage attractions expectation factor significantly affected overall tourist satisfaction as the other five expectation factors; price, local people, staff, tourist amenities, and safety; had $p > 0.01$.

Table 2: Correlations analysis of overall tourist satisfaction

Correlations								
Variables			**Heritage**	**Price**	**Local People**	**Staff**	**Amenities**	**Safety**
Overall satisfaction	Expectation	Pearson Correlation	.205**	.123*	.115	.086	.076	.014
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.044	.059	.162	.213	.822
		N	269	269	269	269	269	269
	Experience	Pearson Correlation	.569**	.684**	.649**	.699**	.693**	.664**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	269	269	269	269	269	269

*Note: **p ≤ 0.01*

The second section of Table 2 depicts the correlation analysis of tourist expectations and overall tourist satisfaction, which was, generally, strong, positive, and significant a $p = 0.01$ (2-tailed). More specifically, all six experience factors had $p = 0.000 < 0.01$, indicating significant correlations. Furthermore, the

Pearson correlation of heritage attractions was 0.569, price was 0.684, local people was 0.649, staff was 0.699, tourist amenities was 0.693, and safety was 0.664.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3 shows the regression results of tourist expectations, tourist experiences, and overall tourist satisfaction. In summary, F ratio = 2.852, p of the F test = $0.010 > 0.001$, tolerance ranged between 0.295 to 0.594, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) ranged between 1.684 to $3.928 < 10$. Five of the six factors; with the exception of the heritage attraction factor ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$); were deemed insignificant as the p of the t-test > 0.05. The insignificant results of the F test and t-test indicated the significance of tourist expectations in explaining the variance of overall tourist satisfaction for the overall data.

The second section depicts the regression results of tourist experience and overall tourist satisfaction. As the F ratio = 75.080, p of F test = $0.000 < 0.001$, tolerance ranged between 0.335 to 0.524, VIF ranged between 1.910 to $2.983 < 10$, it indicated the appropriateness and significance of tourist experience in predicting the variance of overall tourist satisfaction. As the adjusted $R^2 = 0.624$, it suggests that up to 62.4% of the variance of the overall tourist satisfaction dependent variable was explained by the six independent variables; tourist experiences with heritage attraction, price, local people, staff, tourist amenities, and safety. This was further verified as all six factors had p of t-test < 0.05, which indicated their significant influence on overall tourist satisfaction. In descending order, the experience factors with the most significant influences were staff ($\beta = 0.221$, t = 3.541, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), price ($\beta = 186$, t = 2.914, $p = 0.004 < 0.05$), safety ($\beta = 0.170$, t = 2.957, $p = 0.0030 < 0.05$), tourist amenities ($\beta = 0.163$, t = 2.524 $p = 0.012 < 0.05$), and local people ($\beta = 0.148$, t = 2.571, $p = 0.011 < 0.05$). Only the heritage attraction experience factor had an insignificant influence as $p = 0.305 > 0.05$. Therefore, of the five factors, staff, price, and safety most significantly affected overall tourist satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression tourist expectations, tourist experiences, and overall tourist satisfaction

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		Model summary
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
Expectation	(Constant)	3.030	.301		10.079	.000			R= 0.248
	Heritage	.259	.087	.231	2.970	.003	.594	1.684	R² = 0.061
	Price	.112	.114	.089	.980	.328	.437	2.288	Adjusted R² = 0.040
	Local people	.091	.108	.086	.838	.403	.342	2.928	F ratio = 2.852
	Staff	-.064	.116	-.061	-.554	.580	.295	3.390	Significance F= 0.010
	Amenities	.012	.121	.011	.102	.919	.296	3.375	
	Safety	-.187	.097	-.181	-1.924	.055	.407	2.459	
Experience	(Constant)	.245	.188		1.304	.193			R= 0.795
	Heritage	.064	.062	.053	1.027	.305	.524	1.910	R² = 0.632
	Price	.207	.071	.183	2.914	.004	.356	2.812	Adjusted R² = 0.624
	Local people	.152	.059	.148	2.571	.011	.423	2.362	F ratio = 75.080
	Staff	.220	.062	.221	3.540	.000	.360	2.780	Significance F= 0.000
	Amenities	.164	.065	.163	2.524	.012	.335	2.983	
	Safety	.174	.059	.170	2.957	.003	.423	2.363	

Note: Sig F test < 0.001
Sig t-test: p < 0.05

DISCUSSION

Generally, the level of overall tourist satisfaction was high and the percentage of tourists who felt satisfied and strongly satisfied was large. The correlation analysis indicated that tourist expectation factors had a weaker correlation with overall tourist satisfaction than tourist experience factors, which had strong, positive, and significant correlations with overall tourist satisfaction. More specifically, the staff, tourist amenities, and price experience factors had the highest Pearson correlation values. These results were corroborated by that of the regression analysis, which indicated that five of the six experience factors

significantly affected overall tourist overall satisfaction. Of these five factors, staff, tourist amenities, and safety were the most significant. Tourists prioritise safety when choosing a holiday destination (Thapa & Lee, 2017). Furthermore, it is believed to be a criterion with which to evaluate the success of a destination's tourism development (Athula, 2015). In the same vein, as tourism is a "people-to-people" service industry, the human element has always played a vital role in the efficient performance of the tourism industry and tourist satisfaction Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Finally, tourist amenities include any and all facilities that cater to needs of tourist (Omar et al., 2017; Oviedo-García et al., 2019) and supports every tourist activity at or between destinations; such as transportation, tourist assistance centres, relaxation, shopping, toilets and washrooms, parking lots, and resting spaces. Tourists always demand easily accessible, available, reliable, and standardised amenities that support their actives during a trip (Huh et al., 2006; Maghsoodiv Tilaki et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this present study; which was to ascertain the extent to which tourist expectations and tourist experiences at heritage attractions, price, people, tourist amenities, and safety; affect tourist satisfaction. The findings indicate that the tourist experiences with staff, safety, and tourist amenities significantly affect tourist satisfaction in Hội An. However, this study found that role of tourist expectations in measuring tourist satisfaction did not align with that of expectancy-disconfirmation model. However, tourists need to contextually outline their expectations as this information is crucial in understanding what they expect from a destination. This study provides insight into tourist behaviours; especially tourist expectations, tourist experiences, and tourist satisfaction. Therefore, tourism management stakeholders in Hội An can use this information to develop effective marketing plans and activities. Furthermore, an understanding of what tourists expect and think about Hội An is important as it can be used to develop products and services that satisfy tourists' needs and increase the competitiveness of Hội An. The case study of Hội An is evidence that tourism development is possible at world heritage sites. At such sites, tourists prioritise the heritage factor as they hope to garner experiences, however, local people, tourism staff, tourist amenities, and price also affect tourist satisfaction. Further research is needed to examine tourist behaviours under normal circumstances, after the many hardships of the early 2020s. As such, future studies should combine different domains; such as motivations and destination choice behaviour; attitudes and satisfaction; personality and decision-making; and perception, satisfaction, and loyalty to name a few; to better understand the complexities of tourist behaviours instead of examining a single feature.

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