Tourist shopping: The relationships among shopping attributes, shopping value, and behavioral intention

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1. Introduction

For tourist destinations, especially those where tourism revenues are a major contributor to the local economy, it is important to identify the spending patterns of tourists in order to increase total revenue. Research results show that a large component of the travel expenditures of tourists is derived from shopping. For example, some studies have revealed that tourists spend approximately one-third of their total travel expenditures on shopping (LeHew & Wesley, 2007; Shopping Center World, 2001; Turner & Reisinger, 2001). The number of tourist visits and the amount of expenditures on shopping may be increased only if the experiences at the destination provide a high value to tourists, since perceived value is an important antecedent of overall satisfaction and behavioral intention (Cronin, Brady, Tomas, & Hult, 2000).

Although many studies have investigated the effect of perceived shopping value on both overall satisfaction and behavioral intention, comprehensive studies examining the additional role of shopping attributes in generating shopping value and behavioral intention are still scarce. There is a need to investigate this field, because in the process of shopping, tourists are assumed to form perceptions about different shopping attributes that may individually and significantly affect the overall value of tourists’ shopping (Yeung, Wong, & Ko, 2004). By following an attribute-level approach, both researchers and destination authorities may able to identify which shopping attributes are critical in terms of leading to high shopping value and positive behavioral intention.

The objective of this study, therefore, is to investigate the role of shopping attributes in the formation of shopping value, which, in turn, affects behavioral intention in the tourism context. We presume that tourists’ satisfaction with shopping attributes will influence both their shopping value perceptions and their behavioral intentions. In accordance with this research purpose, the content of the present paper is configured as follows: in the first section, a literature review about the shopping and behavioral characteristics of tourists as shoppers is presented. Tourists’ satisfaction with shopping attributes is discussed in the next section, following which, shopping value and behavioral intention relationships are briefly explained. After the research model is configured, the survey setting (the ancient site of Side, Antalya) is introduced. Then, the results are presented and discussed in detail. Finally, the findings are concluded, and some managerial implications are proposed.

2. Tourists’ shopping behavior

Tourists behave differently when they shop while traveling than they do when in their home countries (Oh, Cheng, Lehto, & O’Leary, 2004; Wong & Wan, 2013). Thus, it is interesting to consider what kind of attributes are important to tourists, and how their value perceptions are formed while they are shopping while traveling. Shopping is one of the most important activities for tourists (Lloyd, Yip, & Luk, 2011). Sometimes, the desire to shop can be the main motivation for travel (Timothy & Butler, 1995). Especially since 2000, academics have shown greater interest in examining why people are motivated to shop.
shop while they are traveling, and how they are influenced by the host destination’s shopping environment and facilities. The majority of the existing studies in the literature are about the relationships between demographics and shopping attitudes (Jansen-Verbeke, 1988, 1990; Mok & Lam, 1997; Oh et al., 2004; Swanson & Horridge, 2004; Yazdani, 2007), shopping satisfaction (Heung & Cheng, 2000; Lin & Lin, 2006; Reisinger & Turner, 2002; Turner & Reisinger, 2001; Wong & Wan, 2013), shopping behavior (Choi, Liu, Pang, & Chow, 2008; Littrell, Paige, & Song, 2004; Suh & Gartner, 2004), shopping motivation (Dellaert, Borgers, & Timmermans, 1995; Swanson & Horridge, 2006), exterior environment (Yüksel, 2013), shopping malls (Christiansen & Snepenger, 2002; LeHew & Wesley, 2007; Stoel, Wickliffe, & Lee, 2004), cross-border shopping (Asplund, Friberg, & Wilander, 2007; Timothy & Butler, 1995; Yeung & Yee, 2012), shopping evaluation (Yüksel, 2004), risk perception (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2007), and modeling (Law & Au, 2000). With the growing importance of repeat visitors, the shopping behavior differences of first-time and repeat visitors are also being investigated by academics (e.g. Rosenbaum & Spears, 2005). For example, Wang, Chen, Chan, and Zhong (2000) demonstrated that repeat visitors spend more on shopping compared to first-time visitors. Similarly, Rosenbaum and Spears (2005) revealed that first-time visitors were likely to purchase local souvenirs by focusing on exploration and learning, while repeat visitors were often focused on relaxation. In contrast, showed that visitors’ preferences and expenditure patterns were not affected by their previous travel experiences. However, there is still a need for further research to clarify the complex structure of tourists’ shopping behavior.

The need for more research into tourists’ shopping behavior arises from the behavioral differences between tourists’ shopping and their regular shopping activities in their homelands (Oh et al., 2004; Stansfield, 1971; Wong & Wan, 2013). Oh et al. (2004) identified three main reasons for changes in people's purchasing behavior. The first reason is the time when the shops open, allowing tourists to make their purchases at “unordinary times.” Tourists feel that they are very free from daily responsibilities when they are on vacation, and they see the shopping experience as an escape from the routines of life. The second is the “consumption of place,” which differs from the usual shopping settings, where the shopping habitat becomes a social and cultural interaction point with the local people. Tourists consider shopping in such different environments as a leisure and hedonic activity. The third is the “special and symbolic meaning of the souvenirs” that tourists bring back home, either for themselves or to support their relationships with other people. Moreover, tourists shop not only for personal necessities, but also for family members, friends, colleagues, and relatives (Lin & Lin, 2006). In some cases, tourists are attracted by unique products, brand names, logos, locations of stores, and bargains at the destination (Gee, 1987; Yüksel, 2004).

In addition to such behavioral changes, many research results show that people tend to spend more money while they are tourists (Turner & Reisinger, 2001). From the destination management perspective, the expenditures of tourists significantly contribute to the local economy (Yüksel, 2004). Yazdani (2007) states that tourists’ shopping offers “economic advantages and job opportunities for local merchandise and those that make the products by themselves.” Moreover, popular tourism destinations can benefit from tourist spending by offering high quality goods and services, and by enhancing the visitor experiences to gain a global competitive advantage over other destinations. In particular, tourist destinations that are famous for their rich shopping opportunities, such as Hong Kong, Taipei, and Seoul, have become the most popular areas for research by academics investigating the shopping behaviors and cross-border shopping of tourists and the economic benefits of such spending to the local economies.

3. Shopping attributes and their influences on value perception

Being a social phenomenon, shopping involves much more than just the purchasing of products (Tosun, Temizkan, Timothy, & Fyall, 2007). In fact, it contains both intangible and tangible factors. Therefore, in addition to tangible factors, such as location, working hours, cleanliness, price levels, and so on, any empirical research on tourist shopping behavior should consider intangible factors, which consist of interpersonal contacts, and the in-store and out-store atmosphere, including the local people, accessibility, and cleanliness.

In particular, the exterior and in-store shopping environment and contacts with the local people become more important for tourists than they are in their usual living conditions. Such shopping factors and others are known as “shopping attributes.” Shopping attributes consist of various factors that are important at the pre-shopping, shopping, and post-shopping phases, such as the accessibility of the store/area, cleanliness, service quality, prices, and so on. For example, Haans (2011) states that in the pre-shopping phase, giving actual price information to consumers who have a regular shopping goal will decrease their buying intentions and anticipated satisfaction, while consumers with an immediate shopping goal are expected to tolerate high prices. Moreover, Hummel and Savitt (1988) note that service quality may be composed of different elements (such as “policies” in the pre-shopping phase, “inventory” in the shopping phase, and “warranty support” in the post-shopping phase), and the importance of these elements may also change in the phases of shopping.

In the literature, starting from the early 1990s, many studies have attempted to identify the most important shopping attributes at the destinations. In one of the earliest studies aimed at the identification of the main shopping attributes and the measurement of their influence on tourists’ value perceptions, Keown (1989) identified 16 attributes in Hong Kong and compared the shopping experiences of Japanese tourists with other nationalities. While human-side attributes (such as the neatness, honesty, and friendliness of the salespersons) were more important for the Japanese tourists, and also became the main reasons for dissatisfaction, the study found that other tourists felt better about their shopping experiences. In another study, which was conducted in Hong Kong, Heung and Cheng (2000) identified 15 shopping attributes, which they grouped under four factors: “tangibles quality” (e.g., physical setting, opening hours, and cleanliness), “staff service quality” (e.g., language ability, attitude), “product value” (e.g., price, value for money), and “product reliability.” A study of domestic tourists visiting the Gold Coast Region of Queensland by Turner and Reisinger (2001) indicated that “cost,” “shop presentation,” and “product display” attributes had the highest influence on tourists’ satisfaction with their shopping experiences.

For the purposes of both travel tourists’ holidays and visits to friends and relatives (VFR), “value” was considered important, which was defined as a wide range of high quality goods at affordable prices. Lin and Lin (2006), who examined a Mainland Chinese group of travelers to Taiwan, identified 20 attributes that were clustered under five dimensions: “physical attraction,” “staff service quality,” “product features,” “uniqueness and convenience,” and “discount and display.” The results of their study showed that the tourists were only satisfied with “providing home delivery service,” while they were the least satisfied with some attributes such as “commemoration of the product,” “uniqueness of the product,” and “price of product.” In a recent study, Tosun et al. (2007) investigated tourists’ perceptions of shopping attributes in the Cappadocia Region of Turkey and obtained two dimensions: “tangible quality of shops” and “staff service quality.”

According to Bajs (2011), a “tourist destination is a specific product composed of complexes of different attributes offered to tourists.” Although shopping attributes may be identified differently, depending on the destination-specific factors and the measurement tool used, perceived value is mostly defined as “the consumers’ overall assessments of the utility of a product or a service based on what is received and what is given” (Zeithaml, 1988). Zeithaml (1988) suggested that value perception “involves not only price variations but also other psychological factors” (Jamal, Othman, &