

Service-Quality Satisfaction of Tourists in Hong Kong

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Service-quality studies in the tourism and hospitality industry are important in identifying the factors that determine visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This study explores the service quality satisfaction of mainland and non-mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong. A questionnaire with items rated on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data on tourist satisfaction with the quality of service in the hotel, transport, and government sectors. The data were examined using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The results show that mainland Chinese generally rate the service environment to be more important, whereas non-mainland Chinese tourists seek good language and communication skills from staff and services. Tourists thus display different expectations and satisfaction levels due to cultural differences.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Tourism, Hospitality, Service Quality, Sectors.

INTRODUCTION

Service quality and customer satisfaction have attracted considerable attention from many researchers and industry practitioners in a variety of fields (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Qu & Li, 1997; Tribe & Snaith, 1998; Weber, 1997; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). The ultimate goal of maintaining a high service-quality and customer-satisfaction level is to survive in today's highly competitive market. From the tourism perspective, a destination remains competitive only if it provides products and services that offer complete satisfaction to visitors (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Satisfying a customer is regarded as the cheapest means of product- and service-promotion because positive word-of-mouth or product- and service-recommendations from satisfied customers are likely to induce positive post-purchase behavior (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). For instance, Peter and Olson (1987, p. 512) (as cited in Pizam & Ellis, 1999) argued that:

if consumers are satisfied with a product or brand, they will be more likely to continue to purchase and use it and to tell others of their favorable experience with it... if they are dissatisfied, they will be more likely to switch brands and complain to manufacturers, retailers, and other consumers about the product.

Similarly, retaining a satisfied customer is less expensive in terms of time, cost, and resources than attracting a new customer (Naumann, 1995). Thus, providing a high quality of service should lead to better customer satisfaction and retention. The significance of customer satisfaction and retention explains why service-quality research has gained currency over the past few years (Chadee & Mattsson, 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Tsang & Ap, 2007; Zeithaml, 2000).

Despite the increase in service-quality research, there remain disagreements about the definition and nature of service quality and customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Zeithaml et al. (1993) pointed out that customer satisfaction and service quality are not the same. Customer satisfaction "is thought to be the result from the comparison between predicted service and perceived service, whereas service quality refers to the comparison between desired service and perceived service" (Zeithaml et al., 1993) (as cited in Chadee & Mattsson, 1996, p. 306). Both are important aspects of customer retention in the tourism and hospitality industry (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). To remain competitive in the global tourism market, it is necessary for tourism destinations to assess service quality and identify the factors that influence customer satisfaction (Jin et al., 2008). By measuring customer satisfaction, tourism businesses and firms in related sectors will be in a better position to understand how their service-delivery performance is perceived by customers and identify the areas that need improvement (Wong & Law, 2003).

The tourism industry has been an important part of the Hong Kong economy for the last two decades. Hong Kong attracted 2.9 million tourists in 2008, 57% of whom were from mainland China (HKTB, 2008). With higher disposable incomes among many Chinese citizens and the implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme (Tourism Commission, 2003), the number of mainland Chinese tourist travelling to Hong Kong has increased dramatically (HKTB, 2008). In light of this development, several studies (e.g., Jin et al., 2008; Song et al., 2008; Wong & Law, 2003; Heung et al., 2000) have investigated service quality and customer satisfaction in Hong Kong. The continuous assessment of service quality and

customer satisfaction is crucial if tourism and tourism-related businesses are to survive stiff competition from other destinations. It is against this background that this study attempts to cast light on satisfaction with service quality of tourists in Hong Kong. It aims to determine how tourists perceive the quality of service in the hotel, transport, and government sectors, the important attributes of these sectors that satisfy tourists, and whether cultural differences play a role in tourist satisfaction with service quality in Hong Kong.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Satisfying a customer and offering quality service are perhaps the targets of all service providers (Slater & Narver, 1998; Wagenheim & Reurink, 1991), in the tourism industry. All tourism businesses wish to gain a “competitive advantage, increase customer loyalty, enhance corporate image, increase business performance, and retain existing customers” (Choi & Chu, 2001). It is argued that to retain a customer, the services offered should exceed what was anticipated or expected, as this leads to satisfaction. It is relatively more cost effective to retain a customer than to attract a new customer (Zeithaml et al., 1990). This is because satisfied customers become loyal and free spokespersons for the service or product. Unsatisfied customers, in contrast, are hard to retain and are likely to spread negative word of mouth to their friends, which action can tarnish the image of a service provider or even a tourism destination. This implies that offering good quality services to tourists is a vital management tool in the tourism sector. According to Zeithaml et al. (1990) the following attributes of service quality must be met if customers are to consider service delivery satisfactory: (1) tangibles, (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, (4) assurance, and (5) empathy. Tangibles refer to the way in which physical facilities, equipment, and personnel appear to customers. Reliability is the expectation that service providers will perform as they promised. Responsiveness reflects how promptly providers help customers when they are in need. Assurance reflects the trust and confidence that customers have in service providers. Finally, empathy reflects how caring and attentive employees or service providers are toward customers (Zeithaml et

al., 1990). It is important to note that when any one of these attributes is violated, customer evaluations of service quality and satisfaction may be negative. This explains why authors such as Bolton (1998) and Walker (1995) argue that satisfying customers is a challenging task, as expectations on all five attributes must be met before customers feel that the service is of high quality and thus satisfactory.

Several theories have been advanced to explain customer satisfaction and service quality. These include expectancy disconfirmation, assimilation or cognitive dissonance, contrast, assimilation-contrast, equity, attribution, comparison level, generalized negativity, and value precept (Oh & Parks, 1997). Of these nine theories, the expectancy disconfirmation theory is perhaps the most commonly used, largely because it has been tested and confirmed to be reliable in several studies. As advanced by Oliver (1980), the theory postulated that

- customers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about
- anticipated performance. After purchasing and consuming the goods and services, the
- results are compared with the initial expectations. Disconfirmation arises if the results
- do not meet the expectations. Positive disconfirmation is a result of perceptions of
- performance being higher than expectation, whereas negative disconfirmation is a
- result of perceptions being lower than expectation. (Wong & Law, 2003, p. 403)

When placed in the tourism and hospitality context, Oliver’s (1980) explanation of the expectancy disconfirmation theory has important practical implications, as it suggests that the way in which customers receive the services at a destination greatly determines whether they will revisit and recommend friends and relatives to visit the destination. This is why it has been concluded that for a tourism destination to remain competitive in the global market, service delivery must satisfy customers (Wong & Law, 2003), and

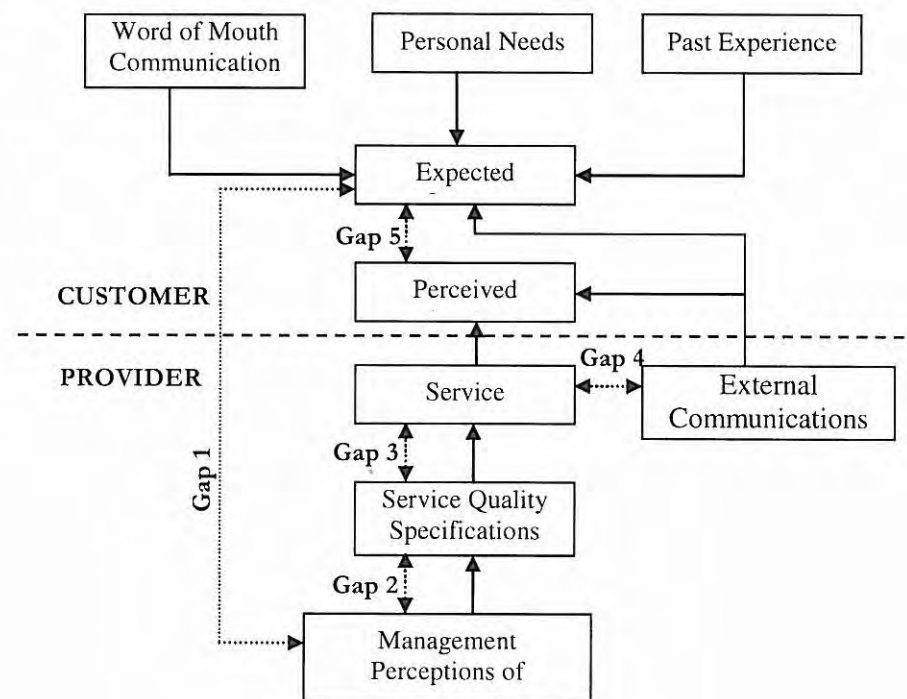
more specifically must meet and exceed the expectations of customers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

As tourism involves visitors from a varied cultural spectrum (Wong & Law, 2003; Kozak, 2001), it is imperative that cross-cultural comparisons be made to ascertain whether cultural differences play a role in customer satisfaction, and to determine how service providers can position themselves to cater to and satisfy the needs of visitors from different cultures. Customer satisfaction is not universal, and authors that have examined the issues of culture and customer satisfaction (Becker & Murrmann, 1999; Reisinger & Turner, 1997; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995) concur that different people perceive satisfaction or evaluate service quality in different ways according to their cultural background (Mattila, 1999; Stauss & Mang, 1999; Pizam & Ellis, 1999), past experience (Zeithaml et al., 1990), and other external factors beyond the control of service providers. As a case in point, it has been confirmed that customers from cultures with a large power distance expect a higher service quality at destinations than their counterparts from cultures with a small power distance, who mostly expect lower quality but an egalitarian service (Tsang & Ap, 2007). In addition to influencing service quality evaluations, culture also affects what an individual decides to have or not to have (Weiermair, 2000). Being able to identify the needs and wants of visitors from different cultures helps destination service providers to be mindful of the pertinent factors during service delivery (Tsang & Ap, 2007), especially the factors that cause service failure. Recovery from service failure may be slow and expensive, particularly if *appropriate* recovery strategies are not in place.

When competition becomes stiff and customers demand higher quality services, it is essential for destination or service managers to pay attention to what causes service failure and customer dissatisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (1990) conducted a study of service-oriented companies that is relevant to the tourism and hospitality sector. In their conceptual model of service quality, they suggested that service failure and consequent customer dissatisfaction are caused by five gaps or discrepancies that, to remain viable, service providers in all sectors should aim to close.

- Gap 1: Discrepancy between what customers expect and management perceptions of customer expectations.
- Gap 2: Discrepancy between management perceptions of customer expectations and service quality specifications.
- Gap 3: Discrepancy between service quality specifications and actual service delivery.
- Gap 4: Discrepancy between actual service delivery and what is communicated to customers.
- Gap 5: Discrepancy between perceived quality failure by customers and the foregoing four discrepancies (Zeithaml et al., 1990). These five gaps are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model of Service Quality



Source: Zeithaml et al. (1990, p. 46).

According to Figure 1, there are three main aspects that determine what visitors expect. What customers expect is important because they base their evaluation of service quality on whether their expectations are met. The three aspects are the effect of word-of-mouth communication, personal needs, and past experience. Word-of-mouth communication is an important benefit but also a potentially harmful tool for service providers. It is a beneficial marketing tool if customers are satisfied with the service delivery, as they may become agents who promote a destination or service (Anderson, 1998; Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Hogan et al., 2004; Richins, 1983; Zeithaml et al., 1990) in places that the service provider cannot reach. New customers are then attracted to the service on the recommendation of their friends. However, word of mouth becomes a harmful tool if customers are dissatisfied with the service quality (Anderson, 1998; Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Haywood, 1989; Richins, 1983). Negative word of mouth spreads after service failure, and leaves little room for the service provider to convince potential customers that it offers high-quality services. This is because customers seem to listen more to their friends or people who have experienced the service than to promotions and advertisements about a service (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Personal needs influence the service quality that customers expect at a destination (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1990). For example, some customers require personalized services, and any deviation from this means that they may evaluate service quality as being poor or unsatisfactory. Finally, past experience (Zeithaml et al., 1990) also influences what customers expect. For instance, if a customer last visited a destination where high-quality services were delivered, then that customer will expect the same or higher service-quality delivery whenever he or she revisits the destination.

METHODOLOGY

Using a questionnaire of ten attributes each for the hotel, transport, and government sectors rated on a five-point Likert scale, data were collected from mainland and non-mainland Chinese tourist visitors to Hong Kong at five locations: Hong Kong International Airport, the Macau Ferry Terminal, the China Ferry Terminal, Hung Hom KCR Station, and the Avenue of Stars.

These locations were selected because they are used by many visitors entering or leaving Hong Kong. Questionnaires were distributed to departing tourists only. The participants were asked to rate the importance of the ten attributes in the three sectors on a five-point Likert scale (where 1 = Not important at all, 2 = Not important, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Important, and 5 = Very important). A similar five-point scale was used to rate the tourists' level of satisfaction with service encounters in the three sectors (where 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, and 5 = Very satisfied). In total, 304, 361, and 362 participants answered questions on the government, hotel, and transport sectors, respectively.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression analysis. T-tests were run to compare the satisfaction levels of the mainland and non-mainland Chinese tourists with the services offered in the government, transport, and hotel sectors. Regression analysis was performed to identify the most important attributes of customer satisfaction in the hotel, transport, and government sectors. The findings from the analysis are presented and discussed in the following section.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics

One-third of the participants were mainland Chinese and the remaining two-thirds were non-mainland Chinese tourists. The demographics of the participants are presented in Table 1. The majority of the participants were aged between 26 and 45. The majority had completed secondary education, and over 70% were either self-employed or company employed. Among those who evaluated the government and transport sectors, around two-thirds were repeat visitors.

Table 1
Demographic Information on the Participants

	Government			Hotel			Transportation		
	MC (N=104)	NM (N=200)	Total (N=304)	MC (N=126)	NM (N=235)	Total (N=361)	MC (N=125)	NM (N=237)	Total (N=362)
Gender									
Male	48 (46%)	102 (51%)	150	57 (45%)	133 (57%)	190	64 (51%)	147 (62%)	211
Female	56 (54%)	98 (49%)	154	69 (55%)	102 (43%)	171	61 (49%)	90 (38%)	151
Age									
16-25	13 (13%)	37 (19%)	50	13 (10%)	43 (18%)	56	15 (12%)	36 (15%)	51
26-35	35 (34%)	57 (29%)	92	54 (43%)	70 (30%)	124	58 (46%)	82 (35%)	140
36-45	31 (30%)	47 (24%)	78	28 (22%)	48 (20%)	76	26 (21%)	65 (27%)	91
46-55	11 (11%)	31 (16%)	42	21 (17%)	42 (18%)	63	17 (14%)	28 (12%)	45
56-65	11 (11%)	18 (9%)	29	5 (4%)	21 (9%)	26	8 (6%)	22 (9%)	30
66 or above	3 (3%)	10 (5%)	13	5 (4%)	11 (5%)	16	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	5
Highest level of education attained									
Completed university	40 (38%)	131 (66%)	171	56 (44%)	153 (65%)	209	15 (12%)	41 (18%)	56
Completed secondary	56 (54%)	66 (33%)	122	68 (54%)	77 (33%)	145	63 (50%)	158 (68%)	221
Completed primary	7 (7%)	2 (1%)	9	2 (2%)	4 (2%)	6	35 (28%)	30 (13%)	65
Below primary	1 (1%)	1 (0%)	2	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	1	12 (10%)	5 (2%)	17
Occupation									
Self-employed	22 (21%)	42 (21%)	64	15 (12%)	36 (15%)	51	22 (18%)	56 (24%)	78
Company employed	57 (55%)	99 (50%)	156	95 (75%)	150 (64%)	245	76 (61%)	134 (57%)	210
Student	2 (2%)	28 (14%)	30	2 (2%)	25 (11%)	27	4 (3%)	30 (13%)	34
Retired	9 (9%)	16 (8%)	25	6 (5%)	15 (6%)	21	5 (4%)	7 (3%)	12
Unemployed	7 (7%)	4 (2%)	11	2 (2%)	2 (1%)	4	4 (3%)	1 (0%)	5
Housewife	7 (7%)	9 (5%)	16	5 (4%)	6 (3%)	11	13 (10%)	9 (4%)	22
No answer	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (0%)	2	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1
First time visiting HK									
Yes	40 (38%)	77 (38%)	117	67 (53%)	106 (45%)	173	40 (32%)	89 (37%)	129
No	64 (62%)	123 (62%)	187	59 (47%)	127 (54%)	184	85 (68%)	146 (62%)	231
No answer	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	2	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	2

*MC – Mainland Chinese; NM – Non-mainland Chinese Service Attributes that Affect Satisfaction Levels

Government

For the data on the government sector, twelve regression models were developed to examine the factors that contributed to overall service satisfaction (Table 2). Each model represented a service department for each segment of the tourism market studied (mainland Chinese tourists, non-mainland tourist, and all tourists). The four overall tourist satisfaction models showed that the responsiveness of officials and staff members was the most influential factor. Among the four models, “Proper attitude of officials” made the greatest contribution in the police ($B=0.397$), immigration ($B=0.306$), and customs ($B=0.283$) and the second highest in the leisure and cultural services (LCS) ($B=0.276$) departments. As the first contact point for tourists, the service quality provided by the immigration and customs departments directly affects the first impression that visitors have of Hong Kong. The models show that five attributes influenced the level of satisfaction with these two departments. In particular, a human touch and a good environment were considered very important, in that the participants expected a good attitude and communication skills from officials and a pleasant waiting area. Clear instructions about procedures were also deemed to be important, as these help first-time visitors to Hong Kong feel more at ease. For the LCS department, the environment of museums and galleries was the most important attribute affecting satisfaction levels ($B=0.278$), followed by information availability ($B=0.235$) and distribution of staff members ($B=0.276$). Interestingly, facilities in public parks had a negative influence on satisfaction. This may indicate that the scenery of the parks in rural areas generates a higher satisfaction level than that of parks in the city center. A comparison of the service attributes affecting service satisfaction in the mainland Chinese and non-mainland Chinese segments showed that the requirements of these two groups of tourists were quite similar to those identified by the overall model. However, the requirements of the mainland Chinese tourists were distinct from those of their non-mainland counterparts. First, the “feeling safe in the presence of police” factor had a significant influence on their level of satisfaction with police services, whereas this factor did not contribute to satisfaction at all in the non-mainland Chinese or

overall models. Second, the mainland Chinese participants rated having a pleasant queuing area to be important (immigration B=0.262; customs B=0.176), whereas the non-mainland Chinese tourists preferred a shorter queuing time and clear instructions on immigration and customs procedures (immigration B=0.137 and 0.195; customs B=0.183 and 0.232). The attitude of immigration and customs officers strongly influenced the non-mainland Chinese tourists' level of satisfaction with these departments (immigration B=0.379; customs B=0.304), whereas the mainland Chinese tourists were not concerned about this factor.

Table 2
Regression Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction with the Government Sector

Police	Mainland Chinese			Non-mainland Chinese			Overall		
	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF
(Constant)	2.069	4.169**		1.144	2.102*		1.728	4.635**	
Feeling safe in the presence of police	0.481	4.121**	1						
Proper attitude of police officers				0.451	3.038**	2.12	0.397	4.950**	1.09
Visibility of police officers in public places				0.385	3.850**	1.23	0.203	2.962**	1.09
Good knowledge of directions and local amenities				0.292	2.308*	1.754			
Police officers deal with enquiries efficiently				0.383	-2.205*	2.61			
	$R^2=0.278, F=16.98**, D-W=2.314$			$R^2=0.583, F=12.572**, D-W=2.332$			$R^2=0.344, F=22.586**, D-W=2.105$		
Immigration									
(Constant)	1.763	5.628**		0.654	2.852*		0.978	4.853**	
Proper attitude of immigration officers				0.379	7.307**	1.652	0.306	6.457**	1.76
Language and communication skills of officers	0.355	4.429**	1.238	0.148	3.114**	1.487	0.161	3.557**	1.59
Clear instructions on immigration procedures				0.195	3.914**	1.242	0.144	3.152**	1.37
Pleasant environment of the queuing area	0.262	3.917**	1.238				0.088	2.096*	1.42
Short queuing time				0.137	3.056**	1.393	0.086	2.304*	1.43
	$R^2=0.395, F=31.07**, D-W=2.236$			$R^2=0.608, F=67.013**, D-W=2.129$			$R^2=0.512, F=56.126**, D-W=1.972$		
Customs									
(Constant)	2.095	6.079**		0.069	0.273		0.85	3.722**	
Proper attitude of customs officers				0.304	4.580**	2.031	0.28	4.637**	1.99
Language and communication skills of officers	0.343	3.939**	1.392	0.14	2.479**	1.611	0.18	3.286**	1.63
Clear instructions on customs regulations				0.232	4.090**	1.426	0.15	2.932**	1.45
Pleasant environment of the customs area	0.176	2.185*	1.392						
Short queuing time				0.183	3.822**	1.327	0.09	2.123*	1.39
Thorough yet courteous security checks				0.13	2.082*	2.259	0.11	1.983*	2.11
	$R^2=0.336, F=20.492**, D-W=1.894$			$R^2=0.652, F=54.71**, D-W=2.073$			$R^2=0.511, F=45.784**, D-W=2.082$		

Leisure and Cultural Services (LCS)								
Constant)	2.143	4.870**	0.148	0.500*	0.77	1.799*		
Pleasant environment of museums and galleries			0.366	5.217**	1.474	0.28	2.998**	1.38
Clear and informative signage in public parks	0.28	3.585**	1.138			0.17	1.699*	1.61

* and ** represent significance at the 5% and 1% levels; D-W=Durbin Watson Test.

Hotels

Among the ten service attributes listed in the questionnaire for the hotel sector, four influenced the overall level of satisfaction with hotels (Table 3). The participants all expected prompt service delivery and a pleasant room (B=0.255 and 0.253). They also required frontline staff to have a proper attitude (B=0.18), especially when handling complaints (B=0.166). However, the focus of the mainland Chinese tourists was the physical environment of the hotel, such as the guest-room environment (B=0.443), whereas the other tourists were not concerned about this factor. The mainland Chinese participants were also concerned about the safety and security of the hotel (B=0.134), whereas the non-mainland Chinese tourists did not rate this as being a significant factor. Instead, they focused on human contact, with their first concern being service delivery (B=0.355) and then complaint handling (B=0.189). The appearance of staff members was also a factor that affected the satisfaction level of the non-mainland Chinese tourists.

Table 3
Regression Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction with the Hotel Sector

Service Attributes	Mainland Chinese			Non-mainland Chinese			Overall		
	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF
(Constant)	0.992	2.980**		1.174	3.261**		0.590	1.937*	
Guest room environment	0.443	7.161**	1.172				0.253	3.686**	1.221
Prompt service upon request	0.175	2.953**	1.100	0.355	3.769**	2.057	0.255	3.423**	1.769
Complaint handling				0.189	2.349*	1.854	0.180	2.706**	1.479
Appearance and tidiness of staff				0.165	1.904*	1.254			
Safety and security of the hotel	0.134	1.934*	1.162						
Proper attitude of frontline staff							0.166	2.122*	1.121
	R ² =0.278, F=16.98** D-W=2.314			R ² =0.583, F=12.572** D-W=2.332			R ² =0.498, F=33.519** D-W=2.191		

* and ** represent significance at the 5% and 1% levels; D-W=Durbin Watson Test.

Transportation

Due to their provision of a fast and convenient service and a self-service environment, the railway generated higher satisfaction ratings than other forms of transport. The focus of the mainland Chinese participants was the cleanliness of the railway environment (B=0.461) and staff attitudes (B=0.179). In contrast, the main concerns of the non-mainland Chinese tourists were safety (B=0.268), proper signage, and location maps (B=0.107), and the provision of toilets in stations (B=0.079).

Buses were deemed to offer the most convenient and low-priced transportation services for tourists. However, some of the tourists became frustrated when they were unable to obtain the desired travel information. The only common service attribute that influenced the satisfaction level of the mainland and non-mainland Chinese segments was punctuality and reliability (mainland tourists B=0.182; non-mainland tourists B=0.456). Otherwise, the two segments had quite different requirements. The mainland Chinese participants looked for "Well maintained and clean buses" (B=0.268) and "Feeling safe on board" (B=0.201), whereas their non-mainland Chinese counterparts looked for "Provision of tourist buses" (B=0.22) and "Proper attitude of bus drivers"

(B=0.171). The overall satisfaction model showed that the tourists all expected a well-presented bus driver (B=0.19) and tourist transportation passes that fit their needs (B=0.182).

The attribute with the greatest influence on satisfaction with taxi services was the attitude of taxi drivers. Both the mainland Chinese (B=0.444) and non-mainland Chinese (B=0.243) tourists rated this as the most important attribute of this service. The honesty of taxi drivers was another concern, with both segments rating it as the second most important attribute (mainland B=0.381; non-mainland B=0.19). The non-mainland Chinese tourists were also concerned about the cleanliness of taxis (B=0.154) and taxi drivers (B=0.19), and expected the taxi driver to help them load and unload luggage (B=0.112). The overall regression models were quite similar to those for the non-mainland Chinese segment, and featured the same attributes except that the overall model also included "information about fares and destinations" (B=0.083).

Table 4
Regression Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction with the Transport Sector

Railway	Mainland Chinese			Non-mainland Chinese			Overall		
	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF
Constant	1.549	4.316**		1.231	4.028**		1.46	6.42**	
Feeling safe when using the services				0.157	2.409**	1.378			
Proper attitude of staff	0.179	2.698**	1.191	0.182	3.579**	1.179	0.20	5.10**	1.137
Clean and pleasant trains/platforms	0.461	5.325**	1.191	0.205	3.061**	1.466	0.32	6.28**	1.268
Signage and location maps inside the station				0.164	3.533**	1.258	0.14	3.59**	1.218
	$R^2=0.384, F=28.082**, D-W=1.846$			$R^2=0.383, F=26.103**, D-W=1.865$			$R^2=0.367, F=51.054**, D-W=1.798$		
Franchised Buses	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF
(Constant)	1.397	3.579**		0.618	2.020*		0.889	2.858**	
Well-maintained and clean buses	0.268	2.809**	1.389				0.204	2.776**	1.403
Feeling safe on board	0.201	2.262*	1.525						
Punctuality and reliability of service	0.182	2.111*	1.497	0.456	5.959**	1.426	0.309	3.716**	1.514
Provision of tourist buses				0.220	3.355**	1.173			
Proper attitude of bus drivers				0.171	2.514**	1.423			
Tidiness of bus drivers							0.190	2.365**	1.420
Tourist transport passes that suits tourist needs							0.182	2.256**	1.427
	$R^2=0.425, F=16.498**, D-W=1.598$			$R^2=0.587, F=39.857**, D-W=2.296$			$R^2=0.476, F=26.584**, D-W=2.079$		
Taxis	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF	B	t	VIF
(Constant)	0.614	1.860*		0.322	1.169		0.348	1.473	
Well-maintained and clean taxis				0.154	2.176*	1.552	0.129	2.156*	1.655
Tidiness of taxi drivers				0.190	2.683**	1.568	0.113	1.853*	1.579
Honesty of taxi drivers	0.381	4.948**	1.357	0.190	3.177**	1.518	0.208	3.928**	1.611
Professional attitude of taxi drivers	0.444	5.215**	1.357	0.243	3.623**	1.555	0.266	4.368**	1.683
Help with loading and unloading luggage				0.112	2.456**	1.258	0.089	2.149*	1.369
Delivery of information about fares and destinations							0.083	1.814*	1.469
	$R^2=0.573, F=53.031**, D-W=2.186$			$R^2=0.548, F=31.533**, D-W=2.009$			$R^2=0.736, F=37.394**, D-W=1.963$		

* and ** represent significance at the 5% and 1% levels; D-W=Durbin Watson Test.

CONCLUSION

This study found that of all of the services examined, mainland and non-mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong were most satisfied with railway services (mean scores for both groups of 4.265 and 4.270, respectively). The largely self-service railway system is not only fast and convenient, but is also less prone to problems with communication, which may be the reason for its high satisfaction rating. The mainland Chinese participants rated the hotel sector as being the least satisfactory, with a mean score of 3.9. This implies that they had high expectations of hotel facilities and services, but were not satisfied with what they received. Taxi services were given the lowest score, 3.699, by the non-mainland Chinese tourists. The regression results indicated that this was because these tourists were not able to communicate effectively with taxi drivers and found the cleanliness of taxis to be unsatisfactory.

With improvements in the financial situation in mainland China and the simplification of visa application policies, increasing numbers of mainland Chinese residents are likely to make Hong Kong their preferred travel destination. The regression models showed that the factors that affect the satisfaction level of mainland Chinese tourists are quite different from those affecting non-mainland Chinese tourists. For instance, mainland Chinese tourists have higher expectations of the physical environment, such as waiting areas at immigration or customs facilities and hotel guest rooms.

The findings of this study and the research of Jin et al. (2008) suggest that the Hong Kong tourism industry should aim to improve employees' language and communication skills because poor communication skills negatively affect service satisfaction levels, which may render the tourism sector and related sectors less competitive and unsatisfactory to international visitors. Finally, although some of the attributes were statistically insignificant, they should not be neglected, as their absence is likely to cause customer dissatisfaction.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

No study is without limitations (Patton, 2002). Accordingly, this study is subject to two main limitations that future studies should address to shed more light on the subject of service quality and customer satisfaction in Hong Kong. First, for the hotel sector, customer satisfaction was not investigated based on the type or class of hotel, such as five-star, four-star, or three-star. However, Choi and Chu (2001) indicated that the type or class of hotel may affect customers' overall satisfaction and their intention to return. Future research should thus investigate overall tourist satisfaction with hotels based on hotel classification. Second, the list of satisfaction attributes rated for the hotel, government, and transport sectors was not exhaustive. There may be other attributes that are relevant but were not included in the survey. Future surveys should try to identify and include relevant satisfaction attributes that were not examined in this study.

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