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# Impact of Service Quality on Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty at Fort Munro, Pakistan

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**ABSTRACT**

Tourism industry plays a significant role in the economy of any country. In classify to enlarge the quality of tourism, this sector needs to know what their competitive advantage is and what potential they require to raise and prolong. The basic intention of this study is to examine tourist satisfaction in the tourism area in order to highlight the need for better service quality. The tourist pleasure is one of important factors as tourists apply to determine quality of service which play an important role in future behavior intentions and destination loyalty and that are intimately connected with their pleasure. That research was quantitative in nature. A standardized questionnaire was used to gather data for the analysis. The study's findings were analyzed using a reliability measure, correlation, and regression analysis. According to the findings of this report, service quality has a huge effect on visitor happiness, and as a result, service quality plays an important role in tourism. The findings showed that service quality does have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, and that tourist satisfaction has a positive impact on potential behavioral intentions and behavioral intentions. This research offers a variety of theoretical and decision-making recommendations to the academic and tourism sectors focused on the findings. The writer offered suggestions and shortcomings for future study.

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## Introduction

In today's global environment, any company must contend with increased competitiveness, including such strategic advantages, sustainability, and efficiency gains, in order to distinguish oneself from the competitors. As a result, in the economy, quality service is critical to a country's economic growth. Furthermore, enhancing service quality boosts consumer loyalty and engagement, growth, and financial results thereby lowering sales and operational costs. (Khan et

al., 2014). In the extremely viable tourism diligence, tourism is observed as dynamic vigor for area expansion. Flourishing tourism is capable of increase earnings, job opportunities and also government returns of any country. Providing the high service quality can increase the tourist satisfaction level and it becomes a key factor for sustainable tourism purpose administration (Liu and Yen, 2010). On the other hand, it can be able to exert a pull on tourists to visit again and advocate intention to others is other significant element to make an accomplishment of tourism aim expansion (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Pakistan is home to several of most amazing tourist attractions in the world. With the attractive topographical features, it's a country that enjoys all four seasons and has been recently recognized as the world's top tourist destination for 2020. It has largest deserts, lush green fields and wonderful hill stations. Pakistan's Punjab province is also a land with astonishing natural variety. Fort Munro is one of most stunning hill station in Pakistan, is one example that wholly reflects the natural diversity of province. That hill station located at a height of 1,972 m (6,470 feet).

Fort Munro is one of the coldest places in the region, which also experiences snowfall every now and then, and is often dubbed as "Mini Murree" by the locals. It is visited by a large number of tourists, mostly during the summer season to escape the heat. With over 6000 ft of elevation, Fort Munro is the highest point of the Koh-e-Suleman mountain range, which is why it is often considered as the 'jewel' of southern Punjab. Keeping in view its significance in the world of Tourism, the current government is doing efforts to make it a fully-fledged tourism spot by adding features like cable car and chairlift system as well as developing new infrastructure projects in the region with the provision of other basic facilities for people visiting the hill station.

Until now, the standard of facilities and their effects on tourist happiness have not been assessed in the chosen context. The tourism sector remains one of the most important industries in this current and competitive age, and amid major developments that have rendered its operational climate more challenging, the tourism sector continues to develop (Theobald, 2005). The World Travel and Tourism Council reported that (2009), the tourism industry has raised a gross income of U.S. 3.5 trillion Dollars and it forecast to boost U.S. 7.0 trillion Dollar by 2011(Salleh et al., 2013). The study on the service quality, tourist satisfaction and future behavioral intentions are well perform in extent of tourism prose (Cole and Illum, 2006). However, research did not been effusive subjected to theoretical and observed analysis in the intellectual tourism perspective mainly in Fort Munro Pakistan. Therefore this study aims to analyze control of service quality and tourist satisfaction on the behavioral intentions and destination loyalty in Fort Munro Pakistan.

That study is ordered in the five main sections which starting with the introduction of study. The next section provides a specific inclusive insight of literature on service quality and customer satisfaction, along with behavioral intentions and designation loyalty. Next section explains in detail research methodology and section four detailed analysis results. The preceding section concludes study which is pursuing by discussion of useful implications and limitations of study.

## Literature Review

### Service Quality and Tourist satisfaction

Service quality is definite as what customers gets out and be ready to give for it relatively than what the giver puts in (Ducker, 1991). Basically service quality must initiate from desires of buyers and ends with customer satisfaction and constructive awareness of the service quality. Both customer and the service giver have a considerable control on the conception and delivery

procedure of a service consequently the service was clear the diverse (Kvist and Klefsjö, 2006). According to While Zeithaml et al (1996) service quality is generally notion of customers to the service flaw or else superiority. Apart from the many definitions of service quality a variety of definitions of service quality contain the similar outlines like service quality is concerning with reference to the prejudiced judgment of customer of a service offered by contributor, according to that the space among customers anticipation and practical insight of the service (Liu and Yen, 2010). Furthermore the stage of satisfaction will be attained if the anticipated level of service is alike to the supposed service. Customers will be much pleased if the gap linking the anticipated service and perceived service is associated little. Therefore, services are most important element of the tourism experiences especially the service quality is most significant feature to gratifying tourists. Still, there are limited shots to study the association between the service quality and satisfaction in tourism business. Hence it proposed a strong association between service quality and tourist satisfaction.

**H1: there is a significance link between service quality and tourist satisfaction.**

**Tourist Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions**

The term customer satisfaction may be is explained as the satisfaction based on the effects which distinguish the satisfaction level as the end state ensuing from the knowhow of utilization, or else a procedure with the aim of to highlight the perceptual, evaluative and psychosomatic procedures contributing to customer satisfaction (Varvara, 1997).It can also be defined as the feelings of the post consumption that the customers practice from their purchase (Um et al., 2006). Tourist satisfaction is explained as the key findings of clients by assessing the tourism service (Bowen and Clarke, 2002). Tourist satisfaction can be a significant issue intended for negotiations in the literature of tourism. The term tourist satisfaction is very significant for the target of marketing as it is primary in the preference of destinations, the spending of the products and the services, and the tourists' decision to revisit (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). In the literature of tourism the satisfaction of customer is the tourist state of sentiment after which they practice their excursion (Sanchez et al., 2006). Tourist satisfaction is imperative factor which being explored in loads of tourism studies due to its magnitude in formative the sensation and sustained survival of a tourism business (Gursoy et al., 2007). The purpose of the vacation of tourist contentment is degree of on whole pleasure that the tourists experience, and effect that the visit experience capable to accomplish the tourist wishes, hopes, desires and wishes from visit (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Behavioral intentions can be of great significance to service providers as they predict the behaviors. But some researchers are of the view that behavioral intention do no predict behavior accurately (Brady and Robertson ,2001).In the model presented by ZBP (1996), repurchase intention, customer loyalty, complaining behavior, price sensitivity and word of mouth all measure the concept of behavioral intention. Behavioral intention can be seen when the customer gets high service quality as perceived by buyer which direct to encouraging behavioral intention where as stumpy service quality perceived by the buyer results in unfavorable behavioral intentions. Some researchers disagree that service superiority being a positive cognitive valuation, is the antecedent of customer satisfaction leading to behavioral intentions while other groups of researchers support the view that customer satisfaction leads to service quality (Brady and Robertson, 2001). In case, the customer, being cognitive oriented, will perceive service quality leading to customer satisfaction but if the customer is affective oriented, his perception of the relationship will be, satisfaction causing service quality. Most of the researcher agreed on that service quality and customer satisfaction has undeviating associations with behavioral intentions (DST, 2000). On the basis of above argument, we come to hypothesize:

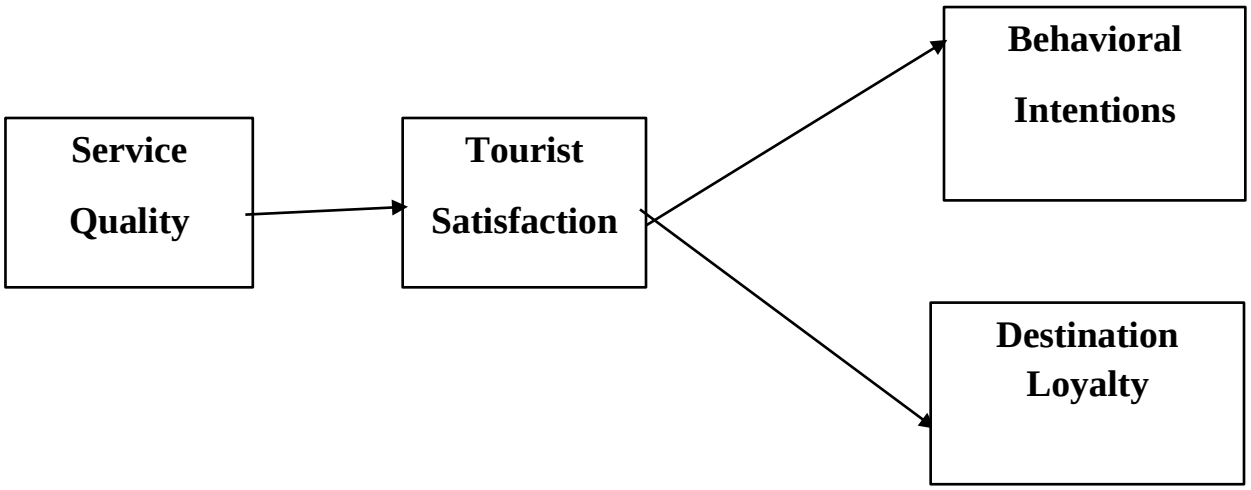
**H2: Tourist satisfaction mediates the connection between service quality and behavioral intention.**

**Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty**

In the field of tourism sector, there are observed indications that the satisfaction of a tourist have a burly sign of their objective to repeat and proposed the objective to the new people tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). It is accepted that the satisfied tourists will revisit the unchanged destination, and are much eager to split their optimistic roving occurrences with the friends and family. There are many previous studies that detail a direct and affirmative association between the visitor/tourists satisfaction and service quality (Osman and Sentosa, 2013).It is additionally confirmed to there is an optimistic association between the visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty. Yet that type of the studies has not account on the significance of the diverse stages of the sightseer satisfaction as a mediating manipulate in ascertained the association between the service quality and destination loyalty. Hence the discussion proposed following hypothesis:

**H3: The tourist satisfaction mediates the association between the service quality and destination loyalty.**

**Framework**




**Research Methodology**

The study used a quantitative research method. The data were gathered through the use of self-administrated questionnaires distributed via face-to-face contacts. 100 respondents from Bahawalpur City were contacted and a total of 90 completed the survey Due to COVID -19 the sample size was small. After the collection of fulfilled surveys the questionnaires were coded and go through into SPSS sheet for advance analysis. That research used convenience sampling techniques which are also known as accidental sampling by gather the samples from the tourist who visited to Fort Munro. A regularity examination was executed to review the allocation of various variables based on the demographic information like respondent age, sexual category, education, profession and common expenditures. Table 1 of the study shows demographic character of the respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics**

| Variable | Sort | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 12 | 30 |
| | Female | 28 | 70 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 20-30<br>30-40<br>40-50<br>50-60 | 33<br>5<br>1<br>1 | 28.5<br>12.5<br>2.5<br>2.5 |
| Education | Intermediate<br>Bachelor<br>Masters<br>Ms/M Phil | 2<br>7<br>15<br>16 | 5<br>13.5<br>37.5<br>40 |
| Income(Rs.) | Below 15,000<br>15,000-25,000<br>25,000-35,000<br>35,000-45,000<br>Above 50,000 | 18<br>7<br>7<br>7<br>1 | 45<br>17.5<br>17.5<br>17.5<br>2.5 |

**Sample/Data**

The researchers usually used 5% edge of error and the existing study also used the matching criteria. For the current study the response rate is projected to 85%.

The sampling technique which we used was convenient sampling and non-probability sampling. It is that type of sampling where some elements of the population have no possibility of selection or else where the probability of selection can't be exactly determined. That technique involves the medley of elements based on the supposition concerning the population of concern, which forms the criteria for selection. Although convenience sampling is a statistical tool for obtaining representative results by choosing individuals based on their willingness to volunteer or units based on their availability or ease of access. Convenience sampling is often used to quickly and cost-effectively gather a vast number of successful surveys (Lym et al., 2010).

**Measures of the constructs**

First section of the scale was designed to include the demographics of the respondents consisted of sexual category, age, earnings and educational level. The section 2 of the study includes the latent variables which are imperative in the existing study. The study includes the variables as Tourists Satisfaction, Destination Loyalty, Behavior Intentions and Service Quality. All the items which used in the current study are adapted from the well known studies. The questionnaire of the study included 23 items (Table 2), which are service quality (6 items), tourist satisfaction (8 items), behavioral intentions (4 items) and destination loyalty (5 items). All the items were scored on a five-point Likert scale which are 1 for “strongly agree”, 2 for “agree”, 3 for “slightly agree”, 4 for “disagree” and 5 for “strongly disagree”. All measurement 23 items derivative from each construct and its Cronbach a value have been listed for reference. The Cronbach a value is well attained by all instruments ahead of the recommended level of 0.60 (Nunnally, 1960) shown in Table 3.

**Table 2: Items for variables**

| No. | Variable | Items | Adapted from |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Tourists Satisfaction** | 1. magnetism of the destination place<br>2. friendliness of the local populace<br>3. sightseeing staff treatment of tourists and local populace<br>4. the reasonability of opening fee to desirability sites<br>5. excellence of information accessible at magnetism sites<br>6. protection and safety of the target place<br>7. convenience of the target destination<br>8. accommodation | Da Costa Mendes et al., 2010; |
| 2 | **Destination Loyalty** | 1. if I have to trip over again, I would prefer this place<br>2. I try to use this place because it is the best choice for me<br>3. I deem for myself to be a loyal client of this place<br>4. I will speak constructive things about this place to other community<br>5. I will suggest this place to someone who seeks my recommendation | Kim and Niehm (2009) |
| 3 | **Behavioral Intentions** | 1. if I had to decide again then I will want again this protected area<br>2. I will advise the practice of ecotourism to relations and links<br>3. I will speak highly of this protected area to family and friends<br>4. I will almost certainly recommend this protected area to family and friends<br>5. I would repeat the visit to this protected area on a different circumstances | Žabkar et al.(2010) |
| 4 | **Service Quality** | 1.Fort Munro is consistent in creating a common sense comfort for you<br>2. Fort Munro people have rapidity and hospitality in serving you<br>3.hotel management provides the information and instructions that are easily understood by you<br>4.You will experience calm and protected during your visit in Fort Munro<br>5. The environment around Fort Munro is clean and neat<br>6.Public facilities that are provided is well managed | Parasuraman et al (1990) |

**Reliability Analysis**

The Cronbach's alpha value of tourists Satisfaction of questionnaire was 0.94 which is supplementary than satisfactory value which is almost 0.50 by Nunnally (1970) and 0.60 by Moss et al. (1998). This value shows that all the 23 items of the questionnaire are highly reliable and valid for the purpose to calculate the opinions of tourist's satisfaction in the tourism industry.

**Table 3: Reliability Test:**

| Variables | No of items | Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Tourists Satisfaction | 8 | 0.94 |
| Destination Loyalty | 5 | 0.92 |
| Behavioral Intentions | 4 | 0.92 |
| Service Quality | 6 | 0.89 |

## Data Analysis and Results:

### Research Hypothesis Testing

After testing the reliability of data gathered by using Cronbach's alpha, the proposed relationship among the tourist satisfaction, service quality, destination loyalty and behavioral intentions are tested in this section of the research study. The model is evaluated using linear regression relationship among, service quality effecting tourist satisfaction, tourist Satisfaction effecting destination loyalty and tourist satisfaction effecting Behavioral Intentions. The descriptive study was conducted to validate relationships existing among independent and dependent variables. The correlation analysis was conducted in order to determine the strength of statistical relationship among variables is conducted as a supplement to the regression analysis.

### Service quality and tourist satisfaction

The results of regression conduct among service quality and tourist satisfaction give the value of ($\beta$=0.424) and $p<0.01$ .Hence on basis of research findings we accept the H1 and validate that here is significant as well as a positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and service quality. Further, the correlation results also support the research findings that both variables are positively and strongly correlated.

### Tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions

Regression analysis which conducted by using SPSS Software Version20 confirm the proposed relationship between the customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions under hypothesis. Value of ($\beta$=0.682) and $p<.001$ prove the existence of a highly significant and positive relationship among the two variables. The correlation analysis also validates this relationship and show the satisfaction of customer has a very strong association with Behavioral Intention. Table given below summaries the above regression results conducted under this study.

### Tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty

The present study attempts to evaluate effects tourist satisfaction can have on the destination loyalty. The regression investigation show that ($\beta$=0.602) and $p<0.001$, there is a considerable positive association among tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty as proposed in the model under H3 hypothesis. The Correlation results also show the high strength of relationship existing among these variables as compared to the relationship among others.

| Hypothesis | Variables of study | Estimates | S.E | p | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Service Quality → tourist Satisfaction | .424 | .117 | ** | Supported |
| H2 | Tourist → Satisfaction Behavioral intentions | .602 | .165 | *** | Supported |
| H3 | Tourist Sat → Destination loyalty | .682 | .0139 | *** | Supported |

**Table 4: Regression Analysis Results**
Where * p<0.005, **p<0.01 and *** p<0.001

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix**

| | Tourist Sat Destination Loy | Behavioural Intentions Service Quality | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cus. Sat | 1 | 0.062*** | 0.682** | 0.424** |
| Cus. Loy. | | 1 | 0.719** | 0.509** |
| Beh. Int. | | | 1 | 0.571** |
| Ser. Qul. | | | | 1 |
| | | | | |

Notes: **correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

**Discussion and conclusion**

The statistical investigation and empirical findings of the study need support that there is an influence of service quality on tourist satisfaction, as well as influence of tourist satisfaction on the future behavioral intentions and destination loyalty. These result findings also support the theoretical background used in this study. The tourist satisfaction can measured to be one of the most significant analysts of potential behavioral intentions. Hence it is extremely significant to recognize that how tourists assessment their understanding in destination. It is important for the tourism management to formulate the most effective strategies and service freedom to assemble the actual needs of tourist. Once the traveler recognizes the practice important, the level of satisfaction will take place and also the remuneration of constructive behaviors in potential possibly will achieved.

**Managerial Implications**

The present study exposed that service quality has a high pressure on the tourist satisfaction as compared to the other factors. Hence, Fort Munro tourist management should develop and improve tourist satisfaction by performing a periodic post-evaluation from each service quality element that is still far from the needs and aspirations of tourists. The aim of enhancing service quality is to ensure that visitors enjoy the benefits they need while visiting Fort Munro. Providing a good service quality is significant but not good enough for Fort Munro tourist management to

rely just on service quality to raise tourist satisfaction that creates positive future behavioral intentions. Other factors such as transportation and convenience, destination attractions and tourism promotion were measured need to be noted due to those factors that also play a significant function in the sensation of tourism business. Although need of Fort Munro tourism management on improving of all the service quality aspects to raise the willingness of domestic local tourist to achieve behavioral intentions in the future. The tourism management at Fort Munro offers organized training programs for staff and tourists that are thought to have a significant advantage in terms of knowledge. The educational programs are structured to enhance the intensity of the ability and willingness to offer the greatest possible service to visitors.

**Limitations & future directions of study**

As the results of the study drop light on the numerous imperative matters but still some limitations require to be measured. The present study has discussed the limited dimensions of quality service and customer satisfaction. The future researchers will investigate that dimensions. Due to limited resources and time constraints, this study is limited on number of samples, consequently the future studies must enlarged the size of the sample in which respondents consist of combination between domestic local tourist and foreign tourists. Thirdly, this study is limited on quantitative approach; therefore, it is recommended that further studies can be developed by combine research methods i.e. quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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