

Determinants of Customer Satisfaction of Colombo Floating Market, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how product and services are supplied by an organization to meet or surpass customer expectation. The concept is defined as the difference between customer's expectation and the total realized value of the product and service offered by the company. Today's organization considers satisfied customer as an asset which is the lifeblood of the organization. The Colombo Floating Market (CFM) is a novel concept to Sri Lanka and beheld that it is usually crowded throughout the day and very popular among visitors who visit central Colombo for various needs. Today CFM has become an iconic place to relax and rest while having shopping experience. The objective of the study is to identify visitor satisfaction of CFM and to identify contributors of the satisfaction of CFM. The two main determinants of the visitor satisfaction are Product Quality and the Service Quality of the CFM and the study uses seven indicators namely; (a) Goods, (b) Food, (c) Service, (d) Quality, (e) Support of Service Staff, (f) Cleanliness, (g) Amenities, and (h) Access as indicators of above identified determinants. The population frame of the study was undefined and the sample was selected from the people who visited the CFM within the study period. The survey carried covering all seven days of the week and randomly 150 respondents were selected for study purpose. The average value of five points Likert Scale measurement established that visitors are dissatisfied on Food available in CFM while all other six indicators are satisfied. In overall,

visitors are satisfied on CFM. The One-Sample t Test and Binomial distribution are analysed for hypothesis testing on the contribution of each indicator for the satisfaction of CFM established that except “Amenities” as an indicator, all other indicators contribute to visitor satisfaction of CFM.

Keywords: Visitor Satisfaction, Product Quality Satisfaction, Service Quality Satisfaction, Floating Market.

Introduction

Retail business is a competitive business in today’s world. Especially, the concept shopping malls or shopping market has become a part of the lifestyle of urban citizens. Shopping mall is defined as “one or more buildings forming a complex of shops representing merchandisers, with interconnected walkways enable visitors to walk from unit to unit. The biggest shopping mall in the world is New Century Global Centre in China. Water Park, IMAX Theatre, 2000 hotel rooms are included in this mall and it spreads on 16 million sq.ft. Also, the Utama in Malaysia, the Dubai Mall in UAE, and West Edmonton Mall in Canada are other examples for shopping malls (Ranghunathann & Robbin, 2013). The primary objective of a shopping mall is to introduce a diversity of stores and restaurants, with unique products and interesting special events including fancy and luxury items shopping, entertainment, walking path and play areas and convenient location.

According to the Hallowell, (1996) satisfied shopping experience encourage visitors on customer loyalty and re-patronage. Multiple numbers of diversified shopping units, which offer an appropriate mix of products and services, is a key feature to enhance the visitor satisfaction (LeHew and Wesley, 2006). Accordingly, shopping center should include multidimensional shopping units range from garments to food. Brown (1978) noted that merchandise, service, physical characteristics, employees, and other shoppers (as cited in Ellis and Marino, 1992) are attributes for visitor satisfaction in shopping malls.

The concept of rivers and canals base floating shopping experience is a sub set of the concept of a shopping mall which is very popular in countries like Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Venice. These centres are

not attracted to people who visit for merely shopping experience but also because of entertainment and relaxing experience.

The floating market is a market where goods are sold on boats or specially designed floating building in the waterfront. Today most of these markets are operated as tourist attraction hubs. Most of floating markets are position as a centre for leisure, relaxation, shopping and dining. Thailand has many picturesque floating markets where goods are sold by itinerant vendors who play the rivers and canals in their boats, delivering commodities to people's homes or meeting to exchange goods in traditional ways (Batra, 2014). Tourism organizations such as TAT, travel agencies, tour operators as well as hoteliers have successfully marketed and promoted floating markets in Thailand. Floating markets have a special place in travel publications in Thailand and a postcard is the indispensable part of a local sightseeing itinerary. Today floating markets have continued to draw the attention of international tourists by offering unique Thai experience. The community also benefits from the sales of local products and services for tourists. Floating markets and community markets are very popular day-trip destinations for urban dwellers and international visitors alike. Probably, the overabundance of fruits and vegetables, which matches the continuous demand, has led to the existence of floating markets (Wiwttanakantang & To-im, 2014).

The city of Colombo has number of shopping malls which offer a complete shopping experience for shoppers. These include Majestic City, Liberty Plaza, Arcade Independent Square, Colombo Racecourse, Colombo Gold Canter and Crescat Boulevard. With the beautification concept in the City of Colombo led by Ministry of Defense and the Urban Development Authority introduced the Colombo Floating Market (CFM), a novel concept to Sri Lankans, located on the bank of the Beira Lake, Bastian street, Colombo. The CFM serves as a tourist attraction point which sells locally produce handicraft, garments and fancy items including around 92 trade stalls established on boats on Beira Lake. The CFM faces Bastian Street, the street that links the Central Bus Stand in Pettah and the Colombo Fort Railway Station, into Pettah, the busiest commercial center of Sri Lanka. One of the objectives of the development was to relocate unlicensed street vendors off the footpaths, particularly in congested areas like Pettah, where they had no facilities and were forcing pedestrians onto

the road. Priority was given to those traders who were impacted by the redevelopment on Bastian Street.

Unlike traditional shopping mall, CFM does not provide luxury experience with high-end technology. However, it offers a traditional shopping experience to visitors. They can experience the free walking along the footpath of the canal, relaxing the common areas of food court etc. Most of the visitors are casually dressed and can get experience the traditional or imported goods range from garments, electronic and toys. Visitor level of the market is about 500-1500 per day. Even though high visitor rate is recorded, vendors are not happy with annual rent and the open nature of the stalls and boats which restrict their ability to secure their goods overnight. Further, even though floating market enjoys a good visitor rate their interaction, expectation and imagining on CFM is not studied. Therefore, this investigation is important to overcome limitations and challenges of this novel concept to Sri Lanka. Visitor satisfaction has direct linkage with the profitability of the vendors and the number of visits by the customer (Gomez et al., 2004; Hallowell, 1996). Thus identifying the attributes of visitor satisfaction on experience at CFM is vital for retailers and management arm of the CFM to develop appropriate strategies to enhance visitor satisfaction.

The aim of the study is to identify visitor satisfaction on CFM, Sri Lanka. In order to achieve this, the study the focus two areas namely; (a) to identify the product quality satisfaction determinants on CFM and (b) to identify the service quality satisfaction determinants of CFM

Conceptual Model

Customer Satisfaction

The intense competition within the business today makes a key to sustainable competitive advantage is delivering high-quality service which results satisfied customers (Shemwell *et al.*, 1998). The concept of customer perception has been discussed by the Kotler and Armstrong (1999) and defined satisfaction as the customer's perception which is the outcome of the comparison of their pre-purchase expectations with post purchase perception. According to the Olen et al (2005), customers' satisfaction is a state of feeling toward a product or service. Fornell (1992) argued that satisfaction is an overall feeling of the customer and Fornell

suggests that customer has an idea about the product or service when compared with an “ideal” norm. However Johnson et al., (1995), argued satisfaction as customer’s overall evaluation of his or her purchase and consumption experience of a good or service. This highlighted the importance of service factor in overall purchase experience. According to the Mohommad and Alhamadani (2011) satisfaction became a popular topic in marketing during the 1980s and is a debated topic during both business expansions and recessions. Most of the scholarly discussions on customer satisfaction involve customer expectation of the service delivery, actual delivery of the customer experience, and expectations that are either exceeded or unmet. If expectations are exceeded, positive confirmation was the results. However a disconfirmation result when customer experience is lower than expected. According to the Oliver (1997), satisfaction is the fulfilment of consumer’s response”, a post-consumption judgment by the consumer that a service provides a pleasing level of consumption related fulfilment, including under or over-fulfilment.

Determinants of Visitor Satisfaction on Shopping Mall

Visitor satisfaction of shopping mall identified as individuals emotional reaction for the total set of experience encountered at the shopping center (Anselmsson, 2006). As a result, it is not the physical product or the experience between the retailer and the customer. The total satisfaction on shopping experience is depended on physical condition and location, environment, services of restaurant, entertainment and leisure, parking facilities and quality of goods and service of the retail outlets (Anselmsson, 2006). According to Pirsigs (1992), there are several approaches to the measurement of quality of the product or service, namely, the product-based approach, the user-based approach, manufacture based approach and value based approach. This allowed for a total shopping experience to customer or visitor.

Determinants of satisfaction of CFM are derived based on the literature review and face to face discussion with visitors of CFM and their expectations. This approach is validated by (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Dabholkar *et al.*, 2000) explaining that perceived performance is the best construct for explaining variations in customer satisfaction. The in-depth reviews visitors of CFM revealed the service quality and the product qualities are two major determinants of satisfaction of CFM. Accordingly, this study is

used two main variables to measure visitor satisfaction; namely, product and service quality satisfaction and these variables were divided to the seven indicators.

Product Related Indicators

The visitor will please and consider product only when a product fulfils his expectation (Wider, 1996 and Chavan, 2003). Product quality directly fulfils visitor satisfaction. LeHew and Wesley (2006) identify; Ease of locating stores, Number of retail stores, Number of food retailers, Number of entertainment facilities, Prices offered by retailers, Fashionability of merchandise, Overall convenience, Parking facilities, Size of center, Layout of center, Variety of stores, Ability to comparison shop, and Experience in center as important quality factors for satisfied shopping experience.

Abdelhamied (2011) previewed the growing competition in the restaurant and the increasing importance of consumer patronage imposes the need to provide better service and to satisfy the consumer. According to the Clark and Wood (1998) six important attributes for satisfying the visitors in a restaurant setting: range of foods, quality of the foods, prices of foods, atmosphere, speed of service, and quality of services.

This confirmed that product related attributes is a function of the quality of the retailers in the market or the shopping mall. Parasuraman *et al.* (1994) and Cronin *et al.* (2000) argued the quality of retailers and the restaurants are significant contributors for the satisfaction of shopping experience.

According to the comments made by visitors of CFM there are two product related indicators identified namely (a) Goods and (b) Food. Warranty and guaranty of the products and fitness for purpose of the product are identified as attributes of Good. Price, Freshness, Diversity, Quality, Healthiness of Foods and Beverage are identified as attributes of Food.

Service Related Indicators

Service quality is the difference between customer expectations of service to be received and perceptions of the service actually received (GroËnroos (1984); Parasuraman *et al* (1988, 1991). The American Society for Marketing defines service as activities or benefits that are offered for sale

or that are offered for being related to a particular product. According to the Kotler (2003) service is any behaviour or act based on a contract between two parties: the provider and the receiver, and the essence of this reciprocal process is intangible. Hakesver (2000) looked at service as a set of economic activities that provide time, location and psychological benefits. Hence, service is a set of characteristics and overall properties of the support which aim to satisfy the clients and meet their needs. Reliability, responsiveness, competence, accessibility, courtesy and friendliness, communications, creditability, security, understanding/knowing the customer and tangibility are dimensions of service quality (Beer, 1993). The review of the literature and the views of visitors of the CFM, summarize five service related determinants on customer satisfaction of CFM namely; (a) Support of Service Staff, (b) Cleanliness, (c) Amenities (d) Access and (e) Recreation.

Friendliness and Helpfulness, Language Skills and support of the Information Centre are identified as attributes of the Support of the service staff. Attributes of Cleanliness are Hygiene of inside the market and Clean of outside the market. Parking and Sanitary facilities are identified as attributes of Amenities while Accessibility and Location are the attribute of Access and finally, Creativity and Leisure identified as attributes of entertainment.

The summary of indicators and determinants are given in table 01.

Determinant	Indicator and Attribute
Product Quality	Good
	Price
	Warranty and guaranty
	fitness for purpose
	Food
	Price of Food and Beverage
	Freshness of Food and Beverage
	Diversity of Food and Beverage
	Quality of Food and Beverage
	Healthiness of Food and Beverage
Service Quality	Support of Service Staff
	Friendliness and Helpfulness

	Language Skills
	Information Centre
	Cleanliness
	Hygiene of inside the market
	Cleanness of outside the market
	Amenities
	Parking
	Sanitary facilities
	Access
	Accessibility and Location
	Recreation
	Entertainment
	Recreation

Research Methodology

This section of the study explains the population, sample, sampling size, survey instrument and the decision rule of the study.

Population, Sampling and Size of the Sampling

The population framework of the study is unknown and the sample size is derived by computing the minimum sample size required for accuracy in estimating proportions by considering the standard normal deviation set at 95% confidence level (1.96), percentage picking a choice or response. The total of 150 respondents included in the sample. Data was collected throughout the day between 9 am to 6 pm within two weeks of August 2015. Participation for questionnaire survey was voluntary and convenient sampling was used to select respondent. The average questionnaires filled per day were 12 to 20.

Survey instrument

The questionnaire filled by the interviewer was used as survey instrument of the study. The questionnaire included general questions at the very beginning to investigate the demographic factors of the respondent.

The satisfaction of CFM was measured by 7 determinants and each construct was measured using three to five items, five points Likert-

type scale with anchors “1 = Strongly Agree” and “5 = Strongly disagree” used as measurement scale.

Questions were first written in English and then translated to the Sinhala language. The final version of the questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure appropriateness of questions’ wording, format and structure. The pilot study was undertaken with academics, university students, visitors of CFM and the selected staff members of the shops of CFM to evaluate the understanding, wording and the determinants. Based on the comments received, final questionnaire was revised.

Hypothesis and Decision Rule

The reliability test of seven indicators carried out according to the principles Cronbach Alpha value. The alpha value acceptable level was set as 0.7 based on Nunnally (1978). The mean value of the each indicator was estimated based on principles of Factor analysis. The normality of determinant was measured using Skewness & Kurtosis z-value which is set as span value span of -1.96 to +1.96.

To identify the contributory factors for visitor satisfaction of CFM below hypothesis were formulated considering seven indicators.

- H₁: Goods related attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM.
- H₂: Food related attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM
- H₃: Support of Service Staff attributes does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM
- H₄: Cleanliness attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM
- H₅: Amenities attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM
- H₆: Access attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM
- H₇: Recreation attribute does not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM

The importance of each indicator for visitor satisfaction of CFM was tested based on the average mean value of each determinant. As set value in liker scale 1 to 5 “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” respectively, if the Average Mean value is not less than 3.0; variable does not affect the visitor satisfaction and vice versa it is considered as the decision rule of the study.

H₀ rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted when sample mean is less than hypothesis mean ($t < 0$), and P value is lower than significant level is set as the decision rule of the hypothesis. One-Sample t-Test and Binomial distribution is used to test the hypothesis depending on normality of the determinate. Refer below hypothesis; where H₀ can be substitute to any of the previous stated hypothesis.

H₀: Average Mean value is not less than 3.0, H₀ rejected and alterative hypothesis accepted.

Findings and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of Floating Market

Questionnaire survey carried out during the month of August 2015 and 150 respondents were interviewed. The demographic characteristics of respondents are given in table 01.

Table No 02: Demographic Factors of the respondent

Demographic Characters	Frequency
Gender	
Male	71.3
Female	28.7
Marital Status	
Married	70
Single	30
Frequency of Visiting	
Daily or more than one day per during weekdays	22.7
Weekends only	20.0
Very often	50.7
Special Occasion	6.7
Preferred Time for Visitation	
09 a.m. to 11 a.m.	42.7
11 a.m. to 01 p.m.	15.3
01 p.m. to 03 p.m.	21.3
03 p.m. to 06 p.m.	20.7

Reason to visit CFM	
To purchase goods	25.3
Spend the time	70.3
Other purposes	4.0
Accompany members while visit to CFM	
Alone	40.0
With children	0.7
With spouse	10.0
With all family members	8.0
With Partner	41.3

Source: field survey data (2016)

According to the frequency of visiting, 22.7 percent of the respondents visit the CFM daily and 70 percent of the respondents visit the CFM very often. Around 70 percent of the respondents visit the CFM to spend the time and only 25 percent of the respondents visit to purchase goods from the CFM. Also, it was revealed that more than 50 percent of the respondents' visit the market with his/her partner or family members which confirmed the total shopping and entertainment experience of the CFM.

Determinants of Visitor Satisfaction

The Cronbach Alpha value uses to test the reliability of attributes of the indicators of the satisfaction. According to Nunnally (1978) the acceptable level of the Alpha value was set as 0.7. The attribute of the "Entertainment" showed 0.219 Alpha value and therefore non-significant. Also, Alpha value of 0.447 was noted for "Information Centre Service" quality. The attribute "Healthiness of Food" was also non-significant with the alpha value of 0.672. Thus, those attributes were dropped from the initial analysis.

Normality Test of the Determinants

The normality test of the indicators confirmed three indicators were not normally distributed, namely, (a) Support of Service Staff, (b) Access and (c) Leisure and other four indicators were distributed normally. Henceforth one-sample t-test was used to analyze normally distributed indicators while the binomial test was used to test the hypothesis of non-normality indicators.

The mean value of the all seven indicators is given in the table 3. The review of the table 03, noted that except “Food” as an indicator, all other indicators were at satisfied level. However, four indicators namely Good, Support of Service Staff, Cleanliness and Amenities were close to average level in the liker scale. Access and Leisure were the highly satisfied indicators of CFM. The overall average mean satisfaction level for Product Quality was 2.8381 and Service Quality average mean satisfaction level was 2.1352. This confirmed that service Quality is the main contributor to the overall satisfaction level of the CFM compared to Product Quality. The overall satisfaction level of the CFM was 2.3360. Refer Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Average Means Value of Determinant of Satisfaction of CFM

Determinant	Indicator	N-Valid	Average mean value	Std. Deviation
Product Quality	Good	150	3.1383	0.04733
	Food	150	2.5380	0.60531
Product Quality average mean Value		150	2.8381	
Service Quality	Support of Service Staff	150	2.3511	0.46948
	Cleanliness	150	2.0511	0.51631
	Amenities	150	2.9843	0.49218
	Access	150	1.3378	0.43175
	Leisure	150	1.9517	0.47034
Service Quality average mean Value		150	2.1352	
Overall Mean Value		150	2.3360	

Source: field survey data (2016)

One Sample t Test

One sample t- test analysis done for normally distributed indicators include (a) Goods, (b) Food, (c) Cleanliness and (d) Amenities

The mean value is 3.1383 of denotes dissatisfaction level for the Goods related indicators of the CFM. The independent sample t-test of the determinant marks the significant value of 0.004. P value is not less than significant level. Refer table 3. In this context H0 can be accepted and

established Goods related attribute not affect the visitor satisfaction of CFM.

Respondent has a satisfactory view on Price, Freshness, and Diversity. Most of the visitors which respond are satisfied over for the quality and healthiness about beverages and fruits. Due to this high satisfaction on Quality and Healthiness, the overall sample mean value of Food recorded as 2.5380 which show a satisfied level. The one sample t-test result of independent sample t-test analyses of Food recorded P value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (Significant value). Accordingly H₀ rejected and confirmed Food related attribute does affect the visitor satisfaction.

Cleanliness as a indicator of service quality recorded the average mean value of 2.0511, which is in a satisfactory level. Many respondents are satisfied with the level of cleanliness CFM which is important for a pleasant shopping experience. The hypothesis test revealed that the sample mean was less than hypothesis mean value at P value of 0.000 which led to reject H₀ of the study and Henceforth H₁ accepted, which meant Cleanliness is a contributor of visitor satisfaction

The final one sample t-test was done for the amenities confirmed the mean value of 2.9843 was recorded. Parking facilities as an amenity was not important for CFM since most of the visitors use public transport and respondents were vague on security of parking. However, it is evident the sample mean value is close to hypothesis mean value. On the other hand the one sample t-test, mean value was less than hypothesis value and greater P (0.349) compared to significant level accept the H₀. Accordingly study concluded that amenities are not a contributor of visitor satisfaction. Refer table 3 for details.

Table 3: One sample t test result on Determinants of Customer Satisfaction of CFM

Test Value = 3						
Variable	T	DF	Sig. (1-Tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Goods	2.923	149	0.004	.13833	.0448	.2319
Food	-9.348	149	0.000	-.46200	-.5597	-.3643
Cleanliness	-22.509	149	0.000	-.92889	-1.0322	-.8656
Amenities	-.388	148	0.349	-.01566	-.0953	.0640

Source: field survey data (2016)

Binomial Test

The binomial test was carried out to three indicators namely (a) Support of Service Staff, (b) Access and (c) Leisure to test the stated hypothesis which are not normally distributed.

The average mean value of Support of Service Staff of CFM estimated as 2.3511. The mean value represented in satisfaction level. The established information center was seemed to be not important for visitors of the CFM and many visitors obtain information from shop owners in the market. Staff members of the restaurant and shop offer handful information to visitors. The binomial test procedure compares an observed proportion of cases to the proportion expected under a binomial distribution with a specified probability parameter. According to the binomial test table variable is divided into two groups. 1st group shows as 0.97 probability which shall be less than or equal 3 and P value is less than Sig. value. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and confirmed Support of Service Staff affect the service satisfaction of CFM. Refer Table 4

Table 4: Binomial test result on Determinants of Customer Satisfaction of CFM

Variable	Category	N	Observed Probability	Test proportion	Asymp. Sig (1-tailed)	Exact Sig. (1-tailed)
Support of Service Staff Group 1 Group 2 Total	=<3	140	0.97	0.05	0.000	0.000
	>3	10	0.03			
		150	1.00			
Access Group 1 Total	=<3	150	1.00	0.05	0.000	0.000
		150	1.00			
Leisure Group 1 Total	=<3	150	1.00	0.05	0.000	0.000
		150	1.00			

Source: field survey data (2016)

The Mean value of Access 1.3378 noted high satisfaction on the indicator. The binomial test, observed probability of all sample to be equal or less than 3. Lower P value compared to the Sig. value of the test results rejected the H_0 and established H_1 which meant Access effects the service satisfaction of CFM.

The final indicator, Leisure recorded average mean value in the satisfied category. This indicator was highly accepted by visitors of the CFM merely because most respondents visit the market to spend their time with this environment and to attend scheduled work in the city of Colombo. The CFM is an apple place for meeting and gathering. According to the binomial test table, the observed probability is to be equal and less than 3.0. P value is less than Sig. Value and accordingly H_0 rejected and accepted Leisure effects the service satisfaction of CFM.

Conclusion

The overall satisfaction level of the CFM was satisfied with the sample mean value of 2.3360. Therefore, the study concluded that visitors of CFM are satisfied with both product and the service quality. After the

hypothetical test satisfaction of the goods, related indicators in CFM was not significant in final satisfaction. All other factors contribute to the satisfaction of the CFM. More importantly, the management of CFM needs manage status quo of all accepted determinant of the study to maintain the same satisfaction level of visitors.

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