

Structural Model on Perceived Destination Competitiveness in CARAGA Region

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Abstract- The study determined the best fit model of perceived destination competitiveness and ascertained which domains in quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services and travel motivation best predicts the destination competitiveness of tourism in Caraga Region. Data were collected using four modified questionnaires, tested for reliability and validated by experts. The data were analyzed from a sample of 400 tourists using descriptive bivariate analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Regression analysis, and structural equation model (SEM). Subsequent regression analysis showed that quality of vacation experience and satisfaction with travel/tourism services are significantly related to the perceived destination competitiveness. Results of the proposed five models using SEM revealed that the Hypothesized Model 5 passed all the goodness of fit indices criteria, signifying the importance of quality of vacation experience as the major predictor of perceived destination competitiveness. In the light of the above stated findings, the perceived destination competitiveness of tourist providers is an important issue from the tourist's perspectives as it affects his tourist's quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/ tourism services and travel motivation.

Keywords- *business administration; destination competitiveness of tourist providers; Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION

The basic issue in today's emerging tourism market is how to develop destination competitiveness (Vodeb, 2012; Crouch, 2011). It shows that competitive tourism markets around the world have a series of images which contribute to the growth of the wider economy as well as to other industries such as retail and public services (Fuller, 2013; Amankwah-Amoah & Sarpong, 2016; Ozturk, Al-Mulali, & Saboori, 2016). The exceptional growth of tourism demand makes it essential to develop and enter into strategic alliances with other organizations and destinations (Vodeb, 2012). One major reason for intense rivalry of these identical goods and services is that fierce competitors use their marketing strategies to find ways to compete with the demands of travelers (Vodeb, 2012). Thus, only a few are able to increase commitment to tourists which prevents destination competitiveness (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013).

The quality of vacation experience is the first variable considered to be relevant. Akkus and Gulluce (2016) state that destination competitiveness depends on the quality of vacation experience offered by the destination. It competes among destinations to achieve a superior tourist destination's competitive advantage. Tourists are searching for more unique vacation experiences (Ursache, 2015) and getting knowledge on the different phases of the journey (Komppula & Suni, 2013). Thus, it is necessary to know the quality of vacation experiences in order to ensure that goods and services offered are suitable to the tourist needs (Meng, 2006).

Satisfaction with travel/tourism services is the second variable considered to be relevant. Tourism service plays an important factor in the ever-changing requests of customers towards their destination choices (Ursache, 2015). Tourist demand for safe products and services prior to purchase (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, & Scott, 2009), as well as authentic tourism products in tourist destinations (Basan, Bagaric, & Loncaric, 2013). Hence, there is a need to understand tourist satisfaction (Aihara, Hosaka, Yasuda, Hashim, & Numata, 2016) considering that tourist arrivals are increasing (Bernini, Urbinati, & Vici, 2015).

Another variable that caught the attention of the researcher is travel motivation. Tourist products offered will enhance tourist motivation to revisit the location (Grazulis, 2015). Hence, the success of marketing destinations should be guided by a thorough analysis of travel motivation (Mohammad & Som, 2010). It is one of the important that motivates people to revisit destinations. Consequently, it will strengthen the long-run monetary development of the country (Brida & Risso, 2010), as well as to improve destination competitiveness in the area. Razovic (2013) added that exploring the national beauties of the tourist destination carries motivation to travel. Therefore, it is important to observe travel motivation to understand their needs and wants of the tourists.

There are many studies have mentioned that a tourist needs indicate as the important aspect which influences competition and competitiveness in the tourism destination (Meng, 2006; Kozak & Baloglu, 2010). According to

Meng (2006), the quality of the vacation experience affects tourists' perception on the destination competitiveness. In addition, she recommends that it would be better to include tourist travel motivation and satisfaction with travel/tourism services which would help to examine the tourists' perception in the expansion of destination competitiveness.

Despite this, destination developers compete with one another. Destinations need to develop competitive advantages so as to survive in the future (Haugland, Ness, Gronseth, & Aarstad, 2011). Competitive strategy then becomes an essential part of any business establishment. The challenge of tourism managers is to develop and manage tourism destinations to perform effectively in increasing competition (Page, 2012), especially for nations in which tourism is an imperative part of the economy (Zibani, 2014; Ghadban, 2014). In the same way, the local tourism industry needs more knowledge of marketing strategies for them to compete with cheaper, as well as organize tourist destinations (Waruiru, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher has not come across with a study exploring the structural models on perceived destination competitiveness in the region.

Hence, it is in the above context, that the researcher opted to conduct this study to determine tourism competitiveness of Caraga Region as an identified place for tourist destination from the tourists' perspectives. In addition, this study seeks to find out the best fit model on perceived destination competitiveness in the region using structural modelling.

1.1 Research Objective

This study aimed to determine the best fit model of perceived destination competitiveness in Caraga Region tourism. Specifically, this study has the following objectives:

- To assess the tourists' level of quality of vacation experiences in terms of *Pre-trip planning experience; En-route experience; On-site Experience, and After-trip experience.*
- To evaluate the tourists' level of satisfaction with travel/ tourism services in terms of *Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the pretrip; Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the en route trip; Satisfaction with travel/tourism services at the destination site; and Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the return trip.*
- To describe the tourists' level of travel motivation in terms of *Personal enrichment; Escape; Socialization; and Family togetherness.*
- To ascertain the level of perceived destination competitiveness by the providers as perceived by tourists in terms of *Destination Management & Marketing; Accessibility and Information Availability; Tourism Attributes; Price and Value; and Environment.*
- To determine the significant relationship between

the following: Quality of vacation experience and perceived destination competitiveness; Satisfaction with travel/tourism services and perceived destination competitiveness of the tourist providers; and Travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness of the tourist providers.

- To determine the significance of the combined and singular influence of quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services and travel motivation on perceived destination competitiveness.
- To find the best fit model of perceived destination competitiveness.

1.2 Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness of the tourist providers.
- There is no significance of the combined and singular influence of quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and travel motivation on perceived destination competitiveness.
- There is no model that best fits perceived destination competitiveness.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents the related studies relevant on the topics which were considered as variables in this study. The exogenous variables are quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and travel motivation. Quality of vacation experience was developed by Meng (2006) with the following indicators: *pre-trip planning experience, en-route experience, on-site experience, and after-trip reflection.* Satisfaction with travel/tourism services was developed by Neal, Uysal, and Sirgy (2007) with the following indicators: *satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the pretrip, satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the en-route trip, satisfaction with travel/tourism services at the destination site, and satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the return trip.* Travel motivation was used by Prebensen, Woo, Chen, and Uysal (2012) with the following indicators: *personal enrichment, escape, socialization, and family togetherness.* The endogenous variable is perceived destination competitiveness which was developed by Meng (2006) with the following indicators: *destination management and marketing, accessibility and information availability, tourism attributes, price and value, and environment.*

2.1 Quality of Vacation Experience

Tourist vacation experiences may create new interests in exploring different destinations, and consequently might

enhance personal satisfaction (Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015). It is important to give more emphasis on tourist experiences because it may contribute to the sustainability of destination competitiveness (Chen & Petrick, 2013); thus, managers of the destination strive to develop a tourism product that provides satisfaction to the tourists (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010).

Tourists want to maximize the value of travel experience by seeking unique sites with enriching activities (Hussain, Lema, & Agrusa, 2012) which are engrained to the tourist memory (Kim et al., 2015). In addition, destinations may come up with a multiple dimensions paradigm to provide a valued experience for the tourist (Hussain et al., 2012), especially on getting knowledge about the different phases of a journey (Komppula & Suni, 2013). Hence, in 2015 global tourism developed by 4.4% with over a billion global trips taken and producing over a trillion dollars of income around the world (Tourism Week, 2016).

The first indicator is pre-trip planning experience. The important component of the pre-trip experience is the use of experiential and enjoyable experiences as travel planning (Gretzel, Hwang, & Fesenmaier, 2012). Zehrer and Crotts (2012) distinguished between short and long type vacations where the latter has more significant pre-trip arrangements than the other where this is a minimal pre-trip.

It is advisable for travelers to access pre-trip information and search for the available sites which are helpful in making better decisions (Nwagwu & Kolapo, 2012), as well as develop a travel plan (Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaier, 2015). Going online and booking for a trip today became easier because of the influx of travel websites which includes travel, hotel and restaurant reservations (McDowell & Gibbons, 2011). These are just a handful of considerations before planning a trip to the chosen destinations. In addition, McDowell and Gibbons (2011) mentioned that on-site transportation needs to be coordinated for arrangements of safe loading and unloading of tourists.

The second indicator is en-route experience. According to Nwagwu and Kolapo (2012) underlined en-route or stop/terminal information is to ascertain the predicted waiting time before the arrival of the next vehicle at that particular location. A portion of the tourism practices which normally affect tourism destinations and business is the use of social media (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), especially during en-route experiences where there are plenty of the beautiful sceneries along that way.

It was revealed that there are many dimensions of en-route experience usually observed on the way to the final destination and those places where few people have visited (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012). These may include the experience of attractions, landscape and other beautiful places where the destination has its unique market for tourist travelers. Also, Zach and Gretzel (2011) signified that mobile technology was used to catch up with the needs and wants of tourists and enhance the visitors'

experiences during the en-route trip. They added that tourism development might always include the expanding availability of free internet connection for it give data for tourists along the trip. This may help guests' endless decision in packaging any of the experiences which en-route trips encounter.

It is important to advise potential travelers of the choices available for a trip and make them informed for better decisions with respect to that journey (Nwagwu & Kolapo, 2012). Thus, to measure en-route experiences for this study is significantly needed in order to capture the best interest of the tourists. As such, Tussyadiah and Zach (2012) stated that a meaningful experience is to measure the general perspectives of tourism experience. Safe mobility is one of the essential considerations to continued engagement for tourists which is necessary for safety and security (Dickerson et al., 2007).

Likewise, transportation systems may be invested in the place of destination to support safety and security which is beneficial for visitors, good for the environment and increases economic growth (Krisberg, 2014). As spelled out by Lob and Smith (2012), a subway station helps distinguish one station from another, provide visual cues, and helps riders feel safer knowing that space is being provided by them.

Based on the study conducted by Phau et al. (2014), marketers may promote communication initiatives for tourists concerning a place which is safe and secure. Hence, the top priority is to ensure that both government and industrial sectors will see to it the tourists are safe and secure during en-route travel (Lee, 2015).

The third indicator is on-site experience. The values at destinations by the owner will be based on the on-site experiences of the tourist (Huebner, 2011). Chang, Backman, and Chih Huang (2014) revealed that the on-site tourism experience is the most persuasive antecedent to imaginative tourism, which is statistically significant for tourists to revisit the locations. This is because travelers are able to screen and evaluate alternatives and make informed decisions on site experience (Tussyadiah, 2012; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012).

Access to website advertisements plays an important part in informing the tourists about the area they will visit. It is important for the tourism industry to give tourists prior knowledge and learning as well as weather conditions in the area. Becken (2010) explained that weather conditions are significantly important to tourists on how they are comfortable and to what extent they are able or willing to adapt.

Experience is not simply of a bodily and physical kind, but connected to imaginations, memories and scenarios invoked during on site (Daugbjerg, 2011). As such, the presence of social media or gadgets like cameras and videos or even souvenir may influence them to revisit the tourist destinations. Moreover, accommodation infrastructures are highly considered in the on-site experience and are an essential part in the tourism sector (Cozea, 2013). It is where the tourists look for

infrastructures for a high quality of tourism experience. However, Chuang, Hwang, Wong, and Chen (2014) explained that the best way to satisfy the visitors is to have service, and reasonable prices which are affordable for consumers.

The fourth indicator is after-trip reflection. Corvo (2011) stressed that when the holiday is over, the difference between vacationers and non-vacationers are equal. Vacationers' expectations before the trip may be regarded as the influences of tourist experiences (Sheng & Chen, 2013). Neuhofer and Buhalis (2012) highlighted that the memorable event experiences do not only enhance and promote tourism on-site, but also after the return travel of tourists from vacation. Yet, Shen (2017) emphasized that reflection after vacation does not mean the end of a learning process.

Accordingly, the sacred places to attract the volume of tourists for its safe was manifested after travel (Korstanje & Busby, 2010). The strength of certain religious places makes tourists who visit the places take out their photos, which usually happens when tourists back home from the tourist destination. Hu (2013) emphasized that after the trip, some independent tourists might want to post their photos taken amid the trip and their remarks or offer stories which happened on the trip.

Moreover, these experiences shared, remarks or stories are valuable for other tourists who are planning to go to the same destination. Some guests after the trip, post their photos using social media such facebook, micro-blogs, and share it to their friends, which usually attracts friends to comment (Hu, 2013). Talking about a trip with friends during one's leisure time makes it helpful to generate income for the tourist destinations to develop to a more competitive destination.

2.2 Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services

The quality of tourism offers needs to be evaluated through satisfaction by the tourist (Dmitrovic et al., 2009). Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, and Grace (2011) pointed out that tourist satisfaction will be measured by the effects of various domains, such pre-trip services, en-route services, destination services, and return trip services. It is an emotional response derived from a consumption experience (De Nisco, Riviezzo, & Napolitano, 2015). Engeset, Hull, and Velvin (2016) found that effective training programs with collaborative efforts for employees in the delivery of services might benefit the company as well as the community as a whole.

The first indicator is satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the pre-trip. Paganelli, Parlanti, Francini and Giuli (2009) mention that the best thing to offer to a tourist during pre-trip phase is a set of facilities. It is important to ask visitors about the various attributes during pre-trip travel (Koroglu & Guzel, 2013). Pre-trip services need more planning to cover all contingencies, especially the unforeseen events.

The second indicator is satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the en-route trip. Mathilda and Saayman

(2013) differentiated that parents whose kids study tourism are more eager to stop for them than those parents whose kids do not. There are a lot of activities that service providers may have no control over during en-route activities, such as the travel agent who sells to the tourists, the resort representative who welcomes them on arrival, and the hotel's receptionist which are components in the general package that tourists may consider in purchasing the products.

Accordingly, there are components of the product over which the tour operator can have no control (Park, Lehto, & Jung-Kun, 2008). It includes family holiday package products like airline, resorts and hotels that cater to the tourists needs during the en-route trip.

The third indicator is satisfaction with travel/tourism services at the destination site. Akroush, Jraisat, Kurdieh, AL-Faouri, and Qatu (2016) emphasized that tourism service quality can be measured at the destination level using the tourism organizations involved in providing numerous types of services (i.e. five-star hotels) and tourists' loyalty through a destination image in tourists' minds as arbitrator. Usually, destination services include financial considerations on transportation like currency exchange, use of credit/debit cards; traveler checks (Alsharif et al., 2016).

Tharakan (2014) spelled out that tourist providers have to understand the needs to satisfy the tourist at a particular destination. Similarly, tourists realize their overall satisfaction with the travel experience when they return to their own place of origin. This is the idea of De Nisco et al. (2015) that evaluation of the performance may be done when they return home, not at the destination which may lead to unreliable results.

The fourth indicator is satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the return. First-timers and repeat visitors are typically detailed in their post-trip assessments which are more receptive to satisfaction at the same open for return intention (Del Chiappa, Tinaz, & Michele Turco, 2014). In addition, recreation endeavors are the fulfillment of inspirational motivation, which convert to outcomes and benefits in satisfaction of services during post-trip phase.

2.3 Travel Motivation

According to Prebensen, Woo, Chen, and Uysal (2013) tourist motivation is an antecedent to the perceived value of tourism experiences. It is also one of the driving force that motivates people to take revisits destinations (Chang et al., 2014) and is closely associated with purchasing behaviors (Meng & Xu, 2012). Travel motivation turn into a principle subject for some tourist theoreticians (Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012) and a reason for a behavior (Solomon, 2009) which is an important factor to influence tourist decision-making (Battour, Battor, & Ismail, 2012; Raj, 2012; Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

The first indicator is personal enrichment. Kinley et al. (2012) pointed out that the tourist with enrichment motive will return to a super-regional mall that has a strong beautiful plea. The results show that the interaction with

other cultures of different countries and personal enrichment are the main motivation of people who undertake trips motivated by solidarity (Fuentes-Moraleda, Muñoz-Mazón, & Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2016).

Personal enrichment motivates people to undertake trips by harmony (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2016). Nassar, Mostafa, and Reisinger (2015) stressed that messages related to emotion and sensory stimulating during travels may develop strong impressions and remembrances of a destination which creates a desire to visit again.

The second indicator is escape. Students need to escape for their academic benefit and to be given the opportunity to learn additional knowledge, especially about tourist destinations (Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap, & Axelsson, 2015). In like manner, tourist shoppers looking for escape focus on whether they are free from any control and they are seldom concerned with the location of the destination (Kinley et al., 2012). Travelers show a desire for novelty as well as a need to escape and they search for authentic experiences (Vojvodic, 2015).

Likewise, another travel motivation is personal escape which includes desires to change environments, way of life and avoid unpleasant scenarios in one's home and work life (Adams, Snyder, Crooks, & Johnston, 2015). In addition, the desire to escape is to change pace and get away from one's routine (Giraldi, 2016). However, Kuehling (2014) confirmed that peace of mind is only temporarily achievable and changes just as the change of the seasons, winds and weather.

The third indicator is socialization. Tourist shoppers might visit the shopping center for entertainment and socializing in which they perceive that all are in place (Kinley et al., 2012). Motivators that have proven to be very significant and do not fall under the principle of fairness, as well as "socialising with friends" which could partly be interpreted as social (Matejevic, Wallrabenstein, & Ristic, 2014). Thus, travel motivation may establish a socialization program for the newcomers as well as existing employees (Patil, 2011).

The fourth indicator is family togetherness. According to Nwagwu and Kolapo (2012) family togetherness differs significantly when travelling with or without children. The experience of the family during vacation reflects how members spend time together. Hyde and Decrop (2011) mentioned that the choices of vacation will depend on the tourist experiences which would impact the satisfaction of the other members of the family. These satisfying experiences will have resulted from the pre-vacation discussions of the couple.

Family together is one of the contributory factors of tourist motivation to visit the tourist destination. It is comprised of narrowing gaps between generation and developing familial bonds (Zvonkovic, Swenson, & Cornwell, 2017; Gray, 2016; Hallowell, 2017). Yet, it is really important for families to spend time together. Kim et al. (2016) pointed out that the expression of family togetherness frequently occurs during family mealtime. According to Vuin, Carson, Carsona, and Garrett (2016) those for

getting away from it all, whether from city life or family tragedy, may choose locations which are remote and isolated. Likewise, Vespestad and Mehmetoglu (2010) concluded that getting away from stressful everyday life necessitates away from home.

2.4 Perceived Destination Competitiveness

The destination is an essential idea in the tourism industry as it embodies the driving factor (Shemma, 2014). The quality of tourism destination may focus on identifying customers' needs and expectations (Bernini et al., 2015), and offering unique and valued experiences (Hussain et al., 2012). As such, destinations need to define their strengths and opportunities to become more competitive in the area (*OECD country profiles*, 2016). Similarly, De Nisco et al. (2015) signified that competition in the tourism industry provides high quality of vacation experiences and satisfactory services as a critical source of competitive advantage. Hence, Chin, Thian, and Lo (2017) mentioned that tourism providers should be aware of the developments of destination competitiveness and align themselves with the objectives.

The first indicator is destination management and marketing. Tourism competitiveness performance can be utilized as a data contribution for destination marketing and management (Dorta-Afonso & Hernández-Martín, 2015). Tourist destinations are required to compete for tourists and economic benefits through market competition (Mika, 2012). This is because of the increasing competitive marketplace that destination competitiveness is vital (Hallmann & Roth, 2012).

Marketing managers must understand the importance of market segments for destination positioning which entails how tourists currently perceive destination against competing destinations. Likewise, destination managers have the responsibility to publicize the main market and its status of performance to members on a timely basis (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010).

The second indicator is accessibility and information availability. Information needs tourist experiences evaluation and survey to adequately satisfy the needs and goals of the visitors (Nwagwu & Kolapo, 2012). In the same way, travelers may rely on information from other travelers who are satisfied with the services during travel. Dorta-Afonso and Hernández-Martín (2015) cited the model provided by Ritchie and Crouch (2010) for tourism competitiveness that the tourist's habitual place of residence may be sourced out in analyzing the performance of the tourism attributes.

Tourism recognizes web accessibility which supports organizations in making better decisions (Leitner, Strauss, & Stummer, 2016). Lu et al. (2015) mentioned that to present themselves in an agreeable and friendly manner, tourism promoters may take initiatives to deliver information to the visitors. They may inform the tourist great promises to help understand how reachable destination with different tourism types of products and services will be offered (Hooper, 2015).

The third indicator is tourism attributes. The appeal of certain attributes of the destination, measured using tourism surveys, has also been used to build tourism competitiveness indicators (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Alegre & Garau, 2009). This establishes which destinations are defined as competitor destinations and which attributes are to be valued, and not the whole range of products offered in a given destination (Kim et al., 2015; Hussain et al., 2012; Dragicevic, Jovicic, Blesic, Stankov, & BosKovic, 2012).

The fourth indicator is price and value. Tung and Ritchie (2011) mentioned that the precise details might be done by a tourist during a service encounter. Tourist valued on geographic spaces and figured it out the essentials of different destinations. This sort of meaning of functional tourist space reflects the potential geographic space that may be controlled by the degree to which biological and cultural needs and values are met (Mika, 2012).

One of the most imperative factors in explaining tourism competitiveness is price (Bolaky, 2011). Portolan (2015) revealed that tourists in repeat visits were chosen as respondents than tourists who make the first visit because they perceive the destination more closely and focus on value above price. However, Kyurova (2013) mentioned that prices are a tool for growing sales volume and have a strong influence on tourist loyalty. It is the priority of the management to choose the tourists who are loyal to the destination.

Price competitiveness essentially relates to the prices of goods and services consumed by customer, usually expressed in currency (Ghadban, 2014). It is vital for travel agencies to determine the optimal price of the product to be acceptable for tourists in the target market. In addition, the price is a source of profit and symbol of achieving success (Kyurova, 2013).

The fifth indicator is environment. Assaker, Hallak, Vinzi, and O'Connor (2014) concluded that the economy has a positive effect on tourism competitiveness, whether by infrastructure or environment. Accordingly, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) defined competitiveness of a tourist destination as its ability to increase tourist expenditure with gradual attraction, while providing them with satisfying experiences in a profitable way.

On the other hand, regulators are responsible for enhancing the well-being of residents in dealing with guests, and more importantly preserving the environment for future generations. Environment is the key in ensuring tourism competitiveness (Dorta-Afonso & Hernández-Martín, 2015).

2.5 Correlations between Measures

With the tourism market becoming progressively competitive, the travel motivation, the vacation experience, and the satisfaction with the services are of greater interest to the tourism industry. It is important to attract visitors to sustain the competitiveness of the destinations (Huang & Hsu, 2009).

The primary fear of many tourism destinations is to

comprehend travelers' motivations (Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009), and to make sure that the tourists are exceedingly satisfied with their tourism services (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), and for the destinations to have a general understanding of the memorable tourism experiences (Wang, 2016).

Therefore, Prayag and Ryan (2012) stressed that the emotional content of the experience and satisfaction with destination attributes have an impact on tourists' future motivation. Similarly, competitiveness is a national apprehension, and the ultimate goal is to improve the revenue of the community (Serirat & Popajit, 2010).

The destination may be perceived as a global product capable of generating satisfactory vacation experiences (Dorta-Afonso & Hernández-Martín, 2015). The capacity of the destination to deliver goods and services other than those destinations would appear to be a factor in destination competitiveness among those aspects of vacation experience which important to tourists (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). It is necessary to understand the quality of vacation experience of the tourist to make sure that the goods and services offered are suitable to their needs.

Yet, it is problematic to produce and manage products in the tourist destination because of the critical role of the tourist in the quality of vacation experience. Thus, a tourist destination needs to consider innovative products to remain competitive (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Mohamed, Malek, and Irwana Omar (2012) mentioned that these products may be highly diversified and have added value with the tourist preference. Van der Merwe, Slabbert, and Saayman (2011) added that in order to keep the destination competitive, it must have added new products and services during the tourists' stay to the existing product and services offerings.

The key for tourism competitiveness is to achieve tourists' satisfaction with the services and products of the travel firms (Da Costa Mendes, Oom do Valle, Guerreiro, & Silva, 2010). Also, the firm may provide products and services which satisfy the desires of the tourists to become competitive (Serirat & Popajit, 2010). Thus, tourists' satisfaction with the high quality of services are important determinants of destination competitiveness (Caber, Albayrak, and Matzler, 2012). Satisfaction may be extremely important for preserving a destinations competitive advantage, achieving economic growth and employment stability for the community (Eusébio & Vieira, 2013).

The destination may exert extra effort to deliver goods and services better than other destinations to satisfy tourist needs (Dwyer, Cvelbar, Edwards, & Mihalic, 2012). The capacity to deliver goods and services and perform well in facing tourists might have some implications in aiming for competitiveness. Devesa, Laguna, and Palacios (2010) mentioned that determining tourism satisfaction with travel/tourism service is extremely imperative in a highly competitive destination. Giving tourist information and demands provide a wider chance that destination will become successful. Yet, it is considered as essential for the

success of any destination and a crucial aid to competitiveness.

Consequently, a high tourist satisfaction level with services can be established so as to generate positive post-purchase tourist behavior, as well as sustain destination competitiveness (Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010). Kim (2014) pointed out that the importance of a highly competitive tourism marketplace for achieving success is to provide the tourists with a memorable vacation. Hence, destination may strive to keep up the good work and increase the level of service.

Tourism researchers have observed the importance of travel motivation to better appreciate the goods and services offered (Prebensen et al., 2013). Fayed et al. (2016) identified that travel motivation of visitors and the high level of service quality in the destinations are feasible ways for destinations to remain competitive. As spelled out by Van der Merwe et al. (2011) knowledge concerning travel motivations may enhance competitiveness in the tourism market. Hence, Allan (2015) asserts that it is essential to understand the different kinds of tourist travel motivation with special needs.

Therefore, it is essential that competing destinations understand the process of attitude formation to comprehend the decision process (Nyaupane, Paris, and Teye, 2011). Dupeyras and MacCallum (2013) added that to increase commitment to tourists, the destination may improve customer service functions which will contribute to the overall competitiveness of the area. Destination satisfactions with travel/tourism services, vacation experiences, as well as travel motivations are significant predictors of destination competitiveness (Di Pietro & Peterson, 2017; Prebensen et al., 2013; Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010).

The above related literature pertains to the variables of the study which are the quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness. The findings, readings and studies included are very much related to the study. According to the literatures, quality of vacation experience encompasses the different phases of travel, namely; pre-trip planning, en-route, on-site and after-trip reflection. In terms of satisfaction with travel/tourism services the indicators are; pre-trip, route trip, destination site and return trip, while travel motivation includes personal enrichment, escape, socialization and family togetherness.

Consequently, perceived destination competitiveness embraces destination management and marketing, accessibility and information availability, tourism attributes, price and value and environment. To sum it up, the cited works were helpful in revealing possible ways in which quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness were related with one another. Thus, the review of literature in this study significantly provided the foundation of information regarding the

variables of this study. Further, it serves as a support to the presentation, results and findings of the study.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the proposition of Meng, Tepanon, and Uysal (2008) which stated that the quality and accessibility of tourism supply resources are critical elements in meeting the needs of the ever-changing and growing tourism market. Thus, destination management to sustain and expand its business, should give careful consideration to ensure visitors' satisfaction with service quality, food/lodging facilities and promote the value of family and friends' togetherness as its unique operating characteristics, because tourists tend to seek pure relaxation.

The above proposition is supported by Chang, Backman, and Chih Huang (2014) which states that if creative attraction proprietors might want to attract repeat tourists, the tourists' experience is surely critical for developing service blueprints to meet the needs and wants of customers; they should give careful consideration to understanding what tourists experience when they visit innovative tourism attractions. In addition, for creative attraction proprietors, collaboration with other innovative tourism attractions should be an approach for tourists to come back.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Quality of Vacation Experience

Presented in Table 1 is the level of quality of vacation experience which as measured by four indicators, namely: pre-trip planning experience, en-route experience, on-site experience, and after-trip reflection. Each of these describes a specific way for destination competitiveness as perceived by the tourists.

The tourists' level of quality of vacation experience obtained a very high level. After-trip reflection got the highest mean score and pre-trip experiences the lowest mean score. The respondents strongly believe that in the after trip, it is important to have the feel of having spent quality time with family and friends and to feel a sense of life-enrichment after the vacation.

This has bearing to the declaration of Shen (2017) who said that reflection after vacation does not mean the end of a learning process. In addition, reflection has many features which encourage insight and complex learning on experiences (Neal, 2016). Family quality time with their children might recognize an express emotion during vacation (Zvonkovic, Swenson, & Cornwell, 2017) and yet it is important to spend quality time with family members on daily activities (Lee et al., 2017). Hence, Gray (2016) presented that families who sought social support might have positive family experiences, as well as, a strong predictor to develop the mindset of the siblings. Raising the interest level of young offspring is to develop their suitable enrichment program that was primed for learning (Van Aswegen, Pendergast, & Garvis, 2014). This implies that managers of tourism business may create programs

pertaining to the likeness and images of the destination.

3.2 Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services

In Table 2 is presented the list of the items in the four indicators of tourist's satisfaction with travel/tourism services. These indicators are satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the pre-trip, satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the en-route trip, satisfaction with travel/tourism services at the destination site and satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to the return trip.

Table 1: *Level of Quality of Vacation Experience*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Pre-trip Planning Experience	.66	4.02	High
En-route Experience	.64	4.18	High
On-site Experience	.48	4.20	Very High
After Trip Reflection	.49	4.34	Very High
Overall	.57	4.21	Very High

The overall satisfaction with travel/tourism services of tourists obtained high descriptive levels. Among the four indicators of satisfaction with travel/tourism services, only the satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to pre-trip got the highest mean, and the other indicators satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to en-route and destination site got equal mean scores, but still reached the high level of satisfaction.

Table 2: *Level of Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to pre-trip	.65	4.07	High
Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to en-route	.64	3.98	High
Satisfaction with travel/tourism services at the destination site	.67	3.98	High
Satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to return trip	.71	4.00	High
Overall	.67	4.01	High

The high level of tourist's satisfaction with travel/tourism services related to pre-trip is indicative of the tourist's

satisfaction of pre-trip information provided by the travel and tourism professionals. This notion is parallel with the study of Slotkin et al. (2016) who stated that the pre-trip provides potential information for tourists' benefit provided by service professionals with tour experience. Hence, service providers need to satisfied their visitors by service professionals during pre-trip (Ratz & Michalko, 2011), as supported by the study of Engeset, Hull, and Velvin (2016) that effective training programs with collaborative efforts for employees on service quality influences tourists' satisfaction, and it might benefit the company as well as the community as whole.

3.3 Travel Motivation of Tourists

Outlined in Table 3 is the level of tourists' travel motivation as measured by four indicators namely: family enrichment, escape, socialization and family togetherness. These indicators determined the travel motivation and the interaction between family togetherness and members of the family in socialization.

Family togetherness is very high, the highest among the four indicators. Escape, socialization and personal enrichment have all high mean scores. Nevertheless, the overall mean of travel motivation is very high. The tourists strongly believe that in travel motivation, family togetherness shows an important part why visitors wanted to travel away from home with their family and friends. This finding is in consonance with the idea Hallowell (2017) who found that family togetherness and positive connections to friends, the neighborhood, school, community might help form a firm foundation for strong family relationships. People have a range of motives for seeking travel experiences and must work together on all levels of travel for multiple motivations to addressed (Giraldi, 2016).

Table 3: *Level of Travel Motivation*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Personal Enrichment	.48	4.30	Very High
Escape	.57	4.41	Very High
Socialization	.62	4.31	Very High
Family Togetherness	.66	4.44	Very High
Overall	.58	4.36	Very High

3.4 Perceived Destination Competitiveness

In Table 4 is presented the list of items in the five indicators of the destination competitiveness scale. These indicators include destination management and marketing, accessibility and information availability, tourism

attributes, price and value and the environment. The five indicators of destination competitiveness had an overall mean rating of 4.14 or high. This denoted that the tourists highly agree that they were highly satisfied with their destinations competitiveness.

The tourists' level of perceived destination competitiveness has an overall mean high descriptive level. The two indicators of perceived destination competitiveness namely: environment, and destination management were described as very high mean scores; and the other indicators; tourism attributes, accessibility and information availability and price and value were generally described as high mean scores.

The very high level of perceived destination competitiveness is indicative of the tourists' perception on environment through unique tourism resources such as natural scenery, historic/cultural/heritage site, local culture, customs, etc., at the same time preserving the destination to more competitive. This finding is parallel with **Chin, Thian, and Lo (2017)** who found out that the environmental impacts significantly contribute to the development of tourism competitive advantage. Yet, tourism and environment depend on each other (**Aydin & Alvarez, 2016**).

Table 4: Level of Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Destination Management and Marketing	.50	4.22	Very High
Accessibility and Information Availability	.63	4.05	High
Tourism Attributes	.97	4.17	High
Price and Value	.88	4.00	High
Environment	.64	4.27	Very High
Overall	.52	4.14	High

3.5 Significance on the Relationship between Quality of Vacation Experience and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

The data in Table 5 showed the correlation between the

Table 5: Significance on the Relationship between Quality of Vacation Experience and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Quality of Vacation Experience	Perceived Destination Competitiveness					
	Destination Management and Marketing	Accessibility and Information Availability	Tourism Attributes	Price and Value	Environment	Overall

quality of vacation experience and the perceived destination competitiveness. It can be gleaned from the results that there was a significant positive strong relationship between quality of vacation experience and the perceived destination competitiveness, as reflected by the P-value that was less than 0.05 and correlation coefficient, $r=0.398$.

Correlational analysis showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between quality of vacation experience and perceived destination competitiveness as reflected by correlation coefficient. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between quality of vacation experience and perceived destination competitiveness is therefore, rejected. This assumption is parallel with **Zainuddin, Radzi, and Zahari (2014)** who pointed out that a successful tourism destination should embrace an integrated approach towards the quality of tourist experience provided by the destination. In addition, **Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2017)** stated that the needs and attitudes of many tourists require destinations to develop unique leisure experiences based on their destination profiles. Thus, to sustained tourism destination is to ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists (**Bernini et al., 2015**).

Consequently, the outcome also finds support to the study done by **Meng (2006)** that the quality of vacation experience affects tourists' perception of the competitiveness of the destination they visit. Thus, the different phases of tourism experience were examined as separate and discreet constructs and reflecting the respondents' general perceptions related to their vacation experience and perceived destination.

This implies that those who experienced easy access and quality service are more likely to perceive higher destination competitiveness. This yields the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings indicate that the higher the tourists manifest great feelings in the quality of their vacation experience, the more likely is the better destination management and marketing competitiveness. The findings also suggest that to acquire a great experience of quality vacation, the management of the different destinations must highly practice the five-sub construct of destination competitiveness namely: destination management and marketing, accessibility and information availability, tourism attributes, price and value, and environment.

Pre-trip Planning Experience	.270** .000	.187** .000	.183** .000	.192** .000	.179** .000	.277** .000
En-route Experience	.182** .000	.222** .000	.207** .000	.116* .000	.191** .000	.255** .000
On-site Experience	.219** .000	.322** .000	.294** .000	.181** .000	.238** .000	.353** .000
After trip Reflection	.241** .000	.252** .000	.217** .000	.148** .000	.181** .000	.286** .000
Overall	.314** .000	.330** .000	.304** .000	.219** .000	.269** .000	.398** .000

*Significant at .05 significance level

3.6 Significance on the Relationship between Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Table 6 shows the relationship between satisfaction with travel/tourism services as an exogenous variable with the endogenous variable which is the perceived destination competitiveness was found to be significant with a P-value less than 0.05, and $r = 0.432$.

In correlation between the satisfaction with travel/tourism

services and the perceived destination competitiveness, the result shows that there is a significant high relationship between satisfaction with travel/tourism services and the perceived destination competitiveness as indicated by the P-value that is less than 0.05. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It agrees with the studies of various authors (Zainuddin, Radzi, & Zahari, 2016; Fayed, Wafik, & Gerges, 2016;

Table 6: Significance on the Relationship between Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Satisfaction with Travel/ Tourism Services	Perceived Destination Competitiveness					
	Destination Management and Marketing	Accessibility and Information Availability	Tourism Attributes	Price and Value	Environment	Overall
Pre-trip	.203** .000	.196** .000	.163** .000	.277** .000	.196** .000	.292** .000
En-route Trip	.278** .000	.203** .000	.145** .000	.354* .000	.255** .000	.342** .000
Destination Site	.329** .000	.276** .000	.236** .000	.279** .000	.274** .000	.383** .000
Return Trip	.263** .000	.183** .000	.191** .000	.173** .000	.232** .000	.284** .000
Overall	.357** .000	.385** .000	.245** .000	.357** .000	.319** .000	.432** .000

*Significant at .05 significance level

Naidoo, Ramseook Munhurrn, & Ladsawut, 2010) who stated that the competitiveness of the destination has its impacts on tourist satisfaction by the quality of service offered which attracts visitors and provides them with a memorable experience satisfaction in the destination. In addition, Engeset et al. (2016) suggested that managers of tourism destinations might focus on employee motivation and training to improve tourist satisfaction, competitiveness, and sustainability for the future.

In addition, this finding is supported by the study conducted by Phau et al. (2014), that marketers' may promote communication initiatives for tourists to a safe place that is a good value for money. Hence, the top priority is to ensure that both government and industrial sectors will see to it that tourists are safe and secure during en-route travel. Thus, according to Lee (2015) it is the marketers task to diversify tourist attraction, to enable the tourist learned what type of leisure or entertainment offer, to promote attractions to social media and to ensure the site is safe and secure.

3.7 Significance on the Relationship between Travel Motivation and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

In Table 7 is shown the values of correlation coefficient, $r=0.265$ and the P-value that was less than 0.05 when the level of travel motivation was correlated with perceived destination competitiveness. The test of relationship between variables reveals that there is a significant relationship between travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness. This denotes that the null hypothesis is rejected. The finding of this study asserts the study of various authors (Pansiri, 2014; Fayed et al., 2016; Moll-de-Alba, Prats, & Coromina, 2016; Yao, 2013) who stated that understanding of tourists for their interest or needs and wants by providers is necessary to enhance the destination's competitiveness. This is congruent with preposition of Prebensen et al. (2013) stating that tourist motivation considered as antecedent to perceived value of tourism experiences. In addition, Chang et al. (2014) affirmed that travel motivation is one of the driving forces that motivates people to take revisit destinations. Both perspectives emphasized on the important roles that motivation which is an important factor to influence tourist decision-making, is closely associated with purchasing behaviors.

On the other hand, tourists' motivation positively affects perceived destination competitiveness. The higher the motivation the higher the perceived destination

competitiveness is (Meng & Xu, 2012). Thus, measurement of the leisure travelers' motivation for taking the route focused on its attractiveness as a driving experience and possibilities for taking part in different (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). Therefore, it is significantly the providers' effort to identify the most influential motivations that affect the overall travel experience of the tourists (Yao, 2013).

3.8 Significance on the Quality of Vacation Experience, Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services, Travel Motivation and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

With the use of regression, the researcher examined if there were possible direct and indirect relationships. When perceived

destination competitiveness was regressed on the quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and

tourists' level of travel motivation, it generated an R^2 of 0.265 as shown in Table 8.

The stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to show which among the exogenous variables were significant predictors of perceived destination competitiveness. The results indicate that quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and travel motivation were found to be significant predictors of perceived destination competitiveness. This implies that tourism providers might be aware of the developments of destination competitiveness and might have aligned the objectives in order to achieve destination competitive advantage (Chin, Thian, & Lo, 2017).

In particular, it shows that quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and tourists' level of travel motivation have positive standardized beta and have a highly significant influence on perceived destination competitiveness. It can be stated therefore that the combination of the three exogenous variables significantly influenced perceived destination competitiveness of tourists, but only satisfaction with travel/tourism services and quality of vacation experience are significant predictors. This finding is parallel with Chen et al. (2016) who found out that tourism experience and tourist's satisfaction could be improved effectively so as to maintain a destination competitiveness advantage. Likewise, Di Pietro and Peterson (2017) stated that destination satisfaction services and experiences are significant predictors of destination competitiveness.

Table 7: Significance on the Relationship between Travel Motivation and Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Level of Travel Motivation	Perceived Destination Competitiveness					
	Destination Management and Marketing	Accessibility and Information Availability	Tourism Attributes	Price and Value	Environment	Overall

Personal enrichment	.316** .000	.248** .000	.200** .000	.128* .010	.256** .000	.305** .000
Escape	.160** .000	.189** .000	.127** .000	.078 .118	.132** .000	.185** .000
Socialization	.216** .000	.195** .000	.142** .004	.049 .330	.152* .002	.197** .000
Family Togetherness	.168** .001	.167** .001	.090 .072	.001 .987	.118* .018	.137** .006
Overall	.279** .000	.262** .000	.180** .000	.078 .118	.211** .000	.265** .000

*Significant at .05 significance level

This establishes the claim made by Crouch (2011) that a destination may endeavor to dissect which part of the model is most vital for reaching a high level of destination competitiveness was responded by the supply-side. Referring to destination images were tourist providers made it with high quality of services to the visitors of the destination. As such, it is legitimate to characterize separate tourism sectors for which destination competitiveness is to be measured, whilst also taking into account tourist experience and motivations through finding a substantial estimation strategy and to avoid arbitrary results (Hooper, 2015).

Table 8: *Significance on the Quality of Vacation Experience, Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services, Travel Motivation and Perceived Destination Competitiveness*

Perceived Destination Competitiveness				
	B	Beta	T	Sig.
Quality of Vacation Experience	.317	.253	3.635	.000
Satisfaction with Travel/Tourism Services	.331	.324	7.023	.000
Travel Motivation	.105	.089	1.887	.060
R	.514			
R ²	.265			
F	47.484			
P-value	0.000			

3.9 The Best Fit Model of Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Model 5 includes quality of vacation experience, as the only latent exogenous variable which is expected to have an influence on the latent endogenous variable, perceived destination competitiveness. The model fitting was calculated as being highly acceptable. This model is strongly supported by CMIN/DF, P-value, NFI, TLI, CFI, RMSEA, and Pclose were found to be consistently indicating a very good fit model as their values, all fall within each criterion. The model fitting was calculated as being highly acceptable as presented in Table 9.

Among the five structural models explored in the study, it appears that only Model 5 named QUAVE-PDESCOM model have indices that consistently indicate a very good fit to the data. By deleting smaller beta values, it is determined which factors best fit the model. This approach is supported by Kline (2011) who stated that model respecification may include trimming or adding measures to attain good fit. This model finds strong support of the study of Chen and Petrick (2013) that it is important to give more emphasis on tourist experiences because it may contribute to the sustainability of destination competitiveness; thus, (Kim et al., 2010) stated that managers of the destination strive to develop a tourism product that provides satisfaction to the tourists. Furthermore, Bigovic (2012) stated that destination competitiveness is a multi-dimensional as well as relative concept which depends on positive tourist experiences in the area of destination. In addition, it was emphasized that positive tourist experience is a crucial part of destination competitiveness. Thus, there is a need to generate business economic activities to come up with a positive experience of tourist in a sustainable manner in the area (Luiz et al., 2010).

Accordingly, Basan et al. (2013) pointed out that the authenticity of tourism product in tourist destinations might only ensure a unique tourism experience and gain of a good position on the tourism market. Hence, tourists' experiences are the results of the interaction of the traveler with the service infrastructure and with the rated environment in a destination (Zach & Gretzel, 2011). Lastly, the result of the study supports the proposition by Chang et al. (2014) which stated that if creative attraction proprietors might want to attract repeat tourists, the tourists' experience was surely critical for developing service blueprints to meet the needs and wants of customers; they should give careful consideration to understanding what tourists experience when they visit innovative tourism attractions. Therefore, this signifies that the perceived destination competitiveness is best anchored on strong evidence of quality of vacation experience as supported by the two subcontracts namely: on-site experience, and after-trip reflection.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. The findings of this study unambiguously confirm finding out the best predictors of perceived destination competitiveness. First, the findings revealed that in terms of the level of tourists' quality of vacations, among the four dimensions, tourists' after-trip reflection and on-site experiences which got the highest means were experienced at all times. Therefore, it can be concluded that the memorable event experiences have an impact on the enhancement and promotion of tourism on-site after the travel of tourists' home environment.

In terms of the level of satisfaction with travel/ tourism services of tourists, all four dimensions obtained a high level mean score. It implies that the quality of service of tourist providers and the cost of services are reasonable with problem free which is manifested most of the times. Hence, the tourists' satisfaction in the region are important concerns of competing other destinations.

In terms of the level of travel motivation of tourists, all four dimensions, family togetherness is always experienced in the motivation to travel among the tourists. Hence, it can be concluded that the travel motivation has a strong attachment to the family. Further, family togetherness is of great importance in the travel motivation.

In terms of level of perceived destination competitiveness is oftentimes manifested as indicated with an overall high mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tourists agree that they are highly satisfied with their destination competitiveness.

The results on the test of the null hypotheses stating that there is no significant relationship among quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and tourists' level of travel motivation and perceived destination competitiveness are rejected. Thus, quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with

travel/tourism services, and level of travel motivation of tourists have an effect on the perceived destination competitiveness.

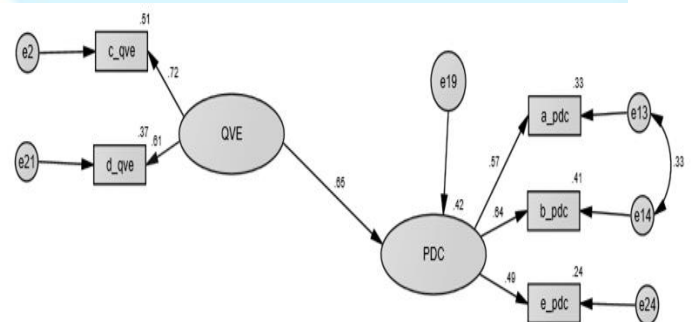
The null hypotheses stating that quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and level of travel motivation of tourists did not influence perceived destination competitiveness were rejected. The three exogenous variables have an influence on the perceived destination competitiveness of tourists.

The null hypothesis that states, there is no model that best fits perceived destination competitiveness was rejected. The hypothesized Model 5 was the best fit model of perceived destination competitiveness. The findings support the proposition by Chang et al. (2014) which stated that if creative attraction proprietors might want to attract repeat tourists, the tourists' experience was surely critical for developing service blueprints to meet the needs and wants of customers; they should give careful consideration in understanding what tourists experience when they visit innovative tourism attractions. Hence, quality of vacation experience has a significant impact and plays as a major role for high destination competitiveness.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations are given. The very high level of quality of vacation experience, high level of satisfaction with travel/tourism services, very high level of travel motivation and high level of perceived destination competitiveness suggested that tourist providers must develop and enhance their travel/tourism services which satisfy the desires of the tourists and for maintaining destination competitive advantage. Hence, frontline employees such as travel agents may be trained to upgrade high quality of services in order to receive high quality of vacation experience of the tourists.

Best Fit Model of Perceived Destination Competitiveness



Model 5. Structural Model Standardized Solution of Quality of Vacation Experience on Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Legend:

QVE – Quality of Vacation Experience

C_QVE – ON-SITE

D_QVE – After Trip

PDC – Perceived Destination Competitiveness

A_PDC – Destination Management and Marketing
B_PDC – Accessibility and Information Availability
E_PDC – Environment
e – Error Variables

Table 9: Goodness of Fit Measures of QUAVE - PDESCOM Model

INDEX	CRITERION	MODEL FIT VALUE
CMIN/DF	$0 < < 2$	1.988
P-value	$> .05$.104
NFI	$> .95$.983
TLI	$> .95$.970
CFI	$> .95$.991
RMSEA	$< .05$.049
Pclose	$> .05$.400

Legend:

CMIN/DF – Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom

Pclose – P of close fit

RMSEA – Root Means Square of Error

Approximation

NFI – Normed Fit Index

TLI – Tucker-Lewis Index

CFI – Comparative Fit Index

To improve the satisfaction with travel/tourism services, operators should perform extra effort to deliver goods and services better than other destinations to satisfy visitor needs with reasonable cost of services. Tourist providers may consider the use of local guides, website and other online tools services that may help tourists to gather information in the area such as; reservations from hotels, planes and other public utility vehicles, as well as routes information and food acceptability.

Understanding the travel motivation may help destinations increase tourists' arrivals. It is important to make them feel safe and secure and that the staff is good. Hence, tourist providers may coordinate military and police intelligence sharing information about the identity of those rebels and violence to promote public confidence. Therefore, the success of a tourism destination depends on a safe and secure environment for visitors.

In terms of the perceived destination competitiveness, destinations may understand the driving forces of success and develop strategies. Competitive price is the essential component in customer purchasing behavior. Thus, tourist providers may set prices by taking into consideration the costs and provides suitable profits. Pricing is a tool for increasing sales volume and have strong influence on tourist loyalty. Lowering prices offered make the buyers want the product. Therefore, marketing strategies may develop techniques in pricing products and services that may lead to the other competitors in the destination.

Since quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and travel motivation were significant predictors of perceived destination competitiveness, it is recommended that the policy makers/human resource managers of every tourist's site

destination company consider these variables in formulating policies, trainings and seminars to improve their destination competitiveness.

It is recommended that Model 5, being the best fit model of destination competitiveness, be adopted in the formulation of organizational policies of every tourist site destination company. Likewise, the top management will conduct trainings and programs for their tourist satisfaction and quality vacation experience. The different tourist site destination companies will provide more value-added products and quality experience for the tourists while sustaining its resources and maintaining market position relative to their competitors for superiority and high performance.

Future researchers who wish to conduct similar study other than Structural Model on perceived destination competitiveness of tourists as influenced by quality of vacation experience, satisfaction with travel/tourism services, and travel motivation may explore other indicators of the exogenous and endogenous variables to discover other challenging variables as predictors of perceived destination competitiveness.

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