

Multi Methods and Triangulation Approach to researching Tourists' Experiences and Satisfaction

Abstract

Tourist experience and satisfaction are subjective measurements of an evaluative orientation - tourists express, through their intentions and behaviour, subjective judgement associated with emotional and cognitive aspects. There are noticeable limitations to existing consumer theoretical and methodological approaches to the measurement of tourist experience and satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality context. A broader fluid research framework, utilising different methodological approaches, is needed to reflect the tourist experience that is complex, subjective, situational, multi-dimensional and involves an individualistic process of consumption. The paper presents a multi-qualitative approach to research tourist experience and satisfaction, namely the Profile Accumulation Technique (PAT) which involves carrying out written assessment, in-depth interviews as oral assessment and observation techniques on site to examine tourist behaviour. We found that tourist experiences and satisfaction are attributed to the personal experiential aspects and functionality/performance of service providers from data triangulation of these three data sources. A multi-method approach utilising three data sources offers a more holistic and detailed investigation with well-founded results and convergent validation of the findings. This method is viewed as a pragmatic research philosophy that offers rigorous data analysis, accurate findings with high cogency and a rich in-depth understanding of tourist experiences as compared to a single method. Hence, multi methodology or mixed method is recommended in researching issues that are subjective, complex, sensitive and multidimensional.