

## **Determination of satisfiers and dissatisfiers using Herzberg's motivator and hygiene factor theory : An exploratory study**

### **Abstract**

This article explores underlying guest satisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge service consumption context, a pioneering investigation adopting Herzberg's Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory. The article suggests that consumer satisfaction can be measured by proposing a paradigm that adopts a behavioral and experiential perspective as an alternative to the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm, rather than the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm that is predominantly employed in measures of consumer satisfaction. It argues that guest satisfaction in the ecolodge context is the consumption of experiences involved in both behavioral and comparison components. Building on Herzberg, underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are linked to job satisfaction in a way that is a function of two types of condition, known as hygiene factors (dissatisfiers), leading to the condition of dissatisfaction (prevention), and motivators (satisfiers), leading to a condition of satisfaction.. These dimensions are determined from service quality attributes, the desired social-psychological benefits (motivation), and attitude. An exploratory qualitative inductive approach utilizes three different techniques to collect "authentic" data. Methodological triangulation, consisting of participation observation, was used to explore behavior and actions during riverboat cruises; in-depth interviews were employed to explore dimensions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction by identifying the key moments of positive and negative experiences; and the Profile Accumulation Technique survey, a novel research tool with an open-ended questionnaire, was adopted to assess service quality attributes. The informants were European English-speaking soft ecoguests who stayed at ecolodges in Sukau, Sabah, Malaysia. The results from the three data sources reveal that satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions in the ecolodge service experience context are derived from both tangible and intangibles elements. These dimensions result from different facets of interaction between their experiences and attitudinal consequences of the individual. They are satisfied and

dissatisfied simultaneously by different unrelated dimensions. Satisfaction dimensions are derived from intangible elements: experience gained from nature attractions including wildlife viewing, the nature environment, the lodge environment; participation of ecoactivities (riverboat cruises and jungle walks) and service provision from experienced and knowledgeable local tour guides, all of which are related to the external ecolodge environment. Dissatisfaction dimensions come from more tangible elements: lodge maintenance (cleanliness, safety, discomfort, and minimum operational standards), the functionality and operation of riverboat cruises (boat engine causing environmental pollution), environmental pollution (noise, air, and waste pollution), and the bumpy road journey to the lodge. These dimensions are largely related to the internal environment of the ecolodge. This leads to conclusions that satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are unrelated. These two different dimensions can be explained by using Herzberg's dual factor theory where satisfaction dimensions can be termed as "true satisfiers or motivator factors" while dissatisfaction dimensions can be termed as "dissatisfiers or hygiene factors." The finding seems to concur with the proposition made by Balmer and Baum in 1993 that true satisfiers are related, primarily, to intangible elements, while dissatisfiers are related to tangible elements. The article explores satisfaction dimensions that consist of satisfiers and dissatisfiers and link well to Herzberg's theory. Thus, this study contributes to the theoretical and methodological advancement of the guest satisfaction literature, in terms of predicting and understanding the true satisfiers and hygiene/maintenance factors.