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The Effect of Psychological Dimensions and Perceived Values on Senior Travelers' Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the effect of perceived values, including functional value and emotional value that could significantly influence psychological dimensions; anxiety and airport fairness, toward the satisfaction and behavior of senior foreign travelers at the Suvarnabhumi airport in Thailand. This research used a quantitative approach to collect data with a purposive sample technique, focusing on senior traveler at Suvarnabhumi airport. The analysis was conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with path analysis applied to test the model of this research. Furthermore, to classify and investigate senior foreign travelers' demographics and general information at the Suvarnabhumi airport, descriptive data analysis was analyzed. The results indicated that the psychological dimensions, including anxiety and fairness, have a significant impact on the perceived value of senior travelers at Suvarnabhumi airport which alter traveler satisfaction and influence their behavior intention. The finding contributes a critical indication of perceived values as impact factors on psychological dimensions that could positively influence and alter travelers' satisfaction and behavior intention at the airport.

Keywords: *anxiety, fairness, perceived value, satisfaction, airport experience*

Introduction

Declining birth rates and rising life expectancy have resulted in an ageing society in various countries throughout the world. In 2015, over 12% of the world population was over 60 years old, with this figure expected to rise to 21% by 2050 (ONS, 2018). Hence, senior travelers become one of the large markets which can generate greater income for many countries (UNWTO, 2019) as their time and purchasing power is relatively higher than younger generations. From this point, it represents new challenges and opportunities for several industries to take advantage from the increasing number of senior travelers by providing products and services to satisfy their preferences and specific requirements (Kežman & Goriup, 2022). As same as the airport industry, understanding customers' needs and wants are always the main responsibility of all airlines. Senior travelers' preferences then become one of the main considerations due to their capability and potentiality (Chen et al., 2019), especially the psychological dimension. The previous study mentioned that experiences can potentially influence their perception which affects behavior and decision-making (Abdel-Gayed et al., 2023). Furthermore, Wang et al., (2023) revealed that anxiety can increase travelers' sensitivity,

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which has an important effect on their level of satisfaction and intent to travel. In addition to fairness, it is another critical issue that is widely discussed in research and studies. Su et al., (2015) represented that quality and fairness of service in the airport have potentially altered travelers' perceptions and attitudes which could impact their satisfaction and travel behavior intention. However, the psychological dimension has been studied mostly among the overall age range group in general which did represent and identify the special preference and requirements of one specific group. Furthermore, limited research has studied on psychological dimensions of foreign senior travelers at the international airport level. Consequently, the main objective of this research is to concentrate on the effects of perceived values of senior travelers and to fulfill the knowledge gap, including functional value and emotional value that could significantly influence the relationship between psychological dimensions, which include anxiety and airport fairness and the satisfaction of senior foreign travelers at the Suvarnabhumi airport in Thailand to enrich the service quality of airport and airline staff and enhance overall senior travelers' satisfaction in using airport service.

Psychological Perspective of Senior Travelers

The psychological dimension is a crucial factor in the aviation sector, which has a significant influence on the overall airport experience of travelers, particularly with regard to their emotions and feelings. In this study, the psychological perspectives comprised of airport anxiety and airport fairness (Su et al., 2015) as they both have a relatively high effect on psychological stress and alter traveler experience and perception (Crawford & Melewar, 2003) which could influence their travel decision and satisfaction. Firstly, anxiety refers to mental circumstances of tension and fears about the future (Luo & Lam, 2020). As (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998) emphasized, anxiety is a negative feeling of being nervous, fearful, stressed, worried, vulnerable, uncomfortable, disturbed, scared, or panicked. Like the previous study, anxiety is strongly associated with the customer's emotions; therefore, anxiety is subjective, depending on individual experience.

Furthermore, anxiety is a feeling caused by unpredictable services and environments during traveling which could lead to unpleasant feelings and emotions (Cheng, 2010). Omar & Kent (2001) have further explained that anxiety is the challenge factor that can affect airport management due to personal emotions and hedonic of the traveler which are naturally stimulated by changes in the surrounding environment which differs from their daily routine as well as the crowdedness of travelers at the airport.

Consequently, international aviation organization has considered and launched the Fast Travel Program to decrease the level of stress and

hasten the airport process. Similar to Batouei et al. (2020) authors announced that aspects of the airport experience have a significant impact on travelers' satisfaction and anxiety. They listed the factors that contribute to airline travelers' anxiety, including general safety and security, weather, instability, delays, ambiguity and lack of information, a foreign environment, dissatisfaction with the quality of the services provided, and the food given during the flight. Thus, research proposed that:

H1a: *Anxiety has a positive influence on the Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers.*

Secondly, another significant factor in the psychological dimension is fairness as it could impact travelers' experience during service delivery processes (Seiders & Berry, 1998). In addition to service fairness, it defined as "a customer's perception of the degree of justice in a service firm's

behavior". A previous study concluded that fairness is related to the customer's emotional outcome after perceiving the service and product and evaluating it (Mccoll-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). At the airport, customers expect to see service fairness from airport staff by not prioritizing privileges to certain groups of customers or persons (Su et al., 2015) which could strongly influence their satisfaction (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2016). If travelers have been mistreated by airport service personnel or airport restriction, it will impact traveler satisfaction and overall experience (Sindhav et al., 2006). Most research about fairness has been investigated in the context through security checkpoint service (Lum et al., 2015; Sindhav et al., 2006). However, there are reasons for unfairness that impact travelers' emotions in the airport. For example, the price of a product or service is too expensive for travelers in general or displeasure treatment by airport authorities and staff, particularly airport security which could alter travelers' emotions and feelings (Rubinstein, 2006), and ended up creating negative experience for travelers and give negative image to the airline and the airport. Furthermore, the inconvenience from airport physical condition, such as waiting area, supportive facilities, and amenity can refer to the unreadiness of the airport and airline to provide the service (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2016). So that, research would like to explore that:

H1b: *Fairness has a positive influence on Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers.*

1. Perceived Value of Senior Travelers

Since the 1990s, perceived value has begun in the business world, and is widely studied until the present time. Zeithaml researched on the theory of perceived value in 1988. He concluded that the perceived value is "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, 1988). The subjective construct of perceived can occur at various stages (Woodruff, 1997). In marketing, marketers have utilized perceived value as a main idea to succeed the consumer satisfaction based on what they perceived and what the consumer is given (Lee et al., 2007). Apart from that, the positive behavior and attitude of customers, including such as revisit, willingness to recommend, repurchase intention, and positive word of mouth, are all influenced by perceived value (Woodruff, 1997). At the same time, perceived value also helps organizations, both public and private, to accomplish a higher level of competitiveness and reduce the opportunity of customer brand switching as their perceived value attracts them to loyalty behavior (Williams & Soutar, 2009).

Furthermore, senior travelers are now becoming one of the potential markets for the tourism industry due to its market size and growth rate which has a higher number of early senior travelers who are willing to spend their time and money on holiday (Bai et al., 2001). The tourism context, therefore, has started to shift the focus and study their need and want in various aspects. Perceived value also accounted for one of the areas for senior travelers' study. It has been studied in various dimensions and from different perspectives. Thus, it makes the definition and attributes of perceived value vague. For instance, (Mary et al. 2020) has mentioned that friendly facilities and accessibility for senior people are the crucial factors that positively link their perception and value toward traveled destinations. In addition to the distinctive perspective of perceived value, Zhang et al. (2020) investigated perceived value in larger dimensions, including social, emotional, functional, and brand values. Like (Yuan & Wu, 2008) proposed that the functional attributes and emotional attributes of perceived value has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, other research studies also agreed

that a positive perceived value of the destination attributes has helped increasing travel experience, satisfaction, and travel intention (Johann & Padma, 2016; Sthapit et al., 2019). Thus, research refers to (Lee et al., 2007) to define perceived value of travelers and proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: *Perceived value has a positive influence on Foreign Senior Travelers' Satisfaction*

2. Behavioral Intention of Senior Travelers

Behavior intentions are considered as the result of travelers' satisfaction that depends on quality of products, services, and services providers (Ratnasari et al., 2021). Their experiences with products or services can significantly influence future behavior after purchasing. Likewise, Sien Leong et al. (2023) concluded that both internal factors and external factors can shape senior travelers' future intentions, especially in the aspect of sociopsychology. For example, senior travelers, nowadays, usually look for places that can give them new experiences, knowledge, and socialization which can result in positive travel intentions in the future. Similarly, (Zeithaml et al. 1996) also claimed that behavioral intention has a positive action that relate to WOM or word of mouth as well as repurchase intention. Sthapit et al. (2019) proposed that loyalty or behavioral intention can be reflected through revisitation and giving a recommendation to others. In the airport context, behavioral intention is often applied as a main factor in representing traveler satisfaction perceived value of airport service.

Furthermore, also classified the revisit and word of mouth as a part of behavioral intentions to study the correlation between satisfaction and perceived value. They found that satisfaction has played a direct impact on behavior intention including revisit and positive word of mouth. However, limited research mentioned senior travelers' behavior and their preference (Musa & Sim, 2010). Therefore, to fulfill this gap, this research utilized the construct of behavioral intention as a revisit intention, and positive word of mouth to be an indicator of foreign senior travelers' intention (Batouei et al., 2020; Kim & Park, 2019) which found that suitable for examining an airport context. Thus, this research proposes the hypothesis as follows:

H3: *Satisfaction has a positive influence on the Behavioral Intention of Foreign Senior Travelers*

Methodology

Research model

In this study, the research model was developed from previous studies which extracted related factors to study the psychological dimensions – including anxiety and fairness, that could positively influence the perceived value of travelers at the airport. Then, the positive perceived value could link to the travelers' satisfaction which could turn into revisitation and a positive word of mouth in the behavioral intention as illustrated below.

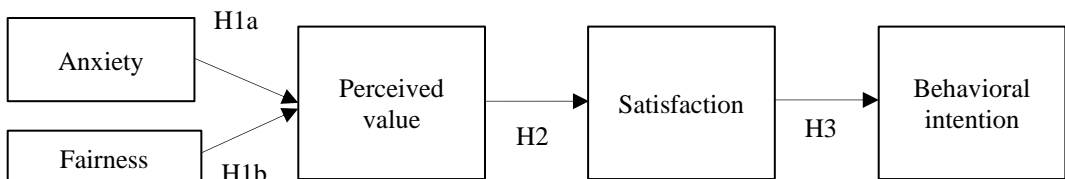


Figure 1: Research Model.

Sample

In this research, 380 foreign senior travelers were the sample group, using a quantitative approach to collect data with a purposive sample technique at Suvarnabhumi airport, Thailand. The criteria of selecting the sample are an international traveler age 55 years old and above.

Analysis

To begin with, the researcher conducted a pilot test to verify the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items. There are 10 variables with 30 question items in this study extracted from previous studies related to airport experience and service. Firstly, the psychological aspect contains 2 major variables: anxiety (including crowdedness – 2 items (Batouei et al., 2020; Cheng, 2010), harmful – 2 items (Batouei et al., 2020), and pandemic – 3 questions (Graham et al., 2020)) and airport fairness (including distributive justice – 4 items, procedural justice – 4 items, interpersonal justice – 5 items, and informational justice – 3 items) (Batouei et al., 2020; Sindhav et al., 2006; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2016). Secondly, perceived value variables include functional value – 3 items and emotional value – 4 items were also employed from the previous study (Lee et al., 2007). Then, the satisfaction variable contains 2 items in the questions adapted from (Kim & Park, 2019). Lastly, the behavioral intention was adapted from (Batouei et al., 2020). Furthermore, this research also studied travelers' preference which covers their travel time, duration, companions, and other significant behavior related to the airport experience. After the data collection process, all surveys were analyzed through a descriptive analysis to classify and investigate senior foreign travelers' preferences and travel patterns through a specific set of questions mentioned above. For the research variables, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to measure the model measurement fit model, reliability, validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Then, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with path analysis is tested (Crockett, 2012).

Finding

This section describes the findings of the research which also include the demographic profile and preference of foreign senior travelers, the reliability and validity of this research model, and lastly the hypothesis results. To begin with, the finding shows the demographic profile of foreign senior travelers. 51.7 % were female and 48.3 were male. Almost 80% of respondents were in the age category of 55-64 years old. About 30% of respondents were retired, followed by private business employees (18.8%), temporary workers or freelance (17.8%), and others. Most respondents had an average income of 1,501-2,000 USD for more than 70% of all respondents. Furthermore, about forty percent (43.8%) of respondents were from East Asia followed by the EU (21.9%), USA (18.8%), Oceania (9.1%), and South Asia (6.6%).

Measurement of Reliability and Validity

The finding of measurement of reliability and validity of Anxiety and Airport fairness factors showed that the average variance extracted (AVE) was a measure of convergence among a set of items representing a construct. It is the average percentage of variation explained among a construct's items (Hair et al., 2017). Each factor in the psychological dimensions has a composite reliability value exceeding 0.60 and an AVE value exceeding 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) which is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Measurement of Reliability and Validity.

| Factor | Reliability | Validity | |
|------------------|------------------------|----------|-----|
| | Alpha Coefficient (CA) | CR | AVE |
| Anxiety | | .78 | .55 |
| CD | .87 | | |
| HF | .87 | | |
| PM | .84 | | |
| Airport Fairness | | .79 | .56 |
| DJ | .86 | | |
| PJ | .88 | | |
| IPJ | .88 | | |
| IFJ | .87 | | |

The Validity of Causal Variables on a Model of Anxiety

The result showed that the standardized solution was between 0.68 - 0.82 statistically significant at a .05 level. The standard error was between 0.11 - 0.12. The variable has a reliability value based on the R square value between 67 – 81%, which indicates that the empirical variable was a good element of the latent variable.

Table 2: The Validity of Causal Variables of Anxiety.

| The causal variables | Factor loading standard | Standard error | t-value or C.R. | P | Reliability (R ²) |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| CD | .82 | - | - | - | 81.6% |
| HF | .81** | 0.13 | 11.99 | 0.000** | 80.9% |
| PM | .68** | 0.09 | 12.75 | 0.000** | 67.6% |

Chi-Square = .126, df = 1, P = .723, Chi-Square/df = .126, RMSEA = .000, GFI = 1.000, AGFI = .999, NFI = .999, CFI = 1.000
(Just Identification Model)

** Means with a statistical significance level of 0.01 (t-value > 2.58)

The Validity of Causal Variables on a Model of Airport Fairness

Table 3 found that a causal variable of airport fairness (APF) consists of factors in which the standardized solution was between 0.79 - 0.86 statistically significant at a .05 level. The standard error was between 0.11 - 0.13. The variable has a reliability value based on the R square value between 79 – 86%, which indicates that the empirical variable was a good element of the latent variable.

Table 3: The Validity of Causal Variables on Model of Airport Fairness.

| The causal variables | Factor loading standard | Standard error | t-value or C.R. | P | Reliability (R ²) |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| DJ | .79 | - | - | - | 79.1% |
| PJ | .86** | 0.13 | 11.99 | 0.000** | 86.4% |
| IPJ | .82** | 0.11 | 13.38 | 0.000** | 81.8% |
| IFJ | .82** | 0.10 | 13.31 | 0.000** | 82.2% |

Chi-Square = 10.102, df = 2, P = .006, Chi-Square/df = 5.051,
RMSEA = .103, GFI = .988, AGFI = .939, NFI = .989, CFI = .991
(Just Identification Model)

** Means with a Statistical Significance Level of 0.01 (T-Value > 2.58).

Hypothesis Testing

This finding presents the data analysis procedures and findings for the research hypothesis. The cross-correlation coefficients were initially used to answer the first research question, and then path analysis through AMOS was employed to provide the parameter coefficient of the relationships among the study variables. Path analysis and the goodness of fit indices were performed simultaneously. In the psychological dimension, the path leading from anxiety and regeneration to the perceived value of foreign senior travelers ($\beta = 0.14$; $p < 0.05$) was statistically significant in the expected directions. Therefore, hypothesis H1a was substantiated, or in the other words, anxiety has a positive influence on the Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers. Secondly, the hypotheses linking fairness on the perceived value of foreign senior travelers were supported by the underlying data. The path leading from fairness to the perceived value of foreign senior travelers ($\beta = .34$; $p < 0.05$) was statistically significant. The more fairness there was, the more perceived value of foreign senior travelers there will be. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was supported which means fairness has a positive influence on the Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers. Furthermore, the influence of perceived value on foreign senior travelers' satisfaction was also aligned with the hypothesis. Regarding the impact of perceived value on foreign senior travelers' satisfaction, the path coefficient was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.74$; $p < 0.05$), thereby suggesting that perceived value can have a direct and insignificant impact on foreign senior travelers' satisfaction. Therefore, the indication supported hypothesis 3 as illustrated in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Results of the Research Hypothesis Testing.

| Hypothesis | Result |
|--|-----------|
| H1: Psychological Dimensions | |
| H1a: Anxiety has a positive influence on the Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers. | Supported |
| H1b: Fairness has a positive influence on the Perceived Value of Foreign Senior Travelers. | Supported |
| H2: Perceived value has a positive influence on Foreign Senior Travelers' Satisfaction. | Supported |
| H3: Satisfaction has a positive influence on the Behavioral Intention of Foreign Senior Travelers. | Supported |

Conclusion

The satisfaction and behavioral intention of foreign senior travelers can be significantly influenced by psychological dimensions, including anxiety and fairness that strongly affect travelers' perceived value while they travel to and experience service at Suvarnabhumi airport, Thailand. The travelers could revisit the airport and provide positive word of mouth to other people if they have perceived a positive experience in the aspect of psychological dimensions. Several airports aim to maintain service quality and assure travelers' satisfaction. In this study, a research model obtained significant hypotheses in the theoretical model and can be applied in the airport service to enhance the competitiveness of the airport in the aspect of psychological aspect and perceived value. Hypothesis 1a anxiety has a significant positive influence on the perceived value of foreign senior travelers which aligned with the previous study, which mentioned that anxiety is a major factor that can affect traveler experiences and it will also impact emotions and perception toward the airport (Omar & Kent, 2001). Therefore,

all safety concerns should be a major consideration for all airports, including safety and security protocols, concise information about weather, delays, service quality, etc. (Batouei et al., 2020). Hypothesis 1b was also confirmed. It shows that unfairness can significantly impact travelers' perceptions, such as overpriced products or services and unfairness from airport staff (Rubinstein, 2006), which could lead to creating an unpleasant experience for travelers at the airport. Hypothesis 2 perceived value has a positive influence on foreign senior travelers' satisfaction. There are several ways to identify perceived value (Zhang et al., 2020). However, functional and emotional value become major attributes that could significantly affect customer satisfaction in this study (Yuan & Wu, 2008). Lastly, Hypothesis 3 was also significant. The findings shows that satisfaction can link to behavioral intention of travelers which includes revisitation and positive word of mouth (Sthapit et al., 2019; Batouei et al., 2020; Kim & Park, 2019).

As aforementioned, this study provides attainable guidelines for airports to increase travelers' satisfaction and positive behavior intention. This can refer to the capability of the airport to improve service quality in terms of airport fairness and anxiety. To ease the anxiety that could happen to travelers while they are traveling, airports can provide a comfortable and relaxing environment to the traveler. Furthermore, making travelers feel confident in the safety and security of the airport is another key success, including themselves, items of luggage, as well as the confidence toward the pandemic regulations and support. Secondly, airport fairness can be done in several ways, such as through security procedures and effective communication. When psychological dimensions – anxiety and airport fairness are satisfied, it would likely link to the positive perceived value which also includes functional value and emotional value that they perceived during traveling. In this way, perceived value links the travelers to the positive experience, which influences satisfaction and behavior intention at the airport.

To conclude, the theoretical implication of this research represents the relationship between psychological dimensions that could significantly influence travelers' perceptions that could link to their satisfaction and behavior intention in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously study airport travelers' needs and preferences in different ways to enhance the service quality and experience at the airport.

The Limitation and the Future Study

However, there are a few limitations to this study. Basically, the experience of foreign senior travelers at Suvarnabhumi airport might not cover all types of experiences and dimensions compared to other airports worldwide. Furthermore, the availability and technological advancement of different airports might affect and alter travelers' perceived value in different ways. Therefore, it is important to conduct further study in this field to gain insightful information for airport service providers and officers to improve the quality and experience of the travelers at the airport.

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