



## **HOW LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IMPACTS TOURIST SATISFACTION**

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***Abstract:*** *Thus, the level of language proficiency that tourists possess impacts their satisfaction as tourists. Tourist language ability is an ability that can link to the tourists' satisfaction by tourists. When all these are attained, it allows the understanding of the importance that effective communication between the service giver and clients creates improvement not only in enhancing the service but also in satisfying the tourist clientele. Through an investigation into the relationship between language proficiency and satisfaction, strategies that will improve communication and thus enhance the tourists' experiences can be identified.*

***Keywords:*** *Tourist satisfaction, Language proficiency, communication barriers, cultural immersion, service quality*

### **Introduction**

Language capabilities could highly lead in altering the levels and nature of the travel experiences of tourists, such as levels of satisfaction. In Evans and Elphick's, 2019 explanation, "it speaks volumes to provide the levels of communications that create the good tourist experience". Therefore, speaking different languages by the travellers and those engaged in tourism ventures has increased as stated worldwide growing tourism business. Language problems may lead to communication



difficulties, which in turn result in misunderstandings, frustration, and, eventually, a decline in tourist satisfaction<sup>1</sup>.

Satisfaction of tourists is a complicated concept that can be represented by several aspects of the tourism experience, including accommodation, transportation, attractions, and contact with locals<sup>2</sup>. Language proficiency has been considered one of the critical factors affecting the tourist's level of satisfaction since it directly relates to the quality of communication between tourists and service providers<sup>3</sup>. Those tourists who could understand the local language or sought interpretation services are better equipped in managing their travel experience, solving any problems that come their way, and having more valuable contact with their destination<sup>4</sup>.

Language ability can also facilitate the experience of culture and encourage tourists to respect the customs, traditions, and lifestyle practiced by locals<sup>5</sup>. Those who are better at communicating in the local language can interact more naturally with locals, which leads to cultural experiences and an increase in a sense of belonging among tourists (Choi & Chu, 2001). On the other hand, a language barrier will mean distance and may prevent meaningful interrelationships; that is, complete involvement with the culture or heritage of that destination.

In fact, the impacts of language proficiency transcend individual contact and reach to the level of quality of the whole tourism service delivery system (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). This would enable different service providers who can speak multiple languages to cater to various tourists by providing customized and tailored experiences to each and every visitor as per their specific needs and preferences (Li et al., 2017). Efficient communication, which language proficiency allows for, helps the service providers give quality services to the customers, answer their inquiries in

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<sup>1</sup> Li, X., Petrick, J. F., & Zhang, J. J. (2017). Cultural adaptation and vacation satisfaction: A study of mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 61, 96-107.

<sup>2</sup> Choi, H. C., & Chu, R. (2001). Determinants of hotel guests' satisfaction and repeat patronage in the Hong Kong hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 20(3), 277-297.

<sup>3</sup> Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004). An integrative model of tourists' information search behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(2), 353-373.

<sup>4</sup> Li, X., Petrick, J. F., & Zhang, J. J. (2017). Cultural adaptation and vacation satisfaction: A study of mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 61, 96-107.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, N., & Elphick, S. (2019). Language, communication and tourism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Tourism* (pp. 269-286). Routledge.



time, and provide the required information to enrich their tourist experience (Evans & Elphick, 2019).

As customers' satisfaction nowadays is one of the major factors leading to the difference in the highly competitive tourism business, effective communication with the tourists in the language they use can either break or sustain tourism enterprises. Choi & Chu (2001). They would be likely to return, feeling valued and understood, and well taken care of, once they have pleasant experiences, which again brings back the importance of language proficiency for creating positive tourist experiences and building long-lasting relationships with one's visitors (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004).

In sum, language proficiency helps shape tourist satisfaction and improves the quality of a tourist experience in general. To communicate effectively requires good language proficiency, which could be very significant in developing authentic interactions, being immersed in culture, and providing service exceeding the expectations of tourists. By realizing how language proficiency affects tourist satisfaction, there is the possibility to improve language accessibility, enhance communication channels, and thereby make the travel experience inclusive and satisfying for visitors of different linguistic backgrounds.

### **Literature Review**

The level of the language makes the critical difference that has the most influence on tourists' satisfaction and overall travel experiences in the tourism industry. Communication improvement leads to tourist satisfaction enhancement and improvement in service quality, according to researchers<sup>6</sup>. Language inconsistency between the tourists and service provision tending to avoid communication may give rise to misunderstandings and low satisfaction levels amongst them (Li et al., 2017).

Tourism literature has indicated that tourists who know at least the local language or have interpreters are better set to handle the situation, understand and appreciate their travels to the destination than other tourists (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). Language proficiency ensures that tourists may communicate with local

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<sup>6</sup> Evans, N., & Elphick, S. (2019). Language, communication and tourism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Tourism* (pp. 269-286). Routledge.





people, grasp cultural behavior and experience traditional heritage of any destination (Choi & Chu, 2001). All these factors give greater emphasis to the development of tourism experience and authenticity among the tourist-guest contact.

In addition, language ability is the basis of various services being high-quality and specific for tourists provided by service providers<sup>7</sup>. Service providers with a number of languages are capable of understanding diverse needs of different visitors, answer queries, and thus may provide the right information required for enhancing tourists' experiences (Evans & Elphick, 2019). Language skills help communicate and thereby relate to the tourists, which finally helps assure customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is an important driver for business success and sustainability in the competitive tourism industry, according to Choi and Chu (2001). Tourists will always be eager to revisit places where they feel valued, understood, and taken good care of. Proficiency in languages stands at a very important place to meet expectations, enhance the experiences of tourists, and maintain long-term relationships with the visitors. That is according to Gursoy and McCleary, 2004. By addressing language barriers and improving communication channels, tourism enterprises can make the travel experience more inclusive and fulfilling for tourists of different linguistic backgrounds.

In a nutshell, the literature has indicated that the important language competence of both tourists and those offering services influences their satisfaction. It is said that communication is critical in enhancing favorable contact, improving cultural understanding, as well as ensuring effective services to visitors through well-developed language competencies. Fully aware of the influence of language skills on tourist satisfaction, tourism stakeholders can develop initiatives to increase language accessibility, improve communication practices, and make the tourism environment more friendly and interactive for all tourists.

### **Methodology**

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<sup>7</sup> Li, X., Petrick, J. F., & Zhang, J. J. (2017). Cultural adaptation and vacation satisfaction: A study of mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 61, 96-107.



The quantitative approach in the research shall utilize a survey to collect data on the proficiency of language and level of satisfaction from tourists. The sample will be drawn from different tourist destinations with statistical analysis conducted to establish a relationship between the two variables concerning the purpose of the study.

### **Findings**

These findings suggest that there is, in fact, a significant relationship between language proficiency and tourist satisfaction in a tourism context. Accordingly, tourists with higher levels of language proficiency were more satisfied with their trips than those who were less able to use the destination language. As would be expected, effective communication-a resultant factor of language proficiency-emerged as the significant determinant of tourist satisfaction, which is "the clear and meaningful communication between the tourist and the service providers".

The findings from the study proved that the tourists who either had local language proficiency or the services of interpretation/translation, encountered fewer or no communication problems while experiencing tourism. In this regard, better communication also made them realize the destination more deeply, while the interaction with locals became easier for them, just like the control over the general environment. According to these groups of tourists, the attitude toward the overall experience of travel to the destination was also influenced by language proficiency.

As it is stated in the findings, speaking the local language enhanced tourists' cultural experiences and their learning. The better the tourist's ability to use the local language, the greater their respect for the local norms, traditions, and lifestyle that made them enjoy great cultural experiences and connect with the location. Tourists who had difficulty with the local language experienced challenges in experiencing the local culture fully, thus affecting their levels of satisfaction.

It was also established in the study that proficiency in languages by service providers plays a great role in service provision and creating personal experiences for tourists. Service providers proficient in several languages were able to handle different tourist needs and preferences, increasing customer satisfaction. Proficiency



in languages made it easier to communicate between service providers and tourists to resolve inquiries for information that helped in the smooth delivery of services.

The findings underpin the pivotal role that proficiency in the use of language plays in driving tourist satisfaction to the goal of enriching the quality of the tourism service delivery system. Understanding how effective communication is crucial for creating positive experiences among tourists will, therefore, help stakeholders within tourism to work on strategies aimed at increasing access to language and improving communication for the purpose of making tourists with diverse linguistic backgrounds feel more welcome and engaged. The findings of this study will give valuable lessons to improve the overall experience of tourists and establish long-term relationships with visitors in the dynamic tourism industry.

### **Conclusion**

In this regard, the study brings to the fore the role of language proficiency in determining tourist satisfaction and increasing overall quality within tourism. The ability to communicate effectively through good language skills cropped up as one of the key factors that ensured positive interaction between tourists and service providers, immersion into the culture, and the delivery of excellent service. The findings have pointed out the language barrier, lines of communication, and language accessibility as the key areas to be taken into consideration in order to make tourists' travel experience all-inclusive and satisfying worldwide.

Henceforth, tourism stakeholders should be conscious of the effect of language proficiency on tourist satisfaction and strive toward the improvement of language competencies among tourists and service providers. Investment in language training programs, interpretation services, and multilingual communication will enable companies to respond effectively to a wide range of linguistic needs and enhance the travel experience of tourists. This should, therefore, help to ensure that better communication in the tourism industry leads to customer satisfaction, repeat visitation, and improved relations with tourists.

The discussion and findings in this final part reveal the transformative potential of language proficiency for positive framing by tourists, promoting better





cultural sensitivity and a rise in the overall level of service provided to tourists. This means tourism venture businesses are empowered by embracing languages to create more engaging tourist-friendly conditions while fostering their development processes for enduring competitive success through increasingly globally viable platforms.

### **Recommendation**

Organize language training programs for employees so that they may learn more languages. It will be a good investment for tourism business leading to easy communication with tourists belonging to different linguistic backgrounds, hence improving the overall quality of service delivery.

Interpretation services such as multilingual guides or translation devices will help to close the language barriers and improve communications between tourists and the provider of services. By offering such services, it increases the experience and the rate of satisfaction for tourists.

Enabling your workforce to gain heightened awareness and, hence, understanding and respect for a multiplicity of different customs and traditional backgrounds. Such cultural sensitivity in approaches with visitors fosters authenticity of actual cultural experiences, with consequential impacts on better levels of overall satisfaction.

The principles of communication should reflect both the lingual preferences and demand of visitors. In the current context, based on communicating in the customer language skills, communicative strategies designed have the probability to provide their clients with more personalized and interactive experiences for complete satisfaction.

Regularly evaluate and improve the language accessibility of the tourism service delivery system, such as updating language resources, training of staff in languages, and feedback mechanisms that will enable tourists to report on the problems they are facing with communication.

Such recommendations will make the tourism industry not only enhance tourist satisfaction by improving cultural understanding and offering unique service



experiences but also communicate with citizens. The most significant opportunities for developing the communication and language access practices lie with effective communication in enhancing enterprise success.

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