

Social Distancing Practices and Its Acceptability as new Ethics and Protocol in Theme Park

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Abstract – These days, the amusement and recreation industries are enhancing. Theme Park staff and customers have continuous interactions. Customer satisfaction is a preference in the said industry. Customer satisfaction is the audit of how the theme park can commit to the necessities and needs of the customers. To attain this quality service required, the staff and management must perform explicit services to achieve the satisfaction of the guests, even in a new normal. This study was conducted to acquire an assessment of the satisfaction and level of implementation towards a theme park in Sta Rosa City through assessing the significant relationship when measured in terms of the psychographic profile of the respondents and different factors such as level of satisfaction and level of implementation on the practices in social distancing. This research conducted a descriptive method and a quantitative method approach. The participants for this study are those persons who have been experiencing the new normal setting in the theme park with implemented safety protocols. Based on the findings, there is a high level of customer satisfaction among consumers of theme parks. The results showed that the psychographic profile did not affect customer satisfaction. The output on the last part of the results and discussion serves as the recommended enhanced strategies for the improvement of customer satisfaction inside the Theme Park for the better normal. This research helps widen the vision of the students, professionals, and officers under the amusement and recreation industry to have a better understanding.

Keywords – Customer satisfaction, social distancing, theme park.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is known as one of the biggest contributors to making the economy grow. Over the past years, it has become the source of economic growth in most of the emerging and developing countries around the world. Tourism gives contribution in terms of different factors like having foreign investors, income from foreign currency, provide job opportunities, and increase in tax revenue [1]. In the year 2015, the positive benefits of the tourism industry are acknowledgment based on helping the social, cultural sectors as well as in boosting the economic growth of a certain country [2]. This is the reason why the United Nations World Tourism Organization announced that the tourism sector is proclaimed as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. About this, a tourist destination is a particular area in which a tourist goes visit either for a couple of days or just only for a night [3]. Furthermore, the theme park was a big part of the greater attractions in the tourism industry. Theme parks were a large, mostly outdoor, entertainment that can trace their origins way back to the 19th century that

converted the amusement parks with the mix of entertainment that included rides, shows, games, and food and beverage offerings. The largest attended theme park is 323.4 million, the level of attendance is likely comparable because it's achieving the second tier of theme parks throughout the world [4].

However, the tourism industries at this time were truly affected by the pandemic. A lot of tourism establishments were closed. Furthermore, the tourism industry is starting to adopt the new normal in this pandemic to be able to make the industry rise again. One of the tourism sectors is the theme parks, during this time of pandemic most of the companies implemented safety measures for the tourist's safety [5]. About this, it was stated that it includes the 6-foot social distancing, sanitation procedures, the mandatory use of facemasks, frequently checking person's body temperature and most importantly is the undergoing of the staffs in a safety measures training. All these new policies must follow before entering the theme park [6]. In some countries like the Shanghai Disneyland, they implanted a total of less than 30% capacity of tourists that can enter the park. The cashless mode of payment was implemented as well as the selling of tickets

online. In addition, technology will play a vital role in making the tourist's experience in theme parks to be safe and protected. The aim of these safety measures and guidelines implemented in parks is to avoid the physical contact of the tourists, staff and to give the tourists a safe yet wonderful stay in the park [7].

There are theories used in this study, these are the Risk Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior [8]. The Risk Theory serves as a basic methodological approach to identify and evaluate the safety and security problems by determining the threats, risk analysis, and the choice of method of risk management. The basic methodological approach of this theory is a threat- risk- measure. On the other hand, the (Theory of Planned Behavior) TPB contains the Psychological judgment where this serves as the main determinant to assess the tourist's satisfaction in terms of the services they have experienced [9]. The psychographic of the tourists was measured under this section. Therefore, these two theories determined and described the relationship of the variables such as the psychographic profiles implemented policies or measures and customers satisfaction. It also determined the effects of the implemented protocols on tourist satisfaction and the psychographic profiles of the tourist.

This topic was chosen by the researchers because aside from it is based on the current phenomenon that the world is facing today, the researchers want to know if the new protocols are applicable and how it is implemented in a theme park. The researchers also wanted to know if all the Inter-Agency Task Force's (IATF) implemented protocols and guidelines were followed by the establishments especially to the theme parks on their re-opening and how their new normal strategies affected their customer's satisfaction.

This study would serve as a guide and would be both beneficial to local and international tourism sectors, community, and future researchers, especially for those industries who are willing to cope up with the revenue that they lose and to sustain the satisfaction of the customers in line with the newly implemented protocols. The output on the last part of the results and discussion serves as the recommended enhanced strategies for the improvement of customer satisfaction inside the Theme Park for the better normal. This study aims on evaluating the level of implementation of the new practices and assessing the satisfaction of the tourists in terms of the social distancing and other new normal protocols that are implemented on the theme parks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the level of implementation of the new practices and to assess the satisfaction of the tourists to the new protocols that are implemented in Theme Parks, more specifically to: First, to assess the psychographic profile of the respondents in terms of personality, interests, lifestyle, and values. Second, to evaluate the level of implementation on the new practices in line with the IATF criteria on theme parks in terms of the waiting line, and rides and gaming booths capacity. Third, to determine the level of satisfaction of the tourists in terms of policies in social distancing, strategies in social distancing, and implementation of the strategies. Fourth, to determine the significant difference of the level of satisfaction on the practices in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profiles. Fifth, to determine the significant difference of the level of implementation on the practices in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profiles. Lastly, to recommend an enhanced strategy in the implementation of social distancing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher used quantitative research. to determine the measurement of the satisfaction and acceptance level of the tourist. The descriptive method was used in this study which refers to precisely describing a specific phenomenon or population of a given sample. The research was conducted in one of the famous theme parks in the Philippines, which is the Enchanted Kingdom. It provides quality service, extreme, and exciting rides, fun, and memorable experience once in a lifetime for the satisfaction of the tourists. The sample size for this study is 125 using the statistical analysis of G-power. It is a statistical treatment used to determine the sample size wherein; the effect size is 0.4, the alpha error is 0.05, and the power is 0.95 thus the researchers used the Convenience Sampling Design for this study. Furthermore, the primary instrument used in this study is a survey questionnaire. It served as the bridge in determining the respondents' insights and satisfaction regarding the newly implemented protocols in the theme parks. The survey questionnaire is composed of the respondent's psychographic profiles (personality, interests, lifestyle, and values) and two (2) sets of questions about the level of implementation on the new practices in line with IATF's (Inter-Agency Task Force) criteria on theme parks and satisfaction of tourists in

terms of the new implemented protocols and policies inside the theme park. It also includes the difference in the level of satisfaction and level of implementation on the new practices in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profiles. The survey questionnaire used was validated by the statistician, research adviser, and the dean of the College of International Tourism and Hospitality department. Also, the researchers adapted the survey questionnaire from Measuring the Service Quality of a Theme Park which focuses on evaluating the implementation of protocols [10]. In addition, the data gathered were interpreted using descriptive statistics thus frequency/percentage distribution in this study was determined by the psychographic profile of the respondents while the weighted mean was also used to identify the average of the relative importance of each observation and measure the respondent's assessment. Also, the researchers used the ANOVA (f-test) to determine the significant difference between the level of satisfaction on the practices in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profiles. The ANOVA (f-test) determined if the model used is suitable and appropriate to the population from which the data were taken. Moreover, the researchers provided a consent letter to the respondents. The consent letter explained the purpose of the research as well as the guidelines in conducting the study to assure that the confidentiality of the data gathered in this study were kept private and was only use for academic purposes. Before the actual distribution of the survey questionnaire, it undergone to a reliability test which were answered by the 125 customers or visitors of Enchanted Kingdom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in Table 1 is the summary table of the psychographic profile of respondents who visited theme parks.

The management made sure that the customers had experienced quality and memorable stay because visiting a theme park makes them entertain and recharge themselves after a tiring and stressful week. Going to various places in which there is an exciting outdoor activity that makes the tourist relax [11]. Therefore, personality is a factor to be considered by the management in terms of offering services and creating processes and procedures. The personality traits of the customers are very important to understand the differences of an individual to influence the travel destination preferences [12]. Also, since the customers

already experienced what is inside the theme park, so that they are interested in something new activities inside the park. Customers are intrigued by a new experience item creates because of publicizing and word-of-mouth exercises amid the pre-launch period [13]. In addition, since the theme park implemented new protocols because of the new normal and one of the values of the respondents are to enjoy visiting the theme park even there is social distancing and other new implemented protocols, knowing that the values of a tourist serve as the evaluation of the service that the tourist experience. It helps them to know the boundaries of their tourists, they can be able to adjust and improve their service [14]. Furthermore, based on the psychographic profile of the respondents who visited theme parks resulted as strongly agreed with a composite mean of 3.62.

Table 1. Summary Table on the Psychographic Profile of Respondents who Visited Theme Parks

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Personality	3.70	SA	2
2. Interests	3.60	SA	3
3. Lifestyle	3.75	SA	1
4. Values	3.43	A	4
Composite Mean	3.62	SA	

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 - 3.49 = Agree (A); 1.50 - 2.49 = Disagree (D); 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 shows that IATF's protocols inside the theme park were fully implemented with a composite mean of 3.69. This means that social distancing was practiced as well as the wearing of safety equipment inside the park such as the face masks and face shields during the respondents' visit. The theme park is strictly monitoring and following the new protocols. Physical distancing will strictly be monitored in all the rides as well as in gaming booths and other facilities inside the park. Since the wearing of a face shield in the rides is dangerous, the management will provide goggles in each ride to prevent the eyes from shedding tears which could be a possible risk of spreading the virus. The safety measures and protocols are strengthening by the theme park so that tourists would not be afraid to go visit [15]. Moreover, the capacity in every ride was strictly observed and monitored. The implementation provided by the theme park in terms of the waiting line was fully applied in the park, it helps the tourists to reduce and avoid the risk of

having physical contact with other people. Also, when it comes to the facility and items at the gaming booths it is strictly sanitized and safe to use by the next customers for safety purposes. Furthermore, the implemented protocols were able to help the customers feel safe and secured while enjoying the park in this new normal setup.

Table 2. Summary Table of the Level of Implementation on the New practices in line with the Inter-Agency Task Force criteria on Theme Parks

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Waiting Line	3.75	FI	2
2. Rides	3.81	FI	1
3. Gaming Booths	3.52	FI	3
Composite Mean	3.69	Fully Implemented	

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 = Fully Implemented (FI); 2.50 - 3.49 = Somewhat Implemented; 1.50 - 2.49 = Implemented; 1.00 - 1.49 = Not Implemented

Table 3 presents the level of satisfaction of the tourists when visiting a theme park in this time of pandemic that resulted as highly satisfied with a composite mean of 3.76. The top priority of the theme park is the safety of the tourist at the same time the enjoyment, hassle-free experience, and satisfaction in this new normal. The strategies implemented in theme parks help to boost the tourist satisfaction rate as well as it can be beneficial to the theme park to attract more tourist-based on the tourist experiences [16]

Table 3. Summary Table of the Level of Satisfaction of the Tourists

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Policies in Social Distancing	3.71	HS	3
2. Strategies in Social Distancing	3.81	HS	1
3. Implementation of the Strategies	3.76	HS	2
Composite Mean	3.76	Highly Satisfied	

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 = Highly Satisfied (HS); 2.50 - 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 - 2.49 = Not Satisfied; 1.00 - 1.49 = Dissatisfied

Moreover, the theme park operates by IATF guidelines that the tourist can be safe before, during, and after the rides at the same time enjoying the new experience. In terms of the policies in social distancing that were implemented in a theme park. Also, the theme park strictly observed and maintained the safety of the customers based on the

IATF guidelines to make sure that all the tourists will be safe inside as well as outside the park. Therefore, most of the tourists visiting the theme park were highly satisfied when it comes to their safety and enjoyment despite the social distancing protocols implemented inside the theme park.

Table 4. The difference in the Level of Satisfaction on the Policies in Social Distancing when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles

Policies in the Social Distancing	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	9.133	.000	Significant
Interest	15.677	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	4.858	.000	Significant
Values	16.238	.000	Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

Table 4 presents the comparison on the level of satisfaction on the practices in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profiles in terms of policies in social distancing. It was observed that there is a direct relationship between the two variables since each variable has a p-value less than a .05 alpha level. The management has guidelines and protocols in the area to avoid physical contact, however, customers can still observe how these protocols are being implemented which can result in different positive or negative opinions and reactions that can affect their insights.

Table 5 Difference in the Level of Satisfaction on the Strategies in Social Distancing when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles

Strategies in Social Distancing	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	4.485	.013	Significant
Interest	17.195	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	11.212	.000	Significant
Values	7.758	.001	Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant difference observed in the level of satisfaction on the practice in social distancing when grouped according to psychographic profile such as personality, interest, lifestyle, and values. This is observed since the

obtained p-value is less than the .05 alpha level. This means that the observation and level of satisfaction of the respondents differ from one another. Customers have a different understanding, observations, and preferences on what social distancing is, what social distancing should be and how the social distancing be implemented for safety assurance.

Table 6. The difference in the Level of Satisfaction on the Practices in Social Distancing when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles

Implementation of the Strategies	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	.540	.584	Not Significant
Interest	2.440	.091	Not Significant
Lifestyle	1.700	.187	Not Significant
Values	1.091	.339	Not Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

While table 6 presents no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the respondents in terms of the implementation of the strategies in social distancing when grouped based on the psychographic profile of the respondents. It is noted that the respondents have the same perceptions on the level of satisfaction with the strategies applied in the operation regardless of their psychographic profile. This means that no direct relationship between the two major variables exists as reflected in the data. This is because all customers want fair procedures and safety precautions while waiting in line.

Table 7. The difference in the Level of Implementation of Waiting Line when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles

Waiting Line	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	12.384	.000	Significant
Interest	16.340	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	10.224	.000	Significant
Values	33.564	.000	Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

Based on table 7 below, the level of implementation of the waiting line has a direct relationship with the personality, interest, lifestyle, and values, all with a p-value of .000. This indicates that there are different viewpoints of the respondents when it comes to their level of satisfaction on the level of

implementation in the waiting lines in rides and gaming booths. This result is caused by how respondents evaluate the implementation of waiting lines aligned with their expectations, safety, and protection. They wanted to get into the line with necessary precautions.

Table 8. The difference in the Level of Implementation of Waiting Line when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles in terms of Rides

Rides	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	16.005	.000	Significant
Interest	28.788	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	21.213	.000	Significant
Values	27.879	.000	Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

Table 8 shows that the implemented protocols in rides differ based on the tourist's psychographic profiles such as the personality, lifestyle, interest, and values, all with a p-value of .000. Customers have different needs and want based from their psychographic profile such as values and interest as they wait in line. There is also the possibility that there are different applications of procedures in the implementation of the mentioned protocol.

Table 9. The difference in the Level of Implementation of Waiting Line when Grouped according to Psychographic Profiles in terms of Gaming Booths

Gaming Booths	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Personality	17.891	.000	Significant
Interest	32.393	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	14.700	.000	Significant
Values	34.051	.000	Significant

Legend: If the p-value is <.05, significant. If the p-value is >.05, not significant.

Table 9 shows that the perception of implemented protocols in gaming booths differ based on the tourist's psychographic profiles such as the personality, lifestyle, interest, and values, all with a p-value of .000. The result has the same data as table 5.0. A direct relationship was reflected because the observations and opinions of the customers differ from one another. It is observed that personality, interest, lifestyle, and values have different influences in evaluating the implementation of the waiting line to the gaming booths. It can also be noted that respondents

have different experiences on different gaming booths. A customer's experience who had tried to line up in a gaming booth may be different from the other customer's experience who had lined up in another gaming booth.

In addition, it shows that the psychographic profile plays a key role in choosing a game that the tourist may want to experience inside the park, more specifically when it comes to the values and interests of the tourist.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN IN THE NEW NORMAL SETUP FOR THE THEME PARK

The researchers came up with output based on the results of data on how tourists evaluate the implementation of the safety protocols inside the theme park. The output can be a guide in giving additional precautions and directions to have a better service to the customers through a more convenient, comfortable, and safe stay while inside the theme park.

The proposed action plan shows the seven strategies drafted by the researchers in this study. First is the Cashless Payment, second is the Limiting the Maximum Capacity per Gaming Booths, third is the Post Orientation for All Levels of Management, fourth is to Boosts Customers Satisfaction, fifth is to be a Pro-Active Customer Service, sixth is to Build a Strong Organizational Culture and lastly is to Know How to Address Customer Needs and Complaints. Moreover, the action plan was created based on the indicated weak points that the tourists experienced during their visit to the theme park during the new normal setup. After analyzing the results, the researchers came up with these significant plans that can be used by the theme parks to be able to improve and enhance their service when it comes to the safety and enjoyment of the tourists in the new normal setup.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The majority of the customers of the theme park strongly agreed in terms of personality, interests, lifestyle, and values based on the outcome of the study. Moreover, they still valued the theme park even in the new normal. The implementation of the new practices in theme parks such as social distancing in line with the IATF criteria is fully implemented inside the park, more specifically in terms of the waiting line, rides, and gaming booths capacity. Also, by following the new protocols, customers were satisfied when the management of the theme park focused on safety and security because it gave an assurance to the guest that

the Enchanted Kingdom is a safe place. Tourists are satisfied and enjoyed visiting theme parks even though there are a lot of new protocols that needed to be followed such as the social distancing in the waiting line, rides, gaming booths, and other facilities as well as the use of cashless payment and the wearing of safety equipment's while inside the park. In addition, there is a significant difference between the level of satisfaction on the practices in social distancing when grouped based on the psychographic profiles of the tourist. This means that psychographic profiles are one of the key factors in identifying the different perceptions of the respondents regarding the improvement and feedback of the newly implemented policies in social distancing. Therefore, the tourists give more importance to the enjoyment that they experienced when it comes to their patients. Moreover, customers that go to theme parks are commonly for leisure that is why they still enjoyed the rides and other facilities even there is an implementation of new protocols such as social distancing inside the theme park. an implementation of the practices in social distancing.

The management of the theme park must give importance to the psychographic profiles of the tourists to be able to know the needs and wants of the customers, as well as for the continuous improvement of the new implemented protocols and services offered to satisfy the customers in the Theme Park. Also, they should identify what are the important factors that they are lacking in terms of implementation of new practices in line with the IATF. Specifically, the implementation of cashless payment by using the application of Pay Maya, Gcash, and other online or bank transactions. The theme park may measure their delivery service by using an online survey to be aware of the opinions of their guests when it comes to their safety and security inside the vicinity of the park. In addition, they must identify what are specific factors that affect tourist's level of satisfaction, considering the adaptation of newly implemented protocols, like social distancing, using a QR code to avoid physical contacts, etc. while giving an authentic experience to the customers despite of the new normal. Furthermore, future researchers may review this study and serve as a reference or guide in conducting new research that is related to the study and utilize the findings of the study as the basis of their related literature and studies. Tourism students may also use this study for references about the social distancing practices and their

acceptability as new ethics and protocol in a theme park. In addition, it is also recommended to use the action plan provided by the researchers in this study as a basis for further improvement of the theme park in terms of the safety, enjoyment of the tourists as well as to the newly implemented protocols in this new normal setup.

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