

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SERVICE QUALITY, EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING, AND THE REVISIT INTENTION OF VISITORS TO TOURISM FACTORIES

Yao-Chang Lin¹, Yao-Hsien Lee², Jau-Ming Su³, Li-Yang Hsieh⁴

¹Ph.D. Program of Technology Management, Chung Hua University, Taiwan.,

twb20150000@gmail.com

²Department of Finance, Chung Hua University, Taiwan

³Department of Transportation and Logistics, Feng Chia University, Taiwan

⁴Department of Tourism & Leisure Management, China University of Technology, Taiwan

Corresponding Author: twb20150000@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study established a linear structural equation model to explore the relationships among visitors' revisit intentions and their perceptions of the service quality and experiential marketing of tourism factories. A structured questionnaire was developed as the survey instrument and was distributed to tourists of 22 tourism factories in Taoyuan City. A total of 440 valid questionnaires were obtained. The results showed that service quality directly and positively affected experiential marketing and revisit intention, with experiential marketing as well as service quality exhibiting a direct positive effect on revisit intention. The analysis results indicated that service quality was a key performance driver of revisit intention. Experiential marketing played the mediating role in the relationship between service quality and revisit intention. Thus, tourism factories must provide satisfactory service quality and experiential marketing processes to improve visitors' revisit intentions and willingness to recommend the tourism factories to other people, thus enabling tourism factories to achieve sustainable operations.

Keywords: Tourism Factory · Service Quality · Experiential Marketing · Revisit Intentions

1. INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing-based factory systems began during the industrialization of the nineteenth century. In response to the tendency of industries to change, service-based industrial tourism became an emerging leisure industry in the twenty-first century. Thus, manufacturing industries have developed and incorporated tourism features into their services, an approach that is prevalent in the age of the knowledge economy. For decades, tourism factories with products related to daily consumption, such as porcelain, crystal, glass, food, wine,

and automobiles, have been developed in the United States, the United Kingdom, Holland, France, and Japan. In the twentieth century, these manufacturing factories featuring tourism services underwent an industrial reform, cooperating with tourism industries to develop international tourism. Their successful development pioneered the tourism factories of today.

Rapid economic development in Taiwan has narrowed the diverse market selections of traditional industries. The drastic changes of recent years in the economic environment have caused high

value-added industries to become the focus of current economic development. In response to the contemporary trend, the Taiwanese government has assisted factories in transforming into tourism factories. In addition to their main manufacturing activities, tourism factors provide product experiences and visitor tours, allowing visitors to tour the factory and observe how the factory operates. Thus, visitors' need for an in-depth leisure experience is satisfied, and more business opportunities are created for numerous factories.

Compared with general tourism patterns, tourism factories feature open-to-the-public tour services that communicate the industry and its business culture to visitors, enabling them to interact with industrial knowledge accumulated over time, observe diverse manufacturing and production procedures, and experience a real-life manufacturing setting. These activities are the most crucial strategic resources for developing tourism in industries. The movement of transforming traditional factories into tourism factories has become prevalent and exhibited a remarkable effect. Through this transformation, old factories in crisis because of the manufacturing industry migration are revived. By integrating

tourism and experiential marketing, the factories can be transformed successfully, creating new business opportunities and evolving into "living" factories that integrate manufacturing, historical and cultural heritage, educational meaning, and tourism and leisure values (Wu, 2013). The government strategically promotes the development of the manufacturing service industry to boost the growth of tourism factories. However, because of the demand for service quality in an unfamiliar service sector, how manufacturing industries create marketing based on consumption experiences and understand visitors' revisit intentions have become a focus of tourism factory operators. Thus, this study explores the relationships among the service quality and experiential marketing of tourism factories and revisit intention.

The Taiwanese government has promoted the Tourism Factory Counseling Program since 2002. By 2017, 135 tourism factories were open for visitors. According to statistics of the Central Region Office of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, tourism factories had 1.1 million visitors with a tourism production value of NT\$500 million in 2008 and 221 million visitors with a tourism production value of NT\$5 billion in 2016 (Fig. 1).

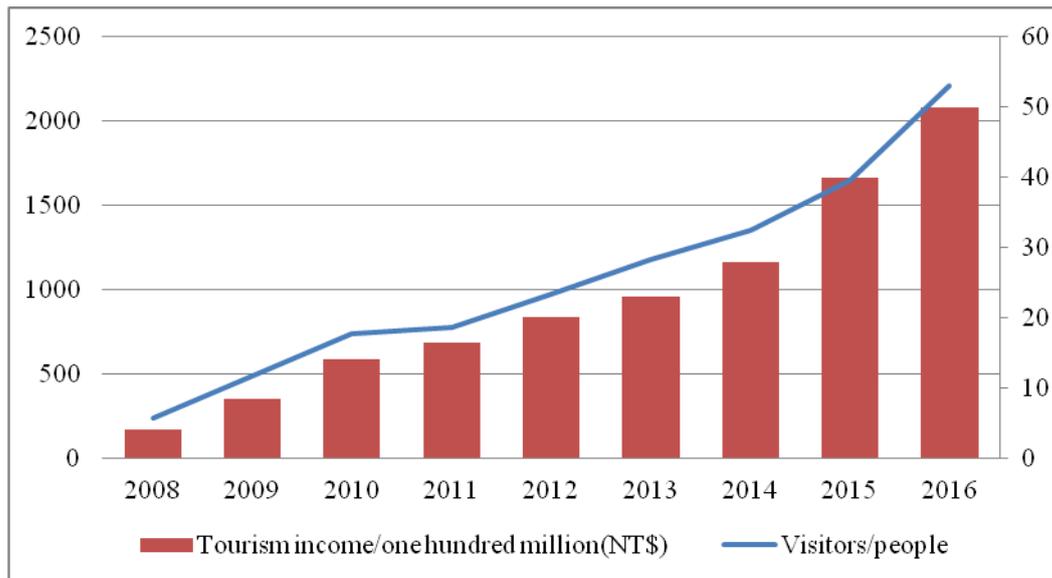


Figure 1. Development trend of tourism factories in Taiwan

Source: Central Region Office, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Taoyuan offers a view of the Taiwanese economy because it is the primary location of manufacturing industries in Taiwan. As the geographic, population, and economic center of Northern Taiwan, Taoyuan City is the hub of various industries. The Taiwanese government has continually assisted in establishing industrial zones through economic construction programs. Thus far, 29 industrial zones have been developed in Taoyuan City. Not only is Taoyuan City the gateway to communicating with the world, but its development also exemplifies the development occurring throughout Taiwan. Over the past 60 years, traditional agriculture has been transformed into refined agriculture; the development focus has shifted from handicraft industries to science and technology industries. In 2011, the city government of Taoyuan City actively promoted tourism factories, with 22 tourism factories and industry culture museums being established by 2014. From 2011 to 2014, the visitors to the factories

and museums exceeded 8 million, contributing a revenue of NT\$1.74 billion. The quality of tourism services in Taoyuan was higher than any other region. Therefore, this study explored the tourism factories under the jurisdiction of Taoyuan City. Questionnaires were distributed to visitors of 22 tourism factories in Taoyuan City. We aimed to identify the relationships among the service quality and experiential marketing of tourism factories and visitors' revisit intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service Quality

Thriving development in service sectors has been a common phenomenon worldwide, contributing to the public's high familiarity with the term "service quality." Tourism factories should emphasize service quality when transforming their focus from manufacturing to service. Bitner (1990) claimed that service quality refers to customers' assessments of the overall

superiority of services, representing perceived quality rather than objective quality. The Parasuraman, Zeithmal, and Berry (PZB) model has been mostly employed to measure service quality. Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1991) simplified the PZB model into a SERVQUAL scale that contains five dimensions and 22 items to measure the service quality that customers' expect and perceive. The five dimensions are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This model has been widely applied in various types of studies on the service industry. Chang and Huang (2009) explored the relationships among visitors' perceived service quality, service experience, relationship quality, and revisit intention. They identified that service experience was a key performance driver of revisit intention. Tsai (2010) explored the relationship between service quality and experiential marketing strategies and indicated that service quality and experiential marketing strategies have positive effects on consumer emotions. Chen (2013) explored the relationship between visitors' satisfaction with a city's featured activities and the city's experiential marketing, service quality, and image.

2.2 Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing reflects how contemporary customers emphasize experiences in addition to product function and value. Customers want to undergo stimulating, entertaining, educational, and challenging experiences. Schmitt (1999) highlighted that contemporary consumers

require more than functional orientations; they value experiential activities that are exciting, entertaining, and educational. Schmitt claimed that experience-oriented marketing strategies have emerged and that consumer experiences can be shaped by stressing experiential marketing that focuses on creating diverse forms of experiences for customers, who value experiences that are joyful and memorable. Enterprises should therefore emphasize consumer experiences as a marketing approach for selling products. Memorable shopping experiences can increase the value of products, enabling enterprises to decrease expenditures in product marketing and sales. Consequently, experiential marketing has emerged into a mainstream marketing method in recent years.

The rise of tourism factories has improved the transparency of factory production lines by adding exhibition spaces. Consumers can enjoy a profound experience as they sample a factory's production procedures. Through various channels such as photographs, products, advertisements, and online marketing, tourism factories are presented in a sensational light. Global patterns of economic consumptions have been transformed from purely selling products in stores into experiential marketing. To measure experiential marketing, Schmitt (1999) proposed strategic experiential modules (SEMs), which involve the five dimensions of sense, feel, think, act, and relate to measure the experiential marketing of tourism factories. Wu and Liang (2009) used leisure farms in

Yilan as a target to explore the relationships among experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and the customer's intention to revisit the farm. Chen (2010) explored the relationships among experiential marketing, customer value, customer satisfaction, and revisit intention. In the present study, we defined experiential marketing as assisting participants in identifying with a particular product or service and in undergoing a memorable consumption experience by sensing, feeling, thinking, acting, and relating, thereby enhancing the overall value of the experience.

2.3 Revisit Intention

Revisit intention originates from a customer's willingness to repurchase, which results from the customer feeling satisfied with a particular product or service (Francken, 1993). Thus, revisit intentions refer to visitors feeling satisfied with a travel destination and showing their willingness to return to the destination or other scenic locations in the same country (Kozak, 2001; Baker & Crompton, 2000) or to recommend the place to others (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Therefore, revisit intention in the present study was defined as visitors' willingness to revisit or recommend others to visit a tourism factory after visiting the tourism factory. Kuo (2013) explored the association among experiential marketing, brand image, and revisit intention. The results indicated that experiential marketing had a significant influence on revisit intention but did not significantly influence brand image and that brand image had a nonsignificant effect on revisit intention.

Yang (2014) reported that experiential marketing had a significantly positive effect on visitors' revisit intentions. A difference was observed in partial hypotheses, which asserted that the place of residence and visiting frequency of visitors had an effect on tourism vision and experiential marketing, verifying that tourism vision was positively correlated with experiential marketing and revisit intention. Liu and Hu (2014) identified that experiential marketing for Penghu's offshore platform had a positive effect on revisit intention.

Chen and Tsai (2007) claimed that the key to developing successful tourism destinations was determining how to increase visitor revisits or how to encourage them to recommend others to visit the destinations. By referencing previous studies, we explored the key factors influencing visitors' intentions to revisit tourism factories in Taoyuan City. We determined the experiential value that visitors emphasize and the key factors required to increase visitors' intentions to revisit tourism factories in various regions, as well as how to mobilize word-of-mouth marketing of the scenic locations through personal introductions and public recommendations.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research framework

In the literature review, we explored the theory and studies related to service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention. Previous studies have indicated that service quality is an index of the objective evaluation of service performance; thus, service quality entails a cognitive construct.

Experiential marketing focuses on generating emotions and memorable feelings in consumers; thus, experiential marketing entails an emotional construct. This structure was used to construct a linear structural

equation model comprising the variables of service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention to validate the causality among these variables. The research framework is shown in Fig.2.

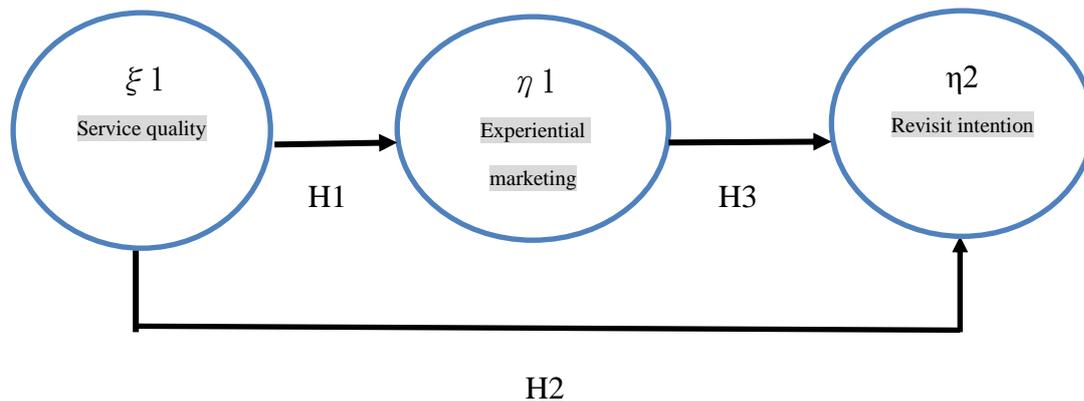


Figure2. Research framework

3.2 Hypotheses

The positive effect of service quality on customer loyalty and behavioral intention has been confirmed (Boulding, Kalar, & Staelin, 1993; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Thus, service quality has been considered a key antecedent in explaining long-term relationships (Thorsten, Gwinner, & Gremler, 2002). Fullerton (2005) explored and identified customer loyalty from the perspective of service quality and relationship marketing. Service quality was deduced to be the antecedent of the relationship quality between two transacting parties. Service quality represents the beneficial aspect of a transaction. Thus, high service quality benefits the maintaining of bilateral relationships. Hypothesis 1 was proposed, as follows:

H1: Tourism factories' service quality positively and directly affects experiential

marketing.

When tourism factories are transformed from a manufacturing to a service orientation, they emphasize service quality to improve customers' revisit intentions. Lee (2007) explored the relationship between the service quality of the Yamay Resort and visitors' revisit intentions. Liu (2011) explored the relationships among the travel motivation of visitors to leisure farms, perceived service quality, and revisit intention. The results indicated that visitors' perceptions of the leisure farms' service quality positively affected their intentions to revisit the leisure farm. Kuo and Hsiao (2014) reported that experiential marketing, leisure involvement, and service quality had significantly positive effects on revisit intention. Hypothesis 2 was proposed, as follows:

H2: Tourism factories' service quality positively and directly affects revisit intention.

Experience is a complex concept. Experiential marketing focuses on the subjective responses and feelings that consumers experience during consumption. Huang (2009) claimed that revisit intention can be interpreted as recommendation willingness in the tourism and resort industries. Recommendation willingness denotes that visitors are agreeable to visit the same destination or scenic location again and to recommend such a destination or scenic location to a friend following a satisfactory tourism and resort experience in that place. Hypothesis 3 was proposed, as

follows:

H3: Tourism factories' experiential marketing positively and directly affects revisit intention.

3.3 Variable Definitions and Measures

A total of 42 measurement items were established under the three dimensions of service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention. The items were developed into a structured questionnaire according to relevant empirical studies and the current situation of services provided by tourism factories. All items in the questionnaire were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The variable definitions and measures are explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Variable definitions and measures

Variable	Definition	Measures	Literature
Service quality	Visitors' evaluation of the services provided by tourism factories after visiting the factories	Comprises 19 items under the five dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy	Parasuraman, Zeithmal and Berry (1991)
Experiential marketing	Visitors identify with the product or service and enjoy a memorable consumer experience that enhances the overall value of the experience	Comprises 19 items under the five dimensions of sense, feel, think, act, and relate	Schmitt (1999)
Revisit intention	Visitors' willingness to visit the tourism factories in the future	Measures the four items of overall satisfaction, revisit, recommendation to family or friends, and priority option	Kozak, 2001 ; Baker & Crompton, 2000

Source: Organized by this study

3.4 Research Scope, Sampling, and Data Analysis

We selected 22 tourism factories in Taoyuan City as the target in distributing questionnaires. The personal interview method was employed to administer the questionnaire survey to visitors at the factory. Descriptive analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted to verify the fitness between various dimensions and corresponding items. Finally, the observed variables established according to the research framework and the estimated parameter values of the causal path were used to test the hypotheses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Structural Analysis of the Samples

A total of 440 valid samples were collected from visitors visiting the tourism factories in Taoyuan City. Demographic data (i.e., gender, marital status, travel style, age, occupation, income, and tourism factory), the sample number, and the distributions of all of the items are listed in Table 2. The following were inferred from the statistics:

4.1.1 Gender: Most of the visitors were female ($n = 247$, 56.1%). The number of male visitors was 193 (43.9%).

4.1.2 Marital status: Most of the visitors were unmarried ($n = 248$; 56.4%); 192 were married (43.6%). Most of the visitors were students.

4.1.3 Travel style: Most of the visitors were students on school trips ($n = 180$; 40.9%) because tourism factories offer

Table 2. Demographic attributes analysis

educational content. A total of 129 visitors were traveling on group tours (29.3%); 71 were with friends (16.1%); 36 were with relatives (8.2%); and 24 were traveling independently (5.5%).

4.1.4 Age: Most of the visitors were aged 18 years or younger ($n = 131$; 29.8%). A total of 65 (14.8%) visitors were 19–25 years old, 91 (20.7%) were 26–30 years old, 80 (18.2%) were 31–40 years old, 42 (9.5%) were 41–50 years old, and 31 (7%) were 51 years or older.

4.1.5 Occupation: Most of the visitors were students ($n = 160$; 36.4%). A total of 115 (26.1%) visitors were employed in the service sector, 66 (15%) in the business sector, 41 (9.3%) were unemployed, 32 (7.3%) were freelancers, 18 (4.1%) were employed in the industrial sector, and 8 (1.8%) were military personnel, public servants, or teachers.

4.1.6 Income: Most of the visitors did not have an income because they were students or unemployed ($n = 197$; 44.8%). A total of 32 (7.3%) visitors earned a monthly income of NT\$20,000 or less, 112 (25.5%) earned NT\$20,000–40,000, 77 (17.5%) earned NT\$40,000–60,000, 11 (2.5%) earned NT\$60,000–80,000, 6 (1.4%) earned NT\$80,000–100,000, and 5 (1.1%) earned NT\$100,000 or higher.

Demographic	Item	Sample number <i>N</i> = 440	Sample distribution (%)
Gender	Male	193	43.9
	Female	247	56.1
Marital status	Married	192	43.6
	Unmarried	248	56.4
Travel style	Independent trip	24	5.5
	Relatives	36	8.2
	School trip	180	40.9
	Friends	71	16.1
	Group tour	129	29.3
Age	≤18 years	131	29.8
	19–25	65	14.8
	26–30	91	20.7
	31–40	80	18.2
	41–50	42	9.5
	≥51	31	7.0
Occupation	Military personnel, public servants, and teachers	8	1.8
	Service sector	115	26.1
	Industrial sector	18	4.1
	Business sector	66	15.0
	Freelancers	32	7.3
	Students	160	36.4
	Unemployed	41	9.3
Income	No income	197	44.8
	≥NT\$20,000	32	7.3
	NT\$20,000–40,000	112	25.5
	NT\$40,000–60,000	77	17.5
	NT\$60,000–80,000	11	2.5
	NT\$80,000–100,000	6	1.4
	≤NT\$100,000	5	1.1

Source: Organized by this study

4.2 Reliability analysis

According to Guilford (1965), a

Cronbach's α value < 0.35 represents low reliability. A Cronbach's α value of $0.35\text{--}0.7$ is acceptable. High reliability is determined by a Cronbach's α value of ≥ 0.7 , representing that the variable items exhibit high consistency and reliability. Thus, passing the internal consistency test indicates the questionnaire's high reliability. Before CFA was conducted, the item reliability of the dimensions of service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention were analyzed by using Statistical Product and Service Solutions software. The analysis results indicated that the Cronbach's α values for service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention were 0.898, 0.919, and 0.763, respectively.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Amos 20.0 statistical software was employed to conduct CFA and examine the fitness between each dimension and corresponding items. According to the test procedures proposed in previous studies, we tested the fitness of the indicator construct by using the following test criteria (Hsiao, 2009): $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} < 3$; goodness of fit index (GFI) > 0.9 ; adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) > 0.8 ; standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) < 0.01 ; comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.9 ; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 ; normed fit index (NFI) > 0.9 ; nonnormed fit index (NNFI) > 0.9 ; and incremental fit index (IFI) > 0.9 .

To scrutinize the proposed questionnaire in this study, Amos 20.0 software was employed to retest the items. Items that exhibited a factor loading of ≤ 0.5 in the dimensions of service quality, experiential marketing, and revisit intention were removed. Excessively low factor loadings represent poor reliability. A total of eight items (i.e., SQ3, SQ4, SQ5, SQ6, SQ7, SQ9, SQ10, and SQ12) were removed. According to the modification index, seven items indicating observed variables with collinearity were removed (SQ2, SQ13, EM2, EM8, EM11, EM5, and EM9).

The number of variables was decreased, modifying the model. CFA was used to test the modified model data and to verify the fitness of each indicator construct (Table 3). The results indicated that the ideal $\chi^2/\text{d.f.}$ value was < 3 . The value obtained in this study was 2.029, within the acceptable range. The GFI value was 0.905, achieving the ideal acceptable range of > 0.9 . The AGFI value was 0.888, achieving the ideal acceptable range of > 0.8 . The RMSEA value was 0.048, achieving the ideal acceptable range of > 0.8 . The NFI value was 0.845, which was approximate to the ideal NFI value (> 0.9). The CFI, NNFI, and IFI values were > 0.9 (CFI = 0.914, NNFI = 0.906, and IFI = 0.915), achieving the acceptable range. In summary, the CFA results showed that the variables exhibited favorable fit.

Table 3. Comparison of confirmatory factor analysis and fit criteria

Fit index	Ideal value	Proposed by	Overall value for model fit
χ^2	—	—	651.303
d.f.	—	—	321
$\chi^2/d.f.$	<3	Hayduk (1987)	2.029
GFI	>0.9	Scott (1994)	0.905
AGFI	>0.8	Scott (1994)	0.888
CFI	>0.9	Bagozzi & Yi (1988)	0.914
RMSEA	<0.08	Jarvenpaa et al. (2000)	0.048
NFI	>0.9	Bentler & Bonett (1980)	0.845
NNFI	>0.9	Bentler & Bonett (1980)	0.906
IFI	>0.9	Bentler & Bonett (1980)	0.915

Source: Organized by this study

The Amos software is a regression-based multivariate statistical technology that analyzes the linear structural relationships of variables. The hypothetical paths of variables are verified by exploring the causal relationship between latent variables and observed variables. Data analyzed during the evaluation process provide the statistical information of the model after verification.

We used Amos 20.0 software to develop favorable fit values and to identify the path relationships.

After CFA, all of the index fits proposed in this study attained satisfactory values, and the convergent validity and discriminant validity achieved a satisfactory level. The overall model and parameter structure are shown in Fig. 3.

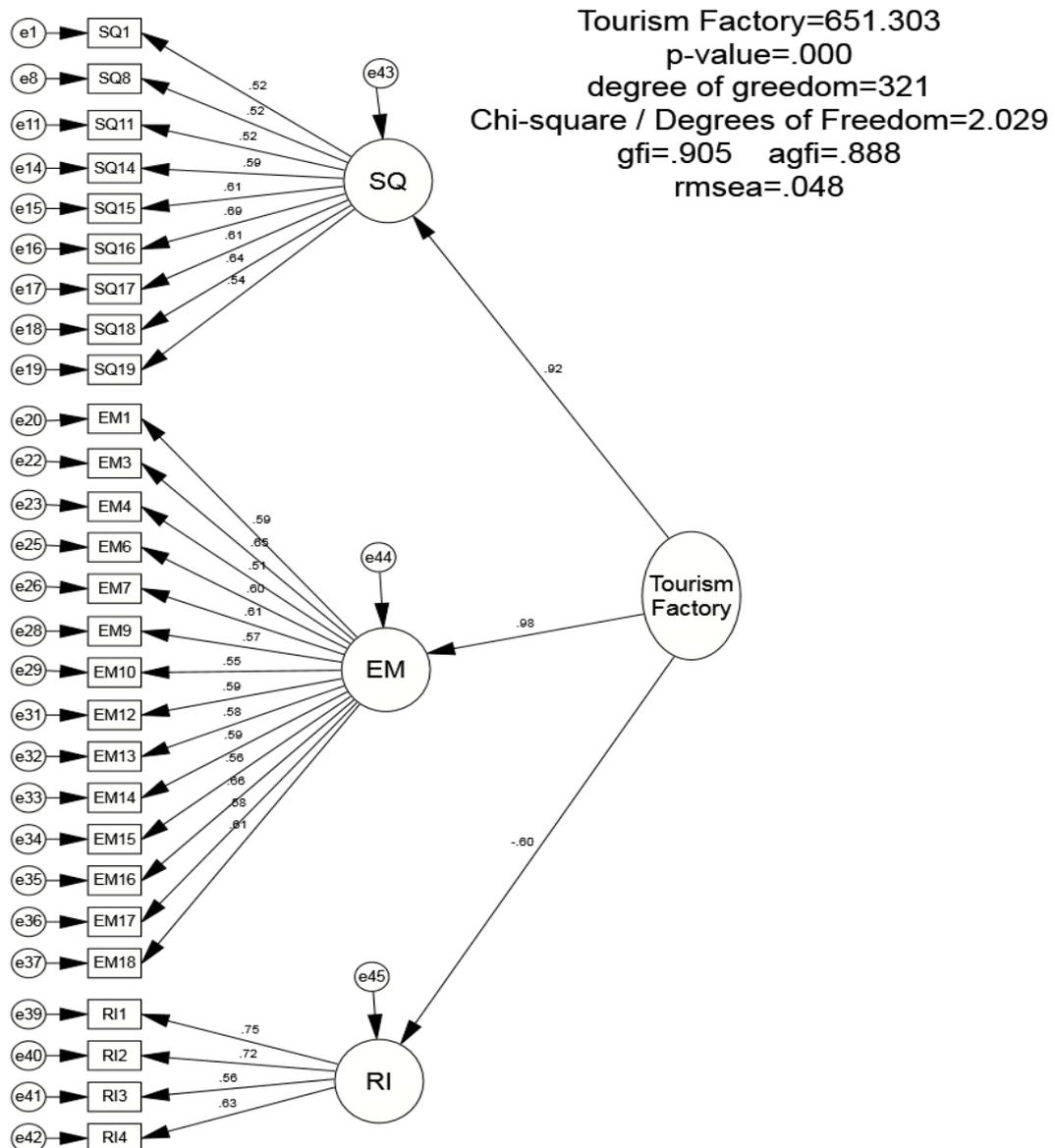


Figure3. Theoretical model and parameter structure

Source: Organized by this study

4.3 Discussion

The objective of the present study was to identify the relationships among visitors' revisit intentions and their perceptions of the service quality and experiential marketing of tourism factories. A questionnaire survey was administered to visitors of tourism factories in Taoyuan City. The CFA results

for the data indicated that various values of index fit achieved satisfactory levels. The convergent and discriminant validities also achieved a satisfactory level. A summary of the verification of the proposed hypotheses is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of hypothesis verification

Number	Hypothesis	Support or Reject
H1	Tourism factories' service quality positively and directly affects experiential marketing.	Supported
H2	Tourism factories' service quality positively and directly affects revisit intention.	Supported
H3	Tourism factories' experiential marketing positively and directly affects revisit intention.	Supported

Source: Organized by this study

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Visitors visited tourism factories primarily because these factories offer do-it-yourself (DIY) activities, through which visitors can experience factory facilities that are educational and suitable for family trips. In addition, what begins as a consumption pattern for the pure enjoyment of tourism factories is transformed into low-cost leisure activities that are educational, entertaining, and enable visitors to interact with nature

Because tourism factories are settings for family trips, the attitudes and amicability of service staff are critical for maintaining service quality. The high-quality service and enthusiasm of staff members can attract more visitors. Experiential marketing is crucial for tourism factories because the main purpose of these factories is expose

visitors to their products and provide them a chance to experience the manufacturing process. Moreover, of all the activities offered in tourism factories, DIY activities are most favored by visitors. Most visitors are willing to return to the tourism factories because of the high-quality services and interesting and educational DIY activities that they can experience. With high revisit intentions, visitors are willing to revisit tourism factories and to recommend them to their family and friends.

5.2 Suggestions

Because there are a wide variety of tourism factories, we classified them into types and proposed suggestions for each type of factory.

(a) Food product tourism factories: This type of factory should provide home delivery services, thus enabling the visitors to buy frozen foods without worrying about the food being spoiled while they continue to visit nearby scenic locations. The factories

should install additional children's facilities or playgrounds so that parents can relax as their children play. Before visitors participate in DIY activities, they should be informed about the resource materials and components to ease their mind during the experience.

(b) Textile tourism factories: The factories should develop application software (apps) for visitors to create their own products and then print them out during their visits. The tourism factories could show videos and photos that assist the visitors in understanding the factories' facilities and functions. As visitors participate in DIY activities, staff members should be on standby to see if the visitors are in progress or whether they need help.

(c) Furniture tourism factories: This type of factory generally do not interest visitors. A diversity of creative ideas could be implemented to increase the exposure of people to furniture factories and their willingness to visit them. The factories could build additional facilities to exhibit their products and offer tours with detailed explanations so that visitors can understand their product categories and select products suitable for them.

(d) Craft tourism factories: The factories should periodically invite customers to gather at the factories, which exerts a critical mass effect that is beneficial to the popularity of the factories. The factories could introduce creative products to attract visitors' interest. When visitors arrive at the factory, the staff could introduce the history of the products to them before giving them a

tour about the historic evolution of the products.

(e) Educational tourism factories: The factories should provide visitors with knowledge that is current and educational. Additional hands-on facilities could be installed, enabling visitors to assimilate into actual factory operations. The factories should designate staff to attend to visitors' need and show concern for the visitors at all times by asking them if they have any problems or need any assistance during their tour.

(f) Musical instrument tourism factories: The factories should hold events with musical themes to attract more visitors. Online marketing could be employed to attract music lovers to visit the tourism factories. Sanitizers should be made available in the factories for visitors to disinfect their hands. The factories' facilities should be cleaned regularly to ensure the safety and health of the children playing in the factories. Before experiencing the music, children should be told stories in a humorous manner by the staff that will increase their understanding of the music and attract their attention.

Lastly, all tourism factories should ensure their sanitary facilities are clean and comfortable at all times to further enhance visitors' visiting experience.

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