Experience Quality, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intention among the Visitors of Taman Tamadun Islam (TTI), Terengganu, Malaysia

Nor Hidayah Azhar and Nor Asmalina Mohd Anuar*

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: asmalina1122@gmail.com

Abstract

Objective – Islamic Heritage Park is one of the major exertions of tourism development and experiences as a central concept in tourism research. This study investigates the experience quality associated with Taman Tamadun Islam (TTI) in Terengganu, Malaysia which offers a combination of tourism activities. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship of experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention among the visitors of TTI.

Design/methodology – A descriptive research was designed for this study to obtain appropriate data using the quantitative approach towards the visitors of TTI. A total of 368 usable questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS to examine the relationship between the variables.

Results – Based on the five dimensions of experience quality (architectural, information and education, facilities, quality of services, and activities), four of them except for the facilities were found to have positive effects on visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention. The results also revealed that satisfaction mediates the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention in the heritage tourism with P value <0.005.

Originality/Value – This study discussed the theoretical and management implications of the findings. The suggested strategies in this study would diversify and boost the Terengganu tourism industry by targeting different groups of tourists. The findings of this study have also provided some practical information on the relationship of these variables and recommendations for the improvement of TTI to meet the needs of their visitors in the future.

Keywords: Experience quality, Satisfaction, Behavioral Intention, Taman Tamadun Islam.

1. Introduction

The nature and level of visitors experiences offered by a destination are determined by the destinations’ services and value provided. Successively, when the visitor becomes satisfied, they are most likely to have the intention to return and loyal to the destination (Lin & Kuo, 2016). Hence, tourism experts should understand and learn more about the customer experiences so they could plan and manage the destination well consistent with the visitors’ demand.

In the tourism and heritage tourism context, studies examining causal relationships between experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (recommendation behavior, loyalty) are still lacking (Altunel & Erkut, 2015). To enhance visitor loyalty, Petrick, Lee, & Crompton (2007) said that heritage park managers need to set their priorities to provide a high quality and satisfying experience to the visitors so that they would see as a result of good services and would have a good quality experience while doing their visitation.

Unlike service quality, however, there is still little research shedding light on the experiential quality of specific tourism participation such as heritage visitation (C. F. Chen & Chen, 2010). Service experience can be defined as individual response and the emotional state experienced by travellers when taking a service (C. F. Chen & Chen, 2010). Otto & Ritchie (2000) also stated that service experience can have an im-
portant impact on visitor ratings and satisfaction with the services provided. Consequently, the perceptions of experience in tourism services are very important and would lead and help the industry to improve.

Behavioral intention is usually represent the customer's loyalty to the destination or any revisit intention from them. Customer loyalty is important to any organization or service provider as the way for them to measures their services or goods. The level of destination loyalty is usually reflected in tourists’ intention to revisit the destination or their willingness to recommend it to others (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

There was an earlier research developed by Ulvoas & Gaëlle (2016) that related to tourism experiences offered by Taman Tamadun Islam using qualitative approach through online customer feedback which it becomes one of the limitations of his study. Ulvoas & Gaëlle (2016) mentioned that a visitor’s feedback provides shallower data than a personal interview would reveal. Apart from that, the study from Zairin, Chamhuri, Habibah, & Hamzah (2013) on the perception, satisfaction and acceptance level of the visitors from Taman Tamadun Islam concluded that 16% of the visitor did not have any revisit intention after their visitation. Therefore, this study was conducted to get a deeper understanding on the experience quality after the tourist visitation to Taman Tamadun Islam and discover the reasons why the visitors have some restraints on behavioral intention to Taman Tamadun Islam. Along with that, the total visitor per year shown by Zairin et al., (2013) has revealed declining and inconstantly in terms of number of visitation from the statistic recorded per year since the opening of Taman Tamadun Islam in 2008.

Hence, the aim of this study is to fill the gap by highlighting the issues based on previous study by Chen & Chen (2010) regarding experiential quality of specific tourism participation in Heritage Park. This study specifically identifies the relationship between the experience quality, satisfaction and behavioral intention among the visitors of Taman Tamadun Islam. In fact, the success of the tourism industry depends of the level of satisfaction received by the visitor based on their experience during their visitation. The finding of this study has provided some practical information about the relationship of these variables and also some recommendations for the improvement of Taman Tamadun Islam as the approach for them to meet the needs of their visitors in the future.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Experience quality

One of the most common use models in the tourism sector that is highly associated with disconfirmation theory is known as the service quality model, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). In spite of its common usage, Fick & Ritchie (1991) claimed that the SERVQUAL model does not entirely cover the emotional and holistic actors of the "service experience" overall quality. According to a study done by Otto & Ritchie (2000) they found that service quality is different with experience quality which service quality is measured by their objective of the dimension while experience quality is more subjective based on the nature of peoples’ experience. This is because the experience quality usually focuses on assessing inner-self (internal factor) of the visitors rather than service environment (external factor).

Kang & Gretzel (2012) defined tourist experience as “a constant flow of thoughts and feelings during moments of consciousness which occur through highly complex psychological, sociological, and cognitive interaction processes”. Therefore, experience quality might involve consciousness cognition process during tourists’ visitation. In line with the notion above, this study conceptualized tourism experience quality of tourist’s participation in consumption and interaction with the services that are provided by the destination provider. In addition, indirect contact such as seeing an advertisement of a destination that is recognized by a tourist in his or her place of residence can also be considered as an element of tourist experience quality (Chen &
Chen, 2010). Moreover, any specific service transaction such as the interaction between people who contributed to the realization of actual experience can also be included as tourist experience quality (Chan & Baum, 2007).

There is an experience quality scale that was constructed by Otto & Ritchie (2000) which consists of hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. These scales are obtained from the tourism service providers such as hotels, airlines, attractions, and a few more. For this study, hedonics factor is related to the emotional responses such as the excitement, enjoyment, and memorability that they received from the information, education and architectural of the attractions during their visitation. Peace of mind factor is associated with the need for both physical and psychological safety and comfort from the visitor which can be supported by the facilities and services that are provided by Taman Tamadun Islam. Likewise, involvement factor refers to the desire to have a choice and control in service offered consumption, and the demand to be educated, informed and instilled with a sense of mutual support. Lastly, the recognition factor is highly linked to the feeling of significant and confident while tourist themselves are being taken seriously.

Similarly, based on a study conducted by Kao, Huang, & Wu (2008) their study is focused on the experience quality of a theme park, where they classified experiential quality into four factors consists of participation; fun; surprise; and involvement. Participation factor usually related to the interaction between visitors and the product or services while the factor of fun is related to the enjoyment of the visitors perceived within the time of the visitations. Next, surprise factor refers to the spiritual potential, specialty or uniqueness perceived. Involvement can be defined as the immersion of visitors during their consumption, which later will lead them to have a good time during their visitations. Additionally, the result of this study has shown that experiential quality relates positively towards satisfaction as well as satisfaction significantly influences visitors’ behavioral intention.

**Satisfaction**

Oliver (1980) indicates that satisfaction is a perceived contradiction between the anticipated expectation and the perceived performance after use - when performance differs from anticipation, dissatisfaction occurs. Satisfaction also can be defined as the experience that generates positive feelings in a human or visitors itself (Rust & Oliver, 1994). In the context of tourism, Reisinger & Turner (2003) defined that satisfaction is mostly referred to as a pre-travel expectation and post-travel experience. When experience than expected causes satisfaction, tourists are satisfied. However, when they cause dissatisfaction, tourists are dissatisfied.

The previous studies have indicated that the perception of quality and value of services affects satisfaction, and satisfaction further affects loyalty and behavior (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bignie, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; C.-F. Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen, 2008; Choi & Chu, 2001; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1980; Petrick & Backman, 2002). For example, satisfied visitors can review the destination, express favorable comments or suggest it to the others about the destination. On the contrary, unhappy visitors would not return to the same destination and most probably would not recommend to other travellers because of the unhappy feelings that they received. In addition, as mentioned by Reisinger & Turner (2003) travellers who are dissatisfied can express negative comments on destinations and spoil their market reputation. Hence it can be concluded that satisfaction play an important role in measuring experience quality and behavioral intention of the visitors.
Experience Quality, Satisfaction, Behavioral Intention

Behavioral Intention

Lien, Wen, & Wu (2011) mentioned that behavioral intention is closely related to the actual behavior of the visitors and also has diagnostic value. Therefore, behavioral intentions are being the most important indicators for services provider to understand whether visitors would remain loyal or not to the destination (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1996). Parasuraman et al., (1996) also define behavioral intentions represent the repurchase intentions of the visitors, word-of-mouth, loyalty complaining behavior, and price sensitivity.

There is no completely recognized definition of behavioral intention. The concept of visitor behavioral intention has been conceptualized in three different ways by Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond (2003) including (a) attitude towards brand loyalty, (b) behavioral loyalty, and (c) co-determinants of brand purchase. From the perspective of behavior, loyalty can be measured directly by observing purchasing behavior, whereas, from an attitude perspective, loyalty can be measured indirectly by attitude or intention to repeat purchase (Hernandez-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena, & Sanchez-Garcia, 2006). Similarly, the reason is that loyalty can be evaluated from cognitive phase (i.e; when the consumer faces information), effective phase (i.e brand fondness), conative stage (behavioral intention) and control of action (i.e, consistent purchasing behavior)’ (Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007). Thus, destination loyalty can be seen as a loyalty measured indirectly or in a conative stage. In the context of tourism, destination loyalty levels are reflected in the desire of travellers to recommend destinations to others and the intention to return (Oppermann, 2000).

Relationships between variables and hypotheses

The causal relationships between perceptions of experience quality, satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hui, Wan, & Cheng, 2010; Huo & Miller, 2007; Martin-Ruiz, Castellanos-Verdugo, & Oviedo-Garcia, 2010). Experience quality studies dominate the marketing and tourism literature, and there is a need for studies examining the experience side of services, such as (Chen & Chen, 2010; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Kao et al., 2008).

However, in the tourism and heritage tourism context, studies examining causal relationships between experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions (recommendation behavior, loyalty) are still lacking (Altunel & Erkut, 2015). According to the results of past studies, experience quality has positively influenced satisfaction and behavioral intention and satisfaction has positively influenced behavioral intention. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed based on the research’s framework.

H1: The visitors’ experience quality in Taman Tamadun Islam positively affects behavioral intention.
H1a: The architectural of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention.
H1b: The Islamic info and education of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention.
H1c: The facilities of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention.
H1d: The quality of services of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affects visitors’ behavioral intention.
H1e: The activities of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention.
H2: The visitors’ experience quality in Taman Tamadun Islam positively affects satisfaction.
H3: Visitors’ satisfaction positively affects behavioral intention.
H4: Visitors’ satisfaction positively mediates the experience quality toward behavioral intention.
3. Research Method

The information that is needed for this study was attained through self-study conducted by the local and international visitors at Taman Tamadun Islam. The local and international visitors of Taman Tamadun Islam were the sample for the study as this study focused on the Taman Tamadun Islam itself. A total of 368 questionnaires were collected which sufficiently considered for the data analysis. The questions in the questionnaire were designed based on a review of the literature and specific characteristics of heritage tourism. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised to ensure the content validity. The questionnaire consists of four sections.

In section A of the questionnaires, it covered the demographic profile such as age, nationality, education level and a few more background of the respondent. For section B, the questions were constructed based on the variables under the experience quality to evaluate the effects to the experience quality received by the visitor after they visit Taman Tamadun Islam. Five-point of Likert scale was used in measuring the items in this dimension ranging from 1 = strongly unimportance to 5 = strongly importance to know the extent of which variables affect most to the visitors' experience quality. In section C, the questions were constructed as the way to measure the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention of the visitors. Section D was constructed to find the significant relationship of the experience quality on the behavioral intention of the visitors. In this dimension, five-point of Likert Scale also was applied to range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

All the data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Multiple Regression Analysis was first used to check the reliability of the data that was already gathered. Then, a descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics of Multiple Regression was used as the way to find the relationship between all the variables to meet all the research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses of the study. The researchers also used the Sobel Test as to find the significant relationship of the mediation effect.

4. Result and Discussion

From the total respondents investigated for this study, female category was slightly higher with 60.9% whereas about 39.1% was found to be male. It also revealed that 95.9% of the respondents were Malaysian, while 4.1% were non-Malaysian (the international visitors). In this study, 91.3% (n = 336) of the respondents were Muslim while non-Muslim respondents constituted for only 8.7%.

Based on the result, H1 have a significant relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention (β = .899, t = 39.274, p < .001). On the other hand, H1a showed a significant relationship between architecture and behavioral intention (β = .209, t = 4.494, p < .001). Thus, hypothesis H1a was supported. For H1b, it showed a significant relationship between information and education with behavioral intention (β = .182, t = 3.089, p < .001). Thus, hypothesis H1b was supported. On the other hand, H1c proposed insignificant relationship between facilities and behavioral intention (β = .082, t = 1.618, p > .001), hence, the hypothesis was not supported. For H1d, it showed a significant relationship between quality of services and behavioral intention (β = .312, t = 5.408, p < .001). Lastly for H1e, it also showed a significant relationship between activity and behavioral intention (β = .185, t = 3.632, p < .001). Consistent with the past study, the result indicated that experience quality has a positive effect on behavioral intention (Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Martin-Ruiz et al., 2010). This finding also supported by other researcher in this area Altunel & Erkut (2015) that commend experience quality has a direct positive effect toward behavioral intention.
Hypotheses 2 result has shown a positive value supported by a significant relationship between experience quality and satisfaction ($\beta = .917, t = 43.877, p < .001$). Consequently, it showed that experience quality was a significant predictor of satisfaction and regression model was significant. This study has demonstrated that experience quality has a positive effect on satisfaction. The result was consistent with past studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2015; Martin-Ruiz et al., 2010) where these researchers had identified that experience quality has a direct relationship toward satisfaction of the visitors.

Hypotheses 3 result showed a significant relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention ($\beta = .903, t = 40.256, p < .001$). Behavioral intentions can be seen as a result of anticipated satisfaction with an object, and hence very useful for marketing purposes. Hence, it can be concluded that satisfaction play a vital role in resulting a high occurrence of behavioral intention. This was supported by a few studies where satisfaction has positively related to behavioral intention (De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Jin et al., 2015; Palau-Saumell, Forgas-Coll, Anchez-Garcia, & Prats-Planaguma, 2013; Williams & Soutar, 2009; Yuan & Jang, 2008).

The result is illustrated in Table 1, where the p-value of the Sobel test was $p = 0.003$ which lower than 0.005, hence it was proved that satisfaction mediates the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention. This was supported based on the past research by Chen & Chen (2010) and they found that satisfaction mediates the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intentions.

| Indicator | Statement of Hypotheses | $\beta$ | P-Value | T-Value | Remarks |
|-----------|-------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| H1        | The visitors’ experience quality in Taman Tamadun Islam positively affects behavioral intention. | .899   | .000    | 39.274  | Supported |
| H1a       | The architectural of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention. | .209   | .000    | 4.494   | Supported |
| H1b       | The Islamic info and education of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention. | .182   | .002    | 3.089   | Supported |
| H1c       | The facilities of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention. | .082   | .107    | 1.618   | Not supported |
| H1d       | The quality of services of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention. | .312   | .000    | 5.408   | Supported |
| H1e       | The activities of Taman Tamadun Islam positively affect visitors’ behavioral intention. | .185   | .000    | 3.632   | Supported |
| H2        | The visitors’ experience quality in Taman Tamadun Islam positively affects satisfaction. | .917   | .000    | 43.877  | Supported |
| H3        | Visitors’ satisfaction positively affects behavioral intention. | .903   | .000    | 40.256  | Supported |
| H4        | Visitors’ satisfaction positively mediates the experience quality toward behavioral intention. | .828   | .003    | 2.995   | Supported |

5. **Conclusions**

Tourism industry for this current era is massively working on the specialties to assure tourists’ satisfaction since everyone can be a channel for bringing more tourists into their country. Every country and state motivates the tourists to come by promoting their own attractions, heritage, historical, or sceneries. Terengganu is one of the states in Malaysia that covers with beautiful natures and historical attributes. Terengganu has developed a lot of tourism attractions, and still to continuously find more added value for the tourism industry.
In this study, it was carried out to examine the experience quality, satisfaction and behavioral intention among the visitors of Taman Tamadun Islam (TTI) in Terengganu. This study was also pursued to clarify if the experience quality attributes have an impact on visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Data analysis results revealed that attributes in experience quality which is the architecture, information and education, quality of services, and activities of TTI were positively affected satisfaction and behavioral intentions. While for facilities, the result has not indicated positive effect to behavioral intention. Perhaps, this was caused by the location of TTI itself that is located nearby city of Terengganu, which already equipped with lots of facilities that could cater the need of the visitors.

Based on the result, it showed that satisfaction of the visitors also has a positive relationship with behavioral intention. This means experience quality is important to give a great satisfaction to the visitors, and subsequently brings a positive behavioral intention for the visitors. Thus, a destination should first increase the experience quality and satisfaction of visitors in attaining tourism services. For that reason, a visitor who has get involved in heritage tourism and experienced high level of quality and satisfaction would intend to recommend the destination in future visit.

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