

The Role of Destination Attributes in Islamic Tourism

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Abstract. The objectives of this study are to test the relationship between tourism motivations and tourist satisfaction, and to test how ‘Religion’ moderates the relationship. The variable ‘Religion’ is represented by the availability of Islamic norms and practices which are relevant to tourism at the destination. The results of the Partial least square (PLS) indicated that the tourism motivations are significantly and positively related to tourist satisfaction. The results also showed that Religion significantly moderates the relationship between pull motivation and tourist satisfaction. However, the moderating effect of Religion on the relationship between push motivation and tourist satisfaction was not supported.

1 Introduction

Tourism industries are always searching for new segment of customers. For example, over the last decade the tourism industry has witnessed many firms in the industry catering to the needs of special groups such as elderly tourists, disabled tourists and gay tourists [1]. However, one relatively unexplored segment is the ‘Religiously conscious’ tourists. It is no wonder therefore that some researchers in this field insist that catering to the religious needs of any faith in this expanding industry is essential [2]. Although the relationship between tourism and religion has been addressed in the literature on tourism, there remains a shortage of theoretical publications in the area of destination attributes in the context of Islam. When it comes to the relationship between tourism and Islam, the lack of literature is more obvious, especially regarding Islamic norms and practices related to tourism at the destination and their impact on the needs of Muslim tourists. Thus, the objective of study is to test the relationship between tourism motivations and tourist satisfaction, and to test how ‘Religion’ moderates the relationship.

2 Literature Review

Religion is associated with tourism, in terms of consumer behaviour and the supplier, as well as the relationship between them [3]. However, there is limited research available on this relationship [4]. Destination marketing could generate greater satisfaction when appropriate tourists are targeted [5]. In response to that, the supply of religious attributes for Muslim tourists may lead to increased satisfaction.

It is known that Muslim customers constitute a broad market which is around 1.82 billion around the world [6]. In addition, the Muslim market has its special requirements and its culture, which cannot be ignored. Thus, satisfying the religious needs of Muslim tourists may encourage them to travel to a specific destination. Religion is bound to be very important considerations when a Muslim decides to travel abroad [7]. The Muslim tourists may decide not to travel to a particular destination in the absence of some Islamic attributes [8, 9, 10]. This study attempts to address this problem by empirically testing the relationship between tourism motivation and overall tourist satisfaction with the availability of religion (Islam) as a moderating variable. The religion (INP) is represented by the availability of Islamic norms and practices related to tourism at the destination.

By using the travel motivation theory as a base, many researchers have tried to give more attention to the pull and push relationship by frequently modifying items associated with the constructs. However, very limited research is focused on empirically testing the relationship between tourism motivations and overall tourist satisfaction. To fill this gap, in addition to studying the tourism motivation for Muslim tourists, this research will also investigate the relationship between tourism motivations and the overall tourist satisfaction. The influence of travel motivations on overall tourist satisfaction has been studied in previous research [11,12]. Each variable, push motivations (PUSM) and pull motivations (PULM), have hypothesized effects on the overall tourist satisfaction (OTS). In addition, as a moderating variable, religion is proposed between tourism motivations and overall tourist satisfaction.

3 Methodology

A total of 1,300 questionnaires were distributed in international hotels and tourism sites in four Malaysian cities: Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Terengganu, Penang, and Johor Bahru. The questionnaires were handed out in these cities following a convenience sampling approach. There was a scanning question on the cover page of the questionnaire to determine whether or not the tourist was Muslim or not. If the tourist was a Muslim, he/she was invited to proceed in filling in the questionnaire. The partial least square (PLS) technique is selected to assess the structural model in the current study. In order to examine the relationship between the constructs in the proposed model as well as to test the hypotheses, two stages of analysis were performed to evaluate the structural model: (a) Structural model without the moderating variable, and (b) Structural model with the moderating variable. The effect size is also calculated, this being a measure of the strength of the theoretical relationship, including the moderating effect [13].

4 Data Analysis and Discussion

To develop INP as a construct, 18 items were generated based on the combination of conducting qualitative research and reviewing tourism and Islamic teachings literature. Out of 1,300 questionnaires, 551 were completed and returned from international hotels and tourism sites in four Malaysian cities: Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Terengganu, Penang, and Johor Bahru. After data cleaning, the final sample size was 508. The EFA results determined significantly the correlated factors, including six push travel motivations, five pull travel motivations, and four factors representing religion (See Table 3,4,5). After EFA, the measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 19 software. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the modified models of the push motivations, pull motivations, and religion are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Fit Measures for the CFA Models

Fit Indexes	PUSM	PULM	INP	Acceptable level
Chi-square	203.582	95.886	304.933	
Degree of freedom (df)	94	48	129	
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	>0.05
Normed Chi-square (CMIN/DF)	2.166	1.998	2.364	< 3.00
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	0.953	0.970	0.938	≥ 0.90
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI)	0.932	0.951	0.918	≥ 0.90
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.981	0.992	0.968	≥ 0.90
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.985	0.994	0.973	≥ 0.90
Root Mean Square of Error of Estimation (RMESA)	0.048	0.044	0.052	≤0.08

A two-stage approach is followed for evaluating the interaction effects of moderating variables modelled in PLS (Chin et al., 2003; Henseler & Chin, 2010). This issue was investigated by comparing the baseline model in stage 1 with the model in stage 2 (See Fig. 2). Results in stage 1 (See Table 2) indicate that the direct paths, PUSM to OTS, PULM to OTS, and INP to OTS, are statistically significant as the *t*-values (3.85, 7.56, and 11.14) are greater than 1.64. The explained variance (*R*-squared) is 0.54 for OTS. The goodness-of-fit (*GoF*) is 0.56. Whereas the results in stage 2, compared with stage 1, show that the *R*-squared was increased to 0.66 providing evidence of a better explained variance. The effect size is 0.26 indicating that the Religion have more than a moderate effect ($0.26 > 0.15$) on OTS. Using procedures suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p.148), the increased *R*-squared is attributable to the moderating effects and the effect size is statistically significant at 0.05 ($F_3, 504 = 129.6 > \text{Critical} = 2.6$). The *GoF* increased from 0.56 to 0.62, indicating a better fit of the Model in stage 2.

Table 2. Tests of PLS Path with Bootstrap for Stage 1 and Stage 2

	Stage 1		Stage 2	
	Path coefficient	<i>t</i> -value	Path coefficient	<i>t</i> -value
PUSM → OTS	0.11	3.85*	0.14	4.42*
PULM → OTS	0.33	7.56*	0.27	6.04*
INP → OTS	0.51	11.14*	0.49	10.34*
PUSM*INP → OTS	-	-	-0.11	1.25
PULM*INP → OTS	-	-	0.15	5.05*
R-squared	0.54		0.66	
GoF	0.56		0.62	
Effect size	-		0.26	

**Sig. if above 1.64 for 1-tailed test.*

Table 3. INP Factors

INP factors	Loading	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha	Mean (Std. dv.)
Factor 1: Worship facilities		52.43	.883	3.76(.533)
Availability of Mosque (Masjid)	.752			
Availability of prayer facilities at tourism sites, airport, shopping malls, hotels, conference halls, parks, etc.	.726			
Presence of loud public pronouncement of Azan to indicate prayer time.	.761			
Placement of Qibla direction (Qibla stickers/direction point towards Makkah city) in your hotel room	.642			
Provision of a copy of the Holy Qur'an in each hotel room	.727			
Availability of water supply in toilets at tourism sites, airport, shopping mall, hotel, parks, etc.	.648			
Factor 2: Halalness		7.57	.893	3.76 (.53)
Availability of Halal food at tourism sites, airport, shopping malls, hotels, parks, etc.	.708			
Availability of segregated Halal kitchen in hotels and restaurants	.714			
Availability of segregated areas for women at beaches	.753			
Availability of hotels with segregated swimming pools and gymnasium for men and women	.697			
Banning of sex channels in hotel entertainment system	.747			
Factor 3: General Islamic morality		6.46	.889	3.78(.563)
Observation of Islamic dress code by hotel and restaurant staff	.624			
Prevalence of Islamic dress code (e.g. Hijab) at public places	.670			
Banning by the authority of prostitution	.779			
Banning by the authority of indecent display of affection between sexes at public places (such as kissing etc.)	.649			
Censorship by the authority of adult scenes in movies shown on TV	.745			
Factor 4: Alcoholic drinks and gambling free		5.70	.918	3.79(.606)
Banning of alcoholic drinks by the authority at public places (such as tourism sites, hotels, parks, etc.)	.857			
Banning of gambling activities by the authority at public places (such as tourism sites, hotels, parks, etc.)	.862			
Total variance explained		72.18		

KMO = .943

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity p- Value =.000

Table 4. Push Factors

Push factors	Loading	Variance explained	Cronbach alpha	Mean (Std. dv.)
Factor 1: Achievement		35.58	.950	3.21(.717)
Meeting new people	.808			
Going places friends have not been	.862			
Talking about the trip	.858			
Indulging in luxury	.829			
Factor 2: Exciting and adventure		7.42	.839	3.05(.589)
Finding thrills and excitement	.727			
Being entertained and having fun	.755			
Being daring and adventuresome.	.779			
Being free to act how I feel	.608			
Factor 3: Family togetherness		5.60	.942	3.24(.682)
Visiting places my family came from	.812			
Visiting friends and relatives	.774			
Being together as a family	.801			
Seeing as much as possible	.714			
Factor 4: Knowledge/education		5.43	.850	3.01(.712)
Learning new things or increasing knowledge	.721			
Experiencing new/different	.682			
Seeing and experiencing a foreign destination	.708			
Visiting historical places	.759			
Factor 5: Escape		4.828	.871	3.06(.677)
Getting away from the demands at home	.836			
Getting a change from a busy job	.828			
Feeling at home away from home	.664			
Experiencing a simpler lifestyle	.771			
Factor 6: Sports		3.728	.555	2.66(.710)
Participating in sports	.787			
Desire to watch sports events	.603			
Participate in physical activity	.758			
Total variance explained		62.61		

Table 5: Pull Factors

Pull factors	Loading	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha	Mean (Std. dv.)
Factor 1: Natural scenery		35.71	.884	3.00(.806)
Outstanding scenery	.601			
Mountainous areas	.868			
Natural ecological sites	.867			
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	.839			
Factor 2: Wide space & activities		8.45	.875	2.95(.682)
Wide spaces to get away from crowds	.842			
Variety of activities to see	.604			
Water sports	.812			
Personal safety	.835			
Factor 3: Cleanness & shopping		7.74	.939	3.06(.699)
Standards of hygiene and cleanness	.754			
Shopping facilities	.810			
Reliance/privacy	.749			
High quality restaurants	.796			
Factor 4: Modern atmosphere		5.48	.784	2.92(.718)
Modern cities	.770			
Exotic atmosphere	.671			
First class hotels	.784			
Reliable weather	.749			
Factor 5: Different culture		5.06	.722	2.98(.611)
Interesting and friendly local people	.661			
Different culture from my own	.678			
Historic old cities	.734			
Interesting town/village	.750			
Total variance explained		62.46		

In stage 2, the moderating effect of INP on the relationship between PULM and OTS is statistically significant as the t-value of the interaction path is 5.05 and higher than 1.64. However, the results show no support for the moderating effects of INP on the relationship between PUSM and OTS as the t-value of this path is 1.25 and less than 1.64. These results suggest that the Model in stage 2 is better than the Model in stage1 and provides evidence that the Religion moderate the relationship between pull motivation and the overall tourist satisfaction. Figure 1 shows that the results supported hypotheses H1, H2, and H4, as evidenced by the path coefficient and significant t-value. While hypothesis H3 was not supported meaning that there is no significant moderating relationship between PUSM and OTS by INP.

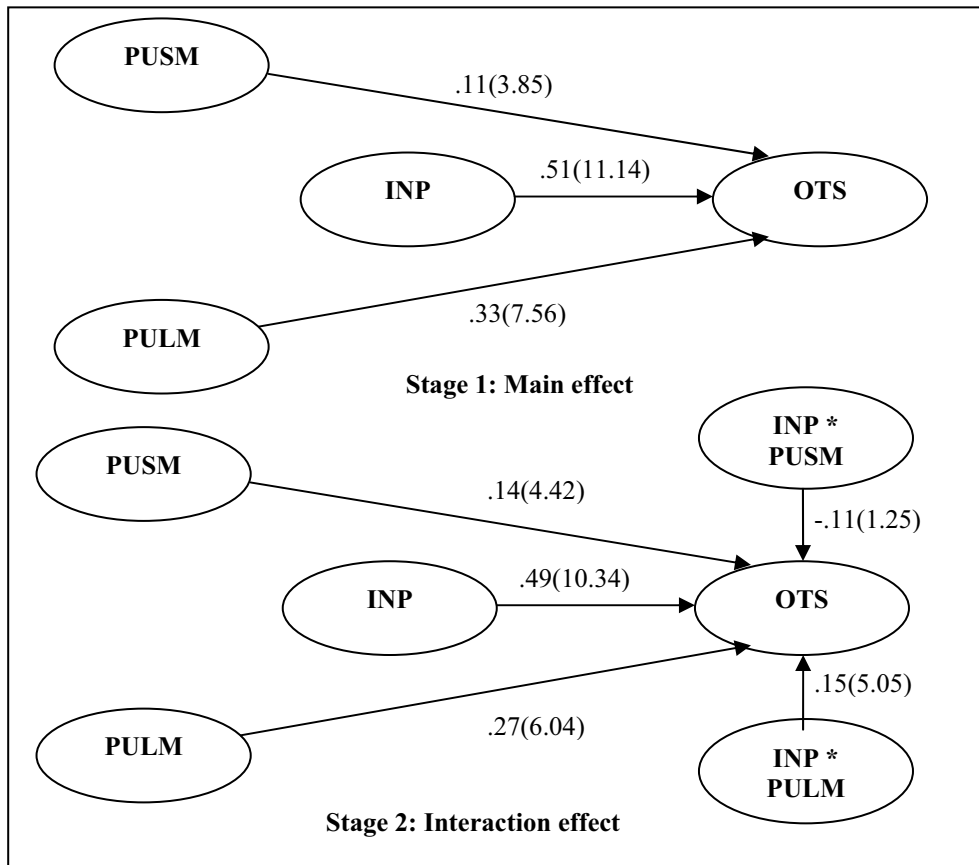


Figure 1. Testing Moderating Variable

5 Conclusion

The results show that four factors were extracted from the eighteen Islamic norms and practices items and labelled; worship facilities, Halalness, general Islamic morality, alcoholic drinks and gambling free. Lack of public consumption of alcohol and public gambling activities were found to be the most important Islamic norms and practices with a mean score of 3.79, followed by general Islamic morality (3.78), worship facilities (3.765), and Halalness (3.763). The results of the PLS indicated that religion significantly moderates the relationship between the pull motivation and the overall tourist satisfaction based on the significant interaction and variance explained ($\beta = 0.15$, t-value (5.05) > 1.64). This result confirms that the availability of Islamic norms and practices related to tourism at the destination contributes to the overall tourist satisfaction and strengthens the relationship between conventional destination attributes and tourist satisfaction for Muslim tourists. By having Islamic norms and practices, destination marketers can achieve tourist satisfaction among Muslim tourists. Furthermore, if destination marketers determine the preferable Islamic norms and practices to Muslim tourists, this could help them to design and tailor Halal products and services. The findings of this study should help marketers to better understand “Islamic tourism” and to develop marketing strategies to attract Muslim tourists. Furthermore, destination marketers might be able to design creative programmes that harness the unique characteristics of tourism products to satisfy and delight Muslim tourists. For example, design resorts fully meet Islamic religious needs such as segregated beaches, segregated swimming pool, and alcoholic drinking free.

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