
Historical Service Quality Assessment of Malaysia's World Heritage Site

Hasnawati Haji Guliling¹, Yuhanis Abdul Aziz²

¹*Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Sabah, Malaysia*

²*Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia*

Abstract — The tourism sector is experiencing a remarkable constant progress and becoming one of the fastest growing economic sectors globally. In this context, it is interest for the academics and destination marketing organizations to undertake a dedicated study that gives a greater understanding of the concept of satisfaction in enhancing tourists' loyalty. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the impact of service quality as one of the key antecedents affecting tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards selected destinations of the World Heritage Site in Malaysia. To confine the scope of the study, the area of interest focuses on a specific type of city, namely the Heritage City. The historical cities of Melaka and George Town inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage City in Malaysia are chosen in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the tourists' attitudes towards heritage city. The sample consists of 450 international and domestic tourists who visited the heritage city. Theoretically, the study contributes to the body of knowledge by emphasizing on key antecedents affecting tourists' behaviour. Practically, the research findings imply suggestive value to destination marketing planning for Malaysian tourist destinations. At the conclusion, the study makes suggestion of the employment of HISTOQUAL model, which provides a detailed and valuable insight into the service quality assessment of the heritage settings.

Keywords - *Heritage tourism, destination service quality, tourist satisfaction and loyalty, HISTOQUAL model*

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I. Introduction

Heritage tourism in Malaysia has been identified as one of the niche products to be developed extensively. It is a growing segment in the tourism market nowadays. Heritage tourism is classified as a subclass of cultural tourism. The World Tourism Organization (1985) defines heritage tourism as the movement of people, particularly for cultural reasons, such as education and cultural tours, enjoyment of the arts or cultural festivals, and other related events. The term heritage in tourism refers to the landscapes, natural history, buildings, artifacts, and cultural traditions that are "either literally or metaphorically passed on from one generation to the other, but there are features among these elements that can be portrayed for promotion as tourism products" (Prentice, 1993). The major heritage elements include the historical buildings, historical sites, and unique local cultures that are commonly found in many heritage cities throughout Malaysia.

The heritage tourism is chosen as the basis of the study for several reasons. Specifically, the Malaysian government takes a proactive approach in diversifying the tourism landscape. Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen, the former chairperson of Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) pointed out that culture and heritage tourism are the new segments that will boost the Malaysian tourism. The new subdivisions will place Malaysia on the world map as one of the destinations that offers a unique experience due to its rich and wide-ranging history, especially Melaka and Penang (The Malay Mail Online 2013, August 16). Furthermore, according to the Tourism

and Culture Minister, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, tourism and culture not only offers enjoyable experiences to visitors but also creates greater understanding among different people and enriches the life experience of the residents that makes them feel proud and want to preserve their heritage (The Star 2013, August 15). The government's strong support by acknowledging heritage tourism as an important economic force leads to better strategies in marketing and branding Malaysia as the most preferred tourist destination in the world.

However, with regards to the tourism industry, Malaysia continues to face challenges in providing high-quality services to its tourists. The tourism chapter of the Malaysian Economic Transformation Program (ETP) Annual Report 2014 stated that one of the key challenges faced by the country's tourism industry is to improve the quality of various existing tourism offerings. Tourists have complained about quality issues related to infrastructure, transportation, human resources, safety and security of tourists. Making sure the tourists receive pleasant memorable experiences right from their arrival through departure will ensure they leave a destination with pleasant memories; a condition that will surely lead to recurring visits and a positive word-of-mouth to third parties. Furthermore, one of the biggest challenges facing destination marketers is that of creating and projecting a memorable and positive image of the destination (Khalid & Mohd Roslin, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the impact of service quality as one of the key antecedents affecting tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards selected destinations of the World Heritage Site in Malaysia. To confine the scope of the study, the area of interest focuses on a specific type of city, namely the Heritage City. The historical cities of Melaka and George Town inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage City in Malaysia have been chosen in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the tourists' attitudes towards heritage city.

II. Literature Review

A. *Service Quality in tourism*

The United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2003) defined "quality in tourism" as the result of a process that implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate products and service needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer at an acceptable price, in conformity with the underlying quality determinants, such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity, and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with its human and natural environment. Within the service sector, the definition of quality follows the customers' perspective and should aim to meet customer expectations.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) introduce an instrument called SERVQUAL to measure Service Quality. The SERVQUAL scale was developed to measure the numerical quality of products and services. It measures the "gap" between the customers' expectations and the performance they actually received. Five dimensions (reduced from ten original items), namely "tangibles", "reliability", "responsiveness", "assurance" and "empathy" using two sets of 20 statements and a rating based on a seven-point Likert scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988) were used in the measurement. The efforts to evaluate quality are concentrated primarily in measuring the perceived service quality using the SERVQUAL scale either in its original form or with modifications. Nevertheless, the scale has not escaped criticism because of its limitations in assessing the quality of complex services, such as found in the leisure, tourism, and hospitality sectors. Furthermore, quality of service is difficult to measure due to its intangibility nature (Shariff et al., 2016). Such services may require the application of a wider range of measures to collectively designate the levels of quality. Despite the ongoing debate over SERVQUAL application, it remains a useful tool in the study of service quality (Wan & Cheng, 2011). Furthermore, it can be used as a "skeleton" and developed further for other contexts application (Frochot & Hughes, 2000).

The scale has been extensively applied in various sectors since its introduction in the 1980s. A number of authors have questioned its usefulness and validity as well as the reliability after using the scale. Many researchers were determined to adapt the scale in the tourism sector or to propose alternative measurement scales. For example, LODGSERV, which measures service quality in the lodging industry (Knutson et al., 1990); LOGQUAL, applicable to the hospitality industry (Getty & Thompson, 1994); DINESERV, used by the restaurant businesses (Stevens et al., 1995); HOTELQUAL, pertinent to the hotel industry (Falces et al., 1999); HISTOQUAL, appropriate for the historical sites (Frochot & Hughes, 2000); and ECOSERV, which was designed to measure perceived quality in ecotourism (Khan, 2003).

Specifically in measuring service quality for the historical sites, Frochot and Hughes (2000) published a paper pertaining to the application of SERVQUAL concept in the heritage attraction in the UK with a tool called HISTOQUAL. Their study was intended to fulfill the research gap in measuring service quality and customer satisfaction in the heritage settings. The HISTOQUAL scale considers the fact that the services provided in the heritage sites are unique and covered a wide range of components, such as direction signage, attitude of the

staff, catering and retailing facilities, special care towards the disabled and children, and so forth. According to Frochot and Hughes (2000), the HISTOQUAL scale employs a more standardised questionnaire survey and suitable for assessing the service quality performance of a property and across different heritage attractions. Based on the HISTOQUAL scale by Frochot and Hughes (2000), Frochot (2001), and Wan and Cheng (2011), five dimensions, namely “responsiveness”, “tangibles”, “communication”, “consumables”, and “empathy” are adapted by this study to evaluate the visitors’ perceptions of service quality at the historical cities of Melaka City and George Town.

B. Destination Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to a short-term emotional reaction to a specific service performance (Lovelock & Wright, 1999). For the purpose of this study, Destination Satisfaction refers to the degree of pleasure or contentment experienced by the tourists, consequent to the destination ability in fulfilling their needs, expectations, and desires (Chi & Qu, 2008). Practitioners of tourism industry employed tourist satisfaction to a destination as the basic parameter to assess the performance of destination products and services (Noe & Uysal, 1997). Furthermore, tourist satisfaction is one of the crucial elements in ensuring destination marketing success (Dmitrovic et al., 2009). It influences tourists’ choice of a destination and their decision to return (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, one of the destination marketing organisations’ primary task is to enhance customer satisfaction (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). Furthermore, tourist satisfaction is a prerequisite to the strategy development that leads to the destination’s greater attractiveness and its competitive positioning (Dmitrovic et al., 2009).

C. Destination Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour” (Oliver, 1997). Operationally, Destination Loyalty is considered as an individual’s judgment in recommending a destination and visiting the same destination in the future as well as his/her willingness to stay longer at the destination; taking into account his/her current situation and likely circumstances. In this study, attitudinal loyalty measurement, which includes the intention to re-visit and recommendation of sites to others (Chi & Qu, 2008), are used to infer Destination Loyalty.

III. Hypothesis

A considerable amount of literature confirmed the positive relationship between quality and satisfaction, which has gathered some momentum in the tourism literature (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Murray & Howat, 2002; de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Ruiz et al., 2009). Based on this confirmation, few major studies (Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Frochot, 2001; Wan & Cheng, 2011) follow the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al. (1994), which specifying that quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction. However, research on service quality in cultural heritage context is still limited (Wan & Cheng, 2011). This study aims to extend the current literature by examining the relationship of service quality in heritage setting with tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, this study proposes that destination service quality has a positive effect on destination satisfaction and destination loyalty.

It is also well accepted by the body of literature that satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty manifested by favorable revisiting intentions and recommendations made to others (Bigné, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Kozak, 2003; Prayag, 2008; Chen & Chen, 2010; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; San Martin et al., 2013). In particular, satisfaction measurement has been displaced recently by the concept of customer loyalty, primarily because loyalty is seen as a better predictor of the actual behavior. In other words, the key consequence of satisfaction is loyalty. Several studies have verified the relationship between the two constructs, both theoretically and empirically, in various markets (Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1997; Ryan et al., 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008). Moreover, recent evidence also confirmed that tourists’ satisfaction has a direct impact on their loyalty toward the destination (Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015; Chiu, Zeng & Cheng, 2016; Antón & Laguna-García, 2017).

Another important hypothesized mediating effect in this study is the mediating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between destination service quality and destination loyalty. Empirical justification can be found in the work of Olorunniwo et al. (2006) who investigates the relationship of service quality and behavioral intentions.

Hence, the formulation of the final hypothesis of this study:

Therefore, based on the empirical foundations of the previous studies, the hypotheses presented in this study are as follows:

H1: Destination Service Quality has a positive effect on destination satisfaction.

H2: Destination Service Quality has a positive effect on destination loyalty.

H3: Destination Satisfaction has a positive effect on destination loyalty.

H4: Destination satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination service quality and destination loyalty.

IV. Methodology

In this study, a questionnaire survey is used to gather the opinions of 450 tourists visiting Melaka City and George Town. The unit of analysis is at individual level that includes both domestic and international tourists. The choice of unit of analysis is made based on the assumption that there are variations in individuals' (domestic and international tourists) perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards the destinations. Therefore, this study utilized a self-assessment technique in which individual visitors were asked to state their level of agreement and disagreement based on the questionnaire's measurement items.

The measures used in this study are adapted from the previous research on marketing and tourism literatures. The scales employed are measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1= very negative to 7 = very positive) and the scales for each construct have a reliability history.

In order to allow researchers to use the SERVQUAL scale to measure service quality in the heritage context, Frochot and Hughes (2000) and Frochot (2001) remodified the scale into a new one, known as HISTOQUAL, as mentioned previously, with five modified dimensions: responsiveness, tangibles, communication, consumables, and empathy. For the purpose of this study, respondents were asked to rate the perceived quality of services provided at the heritage attractions according to a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Based on the HISTOQUAL scale by Frochot and Hughes (2000), Frochot (2001), and Wan and Cheng (2011), Table 1 summarizes the five dimensions with 24 items adapted to evaluate visitors' perceptions of the service quality of Melaka City and George Town historical cities.

For destination satisfaction, the measures of tourists' satisfaction are based on the seven domains of tourism activities: accommodation, dining, shopping, attractions, activities and events, environment, and accessibility, adapted from Chi and Qu (2008). For destination loyalty, through the adaptation of attitudinal measurement of Chi and Qu (2008), six measures were used for assessing tourist destination loyalty as the ultimate dependent construct including revisit intention and recommend intention or their willingness to recommend Melaka and George Town historical cities as favorable destinations to others. The measures were rated using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = most unlikely to 7 = most likely).

Table 1: Destination Service Quality – HISTOQUAL Construct and Items

| Construct | Dimension & No. of Item | Item |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Service Quality HISTOQUAL | Responsiveness (8 items) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are always helpful and courteous 2. Staff are willing to take time for visitors 3. Visitors are made to feel welcomed 4. Level of crowding is tolerable 5. Staff are well-informed to answer customers' requests 6. Visitors feel free to explore, there are no restrictions to access 7. The property and grounds are opened at convenient hours 8. Staff are always available when needed |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Tangibles (7 items) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The property is well kept and restored 2. The general cleanliness and upkeep of the property and grounds is satisfying 3. The grounds are attractive 4. The site has remained authentic 5. Direction signs to show around the property and grounds are clear and helpful 6. The garden and/or park contain a large variety of plants 7. The interior of the house offers a lot of interesting things to look at |
| Communication (4 items) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The written leaflets provided enough information 2. The information on the property and grounds is detailed enough 3. Visitors are well informed of the different facilities and attractions available at the property 4. Foreign language leaflets are helpful |
| Consumables (3 items) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The restaurant offers a wide variety of dishes and refreshments 2. The shop offers a large variety of goods 3. The restaurant's staff provided efficient service |
| Empathy (2 items) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The property considers the needs of less able visitors 2. Facilities for children are provided |

(Source: Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Frochot, 2001; Wan & Cheng, 2011)

V. Results

A. Socio-demographic profiles

Table 2 summarizes the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents. A total of 450 international and domestic tourists from both heritage cities responded voluntarily to the survey. The distribution of respondents for both Melaka City and George Town is 55.6% (250 samples) and 44.6% (200 samples), respectively.

As depicted by the table, the percentage for country of origin distribution indicated that the domestic tourists accounted for 61.1% (275 samples) of the total respondents whilst the international tourists accounted for 38.9% (175 samples). For the domestic samples, the majority of respondents (92.4%) are from Peninsular Malaysia.

The international tourists (175 samples) from 29 countries are segregated based on the five world regional groups that comprise Asia-Pacific 58% (Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippine, Thailand, China, Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Korea, India, Ireland, and Uzbekistan), Africa 7% (Nigeria and South Africa), Western European 28% (Australia, France, Canada, the United States, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Spain, New Zealand, Denmark, and Sweden), Eastern European 4% (Ukraine, Germany, Greece, and Poland), Latin American and Caribbean State 3% (Mexico).

In terms of gender distribution, both groups of genders are evenly distributed. Most of the samples are distributed among the age groups of 18-24 (37.6%), followed by 25-34 years old (29.3%), 35-44 years old (18.2%), 45-54 years old (10.7%), 55-64 years old (2.2%) and over 65 years old (2%). The education level shows that the majority (44.7%) are educated up to bachelor degree level. Slightly over half of the respondents are single (54.2%), 44% are married whilst the remaining are either divorced or widowed (1.3%).

For the income group, the majority of them are classified into low-income group (61.8%). In terms of occupation, 33.3% of them are students visiting Melaka city for holiday and leisure purpose. Finally, for domestic tourists, 77.5% of them are Malay, followed by Chinese (16.7%) and Indian and others (2.9%).

Table 2: Socio - Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 450)

| Demographics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <i>City</i> | | |
| Melaka City, Melaka | 250 | 55.6 |
| George Town, Penang | 200 | 44.4 |
| <i>Country of Origin</i> | | |
| Domestic | 275 | 61.1 |
| International | 175 | 38.9 |
| <i>Domestic</i> | | |
| Peninsular Malaysia | 254 | 92.4 |
| Sabah & Sarawak | 21 | 7.6 |
| <i>International</i> | | |
| Asia Pacific Region | 101 | 58 |
| African Region | 13 | 7 |
| Western European Region | 48 | 28 |
| Eastern European Region | 7 | 4 |
| Latin American & Caribbean | 6 | 3 |
| <i>Gender</i> | | |
| Male | 225 | 50 |
| Female | 225 | 50 |
| <i>Age</i> | | |
| 18-24 | 169 | 37.6 |
| 25-34 | 132 | 29.3 |
| 35-44 | 82 | 18.2 |
| 45-54 | 48 | 10.7 |
| 55-64 | 10 | 2.2 |
| over 65 | 9 | 2 |
| <i>Education</i> | | |
| SPM/junior/senior/middle school | 69 | 15.3 |
| STPM/Diploma | 119 | 26.4 |
| Bachelor Degree | 201 | 44.7 |
| Master/PhD | 41 | 9.1 |
| Professional Qualification | 15 | 3.3 |
| Others | 5 | 1.1 |
| <i>Marital</i> | | |
| Single | 244 | 54.2 |
| Married | 198 | 44 |
| Divorced | 6 | 1.3 |
| Others | 2 | 0.4 |
| <i>Income Group</i> | | |
| Low | 278 | 61.8 |
| Middle | 130 | 28.9 |
| High | 42 | 9.3 |

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|--|-----|------|
| <i>Occupation</i> | | |
| Student | 150 | 33.3 |
| Housewife/unemployed/retired | 21 | 4.7 |
| Managerial/professional | 69 | 15.3 |
| Supporting | 53 | 11.8 |
| Self-employed | 73 | 16.2 |
| Others (retired, researcher, engineer) | 84 | 18.7 |
| <i>Ethnicity (domestic)</i> | | |
| Malay | 213 | 77.5 |
| Chinese | 46 | 16.7 |
| Indian | 8 | 2.9 |
| Others | 8 | 2.9 |

For reliability test, in measuring the internal consistency of a scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7 indicates an acceptable internal reliability based on Nunnally (1978) and Pallant (2001). In this study, all constructs involved showed an excellent internal reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.91 to 0.96 (destination service quality, 0.94; destination satisfaction, 0.96; destination loyalty, 0.91).

B. Measurement and Structural Model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 20.0 is employed to model the interrelationship among the variables in the present study (service quality - destination satisfaction - destination loyalty), simultaneously. A two-step model validation procedure is followed; first, to examines and purifies the measurement (measurement model), and second, to tests the proposed theoretical structure (structural model) as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Gerbing and Anderson (1992).

For the measurement model, the analysis begins by conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA is a special factor analysis to test whether the measures of a construct are consistent with the researcher's understanding of the nature of that constructs (Zainudin, 2012). For the purpose of evaluating the fitness of the proposed model, three fit index categories are used: absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious fit. Four indexes are recommended to test the model fit since they are frequently reported in the literature. The indexes include Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Chi Square/Degrees of Freedom (χ^2/df) as recommended by Browne and Cudeck (1993), Joreskog and Sorbom (1984), Bentler (1990), and Marsh and Hocevar (1985). The output revealed that the model of this study demonstrated a good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.402$, RMSEA = 0.072, GFI = 0.823 and CFI = 0.924). As depicted by Table 3, all indicators on its posited underlying factors are statistically significant. All of the standardized factor loadings and AVE are greater than 0.6 and 0.5, respectively, indicating an evidence of convergence validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 3: Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

| Construct | Item | Factor Loading | CR (above 0.6) | AVE (above 0.5) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Service Quality | Responsiveness | 0.83 | 0.90 | 0.70 |
| | Tangibles | 0.82 | | |
| | Consumables | 0.87 | | |
| | Communications | 0.82 | | |
| | Empathy | 0.82 | | |
| Destination Satisfaction | Environment | 0.72 | 0.92 | 0.62 |
| | Attraction | 0.75 | | |
| | Accessibility | 0.79 | | |
| | Lodging | 0.85 | | |
| | Activities & Events | 0.84 | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| | Dining | 0.78 | | |
| | Shopping | 0.81 | | |
| Destination Loyalty | DL1 | 0.86 | 0.90 | 0.64 |
| | DL2 | 0.85 | | |
| | DL3 | 0.71 | | |
| | DL4 | 0.77 | | |
| | DL5 | 0.79 | | |
| | DL6 | 0.79 | | |

For the structural model, this analysis intends to illustrate the hypotheses testing analysis that propose direct connection between variables as well as the analysis of mediating effect. Since all hypotheses are stated in a directional manner, all tests of path coefficients and correlations and reported p -values represent a one-tail procedure.

The research objective of this study examines the impact of destination service quality on destination satisfaction and destination loyalty. H₁ proposed that destination service quality has a positive effect on destination satisfaction. The result shows that the relationship between destination service quality and destination satisfaction is significant at 0.05 (β : 0.156, t : 2.252, p : 0.024). Therefore, H₁ is supported. Meanwhile, H₂ proposes that destination service quality has a positive effect on destination loyalty. The result shows that the relationship between destination service quality and destination Loyalty is not significant (β : -0.155, t : -1.461, p : 0.144). Thus, H₂ is not supported. The result for H₃ shows that the magnitude of the relationship between destination satisfaction and destination loyalty is significant (β : 1.792, t : 12.060, p : 0.001), and thus, H₃ is supported.

For the mediation hypothesis, based on the results of H₁, H₂, and H₃, reveal that destination satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty. The type of mediation is full mediation since the direct effect (service quality – destination loyalty) is no longer significant after destination satisfaction enters the model. Thus, H₄ is supported. Table 4 summarizes the hypothesized relationships between the variables.

Table 4: Result Summary

| Hypothesis Statement of Path Analysis | Estimate | p -value | Result |
|--|----------------|------------|---------------|
| H ₁ : Destination service quality has a positive effect on destination satisfaction. | 0.156 | 0.024 | Supported |
| H ₂ : Destination service quality has a positive effect on destination loyalty. | -0.155 | 0.144 | Not Supported |
| H ₃ : Destination Satisfaction has a positive effect on destination loyalty. | 1.792 | 0.001 | Supported |
| H ₄ : Destination satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination service quality and destination loyalty. | Full mediation | | Supported |

Note: *** Significant at $p < 0.001$; Significant at 95% Confident Interval

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

The results confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between destination service quality and tourists' satisfaction. This denotes that the higher the service quality perceived by the tourists in the heritage destination, the more satisfied the tourists will be. Accordingly, the outcome confirms the literature suggestion (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Murray & Howat, 2002; de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Ruiz et al., 2009), thus, corresponds to the HISTOQUAL model by Frochot and Hughes (2000), Frochot (2001), and Wan and Cheng (2011). As predicted, there is an association between tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. It indicates that in order for the tourists to revisit the destination and recommend it to others, they must experience utter satisfaction. The outcome substantiated the previous findings, both theoretically and empirically, in various settings (Anderson & Fornell, 1994); Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1997; Ryan et al., 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015; Chiu, Zeng & Cheng, 2016; Antón & Laguna-García, 2017).

This association added to the body of literature, which recognized that tourists' satisfaction has a strong direct influence on their loyalty.

The result of mediation analysis discloses that destination satisfaction is also found to fully mediate the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty. This finding supported the final hypothesis of this study, and consistent with the work of Olorunniwo et al. (2006). It is evidenced that while service quality is an important assessment of tourists' loyalty, its indirect effect of tourists' satisfaction is overwhelmingly larger than the direct effect of enhancing tourists' loyalty. Since heritage destination has high levels of tourists' personal interaction services, this study suggests that the direct link between service quality and tourists' loyalty may not be as important as the indirect effect of tourists' satisfaction. The most important conclusion drawn from the finding is this research strongly suggests the employment of HISTOQUAL model guided by Frochot and Hughes (2000), Frochot (2001), and Wan and Cheng (2011), which provides a detailed and valuable insight into the service quality assessment of the heritage settings. The key lesson conceded from the present study is providing quality service to the tourists is an important part of heritage destination marketing. The results of the study also offer an enhanced understanding of heritage properties management. Through the identification of different service quality dimensions of heritage attractions, the historic properties managers and operators could identify areas of improvement for the delivery of service quality. For example, the adequate safety and satisfactory security of the tourists should be ensured to remove negative image and unfavorable emotions. Tourism facilities and services like accommodation, food and beverage, entertainments, travel agents, tour operations, shopping malls, supermarkets, transportation facilities have to be established to perfectly deliver high quality service.

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