

# Tourists' Perception on Memorable Tourism Experience Towards Their Revisit Intentions to Islamic Tourism Destination in Shah Alam, Selangor

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## ABSTRACT

Islamic tourism has gained popularity among tourists and a huge potential for Malaysia to explore in the tourism industry. Muslims travelers are inclined to adhere to Islamic teachings which may, directly and indirectly, impact their decisions concerning leisure and travel plans. This study aims to examine the relationship linking tourists' memorable tourism experience attributes and their revisit intentions to Islamic tourism destination. Using convenience sampling, a total of 384 survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents visiting Islamic tourism attractions in Shah Alam and were used for data analysis. Regression results revealed that three Memorable Tourism Experience attributes have significant relationships with tourists' revisit intention. These include hedonism experience, meaningfulness experience and social interaction. Of these three attributes, hedonism proved to have the most significant impact on tourists' revisit intentions

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism has become common in this modern era, whereby according to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) that tourism comprises activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) believe that tourism sector can bring good impacts in terms of economic such as job creation, income growth, infrastructure development and increase the standard of living (social).

International tourist regions which are dominated by western countries back then was changed towards countries like Asia Pacific, Middle East and CIS countries in remarkable tourism growth in the particular

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countries. Among these emerging markets, there is a significant amount of Muslim population (Cetin, Istanbul & Yasankul, 2015), particularly in the Middle East and South-East Asia. Duman (2012) highlighted that Islamic tourism can be described as Muslims with Islamic motivations that want to participate in tourism activities based on sharia-principles. Islamic tourism covers a wide range of facilities and services which may include prayer facilities, halal food, Islamic entertainment, Islamic dress code and behavioral intention (Mahmood, Muda, Putit, Taufek & Wahib, 2016).

Malaysia targets to receive 36 million tourist's arrival and bring up to RM168 billion revenue from the tourism industry in 2020 as Islamic tourism has huge potential for Malaysia to explore tourism industry (Laderlah, Rahman, Awang, and Man, 2011). Tourists that came from the Middle East have been the focus for Islamic tourism (Henderson, 2010a) who are especially welcome because of their high spending power (WITM, 2012; ReSIT, 2012). Besides, memorable tourist experiences are the elements of tourism experience that influence person to memorize memories as well as taken into consideration in creating memorable tourism experience (MTE) as MTE can be defined as recaptured and recalled tourism experience that already happened (Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012).

### *1.1 Problem statement*

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) is the rational factor that impacts to the future behavior as the need to enhance customer experience that influences tourist revisits intentions as stated by Kim et al. (2012). Thus, people tend to memorize the previous experience first when comes to determine destination area and searching information for travel (Raju & Reilly, 1979). Kerstetter and Cho (2004) as remembered experiences are the great predictors of a person's fascination to have the same destination for future as stated by Wirtz, et al. (2003). Most of the previous research has focused on cross-cultural validation of a Memorable Tourism Experience Scale (Kim & Ritchie, 2014), cross-cultural comparison of MTE (Mahdzar & Shuib, 2016) and development of a scale to measure MTE (Kim, McCormick & Ritchie, 2012). There are also studies on exploring the essence of MTE (Ritchie & Tung, 2011) and effect of MTE to destination competitiveness (Akkus & Gulluce, 2016). However, specific studies of MTE focusing on Malaysia Islamic tourism are still limited as previous research only looked into several aspects of Islamic tourism in Malaysia such as the impacts to Malaysia Industry (Kamarudin & Nizam, 2013) and Muslim tourist satisfaction in Malaysian Islamic tourist destination in the different facets. Thus, this paper emphasized in examining the relationship between Tourists' MTE towards their revisit intentions in Islamic tourism destination in Selangor.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1 Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)*

The tourist experience has been defined as the subjective mental state felt by participants during a service encounter (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Besides, a memorable tourism experience is defined as a tourist experience positively remembered and recalled after the event has taken place (Kim et. al, 2012). Furthermore, tourists have different experiences even if they are doing the same thing in the same place, as their moods and personal feelings at a particular moment affect their interpretations of the experiences. Even if all tourists said that they enjoyed themselves during an experience, it does not necessarily mean that they all had the same existing and memorable experiences (Ooi, 2005). For example, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) stressed that destination competitiveness is derived from the delivery of such memorable experiences.

According to Kim and Ritchie (2014), there are 7 dimensions of memorable tourism experience that are suggested which include hedonism, involvement, meaningfulness, refreshment, knowledge, novelty and social interaction that can influence tourist to revisit intention. Otto and Ritchie (1996) mentioned

that tourism products and services are rich in an aspect that is mainly used for hedonic purposes. Tung and Ritchie (2011) found that good emotions and feelings is related to happiness and excitement, explained the essence of MTE. The next dimension, involvement experience is said tourists begin to be involved, while actively participated in tourism activities. Pine and Gilmore (1999) recommended that encouraging customer participation would effectively deliver MTE. They noted that customers are more likely to have a memorable experience when they find themselves engaged in the programs. The other dimension, meaningful experience is defined as having meaningful experiences within their travel and tourism activities such as finding a sense of physical, emotional, or spiritual fulfillment through tourism rather than go after simple escapism or a hollow search for authenticity (Callanan & Thomas 2005; Digance 2003; Noy 2004).

Since tourists' are wiser today, they are more likely seek unique and meaningful travel experiences that will satisfy their needs and wants. Along with hedonism, the next dimension which is the refreshment, or relaxation is best described as the basic component of tourism activities. For example, Lscerblanc (2003) found that rest and relaxation were part of the main reason for tourists who join special events and festivals. Tung and Ritchie (2011) found that knowledge experience or intellectual development was one of the most important elements of MTE. Many respondents indicated that tourist gained new knowledge about the destinations visited were part of the most memorable tourism experiences. The other dimension of MTE which is the novelty is derived from experiencing something new (e.g., culture, food, and accommodation) and encountering different styles of a tour (Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013) and is an important component of MTE. Finally, social interaction dimension in experiencing local culture is also considered as a significant motivational element for traveling. For example, knowing about local culture, by learning residents' way of life and the local language, significantly improve MTE (Tung and Ritchie, 2011).

## *2.2 Tourist revisit intention*

Chen and Tsai (2007) stated that tourist tends to choose a destination to visit and make subsequent evaluations that will lead to future revisit intentions. The following evaluations are based on the travel experience; recognize the value and comprehensive visitor's satisfaction. Several studies showed that satisfaction of memorable experience as the major reason of revisit intention (Oppermann, 2000; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Jang & Feng, 2007; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008, Mahdzar & Shuib, 2016). Tourist revisit intention has been considered as an extension of satisfaction (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). In a nutshell, pleasant, positive and memorable experience are usually believed to influence tourists' satisfaction and their revisit intentions.

## **3. Methodology**

This study employed the use of a quantitative research design with a structured questionnaire as the research instrument. This study is also using convenience sampling of 384 samples according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample derived from tourists' that visits Islamic tourism destinations in Shah Alam. Shah Alam is well known for Islamic tourist attractions such as The Selangor Islamic Arts Park Complex and The Selangor Blue Mosque. Questionnaire items were adapted from Kim and Ritchie (2014) as well as Mahdzar and Shuib (2016). The reliability test was done before data collection took place.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Respondents' profile

Through the frequency test, local (Malaysian) constituted around 92 percent (n=353) as opposed to foreigners with 8 percent (n=31). In regards to age group, 43 percent of respondents from age 18-24 years old, 36 percent respondents from age of 25-34 years old, 11 percent from age 35- 44 years old, and 8 percent from age 55 years and above. Majority of the respondents is female 69 percent while male constitute 31 percent.

### 4.2 Descriptive statistics

The study shows the perception towards MTE in general (Table 1). These sections contain 25 questions that were asked to the 384 respondents. Mean indicated average answered among respondents and standard deviation indicates how close the data is to the mean.

Table 1. Mean Score and S.D

	N	Mean	S.D
<b>Hedonism</b>			
Thrilled about having a new experience	384	4.19	0.720
Indulged in activities during the trip	384	3.55	1.114
Had an exciting experience	384	4.23	0.737
Really enjoyed this tourism experience	384	4.06	0.776
<b>Involvement</b>			
I visited the place(s) I really wanted to go	384	4.19	0.720
I enjoyed doing the activities that I really wanted to do	384	3.55	1.114
I was interested with the main activities offered to me	384	4.23	0.737
<b>Meaningfulness</b>			
I felt I did something meaningful in the Islamic Attraction	384	3.99	0.870
I felt that I did something important in Islamic destination at Shah Alam	384	3.97	0.881
I learned something about myself from this trip	384	3.96	0.864
I felt that I have gained valuable experience from this trip	384	4.14	0.829
<b>Refreshment</b>			
I had a refreshing experience	384	4.16	0.728
I felt free from my daily routine	384	4.10	0.725
I relieved stress	384	4.19	0.697
<b>Knowledgeable</b>			
I gained a lot of information from this trip	384	4.15	0.719
I acquired a new skill(s) from this trip	384	3.96	0.764
I experienced new culture(s)	384	4.10	0.718
<b>Novelty</b>			
I had once-in-a lifetime experience	384	3.88	0.988
I had a unique experience	384	4.05	0.857
I had experienced different kind of experience	384	4.16	0.735
I had experienced something new	384	4.20	0.711
<b>Social Interaction</b>			
I had a good impression about the local culture here	384	4.20	0.739
I had a chance to closely experienced the local culture of Shah Alam	384	4.04	0.790
The local people in Shah Alam, (Islamic destination) were friendly to me	384	4.16	0.801

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that the total mean and standard deviation for items of MTE factors (Hedonism, Involvement, Meaningfulness, Refreshment, Knowledge, Novelty & Social Interaction) have a mean that is at the level of agree (4) answered by respondents in the questionnaires. The total mean and standard deviation for factor hedonism experience shows 4.00 for mean and 0.65 for standard deviation. For involvement experience, some of the respondents agree that these attractions (Masjid Salahudin Abdul Aziz Shah & Islamic Arts Garden Complex) offer activities that are interesting

to them and that makes them visiting the place(s) they really wanted to go ( $M= 3.92$ ,  $SD=0.670$ ). For Meaningfulness experience, respondents mostly agreed that they gained a valuable experience from their trip to the Islamic destinations; they felt meaningful and did something important in Islamic Destination with the mean of 4.01 and standard deviation of 0.735. The fourth factor that is refreshment experience, most respondents agreed that while visiting the Islamic destination they relieved stress the most, had a refreshing experience and felt free from their daily routine when visiting this attraction with the mean of 4.14 and standard deviation 0.596. For knowledge experience, based on the table, respondents agreed that they gain knowledge while visiting these places with the mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.608. As for novelty experience, their overall experience shows that they had experienced something new when visiting these destinations ( $M=4.07$ ,  $SD=0.670$ ). Last but not least, mean for respondents experiencing social interaction shows mean of 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.683. It can be concluded that most respondents had a good impression of local culture when they visited the Masjid Salahudin Abdul Aziz Shah or Islamic Arts Garden Complex.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation for All

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Hedonism	384	4.00	.658
Involvement	384	3.92	.670
Meaningfulness	384	4.01	.735
Refreshment	384	4.14	.596
Knowledge	384	4.07	.608
Novelty	384	4.07	.670
Social Interaction	384	4.13	.683
Valid N (listwise)	384		

### 4.3 The relationship between MTE and tourists' revisit intention

To see whether there is a significant relationship between tourists' MTE and their revisit intentions to Islamic tourism destination, a single step multiple regression was conducted. The 25 items in independent (MTE) dimension and two items in the dependent dimension (revisit intention) were collapsed and entered into the equation. The outcomes demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between tourists' MTE towards revisit intentions. The tourists' MTE was able to explain 47% ( $R^2=0.470$ ,  $F - \text{change} = 11.541$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) of the variance in revisit Intentions to Islamic destinations. It evidently showed that tourists' perception of MTE was found significantly and positively influence their revisit intentions thus the hypothesis manifestly supported.

Besides that, Table 3 shows the value of Beta Coefficient for this study. Pallant (2005) stated that beta coefficient indicates which variable(s) important to the model by looking at the largest value with ignoring the negative signs. This study suggests that among the factors of MTE, hedonism experience (0.515) is the strongest influence on revisit intention and followed by meaningfulness experience (0.351) and social interaction (0.241). However, other factors of MTE such as involvement, refreshment, knowledge and novelty experience have statistically insignificant relationship towards revisit intention

Table 3. Coefficient Revisit Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.495	.404		3.700	.000	
	Hedonism	.512	.124	.515	4.126	.000	
	Involvement	-.207	.113	-.213	-1.843	.069	
	Meaningfulness	.312	.091	.351	3.434	.001	
	Refreshment	-.151	.122	-.138	-1.246	.216	
	Knowledge	-.225	.131	-.210	-1.715	.090	
	Novelty	.195	.117	.200	1.668	.099	
	Social Interaction	.230	.102	.241	2.259	.026	

a. Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention

## 5. Conclusion

The result from this study shows that the most important experience felt by respondent while visiting this destination is the refreshment factor, while the least important factor is the involvement experience. The majority of the respondents also agree to the revisit intention towards this Islamic destination in the future.

The result has shown that the independent variable, tourist's memorable tourism experiences had a significant influence on revisit intention. Among all the MTE attributes, hedonism had the strongest impact on revisit intention followed by meaningfulness and social interaction.

This research will be helpful and as a guide for tourism destination marketers and officials in attracting more tourist to come and experience Islamic destinations. It is proven that tourists' memorable tourism experience is very important in encouraging tourist intention to revisit the places. Customers will subsequently form favorable intentions if they are satisfied with the services they have received (Lennora Putit et al., 2016). Thus, Islamic destination marketers can contribute more facilities and amenities as well as quality service that can enhance tourist's experiences such as relaxation and refreshment while they are at the destination.

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