ASSESSING THE MEDIATION ROLE OF BRAND ATTACHMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG TOURISTS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship of hotel attributes on consumers' satisfaction and revisit intention through mediation of brand attachment. The stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory is utilized in the study to examine the relationships between the constructs. To validate the research model and hypotheses, the study used a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. The empirical evidence was collected from 474 Malaysian tourist. The results showed that brand attachment mediates the relationship between hotel attributes and satisfaction as well as revisit intention. In addition, the indirect effect of hotel attributes on revisit intention through brand attachment and satisfaction sequentially are also supported. This paper attempt to offers new insights into how brand attachment influences the relationship between hotel attributes and satisfaction as well as revisit intention. This study determined that hotels should consider the importance of brand such as brand attachment in developing sustainable marketing tactics. These findings might support practitioners and decision makers to focus on brand related functions that could be utilized to achieve competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Hotel attributes, brand attachment, satisfaction, revisit intention, branding, Malaysia.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Hospitality is a highly competitive global industry and demand for services is increasing far beyond traditional offerings (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). The unprecedented growth of the hospitality industry has led to fierce competition among hotels to entice consumers to stay and experience their services (Luturlean et al., 2018; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). Thus, it is vital to understand the demands, interests and behaviour of various tourist markets to attract them to destinations.

The hotel brand encompasses a broad range of physical and socio-psychological features and beliefs. These characteristics have a substantial impact on how a consumer perceives a product or service, and meaning that the consumers associated with the brand. There is also potential economic advantages and customer interests in hotel branding. The hotel industry in Malaysia works in an environment characterised by strong competition and high unpredictable (Ismail et al., 2016). The products and services offering as well as subsequent branding initiatives may thus be useful ways to cope and remain competitive in the shifting market dynamics. Strengthening the hotel brand involves increasing the awareness among consumers and establishing a strong consumer brand image.

In addition, hospitality is also a sociocultural organization that should completely reflecting the host culture's religious and ethnic identity (Stephenson et al., 2010). The rising visibility of Muslims as consumers is closely connected to their spending power, particularly through the emergence of the middle-class consumers. Global Muslim expenditures, in particular in the travel sector, grew by 4.9% to $151 billion in 2015, representing 11.2% of global spending and are predicted to reach $243 billion by 2021 (Reuters, 2016) traditional values like modesty, the concept of halal, Islamic principles regulating finance are being negotiated for our modern context. The result is a burgeoning Islamic economy. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 brings you the latest developments and trends from this economy whilst also acting as a roadmap for you and your business to profit from this rising global market. Momentum has been building since last year, the Halal food sector saw South Africa partnering with Malaysia as the Western Cape Fine Food Initiative and the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

This statistic showed an increasing need for Muslim travel requirements, which is demonstrated by the increase in spending power of Muslim consumers. When Muslims opt to stay in a hotel, some might view hotel amenities at various levels. Some are more important than others, while some are less important than others (El-Gohary, 2015). This is due to distinct individual characteristics and preferences (El-Gohary, 2015). Research on the travel motivations of Muslim tourists has not been paid the same attention as compared to motivations for Westerners, indicating a failure to understand the

actual desires of Muslim consumers (Battour et al., 2012). Moreover, Chiang and Jogaratnam (2006) argue that studies on travel motivation typically focus more on the general population. Thus, they suggested that researchers can uncover the demands of smaller, homogenous groups instead. In addition, future research should rethink present tourist motivations with greater attention on consumer's well-being. The challenge is to build models that take into consideration cultural variety, particularly in non-Western tourism groups (Filep & Laing, 2018).

In view of the above, this study attempts to examine the drivers and effects of Malaysian Muslims' hotel choices. Recognizing the growth in this potential Muslim travel industry, destination marketers need to understand more about the motivations and satisfactions of Muslim travellers to successfully adapt their marketing tactics. This justifies the need of present study which specifically examines the validity of brand attachment as mediator as to whether it will enhance the relationship between hotel attributes and post consumption behaviour including satisfaction and revisit intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This study utilized the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory as our underpinning theory. This theory was among the most commonly employed theories over decades by incorporation of input (S), process (O) and output (R) (Kim et al., 2020). The Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory (SOR), originally developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), gained great interest in various disciplines of research over the last few decades due to its instinctive and strong inquisitive capacity in the examining of human behaviour (Kim et al., 2020). The idea behind the theory suggests that behavioural responses (R) is affected by heightened emotions (O) which are first affected by environmental stimuli (S) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Due to its broad use, in order to bet-ter suit particular study environments, several researchers have adapted the SOR model to meet their needs and integrated a variety of aspects into the framework, including cognitive and emotional components (Kim et al., 2020). Chang et al., (2014) asserts that the SOR model is among the most appropriate model for explaining visitors' behaviour; given the abstract character of tour-ism, the focus placed by the SOR theory on emotional aspects gives insights into tourism experiences. Building on this theory, in this study the stimuli is

represented as hotel attributes, and their affects on brand attachment is represented by organism and post consumption behaviour (i.e. satisfaction and revisit intention) as response.

2.1   Hotel Attributes

There are numerous definitions and interpretations of attributes. Product or service attributes is described as "observed consumer products and services as a bundle of attributes or features, and benefits" (Alpert, 1971). Meanwhile, product attributes are described as "tangible and intangible features of a product which include benefits, functions and uses" (Keller & McGill, 1994) and "utilitarian and hedonic benefits of product" (Sheng & Teo, 2012). Wuest et al., (1996) on the other hand describe hotel attributes as "as the extent to which travellers find various services and facilities are important in stimulating their satisfaction with the hotel stay".

Researchers has demonstrated the important of attributions in predicting consumer preferences and market segmentation, especially in the hospitality industry (Bell & Morey, 1997). There are a number of studies in the literature on tourism and hospitality that examine the hotel attributes preference in tourists' hotel choice decision (Chu & Choi, 2000; Dolnicar & Otter, 2003; Kim, 1996; Rhee & Yang, 2015; Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010; Usta et al., 2011). Most of the studies emphasized their focus in determining attributes importance and despite its commonality, the findings were often mixed. Unlike prior studies, this present study seeks to explore hotel attributes as an overall abstraction. In the study, the dimensions of hotel attributes include essential facilities, in-room facilities and culturally compliant facilities.

2.2   Brand Attachment

A great brand typically connects the desired audience emotionally. "They go beyond the purely rational and economic level to encourage sentiments of closeness, affection and trust" (Berry, 2000, p. 134). Emotional attachment reflects a mental state or connected feeling or attachment towards brand (Levy & Hino, 2016). It is an results of firm's holistic marketing efforts and long-term relationship held between service provider and consumer that take place during the service experience (Levy & Hino, 2016). The attachment theory was stemming from Bowlby's (1969) research that examined the association that was established between infants and their caregiver.

Nowadays, the theory has expanded beyond the person-to-person relationship (Thomson & Johnson, 2006), and it has been widely utilised to understand emotional attachment held between human and objects, including celebrities, companies and most notably brands (Park & MacInnis, 2006). Thomson, MacInnis, et al., (2005) provide a seminal empirical approach on brand attachment. Drawing from attachment theory, they describe attachment as "an emotional link between a person and a brand that is characterised by profound feelings of connection, affection and passion". Additionally, brand attachment is defined as strength of the relationship that connects the brand with the self (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Park et al., 2010), the bond which involved feelings that connects a consumer with specific brand (Malär et al., 2011) and a sense of safety that each person perceives with a brand (Japutra et al., 2014).

2.3   Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has long been a dominant subject for both researchers and practitioners with relation to tourism and hospitality products and services (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). Consumer satisfaction is defined as a qualitative assessment of the experience of the product as compared to its prior expected (Hunt, 1977). In tourism context, it is also defined as an outcomes of tourists' experience with a destination contrary to their prior expectation (Pizam et al., 1978). In addition, it is also describes as consumers' responses to their expectations and their physical and mental state following a stay (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Oliver, 1997). Satisfaction is believed to promote favourable behavioural intentions (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). Alrawadieh and Law (2019) in their study found that attributes of hotel rooms along with the service quality from the staff, contributed to the increase in guest satisfaction. Meanwhile, Mohd Ali et al., (2020) demonstrated that boutique hotels' guest satisfaction increased their likelihood to revisit the same destination.

2.4   Revisit Intention

Revisit intention is described as the desire to anticipate a specific behaviour, such as to revisit a location (Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000). The revisit intention to a tourist destination is the willingness or desire of an individual to return the same location again, providing the most detailed representation of a decision to revisit (Lee et al., 2010). Similarly, Cole and Scott (2004) defined revisit

intention as the interest to return, to particular previous destination, in a particular time for a second time.

One of the early studies into the phenomena of repeated visits was the research by Gitelson and Crompton (1984) that investigated repeated vacations and their marketing implications. Generally, repeated purchase or revisit intention has been considered as one of the most important subjects in contemporary marketing due to its favourable outcomes; for instance it consequently leads to positive word of mouth, obtaining higher profitability by repeated visits and improving economic profit (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999; Tanford et al., 2016). The phenomena of repeated tourism visits are equally essential both from individual and the economic point of view.

2.5   Mediating Effects of Brand Attachment

The effect of emotion on consumers' purchase decision have increasingly become apparent to majority of the marketing scholars (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Gaur et al., 2014). Previous literature has shown the impact of the product or service attributes on brand attachment (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2010).

There are also numbers of study that demonstrated the effects of brand attachment in various context, for example repurchase intention (Barreda et al., 2013; Baumgarth, 2014; Hew et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2011), propensity to recommend (Japutra et al., 2014) and satisfaction (Dennis et al., 2016; Thomson et al., 2005). According to Hew et al., (2017), brand attachment is an important driver of customers repurchase intention. In other words, when a person was attached to a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchase from the same brand. Ahmed et al., (2018) and Loureiro et al., (2017), also shared similar findings in their research.

In the past, consumers' tendency to stay in a hotel relied on the functionality of the facilities and services that the hotelier supplied. However, as most hotels are nearly homogeneous, there has been rising demand for quality products and services in the tourism industry (Anawade, 2016). In the hospitality industry, dependability on service offerings is not adequate to distinguish from one hotel to another (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Hoteliers are compelled to find innovative means in order to distinguish their brands from competitors (Bailey & Ball, 2006; Khan & Rahman, 2017).

It is evident that the consumer-brand relationships begun to enormously shift in recent years, with emotions predicting the fate of the brand (Joshi & Garg, 2021). Park et al., (2010) also emphasised that additional study is required in order to better understand the background and consequences of brand attachments in various disciplines. Considering the additional benefits that may be obtained, it is necessary to examine as to whether the relationship between hotel attributes and satisfaction as well as revisit intention will be enhanced by the brand attachment.

It is believed that consumers would be more likely to be satisfied with the products and services offered by the hotel when they establish an attachment to the hotel brand. Since they are linked to the hotel brand, they will also most likely to return to the same place in the future. The following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 1: Hotel attributes has an indirect effect on satisfaction through brand attachment.
Hypothesis 2: Hotel attributes has an indirect effect on revisit intention through brand attachment.
Hypothesis 3: The effects of hotel attributes on revisit intention is sequentially mediated by brand attachment and satisfaction.

3.   RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on a comprehensive assessment of previous research, the current study presented the conceptual model described below (Figure 1) which is in line with the aim of this study - to understand whether brand attachment will enhance the relationship between hotel attributes and post consumption behaviour (i.e., satisfaction and revisit intention).
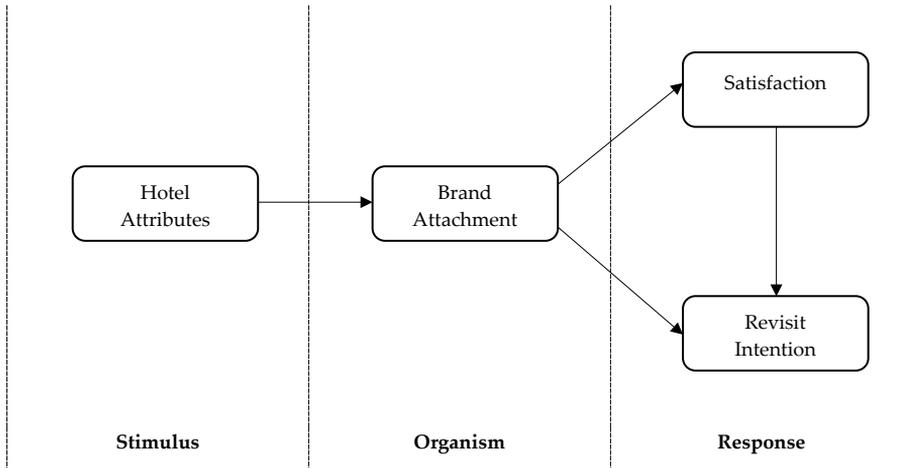
Figure 1: Research framework

4.   MATERIALS AND METHOD

4.1   Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered from Malaysian Muslim tourists who have previously stayed at a hotel, minimum once in the last year. Muslim tourism was selected as the study's respondents for two primary reasons. First, Muslim population is growing which result in the rise of halal consumers' purchasing power as a market force (Dinar Standard, 2020) shariah-based principles, to halal food that height- ens trust between producer and consumer — from the farm to the fork. Blossom Finance is a perfect example, with its blockchain solution to help SMEs raise sukuk finance. With 1.8 billion Muslims, and Muslim spend estimated at US$2.1 trillion in 2017, the Islamic economy continues its steady growth. But there is significant scope for growth and maturity in the Islamic economy, with a mere US$745 million in disclosed private equity investments over three years, far less than the almost US$595 billion in private equity and venture capital investments that occurred globally in 2017. While more government backing is needed in certain segments of the Islamic economy, at the same time there was a more nuanced focus on the necessary steps to take the Islamic economy further, especially regulations. We are also seeing

certain countries come out as leaders, notably the UAE, Malaysia and, to a lesser degree, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. This report estimates that global Muslim spend across life- style sectors was US$2.1 trillion in 2017, while the Islamic finance sector has US$2.4 trillion in total assets. Food and beverage leads Muslim spend by category at US$1.3 trillion, followed by clothing and apparel at US$270 billion, media and entertainment at US$209 billion, travel at US$177 billion, and spending on pharmaceuticals and cosmetics at US$87 billion and US$61 billion respectively. The Islamic economy has shown it is in tune with the latest developments in technology and investment. Companies have adopted blockchain technology for payments, to confirm halal compliance, or track food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products from the manufacturing facility to the retailer. In Islamic finance, blockchain and automation is expanding access to financial services. Smart technologies are being incorporated into clothing, such as the smart hijab, to GPS systems that show the closest prayer spaces. Equally, investment is taking place in artificial intelligence (AI). The Muslim travel market is the second largest, just behind China ($168 billion) and ahead of the United States ($147 billion) (Reuters, 2016) traditional values like modesty, the concept of halal, Islamic principles regulating finance are being negotiated for our modern context. The result is a burgeoning Islamic economy. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/16 brings you the latest developments and trends from this economy whilst also acting as a roadmap for you and your business to profit from this rising global market. Momentum has been building since last year, the Halal food sector saw South Africa partnering with Malaysia as the Western Cape Fine Food Initiative and the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT). Second, it is opined that research into Muslims' travel motivation has not gained the same level of attention as compared to research into Westerners' travel motivation which demonstrated a failure to understand Muslims' consumers actual need (Battour et al., 2012). Future research should focus on rethinking current tourist motivation and putting a larger emphasis on the pursuit of well-being through travel. The challenge is to develop models that can account for cultural diversification, particularly when it comes to non-Western tourist groups (Filep & Laing, 2018). This indicates that the demand for Muslim travel needs is escalating and offers a valuable perspective for understanding consumption outcomes.

A self-administered questionnaire survey was distributed by employing a

purposive sampling procedure. Further analyses were conducted by using 474 completed and verified questionnaires. The respondents' demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' demographic profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	254	53.6
	Female	220	46.4
Age	20 - 29 years old	377	79.5
	30 - 39 years old	56	11.8
	40 - 49 years old	35	7.4
	50 – 59 years old	5	1.1
	60 years old & above	1	.2
Marital Status	Single	366	77.2
	Married without children	28	5.9
	Married with children	77	16.2
	Divorced/Separated/Widowed	3	.6
Education	SPM	34	7.2
	STPM/Diploma/College	123	25.9
	Bachelor Degree/Professional Degree	299	63.1
	Postgraduate Degree	18	3.8
Monthly Income	Less than RM1,999	254	53.6
	RM2,000 - RM3,999	137	28.9
	RM4,000 – RM5,999	53	11.2
	RM6,000 – RM7,999	14	3.0
	RM8,000 – RM9,999	8	1.7
	RM10,000 and above	8	1.7

4.2 Measures

Firstly, the questionnaire focused on questions that are related to respondents' travel patterns. Subsequently, the respondents were asked to assess items that were related to hotel attributes instruments that were derived from literatures (Battour, Battor, & Bhatti, 2014; Dortyol, Olgun Kitapci, & Varinli, 2014; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010; Saad, Ali, & Abdel-Ati, 2014; Usta, Berezina, & Cobanoglu, 2011). The hotel attributes comprised of three dimensions, including essential facilities, in-room facilities, and culturally compliant facilities. The hotel attributes construct was modelled as formative-formative (Type IV) hierarchical component model. Each of

the dimensions related to hotel attributes were independent, unrelated and not interchangeable, thus, formative measures were more appropriate to be utilised (Hulland, 1999; Jarvis et al., 2004).

Meanwhile, the measurement items for brand attachment were adopted and modified from Hemsley-Brown and Alnawas (2016), which originated from Malär et al., (2011), Thomson et al., (2005) and Tsai (2014). Brand attachment is modelled as a reflective-reflective (Type 1) hierarchical component model. The lower-order constructs are represented by brand passion, self-brand connection and brand affection.

On the other hand, satisfaction dan revisit intention was modelled as a first-order construct. The measurement items for satisfaction were adapted and adopted from Ryu, Han and Jang (2010) as well as Yoon and Uysal (2005). Meanwhile, the measurement items for revisit intention were adapted and modified from Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou and Andronikidis (2016). Respondents were asked to respond to each survey instrument on a seven-point Likert scale with the first point denoting strongly disagree (1) and the last being strongly agree (5). The survey's final part comprised of demographic questions.

4.3 Analysis Method

The structural equation model was analysed via the variance-based partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method. PLS-SEM was chosen due to several reasons. First, the research model is complex considering the type of hypothesised association and formative measured construct was part of the structural model. Therefore, the utilisation of PLS-SEM is recommended (Hair et al., 2017). Second, PLS-SEM offers some advantages especially in testing mediation. This includes its ability to reduced bias because the bootstrapping procedure does not make any assumption on the distribution of samples and all mediation effects are evaluated at the same time in a single model (Hair et al., 2014).

4.4 Model Estimation and Results Evaluation

SmartPLS 3.3.3 software were utilised in this study and the findings were reported following the guideline by Hair et al., (2017) and Ramayah et al., (2018). Two stage approach were carried out for the analytical procedure.

First, the measurement model was assessed to determine the reliability and validity of the instrument. Second, the structural model was assessed to analyse the hypothesised relationship between the constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

5. RESULTS

Firstly, since the data was collected via self-reported questionnaire and both predictor as well as criterion variables are obtained from the same source, the common method variance is required to be addressed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). There are several recommendations in resolving this issue, and one of the most common approach is the Harman's single factor test, whereby all of the primary constructs are placed into a principle component factor analysis (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). A factor analysis without rotation revealed that the first component accounted just 35.19 percent of the variance, which is significantly lower than the majority, suggesting that method bias is not a serious concern in this study.

5.1 Assessment of Reflective Measurement Model

To evaluate the measurement model for the reflective indicators, the individual item reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed. As shown in Table 2, the loading of all indicators are more than 0.70, hence individual item reliability is deemed satisfactory in this study (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, to determine the convergent validity, the average extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) were assessed. The results shown that all AVEs and CRs exceeded the threshold value of 0.50 and 0.70, respectively, which demonstrated that all the latent variable obtained convergent validity.

Table 2: Indicator's reliability and convergent validity
(reflective measurement model)

First Order Construct	Second Order Construct	Item	Loadings	CR	AVE
Brand Passion		BA1	DEL	0.954	0.839
		BA2	0.920		
		BA3	0.909		
		BA4	0.916		
		BA5	0.918		
Self-Brand Connection		BA6	0.902	0.952	0.800
		BA7	0.911		
		BA8	0.852		
		BA9	0.910		
		BA10	0.896		
Brand Affection		BA11	0.917	0.946	0.813
		BA12	0.912		
		BA13	0.892		
		BA14	0.886		
	Brand Attachment	BP	0.936	0.953	0.871
		SBC	0.950		
		BAFF	0.914		
Revisit Intention		BOVIS1	0.945	0.963	0.866
		BOVIS2	0.951		
		BOVIS3	0.920		
		BOVIS4	0.906		
Satisfaction		BOSAT1	0.930	0.967	0.878
		BOSAT2	0.951		
		BOSAT3	0.945		
		BOSAT4	0.922		

Then, we employed the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria to determine the discriminant validity. As seen in Table 3, the diagonal values are larger than the values in their respective row and column, suggesting that the measures used in this study are unique and possess sufficient discriminant validity. However, Henseler et al., (2015) argued that the Fornell and Larcker criteria does not have the ability to reliably detect the lack of discriminant validity in most common research situations. Thus, in addition to Fornell and Larcker

criteria, the discriminant validity is also evaluated by using heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio.

Some scholars suggested that when the value is closer or exceed 1.0, the discriminant validity is violated (Franke & Sarstedt, 2018). Meanwhile, Henseler et al., (2015) suggested threshold value for HTMT are 0.90 or 0.85, whereas Voorhees et al., (2016) recommended that cut-off values of 0.75 is more useful. As observed in Table 4, the assessment of discriminant validity based on HTMT demonstrated that all HTMT values for the lower-order constructs are less than 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), implying that all the constructs are empirically distinct.

On the other hand, the discriminant validity issue between the lower-order and higher-order constructs are not a major concern in the second-order model. This is because both components that come from the same theoretical concept, therefore they are fairly similar by definition. Discriminant validity violations between these constructs are expected, given the measurement model for the higher-order constructs' components duplicates the indicator of its lower-order components (Sarstedt et al., 2019) which facilitate modeling a construct on a more abstract higher-level dimension and its more concrete lower-order subdimensions, have become an increasingly visible trend in applications of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM. As observed in Table 4, all the main constructs exhibit discriminant validity following the 0.90 cut-off value (Henseler et al., 2015), indicating that all constructs are empirically distinct.

Table 3: Discriminant validity via Fornell-Larcker criterion

Constructs	Brand Attachment	Hotel Attributes	Revisit Intention	Satisfaction	Brand Passion	Self-Brand Connection	Brand Affection	Essential Facilities	Culturally Compliant Facilities	In-room Facilities
Brand Attachment	**0.844**									
Hotel Attributes	0.207	**NA**								

Revisit Intention	0.744	0.243	**0.939**						
Satisfaction	0.748	0.275	0.789	**0.937**					
Brand Passion	0.936	0.194	0.717	0.730	**0.916**				
Self-Brand Connection	0.950	0.170	0.694	0.666	0.842	**0.894**			
Brand Affection	0.914	0.220	0.674	0.705	0.782	0.797	**0.902**		
Essential Facilities	0.124	0.665	0.140	0.253	0.119	0.085	0.150	**NA**	
Culturally Compliant Facilities	0.131	0.703	0.171	0.144	0.142	0.106	0.123	0.553	**NA**
In-room Facilities	0.185	0.986	0.227	0.270	0.169	0.150	0.206	0.653	0.589	**NA**

Table 4: Discriminant validity via Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlation (HTMT)

Constructs	Brand Attachment	Revisit Intention	Satisfaction	Brand Passion	Self-Brand Connection	Brand Affection
Brand Attachment						
Revisit Intention	*0.783*					
Satisfaction	*0.778*	*0.835*				
Brand Passion	0.982	0.767	0.773			
Self-Brand Connection	0.999	0.741	0.703	0.899		
Brand Affection	0.968	0.726	0.752	0.840	0.856	

Note: Italics used for higher-order construct values.

5.2 Assessment of Formative Measurement Model

5.2.1 Assessment of Formative First Order Construct

There were numerous procedures that needed to be completed in order to test the validity of formative construct at the first-order construct level. First, the multicollinearity issue needs to be assessed. A high level of multicollinearity

signifies that certain items may be redundant. As observed in Table 5, all of the indicators' VIF were well below 3.3 threshold value (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006), indicating that collinearity does not reach a critical level in any of the formative constructs and it is not an concern for the estimation of the PLS path model.

Then, the contribution of each formative indicator to the formative construct was evaluated, which was performed by consolidating the formative indicators using the item's weight. The weight of the item should be significant and the magnitude of the weight have to be greater than 0.10 (Rai et al., 2006). A high indicator weight signifies that the indicator is making a significant contribution to the formative construct (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). As observed in Table 5, most of the indicators were insignificant except for HA6, HA10, HA17 and HA20, which significant at 95 and 90% confidence level. Insignificant indicator weights, on the other hand, should not be interpreted as indicating poor measurement quality. Rather, the absolute contribution of the formative indicator to its construct should be evaluated, which is assessed by outer loading (Hair et al., 2017). As observed in Table 5, all of the insignificant item's outer loading were 0.50 and above, implying that these indicators should be interpreted as absolutely important (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, these indicators would generally be kept (Henseler et al., 2009).

5.2.2   Assessment of Formative Second-Order Construct

Likewise in order to assess the formative second-order construct, the collinearity issue needs to be addressed among the three constructs. Similarly, the procedure and evaluation process for collinearity issues follow the same guideline as for the first-order construct model. According to Table 5, VIF for all three indicators of construct of hotel attributes are less than value of 3.3, implying that there is no multicollinearity issue across the indicators.

Furthermore, Table 5 depicts that only one indicator (i.e., in-room facilities) is significant at 95% confidence level. However, the essential facilities and culturally compliant facilities are insignificant. Nevertheless, prior study and theory, on the other hand, demonstrates the importance of these indicators for operationalizing the concept of hotel attributes. Hence, these indicators are retained in the formative construct despite their non-significant outer weights.

Table 5: Result of formative measurement model assessment

First Order Construct	Second Order Construct	Items	Scale	Weights/ Loadings	CR/ t-value	VIF	Sig.
Essential Facilities		HA1	Formative	0.282 / 0.752	1.024	1.710	0.306
		HA2		0.161 / 0.775	0.934	2.182	0.350
		HA10		0.339	2.267	2.716	0.023**
		HA11		0.353 / 0.863	1.528	2.857	0.127
		HA12		0.036 / 0.794	0.224	3.163	0.823
		HA13		0.061 / 0.721	0.453	2.091	0.650
		HA14		0.066 / 0.750	0.376	2.336	0.707
Culture-Compliant Facilities		HA15	Formative	0.171 / 0.645	0.811	1.605	0.417
		HA16		0.282 / 0.759	1.081	1.718	0.280
		HA17		0.476 / 0.809	1.839	1.442	0.065*
		HA18		-0.064 / 0.507	0.411	1.473	0.681
		HA19		0.024 / 0.563	0.154	1.652	0.878
		HA20		0.401 / 0.772	1.725	1.838	0.085*
In-room Facilities		HA4	Formative	0.446 / 0.799	1.438	1.730	0.151
		HA5		0.236 / 0.785	0.981	1.934	0.327
		HA6		0.357 / 0.765	1.836	1.480	0.066*
		HA9		0.293 / 0.634	1.438	1.281	0.150
	Hotel Attributes	Essential Facilities	Formative	-0.020	0.076	1.885	0.939
		Culturally Compliant Facilities		0.193	0.606	1.656	0.544
		In-Room Facilities		0.886	2.174	2.003	0.030**

Note: *$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

5.3 Assessment of Structural Model

The study employed the transmittal approach as per guidelines provided by Rungtusanatham et al., (2014) to theorise and hypothesise the mediation relationship between the constructs. Rungtusanatham et al., (2014) stated that, researchers should "establish the hypothesis that M mediates the effect of X on Y, or that X has an indirect influence on Y through M, without requiring to define theories relating X to M and M to Y". Thus, the focus was only on the indirect effects.

The study followed the guidelines provided by Hair et al., (2017), whereby the Bootstrapping procedure was performed with 5,000 iterations to estimate the 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval for the indirect effects of each path (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Rungtusanatham et al., 2014). Table 6 summarises the results of the hypothesis testing.

Table 6: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis		Relationship	Std Beta	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Confidence Interval (BC)		Decision
							LL	UL	
	a	HA → BA	0.207	0.083	2.505	0.012**	0.091	0.406	Supported
	c'_1	HA → SAT	0.155	0.062	2.506	0.012**	0.066	0.300	Supported
	c'_2	HA → RVI	0.154	0.062	2.474	0.013**	0.065	0.300	Supported
	b_1	BA → SAT	0.748	0.033	22.733	0.000***	0.678	0.808	Supported
	b_2	BA → RVI	0.350	0.058	6.054	0.000***	0.250	0.471	Supported
	b_3	SAT → RVI	0.527	0.062	8.452	0.000***	0.395	0.636	Supported
H1	a_1b_1	HA → BA → SAT	0.155	0.062	2.506	0.012**	0.066	0.300	Supported
H2	a_1b_2	HA → BA → RVI	0.072	0.033	2.174	0.030**	0.028	0.158	Supported
H3	$a_1b_1b_3$	HA → BA → SAT → RVI	0.082	0.035	2.336	0.020**	0.035	0.166	Supported

Note: *$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

HA: Hotel attributes; BA: Brand attachment; SAT: Satisfaction; RVI: Revisit intention.

HA → SAT: Results suggest that the mediation effect, HA → BA → SAT is significant (H1, β=0.155, t-value=2.506, $p < 0.05$). The specific indirect effects 95% Boot CI Bias Corrected [LL = 0.066, UL = 0.300], do not include zero, which implying occurrence of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)formal significance tests of indirect effects are rarely conducted. After a brief overview of mediation, we argue the importance of directly testing the significance of indirect effects and provide SPSS and SAS macros that facilitate estimation of the indirect effect with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach to obtaining confidence intervals, as well as the traditional approach advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986). As such, H1 is supported. If the specific indirect effect (ab) is significant, while the direct effect (c') is not significant, thus a full mediation (indirect-only effect) is established. Meanwhile, if both specific indirect effect (ab) and direct effect (c') are significant, a partial mediation is established

(Carrión et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2017) the methods for testing mediation have become more sophisticated. However, many researchers continue to use outdated methods to test mediation effects in PLS-SEM, which can lead to erroneous results in some cases. One reason for the use of outdated methods is that PLS-SEMtutorials do not drawon the newest statistical findings. This chapter illustrates how to perform modern procedures in PLS-SEM by challenging the conventional approach to mediation analysis and providing better alternatives. These novel methods offer a wide range of testing options (e.g., multiple mediators. As shown in Table 6, the direct effect (c'_1) between hotel attributes and satisfaction is significant ($p < 0.05$), therefore, the mechanism by which hotel attributes affected satisfaction was partially mediated by brand attachment.

HA → RVI: Results suggest that the mediation effect, HA → BA → RVI is significant (H2, β=0.072, t-value=2.174, $p < 0.05$). The specific indirect effects 95% Boot CI Bias Corrected [LL = 0.028, UL = 0.158], do not include zero, which implying occurrence of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)formal significance tests of indirect effects are rarely conducted. After a brief overview of mediation, we argue the importance of directly testing the significance of indirect effects and provide SPSS and SAS macros that facilitate estimation of the indirect effect with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach to obtaining confidence intervals, as well as the traditional approach advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986. As such, H2 is supported. As shown in Table 6, the direct effect (c'_1) between hotel attributes and revisit intention is significant ($p < 0.05$), therefore, the mechanism by which hotel attributes affected revisit intention was partially mediated by brand attachment.

Additionally, the study also found that the serial mediation effect of hotel attributes and revisit intention through brand attachment and satisfaction (HA → BA → SAT → RVI) is significant (H3, β=0.082, t-value=2.336, $p < 0.05$). The specific indirect effects 95% Boot CI Bias Corrected [LL = 0.035, UL = 0.166], do not include zero, which implying occurrence of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008)formal significance tests of indirect effects are rarely conducted. After a brief overview of mediation, we argue the importance of directly testing the significance of indirect effects and provide SPSS and SAS macros that facilitate estimation of the indirect effect with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach to obtaining confidence intervals, as well as the traditional approach
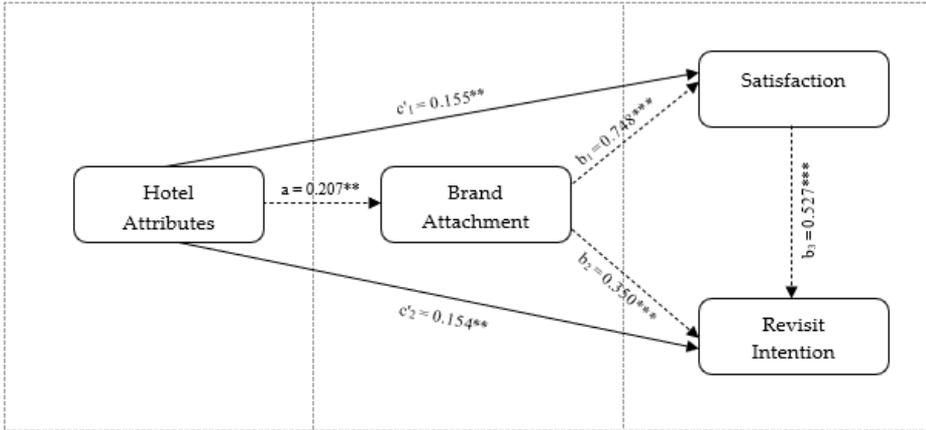
Notes: Dotted lines denote simple mediation (ab) and sequential mediation (abb) effects; solid lines denote direct effects (c´); **p<0.05; ***p<0.001 (two-tailed).

Figure 2: Structural Model

6.   DISCUSSION

6.1   Theoretical Implication

The relationship patterns substantially matched our expectations. An evaluation of the indirect effects indicated that brand attachment mediates the influence of hotel attributes on satisfaction. In other words, hotel attributes influence consumers' satisfaction via brand attachment indirectly. In an ideal situation, when consumers form a bond with a brand, it is expected that they will consequently be satisfied with the services offered by the hotel. This is in line with the literatures that suggested the role of brand attachment in fostering consumers' satisfaction (Dennis et al., 2016; Thomson et al., 2005). Furthermore, according to Sant (2017), people may be satisfied without attachment, but they cannot be emotionally attached without being functionally fulfilled. This statement further underscores the findings that suggests the important role of brand attachment on satisfaction.

Likewise, this study also demonstrated that the brand attachment mediates

the influence of hotel attributes on revisit intention. This finding concurs with literatures that evidences the role of brand attachment that leads to propensity to repurchase (Barreda et al., 2013; Baumgarth, 2014; Hew et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2011). In an ideal situation, when consumers form an attachment towards specific brand (i.e., hotel), the possibility that they will revisit the same destination is higher. This is because most people are not used to change their behaviour, as they will require to perform extensive information search if they decided to make any changes in their behaviour or routine (Grohol, 2016).

The study also supported the sequential mediation hypothesis, whereby it is found that hotel attributes influence on revisit intention is mediated by brand attachment and satisfaction in a series. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that able to validate sequential mediation in a model simultaneously. In general, it is widely accepted that a collection of location-specific resources and offerings, which may be accommodated and controlled by a hotelier, can elicit emotional attachment to a destination (Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Veasna et al., 2013). This findings correspond with literature that supported the role of product or service attribution in fostering brand attachment (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013; Vlachos et al., 2010) and consequently lead to satisfaction (Bahri-Ammari et al., 2016) and repurchase intention (Barreda et al., 2013; Baumgarth, 2014; Hew et al., 2017; Huang et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2011). This confirmed the idea that when consumers are attached to a hotel brand, they are anticipated to be more satisfied with the products and services offered at the hotel. In addition, since they are attached to the hotel brand, they will also very likely to return to the same destination in the future since they feel close to the hotel brand. They are also more inclined to share their experience with others and promote the hotel brands since they have a good emotional tie to the hotel brand.

6.2   PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Additionally, our findings form the basis for important management implications. In line with prior research on the tourists' hotel, the results further accentuate the relevance of brand attachment in determining the impact between hotel attributes and post consumption behaviour (i.e., satisfaction and revisit intention). The hospitality sector is typically characterized by cognitive attributes and easily replaceable services. It is much more difficult for a hotel to distinguish itself from its rivals on the basis of functional value. Therefore,

to ensure competitive differentiation, the hotel business may leverage advantage through cultivating the emotional value. Thus, based on the results of the study, hotel managers are recommended to strategically profit from the importance of brand attachment in tourists' hotel choice.

7 CONCLUSION

Although our study sheds light on the significance of brand attachment in determining relationship between hotel attributes and post consumption behaviour, a number of constraints have to be recognised. Future study may consider broadening the samples of research to international Muslim tourists. Since they are distinct culturally, the attitudes and preferences of the hotel are presumably different. Consequently, they may evaluate the comparability between the two and perform cross-sectional analysis. Furthermore, this study was also restricted to hotels in Malaysia, thus due to nature of the hospitality services in Malaysia, our study might have aided in the establishment of attachments. Therefore, we invite tourism researchers to conduct additional validations of our model across several destinations, particularly among seasonal destinations, in which may result in differing levels of attachment.

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