Validating Theory of Planned Behavior with Formative Affective Attitude to Understand Tourist Revisit Intention

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to integrate affective attitude in Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to predict tourists' revisit intention to UNESCO heritage sites in Melaka. A survey of 238 among international tourist was undertaken in Melaka, Malaysia. PLS-SEM was used to assess higher order model of three dimensional affective attitude as well as the measurement model and structural model. Hypothesized relationship between affective attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and revisit intention were examined. The results indicated that the proposed model had strong predictive ability regarding tourists' revisit intention to UNESCO heritage sites. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Revisit intention; affective attitude; subjective norm; perceived behavioral control

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of lucrative economic sector in Malaysia with enormous impact towards growth of the country. Malaysia has been ranked top ten destinations receiving the highest number of international tourist arrival in the Asia with Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, George Town and Langkawi being cities attracting large amount of tourist (UNWTO, 2019). However when more and more countries embarked in tourism and heritage activities after being inspired by neighbouring countries success stories, it has resulted in intense competition among destination. In order to address competitions, it is important to tackle the problem with correct marketing strategies that capable to pull more tourists to increase place sustainability. Tourism scholars lend support to the conception that increasing sequence or proportion of visit to a destination can be able to keep and foster strong tourist base as well as to support the numbers of arrival to destination (Ziadat, 2015).

1.1. Theoretical Gap

Ajzen & Driver (1992) in their seminal work using Theory of Planned behavior (TPB) accorded an efficient approach in predicting destination choice with the use of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control towards action of travelling. Vast array of subjects embracing TPB have been covered in tourism research to deliberately predict and explain tourist selection model using tourist revisit intention as proximal predictor of their subsequent behavior (Japutra, Loureiro, Molinillo, & Ekinci, 2019; Seow, Choong, Moorthy, & Chan, 2017; Ziadat, 2015). However, empirical evidence have reported mix evidence on predictive ability of attitude on revisit intention owing to the variety seeking nature of tourist which indirectly shows the limitation of TPB in explaining tourist behavior (Han, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2019; Na, Onn, & Meng, 2016; Soliman, 2019). Furthermore, it has been long argued that cognitive attitude used as one the construct in TPB have failed to explain tourist variety seeking nature which subsequently impedes tourists' from making repeat visit to same destination. Intellectual progression on the topic of revisit intention indicated immense focus on pull factor comprising cognitive attractions. As such, a plausible explanation on the limitation of past studies on revisit intention could be weakness in emphasizing on cognitive attitude approach within the framework of TPB.

Deonna & Teroni's (2015) finding lend support to pursue an alternative approach according to which emotions qualify as evaluations because they are specific types of attitudes. Similarly, Tricomponent Attitude Model supported attitude classification into three main components namely cognitive, affective and conative to predict tourist intention (Jain, 2014; Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015; Pandey Akilesh, 2015). Based on the this argument, it can be inferred that tourist emotions can be proposed as affective attitude within the framework of TPB along with subjective norm and perceived behavior control to predict on revisit intention among tourists in this following research agenda.

2. Literature Review

This study incorporated affective attitude onto the TPB model in order to predict revisit intention among tourists. As tourism activities are experiential based, it was well documented that these experiences will elicit numerous emotions accounted as affective attitude. In this study, positive emotion is more representative of travel experience as previous consumption emotion literature has established the direct effect of positive emotion and tourist intention.

2.1. Revisit Intention

Over the past three decades, tourism researchers have incorporated repeat visitation as a key tactic to maintain competitiveness and sustainability in tourism business. Recent studies in tourism have evidenced growing literatures quantifying revisit intention to natural parks, old castles, villages to archaeological sites and various fascinating historical attractions that relive the past to understand factors motivating tourist's interest. Most of these studies supported the strength of experience witnessing the past that was packaged together to attract tourist as the main factors drawing tourist (Patwary & Rashid, 2016). Marketer began to realize the essence to adapt the sub-conscience response of the tourist in order to provide predictor base in attempt to conceptualize revisit intention. Nowadays, destination or tourism product attributes and functional quality alone is inadequate to reach the tourist when competition becomes more intense. Tourism marketing today have shifted towards concentrating more on people and process to satisfy their emotional needs. This was evidenced by research stream on revisit intention with broader aspects such as altruism (Kim, M. J., Lee, C. K., & Bonn, 2016), authenticity (Del Chiappa & Atzeni, 2016), hedonic value (Choi & Choi, 2019), holistic image (Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016) and memorability (Hung, Lee, & Huang, 2014). However, there is still dearth of research done to understand the tourists' revisit intention using comprehensive determinants aiming for effective marketing and analysis of tourist choices.

2.2. Affective Attitude

Affective attitude represent an esteem topic in academic research due to its personal reflection on the human emotion in decision making process. Academia have acknowledged emotion as dominant discretion in consumer selection model and once for all rejected the notion of the logical consumer (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014). In tourism research, affective attitude can be equated to appraisal elements such as interpreting physiological arousal, expression, emotional responses arising from tourist experience (Patwary & Rashid, 2016). Existing literatures offers two major approaches to conceptual09ize affective attitude in tourism research. The first is by way of dimensional (valence based) and the second way through categorical or emotion specificity)(Del Chiappa & Atzeni, 2016; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). In destination marketing research, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) is one of notable study that proposed three dimensional Destination Emotion Scale (DES) consist of joy, love and positive surprise to gives a more parsimonious account of tourists related destination emotions. Aleshinloye & Woosnam (2016), disclosed tourist emotion has positive and significant effect on intention to revisit among festival visitors in Nigeria. Lan-Lan Chang & Kenneth Backman (2016) supported greater intention to revisit creative tourism is to be drawn from affective elements such as emotional experience and memorability. Hosany et

al.,(2015) evidenced joy, love and positive surprise have positive and significant effect on intention to recommend among international tourist to Thailand. Thus in tandem with earlier work, this study hypothesizes the following:

H1: Affective attitude has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

2.3. Subjective Norm

In destination marketing studies, subjective norm has been widely researched owing to its ability to influence tourist intention. Finding that supports subjective norm being an important factor influencing tourist intention to visit a destination denoting the importance of reference group influence in travel behavior can be widely found (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Kaushik, Agrawal, & Rahman, 2015; Soliman, 2019). Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) in their empirical study to link electronic word of mouth and TPB confirmed subjective norm as most significant predictor of intention to travel among tourists visiting Isfahan in Iran. Kaushik et al.(2015) extends the technology acceptance model (TAM) employing subjective norm to predict intention towards adoption of self-service technologies among tourists in hotels in north India. This observation leads us to assume that tourist intention to revisit is substantially influenced by their perceived opinion about societal pressure. Taken together, we postulate the second hypothesis:

H2: Subjective norm has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

2.4. Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is a belief about perceived ease or difficulty in performing a behavior (Japutra et al., 2019; Seow et al., 2017) previous literatures have recognised range of constraints or barriers that impede a tourist from travelling such as language, distance, cost, familiarity, safety and government policies (Han et al., 2019; Soliman, 2019). Soliman(2019) attempted to test the applicability of TPB among travellers in Egypt supported perceived behavioral control as strongest predictor of intention. In another attempt by Duarte et al., (2015) seeking to understand behavioral intention among visitors to heritage building in UK, found perceived behavioral control being one of the important predictor of intention. Based on the prior review of the literatures, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

2.5. Proposed Conceptual Model Overview

The associations among the constructs hypothesized for this conceptual model were adapted from related literature as previously described. Figure 1 depicts the proposed scheme, which comprises affective attitude as second order with three dimensional first order construct consist of joy, love and positive surprise adopted from Hosany & Gilbert (2010) along with subjective norm and perceived behavioral control being the original component construct of TPB. This conceptual model assesses the associations found among the above-mentioned constructs and presents a set of three hypotheses for testing.
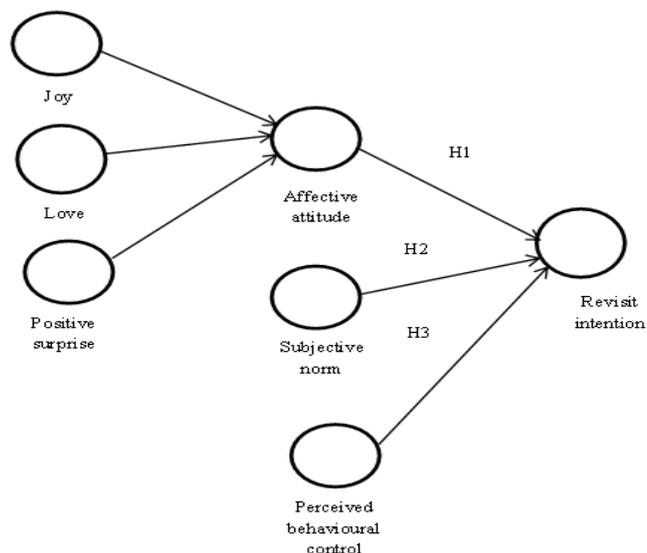
Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

3. Methodology

Data was gathered from international tourist visiting heritage sites in Melaka, a historic city in Malaysia which was recognised by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Site. Heritage sites was selected for this study owing to its strength in attracting huge volume of international tourist apart from niche offerings in term of experiential learning capable to elicit numerous emotions. This study utilized self-reported questionnaires divided into three sections. Part A is travel characteristic and behavior; Part B includes demographic profile of the respondents and Part C questions gauging six sub-sections of the constructs consist of emotion of joy, love, positive surprise, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and revisit intention. All measurement items were adopted carefully from Scopus indexed journals. All the 15 items measuring joy, love and positive surprise were adopted from Destination Emotion Scale by Hosany & Gilbert (2010). They were used as first order formative construct to measure affective attitude. Five items were adapted from Kaushik et al.(2015) to measure subjective norm, five items were borrowed from Ziadat(2015) and six item from Japutra et al., (2019) to measure perceived behavioral control and revisit intention respectively. All the 31 items were assessed with Likert scale, where 1 denotes 'strongly disagree' and 7 denotes 'strongly agree'. The sample size was decided based on guidelines suggested by Hair et al., (2019) to have at least five times as many observations as the number of variables to be analyzed. Based on this minimum sample size rule (31 x 5), a total 250 questionnaires were distributed using purposive sampling among international tourist. In total, 238 questionnaires were returned yielding an overall response rate of 95.2% out of the distributed survey. The completed questionnaires were further screened for missing data analyses and straight lining, retaining a total of 236 questionnaires for further analyses.

4. Data Analysis

In order to ensure that there was no common method variance, Harman's single factor test was performed through unrotated principal component factor analysis on all measurement items via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. which affirms none of the generated factors explained more than 50% of the variance.

Results show that 51.5% female and 48.5% male tourist participated in this survey. The majority of the visitors were Europeans (51.8%).Regarding marital status, 55.1 were not married and 44.9% were married. In addition, most respondents (45.3%) were middle aged ranging between 36 to 60 years. Mostly (64.8%) have completed tertiary and higher education. Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the relationship between affective attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and revisit intention. Partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, a second generation analysis software to test complex models with latent variables as well higher order model, using Smart PLS software version 3.2.8 was applied in this research.

5. Results and Findings

The PLS-SEM analysis to test the proposed hypotheses was evaluated via a two-stage approach using measurement model and structural model as suggested by Anderson & Gerbing (1988).

5.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

Ramayah et al., (2018) advocates four steps in examining the measurement model consist of examining item loading, internal consistency, convergent validity and finally assessing discriminant validity. This study employs affective attitude as high order model with three formative dimensions consist of joy, love and positive surprise as contended by Hosany & Gilbert (2010). Hence, estimation of higher order model was done using disjoint two-stage approach suggested by Becker et al., (2012) (2012). Composite reliability as well as factor loading were fulfilled with all values exceeding 0.70 threshold as suggested by Hair et al.,(2019) except for EJ5, SN5, PBC5 and RI6.Thus all the four items were dropped from further analysis. On the other hand, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all construct exceeded 0.5 indicating that every respective construct includes more than 50% of the indicator variance fulfilled the convergent validity. All constructs denotes VIF values less than the recommended value of 5 (ranging from 1.865 to 2.971), surmising there were no multicollinearity issues among the predictor constructs. Both findings provide evidence of satisfactory discriminant validity. Finally, the measurement model was examined with Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratios (HTMT). All the result fulfilled Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT values were below 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity has been ascertained (Henseler, 2015).

5.2. Assessment of Structural Model

In order to assess the structural model, Ramayah et al. (2018) and Hair et al. (2019) recommended to examine the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficient (β) and the corresponding t-values via a bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 5,000. First, this study looked at the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Affective attitude has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention. Therefore H1 is acceptable given that ($\beta = 0.527$, $\tau = 9.591$, p <0.000). For the second hypotheses, subjective norm was found to be positively and significantly influence revisit intention among tourist (($\beta = 0.138$, $\tau = 2.581$, p <0.010), thus accepting H2. Finally, perceived behavioral control also meaningfully predicts revisit intention among tourist confirming H3($\beta = 0.213$, $\tau = 4.608$, p <0.000).This study also confirmed

that 65% variation in revisit intention among tourist to heritage sites in Melaka can be explained by affective attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. Based on effect size guidelines by Gefen, Ringdon & Straub (2011), it was found that affective attitude (f^2=0.422) has large effect on revisit intention as compared to subjective norm (f^2=0.067) and perceived behavioral control ((f^2=0.118). In the assessment of predictive relevance for the research model, this study implemented the blindfolding technique. Based on Fornell & Cha (1994) as well as Hair et al. (2019), endogenous constructs were deemed to have predictive relevance if their values of Q^2 exceed zero. In this research, construct cross validated redundancy Q^2 value indicated Q^2 of 0.354.Therefore it may be concluded that our suggested model feature large effect on predictive relevance. Figure 2 shows the structural model the study.
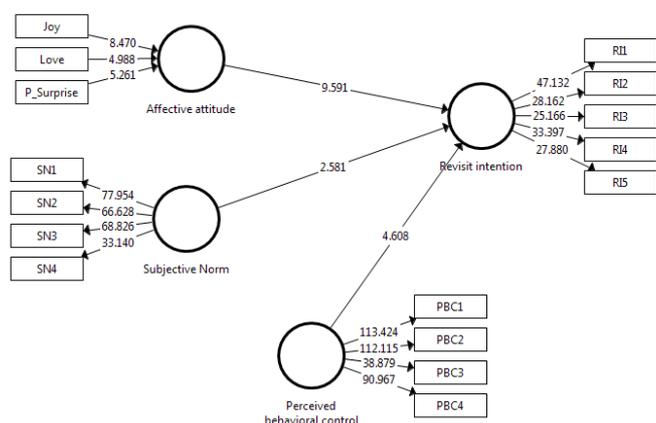
6. Discussion
The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of TPB to predict revisit intention by utilising affective attitude operationalized as second-order formative construct composed of three reflectively measured dimensions, namely joy, love and positive surprise. In addition, this study examined the effect of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on revisit intention. In doing so, this study followed the recent guidelines on the estimation and assessment of models containing constructs modeled as composite and common factor as well as second-order composites built by common factors the in the context of PLS-PM. Several previous studies have identified tourist affective attitude or emotion as a multidimensional construct (Del Chiappa & Atzeni, 2016; Hosany et al., 2015; Woosnam et al., 2016). For the first time, the results of our study provided empirical evidence for affective attitude modeled as second-order composite built by its three dimensions. Consistently, finding of this study supported that affective attitude can be appropriately modeled as a composite in attempt to predict revisit intention within integrated approach.

6.1. Theoretical and Practical Contributions
Results of the current study were consistent with those from previous studies. Several previous studies have identified the positive and significant effects of tourist affective attitude on intention (Lan-Lan Chang & Kenneth F. Backman, 2016; Woosnam et al., 2016). Our results also identified the direct effect of affective attitude on revisit intention (β=0.527), which was much higher than the direct effect of subjective norm (β=0.527), and perceived behavioral control (β=0.213) on revisit intention. As such it can be deduced that the criteria for revising the TPB have been met by the new model. Essentially, the proposed affective element of TPB are in

compliance with the compatibility principle with its ability to explain more than half of the variation (R² =65%) in revisit intention. This study also established that affective attitude produces meaningful positive and significant effect on revisit intention which implies that affective attitude is an interwoven appraisal character in which emotion, feelings or stimulus condition as driver to action. As such, the intensity of destination experiential value depends on the emotional response from the episodes of event tourists go through during the visits. Essentially, large effect size of affective attitude on revisit intention also provide clear distinction that dimensional approach is more suitable to examine emotion in marketing as it provide better explanatory value and can better capture tourist emotional responses as argued by Hosany et al., (2015).

In regard to practical contributions, the present study provides substantial direction for the planning and development of the heritage management in Melaka. It suggests that understanding the essential factors affecting the tourists' revisit intention to will help in devoting effective marketing strategies that influence travel decisions. Consequently, both tourism marketers in Melaka have to focus on interpreting heritage in interaction to create a participatory learning experience so that it stimulates various emotions as recollection of 'good past days'. This is important in the new era of emerging heritage 'business' in which the past is treated as a commodity to be bought and sold as part of the contemporary tourist industry, with the conscious manipulation of history designed to create something which people will consider worth visiting and spending money on it.

6.2. Limitation and Future Research
The present study has some limitations. The study may present bias in the sample selection covering data collection in UNESCO heritage sites in Melaka. It was suggested future studies should apply the model by presenting the questionnaire to different destination, nationalities, with other native languages, to examine the influence of the studied constructs on tourist revisit intention in other UNESCO heritage sites.

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