

The Influences of Authenticity and Experience Quality on Behavioural Intention in Cultural Heritage Destination

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Abstract: - Cultural heritage tourism is essentially comprised of cultural tourism and heritage tourism. Authenticity of the attractions is unquestionably the most critical success factor for this niche tourism. While authenticity of the “built heritage” has been extensively studied, the authenticity of the presentation of the “local culture” seems to be ignored by past researchers. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of heritage authenticity, and cultural authenticity on behavioural intention in the context of cultural heritage tourism destination. This study also anticipates that the above relationships are mediated by the quality of experiences. This study involving 500 foreign tourists visiting the Malaysia’s first World Heritage City, Malacca City used questionnaire survey as the data collection method. The results show that only heritage authenticity is positively related to behavioural intention while cultural authenticity affects behavioural intention via experience quality. Heritage authenticity also shows insignificant relationship with experience quality.

Key-Words: - Heritage tourism, Cultural tourism, Heritage authenticity, Experience quality

1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and most widespread industries in the world [1]. Tourism has evolved to a point where there are several coexisting niche markets for tourists to experience [2]. One of them, the cultural heritage tourism, is considered one of the fastest growing segments of tourism [3,4].

For the purposes of the present study, cultural heritage tourism will be considered a marriage between the two distinctive but very closely related niche forms of tourism, namely cultural and heritage tourism [5]. The National Trust for Historic Preservation of United States defined cultural heritage tourism as “travelling to experience the places (such as colonial palace, old canals, battlegrounds) and activities (such as performing and visual arts, local festivals, and cultural village) that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present”.

The above definition, indicates that the core objects of cultural heritage tourism comprise of two main components namely “places” and “activities”. Heritage tourism in this study generally refers to the

“built heritage” which includes historic sites, monuments, memorials as well as distinctive landscapes and architecture [6]. On the other hand, cultural tourism focuses on local “culture heritage” which includes presentations of traditional lifestyle, and distinctive social practices.

In light of the vital role played by cultural heritage tourism, more specific studies are needed to understand the behavioural intention to visit such destinations from the perspective of experience quality. Due to the highly experiential elements involved in cultural heritage tourism product and service offering, the quality of the experience is expected to play a very crucial role in determining intention to visit and revisit the destinations. Quality of experience refers to the psychological outcome resulting from their cultural participation in tourism attraction [7]. Therefore, the quality of experience can be conceptualized as the emotional reactions of tourists to their socio-psychological benefits desired.

Since cultural heritage tourism is viewed as a form of tourism concerned with experiencing not only the tangible product offerings, such as historic sites, and buildings but also the intangible product

offerings, such as local values and life styles, authenticity is certainly a core characteristic of this niche tourism [8, 9]. Authenticity is defined as representation of traditions, made in the place of origin by traditional suppliers, workmanship, genuineness, a negotiation process, illusion, and connection to the past [10]. In the present study, it is proposed that the quality of cultural heritage tourism experience is enhanced by the authenticity of the heritage site as well as the local culture.

This present study proposed that both heritage as well as cultural authenticity are the most important predictors of experience quality in the context of cultural heritage tourism. Apart from that, this study also would like to investigate whether experience quality mediates the relationship between the two predictors and behavioural intentions.

2 Research Issues and Objectives

As mentioned in the introduction, cultural heritage tourism is a blend of cultural as well as heritage tourism. While there have been an abundance of valuable studies that emphasized on the aspect of site authenticity of the heritage destinations, very little has been studied on the aspect of cultural authenticity in the overall context of cultural heritage tourism. Review of the literature reveals that the quality of experience does not solely depend on the heritage site but equally importantly is on the cultural environments.

This is the most important research gap this present study strives to bridge and subsequently contributes to the body of knowledge. The issue concerning the authenticity of the cultural aspects is to be addressed in this study by comparing its influence on experience quality relative to the extensively studied element of authenticity of heritage site. There is still a gap in knowledge with regards to how tourist experiences may be generated around a set of cultural heritage products and services. Based on the above issues, the specific research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the influence of heritage authenticity on experience quality in the context of culture heritage tourism.
2. To determine the influence of cultural authenticity on experience quality in the context of culture heritage tourism.
3. To investigate the relationship between experience quality and behavioural intention in the context of culture heritage tourism.
4. To examine the mediations role of experience quality on the relationship between authenticity (heritage site

authenticity and cultural authenticity) and behavioural intention.

3 Significance of Study

The findings of this study would contribute significantly to the theoretical as well as managerial aspects in the areas of tourism services and hospitality generally and cultural heritage tourism in specifically.

The authenticity of heritage sites or buildings has been the focus of past studies on cultural heritage tourism. Interestingly, almost none of these past studies has investigated the influence of the cultural authenticity in this context. This study is intended to distinctively contribute to the body of knowledge on tourism quality experience by bringing together the literature on heritage tourism and cultural tourism. The analysis of this study will help eradicate the literature gap of what authenticity analysis failed to represent in tourism quality experience and behavioural intentions. In additions, this study also attempts to contribute to the theoretical foundation of cultural heritage tourism by distinctively encompassing both aspects of authenticity namely heritage authenticity and culture authenticity. Theoretically, this study will contribute to the literature by investigating the mediating role of experience quality on the relationship between authenticity and behavioural intention.

In terms of managerial contributions, this present study would provide input to the tourism authorities on how to further enhance their marketing strategies to attract more tourists to visit cultural and heritage tourism sites as well as to encourage return visits.

4 Literature Review

4.1 Authenticity in the Context of Cultural Heritage Tourism

The idea of the authenticity in this study was developed based on the most widely accepted (in marketing context) post-modernist perspective which argued that “genuineness or authenticity of a tourism structure is not merely a tangible asset, but is also a judgment or value placed in the arrangement setting by the observer” [11]. Postmodern tourists are emotionally driven and seeking valuable experiences. Literature indicated that there are two main types of authenticity namely “existential authenticity” and “objects authenticity”. The concept of existential authenticity looks at authenticity as a subjective, individually and socially constructed perception; for objects

authenticity, authenticity refers to the identification of a property of objects and cultures in an objective manner [12]. Authenticity can be implemented in the field of tourism in both the tourist experience (in contact with the original activity) and in the objects themselves (the authenticity of particular objects) [13]. The concept of existential authenticity is divided into two sub-categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal authenticity is associated with physical feelings of pleasure, relaxation, reinvigoration, fun, and control. Interpersonal experiences of authenticity result from experimental tourist areas, achieving a sense of unity in the family, and the building of communities within groups of tourists.

Past literature has shown that perceived authenticity acts not only as an output of tourists' experience but also as an input of tourist behaviour [12]. Based on the above coupled with the postmodernism view of authenticity, this present study employed the consumer-based model of authenticity which reflect a more realistic, affirmative and multiplicity of tourist behaviors and perception [12, 13]. The model describes authenticity as either a motivational force driving tourist behavior or as an experience or as a perception of a place (object) or existence. Both object and existential authenticity are treated as evaluative judgment of tourist experiences with a heritage site, cultural performance or local lifestyle.

Objects in the context of "heritage authenticity" in this study specifically refer to the built environments (buildings) and landscapes, while the objects for "cultural authenticity" refer to the socio-cultural assets pertain to local people. Heritage tourism refers not only to the built environment but also the quality of interpretative experience which tourists seek to have in them [14].

A recent study has indicated that significant relationship exist between heritage buildings and tourist experiences [15, 16]. It is argued that one of the most important tourist attractions is the building and/or the façade with its architectural form and visual elements that because of their cultural and historical characteristics arouse emotions among the tourists [17]. Heritage authenticity was mainly operationalized as the tourists' overall perception on the architectural aspect (such as furnishing, exterior and interior designs) as well as the peculiarities about the design of the built environment, landscape or streetscape.

While the above physical attributes of the artifacts were related to the object authenticity, the existential authenticity was operationalized as the feelings of connectedness to the past time created

through the experience visiting the built environment. It described how the heritage buildings provided a thorough insight into the old time of the site as well as the extent to which tourists are able to enjoyed the unique spiritual experience while visiting the heritage sites. In addition to the above, the feeling of enjoyment in experiencing cultural heritage products and services is also considered as very crucial for tourism satisfaction[18].

While heritage tourism is concerned with built environment, cultural tourism pertains to a place's culture, specifically its people lifestyle, history, art, belief, rituals and other elements that form their unique way of life. The component of "cultural" in the context of cultural heritage tourism refers to among others festivals, rituals, dress, food as well as other supporting artefacts related to the local people of past and present times [13]. Cultural authenticity is a lifestyle related to the way people organize things and mix with foreign elements without sacrificing the core values of being friendly, welcoming, hospitable, and respectful.

4.2 Experience Quality

Improving the quality of cultural heritage destinations is an essential requirement for satisfying the needs of tourists. Many well-known tourism scholars believed that the quality of experience in the cultural heritage tourism is substantially enhanced by authenticity [19]. Albeit tourism is fundamentally a service sector and the importance of service quality has been emphasized, another important aspect, service experience, has been largely ignored in the tourism and hospitality industry [20]. Experience quality has been defined as the elements of the perceptions, sensations, perceptions, and views of individuals based on their interaction with their environments [21]. These elements may be either enjoyable and pleasing, or frustrating and displeasing. A previous study has examined the mediating role of experience quality in a model of tourist experiences [22]. The authors found that experience quality fully mediates the linkage between quality of performance and tourist satisfaction.

Experience quality and service quality are two different concepts altogether. It has been argued that experience quality is referring to the psychological outcomes (feeling or subjective reactions) resulting from customer involvement or participation in the tourism offerings while service quality is concerning the performance of service delivery at the attribute level [7]. The study suggested that experience quality consists of four

factors namely peace of mind, hedonics, recognition and involvement. The findings of the study revealed that experience quality was significantly related to perceived value and satisfaction and both of these constructs were shown to have a positive impact on behavioural intention.

4.3 Behavioural Intention

Behavioural intention is typically defined as the intention to return or purchase the same product or another product from the same business establishment [23]. Customers who are very satisfied with their commercial experience are more likely to be repeat buyers, to be hard loyal users, and to spread positive word of mouth to other parties. The extent to which a customer is loyal to the destination is frequently reflected in tourists' behavioural intention [7].

Behavioural intentions always focus the anticipated outcome in the future behaviour and in compares with overt behaviour [24]. Detail literature discussions on the subject matter have focused much attentions on the links between the behavioural intention and the service's quality analysis and customer satisfaction [25].

By understanding the relationships between future behavioural intentions and their determinants, destination tourism managers will be able to better understand how to build an attractive image and improve their marketing efforts to maximize their use of resources. Future behavioural intentions include the intention to revisit and willingness to recommend the destination to others [26]. Empirical research also reveals the positive impact of perceived value on both future behavioural intentions and behaviours.

5 Framework and Hypotheses

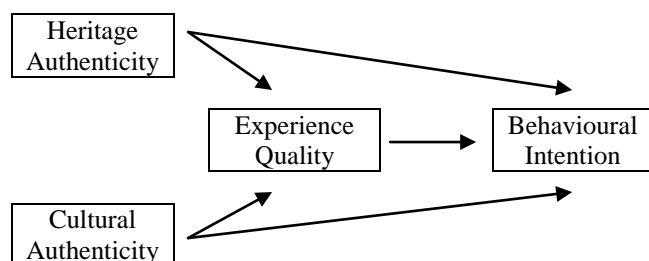


Fig.1: Research Conceptual Framework

Based on the research framework of this study as presented above, a total of five hypotheses (two of them were hidden due to the nature of the role in the mediation relationship) were developed as follows:

- H1 Heritage authenticity is positively related to experience quality.
- H2 Cultural authenticity is positively related to experience quality.
- H3 Experience quality is positively related to behavioural intention in the context of cultural heritage tourism.
- H4 Experience quality mediates the relationship between heritage authenticity and behavioural intention.
- H5 Experience quality mediates the relationship between the cultural authenticity and behavioural intention

6 Research Method

The field work for this study was conducted in a single cultural heritage destination identified as Malacca City in Malaysia. Malacca City has been declared as Malaysia's first World Heritage City by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2008. Only tourism attractions and offerings related to cultural and heritage theme were included in this study. Specifically, this study was focussing on the quality of experience obtained by the international tourists derived from their visits to Malacca City with the main purpose of exploring and enjoying its cultural heritage products and services.

6.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study was referring to the international cultural heritage tourists in general regardless of their nationalities. As there was no readily available sampling frame to be utilized in this study, a non-probability sampling seemed to be the appropriate technique. When theoretical generalizability becomes the priority over population generalizability, non-probability sampling is deemed acceptable [27].

A questionnaire survey was the main method of data collection in this study. The data was collected for a period of two months in April and May 2015. A rule to thumb that a sample of 500 is appropriate for most research [28]. In this study a total of 550 questionnaires were distributed using judgmental sampling technique. Under judgmental sampling, samples are selected based on the research's judgment about some characteristics required of the sample members. Judgmental sampling approach is also the most widely used technique in the hospitality-related studies [29]. The respondents of this study (cultural heritage tourists) were approached while visiting cultural heritage tourism attractions in the city as well as intercepted

while they were hanging out in the main shopping malls.

6.2 Measurements

All scales in this study were measured on a 6-point scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). Heritage authenticity (HA) in this present study is defined as the overall tourists' enjoyment and perceptions of how genuine are their experiences with a built heritage site which includes historic site, monuments, memorials, landscape and architecture [6, 12]. The measurement for authenticity of heritage site was adapted and consists of five items [12]. Sample of items included "The overall architecture and impressions of the buildings (heritage sites) in the city of Malacca inspired me", and "The heritage buildings provided a thorough insight into the old time of Malacca".

Cultural authenticity (CA) refers to the overall tourists' perceptions of how genuine are their experiences with a staged cultural encounter representing the local tradition or way of life [30]. Cultural authenticity of local culture was measured using adapted instrument originally developed by [30]. The scale consists of five items. Among the items were "The cultural aspect that I observed represent local ways of life", and "The cultural presentations represent the past".

Experience quality (EQ) was defined as the overall tourists' affective responses to the desired social or psychological outcomes that they experience throughout the whole visit [7]. The measurement for experience quality was adopted from previous studies [22, 31]. The measurement consists of 15 items. Among the items were "I feel involved in the cultural presentation", and "I forget that time is passing while visiting Malacca's cultural heritage attractions".

Behavioural intention (BI) refers to the tourist's willingness to recommend and intention to revisit the heritage attraction in the future [32]. The measurement for behavioural intention was adopted from a previous study and consists of four items [33]. Two of the items were "If I had to decide again, I would choose Malacca again", and "I will speak highly of Malacca to friends and relatives".

6.3 Validity

All scales were refined and edited for content validity by a panel of three expert reviewers who are scholars in the areas of tourism, hospitality and services marketing. Reviewers were required to rate each item as being representative or not representative of the related construct. Those items rated as not representative by at least two of the

reviewers were discarded. Based on the comments of the reviewers, some of the items were reworded to better fit the context, but none of the items is completely eliminated from further analysis. The survey instrument is then pre-tested prior to the pilot study to assure the content validity of the construct involved. Based on the feedbacks received from the pre-test exercise, some items were further improved and finalized.

6.4 Plan for Data Analysis

The two-step approach of SEM was employed to analyse the data [34]. Firstly, an assessment of the measurement model was conducted mainly to assess the uni-dimensionality and validity of the constructs involved; secondly, the hypothesized model was tested by an assessment of the structural model.

In this study, Sobel test was also conducted to provide statistical supports for the mediation effects of experience quality (EQ) on the relationships between each of the two independent variables (heritage authenticity (HA), and cultural authenticity (CA)) and behavioural intention (BI).

7.0 Research Findings

The instrument of this study was pre-tested with five international postgraduate students in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) who are interested in Cultural Heritage tourism in order to assess the appropriateness and clarity of the survey instruments. Based on the feedback of the pre-test as well as the panel of expert reviewers, some items are revised and reworded accordingly.

The final version of the instruments consists of 29 items from four main variables of this study. Subsequently, the instrument was then pilot-tested mainly to assess the reliability as well as the validity of the measurements used in this study. A total of 30 respondents were considered to be sufficient to obtain statistically reliable results [35]. A total of 100 respondents involved in the pilot test of this study. They were the actual international tourists intercepted at several tourist spots in the city center of Malacca, the fieldwork site for the actual study.

The reliability of the four main variables were assessed by examining their Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The Cronbach's alpha for heritage authenticity, cultural authenticity, experience quality, and behavioural intention were 0.757, 0.741, 0.833, and 0.793, respectively. The results indicated that all constructs had Cronbach's alphas exceeding the cut-off point of 0.7 [36].

7.1 Response Rate

Out of the 550 questionnaires distributed to the international tourists during the field work in Malacca City, 535 questionnaires were returned, recording 97.2% initial response rate. A total of 35 questionnaires or 6.3% were then discarded because of incomplete responses. Therefore, the remaining 500 questionnaires were usable for analysis purposes.

Males constitute the majority of the respondents with 66.4%. In terms of age, 42.8% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 30-40 years old followed by those within 20-30 years old (38.2%). Large majority of the respondents were professionals (28%).

7.2 Preliminary Data Assessment

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the four main variables of this study. The means recorded ranged between 4.66 and 4.92 with standard deviations in between of 0.43 to 0.59.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviation

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Heritage authenticity	4.66	.574
Cultural authenticity	4.76	.560
Experience quality	4.75	.429
Behavioural intention	4.92	.588

A correlation coefficient exceeding 0.8 would be indicative of multicollinearity problem [37]. The results indicate that all correlation coefficients among the four variables were less than 0.8. The values of VIF for all the main independent variables ranged between 1.06 and 1.74, indicating that no multicollinearity exist for the variables in this study.

7.3 Measurement Model Analysis

The results of the CFA showed that the measurement model had an ill fit, with a chi-square (χ^2) of 1243.326 and a degree of freedom (df) of 443 at $p < 0.000$, CFI = 0.773, TLI = 0.758, GFI = 0.785, and RMSEA = 0.054. The standardized residuals of the eight items (culture authenticity (1 item), experience quality (6 items), behavioural intention (1 item)) were all higher than 2.58. Therefore, all the eight items were removed from the model before the re-estimation.

The re-estimated model fit was considered adequate, with $\chi^2 = 408.481$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 383$, RMSEA = .044, CFI = 0.920, TLI = 0.901, GFI =

0.908, and IFI=0.915. As showed in Table 4, all items recorded standardized factor loadings greater than 0.4, suggesting that uni-dimensionality of the measurement model was achieved.

Convergent validity in this study was measured by two indicators namely average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability index (CR) (Hair et al. 2006). Table 2 shows that the AVE of all latent constructs ranged from 0.51 to 0.63. Therefore, all four variables in this study had achieved convergent validity. CR measures the internal consistency of the items in a latent construct based on the estimates of load factors and error variance. It is suggested that the cut-off value for CR is 0.7 [34]. Table 2 shows that the CR of all latent constructs ranged from 0.70 to 0.77. The results recommended that all constructs in the measurement model had adequate reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2: The Reliability Statistics of the Measurement Model

Items	Std. loading	CR	AVE	(Corr) ²
<u>Heritage authenticity</u>		0.768	0.630	0.363
Y	0.624			
Ha1	0.609			
Ha2	0.621			
Ha3	0.631			
Ha4	0.668			
Ha5				
<u>Cultural authenticity</u>		0.715	0.621	0.227
Y	0.680			
Ca1	0.618			
Ca2	0.602			
Ca4	0.580			
Ca5				
<u>Experience quality</u>		0.766	0.516	0.251
Eq2	0.607			
Eq3	0.513			
Eq4	0.477			
Eq5	0.539			
Eq7	0.607			
Eq10	0.454			
Eq11	0.508			
Eq12	0.405			
Eq14	0.529			
<u>Behavioural intention</u>		0.702	0.601	0.357
Y	0.759			
Bi1	0.678			
Bi2	0.546			
Bi3				

Discriminant validity is confirmed if the AVE of a construct is greater than its (Corr)². Table 2 shows the AVE of all four constructs ranged from 0.51 to 0.62 while the (Corr)² ranged from 0.22 to 0.36. Thus, this study recommended that all construct in the measurement model had discriminant validity.

7.4 Structural Model Analysis

The results of the confirmatory structural model analysis demonstrated that the model has an adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2= 411.384$ at $p<0.001$, $\chi^2/df=1.80$, $IFI=0.912$, $TLI=0.910$, $CFI=0.918$ & $GFI=0.911$). The overall results revealed that three of five path coefficients were statistically significant.

The first path relationship between HA and EQ was not statistically significant (standardized coefficient=0.301 and $p>0.05$). It suggests that hypothesis H1 was not supported. The second path relationship between CA and EQ was statistically significant (standardized coefficient=0.346 and $p<0.05$), hence supporting the hypothesis H2. The third path from EQ to BI recorded a significant relationship with coefficient of 0.805 ($p<0.05$), providing support for hypothesis H3.

The results of the confirmatory structural model analysis revealed significant path from HA to BI, while the path from CA to BI recorded insignificant finding. The path relationship between HA and BI was statistically significant with standardized coefficient of 0.301at $p<0.05$. These results suggested that hypothesis H4 was supported while hypothesis H5 (CA to BI) was not supported (coefficient=-0.238 at $p>0.05$). The above findings were summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of Structural Relationship of the Structural Model

Structural Path	Std Loadings	Std Errors	Critical Ratio	Prob.
HA→EQ	-0.081	0.154	-0.882	0.537
CA→EQ	0.346	0.136	2.508	0.012*
EQ →BI	0.805	0.117	7.077	0.001**
HA →BI	0.301	0.171	2.126	0.033*
CA →BI	-0.238	0.155	-1.556	0.120

7.5 Mediation Analysis

The Sobel test examines whether a mediator variable (EQ) significantly carries the effect of an independent variable to a dependent variable (Baron and Kenny 1986). The Sobel’s statistics showed that Path 1 (HA to BI through EQ) demonstrated a non-significant relationship. Specifically, the results

indicated that EQ did not mediate the relationship between HA and BI. On the other hand, the results indicated a significant influence ($p = 0.006$) of EQ on the relationship between CA and BI, indicating that EQ mediated the relationship between CA and BI. The Sobel’s statistics were consistent with the results of the confirmatory structural model analysis presented earlier.

Table 4: Sobel Test Results

Path	Relationship	Sobel’s Stat.	Prob.
Path1	HA → EQ → BI	-0.59	0.27
Path 2	CA →EQ →BI	2.47	0.006

8 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

The results showed that i)cultural authenticity is significantly related to experience quality, ii) experience quality is significantly related to behavioural intention, iii) experience quality mediates the relationship between cultural authenticity and behavioural intention, and experience quality acts as a full mediator in this relationship, iv) heritage authenticity is not significantly related to experience quality, and v) experience quality does not mediates the relationship between heritage authenticity and behavioural intention, and heritage authenticity influence behavioural intention directly.

Surprisingly, the finding of this study revealed that there was no significant relationship between heritage authenticity and experience quality. Heritage authenticity in this study pertained to the genuineness or originality of the built environment. In the context of Malacca City, among the main heritage buildings were the royal palace (Melaka Sultanate Palace), ruined fortress (A’Famosa), colonial administrative building (Stadthuy), and church (St. Paul). Quick observations on all these buildings at present time showed that they were all not in the satisfactory shapes to represent their past time; this condition is obviously clear to all the so-called “cultural-heritage tourists”. In fact, due to advancements in information technology, they have actually already expected to experience the phenomenon before they set foot in Malacca. This phenomenon is not only applicable to Malacca City but also for many other heritage cities throughout the world.

Buildings (compared to local lifestyle) can be reconstructed, repaired, or renovated for commercial purposes. Cultural heritage’s object that is created (or recreated) for commercial purposes is seen as morally inferior by the tourists. The object automatically loses its historical and natural values

and would not be intellectually satisfying. Authenticity of a tangible heritage offering is thus authentic when it is perceived as such by the tourists. From a managerial implication perspective, conservation efforts must be done in a way that allows the tourists to recognize and experience the authenticity of the heritage buildings or offerings.

Heritage authenticity in this context can also be argued to be primarily a consequence or outcome of the experience with the offerings rather than the driver (motive) to take the trip. This is in-line with the assumption of symbolic authenticity that authenticity can be experienced from the “outside” with intellectual proficiency [12].

Clearly, it is more difficult for the tourists to judge the authenticity of local lifestyle (more intangible) and traditions presented to them commercially than the authenticity of the built objects and environments (more tangible). This is largely due to their knowledge of the building’s actual or original structure which is available to them from various sources. Hence, tourists are more likely to accept the cultural presentation as more genuine than the built presentation. This argument supports the finding of this study that cultural authenticity does influence experience quality but not heritage authenticity. Since cultural authenticity is the only component of authenticity that significantly influence tourist’s experience quality, commercial cultural presentation must always keep the traditional elements alive and avoid modernization to maintain its natural meaning.

To create an authentic experience, tourists need to be “personally involved in the experience”. This is easily applicable to the cultural presentation, in which tourists are encourage to participate in the performance such as by dancing and singing along with the presenters but not for the context of heritage buildings. Thus, experiential motives such as escapism and enjoyment are playing more important roles in cultural authenticity rather than heritage authenticity which is more to the motives of knowledge and educational.

This study also found that experience quality fully mediates the relationship between cultural authenticity and behavioural intention. In other words, cultural authenticity has no direct relationship with behavioural intention. Authenticity of the local culture offerings would not be able to stimulate return visit if it fails to effectively play with the tourist’s emotions. The design of the cultural offerings must incorporate experiential elements to create memorable experience for the tourists. This is because, as an intangible offerings with no physical existence, tourists are not certain

that they will be presented with at least the same (if not better) quality of presentation the next time around when the visit the destination. Thus, a memorable cultural experience which impressed them is the best way to encourage return visit. Subsequently, the finding of this study suggests that the higher the quality of their experiences, the more positive their behavioural intention towards the destination.

On the other hand, this study has shown that heritage authenticity (compared to cultural authenticity) has a direct effect on behavioural intention. In similar note with the above discussion, heritage authenticity with its tangible existence physically provides assurance to the tourists that they would be able to experience the same offering in their future visit. The tourists are also in a more confidence state to recommend the site to others because of the availability of its tangible physical evidences. For the managerial implication perspective, to promote positive behavioural intention for heritage buildings, not only the physical environment and its surroundings must be taken care but also the customer service provided at the site. Excellent customer service and hospitality can act as a competitive advantage to differentiate the tangible offerings and make it stand out in the tourism map [1]. However, as the core offering, the attributes (pleasantness, inspiration) of built heritage itself must be prominently highlighted or promoted in the promotional materials by emphasizing on among others its pleasantness, inspiring power, and legendary.

9 LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There were several limitations of this study that should be noted. One such limitation was related to the research design, which was fully reliant on the structural equation modelling method. A mixed-method combining the qualitative and quantitative research design is said to be more appropriate in studying such as complex and controversial construct as authenticity [11].

Another limitation of this study was related to the choice of destination for the field work. In this study, only one single cultural heritage destination was chosen namely the Malacca City. It would be better for the future studies to cover more than one destination to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Finally, since the focus of this present study was on theoretical generalizability rather than population generalizability, non-probability sampling has been employed. However, future

studies should attempt to employ probability sampling to allow the studies to confidently state the findings are representative of the population.

10 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the findings of this study are primarily relevant for the marketing and management of cultural heritage destination not only in the context of Malacca but can also be generalized to many others. To create strong behavioural intention, revisit or positive word-of-mouth, destination managers firstly need to recognize the existence of the two type of offerings namely building heritage (tangible) and the cultural heritage (intangible), and secondly to understand the distinct concept of authenticity related to each of them (heritage versus cultural authenticity) and finally, to strategize how each of the two influence behavioural intention in their own paths. For cultural authenticity, attraction management can only influence behavioural intention via experience quality; for heritage authenticity, experience quality is not something that requires extra attention.

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