Gender Differences in Hotel Choice: A Case of Malaysian Muslims

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide gendered insights into tourist perceptions in hotel choice among Malaysian Muslims. Specifically, this study was to examine potential gender differences relating to the perceived importance of hotel attributes in building emotional bond with the hotel and post-consumption outcomes. A survey using self-administered questionnaire was conducted and a total of 474 completed and usable questionnaire were utilised for further analysis. A partial-least squares – structural equation modelling was utilised for the data analysis. The findings indicated that there were significant differences between males and females in regards to the effect of hotel attributes on revisit intention and word-of-mouth. Moreover, there was significant difference on the effect of brand attachment on word-of-mouth. The study attempts to fill the gaps in literature that assumes the effects of hotels attributes in building attachment and post-consumption outcomes (i.e., satisfaction, revisit intention and word-of-mouth) are significantly different between males and females. The findings of this study will provide some guidelines and valuable information to stakeholders of hospitality industry in their implementation of marketing strategies.

Keywords: hotel attributes; brand attachment; post-consumption outcomes; satisfaction; revisit intention; word-of-mouth; gender

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourism industry is increasingly becoming popular worldwide, especially among Muslim tourists. The growth of Muslim population has resulted in the rising of Muslim consumers’ purchasing power as a market force and disposable income [1]. Malaysia, for instance, is a popular destination among Muslim consumers, particularly due to the fact that Islam being prominent and therefore it has an easy access to Halal services and foods. The rapid development of hospitality industry has resulted in competitive rivalry among hotels over attracting consumers to stay and use their facilities [2]. Thus, it is essential to understand the needs, interests, and behaviours of different tourist markets in order to attract them to the destinations.

In previous years, there were numbers of media headlines that linked Islam with terrorism activities such as September 11 attack, April 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, as well as November 13, 2015 Paris attack. Since then, there has been an increase in Islamophobia which makes Muslim people feel unsafe and targeted, as well as an increased preference to congregate within Muslim sphere. As a result, they are changing their travel behaviour and redirecting their choices towards Muslim-friendly destinations [3].

2. Literature Reviews

Studies that attempt to identify hotel attributes categories, reflecting traveler’ staying experience are common [4]–[8]. However the results are often mixed. The factors affecting guests’ choice of hotel are rather complicated [9]. Previous literature shows the influence of product or service attribution in building brand attachment [10], [11].

Although it is commonly believed in these modern days that the differences of travel patterns between men and women are much less pronounced than before, gender differences related to travel and tourism still remain substantive [12]. Evidently, women are more likely to be the primary leisure vacation planner and gatekeeper of household tourism decision making among Western couples and families [13]. A study in the US [48] showed that although men dominate the business travel market, the same was not true for the leisure market as women are taking as many and even more holidays than men Therefore, understanding on the interests and activities of retrospective consumers from a gender perspective is crucial to the planning and marketing of tourism operators such as hotels.

Nevertheless, it is noted that there are only limited research that attempt to address gender perspectives in tourism behaviour [14]–[16]. While a great deal has been learned about gender differences...