

Research Paper

Modelling the Relationships between Destination Attractiveness, Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty

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Abstract: As the first and only global geopark in Malaysia, Langkawi Island is experiencing an unstable and slow growth of international tourist arrivals. The main objective of the present study is to examine the predicting factors that can enhance the island's destination loyalty by investigating the relationships between destination attractiveness, service quality, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Data from a total of 365 completed questionnaires were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM-AMOS) in which the research findings supported all hypotheses. Specifically, tourist satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between destination attractiveness, service quality and destination loyalty. This study proposes three recommendations for tourism managers to optimise tourist experience which are quality transportation service, cultural attractiveness and adequate infrastructure to increase international tourists arrivals.

Keywords: Destination attractiveness, destination loyalty, Langkawi Island, service quality, structural equation modeling, tourist satisfaction

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Introduction

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The tourism industry is continuously expanding, making it one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (Ruiz, Mandigma & Vero, 2019; World Tourism Organization, 2018; Rivera & Gutierrez, 2018). In this regard, Malaysia ranks second most tourist-friendly destination in Southeast Asia (World Economic Forum, 2017). In 2019, Malaysia's tourism industry contributed RM86.14 billion to the national economy (Tourism Malaysia, 2020).

Chi and Qu (2008) claimed that tourist loyalty towards a destination can be assessed through repeat visits. Similarly, Mohamad, Ab Ghani, Mamat and Mamat (2014) found that the number of repeat visits to Malaysia among foreign tourists was lesser than the number of first-time visits. This situation indicates that international tourists have a low level of destination loyalty towards the country. However, this study focuses on tourists from three countries listed in the top 20 markets to Malaysia, but demonstrate low repeat visits compared to the number of first-time visits for four consecutive years, from 2014 until 2017 (Tourism Malaysia, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Moreover, one of the premier island tourism destinations in Malaysia, namely Langkawi, is experiencing an unstable and slow growth of international tourist arrivals (Langkawi Development Authority, 2019). This is indeed an unfortunate situation for Langkawi Island as it is a popular tourist destination as well as the first and only global geopark in Malaysia (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2018). This calls for an immediate action to sustain Langkawi Island's global geopark status and to remain as one of Malaysia's most famous tourist destinations.

The success of a tourist destination depends on tourists making repeat visits (Alrawadieh, Alrawadieh, & Kozak, 2019); therefore, studies on destination loyalty has become the focus for researchers and practitioners since a clear understanding of destination loyalty could facilitate a tourist destination in establishing effective business strategies. Several authors found that destination attractiveness (Yu & Hwang, 2019), service quality (Abdulla, Khalifa, Abuelhassan, & Ghosh, 2019) and tourist satisfaction (Alauddin, Ahsan, Mowla, & Islam, 2019) are essential factors to surge destination loyalty.

However, only a limited number of studies have investigated the influence of destination attractiveness, service quality and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty simultaneously in one model. Table 1 highlights several studies that have tested the relationship between destination attractiveness, service quality, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty, separately.

Table 1. Summary of studies on destination attractiveness (DA), service quality (SQ),

tourist satisfaction (TS) and destination loyalty (DL)

No	Researchers	Research Hypotheses						
		H1 → DL	H2 → TS	H3 → DL	H4 → TS	H5 → DL	H6 → TS → DL	H7 → TS → DL
1.	Huang et al. (2015)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
2.	Allameh et al. (2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
3.	Akroush et al. (2016)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
4.	Xu and Zhang (2016)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
5.	Yolal et al. (2017)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
6.	Song et al. (2017)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
7.	Han and Hyun (2018)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
8.	Yu and Hwang (2019)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
9.	Abdulla et al. (2019)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
10.	Alauddin et al. (2019)	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
11.	Alrawadieh et al. (2019)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
12.	Nafis and Sutrisno (2019)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
13.	Kanwel et al. (2019)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
14.	Nasir et al. (2020)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
15.	Current study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note: (✗)= Did not test the relationship, (✓) = Tested the relationship

This study aims to better understand destination loyalty among foreign tourists visiting Langkawi Island, Malaysia by integrating and testing all of the relationships between these constructs simultaneously in one research model. For this purpose, the following research objectives were established:

1. To determine the impacts of destination attractiveness and service quality on tourist satisfaction.
2. To determine the impact of tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty.
3. To determine the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction on the relationships between destination attractiveness, service quality and destination loyalty.

Literature Review

Destination Loyalty

Wang, Zhang, Gu, and Zhen (2009) stated that destination loyalty is defined as the act of recommending a particular destination to others by a satisfied tourist. This definition focuses on the attitudinal aspect of destination loyalty. Chen and Tsai (2007) further defined destination loyalty as tourists' decision to revisit the same destination and their willingness to recommend the destination to others. The latter definition is more comprehensive because it addresses both attitudinal and behavioural aspects of destination loyalty. Several authors used this definition in their studies (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; Gok & Sayin, 2015; Mohamad, Abdullah, Ali, & Yacob, 2013).

Suhartanto and Triyuni (2016) claimed that there are three critical dimensions of destination loyalty which are attitudinal, behavioural, and composite. Next, Mohamad, Nasir, Ghani and Afthanorhan (2019) contended that attitudinal loyalty refers to a tourist's positive internal feelings about the destination like the intention to revisit or willingness to recommend the destination to others. Meanwhile, the authors claimed that behavioural loyalty refers to the behavioural outcome perhaps as a result of the attitudinal loyalty, for example, making repeat visits to the destination. The combination of the behavioural and attitudinal aspects is called the composite approach. Maintaining these two aspects are critical in tourism businesses. Attitudinal loyalty offers excellent potential for reinforcing the image of a destination and capturing other tourists by spreading positive word-of-mouth. In the same way, behavioural loyalty will increase the repeat visits to the same destination, therefore generating revenue for the destination. Considering the above argument, the present study employed composite loyalty to measure destination loyalty. Moreover, applying composite loyalty to measure destination loyalty will increase the predictive power in measuring the construct suggested by Zhang, Fu, Cai, and Lu (2014).

Destination Attractiveness

Destination image and destination attractiveness are two constructs that have been equally measured, hence both have constantly been used interchangeably. Destination attractiveness refers to the tourists' perception of destination attributes concerning meeting tourists' needs and objectives (Ariya, Wishitemi, & Sitati, 2017). Similarly, destination attributes refer to three important elements, which are cultural attractions (such as cultural performance and historical buildings), natural attractions (such as beach, hill and cave), and human-made attractions (such as theme parks and infrastructure). Besides, Nasir, Mohamad, Ghani and Afthanorhan (2020) claimed that destination attractiveness is defined as tourists' emotions, beliefs, and sentiments about cultural attractiveness, natural attractiveness and infrastructure within a destination that meet their special vacation needs, subject to their availability, budget

allocation and time.

Destination attractiveness can be manifested using two dimensions which are people's characteristics and the physical environment (Akroush, Jraisat, Kurdieh, Al-Faouri & Qatu, 2016). People's characteristics refer to residents' friendliness and how welcoming they are to visitors, while, the physical environment includes historical and touristic places, ease of access, good transportation system, building design, and environmental attractiveness. On the other hand, Xu and Zhang (2016) suggested a comprehensive measurement of destination attractiveness using three dimensions, namely cultural attractiveness, natural attractiveness and infrastructure. Several authors working in tourism research found that destination attractiveness has a significant impact on destination loyalty (Huang, Lunhua Mao, Wang, & Zhang, 2015; Allameh, Khazaei Pool, Jaber, Salehzadeh & Asadi, 2015; Akroush et al., 2016; Song, Kim, & Yim, 2017; Yu & Hwang, 2019) and tourist satisfaction (Nafis & Sutrisno, 2019; Kanwel et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2020).

H1: Destination attractiveness has a significant impact on destination loyalty.

H2: Destination attractiveness has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction.

Service Quality

Service quality refers to tourist valuation of the service performance experienced in a particular tourist destination (Tosun, Dedeoğlu, & Fyall, 2015). A recent study extended the definition of service quality by including the tourist's emotional feeling. Cong (2016) suggested that service quality is defined as tourists' overall assessment of a destination based on their internal feelings and experiences. Typically, when tourists travel to a particular destination, the service delivery is accompanied by facilities or tangible products. Hence, Mohamad et al. (2019) proposed a comprehensive definition of service quality which refers to tourists' overall assessment of services and facilities performed at a destination based on their experiences and internal feelings.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) proposed five dimensions of service quality known as SERVQUAL. The first dimension is empathy which refers to an understanding of, and individual attention to different clients' needs. The second dimension is tangibles related to physical facilities, equipment and employees' appearance. The third dimension is reliability associated with the ability to dependably and precisely perform the promised service. The fourth dimension is responsiveness which comprises employees' willingness to provide aid to clients and deliver quick service. The fifth dimension is assurance which refers to employees' competency and courtesy and their ability to obtain trust and confidence.

However, different authors applied different dimensions to manifest service

quality offered at a specific destination. For example, Kayat and Abdul Hai (2014) used two dimensions to measure service quality, namely perceived tour service quality and perceived hospitality service quality, where the latter is related to hotel and restaurant services. In contrast, the former is associated with information, immigration, transport services, clean toilets, route signs and complaints handling. On the other hand, Moutinho, Albayrak, and Caber (2012) proposed a more comprehensive service quality measurement including five dimensions of shopping, health, information, transportation and accommodation that depict an accurate representation of a particular destination's service quality. Most importantly, service quality was found to be an essential predictor of destination loyalty (Allameh et al., 2015; Yolal, Chi, & Pesämaa, 2017; Abdulla et al., 2019) and tourist satisfaction (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2016; Alauddin et al., 2019; Abdulla et al., 2019).

H3: Service quality has a significant impact on destination loyalty.

H4: Service quality has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction.

Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is commonly known as tourists' positive judgment of their travel experience, while the negative reviews of their trip experience are expressed as dissatisfaction (Xu & Li, 2016). Tourist satisfaction is the outcome of their trip experiences at the destination, either meeting or exceeding their earlier expectations. Similarly, Chiu, Zeng, and Cheng (2016) claimed that tourist satisfaction refers to tourists' assessment of their earlier expectations and perceptions. The feeling of satisfaction arises when a tourist's perception exceeds the initial expectation.

There are two critical approaches to manifest tourist satisfaction in tourism research, namely the multi-attribute and overall approach. The difference between these two approaches is that the multi-attribute approach applies several dimensions to measure satisfaction, whereas the overall approach uses several items to measure satisfaction. Several researchers applied the multi-attribute approach, such as Meng, Tepanon, and Uysal (2008) as well as Chi and Qu (2008). However, recent studies preferred to use the overall approach to manifest satisfaction such as Xu and Zhang (2016), Lin and Kuo (2016), as well as Kim, Woo, and Uysal (2015). The advantage of using the overall approach with multiple items is that it gives a more significant variance in explaining overall satisfaction (Kim, Holland, & Han, 2013). Besides, overall satisfaction is treated as a cumulative construct leading to satisfaction with a range of factors in a particular destination (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Thus, this study applied overall satisfaction with multi-items to measure tourist satisfaction based on the aforementioned advantages. Several studies (Huang et al., 2015; Allameh et al., 2015; Yolal et al., 2017; Alauddin et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2020) also found that tourist satisfaction has a direct effect on destination loyalty. Moreover, tourist

satisfaction is a mediator of the relationship between destination attractiveness and destination loyalty (Kanwel et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2020). Tourist satisfaction also plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty (Yolal et al., 2017; Abdulla et al., 2019).

- H5: Tourist satisfaction has a significant impact on destination loyalty.*
- H6: Tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination attractiveness and destination loyalty.*
- H7: Tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty.*

Research Methodology

The present study employed a cross-sectional causal research design to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between the constructs. Destination attractiveness and service quality were the independent variables while tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty were the mediating variable and dependent variable, respectively. The study data were collected from international tourists, specifically from France, the Netherlands and Germany at the Langkawi International Airport's departure hall as they were listed among the top 20 international tourists visiting Malaysia, including Langkawi Island yet having a lower repeat visit than the first-time visit. In other words, this implies a problem in terms of destination loyalty.

This study used a closed-ended structured questionnaire, and all items measuring the constructs in this study were formulated using a 10-point interval scale (1 as Strongly disagree and 10 as Strongly agree). Furthermore, Awang (2015) claimed that a 10-point scale is preferable to meet the parametric analysis requirement as it is more independent. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of 21 items adapted from Xu and Zhang (2016) that explained destination attractiveness into three dimensions which are infrastructure, cultural attractiveness and natural attractiveness. The second section of the questionnaire comprised 27 items adapted from Moutinho et al. (2012) that measured five dimensions of service quality based on transportation, shopping, accommodation, information, facilities and health and hygiene. The third section of the questionnaire contained a one-dimensional construct with eight items on tourist satisfaction adapted from Kim et al. (2015) as well as Lee, Yoon, and Lee (2007). The fourth section of the questionnaire consisted of a one-dimensional construct with six items on destination loyalty adapted from the studies conducted by Mohamad, Ali, and Ab Ghani (2011) as well as Sun, Chi and Xu (2013). The questionnaire's final section was related to the respondents' demographic profile to get some basic information about their details and trip to the island.

Data Collection

A pre-test was conducted to ensure that the respondents understand the questionnaire. Data collected from the pilot study consisting of 201 respondents were then subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to ascertain the constructs' underlying dimensions and the total number of items retained in the study using IBM SPSS. Data collected from the pilot study were also subjected to reliability analysis to determine the instruments' internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The findings revealed that the Cronbach's alpha values for destination attractiveness, service quality, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty were 0.85, 0.73, 0.95 and 0.92, respectively which exceeded the required value of 0.7. Thus, all the constructs in this study met the requirement of internal consistency.

The field study was conducted after performing a pre-test and pilot study, respectively. The tourists from France, Germany, and the Netherlands were identified by asking their country of residence at the departure hall of Langkawi International Airport's using purposive sampling. Then, the simple random sampling approach was used to select the sample from the sampling frame. The study's sample size was determined based on two criteria proposed by Burns, Veeck, and Bush (2017) as well as Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010). Using the confidence interval, the study's sample size must be between 96 and 384, as suggested by Burns et al. (2017). Moreover, Hair et al. (2010) claimed that any research performing factor analysis should have at least 5 to 10 times the sample size as the items to be analysed. Hence, this study's calculated sample size was 365 within the sample size range recommended by both criteria.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was executed to validate the measurement model of the research. The unidimensionality of items test was achieved when the factor loading of the items is equal or exceeds 0.6. Whereas convergent validity was ascertained through average variance extracted (AVE), in which the value of AVE should be equal or greater than 0.5 while the value of composite reliability (CR) should be equal or greater than 0.7. Several goodness-of-fit indexes were employed to measure construct validity such as absolute fit (RMSEA < 0.08), incremental fit (TLI > 0.90 and CFI > 0.90) and parsimonious fit (Chi-square < 3.0). Discriminant validity was measured using AVE's square root, whereby the square root of AVE for all latent constructs should be greater than values of the correlation between constructs. Moreover, to avoid the redundancy problem, the correlation values among constructs must be less than 0.85 (Hair et al., 2010). Lastly, structural equation modelling (SEM) was performed to test the relationship between the study's latent constructs.

The mediation effect is deemed to occur when the relationship between the independent and dependent constructs go indirectly through the mediating construct. This study examined the mediation effect using bootstrapping approach proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). In this study, mediation occurred when the upper bound and lower bound values of indirect effect did not straddle a zero in between. Moreover, the mediation effect could be partial mediation or full mediation. Partial mediation occurs when direct and indirect effects are significant. Meanwhile, full mediation occurs when the direct effect is not significant, while the indirect effect is significant.

Findings and Analysis

Demographic Profile

The respondents who participated in the research consisted of tourists from the Netherlands (45%), Germany (38%) and France (17%). The female respondents (52.1%) were more than the male respondents (47.9%) and the majority of the respondents were teenagers and young adults (68%). They travelled to Langkawi Island with their spouse or partner, family and friends. Most tourists visited this island for holiday (96%) and stayed at hotels and homestays (86.8%). About 80% of them were first-time visitors, and they collected information about the island through social media, websites and recommendations from relatives and friends who have visited the island before.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Figure 1 shows the measurement model of the current study. The study met the construct validity requirements since the measurement model attained acceptable values of goodness-of-fit indices ($\text{Chi}/\text{df} < 3.0$, $\text{CFI} > 0.90$, $\text{TLI} > 0.90$ and $\text{RMSEA} < 0.08$) as shown in Table 3. The factor loading, AVE and CR of the measurement model are illustrated in Table 2. The findings reveal that unidimensionality was achieved since the value of factor loading of each item was more than 0.6. Besides, the measurement model of the study achieved convergent validity and reliability since the values of AVE and CR were more than 0.5 and 0.7, respectively. Table 4 indicates that discriminant validity was achieved since each construct was distinct between one and another.

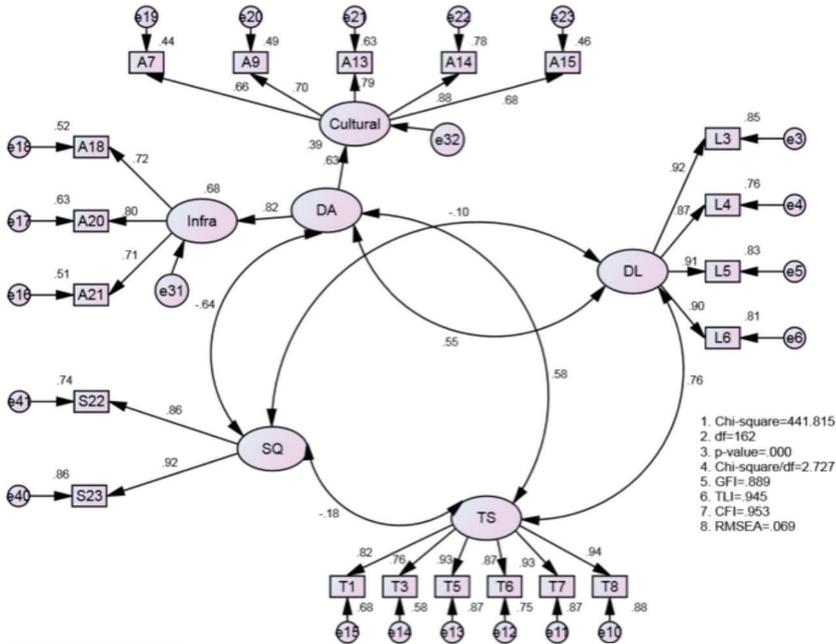


Figure 1. Measurement model

Table 2. Factor loading, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR)

	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Destination Loyalty (DL)		0.81	0.95
I will recommend Langkawi Island to friends (L3)	0.92		
I will recommend Langkawi Island to family members (L4)	0.87		
I will encourage other people to visit Langkawi Island (L5)	0.91		
I will spread positive word-of-mouth about Langkawi Island (L6)	0.90		
Service Quality (SQ)		0.80	0.88
Frequency of the transport service (S22)	0.86		
Generality of the transportation system (S23)	0.92		
Destination Attractiveness (DA)		0.54	0.70
Dimension 1: Cultural Attractiveness		0.50	0.82
Local festivals (A7)	0.66		
Learning local skills (A9)	0.70		

Table 2 (con't)

	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Traditional customs (A13)	0.79		
Local cultural performances (A14)	0.88		
Langkawi Island special souvenirs (A15)	0.68		
Dimension 2: Infrastructure		0.55	0.79
Convenient local transportation (A18)	0.72		
Standard travel services (A20)	0.80		
Convenient visitor information system (A21)	0.71		
Tourist Satisfaction		0.77	0.95
My overall evaluation of my vacation is satisfactory (T1)	0.82		
My overall evaluation of my vacation is satisfactory when considering my invested time (T3)	0.76		
My overall evaluation of my vacation is positive (T5)	0.93		
My overall evaluation of my vacation is favourable (T6)	0.87		
I am satisfied with my vacation (T7)	0.93		
I am pleased with my vacation (T8)	0.94		

Table 3. Goodness-of-fit indices

Name of Category	Name of Index	Level of Acceptance	Current model
1. Absolute Fit	RMSEA	RMSEA<0.08	0.069
2. Incremental Fit	TLI	TLI >0.9	2.968
	CFI		2.888
3. Parsimonious Fit	Chi/df	Chi/df<3.0	2.727

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	Destination Attractiveness	Service Quality	Tourist Satisfaction	Destination Loyalty
Destination Attractiveness	0.73			
Service Quality	0.64	0.89		
Tourist Satisfaction	0.58	0.18	0.88	
Destination Loyalty	0.55	0.10	0.76	0.9

Structural Model

The structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses of the study. Figure 2 illustrates the study’s structural model that tested the interrelationships between destination attractiveness, service quality, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. There were seven hypotheses developed in this study. Five hypotheses of H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 were formulated to test the direct effects among constructs using path analysis, while the remaining two hypotheses, H6 and H7, were developed to test the mediation effect using the bootstrapping approach.

Table 5 illustrates that H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 were supported. H1 indicated that destination attractiveness significantly impacts destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.624$, $Z = 2.804$, $p = 0.005$) and H2 showed that destination attractiveness significantly impacts tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.973$, $Z = 5.441$, $p = 0.001$). Meanwhile, H3 confirmed that service quality significantly impacts destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.296$, $Z = 2.738$, $p = 0.006$) and H4 denoted that service quality significantly impacts tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.301$, $Z = 3.130$, $p = 0.002$). Likewise, H5 signified that tourist satisfaction significantly impacts destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.884$, $Z = 8.461$, $p = 0.001$).

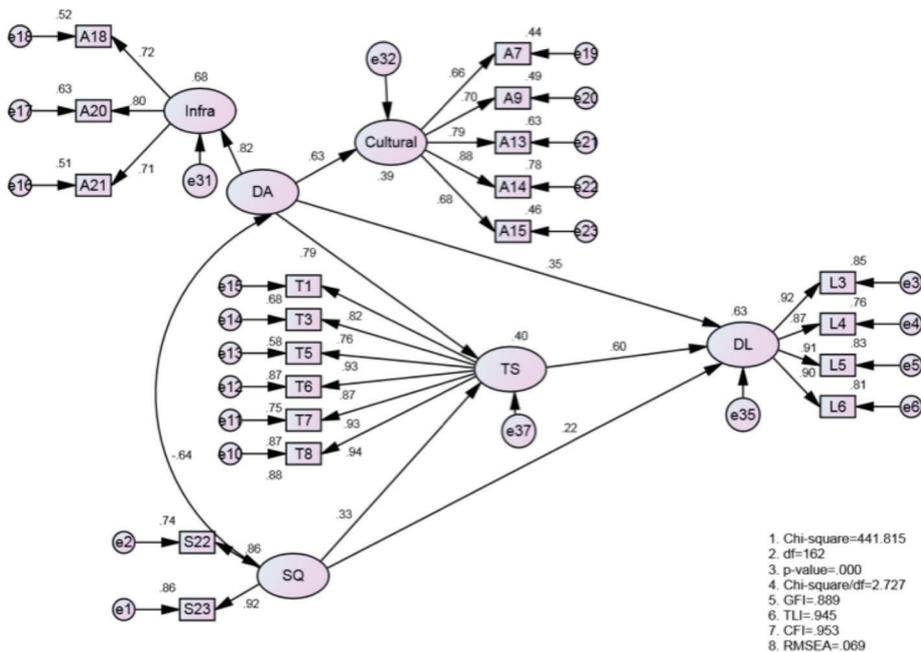


Figure 2. Structural equation model

Table 5. The path regression analysis

	Estimate	SE	CR	P-value	Hypotheses	Result
DL ← DA	0.624	0.223	2.804	0.005	H1	Significant
TS ← DA	0.973	0.179	5.441	0.001	H2	Significant
DL ← SQ	0.296	0.108	2.738	0.006	H3	Significant
TS ← SQ	0.301	0.096	3.130	0.002	H4	Significant
DL ← TS	0.884	0.105	8.461	0.001	H5	Significant

Note: Destination Attractiveness (DA), Service Quality (SQ), Tourist Satisfaction (TS), Destination Loyalty (DL).

This study also tested the mediation effect of tourist satisfaction (H6 and H7) using the bootstrapping approach proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the mediation effects of tourist satisfaction on the relationship between destination attractiveness, service quality and destination loyalty. Meanwhile, Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the results of bootstrapping analysis for H6 and H7.

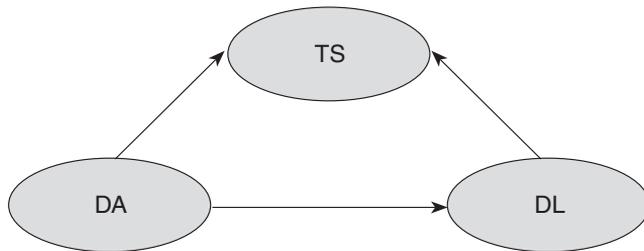


Figure 3. Mediation effect of tourist satisfaction (TS) on the relationship between destination attractiveness (DA) and destination loyalty (DL)

Table 6. The bootstrapping procedure results in testing the mediating effects of Tourist Satisfaction (TS) on the relationship between Destination Attractiveness (DA) and Destination Loyalty (DL).

Effect	H6: DA-TS-DL		Two-Tail Significant	Result
	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Direct	0.108	0.954	0.012	Significant
Indirect	0.346	0.692	0.001	Significant
Result	Mediation occurs because the values of the lower and upper bound of the indirect path do not straddle a zero (0) in between.			
Type of mediation	Partial mediation since the direct and indirect effects are significant			

Table 6 shows that, H6 was supported, indicating that tourist satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between destination attractiveness and destination loyalty.

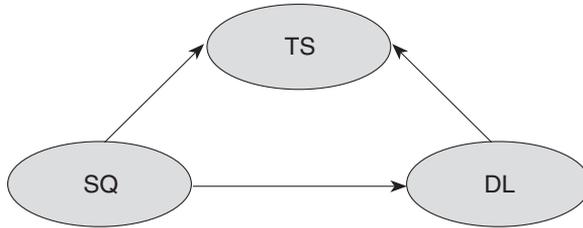


Figure 4. Mediation effect of tourist satisfaction (TS) on the relationship between service quality (SQ) and destination loyalty (DL)

Table 7. The bootstrapping procedure results in testing the mediating effects of Tourist Satisfaction (TS) on the relationship between Service Quality (SQ) and Destination Loyalty.

Effect	H7: SQ-TS-DL		Two-Tail Significant	Result
	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Direct	0.061	0.571	0.007	Significant
Indirect	0.103	0.417	0.001	Significant
Result	Mediation occurs because the values of the lower and upper bound of the indirect path do not straddle a zero (0) in between.			
Type of mediation	Partial mediation since the direct and indirect effects are significant			

Table 7 shows that H7 was supported. H7 indicated that tourist satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty.

Discussion

The outcome of this study illustrates that the international tourists from France, Germany, and the Netherlands have problems in terms of destination loyalty since they came to this island for the first time (80%); this is a similar situation happening at the national level. Hence, there is a need for an immediate call to action to curb this problem from persisting. The findings revealed that destination loyalty was adequately explained by destination attractiveness, service quality and tourist satisfaction as the achieved total variance explained was 63%. Seven hypotheses in this study are supported (H1 to H7). Most importantly, this study has empirically supported H6 and H7, whereby tourist satisfaction partially mediates destination attractiveness, service quality and destination loyalty relationships. These are

consistent with the findings found in past research, whereby tourist satisfaction mediates destination attractiveness-destination loyalty (Kanwel et al., 2019) and service quality-destination loyalty (Abdulla et al., 2019) relationships. It means that providing high-quality transportation service, attractive culture and adequate infrastructure could directly or indirectly increase tourist visits to Langkawi Island through satisfaction. Hence, analysing the associations through multiple mediators is a relatively novel idea, especially in Langkawi Island, where very few related studies were found about this tourist attraction.

Conclusion

In this study, SEM was applied to test the interrelationships between destination attractiveness, service quality, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. It was found that not all loyal tourists would make repeat visits but instead engage in disseminating positive word-of-mouth to their families, friends and other people. However, it is worthwhile for Langkawi Island to showcase its destination attractiveness and provide quality service that meet tourist satisfaction to develop long-term tourist loyalty by positive word-of-mouth to other potential tourists.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study has contributed to the existing literature by introducing a new research model comprising the four constructs and testing two mediations. Tourist satisfaction partially mediates destination attractiveness, service quality and destination loyalty relationships. This is a unique contribution to the existing knowledge as a limited number of studies have combined these constructs and investigated these two mediators simultaneously in one model (refer to Table 1). Moreover, this model was explicitly tested on international tourists from France, Germany and the Netherlands, which is crucial for future marketing strategies instead of testing on the general population of international tourists.

Practically, the study provides important information that could benefit the stakeholders of Langkawi Island. Travel-related agencies, for example, should introduce the island's unique culture to international tourists by bringing them to cultural performances and local festivals, as well as water buffalo farms to provide an opportunity for tourists to wade into the paddy fields and learn first-hand how labour-intensive this crop is. Langkawi Tourism Management Authority should also provide the necessary infrastructure that ease tourist travel such as convenient transportation, travel service, and visitor information centre or kiosks that should be made easily accessible. These efforts would lead to the development of several strategies and actions to increase tourist satisfaction level which ultimately guarantees tourists' long-term loyalty and advocate Langkawi Island as a unique tourist destination.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research has its own limitations, namely time and budget constraint. Hence, the study was only able to execute a cross-sectional study instead of a longitudinal study. Future research is recommended to execute a longitudinal study to better understand tourist behaviour. Another limitation found in the literature is that there is another predicting factor of destination loyalty. Therefore, future research should add other variables such as quality of life to refine and extend the model proposed in this study.

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