

Tourist Motivation and Future Behavioral Intention: the Moderating Effects of the Push Factor

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Abstract: This paper focusses on British tourist motivational factors in visiting Malaysia and their future behavioral intention. Previously, historical affection between Malaysia and Great Britain played a significant role in influencing British Tourist to revisit Malaysia. However, it was found that very little research has been conducted regarding the modern British tourist motivation to visit Malaysia. Results of the study show that the push factor does moderate the British tourist future behavioral intention. Knowledge about the moderating effect of push motivation would enable tourism destination planners to satisfy specific consumer needs better and in this case the British tourist. The findings of this paper provide valuable information for the tourism-related organization in providing and improving the products, facilities and services offered particularly to British tourist. Moreover, understanding their preferences is indispensable to prolong existing tourist and exert a pull on a new tourist from the United Kingdom.

Key words: Push Motivation • Pull Motivation • Behavioral Intention • British Tourist

INTRODUCTION

Tourism had been identified as the next largest foreign exchange earner in Malaysia [1, 2, 3]. As a rapidly growing sector, it galvanized economic growth in Malaysia and had contributed an exceptional augment in the revenue [4]. Consequently, Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 has named Malaysia as one of the world's highest benefit from excellent price competitiveness, with low comparative hotel and fuel prices, low-ticket taxes and airport charges and a favorable tax regime [5]. Malaysia is ranked 31st overall out of 141 countries on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) produced by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The TTCI indicated that Malaysia has excellent ground transport infrastructure and superior safety perception [6]. In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia announced that the Tourist arrivals to Malaysia for January to June 2016 showed improvement, registering a hike of 3.7% compared to the same period in 2015 [7].

Based on the statistics from Tourism Malaysia website, the top ten tourist generating markets to Malaysia in 2016 were Singapore (6, 496, 452), Indonesia (1, 378, 699), China (992, 463), Thailand (864, 453), Brunei

(637, 369), India (359, 853), South Korea (228, 023), the Philippines (220, 163), the United Kingdom (206, 313) and Japan (198, 693). The statistics show that British tourist is a large tourism market and provides enormous income towards Malaysian tourism industry, even though they travel the farthest compared to the rest. As they can be categorized as a quality tourist and has immense purchasing power, therefore, it is imperative to study the British tourist preferences, travel motivation and behavioral intention [8].

Due to intense competition among international destinations, accurate identification of customer motivation and need is very crucial in maintaining the image of Malaysia as a preferred travel destination [9, 10]. On the other hand, the significance of British tourist towards contributing to the numbers of arrival and revenue to Malaysia should be enhanced, in which therefore more effort must be made through research on their motivational factors. Finally, understanding their motivations would lead towards repurchase and recommend products to their families and friends [11, 12].

Having concisely introduced the issue, this paper seeks to empirically identify British tourists' motivational factors and behavioral intention in visiting Malaysia.

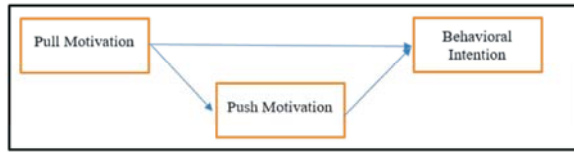


Fig. 1: Theoretical framework
Sources: [18, 22, 23, 24]

Literature Review: In tourism research, motivation concept can be classified into two forces, which indicates that people travel because they are pushed and pulled to do so by specific forces or factors [13, 14]. According to [15], these forces describe how individuals are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions and how they are pulled or attracted by destination attributes. Push motivations are more related to internal or emotional aspects. Pull motivations, on the other hand, are connected to external, situational, or cognitive aspects [15, 16, 17].

A literature review on motivation reveals that people travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal psychological forces and pulled by the external forces of the destination attributes [15]. The push-pull framework provides a useful approach for examining the underlying tourist motivations and visitation behavior [13, 18]. Push factors refer to the specific forces that influence a person's decision to take a vacation, while pull factors refer to the forces that influence the person's decision of which specific destination should be selected [13].

Behavioral intention is one of the most significant concerns of competitive destinations as it considerably impacts on the tourist's choice of the holiday destination and the decision to visit the destination in the future. As a result, behavioral intention is one of the most investigated topics in the field of tourism due to its role in the survival of a destination [19, 20, 21]. In fact, the relationship between the tourist motivation and future behavior has proved to be well established [21, 22, 23]. However, the moderating effect of tourist motivation had not been researched widely [18]. Several researchers argue whether push motivation can act as a moderator to influence the tourist behavior is yet to be fully researched [24, 25].

From the literature above, three research propositions were developed. Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework.

Based on the framework context, the objectives of this paper are i) what are the push and pull motivation of British tourist in visiting Malaysia? ii) Does the pull factor

alone may affect their satisfaction level? and; iii) does the push factor moderates the relationship between pull factor and tourist satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is noteworthy to inform that respondent's motivational factor is the first construct to be probed in the questionnaire. This paper used an existing scale for measuring the variables on trip motivation and satisfaction. The survey design was adapted from previous researchers' work [15]. Push factors, which were origin-related and intangible desires of individual travelers, consisted of 11 items. Likewise, ten pull motive elements, which were the external forces of destination attributes in the country, were adapted for this study [15]. Finally, the behavioral intention instruments (5 items) were adapted from [26]. The questionnaires used 5-points Likert scales developed from the information gathers from the literature review.

Non-probability sampling was chosen as the sampling method for this research. Only the British tourist would make up the target population thus convenience sampling is applied to select the respondent. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2). The data were collected during different departure flights, days and times to reduce biases. The samples of 281 British tourists were drawn randomly from a target of 400 tourists. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique was applied to analyze the causal relationships between constructs using the software application SmartPLS 3.0. The PLS approach was selected due to the exploratory nature of the research (Hair & Lukas, 2014). The first step involves the analysis of the measurement model, while the second phase tests the structural relationships among the latent constructs [27].

RESULTS

The final sample (n=281) consisted of 156 male respondents and 125 female respondents. In fact, this is not surprising as most studies have proved that the propensity for traveling abroad is higher among male westerners than female. Furthermore, males are still the breadwinners of the family. About marital status, 196 of the respondents were married compared to 85 of them who were single. From the researcher's observation, most of the married respondents were accompanied by their

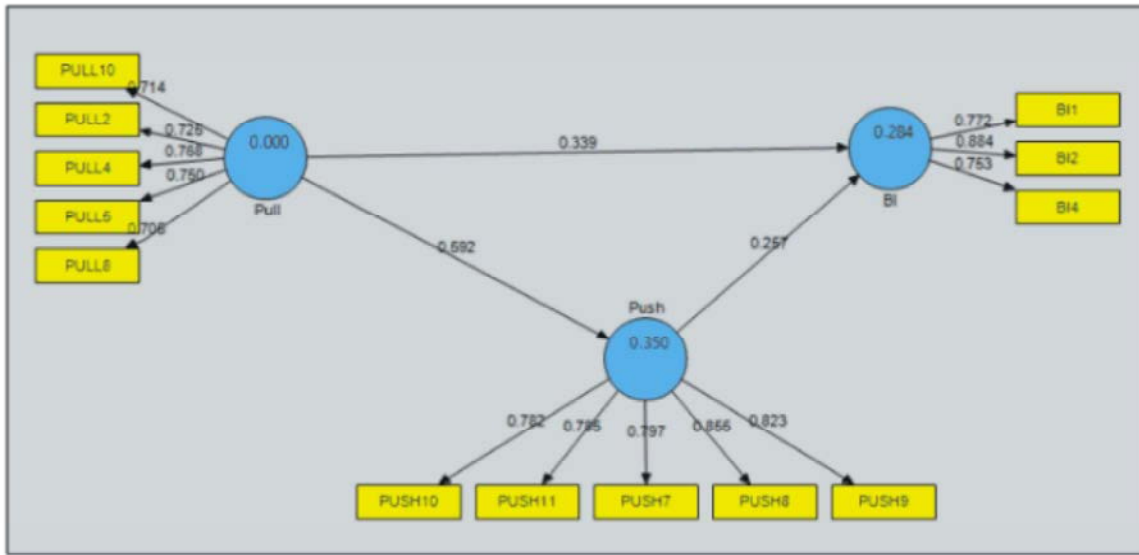


Fig. 2: Measurement model

spouses and it was also found that although some proportion of interviewees was single, they traveled with their companion [28]. These points indicate that the majority of British tourists prefer to travel with a companion or group as this would probably provide more security during the vacation.

Data also revealed that the respondents' ages ranged from 18 to over 50 years old. Most respondents were between 18 and 29 years of age, a total 129 followed by the 30 to 35 years old ($n = 98$). It could be said from the result that most of the British tourists who visited Malaysia were from the young and middle-aged group (18 to 35 years). These groups are believed to have a greater interest in traveling and exploring exciting new things and they also travel more frequently compared to the older group (50 years and above) [29].

As stated earlier, the second stage of analysis is the examination of the quality of measurements model through the assessment of model fit. Before the structural model can be tested, the measurement model must be specified. The measurement model was tested using the Smart PLS software (version 3.0). The key aspects to determine the quality of the reflective measurement model is through the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model [30]. Four parameters assessed the reflective measurement model: (i) internal consistency reliability, (ii) indicator reliability, (iii) convergent validity and (iv) discriminant validity [27, 30].

Measurement Model: The first part of PLS-SEM analysis is termed measurement model, which employs

measurement model to assess the reliability and validity of the research framework [30]. The standard procedures of Smart PLS were followed to obtain the measurement results. First, the structural links among the constructs were established (Figure 1) followed by setting the path weighting scheme in the PLS algorithm [30, 31]. Next, the measurement model is tested by assessing the validity and reliability of the items and constructs. Figure 2 shows the measurement model.

Composite reliability (CR) was measured to assess the model's internal consistency reliability. This step ensures that measurements are prioritized according to their reliability about making estimations, rather than assuming that all measurements are equally reliable; this, in turn, makes it suitable for PLS-SEM [31, 32]. Table 2 summarized the measurement model results.

Table 2 above indicated that all the items have outer loadings above 0.70. Hence all the items have high degrees of validity for the respective constructs. Also, this research found that the AVE for all constructs was more than the recommended value, which is more than 0.50, indicating that the latent variable explains more than half of its indicator's variance.

Meanwhile, the CR values for all constructs ranged between 0.703 and 0.859, where this value also exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70. This result indicated that the measurement model had demonstrated an adequate reliability for the grouped items. Since all the criteria which are loading, AVE and composite reliability meet the recommended threshold of the convergent validity, it can be concluded that the measurement model

was valid from the aspect of convergent validity. Furthermore, the measurement model has established its discriminant validity based on [33] criteria and also the cross-loading assessment criteria [31, 32].

Structural Model: Having established a reliable and valid measurement model, the next step of the analysis involved estimating the causal and covariance linear relationships among the exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) latent variables [32, 34]. Table 3 lists the path coefficients, observed t-statistics and significance levels for all hypothesized path. Using the results from the path assessment, the proposed hypotheses were tested, as is elaborated in the following section.

To test the significance level, the path relationship presented in the framework was examined through regression coefficient (β) value. The significance of the regression coefficient β was based on t-values, which was obtained using the PLS Bootstrapping process. Concerning the Behavioral Intention, results of the path coefficients revealed that pull factors ($\beta=-0.571***$) and push factors ($\beta=-0.526***$) were significant, while the relationship between Pull factors and Push Factors was also significant ($\beta=-0.515***$).

The criteria used in assessing the validity of the structural model involved the assessment of coefficient of determination (R^2), estimation of path coefficient (β), effect size (f^2) and prediction relevance (Q^2) [34]. Table 4 summarized validity of the structural model.

Table 2: Summarized Measurement Model Results

Constructs	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Push Factors	0.872	0.630	0.802
Pull Factor	0.871	0.771	0.703
Behavioral Intention	0.900	0.643	0.859

Note: Threshold sets by [31]

Table 3: Path Coefficients, Observed T-statistics and Significance Levels

	β	T-Stat	P
PULL -> BI	0.571	3.672	0.000
PUSH -> BI	0.526	5.020	0.000
PULL -> PUSH	0.515	4.177	0.000

Notes: *p>.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 4: Summary of Validity of the Structural Model

	R^2	Q^2	f^2
PULL -> BI	0.511	0.18984	0.601
PUSH -> BI	0.429	0.14776	0.177
PULL -> PUSH	0.218	0.01546	0.062

Table 5: Moderating Effect Analysis

	B	T-	P Values
Pull factors +			
Push factors → Behavioral Intention	0.327***	1.852	0.045

From the Table 4 above, the R^2 value for the Pull factors and Behavioral Intention was 0.511. The value indicates that only 51.1% of the total variation of this latent construct was explained by all independent variables in this study, whereas Pull factors explained 42.9% of the Behavioral Intention variation. Furthermore, total variation explained for Pull factors towards Behavioral Intention was 21.8%. In addition to evaluating the magnitude of the R^2 values as a criterion of predictive accuracy, researchers should also examine Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value [35]. This measure is an indicator of the model's predictive relevance. To analyze the structural model predictive relevance, a blindfolding algorithm setting readily available in SmartPLS used to obtain the Q^2 values. The Q^2 assessment reported in the Table above conclude that each endogenous latent construct in the model has an adequate degree level of the predictive relevance by their respectively exogenous latent constructs.

The assessment of the effect size (f^2) for shows the effect size of an exogenous latent variable of Pull factors ($f^2 = 0.601$) has a substantial effect size towards Behavioral Intention, while exogenous latent variable of Push factors have moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.177$) towards Behavioral Intention.

Moderating Effect: As in the above case, PLS product-indicator approach proposed by [36, 37] was applied in this study to test the moderating effect of Push factors on the relationship between Pull factors and Behavioral Intention. Pull factors (predictor) and Push factors (moderator) were multiplied to create an interaction construct (Pull factors x Push factors) to predict Behavioral Intention. Table 5 exhibits the result of moderating effect proposed in this study.

Based on the results of the direct effect model (Table 5), it was revealed that the moderator variables (Push factors) significantly affect the relationship between Pull factors and Behavioral Intention.

CONCLUSION

As referring to the first research objective, the study reveals that there is a mix of pull factors (the unique attributes of the travel destination that motivate tourists to visit) and push factor (the psychological needs that

drivetourists to travel [2, 28]. Based on the findings, top motivational factor was the push factors Experience new/different lifestyles, enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, beaches, do something exciting, escape from the routine of work or life and to reduce stress. Meanwhile, British tourist claimed that Malaysia offers outstanding scenery, Malaysia offers wide space & activities, Malaysia has an interesting town/village, Malaysia offers modern atmospheres & activities and Malaysia provides ideal climate and clean environment as their pull motivational factors. This finding of this study was supported by many prominent tourism researchers [28, 38, 39].

The finding also in line with research by [40], in which their study found that motivations had influenced the affective components of the image (pleasant/unpleasant, exciting/annoying). First-time tourists who had relaxation as the motivation found the sun and beach destination attractive, whereas the repeat tourists went there to increase knowledge of the destination [41, 42, 43]. The study identified that the more experiences with the destination the tourists had, the better destination image they would have because they were more familiar with the destinations [29, 40, 44]. The results of the path coefficients towards Behavioral Intention revealed that the Push and Pull factors constructs were all significant. The outcome also indicates that there is a high probability of British tourist revisit Malaysia in the future [45].

The most important part of this study was to examine whether Push factors moderate the relationship between Pull factors and Behavioral Intention. Explicitly, the moderating analysis results showed that Push factors played the intervening role in influencing British Tourist to revisit Malaysia [18]. This study confirmed the new model of tourist motivation, with the adoption of push factors as a moderating variable [18, 24, 25]. The new tourist motivation framework had gone through the measurement model analysis and found to be a valid framework. The Push factors had been considered as a significant moderating variable [18].

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