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Examining the Behavioural Consequences among Convention's Attendees in Malaysia

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Abstract

This research was attempting to investigate the aspects that lead to behavioral consequence. The Covariance Based SEM By using the linear structural relational model as the main data analysis tool used for 150 participants who attended international academic association conventions that were placed on Penang Island, Malaysia. Examine of significant aspects having an influence on attendee's satisfaction for creating proper marketing and advertising strategies to motivate international academic association conventions travel to Malaysia. This research goals at examining the behavioral consequences among convention attendees in Malaysia. The model used for this research was developed based on the existing literature on travelers' behavioral consequences among convention attendees. The present study intends to capture the underlying influence of perceived conference quality, perceived value and perceived trust on behavioral consequence's attendees in international association conference setting in Malaysia.

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Data were collected through a survey from convention attendees in the Penang, Malaysia. The outcome of this research found that conference quality only effect on attendee's perceived value and perceived trust, but no effects have found significant on attendee's satisfaction and behavioral consequences. The results of this study are valuable for congress center managers in Penang and for destination management organizations.

Keywords: Conference Quality; Satisfaction; Behavioral Consequence; Trust; Perceived Value.

1. Introduction

According to [1], in recent years, there has been an increasing growth and competition of the venues of global conventions. Therefore, it is necessary to gain deep insights into behaviours of conference participants a well as understand the value and the assessment of those conferences. Research on conventions have paid much attention to the key factors such as conference venue [2,3,4,5], conference participants' motivation [6], issues of meeting planner including the process of making important decisions [7,8], conference participants' perceptions towards venues as well as their evaluation of imagines [9] and literature on industry. According to perspectives of a business and management, important factors such as value, satisfaction and behaviour of conference participants need to be further investigated [10, 11].

According to [12] stated that participants' well-being includes the evaluation of the satisfaction of participants in the conferences, which positively affects the advantages and the stability of conference centres. Therefore, both researchers and practitioners need to get better understanding of dimensions which are diverse and complicated and used by participants to evaluate the conference performance as well as understand participants' desire to participate in the conference again or introduce those conventions to their acquaintances. This study was conducted to understand key factors such as participants' motivation to attend the conferences, their assessment of conference performance as well as their perceptions towards the conferences. It also aims to examine the association of those factors. Two concepts of conference and convention are used in this study referring to the events such as programs related to education, networking activities, and exhibitions. To achieve research objectives, participants are referred to as attendees of events.

2. Literature review

2.1 Perceived Conference Quality

Perceived quality is defined in different ways. According to [13], perceived service quality is defined as the behaviour of participants in the world towards the service. This concept is defined by [14] as a user-based approach, referring to the evaluation of customer about the best service. It also results from the process of assessment. In this regard, the customers are possible to compare their desire with their perception towards the service [15]. From this perspective [16,17] characterized perceived conference quality as participants' assessment about the best conference. Service quality has different attributes including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [18]. Likewise, many researchers [16,19,17,20] stated that different attributes in different dimensions are used to evaluate the quality of perceived conference. For example, [19], used factors of convention quality such as professional education, social networking, site selection, and staff

service in order to examine the attendee-based brand equity. According to [16] examined the differences between participants joining the conference at the first time and who attending the conference many times using two dimensions of convention quality: convention-specific and site-specific. Different attributes of convention quality dimensions including accessibility, extra convention opportunity, site environment, social networking, professional education, and staff service are used [20]. Therefore, it is suggested that a wide range of dimensions should be used for examining perceived conference quality. A number of researchers [21,16,19,22] have also proposed the theoretical background and empirical approaches related to this issue. Based on the research framework in Fig. 1, the hypotheses are proposed and summarized below:

H1: Conference quality has a positive influence on perceived value.

H2: Conference quality has a positive influence on perceived trust.

H3: Conference quality has a positive influence on attendee's satisfaction.

H4: Conference quality has a positive influence on behavioural consequence.

2.2 Perceived Conference Value

In order to get better understanding of customers, the concept of perceived value has been widely used as a main concept in literature on hospitality [23,24,25]. According to [26], perceived value is defined based on the functional theory, and thus it has been widely discussed in literature. In this view, customers evaluate the products or services based on their perceptions towards those products or services. [17] stated that customers' viewpoint is highly appreciated in the functional/economic approach. In fact, according to this approach, customers could evaluate the value of products regarding the quality and cost. According to [27] conducted a study to investigate the behaviours of conference's attendees in southern Taiwan using a more comprehensive model with regard to images of venue, factors of evaluation such as trip quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intention. It was found that perceived value directly affects the overall satisfaction of customers. Additionally, [28] conducted a study to examine the relationship of image of cruise, perceived value, satisfaction, and post-purchase behavioural intention for Taiwanese tourists. The results of this study indicated a positive impact of perceived value on customers' satisfaction. Meanwhile, a study was conducted by [29] in order to analyse both direct and indirect effects of perceived value dimensions including functional and relational value on attitudinal and behavioural components such as loyalty in satisfaction and behavioural intention of using retail bank services. Therefore, hypotheses are addressed as follows:

H5: Perceived value has a positive influence on tourist satisfaction.

H6: Perceived value has a positive influence on behavioural consequence.

2.3 Perceived Trust

The concept of trust attracts researchers' attention in marketing literature because it has a positive impact on a long and profitable relationship [30]. As a rule, trust refers to beliefs of individuals who have perceptions of certain attributes. In the field of marketing, trust mentions the brand, products or services, salespeople, and the establishment where there is a trade exchange of the products or service [31]. In this regard, belief is categorized into different dimensions, and thus this concept is defined as a construct including a wide range of dimensions, which makes a difference between honesty and benevolence perceived in the behaviour of the other party. It is the fact that honesty is characterized as beliefs in which promise and deep sincerity is kept [32]. Therefore, the growth of marketing requires this characteristic [31]. Moreover, it was found that trust has a close relationship with commitment, communication and satisfaction, which helps support the theory of relationship marketing [33]. Also, trust involves one's beliefs which are required for the future by actions undertaken by the other party (1). Similarly, trust is referred to as a set of beliefs of a customer which has certain characteristics and possible behaviour of the providers in the future [34]. The discussion above leads to the following hypotheses:

H7: Perceived trust has a negative influence on tourist satisfaction.

H8: Perceived trust has a negative influence on behavioural consequence.

2.4 Tourist Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction means that customers are satisfied with the products or services [12]. Consumer satisfaction as one of the important factors of marketing strategies is required for organizations' success. Therefore, many researchers on tourism have been conducted studies to introduce theoretical and methodological frameworks for the measurement of customer satisfaction in entertainment vacation [35], hotel services [36], restaurant services [37] and tourism destination [38]. However, in conferences, very few studies were conducted to examine service quality and survey customers' satisfaction with the products. In fact, most studies have emphasized satisfaction of site selection instead of highlighting satisfaction of customers with the event. According to [39], the normal confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm is suitable for products which are not stable such as a convention or conference. Overall satisfaction is evaluated based on performance at the attribute level with attributes defined in the event [40]. It is very difficult to measure the desire of participants [2], therefore, a number of studies were conducted to measure the perceived performance which is considered as a predictor of satisfaction. Besides that, it is profitable for organizations to identify management-controlled performance attributes of their product/service including conference program, which makes customers satisfied [2]. When the influence of specific performance attributes on satisfaction is indicated, practitioners make an attempt to get more information about consumption experience of customers regarding conference experience [41]. Performance attributes are used to evaluate overall satisfaction, which helps researchers raise questions in constructing instruments to measure the data [38]. Therefore, this study attempts to put an emphasis on the quality of conference in order to determine satisfaction level, leading to conference attendees' behaviour consequence in Malaysia. The argument above reach to the hypothesis in below:

H9: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on behavioural consequence.

2.5 Behavioural Consequence

According to [42], satisfaction of product/service has a close association with purchase intention. Studies on behavioural intentions were conducted to examine two variables such as word-of-mouth behaviour and intention to return. Satisfaction is important because it has a relationship with the decision making of participants in the future. In this sense, [43] stated that satisfaction is considered as attitude of post-purchase, which has an impact on both cognitive and affective aspects in pre-purchase, purchase, and post purchase phases of buying goods and/or receiving services.

According to [44] found that word-of-mouth communication is one of the strongest predictors to form customers' behaviours and attitudes in the future. Word-of-mouth communication also forms customers' expectations, helping predict the future behaviour of consumers who have positive word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth is also one of the useful factors to get successful in delivering the products or services. In many cases, word-of-mouth is a main source to get information through future customers [45]. It was indicated that word-of-mouth is related with customers' satisfaction and loyalty, which is examined through the customer's intention of telling good or bad things about a business [46]. It is the fact that word-of-mouth is very powerful, which has a relationship with satisfaction. The result showed that if there are 20 people who are satisfied with a service or product, they will introduce products or service to other 100 people, which helps enhance the efficiency of business market [47].

3. Conceptual Research framework

This study aims to examine the convention quality, perceived value, and perceived trust of conference as well as behaviours of convention participants, which could make both researchers and convention planners positively affect participants' return though it does not ensure that these attendees will participate in the conference again. [11,10] suggested conducting more studies regarding word of mouth by adding satisfaction and convention behavioural consequences from perspectives of participants.

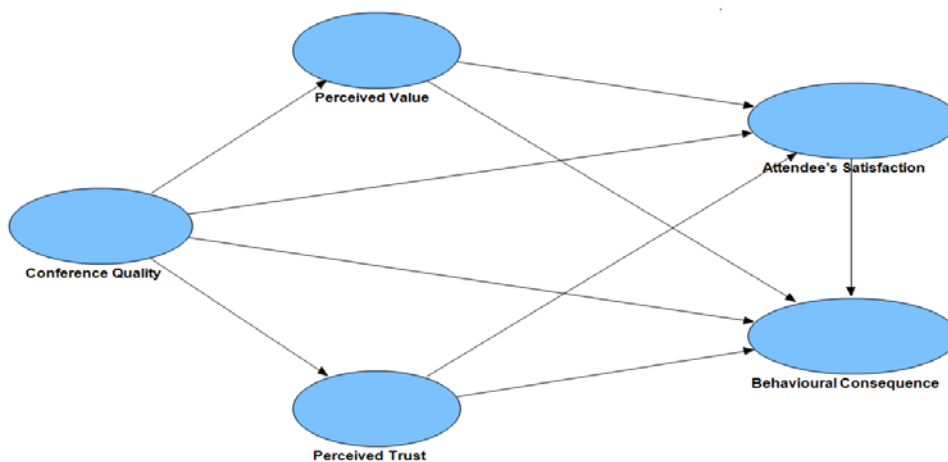


Figure 1: Conceptual Research framework

4. Methodology

A survey questionnaire was used as an instrument in this study, and an in-depth literature review was conducted on issues with regard to convention, meeting, and conference attendance behaviour consequence in order to establish the measurement items for the specific questions raised in this study related to the conference quality, perceived value, trust and their subjective evaluation of attendee's consequence based on the conference's participants.

4.1. Data collection

A sample of this study was 150 participants who attended six international academic association conventions which were held in Penang Island, Malaysia. Data were collected by a group of faculty members and trained graduate students in the conference venues. Specifically, research purpose was introduced to these participants who voluntarily participate in data collection. It is noted that to collect data at the same site environment, the conferences were all organized in Penang, Malaysia by the same convention centre.

5. Results

5.1. Profile of respondents

Table 1 shows participants' demographic information. There were more female respondents (52 %) than male ones (48 %). Participants in the 31-40 age range accounted for 29%. Meanwhile, a small number of participants (2%) were below 25 years old, and those in the 26-30 age range were 26%, 24 % participants were 41-50 years old, and 17% were 50 years old and over 50 years old. Most respondents had the degrees of higher education such as bachelor's degree (21%), master's degree (47%), and doctoral degree (30%), and only few respondents (2%) had diploma. Participants (53%) were students, followed by professional and technical students (21%), Social, fraternal (20%), and trade grope (17%). Participants (37%) reported that they paid conference fee by themselves, and participants (35%) were fully paid by their organizations or universities, and participants (28%) were paid partially by themselves and partially by their organizations or universities.

5.2 Measurement Development

The concepts of conference quality were adapted from three items of the existing measurement developed by [48],[49]. The existing three items of [50] were used to measure the constructs of PT and PCV. Both constructs of attendee's satisfaction (AS) and behavioural consequence (BC) were three items measurement and adapted from [51]. All measurement items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1= 'strongly disagree' to 7= 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire items used in the survey are given in Table 2.

5.3 Data Analysis

The major data analysis tool was utilized by the covariance-based structural equation modelling (SEM), which the maximum likelihood estimation was applied to the data by the use of the linear structural relational model.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
gender		
female	72	48
male	78	52
Age		
< = 25	3	2
26–30	42	28
31–40	43	29
41-50	36	24
> = 50	26	17
Education		
Diploma	3	2
Bachelor’s Degree	31	21
Master	71	47
PhD	45	30
best describes the type of convention attended:		
professional and technical	41	27
Social, fraternal	30	20
trade grope	26	17
Student	53	53
Payment Status		
Fully paid by myself	56	37
Fully paid by my organization/ university	52	35
Partially by myself & partially by my organization/university	42	28

Table 2: The Measurement Model

Question Items	AVE	Squared multiple correlation	CA	CR
Conference Quality (CQ)	0.52			
I developed my knowledge and skills by attending educational sessions.		0.39		
The conference offered an informative educational program agenda.		0.67	0.764	0.772
The conference offered helpful session topics.		0.57		
Perceived Conference Value (PCV)	0.61			
This conference was reasonably priced.		0.67		
Session programs and topics at the convention were informative.		0.67	0.806	0.817
The conference has generally provided high quality of education and research trends.		.046		
Perceived Trust (PT)	0.50			
conference has been frank in dealing with attendees		0.38		
Promises made by this conference are reliable.		0.43	0.743	0.755
Conference does not make false claims.		0.63		
Attendee's Satisfaction (AS)	0.74			
I am pleased that I have decided to attend this conference		0.71		
I am delightful about the conference in Malaysia		0.71	0.843	0.850
Attending in conference in exceed than what I expected to be.		0.74		
Behaviour consequence (BC)	0.54			
I say positive things about the convention.		0.43		
I am willing to attend the convention continuously in the future.		0.67	0.756	0.763
I am willing to pay more to attend the convention.		0.46		

Note: CR: Composite Reliability, CA: Cronbach's Alpha, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

5.4 Measurement Model

As presented in Table 2. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs were ranging from 0.743 to 0.806, which have exceeded the satisfactory level of 0.70 requirements for reliability of internal consistency of the instrument [52]. The composite reliability coefficients were ranging from 0.722 to 0.850, where the

recommended level of 0.6 were exceeded [53]. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each factor were calculated in order to achieved convergent and discriminant validity, As Table 2 has shown that the overall AVE were ranging from 0.50 to 0.74 which have satisfied the recommended level. Convergent validity will be established if the shared variance accounts for 0.50 or above of the total variance. Discriminant validity of the constructs was satisfactory 1.02 to 4.43 (Table 3).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Latent Variable	CQ	PCV	PT	AS	BC
Conference quality (CQ)	1.00				
Perceived Value (PCV)	0.28	1.00			
Perceived trust (PT)	0.26	0.21	1.00		
Attendee’s Satisfaction (AS)	0.35	0.62	0.31	1.00	
Behavioural consequence (BC)	0.13	0.49	0.23	0.72	1.00
Discriminant Validity	4.43	1.52	3.58	1.02	1.03

Note: Diagonal element is average variance Extracted (AVE) and should be larger than the square of the off-diagonal correlation coefficient. $AVE \geq 0.5$.

Table 4: Described Values for Structural Model

Index	Recommended values	Model values
Chi-square p	$p \geq 0.05$	214.62
Chi-square/d.f	≤ 3	1.934
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index	≥ 0.90	0.86
Root-mean-square error of approximation	≤ 0.08	0.053
Normed-fit index	≥ 0.90	0.94
Comparative-fit index	≥ 0.90	0.96
Goodness-of-fit index	≥ 0.90	0.95

5.5 Structural Model

The structural model was determine by numerous indices that recommend by [54] and [55]. As Table 4 has demonstrated the final results of SEM acquired for the theoretical model where chi-square = 214.62 (df = 110, p = 0.000), Adjusted goodness-of-fit index = 0.86, Normed-fit index = 0.94, Goodness-of-fit index = 0.95 and Goodness-of-fit index = 0.96. All of the indices displayed a higher level of fitness with regards to the structural model utilized in this particular research.

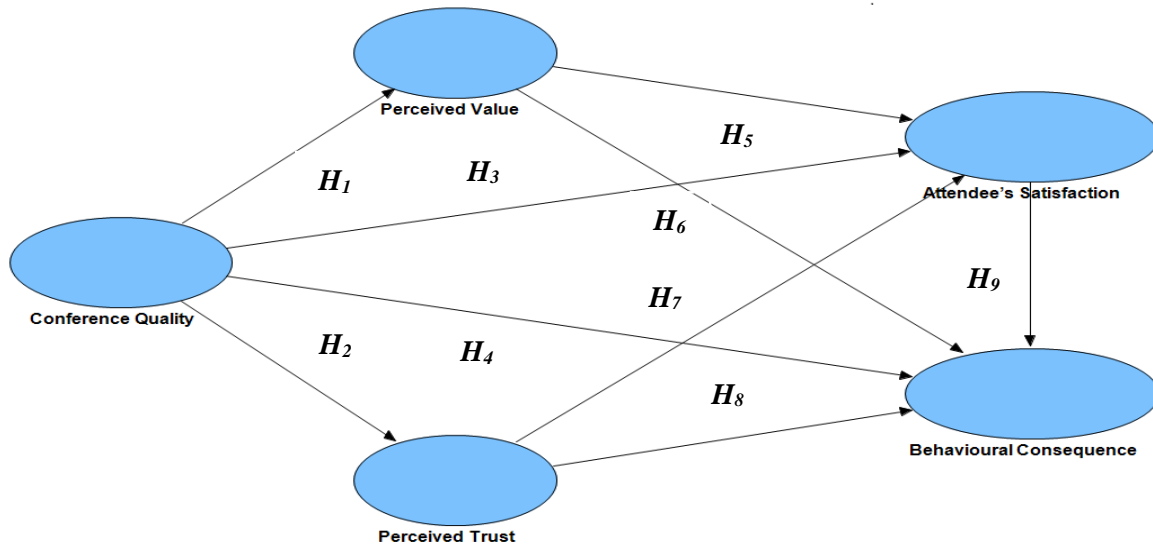


Figure 2: Structural Model

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The Figure 2 reveals the path coefficients, loading and significance and R squar for the hypothesized model. \ xwrThe Dependent variables perceived value, perceived trust, attendee's satisfaction and behavioural consequence were described for a considerable portion of the variance of the model. Accordingly, just five hypothesizes H_1 , H_2 , H_5 , H_7 and H_9 tend to be statistically significant. Figure 2 show the direct effects and path coefficients. By comparison, no significant relationship is available between conference quality on attendee's satisfaction and conference quality on behavioural consequence. In addition, no significant relationship between perceived value on behavioural consequence and perceived trust on behavioural consequence. As a result H_3 , H_4 , H_6 and H_8 are not supported.

6. Recommendations

In order to substantially manage participants of the conference, it is recommended that both managers and government authorities in the tourism and other related industries should increase the constructive perceived value of conferences in Malaysia and reduce the cause of perceived trust, which might bring benefits to the industry of conference. As a result, further development from this specific tourist sector will be enhanced.

7. Conclusions

Business tourism is of concern to the development of the country due to its improvement of the current position of Malaysia in Asia and in the tourism market in the world as well as its contribution to the promotion of tourist offer in Malaysia. Therefore, there is a need to carry out studies in the organizations of destination management, hotels and congress centres as well as hosting congresses in order to examine satisfaction and behavioural consequence of participants. In this paper, participants' satisfaction with the conference and their behavioural

intentions towards the conference are clearly explained. This study was done in Penang, Malaysia. Its sample includes participants of international conferences as voluntary persons. The results obtained from the analysis of the satisfaction with the conference elements indicated a high level of attendees' satisfaction, which means participants are interested in becoming repeat conference ones in the future. Moreover, Penang is recommended to be a conference venue by most respondents. The results obtained from the analysis of respondents' future behaviour revealed the respondents' satisfaction with the selection of destination. As indicated, the satisfaction of participants was related with their behavioural consequence. Consistent with the findings of other studies, this study showed that favourable word-of-mouth and repeat visit to a destination resulted from the satisfaction of attendees. Even though the results indicated that there was a positive and direct impact of conference quality on perceived value and perceived trust, no significant effects of perceived trust on attendee's satisfaction and behavioural consequences was found. It may therefore be interpreted that Penang is one of the attractive venues of the conference despite some heavy accidents, however, it was shown that there was no significant impact of these accidents on an increase in conference participants. Furthermore, the results of obtained from this study indicated that there was no a direct impact of the quality of conference on the satisfaction and behavioural consequence of participants. Meanwhile, the results of this study are no in line with those of previous studies, which asserts that the results of this study become a unique case of convention experience for international participants and convention. The results of this study also revealed that perceived value and perceived trust had a positive and direct impact on conference quality.

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