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## Are Visitors Satisfied and Intend to Revisit Rumah Terbuka Aidilfitri?: Malaysian Community in Perak

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### Abstract

This study empirically examined the level of visitors' satisfaction and intention to revisit the Rumah Terbuka Aidilfitri celebration in Perak, Malaysia. 160 visitors were given questionnaires during the festival. The event managed to attract a huge crowd from different ethnicities and backgrounds. Varieties of foods were served to the visitors. However, they have to spend time queuing for food and sometimes could stretch into long hours before they can be seated and enjoy the festivals. Nevertheless, majority of the respondents satisfied with the festival and would return to this festival again and will recommend the festival to others.

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**Keywords:** Aidilfitri; visitors; malaysian community; revisit

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## 1. Introduction

Malaysia is a unique country with diverse ethnicity and religious beliefs as well as various ethnics' festivals celebration. For instance, the Malays celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Hari Raya AidilAdha, and Maulidur Rasul while the Chinese celebrates Chinese New Year and Chap Goh Mei. Deepavali and Thaipusam are celebrated by the Hindus, whereas Tadau Ka'amatan and Gawai Dayak are the grandest celebration in Sabah and Sarawak (Suhaimi, 2010). Uniquely, these festivities are not only celebrated by the related ethnic groups and practitioners but become a national celebration.

The "Rumah Terbuka" festival expresses a unique way of celebrations which is not only allowed the people to visit each other on festive occasions of a race or an ethnic group but also to enjoy the foods prepared by the hosts (Suhaimi, 2010).

Even though the celebration of "Rumah Terbuka" festivals have been started and celebrated few years ago, in 2011, Utusan Online has reported that each of the festivals manages to attract huge crowd from different ethnicities and backgrounds although such "Rumah Terbuka" festivals were held annually. Despite that, people willing to spend time queuing which sometimes could stretch into long hours before they can be seated and enjoy the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals.

Therefore, it is conjectured that festival attributes such as foods, facilities and amenities, entertainment, program as well as venue satisfied the visitors and create their intention to revisit the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals for the next year. It is also believed that quality foods with various choices may also attract visitors to attend the festivals. With a good amenities and facilities provided by the celebrations, it is believed may also encouraged them to spend their time at the festivals. An interesting entertainment and suitable programs for various age groups are also believed to become a major factor influenced them to the festival. With a good selection of strategic location for the venue and good accessibility, it is also believed to encourage them to attend the festivals. Overall, it is conjectured that with a good quality of the "Rumah Terbuka" attributes provided which directly creates satisfaction to the visitors; it may also directly encourage them to revisit the festival celebrations.

Therefore, it raises a question on the visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention towards the festivals. Despite growing research on festivals, no published academic study has examined the levels of satisfaction and behavioral intentions particularly the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Festival

Traditionally, festivals are associated with religious belief, customs, and culturally shared myths. As time changes, festivals evolved and so do their significance, acceptance in political, social and cultural aspect (Porananond & Robinson, 2008). Festivals may also reflect traditional social celebrations of a community or they may be constructed by the community around a theme connected to the place (Jolliffe, Bui, & Nguyen, 2009). They are important occasions for communities, families and individuals to express in public their identities, lifestyles, social relations and senses of belonging. In large part of developed countries, festivals have become popular as cultural tourism attractions where the number of festivals with strong cultural component is substantially increasing in numbers globally (Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004). Festivals not only contribute to the local regeneration and prosperity of a destination, but they also help to generate new employment opportunities (Prentice & Andersen, 2003; Smith, 2004).

### 2.2. Hari Raya Aidilfitri and "Rumah Terbuka"

Hari Raya Aidilfitri is celebrated every year by the Muslims all over the world. It is celebrated in the month of Syawal of the Islamic calendar after one whole month of fasting (Shuhaimi, 2010). This festive celebration inculcates the spirit of sharing, caring and forgiving. One of the traditions endured by the Malay communities during Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration is the practice of visiting others (Osman, 2011). This practice coincides with the concept of "Rumah Terbuka" whereby the hosts extend their homes to guests and well wishers as well as served

them with Malay foods and delicacies (Malaysia Tourism Centre, 2010). “Rumah Terbuka” has always been used as a symbol that shows that the nation is living in harmony. People from all races celebrate their respective festivities with each other (Thomas, 2012). Regardless being held individually or in the community, all Malaysians from the rulers, Prime Minister to humble villagers practice this “Rumah Terbuka” concept (Vivienne, 2008). Therefore, Hari Raya “Rumah Terbuka” festival will be celebrated every year at selected public venues set by the government authority. In 2009, the festival was held in Seri Perdana, Putrajaya the official residence of the Prime Minister of Malaysia (Bernama, 2009) while in 2011, it was held in Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang (Utusan Online, 2011).

### *2.3. Satisfaction and behavioral intention*

Generally satisfaction is one of the tools used by most marketers and consumer researchers in order to attract the most variable segments of the market (Esu & Arrey, 2009). Oliver (1997) noted that satisfaction is consumer judgment about goods and services. It is the outcome of a subjective evaluation about whether the selected alternative meets or exceeds expectation. In relation to the study, satisfaction is both a mediator and a critical factor that can be effectively used to assess the experiences of visitors who attend festivals (Lee & Hsu, 2011). Kozak and Rimmington (2000) noted that satisfaction is important to a successful destination marketing. Cronin et al., (2000), suggested that satisfaction level affect customer retention, repurchase intention, and revisiting while Baker and Crompton (2000) argued that measuring and monitoring visitor satisfaction is very important process as it is a predictor of future intentions (Tam, 2000; Choi & Chu, 2001). Kim et al. (2010) also supported this notion as by understanding satisfaction; customer repeat product purchasing or their revisitation to a destination can be predicted. Behavioral intentions include desirable behaviors that influence anticipation and either they will exhibit in the future (Lee, Petrick & Crompton, 2007). According to Baker and Crompton (2000), tourists loyalty usually are measured in terms of their intentions to continue buying the same product and the willingness to recommend product to others (Severt, Wang, Chen & Breiter, 2007) or visiting again in the future (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Bowen and Chen, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen & Santos, 2003; Severt et al., 2007). The evaluation of visitors experience and satisfaction will determine whether they would likely return to the festival or recommend to others (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Previous studies had proven that visitor's satisfaction level have a direct association with their loyalty towards the festival (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Thrane, 2002; Yuan & Jang, 2008). Studies of festival tourism frequently used satisfaction as the mediating variable for service quality, behavioral intention (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Cole & Illum, 2006) and festival environmental emotion and loyalty (Lee et al., 2008). Many studies on festivals have acknowledged satisfaction serves as an antecedent of behavioral intentions.

### *2.4. Factors affecting visitors satisfaction and behavioral intentions*

Many studies have examined the factors affecting levels of visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention towards festivals. Several attributes (program, food, venue, entertainment and facilities) were found to have influence on the visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention. Controllable environment characteristics such as planned program content and food quality affect visitors' satisfaction and loyalty towards the festival (Lee et al., 2008). Meanwhile, Saleh and Ryan (1993) discovered that program content was the most crucial factor in attracting tourist towards a festival. The important factors identified in Anwar and Sohail's (2004) study were variety of food, degree of organization, peaceful and natural environment, thrilling experience, ideal beaches and immense shopping opportunities. Özdemir and Culha (2009) found that attributes such as the festival program and the quality of facilities led to higher satisfaction and loyalty among visitors.

Amenities such places to sit, restrooms and overall cleanliness of the festival were also found to be one of the important factors (Crompton & Love, 1995). Amenities, programs, and entertainment are the important factors in a study conducted by Cole and Chancellor (2009). Yuan and Jang (2008) noted that queuing, food, admission price, facilities as well as entertainment affects tourists' satisfaction and loyalty in wine festival. Finally, findings by Wan and Chan (2011) found that location and accessibility, food, venue, environment/ambiance, service, timing and entertainment were important in affecting the levels of satisfaction among tourists.

### 3. Methodology

As this study focuses on the “Rumah Terbuka” festival, the celebration of “Rumah Terbuka” Hari Raya Aidilfitri festival was chosen as the survey site. The survey was conducted during the “Rumah Terbuka” Hari Raya Aidilfitri festival that was held in Perak by the Perak state government in September 2012. The questionnaires were distributed to the “Rumah Terbuka” festival visitors/attendees during the one-day event that started from 2pm to 10 pm.

Prospective respondents were observed before they were intercepted at the various locations of the festival ground by the researcher. The purposive sampling was applied, and a screening process based on the appearance and age was done by the visitors. A wide range of visitors representing the different age group from 18 years old to 60 years old was selected. Once the potential respondent had been identified, the individual was approached by the researcher and asked whether he or she would like to be involved in a survey. Screening questions were asked to ensure that the respondent met the criteria set. Those who agreed to take part were given a short brief about the purpose of the study and also specific instructions in answering the questions regarding the festival with the presence of the researcher. They were also informed that the data would only be used for academic purpose and assured confidentiality of the information given. The respondents were also encouraged to provide honest and truthful responses.

During the actual day, only 160 out of 240 visitors approached agreed to be involved in the survey. The respondents took about 15 to 30 minutes each to complete the questionnaire. There were several analyses conducted to gather the information based on the collected data. Based on IBM SPSS Statistics 20, descriptive and inferential analyses were used to describe the general profile of the respondents, level of satisfaction and revisit intention.

### 4. Results and discussion

Most of the “Rumah Terbuka” respondents were among those aged 18-24 years old (29 percent, N=46), followed by those aged between 25-31 years old (23 percent, N=37). 16 percent (N=25) of them were in the age group of 32-38 years old. Meanwhile, respondents age between 39-45 years old and 46-52 years old shared the same amount of percentage (12 percent, N=20). 5 percent (N=8) of them were within the aged of 53-59 years old while those aged above 60 years old (3 percent, N=5) made up the lowest percentage of the group. Majority of the visitors were female which contributed 56.2 percent as compared to the male visitors (43.8 percent, N=70).

The percentage of the single respondents (51 percent, N=81) was slightly higher as compared to the married visitors (48.1 percent, N=77) visiting the festival. Almost 69.4 percent of them were Malays (N=111), followed by the Chinese (16.9 percent, N=27) and Indians (11.3 percent, N=18). The remaining 3 percent (N=4) represented the other group. 32 percent (N=51) of the respondents were degree holders. 25 percent (N=40) of them were SPM holders while 23 percent (N=37) of them have diploma. Only 23 respondents (14 percent) hold Master degree while the other group represented 6 percent (N=9) of the overall percentage. Majority of the visitors were from the urban area (73.1 percent, N=111) with the remaining 20 percent living in semi-urban area (N=32) and another 6.9 percent of them comes from rural area (N=11). 26.9 percent (N=43) of the respondents monthly income were below RM500. Out of the 160 respondents, only 15.6 percent (N=25) of them have a monthly income of above RM5001. Meanwhile, the remaining percentages were shared almost equally among the remaining groups. Interestingly, 30.6 percent of them were those working in the government sector (N=49) followed by students (24.4 percent, N=39) and those working in the private sector (22.5 percent, N=36). The remaining visitors were retirees (7.5 percent, N=12) as well as housewives (3.1 percent, N=5) and self-employed (10 percent, N=16). 51.9 percent (N=83) of the respondents were repeat visitors to the festival while the remaining percentages were first-time visitors (48.1 percent, N=77). 35 (21.9 percent) out of the 160 respondents had previously visited the festival more than 5 times as opposed to those previously visit the festival between 1-2 times (13.8 percent, N=22) and 3-4 times (16.3 percent, N=26). The profile are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' profile

	Variables	N	Percentage
Age	18 – 24 years	46	28.7
	25 – 31 years	37	23.1
	32 – 38 years	25	15.6
	39 – 45 years	20	12.5
	46 – 52 years	19	11.9
	53 – 59 years	8	5.0
	60 years and above	5	3.1
Gender	Male	70	43.8
	Female	90	56.2
Marital Status	Single	81	50.6
	Married	77	48.1
	Other	2	1.3
Ethnicity	Malay	111	69.4
	Indian	18	11.3
	Chinese	27	16.9
	Other	4	2.5
Level of Education	SPM	40	25.0
	Diploma	37	23.1
	Degree	51	31.9
	Master and above	23	14.4
	Other	9	5.6
Area of Living	Urban	117	73.1
	Semi-Urban	32	20.0
	Rural	11	6.9
Monthly Income	Below RM500	43	26.9
	RM501 – RM1000	19	11.9
	RM1001-RM2000	17	10.6
	RM2001 – RM3000	21	13.1
	RM3001 – RM4000	16	10.0
	RM4001 – RM5000	19	11.9
	RM5001 and above	25	15.6
Profession	Retired	12	7.5
	Self-employed	16	10.0
	Housewife	5	3.1
	Government servant	49	30.6
	Private servant	36	22.5
	Student	39	24.4
	Other	3	1.9
Previous experience	First time visitor	77	48.1
	Repeat visitor	83	51.9
Number of previous visit	1-2 times	22	13.8
	3-4 times	26	16.3
	5 times and above	35	21.9

#### 4.1. Satisfaction towards Rumah Terbuka

In this section, the respondents were asked about their satisfaction level towards the “Rumah Terbuka” festival. The overall results were tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2. Satisfaction towards Rumah Terbuka

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I really enjoyed the programs provided in the festival	160	3.64	.987
2.	I really enjoyed with the food served in the festival	160	3.68	1.024

3.	I am satisfied with the facilities provided in the festival	160	3.49	.883
4.	I am satisfied with the venue of this festival	160	3.69	.966
5.	I really enjoyed with the entertainment provided in the festival	160	3.64	1.000
6.	I really enjoyed the festival	160	3.65	.940
7.	I am happy with my visit to the festival	160	3.84	.846
8.	I am satisfied with the festival	160	3.68	.864
9.	Overall, I am satisfied with my visit to the festival	160	3.75	.890

Most of the respondents were happy (Item 7,  $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=.846$ ) and satisfied (Item 9,  $M=3.75$ ,  $SD=.890$ ) with their visit to the festival. Item 8 ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=.864$ ) on the table showed that the respondents were satisfied and enjoyed (Item 9,  $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=.940$ ). Apart from that, most of the other items score were almost the same except for item 3 ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=.883$ ) which is the satisfaction towards the facilities provided. Therefore, it can be concluded that, most of the visitors agreed that they were satisfied with the festival. Having discussed on the visitors' satisfaction, the next section will focus on their revisit intention.

#### 4.2. Intention to revisit "Rumah Terbuka"

The results for visitors' intention to revisit the "Rumah Terbuka" festival are recorded in Table 4.4 based on mean and standard deviation score for each item.

Table 3. Intention to revisit the festival

No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I will come to the festival again next year	160	3.61	1.070
2.	I would recommend this festival to others	160	3.68	.987
3.	I would probably visit this festival again next year	160	3.64	1.031
4.	If I decided to go to any festival, I would return to this festival again	160	3.63	1.074

Overall, it is clear that most respondents will likely to visit the festival again next year (Item 3,  $M=3.64$ ,  $SD=1.031$ ). They also would likely to recommend the festival to others (Item2,  $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=.987$ ). Interestingly, when asked whether they would decide to go to any other festival, respondents answered that they would return to this particular festival again (Item 4,  $M=3.63$ ,  $SD=1.074$ ). It shows that the festival is highly regarded by the respondents.

## 5. Conclusion

Since this study focused on the "Rumah Terbuka" festival held in Perak, thus the results obtained were only representing those visiting the festival. In relation to that, the findings, therefore, cannot be generalized and represent the whole population of those attending the same type of festival. As stated earlier, in Malaysia there were six major "Rumah Terbuka" festival held every year. Thus, the results of the findings might not apply to the different festival site especially those held on a large scale either nationally or internationally. Future studies should include festivals from different regions, scales, and different ethnic festivals. The present study brought some findings that may assist festival organizers and marketers in developing a more appealing and successful to visitors' festival as well as to contribute a better understanding of the literature related to the festival.

It is also important for the organizer to improve on the areas of weaknesses such as waste management and the filthiness of the facilities as suggested by the respondents in the open-ended section of the questionnaire. The problem can be fixed by hiring staff to look after the facilities cleanliness (i.e. restrooms, sitting area, and site) as well as scheduling frequent trash pick which are the aspects that are often being neglected by the organizer while

organizing festivals and events. Apart from that, the visitors should be encouraged to be more socially responsible and disciplined by cleaning up the tables after using them.

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