

ICBSI 2018
International Conference on Business Sustainability and
Innovation

MOTIVATIONS FOR REVISITING RELIGIOUS TEMPLES: THE
CASE OF CHINESE IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This study seeks to unravel visitors' motivation of revisiting Buddhism religious site. Although there are many religious sites for Chinese believers, only a handful of writers have been able to draw a systematic research into Chinese religious tourism in Asia. The study was conducted using survey method, with data being gathered through self-administered questionnaire from the perspective of Buddhism religion in Malaysia. The questionnaires that were conducted on-site and online were distributed among Buddhists who had been to religious temple(s) in Malaysia. The data were analysed using SmartPLS 3.0 software and the results demonstrated that religious value, personal and spiritual growth, as well as the need for social interaction, displayed significant effects on religious site revisit motivation. In addition, the aspects of achievement, recognition and culture turned out to insignificant factors. Due to practical constraints, this study has only a small sample size of 158 respondents. Nonetheless, the results still reported important insights into the motivations that encourage Buddhists to visit religious temples. By understanding the underlying motivations, the government or businessmen may take advantage of these insights to participate in the religious tourism sector.

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Keywords: Religious tourism, revisit intention, religious value, personal and spiritual growth, need for social interaction



1. Introduction

Religious tourism is a niche of tourism. If one describes the customary delineation of niche as a “distinct segment of a market”, it is fitting to claim that religious tourism is a niche of worldwide travel market (Amaro, Antunes, & Henriques, 2018). Religious tourism can be categorized as a type of tourism in which individuals go alone or in groups to a place for missionary, leisure or pilgrimage purposes (Bader, 2012; Iheanacho, 2015). There have always been numerous and diverse motivations that prompt the masses to travel, and religious motives were one of the oldest inspirations (Amaro et al., 2018; Iheanacho, 2015). Some traditionalists believed that a trip that was inspired by spiritual motives focused on penance, prayer, and medication while tourism was merely a hedonistic phenomenon (Hall, 2006). Nevertheless, there was a consensus that journeys motivated by faith shared many characteristics with tourism travel, with the difference being the act of consumption (Özkan, 2013).

Besides that, the world’s biggest form of mass religious tourism happens annually in Mecca, Saudi Arabia during the Muslims’ Hajj pilgrimage season (Aziz, 2001). Christianity also has a strong culture of pilgrimage. For instance, the well-known pilgrimage of ‘El Camino de Santiago’ or ‘The Way of Saint James’ is one of the famous religious site for Christian located in north-western Spain (Amaro et al., 2018). For Buddhism, Northern India and Southern Nepal are the most significant places for pilgrimage. The four major pilgrimage sites for Buddhist are Bodh Gaya, Lumbini, Sarnath, and Kusinagara. They are situated between New Delhi and Rajbir, the area where Gautama Buddha stayed and preached Buddhism (Hall, 2006; Rodriguez, 2017).

Understanding the extent of individuals’ motivations in visiting sacred sites and fulfilling their expectations is pivotal (Amaro et al., 2018). The intentions for visiting religious sites can be divergent and individuals taking such a journey might waver in their initial motivations (Nieminen, 2012). For example, some tourists might overlook their initial inspiration to go for a pilgrimage, while some may be motivated by merit or repentance (Amaro et al., 2018). Differing motivations for religious tourism ought to be understood to improve religious tourism sector (Nieminen, 2012).

1.1. Religious Tourism in Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the most developed countries in tourism in the Southeast Asian region, especially Islamic religious tourism (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2017). Apart from that, there are also Hinduism and Buddhism religious places that have the potential to be a tourist site. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research being done on that religious tourism. Hall (2006) stated that Buddhism is typically regarded as one of the world’s best religion. Buddhism is prevalent in South and Eastern Asia, and now Buddhism slowly began to draw followers from the Western countries. The South and South-East Asian regions usually attract a high number of foreign tourists that visit Buddhist pilgrimage sites. With regard to this, countries such as China, India, and Thailand are trying to improve their countries’ Buddhist tourism (Madhu, Himanshu, & Gaurav, 2010), Malaysia should also improve its Buddhist tourism to attract more tourists from their neighbouring countries. The Buddhism holy sites in Malaysia that have the highest number of tourists from all around the world are Kek Lok Si Temple, Snake Temple, Dharmikarama Burmese Temple, Wat Phothivihan and Thean Hou Temple.

2. Problem Statement

The majority of the population are practicing a belief system, so religion sector should be explored to increase a country's economic status (Amaro et al., 2018). Some entrepreneurs are aware of this opportunity. This is reflected in a growing trend of religious tourism attractions in most countries (Raj et al., 2015). Despite being a worthy economic sector, this tourism sector is one of the most understudied areas in tourism research (Amaro et al., 2018; Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015; Raj et al., 2015). Understanding individuals' motivation to participate in religious tourism is crucial to fulfil potential customers' requests (Amaro et al., 2018; Raj et al., 2015). With the continuing increase of market opportunities and religion being the focal point of leisure, it is quite surprising that religious tourism has been overlooked (Amaro et al., 2018; Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015; Raj et al., 2015). Hence, this study aims to understand the motivations affecting revisit intention to religious temple from the Buddhism perspective in Malaysia.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What are the motivation factors for the Buddhist tourists to revisit the temple?
- 3.2. What is the demographic profile of the Buddhist tourists in Malaysia?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand the motivations affecting revisit intention to religious temple from the Buddhism perspective in Malaysia. This research also evaluates the opportunities and gaps in religious tourism sector.

4.1. Hypothesis Development

Religious tourism can be defined as “a travel resulting from religious causes, externally to a sacred site, and internally for internal cognition and spiritual motives” (Amaro et al., 2018). Religious tourism can also be seen as an ancient practice where individuals travelled alone or in a group for religious reasons for an extended period of time (Bader, 2012; Raj et al., 2015). Those types of travels include pilgrimages, visiting holy sites, and missionary trips. Prior to the 19th century, a pilgrimage was expected to be an adventurous undertaking that included hardship. This was to obtain a sense of spiritual satisfaction (Raj et al., 2015; Wong, Ryan, & McIntosh, 2013). Nowadays, religious tourists join a pilgrimage for other reasons (Amaro et al., 2018; Antunes, Amaro, & Henriques, 2017). The experience was seen as a way to strengthen ties with people of similar mind and faith, reinforcing beliefs and relationship with people and the divine (Wong et al., 2013), seeking pleasure as well as other personal reasons (Bader, 2012). Besides that, religious tourism is comprised of spiritual sites and associated services, which were explored for secular and religious motives. Moreover, it was observed that there was an increasing trend towards promoting the purpose-built religious tourism attractions on non-holy places (Raj et al., 2015) such as Wat Mae Kaet Noi Temple in Thailand which was built to depict hell in Buddhism. Moving on, Raj et al. (2015) mentioned that despite the resemblances and disparities between these types of tourism, the underlying theme for religious tourism is typically still ‘travel’. Studies such as the current research can benefit businesses and commercial analyst

by providing valuable input for sound market analyses (Bader, 2012). In conclusion, discussions on tourists' motivations are important in comprehending their decision to travel.

4.2. Religious Value

Although there are different motivations for religious tourism, religious values would be the main reason to travel to the sacred sites of a religion (Amaro et al., 2018; Bader, 2012; Musawenkosi, 2010; Wang et al., 2016). This is also a fundamental psychological motivation. There is a particular component to the motivation of religious value; some people are profoundly influenced by their religious faith, beliefs, and practice, affecting their actions (Raj et al., 2015). Musawenkosi (2010) and Iheanacho (2015) explained that this form of tourism was motivated by a sense of obligation and duty rather than a hunt for amusement and leisure. Musawenkosi (2010) further explained that some people take the journey to religious places to preserve their personality and identity, others to fulfil the emotions of nostalgia, to undergo spiritual transcendent or to perform the teachings of the specific faith. Journeys that were driven by religious urges were integrated in the history of mankind. A research conducted by Wang et al. (2016) claimed that religious beliefs influenced people to become religious tourists. By observing the behaviour of other religious tourists at the temple, tourists may also experience the genuineness of the holy experience.

H1: Religious value will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

4.3. Sense of Achievement

People always wanted to achieve something in life. Whether it is education, job or social status, people are typically motivated by achievements (Raj et al., 2015). A sense of achievement can be defined as the pride of having successfully completed or go through something difficult and worthwhile. We have always been trained to challenge ourselves and be independent. These influence people to visit the religious site and gain personal satisfaction that will only increase with hardship. As such, religious tourism is seen as a chance for personal improvement, adventure, the creation of wealth, and intellectual, practical and spiritual discourse. A study by Battour, Battor, and Ismail (2012) found out that the achievement is the motivation for the Muslim tourists to undergo religious tourism in Malaysia. Apart from that, modern-day pilgrimages provide opportunities for adventure. For example, some religious sites are located in remote areas that require visitors to travel by foot for several days before reaching the destination. Feeling responsible for achieving a certain degree of prostration is also a point to consider. This is especially true for older believers who beliefs are important to themselves.

H2: Sense of achievement will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

4.4. Recognition

Some religious tourists are motivated by recognition (Raj et al., 2015). Recognition is the external influence that shapes individual motivations to visit the holy place. The individuals visit religious sites to be seen as a devoted member of a religion, or in other words, to be seen as 'religious'. An example would be photographing their participation to be shown to others, usually friends and family (Raj et al., 2015). Although there is a photography service for souvenir photos, self-taken photographs or videos are usually

taken with this particular motivation (Belk & Hsiu-yen Yeh, 2011). These photos are claimed to be a token for memory and also a proof that the tourists have visited the religious site. It is also is an act of self-fashioning to gain recognition of what one has achieved (Belk & Hsiu-yen Yeh, 2011). In addition, procuring a certificate of participation from a religious ceremony may also motivate people to visit religious sites (Raj et al., 2015). They pride themselves on their achievement on occasions such as those in religion. Pictures and certificates displace the senses and meanings of religious ceremonies that are too frangible and tenuous to be contained in the here and now (Belk & Hsiu-yen Yeh, 2011).

H3: Recognition will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

4.5. Personal and Spiritual Growth

Moving on, Raj et al. (2015) believed that some tourists are motivated by personal and spiritual growth. Tourist that travelled for religious purposes may perceive difficult journeys as an opportunity to grow and develop survival skills. For example, crowd surges at the Hajj in the last several years caused hundreds of deaths and injuries amongst tourists. Although there were worries and concerns that such cases would have a demotivating effect, there is still a lot of Muslims performing the Hajj every year (Raj et al., 2015). This is because they wanted to develop their survival skills and personal growth that are also seen as a form of spiritual rewards. Furthermore, there are two types of rewards: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards are the enhancement of spirituality or self-actualization while extrinsic rewards are the recognition or status gained. Perception is important because it is correlated with effort and reward. If a person believes that enduring the hassles of pilgrimage will gain them spiritual advancement, then that will encourage them (Amaro et al., 2018; Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015; Nieminen, 2012; Raj et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2016; Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016). In addition, religious tourists may be motivated by the spiritual culture of the religious site (Nieminen, 2012). A research concluded that tourists who travel solely for religious motives were small in numbers (Nieminen, 2012). Meanwhile, spiritual motives were more common. Individuals seek for personal and spiritual growth due to the shallowness of everyday lives and the inauthentic experiences they went through every day (Wang et al., 2016).

H4: Personal and spiritual growth will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

4.6. Cultural Value

Cultural value may also be the reason why people visit religious sites all around the world (Amaro et al., 2018; Antunes et al., 2017; Bader, 2012; Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015; Wang et al., 2016; Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016). All archaeological memorials and monuments in Asia have some implications and meanings to the religion and constitute the backbone of tourist circuits. This makes cultural and religious tourists difficult to distinguish. Bader (2012) claimed that there was some similarity between the practice of cultural tourism and religious tourism. Both intentions may not be exclusive from each other, and a person may integrate both intentions in their travel. Moreover, a religious place for one may be a cultural site for another; Wailing Wall may hold different significance to a Buddhist and a Jew. Religion is an essential element of all cultures, making many holy places the cultural heritage of a society. Apart from that, cultural enjoyment is also a pull (external/extrinsic) factor (Wang et al., 2016; Yu & Phakdee-auksorn,

2016). Religious tourists are attracted to cultural events (Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015), exotic customs, atmosphere of a particular place (Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016) and the natural environment holy temples are situated (Wang et al., 2016). Such intense religious atmosphere could guide them in discovering their inner selves (Wang et al., 2016). In addition, some tourists may hope to experience the cultural or historical heritage to gain knowledge (Wang et al., 2016; Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016).

H5: Cultural value will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

4.7. Need for Social Interaction

Average individuals will have a need for affection, a sense of belonging and social interaction. Raj et al. (2015) argue that those who feel the need to socialize with like-minded people may join a tour group to a sacred place. Similarly, those who travel individually or within a small group of people are usually still a part of a bigger group going to the same holy place. Travelling in a group is a bonding experience, adding social element to a spiritual experience and spiritual element (Cohen, 2006). A pilgrimage can strengthening ties with like-minded people, reinforcing beliefs and relationships with people and the divine (Wong et al., 2013). Group travels usually develop a sense of fondness and connection throughout the journey. Such emotional connection binds people from a similar religion and motivates people to participate in a trip (Cohen, 2006). Once other needs are fulfilled, individuals are usually motivated to achieve a higher esteem in their religious community by participating in a religious travel. In addition, believers who are gathered at the religious place gain emotional support from friends of different backgrounds (Wang et al., 2016).

H6: Need for social interaction will be positively related to the revisit intention to a religious site.

5. Research Methods

The questionnaire was design to gauge motivation for revisiting temples by the Buddhist in Malaysian. The questionnaires consisted of three different sections. Section A was made up of screen questions. This was to identify Buddhist respondents who were relevant to our research. Meanwhile, Section B was regarding the motivations that affected their visits to the religious site. For this section, the instrument was developed on the basis of the modification of items from previous literature, namely, constructs for Revisit Intention to Religious Site (VRS) (Campón, Alves, & Hernández, 2013; Nieminen, 2012), Religious Value (REL) (Amaro et al., 2018; Plante, 2010; Wang et al., 2016), Sense of Achievement (ACH) (Phan, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), Recognition (REG) (Luc Véraïn, 2015, May), Personal and Spiritual Growth (PG) (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009; Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016), Cultural Value (CUL) (Amaro et al., 2018; Hughes, Bond, & Ballantyne, 2013; Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015; Konu & Laukkanen, 2009) and Need for Social Interaction (SI) (Luc Véraïn, 2015, May; Phan, 2010; Pinto, Barbeitos, Guerreiro, & Mendes, 2014). Section C is demographic profile of the respondents that question about respondents age, gender, education level, employment status, monthly income, and who the respondents go with to the religious site. The independent variables were measured using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). On the other hand, the dependent variable was measured using the 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The unit analysis of this study is the individuals who had visited Buddhist Temples in recent years for religious purposes. Thus, non-probability convenience sampling method, which was incorporated with purposive sampling technique, was adopted. The purposive sampling technique was chosen because this study focuses only on respondents who had visited temples for religious purposes. Thus, the screening questions were imposed at the beginning of the questionnaire. Respondents who recently visited the Buddhist temple are eligible to answer the questionnaire.

The data collections were conducted using the online questionnaire. The online survey forms were distributed through social media such as Facebook Buddhist Group and Cari Chinese forum group. These respondents had visited to famous Buddhist temples in Malaysia such as Kek Lok Si, Snake Temple, Dharmikarama Burmese Temple, Wat Phothivihan and Thean Hou Temples at least once in recent year.

Thus, the final number within the population was estimated based on the rule of thumb; the minimum number of respondents was a five-to-one ratio of the number of latent variables to be tested. A total of 158 usable survey forms managed to be collected and coded for the data analysis using the SmartPLS 3.0 software.

6. Findings

There were more females (59.5 %) than males (40.5 %) were included in the sample. With respect to age, 40.5 % of the sample were below 25 years old, followed by those between 25 and 34 years old (26.6 %). For education level, most of the respondents (55.7 %) had a degree, while 1.9% of them were Ph.D. holders. Moreover, 43 % of the respondents have a full-time job and 3.2 % of them had a part-time job. In addition, 63.9% of the respondents went to religious sites with their family and only 3.2 % went with their children. Results also indicated that 26.6% of the respondents did not have any source of income but 14.6% of them were earning RM5000 and above per month. According to the survey, the most visited temple in Malaysia is Kek Lok Si Temple, in which 46 respondents have been there at least once in recent year. Then, it is followed by Wat Photivihan (15 respondents), Thean Hou Temple (10 respondents) and Dharmikarama Burmese Temple (1 respondent). However, there were 86 respondents visited other temples in Malaysia as well.

6.1. Measurement Model

Individual item reliability, internal consistency or construct reliability, convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and discriminant validity were examined to test their reliability (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). The CR of each construct for this research ranges from 0.903 to 0.963; all of them are above the recommended threshold value of 0.7. Therefore, the items have satisfactory internal consistency reliability. In addition, the items loadings were examined to ensure the reliability of the measurement model. The analysis showed that all but one item in the measurement model had loadings that were higher than 0.7 and a significant level of 0.01, which showed that it has satisfactory indicator reliability. An item under cultural values coded CUL5 was removed from the data because the loading value was lower than 0.7. Apart from that, convergent and discriminant validity were measured in different ways. Firstly, the AVE values reached the threshold of 0.5 for all constructs

(Hair Jr et al., 2016). Then, Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion were employed to test discriminant validity. The AVE scales are required to be larger than the square of its largest correlation with any scale, in which all scales met. Afterwards, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation approach was used based on Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) recommendations. All HTMT values in the model were below the cut-off value of 0.85. This shows that the measurement scales have suitable convergent and discriminate validity.

6.2. Structural Model

Figure 1 represents the graphical demonstration of the research model. Donate and Sanchez de Pablo (2015) claimed that path coefficients that are below 0.30 caused moderate effects, 0.30 to 0.60 caused strong effects and above 0.60 caused very strong effects. The predictive power of the structural model was assessed based on the R² value of the endogenous constructs. Based on the path coefficient and t-test results of the six hypotheses, only three of the hypotheses were supported. The data did not support the hypotheses related to the sense of achievement, cultural values, and recognition. The results showed that religious value positively influences the revisit intention to religious sites at a significant level of p<0.001. Besides, personal and spiritual growth positively influences the revisit intention to religious sites at a significant level of p<0.01. Meanwhile, the need for social interaction also positively influence the revisit intention to religious sites at a significant level of p<0.05. Furthermore, the result of R² value is 0.584. This suggests that 58.4% of the variance in the revisit intention to religious sites can be explained moderately by religious value, personal and spiritual growth and the need for social interaction.

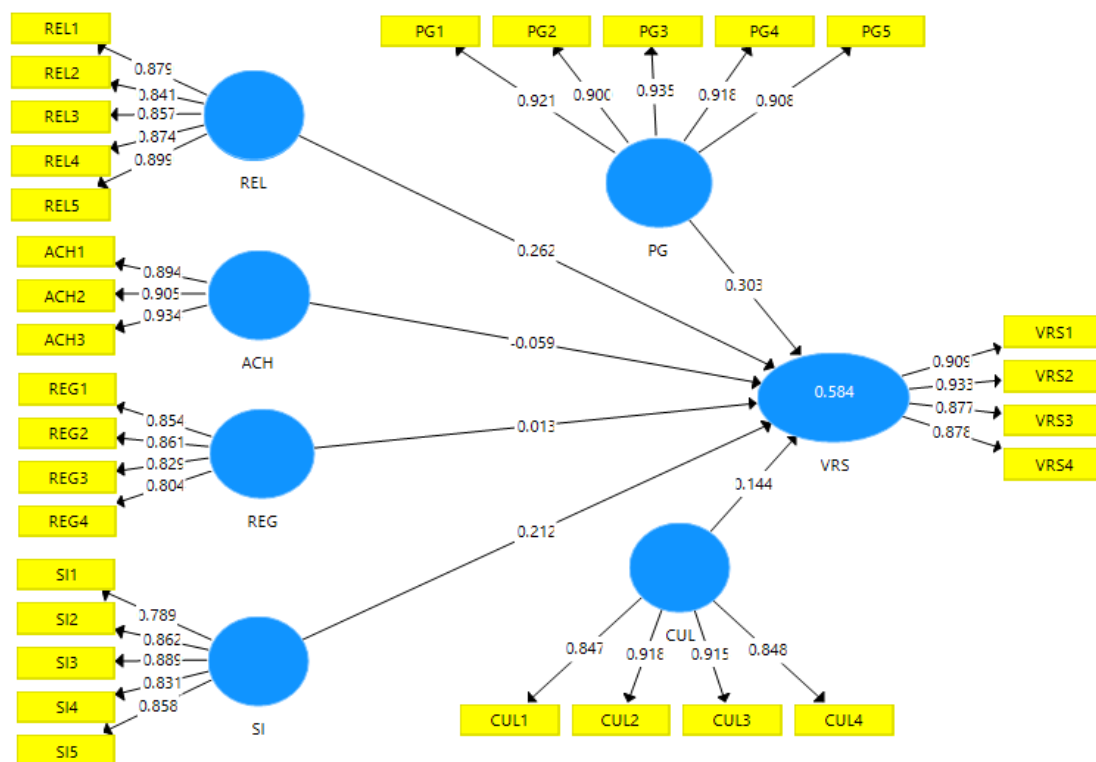


Figure 01. Measurement Model

7. Discussion and Implications

This study aims to understand the motivations that affect revisit intention to the religious temple from the Buddhism perspective in Malaysia. The model developed helped to determine the relationship between revisit intentions to the religious site with religious value, sense of achievement, recognition, personal and spiritual growth, cultural value, and the need for social interaction. It was found that religious value, personal and spiritual growth, and the need for social interaction influence revisit intention to religious temples. On the other hand, the sense of achievement, recognition and cultural values were found to be insignificant motivations.

The findings demonstrated that religious values were the strongest motivation to revisit intention to religious temples at a significant level of $p < 0.001$. This shows that religious faith and practice can deeply motivate believers' actions. Besides seeking repentance, some researchers claim that these individuals may visit religious places frequently out of a sense of responsibility and obligation (Iheanacho, 2015; Musawenkosi, 2010). Furthermore, Raj et al. (2015) also emphasized that religion is the prime motive for visits to religious sites. Nonetheless, religious value is a complicated concept with various layers of meaning and depth depending on the faith of a person and society. This is explained by Wang et al. (2016), who explained that tourists' positive past experiences will result in the enhancement of the religious beliefs and they might revisit the temple again in the future. On the other hand, religion and religiosity are sensitive and personal matters (Kamenidou & Vourou, 2015). Therefore, marketing officials must take these sensitivities into account in improving the quality of tourist experience and while promoting the religious site as a religious tourist destination. Examples of such services are an interpretation-history centre that explains Buddhism or an immersive multi-media show such as 'Walking With Buddha' that takes the tourists to go through Siddhartha's life (Wong et al., 2013). These services may improve tourists' experience and provide meaningful lessons on the teachings of Buddhism.

Besides, personal and spiritual growth positively influences the revisit intention to religious temples at a significant level of $p < 0.01$. Religion and spirituality are very common motivations for travel over the last few decades for religious tourism (Amaro et al., 2018; Nieminen, 2012; Raj et al., 2015; Yu & Phakdeekauksorn, 2016). Wong et al. (2013) explained that spiritual motivations would encourage people to go on religious holidays. This includes those who wanted to further their spiritual involvement with Buddhism. Some prime motivations include fulfilling their spiritual needs. This involves searching for authenticity and genuineness within holy experiences while immersing themselves in a solemn peaceful atmosphere of a Buddhist temple. Religious ceremonies executed at the sites tourists' spiritual experience. Some of the characteristics of such ceremonies are focusing on prayers, bonding and chanting with fellow travellers, long walking journeys to the top of a hill, immersing in sacred water, eating simple vegetarian food, donating, and enduring long queues and troubles (Vinnie & Sanjeev, 2010). Preserving and maintaining ancient architectural buildings and temples may improve tourists' experience.

Moreover, the need for social interaction also has a positive relationship with the revisit intention to religious temples at a significant level of $p < 0.05$. According to Raj et al. (2015), individuals who have a need for social interaction with new or like-minded people may participate in an organized trip to a sacred site to socialize. As mentioned before, gathering with fellow devout believers may strengthen existing or

create new relationships among people with the same beliefs and with the divine power (Wang et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2013).

The aspect of achievements was insignificant to most of the respondents. This could be due to Buddhists not looking for adventure or physical activity when visiting religious sites. They also do not put much effort to challenge their ability. Buddhists put more emphasize on spiritual growth; this is in line with Buddhism teachings that encourage spiritual growth in present life. On the other hand, the two-factor theory of motivation suggests that religious tourists may be motivated to achieve a goal if they are simultaneously satisfied with hygiene and physical conditions of the sites (Raj, Griffin, & Blackwell, 2015). According to Wong et al. (2013), religious tourism was expected to be an adventurous undertaking that included hardship to achieve spiritual satisfaction, but this expectation was valid only before the 19th century.

Since the hypothesis was rejected, recognition was not a factor influencing revisit intention to religious temples in Malaysia. Buddhism teaches that greed will lead to suffering. Therefore, most believers do not seek recognition as it can be seen as a form of greed. In addition, Buddhism also guides its believers to be free from samsara and achieve Nirvana. Buddhists believe that the cause of suffering is the projection of the myth of permanence upon a situation that is actually conditioned, selfless, and constantly changing. Suffering originates from desire and recognition is temporary. Hence, Buddhists try to not seek for recognition in their actions.

Moving on, cultural values do not significantly influence revisit intention to religious temple among Malaysian Buddhist. This result is inconsistent with studies done by Wang et al. (2016) and Wong et al. (2013). This could be due to intrinsic factors being more important for Malaysian Buddhists. According to Iheanacho (2015), cultural values cannot motivate religious tourism as there are various attitudes and arguments about the purpose of a religious and cultural trip. It should be noted that there is a distinct difference between religious and cultural tourism. A visit to appreciate religious monuments is not regarded as a religious visit.

8. Conclusion

Following the aims of this study, the results may assist the government or businessman in expanding their business in the religious tourism sector. Understanding potential customers may be helpful in choosing the right actions. In addition, future research should also improve and address the limitations of this study. These researches are hoped to provide meaningful insights into Malaysia's religious tourism. In conclusion, a thorough and continuous study of religious tourism is needed to keep up with the growing trend of this niche of tourism. The lack of research on this blooming sector makes it difficult to observe the advancement of religious tourism since the old age of pilgrimage. Providing in-depth insights on the motivations for religious travel is pivotal for policy makers, tourism sector and local communities. If such data is easily accessible, we can enhance the quality of the tourist experience in visiting the religious site and indirectly increase Malaysia's economic growth.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Universiti Sains Malaysia for funding this research under the Research University Grant No. 1001/PMGT/816211.

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