



## The Impact of Tourism Service Quality on Satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between tourism service quality with overall satisfaction, intention to revisit and willingness to recommend to relatives and friends. This study is significant in at least two ways. First, it extends the work of Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) who included transport as a general component. This study includes taxis as a separate component since taxis are a popular transportation mode. Second, it provides information to multiple government agencies on ways to improve satisfaction among tourists. Data is collected from foreign tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur. A total of 199 completed questionnaires were received. There are three notable findings; first, there is a significant relationship between accommodation service quality, hospitality, entertainment, transportation, taxi service quality and overall satisfaction. Second, there is a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and intention to revisit Kuala Lumpur. Third, there is a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend Kuala Lumpur to friends and relatives.

**Keywords:** Intention to revisit, Overall satisfaction, Tourism service quality, Willingness to recommend

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## INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism shows an increasing percentage share of Gross Value Added of Tourism Industries (GVATI) towards Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), from 10.4% in 2005 to 12.5% in 2012 (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2013). GVATI is the total gross value added of all establishments belonging to tourism activities which takes into account numerous tourism-related industries, from retail and trade, accommodation services, food and beverage serving, passenger transport services, cultural sports and recreation, travel agencies and other reservation service industries to other tourism industries. In addition, the accumulated tourist receipts to Malaysia increased from RM32 billion in 2005 to RM60.6 billion in 2012, along with the increment number of tourist arrivals from 15.43 million in 2005 to 25.03 million in 2012. As for the employment aspect, the tourism industry registered an increment share towards the total employment rate, from 15% in 2005 to 16.4% in 2015 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013). Hence, with such enormous contributions toward Malaysia's economy, the government of Malaysia continues to focus on enhancing the country's position as a leading foreign tourist destination.

However, there are reports indicating tourist dissatisfaction. First, tourists only stay in Kuala Lumpur for about 2.6 days on average as compared to other cities such as Jakarta and Bangkok. This is perhaps due to lack of information on tourist locations (Daniel, 2014). In addition, tourists with lack of previous knowledge and experience in Kuala Lumpur may find it confusing regarding the options that they have. For instance, due to vague and limited signage, tourists may not be aware of the two different types of taxis, airport limousines and city taxis which are available at the airport. This may be important for some tourists as they are on a limited budget, and paying more would be a waste of money (O'Neill, 2014). Second, toilet hygiene is an issue, whereby, the current condition of public toilets in Malaysia remains unsatisfactory regardless of the effort to beautify and maintain its cleanliness; only 350 out of 10,257 public toilets in the country earned a five-star rating in the first half of 2013 which was audited by the Urban Wellbeing Housing and Local Government Ministry. Additionally, unpleasant comments on toilets in Malaysia can be found on the Internet as well, which revolves around filthy, wet floors, lack of maintenance and lack of toilet paper (Tho, 2013). Third, the behaviours of taxi drivers significantly affect tourism success as tourists usually travel by taxis. Taxi drivers refuse using meter fares while commuting passengers. The typical excuses that they give to passengers include: the meter is broken, fares are at flat rate for certain destinations, Friday prayers, bad traffic jams and the list goes on. There were cases of passengers who had to hail for at least five different taxis in order to acquire a taxi driver who agreed to use the meter (Amran, 2008). Overcharged fares can be said to be a common practice by taxi drivers. A British-Malaysian went

undercover to investigate how a typical tourist would fare with taxi drivers. The result was that the passenger was charged RM25 for a trip of approximately two kilometres in about five minutes, which was only supposed to cost RM8 according to the Malaysia Taxi Auto Fare (Aruna, 2013).

Literature that investigated destination service quality tend to include transport as a general component which consist of buses, taxis, rails and other mode of transport in relation to other components such as food and beverages, accommodation and tourist facilities. For example, the study by Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) investigated tourist satisfaction regarding aspects such as food and beverage, accommodation service quality, hygiene, hospitality, tourist facilities, price and value, entertainment, quietness, convenience, communication, security, transportation, airport services and weather. However, taxis seem to be a more popular transport choice as tourists may demand a more personalised journey and destination (Yao and Ding, 2011). Nonetheless, taxi service quality has not been studied alongside with other tourism factors in understanding its relative impact on tourist satisfaction. Understanding this relationship is vital to policy makers and town planners. Thus, this study extended Rimmington and Yuksel's (1998) tourist satisfaction framework by including taxi service quality to produce a more holistic picture on service quality factors that influence tourist satisfaction.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Crompton and Mackay (1990) defined service quality as the quality of service attributes and investigations on the importance of those attributes based on types of service categories, which include: high staff intensives with high facility intensives, high staff intensives with low facility intensives, low staff intensives and high facility intensives and low staff intensives and low facility intensives. Results from the study also showed that capabilities to perform stated and promised service reliably and precisely are important. The service quality model, SERVQUAL by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) is widely applicable and can be generalised to various service contexts. Bigne *et al.* (2003) provided evidences on the applicability of SERVQUAL in travel agencies.

In assessing quality of a tourism destination, various attributes or factors were used. First, some tourism researchers used single-item attributes in assessing destination quality. For example, Edward (2006) utilised the attribute approach in studying service quality in India. The study measured perception towards performance of 24 attributes. The attributes were quality of accommodation, tourist information, airport services, restaurants, local transportation, safety, hygiene, staff attitude, local people friendliness, staff language, tour operator service, tour guide

service, climate, rest and relaxation, activities of excitement, nightlife, shopping, amenities, accessibility, beach cleanliness, natural attractions, cultural attractions, historical attractions and opportunity for sightseeing. Similarly, Chaudhary (2000), who also conducted a tourism study in India, used 19 attributes. They were destination, shopping, arts, tourist landmarks, culture, hospitality, hotels, transportation facilities, train services, closeness to nature, safety, trustworthiness, domestic airlines, guide services, hygiene, food and drinks, nightlife, roads, beggars and ethical businesses.

Second, another group of researchers used multi-item factors in assessing the quality of a destination. For instance, Kozak and Rimmington (2000) measured the level of tourist satisfaction based on factors such as destination attractiveness, tourist attractions and facilities, availability of the English language and facilities and service quality at the destination. Using the same approach, Heung and Qu (2000), indicated that a total of eight factors such as people, overall convenience, price, accommodations, food, commodities, attractions, culture and climate and images influenced tourist evaluations of destination. Similarly, Middleton and Clarke (2001) summarised that components of overall tourism product consisted of five main components; they were destination attractions and environment, destination facilities and services, accessibility of destination, image of destination and price to the consumer.

In the context of tourist destination, Narayan, Rajendran and Prakash Sai (2008) used ten dimensions of service quality which captured the core tourism experience such as natural beauty, climate and cultural heritage, information (such as the availability of information at tourist spots), hospitality (courteousness and friendliness of locals), fairness of price (such as pricing system for locals and tourists), hygiene (cleanliness at tourists spots), amenities (such as internet and telecommunication services), value for money (such as level of price and quality of products), logistics (transportation), food (local delicacies) and security (such as safety). Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) covered 16 factors, comprising both single-item and multi-item factors, in studying facilities and services which impact satisfaction among tourists. Rimmington and Yuksel's (1998) factors seem to be more complete than Narayan, Rajendran and Prakash Sai (2008) as they covered additional factors like accommodation, entertainment and ease of communication. Thus, Rimmington and Yuksel's (1998) model was used as the basis for assessing tourism quality for this study. However, a weakness in Rimmington and Yuksel's (1998) model was the exclusion of taxi service quality. Taxi service quality is an on-going issue in Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, taxis are reputed to be a more popular transport in developing countries such as Malaysia compared to other modes of transport since it is more flexible to determine passengers' demands on destinations

(Yao and Ding, 2011). Thus, the study intended to extend the model by adding taxi service quality factor.

Measuring service quality for public transport has two dimensions: the first would be objective dimension, whereby, service quality is objectified in performance indicators such as frequency and speed; while the subjective dimension measures service quality through consumer judgments (Mouwen and Rietveld, 2013). In the context of taxi service quality, Yao and Ding (2011) adapted SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) and SERVPERF model of Cronin and Taylor (1992) to evaluate the taxi service quality in China. They found all five dimensions of service quality consisting of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy were significantly and positively correlated with satisfaction. Tangibility includes exterior, interior facilities, equipment in taxis and the appearance of taxi drivers; whereas, Santos (2002) referred tangibility to exterior and interior of physical features, tools, equipment, exterior of human resources, communication materials and other physical features being used by service providers to offer and deliver services.

Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1994) stated that reliability is an important element and it was supported that regardless of service industries types, reliability will remain to be one of the key elements. Daskalakis (2008) explained that reliability focuses on reducing travel time, as well as, reducing travel time variability since such variability may lead to vagueness of arrival time. Moreover, Tse, Flin and Mearns (2000) found that reliability of public transportation positively correlated with stress level and satisfaction. Yao and Ding's (2011) reliability included drivers' attitudes before serving, along with the driving attitude.

Responsiveness was defined as the willingness and capability of employees (Allred and Addams, 2000). Perception on willingness of employees to respond accurately, and the dependability and speed of employees to entertain consumers can be captured in this dimension (Barlett and Han, 2007). For Yao and Ding (2011), responsiveness captured taxi drivers' patience, response towards bookings and complaints and route arrangements once destination was assigned.

As for assurance, it was defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to instil trust and confidence in others (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). Vogel and Pettinari (2002) stated that service providers must ensure that consumers feel safe while patronising services as it will lead to an increment of trust and confidence among passengers toward employees and service providers. Furthermore, based on the Transit Cooperative Research Program (1994), prepared by the American Quality Group, it was indicated that public transportation service providers are expected to be helpful in delivering information that motivates. Yao and Ding (2011) included communication language as one of the elements

in assurance, besides elements like knowledge of routes, availability of security facilities, small changes and receipts.

Empathy was defined as the skills to put oneself mentally in another person's condition and issues, and the ability to understand that person's state of mind and point of view (Varca, 2004). Andreassen (1995), on the other hand, stated that empathy is understanding consumers' needs and wants, as well as, offering and delivering services with individual attention (Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright, 2004). It is an internal sensitivity which will lead oneself to have more capabilities to recognise the intrinsic qualities of personality (Hackney, 1978). Yao and Ding (2011) stated that empathy captured elements such as drivers' knowledge of tourist spots, warm service and honesty.

In the tourism industry, satisfaction refers to pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences, which is comprised of the emotional state after experiencing the trip (Baker and Crompton, 2000). It is the expectation of tourists toward the destination on the basis of previous image and referrals, and an assessment on the outcome of their experience at the destination (Neal and Gursoy, 2008). Yuksel (2001) summarised that the tourism studies that were accomplished, related to satisfaction throughout the years, have been revolving around satisfaction with destination services, satisfaction with recreational services, satisfaction with tours and cruise travels, satisfaction with hotels and restaurant services and also the quality of tourist experiences of students from different cultures. The same study also highlighted that uncontrollable destination factors such as natural environment, scenery, culture and climate forms the major elements of satisfaction among tourists; together with attitude and behaviour of hosts, information hub and channel and efficiency of services. Satisfaction influences the choice of destination, consumption of services and decision to return. High satisfaction levels among tourists will likely impact the enhanced reputation of tourism products, the destination brand name and will increase in loyalty (Anderson and Fornel, 1994).

Since the cost to capture a new consumer is roughly five times more in terms of time, money and resources as compared to taking care of a current consumer, it is vital that service providers are well aware that satisfaction is important for their businesses (Kotler, 1994; Naumann, 1995). Satisfaction may influence intention to repurchase and word-of-mouth advertising in the society (Berkman and Gilson, 1986). Satisfied individuals will tend to have a higher propensity to inform others, as well as, share experiences regarding the services. The best part of positive word of mouth advertising and recommendations is that it does not require any costs from service providers.

Tourism service quality model of Rimmington and Yuksel (1998), taxi service quality model of Yao and Ding (2011) and intention to revisit and willingness to recommend model of Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004) were used as the theoretical basis to develop hypotheses on how each dimension of service quality affects satisfaction among tourists in Kuala Lumpur. A total of 15 dimensions of service quality were chosen: food and beverage quality, accommodation service quality, hygiene, hospitality, tourist facilities, price and value, entertainment, quietness, convenience, communication, security, transportation, airport services, weather and taxi service quality were expected to affect satisfaction.

### **Relationship between Food and Beverage Quality and Overall Satisfaction**

There are tourists who travel to understand and experience local cuisines, yet there are also tourists who would like food that they are accustomed to. As for Malaysia, the country consists of multi-ethnic communities, offering multi-flavoured selection of cuisines from Malay, Chinese, Indian, Peranakan, Eurasian and Borneo to Western cuisine; also from exotic, international to simple street food. Availability and tastiness of local food which tourists would prefer to eat makes the food and beverage dimension an indicative of the overall touristic satisfaction (Panton, 1999). Following expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, tourists are satisfied if food and beverage quality meet their expectations. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H1 : There is a significant relationship between food and beverage quality and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Accommodation Service Quality and Overall Satisfaction**

Accommodation service quality refers to lodging that includes responsiveness of service personnel towards requests and complaints. Furthermore, giving feedback and solutions in an appropriate and fine manner may also contribute to satisfaction (Bitner, Booms and Tetrault, 1990). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H2 : There is a significant relationship between accommodation service quality and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Hygiene and Overall Satisfaction**

Hygiene takes into account the cleanliness of accommodation and availability of resources supplied to tourists so as to ensure cleanliness of themselves (Rimington and Yuksel, 1998). Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) suggested that physically and psychologically comforting accommodation contribute to quality holiday experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H3 : There is a significant relationship between hygiene and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Hospitality and Overall Satisfaction**

Hospitality refers to tourists being treated well by locals. It involves the courteousness, friendliness and reliability of service providers and local people. Among tourists, they will interact with each other to exchange views as it may be easier to communicate with people who come from the same country. Moreover, tourists (especially females) are deeply anxious on the attitude and way they are being treated by locals (Narayan, Rajendran and Prakasah Rai, 2008). However, tourists cannot avoid interacting with locals on instances such as when buying food, checking in hotels and asking for directions. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H4 : There is a significant relationship between hospitality and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Tourist Facilities and Overall Satisfaction**

This dimension constitutes the service quality provided to tourists at tourist locations such as museums, galleries and landmarks (Rimington and Yuksel, 1998). Kuala Lumpur has various museums and landmarks, places which tourists will pay attention to and go for. Tourists may give their own thoughts and perceptions toward local services based on how they are being served at these tourist facilities. Therefore, it was indicative to include this dimension in the study. As a result, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H5 : There is a significant relationship between tourist facilities and overall satisfaction.*



### **Relationship between Price and Value and Overall Satisfaction**

Tourists desire and go for value when it comes to money; this includes price and quality (Narayan, Rajendran and Prakasah Rai, 2008). In the Malaysian context, due to currency exchange and having a lower level of foreign exchange rate compared to other countries, this may be seen as an opportunity for Malaysia to promote its products to tourists since tourists may view them as cheap. Reisinger and Turner (2003) indicated that service prices, price and value connections and commercialisation extensions have an impact on tourist evaluations. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H6 : There is a significant relationship between price and value and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Entertainment and Overall Satisfaction**

In the context of tourism, tourists demand some excitement and joyful moments by participating in entertainment events and tours (Rimington and Yuksel, 1998). In Kuala Lumpur, a modern city which offers all day entertainment, it is significant for entertainment to be measured. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H7 : There is a significant relationship between entertainment and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Quietness and Overall Satisfaction**

Tourists may need a break, rest and relax during their holidays. Based on Rimington and Yuksel (1998), noise may interrupt their personal space. Kuala Lumpur has always been pictured as a busy urban city surrounded by traffic noises and constructions. This may be a disturbance for tourists and can influence their overall satisfaction regarding Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H8 : There is a significant relationship between quietness and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Convenience and Overall Satisfaction**

In the tourism context, tourists would prefer a destination which is easy for them to travel from one place to another, especially back and forth to their accommodation (Rimington and Yuksel, 1998). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H9 : There is a significant relationship between convenience and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Communication and Overall Satisfaction**

Service providers are the first and direct contact point for tourists. In the Malaysian context, the Malay language is the national official language; but a non lingua franca language these days. However, English is widely understood, yet the proficiency in the level of the English language among Malaysians may not be high. Therefore, service providers will have to understand and capture what tourists are trying to voice out and enquire; it is vital to consider communication as the tourism service quality dimension (Rimington and Yuksel, 1998). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H10 : There is a significant relationship between communication and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Security and Overall Satisfaction**

Tourists would like to feel safe and secure throughout their stay, regardless of the places that they are at, such as accommodation or tourist spots (Narayan, Rajendran and Prakasah Rai, 2008). In the tourism perspective, security may not revolve around the safety of the individual himself, but also the safety of luggage and belongings; especially the ones left at lodgings. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H11 : There is a significant relationship between security and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Transportation and Overall Satisfaction**

In Kuala Lumpur, the city centre is equipped with various public transports such as taxis, buses, light rail transits and monorails. Tourists would be concerned about logistics as it affects easiness and accessibility to tourist attractions. Therefore,

efficiency and linkage between public transports to take tourists to desired locations are vital. As a result, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H12 : There is a significant relationship between transportation and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Airport Service and Overall Satisfaction**

Efficiency of airport service has a vital role on tourism service quality. This is due to airports being the first and last place visited by most tourists, and airport services are the first and last experience which tourists have related with destination (Whipple and Thach, 1988). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H13 : There is a significant relationship between airport service and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Weather and Overall Satisfaction**

Having hot and humid climate throughout the year in Kuala Lumpur may impact the adaptability of tourists from other climates. Some tourists who enjoy sun bathing may not stand the humid, high temperature and sunny condition. This may influence the pictorial experience that they have in mind. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H14 : There is a significant relationship between weather and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Taxi Service Quality and Overall Satisfaction**

The visual exterior of taxis probably captures tourists on whether to hop in the taxi (Yao and Ding, 2011). Since Malaysia is hot and humid, tourist may opt for taxis as compared to walking, likely due to the availability of air conditioner. Thus, air conditioner quality makes tangibility substantial for satisfaction. In Kuala Lumpur, reliability elements in terms of taxi drivers' driving attitudes which comply with rules and regulations are significant for satisfaction since Kuala Lumpur has a high level of traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. This suffocating situation will eventually reveal the driving attitude of taxi drivers.

Based on the study of Yao and Ding (2011), reliability elements referred to the attitude to gain passengers may be significant as well. Locals usually opt for private transportation which makes the number of passengers lessen and compel taxi drivers

in need of passengers to gain profit to push them to attract passengers illegally or rudely. Reducing the number of passengers may also lead to responsiveness elements in terms of reasonable route arrangements. In the context of tourists, they might not have the knowledge of the best routes to reach their desired destination; therefore, taxi drivers will eventually take advantage of this by taking a longer route in order to gain more income. However, there are some frequent tourists in Kuala Lumpur who are aware of the routes taken by taxi drivers, and this may actually influence their satisfaction level regarding the services provided.

While using taxis, tourists will usually be very cautious in regards to their safety. In the Kuala Lumpur context, assurance elements in terms of security facilities, such as seat belts, are crucial since the road infrastructure may not be very good and there may be chances where the emergency brakes will be needed. In terms of price tags and meter usage, it would be useful for tourists to be assured of the price that they are supposed to pay. In Kuala Lumpur, due to traffic congestion, the duration of travel time varies even when the length is the same. Thus, it is crucial to include this aspect as tourists will be cautious on the amount of money they spend. As for empathy elements of knowledge of tourist spots, this may be significant since tourists are not aware or certain of each and every tourist spot that they should visit. Informing them on various facts and figures regarding tourist spots may be very helpful and tourists may feel very delighted. Thus, taxi service quality that capture tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy is likely a significant factor that determine satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H15: There is a significant relationship between taxi service quality and overall satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Overall Satisfaction and Intention Revisit**

Cronin and Taylor (1992) found empirical support that satisfaction does impact behavioural intention to repurchase. Similarly, Rust and William's (1994) study indicated that higher satisfaction levels will lead to higher intention to repurchase level. Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004) found that satisfaction strongly influenced intention to return to the same destination, and a study by Kozak and Rimmington (2000) also concluded that overall satisfaction among tourists will lead to tourist intentions to visit the same destination in the future. Geng-Qing and Hailin (2008) further found that tourist satisfaction impacted their intention for revisiting. As

for Tribe and Sanith's (1998) study, it was indicated that tourists with negative experiences will feel dissatisfied and will not revisit the same destination. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H16: There is a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and intention to revisit*

### **Relationship between Overall Satisfaction and Willingness to Recommend**

Satisfied tourists reflected that if they enjoy their time spent in a destination, they may revisit the same destination, recommend to others, provide favourable comments and share positive experiences regarding the destination. Nevertheless, dissatisfied tourists may not want to return to the same destination, may not recommend to others and, in a worst case scenario, may share negative experiences and provide negative remarks on the destination which will damage the destination's image and reputation (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Similarly in the study by Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004), they found that satisfaction strongly influenced intention to return to the same destination and the intention to recommend the destination to others. Destination attractiveness, tourist attractions, facilities and destination airport facilities and services impacted the level of overall satisfaction among tourists; this led to tourists' intentions to visit the same destination in future and to recommend the destination to others (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000).

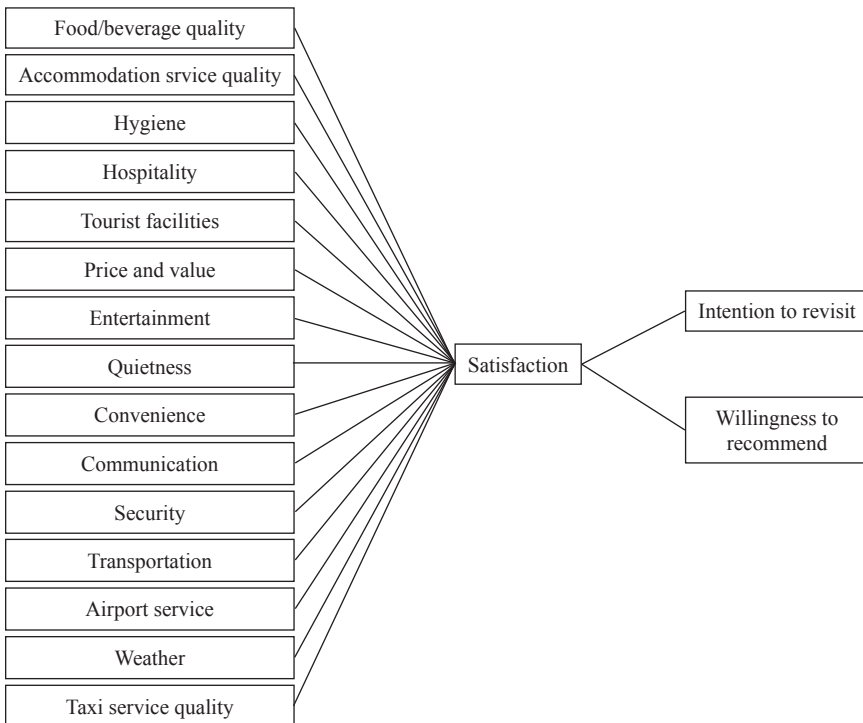
Based on Tribe and Sanith's (1998) study, respondents who were dissatisfied with their destination were the same individuals who encountered negative experiences, stated that they will not revisit the same destination and will not recommend that destination to others. A study done by Geng-Qing and Hailin (2008) also found similar findings and suggested that tourism service providers should pay attention and care for their image, product and service quality offered since it will be the basic element of tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit. Thus, to achieve satisfaction, tourism organisations should focus more on service quality, identify expectations of tourists and plan methods that can be used to meet such expectations since satisfaction leads to loyalty and retention (Ojo, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H17: There is a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend*

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Framework

The following research framework was adapted from the study done by Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) which aimed to determine perceptions of facilities and services that influence satisfaction of tourists. However, the last dimension in the research framework, which is the taxi service quality, was an additional dimension introduced in this study. The dimension was adapted from the study done by Yao and Ding (2011) which was a revised SERVPERF model that suited the taxi industry. The additional dimension was introduced in this study because taxi service quality also determined the overall satisfaction level. As for the framework on the overall satisfaction, impacted by the intention to revisit and willingness to recommend to others, was adapted from the study done by Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004) which found that satisfaction influence intention to return to the same destination and the intention to recommend the destination to others.



**Figure 1** Research framework

## Instruments

A total of 18 variables were measured and respondents were asked to answer them based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low Performance; 2 = Low Performance; 3 = Neutral; 4 = High Performance; 5 = Very High Performance). Each of the measurement items and references were explained below.

### Tourism Service Quality Scale

58 items of tourism service quality were grouped into 16 aspects developed by Rimmington and Yuksel (1998). However, since beach environment and water sports are not attractions in Kuala Lumpur, this study excluded only six items. This resulted in the use of 52 items grouped into 14 aspects.

**Table 1** Tourism service quality scale

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<b>Tourism Service quality items</b>	
1.	Food and beverage quality
a.	Tastiness of food served
b.	Quality of food and beverage
c.	Accuracy of the temperature of food served
d.	Portions of food
e.	Presentation of dishes
f.	Hygienic preparation of food
g.	Variety of menu
h.	Availability of preferred dishes
i.	Availability of traditional food
2.	Accommodation service quality
a.	Efficiency of check-in and check-out at accommodation
b.	Friendliness of service at accommodation
c.	Efficiency of service at accommodation
d.	Responsiveness of staff towards request
e.	Responsiveness of staff towards complaints
f.	Competency of staff
3.	Hygiene
a.	Cleanliness of accommodation
b.	Cleanliness of restaurant at accommodation
c.	Cleanliness of room
d.	Physical condition of accommodation
e.	Quality of facilities offered at accommodation
f.	Comfort of room
g.	Adequacy of water and electricity supply

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Table 1 (Cont.)

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<b>Tourism Service quality items</b>	
4.	Hospitality
	a. Courtesy of locals
	b. Courtesy of employees
	c. Willingness of locals to help
	d. Willingness of employees to help
	e. Friendliness of locals
	f. Safety in public area
5.	Tourist facilities
	a. Efficiency of service at tourist facilities
	b. Courtesy of service at tourist facilities
	c. Waiting time for service at tourist facilities
	d. Quality of service at tourist facilities
	e. Convenience operating hours at tourist facilities
	f. Accuracy of bills and tariff at tourist facilities
6.	Price and value
	a. Prices of food and drink served at accommodation
	b. Value of food services for price charges at accommodation
7.	Entertainment
	a. Quality and availability of entertainment
	b. Availability of tours
	c. Quality and availability of restaurants
	d. Value of goods and services for the price charged
8.	Quietness
	a. Noise level at restaurant of accommodation
	b. Noise level at accommodation
9.	Convenience
	a. Location of restaurants
	b. Location of accommodation
	c. Operating hours of restaurants at accommodation
10.	Communication
	a. Ease of communication with locals
	b. Ease of communication with employees
11.	Security
	a. Safety at accommodation
	b. Security of room

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Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>Tourism Service quality items</b>	
12.	Transportation
a.	Efficiency and timeliness of public transport
13.	Airport Services
a.	Efficiency of check-out at airport
14.	Weather
a.	Weather conditions

### Taxi Service Quality Scale

For the last dimension, taxi service quality was measured using 21 items grouped into one dimension, adapted from Yao and Ding (2011).

**Table 2** Taxi service quality scale

<b>No.</b>	<b>Taxi service quality items</b>
1	Exteriors of taxis
2	Interiors of taxis
3	Appearance of taxi drivers
4	Facilities and equipment inside taxis
5	Equipped with taxi drivers' license number and company name
6	Taxi drivers' acceptance after destination is assigned
7	Taxi drivers' compliance with traffic rules
8	Taxi drivers' attitude to attract passengers
9	Taxi drivers' behavior while driving (Smoking, phoning, eating)
10	Taxi drivers' patience
11	Taxi drivers' responds towards complaints
12	Time of arrival after taxi bookings
13	Reasonable route arrangements
14	Taxi drivers' knowledge of routes
15	Display of price tags and meter usage
16	Taxi drivers' language used to communicate
17	Availability of security facilities
18	Availability of small change and receipt
19	Taxi drivers' knowledge of tourist spots
20	Taxi drivers' warm services
21	Taxi drivers' honesty

### **Overall Satisfaction Scale**

Satisfaction was measured using a single-item scale adapted from Rimmington and Yuksel (1998), “Your overall satisfaction level”

### **Intention to Revisit Scale**

Intention to revisit was measured using a single-item scale adapted from Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004), “Your intention to revisit Kuala Lumpur”

### **Willingness to Recommend Scale**

Willingness to recommend was measured using a single-item scale adapted from Salazar, Costa and Rite (2004), “Your willingness to recommend Kuala Lumpur to friends and relatives”

### **Data Collection**

For this study, the area sampling method and the judgmental sampling method were used. Area sampling was used since the targeted respondents were foreign tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur, especially in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) area. KLCC was chosen as it is one of the tourist spots in Kuala Lumpur. Judgmental sampling was employed as only foreign tourists who have experience visiting Kuala Lumpur and had used facilities and services and taken taxis were invited to participate in the study. Foreign tourists were given questionnaires which captured the main concepts and demographic items such as age, gender, home country, days stayed in Kuala Lumpur, travel type and travel arrangement. From the sample size calculator provided by Creative Research Systems (2012) and based on the data of tourist arrivals in Malaysia gained from Tourism Malaysia which stated that 26 million tourists visited Malaysia in 2013, 196 questionnaires were required for this study. There were 196 questionnaires distributed, received and used.

## **RESULTS**

### **Reliability**

Table 3 exhibited the reliability analysis of each variable used in this study. However, six variables did not perform this analysis since only 1 item was used. The six variables were transportation, airport services, weather, overall satisfaction, intention to revisit and willingness to recommend. Since all Cronbach’s Alpha

values in Table 3 were greater than 0.60, this meant that tested instruments had internal consistency (Nunally, 1978).

**Table 3** Reliability score

<b>Description</b>	<b>N of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Food and beverage quality	9	0.86
Accommodation service quality	6	0.92
Hygiene	7	0.93
Hospitality	6	0.87
Tourist Facilities	6	0.91
Price and value	2	0.86
Entertainment	4	0.70
Quietness	2	0.79
Convenience	3	0.73
Communication	2	0.87
Security	2	0.82

### **Descriptive Analysis**

Referring to Table 4, all elements of tourism service quality were above level three of performance since the mean value was between 3.65 and 4.33. Taxi service quality, however, produced the lowest performance score, 3.65. Thus, it should be targeted for improvement. The mean of 3.65 meant that the taxi service quality is only slightly above neutral level; not reaching the high performance level of four. Moreover, improvements should be done towards elements which had not achieved performance level of four. The elements were price and value with a mean of 3.70, quietness with a mean of 3.78, tourist facilities with a mean of 3.90, entertainment with a mean of 3.91, hygiene with a mean of 3.94, airport service with a mean of 3.97 and food and beverage quality with a mean of 3.99. Nevertheless, security element produced the highest means score of 4.33, indicating that tourists are satisfied. The other high performance elements with mean scores above 4.00 were communication, accommodation service quality, convenience, transportation, weather and hospitality with mean scores of 4.03, 4.07, 4.07, 4.09, 4.12 and 4.18, accordingly.

**Table 4** Ranking of tourism service quality performance level

Description	Mean	Standard deviation
Taxi service quality	3.65	0.65
Price and value	3.70	0.76
Quietness	3.78	0.88
Tourist facilities	3.90	0.71
Entertainment	3.91	0.61
Hygiene	3.94	0.75
Airport service	3.97	0.99
Food and beverage quality	3.99	0.55
Communication	4.03	0.88
Accommodation service quality	4.07	0.77
Convenience	4.07	0.72
Transportation	4.09	0.91
Weather	4.12	0.80
Hospitality	4.18	0.66
Security	4.33	0.70

Table 5 indicated that respondents had high levels of overall satisfaction with the mean value of 4.20, which was above high satisfaction level. Also, respondents had the intention to revisit Kuala Lumpur and were willing to recommend Kuala Lumpur to friends and relatives since the mean value for both elements were 3.88 and 4.15 each, close to high intention to revisit and high willingness to recommend.

**Table 5** Mean analysis for satisfaction, intention to revisit and willingness to recommend

Description	Mean	Standard deviation
Overall satisfaction	4.20	0.55
Intention to revisit	3.88	0.97
Willingness to recommend	4.15	0.77

## Hypothesis Testing

Table 6 showed that adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.46 which indicated that approximately 46% of variance in the overall satisfaction was explained by the 15 elements of tourism service quality, which were: food and beverage quality, accommodation service quality, hygiene, hospitality, tourist facilities, price and value, entertainment, quietness, convenience, communication, security, transportation, airport service, weather and taxi service quality. Moreover, the table showed significant  $F$ -value

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of 12.38 being significant at  $p = 0.00$ . Based on the table, five hypotheses were supported:  $H2$ ,  $H4$ ,  $H7$ ,  $H12$  and  $H15$ . The regression coefficient for accommodation service quality ( $H2$ ) had the highest value which was  $r = 0.31$ , followed by hospitality ( $H4$ ) with  $r = 0.29$ , taxi service quality ( $H15$ ) with  $r = 0.25$ , entertainment ( $H7$ ) with  $r = 0.23$  and transportation ( $H12$ ) with  $r = 0.18$ .

**Table 6** Regression table for overall satisfaction

<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Standardized coefficient</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Food and beverage Quality ( $H1$ )	-0.06	0.44
Accommodation Service Quality ( $H2$ )	0.31	0.00
Hygiene ( $H3$ )	-0.06	0.45
Hospitality ( $H4$ )	0.29	0.00
Tourist Facilities ( $H5$ )	-0.02	0.78
Price and value ( $H6$ )	-0.01	0.95
Entertainment ( $H7$ )	0.23	0.01
Quietness ( $H8$ )	-0.06	0.45
Convenience ( $H9$ )	-0.06	0.55
Communication ( $H10$ )	-0.12	0.30
Security ( $H11$ )	0.01	0.87
Transportation ( $H12$ )	0.18	0.01
Airport Service ( $H13$ )	0.10	0.19
Weather ( $H14$ )	0.08	0.28
Taxi Service Quality ( $H15$ )	0.25	0.00
Adjusted $R^2$	0.46	
F	12.38	
P – value of regression model	0.00	

Table 7 exhibited that the value adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.18 indicated that approximately 18% of variance in intention to revisit was explained by overall satisfaction. Also, the table showed significant  $F$ -value of 43.31 being significant at  $p = 0.00$ , and  $H16$  was supported.

**Table 7** Regression table for intention to revisit

<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Standardized coefficient</b>	<b>p - value</b>
Overall Satisfaction ( $H16$ )	0.43	0.00
Adjusted $R^2$	0.18	
F	43.31	
P – value of regression model	0.00	

Based on Table 8, adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.29. This indicated that approximately 29% of variance in willingness to recommend was explained by overall satisfaction. Also, the table showed significant  $F$ -value of 82.25 being significant at  $p = 0.00$ , and  $H17$  was supported.

**Table 8** Regression table for willingness to recommend

Independent variables	Standardized coefficient	p - value
Overall Satisfaction ( $H17$ )	0.53	0.00
Adjusted $R^2$	0.29	
F	82.25	
P – value	0.00	

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study provided evidences on the applicability of tourism service quality model proposed by Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) and Yao and Ding (2011) in assessing tourism quality in Kuala Lumpur. From the 17 hypotheses proposed for the study, five hypotheses were supported. Four hypotheses that were supported (accommodation service quality, hospitality, entertainment and transportation) provided backing to the study of Rimmington and Yuksel (1998). Hypothesis on taxi service quality was supported, giving evidence to the study of Yao and Ding (2011). Ten hypotheses suggested by Rimmington and Yuksel (1998) were not supported. They were food and beverage quality, hygiene, tourist facilities, price and value, quietness, convenience, communication, security, airport service and weather. These variables were not significant in the context of Malaysia due to the ease of finding global food with global brand names such as Mc Donald's, Pizza Hut and Burger King. Currency exchange with Ringgit Malaysia are present and tourists perceived that these variables are the basic needs which have to be provided by all, and only contributed to a small proportion as compared to the whole experience and journey touring Kuala Lumpur.

### Theoretical Implications

This study provided evidences on the applicability of the model in assessing tourism quality in Kuala Lumpur. The study found that five of the 14 factors, namely accommodation service quality, hospitality, entertainment, transportation and taxi service quality, significantly explained satisfaction. Also, this study led to support to Yao and Ding (2011) taxi service quality model where service quality did significantly influence satisfaction.

### **Managerial Implications**

This study also found that tourists were generally satisfied with tourism service quality in Kuala Lumpur and had intentions to revisit Kuala Lumpur, and were also willing to recommend Kuala Lumpur to friends and relatives. Nevertheless, there were still some elements of tourism service quality which require improvement, which include taxi service quality, price and value, quietness, tourist facilities, entertainment, hygiene, airport service and food and beverage quality. Thus, service providers and the government are suggested to improve their service quality in these aspects.

More specifically, the study found accommodation, hospitality, entertainment, transportation and taxi service quality to positively impact satisfaction. Hotel staffs and local residents play a role in improving quality involving accommodation, hospitality and entertainment factors. On the other hand, local government and taxi drivers are pertinent in improving transportation and taxi service quality. In order to improve overall tourist satisfaction, all stakeholders consisting of hotel staffs, local residents, government agencies and taxi drivers need to responsibly play their parts. When the five factors are improved, tourists will be satisfied and they will consider revisiting and recommending Kuala Lumpur to friends and relatives.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The scope of this study was tourists who visited and experienced Kuala Lumpur, and had undergone all elements of tourism in the questionnaire. However, they did not have much time to spend in taking part in the survey and answer the questionnaires. Also, there were limitations in terms of language. The questionnaires were developed in the English language as it is the global lingua franca. However, there were some respondents who did not understand English; and due to this reason, they could not participate in the survey.

Since this study focused on Kuala Lumpur, future studies should adapt the framework of tourism service quality, satisfaction, intention to revisit and willingness to recommend other tourism locations such as for Melaka and Langkawi Island. Other locations have different service providers and elements of attractions. The framework could help destination managers identify areas of poor performances and improve accordingly. In order to overcome limitations of language barriers and tourists' time constraint, future studies are suggested to translate questionnaire into popular languages like Arabic, Mandarin and Spanish and shorten the questionnaire by concentrating on significant variables like accommodation, hospitality, entertainment, transportation and taxi service quality. In addition, future studies can be accomplished on comparing which service quality impact

satisfaction based on first time tourists and returning tourists. Elements of tourism service quality may vary for both types of tourists since first time tourists have no prior experience or knowledge touring Kuala Lumpur; but as for returning tourists, they already possess the experience visiting Kuala Lumpur and are more prepared before visiting. Thus, tourism elements which impact first timer's satisfaction may be different from those that affect returning visitors. Furthermore, this study did not analyse satisfaction across tourists from different home countries. Therefore, future studies may select and focus on few home countries of tourists and compare the satisfaction level. Future studies may select the highest tourists arrival country for the specific destination and understand how best to improve their satisfaction level.

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