SERVICE QUALITY, VISITOR SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS PUBLIC MUSEUMS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRAK

Muzium, sebagai suatu produk yang penting dalam industri pelancongan warisan budaya Malaysia, merupakan sektor yang boleh memberi kesan terhadap pertumbuhan industri pelancongan negara. Berdasarkan fenomena persaingan yang semakin bertambah dalam industri pelancongan, maka kajian ini dijalankan untuk menilai persepsi pelawat muzium terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan, tahap kepuasan serta niat perilaku terhadap muzium awam di Malaysia, dengan mengaplikasikan model SERVPERF yang telah diubahsuai. Kajian ini juga bertujuan mengkaji hubungan di antara kualiti perkhidmatan, kepuasan pelawat dan niat perilaku secara keseluruhannya.

Sejumlah 300 set soal selidik yang merangkumi 35 butiran tentang kualiti perkhidmatan diedarkan kepada para pelawat di sembilan muzium di Malaysia, yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Data yang terkumpul telah melalui pelbagai analisis seperti ujian kebolehpercayaan (reliability test), taburan data, analisis deskriptif (descriptive analysis), dan analisis faktor dengan menggunakan SPSS. Seterusnya, dengan menggunakan AMOS, analisis laluan telah dijalankan melalui pembinaan model ukuran dan model struktur.

Berdasarkan keputusan analisis deskriptif, dimensi khidmat pelanggan mencapai skor min tertinggi bagi kualiti perkhidmatan, sementara dimensi harga menerima skor min terendah. Faktor analisis menunjukkan bahawa faktor 'Khidmat Pelanggan',

'Kualiti Peragaan / Pameran', 'Perkhidmatan dan Kemudahan Sokongan', 'Sumber Maklumat', dan 'Ameniti dan Kemudahan' secara signifikannya menyumbang terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan. Dapatan analisis laluan mendedahkan bahawa kualiti perkhidmatan adalah penentu tahap kepuasan pelawat. Di samping itu, hubungan positif di antara kepuasan pelawat dan niat perilaku secara keseluruhannya adalah signifikan. Walau bagaimanapun, kesan langsung daripada kualiti perkhidmatan secara keseluruhannya terhadap niat perilaku menunjukkan bahawa ia tidak signifikan dalam perkara tersebut.

Kajian ini diharapkan dapat menyumbang ke arah pembentukan suatu asas untuk pembangunan kualiti masa hadapan dalam bidang penyelidikan yang sama, dan akan menjadi panduan untuk sektor muzium di Malaysia. Di samping itu, diharapkan juga agar ia mampu menyediakan panduan asas kepada pengendali muzium untuk merumus and memantau operasi mereka, yang akan membolehkan mereka memenuhi kehendak pelawat serta menawarkan perkhidmatan yang lebih baik.

SERVICE QUALITY, VISITOR SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS TOWARDS PUBLIC MUSEUMS IN MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Museum, as a niche product of Malaysia's cultural heritage tourism industry, is one of the sectors that could promote the growth of the tourism industry in the country. Given the increasing competitive phenomenon of the tourism industry, this study aimed to assess the visitors' perceptions of the service quality, the satisfaction levels, and the behavioural intentions towards public museums in Malaysia by applying the modified version of the SERVPERF model. This study was also set out to explore the relationships between the overall service quality, the overall visitors satisfaction and the behavioural intentions of visitors.

A set of questionnaire with 35-items of perceived service quality was formed, and 300 copies of the set of the questionnaire were distributed to the visitors of nine participating museums in Malaysia. The data collected was subjected to various analyses, such as reliability test, data distribution, descriptive analysis, and factor analysis by using SPSS. In addition, by using AMOS, path analysis was conducted by constructing the measurement model and the structural models.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, customer services dimension obtained the highest mean score for perceived service quality, while the pricing dimension received the lowest mean score. The factor analysis indicated that the 'Customer Services', 'Quality of Displays/Exhibitions', 'Supporting Services and

Facilities', 'Information Sources', and 'Amenities and Facilities' factors were the significant contributing aspects of the service quality. The results of the path analysis revealed that service quality is an antecedent of the satisfaction levels. Moreover, the positive relationship between the overall visitor satisfaction and the behavioural intentions is also significant respectively. However, the direct impact of the overall service quality towards the behavioural intentions showed no significance in this matter.

This study is expected to contribute towards the setting of a foundation for future quality development along a similar line of research, which serves as the basis for the museum sector in Malaysia. In addition, it might provide a foundation for museum operators to formulate and monitor their setups that will enable them to satisfy their visitors as well as provide better services.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. The first section of the chapter discusses the background of study, follows by problem statement, the research objectives, the scope of study and the overview of the cultural heritage tourism.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the recent decades, there has been an interest in promoting the past as a tourism 'product', and along with it comes the idea of understanding and reliving the past as a key tourist 'experience'. Even though cultural heritage tourism is not a new phenomenon (Boyd, 2002), it has become a 'new' area of tourism demand which is known for its new offerings and invaluable experience to tourists. The increasing popularity of this sector is mainly due to the public's inclination to seek out for attractions of novelty and uniqueness which allow them to gain exceptional experience and learn new knowledge (Jin, 2002).

As one of the sectors in the service industry, the quality issues have been an existing challenge of cultural heritage tourism. As mentioned by Boyd (2002), quality has recently been associated with service and heritage management, while at the same

time it is indeed a process that requires implementation. Furthermore, with modern technology and media like television and the Internet, people do not need to step out of their homes to see a typical attraction. A person can enjoy a tourist experience in artificial reality at home, or at least a tourist may be able to access the virtual experience about the place even before the actual trip. Besides that, easy access to information might provide tourists a great number of alternatives when they are planning for a trip (Honkanen, 2002). In this competitive environment, the true measure of a heritage attraction's success depends on the operator's ability to constantly satisfy their customers. Due to the rising number of available options and the ease and comfort of information access at their fingertips, the demand of value for money and the value of time in terms of both price and the quality of service being provided has also increased tremendously. Frochot and Hughes (2000) stated that the success of heritage attractions is dependent upon the quality of the visitor's experience. It is crucial for heritage attractions providers to understand how visitors evaluate the elements of their service delivery.

Museum, as a type of cultural heritage attraction is selected as the main focus of this study. Similar to other service industries and heritage attractions, the typical museum's product is delivered in a physical setting or site, which includes the land or building area, shape, lighting, means of orientating the visitors, queues, waiting, crowding, and methods of stimulating interest and engagement (Goulding, 2000). Recently, museums throughout the world realized that entertainment, leisure and education are the legitimate parts of their repertoire. According to Rowley (1999), customer service, which includes the interaction between the museum staff and the visitors, is only one of the components of the overall visitors' experience. Visitor

satisfaction depends on the total visit experience provided by the museum. Edvardsson (1996) mentioned that the concept of service should be approached from the customer's point of view; since it is his or her perception towards the service that will determine the outcome towards the service. Different customers may have different values and different grounds for assessment. Undeniably, there is a tendency that different group of customers may perceive the same service in different ways (Edvardsson, 1996; Rowley, 1999).

Although the measurement of quality in service industries began as early as in the 1980s with the development of the SERVQUAL model, there has not been any systematic study of how museums measure service quality (Caldwell, 2002). Marketing services focused initially on the well-known industries, such as the finance and banking sector, the airlines industry as well as the hospitality industry. Goulding (2000) also stated that there are only a few researches that take into account the perspectives of visitors to the museums. Some museum operators and other related official bodies have attempted to collect data of/from the visitors. However, quite a number of those researches have been criticised for their lacking in the attempt to integrate the results into a coherent framework and failing to use the findings to advance and improve the understanding of the nature of the visits.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Mason and McCarthy (2006), public museums and galleries are under a lot of pressure to be more business-oriented in terms of their overall marketing strategy. Sterry (2004) stated that there is also an additional strain on the attraction operators to seize new opportunities and to focus greater attention on changing audiences with new needs and demands. Thus, in the highly competitive world of leisure and tourist attractions, museums need to focus sharply in the area of visitor satisfaction, an element in which is crucial as it plays the role of a determinant factor to create returning visitors (Rowley, 1999).

A local researcher, Haji Hassan (2006) stated that the function of the museum should not just merely align with the requirement of the International Council of Museums ICOM resolution, but also incorporate with the Malaysian context in fulfilling the need of the community. Museums are also facing the social pressures to respond more effectively to the needs of the plural society.

By referring to the issues mentioned above, the main purpose of this study is to assess the perceptions of service quality, satisfaction levels, and behavioural intentions towards public museums in Malaysia, from the visitors' perspective, by applying the modified version of the SERVPERF model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Most of the studies dealing with museums' service quality that have been carried out were conducted by adapting SERVQUAL model (Saleh, 2005; Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, Nowacki, 2005). Besides that, multiple studies which used

SERVQUAL model have demonstrated the existence of difficulties resulting from the conceptual or theoretical component, as well as from the empirical component (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Boulding et al., 1993). Furthermore, previous researches revealed that SERVPERF model then to be more efficient (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), provide more reliable estimations, better convergent and discriminant validity, greater explained variance (Elliott, 1994), and consequently less bias (Llusar & Zornoza, 2000). Thus, in this study, modified SERVPERF model were used to assess the service quality of museums in Malaysia which might provide more useful and reliable findings to the museums operators in Malaysia.

Another issue raised by literature is that, even though there are some studies tend to support the service quality (SQ) $\rightarrow$ satisfaction (SAT) model, it seems to be no consensus on the causal ordering of service quality and satisfaction (SAT $\rightarrow$ SQ or SQ $\rightarrow$ SAT). But, whatever may be the causal ordering of SQ and SAT, many researchers revealed that both SQ and SAT may have direct links to the behavioural intentions (BI), i.e. SQ $\rightarrow$ BI and SAT $\rightarrow$ BI (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Cronin *et al*., 2000; Dabholkar *et al*., 2000; Olorunniwo *et al.*, 2006). By using the overall sample from six different industries (spectator sports, participative sports, entertainment, healthcare, long-distance ground carrier, and fast food), Cronin *et al*. (2000) found out that there is a significant direct link between SQ and BI. However, when the data for the industries were tested separately, the same researchers found that service quality had a direct effect on BI in only four of the six industries (Cronin *et al*., 2000). Even in the area of tourism, existing empirical researches on perceived quality and customer satisfaction frequently provide contradictory results regarding the relationships between perceived quality, customer satisfaction and behavioral

intentions (Ekinci and Riley, 1998; Gonzálezet *et al.*, 2007). In this study, one of the main concern is whether the direct effect of SQ on BI (*i.e.* SQ→BI) is significant or not in the context of museum.

There are also some other supporting points to justify the significance of this study. From the Malaysia government perspective, tourism is a critical source of income which has an impact on Malaysia's economic growth. Economic contribution of tourism sector has become the second major contributor to the country's economy after manufacturing (Jusoh, Mohamed & Puad, 2007). In the 2007 Budget, the Malaysian government proposed to spend RM49 million to promote Visit Malaysia Year 2007. Besides that, the 2009 Budget under the section of 'Promoting Tourism', proposed an allocation of RM50 million for conservation works of heritage sites in Malacca and Penang, which were listed as World Heritage Sites in July 2008. Furthermore, in the 2010 Budget, the government has allocated RM899 million to further boost the tourism industry.

Besides that, tourism is also a good way to promote national integrity, international relations and stability. Cultural heritage which includes historical sites, buildings, cultures and related assets are the distinguished elements that encapsulate a nation's spirit. Malaysia's cultural heritage is unique as it portrays a multicultural community living in harmony amidst modernization and social change (Ahmad & Badarulzaman, 2005). So, by promoting the rich cultural heritage tourism of Malaysia, it will move even further to allow deeper understanding and greater awareness of our country's existence as well as role in the international arena.

Furthermore, researches found that overseas travellers to the United States who visit cultural attractions (*i.e.* museums, national parks) tend to spend more time and money during their visit (Hotel Online, 1998). Kerstetter *et al.* (2001) also stated that individuals with interest in visiting heritage or cultural sites tend to stay longer, spend more per trip, highly educated and have higher average annual income than general travellers. From the findings of those studies, it seems that the cultural heritage travellers belong to the affluent group in the tourism market. So, it will be profitable for the country to attract this group of tourist.

This study aims to extend the literature on service quality in the cultural heritage tourism sector, specifically focuses on the public museums in Malaysia. Throughout the preliminary literature review, majority of the studies dealing with service quality have used United States and Canada, Europe, New Zealand and Australia as samples. Therefore, this study needs to be carried out since there might be variation due to the differences in terms of culture compared with the countries mentioned above. With this study, it is hoped that it will be able to provide better understanding of the relative importance which visitors will consider when evaluating the perceived service quality provided by museums in Malaysia. Hopefully, the findings of this study will contribute to the setting of a foundation for future quality development, which will serve as a basis for benchmarking by the cultural heritage tourism sector in Malaysia.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

There are four specific objectives for this study. First, to determine the perceived service quality attributes that can be used in evaluating service quality and effectiveness of museums in Malaysia. Second, to examine the level of perceived service quality provided by the museums in Malaysia from the visitors' perspective. Third, to examine the overall service quality, overall satisfaction levels and behavioural intentions of visitors. Last but not least, to assess the relationships between the overall service quality and overall visitor satisfaction as well as the behavioural intentions of visitors.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Issues of cultural heritage tourism cover rather broad and wide-ranging aspects. With the complexity of the tourism and marketing fields, as well as the variety of school of thought in the existing marketing theories and strategies, to include all the issues in this thesis could make this a monumental task. In order to produce a more defined study, a set of research and production boundaries has been set.

The scope of this study is limited to the public museums in Malaysia, which the management of these museums has agreed to participate in this study. Only public museums were approached to participate in this study as to try to minimize the managerial differences. It is important to note that organization cultures, government regulations, funding, the aims and goals of a particular museum and etc. might cause

different perspectives on the development, management, maintenance, and the planning of museums. Those perspectives however, are not the focus of this study.

One of the key issues in this study is to discover the key museum attributes that represent the fundamental service-quality dimensions. Furthermore, the issues of service quality influence towards the overall visitors' satisfaction and behavioural intentions will also be the focus in this study.

The data collection was only targeted to the visitors of the participating museums. The management or staff of museums' perspectives, however, is not the focus of this study. Their opinions and suggestions were merely used to contribute in the process of forming and developing the questionnaire.

Besides that, there might also be contextual differences in several factors, mainly due to the background of the respondents. The respondents are ranged from different cultural and educational background, different job environment, and different visiting purpose. These differences may have some influences on the different perceptions towards service quality, which directly or indirectly may affect their overall satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. The results of this study do not explain reasons behind the differences in perceptions among the visitors.

1.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

1.5.1. Definition

Even though cultural heritage tourism has been recognized as one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry (Ahmad & Badarulzaman, 2005), it is not easy to define the precise meaning of cultural heritage tourism or in other words, to find a phrase that best defines it (Honkanen, 2002). This is because the term "culture" and "heritage", respectively, can be each defined in numerous ways (Boyd, 2002; and Honkanen, 2002).

UNESCO (2010) stated that, "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we pass on to future generations". However, according to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (1999), heritage is defined as a broad concept that includes natural and cultural environments, encompassing of landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. On the other hand, Nuryanti (1996) viewed heritage as part of the cultural tradition of a society.

From Honkanen's (2002) point of view, culture is a behavioural characteristic of human beings in which material objects, especially, have significant role. Culture includes many aspects, such as languages, ideas, beliefs, habits, codes of ethics, institutions, tools, technologies, works of art, ceremonies and rituals. World Heritage Convention also suggested that cultural heritage includes monuments such as architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or

structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and the combination of historic artistic or scientific features, groups of buildings and sites (Rátz, 2003). Silberberg (1995) defined cultural tourism as visits by people from outside the host community, which are motivated wholly or in part by the interest in the historical, artistic as well as the scientific lifestyle or heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution.

On the other hand, some researchers have also stated that cultural heritage tourism can be defined as the travel to experience the historical sites, artifacts, cultures and activities that genuinely represent the chronicles and the people of the past. Heritage is the main motivating factor for the consumer or visitor to visit that particular destination (Ahmad & Badarulzaman, 2005; Rátz, 2003; and Fyall & Garrod, 1998). Based on the definitions mentioned above, it seems that the terms 'cultural tourism' and 'cultural heritage tourism' are rather interchangeable in terms of their usage and meaning.

Whereas as in the case of museums, museums are viewed as an element which foster an integrated approach to cultural heritage, as well as act as a link of continuity between creation and heritage (UNESCO, 2007). Barrio *et al.* (2009) mentioned that museums are perhaps the most significant representation of all manifestations of cultural heritage. This is mainly due to the characteristic of museums as the organizations that have the perfect blend of preserving the legacy handed down to us by our ancestors, maintaining and selecting those possessions which reflect the creativity and identity of a society, as well as managing and displaying them to visitors.

1.5.2 The Integration of Cultural Heritage and Tourism

According to World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2010), international tourism has generated US$ 946 billion (€ 643 billion) in export earnings in 2008, and a growth in the international tourist arrivals is expected to be between 3 to 4 percent in 2010. The growth in the tourism sector does not just reflect the importance of the tourism industry within the global economy, but also the changes in the social and economic profiles of the world's population, such as the increased disposable income and the spending power per capita, greater leisure time, better informed and traveled public, and major demographic changes in the developed and, moreover, in some cases also include the developing countries as well, leading to major changes in the travel and leisure demand characteristics (Aziz, 2005).

Nowadays, tourism is sprouting into something sophisticated and modern. Tourists are no longer just seeking for conventional activities, like sunbathing beside the pool or shopping in the state-of-the-art malls with the list of high end boutiques. They prefer exotic experiences of the vacation, whether to gain new experiences or knowledge (Aman *et al*., 2005). They might also want to explore the culture and ethnicity of the place they visit (DeMasi, 2005). As the homogenization of our world continues to grow due to the globalization process, people tend to seek for unique indigenous experience when they travel. They are looking for destinations that offer them some unique experiences. Besides that, the changing of traveling behaviours and trends are also caused by the growth of the elderly population and the aging of the baby boomers generation (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2004; and Goulding, 1999). This is the group of travelers who have more time and money to

spend more during their vacation and might be seeking for the fulfillment of their nostalgic memories by traveling to the historical attractions (Goulding, 1999).

The idea of marketing a destination as an attraction with historical, natural, and cultural value is strongly supported by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It is estimated that 37 per cent of all trips today involved a cultural and heritage component (Boyd, 2002). Thus, historical buildings, historical sites and unique local cultures may be promoted as tourism products to generate foreign income (Ahmad & Badarulzaman, 2005). Cultural and heritage resources can be sold as 'commodity', which will allow people to see or visit for the purposes of visual enjoyment and recreation, to learn about history and culture, and for academicians as well as researchers to carry out research and investigation (Kamamba, 2003). The concept of cultural heritage tourism is highly related to the desire of the people, as a member of the population in this world, to understand, learn and explore their own as well as others' culture and history (Kamamba, 2003).

1.5.3 Museum

According to the International Council of Museums (2007), a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution to serve the society. Its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity, and its environment are for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

On the other hand, Hirzy (2005) defined museums as an institution that helps people to understand and to appreciate the natural world, the history of civilizations, and the record of the humanity's artistic, scientific, and technological achievements.

The idea behind the formation of museums started early in the second millennium BCE. It was found that copies of old inscriptions were reproduced for educational purposes at Larsa in Mesopotamia (International Council of Museums, 2004). The concept of museums started from the ancient human desires to preserve cultural identity, gain social, political and economic status, and pursue knowledge. In the early stage, the collections which included works of art, natural curiosities as well as exotic items brought from far-flung parts of the empire were usually housed in the temples or specially built treasuries that were opened to the public with small entrance fees. The collections were primarily a religious provision. The word "museum" was first used in English in the 17th century. It was derived from the Greek word "mouseion", which means, "seat of the Muses" (Hirzy, 2005). The opening of the Ashmolean Museum by the University of Oxford in1683 is generally considered as the first museum established by a public body for the benefit of the

public. At that time, the collections were mainly brought together by the Tradescant family from many parts of the world, and previously displayed to the public at their home in London (International Council of Museums, 2004).

The primary function of museums is to gather, to preserve and to study objects (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). They collect objects of scientific, aesthetic, or historical importance; care for them; and study, interpret, as well as exhibit them for the purposes of public education and the enrichment of knowledge. Museums offer many benefits to the visitors and their communities, as well as the society as a whole. As educational institutions, they offer unparallel opportunities for self-directed learning and exploration to people of different ages, interests, backgrounds, and abilities. Besides that, they also serve public gathering places where visitors can be entertained, inspired, and introduced to new ideas and knowledge. Museums enrich local cultural life and make communities more appealing as places to live and visit. For the society as a whole, museums provide the sources of national, regional, and local identity. They play an important role in reflecting both continuity and change with the aim to preserve and to protect cultural and natural heritage while vividly showing the progression of the human imagination and the natural world (Hirzy, 2005). By visiting museums, visitors can seek for the total experience that may embrace leisure and recreation, culture, education, space, as well as social interaction (Rowley, 1999).

Recently, museums are increasingly seen as important tools for community development in assisting the promotion of cultural conservation. In many developing countries, museums have been included as an important part of the community

development projects. Due to the multiple functions and possible uses, museums have great potential in helping to maintain people's cultural traditions and at the same time promoting their socioeconomic development (Kreps, 1997).

1.5.4 Types of Museums

There are different types of museums around the world, which are mostly categorized by the scope of collections of those museums. The major types of museums are namely art, history, natural history, and science museums. In several museums, these disciplines may be combined, and within these categories, there are also many specialized museums focusing on particular topics or types of collections, such as museums of local history, music, the cultural heritage of native peoples, or maritime history (Department of the Interior, 1997).

Art museums reflect both the historic and contemporary artistic accomplishment. Art museums enable visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy the beauty of art. They often have a variety of artworks, including paintings, sculpture, furniture, and other decorative arts. Many art museums have highly specialized collecting objectives, whereby they focus on a particular type of art (Kenney, 2010).

For history museums, the main purpose is towards promoting a greater appreciation and knowledge of history and its importance to understand the present and to anticipate the future. They can be ranged from historic sites and small historic house museums to large, encyclopedic institutions such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Most cities and states have

historical societies that operate museums or historic sites. History museums usually collect a wide range of objects, including fine arts, furniture, clothings, documents, and other materials. Some history museums focus on the art or natural history of a region as well as its cultural history. The most common type of history museum is the historic house. Historic house museums are residences or properties of historical interest that have been restored and opened to the public. Furnishings are chosen to reflect the period during which the most notable owners of the house were in residence. Another type of history museum is outdoor museum, whereby history is presented in the context of a community. They are also named as historic villages or living history museums (Hirzy, 2005).

Natural history museums are used to share knowledge about the natural world in many aspects. Collections and exhibitions in natural history museums generally focus on nature and culture. Some of the popular exhibits at natural history museums include dinosaurs, gems and minerals, native as well as ancient cultures. Other topics of interest also include biodiversity, ecology, plants, human biology and evolution, meteorites, ocean life, birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians, mollusks, and vertebrate evolution. Many natural history museums were originally established as centers of scientific research, with collections that are gathered from research expeditions and fieldwork (Virginia Association of Museums, 2008).

Another type of museums is the science museums. Science museums or science-technology centers are devoted to enhance the public's understanding of science and scientific achievements. Most exhibits are family-friendly, which are suitable for both adults and children. By using interactive exhibition techniques and participatory

experiences, they stimulate curiosity and allow people to learn at their own pace while exploring the principles, concepts, and the implications of science and technology. Common exhibits at science museums teach visitors about computers, robots, machines, the human body and senses, chemistry, physics, and astronomy. Science museums include aquariums, planetariums, small zoos, and botanical gardens (Virginia Association of Museums, 2008).

Besides the four main types of museums, many museums challenge the aforementioned traditional categories. These include sports museums and halls of fame, music museums, and children's museums, for example the Toy Museum in Penang.

1.5.5 Museums in Malaysia

The formation of museum was established in Malaysia more than hundred years ago. After the founding of the first museum, the Perak Museum, in Taiping in 1883, more than 100 museums have been set up in the country. They are managed by various government agencies, from federal to states levels. Nowadays, even the private sector is playing an important role in this field. The Department of Museums Malaysia (formerly known as the Department of Museums and Antiques) was established soon after independence in 1957, which was under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. However, this department is currently under the Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage (Department of Museums and Antiques, 2004). In 1959, the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj commissioned

an architect to prepare plans for the National Museum. Malayan designs and motifs were to be incorporated into the building. The National Museum was officially opened in 1963 (GTi Technologies, 2001).

In Malaysia, the administration of museums can be broadly categorized as follow: the federal, state, government departmental, institutional and private museums. The Department of Museums Malaysia is under the Federal Government and it only administers and finances the National Museum, the Perak Museum, and the Bujang Valley Archaeological Museum in Merbok. Currently, each state in Malaysia has its own museum, with several states administering more than one museum. For the institutional and government departmental museums, they are established for teaching and educational purposes, as well as to highlight the respective departments' activities. Among those are university museums, geological museums, forestry museums, rubber museums, armed force museums and numismatic museums (Department of Museums and Antiques, Malaysia, 2004).

According to the Department of Museums and Antiques, Malaysia (2004), museums have been one of the significant products of tourism. The National Museum is one of the popular tourist attractions in Malaysia, with an average of over two million visitors a year. Since the Sixth Malaysia Plan, the government has allocated a considerable sum of money to preserve the historic monuments, archaeological sites and museums, as well as to develop those places into tourist attractions.

1.6 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis comprises of five chapters. The purposes and the contents of each chapter are briefly described in the following list:

Chapter 1 presents the introduction of the study, which includes the background of study, problem statement, the research objectives, the scope of study and the overview of the cultural heritage tourism.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review, which is presented under the broad heading of the concept of quality, the concept of service, service quality, relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and museum attributes.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, which consists of the research framework, instrumentation, pre-testing, the sampling procedure, the data reliability, the data distribution, and the data analysis.

Chapter 4 reveals the findings resulting from the data analysis. The results are presented in relation to the research objectives. The report of the findings is divided into eight sections; namely the respondents' profile, descriptive statistics on the perceived service quality, descriptive statistics on the overall service quality, descriptive statistics on the satisfaction levels, descriptive statistics on the behavioural intentions, factor analysis, the measurement model, and the structural model.

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings, discusses the implications and recommendations for management practice, reviews the limitations of the study and finally presents suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the literature on the concept of quality, the concept of service and service quality is presented. Previous studies that draw relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions are also discussed in this chapter. It is followed by discussions on the museum attributes.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY

The concept of quality means differently to different people. It is very hard to set a threshold to judge quality (Harvey & Green, 1993). However, quality is never an accident, but it has to be visionalised, initiated, planned, delivered, monitored and sustained (Pallet *et al*., 2003). In the United States and Europe, quality control from one type to another has been part of the manufacturing industry for more than hundred years, and the use of various quality concepts is evolving. On the other hand, in Asia, many quality practices started and developed in Japan (Kull & Wacker, 2009), especially during the quality revolution in Japan following the World War II (American Society for Quality, 2010).

Quality has been recognized as one of the important tools for attaining operational efficiency and improving business performance (Jain & Gupta, 2004), and is one of

the most critical aspects for the strategic management in today's business world. The concept of quality has been constantly discussed in both the academic and business fields (Garvin, 1984; Reeves & Bednar, 1994). Early studies on quality were mostly based on technical standards and specifications of goods. For example, it merely measured the fitness to standard, which was more applicable to the manufacturing sector (Wong *et al*., 1990).

After the evolutionary process of measuring quality, there are four fitness or levels of quality in measuring quality of goods, such as fitness to standard, fitness to use, fitness to cost and fitness to latent requirement, which particularly have been maintained by the Japanese manufacturers in the past six decades (Maken, 2009). In general, the foundations of quality management, which were mostly laid by Daming, Juran, Crosby and others advocated the use of statistical methods to control variations in manufacturing process. These quality "gurus" have been prolific in writing how-to books in improving quality.

Although quality has been with us for such a long time, Garvin (1988) stated that quality has emerged as a formal management function not only until recently. Modern approaches to quality have emerged gradually. It has gone through an evolution instead of dramatic breakthroughs, which were the outcomes of a series of discoveries dating back to over a century. However, during the 'quality assurance' era in 1950s, quality started to evolve from a narrow, manufacturing-based discipline to a broader implication for management. Four important elements were involved in this era: quantifying the costs of quality, total quality control, reliability engineering and zero defects. During the quality revolution, Japan started to implement the new

"total quality" approach. Rather than relying purely on product inspection, Japanese manufacturers focused on improving all organizational processes through the people who used the product, based on the feedback from the internal and external customers (American Society for Quality, 2010).

Since the last two decades, quality embodied a dramatic shift in perspectives. All the top management had expressed an interest in quality. They had linked it to profitability, defined it from the customer's point of view, and included it in the strategic planning process. Currently, the world is in the strategic quality management era, which is an extension of its predecessors (Garvin, 1988). From the product quality perspectives, there have been a series of managerial methodologies developed, such as Quality Circles, Total Quality Management, Six-Sigma Quality, which have enriched quality perceptions (Ghylin *et al*. 2008).

2.1.1 Definitions of Quality

Quality is a notoriously ambiguous term (Pounder, 1999). According to Drury (2000), there is no single definition that can encompass the whole gamut of the word "quality". Crosby (1979) explained quality as conformance to requirements, the reduction of errors, lower scrap rate, and higher efficiency. However, Juran and Godfrey (1999) described it as the features of products, which meet the customers' needs and thereby provide customer satisfaction. They also suggested that quality implies freedom from deficiencies.

Almaraz (1994) explained that the definitions of user-based, product-based, and manufacturing-based are rather similar to the definition of Juran and Godfrey (1999) regarding the concepts of quality. He noted that the value-based definition is the basis for most of the research conducted on service quality, which explores the gaps between perceived expectations and the actual value.

On the other hand, Garvin (1988) viewed quality as a multifaceted concept. He defined quality by five principal approaches, which are transcendent, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based, and value-based: -

- Transcendent denotes "innate excellence".
- Product-based definition views quality as a precise and measurable variable.
- User-based measures quality by the degree to which the customers' wants and needs are satisfied.
- Manufacturing-based definitions identify quality as the conformance of requirements.
- Value-based defines quality in term of prices or costs.

According to Berden *et al.* (2000), quality is accomplished when a company has successfully fulfilled the customer requirements. Thus, a straightforward definition of quality is therefore to "conformance to requirements". These requirements might comprise many aspects of different nature, including objective as well as subjective aspects and aspects relating to time, price, etc.