

# ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES OF EMOTIONS AND SATISFACTION OF GUESTS IN THE MALAYSIAN PEER-TO-PEER ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

LAIBA ALI

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Ву

LAIBA ALI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

November 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of degree of Master of Science

## ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES OF EMOTIONS AND SATISFACTION OF GUESTS IN THE MALAYSIAN PEER-TO-PEER ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

Ву

#### LAIBA ALI

November 2018

Chairman : Wong Foong Yee

Faculty: Economics and Management

The main aim of this study is to investigate antecedents of guests' behavioral intentions in Peer to Peer (P2P) accommodation sector of Malaysia. This study has three specific objectives that are: 1) to determine the effect of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest emotions within P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia; 2) to determine the effect of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest satisfaction within P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia; and 3) to determine the effect of guest emotions and guest satisfaction on guest's behavioral intentions within P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia.

A quantitative analysis of these antecedents is provided in this study in the context of Malaysia, and questionnaires were used to collect data as a principal data collection method. Data was collected online from tourists/guests (local and international), who have stayed at P2P accommodation in Malaysia during the last 24 months. This study used the purposive sampling and multiple sampling approaches in order to make the sample more generalized.

Based on Stimulus-Organism-Response model theory, hypothesized theoretical models for the present study was developed and analyzed. Firstly, descriptive statistics were used to determine the demographic characteristics of the sample among other P2P accommodation practices in Malaysia. Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the eight hypotheses of this study under three objectives.

The findings showed that three dimensions of the physical environment had a significant positive impact on guest emotions and satisfaction, social environment had a significant positive impact on guest satisfaction only and price fairness had a significant positive impact on guest emotions only. Both guest emotions and satisfaction had a significant positive impact on guest behavioral intentions.

This study had made contributions in theoretical, practical, policy and methodology. The findings suggested that government should educate all the working bodies and stakeholders of P2P accommodation about the services and importance of this sector. This study has tested few antecedents of behavioral intentions in Malaysian P2P accommodation sector. Future studies can test other antecedents in different sectors and contexts.

### Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

### ANTESEDEN DAN HASIL EMOSI DAN KEPUASAN PENGUNJUNG DALAM SEKTOR PENGINAPAN RAKAN KE RAKAN DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

#### **LAIBA ALI**

#### November 2018

Pengerusi : Wong Foong Yee

Fakulti : Ekonomi dan Pengurusan

Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah untuk menyelidik anteseden niat tingkah laku pengunjung dalam sektor penginapan Rakan Ke Rakan (P2P) di Malaysia. Kajian ini mempunyai tiga objektif spesifik iaitu: 1) untuk menentukan kesan persekitaran fizikal, persekitaran sosial dan keadilan harga ke atas emosi pengunjung dalam sektor penginapan P2P di Malaysia; 2) untuk menentukan kesan persekitaran fizikal, persekitaran sosial dan keadilan harga ke atas kepuasan pengunjung dalam sektor penginapan P2P di Malaysia; dan 3) untuk menentukan kesan emosi pengunjung dan kepuasan pengunjung ke atas niat tingkah laku pengunjung dalam sektor penginapan P2P di Malaysia.

Satu analisis kuantitatif terhadap anteseden tersebut disediakan dalam kajian ini untuk konteks Malaysia, dan borang soal selidik digunakan sebagai satu kaedah pengumpulan data utama untuk mengumpul data. Data dikumpulkan secara atas talian daripada pelawat/pengunjung (tempatan dan antarabangsa), yang mana pernah menginap di penginapan rakan ke rakan di Malaysia untuk tempoh 24 bulan yang lepas. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan persampelan bertujuan dan persampelan pelbagai bagi memastikan sampel adalah lebih bermakna.

Berdasarkan kepada teori model Stimulus-Organisme-Respons, model hipotesis teoritis untuk kajian ini telah dibentuk dan dianalisa. Pertama, statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk menentukan ciri demografi sampel di antara amalan penginapan P2P di Malaysia. *Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)* digunakan untuk menguji lapan hipotesis kajian ini hasil daripada tiga objektif.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa tiga dimensi persekitaran fizikal mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap emosi dan kepuasan pengunjung, persekitaran sosial mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap kepuasan pengunjung sahaja dan keadilan harga mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan ke atas kepuasan pengunjung sahaja. Kedua-dua emosi dan kepuasan pengunjung mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap niat tingkah laku pengunjung.

Kajian ini memberi sumbangan dari segi teori, praktikal, dasar dan metodologi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kerajaan harus mendidik semua pihak yang terlibat dan pemegang taruh penginapan P2P mengenai perkhidmatan dan kepentingan sektor ini. Kajian ini telah mengkaji beberapa anteseden niat tingkah laku dalam sektor penginapan P2P di Malaysia. Kajian akan datang boleh mengkaji anteseden yang lain dalam sektor dan konteks yang berbeza.

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This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been submitted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of the Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

#### **Wong Foong Yee**

Senior Lecturer Faculty of Economics and Management Universiti Putra Malaysia (Chairman)

#### Serene Ng Siew Imm, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Economics and Management
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

#### **ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD**

Professor and Dean School of Graduate Studies Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

#### **Declaration by graduate student**

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Signature :	Date :	
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#### **Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee**

This is to confirm that:

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- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

Signature: Name of Chairman of Supervisory	
Committee:	Wong Foong Yee
	Treng recing rec
Signature:	
Name of Member	
of Supervisory	Associate Professor
Committee:	Dr. Serene Ng Siew Imm

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#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS Analysis of Moment Structure

AVE Average Variance Extracted

B&B Bed-and-breakfast
CR Composite Reliability
DSG Doctoral Support Group
EPPs Entry Point Projects

ETP Economic Transformation Program

FEP Faculty of Economics and Management

GDP Gross Domestic Product
GNI Gross National Income
HTMT Hetero Trait-Mono Trait
LISREL Linear Structural Relations

MOTAC Ministry of Tourism and Culture

MR Mehrabian and Russell

NGOs Non-Governmental Organizations
NKEA National Key Economic Areas
NTP National Transformation Program

P2P Peer to Peer

PLS Partial Least Square

SEM Structural Equation Modeling
SOR Stimulus Organism Response

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organization

UPM Universiti Putra Malaysia
USA United States of America

WTTC World Travel and Tourism Council

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this thesis provides an overview of hospitality and tourism as well as the background of this study, which mainly focuses on the antecedents of the Malaysian P2P accommodation sector. After presenting some basic introduction about the topic of the study, a declaration of the problem statement will be given. Then, based on the problem statement, the research objectives and questions will be presented. Finally, the significance of this research and the definitions of the key terminologies used in this study are presented at the end of this chapter.

#### 1.1 Overview of Hospitality and Tourism

Today, the hospitality and tourism industry play an important role in the world economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2018), the hospitality and tourism industry in 2017 accounted for 10.4% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), US\$1.5 trillion (6.5% and 28.8% of the global services exports) of global exports, and US\$882 billion (4.5%) of the total quantity of the global investment. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) reported that the tourism industry is a vital contributor to job formulation, poverty diminution, protection of the environment and multicultural peace across the world. In 2017, travel and tourism provided nearly 119 million jobs worldwide and directly contributed US\$2.6 trillion (WTTC, 2018). The total international tourists' arrivals reached 1,322 million in the year 2017; whereas, the total international tourism receipts surged to US\$1.392 trillion worldwide (UNWTO, 2018; World Bank, 2017). The organization further reported that the year 2017 sustained the growth in both international tourist arrivals and international tourist receipts for the eighth consecutive year, as shown in Figure 1.1. Furthermore, Asia-Pacific was the strongest growing region in international tourist arrivals in 2016 and has enjoyed the fastest growth in tourism worldwide; whereas, in 2017, Asia-Pacific experienced a growth of 6% with 324 million international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2017/2018).



Figure 1.1: Inbound tourism 1995-2017 (Source: UNWTO 2018)

The World Travel Awards (2016) named Malaysia as Asia's leading destination and was ranked at the top position by the Mastercard-Crescent rating (2016) in terms of being a Muslim-friendly destination (NTP, 2016). The country has made continuous efforts to improve its tourist offerings and attractions. As such, Malaysia has been regarded as one of the 17 must-visit destinations. According to a CNN Travel report, Ipoh and Perak were among Lonely Planet's top 10 cities for travel in 2017 (NTP, 2017). Moreover, Kuala Lumpur was ranked among the world's top 10 cities based on tourism growth (WTTC, 2017). Therefore, tourism has turned out to be the third major source of Malaysia's foreign exchange income and the sixth largest funder in the Malaysian economy (ETP, 2014). Additionally, Malaysia was the 5<sup>th</sup> best country in Asia and the 25th out of 141 countries worldwide in tourism competitiveness (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2017). By knowing that Malaysia enjoys a strong worldwide competitive position, the government has standardized tourism as one of the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) to expand the sector's benefits nationwide. Malaysia's tourism industry until 2020 is expected to contribute RM104 billion to the gross national income (GNI). To achieve this target, the Tourism NKEA has identified 12 entry point projects (EPPs) into five themes, as demonstrated in Figure 1.2. These will generate a rise of RM168 billion in GNI, 37,900 jobs and an estimate of 36 million tourist arrivals by the year 2020. Based on the National Transformation Program (NTP, 2017), the country is on its track towards achieving this target with 25.7 million tourist arrivals, making RM81.4 billion tourism receipts recorded in 2017. Moreover, the NKEAs accounted for the largest share of GDP, representing RM865.3 billion (70%) of the country's GDP amounting to RM1.23 trillion in 2016 (NTP, 2016).

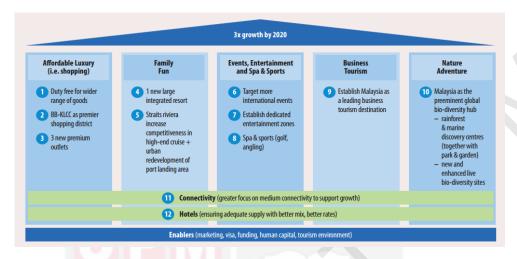


Figure 1.2: Entry Point Projects (Source: ETP)

#### 1.2 Background of the Study

"Malaysia Truly Asia" was created as a tagline by the Tourism Malaysia to promote the country to international and local tourists (Shariff, 2015). While Malaysia's tourism industry showed some signs of decline by about -6.3% of international tourist arrivals during 2015, it exhibited a slight recovery of 4.0% in 2016 (UNWTO, 2016). But, the other competing destinations such as China, Japan, Thailand and Indonesia showed continuous growth in both years. As noted by Barrows, Powers and Reynolds (2012), the growth in the tourism industry can be sustained by understanding the needs of the end customers. Indeed, the Malaysian tourism sector needs to recognize the needs, demands, and preferences of incoming tourists. In this context, Donnelly (2009) suggested that service providers in the hospitality and tourism industry must "create authentic, diverse, and changing experiences to attract visitors, make them want to return, and make them give strong recommendations to their families, friends, and colleagues" (p.11). Diversified tourism products and services must be made available to meet the tourists' needs. Among the main services needed by tourists are accommodation facilities. The peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation sector is an innovative and rising accommodation type which has recognized its demand in the conservative accommodation systems. It has become a very popular form of accommodation nowadays (Elizaveta, 2016). It is a mixture of tourism and recreation in which tourists experience the daily life of local people by living with them in their residence. Two of the key players in P2P accommodation services are Airbnb and Homestays, which are peer-to-peer online marketplaces and homestay networks that provide short-term lodging to tourists in residential properties of local people, with accommodation costs set by the local property owners. The Airbnb was founded in 2008. The platform describes itself as a trusted community to list, discover and book exceptional accommodation for people globally (Razli, Jamal & Zahari, 2017). Tsotsis (2015)

pointed out that, in one night, more than 500,000 tourists have stayed globally in the residence of local people arranged online through the company Airbnb compared to billeting in a hotel, hostel, or bed and breakfast (B&B). Airbnb has become incredibly popular and it continues to grow rapidly (Guttentag, 2016). It has over 1 million listed properties and has experienced over 10 million nights of collective booking worldwide (Horton, 2014; Razli et al., 2017; Salter, 2012). Despite being a new arrival in the hospitality industry as compared to hotels, the Airbnb has become a strong competitor to hotels (Freitag & Haywood, 2015). Airbnb is said to be the most successful P2P tool in the hospitality industry due to its popularity worldwide (Liu & Matilla, 2017). It served more than 200 million guests worldwide in the year 2017 (Airbnb Fast Facts, 2017) since the company was founded in 2008. Apparently, 4 million listings are available in the platform of Airbnb, which is more than the list of any registered chain hotels (Airbnb Fast Facts, 2017; Freitag & Haywood, 2015). The top ten places which have active listings are Amsterdam, Barcelona, Copenhagen, London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, and Sydney (Wallsten, 2015). In Malaysia, Airbnb grew over 500% in the year 2013 (Airbnb, 2015). In 2015, the P2P accommodation, mainly Airbnb, gained more attention in Malaysia (Euromonitor International, 2016). Guests from 78 different countries around the world traveled to Malaysia through Airbnb (Razli et al., 2017).

On the other hand, Malaysia's homestay program is growing its popularity day by day among other accommodation products (Balasingam, Bojei, Awang & Radzi, 2017). Malaysia's homestay is the place where tourists experience the daily life of the host family by living with them in both direct and indirect manner (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2009). The homestays in Malaysia have generated tourist receipts of RM27.7 million in 2016, that were divided into 193 clusters with 3800 homestay operators involved (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, MOTAC 2017). From the year 2007 to 2016, the homestays grew at an average of 6% with a contribution of 0.03% of the total tourism receipts in 2016 (Ahmad, Jabeen & Khan, 2014; Balasingam et al., 2017; Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2013; MOTAC, 2015, 2016; The Star Online, 2013; The Sun Daily, 2015; Tourism Malaysia, 2015; WTTC, 2015). P2P accommodation is therefore known as a powerful instrument for economic development.

Nowadays, the focus of all accommodation industries is centered mainly on the behavioral intentions of their customers. Customers' positive behavioral intention is a fundamental concept in management and services marketing (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Organizations mainly focus on providing such type of services to customers that lead to their return intentions. Previous studies have agreed that companies increase their income and decrease their marketing cost by mounting their customers' revisit intentions (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012). Customers with positive behavioral intentions participate in positive word-of-mouth behaviors and spend more money in particular service operations. Chang (2013) added that one of the main critical tasks for tourism managers is to fully understand the purchasing behaviors of tourists and predict their future purchasing intentions. Tussyadiah, (2016) also recognized that the

services which lead to tourists' behavioral intentions are a major element of success and a source of competitive advantage for various accommodation industries in hospitality, specifically in the P2P accommodation sector. Identifying the way tourists evaluate accommodation services understanding quest behavioral intentions can benefit the owners of accommodation businesses particularly in terms of implementing strategies and increasing tenancy. In this respect, a large number of studies have discussed the antecedents of customer behavioral intentions. For instance, satisfaction and emotions have been studied as strong predictors of customer behavioral intentions in resort hotels and other accommodation industries (Ali & Amin. 2014; Ali & Omar, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Jani & Han, 2013; Kang, Okamoto & Donovan, 2004; Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013; Ryu et al., 2012; Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997). Similarly, in services marketing, a huge body of research has also focused on recognizing the aspects that increase the level of customer emotions and satisfaction. Researchers have suggested that, ultimately, customer satisfaction (Ali & Omar, 2014; Bassey, 2014; Cetin & Dincer, 2014; He, 2008; Kim & Choi, 2013, Ryu & Jang, 2009) and emotions (Borondo, Oliva & Pascual, 2016; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Sherman et al., 1997) are strongly influenced by the physical environment, social surroundings and price fairness. Additionally, these factors have all been found to play a significant role in customer behavioral intentions. Besides, the impact of physical environment on behavioral intentions has also been observed in the services industries in a way when consumption object is service, so that there will be no other physical evidence to evaluate (Hightower & Shariat, 2009). Also, various researchers have observed the importance of social surroundings and price fairness on customers' behavioral intentions in the services and hotel industries (Kim & Choi, 2013; Haddad, Hallak & Assaker, 2015). Thus, based on the above literature, it can be said that physical environment, social environment, price fairness, emotions and satisfaction are potential determinants of behavioral intentions.

#### 1.3 Problem Statement

P2P accommodation is a new and innovative tourism product in Malaysia. The popularity of P2P accommodation's short-term rentals in Malaysia has grown significantly (Euromonitor International, 2016). The sector does not only provide accommodation, but also showcases Malaysia's ironic culture, heritage and lifestyle in an exceptional way. From the report of the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen (2012) stated that the homestay is one of the most successful and effective programs by the ministry which has exceeded its target rate of occupation from 23% to 32% since the year 2000, when homestays were first introduced. According to MOTAC (2016), over 50,000 international tourists stayed in homestays in Malaysia in the year 2016. Among those international tourists, a majority originated from Australia, China, Europe, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and the USA (Bhuiyan, Siwar & Ismail, 2013; MOTAC, 2015/2016). Moreover, Malaysia has about 306 Airbnb listings as of January 2017 and is the top three country after Japan and Thailand

to have the highest progress in bookings (Razli et al., 2017). Indeed, tourists are now choosing P2P accommodations over the traditional ones (Guttentag, 2016). However, a few studies have focused on the P2P accommodation sector of Malaysia, particularly on Airbnb (Razli et al., 2017). The behavioral intentions of tourists are imperative in Malaysia for increasing its tourism industry revenues. (Jayaraman et al., 2010; Som, Marzuki, Yousefi & AbuKhalifeh, 2012). Consequently, the success of this sector raises a question regarding the elements that potentially influence tourists' behavioral intentions to use P2P accommodation in Malaysia. Although some scholars have conducted studies in this sector (e.g., Buczynski, 2013; Elizaveta, 2016; Tussyadiah, 2016), most of them have mainly examined the rise of collaborative consumption (e.g., Botsman & Rogers, 2010), factors that motivate individuals to use and participate in P2P accommodation (e.g., Buczynski, 2013; Kim, Yoon & Zo, 2015), P2P as a travel accommodation option (e.g., Elizaveta, 2016), factors that influence the decision to choose Airbnb (e.g., Guttentag, 2016), hotels vs P2P accommodation and factors contributing to guest satisfaction in P2P accommodation (e.g., Tussyadiah, 2016). Apparently, the behavioral intentions of guests in P2P accommodation remain understudied.

Moreover, tourists have now become more concerned about their expenditures and try to save more money. P2P accommodation is a substitute for a hotel type of accommodation in the travel industry that fulfills different consumer needs such as the need for lower prices, more authentic and social experiences, and more sustainable travel. Therefore, factors that influence guests' intentions to use P2P accommodations are different from those associated with a hotel stay. The determinants of customers' behavioral intentions related with hotel stay have been well-researched (Ren, Qiu, Wang & Lin, 2016; Torres & Kline, 2006). However, P2P accommodation has not been addressed holistically and not much is known about the factors influencing guests' behavioral intentions in the P2P sector.

The customers of the hospitality industry are not willing to sacrifice the physical environment and the poor services in the social environment of the accommodation sectors (Ali & Amin, 2014; Ali & Omar, 2014). An attractive physical and social environment needs to be created in order to satisfy guests, make them emotionally happy and increase their re-visitations. Similarly, as P2P accommodation has been used by more tourists around the globe, scholars have emphasized the need to identify how the behavioral intention of guests in P2P accommodation changes based on their level of satisfaction (Tussyadiah, 2016), emotions and their perceptions about the physical environment (Ali et al., 2016; Ryu & Jang, 2007) and social environment (Ali, 2015; Ali & Omar, 2014; Mari & Poggesi, 2013).

Finally, tourists use Airbnb, homestays and other online reservation websites via the internet to stay at P2P accommodations that easily enable them to alter prices. Customers have diverse perceptions of prices, , as a result, scholars concluded that perceived price fairness evokes different emotions among tourists and affects their level of satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Bassey, 2014). Regardless of the importance of price fairness, surprisingly, very limited studies in the hospitality literature have focused on the roles of customer emotions and customer satisfaction in the formation of behavioral intentions (e.g., Bassey, 2014; Cristo, Saerang & Worang 2017, Xia, Monroe & Cox, 2004; Zielke, 2017). A few scholars have studied the influence of price fairness on satisfaction, emotions and behavioral intentions separately in their research of different sectors (e.g., Bassey, 2014; Cristo et al., 2017; Gunmmesson, 2002; Ledoux, 1998; Srikanjanarak & Ramayah, 2009; Zajonc, 1980; Zielke, 2017). Also, various studies have found that price is a motivator behind choosing P2P accommodation (e.g., Guttentag, Smith, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Nonetheless, some studies have regarded price as a strong motivator, while others found that it is not an effective driving force (Eckhardt & Bardhi 2015; Guttentag et al., 2017; Quinby & Gasdia, 2014; Tussyadiah, 2015). Therefore, the collective impact of price fairness, guest emotions and guest satisfaction to bring about guests' behavioral intentions in the P2P accommodation sector needs to be studied empirically.

In conclusion, to fill in all the above-mentioned gaps, the current study sought to examine quantitatively the effect of the three dimensions of physical environment (ambient component, design component and spatial layout), social environment, price fairness, quest emotions and quest satisfaction on quest behavioral intentions associated with the use of the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia based on the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory. The SOR paradigm which was proposed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974) stipulates that stimuli (stimulus) have direct effects on people's internal states (organism), further resulting in either approach or avoidance behavioral intentions (response). In this study, stimuli include the physical environment, social environment and price fairness. On the other hand, organism denotes guest emotions and guest satisfaction, while response refers to guests' behavioral intentions. The sample for the current study comprised tourists or guests (local and international) who have stayed at a P2P accommodation in Malaysia in the last 24 months. Purposive and multiple sampling approaches were used in order to make the sample generalizable to the population. Essentially, findings from this study may help P2P providers with some ideas on how to attract and retain guests. This research may also provide information about the competitive advantages and service characteristics of the P2P accommodation sector over hotels.

#### 1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

The main question of this research was, "What is the effect of physical environment, social environment, price fairness, guest emotions and guest satisfaction on guest behavioral intentions in the Malaysian P2P accommodation

sector?" Specifically, this research sought to answer the following specific questions:

- What are the effects of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest emotions within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia?
- 2) What are the effects of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest satisfaction within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia?
- 3) What are the effects of guest emotions and guest satisfaction on guest behavioral intentions within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia?

The general objective of this research was to examine the effects of physical environment, social environment, price fairness, guest emotions and guest satisfaction on guest behavioral intentions in the Malaysian P2P accommodation sector. Based on the primary research aim and questions, the specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) To determine the effects of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest emotions within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia.
- 2) To determine the effects of physical environment, social environment and price fairness on guest satisfaction within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia.
- 3) To determine the effects of guest emotions and guest satisfaction on guests' behavioral intentions within the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia.

#### 1.5 Scope of the Study

This study identified the determinants of guest emotions, guest satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the peer-to-peer accommodation sector based on the S-O-R theory. This study investigated international and local tourists who have stayed in a P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia in the last 24 months. Specifically, this study focused on the users of P2P accommodation platforms, such as Airbnb and homestays, as these are most commonly used platforms of P2P accommodation in Malaysia.

#### 1.6 Significance of Research

The current study may increase the understanding of P2P accommodation in the hospitality and tourism industry from the theoretical, practical, and

methodological perspectives by fulfilling the research objectives. This study will be significant in the following ways:

#### 1.6.1 Theoretical Contributions

Little empirical studies have focused on the behavioral intentions of tourists in the P2P accommodation sector of developing countries. Even in some established nations, most studies in extant literature have not provided a comprehensive discussion on the antecedents of behavioral intentions in the P2P accommodation sector. Therefore, from the theoretical perspective, this study may contribute to the services marketing literature and P2P accommodation sector by conducting a quantitative analysis of the antecedents of guests' behavioral intentions in Malaysia. The present study may be able to provide a creditable source of information on physical environment, social environment, price fairness, emotions, satisfaction and behavioral intention of guests in the P2P accommodation sector and provide opportunities to conduct future research in this area.

This study may contribute to a better understanding of the SOR theory in relation to the P2P accommodation sector. The said theory has been tested in many sectors including shopping malls, hotels, restaurants and resorts. However, to date, it has not been examined in relation to the P2P accommodation sector. Also, the present study investigated two new variables under the SOR theory, namely, social environment and price fairness. This study also developed a behavioral intention based on a hypothetical model in the context of the P2P accommodation sector; henceforth creating a more robust model in existing literature. The present study further showed that the antecedent that does not increase guest emotions is social environment; whereas, price fairness does not affect guest satisfaction in the P2P accommodation sector of Malaysia.

#### 1.6.2 Practical Contributions

This study may likewise provide practical and managerial contributions. It may elicit a better understanding of why tourists and guests choose to stay with the local people in P2P accommodations. Additionally, it may enlighten practitioners about various motivation-based antecedents. It may further provide benefits for marketers, tourists and local people who are working in, or are planning to work in the P2P accommodation sector by identifying its major competitive advantages. Knowing tourists' reasons behind choosing P2P accommodation over other types of accommodation can help other accommodation sectors to promote their products in the market over users of P2P accommodations. Indeed, the current study has shown that guests at P2P accommodations are attracted to physical amenities while staying in a property.

Moreover, tourism firms and destination marketing organizations can also benefit from the findings of this study as the overall characteristics of the preferences of their consumers are highlighted by providing P2P accommodation guests' antecedents for using the service, such as knowing locals closely. Furthermore, the study highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the P2P accommodation sector in Malaysia. The findings showed that physical environment positively affected guest emotions, guest satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Similarly, social environment positively influenced guest satisfaction and behavioral intentions. By the same token, price fairness positively impacted guest emotions and behavioral intentions in the Malaysian P2P accommodation sector. These results can help these accommodation types to design and apply effective services marketing policies and strategies in the industry. The findings for both product advancement and marketing have indeed vital practical implications.

#### 1.6.3 Methodological Contributions

Lastly, the current study may also have methodological contributions. Considering the challenges of recruiting respondents who are spread geographically and globally, the use of the internet to reach anyone from any place and the usage of online multiple sampling frames are indeed valuable. Also, the mechanical Turk was used as one of the sampling frames, which has increasingly become popular in social sciences (Berinsky, Huber & Lens, 2012). However, very few studies have employed it (Guttentag, 2016; Shim, Vargas & Santos, 2014; Tussyadiah, 2015).

#### 1.7 Definition of Terms

This study investigated behavioral intention, physical environment, social environment, price fairness, guest emotions and guest satisfaction. Their definitions as used in this study are given in the ensuing subsections.

#### **1.7.1** Guests

Guests pertain to tourists or local people who have stayed at a P2P accommodation in Malaysia.

#### 1.7.2 Behavioral Intention

Behavioral intention is defined as the likelihood that a person will carry out a specific behavior after using a P2P accommodation.

#### 1.7.3 Physical Environment

The physical environment refers to all tangible and intangible materials, objects and conditions that surround a business or an individual.

#### 1.7.4 Social Environment

The social environment represents the sum of society's beliefs, customs, practices and behaviors associated with the natural environment in which an individual lives.

#### 1.7.5 Price Fairness

Price fairness is a consumer's evaluation and related feelings of whether the variation or lack of difference between one seller's price is reasonable, acceptable, satisfactory or defensible from the other party or seller's comparative price.

#### 1.7.6 Emotions

Emotions are human inner changes with psychological changes together, prompting one's decisions, sometimes out of the normal pattern for the individual, used particularly in the reference for buying a product or using a service.

#### 1.7.7 Satisfaction

Satisfaction is the fulfillment of an individual's expectations, hopes, pleasure or gladness derived from a particular place, person, object or a service.

#### 1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided in to five chapters. Chapter one consists of the overview of hospitality and tourism, background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the research, and definitions of the terms.

Chapter 2 discusses literature related to key concepts and terms of the study. This chapter discusses introduction, history of hospitality, Peer to Peer accommodation, Stimulus Organism Response theory and behavioral intention, followed by its detailed information of antecedents that influences guests to stay at the P2P accommodation. This chapter will discuss all the studied variables and their relationship and impact with each other by providing analysis and findings of the previous studies. Also, the chapter will propose hypothesis and summary of the chapter at the end.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology which is used to carry out the study. This chapter involves research design, research framework, measurement and instrument, the reliability of the survey instrument and validity of the survey instrument. This chapter also discussed data collection procedures, sampling technique and data analysis followed by approval for data collection and pilot study.

Chapter 4 is generally known as the most important chapter of the thesis. This chapter will provide characteristics of survey respondents and the results of descriptive and inferential statistics. It will also answer research questions and fulfills research objectives by testing and analyzing hypothesis.

Chapter 5 is usually the conclusion of the thesis and is the last chapter. It consists of summary and discussion of results and their future implications, as well as limitations of the study.

#### 1.9 Conclusion

Chapter 1 was about the introduction of the current study. This chapter has summarized an overview of the tourism and hospitality, background of the study and problem statement. Then the chapter has highlighted three specific objective and research questions of the study. The three objectives and research questions of this study will subsidize the body of knowledge in consumer behavioral studies. Followed by the contributions and definitions of the key constructs are also given in this study.

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