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Qualities of effective cruise marketing strategy: Cruisers' experience, service convenience, values, satisfaction and revisit intention

Milad Kalantari Shahijan, Sajad Rezaei, Muslim Amin,

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QUALITY PAPER

Qualities of effective cruise marketing strategy

Cruisers' experience, service convenience, values, satisfaction and revisit intention

Milad Kalantari Shahijan

*UTM Razak School of Engineering and Advanced Technology,
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and
International Center of Qeshm, Payame Noor University (PNU), Qeshm, Iran*

Sajad Rezaei

*School of Business, Economics and Social Sciences,
Universität Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany, and*

Muslim Amin

Taylor's Business School, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the qualities of delighted cruise travelling experience and proposed cruisers' experience, service convenience and perceived overall value as the drivers of cruisers' satisfaction and revisit intention. Thus, the attributes of an effective cruise-marketing strategy in formulating consumer's recreational experiences are examined.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 287 questionnaires were collected and structural equation modelling technique was used to analyse data obtained from cruise travellers.

Findings – The empirical results indicated that service convenience and cruisers' experience significantly influence perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction and revisit intention, whereas perceived overall cruise value influences perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction but not cruisers' revisit intention. Furthermore, empirical assessments support that service convenience is a higher-order model (reflective-reflective) consisting of decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, benefit convenience and post-benefit convenience.

Originality/value – This research is among ongoing attempts that have been carried out regarding the qualities of cruise satisfaction and revisits intention and uncovers recreational experiences to propose an effective cruise-marketing strategy.

Keywords Cruisers' experience, Service convenience, Perceived value, Cruisers' satisfaction, Revisit intention, Cruise marketing strategy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Cruise tourism is characterised by a relatively limited amount of academic research like other areas of tourism and hospitality (Brejla and Gilbert, 2014; Larsen *et al.*, 2013; Han *et al.*, 2016; Álvarez-García *et al.*, 2017) despite the rapid growing sector in the global tourism market (Álvarez-García *et al.*, 2017). Cruise tourism contributes \$2tn towards global economic development (Korbee *et al.*, 2015); even though the number of studies is limited, cruise tourism is considered to have a main economic effect on the prosperity of nations and destination specifically (Singh, 1999). While this industry continues to be a main global growth sector, the qualities of an effective cruise-marketing strategy are unknown (Xie *et al.*, 2012; Kwortnik, 2006). The most preferred types of setting for holidays are cruise ships, which continuously obtain top market. Cruise tourism pertains to a delight journey on a cruise ship, and the cruise ship's services and mildness, along with the different ports of call are significant aspects of the experience (Han *et al.*, 2016; Kwortnik Jr, 2006). Cruise travelling is no longer an option for rich,



high-income families and retirees but the cruise industry has also tried to penetrate to several market segments, budgets as well as geographical areas. Therefore, cruise tourism marketing strategy is the most globalised, progressing and vital segment of the global economy which is trying to develop its source markets.

A cruise holiday has raised and still growing rapidly and the cruise lines should pay more attention to the consumers/tourists needs and satisfaction for receiving a portion of the emerging market (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). The ship itself considered a destination which has attractions and amenities on the ship with easy access to food as well as shopping and entertainment activities. Since cruise ships presume to pay more attention and pamper their guests, this makes them extremely labour-intensive enterprises, for example, one onboard employee for every two to three passengers on average. According to Hung and Petrick (2011), satisfied first timer passengers are willing to have a higher value perception and they are inclined to have positive word of mouth and also willing to visit the destination again. Service convenience is a proposition of value expressed by the moment of truth which can be used interchangeably as service encounter (Wong, 2013; Lai *et al.*, 2007). According to Wong and Wu (2013), service convenience simplifies the sale of services because it decreases the time period and effort that consumers spend during purchase. According to Geissler *et al.* (2006), service convenience will reduce the services when the time costs rise. Chang *et al.* (2010) indicated that service convenience in a business can give market opportunity which can lead to competitive advantage. Likewise, Nguyen *et al.* (2012) and Lai *et al.* (2007) argued that service providers should pay high attention to service quality and convenience which is necessary for establishing service delivery to the consumers. Similarly, value perception illustrated the significant and direct impact on customer satisfaction as well as revisit intention (Shahijan *et al.*, 2015). Hence, the experience is identified as a main benefit and advantage in the hospitality and tourism context, as giving a decent and pleasant experience is vital because it influences customer satisfaction. According to Wang (2004), prior experience as well as the destination satisfaction have an effect on the intention to revisit due to the fact that tourists have various experiences, for instance, tourists who visit for the first time and repeat visitors have various perceptions, idea, image, expectation as well as information about the particular destination. Therefore, scholars, academics and marketing practitioners have paid thoughtful consideration to individual experience (Volo, 2009; Choi and Chu, 2000). Nevertheless, scholars and researchers have not paid much attention to service convenience in tourism marketing literature. Thus, there is a need to further examine service convenience in the cruise tourism context, in general, and particularly with regard to its influence on recreational experience in order to increase behavioural intentions (Lai *et al.*, 2007; Negi, 2009).

Furthermore, cruise marketing has been essentially reshaped in Southeast Asia during the last decade, for example, almost about 12 years ago, the South-east Asian ports for cruise ships mostly were transporting European as well as American travellers originating beyond the region (Wood, 2002). The number of global cruise passengers based on the mean annual growth rate was 7.4 per cent during the period 1990–2007 which has raised approximately twice the rate of overall tourism growth and considerably, the development continues in the future (Cruise Lines International Association, 2010; Lorentz *et al.*, 2012). The genuine severity of demand ranges from the seldom visited adventures curious regions such as Alaska, the Amazon and Antarctica to the most favourite and popular destinations of Mediterranean and Caribbean seas (Ritter and Schafer, 1998). Similarly, according to Irandu (2004), the most leading cruise destination is the Caribbean which offered approximately 50 per cent of berths; hence, it is the area offering a good market for cruise lines due to the vicinity to the US market. The Mediterranean area offered 21 per cent of berths which is catered for European market and Africa offered 0.2 per cent of total berths as well as finally Asia offered only 4 per cent of berths. Specifically, South-East Asia has started to exert a powerful influence on the industry of cruise for great reasons, for example,

famous with public travelling as well as various cultures and destination attractions. Moreover, the majority of the cruises sail from Singapore to other geographical destinations, for instance, Penang, Port Klang and Langkawi in Malaysia, Medan, Jakarta and Bali in Indonesia, Phuket in Thailand, Kong, and also China (Singh, 1999).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of cruisers' experience, service convenience and perceived value on cruisers' satisfaction and revisit intention to uncover recreational experiences in managing an effective cruise-marketing strategy. Accordingly, this research organised as follows. The current section briefly discusses the background of cruise tourism industry and starts to introduce research constructs that in the next section formulate research framework. The second section discusses theoretical background and hypothesis development, and the third section depicts the research methodology and statistical design that were performed to empirically test the model (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the third section depicts methods, the statistical analysis and results, and finally, the last section presents the managerial implications and limitations and conclusion.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

The notion of intention to revisit is adapted from behavioural intention theories and it has grabbed critical observation in the tourism scope. Revisit intention is the tourist willingness to visit the particular destination or cruise again in the future. According to Filo *et al.* (2011), tourist willingness to revisit a destination demonstrates a significant attitudinal attribute. Tourism researchers and scholars increasingly discussed and debated the concept of intention to revisit and its antecedents, for instance, establishing the positive word of mouth as well as obtaining better cost-effective by repeat visitors. Similarly, Lin (2013) noted that understanding tourists' revisit intentions is important because repeat visitation is more cost-effective than the first visitation and tends to produce positive word of mouth recommendations.

Assaker *et al.* (2011) stressed that investigating the revisit intention towards a destination from a time perspective is therefore useful for both the practical as well as theoretical reasons. According to Petrick (2004b), the likelihood of returning to the same destination to visit or travelling to other destinations is impacted by individual's visitation to one particular destination. Likewise, visitors' behavioural intentions, such as intentions to revisiting the same destination as well as disseminating affirmative word of mouth to their friends and relatives around them, are usually considered as adequate measures that capture tourists' loyalty to a given destination (Prayag, 2007; Shahijan *et al.*, 2015).

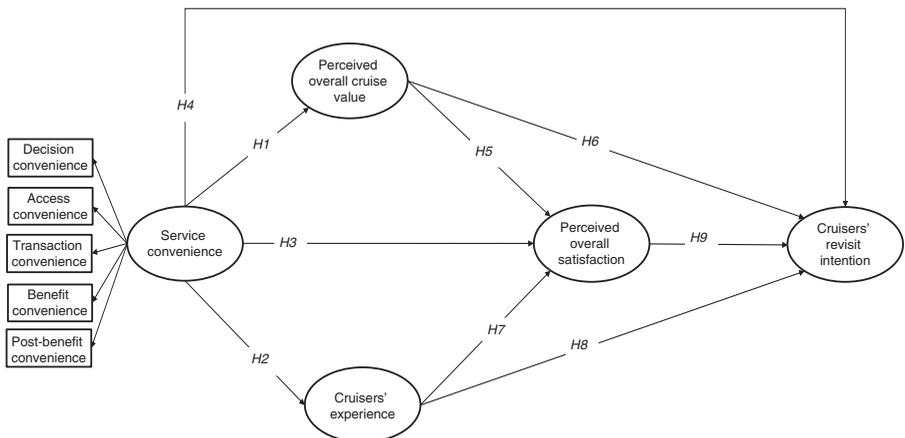


Figure 1.
Theoretical research model

Therefore, this study proposed several key factors such as cruisers' experience, service convenience and perceived overall value and perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction in determining cruise travellers revisit intention (see Figure 1).

2.1 Service convenience

Service convenience has been suggested by Berry *et al.* (2002) and Seiders *et al.* (2005) in the fact that there are numerous steps in the service procedure and each individual could access convenience variously at every step. Therefore, service convenience refers to "consumers' time and effort perceptions related to using or buying a service" (Berry *et al.*, 2002, p. 5). Service convenience is an idea and thought of adding value to the customers/tourists and reducing the effort and time that customers spend (Kaura *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, service convenience refers to "consumers' time and effort perceptions related to using or buying a service" (Berry *et al.*, 2002, p. 5). Service convenience comprises of five dimensions, namely, decision, transaction, access, benefit as well as post benefit convenience; therefore, the service convenience dimensions delivered the key motion that involved in the service acquisition process (Lloyd *et al.*, 2014; Prayag, 2007). Colwell *et al.* (2008, p. 161) and Thuy (2011, p. 476) defined each dimension as follows. Decision refers to consumers who have recognised the need for a product or service and are immediately faced with the decision of which supplier and offering to choose; access is defined as the consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to initiate service delivery; transaction refers to consumers' perceived expenditures of time and effort to effect a transaction; benefit defined as consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to experience the service's core benefits and finally, post-benefit convenience refers to consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures when reinitiating contact with a firm after the benefit stage of the service.

Furthermore, service convenience reduces for most of the services when the time cost increases, nevertheless; value perception normally raises due to the service duration in the case of time investment services (Geissler *et al.*, 2006). Likewise, a study (Lloyd *et al.*, 2014) regarding the shopping mall has examined the impact of service convenience as well as the experience, and revealed that service convenience saves time which is spent during shopping and also alternatively raises the time and effort for following other types of tasks or activities. Similarly, Athanassopoulos *et al.* (2001) stated that good value and convenience for money as well as accessibility improve customer satisfaction and eventually behavioural intentions. Moreover, Tam (2004) investigated the relationship between satisfaction, value perception and also the quality of service and revealed that monetary and time costs are the significant determinants of perceived value. Dodds *et al.* (1991) claimed that desirable information is directly influenced by quality and value perception. Conversely, a study (Wang and Wang, 2010) regarding predicting mobile hotel reservation adoption found that fee perception has a negative impact on foreseeing perceived value of customers. Therefore, this study hypothesises as follows:

H1. There is a positive relationship between service convenience and perceived overall value.

The customer experience can be impacted by the significance of convenience and location based on the empirical evidence. The study has examined the influence of convenience as well as social interaction on satisfaction and also investigated the mediating role of experience and therefore, found that convenience leads to greater experience as well as satisfaction (Srivastava and Kaul, 2014). A study in a sporting context such as golf has pointed out that convenience cart service is an important amenity to the golf experience (Clemenz and Weaver, 2002). Tourism contains information searching during the pre-trip period, making a decision, the experience as well as the experience of post-purchase of satisfaction assessment. Collier and Kimes (2013) stressed that when the customers are capable of dictating the transaction time and location, this intensive convenience level can directly and positively influence experience. Moreover,

Yeo *et al.* (2017) confirmed that experience in online usage will significantly improve a person's convenience. Hence, this study hypothesises as follows:

H2. There is a positive relationship between service convenience and cruisers' experience.

Service convenience positively and significantly impacts satisfaction (Chang *et al.*, 2010). An increment convenience is correlated with a rise in satisfaction (Kimes, 2008; Negi, 2009). Similarly, a study (Kaura, 2013) has examined service convenience, satisfaction as well as the loyalty of Indian commercial banks, therefore, found that service convenience dimensions are the drivers of customer satisfaction. Empirical studies ascertain that service convenience and quality leads to the superiority of satisfaction levels (Wong, 2013; Rezaei *et al.*, 2017). According to Kumar *et al.* (2009), customers' overall satisfaction with the service has been impacted by service convenience perceptions. Similarly, Chang and Polonsky (2012) asserted that convenience is associated with satisfaction in relation to repurchase intentions. Moreover, according to Kaura *et al.* (2014), the customer can easily approach to the service providers by having access conveniences; therefore, it assists in escalating his or her satisfaction. Another similar study by Kaura *et al.* (2015) regarding service convenience, service quality, price, loyalty as well as examined the mediating role of satisfaction and found that transaction convenience indicates the positive and direct effect on satisfaction. The study has measured the service convenience effectiveness for the retail industry in Ahmedabad city in India and found that transaction, decision, post benefit as well as benefit convenience have a significant positive relation with satisfaction, while it shows that the access convenience is not significant (Pandya *et al.*, 2012). Thus, this study hypothesises as follows:

H3. There is a positive relationship between service convenience and perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction.

Research regarding mega-events in Shanghai, China has investigated the influence of value perception on behavioural intention and found that the convenience directly and significantly impacts the local tourist intention to revisit (Wang *et al.*, 2012). Decision convenience plays an important role in driving the tourists to visit the destination again (Seiders *et al.*, 2007). The cruise should have good channels in order manage complaints as well as a recommendation. Because if the passengers are happy with it, then they are willing to visit the destination again and would recommend the destination or the cruise to others; therefore, this study hypothesises as follows:

H4. There is a positive relationship between service convenience and cruisers' revisit intention.

2.2 Perceived value

The person's general assessment of the goods and services productivity is based on the perception of what actually is achieved and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988). The perceived value has been identified as a significant variable from both marketing researchers and practitioners. The reason is that it has been broadly admitted that one of the most efficient ways to obtain competitive advantage is "value-driven" marketing, and value is a key concept in marketing. Presenting the notion of value perception into the business strategy will impact an organisation's propensity towards the customer. The value development and transfer to the individual person became a competitive advantage in the environment which has identified by the globalised rivalry and also by individual who is demanding more and more (Sánchez *et al.*, 2006). Jamal and Muhammad (2011) stressed that perceived value could be broadly dissimilar based on the types of services and products which are presented. Besides, Boksberger and Melsen (2011) stated that perceived value is an outcome of consumer price structure differentiation such as advertisement selling price, advertisement reference price as well as the interior reference price.

Considerable attention has been paid by scholars and academics on the significance of value repeatedly in marketing and particularly in tourism literature and mentioned that satisfaction has been predicted by value. Customer satisfaction is affected by individual receiving value perception for money. A study in luxury hotel revealed that customer satisfaction has been impacted positively and directly by a value which means that positive satisfaction assessment can occur when the customers have greater value (Wu and Liang, 2009). Similarly, another study in restaurant context found that perceived value is the significant predictor of satisfaction (Ryu *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, a study regarding winter tourism revealed that the value perception of a winter tourism experience is a stronger predictor of satisfaction for those who are mentally and physically involved in the activity (Prebensen *et al.*, 2015). Perceived value and satisfaction can be considered as significant determinants of revisiting intention to the entertainment destination such as cruise experience (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2009). Likewise, a perceived value directly and positively influenced satisfaction (Hume and Mort, 2010; Setijono and Dahlgaard, 2008). Furthermore, if the individual obtains more value in comparing to the value of what actually they have spent in terms of time, effort and also price, then cruisers satisfaction can occur. Therefore, this study hypothesises as follows:

H5. There is a positive relationship between perceived overall value and perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction.

Value perception affects tourists' willingness to recommend a vacation and their intention to revisit and has an impact on revisit intention. A study (Kim *et al.*, 2010) in the USA regarding small festival setting has examined the relation among value perception, satisfaction and revisit intention and found that perceived value is considered as a direct antecedent of revisit intention. In addition, Lee *et al.* (2014) mentioned that customers' revisit intentions have been impacted by perceived value. A study in Hong Kong (Um *et al.*, 2006) explored the antecedents of revisit intention based on literature reviews and indicated that perceived value is an important construct in impacting intention to revisit. Furthermore, a study in Korea (Lee *et al.*, 2007) has investigated the relation between value perception, satisfaction and recommendation and found that the tourists' perceived value has indirect effects on the recommendation. Another study has examined the relationship between value perception and revisit intention to create tourism destination and also the results indicated that perceived value does not significantly impact revisit intentions to creative tourism attractions (Chang *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the satisfied customers will revisit the destination or the cruise for their holidays. Thus, this study hypothesises as follows:

H6. There is a positive relationship between perceived overall value and cruisers' revisit intention.

2.3 Cruisers' experience

The complete perception of the concept of experience is of utmost importance to the tourism marketing strategy and it makes this industry to outperform. Moreover, cruise tourists look for recent and modern services and products in order to amplify their travel experiences. In the contemporary era, the individual experience plays a critical role in social and economic life. Likewise, experience has assumed a focal role in understanding tourism; it has turned into a substantially more explicit approach in order to deal with tourism research in the past decade. Tourism is all about experiences because tourists seek experiences at travel destinations (Shahijan *et al.*, 2015). In addition, the experience is a constant stream of feelings, ideas, and thoughts that happen during moments of consciousness. Particularly, the tourist experience has been defined as "the culmination of a given experience formed by tourists when they are visiting and spending time in a given tourists location" (Volo, 2009, p. 114).

Satisfaction has been recognised as an emotional response to experiences. More recent trends have perceived the individual experience as the determinant factors in creating satisfaction. The experience of the travellers is the aggregate of satisfaction/dissatisfaction which is obtained from the individual characteristics of services and products. According to Cole and Chancellor (2009), positive experience leads the tourists to be more satisfied, therefore, the tourists will revisit the destination in the future. Moreover, Maunier and Camelis (2013) pointed out that the travel experience is specified by physical and human environment interaction which is valued by travellers and therefore leads to satisfaction. Furthermore, Wu (2014) mentioned that customers experience of service/product quality at the casino can impact their satisfaction. Likewise, provoking travellers to judge a destination as pleasant or unpleasant, tourism aesthetics could have a remarkable impact on tourism experience, connecting it to overall satisfaction. Therefore, this study hypothesises as follows:

H7. There is a positive relationship between cruisers' experience and perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction.

The study has found that the destination experience has a significant impact on the revisit intention (Kim *et al.*, 2012). In spite of the fact that an unpleasant experience drastically reduces the likelihood of a further visit by a repeat visitor (Osti *et al.*, 2012). According to Huang and Hsu (2009), travel experience significantly influences tourists' behaviour of revisiting a destination. Similarly, according to Lin *et al.* (2012), if the genuine experience is greater than their expectations, it means that the tourist is satisfied. Therefore, the individual tourist will visit the location again. Jin *et al.* (2015) stated that prior experience is an important factor which can impact revisit intention because individuals who revisit a destination have shown various attributes in their behaviour. Moreover, research in the field of tourism demonstrates that travel experiences to particular destination increase the intentions to visit there in the future. Likewise, Wang *et al.* (2010) pointed out that through analysing tourists' experiences, the destination managers could specify the critical factors that construct an image of a destination and that could raise the individuals to revisit intentions. Thus, this study hypothesises as follows:

H8. There is a positive relationship between cruisers' experience and cruisers' revisit intention.

2.4 Perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction

The concept of satisfaction has been adopted by Oliver (1980). Satisfaction has been researched across the industry, especially in cruise tourism context (Satta *et al.*, 2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, Radojevic *et al.* (2015) asserted that satisfaction is an outcome of either affirmation or positive disconfirmation of individual expectations; on the other hand, dissatisfaction comes from a negative disconfirmation of expectations. Moreover, Baker and Crompton (2000) defined overall satisfaction as "an affective state that is the emotional reaction to a product or service, which is consistent with the notion of satisfaction" (p. 789). To satisfy and delight the tourists, it is clearly required to expand the business in order to obtain a large market share as well as to gain repeat business, therefore, it can lead to strengthening profitability (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). Prayag (2009) stressed that tourist expectation regarding destination is really important because it can affect the individuals' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the particular destination. Sim *et al.* (2006) pointed out that excellent service quality and satisfaction improvement are broadly identified as significant elements which can lead to the success of business in tourism and other industries. Tourists can have the intention to visit the destination again if their level of satisfaction rises. Satisfaction directly influences the intention to revisit (Wu *et al.*, 2014). A study has investigated the impact of variables such as satisfaction, destination image as

well as novelty seeking on tourist return pattern; therefore, the result confirmed that revisit intention has been influenced positively and directly by satisfaction (Assaker *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, satisfied travellers are more willing to revisit the destination and also recommend to their relatives, colleagues and also friends in comparison to other market segments.

Osti *et al.* (2012) stressed that repeat visitation can increase based on high satisfaction. In the same vein, satisfaction is a powerful indicator of revisit intention as well as destination recommendation to others. Similarly, a study has investigated the factors influencing satisfaction of international tourists with Korean traditional restaurants and revealed that revisit intention and intention to recommend the restaurant are influenced positively by international tourists' satisfaction (Nam and Lee, 2011). A high tourists' satisfaction level leads to future returns, as well as speak favourably about their experiences in the cruise/destination to others. Thus, this study hypothesises as follows:

- H9. There is a positive relationship between perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction and cruisers' revisit intention.

3. Methods and results

To conduct the statistical analysis and test theoretical model, the cross-sectional data collection with quantitative method was employed. Data were collected via personal interaction with cruise passengers (paper and pencil questionnaire) from various countries across a variety of cruise lines (e.g. Princess Cruises, Costa Cruises and Star Cruises) and cruise centres in Malaysia. The Port Klang is well known for its cruise terminal which is one of most visited capitals in the world. The global cruise lines such as Royal Caribbean, Princess Cruises, Carnival Cruise Lines, Cunard Lines, Costa Cruises, and Star Cruises and other regularly use Malaysian port terminals. Because the sample required experience or knowledge of cruise passengers concerning the qualities of cruise satisfaction and revisit intention, a judgmental sampling which is non-probability sampling technique was used to approach respondents in this study. The target of the population is from cruise passengers who had just debarked for cruises embarkation from September and October 2015. From the total estimated number of cruise vessels, the selection was made for the ships embarked and debarked. A-priori sample size calculator for Structural Equation Models (Soper, 2015) was used to calculate the sample size sufficiency. In addition, Roscoe (1975) claimed that for specifying sample size, sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are suitable. Thus, a total of 500 questionnaires were distributed among cruise passengers. Respondents were successfully approached by trained researchers requesting them to participate in this study, and the response rate was 57 per cent (287 respondents out of 500). Table I shows the demographic profile of respondents.

To ensure content validity in measuring the research constructs (Table AI), the measurement items for endogenous and exogenous latent constructs were adopted from previous studies (Westland, 2015). In addition, researchers can choose from a myriad of scale formats, such as paired comparisons, graphical, semantic differentials, Likert scale and Stapel scales to measure consumers' attitudes (Boris *et al.*, 2010). Semantic differential adjective pairs are appropriate for constructs such as satisfaction because an effect is best measured along bipolar evaluative dimensions (Wu *et al.*, 2012). To measure cruisers' experience, followed by a previous study (Hosany and Martin, 2012), respondents weighed the extent to which their experience with the cruise travelling was stimulating, exciting, enjoyable and interesting on seven-point scales ranging from not at all to very much. To measure perceived overall cruise satisfaction, five items with seven-point numerical scales (1 = a dissatisfactory response and 7 = a satisfactory response) and to measure perceived overall cruise value six items with seven-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) were adopted from Duman and Mattila (2005). Similarly, 14 items to measure service convenience were adopted (Chang and Polonsky, 2012) and 4 items to measure revisit intention were adopted

Profile	Category	Percentage	
1. Age	18–24	18.5	
	24–31	20.2	
	31–37	38.7	
	Above 37	22.6	
2. Gender	Male	58.9	
	Female	41.1	
3. Marital status	Single	48.8	
	Married	42.5	
	No data	8.7	
4. Nationality	Singapore	15.0	
	Thailand	15.3	
	USA	12.5	
	South Korea	13.9	
	India	9.8	
	Australia	16.4	
	China	10.5	
	Indonesia	6.6	
	5. Education level	Diploma	22.6
		BS	36.9
Master		30.3	
PHD		5.9	
Others		4.2	
6. Household income (yearly)	Less than \$30,000	11.5	
	\$30,000–\$49,999	29.3	
	\$50,000–\$74,999	43.6	
	\$75,000+	15.7	
7. Frequency of cruise travelling	1 time	13.6	
	2 times	30.7	
	3 times	42.2	
	Above 3 times	13.6	

Table I.
Demographic profile
of respondents

(Petrick, 2004a; Lai, 2015) with a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). According to Friberg *et al.* (2006), a seven-point Likert scale indicates a higher level of resilience. Therefore, perceived overall satisfaction, service convenience, cruisers' experience and perceived overall value are conceptualised as the post-consumption assessment of cruisers' vacation experience.

The questionnaire was prepared in English to assure the clarification of meaning, and also the validity of content such as wording was scrutinised carefully by three experts in the field of tourism and hospitality management. A pre-test was then conducted to improve questionnaire structure, readability and content. Questionnaires were distributed among travel agencies that have experience with cruise packages, and a few changes were made to the scales to ensure that the questions were not repetitive. Moreover, the data from the pre-test ($n = 31$) pilot test ($n = 109$) in the further analysis were excluded.

Furthermore, structural equation modelling (SEM) has become a mainstream technique in many fields such as marketing and tourism (Rezaei *et al.*, 2017). PLS path modelling approach which is known as a variance-based SEM has acquired increasing interest in tourism research. SEM technique provides evidence of measurement quality, and when the measure of constructs is satisfactory, the technique provides the validity assessments (Babin *et al.*, 2008; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, SEM can be considered as an analytical tool to check the relationship between the latent constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2011a, b) which has become a quasi-standard for empirical studies (Hair *et al.*, 2011a; Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2012; Henseler *et al.*, 2012). Because it represents an SEM technique from which both reliability and

validity of the theoretical constructs are evaluated, PLS-SEM result can be reported in two steps, first is the measurement model which focuses on the items reliability and validity and second structural model (Chou and Chang, 2008; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle and Mena, 2012; Rezaei, 2015; Reinartz *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, this study employed PLS-SEM in order to carry out analyses using Smart-PLS software, Version 2.0 (Ringle *et al.*, 2005). The PLS algorithm was used to specify the outer loading and outer weight in order to recognise the significance level of each item and in order to achieve significance of the path coefficients, and second, bootstrapping technique of 5,000 resamples was performed which takes into consideration the statistical testing of the hypothesis (Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Rezaei, 2015). Finally, blindfolding procedure was implemented in order to estimate the cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2 .

3.1 Evaluation of measurement model

Reflective dimension assumes causal interactions from the latent constructs to the associated manifest variables (Henseler, 2010). Table II indicates the construct validity.

Second-order construct	First-order construct	Item	Item loading	AVE ^a	CR ^b	Cronbach's α
Service convenience	Decision convenience	SCDC1	0.813	0.670	0.859	0.753
		SCDC2	0.791			
		SCDC3	0.851			
	Access convenience	SCAC1	0.846	0.675	0.861	0.758
		SCAC2	0.778			
		SCAC3	0.839			
	Transaction convenience	SCTC1	0.825	0.717	0.835	0.607
		SCTC2	0.868			
	Benefit convenience	SCBC1	0.869	0.726	0.888	0.812
		SCBC2	0.842			
		SCBC3	0.845			
	Post-benefit convenience	SCPC1	0.839	0.639	0.841	0.716
SCPC2		0.832				
SCPC3		0.720				
Perceived overall cruise value	n/a	POV1	0.736	0.537	0.853	0.785
		POV2	0.711			
		POV3	0.753			
		POV4	0.765			
		POV5	0.697			
Cruisers' experience	n/a	CEX1	0.803	0.630	0.872	0.805
		CEX2	0.807			
		CEX3	0.790			
		CEX4	0.775			
Perceived overall satisfaction	n/a	POS1	0.855	0.590	0.895	0.858
		POS2	0.815			
		POS3	0.694			
		POS4	0.847			
		POS5	0.713			
		POS6	0.664			
Cruisers' revisit intention	n/a	RI1	0.803	0.646	0.880	0.818
		RI2	0.794			
		RI3	0.807			
		RI4	0.812			

Notes: ^aAverage variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings)/{(summation of the square of the factor loadings) + (summation of the error variances)}; ^bComposite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/{(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (square of the summation of the error variances)}

Table II.
Construct validity

Therefore, outer loadings (item loadings), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (convergent validity) and discriminant validity are considered in order to determine the reflective constructs. According to Chin (1998), the loadings values should be at least 0.60 and ideally at 0.70 or above. Hence, the result shows that all items loadings of the reflective constructs are above the minimum threshold value of 0.60 and as depicted by the CR values, all the reflective constructs have high levels of internal consistency reliability. Moreover, the AVE values (convergent validity) are above the minimum threshold level of 0.50 in consequence of that, illustrating convergent validity for all constructs. The internal consistency reliability measures of Cronbach's α values are also above the minimum threshold level of 0.70 except for transaction convenience which is 0.607.

The Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and cross-loading criterion were assessed to determine discriminant validity. As depicted in Table III, the off-diagonal values are the correlations between the latent constructs. The shared values between the constructs are square correlations. The results obtained from loading-cross loadings show that in all cases, an indicator's loadings on its own construct are higher than all of its cross-loadings with other constructs, thus, implying that there is discriminant validity between constructs drawn in Figure 1.

Moreover, the measures of service convenience dimensions, for example, decision, transaction, access, benefit as well as post-benefit have been validated in various service context settings (Chang and Polonsky, 2012). In this study, to examine the higher order model (service convenience) in PLS technique or hierarchical component model (Chin *et al.*, 2003), the repeated indicators approach (Lohmoller, 1988) was performed. Table AII shows the weights of first-order constructs on designated second-order constructs. This depicts that "lower-order constructs are reflectively measured constructs themselves that can be distinguished from each other but are correlated" (Becker *et al.*, 2012, p. 363). In line with a previous study (Chang and Polonsky, 2012), statistical assessments support that service convenience is a higher-order model consisting of decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, benefit convenience and post-benefit convenience. Therefore, service convenience is considered as a reflective-reflective or hierarchical common factor model.

3.2 Evaluation of structural model

Once the validity and reliability of constructs are confirmed, the structural model containing examining the model's predictive capabilities and the association between the constructs are assessed following previous studies (Hair *et al.*, 2013; Rezaei *et al.*, 2017). In order to achieve the path coefficient for the structural model, the researchers required performing PLS-SEM algorithm, which can display the hypothesised relationships among the constructs, as

Construct	CEX	SCAC	SCBC	SCDC	SCDC	SCPC	POS	POV	RI
CEX	0.630								
SCAC	0.574	0.675							
SCBC	0.417	0.413	0.726						
SCDC	0.538	0.335	0.559	0.670					
SCDC	0.481	0.444	0.412	0.356	0.638				
SCPC	0.424	0.376	0.548	0.315	0.410	0.717			
POS	0.403	0.367	0.490	0.430	0.595	0.314	0.590		
POV	0.484	0.316	0.399	0.347	0.339	0.556	0.478	0.537	
RI	0.380	0.432	0.377	0.352	0.553	0.331	0.325	0.378	0.646

Table III.
Discriminant validity–
Fornell–Larcker
criterion

Note: The off-diagonal values in the above matrix are the square correlations between the latent constructs and diagonal are AVEs

indicated in Table IV. Further, bootstrapping option can be used in order to test the significance of path coefficient prior to evaluating the sizes of the path coefficients.

Hair *et al.* (2011a) emphasised that critical *t*-values for an empirical test are 1.65 (significance level = 10 per cent), 1.96 (significance level = 5 per cent) and 2.58 (significance level = 1 per cent). The empirical results indicated that service convenience and cruisers' experience significantly influence perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction and revisit intention, whereas perceived overall cruise value influences perceived overall cruisers' satisfaction but not revisit intention. Thus, *H6* (Perceived overall cruise value → RI) with path coefficient = 0.088, standard error = 0.059, and *t*-statistics = 0.477 was rejected. Furthermore, as indicated in Tables V and VI, the researchers appraised the significance of the path coefficients, the degree of R^2 values and also the f^2 effect size. Finally, the predictive accuracy of Q^2 as well as q^2 effect size were also examined. The R^2 values of the endogenous latent variables were found by performing PLS-SEM algorithm. On the other hand, Q^2 values were an indicator of the model's predictive relevance acquired from blindfolding procedure.

Hypothesis	Path	Path coefficient	SE	<i>T</i> -statistics	Decision
<i>H1</i>	Service convenience→POV	0.691	0.048	14.289**	Supported
<i>H2</i>	Service convenience→CEX	0.664	0.042	15.917**	Supported
<i>H3</i>	Service convenience→POS	0.123	0.050	12.988**	Supported
<i>H4</i>	Service convenience→RI	0.674	0.026	29.912**	Supported
<i>H5</i>	Perceived overall cruise value→POS	0.505	0.049	10.399**	Supported
<i>H6</i>	Perceived overall cruise value→RI	0.088	0.059	0.477	Not supported
<i>H7</i>	Cruisers' experience→POS	0.276	0.054	5.107**	Supported
<i>H8</i>	Cruisers' experience→RI	0.031	0.048	1.979*	Supported
<i>H9</i>	Perceived overall satisfaction→RI	0.231	0.054	4.283**	Supported

Notes: *t*-values test: *1.96 (sig. level = 5 per cent); ***t*-value 2.58 (sig. level = 1 per cent) (Hair *et al.*, 2011a)

Table IV. Hypothesis testing

Endogenous latent variables	R^2	Q^2
Perceived overall satisfaction	0.667	0.362
Cruisers' revisit intention	0.639	0.314

Notes: ^a Q^2 value (effect size): 0.02 (Small); 0.15 (Medium); 0.35 (Large)

Table V. Results of R^2 and the model's predictive relevance^a

Endogenous latent constructs	Cruisers' revisit intention			Perceived overall satisfaction		
	Path coefficients	f^2 effect size	q^2 effect size	Path coefficients	f^2 effect size	q^2 effect size
Perceived overall satisfaction	0.231	0.109	0.048	n/a	n/a	n/a
Service convenience	0.674	0.321	0.126	0.123	0.042	0.001
Perceived overall cruise value	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.505	0.249	0.098
Cruisers' experience	0.031	0.000	0.098	0.276	0.126	0.609

Notes: ^aAssessing q^2 and f^2 : Value (Effect size); 0.02 (Small); 0.15 (Medium); 0.35 (Large)

Table VI. Results – path coefficients and effect size^a

4. Discussion

This current research is among the few prospective studies assessing the impact of cruisers' experience, service convenience and perceived value on cruisers' satisfaction and revisit intention. With the prospect of cruise hospitality, tourism expects to enhance Malaysia's competitiveness as a cruise destination, and there has been a very small amount of research attention paid in the marketing of cruise sector (Brejla and Gilbert, 2014; Larsen *et al.*, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2012). In addition, this study proposed several factors comprising perceived value, service convenience and cruisers' experience as the drivers of cruisers' satisfaction and cruisers' revisit intention. Revisit intention has grabbed critical observation in the tourism context. A tourist willingness to revisit a destination illustrates significant attitudinal characteristics which are highly shaped by cruise marketing tactics and strategy. The findings indicate that tourists' revisit intention is important because repeat visitation is more cost-effective than the first visitation and tends to produce positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Theoretically, as satisfaction concept has been originated from Oliver (1980), in order to satisfy and delight the tourists, it is clearly required to expand the business, to obtain a large market share as well as to gain repeat business, therefore; these can lead to strengthening profitability. Satisfied travellers have more willingness to revisit the destination and also recommend it to their friends, relatives, and colleagues as compared to others. Moreover, the likelihood of returning to the same destination to visit or travelling to other destinations is impacted by individual's visitation to one particular destination.

Kim and Shan (2015) stated that travellers experience impact on the overall satisfaction which is in line with the findings of this study. Another study conducted by Lin (2014) in the context of hot springs travellers in Taiwan explained that intention to revisit is impacted by cuisine experience and also emphasised that cuisine experience is one of the important predictors of revisit intention. Moreover, Sirakaya-Turk *et al.* (2015) stressed that tourist experiences play a critical role in influencing destination satisfaction as well as intention to recommend to others. The perceived value has been identified as a significant variable from both marketing researchers and practitioners. Presenting the notion of value into the business strategy will impact organisation's propensity toward the customer. If the consumer has a feeling that they are getting greater value, they are more inclined to be satisfied with the experiences. Likewise, if the customer obtains more value in comparing to the value of what actually they have spent in terms of time, effort and also price, then satisfaction can occur. Moreover, a study in the USA regarding small festival setting has examined the relation between value perception, satisfaction and revisit intention and found that perceived value is considered as a direct antecedent of revisit intention. Perceived value greatly influences customer satisfaction because of its ability to attract or repel customers (Wu, 2013). Besides, the tourism marketers should have the capacity to give more net value to the consumers in comparison to its rivals in order to stay competitive. The relation of perceived value and satisfaction has been widely argued in the marketing setting and specifically in tourism management context; thus, it is claimed that value positively influences satisfaction (Hu *et al.*, 2009). Chang *et al.* (2014) claimed that value can be considered as an important concept for future studies that attempt to predict tourists' revisit intention or behavioural intention which is similar to the findings of this study. Therefore, value plays a significant role for tourism directors in order to raise satisfaction and intention to revisit.

From a marketing perspective, service convenience is an idea and thought of adding value to the tourists and reducing the effort and time that tourists spend. Researcher indicated that service convenience in a business can give market opportunity which can lead to competitive advantage. As discussed, service convenience contains five dimensions including decision, transaction, decision, access, benefit as well as post-benefit convenience. Nevertheless, there is a need to further examine service convenience in the cruise tourism

context, in general, and particularly with regard to its influence on recreational experience in order to increase behavioural intentions and marketing performance. A previous study (Juan and Chen, 2012) illustrated that the Taiwanese cruise travellers considered price as the major factor in selecting a holiday package as well as the duration of the trip and followed by the desires of travelling companions. Furthermore, the service providers should put more effort and time for the tourists/customers in order to achieve greater value and become satisfied otherwise they would have a poor experience and less satisfaction.

Theoretically, individual experiences have assumed a focal role in understanding tourism marketing; it has turned into a substantially more explicit approach in order to deal with tourism research in the past decade. Experience is a constant stream of feelings, ideas, and thoughts that happen during moments of consciousness because positive experience leads to visitors reaching a higher overall satisfaction level, which translates into a revisit (Mohseni *et al.*, 2016). A study stated that prior experience is an important factor which can impact revisit intention because individuals who revisit a destination have shown various attributes in their behaviour. Furthermore, cruise tourists looking for recent and modern services and products in order to amplify their travel experiences and customer satisfaction can occur when the service convenience perception level is high. Similarly, customers' perception of value can raise when the service convenience is high; thus, more convenience could lead to greater satisfaction (Thuy, 2011). Hsu *et al.* (2010) stated that service providers could enhance the satisfaction of customers via services convenience, and by doing so, convenience can increase customers' value. Srivastava and Kaul (2014) illustrated that shopping convenience is a significant element in order to establish good experience. Therefore, convenience is capable of decreasing customers non-monetary expense for example time, energy and effort while buying or even utilising services and products. The theory of expectation dis-confirmation is originated from Oliver (1977) and Oliver (1980) in order to illustrate the complex relationships among the variables. Therefore, this particular study contributes to tourism marketing literature that examines the qualities of cruise satisfaction and revisits intention in the cruise tourism context.

Hui *et al.* (2007) stated that overall satisfaction level with vacation experiences has the major influence on the revisit intention of the identical destination and also emphasised that satisfaction is considered to be an important antecedent of revisit intention in a tourism setting. A study in hospitality context illustrated that high customer satisfaction with the quality of service led to the propensity to revisit the dining unit (Kim *et al.*, 2009). Another study in casino context found that gamblers who were more satisfied showed a greater intention to revisit which means that customers tend to revisit when they are delighted with the environment (Lam *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, there is a high possibility to recommend this to friends and relatives. Moreover, travellers who experienced higher satisfaction are more likely to revisit a travel destination.

Finally, cruise holidays have emerged out of liner shipping nearly in the past century; therefore, it is not a new phenomenon (Ritter and Schafer, 1998). According to Henthorne *et al.* (2013), most cruise tourists spend a significant amount of time in shopping; thus, this is considered good for the local economy since most shop owners are small-scale local businesses. Likewise, Gibson and Bentley (2007) stressed that economy of the visit port has been dramatically influenced by the arrival of a large number of cruise passengers. Accordingly, developing countries such as Malaysia can take advantage out of cruise tourism in order to enhance and upgrade profit and taxis, employment, exchange earnings, terms of trade externalise as well as economies of scale. Financial contributions towards the local economy originating from cruise ships are classified into two different categories such as passenger expenditure and port expenditure. Considerably, Malaysia is strategically situated as a cruise destination in South-East Asia; thus, Malaysia is able to obtain advantages from this region's rising cruise industry. As part of economic transformation

programs (ETP), Malaysia is aiming to capitalise on its strategic location to improve its competitiveness as a cruise destination (ETP, 2013). Consequently, this can be achieved by establishing a Straits Riviera. Malaysia will create five world-class cruise terminals in various places such as Malacca, Sepang, Penang, Kota Kinabalu as well as Tanjung Pelepas in order to absorb the cruise travellers, mainly international tourists. Therefore, tourists look forward to the attractive cruising regions and marvellous experiences in which they can find in South-East Asia.

4.1 Limitations

This research left some limitations, thus directing future research avenues. First, this research was undertaken in a developing cruise tourism destination, Malaysia. Future study should evaluate the model (Figure 1) in developed countries in which the cruise tourism has reached standing points. Conceptually, this study supports that service convenience is a higher-order model consisting of decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, benefit convenience and post-benefit convenience, indicating a hierarchical common factor model. However, the impact of each dimension should be empirically evaluated to check the direct influence of each relationship. Similarly, the results imply that perceived overall cruise value and revisit intention were not supported and the model predicted the 63.9 per cent of consumers variances, thus, future research should expand the finding of this research by improving the proposed model and adage of the perceived brand experience into the consideration to maximise the predictive power of the model. The interrelationship between experiential services, immersive brand satisfaction on cruisers willingness to pay more and word-of-mouth recommendation has both theoretical and practical implications. According to Eid and El-Gohary (2015), research regarding satisfaction has used overall satisfaction formulation because it is significant in order to predict behavioural intention of consumers and the organisation performance during past, present, and future. Therefore, this study has used overall satisfaction in cruise tourism context, while few studies conceptualised the immersive satisfaction as a construct. Satisfaction is an element for businesses to maintain their competitiveness, (Zhang *et al.*, 2015) and overall tourist satisfaction with the destination could influence the likelihood of future recommendations (Satta *et al.*, 2015). Thus, tourists who experience high levels of quality and immersive satisfaction will intend to recommend the cruise services and destination. Finally, the approach in collecting data was cross-sectional data collection approach and the total sample size was 287 respondents. Future research should be undertaken in the assessment of cruiser total experience by performing longitudinal data collection procedure and considering bigger data size. Because cruise travellers experience might be influenced by several factors, future studies should consider both country destination and cruise service quality separately to analyse the pre-stage, during consumption and post-stage consumption evaluation of the particular trip.

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(The Appendix follows overleaf.)

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Construct	Measurement items	Source
1. Perceived overall cruise value ^a	POV1. Compared to the price I paid, time and effort I spent, I think I have received good value POV2. I feel that my last cruise vacation was worth the money and time I spent POV3. Overall, my last cruise vacation was a good buy POV4. I value my last cruise vacation because it met my needs and expectations for a reasonable price POV5. I think that given whole service features, my experience was a good value for the money, time and effort I spent	Duman and Mattila (2005)
2. Cruisers' experience ^b	CEX1. Experience was stimulating CEX2. Experience was exciting CEX3. Experience was enjoyable CEX4. Experience was interesting	Hosany and Martin (2012)
3. Service convenience ^a	Decision convenience: SCDC1. I spent minimal time finding the information to choose this cruise SCDC2. This cruise company made it easy for me to find suitable exercise programs SCDC3. It was easy to get the information I needed to decide to join this cruise trip Access convenience: SCAC1. It was easy to contact this cruise SCAC2. It did not take much time to reach this cruise trip SCAC3. I can easily figure out the location of this cruise Transaction convenience: SCTC1. This cruise allows diversified methods of payment SCTC2. The method of payment provided by this cruise is convenient Benefit convenience: SCBC1. I was able to complete my purchase quickly in this cruise SCBC2. The services in this cruise were easy to use SCBC3. The speed of providing services in this cruise met my requirements Post-benefit convenience: SCPC1. When I had a problem, this cruise resolved my problem quickly SCPC2. This cruise enabled me to arrange my next exercise programs/plans with minimal effort SCPC3. This cruise has a good channel to handle complaints and recommendations	Chang and Polonsky (2012)
4. Perceived overall satisfaction	POS1. Dissatisfied–satisfied POS2. Displeased–pleased POS3. Frustrated–contented POS4. Terrible–delighted POS5. Fell short of my expectations–exceeded my expectations POS6. Worse than I expected–better than I expected	Duman and Mattila (2005)
5. Revisit intention ^a	RI1. In the future, I will speak favourably about this cruise to others RI2. In the future, I will recommend this cruise to my relatives and friends RI3. In the future, I will come back to this cruise in a short period of time RI4. The likelihood that I would consider this cruise in the future is high	Petrick (2004a) and Lai (2015)

Table AI.
Measurement items

Notes: ^aSeven point Likert Scale: 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree; ^bSeven point semantic scale: 1 = not at all and 7 = very much

Appendix 2Qualities of
effective cruise
marketing
strategy

Second order construct	First-order construct	β	STD loading squared	AVE	CR
Service convenience	Decision convenience	0.837*	0.701	0.733	0.932
	Access convenience	0.886*	0.785		
	Transaction convenience	0.832*	0.692		
	Benefit convenience	0.902*	0.814		
	Post-Benefit convenience	0.821*	0.674		

Note: *2.57 (1 per cent significant level)**2327****Table AII.**
Assessment of higher-
order construct
(service convenience)**Corresponding author**Sajad Rezaei can be contacted at: mmg.sajad@gmail.com

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