

Antecedents of Actual Visit Behavior amongst International Tourists in Jordan: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Approach

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Abstract

This study which is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), examines the relationships between antecedents of revisit intention, perceived risk and actual visit behavior, and the mediating effect of revisit intention in the relationship between perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior. Data was collected from 850 tourists via questionnaires. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling techniques (Amos 6.0) to evaluate the path model. Additionally, deductive approach was used. The findings highlight four significant direct relationships (1) revisit intention and (2) perceived risk to actual visit behavior; (3) tourist attitude and revisit intention (4) subjective norm and revisit intention. And two hypothesis were insignificant relationships which are; perceived behavior control and revisit intention and perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior. However, does not have mediating effect. This result demonstrates the ability of the original TPB model to explain international tourists' behavior in Jordan. The findings are discussed in the context of the antecedents of revisit intention and actual visit behavior of international tourists in Jordan.

Keywords: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Actual Visit Behavior, Revisit Intention, tourist satisfaction, Jordan's image, perceived risk, and service climate.

Introduction

Travel and tourism especially for the economic growth around the world, have undergone different stages of development in the last few decades (Hui et al., 2007). According to Castro et al (2007), one of the major challenges that face tourism managers is to understand the behavioral patterns of individual tourists. They argue that international tourists may face many dangers that may affect their behaviors such as diseases, tourists' accidents and natural disasters. For example, this can be observed in the natural disasters and the series of terrorist's attacks around the world (e.g. the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 and 11 September event, 2001, in the United States of America) (Howard, 2009). However, Lea (1988) noted that investigating the patterns of actual tourists' behavior is not an easy task due to the scarcity of research in this area. The researcher believes that this will enhance hotel managers', tourists' and travel agents' better understanding of actual tourist's behavior and could lead to improvement in the tourist and travel industry. Consequently, because of the scarcity of research in the area of travel and tourism, especially concerning the actual tourist's behavior, this study has been conducted to investigate and demonstrate how the travel and tourism sectors can be improved (Harahsheh, 2010). Most of tourists' behavior that is only dependent on the tourism news in the media is likely to develop negative images about the Middle East and Arab countries. Unquestionably, the tourist's behavior of Middle Eastern countries is continually impacted by the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict and many terrorist incidents which happened in Jordan in 1995, 2004 and 2005 (Alrai, 2008). The main objective of the present research is to contribute to tourism development. In addition, this research is needed in the Jordanian travel and tourist situations as agents and law-makers face many problems such as the actual visit behavior, revisit intention, and decrease in the number of international tourists (Hamid, 2007). These problems are reflected in terms of the decrease in the number of international tourists between the years 2006 and 2009 in Jordan. For example, the number of international tourists in Jordan for the year 2006 recorded 6,712,804 and declined gradually to 5,413,919 in year 2009 (MoTA, 2010). Tourist and travel industry in Jordan particularly the actual tourists' behavior, is regarded as the most difficult issue that hotel managers, tourist and travel agents face when attempting to promote and market their country world-wide. In fact, travel and tourism industry in Jordan has a critical role in the development and growth of the national economy and offers an appropriate avenue for travel and tourism agents to market and promote their companies as a source of income (Harahsheh, 2002). This research which adopts the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) is concerned with the actual visit behaviors in a Jordanian context unlike other research studies which are more concerned with tourism aspect in general. Actual visit behavior is unlike other aspects of tourism as it deals with a basic issue in the travel and tourist industry. It helps tourist and travel agents, hotel managers and law-makers to understand the processes involved in the tourists' behaviors by providing them with the appropriate solutions. Therefore, the researcher believes that there are a good number of important related relationships that should be discussed with actual behavior as shown in the following section.

Objectives of Study

The specific objectives of this study include the following 1) to identify the direct influence of predictors (perceived risk, revisit intention and perceived behavior control) on actual visit behavior, 2) to identify the direct influence of predictors (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control) on revisit intention, 3) to examine to what extent revisit intention mediate the relationship between perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior.

Actual Visit Behavior

Tourists are considered as the principal factor of the tourism industry. It is important to know more information about international tourists' behavior, and what they expect during their travels out of their countries (Cook et al., 1999). Therefore, tourist's behavior is the act through which the tourist makes purchasing decisions (Boone and Kurtz, 1998). Internationally, there are only very few studies that examine the actual behavior of visitors (Castro et al, 2007; Ryu et al, 2007; Um et al, 2006; Valle et al, 2006; Hong et al, 2009). Moreover, there is not much research that has been done to examine the path between intention and actual behavior in Jordan. This also applies to Jordan in which there is a scarcity of research on actual visit behavior, whereby most of the studies conducted in this area focus only on the satisfaction of tourists (Qwaider, 2005). Also, many studies stopped at behavior intention as the dependent variable (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Hellier et al, 2003; Um et al, 2006; Castro et al, 2007; Chen, 2008; Hong et al, 2009). Also there are limited past studies that have examined predictors of actual behavior (ACT) in tourism setting, such as intention (Zhang, 2008; Duffy, 2009) subjective norm (Lin, 2008), service (Bigne, 2001; Lin, 2008), attitude (Steinbauer and Werthner, 2005), habit (Zhang, 2008), and satisfaction (Allard & Van Riel, 2004). Therefore, the researcher found that the actual visit behavior could be predicted by behavior intention and perceived behavior control, which will be discussed later in the next section.

Revisit Intention and Actual Visit Behavior

Behavioral intention (INT) is a very important factor to assess visitors' potential for revisiting, and it is considered to be a relatively accurate predictor of actual visit behavior (Fishbein 1980). Behavioral revisit intention is defined as "the possibility to return to visit Jordan and recommend Jordan to family, friends and others in the future". Many studies found consistently significant positive relationship between behavior intention and actual behavior (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Tan & Teo, 2000; Suh & Han, 2002; Amoroso, 2004; Fusilier & Durlabhji, 2005; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007; Amoroso & Hunsinger, 2008; Canniere et al., 2008). However, most of the earlier researches have been conducted in developed countries and focused mainly on IT, banking industries (Schneider and Sonmez, 1999; Heung and Qu, 2000; Danell, 2001; Ryua et al., 2007; Ekinci et al., 2008). Alhroot (2007) found that there is a weak intention of revisit amongst tourists in Jordan. This may be related to indefinite reasons (economical, social or political). Theory of TPB (Ajzen, 1991), also suggest PBC has direct effect on actual behavior, thus, the next section will discuss this relationship.

Perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior

Perceived behavior control (PBC) refers to the presence or absence of necessary resources and prospects, the person's perception of the simplicity or complexity in showing the behavior of attention. Thus, the operational definition of PBC for this study is 'tourists' assessment of ease or difficulty in performing the visit behavior'. There is inconsistency in finding for this linkage whereby previous studies found significant relationship (George, 2004; Fusilier & Durlabhji, 2005; Chu & Wu, 2005; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007), while others found insignificant relationship (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2005). Additionally, there are limited studies in tourism settings in general and in particular in Jordanian tourism settings (Alhroot, 2007).

Perceived Risk and Actual Visit Behavior

Perceived risk is defined as tourist's perceptions of uncertainty and damage as expected at the destination. Being one of the Arab countries, the consequence of 11 September 2001, has damaged the tourism industry in Jordan as well (Buhalis, 2000; Mohsin, 2005; Liesch et al., 2006; Newell & Seabrook, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Jordan times, 2009 5th August; McAleer et al., 2010). After the incident, Jordan was also affected by many international terror events such as attacks on three Jordanian hotels in Amman in late 2005 (Alrai, 2005). In the event, five tourists from Britain, New Zealand, Netherlands and Australia were injured (BBC, 2006). This unprecedented event gives negative perceptions of tourists towards safety and security of Jordan. Empirically, there are inconsistent findings found for this relationship where some studies found significant relationship (Sathye, 1999; Kolodinsky et al., 2004; Mphil et al., 2007; Lin, 2008; Ozdemir & Trott, 2009), while others found insignificant relationship (Ndubisi & Sinti, 2006; Hongfeng et al., 2008). Additionally, there are no previous studies that have been conducted in Arab countries to investigate this relationship.

Antecedents of Revisit Intention

Attitude, subjective norm and PBC were important factors that can explain behavior intention and actual tourist's behavior. Attitude (ATT) is the first significant determinant of behavioral intention that can be stated as "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Tourist attitude is defined as the tourist's positive or negative feeling which results in certain behavior towards a particular tourist site. In the theory of planned behavior (TPB), second determinant of behavioral intention is subjective norm (SN), subjective norm is "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior" (Ajzen (1991, p 188). However, the researcher defined subjective norm as the perceived social factors (family, friends, and relatives) that could have influence on the tourist's behavior. There are inconsistent findings; some of the previous studies found that there is a significant relationship of attitude (Tan & Teo, 2000; Pavlou & Chai, 2002; Shih & Fang, 2004; Pilling et al., 2004; Laforet & Li, 2005; Al Sukkar, 2005; Mahmud et al., 2005; Pedersen & Nysveen, 2005; Chu & Wu, 2005; Ng & Rahim, 2005; Ok & Shon, 2006; Lam et al., 2007; Dai & Kuo, 2007; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007; McIvor & Paton, 2007; Nor & Pearson, 2007; Baker et al., 2007; Woon & Kankanhalli, 2007; Canniere et al., 2008; Schubert, 2008; Celik, 2008; Amoroso & Hunsinger, 2008; Quintal et al., 2009; Han et al., 2010), of subjective norm (Tan & Teo, 2000; Pavlou & Chai, 2002; Pilling et al., 2004; Fusilier & Durlabhji, 2005; Chu & Wu, 2005; Ng & Rahim, 2005; Lam et al., 2007; Dai & Kuo, 2007; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007; McIvor & Paton, 2007; Nor & Pearson, 2007; Baker et al., 2007; Abu Shanab & Pearson, 2007; Hernandez & Mazzon, 2007; Woon & Kankanhalli, 2007; Canniere et al., 2008; Schubert, 2008; Lin, 2008; Quintal et al., 2009; Han et al., 2010), and of perceived behavior control (Tan & Teo, 2000; Shih & Fang, 2004; Pilling et al., 2004; Fusilier & Durlabhji, 2005; Pedersen & Nysveen, 2005; Chu & Wu, 2005; Ok & Shon, 2006; Dai & Kuo, 2007; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007; Nor & Pearson, 2007; Hernandez & Mazzon, 2007; Canniere et al., 2008; Schubert, 2008; Amoroso & Hunsinger, 2008; Quintal et al., 2009; Sparks & Pan, 2009; Han et al., 2010), while few studies found that there is an insignificant relationship of attitude (Fusilier & Durlabhji; Sparks & Pan, 2009), of norm (Shih & Fang, 2004; Pedersen & Nysveen, 2005; Ok & Shon, 2006), and of perceived behavior control (Pavlou & Chai, 2002; Ng & Rahim, 2005; Celik, 2008).

Mediating Effect of intention

This study consider revisit intention as mediating effect, Regarding the mediating effect of intention show inconsistent results. Some of previous studies found that the intention fully mediates (Harakeh et al., 2004; George, 2004; Khoo & Ainley, 2005; Canniere et al., 2008), while another study found that the intention does not (Mateos et al., 2002). Moreover, there is no previous study that attempts to examine the mediating effect of revisit intention in Jordan.

Theoretical Research Framework

Many previous studies used an alternative approach called the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in predicting intentions and behavior. This is widely used in consumer behavior research (Ajzen, 1991, 2002). This study uses TPB as the main theory to explain international tourists' behavior towards visiting Jordan. However, the main components of the TPB are a person's own attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intentions, and behavior (Ajzen, 1988). The relations among these variables are described in (Figure 1.1). Most theories relating to tourists behavior have been created in developed countries such as TPB established by Ajzen & Fishbein 1980 in USA. In fact, this theory is not thoroughly tested in developing countries or even in non-western cultures such as Jordan which indicate problematic issues in adopting this theory (Dai & Kuo, 2007; Ahmad & Juhdi, 2008; Schubert, 2008; Quintal et al., 2009; Sparks and Pan, 2009; Han et al., 2010). Bang et al., (2000) support this nation when they conclude that the TPB model contains Western cultural biases. Therefore, measurement constructs could be tested in non-western setting such as Jordan. Additionally, previous research and literature that used TPB focused only on constructs of attitude (ATT) subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavior control (PBC) without adding external variables to the full model (Bagozzi, 1981; Warburton & Terry, 2000), such as perceived risk (Lee, 2009), climate, policy, facility and training (Huang & Hsu, 2003). But this study will include perceived risk as external factor to increase the power of TPB (Figure 1.1). Therefore, the challenge of validating this theory exists in the present research.

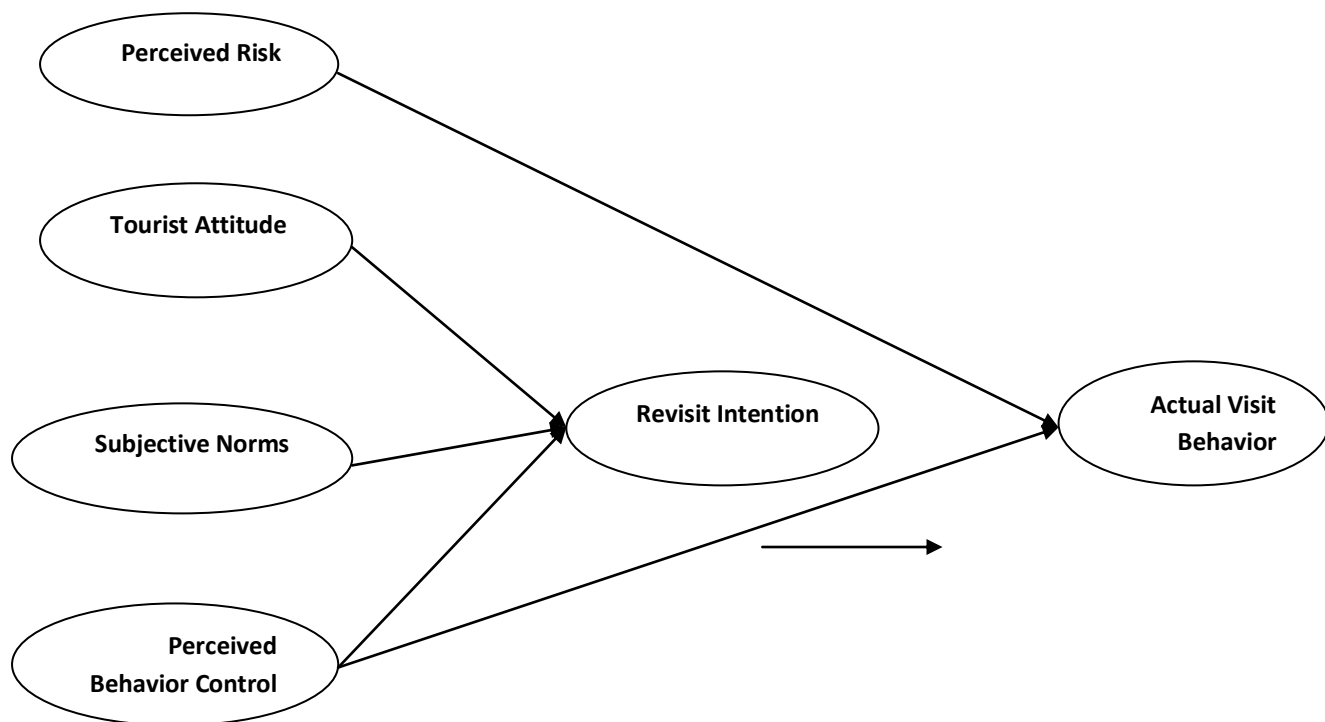


Figure 1.1: Research Framework

Hypothesis Formulation

There are 7 hypothesis formulations for this study which can be stated as:

- H1 Revisit Intention is positively related to Actual visit Behavior.
- H2 Perceived Risk is negatively related to actual visit behavior
- H3 Tourist Attitude is positively related to Revisit Intention
- H4 Subject Norm is positively related to Revisit Intention.
- H5 Perceived Behavior Control relates positively to Revisit Intention.
- H6 Perceived Behavior Control related positively to Actual visit Behavior.
- H7 Revisit Intention mediates the relationship between Perceived Behavior Control and Actual visit Behavior.

Methodology

This study utilizes quantitative research design to investigate the predictors of actual visit behavior of international tourists visiting Jordan. The population of this study consists of international tourists in the Jordanian hotels in the south. This study excludes local Jordanian tourists. This study selected international tourists due to some reasons. Firstly, it has been used in past studies (Bigne et al., 2001; Ryu et al., 2007; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007). Secondly, the international tourists can use the correct information regarding the model such as, image, risk, satisfaction. Thirdly, international tourists inside Jordan have fresh memories according to their experiences of visits to Jordan. Fourthly, the number of international tourists in Petra in southern Jordan has increased from 18% in 2007 to 25% in 2008 (MoTA, 2009a). A systematic random sample was used in which 850 respondents were identified from 55 hotels in the Southern region of Jordan (MoTA, 2009).

The questionnaire is divided into five parts: part (1) demographic variables (12 items); part (2) perceived risk (7 items) adopted from Gallarza and Saura (2006), and part (3) tourist attitude (6 items) adapted from Cannier et al. (2008), subjective norm (6 items) adapted from Cannier et al. (2008), and perceived behavior control (6 items) adapted from Cannier et al. (2008) and Koufaris & Hampton-Sosa, 2002); and part (4) revisit intention (5 items) adapted from Olorunniwo et al. (2006), and Ryu et al. (2007), and part (5) actual visit behaviour (5 items) adapted from Shih and Fang (2004) and Raman et al (2008). Finally, this study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) instead of multiple regression because SEM can give more goodness of Fit indices for the full structural model, giving more superior empirical results (Hair et al., 2006). All variables were measured using Seven-point Likert scales from (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Disagree somewhat, (4) Undecided, (5) Agree somewhat, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree.

Results

Descriptive statistics of variables

Overall, the results in Table 1.1 shows that mean score of tourist attitude are considered very high (6.1). In contrast, perceived risk is relatively low with mean score (3.70), meaning that the tourist perceived Jordan as a low risk country.

Table1.1: Descriptive statistics of variables and Reliability Results

Variable Name	Original Items	Cronbach Alpha after Transformation	Total Mean	Items after CFA	Cronbach Alpha after CFA	Composite Reliability
Perceived Risk	7	.90	3.7	4	.94	.94

Tourist Attitude	6	.63	6.1	4	.82	.94
Subject Norm	6	.89	5.9	4	.84	.97
Perceived Behavior	6	.71	5.7	4	.60	.92
Revisit Intention	5	.89	6	4	.88	.95
Actual Visit Behavior	5	.61	5.3	4	.61	.87
Total items	35			24		

Reliability Test

The research framework consists of four exogenous (perceived risk, tourist attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control), and mediating effects of revisit intention, and one endogenous variable (actual visit behavior). Table 1.1 shows the reliability of each construct as shown by Cronbach's alpha's acceptable result above 0.60 (Nunnally, 1970). The composite reliability calculated based on the standardized factor loadings obtained from hypothesized structural model (Table 1.1), also show acceptable value of above 0.60 (Nunnally, 1970).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results

In this study, the "cut-off" point chosen for significant loading is 0.30, which is the minimum level required for a sample size of 350 and above as suggested by Hair et al. (2006, p 128). As shown, (see Appendix B) the confirmatory factor analysis results show that most constructs have factor loadings of 0.47 to 0.98. This indicates that all the constructs conform to the construct convergent validity test.

Discriminant Validity of Constructs

In Appendix C, the calculation and presentation of the variance extracted (VE) is shown. The results obtained from the variance extracted, AVE is calculated by averaging two variance extracted from the variables based on the SMC data using the following equation:

$$\text{Variance Extracted} = \frac{\sum (\text{standardized } SMC^2)}{\sum (\text{standardized } SMC^2) + \varepsilon \sum j}$$

(Source: Hair et al. 1998:624)

For discriminant validity to be upheld, it has been suggested that AVE should be greater than .50 (Barclay et al, 1995). Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that the correlations square between the constructs should be less than the average variance explained by each construct (AVE > correlation square). Thus, all constructs used for this study support discriminant validity as shown in Appendix C. The CFA measurement and structural model has a good fit with the data based on assessment criteria such as GFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). All CFAs of constructs produced a relatively good fit as indicated by the goodness of fit indices such as CMIN/DF ratio (< 2); P-value (> 0.05); goodness of fit Index (GFI > .90); and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of values less than 0.08 (< 0.08) (Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, in case not achieved, these values have to be confirmed with factor loading for each construct should be more than .30 (Hair et al., 2006). Most constructs have achieved values of GOF.

Hypotheses Results

A direct effect represents the effect of an independent variable (exogenous) on a dependent variable (endogenous). The hypothesized model did not achieve model fit ($p < .000$). Therefore, the explanation of hypotheses result is based on Generating Model (GM) (Table

1.2 and Figure 1.2). Six hypotheses are supported (H1, H2, H3, H4), while H5 and H6 are rejected. The SMC or (R^2) for generating model to variance in actual visit behavior is 70.3%, variance in revisit intention is 50.9%.

Table 1.2: Direct Hypotheses Testing Result of Generating Model: Standardized regression weights

H.	Regression Weights From	To	Estimate	SE	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
H1	INI	ACT	.730	.268	2.720	.007	Yes
H2	RISK	ACT	-.869	.395	-2.197	.028	Yes
H3	ATT	INT	.173	.063	2.734	.006	Yes
H4	SN	INT	.237	.057	4.178	***	Yes
H5	PBC	INT	.054	.069	.789	.430	No
H6	PBC	ACT	.068	.238	.287	.774	No

Mediating Effect Analysis of Generating Model (GM)

For this study, we tested mediating effect of revisit intention in the relationship between perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior (H7) shows no mediating effect (see Table 1.3). this result because the relation between PBC and INT not significant and the relationship between PBC and ACT also not significant (see Table 1.2). In additionally, direct effect less than indirect effect, this that means that revisit intention not mediating between perceived behavior control and actual visit behavior.

Table 1.3: Mediating Effect

Hypothesis	From	Mediation	To	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total Effect	Mediating
H7	PBC	INT	ACT	.024	.052	.076	Not Mediating

Note: Standardized path estimates are reported

Discussion

This study attempts to answer 3 objectives. The Generating Model (GM) achieves model fits and supported (4) direct effects hypotheses.

Firstly, revisit intention has a direct significant effect on actual visit behavior. This means that if the tourists have a positive intention this will lead to actual visit to Jordan, this is supported by numerous past studies (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1991; Amoroso, 2004; Kim et al., 2008; George 2002). Secondly, perceived risk has a direct significant effect on actual visit behavior. This means that risk is an important factor in tourists' perspective when they want visit Jordan, this is supported by (Kolodinsky et al., 2004; Mphil et al., 2007; Ozdemir & Trott, 2009). Thirdly, tourist attitude has a direct significant effect on revisit intention. Those who have positive attitude about Jordan are likely to have revisit intentions towards Jordan in the future, supported by Pilling et al, 2004; Laforet & Li, 2005; Al Sukkar & Hasan, 2005; Gopi & Ramayah, 2007; Nor & Pearson, 2007; Celik, 2008; Amoroso & Hunsinger, 2008; Quintal et al., 2009; Han et al., 2010. Fourthly, subjective norms have a direct significant effect on revisit intention. This could imply that families, friends and others could have high influence on intention to visit Jordan rather than on the actual purchasing behavior. This could be especially true amongst international tourists since they may have intentions to visit Jordan but could be hindered by friends' opinions and involvement. Pilling et al, 2004; Laforet & Li, 2005; Al Sukkar & Hasan, 2005; Celik, 2008; Baker et al, 2007; Sparks & Pan, 2009 have found similar finding. In contrast, there are four insignificant direct effects. Firstly, perceived behavior control have no significant direct positive effect on revisit intention, this finding supported by (Woon & Kankanhalli, 2007; Celik, 2008) Secondly, perceived behavior control have no significant direct positive effect on actual visit behavior. (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2005) have found similar finding. For the mediating effect of revisit intention, GM results shows that the intention do not have a mediating effect between PBC and ACT (Mateos et al, 2002; Nik Mat and Sentosa (2008). This means that the tourists tend to have the inclination to visit direct rather than just thinking about it. This also means that in most cases tourists are likely to visit Jordan directly once they have the opportunity to visit. Thus, in most cases international tourists are likely to visit directly once they have the opportunity to visit Jordan.

Suggestion for future research

Future research should investigate the model in a different setting such as in Arab countries, and examine the variables that could include local tourist products attributes such as (brand and quality), switching behavior, perceived value, tourists' loyalty. Additionally, the researcher used only one instrument that is questionnaire survey. Thus, the researcher suggests that, the qualitative method of in-depth interview is more suitable to measure their level of tourists' satisfaction and revisit intention towards actual visit behavior amongst international tourists. This can be better achieved when the researcher builds trust relationships with them and speaks their language.

Conclusion

The research investigates the antecedents of intention/behavior. Several direct paths are found to be significantly related to either intention or behavior. The level of perceived risk among international tourists in Jordan is low, and three predictors (revisit intention, tourists' attitude, and subjective norm). Generating Model (GM) is the best model to explain the international tourists' behavior as compared to the Hypothesized and TPB Models. Lastly, results of the study demonstrate the strong predictive power of the original TPB model to explain international tourists' behavior in Jordan.

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