Not A Typical Tourist: A Study on Malaysia International Students’ Psychosocial Influence in Education Tourism

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Abstract
This study focused on three psychological phenomena (perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction) in explaining destination-loyalty intention as expressed by international students in Malaysia. A sample of n =132, international students completed an online survey. Results from structural equation model-AMOS indicated that: (1) orientation to mainstream culture positively influences destination-loyalty intention; and (2) orientation to mainstream culture mediates the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention. It can be concluded that orientation to mainstream culture is integral to the concept of destination- loyalty intention. This factor may be among some of the driving forces that facilitates an increasing number and diversity of students participating in international study. This will also assist study abroad professionals develop and market programs to students.

Keywords: Destination-Loyalty Intention, Perceived Discrimination, Culture, Life Satisfaction, Education Tourism

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Introduction
The interest of this study begins from the realisation of the importance of international students’ experiences in international education. This is because, building bridges of international education and understanding across borders has been the impetus for many social and governmental programmes, such as the ERASMUS1 programmes (EU countries)(Pitts, 2005).

However, due to various social and psychological barriers, the full positive outcomes of study abroad are not always achieved (i.e., Jackson et al., 2013), leaving some students with lower destination- loyalty intention (Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal, & Adam, 2016a) or unable to complete their sojourn (Pitts, 2005). Further, Pitts (2005) has suggested that in worst case scenarios, unprepared sojourners might further instigate international tensions and increase ethnocentrism for both parties. Thus, this study holds the view that it is important that sojourners (education tourists) experience a successful term abroad which will eventually bolster their intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Jamaludin et al., 2016a).

Additionally, many studies also acknowledged that international students contribute far more than monetary to the economy (see Chellaraj, Maskus, & Mattoo, 2008; Chirkov, Safdar, De Guzman, & Playford, 2008). One cannot underestimate their immeasurable academic and cultural contributions to universities and society at large (Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal, & Adam, 2016b) but

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1 The Erasmus Programme (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in the late 1980s. Its purpose is to provide foreign exchange options for students from within the European Union and it involves many of the best universities and seats of learning on the continent (Erasmus Programme, 2010).
very little is known about their specific contribution to the tourism sector. Geus, Richards, and Toepoel (2015) suggested that gaining a better understanding of the definition and operationalization of experiences is important to provide a better understanding on how experiences contribute to quality of life. In this study such responses are measured by looking at international students’ destination-loyalty intention. This study is done to see the interesting antecedents, correlates and consequences of national differences in influencing international students’ destination-loyalty intention in Malaysia. It applies the study of Oppermann (2000); Yoon and Uysal (2005) which studied tourists and destination loyalty. This is because, international students experiences with their host country will impact their destination loyalty intention (Jamaludin et al., 2016a).

This study concentrates on the concept of educational tourist experience as seen from a psychological perspective. It begins with the central empirical question of how the studied variables are related to international students’ roles as ambassadors to the host country, measured by their destination-loyalty intention. An underlying assumption is that the students will encourage (or discourage) people in their social network to visit the country depending on their experiences in education tourism. Education tourism includes being abroad for cultural learning, to work and apply knowledge learned in a classroom in a different environment (Ritchie, 2003) such as archaeology, painting, cooking or anything new in a foreign environment (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). A study by Tashlai and Ivanov (2014) suggested that educational tourism has a great potential to become one of the most in-demand travel activities on the tourism market, and it can easily rise to a leading position among other tourism services and travel-related products.

The researchers posit that more comprehensive and thorough examination is required in the area of international education in order to establish well-organized and efficiently-functioning international education market. In addition, limited studies regarding Malaysian educational tourism justifies the further research covering this issue. Specifically, this study focuses on the following research objectives: (1) identifying the impact of perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction on destination-loyalty intention; and (2) ascertaining the mediating effect of orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction on the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention.

It is believe that the understanding of perceived discrimination-orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction-destination loyalty intention may become critical for all nations. This is because international students’ experience at a destination is vital to determining whether destinations are meeting their needs. Furthermore, it contributes to the literature on this topic in the recognition that both the education and tourism industries need psychological element to promote their products in the market, and the market needs psychology elements to better promote products to education and tourism. To end, this study also provides a ground work for both industries to understand more about the close relationship that exist between them.

Framing the Study

Malaysian Context for International Students

Among Asian countries, Malaysia emerged to be an education hub in the region through accepting more international students (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007). Many international students have discovered that studying in Malaysia is a “value-for-money” option as Malaysian education offers them such as; 1) a wide diversity of study options to choose from (e.g. foreign university branch campuses, etc.), 2) competitive education costs and 3) high quality education ("Cost Of Studying And Living In Malaysia," 2017). In addition, there is a wide choice of study options which are taught in English. Students also experience an exciting multi-cultural environment ("Cost Of Studying And Living In Malaysia," 2017).

UNESCO’s recognition of Malaysia as one of the top 10 destinations for post-secondary education bodes well for the Malaysian government’s goal to significantly increase its enrolment of international students to 250,000 by 2025 (ICEF, 2016).
The challenges for international students’ in pursuing higher education while residing in foreign country with the limited knowledge that they possess about the new culture can lead to negative consequences for international students and the host society (Yang & Clum, 1994). However these negative consequences could be avoided if international students prevail over their challenges and develop adaptive behaviour in the host country (Earley & Ang, 2003; Molinsky, 2007) which will affect their destination-loyalty intention (Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal, & Adam, 2016). Furthermore, study of this kind which can clearly portray the factors related to international students’ destination-loyalty intention is scarce in the context of Malaysia.

**Theoretical Overview of Constructs**

**Dependent variable**

**Destination-Loyalty Intention**
Extensive studies have been carried out on destination-loyalty intentions but few have been done in the context of education tourism. Studies on consumer behavior found commitment and temporal consistency are the key components of loyalty (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998; Oliver, 1997). These studies defined loyalty intention as international students’ intention to commit to a destination, which is expressed in a stable form over a prolonged period of time. Having positive experience with the destination increases the intention to return and the possibility of being loyal (Dolnicar, Coltman, & Sharma, 2013). Ajzen (1991) suggested that given the difficulty in measuring visitors’ actual loyalty behavior, measuring their loyalty intentions to a given destination (i.e. destination-loyalty intention) may be more relevant and useful approach. According to Ajzen (1991), loyalty intention is more proximal to a given behavioral process and often leads to a corresponding actual behavior although it is not always consistent.

**Independent Variables**

**Perceived discrimination**
Perceived discrimination is an individual’s perception that he or she is treated differently or unfairly because of that person’s membership to a group or country (Sanchez & Brock, 1996; Ye, Zhang Qiu, & Yuen, 2012). An investigation of perceived discrimination in the tourism context may generate interesting results and useful suggestions. Many perceived discrimination studies focus on employees’, ethnic representatives’ and customers’ understanding of their jobs and experiences as antecedents to intention (Becerra, 2012; Ye et al., 2012). These studies begin with the premise that active consideration of intention is affected by perceived discrimination experiences. In the relevant literature, perceived discrimination against customers can be damaging to a firm’s business through negative word-of-mouth and decrease repeat patronage (Walsh, 2009).

In this research, international students are the customers. The experiences of being discriminated (perceived or real) against is damaging for the intended country of destination. Other studies also suggested that perceived discrimination among tourists will severely damage or negate any intention of repeated patronage (Ye et al., 2012). However, studies on the influence of perceived discrimination on international students’ loyalty intentions are sparse. Discrimination comes in many forms depending on the perceptions of the individuals affected (Hanassab, 2006). Ye et al. (2012) found that international students often experience discrimination in their interactions with faculty, staff, other students and the community. This discrimination may have an impact on international students’ reluctance to revisit their institution.

**Orientation to Mainstream Culture**
Acculturation strategies in this study are measured by looking at orientation to mainstream culture. Berry (1997) conceptualizes acculturation in two dimensions, namely: 1) the wish to sphere the unique aspects of one’s cultural; 2) the wish to have contact with other culture. One might show
more behaviours conforming with their heritage culture with family, while displaying more behaviours suitable into the dominant culture when at school, work or travelling (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007).

Contact and social ties with the host nation’s residents have been shown to facilitate and enhance international students’ experience and adjustment (Campbell, 2011b; Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Jamaludin et al., 2016a). The more assimilated individuals are towards a host country’s culture, the greater the progression in taking up the attitudes and values of the host society (Faber, O’Guinn, & Meyer, 1987). According to Berry (1997), assimilation happens when individuals do not wish to maintain their heritage culture and primarily interact with mainstream culture.

Equally, integration happens to those who, for various reasons prefer to maintain their heritage culture while adapting and adopting the mainstream culture (Berry, 1997). Thus well-adjusted students in the host communities are more likely to remain and have a sense of positive integration or assimilation, which arguably should strengthen their educational goal commitment and loyalty to the institution (Jamaludin et al., 2016a; Zea, Reisen, Beil, & Caplan, 1997).

This study is limited to international students’ orientation to the society of sojourn, specifically the contact, experience and social ties with the host nation’s residence because contact and social ties with the host nation’s residence have been shown to facilitate and enhance international students’ experience and adjustment (Campbell, 2011a; Stone, 2000). Moreover, studies on expatriates who stay at a destination temporarily also demonstrated that place adjustment, job satisfaction and job commitment influence destination-loyalty intention (Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). For international students, cross-cultural transition can be a life-challenging process because it potentially involves both a disruption of a well-established social network and replacing it with a new one (Ando, 2014). Additionally, previous studies have shown that international students’ orientation to the host culture influences their sense of connection and thereby positively influences destination-loyalty intention (Jamaludin et al., 2016).

**Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is defined as the global evaluation of a person’s quality of life based on the person’s own chosen criteria (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Judgments made about one’s life satisfaction are based on a comparison with a standard that each individual sets for himself based on his own valuation (Sam, 2001). Studies on the relationship between life satisfaction and individual decisions and activities indicated people who are satisfied with life tend to be more successful and socially active (Diener, Kanazawa, Suh, & Oishi, 2014; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014).

Soderlund and Ohman (2003), suggest that satisfaction based on an event that has actually taken place is likely to produce a higher sense of ownership than any type of intention (i.e. future event that is yet to take place). Empirical evidence by Graham and Markowitz (2011) confirms that life satisfaction influences an individual’s intention to stay at a destination. They suggest that the chance of relocating is high when people are dissatisfied with their home country. Thus, based on the general literature on life satisfaction-loyalty (Graham & Markowitz, 2011; Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014), this study expects international students’ overall life satisfaction will increase their attachment to the destination where they studied.

Additionally, past studies that examined consumer behaviour and loyalty intention have paid special attention to life satisfaction (Oppermann, 2000). It is generally believed there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and intention. Soderlund and Ohman (2003), claim that intention and word-of-mouth are dependent variables in satisfaction research. Loyal customers are more forthcoming with positive word-of-mouth endorsements, referrals and repeat visits. Graham and Markowitz (2011) assert that life satisfaction influences individuals’ intentions to stay at certain destinations.

Besides understanding the contributing factors to destination-loyalty intention, this research acknowledges that between perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and life
satisfaction, only perceived discrimination hypothetically has a negative impact on destination-loyalty intention. Thus it is the aim of this study to determine whether this can be improved. Furthermore, although studies on tourist satisfaction have been widely published, tourist dissatisfaction has received much less attention (Ye et al., 2012) and this includes perceived discrimination (Cheng, Lam, & Hsu, 2005).

Perceived discrimination is negatively associated with loyalty intentions (Ye et al., 2012). Disadvantaged or minority customers who experience marketplace discrimination become frustrated and dissatisfied. This decreases the likelihood of repeated patronage. Negative word-of-mouth will have a stronger impact on the business and transactional relationship (Ye et al., 2012). Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006), suggest that perceived discrimination is an important predictor of orientation to mainstream culture.

Studies on tourists’ perceptions of their being discriminated against are rare (Ye et al., 2012). Those done have helped to broaden the knowledge on perceived discrimination. This study is conducted using an empirical investigation of real settings to explore the antecedents of perceived discrimination, taking into account orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction from the perspective of education tourists. The link between perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture, life satisfaction and lowered intention are consistent with the conceptualizations of Ye et al. (2012), Walsh (2009), Berry et al. (2006) and Zea et al. (1997). Their studies suggest that perceived discrimination is linked to destination-loyalty intention through its relationship with orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction.

In the case of international students, moving from relationships, affiliations and social routine environments may seem difficult in a foreign environment which offers limited personal connections. This study seeks to understand factors that assist the connection for international students in a new environment based on the assumption that strength of relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention may differ with orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction.

Methodology

Hypotheses
The theoretical proposition and pertinent hypothesis are rooted in research literature of perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture, life satisfaction and destination-loyalty intention that help to explain the research questions suggested in this study. The lists of hypotheses are as follows:

- **H1:** Perceived discrimination will be negatively related to destination-loyalty intention.
- **H2:** A positive relationship is expected between orientations to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intention.
- **H3:** Life satisfaction will have positive relationship to destination-loyalty intention.
- **H4:** Orientation to mainstream culture mediates the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention.
- **H5:** Life satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention.

Sampling Details
All registered International students at a university in Shah Alam, Malaysia were eligible to participate in the study. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to potential participants between Mac and June 2017. After inspecting and cleaning up the data, a total of 132 cases were used for the final analysis. The majority of respondents were male as compared to females. In terms of age, most were between 30 and 40 and were from Asia. See Table 1 for the details on the respondents’ profiles.
Table 1 Profile of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 20 years old</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 years old</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years old</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years old</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Instruments
All responses were rated on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

Destination-Loyalty Intention
Using destination-loyalty intention as the dependent variable, we used the instruments by Oppermann (2000). Sample item were: ‘My overall feeling about Malaysia is so good that I will come again after I completed my course/study’.

Perceived Discrimination
Perceived discrimination was assessed using 5 (five) items drawn from the Perceived Discrimination Scale developed by Berry et al. (2006) with a scale about unfair treatment. Sample item were: ‘I think that others have behaved in an unfair or negative way towards my ethnic group’.

Orientation to Mainstream Culture
Orientation to mainstream culture was measured in accordance to the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) by Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000). For the purpose of this study only the ten items pertaining to the level of orientation to mainstream culture was used. Example of the question used were: ‘I often participate in mainstream Malaysian cultural traditions’.

Life Satisfaction
Life satisfaction was assessed using the scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). Sample of the question were: ‘In most ways my life is close to my ideal’.

Data Collection Methods
The selection of sample subjects is strictly based on how well the characteristics of the target population can be represented. The researcher collects data using a questionnaire from international students in one university in Shah Alam. In compliance with the ethical requirements, a number of considerations have been applied to ensure that no one will be compromised by this study. The aims, procedures, and the nature of this study were clearly stated in the cover letter that was enclosed together with the survey instrument. The estimated time frame in answering the survey and matters related to the respondent’s voluntary involvement and privacy were also mentioned.

Results
Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for international students ranged from (m = 4.17, sd = 1.01) to (m = 2.07, sd = .93) for all the scales used in the study. With the exception of perceived discrimination, all the mean scores were above the neutral point of the scale (i.e. above 3), suggesting that respondents were on the positive side of the scale. Perceived discrimination was on the lower side of the scale.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation To Mainstream</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination-loyalty intention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural equation model (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. The data analysis was carried out in accordance with the two-step methodology recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Analysis and results concerning these two stages are discussed in more detail in the following section.

5.1 The measurement model test

To refine all measures for the structural model, a measurement estimated model using the maximum likelihood estimation method was applied. The initial items relating to four main variables (perceived discrimination, life satisfaction, orientation to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intentions) were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The CFA results revealed a moderate fit; \( \frac{c_{min}}{df} = 1.72 \), standard root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.16, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .07, parsimonious fit indices (PNFI) = .62 and (PGFI) = .65 and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .81. From the analysis, 1 item for destination-loyalty intention, 2 out of 5 items for perceived discrimination, 1 out of 5 items for life satisfaction and 8 out of 10 items for orientation to mainstream culture with standardized regression weights below 0.50 value were removed. Consequently, this measurement model was used for the analyses.

A reliability test was then conducted to assess internal consistency of multiple indicators for each construct. As shown in Table 3, all variables were found to have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) higher than 0.5. However, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Huang, Wang, Wu, and Wang (2013), if AVE is less than 0.5 but composite reliability is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is adequate. The composite reliability for all constructs was more than 0.6. Thus the multiple measures in this study are reliable for assessing each construct (Nunnally, 1978). However, for value of AVE and composite reliability which is lower than recommended, the Cronbach Alpha index was applied (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). The Cronbach Alpha values of 0.68 - 0.88 confirmed the factor reliability.

A construct validity test was conducted using the factor loadings within the constructs. As shown in Table 3 all standardised factor loadings emerged fairly high showing the measurement had convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 2 Validity and Reliability Analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Loadings</th>
<th>Convergent Validity</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination-loyalty intention</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to mainstream culture</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.65</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 4 indicate that discriminant validity is well established. Following Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2013), the squared root of AVE should also be higher than the inter-construct correlation and no correlation among the latent variables exceeded 0.9, thus suggesting good discriminant validity. Furthermore, Table 4 suggests that the correlation coefficients among the latent constructs did not exceed 0.9, and therefore the model is assumed to be free from multicollinearity problems (Fidell & Tabachnick, 2006; Hair et al., 2013). Comparison between the square root of AVE and inter-construct correlation also established discriminant validity. From the tests for reliability and validity, strong evidence emerged showing the constructs satisfied the requirement for their reliability, convergence and discriminant validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Discriminant Validity Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Destination-loyalty intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orientation to mainstream culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Life satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived discrimination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structural model test
Results suggest that the fit indices of the hypothesised model meet the minimum requirement; $cmin/df = 1.70$, standard root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.09, parsimonious fit indices (PNFI) = 0.61 and (PGFI) = 0.53, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.94 and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.93 > 0.90 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Therefore, the hypothesised model could be accepted as providing a good fit (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and met the requirement for reliability and validity. Accordingly, the proposed structural model satisfies the conditions of unidimensionality. The structural results of the proposed model are depicted in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Structural model on the relationship between perceived discrimination (PD), orientation to mainstream culture (COM) and life satisfaction (LS) to (DLI) destination-loyalty intention.

Results shows that the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention was ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = .288$), indicating that perceived discrimination was not related to destination-loyalty intention. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. In contrast, the relationship between orientation to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intention was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.47; p < .05$) indicating that Hypothesis 2 was supported. However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported as the relationship between life satisfaction and destination-loyalty intention was not significant ($\beta = .14; p = .237$) Results from these hypotheses testing are summarised in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesised path</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 Perceived discrimination $\rightarrow$ Destination-loyalty intention</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.288</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 Orientation to mainstream culture $\rightarrow$ Destination-loyalty intention</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 Life satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Destination-loyalty intention</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of the role of orientation to mainstream culture as the mediating variable between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention

Figure 1 illustrates the path diagram and the direct effects are shown as path coefficients. Hypothesis 4 dealt with the role of orientation to mainstream culture as the mediating variable between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention. By employing Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS), indirect and total effects were computed in the final model. All effects are shown in Table 6 together with the squared multiple correlations ($R^2$) associated with destination-loyalty intention. All effects were statistically significant ($p < .001$) except those effects referring to perceived discrimination against destination-loyalty intention.

Guidelines recommended by Cohen (1988) were followed in interpreting the magnitude of effects found in the structural model. As summarised in Table 6, the direct effect of perceived discrimination ($\beta = -0.04$) and orientation to mainstream culture ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$) on destination-loyalty intention were extremely low and significant. The relationship of perceived discrimination to destination-loyalty intention was found to be improved with orientation to mainstream culture as a mediator. Hence, hypothesis 4 was supported in this study.

Results from the analysis indicated that life satisfaction (hypothesis 5) was unrelated to destination-loyalty intention. The researcher found that the direct effect of perceived discrimination ($\beta = -0.04$) and life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.05$) on destination-loyalty intention were extremely low and insignificant ($p > 0.001$). No evidence was found to suggest that life satisfaction has a significant relationship with destination-loyalty intention. Hypothesis 5 was not supported in this study.

Apart from path coefficients, squared multiple correlations ($R^2$) were also employed as an indicator showing the integrated effect size for predicted endogenous variables. The $R^2$ of destination-loyalty intention was .35 indicating a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Based on the $R^2$, it can be assumed that the proposed structural model had a robust statistical ability in explaining destination-loyalty intention of international students in education tourism.

### Table 6 Mediation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Direct Effect</th>
<th>Indirect Effect</th>
<th>Total Effect</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Destination-loyalty intention ($R^2 = .35$)</td>
<td>-0.12*</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation to mainstream culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Destination-loyalty intention ($R^2 = .35$)</td>
<td>-0.12*</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
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### Discussion and Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between psychological factors and international education experiences and international students’ destination-loyalty intentions. Results reveal that international students in Malaysia generally tend to view their psychological needs as similar to international students in Norway (see Jamaludin et al., 2016a). Results for the study is in line with findings by Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder...
(2006b) who suggest that perceived discrimination is an important predictor (positive or negative) of orientation to mainstream culture. Nevertheless, in this study, the relationship between orientations to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intention is similar with the study by Jamaludin et al. (2016a). This shows that even by using different samples with the robust analysis, orientation to mainstream culture still play important roles in influencing destination-loyalty intention. This study also supported the finding of Zea, Reisen, Beil, and Caplan (1997) who suggest that well-adjusted students in the host communities are more likely to remain and have a sense of positive integration or assimilation, which arguably should strengthen their educational goals, commitment and loyalty.

This study suggests that feelings concerning being discriminated against can result in poor orientation to the mainstream culture for students in Malaysia. This in turn may lead to lower destination-loyalty intention. This finding may however be attributed to cultural proximity, as the majority of our study sample originated from countries that are culturally close to Malaysia (Asia), and thus may not experience much discrimination and be more culturally involved. The link between perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intention may elucidate the understanding in this area.

On the impact of perceived discrimination, orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction on destination-loyalty intention, results indicate that orientation to mainstream culture is the only variable significantly explaining destination-loyalty intention. Broadening this initial line of inquiry in further research on the relationship between orientation to mainstream culture and destination-loyalty intention may be translated in the long-term into areas for intervention, allowing efforts to be directed toward creating education destination climates that encourage the development and nurturance of broad expressions of international students’ destination-loyalty intention across various contexts.

Hypothesis 1, on the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention, was not supported. This is inconsistent with several previous studies (Stainback & Irvin, 2012; Ye et al., 2012). This may be due to more than 50% of the respondents’ in the study coming from culturally similar background that is Asia. For Malaysia, future research should seek to observe further using more cultural diverse samples on the impact of perceived discrimination on destination-loyalty intention. This is because, despite there being many commonalities, differences among the subgroups of international students do exist (Jamaludin et al., 2016a). Thus it is necessary to further examine students’ experiences and needs based on their nationalities in Malaysia and Asia.

Perceived discrimination significantly influences orientation to mainstream culture for Malaysia. With regards to perceived discrimination, this finding was found to be consistent with the finding of Berry et al. (2006) who suggest that perceived discrimination is an important predictor (positive or negative) of orientation to mainstream culture. This study suggests that experienced discrimination leads to lower orientation to mainstream culture which again would negatively influence destination-loyalty intention for Malaysia. As for life satisfaction, the researcher speculates that the generally good psychological adaptation (which is represented by life satisfaction) among the international students was that they were well prepared for their overseas sojourn (Sam et al., 2015). Further, majority of students in this study originated from Asia, and can travel back to their home countries for a brief period, even for a weekend if they want. This perhaps further influences their psychological adaptation and subsequently their destination-loyalty intention.

The second hypothesis was accepted. This shows that orientation to mainstream culture influences destination-loyalty intention which supports the finding of Zea et al. (1997) who suggest that well-adjusted students in the host communities are more likely to remain and have a sense of positive integration or assimilation, which arguably should strengthen their educational goals, commitment and loyalty. International students who have positive experience and have strong relationship with the host society will be more likely to return to the host destination or recommend it to others (Jamaludin et al., 2016a). The significant relationship between orientation to mainstream
culture and destination-loyalty intention can be further nurtured by education practitioners through adjusting the introduction programs and providing support throughout the study duration. Considering this along with the results of the present study, it seems that interventions targeted on enhancing adaptation to host culture may influence international students’ destination-loyalty intention, and this may have economic benefits in the long run.

The third hypothesis regarding the relationship between life satisfaction and destination loyalty was not supported. The findings indicate that life satisfaction was not related to destination-loyalty intention. A study by Jamaludin et al. (2016a) suggested that the non-significance relationship of life satisfaction on destination-loyalty intention may have to do with the measurement of the variable. In this study, life satisfaction was measured on a broader view without considering factors specifically focusing on destination-loyalty intention such as time orientation and destination experiences as factors that would influence the level of destination-loyalty intention among international students (Jamaludin et al., 2016a). Thus, it is recommended that future study should address these issues.

Another important contribution of this research relates to the second research questions on the mediating effect of orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction. Hypothesis 4 deal with the role of orientation to mainstream culture as a mediator of perceived discrimination towards destination-loyalty intention. As summarised in Table 6, the researcher found the pattern of causal relationships to be consistent in this context, with what should be expected theoretically. In predicting destination-loyalty intention, orientation to mainstream contributes the most as compared to other variables. The relationship of perceived discrimination to destination-loyalty intention was found to be improved and statistically significant (p < 0.001) with orientation to mainstream culture as a mediator. As perceived discrimination increases, orientation to mainstream culture decreases and vice versa. Results indicates that the relationship between perceived discrimination and destination-loyalty intention was found to be improved with the existence of orientation to mainstream culture as a mediator which indicates by the total effect figure (0.51, Malaysia).

Finally, hypothesis 5 was not supported in this study as no evidence was found to suggest that perceived discrimination has a significant relationship to destination-loyalty intention, even with life satisfaction as a mediator. It was found that the direct effect of life satisfaction on destination-loyalty intention were extremely low and insignificant (p > 0.1). While this study found very little support regarding the relationship between life satisfaction and destination-loyalty intention, the researcher thinks it may be premature to dismiss the potential relationship as non-existent. Further studies on these relationships may be needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

**Recommendations and Limitations**

Generally, results suggest that some of the relations between orientation to mainstream culture and life satisfaction and destination-loyalty intention are context-dependent. However, it can be concluded that orientation to mainstream culture is integral to the concept of destination-loyalty intention.

The findings here are based primarily on destination-loyalty intentions, which are not the primary motive for international student exchange. The findings, however, are clear enough as indicating a need to look into this area more closely. These results underscore the fact that facilitating loyalty intention may be important for an institution to create and maintain a support system that promotes cultural adjustment. This research recommends institutions to consider ways to counter problems undermining the international experience. The researcher contends that this work has the potential to advance the development of culturally informed, empirically supported interventions for international students.

The research acknowledges the limitations of the approach taken to analyse the total process of destination-loyalty intention. In the setting of this study, few items were removed from the selected measurement based on statistical requirement. The total items removed for the analysis might suggest that further work on the predictors of destination-loyalty intention is necessary.
Although each of these findings represents an important contribution to the understanding of student loyalty intention, a significant amount of research is still required in order to explicate relational exchanges in this context. Future studies should seek to use more heterogeneous and larger samples to ascertain the validity of the current findings.

This study also recognises that the data collection, which was limited to only international students in Klang Valley Malaysian university, may be suffering from single-source bias and great caution should be exercise when generalising the findings to other countries. Besides, the presented study is correlational in nature. As a potential direction for future research, the researcher proposed that longitudinal studies should be done to help provide clearer evidence of causal relations between perceived discrimination–orientation to mainstream culture–life satisfaction–destination-loyalty intentions. In spite of the limitations of this study, the researcher thinks the findings from the study are clear enough to suggest that international students’ destination-loyalty intention is influenced by… perceived discrimination and orientation to mainstream society.

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