

# EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF TOURIST SATISFACTION AND NATIONALITY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND DESTINATION LOYALTY: EVIDENCES FROM SULTANATE OF OMAN

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**Abstract:** This study proposed and empirically tested a model to understand the direct effect of service quality on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty and the moderating effect of nationality on the proposed relationship in the context of Sultanate of Oman. The result shows that service quality and tourist satisfaction are significant predictors of destination loyalty. It also shows that nationality has significant positive moderating effect on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. The results indicate that the destination marketers must consider nationality as an important factor while designing the products and services and implement resource-based and culture-specific approaches and plans to make Sultanate of Oman a leading all-season tourist destination among the GCC countries and to sustain its competitive advantage.

**Key words:** Service quality, tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, Asians and Non-Asians

## INTRODUCTION

Sultanate of Oman is the second largest country among the GCC nations (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). It is predominantly an oil-based economy. However, the government has been under constant pressure to identify alternative sources of income due to the fast depletion of oil resources (Al-Shanfari, 2012) to sustain its competitive advantage. Heeding to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos' repeated emphasis, tourism has been recognized as the next main source of income after oil and gas. The mission statement envisaged in 'Vision 2040' that 'tourism will help to facilitate economic diversification, preservation of cultural integrity and environmental protection of the Sultanate of Oman' is a testimony to the country's focus on tourism sector (Ministry of Tourism).

Sultanate of Oman as a country is blessed with diverse resources, rich culture, and old heritage such as

Arabic calligraphy, marine environment, local textiles, landscape, tall mountains, wildlife, archaeological sites, forts, and castles (Middle East Performance Review, 2008). The Brand Oman Management Unit (BOMU), launched by the Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (PAIPED) in 2009, has been entrusted with the task of branding Oman as a nation with unique people, stories, culture, ideas, leadership and vision. Since its inception the country has been aggressively developing tourism development strategies and tourism infrastructure to become the most sought-after destination among the GCC countries. Three of its cultural heritage sites namely Qal'at Al-Bahrain, Bahla Fort, and Land of Frankincense have already been in the list of UNESCO's world cultural heritage.

In 2016, Oman unveiled its National Tourism Strategy (NTS). The NTS aims to double the number of international tourist arrivals to the country by 2020 and

also to increase the number of Omani nationals working in the tourism sector to around 500,000 (75% of the total workforce) by 2040. The NTS also aims to position

Oman as an all-season destination for the travellers from all over the globe. The travel and tourism statistics for Oman 2018 is provided in Table 1.

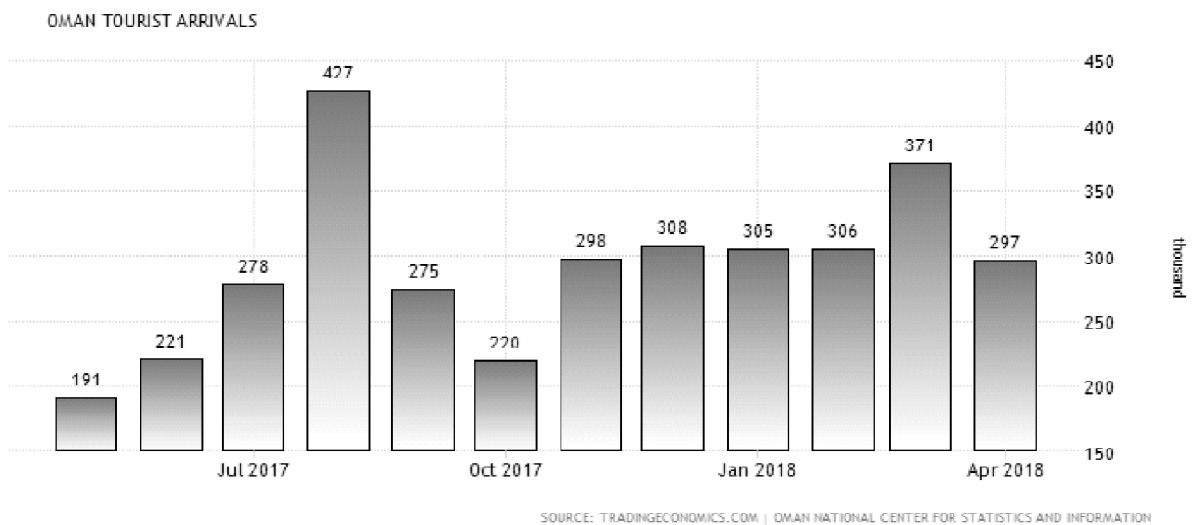
**Table 1**  
**Travel and Tourism Statistics 2018 for Oman Source: Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Report 2018 Oman**

OMAN	2017 USDmn <sup>1</sup>	2017 % of total	2018 Growth <sup>2</sup>	USDmn <sup>1</sup>	2028 % of total	Growth <sup>3</sup>
Direct contribution to GDP	2,209.5	3.2	6.0	4,170.1	4.3	5.9
Total contribution to GDP	4,616.2	6.6	6.3	8,674.8	8.9	5.9
Direct contribution to employment <sup>4</sup>	73	3.4	1.5	95	4.0	2.6
Total contribution to employment <sup>4</sup>	140	6.6	3.3	199	8.2	3.2
Visitor exports	2,689.9	7.1	6.5	5,557.8	10.3	6.9
Domestic spending	1,137.7	1.6	3.6	1,451.9	1.5	2.1
Leisure spending	2,786.1	2.3	6.5	5,347.6	3.2	6.1
Business spending	1,041.5	0.9	3.4	1,662.2	1.0	4.4
Capital investment	709.9	2.8	4.3	997.3	3.0	3.0

<sup>1</sup>2017 constant prices & exchange rates; <sup>2</sup>2018 real growth adjusted for inflation (%); <sup>3</sup>2018-2028 annualised real growth adjusted for inflation (%); <sup>4</sup>000 jobs

As per the Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Report 2018 Oman given in Table 1, the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to the GDP of Oman was USD 2,209 mn in 2017 which is forecast to rise at 4.3% to USD 4,170.1 mn in 2028. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism was USD 4,616.2 mn in 2017 which

is expected to grow at 8.9% to USD 8674.8 million in 2028. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism was worth USD 73 mn in 2017 which is expected to rise at 4% to USD 95 mn in 2028. The total contribution to employment was worth USD 140 mn in 2017 which is expected to be around USD 199 mn in 2028.



**Figure 1: Oman Tourist Arrivals (June 2017 – April 2018)**

Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/oman/tourist-arrivals>, 7-7-18 @ 10.52 am

The statistics on tourist arrivals in Oman (Figure 1) indicates that it is in the 'evoked set' of the tourists from various parts of the world. However the visitor traffic, in comparison to other GCC countries, has been declining for the past few years. Despite the rapid growth of tourism, little attention has been paid to understand the expectations and perceptions of the tourists who visit the destinations in Oman. The studies available on Oman primarily focus on perspectives on education, student awareness, general perspectives of tourists etc. Maha Al Balushi and *et al.* (2013) in their study on 'the awareness and views on branding Oman' mentioned that the country remained unknown to the foreigners due to its poor branding efforts. Mohammed Gamil Montasser (2016) conducted a study on Oman's position in US tourists' mind about destination attributes and suggested that the country should improve a lot in its performance score to improve its competitive position. The Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Report 2018 Oman also indicates that the country is way behind other GCC countries in investment, employability etc. Many questions are therefore being raised regarding the sustainability of policy initiatives of Oman.

It is surprising to note that no serious research has been conducted to understand the perception of tourists with respect to service quality, satisfaction and destination loyalty in connection with the nationality of the tourists who visit Oman. This paper is an attempt to address this research gap by exploring the perspectives of the Asian and Non-Asian tourists about service quality, satisfaction and destination loyalty.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tourism is an experience. Unlike other industries, tourism industry is a conglomerate of various industries such as hotels, airlines, attractions, travel and tour operations etc. These components are integral part of tourism. It entails that a destination must have a wide mix of tourism products and services (Buhalis, 2000) with all the essential facilities such as entrainment, lodging, transportation and qualified workforce to serve the tourists (Bieger, 1998). According to Kozak (2001) satisfaction with different elements of the destination is important to develop loyalty towards the destination. If any element of the tourism

product mix fails to deliver the expected services, the entire industry will be blamed and affected.

A destination is preferred by a tourist on the basis of its image and its fitment in terms of attractions, accommodation, accessibility etc. It is not easy to carve a strong favourable imagery in the minds of the tourists unless the destination has something unique and exceptional to stand out in comparison to other destinations (Fan, 2006). According to Pike (2005) no country can claim monopoly on the destination attributes as the tourists are spoilt by numerous choices. The positioning of the destination should therefore be so captivating that the potential users instantaneously choose it as their first choice. As suggested by Walle and Verhallen (1986), there is an urgent need to segment the market as per the tastes and preferences of the customers to adjust with the large differences in tourist behaviour. The quality of services provided at the destination must be capable of making the tourist happy and motivated to visit it again and spread positive word of mouth about it. Though the demand for multiple products and services would be very challenging and difficult to manage (Pritchard, and Piggott, 2003; Bregoli, 2013), the destination marketers must be capable of delivering the expected services to the tourists to leave them happy with memorable experiences about the destination (Bornhorst, Ritchie, and Sheehan, 2010, Edward, 2013).

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES**

### **Service Quality**

According to Bitner, Booms and Mohr (1994) service quality is expressed as the overall impression of the tourists about the relative inferiority or superiority of the destination and its services. It measures the psychological variations between experiences and performances regarding service benefits (Roest & Pieters, 1997) and shows the gap between the expected services and experienced services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

The concept of Service Quality is very important in tourism service delivery (Wyllie, 2000). According to Grönroos (1984) the customers always assess the quality

of services received in comparison to their expected services. If the perceived service falls below the expected service, the customers are disappointed (Kotler, 2014). According to Szwarc (2005), satisfaction and loyalty constructs are interdependent. According to Cole and Illum (2006), high levels of Service Quality influence the level of satisfaction of the tourists. It helps in generating positive word of mouth and more benefits to the destination and its marketers. According to Kandampully (2000), service quality is the most significant determinant of destination competitiveness. Tourism managers have given vital importance to the concept of service quality as an important determinant of satisfaction and loyalty (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003, Canny & Hidayat, 2012). They analyze the quality of the services at the destination not only for destination planning and product development (Moutinho, Albayrak, & Caber, 2012) but also for reducing expenditure and increasing income from the destination. The studies stated above lead us to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Service quality has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction

H2: Service quality has a significant positive effect on destination loyalty

### **Tourist Satisfaction**

According to Baker and Crompton (2000) satisfaction is the state of emotion that the tourists express after experiencing the destination. It is directly connected with pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences (Moutinho, 1987). Tourist satisfaction is extremely important for a destination to be regarded as successful because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak, 2001). Positive experience by the tourists at the destination can produce positive effects including repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth to friends and relatives (Chi & Qu, 2008, J. Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007, Devashish, 2011).

Satisfaction is viewed as a key source of superior performance and business success in today's competitive environment (Eusebio & Vieira, 2013). Because of its power to influence destination choice, spending, repurchase intention, and word of mouth, satisfaction

of the tourists has been made the core objective of tourism marketing strategies (Eusebio & Armando Luis, 2013; Devashish, 2011). As mentioned by Bowen and Clarke (2009), dissatisfied tourists will never return to a place which gave them a useless vacation. Tourist satisfaction is very important to create revisit intention and destination competitiveness (Chi and Qu, 2008). Several authors have reported positive mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty (Osman & Sentosa, 2013; Valle, Silva, Mendes, & Guerreiro, 2006). According to Kotler (2009) assessment of the satisfaction levels of the customers would help the managers not only to improve services but also to compare organizations and destinations in terms of performance. Given the importance of tourist satisfaction, we propose to test the following hypotheses:

H3: Tourist satisfaction has a significant positive effect on destination loyalty.

H4: Tourist satisfaction has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty.

### **Nationality**

Studies reveal that cultural differences significantly affect service quality perception, satisfaction and loyalty. Dedeođlu, Dedeođlu, and Gürkan (2017) found significant differences among the nationals of Turkey, Germany and Russia with respect to service quality perception, destination image and revisit intentions. Lee and Ulgado (1997) found significant differences between the American and Korean people with respect to service quality perception of fast-food restaurants. While the Koreans prefer to travel in groups and insist on Korean restaurants (Pizam & Sussman, 1995), the American tourists are interested in socializing with other tourists (Maoz, 2007). According to Angelos Pantouvakis and Christos Patsiouras (2016) the Koreans show strong loyalty to their socio-cultural identity and are reluctant to accept anything that does not have enough in common with their lifestyle. Reisinger and Turner (1998) reported significant differences in communication style, feelings and attitudes between Korean tourists and Australian service providers. The perception about eating out, rent-

a-car services and sightseeing tours significantly deferred between the European and Asian student groups (Chadee and Mattsson, 1996). Richardson and Crompton (1988) found significant differences in the vacation travel characteristics of the tourists hailing from different countries. Prayag & Ryan (2010) noticed the tendency of the tourists to interpret the environment of the destination in relation to their nationality and suggested to include it as an effective variable for segmenting the markets.

The moderating effect of nationality is also reported by many researchers. Pantouvakis (2013) investigated the moderating effects of nationality in the context of hospitality industry and found significant moderating effects on the relationship between perceived satisfaction and loyalty. Zgolli & Zaiem (2017) researched on the moderating effect of nationality on customer to customer interaction in the context of Tunisia and found positive

moderating effect on the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Forgas *et al.* (2012) analyzed the loyalty level of the American and Italian tourists towards urban tourist destinations in Barcelona and found partial moderating effect of nationality on the satisfaction-loyalty link.

Given the importance of nationality in destination marketing the researchers propose to test the following hypotheses:

- H5: Nationality has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty.
- H6: Nationality has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between service quality and Tourist Satisfaction.
- H7: Nationality has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

### PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

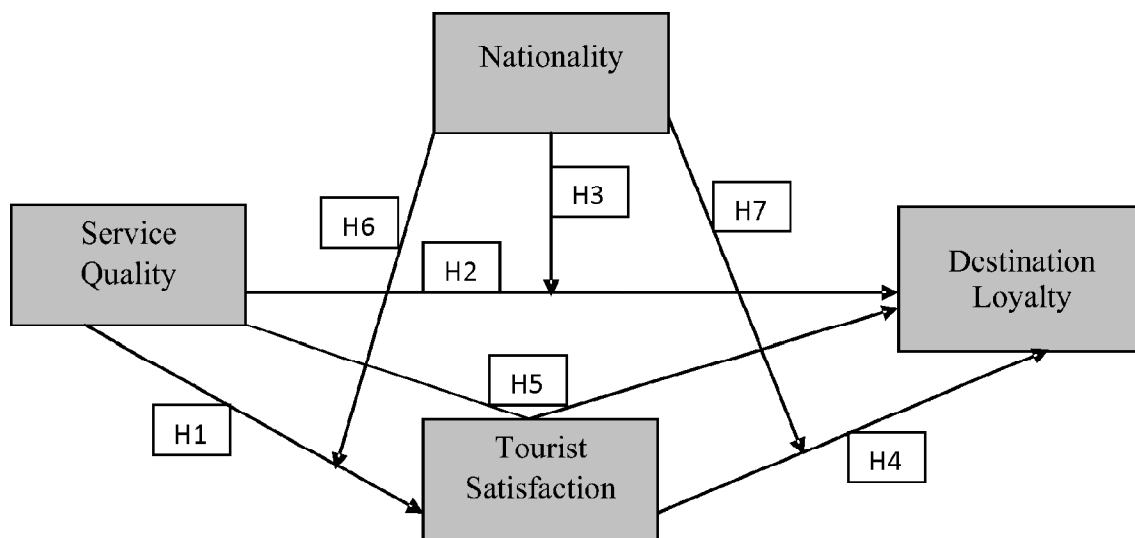


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

### METHODOLOGY

The geographic territory of this study was confined to Sultanate of Oman. The respondents were categorized as Asian and Non-Asian tourists who were above 18 years of age. The tourists were approached at the destinations as per the convenience of the researcher. A structured questionnaire comprising 2 sections were administered for

data collection. The first section consisted of questions on demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 1) and the second section on service quality, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies as mentioned in Table 2. The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The data were collected during February-July 2017 from 800 respondents of which 788 were found useable for the study.

**Table 1**  
**Profile of the respondents**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Gender	Male	443	56.2
	Female	345	43.8
	Total	788	100.0
Age	18-27	208	26.4
	28-37	248	31.5
	38-47	240	30.5
	above 48	92	11.7
	Total	788	100.0
Marital status	Married	450	57.1
	Unmarried	338	42.9
	Total	788	100.0
Nationality	Asian	362	45.9
	Non Asian	426	54.1
	Total	788	100.0
Education	School level	28	3.6
	Technical	92	11.7
	Graduation	320	40.6
	Masters	244	31.0
	Ph D	104	13.2
Total	788	100.0	

Out of the 788 respondents, 56.2% were males and 43.8% were females. 58% of the respondents were in the age group of 18-37. 57.1% were married. 45.9% of the respondents were Asians and 54.1% Non-Asians. About 85% of the tourists had a bachelor degree or higher qualification.

**Table 3**  
**Source of Variables**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>No. of Item</i>	<i>Source</i>
Service Quality	28	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> (1991)
Tourist Satisfaction	11	Oliver (1991), Yoon & Uysal (2005)
Destination Loyalty	6	Kim (2010)

The psychometric properties of the research instrument were examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (Table 4). All the items under the constructs demonstrated good internal consistencies as the Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the recommended value of 0.70. The convergent validity was determined by factor loading and Reliability test of all the variables using IBM SPSS software.

**Table 4**  
**Reliability of Measurement Scales**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Composite Reliability Coefficient</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha Coefficient</i>	<i>Average variance Extracted</i>
Destination Loyalty	0.868	0.817	0.522
Tourist Satisfaction	0.885	0.843	0.562
Service Quality	0.921	0.893	0.700

**MODEL FIT INDICES**

The model fit indices were then calculated to know the predictability of the measurement model. The result given in Table 5 demonstrates that the values of all the fit indices are within the acceptance range and the model is fit to measure the constructs.

**Table 5**  
**Fit Indices for Measurement Model**

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Accepted Range</i>	<i>Model Fit Measurement</i>
Goodness of fit index	> 0.90	0.933, Good Fit
Adjusted Goodness of fit index	> 0.80	0.906, Good Fit
Tucker Lewis index	> 0.90	0.911, Good Fit
Comparative Fit index	> 0.90	0.895, Good Fit
RMSEA	<= 0.08	0.034, Good Fit
CMIN/DF	< 5.0	2.038, Good Fit

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The hypotheses from H1 to H3 were tested using correlation and regression analysis. The descriptive statistics and the model summary are provided in Table 6 and Table 7 respectively.

**Table 6**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Service Quality	3.080	0.666
Tourist Satisfaction	3.920	0.552
Destination Loyalty	3.792	0.414

The result shows that the mean values of all the constructs are above 3 indicating that the respondents have positive opinions about the destination attributes.

However, the mean of value service quality dimension (M=3.08) is lower than the mean values of Tourist satisfaction (M=3.92) and Destination loyalty (M=3.79). This indicates that the tourists are not very happy about the quality of services rendered at the destination. Though they appear to be satisfied with the services received and are loyal to the destination to a greater extent, the destination marketers must act upon immediately to improve the quality of services rendered at the destination to enhance their overall satisfaction and loyalty.

**Table 7**  
**Correlation and Regression Analysis (Model summary)**

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Dependent variables</i>							
	<i>Tourist satisfaction</i>				<i>Destination Loyalty</i>			
	<i>Unstandardized β</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Unstandardized β</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>F</i>
Service quality	.891***	.621	.385	18.928	.769***	.528	.278	17.955
Tourist satisfaction		.848***	.721	.519	1078.55			

\*\*\*significant, p<0.001, \*\*significant, p<0.01, \* significant, p<0.05

The correlation and regression values are given in Table 7. The result indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between service quality and tourist satisfaction (R=.621) and one unit change in service quality can bring about 89.1% change in tourist satisfaction ( $\beta=.891$ ). The result also shows that the correlation between Service quality and destination loyalty is moderately high (R=.528) and one unit change in service quality can cause 76.9% change in destination loyalty ( $\beta=.769$ ). The result further shows that there is a strong positive correlation between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (R=.721). The Unstandardized beta ( $\hat{\alpha}=.848$ ) indicates that one unit change in tourist satisfaction can cause 84.8% change in destination loyalty. Since the proposed hypotheses are

positively correlated and significant at .001 level, we accept all the hypotheses from H1 to H3.

The mediation effect of tourist satisfaction on service quality and destination loyalty (hypothesis 4) was estimated using bootstrapping method. The result is given in Table 8.

The test result for mediation effect of tourist satisfaction on Service Quality and Destination Loyalty given in Table 8 shows that the value ( $\hat{\alpha}=.798$ ) is high, the critical ratio is above 1.96 and is significant at .001 level leading to the conclusion that tourist satisfaction can significantly mediate the relationship between service quality and destination loyalty. Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant, tourist satisfaction has

**Table 8**  
**Mediation effect of Tourist Satisfaction on Service Quality and Destination Loyalty**

<i>Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)</i>							
		<i>β</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>C.R.</i>	<i>Bootstrapping P value</i>		
Loyalty	<—	Tourist Satisfaction	0.798***	0.041	19.463	Indirect effect	Direct effect
						.001***	.004***

partial mediation effect on the proposed relationship. This leads to the acceptance of the hypothesis 4 that there is a significant mediating effect of tourist satisfaction on the proposed relationship.

The moderation effect of nationality on the proposed relationships (Hypotheses 5 to 7) was estimated using three steps. First, the data were split in two different datasets namely Asians and Non Asians. Second, the path

of interest was depicted between the predictor and latent variables and named as constrained model and unconstrained model. Third, the constrained model was assigned a value of one [1] and the unconstrained model a value of zero [0] with the assumption that there is a moderation effect if the chi-square difference between the constrained and unconstrained model is more than 3.84. The moderating effect was estimated using SEM analysis. The results are given in Table 9.

**Table 9**  
**Moderation effect of nationality on proposed relationship for Asians & Non-Asians**

		<i>Regression Weights for Asians</i>			<i>Non-Asians</i>			
			$\beta$	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>C.R.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>C.R.</i>
Service quality	→	Destination Loyalty	0.764***	0.064	11.93	0.715***	0.081	8.827
	→	Tourist Satisfaction	0.795***	0.084	9.46	0.675***	0.084	8.247
Tourist Satisfaction	→	Destination Loyalty	0.676***	0.029	23.31	0.628***	0.041	15.31

The result given in Table 9 indicates that nationality has a significant moderating effect on the proposed relationship between the variables for both the Asian and the Non-Asian tourists. The result shows that the effect of nationality of the Asian tourists is higher in its effect than the Non-Asian tourists. It means that the Asians are more sensitive about service quality and satisfaction than the Non-Asian tourists. Since the effect of nationality on all the proposed relationships is positive and statistically significant at .001 level, we accept all the hypotheses from H5 to H7.

### CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer several insights to the destination marketers of Sultanate of Oman. The mean values indicate that the tourists are not satisfied with the quality of services rendered at the destination. The values for satisfaction and destination loyalty are also less than 4 indicating that the tourists are also not very happy about the destination attributes. It is assumed from the responses that the tourists expect the destination to have more modern facilities with provision for quality economical accommodation and variety of cuisines according to the tastes of the tourists. The tourists spend almost a quarter of their total spending on food and

accommodation and it is important that they are provided with quality food and convenient accommodation facilities as suggested by Elmont (1995) to ensure their satisfaction. Mohammed Gamil Montasser's (2016) suggestion that Oman has to improve a lot in its performance score to improve its competitive position still holds true.

We also get several insights from the regression results. The direct effect of service quality on tourist satisfaction ( $\beta = .891$ ) and destination loyalty ( $\beta = .769$ ) is very strong. This means that service quality cannot be compromised. If neglected it would have very adverse effects on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. The direct effect of satisfaction on destination loyalty is also very high ( $\hat{\alpha} = .848$ ) indicating that satisfaction of the tourists is to critical to enhance their loyalty behaviour. A lot of studies have reported similar findings and implications (Alroushan & Abuamoud, 2013; Atilgan, Akinci, & Aksoy, 2003; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Basiony, 2014; Kwok, Jusoh, & Khalifah, 2016; Nithila, 2016; Prabakaran, Arulraj, & Rajagopal, 2008; Mat Som, Mostafavi Shirazi, Marzuki, & Jusoh, 2011; Mohamad, Ghani, & Izzati, 2014; Pantouvakis, 2013; Forgas et al., 2012).

Another important insight of the study is the significance of nationality in destination marketing. The



effect of it on both the Asian tourists and non-Asian tourists is very high and significant. For Asians one unit change in service quality can bring about 76.4% change in destination loyalty. For the non-Asians the effect is 71.5%. While one unit change in service quality can cause 79.5% variation in the satisfaction level of Asian tourists, it can cause 67.5% change in the satisfaction level of Non-Asian tourists. An element of dissatisfaction can bring about 67.6% variation in the loyalty behaviour of Asian tourists and 62.8% variation in the loyalty behaviour of Non-Asian tourists. It reiterates that cultural differences should be strategically managed not only to attract the tourists from different countries but also to retain the loyalty of those who have already visited the country. The managerial implications of these findings would be far reaching and detrimental unless the destination marketers take it very seriously and act upon immediately to stop the negative feelings from spreading.

The result reveals that the primary expectation of the tourists from the destination is modern public facilities, availability of information desks, sign boards, visually appealing infrastructure, well-connected roads and transportation facilities, prompt and responsible services from the personnel, sincere interest in solving the problems of the tourists on time, assured security and respect to the culture and tradition of the tourists. The destination marketers can deploy service personnel who can speak multiple languages at prominent spots and can train the employees to respect the culture and tradition of the tourists and promptly respond to their service requests with courtesy and responsiveness. The destination marketers must formulate specific plans and strategies to cater to the demand of different tourist segments to elicit favorable response from them. This is critical for achieving the stated objectives in a time bound manner.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study primarily attempted to understand the service quality perception and its effect on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty pertaining to Sultanate of Oman. Although the geographical location for the study is assumed to be the entire country, the survey was

conducted in selected tourist centres only and therefore the opinions of the tourists may not be generalized to the population. The grouping of tourists as Asians and Non-Asians is also not strategically correct. It is so because the cultural differences, the characteristics and perceptions of the tourists belonging to different countries in the same group (Asian and Non-Asian) are not considered while grouping them. This is a major limitation of the study. Researchers can address this gap in their future studies.

The constructs used for the study have several antecedents. For example, satisfaction of the tourists depends on various factors which are not part of this study. This can be looked at with a multi-dimensional perspective in future studies. The researchers can derive better insight if factors such as destination image, type of tourists, travel motivations, etc. can also be included in the study framework.

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