

# The Relationship Between Place Attachment and Satisfaction of Visitors in Cinema Multiplex (Case Study: *Pardis Melat and Koorosh, Tehran, Iran*)

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## Abstract

The study tested whether place attachment enhances the place satisfaction among visitors of the multiplex cinema in Tehran-Iran. Structural equation modeling was employed on a sample of 220 visitors. Regression models were estimated to test the relationship of place attachment and place satisfactions of visitors. Place attachment has the four dimensions of place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding. Results show that as hypothesized, the place attachment has the positive effect on place satisfaction and these effects have been approved and an important theoretical contribution is that the important role of place attachment on place satisfaction of visitors of multiplex cinemas by approving four hypotheses of this study. The results of this study enhance the body of knowledge of place satisfaction and place attachment in cultural place. Practical applications of this study include marketing aimed at encouraging repeat visitation by increasing levels of satisfaction by increasing the place attachment in multiplex cinema. The article closes with implications of the study for academics and practitioners.

**Keywords:** Place attachment, Place satisfaction, Multiplex

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## 1. Introduction

There are many studies on satisfaction which have been used the different conceptualization of satisfaction as the dependent variable (Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Song, van der Veen, Li, & Chen, 2012; Williams & Soutar, 2009; Yeh, 2013). According to the behavioral studies, research on satisfaction may be important to improve the previous findings (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Ramkissoon, Smith, & Weiler, 2013a). In earlier studies, satisfaction used as the dependent variable and it is related to the outcomes of business performance. While, this may be a stretch given the differences in the unit of analysis. Moreover, there are limited number of studies that specifically suggested the link between place attachment and satisfaction (Ramkissoon, Smith, & Weiler, 2013b; Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013).

Hence, the study on place attachment and place satisfaction in cultural space has been neglected.

the visitor satisfaction is a concept widely studied in tourism. It has an assumed impact on visitor behavior depending on the strength with which they are satisfied with the (tourism) product (Tudoran et al., 2012).

It has an assumed impact on visitor behavior depending on the strength with which they are satisfied with the settings and facilities (Tudoran et al., 2012). Satisfaction in behavior studies can predict the future intention, and it is important to understand the satisfaction of visitors to place contributes to the emotional ties with the place to encourage future visitations. These emotional ties are commonly referred to as place attachment in environmental psychology and tourism literature (Lai, Hsu, & Nepal, 2013; Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011; Ramkissoon & Mavando, 2015). In architecture and behavior studies, place attachment has the important role to encourage the use of public places, green spaces and relevant to the environmental perceptions (Leila Scannel & Robert Gofford, 2010). The attachment theory has expanded around 30 years before including social ties (Wiles, Allen, Palmer, Hayman, Keeling, & Kerse, 2009). Because of the application of place attachment to many perspectives, a plenitude of definitions has accumulated. However, variation in this definition is vast. Recently, some studies have called for further clarifications of the inconclusive findings on the association between place satisfaction and place attachment in nature-based settings (Lee et al., 2012; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

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This study tries to find out that place attachment and place satisfaction is associated in cultural place such as cinemas. This study seeks to close these gaps and make following contributions: first, this study seeks to establish the relationship between place attachment and place satisfaction. Second, help the urban planner and policy makers to enhance the settings and facilities in cinemas to increase the place satisfactions of visitors by their place attachment. Thirdly, this research has been used the PLS-SEM software as a new path analysis which can measure the hidden relationships among the indicators embedded in our model.

## **2. Research Background**

Existing studies of place attachment reflect a number of dimensions focusing on the people–place bond (Snider, Hill, Luo, Buerger, & Herstine, 2011). Recently, an integrative concept of the term has attracted interest of scholars (Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013), turning it into a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. At least four dimensions have been used to conceptualize and operationalize the place attachment: place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding (Ramkissoon et al., 2012, Leila Scannell, 2010). While most studies have operationalized the term as place dependence (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992) and place identity (Proshansky, 1978), more recently place affect (Halpenny, 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2013) and place social bonding (Ramkissoon et al., 2013) have emerged as sub constructs of place attachment. Place attachment research recognizes place dependence as how well a place's resources help visitors in fulfilling desired goals compared to other alternatives. Individuals evaluate places in terms of how best resources support their enjoyment of activities they engage in (LopezMosquera & Sanchez, 2011) in serving their functional purpose (Stokols & Shumacker, 1981). The higher someone associates with the physical characteristics of a place, the less willing it will be to change the place for another (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The construct of place identity is defined by Prohansky (1978) as "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment" (p. 155). This cognitive dimension of place attachment offers individuals the opportunity to identify themselves with places (Budruk, Thomas, & Tyrrell, 2009), which involves not only the specific localized experiences but also more specific memories about the place (Devine-Wright & Clayton, 2010). The affective dimension of place attachment is underrepresented in place attachment research (Ramkissoon et al., 2012; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Tonge, Valesini, & Moore, 2013). Conceptualized as place affect, it predominantly relies on emotions, allowing individuals to build their sentiments about a place and giving meaning to it (Tuan, 1977). Natural settings tend to

increase positive emotions (Hartig, Book, Garvill, Olsson, & Garling, 1996; Ulrich, 1979), generating stronger affective ties with those environments (Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Ramkissoon et al., 2013). Place social bonding reflects the importance of people's experiences derived from social interactions at a particular place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Cultural place often set the context for social relationships (Raymond et al., 2010) where visitors draw on these social opportunities to redefine their "being in place" (Ramkissoon et al., 2013). These positive bonds connecting humans can be stronger than attachments with the physical attributes of a place (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001).

Visitor satisfaction is a psychological outcome for the visitor (Crompton & Love, 1995; Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). Satisfaction has been of central focus in tourism and behavior studies (Wang & Davidson, 2010). Stedman (2002) conceptualized satisfaction as place satisfaction, which he defines as a multidimensional summary judgment of the perceived quality of a setting, meeting an individual's needs for the physical characteristics of a place, its services, and social dimensions. Place satisfaction is perceived as a key to the success of attractions in today's competitive market (Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Tonge, Moore, & Taplin, 2011). In recent years, the concept has been extensively used to understand visitors' various levels of place satisfaction (Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005; Tonge & Moore, 2007; Ramkissoon et al., 2013). Recently some researchers established a positive relationship between place attachment and satisfaction (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Ramkissoon, Smith, & Kneebone, 2014; Yuksel et al., 2010). Although visitor satisfaction has been well researched in literature and has yielded to a range of policy implications. Researchers have mostly focused on satisfaction as an antecedent of environmental-behavior (Davis, Le, & Coy, 2011; Lopez-Mosquera & Sanchez, 2011; Ramkissoon et al., 2013) and direct effects of visitor satisfaction on outcome variables such as repurchase intentions and recommendation (Theodorakis, Alexandris, Tsigilis, & Karvounis, 2013; Zboja & Vourhees, 2006). Environmental psychologists have demonstrated some evidence showing that environmentally responsible behaviors predict satisfaction (De Young, 2000; Pelletier, Tuson, Green-Demers, Noels, & Beaton, 1998). In the consumer behavior literature, customers' green purchasing behavior influenced their satisfaction with the product (Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992). Thus, place attachment has been reviewed in many studies but in cultural space there is a lack of study on the visitor's satisfaction. This study tries to clear the study on satisfaction behavior among the visitors of cinemas.

By definition, multiplexes are purpose-built cinemas offering a wide choice of viewing across at least five screens (and typically 10 to 15). Most feature Surround-Sound systems (360° digital sound), wide screens, a range of food and confectionery, spacious seating, air conditioning, and free/easy parking. Many also incorporate themed restaurants, cafes, shops and amusement arcades

(and are therefore indicative of the quasification that is fast-blurring the distinctions between different forms of urban leisure (Klinger, B, 2006).

While the first multiplex in the UK (The Point at Milton Keynes) was opened in 1985, it was not until the 1990s that the major cinema circuits began to channel the majority of their investment into multiplexes, with the result that by May 2002 there were an estimated 226 multiplex cinemas in the UK, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all cinema screens and three-quarters of all cinema admissions in just one-third of all cinema sites (Naficy, 2009). Significantly, the vast majority are located out-of-town, taking their place alongside the plethora of retail parks, malls, science parks and heritage centers that typically cluster on the edge of major urban centers. In general then, town center cinemas have suffered from the arrival of the multiplex, with the number of sites in this sector falling steadily from 629 in 1997 to less than 553 in 2002 (Naficy, 2009). Multiplex users typically regard them as comfortable spaces, where this notion describes both the bodily sensation of being warm, cushioned and relaxed, as well as the sense in which people feel secure and 'in place'. Crucial here is the idea that they allow people to develop a clear sense of ontological security, knowing they will be able to enjoy an evening out without their sense of self being challenged.

Based on the literature, four hypotheses have been defined. Hence, the following hypothesis: H1: the place dependence has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema.

H2: the place identity has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema.

H3: the place affect has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema.

H4: the place social bonding has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema.

Literature suggests that place attachment are antecedents to place satisfaction. However, this study attempts to bridge this gap in literature by focusing on place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding as antecedents.

### 3. Research Methodology

*Pardis Melat* and *Korosh* as a multiplex cinema have been selected as the study site. there were located in the state of Tehran in Iran. Both have around 2200 visitors annually due to the easy accessibility from the center to the north of the city of Tehran. The multiplex cinema places serve as a convenient recreational spot, offering a variety of activities such as gallery, museum, theater, and also some outdoor activities. *PardisMelat* is located in the middle of *Melat* national park. So, this multiplex cinema provides the various activities for visitors and can be a good example of multiplex cinema in Iran. According to the De vaus (2013), 10% of visitors can be selected as the sample size with 95% confidence. thus, 220 respondents has been selected by random sampling. After explaining the purpose of the study to respondents, the survey questionnaire was handed to the participant. After

calculating the missing data, leaving a total of 200 completed and useable questionnaires for the final analysis. The three- items place satisfaction measure ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), reflecting overall satisfaction, which is a function of visitor satisfaction with different elements of a setting (Tonge & Moore, 2007), was adopted from Yuksel et al. (2010). Place dependence with two items ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ) and place identity ( $\alpha = 0.67$ ), consisting of three items each, were also borrowed from Yuksel et al. (2010). Place social bonding ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ) and place affect ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), consisting of three items, respectively, were operationalized from Kyle, Graefe, Manning, and Bacon (2004). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

### 4. Analysis

PLS-SEM (structural equation modeling) software was utilized to determine the overall fit of the measurement and structural models using the maximum likelihood method of estimation (Hair et al, 2014). The factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted of the measurement model appear in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the composite reliabilities were higher than the acceptable value of .70 (Nunkoo & Remission, 2012). The square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) were higher than the correlations among the corresponding latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) providing evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 1  
Measurement Model Results (Source: PLS-SEM Result)

Constructs	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	$\sqrt{AVE}$
Place Dependence		0.94	0.942
PD1	0.943		
PD2	0.944		
Place Identity		0.82	0.777
PI1	0.761		
PI2	0.832		
PI3	0.736		
Place Affect		0.88	0.851
PA1	0.867		
PA2	0.882		
PA3	0.804		
Place Social Bonding		0.88	0.886
PSB1	0.858		
PSB2	0.914		
Place satisfaction		0.92	0.900
PS1	0.884		
PS2	0.913		
PS3	0.905		

According to the table 1, the internal consistency and convergent validity has been checked. Discriminant validity is the next step which is checked the cross factor

loading and fornell-lacker criterion. In the following step, the outer loading of a specific construct should be bigger than its loading on all of the other constructs. Table 2 shows the result of the cross factor loading which is passed the threshold. After that the square root of AVE for each construct is bigger than the correlation between constructs, so the fornell- lacker criterion has been accepted. All the following steps checked the validity of measurement model and the next step is checking the structural model and checking the hypothesis.

Table 2  
Cross Factor Loading (Source: SEM-PLS Software)

	Place Affect	Place Dep	Place Identity	Place SB
PA1	0.867127	0.582896	0.600313	0.589720
PA2	0.882306	0.665670	0.581005	0.498078
PA3	0.803973	0.545929	0.553574	0.551825
PD1	0.653556	0.942948	0.581091	0.589836
PD2	0.675455	0.943627	0.669632	0.527787
PI1	0.552650	0.628187	0.761212	0.469663
PI2	0.576425	0.500744	0.831589	0.538034
PI3	0.448894	0.404778	0.735838	0.532998
PSB1	0.515674	0.527526	0.506455	0.858258
PSB2	0.610748	0.526236	0.651629	0.914024

To test relationships suggested in hypotheses of this article, Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping approach was used. Bootstrapping is one of the most popular techniques to gauge the extent and significance of indirect effects (Preacher et al., 2007). Bootstrapping takes a large number of samples from the original data, sampling with replacement and computes the standard error of the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The reason for bootstrapping is to compute the best estimate of standard errors since it is known that the interaction term does not follow a normal distribution. Bootstrapping is employed since it does not make any assumptions about the distribution of the interaction term (Preacher et al., 2007). In this study, 5000 bootstrap samples were used to obtain estimates for the conditional indirect relationships.

**5. Results and Discussion**

The measurement model showed that all items loaded on their expected factors; the reliability (compositereliability) was strong for all measures (see Table 1). Model fit statistics indicate that the model fits the data closely. Discriminant validity was determined showing the average variance extracted for each construct was greater than the squared correlations between the construct and other constructs in the model (Fornell&Larcker, 1981; Nusair&Hua, 2010). After ensuring that the overall measurement model was acceptable, the structural model was tested. The fit indices for the structural (path) model were as follows: Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test for model fit for both the measurement and structural models. The estimates for the effects were provided for the structural equation model (Table 3) to address hypotheses concerning the relationship between place satisfaction and place attachment. The model has been defined to test that the four hypotheses of this

research model. For testing the research hypothesis, the path coefficients as a result of the PLS algorithm need to be assessed. The benefit of doing this is to recognize that SEM has two basic components that need to be examined separately to investigate the source of the discrepancy. The figures show that the lack of perfect fit arose from the measurement model; the path model was actually very fitting ( $p < 0.10$ ) (see McDonald & Ho, 2002). The t values were assessed which was the result of the bootstrapping procedure. The model showed acceptable fit to the data and H1 which hypothesized that the place dependence has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema (path coefficient=0.278, t-value=4.240, p value=0.00). H2 was accepted and it was strongly supported by model which is suggested that the place identity has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema (path coefficient=0.122, t-value=1.728, p value=0.02). The results indicated that the place affect has the positive effect on place satisfaction and H3 was accepted (path coefficient=0.338, t-value=4.115, p value=0.006). According to the H4, the place social bonding has the positive effect on place satisfaction among the visitors of cinema and H4 was supported (path coefficient=0.267, t-value=3.317, p value=0.008).

Table 3  
Structural Model Results (Source: SEM-PLS Software)

Path	Coefficients	T value	P value	Hypotheses
Place depen- dence → Place satisfac- tion	0.278	4.240	0.000	Sup- port- ed
Place identit- y → satisfac- tion	0.122	1.728	0.088	Sup- port- ed
Place affect → Place satisfac- tion	0.338	4.115	0.0006	Sup- port- ed
Place social bondin- g → Place satisfac- tion	0.267	3.317	0.0008	Sup- port- ed

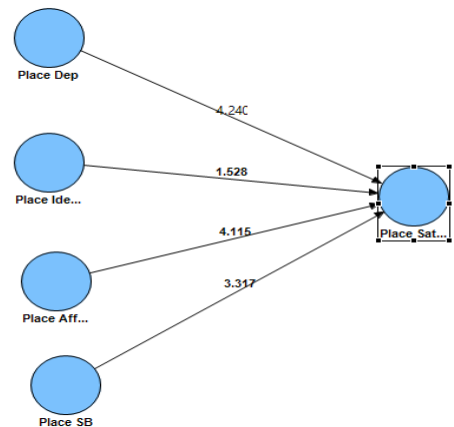


Fig .1. Approved Structural model with regression coefficients(Source: SEM-PLS Software)

As shown in figure 1, all the path coefficients were significant and all the construct has the absolute value highlighted. In sum, the empirical evidence showed that place attachment such as place dependence, place identity, place affect and place social bonding to be influential factors on the place satisfaction of visitors of cinemas. As results, all the hypothesized were accepted.

Significant relationship may be explained by the fact that visitors engaging in cinemas activities and it may become more dependent on its resources, which contribute to meet their visitation goals (Basi, 2010). This leads to high levels of place satisfaction and they are often reluctant to change the place for another (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This finding contributes to existing studies on the positive effect of place dependence on place satisfaction, (Loureiro. S.M.C, 2014; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Yuksel et al., 2010), highlighting the possibility that visitors can have higher levels of place dependence through with the place. Visitors' place affect had a substantial impact on their levels of satisfaction (Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Yuksel et al., 2010). Based on previous studies, place attachment is a significant predictor of higher levels of place affect. Another argument could be the influence of place affect on the place satisfaction of the cinema's visitors. Place social bonding is another dimension of place attachment among visitor's satisfaction.

## **6. Conclusion**

No empirical studies to date, to our knowledge, have studied place attachment and place satisfaction among cinema's visitors. The findings of this study suggest that place attachment dimensions have strong effect on place satisfaction of people in cinemas. The place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding are the dimensions of place attachment which have a positive effect on place satisfaction of visitors in cinemas.

This study seeks to understand the place attachment linkages of place satisfaction and the associated mechanisms and boundary conditions through hypothesizing that place attachment is positively related to place satisfaction which is affected by place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding. Overall, this study makes several contributions. First, this study is one of the first in the tourism and architecture research to look at a comprehensive model involving multi-level regression by PLS-SEM. The findings highlight that the relationships examined in this study are complex but can be effectively investigated. This advances theory development beyond the simple direct relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. Thus, this study explains the mechanism that links place satisfaction to place attachment that if policy maker can work to enhance the place attachment of visitors which can promote their satisfaction. which in turn translates into place dependence, place identity, place affect and place social bonding. Finally, this study makes an important theoretical contribution to place attachment research in showing that place dependence, place identity, and place

engagement in cinema, which in turn may lead to higher levels of place satisfaction.

An important observation, however, is that Place identity did not have any significant Influence on visitors in a recent study by Ramkissoon et al. (2013). Evidence of the significant effect of place attachment suggests that engaging visitors in cinema may intensify their sense of identity to the place, which may in turn lead to higher levels of place satisfaction. Urban planner and cinemas policy could consider promoting and maintaining the place's uniqueness and distinctiveness through processes of identification (Twigger-Ross, Bonaito, & Breakwell, 2003) with cinema multiplex which in turn may lead to high place satisfaction levels (Ramkissoon et al., 2013). The high level of place identity are triggered among visitors of cinemas, in turn leading to high levels of satisfaction ( Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuksel et al., 2010)

affect are strong antecedents positively impacts on place satisfaction among visitors in the multiplex cinemas.

## **7. Limitation and Research Implications**

In spite of the methodological strengths, there are limitations to the present study that call for attention in interpreting the findings. The first and obvious weakness is that the study used cross-sectional data. Thus, causality cannot be unambiguously established. However, we hold that the directions of causality assumed in this study are very likely. Also, we demonstrated through investigating alternative models that our model is more viable than some alternative models. However, one cannot rule out other potential alternatives (Ramkissoon et al., 2013). It may be fruitful for future research to address this important issue through (quasi) experiment or a longitudinal study design.

The generalizability of the findings may be limited because data were collected at one site in Australia. The findings might follow different patterns in different contexts. While the issues investigated are general and have been studied in diverse contexts, we concede there could be cultural and other factors that could affect the pattern of relationships. Future research should use samples with diverse nationalities, cultures, and tourism experiences. Another concern is that the control variables used in this study explained a very small proportion of the variance in the dependent variables (dimensions of place attachment). Perhaps inclusion of other variables (e.g., visitor density) which may impact visitor perceptions would enrich the model. The findings may also have been influenced by our selection of repeat visitors. There were no significant differences in the level of satisfaction between first time visitors and repeat visitors but the relationships under investigation were more relevant to repeat visitors.

Finally, we used self-reported outcome variables. Self-reports are the most appropriate measures since we were investigating personal opinions and attitudes that are inaccessible by most other means. Because researchers were not associated with the site, the problem of social

desirability did not arise and since no investigator interference occurred, the data are not contaminated with these considerations.

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