PROCEEDINGS OF THE GLOBAL TOURISM CONFERENCE
GTC 2021
“Building Connections, Extending Adventures”
TOURISM INNOVATION & DIGITALISATION. A NEW WAY IN REDESIGNING TOURISM LANDSCAPE
7th - 9th SEPTEMBER 2021

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Proceedings of the Global Tourism Conference 2021

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Diterbitkan oleh/Published in Malaysia
Penerbit UMT
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
21030 Kuala Nerus
Terengganu, Malaysia

http://penerbit.umt.edu.my
Email: penerbitumt@umt.edu.my

The Global Tourism Conference (2021 : Online)
PROCEEDINGS OF THE GLOBAL TOURISM CONFERENCE GTC 2021 :
“Building Connections, Extending Adventures” : TOURISM INNOVATION AND DIGITALISATION: A NEW WAY IN REDESIGNING TOURISM LANDSCAPE,
Mode of access: Internet
1. Tourism--Congresses.
2. Tourism--Technological innovations--Congresses.
3. Tourism--Management--Congresses.
5. Electronic books.
   338.4791

Set in Optima

Design: Penerbit UMT
Layout: Penerbit UMT
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PREFACE

This volume of conference proceedings contains the extended abstracts from most of the presentations at the Global Tourism Conference 2021 (GTC2021), which was held virtually from 7th - 9th September 2021. The conference was co-hosted by The State Government of Terengganu and Victoria University, Australia. The GTC2021 was supported by various partners including the UMT Knowledge Transfer and Industrial Networks Centre (PPIJII), as well as a number of tourism organisations and tourism players from Terengganu, Malaysia.

The GTC2021 theme, “Tourism Innovation and Digitalisation: A New Way in Redesigning Tourism Landscape” was deliberately chosen to facilitate discussions on various tourism and hospitality issues; particularly the critical role of tourism innovation and digitalisation in redesigning the tourism landscape. The conference theme is very much in line with the current situation globally as people learn to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and other related issues which have triggered an unprecedented crisis for the global tourism industry.

This years’ conference has managed to call together researchers from a wide range of tourism-related disciplines to promote, encourage and recognise the excellence of both, the pure sciences and social sciences and their contributions to the tourism industry. The scale of the meeting this year was large enough to encourage the integration, exchange of ideas, techniques, and approaches and future collaboration between the pure and social sciences. The GTC2021 was attended by more than 100 presenters and participants from various countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam Nigeria, Portugal, Japan, Australia, and Saudi Arabia.

Papers included in these proceedings were based on the four conference themes, namely Innovation & Technology-Based Tourism, Tourism Development & Sustainability, Tourism Management, Marketing & Hospitality and Current Issues in Tourism. These GTC2021 proceedings are not meant for academia only. Instead, the proceedings are meant to provide industry players including catchment management and policy makers with key data as the proceedings were written based on the current state of affairs and developments in the tourism industry.

The GTC2021 was more meaningful with the attendance of following keynote and invited speakers; many of whom are renowned scientists and major contributors in their respective fields of study.

• Professor Cihan Cobanoglu, University of South Florida, The United States
• Professor Michael Hall, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
• Professor Brian King, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
• Professor Ramayah Thurasamy, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
• Mr. John Chong, Summer Bay Resort, Terengganu, Malaysia

The organisation of GTC2021 was unique in many ways. Most of the conferences organised worldwide comprised of three traditional components; presentation, publication and excursion. The GTC2021, on the other hand was organised as a distinctly different kind of conference whereby both players (Tourism State Office and tourism players around Terengganu, Malaysia) were invited as GTC2021 strategic partners. This strategy was designed to promote various tourism attractions in Terengganu and increase the visibility of Terengganu tourism players on a global level. One example of this strategy in action is that; the GTC2021 Kit consisted of various coupons for promotions by tourism players in Terengganu.
The climax of GTC2021 was the award of research grants to the attendees; something which had never been done at any of the other conferences around the world. The research grants were aimed at facilitating research and development (R&D) in the Tourism and Hospitality sector. This will also ensure that the impact of GTC2021 will benefit the tourism industry in the long run.

The success of GTC2021 is thanks to the collaborative efforts of various parties around the world. Hence, the organising committee of GTC2021 would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude and appreciation to:

- The scientific committee involved in the conference for their help and support especially with regard to the peer-review of all the submitted papers in a timely manner,
- The keynote and invited speakers for agreeing to participate in this year’s GTC2021,
- The sponsors of the conference; specifically: The Terengganu State Government, PPIJI (UMT), KETENGAH, Ziq Bakery & Cakes, Grand Ion Delemen Hotel, Summer Bay Resort, Laguna Redang Island Resort, Duyong Marina & Resort, Primula Beach Hotel, Sumai Hotel Apartment, Raia Hotel, Homestay Teluk Ketapang, Lambo Sari, TY Hotel, Warisan Spa, Aputirich, Jakel Trading, and
- GTC2021 partner, Victoria University, Australia for supporting us and making the GTC2021 possible.

We hope that all GTC2021 attendees had good virtual conference with us. We look forward to seeing all of you again at the 3rd Global Tourism Conference, hopefully in Terengganu, Malaysia!

PROF. TS. DR. MOHD SHALADDIN MUDA  
CHAIR OF GTC2021
THEME:
INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY-BASED TOURISM
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF EMPLOYEES’ INTENTION TO USE ROBOTS

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to investigate the underlying factors that influence an employees’ decision to use robots at work. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was used in this study. This theory assumes that people’s actual behaviour and willingness to utilise technology is influenced by four underlying elements, namely performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI) and facilitating conditions (FC). Based on this assumption, the specific objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between these factors and a fast-food restaurants employees’ intent to use robots at work. The role of gender as a moderator in each of these interactions was also considered in this study. Based on data acquired from an online survey, the stated hypotheses were tested using the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. The findings revealed that performance expectancy and social influence enhances an employees’ intention to use robots at work. It also showed that there was no moderation effect in the proposed model. This study presents empirical facts and direction to managers in the fast-food industry in Malaysia, researchers and practitioners regarding the adoption of robots or technology-based services at work. Theoretical advances as well as prospective research directions are also explored.

KEYWORDS: employees, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), robots, intention, gender

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Artificial intelligence, robotics, and service automation have evolved significantly in recent years (Ivanov et al., 2017; Samani, 2016). The travel, tourism and hospitality industries are among the areas where this technology-based service is making inroads and swiftly growing (Fusté-Forné, 2021; Ivanov et al., 2019; Murphy et al., 2017). This is due to the belief that the adoption of these tools offers the business many opportunities to improve its operations boost service productivity, cost efficiency and efficacy (Ostrom et al., 2015; Mustak et al., 2021; Wirtz et al., 2018) as well as help the businesses gain competitive advantage, expand their business and markets and to become economically sustainable (Nam et al., 2020).

From the customers’ and employees’ perspectives, adoption of this technology can create more innovative and memorable experience to the customers, while employees are happier at work by freeing them from boring, monotonous, and repetitive work (Zhou, 2019).

While there is a great potential for this technology to replace human-labour in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries, it is observed that the application of robots at work is still quite limited. In other words, it is still more theoretical than actual, and empirical findings on the drivers of employee’s adoption and intention to use robots is still in its nascent stages (Murphy et al., 2019; Ivanov et al., 2019;
Vatan & Dogan, 2021) especially with regard to the fast-food restaurant industry in Malaysia. Therefore, it is important for other researchers, especially in the wake of this study to uncover more about this topic.

Specifically, the main objective of this study which is to investigate the relationship between performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI) and facilitating conditions (FC), in relation to a fast-food restaurant employees’ intention to use robots at work, and the results then tested using the theory of UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Additionally, based on the arguments concerning gender differences on the adoption of technology (i.e., Ye et al., 2020; Ivanov et al., 2018; Ivanov et al., 2020; Hudson et al., 2017; Loffredo & Tavakkoli, 2016), this study also predicts that males are more resistant to the use of robots at work compared to females.

METHODOLOGY
A quantitative research approach was used to gather insight and gain a deeper understanding into the willingness of fast-food restaurant employees in Malaysia to use robots at work. Using convenience sampling, questionnaires were collected via an online platform. Specifically, the data was collected by sending the questionnaire to employees’ email addresses as provided by the company and as a link which was sent to the employees’ WhatsApp accounts by managers of the restaurants or shared by their peers. All the items queried in the questionnaire were borrowed from past studies on the subject and then adapted to the work in context of this study. The respondents were asked to rate the items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The data was then analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

FINDINGS
Based on the PLS-SEM analysis, it was found that both performance expectancy (PE) and social influence (SI) are two factors that have a beneficial impact on the intention to utilise robots. Meanwhile, the expectancy of effort (EE) and facilitating conditions (FC) were both found to have no favourable impact as factors influencing the decision to use robots at work. In addition, the link between PE, EE, SI and FC, and fast-food restaurant employees’ propensity to use robots was found to be unaffected by the gender of the employee as a moderator.

CONCLUSION
Overall, it can be concluded that fast-food restaurant employees in Malaysia were more inclined to use robots if they perceived that the technologies were useful and beneficial to their performance as well as when they have strong social influence such as from their managers, supervisors and colleagues. The findings were consistent and supported past studies (Rabaa’i, 2017; Ye, Zheng & Yi, 2020; Bansal et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, the insignificant moderation effect of gender in the relationship between PE, EE, SI and FC with intention to use robots implied that there was no difference between male and female towards their willingness to use robots at work. The findings contradicted and disputed prior studies on the impact of gender in affecting the intention to employ robots at work (Rabaa’i, 2017; Ivanov et al., 2018; Hudson et al., 2017).
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to the fact that the implementation and use of robots in workplace is still in its early stages especially in Malaysia, it is hoped that this study can provide insights to the management of fast-food restaurants in Malaysia to better implement technology in their business environment by focusing more on the performance expectancy and influence of others on the intentions of employees to use robots at work. It is also hoped that the willingness of employees to work with robots can meet or exceed customer requests, needs and requirements and create an excellent customer service experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu supports this work under the research grant entitled Talent and Publication Enhancement - Research Grant (TAPE-RG - 55281).

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THE EVALUATION OF USABILITY OF I-REHLAH PROTOTYPE BASED ON EXPERTS’ CONSensus USING FUZZY DELPHI ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
To verify a product’s usefulness, each application must go through a testing or evaluation phase. The usability evaluation is described as a test performed on a real user to assess how easy it is to use an application. In this study, the respondents must use the developed prototype and evaluate it by answering the questionnaire provided in order to determine the usability of the i-Rehlah prototype. Since the evaluation of usability could not be applied to Arab tourists as the main respondents, the authors decided to appoint professionals in academia, industry and government as respondents. For the initial phase of construction for the real application, the choice of this technique and a target group of experts is deemed appropriate.

KEYWORDS: i-Rehlah prototype, Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM), Experts’ Consensus, Evaluation of Usability

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
This study aimed to obtain the consensus of experts on the elements of i-Rehlah prototype application. The main focus of this study is to assess the efficacy of the i-Rehlah prototype, which aims to make it easier for travelers, particularly Arabs, to travel in Selangor, Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY
This study used the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) to achieve its results. This questionnaire contains three main domains with total of 21 items and was distributed to 10 respondents. The criteria and characteristics of the experts who were the subject of this study were in line with the context of the study because it involved experts in the fields of academia, industry and government.

FINDINGS
The results show that two of the three domains had experts agree; especially on information and interface domains. Meanwhile, for the interactive domains, four of the eight items stated were rejected by the experts due to a lack of fuzzy score requirements.

CONCLUSION
In this study, a product an application called i-Rehlah was developed with the intent of making it easier for tourists, particularly those from the Middle East, to visit the state of Selangor in Malaysia. Due to the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, the study was unable to recruit Arab travellers. As a result, the prototype was only examined by professionals who were knowledgeable and qualified to do so before it was released.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study highlights components and characteristics that must be featured in the i-Rehlah prototype and are considered a vital part of the application. The findings also serve as a useful guide for Arab tourists visiting the state of Selangor.

REFERENCES


EXPLORING CUSTOMERS’ ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS USING MOBILE MARKETING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER VISITING RESTAURANTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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http://doi.org/10.46754/gtc.2021.11.003

ABSTRACT
Contemporary tourism has seen the adoption of mobile applications to discover and market attractions such as restaurants and hotels, yet few academic studies focus on customer attitudes and behaviours towards the usage of mobile marketing for restaurants in non-western cultures, like Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabian Government’s announcement that its borders are opening to international tourists marks a significant opportunity for the hospitality businesses. This study provides insight into customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards using mobile marketing channels when deciding on restaurants. Qualitative research using semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten Saudi customers who frequently utilised their smartphones to decide on restaurants. Thematic analysis identified positive attitudes towards using mobile marketing for restaurants which considered factors like usefulness, ease of use, time and money savings, while misleading information and massive advertising resulted in negative attitudes. Furthermore, the research highlights customers’ main mobile marketing activities before, during, and after their visits to restaurants. This research provides the initial findings identifying opportunities for businesses as a result of the adoption of these technologies.

KEYWORDS: mobile marketing, customers’ attitudes, customers’ behaviours, restaurants, Saudi Arabia

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Fundamentally, mobile marketing is both a communication tool and marketing process as it is performed through mobile phones, including mobile web, SMS messages, social media, and various mobile applications. This research seeks to investigate the attitudes and behaviours of Saudi Arabian customers towards mobile marketing for restaurants.

METHODOLOGY
Given the study’s aim of examining in-depth the feelings and emotions of consumers towards an experience, a qualitative methodology was employed. The study sample chosen consisted of ten Saudi Arabian consumers who both owned a smartphone and used it to make restaurant selection decisions in Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the primary data. The researcher adopted a thematic analysis approach and used NVivo version 12 to manage the text transcribed from the interviews and to code the data.

FINDINGS
The findings show that Saudi customers have both positive and negative attitudes towards mobile marketing for restaurants in Saudi Arabia. Saving time and saving money emerged as the two main factors that Saudi customers considered when selecting restaurants using mobile marketing channels. Prior to visiting restaurants, customers may conduct a variety of mobile marketing activities including searching
for information about restaurant locations and working hours, seeking photos of meals and restaurant décor, creating lists of restaurants, reading customer reviews, and searching for restaurants on social media influencers’ accounts. Customers’ main mobile marketing activities when visiting restaurants involved looking for information before ordering and posting pictures on social media. Finally, the findings indicated that customers’ mobile marketing activities after visiting restaurants included posting reviews on a public platform, sharing the experience with close friends, and contacting the restaurants’ management.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to investigate customers’ attitudes towards restaurants’ mobile marketing channels in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this study identified the usefulness of mobile marketing for customers when selecting restaurants in the country. Furthermore, this current research offers insights into the mobile marketing interactions that customers engaged in before, during, and after their visits to the selected restaurants. It has contributed significantly to the understanding of customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards a restaurants’ mobile marketing channels, which will help restaurant managers in Saudi Arabia and other destinations to improve their marketing performance, thereby increase the number of customers choosing their restaurants for a dining experience.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research will contribute to the current literature on customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards the use of mobile marketing. Particularly, it will contribute to the current knowledge on customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards the use of mobile marketing in any global markets where dine-in restaurants and mobile marketing channels exist with a focus on the Saudi Arabian market. The practical contribution of this research will help marketers to design appropriate mobile marketing campaigns that will attract targeted consumers. The understanding of customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards the use of mobile marketing will help marketers in the tourism and hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia to improve their marketing performance, which will reflect positively on the industry.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Dive sites which are home to various forms of marine life, unique structures and corals have become the main attraction for scuba divers. Divers normally choose the most attractive diving sites by visiting dive centers or getting referrals from other divers. However, there is problem in conventional subjective judgments where no standard measures have been considered. As a result, the judgments on dive site attractiveness may satisfy some divers but not others. To avoid these uncertainties, this research innovatively developed the world's first index model for the attractiveness of a dive site. Eight factors have been carefully selected, namely visibility, current stability, uniqueness of underwater scenery, coral health, the immensity of the coral reef, diversity and density of marine life. Then, these identified factors were ranked and assessed by using an Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Evidential Reasoning (ER). Finally, all dive sites are indexed so it can be compared with others for better decision-making. To test the applicability of this proposed model, 22 dive sites in Perhentian Island were successfully assessed, indexed, and mapped. Terumbu Tiga (T3), Sail Rock and Tokong Laut were indexed as the top three dive sites in Perhentian Islands. The results also showed that the most profound factor that determined the attractiveness of a dive site was the diversity of its marine life followed by the diversity of its coral species, and the uniqueness of its underwater scenery. Practically, this model can be applied and widely used for indexing all dive sites in the world based on decision-makers’ preferences. It is expected that this index model will benefit divers, dive centers, marine parks, and related agencies by providing a new information that can be used in marine tourism.

KEYWORDS: Scuba diving, marine tourism, Dive Site Attractiveness Index (DSAI), Perhentian Islands, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Evidential Reasoning (ER)
and assessed by using Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Evidential Reasoning (ER). Finally, each dive sites will be indexed so it can be compared with other dive sites for better benchmarking (i.e., visual maps).

**METHODOLOGY**

For the purposes of this research paper, a Dive Site Attractiveness Index (DSAI) a tool used to measure the attractiveness of a dive site was used. There are two mathematical methods used in this index methodology which are the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the Evidential Reasoning (ER) methods. Saaty (1980) introduced AHP as an efficient tool in dealing with complex decision making and would aid the decision maker in setting priorities and making the best decision. While the ER method was employed for the synthesis of all subsets after all key features at dive site had been assessed. For the purpose developing the dive site attractiveness indexing process, a flow of the proposed methodology consisting of seven steps is illustrated in sequential order.

**FINDINGS**

Based on the AHP, the diversity of marine life has been judged to be the prime feature for dive site attractiveness with the highest value of 0.1862, followed by the diversity of coral species (0.1696), uniqueness of underwater scenery (0.1551), visibility (0.1300), immensity of coral reef (0.1048), density of marine life (0.1044), coral healthy (0.0802) and current stability (0.0697). The results show that based on 15 experts’ judgments, dive sites with a high diversity of marine life and coral species have become the most preferred dive spots while current stability was the least significant feature when choosing the best dive sites. The DSAI assessment of the test location, revealed that the most attractive dive site in Perhentian Island is Terumbu Tiga (T3), which ultimately become the top dive site when compared to 21 others. Terumbu Tiga is also known as “The Three Brothers, located at quite a distance from the main island resulting in infrequent dive visits. The visibility is usually very clear (i.e., the DSAI assessed visibility at Terumbu Tiga as 0.877). The diversity of marine life at Terumbu Tiga is also very high with significant concentrations of reef fish, pelagic fish, and blacktip sharks.

As a result, of the DSAI, the diversity and density of marine life at Terumbu Tiga have been assessed as a perfect 1. Moreover, Terumbu Tiga has also scored perfectly for coral health (0.9466), diversity of species (1) and coral reef immensity (0.9466). The other special feature of Terumbu Tiga the uniqueness of underwater scenery which showcases several small caves, perfect for underwater photography with very clear visibility. Some experts shred their views that this dive site is also great for cave diving in Perhentian Island as the location itself has many rocks. Of the 21 other dive spots assessed, the index has ranked the Maritime Wreck as the most least attractive dive spot in Perhentian Island with the value of 0.1991, it scored 0 for both coral diversity, marine life density and diversity with the only attraction of this dive spot being a single shipwreck.

**CONCLUSION**

It is worth mentioning that marine tourism has contributed a substantial amount of income to the national economy, especially in Malaysia. Being cognisant of this significant impact on the economy should make improvements of social and practical innovation a necessity. This paper innovatively proposed an index model for the attractiveness a dive site. Eight key features have been carefully selected which are visibility, current stability, uniqueness of underwater scenery, coral healthy, and diversity of marine life, immensity
of coral reef, diversity of marine life and density of marine life. All the dive sites were indexed so it could be compared with others for better decision-making.

Practically, this model can be applied and widely used for indexing all dive sites in the world for better decision making. It is noteworthy to mention that this proposed model can be adjusted or modified based on a decision makers’ preferences. It is expected that this index model will benefit divers, dive centers, marine parks, and other related agencies by providing new information that can be used to improve diving tourism. In future, the current research will be continued by looking at the decision-making model for selecting which dive sites need a “resting period” after being “overpopulated” by divers to allow for the natural restoration to occur.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Looking on the practicability of the proposed DSAI model, this research is expected to contribute to diving tourism in many ways. First, by using the proposed model, all dive sites around the world can be indexed so each dive site’s attractiveness can be presented in an index number.

Consequently, a clear decision can be made without the need for subjective judgement to be made under uncertain and ambiguous conditions. Owing to the concern of its commercial practicability, the proposed model has been successfully copyrighted under Perbadanan Harta Intelek Malaysia in 2020.

Additionally, as most of dive centers and marine tourism information centers display the available dive sites in the area with traditional maps, the current research can improve the map by adding the new information on the attractiveness of the dive sites on display. As a result, Figure 5 illustrates the novel “Map of Dive Site Risk & Attractiveness Index” in Perhentian Island resulted from the test case conducted in Section 5 while “Dive Site Risk Index” can be referred to Anuar et al. (2020). It is noteworthy to mention that this map under the application process for a “trademark” which can be commercialised and then used on Perhentian Island in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was conducted under the Knowledge and Technology Assimilation Grant Schemes (KTAGS) (UMT/PIJI/2-2/25/15/JLD1(63)) and using the research facilities of the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT).

REFERENCES


THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE CONSERVATION MARKETING FOR RELATIONSHIP MARKETING BETWEEN CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES

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ABSTRACT

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, marketing for online conservation was increasingly used by conservationists to appeal for funds from businesses and to improve public awareness on the need to reduce the loss of biodiversity. Yet, uncertainty remains in the academic literature about the effectiveness of online conservation marketing. Given that the potential impact of online conservation marketing in the corporate sector is evident (i.e., with a clear reduction in management and maintenance costs, and an increase fund collection), knowledge of online conservation marketing is important for building and maintaining a conservation group-to-business relationship. This study serves as an exploratory inquiry and aims to understand whether Environmental Education Centers (EECs) in Malaysia use electronic platforms for conservation marketing purposes. Based on an extensive literature search on conservation marketing and a search for EEC background information, from 2015 to 2020 many EECs in Malaysia have either used, or are using (i.e., WWF Malaysia) or will soon be using (i.e., Taman Hidupan Liar Gua Musang) online conservation marketing as one of their marketing strategies. The findings hold true even for the EECs with poor Internet connections (i.e., National Elephant Conservation Centre Kuala Gandah). This exploratory study underscores the need for more research in this area, especially with regard to the effectiveness of online conservation marketing among EECs since many of the EECs are situated in locations with poor Internet connectivity. Without an understanding of electronic marketing strategy used by the EECs, the conservationists’ role will likely be limited to that of conservation research, improving the standards of animal welfare and describing the loss of biodiversity.

KEYWORDS: Education Environmental Centers, Electronic Platform, Conservation Marketing, Sustainable Tourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Reaching a target audience to talk about conservation issues and influencing their behaviour is not easy in current world where people are continually bombarded with information, and distractions are so readily available. Although not typically considered to be a part of the conservation science toolkit, marketing techniques designed for use in the commercial sector to identify and influence human preferences and behaviour by placing the target audience at the core of the marketing process, should definitely be added to the conservationist’s arsenal. The objective of this exploratory study is to understand whether Environmental Education Centers (EECs) in Malaysia use electronic platforms for conservation marketing purposes, and if they do, to what extent are the electronic platforms used for conservation marketing purposes?
METHODOLOGY
This study explores new insights into a well-known research area (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); hence a qualitative methodology was chosen for this research. This qualitative research is one-of-a-kind as it makes use of both primary and secondary data. The secondary data, was received via extensive literature search and analysis of EEC online platforms on a computer. Meanwhile, the primary data, was collected via semi-structured interviews with those who work or volunteer at EECs in Malaysia. Some, 23 interviews were performed before the ideal data saturation was achieved. The rational of choosing staff or volunteers at EECs was because they spend most of the time at the EECs, making them the ideal respondents.

FINDINGS
Based on the primary data (interviews) and secondary data (extensive literature search and analysis of EEC online platforms), even before first outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia (2015 to 2020), many EECs in Malaysia had either used or were using at least one type of electronic platform for conservation marketing purposes (i.e., WWF Malaysia). These findings also clearly show that many of the EECs that do not use any electronic platforms for conservation marketing purposes, have every intention to start using online conservation marketing as one of their marketing strategies (i.e., Taman Hidupan Liar Gua Musang). The findings hold true even for the EECs with poor Internet connections (i.e., National Elephant Conservation Centre Kuala Gandah).

The reasons why the EECs should be using electronic platforms for conservation marketing purposes include the greater exposure for conservation programmes, lower costs, and that online marketing is more effective than the traditional marketing approaches. Based on this study, the types of electronic platforms that are most commonly used by EECs to promote their conservation initiatives is their own corporate website. However, when EEC representatives were interviewed (at EECs which did not make use of any electronic platform, but have every intention to do so), majority of these EECs plan to use social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram as their primary electronic platform.

One of the reasons given by EECs for choosing social media platforms is because advertising on social media is the most cost-effective. Meaning that the EECs may use more of the funds raised for conservation efforts, rather than for more expensive advertisements. Another reason for choosing to use social media platforms is because most of the current volunteers and staff at EECs are millennials who are familiar with the use of social media platforms. They even make use of their own personal accounts for conservation marketing-related activities. Hence, doing the same task on the EEC’s own social media platform is not a difficult ask for the staff, or volunteers at the EEC.

CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS
This original research study explores the use of electronic platforms by EECs. In particular, this study explores the current levels of utilisation by EECs of electronic, social media platforms. This study also explores the intention of EECs (which do not own or use any electronic platforms at the time of research) to make use of electronic platforms in the near future, the study also considers the types of electronic platforms and the reasons for the EEC’s intention to use that particular platform. Based on the primary data (interviews) and secondary data (extensive literature search and analysis of EECs use of online platforms), from 2015 to 2020 many EECs in Malaysia have used, are using (as in the case of WWF Malaysia) or will soon be using (as in the case of Taman Hidupan Liar Gua Musang) online platforms for conservation marketing purposes.
Interestingly, the research findings hold true even for EECs with poor Internet connectivity (as in the case of the National Elephant Conservation Centre Kuala Gandah).

Additionally, this study also makes a practical contribution as to how conservationists may encourage businesses and individuals to participate in conservation initiatives. The findings of this study may strengthen the relationship between EECs and businesses and encourage the EECs to act proactively by advertising conservation initiatives directly to businesses and the general public, rather than to act reactively waiting for the volunteers to help them obtain funding from organisations and individuals.

This exploratory study underscores the need for more research in this area, specifically with regard to the effectiveness of online conservation marketing among EECs. Without an understanding of the electronic marketing strategy used by the EECs, conservationists’ will likely be limited to conservation research, improving the standards of animal welfare and describing the loss of critical biodiversity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is funded under the Talent and Publication Enhancement (TAPE) Research Grant by Universiti Malaysia Terengganu.

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SERVICE ROBOT ADOPTION AMONG EMPLOYEES: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the adoption of service robots by fast-food restaurant employees. Adopting the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), this study proposes four determinants of intention to use: performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI) and facilitating conditions (FC). The role of culture was also considered to examine its role in moderating the influencing factors. The data was collected from Malaysian fast-food restaurant employees and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Smart-PLS software. The findings showed that intention to use service robots is primarily influenced by performance expectancy and social influence. Additionally, culture also has a significant effect as moderating factor on the relationship between social influence and intention to use service robots in a fast-food restaurant setting. Lastly, a discussion on the contributions and implications are presented.

KEYWORDS: Service Robot, Employees’ Acceptance, Fast-Food Restaurant, Culture, UTAUT

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Robots are increasingly being adopted as service providers in the tourism and hospitality industries (Fusté-Forné, 2021; Ivanov et al., 2019; Kuo et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2017). Thus, many scholars argue that the real-world application of robotics in hospitality is booming across the world (Choi et al., 2020). In the restaurants for instance, robots are used to perform a wide range of tasks in the kitchen and even serving customers, working as replacements for chefs, waiters, baristas hostesses and servers (Hwang, 2020). Currently, robots are used in many western countries including the United States, Turkey and the United Kingdom and a few Asia Pacific countries such as China, Japan and South Korea (Hwang et al., 2020).

The adoption of service robots in Malaysia is still in its first phase. In 2018, Nam Heong restaurant became the first restaurant in Malaysia to use 8 robot waiters to serve and attend to customers (Says, 2018). Previous studies acknowledged that national cultures affected service cultures and influenced the way technology-mediated service may have manifest (Yu & Ngan, 2019; Tuomi et al., 2020). Thus, culture appears as a cause to influence an individual to respond either positively or negatively to the use of service robots and it is important to use robots that can be easily accepted and integrated into the national culture.

This study was designed to examine the factors that influenced the adoption of service robots by fast-food restaurant employees. This study proposed that the four dimensions of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (i.e., performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) have a positive influence on the overall robot adoption rates by restaurants and employees.

According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), performance expectancy refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a technology will assist him or her achieve his or her job performance
objectives; effort expectancy is defined as a measure of the ease correlated with the use of the system; social influence is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive the importance of others to believe they should use the new technologies while a facilitating condition is described as an individual’s belief in the existence of an organisational and technological infrastructure capable of supporting the technologies.

This study also aims to understand the role of culture in the context of the adoption of service robots among employees. One of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions that was incorporated in this study was uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how threatened individuals are by ambiguity and also the perceived significance of norms and standards (Hofstede, 1991).

**METHODODOLOGY**

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions and the intention to use robots. This study also aims to understand the role of culture in moderating social influences and the intention to use robots.

The items for the UTAUT constructs were adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003) and Venkatesh et al. (2012). For the moderating variable, the uncertainty avoidance constructs were adapted from Hofstede (1980). A total of 204 questionnaires were collected online. To obtain an adequate sample of the population, this study used convenience sampling. An email invitation was sent to the fast-food restaurant manager and upon receiving an approval, a link to the questionnaire was distributed to the employees via email and on the WhatsApp’s mobile application. To achieve the objectives of the study, descriptive analysis and common method variance were analysed using SPSS version 26, while the measurement model and structural model were analysed using SmartPLS 3.0.

**FINDINGS**

It was found that performance expectancy (t-values=2.110, p<0.05) and social influence (t-value=5.445, CI: 0.280, 0.606) positively influenced the intention to use service robots among fast-food restaurant employees. With regard to the second research question, culture moderates the relationship between social influence and the intention to use robots. The findings show a significant negative effect of uncertainty avoidance on the relationship between social influence and the intention to use service robots. It implies that the negative relationship between social influence and the intention to use service robots would be stronger when uncertainty avoidance is lower. This is consistent with previous studies (Bankole & Bankole, 2017).

**CONCLUSION**

The potential for the use of service robots in Malaysia is vast. This study shows that fast-food restaurant employees in the country have a higher tendency to adopt service robots if they realise that the service robots are useful in assisting them with their tasks. Also, if more influential people think that adopting service robots at fast-food restaurants is useful, it is more likely that employees will adopt the use of service robots in the restaurant. Employees also see it as challenging to work with service robots and the intention to use service robots is not influenced by the infrastructure at the restaurants or by their knowledge of the new technology. By integrating a cultural moderator, this study adds a stronger basis to predict the intention to use a service robot and thus provides more analytical potential to the existing UTAUT.
This study could offer several significant recommendations to the service sector in Malaysia and also hopes that they could gain some benefits from this study by considering UTAUT and culture in practice. Research on various cultural settings and various cultural dimensions should be considered to provide a better understanding of robotic adoption by workers globally.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, this study postulates a foundation for additional improvement of individual models of acceptance. It implies that acceptance and cultural dimensions are suitable bases when examining cultural diversity in technology-based settings. From a managerial standpoint, understanding the key factors is important to develop, enhance and execute the adoption of service robots in fast-food restaurants to achieve high levels of employee acceptance. By understanding the main factors affecting employees’ acceptance and constraints, fast-food restaurants in Malaysia will be able to cope with the rising customer demands and technological advancement to enhance the acceptance and support of the service robot adoption.

As, service robot adoption rates in restaurants and other service sectors are already being sensationalised and is already a success story in western countries and in some Asian countries, Malaysia should learn from the good examples already in place and benefit from new levels of acceptance and technology advancement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu supports this work under the research grant entitled Talent and Publication Enhancement -Research Grant (TAPE-RG55281).

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A “NEW NORMAL” CONCEPTUAL APPROACH; AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) TOURISM IN TERENGGANU

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the sectors that has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, governments around the globe have taken measures to ease the effect of the resulting economic downturn on households and businesses in a bid to prolong survivability of the public. In the longer run, this tourism industry will desperately need to adapt to a post-pandemic “new normal” to sustain the income of its tourism players and operators. The alternative to coping with the new normal is to migrate from the classical model to an advanced or high-technology approach. “High-Tech” devices or tools can play an important role towards the recovery of the tourism industry following the upheaval caused by the pandemic. The new standard operating procedures (SOPs) to mitigate the spread of the disease, health consciousness and better hygiene protocols, and as well as social distancing are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future. Touchless services delivery and investments in digital technology could facilitate an industry-wide recovery. The use of modern technology is quickly becoming a necessity for many destinations in order to stay competitive and attractive in the new norm of the tourism industry. A new form of technology that may be suitable for the tourism industry to use to regain some of its former glory is that of virtual and or Augmented Reality (AR). The aim of this paper is to give industry players an insight into the basic design of a mobile AR Tourism application for the state of Terengganu in Malaysia. Several interesting places will be selected for AR Tourism research and practice. The AR Tourism app will be designed to serve a specific purpose for the user, while multi-language functionality, ease-of-use and the capability to personalise the app are among the main requirements that need to be considered in attracting tourists and encouraging regular use among travel enthusiasts.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Augmented Reality, AR Tourism, Covid-19, Mobile Application

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In general, Augmented Reality refers to the use of computer-generated content to augment the real world, which is now largely supplemented with graphical content (Hyun et al., 2009). However, despite the fact that Augmented Reality technology has been around for more than a decade, it is still a relatively new concept in the tourism industry, and it has not yet reached its full potential. As a result, accurately defining Augmented Reality is a challenge.

Augmented Reality has been deemed to have a great potential for the tourism industry due to its ability to enhance the location (Fritz et al., 2005). Tourists are defined as those who have “little to no awareness of the area.” (McKercher et al., 2003) As a result, a location-based technology that can access information
in the immediate vicinity would be extremely beneficial to the industry. The use of Augmented Reality devices has the potential to develop the next generation of computerised tourist guides, as travelers are generally interested in their surroundings (Olsson et al., 2011).

According to Höllerer and Feiner (2004), the user interface should not only be able to pinpoint the user’s location, but also provide background information on the area that might be of interest. This concept has sparked a lot of interest in developing a tourism app for mobile phones.

**METHODOLOGY**

The AR Application will be able to deploy a 3D model to an Augmented Reality (AR) content which is in animated 3D model input format. The deployed content will be device agnostic. The AR apps core engine can be installed on an Android or Apple mobile phone. The software will not require a custom operating system (OS) in order to make use of the content and can be installed on a standard OS for smart devices. Thus, the application can be used by any user on any smart device.

The Augmented Reality (AR) software and generation tool will be able to output to an app that the user will define. Other than that, the software and generation tool will be able to support the followings to the users:

a) Display animated slide,
b) Display video MP4 files,
c) Creating 3D, 2D, video, and text content.

Users will be able to interact with the AR content such as zoom into and out of the 3D Content. For smart devices with touch screens, user will be able to pinch their fingers together to zoom in and pull fingertips apart from a pinched position to zoom out the content. Meanwhile, for wearable head mounted displays, users will be able to zoom in and out the content by pinching their fingertips (on their right and left hands) and pulling their fingertips apart. The AR application will be able to produce unique QR codes, images and icons. These QR codes can be assigned to assets at the location. Other than that, the AR app can be linked to IoT data at specific locations. Thus, a “Localisation tag” will be created via the use of QR codes, icons and images.

**FINDINGS**

The proposed AR Tourism App that will be implemented in Terengganu will attract more tourists. A marketing video of interesting places in Terengganu tied to the AR app should be promoted through various media channels to attract tourists. The development of this AR app will be introduced in the marketing video so that tourists can download the app and effectively start using it. Thus, enjoying tourist activity in Terengganu in the new norm of the post pandemic era. In the AR app, interesting places introduced in the promotional video will be listed so that tourists can plan their vacation before they visit the state. The AR app is also equipped with geo-location AR features for tourists to find places easily and the marker features have been added to the app to give tourists an explanation about the place and its heritage, history and other pertinent facts of interest.
CONCLUSION

Many augmented reality apps have been developed and are still rapidly making inroads into various sectors of economy and industry. Few of the developed applications are largely used in the tourism industry and it is about time to introduce this “High-Tech” and “New-Normal” solution to the interesting views in Terengganu and in Malaysia as well.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In summary, the objective of this paper is to propose the use of augmented reality apps in the tourism industry which indeed benefits its operators and key players and hopefully allow businesses affected by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic to recover and grow.

REFERENCES


TOURISTS SATISFACTION TOWARDS SMART TOURISM SERVICES IN MALAYSIA
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ABSTRACT
Smart tourism projects are already underway across the globe including Tourism Malaysia. In 2018, Tourism Malaysia has launched the Malaysia Smart Tourism 4.0 initiative to take the industry to the next level by capitalizing on the new opportunities of the digital age. Despite the increase in the number of studies on customer satisfaction towards smart tourism services, only a limited number of studies were carried out in Malaysia. Therefore, this research proposes to obtain a better overview of this issue from a Malaysian perspective. The main objective of this study is to analyse the relationship between smart tourism technology attributes, tourist service satisfaction levels and to assess the relationship between the levels of tourist service satisfaction and the intention to use new technology. This study was also carried out to examine the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between smart tourism technology. This study will use a structural equation method to find the relationship between the smart tourism technology attributes of trust, service satisfaction, and the intention to use. This study employs a quantitative method of analysis with a questionnaire that were distributed to Malaysian tourists online. The sample size was selected based on the sample size table used by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The study expects to find that smart tourism technology attributes are significantly associated with service satisfaction levels, and this it will have a positive effect on the intention to use. Meanwhile, the trust factor will be positively associated with service satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Intention to use, Smart tourism services, Smart tourism technology, Trust, Malaysia tourists

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
This paper aims to analyse the relationship between smart tourism technology attributes with tourist service satisfaction levels and to assess the relationship between tourist service satisfaction and intention to use the new technology. To fill in potential research gaps, a trust factor is added as moderator.

Through the years, the tourism sector has been evolving moving from traditional tourism to smart tourism which capitalizes on new technology to offer tourists more travel options and unprecedented freedom to roam where they will. Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015) defined smart tourism as the act of tourism agents utilising advanced technologies and practices to boost resource management and sustainability, while increasing the businesses overall competitiveness.

Um and Chung (2019) described smart tourism as a strategy to rejuvenate tourism in South Korea. It is an era of rapid technological innovation that offers access to tourist-related data. Smart tourism projects are already underway across the globe including Tourism Malaysia. In 2018, the Malaysian Minister of Tourism and Culture launched the Malaysia Smart Tourism 4.0 initiative. The initiative aims to move the industry forward through the use of technology. Tourism will be more accessible and pleasurable for all, thanks to the interconnected services and improved coordination between the government and local organisations. Yet, Malaysia has fewer studies that tackle the issue of smart tourism and its technological
attributes because the technology is still in the early stages of development, and domestic tourism is still looking to find its own rhythm to thrive especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**METHODOLOGY**

In this research paper, the population refers to domestic tourists in Malaysia from 2019 until the present day. The population for this research should be derived using non-probability sampling; therefore, researchers used convenience sampling to come up with the sample size of 382 respondents (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A questionnaire that has been prepared will be measured using a seven-point Likert scale to avoid a central tendency. The questionnaires will be distributed through online means to minimise personal contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The link to questionnaires will be shared over social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A structural equation modeling technique will be used to analyse data collected from targeted respondents.

**FINDINGS**

This study expects to find that smart tourism technology attributes are significantly associated with service satisfaction, and that it has a positive effect on revisit intentions. Meanwhile with regard to the trust factor the study expects to find that it is positively associated with tourist service satisfaction.

**ORIGINALITY**

The present study makes an important contribution to the current literature on smart tourism services specifically and the tourism sector in general by proposing to link smart tourism technology to travel experience satisfaction and the intention to use technology. The proposed model has never been tested in the relevant available literature and could be used to provide a foundation for the use of technology and the advent of smart tourism.

**CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION**

First, the result of this study will provide meaningful insights into smart tourism for tourism-related companies and governments. As the government of Malaysia aims to raise the tourism sector to a whole new level by leveraging new digital technologies, this researcher believes that the output of this research will be beneficial in achieving that goal. In addition, this researcher assumes that this research will be able to provide feedback on what tourists experience when visiting domestic tourist attractions and this will tell tourism industry players how to achieve high satisfaction levels among tourists aided by smart tourism technology. The outcomes of this research will help with the issue of tourist satisfaction specifically in regard to smart tourism technology. Last but not least, this research will help industry players meet the expectations of tourist during their visit.

**REFERENCES**


TOURISTS RESPONSES TO THE USE OF MOBILE AUGMENTED REALITY FOR TRAVEL

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ABSTRACT
Tourist experiences are shaped by the complexities of the individual visitor’s psychological factors, and it is widely known that tourists anticipate a positive experience from every trip made. Yet, the fact remains that travel is inextricably linked to the issues of geography and awareness and a misinterpretation of the attributes of a destination may lead to unlikely expectations that affect the entire experience. With the dynamic and interactive visualisation features offered by augmented reality (AR) on mobile phones and other smart handheld devices, this technology is viewed as being capable of closing the gap between tourist expectations and reality, thereby improving how tourists engage with their surroundings. Despite the known potential of this relatively new technology, its actual acceptance among the users is still minimal, especially in the Malaysian context. Considering this limitation, this study examined the extent of AR utilisation and its ability to influence the development of a tourists’ travel experience. The ‘Iskandar.my’ mobile AR app was used in this research to evaluate the tourists’ expectations, perception and satisfaction with the utilisation of this software platform to add value to their travel experience. The findings indicated that there was a statistically significant differences in the respondents’ experiences before and after using the AR content on the mobile app. The thrill associated with the use of this advanced technology was the primary factor in their satisfaction with the AR function. However, the lack of variety in the attractions covered, as well as the app’s currently limited offerings, were noted as factors that could affect the ‘Iskandar.my’ apps competitiveness with regard to other travel-related apps. Therefore, this researcher recommends that the developer of the app improve the design and service dimensions of the app to meet users’ travel needs.

KEYWORDS: Mobile augmented reality, tourists experience, destination engagement, interpretation

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The formation of tourist experiences involves complex process within the inner-mind. The positive and negative experiences of a destination is subject to an individuals’ psychological factors including his or her emotional state, character and values (Larsen, 2007). With the current advancement in technology, tourists have become more empowered and sophisticated in information acquisition and decision-making, thanks to the progression of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Buhalis et al., 2011; Gretzel et al., 2006).

In relation to mobile technology engagement, the dynamic interaction with places of interest that users obtain and their ability to share travel experiences with friends and family in real-time via digital devices and social networking sites brings in a new form of tourist-destination interaction, enabling tourists to engage with destinations from a different yet unique perspective (Neuhofer, 2016).
This is one of the important things that can add a new dimension to the tourists experience and is one that industry players should be aware of and try to capitalise on in their bid to meet and satisfy the tourists sophisticated and increasingly more complex demands (Kounavis et al., 2012; Linaza et al., 2012).

This study therefore aims to understand the tourist’s response to the use of AR technology as a travel guide and the study will also examine the extent to which the use of AR technology influences the development of a tourists travel experience.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research used a quantitative method and questionnaires to gather the data for the study. The ‘Iskandar.my’ AR app was selected as the app to be used in this study as it was the only destination-based AR app available in Malaysia.

The respondents were selected via a purposive sampling method targeting the current and potential users of the ‘Iskandar.my’ app that have visited the Iskandar region in Malaysia. A summative evaluation was then applied to this research as it is the most well-suited to assessing the impact of an intervention on a target group, in this study that means the impact of mobile AR apps use on tourist responses.

The execution of summative evaluation in this study involved two steps:

1) execution of experimental session,
2) answering of the questionnaire survey.

As the app ‘Iskandar.my’ might be new to some respondents, they were requested to undergo a testing session with the app to test it and familiarize themselves with its use prior to answering the questionnaire. Respondents were given time to explore the app and to answer after they had finished testing the app.

**FINDINGS**

Table 1 shows the pair sample t-test of respondents’ expectation and satisfaction towards the use of ‘Iskandar.my’ as mobile AR travel guide. The statistical findings signify the respondents actually encountered more positive changes compared to previous experiences with the AR content of the ‘Iskandar.my’ adding positive value to the attractions and the way the tourists interacted with them at destinations in the Iskandar region. The test also proved the presence of the app and its use significantly altered the respondents’ experience with regard to how tourists explored the destination, the dynamics of the interactions at the destination, and the uniqueness of the travel experience. The positive changes in tourists’ responses can be directly linked to the distinctive 3D viewing feature of the mobile AR app that positively influences the user’s psychological state.

Table 1: Paired sample t-test of respondents’ responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist Responses</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>p-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. dev.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. dev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination knowledge</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination exploration</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic interaction</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique experience</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p-value is significant at <0.05
CONCLUSION

The significant improvement in the respondents’ experience before and after using the mobile AR features in the ‘Iskandar.my’ app is seen as a result of the psychological influence of the app in creating a unique virtual experience for each individual tourist. However, the app seems to have only limited information on points of interest at each of the travel destinations, which may result in the selection of other travel apps among its existing users to gain more extensive and inclusive services and information.

Despite the limitations in the performance of the ‘Iskandar.my’ app, its ability to significantly enhance the experience of its users successfully illustrates the capability of AR technology to influence the psychology of its users by making the destination seem more attractive than it usually is.

With reference to the analysis, findings and recommendations proposed in this research paper, it can be concluded that the use of mobile AR technology for tourism-related purposes does influence the psychology of its users and can enhance their travel experience.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Employing the AR technology without further consideration of the users’ need for information would not be an effective means of facilitating positive travel experiences. Therefore, it is recommended that the app expand on the breadth of topics covered and depth of the information provided, such as history and background of places of interest and the diversity of the attractions on location, to better fulfil the end-users’ information needs and facilitate the better execution of travel activities. In improving the performance and the ability of the ‘Iskandar.my’ app to influence of end-users’ experiences, it is recommended that the app enrich its AR offerings by adding information and links to more diverse forms of media such as videos and websites which contain relevant historical information among other things to better enhance the users sensory and emotional attachments to the destination and help them to create a positive and memorable travel experience.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Balik Pulau is a uniquely situated landscape on the western side of Penang Island, being both quieter and greener in comparison to Georgetown. It is famous among locals for producing high quality durians. Thus, making it a hotspot for agritourism entrepreneurs. This paper aims to explore the agritourism prospects in Balik Pulau to better understand the motivations and challenges faced by agritourism entrepreneurs in the area. Through in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs, this study has established that the motivation of agricultural entrepreneurs is highly dependent on their goals. Their motivations are also influenced by their individual financial situation, health concerns and eagerness to share and preserve ethnic and agricultural knowledge. This study has identified five challenges faced by agritourism entrepreneurs which are inadequate support from government, private and community sectors, difficulties in employing staff, insufficient infrastructure, seasonal income and encroaching urbanisation. This paper suggests Balik Pulau can be marketed as Penang’s agritourism hub and a one-stop centre for durian lovers.

KEYWORDS: agritourism, entrepreneur, durian, motivation

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This paper is focused on Balik Pulau’s agritourism entrepreneurs’ motivations to start their businesses and the challenges faced while operating in the area. This study also investigates the types of activities offered to tourists from non-durian orchard owners when durians are off-season, and the manner in which orchard owners avoid total income dependency on this seasonal fruit. The main concern area is shortage of land for cultivation and the limited number of agritourism activities in the off-season to meet the growing demand from customers, especially local tourists. The lack of tourist activity is compounded by the fact that several small oil palm plantations, shrimp ponds and mangroves in Balik Pulau have already been converted into housing areas and have given way to urban development which has resulted in the further loss of land available to the agritourism industry.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methods were used to investigate the circumstances around the agritourism sector in Balik Pulau. Eleven agritourism entrepreneurs were approached but only six were willing to be interviewed. The in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Purposive sampling was then used to determine the respondents to be targeted. This method was chosen as it took into account the conditions of the person who fulfilled the requirements of the research question, and whether he or she was able to provide the necessary explanations and was inclined to share the information. In order to analyse the data, thematic analysis was practiced in this study. The majority of the respondents were only able to converse in Hokkien language and dialect was then translated using ‘Software and Documentation Localization
FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that four of the six agritourism entrepreneurs operated homestays on their durian orchards, while the remaining two entrepreneurs operated an animal farm and an apiary. The activities provided at the agritourism sites basically varied according to the landscape of the sites and what motivated the owners to venture into agritourism. The activities included educational tours, hiking, animal riding, honey farming, and cycling which were available all year round to support them financially during off-season.

Their motivations to run the business were also influenced by their individual financial situations, health concerns and eagerness to share and preserve ethnic and agricultural knowledge.

The main challenge faced by most agritourism entrepreneurs was inadequate support from government and private sectors as well as the locals. Due to lack of assistance from these groups, agritourism entrepreneurs were forced to self-fund their operations which meant that the development of their sites was slowed and had to be done in small incremental steps on a very small scale. The second challenge was the difficulties they faced in employing staff due to the hilly landscape in Balik Pulau, remoteness of the area, and the generally poor working conditions.

The third challenge was the lack of infrastructure and poor road conditions in the area, which led to the fourth challenge that was seasonal income. During the durian season, throngs of tourists will visit and stay. However, the off-season sees a sharp decline in the number of visitors and the resulting income, forcing a few of these entrepreneurs to look at other types of activities to attract tourists to the area all-year round.

The last challenge faced by some agritourism entrepreneurs was the encroachment of urbanisation. Developers see Balik Pulau as a potential area for development and offer a fortune for the land. However, offers were turned down by the agritourism business owners due to their strong motivations and their desire to ensure that their legacy will continue and they will be able to preserve the natural beauty of the area.

On the other hand, some of them revealed that urban development has helped to boost their business, making tourists aware and creating easier paths and better roads for tourists to find and reach their business areas. One respondent also said there were negative aspects of urbanisation when new land developers purchased the land in Balik Pulau, they were likely to chop down old wild durian trees, and replace it with famous durian species. In order to enhance plant growth, new land developers are heavily dependent on chemical fertilisers that lead to a loss of soil and water quality.

CONCLUSION

Balik Pulau offers a unique experience for both local and international tourists. In less than hour, one may travel from the bustling city of Georgetown to the serene and quiet space to enjoy nature and taste durians at their best and most natural. Looking at the remarkable landscape and the different agritourism activities on offer, this research paper suggests that Balik Pulau should be marketed as Penang’s agritourism hub and a one-stop center for durian lovers and agritourism. This will not just boost Penang’s tourism industry, but also preserve its natural resources.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In response to the decline in suitable tracts of agricultural land in Penang, this research paper highlights the importance of motivation and the strong desire among agritourism entrepreneurs in Balik Pulau to stay afloat even though their revenue is seasonal. Their creativity in tackling challenges needs to be credited and their existence helps to preserve the natural resources of Balik Pulau and their enterprise serves as a sustainable form of development in rural areas.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Information and communication technologies have deep implications for the tourism industry. This combination of devices is being used extensively in an excessive variety of functions and numerous applications. On the other hand, tourism has become an extremely dynamic system. The globalisation enabled by technological development and budget travel has greatly increased competition. Decision support systems (DSS) can play an important role within organisations and assist people who manage tourist destinations. The main intention of this research paper is to see how to apply Decision Support Systems (DSS) to the tourism industry. It aims to establish a personalised interactive travel recommender system that can be shared and integrated easily in order to work as a proof of concept for the decision to provide the tourism sector with interactive decision support systems. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives which are to evaluate and measure criteria and alternatives to performance, to analyse the ranking of criteria and alternatives and to recommend tourist attractions in terms of islands, accommodation, activities and etc. based on the travellers’ budget constraints. The evaluation module enables experts to evaluate and consider alternatives to the small islands to benchmark the islands’ performance. An analysis module will provide reports for performance of criteria and alternatives based on a “Best Non-fuzzy Performance” basis. A risk analysis model for the travel recommender system using a fuzzy set approach has been proposed and incorporated into a Fuzzy Decision Support System (FDSS). This study presents fuzzy-AHP as a proposed method to apply to decision-making with social attributes. A web-based prototype Decision Support System (DSS) has been designed and developed in order to prove the objectives.

KEYWORDS: Decision Support System, Travel Recommender System, Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Over the past few decades, numerous studies have been carried out on customer choice behaviours, particularly with regard to the destination choice model. However, only a few have attempted to integrate the use of web technology with traditional approaches to consumer choice behaviour.

With tourism expanding globally, the use of the Internet in tourism has become inevitable. This study presents an approach to the design of a destination choice model using a fuzzy multi-criteria decision support system that can be used by tourists to make choices on travel destinations.

Tourism decision support systems have been in existence for a few decades. During the early days, the focus was on developing better tourism data acquisition technology. They then attempt to integrate database management systems and artificial intelligence for more effective use and interpretation of available data to assist decision making in tourism.
This study focuses on islands as a travel destination. The choice of location for travel is an important factor leading to the selection of the islands since it will determine how convenient it is to serve tourists and how many tourists are attracted to the place. There are six small islands in Terengganu and tourists have some characteristics that they consider when selecting an island to visit.

The evaluation process in the selection of islands needs to be evaluated by experts in order to provide tourists with the best recommendation. This research paper incorporates two major theoretic frameworks, namely the tourism decision support systems and web services, and applies them to evaluate and recommend the best island to tourist.

The tourism decision support system uses computers to analyze the performance of islands based on ten social attributes including attraction, accommodation, transportation, activity, entertainment, resident attitudes, environment, other facilities and souvenirs in order to enhance its accuracy. This system also been developed to handle recommendations to tourists.

**METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation of a travel destination and the making of a recommendation is a wide-ranging problem with complex variables to consider. This study presents fuzzy-AHP as a proposed method to apply decision making with social attributes. This problem requires methods that can handle qualitative criteria’s that are difficult to describe in crisp values. Fuzzy decision making is a powerful method to solve complex decision-making problems in a fuzzy environment.

This method can be applied with the problem of ranking and selection. In the real world, linguistic environmental factors are used by human beings in order to make decisions (Zadeh, 1975; Zadeh, 1983, 1987, 1997). Meanwhile, the original analytic hierarchy process (AHP) used in this proposal was first developed by Saaty (Saaty, 1977).

**FINDINGS**

The results from the software usability measurement inventory (SUMI) evaluations are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 in terms of the mean, upper and lower confidence intervals. These intervals are derived from the global usability scale and each of the five usability sub-scales which are efficiency, affect, helpfulness, controllability and learnability. The upper and lower confidence intervals represent the limits within which the theoretical true score falls 95% of the time for these respondents.

Table 1 and Table 2 show that, on the global scale, the SUMI evaluation indicates that the usability of the iTAS is within the lower and upper confidence intervals. The results showed consistent in terms of usability sub-scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Lower Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Upper Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global n = 10</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controllability</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnability</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: The Results from SUMI Questionnaires (Tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Lower Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Upper Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global n = 60</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controllability</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnability</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

The findings in this research show that this study is consistent with the hypotheses made. All hypotheses made based on the five aspects of user satisfaction are consistent and therefore accepted to be true.

The iTAS is found to be helpful. The users feel in control over the iTAS. The iTAS is easy to learn even for novice users. On a global scale, experts, aspects of helpfulness and controllability have the highest mean scores compared to other aspects. This shows that the experts find that the iTAS is helpful and they are in control of the iTAS. Tourists find that the iTAS was helpful and easy to use but some modifications have to be focused on. Learnability and efficiency received the lowest mean as compared to the other aspects.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPlications

The author’s suggests improvements to the user interface with better functions and information to improve efficiency and learnability. The benefits of this are several orders of magnitude more for the tourist attractions and this will also affect consumer interest in being able to visit islands in Terengganu.

REFERENCES


THEME:
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & SUSTAINABILITY
HOW COGNITIVE APPRAISALS AND MALADAPTIVE COPING EXPLAIN THE BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION OF HEALTH TOURISTS?

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ABSTRACT
The main purpose of this paper is to understand the behavioural intention of health tourists through cognitive appraisals and maladaptive coping. A research model is proposed. A field study was conducted in Malaysia’s various international airports. 718 international tourists were approached to partake in the paper survey. The data collected was analysed using SmartPLS software version 3 with partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). This study’s findings show that only response severity is not significant related to maladaptive coping, which is defined as a compulsive behaviour individuals use to soothe themselves when feeling anxious. Perceived vulnerability and response cost are positively related to maladaptive coping, whereas response efficacy and self-efficacy are negatively significant to maladaptive coping. This study’s abstract consists of seven main elements: purpose and background, methodology, findings, conclusion, contribution/practical implications, references, and keywords.

KEYWORDS: Health Tourism, Protection Motivation Theory, International Tourists, Maladaptive Coping, Appraisals Coping

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Past studies on health tourism have mainly focused on clientele’s perspective, the current research attempted to fill the research gap by predicting international tourists’ behavioural intention for healthcare services abroad using a theoretical based model adopted from Protection Motivation Theory (PMT). The hypothesis was proposed to incorporate cognitive appraisal and the maladaptive coping roles.

METHODOLOGY
A self-administered questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. Field study was conducted in Malaysia at five major international airports. The data was gathered from 718 respondents via structured survey questionnaires. The structural model was assessed using PLS-SEM in an effort to further affirm the robustness of the findings.

FINDINGS
The results indicated that perceived vulnerability and response costs are positively related to maladaptive coping, however response efficacy and self-efficacy are negatively significant to maladaptive coping. Further, perceived vulnerability, perceived severity, and self-efficacy are positively related to behavioural intention for health tourism. Whereas response cost and maladaptive coping are negatively significant to behavioural intention for health tourism.
CONCLUSION
This study’s finding establishes a proposed research framework and argue based on PMT accentuation and belief that policy makers and healthcare providers should be encouraged to continuously strengthen the media messages and provide more health campaigns which focus on motivating international tourists to consider health tourism as an option when travelling. Several research insights have been derived from the findings which could benefit various stakeholders such as academicians, healthcare centers, relevant governmental agencies and the local authorities.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
The study implied that the government administration in the health tourism industry is highly dependent on the significant perception of potential health tourists. Thus, the development of healthcare infrastructure to create an enabling environment and at the same time to foster the growth of health tourist arrivals is interrelated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
This research has been awarded by the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia under Fundamental Research Grant Scheme project no. FRGS/1/2019/SS01/UTAR/02/2.

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ABSTRACT

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is an approach to tourism presumed to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially involved on SDG1-No Poverty and SDG11-Sustainable Cities and Communities. In rural communities, homestays are essential CBT component that have made many contributions to the local economy and quality of life. The Malaysia Homestay Programme (MHP) has received special attention from the government due to its potential to enhance local communities’ livelihoods and economic sustainability. This study assesses factors that measure the successful performance of community-based tourism on the MHP. Homestay programmes are a form of community tourism, in which the host (operator) provides family-friendly stay facilities for rent to tourists, thus generating additional income for the family. Based on the previous studies, the homestay operators faced the following external challenges such as village landscape, inefficient networking, lack of cooperation and commitment from homestay operators, exploitation of external parties, as well as ineffective promotional and marketing activities. These challenges must be resolved effectively to sustain the MHPs forward momentum. Essentially, the experiences of hosts (homestay operators) in dealing with the above mentioned challenges should be sought and empirically documented for future policy-making activities by the development agencies and the society. The national economy is bound to progress with escalating arrivals of tourists if effective strategies are devised by the stakeholders in resolving the problems faced by the homestay operators. Prior studies have listed the critical factors that dictated the success or failure of CBT programmes from the stance of CBT managers and experts. Nonetheless, insights from the local community pertaining to the success of CBT have been largely ignored despite their significance. A case study approach was adopted in this research paper with a qualitative methodology. Data was collected from 17 key informants in 11 MHPs. A structured and in-depth interview was the primary data collection technique, used together with photos, note-taking, and sound recordings. From the interview analysis, 12 criteria were identified as most of the respondents had mentioned those criteria as success factors for MHPs. The findings also revealed 7 very important dimensions for MHP to receive high numbers of visitors which are: effective marketing and promotional strategies, maintained facilities and utilities, uniqueness and quality products/packages design, community engagement and support, collaboration and networking, leadership, and recognition, as well as previous awards. The new dimensions on homestay development identified in this study are recognition and previous awards, entrepreneurship and uniqueness of product and package design.

The study outcomes signify that most of the respondents claimed that the MHP success is dictated by the quantity of tourists. This is because; the volume of tourists generates additional income to those involved in the MHP. However, there are other dimensions that should be weighed in by homestay operators to ensure that their homestays can succeed and survive for a longer period and can be contribute to SDG1 and SDG11.

KEYWORDS: Malaysian Homestay Programme, Success Performance, Community-based tourism
PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

A popular tourism initiative that is considered consistent with tourism-based sustainable development is community-based tourism (CBT). CBT has been acknowledged as an excellent platform to initiate multiple activities that attract tourists to explore the available natural resources.

This tourism segment is a crucial economic tool that sustains cultural and natural attractions amidst foreign and local tourists. The evidence of the homestay programmes performance and success criteria are still hard to achieve much less progress on SDGs. Therefore, this study assesses the factors that measure the successful performance of community-based tourism on MHP.

METHODOLOGY

The case study approach was adopted in this qualitative research work. Data were gathered between June and July 2019 from 17 key informants in 11 MHPs; five community leaders, eight CBT operators, and four marketing staff. The selection of respondents was based on their availability and commitment to participate in the interview session and site visit. A structured and in-depth interview served as the primary data collection technique, along with photos, note-taking, and sound recording. The data were assessed using open coding by NVivo12.

FINDINGS

From the interview analysis, 11 criteria were identified as most of the respondents had mentioned those criteria as success factors for MHP. From these criteria, this study has broken the classifications into three groups. In the first group, the finding revealed 7 very important dimensions for MHP to receive high number of visitors which is: effective marketing and promotional strategies, maintained facilities and utilities, uniqueness and quality products/packages design, community engagement and support, collaboration, and networking, market environment, leadership and recognition, as well as previous awards.

In the second group, there were also three important dimensions derived from these criteria, namely organisational management skills, funding and human resources support and generating benefits for the community. In the third and last group, the new dimensions of homestay development identified in this study were: (a) recognition and previous awards, (b) entrepreneurship, and (c) uniqueness of product and package design.

CONCLUSION

The study outcomes signify that most of the respondents claimed that the MHPs success is dictated by the quantity of tourists. This is because; the volume of tourists generates additional income to those involved in the MHP.

However, there are other dimensions that should be weighed in by homestay operators to ensure that their homestays can succeed and survive for a longer period. These dimensions include provision of products, facilities, and services that are unique, efficient, well-maintained, safe, and satisfying; deployment of effective marketing technique including use of marketing networks; as well as acquiring and practicing skills and knowledge to operate the tourism businesses.

The community-based MHPs run by rural communities should be equipped with adequate experience, awareness, skills and knowledge to successfully operate the business. This is highlighted by the practice of the listed dimensions.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The MHPs reflect the rural entrepreneurship entities despite fitting the description of a CBT as outlined by Russell (2000). The programmes can also evolve into community-based business cooperatives. Thus, these dimensions serve as the basis to assess MHP performance, which can assist with enhancement decisions. It is hoped that this study will lead to new insights which will in turn be able to contribute to the success of the homestay programme especially with regard to increasing the economic and social status of the local community.

REFERENCES


FACTORS THAT DETERMINE TOURIST’S PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD KELANTANESE LOCAL CUISINE

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ABSTRACT

Local foods are one of the cravings of travelers wanting to experience the joys of domestic tourism. Some of the other reasons tourists visit a place is to experience the lifestyle, and culture. Besides these motivational factors, tourist visit places based on word-of-mouth and their own past experiences. The state of Kelantan, Malaysia is identified as a vibrant tourist destination as it has beautiful natural environs and has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that is easy to promote to tourists. Kelantan is also well known for its local cuisines that can attract the foodies. The uniqueness of the local cuisine also influences tourists to make other purchases. Using the quantitative research approach, this study aims to identify the relationship between food quality, price, and service quality towards the tourists intention to purchase local cuisine in Kelantan. These three independent variables will have a different role in explaining the factors that influence a tourist’s intent to purchase Kelantanese foodstuff.

KEYWORDS: Food Quality, Price, Service Quality, Purchase Intention & Kelantan Cuisine

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Food has often been considered a key attraction for visitors to a destination. In Southeast Asia, Malaysia is known as the one of the countries which offers glorious food products that promote domestic and international tourism (Jalis, Salehuddin, Zahari & Othman, 2009). The Malaysian government has identified the tourism sector as a high priority growth sector and therefore the government is aggressively promoting Malaysia on the world stage (Tourism Malaysia, 2021).

A recent tourism activity making waves is nurturing the tourist experiences that revolve around the local foods and the pursuit of memorable tourist experiences (Hashemi, Mohammed, Kiumarsi, Hung Kee, & Anarestani, 2021). According to Karim and Chi, (2010) food influences the tourist’s loyalty and causes them to visit the destination more than once.

However, there are insufficient studies that investigate the outcome of the gastronomic experience on the tourists’ intentions towards the destination and the local food on offer. According to Nam (2017), there are several countries that have made extensive use of local foods as a primary tourism activity, these include, Spain, France, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Singapore, and all of them have become popular tourist destinations.

As such Kelantan is well-known for its cultural, heritage and natural environment. However, according to Abdullah, Teo and Foo (2016), food production in Kelantan has consistently added to the states revenues.

The states local foods are frequently cited as an important factor that lures tourists to the state. Despite the growing number of tourists arrivals; there is very minimal research and data on the consumption of
local Kelantanese cuisine by tourists. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the gap between the tourist’s intention to purchase local Kelantanese delicacies and the foodstuffs that are being developed to attract tourists to the state as symbolic cultural heritage items in Kelantan.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study used a quantitative approach, and the questionnaire is developed through a review of the literature. The instruments for this study were adopted and adapted from the work of several scholars, such as the food quality (Hanaysha, 2016); Price and service quality from Muskat, Hörtnag, Prayag and Wagner (2019) and purchase intention from Nam, Shim and Jeong (2017).

The questionnaire survey consists of (3) sections and self-administrated. This study is intended for the domestic and international tourists who are travelled visiting Kelantan and intend to try the local cuisines. Therefore, this study uses the convenience sampling technique as the sampling method in which this approach provides the researcher with a generalised sample (Sharma, 2017).

This study has 384 respondents representing a population of more than 6.5 million people, as suggested by Krejie and Morgan (1970). The data was analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. In this study, the items were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale and carried out a pre-test activity at two levels to ensure the question items’ validity.

The viewpoints of experts from the Department of Tourism, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness’ were also considered and used to modify the questions in some cases. A pilot study was then conducted before the mass data collection process. A total of 30 sets of the questionnaires were analysed for reliability purposes. All items achieved an acceptable Cronbach’s alpha value, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Quality</td>
<td>.812**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>.802**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>.819**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Corelation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Based on Table 2, there is a significant, strong, and positive correlation between food quality and factors that influence visitors’ intention to purchase Kelantanese cuisine. The relationship between the food quality is 0.812, which R-value was positive, indicating linear correlation was high at p-value 0.000.

This indication is supported by Xiao, Yang and Iqbal (2018), stated that food quality is the most influential factor influencing the purchasing intent for all industries. There is a significant, strong,
and positive correlation between price and factors that influence visitors’ purchase intention towards Kelantanese cuisine. The relationship between the price is 0.802, which R-value was positive, indicating linear correlation was high at p-value 0.000.

In the restaurants, customers’ expectations might not be the same, regardless of the same service suppliers’ availability, making the perception of prices on customer behaviour the most influential (Shahzadi, Malik Shahab, Ahmad, & Shabbir, 2018). There is a significant, strong, and positive correlation between service quality and factors influencing visitors’ intention to purchase Kelantanese cuisine.

The relationship between the food quality is 0.819, which R-value was positive, indicating linear correlation was high at p-value 0.000. Based on the previous study done by Shahzadi et al. (2016), it was found that customers often have high expectations from services, especially in service settings. Hence, they need to receive higher quality service to be delighted with the service and to ensure that they revisit them.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the connection between the impacts of identification, tangible aspects, and responsiveness that influence visitor’s purchase intention towards Kelantanese cuisine. The findings of this study can be used to design marketing strategies and local government tourist policy linked to gastronomic tourism and contribute to academic literature gaps. Thus, from the marketers’ perspective, they should understand the characteristics of food tourists who like food tourism to establish any promotion activities.

This research aims to help small and medium entrepreneurs (SME) food enterprises identify the impacts of visitors’ purchase intention toward Kelantanese cuisine. Moreover, the research framework was developed and supported according to the literature that had been viewed. It can be concluded that Kelantan can promote gastronomy tourism as attractiveness to reflect its food cuisine. This study has some limitations that might be dealt with in future research. Hence, it is crucial to investigate how Kelantan’s cuisine is reflected in various businesses and determine the perceived food image.

REFERENCES


AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE USAGE OF ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR CONSERVATION MARKETING AMONG EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRES (EEC) IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

With limited funding, conservationists are far from able to assist all threatened species. Even though online marketing has been increasingly used by conservationists to raise funds and awareness on the need to reduce biodiversity loss, the major issue is reaching the target audience and influencing their behaviour, especially if the target audience is a profit-making entity. To date, a comprehensive theoretical investigation on online conservation marketing pertaining business expectation, preferences, experience and satisfaction is still in its infancy and remains unanswered. Therefore, to fulfill this gap, this qualitative study is executed, in which 19 in-depth interviews was adopted until data saturation is achieved. The participants are those who worked in relationship marketing field and have experienced online conservation marketing activities. The study explores and profiles the experiences and satisfaction of businesses based on their previous online conservation marketing and the expectation and preferences of businesses for future online conservation marketing. Based on the research findings, even before the first Covid-19 outbreak in Malaysia, many businesses in the country were involved in at least one online conservation marketing strategy with an Environmental Education Centre (EEC) and many were satisfied with the EEC online marketing strategies and services. However, most businesses have less expectations and low preferences towards the future online conservation marketing by the EEC. This study assists conservation organisations in retaining the financial support from businesses and enhancing public conservation awareness through businesses. This study is aligned with Malaysia National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) no 4, under Entry Point Project 4 (EPP 4) and also NKEA no 6, under EPP 12.

KEYWORDS: Environmental Education Centers, Electronic Platform, Conservation Marketing, Sustainable Tourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Inadequate funding levels are a major impediment to effective conservation and are likely associated with recent failures to meet United Nations biodiversity targets (Waldron, 2013). The importance of evaluating effectiveness is widely recognised in both marketing and conservation. However, to date, little research into the effectiveness of online conservation marketing has been published especially in regard to business expectation, preferences, experience and satisfaction.

Prior conservation research on individual expectations shows that perceived expectations were the strongest predictor the likelihood of individuals to participate in wildlife conservation programmes (Lo,
Chow, & Cheung, 2012). However, there is little in conservation research pertaining to the preferences and expectations especially for businesses. Similarly, there is limited research on the businesses experience and satisfaction towards conservation programmes.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to explore and profile the experiences and satisfaction of businesses based on their previous online conservation marketing, and the expectations and preferences of businesses for future online conservation marketing.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is different from many others in the same category as it uses a qualitative approach in which it explores the new viewpoints on a well-known research subject (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The research problems of this study were framed as open-ended interview questions to support the discovery of new findings, thereby allowing this study to update the researchers’ knowledge of the subject-matter (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). Specifically, 19 semi-structured interviews were executed and data saturation was achieved.

The interviews were geared towards Malaysians who worked in the relationship marketing field and have experienced at least one online conservation marketing activity at their workplace. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interviews in other languages other than English were then translated into English. All the interviews were then manually analysed.

**FINDINGS**

Even before the first outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia, many businesses in the country have had some experience with at least one online conservation marketing strategy with a local Environmental Education Centre (EEC) which includes using or viewing the EEC’s own corporate website, the EEC’s social media page (mostly via Facebook), Instant Messenger (mostly via WhatsApp with EEC representatives), or by e-mails and surveys with the EECs. Many of the businesses were satisfied with the EEC online marketing strategies and services.

The reasons for this were because these strategies have informed the businesses about current conservation activities offered by EECs, provided a means for the businesses to use their funds for corporate social responsibility purpose (which would have otherwise been used for tax purposes), and increase awareness of the current and global conservation issues.

However, most of these businesses have low expectations and preferences when it comes to online conservation marketing by the EEC in the near future. According to these businesses, they prefer to have face-to-face interactions with EEC representatives, rather than dealing with online platforms.

One of the reasons is because it is easier for them to customise the conservation activities (offered by EECs) based on the company’s needs, preferences, and what they can offer. Another reason is because most of the decision makers in the companies are not millennials, hence they have a higher preference for traditional marketing such as public relations and flyers.
CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

This study provides original research exploring conservation marketing for relationship marketing purposes between businesses and non-profit organisations, as well as between funder and fundee. Based on the research findings, even before the first COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia, many businesses in the country have had some experience with at least one of the online conservation marketing strategies and dealt with an EEC (i.e., Kenyir Elephant Conservation Village, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia, and Maliau Basin Conservation Area).

The research findings also illustrate that many businesses were satisfied with the EEC online marketing strategies and services. However, most businesses (prior to the enforcement of lockdown due to the pandemic) had low expectations and preference for the future of online conservation marketing by the EEC.

Additionally, this study also contributes to conservation organisations ability to generate funds from businesses by understanding the standpoint of the businesses. The research findings may allow the conservation organisations (i.e., Pusat Konservasi Hidupan Liar Bota Kanan, Turtle Conservation and Information Centre Pulau Pinang, and Pusat Konservasi Hidupan Liar Segamat) to be more proactive in generating funds (i.e., adapting to business needs), rather than reactive by waiting for businesses to come to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research receives funding by Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, under the Talent and Publication Enhancement (TAPE) Research Grant.

REFERENCES


ANALYSIS OF VISITORS’ EXPERIENCES AT THE OLD MELBOURNE GAOL

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ABSTRACT

Visitation to the dark past of history is growing where more tourist is confronting concepts of mortality. Still, it appears to have minimal research on dark tourist experiences in the context of prison museums, particularly the Old Melbourne Gaol. The aim of the research is to analyse visitors’ experiences and provide recommendation for improvement. The relevance of the research is understanding dark tourist experiences will give insight into how service offerings can be improved in prison museums. The researcher conducted a qualitative study using thematic analysis to understand visitor experiences better and provide recommendation for future visitation. Purposive sampling was used to explore mixed reviews from the widely used platform called TripAdvisor. One of the key findings is that most visitors are international tourists accompanied by family or friends visiting towards the end of the year, which means that service offerings should be geared towards this group. Furthermore, the overall visitor experience is positive, and emerging themes narrates the authenticity of carceral life, interactive experience and exciting re-enactments at the Old Melbourne Goal. Lastly, the findings reveal the need to reconsider the role of customer service as it influences the overall satisfaction of visitors and strengthen substantial aspects of service offerings to increase visitation and enhance the visitor experience.

KEYWORDS: Dark tourism, online review, visitor experience, TripAdvisor

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The popularity of prison tourism in Australia in the postmodernity world is said to be emerging. With millions of visitations every year, many are including prison tours in their bucket list to experience history’s infamous deaths and tragedies that is more academically referred to as dark tourism (Sampson, 2019; Cakar 2018). The term dark tourism is a form of tourism that involves death, suffering, violence or tragedy presented in a commodified and a commercialised way to increase public awareness of the site’s dark past (Light, 2017). A compelling example is the Old Melbourne Gaol as Victoria’s best heritage and cultural attraction (Welch, 2012).

Despite growing attendance at the Old Melbourne Gaol, there have been mixed customer reviews about their experiences during and post visitation (TripAdvisor, 2021; National Trust, 2019). The purpose of this research is to identify the factors influencing the visitors’ experiences during visitation and analyse the relationship between the online rating system and recommendation intention after visitation.

METHODOLOGY

The secondary data that was used for this research was from the commonly used online platform called TripAdvisor which was used to examine the visitors’ reviews and comments on their experiences at the
Old Melbourne Gaol. Currently, there are over 3,000 reviews on TripAdvisor, and this research paper examined the average of those user-generated content.

Moreover, the study used qualitative content analysis by categorising themes of the common keywords found in the user comments to examine influencing factors during visitation. This researcher also attempted to understand the relationship between post-visit satisfaction and the intention of the visitor to recommend a trip to the Old Melbourne Gaol using correlation analysis by exploring customer's rating reviews to improve customer experience.

FINDINGS

One of the key findings is that most visitors to the Old Melbourne Gaol are international tourists accompanied by family or friends visiting towards the end of the year, which means that service offerings should be more geared towards this group.

Furthermore, the overall visitor experience is positive, and emerging themes narrates the authenticity of carceral life, interactive experiences and exciting re-enactments at the Old Melbourne Gaol. Lastly, the findings reveal the need to reconsider the role of customer service as it influences the overall satisfaction of visitors and strengthen substantial aspects of the service offerings to increase visitation and enhance the visitor experience.

CONCLUSION

In general, the results reveal positive visitor experiences at the Old Melbourne Gaol. The current demographics tell us that majority are international tourists visiting towards the end of the year and are likely to engage in “dark tourism” Tourism involving travel to sites associated with death and tragedy, which is usually accompanied by family or friends.

It is safe to conclude that future visitation should be geared towards this market segment to increase visitation and improve customer experience. Even though the emerging themes are dependent on how visitors perceived them, the analysis of the comments mostly reflects the authenticity of carceral life, interactive experience and thrilling re-enactments at the Old Melbourne Gaol.

As a result, these factors shape the visitors’ experiences during visitation. Although the results are overall positive, one cannot neglect the aspects about customer service, accessibility of the building designs and visibility of information that influences the visitors’ satisfaction and the likelihood of revisitation or recommendation.

Lastly, the findings suggest the need to re-evaluate areas of weakness, especially customer service and strengthen strong points to increase visitation and enhance the customer experience in the Old Melbourne Gaol.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Since the study explored the influencing factors during visitation, it is encouraged to do further investigation on the motivating factors in the pre-visit stage. By understanding the pre-visit motivating factors, it will give insight on how to manage the expectations of visitors and appropriately cater to the organisation’s services not only operationally but also the aspect of Customer Relationship Management (CRM).
Being a niche tourism, further study on the relationship between online rating system and recommendation intention could help identify areas during visitation that needs improvement. Lastly, collecting other data such as age, level of income and educational attainment can help in the promotion of the prison museum to the different demographics which will optimise the resource use and provide offerings or special promotions to that target market.

REFERENCES


THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE FAILURE, SERVICE RECOVERY AND AIRLINE PASSENGER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT
Service failures and the following service recovery of a firm can greatly influence customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and the relationship quality with the firm, regardless of other firm’s efforts to establish strong relationships with its customers in the long run. Airlines in particular are struggling with several obstacles concerning their business continuity and ability to survive. One of the obstacles is the fact that they are subject to inevitable service failures which are unavoidable. Meanwhile, the concept of potent service recovery has become extremely vital in terms of retaining customer satisfaction. This research paper examines the relationship of service failures and service recovery and passenger satisfaction. The data was collected from domestic passengers at the Sultan Mahmud Airport in Terengganu. The relationships among the variables of the study were supported. Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that the airline management team and staff plan an effective recovery mechanisms to rectify service failures.

KEYWORDS: Service failure, Service Recovery, Customer Satisfaction, Airline Passengers

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Enhancing customer satisfaction has become a major concern of service providers and marketers. Numerous studies have emphasized the significance of satisfaction in the service industry (Curry & Gao, 2012). Service quality is also acknowledged as being able to influence customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Due to the rapid growth of competition and the growing expectations of customers in the business environment, it is tough for many companies especially airlines to retain customers. It is impossible for every company to avoid mistakes and to cater to every customer’s expectation, especially now that customers are less devoted to a brand name and more demanding no matter how good the service delivery.

Demonstrating dissatisfaction, quitting the service, supporting the same brand or spreading negative reviews are some of the consequences to a business following a failure of service. In the airline industry, which is continuously expanding service disappointment is hard to avoid. For that reason, efforts must be made to provide excellent service recovery to claw back a positive review from customers following the service failure (Curry & Gao, 2012).

Moreover, being unable to recognise the exact needs and wants of customers has also become one of the obstacles to the delivery of excellent service (Izogo & Ogba, 2015). Quality of service and customer satisfaction elements are often compromised (Boetsch, Bieger, & Wittmer, 2011). A great number of research papers on service failure have been published in connection with a diverse range of industries. However, a considerable number of those studies focus on effects of service failure and recovery in the airlines and the impact of service failure on customer satisfaction also gain attention from researchers.
According to Curry and Gao (2012), customers who are satisfied with the recovery efforts have a more favourable evaluation than those who do not face any service failures. Having an effective process to recover from a failure is vital in airline operations. Therefore, it is crucial for managers to understand reaction of customers towards failures and recovery (Curry & Gao, 2012). Delivering excellent service quality is beneficial for determining and boosting organisation’s performance in the age of competitive business environment (Namukasa, 2013). Regarding the service quality subjective nature, abundant studies have examined the issues of dimensions and measurement (Shabbir, Malik, & Malik, 2016).

Despite the fact that service quality has gained extensive number of studies, yet service failure and recovery of airline industry in Malaysia is still relatively unexplored and requires further investigation. The unique nature of the airline service industry which is substantially different from other service industries, warrants further studies to explore the service failure and recovery of airlines and its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Steven, Dong, & Dresner, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to assess the satisfaction levels of airlines passengers, and the impact of the service failure, subsequent recovery and resulting passenger satisfaction. In reality, service failures can often be rectified by adequate service recovery efforts. Service failure does not greatly influence customer satisfaction, instead the major influence is the service recovery effort (Bankova et al., 2018). Furthermore, service providers cannot always avoid failure because of the nature of service industry. It is more essential however that service providers respond immediately and appropriately to rectify the failure whenever failures occur.

**METHODOLOGY**

For this study, the researcher used a non-probability sampling technique to obtain a sample from the population. The convenience sampling technique was chosen as the technique is the most easily accessible members (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

There were 300 questionnaires distributed and the total of 250 questionnaires were collected. The questionnaires were distributed to the passengers at the waiting lounge by approaching and asking them whether they would want to participate in the study. Before distributing the questionnaires, a letter of permission was sent to the airport department for approval to collect data in waiting lounge.

To achieve the objective of the study, multiple regression was applied to analyse the relationship among the variables studied.

**FINDINGS**

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<th>β</th>
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<td>9.229</td>
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CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it shows that the relationship between service failures, service recoveries and customer satisfaction are a positive. This means that service failures influence the satisfaction levels of airline passengers. When service failures happen, customers are expecting greater efforts or skill by service provider to deal with, rectify and avoid future failures. The greater the recovery efforts shown by the service provider the more it will influence passenger satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the wake of the service failure. This also indicates that an effective recovery mechanism is extremely essential for airlines to have so that they can deal with service failures when they happen.

REFERENCES


PETROGRAPHIC FEATURES AND MODELLING OF SOME WATERFALL ROCKS IN KENYIR LAKE, TERENGGANU: A MICROSCOPIC PERSPECTIVE APPROACH IN SUSTAINABLE GEOTOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Waterfalls around Kenyir Lake, Terengganu naturally serve as an iconic symbol of amazing rock bounded formation amidst the wilderness, which stores a hidden story for millions of years. The waterfalls feeding the Kenyir Lake have become tourists’ main attractions since they are located separately on a different island. There are three naturally picturesque waterfalls worth seeing in the study area, namely Sungai Buweh Waterfall, Lasir Waterfall, and Saok Waterfall, which are made up of granitic rock body that emerged in the Eastern Belt during the Late Triassic (~251.2 Ma). To date, the waterfall landscape in any area concerned with geotourism focusses more on outcrop architecture and geomorphological features, but has only limited accessibility to rock records. This study was carried out to evaluate the geo heritage features, of the waterfall landscape as well as its rock-forming minerals. Three rock samples were carefully collected from the waterfalls and subsequently prepared for optical thin section petrography analysis using a polarised light microscope. The optical thin section petrography further revealed precise mineral compositions, fabrics, and microstructures. A photomicrograph of the thin sections was also taken at low and high magnification levels in plane polarised light (PPL) and cross polarised light (XPL). Additionally, petrographic modelling was constructed using optical microscopic data to help identify a microscopic mineral (a hidden material in rock) in detail so that the mineral becomes clear to both geologists and the public at large. Generally, this modelling will enlighten the public on the material embedded in the rocks and illustrate the importance of learning about rock-forming minerals as well as to embed the idea of making the waterfall a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Besides making geology an interesting field to embark on, this mineral find affirms the beauty of the waterfalls for tourism purposes, thereby connecting geotourism and nature. The minerals from various constituents are also useful for scientific heritage purposes and may benefit the economy by serving as sustainable tourism while being part of a geopark.

KEYWORDS: Kenyir Lake, granitic rock, petrography, geology, geotourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Kenyir Lake lies at a latitude of 4° 46’ N and longitude 102° 35’ E and receives water from the main river on the Terengganu River Basin (Suratman et al., 2005). Overall, the lake covers 260 km and has 340 small islands, limestone caves, and more than 14 waterfalls and small rivers. The topography of Kenyir Lake and
the surrounding area achieve a maximum elevation of about ~ 1500 meters, and the area is encircled with rugged terrain, mainly at North and South, and has a lower area (i.e., the middle section) completely submerged in water. The catchment area of Kenyir Lake is mainly underlain by felsic igneous rocks of granite and granodiorite, marine clastic rock (shale and sandstone), minor carbonate rocks with some metamorphic rocks (phylite, quartzite), including basic to intermediate volcanic rocks.

The geological features of the Lake as a tourist attraction and its geo-heritage value have recently been accepted and promoted around the world, thereby allowing it to use the geo-tourism classification and opening up Kenyir Lake as a site for a potential geopark. Geo-tourism has been developed in recent years to minimise the negative impact of mass tourism at tourist sites around geological and geomorphological attractions (Newsome & Dowling, 2010), geo-tourism primarily emphasises sustainable tourism development in rural and natural environments.

At present, a geopark has been established owing to some of the values discussed above, but it has been more focussed on outcrop architecture and geomorphological features, and has only limited accessibility to the rock records. While the public might be aware of what a “rock,” is they may not know how amazing the rock is on the inside; hence, the question is not about its appearance on the surface, but rather the materials and qualities inside of the rock.

In this regard, the current study was carried out to evaluate the geo-heritage features, such as the waterfall landscape and study the rock forming minerals. Ultimately, using an interactive learning platform for interpreting rock-forming minerals and their functions in line with sustainable geo-tourism, this study also aims to educate the public.

**METHODOLOGY**

The sampling was conducted by collecting granite rocks from Buweh, Saok, and Lasir waterfalls for petrophysical analysis purposes. As for the petrographic method, to identify significant minerals the authors used the general polished thin section, which was prepared based on King’s (1957) procedure.

In this study, the modelling for the petrographic composition section such as quartz along with the various types of feldspar were constructed using integrated software, Autodesk 3ds Max and Debrismaker 2.0.

**FINDINGS**

This study has successfully evaluated the three waterfalls in Kenyir Lake: Buweh Waterfall (BW), Saok Waterfall (SW), and Lasir Waterfall (LW), which is further divided into Lasir Waterfall Left (LWL) and Lasir Waterfall Right (LWR).

Two prominent geological heritage features, namely waterfall landscapes and rock units, have been evaluated and identified within those waterfalls as a significant geological heritage due to their substantial aesthetic and scientific values. Most of the waterfalls exposed in Kenyir Lake encompass horsetail and fan types that are partially in contact with rocks.

As a result of the constant water flow, the rocks are likely to erode faster. While BW and SW can be characterised as an early stage of waterfall development, LWR, however, is more prone to advancing its development. With the study and discussion on petrographic or optical-mineral data for the mineral in a rock, we will, therefore, be enlightened about the exact material in a rock to better understand the landscapes and the geologic history of the area.
Meanwhile, the modelling and possible Virtual Reality Device (VRD) are equally discussed as a possible method to educate the public about a significant of minerals present. Quartz, a common major mineral in a granite rock with various feldspar types have been highlighted to represent an iconic education model for educating the public about the wonderful rock-bounded waterfalls. Both quartz and feldspar are from major silicate crystal groups and share the same mineral constituents, leading to similar mineral lattices.

For VRD, this interactive tool is useful in teaching the public about minerals more easily and realistically without the need to observe the minerals under a microscope.

CONCLUSION

First, the Buweh Waterfall (BW) encompasses a horsetail type with aesthetic, educational, and scientific values, where the petrographic analysis for microscopic materials in the coarse granite rocks has revealed the abundance of quartz with plagioclase and potassium feldspar; however, plagioclase feldspar was more abundant than potassium feldspar. Next, the Saok Waterfall (SW) similarly encompasses a horsetail type and additionally develops a long canal with several stages, illustrating both aesthetic and scientific values. Lastly, the Lasir Waterfall (LW), which combines both horsetail and fan types, was recognised as the most attractive location among visitors. Modelling has been done on the major minerals (quartz and feldspar) exposed from the polished thin section.

Specifically, the common quartz mineral has been modelled using a combination of crystallographic forms to create a trigonal crystal system. Meanwhile, for feldspar, modelling is available for the major mineral exposed in the polished thin section with a variety of twinning in some feldspar groups, namely albite, microcline, and sanidine.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Generally, this modelling will enlighten the public on the material embedded in the rocks and illustrate the importance of learning a rock-forming mineral as well as to bring it in line the idea of making Kenyir Lake part of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Besides making geology an interesting field to embark on, this mineral affirms the beautiful scenery of waterfalls for tourism, thereby connecting the interrelationship between geotourism and nature. The minerals from various constituents are also useful for scientific heritage and may benefit the economy by serving as sustainable tourism while being part of a geopark.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has benefited from the support of Talent and Publication Enhancement Research Grant (TAPE-RG) 2020 for sponsoring the project. Our gratitude is also extended to Universiti Malaysia Terengganu for all help and moral support towards the publication of this paper.

REFERENCES


CUSTOMER RESTAURANT SELECTION FACTORS IN VEGAN RESTAURANTS: AN EVALUATION OF ONLINE REVIEWS IN MELBOURNE VEGAN RESTAURANTS

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ABSTRACT

Restaurants are constantly adapting towards customers’ wants and needs. Vegan restaurants have become increasingly popular, particularly in Melbourne, which is one of the fastest growing vegan markets in the world. While there is literature and evidence of restaurant selection factors in general restaurants, there are no specific studies in vegan restaurants. The aim of this study is to determine the customer restaurant selection factors in vegan restaurants by way of a qualitative content analysis of 5 popular Melbourne vegan restaurants with 10 reviews each. This study found that similar to general restaurants that serve meat, vegan restaurants are chosen mainly because of their food quality and service quality. Vegan restaurants must continue to build on the quality of their food and prioritize putting the same amount of focus on service quality, as poor service quality can completely tarnish the entire dining experience.

KEYWORDS: Vegan restaurant, online review, selection factors, sustainable

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The restaurant industry is constantly adapting as the modern customers are seeking new dining experiences based on evolving wants and needs. Plant-based foods which include the vegetarian and vegan diets have become increasingly popular in recent years as people are looking for more sustainable options for health, ethical, and environmental reasons (Melina, Craig & Levin, 2016).

Customers are always looking for value for their money and use the internet to find out information about an establishment when dining out. While there is enough information and literature on the restaurant selection factors for general restaurants, there is limited research on plant-based focused restaurants.

The purpose of this research is to explore the restaurant selection factors of vegan restaurants in Melbourne, where the plant-based dining scene is thriving and currently one of the fastest growing vegan markets in the world. Moreover, the scope of this research will focus mainly on Melbourne’s vegan restaurants.

METHODOLOGY

Using qualitative content analysis as the main research method, this research analysed text data, focusing on the language used by user-generated data in accordance with the contextual meaning of the content (Budd, Thorp & Donohew, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990, cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This research collected data from existing user-generated online reviews of Melbourne vegan restaurants with reviews on websites such as TripAdvisor and HappyCow.
FINDINGS
This study has found with the aid of 50 reviews that food quality and service quality are invaluable factors that influence decision making. While there are more factors that could be considered like price and value, ambiance, and convenience, more studies need to be done create a more accurate picture of restaurant selection in vegan restaurants.

CONCLUSION
Today’s modern customers are heavily influenced by the online reviews they find on the internet. Reviews on websites like TripAdvisor display the highly influential recommendations that either make or break the restaurant experience. As vegan restaurants are becoming a staple restaurant trend, more literature and studies are finding what influences customers to select a vegan restaurant.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
In terms of food quality, vegan restaurants should continue to focus on sub-factors of taste, menu variety, and presentation, which help ensure customer satisfaction. More often than not, restaurants only have one chance to make a good impression on guests.

One mistake on any of the aforementioned sub-factors could lead to a decline in customer revisits and the reputation of the restaurant. In terms of service quality, vegan restaurants should put as much focus on the service quality as they do with the food quality.

Customers are extremely receptive to the service of a restaurant which heavily influences the dining experience. Despite having good food quality, a restaurant that exhibits poor customer service will tarnish the entire experience.

REFERENCES


COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HAJJ

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ABSTRACT

Every year, millions of Muslim worshippers visit Mecca in Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj which is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. Mecca hosts more than 2,300,000 people from around 183 different countries and cultures every year. In 2016, these numbers were forecast to grow to 2,500,000 in 2020. This goal, however, has not been achieved due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has forced the government to severely reduce the number of pilgrims in 2020 to just 10,000 people. Ultimately, this situation is temporary and visitor numbers should continue to rise. Tourism, especially religious tourism such as the Hajj, is expected to boost the economy and create new jobs for Saudi youth in the services sector. Yet, despite the many benefits of the pilgrimage, the Hajj itself has several severe adverse environmental impacts. The activities of Hajj generate considerable solid and liquid waste, use large quantities of scarce fresh water and produce high levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

KEYWORDS: The Hajj, stakeholders’ collaboration, environmental sustainability, greenhouse gasses

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

After launching Vision 2030, the government of Saudi Arabia has set many strategies and policies to reduce the significant impact of the Hajj activities on environmental sustainability. However, these environmental strategies have not been achieved due to a lack of stakeholder’s collaboration.

For example, several hospitality agencies rejected requests for collaboration in preparing a meal for pilgrims that the government hoped would reduce waste. Furthermore, many hospitality agencies did not collaborate in implementing the Green Hajj project. Based on a wider study the success of sustainability plans and projects in a tourism context requires collaboration between stakeholders from all sectors (Graci, 2013; Jamal & Getz, 1995), which does not exist presently in the Hajj.

Accordingly, the over-riding aim of this research is to investigate how the environmental sustainability of the Hajj can be improved. The particular focus of the study, however, is on how stakeholder collaboration can be improved to achieve sustainability goals. This study applies Gray’s (1989) collaborative planning model to investigate the nature of the collaborative process between Hajj stakeholders and the drivers that induce the collaboration.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aim, this research employed a qualitative methodology with the objective of investigating the nature of collaboration between Hajj stakeholders while planning for environmental sustainability of the Hajj. Both primary data and secondary data was used in this study.
A qualitative approach was adopted as the best strategy to understand why, as opposed to what things occur in the social world. The specific methods used in this study include unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The study was conducted in two rounds. Interviewees were selected to be representative of the public and private sector stakeholders and interviews conducted in a face-to-face setting at a convenient time and location. The qualitative analysis programme, Atlas, was used to analyse the data and define the themes of the research paper.

FINDINGS
Research findings show that there were many barriers to collaboration between Hajj stakeholders at each stage of Gray’s collaboration model. Centralisation, leadership style, and lack of adequate resources in the collaboration process have added to the number of obstacles facing Hajj stakeholders to achieve environmental sustainability in Mecca.

Thus, since collaboration is vital to achieving environmental sustainability goals and objectives (Graci, 2013; Jamal & Getz, 1995), decentralisation of the planning process, the presence of an effective leader, and existence of adequate resources is necessary to ensure the success of collaboration between Hajj stakeholders.

CONCLUSION
This study aims to investigate the nature of collaboration between Hajj stakeholders and the drivers that induce the collaboration at the planning stage. The ultimate aim of the investigation was to enhance the environmental sustainability of Hajj and the travel and stay in Mecca. This is because collaboration in the planning process has proven to be vital to achieving sustainability at tourist destinations (Graci, 2013).

The results show that the level of collaboration between stakeholders in Hajj is fragile at best and is still in the first phase. Despite the fact that on paper the project plans show that project planning has reached the third phase (implementation). In practical and realistic terms on the ground the level of collaboration between Hajj stakeholders remains in early stage.

Thus, this study aims to provide an analysis on how to improve the collaborative network between Hajj stakeholders when planning for and protecting the environment and ensuring sustainability of the Hajj.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
This paper aims to contribute to the existing theory by providing a different approach as to how collaboration can be achieved in developing countries that share a similar structural system to Saudi Arabia. The results demonstrate that a “top-down” approach can contribute positively to building a successful collaboration between tourism stakeholders. To illustrate, when the government included the environmental sustainability objectives in its Vision 2030 document the Hajj stakeholders started to collaborate with the aim of reducing the environmental impact of the Hajj.

Without the government intervention, this study argues that collaboration between Hajj stakeholders to set plans for preserving the environment and ensuring the sustainability of the Hajj pilgrimage would not have occurred. This contrasts with the already established argument that tourism destinations have executed a top-down approach in which the governmental sector sets the strategy and determines what
is best for the destination is more likely to hinder the achievement of participatory and collaborative planning processes.

Moreover, the use of inductive methods has contributed in providing a better view of the main problems that have hampered the acceptable degree of stakeholder collaboration in the planning process, as well as the drivers that may enhance their level of collaboration. From a practical standpoint, the results of this study are beneficial for policymakers to understand the importance of changing their traditional approach in the planning process. Especially in this time as the government of Saudi Arabia is strongly attempting to improve the environmental sustainability as mentioned in the national document of Vision 2030.

Thus, collaboration between stakeholders from all sectors is one of the keys that need to exist to achieve this aim (Graci, 2013). The results may guide Hajj stakeholders from all sectors to understand the barriers and drivers that impact the development of collaboration. By doing this they may review and establish collaborative networks in the planning process.

REFERENCES


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPLY IN THE NATIONAL PARK: A CASE FROM PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims to present the sustainable development of the environment in the Pha Taem national park in Thailand. It is in the context of the environmental supply for Eco-tourism and nature-based tourism. The study is in the area of the Pha Team National Park (PTNP) in Thailand, which consists of natural and historical features. PTNP has a distinctive geomorphological appearance. The uniqueness of the national park makes it more valuable as a site for not only establishing a national park but a geo-park as well. The PTNP is located on the edge east of Thailand’s territory. The boundary of the PTNP is along with Thailand and the Lao PDR border across the Mekong River. This study employed a semi-structured interview with the national park staff and superintendent. Fifteen questions ranging from the perspective of sustainable tourism development goals to environmental supply were posed to the respondents. The findings demonstrated that to successfully manage the national park and achieve its sustainable tourism development goals the national park should be careful with its management plan and deal cautiously with stakeholders. The national park tourism management plan should include the stakeholder in the planning process to avoid potential conflicts. Moreover, it is necessary for effective tourism management that the park staff enhance their expertise and skills with regard to the tourism operations and tour management aspects of the park.

KEYWORDS: Sustainability, national park, environmental supply, tourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Tourism is one of the economic activities that enhance the revenue to the national park. On the other hand, tourism could cause more harmful issues to the natural environment in the park. Hence, sustainable tourism development plays an essential role in the framework that aims to protect the environment and provide quality experience to visitors (UNWTO, 1998).

The tourism landscape at any destination is the consumer product that relies on selecting the right supply (Hall, 1998). The term environmental supply is the concept developed by McNicol (2015), which tries to balance the management of ecological health and visitor demand.

It consists of policies and guidelines, zoning and access, environmental impact assessment, educational interpretation, and communication (McNicol, 2018). The environmental supply concept is based on the sustainable development goal, which adds up the tourism operators’ perspective for expanding the park management from the commercial tourism and private sector’s point of view.
In this regard, this study aims to understand the sustainable development of the environmental supply in the context of the national park in Thailand. In the context of the national park, it provides the experience of Eco-tourism and Nature-based tourism to the visitor.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the methods involved in the semi-structured interview with the national park staff and superintendent. Fifteen questions range from the perspective of sustainable tourism development goals to environmental supply. The data collection was the interviews and took on average one hour to complete.

The interviews were transcribed for data analysis. The study area of this research consists of the natural features and the historical attractions in the Pha Team National Park (PTNP). PTNP has a distinctive geomorphological appearance, and the prehistoric painting dating back between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago on the surface of the cliffs in the PTNP.

The archaeologist interpreted the wall paintings that humans settled in this area between 1,400-6,000 years ago (PTNP, 2019). The uniqueness of the national park makes PTNP more valuable as a site for establishing not only a national park but also a geo-park as well. PTNP is located on the east edge of the Thai territory. The boundary of the PTNP is along the Thai and Lao PDR border across the Mekong River.

**FINDINGS**

The results demonstrate that the goal of establishing the PTNP boundary is for the protection of the natural resources, the conservation of biodiversity and the provision of a quality experience with the nature-based tourism, adventure tourism and historical tourism as well as research in the PTNP.

The goal of gazetting a national park in Thailand, is the framework for the development of the tourism industry at PTNP and ensuring that it is sustainable. Moreover, the environmental supply consideration of the PTNP could be described as the tourism policies, and guidelines are based on the goal of sustainable tourism development.

The National Park Act prescribed the zoning and access of the park in 1961. The environmental impact assessment procedure took place while the PTNP was still developing its tourist offerings. An education programme has been bundled together with the exhibition, the nature tour guide, and the publication such as a brochure.

The last indicator of environmental supply in the PTNP is the communication with the stakeholders; the PTNP appointed the public and private sector in the Ubon Ratchathani province to be on the PTNP advisory board; however, the management plan was only for the PTNP’s staff. With regard to the communication with the visitors, the PTNP uses social media websites to communicate with visitors about the tourism services and the information on the attractions, activities, accommodation, access, and its amenities.

**CONCLUSION**

This study on the sustainable development of the environmental supply in the national park: a case from Pha Taem National Park, Thailand, is aimed at understanding the sustainable development requirements of the environmental supply in the context of the national park in Thailand.

The results show that the PTNP management is comfortable with both the sustainable development and the environmental supply concepts. However, the inclusion of the stakeholders in the planning process is relatively limited and plans are dealt with solely by park’s staff.
Therefore, it is necessary to communicate effectively with all stakeholders, especially the local community, to enhance tourism development in the PTNP. Moreover, the park staff must be trained in standard operating procedures for handling tourists in order to maintain a high level of visitor satisfaction at the park.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research paper aims to follow the environmental supply concept from McNicol (2015), which switched the direction of the tourism landscape measurement in national parks. It turned the negative into a positive by focusing on quality success factors.

This study is a preliminary study of a sustainable tourism development project in the unique Pha Team National Park in Thailand. The findings contribute to the currently available literature on sustainable tourism development in national parks by using environmental supply indicators. The results could apply to the improving the processes and management planning of the national park.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project was financially supported by Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Mahasarakham University, Thailand.

REFERENCES


AN ANALYSIS OF COMPETITIVE CAPABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION PERFORMANCE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ACCOMMODATIONS (SMSAs) IN EAST-COAST OF MALAYSIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented threat to the hospitality industry. Numerous hospitality firms have been impacted by strategies used to flatten the COVID-19 curve. Hospitality firms are required to significantly alter their operations in the COVID-19 business climate in order to secure industry survival and to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. As a result, this study focuses on small and medium-sized accommodations (SMSAs) on Malaysia’s East Coast, which are particularly hard hit by the pandemic. The study of SMSAs on Malaysia’s East Coast discovered that marketing and human resource management contribute significantly to accommodation performance, while the other two factors have a negligible effect on accommodation performance during this pandemic, as determined by multiple regression analysis.

KEYWORDS: Tourism industry, Competitive capabilities, Orchid rating categories, Resource-based vide, Covid-19 pandemic

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting many business leaders, entrepreneurs, and employees to the ultimate test. The unprecedented nature of COVID-19 has had crippling effects, resulting in numerous restrictions on businesses, with far-reaching implications on hotels, restaurants, bars, and other hospitality businesses, with overall serious and seemingly insurmountable challenges for the hospitality industry (Gosling et al., 2020).

During the pandemic, SMSAs are suffering with their human resources, information technology, marketing, customer service, and innovation skills. Personnel lack of training will only lead to a reduction in the performance of the accommodations. Therefore, the goal of this study is to see if SMSAs on Malaysia’s East Coast can improve their competitive capabilities and accommodation performance in order to improve Malaysia’s image of hospitality in the eyes of tourists.

Small and medium-sized accommodations (SMSAs) on Malaysia’s East Coast must recognise their potential to compete effectively in local markets. To improve their accommodation performance, SMSAs should concentrate on its marketing management, human resources management, innovation capabilities management, and information technology management. These factors can be examined to determine whether SMSAs have excellent competitive capabilities in the industry.
Many studies, according to Wall et al. (2004), have requested directors to measure the performance of their businesses using subjective measurement because data can be collected easily using a questionnaire. As a result, this study relies on subjective measurement and focuses on SMSA on Malaysia's East Coast.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a quantitative research design. 144 SMSAs from Malaysia's East Coast were studied, including those on the states of Terengganu, Kelantan, and Pahang (MOTAC, 2017). 144 respondents in the study were chosen based on the following criteria:

(a) SMSAs that are members of MOTAC's Orchid Classification Scheme, and
(b) Malaysia's East Coast SMSAs, which include Terengganu, Kelantan, and Pahang.

The survey instrument was tailored to the local tourism environment and validated using face validity. In this study, the SMSAs were sampled using a basic random sampling method. A total of 105 respondents were picked from the sample and were sent questionnaires. One respondent from each SMSA with an executive level or higher was used as the sample for this study.

A total of 97 questionnaires were received, with 100% of them being suitable for use. This amounts to a response rate of 92.4 percent, which is considered high when compared with previous online mail-survey studies in Malaysia. There were no missing data because the researchers used Google Forms to make every item mandatory. As a result, respondents were unable to go on to the next question without providing a legitimate response. SPSS Statistics V22 was used to analyse the survey data.

FINDINGS

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to develop a model for predicting accommodation performance of SMSAs in East-coast of Malaysia from their management aspects (namely, marketing, human resource, innovation capability and information technology). The value of $R$ is (.386), which indicates a good level of prediction. Also, the coefficient of determination indicates has a value of .149 ($R^2 = .149$) for marketing, human resource, innovation capability and information technology management which explain 14.9 percent of the variability in accommodation performance. Hence, 82.1 percent (100 percent - 14.9 percent) of the variation is caused by factors other than the predictors included in this model.

The results of testing the coefficients to determine the statistical significance of the independent variables. It is clear that two variables - marketing management ($p=.044$, $p<.05$) and human resource management ($p=.028$, $p<.05$) - contribute statistically to the prediction. Other two factors, innovation capability management and information technology management, contributed by $p=.936$, $p>.05$ and $p=.854$, $p>.05$, respectively, have no statistically significant influence on the accommodation performance of SMSAs in Malaysia's east coast. Human resource management ($\beta=.254$) has the biggest contribution to understanding accommodation performance, followed by marketing management ($\beta=.215$).

The model does not have a multicollinearity problem because the variation inflation factor (VIF) for all four variables is less than 10 (or a tolerance greater than .1). The component coefficients of determination for marketing management, human resource management, innovation capability management, and information technology management are (.196)$^2$, (.214)$^2$, (-.008)$^2$, and (.018)$^2$, respectively.

When the individual contributions of the predictors are added together, they account for about 8.46 percent of the variation in the outcome variable. The response variable's percentage of variance differs from the model's $R^2$ value (14.9 percent). The predictors were responsible for 6.44 percent (14.9 - 8.46)
of the overlapping predicted accommodation performance. This demonstrates that the overall effect of all variables is highly favourable. As a result, it can be inferred that the links between marketing and human resource management and SMSAs accommodation performance in Malaysia's east coast are statistically significant (p<.05).

CONCLUSION

In general, this research offered some insight on the hotel business, which has been devastated by recent events. To present, the hotel industry is still undergoing a difficult and trying period following the introduction of MCO. Additionally, the imposition of entrance restrictions and border closures threw the hotel business into a tailspin. This investigation exposed the reality of what hotels are currently suffering as a result of COVID-19.

The purpose of this study is to enhance the performance of small and medium-sized accommodations (SMSAs) on Malaysia's East Coast. The study examines four elements (marketing management, human resource management, innovation capability management, and information technology) that may influence the accommodating performance. The findings of this study differ from those of the prior study.

This study discovered that marketing and human resource management substantially contribute to the accommodation performance of SMSAs on Malaysia’s east coast during the pandemic, but the other two components had a negligible effect.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The small contribution is due to many factors: first, most SMSAs on Malaysia’s east coast received less visitors during the pandemic than they did before to the outbreak.

Second, because the majority of them work just for survival, marketing and human resource management, rather than innovative capabilities and information technology, are the primary contributors to their performance.

Finally, because these SMSAs are built on a solid foundation of marketing and human resource management, they can thrive even during a pandemic, as these two elements serve as a pillar of their survival. Indeed, if they are attempting to upgrade their information technology and expand their innovation capabilities, they may require additional capital and a higher pay scale for experts, and this is a near-impossible task in the midst of a pandemic season.

REFERENCES


THEME:
TOURISM MANAGEMENT, MARKETING & HOSPITALITY
CHINESE FOOD CULTURE AND FESTIVAL: ROLE AND SYMBOLIC MEANING AMONG HOKKIEN MILLENNIALS

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ABSTRACT

The practice of preparing and consumption traditional food at home is the foci in most traditional celebrations, mostly accompanied by rich ethnic rituals, practice and symbolic meanings. However, studies showed changes in lifestyle and work demands in post-modernity have impacted the significance of century’s old ethnic practices in modern life. Millennials (those born between 1980s - 1990s) are more attracted to branding and commercial foods rather than festival foods. This presents an imminent risk of an erosion of Chinese festival foods and cultural identity. This study explores the symbolic meanings of the Hokkien festival foods, factors influencing the consumption of Hokkien festival foods, and role of Hokkien festival foods among Hokkien millennials. Adopting an interpretivist approach, twenty participants who identified themselves as Chinese Hokkien and were born between 1980s - 1999s in Negeri Sembilan were interviewed for the purposes of data collection. The symbolic meaning of Hokkien festival foods among Hokkien millennials were maintaining relationship with their ancestors by following festive traditions and spending quality time with family members. The role of Hokkien festival foods were to celebrate the traditions, culture and heritage as well as pass those traditions on to the younger generations. There were three main factors that influenced Hokkien festival food consumption, which were changed or set aside in keeping with a more modern lifestyle, affected by the attitude of the younger generation and the fact that parents failed to pass on the traditions.

KEYWORDS: Hokkien, Food Culture, Festival, Symbolic Meaning, Millennials

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In Hokkien culture, foods have different meanings, have a different impact and long festivals (Wen, 2016). Each festival celebration has its own symbolic festival foods that represent that particular festival. The festivals celebrated by the Hokkiens were divided into three categories which are:

a) celebrating a whole new year,
b) a time of reunion with family and
c) memorials to commemorate historical figures (Ma, 2015).

Although food has significant meaning to ethnic Hokkien people, changes in lifestyle appear to impacted the Hokkien culture and food in the modern day. Younger generations are ashamed to be eating traditional foods. The busy lifestyles of the younger generation means that they prefer to eat fast, instant, and ready-to-eat (RTE) foods that require little to no preparation.

This situation has impacted the way traditional foods are being consumed, where the trend of consumption in Hokkien festival food among young generation appeared decreasing (Siti Radhiah & Siti Nazirah, 2018).
This research paper aims to explore the Hokkien culture and its significance to the younger generations especially Hokkien millennials. The younger generations are forgetting the traditions of their own ethnic group. This study is the first endeavour to study Chinese festival foods. And it is hoped that this study can introduce Hokkien food culture and identity in Malaysia. This study may also provide baseline data for the Hokkien festivals in Negeri Sembilan.

Besides, this study can reveal the satisfaction and symbolic meaning differences across the demographics. The data collected can provide to stakeholders interested in Chinese food culture in Malaysia specifically that of ethnic Hokkien people.

**METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative method which makes use of semi-structured interviews was used in this study for data collection purposes. This research was conducted in Negeri Sembilan. A total of 20 participants which fulfil the criteria needed in this study were chosen to be interviewed. The criteria that were needed for this research were Hokkien millennials born between 1980 and 1999.

**FINDINGS**

This research paper found that traditional Hokkien festival foods have symbolic meanings to Hokkien millennials. The symbolic meanings of Hokkien festival food include maintaining relationships with the ancestors by following festival traditions and keeping the family happiness.

The idea of maintaining relationship with ancestors by following festival traditions consists of five elements which are:

1. commemorating ancestors,
2. improving relationship with family members, relatives, and friends,
3. symbolic festive items with cultural heritage and meaning,
4. passing on family traditions and
5. cultural identity.

In the perception of the participants, Hokkien's festival food was a way to remember ancestors and a symbol of festival. This was due to Hokkien’s festival food was a tradition passed from ancestors until today as a means to pass on and to continue the cultural rites of the ethnic Hokkein people.

The elements of happiness with family include

1. celebrating with family,
2. gathering with family, relatives and friends, and
3. being joyous at festival time.

The celebration with family in the festival time was the most meaningful things to the participants. The happy moments with family cannot be replaced as the Hokkien community celebrates togetherness with family.

The role of Hokkien’s festival food (HFF) was also important in passing on the traditions. The respondents thought the celebration made them learn and remember the meaning of the HFF. This was a way to make sure that the traditions were passed down through the generations.

The respondents to the survey say they have neglected or forgotten the traditions that have not been celebrated with festivals. The responsibility of transferring the traditions must lie with the old generation
who should pass on what it has learned to the younger generation. Without the efforts of both generations, the traditions will not be passed on to future generations.

There were three main factors that influence the practice of traditions among the participants in this study. The three factors were change in modern lifestyle, attitude of the younger generation and the role of parents in passing on the cultural heritage.

There were four elements of a modern lifestyle like being extremely busy, the ready availability of convenience foods, purchasing power, and modern technology that were also considered as factors in this study. With regard to the attitude of the younger generation, there were four elements considered in this study including good and bad attitudes, the transfer the responsibility to the older generation, and the complicated steps and high skill levels needed to prepare the traditional HFF. The role of parents had the elements of exposure from young and support from family.

CONCLUSION

The symbolic meaning of Hokkien’s festival food among Hokkien millennials includes that of maintaining ties with ancestors by following festival traditions and spending quality time with family. Hokkien’s festival foods also help with maintaining traditions and passing them on.

There are three main factors that influence Hokkien festival food consumption, which have changed as a result of modern lifestyle, the attitude of the younger generation and role of parents. Traditional culture is a creation of ethnics and symbols of the spiritual life for a long history. It represents the life style and the value system of an ethnics (Tao & Yin, 2017).

Festivals are the elements that reinforce traditional cultures. They are representative of the cultures of each ethnic group as each ethnicity has each got its own festival. The social gathering common consensus, inheriting of traditional cultures, and enrichment of spiritual life are among the roles of festivals (Wang et al., 2021). However, the culture is facing the risk of extinction due to the process of globalization and modernization. This makes the culture gaps between old generation and young generations. The conservation of the culture should be taken immediately to avoid the loss of culture.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research can introduce information about Hokkien culture to society. This research can make society aware that traditions are disappearing among millennials steps must be taken to preserve the traditions before it is forgotten by the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Malaysian Government funding from Fundamental Research Grant Scheme FRGS 59589 [FRGS/1/2019/SS06/UMT/02/1] and all the participants that involved in this research.

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ABSTRACT

Religious tourism demand is one of the major contributors to Saudi Arabia economy and considered to play an important role in the “Vision 2030”, which seeks to diversify Saudi Arabia’s economy reliance on oil revenues. As the country has undergone structural changes in international tourism and removed travel restrictions in the past few years, there is a need to identify the determinant factors that influence international tourists to plan and manage their trips. Therefore, this current study aims to investigate the effects of economic and noneconomic factors on international tourist flows by using A panel data gravity model for the period 2000-2019. The empirical evidence is based on the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) and the Panel Regression technique. The findings of the regression show that the traditional gravity variables are important to explain Saudi Arabia’s religious tourism demand. The study also has found that habit persistence, the Pandemic Index, GDP per capita of Saudi and the original countries, human rights and investments in the tourist sector have a significant and positive impact on religious tourism demand. While political risks, transport costs, and tourism price have a statistically significant and negative effect on religious tourists’ arrivals. This study will contribute largely to the tourism demand literature by introducing country characteristics factors which include human rights issues as security proxies, pandemics, and quality of life and by measuring the impact of these variables in tourism demand in the context of an oil-based economy that under the transition to a diversified economy with a new vision. The findings of this study may assist in the development of Saudi Arabia’s tourism sector and economic development by providing knowledge to policymakers, investors, and other tourism stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: Religious tourism demand, gravity model, economic factors, country characteristic factors, safety and security

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Vision 2030 project aims to increase the number of international religious tourists to 30 million by 2030. It would mean doubling the number of religious tourism visas, and thus the demand. Given the significance of religious tourism’s recent contributions and its future potential for job creation and foreign exchange earnings, it is critical to investigate and identify the major determinants of international religious tourism in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this study investigates the role of economic and non-economic factors in affecting the demand for religious tourism.

METHODOLOGY

This study used an augmented gravity panel data model to determine inbound tourism and estimate their importance in explanation tourist arrivals to Saudi Arabia. For panel data, Gravity models are typically static, with no inclusion of lagged variables (Morley et al., 2014).
Therefore, this study uses the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) dynamic panel Data Analysis, Fixed Effect Method (FE) and GLS estimators. The distinguishing feature of the GMM method is that it is a dynamic method. It considers the effect of time on the efficiency of the function, while the FE method is a static method.

FINDINGS

The regression results of this study indicate that there are many independent variables that have a significant and positive impact on religious tourism demand such as word of mouth. GDP per capita original countries and Saudi Arabia pandemics index, human rights and investment in the tourism sector political risk, transport costs, and tourism price have a statistically significant and negative effect on tourism arrivals.

CONCLUSION

Due to the potential rise of the number of incoming religious visitors as part of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, it is worth investigating the determinants that influence international religious tourists’ arrival to Saudi Arabia to foster a greater understanding of how the country can grow their tourism sector. The study mainly used the generalized moments model (GMM), random-effects method (RE) and the fixed effects (FE) method and an augmented gravity model has been employed.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The contribution of this research is to develop a holistic static and dynamic model of economic and non-economic factors (country characteristics) on religious tourism demand by using gravity model panel data. The findings of this study can contribute to the tourism and economic advancement of Saudi Arabia and facilitate information for professionals, tourism promoters and investors, economic operators and policymakers, to develop effective policies and strategies for religious tourism and achieve the goal of Vision 2030 to diversify the Saudi economy through the increase in the number of international visitors.

REFERENCES


THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH UNDER DENGUE FEVER RISK IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT
Dengue fever has long been a public health problem in tropical and subtropical countries. The dengue virus is critical problem for international tourists with a rising number of them returning from dengue-endemic countries infected with dengue fever. The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between international tourist arrivals on economic growth moderated by the rise in dengue fever cases in Malaysia from 2014 until 2020. This study was carried out using secondary monthly data for dengue fever cases, gross domestic productivity (GDP) data and data on international tourist arrivals in the country. A correlation test was used to determine the correlation between the independent, dependent and moderating variables. The results reveal a significant correlation among dengue fever cases, tourist arrivals and economic growth. In 2017 and 2018, higher international tourist arrivals lead to a lower Malaysian economic growth following a dengue disease outbreak. Furthermore, dengue fever risks show a positive relationship with international tourist arrivals and vice-versa. In line with the government’s strategy to promote the Malaysian tourism industry, some prevention and recovery policies that take into consideration the number of dengue cases and economic factors should be planned.

KEYWORDS: International tourist arrivals, economic growth, dengue fever, Malaysia

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Malaysia is one of the tropical countries that is plagued by dengue. In 2019, a dengue outbreak occurred in Malaysia, with some 130,385 cases reported. It was also reported that there were 336 fatalities that year. The tourism industry plays a significant role in Malaysia’s economic growth. Hence, this study aims to investigate the relationship between international tourist arrivals on economic growth moderated by dengue fever cases in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY
This study was carried out using secondary monthly data from between 2014 and 2020 for dengue fever cases, gross domestic productivity (GDP) data and data on international tourist arrivals. The E-view software was employed to test the correlation between the independent, dependent and moderating variables.

FINDINGS
The results reveal a significant correlation among dengue fever cases, tourist arrivals and economic growth. In 2017 and 2018, higher international tourist arrivals lead to a lower Malaysian economic growth following a dengue disease outbreak. Furthermore, dengue fever risks show a positive relationship with the number of international tourist arrivals and vice versa.
CONCLUSION

Dengue infections in international tourists crop up regularly and may be linked with to other illnesses. This paper is the first to contribute to an investigation of the impact of international tourist arrivals on Malaysia’s economic growth in dengue outbreak conditions.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has prompted more government surveillance on dengue disease risks which are contagious and likely to be transmitted to more people. It has also prompted the government to put in more effort to mitigate the effects of dengue fever cases and contagion on the tourism industry and the country’s economic development especially in line with the government’s strategy to promote the Malaysian tourism industry, prevention and recovery policies that take into consideration the number of dengue cases and economic factors should be planned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the financial support given by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme, FRGS/1/2020/SS0/MMU/02/5.

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TOURISM PRODUCT QUALITY PERCEPTIONS AND BIG SPENDERS’ TRAVEL INTENTIONS IN MALAYSIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is the second-largest economic driver of the Malaysian economy. This paper aims to examine the mediating role of perceived tourism product quality (TPQ) in Malaysia on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the intent to travel to Southeast Asia (SEA) and the Middle East.

Two-fold objectives were developed which are to investigate the significant difference of the perception between SEA and Middle East countries on Malaysian’s tourism products quality and to examine the mediating role of perceived tourism products quality in Malaysia towards eWOM and travelling intentions of SEA and the Middle East. The questionnaire that was used to collect the data used in this study was designed with tourists from SEA and the Middle East who have been to Malaysia in mind. The questionnaire was designed for online distribution using Google Forms. The study processed 92 responses from Middle Eastern tourists and had another 79 respondents from SEA. The data sets and responses were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and MANOVA techniques. The findings show a significant mediating effect of perceived TPQ towards the eWOM and revisit intentions of tourists. Besides, comparison analysis shows that SEA tourists are more likely to revisit Malaysia than the Middle East, the same as for the finding of eWOM and perceived TPQ. TPQ has a mediating impact on eWOM and the intention to revisit both geographical locations. The findings of this study are expected to positively affect stakeholders, especially the State Tourism, Tourism Board, and tourism industry players.

KEYWORDS: eWOM, Tourism Product Quality, Big Spender Tourists, South East Asia, Middle East

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Fundamentally, this study examines the travel intentions of large-scale travelers from Southeast Asia (SEA) and the Middle East to Malaysia. This study aims to assess the eWOM of international tourists, the perceived quality of TPQ, and revisit intentions. Two-fold objectives were developed:

1) To investigate the significant difference of the perception between SEA and Middle East countries on Malaysian’s tourism products quality.

2) To examine the mediating role of perceived tourism products quality in Malaysia towards eWOM and travelling intentions of SEA and the Middle East.
METHODOLOGY
Given the study aims to consider the perception in SEA and Middle Eastern countries on Malaysia’s tourism product quality and to examine the mediating role of the perceived product quality of tourism offerings in Malaysia towards eWOM and the intention to travel to SEA or the Middle East, a quantitative analysis and survey methodology were employed in this study, since it aims to explore the effect of perceived tourism product quality with Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and revisit intentions being mediator variables using quantitative measurements (i.e. structured questionnaire).

A total of 171 respondents being tourist groups from South East Asia (i.e., SEA) and the Middle East (i.e., ME) were selected using purposive convenience sampling. It employed the use of electronic data collection methods so as to ensure all questions asked in the structured questionnaire were answered by the respondent.

Statistical analysis was then done using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (i.e., PLS-SEM) estimation multivariate data techniques since the sample size for this study can be considered relatively small). PLS-SEM was considered the optimal statistical data analysis method since it allowed the researchers to test the indicators used for measuring targeted constructs based on convergent validity and discriminant validity.

In addition, the significance test in the PLS-SEM analysis was computed using a bootstrapping method, which can be considered a more robust method as compared to the conventional t-test method, 5000 replications of the samples were computed for getting reliable results for empirical t-statistics and bias correction (i.e., BCa) bootstrap. For comparative purposes, an independent t-test was used for accessing the different average values of the targeted variables between two tourists’ group.

FINDINGS
The findings show a significant mediating effect of perceived TPQ toward the relationship of eWOM and revisit intention. In addition, comparison analysis shows that SEA tourists are more likely to revisit Malaysia as compared to the Middle East, same as for the finding of eWOM and perceived TPQ. TPQ has a mediating impact on eWOM and revisit intentions for both geographical areas.

This mediating study will advance the idea the role of perceived TPQ towards eWOM and travel intentions of big spenders in Malaysia: A comparative study on SEA and Middle East countries, in this study, is expected to intervene in the governments policy in harnessing the competitiveness of Malaysia’s tourism industry in line with the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030.

The study has answered in its investigation and significant difference of the perception between SEA and Middle East countries on Malaysian’s tourism products quality and finding of mediating roles of perceived TPQ in Malaysia towards electronic-word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the intent to travel to SEA and or the Middle East.

CONCLUSION
If the average level of Electronic Word-of-Mouth was increase, basically it will increase the average level of Perceived Tourism Product Quality simultaneously, hence indirectly the Perceived Tourism Product Quality will increase the average revisit the country.
In the same way, an increase in the level of Electronic Word-of-Mouth will directly increase the level of intentions to revisit the country. The comparative analysis shows that, tourists from South East Asia are more likely to have a better perception and leave a favourable review by Electronic Word-of-Mouth, and have higher level of Perceived Tourism Product Quality and consequently more intent to revisit as compare to Middle Eastern tourists. The analysis indicated that, if the average level of Electronic Word-of-Mouth was increased, it will increase the average level of Perceived Tourism Product Quality simultaneously, which will increase the average level of intentions to revisit.

In the same way, an increase in the level of Electronic Word-of-Mouth will directly improve the average level of intentions to revisit. The comparative analysis shows that, tourists from South East Asia are more likely to give a better review by way of Electronic Word-of-Mouth, and have a higher level of Perceived Tourism Product Quality and intent to revisit as compare to Middle Eastern tourists.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research will contribute to the current literature on customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards the average level of perceived TPQ between SEA tourist group and the Middle East tourist group, where tourists from SEA are more likely to give a better perceived TPQ perception. TPQ has a mediating impact on eWOM and revisit intention for both geographical areas.

Particularly, it will contribute to the current knowledge on SEA and Middle East tourists’ attitudes and behaviours toward Malaysia’s product quality. The practical contribution of this research will help marketers in creating marketing campaigns that will attract SEA and Middle East’s Big Spenders markets. The understanding of customers’ attitudes and behaviours towards eWOM and Malaysia tourism product quality will help marketers in the tourism and hospitality industry in Malaysia to improve their marketing performance, which will reflect positively on the industry.

REFERENCES


FROM CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE TO A WHALE RIDER: EXPLORING TRADITIONAL TALES IN THE DIGITAL PROMOTION OF NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT
The paper applied a content analysis method to examine how myths and legends have been employed by the promotional organization in portraying New Zealand on the official tourism website. The assessment of the website uncovered six main legends which have been presented in the promotion of New Zealand to potential tourists. These traditional tales have been incorporated into the website chiefly as part of Maori heritage attributes in which purakau (the Maori term for legends) represents among crucial aspects in understanding their worldviews and cultural identities. Legends narrating fishing voyages involving demi gods offers a mythological explanation of the origin of the geological formation of islands of New Zealand were presented more than once on the website. Among the legends presented to readers on the websites encompass stories of Tane Mahuta, which depicts the tale of the sky father, the earth mother, and the creation of the world of light that humans live in today. Another unique legend, Paikea the whale rider, is featured as part of the description of a whale-watching attraction in Kaikoura, Christchurch. The overall analysis uncovered that legendary tales are incorporated into the website as the part historical origin of Maori people and in the promotion of several tourist attractions in New Zealand. From a tourism perspective, the representation of these tales enhances the appeal of destinations and make them stand out to visitors. The inclusion of the purakau offers tourists a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage of this country. Furthermore, Maori worldviews on the creation of the universe and formation of the natural environment are transpired. It is noticeable through these legends that Maori people strongly respect their ancestors and highly appreciated natural resources. Finally, the emphasis on environmental conservation and sustainability as ingrained in the tales further supported the overall promotional tagline of 100% Pure New Zealand and the inclusion of Tiaki Promise a commitment to care for New Zealand, for now, and for future generations on the official tourism website.

KEYWORDS: Myths, legends, New Zealand, tourism promotion, content analysis

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
This paper aims to examine the utilization of traditional tales in the digital promotion of New Zealand or Aotearoa to tourists. Previous studies suggested that incorporating legendary stories has significant roles in tourist destinations, such as enhancing its marketing value, exhibiting exotic features, and promoting environmental sustainability.

Currently, numerous intangible heritage resources have been included in the promotion of New Zealand to potential tourists, and these attractions include the myths and legends of the Maori people. As mentioned in the existing literature, there are abundant myths and legends recounting stories of the “fishing-up” and “throwing-down” in the area of the Pacific Islands, including in New Zealand. Two of
the main tales associated with fishing are the stories of Maui fishing up New Zealand and Kupe, who encountered New Zealand during his voyage to search for a fish (Nunn 2003; 2021).

It is acknowledged that a few past studies (e.g., Hall, Mitchell & Keelan, 1992) have touched on topics related to mythology as part of heritage tourism and environmental tourism development and products in New Zealand. Nonetheless, this paper aims to fill in the gap by investigating how the official tourism organisation of New Zealand has presented myths and legends in the digital promotion of this country.

Specifically, it concentrates on the types of traditional tales which have been selected to be included on the current website and how these stories have been presented to potential tourists.

**METHODOLOGY**

A content analysis method was adopted to analyze how myths and legends have been presented in marketing New Zealand to the international market via its official website. This method was selected as the assessment carried out in the paper involved examining the content of one type of promotional tool, a tourism website created by Tourism New Zealand.

The process of content analysis has involved undertaking several basic steps. The initial step is the selection of documents to be examined based on the research question formulated. In the context of this paper, the website of Tourism New Zealand has been chosen. The assessment of a tourism website rather than other modes of promotional tools is considered appropriate for the examination carried out in this paper, as many countries and destinations have developed tourism websites for their national marketing purposes. Therefore, it is timely to perform an analysis based on content presented on the tourism website, including research focusing on the portrayal of myths and legends in the area of destination marketing.

The second step was to determine the suitable unit of analysis to be analyzed in which the narrative of myths and legends presented on the website was selected. These tales can be spotted in the promotional material by inclusion of narratives with plots involving supernatural beings and magical occurrences or events that happened in the distant past. The next stage in the assessment process involved the action of identifying how many traditional stories have directly manifested on the website. Then, the type of tales selected to be presented on the website was determined. This is followed by further evaluation of the latent contents of the tales based on the selection of the stories and values embedded in the narratives presented.

Lastly, the way these stories have been projected on the website from the perspective of tourism was also assessed. On the whole, the narratives of myths and legends projected on the website were examined from both manifest and latent contents.

**FINDINGS**

Based on content analysis on the tourism website of Tourism New Zealand, six legends have been featured in its digital tourism promotion. These traditional tales have appeared in the descriptions of background information such as historical origin, cultural heritage resources and promotion of tourist destinations.

One of the legends, the fishing journey of Maui, the demi-god appeared more than once on the website. This well-known legend has been incorporated to supply information to potential tourists on the geological origin of islands of New Zealand from Maori traditional beliefs. This legend is also included in the description of Mount Hikurangi. As a country surrounded by sea, fish and fishing activity are crucial to the seafaring communities of New Zealand in the past. Therefore, it is not surprising that fishing and fish
are parts of the legends found in New Zealand. Another legend describing the fishing adventure of Aoroki and his brothers is included as part of the promotion of Mount Cook situated on the South Island.

The story associated with Tane Mahuta is another prime legendary tale incorporated into the website as part of the description of Waipoua Forest located in the Northland region. Tane Mahuta tale provides an explanation for the creation of the universe or the world of light, which involved the earth mother, the sky father and their offspring, such as the Tane Mahuta, the God of the Forest.

This legend offers some understanding to potential tourists and outsiders of the connection between Maori with their past ancestors and various natural resources. Their strong commitment to environmental protection and sustainability are justified through this legend. Three other legends presented on the website are the tales of Hinemoa and Tutanekai, the New Zealand version of Romeo and Juliet, Paikea the Whale Rider and Pounamu.

The legend associated with Paikea offers a unique explanation of how the ancestor named Paikea successfully travelled to New Zealand on the back of the whale known as Tohorā. This rare tale is added in the promotion of a whale watching tourism.

Lastly, the legend associated with Pounamu, the greenstone of New Zealand has been incorporated into the promotion of Maori arts. Overall, these traditional tales have been employed mainly as parts of the descriptions of tourist attractions in the form of natural resources such as mountains, forests, lakes, rivers and other water-based attractions.

This is not surprising as it is mentioned in the literature review section that natural resources are among the main tourist attractions promoted in New Zealand. In fact, since the early days, the association of tourism with nature was strong, as reflected by the remark made by Bernard Shaw during his visit in 1934. It appears that that the presence of myths and legends associated with these natural resources act as a bonus in the tourism promotion. From the viewpoint of tourism marketing, the association of natural heritage attractions with unique legendary tales enhances their appeal to tourists and making them more notable.

CONCLUSION

This paper evaluated how mythological and legendary tales have been employed in marketing New Zealand as a tourist destination by its official tourism organization in the current website. The assessment of the digital content of the website was completed using a content analysis method. The findings of this paper uncovered that six traditional Maori stories have been selected and presented on the website of Tourism New Zealand.

The legend of the fishing adventure of the demi God, Maui, which appeared more than once on the website, reveals the significance of the traditional worldviews of the geological formation of this country. A few of the legends manifested on the website are famous traditional stories often narrated in New Zealand, such as Tane Mahuta, The Lord of the Forest, Hinemoa, and Tutanekai and Paikea the whale rider. Some of the core Maori worldviews and values reflected through the narratives of the legends include upholding respect to their ancestors and maintaining a good relationship with the natural world.

From a tourism perspective, the inclusion of legends or purakau improves the appeal of several nature-based destinations such as national parks, mountains, and lakes. The importance of environmental protection and sustainability of natural resources, which is reflected in these legends, is in line with the
Tiaki Promise, a commitment to care for New Zealand, for now, and for future generations, that has been added to the website recently and the current tagline 100% Pure New Zealand.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this paper contribute to expanding the knowledge in the field of tourism mythology by revealing how myths and legends have been featured is fairly new method to promote tourism, the website, particularly in the context of New Zealand. The type of stories that have been selected and how these tales have been presented in the promotion of tourism attractions have been detailed in the paper. From a practical point of view, the findings demonstrate to destination marketers how Tourism New Zealand successfully integrated Maori legends or purakau into the official tourism website. The incorporation of traditional tales fits the overall image of this country as a tourist destination and the recent pledge for sustainability via Tiaki Promise.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and social media engagement on destination brand loyalty. These concepts are not fully understood, especially in the context of sustainable development of nature-based tourism, which makes managing the negative impact on the environment more challenging. The study developed a parsimonious model to investigate the interrelationship between CSR and destination loyalty by incorporating social media engagement as a mediating variable to study the impact mechanism of tourists’ CSR activities on tourists’ destination brand loyalty in a nature-based tourism context. The data used was collected from 240 inbound and outbound tourists that visited a well-known marine park site in Malaysia. In addition, a Partial Least Square (PLS) based structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was utilized to analyse the data. The result showed that CSR and social media engagement had an influence over destination loyalty. These results suggest some practical implications for destination operators designing CSR activities as a strategic technique for ensuring sustainable success.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Social Responsibility, Media Engagement, Destination Loyalty

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Marine and coastal destinations, being one of the Nature Based Tourism Products, are one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism industry (Marasinghe, Perera, Simpson, & Newsome, 2021). The European Union (EU) has recognized its potential to foster sustainable development, as documented in the EU Blue Growth Agenda (Dimitrovski, Lemmetyinen, Nieminen, & Pohjola, 2021) and the EU Blue Economy studies (European Commision, 2019).

Furthermore, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has established 169 targets to track progress toward global sustainability in 2015 as part of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that must be met by 2030. Among those is Goal 14: Life Below Water (the “Oceans’ goal”), which was included in the list of SDGs, with the goal of harvesting oceans, seas, and marine resources sustainably and preserving marine ecosystems for future generations. These objectives were formulated as a result of worldwide interdisciplinary teamwork, and they explicitly allowed countries to choose their own context-appropriate solutions.

Andolina, Signa, Tomasello, Mazzola, and Vizzini, (2021) argue that attaining sustainable development is fraught with social and environmental difficulties, such as resource shortages, single-sector resource
management, and pollution. Ghaderi, Mirzapour, Henderson, and Richardson, (2019) added that these challenges of dealing with sustainability are to provide the best CSR activities for outbound operators and tourists.

In this case, customers of nature-based tourism are more aware and concerned about the importance of sustainability of the finite resources of the planet. While focusing on the importance of environmental health, preserving biodiversity of natural resources and reducing the negative impact, especially on marine life (Pham-Do & Pham, 2020; Wang, Paudel, & Caffey, 2020). Given their role in tourism, tour operators have made many attempts to implement distinctive social responsibility activities to meet stakeholder expectations (Olajide, 2014).

Similarly, an Interviewee & Commentary, (2020) CSR research paper reveals that consumers’ interest in CSR is now on the rise. In fact, most studies confirmed that customers are of the belief that companies or businesses should engage in social initiatives and that the firms benefit from these activities (Lee, Ham, & Koh, 2019).

Earlier studies have shown a positive relationship between CSR and loyalty, but in most of cases there is absence of any mediating variable in their models. In a study by Chuchuwong, (2019) it was acknowledged that there was a lack of understanding of the association between CSR and customer loyalty.

Social communication emerged in various industries, including the hospitality and travelling context, for the purpose of disseminating information relating to corporate social responsibility (CSR) Despite widespread use of social media among companies, there is still a lot unknowns about its effects on customer loyalty especially within the tourism industry (Martinez, Herrero, & Garcia-de los Salmones, (2020). Furthermore, the relationship between CSR and social media engagement on destination loyalty is not fully understood, especially in the context of sustainable development of nature-based tourism. The aim of this research paper is to develop a parsimonious model to analyse the inter-relationship between CSR and social media engagement on destination loyalty is not fully understood, especially in the context of sustainable development of nature-based tourism and try to fill in the aforementioned gap in previous research papers.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the current study involves the use of questionnaire surveys distributed through social media platforms. A cross-sectional data collection method was applied in the administration of the questionnaire survey to collect data from 240 respondents through the application of convenient sampling technique.

The respondents of this current study included both inbound and outbound tourists that visited well-known marine parks in Malaysia in June 2021. In addition, the PLS-based structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was used to analyse the data and to examine the hypotheses formulated by the answers to the research questions.

FINDINGS

The result has shown that marine parks should invest in more CSR activities to send a positive message to visitors and stakeholders. They should also minimise the negative impact of their communications via an active use of social media platforms to communicate directly with their target demographic and customer
base. The research paper also shows that CSR and social media engagements are influenced by customer loyalty. These results suggest that there are some practical implications to the design of CSR activities by the destination operator that play a strategic role in ensuring its sustainability and success.

CONCLUSION

The empirical findings show that social media engagement has the ability to significantly mediate the relationship between CSR activities and customer loyalty in tourist destinations.

This study also revealed an active engagement of social media, which reflected the effect of the CSR activities of Marine Park, which in turn affected customer loyalty. This is in agreement with Mohammed and Al-Swidi, (2019), who acknowledged that CSR activities will directly influence consumers’ choices and influence customers to actively engage in social media by sharing their holiday experiences with their friends and family.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This current study has both practical and social implications. Regarding the practical contribution, tourist/customer loyalty can be enriched with companies’ investing appropriately in corporate social responsibility activities.

Besides, current findings will assist policymakers and DMOs in planning, creating and maintaining business continuity and improve the utilisation of social media to encourage customer engagement in order to sustain environmental protection. This study will also serve as a guide to planning some attractive CSR activities in protected areas of the marine park. It will also be of benefit to the tourist destination and ensure community sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was supported by Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis’ Short Term Grant, (STG 006).

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ABSTRACT
The fact that no company is immune to distress is indicates that business perform in a similar fashion to products. A company’s failures or a passive reaction towards handling the decline would cause the company to end up in crisis. SBH Hotel has seen a continuous decline in occupancy rates from 2016 to 2019 from 70% to 51% and 27% after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The hotel’s sluggish reaction towards increasing competition and small improvements in management since its establishment in 1998, were not good enough to help them rebound and led them into their present crisis. Turnaround management that has been known to be the best strategy to save a company in crisis, is the proposed solution that this research paper recommends. The financial data collected, interviews and this researcher’s observations in the gathering of the data and the use of International Turnaround Management Standard framework by Lymbersky will be applied in a bid to resolve the hotel’s crisis. The International Turnaround Management Standard framework by Lymbersky was chosen as a solution due to its thorough coverage which makes it the suitable framework for the turnaround process. The framework covers areas which include, financial strategies, operational and others that the hotel needs to consider. Business process re-engineering will also help this researcher to determine the change in management processes that are required when developing the hotel’s turnaround management action plan. This research paper will be a development from previous research regard its marketing strategy. Turnaround management will be done through Business Process Re-engineering as a rethinking and redesign process. SBH Hotel expected to perform with better management process and provide customer with higher quality of services and products. SBH Hotel ability in earning outstanding guests’ experience brought hotel more guest loyalty and help the hotel remain profitable.

KEYWORDS: Business Decline, Organizational Decline, Turnaround Management, Business Process Re-engineering

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
SBH's failure to acknowledge and passive reaction towards the increase in competition in the market has caused them to face a crisis. Turnaround management which is the best strategy to save a company in crisis, has been proposed as a solution for the crisis. A turnaround is expected to give SBH Hotel a suite of crisis management strategies and a better and clearer direction which will improve hotel operations and guest loyalty.

METHODOLOGY
Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data for this study. Data collection, interviews, observations and a study of available literature will be used to come up with an appropriate turnaround management strategy for the SBH Hotel. The turnaround plan will make use of the International Turnaround Management Standard (ITMS) framework by Lymbersky.
The ITMS framework will provide a suitable and comprehensive guide for the hotel’s turnaround since ITMS covers all key areas including, financial and operational strategies that need to be considered. Additionally, business process re-engineering will be used to help this researcher to determine the changes in management processes that are required in developing the turnaround management action plan.

FINDINGS

Turnaround strategy that is required to be done in a holistic way through ITMS Framework by Lymbersky consist of four stages:

1. Stage 1: Pre-Turnaround Stage - Diagnostic Review Stage
   In this stage, at the beginning the management analyze an elaborate business situation to gain an understanding with regard to the severe situation hotel have developed currently and define what root causes that support the current hotel situation.

2. Stage 2: Crisis Stabilization Stage - Change Management
   Stage two, discuss about the alternative formulation suggested for SBH Hotel up to change management. New concept of heritage boutique smart hotel is suggested by the author considering the strategic location SBH Hotel has and the beauty of classic design of the building. Renewal and redesigning its product quality, services, and hotel's design interior is encouraged. Organizational improvement done through training conducted and the hiring for a change agent. Retrenchment and 13-weeks cashflow are suggested to ensure a healthy cashflow.

   Stage three explains the importance of communication among its stakeholder to gain their support and trust. SBH Hotel’s management needs to gain acknowledgement for its risk management that could incur costs.

4. Stage 4: Closing the Turnaround
   Last stage is the act of the management to keep a journal of turnaround management process for future benefit

CONCLUSION

Passive reaction and employee inability in acknowledging the change of rapid market needs and competition, SBH Hotel has been struggling with its business and organisational decline that has led the business into its present crisis and it is in desperate need of turnaround management.

The turnaround management concepted through ITMS framework developed by Lymbersky due to its comprehensive coverage for the business.

Turnaround strategy that is required to be done in a holistic way through the use of an ITMS Framework by Lymbersky which can be summarised as follows:

1. Stage 1: Pre-Turnaround Stage - Diagnostic Review Stage
   In this stage, the management elaborates a business situation, reasons that support SBH Hotel face crisis stage of decline.
2. Stage 2: Crisis Stabilization Stage - Change Management

Stage two discuss about a formulation for alternatives suggested for SBH Hotel up to change management.


Stage three shows the importance of communication among its stakeholder and gaining acknowledgement for its risk management that could incur costs.

4. Stage 4: Closing the Turnaround

Last stage is the act of the management to keep a journal of turnaround management process for future benefit.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study expects to create a clearer and more direct framework for documenting the turnaround management plans for hotels in any classification. Remembering the steps and stages that the management should take in this turnaround process can be implemented in general and this method could be used to help hotels survive the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this study, readers are expected to be able to understand and dissect their own hotel’s shortcomings for then gain an insight and have an idea of what turnaround strategy is the most suitable for them based on ITMS framework provided in this research paper.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Author would like to send my outmost gratitude to Mr. Deddy P. Koesrindartoto as project counselor for the trust and encouragement to finish this project and Mr. Yayat Ruchiyat as the General Manager of SBH Hotel for the assistances to provide author with the data author needed.

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DOMESTIC TOURISTS NEW DINING BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO COVID-19 AT ISLAND SETTING IN TERENGGANU, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Today, the tourism industry has grown rapidly and many destinations have been recognised as tourist niches in a bid to stay competitive in the industry. Island tourism is one of the most popular tourism niches. Island tourism in Malaysia has lured tourists from all over the world to come to Malaysia, offering tourists a unique and unforgettable tourism experience. It has become one of the most famous types of activities tourists. Moreover, tourists are showing an increasing interest in local foods at the destination and dining has become a special experience while on vacation. Dining itself is a pleasurable sensory experience that is a key part of the holiday experience, which influences a tourist’s experience and makes it memorable and this in turn influences the tourist’s intention to revisit the destination, especially an island destination. However, the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent Movement Control Order (MCO) and COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) enforced to control the spread of the pandemic have significantly influenced tourists dining behaviours and perceptions particularly with regard to dine-in options at any food establishment/outlets.

KEYWORDS: Tourist dining behaviour, Malaysia’s Domestic tourist, Local Island food, Covid-19 Pandemic, Willingness-to-try, Risk perception

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Dining out when travelling involves uncertainty where their purchase decisions are questionably reliant on pre-judged perceptions especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. To date, tourists dining behaviour toward unfamiliar local foods especially at island destinations remains unexplored.

This study aims to explore new dining behaviours among local tourists in island settings following the recent COVID-19 pandemic. This study employed qualitative research methods which it used to conduct its research on Redang Island and Perhentian Islands, in Malaysia. The research paper aims to explore the domestic tourist’s behaviour towards dining-in at restaurants and the impact on their willingness to consume local foods while travelling on small islands in Malaysia in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative approach, a total of sixteen participants of domestic tourists from Redang and Perhentian Island in Terengganu, Malaysia participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were carried out between July and August 2020 during the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) period, focusing on restaurants on the two Islands. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.
Transcripts were content analysed using ATLAS.TI 9.0, and coded in stages. The data was then analysed using thematic analysis.

**FINDINGS**

Based on the completed thematic analysis, the findings of this study show that there are a total of seven factors that affect the dining behaviour of domestic tourists that travel to Redang and Perhentian Island during the COVID-19 pandemic including; emotional connections, the value of money, support for the local economy and tourism industry, risks to safety, acceptance on new norms, neophobia, and the cleanliness and hygiene have emerged as new dining behaviours among the domestic tourists.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, most of the domestic tourists that participated in this study showed that they connected emotionally with island by experiencing the local cuisine. This gastronomic venture indirectly supports tourism activities and boosts the income of the local community.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic the tourism industry is facing problems with international tourists’ numbers as such it is great that the local authorities are encouraging residents to travel domestically as this will help support the growth of the local economy.

Besides that, risk prevention measures imposed by the local government to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic also seemed to make residents realise the importance of good food hygiene, cleanliness, safety, and increase their risk perception.

Thus, it is important for tourism industry representatives and stakeholders to cooperate and educate domestic tourists on local cuisines on offering each state especially that which is unique to the islands under review. This will help them understand and appreciate the uniqueness of the local cuisines on offer on the island.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings help restaurateurs, resort operators, and other tourism stakeholders at islands destination gain a deeper understanding of the changes to the domestic tourists’ dining behaviours especially towards food served on the island.

The findings of this study also provide insightful information for tourism marketers and hospitality businesses to develop their gastronomic products and services in the future. The results also show that most tourists learn to love the island environment and have an emotional connection with island through the food that it offers. This could help boost local island tourism and consequently their economy. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, results show that due to the risks local food premises cleanliness has become a priority in deciding whether to dine-in at restaurants on the islands. The local food risk perception framework in this research paper will help boost domestic tourists’ trust and may potentially improve patronage at local businesses, the social well-being of people on the islands, and the image of the country as an island getaway destination.
REFERENCES


AN ANALYSIS OF INTENTION TO DO ECOTOURISM IN THE NEW NORM: A COMPARATIVE STRUCTURAL MODEL BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism contributes to the growth of economy of a nation through employment, the multiplier effect, and foreign exchange earnings. It also contributes towards a positive balance of payments. Eco-tourism is the natural evolution of tourism that cares for the environment, culture and local traditions, while promoting environmental education. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant negative effect on the tourism industry in almost all countries in Asia including Malaysia and Indonesia, therefore an analysis of the intention to undertake eco-tourism in the new norm of the post pandemic period is the basis for consideration of this research paper in a bid to turnaround the tourism industry.

KEYWORDS: Ecotourism Intention, Covid - 19, Awareness of consequences, Personal norms, Social norms

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 lockdown around the world has had a negative impact on the world economy and has adversely affected the tourism industry. Ecotourism is one of the options that the tourism sector and travelers may consider as a means to minimise the need for social distancing that are part of the pandemic prevention safeguards. The people who implement and participate in eco-tourism activities should follow the principles of eco-tourism such as minimising physical, social, behavioral and psychological impacts.

A study by Romero et al. (2019) found that the intention to practice eco-tourism in Chile and Spain were influenced by awareness of consequences, personal norms, and social norms and they recommended further study in other countries. With regards to this from an ecotourism perspective, there is a need to understand the behaviour of eco-tourists.

The eco-tourist's behaviour is an area of opportunity for research in order to understand factors, whether economic, cultural, social, demographic, or psychographic, that determine this behaviour. This research uses the value-belief-norm (VBN) theory and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to analyse the intention to practice ecotourism among eco-tourists from two countries.

An earlier study by Stern et al. (1999) recommended the VBN model as a comprehensive model that uses a psychological approach. In addition, a study by Choi et al. (2015), used the VBN model in tourism to examine consumption in eco-friendly hotels.

The objective of this study is to create a new model that facilitates an understanding of the intention to practice ecotourism as a means to turn the industry around in the new norms of the COVID-19 pandemic which still have various unpredictable circumstances.
This research is also aimed at understanding the determiners in the process of a consumer’s intention in ecotourism context, as well as verifies the growing importance of ecotourism. Therefore, it can be said that this comparative research is to analyze the intention to practice ecotourism among eco-tourists from the two countries by comparing eco-tourists in Malaysia and Indonesia, where the emphasis on ecotourism as a part of the economy is similar.

**METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative study on the tourism industry with individuals as the unit analysis based on convenience sampling method. 200 eco-tourists were chosen as respondents from both Malaysia and Indonesia and they were given five-point Likert scale questionnaire which was analysed using multi group analysis (MGA) smart PLS 3. MGA is one of the most efficient ways to assess moderation across multiple relationships (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Construct variables are intention to do ecotourism, awareness of consequences, personal norms and social norms. Moderator variable is Covid-19.

**FINDINGS**

In general, there is a significant and positive relationship between COVID-19 and the intention to engage in Ecotourism. Personal norms and social norms have a positive relationship with the intention to engage in Ecotourism. However, there is no moderating effect from the COVID-19 pandemic on the intention to engage in Ecotourism.

In Indonesia, there is a significant and positive relationship between COVID-19 and the intent to engage in Ecotourism. Personal norms have a significant positive relationship on the intention to engage in Eco-tourism. There is no moderating effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the intention to engage in Ecotourism.

In Malaysia, there is a significant and positive relationship between Covid-19 and the intention to do Ecotourism. Awareness of consequences has significant positive relationship with the intention to engage in Ecotourism. There is no moderating effect from the COVID-19 pandemic on the intention to engage in Ecotourism.

**CONCLUSION**

This study analyses the intention to engage in ecotourism using multi group analysis to compare the business models used in Malaysia and Indonesia. The findings demonstrate different significant factors affect the intention to engage in ecotourism. The awareness of consequences and the COVID-19 pandemic has a positive relationship with the intention to engage in ecotourism in Malaysia, while in Indonesia, personal norms and the pandemic have a positive relationship with the intention to engage in Eco-tourism.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has no role in moderating the results of this research paper. A combined analysis with the results from both countries demonstrate that both personal and social norms have a positive relationship on the intention to engage in ecotourism.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results recommend ecotourism as a means for the country to recover from the current economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to test the model in particular with regard to the potential eco-tourism areas within the two countries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for the support of the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. Thank you for the collaboration with the Universitas Pakuan, Bogor Indonesia for finding the respondents in Indonesia.

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FOOD NEOPHOBIA, FAMILIARITY, AND WILLINGNESS-TO-TRY MALAYSIA LOCAL FOODS AMONG SOJOURNERS IN TERENGGANU

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ABSTRACT
Nowadays, Malaysia has gained more popularity among sojourners either as a destination to continue their study or as a good place to work. However, there are few studies regarding food neophobia among sojourners and information on the subject is limited. The objectives of this study are to determine the level of food neophobia among sojourners in Terengganu, to compare between food neophobia score and social-demographic profile, to examine association of familiarity and willingness-to-try local foods among people with different levels of food neophobia and to examine the relationship between the food neophobia scores and the willingness-to-try new foods and same food neophobia score with familiar foods. A total of 152 questionnaires were distributed to international students from Middle east. The findings reported average food neophobia scale among sojourners in Terengganu was 40.15 ±12.21. There were no significant differences between food neophobia and gender but a significant difference between residential area (urban and rural), and the length of stay in Malaysia. Moreover, there were significant associations between food neophobia and familiarity towards Malaysia’s local cuisines. A significant association between food neophobia and willingness-to-try Malaysia local foods was also recorded. The impact of the findings on respondents was also discussed.

KEYWORDS: Food neophobia, familiarity, willingness-to-try, sojourners, Malaysia local foods

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Food neophobia is generally known as a personality trait of an individual, their acceptance or avoidance towards food that unfamiliar or new to them. (Education of Malaysia, 2019). For the past few years Malaysia have recruited many international students. These students can be called as sojourners. Sojourners might have a problem in consuming Malaysia food because they are not familiar with local food.

This will decrease their willingness-to-try due to certain thing such as food aversion and disgust. Since, these sojourners not familiar with Malaysia local foods, food neophobia levels among them are likely to be high. When food neophobia is high it will generally decrease the willingness-to-try novel foods (Loewen & Pliner, 2000). Malaysia local foods will be novel foods towards these sojourners because they have never been exposed to Malaysian cuisine before.

High levels of food neophobia often mitigate consuming a nutritionally balanced diet (Edwards et al., 2010) and this may be harmful to the sojourners in the long run, they can become malnourished. However, there is limited research on sojourners’ food consumption making it a challenge to learn about them. This study was carried out in order to provide additional knowledge on to levels of food neophobia among sojourners in Terengganu.
METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study involving 152 international students of UMT and UniSZA at Gong Badak, Kuala Terengganu and Tembila. Purposive sampling was used to choose a group of respondents which match with the inclusion criteria. The researchers used a snowball sampling method asking international students directly where other international students could be found. The questionnaires were then distributed using a face-to-face approach and online via Google Forms. Google Forms was used to obtain international students at Tembila and Kuala Terengganu. Data collected were analysed by using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) Version 23.0. The statistical procedures involved descriptive test that covered on the mean and standard deviation, correlation test and lastly chi-square test according to the research objectives.

FINDINGS

The findings reported average food neophobia scale among sojourners in Terengganu was 40.15 ±12.21. The value was quite high compared to the study that had been done by Choe, and Cho (2011) among Korean towards their non-traditional foods and studied by Olabi et al. (2009) among American and Lebanese students. The result obtained was a little higher compared to other studies, it showed that sojourners in Terengganu are more afraid to try unfamiliar foods. There was no significant difference between food neophobia and gender but there was a significant difference in the neophobia levels between residential areas (urban and rural), and the length of stay in Malaysia.

Sojourners who stayed in urban area have lower neophobic value compared to those who stay in rural area. Faccio and Nai-Fovino (2019) stated that urbanisation have a significant impact on food neophobia. This finding was supported by Guzek et al. (2018) who highlighted the fact that neophobic tendencies of those who live in urban areas are much lower compared to those who live in suburban areas.

Another study also stated that food neophobia among international students decreased with time, as they started to get familiar with the food the food neophobia also decreased (Edwards et al., 2010). It can be concluded that, the duration of exposure can affect food neophobia levels in an individual (Choe, and Cho, 2011).

Moreover, there were a significant association between food neophobia and familiarity towards Malaysia local foods. A significant association between food neophobia and willingness-to-try Malaysia local food also recorded. Besides, familiarity and food neophobia have strong negative correlation (-0.770**), while willingness-to-try recorded a moderate negative relationship (-0.529**) in non-stimulating circumstances and a weak positive (0.168*) relationship in stimulating circumstances.

CONCLUSION

The present study shows that FNS among sojourners in Terengganu was quite high where there were significant differences reported for residential area and length of staying in Malaysia towards food neophobia, while gender did not have significant impact on food neophobia.

Moreover, this study also indicated that there were significant association between food neophobia and familiarity, and food neophobia with willingness-to-try. Future studies should focus the related factor that affected the food neophobia such as the culture of the particular ethnic.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study regarding food neophobia is particular vital because food neophobia have an impact on food preferences. Understanding the factors influencing food preferences is essential for the implementation and promotion of positive changes in the food habits of any society.

It also will help the food acculturation process among these sojourners, the faster their food acculturation process the better to obtain the restrictive diet. Moreover, this study also will expose local foods to the sojourners. This will increase the sojourners knowledge regarding the food and they will become more familiar. This will benefit Malaysia as other countries try and share Malaysian foods with their countrymen back home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my family, my supervisor Dr. Shukri. I would also like to thank Malaysian Government funding from Fundamental Research Grant Scheme FRGS 59589 [FRGS/1/2019/SS06/UMT/02/1] and all the participants that involved in this research.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING INTENTION ON SELECTING TOURISM DESTINATION: CASE STUDY SUMAI HOTEL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined factors that influence the intention of tourists to select a tourism destination. Data quantitative was collected from tourists across Peninsular Malaysia. A frequency, percentage, and mean analysis were used to identify the specific respondent’s view. The variables assessed in this study, including tourism tendencies, coastal tourism, sustainable coastal tourism, accommodation, and demographic profile. The result showed that the majority of respondents choose Sumai Hotel & Apartment for religious purposes. In addition, the English-speaking staff, interesting places nearby, and transportation were the top three reasons why they choose to stay in Sumai Hotel & Apartment Sdn. Bhd.

KEYWORDS: Influence, Intention, Tourism Destination, Sumai Hotel

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The tourism industry is recognised as one of the fastest economic drivers in the world. Many countries have seen this industry as significant especially as a mechanism for economic growth. The hotel industry is an essential element of tourism.

In addition, Leisen (2001) says that hotels can influence tourist’s perception because they are an information sources for tourists. The hotel plays a role as the main attraction for tourists. Hoteliers have to make tourism destinations even more competitive through a package offered, facilities, and services.

Hotel managers must invest more in their marketing activities to attract, retain customers and maintain their place in the industry. Since the demand for traveling keeps increasing hotel industry has to be more competitive and attractive. The objectives of this study were:

1) to identify the demographic customer of Sumai Hotel and Apartment Sdn. Bhd. and
2) to identify the most significant factor a tourist would use to select a tourism destination.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive quantitative survey research design was used in this study. The target population of this study was domestic tourists. The survey instrument for this study was purposely to identify the intention of tourists to select a tourist destination. Data was collected between September and October 2019.

A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed via a self-administered survey and only 367 were returned which representing a 61.2% response rate. The questionnaire was prepared in Malay and English as the two languages were the most common in Malaysia. The questionnaire consists of five sections. The statistical analysis is carried out using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-21) to analyse the tourist’s views to select a tourism destination.
FINDINGS

In this section, information about the respondents’ background that participated in this study was presented. The result showed that the distribution of the respondents based on gender indicated that about 78.5% of the respondents were female, whereas 21.5% of the respondents were male.

Hence it is indicated that female respondents were the majority of respondents that participated in this study. Besides that, the majority of the respondents were Malay (97.7%) and also a married (65.7%).

On other hand, it is also can be concluded that the majority of the respondents who participated in this study were in the range of 21 years to 40 years old (50.7%), whereas respondents who are in the ranged of 41 years old and above (17.8%) can be considered as minority groups. In addition, in terms of nationality status, the majority of respondents that participated in this study were Malaysian (99.2%) citizens and most of the respondent's having a monthly income below RM5000 (58.9%).

Respondents who had a monthly income of less than RM1000 (21%) can be considered as the second highest group. Descriptive analyses which comprise a frequency, percentage, median, mean and standard deviation, were used to describe items within each variable. The result indicated that the majority of the respondents know (77.6%) about Sumai Hotel and Apartments and they choose (74.2%) Sumai Hotel and Apartments for their accommodation/hospitality and food services.

The primary purpose they visited Sumai Hotel and Apartments services was for religious reasons (30.2%), followed by individual business/education (26.8%), leisure (26.2%) and lastly for group business/education (16.9%).

CONCLUSION

The analysis revealed that the top three reasons why they choose Sumai Hotel and Apartments services are because of the English-speaking staff (10.9%), followed by interesting attraction nearby factors (10.1%) and transportation factors (9.2%). The majority (63.4%) of the respondents indicated that the service they received while in Sumai Hotel and Apartments was reasonable. Most of them stated that they will repeat a stay at Sumai Hotel and Apartment (68.6%).

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The finding revealed that most respondents of this study choose Sumai Hotel & Apartment because of religious purposes compared to business or educational reasons. Therefore, Sumai Hotel and Apartments would need to take necessary action to match with the target tourists.

Previous studies have identified services quality will lead customers satisfaction (Bakti & Sumaedi, 2013), customer trust (Moliner, 2009), and destination loyalty (Hui et al., 2007).

REFERENCES


FACTORS INFLUENCING TRAVEL BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS TO SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the factors affecting the behaviour of international tourists based on online reviews. To further understand tourist perceptions and opinions from online posts reviews Netnography approach has been implemented. A few studies have used Netnography to investigate online reviews of hotels and restaurants, but there has been limited examinations of online reviews of tourist attractions. To date, no studies have been done on this concerning Saudi Arabia. The OutWit Hub software was used to extract TripAdvisor reviews and content automatically. The data collection focused on attractions (Things To Do) located in Jeddah and Riyadh, the most populated cities in Saudi Arabia with a wide range of attractions and activities, including sights and landmarks, nature parks, and museums. The following approaches were utilised for netnographic analysis: first form the studied culture or group; collect data; analysis and interpretation: report on study findings and comprehend the theoretical consequences. The most significant findings were that the data supported correlations between visitors’ behavioural intentions, travel motivations and experience quality. This research provides evidence that travel motivations and experience quality affect the development of tourist behavioural intentions. This research offers policy-makers, destination planners and industry professionals a proper and thorough analysis of tourists’ behaviour and needs.

KEYWORDS: online reviews, Netnography, tourists experience, travel behaviour, travel motivation and experience quality

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This research aims to identify the factors affecting international tourists’ behavioural intentions based on tourist online reviews. To further understand tourists’ perceptions and opinions from online post reviews, a Netnography approach has been implemented. A few studies have employed Netnography to investigate online reviews of hotels and restaurants, but to date there has been limited examination of online reviews about tourist attractions. No studies have yet been done using this approach with reference to Saudi Arabia.

METHODOLOGY

The OutWit Hub software was used to automatically extract the content of TripAdvisor reviews. The data collection focused on attractions (things to do) located in Jeddah and Riyadh, which are the most populated cities in Saudi Arabia with a wide range of attractions and activities including sights and landmarks, nature parks and museums. The following Netnographic data collection including analysis, reporting and interpretation of results, was implemented:

1. gaining “entrée” into or formulating the culture or group one wants to investigate;
2. data collection;
3. analysis and interpretation;
4. reporting the research findings; and
5. understanding the theoretical implications.

FINDINGS
The most significant findings were that the data supported correlations between visitors’ travel motivations and quality of experience, which influenced their behavioural intentions. After analysing many reviews, Saudi Arabia’s culture and scenery have emerged as the main factors attracting vacationers to the country. Furthermore, the study found that people were driven by the desire to interact with others, learn new knowledge and/or escape and relax. The study also found that joyful travel experiences included experiencing places hedonically or simply as something new.

CONCLUSION
Undertaking a travel behaviour assessment provides an opportunity to better understand the various decisions and behaviours that unfold throughout a travel experience. Travel motivations and experience quality are important determinants of revisit and recommendation intentions.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
This research provides evidence that travel motivations and quality of experience affect the progress of tourist behavioural intentions. The research also offers tourism policy-makers, destination planners and industry professionals a proper and thorough analysis of tourists’ behaviours and needs.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

The Novel Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak has decreased international students’ enrolment in public and private educational institutions. The educational tourism industry can achieve better benefits if the service providers and policymakers become more proactive in understanding educational tourist behaviour when dealing with challenges during the pandemic. This study examines whether educational tourist and institutional physiognomies affect the relationship between motivation facets and destination selection behaviour within an augmented Stimuli-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. This paper analyses the issues and objectives for the forthcoming study through several works of literature from various disciplines. The outcomes of the review proposed a conceptual framework to extend the S-O-R model in future research focusing on the relationship between educational tourist motivational facets, educational tourist and institution physiognomies, and destination selection behaviour.

KEYWORDS: Educational Tourism, Motivation Facet, Destination Selection Behaviour, SOR Model

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2019) has defined educational tourism as a form of tourism that encompasses different types of tourism, which are related to the motivations of tourists to travel, participate, and engage themselves in various trainings, self-improvement processes, intellectual growth, and development of different and diverse skills. With that definition, educational tourism represents a wide range of products and services related to academic research, skills acquisition holidays, school trips, sports trainings, career development courses and language courses. Thus, this conceptual paper is intended to identify the links between motivation facets, educational tourist and institutional physiognomy and destination selection behaviour among ASEAN postgraduates in Malaysia. As such, the research questions that will be addressed are:

i. What are the relationships between motivation facets, educational tourist physiognomy, and educational tourism destination selection behaviour in the extended S-O-R model?

ii. Does educational tourist physiognomy mediate the relationship between motivation facets and educational tourism destination selection behaviour in the extended S-O-R model?

iii. Does institutional physiognomy moderate the relationship between motivation facets and educational tourism destination selection behaviour in the extended S-O-R model?

iv. How does educational tourism destination selection behaviour affect the S-O-R model?
PROBLEM STATEMENT

The central problem to be investigated in the proposed study is the lack of admittance, emotion due to sudden changes in the environment, institutional image, as well as limited research on student motivation, which may affect educational tourists’ behaviour in selecting Malaysia as their educational tourism destination. Therefore, it is crucial for the educational tourism industry to find out the factors contributing to the decreasing trend of international educational tourists to Malaysian universities.

In view of the above discussed issues, this study aims to examine educational tourist motivation facets, physiognomies, and destination selection behaviour among ASEAN postgraduates in Malaysian public universities by using an integrated Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The outcomes of this study would contribute to the identification of motivational facets of international students who are desirable to a host country, which in the long-term would sustain the number of international students enrolled in public universities.

PROPOSED ADAPTED THEORY

The S-O-R model was implemented in different research frameworks by using different research methods and theories. Physical stimuli on human emotions and behavioural responses, according to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), can be used to investigate the outcome using the S-O-R model.

The S-O-R model includes a stimulus as an independent variable, an organism as a mediator, and a response as the dependent variable (Pandita et al., 2020). Therefore, it could enhance the understanding of the mediating role of affective states, which are consumer emotions and responses, through the S-O-R model. In this present study, there are two applications of theories, which are the application of motivational theory and behavioural theory to support the Self-determination Theory with the S-O-R Theory to develop the research model.

Each theory has its own role to play, either as an overall contribution to the theories or as a component of achieving the research objectives. The application of theories will assist the researchers to decide on the usefulness of motivation as a force mechanism for travel.

CONCLUSION

The findings provide a gateway to the study of the relationship between motivation facets, educational tourist and institutional physiognomy, and educational tourism destination selection behaviour in the Malaysian context. To proceed with empirical research, a wider range of literature must be examined to gain useful information.

Even though this is a conceptual paper, it is hoped that the endeavour will contribute as supplemental literature for scholarly reference as well as have a substantial impact on educational tourism service providers and policy makers until research is completed.

IMPLICATION AND FUTURE STUDY

The conceptual paper is significant as it will provide a better understanding of educational tourist behaviour in selecting educational tourism destinations. The proposed future study attempts to investigate the relationship between motivation facets and destination selection behaviour among ASEAN postgraduates in the public universities in Malaysia. The study will also investigate the mediating effect of educational tourist physiognomy (emotion) between motivation facets and destination selection behaviour.
Furthermore, this study expands on the S-O-R model of stimulus, organism, and responses by introducing an external source of information (institutional image) as a critical factor in educational tourism destination selection behaviour. Therefore, the present conceptual paper will contribute to the limited literature on the involvement of educational tourists and institutional physiognomy and broaden understanding regarding educational tourism destination selection behaviour.

The result of these linkages may provide information benefits to both education service providers as well as key players in the tourism industry on how to attract more educational tourists to choose Malaysia as an educational tourism destination. This study is also relevant to policymakers who design support mechanisms and schemes to promote the continuous growth of the educational tourism industry. Last but not least, this conceptual paper can contribute as literature for scholars as a reference and also as a future study.

REFERENCES
ANTECEDENTS OF WORD-OF-MOUTH GENERATION IN MEDICAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT
The growing market demand for medical tourism has triggered intense competition among the medical tourism industry players. Word-of-mouth has been recognised as one of the key acquisition channels among the thoughtful marketing tactics to attract medical tourists. The purpose of this study is to gain insight on the relationship between medical service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction on word-of-mouth generation in a medical tourism setting. A quantitative survey was conducted to collect the data. The data collected was analysed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicated that medical service quality is positively associated with perceived value, which in turn, affects satisfaction. However, perceived value and satisfaction are not positively related to word-of-mouth generation. The availability of resources, patient cooperation and collaboration among service providers do affect the outcomes of word-of-mouth generation. It is implied that effort must be directed by the healthcare institutions to enrich the value and satisfaction of medical services. Hospital management should emphasise the service quality and raise it to a high level in order to increase recommendation.

KEYWORDS: Word-of-Mouth, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, Medical Service Quality, Medical Tourists

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Medical tourism has been considered as a profitable economic sector in many countries (Zarei & Maleki, 2019), and they enthusiastically promote this industry to stimulate economic growth (Beladi, Chao, Ee, & Hollas, 2019). This phenomenon has led to fierce competition among the participants in the industry. Accordingly, word-of-mouth has been recognised as one of the key acquisition channels among the thoughtful marketing tactics to attract medical tourists (Taheri, Chalmers, Wilson, & Arshed, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to gain insight on the relationship between medical service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction on word-of-mouth generation in a medical tourism setting.

METHODOLOGY
The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to gather their opinions. This research used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) as the data analysis technique.

FINDINGS
The results revealed that medical service quality was positively related to perceived value (b = 0.863, p < 0.05), which in turn positively related to satisfaction (b = 0.854, p < 0.05). Besides, the results showed that perceived value (b = 0.457, p > 0.05) and satisfaction (b = 0.278, p > 0.05) were not positively related to word-of-mouth generation.
CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have provided a better understanding on medical tourists’ behaviour in the context of word-of-mouth generation in medical tourism.

These outcomes contribute to the developing body of knowledge on medical service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and word-of-mouth generation, as well as their importance to the research on word-of-mouth generation. Certain limitations associated with this research have been highlighted.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on the important role of healthcare institutions in enhancing the value and satisfaction of medical services. Healthcare institutions are encouraged to monitor regularly on medical service quality for high levels of satisfaction and word-of-mouth generation.

It is expected that this study could provide a significant account of the circumstances under which consumers would recommend medical tourism destinations to others. Besides, the outcomes of this study could help healthcare managers to develop effective tactics to improve service quality as well as attract and acquire more potential medical tourists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has been carried out as a partial fulfilment of Research Scholarship Scheme under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme Project No. FRGS/1/2019/SS01/UTAR/02/2 provided by the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia.

REFERENCES


EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF KOTA KINABALU CITY AS AN URBAN ECOTOURISM DESTINATION

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ABSTRACT

The concept of ecotourism which applies to tourism activities in natural and undisturbed environments, is frequently thought to be antonymous with urban environments, however, can be proven possible. Despite Sabah being well regarded for its ecotourism sector, the concept of urban ecotourism in the city of Kota Kinabalu has yet to be explored. Existing ecotourism destinations in Sabah are facing carrying capacity problems thus there is a growing need to explore new and different destinations or attractions to meet the demand of tourists. This study examined local Kota Kinabalu residents and tourists’ perception and values pertaining to the potential of Kota Kinabalu as an urban ecotourism destination as well as how preservation of green spaces in cities encouraged sustainability using a multi-methodological approach. Based on the results of this study, both respondent groups ranked Kota Kinabalu city as having a high potential as an urban ecotourism destination. In addition, the results of this study could assist decision or policymakers in the local tourism sector with tourism development decisions.

KEYWORDS: Urban Ecotourism, Green Space Conservation, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Development, Destination Competitiveness

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The concept of ecotourism which applies to tourism activities in natural and undisturbed environments, has always been thought to be antonymous with urban environments, however, the reverse can be proven possible. Despite Sabah being well regarded for its ecotourism sector, the concept of urban ecotourism in the city of Kota Kinabalu has yet to be explored. Existing ecotourism destinations in Sabah are facing carrying capacity problems thus there is a growing need to explore new and different destinations or attractions to meet the demand of tourists.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined local Kota Kinabalu residents and tourists’ perception and value pertaining to the potential of Kota Kinabalu as an urban ecotourism destination as well as how preservation of green spaces in cities encourages sustainability by using a multi-methodological approach.

FINDINGS

Based on the results of this study, both respondent groups rank Kota Kinabalu city as having a high potential as an urban ecotourism destination.
CONCLUSION
The ultimate goal is to ensure that the natural environment and its resources are be protected regardless of whether it is an urban or rural area, although not gazetted as a recreation or tourism area and whether or not it is in pristine condition.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
In addition, the results of this study could assist decision or policymakers in the local tourism sector to plan and execute tourism development programmes.

REFERENCES


CULTURAL, ARCHITECTURAL, ‘SENSE OF PLACE’ AND SUFISTIC BELIEFS IN MOSQUE TOURISM CASE STUDY: MASJID AR-RAHMAN, PULAU GAJAH, KELANTAN

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ABSTRACT

The mosque is a sacred important religious symbol for bringing Muslims together as demonstrated during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This paper investigates the potential of Masjid Ar-Rahman of Pulau Gajah, Kelantan as a spot for mosque tourism. Although this mosque was constructed in 2016, it has demonstrated a simplicity in its scale and traditional image. It has value as a hybrid assimilation of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism and tolerance, and has coined the term Nusantara to denote its hybridised Malay and Javanese architectural styles. The typology of this humble Malay Mosque architecture is of medium-scale and reflects the Sufistic contextual value beliefs of encouraging religious and architectural tourism alike. The conceptual framework capitalises on the research gap found in mosque cultural, architectural and Sufistic beliefs. Research by further delving into constructing the “Sense of Place” in relation to the “Sacred Places”. This research employs qualitative methods of interviewing visitors, applying phenomenological and case study approaches supported by architectural documentation in emphasising the symbolic and semiotic aesthetics aspects in constructing the “Sense of Place” bonded by Sufistic symbolic aesthetics. The theory is constructed in the deeply rooted Islamic Mosque architecture via Sufistic beliefs that provides a platform for mosque tourism activities.

KEYWORDS: Mosque tourism, mosque architecture, Sufistic beliefs, sense of place

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Cultural heritage plays an important role in keeping traditions alive and more so when mosque tourism is taken into consideration. Currently, most mosques in Malaysia have forms of big domes with minarets (Utaberta et al., 2015). The two non-local mosque features of tower and domes elements have replaced local parts and altered the official expressions of the mosques in the Malay Archipelago. The style was brought along by the British colonials during their period of colonisation in the then the Malay Federal States before the Independence. One of the identified problems in mosque architecture now is the loss of the vernacular style mosque architecture hence the loss of the local architectural identity. It is mainly in the use of construction materials and is has been described as a crisis for the mosque.

The style was brought along by the British colonials during their period of colonisation in the then the Malay Federal States before the Independence. One of the identified problems in mosque architecture now is the loss of the vernacular style mosque architecture hence the loss of the local architectural identity. It is mainly in the use of construction materials and is has been described as a crisis for the mosque.

The traditional mosques usually reflect strong the influences of the Malay houses, way of life and the environment. Previously, the mosques used timber in their construction as opposed to the current materials of mainly bricks, steel, glass, and concrete. Among the different kinds of historical approaches employed are architectural typologies that deal with function, form, style, and materials.

Thus, these components play an important role in creating the “identity” of the mosque. The components coupled with the understanding of Sufistic beliefs of creating ‘Sacred Places’ would assist with the construction of the ‘Sense of Place’. It is another method of bringing back the meaning of the
‘Sense of Place’ in a mosque. This idea cumulates all the issues on ‘conceived’, ‘perceived’ ideas of mosque architecture in creating a ‘lived in’ notion thus constructing the ‘Sense of Place’ after the ‘Sacred Places’ has been established.

The architectural design, symbols, iconography, and artefacts are essential to a religion. Religion affects the people’s attachment to a sacred place, where space is purposely created to keep the basic concept of religions and as a mediator for experiencing faith (Gojnik & Gojnik, 2019b).

Nowadays, most mosques have lost their social characteristics. In other words, it seems that mosques in the present times are operated simply as a house of worship for Muslims, rather than being used by the whole community and are more exclusive spaces rather than inclusive ones.

The main aim of this paper is to delve into mosque tourism by looking at its connection to mosque architecture. It goes further to examine the spiritual approach of Sufism that characterises the mosque through its architectural components and space planning.

This angle is believed to have portrayed the mosque of having the ultimate beauty, simplicity, and openness thus visitors. In National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 (2019) mosque tourism falls under the Cultural and Heritage Tourism, Muslim Friendly Tourism and to some extent the Cross-Border Tourism.

**METHODOLOGY**

The investigation into the issue of mosque tourism looks deeper into the potentiality of a mosque to provide an opportunity for tourism activities based only on its appearance religious and other functions.

This study uses descriptive qualitative approaches, especially in the context of phenomenology, with the aim of obtaining accurate systematic facts regarding the characteristics and values of expression from the mosque architecture of the Masjid Ar-Rahman and the construction of the ‘Sense of Place’. It also relies heavily on the observation process during an event, in prayer times and at quiet times.

The observation also focused on the overall composition of the mosque space and on the hybrid components of some of the mosque’s architecture and design styles. A survey on the number of visitors to the mosque also determines the popularity of the mosque in attracting tourists based on its architectural features on different occasions throughout the year.

A set of questionnaires was used to indicate the attractive characteristics of the mosque and to understand the connection between the visitors, the mosque architecture and Sufism.

**FINDINGS**

When dealing with Sufism in a mosque architecture, it involves spirituality and strengthen by other functions that create the ‘Sacred Places’. Authenticity means that the architecture of the mosque has a twofold space conception: spiritual and physical, epistemological, and aesthetical. These are fundamental areas of concern, that require deciphering to relate to the mosque tourism.

**CONCLUSION**

In referring to the objectives of the research, Masjid Ar-Rahman has demonstrated the success in constructing the ‘Sense of Place’ based on ‘Sacred Spaces’ for mosque tourism. It is successful in presenting the outlook of a vernacular architecture that suited the environment. This is achieved with an understanding of the architecture in relating to simplicity or in moderation for all actions, physically, emotionally, and mentally.
The mosque architecture has managed to construct the ‘Sense of Place’ based on the Sufistic beliefs and the creation of the ‘Sacred Places’ for mosque tourism. Above all the design conceptualisation of faith, spirituality, and aesthetics can support the preservation of the identity of various forms that constitute the elements of a religious edifice for men and women; elements that thematise the relationship between spiritual repose, spatial equity, and aesthetics.

Thus, the ‘Sacred Places’ can be identified departing from the teaching of Sufism. Above all, the Sufistic beliefs not only provide the ‘Sense of Place’ for Masjid Ar-Rahman but also encourages the mosque tourism in an inclusive mode as a house of worship.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The Sufistic beliefs can be related to the mosque architecture of Masjid Ar-Rahman as the environmental context and the architecture itself offer the ‘Sense of Place’ with openness and no ‘intimidation’ to the visitors. The concept of inclusivity is truly found in the ‘Sacred Spaces’ that provides access to all walks of life hence enhancing the real meaning of mosque tourism. This welcoming ambience encourages visitation by the worshippers and non-Muslims alike.

The Sufistic beliefs provide another angle of attraction for the visitors to the mosque. The mosque architecture of Masjid Ar-Rahman not only offers a look into vernacularity and heritage in architecture but also the meaning of inclusivity for the mosque tourism intention. Although the Sufistic beliefs are considered the fundamentals of Islamic teachings and have long been in existence, the renewal of its existence enhances the meaning of local identity and vernacularity in the mosque architecture.

This experience can be seen as an innovation in mosque tourism that can be further developed and promoted as part of the heritage trail for mosque architecture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the School of Housing, Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia for providing facilities for the research work. The architectural documentation was provided by the Arkitek Punca Cipta, Kuala Terengganu.

REFERENCES


INTANGIBLE HERITAGE TOURISM: 
THE NEPALESE DIASPORA IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT
Who are you? Where are you from? How did you end up in Malaysia? These are the common questions that the Nepalese community here in Malaysia has had to respond to many a time. We cannot blame the naïve attitudes that our Malaysians possess but it is a matter of regret that most Malaysians from other ethnic groups are not aware of the Nepalese community here, simply because there has been no exposure to their presence. The intangible heritage of one’s ethnicity and culture play a crucial role in pointing out one’s origin, identity and existence. In the context of tourism, it is essential to sustain this minority group as it may arouse the interest of the Nepalese not only in their motherland but also around the globe. Tourists will be interested to learn about how the Nepali diaspora is able to preserve their unique traditions despite the influence of urbanisation and other culturalisations. The authors would apply the functionalist approach to discuss how the intangible tourism not only benefits the nation’s economy but also functions to prevent the extinction of the Malaysian Nepalese customs. The research questions that are posed for this paper are as follows: i) How do the Nepalese Malaysians sustain their intangible heritage? ii) What measures are this minority group taking to safeguard their tradition? and iii) In what way will the preservation be able to benefit the country and themselves? In-depth interviews with 15 informants will be conducted along with consensual audio-recording. Transcriptions of the interviews will analyse the thematic patterns coupled with peer checking to reduce bias for the data to be credible and trustworthy. The outcome of this research will be presented.

KEYWORDS: Intangible heritage tourism, Minority ethnic, Nepalese diaspora, Malaysia

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The Nepalese society is a minority community (Low, 2016) who lives with other larger ethnic groups in this country. Their identity is ‘shaken-up’ as Malaysians cluster them with the ‘Indian’ ethnic groups. Yes, they are Hindus and are of South Asian descent (Kalaimuthu, 2008), but they do not come from the Indian sub-continent.

As such, this confusion had led to an identity crisis among the youth who have difficulties in differentiating themselves and their origins. Moreover, it had caused many of the age-old traditions to be under ‘threat’ of losing their intangible heritage. In the landscape of tourism, this situation can be taken advantage of by the relevant authorities in promoting this minority population to the ‘outside world’.

It could generate income ‘handsomely’ for the nation, as tourists would find this Nepalese culture as sui generis where they are able to withstand the pressure of major cultures and the impact of modernization. Besides that, this diaspora collective will also be able to protect their traditions with the help of these authorities. It is a win-win situation for both the country’s economy and the Nepalese values.
METHODOLOGY

The qualitative technique (Creswell, 2007) was used to extract the essential outcomes for this research paper due to the holistic nature of the data collection processes involved. Moreover, due to the nature of the study the researchers applied dual method in sourcing the information of the Nepalese minority group.

First, the documentation approach. These materials are from the hardcopies and softcopies of major English and Malay language newspapers in the country. Data gathered from the National Archives and the National Library of Malaysia will was also used in the search and compilation of the intangible heritage of the Nepalese diaspora in Malaysia.

Second, for the interview sessions. 15 respondents were chosen for in-depth interviews. The participants’ contacts were provided by the gatekeepers and this enabled the researchers to narrow down the samples using purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) in order to get hold of imperative testimonies of their culture. The interviews were done in two ways, the first being face-to-face and the other being through telephone conversations.

All the oral communications were audio recorded with the informants’ consent with the qualifier that the information collected be used for academic purposes only. These recordings were transcribed by the researchers in a bid to analyse and examine the thematic patterns that emerged from the participants’ inputs.

Further, peer checking was conducted to cross-check the interpretation of the transcripts to reduce bias. This was to make sure that the information collected was credible and trustworthy.

FINDINGS

Sustaining an Intangible Heritage

Most of us have come across the word heritage literally referring to culture, custom, tradition, ancestry et cetera. However, when the term intangible is added to heritage it brings a different significance especially from the viewpoint of tourism.

It delves into the ‘ABSTRACT’ heritage which cannot be seen or touched but can only be known through a person’s action or behavior such as knowledge and practice. As such, this form of intangible culture will be a stumbling block for the Nepali community, a known minority group in Malaysia. The rituals and festivals must be passed on to the next generation or these practices will vanish into thin air especially if there are no documentation explaining the symbolic practices.

In other words, the transmission of the tradition can only be upheld by humans if they want to maintain their identity in the future. Of course, there would be recreation, modification and elimination in the cultural rituals according to the timeline and space. The Nepali diaspora had incorporated their cultural elements into the local norms by simplifying their major celebrations such as Tihar, Bhai Tika and Dussehra/Dashain (Muthiah, 2008) and adapting it to the country they are residing in.

The Hindus are only given public holidays by the states in Malaysia for Deepavali and Thaipusam representing the Tamil community as this group is the largest ethnic composition compared to other Indian ethnic groups. These celebrations have attracted local and international tourists as they do not need to go to India to experience it.

Due to this scenario, celebration such as Tihar that runs up to five days for the Nepalis is celebrated in a simple and moderate manner in their house or temple. Some of the employed Nepalis will apply for annual
leave from work and school goers may be absent from school. In essence, this form of accommodation has been adopted into their livelihoods in order to sustain their intangible heritage.

**Safeguarding Tradition**

Traditions will fade if one does not take the necessary measures to sustain them specifically the intangible elements. Safeguarding them will become impossible as there will be demise of the elderly, and the customs will be forgotten if not taught to their offspring. Moreover, initiative needs to be taken collectively by the community to ensure that these values are imparted to the younger community members who will eventually become the ‘torchbearers’ of the traditions.

There are various heritages that are facing extinction in the 21st century such as language, food and attire. For the Nepali folk, their mother tongue is losing its hold as the youth are articulate in the Malay lingo because they attend the national school where the medium of instruction is the Malay language.

English is the second language that is practiced at school. Due to this status quo, their fluency in these two languages is better in terms of written, speaking and reading. Habitually, their native language will take a back seat. Parents who are illiterate of their native tongue want their children to learn and it and will look for tutors who are proficient in the Nepali language.

Besides that, another intangible scope that brings excitement to everyone is food. Every type of cuisine has its symbolic meaning in a society. So too does food, the food traditionally consumed by Nepalis. During major festivals the main courses (Chandran, 2020) such as bread and chicken masala are served with aromatic side dishes comprising a cucumber salad and spicy potato. For dessert there is the appetizing milk ball soaked in sugar syrup and rice pudding.

However, due to the Malaysian flavor many of the cooking ingredients have been altered to suit the local palate. These traditional delicacies will not diminish over time but will be diversified in accordance to the novel techniques in the culinary arts as food is a necessity factor in our lives. In addition, attire plays a substantial role in projecting one’s ethnic identity. It makes one feel a sense of belonging when we are wearing our traditional clothes and share the similarities.

The Nepalese classic male apparel is the Daura-Suruwal suit while the female is draped in Nepalese style saree. Nevertheless, many are embracing the resident country’s traditional outfits as part of the dominant culture (referring to the Indians). The men still don in Daura-Suruwal as it is similar to the Indian traditional garb and the women adorn the saree but in the ‘Indian’ style. Due to the nature of the costume, the transition takes place effortlessly because there are no extreme adjustments to their garments.

**Benefitting Economy and Preserving Cultures**

Tourism is an industry that can generate revenue for any nation as long they can manifest the cultural uniqueness of communities. As all of us are aware, Malaysia is a country that is known for its multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural composition.

This has always fascinated the people around the world as to how a pluralistic society can co-exist peacefully despite the many differences. This curiosity had led tourists to ‘fly in’ to the country and to experience this diversity for themselves. The Nepali diaspora is one of the minority ethnic groups that is slowly fading because of the overpowering of the mainstream ethnic segments. Due to this situation, the community leaders are trying their best to perpetuate their community’s culture by getting the parents to instill their cultural components in the everyday life of their children.
However, it is easier said than done as many parents have gradually incorporated the Indian and other ethnic milieu practices into their own lives. They would be better off if the state and/or federal governments are able to assist in their community’s initiative to preserve their heritages. It would be interesting to see such a ‘tiny’ cultural group become a pulling factor for the tourists if proper promotion is executed.

The Nepali community even has their own shrine named Kali Amman Temple. If they were to have a community hall, they could have open houses for their festivals, conduct Nepali cultural activities such as classes for language, spiritual events and rites, dances, cooking and craftsmanship even for the tourists. It will be a ‘triple bonus’ where the heritage is being retained, and it has become a welcome source of income for this community and country.

CONCLUSION

Cultural sustenance is not something easy especially when it comes to intangible heritages. It is a practice that needs to be carried out by each family in the community. Safeguarding the tradition has no value if one does not follow the customs.

Of course, as we live in an era that makes us adapt to a new environment, many of our traits will be diluted to create a new culture. As the diaspora moves from one generation to another, there will be a vacuum in the original cultural heritage as many outside influences will be infused into the present culture. This happens everywhere and anywhere there are minority cultures that have left the motherland. The preservation of the Nepali culture can be done if they were to ‘exploit’ the circumstances by coordinating with the relevant authorities to obtain a settlement for their society.

By doing so, they would be able to attract travelers to witness their ‘microscopic’ unique culture. The functionalist paradigm examined the social order of this community of having stability in pursuing a common goal which is to maintain their identity with the consensus of the Nepali members. Hence, tourism will be able to improve the Malaysian economy, domestically and internationally and be in sync with conserving the intangible heritage of the Nepali diaspora in Malaysia.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research paper highlighted the challenges of the Nepali community’s intangible heritages. They are facing difficulties in sustaining their minority culture due to their tiny population compared to the other ethnic groups. Per se if the ministry intervenes by helping to secure the traditions of Nepali diaspora, they could turn this situation into a tourism commodity. Intrinsically both parties will have a solution for this issue.

REFERENCES


AESTHETIC QUALITY OF ISLAND TOURISM IN MALAYSIA’S EAST COAST REGION: DOES DURATION OF STAY MATTER IN SATISFYING TOURISTS?

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ABSTRACT

The East Coast islands of Malaysia are becoming increasingly popular as a world-class nature tourism destination. Not only are they naturally beautiful and accessible, they are also attractive and appear as a destination image. However, whether satisfaction based on the aesthetic quality of the island is sufficient in determining a tourist’s duration of stay is being questioned. This study, therefore, sets out two objectives to investigate the relationship between Aesthetic qualities and Tourist Satisfaction which are to investigate which aesthetic quality has a significant influence on tourist satisfaction of Malaysia’s East Coast islands and to determine whether the length of stay has a significant influence on tourist satisfaction of the East Coast islands of Malaysia. This study used both quantitative and cross-sectional methods to collect data. Then a Smart PLS-SEM analysis was used on the 150 responses; the 5000 replication of samples reveals that all aesthetic qualities contributed to tourist satisfaction. The ANOVA analysis, supported by the post hoc multiple comparison analysis among the groups, the Least Square Difference (i.e., LSD) Fisher’s Test, and Games-Howell Test, yielded intriguing results for the significant difference between the duration of stay groups on these islands. All aesthetic qualities, especially scenery, showed significant differences during a short stay. The findings would raise public awareness of the importance of sustaining the aesthetic quality of island tourism while also benefiting many stakeholders. There is also a need for more promotional efforts to extend the tourists’ duration of stay. However, generalisations of the results of this study are limited to responses given mainly from three main islands of Terengganu.

KEYWORDS: Aesthetic qualities, island tourism, length of stay, satisfaction, Malaysia

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The islands of the coast of Pahang, Malaysia are becoming increasingly popular as world-class nature tourism destinations. The East Coast islands facing the South China Sea have become full-fledged nature tourism destinations. Natural beauty and accessibility, among other things, attract and appear as a destination image, making Malaysia one of the most popular tourist destinations.

However, tourist loyalty is being questioned because tourism activities may impact the nature of the islands, resulting in a decrease in the number of tourists. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between aesthetic qualities (cleanliness, scenery, art/architecture, and genuineness) and Tourist Satisfaction.
The study has two research objectives:
(1) to determine whether aesthetic qualities affect tourist satisfaction in Malaysia’s East Coast islands and
(2) investigate which aesthetic qualities have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction in Malaysia’s East Coast islands in terms of length of stay.

METHODOLOGY
This study investigates how the cleanliness, scenery, architecture, and genuineness of islands affect tourist satisfaction. The quantitative analysis and survey methodology of this study followed recommendations laid out by Creswell (2014) and Saunders et al. (2009). The demographic profile, research variables, and open-ended query were all tailored to the respondents of this study.

In developing the questionnaire sample, question items from Breiby and Slatten (2018) and Phillips et al. (2013) were adapted. The question items were then pretested among three experts whose comments were then considered for the final revision of the items for the pilot test. Later, using purposive ease sampling, the Google Forms program, which is a common electronic tool for collecting data nowadays, snowballed the respondents.

However, one of this medium’s drawbacks is that researchers must find a suitable platform to reach as many people as possible. Nevertheless, a total of 150 responses were received over a one-month period. In terms of data collection, researchers used an automated medium to ensure that respondents answered all of the questions in the standardised questionnaire.

To analyse a relatively small data size of 150 samples, the Equation Partial Modeling with Least Squares (i.e. PLS-SEM) estimation multivariate data technique was used (Hair et al., 2017; Ong & Puteh, 2017).

The PLS-SEM can be considered the best statistical data analysis method since it allows the researchers to test the indicators used for measuring targeted constructs based on convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2012; Henseler & Chin, 2010). The significance test in this PLS-SEM analysis was computed using the Bootstrapping method, which can be considered more robust than the conventional t-test method (Hair et al., 2012; Henseler & Chin, 2010).

As suggested by Hair et al. (2017), 5000 replications of the sample were computed to get reliable results for the empirical t-statistics and Bias Corrected (i.e., BCa) cultural bootstrap. For the comparison analysis, a series of One-Way Analysis of Variance (i.e., ANOVA) were conducted to assess the significant differences among the duration of stay groups toward all the targeted variables in this study. As for strengthening the ANOVA results, the Welch robustness test of equality of means was also used to support the result of the Statistics produced by the ANOVA analysis.

Finally, a post-hoc multiple comparison analysis was done among the groups to support the significant difference among the duration of stay groups. Two types of tests were used for this purpose: The Least Square Difference (i.e. LSD) Fisher’s Test and Games-Howell Test.

FINDINGS
This study collected 150 responses from tourists who had visited any of Malaysia’s East Coast islands in the past three years. After the 5000 replications of samples, the analysis reveals that all aesthetic qualities (cleanliness, scenery, art/architecture, and genuineness) contributed to tourist satisfaction when visiting the East Coast region’s islands.
The ANOVA analysis, supported by the post hoc among the groups, Least Square Difference (i.e., LSD) Fisher's Test, and Games-Howell Test, yielded intriguing results for the significant difference between the duration of stay groups in the islands. The duration of stay, scenery, architecture, and satisfaction showed positive and significant results, which concluded the overall research.

CONCLUSION

Aesthetic qualities of cleanliness, scenery, art/architecture, and genuineness contributed to the tourists’ satisfaction. Only the Scenery and Architecture showed positive and significant results determining the tourists’ satisfaction by staying longer in the islands. Tourists appreciate both nature and history values in island tourism, and these values must be kept constant for the sustainability of island tourism in the East Coast region.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Academics and practitioners need to create awareness among the local communities on the importance of sustainability and its benefits. Where the private sector is concerned, a strong partnership and collaboration between travel operators, budget hotels, tourist associations and the local government could lead to improved infrastructure, facilities, amenities and activities for tourists and visitors, thus contributing to a more enjoyable and memorable holiday experience on the island.

This would mean longer stays, repeat visits, loyalty, and word-of-mouth information of the island to friends and relatives. During the pandemic crisis, various tourism sectors need to meet and review the current situation to re-strategise further development and sustainability of the beautiful scenic islands of the East Coast of Malaysia.

REFERENCES


MEASURING THE TOURIST SATISFACTION ON ECOTOURISM SERVICE QUALITY AT KUALA TAHAN NATIONAL PARK: AN INVESTIGATION ON VISITORS PERCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT
Ecotourism is a sub-component of sustainable tourism that involves a visit to a natural area and manages the living parts of the natural environment. Moreover, ecotourism's perceived potential as an effective tool for sustainable development, including economic development and conservation strategies. Currently, the importance of ecotourism service quality is gaining tremendous attention due to the growing demand for ecotourism worldwide and increasing expectations from visitors. A challenge remains in identifying how natural resource and nature-based tourism providers can best achieve those benefits and increase the visitor's satisfaction levels, while at the same time minimising the effects of degradation to the natural resource being used. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to assess the ecotourism services quality at Kuala Tahan National Park. This study will adopt the ECOSERV instrument to measure visitor's expectations and perceptions of service quality. This study was conducted using a quantitative approach by obtaining responses from 153 tourists. Based on service quality provided at Kuala Tahan National Park, visitor's were satisfied with the services provided there. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis to achieve the objectives of the study. This study also finds the responsiveness, empathy, and assurance have a significant relationship with service quality at Kuala Tahan National Park. However, they have an unsignificant relation between ecotangibles, tangible and reliability with tourist’s satisfaction. The finding of this study is important for ecotourism activity at Kuala Tahan National Park and for government be able to promote ecotourism product as the main attraction in Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: Ecotourism, ECOSERV, tourist satisfaction, service quality, Kuala Tahan National Park

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Tourism has been recognised as one of the largest industries and a major socio-economic activity in the world. It has been acknowledged as a tool for bringing economic benefits to a country or a specific region (Kisi, 2019). Tourism was defined as a collection of activities, services and industries which is deliver a travel experience comprising transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, retails shops entertainment businesses and hospitality services is provide for individuals or group travelling away from home (Alam, Er, Begum, Alam, 2015).

However, ecotourism also is one of the crucial components of tourism industry (KC, 2017). Ecotourism is a sub-component of sustainable tourism that involves a visit to a natural area and manages the living parts of the natural environment. Moreover, ecotourism's perceived potential as an effective tool for sustainable development, including economic development and conservation strategies.

Currently, the importance of ecotourism service quality is gaining tremendous attention due to the growing demand for ecotourism worldwide and increasing expectations from visitors. A challenge remains
in identifying how natural resource and nature-based tourism providers can best achieve those benefits and increase the visitor’s satisfaction levels, while at the same time minimising the effects of degradation to the natural resource being used. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to assess the ecotourism services quality at Kuala Tahan National Park.

METHODOLOGY

This study will adopt ECOSERV instrument to measure visitor’s expectations and perceptions on service quality. This study was conducted using a quantitative approach by obtaining responses from 153 tourists. The data was gathered through the use of questionnaires distributed using online survey techniques.

The questionnaire consisted of 45 questions and was divided into three part which is; respondent’s demographic, tourist satisfaction and overall satisfaction. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item in tourist satisfaction and overall satisfaction using a 5-point Likert scale. With 1 point on the Likert scale representing strongly disagree while 5 points was strongly agreed.

In this analysis of this study non-probability with a purposive sampling method has been used. The respondents were selected based on several criteria. Using the online survey as a data collection because the pandemic hinders one from conducting a face-to-face survey. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis to achieve the objectives of the study.

FINDINGS

Responsiveness was the highest mean of tourist’s satisfaction which is 3.9853. this is because the tourists satisfied with the service that Kuala Tahan National Park provide. Tourists were satisfied with the employees at Kuala Tahan National Park because they were always willing to help them. Empathy had the lowest mean with tourists with a value of 3.8399. This is because Kuala Tahan National Park cannot fulfill their needs. The tourists have a high expectation when they come visit to one place. But when they reach the places, what the tourists expect does not match the place. That’s why empathy has the lowest mean for tourist’s satisfaction.

The results indicated that only three out of six variables were statistically significant (p<0.05) except ecotangibles, tangibles and reliability. The result of t-test analysis found that for responsiveness (2.352>1.9763, sig 0.02<0.05), empathy (4.986>1.9763, sig 0.000<0.05) and assurance (2.878>1.9763, sig 0.005<0.05). This indicated that this variable has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction.

The results also showed that empathy was the largest portion of the variance in tourist satisfaction. While for the variable which is ecotangibles (3.146>1.9763, sig 0.513>0.05), tangibles (0.011<1.9763, sig 0.991>0.05) and reliability (-0.046<1.9763, 0.86>0.05). The value for the items of the score was smaller than the t-value, indicating no significant relationship. In the other word, ecotangibles, tangibles and reliability are not determining factors for tourist satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to examine the tourist’s satisfaction about ecotourism service quality at Kuala Tahan National Park based on visitor perception. Accordingly, this research summarizes the presentation of the issue, the developed research question and objectives and major contribution to the field. Finding from the study concluded that only six of the independent variables of this research, which is ecotangibles, tangible, responsiveness, reliability, empathy, and assurance are significant.
From these findings multiple regressions of six factors were identified that responsiveness has the great influence in tourist's satisfaction compared with empathy and assurance. While the tangible, ecotangibles and reliability was the factor that does not support the tourist's satisfaction. This study also finds the responsiveness, empathy, and assurance have a significant relationship with service quality at Kuala Tahan National Park.

However, there have an insignificant relation between ecotangibles, tangible and reliability with tourist's satisfaction. Recommendation that Kuala Tahan National Park should take a note to repair the damage to facilities. So, that tourists can use them without any issues. Only then will the tourist's satisfaction level increase because they are satisfied with the service provided there. The management must also make sure that equipment or facilities are safe to use. Last, to avoid the small injury becoming a serious injury, they should prepare an emergency kit or first-aid kit so that they can treat tourists if needed.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The finding of this study is important for the operators, tourists, and local community to promote the national park as the ecotourism around the world is gaining momentum. This study only focuses on the service quality at Kuala Tahan National Park and tourist's satisfaction levels.

Further study is needed to know who the stakeholders are in a bid to upgrade and rebrand the national park as an ecotourism destination. The outcomes from this research will help to overcome the issue related to tourist satisfaction specifically in Kuala Tahan National Park. Finally, this research will help park management meet the expectations of tourists during their visit.

REFERENCES


A NETNOGRAPHY EXAMINATION OF TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ST REGIS HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing reliance on consumer generated content as a source of knowledge for hospitality product decision-making. People post their views, ratings, and reviews of products and services on such platforms, and companies and research organizations are interested in analyzing and extracting all of the comments. It is critical for hotels to take advantage of online customer review information in order to better understand their customers and enhance hotel efficiency. However, analyzing guest reviews is challenging as it contains abundance of data.

Using The St Regis Kuala Lumpur as a case study, the objective of the paper is to profile the hotel online reviews using a Netnography approach, identify the hotel attributes that guest comment based on the hotel online reviews and examine the guest satisfaction attitude based on the hotel online reviews.

A total of 388 reviews from TripAdvisor were collected. The findings revealed that most of the hotel guests who left comments were international tourists, and couples. Many of whom left excellent ratings for the hotel. The findings show there are nine attributes that are frequently mentioned namely, amenities, location, price, service, cleanliness, food and beverages, hotel and room environment.

The results also show that guests left both positive and negative reviews in few common categories such as hotel cleanliness, hotel environment and amenities. Among all the attributes mentioned, satisfied guests tended to leave positive comments for things like hotel cleanliness, hotel and room environment, while dissatisfied guests emphasised the amenities or the lack thereof.

The findings of this study make several theoretical and managerial inferences with regards to identifying hotel attributes that contribute to guest satisfaction and improves the understanding of what satisfies and dissatisfies guests from the comments left by the guests on TripAdvisor. The paper concludes with limitations and suggests future research.

KEYWORDS: Online hotel reviews, hotel attributes, customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, Netnography.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

With technology advancement, travellers nowadays opt to share their travel experience in a non-traditional way, via online mode which consist of positive and negative comments (Ekiz, Khoo-Lattimore, Memarzadeh, 2012). One of the methods is through online travel agencies (OTAs), such as Tripadvisor, Expedia, and Cleartrip. These online travel agencies do not own any hotel but host websites that attract customers with large collections of hotel information, price comparisons, discounts, and review comments (Masiero, Viglia & Nieto-Garcia, 2020).
Although considerable amount of research has emphasized the importance of customer satisfaction for both customers and hotels, research on hotel customer satisfaction mainly focus on the attributes of service quality based on the perceptions from hotel customers, and little research has attempted to examine the attributes of hotel customer satisfaction from the perspective of online hotel review — the real feedback of hotel customers (Dong & Zhang, 2014).

Thus, using The St Regis Hotel Kuala Lumpur, a luxury 5-star hotel as a case study, this study attempts to
(1) profile the hotel online reviews using Netnographic approach,
(2) examine the guest satisfaction levels based on the hotel online reviews and
(3) identify the hotel attributes that guest comment based on the hotel online reviews.

METHODOLOGY
This study uses qualitative methods and a single case study that uses secondary data derived using Netnography to research the hypothesis posed in this research paper.

This study used the approach from a content analysis study on guest reviews, Traveller reviews are defined as an unstructured, but complete text distributed into a series of complete sentences called comments by individual online reviewers. Individual comments are evident irrespective of the lengths of the paragraphs and a full stop is deemed as ‘a point that marked the end of a sentence’ (Full Stop”, 2007).

Comments were categorized into positive, negative and/or neutral. Every comment can be assigned to one of more categories with specific attributes. Neutral are associated with the situation where consumers may not have a strong feeling towards a particular item being evaluated which adopted for this study. Using a taxonomy of consumer comments by Lei and Law (2015), a “+1+ is numerically assigned to a specific attribute of a category (e.g., positive, negative or neutral) whatever the textual meaning of the sentence fits the category and the attributed.

All reviews, both textual and photographic were carefully examined. Given the enormous amounts of data collected, a cut-off date was assigned. Data was monitored and collected until April 2020.

A total of 388 reviews were collected and initially recorded in Microsoft Excel manually. Multiple languages were used in the reviews such as English, Chinese, Japanese and Malay. However, all the non-English reviews were excluded to avoid misinterpretation. After sorting and ensuring all the data had been presented accurately, the data were converted to qualitative analysis software NVIVO 11 to complete the data analysis.

CONCLUSION
Being able to provide high-quality, meaningful experiences to hotel guests is unquestionably important in hotel establishment. Ensuring what makes customer satisfied requires knowledge in identifying what guests deem as important when evaluating the hotel experience provided to the guest. Although recognising the factors that contribute to determining a guest’s choice of hotel are complicated, the importance of identifying the hotel attributes that influence guest hotel choice and the features that are perceived as significant by guest assist hoteliers in making optimal decision from a hotel development and pricing strategy standpoint.

Not only it is beneficial for hotels, the positive experience guest received during their stay will stimulate them to contribute positive word-of-mouth about the hotel to their friends and family and these types of
guests tend to be more loyal. Therefore, understanding expectations and perceptions of hotel guest is one of the critical factors in achieving customer satisfaction in hotels.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

By examining and monitoring the attributes that have emerged from the online customer reviews, it enables hotels to understand the voice of every guest. Concurrently, by analysing these comments, hotels will be able to see the larger picture and pinpoint the important attributes and critical discussion about the underpinnings of satisfied and dissatisfied hotel customer.

A failure to obtain any input from guests would have a negative impact on hotels. In addition, the attributes identified can assist the hotel to identify top concerns, so that they know which aspect of their hotels needs more attention.

REFERENCES


INFLUENCING FACTORS OF 7PS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF HALAL TOURISM IN KANO-NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Halal Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes in accordance with Islamic injunctions. Nigeria has a Muslim population of more than 100 million which makes it an ideal halal marketplace worth trillions of US dollars. As the halal movement gains traction, the global industry has set its sights on Nigeria’s growing demand for shariah-compliant goods and services. The purpose of this paper is to examine the marketing mix strategy for halal tourism consisting of products, prices, promotions, locations, personal preferences, processes and physical evidence of the intent to partake in halal tourism by consumers in Kano-Nigeria. This research paper observes that Nigeria as a country has the potential to make tourism a main source of income seeing as it has a diverse set of tourist attractions, a large domestic tourism market and a unique cultural heritage capable of enticing foreign tourists. This research paper recommends among other things that the entrenchment of a sound halal tourism development master plan capable of rejuvenating the economy of the country and ensuring sustainable halal tourism development even in the face of the current global economic melt-down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper employs the Desk Study approach as its method for gathering the data to be used in this study. The findings of this research paper will benefit those in tourism-related industries and policymakers. The specific identification of certain elements namely: products, prices, promotions, locations, personal preferences, processes and physical evidence of a consumer’s intention to partake in halal tourism in Kano-Nigeria would help halal tourism service providers to offer attractive packages that meet tourist expectations. This paper has its limits as it is a conceptual approach, and empirical studies are both recommended and needed in the future.

KEYWORDS: Halal tourism, purchase intention, service marketing mix strategy, Kano.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The tourism industry is potentially a key economic driver of a nation, especially for developing countries like Nigeria and Malaysia, which are looking to diversify their revenue streams (Isa, Chin, & Mohammad, 2018). It is evident that Muslim tourists participating in halal tourism represent one of the biggest global tourism niche markets that can provide many opportunities for Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Bogan & Sarusik, 2019).

Mastercard and Crescent rating’s (2016, 2018) asserted that, the rising Muslim population and its growing middle class with higher disposable income levels, coupled with increasing access to travel information and the ready availability of Muslim-friendly travel services and facilities, travelling during the Ramadhan fasting period and travelling for business are key drivers of Muslim travel market growth.
Moreover, it was reported by the Pew Research Centre (2011) that, the world’s Muslim population is projected to reach 2.2 billion in 2030 and Muslims will account for 26.4% of the world’s total projected population of 8.3 billion in 2030.

In 2017, it was determined that 131 million Muslim tourists took part in tourism activities globally. It has been forecasted that these numbers will reach 156 million visitors by 2020 and will represent 10% of the global travel segment (Mastercard & Crescent Rating, 2018).

In Africa (Nigeria inclusive), it was reported by Statista (2021) that, tourism sector recorded 1.2 million visitors in December, 2020. This is contrary to over 6.3 million tourists who arrived in the continent as of December 2019. The negative disparity may be connected with the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the global economy. However, the Nigerian tourism industry has experienced significant growth over the last decade, and the country as a travel destination is becoming an increasingly popular choice for many both domestically, regionally and internationally.

A recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017) revealed that, tourism accounted for 34% of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) and about 20% of the nation’s employment creation. But the novel corona virus pandemic had hugely affected both travel and tourism in the country. According to Oyedero (2020) economy report reveals that, travel into Nigeria reduced by 3.5 million which resulted in a revenue loss of US$0.7 billion with 91,380 jobs lost.

This is as a result of increase in cancellations of hotel reservations by both local and international tourists resulting in a negative impact on revenue generation due to lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. World Bank (2021) reported that, Nigerian tourism sector recorded US$1.47billion US dollars in 2019, down from US$1.97billion previous year, this is a change of 25.59%.

Also, travel and tourism contributed 5.1% of GDP in 2019. There are however, several challenges which affect the ability of the sector service providers in the industry to meet customer expectations. This paper aims to discuss the influencing factors of the 7Ps on the consumer’s intent to partake in halal tourism in Kano Nigeria. This is to add value to the existing literature in the halal industry that can inevitably assist marketing practitioners to move forward in applying good marketing strategy towards their target customers.

**METHODOLOGY**

The paper employs the Desk study approach as its methodology which was carried out by browsing information sourced from print and electronic media and tourism literature about the development of regular tourism and halal tourism all over the world and from Nigeria in particular. Data was collected from government policies on tourism in Nigeria and from the Nigeria Information Culture and Tourism Ministry. The study also considered the Holy Qur’an and Hadith as source of information on the principles of shariah- compliant tourism.

**FINDINGS**

The paper observes that Nigeria as a country has the potential to make tourism a main source of income seeing as it has a diverse range of tourist attractions, a large domestic tourism market and a unique cultural heritage capable of enticing foreign tourists.
CONCLUSION

This study discusses a conceptual framework on factors that influence the 7Ps of a consumer’s intent to partake of halal tourism in Kano-Nigeria.

Halal tourism is a sub-category of religious tourism geared towards Muslim families who abide by Islamic principles. Islamic teaching affects the behaviour of these Muslim tourists. Therefore, halal tourism providers are required to plan their management and organisations to ensure that their products, prices, promotions, places, processes, people and physical evidence are in line with Islamic principles.

It is important for tourist facilities to operate in accordance with Islamic principles to ensure tourist satisfaction. In conclusion, developing tourism products according to Islam, requires consideration of some intangibles and tangible elements, availability halal food, clothing, places of worship, religion and gender of hotel facilities, the provision of entertainment centers and public spaces.

CONTRIBUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that, the Nigerian government should establish an agency that would be saddled with responsibility in marketing and regulating halal tourism activity in the country.

There is need by government sat all levels to shift in the education dynamics to be a strong working tie between the academia (primary custodian of knowledge) and the industry (primary users of knowledge) in the halal industry. Also, governments at all levels need to make investors protection shift from institutional uncertainty to established order not just in policy statements but in the actions of its employees in the halal industry because emerging market investors are mostly concerned with level of protection that the operating environment offers such as clarity of economic policies, application and institutional enforcement of rules etc.

The Government should increase its spending to support local halal industry in the area of grant, conferences and workshops that will enlighten halal industry players on how to go with halal investment in Nigeria. It is generally recommended that Nigerian government should encourage the establishment of halal tourism organizations by marketing practitioners (both within and at international level) to consider Nigeria as a potential market hub for the halal tourism business.

The current study was design on conceptual framework using the 7Ps marketing mix variables and limited to Kano state only. Future empirical research should be conducted to identify more variables that may influence consumers intent to partake in or make use of halal tourism in Nigeria. This will offer more insight on other related independent variables that affects purchase intention in the halal industry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nigeria Police Academy supports this work through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund. 2019/2020 sponsorship)

REFERENCES


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THEME:
CURRENT ISSUES IN TOURISM HOSPITALITY
TRAVEL BUBBLE: RISK ANXIETY, RISK ATTITUDE AND INTENTION TO TRAVEL DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

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ABSTRACT
The COVID-19 pandemic has made the tourism industry in Malaysia decline drastically. The outbreak has continued for almost two years and has decreased local and international tourist arrivals. The decline is because of the Movement Control Order (MCO) execution, and safety precautions were issued when travelling. Nevertheless, the impressive rate of deterioration in pandemic transmission gives a new shade to domestic tourism. The Tourism Ministry has put forward an initiative that can revitalise the economic sector in the country by introducing the travel bubble destinations among Malaysians. With that, the main purpose of this study is to explore the travel bubble risk anxiety, risk attitude, and intention to travel among Malaysian when COVID-19 is still plaguing the nation. A self-administered survey was conducted online using a snowballing technique. The data collected was keyed in and analysed according to the objectives of this study. The main findings of this study highlighted that those respondents would feel anxious and worried about their safety when participating in the travel bubble. Statistical significance also revealed the respondents’ intentions to travel during the COVID-19 outbreak. Further discussions of the findings were also highlighted to deliberate the implications of the study.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Travel Bubble, Risk Anxiety, Risk Attitude, Intention to Travel

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The world tourism industry has been severely affected since the COVID-19 pandemic (UWTO, 2020). To date, almost all the tourism and hospitality sectors have had a difficult time, including Malaysia. Hence, to revive the countries tourism and hospitality sectors, the Malaysian government started to introduce Travel Bubble destinations after the Movement Control Order (MCO) was lifted, and there was a reduction in daily cases of infection (New Straits Times, 2021). Travel bubbles also known as “Travel Bridges” or “Corona Corridors”.

This initiative was first introduced by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, where the citizens from these countries were allowed to enter the borders without any quarantine restrictions (Reuters, 2020). Many countries have started to introduce travel bubble destinations to their citizens to stimulate the national economy during the current pandemic situation (Leung, 2020; Locker, 2020).

It can be seen as a recovery plan to revitalise the tourism and hospitality sectors. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified some safe countries to start with as travel bubble destinations, for example, Brunei, Singapore and Thailand or ASEAN countries and Asia Pacific countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Indonesia has given Malaysia the green light for a Reciprocal Green Lane/Travel Corridor Arrangement (RGL/TCA) travel bubble between both nations.

This approval could be an opportunity to boost the economies of both nations after a series of lockdowns following the COVID-19 pandemic (MOTAC, 2021). The COVID-19 outbreak has
psychological and physiological effects on an individual's health and well-being. It will lead to worse outcomes such as anxiety when rumours or fake news spreads in society. Past studies revealed that anxiety is an incurable sickness and will cause a detrimental behaviour (Taylor, 2019). The pandemic has caused chaos in people daily lives and scared them.

It is crucial to understand to what extent the COVID-19 outbreak has affected people’s mental health (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Gnoth et al., 2000). Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore the travel bubble risk anxiety, risk attitude, and intention to travel among Malaysians.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was employed in this study. A survey questionnaire was formulated using the Google Forms software and distributed using to respondents using a “snowballing” technique getting respondents to point out others in their social circle who are also suitable respondents. The survey instruments used in this study were adopted from Luo and Lam (2020) and consist of six sections. The respondents’ demographic profiles were placed in the first section of the questionnaire. The respondents’ travel preferences were in the second section.

Sections three to six of the questionnaires asked the respondents about their travel behaviour, travel anxiety, risk attitudes and intent to travel within the travel bubbles. These constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The gathered data was then analysed using descriptive and ANOVA tests to derive the findings.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study can be used as extended literature for the tourism and hospitality industries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. There are seven significant findings revealed by this study about the tourists’ behaviours:

1) they have become more careful in choosing their travel bubble destinations,
2) they are anxious when travelling to COVID-19 destinations even when there are fewer cases reported,
3) they have a positive attitude towards friends and family who visited travel bubble destinations,
4) will recommend to their relatives and friends to visit travel bubble destinations,
5) women tend to have travel anxiety;
6) men have an intention to visit travel bubble destinations,
6) individual age 41 years old and above will visit fewer COVID-19 cases, and
7) concern if friends and families following standard operation procedures (SOPs).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influences people’s psychology and physiology.

CONCLUSION

In revitalising the national economy, the government must carefully research this travel bubble initiative. Many aspects should be emphasised where the COVID-19 virus has upended human lives for almost two years since 2019. The tourism and hospitality sector were hugely affected, and Malaysia has lost its earnings from this once lucrative source. Therefore, introducing tourists to visit travel bubble destinations is a wise action.

However, proper plans and standard operation procedures (SOPs) must be thoroughly reviewed. All stakeholders must play an important role to ensure this initiative can be implemented and run smoothly.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study could be used as extended literature for the tourism and hospitality industries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides that, the findings of this study have also identified the possible ways that the government can introduce a travel bubble to tourists.

REFERENCES


PROPOSED MARKETING STRATEGY FOR TOURISM USING VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) DURING COVID-19 (STUDY CASE: LABUAN BAJO)

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ABSTRACT
One of the factors in the development of culture and natural resources in Indonesia is the tourism sector. This is sought to help improve and improve the community's economy by opening employment opportunities and developing areas that have the potential as tourism hotspots, one of which is the Komodo National Park in Labuan Bajo. However, due to the outbreak of the SARS- COVID-19 virus, the government came up with a policy to stop economic activity in the tourism sector to prevent the spread of the virus by implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). This paper aims to propose a tourism marketing strategy during the COVID-19 period by using Virtual Reality (VR) technology as a market research requirement for the TelkomGroup. This paper used a mix of methods to collect and test the data to prove the hypothesis including an External Analysis (PESTEL and Consumer Analysis) and Internal Analysis (STP or Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning and 4P Marketing Mix). The formulation of the business strategy used in this study was the Lean Canvas Business Model. Qualitative data was obtained from quantitative data analysis, which was in turn obtained by conducting interviews and collecting data surveys from a total of 360 respondents. The research resulted in a proposed marketing strategy for tourism for the COVID -19 period and beyond in the form of an STP and marketing mix, as well as its implementation through the introduction of VR. Therefore, by providing this recommendation, it is hoped that it can be a point of reference to promote and increase the interest of tourists again to support the “Pesona Indonesia” programme.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, External and Internal Analysis, Labuan Bajo, Marketing Strategy for Tourism, Virtual Reality (VR)

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The tourism sector in Indonesia has a lot of potential because it can affect the country's foreign exchange earnings. However, because of the COVID-19 virus, the government immediately made an emergency regulation with Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions activities by limiting direct social contact.

With the implementation of the health protocols, the tourism sector has started operating again. One of the tourist attractions that needs to be developed is the Komodo Tourism Park, Labuan Bajo, which is one of villages located in the Komodo sub-district, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

During the pandemic, it was difficult to predict how many tourists would visit the Komodo park in the future. This was due to the ‘uncertainty’ in each business sector caused by the pandemic. One solution that was considered is the use of Virtual Reality. Virtual Tourism has become a strategy for branding tourist destinations during the pandemic. Managers of tourism destinations in Labuan Bajo can work with hotel, restaurant, entertainment and other tourism stakeholders to collaborate with VR Tourism service providers.
METHODOLOGY

The research methods that were used to collect data include both quantitative and qualitative methods with a descriptive analysis. The analysis used in this research paper to test the hypothesis include an External Analysis (PESTEL and Consumer Analysis) and an Internal (STP and 4P’s Marketing Mix) with business/marketing strategy formulation using the Business Model Lean Canvas.

An interview method was used for qualitative research. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed online via email and social media. For the required number of samples, using the Slovin method.

FINDINGS

Lean Canvas

![Lean Canvas](source:Processed Data)

**STP**

**Segmenting:** Differentiate customers (demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behaviour variables).

**Targeting:** Evaluating the attractiveness of each segment and selecting the target segment.

**Positioning:** VR has a deeper point in fulfilling the desire of the users with a more real sensation.

Table 1: Suggested Market Target for Tourism using VR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male - Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>21 - 30 years old; 31 - 40 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Private Employee; BUMN/BUMD; Students; Entrepreneur; Freelancer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Rp 1.000.000 - Rp. 3.000.000 (middle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rp 3.000.001 - Rp. 5.000.000 (middle-up)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rp 5.000.001 - Rp. 10.000.000 (up)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Social</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Java &amp; Sumatra Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Urban; Sub-Urban; Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychographic</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Playing Game; Watching Movie; Education Learning; Traveling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4P's Marketing Mix

**Products:** 360 virtual images and VR Glasses.

**Price:** Free or service/rental fees per hour.

**Place:** Create a spot to try and taking virtual tours through online meeting.

**Promotion:** Digital marketing.

**CONCLUSION**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector has been temporarily suspended because it has to follow government regulations to ensure public health and safety. Therefore, in order for it to start moving again it must follow all of the applicable health regulations and procedures. Since access to travel is still limited, one way to restore the tourism industry is through the use of technology such as Virtual Reality. By switching to a digital system, people can enjoy an easy and close vacation from the comfort of their own homes.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The author suggests a cooperation with SmartEye because there are many facilities that will help Telkom to prepare the groundwork for VR and AR technology. The benefits include more VR technology education, getting partners and resources who are ready to collaborate and that already have a platform in the form of a website. This will also affect consumer interest in being able to visit Komodo National Park in Labuan Bajo after the COVID-19 pandemic having experienced it in Virtual Reality.

**REFERENCES**


AN ASSESSMENT OF COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE
IN NETWORKING FOR CONTENTS TOURISM

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ABSTRACT
The tourism industry has been recognised as a potential development mechanism in local communities facing various changes and challenges. In recent years, content tourism, which is the utilisation of lands associated with works appearing in subcultures and other content works for which Japan has attracted international attention, as a tourism resource. However, previous studies have not revealed much about the practice of contents tourism, especially those that examine it from the perspective of collaborative governance. This article presents a case study of a cross-sectoral organisational network designated to promote contents tourism in Sasebo, Nagasaki. This paper briefly introduces the topics of collaborative governance and contents tourism, and then the network for cross-sectoral collaboration and the research method. As a result, findings are discussed in terms of key elements of collaborative governance, aspects of the network formation and development process and features of the Sasebo’s context that may influence the network development. In conclusion, this paper focuses on the role of key stakeholders in formatting a network in the context of content tourism. The struggle to formulate a collaborative governance approach for effective content tourism may bring positive socio-economic benefits to the city and similar declining cities in Japan. As this approach is conceptually tentative and in its developmental stage in theory and practice, it needs to be complemented by additional research findings from empirical case studies conducted with broader and more diverse stakeholder involvement.

KEYWORDS: Contents Tourism, Collaborative Governance, Networking, Assessment, Sasebo

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The tourism sector in Japan have been exploring ways to promote and assess progress towards contents tourism. These efforts have reflected growing interest and recognition of contents tourism, to be more successful they need to integrate both government sectors and private sectors through cross-sectoral collaboration and its network that can enhance the level of stakeholder participation in tourism development. The cross-sectoral collaboration with broad stakeholder has emerged recently as an important topic in the public policy literature.

Today, in Japan, there are considerable amount and array of contents tourism-related activities taking place in the context of cross-sectoral networks of diverse individuals and organisations. Given the importance of diverse entities working together to accomplish common objectives and produce shared value, such systems have been identified as comprising a new form of “collaborative governance”.

Available literature on collaborative governance in the tourism sector provides much useful information on how collaborative governance systems can be designed and managed so as to work effectively. However, there is still much to be learned from studying a diverse array of these efforts to better understand how they function and what makes it work successfully.
This paper focuses on a case of collaborative governance recently initiated to promote contents tourism activities in Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan. Between 2018 and 2019, the Sasebo Project Team for Regional Revitalization (SPTR2), as a cross-sectoral network of stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

As a research methodology, this study is a qualitative case study based on (structured and semi-structured) interviews with SPTR2 stakeholders and document analysis. The paper contextualises the early stages of content tourism development in Sasebo and identifies key management issues that need to be addressed to capture future opportunities. Furthermore, it reflects on the recent characteristics of content tourism in Japan as a potential option to promote regional revitalisation.

FINDINGS

According to interviews with SPTR2 members, one problem has been the spread of content tourism related activities, which has increased the awareness of the content’s tourism to residents and tourists. However, there have been reports of cases where people have used characters in games without the permission of the content holders and have been severely warned by the content rights holders. There are also reports of cases of severe warnings from SPTR2.

Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to establish a compliance system within the region, as well as rules or guidelines regarding the use of content tourism-related resources (e.g., copyright pictures of characters). In Sasebo, many of key players in the tourism sector have long-standing formal and informal, as well as personal and professional relationships, which provide a foundation of trust and a source of social capital for the “start-up” of SPTR2.

In order for SPTR2 to develop into a significant system with a meaningful impact on sustainable contents tourism in Sasebo, it is necessary to build quality relationships, create an environment of trust and openness, and establish the conditions for “authentic dialogue” as the basis for collective decision-making and joint implementation. Ongoing effort will be needed.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the analysis, from a comparative perspective, this paper examines what features of the Sasebo context are particularly important for considering SPTR2 and the conditions necessary for its success.

First, there is a kind of paradox regarding the formation of networks in Sasebo. There are already a number of associations, federations, and networks in the tourism sector. Some stakeholders seem to be willing to actively participate in tourism-related events and become part of some kind of affiliation group.

However, one of the main challenges in promoting the regional integration of tourism is the need for a “paradigm shift from ‘me’ to ‘us’” (Lima 2009). The challenge of overcoming the tendency towards self-interest may be nearly universal, but according to the authors’ observations, there is still a lack of discussion in terms of what is needed for the network as a whole to benefit. Given the potential for synergies in the tourism sector, this paradigm shift could provide the basis for identifying win-win solutions that simultaneously benefit multiple diverse stakeholders.
CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The significance of the research is that it will help to build cross-sectoral governance in effective content tourism (industry), especially in cities where access to content industry and content business is limited.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the members of SPTR2 for their interview assistance in writing this paper.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
As a result of globalisation, destination marketing has become essential as cities, states, regions and countries compete with one another to attract huge investment and tourists (Baker & Cameron, 2008). In order for these destinations to compete effectively, it is essential to explore how natural disasters may have impacted the destination. Basic utilities such as water resources could have been impacted by natural disasters. To date, little is known on the impact of natural disasters on the water supply which may directly and indirectly affect the image of a destination. Information on the characteristics of natural disasters, namely floods and drought, (i.e., the time duration, location and the severity) based on the individual destination are also not known. Hence, the main objective of this study is to understand the economic and socio-economic aspects of natural disasters on water supply. To fulfill the research gap, a qualitative study was performed. Specifically, two focus group discussions were executed on household representatives of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur in regard to natural disasters like floods and droughts. Based on the research findings, there is no issue of water supply associated with the flood crisis. However, there are mix opinions on the correlation of droughts and the water supply, with majority believing that there is no correlation between droughts and water supply in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The findings of this qualitative study may serve as the foundation for a quantitative study (i.e., developing sets of questionnaires), and may contribute for policymakers and water utility providers in comprehending the issues and taking precautions prior to the occurrence of natural disasters.

KEYWORDS: Destination Marketing, Water Supply, Flood, Drought, and Sustainable Tourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Due to the increasing population growth, urbanisation industrialisation, and various economic activities (Syuhada et al., 2021) including tourism activity, the demand for water supply is projected to undergo massive changes especially in urban area such as the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. Yet, the service of water supply is normally taken for granted (Syuhada et al., 2021).

Based on previous studies, little is known about the impact of natural hazards, such as floods and drought, towards water supply. Information on the characteristics of natural hazards, namely flood and drought, (i.e., the time duration, location and the severity) based on individual destination are also not known. Therefore, the objectives of this study are two-fold.
The first objective of this study is to explore the characteristics of natural hazards, namely floods and droughts, on water supply of Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The second objective of this study is to understand the economic and socio-economic aspects natural disasters (such as floods and droughts) on water supply in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

METHODOLOGY
This study begins with the development of a qualitative interview guide. Based on the flood and drought zoning areas in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, two (2) focus group discussions were used to interview households (20 interviewees).

Specifically, 8 respondents were interviewed regarding the floods and 12 respondents were interviewed regarding droughts in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. These households were chosen from areas affected by flash floods and droughts (in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur), making them ideal respondents.

Each focus group discussion took place between 90 to 120 minutes. All qualitative data were successfully collected and transcribed verbatim. Interviews performed in other languages (other than English) were then translated and manually analysed.

FINDINGS
The key findings of this study are that the floods usually occur on the low land or near the river, construction area. It occurred more often in the 1990s compared to in the 2000s and 2010s, and frequently occurred in the evening. Some of the households mentioned that floods usually happen during the rainy season.

Still, some said that floods could occur at any time without regard to any specific season. The duration of the floods were usually short; only a few hours long and do not take more than a few days to clear. There are different opinions on the floods’ length and depth be it; ankle, calf, knee, thigh, or waist deep. The floods impacts include: an increase in the financial burden on affected households, trauma, immobility, damage to property and belongings, the need for relocation (of both people and belongings), the need for cleaning, product safety, psychological distress and inconvenience.

With regard to the water supply, there has been no issues with the water supply in the aftermath of a flood in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

The majority of the representatives believe that the Federal Territory is quite experienced in handling droughts; as it usually happens at the beginning and in the middle of the year. Some representatives indicated that the droughts might take several days or several months to clear, during which the drought temperatures move between “hot” and “extra hot”. The effects of the droughts on households are unpleasant and uncomfortable, the impact on crop yields is disastrous with lower water levels, and less rain.

Some representatives had no water supply issues during drought, while others experienced bad water supply issues during drought, especially after the water disruptions.

CONCLUSION
The key findings of the focus group discussions with the households suggests that there were no issue of water supply associates with the flood crisis in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. However, opinions were mixed with regards to droughts and water supply in Kuala Lumpur. Some respondents suggested that
there was a possible correlation, and some said that they were unsure whether there was a correlation between droughts and water supply. Majority of the interviewees were of the opinion that there was no correlation between droughts and water supply in Kuala Lumpur.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the findings from this study (characteristics of floods and droughts in urban areas as well as the impact of such disasters on the on-water supply as well as the economic and socio-economic impacts of the same) may serve as the foundation for future research.

In order to generalise these qualitative findings, future research may use a quantitative approach. The findings of this qualitative study on floods and droughts may serve as the foundation for such a quantitative study, and aid in the development of sets of questionnaires; to be distributed to households.

Practically, this study may also contribute to policymakers and water utility providers comprehension of the issues that arise due to water disruptions caused by natural disasters, and take the necessary preventive measures before these natural disasters hit. Without the strong understanding of water disruption issues at a destination (such as in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur), the destinations image may be tarnished.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded by National Water Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM).

REFERENCES


REVIEW OF THEORIES AND MODEL OF RESEARCH ON LIMINALITY IN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Liminality is important in the tourism field to measure the tourist experience from their satisfaction, whether the actual reality experienced meets their expectations. Conceptual research method using secondary data are used in this study. This paper reviews some selected theories and models to comprehend more on the concept of liminality with tourism. For that, the theories and models that would be examined are Five Phases Tourism Model (1966), SERVQUAL Model (1988), Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) and Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory (2016). The Five Phases Tourism Model is a model used to describe the experience in various phases: expectation, away trip, tourist destination, return trip, and memories, while a SERVQUAL Model is used to measure the quality of service. The Liminality Tourism Structure Model describes the tourist experience from various elements such as physical, social, and emotional. Finally, the Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory compares the classical liminal experience of society in ancient times and the liminal experience of post-modern society. The literature review results show that the theories and models aid in explaining tourist experience using five phases and was influenced by several aspects. Thus, the combination of all these existing models related to liminality will help to understand tourists more deeply and measure the level of tourist satisfaction that are seen from their experience, expectation, and the actual reality being experienced by them.

KEYWORDS: Theory, Model, Liminality, Tourism, Tourists Experience

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Liminality was first introduced in the fields of anthropology and sociology by Van Gennep (1909) to describes the transitional phase of an individual. However, the development of the liminality concept has caused this concept to be applied in various fields such as geography, tourism and others to describe temporary conditions, landscapes and experiences gained.

Therefore, the uses of liminality theories and models in tourism are necessary to explain the tourist experiences based on their expectations and actual reality experienced by them. Hence, the purpose of this study is to review some selected theories and models to comprehend better the concept of liminality in tourism.

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual research was the research method that was used in this study. This conceptual research was conducted by observing and analysing information from secondary data sources that are related to the research topic. Secondary data involves using already existing data.
The data was summarised and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of the research. The data was collected from the Internet, libraries, archives and so on. It was a convenient, cost-effective, and time-saving method. Especially since a huge amount of secondary data can also be accessed from a wide variety of resources quickly and easily.

**FINDINGS**

The combination of all existing theories and models which are, Five Phases Tourism Model (1966), SERVQUAL Model (1988), Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) and Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory (2016) related to liminality will help in understanding tourists better and to measure the level of tourist satisfaction that are seen from their experience, expectation, and the actual reality being experienced by them.

i) The Five Phases Tourism Model (1966) emphasise the tourist experience in five phases which are:

ii) expectation, where tourists imagine and plan their trip by reviewing guidebooks, travel review sites, Google Earth and other related resources that are needed,

iii) away trip, which refers to the journey of tourists towards their destination by using transport such as car, bus, plane and so forth,

iv) on-site (tourism destination), where the opportunities for experience to take place,

v) return trip, which refers to the return journey of tourist from tourist destination to the place of their origin and

vi) memories, where the tourist acquires good and bad memories from the tourist destination visited.

Next, the SERVQUAL Model (1988) explains that the model is divided into five dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability responsiveness, assurance and empathy that can be used in determining the satisfaction level of tourists at tourist destinations visited based on tourist experiences and the actual perception of tourists on the reality experienced.

Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) elucidates that the liminal experience of tourists derived from experience in terms of physical, social, social symbolism, nature and the search for sensation where the results shows that emotional arousal mediates the positive effects of:

i) social,

ii) socially symbolic and

iii) natural tourscapes on liminal experience while physical tourscape affect the emotional arousal but negatively.

Sensation seeking also positively influences liminal experience among tourists. Furthermore, Classical and Post-Modern Comparative Theory (2016) describes that there has been a development of advanced liminality in the post-modern age where the liminal experience is freer and more open than in the past. This post-modern theory has identified some major cultural changes in tourist experience that shows that liminality evolved in line with the post-modern theory.

At first, the classical conceptualisation of liminality by Turner emphasises that an individual is obliged to enter the liminal state. However, the post-modern theory states that tourists choose to enter the liminal state voluntarily.
CONCLUSION
The liminal experience of a tourist is not an easy thing to explain. Therefore, these liminality related theories and models will be able to describe the perceived tourist experience using five phases that are influenced by several aspects to understand tourists more deeply.

Furthermore, these theories and models will help to measure the level of satisfaction among tourists that are seen from their experience, expectation and the actual reality being experienced by them. The challenge now is applying the theory and model of liminality to tourism to measure the tourist experience that will cultivate the concept and aspects of liminality in the tourism sector.

In other contexts, most tourist experience studies still lack application of existing liminality theories and models to measure tourist experience. Therefore, it is time for innovation in measuring the tourist experience based on the theory and model of liminality in existing tourism to provide a more meaningful, holistic and complementary tourist experience.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
The review of theories and models of research on liminality in tourism can contribute theoretically where this paper helps to pioneer ideas and improve existing theories and models of the tourist liminal experience in terms of their expectation and actual reality experienced by them. This will be able to improve the existing theoretical framework that are related to liminality in tourism.

Furthermore, this paper can also contribute practically to i) academics (researchers) by strengthening the knowledge and literature resources on liminality in tourism, ii) government (policymakers) by helping the government to understand the behaviour of tourists that will help them develop the tourism sector through providing tourism products and services that meet the needs and desires of tourists and iii) society (community) to make them understand the concept of liminality more deeply and clearly. Lastly, this study will be able to contribute empirically to the knowledge of geography in tourism that are related to liminality.

REFERENCES
MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEMS AND LODGING BUSINESS MODEL IN JAPANESE RYOKANS

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ABSTRACT

The lodging sector in Japan has experienced a shrinking market size of traditional lodging providers (known as ryokans). Ryokans, which account for about 40% of Japanese lodging market, have operated their lodging businesses based on a unique business model that has been in existence for over 1,000 years. About 30% of ryokans are in a declining stage, where they are unable to break away from the traditional business models and are in a negative spiral of continuing deficits. The intent of this paper is to understand how ryokans innovate their business model while maintaining some of their traditional fundamental elements. This paper adopts a multiple-case study approach based on the two high-performing ryokans with long histories. Our findings add the ryokans’ commercial-cultural context to existing literature that describes the role of management control systems (MCS) in supporting business model innovation. Understanding the achievement of their business model innovation from a long-term perspective of about thirty years provides our paper with theoretical originality. We conclude that the weights of formal and informal controls in MCS are equal in the long term regardless of the direction of their business model innovation. In recent years, tourism policy has encouraged ryokans to use management accounting information to overcome their low-profit businesses. Our practical suggestions complement the tourism policy that presupposes the use of management accounting information alone, and support ryokan managers to use it as a part of MCS.

KEYWORDS: Management control systems, Business model innovation, Japanese lodging sector, Ryokans, Qualitative case studies

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this paper is to understand the role of management control systems (MCS) in supporting business model innovation of ryokans which have operated as the Japanese lodging business model for over 1,000 years. Although ryokans which account for about 40% of Japanese lodging market, about 30% of them could not break away from the traditional business model and are in a negative spiral of continuing deficits.

We are interested in understanding how ryokans under the commercial-cultural context innovate their business model while maintaining some of their traditional elements. MCS which influences human or organizational behavior towards achieving desired organizational goals and strategies acts as an organizational vector in dealing and adapting to change.

METHODOLOGY

We recognised the literature gap that little is known about MCS practices, including the use of management accounting information, at ryokans operating in a commercial-cultural context. This study conducts a multiple-case study approach based on two high-performing ryokans with long histories of survivability.
The ryokans were selected due to the following criteria i.e. (a) they have advanced initiatives to help improve innovation and profitability, (b) ryokans which have been operating for over a hundred years in hot-spring areas and family-owned. This appears the typical features of ryokans, therefore this research generalises the theory and analysis. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with their presidents and head of the corporate planning office.

FINDINGS

The formal and informal MCS plays an important role in ensuring that the limited management resources are utilized effectively. The MCS exists via the four levers (beliefs, business, boundary, diagnostic and interactive systems), depending on the strategic direction of the respective organizations. The weights of formal and informal controls eventually are equal in the long-term.

CONCLUSION

While evidence from the case companies clearly supports that there was a strategic direction search between business model innovation and MCS even under commercial-cultural context, it only explained their short-term direction. It can be concluded that even among companies with different strategic directions in the short-term, they will experience equal formal and informal control weights of MCS in the long-term.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our conclusions and theoretical originality were drawn by understanding the achievement of business model innovation from a long-term perspective of about thirty years. The study also suggested to ryokan management that it has practical implications for continuous improvement of MCS for business model innovation.

Ryokan management is required to actively utilise management accounting information to improve their efficiency and profitability by Japanese tourism policy. Our findings do not deny management accounting information. However, the best practices of case companies indicate that the control by management accounting does not work without being supported by other formal and informal controls in MCS.

In addition, we proposed to the ryokan management that staff actions could be promoted and regulated through MCS in order to maximise the Japanese hospitality (omotenashi) that represents the ryokans’ traditional value.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish acknowledge the valuable comments from an anonymous reviewer. We also thank the participants from the two ryokans whose cooperate semi-structured interviews.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
Tourism is the economic driver for many emerging countries, and the main key distribution components of wealth in the world. Globally, tourism generated over 10% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provided an estimation of 115 million jobs in 2017. Moreover, the tourism sector consumed 1% of the global consumption of water. This paper reviews the current literature that focuses on water usage in tourism sector and water management initiatives in tourism in order to identify the current and future contrast between water demand and supply for sustainable tourism, and to understand the key issues and challenges facing water usage in Malaysia. Furthermore, the paper examines the linkages between tourism and water consumption, and analyses the trends in water consumption. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of improving and enhancing the existing water resources policies in order to conserve nature while promoting sustainable tourism industry.

KEYWORDS: water use, tourism, sustainable, management

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Malaysia’s tourism sector has become one of the largest contributors to Malaysia’s GDP, which increased from 14.6% in 2017 to 15.2% in 2018. In 2018, the domestic visitors increased by about 7.7% and total domestic expenditures increased by 11.4% compared to the previous year in 2017. Inbound travel and outbound travel expenditures increased by about 2.28% and 5.77%, respectively compared to 2017.

The tourism employment raised from 3.308 million to 3.471 million people who worked in the tourism sector (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). These increases prove that tourism sector plays a major role in the economic development throughout many countries in the world including Malaysia. The tourism sector consumes 1% of the global consumption of water.

Freshwater is an important factor in performing tourism activities, such as ski or golf tourism, swimming, fishing, sailing, diving and kayaking. Tourists also consume water for baths, showers, washing and using the toilet whereas the tourism businesses needs water for gardening, irrigation, snowmaking and landscaping in the touristic areas. Tourism depends on water resources in various forms, such as winter tourism, agritourism and wildlife tourism.

Many countries have expansively been using water resources, with desalination being often used by some large industrialised countries such as United States, Italy and Spain. The freshwater imports with tanker ships have also become critical for the island states, such as Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Mallorca, the Greek Island, Fiji and Tonga (UNESCO, 2009).

The important problems that need to be considered urgently are when the freshwater usage exceeds the availability of renewable water resources, leading to significant shares of renewable water use. Increase in tourist numbers, higher standards of hotel and tourism accommodations, and the increase in water-related tourism activities will cause higher water consumption in the tourism sector by 2020 (Gossling, 2012).
As a result, the tourism management may not manage a proper water supply, jeopardizing the function of the infrastructure related to water needs for the tourists. This paper reviews the current literature that focuses on water usage in tourism sector and water management initiatives in tourism in order to identify the current and future contrast between water demand and supply for sustainable tourism, and to understand the key issues and challenges facing water use in Malaysia.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study is a literature review of water usage in the tourism sector in Malaysia based on full-text journal articles, reports, and conference proceedings sourced from both electronic and non-electronic databases. In addition to this, the websites of organisations that have researched or addressed this issue were referred to for related documents and reports. Only documents written in English were considered.

**FINDINGS**

This research has affirmed that sustainable water usage in the tourism sector is a crucial issue because tourism is the important sector in economics as mentioned by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which is Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. Moreover, the tourism sector is valued as the main sector to safeguard water resources by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2014). The meaningful information can contribute to improve the water management in tourism sector and to tally with the water indicators on tourism accommodation, particularly on water availability, water conservation and drinking water quality as proposed by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2004).

**CONCLUSION**

According to Natalia (2020), there are 22 articles focused on water consumption and their determinants in hotels. The water usage in tourism is divided into two types: direct usage, for example in accommodation and during tourist activities; and indirect usage particularly for tourists’ food-related needs and fuel use.

The main factor to determine the water usage or consumption is the hotel’s infrastructure (Tortella and Tirado, 2011), and the role and water tariffs in water consumption (Razumova et al., 2016).

Lastly, this article concludes by emphasising the importance of improving and enhancing the existing water resources policies in order to conserve nature while promoting sustainable tourism industry.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

These findings can contribute to efficiently manage the water in the tourism industry, focusing on hotels to achieve sustainable water resource in the future. Additionally, better knowledge of hotels’ water usage might help cope with freshwater scarcity, which is one of “the challenges that humanity faces” (United Nations, 2015).

Awareness on water conservation is also highly critical in tourism sector in order to improve their strategies to manage the limited resources in the future with sustainable manner.
REFERENCES


READING TOURS INTO MALAYSIAN NARRATIVES: LOCALES IN THE GARDEN OF EVENING MISTS AND THE NIGHT TIGER

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ABSTRACT
If one has not read local English novels like The Garden of Evening Mists and The Night Tiger, one would never be able to imagine the wonders of locales depicted in these two books. One of the reasons the authors here want to visit a said destination is because of the way a certain place is pictured in narratives. Tan Twan Eng brings to life the beauty of Japanese gardens in Cameron Highlands, in the backdrop of post-World War II while Yangsze Choo takes us into several small towns of Kinta Valley in the state of Perak in her beautifully woven tale of the superstitions and beliefs of the local people in Chinese folklore and myth in war torn Malaysia in the 1930s and after. Many of the places mentioned in these two novels should be considered places to visit by tourists local and international. Although these Malaysian novelists live away from Malaysia, they are clearly ambassadors of the Malaysian cultural and regional heritage. In this paper, a few of the places in the novel will be looked at as potential spots for the coming decade. The research questions considered here are i) what can be done to make written narratives the new trend to pave the way for Visit Malaysia destinations? ii) how could these narratives be promoted as guides to the history and culture of Malaysia? The significant destinations and the relevant cultural history of the regions will be discussed in-depth to come to a relevant conclusion.

KEYWORDS: The Garden of Evening Mists, The Night Tiger, tourist destinations, Cameron Highlands, Kinta Valley

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
When one speaks of ‘tourism’ what generally comes to one’s mind? If one is a regular tourist, it would be tours to take at a certain place, and most likely, the oft-visited popular localities and touristy landmarks. For the traveler perhaps, it would go deeper as travelers may avoid the regular tourist spots and prefer to go beyond. Here we would like to look further at readers perhaps. What would readers go in for when they go on a tour?

More often than not, readers would love to check out places mentioned in novels they have read so why not consider narratives as a new form of travel and tourism? It is known that scenes in celluloid have attracted people to go visit certain places and these have been proved through tours such as Sound of Music Salzburg tour and Lord of the Rings tour from Auckland to Queenstown.

If such tours can happen in foreign locales, this can be made available in Malaysia too. Actually, there are several novels in the various languages used in the country that one can consider as the locations for travelling but here we would like to look at two novels by Malaysian authors, namely The Night Tiger by Yangsze Choo and the Garden of Evening Mists by Tan Twan Eng. This kind of tourism is suggested as an exciting alternative to visiting certain lesser known or less highlighted places which are of historical significance.
METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this paper, a textual analysis has been employed to wean all the locations of interest from the novels in question. At close reading the locations provide the reader and the travel planner a whole host of places the local as well as the international (ASEAN, Asian, Arab, African, European and American) tourists may find worthy of visiting, especially via various travel modes such as trains, buses and cars.

FINDINGS

Of Folklore and Fact in The Night Tiger

A cursory reading of this novel, one gets to travel to various places in the Kinta Valley, namely Ipoh and Batu Gajah. Historically, this is set during 1930s when Malaya was occupied by colonial forces and the narrative flows into the 1970s. Basically, there is mystery at the start of the novel. In summary, this story has alternated frameworks and the lead characters are Ren, an 11-year-old ‘servant’ boy who is on a mission to locate his master’s (now dead) dislocated finger.

He meets Ji Lin, the voice through which we are immersed in the story, and who is a dressmaker by day, moonlighting as a dancehall girl for supplementary income to enable her to settle her mother’s Mahjong debts. Ji Lin helps recover the missing finger while she works as an assistant at the Batu Gajah hospital. All the characters in the novel are strangely bound to each other and their destinies merge.

What is amazing about this story is the belief in spirits and weretigers, which is similar to the concept of werewolves in western folklore. This folklore can be built into tourist brochures to enable visitors to the Kinta Valley have some background information on both Malaysia and the beliefs and superstitions such as the idea of weretigers, also seen as shapeshifters as these entities could turn from man to beast and also the Chinese belief in the elements or fengshui.

The five significant characters in the novel correspond to the five virtues in Confucianism, which according to author Choo Yangsze, comprise benevolence, honesty, knowledge, integrity and proper behaviour. These virtues could be something that tourists can learn about.

The belief that the separated finger needs to be reunited with the body within a said number of days so that Ren’s master’s soul can rest in peace is also mentioned over and over. There are endless learning points in the novel which can interest people from different towns and cities within Malaysia itself.

Fictionalised Ipoh is where part of the story takes place and we get glimpses, peeks into Kamunting, a detailed look at the Batu Gajah train stations, hospital and the Kinta river. Many events and places were also drawn from the writer’s imagination but the way the writer describes the bylanes and roads between certain houses in various places in the novel could also be capitalised on for tourism purposes.

Of Memories and Mists in The Garden of Evening Mists

Another novel that could help promote certain places in Malaysia as must-visit spots can be found in Tan Twan Eng’s The Garden of Evening Mists. Now residing in South Africa, Tan has given a beautiful description of the Cameron Highlands in his second novel.

Here, the story is told in a series of flashbacks taking the reader to various locations within the highlands, the most remarkable being a place called ‘Yugiri’ which is always bathed in mists in the evening. In the
novel, which has been adapted into celluloid, the kind of Japanese garden mentioned had to be created for the film shooting and that itself can be a tourist draw.

The novel, which won the 2012 Man Asian Literary prize tells the haunting heart-breaking tale of Yun Ling, who, along with her sister Hong, were at a Japanese prison camp where they experienced all sorts of atrocities. Yun Ling who survives and goes on to be a judge, goes back in time on her retirement and relates the story of her life and her interest in ‘constructing’ a Japanese garden in her sister’s memory.

In the process of setting up the garden, Yun Ling falls in love with the former gardener of the Japanese emperor, Nakamura Aritomo and gets to realise her dream of building the garden as a memorial for not only her sister but also for her lover.

This novel spans the time of World War II, the 1950s as well as the 1980s when the novel opens. It is a tragic tale of the horrors of war and the realization and acceptance of life’s challenging struggles, while aligning with the philosophy of the construction of Japanese gardens. The fact that most of the scenes take place in various spots in the Cameron Highlands can actually be a tourist draw. The novel also includes characters from various nationalities which can make a tourist or traveler interested in the history of the highlands.

Also the evocative scenes where the weather, the mood and the flora and fauna come alive are also points that can be emphasized in a tourist brochure. Location wise apart from the tea plantations and the Mossey forest of the Cameron Highlands, there were also other places reconstructed here especially for the film shooting and these include Carey Island, Temoh Resort and Sungai Lembing mines - locations which can be added as travel destinations for the interested tourists.

CONCLUSION

The two novels, The Night Tiger and The Garden of Evening Mists can be seen as two narratives that can pave the way for more local fictional writings to be used in the concept of ‘book trails’ and ‘story treks’ as a part of promoting reading as well as travel to Malaysians and foreigners.

These novels help take one back to various moments in time as well as different historical epochs, further heightened by the beauty of the descriptions of the places as well as local beliefs, customs and practices that can be gleaned from a quick reading of the narratives.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

More and more innovative ways can be suggested to help boost the tourism industry in Malaysia, especially now that the pandemic has affected all manner of travelling. The researchers suggest that one way can be by introducing written narratives where stories take place in believable and often ‘real’ places and those places be promoted as they have found their way into the stories, whether portraying the back alleys of a narrow housing colony, or a war torn prison camp sites, misty tea gardens, eateries in urban settings or even certain ‘dance halls’ these could be the next tourism trend.

More so, with the advent of Virtual reality and Augmented reality which are being made use of for promoting virtual tours at the click of a button in many destinations around the world, this could be the next big thing in local tourism for both local and international visitors.
REFERENCES


THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MICRO & SMALL SCALE TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector is the single largest contributor to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Malaysia. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are divided into three levels: micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, in a programme initiated by the government to reduce poverty and cut the income gap between rural and urban residents. The involvement of SMEs in the tourism industry has contributed to the development of a competitive advantage for the tourism industry in Malaysia. SMEs are an important component of the Malaysian economy, accounting for more than a third of the total GDP and providing employment to more than seven million people. However, when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a worldwide pandemic, it has radically changed the direction of the tourism sector in Malaysia, especially among the micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs). In an effort to slow the spread of the virus, numerous countries introduced and mandated the use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including hand washing and sanitisation, social distancing and social isolation. Furthermore, the government has introduced several policies, improved public health systems and closed borders. These developments have restricted and even banned international travel and domestic travel, resulting in severe negative effects on the tourism sector. This unforeseen shock, to the tourism and other sectors, has dragged on for more than 12 months. It has severely curtailed the growth of micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs), leaving many such enterprises on the brink of closure. This study examines the literature and critically reviews the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted SMEs. The methodology of this study uses the method of highlighting literature material systematically. A conceptual research method using secondary data was used in this study.

KEYWORDS: Impact, Pandemic, COVID-19, Micro and Small-Scale Tourism Entrepreneur

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Malaysian SMEs are a government initiative to reduce poverty and cut the income gap between the rural and urban populations in Malaysia. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are a major contributor to the development and the competitive advantage of the tourism industry in Malaysia. The growth of SMEs is dominated by micro and small-scale enterprises (SMEs), especially in services, which are one of the key factors that boost the country’s income and economy.

Nevertheless, the sustainability of these small and medium scale tourism industry players have been put in jeopardy by the COVID-19 outbreak which the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic due to its rapid contagion and spread around the world. This study examines the literature and critically reviews the extent to which COVID-19 has impacted SMEs.
METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study uses the method of highlighting literature material systematically. Conceptual research is the research method that are used in this study. This conceptual research is conducted by observing and analyzing present information from secondary data that are related to the research topic.

Secondary data involves using already existing data. These data are summarized and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of research. The data is collected through the internet, libraries, archives and so forth. It is a convenient, cost-effective, and time-saving methods. A huge amount of secondary data can also be accessed from a wide variety of resources.

FINDINGS

This paper provides an examination of (i) the history of the COVID-19 pandemic, (ii) the importance of micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector, (iv) pandemic impact on the tourism sector, and (v) pandemic impact of COVID-19 on the sustainability of micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs). Although a pandemic is not a new thing anymore due to the existence of a pandemic that has spread in the world, killing many.

For example, smallpox, tuberculosis, Antonine epidemic, Justinian epidemic, The Black Death, Ebola, Zika, Influenza H1N, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). However, the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic is still the biggest shock today due to the rapid manner and duration of its infection and still prevalent over the past few years.

PSMK is one of the sectors that is the largest contributor not only to the tourism sector but also to the country’s, GDP. The contribution of micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs) to the development of the tourism sector, the national economy, providing employment opportunities, improving the skills of workers and also as a support to larger enterprises is important in ensuring that micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs) grow in various aspects.

The impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry is mixed and involves various parties. Previous studies conducted by scholars found that the pandemic outbreak that affected not only the national economy but also employment.

Furthermore, the survival of micro and small scale enterprises (SMEs) hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which involved the cessation of business operations the restructuring of business structures and redesigning of operating strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the impact that had to be faced, especially by micro and small-scale enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs, is in an increasingly critical situation. More and more contingencies have to be faced following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, for which there is still no solution. All parties need to be more resilience, especially in finding a way to overcome every challenge resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accordingly, epidemic risks are complex, but policymakers need to be responsive by providing several mechanisms to deal with them. Some tools or mechanisms are used to reduce the spread of the epidemic. For achieving the goals effectively policymakers have to elaborate and implement the relevant policy.
Tourism researchers Edgell and Swanson emphasise, that public private partnership and involvement of non-governmental sector in developing tourism policy are essential, in order to achieve productive results in a short- and long-term period (Edgell D. L & Swanson J.R, 2013).

Another initiative is to reduce the health impact of the spread of uncontrollable epidemics. Meanwhile, the next strategy is to reduce the economic impact. In turn, measures to build a strong health system with complete nutritional support can help ensure a good level of basic health, thus enabling a healthier population to avoid epidemic infections.

Careful effort and planning needs to be done to ensure that micro and small-scale enterprises (SMEs) and the country’s economic sector can become competitive again.

To achieve the aim of finding academic and practical implications for making the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on micro and small-scale tourism entrepreneur, a comprehensive literature review is needed to bridge the gap in understanding how this pandemic has affected the existing micro and small enterprises.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The theoretical aspect of this study is expected to generate ideas for the formation of theories and models regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on micro and small-scale entrepreneurs. This is because this study examines a new issue regarding the COVID-19 pandemic situation that first occurred and was faced by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs and the tourism sector.

This study is able to contribute to the field of tourism geography, especially those involving Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In the academic field, this study is expected to be able to strengthen knowledge and be a source of literature for other researchers. Most previous studies on the impact and strategies of empowering micro and small-scale tourism entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic were not in-depth.

This study indirectly encourages more focused, in-depth studies to be conducted. Meanwhile, from the point of view of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs, this study is expected to increase the knowledge of each Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs who are directly involved in helping them to adapt to the current situation.

The government at the same time gets input for policy formulation. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to new knowledge in the country’s tourism industry.

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MEASURES TAKEN BY THE HOTELIERS TO OVERCOME THE COVID-19 IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

The hotel industry which supports the tourism industry, plays a crucial part in Malaysia’s economic development. Unfortunately, the outbreak of COVID-19 has caused the tourism industry to make huge losses, both locally and globally in terms of cancellation of all travel and tour activities, including accommodations. Many researchers have attempted to highlight the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on various sectors, however limited studies have been conducted to address how the hospitality industry can mitigate this situation to recover and revive the hospitality industry. Recent reported figures lack of empirical and academic underpinning. This paper aims to fill the gap. It is thus imperative to examine the measures being taken by hoteliers in order to overcome this unprecedented scenario. Therefore, this study’s aim is to highlight the measures taken by the hoteliers to overcome the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in terms of staff employment, working terms and hotels’ loss of revenue. A qualitative research method was deemed appropriate to investigate this scenario. The data collection was founded based on the Grounded Theory approach and feedback was collected through semi-structured interviews among 15 staffs from the Food and Beverage, Accounts and Front Office departments which were selected using purposive sampling from five different hotels in Penang. The findings showed that all of the respondents have come to the agreement that the measures taken by their hotels to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of staff employment and work conditions were to lower the hotel operations costs. This was done by reducing the number of employees and reducing staffs’ salaries. Other measures taken by the hotel management to mitigate the pandemic’s impact include increasing room sales, venturing into other services, and extending bookings for events. The findings of this study have some practical implications for hoteliers as they can adopt similar strategies in their respective hotels as a means of coping with impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Hotel Industry, Impact, Measures to Overcome COVID-19, Grounded Theory

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Many researchers have attempted to highlight the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on various sectors (Bonaccorsi et al., 2020; Ashraf, 2020; Baker et al., 2020), however limited empirical studies have been conducted to address how the tourism and hospitality industry mitigated this situation.

This was also supported by Yacoub and ElHajjar (2020), who conducted a study to address the managerial reactions of the hotel industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential strategic approaches that hotels might adopt in the future. Although there were quite a number of recorded figures and measures done by hoteliers being addressed in printed medias especially newspapers recently, however these figures lack of empirical and academic underpinning.
Thus, this paper aims to fill in the gap in the research that maps a way forward as a guide to recover and revive the hospitality industry. Especially since the tourism and hotel industry is one of the biggest contributors to the Malaysian economy. Thus, it is critical to understand the strategies taken by hoteliers as the information gathered would be useful for other hoteliers in the industry who are still struggling to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 towards their business operations.

Hence, a study to explore the measures taken by hotels in order to fight the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in terms of staff employment, working terms and hotels’ loss of revenue is worth conducting. These findings could not only inform the authorities on the appropriate support that could be provided to assist in the post-COVID recovery of hotel industry in Malaysia, but also as a reference point by other hoteliers.

Therefore, the objective of this study was to identify the measures taken by the hotel industry to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 based on Grounded Theory approach.

METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature as not a lot of researches has been done regarding this issue, especially concerning the staff employment, working terms and hotels’ loss of revenue. Thus, this study seeks to gain insights on the informants’ responses regarding the measures taken by hoteliers to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 towards the hotel industry.

Therefore, a qualitative method was applied to seek the abundance of informants’ responses regarding the purpose of the study. The data collection was founded based on the Grounded Theory approach, a methodology initially introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1969). Grounded theory purports that the collected data based on informants’ feedback will be utilized to create theories, and according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), relevant aspects could be discovered under specific social fields when utilizing this theory.

Although Grounded Theory does not necessarily produce a formal theory every time it is applied, it has aided in constructing conceptual analyses of a particular experience. Data collection was done via semi-structured interviews among 15 staff members from the Food and Beverage, Accounts and Front Office departments who were selected using purposive sampling from five different hotels in Penang.

The collected data was then transcribed and analysed via thematic content analysis to make sense of the data and coming out with appropriate themes to answer the study’s objective.

FINDINGS

The findings revealed that all informants agreed that the measures taken by their hotels to overcome the COVID-19 impacts in terms of staff employment and working terms was to lower down the hotel operation cost. This was done by reducing the number of employees and also reducing staffs’ income.

In terms of reducing the number of employees, steps taken include halting the hiring of part-time staff and implementing staggered or flexible working schedule, while unpaid leaves and salary cuts were used as other ways to cut the hotel operation costs as measures to decrease the staffs’ salaries. Apart from that, other measures taken by the hotel management to overcome the pandemic’s impact in terms of reducing the hotel loss included increasing room sales, venturing into other services, and extending bookings for events.
CONCLUSION

The Grounded Theory approach which acts as the underpinning theory for this study has provided the necessary conceptual underpinnings in terms of bringing forward some practical measures which could be replicated by other hoteliers in the case of any pandemic.

Overall, based on the informants’ feedback during the interview sessions, they were aware and knowledgeable about COVID-19 and they were also able to highlight the steps taken by the hotel industry in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 towards the employment of staff and working terms, and also how to reduce the loss of hotel revenue.

The findings managed to adequately answer the research aims of the undertaken study and provide useful insights on measure undertaken by hoteliers to mitigate COVID-19 impact which supported the existing literature gap. It has become critical to conduct researches similar to the undertaken study in order to identify and highlight the strategies that will help the hotel industry to sustain their businesses despite the pandemic.

Thus, this will aid in conveying some innovative ideas as alternative strategies in redesigning Malaysia’s tourism landscape in this challenging situation.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study is deemed practical especially on how the different hotels coped with impacts of COVID-19 from the aspect of staff employment and working terms, in addition to mitigating the loss of revenue that might be caused by the pandemic as they could be a good source of reference for industry players.

Further, the findings of this study have practical implication for hoteliers as they could adopt or improvise similar strategies in their respective hotels to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the findings would help inform the authorities regarding the appropriate support that could be provided to assist the post-COVID recovery of the hotel industry.

This measure may provide some basis for theoretical contribution for this kind of study, especially concerning the unique nature of the hospitality industry. It has become critically important now for the hoteliers to look into ways to maintain the operation of its facilities at the most economically feasible scale despite the plummeting demand for accommodation. This is to ensure continuity of business, apart from generating considerable amount of revenue to sustain its facilities, employees and potential influx of guests. Thus, the management of hotels which are equally affected by COVID-19 may consider and adopting similar measures implemented by other hotels as part of their efforts to face the challenges posed by the pandemic.

For instance, strategies such as offering unpaid leave, pay cuts, reshuffling of staff work schedule and implementation of staggered working hours may provide a better solution for employee management during the pandemic instead of retrenchment, as this would help the hotels to retain its talents and manpower until the situation improves in the future. On the other hand, alternative services offered by the affected hotels such as food delivery or even renting their parking lots may also be adopted by other hoteliers in order to diversify their ways of generating income as room sales takes a nosedive (Solomon, 2020).

The findings of this study also have practical implication towards the authorities and ministries responsible for the operations and sustainability of hotel industry during the strike of COVID-19. The
information gathered through this study may inform the relevant authorities and ministries of the challenges faced by the hoteliers which urgently need their interventions, both for short and long-term sustainability.

REFERENCES


AUSTRALIAN HOTEL ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR PRE AND MID COVID-19 ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE
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ABSTRACT
This study focuses on the Australian hotel organisation and their organisational resilience (O.R.) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Its objectives are to leverage the “Hotel Resilience model” developed by Melián-Alzola et al. (2020) and the Benchmark Resilience Tool to gain indications of the level of O.R. of the Australian hotel sector, to determine the relationship between the hotel O.R. indicators and the financial outcomes and to document O.R. related tactics and strategies implemented in the Australian hotel industry during the Global pandemic. By adopting a qualitative research approach using experts’ interviews with 10 hotels general or operations managers, the study found that there was no formal awareness of or adoption of formal O.R. frameworks within the participating hotels nor was there any indication of an appetite for the implementation of any O.R. frameworks, also as a result of lack of data, the study was unable to determine a link between O.R. indicators and financial outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Organisational Resilience Practice, Global Pandemic, Australian Hotel Sector, Covid-19

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
The COVID-19 pandemic has affected business performances across the globe and across many industries, amongst which the hospitality industry is significantly affected. Hotels within Australia must ensure that they have Organisational Resilience (O.R.). O.R. practices are key to both manage a crisis effectively and ensure that a business is in place for the long term. This research is therefore to determine the effects of the global pandemic on hotel business performance.

 METHODOLOGY
This research adopted a qualitative research approach using experts’ interviews with 10 hotels general or operations managers. It provides insights into O.R. practices within the Australian hotel industry, affected of the global pandemic on hotel management, areas for targeted improvement within the O.R. to strengthen the industry, while the overall O.R. awareness and capabilities mature. By using constant comparison analysis approach, the data was analysed to compare pre and post COVID-19 situations, and recurring themes of actions taken or plans to address O.R.

FINDINGS
The research on first objective (what was the level of Organisational Resilience of the Australian hotel industry?) found that there was no formal awareness of or adoption of formation O.R. frameworks within the participating hotels. The findings on the second objective (determine whether hotels with high O.R. indicators fared well during the COVID-19 crisis (as measured by profit increase or decreases between
March 2019 and March 2021)) and was difficult to determine with only half of the hotel managers providing accurate details of profitability. The consequence of sample size meant that it was unable to be determined whether there is a link between strength in O.R. indicator activities and the financial performance.

The final objective targeted was to determine both if the Australian hotel industry has put in place O.R. measures, and if so what strategies or tactics they have planned/implemented. There was no indication of any appetite for the implementation of any Organisational Resilience frameworks. The focus of leaders within the industry trended towards risk mitigation.

Despite these outcomes, there was a strong level of acceptance of and the desire for the risk management practices of crisis management or business continuity planning, elements of O.R. (Melián-Alzola et al., 2020), which may be a good foundation for O.R. framework implementation.

CONCLUSION
Comparison of the hotel O.R. approaches, before Covid-19 and at this time have indicated crisis management and adaptive behaviours (in response to customer requirements or issue resolution) appears to be embedded into the Australian industry, yet the concepts of overall O.R. has not yet reached the Australian hotel industry and may be ripe for development.

It is noted that the confidence in risk (crisis/incident) management practices/skills demonstrated by many leaders interviewed may lead to some resistance to acceptance of the possibility that there is room for improvement or a need to consider O.R.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
It is recommended that industry leaders across hotels (CEO’s, owners and hotel managers) consider the strategic perspective of Organisational Resilience rather than pure risk management (disaster recovery, crisis or incident management etc.).

The revealed areas for targeted improvement within the O.R. indicators are Decision Making, Internal Resources and Stress Testing of Plans: an uplift in these internal capabilities will strengthen the industry, while the overall O.R. awareness and capabilities mature.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
As recent studies show, tourists increasingly favour hotels and other tourism businesses that adopt more sustainable practices. This trend has arguably been intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, due to the restrictions regarding crowded places and closed spaces, a lot of tourists have (re)discovered nature. In this context, the present study aims to analyse tourists’ evaluation of sustainability criteria and willingness to pay for items when choosing a destination during the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, previously validated scales for sustainability criteria and willingness to pay (for a sustainable destination) were tested, through a confirmatory approach, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, data was collected through a survey questionnaire (n=567) with Portuguese tourists and subjected to a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The findings show that the factors hold their dimensionality, convergent validity, and reliability in the context of Portuguese tourists travelling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, a newly proposed item, related to the importance given to the inclusion of local producers in the tourism industry’s supply chain, was validated. The findings also show that, especially when it comes to willingness to pay, factors with a direct effect on tourists’ experience are significantly more valued. Additionally, the results point to a slightly different outlook on sustainability criteria by Portuguese tourists, which is likely related to the context of the pandemic. Finally, the findings provide useful insights for destination managers aiming to attract tourists with a more sustainable behaviour.

KEYWORDS: Tourism sustainability, Sustainable destination, Sustainability criteria, Willingness to pay, Covid-19

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
As recent studies show, tourists increasingly favour hotels and other tourism businesses that adopt more sustainable practices. This trend has arguably been intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, due to the restrictions regarding crowded places and closed spaces, a lot of tourists have (re)discovered nature. Indeed, tourism in nature does not necessarily mean sustainable tourism.

However, tourism in natural areas has the potential of educating tourists about the need for preserving natural resources and adopting a more sustainable lifestyle. In this context, the present study aimed to analyse tourists’ evaluation of sustainability criteria and willingness to pay items when choosing a destination during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY
To achieve the present study’s objective, data was collected through a survey questionnaire (n=567) with Portuguese tourists. The questionnaire included 24 sustainability criteria for destination choice and 15 items of tourists’ willingness to pay for sustainable practices.
The items were operationalized though 7-point Likert scale questions, through which respondents were invited to demonstrate how much importance they attribute to each item. The data was subjected to a confirmatory approach based on factor solution achieved by a previous study (Aydın & Alvarez, 2020).

**FINDINGS**

The findings show that the factors hold their dimensionality, convergent validity, and reliability in the context of Portuguese tourists travelling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only one factor of sustainability criteria was excluded due to its negative effect on reliability.

Moreover, the proposition of a new item, related to the importance given to the inclusion of local producers in the tourism industry’s supply chain, both on the sustainability criteria and willingness to pay items, was corroborated. The findings also show that, especially when it comes to willingness to pay, factors with a direct effect on tourists’ experience are significantly more valued.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings show that Portuguese tourists have a different outlook on the analysed items, particularly the sustainability criteria, as they tend to attribute a very similar value to all items within the list. This might be explained by an inherently different attitude to sustainable tourism criteria, when compared to other nationalities or specific tourist segments.

Another possibility is that this undifferentiated evaluation is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which might have exacerbated the importance given to certain items, while obscuring that of other items.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The present study shows that, in addition to previously tested items, tourists also value the inclusion of local producers in the tourism supply chain when choosing a destination, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings also suggest that tourists are more likely to to pay more for sustainable practices when they have an expected positive effect on their overall experience. In this context, tourism businesses are advised to prioritise local-based supply chains and market such initiatives in a way that highlights the benefits to guests’ experiences, rather focusing exclusively on the enhancement of local quality of life and overall sustainability performance.

**REFERENCES**


ABSTRACT

For the event organiser, Sabah is one of the states that becomes a focal point. As Sabah is one of the most popular tourist destinations, several large events such as the Sabah Jazz Festival, Pesta Lepa-lepa, Pesta Kaamatan, Pesta Kalimaran, and other festivals have been held. However, COVID 19’s disruptive impacts have had such a significant impact on the event sector. Most of the events are getting cancelled or postponed all over the world. Over the past several months, a significant number of meetings and conferences have been redesigned as virtual events. However, the event industry needs to know the readiness of the public towards the shifting from the physical to the digital. Therefore, the objective of this research is to determine the event audience readiness for digital events. It is important for the event industry to know the readiness and a good online platform in providing a good service to their audience. A quantitative method was used to conduct this study. The main finding will see how far our communities is ready to adapt the new norm. Based on the finding it shows that event audience are willing to adopt the event digitisation, and this is due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic which was accelerating changes in event audience behaviour. This research will benefit the event organisers and help them prepare strategic plans to cater to the audience needs.

KEYWORDS: Event Industry, Readiness, Event Digitization, Covid 19

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

All the major industries of the world are currently dealing with the devastating effects of COVID-19 or known as coronavirus. Year 2020 has seen shifts in the way businesses and organisations operate in the wake of the deadly virus affecting everything from manufacturing to marketing. The events industry just like the other business industry has also been badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most of the events were cancelled or postponed all over the world, including in Sabah. The events industry has been strongly affected by the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Event organisers are required to follow the guidelines set by public health officials and the direction of the local government to help stop the spread of the virus.

Therefore, The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recently published a document that offers both general and COVID-19 specific considerations for organisers hosting large events. In this unusual scenario, event organisers are required to reconsider their options and to balance their priorities which is to uphold the health and safety of staff, sponsors, and attendees.

Additionally, the event organiser needs to come up with different strategies to sustain their event business. Over the past few weeks, a significant number of meetings and conferences have been redesigned as virtual events. If adaptable, this meeting format is probably the best alternative in these challenging times. By their very nature, virtual events allow attendance irrespective of travel restrictions and facilitates the delivery of vanguard information.
Moreover, this format is perfectly compatible with event marketing and sponsorship strategies while allowing planners to be ready for any eventuality. If they are strategically planned to use the right technologies, virtual events can reach a wider audience than traditional live events.

However, the event industry needs to know the perceptions and the readiness of the public towards the shifting from the physical events to the digital events, especially in Sabah. For some of the event audience this is a new norm for them. In addition, not all communities have their accessibility to the internet connection. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the perceptions and readiness of the public for digital events.

METHODOLOGY
The study has been conducted in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah with the aim of examining the audience readiness for digital events. The study used quantitative approach and use the structured questionnaire as the research instrument. The target population of this study is the event audience that have attend any online event. The questionnaire was distributed using google form. A total of 169 respondents has participated in the data collection. The study used a five-point Likert scale in the survey instrument, which ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Event audience readiness was measured from 4 dimension according to the TRI namely optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity.

FINDINGS
The findings of the study further prove the TRI model as developed by Parasuraman (2000) can indeed prove the event audience readiness towards event digitization. This study shows that the 4 dimensions of event audience readiness which represent by optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity are positively impact on the behavioral intention in adopting the new ways of attending an event.

Overall, the event audience are ready to use and are adapting to the new event style even though there is some discomfort and insecurity in attending the virtual event. The COVID 19 pandemic is accelerating changes in event audience behavior. Event audience willingness to adopt digital is reflected in attitudes towards online events.

CONCLUSION
It is important for the event industry to know the readiness and a good online platform in providing a good service to their audience. Based on the result, we can see how far our communities is ready to adapt the new norm. Studies on the adoption of new technology are not new, however studies relating the readiness of the event audience toward the digitalization are relatively new considering the fact that now most of the event is going virtually.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
The result of this research also will assist the State Government to facilitate the communities for what their lacking in term of technology infrastructure. Besides that, further research is needed as this study only focus on the readiness and intention and not on the competencies of the audience in using the new technology. This research also will benefit the event organizer and they can prepare strategic plan to cater their audience needs.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the Research and Innovation Management Centre, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, for funding this research project (Grant No: SDK0201-2020).

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Spiritual tourism also known as one type of special interest tourism activity based on the expectations related with spirituality is now continuously developing and is being demanded by tourists. This demand is in line with the improvement of tourism information technology. Spiritual tourism will continuously develop due to the changes in the needs of the market. Initially, spiritual activities are directly connected with religion, and they have now shifted to the idea to something that is related with spiritual activities which include, creating comfort, pleasure and quality experience. Despite of the rapid development, it can be seen in the academic research, there are still several researchers who argue that religious and spiritual tourism as the same type of tourism.

Religious spiritual tourism requires a new mode as a form of quality tourism development so that it will organise socio-cultural life with varieties of unique customs and become a tool to increase regional income, creating job opportunities and indirectly improve Malaysians’ quality of life. Thus, there is an urge to integrate the religious aspect into spiritual tourism. Hence, this research aims to develop an Islamic Spiritual Tourism Model (ISToM) based on Maqasid As Shariah. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the existing knowledge about values and provide implications for developing spiritual tourism sustainably.

KEYWORDS: Spiritual Tourism; Islamic Tourism; Islam; Religious Tourism

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Spiritual tourism also known as special interest tourism based on the expectations related with spirituality is now developing and in demand by tourists. This demand is in line with the improvement of tourism information technology. Spiritual tourism will continuously develop due to the changes in the needs of the market.

Initially, spiritual activity was directly connected with religion, and has now shifted to the idea to something that is related with spiritual activities which include, creating comfort, pleasure and quality experience. Despite of the rapid development, it can be seen in the academic research, there are still several researchers who argue that religious and spiritual tourism as the same type of tourism.

Religious spiritual tourism requires a new mode as a form of quality tourism development so that it will organise socio-cultural life with varieties of unique customs and become a tool to increase regional income, creating job opportunities and indirectly improve Malaysians’ quality of life.

Thus, there is an urgent need to integrate the religious aspect into spiritual tourism. Hence, this research aims to develop an Islamic Spiritual Tourism Model (ISToM) based on Maqasid As Shariah.
This research aims to develop an Islamic Spiritual Tourism Model (ISToM) for the millennial generation in Malaysia.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study focuses on the development of Islamic Spiritual Tourism Model for the millennial generation in Malaysia with three main objectives. Design and Developmental Research (DDR) will be used in this research. There are three phases involved which are: Phase 1 needs analysis, Phase 2 model design and development and Phase 3 model evolution. In Phase 1, the researcher will distribute questionnaires to 384 millennials as a sample of this research. The questionnaires will touch on questions related to the millennials’ perceptions, knowledge and acceptance towards Islamic Spiritual Tourism.

After gathering this data, phase 2 will start where researchers will start to develop the component of Islamic Spiritual Tourism based on five main components in Maqasid As Shariah.

The data will be collected from dalil Quran, hadith and Muslim scholar works. After the component of model is develop then researchers will analyse the data using fuzzy Delphi. This analysis requires researchers to request confirmation from 10 experts to confirm on the model. The experts will be selected via authoritative sampling technique among those who are coming from six tourism stakeholder (Islamic Tourism Centers, Travel Agents, decision makers) and four academicians.

**CONCLUSION**

It is hoped that this model will improve the planning activity for the travel operators and organizations, giving them the opportunity to access a new spiritual tourism segment that could boost the overall tourist numbers in the future. Furthermore, it will lead to better employment opportunities, provide quality experiences to tourists or travelers, respect local communities, preserve the Malaysian tourism industry, and bring about many other benefits.
The correct method of commercialisation will stimulate the spiritual tourism economic development. Spiritual tourism requires a new mode as a form of quality tourism development so that it will organize socio-cultural life with varieties of unique customs and become a tool to increase regional income, create job opportunities and indirectly improve the Malaysian quality of life.

Last but not least, it contributes to the existing knowledge about values and provide implications for developing spiritual tourism sustainably.

**CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This will influence the planning activity for the travel operators and organisations, giving them the scope to access a new spiritual tourism segment that could increase the overall number of tourists in the future.

Furthermore, this development will lead to better employment opportunities, provide quality experiences to tourists or travellers, respect local communities, preserve Malaysian Tourism Industry, and bring many other benefits.

Spiritual tourism requires a new mode as a form of quality tourism development so that it will organise socio-cultural life with varieties of unique customs and become a tool to increase regional income, create job opportunities and indirectly improve Malaysian quality of life. The correct method of commercialisation will stimulate the spiritual tourism economic development.

**REFERENCES**


ABSTRACT

Sports globally are also affected and impacted because of COVID-19. Time sports although often associated with healthy physical activity and its ability to improve the ability to improve health, these sports activities are seen as more dangerous if continued. Global concerns trigger a disturbing world life phenomenon in all aspects of life especially to the countries hit by this epidemic. This limitless and borderless COVID-19 pandemic forced various major world sporting events to be postponed. Sports are all physical activities performed to express feelings and convey value through the physical behavior as well as to test the skills of an individual with other individuals who venture into the same field of sports through competition based on the rules that have been set. As a clearer understanding, a pandemic occurs when many individuals can be infected with a disease easily and the disease can spread from one individual to another continuously without hindrance around the world and have a huge impact on sporting events.

KEYWORDS: Golfing, golf course, tourism management, sports tourism, covid-19

BACKGROUND

Since the COVID-19 epidemic hit the country early last year, the tourism industry has been among the worst affected sectors. Many tourism industry operators have been forced to retire due to lack of income. Creative initiatives need to be implemented immediately to ensure that the tourism sector continues to contribute to the national economy, especially the tourism sector. Among those affected are golfing sports activities that have an impact on individuals and groups in continuing the sport which is considered an important prospect for the country’s sports tourism industry.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach is by using simple random sampling method. Questionnaires using “Google Forms” were distributed through online social media applications such as WhatsApp. At the time of this study, the state of Movement Control Order (MCO) was activated in Malaysia, which forced golfers not to congregate in one area. Therefore, this method was used to facilitate the dissemination of the questionnaire, while adhering to the safety instructions in the research. 30 golfers represented player perceptions and views selected by the researchers to answer the questionnaire and Kuala Terengganu Golf Resort (KTGR), Kuala Nerus was selected.

FINDINGS

The findings showed that a total of 30 golfers were concerned about efforts to keep the game of golf safe and in accordance with the SOPs set by the Golf Club and the organizers of the game. The result also emphasised on activity rules and new guidelines that needed to be implemented for the health of all and
CONCLUSION

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the government to implement the Movement Control Order (MCO) which in turn has influenced several popular sports including golf. The pandemic did indeed have a profound effect on all golf enthusiasts as they have to get used to the new norms and abandon the activities they used to do before. With new habit changes or new norms, golfers must adhere to established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to stop the spread of this dangerous virus.

The findings of this study, which are usually needed to be continued for the health of all and at the same time it will teach golfers to emphasise hygiene, making them more disciplined and creative in maintaining their health and fitness levels. The changes that all golfers need to practice will make them more disciplined and respectful of one another.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In line with the recommendations of the Organization World Health Organization (WHO), this is a proactive step in the effort curb the chain of transmission and stop the spread of the pandemic, by strictly supervising sporting activities, as well enforcing the new healthcare norms in golf activities and tournaments.

REFERENCES


