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Investigating Pull Factors in International Tourist Travel Motivation: An Empirical Analysis on the Malaysian Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The Malaysian economy has evolved since it gained its independence in 1957, moving away from one centered on natural resources and toward one based on services. The Malaysian tourism sector that is one of the country's promising service industries, was further expanded in 2013 under the direction of the Ministry

of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC), as part of the country's attempts to become a top travel destination. Due to its political stability, tropical climate, gastronomic choices, and cultural and linguistic variety, Malaysia is one of the world's top business and tourism destinations and is now seeing a spectacular expansion as a result of globalization. With an average yearly growth rate of 11.2 percent, Malaysia's GDP contribution from the service sector has been on the rise. In 2005, tourism made up 10.4% of the GDP; by 2017, it had increased to 14.9 percent. International tourism receipts increased from USD 18.08 billion in 2016 to USD 18.53 billion in 2017 despite a decline in domestic tourist arrivals of 809,000 between those two years ("World Tourism Organization and International Transport Forum 2019") that describes the expansion of tourism's significant part in Malaysia's economy (Sharif et al. 2020)

Keywords

Tourism, Travel Motivation, Satisfaction, Tourist's destination, Word of Mouth.

I. Introduction

The significant contribution the tourist industry makes to Malaysia's economic growth is widely known to the Malaysian government. Because tourism development is always one of the key components of every plan in Malaysia, the government is able to provide particular attention to the growth of the tourist industry during each plan period. MOTAC has run a number of marketing and promotion programs throughout the years to help the travel and tourist sector. The tourism industry in Malaysia expects to bring in 36 million visitors and generate RM168 million in revenue from tourism in 2020. Sadly, a number of surveys indicate that tourists are unsatisfied with their vacation experiences in Malaysia (Rahman et al. 2011; Watts, 2020). The need for tourism has risen as a result of globalization. Since the 1960s, research on the reasons why people travel has been a significant topic of study and a key component of understanding tourist behavior. Planning and marketing for tourism benefits from knowing why people travel and what influences their behavioral intention to visit a location (Saayman et al 2018; Samarasinghe, 2020). The degree of pleasure of visitors is likely to suffer as a result of their unfavorable encounters while they are there. Tourists will eventually feel disappointed since it might be difficult for service providers in the tourism industry to keep them entirely happy during their trips or whole travel experiences (Yap et al. 2018; Sooriyamudalige et al., 2020). Figure 1 shows the travel motivations influencing tourism development and revisit intentions.

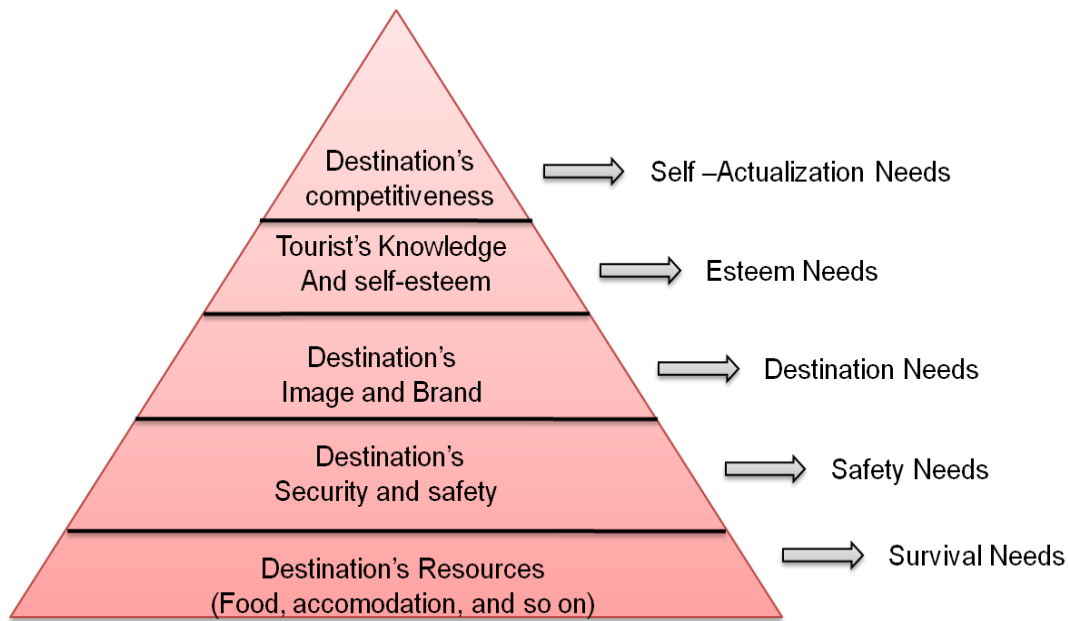


Figure 1: Travel motivations influencing Tourism

Malaysia loses its competitive edge in terms of economic growth due to the tourist industry's slower development rate. Since many nations largely rely on repeat travelers to draw a bigger flow of tourists, the desire of foreign tourists to return has become crucial to the development of the tourism sector in the specific locations. Even though various studies have been conducted to evaluate visitor satisfaction as a determinant for the desire to return, the results are still inconsistent and insufficient to accurately gauge satisfaction. The majority of research on the growth of the tourism industry in Malaysia focuses on resort, policy and planning, policy and alliances, marketing, branding, community involvement, and regional development, but none of these studies specifically identifies the success parameters that influence the development of the tourism industry in Malaysia (Hussain and Buchmann 2019). There haven't been many studies looking at how encounters with a destination's cuisine, people, language, and other factors affect tourists' happiness and plans to return. This is despite the fact that food, safety, people, and destination image are important in advertising a destination. This inspired us to do this research. The following are the study's contributions.

- This research aims to investigate how tourist satisfaction mediated the relation between food, safety, people, place, price, hygiene, language, and likelihood of future visit.
- This study also analyzes the relation between overall tourist satisfaction, and word of mouth and probability of future visit.
- In addition, the relationship between tourist's word of mouth and probability of future visit.

The remainder of the article is divided into the following parts. Part II contains the related literature as well as the problem statement. Part III contains the methodologies involved in the planned work. The findings and discussions are included in part IV. The conclusion of the proposed article is offered in part V.

II. RELATED WORKS

There has been a lot of material on the push and pull motivations in travel motivation research that has been published.

a) Food Experience and Tourism

In Malaysia, data on how visitors feel about the country's cuisine and their intentions to return are still limited. Hashemi et al. 2021 investigate the connections between food neophobia, the behavioral intentions of foreign visitors in Malaysia, and the culinary image of a tourism destination. Mohamad et al. 2022 created a case study to investigate this phenomena by finding the key variables impacting tourists' behavioral inclination to return to certain Penang street food establishments. The results showed that food cleanliness, food pricing, meal quality, and service quality each account for 47.4% of the variation in behavioral intention. Furthermore, it has been shown that the quality of the meal service has a substantial effect on tourists' behavioral intentions to return for more Penang street food, although sanitation and cost have no bearing on this. Yasami et al. 2021 evaluated the mediating role of food satisfaction in this connection while examining the multidimensional concept of food image (taste, quality, safety, cleanliness, and popularity). They also analyzed the influence of destination food image on visitor loyalty intentions. Lee et al. 2020 sought to analyze the relation between the experience quality of street meals and how visitors' perceptions of a place, their level of happiness, and word-of-mouth were affected.

b) Tourist satisfaction and Revisit Intention

By taking into account the moderating effect of the destination image, Chan et al. 2022 sought to investigate the empirical proof of the correlations among service quality, contentment, and return intention to Semenggoh Nature Reserve, an ecotourism site in Sarawak. In this research, there is no evidence to support the destination image's moderating influence on satisfaction and return intention. Utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, Isa et al. 2019 investigated the route, environment, place attachment, and revisit intention in the Batam area. Place attachment characteristics support revisit intents in a favorable way. The objective of Cham et al. 2021 is to analyze the parameters that influence Malaysia as a destination for Chinese clinical tourists. The results show that social and national characteristics, such as word-of-mouth and social media, significantly affect Malaysia's reputation as a destination for medical tourism that in turn influences perceived value and desire to return. Country-specific considerations include familiarity with the nation, safety & security, accessibility, and affordability.

Less is known about whether a trip affects travelers' long-term plans to return. By outlining the underlying mechanism linking the memorability of a trip

experience with revisit intention and defining the bounds of this impact, Hu et al (2021)'s addition to the travel and tourism literature is important. Moon and Har (2019) examined the relationships between perceived value, perceived price reasonableness, visitor satisfaction with tour experience, and loyalty to an island destination while taking into account the moderating impact of destination image. Gohary et al. 2020 examined the influence of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) on visitor satisfaction, intention to return, and positive word-of-mouth in the context of ecotourism. (Lai et al. 2018) study the connection between the tourist-resident relation and safety perceptions in relation to the roles of service quality, traveller satisfaction, and word-of-mouth. According to (Syakier and Hanafiah's 2022), tourists' behavioral intentions are positively impacted by their level of pleasure, which in turn influences their desire to return to Kuala Lumpur and their reputation there.

In Malaysian tourism, there is a dearth of conceptual frameworks examining how visitor satisfaction mediates the link between the probability of future visits and factors including food, safety, people, site, pricing, and cleanliness. The purpose of this study is to close this research gap. One dependent variable (DV) and seven independent variables (travel reasons - food, safety, people, location, price, cleanliness, and language) are used in the research. The suggested theorized model is seen to be innovative since it tries to explain the factors that influence travelers' choices, which in turn impact satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and the chance of returning to Malaysia. Listed below is the hypothesis model:

- H1:** The probability of future trips to Malaysia and satisfaction of international tourists are mediated by the quality of Malaysian cuisine.
- H2:** The probability of future trips to Malaysia and international tourist satisfaction are correlated.
- H3:** The link between pricing and the probability of future trips to Malaysia is mediated by the satisfaction of international tourists.
- H4:** The possibility of future trips to Malaysia is mediated by the satisfaction of international tourists.
- H5:** The probability of future trips to Malaysia and location are mediated by international tourist satisfaction.
- H6:** The probability of future trips to Malaysia and international tourist satisfaction are correlated.
- H7:** The probability of future trips to Malaysia and international tourist satisfaction are correlated.
- H8:** Word-of-mouth has a relationship to international tourists' contentment.
- H9:** There is a relationship between international tourists' contentment and their propensity to go to Malaysia again.
- H10:** The possibility of future trips to Malaysia by foreign tourists and their pleasure with their experience are mediated through word-of-mouth.

III. METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this study is to evaluate the relationship between travel motivators, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intentions. Initially, data was collected from international visitors of Malaysia through questionnaire. After that, partial least squares were used to analyze the data. The following is an explanation of the research's methodology.

a) Data Collection

The information was gathered using an online survey with 423 respondents who are foreign tourists to Malaysia and a questionnaire that was circulated online. The intended principles for personal opinion surveys were followed in the design of the research surveys. Before beginning the survey, consent from respondents is obtained to confirm their readiness to take part in the research. Prior to the poll, instructions were sent to the respondents. The questionnaire was created using a variety of travel factors, such as safety, food, pricing, people, location, language, and cleanliness. The selection of the items was based on how well they fit the topic of the present research. These models were taken from (Noor, Nasarudin and Foo, 2014). All of the questions were scored using a Likert scale with a maximum of five points, varying from strongly agree to disagree, and were then subjected to structural equation modeling using PLS software.

b) Partial Least Square-Structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) Analysis

Using PLS-SEM, the association between several travel motivators, visitor satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and return intention is assessed. PLS-SEM is suitable for theory development and prediction during the exploratory stage. The structural linkages are investigated using structural equation modeling, a multivariate statistical analytic technique. This approach combines component analysis and multiple regression analysis to look at the structural relationship between measured variables and latent variables. The PLS-SEM analysis was carried out using a two-stage procedure. Testing the measuring model's validity and dependability for the constructs is the initial step. To evaluate the reliability of the used constructs, tests for Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were conducted. The suggested connections between the structural model's components were then assessed. Figure 2 illustrates the study framework. This research used the SmartPLS 3.0 software suite to carry out PLS-SEM. The product of coefficients technique with bootstrapping has been used to address the mediator.

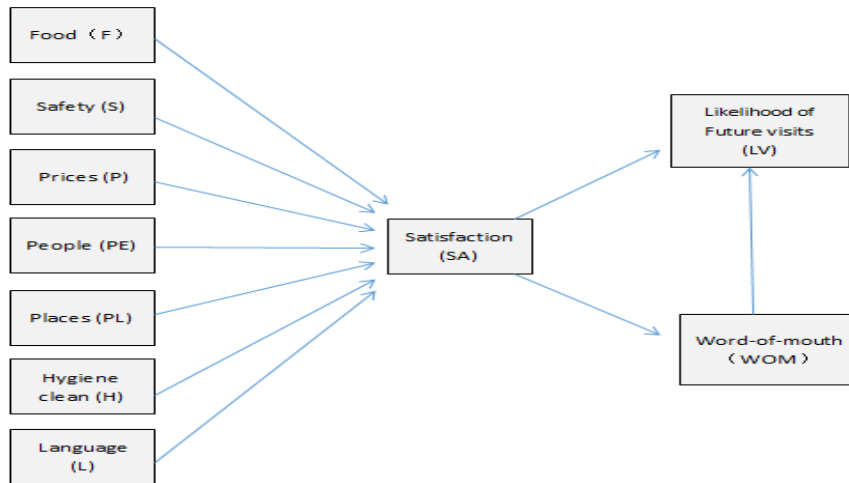


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of travel motivations on revisit intentions of international visitors of Malaysia

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the analysis of effects of relationship between international visitor’s travel motivations and revisit intention in Malaysian tourism. According to a summary of the respondents’ demographic data, there was an equal mix of male and female respondents, with more than half being in the 20–29 age range. The majority of the responders from China is unmarried and has at least a bachelor’s degree.

Travel motives are the goals of travelers and characteristics of the travel location that influence someone to take a holiday. Each travel motivation’s effect on the chance of returning to Malaysia has been evaluated. The structural route model for evaluating each conceptual link is shown in Figure 3. In Figure 3, the association between Malay cuisine, safety, price, people, site, language, and cleanliness and future visits to Malaysia as well as word-of-mouth was mediated by visitor satisfaction.

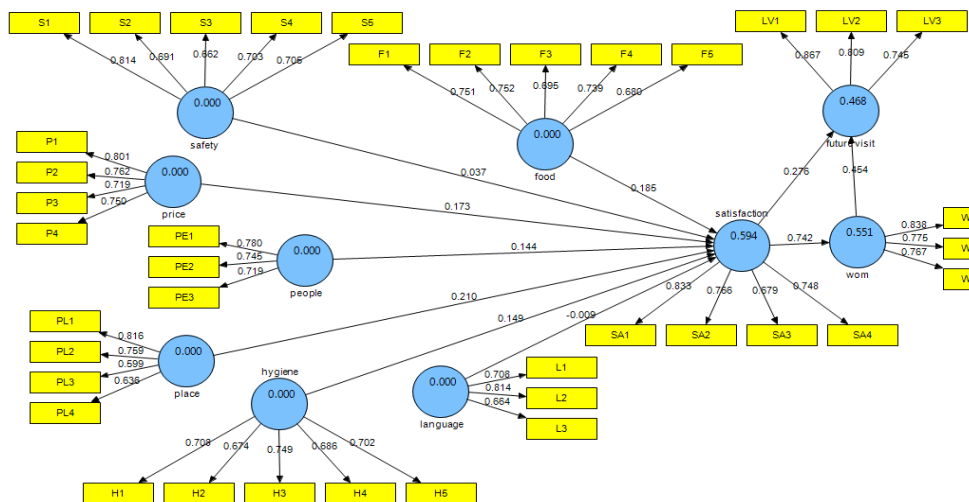


Figure 3: Detailed Structural path model for assessing international visitor’s travel motivations

Table 1 shows the reliability and validity evaluation of our conceptual framework. All of the loading values in this research are more than 0.5, as indicated in Table 1, hence none should be deleted. Cronbach's alpha values are the outcome of testing the instrument's dependability and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values vary from 0.60 to 0.80, with 0.60 denoting bad, 0.61 to 0.79 being acceptable and 0.80 or above being noticeably excellent. (Hair et al. 2010). In this research, the findings revealed that Cronbach's alpha values for travel motivations like food, safety, prices, places, and hygiene in Malaysia, likelihood of future visits to Malaysia, tourist's word of mouth were in the acceptable range. The reliability of the instrument was acceptable for these factors. Cronbach's alpha values for travel motivations like people and language in Malaysia were not in acceptable range. The reliability of the instrument was not acceptable for these two factors.

The composite reliability (CR) scores should be at least 0.7 to guarantee the validity declaration of the data. The cutoff point for the average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.5. There must never be an AVE reading below 0.50. The CR readings for travel motivations like food, safety, prices, places, people, language, and hygiene in Malaysia, likelihood of future visits to Malaysia, tourist's word of mouth met the minimum criteria of 0.7. The AVE readings for all constructs have met the minimum criteria. Hence, data concerned with travel motivations like food, safety, prices, places, people, language, and hygiene in Malaysia, likelihood of future visits to Malaysia, tourist's word of mouth was valid.

One of the most often used methods for evaluating the discriminant validity of measurement models is the Fornell-Larcker criteria. The square root of the average variance retrieved by a construct must meet this requirement, and it must also be bigger than the correlation between the construct and any other construct (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The discriminant validity of the constructs utilized in our investigation is shown in Table 2. Table 2's average extracted variance (AVE) square root and off-diagonal correlations between components are also shown in red. It examines the veracity of the alleged disparity between the notions. It has been shown by contrasting the average variance of several components with their squared correlation. The discriminant validity of the factors, such as travel motivations like food, safety, prices, places, people, language, and hygiene in Malaysia, likelihood of future visits to Malaysia, and tourist referrals, is demonstrated by the average variance extricated for all the parameters being higher than the squared correlation.

Table 3 depicts the results of bootstrapping analysis of relation between travel motivation and revisit intention. If the indirect impacts 95% Boot CI did not straddle a zero suggesting there is mediating effect. The bootstrapping analysis showed that the food and place in Malaysia has significant indirect effects on probability of future visits to Malaysia. There is tourist satisfaction mediated between the relationship of food, place & probability of future visit to Malaysia. Likewise, word of mouth mediated the relation between international tourist satisfaction and probability of future visit to Malaysia. As the indirect impacts 95% Boot CI straddle a zero, it may

be deduced that the tourist satisfaction did not mediate the relation between safety, price, people, hygiene and language in Malaysia and probability of future visit to Malaysia.

Table 1: Assessment of reliability and validity of conceptual framework

Construct	Code	Loadings	Cronbachs Alpha	CR	AVE
Food	F1	0.750922	0.772695	0.846119	0.524178
	F2	0.752154			
	F3	0.694766			
	F4	0.739354			
	F5	0.679651			
Safety	S1	0.814367	0.762939	0.840274	0.514023
	S2	0.691384			
	S3	0.661604			
	S4	0.703283			
	S5	0.704689			
Prices	P1	0.801191	0.754083	0.844083	0.575454
	P2	0.76216			
	P3	0.71904			
	P4	0.749669			
People	PE1	0.77973	0.606271	0.792145	0.559814
	PE2	0.744941			
	PE3	0.718697			
Places	PL1	0.816376	0.661696	0.798591	0.501729
	PL2	0.7594			
	PL3	0.599316			
	PL4	0.636064			
Hygiene	H1	0.708177	0.746405	0.830962	0.5
	H2	0.67432			
	H3	0.74893			
	H4	0.686084			
	H5	0.701845			
Language	L1	0.707517	0.559288	0.773749	0.534544
	L2	0.813635			
	L3	0.664114			
Satisfaction	SA1	0.833483	0.752015	0.843572	0.575421
	SA2	0.765761			
	SA3	0.679252			
	SA4	0.747807			
Word-of-mouth	WOM1	0.838327	0.707299	0.836473	0.630699
	WOM2	0.775289			
	WOM3	0.766963			
Likelihood of future visits	LV1	0.867061	0.734108	0.849475	0.653776
	LV2	0.808862			
	LV3	0.745168			

Table 2: Discriminant Analysis

	food	future visit	hygiene	language	people	place	price	safety	satisfaction	wom
food	0.724									
future visit	0.511102	0.809								
hygiene	0.725737	0.551455	0.704							
language	0.663721	0.527452	0.682275	0.731						
people	0.69781	0.519043	0.701941	0.647608	0.748					
place	0.689539	0.591397	0.70942	0.651318	0.661927	0.708				
price	0.749573	0.48164	0.677942	0.699979	0.652697	0.637325	0.759			
safety	0.790446	0.454701	0.735935	0.667276	0.728212	0.696507	0.692066	0.717		
satisfaction	0.690927	0.61282	0.671122	0.590647	0.650297	0.66841	0.6592	0.657281	0.759	
wom	0.64692	0.658786	0.655431	0.602868	0.635749	0.6785	0.574116	0.636111	0.742173	0.794

Table 3: Results of Bootstrap analysis for Mediation Testing

	Path a	Path b	Indirect Effect	SE	t-value	Bootstrapped CI	
						95% LL	95% UL
H1	0.185	0.276	0.051	0.025	2.042	0.002	0.100
H2	0.037	0.276	0.010	0.028	0.365	-0.045	0.065
H3	0.173	0.276	0.048	0.025	1.910	-0.001	0.097
H4	0.144	0.276	0.040	0.023	1.728	-0.005	0.085
H5	0.210	0.276	0.058	0.026	2.229	0.007	0.109
H6	0.149	0.276	0.041	0.027	1.523	-0.012	0.094
H7	-0.009	0.276	-0.002	0.021	-0.118	-0.044	0.039
H8	0.742	0.454	0.337	0.059	5.710	0.221	0.453

Discussion

In our study, experience with food has an indirect positive effect on likelihood of future visits to Malaysia. Food is important in determining a tourist's pleasure and choice of place. Food has a significant role in drawing tourists and determining how happy they are with their trip. An earlier study, Study on Food Tourism in Bangladesh Affecting the Importance of Food, lends credence to this. (Walker and Evans, 2010). Place also has an indirect positive effect on likelihood of future visits to Malaysia. Because the location they choose may meet their demands and make their trip enjoyable, aesthetics and attractiveness play a key role in the visitors obtaining excellent services. These are the travel-related companies, as shown by (Ahmed et al. 2010). Impacts of other travel motivations like hygiene, safety, prices, people, and language on likelihood of future visits to Malaysia was considerably low.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate how international tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between various travel motivations like food, safety,

prices, places, people, language, and hygiene in Malaysia and revisit intention of visitors of Malaysia to enhance the development rate of visitor arrival. The statistical analysis was performed using PLS-SEM to study the conceptual relationship. The result analysis showed that international tourist satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between travel motivations like food and places, and revisit intention of visitors of Malaysia. Moreover, international tourist satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between travel motivations like safety, price, people, hygiene and language in Malaysia and likelihood of future visit to Malaysia. Thus food and tourist spots in Malaysia are the key factors among the seven considered factors that enhance satisfaction of tourists of Malaysia and likelihood of future visit to Malaysia. Hence tourism development strategy must focus on improving food and tourist spots in Malaysia to boost Malaysian tourism.

Limitations and future research

The study does, however, have two major weaknesses. First, every consumer from Western and Asian tourists who arrived in Malaysia with at least one lodging should be included in the research's total population. Studies on the population should also include travelers to and from Malaysia who used a variety of modality characteristics. Additionally, the sample only included travelers who flew out of Malaysia. Additionally, various rankings of lodging will provide those travelers a variety of service levels. For instance, visitors who choose to stay in upscale hotels will undoubtedly get higher-quality service than those who opt to stay somewhere else. A larger population should be studied, and the scope of study in other areas relating to a more comprehensive tourist economy should also be expanded.

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