

Factors influencing Tourists Visiting Kuching, Sarawak

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine factors influencing tourists visiting Kuching as a preferred tourism destination. For the design and methodology approach, this study adopted quantitative method through questionnaires distribution among 380 tourists visited Kuching. Findings discovered that majority of the respondents were interested to visit Kuching due to cultural reasons. Researchers concludes that Kuching need to maintain their tourism spot such as the "Rumah Panjang" as one of the historic, culture diversity and unique tourism destination to remain relevant and ideal as one of the Malaysia popular tourism destination.

Keywords: Culture, Food, Factors influencing tourists, Tourism destination, Shopping

Introduction

The presence of affordable transportation has contributed to flourishing tourism industry. Generally, people tend to have the motivation to travel and they put their expectation for that place. But, what drives them to travel? And as a result, will it spark the mind of the tourists to revisit the place?

The motives that have been created will determine satisfaction from the tourists and will be resulting in tourist's revisit intention. Tourist satisfactions and tourism product are related to each other and it contributes the growth to the industry. Tourist satisfaction is a great barometer in order to understand their intention to revisit the place and the desire to recommend to others (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chung & Petrick, 2013; Dmitrovic et al., 2009; Kozak, 2003; Prebensen, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Hence, the main purpose of this study is to examine factors influencing tourists to visit Kuching. The findings from the research study would provide greater opportunities for government and private sectors to enhance and develop Kuching as a new business investment for tourism activities.

Literature Review

Tourist Motivation to Travel

Kuching, Sarawak is well known as one of the popular tourism destinations in Malaysia. Tourists visited Kuching for several reasons: culture (Gezici & Kerimoglu, 2010), food (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016), tourist destination (Kim & Brown, 2012) and shopping (Guiry et al, 2000). Generally, theories of motivation is among popular theories that widely used by scholars with regards to this field (Lee & Lee, 2015). The simplest motivation theory as describe by Fodness (1994), is an active process of psychology factors within human, namely needs, wants, and goals, which will distress the tension inside the human's minds and body. This will cause the tension result for human to take action on satisfy their needs and wants.

Culture

Culture tourism has been an important factor in increasing the economy of a country for the last 20 years and it has been a part of the urban tourism (Gezici et al, 2010). According to Jensen (2007), anthropologist clarify that culture is a way of life and on the other hand, its available asset produce the place itself including its tangible and intangible values. Furthermore, cities are one of the place where tourists can meet with the local community through culture (Gezici *et al*, 2010). Thus, culture can no longer be defined as visual utilization of artefacts such as galleries, theatres, and architecture, but also includes the adaption of atmosphere for the tourists (Galdini, 2007). In Sarawak, Anonymous (n.d) as cited in Tourism Malaysia Travel Guide, said that tourists can stay with the hosts and join the locals in producing jungle products such as the handcraft, learning the culture dance, and seeing local women weaving the beautiful traditional *Pua* cloth on the old back-strap loom.

Food

In general, local cuisine is one of the resource of tourism that can be utilized by service providers in order to market the place such as the local restaurant, accommodation, and also to brand the destination too and the idea of local food is characterized by its national and regional signature cuisine (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). The motivation in tourism for local cuisine is because of the uniqueness of the food connected with the place and therefore, it has become the part of the local culture and history (Björk et al, 2016). Related to the point, Hillel et al., (2013) assumed that local cuisine has become known as the tourism attraction and tourists travelled because they want to explore and experience the taste of local food (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2009). Kuching has diverse, tasty, and exotic local cuisines, it is suitable for tourists who are daring enough to try the cuisine (Anonymous, as cited in "Nature, Adventure, Culture, Gear-up for Non-Stop Action", 2009). Furthermore, Kuching's authentic dishes include the Sarawak *Laksa*, *MeeKolak*, *BuburPedas*, *Manok Pansoh*, Sarawak Layer Cake, and many more.

Tourist destination

The definition of tourists' destination is the centre locations that have attractions that provides travel facilities and services (Kim et al, 2012). Furthermore, it is the place where travellers involve in many tourists' activities (Pestana et al., 2009). Zabkar et al., (2010) pointed out 2 theoretical frameworks about destinations attribute that is 4A's and 6A's. The 4A's indicate "Attractions, Access, Amenities, and Ancillary services" while 6A's indicate

“Attractions, Access, Amenities, Available packages, Activities, and Ancillary services”. While the study from Pestana et al., (2009) about tourist destination, his variables indicate the monuments, museums, theme parks, beaches, ski resorts, and natural parks had been selected as it affects the attraction of destination. Moreover, findings from Mahika (2011), she reveals tourist choose recreational tourism destination is because they are desired for recreation and leisure activities. From Sarawak Tribune News, as cited by Karim (n.d), national parks are still a favourite destination for tourist from local and abroad in Kuching because of the diverse biodiversity, aesthetic and unique landscape and wildlife varieties (Anonymous, 2017). Kuching has been popular for its national parks and destination such as the Bako National Park, Semenggoh Nature Reserve, Kuching Waterfront, Cat Museum, and Sarawak Museum Kuching.

Shopping

“Shopping is a way of life in contemporary consumer society” (Guiry et al., 2000). Shopping can be defined as the favourite choice of recreational and entertainment activities for the tourist (Hughes, 1989). A trip will not be accomplished without spending money for shopping (US Travel Association, 2009; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2000). Generally, travellers like to buy something from their trip to bring back home as souvenirs (Gordon, 1986). Thus, tourists usually search for something that is unique and experience something that they cannot find at their home. Kuching, Sarawak, is popular with the uniqueness and aesthetics of their local handicraft such as the Pua Kumbu cloth, beads necklaces, and rattan products. In Kuching, Main Bazaar has been the focus point for tourists to shop for antiques and handicraft, where there can have bargain sessions (Sarawak Tourism Board, n.d).

Methodology & Discussion

Research Design

This research paper adopted quantitative research approach through the distribution of self-administered questionnaire. The population in this study involves 1000 respondents that were visiting Kuching for leisure. The sample size is 380 visitors based from Krejcie and Morgan 1970 sample size (Kruger, 1994). The data was collected using convenience sampling. This sampling method involves getting participants at researchers’ convenience. This type of sampling suits the current study as it can cover the large number of surveys quickly and cost effective. Table 3.1.1 show the demographic profile of the respondents. In total, 194 (51.1 per cent) of respondents were male, whereas 186 respondents (48.9 per cent) were female. The majority of respondents (41.1 per cent) were between 31-40 years old and 56.3 per cent of respondent were married. Majority of respondents (42.1 per cent) are working in private sector. Interestingly, findings indicate that 61.1 per cent were international tourists and more than 50 per cent of the total 380 respondents were coming to Kuching for leisure.

The questionnaire used was focused to examine tourists’ motives coming to Kuching. The questionnaires consist of dual languages, English and Malay. It includes three (3) sections; section A, B and C. Section A comprise of demographic information such as gender, age, status, occupation, country of origin and purpose of travel. Section B comprise of 4 factors tourists visiting Kuching: culture, food, tourist destination and shopping while Section C comprise of information on revisit intention of the city. A pilot test was conducted among 30 academicians of Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, UiTM Terengganu to enhance the reliability and validity of the questionnaires and recognize insufficiencies of questions design prior actual

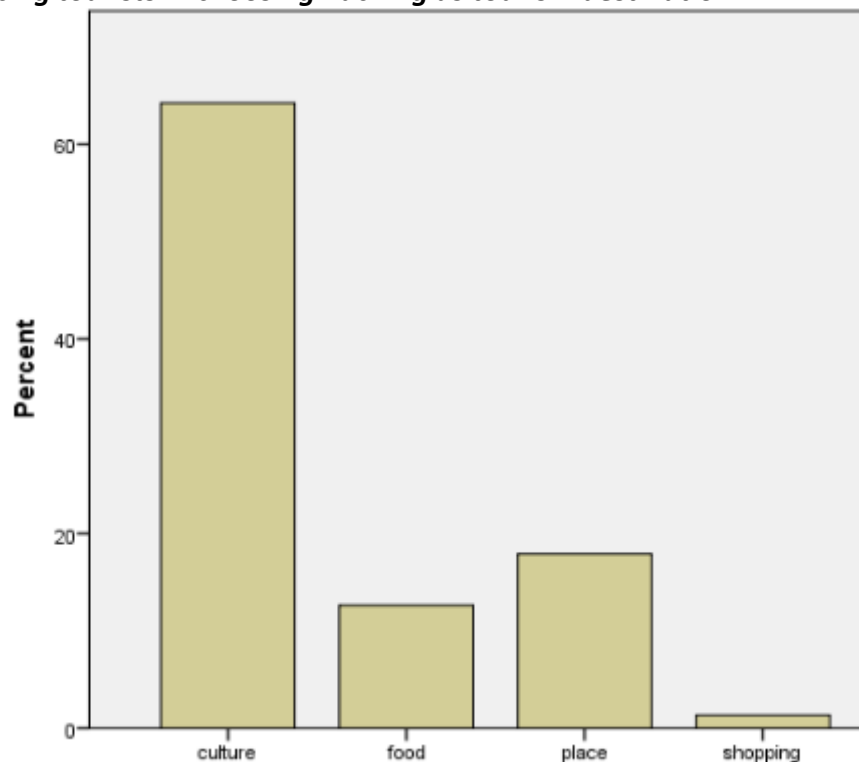
survey. Typo errors were identified in the pilot test; redundant statements in tourist revisit intention as well as the questionnaires only use one language that is English instead of dual language. Thus, all corrections have been amended and researchers make a modification inserting additional items. This study scored high in the reliability statistics indicated that the questionnaires is valid.

Table 1

Profile of respondents

Characteristic	Description	Statistic (%) (N= 380)	Frequency
Gender	Male	51.1	194
	Female	48.9	186
Age	Below 20	6.3	24
	21-30	34.7	132
	31-40	41.1	156
	41 and above	17.9	68
Status	Single	43.7	166
	Married	56.3	214
Occupation	Government	28.7	109
	Private	42.1	160
	Own business	18.7	71
	Student	5.3	20
	Unemployed	5.3	20
Country Origin	Local traveler	38.9	148
	International traveler	61.1	232
Purpose of travel	Leisure	59.7	227
	Business	25.3	96
	Education	10.5	40
	Attending event (Seminar, wedding, etc)	4.5	17

Factors influencing tourists in choosing Kuching as tourism destination



Factors influencing tourists to visit Kuching

Figure 1: Factors influencing tourists to visit Kuching

Figure 1 displayed above indicated the result with regards to factors that influence tourists to visit Kuching. Interestingly, majority of respondents are interested to visit Kuching due to culture (with 64.2 per cent). Kuching, Sarawak is well-known for various ethnics and its exciting to discover new culture there. Additionally, tourists interested to visit Kuching due to the places itself which scored at 17.9 per cent and food scored at 12.6 per cent. Kuching were surrounded by Kuching's Golden Triangle, waterfront and historical buildings such as the Astana, Fort Margherita, and the Court House (Adom, Jussem, Pudun & Azizan, 2012). Moreover, 1.3 per cent visit Kuching due to shopping. Table 2 below indicated questionnaires item adopted from previous study with regards to factors influencing tourists to travel to Kuching.

Table 2

Tourist motivation to travel

Item	Description	Author
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicraft • Culture dance • Traditional <i>pua</i> cloth 	Galdini (2007) and Richards (1996)
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local cuisine 	Hillel et al (2013)
Tourist destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks • Unique Landscape • Wildlife varieties • Museum 	Mahika (2011)

Shopping	• Souvenir	Guiry et al (2000)
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Conclusion

Overall, out of the total of 380 respondents involved in this study, 66.3 per cent of them had visited Kuching within 2-4 times in their lifetime. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (64.2 per cent) of them were interested to visit Kuching due to cultural motivations. All the factors involved in this study (culture, food, destination and shopping) on influencing tourists to visit Kuching played a crucial part to ensure that Kuching stay as one of historic, culture diversity and unique tourism destination. From the findings, researchers concludes that Kuching need to maintain their tourism spot such as the “Rumah Panjang” to remain relevant and ideal as one of the Malaysia popular tourism destination. Government probably can focus on the culture to enhance Kuching tourism development in Malaysia. For future research, it would be advisable to collect data intensively from other regions of Sarawak to obtain a better finding (Adom et al, 2012). In addition, more respondents from foreign tourists would be required to provide a better picture of Kuching overall.

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