ATTRIBUTES OF TRAVEL DESTINATIONS THAT AFFECT TOURISTS' DECISIONS: A CASE OF SEREMBAN STREET ART

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Abstract:

Making general decisions on where to travel may be very exciting for tourists but it can be quite challenging when it comes to choosing the exact fascinating places to visit and discover. There have been several research studies published that examine vacation destinations and how travellers make decisions, but few publications have combined these studies to help professionals in the travel and tourism business make well-informed decisions. This research was intended to examine tourists' decisions to attend the Seremban Street Art in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Attributes to travel destination consist of 5A's namely accommodation, articulated stories, affordability, accessibility, and attribution. A total of 69 respondents were involved in this survey. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the respective sample by utilizing a convenience sampling technique. All data were extracted by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. The results of the study indicate that accessibility is the main attribute of tourists' decisions to travel destinations whereby accommodation is the attribute that least influences tourists' decisions on travel destinations. The study focused on the decision-making and destination aspects and summarized how visitors make their destination decisions. Moreover, it acts as a reference for business owners to understand the aspects that influence tourists' decisions and consequently help them make wise decisions to keep their businesses afloat.

Introduction

The tourism industry, tied to leisure and travel, is one of the most significant service industries globally. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, its dominance has decreased (Chemli, Toanoglou, & Valeri, 2022; Khalid, Okafor, & Burzynska, 2021). As a result of this crisis, this industry has been more affected than other major economic sectors (Shao, Hu, Luo, Huo, & Zhao, 2021). For example, the effects of the crisis have led to a 72% drop in international tourism arrivals from 2019 to 2022, which means 900 million fewer international travellers and a loss of USD 1.1 trillion in tourism receipts worldwide (Clark, Nyaupane, Timothy, & Buzinde, 2022). Tourism literature increasingly discusses tourism destination competitiveness, and the evaluation of tourism destination competitiveness is becoming a critical part of strategic positioning and marketing analyses (Hudson, Ritchie, & Timur, 2004). This is while different destinations with varying attributes have helped boost the competitiveness of tourism over the last few decades (Blanco-Cerradelo, Gueimonde-Canto, Fraiz-Brea, & Di´eguez-Castrillon, ´ 2018; Evren & Kozak, 2018).

Therefore, the idea to include street art as one of the travel and tourism destination was brilliant. Initially, there is no universal definition of "street art" because the meaning of the term changes with time (Blanché, 2015). In many places, street art has become a tourist attraction and a welcome decoration of the walls of pubs, cafes, and shops. Photos of street art are accordingly used in tourism promotion materials. The public has also begun to collect pictures of street art and post the relevant images on social media. Street art can add value to heritage sites too (Merrill, 2011). For instance, George Town in Malaysia offers a successful case of the use of street art to attract tourists (Sadatiseyedmahalleh, Rahman, & Abdullah, 2015). Apart from George Town Street Art, there is a new one in Negeri Sembilan namely Seremban Street Art which was established in 2021. It was located in the state capital of Negeri Sembilan, Seremban. Tourists heading for Negeri Sembilan can enjoy a new travel destination offering a new street art attraction as well as heritage sites.

A giant mural of legendary pop singer David Arumugam from the Alleycats is seen at Lorong Seni Seremban, which has been transformed into a street art district with over 30 murals. Photo: Bernama

Figure 1: Seremban Street Art in Negeri Sembilan

(Source: Bernama)

As a tourist, making decisions in choosing a travel destination is not an easy task. Each travel destination has its own qualities and facilities to offer to tourists. Numerous researches have indicated that the attributes of a travel destination that may influence a tourist decision include accessibility, place, price, safety and security, as well as political stability (Jariyachamsit, Jannit, & Praditpong, 2020). Previously, Pooi in her studies in 2006 mentioned that the other factors influencing tourists' decision-making include the condition of the place or destination quality, management and environment, transportation, safety and security, culture, likeness of the area, reason and cost of travel. Obviously, tourists have their own expectations by identifying certain features of a destination that will attract and influence them in choosing a place including architecture, culture, food, landscape and shopping stores (Mirabent, 2019). Travel destinations that feature their attractions, image, price, amenities, accessibility, location attractiveness, comfort, safety and security, local cuisine, recreation, entertainment, souvenir shops and human resources are some of the aspects present in a travel destination that influence a tourist's decision (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016; Das Sharma, Mohapatra, & Sarkar, 2007; Cho, 2008; Madhavan & Rastogi, 2011; Khuong & Nguyen, 2017; Zainali, Jafarpour, Hessam & Zolghadr, 2014). Thus, this study was conducted to examine the travel destinations attributes that affects tourists' decisions.

Literature Review

Generally, a travel destination consists of five components that enable them to attract tourists. These components are the type of accommodation, entertainment, food, tourism and transportation that are often characterized by its accessibility, attraction, comfort, facilities and conditions of mobility (Deng, Xu & Wie, 2021). Additionally, the facilitators and caretakers of the travel destination are urged to constantly provide the highest standard services to address tourists' needs and wants so that they could ensure their satisfaction (Camilleri, 2018). However, a systematic review conducted by Mangali and Ortaleza (2021) with upgrading research done by Kijima, Novani, Widiana, Palumian and Cintyawati (2020) state that there are five attributes or 5A's of travel destinations that influence tourists' decisions, namely accommodation, articulated stories, affordability, accessibility and attribution.

Accommodation (Hotels and Restaurants)

Accommodation is one of the most significant aspects for people travelling when they spend overnight stay and dine outside their casual abode (Westscott, 2019). The variables related to accommodation include hotel, restaurant, hotel service and quality service in the restaurant including the variety of foods offered in the menu (Kijima et. al., 2020 & Gunasekaran & Anandkunar, 2012). Samy (2016) stated that location of a hotel budget, cleanliness, comfort, hotel staff services, maintenance, food and beverage and value for money of room rates are among the vital factors that influence tourists' decisions. Meanwhile, Peace (2018) added that the service quality and facilities in the hotel, staff and customer service quality, hotel safety and security and clean rooms influence a customer's choice in choosing an accommodation.

Articulated Stories

Articulated stories or often called word of mouth (WOM) is another significant part of promoting a destination and of equal importance when influencing tourists' decisions. WOM has an impact to the decision-making of tourists after an experience on a trip (Harris, 2014). These travel experiences shared online make a huge impact on the tourism and hospitality electronic WOM by helping in marketing a destination, and consequently proving to be a significant influence in decision making (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). Electronic WOM is

effective to tourists because they usually surf the Internet before planning and deciding on their next travel destination (Kijima et. al., 2020).

Accessibility

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and ONCE Foundation in 2019 launched the Accessible Tourism Destination (ATD) to boost the accessibility in tourist destinations. Accessibility relates to tourism products, services and facilities that do not only focus on human rights but also to equip destinations with business opportunities, to accept all guests and to augment their revenues (APEC, 2003). Accessibility can be referred to as the tourist flow significant to transportation, transportation expense and network. Public transportation including road quality and infrastructure, plays a vital role in a destination's accessibility. It is a key factor to note that ease of access, and an existing and effective public transportation connects more tourist flows (Yang, Li & Li, 2017).

Affordability

The fourth attribute that influences tourist's decisions is affordability. According to Kijima et. al., (2020), affordability includes local people's hospitality, cleanliness, safety and security, proximity to a tourist attraction and reasonably priced food and beverage. Affordable tourism destination such as cost of travel, rates of accommodation and entrance fees to attractions would definitely help in making a successful destination (Samuel, 2020). Teng, Wu and Chou (2020), indicate that most customers believe that online hotel booking is more convenient, more reliable, faster and cheaper than booking offline. Therefore, tourism destination affordability is often referred as the perceived price of the service provided. Perceived affordability and availability of personal finances encourage tourists to spend more. As a result, it significantly increased in the Traveller Sentiment Index (TSI) (Kandzavelou, 2015).

Attribution

Attribution includes the existence of souvenir shops and local events or ceremonies (Kijima, et. al., 2020). Souvenir shopping is another important part of a travel package that may characterize the totality of a travel experience (Kong & Chang, 2016). Shopping for tourists is an essential activity because a trip is not complete without buying souvenirs or anything from the destinations (Yuksel, 2004). Shopping may not be a major reason for travel but it can be a motivator for a tourist to go to a place that offers enjoyable buying experience in certain destinations (Azmi, Ahmad, Abdullah & Shaw, 2019).

Methodology

Participants and Procedure

To achieve the research objectives, the questionnaire was distributed to tourists visiting Seremban Street Art at the end of 2022 during a collaboration program between Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Negeri Sembilan and Seremban City Council @Citra Lorong Seni Seremban. A total of 69 respondents were involved in this survey. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the respective sample by utilizing a convenience sampling technique. All data were extracted by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.

Instruments

The research instrument was adopted and adapted from existing review of literature. The PRISMA model utilized by Mangali and Ortaleza (2021) identifying 5A's attributes to travel destination namely accommodation, articulate stories, affordability, accessibility and attribution, was adapted for this study. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale response format with values ranging between 1 (awful) to 5 (fantastic).

Data Analyses

All gathered data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 23. For this study, a descriptive analysis was conducted to provide information on respondent characteristics. To achieve the research objective, the same analyses was utilized to examine tourists' decisions to attend Seremban Street Art.

Results and Findings

Table 1 indicate the demographic profile of the respondents. It includes the types of transportation to reach Seremban Street Art, source of information about the destination, first time visits, main reason for the visit as well as companionship during the visit.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic on the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Items		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Types of transportation			
	Own transport	61	88.4
	Public transport	6	8.7
	Others	2	2.9
Source of information			
	Already knew about it	31	44.9
	The Internet	7	10.1
	Friends and relatives	25	36.2
	Others	6	8.7
First time visits			
	No	27	39.1
	Yes	42	60.9
Main reason of the visits			
	Work	15	21.7
	Fun	31	44.9
	Leisure and recreation	16	23.2
	Others	7	10.1
Companionship			
	With partner	1	1.4
	With family	10	14.5
	With friends	44	63.8
	On my own	13	18.8
	Others	1	1.4

In this study, the results obtained also show that the respondents visiting Seremban Street Art experienced all attributes to travel destination namely accommodation, articulated stories, accessibility, affordability and attribution. Table 2 shows the five attributes of travel destination

that influence tourists' decisions to visit the Seremban Street Art. These attributes include accessibility with the highest mean score (M=4.77) whereby accommodation 's score has the lowest mean (M=3.30).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic of Attributes of Travel Destination that Influence Tourists' Decisions

Attributes	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Accessibility to Seremban Street Art	4.77	.425	1
Attribution	4.61	.691	2
Articulated stories	4.42	.687	3
Affordability	4.41	.647	4
Accommodation	3.30	.565	5

Discussions and Conclusions

There are plenty of research related to tourists and tourism but those with variables that encompass the attributes of travel destination that influence tourists' decisions, are quite rare. There is a series of variables that influence tourists' decisions in choosing a travel destination including accommodation, articulated stories, accessibility, affordability and attribution. Tourists' decisions on travel destinations are very subjective. They depend on the types of travel destination too. Previous literatures state that accommodation is the most important attribute of travel destination. Accommodation normally refers to hotels and restaurants services provided at the travel destination. However, this current study shows otherwise. This current study shows that accommodation is not the main attribute to tourists' decisions. In fact, accommodation is the attribute that least influences a tourist's choice of travel destination. This is probably due to the location of Seremban Street Art that does not require them to stay overnight. The destination which is located at the state capital is quite congested and tourists would usually come here for only a short visit. They would prefer to go to other destinations such as Port Dickson for accommodation.

On the other hand, the variable accessibility influences a tourist's decision and is the main attribute to tourists' decision attending Seremban Street Art. This is probably due to the fact that, road quality and infrastructure, including the means of transporting tourists from one place to another, has an effect on tourists' experience and overall quality of the visit. Availability of public transportation including e-hailing services enables tourists to reach the intended place of attraction and enjoy the experiences the destination has to offer. In short, this study managed to achieve its objective by examining tourists' decisions to attend Seremban Street Art depending the five attributes (5A's) of travel destinations. This study could contribute to both theoretical as well as managerial implications on expanding the existing practice towards understanding tourists' decisions on travel destinations attributes.

It is recommended for future research to explore the different attributes influencing tourists' decisions based on geographical location as well as region – this is to assist and guide business owners in strategizing and predicting intervention plans that will benefit both the local and international tourism industry.

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