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YOUTH AND CRUISE TOURISM: BEHAVIORAL DRIVERS AND MARKET POTENTIAL IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

The study addresses the underexplored area of youth participation in cruise tourism, particularly in Southeast Asia. It employs the Theory of Planned Behavior to investigate Malaysian youths' intentions to experience cruise tourism. This study also seeks to measure the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavior control towards the intention to experience cruise tourism. This study adopted a quantitative method of online questionnaire survey and multiple regression analysis was used to test the model. Purposive sampling survey method was used and youth categories which range ages from 18 to 30 in Malaysia were selected. The findings reveal that all variables are significant, and attitude has the most significant relationship to the youth's intention to experience cruise tourism. The results also show youth in Malaysia have a high level of intention to experience cruise tourism. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on cruise tourism from the perspective of youth. The findings of the study will be beneficial for the tourism stakeholders in the planning to promote the cruise tourism industry in Malaysia, particularly to the youth generation.

Keyword:

Cruise Tourism, Theory of Planned Behavior, Youth



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Introduction

Cruise tourism has experienced consistent development over the past decade. Annual passenger numbers in the ocean cruise industry increased at a compound annual rate of 5.9% between 1990 and 2024 (Cruise Market Watch, 2024). The cruise industry demonstrated its resilience in 2022 by recovering from the operational halt in March 2020. By year's end, all of CLIA cruise line members had resumed operations and welcomed over 20 million guests for an amazing holiday (Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA], 2022a). Beyond pre-pandemic levels, cruise intent increased, resulting in busy ports and global economic booms. In addition, youth have emerged as significant contributors to the development of tourism. One reason highlighting the importance of youth is their significant representation in the current population (Richards, 2006; United Nations World Tourism Organization and World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation, 2016).

Countries in Asia have their own unique culture and that is what attracts passengers from Asian countries to sail within Asian countries. The majority of cruises depart from Singapore to destinations nearby such as Port Klang, Penang, Langkawi, Phuket, Medan, Jakarta, Bali, Hong Kong, and China. Statistical data from CLIA showed that most of Malaysia ports only for stopover and transit, there are no overnight activities provided in every destination except for Klang Port. According to the CLIA (2022b), cruise passengers within age 13-29 accounted for 17% of all cruise passengers in 2019, decreased to 15% in 2020, and increased to 17% in 2022. The decrease in cruise passengers visiting Malaysia in 2020 can be ascribed to the global Covid-19 outbreak, which coincided with the Malaysian government's decision to temporarily halt all tourist activities. According to the CLIA (2022a), a cruiser's average age is 46.5 for the year 2022. CLIA reports from 2019 to 2022 continuously demonstrate that the majority of cruisers are 46 and older. In 2019, only 15% of cruisers were aged 13 to 29, 14% in 2020, 15% in 2021, and 16% in 2022. These results show that youth involvement in cruise tourism has been below 50% during the last four years. Malaysia is one of the countries with the lowest contribution to total cruise passenger numbers in Asia, trailing just China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (CLIA, 2022a). Given this trend, there is a critical need to investigate the factors influencing youth participation in cruise tourism, particularly their motivations and barriers.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the determinants of youth intention to engage in cruise tourism, by using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a framework, by focusing on three key variables: attitude (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavior control (PBC). The target respondents are youths aged 18 to 30, with a particular emphasis on those in their twenties. A survey questionnaire has been chosen to conduct the research due to the limited scientific resources on cruise tourism in Asia, particularly Malaysia. By filling this gap, the study aims to indirectly promote cruise tourism among Malaysian youths. The primary objectives are to measure the level of youth's intention to experience cruise tourism, and to

measure the relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control towards youth's intention to experience cruise tourism.

Literature Review

Academic study on cruises began in 1988 (McKee, 1988). The number of global ocean cruise passengers has steadily increased year after year. According to Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010), the topic of research interest in cruise studies can be divided into two major areas: the issue of cruise passengers' experience behavior and patterns, and the research reviewing various other issues in the cruise industry. Experiences, satisfaction, intention to return, motivation, purchasing behavior, mobility, activities, excursions, destination attributes, information sources, itinerary, and onboard behavior have all been examined in previous studies on cruise passengers. Cruise tourism development and impacts (environmental, economic, social, political, power relations, rules or policy, sustainability, cruise port, networks of flow and typology) are included in the second category.

Youth and cruise tourism

Nowadays, youth is also one of the contributors to the development of tourism. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia (2015) defines youth as individuals aged 15 to 30 years old. Thus, in Malaysia, youth are defined as persons who are transitioning from adolescence to early adulthood. This group of youth also has their own will and desires in setting their will. Youth is also one of the most important components in the tourism industry to ensure and guarantee the development of the tourism industry in Malaysia. Youth are also capable of contributing to the number of visitors in a destination and contributing to measures of a destination. Such as Gen X, Gen Y, youth also have desires and destinations that are their choice for vacation. Today youth also have different needs than their parents or grandparents (Howe & Strus, 2000).

Cruise tourism can be defined as "any maritime based tour by fare paying guests on board a vessel whose primary purpose is the carriage of passengers" (Wild & Dearing, 2000). However, the term "cruise tourism" now refers to much more than merely passenger travel. For example, Teye and Leclerc (1998) define cruise tourism as a leisure voyage where the cruise ship's facilities and services, together with any port calls along the route, are all integrated into the experience.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is widely used in the tourism industry and its associated industries, including hotels (Han et al., 2010), restaurants (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021), national parks (Seong & Hong, 2021), and others, to explain human intentions. It is regarded as one of the most popular models to aid in the understanding of human decision and Behavior (Han et al., 2020). The theory of reasoned action by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) was expanded upon in Ajzen (1985) to include intentions as immediate predictors of Behavior. Attitudes, subjective norms (SNs), and perceived Behavioral control (PBC) all have an influence on intentions (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015).

An individual's opinions regarding the advantages of carrying out a specific action are referred to as their attitude (Ciasullo et al., 2017). An individual is more likely to adopt a positive attitude towards an activity that contributes to behavioral intention if they believe that

executing that action will result in a positive outcome (Han et al., 2020). Attitude is defined as an individual's cognitive and affective evaluation or appraisal of an activity determines whether the conduct in issue is beneficial or detrimental (Ajzen, 1991). This attitude seeks to find out whether youths can determine their desire to engage in cruise tourism. Youth have met the attitude criteria if they have the desire or intention to get involved in cruise tourism. The attitude has the potential to affect decisions as well. When youths have the intention of getting involved with cruise tourism, they will feel a sense of desire and decide to carry out their purpose. Attitude will influence tourists in making decisions on their travel destination (Jalivand et al., 2012). If youth have intentions towards cruise tourism, then they can decide whether to be involved in cruise tourism or not. The confidence in one's behavior is determined by their subjective opinion on the world and environment (Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020). Attitude towards behavior is the attitude shown from the result of a positive or negative appraisal of behavior. Seow et al. (2019) has conducted a study regarding international tourists in Malaysia, within the age of 18 years old and above, about the topic predicting medical tourism behavioral intention using social cognition model. The term "attitude" describes a person's choice to carry out a particular Behavior (Teng et al., 2018).

Another important factor influencing behavior intention is the subjective norm, which is defined as a person's perception of social pressure to carry out a specific action (Ajzen, 1991; Tommasetti et al., 2018). Subjective norms, which are forces inside society that either encourage or prohibit someone from engaging in a particular behavior. According to the attitude of any behavior, subjective norms refer to an individual's appraisal of the opinions of members of society who are significant to them (Ajzen, 1991). For subjective norms in youth involvement in cruise tourism, youth will get encouragement from other individuals before they have the intention to experience cruise tourism. Encouragement from people around the youth is a reason for the youth to spark the intention and then lead to experience cruise tourism itself. The influence from people around the youth who have a convincing personality is also one of the reasons that make the youth feel the need to be involved and experience cruise tourism. It may be argued that broad attitudes and personality traits have an impact on specific behaviors only indirectly by influencing some of the factors that are more closely linked to the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). With people around these youth who encourage them to experience cruise tourism, it will turn the youth's intention into behavior which is doing and experiencing traveling with cruise tourism. According to (Wang et al., 2021), based on their study about tourist travel intention during the pandemic Covid-19 among Taiwan students, older people are less likely to be impacted by subjective norms about travel intention.

Cop et al. (2020) state that another significant factor influencing behavioral intention is perceived behavioral control. This is the sole non-volitional component that deals with a person's perception of their capacity to carry out a specific action. Perceived behavior control refers to a person's perceived ability for involvement in any given activity or behavior (Pratiwi et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020). Perceived behavior control is the ability of an individual towards something, if applied in the concept of youth this is the ability of the youth to experience cruise tourism. This ability can be the youth's economic, physical, social and so on. For instance, when considering the economic aspect for youths, financial stability can be considered as the main factor. If a youth has the financial means to partake in cruise tourism, they are likely to engage in it. Conversely, if a youth lacks the financial capability, they will likely restrain from participating. This idea aligns with perceived behavior control, which refers to the ease or difficulty a person experiences in carrying out a behavior. Individuals are more

likely to avoid actions if they perceive limited control over them due to specific factors (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

Intention to experience cruise tourism is the outcome after form of three independent variables. The TPB claims that the three factors are related to how one intends to behave (Ajzen, 1991). It is a person's expectations for a specific behavior in a specific situation and can be expressed as the probability of acting (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). If the youth meet three independent variables which are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, the intention to engage in cruise tourism will follow. Once the youth complete these three things, youths will be motivated to get involved with cruise tourism. These three independent variables are capable of influencing a person's behavior. According to the theory of planned behavior, a person's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control may all have an influence on their behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).

Based on the above literature review of TPB, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1. Attitude is positively related to intention to experience cruise tourism.

H2. Subjective norms are positively related to intention to experience cruise tourism.

H3. Perceived behavior control is positively related to intention to experience cruise tourism.

Methodology

Research Design

This study aims to explore the intentions of the youth regarding their potential participation in cruise tourism in the future. This investigation seeks to understand whether youth express an inclination towards traveling via cruise ships and identify the factors influencing their interest in such experiences. To substantiate the research on youth's intentions towards experiencing cruise tourism, the TPB has been employed. This theoretical framework utilizes three independent variables: attitude (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavior control (PBC), which serve as the basis for constructing a questionnaire to be distributed to respondents. The participants targeted for this study are individuals belonging to the youth generation, aged between 18 to 30 years old, with a particular focus on teenagers in their twenties. To facilitate this investigation, an online survey questionnaire has been selected as the primary research instrument. This study adopts a quantitative approach and employs non-probability sampling methods to gather data.

Population and Sampling

Youth in Malaysia are people who are between the ages of 15 and 30. However, only those between the ages of 18 and 30 are taken into consideration for the purposes of this study. Since it is not always possible to get data from every unit of the population, a sampling strategy is usually necessary (Kumar et al., 2013; Sekaran, 2003). The Raosoft Calculator was used to determine a sample size of 377, based on an anticipated population size of 20,000, a margin of error of 5%, and a confidence level of 95%. At first, there were 333 respondents in the dataset. However, after the screening procedure, the dataset was narrowed down to only include data from 324 respondents, indicating the response rate at 86%. This study employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique to recruit respondents who met the predefined criteria of being Malaysian youths aged between 18 and 30 years. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study specifically targeted a distinct demographic segment

relevant to the research objectives. The established rationale for using purposive sampling as the most appropriate strategy for this study is the generational divide between younger and older generations. However, as respondents were not selected through random sampling, the sample may not fully represent the broader population of Malaysian youth in terms of geography, socio-economic background, education level, or digital access. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution and cannot be statistically generalized to all Malaysian youth. Instead, the results provide useful indicative insights into the perceptions and behaviours of the sampled group.

Data Collection

A purposive sampling approach was used to identify eligible respondents for the survey. Data were collected using Google Forms and distributed primarily through online platforms such as WhatsApp and other social media channels. The online mode of distribution was selected due to its cost efficiency, accessibility, and ability to reach youths across different locations. Data collection was conducted over a three-month period from October 2023 to December 2023. During the initial phase, the questionnaire was circulated among the researchers' personal, academic, and professional networks. In the second month, distribution was expanded through extended contacts, including respondents from different states and universities, to improve sample diversity. Responses were monitored regularly throughout the data collection period. Although efforts were made to broaden participation, the online self-administered approach may have introduced sampling bias, as individuals with stronger internet access, higher digital literacy, or closer social proximity to the researchers were more likely to participate. Consequently, certain youth subgroups may have been underrepresented. Data collection concluded at the end of December 2023, with a total of 333 responses received.

Study Instruments

The questionnaire will be developed based on three independent variables: attitude (ATT), subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavior control (PBC). Each question will use the Likert scale method from scale 1 to 5. 1 will represent strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neither agree or disagree, 4 agree and 5 represents strongly agree. The questionnaire has been divided into two sections which is section A and section B. Section A will be asking about the demographic question such as gender, age, employment status, monthly income, level of education. For section B the questionnaire will ask about the questions that relate to TPB.

Table 1: Demographic Questions

Section A	
Items	
Gender	Male
	Female
Age	18 to 20
	21 to 23
	24 to 26
	27 to 30
Race	Malay
	Chinese
	Indian

	Others
Education level	High school Diploma Bachelor's degree Postgraduate
Employment status	Working Part-time worker Unemployment Student
Monthly income	RM 0 – RM 2,000 per month RM 2,001 – RM 3,000 Per month RM 3,001 – RM 4,000 Per month More than RM 5,000 Per month
Current location	Johor Melaka Negeri Sembilan Selangor Kuala Lumpur Perak Kedah Pulau Pinang Perlis Pahang Terengganu Kelantan Sabah Sarawak

Table 2: Section B for TBP Questions

Section B
Items
Attitude (ATT) I think travel with cruise is fun. I think travel with cruise is pleasant. I think travel with cruise is beneficial. I think travel with cruise help me gain knowledge.
Subjective norms (SN) My family and friends think it ok for me to experience cruise tourism. My family and friends think I should experience cruise tourism for knowledge. My family and friends recommend to experience cruise tourism.
perceived behavior control (PBC) I have enough money to travel with cruise. I have enough time to travel with cruise. I have enough information to travel with cruise. I have enough knowledge to travel with cruise.

Intention to experience cruise tourism
I will experience cruise tourism.
I am willing to experience cruise tourism.
I will try to travel with cruise.

Data Analysis

To achieve the objectives of this study, descriptive analysis and regression analysis has been used. This study conducted descriptive analysis in which the demographic questions such as gender, age, employment status, monthly income, level of education and ever experience of cruise tourism. To achieve objective number one which measures the level of youth intention to experience cruise tourism, the descriptive analysis has been conducted and also the demographic of respondents has been explored. For the second objective, the regression analysis was executed to measure the relationship between independent variables which are attitude (ATT), subjective norms (NS) and perceived behavior control (PBC) whether these independent variables influence the dependent variable which is the intention of youth to experience cruise tourism. All the data collected has been analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results And Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic of the respondents. The gender distribution reveals that 64.2% of respondents are female, highlighting a slightly higher respondents among females compared to males (35.8%). Age-wise, the majority falls in the 21 to 23 age range (42.6%). In terms of race, the majority are Malay (76.9%), reflecting the ethnic composition of Malaysia, with smaller percentages of Chinese (7.7%), Indian (5.6%), and Others (9.9%). Education levels indicate a relatively educated sample, with a significant proportion holding Bachelor's degrees (67.9%). Employment status reveals that a substantial portion are students (60.8%), and monthly income distribution suggests a predominant group earning between RM 0 and RM 2,000 per month (81.8%). Geographically, a notable number are from Terengganu (28.4%), indicating regional variations among respondents in Malaysia. These findings provide valuable insights for cruise tourism planners and marketers, indicating specific demographic segments and geographical regions where promotional efforts might be more concentrated, and where tailored experiences or promotions could be devised to encourage cruise tourism among Malaysian youth.

Table 3: Demographic Of Respondents

	Items	Frequency	Percentage
GENDER	Male	116	35.8
	Female	208	64.2
AGE	18 to 20	38	11.7
	21 to 23	138	42.6
	24 to 26	118	36.4
	27 to 30	30	9.3

RACE	Malay	249	76.9
	Chinese	25	7.7
	Indian	18	5.6
	Others	32	9.9
EDUCATION LEVEL	High school	17	5.2
	Diploma	61	18.8
	Bachelor's degree	220	67.9
	Postgraduate	26	8.0
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Working	99	30.6
	Part-time worker	16	4.9
	Unemployment	12	3.7
	Student	197	60.8
MONTHLY INCOME	RM 0 – RM 2,000 Per month	265 39	81.8 12.0
	RM 2,001 – RM 3,000 Per month	19 1	5.9 0.3
	RM 3,001 – RM 4,000 Per month		
	More than RM 5,000 Per month		
CURRENT LOCATION	Terengganu	92	28.4
	Selangor	47	14.5
	Kelantan	34	10.5
	Johor	31	9.6
	Kuala Lumpur	20	6.2
	Perlis	18	5.6
	Melaka	17	5.2
	Sabah	14	4.3
	Sarawak	13	4
	Perak	10	3.1
	Kedah	10	3.1
	Negeri Sembilan	8	2.5
	Pulau Pinang	5	1.5
Pahang	5	1.5	

To achieve the first objective, descriptive analysis has been executed which is to measure the level of youth intention to experience cruise tourism. The level of youth intention has been categorized into three levels which are low, medium and high level. The respondents have high intention to experience cruise tourism (see Table 4). The results of the analysis revealed that 89.2% of the respondents have high intention to experience cruise tourism, which indicates 289 from 324 respondents. 29 respondents representing 9.0% have medium intention level and 6 respondents which represents 1.9% have low intention to experience cruise tourism (see Table 4).

Table 4: The Level of Youth Intention to Experience Cruise Tourism in Malaysia

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	6	1.9
Medium	29	9.0

High	289	89.2
Total	324	100.0
	Mean	SD
Intention to experience cruise tourism	4.395	0.7266

Regression Analysis

The second objective aims to assess the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control towards youth intention to experience cruise tourism. To achieve this objective, a regression analysis was performed. In this analysis, which applies the TPB to forecast the intention to engage in cruise tourism, the unstandardized beta coefficients offer valuable insights into the connections between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R^2 value of 0.497 suggests that approximately 49.7% of the variability in the variables can be elucidated by the combination of the three independent variables: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control. However, the remaining 50.3% of the variability remains unexplained, potentially due to other factors not included in the analysis. It is worth noting that if more variables are considered, the probability of the R^2 value increasing may rise. From the analysis of the three independent variables, it was found that all variables significantly influence the intention to experience cruise tourism. This includes attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control. The R^2 value of 0.497 indicates that approximately 49.7% of the variability in the intention to experience cruise tourism can be accounted for by these significant variables.

Table 5: Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.943	0.197		4.791	0.000		
M_ATT	0.630	0.052	0.586	12.206	0.000	0.682	1.467
M_NS	0.098	0.046	0.107	2.123	0.035	0.616	1.623
M_PBC	0.107	0.034	0.134	3.105	0.002	0.838	1.194
R		0.705 ^a		Sum of Squares		84.770	
R Square		0.497		df		3	
Adjusted R Square		0.492		Mean Square		28.257	
Std. Error of the Estimate		0.518		F		105.420	
Durbin-Watson		1.835		Sig.		.000 ^b	

a. Predictors: (Constant), M_PBC, M_ATT, M_NS

b. Dependent Variable: M_ITE

The results (see Figure 1) reveal that the attitude toward cruise tourism holds a substantial impact on the intention, as evidenced by an unstandardized beta coefficient of 0.630. Subjective norms also play a role in influencing the intention to experience cruise tourism, though to a lesser extent. The unstandardized beta coefficient for subjective norms is 0.094. Similarly, perceived behavior control contributes positively to the prediction of intention. The unstandardized beta coefficient for perceived behavior control is 0.107. Attitude (ATT) exhibits a significant influence on the intention to experience cruise tourism (ITE) by 63%, whereas

subjective norms (SN) contribute 9.8% and perceived behavior control (PBC) contributes 10.7%. The analysis underscores the substantial impact of attitude on the intention to experience cruise tourism (ITE), accounting for an impressive 63%. This result shows how much the attitude has the significance towards youth intention to experience cruise tourism. A robust positive attitude towards the behavior can be a powerful predictor of the intention to engage in that behavior.

Additionally, subjective norms (SN) contribute to intention by 9.8%. This implies that the perceived influence of important others and societal expectations has a relatively modest impact on shaping individuals' intentions compared to the dominant influence of attitude. Perceived behavioral control (PBC), reflecting the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, contributes by 10.7%. This suggests that individuals' beliefs about their ability to control and execute the behavior also play a significant role in influencing their intention. Overall, these results highlight the differential impact of the TPB components, with attitude emerging as the most influential factor in predicting intention, reinforcing the theory's emphasis on the importance of personal beliefs in shaping behavioral intentions.

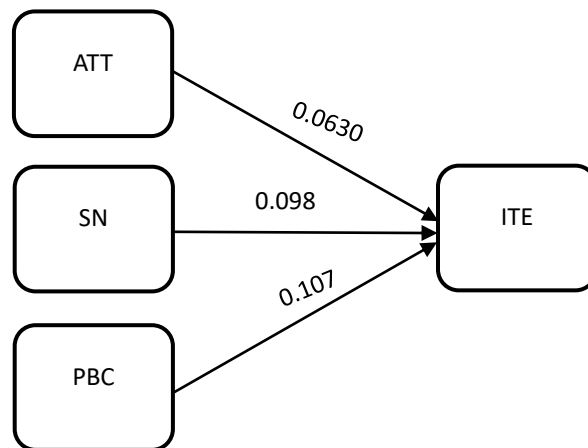


Figure 1: Regression Analysis results

The results of the t-test analysis (see Table 6) depict the t-value for attitude ($12.206 > 1.96$, sig. $0.00 < 0.05$), subjective norms ($2.123 > 1.96$, sig. $0.035 < 0.05$) and perceived behavior control ($3.105 > 1.96$, sig. $0.002 < 0.05$). The t-values for attitude (12.206), subjective norms (2.123), and perceived behavior control (3.105) all exceed the critical value of 1.96, signifying their substantial impact. Additionally, the significance levels (Sig.) for attitude (0.00), subjective norms (0.035), and perceived behavior control (0.002) are all below the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating a high degree of confidence in rejecting the null hypothesis. The positively significant results suggest that each component of the TPB plays a crucial and positive role in influencing the behavior under investigation, reinforcing the theoretical framework's validity in explaining and predicting the observed behavior.

Table 6: T-Test Analysis Results

Independent variables	<i>t</i> – value	Sig.	Hypothesis	Result
Attitude	12.206>1.96	Sig. 0.00<0.05	H1	Positive
Subjective norms	2.123>1.96	Sig. 0.035<0.05	H2	Positive
Perceived behavior control	3.105>1.96	Sig 0.002<0.05	H3	Positive

This study emphasizes the intention of youth in Malaysia to experience cruise tourism by conducting several analyses to ensure the objectives are achievable. Based on the regression analysis has been revealed that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control has positive significance towards youth intention to experience cruise tourism. Based on the findings revealed that youth in Malaysia have high intention to experience cruise tourism and attitude (ATT) has the highest contribution significant to the relationship towards intention to experience cruise tourism.

The *t*-test revealed that all the variables are positively significant towards the intention to experience cruise tourism where all the variables show attitude is $0.00 < 0.05$, subjective norms $0.035 < 0.05$, and perceived behavior control $0.002 < 0.05$. For the *t*-value attitude revealed $12.206 > 1.96$, subjective norms $2.123 > 1.96$, and perceived behavior control $3.105 > 1.96$ (see Table 5). This study is in line with study from Seow et al., (2019) where the most important factor to predicting medical tourism Behavioral intention using social cognition models is attitude. Attitude plays an important role in the TPB models because attitude gives the first impression about the particular action because attitude seeks to find out whether an individual is able to determine their desire to engage in particular action. In this study youth have met the attitude criteria if they have the desire or intention to get involved in cruise tourism. The attitude has the potential to affect decisions as well. When youths have the intention of getting involved with cruise tourism, they will feel a sense of desire and decide to carry out their purpose.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Malaysian youth exhibit a strong intention to participate in cruise tourism, with attitude emerging as the most significant predictor among the Theory of Planned Behavior constructs. The findings reveal that Malaysian youth perceive cruise tourism as an enjoyable, beneficial, and educational experience, which collectively contributes to their positive behavioral intentions. These results suggest considerable potential for market growth by targeting this demographic segment. The study offers several practical implications for industry stakeholders. First, cruise operators should develop targeted marketing strategies emphasizing the experiential benefits that appeal to youth travelers, such as adventure activities and cultural immersion opportunities. Second, affordability remains a key consideration, suggesting the need for youth-exclusive pricing tiers, shorter itinerary options, and flexible payment plans. Third, onboard offerings could be enhanced with youth-centric amenities including reliable WiFi connectivity, co-working spaces, and social programming tailored to younger travelers. From a research perspective, this study highlights several avenues for future investigation. Subsequent studies should examine how socioeconomic factors influence participation patterns among different youth segments. Comparative research across Asian markets would help contextualize these findings within the broader regional cruise tourism

landscape. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking changes in youth perceptions and participation rates could provide valuable insights into market evolution.

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting these findings. The study's focus on 18–30-year-olds necessarily excludes perspectives from other demographic groups that dominate cruise tourism. The reliance on self-reported intentions rather than actual behavior represents another constraint. Furthermore, the Malaysian context may limit generalizability to other cultural settings. Despite these limitations, this study makes important contributions to the literature by addressing the previously under-researched area of youth participation in cruise tourism. The findings provide both theoretical insights into youth travel behavior and practical guidance for industry stakeholders seeking to cultivate this promising market segment. Future research building on these findings could further enhance our understanding of youth cruise tourism dynamics in Asia and beyond.

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