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**PUSH AND PULL FACTORS INFLUENCING VISITORS FROM
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO MALAYSIA**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of the push factors in terms of knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest & relaxation and spending capacity and the pull factors namely environment safety, cultural and historical attraction and tourism facilities on the average length of stay (in days) of the tourist visitors from European Countries to Malaysia. The primary data collection has been undertaken in Malaysia among the European tourists' visitors. A total of 107 European tourists' are the respondents of the study and their responses are used for multivariate data analysis. The findings of the study reveals that push factor namely 'spending capacity', 'rest and relaxation' are the major predictors and are highly positively significant on the average length of stay of European visitors to Malaysia. On the other hand, 'environment safety' has negative effect on the tourists' average length of stay. Tourism industry is the major market player for Malaysia in terms of revenue generation and therefore, the ultimate implications of the present study are useful to policy decision makers and Tourism Malaysia to strategies their marketing plans to attract European tourists to Malaysia.

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Keywords: Push and pull factors, length of stay.

1. Introduction



Tourism is a fast-growing business which takes global attentions as it brings huge benefits to host countries (Ying, Jusoh, Khalifah, & Said, 2015). The tourism industry has emerged considerably to be one of the prominent sectors to contribute towards national growth as well as that of the regional economy (Jayaraman, Lin, Guat, & Ong, 2010a). The importance of this sector can be manifested from the fact that it increases earnings, creates employment opportunities, encourages the private sector and develops infrastructure (Jalil et al., 2013). Malaysia is not an exception. As Malaysia gains a foothold within the global market as a place of tourist attraction and deemed famous for its coastal areas, more and more holidaymakers are keen to travel to different place to spend their time either for business or leisure. Malaysian also remains to be a strategically situated country with unparalleled national treasures environmentally and economically which sets it out apart from most country within South East Asia Region (SEA) and makes it a seeming choice for holidaymakers to travel for business or pleasure. The five Asian countries, namely Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, and China, together accounted for 75.3% of the international tourist arrivals into Malaysia and contributed to 66.5%, of the Malaysian tourism revenue for the year 2007 (Jayaraman et al., 2010a; Jayaraman, Lin, & Ismail, 2008). The travel and tourism industry is progressing continuously in Malaysia, which is parallel with the worldwide tourism industry (Ying et al., 2015). The Malaysian tourism industry has succeeded significantly over the years due to the growth of new tourist landmarks, together with its rich cultural heritage (Jayaraman, Lin, Haron, & Ong, 2011). Over the past 10 years, Malaysia has experienced a significant increase in tourist arrivals (Habibi, 2017) which is one of the significant factors influencing on the country economy growth. At the start of the 1990s, Malaysian tourism made up around 3.8% of the GDP, and this percentage rose to 16.1% in 2014 (Habibi, 2017). During a period of over 10 years, Malaysia has expanded its tourist plan significantly including growth in the number of hotels (989 hotel in 1990 increased to 3094 in 2014), guest houses, lodges, restaurants, tour operators and even the number of airlines servicing the country (Tang, 2011). In Malaysia the visitor arrivals increased from 13.29 million in 2002 to 27 million in 2014 (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2015).

However, the tourist arrivals and receipts increase year by year, unfortunately, the average length of stay dropped from 7.0 in year 2012 to 6.6 nights in year 2014 (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2015). Hence, if the length of stay is in declining trend, it shows that the Malaysia tourism's revenue is also in declining trend. An attempt is in this study to examine what factors effecting on the average length of stay (in days) of the Malaysian visitors. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the influence of the push factors (in terms of novelty and knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest and relaxation, and spending capacity) and the pull factors (in terms of environment safety, cultural and historical attraction, and tourism facilities) on the average length of stay (in days) of visitors in Malaysia. Further, it examines the possible moderating effect of frequent tourists and non-frequent visitors on the relationship of push and pulls factors with the average length of stay.

Many research have been conducted in the context of tourism looking at the factors such as satisfaction, loyalty, intention, or motivation (Chi & Qu, 2008; Maghsoodi, Marzbali, Abdullah, & Bahauddin, 2016). However, the current research focuses on different angle and will examine factors affecting the tourist average length of stay. Literature on travelers' motivation reveal that people travel

whether they are “pushed” into making travel decisions through internal forces or “pulled” by the external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Such push and pull forces contribute to destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) and bring intention to them to revisit the destination and recommend others (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000). Push factors (internal motivations) relate to the decision of whether or not to go on a vacation leading to an external search for an appropriate tourist destination, while pull factors relate to the decision of where to go and come into effect by convincing the tourist that a particular destination is appropriate for them (Phau, Lee, & Quintal, 2013). Following the work of Yoon and Uysal (2005) and Phau et al. (2013) on pull and push factors, we consider novelty and knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest and relaxation, and spending capacity as push factors in making traveler decisions. And environment and safety, cultural and historical attraction, and tourism facilities as pull factors drive traveler decision.

2. Problem Statement

Malaysia is a leading market mix in ASEAN tourism arrivals compared with other countries in the world. Basically, the ASEAN tourists have shorter stay in Malaysia as their country is the nearest neighborhood of Malaysia. Many of these countries are still in developing stage and therefore tourists' purchasing power is lower than those from developed countries. Malaysia was not in the top 10 spots for international tourism receipts. In 2014, Malaysia's revenue for tourism was 22 million while in 2015 it was 24 million. According to Tourism Malaysia, 2015, the top five countries who visit Malaysia were Singapore, Indonesia, China, Thailand and Brunei which conquer the 75%. While the balance 25% tourist is from European, Middle East and Australian (Jayaraman et al, 2011).

International Tourist arrival in Malaysia recorded 25,948,459 with 0.1% growth in tourist receipts, however the average length of stay (ALOS) in 2017 for foreign tourists decreased to 5.7 nights from 5.9 nights in the previous year. Tourist arrivals dropped by 3%, in terms of numbers. Thus, if the length of stay is in declining trend, it shows that the Malaysia tourism's revenue is also in declining trend. Moreover, the average hotel occupancy rate in 2012 are 62.4%, in 2013 is 62.60% while in 2014 is 63.60%. There are huge losses in revenue to the hotel management as only 1/3 of the hotel management in Malaysia has been 'idle' and only 2/3 has been occupied (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia, 2015).

3. Research Questions

This research focuses on the average length of stay (in days) of the European countries who are visiting Malaysia. There are 28 countries in the European region. Moreover, United Kingdom (UK) and Germany are the leading European countries in term of more members of visitors to Malaysia, according to the current data. Basically, this study is comparing United Kingdom and Germany versus the rest of European countries. This is to compare any differences among this region with other regions of Europe. In addition, this research is also to identify the push and pull factors for European to visit Malaysia. Moreover, this study is to further investigate on the socio- demographic factors influencing European tourists to Malaysia.

3.1 Do the push factors (novelty and knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest and relaxation, spending capacity) influence European tourists to visit Malaysia?

3.2 Do the pull factors (environment and safety, cultural and historical attraction, tourism facilities) attract by Malaysia for European tourists visit Malaysia?

4. Purpose of the Study

Travel motivation research found various push factors which motivate individual to travel (Haukeland, Grue, & Veisten, 2010; Jang & Cai, 2002; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2008). However, the most common identified push factors are escape from daily routine, social opportunities, prestige, and novelty (Phau et al, 2013). Earlier research suggested that anomie or ego-enhancement is two factors motivate people to participate in leisure tourism (Dann, 1981). Cultural value, utilitarian, knowledge, social, economic, family togetherness, interest, relaxation and convenience of facilities have been found to motivate tourists visiting Saudi Arabia (Bogari et al, 2003). Kim and Richardson (2003) examined the motivations of visitors to six different Korean national parks in domains of family togetherness, appreciating natural resources, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship. Relaxation and health followed by appreciating natural beauty and acquiring knowledge and enhancement of human relationship were found to be the most important factor in the study conducted by Wang (2004). Similarly, Pan and Ryan (2007) found relaxation, social needs, sense of belonging, mastery skills and intellectual needs as the most important factors motivated people to visit Pirongia Forest Park in New Zealand. Considering the above factors, this study examines novelty and knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest and relaxation, and spending capacity as push factors in making traveler decisions to visit Malaysia. The research framework shown Figure 1.

5. Research Methods

This study is using quantitative methodology which is a questionnaire to identify the relation among the variables which is called as hypotheses and the hypotheses need to be tested using some testing method. Basically, hypotheses depend on the question attained and objective of the current research. The European citizen who has visited Malaysia as a tourist for one or more times for spending leisure time are respondent for this research. Hence, individual management theory (TPB and motivation theory) has been employed to support the conceptualization of the proposed variables. For this study the research site is the Penang International Airport and Batu Ferringhi which is main international tourist spot. The entire European tourists are the respondent for this study. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. The items for the variables was adopted from Maryam Yousefi & Azizan Marzuki (2015).

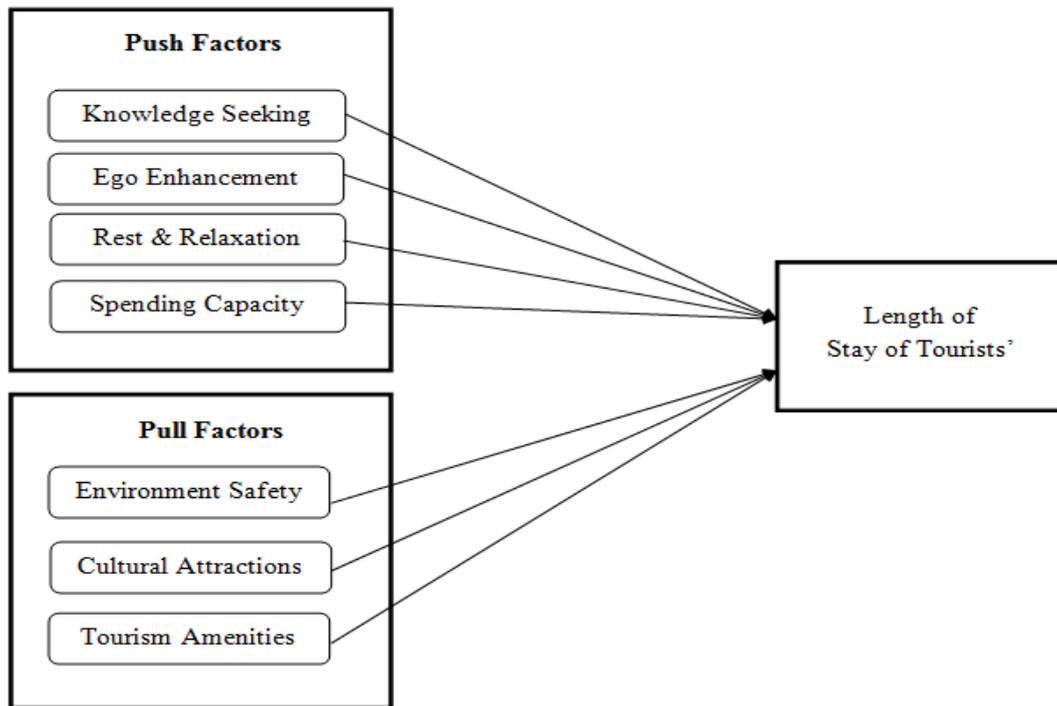


Figure 1. Conceptual Research framework

6. Findings

From the analysis of the study, research rest and relaxation, spending capacity, environment and safety is highly correlated with the average length of stay (Table 01 and 02).

Table 01. Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Place	UNITED KINGDOM (28 respondents) and GERMANY (12 respondents)	40	37.4
	OTHERS (Rest of the 26 countries)	67	62.6
Gender	MALE	58	54.2
	FEMALE	49	45.8
Number of Visits	FIRST TIME	27	25.2
	MORE THAN ONE TIME	80	74.8
Accommodation	RESORTS	18	16.8
	HOTEL	63	58.9
	MOTEL	6	5.6
	FRIENDS OR RELATIVES HOUSE	8	7.5
	APARTMENTS	8	7.5
	OTHERS	4	3.7

Table 02. Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Multiple Regression Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
H1: Knowledge seeking has positive influence on tourists' average length of stay	AVENK	0.42	0.54	0.08	0.77	0.44	Not Supported
H2. Ego enhancement positively effects on tourists' average length of stay	AVEE	-0.6	0.47	-0.15	-1.27	0.21	Not Supported
H3. Rest and relaxation has positive relationship with tourists' average length of stay	AVERR	0.84	0.49	0.20	1.73	0.05	Supported
H4. Spending capacity of traveler has positive relationship with tourists 'average length of stay	AVESP	0.95	0.21	0.38	3.95	0.00	Supported
H5. Environment safety has a negative influence on the tourists' average length of stay	AVEES	-0.62	0.3	-0.2	-2.03	0.04	Supported
H6. Culture and historical attraction has a positive influence on the tourists' average length of stay	AVECH	0.08	0.57	0.02	0.14	0.89	Not Supported
H7. Tourism amenities has a positive influence on the tourists' average length of stay	AVETF	-0.19	0.62	-0.04	-0.31	0.75	Not Supported

7. Conclusion

The average sample in place is 37.4% of tourists from United Kingdom and Germany while other is 62.6%. Moreover, gender is 54.2% of male and 45.8 % of female. The objective of this was to investigate the influence of the push factors (in terms of knowledge seeking, ego enhancement, rest and relaxation, and spending capacity) and the pull factors (in terms of environment safety, cultural attraction, and tourism amenities) on the average length of stay (in days) of visitors in Malaysia. Further, it examined the possible moderating effect of frequent tourists and non-frequent visitors on the relationship of push and pull factors with the average length of stay. Based on the findings only on push factor 'spending capacity' is the main important variable that is highly significant towards the average length of stay of European tourists to Malaysia. In fact, currency of Malaysia is not that much expensive for European thus they can effort and stay more to enjoy country attractive places.

Unpredictably, 'rest and relaxation' and 'environment safety' have negative relationship with traveler's average length of stay. While rest and relaxation has been found as one of the internal motivators for inbound tourists to Taiwan (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009), researcher believed that it more rely

on visitor age, higher family income, or health issue (Guinn, 1980). Having feeling of relaxation, travelers average length of stay decrease. Perhaps, other factors can effect on this relationship. The same negative relationship result is found on the relationship between environment safety and average length of stay. We measured environment safety in terms of three categories namely security and cleanliness, climate conditions and the friendliness of people, and festival and recreation activities and variety of shopping place. However, the results show that such elements can decrease the traveler average length of stay in Malaysia.

In addition, knowledge seeking is not significant with the average length of stay. It doesn't matter how much knowledge and novelty for seeking experience they have, the relationship is not significant. Maybe it can increase the level of satisfaction or loyalty, but it dent have any influence on their average length of stay in Malaysia. Similar results are found on the relationship of ego enhancement, cultural and historical attraction, and tourist facilities with the average length of stay. Considering moderating role of frequent and non-frequent, it has positive impact on the relationship between visitor spending capacity and average length of stay. It can be said that, more frequent visiting the country, a person can get more familiarity and information about the country situation. Thus, it can motivate them to prepare themselves to stay more.

Malaysian tourism industry is one of the major industries which contribute revenue for the country. Tops five countries which are generates income is Singapore, Indonesia, China, Thailand, and Brunei. These top countries are the only nearby countries who willing to visit Malaysia. Malaysia is one of the wonderful tourism country which preferred by all countries as the travel destination to spend their holiday. European country derived Malaysia as a developing country and has the similar benefits as others. Shopping culture is also another important factor for tourists to enjoy their holiday in Malaysia. In addition, tourism product such as heritage cultural tourism, natural tourism, creative cultural tourism, religious tourism, indigenous cultural tourism and gastronomy tourism have to be maintain to attracts tourists not only European as well as other countries. Festival seasons and events need to be advertise more in order for tourists to know about Malaysian's culture and living style. Tourism industry is a major contributor for Malaysia society also. Malaysian society will be able to learn the different kind of culture from different countries from tourists who visit Malaysia. Basically, from this study Malaysian people will have mutual benefits of culture of similarity and dissimilarity between each country. Malaysian and as well as tourist able to learn about language, style and lots more.

Malaysia government must show an important focus for tourism industry in order to increase the length of stay of a tourist. Lately, Malaysia government have waved visa fees to China started from 1st April 2015 till June 2016 next year. This promotion need to be given to other countries as well in order to encourage them to travel to Malaysia. In addition, tourism facilities are also another important factor which needs to take into consideration. Tourism information and facilities is center for a tourist to get to know about Malaysia in detail about latest updates. Furthermore, Malaysia government need to create a center of attention under telephone communication network to make sure they can get have a good reception.

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