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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Paper Title	Page
Factors that Influenced Libyan Teachers' Decisions in Selecting Materials for EFL Reading Classroom	1
Determinants of Savings in Malaysia	12
Influence of Social Media on Consumers' Food Choices	21
Students' Opinion on a Language Game: A Preliminary Study on MonoEnglish	35
Analysis of Public Administrative Reforms: A Case in Afghanistan	46
Market Orientation and Brand Performance in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMES) in Malaysia Context	58
CDIO Implementation in Fluid Mechanics at UiTM Sarawak: Student Centered Learning	71
Critical Factors Influencing Decision to Adopt Digital Forensic by Malaysian Law Enforcement Agencies: A Review of PRISMA	78
Sustainable Solid Waste Management from the Perspective of Strong Regulation	94
Tourists' Tourism Experiences and Their Revisit Intentions to Skyrides Festivals Park, Putrajaya	109
An Evaluation of Learners' Level of Satisfaction using MOOC: Satisfied or Unsatisfied?	117
Carbon Dioxide Emission and Developing Countries: A Dynamic Panel Data Analysis	128
Factors Affecting Customers' Online Purchasing Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention	143
A Study on Precautionary Steps in Purchasing Goods Online	156
Gamification Intervention in Teaching and Learning Accounting: ComAcc Card	166
Factors Contributing to Mathematics Performance of UiTM Johor Students	175
Exploring Factors Affecting Public Acceptance Towards Tax Reform in Malaysia	194
The Relationship between Background Music and Customers' Emotion towards Duration of Stay in Restaurants	211
Organizational Justice, Organizational Reputation and Self-esteem in Improving Employability in Malaysia	220

Tourists' Tourism Experiences and Their Revisit Intentions to Skyrides Festivals Park, Putrajaya

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Abstract

Tourism industry is an important economic generating income for a country. Theme parks are one of the tourism products that motivate people to travel to a particular destination and one of the important generators in tourism demand. This study aims to examine the relationship linking tourists' memorable tourism experience attributes and their revisit intentions to theme parks. Using convenience sampling, a total of 370 survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents after their visit to Skyrides Festivals Park in Putrajaya, and the data were used for data analysis. Regression results revealed that three Memorable Tourism Experience attributes have significant relationships with tourists' revisit intention. They are meaningfulness experience, novelty experience and refreshing experience. Of these three attributes, novelty proves to have the most significant impact on tourists' revisit intentions.

Keywords: Tourism Experience, Theme Park, Memorable Tourism Experience, Revisit Intentions.

1. Introduction

Tourism has become common in this modern era. It comprises activities of persons travelling to, and staying in, places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Jurowski, Uysal, and Williams (1997) believe that tourism sector can bring good impacts in terms of economy such as job creation, income growth, infrastructure development and increase the standard of living (social).

Theme parks have become one of tourism products that have unique concepts that attract and give visitors a totally different experience (Ulvoas, 2016). The Skyrides Festivals Park in Malaysia is an iconic symbol of Putrajaya's entertainment centre. Skyrides Festivals Park is the first festival park of its kind offering unique experiences and attractions such as Sky Warrior Rainforest Challenge, Skyridess Balloon, SkyStage, SkyTaste, SkyGallery, SkyDemo, SkyKids and SkyKids Warrior. Unique travel experiences and activities of a destination can influence a traveller's decision to visit the destination (Cerutti & Piva, 2016). Researchers have looked into theme park development including various factors that bring success to the theme park attraction (Pikkemaat & Schuckert, 2007). As stated by Yooshik and Muzaffer (2003), satisfaction and pleasant experience with the theme park are usually believed to build their loyalty behavior to the park.

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) is the rational factor that affects the future behaviour as the need to enhance customer's experience that influences tourist revisits intentions as stated by Kim et al. (2012). Thus, people tend to memorise their previous experience first when it comes to determining destination area and searching for information for travel (Raju & Reilly, 1979). As stated by Kerstetter and Cho (2004), remembered experiences are great predictors of a person's fascination to have the same destination in the future. Most of the previous research on MTE has focused on cross-cultural validation of a Memorable Tourism Experience Scale (Kim & Ritchie, 2014), cross-cultural comparison of MTE (Mahdzar & Shuib, 2016) and development of a scale to measure MTE (Kim, McCormick & Ritchie, 2012). Other studies have looked on exploring the essence of MTE (Ritchie & Tung, 2011) and effects of MTE to destination competitiveness (Akkus & Gulluce, 2016). As stated by Qu (2017), there are specific elements of tourism experiences that influence a person to memorise memories as well as taken these memories into consideration in creating memorable tourism experience. MTE is the rational factor that also impacts the future behaviour i.e. their revisit intentions to a destination. However, specific studies of MTE focusing on Malaysian theme parks are still limited as previous research only looked into several aspects of tourism experience in other attractions such as national parks and museums. Thus, this paper emphasised on the relationship between Tourists' MTE and their revisit intentions to a theme park in Putrajaya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE)

MTE or Memorable Tourism Experience is defined as "a tourism experience that gives positive feedback to remember and recalled after the activity has happened". According to Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012), the only mechanisms of the tourism experience that strongly affect individuals and lead to memorability should be taken into thought in abstracting an MTE. According to Kim and Ritchie (2014), there are seven dimensions of MTE which are hedonism, involvement, meaningfulness, refreshment, knowledge, novelty and social interaction that can influence tourists to revisit intention.

Tourists mostly try to find enjoyment while gaining experiences. Thus, the first element of MTE is hedonism; experiences that are popular and contribute to the tourism product. For example, Tung and Ritchie (2011) found that good emotions and feelings are related to happiness and excitement which explain the essence of MTE. The second element is involvement experience that refers to when tourists begin to be involved, while actively participating in tourism activities. Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggested that when the travellers are encouraged to participate, the MTE would be delivered affectively. They noted that customers are more likely to have a memorable experience when they find themselves engaged in the programs. The third element, meaningful experience, is defined as having meaningful experiences within their travel and tourism activities such as finding a sense of physical, emotional or spiritual fulfilment through tourism rather than going after simple escapism or a hollow search for authenticity (Callanan & Thomas 2005; Digance, 2003; Noy, 2004). Since tourists are wiser today, they are more likely to seek unique and meaningful travel experiences that will satisfy their needs and wants. The next element which is refreshment or relaxation is best described as the basic component of tourism activities. For example, Boo and Jones (2009), Lscerblanc (2003), Pearce and Lee (2005), Richards (2002), and Snepenger et al. (2007) supported the importance of escapism by discovering that rest, relaxation, and recuperation are the major motivations of travellers who attend special events and festivals. The other element, knowledge experience, is stated as travellers' intention to learn new things, and develop new insights and skills that could lead them having good memorable experience when travelling. Tung and Ritchie (2011) found that the intelligent

growth is one of the most important elements in MTE. Many respondents indicated that tourist gaining new knowledge about the destinations they visited as part of the most memorable tourism experiences. According to the respondents, the most memorable experiences they gained include new knowledge about the destination they had visited. The other element of MTE is novelty that is derived from experiencing something new (e.g., culture, food, and accommodation) and encountering different styles of a tour (Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013); and this is an important component of MTE. Finally, social interaction element in experiencing local culture is also considered as a significant motivational element for travelling. For example, knowing local culture by learning the local people's way of life and the local language, significantly improve MTE (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). This study is supported by Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) who noted that when travellers experience the real local life, cultures and local foods, the experience will be unforgettable.

2.1 Tourist Revisit Intention

Chen and Tsai (2007) stated that a tourist tends to choose a destination to visit and make subsequent evaluations that will lead to future revisit intentions. The following assessments are based on the travel experience; recognise the value and comprehensive visitor's satisfaction. Several studies showed that satisfaction of memorable experience as the major reason of revisit intention (Oppermann, 2000; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Jang & Feng, 2007; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008, Mahdzar & Shuib, 2016). Tourist revisit intention has been considered as an extension of satisfaction (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). The study stated that past tourism experience and memory that they faced affect the behavioural intentions in the future. It is also affirmed that memorable tourism experiences are usually believed to influence tourists' satisfaction and their revisit intentions.

3. Methodology

This study employed the use of a descriptive research design using a quantitative approach through cross-sectional study. The sample populations were among tourists who had experienced the Skyrides Festival Park, Putrajaya. The sample size for this study was 370 respondents which adhered to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) determination of sample size. Data were collected using a questionnaire that included 24 items that assess tourists' MTE and their revisit intentions. 370 questionnaires were distributed to tourists after they had experienced the activities and attractions in Skyrides Festivals Park, Putrajaya, and the data were used for further analysis. Questionnaire items were adapted from Kim and Ritchie (2014) as well as Mahdzar and Shuib (2016).

4. Findings

4.1 Respondents Profile

Through the frequency test, the locals (Malaysians) constituted 39.2 per cent (n=145) of the respondents as opposed to foreigners from China 56.8 per cent (n=210), United Arab Emirates 0.8 per cent (n=3), Singapore 2.2 per cent (n=8), Canada 0.5 per cent (n=2) and Japan 0.5 per cent (n=2). In regards to age group, 53.3 per cent of the respondents belonged in the 21-40-year-old age group, 35.7 per cent aged below 20 years old, and 14.1 per cent aged 41

years and above. The majority of the respondents were females 60.5 per cent, while the males constituted 39.5 per cent.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The study shows the perception towards MTE in general (Table 1). These sections contain 24 questions that were asked to the 370 respondents. Mean indicates the average answered among respondents and standard deviation (S.D) indicates how close the data is to the mean.

Table 1: Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Construct	Indicator	Mean	S.D
MTE	Thrilled having a new experience	3.60	1.118
	Indulged in activities	3.75	1.102
	Exciting experience	3.50	1.237
	Enjoyed tourism experience	3.87	.944
	Once-in-a lifetime	3.82	1.111
	Unique experience	3.86	.953
	Different kind of experience	3.82	1.061
	Experienced something new	3.79	1.039
	Received a good impression	3.64	1.204
	Experienced local culture	3.65	1.161
	Locals were friendly	4.05	.959
	Enjoyed the environment	4.08	.856
	Theme park help me refreshing	3.55	1.220
	Restored myself	3.80	1.088
	Did something meaningful	3.82	1.157
	Did something important	3.84	.972
	Learned more about myself	3.96	.995
	Visited place(s) I really wanted to go	3.91	1.121
	Did not willingly to involve activity	2.11	1.100
	Not interested with the main activities	1.89	.981
	A lot of new knowledge	3.92	.971
	Learnt new cultures	3.88	1.008
Manage to explore more about the other type of	3.88	.967	
Revisit Intentions	Willing to visit again	4.19	.981

The table shows recorded mean score between 1.89 to 4.08. The highest mean is 4.08 (SD= 0.856) representing the refreshment element of MTE. Meanwhile, the lowest mean comes from the involvement element, an item labelled as not interested with the main activities with a score of 1.89 (SD= 0.981). For the revisit intention, 1 item was measured by Likert scale with 1 representing "Completely Unwilling" to 5 representing "Completely Willing". Table 1 shows that the mean is 4.19 (SD= 0.981) which proves most respondents are completely willing to revisit Skyrides Park in the future. It can be concluded that the total mean and

standard deviation for items of MTE factors (Hedonism, Involvement, Meaningfulness, Refreshment, Knowledge, Novelty & Social Interaction) have a mean that leans towards the level of agree (4), while “Completely Willing” towards post behavioural intention.

4.3 The relationship between MTE and tourists’ revisit intention

To see whether there is a significant relationship between tourists’ MTE and their revisit intentions to Putrajaya Skyrides Festivals Park, a single step multiple regression was conducted. The 23 items in independent (MTE) dimension and 1 item in the dependent dimension (revisit intention) were collapsed and entered into the equation. The outcomes demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between tourists’ MTE and revisit intentions. The tourists’ MTE was able to explain 35.8% ($R^2=0.358$, F – change = 28.874, $p < 0.000$) of the variance in revisit Intentions to Putrajaya Skyrides Festivals Park. It evidently shows that tourists’ perception of MTE was found to significantly and positively influence their revisit intentions; thus, the hypothesis is manifestly supported. Besides that, Table 2 shows the value of Beta Coefficient for this study. Pallant (2005) stated that beta coefficient indicates which variable(s) are important to the model by looking at the largest value while ignoring the negative signs. This study suggests that among the factors of MTE, novelty experience (0.573) is the strongest influence on revisit intention, followed by meaningfulness experience (0.164) and refreshing experience (0.114). However, other factors of MTE such as hedonism, local culture, involvement and knowledge experience have statistically insignificant relationship towards revisit intention.

Table 2: Coefficient Revisit Intention

Model	B	t	Sig.
Constant		5.065	.000
Hedonism	0.034	0.681	.497
Novelty	0.573	7.311	.000
Local culture	0.014	0.298	.766
Refreshing	0.114	2.277	.023
Meaningfulness	0.164	3.374	.001
Involvement	0.068	1.560	.120
Knowledge	0.015	0.191	.849
Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention			

5.0 Conclusion

The results from this study show that the most important experience felt by respondents while visiting this attraction is the novelty element, while the least important factor is the refreshing experience. The majority of the respondents also agree to the revisit intention towards this theme park in the future. The results have shown that the independent variable, tourists’ memorable tourism experiences have significant influence on revisit intention. Among all the MTE attributes, novelty has the strongest impact on revisit intention followed by meaningfulness and refreshing experience. The result of this study is consistent with studies by Qu (2017) and Som et. al. (2012) which stated that novelty experience is the main reason for revisit intention and considered as an encouragement for tourist’s satisfaction in tourism.

This research offers advantages and insights to tourism marketers and officials in improving the quality of services in their attractions and concentrating on the experiential factors that affect their customer behaviour intentions to the theme park. It is proven that tourists' memorable tourism experience is very important in encouraging tourist intention to revisit the places. Thus, theme park operators and marketers can provide more facilities and amenities, as well as quality service that can enhance tourist experiences such as unique rides and refreshment while they are at the park.

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