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Long-Haul Travel Motivation by International Tourist to Penang

Norkamaliah Shahrin and Azizan Marzuki

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Abstract

Long-haul travel does not constitute an obstacle for tourists to travel and is fast gaining the attention of tourists in new and unique experiences. This study was conducted to identify the long-haul travel motivation by international tourists to Penang. A total of 400 respondents participated in this survey, conducted around the tourist attractions in Penang, using cluster random sampling. However, only 370 questionnaires were only used for this research. Data were analysed using SPSS software 22 version. The findings, 'knowledge and novelty seeking' were the main push factors that drove long-haul travel by international tourists to Penang. Meanwhile, the main pull factor that attracts long-haul travel by international tourists to Penang was its 'culture and history'. Additionally, there were partly direct and significant relationships between socio-demographic, trip characteristics and travel motivation (push factors and pull factors). Overall, this study identified the long-haul travel motivations by international tourists to Penang based on socio-demographic, trip characteristics and travel motivation and has indirectly helped in understanding the long-haul travel market particularly for Penang and Southeast Asia. This research also suggested for an effective marketing and promotion strategy in providing useful information that is the key to attract international tourists to travel long distances.

Keywords: long-haul travel, motivation, international tourists

1. Introduction

Travelling further from home amidst unfamiliar surroundings is driven by the desire to see more and to gain more experience [21]. The distance can have positive and negative influences [10, 23] dependent upon the travel characteristics and individuals [27]. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNTWO) [33], the number of international tourist

arrivals in 2015 increased by 4.6% (1180 million worldwide), an increase of 52 million over the previous year. It was the sixth consecutive year of above-average growth in international tourism following the 2009 global crisis [32]. Asia, for example, recorded close to 6% growth in international tourist arrivals. Tourist arrivals have seen growth from 25 million in 1950 to 1.087 billion in 2013 and expected to reach over 1.8 billion in the year of 2030 [32]. According to UNTWO [32], study of motivation of tourists to visit another country, rising economies have become more critical through the fact that their market share increased from 30% in 1980 to 47% in 2013 and is expected to reach 57% by 2013. Nevertheless, based on previous researches on travel motivations [19, 25, 36] in Malaysia, the study elaborated on travel motivations of overall international tourists rather than focused on long-haul tourists.

International tourist arrival markets, particularly in the Asian and Southeast Asian regions, are more focused on short-haul tourists than long-haul tourists. The tourism markets in Thailand, for example, received short-haul tourists rather than long-haul tourists. Based on the statistics issued in 2009 [8], Thailand received 21,345,482 short-haul tourists compared to 8,160,880 long-haul tourists (statistics based on the arrival of 25 major markets to Thailand). Likewise, Singapore received short-haul tourists as much as 9,645,346 compared to 3,711,783 long-haul tourists (statistics based on the arrival of 15 major markets to Singapore) [28]. Malaysia also faced the same issue with the arrival of 23,393,445 short-haul tourists compared to 1,987,545 long-haul tourists (statistics based on the arrival of 15 major markets to Malaysia) [30]. The Penang Institute or SERI [26] said the major tourist markets to Penang in 2014 were from short-haul markets from Indonesia (41.1%) and Singapore (20.4%), compared to long-haul countries, for example, Japan (4.5%), the United States (3.1%), Australia (2.8%) and others. Meanwhile, for tourist entries in 2015 (January–October), only 19.92% (155,263) were long-haul arrivals in Penang compared to 80.08% (779,245) of short-haul tourists [13]. The study was conducted to identify the motivations that affected the long-haul travel by international tourists to Penang and will indirectly fill the gap of long-haul travel studies for the state.

2. What is long-haul travel?

Long-haul or long-distance travel can be described as having a long period of time to travel. The concept of long-haul travel based on Dateline project comprises a minimum of 100 km journey [7]. According to Boerjan [3], long-haul travel by airplane involves more than 5 h or travel distance of more than 3000 miles to destination. Letho et al. [16] defined long-haul travel as 'travel more than four nights or more by plane outside of the international area'. In the past, trips involving multiple destinations, long-haul in nature and airplane use were rarely done [20]. Now, travel is already considered habitual, and for some individuals, travel constitutes part of their lifestyle. Introduction to new technologies has enabled people to travel further and comfortably [14–15] (e.g. new airports, direct flights and others) and with further advanced technological developments, travels to a destination are now more convenient than ever [16].

3. Long-haul tourists

Long-haul and short-haul tourists are different based on holidays, trips, budgets, accommodation and others. Most long-haul tourists travel independently [2] and, according to Tidelwall and Faulkner [29] and Hwang and Fasenmaier [12], engage in multi destination trips and sought to satisfy multiple trip purposes. Pre-holiday phase is very important for the long-haul tourists, who usually spend more time gathering information about the trip [3]. According to McKercher and du Cros [18], long-haul tourists were most likely willing to enter a culturally different atmosphere and tend to travel further. Long-haul tourists view their trips as opportunities for learning and personal development as well as seeing it in the context of a rare, often once-in-a-lifetime occurrence [33–34]. Bao and McKercher [2] stated that there were similarities between long-haul tourists and backpackers, such as ability to travel independently, limited budget, simple accommodation and travel pattern. However, based on Crouch [6], long-haul tourists were less sensitive to price and willing to spend more on travel [3], because they consider quality and product features [17].

4. Travel motivations

Motivation is defined by Myers [22] as the need or desire and stimulus to achieve the goal behaviour. Hsu et al. [11] stated that tourists behave as they do because of motivations. Escape from the actual routine, relaxation, prestige, nostalgia, improved relationship, social interaction, adventure, health, personal development, novelty, education, seclusion and romance are common reasons of tourist motivations [11]. The basic motivation theory describes a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs, desires and goals) that will produce a level of discomfort and tension, and this will meet the requirements.

Many researchers argue that tourists travel due to push and pull factors by a destination [5]. The push factors are related to internal factors that motivate individuals to travel, while the pull factors are related to the external factors that determine their travel on where, when and how [9]. Uysal and Hagan [31] stated that push and pull factors are acting separately and tourists travel due to the variable interests' motivation in making travel decisions. According to Bashar [4] most of the push factors which are origin related are intangible or intrinsic of the individual travellers, while the pull factor on the contrary are those that emerged because of the attractiveness of a destination as perceived by the tourist.

However, motivation studies are different in each area (place) and time. Furthermore, each traveller is different based on age, motivation and need [23–24]. Studies that have been conducted [2] stated that long-haul tourists' travels were motivated because of 'knowledge' and 'culture' to Hong Kong. A study by Correia et al. [5] on Portuguese tourists travelling in Latin America and Africa found that the main push motivation of long-haul travellers was to 'relax', while pull motivation was 'landscapes'. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Assiouras et al. [1] in Greece found that the main push factor was 'knowledge', while 'culture and history' were the main pull motivations of long-haul travellers travelling from China, Korea and Japan.

5. Methodology

Tourists were selected from all long-haul gateways located 3000 miles and above from Penang (Asia, and the others are outside Asia). A cluster random sampling approach was employed to collect data at tourist attractions such as Georgetown World Heritage Site, Batu Feringgi, Kek Lok Si Temple, Penang Hill, Taman Negara and others. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 370 usable questionnaires were obtained representing 95.5% response rate. Questions were developed based on a comprehensive review of travel motivations from previous studies [1, 4, 5, 10]. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first section posed questions about respondents' profile, the second about travel characteristics and, lastly, questions about push statements (reasons of their travelling) and pull statements describing destination attributes. Respondents were asked to rate agreement of each statement by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. Data were analysed using the SPSS software version 22.

6. Findings

6.1. Respondent profile

Based on **Table 1**, with respect to nationality, 78.1% respondents were Europeans, 14.6% Americans, 3.8% from Oceania, 2.4% Africans and 1.1% from Asia. The respondents of this study were mainly male (51.6%), aged 21–30 years old (56.2%), and had graduated from university (67.3%). About 28.9% of the respondents are professionals, 18.4% were students, 13% are not working, 11.9% are working in private sector, 8.4% are self-employed, 5.5% others, 3.5% are business owners, 2.5% are retired and 0.5% are housewives. About 54.6% of the respondents have an income less than USD 3000, 15% have no income and 13% have USD3001–4500 income, while 12.4% have incomes of more than USD4501.

6.2. Travel characteristics

The results reveal that most of the respondents are first-time visitors (80.8%) compared to revisit respondents (19.2%). The average stay in Penang is between four and seven nights (38.6%), while the main purpose of the trip to Penang is for holiday (91.1%). Most of the respondents use the Internet as a main source of information (51.1%). About 41.1% of respondents used land transportation having arrived at Penang, with 60.5% of respondents using public transport in Penang. The majority of respondents stayed at guesthouses (48.9%). Five main activities that were experienced by respondents were the local food (95.5%), sightseeing in the city (90.8%), street arts (83.2%), visiting historical sites (81.4%) and shopping (44.6%). About 74.9% of the respondents spent below RM 200 per day, and 90% of the respondents were involved with multiple destinations (from one country to another country). The majority of the respondents travelled with their partners (34.9%) compared to solo travellers (30.5%) and group of friends (22.2%).

Statements	Factor loading			
	1	2	3	4
Novelty and knowledge seeking				
To experience of local culture, history and society	0.861			
To gain knowledge and experience in foreign country	0.803			
To see something different that I do not normally see	0.762			
To see how other people live and their way of life	0.756			
To see something new and exciting	0.730			
To go somewhere with a different environment	0.700			
Rest and relax				
To escape from stress in my daily life		0.863		
To rest and relax physically and psychologically		0.823		
Get away from my daily routine		0.817		
To rest spiritually		0.613		
Achieve dream				
To grab once in a lifetime opportunity			0.723	
To travel to a country that I always want to go			0.659	
To travel to a place that I have always wanted to visit			0.633	
To find thrills and excitement			0.617	
To fulfil my dream and self-curiosity			0.615	
Prestige				
To go to a place that my friends have been before				0.758
To spent more time with my family members while travelling				0.671
To visit a country which most people value and appreciate				0.587
To share my experiences with other people when I return home				0.586
Mean	4.371	3.580	3.568	2.803
Eigenvalue	5.575	2.782	1.927	1.326
Variance (%)	29.343	14.640	10.143	6.927
Cumulative variance (%)	61.052			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)				0.821
Bartlett Test of Sphericity (BTOS)				3161.459**

**p< 0.010, showed that correlation matrix is significant and suitable for factor analysis.

Table 1. Push factor.

6.3. Motivation factors

6.3.1. Push factors

An exploratory factor analysis was carried out to identify the underlying dimensions of push factors. The measure of Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin was applied in all procedures, and all items had an eigenvalue of greater than 1. From the varimax-rotated factor matrix, four factors representing 61.05% of the explained variance were extracted from the analysis of the 19 push items of travel motivation. The four factors were 'novelty and knowledge seeking', 'rest and relax', 'achieve dream' and 'prestige' (**Table 1**). Moreover, all the factor loadings were greater than 0.580, and all factors had relatively high reliability coefficient ranging from 0.657 to 0.878. 'Novelty and knowledge seeking' emerged as the most important push factor that acted as a long-haul travel motivation to Penang (mean score of 4.371). The result of this study supports the finding from previous studies on long-haul travel [1, 2] that suggested that 'novelty and knowledge seeking' were the important push factors among long-haul travellers.

6.3.2. Pull factors

The same procedure was applied on the underlying dimensions of pull motivation factors. The measure of Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin was applied in all procedures, and all items had an eigenvalue greater than 1. Five factors were extracted from the analysis of the twenty pull items of travel motivation. These were 'attraction', 'culture and heritage', 'tourism facilities', 'price and quality' and 'environment'. These five dimensions represented 60.17% of the total variance (**Table 2**). Following the principal component analysis with varimax-rotation, all factors had relatively high reliability coefficient ranging from 0.738 to 0.804. Moreover, all the factor loadings were greater than 0.510. 'Culture and heritage' emerged as the most important pull factor that attracts respondents to Penang (mean score of 4.074) compared to the other factors.

6.4. Relationships between socio-demographic, trip characteristics and travel motivation

Results of the analysis showed (**Table 3**) that there are partly direct and significant relationships between socio-demographic, trip characteristics and motivation (push and pull factors). **Table 3** also showed that from nine factors that have been analysed using multiple regression, five of nine factors were found to have a linear and significant relationship. These were 'novelty and knowledge seeking' ($R^2 = 0.231$; $p < 0.010$), 'achieve dream' ($R^2 = 0.187$; $p < 0.050$), 'prestige' ($R^2 = 0.234$; $p < 0.010$), 'attraction' ($R^2 = 0.225$; $p < 0.010$) and 'cultural and heritage' ($R^2 = 0.190$; $p < 0.050$).

1 = novelty and knowledge seeking; 2 = rest and relax; 3 = achieve dream; 4 = prestige; 5 = attraction; 6 = culture and heritage; 7 = tourism facilities, 8 = price and quality; 9 = environment.

Statements	Factor loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
Attraction					
Nightlife	0.758				
Seaside/beaches	0.699				
Variety of shopping places	0.660				
Festival and recreational activities	0.638				
Social environment	0.555				
Culture and heritage					
Art, cultural and historical places/sites		0.791			
Multicultural aspects		0.743			
Temples, Mosques, Churches		0.741			
Variety of food		0.515			
Tourism facilities					
Public transport (bus, taxi, ferry)			0.743		
Travel distance (within walking distance)			0.621		
Convenience of visa			0.608		
Accommodation			0.586		
Price and quality					
Quality of the tourist place				0.791	
Reasonable price of goods and services				0.751	
Variety of tourist attractions				0.710	
Environment					
Safety and security					0.767
Hygiene and cleanliness					0.719
Friendliness of its people					0.608
The availability of travel-related information					0.518
Mean	3.075	4.074	3.523	3.872	3.500
Eigenvalues	6.246	1.923	1.565	1.217	1.083
Variance (%)	31.230	9.617	7.827	6.083	5.415
Cumulative variance (%)	60.172				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)					0.859
Bartlett Test of Sphericity (BTOS)					2596.770**

**p< 0.010, showed that correlation matrix is significant and suitable for factor analysis.

Table 2. Pull factors.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
F	1.934	1.305	1.486	1.975	1.874	1.514	1.297	1.080	1.157
Significant	0.001	0.098	0.027	0.000	0.001	0.022	0.103	0.344	0.235
R^2	0.231	0.168	0.187	0.234	0.225	0.190	0.168	0.143	0.152
Adjusted R^2	0.111	0.039	0.061	0.166	0.105	0.065	0.038	0.011	0.021

Table 3. Relationships between socio-demographic, trip characteristics and travel motivation.

7. Discussion

Long-haul tourists to Penang are younger, graduated and professional, and travel with partners. Results from previous studies and findings from this study showed that most of the long-haul tourists are first-time tourists and are involved with multiple destinations. Other than that, long-haul trip involves longer trip durations, the tourists tend to explore more during the trips to find new thrills and excitement and also because of the 'once in a life time' opportunity. Long-haul travel characteristics based on the findings are quite similar with that of backpacking tourists, with focus on low expenditures, stay at guesthouses and travel to multiple destinations; this is supported by Bao and McKercher's [2] work that state that long-haul tourists do engage in the backpacking style of travel. The main factor of internal motivations (push factors) of long-haul travel is 'novelty and knowledge seeking', while external motivation (pull motivation) is 'culture and heritage'. Long-haul tourists tended to find and explore new things outside of their comfort zone, looking for new challenges and delving into different kinds of cultural heritage and history.

Findings from the relationships between socio-demographic, trip characteristics and motivations (push and pull factor) indicate that long-haul travellers to Penang relish exploring different experiences with their daily lives based on novelty and knowledge seeking. It also constituted part of the dream they want to achieve and at the same time they can share their experience with family and friends. Long-haul tourists also visited famous attractions to experience first-hand the cultural and historical offerings that differ from their culture. Long-haul travel is further related to psychological attitudes and desires [35–37] and is difficult to assess the different kind of attitudes and needs of tourists. This study however, can indirectly help tourism marketers to plan and develop new strategies and policies to attract long-haul tourists especially to Penang and Malaysia, which could be based on their demand (socio-demographics and travel characteristics) and supply (motivation) issues as revealed by the findings.

8. Conclusion

This study enlightens how travel motivation helps in understanding the long-haul travels of international tourists with different needs and desires. This research aims to determine the

motivations of long-haul international travellers to Penang based on socio-demographic, trip characteristics and travel motivations (push factors and pull factors). Indirectly the findings can be the platform to provide input in drafting policies and planning strategies for long-haul tourism. The motivation theory of push and pull factors has been used to determine the relationships between long-haul travel by international tourists, based on motivations (desire or need) and attractions (destination) to go on a vacation. The research however, has limitations that must be highlighted and overcome in future related studies. The studies only focused on using quantitative methods, where the analysis outcomes are fairly predictable. It would thus be interesting to see the application of qualitative methods in the study. With in-depth interviews of the long-haul tourists, researchers can be exposed to a variety of answers, rather than what have been premeditated via the questionnaires. Other than that, because the samples were more predisposed to Europeans, it would be good to have information from respondents of other continents revealed, so the results can be analytically compared and segmented. This study aims to understand long-haul tourists travel motivations, willing to travel more than 3000 miles to Penang. Clearly, it revealed that the push and pull factors are indeed very important to the destination choice.

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