

Profiling the travel-related behaviours of Malaysian outbound tourists' selection criteria for choosing a tour package

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Article Info

Volume 82

Page Number: 628 - 636

Publication Issue:

January-February 2020

Article History

Article Received: 14 March 2019

Revised: 27 May 2019

Accepted: 16 October 2019

Publication: 04 January 2020

Abstract

This study attempts to comprehend the all-inclusive package tour among Malaysian tourists. This study sought to identify the important selection criteria for all-inclusive package tours. In this study, 30 selection criteria were provided and were analysed. The result shows that respondents see the safety of the tour as the most important consideration for choosing a package tour. Furthermore, the price and the service quality offered by the travel agency are another two important consideration for choosing a package tour. Finally, the study suggests some recommendations that can enhance the attractiveness and the competitiveness of package

Keywords: Outbound tourists, All-inclusive packages tours, Malaysian, Criteria

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the economic downturn, Malaysian outbound travel was not affected. A recent study by MasterCard reported that Malaysia ranks top sixth outbound nations in the Asia Pacific (Choong & Wong, 2016). In the past few decades, Malaysian outbound tourism market has seen growth due to the improvement of Malaysia's domestic economy and individual disposal income (Business Monitor International, 2013). Meanwhile, a high leave entitlement, public holidays, and school breaks are the driving forces Malaysian tourists to travel abroad (Euromonitor International, 2012). This is similar to the Hong Kong context, where the people prefer to travel abroad during festive season and holidays (Wong & Kwong, 2004). As a result, the number of outbound travel is expanding (Euromonitor International, 2012). According to The Passport Index (2018), Malaysian passport ranks 6th most powerful passport in the world.

Today, the growth of low-cost carriers and the expansion of more routes give travellers more choice to travel. The existing of regional low-cost carriers (e.g. VietJet, Tiger Air, AirAsia) allow travellers to travel far at affordable price. Recently, the Visa-free policy entry to Japan encourages Malaysians to visit Japan (The Star, 2013). In addition, many attractive outbound packages offered by tour operators drive Malaysians to travel oversea. A study by Master Card reported that there were 11.9 million outbound trips were made by Malaysians in 2016, and it is expected to grow at 3.5% CAGR (Choong & Wong, 2017). However, the period of 2013 – 2015 witnessed a negative growth between 2.1% to 4.3% (UNWTO, 2018). In 2016, Malaysian made 22 million trips, an increase of 3.8% compared to the previous year (UNWTO, 2018). Meanwhile, outbound tourism expenditure recorded RM38.9 billion, an

increase of 14.2% compared to 2016 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). The top three outbound expenditure is on transportation RM13.8 billion (35.5%), accommodation RM9.1 billion (23.3%), and shopping RM8.6 billion (22.0%).

Due to the geographical location, the neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia remain the top three favourite outbound destination for Malaysians (Euromonitor International, 2012; UNWTO, 2018). Indonesia and Thailand are popular among Malaysians owing to the sandy beaches, foods, affordable prices, rich culture and heritage. The demand for outbound tourism is influenced by several external factors (i.e terrorism, crime, health risks, safety, natural disaster, and political stability (Breda & Costa, 2006). For example, Typhoon Mangkhut in Hong Kong, an earthquake in Japan, volcano eruption in Indonesia has disrupted flight schedules. Likewise, political instability in some countries (e.g. Iran, Egypt, and Syria) influence the decision to travel to these countries.

Most of the all-inclusive package studies are concentrated in East Asia including Hong Kong (McKercher, 2008; Guillet, Lee, Law, & Leung, 2011; Zhang et al., 2004; Law et al., 2011), China (Jiang, Scott et al. 2012), and Taiwan (Chang, 2006; Lai & Graefe, 1999). To the authors' best knowledge, limited studies have been undertaken to understand Malaysian's decision criteria in choosing a package trip. Thus, this study aimed to fill this gap, hence provide a better understanding of the selection criteria.

II. LITERATURE

Package Tour

A package refers to a “pre-arranged combination of transport, and/or accommodation and/or other tourist services not ancillary to transport or accommodation and accounting for a significant proportion of the package” (European Union, 2007). On the other hand, an all-inclusive package tour refers to a prepaid trip that comprises few components such as transportation, accommodation, meals, tour itinerary, sightseeing, and escort or tour guide (Lo & Lam 2004; Heung & Chu, 2000; Wong & Lau, 2001; Aguiló & Rossello, 2012). All-inclusive holiday packages are popular in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean (Farmaki, Georgiou, & Christou, 2017). In Asia, all-inclusive package tour is the dominant travel style of outbound travel among Asian especially Chinese Asian (Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000; Chang et al., 2007; Pearce & Lu, 2011). Teng (2005) reported that majority of Chinese outbound tourists (90%) who travelled to Southeast Asia chose group package tours.

In general, a package tour can be classified into two types (i.e. basic package tours & all-inclusive tours) (Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). In general, there are only two types of elements (i.e. transport and accommodation) covered in basic package (Botti et al., 2007; Mok & Armstrong, 1995) whereas all-inclusive package covers a more comprehensive elements (i.e. entertainment, tour guide) Package tours offer customers pre-arranged arrival and departure transports, professional guiding, food and lodging services (Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010; Xu & Chan, 2010). Some package even includes five components (e.g. basic package; bed and breakfast; half board; full board; and all-inclusive). Some published studies also suggest that there are many types of tourist package offer and it depends on the tourism product. For example, in a study carried out in the South Island of New Zealand, Kane and Zink (2004) revealed that the adventure all-inclusive tour covered food, accommodation, and equipment only.

Recently, there is a shift of all-inclusive package study in hotel industry (Arbelo-Pérez et al., 2017). An all-inclusive package can assist hotel operators to achieve economies of scale and manage the hotel operation effectively (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Aguiar-Quintana, & Suárez-Acosta, 2013). There are substantial explanations why travellers purchase a package tour. First, the organisation of package tour permits travellers to explore more sightseeing in a restricted period (Enoch, 1996; Heung & Chu, 2000). Second, an all-inclusive package tour is normally priced lower because travel agencies are able to ask for special rate on accommodations, foods, and transportation (Enoch, 1996; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008). Third, package tours increase the sense of safety and security (Jang & Wu, 2006), mainly to elderly tourists. This is due to some people feel a sense of safety because it reduces the worry about hygiene and transportation, and different culture (Enoch, 1996).

Fourth, travellers can reduce the worry if tourists choose a package tour (Lee et al., 2012) because all elements are included and reduced the use of cash (Patterson, 2006). Tourists typically just follow the itinerary prepared by travel agencies prior to the departure and reduce the time of planning itinerary. Fifth, all-inclusive package tour is

convenience especially for senior citizens (Heung & Chu, 2000). For example, Huang and Tsai (2003) stated that convenience was regarded as the most significant aspect since everything is all-inclusive.

Finally, package tour is a good option if one has language barrier (Chang et al., 2007; Li et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2012; Huang & Tsai, 2003). Some tourists will avoid visiting a foreign place where they will encounter language and communication barriers (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989). This is evident in Spears and Rosenbaum's (2012) study, where they reported that the package tour is favourable among Japanese tourists they have English language barrier.

According to a survey by Holiday Which (2001), there are five important considerations of choosing a tour 1) accommodation, 2) convenience of travel arrangements, 3) value for money, 4) brochure description, 5) and services of a representative. On the other hand, the demand of all-inclusive is popular among Chinese and Indian due to by convenience, comfort and cost-effectiveness (Farmaki et al., 2017; Heung & Chu, 2000; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). Furthermore, travel operators offer convenient services to solve dissimilar cultures and poor transportation problems (Enoch, 1996). On the other hand, Arbelo-Pérez, Pérez-Gómez and Arbelo (2017) summarized the four main reasons why implement all-inclusive packages. The benefits derived benefits the tourists as well as the tour operators. The selection criteria are important in understanding the tourist's preference. For instance, service competences, payment conditions and cost, reputation, and interactive relationships are important criteria for a group package trip (Tsaur & Lin, 2012). However, an all-inclusive package is said to cause negative impacts on the local economy (Tavares & Kozak, 2015).

Factors influence tour package

Some studies (e.g. Wong & Kwong, 2004) have tried to identify the determinant factors influencing the selection of package when tourists travel. It was reported that socio-economic characteristics and the demographics of the travellers influence the purchase of tour package (Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017; Lee, Tsai, Tsang, & Lo, 2012, Wang et al., 2007). Age group was found to be an influencing factor of selection criteria. For instance, restaurants, hotels and airline facilities, travel safety, and reasonable prices are viewed as important considerations why senior tourists choose an outbound package tour (Huang & Tsai, 2003). Similarly, age was found to be an important influential factor for selection criteria. For instance, seniors Taiwanese tourists concern about the tour guide, restaurant, accommodation, bus, and scenic destination (Wang et al., 2013) while younger tourists less than 40 years old see length duration of tour and type of flight as an important consideration (Tsaur & Wu, 2005).

Price has often been measured as key factors in deciding travel products (Alegre & Sard, 2015; Coulter, 2001; Musa & Sim; 2010; Tsaur & Wu, 2005). Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009) agreed that some tourists considered the overall cost as the most important selection criteria if they travel abroad. Thus, price is a factor that cannot be neglected and required to be taken into consideration in the process of evaluation before potential tourists make their ultimate

purchase decision (Quiroga, 1990). As price increase would decrease tourists' spending for the majority travel-related products (Chang, Chen, & Meyer, 2013), offering low-priced package become common to many tour operators to attract tourists to buy the package (Lin & Kuo, 2018). However, this strategy is a short term and may have a negative impact on the long term period. Thus, many companies adapt packaging strategy to achieve profits and customer lock-in and reduce entry barriers (Albayrak, Caber, Hutcheson, & Moutinho, 2016). Meanwhile, additional strategies used by travel agencies in attracting customers includes offering complimentary gifts, low price, and different type of discounts (Heung & Chu, 2000).

Although different demographic backgrounds were found to have different destination attribute preferences, safety is the main concern when they choose travel destinations. Safety and security were found to importance consideration for senior Malaysians and Taiwanese tourist (Musa & Sim, 2010; Lai & Graefe, 2000; Jang & Wu, 2006). This is evident in several studies found among Taiwan senior citizens tourists (Lai & Graefe, 2000; Jang & Wu, 2006). Meanwhile, Malaysians senior tourists prefer to travel in a group and their family's recommendation influence their travel decision (Musa & Sim, 2010). Recently, various kind of treat (i.e. natural disasters & terrorist attacks) raise the worry about safety (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). This inevitable tourism disaster and terrorism affect tourist's decision.

Previous studies (e.g. Wong & Kwong, 2004; Hyde & Lawson, 2003; Choi, Lehto, Morrison, & Jang, 2012) stated that flight schedule, non-repeated routing, and travel routing are viewed as another vital criterion when choosing all-inclusive tour package. Non-repeated routing is favourable among tourists as tourists like different types of destinations and less-hectic schedules (Li et al., 2011). For example, Ko's (2000) study stated that excessive shopping itinerary affected the satisfaction of tourists because numerous key attractions were omitted. This is in line with the study conducted by Li et al. (2011), where respondents were complaining by saying 'they spent too little time at attractions, but a lot of time at shopping venues'. Thus, planning an itinerary is vital because of travel distance influence tourist's decision (Yang, Gu, & Ryan 2009).

Sometimes, tourists prefer to buy a package tour as it includes a tour guide service, where a tour guide can help tourists solve problems or difficulties (Lee, Wilkins, & Lee, 2011). The service quality delivered by travel agency influence the tourists' decision for the selection of tour packages and their loyalty (Moliner et al., 2007; LeBlanc, 1992; Kuo et al., 2013; Lai, 2014). Six service attribute dimensions of group package tour were considered in Jin, Lin, and Hung's (2014) study of the expectation of the Chinese outbound tour. Thus, comprehending and fulfilling a good service quality for customers is essential to meet their expectations (Fornell et al., 1996). Besides that, customer's evaluation of the service quality provided is largely based on the expectancy confirmation theory (Loureiro & Kastenholz, 2011; Oliver, 1980).

Travel agencies play a significant role in providing travel experiences by gathering and allocating tourism package (Räikkönen & Honkanen, 2013). Agency's reputation and

image were found to be one of the key attributes for choosing a travel agency (Heung & Chu, 2000; Milewicz & Herbig, 1994). However, a company will lose its positive reputation if the company repeatedly fail to fulfil stated intentions or marketing signals (Milewicz & Herbig, 1994). Räikkönen and Honkanen (2013) conducted a study to see whether there is a relationship between satisfaction and trip experience based on a few components of a package tour. Their results indicated that destination services of tour operators and accommodation service were the main factors for vacation experience. However, transportation-related services (i.e. flight and airport services) were viewed as least significant.

Tour guides are one of the key front-line players in the tourism industry because they provide tourism experience to their customers (Ap & Wong, 2001). A good tour guide provides quality service and determines the success of the trip (Wang et al., 2007; Li et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2010). Professional tour guide performance is viewed as important evaluation as good service quality provided by tour guide increase the satisfaction of tourists (Huang et al., 2010; Heung, 2008; Bowie & Chang, 2005). Tour guides are expected to be professional, honest, understand the local culture, and are proficient in numerous languages (Li et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2014; Heung, 2008). For example, in Taiwan, most of the tour guides speak fluent Japanese and equipped with high interpretation skills (Chang, 2009). In addition, professional tour guides show their passion and have good attitude in providing professional service to tourists (Ap & Wong, 2001).

A guaranteed departure date, availability and flexible departure dates are a crucial aspect for the tourists to choose a tour package (Dellaert et al., 1998; Quiroga, 1990). Nevertheless, it is difficult for travel agencies to promise guarantee departure and follow the schedule set because it depends on the popularity of package tours. Thus, the departure date may not guarantee although advance payment has been made in full. Some tours will depart if certain minimum numbers are reached. This is because a low number of registered participants will make the tour had no choices but to cancel on some occasions (Lo & Lam, 2004).

III. METHOD

There are three sections in the questionnaires. Respondent's demographic profiles such as gender, age, race, marital status, education, occupation, and monthly income were collected in the first section. The second section collected information regarding trip-related information such as the number of times of joining package tours, upcoming trip destination, upcoming trip duration, and travel companion. The third section asked respondents to rate importance for each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). All the items were adopted from Wong and Kwong's (2004) study. A pilot study was carried out among 30 Malaysian undergraduate students to test the comprehensible of the questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used in this study, it selects a specific sample (i.e. respondents or case) based on the objective to answer research questions (Teddlie & Yu,

2007). In order to be qualified as respondent, they must fulfil three criteria as suggested by Wong and Kwong (2004):

1. They must be Malaysian;
2. Their ages must not be less than 18; and
3. They indicated that they planned to travel abroad within 3 months from the date of the survey.

In this study, only Malaysian tourists that have the intention to travel abroad was included. Thus, domestic tourists were excluded. Respondents were intercepted at various location (e.g. travel fair, shopping malls, & streets). Prior to the survey, respondents were invited to participate in the survey and they were informed the survey is on a voluntary basis. The entire data collection was aided by two enumerators.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data collected. In term of analysis, descriptive analysis outlines the demographic profile of respondents. On top of that, Cronbach's alpha was performed to measure internal consistency. Based on Nunnally's (1978) recommendation, Cronbach's alpha score ≥ 0.6 is reliable and was used for analysis.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Only fully answered questionnaire were included for analysis to warrant the validity and reliability. Overall, 310 completed questionnaires were received. After eliminating incomplete responses, this study obtained 300 usable questionnaires, resulting in a 97% response rate.

The demographic profiles of respondents were analysed using simple frequencies. Table 1 summarises the demographic profile of respondents. About 70% of the respondents were males while the remaining 30% were female. The result indicates that over half (66%) of the respondents were Chinese, following by Malay (31) and Indian (3%). A large proportion (87%) of the respondents indicated that they were single, and closely 77% of the respondents reported themselves had at least a bachelor degree. In terms of occupation, most of the respondents were private sector employee (40%) and student (39%). On the other hand, the majority of the respondent's income range between RM2001 – RM4000.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents (n=300)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	89	29.7
Female	211	70.3
Age		
18-30	253	84.3
31-40	29	9.7
41-50	18	6.0
Race		
Malay	92	30.7
Chinese	198	66.0
Indian	10	3.3
Marital status		
Single	260	86.7
Married	38	12.7
Divorce/Separate	2	0.6
Education background		

Primary school	1	0.3
Secondary/high school	11	3.7
Pre-University/ Matriculation/ A-Level	36	12.0
Diploma	21	7.0
Undergraduate	196	65.3
Postgraduate	35	11.6
Occupation		
Government servant	36	12.0
Self-employed	24	8.0
Private sector employee	120	40.0
Student	117	39.0
Unemployed	3	1.0
Income		
≤RM1000	89	29.7
RM1001 - RM2000	47	15.7
RM2001 - RM3000	96	32.0
RM3001 - RM4000	28	9.3
RM4001 - RM5000	16	5.3
> RM5001	24	8.0

Travel-related behaviours of the respondents

The respondents (66%) said that had purchased an all-inclusive package tour. Majority of the respondents (34%) indicated they prefer to travel to other countries while 28% of respondents said they would prefer Southeast Asia. Over half (55%) of the respondents would choose a tour between 4-7 days and would not like to travel alone. In term of travelling companions, respondents said that they prefer to travel in a group (33%) and family (27%). Among 300 respondents, 90% of the respondents indicated that they would not travel with their children. Most of the respondents (53%) preferred to travel in a group of 2-4 people. The detail of the travel-related behaviours of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Travel related behaviours of respondents (n=300)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Times of joining package tours		
Never	103	34.3
1 - 3	157	52.3
4 - 6	29	9.7
7 - 9	4	1.3
> 9	7	2.3
Destination of the coming package travelling		
Australia	37	12.3
China	24	8.0
Hong Kong	29	9.7
Indonesia	17	5.7
Singapore	20	6.7
Thailand	46	15.3
UK	17	5.7
USA	5	1.7
Saudi Arabia	4	1.3
Other	101	33.7
No. of days of the coming package travelling		
2-3	40	13.3
4-5	107	35.7
6-7	58	19.3
>7	95	31.7
Travelling partners		
Travel alone	15	5.0
Couples	77	25.7
Families	81	27.0

Group	98	32.7
Other	29	9.7
Travelling with child(ren)		
Yes	29	9.7
No	271	90.3
No. of travelling partners		
1	58	19.3
2-4	158	52.7
>4	84	28.0

Among the 30 criteria, respondents rate safety of the tour (M=4.76), service quality of travel agency (4.57), and guaranteed departure (4.52) as the top three important criteria. Conversely, TV ads & travel programs (3.33) was viewed as the least important criterion for package tours selection. Table 3 outlines the mean score of the selection criteria for package tours.

Table 3: Mean score of the selection criteria for package tours

Criteria	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Reputation of the travel agency	4.17	0.91
2. Service quality of travel agency	4.57	0.73
3. Escorts, tour-guides quality & experience	4.46	0.73
4. Guaranteed departure	4.52	0.72
5. Safety of the tour	4.76	0.60
6. Relaxing tour itinerary	4.30	0.76
7. Visiting natural environment	3.90	0.91
8. Visiting cultural characteristics	3.75	0.94
9. Sightseeing points included	4.06	0.81
10. Hotel's quality & grading	4.00	0.89
11. Hotel's facilities	3.94	0.91
12. Airlines used	3.83	0.91
13. TV ads & travel programs	3.33	1.06
14. Allowance of special request for room/bed	3.55	1.03
15. Freedom to join/not join self-paid activities	4.00	0.87
16. Non-repeated routing	4.29	0.78
17. Flight schedule	4.20	0.89
18. Personal interests	4.26	0.74
19. Visiting a theme park/ amusement park	3.57	1.02
20. Traveling partners' opinions & interests	4.15	0.78
21. Family's & friends' word-of-mouth recommendations	4.10	0.79
22. Time for travelling	4.32	0.72
23. No. of days of tour	4.23	0.75
24. Choice of destination	4.44	0.74
25. Air-conditioned coach	4.06	0.83
26. Items included in the tour price	4.43	0.76
27. Price of the tour	4.57	0.68
28. Weather of the destination	4.28	0.85
29. Number of meals included	3.82	1.00
30. Season of travelling	4.25	0.81

V. CONCLUSION

This study attempts to examine the profile and the travel behaviour Malaysian outbound tourists' selection criteria for choosing a tour package. Some important findings emerged from this study. Consistent with previous studies, the results highlight that all-inclusive package tours are the most common travelling mode for Malaysian. Respondents rate safety of the tour (M=4.76), service quality of travel agency (4.57), and price of the tour (4.57), as the top three important criteria. Conversely, TV ads & travel programs (3.33) was viewed as the least important criterion for package tours selection.

It was found that South-East Asia (e.g Thailand), South Asia (e.g. China, Taiwan, Hong Kong), and the Pacific region were the three major popular travel destinations for Malaysia. However, it was not consistent with the reported generated Euromonitor International (2012). Euromonitor International (2012) reported almost Singapore is the preferred country for Malaysian, following by Thailand and Indonesia. The inconsistent of result might due to the respondents do not choose package tour when travelling to Singapore. Singapore is a small country and Malaysian can travel without using a package tour. Therefore, it is not surprising when Singapore is not the preference country when selecting an all-inclusive package tour. Furthermore, the package tours offered in MATTA fair is rather limited and mostly focus on cruise package.

The results reported that safety was viewed as the highest priority in choosing an all-inclusive package. It can be concluded that Malaysian tourists are general possess highly safety conscious and will choose to travel to a safer place in order to reduce any risks. Thus, if one destination is targeting Malaysian tourists, safety assurance is a useful promotion tag. The finding is in line with earlier studies (Lai & Graefe, 2000; Wong & Lau, 2001, Wong & Kwong, 2004) where safety was rated as the most important criteria when choosing a package tour. Malaysians are aware of the safety concern when they travel abroad. Recently, MATTA insisted customers purchase travel insurance when travelling abroad. As a result, some of the packages offered inclusive of insurance.

This study confirmed that the service quality of a travel agency is an important selection criterion when choosing a tour package. Some researchers suggested that service quality provided by travel agencies is important to fulfil customer satisfaction (Fornell et al., 1996; Kaynama & Black, 2000; Jin et al., 2014; Kuo, Chang, Cheng, & Lai, 2013). Consistent with Wong and Kwong's (2004) study, this study found visiting a theme park/ amusement park, allowance of a special request for room/bed and TV ads & travel programs are three less important criterion for Malaysians travellers when choosing package tours.

It is necessary to struggle for managing the all-inclusive package tour offered by travel agencies as successful vacation experiences. This is because of the components of the package tour influence customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, travel agencies will need to offer a relatively flexible itinerary and programs due to the decline of traditional escorted tours.

Free and Independent Travel (FIT) market is becoming increasingly significant for Malaysian tourists, which indirectly bring significant implications to tour operators who

offer an all-inclusive package tour. This calls for travel agencies to change their marketing strategies. For instance, travel agencies can reformulate a more price-competitive package, customize the itinerary, and discounts to capture the FIT market.

Implications and Limitations

This research makes both theoretical and practical implications. From the theoretical perspective, this research extends the body of knowledge on tourism consumer behaviour. It is believed that the use of the theory of reason action provides helpful insights for a better understanding of tourism motivations and the behavioural characteristics of Malaysian outbound tourists and the selection criteria of all-inclusive package tours. The theory provides a basis for understanding how Malaysian tourists make decisions on outbound travel. Meanwhile, current study is one of the very little on the criteria used by Malaysian outbound travellers to select all-inclusive package tours. The results of this study have added new knowledge of what Malaysian future outbound travellers may consider important when buying all-inclusive package tours.

From the managerial perspective, these findings should be of interest to the tourism stakeholders who are interested in Malaysian outbound tourism. These parties include, but are not limited to, tour agencies, destination management organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders. This study provided a number of interesting implications of the emerging characteristics of the Malaysian travellers that will require a response by the industry to meet changing demand. A number of practical implications arose from this research, and these may be of interest to destination managers or marketers. This study demonstrates the shifting characteristics of Malaysian consumers. This mirrors not only on their changing lifestyle but also the information they employ to get information about destinations.

Several ideas for future studies are observed from the limitations of the current research. First, some sample were conveniently derived from one travel fair (MATTA fair Kuala Lumpur) and it is quite possible that visitors in other cities could grasp dissimilar travel behaviours. Second, the sample was biased toward younger respondents and it would be desirable to obtain different sights of a wider range of age groups, such as senior visitors as they are one of the key customers for outbound tourism. Third, convenience sampling was a non-probability approach that may direct to sampling bias. Fourth, this study solely adopted 30 attributes in Wong and Kwong's (2004) study and may not be comprehensive in terms of assessing the criteria for joining outbound package tours because there are more criteria to be included.

Suggestions for Future Study

This study examined Malaysian preferences outbound decision when choosing an all-inclusive package tour in general terms. Further research might examine the preferences and selection criteria of the all-inclusive package in relation to ethnic groups since Malaysia has a mixture of ethnic and each ethnic groups may vary. Therefore, further

research on Malaysian outbound leisure travellers' behaviour or their travel-related characteristics would be helpful.

The current research is quantitative in nature, with the primary objective of identifying the selection criteria for choosing an all-inclusive package tour. This study, however, did not take into consideration the in-depth reasons for their choices. Future research can investigate deeper information using the exploratory study to better understand their behaviour.

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