EFFECTS OF TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS ON TOURISM EXPENDITURE: A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIA YOUNG OUTBOUND TOURISTS

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the travel characteristics determinants affecting tourism expenditure, among 40 young outbound tourists to Fukuoka Japan. Two hypotheses are tested using data collected from purposive sampling recruited via diary record survey. Pearson correlation explores the difference in length of stay, planned expenditure in influencing the actual expenditure of accommodation, shopping, food and beverages, entertainment and transportation. Empirical result confirmed that the determinants of expenditure have different influence on spending sectors. Length of stay, has bearing in most of the expenditure segments. This result provides useful input for decision makers to revise policies and strategies related to domestic and outbound tourists flows and expenditures.

Keywords: Travel characteristics, tourist expenditure, outbound tourist, tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is being recognized as a push force in economic development of several regions especially developing and undeveloped countries. Studies by Craggs & Schofield (2009) manifested that tourism has the capability and capacity to generate economic benefits especially for locals. In 2019, World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that the contribution of the travel and tourism industry towards global GDP has significantly increased from USD940 billion in 2018 to USD800 billion in 2019. Among of the factors was tourists' expenditure, which was a measure of money that has been spent by domestic and international tourists. Tourism industry in Malaysia recorded an outstanding performance in 2018. The share of gross value added tourism industries (GVATI) to GDP elevated to 15.2% in 2018 against 14.6% in 2017 that contributed to RM220.6 billion in 2018 compared to RM220.4 billion in 2017.

At present, there is a large volume of published studies associating tourism destination with spending behaviour. With the cognisance of this pattern, relevant authorities can then better strategize tourism promotion and marketing in improving the performance of tourism industry. However, to date far too little attention has been paid to Malaysian outbound tourism expenditure in specific countries. The regions in which the tourism as the main industry, it is important to comprehend this behavioural pattern of expenditure among tourists especially in Asian destinations, a region in which tourism industry play a paramount role in the economy, for the analysis provides an insight to planning and arrangement of domestic and internal tourism strategies.

In light of the above, this paper seeks to address the expenditure patterns of selected segments of Malaysians to Fukuoka Japan as outbound tourists and its determinants. Fukuoka, with an area of 343.39km sq., and a population of 1.59 million (as of June 2019), is one of the more popular Malaysian tourists' destination. Fukuoka is characterized as smart, modern and natural tourism, with historical and cultural tourism. This paper is organized as follows. The first part presents the literature review relating to tourism expenditure. This is followed by description of methodology. Next section presents the results on the total tourists expenditure patterns in five main tourism sectors, namely, accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, shopping and entertainment. The last section involve the discussion and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist expenditure has been clearly defined by World Tourism Organzation (1991) as the total consumption and spending made by a tourist for and during their visit to the destination. It is a basic concept of measurement to measure tourism activities and total consumption of product and services (Dixon et al., 2012) that is known as tourism demand (Zhang et al., 2020). In Malaysia context, according to Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) 2005-2011, a tourist's expenditure

refers to the total paid by tourists for their consumption of goods and services during trips. All goods purchased and prepared before the trip should be included. Outbound tourism expenditure refers to the tourism expenditure for a resident visitor outside Malaysia.

Tourism market segments can be defined by using a range of segmentation bases. This has been categorized into geographical, socio-demographic, tourist behavioural, psychographic, economic and socio-cultural (Wedel & Kamakura, 2000; Dolnicar, 2007). However, Wang (2014), Syakir Amir et al. (2014) and Yuliana (2018) believe that socio-demographic and travel characteristics are the most frequently used as expenditure determinants. Several studies revealed the varying directional relationships of tourists' expenditure have with each of the associated socio-demographic factors namely income level, education level (Hung et al., 2012), age, occupation, country of residence (Wang et al., 2006). Travel characteristics relate to purpose of visit, frequency of visit, number of accompanying people (Joy, 2001; Swanson & Horridge, 2004). There are a few studies that explore expenditure distribution across five tourism main sectors, namely, accommodation, transportation, food and beverage in depth (Li et al., 2020; Syakir Amir et al., 2017), shopping, and entertainment. Shopping has become a significant tourism sector that took a large portion of tourist expenditure (Lioyd et al., 2011; Hang et al., 2019) and generated a major revenue source for many tourism cities, namely Hong Kong (Choi et al., 2008), Macau (Wong, 2013). In some studies, tourists spent much only for subsegment of shopping, as it was initially the purpose of the trip (Wong & Wan, 2013; Lehto et al., 2014). Food and beverages subsegment is a manifestation of sense of place with reference to the host destination (Nik Mohd Aizat et al., 2020) which demonstrated the sensory functioning of auditory, taste, vision, tactile and olfaction (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). (Wu et al., 2016) believe that expenditure covers one-third of the total expenditure in most of the regions with food experiences, i.e. in their offering of local cuisine as part of the activities (Sengel et al., 2015).

On the other hand, many outbound tourism studies have been conducted, For example, Anyango et al. (2013) explore that the Dutch tourists spent 18% on accommodation, 7.5% for transportation, and 10.5% for food beverages. While, Japanese tourists spent as high as 36.2% of total expenditure, relative to other subsegments expenditure (Kim et al., 2011). Several similar studies explored a few other tourist destinations including China (Wen et al., 2020), United Kingdom (Sharma et al., 2020), Tuscany (Ferrari et al., 2018), North Korea (Li & Ryan, 2018), Italy (Brida & Tokarchuk, 2017). In the Malaysia context, the total Malaysian tourists' expenditure abroad increased to RM41.3 billion in 2018 compared to RM38.9 billion in 2017 and RM34 billion in 2016 with a moderate growth of 6.2%. According to the statistics, the main components

for outbound tourists expenditure were transportation 31.6%, followed by shopping 23.7%, accommodation 23.4% and food and beverages 13.3%.

H1: The relationship between length of stay and expenditure is significant
Most studies in tourism economics and behaviour concluded that length of stay had somewhat positive impact on total tourist expenditure (Agarwal & Yochum, 1999; Downward & Lumsdon, 2003; Downward & Lumsdon, 2004; Nicolau & Mas, 2005; Pouta et al., 2006; Fredman, 2008; Nik Mohd Aizat & Syakir Amir, 2020). In regard to tourists' behavioural pattern, Zhang et al. (2012) believe that the longer a tourist stays in a destination, the more likely it is that their expenditure will increase.

H2: The relationship between allocation of tourist budget (planned) and expenditure is significant
To date, there is little discussion on tourists' planned budget before travel. Several researchers claim that when an individual's preparation duration increases, his/her demand for travel is likely to increase (Chhabra et al., 2002; Thrane, 2002; Syakir Amir et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY
Diary record survey (DRS) was chosen as the data collection method to record the outbound tourists' expenditure in Fukuoka Japan. As compared to other expenditure recording methods in tourism research, DRS reduced the error caused by memory decay recalling expenditure among tourists. This study used a purposive sample of 40 young Malaysian tourists who visited Fukuoka from 14th January until 23rd January 2020. The respondents were selected on the basis of degree of homogeneity of their travel characteristics namely, length of stays and length of time for trip preparation. The respondents were required to record the detail expenditure in five main tourism sectors, food and beverages, accommodation, entertainment, shopping and transportation. The subcategories under two sectors were further generated to represent the second layer of expenditure typology. For example, classification of food and beverage expenditure was split into five subcategories of which were (i) total expenditure on food and beverage, (ii) breakfast, (iii) lunch, (iv) dinner and (v) snacks. Similarly, classification of shopping expenditure was further typified by two subcategories namely (i) souvenir and (ii) non-souvenir. Cultural and entertainment expenses were deemed as entertainment expenditure. These breakdowns of expenditure allowed the investigation of influencing effect that each and every distinct spending category and subcategory has on selected travel and trip making factors. Hence, the result may provide significant information to tourism sectors and services industries.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Length of Stay and Expenditure in Tourism Sectors

Length of stay and Average Expenditure					
Pearson Correlation Test					
Variables	**r value**	**ρ value**	**Decision**	**Strength**	**Direction**
Total exp. FOOD BEVERAGE	.334	.043	Reject H_0	Small	Positive
exp. breakfast	-.402	.183	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. lunch	**.653**	**.037**	**Reject H_0**	**High**	**Positive**
exp. dinner	.244	-.293	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. snacks	**.432**	**.031**	**Reject H_0**	**Small**	**Positive**
Total exp. ACCOMMODATION	**.577**	**.015**	**Reject H_0**	**Medium**	**Positive**
Total exp. TRANSPORTATION	-.391	.149	Fail to Reject H_0		
Total exp. SHOPPING	**.433**	**.008**	**Reject H_0**	**Small**	**Positive**
exp. souvenirs	**.615**	**.038**	**Reject H_0**	**Medium**	**Positive**
exp. non-souvenirs	**.811**	**.014**	**Reject H_0**	**High**	**Positive**
Total exp. ENTERTAINMENT	.105	.473	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. cultural	.235	.282	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. recreational	.493	-.194	Fail to Reject H_0		

Source: Diary Record Survey, 2020

Table 1 above illustrates the relationship of length of stay with outbound tourists expenditure to Fukuoka Japan. Results indicate that length of stay correlated positively expenditure for lunch (r =.653) p>.05 and expenditure for non-souvenirs (r =.811) p>.05 with both strong relationships. It is followed by total expenditure for accommodation (r =.577) p>.05 and expenditure for souvenirs (r =.615) p>.05 with both medium relationships, with total expenditure of food and beverage (r = .334) p>.05, , and expenditure of snacks (r =.432) p>.05, , total expenditure for shopping (r =.433) p>.05 with small relationships.

Table 2: Planned Expenditure and Average Expenditure in Tourism Sectors

Planned expenditure and Average Expenditure					
Pearson Correlation Test					
Variables	**r value**	**ρ value**	**Decision**	**Strength**	**Direction**
Total exp. FOOD BEVERAGE	.302	.233	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. breakfast	.453	.183	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. lunch	.546	.237	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. dinner	.443	.293	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. snacks	.781	.231	Fail to Reject H_0		
Total exp. ACCOMMODATION	**.258**	**.018**	**Reject H_0**	**Small**	**Positive**
Total exp. TRANSPORTATION	**.428**	**.023**	**Reject H_0**	**Medium**	**Positive**
Total exp. SHOPPING	**.731**	**.019**	**Reject H_0**	**High**	**Positive**
exp. souvenirs	**.834**	**.036**	**Reject H_0**	**High**	**Positive**
exp. non-souvenirs	.541	.065	Fail to Reject H_0		
Total exp. ENTERTAINMENT	.213	.634	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. cultural	.334	.324	Fail to Reject H_0		
exp. recreational	.134	.244	Fail to Reject H_0		

Table 2 above illustrates the relationship of planned expenditure with outbound tourists expenditure to Fukuoka Japan. Result indicates that planned expenditure correlated positively with total expenditure for shopping (r = .731) p>.05 and expenditure for souvenirs (r = .834) p>.05 with both strong relationships. It is followed by total expenditure for transportation (r = .428) p>.05 with medium relationship, total expenditure for accommodation (r = .018) p>.05 with small relationship.

DISCUSSION

Diary Some 40 samples have been collected, with an average age cohort of 21-25 years old. The 10 days trip to Fukuoka Japan began and ended with a flight to and from Fukuoka International Airport, which was planned some 6 months earlier. Accommodation was bed and breakfast style, located in the city centre, 5 minutes from Hakata station. On average these 18 males and 24 female respondents spent each person an average daily RM100 (USD23) on food, RM80 (USD18) on accommodation, RM50 (USD12) on shopping, RM50 (USD12) on entertainment and cultural and RM40 (USD10) on transportation. This homogeneous group had a full day activity on five of planned days and half day excursions for the remaining days. On average they made three minimum trips per day. The tourists had allocated a budget of RM300 (USD70) daily to cover the 10 days trip total expenses, amounting to RM3000 (USD700).

The results of this study indicated that the Malaysian tourists expenditure for an outbound visit was affected by a complex set of travel characteristics, namely, length of stay and planned expenditure. One an unanticipated finding was that the tourism expenditure for this group of respondents being higher than had been planned for, for this outbound market, to be precise, Fukuoka Japan. A plausible reason could be the fluctuation of foreign exchange rates and the weakening of Malaysian Ringgit, not withstanding the fact that Asians were indeed high spenders. An observed behaviour of these young tourists staying in B&B, they would either skip breakfast to catch up with the tight schedule or take a light breakfast and prepare for an outing with a very heavy lunch in between activities. As such, it was relevant that their expenditure on lunch was the highest among all food consumption i.e. RM100 per day. These Malaysia tourists demonstrated typically similar behaviour when they are touring domestically, i.e. high lunch consumption rate and expenses. This observation was supported by Siti Radhiah Omar et al. (2015) that suggested some tourists were motivated by culinary exploration and cuisine testing when deciding on making a trip. This study also showed that this segment of tourists were highly like to consume snacks between meals. It is important to note that length of stay is a significant determinant of most of the spending for Malaysian in Japan, except transportation and entertainment. This finding has important implications for Malaysia is also one of the leading tourism destinations is Asia. One such

implication is that in making tourists stay longer, various facilities should be packaged so as to induce inclusivity among domestic and inbound tourists to explore deeper any attraction or linking on destination to another through seamless transportation. This may be the future niche market for Malaysia, which can be learned from examples in Japan. Japan offers variety of so-called discount passes especially for their public transportation – shinkansen, subway and public bus. The introduction of JR pass for foreigners – 3 days pass and 7 days pass with an embedded combination for some other services including food purchase has aimed at both increasing tourists' expenditure levels and extending tourists stay. Another important observation was that food and beverages expenditure had significant correlations with all travel characteristics. This result indicated that while general food were abundantly found in Japan, special dietary meals like Halal food were also increasingly widely offered. It is timely for Fukuoka, Japan to serve Halal food for Muslim travellers. As expected, expenditure in shopping correlated positively with all travel characteristics Of the items purchased by tourists, non-souvenirs contributed to a significant share of overall shopping expenditure. There were several possible explanations for this result, the first being Asians were among the most widely recognized tourists groups for shopping activities, while other national and ethnic groups especially European and American were more interested in cultural and heritage values. Second, the habit of gift-giving to friends and relatives in Asian cultures after completing a trip has been the source for harmonious relationships and demonstrated gratitude for the kindness of others. Last, tourists were influenced by tax-free items, Japanese branded products and products availability. This study demonstrated that despite Japan being a cultural and techno-nation, the country was also serving tourists as a shopping destination in Asia.

CONCLUSION

The present study is an explorative research that has been designed to highlight spending behaviour and segmented expenditure of young Malaysians with specific travel characteristics making a trip to Fukuoka, Japan. With a few limitations that need to be considered, a number of possible future studies using the same experimental set up are apparent. The study was limited in several ways. First, the study used a limited sample size that shared most of the similar socio-demographic background. Also, these data apply only to a specific city – Fukuoka. Therefore, it is recommended the further research be undertaken in the following areas: first, identify other travel characteristics, for instance, trip purpose, type of trips, number of destinations visited, payment method, actual and planned expenditure. Second, the outbound tourism expenditure can be evaluated in other regions like Europe and Middle East. Third, these future studies may improve the understanding on outbound tourism pattern and characteristics and contribute to the empirical studies on certain niche tourism.

For decision makers, an appreciation and high comprehension of outbound tourists' expenditure were important in order to plan and control the expenditure-driven economic activity of local citizen at host destinations.

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