

## DOMESTIC TOURIST MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT IN I-CITY SHAH ALAM

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### ABSTRACT

The theme park is one of the tourism products in Malaysia that generate income to the country as well has been selected as the prior destination among tourists as it is one of the famous attraction sites for the purpose of leisure, recreational, entertainment activities. It is important for the theme park operators to understand the motivations that lead the visitors to come to their places. This paper presents the relationship between domestic tourists' demographic characteristics and their frequency of visit to I-City, Shah Alam. Total of 150 respondents involved for the questionnaire survey. The result shows the purpose of recreation and relaxation is the main motivations that motivate their visit to the study area. It is also found that most of the domestic tourists are young, single and living nearer to the Shah Alam region. Adopting few strategies like introducing new themes, games and attractions that compatible with every age group and improving the accessibility by providing I-City Shuttle Bus will help to increase the number of tourist arrival and tendency to revisit more in the future. The research gives benefits and provide information to the authoritative body as well as industry players, especially I-City's management, and Tourism Selangor in order to contribute more to the related tourism products besides for the educational references for the future.

**Keywords:** Theme park, Tourist motivation, Demographic

### INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is now booming to become a very important industry for the country and the local economy. According to the World Tourism Organization (2018), international arrivals have reached 1332 million in 2017, which grew at a remarkable 7% and is expected to be continued in 2018 at a rate of 4% to 5%. While in Malaysia, tourism industry is the second largest industry with the main contributor to the economy after manufacturing sector. There are 26.8 million of tourist arrivals with the total receipts of 82.1 billion in 2016. This amount represents an increase of 1.04 billion of tourist arrivals and an increase of 13 billion in total receipts compared with the year 2015 (Ministry of Tourism of Malaysia, 2016).

The theme park is one of the tourist destinations that is no exception in experiencing vast development as a tourist attraction. The first theme park was opened in Denmark in 1583 to entertain visitors and give them pleasure in creating memories that will bring them back year after year to find the next fun (Yap, 2013). The number of theme parks in Malaysia is increasing year by

year. This situation leads to the difficulties in decision making for tourists who are preferring to have leisure holiday in the theme park as many tourist destinations are offering a variety of products and services. Therefore, it is very important for marketers to see the miracle and give knowledge as a driver for people who do not know to go to new places and encourage them to visit new destinations. Slabbert and Vuuren (2011) also state that travel motivation is part of travel behavior that has been widely studied and applied in tourism marketing strategies. However, there are several issues and problems on theme parks in Malaysia namely low quality of facility equipment and service as well as lack of safety management are widely discussed despite of the emergence of the new theme parks which are more sophisticated in terms of technology and diversity of attractions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Tourist Motivation**

Motivation can be defined as something the nature that drives us to do or not do something (Broussard & Garrison 2004). Besides, the needs and wants of tourists are viewed as a driving force that causes an individual to travel. Peters (1982) claims that there are multiple of tourist motives and every person may have a number of needs that he or she wants to satisfy. According to Murray (1964), a motive is a central basis in tourism that arouses, directs, and integrates a person's behavior. Dann (1981) and Iso-Aloha (1980) indicate that motivation is known as psychological or biological needs and wants that risen, lead and integrate the behavior and activity of an individual. Hence, to meet the needs of a person, the marketers stimulate those needs by making offers.

Lam and Hsu (2006) analyze that the main concept of this model is decomposition individual choice for travel purpose into two troops. The first force is a push factor pushing individuals away from home and trying to develop a common desire to go somewhere others, without specifying where possible. The second is an interesting attraction factor individual to the destination as it is a region-specific attraction, or charm. The push factors are seen as individual socio-psychological variables that convince them to travel and help explain the desire of travel (Crompton, 1979; Goossens, 2000; Klenosky, 2002; Kozak, 2002b; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In addition, the push factors are also much related to origin and involve socio-psychological concerns and intrinsic desire such as the need to escape, rest, adventure, prestige, family and friendship togetherness, and natural resources.

### **Demographic Factors**

Tourist demographic is determined by various attributes. It includes age, gender, educational background and income. Demographic characteristics also

can be categorized as push motivation factors where Uysal and Hagan (1993) developed the Push and Pull framework of tourist motivations which identifying the different factors that fall into each category. The first category, 'Push' factors are related to the individual tourist and are categorized into several groups: (1) Motivations (such as: escape, rest and relaxation, self-esteem, prestige, adventure, social interaction, personal interests, and benefit expectations.); (2) Socio-economic and demographic factors (such as: age, gender, income, education, family life-cycle and size, occupation, second home ownership); and market knowledge.

Age is one of the demographic elements that has influence on a business and should be taken into account as the company's products and services are more likely to appeal to a particular age group. Hanqin and Lam (1999) emphasize that there were significant differences between the motifs of Chinese tourists and subsequently the influence of push and pull factors according to their age. Based on the results of the study, they suggested that people aged 36-45 see the trip to Hong Kong as very prestigious, and 'prestige' is a very important driving force for Chinese tourists. In Hong Kong's tourist motive's study, Mok and Amostrong (1995) believe that there was a significant relationship between gender and destination attributes perceived importance. Through these studies, they found that men responded to entertainment and climate as more important than women.

Based on the previous study, Zhang et al (2004) find that married couples are regarded as tourism characteristics more important than their single associates. Travelers with different levels of education are also found to have different tourist motives and choose different tourist destinations. Baloglu and Uysal (1996) also believe that graduates of high school and university are generally searched locals and usually travel in the summer and stay longer in the destination. The income of tourists was also found to have an influence on tourist motives; according to Kim et al., (2003) income has a significant effect on the push and pull factors.

## **STUDY AREA**

I-City Theme Park is one of the famous urban tourism destinations in Malaysia. It is a 72- acre urban development based on ICT that located in the state of Selangor. Its strategic location lies next to the Federal Highway in Section 7, Shah Alam which easily accessible to visitors. An area of 1 million square feet is divided into regional shopping malls, office towers, Cyber centre office suites, hotels, apartments, data centers, and innovation centers. It is built over 24 acres of land has attracted 90000 visitors every week. I-City is designed as a fully integrated smart city by architect Jon A. Jerde, who comprising corporate, recreation and residential components. I-city is a technology theme park that often being the choice of many visitors at night because of it's so lively.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In analyzing the relationship between frequency of visit and demographic factors of domestic tourists to I-City, Shah Alam, the method of a questionnaire has been used in this study.

According to Bulmer (2004), questionnaire is a powerful tool in social science research to get information about social participants' characteristics, current and past behavior, standards their behavior or attitude and beliefs and the cause of action in relation to the topics being investigated. Furthermore, it is collected to gather information from the respondents in order to understand tourist's experiences and their motivation during visiting the study area.

The primary data will be collected by using questionnaires that will be distributed to 150 respondents which basically targeting the respondents that have visited the study area, I-City, Shah Alam. Moreover, the questionnaire is conducted in order to identify the push and pull factors that motivate the visitors and attract them to visit the study area as well as to examine the relationship of demographic data with frequency of visit. The questionnaire consists of three sections where the first section is asked to collect visitors' personal information of demographic attributes such as age, gender, income and education level, while the second section is composed of pull factors questions to measure the level of importance and their travel preferences. The last section is about the visitor's opinions and views regarding I- City, Shah Alam as a successful theme park

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

### Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Profiles

**Table 1:** Respondents' Socio-demographic Profile

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	45	30
	<b>Female</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Age</b>	15-20	12	8.0
	<b>21-30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66.7</b>
	31-40	20	13.3
	41-50	9	6.0
	51-60	5	3.3
	61 and above	4	2.7
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>65.3</b>
	Married	52	34.7

<b>Origin</b>	<b>Selangor</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>35.3</b>	
	Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur	31	20.7	
	Perlis	11	7.3	
	Kedah	7	4.7	
	Pulau Pinang	10	6.7	
	Perak	14	9.3	
	Negeri Sembilan	10	6.7	
	Melaka	2	1.3	
	Johor	2	1.3	
	Terengganu	1	0.7	
	Pahang	6	4.0	
	Sarawak	3	2.0	
	<b>Education level</b>	SPM	17	11.3
		STPM	4	2.7
Certificate		5	3.3	
Diploma		28	18.7	
<b>Bachelor degree</b>		<b>89</b>	<b>59.3</b>	
Master degree		5	3.3	
Phd		2	1.3	
<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>44.7</b>	
	Government	28	18.7	
	Private	35	23.3	
	Self-employed	7	4.7	
	Unemployed	13	8.7	
<b>Monthly income</b>	<b>0 (no income)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>43.3</b>	
	Less than RM 1000	16	10.7	
	RM 1001-2000	21	14.0	
	RM 2001-3000	23	15.3	
	RM 3001-4000	15	10.0	
	More than RM 4000	10	6.7	
	5000			

Source: Primary data: Questionnaire Survey, 2018

Table 1 above reports the demographic profile of 150 respondents (n=150). The study found that the I-City, Shah Alam was visited by both genders, male and female. 105 out of 150 respondents are female with the higher percentage, 70%. Meanwhile, the other 45 respondents are male with 30%. The study divided the age into five groups. The youngest respondent group is between 15 to 20 years old, meanwhile, the oldest age group is 61 years old and above. The higher percentage of the respondents consists of youths which fall between the age group of 21 to 30 years old with 66.7% (100 respondents). The lowest percentage was recorded by the age group of 61 years old and above with only 2.7% or 4 respondents. The trend shows that the respondents in the second age group have high motivation and more interested in involving or visiting urban destinations.

Next, single status was recorded the highest percentage among domestic respondents, which was 65.3% and the rest is married. Moreover, most of respondents are students, so they have fewer responsibilities or commitment than married couples. Based on Table 4.1, 35.3% from the total domestic respondents were from Selangor, followed by followed by the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur (20.7%) and Perak (9.3%). Meanwhile, Terengganu recorded the lowest number of respondents with only 1 person who visited I-City Shah Alam. For education level, bachelor's degree was recorded the highest percentage among domestic respondents, specifically 59.3%, followed by diploma (18.7%), and SPM (11.3%).

Moreover, 67 or 44.7% of the respondents were students with the highest figures recorded for respondent's employment status. This group may travel with their family and friends. The second highest respondents were private sector employers with 35 (23.3%), followed by government employees with 18.7% (28 respondents). Self-employed with only 7 respondents (4.7%) stated the least number of all. Most respondents have no monthly income with 65 of them (43.3%). Basically, they are students and funded entirely by their parents or use a study loan for their travel budget. The second highest is from respondents who earn between RM2001 and RM3000 per month with 10% (23) followed by those who earn monthly income between RM1001 and RM2000 where 21 respondents (14%). Meanwhile, at least 10 respondents (6.7%) are from those who have income levels of RM 5000 and above.

## The Relationship between Respondents' Demographic and Frequency of Visit

**Table 2:** One-way ANOVA Test on Frequency of Visit by Tourist Demographic Attributes

Variable	df	F-value	p-value	Decision
Gender	1, 148	0.345	0.558	Fail to reject H <sup>o</sup>
Age	4, 145	0.699	0.594	Fail to reject H <sup>o</sup>
Marital status	1, 148	0.710	0.401	Fail to reject H <sup>o</sup>
Education level	6, 143	1.792	0.105	Fail to reject H <sup>o</sup>
Employment Status	4, 145	0.543	0.705	Fail to reject H <sup>o</sup>

One-way ANOVA, significant at  $p < 0.05$

In the SPSS descriptive table 2 above, the result indicates the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to determine the relationship between the gender, age, marital status, education level and employment status of the respondents with their frequency of visit to the I-City, Shah Alam. Overall, there are no significant difference in mean for all demographic variables (gender, 0.558; age, 0.594; marital status, 0.401; education level, 0.105 and employment status, 0.705). Therefore, the null hypothesis was failed to be rejected.

### DISCUSSION

The dominants categories of domestic respondents were from the young age group and having high level of education with bachelor's degrees. The lowest percentage was recorded by the age group of 61 years old and above. The trend shows that the respondents in the young age group have high motivation and more interested in involving or visiting urban destinations, which is consists of adventurous activities and attractions that suit with their age and interests. This group may travel with their family and friends.

In addition, most of the domestic respondents were single and female. It shows that female respondents are more interested in theme park destination because of its adventurous activities and attractive environment. Since they are single, it is easier for them to participate in any adventurous activities because they have more time to enjoy and get fewer responsibilities or commitment than married couples. Besides that, half from the total domestic respondents were

from Selangor, followed by the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Perak. These respondents are accessible to the study area because of the close distance and save time. Last but not least, most respondents have no monthly income yet as they are still students and funded entirely by their parents or using a study loan for their travel budget and it is noticeable that the domestic tourists tend to spent below RM 100 in the I-City, Shah Alam.

The present data suggested that domestic tourists are pushed by a number of factors to visit I-City, Shah Alam. Therefore, this study identified the tourist demographic factors that influenced their frequency of visit according to the domestic tourists. Six push motivations of respondents' demographic that emerged throughout the survey including age, gender, education level, employment status, marital status, and monthly income. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson Correlation Analysis were conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' demographic and their frequency of visit to the I-City, Shah Alam. Overall, based on the results above, there was no significant difference in scores for all independent variables with the frequency of visit (dependent variable). Hence, age, marital status, gender, education level and employment status in domestic respondents resulted in no significant mean differences in frequency of visit.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the monthly income of the respondents and their frequency of visit to the I-City, Shah Alam has been tested. Overall, there is a perfect positive relationship between two variables where it was an intermediate, positive correlation between age and frequency of visit, which was significant. It can be concluded that, the higher the monthly income of the domestic tourists, the higher the frequency of their visit to the study area. Besides that, the relationship between the age groups of the respondents and their frequency of visit to I-City, Shah Alam also be tested by ANOVA. Overall, there was no significant difference between age groups with frequency of visit. Moreover, according to the data collection, most of the domestic tourists who visited the study area are from aged 21 to 30 years while the least one is from the tourist in the oldest age category which is 61 years old and above. It shows that I-City, Shah Alam still do not success to attract older visitors to come for having a holiday due to they do not really provide suitable activities, facilities or packages for that age-group visitor. It can be concluded that the growing one's age, the less their visit to the theme park.

On the other hand, many visitors are among students and still single according to the data collection. Most of them also have a bachelor's degree as their level of education and it can be said that they are studying at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UITM), Shah Alam and Management and Science University (MSU) as these institutions located near to the I-City which takes about 5 to 10 minutes only to arrive. They tend to choose the I-City is because they are interested in involving or visiting urban destinations, which is consists of adventurous activities and attractions that suit their age and interests.



Furthermore, single person usually have more time to enjoy as they have fewer responsibilities or commitment than married couples. However, the study revealed that most of the visitors have no income yet and it is likely their expense to I-City was incurred by parents or study loan.

Besides that, most of the visitors were originated from Selangor itself and nearest state such as Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur which has a short distance to the study area. These data show that I-City still cannot capture the tourists' heart that stay far such as Terengganu and Johor. Maybe they have no encouragement to visit I-City because of the big distance and budget. Thus, they just choose the destination or theme park that located near to their home to save budget and time. The results also showed that the primary motivations of the domestic tourists to I-City, Shah Alam are recreation and relaxation. Many attractions and games at I-City, make this theme park a great choice for visitors to enjoy recreation as well as relax and unwind after work. Usually, they will come with their family and friends which indirectly can strengthen the relationship among them. However, I-City is seen to be less satisfying in providing rugged and challenging entertainment for visitors as not many respondents choose 'adventure' as their main motivation to visit the study area.

Based on the study conducted, travelers prefer to use their own transport or rental car to I-city. This is seen easier and more comfortable for them because many of them live in Selangor and surrounding areas like Kuala Lumpur. So it is not far away that they need to take public transport. Furthermore, the location of the study area located in the city area near the federal highway makes it easier for them to find this destination in a short time. In fact, when a site visit is conducted, it is evident that the I-City Theme Park has provided adequate parking for visitors. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why tourists are more comfortable driving their own vehicles. Therefore, the I-City management should charge a reasonable parking fee so as not to burden the visitors.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study provides an experience for identifying the main motivation of domestic tourists to the I-City, Shah Alam as well as analyzing the relationship between their visit frequencies to the study area with their demographic factors. Based on the study findings, the two push main motivations of the domestic tourists for visiting the I-City are relaxation and recreation. In addition, the age factor, monthly salary, and origin of a tourist affect their frequency to visit back to the study area in the future. Additionally, with a wide range of the pull attributes such a variety of games offerings and entertainments demonstrate that the I-City, Shah Alam, understandably, could potentially extend visitors' stay, expenditures and promote repeat visits.

Therefore, the government authorities and tourism operators should make the most out of this by enhancing the service sector particularly tourist facilities and infrastructure at the destination besides do some planning in terms

of development and promotional strategies in order to increase the number of tourists.

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