

Salt Water Tourism Development in Peninsular Malaysia: A General Review

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this paper is to study factors that influence the development of Salt-Water Tourism in the Peninsular Malaysia. The Salt water environment has long been one of the most attractive settings for tourism in the world. Salt water tourism entertaining activities that involve travel away from one's place of residence and which have as their host or focus the salt water environment. Saltwater tourism in a country involves visit to the beach for relaxation, vacation and doing salt water activities by individual tourist. This study is focus on the Salt Water Tourism Development in Malaysia particularly the peninsular side of the country. Based on the past literatures reviewed, the proposed framework predicted that the development of this Salt-Water Tourism is depend on the factors like product diversity, perceived quality, perceived value, destination image, cost, risk, safety and facilities. The findings of this study could provide knowledge about factors that tourist choose for vacation to gain the satisfaction simultaneously lead to the development of Salt-Water tourism in the country. Malaysia's assets have always been a factors that attracting tourists to the country. The development of these assets has subsequently been given priority by both the government and the private sectors in the country. Malaysia is paying attention to the development of Salt-Water as tourist destinations and the proposed framework could guide the tour operators in providing better and specialized recreational or touristic requirements which at the end contributed to the development of the Salt-Water tourism sector in the country.*

KEYWORDS : *Tourism Marketing, Salt-Water Tourism, product diversity, perceived quality, perceived value, destination image, cost, risk, safety and facilities, Salt-Water Tourism Development in Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

Salt Water Tourism industry is growing fast in all over the world included Malaysia. Many tourists have chosen Malaysia as a part of their destination to visit. This is proven by the report of Trading Economics; the data show that approximately about 2.8 million of tourists have visited Malaysia in the past 2017. The increasing of the salt water tourism industry will contribute the part of country revenue. In order to ensure the success of the industry, the involvement and participation of the local communities and tourists are pertinent. Support from local communities and tourist for tourism is necessary to ensure the commercial, socio-cultural, physiological, political and economic sustainability of the industry. Their role in influencing the tourism development activities through working together with the government is vital (Jamaluddin, Othman & Awang, 2009). The growth of the tourism industry is

crucial to the economic growth as well as the related field such as transportation, leisure services and hospitality (Weaver & Lawton, 2013). The rapid growth in the salt water tourism industry will certainly transform the tourist destination spot, but with unplanned tourism development, it could lead to environmental degradation and socio-economic disparity amongst the local community.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2013, Malaysian salt water tourism spots have been awarded among the best and most beautiful spots in the world by CNN (The Star, 2013). The three beaches in Malaysia were also awarded the top 50 most beautiful beaches in the world (The Star, 2013). Unfortunately, although Malaysia has many spots for its salt water tourism, the development of these destinations is considered limited as compared to other popular salt water tourism spots in the world. Perhaps, the main reason is the limited number of researches which subjected to study on the development of salt water specifically and the lack of focus and understanding of salt water tourism as individual branch of tourism sector. Mostly researches found to talked about beach tourism and island tourism or in general tourism but limited numbers were focusing on analysing the development of salt water tourism which actually a big contributor to Malaysian tourism development. In Malaysia, 76 percent of contributor to the income of tourism came from the salt water tourism (MTDC, 2016). Thus, this research will be able to enrich the current body of knowledge in saltwater tourism particularly in Malaysia. Other researchers will gain new insight on the area of saltwater tourism that could be developed further and at the same time get new information about factors that influenced tourists' intention to choose Malaysia as their saltwater tourism destination. Furthermore, it will provide better and wider knowledge preferences to consumer and meets their needs and wants as tourists. This research also will expose and promote new spots of tourism in Malaysia which can attract more tourists (locally and internationally) to visit and promote the beauty of Malaysian saltwater spots to their relatives. By understanding the consumers and tourists' preferences, the tourism operators could develop and focus their tourism marketing efforts to convince the visitors to come again. Moreover, they can increase the numbers of visitors plus developing these spots as the preferred tourists' world salt water destinations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Salt Water Tourism

The Salt Water Tourism is related to the salt water environment and it has long been one of the most attractive settings for tourism in the world. Salt water tourism recreational activities that involve travel away from one's place of residence and which have as their host or focus the salt water environment (Jamaluddin, Othman & Awang, 2009). The salt water environment is defined as those waters which are saline and tide-affected. Thus, it includes a wide spectrum of activities, such as scuba diving, snorkelling, wind surfing, fishing, the cruising, all beach activities, sea kayaking, visits to fishing villages and lighthouses, maritime museums, sailing and motor yachting, maritime events, and many more. This paper aims to contribute to the process of theory building, and to be the leading source for research reports and analysis related to all forms of salt water tourism in Malaysia.

Type of Salt Water Tourism

Salt Water Tourism has several types such as under water, on water or nearby water (Aliman et. al., 2016; Weaver & Lawton, 2013). Under water can be define as competitive sports using one or a combination of the following underwater diving techniques like breath-hold, snorkelling or scuba including the use of equipment such as diving masks and fins. These sports are conducted in the natural environment at sites such as open water and sheltered or confined water such as lakes and in artificial aquatic environments. In addition to that, on water or above water sports also one of the types of Salt Water Tourism. The activities like swimming, fishing and kayaking also can do in this type of Salt Water activities. The nearby water activities include all activities conducted nearby beach at the coast side along the beaches. The popular nearby water activities under the Salt-Water Tourism are beach relaxing, Beach Frisbee Golfing, water bucket relaying, kite flying, beach limbo, beach bowling, beach volleyball and many more. All these activities are actively found at the Peninsular Malaysian beaches until today (Aliman et. al., 2016).

Salt Water Tourism Spots in Peninsular, Malaysia

A great number of salt water tourism destinations in Malaysia (Aliman et. al., 2016) and most of them located at the Peninsular Malaysia and eight of them are considered by Trip Advisor (2018) as the most beautiful in South East Asia which received high numbers of tourists locally and internationally. Those eight spots are:

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| 1. Perhentian Island, Terengganu | 5. Tioman Island, Pahang |
| 2. Redang Island, Terengganu | 6. Kapas Island, Terengganu |
| 3. Tenggol Island, Terengganu | 7. Langkawi Island, Kedah |
| 4. Rhu Island, Terengganu | 8. Pangkor Island, Perak |

The factors of Salt Water Tourism development in Peninsular, Malaysia

Product Diversity

The variety of the activities that offer at the tourism location will attract more tourist because a lot of choices. According to Salleh et al (2013), the more choices are better because every people have different interest toward the activities that provided. Besides that, this factor can give advantages both to the tourist and the tourism operator. For the tourist, they can freely choose what activities that they want and more interested based on their hobby and ability. Some of the activities may be dangerous for the unhealthy tourist, but, the diversity of the activities will give this unhealthy tourist to another activity that they can experience during the holiday or vacation. The past researches shown that, there are positive significant relation between product diversity and salt water development. In order to measure the importance of product diversity in influencing the development of Salt Water tourism in Malaysia, four items developed by Salleh et al (2013) will be indeed useful.

Tourist Expectation

Tourists' experience during the vacation should not contradict with their expectation before their holiday. The interesting experience that tourist could satisfied them. Their satisfaction is important to retain them to re-visit and spread positive word of mouth about the destination that they have visited to their friends, relative, family, colleagues, neighbour, and others. This is proving that the tourist expectation is significantly positive with the salt water development. Three items from Fornell et al (1996) will be adopted to measure the influence of tourist expectation in the development of Salt Water tourism in Malaysia.

Perceived Destination Quality

Perceived destination quality is significant and positively affects the salt water development. It is because the reasonable price with the good service tourism relates each other to give satisfaction for tourist. Additionally, Aliman et. al. (2016) stated that, "Satisfaction is determined by the consumers' perceptions of the service and attention they receive from the representative of the service company with whom they are dealing". Xia et al (2009), Hui et al (2007), Chen & Tsai (2007) and Wang et al (2005) in Aliman et. al. (2016) proposed seven items to measure the influence of perceived destination quality in the development of Salt Water tourism in Malaysia.

Perceived Destination Value

Tourist usually cannot measure the value of the service provided for them with the intangible product but if the tourism operator added value to their services, it will help the tourist to recognized the differences in value. Perceived value is the worth that a service has in the mind of the consumer. There are positive relation between perceived destination value and salt water development. The beautiful scenic and unforgettable memories through a lot of experience at the Malaysia Island will give exclusive destination value for the tourist. Three items in Aliman et. al. (2016) which was developed by Xia et. al (2009), Chen & Tsai (2007), Bolton & Drew (1991) and Oliver & Swan (1989) will be adopted to measure the influence of product destination value in the development of Salt Water tourism in Malaysia

Destination Image

Destination image is important to influence tourist perception and behaviour toward the place that they are visited. Most of the destination image with the great responses from tourist will attract more tourists to visit that place. This is because of the news that spread from word-to-mouth among the tourists. The positive significant relationship between destination image and salt water development were found in the past researches. Many tourists that satisfy with the destination image probably promote that destination to their nearest relative and friends. Buhalis (2000) suggested six items in measuring the impacts of destination image in measuring the development of Salt Water tourism and it will be adopted for this study.

Cost

The cost and price that tourist spent to enjoy the service provided by the tourism operator could lead to worth feeling among tourists. Cost is an important antecedent in influencing tourists' acceptance either to agree or disagree with the costs of the vacation. Tourist normally not too calculative with the cost if the services provided is excellent. For example, to have great experience in the salt water they need to do snorkelling, then the cost will be expensive. But, if the costs also include the package of jacket life, insurance, other safety and facilities, it will be considered affordable and acceptable. These factors have found to be significantly and positively influenced the salt water development. Thus, to measure the relationship between the cost and the development of Salt Water Tourism in Malaysia, the proposed five items in Barutcu, Dogan & Unguren (2011) will be adopted for that matter in this study.

Risk

Today, many salt water extreme activities are becoming popular among tourists and the tourism operators. The activities like scuba diving and canoeing need addition safety guide, facilities and insurance for protection. With the improvement of the overall security aspects of the activities, it will increase the confident level of tourists to engage with those activities. Past researches found many positive and significant relationships between the risk and the salt water development. Thus, five items used in Barutcu, Dogan & Unguren (2011) will be adopted in this study to measure the relationship between the Risk and the development of Salt Water Tourism in Malaysia.

Safety

Before doing any activities during the vacation, the first concern of tourists is the destination safety. Anything that they have paid should consider their safety and life. Even the extreme activities usually might cause dangerous and unexpected accident. Relation of the safety and salt water development is positive and significant. In salt water tourism, the tourist's developer offer a few extreme activities such as snorkelling, scuba diving, parasailing, and many other of extreme activities that required more safety in that activities. Salleh et. al (2013) proposed four items to measure the importance of safety aspects and the safety of the selected destination among tourist towards the development of Salt Water Tourism in Malaysia.

Facilities

Facilities have positively and significant influence salt water development. The more facilities that tourists get from the tourist's developer the more satisfy they will be. For example, in salt water tourism it is rarely that developer provide toilet, beautiful jetty, rest room, and soon. The facilities that could be charge should satisfy the tourists in term of value that they receive from the facilities provide. Salleh et al (2013) also proposed five items to measure the importance of support facilities in the development of Salt Water Tourism in Malaysia.

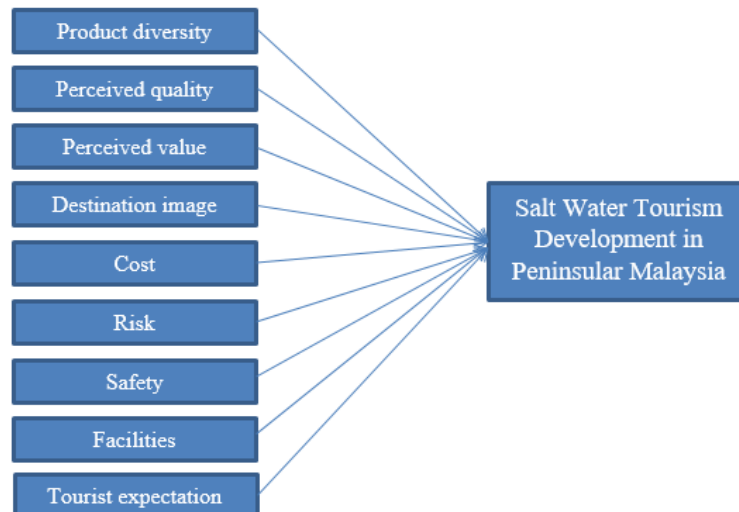


Figure 1: Propose Research framework

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

By understanding tourist expectation will provide meaningful clues on developing the tourist destination further and offering better goods and services. Study had shown most of the tourist were satisfied with their visit and overall image as tourist destination is positive. That is a good signal of development in Salt Water tourism. Tourists profess their intention to come and revisiting Malaysia in the future because Malaysia is perceived as offering good natural scenic beauty, reliable transportation and accommodation facilities and other travelling services, and as a consequence.

The researcher suggested that salt water tourism should be put as travel destination that will fully accommodate the need of tourist and to support the tourism campaigns that might be derived in the future. Even though the statistics were showing positive feedback, the satisfaction monitoring should be under constant basis. The results may serve as valuable input for a trend analysis on the one hand and strategic discussions on the other. The aims are to identify strategic objectives at the destination level, to prepare tactical and operational plans to increase the competitiveness of a given destination, to allocate resources efficiently and effectively and to define future mission.

The researchers suggest the tourism operators to control the price of products and services provided while tourists stay on the island. So that, costs will not increase extremely in order to increase satisfaction further. They are encouraged to design packages that offer value-for-money tours to attract those from the lower income group to visit Malaysia. The island tourism operator should focus on improving the quality of services as well as the facilities by keep improvising the accommodations and maintaining the conservation of environment these are crucial for tourists simultaneously contributed to better development of Salt Tourism in Malaysia. Besides, actions should be taken to classify the social and financial aspects of tourism to better understand the reasons why salt water tourism remains as popular tourism sectors which becoming the preferred choice for vacation among local and international tourists simultaneously make them continue revisit Malaysia.

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