The Expectation and Satisfaction of the First Time and Return Tourists toward the Heritage Attractions in Melaka

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ABSTRACT

The heritage city of Melaka is one of the top most visited destinations in Malaysia by both domestic and international tourists. It has a mixture of heritage attractions that correspond to its status as one of the World Heritage Sites. Thus, the level of tourists' expectations and satisfaction needs to be analysed so as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Heritage City of Melaka. This research is based on the expectation and satisfaction of both first time and return tourists of the Heritage City of Melaka. Questionnaires were used as a medium to acquire the relevant information about these levels from the tourists. The expectation and satisfaction of the tourists were measured based on the dimensional elements of heritage attractions. The results of this experiment show that there is a significant difference of expectation between a first timer and a return tourist towards art (music/ dance) at the significant level of $p < 0.01$ and six other elements at the significant level of $p < 0.05$, which include the historical buildings, traditional views, traditional handicraft, monuments, museums and traditional villages. For the satisfaction level, however, only traditional views in the study area have a significant difference between a first timer and a return tourist at the significance level $p < 0.05$. In conclusion, first timer and return tourists have different expectations but a similar level of satisfaction on the elements of heritage attractions in the Heritage City of Melaka.

Keywords: Expectation, Satisfaction, Heritage Attraction Attributes, First Timer, Return Tourist, Heritage City

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that contributes to the development of the country. This sector brings opportunities to the country and its people by providing employment opportunities through several sectors like

accommodation, food and beverages and transportation services. Besides, this sector also encourages new development that focuses on the infrastructure such as road, water services and sewerage. Consequently, it also increases the tourists' accessibility while travelling to a particular destination. As stated by Som and Badarneh (2011), tourism is able to attract many tourists through good planning while at the same time, it also encourages the exchange of foreign currency and provides employment opportunities. On the other hand, another component that contributes significantly to a destination is the attraction available at these places. This pull factor leads the tourists to decide on whether to visit a destination or vice versa. Therefore, it is important for decision makers and relevant authorities to improve and maintain the tourist attractions that can encourage tourists to visit a particular tourism destination.

The Heritage Tourism

Alzua, O'Leary and Morrison (1998) clarified that heritage tourism is one of the sectors that is currently growing rapidly. This sector has become one of the important segmentations in tourism marketplace (Sudipta, Sarat, & Babu, 2010). Thus, many countries focused on conserving and preserving their valuable heritage in order to obtain the world heritage site status. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an institution that is responsible in giving the world heritage status to any eligible countries. UNESCO (2013) reported that

there are 981 sites inscribed as world heritage sites. These include 759 cultural heritage sites, 193 natural heritage sites and 29 mixed cultural and natural sites. The status inscribed by UNESCO gives the opportunity for a country to promote their heritage site. Malaysia has five heritage sites inscribed as World Heritage Sites, namely, the City of Melaka and George Town City in Pulau Pinang, Kinabalu Park in Sabah, Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak and Lenggong Valley in Perak. Among these heritage sites, Melaka has shown an excellent performance through a high number of tourist arrivals since it was inscribed in 2008 (Chen, 2012). With reference to this situation, a study was conducted in Melaka World Heritage Site in order to evaluate the level of influence of these heritage attractions have on both domestic and international tourists to Melaka.

Melaka as World Heritage Site

The slogan used by the state government "Visit Melaka means Visit Malaysia" reflects the attractions available in Melaka. The uniqueness of the Heritage City of Melaka can be seen from its heritage elements such as its historical building, traditional villages, architectural buildings and monuments, and people of different cultures like Malay, Chinese, Indians, Baba and Nyonya, Chettis, and Portuguese (Melaka Historic City Council, 2007). Melaka's achievement as a World Heritage City and its many heritage assets have attracted many tourists from both inside and outside of the country to

come and visit this historical site. This achievement makes this study relevant because there are a few studies that have been conducted on tourists' expectation and satisfaction towards heritage attraction attributes in Melaka Heritage City.

In conjunction with the year 2013 which is the 5th anniversary of Melaka's recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is important for decision makers to identify both the weaknesses and strengths of Melaka Heritage City based on the tourists' expectation and satisfaction. In order to make sure that the tourists are continuously visiting the Heritage City of Melaka, the rates of expectation and satisfaction of tourists need to be taken into account so that the tourists will revisit this historical site in the near future. Thus, the results of this study will help decision makers to make improvements based on the issues identified. It was the aims of this study to evaluate the expectation and satisfaction levels of the first time and the return tourists towards heritage destination attributes of the Heritage City of Melaka. The key function is to identify the attributes and dimensions that the tourists are mostly satisfied with. Furthermore, it is crucial to answer whether there is any difference in the perception between first timer and return tourists towards the heritage destination attributes in Melaka Heritage City.

Tourism Destination Attributes

Destination attributes represent the identity of a place (Um, 1987). The attributes of tourism destinations are made of physical settings and the level of development in a place. Meng and Uysal (2008) have identified six factors related to destination attributes in nature-based destinations, which are natural settings, quality and convenience, nature-based activities, recreational activities, activities for children and resort-related activities. According to a research conducted by Zhou (2005), ten destination attributes that represent the Cape Town are landscape, culture, entertainment, service, accessibility, attitude, safety, relaxation, climate and price. Similarly, Buhalis (2000) has presented six destination attributes, which are attractions, accessibility, amenity, packages available, activities and ancillary services. These attributes are used by tourists to attain information on the tourist destinations (Gaffar, Wetprasit, & Setiyorini, 2011). Therefore, the attributes of a destination that attract tourists to a particular destination were identified based on the information gained from travel magazines, websites and brochures. The quality of information provided for the attributes will influence the tourists' decision to travel.

In the Malaysian context, Shahrivar (2012) identified eight different dimensions (namely, natural factors, cultural factors, recreation and shopping facilities, accessibility, infrastructure, reception, services and cost) to represent the destination attributes of Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Melaka. The destination attributes used by some previous researchers were simplified by Huh (2002) by categorizing the attributes into four main dimensions, namely, general tour attractions, heritage attractions,

Ariffin, Omar and Yoon (2011), is the result from the experiences received by the tourists. Therefore, a study on the expectation and satisfaction of tourists has a significant role in the development of sustainable tourism of a particular destination (Lather, 2012). According to McQuilken (2000), there is a strong need to determine visitors' expectation level prior to the tourism experience and whether the performance of heritage destination attributes actually lives up to these expectations. Aksu et al. (2010) stated that it is important to understand tourists' expectation as it can help in improving products and services for the tourists. Failure to provide the desired quality is often identified as a factor that leads to poor performance in the tourism industry (McQuilken, 2000). The tourist's viewpoint of the destination's strengths can help destination marketing to focus on tailoring and offering services accordingly to satisfy their needs (Augustyn & Ho, 1998). However, these requirements should be in accordance with various categories of tourists who have different criteria of needs. This study is conducted to compare the level of expectation and satisfaction of first time and return tourists toward heritage attractions in the Heritage City of Melaka.

First Time and Return Tourists

A study by McKercher and Wong (2004) and Lau and Mckercher (2004) found that tourists were divided into two categories; tourists who visited for the first time and return tourists. Previous researchers found that return tourists are more satisfied with their journey compared to the tourists who are visiting for the first time (Gitelson et al., 1984; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). However, in a research by McKercher and Wong (2004), return tourists are more likely to be less satisfied with the destination that they travelled to. A research by Crompton (1979) showed that first time tourists and return tourists are different in various aspects. These differences cover the demographic aspects, typography, destination perception, value (perceived value), and motivation to travel (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lau & Mckercher, 2004; McKercher & Wong, 2004; Oppermann, 1998; Petrick, 2004; Shanka & Taylor, 2004). Understanding the differences can help in creating marketing strategies and effective tourism management such as coming up with motivation to travel and making theoretical decisions (Lau & Mckercher, 2004; Oppermann, 1997; Petrick, 2004). Therefore, the levels of expectation and satisfaction are the key indicators to identify deficiencies and advantages of a particular destination for the purpose of improving the development of the tourism industry. This research will help destination managers or planners to identify whether the given satisfaction level of product meets the expectations from the perspective of tourists or otherwise.

Objective of Research

There are two variables in this study; types of tourists as the dependent variable and dimensions of heritage attraction attributes as the independent variable. The tourists are

divided into two categories; the first time tourists and the return tourists. Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine the level of expectation and satisfaction of the first time and return tourists' based on their experiences while visiting the heritage attraction elements in Melaka.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative method through survey. Many past researchers such as Homsud et al. (2012), Lather et al. (2012), Salleh et al. (2011), Aksu et al. (2010) and Huh (2002) used the survey method to acquire responses on tourists' levels of expectation and satisfaction. The survey questionnaire was revised and constructed according to the research by Homsud et al. (2012) and Huh (2002). These research questionnaires consist of 2 main parts; the respondents' profile and heritage attraction elements. The respondents' profile covers four main items: their continent, gender, age and occupation. As for the levels of expectation and satisfaction, heritage attraction elements consist of ten chosen elements, namely, architectural buildings, historical buildings, traditional views, traditional handicrafts, art (music/ dance), monuments, local cuisine, local people, museums and traditional villages. These elements were chosen by referring to the following past researchers, Homsud et al. (2012) and Huh (2002). The levels of expectation and satisfaction of the tourists' experience were measured by using the five stages of Likert scale; very low (1), low (2), medium (3), high (4), and very high

(5) for each expectation,while, the level of tourist satisfaction was measured from very dissatisfied (1), dissatisfied (2), medium (3), satisfied (4) and very satisfied (5).

Data Collection

The survey form was distributed to 450 respondents who were visiting Melaka. The small response rate 35.7% was due to a high number of tourists from China who were unable to complete the form as they did not understand the English language very well. Besides, the enumerators were unable to approach tourists who were from a tour group because they had a pack schedule and could not be disturbed. As a result, a total of 161 respondents both from domestic and international tourists took part in the survey and gave their feedback. The survey forms were given out randomly at a few strategic locations within the core zone of the Heritage City of Melaka. Among the strategic locations are rest-stop at Dutch Square, along Sungai Melaka, Taman Merdeka, Porte De Santiago, Old Quarter of Melaka, Taming Sari Tower and accommodations. These are the locations that are most frequently visited by tourists. The time chosen for the survey was the peak season for tourists visiting Melaka, which is during the Chinese New Year. The tourists were asked whether they had any previous experiences in Melaka before the survey forms were handed over to them in order to ensure the tourists had prior visit of the research locations so that the outcome of the findings would meet the need of this research.

Data Analysis

A general picture of the respondents' social demography and the information on the level of expectation and satisfaction of tourists were analysed by using the descriptive analysis. In order to achieve the objective of this research, the researchers used the gap analysis and paired sample t-test. These analyses were used in order to identify the different perspectives of the tourists' expectation and satisfaction toward the heritage attraction elements in the study area. Furthermore, these analyses had also been used by previous researchers like Homsud et al. (2012), Lather et al. (2012), Salleh et al. (2011), Aksu et al. (2010), Tonge et al. (2007), Huh (2002) and McQuilken et al. (2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are made up of 3 main discoveries. First, the respondents' profiles which include the first time and return tourists' background information such as their continents, gender, age, and occupations. Second, the level of expectation, and finally, the level of tourists' satisfaction for both the first time and return tourists toward the heritage attraction elements in the Heritage City of Melaka.

Respondent's Socio-demographic Information

Mckercher and Wong (2004) stated that there is a difference between the social demography of the first time tourists and return tourists. However, based on this case, there is a minimal demographic difference between the first time and return tourists. Overall, a total of 161 respondents took part in this research, in which 51.6% (83) respondents were first-time tourists and the remaining 48.4% (78) were return tourists. Cross analysis showed that the majority of first time tourists were international tourists who contributed to 81.9% (68), while the majority of the return tourists were domestic tourists who formed 79.5% (62). However, there was no significant difference in term of the percentage of genders listed for both tourist categories. The first-time tourists consisted of 59.0% (49) males and 41.0% (34) females, whereas the return tourists were made up of 57.7% (45) males and 42.3% (33) females. A previous research shows that age is the main indicator that differentiates between the first-time and the return tourists. This is because the first-time tourists are basically those of young generations whereas return tourists are usually the senior citizens (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008). On the contrary, in these research findings, it is proven that the age range of the first-time and return tourists are between 21-30 years old. The findings of this research are supported by the research conducted by Lee (2009) and Aziz et al. (2011) that in the Heritage City of Melaka, majority of the respondents are from the younger generation. Therefore, as a whole, Melaka could be classified as a destination that could attract younger generations to travel and understand the heritage of the city. In the aspect of occupation, most of the first-

Table 1
Social Demography of Respondents based on Tourist Category

| PROFILE | DETAILS | TOURIST CATEGORY (RESPONDENTS) | | | |
| | | First Time Tourist | | Repeat Tourist | |
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Continent	Domestic	15	18.1	62	79.5
	International	68	81.9	16	20.5
Gender	Male	49	59.0	45	57.7
	Female	34	41.0	33	42.3
Age	20 and below	8	9.6	13	16.7
	21-30	47	56.6	47	60.3
	31-40	11	13.3	12	15.4
	41-50	10	12.1	3	3.8
	51 and above	7	8.4	3	3.8
Career	Academic/ Education/ Researcher	8	9.6	6	7.7
	Technical/ Engineering Buildings/ Architect/ Development	11	13.3	16	20.5
	Management	20	24.1	9	11.5
	Student	31	37.3	35	44.9
	Others	13	15.7	12	15.4

Table 2
Tourist Expectations towards Heritage Attraction Elements at Melaka Heritage City

| Tourist/ Heritage Attraction Element | First Timers | | Return Tourist | | Df | t | p | Result |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Architectural Buildings	3.45	.967	3.72	.947	154	-1.786	.076	NS
Historical Buildings	3.40	.922	3.71	.841	151	-2.181	.031*	S
Traditional Sites	3.28	.966	3.63	.820	143	-2.334	.021*	S
Traditional Handcrafts	2.96	1.028	3.34	.946	141	-2.334	.021*	S
Art (music/dance)	2.90	1.130	3.39	.963	139	-2.816	.006**	S
Monuments	3.19	.792	3.51	.837	156	-2.479	.014*	S
Local Cuisine	3.48	1.011	3.68	.947	152	-1.259	.210	NS
Local People	3.23	.974	3.45	.923	140	-1.415	.159	NS
Museums	2.91	1.085	3.33	1.038	150	-2.444	.016*	S
Traditional Village	3.01	.971	3.38	.932	144	-2.314	.022*	S

*Siginificant level at $p < 0.05$; **Siginificant level at $p < 0.01$
S= Significant   NS= Not Significant

time and return tourists are students. Table 1 shows the social demography based on the respondents' category.

Tourists' Expectations towards the Heritage Attraction Elements in the Heritage City of Melaka

Table 2 shows a detailed analysis on the expectation of first-time and return tourists toward the elements of heritage attractions in Melaka. Firstly, based on the paired sample t-test, the most significant difference between the first-time and return tourists is art (music/dance), with the significance level is $p < 0.01$. It is because this study was conducted during Chinese New Year holiday and therefore many cultural performances could be seen within the area of the Heritage City of Melaka. On the other hand, six out of the seven elements showed a significant difference between both types of tourists based on the value, $p < 0.05$. The differences are in the aspects of historical buildings, traditional sites, traditional handcrafts, monuments, museums, and traditional villages. Lee (2010) found that historical buildings play an important attributes in Melaka heritage site as the tourists have high expectations toward this element. Secondly, based on the mean value, each attraction has a higher expectation among the return tourist because they have experienced the city and are more familiar with the attractions in Melaka. In this case, their knowledge about the heritage attractions in Melaka is wide compared to the first timers. This result is supported by Lau et al. (2004) who stated that a first timer is a new visitor who intends

to explore a place and a return tourist is a tourist who is already familiar with the area. In addition, McKercher and Wong (2004) and Reid and Reid (1993) found that return tourists are more particular about a destination and it is based on their past vacation. On the other hand, the first timer is depending on external information. These characteristics caused the return tourists to have higher expectation than first timers who are new visitors.

Besides that, this analysis shows the difference in the expectations for the aspect of types of attractions. First time tourists have higher expectation towards the element of local cuisine (M = 3.48; SD = 1.011). A research by Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd (2001) showed that there are strong relationships between food, drink and cultural tourism. According to UNWTO (2012), food tourism gives an impact to the quality of tourists' experience. Thus, that is why the first timers tend to have higher expectations towards the local food. However, return tourists have different expectation, and this is more on architectural buildings (M = 3.72; SD = .947). The high expectation towards architectural buildings is because they are symbolic icons of a historical site. Based on the visual analysis that has been conducted, the core zone site consists of many historical buildings that are preserved to this day such as vernacular buildings, shop houses as early as the 1870s to the 1880s, shop houses during the early transition era between the 1900s and the 1940s, shop houses during the end of the transition era (strait eclectic), and art

deco shop houses between the 1930s and the 1960s (Melaka Historic City Council, 2001). Overall, first timers are more likely to expect more on the local food rather than the architectural buildings that have higher expectations among return tourists. This result is similar to a research by Aksu et al. (2010) that tourists have higher expectations towards Turkish Cuisine, Historic Sites and Cultural Values.

In addition, the analysis also indicates the element that has low expectation among the tourists. The first time tourists have low expectation towards the element of art (music/dance) in the study area. Observations show that there is not much in the elements of the arts in the research area. According to Lee (2009), the elements of music and dance are less of a tourist attraction in Melaka. By referring to Melaka's activities at the official portal of Melaka State Government (2013), annually, there are seven types of activities that involve music and dance. For example, Chinese New Year Festival, Menara Taming Sari Anniversary, Melaka Art and Performance Festival and Melaka World Music Festival. The festivals occur in particular months in a year. Therefore, they are influential and meet the expectation of first time tourists who are not aware of the events compared to return tourists who are already aware of the festivals celebrated in Melaka due to their past experience. For return tourists, their lowest expectations are the museums. From the observations, the highest demands for museums that are available in the study area were at St. Paul's Civic Hill. However, low expectation among

return tourists was because 79.5% of them are domestic tourists. According to Lee (2009), museums are not the top priorities among domestic tourists who visit the Melaka World Heritage Site. All in all, the level of expectation for the return tourists is higher than the first-time tourists.

Tourists' Satisfaction toward Heritage Attraction Elements in the Heritage City of Melaka

Table 3 shows the levels of satisfaction of the -time and return tourists in the study area toward the 10 heritage elements. Based on the paired sample t-test, only the traditional views have a significant difference between the types of tourists with the value p < .05. However, Lee (2010) found out that tourists are more satisfied with the historical buildings in Melaka. This is because the study by Lee (2010) was conducted 3 years ago whereas this paper shows the results of the research findings in the year 2013. Within the 3 years, many efforts have been made to preserve the heritage buildings like shop houses that are located in the old quarter of Melaka. This is supported with the findings by Wan Ismail (2012) who stated that the buildings within the heritage site of Melaka have gone through several phases of transformation. In the study area, the traditional views can be found in the Old Quarter of Melaka and in the traditional villages such as Morten village, Chitty village and Portuguese village (Melaka Historic City Council, 2007). The paired sample t-test shows that the mean for return tourists toward the traditional views is M=3.

Table 3
Tourists' Satisfaction towards the Heritage Elements at Melaka Heritage City

Tourists/ Heritage Element	First Timers		Return Tourist		Df	t	p	Result
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Architectural Buildings	3.92	.990	4.09	.982	150	-1.069	.287	NS
Historical Buildings	3.87	.914	4.01	.830	149	-1.019	.310	NS
Traditional Views	3.60	1.030	3.93	.918	143	-2.064	.041*	S
Traditional Handcrafts	3.40	1.028	3.68	1.012	136	-1.639	.104	NS
Arts (music/ dance)	3.16	1.231	3.50	1.138	134	-1.666	.098	NS
Monuments	3.57	.924	3.84	.784	148	-1.955	.052	NS
Local Cuisine	3.79	1.080	3.70	1.033	141	.555	.580	NS
Local People	3.65	1.103	3.71	.882	128	-.355	.724	NS
Museums	3.44	1.137	3.74	1.012	144	-1.653	.101	NS
Traditional Villages	3.41	1.123	3.70	.932	138	-1.689	.093	NS

*Significant level at p <0.05;   S= Significant   NS= Not Significant

93; SD= .918, which is higher compared to first-time tourists (M=3. 60; SD= 1. 030). The vast difference is because return tourists have more experiences compared to first time tourists. According to Lau and McKercher (2004), first timers tend to have shorter stays at a destination. In addition, the result obtained is similar to the research done by Gitelson and Crompton (1984) and Kozak (2000) who found that the first timers are less satisfied compared to return tourists. This is because the first timers choose to travel to new places and search for new cultural experiences.

CONCLUSION

This research was done to study the differences between the expectations and satisfaction levels of first-time and return tourists toward the elements of heritage attractions found in the Heritage City of Melaka. The results of this study showed the same findings as those of the past research in which the the return tourists of the Heritage City of Melaka were shown to have higher levels of expectations and satisfaction towards the heritage attraction elements in the study area compared to the first-time tourists. This is because mostly return tourists already have the experience of visiting heritage elements in the Melaka World Heritage Site compared to the first-time tourists. The findings of this research show that the expectations of first time tourists are focusing on the local cuisine whereas return tourists have higher expectation towards the architectural buildings. However, the satisfaction level of the first timers changes towards architectural buildings as well as the return tourists. The researchers hope that the findings will help the local authority to focus on maintaining the existing architectural building as it is favourite attraction among tourist. In

addition, this study has highlighted an essential finding that will help the local authority to enhance the heritage attractions available to ensure the revisit of the first-time and return tourists to Melaka. As for the future research, new research on expectation and satisfaction towards heritage attraction based on racial groups in Melaka could be conducted. The expected finding could help in diversifying the attractions in Melaka especially towards intangible cultural heritage. In conclusion, the experience affects both the first-time and return tourists' levels of expectation and satisfaction in the study area.

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