

DETERMINING VISITORS' SATISFACTION IN THEME PARKS: A CASE FROM KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

Siti Rosyidah Mat Romli¹, Albattat Ahmad¹, Arfah Kassim¹, Razali Ibrahim¹

¹ School of Hospitality & Creative Arts, Management and Science University, 40100, Selangor, Malaysia

dr.battat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Theme park is one of the tourism products in Malaysia that generate the income to the country and influence the growth of tourism economy. Theme park in Malaysia has been the selected as the prior destination among the residents and tourist as it is one of famous attraction site for the purpose of leisure, recreational, entertainment and enjoyable activities besides providing tourist experience at the destination. The proposed research has been selected in one of the biggest and famous theme park in Malaysia which is Sunway Lagoon Theme Park located in the city of Petaling Jaya in Selangor. The objective of the research is to determine the visitor satisfaction at the attraction site, theme park of Sunway Lagoon Water Theme Park. Satisfied visitors also will influence the repetition of visitor to the theme park and build loyal customer and influence repeat visitor. Review from the primary data source which is journal papers of research study on related topics takes place. The data collection that able to gather the required respondents by the usage of stratified random sampling has been carried out. The descriptive and cross-sectional studies and quantitative data by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) has been selected in performing data analysis. The findings obtained showed a wide choice of recreational activities, service quality (using SERVQUAL dimensions) and queue management aspect has conclude that all the variables has positive relationship in towards determining visitors satisfaction. An additional information of pull and push factors determinants has been concluded in the aspect of motivation among visitors. The results obtained able to contribute to the related tourism products besides for the educational references for the future.

Keywords: Visitor, Satisfaction, Theme Park, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the growth of economic have had an economic impact on the area of leisure and recreation. The theme park industry which sometimes known as tourism product for some countries has been growing rapidly globally in this emerging market either regional or world widely. The development of the theme park in the last three decades has affected the size, capacity, products and entertainment offerings. Theme park attraction has able to improve destination image, enhance tourism, benefit the economy and provide education, recreation and entertainment opportunity for people. Other than that, theme park offering employability opportunity for local residence to sustain the country and accelerates the country economic growth. Contemporary theme park provides services such as accommodation, online booking services, night entertainment, activities and transportation services other than the rides, performances, retail outlets and food and beverage services.

Asian countries such as China and Malaysia are developing theme parks in order to increase revenue. The growth of economy of theme park as tourist destination would increase economy input and provide leisure and recreational activities to people. There are many theme parks in the market which include large scale theme park with thrilling rides, historical features, art galleries, museums, botanical gardens, zoos, and wildlife parks. Meanwhile, Malaysia is an ideal place for people to enjoy theme park as the country fortunate for having green environment and suitable climate and weather. There are many theme park has been built in Malaysia such as Genting Highlands Theme Park, Sunway Lagoon Theme Park, A'Famosa Theme park, Cosmo' World Theme Park, Bukit Merah Lake town Resort, LEGOLAND Theme Park the latest one and many more. These growing rate and sustainability of the theme park industry is affected by the attendance of the consumer and visitors.

The selected theme park for this research study is Sunway Lagoon Theme park. It is located in heart of Petaling Jaya. Sunway Lagoon Theme Park has located strategically with surrounded attraction such Sunway Convention Centre, Sunway Resort hotel and the massive and famous Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall. The theme park also can be access easily by many public transportation especially public bus and reachable by nearby city such as Subang Jaya, Shah Alam and Kuala Lumpur. Theme park has provides an attraction in the city for the local community, residences and also tourist abroad. Theme park provides enjoyment for the visitors and create a leisure period that visitor can spend with their family, friends and relatives. Theme Park which often has been symbolized as family trip vacation as the theme comprise activities and games that can cater various age group from the amusement theme suitable for children and up to the extreme that may located in the attraction as well. Theme park as the tourism product has contributed to the growth of the economy not only for tourism industry however overall economy of Malaysia. To accelerate this positive growth, the managerial and operational team of the theme park should managed wisely since the demand for the recreational games and leisure activities are increasing. The aspect of maintenance of games site, cleanliness, facilities and services has to be up grade and keep in a tip top condition for the use of the local residence and international tourist. As Sunway Lagoon Theme Park has been locate strategically at the center of Petaling Jaya city with surrounded by other place of attraction such as Sunway Resort Hotel and Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall. With the attraction along the theme park, indirectly can influence the visitor overall satisfaction when visiting the theme park and nearby attraction.

The objective for this research study to determine the customer satisfaction in Sunway Lagoon Theme Park located in Petaling Jaya and the intention of the customer to revisit the theme park in the future. The identification of the dependent variables includes the various choices of recreational activities on the theme park site, queue management, safety and security, and service quality at the theme park.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research study has used the descriptive study. Descriptive studies often designed to collect data that describe the characteristics of persons, events, or situation. Descriptive for this purpose of research study is quantitative in nature. In this research, it involved the collection of quantitative data of satisfaction ratings and demographic data, however it may also entail the collection of qualitative data. The research also used the quantitative data. This is because the data are in the form of numbers as generally gathered through structured questions. The quantitative data which based on deductive reasoning starts with a general theory and then apply this theory to specific cases. In this case, theories that applies such as Push and Pull Theory and Visitors' Satisfaction and Service Quality. The research also used the cross-sectional studies. This cross sectional studied has been carried out once, perhaps over a period of days or weeks or months in order to answer to research question. In this case the research study on Determining Visitors' Satisfaction in Sunway Lagoon Theme Park has been collected once and does not involved pre and post evaluation in answering the questionnaire.

The questionnaire has been constructed as the sections have been divided by three parts. The first part is demographic profile which will asked the questions of the demographic profile such as age, education, income, gender and many more. The second part will asked on the aspects and factors for this research study. The independent variables such queue management, services quality, wide array of activities offered and safety and security will be asked in this part in determining the dependent variable level which is visitors' satisfaction in the respective theme park. The questionnaire has been distributed during August 2015 using stratified random sampling method. Stratified sampling method is where the population is classified into strata and separate samples are selected from each stratum. The random sampling stratified the study are able to select any potential respondents based on each strata regardless of their demographic background profile. Overall, the sample size for this study is 120 respondents. The Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) software has been used to analyses the data and interprets it. Descriptive statistics: Cross tabulation, Frequencies, Descriptive, Explore, Descriptive Ratio Statistics were used to analyses the data.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

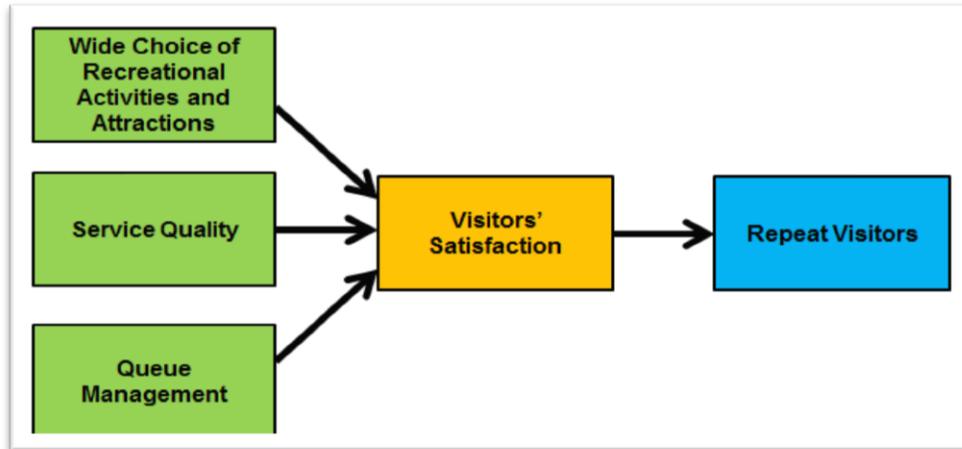


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Research Study

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The elaboration of the findings for the first section of the questionnaire will be discussed as below. This section focused on the aspect of the respondents' demographic profile. The respondents are made of 120 people for this study. 52.50 % (63 respondents) are female while another 47.50 % (57 respondents) are male. The total respondents of 120 are made up of 24.0 % of below 18 years old (29 respondents mostly are secondary and primary students), 28.0 % are 19-24 years old (33 respondents), 20.0 % are between 25 to 34 years old (24 respondents), 14.0 % are 35-44 years old (17 respondents), 11.0% are 45-55 years old (13 respondents) and 3.0 % are above 55 years old (4 respondents). Out of 120 respondents, 24% are Malay (29 respondents), 26% are Chinese (31 respondents), India are 18% (22 respondents) and 32% are foreign tourist (38 respondents). From the first figure, the study concluded that Malay, Chinese and India are made up of 68% local respondents and 32 % are foreign tourist as respondents. Both primary and secondary level education are 11% (13 respondents) and 34% (41 respondents) respectively. These two groups or respondents might be range from the age of 11-24 years old. Vocational level are 10% of the respondents (12 respondents) whereas tertiary level is 45% (54 respondents).

The local respondents' ethnicity was Malay, Indian and Chinese in this research. This group has the knowledge of the theme park based on their current local knowledge. However, for the foreigner, the source of knowledge was through their places of origin that has their local tourism offices. Some of the foreigner tourist which are travelling under travelling agencies are aware about the theme park based on the source of itinerary that their received from their travel agencies or travel tourism offices in their own countries before visiting this country. The local respondents are travelling by their own transportation mostly. This is because they are the local community here and know well on the roads and accessibilities getting to theme park. Meanwhile, the foreigner respondents found that they are preferred in travelling by public transportation (e.g.: public taxi, public bus). Some of them also

which visit Malaysia by travel agency may found very convenient as the transportation of travelling has been provided for the ease of the international tourists. (e.g.: First Coach Bus, Aero line Bus). Most of the foreigner respondents are visiting the park for the first time. However some of them has visited the theme park once a year as their annual vacation in Malaysia. On the other hand, local respondents have visited the park between 2-5 times a year as the convenience factor of local community and residence in this region. Some of the local respondents may spend more than 5 times a year. This shown that the respondents are the one who make repetition to come back to the theme park.

The length of stay influenced by the age group of the visitors. The age group have the average to spend half day at the theme park, but we believed the senior citizen are less likely to spend full day at the park. The results that show they are staying more than half day may be caused by the family vacation that involved entire group that required them to spend more together to strengthen the family bonding among them. Visitors travelling by group such families, friends, relatives, clubs and association and colleague under company program such as Family Day tend to spend time more in the theme park as the spend almost full day in the theme park. However, visitors travelling solo or fewer crowds tend to spend less time in the theme park. This may be caused travelling in large group of participation will required more time as they might going for lunch together, performing activities in a group and consuming more time and many other factors. Group travelling among friends and relatives are those who are the combination of students and working adult. Students who make up the highest percentage under the category of travelling group among friends and relatives may under a school programs, classmates vacation, school holidays trips and many more. Meanwhile, adult working people make up the large percentage of group travelling under clubs, association and company programs.

An average of 56.75% agreed that they had received good service such as responsive and helpful, knowledgeable staff and friendliness manner by the park staffs. The assurance which includes the aspect of safety and security are the next. An average of 48% in this aspect has contribute to the positive opinion as the park provide a safe rides and slides, a safety briefing was given and a good maintenance of equipment, materials and machinery. A slight below the percentages from the dimension of assurance, is tangibility. Tangibility dimension indicates that aspect facilities and services at the 4th ranked of 47.5%. This may be results by high rental imposed for facilities and services offered at the park and expensive rate of souvenirs and food and beverages outlet. Below is the summarization of the aspect of service quality.

The aspect of queue management on the other hand has unfavorable opinion in managing the waiting and queue. About 72% has unfavorable opinions on the management of the park in managing the queue, there is lack of actions taken by

providing, clown, bunny shows and visual informative boards to reduce the boredom of the visitors at respective park, zone and hours.

The overall satisfaction has a contribution of 84% among the respondents where 102 out of 120 respondents are satisfied in their visit at the Sunway Lagoon Theme Park. The similar respondents will also recommend the park to the others. 78% out of the total respondents will come back for the next visit or trip. However only 35% are planning to sign up for the membership of the park which has been introduced as Sunway Pals under the Loyalty Programmed by Sunway Berhad.

Table 1. Push Motives in this Study

Aspect	Push Factor	Ranking	Percentage (%)
Source of Knowledge About the Theme Park	Word-of-mouth	1	27
	Local Knowledge	2	23
	Internet/Websites	3	15
	Staff Members	4	11
	Local Tourism Offices	4	11
	Brochure	5	7
	Magazine	6	6
Mode of Transportation (Getting Here)	Own Transportation	1	41
	Group Transportation	2	31
	Public Transportation	3	28
Purpose Visiting the Theme Park	Time with friends and families	1	24
	Rest & relax	2	21
	Others (Family Day, Music Festival)	3	20
	Adventure Activities	4	17
	Break from City Life	5	10
	Sightseeing	6	7

	Watching wildlife	7	6
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Information gathering of the Sunway Lagoon Theme Park can be gathered through many ways and methods. One of the convenient way is through its official websites which is www.sunwaylagoon.com.my. The websites provides the information such as on how to get to the theme park, on-going promotional, any closure of park or activities under maintenance, and others. The information also can be gathered through walk-in to the theme park by seeking the information at the information counter or its direct line at +603 5639 0000. Most people or the viewers are seeking for the information especially the directory, promotional news and latest attractions available. For this aspect of information, the measurement has been studied based on two factors, the information availability off-site and on-site the theme park. The aspect of off-site information based on the Q1 (The usefulness of information on website) and Q2 (the accuracy and current information on the website). The on-site information was being measured by Q3 (Useful directional signage) and Q4 (Useful of visitor guide and maps).

4. CONCLUSION

This study determined the visitors' satisfaction in Sunway Lagoon Theme Park. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Visitors' satisfaction has been summarize into three variables which are wide choice of recreational activities, service quality and queue management. The first factor has been to the highest percentages of satisfaction among respondents. This variable has measure of the attractiveness of the park division, enjoyment and suitability of the park as family trips. The results had favorable answer at 84%, 93%, 90% respectively. The variables of service quality has combined some aspects such as assurance (aspect safety and security), tangibility (aspect facilities and services offered), reliability (aspect information and accessibility) and responsiveness and empathy (aspect in delivering services by the staffs). Among these aspects, reliability has the highest contribution (62%). This indicates respondents are satisfied with the information and accessibility to the theme park for both on-site and off-site. Next followed by delivering of the service among the staff which is responsiveness and empathy dimensions. The findings obtained was valid as the results obtained through factors being measure are fit the theories and around which the study has been designed. The study has measure the right concept by relating factors influencing visitors' satisfaction with the stability and consistency of the measurement. The findings also is reliable as the results obtained are without bias (error free), hence ensure consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument.

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