A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES: IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY OF ISLAND TOURISM

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Abstract: Important issues in sustainable development of tourism include the knowledge of the host and tourist needs and constraints. Since tourism is now global in nature, there is a need to study these two issues from a cross-cultural context. This paper investigates a cross-cultural exchange between hosts and guests and the potential impact of cultural differences on selection of destination attributes. A cross-cultural approach involves the grouping of the sample according to the spoken languages: Malay, Chinese, English and non-English (Continental European). This study is quantitative in nature with survey data collected from three island destinations in Malaysia, reprenting small islands (Perhentian and Redang) and a large island (Langkawi). The main method used in the survey is a self-administered survey, collected as a convenience sample. Altogether there were 1285 respondents involved in this study. The study locations were divided in such a way to permit a meaningful comparison between island settings and to indentify unique criteria and issues for small island tourism. A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used in analysing the data. This study found that hosts and guests from different cultural groups behaved differently with regard to destination attributes. This study contributes to the literature related to consumer behaviour in a cross-cultural context. Additionally, this study enriches knowledge on service and destination attributes, and stresses the importance of cultural differences in providing quality services for sustainability of island tourism.

Keywords: Cross-cultural, destination attributes, island tourism, sustainable tourism.

Introduction

Tourism has made immense contribution to the economy of many countries. Contrary to popular belief, tourism is regarded as a catalyst for the conservation and improvement of the environment as well as retaining local diversity and culture. Tourism is closely linked to numerous key economic sectors such as transport, hotels and restaurants, wholesale and retail trade since tourism has the capacity to create multiplier effects in various ancillary and supporting services. The big growth in the number of tourists and tourism receipts over the last few decades has been recorded. The growth in population, income and greater opportunity for international travel are the contributing factors. This phenomenal growth has convinced

many developing nations that they can profit from tourism. Malaysia is no exception.

Malaysia is one of the world's most popular destinations for international travellers. From a virtually zero base in the 1960s, the tourism industry has grown and has contributed significantly to the economy. However, Malaysia must overcome several issues in order to fully utilize its tourism potential. One major problem is the high dependency on one single market. Currently, more than 70% of the international arrivals to Malaysia are from ASEAN countries with 50% from Singapore (Tourism Malaysia, 2016). Heavy dependency on one single market is not healthy from an economic and political perspectives. Malaysia has been left far behind in terms of tourism receipts. Tourism receipt

will only increase if Malaysia is able to attract tourists from more diverse markets around the world. Relying on the short-haul market, particularly from ASEAN countries will not work. The potential for island tourism is vast. Island destinations seem to be more attractive to longer-haul market including Europe, United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. Greater efforts in promoting small islands in Malaysia is therefore crucial. However, the long-haul markets tend to have significant cultural differences between tourists and hosts. Different requirements and constraints arise. Hence, an understanding of cultural differences becomes vital in ensuring sustainability of island tourism in Malaysia. This study investigates the impact of cultural differences between host communities and guests and how cultural differences affect their perceptions toward the importance of destination attributes.

Culture in Tourism

Culture is a complex concept and is hard to explain. Hundreds of definitions of culture are reported in the literature. The classic definition of culture is:

"..That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society (Taylor, 1974, p. 1)

Following the classical approach, researchers have attempted to define the concept of culture and all these definitions focus on human origin (Moore & Lewis, 1952; Kroeber & Parsons, 1958; Piddington, 1960; Mair, 1972; Schneider & Bonjean, 1973; Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Anthropologists however define culture from a perspective of human behaviour (Schusky & Culbert, 1987). Culture is seen to be associated with behavioural patterns related to groups of people (Barnlund & Araki, 1985).

Cultural values include shared values, belief and norms that collectively distinguish a particular group of people from others (Pizam, Pine, Mok & Shin, 1997). Reisinger and Turner (2003) summarized values between hosts and guests as critical in a comparison of cultures. Values can influence behaviour because they determine rules of behaviour (Samovar & Porter, 1988). They guide and rank behaviour (Peterson, 1979). Differences in values reflect those in behaviour (Rokeach, 1973).

In tourism, understanding the cultural differences is important because it may influence tourist behaviour, travel destinations, consumption patterns, activities, food choice and finally their satisfaction and repeat visitation. These differences include variation between host communities and tourists. Reisinger and Turner (1997a) said that cultural differences between hosts and guests are crucial in developing successful marketing strategy and segmentation. An understanding of the cultural background of the tourist on behalf of the host and the host culture on behalf of a tourist is one of the important factors that motivate the tourists to visit a foreign country (Reisinger & Turner, 1998). Sensitivity to cultural differences also influences the ability to compete in the global market. The tourism industry operates in an environment which demands greater sensitivity to culturally determine needs of international tourists. Efforts cannot be directed just to the promotion of tourism facilities and products. An in-depth understanding of cultural background of the incoming tourists is important. How cultural differences influence the expectation and perceptions of tourists on host destinations and the importance of destination attributes to both stakeholders are also important.

Regarding to cross-cultural studies, research has focused on the general impact of cross-cultural exchange between hosts and guests (Reisinger, 1997; Reisinger & Turner, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2002a, 2002b; Truong, 2007). No studies have been done on cross-cultural exchange between Malaysian hosts and tourists (domestic and international) and none has included small island settings. The impact of cross-cultural differences on expectations and needs between hosts and guests on island settings in Malaysia should be studied.

Island Tourism

Island tourism is an extremely important tourism product. With unique flora and fauna, exotic coral reefs and marine life and unique geography features and attractive landscape (Fotiou *et al.*, 2002), small islands are popular destinations around the world. Small islands share common characteristics such as a narrow economic base, geographic isolation, small population and a lack of skilled human resources, lack of physical and natural resources and heavy economic dependence on larger countries (or region) for markets and investment (Bass & Dalal-Clayton, 1995). Due to their smallness in size, geographic isolation, high transportation costs and lack of resources (physical and human), economic development has often been difficult for small islands. Therefore, these small economies have focused on tourism as the best alternative for economic growth. Realising the potential of the tourism industry to the development of small island destinations around the world, a number of researchers have studied the positive correlation between economic growth and the tourism industry (Amstrong & Read, 2000; Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Easter, 2002; Latimer, 1985; Modeste, 1995).

Despite the significant contribution of tourism to the economy of small islands, many issues pertaining to small islands have not been studied (Oglethorpe, 1985; Wilkinson, 1989; Keane *et al.*, 1992; Fagence, 1997; Henderson, 2000, 2001; Kokkranikal *et al.*, 2003; Vanegas & Croes, 2003). Past studies have focused mainly on the significant economic contribution of tourism to the economy (Oglethorpe, 1985; Fagence, 1997; Henderson, 2000, 2001; Sharpley, 2003; Vanegas & Croes, 2003; Croes, 2005). (Keane *et al.*, 1992; Fagence, 1997; Henderson, 2000, 2001; Kokkranikal *et al.*, 2003) and Fotiou *et al.*, (2002) are concerned with the negative impacts of tourism especially on sustainability of development. Sharpley (2001) discusses the challenges and opportunities of tourism in Cyprus and Hai-Yan and Lu (2005) focused on the tourist needs for island tourism in China. However, no studies have specifically been designed to examine the cross-cultural expectations and needs of host and guest communities on small islands. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of cross-cultural exchange between Malaysian hosts and incoming tourists (domestic and international) in a small island setting. The potential influence of cultural differences on the expectations of all stakeholders is new and opens up a significant area of study that is relevant to tourism economic, social development as well as sustainability of island tourism over the long term.

Destination Attributes

Tourism has helped in stimulating economic growth of many countries. Several small islands have become tourist destinations worldwide. Currently there are 180 (with land area of more than $2500km^2$) and about 400 (with the land area of less than $2500km^2$) island destinations throughout the world (Wikipedia, 2007a). With the emergence of new markets, competition in island tourism has become stiffer. Many small islands worldwide are confronted with the challenge of attracting and retaining visitors. An important tool in successful destination marketing is the understanding of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is a result of comparison of the service performance with expectation (Barsky, 1992; Hill, 1986). Customer satisfaction can be defined as a post-purchase evaluative judgement concerning a specific product or service (Fornell, 1992; Gundersen *et al.*, 1996).

An understanding of tourist satisfaction is an important parameter in evaluating the performance of destination products and services (Noe & Uysal, 1997; Schofield, 2000). Since a customer's satisfaction is influenced by the availability of services, the provision of quality customer service has become a major concern of all businesses (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Failure to pay attention to the influential attributes in choice intention may result in a customer's negative evaluation. Unfavourable word-of-mouth on that destination may follow suit (Chon *et al.*, 1995). Marketers and managers

should understand destination attributes in promoting and positioning a certain destination in the marketplace.

Research that deal with tourist satisfaction and destination attributes has been carried out worldwide. However, little research has been conducted on island destinations, particularly in Malaysia. Taking into consideration the importance of the industry to the development of small islands in Malaysia and elsewhere, it is imperative to identify factors that will influence destination choice and consequently will affect tourist satisfaction. A knowledge on the importance of destination selection attributes from the view of both stakeholders are important to formulate effective marketing and management strategies in order to stimulate the growth of small island tourism and sustain the industry over the long term. Therefore, this study aims to identify the significant differences in the importance of destination attributes from the perspective of multi-cultural tourists and host communities.

Subsequent sections present a discussion on study methodology, results and discussion of findings. A conclusion and policy implication end the paper.

Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the differences in the cultural background of tourists and host communities in small islands settings and the potential influence that culture exerts on perceptions of the importance of destination attributes by hosts and guests. Relationships between cultural diversity and perceptions may be expected to be more complex in small and close communities compared with in the larger geographically spread communities. Consequently, a benchmark is needed to compare results obtained on small islands. In order to represent small island destinations in Malaysia, two islands; Perhentian and Redang are chosen because they are the most frequently visited small islands in Malaysia. Langkawi Island has been selected to represent the larger island. This study aims to examine the cross-cultural differences between hosts and tourist groups and what are the potential impact of cultural differences on their needs. Therefore, the sample groups have been divided into two main categories; hosts and guests. The tourist samples chosen to consist of Malay, Chinese, English and European tourists. The Malay and part of the Chinese tourists is domestic tourists. The inclusion of domestic tourists also permits comparison between local and international tourists, and this forms an important aspect of the cultural pressures in small island settings.

The English and European tourists have been chosen because they form the largest international arrivals to island destinations in Malaysia and particularly to Perhentian and Redang. Among the Chinese international tourists, majority are from Singapore. For the English tourists, the overwhelming majority are from the United Kingdom. Unlike the Chinese and the English tourists, the European tourists to these two destinations come from several countries in Continental Europe. Since the country of origin for the European tourists are diverse, it is difficult to collect enough data for analysis on the basis of individual Continental European countries. Thus, for the purpose of collecting a sufficient sample data for analysis, these European respondents have been grouped together regardless of their language spoken. It is argued that although these European tourists from different countries speak different languages and may have different subcultures, they can be described as a cultural grouping and can still be analysed as a group. Further, it is argued that marketing plans would not practically be developed for small numbers of tourists from individual Continental European countries at present on Perhentian and Redang Islands.

A quantitative approach has been taken in the study in order to collect the relevant data, two sets of questionnaires are developed. One set for hosts and the other for tourists. For the purpose of comparison, the majority of questions in the both questionnaires are similar, except that a

few questions are only relevant either to hosts or tourists. The questionnaires are originally designed in English and in order to avoid discomfort among the respondents as well as to increase the response rate, the questionnaire for hosts has been translated into the Malay language. The questionnaire for tourists is also translated into Chinese. Traditional Chinese has been chosen because this language is spoken by the wider group of Chinese visiting Malaysia including from China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The English language is considered a second language for many European tourists. However, the questionnaire is not translated into individual European languages as it was found that majority of the European tourists are able to speak English. A self-administered survey using a random convenience sample is carried out at various tourism spots around the three islands. The questionnaires are hand delivered and collected on the spot with the survey collector available to answer queries in either Malay or English. This study involved 1,053 respondents in total. Following the data collection process, a descriptive analysis has been undertaken to summarise the data and provide a broad view of the two main samples. A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was adopted to analyse the dimensions of each concept for the different cultural groups. When there are many variables involved in an analysis, it can be difficult to analyse the relationship between the variables. Indeed, the relationship among the variables could be very complex. Therefore, a technique that can identify patterns of complex structure is needed. The most powerful technique to do this is a Principle Component Analysis (PCA). PCA does this by looking for groups among the inter-correlations of a set of data (Pallant, 2005). It provides two distinct but interrelated outcomes; data summary and data reduction.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Profiles of Hosts

Table 1.1 presents the demographic profile of hosts at the Perhentian, Redang and Langkawi Islands. The demographic variables are categorized into five; country of origin, language spoken at home, gender, age and occupation. All of the respondents participating in this study at small Islands are Malaysians. However, about 3% of the hosts in Langkawi Island are Thai. In line with their country of origin, majority of hosts in small islands (92%) speak Malay whereas in Langkawi, a small percentage of hosts speak Chinese (2.4%), Tamil (2.4%) and Thai (3.2%).

In terms of gender, 67% of the respondents at Perhentian and Redang Islands are men whereas 62% of the respondents at Langkawi Island are women. There was also restraint on participation in surveys by authorities at hotels, chalets, airport, ferry terminal and other business premises on Langkawi Island. The only accessible business premises are shops around the island with a majority of female workers. Majority of the service providers involved in this study at all locations is between 21-40 years old. These made up 76% on Perhentian and Redang Islands and approximately 80% on Langkawi Island.

The range of occupation of the hosts on the islands is dispersed. The largest group of hosts at Perhentian and Redang Islands are engaged as front office employees (16.8%) and tour guides (16.8%). However, hosts in Langkawi Island tend to work as sale persons in a variety of shops around the island. Langkawi Island is granted duty free status by the government. Several shops around the islands sell diverse products, including leading world brands. Therefore, shopping based hosts are more important on Langkawi Island. The rest of hosts on Perhentian and Redang Islands are employed in the accommodation sector (15%), food and beverage (14%), sales (10.3%), transport (9.3%), professional management (7.5%), other service worker (7.5%), tourism marketer (1.9%) and entertainment worker (0.9%). In comparison, besides being employed in the sales sector, the hosts in Langkawi Island are engaged as tour guides (10.4%), front office employees (12%), transport employees (9.6%), restaurant employees (8%), other service

workers (8.%), management professionals (4%) and accommodation service workers (0.8%).

The differences in the range of occupational areas for the hosts in the three islands can be explained by the nature of economic activity at the three locations. Most of the population on Perhentian and Redang Islands relies heavily on tourism as their means of living. Therefore, most of them generally engage in employment directly related to tourism. However, as the biggest island in Malaysia, the economic activity in Langkawi is more diverse.

Tourist Demographic Profiles and Travel Patterns

Four groups of tourists were chosen for this study based on their language spoken; Malay, Chinese, English and non-English. Table 1.2 below presents the demographic profiles of the culture groups involved in this study. For language spoken at home, the distribution of the three cultures of tourists groups (Malay, Chinese and English) at small islands is evenly spread. The tourists from Continental European countries form the largest group of tourists to Perhentian and Redang Islands. The tourist groups on Langkawi are evenly divided based

Table 1.1: Hosts' demographic profiles

Characteristics	Perhentian and Redang Islands (n = 107)		Langkawi Island (n=125)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Country of origin				
Malaysia	107	100	121	96.8
Thailand	0	0	4	3.2
Language spoken at home				
Malay	106	99.1	115	92.0
Chinese	1	0.9	3	2.4
Tamil	0	0	3	2.4
Thai	0	0	4	3.2
Gender				
Male	72	67.3	77	38.4
Female	35	32.7	48	61.6
Age				
20 years and below	2	1.9	7	5.6
21-30 years	53	49.5	66	52.8
31-40 years	28	26.2	34	27.2
41-50 years	10	9.3	15	12.0
51-60 years	8	7.5	3	2.4
Above 60	6	5.6	0	0
Occupancy				
Front Office Employee	18	16.8	15	12.0
Restaurant Employee	15	14.0	10	8.0
Sales Person in a Shop	11	10.3	47	37.6
Entertainment Worker	1	0.9	0	0
Tourism Marketer	2	1.9	12	9.6
Tour Guide	18	16.8	13	10.4
Transport Employee	10	9.3	12	9.6
Accommodation Service Worker	16	15.0	1	0.8
Professional Management	8	7.5	5	4.0
Other Service Worker	8	7.5	10	8.0

Table 1.2: Tourists' demographic profiles

Characteristics	Perhentian and Redang Islands (n= 514)		Langkawi Island (n=539)	
Language spoken at home	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Malay	125	24.3	147	27.3
Chinese	120	23.3	128	23.7
English	110	21.4	134	24.9
Non-English	159	31.0	130	24.1
Gender				
Male	276	53.7	284	52.7
Female	238	46.3	255	47.3
Age				
20 years and below	33	6.4	34	6.3
21-30 years	292	56.8	180	33.4
31-40 years	103	20.0	172	31.9
41-50 years	57	11.8	100	18.6
51-60 years	27	5.3	33	6.1
Above 60	2	0.4	20	3.7

on language spoken at home. This result occurs because each sample is drawn independently as a convenience sample with a target of at least one hundred sample members for each cultural group.

The distribution of gender is almost balanced between male and female for the three islands. There were approximately 54% male tourists on Perhentian and Redang Islands and 53% on Langkawi Island. Age wise, majority of tourists to small islands are young travellers, aged between 21 to 30 years old, who comprise almost 57% of the total tourists to the islands. Tourists to small islands participate in adventurous activities such as scuba diving, snorkelling, canoeing and jungle trekking. These activities tend to attract younger visitors rather than older visitors. However, only 33.4% of the tourists to Langkawi Island are from this younger (21-30 years) age range. This can be explained by the nature of Langkawi Island as a tourist destination that is not only suitable for adventurous activities but also appeals to shoppers and businessmen/women. Therefore, there is a difference in the purpose of travel between the large and small island destinations. Most European tourists are from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherland, Sweden and Switzerland. Tourists from these countries formed

about 92% of tourist arrivals to small islands and about 82% to Langkawi Island.

Tourists who visit small and large islands can be differentiated based on the length of stay. The highest length of stay to both destinations was recorded by the European and English tourists. On average, the European and English tourists stay on the islands for more than 6 nights. Langkawi recorded a higher average length of stay, particularly for the Malay and Chinese tourists. This again relates to the purposes of travel and a variety of tourism products. The Malay and Chinese tourists visited Langkawi Island for holiday and official events such as attending meetings, conferences and courses. Langkawi has been recognized as the premier shopping destination in Malaysia, particularly among Malaysians. The attractions on Perhentian and Redang Islands are natural beauty. Shopping opportunities and facilities for meetings or other official events are limited. Therefore, most tourists including Malay and Chinese tourists visit both islands mainly for a holiday, thus a lower average length of stay. The lower average length of stay on small islands among the Malay and Chinese tourists could also be explained by the short travelling time. They usually stay for only 2 nights and sometimes extend their stay up to 5 nights during a public holiday.

The majority of the European and English tourists have never visited the Perhentian and Redang Islands. About 14% of the English tourists have visited Perhentian and Redang Islands once while two thirds of the Malay tourists and more than 40% of the Chinese tourists have previously visited both islands once or twice. The locals seem less interested in visiting regularly. This may be explained by the fact that Perhentian and Redang Islands only offer limited attractions and activities. Unlike Perhentian and Redang Islands, the larger Langkawi Island offer more attractions and activities to tourists including sea-based and land-based attractions such as island hopping, sailing, snorkelling, mangrove tours, jet skiing, diving, kayaking, jungle trekking, biking, sight-seeing and shopping. Langkawi is also well-known for its history and legend. Hence, Langkawi recorded higher repeat visitation, particularly among the Malay tourists. More than 70% have visited the island between 1 to 5 times and 19% have visited the island for 10 and more times. About 72% of the Chinese tourists have visited Langkawi Island between 1 to 6 times.

These two destinations; small and large islands can also be differentiated by type of organized tour. This study indicates that culture has some impact on the selection of travel type, particularly for small island destinations. In general, the English and European tourists are inclined to make their own arrangements when travelling abroad regardless of destination. One quarter of the European tourists on Langkawi Island travelled on a package tour while only 5% of the European tourists travelled on a package tour to the small islands. Unlike the other three groups; Malay, Chinese and English on Langkawi Island, there are a significant number of Malay and Chinese tourists on Perhentian and Redang Islands who also choose a package tour. This could be explained by their travel style and short length of stay. As most of the domestic tourists travel during the weekends and stay on the islands for only 2 nights, a decision to opt for a package tour rather than non-package tour may provide them with an opportunity to maximize their times on the island. Furthermore, being small islands, Perhentian and Redang Islands only offer limited facilities and amenities. It may be easier for the tourists to let the travel agency plan the holiday especially when they have a time constraint and limited knowledge of the destination. However, all of the English tourists and 95% of the European tourists to small island destinations are independent travellers. The English and European tourists are more adventurous compared to local tourists. Langkawi is a larger island and it is unlikely that tourists face major problems when travelling to Langkawi Island. As such, most tourists to Langkawi are independent travellers regardless of cultural grouping.

Principal Components Analysis (PCA)

Table 1.3 shows the summary of PCA for the five sample groups at Perhentian, Redang and Langkawi Islands. The results indicate the difference in terms of the importance of destination attributes across the cultural groups, indicating differences in their needs. The hosts on small islands are concerned about the environment. This is not surprising as one of the attractions to small island destinations is activity related to natural resources, particularly water based. The hosts perceive that in order to sustain the business, quality of the island environment and safety is important. The second issue to small island hosts is activities. The hosts perceive that activities such as snorkelling, diving, fishing and jungle trekking are important in order to attract tourists. The next issue highlighted by the hosts is quality of facilities. The availability of facilities such as accommodation, transportation, restaurants and information centres is considered vital in attracting tourists to island destinations. Hosts also pointed out the importance of other facilities including availability of 24-hours electricity and treated water. Currently, only a few chalets and resorts on Perhentian and Redang Islands provide electricity around the clock and some of the chalets face problems with water supply. The availability of credit card and banking facilities has not been considered as important on these

two islands. Being small islands, most tourism products and services are provided by local communities and most of the transactions are by cash. Similarly, the availability of other services including TV service and mobile phone has been perceived by hosts as less important.

Hosts on large islands seem to have a different view compared with the hosts on the small islands. Apart from environmental issues, hosts on the large island focus on the facilities offered. Unlike Perhentian and Redang Islands where majority of tourists visit both islands for a holiday, Langkawi Island attracts tourists who are on holidays as well as other purposes. Thus, in order to cater for the tourists from

around the world; it is crucial for Langkawi to have efficient and modern facilities including an international airport, jetty, road, diverse type of accommodation, enough restaurant choice and so forth. Regarding activities, hosts on the large island not only emphasize sea-based activities but shopping opportunities as well. In fact, being the largest island in Malaysia with duty free status, shopping tourism is among the most important tourism product for Langkawi Island. Unlike local hosts on Perhentian and Redang Islands, hosts on the large island also place some importance on the availability of other services, particularly related to mobile phone and TV services. This again could be explained

Table 1.3: The importance of destination attributes

| Sample Group | Perhentian and Redang Islands | | Langkawi Island | |
	Factor	% of Variance Explained	Factor	% of Variance Explained
Host	Environment	13.8	Environment and Facilities	21.8
	Activities	12.6	Other Facilities	17.6
	Facilities	12.4	Activities	12.4
	Other Facilities	11.4	Service Availability	12.1
	Money	9.2	Money	7.8
	Service Availability	7.1		
Malay	Environment and Facilities	23.1	Environment and Facilities	27.5
	Money and Service Availability	18.0	Service Availability	19.0
	Activities	10.5	Activities	12.7
	Other Facilities	10.1		
Chinese	Facilities	21.0	Environment and Other Facilities	20.6
	Service Availability and Money	18.6	Facilities	17.0
	Environment	10.7	Service Availability	14.5
	Activities	8.2	Activities	14.0
English	Facilities and Service Availability	24.3	Facilities	18.4
	Other Facilities	13.7	Other Facilities	12.4
	Activities	13.4	Service Availability	11.4
			Environment	9.6
			Activities	8.3
			Money	6.6
European	Service Availability	14.9	Facilities	15.5
	Money	12.5	Service Availability	13.5
	Environment and Facilities	11.5	Other Facilities	11.2
	Other Facilities	10.1	Environment	10.1
	Activities	8.6	Activities	9.5

in relation to the differences in purposes of travel. Availability of credit card and banking facilities is somewhat important on the large island compared with the small islands.

Being guests, the Malay tourists on the small islands seem to focus mainly on environment and facilities. The Malay tourists consider the exotic environment and availability of basic facilities including accommodation, transportation system and restaurants as important. Although money and service availability has been perceived by hosts as the least important attribute, the Malay tourist ranks this issue second. Thus, the Malay tourists seldom carry a lot of cash when travelling. They rely heavily on the availability of credit card and banking facilities. The Malay tourists emphasize mobile phone, TV services and internet facilities. The availability of activities seems not to be important to the Malay tourists. It can be concluded that the Malay tourists are less interested in water-based or adventurous activities while on island destinations. A comparison between the Malay tourists on both destinations; small and large islands indicate that both sample groups share some similarities in their perceptions toward the importance of destination attributes.

Unlike the Malay tourists on small islands, the Malay tourists on large island placed some importance on the availability of activities related to nightlife and entertainment. These differences again can be explained with reference to the difference in purpose of travel. The majority of tourists to the small islands visit the destination to enjoy a variety of sea-based activities while a significant number of tourists to Langkawi visit the island with the purpose of attending official events. While tourists on the small islands usually spend their night relaxing, tourists on the large island might want to have some entertainment after a stressful day. Overall, there are considerable differences in the views of Malay tourists at both destinations.

While both hosts and the Malay tourists on the small islands emphasized the environment, the Chinese on Perhentian and Redang Islands concentrate on destination attributes related to

facilities. Unlike the other sample groups, the Chinese highlighted the price of goods and services. Like the Malay tourists, the Chinese also regard destination attributes related to service and money as important. The Chinese emphasized on facilities and services because they visit small islands only for a short period. Unlike the hosts and the Malay tourists, the Chinese tourists on the small islands consider destination attributes related to environment and activities as least important. The Chinese on the large island seems to support the view of the hosts and the Malay tourist with respect to environment. Exotic and unpolluted environment as well as beautiful scenery is important to them. Additionally, Chinese on the large island tends to share similar perceptions with the Chinese on the small islands by focusing on availability of facilities. Regarding activities, the Chinese tourists tend to share a similar view with the hosts on the large island, whereby they both emphasize shopping opportunities.

The English tourists are not far different from the Chinese tourists as their main concern relates to availability of facilities and services. In fact, compared with the Malay and Chinese groups, the availability of services such as credit card, internet facilities and mobile phone service are more crucial to the English tourists. This is because majority of them are independent travellers. They need to pay the expenses upon arrival at destinations. Additionally, the internet facility and mobile phone service is important for them to get in touch with their family and friends. The other important differences in destination attributes between the Malay and the Chinese tourists are availability of unique souvenirs and information centres.

The European tourists on small islands can be distinguished from the other four groups; host, Malay, Chinese and English with their focus on the availability of services and destination attributes related to money. The most significant differences highlighted by the European tourists relate to safety. Like the Malay, Chinese and English tourists, the European tourists are less concern on activities. The European tourists on

large islands tend to share similar views with the Malay, Chinese and English. Judging from the overall constructs for the European tourists on the large island, their needs tend to be close to the English group on the large island.

A comparison between the two destinations shows that the importance of destination attributes not only differs across cultural groups, but between different island settings. Hosts on small islands focus on environment and activities while hosts on large island emphasize on facilities. The tourist groups, particularly the Chinese place a greater concern on facilities and service availability. Although all sample groups regardless of island size place least concern on activities, the tourist sample groups, together with the hosts on large island emphasize shopping opportunities. While the English emphasize credit card and communication issues, the European tourists are concerned with safety. The most extreme differences are between the hosts and guests, with hosts indicating a poor understanding of guest priorities with regard to attributes.

Conclusion

This study provides all stakeholders of island tourism with knowledge on the impact of cultural differences on tourist's need. The establishment of the tourist profile and the identification of important factors that motivate tourists to visit island destinations would help in devising new strategies for a sustainable development of island tourism in Malaysia. The strategies can be implemented in short term and long term. Unlike Langkawi Island, this study has shown that small islands (Perhentian and Redang) have successfully attracted international tourists but only from limited markets. Although most of the international tourists to Perhentian and Redang Islands are from Europe, they are limited to a few countries including Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Netherlands. Despite the close location of Australia and New Zealand, the small islands seem to rely mainly on traditional markets such as the United Kingdom and United States of America. Instead of focusing on European and American markets, in order to sustain small island tourism and increase tourism earnings, different marketing strategies need to be undertaken. Promotional activities need to be extended not only to the traditional European, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as Singapore markets, but to other destinations as well. More aggressive promotion and marketing strategies should be undertaken in order to attract Australian and New Zealanders to the small islands in Malaysia. Australia and New Zealand tourists have long been attracted to islands in Thailand and Indonesia. Tourism marketers may promote a package to Malaysia together with other destinations in Thailand and Indonesia. It is possible to provide a sea catamaran service from Singapore to the Tioman Island, onto Redang and Perhentian Islands and then to Samui (Thailand). Promotion and marketing activities concerning small island tourism should target other major and growing markets such as such as China, Japan, India and the Middle East.

The study also indicates that majority of the English and European tourists are more adventurous than the domestic tourists. Therefore, to make the trip to islands in Malaysia more attractive, promotion and marketing of small islands should be based on multi-destinations. For example, in Terengganu, apart from Perhentian and Redang Islands, other islands include Kapas, Lang Tengah, Gemia, Tenggol and Bidong. Travel to multiple destinations is practical since these islands are closely located. Therefore, marketing strategies for small islands should also emphasize the possibility for tourists to travel to multiple destinations. Promoting multi-destinations simultaneously will not only increase attractions for island tourism, but at the same time increase average length of stay in Malaysia. At the same time, small island promotions can be packaged together with the other mainland attractions related to natural resources, culture and heritage, as well as shopping.

The other important issue in sustaining tourism is infrastructure. All the tourist groups emphasize this issue in choosing

travel destinations. Compared to mainland and large island destinations, the quantity of infrastructure on small islands is inadequate. The Malaysian government together with the industry players need to improve infrastructure especially transportation, electricity and water supply, eateries and accommodation. Since many long-haul tourists are independent and young travellers, lower budget accommodation should be provided. The quality of existing accommodation should be improved. The variety of food served at the eateries should be increased in order to cater for diverse tourist needs. More communication facilities should be provided including Internet café and phone lines.

The other important finding from this study relates to environment. Environmental problems such as waste and rubbish disposal will eventually harm the fragile ecosystem. Planning for nature-based tourism should seriously consider environmental preservation. The accommodation operators should learn how to handle rubbish and waste. Tourists need to be reminded not to throw rubbish and damage the coral reefs. The natural assets of small islands should be carefully managed for the survival of island tourism. Effort toward improving and maintaining the quality of the environment should be under continuous review by all. Government agencies, private businesses and individuals involved in tourism as well as the host and guest communities should participate in the conservation of the environment.

Limited attractions are another major issue for the sustainability of small island tourism. Consequently, small islands only attract tourist with a single purpose of travel, short average length of stay and low repeat visitation. New tourism products for small islands are needed. More tourist with different purposes of travel (apart from holiday) should be directed to the small islands, particularly for smaller scale meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) as this market can generate higher tourism receipts. More resorts need to be constructed with facilities for meetings

and conferences catering for up to 300 people. Considering the size and fragility of ecosystem, the construction of such accommodations needs to be carefully conducted. The existing resorts including Berjaya, Laguna Island Resort, Perhentian Island and Arwana should be aggressively involved in promoting tourism, specifically for the smaller scale MICE market. These resorts are currently among the most well-known venues for MICE tourism on Perhentian and Redang Islands. These strategies are relevant to many destinations and not just to the small islands in Malaysia.

Future research could examine a wider range of cultures. The question raised here whether island cultures react differently to tourism development. This study focused upon Malaysia and it is likely that different island cultures in the Pacific, America and Europe may have quite different juxtapositions between host and guests.

Acknowledgements

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