DIFFERENCE OF CHOICE IN HOTELS SELECTION BETWEEN TWO GENDERS

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of this study is to focus on the preferences difference in choice of hotels in travellers between the two genders in terms of cleanliness, friendliness of hoteliers, location, facilities and security. A total of 150 males and female travellers participated in a questionnaire survey. The correlation tests showed positive correlations between all five independent variables for both genders. The t-test and regression analysis showed that male travellers are indifferent to all five variables. However, female's travellers view cleanliness, location, facilities and security as significant selection criteria. As past studies have also shown that females, especially in a family setting, are the primary decision makers, their concerns and perceptions of the various attributes of hotels are most important and hoteliers need to take heed in order to ensure that their hotels are the preferred choices especially by individual and family travellers.

Keywords: Hotel, gender preferences, independent t-test.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has enjoyed several decades of growth and prosperity since the 1980s and has successfully withstood the negative impact of a series of economic crises including the collapse in world commodity prices (1983–1984), the Asian Financial Crisis (1997–1998) and the Global Financial Crisis of 2007–2009 that weaken the local currency, the Ringgit Malaysia (RM). The tourism sector has been recognised as one of the main valuable service industries in the world (Schumacher, 2007). Hospitality accommodation is included as one of the section in tourism sector that played an important role in contributing to the tourism sector by providing accommodation to travellers. Malaysia is a tropical country, rich in multicultural traditions, plenty of natural attractions such as shorelines and highlands as well as a reasonably developed infrastructure and amenities; it attracted steady increases in tourist arrivals from year to year.

Travelling became a lifestyle and is more convenient and affordable today, due to the growth of low cost airlines such as China United Airline, Air Asia, Lion Air, Jetstar, Malindo, Firefly and Tiger Air and hotel booking websites such as Agoda.com, Booking.com, HotelsCombined.com as well as Trivago.com. While people are travelling from their origin to another location for the purpose of leisure, business, recreation, education or other reasons, they will be labelled as travellers. As a traveller, accommodation is considered as a shelter which is a basic necessity for a human being to stay away from bad weather or danger or attack.

The hotel is a "commercial establishment providing, lodging, meals and other guest services" (Bonvin, 2015) and available for travellers in the current market are commercial hotels, motels, all-suite hotels, airport hotels, residential hotels, resorts, conference/convention hotels and city hotels. Travellers are endlessly searching for occasions and various enriching experiences which can contribute towards their comfort and pleasure (Lewis and Chambers, 1999). However, gender difference has been considered as a significant factor other than personal characteristics (Wilborn *et al.*, 2007) owing to its strong capability to understand consumer behaviours. Nonetheless there is doubtless no largely accepted judgement, as most consumer researchers take the view that "gender differences exist" and "females make purchase decisions more easily than males" (Mitchell and Walsh, 2004; Wang *et al.*, 2004). They also highlighted that males and females have different wants and thoughts. Women are no longer characterising as a peripheral market for marketing in the hospitality industry and as they comprise a concrete and mounting percentage of travellers (Kotler *et al.*, 2006). There are numerous studies that statement gender differences in the number of product groups bought (Teller and Thomson, 2012; Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013).

With the fast growth in the number of hotels and rooms to availability over the last decades, hoteliers are progressively aware of the value of accommodation develop market and thereby develop market strategies to align with travellers' needs. According to Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (2018), tourist arrivals consist of 25.95 million with receipts of RM82.17 billion in the year of 2017 (growth of 0.08%). There are 4.96 thousand units of government approved hospitality accommodation properties offering 321.97 thousand units of rooms in year 2017 with average occupancy rate of 66.1% and the average length of stay was 5.7 nights (declined 0.2%). Together with the extremely competitive market in the hospitality sector of the economy, there is a renew scrutiny and analysis on the profile of hotel customers. It has been realised that filling up hotel rooms is of vital importance to the health of the tourism industry and this industry contributes significantly to the country's economy.

Hypotheses Development

H_1: There is a significant difference between the two genders for perception of cleanliness and housekeeping on the choice of hotels.

H_2: There is a significant difference between the two genders for perception of friendliness of hoteliers on the choice of hotels.

H_3: There is a significant difference between the two genders for perception of convenience of location on the choice of hotels.

H_4: There is a significant difference between the two genders for perception of facilities services on the choice of hotels.

H_5: There is a significant difference between the two genders for perception of safety and security on the choice of hotels.

Significant of research

The main purpose of this research is to provide a good understanding on the determinant of the factors that affects choice of hotels between two genders travellers in Malaysia. Shelter is one of the basic necessary needs for human beings. As according to Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, shelter is one of the most basic needs for survival. Travelling became a trend with the convenience of infrastructure and appearance of budget variety of accommodation. This research is useful to the various parties such as Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners (MAHO), Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysian Association of Hotels Training and Education Centre (MAHTEC), Malaysia Budget Hotel Association (MyBHA), Economic Planning Unit and other hospitality accommodation related stakeholders and can be a guideline to help travellers in selecting their preference accommodation while travelling. Besides that, this research will be helpful to education institutions which are offering hospitality and tourism related programmes because accommodation services are in the course syllabus. For travellers, this research can be presented as a reference of guideline to help them to recognise what are the actual factors that affects accommodation selection among the group. In addition, travellers may understand that the cleanliness and housekeeping, friendliness of hoteliers, convenience of location, facilities services and safety and security may affect the travellers in difference gender for selection of accommodation while travelling. Based on those factors, hospitality accommodation providers are able to make sense of the causes of accommodation selection and further to solve of the issue by suit up a proper products and services to travellers. All the outcomes of this research can provide some understanding and information for the future reference to other researchers. At the same time, this research will add to or contribute more justification on past research method.

Theoretical Framework

Several studies have been carried out on gender differences from various angles, including consumer values (Mitchell and Walsh, 2004), biological factors (Derry, 2006), gender role attitudes (Stickney and Konrad, 2007) and sexual identity (Thompson and Morgan, 2008), because their rational choices are different (Yang and Wu, 2007). Research on the reality of gender differences mainly contends that women are the decisive decision creators relating to family holidays (Wang *et al*., 2004), and are more involved in the holiday decision-making process (Pan and Ryan, 2007). A group of researchers demonstrated the importance of physical environment (Suh et al., 2015) and revealed gender preferences are not universal among cultures (Taylor *et al.*, 2013).

Chan and Wong (2005) found that business travellers have a tendency to place more importance on their previous experience, good service, convenience and recommendations while leisure travellers and those with a lower level of education cherished more the recommendations from travel agents. Nevertheless, McCleary *et al*. (1994) have shown that female business travellers consider safety and security facilities, personal services, and lower rates to be the more significant hotel selection criteria than male business travellers in their analysis of gender-based differences in accommodation selection and service use preference. Lockyer (2002) investigated the factors which affected the accommodation selection from the viewpoints of both hotel management and guests, and discovered that hotel management was not as discerning in understanding the needs of

travellers. Sim *et al*. (2006) found that hotel atmosphere and hospitality were foremost in the minds for revisit customers.

Knutson (1988) recognised clean and comfortable room was one of the five selection factors for business travellers; Atkinson (1988) found that courtesy of staffs was one of the top points by travellers in hotel selection. Weaver and Oh (1993) found from their research that business travellers deem friendliness of service employees as very important. Arbel and Pizam (1977) contended almost 40 years ago that the majority of travellers wanted their hotels to be within walking distance of main attractions. Similar conclusions are found in studies done by Knutson (1988), Rivers *et al*., (1991), Weaver and Oh (1993), Egan and Nield (2000); Urtasun and Gutiérrez (2006), McKercher and Lau (2008) and Ashworth and Page (2010). Facilities as a criterion in selection of hotels are found to be significant in studies done by Knutson (1988), Juwaheer (2004), Sim *et al*., (2006) and Muxlow (2007). Safety and security issues were high on the criteria list for female business travellers, safety and security in terms of electronic key card, bright hallway, sprinkler system as well as closed-circuit television (CCTV). Other studies on the importance of safety and security are done by Knutson (1988), Atkinson (1988), Weaver and Oh (1993), McCleary *et al*., (1994), Juwaheer (2004), Phatcharin (2008) and Ruturaj (2015).
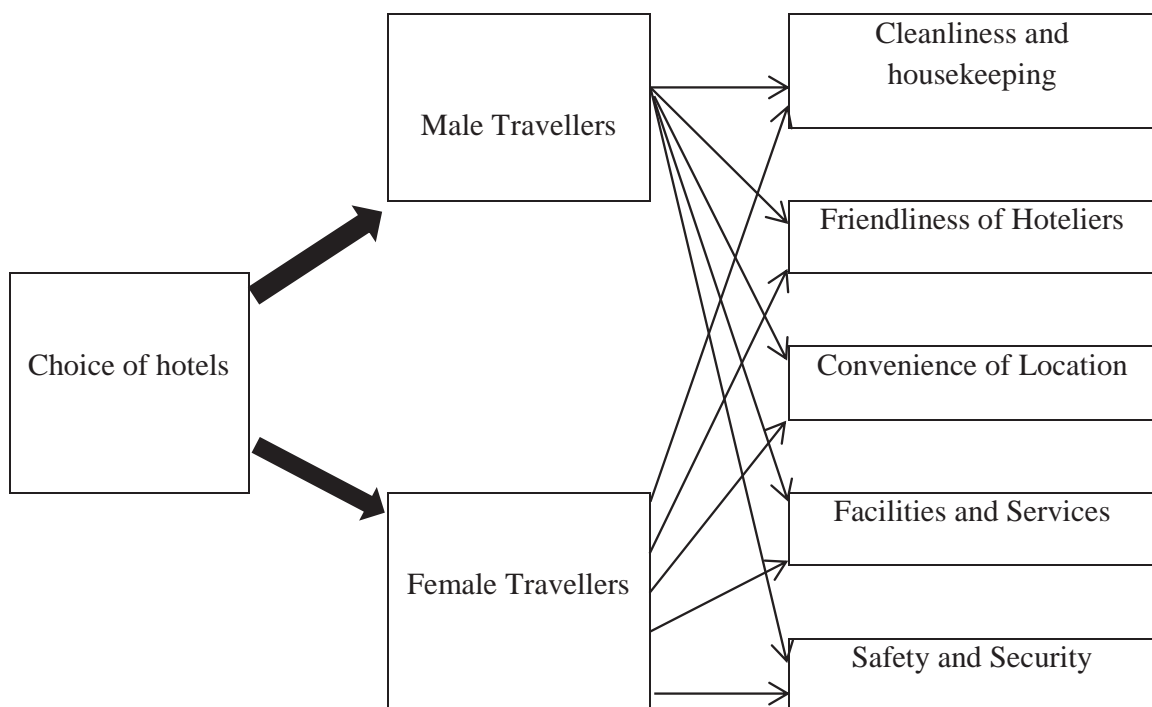

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and sampling

Cluster random sampling by gender used in data collection. 150 questionnaires were distributed in person and through online survey. The questionnaires will be sent throughout the country. Inadequate or excessive sample size may affect the research. According to Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran (2001), a sample size of between 30 and 500 would be effective for our kind of study. The target respondents are male and female travellers grouped into five age groups of 18-24, 25-31, 32-38, 39-45 and 46-52. The research questionnaire is separated into 3 sections, comprising seven questions under demographic, five questions to measure the dependent variables and twenty questions to measure the independent variables.

Data Analysis Technique

The data will be processed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Before analysis, the raw data are tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha and for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnoff (K-S) test. There are two main methods for assessing normality: graphically and numerically. The numerical test has the advantage of making an objective judgement of normality and is more accurate. The graphical interpretation can visualize the distribution of the data using graphical displays such as a histogram, boxplot, stem-and-leaf diagram, and normal Q-Q plot. In this research, the K-S test will be used to evaluate the normality of the data. The descriptive analysis is a fundamental process before carrying on further statistical analysis, as it is used to determine the mean, variance and the standard deviations for both the independent and dependent variables. The demographic information for investigating the gender differences encompassed the following characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, education level, occupation, income level, frequency and purpose of travel. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Test of reliability refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure. In short, a test is reliable if it is consistent within itself and across time. The K-S test results will inform whether one should reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis that the data come from a normally distributed population. The null hypothesis is that "sample distribution is normal", when p-value less than significant level, reject null hypothesis and conclude that data are nor from a population with a normal distribution. Finally, the tests of the research objectives and the relationships between the dependent and independent variables using regression will be conducted. Pearson's correlation analysis is used to evaluate the strength of linear relationship between independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

The male gender comprises slightly more than half, 53% of those surveyed. The majority are aged between 25 and 31 years old (63%). The proportion of not married respondents is 73% while those with a diploma and a Bachelor degree make up 72%, similarly 72% are private

sector employees and 81% of those who travelled are for the purpose of holidays and vacations.

Table 1: Sample Description

Variable	Number	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	79	53
Female	71	47
Age		
18 - 24	15	10
25 - 31	94	63
32 - 38	15	10
39 - 45	8	5
46 - 53	18	12
Marital Status		
Single	110	73
Married	40	27
Education		
High School	5	3
Diploma	35	24
Bachelor Degree	72	48
Master/Doctorate	38	25
Occupation		
Business owners	23	15
Private sector employees	107	72
Government servants	20	13
Purpose of travel		
Vacation	121	81
Business	17	11
Shopping	4	3
Sports	2	1
Others	6	4

Reliability Analysis

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) indicates that the variables measure what it is supposed to measure instead of something else. It also makes sure that consistent measurements are made across time and across the various items in instrument. In order to measure reliability and to ensure that accurate results are obtained, the Cronbach's alpha is used to test the coefficient of reliability, the results are as shown in Table 2 below. The results based on the rule of thumb of Cronbach's Alpha shows that the test coefficients range from acceptable to good.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Number of Questions	Cronbach Alpha
Choice of Hotels	5	0.845
Cleanliness	4	0.775
Friendliness of hoteliers	4	0.842
Location	4	0.675
Facilities and Services	4	0.782
Security and Safety	4	0.765

Normality and Test of Significant Relationships

Normality test is used to calculate the probability of normal data distributions. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test will show whether the variables used are normally distributed and whether we can accept or reject the null hypothesis. The results are as shown in Table 3. All the variables are shown to be not normally distributed as the significant values are all below 0.05, the significant level. As the p-values are below 0.05, they showed that all the null hypotheses are all rejected and all the alternative hypotheses are accepted. This means that there are significant relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 3: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Variables	Statistics	DF	p-value
Cleanliness and Housekeeping	0.133	150	0.000
Friendliness of Hoteliers	0.098	150	0.001
Location	0.011	150	0.000
Facilities and Services	0.124	150	0.000
Safety and Security	0.151	150	0.000

Compare Mean Analysis

Independent t-test will be utilised in running this research. The researcher in this study want to show that the two genders travellers have different preference on the choice of hotels, the sample should be from each two genders traveller. However, an independent t-test also named as two sample t-tests, is an inferential statistical test that decides whether there is a statistically meaning dissimilarity between the means in two genders travellers in preference of accommodation selection. If the significance value higher than 0.05 which mean the disagreement can be preserved as equal and if lower than 0.05 considered as unequal variances.

Table 4: Independent T-Test Statistics

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	Std. Devia.	T-Value	P-Value	Support / Reject
Cleanliness & Housekeeping	Male	79	3.8861	.68966	.020	.000	Support H_1
	Female	71	4.3627	.52575			
Friendliness of Hoteliers	Male	79	3.9620	.75116	.764	.099	Reject H_2
	Female	71	3.7641	.70949			
Location	Male	79	3.9462	.63381	.684	.005	Support H_3
	Female	71	3.6655	.57632			
Facilities and Services	Male	79	3.4968	.76637	.573	.004	Support H_4
	Female	71	3.8345	.65730			
Safety and Security	Male	79	4.0063	.72055	.000	.000	Support H_5
	Female	71	4.4542	.41889			

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a commonly used technique to verify that between dependent variable and independent variables which are related to hypothesis for correlation showing in percentage or value able to describe and explain. Simple regressions analysis was used to evaluate the research throughout the test in-value showing how strong the relationship and a significant value of less than 0.05 is the better to show that is a positive relationship between variables and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: Regression Test

Variables	Gender	Number	P-Value	Relationship	Support / Reject
Cleanliness & Housekeeping	Male	79	.335	Negative	Support H_1
	Female	71	.017	Positive	
Friendliness of Hoteliers	Male	79	.777	Negative	Reject H_2
	Female	71	.954	Negative	
Location	Male	79	.058	Negative	Support H_3
	Female	71	.006	Positive	
Facilities and Services	Male	79	.396	Negative	Support H_4
	Female	71	.041	Positive	
Safety and Security	Male	79	.369	Negative	Support H_5
	Female	71	.036	Positive	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research memorandum contributes to the hospitality and tourism literature and relevant stakeholders by revealing the difference in the preferences in choice of hotels in travellers between the two genders in terms of cleanliness, friendliness of hoteliers, location, facilities and security. Based on the integrative framework, male travellers and female travellers have variance in preference on choice of hotels which female travellers more significantly on cleanliness, location, facilities and security and both genders also insignificantly on friendliness. In research suggests that accommodations should place a strong emphasis on

leisure and business female travellers in cleanliness, location, facilities and security in selection. Hence, most of the time female travellers act as influencer, decision maker and approver whereby male travellers just in-charge for paying the rate for accommodation. As such, subtle actions such as increasing marketing promotion on female travellers segment would be advisable.

Researcher also found out the male travellers having most insignificant values on choice of hotels and female travellers having one insignificant value on friendliness of hoteliers. Hence, would place a suggestion to focus on male travellers to find out their wants in the choice of hotels. Besides that, also suggest viewing the choice of hotels from married family as they are having children or senior citizens travelling together in a trip, probably having difference of preference on selection. In conjunction with the promotion of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism of Malaysia regarding the growth of medical tourism and attracting foreign travellers visiting to Malaysia, therefore it is recommended for future research. Other than that, numerous of marathon and sport events (sport tourism) organised throughout the year in Malaysia, thus travellers fall under this category should be reviewed as well.

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