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THE GAME ON 2022:

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT**

**FACUTLY OF HOSPIATLITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS,
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN**

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Tourist Intention in Accommodation Decision Making During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore tourist intention in accommodation decision-making during the Covid-19 pandemic. Convenience sampling data collection was used, and 302 respondents were evaluated. The data collected is analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science Version 27 (SPSS Version 27) software based on descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis. As for the result, all the independent variables (hygiene, perceived risk, quality, price risk) have a significant relationship to the dependent variable (tourist intention) in accommodation decision-making during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Hygiene, Perceived Risk, Quality, Price Risk, Tourist Intention.

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus outbreak has shocked the entire world today. Based on a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), coronavirus is one of a large family of viruses that cause respiratory tract infections such as Severe Accurate Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-related Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The latest and most pandemic coronavirus worldwide is now known as Novel Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19). The outbreak was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Thevadas et al., 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Covid-19 was a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As of November 7, 2021, more than 250,410,315 million Covid-19 cases have been reported in more than 221 countries, resulting in over 5,062,923 million deaths while over 226,672,096 million patients have been recovered (Worldometer, 2021).

Indirectly, the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic has dealt a severe blow to the economic sector, especially in tourism. The state of this sector seems to be paralyzed because governments worldwide have introduced movement control orders for all human beings. These restrictions have made it impossible for tourists to cross the country to travel. The country's borders have been closed with strict laws, and domestic tourism is also not allowed. When the tourism sector is paralyzed, the tourism accommodation industry also seems lifeless. Considering the specifics of the current pandemic, the impact of the pandemic and primarily businesses' response raises concerns about the industry's preparedness to cope with prolonged periods of crisis and its overall resilience.

Accommodation is still amongst the most important components of the tourism value experience; hence an investigation of customers' accommodation preferences could highlight further implications for their overall travel intentions. According to Ricky Nutsugbodo (2016), tourist accommodation is an establishment that offers its facilities and services to individuals or groups. Tourists will find the best accommodation during their travels (Park et al., 2019). There are several things that tourists need consideration in choosing accommodation, especially during the pandemic of Covid-19 (Park et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020). Safety factors have been considered in providing safe accommodation in this Covid-19 pandemic. The accommodation industry must have its challenges in

developing it. However, the challenges faced before the Covid-19 pandemic were different after. According to Nain Akshay (2018), one unpleasant experience with a brand in the hotel hospitality industry is enough to turn consumers away. Economic inclusion (economic volatility), staff shortages, retaining quality workers, increasing demand for technology, maintaining cleanliness, and offering good client service are all issues faced by the hotel sector today (Alom et al., 2019). Based on data from (Berita Harian, 2021), the accommodation industry, including Malaysian hotels, is estimated to have lost more than RM5 billion in revenue in the first six months of this year due to movement restrictions to curb the spread of the pandemic. This clearly shows that the accommodation industry has great challenges in terms of its development. There are four objectives of this research:

1. To determine the relationship between hygiene in accommodation decision-making among tourist intention during Covid-19.
2. To identify the relationship between perceived risk in accommodation decision-making among tourist intention during Covid-19.
3. To examine the relationship between quality of accommodation in decision making among tourist intention during Covid-19.
4. To determine any relationship between price risk in accommodation decision making and tourist intention during Covid-19.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Researchers

This study looks at how the pandemic and the resulting global lockdown have had a huge impact on community lives and the tourism industry. People's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours about the disease all play a role in a society's willingness to accept behavioural modification measures imposed by health authorities. Furthermore, this research can contribute to the knowledge community even in this pandemic of Covid-19. Adapting to the 'new normal' can greatly affect the future.

The UNESCO World Tourism Organization

The UNESCO World Tourism organization actively supports organizations to establish initiatives to assist a struggling travel and tourism industry by safeguarding the employment of service employees and providing financial assistance to corporations and industries impacted (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). Various countries and organizations had put in place plans to aid the hospitality industry in rehabilitation, including increased communication with the business, incentives, and better healthcare monitoring.

WHO

Aside from reducing the pandemic's immediate damage, countries will need to establish a "new normal" for the tourism industry. Vaccines must be broadly distributed, and legislative measures must be enacted to recover. Some governments have provided financial assistance to the industry, either directly or through soft loans and guarantees. Alternatives will vary by country, and the speed and extent of recovery will, of course, be influenced by global events. However, there is a significant opportunity to be taken advantage of.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hygiene

The significance of hotel cleanliness and hygiene has recently increased since Covid-19 can be spread by touching virus-infected surfaces (WHO, 2020b). According to Park et al. (2019), hotel surfaces are more likely to be filthy, have greater germ counts, and provide possible disease transmission vectors. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, travellers are likelier

to stay in hotels that provide clean and sanitary services and products. As already stated, hotel surfaces that frequently receive human contact are more likely to be contaminated through contact and constitute a source of transmission of infectious diseases such as Covid-19 (Park et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020). The central air conditioning system, which is out of reach of hotel guests, may potentially facilitate the aerosol transmission of viruses (Patwary, 2022). According to Zemke et al. (2015), young tourists and women of all ages are prepared to pay a premium for improved guest room disinfection. Improved hygiene and sanitation to prevent or curb the spread of disease can be promoted as a feature of sales during and after an outbreak, as there has been an increase in consumer demand for hotel cleanliness following the Covid-19 outbreak. The dedication of hotel restaurants and other departments to safety and hygiene measures, as well as excellent housekeeping standards, should be emphasized (Hung et al., 2018)

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is an individuals' views of the uncertainty and negative repercussions of purchasing a product or service are frequently used. Perceived risk has long been a key factor influencing consumers' decision-making and behavior (Han et al., 2019). In tourism context, perceived risk characterizes situations within which it clearly predicts the choice to avoid traveling to certain destinations, as an example, because of terrorism, political instability, or health risks. Perceived risk has been identified as a multi-dimensional construct in studies that have looked at the impact of perceived risk in the tourist setting (Cui et al., 2016). Furthermore, according to Yeung and Yee (2019), due to the intangible and perishable nature of services, the influence of perceived risk appears to be substantially more prominent in-service consumption decisions than in physical product consumption decisions. As a result, tourists' perceptions of danger are an important factor and antecedent in their decision- making process.

Quality

Quality is about the efficiency of an organization in performing for its stakeholders. Among the necessary qualities are improving products, daily services, systems, and processes. This quality system should be maintained to ensure that the entire organization can maintain its image and be more effective (ICRA, 2021). This quality is important especially in the accommodation industry during this Covid-19 pandemic. According to Sampson Quain (2019), the importance of quality to an organization is to meet customer expectations, satisfy customers, establish a company reputation, and manage costs effectively. In this pandemic phase, all accommodation sectors should prioritize the quality of their services (Krzysztof Stepaniuk, 2017; Patwary et al., 2020).

Price Risk

Tourists' price risk is an important factor in accommodation decision making. Earnings fluctuation, bad cost probability is influenced by factors such as organizational administration and price variations. The possibility also that the amount of a protection or investment will fall. The immediate cause of the Covid-19 pandemic was a price decline in the days leading up to the lockdown (Will Kenton, 2021).

Price risk is influenced by earnings volatility, poor management, industry risk, and price variations. A non-sustainable situation, company strategy, Generalization of the income statement, natural hazards in a firm's rotation, or strategic risks because of a lack of trust in management are all factors that could reduce the value of a security (Patwary et al.,

2022). Small start-ups face greater price risk than larger, more established businesses. This is primarily since the management, market capitalization, financial status, and geographic location of operations of a larger company are frequently stronger and more suited than those of smaller businesses (Will Kenton, 2021).

Tourist Intention

Tourist intention can be described as the consumer's personal view likelihood of participating in or refraining from participating in specific actions about an economical service. The travel intention is predicted as to how probable consumers are to tour the location over a certain period (Patwary & Rashid, 2016). Moreover, the tourism business has been impacted the hardest among industries afflicted by the global epidemic of Covid-19. Compared to other businesses, the impact of travel restrictions, particularly in the field of international tourism, puts the industry at risk, with a considerable drop in international tourist arrivals. After the pandemic, this circumstance impacts consumer behaviour in terms of travel intentions. Environmental variables used to have a moderately great connection to the intention of Asian and European tourists to visit Malaysia, and since, according to the explanation, several travellers accepted that Malaysia provides great assistance and accommodation goods to consumers, and that had a beneficial impact, resulting in visitors planning to travel to Malaysia. (Mohammad Sadegh Eshaghi, 2020).

Research Framework

The conceptual framework was developed based on previous research results. The purpose is to determine the tourist intention in accommodation decision-making during the Covid-19 pandemic. Figure 1, given below, describes the conceptual framework of this research.

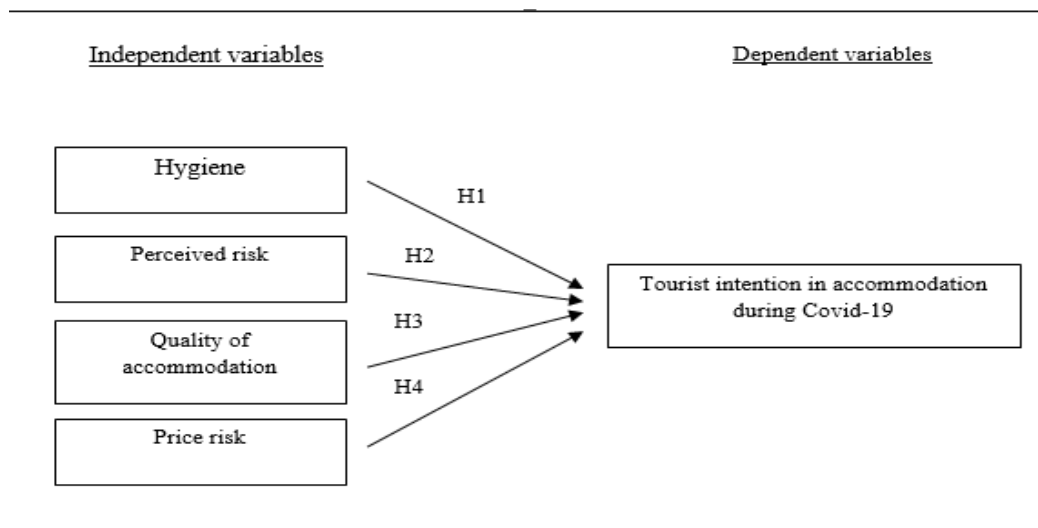


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to Figure 1, there were four hypotheses:

H1: There is a substantial relationship between hygiene and the tourist intention in accommodation during Covid-19.

H2: There is a substantial relationship between perceived risk and the tourist intention in accommodation during Covid-19.

H3: There is a substantial relationship between quality and the tourist intention in accommodation during Covid-19.

H4: There is a substantial relationship between price risk and the tourist intention in

accommodation during Covid-19.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the quantitative method that gathers all data through questionnaires. A research design is a blueprint for the planned research endeavours that binds all the components together. (Akhtar, 2016). In this study, quantitative research was used as the research design. Quantitative research is a systematic method of collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources. Quantitative research focuses on objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data acquired through polls, questionnaires, and surveys. Quantitative research is concerned with collecting numerical data and generalizing it across groups of individuals or describing a phenomenon. (SIS International Market Research, 2018).

Data Collection

We were focused on handing out surveys through social media of tourism in Malaysia to gather responders due to the usage of Covid-19 and MCO online methods to collect primary data. The questionnaires were created using a google form; the reason why we chose this method was the data that we received was easier to analyze and more accurate by using this method. Next, the survey questions were given out to the target respondents. The questionnaires were handed out for 24 hours for the respondent to respond and closed after 24 hours. Finally, the gathered data were analyzed with the selected method.

Sampling

Non-probability sampling was utilized in this study because this study necessitates descriptive evaluations; this sample strategy is advantageous. The convenience sampling method is used in this study while distributing questionnaires to respondents' goals. According to Etikan & Bala (2017), collecting data from few people who are easily accessible to participate in the study influences convenience sampling. It is simple to conduct convenience sampling with only a few guidelines controlling how the sample should be gathered. In contrast to probability sampling methods, a convenience sample has a low relative cost and time requirement.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a way of evaluating information using scientific reasoning to examine each piece of information provided. Three types of data analysis were used in this study, namely frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, and reliability analysis. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 27 (SPSS).

FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Respondents' profile

Items	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	77	25.5
	Female	225	74.5

Age	20 - 24 years old	197	65.2
	25 - 29 years old	27	8.9
	30 - 34 years old	18	6.0
	35 years old and above	60	19.9
Marital Status	Married	102	33.8
	Single	200	66.2
Income	Below RM1000	182	60.3
	RM1000 - RM1999	54	17.9
	RM2000 - RM2999	35	11.6
	RM3000 - RM3999	7	2.3
	RM3000 - RM3999 and above	24	7.9

Table 1 shows the characterization of respondents. 225 out of 302 respondents are female, representing 74.5%, while 77 respondents are male, representing 25.5%. Out of 302 respondents for age, the most respondents are 20 – 24 years old, 65.2 % that is 197. In contrast, the second most respondent is 35 years old and above, 19.9 %, that is 60 respondents. Thirdly, 25 – 29 years old, 8.9 %, that is 27 respondents. The lowest respondent is 30 – 34 years old, 6.0 %, that is 18 respondents. For marital status, most respondent is single, 66.2 % is 200 respondents. While the second most respondents are married, 33.8 % that is 102. For income, most respondents are below RM 1000, 60.3 %, 182 respondents. In contrast, the second most respondent is RM 1000 – RM 1999, 17.9 %, 54 respondents. Thirdly, RM 2000 – RM 2999, 11.6 %, that is 35 respondents. The next is RM 3000 – 3999 and above, 7.9 %, 24 respondents. The lowest respondent is RM 3000 – RM 3999, 2.3% which is 7 respondents.

Analysis on Tourist Intention in Accommodation Decision Making During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the Tourist Intention in Accommodation Decision Making During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
DV: Tourist Intention in accommodation during Covid-19		
Factors of concern for tourists intending to travel were related to the accommodation sector during the Covid-19 Pandemic	4.11	.753
I will choose an accommodation based on feedback and other factors	4.32	.702
Covid 19 pandemic conditions affect tourist's behavior in terms of travel intentions	4.27	.701

In my opinion, the Covid 19 protective measures taken by the accommodation will make the tourists feel safe	4.45	.703
Good service can change the view of tourists to choose accommodation	4.54	.618
IV 1: Hygiene		
The cleanliness of an accommodation is an important factor for every tourist	4.74	.492
Unclean accommodation environments are likely to have large numbers of germs and facilitate the transmission of disease	4.59	.645
In my opinion, an accommodation that has many tourists has the potential to reduce the level of cleanliness of the accommodation	3.95	.974
In the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, I prefer the accommodation industry such as hotels to always perform regular and scheduled accommodation cleaning	4.54	.629
I think that every owner of an accommodation sector such as a hotel should implement safety and hygiene measures, as well as excellent housekeeping standards	4.60	.595
IV 2: Perceived Risk	4.16	.793
Faced risks when traveling nowadays are normal that occur among tourists	4.01	.861
I feel that is a high risk when staying at the accommodation at the time of the current Covid-19 pandemic	4.28	.676
When booking accommodation, I consider the risks in the way the management of accommodation	4.11	.748
When booking accommodation, I consider the risk that I will not receive what I not expected	4.36	.641
The risk in a destination is important to make decisions when choosing an accommodation		
IV 3: Quality	4.53	.608
My priority in booking is based on the quality of accommodation	4.55	.601
When it comes to booking accommodation, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	4.40	.654

I have very high standards and expectations regarding the quality of accommodation I book	4.36	.666
When booking accommodation, I consider its quality compared with other relevant available accommodation choices	4.47	.635
Quality is very important especially in the accommodation industry during this Covid 19 pandemic outbreak	4.54	.613
IV 4: Price Risk	4.48	.651
Comparison of hotel prices is very important for tourists	4.42	.690
I choose accommodations based on the affordable price	4.51	.625
I prefer to get discounts codes to stimulate direct booking	4.45	.736
Special offer is one of the most effective every tourist to choose their accommodations		
Price is very important during this COVID-19		

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for twenty statements under four independent variables and five under the dependent variables based on the survey involving 302 respondents. The highest mean value for tourist intention is good service can change the view of tourists to choose the accommodation that, is 4.54. In contrast, the lowest mean value for tourist intention is factors of concern for tourists intending to travel were related to the accommodation sector during the Covid-19 Pandemic that is 4.11. For hygiene, respondents agreed that the cleanliness of accommodation is an important factor for every tourist, which is 4.74. At the same time, the lowest is in my opinion, an accommodation with many tourists has the potential to reduce the level of cleanliness of the accommodation that, is 3.95. Next, the highest mean value for perceived risk is the risk in a destination is essential to make decisions when choosing an accommodation that is 4.36, while the lowest mean value for perceived risk is I feel that is a high risk when staying at the accommodation at the time of the current Covid-19 pandemic that is 4.01. Furthermore, for quality, respondents agreed that when it comes to booking accommodation, I try to get the best or perfect choice, which is 4.55, while the lowest is when booking accommodation. I consider its quality compared with other relevant available accommodation choices that 4.36. Lastly, the highest mean value for price risk is comparison of hotel prices, which is very important for tourists that is 4.54, while the lowest mean value is I prefer to get discount codes to stimulate direct booking that is 4.42.

Relationship between hygiene, perceived risk, quality and price risk on tourist intention.

Table 3: Spearman's correlation between hygiene, perceived risk, quality and price risk on tourist intention.

Variables		Tourist intention
Hygiene	Correlation Coefficient	.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Perceived Risk	Correlation Coefficient	.568**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Price Risk	Correlation Coefficient	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Table 3 shows Spearman's correlation between hygiene, perceived risk, quality and price risk on tourist intention. Firstly, The correlation coefficient of hygiene is 0.629, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between tourist intention accommodation during covid-19. Secondly, The correlation coefficient of perceived risk is 0.568, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between tourist intention accommodation during covid-19. For quality, the correlation coefficient is 0.550, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between tourist intention accommodation during covid-19. Lastly, the coefficient of price risk is 0.595, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between tourist intention accommodation during covid-19. All the p-value was 0.000, which was less than the significant level of 0.01 for every variable.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result obtained, hygiene influences tourist intention on accommodation decision-making. Tourist intention positively correlates with hygiene and carry out moderate relationships with 0.629 or 62%. This result is supported by a previous study that found whether there are any correlations or relationship between dependent variables and independent variables. Since the significant levels of both variables are 0.000 showed highly significant, H1 is proven and accepted, and the research objective is supported.

This paper is hoped to contribute ideas to the related stakeholders to improve accommodation operations to satisfy tourists while creating possibilities for attracting more new tourists in the future. As He and Harris (2020) suggest, Covid-19 will most likely change how we perceive the world, think, conduct our lives, and experience tourism. With tourism and hospitality business being among the hardest hit by Covid-19 (UNWTO, 2020b), accommodation providers need to adapt to the new environment. The most important consideration now is health and safety. Until the pandemic eases, the levels of hygiene provided and the protection of customer health will be paramount factors affecting accommodation decision-making. In the tourism domain, health-related aspects have always been important, especially for vulnerable segments (i.e. older tourists) (indicatively, please read Mrcela et al., 2015). Still, due to Covid-19, they have now assumed paramount importance. Thus, researchers are strongly encouraged to use a large sample size for future study. This is because the bigger samples are like the population. It is suggested that future research may explore this study in qualitative to ensure the trustworthiness of those variables.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research aimed to examine the tourist intention on accommodation decision-making preferences concerning Covid-19. The results show four main factors that influence tourist intention, which is: (i) hygiene; (ii) perceived risk; (iii) quality, and (iv) price risk. Despite the study's contribution, several limitations should be highlighted in terms of time, study sample and method of data collection. Decision-making is more complex than ever in a quickly changing environment. Covid-19 has drastically altered the wayhow we think, act, and react, and has already wreaked havoc on the transportation, tourist, and hospitality industries.

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