


Information Source Before Travelling and Choice of Traveling Mode

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ABSTRACT

The ability to attract tourists is crucial for the success of tourism firms in Malaysia. This has therefore raised a major concern on which information sources tourists use when making choices on their traveling mode as well as the destination. It is on this basis that tourism operators; tourism providers and managers of tourist destinations are particularly concerned with which information source or media to use to attract tourists to tourism destinations. This study investigates the relationship between information source before traveling and choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with convenient sampling technique to generate questionnaire data from 358 participants who are mainly tourists from three major tourism attraction centers in Malaysia. The questionnaire data was analysed using multiple regression analysis technique to determine the relationship between information source and choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. First, the overall findings show that information source before traveling among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia is significantly related to the choice of traveling mode. Further findings revealed that both tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources but not travel agent source are significantly related to the choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. The study concludes that the choice of traveling mode among Arabs coming to Malaysia is mainly determined by tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources of information and not travel agent source of information. The outcomes of the study have significant managerial implications for tourism operators, tourism providers and managers of tourist destinations as well as tourism policy makers in Malaysia.

KEYWORDS

Malaysia, Tourism Information Centers, Tourism Service Providers, Travel Agent, Traveling Mode

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that studies on tourism are fast drawing attention among the academics, practitioners including governments in different countries of the world (Chetthamrongchai, 2017; Chiappa & Balboni, 2019). In some countries across the globe, tourism has become an important sector or subsector of the economy generating significant revenue for any country (Chu and Luckanavanich, 2018). Most Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, etc., are presently benefiting from the huge revenue from the tourism sector. Globally, tourism business is in its booming period. For instance, the projection by the world travel and tourism Council for the tourism industry in Southeast Asia has been deemed to be very significant and strong (Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), 2019).

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In Malaysia for instance, tourism industry is currently at its boom, call it “tourism boom”. It is recorded that tourist’s arrivals in Malaysia has continued to increase by 14.3% (2,078,485) in October 2009 compared with 1,818,304 in the same month in 2008 (New Straits Times, January 4, 2010), despite the financial crisis facing the world. From January to October in 2009, Malaysia has seen an increase of 7.2 per cent in tourists’ arrival to 19.45 million compared with 18.14 million in the same period in 2008. Also, the current tourism arrivals in Malaysia in 2018 showed about 25.8 million tourists with RM84.1 billion receipts (Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), 2019). This is a tremendous and significant increase compared to 2009 and 2008 when only 2,078,485 and 1,818,304 were recorded respectively. This is equally restated by the Tourism, Art and Culture Minister (MoTAC), Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi that the Malaysian tourism sector has contributed RM84.1 Billion to the national economy in 2018 compared to the previous year which recorded RM82.2 billion, about 2.2 percent increase. This shows the resilience of Malaysia’s tourism industry (Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), Head Office, 2019).

Concerning the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia, it is observed that Malaysia has become a destination of choice for Arabs, with the country attracting a larger number of tourists from the Middle East compared to previous years. For example, the data provided by Mat, Zakaria, & Jusoff (2009) shows that there have been yearly increase in the number of Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. For example, the data showed an increase of 23.9% in 1999; 46.5% in 2000 and 87.1% increase in 2001 while it is expected to soar higher by 90% in the near future. As expected, in 2018, nearly 33,000 Arab tourists visited Malaysia, up from 27,000 in 2017 (Arabnews, 2019). Still the number of Arab tourists coming to Malaysia is expected to rise further as Malaysia continues to position itself as a Muslim-friendly, halal haven. However, one major problem that is of concern to the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia is the sources of getting information before embarking on their tourism adventure. For instance, the tourists have just discovered that the sources of their information before traveling play a crucial role in determining their choice of traveling mode such as the use of air, water and train. This has therefore raised a major concern on which information sources tourists use when making choices on their traveling mode as well as the destination. It is on this basis that tourism operators, tourism providers and managers of tourist destinations are particularly concerned with which information source or media to use to attract tourists to tourism destinations (Korneliussen & Greenacre, 2016).

In their study on cross-cultural information sources used by European tourists, Chu and Luckanavanich (2018), noted that although travelers happen to receive abundance of information from many sources before they actually visit the place, however, this amount of information from several sources have directly or indirectly influence the receiver’s travel intention. Apart from that, this amount of information from different sources equally affects the choice of traveling mode the tourists choose. Also, Fisher, Petersen & Burstein (2017) observed that there is lack of awareness on information sources among the tourists. They argued that tourists need reliable information sources which are however scattered but not easy to find. In this case of Arab tourists, often decisions are made based on unreliable sources which then affect their choice of travelling mode. Thus, there is a limited awareness and understanding of the background of those travelling and how information is sourced for decision making on traveling mode (Fisher, Petersen & Burstein, 2017). Also, earlier studies such as Fodness and Murray (1997) and Grønflaten (2009b) have acknowledged that there is a problem of information sources among tourists, that is, who provides information about tourism to them? To this end, Fodness and Murray (1997) claim that the most pressing need is for more systematic research describing how and why travelers-tourists source for and use information regarding tourism especially before embarking on tourism adventures. As a result, they suggested that future research is required in order to examine travelers’ use of different information choice strategies through the analysis of perceptions of the alternatives available to them for trip planning, and that such research should address the dimensions underlying information choice strategy preferences. For example, it is important to know what causes different tourists to choose specific sources to plan their trips (Fodness & Murray, 1997). (Grønflaten, 2009a) and Fodness and Murray (1997) have identified several

information sources such as travel agents, tourism service providers, tourism information centers etc. in which they argued that these information sources affect choice of traveling mode. However, there is lack of empirical testing on how these information sources (Al-khateeb & Dahalin, 2013, 2015; Al-khateeb, 2019) affect the choice of traveling mode particularly within the context of Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to determine the influence of travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers source on the choice of traveling mode of Arab tourists coming to Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information Source Before and the Choice of Traveling Mode (Information Choice strategy)

First and foremost, information source can be simply described as the motivated activation or acquisition of knowledge stored in memory or acquisition of information from the environment (Korneliussen & Greenacre, 2016). In other words, it is also the search for information at the early step in the decision-making process of tourists. Fodness and Murray (1997) state that information source before is described as any information source obtained by the potential tourism travelers prior to making the tourism adventure.

Furthermore, on whether information sources affect choice of traveling mode among the tourists, Chetthamrongchai (2017) argued that information sources affect destination image. For example, the tourist will make a decision whether to travel to a particular destination after building an image based upon those sources. The travelers' choice of information is an important issue that cannot be ignored in the field of tourism as it affects tourists' plan as well as their choice of traveling mode. The study by Grønflaten (2009a); Grønflaten (2009b) and Jansen and Rieh (2010) noted that information sources used by the tourism travelers are associated with the information choice of strategy which also includes traveling mode. However, the study is limited in scope and coverage as Arab tourists were not included in the study. Chiappa & Balboni (2019) examined the travellers' choice of information sources and information channels for domestic trips with specific focus on information search perspective. The major objective of the study was to identify which factors in terms of different sociodemographic and characteristics and travel-related variables that really affect traveller's information search from a travel agency or from a service provider (i.e. information source choice). The study adopted a survey questionnaire research design as suggested by Grønflaten (2009a) with a convenience sampling technique which was used to draw 363 domestic respondents who are mainly tourists between the age of 18 years and above in the island of Sardinia, Italy (short-haul trip). Also, the study collected data through an ad-hoc questionnaire administrated face-to-face by two trained interviewers at airport and port areas in Olbia, one of the main gateways to the region. From the analysis, the study found that travel agent is the most important information source and channels than both service provider and tourist office when making their choices and the related priority. Also, it was found that a higher length of stay is associated to the use of a face-to-face information source, rather than a digital information source. Additionally, the study equally reported that mode of travel and age were not significantly associated with either the source or the channel decision alone, these variables resulted to be significantly associated with the strategy choice. In their study of the influence of social media use and travel motivation on the perceived destination image and travel intention to Taiwan of the Thai people, Chu and Luckanavanich (2018) found that social media is an effective predictor of people's travel intention and destination image. They concluded that people frequently use social media to get traveling information seem to have better destination image and higher travel intention.

Similar to the above, Chetthamrongchai (2017) in his study investigated the influence of travel motivation, information sources and tourism crisis on tourists' destination image with a view to develop a destination image theoretical model through tourists' travel motivation, information and crisis perception. The study sampled all international travellers who visited Thailand during

August to September 2015 in which the target population was drawn from the top five inbound tourist markets of Chiangmai, Pataya, Phuket, and Bangkok. It adopted a survey questionnaires method that was distributed among group tours or individual tours. Data analysis was done using the LIEREL programme and Structural equation modeling (SEM) and the study found that Thailand's travel motivation, travel motivation, crises, information sources in the normal situation and in an unusual occurrence significantly exert influence on Thailand's destination image, and that a positive attitude towards travel motivation represents a factor having an influential effect on Thailand's travel motivation.

In a related development, Fisher, Petersen and Burstein (2017) studied the importance of reliable information sources for prospective medical travelers. The study noted that there lack of awareness risk among those travelling for treatment abroad because of this they need reliable information sources which are however, scattered and not easy to find. The study adopted an interviews approach with a sample of 51 Australians who had travelled for stem cell treatment. The data highlight that health travelers are likely to search extensively using a wide range of sources including information on clinics' websites, Facebook, blogs, friends and family. Interviewees highlight that often decisions are made based on unreliable sources.

In a cross-cultural study, Korneliussen and Greenacre (2016) investigated information sources used by European tourists. Specifically, the study attempts to determine which information sources European tourists use when making decisions about their travel/ holiday plans. Based on this, a survey data was generated from 27 member countries of the European Union. The survey data generated was analysed and the findings revealed that there are systematic differences in how information sources are related to one another and that the various national cultures within the European Union have influence on tourists' use of information sources. Additionally, the study revealed six segments of information source behaviour that reflect economic development and the national cultures of European nations. It is also noted that tourists can segment their information sources using economic development and national culture.

Furthermore, the source of information before embarking on tourism also affects the information choice of travelers. This is due to the information at hand before such an encounter with an environment required as a place that is relevant for the tourist to make use of. It can also be attributed the Media richness theory which clearly stipulates that the richness of information source has a direct positive effect on the transmitted information which can be shared between the people as seen in (Tan & Arnott, 1999). Going by the traveler's choice of information, there is clear evidence from the study of Grønflaten (2009b) which also reviews that information sources can never be out of place or ignored as it affects the travelers' choices of information as derived from the travel agents and service providers, as well as the internet and face-to-face as information channels.

Empirical findings by previous studies such as Grønflaten (2009a); Grønflaten (2009b) and Jansen and Rieh (2010) have acknowledged that travelers choice of information is affected or determined by a number of factors such as information source and information channels. For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Grønflaten (2009a) on factors that affect traveler's choice of information revealed that information source and information channels are among the identified factors. Thus, information source is a good determinant of information choice of the travelers. This is also in line with the Media Richness theory which emphasizes on the richness of the information source to transmit or share information between people (Tan & Arnott, 1999). Also, another study by Grønflaten (2009b) on traveler's choice of information found that information sources such as travel agents and service providers; and information channels such as face-to-face and the internet significantly affect travelers' choice of information.

Tourism information becomes necessary to be distinguished by knowing the various methods and channels; this will make the Arab tourists to also know the differences as involved. The search behavior of the Arab tourists will be made known when there is clearly an understanding between the different sources such as travel agents and primary source, face-to-face, communication, and internet

channels Grønflaten (2009b). Therefore, within the context of this study, information source before is conceptualized as travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers which are external to the tourists. Thus, the focus of this study is external information source before. They represent the sources of information for the tourist before they embark on tourism pleasure. In other words, it shows where the tourists obtained their information about tourism adventure before the actual tourism journey is embarked on. These factors are assumed to be very crucial in determining the choice of traveling mode of Arab tourists before coming actually embarking on their tourism adventures. Hence, the information sources before in the form of travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers are believed to determine the choice of traveling mode of the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a cross-sectional questionnaire survey with a quantitative approach. It is concerned with a quantitative data and then applies statistical analysis in the analysis of the data being collected (Saidu, 2006). Amin and Khan (2009) and Khurshid (2008) affirmed that quantitative questionnaire approach is suitable in conducting a research in social science research.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population of this study covers all the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia from three major tourism attraction centers in Malaysia as of the time this study was conducted. In 2018 alone, there are 33,000 Arab tourists that visited Malaysia (Arabnews, 2019). This study adopts a convenient sampling approach of non-probability sampling technique. It employed Krejcie and Morgan (1970) general scientific guideline ($S = X^2 NP(1 - P) / d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)$) for determining a sample size in order to determine the sample size of this study. The sample size for this study is 500.

Measurement of Variables

For measurement, the information sources are travel agents, service providers, information center, journalists/ writers, other travelers, and friends/ family adapted from the work by (Grønflaten, 2005). The choice of traveling mode variable was equally measured with five (5) items reflecting various methods and channels choosing by the Arab tourists when traveling to Malaysia for tourism.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was employed to elucidate data from a large population of Arab tourists from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen and Libya in Malaysia between 2012 - 2014 through self-administration questionnaire procedure. In all 500 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 385 copies were retrieved accounting for 77% response rate.

Conceptual Framework

Although there are several theories that could be used to underpin this study that is by a way of explaining the relationship between the variables being investigated in this study, however, this study would focus on communication theory to explain the relationship between information source and choice of travelling mode. Communication theory was proposed by S. F. Scudder in the year 1980. The theory posits that all living beings existing on the planet communicate; however, the mode of communication tends to differ considerably. For example, mothers understand that a child is hungry through the child's cry. In this case, cry has demonstrated a form of communication to express his hunger and he needs food. This is also applicable when a child is injured and then cries out for urgent

medical attention. Therefore, the common acceptable believe of communication theory is that “all living beings whether they are plants, animals, human beings communicate through sound, speech, visible changes, body movements, gestures or in the best possible way to make the others aware of their thoughts, feelings, problems, happiness or any other information”.

Amadi and Paul (2017) in their study adopted Scudder (1980) communication theory to explain how student-teacher communication influences students’ academic achievement for effective teaching and learning. They posit that communication is the first source of students’ academic achievement. That is, if the students failed to communicate then they will not be able to obtain the necessary information required for academic achievement. Scudder (1980) explained that communication process may be understood as a source communicating to a destination, where the source provides information to the destination which enables the destination to make choices. Thus, the choice of traveling mode of the tourists depends largely on the information and the source of such information. For example, if the information source is poor or unreliable, then the choice of traveling mode would be badly affected. This is more reason why many tourists make wrong choices of mode of traveling. Hence, there is a strong connection between information source before traveling and choice of traveling mode among the tourists (Figure 1).

H1: Information sources before traveling significantly influences Choice of traveling mode Arab tourists coming to Malaysia

Descriptive Analysis Result

The descriptive analysis was used to determine the position, the result of the descriptive analysis in table 1 indicates for. Gender, 193 (53.9%) for male and 165 (46.1%) for the female. For the age, the result indicates that 103 (28.8%) are under 25 years, 98 (27.4%) are between 25 to 35 years, 56 (15.6%) are between 35 to 44 years, 81 (22.6%) are between 45 to 54 age bracket while 20 (5.6%) are above 55 years. For the nationality, the result also shows that 114 (31.8%) of the respondents are from Saudi Arabia, 56 (15.6%) are from UAE, 40 (11.2%) are from Bahrain, 40 (11.2%) are from Qatar, 38 (10.6%) are from Oman while 24 (6.7%), 20 (5.6%), 8 (2.2%), 5 (1.4%), 3 (1.1%), 4 (1.1%), 4 (1.1%) and 2 (.6%) are from Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen and Libya respectively. Similarly, for married status, 217 (60.6%) of the respondents are married while 141 (39.4%) are not married. Accordingly, the result shows that 84 (23.5%) of the respondents have a high school education, 85 (23.7%) are diploma holders, 128 (35.8%) have degrees, 56 (15.6%) of them have master’s while 5 (1.4%). Also for monthly income, the result shows that 14 (43.9%) of the respondents are on a salary below RM 20,000, 50 (14.0%) are between the income of RM 21,000 and RM 30,000, 63 (17.6%) of them are between the income of RM 31,000 and RM 41,000, 104 (29.1%) are also between the salary of RM 41,000 and RM 50,000, 127 (35.5%) while majority of them earned a monthly income of a list RM 50,000. Furthermore, the result also indicates that 173 (48.3%) of the respondents have visited Malaysia while 185 (51.7%) have not visited Malaysia. It further shows that the majority of respondents 207 (57.8%) is between 0 to 2 years, number of years traveling to Malaysia while 65 (18.2%), 57 (15.9%), 26 (7.3%) and 3 (.8%) are between 2 and 4 years, 4 and 6 years, 6 and 8 years, and above 10 years (Table 1).

Figure 1. Research model information source and choice of traveling mode

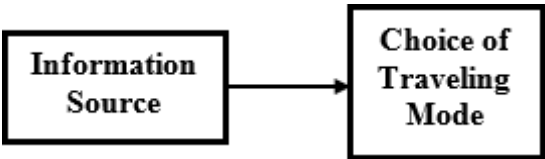


Table 1. Descriptive analysis result

N	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	193	53.9
Female	165	46.1
Total	358	100.0
Age:		
Under 25	103	28.8
25-34	98	27.4
35-44	56	15.6
45-54	81	22.6
Above 55	20	5.6
Total	358	100.0
National:		
Saudi Arabia	114	31.8
UAE	56	15.6
Bahrain	40	11.2
Qatar	40	11.2
Oman	38	10.6
Iraq	24	6.7
Kuwait	20	5.6
Jordan	8	2.2
Syria	5	1.4
Palestine	3	1.1
Lebanon	4	1.1
Yemen	4	1.2
Libya	2	.6
Total	358	100.0
Marital Status:		
Married	217	60.6
Non-married	141	39.4
Total	358	100.0
Education:		
High school	84	23.5
Diploma/ Certificate	85	23.7
Degrees	128	35.8
Masters	56	15.6
Others	5	1.4
Total	358	100.0
Monthly Income RM		
Less Than RM 20,000	14	43.9
RM 21,000- RM 30,000	50	14.0
RM 31,000- RM 41,000	63	17.6
RM 41,000 – RM 50,000	104	29.1
Over RM 50,000	127	35.5
Total	358	100.0
Visit Malaysia:		
Yes	173	48.3
No	185	51.7
Total	404	100.0
Number Years Traveling Malaysia:		
0-2 Years	207	57.8
2-4 Years	65	18.2
4-6 Years	57	15.9
6-8 Years	26	7.3
10 years and above	3	.8
Total	358	100.0

Factor Analysis

Table 2 and 3 show the results of the factor analysis which was used to validate the items for the variables. The study used the principle components factor analysis with a varimax rotation while all items are required to achieve a factor loading of 0.4 and above to be included in any of the factors as suggested by Minai and Lucky (2012). Both Table 1 and Table 2 show the factor loadings, Eigenvalue and the percentage of variance explained for information source before and choice of traveling mode.

CORRELATION, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS RESULTS

For this analysis, the Pearson correlation analysis technique was employed to determine the strength the relationship between information sources and choice of traveling mode. The result in table 4 shows that information sources ($r=.195^{**}$) have very weak association with choice of traveling mode.

These were determined using both Kasier-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Cronbach Alpha coefficient scores. The minimum acceptable limit for both validity and reliability is 0.5 as suggested by Lucky and Minai (2011) and Minai and Lucky (2012). The result depicted in Table 4 indicates that both variables (Information source before and choice of traveling mode) showed KMO and Cronbach

Table 2. Information sources before traveling

Information sources before traveling	Factor Loading 1
Q1B	.803
Q1C	.784
Q1A	.491
Eigenvalue	1.66
Percentage of variance explained (%)	27.7
Kasier-Meyer-Olkin	.513
Bartlett's test of sphericity approx. chi square	173.061
df.	15
Sig.	.000

Table 3. Choice of traveling mode

Choice of traveling mode	Factor Loading 1
Q12E	.759
Q12D	.659
Q12B	.611
Q12C	.553
Eigenvalue	1.795
Percentage of variance explained (%)	30.90
Kasier-Meyer-Olkin	.628
Bartlett's test of sphericity approx. chi square	144.215
df.	10
Sig.	.000

Alpha coefficient scores above 0.5 respectively, suggesting that the items measuring the variables are both valid and reliable respectively.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

This was done using the standard regression analysis technique and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 after the data have been subjected to basic assumptions of regression analysis. It was used to test the influence of information source and choice of travelling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. As depicted in Table 5 below, the result revealed that information source before traveling is statistically significant with choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia at $p < 0.005$.

The R square for the model which is a measure of the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variable is 0.025. This implies that almost 2.5% of the variance in choice of traveling mode is explained by variance in information source before traveling. The 2.5% R square suggests that there is poor influence of information source before traveling on choice of traveling mode. The sig. value is .003** indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between information source before traveling and choice of traveling mode.

DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

The major objective of this study is to investigate how the information sources before traveling affect the choice of traveling mode among the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. In other words, how information sources before traveling influences the choice of traveling mode among the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. It equally looked into how travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers influence the choice of traveling mode of the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia.

First and foremost, the study found overall significant and positive support for the influence of information source before traveling on the choice of traveling mode among the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. This implies that credible information sources before traveling are indispensable in making choice of traveling modes. Hence, there is a need for tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources to ensure that credible information is presented in a very persuasive way for better decision on choosing traveling modes among the Arab tourists. As reported by Fisher, Petersen and Burstein (2017) for example, there can be some ways of linking a bundle of relevant information in a logical and persuasive form, which would allow the user to follow on her/his queries

Table 4. Correlation, validity and reliability results

Variables	1	2	No of Items	KMO	Cronbach Alpha
Information Source	1		3	.513	.56
Choice of traveling mode	.195**	1	3	.628	.54

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

Table 5. Test result of regression analysis summary for the independent variables

Variables	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Beta	t
Information source before	.025	.022	9.127	.158	3.021

further without necessarily initiating a new search. Therefore, providing information in a variety of sources such as through the travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers would go a long way in helping the Arab tourists to make better decisions on which mode of traveling should choose when traveling. The implication of this finding is that the information source used by the Arab tourists before coming to Malaysia determines which traveling mode, they use in coming to Malaysia for tourism pressure. It suggests that Arab tourists coming to Malaysia must first think about their sources of information before deciding on their choice of traveling mode when coming to Malaysia. Hence, sources where the Arab tourists obtained their information before traveling is a function or determinant of choice of traveling mode. That is to say that when they obtained information from quality and reliable sources such as through the travel agents, tourism service providers and tourism information centers, then they make inform and better decisions on the mode of traveling. This finding is consistent with the previous studies by Gronflaten (2009, 2008) where it was affirmed that information sources significantly predict information choice strategies.

Secondly, the result on the dimensions of information source before variable revealed that both tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources but not travel agent source are significantly related to the choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. In other words, the study found that both tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources are significant determinants of the choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. While the study failed to establish a significant relation between travel agent source and the choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. Thus, the hypothesis that travel agent will significantly affect the choice of traveling mode among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia is not supported. This implies that many Arab tourists coming to Malaysia prefer using tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources for their choice of traveling mode rather than travel agents' source. It suggests that both tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources offer them the relevant and important information that help them to make choose among traveling mode. Thus, the use of Air, train or water by the Arab tourists to come to Malaysia for their tourist adventure is mainly affected by tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources, and not travel agent source. The finding collaborates the previous studies by Gronflaten (2009) and Gronflaten (2008) which affirmed that information source was related to information choice strategy.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The purpose of this article is to investigate which information sources among Arab tourists coming to Malaysia use before traveling to make choice of their traveling mode. Therefore, using a survey data from 385 Arab tourists coming to Malaysia allowed the study to answer the research question. The study concludes that information source before traveling which comprises of tourism service providers and tourism information centers sources affect the choice of traveling mode of the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia. While travel agent source offers no contribution to the choice of traveling mode of the Arab tourists coming to Malaysia.

One major implication of this study is that without quality and reliable information sources before traveling Arab tourists traveling to Malaysia would make wrong choices on the mode of traveling, and this could make them to be at risk of suffering adverse outcomes and spending significant funds without achieving their satisfaction or tourism desires.

Suggestion for Future Studies

One major limitation to this study is the data utilized in this study only reflect the Arab tourists or pleasure travelers coming to Malaysia. Other tourists from other countries or continents are not accounted for. Thus, a larger more diversified sample from different economic and cultural regions could enhance the generalization of the findings of this study.

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