

**STUDY OF VACATION MOTIVES AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS OF
PEOPLE AND THEIR TRAVEL INTENTION**

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**STUDY OF VACATION MOTIVES AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS OF
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By

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ABSTRAK

Pelancongan merupakan sejenis industri perkhidmatan. Ia adalah tidak ketara dan cara pemasarannya agak berbeza berbanding dengan produk lain yang ketara. Pemasaran destinasi pelancongan hanya berkesan apabila pemasar pelancongan memahami kehendak tiap-tiap orang, khasnya mengenai sebab-sebab yang mendorong mereka membuat keputusan untuk melancong. Oleh sebab itu, kajian ini direka untuk mengenalpasti kepentingan beberapa jenis motif bercuti bagi orang yang mempunyai umur, jantina, taraf perkahwinan, bangsa, pendapatan, dan pencarian sumber maklumat yang berbeza. Dengan itu, perbezaan bermakna antara motif bercuti, demografik, dan sumber maklumat telah diperiksa dalam kajian ini. Selain itu, perhubungan antara motif bercuti dan keputusan melancong juga diuji dalam kajian ini. Soal selidik diedarkan kepada 160 orang responden yang berumur lebih daripada 18 tahun di sekitar Pulau Pinang. Keputusan soal selidik menghasilkan empat motif bercuti iaitu: 'istirehat', 'pencarian faedah', 'nikmati aktiviti yang digemari', dan 'ciri-ciri destinasi'. Sebagai tambahan, keputusan yang diperolehi juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang bermakna antara motif bercuti responden dengan umur, jantina, taraf perkahwinan, pendapatan, dan pencarian sumber maklumat yang berlainan. Daripada empat motif bercuti yang diperolehi, 'istirehat' didapati merupakan motif yang paling penting bagi para responden dan ia dapat meningkatkan keputusan atau keinginan melancong bagi para responden.

ABSTRACT

Tourism is an intangible industry. It is produced and consumed at the time and on site in which its marketing approach would be very much different as compared to other products which are tangible. Tourism destination marketing can be only effective when the tourism marketers understand the insight desires of each and everyone, particularly on what stimulate them to travel. Thus to have a better understanding of the travelers, this study was designed to identify the relative importance of vacation motives as perceived by people with different age, gender, marital status, race, income, and source of information search. Consequently, the significant differences between the derived vacation motives and socio-demographic and information source were examined in this study. Furthermore, the relationship between the vacation motives and people' travel intention was tested in this study. A survey was conducted with 160 respondents above the age of 18 in Penang Island. The results show that four vacation motives were derived: 'escaping from everyday routine', 'benefits sought', 'enjoyable activities', and 'destination characteristics'. In addition to this, the results also show that there are significant differences in the vacation motives of respondents with different age, gender, marital status, monthly household income, and source of information search. Among the four vacation motives, 'escaping from everyday routine' was found the most important motive and has greater impact in increasing people' travel intention.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to Tourism

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy and is widely recognized for its contribution to regional and national economic development (Seddghi & Theocharous, 2002). For instance, tourism alleviates the balance of payments problems, creates employment, and contributes significantly towards the increase of income, savings, investment, and economic growth. In addition, tourism export also becomes an important sector in many countries as a growing source of foreign exchange earnings. Thus, many countries emphasize on tourism as an industry to develop. For example, Singapore, China, Japan, Australia, and Europe countries view tourism as one of their source of earnings.

Table 1.1:

Tourist Arrivals and Expenditure in Malaysia (2000-2003)

| Year | Tourist Arrivals (millions) | Tourist Receipts (RM millions) |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2001 | 12.78 | 24,221.50 |
| 2002 | 13.29 | 25,781.10 |
| 2003 | 10.58 | 21,291.10 |

Source: Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2004.

At the local scene, Subramaniam (2004) noted that Malaysia's biggest invisible trade is exporting tourism. Table 1.1 shows the number of tourists visited Malaysia between the years of 2001 until 2003 has reached more than 10 million people with spending of RM21 million and above. This is evidence that the growth of Malaysia tourism will contribute positively to economic development and assumably help to enhance the quality of life for all Malaysians.

Nevertheless, in order to be competitive compared to other countries, places in general, and tourist destinations in particular, must be managed from a strategic

perspective. Malaysia government executes a lot of activities to boost its tourism industry. These include presenting Malaysia's rich culture and tradition through a showcase of cultural activities (e.g. Colors of Malaysia), extraordinary discounts at retail outlets throughout the country (e.g. Malaysia Megasale), endless promotion of variety and abundance of available cuisine in Malaysia (e.g. Food and Fruit Fiesta), and the celebration of 47 years of independence or 'Merdeka' (e.g. Merdeka Day Parade). All these events have one main objective- to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination. Noting the importance of tourism industry in boosting Malaysia's economic growth and the importance of our nation to correctly strategize in order to be competitive, it is the intention of this study to investigate 'what' factors that motivates tourists or influence tourists' intention to travel to certain destination, and whether socio-demographic factors and sources of information search may influence the motives tourists have. Unless these are known, there is no way the government and the industry can develop appropriate marketing strategies to help boost the industry.

1.1 Problem Statement

In tourism industry, it is well accepted that the service providers have to cater to different needs and wants of tourists. Different tourist groups may have different kind of demand and preferences. For example, some people may like shopping, some may like beaches, and some may seek to explore different heritage when traveling. This shows that tourists have their own reason for traveling to a certain destination. As such, it is obvious that marketing decisions and strategic planning of tourism provisions require knowledge of various people vacation motives (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). However, the issue will not be comprehensive if one doesn't

know whether vacation motives are influenced by other factors such as socio-demographic background and sources of information search tourist do. Noting the importance of this, the first problem of this study is to investigate the diverse vacation motives of people with different socio-demographic and sources of information search.

According to Papatheodorou (2001), the derived vacation motives of individuals may cause different degree of travel intention. Becken and Gnoth (2004) later showed in their research that some of the vacation motives such as ‘escaping from everyday routine’ and ‘dream fulfillment’ increase people travel intention. While other motive for instance, ‘destination attractions’ shows no impact on people travel intention. As a result, an integral aspect of this research would be to develop the underlying dimensions of the diverse vacation motives and to identify the impact of these motives on the intention to go traveling. To survive in the present keenly competitive environment, this is important for the tourism marketers to conduct strategic segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) by capturing the attention of those who really have an intention to travel.

1.2 Research Objectives

As a continuation of the problem statement above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the various vacation motives that people perceived as important for leisure travel from the literature.
2. To examine the significant differences between the derived vacation motives and socio-demographic variables of the respondents.
3. To examine the significant differences between the derived vacation motives and sources of information searched by the respondents.
4. To explore the relationship between vacation motives and travel intention.

1.3 Research Questions

The problem statement leads to the following research questions:

1. Why people decide to travel?
2. Is there a significant difference in vacation motives between people with different demographic background?
3. Is there a significant difference in vacation motives between people who search different sources of information?
4. Do vacation motives impact significantly on people's travel intention?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is undertaken after realizing the importance of tourism industry and also the intense competition faced by our country in this industry. It is essential for tourism marketers to know and understand who their customers are- i.e. based on their needs and wants. In addition, they should also identify what factors affect their motives and further their intention to travel.

Consequently, this study is conducted in order to provide tourism industry with useful information concerning vacation motives of different groups of people and their likely intention to travel. This helps to increase the tourism policy makers' knowledge of tourists' behavior- i.e. on what determine the tourists' intention of traveling to a destination. With this information, the tourism marketers can better predict the likely choice of vacation destination of an individual and the type of activity that individual is likely to engage in while on vacation. The information also can be used to better segment the tourist market according to the tourist's demographic and sources of information search. In turn, a number of marketing

strategies can be provided- for instance, effective promotional messages and holiday packages to attract these identified tourists.

In summary, this study seeks to provide information for contribution to the betterment of tourism industry in Malaysia. The study provides Tourism Malaysia an opportunity to understand the reasons for leisure travel by different groups of people. Finally, the research findings indicate their travel intention and this may give directions for future research.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Table 1.2:
Definition

| Key term | Definition | Source |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Tourist | Person visits a place for traveling purposes. They consists of both domestic and foreign people. | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (third edition), 1990. |
| Tourism | A kind of service industry associated with serving people visiting a particular place. | Kozak, 2002. |
| Intention | Conscious plan or decision to exert effort to perform a certain behavior. | Becken & Gnoth, 2004. |
| Marketing strategy | An integrated and coordinated set of actions- segmentation, targeting, and positioning, designed to outperform the competitors. | Gilbert, 2003. |
| Vacation motives | The set of attributes that, when aggregated together, describe a place as a travel destination. Include all elements that are related to a destination and people personal desire to travel to that destination. | Um, 2000. |
| Socio-demographic | Personal detail of a person such as age, gender, marital status, etc. | Kim & Lee, 2000. |
| Sources of information search | The motivated activation of knowledge stored in memory (previous experience) or acquisition of information from the environment (from friends, family, travel agencies, media, etc). | Dogan & Ken, 2003. |

1.6 Organization of the Dissertation

This report consists of five chapters. The first chapter, Introduction gives an overview of this study by explaining the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter Two is a review of the related literature on vacation motives of travelers. Chapter Three covers the methodology of this study. Chapter Four presents the findings of the various data analyses and the last chapter displays the discussion and conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Understanding consumer's vacation motives and travel intention can help in developing effective marketing strategies (McGuiggan, Emerson & Glaser, 2003). Every consumer has to make decision on what to buy, when to buy, where to buy, and how to buy before purchasing. They will normally form their own intention first before making their final buying decision (Kotler et. al, 2003; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2004). The following sections discuss about decision making by consumers followed by the previous study on tourism decision-making, vacation motives, the relationship between vacation motives and socio-demographic, the relationship between vacation motives and sources of information search, and finally the relationship between vacation motives and tourists' travel intention.

2.1 Consumers' Decision Making

According to Gilbert (2003), decision making is the process of choosing among alternatives. All consumers must follow particular steps of decision making no matter what product they wish to buy, physical goods or intangible services. The process of buying decision making can be divided into four steps. These steps are: define the problem, search for information and evaluate alternative, make choice and finally consume and evaluate. This decision making process depends on both cognitive and affective state of the consumer (Holbrook & Hirshman, 1999). Cognitive state is rational decision making based on consumers' awareness and sensation. Affective state is based on emotion. Hence, this study examines the interrelationships among knowing and feeling. According to Michael (2002), 'knowing' means forming beliefs

(cognition) about a product by accumulating knowledge regarding relevant attributes. From the beliefs, ‘feeling’ (affect) about the product will be formed, such as preferring the product and having higher intention toward buying the product.

According to Lawrence and Linda (2000), an individual maybe an influencer, gatekeeper, decision maker or consumer when making a buying decision. An influencer will make the initial suggestion about the best product to be bought. A gatekeeper controls the collection of products’ information. A decision maker will make the final buying decision and a consumer will consume or use the product. All of them will actually have their own preference or intention for a particular product as we can see in the case of vacation travel.

2.2 Previous Study on Tourism Decision Making

Vacation travel is actually an experience, an essentially intangible product (Ahmad, Barber & Astous, 1998). According to Danaher and Arweiler (1996), before traveling, an individual will follow the steps of decision making to choose a particular vacation package. That vacation decision is actually a complex process involving an individual’s personal profile, motives, information search, and intention (Chen, 2003). Evidently, the vacation decision-making process is influenced by both psychological or internal variables (e.g. motive and intention), and non-psychological or external variables (e.g. sources of information and characteristics of destination).

There are different types of multi-attribute models that study the relationship between the elements of a place and people preference for the place as a travel destination (Goodrich, 1978; Scott, Schewe & Frederick, 1978). Efforts have been made to explore how tourists perceive a set of alternative travel destinations, form

their intention, and make their final decision (Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Woodside & Sherrell, 1977).

Two approaches have received substantial attention in tourism decision-making literature, they are behavioral and choice-set approaches. Both approaches suggest that the purchase of a tourism service, occur in stages. Behavioral approaches suggest that tourists will collect information about different alternatives, which may meet their needs. Then, the individual assesses and eliminates these alternatives to reach a final decision (Woodside & King, 1998). Choice-set models attempt to illustrate the same process and propose that decisions are sequential in nature and are comprised of sets (Crompton, 1999). Based on the theory, a tourist first develops an initial set of destinations, widely known as an awareness set, then eliminates some of those destinations to form a smaller late consideration or evoked set and finally selects a destination from the late consideration set. Both behavioral and choice-set approaches applied the Fishbein model. The model measures three components of attitude:

- 1) Salient beliefs – those beliefs about the object that are considered during evaluation.
- 2) Object-attribute linkages – the probability that a particular object has an important attribute.
- 3) Evaluation – assess each of the important attributes.

By combining these three elements, an individual overall attitude toward traveling can be predicted. Nonetheless, Arturo and Juan (2003) regarded vacation travel as a high-risk purchase because travelers can neither directly observe what is being bought, nor try it out inexpensively. So, tourists are motivated by a number of factors to make this extensive, complex, and risky decision. The number of factors is called vacation motives or vacation factors. Consequently, these vacation motives are used to test

people intention to perform the traveling behavior. This is because according to McGuigan, Emerson, and Glaser (2003), understanding why people decide to travel and what influences their choice of destination are of critical importance in developing appropriate marketing strategies. The vacation motives facilitate the prediction of the likely choice of vacation destination of an individual, and the type of activities that individual is likely to engage in while on vacation. This will be beneficial to all the tourism marketers.

2.3 Vacation Motives

According to Samuel and Bruce (2004), every traveler has his/her own motives before deciding to travel. Um (2000) defined vacation motives as all attributes or elements that are related to a destination and to traveling to the place. They are the elements that will raise utility or satisfaction of tourists if they made a certain destination choice (Um, 2000). Kim, Crompton, and Botha (2000) said that customers do not choose products themselves, but rather the attributes possessed by the products, and that they use the attributes as input factors that produce utility. Hence in broad terms, vacation motives can be classified into two separate categories: ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors.

The idea of the push-pull model is the decomposition of a tourist’s choice of destination into two forces (Kozak, 2001). Push factors include cognitive processes and travel motivations including socialization, dream fulfillment, and the need for escape (Vincent, Hailin & Raymond, 2001). According to Kim, Crompton, and Botha (2000), these push factors are psychological needs that play a significant role in causing an individual to feel psychological disequilibrium that may be corrected

through a travel experience. Those factors are largely intangible and origin-related, and motivate or create a feeling of desire for satisfying a need.

On the other hand, pull factors consist of those tangible and intangible cues of a specific destination that drive travelers to realize their needs from other people recommendation or from a particular travel experience, such as natural attractions, food, and people (Vincent, Hailin & Raymond, 2001). Pull factors refer more on to those forces that influence a person's decision of which specific destination is selected. They may be highly personal as well as more generalized (Kim, Lee & Klenosky, 2003). Pull factors comprise tangible characteristics or attributes of a destination that are primarily related to the perceived attractiveness of a destination.

Kozak (2001) points out the usefulness of the push-pull concept to model the intangible, intrinsic desires of a tourist to go on vacation. Accordingly, advertisements directed towards potential tourists typically address both push and pull factors. The advertisements tend to push people into making travel decisions by internal forces (push factor) and at the same time pull people into travel decisions by external forces (pull factor).

A review of the motivation literature identified a number of factors that influence travel decisions. Table 2.1 provides a listing of the most important vacation motives, including push and pull factors.

2.4 The Relationship between Vacation Motives and Source of Information

According to Dogan and Ken (2003), information search has been one of the most examined subjects in consumer studies. This is because understanding how people acquire knowledge is important for marketing management decisions, designing effective communication campaigns, and service delivery. It is during information

Table 2.1:
Listing of Vacation Motives

| Vacation motives | Source |
|---|---|
| <i>Push Factor Groupings</i> | |
| <u><i>Factor 1: Dream fulfillment</i></u> | |
| Fulfilling dreams of traveling | Vincent, Hailin & Rymond (2001); Samuel & Bruce (2004). |
| Having enough money to travel | |
| Traveling to a destination that never been to | |
| <u><i>Factor 2: Benefits sought</i></u> | |
| Enjoying holidays | Vincent, Hailin & Rymond (2001); Kozak (2001). |
| Taking advantage of discounted fares and tour packages | |
| <u><i>Factor 3: Escaping from everyday routine</i></u> | |
| Relieving boredom | Zhang & Terry (1999); Bansal & Eiselt (2003). |
| Relieving stress | |
| Gaining new energy of life | |
| <u><i>Factor 4: Socialization</i></u> | |
| Meeting new people | Vincent, Hailin & Rymond (2001); Samuel & Bruce (2004). |
| Increasing family ties | |
| Visiting friends and relatives | |
| <i>Pull Factor Groupings</i> | |
| <u><i>Factor1: Enjoying tourist resources</i></u> | |
| Seeking fun | Vincent, Hailin & Rymond (2001); Samuel & Bruce (2004); Kozak (2001); Kim, Lee & Klenosky (2003); Kim, Crompton & Botha (2000). |
| Seeking novelty | |
| Exploring a different culture | |
| Enjoying a great variety of food | |
| Enjoying tourist leisure and recreation | |
| Enjoying night life | |
| Shopping | |
| Sightseeing of tourist spots | |
| Seeking adventure | |
| <u><i>Factor 2: Destination attraction</i></u> | |
| Traveling to a safe destination | Zhang & Terry (1999); Kozak (2002); Kim, Lee & Klenosky (2003); Samuel & Bruce (2004). |
| Traveling to a destination with a mixture of East and West | |
| Traveling to a closer or nearby destination | |
| Traveling to a destination without language barrier | |
| Experiencing pleasant climate/temperature | |

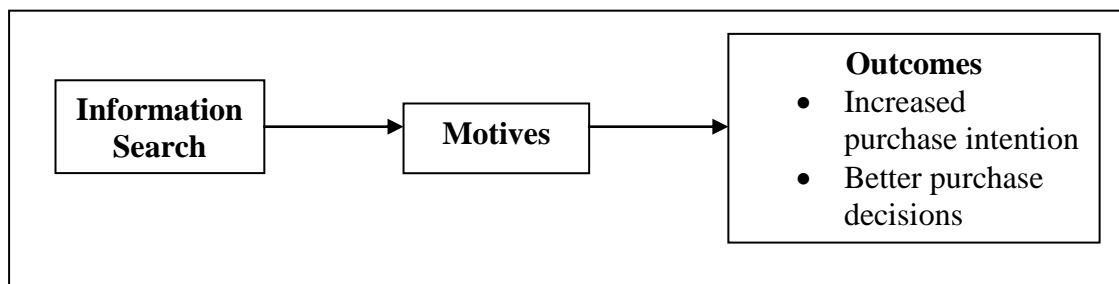
acquisition that marketers can influence consumers' buying decisions (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). As for many consumer product decisions, information acquisition is

necessary for tourists in selecting a travel destination. Empirically, the information search construct has regularly been used as a segmentation variable in the tourism literature.

Based on the regular decision-making process, people should have motive or problem in their mind first before searching information. However in this research, the flow has been adjusted base on the framework suggested by Peter, Daniel, and Nancy (1986). People are found searching for information first, and this information factors will influence the formation of people' vacation motives. This is because the motives being considered in this research are rather different with the ordinary motives we usually mention. The ordinary motives refer to the needs that drive an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction, but the vacation motives mention here include not only people personal needs. They also consist of those tangible and intangible cues of a specific destination that 'drive' people to realize their needs such as natural attractions, food, and climate (Stabler, 1995). Therefore according to Schmidt and Spreng (1996), people generally have limited knowledge about a destination that they have not previously visited. Hence, the sources of information are the forces which influence the forming of motives and perceptions and directly affect tourists' choice of destination. Based on Schmidt and Spreng (1996), the logical flow here is people at first realize their hope to travel, they go and search for required information, and this information assists them to form their complete set of vacation motives which finally influence their intention to travel. Thus, source of information will cause differences in people vacation motives.

Dale and Brian (1997) examine motives of West German travelers to the United States in terms of their information search behavior. They apply the framework for consumer information search developed by Peter, Daniel, and Nancy

(Figure 2.1). They define information search as an expressed need to consult various sources prior to making a purchase decision. Fodness and Murray (1998) also regard sources of information as the direct independent factor that stimulate and foster tourists to visit a place. They have studied how tourists searching different sources of information will have different vacation motives. They find that people who acquire information through travel agencies and airlines rated the factors of ‘enjoying various tourist resources’ and ‘destination attraction’ as more important to them. In opposition, people who search information from their family and friends rated ‘benefits sought’ factor as more important to them.



*Figure 2.1 A Framework for Consumer Information Search. (Source: Peter H. Bloch, Daniel L. Sherrell, and Nancy M. Ridgway, “Consumer Search: An Extended Framework,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 13 (June 1986):120.)*

Chen and Gursoy (2000) explain information search as the motivated activation of knowledge stored in memory or acquisition of information from the environment. As the explanation suggests, a search can be either internal or external. The internal source is the tourists’ previous experience by actually visiting to a place. The external sources are organic, induced, and autonomous sources of information that basically one perceived before experiencing a destination and directly affect their choice. They include promotional messages by travel agencies, airlines, media, friends and family, and national tourist organization influences. For media, it consists of brochures, magazines, newspaper, TV, radio, and Internet.

Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond (2001) have conducted a survey with 406 Japanese travelers to Hong Kong to examine the relationship between vacation motives and information search and also socio-demographic variables. In the case of information search, Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond discover that travelers who acquire travel information through referrals (friends and family) rated the ‘dream fulfillment’ and ‘benefits sought’ factors as more important than those who sought travel information from travel agencies and airlines. The results are consistent with the research done by Fodness and Murray (1998). Besides, Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond also find that the travelers who acquired information from the media rated the ‘benefits sought’ factor as more important to them than those obtaining travel information from travel agencies, airlines, and the national tourist organization. They explain that this may be because of the people who prefer to search, evaluate, and integrate the information in which they obtain themselves from the media are more careful and more emphasize on the benefits that they will gain through a buying decision. Therefore, they would rather put some efforts on media information search than straight away listen to the agents’ recommendation in travel agencies or airlines. Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond think this kind of people strongly believes in themselves that they are able to take pleasure in satisfactory benefits with their own sufficient information search behavior.

2.5 The Relationship between Vacation Motives and Socio-demographic

According to Soo and Wu (2005), socio-demographic variables, including age, gender, and income level play a crucial role in the vacation behavior of individuals. Kozak (2002) has indicated in his study that travelers with different personal backgrounds

have different motivations for traveling. They will perceive the relative importance of vacation motives differently.

Soo and Wu (2005) demonstrate that the variable of age is important in explaining the variances of the vacation motives. According to them, as people grow older, their needs and preferences change, often in concert with others who are close to their own age. For this reason, a tourist's age exerts a significant influence on his identity. Therefore, people of similar ages form an age cohort. They have undergone similar experiences and shared many common memories about cultural heroes, important historical events, and so on. Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond (2001) done a survey focused on the importance of vacation motives in February 1998. They show that age groups vary significantly on the importance of various vacation motives. The age groups of 18-24 rated the 'dream fulfillment' and 'benefits sought' factors significantly higher than the other age groups. The age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 rated 'escaping from everyday routine' factor as most important. Besides, the senior generation who age more than 65 years old rated 'socialization' considerably much important than other factors. The Generation Y people (18-24 years old) are benefits seekers and they often have the strongest desire to fulfill their dreams by exploring the world (Chen, 2003). The Generation X people (25-44 years old) has different motives because they normally desire products that reduce the stress generated by juggling career demands. Conversely, people with more than 65 years old are more focusing on the relationship between family, relatives, and friends after retirement.

According to Vincent, Hailin, and Raymond (2001), gender is also an important discriminating demographic variable that influence the vacation motives of an individual. They found that female leisure travelers rated the factor of 'benefits sought' much higher than the male travelers. As shown in the study, female travelers

spend money more carefully and can be attracted through special tour packages tailor-made for them, e.g. all-inclusive package tours. Moreover, female travelers rated 'shopping' as a very important factor compared to the male travelers. This is a typical phenomenon as women prefer shopping much more than men.

Samuel and Bruce (2004) state that there are many ways to spend money and a wide gap exists between those who have it and those who don't. People often say, "The rich are different". This reflects that people who occupy different positions in society consume in very different ways. Bansal and Eiselt (2003) conduct a study to test how income level affect people vacation motives and the way they allocate their money. The results show that people from higher income groups are much enjoying a particular destination's tourist resources. They conclude that higher income group people are more able and willing to spend their money while traveling. This is the reason why they usually seek the destination with the most attractive tourist resources (e.g. interesting night-life, shopping paradise, variety of food) without considering much about the money factor (discounted fares). Besides, people who have higher income tend to visit farther-away destinations. Bansal and Eiselt (2003) explain that this may because they want to show their social status or to show up their experience to others.

2.6 The Relationship between Vacation Motives and Tourists' Travel Intention

The evaluation and analysis of the tourists' intention to travel to a destination has been the subject of much attention nowadays, and has made a significant contribution to a greater understanding of tourist behavior (Arturo & Juan Manuel, 2003). The intention to travel to a destination refers to the extent in which a person feels stimulated to visit a place (Han, Durbarry & Thea Sinclair, 2004). From Stabler's

(1995) point of view, tourists' intention to visit a place is assessed on a set of vacation motives and attributes. Sirakaya and Woodside (2004) have done a qualitative review of the tourist decision-making literature. They conclude that human behavior is a function of intentions. Intentions are assumed to capture the vacation motives that influence the human behavior. As a result, the vacation motives are expected to influence the tourists' intentions to travel to a destination. Becken and Gnoth (2004) apply the proposition by Sirakaya and Woodside to predict tourists' intention in traveling. They have collected data from tourists visiting Cyprus. The results are able to prove that the vacation motives have significantly increased the predictability of tourists' intention to visit a destination. Furthermore, they discover that travelers who rated 'escaping from everyday routine' as more important factor have higher intention for traveling. This is because the people with higher pressure have stronger need to rest and relax in order to release their work stress and relieve their busyness. In addition, the results also show that people who are more desperate in fulfilling their dream are more intend to travel.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Based on the review of literature mainly by Vincent, Hailin and Raymond (2001), Samuel and Bruce (2004), and Becken and Gnoth (2004), a theoretical framework is developed as shown in Figure 2.2. There are altogether four major variables in the model. They include socio-demographic of respondents, sources of information search, vacation motives, and travel intention. The socio-demographic and sources of information are the independent variables in the model whereas vacation motives is the mediating variable, and travel intention is the dependent variable. The vacation motives are further divided into six different categories based on the literature. They

consist of ‘benefits sought’, ‘escaping from everyday routine’, ‘dream fulfillment’, ‘socialization’, ‘enjoying various tourist resources’, and ‘destination attraction’.

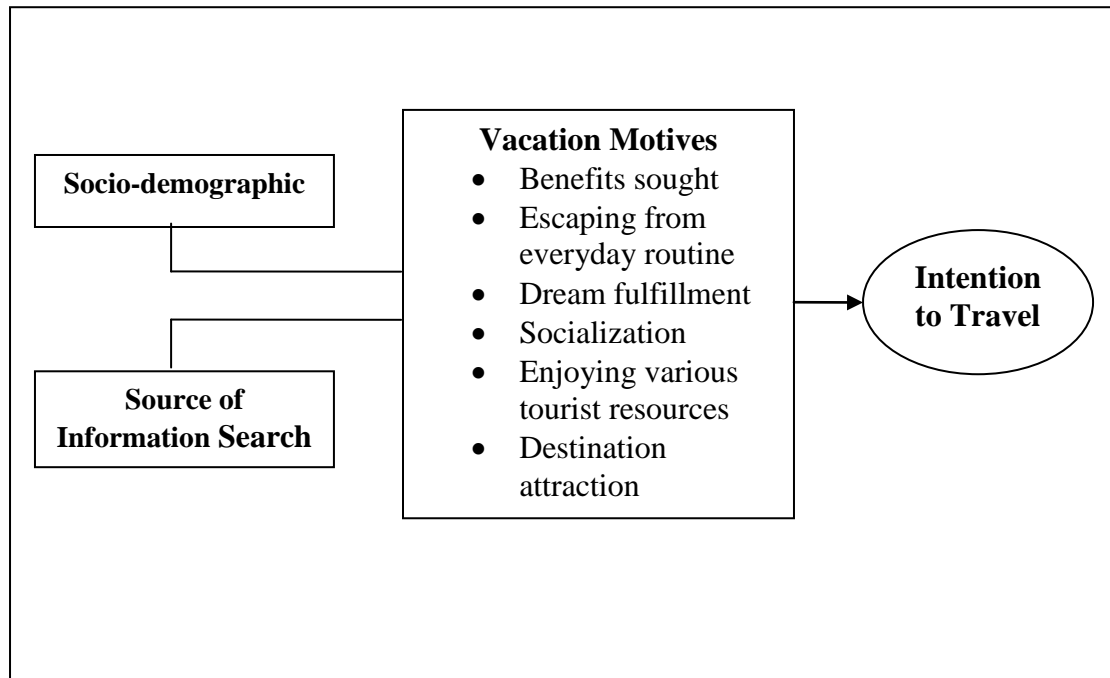


Figure 2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.8 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are developed based on the theoretical framework and literature review discussed.

Socio-demographic is the personal profile of an individual such as age, gender, marital status, ethnic, income, etc. According to Vincent, Hailin and Raymond (2001), and Bansal and Eiselt (2003), individuals with different demographic backgrounds will have different vacation motives. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: There will be significant differences among individuals' vacation motives classified by their socio-demographic.

H_{1a}: There will be a significant difference between age groups in terms of the vacation motives.

H_{1b}: There will be a significant difference between genders in terms of the vacation motives.

H_{1c}: There will be a significant difference between income level groups in terms of the vacation motives.

In order to adapt to the case in Malaysia as a multi racial country, the ethnic variable also included inside the test. Besides, marital status variable is utilized to test the differences in individuals' vacation motives too as additional information.

H_{1d}: There will be a significant difference between ethnic groups in terms of the vacation motives.

H_{1e}: There will be a significant difference between marital status groups in terms of the vacation motives.

Sources of information are the forces that stimulate the forming of vacation motives. Fodness and Murray (1998), and Vincent, Hailin and Raymond (2001) state that different information sources (past experience, travel agencies, airlines, media, friends and family, national tourist organization, and others) will arouse different vacation motives. Thus, the hypothesis developed is as follows:

H₂: There will be significant differences among individuals' vacation motives classified by their sources of information search.

Becken and Gnoth (2004) define intention as a course of action that one proposes to follow. In their research, they realize that individuals' vacation motives may influence their intention to travel. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H₃: Individuals with different socio-demographic and sources of information search have different vacation motives that significantly influence their intention to travel.

2.9 Summary

In summary, the model of this study intended to determine the relative importance of vacation motives as perceived by people with different demographic and sources of information search. This will then use to establish profile that covers the type of vacation motives that different individuals are interested in. Moreover, the model also intended to study the influence of the various vacation motives on people travel intention. As a result, this study will be able to profile the different motives and predict the extent of people travel intention in order to develop a segmentation strategy to better target the individuals. Table 2.2 in the next page indicates the summary of results gain in previous research.

Table 2.2:
Previous Research Results

| Independent Variable | Important Vacation Motives (Mediating Variable) | Intention (Dependent Variable) | Source |
|--|--|--|---|
| <i>Socio-demographic</i> <u>Age (years)</u> 18-24 25-34 35-44 > 65 <u>Gender</u> Female <u>Income</u> Higher income group | ~ Dream fulfillment ~ Benefits sought ~ Escaping from everyday routine ~ Socialization ~ Benefits sought ~ Shopping ~ Enjoying various tourist resources | Higher intention Higher intention | Vincent, Hailin, & Raymond (2001); Becken & Gnoth (2004) Vincent, Hailin, & Raymond (2001) Bansal & Eiselt (2003) |
| <i>Information</i> Travel agencies and airlines Friends and family Media | ~ Enjoying various tourist resources ~ Destination attraction ~ Benefits sought ~ Dream fulfillment ~ Benefits sought | Higher intention | Fodness & Murray (1998) Fodness & Murray (1998); Vincent, Hailin, & Raymond (2001); Becken & Gnoth (2004) Vincent, Hailin, & Raymond (2001) |

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

After formulating the research problem, a set of techniques used for carrying out this study had been developed. The following sections specify the research design, structure of questionnaire, data collection method, operationalization of variables, and data analysis method.

3.1 Research Design

Research design was a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information (Zikmund, 2003). The research objectives were considered and included in this design to ensure that the information collected was fitting for solving the research problem.

3.1.1 Type of study

This study was a basic research that proposed to develop and evaluate the concept of tourists traveling intention. As mentioned in the research objectives, firstly it sought to examine the differences in vacation motives among people with different backgrounds and information search. This was a descriptive research designed to describe characteristics of the respondents having dissimilar vacation motives. Furthermore, this study was descriptive as well as correlation in nature to explore the intervening power of vacation motives between the socio-demographic, information sources variables, and the intention variable. In short, the main purpose of this study was to establish a profile of diverse people vacation motives and their travel intention.

3.1.2 Nature and setting of study

This research was undertaken using a survey design. It was a research technique in which information was gathered from a sample of people using a questionnaire. Survey research had been selected because it matched the research purpose of this study, which was to evaluate the reasons for various people decided to go traveling. Furthermore, survey research also provided quick, inexpensive, and efficient mean of collecting and assessing data.

In addition, this study was analytical in nature. Respondents took responsibility for reading and answering the questionnaires, and the information collected was analyzed further in order to answer the research questions. This research utilized printed and self-administered questionnaires to collect the required information. The questionnaires were distributed and respondents were asked to response in a natural setting without external interference (non-contrived setting).

3.1.3 Unit of analysis

This study looked for the response from individuals who had travel experience regardless of whether they traveled locally or to foreign countries. Therefore, the unit of analysis of this study was individuals. Individuals' opinion was gathered to learn how the independent and mediating variables influenced their travel intention personally.

3.1.4 Time horizon

Time horizon was the time frame in which the data were collected (Zikmund, 2003). This study was a cross-sectional study because the data was collected at a single point

in time. It was conducted only once over a short time period. Questionnaires were distributed and data were collected within one month.

3.1.5 Population and sample

The population of this study consisted of those people who had vacation travel experience. They could be Malaysian or foreigner, male or female, and any races of people as long as they had vacation travel experience. Nevertheless, the eligible respondents were those adults over the age of 18 years old. This was because only those individuals above 18 years old were allowed, able, and willing to spend and make their own leisure travel decision. Nevertheless, the eligible respondent should be an influencer, gatekeeper or decision maker that actually take part in travel decision-making process rather than just ‘consume’ the traveling experience. This could be sure by asking a simple question when approaching each of the respondents. The question being asked verbally was ‘did you take part in your vacation travel decision-making process or you just follow exactly what your family member decided?’. If they answered that they really participate in the decision-making process, they could proceed answering the questionnaire that had been prepared. Due to time and budgetary constraints, data was gathered mainly in the state of Penang by using a convenience sampling approach. Consequently, the sample primarily consisted of local residents who had leisure travel experience.

Convenience sampling was a nonprobability sampling procedure used to obtain those people most conveniently available (Sekaran, 2003). The justifications for the utilization of this sampling method were:

1. Completed questionnaires had to be collected quickly due to project time constraints.