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PRICE VS COMFORT: MALAYSIAN YOUTHS' PREFERENCE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS WHEN TRAVELLING

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Abstract

In Malaysia's evolving hospitality industry, there needs to be more in the Malaysian youths' nuanced preferences regarding accommodation selection, particularly the trade-offs between pricing and comfort. The purpose of this study is to explore the preferences of Malaysian youths regarding accommodations selection during travel focusing on the trade-off between price and comfort. The research design for the study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews. The open-ended interview questions allow participants to contribute their original perspectives without being constrained by predefined answers. The study employs interviews to determine the main factors influencing Malaysian youths' accommodation preferences, such as proximity to amenities, price points, service quality, and location. By examining these variables, the study seeks to provide valuable recommendations to accommodation providers to better meet the requirements and demands of young Malaysian travelers. The data were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis to understand the preferences of Malaysian youths when choosing accommodations during travel. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of respondents prioritize comfort and facilities, though many are willing to compromise these to save money. This study's practical implications are considerable, as its findings can help accommodation providers better align their services with the preferences and lifestyle needs of young Malaysian travelers, ultimately enhancing their overall experience.

Keywords: Accommodation, Choices, Comfort, Hospitality industry, Malaysian Youths, Price

Abstrak

Dalam industri hospitaliti Malaysia yang sedang berkembang, terdapat jurang dalam pilihan halus belia Malaysia berkenaan pemilihan penginapan, terutamanya dalam pertukaran antara harga dan keselesaan. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka pilihan belia Malaysia ketika memilih penginapan semasa melancong, terutamanya

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dalam pertukaran antara harga dan keselesaan. Reka bentuk penyelidikan untuk kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan temubual mendalam. Soalan temubual terbuka membolehkan peserta memberikan pandangan asli mereka tanpa dihadkan oleh jawapan yang telah ditetapkan. Kajian ini menggunakan temubual untuk menentukan faktor utama seperti kedekatan dengan kemudahan, titik harga, kualiti perkhidmatan, dan lokasi yang mempengaruhi pilihan penginapan belia Malaysia. Dengan meneliti pembolehubah-pembolehubah ini, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan cadangan berharga kepada penyedia penginapan untuk lebih memenuhi keperluan dan permintaan pengembara muda Malaysia. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik induktif untuk memahami pilihan belia Malaysia dalam memilih penginapan semasa melancong. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa, walaupun sebahagian besar responden mengutamakan keselesaan dan kemudahan ketika memilih penginapan, sebilangan besar sanggup berkompromi terhadap ciri-ciri ini untuk menjimatkan wang. Pada akhirnya, diharapkan hasil kajian ini akan meningkatkan pengalaman keseluruhan pengembara muda di Malaysia dengan lebih baik memadankan pilihan penginapan dengan citarasa dan keperluan gaya hidup mereka.

Kata kunci: *Penginapan, Pilihan, Keselesaan, Industri hospitaliti, Belia Malaysia, Harga*

Introduction

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), accommodation is "something supplied for convenience or to satisfy a need," including lodging, food, and other necessary or related services. the hospitality industry offers various types of accommodation, such as hotels, homestays, hostels, and dorms. When it comes to Malaysian youths, their preferences for accommodation while traveling are often influenced by a trade-off between price and comfort. The United Nations defines "youth" as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 for statistical reasons, regardless of any different definitions provided by Member States. This definition came forth as part of the 1985 International Youth Year planning. The World Youth Report (2020) mentions 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24, representing 16% of the global population. Understanding the factors influencing decision-making processes, particularly among the youth demographic, is essential for businesses to tailor their offerings effectively.

According to Statista (2024), Malaysia has the second-highest tourist arrivals in Southeast Asia. At the center of Malaysia's tourism sector is the accommodation industry, which will employ around 200 thousand people in 2021. Nevertheless, during the COVID-19 pandemic, travel restrictions were implemented for about two years, which led to a notable decline in the number of foreign visitors entering the country. Ultimately, this affected the accommodation industry's revenues. By the end

of 2021, Malaysia's accommodation sector recorded a gross output value of 6.75 billion Malaysian ringgit, around 60% less than before the pandemic (Statista, 2023). With travel restrictions loosened, foreign visitors are returning to Malaysia, which has helped the accommodation industry gradually recover from the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition to the industry's predicted roughly 40% increase in the holiday rental category in 2023, the hotel market was predicted to grow by 18% that year. Thus, while in recovery, acclimating to the preferences and needs of Malaysian youths would help the industry's recovery and increase revenue (Statista, 2023).

A prior study by Leh et al. (2016) on Malaysian youths' choices for accommodation in urban centers showed that they preferred landed homes with more bedrooms over apartments in high-rise buildings. This emphasizes how crucial it is to consider the kind and design of accommodations that appeal to young Malaysians. Furthermore, studies on the difficulties in providing accommodations for students in Malaysia have highlighted ongoing concerns about student housing and pointed out issues with the sector's progressive growth and development (Ghani et al., 2020). Additionally, Strzalka (2019), looking at housing preferences among students worldwide, highlighted important factors that affect students' decisions when choosing accommodations, including location, affordability, privacy, customization possibilities, noise levels, and facilities. The findings highlight how youths' expectations and priorities regarding accommodation are evolving, highlighting the need for customized accommodations that meet their needs and lifestyle preferences.

Suhana Ismail et al. (2021) discussed the housing preferences of Malaysian youths, revealing that the youths prioritize financial factors, followed by neighborhood, location, and design factors when it comes to housing options. However, the study did not touch on their preference while traveling. Furthermore, Gorbатов and Chuvatkin (2021) talk about youth travel preferences and how their interests and values influence it, although the study does not include the youth's preferences regarding accommodation. Moreover, Zainol and Mustafa (2021) analyze Muslim travelers' perceptions regarding accommodation experiences during their stay to realign with their needs and preferences. The limitations of the research include not taking Malaysian youth's preferences.

In Malaysia's evolving hospitality industry, there is a gap in understanding Malaysian youths' nuanced preferences in accommodation selection, particularly the trade-offs between pricing and comfort. While it is essential to meet the demands of this particular demographic, there is not much thorough study that explores the particular elements that young Malaysians consider when making their lodging decisions. By examining the underlying motives and objectives that influence Malaysian youth's choice of accommodation habits, this research seeks to close this gap. It focuses on the relationship between comfort preferences and pricing concerns.

The novelty of this research lies in its distinct focus on the accommodation preferences of Malaysian youths, a demographic frequently overlooked in the broader scope of tourism literature. Previous studies tend to generalize tourist behavior, overlooking the unique preferences of young travelers. This research, however, underscores the critical importance of factors such as price, comfort, location, and peer reviews in influencing accommodation choices among youth (SPR et al., 2023). By identifying these factors, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding youth travel behavior, essential for developing targeted strategies in tourism and hospitality.

The economic relevance of this study is evident in its potential to guide strategies that enhance the appeal of domestic tourism to Malaysian youths. As highlighted by Nazari (2019), a thorough understanding of consumer preferences can lead to more effective pricing strategies and tailored product offerings designed to attract and retain this specific segment of travelers. For the accommodation sector, such insights are crucial as they translate into increased occupancy rates, optimized pricing strategies, and enhanced customer satisfaction. These outcomes are particularly significant in post-pandemic economic recovery, where revitalizing the hospitality industry is a key priority. By aligning accommodation services with the expectations and financial capabilities of young travelers, businesses can not only improve their market positioning but also contribute to broader economic growth and sustainability in the hospitality sector.

In conclusion, this paper will deeply examine the preference of Malaysian youths when choosing an accommodation when traveling by considering and exploring the different factors and elements involved in their decision-making process. The findings of this study will contribute to understanding the preference of Malaysian youths' accommodation choices and provide insights for tourism stakeholders and the hospitality industry to develop the accommodation sector.

Literature Review

The research by SPR et al. (2023) on the elements influencing domestic tourists' accommodation repurchase decisions in Malaysia throws light on crucial aspects impacting traveler selections. It highlights the importance of cost, service quality, advertising, facilities, and cleanliness in purchasing decisions. Interestingly, the study emphasizes cleanliness as a critical component that may improve travelers' decision-making. Using the results, the study seeks to explore the different factors that influence youths' choice of accommodations and the level of importance of those factors.

Musa and Thirumoorthi (2011) mention that inexpensive hotels and hostels are the most popular accommodation options among young people, with price, proximity, and cleanliness being the most critical aspects. This implies that youths may prioritize

affordability and useful amenities over lavish accommodations when traveling. It was also mentioned that young travelers may have different travel habits and accommodation preferences than other demographic groups, emphasizing the necessity to comprehend their particular preferences.

Mazlina Mahdzar et al. (2021) mentioned that perceived risk, quality, price, and trust influenced young Malaysian travelers' purchasing intentions while booking Airbnb. The study found that young travelers' intentions to make an online reservation at Airbnb were most significantly influenced by trust. Woon and Ban (2019) found in another study that characteristics such as authenticity and uniqueness of place influence Malaysians' intention to purchase Airbnb accommodations. This implies that Malaysian tourists would find Airbnb rentals' distinctive experiences appealing.

Additionally, Priporas et al. (2017) investigated the elements influencing Generation Y travelers' decision to book through Airbnb rather than other accommodation sources. The researchers identified social, environmental, technological, and media factors as important predictors of Airbnb selection among this group. This demonstrates the complex nature of Malaysian youths' preferences for accommodations, as they may consider a variety of aspects other than cost and comfort, including the impact on the environment, technology advancements, and social influence of their choices.

Furthermore, Madzura's (2016) research on the push and pull factors impacting the travel motivation of Malaysia's Generation Y population examined the physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige elements and the motivators encouraging millennials to travel. To provide marketers with helpful information to create positioning strategies that provide tourists with a comprehensive travel experience, this research attempted to close the gap in understanding young Malaysians' travel habits and outbound tourism intentions. To fulfill the changing needs of this demographic segment, customized accommodation offers that strike a balance between price and comfort can be developed with an understanding of the various motivations and preferences of Malaysian travelers belonging to Generation Y.

Challenges Faced By Malaysia's Accommodation Industry

Malaysia's accommodation industry has changed significantly in the last several years. Sangaran and Selvanayagam (2021) examine the current state of the Malaysian hotel sector, highlighting the business's capacity, strength, and vulnerabilities. The expansion of the hotel industry in Malaysia has been driven by the country's tourism sector, which has benefited from advancements in infrastructure, job opportunities, education, and tourism products. However, the sector also faces obstacles that could hinder future growth, including the rise of homestay models, organizational culture challenges, employee satisfaction, and turnover. Employee

turnover, driven by dissatisfaction, is one of the main challenges in Malaysia's hotel sector. According to a study by Zainol et al. (2015) on employee unhappiness and turnover issues in the hotel industry, job hopping is frequently the result of unhappy employees looking for better prospects and workplaces. This turnover crisis stems from issues such as unfavorable working conditions, low job satisfaction, and insufficient staff training. To address these issues, the industry must improve employee satisfaction and create a more supportive workplace environment. Malaysia's accommodation sector is also adjusting to new developments in technology and fashion. Sangaran and Selvanayagam (2021) also mention that hoteliers are reevaluating their pricing tactics to remain competitive. Additionally, the industry is adopting Industry 4.0 and Lean Management to improve productivity and efficiency. The future sector's growth and competitiveness depend heavily on these breakthroughs.

Additionally, Nazari's (2019) study indicates that young visitors from Malaysia, a significant market sector, are looking for hotels that balance comfort and price. Even though they favor less expensive options, they also emphasize aspects like the accommodation's size, layout, and decor. This suggests that for the sector to be relevant, the industry must adjust to the changing preferences of this particular demographic.

The Influence Of Price, Comfort, And The Purchasing Patterns Of Youth

The right mix of affordability and comfort is a critical factor in the accommodation preferences of young Malaysian visitors. According to a study by Mohamed et al. (2010), young travelers in Malaysia, who typically fall between the ages of 15 and 30, tend to favor budget-friendly accommodation options like hostels and backpacker hotels. Since most Malaysian young travelers are college or university students, this inclination is motivated mainly by their desire to keep their travel expenses to a minimum. However, the desire for comfort and experience also influences their hotel selections. According to a study by Ismail et al. (2021), although youth travelers from Malaysia prefer less expensive options, they still emphasize aspects like the accommodation's size, layout, and design. This implies that their priorities extend beyond cutting expenses and include finding accommodations that offer an appropriate level of comfort and convenience. Moreover, Mohamed et al. (2010) suggest that youth travelers from Malaysia are becoming more and more interested in alternative tourism experiences, including adventure travel and cultural immersion. This change in their tastes might make people look for accommodations that better support these kinds of activities, even if they cost more than a standard inexpensive choice.

The Expectancy-Value Theory

The expectancy-value theory is a motivational concept that posits expectancy and value as the two main elements influencing an individual's drive to pursue an objective. Expectancy is a person's belief in their capacity to complete a task well, whereas value is the task's significance, practicality, enjoyment, and necessity to the person (Wigfield et al., 2009). This theory can be applied to the study by examining the factors that influence Malaysian youths' preferences for accommodation while traveling. Malaysian youths' choices may be influenced by their expectations regarding comfort, value for money, and the standard of accommodation. They are more inclined to select it if they anticipate receiving outstanding accommodation at a fair cost. This is a reference to the theory's mention of expectation.

On the other hand, if they anticipate expensive or subpar accommodation, they might choose to look elsewhere. The study emphasizes the significance of comfort and price in accommodation choices. When traveling for leisure or relaxation, Malaysian youths tend to place a higher value on comfort; however, when traveling for work or on a tight budget, they may emphasize pricing more. This is consistent with the expectancy-value theory, which holds that motivation is influenced by the value assigned to a task-in this case, accommodation. Chiang et al. (2008) applied the expectancy-value theory as a framework to understand hotel employee motivation. Specifically, it examined how the three critical components of the expectancy-value theory - expectancy, instrumentality, and valence - influence hotel employee motivation. This demonstrates how the expectancy-value theory can effectively explain the motivational drivers of hotel employees. The findings suggest that hotel managers should focus on enhancing employees' expectancy, instrumentality, and valence perceptions and fostering effective communication to boost employee motivation and engagement.

Methodology

The research design for the study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews as the primary methodology. The decision to use a qualitative study approach was motivated by the need to understand better the subtle balance of price and comfort in Malaysian youth travelers' accommodation preferences. According to Boyce & Neale (2006), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique involving lengthy individual interviews with a few respondents to investigate their perspectives on a certain topic, program, or situation. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers can investigate the participants' subjective experiences, perspectives, and decision-making processes in greater detail (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). The study focuses on young Malaysian travelers, specifically those between the ages of 15 and 24, as this group has been found to represent a sizable market sector with distinct accommodation preferences. To understand the range of

viewpoints in this age group, the researcher interviewed several participants in-depth and one-on-one. Various aspects related to the participants' preferences for accommodation will be investigated during the interviews, such as the criteria they use to make their decisions, how much weight they give to comfort versus price, and whether or not their preferences have changed in response to various travel experiences.

Although it may appear ideal to conduct research with large-scale, statistically representative samples, the current study on youth preference in accommodation adopts a different methodology. Using a purposive sample technique with a small number of participants prioritizes depth and richness of understanding over generalizability (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants are selected from the Malaysian Youth population, representing a wide range of people. People must be between the ages of 18 and 24 to be able to participate, guaranteeing a wide but targeted demographic. Morse (1994) suggests that qualitative researchers use at least six participants in investigations where the goal is to understand the essence of experience.

Moreover, Kuzel (1992) recommends that six to eight respondents or sampling units often will be sufficient in qualitative research. As the research objectives seem to be focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and experiences of Malaysian Youths rather than breadth across a large and diverse population, a targeted sample of people has been chosen to be the participants for this research. Eight individuals from different backgrounds were selected to create a diverse and inclusive group. Not only a different family and economic background, but it has also been noted that a couple of the participants have physical disabilities that would make their experience unique and make this study inclusive to both disabled and non-disabled youths.

The current research employs qualitative data analysis techniques to examine the comprehensive and intricate answers from structured interviews about Malaysian youths' preference for accommodation while traveling. The objective is to reveal recurrent themes, patterns, and insights from the many tales of the participants, thereby illuminating if they have shared views with their experience in choosing accommodations. The study focuses on Malaysian youth prioritizing price and comfort when choosing accommodations. It uses thematic and descriptive analysis to reveal the intricate stories the local communities have constructed around it. Every approach contributes differently to deepening the comprehension of their viewpoints and experiences.

Results

Factors That Influence The Decision-Making Process Of Malaysian Youths

When selecting accommodations while traveling, Malaysian youths consider several vital aspects. They evaluate which option best suits their needs and budget by looking at costs, location, features, and reviews. They choose the accommodation that ultimately satisfies their requirements and desires while living up to their expectations. They set those expectations by looking at existing sources they can access or listening to the experiences and opinions of those around them.

Multiple participants' testimonies show that online reviews, ratings, and other sources that previous guests of the accommodation have provided play an essential part in the youths' decision to book a stay. The opinions of others who have voiced their opinions help shape the views and thoughts of Malaysian Youths who have not stepped foot in a particular accommodation. The way forward for the accommodation industry is to be vigilant in ensuring guests' satisfaction and that the content posted online is positive.

According to the statements made on location, an accommodation with a strategic location would have a higher chance of being considered, as it does affect the preference of Malaysian youths. A strategic location would increase the quality of their stay, as they can choose somewhere that is in line with their priorities, whether that is entertainment, resources such as food and drinks, or just peace.

The participants' statements show the different ways space and comfort are important to them when choosing an accommodation. This shows that both space and comfort play a crucial role in the participants' decision to book an accommodation. It is safe to say that a good chunk of Malaysian youths would also consider space and comfort when making their decision, as most participants mentioned it in one way or another. As mentioned by one respondent,

“I think because I often go on trips, so when you choose a room to stay in, you want to choose the best one for yourself, like where you're going to sleep, even if you just spend the whole day in the room, you would want somewhere where you feel comfortable so I think that's why I prioritize comfort more than price, I would willing to pay more so I would get a better room.”

The testimonies given by the participants show why certain facilities and amenities play an important role in their decision-making process when choosing accommodation while traveling. The participants can see the different and unique

answers. Unquestionably, facilities and amenities are essential elements that Malaysian youths consider when deciding to book and stay at a particular accommodation, no matter how low maintenance they are, as everyone has their expectations and thresholds that they would consider.

The various statements provided by the participants from the held interview show that the cost of stay plays a part in their accommodation preferences. In this current economy, many young travelers are starting to be more price-sensitive and aware of the cost of products and services they are interested in purchasing. Accommodations that provide affordable and valuable prices would have a higher chance of being considered as a temporary place of stay by Malaysian Youths. This shows that the lodging industry should also use price to pull these young travelers into choosing the establishment to stay at during their travel.

According to the statements that were given, specific policies should be considered when choosing accommodation to stay at while traveling. Although it might seem minor or unimportant to certain people, others might have different wants and needs that need to be reflected in the accommodation policies they plan to follow. By establishing clear policies, accommodations can maintain a positive and respectful environment for all guests while protecting their property and services. To add these policies can also be a factor that would pull the interest of Malaysian Youths to consider booking.

Prioritization Of Key Factors

Different factors affect the participants' decision regarding choosing accommodation while traveling. However, some factors are more important than others. The judgment of what factor is more critical is subjective, as the answers will vary from one person to another. All the participants were asked to rank the factors that were most important to them, and to ensure authenticity, the factors that they had to rank were not given so they could put what they wanted into their list. This leads to a wide variety of answers amongst the 8 participants. Some of them see it as a ranking of three, where the first factor is the most important, and the third factor is not that important to them, while a few of them see every factor that was put on the list as necessary when choosing an accommodation.

However, most of these participants put location as the first factor when it comes to the importance of all the factors they consider. All the statements show that the participants all have their own mindset and decision-making process when choosing an accommodation. Some might have similar parts to one another, but most of the answers and the reason behind their rankings are different, which can be based on the various answers that have been heard from the participants. This shows that the

difference in economic background and previous experience would form a unique way of thinking and put certain factors into consideration and how to prioritize them.

Prioritization Between Price And Comfort

Malaysian Youths often face a trade-off between price and comfort when choosing accommodation. While some may prioritize affordability and opt for a budget-friendly option, others may be willing to pay a premium for luxurious amenities and exceptional service. For many participants, comfort is a crucial factor, and they may be willing to pay a bit more for a hotel that offers plush bedding, a relaxing atmosphere, and top-notch amenities. On the other hand, those on a tight budget may compromise on comfort to save money. Ultimately, the decision between price and comfort depends on individual priorities and the purpose of the trip.

“If it’s okay, I will answer this in two parts. The first part is with my friends, so it depends on how much we save when we look into comfort. If the budget doesn’t go over a certain amount, let’s say RM100, then we wouldn’t consider comfort at that stage. However, if it’s with family, then it’s a whole different story because then the budget would matter less.”

The statements taken from two participants show how price is a big factor that drives the preference of the participants, who are both in the demographic of Malaysian Youths when it comes to choosing accommodation to stay at while traveling. It shows how they are willing to sacrifice comfort to spend less on their stay. With that being said, this also shows that people are not inherently black and white, they are more complex. This was shown by the two participants who, although said to prioritize price over comfort, mentioned how they would choose comfort and pay more if they could and if it seemed necessary.

Even though most participants prioritized comfort, their preferences were not absolute. As mentioned before, Malaysian youths, like others, have complex preferences when choosing accommodations, often balancing multiple factors. The same statement applies to Malaysian Youths as they are a demographic with complex thinking that may be unique. Choosing accommodations involves considering multiple factors, and preferences evolve with experience. Like any demographic, Malaysian youths have diverse preferences when selecting accommodations. Some prioritize comfort over price, while others weigh both factors equally. Moreover, Malaysian youths' preferences may change over time as they gain more travel experience and exposure to different accommodations.

Table 1 Comparison findings

Factors	Description	Importance
Cost	Price sensitivity and affordability	High
Location	Strategic and convenient location	Very High
Features & Amenities	Availability of essential amenities and features	High
Online Reviews	Positive online reviews and ratings	Moderate
Space & Comfort	Importance of space and comfort level	High
Policies	Specific policies (e.g., pet-friendly, family-friendly)	Moderate

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the key factors, including their descriptions and respective levels of importance, while the diagram offers a visual representation of the prioritization of these factors according to their importance rankings.

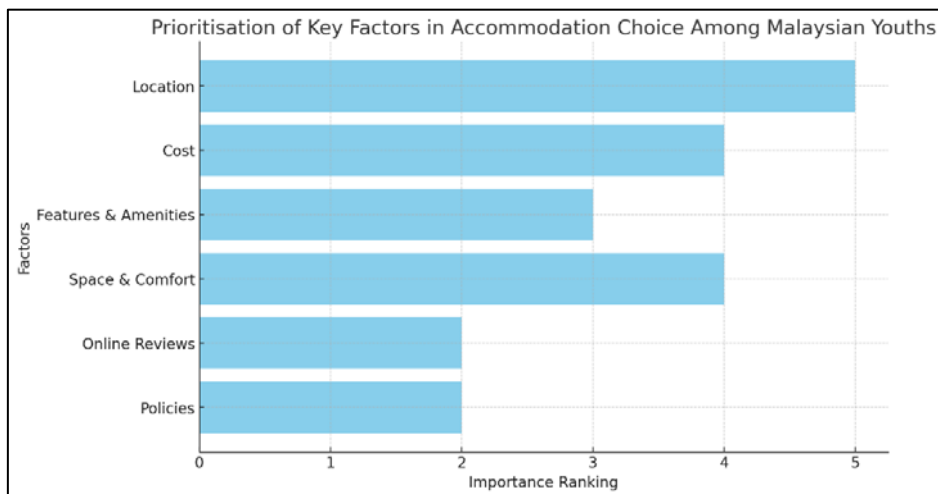


Diagram 1

In diagram 1, "Location" is identified as the most critical factor influencing accommodation choices, underscoring Malaysian youths' importance on strategically situated accommodations. This is followed by "Cost" and "Space & Comfort," reflecting a preference for options that strike a balance between affordability and a comfortable stay. Additional factors, such as "Features and amenities," "Online Reviews," and "Policies," are also significant; however, they are generally regarded as secondary considerations in the overall decision-making process. This hierarchy of factors highlights the nuanced priorities of Malaysian youths, suggesting that while

amenities and reviews are valued, the primary drivers remain proximity, cost-effectiveness, and comfort.

Conclusion and Implication

In summary, this study's findings on Malaysian youths accommodation preferences when traveling indicate the central trade-off between price and comfort. The findings show that, while a significant proportion of respondents prioritize comfort and facilities when choosing accommodation, a significant number are willing to compromise on these characteristics to save money. This duality emphasizes the need to understand travelers' different requirements and interests, especially among the younger demographic.

These findings have broad implications, especially for the hospitality and tourism industries. To accommodate a diverse range of budgets and purposes, hotels and accommodation providers need to adjust to the changing preferences of young Malaysians. This could entail creating premium options that offer experiences never found in the luxury market and affordable options that maintain a high standard of comfort and facilities. The travel industry should consider how technology may improve the travel experience to serve the demands of tech-savvy travelers better. Examples of this include digital concierge services and smartphone check-in.

In terms of future research directions, this study emphasizes the need for additional investigation into the factors influencing Malaysian youths' accommodation choices. For example, more research is needed to determine how social media and online reviews influence people's travel selections. Furthermore, the study results imply that there might be notable differences in preferences among various geographical areas and socioeconomic backgrounds; these might be investigated in future research.

A significant finding of this research is that when choosing lodging, accommodation providers ought to prioritize comfort and facilities. Hotels and other accommodation providers should offer organized, spacious rooms, good amenities, and top-notch customer service to attract tourists. Emphasizing comfort and amenities may help accommodation companies stand out and attract more guests.

The study also emphasizes the need to take into account the presence of travel companions while choosing accommodations. This implies that accommodation providers must offer a variety of lodging options to meet the needs of different traveler demographics, such as families, groups of friends, and lone travelers. By providing a variety of accommodation choices, lodging businesses may draw in a more extensive clientele and become more competitive in the market. Moreover, accommodations should be transparent about their policies, especially those less familiar, such as the pet-friendly and kids-friendly policies mentioned previously in the study. These

policies can help pull travelers looking for specific types of accommodations that suit their needs.

Accommodation providers also take note of the change in trends that the Malaysian youths might follow and prefer when choosing an accommodation. Like any other demographic, Malaysian youths have diverse preferences when choosing accommodations. While some may prioritize comfort over price, others may choose between the two factors. Moreover, Malaysian youths' preferences may change over time as they gain more travel experience and exposure to different accommodations. Providers should monitor online reviews and ratings left by previous guests to find out which part of their establishment should be improved as some youth travelers would use those online sources as a reference to see if the accommodation would suit their needs and would match their liking.

Significant and Recommendation

Significant

Government Bodies

For government authorities involved in tourism and economic development planning, this research provides evidence-based insights that can help shape targeted policies aimed at developing youth travel as a significant contributor to domestic tourism. By incorporating youth preferences into accommodation offerings, government initiatives can more effectively boost local tourism, increase revenue streams, and promote sustainable economic growth in the hospitality sector.

Academia

This study fills a key gap in the academic literature on youth travel behavior, especially in Southeast Asia. Previous research has largely focused on broader demographics and has yet to specifically address the needs of young travelers (SPR et al., 2023). This paper enhances our understanding of youth consumer behavior and decision-making processes in tourism by offering empirical data on the trade-offs between price and comfort in accommodation choices. These insights are valuable for developing curricula in hospitality and tourism management programs.

Economy

The economic importance of this study lies in its potential to inform strategic decisions for accommodation providers. According to SPR et al. (2023), factors like price sensitivity and comfort expectations play a major role in young travelers' purchasing decisions. By aligning offerings with these preferences, businesses can refine their

pricing strategies and improve their market positioning, which can drive revenue growth, especially during the post-pandemic recovery period.

Community (Users)

For young travelers, the study's findings can enhance the overall travel experience by guiding accommodation providers to tailor their services to better match youth expectations and financial limitations. As Musa and Thirumoorthi (2021) highlight, understanding the specific preferences of youth travelers can lead to customized services that boost satisfaction and encourage a culture of travel among young Malaysians.

Recommendation

Examining how technological advancements affect travelers' decision-making regarding accommodations is another topic for further research. Travelers can now easily compare costs and amenities and have access to a wide range of accommodation options thanks to the development of online booking platforms and travel applications. Researchers could look into how these technological advancements affect travelers' overall satisfaction and loyalty and how they affect the trade-offs that travelers make between price and comfort.

Additionally, studies in the future may examine how environmental concerns and sustainability influence travel choices. Researchers should look into how Malaysian youths balance their concerns for sustainability and cost while also considering their desire for comfort. This is increasingly relevant as travelers become more conscious of the environmental impact of their travel decisions. Such studies could look at how satisfied and loyal tourists are to environmentally friendly accommodations and travel practices and how government laws and regulations support sustainable tourism.

Expanding the study's focus to include cultural and societal aspects, technological progress, and environmental considerations can offer a more thorough comprehension of the intricate relationship between cost and comfort in influencing travel choices. Future studies in these fields may yield insightful information that will guide the development of travel products and marketing plans that will ultimately improve the travel experiences of young Malaysians.

In conclusion, this research is necessary due to the evolving nature of youth travel behavior and domestic tourism's critical role in the economic landscape, especially in a post-pandemic world. The findings of this study are timely, offering accommodation providers actionable insights better to align their offerings with the preferences of young travelers. As highlighted by SPR et al. (2023), catering to the specific needs of

youth travelers can drive sector growth, enhance competitive advantage, and contribute to the broader economic recovery of the hospitality industry.

This paper comprehensively analyses Malaysian youths' accommodation preferences, delivering value across multiple domains, including policy development, academic research, economic strategies, and community engagement. The comparative model and decision-making framework proposed in this study are instrumental in guiding accommodation providers to effectively balance price and comfort, thus attracting and retaining this critical market segment.

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