

## EVALUATING THE TOURIST'S MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES (MTEs) IN MELAKA WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) tourist indicators that have been developed to examine the tourist experience in a tourist destination. This concept has been implemented in different tourism destination contexts such as in heritage sites and even in ecotourism destinations. It explores the various elements and factors that contribute to creating memorable experiences for tourists. However, there is limited research that has been conducted on the concept of memorable tourism experiences, especially in the context of Melaka World Heritage Sites.

Hence, the aim of this study is to evaluate the Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) in Melaka World heritage Site. The research methodology involves collecting data from 117 domestic tourists who have experienced the Melaka World Heritage Site through an online survey. The findings indicate that various factors contribute to the overall experience of MTE (tourist's memorable tourism Experiences), These factors include elements such as hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, and knowledge. The outcomes of this study have shown that the factor of 'Meaningfulness' was considered as the most important factor that influenced the Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) while knowledge is the least preferred memorable tourism experience (MTE), in Melaka World Heritage Site. The results contribute to improving the understanding of how tourism operators and destinations can strategically design and deliver memorable experiences to meet tourists' expectations and to enhance their overall tourism experience.

### INTRODUCTION

tourism experiences and memorable tourism experiences are two abstractions that are interrelated but distinct in terms of connotation and extension (Zhang et al.,2018). Simply said, not all tourism encounters are memorable; only those selected recalled by the visitor while describing a distinctive trip experience should be considered as MTEs (Kim et al., 2012). MTE has received academic interest and has become the focus of a developing field of research: existing MTE research extends from case studies to conceptual papers, technique

research to behavioral model studies The current studies, tourism experience tends to learn new conceptual models and growth from the very base of delivering satisfaction and consistency and lately to providing visitors with memorable tourism experiences.

Tourism is a global industry that is expanding quickly and has a direct impact on social, environmental, and economic factors. The Malaysian government promoted a rise in tourism to diversify the economy and reduce Malaysia's reliance on exports. The tourism sector is significant to Malaysia's economy. Due to its reputation as one of the top tourist sites in Malaysia, Melaka was selected as the research's location. Melaka competes with other UNESCO-recognized locations like Myanmar, Cambodia, and Indonesia for visitors from those countries (Johari & Anuar, 2020). Melaka is one of the must-visit places when tourists visit Malaysia. This is due to Melaka having been recognized as a historical and cultural place in Malaysia. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the factor that attracts tourists to visit Melaka World Heritage Sites

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultural Heritage Tourism**

Cultural heritage tourism refers to a specific form of tourism in which the primary motivation of the traveler is to engage in activities such as reading, exploring, observing, and experiencing the tangible and intangible cultural attractions and products offered by a particular tourism destination (UNWTO, 2017). These attractions/products refer to a collection of unique material, intellectual, moral, and emotional characteristics of a community that with their habits, value systems, values, and traditions, includes arts and architecture, religious and social heritage, cuisine, writing, arts, creative arts and living cultures (UNWTO, 2017).

### **Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)**

According to Kim et al., (2012) p.14, a Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) is defined as "a tourism experience that is positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred". Therefore, this experience occurs in the last stage, or the recollection stage, in Kim, (2014) multi-phase experience model. MTEs are significant because they are excellent indicators of future destination preferences, according to researchers. When choosing their destinations, people think back on their past experiences.

### ***Factors of Memorable Tourism Experiences***

According to Kim et al., (2012), there is a seven-dimensional MTEs scale that includes local culture, hedonism, refreshment, knowledge, meaningfulness, novelty, and involvement. It is also supported by Kim and Ritchie (2014) and Mahdzar (2019) stated that involvement, local culture, hedonism, refreshment, novelty, knowledge, and meaningfulness as the key Memorable Tourism Experience aspects. Sthapit et al. (2019) conducted research on memorable tourism experiences, specifically emphasizing local food encounters. They developed and validated a distinctive model that investigates the factors influencing the formation of memorable experiences in local food settings. The study explores the influence of the service environment, the desire for novelty, collaborative experience creation, excessive choices, and intensified experiences on the establishment of enduring memories

associated with local food experiences.

### **Melaka World Heritage Site**

The idea of a Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) has become more significant in recent years because of the tourist industry's extraordinary development in destination competition. The findings of the research indicate that two out of the seven sub-dimensions of MTE demonstrate a significant positive relationship with tourist satisfaction (Amira Ariffin et al., 2020). Melaka exemplifies a notable illustration of a historic colonial city situated on the Straits of Malacca in Malaysia. Its profound historical and cultural significance is attributed to its past role as a bustling trading port connecting the East and West. The rich historical and cultural heritage of Melaka establishes it as a compelling destination for both local and international tourists. The substantial influx of domestic tourists can be attributed to various factors that influence the local population's inclination to visit, such as increased personal income, leisure time, population growth, improved education, and advancements in transportation and communication (Johari & Anuar, 2020).

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

A thorough questionnaire was created to gather information for the analysis. The demographic, sample, and sampling techniques were all chosen to acquire the data. A quantitative methodology was used to carry out this research. Quantitative methods of research are those that describe an issue or process through the collection of numerical data and mathematical analysis, particularly statistics (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). The sample in this research is 117 respondents of tourists that have experienced Melaka World Heritage Sites. The sampling technique used for this research is Convenience Sampling to ensure that an equal chance of individual as eco-tourists in Melaka World Heritage Site to be the selected sample. The instrument for this study is a set of questionnaires which are divided into two sections. Section A is to identify the demographics of the respondent, while Section B is the Likert scale that covered the factor of Memorable Tourism Experience in Melaka World Heritage Sites.

The data were analyzed, and the outcomes were generated by using SPSS software version 25 which enables use of the gathered data across a range of tests including reliability test and descriptive analysis, to provide statistical data. 30 different respondents will participate in an online questionnaire series that will be used to collect data. The data was examined and made available for debate in accordance with the research objectives. The explanation of the findings was described before the general conclusion of this study was offered along with the recommendations for further research.

The Likert scale was used for Section B. In this study, 1 represents Strongly Disagree, 2 represents Disagree, 3 represent Neutral, 4 represent Agree and finally 5 represents Strongly Agree. The mean values were used to position the level of Memorable Tourism Experience in Melaka World Heritage Sites. Next, the mean values will be classified according to the mean range of 5-point scale which is Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Disagree. Then, the result will be ranked to the highest and lowest MTE in Melaka World Heritage Sites.

### Population and sample Size

Kenton (2020) highlighted that the population is referred to as the entire set of individuals from which a statistical sample is drawn. In the context of this research, the population consists of domestic tourists who have visited the Melaka World Heritage Site. Based on Fugard and Potts (2015), they had suggested that a total sample size of over 150 respondents is sufficient to accurately represent the population. Therefore, a sample size of 164 respondents was collected from tourists who have visited and experienced the Melaka World Heritage Site and only 117 respondents that will be used in this research due to reliability test. The questionnaires began to be distributed on 22 March 2023 until 26 March 2023.

### Pilot Test Results

In this research, the pilot research aimed to ensure that tourists understood the question and to find issues with the measuring objects, the guidelines for the questionnaire and the time needed for respondents to complete the questionnaire. Also, it is to test the reliability and validity and to identify errors in the questions in the questionnaire by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher conducted the pilot test on 30 tourists who had experienced visiting Melaka World Heritage Site using Google form.

Reliability tests have used Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability. The reliability of the scale instrument under the effect of the independent and dependent variables was evaluated using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test. According to Piaw (2016), The correct level of the alpha coefficient is 0.70 score and above for keeping an object in a scale. Thus, since all the values of mean were over 0.70, the ratio can be called accurate, so the scale can be considered reliable.

**Table 1:** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for each item

Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Hedonism	0.702
Novelty	0.749
Refreshment	0.803
Knowledge	0.739
Local Culture	0.746
Involvement	0.820
Meaningfulness	0.808

### RESULTS

As shown in Table 2, respondents were mainly female (67.5%) and the range of age is 21 – 30 years old with 77.8% Of the 117 respondents, the highest number of local tourists is a student with 85.5% (N=100) while the highest number of Purpose of visiting is for Holiday with 74.4% (N=87). For the Nationality, 100% (N=117) of the respondents were Malaysian.

**Table 2:** Socio-demographic profile of the respondent

Item Name	Element	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	38	32.5
	Female	79	67.5
Age	21 - 30	91	77.8
	31 - 40	2	1.7
	41 - 50	1	0.9
	Above 51	1	0.9
	Under 21	22	18.8
Status	Employed	12	10.3
	Self-Employed	2	1.7
	Student	100	85.5
	Unemployed	3	2.6
Nationality	Malaysian	117	100
	Non-Malaysian	-	-
Purpose of visiting	Business	2	1.7
	Holiday	87	74.4
	Shopping	8	6.8
	Visiting Family and Friends	15	2.8
	Others	5	4.27
Have you ever visited Melaka: The World Heritage Site	Yes	117	100
	No	-	-

### Mean Score Memorable Tourism Experience

The average mean score was used to see which factor of memorable tourism experience gained the most after visiting Melaka World Heritage sites. The mean score for all Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) was calculated to gain the highest and least mean values to get the highest and lowest Factor of Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) in Melaka: World Heritage Site and automatically lead to satisfying research objective which is to find the most influential factor of Memorable Tourism Experience at the Melaka World Heritage Site. Based on Table 3, the highest mean score is Meaningfulness with the mean score of 4.39 (ranked 1), followed by Involvement with the mean score of 4.36 (ranked 2). Next, Memorable Tourism Experience of Hedonism has a mean score of 4.31 (ranked 3), followed by Local Culture with the mean score of 4.23 (ranked 4). The last three of Memorable Tourism Experience are Refreshment with 4.20 (ranked 5), Novelty with 4.19 (ranked 6) and finally the Knowledge with 4.17 (ranked 7). Hence, Melaka World Heritage Sites provides Meaningfulness for the highest Memorable Tourism Experience and the least

Memorable Tourism Experience at the Melaka World Heritage Site is Knowledge.

**Table 3:** The ranking average mean

Variables	Items	Mean	Average Mean	Rank
Meaningfulness	I felt that I did something meaningful in Melaka	4.26	4.39	1
	I felt that I did something important in Melaka	4.8		
	I learned something about myself in Melaka	4.14		
	I felt that I have gained valuable experience from this trip	4.36		
Involvement	I visited the place that I wanted to see in Melaka	4.38	4.36	2
	I enjoyed doing activities in Melaka	4.40		
	I was interested in the main activities offered to tourists	4.32		
Hedonism	I was thrilled to have a new experience in Melaka	4.45	4.31	3
	I willingly took part in activities held in Melaka	3.98		
	I really enjoyed my trip to Melaka	4.46		
	I Indulged in activities during the trip	4.37		
Local Culture	I had a good impression of the local culture in Melaka	4.29	4.23	4
	I had a chance to experience the local culture in Melaka	4.29		
	Local people in Melaka were friendly toward me	4.12		
	Good impressions about the local people	4.25		
Refreshment	I relieved stress in Melaka	4.23	4.20	5
	I felt free from daily routine in Melaka	4.27		
	I felt better after the trip to Melaka	4.16		
	I enjoyed the sense of freedom in Melaka.	4.16		
Novelty	I had a unique experience	4.40	4.19	6
	That was once in a lifetime experience	3.79		
	I experienced something new (e.g., food, activities,	4.32		

	etc.) in Melaka			
	I had experienced different kind of experience	4.25		
Knowledge	I gained new information in Melaka	4.36	4.17	7
	I gained a new skill from Melaka	3.85		
	I experienced new culture(s) in Melaka	4.29		

## DISCUSSIONS

Kim et al. (2012) was the first to build a scale that tests memorable tourism experiences and managed to introduce the seven indicators of Memorable Tourism Experiences that are HEDONISM, REFRESHMENT, LOCAL CULTURE, MEANINGFULNESS, KNOWLEDGE, INVOLVEMENT, AND NOVELTY. According to Kim et al. (2012), p15, the experience of memorable tourism can be characterized as "tourism experiences that are positively remembered and remembered after the event". This indicates the memorable tourism experience in Melaka World Heritage Sites. The results of this research showed that MEANINGFULNESS was considered the most important factor in influencing memorable tourism experiences in Melaka World Heritage Site.

The results of this research are in line with the findings from the previous research by Chen et al., (2020), involvement is one of the important travel motivations that people want to experience during their trips. By enhanced comprehension of the behavioral aims, fun feelings, and meaningful effects of MTEs in the realm of international tourism. This has improved our understanding of experience marketing, consumer behavior, the value of MTEs in the tourism industry, and the significance of emotions in experiencing consumption.

## IMPLICATIONS

The most important factor that influences tourists' memorable tourism experiences in the Melaka World Heritage Sites is MEANINGFULNESS. Thus, it is recommended that the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture Malaysia create tourist projects through which visitors can observe the local community closely. According to Wei et al. (2019), meaningfulness can help create positive emotions and memorable experiences. Travel is regarded as an effective means of obtaining important experiences because people want their lives to be valuable and meaningful.

## LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This research has its own limitations, which can be overcome by improving several factors. This research has referred to and reviewed only "memorable tourism experience" (MTE) as the variable. Hedonism, novelty, meaningfulness, involvement, local culture, refreshment, and local culture are the only seven variables considered in this research on Melaka's world

heritage sites. There are other variables that can be used in the memorable tourism experiences (MTE) in this research that have been used in other research, such as social interaction, serendipity, recollection, and vividness (Wei et al., 2019). Therefore, the first recommendation to improve future research is to use other factors for memorable tourism experiences (MTE). This research is only focusing on the dimension of memorable tourism experiences (MTE) that have been created by Kim et al. (2012) that also have been adopted by Johari & Anuar, (2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

The Melaka World Heritage Site is a UNESCO-recognized destination known for its rich history, cultural diversity, and well-preserved heritage. This research focuses on identifying the factors that contribute to memorable tourism experiences (MTE) at Melaka's world heritage sites. By adopting the seven-dimensional Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) model proposed by Kim et al. (2012), the study validates the relevance of this model and its variables in the context of Melaka's cultural heritage destination. In the findings, knowledge is the least preferred memorable Tourism Experience in comparison to other aspects of the MTE. Hence, the engagement between tourists and local people at Melaka World Heritage Sites needs to be improved to give a better knowledge experience to the tourists.



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