

Who Are Malaysia's Bicycle Tourists? An Exploratory Analysis of Their Key Features

Asy-Syifa' Zamsari,¹ Mazni Saad,^{2*} Ala Bawazir³

¹ARBA Travel, Putrajaya, Selangor, Malaysia, ²Department of Tourism, ³Department of Arabic, Kulliyyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia

¹syifazamsari@gmail.com

²maznisaad@iium.edu.my

³alabawazir@iium.edu.my

*Corresponding Author: maznisaad@iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This paper dives into the new phenomenon of bicycle tourism in Malaysia by outlining the major demographic and behavioural characteristics of bike tourists. This study is a response to the increased popularity of cycling (which seems to be going even higher due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and fills the gap in empirical evidence regarding the cycling tourism market in Malaysia. A quantitative research method with a snowball sampling technique was used, providing online survey information to 206 active bicycle riders who were surveyed online through the Malaysia Cycling Community. Results indicate that the Malaysian bicycle tourists are overwhelmingly young adult males, well educated, and aged between 18 and 27 years. The majority upbike on recreational road rides once per week (mainly with friends) and like short trips that are not overnight. Their spending habits should be indicative of the idea that they seek value products when it comes to cycling. The insights can provide useful recommendations to tourism planners, policymakers, and local businesses in the effort to optimize infrastructure, stimulate sustainable tourism attractions, and tailor services to the special needs of the swelling demographic. The paper is relevant to the academic literature on niche tourism as well as to the informed development of the bicycle tourism industry in Malaysia.

Keywords: Bicycle Tourism; Cycling Motivation; Niche Tourism; Recreational Cycling; Sustainable Tourism; Travel Behaviour

Article Classification: Research Paper

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a long history of bicycles as a means of transportation. A cultural product of the past that became one of the main means of transport, the bicycle turned into a recreational, tourist, and leisure product. Although the transportation sector has been highly monopolised by motorised vehicles, it has not been void of the bicycle, especially as a source of body exercise and travel experience. Cycling has become part of a lifestyle as well as an enjoyable hobby in the 21st century and is backed by a lot of research, which has indicated its health benefits and advantages to society (Sharma & Nag, 2025). Sharma and Nag's (2025) bibliometric analysis indicates that Italy ranks first in the number of documents produced between 1982 and 2024, with 12 publications in articles that were retrieved out of 134.

The bicycling trend has been experiencing a significant increase in Malaysia. Several recent Malaysian works have examined the recreational cycling characteristics (Aizat et al., 2025), the motives of the e-bike sharing services (Ahmad & Harun, 2024), and the possible community-based tourism (Arissuta & Kholis, 2024), to mention some. As Lian et al. (2014) note, the number of registered cyclists was 15,335 in the country as of 2011. Despite the scarcity of the latest statistics, Loh (2021) found that Malaysia was in second place in Asia in 2020 as the largest bicycle market, which suggests an increased popularity among Malaysians of cycling-related activities. Bicycle tourism has also been growing as a niche in Malaysian tourism due to this trend. In the 2011-2014 period, 95 travel agencies in collaboration with Tourism Malaysia were used to introduce 202 cycling tourism packages around the nation in order to exploit the costs and benefits of increasing growth in the trend (Tourism Malaysia, 2015; Rahman et al., 2023).

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic affected world travel and tourism in 2020, but strikingly led to a rise in bicycle tourism. The restrictions and limitations reduced the possibility of organising large group activities, which is why the Malaysians could enjoy a secure and single mode of outdoor entertainment through cycling. Cycling also became an escape and therapeutic way of exercising, a tool of local exploration, and a sport to many (Aziz & Lim, 2022; Wong & Tan, 2021). In contrast, OsOch and Steingrube (2024) emphasised that the phenomenon of bike tourism in Poland was hugely demanded by the youngest.

The bicycle was initially invented as a means of transport, but it has since adapted to play other roles other than being a mode of transport. Biking as a leisure and tourism activity has received huge attention in the last few years. Xu et al. (2019) assert that the importance of cycling in recreational activities has been examined by a number of studies in the context of its increased popularity all over the globe. Being an alternative type of tourism, bicycle tourism has proven to have significant advantages, which include local economic growth, fewer effects on the environment, and more investment in tourism infrastructure. Furthermore, a recent study by Smith and Johnson (2023) refers to the increased role of bicycle tourism in encouraging community involvement and the creation of a healthy travelling pattern.

Such activities vary depending on the use of bicycles, as they could be used in leisure riding, competitive sports, and travel tourism. Under this, cycling is considered an efficient and environmentally friendly form of travel within the tourism sector, which enables tourists to have a closer interaction with the local communities and environments. It is very much in tandem

with worldwide initiatives to enhance sustainability and responsible tourism. Indeed, riding is relevant to some of the goals of Sustainable Development issued by the United Nations (SDGs), particularly the objectives of health, environment, economic development, and sustainable cities. According to the United Nations (2020), cycling also has a significant contribution in supporting the achievement of at least 10 of the 17 SDGs, thus being a useful part of the international sustainable development projects before the year 2030.

Bicycle tourism is recognised as part of the country's niche tourism in the case of Malaysia. In Malaysia, the concept of cycling is being increasingly embraced by both urban and rural folks due to the development of ownership of bicycles, coupled with an increase in the number of people taking part in cycling activities, as well as bicycle rides. Even as early as 2011, the number of registered cyclists was already impressive, and since then, the interest in cycling has grown wider throughout the years. Having identified this trend, Tourism Malaysia (2015) has started to create more than 200 bicycle packages in partnership with other local travel agencies, and it can be stated conclusively that this segment of the tourism market has been in the sights of the organisation.

As of now, with the increasing importance of bike tourism in global and national perspectives, there is a necessity to know more about people who pursue bike tourism. Nevertheless, as much as it has the potential, there is little empirical work that has been done in the context of Malaysia to profile the demographic, behavioural, and motivational issues of bicycle tourists. The identification of the type of tourists and their motivation to participate in cycling activities is critical in formulating specific tourism and infrastructure development, as well as in marketing.

However, bicycle tourism has been a major concern in recent years and is no exception in Malaysia in the tourism industry. Bicycle tourism is any travelling that incorporates cycling into the travel experience, commonly outside the local neighbourhoods and into new areas (García & Müller, 2022). As the popularity of cycling as a recreation and tourism activity has been experienced internationally, there has been a subsequent spillover to Malaysia, where the activity of cycling has gained popularity, particularly during the COVID-19 period in Malaysia. The need to avoid contact with others, plus the restriction of movement and size of groups, prompted many Malaysians to choose cycling as one of the safe, individual, and therapeutic methods to exercise outside (Aziz & Lim, 2022; Wong & Tan, 2021).

This trend has statistical backup. The United Nations Comtrade (2021) reveals that the amount of bicycles that were imported in Malaysia in 2019 was almost 50 million dollars, and this is something that shows an emerging interest of the consumer in bicycle ownership and usage. In acknowledging this change, Tourism Malaysia has reported bicycle tourism as an officially selected niche tourism product and one that has the potential to infuse economies in the region with cycling activities and travel packages (Rahman et al., 2023; Tourism Malaysia, 2015).

Through these developments, there is still no empirical study on the nature of bicycle tourists in Malaysia. Knowledge of the profile of these tourists, their demographics, travelling trends, motivations, preferences, and behaviours is what is required to have efficient tourism planning and design of products and market segmentation. According to Sheng (2015), it is

essential to understand the motivations and characteristics of tourists because they are the keystone to their target market identification and development of tourism offerings. In the absence of such an understanding, promotion of and expansion of the bicycle tourism industry could be misguided and would not live up to the expectations of prospective sector players.

Moreover, previous studies conducted in Malaysia have concentrated on motivational factors to a limited extent by neglecting a larger comprehension of the traits of tourists, such as age, gender, income level, experience of cycling, the purpose of travel, and preferences. As was pointed out by Nazarudin et al. (2020), people have different motives to spend time cycling, and such motives are usually determined by various personal, social, and environmental reasons. In this way, there is a need to conduct a full profiling of bicycle tourists to assist tourism stakeholders in tailoring their experience, boost destination attractiveness, and establish long-term sustainable tourism approaches (Nazarudin et al., 2020; Lim & Cheah, 2023).

Hence, this research paper attempts to fill this gap as it determines the key defining attributes of bicycle tourists in Malaysia and contributes to areas of research and practical applications in the burgeoning tourism market in Malaysia. This research study aims to determine the nature of bicycle tourists. In that regard, the research question will be, what are the drivers of bicycle tourists in Malaysia? The aim thereafter is to determine the core features of bicycle tourists in Malaysia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Bicycle Tourism

The scope of bicycle tourism is very broad with regard to all the activities associated with travel, which have been the core ingredient as far as the bicycle is concerned for tourism. Depending on the sources, there are many different definitions of literature, with most focusing on two- and three-dimensional components. According to Yeh et al. (2019), bicycle tourism could be characterised as travelling involving the observation of or attending a cycling event or the actual engagement in a solo or organised cycle tour. In the meantime, Garcia and Muller (2022) expressed a broader understanding of adventure cycling as any kind of ride with the help of a bicycle that is pursued with pleasure.

These different definitions remind us of the wide definition of bicycle tourism, as it may comprise pleasure riding, racing, arduous pedalling, cross-country travel, mountain biking, and even exploration of the countryside or city. Irrespective of the mentioned activity, the point is that all of these activities are united by one aspect: cycling is just a part of the general tourism experience, either being a core reason to travel to the place or a side adventure on a trip (Lim & Cheah, 2023).

Traditionally, bikes became a favourite means of transport and recreation all over the world in the 1890s, only to remain relevant till the 1920s (Soyalp, 2018). Motorised transport of all kinds caused bicycles to decline, especially among the higher-income bracket. Nevertheless, after the petrol crisis in the world, bicycles started to regain serious significance as a mode of transport. During the 1980s, bicycles were starting to take the form of a tourism industry, which

at the time was viewed as an activity that low- to middle-income people could participate in until the research of special interest tourism changed the perception (Garcia & Muller, 2022; Soyalp, 2018).

Technically, Sarol and Cimen (2017) characterise bicycle tourism as an equal number of 40-kilometre cycling trips taken outside of home and an overnight stay, or the 50-kilometre cycling round trip and four-hour trip away, and at least a 50-kilometre trip (without cycling) and four hours away. These trips involve an active or passive participation in the area of cycling as vacation/leisure/recreation/sports/competition (attendance at commercial or charity/festivals/challenges) and a self-organised cycle tour (Sarol & Cimen, 2017). Another development that gave form to sustainable tourism in Italy is bicycle tourism (Maggi et al., 2021).

Bicycle tourism is environmentally friendly and sustainable in nature, which provides the possibility to visit the places that are not exposed to mass tourism; hence, it allows tourists to feel close to nature (Bakogiannis et al., 2020). The high level of its popularity can be observed in the segment that takes its place in the tourism market (Yeh et al., 2019). However, cycling has been viewed as a sustainable mode of transport system, and it is encouraged by cities to enhance the quality of life, health, wellness, and environmental protection (Mosko et al., 2019). Although infrastructure development remains a necessity, having insights about the behaviour and needs of cyclists is of paramount importance so as to have a thriving and sustainable growth of tourism (Khaironi et al., 2024). Bike tourists, therefore, are the key players in shaping the bicycle tourism industry.

Being a niche form of tourism, bicycle tourism falls in line with sustainable travel, active life, and authentic interaction with local settings and environments. It appeals to a wide audience of people with different age groups, genders, incentives, cycling knowledge, and interests (Nazarudin et al., 2020; Thompson & Garcia, 2022). To facilitate the successful development and marketing of this industry, it is important to know the characteristics and needs of bicycle tourists (Rahman et al., 2023; Sheng, 2015).

This survey is aimed at determining the key profile of bicycle tourists in Malaysia, where limited research has been conducted, which is essential in the efforts of various stakeholders to create such products, improve services, and contribute to bicycle tourism proliferation with the objective of sustainability.

2.2 Bicycle Tourist

This study focuses on the figure of the bicycle tourist since the latter cannot be imagined without the active involvement of individuals who motivate the involvement of bicycle tourism. The mode of expressing personal trips, bike touring, has grown more common in the world; thus, the number of people who refer to themselves as bicycle tourists has increased. To develop, market, and sustainably offer this niche tourism sector appropriately, it is important to know who those tourists are (Garc, 2022; Lim & Cheah, 2023).

Lamont (2015) noted that a bicycle tourist is an individual who engages in an activity or watches any activity concerned with cycling that either involves a one-day trip by the bicycle

tourist or overnight stays. The definition contains a variety in the group, as it might consist of casual leisure cyclists, competitive participants, long-distance cycle tourers, and spectators of an event. Despite the presence of a certain activity, the common feature of this group is the involvement of cycling in the travelling experience to pursue recreation, competition, or exploration of the purpose (Yeh et al., 2019).

Bicycle tourists differ in demographic features, experience in the field of cycling, motivation, travelling habits, and preferences in destination and tourist behaviour (Nazarudin et al., 2020; Thompson & Garcia, 2022). Some will cycle to have fun and be fit; others will travel to have adventures/explore nature and cultures, as well as promote environmental sustainability. Such variations necessitate the need to segment and profile the nature of bicycle tourists to be able to comprehend their needs and expectations.

According to this study, the bicycle tourist is a narrower version of the bicycle tourist in the sense that the bicycle tourist in this particular study indicates people who use bicycles to travel locally in and around Malaysia. It is expected that by outlining their key peculiarities, this research will become a part of the existing body of knowledge on cycle tourism and help tourism stakeholders adopt more specific and inclusive tourism strategies (Rahman et al., 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the demographics, travel behaviours, and preferences of bicycle tourists in Malaysia. According to Bhandari (2020), quantitative research involves the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, while Apuke (2017) highlights its utility in measuring variables and identifying patterns across larger populations. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms, a widely accessible and cost-effective online survey tool. Such web-based platforms allow researchers to reach participants efficiently, even within limited budgets, and to compile statistical data in a relatively short timeframe (Vasantha & Harinayana, 2016). The questionnaire comprised two major sections. The first section focused on respondents' demographic profiles, including gender, age, education level, employment status, and spending patterns. The second section explored their cycling background and experiences, with questions addressing the nature and frequency of cycling trips, whether conducted individually or in groups, and respondents' personal reflections on their cycling practices.

A snowball sampling technique was employed, in which existing respondents referred to other potential participants who met the study's inclusion criteria (Gagnon & Barber, 2018). This method was particularly effective given the difficulty of directly accessing the niche population of bicycle tourists. Initial participants were recruited from the Malaysia Cycling Community, a popular Facebook group with a diverse membership of casual, regular, and competitive cyclists who actively engage in bicycle tourism activities. To qualify, respondents had to be actively involved in cycling in Malaysia, whether for leisure, organized events, or travel purposes. The snowball approach ensured that the study reached a credible and relevant sample of bicycle tourists. As there is currently no national registration or monitoring system for cyclists in

Malaysia, the Malaysian Cycling Community was adopted as a practical proxy for the population of bicycle tourists. This group reflects the diversity of cycling activities, making it a suitable platform for sampling. To determine an appropriate sample size, the study applied the sample-to-item ratio suggested by Gorsuch (1983), which requires at least five respondents per questionnaire item. With 36 items in the instrument, a minimum of 180 respondents were targeted to achieve statistical reliability. The data collected was processed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was applied to summarize demographic characteristics, while inferential analysis allowed the identification of behavioural patterns and relationships among variables relevant to bicycle tourism.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This study collected data using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire link was shared within the Malaysia Cycling Community Facebook group, allowing active cyclists to voluntarily participate. The study used a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data at a single point in time. As noted by Cherry (2019), cross-sectional studies are effective for examining relationships among variables and providing snapshots of current trends. The questionnaires applied in the study will be distributed via a Facebook cycling club called Malaysia Cycling Community. The researcher got a total of 206 in a period of seven weeks. The questionnaire has been circulated among 206 bicyclists; hence, this research was able to achieve a 114% response rate.

The response rate has amounted to greater than 100 per cent because the research was conducted using the snowball sampling technique in gathering the data. The participants have an opportunity to respond to the research as long as the survey link in Google Forms is open. The researcher ceased to receive replies in week seven, and a total of 206 responses had been received that surpassed the number of recommended respondents by Gorsuch (1983). Nonetheless, Cleave (2020) indicated that over 50% in the response rate is considered great in most instances. This indicates that these participants have high levels of motivation to partake in this study.

Table 1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents, which incorporates gender, age, highest level of education, current condition of employment, and the willingness of the respondents to spend on buying a bicycle. As indicated by the table, male respondents accounted for 66.5% (N=137), which was the highest as compared to female respondents, who formed 33.5% (N=69) of the entire study. In the meantime, concerning the age, the highest age group participating in this study is the 18-27 group, contributing 37.9% (N=78), and the lowest age group, which is 58 and above, takes 3.4% (N=7). Thereafter, in the table, the results of the level of education of the respondents are also given. Using the table, one can conclude that the highest level of respondent compound corresponds to 41.3% (N=85) of SPM or Diploma, and only 0.5% (N=1) possess a PhD. Regarding the employment status, 72.3% (N=148) of respondents are considered employed, making this population the majority, and contrasted with 1.5% (N=3) of respondents who are not working. Finally, the final question would find out whether the respondents were willing to spend it on purchasing a bicycle. According to the table,

36.9% (N=76) of them will be able to buy a bicycle at a price of less than RM1,000. In the meantime, 1.9% (N=4) of the respondents will pay RM 7,001-RM 10,000 to acquire a bicycle.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Item	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	137	66.5
	Female	69	33.5
Age Group	18–27	78	37.9
	28–37	60	29.1
	38–47	48	23.3
	48–57	13	6.3
	58 and above	7	3.4
Education Level	SPM	35	17.0
	STPM/Diploma	85	41.3
	Bachelor's Degree	80	38.8
	Master's Degree	5	2.4
	PhD	1	0.5
Employment Status	Employed	148	72.3
	Student	44	21.4
	Part-time	5	2.4
	Retired	5	2.4
	Unemployed	3	1.5
Spending Willingness	Below RM1,000	76	36.9
	RM1,001 – RM3,000	66	32.0
	RM3,001 – RM5,000	39	18.9
	RM5,001 – RM7,000	16	7.8
	RM7,001 – RM10,000	4	1.9
	RM10,001 and above	5	2.4

As indicated by Table 2, the results demonstrate the background of the cycling trip, which involves questions regarding the cycling programme, the type of cycling one had, the participant who took the cycling part, and the type of accommodation they utilised when visiting. Based on the table, most of the respondents 48.1%, N=99) cycled once a week, which constituted 48.1% (N=99) of the respondents, and 3.4% of the respondents (N=7) cycled five days a week. In the meantime, for one type of cycling, the greatest proportion among the respondents, 47.6% (N = 98), cycled on the road, whereas the lowest category, 15.0% (N = 31), went for the mountain biking type. This is followed by the findings on the primary cycling partner of the respondents, which are also reflected in the table. In reference to the table, it is understandable that the largest category of respondents produced a result of 44.2% (N=91) who answered to go cycling

with a friend, or 1.0% (N=2) wrote under the name of "other" but did not specify who exactly. Finally, the final question concerning the accommodation—hence the response—indicated that the proportion of the respondents not visiting the cycling trip overnight was 54.4% (N=112) and the proportion choosing a motel as the accommodation of the cycling trip was 4.4% (N=9).

Table 2. Background of the Cycling Trip

Item	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Cycling Schedule	One day/week	99	48.1
	Two days/week	48	23.3
	Three days/week	34	16.5
	Four days/week	9	4.4
	Five days/week	7	3.4
	More than five days/week	9	4.4
Type of Cycling	On-road	98	47.6
	Off-road (Mountain biking)	31	15.0
	Both	77	37.4
Cycling Partner	Friend	91	44.2
	Family	48	23.3
	Solo	47	22.8
	Cycling club	18	8.7
	Others	2	1.0
	Not applicable (day trip only)	112	54.4
Accommodation	Private home (friends/relatives)	29	14.1
	Rented house	21	10.2
	Campgrounds	18	8.7
	Hotel	17	8.3
	Motel	9	4.4

5. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

Based on the survey results, the nature of bicycle tourists in Malaysia exhibits some principal demographic and behavioural patterns that make it possible to realize the objective of identifying them and the ways in which they engage in the activities relating to cycling. On its demographic aspects, the data reveals the fact that bicycle tourism is arguably an active type of tourism in Malaysia that is largely dominated by the young adult population, especially those in the ages of 18 to 27 years (37.9%). Backed up by the previous research of Osóch and Steingrube (2024), this trend involving younger people may be explained by their higher physical abilities, energy, adaptability, and willingness to indulge in adventure, as the young have a tendency to have. Participation with older adults (58+) was, by contrast, minimal (3.4%), probably due to the

amount of physical activity required to ride a bicycle and the varying recreational habits of older adults, as opposed to younger adults.

In gender analysis, the number of respondents (66.5%) who were male was high, and the proportion of the female respondents (33.5%) was also wide. This 2:1 proportion holds in tandem with worldwide trends that indicate a larger male population in road as well as mountain biking (Yeh et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the fact that women also participate in bicycle tourism greatly indicates that bicycle tourism in Malaysia is attached to inclusiveness regardless of gender. The activity is free, self-sufficient, and healthy in terms of lifestyle, which is why the offered activity attracts a large number of participants irrespective of their gender identification.

The bicycle tourists' educational background was also multifaceted, with most of the individuals having an STPM/Diploma (41.3%) or a bachelor's degree (38.8%). This implies that bicycle tourism is specific to highly educated people, probably because many of them are more aware of the disciplines regarding environmental sustainability, health awareness, and lifestyle, focusing on the advantages of cycling. Such results concur with the position offered by a study of past research that an elevated level of education is usually recognised to be related to an increase in eco-friendly and wellness practices (Lois-Gonzalez et al., 2020).

With respect to employment status, 72.3% are employed, indicating that the vast majority of bicycle tourists are working individuals who perceive cycling as not only an active tourism activity but also a recreational activity, usually done during weekends or holidays. Also, they were price-sensitive, as 36.9% declared that the lowest budget for a bike purchase was less than RM1000. Though in certain responses it was noted that biking is a costly sport, these findings revealed that there are cost-effective alternatives and accessibility for different people based on their personal preferences and budget limitations. To most people, low-priced bikes that do not compromise on durability and functionality are just enough to facilitate their cycling activities in relation to tourism.

The study on the cycling behaviour of respondents also adds to the profile of the Malaysian bicycle tourists. Most of the subjects claimed to exercise by riding a bike once a week (48.1%), and this indicates cycling as an activity and pastime, not an everyday routine. Few participated in high-frequency cycling (five days or more a week, 7.8%), so the committed or performance-based cyclists are a minority within the overarching bicycle tourism population.

Regarding the type of cycling, on-road cycling was preferred by almost forty-eight percent of the people (47.6), and a total of forty percent of the respondents engaged in road cycling and off-road activities. Riding a mountain bike on its own was less popular (15.0%), perhaps because of incomplete access to the terrain, specialist equipment requirements, or increased skill requirements. This evidence gives an indication that the majority of bicycle tourists like to cycle in an urban or defined cycling environment that is easier to access and facilitated by the infrastructure.

The companionship in cycling was not homogeneous, with friends making the largest size (44.2%), followed by the family members (23.3%) and the individual riders (22.8%). This is indicative of the social aspect of bike tourism, whereby group activities increase the recreational experience. Also, 8.7% of respondents rode in cycling clubs, thus implying that there are organised groups of cyclists that facilitate the development of this niche in tourism.

Finally, the accommodation use results revealed that 54.4% of the respondents did not spend a night, which prospectively indicates that not all cycling tours are long durations, and they are rather considered as day trips. It is an indication of one possible growth area because multi-day bicycle touring is relatively underdeveloped in Malaysia. Most of the overnight stays consisted of people preferring to stay in a private home or rented house, which implies the significance of affordable and informal options of accommodation to domestic bicycle tourists.

The results of this study indicate that bicycle tourists of Malaysia are predominantly young, male, highly educated, and prefer short journeys and recreational riding with friends on a low-cost budget. Such demographics and behaviour of respondents correlate with other studies, underlining the variety of motivations and profiles of bicycle tourists (Nazarudin et al., 2020). In addition, the tendency towards convenient cycling experiences favours the initiatives of Tourism Malaysia to base their cycle-related packages and renovations according to the priorities of these tourists (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). This work relates the findings to what is known regarding extant literature and industry initiatives to offer action-oriented reports to inform policymakers, planners, and business organisations on how to catalyse the sustainable development of bicycle tourism in the Malaysian context.

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to determine the principal attributes of bicycle tourists in Malaysia in terms of their demographic and cycling patterns. Thus, the research focuses on defining the key aspects of bicycle tourists in Malaysia that, in turn, will contribute to the better recognition of this growing tourism market and the support of this niche as a sustainably developed and economically profitable one. The study contributes to the current research because there is a very serious gap in the empirical data on the demographic and behavioural characteristics of bicycle tourists in Malaysia, and the contribution made by the current study fills this gap in a very valid manner. These results will assist tourism planners or policymakers, as well as local companies, to come up with specific solutions to improve infrastructure and sustainable tourism and cater to the bicycle tourist population with specific needs (Nazarudin et al., 2020; Tourism Malaysia, 2015). The study, therefore, forms part of academic knowledge and its practice in terms of the tourism bicycle sector in Malaysia.

The research results can offer very useful information about an emerging niche in the Malaysian tourism sector—bicycle tourism. The findings indicated that the high number of bicycle tourists in Malaysia is composed of young adults, especially those falling between the age bracket of 18 and 27 years. People in this age bracket are better suited to cycling, as they tend to be active, adventurous, and health-conscious, which are the physical and recreational requirements of cycling. Although males are more inclined toward the activity, it is also important to note significant involvement of females, which proves that bicycle tourism is an increasingly inclusive and gender-neutral phenomenon.

Educationally, the majority of the respondents possessed a diploma or higher education degree, which proves that this activity is favoured by people with a high level of education who could be more environmentally and health-conscious. Economically, most of the bicycle tourists

were employed professionals who happened to spend their money in a way that was inclined towards affordability; most of them would spend their money to buy a beginning-level bicycle, which costs below RM1,000.

Behaviourally, one balanced view shows that bicycle tourism in Malaysia is mostly recreational, whereby the majority of the cyclists log in once a week and mostly on roads. A social aspect is also an important aspect since the majority of the respondents were more interested in cycling with friends or family members, but individual and club types of participation are also present. This was in contrast with many other countries, such as the Czech Republic or Italy, where most of the trips were short and there were no overnight stays, thus showing that bicycle tourism in Malaysia is a developing industry and it can also be expanded into longer-term or longer-duration tourism segments.

Finally, the paper has managed to present the characteristic features of bike tourists in Malaysia. Such observations can assist stakeholders, including the tourism planning team or government departments, or a tourism operator, to adjust their strategies to fit the needs of this segment better. Cognisant of the models of behaviour conducted by these tourists, Malaysia can further develop and popularise bicycle tourism as a sustainable kind of travel that is inclusive and that fosters dancing, economies, and environmental objectives.

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