



E-PROCEEDING HOTWEC 6.0

THE GAME ON 2022:

**THE FUTURE IS
BRIGHT**

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT**

**FACUTLY OF HOSPIATLITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS,
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN**

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A Cross-Ecotourism Activities Comparison of Memorable Tourism Experience Among Penang National Park Visitors.

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ABSTRACT

Memorable tourism experience has been a recent focus of tourism academics. There have been various studies that have focused on the behavioural intentions of tourists in various settings. The present study focuses on the relationship between memorable tourism experiences and tourist satisfaction. A quantitative research survey was distributed to online survey numbers of 300 respondents who have visited Penang National Park in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, which suggests different dimensions for the MTE scale. It was found that only four dimensions of MTEs, namely hedonism, involvement, refreshment & knowledge, were meaningfully contributing to the tourist's satisfaction. The results also proposed that hiking has a stronger memorable experience than trekking. The findings of this paper are believed to provide great insight into how to improve tourism packages. It enables the tour operator and national park to create more spectacular tourism packages that place a greater emphasis on the tourist experience. This is because, in today's world, tourists are not only interested in seeing the sights but also the experience that they will never forget.

Keywords: *Memorable tourism experiences, Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Penang National Park (PNP) in Malaysia was once known as Pantai Acheh Forest Reserve. It was also known as the 'Bay of Glowing Amber' due to its spectacular sunset vistas (Rajoo, 2020). PNP is the world's smallest national park, yet it has plenty of intriguing things to do for a nice day out in nature (Ferrarese, 2021). Although it is Malaysia's smallest national park, it is one of the country's most prominent ecotourism sites, attracting a substantial number of ecotourists each year (Kaffashi, 2015). Despite its tiny size, the park's beach-fringed woodland is home to many distinctive flora and fauna species, including silvered leaf monkeys, flying lemurs, leopard cats, and numerous bird, amphibian, and reptile species. Furthermore, at PNP, everyone can easily do some exciting activities that will fill a day, such as forest walks and taking a boat ride to tranquil golden-sand beaches (Planet, 2021).

Table 1: Malaysian and International Tourist Arrivals PNP, 2014-2020.

Year	Malaysian Visitors	International Visitors	Total
2014	75,331	51,503	126,834
2015	90,651	57,936	148,587
2016	83,114	64,726	147,840
2017	87,850	69,382	157,232
2018	79,303	68,437	147,740
2019	85,205	68,590	153,795
2020	47,018	19,246	66,264

Table 2: Experiences offered between Penang National Park and National Park.

Penang National Park	National Park
1. Interpretation Centre	1. Hike to Bukit Tereseck
2. Camping	2. Hike to Gunung Tahan
3. Wildlife Observation	3. Go for a Night Jungle Walk
4. Canopy Walkway	4. Visit the Kampung Orang Asli
5. Water activities	5. Go rapid shooting
6. Picnic	6. Take a boat cruise to Lata Berkoh
7. Fishing	7. Feed the fish at Kelah Sanctuary
8. Jungle Trekking	8. Observe the animals
9. Hiking	9. Go fishing
10. Muka Head Lighthouse	10. Go spelunking at Gua Telinga
11. Turtle Conservation Centre	11. Explore Gua Kepayang Besar
12. Visit to Meromictic Lake	12. Hike to the Four Steps Waterfall
	13. Go bird watching
	14. Climb the Canopy Walkway
	15. Go on a night 4WD Safari
	16. Hike to Lubok Simpon
	17. Trek to Gua Luas and Gua Daun Menari

Although memorable tourism experience is very important to enhance tourism businesses' competitiveness, there are relatively limited studies on MTEs specifically at PNP. Many researchers have concentrated on other types of tourism, such as cultural tourism (Chen & Rahman, 2018), rural tourism (Loureiro, 2014), food consumption among tourists (Tsai, 2016) and Islamic tourism (Mahdzar, 2018). Nonetheless, Kim (2010) notes that not all seven elements of MTEs are not applicable across a range of destination-specific tourism scenarios. Hence, additional research on MTEs in a different research setting, especially in Penang National Park is warranted.

This study is carried out to examine a cross-ecotourism activities comparison of memorable tourism experiences among Penang National Park visitors based on Kim and Ritchie's cross-cultural validation of the memorable tourism experience scale (MTES). Specifically, this research examines the relationship between refreshment, knowledge, novelty and involvement in memorable tourism experiences of Penang National Park visitors and finally compares tourist MTEs based on ecotourism activities in which they participated. The result of this research can help the future study of memorable tourism experiences among tourists.

There are five objectives of this research:

1. To examine the relationship between refreshment and re-participation.
2. To examine the relationship between knowledge and re-participation.
3. To examine the relationship between novelty and re-participation.
4. To examine the relationship between involvement and re-participation.
5. To compare 'tourists' MTEs based on ecotourism activities in which they participated.

Significance of the Study

Academic Perspective

It will aid scholars by improving their understanding of memorable tourism experiences in ecotourism settings. Aside from that, this research will be valuable for academics because it will help to expand the present research context, which focuses on ecotourism sites. The findings of theories, hypotheses, and research queries will benefit future studies in obtaining a firm conclusion.

Practical Perspective

The entire tourism sector will gain from it as the insights may be useful in improving tourism packages. It enables the tour operator and national park to design outstanding tourism packages that focus more on the tourist experience. In today's world, travellers are interested in more than just viewing the sites; they want to have an experience they will never forget.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Refreshment

Refreshment is referred to as relaxation as the main push factor motivating travelling, such as a travel experience where people can feel happier, relaxed and healthier (Sthapit, 2017). Refreshment is also a major component of tourism and leisure that concentrates on the state of mind and the depth of experiential engagement. Ramanpong (2019) discovered that refreshment has significantly positive effects on visitors' behavioural intention. Moreover, the individuals highly value refreshments as psychological benefits from their travel experiences.

A previous study by Coudounaris (2017) stated that refreshment has no significant relationship with behavioural among visitors to a zoo and museum in Rovaniemi, Finland.

Knowledge

Knowledge is defined as a cognitive aspect of the tourist experience that includes guidance during the vacation. Travel experience gives unique experiences and possibilities for the visitor, such as new practical skills and experience (Coundounaris, 2017). In addition, the study also has explored whether other possible outcome variables, such as subjective well-being, may be used (Kim H., 2015). Coundounaris (2017) said numerous MTE researches have demonstrated that knowledge affects satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and it is also indicated that knowledge and behavioural intention had no significant relationship. However, the knowledge dimension exerted a significantly negative effect on visitors' MTE (Ramanpong, 2019).

Novelty

Research by Mitas (2018) defined novelty seeking as an antecedent of emotional arousal. The basic notion underlying the construct of novelty seeking appears to be that through some internal drive or motivating force, the individual is activated to seek out novel information. According to Ramanpong (2019), novelty positively affects the MTE and negatively affects the memorable. So, in other words, the novelty dimension exerted non-significant influences on visitor MTE and revisit intentions. In addition, it also involves the willingness-to-take physical, psychological, and social risks for the sake of varied, novel and complex sensations. Novelty seeking is particularly important in tourism as a popular motivation for an individual to travel.

Involvement

According to Ramanpong (2019), involvement influences satisfaction and behavioural intention has significantly positive effects on visitor MTE intention. Involvement also important for psychographic constructs because of its potential effects on people's attitudes toward activity and their behaviour with respect to the activity and decision-making. Involvement also has a significant relationship with the behavioural intentions of heritage tourists through the mediating role of satisfaction (S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, 2021). Next, tourists know that an experience is closely related to their interests and develop involvement through active participation in tourism programmes during the on-site phase of tourism experiences. Visitors also find themselves immersed in a leisure activity and are more likely to have a memorable experience.

Re-Participation

Behavioural intention is the component that leads to the intention of a return visit or re-participation and is within the scope of conative loyalty. The intention of re-participation is the intention of the visitor to re-experience the same product, place or activities in the future (Tosun & Fyall, 2015). According to Whitehead & Wicker (2018), travel costs is a barrier to re-participation in sports events. In addition, there are studies linking the propensity for re-participation with the overall degree of satisfaction with the experience (Huang, Mao, Wang, & Zhang, 2015).. Next, tourists or visitors who decide to re-participation are evidence showing that tourists are satisfied with cross-ecotourism activities comparison memorable tourism experiences.

Research Hypothesis

In this study, there are five hypotheses. The independent variables are refreshment, knowledge, novelty, and involvement. A dependent variable for this study is re-participation. Based on the variables mentioned above, the hypotheses are:

- H₁** There is a positive relationship between refreshment and re-participation.
- H₂** There is a positive relationship between knowledge and re-participation.
- H₃** There is a positive relationship between novelty and re-participation.
- H₄** There is a positive relationship between involvement and re-participation.
- H₅** Hikers have a more Memorable Tourism Experience as compared to

Research Framework

A research framework has been conducted to investigate the connection between four independent variables used to measure a cross-ecotourism activities comparison of memorable tourism experiences and re-participation.

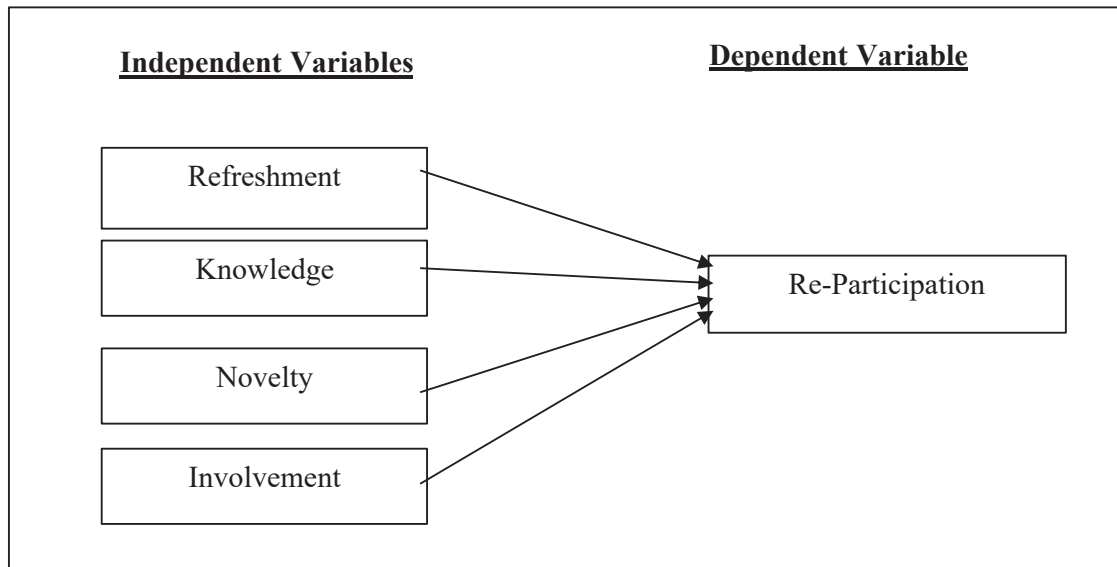


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Memorable Tourism Experience and Re-Participation adopted from Kim and Ritchie (2013).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study will adopt the quantitative method as a research design. Quantitative research is based on the aspect of quantity or extent. It is related to the object that can be expressed in terms of quantity or something that can be counted. The researcher believes that the quantitative method is the most suitable research design to be adopted in this study. The objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between memorable tourism experiences towards behavioural intention among tourists who have visited ecotourism sites. The study is designed to investigate cross-ecotourism activities comparison of memorable tourism experiences among Penang National Park (PNP) visitors.

A set of questionnaires was distributed to collect data from tourists who have visited PNP. The researchers divided the questionnaire into four sections which are Section A, B, C and D. For Section A, the questionnaire requested general information about the Malaysian demographics such as the living area of respondents, gender, age, race, education level, working status, and income level. For Sections B, C and D, the questions elaborated more on the dependent and independent variables, which were (i) Refreshment, (ii) Knowledge, (iii) Novelty, and (iv) Involvement. This questionnaire used the format of multiple choices and a 5-point Likert scale of agreement.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted using questionnaires. The researchers chose to distribute the questionnaire using the Google Form application to identify how they once travelled to PNP.

The researcher uses social media platforms such as Facebook' and 'Instagram' to approach them. Researchers began searching for them using #PenangNationalPark as well as looking at the pictures they had posted when they travelled to the PNP. The purpose of using the ' is because the researchers believe that the person who posted the picture using this hashtag is a person who has been to the PNP. The next strategy is that the researchers sent a message through social media accounts to ask for their permission to answer this PNP- related questionnaire. If they agree, then a set of questions made by the researchers using Google Form was given to them.

Sampling

This study uses non-probability sampling techniques. This study adopted convenience sampling because convenience sampling is a method used to collect samples taken around a location or from an internet service. The researchers took a sample from the closest part of the population by hand. For example, 'Facebook' and 'Instagram' surveys or questions can be categorised as simple as well as popular examples for convenience sampling. Furthermore, this method also involves participants from wherever they can be found and appropriate. In other words, it does not focus on just one participant.

Data Analysis

There were five types of data analysis used in this study, namely frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability test, t-test and spearman correlation analysis. The data obtained was analysed by using SPSS version 26.

FINDINGS

Result of Frequency Analysis

Demographic Profile

The online platform assigned a total of 31 sets of questionnaires. About 46.3% of the respondent were male, and another 53.7% were female. Table 3 showed most of the respondents in the race are Malay, with 163 respondents (54.3%), followed by Chinese with 66 respondents (22%), Indian has 37 respondents (12.3%), 34 of the respondents (11.3%) are from other races.

According to the results, most of the respondents aged between 21-30 years old with a frequency of 170 respondents (56.7%). This is followed by those below 20 years old with 50 respondents (16.7). Respondents aged between 31-40 years old with 41 respondents (13.7%), 28 respondents (9.3%) aged between 41-50 years old with, and those aged above 51 years old are 11 respondents (3.7%).

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender		
Male	139	46.3%
Female	161	53.7%
Race		
Malay	163	54.3%
Indian	37	12.3%
Chinese	66	22.0%
Others	34	11.3%
Age		
Less than 20 years old	50	16.7%
21 - 30 years old	170	56.7%
31 - 40 years old	41	13.7%
41 - 50 years old	28	9.3%
51 years' old and above	11	3.7%
Education Level		
SPM	54	18.0%
Diploma	65	221.7%
Degree	99	33.0%
Post Graduate	23	7.7%
Masters	19	6.3%
PHD	16	5.3%
Others	24	8.0%
Income (RM)		
Less than RM1000	117	39.0%
RM1000-2000	69	23.0%
RM2001-RM3000	55	18.3%
RM3001-RM4000	33	11.0%
RM4001 and above	26	08.7%
Participation		
Rarely	130	43.3%
Sometimes	94	31.3%
Frequently	49	16.3%
Never	27	9.0%

Table 3: Respondent Demographic Profile

In addition, the table indicated that most of the respondents have Degree (33.0%, N=99). Next, the second highest respondents have Diploma (21.7%, N=65). While for, SPM is t (18.0%. N=54) and for others is (8.0%, N= 24). Next, for postgraduate (7.7%. N= 23) and for Master's holder is (6.3%, N=19). Lastly, for PhD (5.3%, N=16). This survey shows that education background was able to gather a mixed education from SPM to PhD..

Based on Table 3, the result found that the highest monthly income of the respondents who earned less than RM1000 with 117 respondents (39%), followed by RM1001-RM2000 with

69 respondents (23%). Next, for monthly income from RM2001-RM3000 is a total of 55 respondents (18.3%), income from RM3001-RM4000 is 33 respondents (11%) and the respondents who earned a monthly income of RM4001 and above are the fewest respondents with 26 respondents (8.7%). Overall, the results that have been received found that most respondents earn salaries from RM1001-RM2000, which starts from the basic salary.

According to the result, the participation of respondents for rarely visitors was 130 (43.30%). For the sometimes and frequently participation of respondents 94 respondents (31.3%) and 49 respondents (16.3%), respectively. The last one was the one who never participated, with 27 respondents (9%). These results indicate that the arrival of visitors to Penang National Park is infrequent, which may be because they are busy working.

Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Refreshment	Trekking and hiking activities stimulate my curiosity.	4.40	0.704
	I find trekking and hiking activities stimulate my emotions.	4.35	0.737
	The place and activities enhance my philosophy of living.	4.37	0.727
	I shared my experiences of trekking and hiking activities with my family.	4.41	0.729
Knowledge	I interact with others while doing the activities.	4.24	0.834
	The activities increase my knowledge.	4.54	0.619
	The activities improve my knowledge.	4.66	0.583
	I have fun learning new things.	4.51	0.593
Novelty	I get to share new knowledge to people.	4.41	0.719
	I become someone else while doing the activities.	3.46	1.194
	I imagine living in a different time and place.	3.86	1.029
	I experienced unusual experienced.	4.36	0.740
	The activities make me escape from reality.	3.90	4.060
	I can get away from crowds of people.	4.06	4.310
Involvement	I can get away from a stressful social experiment.	4.31	0.843
	I visited place where I really wanted to go.	4.51	0.652
	I enjoyed doing activities which I really wanted to go.	4.53	0.656
	I was interested in all activities in Penang National Park.	4.17	0.819
	I vividly enjoyed the experience in all the activities.	4.62	0.655
	I observed that the activities boost up my productivity.	4.53	0.598

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis that showed independent variables verified a moderate mean score (M=3.9917, SD=0.77178). Altogether the dimension variables also scored a moderate mean score where refreshment was 4.3825 (SD=0.54608), knowledge 4.472 (SD=0.51488), novelty 3.9917 (SD=0.51488). Besides, the sub-variable named involvement gained 4.472 (SD=0.50620).

Reliability Test

This analysis used the reliability analysis to determine Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables. The values are as follows: refreshment (0.862), knowledge (0.857), novelty (0.908), involvement (0.872) and re-participation (0.864).

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Refreshment	4	0.862
Knowledge	5	0.857
Novelty	6	0.908
Involvement	5	0.872
Re-participation	5	0.84

Table 4: Reliability Test

Hypothesis Testing

In this study, there were four hypotheses were determined. The first hypothesis determines the positive relationship between education and re-participation. The second hypothesis determines the positive relationship between knowledge and re-participation. The third hypothesis determines the positive relationship between novelty and re-participation. Lastly, the fourth hypothesis determines the positive relationship between experience and re-participation.

Hypothesis	Result	Analysis
H₁ : There is a positive relationship between refreshment and re-participation	r = 0.683, p = 1.0000 Very high positive	H₁: Accepted
H₂ : There is a positive relationship between knowledge and re-participation	r = 0.699, p = 1.000 Very high positive	H₂: Accepted
H₃ : There is a positive relationship between novelty and re-participation	r = 0.596, p = 1.000 Very high positive	H₃: Accepted
H₄ : There is a positive relationship between involvement and re-participation.	r = 0.701, p = 1.000 Very high positive	H₄: Accepted

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

The above table serves to summarise the findings of this study. Hypotheses that have been tested for this study will be further elaborated as follow:

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that refreshment is a very high positive relationship with re-participation. The results of the correlation between refreshment and re-participation are 0.683. So, the result accepts hypothesis 1 (H1), whereby refreshment is positively significant with re-participation.

Based on the relationship between knowledge and re-participation is stated as 0.683. These results are intended to indicate a relationship between the variables. So, a positive value for the correlation coefficient 0.683 indicates that their relationship is strongly positive. Therefore, the prescribed (H2) was to assess the relationship of knowledge and re-participation, is accepted. Furthermore, the relationship between novelty and re-participation stated as 0.596. These results are intended to indicate the existence of a relationship between the variables. So, a positive value for the correlation coefficient 0.596 indicates that their relationship is strongly positive. Therefore, the prescribed (H3) was to assess the relationship of novelty and re-participation, is accepted.

Next, the relationship between involvement and re-participation stated as 0.701. These results are intended to indicate the existence of a relationship between the variables. So, a positive value for the correlation coefficient 0.701, indicates that their relationship is strongly positive. Therefore, the prescribed H4 was to assess the relationship of involvement and re-participation, which is accepted.

Comparison Result

Preference	Frequency	MEAN	SD	SD differences	T values	P values
REFRESHMENT						0.001
Hiking	151	4.589	0.440	0.584	7.070	
Trekking	149	4.176	0.565	0.585	7.058	
KNOWLEDGE -						0.001
Hiking	151	4.634	0.401	0.563	5.925	
Trekking	149	4.301	0.561	0.565	5.913	
NOVELTY -						0.001
Hiking	151	4.211	0.801	0.855	5.170	
Trekking	149	3.768	0.672	0.854	5.176	
INVOLVEMENT						0.001
Hiking	151	4.629	0.435	0.556	5.663	
Trekking	149	4.314	0.524	0.557	5.656	

Table 7: Comparison between Hiking and Trekking Activities using T-Test

A two-sample t-test was used to compare the memorable experiences of hikers and trekkers. Table comparison is shown in table 7. Based on the table, majority of hikers has a strong

refreshment, knowledge and involvement experience compared to trekkers. There was a significant difference in tourist' refreshment experience between hikers ($M = .589$, $SD = 0.440$) and trekkers ($M = 4.176$, $SD = 0.585$ (df), $T = 7.070$, $p=0.001$). Hikers seem to have a more refreshing experience as compared to trekkers.

In term of knowledge experience between hikers ($M=4.634$, $SD =0.401$) and trekkers ($M =4.301$, $SD 0.565$ (df), $T= 5.913$, $p=0.001$). This indicates that trekkers seem to have learned a lot of knowledge when they went to Penang National Park.

Furthermore, in terms of novelty experience between hikers ($M=4.211$, $SD=0.801$) and trekkers ($M=3.768$, $SD=0.672$). This shows that hikers had more novelty new experiences as compared to trekkers.

Finally, for involvement experience between hikers ($M=4.629$, $SD=0.435$) and trekkers ($M=4.314$, $SD=0.524$). This shows that hikers had more involvement than trekkers when they went to Penang National Park.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the previous chapter, some empirical factors that determine the ecotourism activities comparison of memorable tourism experiences and re-participation in the activities have been determined. As a result, some recommendations are made to improve the research for future study.

Researchers can expand the study area from one state to another. For example, from Penang National Park to all existing national parks throughout the state. The aim was to obtain a higher number of respondents based on a comparison of the two activities. Therefore, a higher number of respondents will allow improvement of the results. However, the number of questions in each section also needs to be increased to be able to compare places studied elsewhere according to demographics.

Next, more methodological work is needed as a reference for researchers. It can also be done using qualitative by seeing and observing for themselves the experience of tourists participating in hiking and trekking activities. Moreover, they voluntarily participate in such research.

The researcher can also add other strenuous activities in the study to analyse the differences between those activities. Although methodologically challenging, it is very useful to conduct some long-term studies to measure the comparative experience factor between the activity with the intention of re-participation.

CONCLUSION

This study used a framework from Kim and Ritchie (2013) to examine the relationship between four independent variables: refreshment, knowledge, novelty, and involvement with the dependent variable, which is re-participation intentions among tourists for hiking and trekking activities. As a result, it provides an outline of the level of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings from this study shows that independent variables have influenced the intention to re-participation in hiking and trekking activities among tourists in Penang National Park.

Almost all respondents said they would like to re-participate in hiking and trekking activities in Penang National Park. They also agreed that participating in the two activities makes them calmer, can keep their bodies healthy, and can avoid unpleasant environments. It also gives them refreshment, knowledge, novelty, and involvement.

Furthermore, the researchers discovered that tourists who hike have a more memorable experience than those who go trekking. This is probably because hiking activities are more challenging such as mountain and hill climbing, compared to trekking, which only goes through the forest. Hiking activity can also see much more beautiful natural scenery such as flora that is rarely found, hills, mountains, and even the sea or beach.

In this paper, the researchers also discuss some limitations in carrying out this study. For instance, the relatively limited sample of the study is limited to respondents who have only participated in hiking and trekking activities in Penang National Park. There is not much data or study comparing these two activities. Hence, future researchers can extend this sample area from one state to another for example, all national parks in Malaysia to get a higher number of respondents depending on the number of tourists who do hiking and trekking activities.

The findings of this paper are believed to provide great insight into how to improve tourism packages. It enables the tour operator and national park to create more spectacular tourism packages that emphasise the tourist experience.

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