The Significance of Conceptual Framework towards the Tourism Apps in Influencing Tourist Travel Experience

Qistina Donna Lee Abdullah, Aimuni Athirah Binti Latif

Abstract: Tourism apps often try to anticipate the needs and demands of travellers to make sure it can make profit for the producer. Sometimes, collaboration between producer of tourism apps and owner of tourism organization such as, accommodation, activities, travel agency and airline play an important role to create effective apps. Apps have many benefits in developing the tourism industry in order to increase economic sector and provide travellers the best travel experience. This paper focuses on the significance of conceptual framework towards the tourism apps in influencing tourist travel experience. The finding of paper also can be used to developing new prototype of tourism apps based on tourist needs. It is to determine the independent variables, dependent variables and moderator for this study. This paper will introduce the best features to be including in tourism apps.

Keywords: Tourism Sector, Tourism Organization, Apps, Travellers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Usage of technology gives an impact towards the tourism industry. Technology is also included in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that is divided into three parts which includes information, communication and technology. The term ICT consists of hardware, software and data that people engage as communication devices. The most important fact in the usage of ICT is the need of internet as a communication instrument. Apps are also included in the term of ICT that are designed with particular purpose by humans to satisfy their needs and demands. According to Bhasin (2017), needs are the basic requirements of human being which include food, clothing and accommodation. Every tourist possesses their own needs in the particular usage of apps. Tourist is a very important part in tourism because they are the main targeted customers in the tourism industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The users make use of mobile phone apps mainly to satisfy their needs such as information flight tickets, accommodation, and possible activities in the selected destination (Shove 2010). Tourists most of the time expects the tourism apps to filter less interesting information and provide them with vacation ideas that can fulfil their desire. Budget is the important thing to be filtered and normally it has to the best value for money.

To ensure the best service is provided, tourism apps must link the satisfaction and desire of tourists with the features in the tourism apps.

Tourist's needs and demands are important things to deal with when it's come to creating efficient tourism apps. Tourism apps will then enhance the development of the tourism industry. According to Holden (2006), tourism industries do influence the economic development of the country. Basically, every country in the world puts huge effort in making tourism industry as one of the factors to develop their economy. The uniqueness and authenticity of each country must be highlighted to attract more tourists to visit the country. The efficiency of tourism apps combined with details of information will attract more tourists to make full use of the tourism apps. According to Kang (2014), the main factors are the one will influence to a destination is using tourism apps. The main factors can be interpreted via tourists' satisfaction in using the tourism apps in terms of the information provided from planning their vacation to getting directional tips during the vacation. Based on Grieve, Hundson and Bendon (2010), study stated that there are ten main benefits of tourism apps in dependence on its functions. Ten benefits of tourism apps are transport planning, event listing, travel planning, accommodation planning, tour guidance, providing directional services, delivering attraction experience, organizing local information, tourist assistance and providing tourist information about specific companies Tourism apps are certainly more simple and efficient to be used than tour guides handbook. According to Xiang, Wong and Fesenmaier (2014), tourist sometimes feel usage of tourism apps have big influence on their experience whether before, during and after vacation. While their not use any tourism apps tourist will feel isolated from their environment during travel. Use the tourism apps increase connectivity from their known environment during travel. Various benefits of tourism apps help tourist to spend their perfect travel experience, like maps to navigate and suggestions to planning their activities. The benefits of tourism apps will give an impact and influence towards tourist travel experience. Tourists prefer everything that can be standardized or filtered according to their desire, preferences and taste. Tourist also use several devices to access the tourism apps such as phones, desktops, or laptops.

III. RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To create a good conceptual framework, researcher needs to include the objectives of research and every important item to create the conceptual framework. According to Ravitch and Riggan (2012),

conceptual frameworks assist the researcher by helping to shape the research question, literature review and all issues relating to methodology, data collection, data analysis and discussion. This conceptual framework also helps researchers to develop interview question and questionnaire to ensure the objectives of the research can be achieved.

IV. FINDINGS

There are three important parts which is represented in this conceptual framework which are the independent variables, moderator and dependent variables. This conceptual framework presents travel needs as the independent variables, apps features as moderator whereas travel attraction, accommodation and transportation as independent variables. The process of creating a useful conceptual framework for this research is divided into five parts.
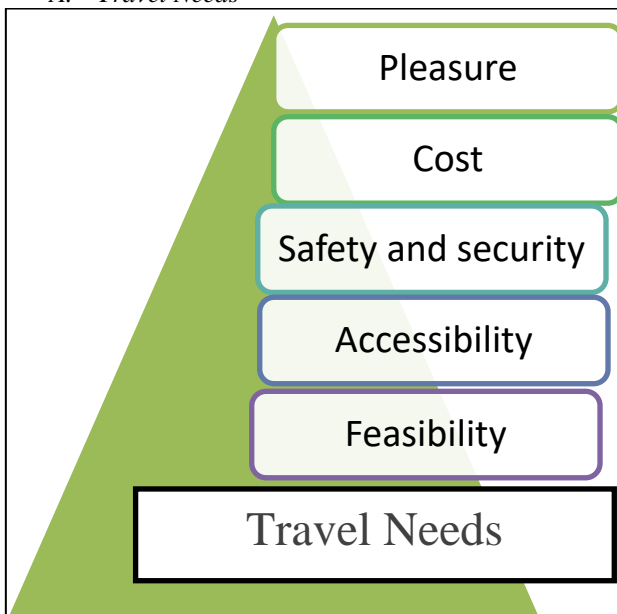
A. Travel Needs

Figure 2: Items of Independent Variables
Sources: Singleton (2013)

Referring to the items under the variable of travel needs discussed by Singleton (2013), every item in travel needs stand for their own speciality. There are five items under the variable of travel needs which includes pleasure, cost, safety and security, accessibility and feasibility. These five items are the main parts in travel needs which are considered to build efficient and impressive travel apps. Pleasure in terms of this research explains about the comfortness and enjoyment of tourist experience during their travel. Cost on the other hand is about how much they spend in terms of monetary, time, physical effort and its reliability for their travel. Safety and security is also a very important part such as safety from traffic and safety from crime. Accessibility must be included to build good apps in order to connect tourist with the attracted location and how the apps can access particular places. Feasibility is all about tourist's mobility with access to transportation and their schedule for the travel activities. Every single item under travel needs is important to be studied to build a good prototype of a travel app. The prototype of tourism apps will be a reference to build the tourism app as per tourist's demands and needs.
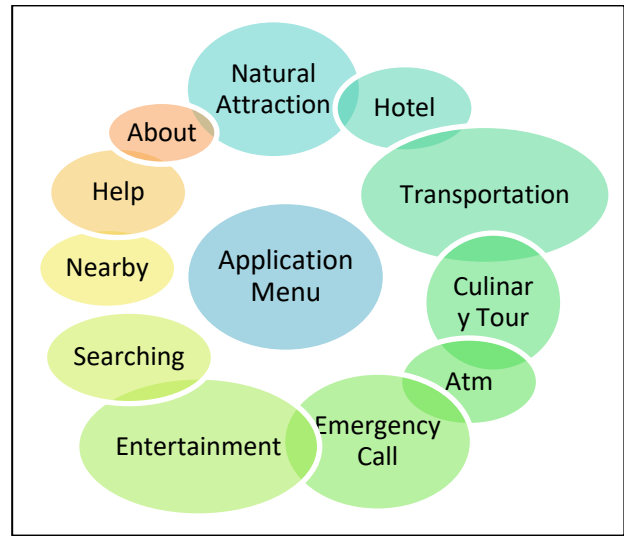
B. Application Features

Figure 3: Items of Moderator
Sources: Gunawan (2018)

This application menu adapted from Gunawan (2018) includes eleven items that stand for their own function. The original application menu stated twelve items but researcher selected among eleven items only for this research. Researcher did not include event in the items because it will combined under one item which is entertainment.
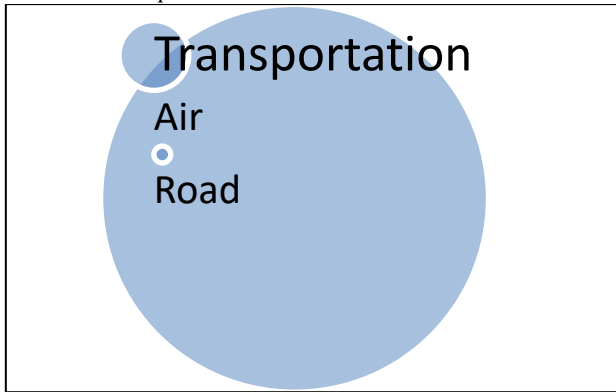
C. Tourist Attraction

Figure 4: Item of Dependent Variables
Sources: Chaisawat (2005)

Theories and concept by Chaisawat (2005), has been selected to design the new conceptual framework for this research. To ensure travel apps become more interesting designing a interesting tourism apps for around Kuching, Sarawak. According to Vengesayi, Mavondo and Reisinger (2009), tourist attraction is a factor which has the ability to satisfy tourists' needs and demands. Tourist attraction is divided into five parts which includes beaches, national parks, cultural, historical building then event and entertainment. Every item has its own elements to be presented and satisfy the tourist. Every attraction have its own strength to attract tourist to choose Sarawak as their travel destination and using this travel apps for their travel activities. Therefore, researcher chose every item in these theories wisely to develop a good and efficient prototype of tourism apps.

D. Transportation

Figure 5: Item of Dependent Variables
Chaisawat (2005)

Transportation by Chaisawat (2005) is also the factor of attraction which is among the tourist's choices of travel destination. Determining the needs of tourist in terms of transportation is another aspect to be included in travel apps as it ensures easier access for the tourists and their safety will also be maintained. Thus, they will feel secured and free to explore every attraction in Kuching, Sarawak. The information about transportation must be included in travel apps because it will help tourist to plan their journey efficiently. There are two modes of transportation that are offered in Kuching, Sarawak. Tourist can use this transportation mode to access from one place to another with ease. Types of transportations are air and road.

E. Accommodation
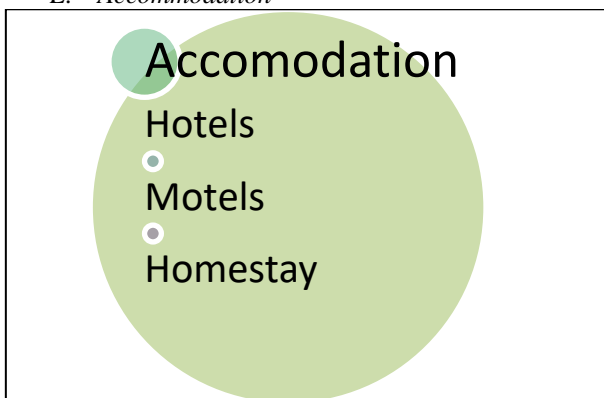
Figure 6: Item of Dependent Variables
Sources: Chaisawat (2005)

There are two types of accommodation which consists of hotels and motels whereas the researcher adds a new item which is homestay. According to Chaisawat (2005), the overall types of accommodation are three which includes hotels and motels. Difference types of accommodation offer tourists different types of experience. To attract more tourist, information about accommodations will also be an important aspect to be displayed in travel apps.

V. RESULTS OF NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Selected frameworks have been used as a guide to design the new framework for this research by the researcher. The new framework will serve as a guideline to the researcher in completing this research whereby it also helps the researcher to build six hypotheses to be studied. There are three main

elements in this content that ensure the success of the framework. The contents are independent variables, moderator and dependent variables. Every element has its own points to display and link with each other. Independent variable consists of travel needs, which is comprised of five items including pleasure, cost, safety and security, accessibility and feasibility. The sub items in the independent variables explain the demands of tourist based on their needs while travelling. Every tourist has difference needs and that drive to many supplies by another party in the tourism sector. Every tourist's needs must be cared for such as their cost of travelling whereby some tourist prefer an accommodation with a high cost but low in terms of transportation while another tourist care more about safety and security. Every single element must be considered to produce good travel apps in Kuching, Sarawak. This is because that new framework will be a guideline to the researcher to study about travel apps and tourists.

Second element in this framework is the moderator that consists of application menu. There are eight sub items in application menu which includes natural attraction, hotel, culinary, ATM, emergency call, entertainment and event, searching, nearby and transportation. Every item in this application menu will be displayed in travel apps features to help tourist treasure around Kuching. Features in travel apps are being chosen wisely by the researcher based on travel needs and demands by tourists. The information will be filtered accordingly to attract tourist using this travel apps while exploring Kuching, Sarawak. Contents in travel apps will ensure the tourism sector of Sarawak offer the best, unique and modest travel experience to the tourists. The uniqueness of cultural and heritage about Sarawak will be highlighted to preserve and inform the other community on the lifestyle in this area. Then the probability of tourist to visit again and choose Sarawak for the second time as their travel location will increase.

The dependent variables stated three items and the first one is tourist attraction which includes sub items of beaches, national parks, cultural, historical building and event and entertainment. Then transportation with three sub items, air, road and rail while accommodation with its own sub item which includes hotels, motels and homestay. The three items under the dependent variables are the attractions and facilities around Kuching, Sarawak that offer the tourist to treasure Sarawak. Information about types of transportation and accommodation that are available in Kuching, Sarawak will help tourist to plan their vacation wisely. Tourist attraction is divided into five items that will attract tourist to visit Kuching, Sarawak. Uniqueness will provide the best experience for the tourist to treasure more about Sarawak.

This new framework helps the researcher to determine and understand what are the tourist's needs are and there are so many types of attraction in Kuching, Sarawak which must be highlighted to attract more tourists. As a conclusion, the new knowledge researcher obtain from the new framework will be an asset to know more about the tourist, attraction, needs and so on.
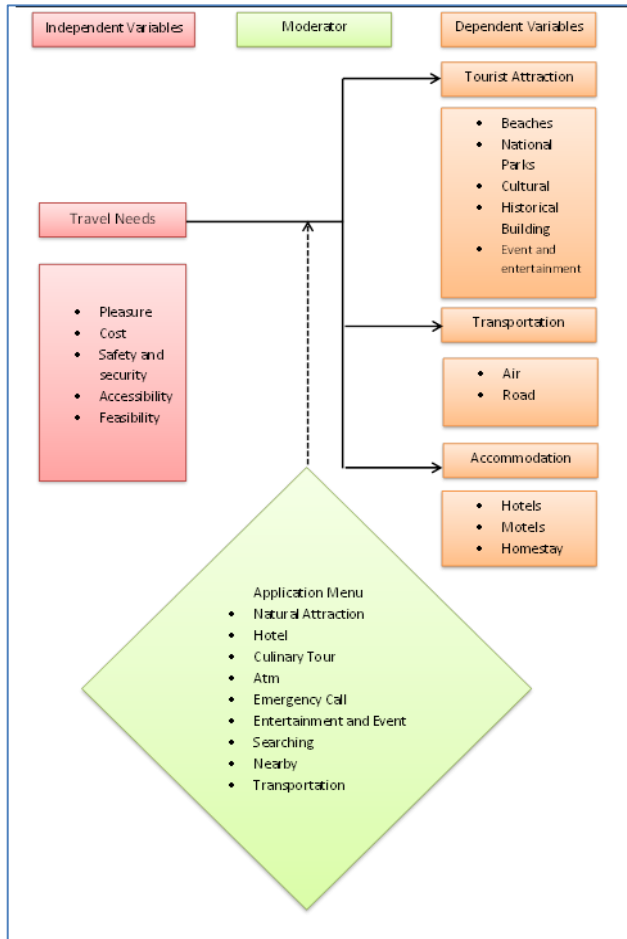
Figure 7: New Framework

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings depicts that travel needs are suitable as independent variables to be included in this new conceptual framework. Meanwhile, tourist attraction, transportation and accommodation are suitable and valid dependent variables to be included into the conceptual framework. Previous studies showed and proven that tourism apps influence tourist travel experience. Each of the variables needed to be incorporated creating new prototype of tourism apps based on tourist needs. It is apps that help tourism organization to provide a service for tourists to planning their vacation then gets information and become deeply familiar with the city and plan leisure activities.

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AUTHORS PROFILE

Qistina Donna Lee Abdullah is holding a Senior Lecturer Post and a Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate for the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She gained her PhD in Office Management System (Event Management) University Technology MARA Malaysia, Master of Management in Arts Management, University Technology Sydney Australia, and Bachelor Degree in Arts Management, University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Qistina launched her career as a Product Development Officer with the Arab-Malaysian Finance Berhad based in Kuala Lumpur before she began her career as an educator in UNIMAS. Qistina developed a strong sense of devotion for arts and management area whereby she is involved mainly in consultancy job which engage with the private sector, state government, GLC and community. Her research area and publications focuses on Leadership, Public Private Partnership, Arts, Culture and Heritage management. Qistina committed to her career as she is currently supervising few postgraduate students and average of 40 undergraduate students. Her passion towards arts management is verified through few taught courses such as Funding and Sponsorship in the arts, Financial Management in the arts Organization, Research Methodology and many more. This experience gave her a deep appreciation on how important is her career and self-improvement in determining the future generations.

Aimuni Athirah Binti Latif is a student pursuing Masters in Arts in University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She has graduated with Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours majoring in Arts Management field. Her current research is on the significance of using tourism apps to influence tourist travel experience. She also possesses some experience in the education field by aiding her supervisor in taking up tutorial classes and small scaled lectures. taught courses such as Funding and Sponsorship in the arts, Financial Management in the arts Organization, Research Methodology and many more. This experience gave her a deep appreciation on how important is her career and self-improvement in determining the future generations.