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Back To The Future: Is The Travel Buble Issue In Malaysia Will Sustain The Region Tourism Outbreak Of Covid-19?

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Abstract

The current study aimed to determine the current travel bubble issue on the tourism marketing sustainability in Malaysia during the outbreak of COVID-19. To collect questionnaires, SPSS 28.0 software was used for statistical validation. The results were validated using multivariate analysis after expert opinions were gathered. A total of 206 respondents contributed to the questionnaire survey and data collected were analyzed using Smart-PLS. Based on the key-findings, this study found that people were aware of the virus's occurrence and preventive measures, but they were not afraid of infection. Tourists mostly want to have free time to travel as it can boost their energy, relieve stress from staying at home, and help their emotions. Unfortunately, due to the Pandemic COVID-19, the infection rates and death are high, and also there have been multiple routes of infection and the evolution of new variants recently namely omicron and identifying the symptoms has been difficult. However, people arriving and departing

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from airports, hotels et cetera, are the tourists who are willing to contribute to the travel bubble policy and travelling during this Pandemic COVID-19. Thus, travel decisions, environmental risk perceptions, physical and mental health and health beliefs were all significantly related to travel intentions, with different issues having various degrees of influence, whereas health beliefs had no effect. Further research is presented in this study.

Keywords: ***COVID-19, Tourism Sustainability, Travel Bubble, Policy Flaws, Malaysia***

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a significant economic source for all countries. 2020 will be the most difficult year for the global tourism industry. Despite the start of vaccination measures, the COVID-19 outbreak in China has not been resolved since it began in December 2019. Due to the risk of infection, travel from one country to another has been stopped around the world. Even as governments all over the world are trying to find the best solution to stop the infection chain and restart tourism activities to the current state of the tourism industry in their respective countries. To successfully revive tourism, governments, together with the travel and tourism sectors, should establish phased tourism recovery plans, with travel bubbles serving only as a step on the way to a fully open regime. During the recovery phase, governments should rebuild tourist confidence while also encouraging innovation and investment to ensure a resilient and sustainable tourism sector. As the world progressively recovers from the pandemic, we begin to hear new terms in travel and tourism, which is the "travel bubble". Malaysia as the country that has a lot of tourism destinations, the possibility of travel bubble arrangements with green zone countries is still being evaluated by Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Brunei are among the countries currently being considered. The Tourism Recovery Plan, which is set to take place in Malaysia, has generated a great deal of buzz in recent weeks. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture of Malaysia officially announced on September 9 that Langkawi will be launched as a pilot destination to be reopened to fully vaccinated local tourists on September 16, 2021. Before reopening the country's borders to international tourists, the government will use the International Tourism Bubble (Inbound) for the Langkawi Pilot Project as a benchmark right after the nation’s vaccination rate has hit 95% for adults and 62% for teenagers fully vaccinated in Malaysia. They finally announced that Malaysia has lifted the Interstate and International Travel Ban. There are 14 beautiful quarantine-free countries that Malaysians can now travel to, which are Thailand, the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland,

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France, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Egypt, Finland, Iceland, and Ireland.

Travel bubbles can be defined as the agreement between two countries to open its border for the people to travel within these countries that is famously known as “travel bridges”. Should be seen as a possible solution to the current pandemic. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have started up the first "travel bubble" destination (Shaikh & Qamari, 2021). People of these countries can travel (no quarantine needed) within these countries. As Malaysia has reported that the adult population over 95 % and 76.7 % of teenagers have completed their vaccination (Ministry of Health, 2022). As a result, a lot of tourism businesses recommend the Malaysian government to start this travel bubble with other countries and cities that are nearby such as Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and others. Although the desire to travel is closely related to an individual's emotional state, tourism researchers generally pay little attention to emotions and their quest for emotions. Recent research has given insight into how emotions can influence people's behavior (Ahmad et. al, 2020). More evidence can be found in behavioral intention studies. As a result, emotion can influence how people decide where to go and how they behave. Fear is a fundamental emotion. As a result, the recent pandemic fear would influence people's travel behavior (Zheng et. al, 2021). COVID-19 has an impact not only on tourism but also on the global economy. COVID-19's overall impact on tourism has been studied by researchers (de Haas et. al, 2020: Parady et. al, 2020) . However, no studies on travel behavior, including the psychological effects of COVID-19, have been conducted. As a result, the objective of this research is to look into the possibility of Malaysians following the current travel bubble (Figure 1). In view of the research study, the research problem and questions are stated as: "How does intention to travel affect the tourism recovery plan which is the travel bubble?". There were four research questions determined: (1) How do travel decisions affect intent to travel? (2) How does environment risk perception affect intent to travel?; (3) What is the relationship between physical and mental health towards intent to travel?, and (4) What is the relationship between health beliefs towards intent to travel?.

Based on the research framework, the present study identified Dependent Variable (DV) is intent to travel. There are four Independent Variables (IV) which are travel decisions, environmental risk perceptions, physical and mental health, and health beliefs. For the travel decisions, improve domestic economy and travel promotion are the measurement items. Next, for environmental risk, there are two measurement items which are the uncertainty and the possibility of loss. The measurement items for physical and mental health are to increase enthusiasm and reduce stress. Finally, the health beliefs. The measurement items for this IV are

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health awareness and behavioral intentions (Figure 1).

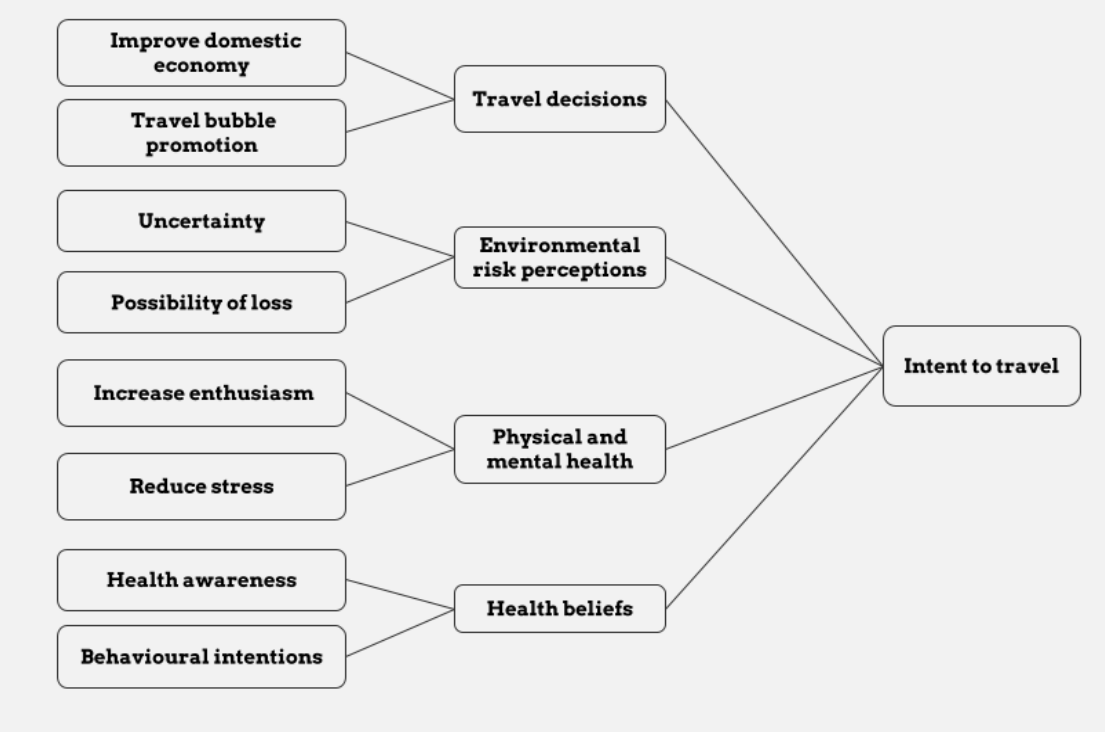


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

LITERATURE REVIEW

Travel is defined as the act of travelling from one location to another. It is also known as long-distance travel, short-distance travel, international travel, domestic travel, and others. The key component to understand is that travel includes both round trips and one-way travels, as well as a wide range of different travel reasons. According to UNWTO (2020) Travel is the action of travelling from one location to another for any purpose, but usually it is for pleasure and enjoyment (Cornet, 2021). People usually travel by grouping, solo travel, backpackers and also family. Basically, people travel to experience a rest in a new place (Marjavaara, 2017). They also travel to relieve stress while working or studying (Isaac & Keijzer, 2021).

Tourism is an important economic contributor because it helps governments accomplish three high-priority goals such as revenue generation (Birendra, 2021: Aman, 2021: Aqifi & Kadriu, 2021), employment (McNaughton, 2020; Ukaegbu & Carr, 2020), and foreign-exchange earnings (Matthew et. al, 2021: Bhattarai et. al, 2021) . However, the COVID-19 epidemic which began on

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December 19, 2019, in Wuhan, China and spread around the world by mid-March 2020, has created the greatest threats to every country. Since then, tourism has been the first industry to be directly impacted by worldwide pandemic measures (Vo, & Tran, 2021). Furthermore, the government's implementation of worldwide travel restrictions caused unprecedented severe disruptions in the global tourism economy, as well as significant negative effects on the global economy. From time to time without a doubt, Covid-19 outbreak obviously give bad impact on tourism globally and forced people to change their typical travel behavior (Bulin & Tenie, 2020; Škare et al., 2021). As a result, an effective tourism recovery plan is crucial (Jones, 2022) to find a balance between the economy and livelihood (Collins-Kreiner & Ram, 2020; Azhari et. al, 2021) . According to the Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture (MOTAC), one approach to recover the country's tourism sector is to create and implement a Tourism Recovery Plan (TRP) as part of the National Tourism Policy 2020 – 2030 (MIDA, 2021). So, for the first phase of the tourism recovery plan (Statista, 2021), the Malaysian government started with the travel bubble pilot test in Langkawi and Kuching destinations (Travel, 2021). A travel bubble also called a travel bridge, a bi-lateral bubble, or a corona corridor, is a sort of travel arrangement in which individuals travel to other places. According to Luo and Lam (2020), travel bubble is an agreement reached between two or more countries that allows them to open their borders without strict quarantine. Yu et. al, (2021) believed that it is only applicable to governments that are close, trusting one another, and confident in their abilities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

According to the Ajzen (2020), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) links psychological belief to behavior and as well as his or her desire to engage in behavior at a certain time and location. It assumed of human behavior in terms of action intent. It was built off to assume human behavior towards intention of actions. The theory was used in this study to explain all behavior in which people can exhibit self-control when travelling. In sum, this theory predicts and understands behavior in terms of behavioral intention to travel by combining 3 factors such as behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is commonly applied to analyze the effects of individual perceptions during COVID-19 on post-COVID-19 travel behavior (Matiza, 2020). So, this research is conducted to evaluate factors affecting travel intentions of tourists during the COVID-19 outbreak. So, in general, this theory relates to our framework since it's concerned with the desire to travel and public opinion on the intention of travel. Aside from that, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is linked with the health belief model which explains how a person's belief in the efficiency of the prescribed health behavior or activity relates to a person's belief in the risk of an

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illness or disease. As a result, it predicts the chance that the person would engage in the behavior or activity. It also explained in which individuals consider travelling by exploring the degree of their personal behavior for them to prepare for their travel behavior and intention to travel in advance.

TRAVEL DECISIONS

Travel Decisions is a multi-layered process in which external and internal influences impact on how frequently, for how long, and where people travel. (Lv & McCabe, 2020). Furthermore, travel decisions are described as attitudinal elements since changing norms during and after COVID-19 may seriously question certain assumptions about travel behavior. (Kock et al., 2020). In fact, they can be applied for a better understanding regarding people's travel decisions during pandemics. Tourists' decisions during or after the epidemic are likely to be influenced by their confidence in the COVID-19 policies. Due to that, the travel bubble policy made by the government acts as the recognition for the proper tourism planning decision and improves the overall domestic economic dilemma. As an outcome, governments on both sides engage with one another to promote their policies, improve travel willingness, restart the tourism industry's development, and rejuvenate the overall economy. For travel decisions, improving the domestic economy and travel bubble promotion are the measurement items in this research. Therefore, this research was used to analyze perception on how people react with travel bubble policy and to determine their willingness in participating in tourism activities.

H1: There is a significant relationship between travel decisions and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK PERCEPTION

Environmental risk perception refers to the process of understanding the unstable but potentially far-becoming possible crises that occur when people get exposed to environmental threats which differ from, or everyday sense of threat. In this independent variable, there are two measurement items that have been used which are uncertainty, and possibility of loss. For the uncertainty, is to show that society is very concerned about the safety of those around them. Uncertainty over the safety and well-being of the surrounding area is a key to proving that society is now afraid to be more open to the outside world. As is well known, the year 2019 has seen the birth of an epidemic of a deadly disease COVID-19 which has paralyzed almost every corner of the earth. Starting from Wuhan, China, the epidemic began to spread to all corners of the world, including Malaysia. This has given birth to high concern among the community and caused them

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to be afraid to do any activities outside their homes because they thought that the danger of COVID-19 could take their lives. The greater uncertainty regarding the future outcome, the greater the danger (Dryhurst et al., 2020). Thus, uncertainty became one of the keys to measuring the environmental risk perception in this study. The possibility of loss becomes the key to measuring the environmental risk perception. The possibility of losses suggests that the presence of COVID-19 outbreak can cause a lot of losses to the local community. It has forced many sectors to close their doors, especially the tourism and economic sectors. The chances of getting a loss are so high that society is also afraid to be exposed to the outside world. People are more cautious about their surrounding living and transportation environment, indoor or outdoor places, dining and consumption moments, and personal feelings and of course for travel. But due to the travel bubble that has been introduced by the government in Malaysia, people are now safer to travel wherever they want.

H2: There is a significant relationship between environmental risk perception and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Physical and mental health implies a situation of health naturally, spiritual, and social features. Physical and mental health can be scrutinized by process of self-awareness consideration (Ahmad et al., 2019), there are two key measurement items that have been used to measure physical and mental health which increase enthusiasm and reduce stress. Boosting can improve one's health to be better and healthier. Health is an important factor to ensure the survival of a person is able to be in good condition or vice versa. COVID-19 transmission has forced many to confine themselves at home to prevent themselves from contracting this dangerous virus. Many are forced to work from home resulting in them losing the appeal to do the job perfectly and brilliantly unlike before this pandemic phase. However, the government's initiative such as the introduction of a travel bubble policy to prevent the spread of this virus has shown the return of a spark of hope for the community to continue their lives as usual, including travel activities. By doing activities such as travel, people will be more motivated to do every job they do, and it will increase people's enthusiasm. The study of individual physical and mental health occurrences related to individual emotions can cause the effect of the current situation on people (Tseng et. al, 2021). Reducing stress is also important to stable people's physical and mental health. As the key to measure the (IV), reduce stress will avoid people from get an illness like feelings of anxiety, insomnia, an abnormal diet, suicidal issue, headaches, and abdominal pain. People will not be in

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good conditions if they keep the stress by themselves and can also influence others around them. Travel is one of 'medicines' that we can do to reduce our stress.

H3: There is a significant relationship between physical and mental health and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia.

HEALTH BELIEF

We can further expand the meaning of this health belief which is a person's belief in the level of his health and his sensitivity to current health issues, including the issue of COVID-19. These beliefs are, of course, culturally determined, and all come together to form larger health belief systems. Health beliefs become the independent variable in this study. There are two keys measurement items for this (IV) which is health awareness and behavioral intention. Health awareness is about health consciousness which mean an individual's heightened worry for physical condition, enhanced the research for health knowledge, dedication to health uncertainties and the importance of health status (Lee et. al, 2020). It implies self-concern similar to self-awareness, supports motivation for self-intensive care and physical condition knowledge, and produces an awareness of health responsibility (Lee et. al, 2021). Health awareness is important for every such individual to maintain the quality of their health. Being aware of every issue that involves one's health can increase one's knowledge of the global health situation. Such as self-awareness in self-care to prevent oneself from being infected with the COVID-19 virus. Awareness such as the use of face masks, the use of hand sanitation, personal hygiene and environmental hygiene can further reduce the transmission of this killer virus. While doing daily activities such as work or while traveling, this awareness must be constantly enhanced to both take care of their health and those around them. Health beliefs can affect behavioral intentions toward medical products. For the COVID-19 cases, the introduction of vaccine for the virus has shown a trend where people are starting to take vaccine injections as a way for them to reduce the severity of this viral infection to their body. People also take some energy boosters such as vitamins to maintain a good level of health. Behavioral people are more likely to seek various supplements to keep themselves healthy and at low risk of being infected with the COVID-19 virus. As we know, activities performed outside the residence have the level of risk that can influence people's behavior in engaging in activities (Alsharo et. al, 2021). Thus, the behavioral intentions become a key to measure health belief in this study.

H4: There is a significant relationship between health belief and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia.

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INTENTION TO TRAVEL

Intention is a mental state that signifies decisions to be carried out on future actions or decisions. An individual's intention is their willingness to carry out a certain action. It's supposed to be a direct cause of behavior. It is also based on three predictor variables: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control, with each predictor weighted depending on its relevance to the activity and population of interest (Ajzen, 1991). The motivating factor in which influence is referred to as behavior intention. The stronger the desire to carry out the activity, the more likely it will be performed. Intent to travel or travel intention has been defined as one's desire or intention to travel. Tourist travel intentions can be severely impacted by COVID-19 crisis (Ryu, 2022; Senbeto & Hon, 2020). Therefore, with the tourism recovery plan and tourism policy made by the government towards the pilot test of the travel bubble in Langkawi is shown as a successful project. According to Minister of Tourism, Art and Culture "Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri", the success of the pilot project for the country's travel concept makes it possible for other destinations to be ready to be reopened (MIDA, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research is to determine Malaysia's readiness to participate in the travel bubble policy. The objective of this study, quantitative study design. The sampling method used for this study is probability sampling using simple random sampling. Quantitative research is defined by (Bhandari et. al, 2020) as "the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships and generalize results to a wider population". There are two sources of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a form of data obtained directly from critical sources by researchers. Secondary data is information that has been obtained from primary sources and provided for use by researchers for their studies. In this study, primary data and secondary data were used. This is because the initial data was collected through surveys using structured questionnaires and secondary data, journals, online research, and literature reviews. Due to this COVID-19 outbreak, we had to use google form to distribute our questionnaire to respondents, and an online questionnaire was created. 250 respondents were recruited using probability sampling and the simple random sampling was specifically employed to select respondents to ensure all respondents are equally likely to be selected as a sample using Google Forms. Study objectives, were used as a guide to collect and analyze data from the questions. Descriptive research and survey are the methods used to collect data and determine Malaysia's readiness to

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participate in the travel bubble policy. The survey is the best to reach the sample for data collection and information collected from individuals who answered a questionnaire allow better capacity and ensure a valid sample to obtain the targeted results simultaneously to draw conclusions and make important decisions. This research also allows large populations to be described. This research is also quantitative research in nature as the main data analyses strategy to derive results from the sustainable development of localization to determine Malaysia's readiness to participate in the travel bubble policy. Therefore, the sample population of our study was general and specific to tourists regardless of specific characteristics such as gender, race, or age. All respondents involved in answering our questionnaire ranged in age from 18 to 54 years and above.

Respondents were locals and tourists from abroad who wanted to participate in the travel bubble policy. Researchers have distributed google forms to contacts within the app via WhatsApp, and in return, a total of 250 respondents involved in answering the questionnaire and 206 responses were valid for further analyses. Questionnaires were used as research instruments to facilitate data collection during fieldwork. The first part of the questionnaire collected sociodemographic information about the respondents. Eight closed -ended questions were included about the respondents 'profiles, including age, gender, race, current level of education, preferred choice for travel, employment status, income as well as frequency of travel. The second part of the questionnaire examines the independent variable and dependent variable. A total of 20 questions were reviewed in the questionnaire. Some questions were answered according to a Likert type scale such as "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree", "Agree" to "Disagree", and "Neutral". This technique makes sense as it will help bring some answers to the understanding of complex questions through an accurate and simple analysis of Malaysia's readiness to participate in the travel bubble policy.

In addition, a pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of the instruments used. Apart from the preparation of the questionnaire, the supervision of the previous study guidelines shown was also considered. Similarly, all published articles and journals were taken as references for secondary data. The questionnaire was then entered into a Google Form, and the link was shared for data collection purposes with social media users.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics (frequencies) were obtained to gather demographics (question 1 to 5) from all 206 valid responses. In this section, it consists of 8 questions: Age, gender, status,

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favorite travel option, education status, employment status, income and often to travel. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-24 with 33.3%. Next, the majority of the respondents were male with 51.7% and followed by female 47.8%. Other than that, our respondents were mostly domestic with 96.1% while only 3.9% from international. Then, the highest favorite travel options among the respondent is family with 72.3% followed by group with 10,7%. It shows that people in Malaysia love to travel with family and group instead of backpackers and travel agencies. Besides that, the highest education status is from degree background with 54.4% and the highest employment status is employed with 55.1%. Most of our respondent income is less than RM1500 with 37.9% followed by RM1500-RM3500 with 31.6%. Lastly, based on the sample, people often travel 1-3 times a year with 63.6% and followed by 6 and more a year with 14,6%.

Table 1: Profiles of Respondents

Variable	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-24	69	33.3
	25-34	37	17.9
	35-44	32	15.5
	45-54	40	19.3
	55 and above	28	13.5
Gender	Male	107	51.7
	Female	99	47.8
Status	Domestic	198	96.1
	International	8	3.9
Favourite travel options	Backpacker	17	8.3
	Family	149	72.3
	Group	22	10.7
	Travel agency	18	8.7
Education status	Diploma and equivalent	53	25.7
	Degree	112	54.4
	Master	15	7.3

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	Phd	3	1.5
	Others	23	11.2
Employment status	Unemployed	51	24.6
	Employed	114	55.1
	Self- employed	20	9.7
	Others	21	10.1
Income	Less than RM1500	78	37.9
	RM1500-RM 3500	65	31.6
	More than RM3500	63	30.6
Often to travel	1-3 times a year	131	63.6
	3-6 times a year	45	21.8
	6 and more in a year	30	14.6

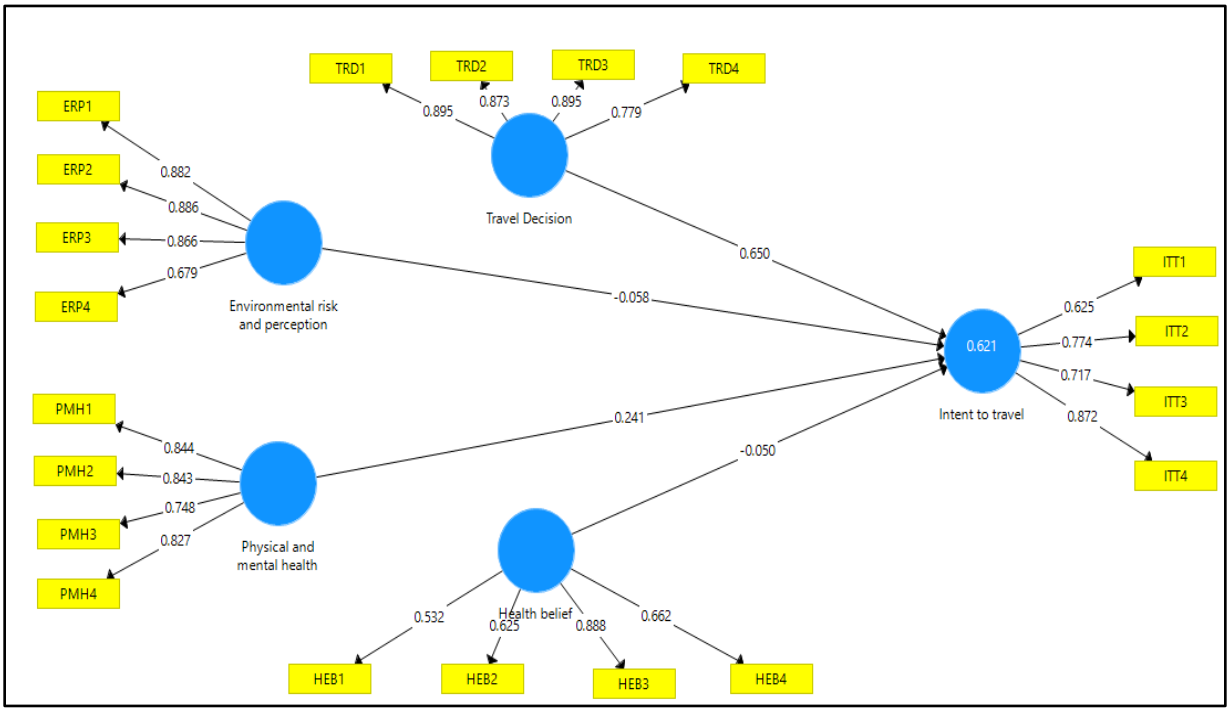


Figure 2: Model Analysis (SmartPLS)

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The Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used to figure out whether the questionnaire was precise enough to be answered by the respondent. Apart from as the measure of internal consistency that is how closely the items are as a group. Other than that, reliability analysis was performed to determine accuracy of measuring instruments in measuring the variable. All the variables used in this analysis were internally consistent and accurate as according to the reliability test. The Cronbach alpha for the variable which consists of travel decisions, environmental risk and perception, physical and mental health and intent to travel were greater than 0.70 except the health belief variable.

Hence, from the table below all the variables were categorized as acceptable for this study. The Cronbach's alpha for the dependent variable which is intent to travel is at (α = 0.745). Then for the independent variables, travel decisions is at (α = 0.884), environmental risk and perception (α = 0.865), physical and mental health (α = 0.834), and lastly health belief (α = 0.681). Travel decisions have the highest Cronbach's Alpha and the lowest is health belief. By that, it shows that travel decisions have a dominant influence on dependent variables compared to the other 3 independent variables as the final result. As stated in the model analysis SmartPLS the final R^2 is 0.621 which means 62%. Based on the result of Cronbach's Alpha above, all the independent variables show factor loading that is more than 0.5. Travel decisions (TRD1, TRD3) show the highest value with 0.895. In fact, the other variables also have the factor loading value more than 0.7 except for health belief (HEB1) that stated 0.532. We can assume that all the models reach the level of a moderate model, and this structured really represent observation for this study.

Table 2. Construct Validity of Measurements

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Factor loading	Interpretation
Travel Decisions	0.884	TRD1 TRD2 TRD3 TRD4	0.895 0.873 0.895 0.779	Very good reliability
Environmental risk and perception	0.865	ERP1 ERP2 ERP3	0.882 0.886 0.866	Very good reliability

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		ERP4	0.679	
Physical and mental health	0.834	PMH1 PMH2 PMH3 PMH4	0.844 0.843 0.748 0.827	Very good reliability
Health belief	0.681	HEB1 HEB2 HEB3 HEB4	0.532 0.625 0.888 0.662	Good reliability
Intent to travel (DV)	0.745	ITT1 ITT2 ITT3 ITT4	0.625 0.774 0.717 0.872	Very good reliability

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing of Bootstrapping Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	T-value	Decisions	R^2	F^2
DV	Intent to travel				0.621	
H1	TRD > ITT	0.650	10.415	Significant		0.608
H2	ERP > ITT	-0.058	0.928	Not significant		0.006
H3	PMH > ITT	0.241	3.174	Significant		0.078
H4	HEB > ITT	-0.050	0.779	Not significant		0.004

Structural model analysis (SEM) was designed to determine “is the current travel bubble is possible during the outbreak of covid 19” towards people in Malaysia. Based on the table above,

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the data shows that the dependent variable intent to travel has a higher number of R^2 with 62%. So, it means that R^2 moderate and agreeable to the respondent. Apart from that, in terms of t-value, it is shown that H1 and H3 are significant to the dependent variable while H2 and H4 are

DISCUSSIONS

The findings indicate that the independent variables "travel decisions" affect intention to travel for tourists. Based on the results from our questionnaire survey, people tend to travel even during these outbreak Covid-19. Thus, with the increase of tourists to visit and travel can give a positive impact towards the recovery plan for tourism Malaysia. The Malaysian government has decided to lift the Movement Control Order (MCO) in June 2020 which has allowed Malaysians to travel domestically and internationally. As a result, a total of 75.2 percent of Malaysians had set their time to travel within Malaysia soon (Hirschmann, 2020). Based on the questionnaire survey, the majority from 206 respondents strongly agreed with the statement from items in the independent variables that state "Improve domestic economy Travel bubble promotion". This item is the highest percentage compared to other items in the independent variables. This shows that the people intend to travel during this pandemic Covid-19 followed by the government policy of travel bubble promotion. Based on the independent variables "environmental risk perception" that states "I may be infected when entering and leaving an outdoor place", the majority of 106 respondents agreed. The item's uncertainty and possibility of loss is accepted. Next, based on the findings for relationships between "physical and mental health" towards intention to travel for tourists is considered accepted. The respondents agreed with the statement "Increase in job performance". With the acceptance to travel, they can increase enthusiasm and reduce stress. Lastly, from the perception of the independent variable which is "health belief" can affect intention to travel, a total of 136 respondents strongly agreed that they understand the prevention guidelines by the government, and this would give a positive impact towards the travel bubble promotion for example they followed the standard operating procedure (SOP) and so on.

In this section, personal characteristics findings will be discussed to give an outlook of the sample population being studied. The total of 206 respondents were used for further analysis. This study assessed our research purposes which is "the current travel bubble possible in Malaysia during the outbreak of COVID-19. All the data from the valid questionnaire has been transferred into the SPSS software for further analysis. In gender demographics, men were more than female with 51.7%. The 107 respondent's male and 47.8% among the 99 respondents were female. Most respondents are within the age group of 18-24 years old at 33%, followed by 45-54 years old at

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19.3%, the 25-34 years old at 17.9%, second last is the age from 35-44 years old at 15.5% and lastly is at age 55 years old or more at 13.5%. Next, the majority of the respondents are from Malaysia with a percentage of 96.1% followed by the international respondents with the percentage 3.9%.

Following the favorite travel options demographics, the highest with the total of 149 respondents at 72.3% are choosing family to travel. Next is the total of 22 respondents at 10.7% are by group. The second last chosen by the respondents are by travel agency with the total of 18 respondents at 8.7% and lastly is the backpackers with the total of 17 respondents at 8.3%. So, it shows that people in Malaysia tend to travel in family and group instead of going solo, which is backpacker or use any agency. In addition, for income demographics, most of the respondents receive monthly allowances less than RM1500 at 37.9%, which is 78 respondents, followed by people who receive between RM1500-RM3500 at 31.6%, which is 65 respondents, and lastly, people who receive allowances more that RM3500 at 30.6% with only 63 respondents. Lastly, how often to travel by the respondents starting the highest is 1-3 times a year at 63.6%, followed by the second highest which is 3-6 times a year at 21.8% and lastly is 6 and more a year at 14.6%. This study uses structural equation model (SEM) and maximum likelihood to examine the travel intention towards “travel bubble” destinations in Malaysia. The R Squared Value is 0.621 (62% significance). Other indicators confirm that the model is acceptable, and the data are consistent with the model. The hypothesis paths are hence tested. There are table above show the results of the hypothesis testing. The first five hypotheses are significant, namely, H1 ($t=10.415$, $p>0.01$), H2 ($t=0.928$, $p<0.01$), H3 ($t=3.174$, $p>0.01$) and lastly for H4 ($t=0.799$, $p<0.01$). This result indicates the evidence to suggest a relationship between fear of COVID-19, decision, and belief influence travel intention.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SEM results also show that the indirect effect travel bubble in Malaysia during the outbreak of COVID-19 according to (Table 5). Bootstrapping is employed to investigate the significance of the mediating effect between H1 and (DV) dependent variable: travel intention. After 206 samplings, the 62% confidence interval is [0.621]. There are 2 hypotheses that show significance with t-value: 10.415 and 3.174 respectively. This result suggests that fear of COVID-19, decision making and belief influenced travel intention through travel anxiety and risk attitude.

Based on the research and findings, the acceptance by local tourists for the travel bubble in Malaysia is considered good. However, the condition due to Pandemic COVID-19 is still ongoing until today, but the infection cases in Malaysia are decreasing as the locals have reached 95% of

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vaccination. As the results to answer the research question in this study above shows that the tourists from the locals in Malaysia are accepting the "Travel bubble" policy by the government. The government of Malaysia has done many guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) so there is no doubt for doing tourist activities such as travel to tourist destinations, attractions, accommodations, restaurants, and many others. By having this "Travel bubble" can positively affect the travel decisions and intent to travel. This not only can improve travel willingness, but Malaysia is able to restart the tourism industry's development and rejuvenate the overall economy. As for the environment risk perception, it can be concluded that the people in Malaysia are also aware of the safety of their surroundings and environment during their travel due to the emergence of COVID-19 virus. Therefore, to conclude, hypothesis 1 which is that there is a significant relationship between travel decisions and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia, the hypothesis is accepted. On the other hand, hypothesis 2 also accepted a significant relationship between environmental risk perception and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia. While for hypothesis 3, there is a significant relationship between physical and mental health and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia, the hypothesis is accepted. Lastly, in hypothesis four, where there is a significant relationship between health belief and intent to travel towards the travel bubble among tourists in Malaysia, the hypothesis is accepted based on the data collected from the questionnaires.

Project-based improvements. Based on the results of the study, the factors of this study have helped the tourism industry to know the important things about this study that can improve their industry when the COVID-19 pandemic is hitting around the world. These factors can help satisfied tourists which tourism industry for example can improve hygiene and safety guidelines. When this pandemic occurs, this point can be used by the tourism industry to increase satisfaction. In this research, we have attached all the data that can be used by them. These improvements will help tourists to be more comfortable when in tourist attractions.

Quantitative, no sample and scope. In this study, we had many obstacles while we were doing this research. Among the first obstacles was while we were doing this research. One of the barriers is the respondents. The reason is because we run online surveys that we provide for those with communication technology such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops only. Because the number of COVID-19 cases still did not decrease during this research. This is just an option to avoid physical contact with others. Apart from that, the second obstacle we faced while conducting this study was the low experience while using SPSS application to exchange data. Because of the online

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classes during this pandemic and we learned to use this app through online, this will cause us to lack understanding and not be very proficient when using this app. This application is very unusual which will confuse us while using this application.

Next improvement? In the future, improvements that we can use when doing further research such as researchers should consider demographic information as well, and questionnaires evenly across many countries and races, so that research results can be trusted. With this research in place, this will help future research to help them conduct research. Research that covers tourist satisfaction while using accommodation. This research can also help our tourism industry through research results. Based on the findings and conclusion presented, the following recommendations are suggested. The first recommendation that needs to focus is towards the government. They should enhance and improve the latest information on the mobile application which is the "MySejahtera" application. This is for the prevention of the locals getting exposed by the high-risk area. The security also should precisely check every person who checks in and checks out the applications as there are no issues such as anti-vaccine showing a fake COVID-19 vaccine certificate. Without proper planning, decisions will stagnate, and administrative resources will be wasted. Therefore, we suggest that the government should establish a consensus with the tourism industry and design a price level that is in line with the market mechanism and the cost to increase the willingness to participate.

Other suggestions for future research on this study was due to the limitations of the study, there are shortcomings in the research method and sample size. It is possible to improve the quality of the data by increasing the sample size or using other types of geographical locations. Our current scenario with the COVID-19 outbreak has prevented us from doing a face-to-face interview. If there is a chance, conducting a face-to-face survey would be beneficial to improve the data's dependability in future studies. It is also suggested to expand the sample size of the questionnaire and use additional validation software or computational methods to investigate the correlation between travel decisions, risk perception, physical and mental health, and other issues that can fill the research gap.

Note: This research has been successfully presented at *The 17th IRSA International Conference* organized by Universitas Mataram and Indonesian Regional Science Association (IRSA) in Mataram, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia on 18-19 July 2022.

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