

ASSESSING TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH THE FACILITIES PROVIDED AT LANGKAWI ISLAND GATEWAY JETTY TERMINALS

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SAŽETAK

Kako bi povećala privlačnost i razinu zadovoljstva na turističkim destinacijama, vlada je osigurala brojne popratne sadržaje. Ti su popratni sadržaji smješteni na raznim lokacijama, uključujući lučke terminale koji imaju funkciju polazišta za turističke destinacije, posebno one smještene na otocima. Glavni cilj ove studije je ocjena razine zadovoljstva turista pruženim sadržajima na lučkim terminalima. Kako bi se taj cilj postigao, provedeno je istraživanje na 3 odabrana lučka terminala za otočje Langkawi. Kako bi se došlo do potrebnih podataka provedena je anketa gdje su turistima koji su posjetili otočje Langkawi podijeljeni upitnici. Zatim je 437 upitnika podvrgnuto metodi statističke analize. Rezultati pokazuju da je ukupna razina zadovoljstva turista pruženim sadržajima na lučkim terminalima niža od zadovoljavajuće. Ova je studija također pokazala da razina zadovoljstva kod turista ne utječe na njihovu odluku da ponovno posjete otočje Langkawi, ali utječe na njihovu odluku o odabiru alternativnih polazišta pri njegojvoj posjeti.

Ključne riječi: zadovoljstvo turista, sadržaji, lučki terminal, polazište

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, Langkawi Island is considered as one of the most popular tourist destinations. As such, several studies related to tourist satisfaction levels

with the island have been conducted over the years. The growth of Langkawi Island as a tourist destination is actually based on several factors, such as the development strategy, effectiveness of the public transportation system, government policies, natural heritage, and culture with tourist potential, as well as other related factors. However, according to Ibrahim and Ahmad (2011), the availability of infrastructure and good quality facilities can also be referred to as one of the factors that would affect the rapid growth of tourism on this island. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that a large sum of financial allocation has been provided steadily by the government for the establishment of these relevant facilities. Ibrahim and Ahmad (2011) also add that in order to ensure that the tourist activities in Langkawi maintain their further growth, the government has been continuously allocating large financial sums for the upgrade of facilities and for the development of tourist products, since the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995).

According to Zainuddin *et al.* (2006), approximately 85 percent of tourists arrive to Langkawi Island through the sea routes, based on the tourist arrival records of the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA). This directly implies that these public passenger jetty terminals are the main gateway for the tourists who are intending to visit Langkawi. In fact, during certain seasons, these jetties are observed to receive a very high number of tourists, to the extent of causing congestion and over-excessive usage. This is as explained by Ibrahim and Ahmad (2011), who state that tourist and vehicle congestion in the Langkawi ferry terminals often occur during festival holiday seasons, school breaks / holidays and during certain events on a national or an international level, which are organized in Langkawi. In order to support the related tourist activities, various facilities have been developed by the government to ensure that every terminal is able to function fully, and consequently, to raise the tourists' satisfaction. This awareness of the government is explained by Mersat (2012), who stresses that the efforts of the Transport Ministry to upgrade the facilities at the Kuala Perlis Ferry Terminal were further amplified by the addition of facilities, for instance, a centralized air conditioning system at the terminal waiting area.

Nevertheless, a review of the previous research has generally indicated that there is a lack of specific studies that provide a relationship between the aspects of tourist satisfaction and the facilities provided at the jetty terminals, although Ibrahim and Ahmad (2008) have explained that there are various issues relating to the quality of products and services in tourist destinations in the state of Kedah, which includes Langkawi Island, where they have discovered that the

dissatisfaction of tourists with the facilities provided at the jetty terminals is due to the toilet cleanliness, vandalism of facilities to the point of non-functionality, poor maintenance, lack of facilities, tourist safety and comfort aspects, as well as others. As the basis of this research, the following research questions were developed:

What is the tourist satisfaction level with the overall facilities provided at the public passenger jetty terminals on Langkawi Island?

Is there any correlation between the satisfaction levels with these jetty terminal facilities and the frequency of visits to Langkawi Island?

TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH THE FACILITIES

Satisfaction has always been considered essential for business success (Cam, 2011:6). Therefore, it is not surprising to find previous research which has delved into tourist satisfaction within the field of tourism studies. For instance, the research carried out by Arabatzis and Grigoroudis (2010) at the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufliou National Park examined the relationship of tourists' satisfaction with various factors such as the regional environmental attributes, service standards and sufficient accommodation for tourists. Another study by Kalisch and Klaphake (2007) evaluated satisfaction and perception of the crowding problem at the German National Park. Prior to that, Akama and Kieti (2003) conducted a research that attempted to explore the tourist satisfaction levels with their safari trips and various other eco-tourist activities at the Kenya National Park. These previous studies connected with tourist satisfaction have shown that the expectations of tourists, as well as their satisfaction levels, are the main concern and that they occur in almost every other tourist destination. As stated by Yuksel (2001), most researchers have studied components of experiences which contribute to tourist satisfaction within different tourist and hospitality contexts, as some researchers examined tourist satisfaction with the destination services, while others ascertained user satisfaction with the recreational services, whereas some explored components of guest satisfaction with the hotels and restaurant services.

The diversity of these studies have caused the creation of various definitions of the actual meaning of tourist satisfaction by inferring from the respective subject matter or the focus of the respective studies. Chon (1989) refers to tourist satisfaction as the result of the relationship between tourist expectations about the destination based on their previous images of the destination and their evaluation of the outcome of their experience at the destination area. Meanwhile,

Baker and Crompton (2000) have defined tourist satisfaction as the quality of visitors' experience and psychological outcome derived from interaction with different service facets in a destination. A more brief explanation has been given by Truong and Foster (2006) who state that satisfaction within the context of tourism is an outcome of the comparison between expectations and experiences. From these definitions and explanations, it can be seen that there are two elements which are integral to the true definition of tourist satisfaction, and which are, "what is expected or hoped" and "what is experienced or received" by tourists. The comparison between these two elements subsequently merges to produce an output, referred to as "satisfaction". As such, the actual concept of tourist satisfaction is in fact similar to the concept of customer satisfaction. This is because the concept of customer satisfaction also stresses the same aspects. Some authors emphasize that customer satisfaction begins with individual comparison of services or product performance based on their expectation. Generally, the level of satisfaction with a product or a service could be expressed through a certain action. In the tourist context, for example, tourists will express their compliments when they feel satisfied with a tourist product or a service, while a comment will be stated when they are dissatisfied. Satisfaction will also result in a more meaningful and significant experience for tourists. Positive experiences can encourage repeat visitation (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000) and create a positive word-of-mouth communication (Beecho and Prentice, 1997).

Nowadays, tourists are increasingly becoming more demanding and desire value for money, as well as the provision of quality products and services (Assefa, 2011:8). In tandem with this development, the need to measure and assess tourist satisfaction levels with a tourist product, service or facility in a continuous manner, has become a necessity. By being aware of tourist satisfaction levels, numerous benefits can be reaped by various related parties. These benefits include measuring of the potential of the industry for strategic planning purposes, understanding of the customers' reactions to a product, encouraging both new and repeat visitation and determine areas that may need improvement. In general, Assefa (2011) states that by knowing the tourist satisfaction levels, a clear understanding of the causes and the nature of visitor satisfaction and dissatisfaction will be gained, while this scenario will assist in the promotion and the development of tourist destinations and enterprises. In addition to these, another expected benefit would be related to the capacity of the industry itself. By understanding and inferring from the tourist behaviour, an abundance of valuable information for further development of the tourist industry may be obtained in a more precise manner. Reisinger (2009) echoes this notion when

concluding that studying tourist behaviour may reveal many potential information such as the type of product attributes the tourists look for, the benefits they seek and the reason of seeking them.

In the field of facility studies, a similar scenario has occurred since various studies connected with user satisfaction have been done by the academia and practitioners. Nawangwulan *et al.* (2012) have studied whether the conditions of buildings and facilities have any significant impact on the improvement of customer satisfaction, particularly for tenants and visitors. Another study, undertaken by Maszuwita (2005), constructed a trend of analysis in order to portray the level of satisfaction with the building performance at Polytechnic Kulim, Malaysia. Previously, Susilawati (2002) conducted a research in Surabaya, Indonesia, to find out the level of tenant satisfaction in high rise office buildings in relation to the existing facilities and to suggest additionally required facilities. Generally, most of these previous studies have focused on the need to identify or improve customer satisfaction with a building and its facilities. However, studies on customer satisfaction with the facilities in terminal buildings can rarely be found, especially in Malaysia.

Thus, this study is significant in terms of identifying customer satisfaction with the facilities provided by the government at the three selected jetty terminals. For the purpose of this study, 5 important aspects of customer satisfaction, such as comfort, safety, cleanliness, sufficiency and functionality, have been developed for further investigation. The comfort aspect is still the main concern when evaluating the level of tourist satisfaction with the services and facilities available. For example, Ma (2012), in his study for facilities on the internet banking systems in China, has listed the comfort aspect as one of the main components which influenced satisfaction levels with the available services. Clemeset *et al.* (2008) discovered that several studies found that airline passengers perceived in-flight comfort, such as having enough knee and leg room and having a comfortable seat, to be an important issue, and passengers had high expectations of performance related to these factors. Furthermore, in discussions put forth by Juhari *et al.* (2012) on the servicescapes of shopping malls, it was stated that the comfortability aspect is related and influenced by several factors such as lighting, colours, soundness (music and noise), smell, temperature and traffic congestion. For jetty terminals, comfortability is a high concern and must be done in a proper manner as it is an influencing factor for tourists to achieve a higher level of satisfaction while using these terminals. This matter is further described by the MORI Social Research Institute (2002), which outlined that the comfortability

aspect of the service environment and facilities needed an emphasis in the evaluation of customer satisfaction with the services and facilities available. Facilities done in a proper and suitable manner will create comfort to tourists, as well as other users.

The second aspect, which is also connected with the level of tourist satisfaction with the facilities at jetty terminals, is the safety aspect. Clemeset *al.* (2008) emphasize that the aspect of safety is one of the main service quality components which has an impact on the level of customer satisfaction. The safety aspect in this context is referred to a form of guarantee that the facilities at jetty terminals are safe to be confidently used by tourists. In addition to these, the aspect of cleanliness also needs to be considered when determining the level of tourist satisfaction. Research by Mrkicet *al.* (2010) on visitor satisfaction at Laguna Grande, Puerto Rico proposed cleanliness of facilities as one of the aspects that is required to be improved immediately by the related agencies. This scenario shows that tourists have taken into account the cleanliness aspect as one of the factors which influenced their levels of satisfaction. In fact, according to Hassanain (2008), the cleanliness aspect is very important because a hygienic environment could promote a healthy life.

The fourth aspect that should be considered when measuring the level of customer satisfaction is availability. Suitability and availability refer to the necessity of required facilities, as well as their number. The number of available facilities must be high enough, always done in a proper manner and relevant to the number of tourists and expected users. Shortage of facilities will create an imbalance, and unexpected situations may happen because of this shortage. Shortage may affect the facilities in terms of frequency of use, as well as improper usage and the lifespan of the facilities would be able to be predicted accurately. Shortage and unsuitable facilities will create dissatisfaction among the tourists. For example, Moscardo (2001) in his study on tourist satisfaction at Pontoons on the Great Barrier Reef, Australia, stated that several facilities and equipment were found to be insufficient such as chairs, lockers, toilets, tables, changing rooms and showers. From his point of view, these facilities should be added and should be placed as well as managed in a proper manner. The final aspect utilized in this study, which influences the level of customer satisfaction, is the functional aspect. It is about the usability of the available facility according to its intended purpose. According to a previous study, Mrkicet *al.* (2010) listed the enquiries about bathroom usability to measure the level of tourist satisfaction with the facilities provided at Laguna Grande, Puerto Rico. Another study by Seubsamarn

(2009) included the enquiries about the functionality of the available facilities at a homestay in order to evaluate the level of tourist satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This is a survey study in which the data was collected through the distribution of questionnaire forms. The development of the questionnaire as a research instrument is entirely based on literature findings that were acquired from numerous secondary sources such as working papers, journal articles, text books, reports and other previous publications. Besides this, through the scope of this research, the content of the questionnaire form is specifically limited to the types of facilities evaluated within the context of this study. The categories or types of facilities were limited to 10, based on the study criteria. These selected facilities are waiting area facilities, seating facilities, toilets, prayer rooms, commercial areas, ventilation equipment, lighting equipment, loading areas, parking facilities, and finally, other facilities. In order to distribute these questionnaire forms as a means to procure the required research data, the researchers directly met the respondents. The respondents of this study consisted of local and foreign tourists who were using the Kuala Perlis, Kuala Kedah and Pulau Pinang jetty terminals as their gateway when visiting Langkawi Island. The content of this questionnaire was divided into two sections, where in the first section, the questions that were asked were intended to gain background information concerning the respondents. In the second section, the 10 types of facilities provided at the jetty terminals were listed down in the 5 respective different aspects, namely the aspects of comfort, safety, cleanliness, sufficiency and functionality.

The final draft of the questionnaire was then subjected to a pilot test involving 10 local persons who have had prior experience in using the Kuala Perlis Jetty Terminal as their gateway to visit Langkawi Island. The pilot test was conducted within 1 week in January 2012. Through this pilot test, a few comments to improve the content of the questionnaire were given by selected respondents. Based on these comments, an amended final version of the questionnaire was then produced and utilized for the actual survey. The respondents were selected through a random sampling process, through which, final 437 respondents were involved in this study. Due to the background of the respondents, a bi-lingual (Bahasa Malaysia and English) questionnaire was prepared and used in the data collection process.

ANALYSIS OUTPUT

Background of respondents

Out of 437 respondents who had completed the questionnaires, 203 (46%) respondents were met at the Kuala Perlis terminal, 187 (43%) respondents at the Kuala Kedah jetty terminal and 47 (11%) respondents at the Pulau Pinang jetty terminal. Lower participation and representation of the respondents from the Pulau Pinang Jetty Terminal is due to the fact that there is only one trip per day to Langkawi Island whereas the other terminals offer more daily trips. In terms of gender, out of 437 respondents, a majority of them, totalling 256, were female tourists while male tourists made up the remaining 181 respondents. The majority (74%) of the respondents are local tourist and the remaining are international tourists. In terms of age, approximately 46% respondents are between 30 to 39 years old. 146 respondents, forming the second highest age group are between 20 to 29 years old. The third age group is between 40 and 49 years of age and were represented by 83 respondents and comprised 19% from the total number of respondents. Only 7 respondents involved in this study were older than 49 years. In the aspect of frequency of visitation, 45% or 196 respondents stated that their current visit is their first time to Langkawi, 125 respondents noted it to be their second visit, 69 respondents mentioned that this is their third visit and 47 have acknowledged that they have visited Langkawi more than 3 times.

Reliability Results

Cronbach's Alpha was used to verify the reliability of tourist satisfaction levels as stated in the survey instrument. Based on Table 1, it was revealed that the final values of Cronbach's Alpha for this study is 0.765, which is above 0.7 as recommended by Litwin (1995). Therefore, this indicates that the survey instrument utilized in this research is reliable and internally consistent.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Total Satisfaction	37.3290	8.829	0.702
Waiting Area	37.2052	9.549	0.734
Seating facilities	37.3746	9.065	0.709
Toilet	37.9902	11.363	0.806
Prayer room	37.3420	8.958	0.705
Commercial Area	38.0423	11.309	0.804
Ventilation	37.2671	9.138	0.715
Lighting	37.2085	9.420	0.725
Loading Area	38.4723	9.936	0.772
Parking	38.3681	10.325	0.789
Other Facilities	37.2443	9.224	0.720
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items
0.765	0.810		11

The Outputs of Satisfaction Level

The collected data was subsequently analysed based on the respective satisfaction aspects using statistical methods. As shown in Table 2 below, it was discovered that the overall tourist satisfaction levels with the facilities provided at jetty terminalstoLangkawi Island were at a less than satisfactory level, as the mean value registered was at only 3.67, less than the prerequisite of 4.0 value for being satisfied. However, when mode values are looked at, the recorded 4.0 value implies that a majority of the tourists have assessed the provided facilities as being satisfactory. Subsequently, when each of the 10 listed facilities are scrutinized individually, it was found that 5 of them were assessed as being satisfactory by the tourists, namely waiting area facilities (mean=4.05, mode=4.0), prayer rooms (mean=4.04, mode=4.0), ventilation equipment (mean=4.02, mode=4.0), lighting equipment (mean=4.15, mode=4.0), and other facilities (mean=4.03, mode=4.0). 3 other facilities were assessed as being less than satisfactory. These 3 facilities are seating facilities (mean=3.62, mode=4.0),

toilets (mean=3.13, mode=3.0) and commercial areas (mean=3.09, mode=3.0). In any case, 2 types of facilities the tourists were dissatisfied with as they returned a mean value of less than 3.0. The facilities in question are loading areas (mean=2.87, mode=3.0) and parking areas (mean=2.98, mode=3.0).

Table 2: Tourist satisfaction levels with the provided facilities at the jetty terminals

Type of Facilities	Satisfaction Level			Satisfaction Aspects									
	Mean	Mode	Justification	Comfort Aspect		Safety Aspect		Cleanliness Aspect		Sufficiency Aspect		Functionality Aspect	
				Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Waiting area	4.05	4.0	Satisfied	4.06	4.0	4.12	4.0	3.08	3.0	4.03	4.0	4.07	4.0
Seating area	3.62	4.0	Less Satisfied	3.04	3.0	4.22	4.0	4.04	4.0	3.96	4.0	3.32	3.0
Toilets	3.13	3.0	Less Satisfied	2.40	2.0	3.05	3.0	2.43	2.0	3.86	4.0	3.22	3.0
Prayer Rooms	4.04	4.0	Satisfied	4.16	4.0	4.02	4.0	3.86	4.0	4.02	4.0	4.12	4.0
Commercial Areas	3.09	3.0	Less Satisfied	3.17	3.0	3.14	3.0	3.32	3.0	3.62	3.0	4.10	4.0
Ventilation Equipment	4.02	4.0	Satisfied	4.14	4.0	4.26	4.0	3.92	4.0	4.03	4.0	4.10	4.0
Lighting Equipment	4.15	4.0	Satisfied	4.18	4.0	4.26	4.0	3.86	4.0	4.38	4.0	4.11	4.0
Loading area	2.87	3.0	Dissatisfied	2.74	3.0	2.42	2.0	2.80	3.0	3.07	3.0	3.12	3.0
Parking Area	2.98	3.0	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	3.11	3.0	3.12	3.0	3.32	3.0	2.44	2.0	4.01	4.0
Other Facilities	4.03	4.0	Satisfied	3.84	4.0	4.14	4.0	3.63	3.0	4.12	4.0	4.16	4.0
OVERALL SATISFACTION	Mean			Mode								Justification	
	3.67			4.0								Less Satisfied	

**The satisfaction level was justified based on the following criteria:*

- i. *Satisfied is denoted when both mean and mode values are more than or equal to 4.0*
- ii. *Less satisfied is denoted when either both or one value of the mean and mode is less than 4.0 but is at least 3.0*
- iii. *Dissatisfied is denoted when either both or one value of the mean and mode is less than 3.0*

These criteria were determined based on the Likert answer scale that was used in the questionnaires follows: 1 for "Strongly Dissatisfied", 2 for "Dissatisfied", 3 for "Less Satisfied", 4 for "Satisfied" and 5 for "Strongly Satisfied"

In addition, as shown in Table 2 below, tourist satisfaction levels with the 10 related facilities vary from one another based on the aspects of satisfaction. The waiting area facilities, out of 5 evaluated aspects, only 4 aspects registered satisfactory levels, namely comfort, safety, sufficiency, and functionality, whereas the cleanliness aspect (mean=3.08, mode=3.0) was found to be less satisfactory. For the seating facilities, only the aspects of safety and cleanliness were revealed to be satisfactory as both the mean and mode values for these two aspects exceeded 4.0. The other aspects, namely, comfort, sufficiency and functionality, recorded a mean and mode values below 4.0 but exceeding 3.0, which implies that they are less satisfactory. From the perspective of the toilet facilities, it was discovered that all aspects were either less satisfactory to the tourists or deemed as being unsatisfactory (i.e. respondents were dissatisfied). For the prayer room facilities, however, only one aspect was classified as being less satisfactory which is the aspect of cleanliness and which returned a mean value of 3.86 and a mode value of 4.0. The other remaining aspects were all considered as satisfactory by the respondents.

As for the commercial area facilities, only the functionality aspect recorded a satisfactory level with its mean value of 4.1 and the mode value of 4.0. The other 4 aspects, namely comfort, safety, cleanliness and sufficiency (were deemed to be less than satisfactory. In both the ventilation and lighting equipment cases, 4 out of the 5 assessed satisfaction aspects registered a mean and mode values of 4.0 and above. This implies that the tourist respondents involved in this study evaluated these aspects as being satisfactory. For the next item, the loading area facilities, the analysis of the results has indicated that the tourist satisfaction levels with this facility, based on the five concerned aspects, was deemed either as less than satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The aspects that were recorded as being less than satisfactory are sufficiency and functionality, while the remaining aspects were classified as being unsatisfactory. Finally, for the category of other facilities, analysis of the obtained results pointed out that there are 3 satisfaction aspects which were assessed as satisfactory by the tourists;

safety, sufficiency and functionality. The other 2 aspects, namely the aspects of comfort (mean= 3.84, mode=4.0) and cleanliness (mean= 3.63, mode=3.0) returned values that placed them under the less than satisfactory level.

Based on these five satisfactions aspects that were used as the assessment criteria for measuring tourist satisfaction levels in this study, for the comfort aspect, it was found that out of all 10 listed facilities, only 4 facilities were deemed eligible as being satisfactory, namely, the waiting area facilities, prayer rooms, ventilation equipment and lighting equipment. In terms of the safety aspect, only 6 facilities were assessed as being satisfactory, which were the waiting area facilities, seating facilities, prayer rooms, ventilation equipment, lighting equipment and other facilities. Subsequently, for the cleanliness aspect, there was only one facility that was evaluated as being satisfactory, namely the seating facilities. From the aspect of sufficiency, there were 5 facilities that the tourists assessed as being satisfactory, which were the waiting area facilities, prayer rooms, ventilation equipment, lighting equipment and other facilities. For the final aspect of functionality, the analysis of the results has shown that 7 facilities were measured as satisfactory, namely, the waiting area facilities, prayer rooms, commercial areas, ventilation equipment, lighting equipment, parking areas and other facilities.

The Outputs of Correlation Analysis

Table 3: The correlation between total satisfaction, visiting frequency and tendency to choose other gateways

		Total Satisfaction	Frequency of Visits	Tendency to Choose Other Gateways
Total Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.016	.469**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.739	.000
	N	437	437	437
Frequency of Visits	Pearson Correlation	.016	1	.097*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.739		.042
	N	437	437	437
Tendency to Choose other Gateways	Pearson Correlation	.469**	.097*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.042	
	N	437	437	437

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation analysis as illustrated in Table 3 above, shows that a significant correlation is only found between total satisfaction and the tendency to choose other gateways (Pearson Correlation = 0.469), and the frequency of visits and the tendency to choose other gateways (Pearson Correlation = 0.097). The analysis of the results as shown in Table 3 also demonstrate that there is no significant correlation between total satisfaction and the frequency of visits. Based on this, it can be deduced that tourist satisfaction levels with the facilities provided at the jetty terminals examined in this study do in fact influence the tendency of tourists to choose other alternative gateways to Langkawi Island. This clearly shows that if tourists assess these facilities as less satisfactory or even unsatisfactory, they will have the tendency to use other available gateways to visit Langkawi in their future trips. However, their satisfaction levels do not influence them when deciding whether to make return trips to Langkawi, since the inherent attraction which Langkawi possesses is sufficient enough to attract them back and make repeated visits or trips. The analysis of the results also implies that whenever tourists repeatedly or frequently visit Langkawi Island, they will definitely have the tendency to choose other jetty terminals or gateways.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the results as described above, it was discovered that the overall tourist satisfaction levels with the 10 types of facilities provided at the Kuala Perlis, Kuala Kedah and Pulau Pinang Jetty Terminals were at a less than satisfactory level. Although when analysed individually, there were certain facilities such as the waiting area facilities, ventilation equipment, lighting equipment and other facilities that were deemed to be satisfactory, not even one type of facility achieved a satisfactory level regarding the five satisfaction assessment aspects of comfort, safety, cleanliness, sufficiency and functionality. This findings also directly imply that the provision of these facilities is still far from being at the most optimal level, as these facilities are still unable to fulfil the actual needs and satisfaction levels of tourists. This scenario is likely to be tied with several specific conditions or issues which may be considered as the contributing factors. The implementation of tourism development activities in Langkawi Island are more focused on activities that strengthen resources which have become assets, or products in attracting tourists to the island. This form of

developmental trend has resulted in somewhat neglected provision of infrastructure and support facilities, especially of those that are located outside of Langkawi Island. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising to find that the implementation of infrastructure and facility upgrading programmes in the gateways to Langkawi Island is more concentrated at the Langkawi International Airport, as well as the Kuah Jetty Terminal, if compared to the jetty terminals at Kuala Perlis, Kuala Kedah and Pulau Pinang. For instance, LADA (2011) has stated that four initiatives concerning infrastructure have been undertaken with the aim of enhancing the overall tourist experience, beginning from the moment the tourists arrive at Langkawi and as they travel within the island, as well as the main services they receive. This clearly shows that the emphasis is on the upgrade or enhancement of tourist facilities of the infrastructure located on Langkawi itself. This is as Tozser (2010) hypothesizes, whereby the availability of supporting infrastructure or facilities of tourism such as telecommunication, public toilets, and public safety is considered to be less important than infrastructure of tourism itself.

The facilities provided at a jetty terminal should generally be maintained in a systematic and continuous manner so that these facilities are kept at their best and are able to be used as per their original intent. The implementation of maintenance activities in these facilities must be precisely planned and undertaken using a specific approach. This is as described by Manaf *et al.* (2005) who stress that the facility management approach should be fused with the tourism industry as there are various tourist based facilities that need to be effectively maintained for the purpose of ensuring that the tourist activities may be carried out without unnecessary hindrances. The failure in maintaining these facilities will bring about negative impacts with regards to the satisfaction levels of the tourists. A study on tourist satisfaction levels with heritage and cultural sites conducted by Huh (2002) discovered that the maintenance factor was one of the main factors influencing satisfaction levels. In general, the maintenance factor includes maintenance activities undertaken in tourist destinations, as well as the related support services. According to Mabunda (2004), the inability to maintain tourist facilities will in turn reduce tourism value. Furthermore, the explanation given by Ekinici (2008), describes that the “maintainability” dimension displays the compliance with the customers’ requirements of the provided services.

The next factor is about the capabilities of government agencies. The Kuala Perlis and Kuala Kedah jetty terminals are owned and managed by an agency within the federal government, i.e., the Malaysian Marine Department,

whereas the Pulau Pinang jetty terminal is owned and managed by the Pulau Pinang Port Commission. Apart from managing these jetty terminals on Langkawi Island, these agencies are also responsible for management and administration of other jetty terminals. For instance, the Malaysian Marine Department manages 37 other jetties besides the 2 jetties on Langkawi Island, and these jetties include both passenger and cargo jetties. Due to this relatively large number of managed jetties, the ability, as well as the priority of adding, repairing and upgrading of the available facilities within these jetties will become restricted and constrained. According to Palomino (2003), governments would need to allocate a huge financial sum to develop and provide the required infrastructure and facilities for the tourism industry in any given country.

Based on previous studies, it was found that most of the research focused on Pulau Langkawi tourist satisfaction levels were more concerned with the tourist sites on the island, as well as other related tourist facilities which are directly connected to these sites, such as hotel and resort facilities, public transport services, and others. There are no specific studies conducted focusing on the aspect of tourist satisfaction with the public infrastructure or facilities that form support services in the development of the tourism sector in Langkawi Island. The importance of these support services must not be overlooked, as Palomino (2003) states that the development of tourism requires the existence of an infrastructure, as well as other facilities specific to tourism. In addition to this, Samsudinand Mohamad (2013) stress the need to provide sufficient infrastructure and facilities to cater for the increase in tourist numbers so that no negative impacts would be present in these tourist destinations. These studies have only underlined the importance and need for research on support facilities, including the facilities provided at the jetty terminals servicing Langkawi Island. Without proper research, the related parties would not be able to obtain accurate and pertinent information regarding the actual needs of the tourism industry in any destination. For instance, in the aspect of hotel facilities on Langkawi Island, a weakness has been highlighted by Zainol(2012), who states that the currently available information and data are not sufficient for the identification of the potential failures of Langkawi hotels. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that, due to this lack of information and research, the facilities provided at these jetty terminals are still below expectations.

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