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Are Visitors Satisfied and Intend to Revisit Rumah Terbuka Aidilfitri?: Malaysian Community in Perak

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Abstract

This study empirically examined the level of visitors' satisfaction and intention to revisit the Rumah Terbuka Aidilfitri celebration in Perak, Malaysia. 160 visitors were given questionnaires during the festival. The event managed to attract a huge crowd from different ethnicities and backgrounds. Varieties of foods were served to the visitors. However, they have to spend time queuing for food and sometimes could stretch into long hours before they can be seated and enjoy the festivals. Nevertheless, majority of the respondents satisfied with the festival and would return to this festival again and will recommend the festival to others.

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Keywords: Aidilfitri; visitors; malaysian community; revisit

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1. Introduction

Malaysia is a unique country with diverse ethnicity and religious beliefs as well as various ethnics' festivals celebration. For instance, the Malays celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Hari Raya AidilAdha, and Maulidur Rasul while the Chinese celebrates Chinese New Year and Chap Goh Mei. Deepavali and Thaipusam are celebrated by the Hindus, whereas Tadau Ka'amatan and Gawai Dayak are the grandest celebration in Sabah and Sarawak (Suhaimi, 2010). Uniquely, these festivities are not only celebrated by the related ethnic groups and practitioners but become a national celebration.

The "Rumah Terbuka" festival expresses a unique way of celebrations which is not only allowed the people to visit each other on festive occasions of a race or an ethnic group but also to enjoy the foods prepared by the hosts (Suhaimi, 2010).

Even though the celebration of "Rumah Terbuka" festivals have been started and celebrated few years ago, in 2011, Utusan Online has reported that each of the festivals manages to attract huge crowd from different ethnicities and backgrounds although such "Rumah Terbuka" festivals were held annually. Despite that, people willing to spend time queuing which sometimes could stretch into long hours before they can be seated and enjoy the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals.

Therefore, it is conjectured that festival attributes such as foods, facilities and amenities, entertainment, program as well as venue satisfied the visitors and create their intention to revisit the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals for the next year. It is also believed that quality foods with various choices may also attract visitors to attend the festivals. With a good amenities and facilities provided by the celebrations, it is believed may also encouraged them to spend their time at the festivals. An interesting entertainment and suitable programs for various age groups are also believed to become a major factor influenced them to the festival. With a good selection of strategic location for the venue and good accessibility, it is also believed to encourage them to attend the festivals. Overall, it is conjectured that with a good quality of the "Rumah Terbuka" attributes provided which directly creates satisfaction to the visitors; it may also directly encourage them to revisit the festival celebrations.

Therefore, it raises a question on the visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention towards the festivals. Despite growing research on festivals, no published academic study has examined the levels of satisfaction and behavioral intentions particularly the "Rumah Terbuka" festivals in Malaysia.

2. Literature review

2.1. Festival

Traditionally, festivals are associated with religious belief, customs, and culturally shared myths. As time changes, festivals evolved and so do their significance, acceptance in political, social and cultural aspect (Porananond & Robinson, 2008). Festivals may also reflect traditional social celebrations of a community or they may be constructed by the community around a theme connected to the place (Jolliffe, Bui, & Nguyen, 2009). They are important occasions for communities, families and individuals to express in public their identities, lifestyles, social relations and senses of belonging. In large part of developed countries, festivals have become popular as cultural tourism attractions where the number of festivals with strong cultural component is substantially increasing in numbers globally (Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004). Festivals not only contribute to the local regeneration and prosperity of a destination, but they also help to generate new employment opportunities (Prentice & Andersen, 2003; Smith, 2004).

2.2. Hari Raya Aidilfitri and "Rumah Terbuka"

Hari Raya Aidilfitri is celebrated every year by the Muslims all over the world. It is celebrated in the month of Syawal of the Islamic calendar after one whole month of fasting (Shuhaimi, 2010). This festive celebration inculcates the spirit of sharing, caring and forgiving. One of the traditions endured by the Malay communities during Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration is the practice of visiting others (Osman, 2011). This practice coincides with the concept of "Rumah Terbuka" whereby the hosts extend their homes to guests and well wishers as well as served

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