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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General Background

The tourism industry plays a crucial role in the development of economies of various countries around the world. The tourism industry has the potential to generate foreign exchange earnings, generate employment and promote the development in various parts of the Country.

In Singapore, tourism plays a significant role in Singapore's economy. The tourism industry contributes 4% to the GDP in Singapore, and provides 160,000 jobs. (STB, 2017) This figure is expected to rise to 4.8% by 2028. This data shows that the tourism industry is crucial for creating and maintaining employment opportunities, as well as to support the economy.

There are many tourist sites in Singapore. The top sites in Singapore include Gardens by the Bay, which saw 10.2 million visitors in its 2017/2018 financial year, with the main attractions being the Cloud Forest and Flower Dome conservatories, and the Supertree Grove. Resorts World Sentosa, a resort which houses six hotels, a convention centre and a casino. Visitor numbers exceed 20 million annually. The Singapore Botanical Gardens is also another popular tourist site, after it became a UNESCO world heritage site. It attracts 4.4 million tourists annually. Singapore Zoo, another popular attraction, covering 26 hectares of tropical rainforest, with an open concept zoological garden. Home to 2,400 animals of 300 different species,

Singapore zoo sees 1.9 million annual visitors. (Singstat, 2018)

Singapore is now a global hub, serving as a popular getaway destination for tourists, as well as a major transit point for flights. Singapore's Changi airport served more than 65 million passengers in 2019 (Government, 2019). Besides the airport, Singapore's cruise industry is also very strong as it attracted some 1.87 million passengers last year, making a 35% growth rate that doubled the growth of 2017. The growth comes on the back of an overall strong tourism performance in 2018 that drew 18.5 million visitors, reflecting a 6.2% increase compared to the previous year, according to preliminary estimates by Singapore Tourism Board (STB).

It is supported by high-quality infrastructure and a seamless integrated transportation system. Over the years, the government has invested a large sum of money into the tourism industry. It is a sector that can be further developed and has great potential to boost the economy.

1.2 Rationale

This paper focuses on the different factors that affect the number of visitors in a tourist site. With an increasingly global world, tourism has become a significant source of income for Singapore. As the number of tourists in Singapore increases annually, it is important to understand why some tourist sites are more popular among tourists compared to others. This comprehensive understanding allows various tourist sites to make necessary changes and change their strategies if needed in order to improve their destination attractiveness. This would boost their profits and benefit our economy as a whole.

1.3 Research questions

1. What are the key factors that determine the success and popularity of tourist attractions in Singapore?
2. What are some methods that tourist sites can use to boost their destination attractiveness?

1.4 Thesis statement

Due to the challenging and competitive global environment Singapore faces, as well as unpredictable factors, there is much uncertainty in tourist arrivals in Singapore, and eventually to various tourist sites. Tourist sites in Singapore need to stay relevant and keep themselves attractive to tourists.

1.5 Scope of research

This research will be limited to looking at 3 tourist sites in Singapore to make comparisons. The sites that are chosen will be 1. Gardens by the Bay, 2. Singapore Zoo, 3. Science Centre Singapore.

1.6 Significance of research

This research will be useful as limited attempt has been made to highlight, group, and rank

the attributes that will affect tourist numbers in a way that could help destinations to allocate resources and prioritize the development of destination facilities for tourist sites in Singapore. This would give us a more comprehensive understanding on the factors determining the success of a tourist site. With this better and increased understanding, tourist sites will be able to implement these new tactics to mitigate these problems and boost their profits and benefit the economy.

1.7 Limitations

This research might be limited as the scope is 2-3 tourist sites. As a result there is only a small amount of data that can be compared to draw a conclusion. In addition, due to the novel coronavirus situation, we are unable to get accurate data of tourists in Singapore. We are unable to interview foreign tourists and only locals on their views, hence the data collected may not be applicable to that of foreign tourists that visit Singapore.

1.8 Methodology

For primary data collection, field research through observation, surveys on tourists can be conducted to find out the factors that encouraged them to visit. In view of the coronavirus Circuit Breaker, this will be replaced with an online survey. For secondary data, library research on materials related to the tourism industry in Singapore and by compiling data from various government websites for statistics will be utilised. Tourism models such as the Butlers' model will be used to analyse and identify the stages that the different tourist sites chosen are in.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Butler's model (1980)

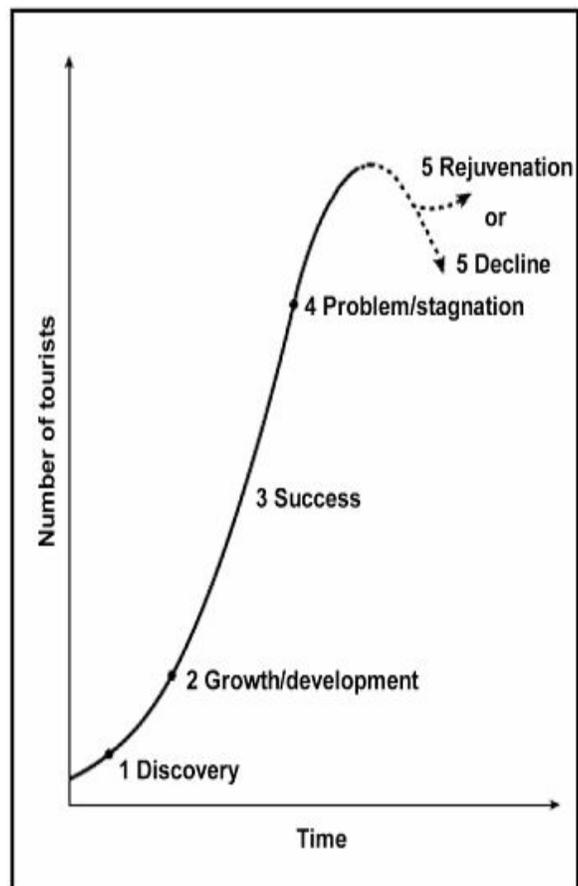


Fig. 1 Butler's model

The Butler Model examines the stages of touristic development for a destination. Butler (1980) suggested that the following stages occur.

Stage 1: Discovery

When an area is first discovered by small groups of tourists that explore a tourist attraction, the people will be able to share their experiences at the destination with other people. This is especially prevalent in the modern world, where social media is ubiquitous and makes communication between people easy. This will lead to the tourist spot gaining some recognition as a result.

Stage 2: Development

With the gained recognition from tourists via word of mouth, the media or guide books, the destination begins to have higher numbers of visitors and the area would develop as well, with the attractions beginning to be marketed at a larger audience.

Stage 3: Success

Mass tourism replaces the original economy and the tourist facilities including transport, guiding, accommodation, restaurants etc. are fully developed and used. The tourist destination enjoys great success and many visitors will visit the destination as a result.

Stage 4 Problem/stagnation

Visitor numbers soar, and eventually reaches its peak. This will cause some problems in the area. Visitors and tourists will start to lose interest in the area and it becomes less fashionable and loses its novelty.

Stage 5: Rejuvenation/Decline

Tourists will look for newer destinations as a result. A decline is defined by a decrease in the number of visitors, either suddenly or gradually, that visits a certain tourist destination.

Popularity may be short lived as people may become bored with the resort once its initial appeal has waned. The tourist site can look for strategies to rejuvenate and attract tourists in order for the site to be sustainable.

Butler's model (1980) is highly relevant to this research paper as its focus is to ensure that Singapore is able to keep its tourist hotspots attractive to tourists. The purpose of the Butler Model is "to look at the way that tourist resorts grow and develop. The tourist industry, like all industries, is dynamic and constantly changing." (Zygmunt et al. 2011) Our tourist sites would have to find new solutions to adapt to this ever-changing market and stay relevant and maintain its attractiveness, as well as its destination image. Destination image refers to the image tourists have of the destination before they visit it.

The model is however unable to show us the exact causes of how a tourist site gains success and the explicit reasons for its decline or rejuvenation.

2.2 Factors that affect destinations' popularity

2.2.1.1 Destination attractiveness

The concept of destination image has been widely studied by authors and researchers such as (Ariya et al. 2017), (Huang, 2012) Countless tourist sites are available, and tourists have a wide choice of available destinations, and the attractiveness held of destination plays a critical role. Destination image therefore plays a major role in the competitiveness of travel destinations. The popularity of a destination is often determined by how well the destination is able to satisfy a consumer's needs. (Vengesyagi, 2002) Tourists will tend to visit places that are able to satisfy what they want to see. Tourists' expectations when visiting a particular place are related to several features of the chosen destination: culture, architecture, gastronomy, infrastructure, landscape, events, shopping, etc. These features attract people to the destination and contribute to the overall experience of the trip. "The more the destination is perceived to be attractive the more likely a tourist will visit it." (Vengesyagi, 2008) A popular tourist destination is one that is able to meet many of these factors and satisfy tourists and the attractiveness diminishes in the absence of these attributes. According to San Martín and Del Bosque (2008), satisfaction can be understood as an individual, cognitive and affective state, which derives from tourist experiences and leads to tourists' loyalty to destinations.

Criticisms

Vengesyagi here has stated that people will tend to visit places that "satisfy consumers' needs". However, the factors that cause this difference and what creates this destination attractiveness is not clearly stated.

2.2.1.2 Factors affecting destination attractiveness

Many researchers agree that the destination attractiveness is a key factor to whether or not the tourist would have intentions of visiting a particular site. A variety of factors contribute to this. One main factor that affects its attractiveness is the cost. This is a crucial factor as cost is very important for tourists, as many of them are on a limited budget and would like to save money as much as possible. "Pricing is one of the most important elements in the tourism marketing mix." (Meidan et al, 1994). According to a research conducted by Islam (2017), cost and affordability was among the top factors that pushes a tourist and basis on whether to go to a place or not. However, the basis for cost may also be different, as some people would want a once-in-a-lifetime experience when they travel. Travelling and tourism is an experience, and some would be willing to pay more for the "worth for its value". Many consumers do believe that price is a good indicator of quality (Owusu, 2013). Choosing a price that is just right hence is quite a difficult task for tourist destinations. (Wells et al. 1997)

Another crucial factor that affects the tourist destination's attractiveness is its beauty, and its variety of attractions. While it is difficult to pinpoint what exactly beauty refers to, beauty may refer to several things and its definition is quite wide. It can be seen as various types of beauty, natural beauty (examples include the Alps, Niagara falls), historical sites (examples include Machu Picchu, Egyptian Pyramids) etc. It may also refer to man-made things (Gardens by the Bay, Marina bay Sands, The Eiffel Tower) . Nonetheless, when a site is deemed beautiful, its attractiveness increases drastically and people would be more willing to visit that place as a result. People will be more willing to go to "beautiful destinations" to help themselves relax and experience (Goldberg, 2018) However, some researchers may argue that beauty can be rather arbitrary, and rather subjective hence it is quite difficult to tell, and is not a good basis to decide

One last major factor that would affect a destination's attractiveness is the infrastructure of the area. This refers to the infrastructure of the destination itself, hotels and shopping malls, as well as the infrastructure around it such as roads that connect to the destination for accessibility. Many researchers such as (Sakshim, 2019) and studies have suggested that failing to adequately develop the infrastructure around the area will lead to reduced destination attractiveness, as it will cause a lot of inconvenience for travellers. Studies and research papers have shown that high-income economies with strong and advanced infrastructure had the largest increase in arrivals, growing faster than the global rate. (Sakshim, 2019) and tourists would prefer to go to a place where access is easy and convenient, with developed infrastructure.

Criticisms

The factors aforementioned are extensively studied, regarding their relationship with destination image. However, the material to rank these attributes and factors are generally limited, especially for the context of Singapore, and it is difficult to tell if these factors apply the same for that of Singapore.

2.2.2 Destination image

Many researchers such as Gartner and Hahhti agree that destination image plays a crucial role in the success of a tourist site. The destination image can be seen as the "total processes of a destination's image being formed over a various sources over a long period of time" (Assael, 1984) There are 2 main ways these images are portrayed in tourists,

1. Through marketing strategies

2. Peoples' own images of the destination

2.2.2.1 Definition

Destination image is a key factor which influences tourists' decision-making when they choose their next destination. When they are in a certain country or city, the destination image also plays a big role as tourists will choose the specific sites they want to go to and sites that they do not want to go to based on this. "The importance of the destination image for the consumers allows us to think of any destination from the consumer's perspective in terms of how they sense, understand, use and connect to the place" (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2004). The studies of destination images highlight the importance of destination attributes in developing positive destination images. Different destinations have different images and thereby attract different people (Gartner, 1989; Haahti, 1986). Gartner and Haahti states that destination image also greatly affects the number of tourists that visit and their reasons for visiting.

2.2.2.2 Marketing strategies

The destination image is decided by a variety of factors, and one of the most crucial factors is the marketing strategies that a destination comes up with. In a tourism context, the destination image that people have of a destination is a very crucial and important problem. Images play an essential role in what and where tourists will do and go to, and in this regard, as tourism services are intangible, images are said to become even more important than reality. Hence, since the media we consume daily have a huge impact on us, the marketing strategies indeed are important. Many studies and researchers such as Sonnleitner have shown that the marketing strategies have a great influence on the minds of people of a certain destination.

Marketing can come in a variety of methods, through television commercials, through television shows, posters, slogans etc. Many researchers have concluded that the information we perceive and take in are closely related. "Marketing strategies and advertisements have an influence on forming perceptions and evaluations on a tourist destination and there is a great diversity of information sources individuals are exposed to. The concepts of destination image and destination marketing and branding are closely interrelated. The ultimate goal of any destination is to influence possible tourists' travel related decision making and choice through marketing activities " (Sonnleitner, 2011)

2.2.2.3 Personal factors

Personal factors also greatly affect the tourists image of the destination. Personal factors refer to psychological characteristics such as an individual's values, motivations, personality or lifestyle, as well as those of a socio-demographic nature. (Sonnleitner, 2011). Hence it can be seen that However, some other researchers say that the personal factors that form the destination image of a place are rather difficult to pinpoint explicitly and it will be impossible for destinations to satisfy everyone.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Survey Questionnaire

This study will mainly involve the collection of primary data through a survey questionnaire and interviews. However, the interviews will not be possible due to the current situation of the coronavirus pandemic. The questions in the questionnaire are based on the literature review and specific destination characteristics, based on the various sites chosen. The questions in the questionnaire will be designed and split into 2 sections. The first section will involve the measurement of the different importances of the different factors that help decide how tourists decide which destination they would be visiting. The list of factors can be found in *Appendix 1*. The second part of the survey questionnaire will be more specific, and respondents will be asked to rank the three tourist attractions given using the Likert scale.

3.2 Interviews

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was not possible to conduct interviews at the attractions itself and interview people in real life. Hence, Google Forms was used to ask

interview questions, on top of the survey questions in order to probe respondents further on the various choices that they have made, and justify their ratings for the different destinations that were given. A total of 51 respondents answered the interview questions and there were a relatively equal representation of both genders, races and age groups. Only locals were interviewed, as initially foreigners were planned to be interviewed at the various tourist sites. However, this has become unfeasible due to the coronavirus.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

A total of 101 respondents were surveyed, with a relatively equal representation between different genders, races and age groups.

4.1 Factors affecting tourists choices

Points scored

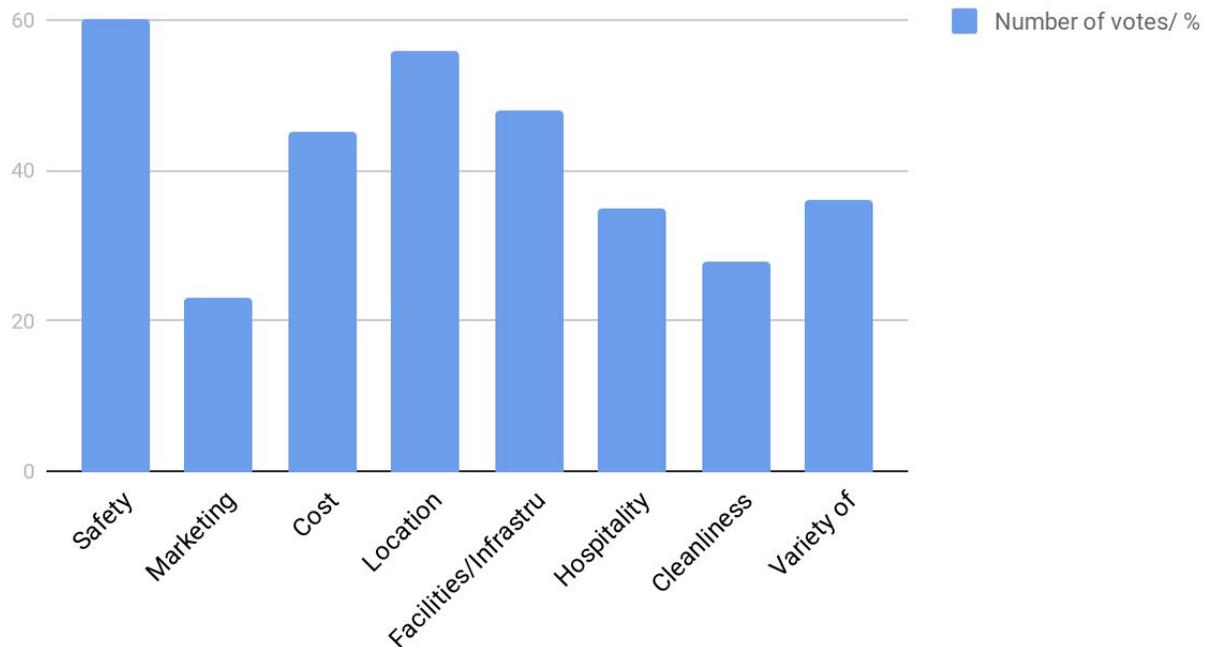


Fig. 2 Factors affecting how tourists decide on attraction (compiled)/%

Respondents were asked to choose up to 3 choices, on the three most important factors that help them choose which destination or attractions they would choose to go to. The respondents were given a list of factors to choose from (see Appendix I). From the diagram shown in Fig 2.2, it can be seen that the most popular reasons and factors that affect tourists' choices on which destinations they choose to go to include location (56% of respondents), Safety (60% of respondents), and facilities and infrastructure, and cost also not far behind, at (47% and 45% of respondents respectively). This implies that these factors are the most important when tourists or visitors consider which attractions they may choose to go to.

From the survey results, it can be seen that marketing/advertisements is the least popular option among respondents, which implies that the advertisements that destinations put up have not been very effective so far in influencing tourists to visit a certain destination, and would have minimal impact. This result is also somewhat surprising as the literature review suggests that marketing strategies adopted by tourist sites play an important role in influencing tourists and their decision making.

Safety of the destination, by far ranks as the most important factor with almost 60% of respondents considering it as one of the most important factors that would help them make their decision on which destination or attraction they would want to visit. Safety of the tourists themselves and their families would be of utmost importance to them. However, one thing to consider is that this factor may not be as relevant for destinations in Singapore. Singapore has been ranked as the second safest country in the world (Insurly, 2020). Hence, this factor is not as relevant as all of the attractions and tourist sites in Singapore would be more or less equally safe.

Location was another crucial factor that decided the popularity of the destination. 56% of respondents from the survey selected location as a crucial factor. This result is not unexpected. People value their time and will prefer a location and a destination that is easily accessible and not too far away. Facilities and infrastructure of the attraction, as well as around the attraction was another popular factor chosen by the respondents in the survey, with 47% of respondents choosing it. Some tourists and visitors may not like old and outdated facilities and would prefer newly built places that have new buildings and good amenities, and this would determine the quality of the experience at the attractions.

Points scored

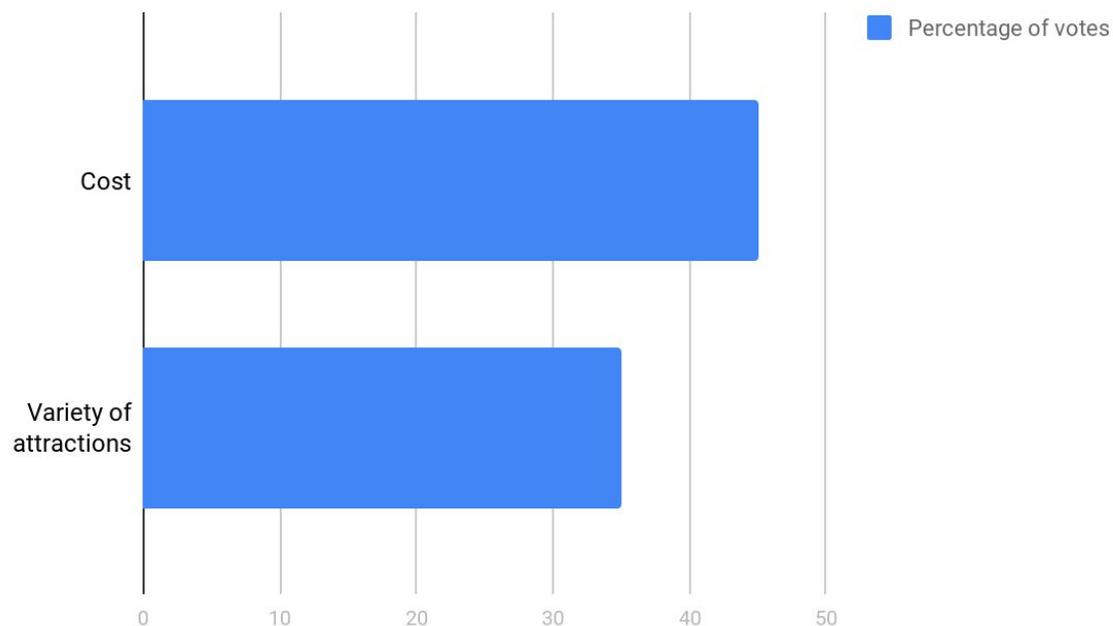


Fig 2.3

Another interesting result observed from the survey is the difference in votes between for cost and the variety of attractions available. As shown in Figure 2.3, 45% of the respondents chose cost as a determining factor, while 35%, which is significantly less than that of cost. This comparison was briefly mentioned in the literature review section of the paper, on whether people valued the price of the attraction or the quality of the attraction more. It was not known whether Based on the results, it can be seen that although the variety and the quality of the attraction does play an integral role in the decision making process, it can be concluded that cost is still more important to tourists, and an overly pricey destination would be unattractive for them.

Finally, some other factors that were less popular included cleanliness and hospitality. This result was expected. This result shows that factors such as cleanliness and hospitality are less important and visitors can come to a compromise for these factors, should the tourist attraction offer what they want.

4.2.1 Comparison and contrast between tourist sites chosen

Location	Mean	Mode
Gardens by the Bay	4.34	5
Singapore Zoo	3.76	4
Science Centre Singapore	3.33	4

Fig. 3 Results of survey/ Number of points

In the survey questionnaire conducted, respondents were asked to compare between the three sites given that had been chosen for this research paper. The three sites chosen were Gardens by the Bay, Singapore Zoo and Science Centre Singapore. Respondents would assess the attractiveness of these sites using the Likert scale. In addition, open ended interview questions were added and the respondents needed to justify their choices. The mean and mode values were calculated from the results of the survey. From this, we can see that the least popular and least attractive destination among the three chosen sites is Science Centre Singapore, followed by the Singapore Zoo and Gardens by the Bay is the most popular option.

4.2.2 Gardens by the Bay

Points scored

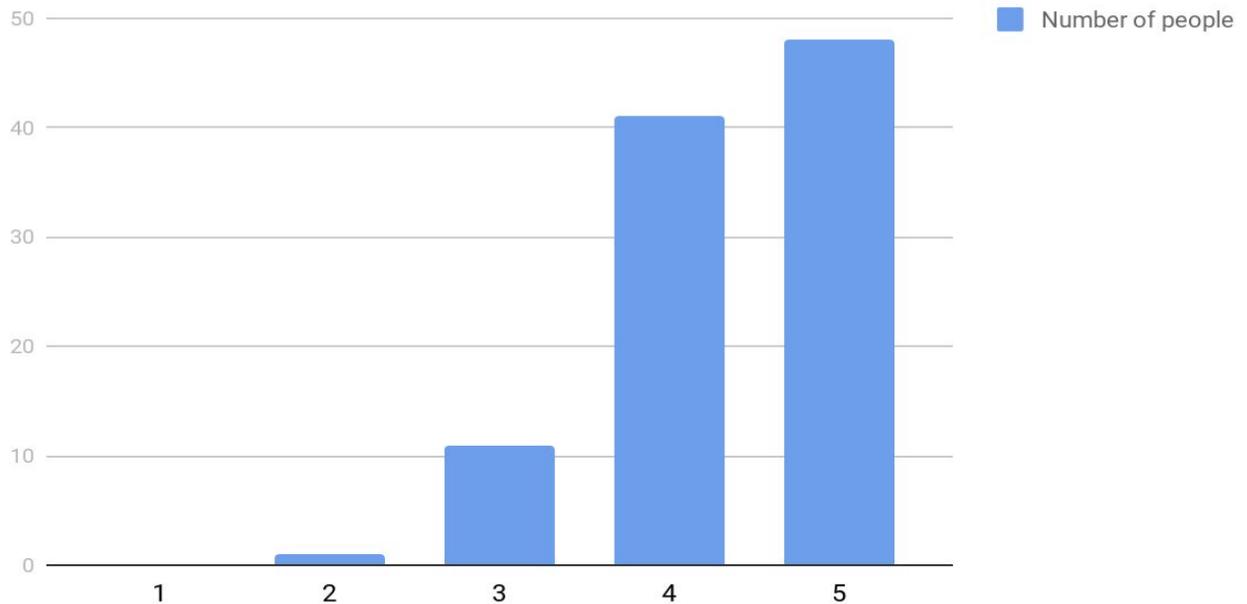


Fig 4.1 Gardens by the bay attractiveness/number of votes

From the figure above, we can see that Gardens by the Bay had very high ratings from respondents. Of 101 respondents, most respondents chose 4 or 5, when asked to rate the attractiveness of Gardens' by the Bay. We can infer from this chart, that Gardens by the Bay is still a very attractive destination in the eyes of consumers, and people would be willing to visit it. When respondents were further probed, a significant number of people (16 respondents) reflected that they gave a high rating for Gardens by the Bay due to its accessibility and location. Gardens by the Bay is located in the Central Business District (CBD) Area and is connected by many MRT lines. It is accessible via the Downtown Line, East- West Line, Circle Line and North South line and would be easy for anyone to visit the location via public transport. Another reason that was pointed out by respondents is the high quality facilities and infrastructure in Gardens by the Bay. A significant number of respondents (11 people), when

asked in the interview questions, pointed out that Gardens by the Bay had high-quality infrastructure and facilities, such as the Flower Dome, Rainforest dome as well as the Supertrees. Interestingly, (11 respondents) pointed out that they find Gardens by the Bay attractive due to the wide variety of flora and fauna in the garden, as well a chance to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. A total of 6 respondents also pointed out the free admission to Gardens by the Bay, with the exception of the domes, as one of the key reasons they found it more attractive than the other destinations.

In conclusion, this high rating of Gardens by the Bay was highly expected. Based on the tourist arrivals, Gardens by the Bay had 12.3 million visitors in 2019. (Statista, 2019) justifying its popularity. Using the Butler's Model as a reference, we can see that Gardens by the Bay is at Stage 3 of the model.

4.2.3 Science Centre

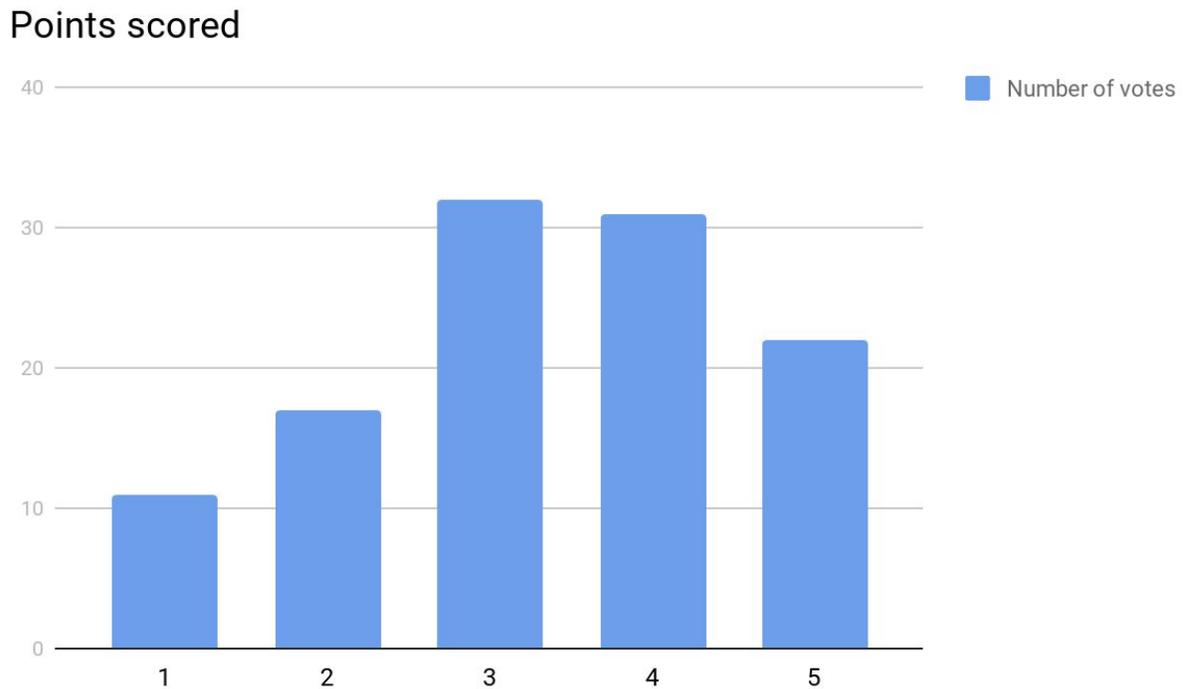


Fig 4.2 Science Centre results/ Number of votes

Science Centre Singapore had a mean score of 3.33, and is ranked 3rd among the three tourist sites chosen for this research. We can infer from this result that the reputation and the destination attractiveness of Science Centre is average, or below average. In general, many respondents voted for 3 on the Likert scale.

, Respondents were further probed for reasons why they found it attractive or unattractive. For respondents who found the Science Centre attractive, some common responses included interest in Science, as well as interactive displays. However, positive responses made up the minority of the respondents. There were many reasons as to why the respondents gave poor ratings for the Science Centre. 9 respondents pointed out that the Science Centre was too old and facilities were aging. Indeed, the Science Centre is a very old

facility and has been here for quite some time. The aged infrastructure is hence a factor that affects the attractiveness of Science Centre Singapore. Another reason is that the Science Centre is too far away from the city centre. 11 respondents explained that location was one of the factors that discouraged them from going to the Science Centre. The Science Centre is located in the Jurong area, which can make it quite a distance from many areas in Singapore. It is also rather inaccessible as there is no direct access to a MRT station and one would have to take a bus from Jurong MRT station just to get there.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Science Centre is not that attractive as a destination to people, and unfortunately has lost its attractiveness and novelty. This result is somewhat expected as among the three destinations chosen, it has the lowest number of visitors annually. From a foreign tourist's point of view, the Science Centre would also not have much destination attractiveness. Using the Butler's model, we can conclude that Science Centre is on Stage 4 of the Butler's model, and some rejuvenation of the site would be required for it to maintain its attractiveness to consumers.

4.2.4 Singapore Zoo

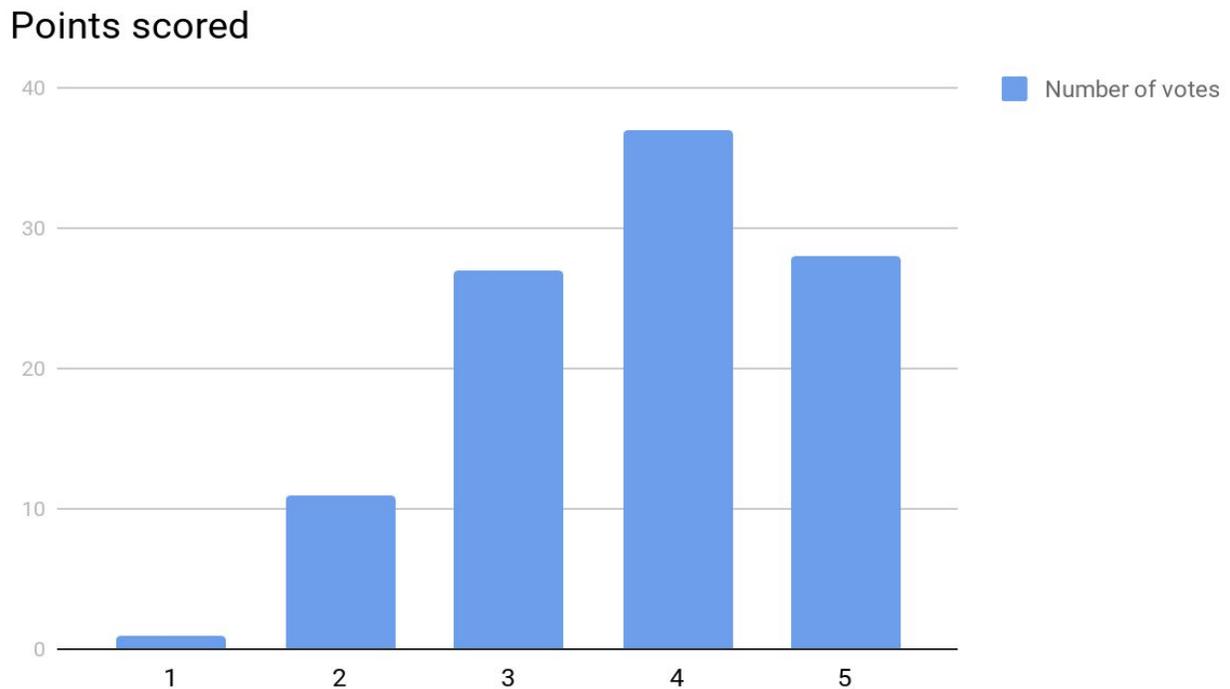


Fig 4.3 Singapore Zoo ratings/number of votes

Singapore Zoo was given a mean rating of 3.76, and is ranked 2nd place among the 2 destinations chosen. Most respondents gave a rating of 4 and above on the Likert scale, which shows that Singapore Zoo is still relatively attractive as a destination. However, there are quite a number of respondents who gave a rating of 3 and below (39 respondents), showing us that there were some flaws and factors that limits its attractiveness too. Similarly, respondents were also further questioned to justify their choices.

A popular reason why the attractiveness of Singapore Zoo is limited is because of its location (16 respondents). The Singapore Zoo is located in the Mandai area, which is a rather

obscure and isolated area of Singapore. This makes accessibility of the location to be compromised as a result, resulting in a fall in its attractiveness. Another reason for its mediocre ratings is cost (11 respondents). A single adult admission ticket costs well over S\$30, and this would eventually add up if you have more family members. Many respondents pointed out that this is still excluding the price of food and beverages that one would most likely purchase during the visit.

On the other hand, there were also reasons for why the Singapore Zoo was attractive. 16 respondents explained that the variety of attractions was one of the reasons why they found the zoo attractive. One of them pointed out that the Zoo had a wide variety of attractions and different parks, such as the Night Safari, River Safari and the Singapore Zoo.

In conclusion, the Singapore Zoo is still attractive as a destination to tourists at the moment. However, it will need to continue its rejuvenation cycle in order to stay relevant and remain attractive.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that the tourism industry in Singapore has its problems. In order for tourist sites to continue their rejuvenation cycles and maintain their destination attractiveness for consumers. This study has shown that some sites such as the Science Centre would have to understand tourists better and come up with newer strategies to attract tourists. Some major factors that destinations would have to consider are the cost and the locations of their destinations, as well as the variety of attractions they offer to tourists. They would also need to step up their marketing tactics and make more influential advertisements appealing to tourists. As some of these factors, such as location may be unfeasible to make any significant changes to, it would be advisable for sites to understand tourists better and gain a more comprehensive understanding on what they want, and roll out new activities and attractions so that it would attract more tourists. By doing so, it would ensure the long-term sustainability of tourist attractions in an unpredictable and volatile world, based on the Butlers' Model stages of rejuvenation or decline.

In addition, after the final evaluation of results, the final ranking of factors that have an important role in Singapore are as follows (From most important to least important)

1. Location
2. Cost
3. Variety of attractions
4. Infrastructure/Marketing
6. Friendliness and hospitality/
7. Marketing tactics
8. Safety

Fig 4. Final Ranking of factors

Appendix I

1. Location Ease of access, transport infrastructure
2. Marketing strategies Influence of advertisements, slogans etc. put out by the tourist destinations
3. Cost Entry fees, cost of food and beverage
4. Safety
5. Facilities and infrastructure in the area
6. Cleanliness of the area
7. Variety of attractions Natural, cultural
8. Friendliness and hospitality

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