

What Drives Re-Participation Intention of Volunteer Tourism in Malaysia?

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Abstract

Purpose: Volunteer tourism which represents a combination of both voluntary work and travel has become one of the fastest-growing trends in the tourism industry today. However, little has been known about the factors that influence the re-participation intention of Volunteer Tourism, especially in emerging markets like Malaysia. In addressing this gap, this study aimed to test the role of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Memorable Volunteer Tourism Experiences (MVTE) and experience co-creation as predictors of re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism.

Design/methodology/approach: The data were distributed by using survey questionnaire, getting 111 usable data. PLS-SEM was applied to investigate the relationship between variables.

Findings: The study's results confirmed that Memorable Volunteer Tourism Experiences (MVTE) and experience co-creation exert a positive influence on re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism. Contrary to expectation, the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and re-participation intention in volunteer tourism found no support.

Research limitations/implications: This study is conducted in the Malaysian context.

Practical implications: The results from this research would benefit the tourism sector and the researchers or academician who interested in hospitality and tourism studies.

Originality/value: This is pioneering research that uses attribution theory to understand the underlying factors of re-participation intention of volunteer tourism in the Southeast Asia context. Also, the relationship between fear of missing out (FOMO) and re-participation in volunteer tourism, which is a new relationship to the tourism literature.

Keywords: Re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism, Memorable Volunteer Tourism Experiences (MVTE), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), experience co-creation.

Introduction

The phenomenon of volunteer tourism (VT) has become one of the global trends in recent years due to the “raised consciousness, increased interest in activism and increased prosocial values, compassion and perspective-taking” (Lin et al., 2023; Salvador-Almela, 2023). Globally, prior to the pandemic, there were approximately ten million volunteers worldwide, contributing US\$2 billion annually to volunteer tourism (McLennan and Thomas-Maude, 2023). Volunteer tourism or voluntourism can be referred as a form of altruistic and sustainable travel that focuses on travelling while doing a good deed (Bajrami et al., 2023; Eckardt et al., 2022). This act of volunteering includes humanitarian causes such as for education, conservation etc, with the involvement of the tourists, host community and volunteer tourism organizations (McLennan and Thomas-Maude, 2023; Salvador-Almela, 2023). Volunteer tourism is

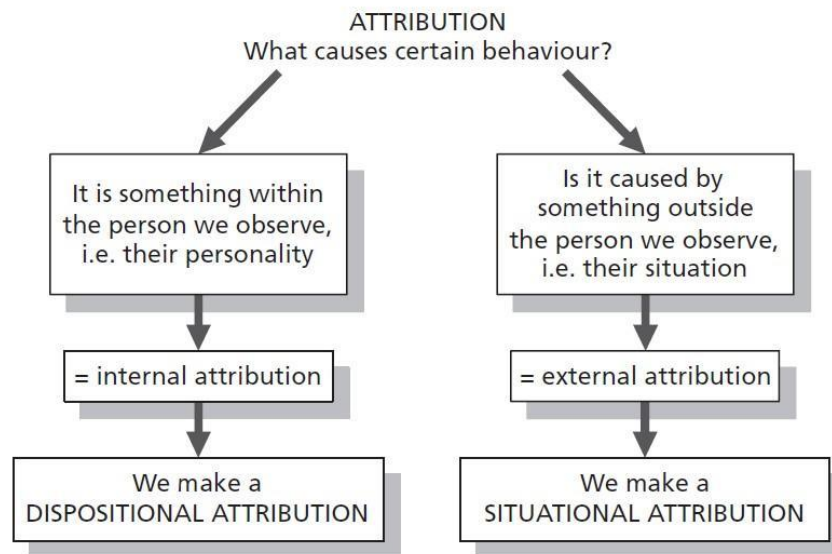
generally driven by altruism, to gain responsible travel experiences and for humanitarian purposes (Bajrami et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). The act of volunteering in tourism or voluntourism is also said to have the potential to maximize the tourist experience while connecting and contributing to the host region financially and spiritually (McGehee and Andereck, 2009). In Malaysia, volunteer tourism has been booming at a rapid rate in recent years. Malaysian's independent travellers especially participate in volunteer tourism projects namely "Clean and Green" at Kanching Eco-Forest Park, the Zoo Negara KeeperKu Programme and Kampung Kuantan Firefly Preservation Project (Selangor.travel, 2020). With this increased relevance of volunteer tourism in Malaysia, it is crucial to examine the underlying factors that promote the re-participation intention in volunteer tourism among Malaysian travellers. Specifically, understanding the determinants of the re-participation intention in volunteer tourism is critical to promoting such services.

Although interest in volunteer tourism has increased in recent years, there is evidently much room for additional exploration (Magrizos et al., 2021). Considerable studies on volunteer tourist motivation mostly focus on the social and altruistic value (Lin et al., 2023, Wearing et al., 2017; Han et al., 2019), intrinsic benefits (Guttentag, 2011; Han et al., 2019) and self-interest (Han et al., 2020). However, the drivers of participation intention in volunteer tourism have received scant attention in tourism literature, especially in the context of local tourists in developing nations (Khan et al., 2023). This study aims to clarify the issue. Thus, this paper enriches the knowledge on volunteer tourism, focussing especially on a study of factors that influence the re-participation intention in volunteer tourism in emerging markets like Malaysia. This study extends the attribution theory to examine the factors that influence re-participation intention in volunteer tourism in Malaysia. Particularly, the current research aiming to analyze the impact of memorable volunteer tourism experience (MVTE), fear of missing out (FOMO) and experience co-creation on the re-participation intention in volunteer tourism among Malaysian tourists.

Literature Review

Theoretical basis

The theory of attribution posits that attributes, whether done internally or externally, have a great influence on how people feel and relate to others. There were two main ideas that were suggested to become influential, which are dispositional (internal cause) and situational (external cause) attributions (Heider, 1958; Malle, 2022). Figure 1 shows the graphical illustration of the attribution theory.



Source: Fritz Heider (Originally) Psychology press (2001)

Figure 1: Graphical illustration of the attribution theory

Attribution theory is widely used to explain research in intention on how people attribute or assign /reason to their own and others' intentions and actions (Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022; Tiamiyu et al., 2020). In this study, the attribution theory is used to explain how a person intends to re-participate in volunteer tourism.

Re-participation in volunteer tourism

Based on the discussion above, VT travellers sought for altruistic experience, there is huge possibility to re-participation in volunteer tourism. Meng et al. (2020) found that the sense of obligation to altruistic actions positively influences the re-participation intention. Hence, this study aimed to understand the relationship between memorable volunteer tourism experiences, fear of missing out and experience co-creation and re-participation intention in voluntourism.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Memorable volunteer tourism experiences (MVTE) and re-participation intention in volunteer tourism

Previous researchers have discussed on (MTE) memorable tourism experience. (Chandralal et al., 2015; Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013; Salleh Mohd Radzi et al., n.d.). This positive experience can lead to a desire to relive similar experiences and further contribute to causes that resonate with them.

Volunteers generally seek a meaningful experience that makes a difference (Tomazos and Murdy, 2023). Thus, it is expected that individuals who have exceptionally memorable and meaningful tourism experiences been more likely to be encouraged to repeat the continue participating in volunteer activities. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose that a notable volunteer tourism experience would foster a deeper connection to volunteerism, resulting in a higher likelihood of re-participation.

H1. Memorable volunteer tourism experiences have positive effect on re-participation intention in volunteer tourism***Fear of missing out (FOMO) and re-participation intention in volunteer tourism***

The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a psychological phenomenon characterized by an individual's apprehension about missing out on exciting or rewarding experiences, especially those shared by others (Przybylski et al., 2013).

FOMO, which is common in today's networked society, is motivated by a need to stay socially connected, participate in trending activities, and avoid feelings of loneliness. Social media provides a platform to share an experience of volunteer tourism. It is proposed that individuals who experience a higher degree of FOMO may find re-participation in volunteerism appealing to mitigate these feelings. Volunteer activities provide a sense of belonging, purpose, and the opportunity to partake in meaningful experiences which can be particularly attractive to individuals seeking to avoid missing out on positive social interactions and personal growth (Nekaris et al., 2022). This hypothesis explores the connection between FOMO and tourist's decision to re-participate in volunteer tourism.

H2. Fear of missing out have positive effect on re-participation intention in volunteer tourism***Experience co-creation and re-participation intention in volunteer tourism***

Experience co-creation emphasizes the active involvement of individuals in shaping their own experiences, often leading to a greater sense of ownership, satisfaction, loyalty and creation of mutual beneficial relationship (Guttentag, 2011). Additionally, volunteer tourism fosters the development and rapport between tourists, hosts and the environment (Lee, 2020).

In the context of volunteerism, experience co-creation refers to volunteers' involvement in designing or adapting their roles, projects, or activities. When volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute their ideas, preferences, and skills to their volunteer experiences, they are likely to re-participate and continue their involvement in volunteerism.

By participating in the design or customization of their volunteer roles, individuals can tailor their experiences to align with their strengths, interests, and values. This personalization leads to a sense of ownership and investment in the outcomes, fostering a deeper commitment to the cause (Nekaris et al., 2022). Therefore, it is suggested that the more individuals are engaged in co-creating their volunteer experiences, the higher the probability of their re-participation in volunteer activities.

H3. Experience co-creation have positive effect on re-participation intention in volunteer tourism**Proposed research framework**

The research model for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.

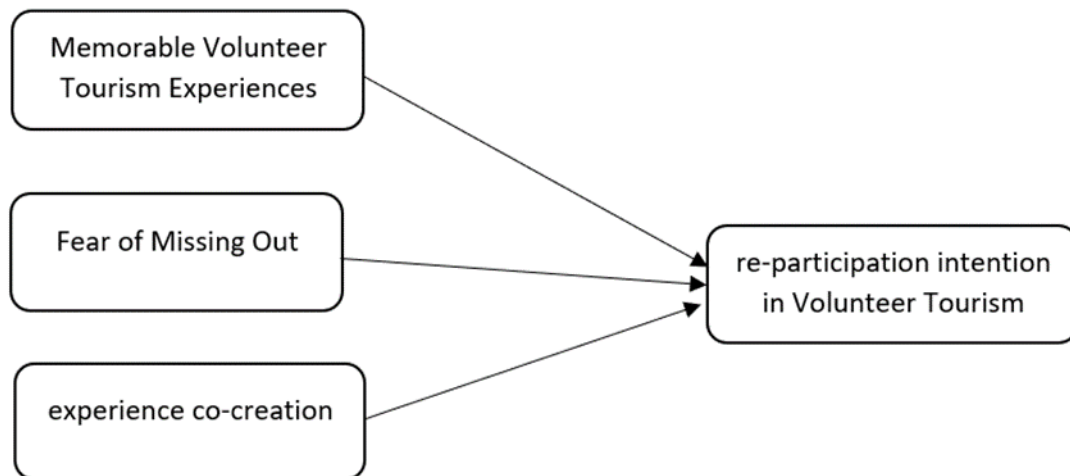


Figure 2: Research model

Method

Memorable volunteer tourism experience (MVTO) and experience co-creation was gauged using three items adapted from Sthapit et al. (2023). The measurement items for re-participation intention in volunteer tourism and fear of missing out (FOMO) was adapted from Meng et al. (2020) and Przybylski et al. (2013) respectively. This research conducted content validity to ensure the measurement items measured the construct appropriately and relevant to the context of the study (Cavana et al., 2001). The measurement items were sent to the experts for the questionnaire validation purpose. Later, content validated questionnaire was distributed to 10 PG students from private university for face validity procedure. The purpose of face validity was to make sure the questionnaire is clear and understandable (Cavana et al., 2001).

Sampling and data collection

This study intends to investigate the drivers of re-participation intention in volunteer tourism in Malaysia. To achieve the study objectives, non-probability judgmental sampling was employed. The population of interest is individuals who are 18 years and above and have experienced participates in volunteer tourism. The screening questions and notes are included in the survey to ensure that only individuals that meet certain criteria participate in the current research. The data collection for this study is by using online survey as it is more relevant to measure an individuals' intention (Evans and Mathur, 2005). The determination of the sample size for this study as per recommendation by Hair et al. (2011). Specifically, each items represent five items; therefore 105 respondents are needed for this study, which comprised of 21 items. 200 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondents which out of 111 were valid for the data analysis purpose.

Demographic output

According to Table 1, 60% of the respondents are female, while remaining is male. Majority of the respondents, which is 63.1% are 18-25 years, 27% are 26-35 years, 6.3% are 36-45 years,

whereas remaining are above 55 years. Nearly 50% of the respondents are Malay, 18% are Chinese and more than 30% are Indian. In regards of the education level, approximately 45% of the respondents are diploma holder, 14.4% are degree holder and remaining have SPM, master's degree and PhD. As for the monthly income, 45% of the respondents have salary of less than RM2000 per month, 23.1% (RM2001-RM3000), 5.4% (RM 3001-RM4000) and 7.2% (RM 4001 and above).

Table 1: Demographic output

Demographic output	Number of respondents =111	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	44	39.6
Female	67	60.4
<i>Age</i>		
18-25 years	70	63.1
26-35 years	30	27
36-45 years	7	6.3
46-55 years	2	1.8
Above 55 years	2	1.8
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Malay	55	49.5
Chinese	20	18
Indian	36	32.4
<i>Education</i>		
SPM	8	7.2
Foundation/ Pre-Diploma	28	25.2
Diploma	50	45.0
Bachelor Degree	16	14.4
Master Degree	5	4.5
PhD	4	3.6
<i>Monthly income</i>		
Below 2000	50	45.0
RM2001-3000	26	23.4
RM3001-4000	6	5.4
RM4001-5000	4	3.6
Above RM5000	4	3.6

Findings

Data analysis and results

The SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2015) software was employed for this regard. PLS-SEM is suitable for exploratory research has advantages in modelling and is less demanding in terms of sample size (Henseler, 2017; Mohamed Sadom et al., 2022). Thus, the application of PLS-SEM for this study is relevant and appropriate. Additionally, PLS-SEM is suggested to produce more accurate and valid results since it is capable to analyzed both measurement and structural model concurrently (Hair et al., 2017). A two-stage method which are to check for

measurement and structural model of the constructs were used for this study (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

Measurement model’s result

The assessment of the constructs’ reliability is by using factor loading, composite reliability and Cronbach alpha (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). As shown in Table 2, the value of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha is more than 0.7, indicating that all construct is reliable (Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021; Hair *et al.*, 2019). Also, the loadings of each were greater than 0.5, thus, consistent with the cut-off value of factor loading as per recommendation by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Thus, the reliability of the proposed research framework was achieved.

Afterward, the evaluation of the convergent validity is by using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which constitute for the number of variances in the construct. Based on Table 2, AVE for all the construct is above the threshold value of 0.5 (Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the convergent validity for all constructs were ascertained.

Table 2: Measurement model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	CA
MVTE	MVTE1	0.984	0.916	0.959	0.954
	MVTE2	0.964			
	MVTE3	0.958			
FOMO	FOMO3	0.631	0.505	0.875	0.852
	FOMO4	0.579			
	FOMO5	0.637			
	FOMO6	0.785			
	FOMO8	0.697			
	FOMO9	0.807			
	FOMO10	0.800			
ECC	ECC1	0.888	0.815	0.949	0.943
	ECC2	0.920			
	ECC3	0.940			
	ECC4	0.854			
	ECC5	0.910			
RI	RI1	0.950	0.886	0.940	0.936
	RI2	0.930			
	RI3	0.943			

Notes: MVTE = memorable volunteer tourism experience; FOMO = fear of missing out; ECC = experience co-creation; RI = re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism; FOMO1, FOMO2 and FOMO7 were removed to increase AVE for FOMO.

Next, the discriminant validity was checked. Fornell-Larcker (1981) Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was used to assess the discriminant validity (Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021; Henseler *at al.*, 2015). According to Table 3, all the square root of AVE of each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs in the model. Hence, the discriminant validity was confirmed (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	ECC	FOMO	MVTE	RI
ECC	0.903			
FOMO	0.196	0.710		
MVTE	0.748	0.144	0.957	
RI	0.717	0.279	0.536	0.941

Notes: MVTE = memorable volunteer tourism experience; FOMO = fear of missing out; ECC = experience co-creation; RI = re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism

As illustrated in the Table 4, all HTMT value is below the threshold value of 0.85, corroborate the discriminant validity for the research model.

Table 4: (Heterotrait -Monotrait Ratio) HTMT

	ECC	FOMO	MVTE	RI
ECC				
FOMO	0.152			
MVTE	0.785	0.141		
RI	0.756	0.226	0.566	

Notes: MVTE = memorable volunteer tourism experience; FOMO = fear of missing out; ECC = experience co-creation; RI = re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism

Structural model's result

The structural model was evaluated by using R^2 , f^2 and the standardised path coefficients and their corresponding t-values using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resample (Hair *et al.*, 2017, 2019). The data from Table 5 suggested that memorable volunteer tourism experience ($\beta = 0.434$, $t = 5.321$, $p < 0.05$) and experience co-creation ($\beta = 0.687$, $t = 7.258$, $p < 0.05$) to have positive association with re-participation intention in volunteer tourism, which provided support for H1 and H2. The results confirmed that memorable volunteer tourism experience and experience co-creation has positive effect on re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. However, the results also indicated that fear of missing out (FOMO) ($\beta = 0.144$, $t = 1.527$, $p > 0.05$) not correlated with re-participation intention in volunteer tourism, rejecting H3.

The coefficient of determination was used to evaluate the model's explanatory power (R^2). R^2 values suggested that amount of variances in the endogenous construct can be accounted for by all of the exogenous constructs linked to it. R^2 value near to 1 indicated for high predictive accuracy (Astrachan *et al.*, 2014). As indicated by Figure 3 and Table 5, R^2 for RI is 0.533, explaining 53.3% of the variance in re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism. This finding confirmed the model has substantial explanatory power (Cohen, 1988). This research also assesses the of effect size (f^2), which indicated that magnitude of a specific exogenous construct on the endogenous construct (Hair *et al.*, 2019). f^2 values of 0.02 represents small effects, 0.15 represents medium effect and 0.35 represents large effects as recommended by Cohen (1988). According to Table 5, the relationship between MVTE-> RI and ECC-> RI is shown to have large effect size, whereas FOMO ->RI is shown to have small effect size.

Table 5: Direct relationship

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	Standard error	t value	R ²	f ²	Result
H1	MVTE-> RI	0.434	0.091	5.321	0.533	0.241	Supported
H2	FOMO ->RI	0.144	0.094	1.527		0.042	Not supported
H3	ECC-> RI	0.687	0.095	7.258		0.438	Supported

Notes: MVTE = memorable volunteer tourism experience; FOMO = fear of missing out; ECC = experience co-creation; RI = re-participation intention in Volunteer Tourism

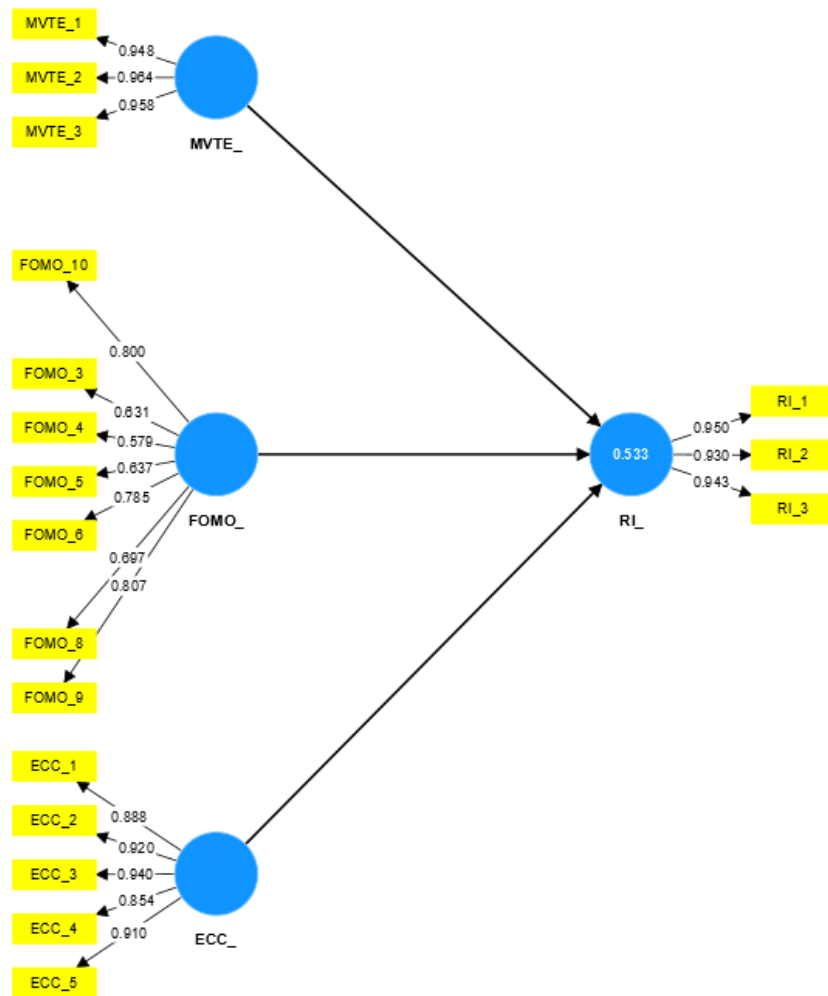


Figure 3: Structural model

Discussion and Conclusion

Theoretical and managerial implications

This study draws on attribution theory to pinpoint the factors influencing re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. Findings of this study provide understanding of the role of memorable volunteer tourism experience (MVTE), fear of missing out (FOMO) and experience co-creation on the re-participation intention in volunteer tourism in the context of Malaysia. The result from this study suggests memorable volunteer tourism experience (MVTE) to have

positive association with re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. This finding is aligned with the past research that mentioned volunteer tourists generally seek a meaningful experience while travelling (Tomazos and Murdy, 2023). In addition, the result from this study suggests that experience co-creation have positive effect on re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. This result is in line with the Wearing et al. (2017) that described social interactions between volunteer tourists, host community and volunteer tourism organization form an exchange of relational influences. Contrary to expectation, the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and re-participation intention in volunteer tourism found no support.

The findings from this research may provide several theoretical contributions and managerial implications for tourism provider and the researchers that specialize in tourism behaviour study. In regard to theoretical contributions, to the best of authors' knowledge, this study is among the pioneer in using attribution theory to understand the underlying factors of re-participation intention of volunteer tourism for Southeast Asia context. Furthermore, the results from this research may assist the volunteer tourism provider especially in better strategizing their marketing efforts. First, tourism provider should develop volunteer tourism program that provide more meaningful and memorable experience to the volunteer tourists. For instance, creation of mural or artwork that represent local community, sharing experience via storytelling evening, create cultural cookbook, create time capsule and organizing cultural swap markets. Also, since social media has been a great hook for the young generation (Dubbelink et al., 2021; Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023), tourism provider may fully utilize social media in their marketing efforts so that people can share their most significant memories from their volunteer tourism experience with a large number of audiences. These efforts would enhance more memorable experience among volunteer tourists, which eventually boost re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. Second, volunteer tourism program should encourage more interactions and collaborations among volunteer tourists, local host or community and volunteer tourism organizer. Connecting the volunteer tourists in the network during the program make them feel enjoyed and allowed them to feel more comfortable.

Limitation and Future Research Direction

Whilst the study provides an interesting finding, they are bound by some limitations which may provide directions for future research for tourism studies. For example, this study used quantitative method, thus, future studies may consider use qualitative method to gather more in-depth insights into factors that influence re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. This study suggests memorable volunteer tourism experience (MVTO), fear of missing out (FOMO), and experience co-creation as a predictor for re-participation intention in volunteer tourism. Thus, future studies may explore other psychological variables such as emotional attachment, trust and cultural experience as the driver for re-participation intention in volunteer tourism.

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