

# Eco-tainment Digital Library and Leisure Tourism: A Practical Approach for Generation Z

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**Abstract:** Reading culture is one of the elements that need to be strategically enhanced to produce an educated and knowledgeable society in the future, specifically in meeting the National Transformation 2050 strategic objective. However, in Malaysia, reading habit is not comprehensively practiced among the Malaysian youth. The paper provides a brief description of a new concept of eco-tainment digital library named as Float eVilla. It highlights the importance of reinventing the traditional library concept into a new eco-tainment digital library to create excitement in the reading experience for generation Z. This study employed the convenience sampling technique for data collection. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to local and international tourists visited Putrajaya. The results of this study are presented in descriptive statistics and describe the patent of respondents' feedback on the eco-tainment digital library characteristics and preferences. Results of the study indicated positive support on the implementation of the Float eVilla concept, which will be able to create excitement in reading habits among Malaysian youth, and provide support to the government's mission in education. This study contributes to provide a new perspective in integrating environment, education and entertainment in leisure tourism setting, which will enhance government transformation strategies to establish a smart young society in the future.

**Index Terms:** Keywords: Education, Innovation, Eco-tainment Digital Library, Leisure Tourism, Generation Z.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge can be obtained by practicing a reading culture. However, environment can either facilitate or inhibit certain behaviors, cognitive processes, and mood. It also assists in developing the ability to enjoy social occasions, improves the sense of community, and enhances openness and talkativeness (Billington, 2015). Malaysia is encountering challenges to increase the reading habit among its nation citizens because this habit is not comprehensively practiced among Malaysians (National Library, 2015). Reading culture is one of the elements that must continually progress to produce an educated and knowledgeable society in the future in order to develop the Smart Communities in

2050. According Rane (2015), library is a social establishment and its main responsibility is to collect, organize, preserve, and disseminate knowledge. The emergence of new technologies has highly impact present and future library. Information technology revolution has promoted the evolvement from the traditional library to computerized library or digitized library. The Internet has given a new dimension to the library and has provided opportunities to users to access and retrieve digital information. Digital library is also known as an electronic version of a library. Digital libraries are the outcomes of information explosion and are simply computerization of traditional libraries and contain a collection of digitized material including text, images, video, and audio for user's access and retrieval. A study by Huang, Pu, Chen, and Chiu (2015) shows that e-resources and digital libraries are becoming increasingly important channels in obtaining information. Consequently, a large number of libraries have introduced mobile communication technologies into their library services which enable users to search for information from anywhere and at any time. It provides access to knowledge, information, and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment (IFLA - Institute Federal Library Association, undated). However, D'Elia, Jørgensen, Woelfel, and Rodger (2002) stated a research found that there are some differences between the library and the Internet which may very well impact consumer choices.

Therefore, a digital library as a center of knowledge plays a strategic role for youth, especially for Generation Z. Generation Z can be defined as the generation that is born between the year 1996 and 2010. Gen Z has been called the "Homeland Generation" and has never known a world without smartphones and social media. They gobble up information quickly and are ready to move on to the next thing instantly (Forbes, 2016).

A research done by Kasim, Zulkharnain, Hashim, Ibrahim, and Yusof (2014) has highlighted that in Malaysia, there are 13.3 million youth between the age of 15 and 40 and this quantity represents 46% of the total Malaysian population. The youth populations have promoted positive impact in the development of the country. Generation Z provides major contributions in shaping the future and community

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well-being. It shows that a positive youth development will contribute to the improvement of the community. Thus, public libraries become the education centers. An example of a center is Float e-Villa which aims to help Generation Z to be more productive and increase the overall quality of life among Malaysian youth.

Tourism has been recognized as one of the national key economic areas (NKEAs) able to contribute to this economic transformation. Hence, the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Programme (MTTP) was formulated to tap the growth potential of tourism sector. MTTP aims to attract 36 million international tourists with RM168 billion (around RM3 billion per week) as receipts in 2020; that is an expansion by 3 times the amount of foreign exchange earnings (MOT, 2013). Supported by Wong (2012) that the following themes were established to attract tourist to the country; affordable luxury, business tourism, nature adventure, family fun, events and entertainment, and spa and sport. For that reason, this study examines the type of characteristics and preferences of eco-tainment digital library factors that can be a practical approach to enhance Generation Z reading habit through leisure tourism.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Larson (2015) stated that digital library is a heterogeneous collection of network-based repositories using a range of protocols for user's interaction, data encoding and transmission. The Working Group of the US Government's Information Technology and Application describes digital library as a system' which provides user with a intelligible access to a very large organization of repositories of information and knowledge. The American Digital Library Federation also mentioned that digital libraries are organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff to select, structure, offer intellectual access to interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity, and ensure the longevity of the collection of digital works and to make sure they are economically available for use by various sets of community.

Grötsch (2001) mentioned that 'tainment- formulas' are a specific classification of experiences that show the importance of feelings, happiness, and emotions. There are many examples of successful 'tainment-formulas'. Examples are arqutainment, confertainment, eatertainment, eco-tainment, edutainment, happytainment, infotainment, publitaimeant, and sport-o-tainment. Eco-tainment can be defined as a combination of ecology and entertainment. This concept has been implemented in public libraries in the United States of America. San Francisco Public Library (2017) introduced unique eco-tainment programs during the summer reading to encourage people, particularly kids to go to the library. This program is called Doug Nolan's which is a combination of juggling, comedy, and audience participation as well as learning about the 4R'S (reduce, reuse, recycle and rot) in a fun manner. These fun activities educate the kids such as teaching about compost and green waste, and disasters by juggling a watermelon, a raw egg, and a tree branch.

Many researchers have discussed about digital library.

Rane (2015) stated that digital library is the IT revolution that transformed traditional library into electronic library or computerized library. The use of Internet provides assistance to users in retrieving and accessing digital information. Digital library is also known as an electronic version of a library. The library contains a collection of digital materials including text, images, video, and audio for ease in accessing and retrieving. Rane (2015) also mentioned that the role of librarian should be changed and they must adapt themselves according to the constantly changing ICT techniques and tools to provide the users optimum services. Sharing of information through digital library should become more attractive for library and information professionals. However, the functions of digital libraries in developing countries are seriously diminished due to traditional reading habits. Libraries in developing countries should offer comprehensive services and take account of the needs of traditional readers when developing digital libraries. For many years, documents that the library have collected are comprised of various types of printed materials. Printed documents are an advantage of the library for traditional users because digital documents cannot fully replace them. It is also unnecessary to digitize all the collected documents of a traditional library. As digital libraries are developed, traditional libraries must continue to provide excellent services in meeting the needs of users with traditional reading habits (Songhui, 2008).

Besides, as cited by Liu (2005), it was suggested that with an increasing amount of time spent reading electronic documents, a screen-based reading behavior is emerging. The screen-based reading behavior is characterized by more time spent on browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading more selectively. In contrast, less time is spent on in-depth reading and concentrated reading. Decreasing sustained attention is also noted. Annotating and highlighting while reading is a common activity in the printed environment. However, this "traditional" pattern has not yet migrated to the digital environment when people read electronic documents.

A generation can be defined as "a set of historical events and related phenomena that creates a distinct generational gap'. The identification of a generation requires some form of social proximity to share events or cultural phenomenon (Parry & Urwin 2011). According to Taylor and Keeter (2010), there are four adult generations which include the silent generation (traditionalists or the Greatest Generation: those born between 1922 and 1945), the baby boomers (born from 1946 to 1964); Generation X (born from 1965 to 1977), and millennial also called as Generation Y (born from about 1977 to 1993).

Prensky (2001) mentioned that the next generation after Generation Y is Generation Z which refers to those born from the mid-1990s to the late 2010s. Generation Z is known as Post-Millennial, I-generation, net-gen, and digital natives and the oldest of whom are now reaching young adulthood and most of whom are between the age 20 or younger. Gen Z is digital natives because they have never experienced a life before the Internet. This

generation has lived in an era in which technology is so readily accessible such as tablets, smartphones (which combines cell phone, media player, cameras, and Internet capabilities into one device), social media, and flat-screen televisions. The advancements of technology enable them to interact and communicate to the world that is connected at all times. However, Generation Z is conservative because they do not actively engage in sports, music, and art. They also have strong family values unlike Generation X who rejects parent values and Generation Y who ignores parents. Generation Z is into news and is concerned about social justice and environment.

Furthermore, Gen Z is uniquely diverse with biracial and multiracial children being the fastest-growing segment in the United States (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011). Generation Z is raised in urban areas, leading to more people within that generation being exposed to a plethora of cultural perspectives as compared to the previous generations (Tacoli, 2012). However, the most significant factor to consider here is digital natives' use of technology. Generation Z has demonstrated a level of proficiency or comfort with technology at such an early age (Palley, 2012). With the web revolution that occurred throughout the 1990s, they have been exposed to an unprecedented amount of technology in their upbringing. In the United States, the popularity of smartphones influenced 77% of 12-17 years old owning a cell phone in year 2015. The technology has strongly influenced Generation Z in communication and education. Sparks et al. (2014), in their research, found that 41% of Generation Z spends more than three hours per day using computers for the purposes other than schoolwork.

In a globalized society, the Internet has become a crucial characteristic and plays a distinctive role in the lives of Generation Z (Toronto, 2009). Furthermore, the abundance of information and resources provided by revolutionary technological advancements has transformed the way people conduct business, maintain contact, and relate as human beings, and access information in a speedy and efficient manner. Social media has the potential to encourage meetings that enable the Paragraph text/Tables Figures etc. As people nowadays travel a lot for different purposes such as holiday (leisure), business or visiting friends and relatives, having a destination attraction like the Float eVilla (the new eco-tainment digital library) could enhance the leisure tourism activities.

### III. METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS

This study purpose is descriptive study in nature, which intend to provide an accurate explanation of observations of a phenomena from individual, organization, industry and other perspectives. According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), descriptive research "is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens". It may be used to justify current practice and make judgment and also to develop theories. For the purpose of this study, descriptive analysis was used to obtain a picture of individuals feedback on the eco-tainment digital library characteristics and preferences. This study employed the convenience sampling technique for

data collection. Dörnyei (2007) stated this sampling is a type of nonprobability where members of the target population meet certain criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study. The convenience sample here would be local tourists, international tourists, residents, or local community from Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya. Out of 200 tourists, 190 (95%) sample were purposively identified as the respondents in this study. The respondents are among local and international tourists. The data collection was also conducted at Putrajaya Botanical Garden which is located in Putrajaya. A pilot study was carried out prior to the final survey. The questionnaires were self-administered to the tourists who visited the Botanical Garden in Putrajaya. From the 200 questionnaires distributed, a total of 190 (95%) answered questionnaires were received and are deemed usable for data analysis.

### IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Demographically, the results show that 72% of the respondents are local tourists (n=136), 4% (n=8) are international tourists and 24% (n=46) are residents or local community. The highest involvement of respondents are from youngsters aged 18-30 years old which makes up 57% and is followed by under 18 years old with 31% and 11% are from aged 40 to 50. Most of the respondents who visited the Putrajaya Botanical Garden is for leisure activities (35%), followed by recreational activities (23%), sightseeing and business purpose are 18% and 14% respectively and visiting relatives (5%). A total of 73% of the respondents are interested to go to the library and the rest (27%) are not interested. Those respondents who are interested to go to the library showed some pattern here 27% of them attended library 2 or 3 times a week, followed by once a month (23%), 2 or 3 times a month (20%), once a week (17%), once a year (12%), and never attended the library is 1% of them. Most of the respondents (69%) agreed that library is attractive, whereby 31% stated that library is unattractive.

About the library concept, almost half of the respondents (42%) would prefer that all the characteristics are applied in the library, followed by digital and technology (20%), entertainment (15%), with education (13%) and leisure (12%). On digital technology application in the library, most of the respondents (97%) are interested while the remaining (3%) stated that it is unattractive. Regarding the green technology implementation, huge number of the respondents (81%) agreed that it is suitable to be implemented in the library while 19% of them disagreed.

On strategic location, 88% of the respondents stated that this concept of ecotainment digital library is suitable to be implemented at Putrajaya Botanical Garden, and 12% of them disagreed. About the concept of ecotainment digital library, most of the respondents (92%) are interested on the concept while the rest (8%) are not interested. Based on the responses from the respondents, 20% of them said facilities is an important criterion for a library, and is

followed by reading materials (18%), strategic location (16%), environment (16%), accessibility (15%), and lastly interior and exterior design (14%). For 4D story-telling session, 44% of the respondents agreed that the reasonable entrance fees is RM3, followed by RM5 (31%), RM4 (17%), and RM6 (8%).

The overall results of eco-tainment digital library concept revealed that the respondents accept and agree on implementing the concept for good. The respondents agreed that the implementation of the concept functions will be able to increase the number of readers among Malaysians, to create excitement in reading habits, and provide support to the government's mission in education.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study focused on the opportunity of implementation on a new concept of library called eco-tainment digital library. The *Float eVilla* will bring Malaysia to a new stage in the digital economy era with this type of *ecotainment-digital library*. The *Float eVilla* will be able to become a new attractive destination to local community and tourists. The implementation of the new library concept will help the related local authorities not only in providing a pleasant facility to the residents and tourists, but also can create a better living environment and improve the quality of life. Furthermore, this *Float eVilla* will help tourism agencies, either government or private bodies in terms of tourists' arrival and market demand.

However, there are several challenges and opportunities in creating an attractive new concept of learning, reading and leisure tourism center for tourist and community. *Float eVilla* must have an ability to attract people to come to the library consistently and able to make them practice reading habit regardless of place and time, and not specifically only in the library. It directly can change people's mentality that reading is an attractive activity. Other than that, *Float eVilla* will be an opportunity to the users in having a pleasant learning and reading center as well as a leisure tourism center with advanced technology.

Based on the findings, the concept is applicable and supported by a majority of the respondents. Innovation of the library concept from traditional to eco-tainment digital library concept will be able to rejuvenate several unattractive libraries to be "alive" and capable of attracting people, especially the youth to use the library.

This study supports the concept that library can influence the desire of Gen Z to visit and use the library. They are inclined towards digital and technology concept and merged with education and leisure elements. The advancement of technology should be a great opportunity in implementing this concept and gaining more support from Gen Z. This can lead to an improvement in education and knowledge among youth. Based on the survey results, it is stated that facilities, reading materials, and strategic location are among the important criteria that are compulsory in each library.

The application of National Blue Ocean Strategy approach in the development of *Float eVilla* will ensure its rapid execution, inclusivity, and minimal costs. This project is in line with the Malaysia transformation strategy towards

creating sustainable, harmonious, and prosperous Smart Communities 2050.

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