A photograph of a wooden boardwalk bridge spanning a river. The bridge is made of weathered wooden planks and has a simple railing. Above the bridge, several strings of small, dark, spherical lights are strung across the path. The river is calm, and the background is filled with lush green trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

# THE EMERGING TRENDS OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL IN MALAYSIA

*EDITOR*  
NUR SHUHADAH MOHD  
MAZNI SAAD

KULLIYAH OF LANGUAGES AND MANAGEMENT



THE EMERGING TRENDS OF  
TOURISM AND TRAVEL IN  
**M A L A Y S I A**



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In collaboration with



Edited by

Nur Shuhadah Mohd  
Mazni Saad

KULLIYAH OF LANGUAGES AND MANAGEMENT

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## PREFACE

The Emerging Trend of Tourism and Travel in Malaysia is established as peer-reviewed book chapter. This book consists of applied research in the context of Tourism and Hospitality in areas such as policy, planning, development, performance, strategy, management, operations, marketing and consumer behaviour. The idea of this research book was inspired by the Dean of Kulliyah of Languages and Management (KLM) as part of the Kulliyah's strategic direction to implement Sejahtera Academic Framework in order to inculcate research culture among all KLM academic staff. Hence, the Department of Tourism took up the initiative where all her staff including part-timers contributed at least one paper for this effort. Ten manuscripts were selected for publishing following a series of screenings and reviews. This book provides all academic staff at departmental level with equal opportunities to share their research findings while improving their research skills.

**Mazni Saad**  
Editor-in-Chief  
2022



# Social Media Usage on Tourists' Trip Planning Process Among Youth

Samshul Amry Abdul Latif<sup>1\*</sup>  
Fatin Shafiq Fouzai @ Fauzi<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Tourists' reliance on social media has increased in recent years. Tourists favor social media over traditional ones for trip preparation and travel decisions. This study examines social media usage on pre, during, and post-trip planning among domestic visitors.

**Methods/Design/approach:** The results were obtained via self-administered online questionnaires from Malaysian tourists who had previously visited attractions in the state of Pahang. This study quantified social media usage in two areas: trip planning and perceived trust.

**Findings:** The results show that respondents use social media heavily before trips compared to during and after trips, namely Instagram and WhatsApp. The results also suggest that respondents trust and rely on travel information from all the six social media platforms suggested.

**Implication/Limitations:** Future studies may incorporate larger samples from various demographic groups and tourist classifications.

**Keywords:** Trip planning process, social media, travel decision, domestic tourism.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations World Tourism Organization or UNWTO reported that the world international tourist arrivals in 2020 were 73% below the pre-COVID-19 pandemic of 2019, while in 2021, it was indicated that the arrivals were 72% below the arrivals in 2019<sup>3</sup>. In Asia and the Pacific, the arrivals were still 65% below 2020 levels and 94% when compared to 2019, as many international destinations remained closed to non-essential travel. The increased rates of vaccination, together with the relaxation of travel restrictions, have all contributed to the struggling tourism industry. As a result, in many countries, various stakeholders encouraged domestic tourism and travel to help their respective tourism sectors survive and grow.

It must be highlighted that prior to the pandemic, the world witnessed a surge in youth travel and tourism. According to the UNWTO (2016), youth and student travelers are a major market for the tourism sector. In 2015, travelers aged 15 to 29 years old accounted for approximately 23% of all international travelers. This suggests that travel trends among the younger generation have increased, and many countries have identified the lucrative young traveler market segment to promote their tourism industry. Conversely, the world's population is estimated to reach 9.9 billion by 2050, and the young generation will continue to account for 49% of the entire population (PRB, 2018). This is yet another indication of the youth traveler's potential on a global scale.

Likewise, in Malaysia, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the overall population in Malaysia is 32.6 million in 2019, with adults aged 15 to 64 comprising 70% of the population. In this age group, the youth (between 15 and 30 years old) account for the highest proportion (Yunus & Landau, 2019). Various stakeholders in the Malaysian tourism industry, including tourism operators, business owners, and policymakers recognized this segment as a significant contributor to the tourism industry. As such many facilities, attractions and marketing effort were geared towards this lucrative segment (Khoo-Lattimore & Yang, 2018; Usamah & Anuar, 2017).

Social media is often viewed as an essential tool in marketing by tourism businesses and operators. Equally, it has also transformed how tourists engaged with tourism businesses and brands, expressed their thoughts, and viewed as well as rated tourism products and services. As technology advances and social media usage expands, tourists and travelers turn to social media platforms to easily find and pick their desired tourist attractions (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016). Social media allows tourists and travelers to access and share information, but it also allows for meaningful connections and networking, thought-sharing, product and service evaluation, and tourism-related decision-making. (Mariani et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2002).

Social media is now more prevalent among tourism and hospitality operators to effectively engage potential tourists, as it is an effective marketing tool in influencing tourists' behavior in planning a trip. As the usage of social media increases for tourism-related decisions, business operators compete to improve the quality of information in their content (Cheunkamon et al., 2020) in attempting to acquire as many data as possible from potential tourist. With the acquired tourists' data, novel information can lead to new opportunities for

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unwto.org/news/tourism-grows-4-in-2021-but-remains-far-below-pre-pandemic-levels> accessed on 8 March 2022.

entities such as destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and destination businesses to engage current and prospective tourists (Pabel & Prideaux, 2016).

Social media, as well as other online platforms such as websites and forums, have become increasingly important mediums in tourism in recent years, contributing to an increase in research interests (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Hashim & Fadhil, 2017; Prisgunanto, 2020). Previous research, among many others, includes the role of social media and tourists' travel planning behavior (Cox et al., 2009), social media on tourism among students (Ráthonyi, 2013), social media advertising effect on consumers' responses (Hamouda, 2018), the usage of social media on pre-trip planning (Mariani et al., 2019; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016) and the intention of Malaysian adopting social media in holidays planning (Moorthy et al., 2021). However, there is yet a study examining social media usage and travel planning process, particularly involving domestic and youth tourists' context. This study investigates social media usage at each travel planning process namely, pre, during and post trip among youth tourists in a domestic tourism context with a specific focus on the state of Pahang.

This study investigates social media usage at each travel planning process namely, pre, during and post trip among youth tourists in a domestic tourism context. There is no elaboration on the objectives of this study

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Youth Tourism

According to Blanco, Fitzgerald, Jordan, & Egidio (2011), youth travel includes all independent trips for a period of less than one year by people aged 18-34 who are motivated, in part or in full, by a desire to learn and experience other cultures, build life experience and benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities outside one's usual environment. Youth also regards travelling as an opportunity for self-development and enhancement of their career towards establishing their self-identity.

The emergence of organizations supporting young tourists in travelling and planning vacations, such as the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, highlights the increasing power of youth in the tourism sector and the need for new strategies to support the global industry in reaching this target audience.

The future market of tourism is centered on youth mainly because of these factors (Blanco et al., 2011):

- often spend more than other tourists from other age groups
- likely to revisit and hence create more value to the destination throughout their lives
- constitute a globally growing market, whereas older generations' spending power in Western economies may decrease in the long run
- Terrorism, political and civil instability, disease, and natural calamities are less likely to dissuade the youth from travelling
- usually, the youths are pioneers in discovering new destinations
- usually, the youths are pioneers in the application of new technology
- communities tend to benefit culturally from their travel contribution

As early-adopting youth are heavy users of new technology; young people are pioneering the use of social networking sites and mobile media in searching for travel information and purchasing products.

## Social Media And Its Classification

Social media is web-based application dissemination of user-generated content (Tussyadiah et al., 2011), where the degree of usage and involvement differs by nation, age group, and gender (Albarq, 2013; Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Cox et al., 2009). Collectively, the plethora of social media interactions or known as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu, 2017), over several sites enables a greater level of personalization of information. The capacity of social media to personalize content and its widespread reach has resulted in increased tourists' participation on social media.

Users usually choose to look at recommendations in accordance with location, environment, and suggestions or comments from other people (Huang, 2016; Lim et al., 2019) according to context (Meehan et al., 2016). It is a medium on the internet for consumers to correspond, participate and create a creative expression by using different technologies and gadgets. In tourism, social media are used to share consumption experiences and disseminate information on tourism products and services, which may include, among others, recommendations on places of interest, accommodation, and transportation. Most importantly, it offers a platform for self-reflection, growth, and learning, which potentially could lead to happiness (Bosangit & Demangeot, 2016).

Social media platforms differ in their communication modes (one-to-many or many-to-many), as well as their usage trends (Fotis et al., 2012). It can be classified based on the set of the related theoretical framework, including media research (social presence and media-richness) and social processes (self-presentation and self-disclosure) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are six categories of social media, namely blogs and microblogs (Twitter), social networking sites (Facebook), virtual social world (Second Life), collaborative projects (Wikipedia), content communities (YouTube), and virtual game networks (World of Warcraft) as depicted in Table 1 below.

*Table 1. Type Of Social Media*

List of social media	Type of social media	Authors (Year)
Facebook, Instagram, Google+	Social networking sites	Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), Chen (2015)
Tripadvisor	Reviews	Xiang & Gretzel (2010)
Twitter	Microblogs	Oeldorf-Hirsch, et. al., (2018)
YouTube	Media-sharing- communities	Cleffman, Feuerabend, Howald & Kollmann, (2010)
WhatsApp, Telegram	Instant messaging app	Lim, Xu & Pathak (2015)
Booking.Com, Trivago, Agoda, Traveloka	Online Travel Agencies	Xiang & Gretzel (2010)

## Youth Tourism and Social Media

The growing popularity of social media among Malaysian youths (Moorthy et al., 2021) and the growing number of young tourists have compelled tourism players to embrace social media as one of the most important channels for communicating and providing their products and services. The growth and changes also affected the roles of tourism intermediaries (Inversini & Masiero, 2014; Kracht & Wang, 2010). Today's youth frequently use social media in their daily activities, which has an impact on how they receive information and make travel-related decisions. (Mariani et al., 2019; Mehraliyev et al., 2019). In these three stages, social media plays an instrumental role in shaping tourists' preferences and decision-making.

### ***Trip Planning Process***

One of the sources for destination suggestions can be found on social media. Social media is used in the pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip stages of the tourist adventure, demonstrating the dynamic roles throughout the tourist journey (Book et al., 2018). The importance of social media in the trip planning process is known to assist potential tourists in recognizing their choice of location, as well as the appropriate lodging and activities in which they desire to engage (Fotis et al., 2012). Social media may be utilized to assist visitors in customizing their trip preferences and decision-making across these three stages.

#### ***Pre-Trip***

The "pre-trip" phase occurs before a tourist starts travelling. Tourists engage social media to research tourism-related information and to accelerate the information search process during this pre-travel stage (Liu et al., 2013) since typically, tourists are known to spend a substantial amount of time searching for information. Social media engagement may also assist tourists in justifying their purchases and reducing post-purchase dissonance, including their destination choice as well as reducing tourists' uncertainty and perceived risks (Tham et al., 2020; Tussyadiah et al., 2018).

Destination selections are especially prone to cognitive dissonance for two primary reasons. The first reason is that consumption does not occur immediately after a purchasing choice is made (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Second, the destination selections are frequently made 'blind', with no opportunity to 'pre-test' the experience, unlike other products (Ráthonyi, 2013).

#### ***During Trip***

The "during" phase refers to tourists who are currently on their journey for a variety of reasons, or the on-site experience phase (Juan & Chen, 2011). In main experience phase, tourists who utilize social media are likely to learn more or discover about certain attractions or leisure activities nearby. Typically, after completing the decision-making process and acquiring the goods or service, the tourists focus on its use, particularly during the journey (Hudson & Thal, 2013).

At this stage, tourists also utilize social media to share their trip experiences online, and this allows other users experience the trip vicariously (Wu & Pearce, 2017). Others argue that social media has evolved into an extension of the ideal social self-image, and the tourism experience offers repositions on how an individual is perceived (Osei et al., 2018). Additionally, given the increased priority placed on tourists' safety and security, social media can be utilized to point tourists' whereabouts (or check-in) while travelling (Hernández-Méndez et al., 2015).

## **Post Trip**

The "post" trip is the culmination of the trip planning process and summarizes the tourism experience and activities. This stage is used to categorize tourists after they have returned from their holiday or excursion (Juan & Chen, 2011). Tourists' levels of satisfaction with the tourism products and/or services they consumed during their trip are computed based on their impressions. If a tourist is satisfied, they are likely to recommend the destination and attractions to their friends, revisit, and leave positive reviews about their experience (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016).

During the post-travel phase, tourists may rely on social media to preserve and capture their tourism experiences. Frequently, forums and photographic archiving websites contain a vast collection of posts from many travelers and tourists discussing their preferences, opinions, and dislikes about their experiences (Fakharyan et al., 2012). Some believe that their opinion might be useful to other fellow tourists when arranging for their vacations (Lee et al., 2014). Additionally, tourists can also utilize social media to reflect on their own trip experiences. Clearly, tourists engage in social media in several ways and throughout their tourism journey. Given that a destination's success is contingent upon its capacity to influence tourist arrivals and revisits, social media may be an advantageous tool for raising awareness and interest in the destination (Zhang, Wu, Morrison, Tseng, & Chen, 2018).

## **Perceived Level of Trust**

Trust has three dimensions and is defined as social media's trustworthiness in comparison to conventional media, social media's trustworthiness concerns, and the link between information sources and trustworthiness (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017). The importance of recommendations from previous visitors on social media as the most dependable source of information and information critical for tourists (Fotis et al., 2012). Social media has a wealth of information on destination characteristics, activities, and pricing information provided to meet the requirements, wants, and expectations of visitors and travelers (Chung & Koo, 2015).

Consumer decision-making is highly influenced by trust, even more so when the Internet is involved (Hansen et al., 2018). From a social media perspective, trust can be defined as 'an attitude of confident expectancy that one's vulnerabilities would not be exploited' (Corritore et al., 2003). Recent research indicates that perceived trust has a significant and positive effect on passengers' inclination to use new technologies to obtain travel-related goods and services (Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu, 2017).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling and Respondents**

There were three main criteria for the respondents to be selected for the study. The first criterion was that all respondents must have visited or traveled to the state of Pahang in Malaysia for tourism purposes within the last 12 months. Pahang was selected for this study as it is one of the states in Malaysia with many well-known destinations, including island beaches, lakes, waterfalls, national parks, hills, theme parks,

museums, and other unique attractions. Among the attractions in Pahang are Pahang National Park (Taman Negara Pahang), Cameron Highlands, Genting Highlands, Pulau Tioman, Sungai Pandan Waterfalls, Gambang Waterpark to name a few. Apart from these attractions, Pahang has unique local food and delicacies such as *Nasi Kebuli*, *Ikan Patin Masak Tempoyak*, *Sambal Hitam Pahang*, *Gulai Opor Daging*, *Gulai Asam Rong*, *Cendol Air Putih*, Durian-based pastries among many others<sup>4</sup>. These tourism highlights in Pahang are easily available in many social media platforms and websites.

The second criterion is that the respondents have used social media platform(s) to plan their tourism trips. The final criterion is that they are Malaysian youths aged not more than 35 years old. The number of domestic tourists' arrival in Pahang was 7,604,372 in 2018 (Tourism Pahang, 2018). As the population was larger than 100,000 and taking into consideration of  $\pm 7\%$  margin error, the recommended number of samples is 204 respondents (Israel, 1992).

This study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique with snowballing approach (Abdul-Latif & Abdul-Talib, 2015), of which the online questionnaire link was disseminated to families, colleagues, and acquaintances via social media platforms. Requests were made to the potential respondents so that the link is shared further with their colleagues and network should they can satisfy the above-mentioned three criteria. This technique was chosen because the respondents were available and easily accessed to answer the questionnaire. The social media platforms used were WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram (Abdul-Latif & Abdul Aziz, 2021). The duration of the sampling was two weeks, starting from 7<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

## Instrument

Following previous studies (Abdul-Latif & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Ismail & Abdul-Latif, 2019), the questionnaire was created using Google Form. The self-administered online survey was designed to be bilingual, using both English and Malay languages. Prior to the distribution of the survey questionnaire to the respondents, the items were translated from English to the Malay language and then back-translated to English (Abdul-Latif & Abdul-Talib, 2015). The questions and items were then reviewed, revised, and corrected to ensure proper language and grammar use.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section covered the demographic details, including gender, age, income level, education, types of social media use, and its frequency. Following Fotis et al. (2012), all twelve items under the Trip Planning Process were measured using the 5-point Likert-type scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Two items measuring social media influence were measured with using a 4-point Likert-type scale: Not at all (1), Unlikely (2), Likely (3), and Definitely (4), following Lo, Cheung, and Law (2002). The perceived level of trust was measured through six items adopted from Lo, Cheung, and Law (2002) using a 7-point Likert-type scale where tend to disagree (3) and tend to agree (5) were included. On average, the questionnaire can be completed within less than 10 minutes. IBM SPSS version 26.0 was used to provide the analysis results.

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<sup>4</sup> Official Portal Pahang State Government <https://www.pahang.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/371?mid=140> accessed on 20 Sept 2020

## RESULTS

### Profile Of The Respondents

The total number of respondents obtained was 210. The respondents were 75.7 percent females and 24.3 percent males. The over-representation of females has been observed in many other studies (Abdul-Latif & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Cox et al., 2009; Fotis et al., 2012; Ismail & Abdul-Latif, 2019) and may to an extent be related to gender differences in trip-related roles. The age groups of 22 to 25 years old and 18 to 21 years old appear to be large, constituting 49.5 percent and 38.1% of total respondents, respectively. As for the age groups of 26 to 30 years old and 31 to 35 years old, both constitutes 8.1 percent and 4.3 percent of the total respondents, respectively.

From the 210 respondents, 26.8 percent and 24.5 percent were diploma and bachelor's degree holders, respectively. The respondents with master's degrees, Ph.D./specialization, and other qualifications (SKM and SRP) shared the same percentage of 0.5 percent. The remaining respondents indicated that they have certification in SPM, Matriculation/Foundation, and STPM/STAM, with values of 22.4 percent, 16.7 percent, and 8.1 percent, respectively.

As most of the respondents were students (72.4%) and aged 25 years and below (87.6%), and the majority of them do not have any source of income (71.9%). The rest of the respondents were employed persons (27.6%), with most of them earning less than RM 2000 per month (18.1%). The employed persons who earned more than RM 2000 per month constituted only about 10 percent and mainly were from the private sector (11.4%). Refer to Table 2 below. The reliability of the measurement scales is depicted in Table 3 below.

### Usage Of Social Media

Based on Table 4, 78.6% of the respondents used social media almost every day, while 18.6% of the respondents used social media several times a day. Only 1.4% of the respondents replied that they rarely or sometimes use social media, respectively.

*Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Profile*

Item		Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	51	24.3
	Female	159	75.7
Age	18-21	80	38.1
	22-25	104	49.5
	26-30	17	8.1
	31-35	9	4.3

Education	SPM	47	22.4
	STPM/STAM	17	8.1
	Matriculation /Foundation	335	16.7
	Diploma	56	26.7
	Bachelor's	52	24.8
	Master's	1	0.5
	Ph.D.	1	0.5
	Others	1	0.5
Employment category	Student	152	72.4
	Executive	6	2.9
	Manager	2	1.0
	Entrepreneur	4	1.9
	Unemployed	13	6.2
	Civil servant	9	4.3
	Private sector	24	11.4
Monthly income	No income	151	71.9
	Below RM 2001	38	18.1
	RM 2001-RM 3000	11	5.2
	RM 3001-RM 4000	8	3.8
	More than RM 4001	2	1.0

*Note: Both Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) is equivalent to 0-levels, while Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) and Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) are equivalent to A-Levels.*

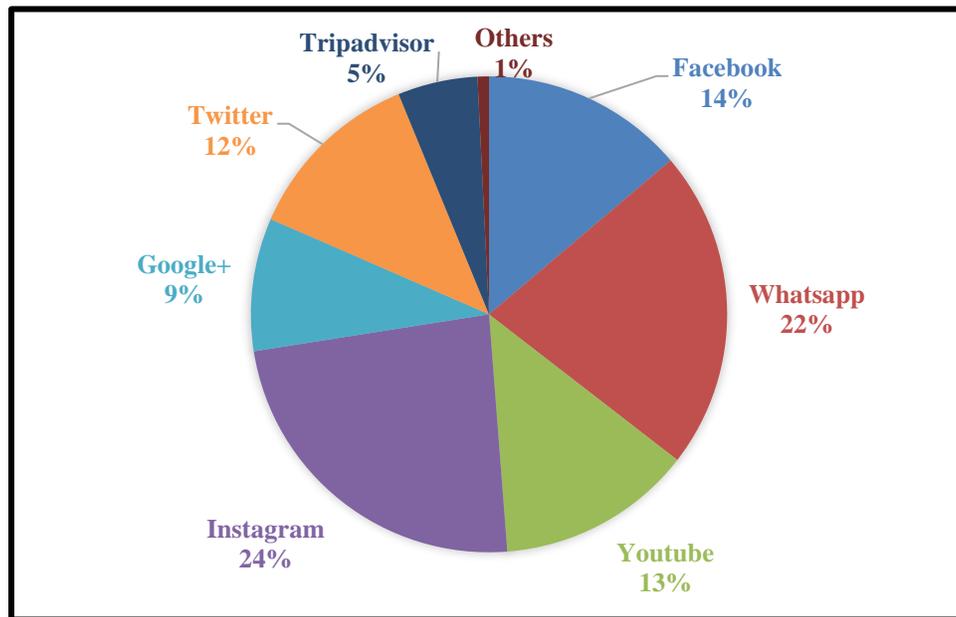
The results suggest that the respondents used a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter, among many others. The results show that majority of the youths (24%) used Instagram in their trip planning. This is followed by the usage of WhatsApp (22%), Facebook (14%), YouTube (13%), and Twitter (12%). Social media platforms such as Google+, TripAdvisor, and others have less than 10% usage. Refer to Figure 1.

*Table 3: Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha*

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No of items</b>
Perceived Level of Trust	.853	5
Social Media Influence	.619	2
Pre-Destination Choice	.893	3
Post-Destination Choice	.902	2
During Trip	.700	4
Post Trip	.806	3

*Table 4: Frequency And Percentage Of Social Media Usage*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Rarely	3	1.4
Several Times A Day	39	18.6
Almost Everyday	165	78.6
Sometimes Per Week	3	1.4



*Figure 1: Most Frequent Social Media Used For Trip Purposes*

## **Trip Planning Process**

In order to understand the youths' preference for social media usage during their travel process, twelve (12) statements were listed and categorized by four (4) trip stages: pre-destination choice, post-destination choice, during trip, and post-trip (Fotis et al., 2012).

The results show that social media were use in all stages of the trip planning process (before, during, and after the trip). Based on Figure 2, the youths used social media predominantly before the trip stages to search for ideas on travel destination, attractions, recreational activities, and accommodations.

In the pre-destination choice stage, most of the respondents used social media to narrow down destinations, confirm their destination choice, and search for ideas on where to go for a trip (mean values of 4.47, 4.45, 4.43, respectively). Meanwhile, in the post-destination choice stage, social media were used to seek information on accommodation options and ideas for excursion and other leisure activities (mean values of 4.48 and 4.49, respectively).

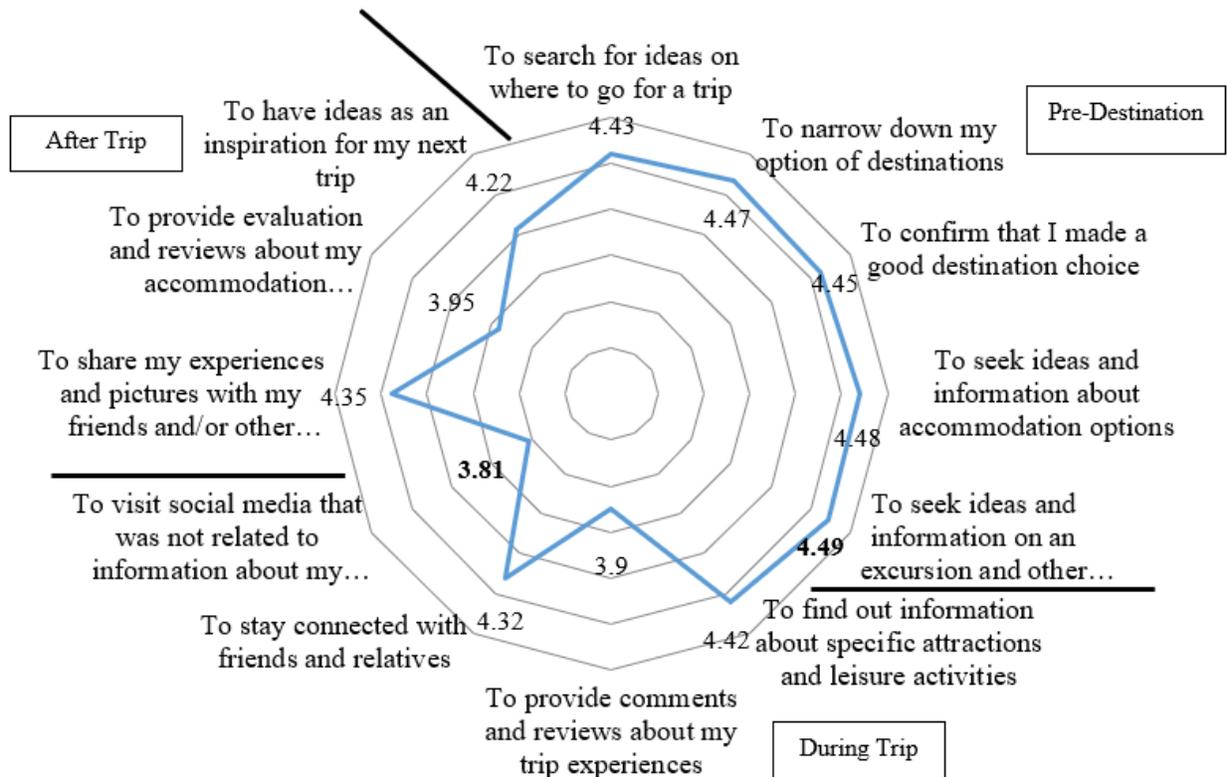


Figure 2: Trip Planning Process

During their trip, the youths used social media to find information about specific attractions and leisure activities appealing to them (mean value of 4.42) and stay connected with their friends and relatives (mean value of 4.32). Based on the results, the youths only occasionally use their social media to seek out unrelated travel information (mean value of 3.81) and provide reviews or comments about their trips and experience (mean value of 3.9).

After the trip, social media were used as a platform for youths to share experiences and pictures with their friends and relatives (mean value of 4.35). The youths also used social media to inspire future trips (mean value of 4.22). The youths occasionally used social media to evaluate and review their accommodation and trips (mean value of 3.95).

### Influence of Social Media

This study also examined the influence of social media on youths' travel plan. The respondents were asked to recall their last travel plan and their social media usage to examine the level of influence. Based on the results, the majority of the youths (93.3%) agreed that social media can influence their purchase of a travel product or book a trip. Only a small percentage (6.6%) disagreed that social media has any influence on their purchases. Likewise, most of the youths (78.6%) agreed that they were likely to change their existing travel plans due to social media influence. In contrast, about 21.5% think that they will not change their existing travel plans because of the social media influence. Refer to Table 5 below.

Table 5. Influence of social media

Items	Percentage (%)			
	Not at All	Unlikely	Likely	Definitely
How likely are you to make a final decision to book a trip or travel product because of the influence of social media?	1.4	5.2	41.4	51.9
How likely are you to change your existing travel plans because of the influence of social media?	6.7	14.8	47.6	31.0

### Perceived Level of Trust

This study also analyzed the perceived level of trust towards information obtained from social media in comparison to traditional media sources for holiday-related information among youths. This study suggests that the youths trust information obtained from their friends and relatives the most ( $M = 5.70$ ), and marginally followed by sources obtained from official tourism websites ( $M = 5.69$ ). The results indicate that youths ranked information sourced from social media as third among six types of information sources. Information provided by the other tourists on the internet is ranked as the fourth (mean of 5.35), followed by information obtained through travel agencies ( $M = 5.31$ ) and travel information from traditional sources such as advertisements on television, radio, newspaper, or magazine ( $M = 5.27$ ). Refer to Table 6.

Table 6. Perceived Level of Trust

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Friends and relatives	5.70	1.077	1
Official tourism websites	5.69	1.197	2
Information on social media	5.40	1.174	3
Information provided by the other tourists on the internet	5.35	1.119	4
Travel agencies	5.31	1.273	5
Advertisements on tv, radio or magazine	5.27	1.267	6

## DISCUSSION

Social media is increasingly crucial to the tourism industry as tourists rely heavily on the travel information obtained through these platforms (Hua et al., 2017). Through these platforms, travel information is easily accessible, leading to the minimization of tourists' travel uncertainties. Like previous studies (Abdul-Latif & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Cox et al., 2009; Hua et al., 2017), this study suggests that youths' usage of social media, particularly Instagram, plays vital role in the tourism industry for the tourists, tourism-related service providers, and businesses. Destination marketing organizations, travel agencies, and other tourism-related businesses must integrate their marketing strategies with social media to have higher engagement with the

potential or current base market. It is reported that Instagram count as many as 285 million posts under the '#travel' hashtag, and almost 1 million accounts on Instagram search for travel-related hashtags every week (Business Instagram, 2018). As of March 2021, approximately 13.8 million Instagram users in Malaysia were 54 percent females<sup>5</sup>.

From a marketing perspective, the results indicate that most Malaysian youth frequently utilize social media during all three stages of the trip planning process, implying that this consumer segment can be exposed or influenced to purchase travel products or services via social media at the various consumption stage. Similarly, the majority of the youths felt that social media could shape their trip decisions. Thus, the importance of social media influencers cannot be understated (Khalid, Jayasainan, & Hassim, 2018). According to this finding, the youth primarily used social media before the trip stage to research travel destinations, attractions, activities, and accommodations. At this stage, a well-crafted non-intrusive advertisement on social media could be beneficial. Marketers must be sufficiently engaged because decisions can be altered, as demonstrated by the results. It is worth noting that youth are more likely to transfer services, products, or brands if the offers and bargains are better (Fotis et al., 2012; Kumar, 2019).

The findings indicate that, while youths are inclined to share their travel experiences with their friends and relatives, they only utilize social media occasionally to evaluate and critique their consumption during and after their trips. That could happen for a variety of reasons and factors. First, generally, Malaysians are conservative and collective people in nature (Sarpal et al., 2018), perhaps sharing evaluations, reviews, or complaints might not be seen as favorable behavior. This could be more apparent since most platforms require logins and non-anonymous identity. Since social media is seen as an ideal social self-image extension, an individual needs to appear as acceptable as possible within his society (Osei et al., 2018). Second, possibly they are generally satisfied with their experiences and justified that no complaints or reviews are necessary. For business sustainability, it is important to obtain good and positive reviews through e-word of mouth (Silvia, Enrique, & Buzova, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017); perhaps a campaign using hashtags tied with attractive rewards could be done to encourage positive tourists' reviews and reduce purchase dissonance (Tham et al., 2020; Tussyadiah et al., 2018).

It is also worth noting that a sizable proportion of respondents prefer to organize their trips based on the information gathered via Instagram, followed by WhatsApp. This finding backs up prior research that suggests Instagram posts that are meticulously crafted, and managed with eye-catching photos, captions, and hashtags could improve the appeal of the featured establishment, product, or service (Khalid et al., 2018). This benefits the tourism organization, the viewers as well as the content providers or influencers.

The results show that the youth are positively receptive to the tourism information obtained through all six channels, suggesting no trust issues between the youth and these channels. This is a clear advantage for tourism marketers and operators to strengthen their relationships and have better engagement with the youth. As the results suggest, connectedness is crucial to youth tourists.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/997071/share-of-instagram-users-by-gender-malaysia/>

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the importance of social media on the trip planning process for pre-destination selection, post-destination selection, during trip, and post-trip among youth tourists. This study also examined the use of social media, social media influence, and the perceived level of trust in social media among young tourists.

Undeniably, this study supports the importance of the role of social media platforms which are inextricably linked to the tourism industry. Especially during this worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, these platforms enable tourism organizations to continue providing innovative and adaptable services, so businesses can survive and remain relevant. Due to the current movement controls and change in consumers' lifestyles, social media plays an important part in new technologies which causes a shift in the activities, operation techniques, and communication methods. This is also prevalent in how tourists seek information, including acquiring tourism-related services and products.

It is demonstrated that social media is used at all stages of the trip planning process (pre-destination choice, post destination choice, during the trip, and after the trip). In contrast to the findings of Cox et al. (2009), who observed that social media is primarily used during the trip, this study demonstrated that domestic tourists who are youth used social media heavily before the trip stages (pre and post destination choice).

In conclusion, tourism marketers and operators should fully exploit social media, particularly Instagram, as it is one of the most prominent social media platforms utilized by youth tourists. Hence, marketers should take advantage of innovative engagements to promote destinations, products, or services, such as through contests, games, or hashtag events. By offering appealing, convincing, and sustainable online marketing campaigns, perhaps the online behavior for the trip planning process may change to the advantage of tourism operators.

## LIMITATION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Several limitations exist—first, this study solely on domestic respondents who visited one particular state. Researchers can replicate this study with larger representative samples from different demographic categories, such as domestic, outbound, or incoming tourists visiting other states in Malaysia. Since the older adults or Baby Boomers are adopting social media, it would be important to examine them as well (Khalid et al., 2018; Sheldon et al., 2021). Second, the questionnaire was prepared in English with Malay translation. Non-English speakers may have difficulty understanding and responding to the questions. As Malaysia is a multicultural country, future studies should incorporate questionnaire translations in additional languages such as Mandarin and Tamil. Some respondents may not comprehend English well, thus, translations in their native language are preferred.

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## Accessible Tourism: Travel Barriers and Destination Preferences among Disabled Youth in Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Accessible tourism is a relatively new concept in the tourism industry. Furthermore, studies of tourists with disabilities in Malaysia are uncommon. This paper aims to identify travel barriers, travel motivation, and destination preferences among Malaysian youth disabled tourists.

**Methods/Design/approach:** The data was collected using questionnaires that were distributed to 40 disabled students from Pusat Latihan Perindustrian dan Pemulihan Bangi (PLPP) and it was analyzed using SPSS software. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 25, with an equal number of males and females. Most of them were already physically handicapped and relied heavily on family and friends to fulfil their travel desires.

**Findings:** The results of the study showed that the main travel barriers were due to the respondents need for travel companions. Also, the destination of choice of disabled tourists in this study is the beach as the most attractive place for their tourist destination.

**Implication/Limitations:** The study only represents the preferences and barriers for domestic disabled tourists.

**Keywords:** Tourism, accessible tourism, disabled, youth, motivation, travel barriers, destination preference.

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## INTRODUCTION

The world population of the aged and disabled is growing, demanding additional assistance and services (Islambekova, 2021). In his study, Qiao et al., (2021) indicated that several studies are also ongoing and focus on the disabled. Some are concerned with the design of accessible facilities (Abreu et al., 2020; Asghar et al., 2020), others with the motivation of accessible tourism participation (Alen et al., 2017a), and still others with the attitudes of accessible tourism practitioners (Adam, 2019).

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has anticipated a total of 1.8 billion international tourist arrivals worldwide by 2030, with part of them made up of individuals with disabilities, according to the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) in their Seminar on Accessible Tourism Matic on 7 February 2017. This equates to approximately 15% of the world's population and mobility is a major issue for between 110 and 190 million people aged 15 and older.

According to Chikuta et al. (2019), it is essential to consider that people with disabilities have distinct characteristics that make them a leading tourist market. Islambekova, (2021) also added that barrier-free tourism is said to be very new in the tourism industry and the beginning and success of this type of tourism is by focusing on the right of people with disabilities to travel comfortably.

Recently, all over the world discovered that there is a huge market in tourism for People with Disabilities (PwD) tourists (Karagkounis, 2019) and dynamically evolving tourism (Islambekova, 2021). In Malaysia, several researchers have shown interest in the issue of disability in Malaysian tourism (Hua, 2019; Sanmargaraja and Wee, 2015; Mothiravally et al, 2014; Dort et al, 2013; Hua et al, 2013; Sanmargaraja and Seow, 2013; Musa 2008; Yaacob and Hashim, 2007).

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Hua's research, 46 percent of disabled individuals in Kuala Lumpur City participate in tourism activities, with 43.6 percent of those aged 21 to 30 years old, indicating that there indeed most of the participation among disabled young tourists. Plus, according to the Malaysian Department of Statistics, senior folks aged 60 and older will account for only 14 percent of the population in Malaysia by 2030. This proves that the statistics of PWD tourists among seniors in Malaysia will decrease and the focus should be increased on youth PWD travellers.

If compared to the older generation, the younger generation is often seen as a traveller because their desire to spend more and travel longer makes them economic collaborators to the destinations visited (Ying and Krishnapillai, 2018). According to this information, in the Malaysian context, youth outperformed the senior community in the accessible tourism market. However, Hua (2019) discovered that most of his disabled respondents agreed that providing appropriate services or infrastructure will increase accessible tourism.

Accessible tourism is not a new phenomenon and this industry are growing fast (Rubio-Escuderos et.al , 2021). However, Malaysia still requires a user-friendly built environment for PWD (Wazani, & Jaafar, 2021). Moreover, recent study appears inadequate to address the wants and requirements of this group of

travellers (Loi & Kong, 2015). Even though PWDs have recently shown an increased interest in travelling, proving that they have the very same reason to travel and explore as non-disabled people, but they face various barriers due to their privilege, which necessitates a more integrated view of the essence of travel, especially for people with disabilities (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). Nevertheless, people with disabilities appear to be an overlooked and ignored segment by the most travel agencies (Zawadka, & Gabryjńczyk, 2020).

Thus, the objective of this research is to:

- 1) To determine the travel barriers faced by the youth disabled tourists.
- 2) To study the destination preference among young disabled tourists.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Person with Disabilities (PWD)

The definition used to describe this community in Malaysia is stated in the Disability Act 2008. According to Abdullah (2012), the term Orang Kurang Upaya (OKU) refers to Malaysian PwD to highlight that they are not abnormal and have rights that should be respected by society. According to Wazani, & Jaafar, (2021), PWD involves people who use wheelchairs, the visual impairments, the listening impaired, involves people who use crutch (Kamarudin et al., 2012) and others in different situations confront numerous challenges.

Furthermore, Carneiro et al., (2022) defined the PwD in their study to include not just people with limited mobility, but also the elderly, persons with mental health issues, and those with other special needs related to personal health or physical problems, commonly known as people with special needs (PwSN). Although the criteria of PwD used by previous studies has been broad, the attention of this study is exclusively on those with physical disabilities.

### Youth Tourists

According to the World Tourism Organization (2016), youth travel has become one of the most important sectors in the global tourism business due to a growth in the number of young travelers, long-distance travel, and frequency of travel. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines youth tourists as individuals aged 16 to 25 who travel by at least one night. In Malaysia, however, the applied youth ranged in age from 15 to 30 years old (Mohamed et al., 2010).

While Kasim and Wickens (2018) examined a sample of young Malaysians between the ages of 19 and 30 as respondents in their study, their findings indicated that the engagement of young visitors is mostly involved in the ecotourism business. In sum, past research, and the facts above reveal that youths begin their travel activities between the ages of 15 to 30. Thus, this study examines this age range to fulfil the definition of a young traveller or youth traveller.

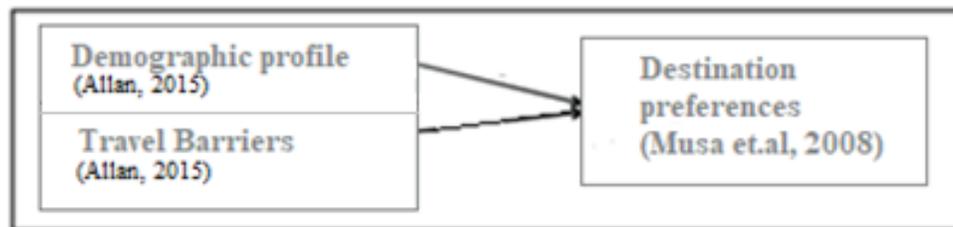
## Accessible Tourism Market

According to Meskele et.al., (2018), one of the issues in human rights is to provide accessible tourism. Although, tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries, but more needs to be done to access and cater to the needs of special people.

Many researchers mentioned that tourism and economic studies have concluded that an accessible tourism market is significant and profitable areas but consistently ignored by the tourism industry (Cockburn-Wootten and McIntosh, 2020). The term ‘accessible’ has a concept derived from the word disability or deterioration (Gillovic et.al., 2018). It has been alleged that the tourism industry is generally unaware of the disabled population or is aware that their facilities or services fail to be accessible to everyone and has dismissed this as a valuable market (Cockburn-Wootten and McIntosh, 2020).

## Theory of Self-Determination

The Theory of Self-Determination was used in this study to determine the travel motivation of youth with disabilities. To study human motivation and personality, Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan developed the Theory of Self-Determination (SDT) in 1985. According to this theory, there are three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivation. This study, however, will only look at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This study incorporates concepts from Musa et al (2008) study, which looked at travel motivation, travel difficulty, and destination selection among the disabled in Kuala Lumpur.



*Figure 1: Research framework adapted from Musa et.al., (2008).*

The figure1 above shows the research framework adapted from Musa et.al., (2008) and Allan (2015). Nevertheless, this study only looks at travel barriers and destination preferences without examining the relationship between the two. Variables from both studies were used to classify the demographic profile of respondents, travel barriers, and destination choice items among disabled youth tourists. Furthermore, the findings of Musa et al. (2008) and Allan (2015) studies were used as a constraint on youth disabled tourists when deciding on a tourist destination.

## Travel Barriers

Travel barriers limit tourists to make decisions for their travel and reduce the demand for advertised package tours (Ahmad et.al., 2020). This type of obstacle arises from the theory of leisure constraints, which, in its simplest form assumes the existence of obstacles that prevent someone from traveling, and if the obstacle can be removed or successfully negotiated, an automatic non -tourist will become a tourist (McKercher et.al., 2018).

Tao et al., (2019) in their study found nine significant variables in their study: four of them is individual circumstances - (1) age, 2) income, 3) education, and 4) marital status), and the remaining five is in travel patterns - (1) frequency, 2) expense, 3) motive, 4) travel time, and 5) travelling companion) are available for influencing PwDs' perceptions of their travel obstacles. Ineffective social skills, physical and psychological dependence on the help of others, lack of adequate awareness of the possibilities of tourists, and mismatch of skills/challenges are all issues of PwD challenges when traveling (Allan, 2015).

Meanwhile, based on McKercher and Darcy (2018), earlier research has revealed the same basic barriers that affect the general population should also apply to the disabled. Worse, they add, people with disabilities faced some tremendous difficulties when traveling. Their research, revealed that there are five major kinds of barriers to PWD visiting, including those connected to the tourist sector itself, attitude, information dependability, ignorance, issue day, and the individual themselves. They also discovered the presence of “*Unique Issues to Specific Impairments*”, which means that persons with diverse forms of disabilities may experience unique obstacles depending on the type of disability they have. Agreed to Allan's findings (2015) the respondent's travel constraints are imposed by themselves rather than by external factors.

### **Destination Preferences**

In some literature destination preferences, also known as Destination Choice (DC), are quite a negotiation process between tourists' needs and what destinations must provide (Karl & Reintinger, 2017). DC is also heavily influenced by the destination and its distinct characteristics (Karl and colleagues, 2015).

According to Rao et al. (1992), the choice of a tourist destination is influenced by various vacation types such as outdoor vacations, city tours, resorts, cruise trips, and theme parks.

According to a study done by Musa et al. (2008), nature attractions seem to be the preferred destination for Malaysian tourists with disabilities. In the case of people with disabilities, travel activities serve as a social space in which they can express themselves.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study also used probability sampling to draw a sample in which each sample of respondents had an equal fair chance of participating.

Meanwhile, unlikely sampling is a sampling procedure selected based on the criteria of respondents to participate in this study (Ethics and Bala, 2017).

### **Measurement Instruments**

The questions were taken entirely from earlier research by Musa et al. (2008) and Allan (2015), who served as the study's original sources.

The questionnaire of this study used a bilingual approach; namely, in Malay and English of the respondents can easily access and understand the contents of the questionnaire.

*Table 1: The Content of The Questionnaire.*

No	Variable	No of questions	Source/s
1	Destination preferences	17	Musa et.al, (2008)
2	Travel barriers	14	Smith (1987); Allan (2015)
Total		31	

A 5 -point Likert scale was used to achieve the objectives of this study. Also, a 5 -point Likert scale is said to be able to assess respondents' responses or attitudes (Bowling, 1997; Burns & Groove, 1997). Also, this type of scale was used to achieve the main variables of this study namely; 1) choice of destination; and 2) travel barriers.

## **SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

### **Sample Population**

This study calculates the population of of 159 students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. This study applied a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, which is one part of the non-sampling.

*Table 2: Total number of PLPP's students in 2019.*

Race	Number of students
Malay	133
Chinese	3
Indian	12
Others	11
Total	159

*Source: Pusat Latihan Perindustrian dan Pemulihan Bangi, 2019.*

### **Sample Size**

To achieve research objectives, some of the requirements were applied to classify the size of research's sample:

- i. PLPP's students either graduated or are still studying in the institute.
- ii. Disabled youth; between 15 years old to 30 years old.

In fact, only 40 respondents out of 159 students agreed to be the respondents of this study. This number of entries is too small and cannot represent the entire population of people with disabilities. So, as Roscoe (1975) mentioned, sample sizes between 30 and 500 are preferable in many recent studies. Showkat and Parveen (2017) agree that the number of respondents should agree and be willing to participate in the study

rather than represent the total sample size. The data collection took place at the PLPP Bangi library. During the one-hour questionnaire distribution session, all 40 students have been present. Although the students required assistance in answering the questions, they were able to complete all of them without missing a single one. It demonstrates that the bilingual questionnaire did not cause an issue for young disabled respondents, particularly PLPP Bangi students.

## DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis of this study used two methods using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) and descriptive analysis.

### Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)

SPSS is a method frequently used by past studies to analyze descriptive data. The use of SPSS is said to be more accurate and can save time and energy in the quantitative method approach.

## FINDINGS

### Travel Barriers

The objective of this study is to determine the travel barriers faced by young tourists with disabilities.

#### *Intrinsic factors*

*Table 3: Results of Intrinsic Factors.*

Item	Percentage (%)					Mean
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	
Travel imposes requirements that are beyond my capabilities.	2.5	12.5	22.5	45	17.5	3.63
Being in a situation where I need others help to do something.	7.5	7.5	12.5	62.5	10	3.60
Fear of causing others discomfort and inconvenience.	7.5	7.5	27.5	32.5	25	3.60
Doctor recommendation for maintaining my health.	10	15	25	22.5	27.5	3.43

Based on Table 3 above, 62.5 percent of the respondents agreed that the main travel barrier is they always need help from others to ease their travel experience; follows with 45 percent of respondents agreed that traveling requires them to act beyond their capabilities; they also feel uncomfortable if their existence might

cause other people to feel uneasy along the journey (32.5%). Meanwhile, only a few of them believed that traveling is for maintaining their health (27.5%).

### **Interactive factors**

*Table 4: Results of Interactive Factors.*

Item	Percentage (%)					Mean
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	
Fear of being ignored by others.	22.5	22.5	25	12.5	17.5	2.80
Lack of experiences in making friends.	27.5	22.5	27.5	10	12.5	2.58
Fear of being an object of others' interest.	15	15	17.5	32.5	20	3.28
Fear of getting hurt.	12.5	25	20	22.5	20	3.13
Fear of prejudice against me.	12.5	20	20	25	22.5	3.25

Next, Table 4 above shows that the travel barrier from interactive factors is mostly because they feel that they are the focus of others while traveling (32.5%); other than that, they also believed that they also lack experience making friends throughout their travel experience (27.5%).

### **Environmental factors**

*Table 5: Results of Environmental Factors.*

Item	Percentage (%)					Mean
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	
Inconvenient facilities (eg: toilets)	15	-	37.5	27.5	20	3.38
My condition requires me to wear assistive devices.	15	17.5	30	20	17.5	3.08
Inconvenient transportation facilities to use.	25	12.5	37.5	15	10	2.73
Inappropriate physical conditions of tourist destinations	20	7.5	32.5	25	15	3.08
Lack of my physical ability to move around freely	17.5	5	35	32.5	10	3.13

Based on Table 5 above, the barriers come from environmental factors includes 1) uncomfortable facilities (37.5%) and 2) uncomfortable transportation facilities to use (37.5%). This result proves that lacking facilities for disabled for the enjoyment of PwD during travel. Not only that, but they also agree that their physical avoid them to move freely during their traveling experience (35%).

## Destination Preferences

In short, the listed destinations are categorized into three categories namely cities, nature, and parks and heritage destinations.

*Table 6: Results of Destination Preferences.*

Item	Percentage (%)					Mean
	1 Very Unattractive	2 Unattractive	3 Neutral	4 Attractive	5 Very attractive	
<b><i>Urban</i></b>						3.70
Theme Park	2.5	2.5	32.5	35	27.5	3.83
Holiday resort	-	-	12.5	37.5	50	4.38
Shopping havens	2.5	7.5	32.5	32.5	25	3.70
Sport events	2.5	5	32.5	42.5	17.5	3.68
Cultural events	-	12.5	42.5	27.5	17.5	3.50
Health/Spa destination	-	15	32.5	32.5	20	3.58
Conference /Seminar/ Workshop	10	15	37.5	17.5	20	3.23
<b><i>Nature</i></b>						4.15
Beach	-	5	17.5	25	52.5	4.25
Lake	-	2.5	27.5	42.5	27.5	3.95
Waterfall	-	2.5	10	37.5	50	4.35
Mountain/ mountain resort	-	10	15	37.5	37.5	4.03
<b><i>Park and heritage sites</i></b>						3.90
Recreational Park	-	-	32.5	47.5	20	3.88
Zoo/Animal safari	-	7.5	35	32.5	25	3.75
Historical sites	2.5	7.5	32.5	30	27.5	3.73
Religious sites	2.5	2.5	20	22.5	52.5	4.20
Village	-	2.5	35	25	37.5	3.98
Forest/ National Park	-	2.5	35	35	27.5	3.88

Based on the table above, 50 percent ( $M= 4.38$ ) respondents agree that holiday is a very attractive destination. Also, the respondents believed sports events also attracts them to travel ( $M = 3.68$ ) compared to be in cultural event ( $M= 3.50$ ). Meanwhile, only a few of them preferred to be in conferences, seminars, and workshop with the lowest Mean of 3.23. The results also found that shopping havens and health or spa destination percent shared a similar percentage of 32.5 percent.

In the meantime, for nature destination; , most of the respondents loves to have a short escape at the beach (52.5%), and they are less likely to travel to mountain areas or mountain resorts (37.5%).

As for the park and heritage sites, most of the respondents agree that religious sites attract them to travel away from their country ( $M = 4.02$ ). It follows with the village as their most preferred destination for traveling with the second highest mean (3.98; 37.5%) and a recreational park with the percentage of 47.5% as their other preferred destination of travel.

In summary, between urban, nature destinations and park or heritage sites, most of the respondents preferred to visit nature destinations with the highest mean of= 4.15, followed by park or heritage sites ( $M= 3.90$ ) compared to urban destinations with the lowest mean of= 3.70.

## DISCUSSIONS

As per findings of this study, most of the respondents believed that the most difficult aspect of travelling as a PwD is when they require total assistance from others. Agreed by Devile et.al, (2018) major factors influencing the participation of people with disabilities to travel is too dependent on others, especially for those with visual impairment had to sit in wheelchairs to be assisted throughout their travelling journey (McKercher et.al., 2018). Not only blinded people but naturally, people with physical disabilities are required to be brought and relocated if they travel to another country to participate in tourism (Darcy et al., 2017).

The role of travel companion during travel is important, where disabled tourists will be accompanied by family members so that they can resolve barriers in tourism participation.

This is supported by previous studies that a lack of caregivers or travel companions is a major barrier for people with disabilities to travel and without travel companions, travel plans cannot take place (Nyman et al., 2018). It is also proven by this study that most disabled people have a desire to travel and are less likely to travel alone and choose to travel with friends or caregivers (Gillovic, et.al., (2021).

As a matter of fact, Malaysia should consider in the future helping to ensure that at least travel agencies provide travel companion services to PwD who may need to travel alone for urgent necessities when their family or friends are not travelling with them.

This study found that, other travel obstacles that PwD travellers believe requiring them to act beyond their ability. For most people with disabilities, the reality of their daily lives is limited movement or limitation of movement that serves to help their disabilities and differences (Imrie, 2000). People with disabilities who have problems for movement find it difficult for participation to be out of their control, making them less likely to express a willingness to participate in such activities go in traveling (Cole et.al, 2019). First,

these types of disabilities clearly pose major travel barriers because of their different access needs (Lehto et al., 2018). The extent to which these 'disabled' passengers indicate that people with disabilities have a lower desire to fly than other tourists. What needs to be considered is to enable them to access air travel at the same level are the physical, organizational, and logistical barriers to flight (Budd and Ison, 2020). Recent studies have documented that physical barriers, discrimination, lack of access to information, mobility restrictions, and worry of not being able to serve travellers with disabilities (McIntosh, 2020). In conclude, the findings of this study reveal that PwD young tourists are hesitant to travel because they are forced to act beyond their capabilities, and that if Malaysia wants to promote disabled tourism, it really should consider facilitating PwD movement while travelling, as this will boost their confidence and good effects for future travel decision.

The result from this study, also proven the similarity in Mackett, (2017) study, which he studied that to build confidence to improve travel among disabled people. He found that people with mental health problems and dyslexic people sometimes had difficulty while traveling. They will face emotional effects, such as frustration, anxiety, lack of self -confidence and low self -esteem, and feelings of inferiority, confusion, and shame. Anxiety and lack of self -confidence are their main reasons for preventing people with disabilities from traveling by local buses. The attitude of other passengers can cause difficulties for dementia sufferers, for example if other passengers are impatient if dementia people are not paying their tickets or if the others not giving them priority seats.

Özcan et.al (2021) also have a similar concerned where millions of people with disabilities are unable to take advantage of vacation opportunities, even though having financial wealth, as of barriers caused by lack of education, managerial attitudes in hotels, or employee behaviour that cannot satisfy to the needs of people with disabilities when traveling. Thus, not surprising, people with disabilities can only travel if their family offers to arrange traveling. And they may also travel because the person believes it will make their family proud of being able to meet the desires of family members to travel (Cole et.al, 2019). At the end, the industry is unaware and feels no need to be aware of the considerations of disabled tourists thus leading to the common misconception that people with disabilities have no need or do not want to travel (Gillovic, et.al, 2021). The findings of this study also proved that PwD young tourists experience as if they're the focus of attention when they travel, making them feel uncomfortable if they are travel alone or with their close friends. Malaysia can develop tourism players' awareness and understanding in the future, especially hotel frontlines and those who act as server for tourism products, as then people better understand and respect way PwD should be treated.

The results of this study found that people with disabilities are very concerned about facilities while traveling; in agreement with Lyu (2017) found that tourists with disabilities are willing to pay more money for providers who are willing to provide travel companions and get accommodation that has many facilities for people with disabilities. Plus, PWDs who have a desire to travel do not participate in tourism because they cannot access transportation and accommodation (Van Horn and Isola, 2006; Darcy et.al, 2020). Even with increasing awareness of the needs of disabled tourists and increased physical infrastructure, many people with disabilities continue to experience high levels of social isolation and lack of transportation (Hine and Mitchell, 2016).

Full awareness should be expanded about travel obstacles faced at tourist destinations, or when traveling allows choices to be made easily and avoid many unforeseen things especially those that disappoint

Kołodziejczak, (2019). Not only that, according to Hua, (2019) many participants with disabilities disclosed their experiences as tourists in the city, who positively agreed that proper and adequate infrastructure or services will increase the level of accessible tourism. As a result of the findings of this research, it should be highlighted that the other constraints, such as facilities, make young PwD travelers feel uneasy about pursuing their trip plans since they must decide whether the location of their choice facilitates or burdens their journey. If Malaysia wishes to promote disability tourism in the future, it should increase the number of facilities available to PwD so that they might spend more time and money at the destination of their preference without being hindered by facilities.

## **What is The Youth Disabled Tourists' Preferred Destination?**

### ***Beach is the Most Preferred Destination of Youth PwD In Malaysia***

52.5% of respondents agreed that the beach is a very attractive destination as the nature -based attractions listed. Seaside or beach became the destination of choice of people with disabilities in the results of this study, and this is like the results of the study by Musa (2008) and also in the study by Zawadka, and Gabryjończyk, (2020). A study by Zawadka, and Gabryjończyk, (2020) also found that forest, urban and rural areas are less frequently chosen by people with disabilities for tourism. Perhaps its shortcomings should be seen in the promotion of rural areas which are still ineffective as tourist destinations. Another reason may also be the desire to experience and find eye-reconciling holiday emotions, which are certainly more accessible with beautiful views of the beach and disabled respondents most often spend time walking while sight-seeing and socializing.

Supported by Kim et.al, (2019) that public beach access is the right of everyone to enjoy a better quality of life. Beaches also offer visual interest, being an open space for community interaction, besides also providing the economic benefits of generating income generated through tourism (Dixon, Oh, and Draper 2012; Kim et.al, 2019). Furthermore, beaches can offer social and psychological benefits (Kim and Nicholls 2016a; Kim et.al, 2019).

According to Anuar et. al, (2017), research on travel decision making found that attraction is a major motivational force influencing the two most important travel decisions; namely 1) destination choice and 2) destination holiday activities. Motivating factors consist of important psychological motivations for individual travelers such as escaping and vacationing, finding new things, relaxing, bragging about travel, and family togetherness. In addition, the seven attractive factors are environmental quality, nature / ecology, amenities and values, arts and culture, atmosphere and weather, unique and different people, and outdoor activities. And all these activities are ideally made by the beach. In addition, beach activities are usually a family tourism destination. This adds to the encouragement of people with disabilities to travel to the beach because their families are also happy if they travel to open places such as beaches that have a lot of outdoor activities.

As for urban destinations, it became less chosen by people with disabilities in this study because as Tao et.al, (2019) said in his study respondents face more interpersonal barriers while traveling in local urban areas compared to visiting other places (i.e. suburbs, city neighbors.) As a conclusion, Malaysia should consider offering more types of destinations in the form of nature and outdoor areas, as this type of destination option allows PwD, particularly those in wheelchairs, to enjoy their holiday more easily.

Although not all PwDs have the same impairment, when the surface or land is at least flat and not sloping, it facilitates the movement of PwD tourists of all types, including the blind.

## CONCLUSION LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study is not planned to be a standard for the entire country of Malaysia, but for tourists with disabilities at the Industrial Training and Rehabilitation Center (PLPP) Bangi, Selangor. However, a similar study in other Malaysian districts might be conducted in the future. Furthermore, this study only represents the points of view of disabled youth travellers, that might not be the same if investigated on other types of PwD travellers, such as elderly PwD citizens or PwD children.

The findings of this study will assist various parties and tourism agencies in understanding disability tourism requirements and desires, as well as offer the Malaysian tourism sector with the concept of 'Tourism for All,' without jeopardising PwDs' freedom to travel. Future research should investigate the need for facilities among disabled tourists, as well as the level to which Malaysia's facilities are designed toward accessible tourism. Furthermore, the study might be expanded to look at disabled people's opinions among older people over young people, so that disabled people's travel preferences and obstacles do not only serve one type of PwD group. Besides, future studies can look at the extent of disabled tourists' involvement and their opportunity to spend for travel so that the facilities and services or destinations of their choice meets demand, and the tourism industry does not over-supply to PwD.

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## Creating Economic Opportunities for Panchor's Future Workforce through a Water-Based Tourism Development Plan

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to assess the local community's perception and support for water-based tourism development in the pre-tourism stage. This examination seeks to evaluate the positive views of the community network on the possibility of the presentation of water-based improvements and its connection to its connections, the nearby inherent inspiration, and community knowledge.

**Methods/Design/approach:** We carried out online and offline surveys, and then analyzed the data using IBM SPSS 22.0.

**Findings:** All of the factors are positively related to the community's potential support for water-based tourism development except for the type of advertising and local knowledge. This investigation recommends water-based the travel industry improvement may get one of the activities to animate the ebb and flow financial state of community individuals on the grounds that the tourism industry has demonstrated assuming a constant critical job for personal satisfaction and financial advancement.

**Implication/Limitations:** This study suggests that local authorities should have a more active role in tourism promotion and investment in community development programs to ensure the longevity of the industry. The main limitation was the difficulty the researcher had in recruiting senior citizens to complete the paper-based survey. The second limitation is that the survey only surveyed Panchor community residents. The neighborhood must include the surrounding communities of Pagoh and Gerisik.

**Keywords:** Community perception, Community support, Pre-tourism development, Water-based tourism development

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## INTRODUCTION

Johor's tourism sector saw a phenomenal increase in tourist arrivals in the last 5 years to 7.4 million people in 2018 (Shah, 2018). When Johor had the third-highest number of international tourist arrivals in 2016, the Malaysian Tourism Council commended it for having the best domestic tourism promotion. Two years after the turn of the century, Johor was Malaysia's leading domestic tourism destination. Also, popular tourist areas are the Johor Bahru, Kota Tinggi, Mersing, Pontian and Muar. Since then, Muar has broadened its focus from just domestic tourists to also include the arrival of an increasing number of international tourists. Apart from beautifying the city, there are presently 20 government-designed tour packages that cater to all tourists' preferences and demands, an initiative that offers future visitors in Muar an array of places to experience (Hassan, 2019).

Despite signs of progress, Johor's tourism industry still has a number of issues that the local community brings up. Their most serious concern is the negative perception that foreign visitors, including Singaporeans, have of the state's "pass-by state" image (Benjamin, 2018). Although the number of Singapore visitors visiting Johor was increasing, most tourists who visited the state just dropped by and usually continued their journey to Malacca and Genting Highlands. To ensure that such tourists would want to visit Muar, the local authority has organized exhibitions, campaigns, familiarization trips, and even come out with creative and attractive tourism products to attract the tourists (Benjamin, 2018).

In this study, the local community's support for Panchor's proposed water-based tourism development plan will be evaluated at the plan's initial stage. Panchor is an idyllic town in the district of Muar, where the beautiful Muar River runs. The Muar River, which runs through the states of Pahang and Negeri Sembilan and is 288 kilometers long, used to serve an important socioeconomic role for traders in the past as they could cruise the river and stop overnight at Panchor before continuing on to their destinations (Samah et al., 2011; Thong & Sheng, 2013).

Presently, the Muar River that flows through Panchor serves as the town's local fisheries and has several restaurants well-known for serving delicious seafood and other local dishes. The majority of visitors are locals who come to Panchor for a day to enjoy the meals along the river and then cruise down to Muar town for more exciting activities like jet skiing and dragon boating. Many tourists prefer river cruises that take them closer to Muar town for a wider range of river activities or even to other bigger towns across the Johor state border.

Panchor, however, has to evolve as a tourist destination in order to attract more high-value visitors who will remain longer in the region (Benjamin, 2018). The town has to be revitalized into what it was in the early 1970s – an administrative center for the upper Muar river (Zakaria, 2020) with an essential waterway for traders between the West Coast and the Peninsula that was important to the local community's socioeconomic status (Samah et al., 2011). Panchor's Muar River must be more than the local fisheries for the local community. To do this, it needs to rope in the local community's cooperation and participation in promoting Panchor's local tourism through a successful and sustainable water-based tourism development. Thus, a study was done to learn the Panchor community's thoughts on the possibility of turning the town into an eco-tourism and outdoor recreation destination.

## Background of Panchor in Muar, Johor

Panchor is a small town in Muar, Johor located approximately thirty minutes from Muar town and near to Pagoh and Gerisik. Panchor is named after the waterfall located at the slope of Bukit Panchor Gemuruh, a community of indigenous people. The indigenous people pronounce the waterfall with the term "Panchur." Another version says the word comes from the fight on Bugis Lady. A Malay man wanted to marry a Bugis woman but the Bugis community opposed the inter-ethnic marriage. Due to some 'objection,' there was a battle between Malay and Bugis men, with 'a lot of blood' spilled. The Chinese call this blood "Pancuran darah."

The Muar River flows through Panchor and has served a variety of purposes in the past. The Muar River used to play a significant influence in the socio-economic status of the community. During that time, they were their main source of income and protein. According to Thong et al. (2013), the Muar River became a major mode of transportation for the community and traders between important towns for waterway shipping. Especially the people who plan to either travel to Bukit Kepong or stay overnight near Panchor will visit the resort in Panchor town. However, shipping by water is now less common and the waterways are restricted because of the construction of the highway. After Muar became the main important town for the economy, Panchor became a silent town.

The Muar River, in recent years, is no longer used as a mode of transportation. The river is now primarily used for fishing purposes. Lee (n.d.) noted that the river is now used mainly for freshwater lobstering which has attracted many tourists to Panchor on weekends and public holidays. However, the sight of the river is beautiful during sunset as it attracts more visitors who come to sightsee the river.

Panchor has the real potential to become one of the tourist attractions at Muar with the various economic opportunities that can be offered that could stimulate the current economic situation of the local community. This can be supported by Peters (n.d.), a community member who operates a restaurant in Panchor stated that Panchor should be transformed into a tourist destination as it offers several opportunities to improve the economic growth of local people specifically to the tourism industry. Additionally, demand for the fleshy Muar freshwater prawns is high, and there are few locations where these freshwater prawns can be fished. We believe tourism investors should take advantage of these opportunities to grow their businesses and provide job opportunities in Panchor.

However, Panchor today is not the same brand it once was. Population decline has occurred as a result of a lack of economic activity, causing younger residents to leave. Table 1 shows a group of students aged 15 to 19 who would soon be ready for a career but might have to move out of Panchor to secure a job. We suggest that new investment and job opportunities should be introduced not only to stimulate Panchor's economy, but also to ensure that its future workforce will be the ones developing its socio-economic status.

If new speculations and openings for work are unavailable to spur economic growth and ease pressure on the labor market, this age will generally become stagnant. Then, the spot goes to a smaller city or shantytown ('Bandar Pencen') like Muar previously. In this manner, this study intended to assess the pre-tourism water-based tourism development support at the Muar River in the non-tourism development phase. This study examined the relationship between community attachments and local intrinsic motivation with local knowledge about tourist destinations and the view of locals on the water-based tourism development.

*Table 1: Total population of Panchor community in 2000 and 2010*

Age distribution/ Year	2000	2010	Age distribution/ Year	2000	2010
0-4	45	26	40-44	47	37
5-9	62	29	45-49	42	42
10-14	81	46	50-54	45	46
15-19	69	111	55-59	37	41
20-24	39	21	60-64	49	35
25-29	29	41	65-69	23	20
30-34	40	13	70-74	17	27
35-39	34	18	75+	22	17
Total population	2000: 681 peoples		2010: 570 peoples		

(Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia (2011))

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Rivers, having one of the characteristics of the travel industry assets, are entrancing spots that give a distinctive appeal and an explosive atmosphere that draws visitors' consideration towards it. Water bodies are notable travel industry assets that are necessary for effective tourism. People are increasingly welcoming the improvements in the waterway. Indeed, even the officials of the certification program hope to utilize the water-based exercises (Bosnic, 2012; World Tourism Organization, 2016). Famous activities among water sport enthusiasts are water skiing, fly fishing, individual watercraft riding, angling, paddling, kayaking, swimming, and plunging. For this study, the objective was to determine the water activities that are preferable to the people in Panchor.

Walter Christaller (1963) proposed a model for international tourist enclaves. He talks about how the destination, type of visitor, tourist experience, and people's involvement change over time. Thus, the same cycle and process will occur as countries become more popular tourist destinations. His ideas on the development of tourism areas had a great influence on others who write on the subject of tourism planning (Mason, 2012).

Tourism areas are dynamic, they develop and change sometimes after a few years. These changes are due to the various factors that bring change in destination including changes in people's needs and wants, changes in the environment, infrastructure changes, and so forth. On the other hand, these products and attractions might be consumed for various purposes or viewed as less deserving of appreciation than the imports. There is going to be a movement towards ecotourism as the location becomes less attractive (Butler, 2012). All of these changes have initiated the development of specific forms of tourism aligned with the current trends of tourism by organizing various special activities and facilities.

The main theory for this study is The Social Exchange Theory (SET), created by Homans (1961), which has underlaid several tourism development studies, including those by Allen (1988), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017), Ward and Berno (2011), and Wang et al (2021). According to SET, people consider the risks and benefits of action and are driven to take action if they believe they would benefit from it (Emerson, 1976). The following studies show that local community support may be evaluated by assessing their attitudes towards tourism development using SET (Ward & Berno, 2011). According to Yu et al. (2018), this might be done from the start or as part of a tourism development initiative.

It is important to note that there is only a little research on community participation in rural tourism in relation to the tourism development project. Thus, it's critical to get locals' feedback on plans to turn a neighborhood into a tourist destination.

### **Local Community Support**

A local community is an important stakeholder in tourism development. Studies on local community support are related to government development and social change. Their support allows the commercial, socio-cultural, physiological, political, and economic sustainability of the industry. Tourism planning is successful when the local community is involved in reducing the negative impacts of the tourism industry. Taking consideration of the community's needs allows for the appreciation of the tourism sector to the community.

Cottrell and Vaske (2006) stated that the most accurate factor to evaluate the current situation towards the destination is how the local community perceives the area because of its proximity to it. However, a previous study has demonstrated varied results. They concluded that this is because their perception was based on the benefits gained from tourism development or the stage of tourism development in that area (Liu & Li, 2018). As the previous findings of local community perceptions have resulted in inconsistent results, there is a need to promote positive perceptions among residents in order to reassure them to support tourism development.

However, these can also be measured by the attitudes of the community towards tourism development, since these attitudes are affected by SET. Yu et al. (2018) note that resident support for tourism development is measured by their attitude towards the present, additional, and specific tourism projects. Similarities between people's perception of tourism and community support toward tourism development were noted.

### **Perceptions of Tourism Development**

Gnanapala and Karunathilaka (2016) have argued that it is a process in which physical sensation consists of sights, sounds, and smells that are selected, organized, and interpreted to give meaning to the given environment.

Tourism research has increasingly emphasized perception studies of water-based tourism development since the end of the 1990s (Bord et al., 1998). Torres-Bagur et al. (2019), for example, looked at stakeholders discover perceptions on the formulation of an effective mitigation and adaptation strategy for the Muga River basin in Girona, Spain. In Abu Dhabi, Hammad et al. (2017) perceived the residents' insights into tourism through their perception of the impact of tourism. Latin et al. (2018) investigated the

perceptions of a group of indigenous Sukau villagers in Sabah, Malaysia, about tourism development in the Lower Kinabatangan River watershed area.

Most research on local community perception seems to indicate that when residents acknowledge the benefit (Hanafiah et al., 2013) or see tourism activities taking place in their region, they will perceive any tourist development favorably (Liu & Li, 2018). Rasoolimanesh and Seyfi (2020) discovered that residents' perceptions are a crucial factor in the success or failure of any destination tourism development.

Cottrell and Vaske (2006) argued that the local community's perception is the most accurate since the place is close to their heart. Thus, in areas where locals have little or no tourism experience, it is critical to investigate their attitudes and opinions regarding a proposed tourism development strategy, particularly in new destinations (Lepp, 2008).

### **Community Attachment**

Community attachment is how residents feel connected to a community and why they want to remain attached to the community (Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, & Ahmad, 2017). Local attachment can be measured in a variety of ways such as how long people grew up in the community, the living and/or having born and/or grown up in the community (Brida et al., 2014). There has been insufficient research in the field of this variable to establish a definitive relationship to residents' perceptions. A research study conducted by Stockton (2011) used community engagement as one of the predictors of attitudes towards tourism. McCool and Martin (1994) revised their measurement of community attachment which they called community orientation from the Likert-type scale items of previous studies. The results of the study showed no connection between community attachment and attitudes toward tourists.

In the study of Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017), the model was simplified by using community attachment as the variable instead of attendance. This study has examined how community attachment changes the community members' perception and support of World Heritage Site conservation and tourism development. The study concluded that there was no significant relationship between community attachment and residents' positive perceptions of their community. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2015) has examined the impacts of tourism, and how it is perceived. In relation to community attachment variables, the results of the study have found a positive impact on positive perceptions and the negative perceptions are negatively affected. The study found that residents who have strong feelings for Lenggong and are also willing to invest their time and resources have more positive perceptions of tourism development, and less negative perceptions.

Meimand et al. (2017) demonstrated that community attachment has a significant effect on perceived socio-cultural benefit. Results showed that residents who have strong attachment feelings and are more sensitive regarding the effects tourism has on them demonstrated more support for tourism growth. There is a positive influence from the attachment of the community towards support for development in the study from Morales et al, (2018), in which support of the local community towards sustainable tourism development depends upon the attachment residents have to their community. Based on the current literature, there is a direct positive correlation between community attachment with residents' perceptions on tourists.

H1: There is a positive significant relationship between community attachments and perceptions towards water-based tourism development.

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Only a few studies have focused on residents' intrinsic motivations and how it correlates with perceptions of locals and support towards tourism development (Meimand et al., 2017). The study concluded that there was no significant relationship between activities that met their needs and desires. Intrinsic factors help residents to perceive and accept tourism development (Meimand et al., 2017). Intrinsic motivation has been used in a variety of social and educational contexts. In his study, Allan investigated the relationship between motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and intentions to repeat a trip to a geo-site. Concerning intrinsic motivation, the research shows that intrinsic motivation positively correlates with the desire of people to revisit the destination.

Le, Reisinger, Kim, and Yoon (2014) measured its influence on the level of support for the Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea. This experiment has concluded that volunteer motivation has significantly moderated the support for the mega-event, with satisfaction and attitudes playing a significant mediating role. On a similar front, Feng and Qin (2016) studied the factors that influence the attitudes of consumers toward mobile advertising. Their research has relied on both intrinsic and extrinsic variables. Also, a positive relationship exists between intrinsic motivations and attitudes toward mobile advertising. The investigation of Petenya (2016) explored the motivation of the host residents, as well as the challenges and problems in homestay tourism. Motivation involves various factors which include social, economic, and cultural factors. As a result, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors that encouraged them to participate in homestay tourism included both positive and negative aspects. The paper used 3-dimensions to analyze the residents' intrinsic motivation towards tourism development in the Malaysian Homestay Program. They are intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplishments, and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation. The study determined that intrinsic motivation, not money, was the main factor that led to the acceptance of the tourism program by residents. The study's findings indicate that there is a correlation between the local inhabitants' intrinsic motivation and their perception toward tourism.

H2: There is a positive significant relationship between local intrinsic motivation and perceptions of water-based tourism development.

### **Local Knowledge about Tourism**

Local community knowledge about the tourism industry is essential in understanding it and the impact it has for the local economy if it does at all. Local knowledge about tourism needs to be further investigated in areas where tourists are rare and where commerce is undeveloped (Meimand et al., 2017). Meimand and colleagues (2017) distinguished between two dimensions: issues of tourism generated costs and benefits and the facts about the tourism industry. Survey results indicate that people who have a lot of experience in tourism have positive perceptions of the benefits they receive socially and culturally as well as negative perceptions of the cost of tourism.

Similarly, Javier (2016) obtained a positive result on residents' perception toward a tourism based on two situations, which are before conducting a tourism awareness education program and after the

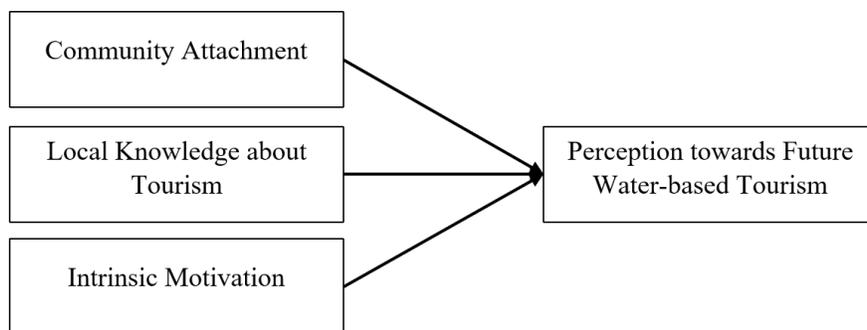
implementation of that awareness education campaign. However, the author stated that the change of their attitudes could only be evaluated based on their previous commitment to community development activities or planning exercises in the future.

Stockton (2011) showed that local knowledge about tourism was a variable in the study of Morro Bay residents and tourism attitudes. The researchers measured the variables like one's level of personal tourism information, and one's level of scientific tourism information. Outline the direct effects tourism has had on the country's economy. It was found that knowledge of economic and environmental tourism had a positive, significant impact on residents' views toward tourism. Indirect knowledge about tourism had no effect on residents' views of tourism. The author suggests that knowledge of tourism itself is the best indicator for understanding residents' attitudes about tourism. Zhang (2008) stressed the importance of community understanding of tourism to the local community. The author suggests that a change in attitude came about as a result of continued education about tourism and as a result of participating in tourism-related activities. This scenario will allow the host to increase their expertise in tourism and make new friends from around the globe.

In (1994), a multiple-attitude scale was created to measure a sense of attitude towards tourism. They discovered great outcomes; if local people have increasingly brilliant information on the travel industry and the nearby economy, the learned occupants are progressively constructive toward the travel industry. The community as a whole has taken part in direct positive relationship between community attachments with the residents' perceptions toward tourism.

H3: There is a positive significant relationship between local knowledge about tourism and perceptions of water-based tourism development.

Based on the presented literature, Figure 1 illustrates the present research framework:



*Figure 1: Research Framework*

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted in the Panchor District in Johore, on the south of the Malay Peninsula. The area of land that Panchor covers is 53.83 ha (0.21 sq mi), and also includes eight villages: Kampung Jawa, Kampung Sg Alai, Kampung Brohol, Kampung Melayu, Kampung Sri Tanjung, Kampung Sungai

Ranggam, and Kampung Terus. The Muar River has been an important water source for agriculture industries in Muar towns over the last century. Panchor town is located next to the Negeri Sembilan River, one of the major rivers in Malaysia which flows through Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang.



*Figure 2: Location of Panchor*  
*Source: Thong & Sheng (2013)*

The purpose of this study is to compile important data regarding local community support for developing water-based tourism at Panchor. To elicit community support towards the future development of water-based tourism, we used quantitative methods. The population of the Panchor town in 2011 was recorded by the Department of Statistics Malaysia to be 570 residents. The community is composed of 145 ethnic Malays, 342 ethnic Chinese, and 75 ethnic Indians. Only eight of the community are non-Malaysian. This study tested the effectiveness of the questionnaire on those living in Panchor.

## Measurement Instruments

A comprehensive literature review is carried out to gather all key variables of this study, and to design the survey instrument. A questionnaire consisted of three parts which measured different variables of the experiment. We have created the questionnaire including paper and online surveys for you to take. The survey, with a simplified English version and a simplified Malay version, is directed primarily at elderly residents in order to gain more accurate data. The items in the measurement instrument were adapted from several other studies (refer to Table 2). The surveys with one-answer closed-ended questions and a six-point Likert scale ranging from disagree (1) to agree (6). Community attachment and intrinsic motivation were adapted from Meimand et al.'s (2017), while local tourism knowledge was taken from studies by Hanafiah et al. (2013); Khanna and Khajuria (2016); Abdollahzadeh and Sharifzadeh (2014); and Miyakuni (2012). Items for community perception were adapted from Moghavvemi et al. (2017) and Doh (2010).

Before the distribution of questionnaires, the researchers tested a pre-test survey on five participants to ensure it's clear and to create the questionnaire. Once the final set of questionnaires was completed, they were sent to the Malay Department of Communication lecturers who reviewed the questionnaire entries for word usage. For the most part, we modified the variables on the survey and questionnaire to make them more appropriate for measuring community support for the tourism industry. The questionnaire has been submitted again to an expert in the Malay language who will review the usage of the Malay words in it. Overall there are fewer mistakes and typo mistakes in the questionnaire.

Table 2: List of items included in the questionnaire

VARIABLES	STATEMENTS	SOURCES
Community attachment	(A1) I am proud to live in Panchor community (A2) To participate in local programs, celebrations and festivals which are organized by the community (A3) I have a close relationship with my neighbours (A4) If I had to move from my village, I would not be very sad to leave (A5) I have a strong bonding with my community	Adopt and adapt from Meimand et. al (2017)
Intrinsic motivation	(B1) I feel joyful to be in contact with people outside of my village (B2) Water-based tourism activities will give opportunities for me to be an entrepreneur in my village (B3) Water-based tourism activities will open a new door to our village, and I can make new relations with others (B4) Water-based tourism activities in my village will provide an opportunity for me to improve my knowledge about other countries and cultures (B5) In my opinion, previous water activities in my village are very interesting	Adopt and adapt from Meimand et. al(2017)
Local knowledge of tourism	(C1) Water-based tourism activities will create employment opportunity for the locals (C2) Water-based tourism activities will improve the economy of Panchor (C3) Water-based tourism activities will provide more recreational activities for residents (C4) Water-based tourism activities will enhance the participation of residents in local activities (C5) Development of water-based tourism activities will bring incentives for environmental protection and conservation	Adopt and adapt from Hanafiah et.al (2013) ; Khanna & Khajuria (2016); Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh (2012); Miyakuni (2012)
Community perception towards water-based tourism development	(D1) Having tourists in Panchor is a good idea (D2) Improving water activities in Panchor Muar River is a wise idea (D3) The presence of tourists in Panchor will be fun (D4) Water-based Tourism looks like the best way to help my community's economy in the future (D5) Overall, the benefits of water-based tourism development will outweigh its costs	Adopt and Adapt from Moghavvemi et.al (2017); Doh (2006)

*Table 3: List of open-ended questions*

SECTION	QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Open-ended questions	Do you support the development of water-based tourism activities at Panchor Muar River? State the reason	Self-develop
	Will you be involved if there is any future development of water-based tourism at Panchor Muar River?	
	Select the following water-based tourism activities which you think are suitable to be implemented at Panchor Muar River	
	Please state if you have any other suggestion for events or activities related to water-based tourism that can be carried out at Panchor Muar River	

### **Sampling Procedure**

The town has a total population of 570 residents in 2017 (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2021). To estimate the number of participants required, the researchers used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and determined the sample size of at least 226 samples. An in-person interview method was therefore chosen by the researcher for the study which the respondents were chosen for convenience and proximity to the researcher.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Primary data was gathered using a paper survey and an online survey. The survey comprises three sections, with questions in both spaces answered. The data has been collected by the researcher with the aid of 17 numerators, the students from the Department of Tourism, Kulliyyah of Languages and Management, International Islamic University Malaysia who are taking Transportation and Infrastructure in Travel class. The data is available from March 29th 2019 until April 20<sup>th</sup> 2019.

## **RESULTS**

### **Sample Profile**

The questionnaire has been transparently completed by all of the local communities that have been canvassed. Ninety-seven participants responded to the study, with only five questionnaires discarded. Although the data collected did not fulfill the study's target set (226), it did obtain an average survey response rate of 33%, which is valid according to Lindemann (2018).

Table 4: Respondents' profile

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Valid percent (%)
Gender	Male	65	70.7
	Female	27	29.3
Age	18-23	18	19.6
	24-38	38	41.3
	39-53	21	22.8
	54-74	15	16.3
Race	Malay	85	92.4
	Chinese	5	5.4
	Indian	2	2.2
Level of Education	SPM	44	47.8
	STPM/STAM/Matriculation/ Foundation	8	8.7
	Diploma	10	10.9
	Bachelor	18	19.6
	Master	7	7.6
	Primary school Certificate	3	3.3
	PhD	1	1.1
	1	1.1	
Employment status	Employed in public sector	25	27.2
	Employed in private sector	23	25.0
	Self-employed	18	19.6
	Student	15	16.3
	Unemployed	10	10.9
	Part-time	1	1.1
Tourism-related job	Yes	20	21.7
	No	60	65.2
	Not applicable	12	13.0
Length of residency	Below 10 years	35	38.0
	10-20 years	15	16.3
	21-30 years	15	16.3
	Above 30 years	27	29.3
Water activities awareness	Yes	63	68.5
	No	29	31.5

## Feedback on Open-ended Questions

A total of 87 respondents responded to the open-ended questions. The researcher has used thematic analysis to analyze the open-ended questions that focus on pinpointing, examining, and recording the themes within the data.

*Table 5: Suggestions by the local community*

Theme	Comments
Tour activities	Sepit biru tour (lobster tour) Panchor tour with the trishaw
Additional water activities	Swimming Shrimp catching Water jet-pack Fish breed Longboat race Dragon boat competition
Attraction & transportation	Floating restaurant Kids' recreational park Floating food truck Water theme park Water taxi Raft house Aquaculture/ aquafarming

## Construct Validity

The correlation matrix revealed many results above .5 indicating a significant relationship. The chi-square value was .893, and the procedure of Bartlett's test was significant. All scales were then factor analyzed using Direct Oblimin rotation with orthogonal varimax rotation methods. The participants discarded a total of five answers on community attachment, intrinsic motivation, and community perception. Distinct three components emerged from the statistical testing of the data, and all three explained the majority of the variance in the measures.

## Reliability analysis

The reliability analysis ensured the accuracy of the instruments used by the researchers and provided consistent results. The raw data were screened and cleansed so that further investigation could be conducted. We detected a few mistakes in the content and quickly corrected the errors in the information and data. Next, we apply reliability analysis to measure the goodness of variables such as community attachment, local intrinsic motivation, local knowledge about tourism, and local community perception.

Table 6: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics			
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Overall Values	
		Mean	Standard Deviation
Community attachment	0.879	4.45	1.17
Local intrinsic motivation	0.898	4.50	1.16
Local knowledge about tourism	0.899	4.62	1.20
Community perception	0.803	4.73	1.14

Note. N=92

## Multiple Regression

There is a positive relationship between community attachment, local intrinsic motivation, and local knowledge about tourism, all of which are positively correlated with community perception towards water-based tourism development.

Table 7: Correlation Coefficients of study variables

Variables	Community Attachment	Local Intrinsic Motivation	Local Knowledge About Tourism	Community Perceptions
Community Attachment	1			
Local Intrinsic Motivation	0.735**	1		
Local Knowledge About Tourism	0.76**	0.826**	1	
Community Perceptions	0.696**	0.721**	0.803**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

To fully agree with the relationship between community attachment, local intrinsic motivation, and local knowledge of tourism, the statistical analysis was performed as stated in Table 8 and Table 9 below.

Table 8: Model summary of variables

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 <sup>a</sup>	.644	.632	.68826

a. Predictors: (Constant), Local\_Knowledge, Community\_Attachment, Local\_intrinsic

b. Dependent Variable: Perception

Table 9: Result of the ANOVA test

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	75.560	3	25.187	53.170	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	41.686	88	.474		
	Total	117.247	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Perception

b. Predictors: (Constant), Local\_Knowledge, Community\_Attachment, Local\_intrinsic

## Hypotheses Testing

The causal relationship of the constructs was assessed using regression analysis are summarized below:

H<sub>1</sub>: Community Attachment has a positive and significant relationship with Perceptions of water-based tourism development.

The results of this study show that community attachment has a beta value of .308 with a significant p-value of .000, meaning that it is significantly related to perceptions. A significant value of .000 affirms H<sub>1</sub> and is accepted by most people.

H<sub>2</sub>: Local Intrinsic Motivation has a positive and significant relationship with Perceptions towards water-based tourism development.

The results show that the relationship between Local Intrinsic Ability and Perceptions is supported with a beta value of .320 with a p-value of .000. H<sub>2</sub> is mutually agreed upon.

H<sub>3</sub>: Local Knowledge has a positive and significant relationship with Perceptions towards water-based tourism development.

The results revealed a positive correlation between Local Knowledge and Perceptions. The beta value for local knowledge is .447, and statistically significant. H<sub>2</sub> is accepted as the p-value is .000.

The beta coefficients in the regression analysis provide an estimate of the relative importance of the three independent variables concerning Perceptions. Based on the results of this study, local knowledge was the

most influential factor ( $B3 = .397, p = .000$ ), followed by local intrinsic ( $B2 = .336, p = .001$ ) and community attachment ( $B1 = .140, p = .066$ ). The findings of the study are comparable to previous research (Stockton, 2011).

## DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to determine the perceptions of the local community towards water-based tourism development. The community of Panchor, a rural town in Johor, was selected for this research as it has the potential to be a remarkable eco-tourism and outdoor recreation attraction. As per findings, the Panchor Muar River has the potential to attract tourists seeking leisure activities such as sightseeing, fishing, kayaking, and water skiing. One of the initiatives to stimulate Panchor's current socio-economic state could be water-based natural attractions. The perspective and support of the local population for a water-based tourism development plan at Panchor Muar River is the first step in making the plan a reality.

The study's objectives were met based on the reported findings. All of the factors in the study had a positive relationship. When the SET results are compared to the area's development, the younger population may decide to stay because there are more career opportunities for them. Younger members of the community appear to have a more equitable perspective of tourism development in the future.

The positive relationship between local community attachment and their support for tourism is similar to the findings of previous scholars, which include Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017), Manyiwa et al. (2017), Meimand et al. (2017), and Morales et al. (2018), and Tournois and Rollero (2020). However, the regression analysis' significant results contradicted the studies by Stockton (2011) and Rasoolimanesh et al (2017). This study demonstrates that actively involving people in river-based activities can increase community attachment. Swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, and maneuvering and steering cruise ship ships are among them. Since many generations of the local population have lived in Panchor, their participation in river-related activities may have resulted in a strong attachment to the place. Shirleyana et al. (2020) highlighted that, as theorized by SET and CPT, government support could lessen physical and economic risks, hence creating a positive local community attachment to river-based tourism in Panchor. Therefore, hypothesis H1, local community attachment concerning their perceptions of water-based tourism development, is accepted in this study.

The second hypothesis was supported by the positively significant and robust relationship between the local community's intrinsic motivation and perception of water-based tourism development. The intrinsic motivation of the local people is related to their perception of water-based tourism development, as shown by this study. The studies on local intrinsic motivation by Allan (2011), Gribanova (2021), Herlambang, (2021); Kim et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2014), and Petenya (2016) have supported this hypothesis. Understanding local community motivation is crucial since it is at the core of local behavior. In this context, intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to have the opportunity to host tourism and form relationships with them. It's also about having a sense of being needed, of having self-respect and having a role to play as a community member.

Local intrinsic motivation can be defined as a local community's participation in an activity for its own satisfaction and enjoyment rather than for the sake of obtaining an external reward. This is shown in the

local community's positive attitude toward the anticipated growth of water-based tourism in their area. They are genuinely motivated to make contact with people from other countries and cultures in order to understand more about them. They also believe that developing water-based tourism will help them to contribute to their community by allowing them to become entrepreneurs and expand their network. Thus, this study has demonstrated that the positive perception and support for a water-based tourism development plan are more than merely financial gains. Non-monetary benefits or internal rewards are also important in deciding how the locals view and support such a project. The findings of this study support what was maintained by Bin et al. (2019) that non-economic gains are also crucial in helping a tourism development plan

The third hypothesis is that the local community's knowledge of tourism will influence their perception of a future water-based tourism development project in their area. This hypothesis is fully supported. The Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses revealed a favorable and significant relationship between local residents' tourist knowledge and their perceptions of water-based tourism development. They confirmed that the most important determinant of perception is tourism knowledge. This result is also consistent with earlier research, including Javier (2016), Rhoden and Kaaristo (2020), and Meimand et al (2017). Panchor residents were also had a good knowledge of tourism and they seemed more concerned with how much tourism development would cost and how it would benefit their community socially, economically, and environmentally. According to Ricart et al. (2019), the more knowledgeable the residents, the more positively inclined they would be towards tourism development. They understand that development will result in a higher standard of living, greater job opportunities, and recreational opportunities for residents. Better incentives for environmental protection and conservation would also arise from the development.

The study provides significant implications for the theory and practice of psychology. The purpose of this study is to develop reliable measurement items to capture perceptions of water-based tourism by residents. Theoretically, the findings reveal that local community attachment, local community intrinsic motivation, and local community knowledge of tourism are significantly related to community perceptions of water-based tourism. Because the independent and dependent variables have a positive relationship, it can be concluded that this study supports the interpretation of Social Exchange Theory (SET). The residents believed that if they could benefit from tourism, they would be more inclined to support it. This study shows that the residents supported a water-based tourism development plan for their community as reflected by their positive perceptions of the initiative. This study also contributes to a reliable way of measuring new items: water-based tourism is the residents' perception of tourism.

Practically, this study suggests that the tourism and hospitality industries should conduct a campaign or workshop to increase the level of public and private sectors understanding about tourism in general. Studies show that consumers' perceptions of tourism have been improved if they are knowledgeable about the industry. When tourism activities are conducted in the local community, the local people will have more opportunities to meet tourists and learn more about tourism. One implication is about the future impact of tourism upon the public sector and tourism planners. This research allows us to better understand how the local community sees the development of water-based tourism. Based on contributions suggested by the local community, the authority may implement a pilot program to promote Panchor in the future. The locals should have had a say in the tourism decision-making process.

The third implication is that the town will benefit from this contract. Also, because water-based tourism development may increase the economic condition and quality of life. Moreover, more investment will flow into the development of water-based tourism if the development is implemented in the future. This study suggests that relevant authorities should be more concerned with building programs that will encourage the residents to support the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The first limitation of this study is that most of the population at Panchor is senior citizens. It is difficult for the researcher to influence the local community to answer the questionnaire although the researcher offered assistance to help them. Another limitation of this study was this study conducted an interview only with the Chief of Head Village. This study is also limited to the residents of Panchor and does not include the perception from the local community near Panchor such as Pagoh and Gerisik.

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## Destination Image, Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty at Malacca, Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study will give a better understanding of the concept and relationship between destination image and satisfaction in enhancing tourists' loyalty. The purpose of this study was to explore the variables related and investigate the relationship between destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty

**Methods/Design/approach:** This research utilized a quantitative approach by 366 respondents that have been to Malacca and were analyzed using SPSS.

**Findings:** The finding of this study showed that destination image was significantly on destination loyalty through the mediation of tourist satisfaction. It also provides information to the government agencies or tourism agencies on improving tourism satisfaction and image.

**Implication/Limitations:** The limitation of the study is that the majority of the samples 95.6 percent were Malaysian, and 4.4 percent were non-citizens. This is due that International borders were closed due to the pandemic COVID- 19.

**Keywords:** Destination image, tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, revisit

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, countries and cities worldwide compete intensively on the global market for investments and aggressively attract a larger number of tourists (Hasnawati,2018). This will create many challenges in tourism marketing of the destinations since the more places in the world are developed for tourism exploitation, the more destination choices are available to visitors (Tran, 2015).

The present study's positioning focuses on Malaysia's tourism destination's image and marketing strategies related to the tourism sectors. This particular tourism sector provides an opportunity for tourists to experience some activities or attractions that are provided in different destinations. Due to the growing interest in cultural heritage tourism and the global influx of the new niche of tourism sectors, tourist arrivals in Malaysia have improved tremendously to explore the historical and cultural value of Malacca (Rahman et al.,2015). According to data collected by Tourism Malaysia, Malacca received 17.02 million domestic and international tourist arrivals in 2018. The growth of the tourism industry in Malaysia is the result of the various marketing and promoting efforts made by the Malaysian government. So it is not surprising that many states or local communities throughout Malaysia will venture into the tourism industry or new niche tourism that can rejuvenate the local economies.

In addition, tourist satisfaction with a destination is another important point that should focus more on a destination. This is due to a destination will be able to identify and satisfy the tourist's needs and demands; certain tourists will be repeated visitors to a particular and spread a positive word of mouth freely, which is called destination loyalty (Bramwell, 1998; Kozak, 2001; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi and Qu, 2008; Zhang et al., 2014). In other words, a positive and attractive destination image and tourist satisfaction is the basis for tourists to visit again. Therefore, creating a distinctive and appealing destination image that will maximize tourist satisfaction is one of the key missions of any destination to win in this ongoing globally intensive competition.

In the existing literature on destination image marketing, an exploration of the relationship between destination image, tourist satisfaction and loyalty is still lacking. In other words, understanding the diversity of perceptions, images, and level of satisfaction and motivation of a destination is vital in understanding and predicting tourism demand and its effects on tourism destinations. Understanding the destination image of the consumer is pivotal for a destination and serves as the basis for more efficient and effective future strategic planning and decision making.

In line with the development of tourism globally, Malacca is one of the states in Malaysia that has already begun to enjoy a rapid and steady increase in tourist arrivals. Over the past 20 years, the tourism industry in Malaysia has progressed a lot, and the number of tourist arrivals has increased enormously. These developments in the tourism industry suggest that in order for Malaysia to compete globally, it needs to increase its competitiveness in offering attractive tourist destinations through its exciting products, such as beautiful beaches and land, eco-tourism, historical heritage sites, million-year-olds rainforest, recreational facilities as well as modern shopping centers and highways. Marketing is one of the important enablers in order to achieve the tourism target for tourist arrivals and receipts. Malaysia has done well thus in terms of respect, largely due to its focused and sustained marketing campaign for tourist destinations. Cultural and heritage tourism in Malaysia has the potential to be fully developed as a tourism product. The country is

well known throughout the world as a melting pot of Asia culture, reflected in Tourism Malaysia creating the tagline “Malaysia: Truly Asia” to promote the country to foreign tourists.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A destination image is an impression or expression obtained by a tourist on his journey (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015). Destination image is a combination of various products, attractions, attributes, and personal perceptions through information selection. Destination images play an important role in decision-making (Whang et al., 2016). Perceived value is consumers’ overall assessment of the utility of products/services based on received and perceived (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). Perceived value is also related to what is perceived toward received value when planning travel services (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015). Thus, the destination image can affect the perceived value obtained when traveling (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015). Many studies state that destination images positively and significantly affect perceived value (Å & Tsai, 2007; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). However, the results also show that destination image does not significantly influence the perceived value in China (Hornig et al., 2012). Destination image affects the intention of tourists to revisit. Based on the results, the destination image positively and significantly affects the revisit intention (Tosun, Dedeolu, & Fyall, 2015; Whang et al., 2016). However, the result also shows that the destination image does not significantly influence the revisit intention in Greece (Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016). So the approach based on existing literature and theory, it can be hypothesized that H<sub>1</sub>: destination image positively and significantly affects the perceived value H<sub>2</sub>: destination image positively and significantly affects revisit intention H<sub>3</sub>: destination image positively and significantly affects revisit intention through perceived value

### Destination Image

Destination image has represented a real subject of interest for both practitioners and academics over time, and since the 90s, it has been studied in correlation with the destination brand (Almeyda and Babu, 2017). Between the concepts of destination image and destination brand, there was often confusion as they were considered the same. According to Crompton, 1979; Ekinici, 2003; Flavia, 2018, the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a person has about a destination. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. Destination image plays two important roles in behaviors which is to influence the destination choice decision-making process and to condition the after decision-making behaviors, including participation (on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction), and future behavioral intention (intention to revisit) (Lee et al., 2005; Kanwel et al., 2019).

Destination image can be assessed from cognitive, affective, cognitive, and empirical results found that affective image components play a more significant influence compared to cognitive components (Xu et al., 2017; Styliadis, 2017; Abdullah & Lui. 2018). Cognitive image refers to an individual's own knowledge and beliefs about the destination (an evaluation of the perceived attributes of the destination) (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Umit Basaran, 2016). Affective image refers to individual’s feelings toward a destination or as an emotional response of individuals to a place (Russell, 1980; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Lin et al., 2007; Umit Basaran, 2016). Conative image refers to the action step on how one acts on the information and how they feel about a destination. The actions comprise individual’s actual conduct or intention to revisit, recommend the

destination to others or spread positive word of mouth (Gartner, 1993; Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Tasci et al., 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Kim et al., 2013, Umit Basaran, 2016).

## **Tourist Satisfaction**

Tourist satisfaction represents a positive, a perception or a feeling that tourists develop or acquire by engaging in recreational activities (Chen and Tsai, 2007, Abdullah & Lui, 2018). Tourist satisfaction also is significant to tourism management because it influences destination choice. Tourist satisfaction is investigated as the result of a tourist's image, value, and quality perception so it is unique to each individual. Tourist satisfaction is considered one of the prime variables to sustain competitive business in the tourism industry because it affects the choice of destination and consumption of products and services (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

Tourist satisfaction usually differs due to the differences of each person. In other terms, the different degrees of satisfaction can lead to the customers' different needs, wants, and motivation. Tourist satisfaction is also the overall evaluation of the services or products, and it is the reflection of the customers who make their previous purchase before making their decision-making. So indirectly, it can always exceed their expectation, and their loyalty increases.

H<sub>1</sub>: The cognitive image has a positive and significant relationship with the tourist satisfaction

H<sub>2</sub>: The affective image has a positive and significant relationship with tourist satisfaction

H<sub>3</sub>: The conative image has a positive and significant relationship with tourist satisfaction

## **Destination Loyalty**

Destination loyalty has been one of the key areas of business research for more than four decades and has produced valuable insights into the process of building customer loyalty (Donnelly, 2009; Rajest, 2013). Newman and Werbel, 1973; Rajesh, 2013) defined loyal customers as those who re-buy a brand, consider only that brand, and do no brand-related information seeking. According to Aaker, 1996; Moiescu, 2009; Flavia, 2018), loyalty can be assessed on 4 coordinates: consumer's satisfaction, customer's behavior, repurchasing intention, and intentions of recommendation. In other words, destination loyalty is the intention of the customers to re-buy or repeatedly the service or the product.

Tourist's loyalty can also be considered a vital feature for destination marketers because it is connected to a lot of desire with less cost, including keeping existing visitors rather than catching new visitors (Loureiro & Gonzalez, 2008). However, repeat tourists can reduce the cost of marketing compared to attracting first-time visitors.

H<sub>4</sub>: Tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship with destination loyalty

## Framework

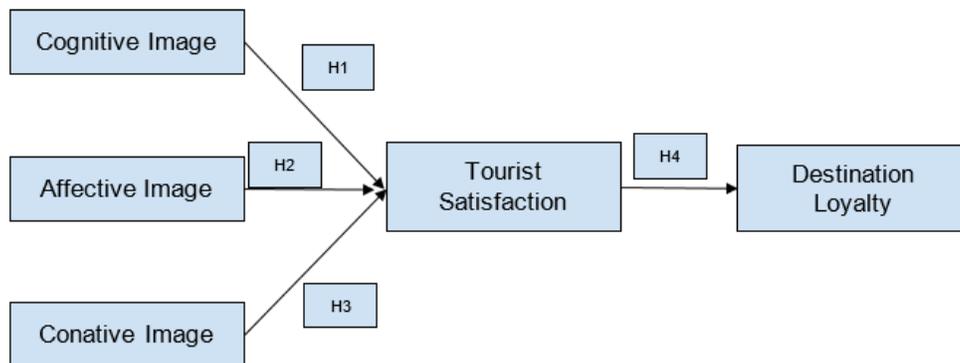


Figure 1: Umit Basaran (2016). Examining the relationships of cognitive, affective and conative destination image : A research on Safranbolu, Turkey, ISSN 1913-9004, Vol 9

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research mainly applied a quantitative approach to examine the effects between the variables, and 366 responses were collected. A total of 53 questions were identified in these previous studies and adapted to the current research context. The questions are divided into four sections which are respondent demographic, destination image, tourist' satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Respondents were asked to indicate their degrees of agreement with each item in the destination image and destination loyalty by using a 5-point Likert scale which; 1 represented strongly disagree, and 5 represented strongly agree. For the tourist satisfaction, the respondents were asked to know their level of satisfaction with each item by using a 5-point Likert scale which; 1 represented highly dissatisfied, while 5 represented highly satisfied. Respondents' demographic information includes age, gender, education, nationality, category of tourist, travel with, the purpose of visit, length of stay, and mode of transportation. The finding of the data was using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a software package used to analyze statistical data version 25.0

## Measurement Instruments

Questionnaire Instrument Statement/items test adapted from an instrument used in previous research, testing variable of destination image adapted from research (Stylos et al., 2016; Tan, 2016; Tosun et al., 2015; Whang et al., 2016), that the dimensions of the destination image is divided into the effective and cognitive image. Furthermore, to test the quality of service variables adapted from research (Kuo et al., 2009; Liu & Lee, 2016; Zhang et al., 2016), that dimension is divided into visible and reliable. Then, the dimension is divided into product and service value to test the perceived value variable adapted from the study (Dye et al., 2007; Kuo et al., 2009). Finally, to test the intentions to revisit variable adapted from the study (Liu & Lee, 2016; Tan, 2016; Tosun et al., 2015), the dimension is divided into the revisit intention and intensity of visiting time. The questionnaires were distributed online since the COVID 19 as the researchers initiated a snowballing concept in getting respondents. The instruments were gathered and adapted from previous research as stated in the earlier section.

## RESULTS

### Sample Design

*Table 1: Demographic characteristic of respondent*

Category	Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Below 20	66	18.0
	Between 21 – 30	252	68.9
	Between 31 – 40	37	10.1
	41 and above	11	3.0
Gender	Male	63	17.2
	Female	303	82.8
Education	High school	23	6.3
	Diploma/STPM/Foundation	80	21.9
	Degree	234	63.9
	Master	25	6.8
	PhD	4	1.1
Nationality	Malaysian	350	95.6
	Foreigner	16	4.4
Category of tourist	First time	82	22.4
	Repeating visitor	284	77.6
Travel with	Family	241	65.8
	Spouse	6	1.6
	Alone	10	2.7
	Friend	109	29.8
Purpose of visit	Leisure	331	90.4
	Business	8	2.2
	Leisure and business	6	1.6
	Visit friend and relative	6	1.6
	Practical student	1	0.3
	Study trip	8	2.2
	Conference	1	0.3
	Appointment doctor/leisure	1	0.3
	Family day	2	0.5
	Interview	1	0.3
	Study	1	0.3
Length of stay	Day trip	69	18.9
	2 days 1 night	147	40.2
	3 days 2 nights	129	35.2
	4 days and above	21	5.7
Mode of transport	Public transport	56	15.3
	Private transport	310	84.7

The respondents for the research consisted of Malaysians and foreigners. Out of 366 respondents, 350 (95.6%) were Malaysian while 16 (4.4%) were non-citizen. The respondents represented various age groups, but the majority, 252 (68.9%), were between 21-and 30 years old, which indicated that tourists from young adults were all target customers of the tourism industry. The number of female respondents was higher, 303 (82.8%), than male 63 (17.2%). 25 (6.8 %) respondents had masters, about 80 (21.9%) respondents possessed diploma, STPM, and foundation, and 234 (63.9%) were degree holders. The respondents were categorized into first-time visitors 82 (22.4%) and repeating visitors 284 (77.6%). About 241 (65.8%) of the respondents traveled with their family, and 109 (29.8%) traveled with their friends. Most of the respondents had come to Malacca for leisure purposes 331 (90.4%) and every 8 respondents (2.2%) for business and study trips. This study also showed 147 (40.2 %) of tourists who responded that they were staying in Malacca for at least 2 two days and 1 one night and 129 (35.2) respondents stayed for three days and two nights. Most of the 310 (84.7%) respondents had used their private transport to visit Malacca, while 56 (15.3%) respondents used public transport.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.829 <sup>a</sup>	.688	.681	.39849

a. Predictors: (Constant), NA, CA, TE, INF, ACC, PNV, AI, CI  
b. Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction

Multiple regressions were run to test three groups of hypotheses and examine the relationship between tourist satisfaction and eight predictors. The  $R^2$  value of 0.688 indicated that only 68.8% of the variation in tourist satisfaction could be explained by combining the independent variable destination image. In addition, 31.2% of the variables in tourist satisfaction cannot be explained, possibly due to the other factors. The adjusted value of  $R^2$  from the findings of this study was 0.681 or 68.1%. The difference between the  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.007. to determine whether each independent variable is significant to the dependent variable, the statistical test is a t-test. Significant values were determined based on the t-value ( $\alpha$ ;  $df = n - k - 1$ ), where  $\alpha = 0.05$ , t-critical (0.05;  $366-8-1 = 357$ ) = 1.9666, and  $\rho = 0.000$ .

Table 3: Results of regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	0.243	0.139		1.752	0.081
	<b>Cognitive Image (24 items)</b>					
	Natural attraction (3 items)	0.11	0.035	0.129	3.184	0.002
	Cultural attraction (6 items)	0.132	0.031	0.165	4.252	0
	Travel environment (3 items)	0.008	0.044	0.009	0.191	0.848
	Infrastructure and facilities (4 items)	-0.06	0.045	-0.064	-1.343	0.18
	Accessibility (4 items)	0.047	0.048	0.049	0.98	0.328
	Price and value (4 items)	0.179	0.042	0.195	4.235	0
	<b>Affective Image (5 items)</b>					
	Conative Image (3 items)	0.127	0.044	0.135	2.895	0.004

The results indicated that only five out of eight variables were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) except travel environment, infrastructure and facilities and accessibility. The results of t-test analysis found that for natural attraction ( $3.184 > 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.002 < 0.05$ ), cultural attraction ( $4.252 > 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), price and value ( $4.235 > 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), affective image ( $7.900 > 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.000 < 0.05$ ) and conative image ( $2.895 > 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.004 < 0.05$ ). This indicates that variables have a significant relationship. The results showed that affective image explained the largest portion of the variance in tourist satisfaction at 39.6 percent, ( $p = 0.000$ ). While for the variables travel environment ( $0.191 < 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.848 > 0.005$ ), infrastructure and facilities ( $1.343 < 1.9666$  sig p  $0.180 > 0.005$ ) and accessibility ( $0.980 < 1.9666$ , sig p  $0.328 > 0.005$ ). The value for the score items was smaller than the t-value, indicating no significant relationship. On the other hand, travel environment, accessibility, and infrastructure and facilities, although important for any destination, appear not to be a determining factor for tourists to form the destination image.

*Table 4: Multiple linear regression results*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.798 <sup>a</sup>	.637	.636	.43129

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tourist satisfaction  
b. Dependent Variable: Destination loyalty

*Table 5 Model Summary*

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.946	.129		7.307	.000
	Tourist satisfaction	.810	.032	.798	25.298	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Destination loyalty

To confirm the relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, further linear regression analysis revealed that satisfaction indeed has a significant relationship with destination loyalty, as shown in Table 4 above. As indicated in the past studies, tourist's satisfaction influences destination loyalty, and they are most likely to engage in positive word of mouth (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Bigne et al., 2001; Engeset and Elvekrok, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Abdullah., Lui, 2018). It reveals the important role that satisfaction plays in developing tourist behaviours related to destination loyalty, including revisiting a destination and spreading positive word of mouth. This study also provided empirical evidence that satisfaction directly and positively affects tourist loyalty. Therefore, as satisfaction levels increase, the propensity to return and recommend increases, which are critical for loyalty.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings are in line as indicated in the past studies, tourist's satisfaction influences destination loyalty and they are most likely to engage in positive word of mouth (Baker and Crompton 2000; Bigne, et al., 2001; Engeset and Elvekrok 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Abdullah., Lui, 2018). It reveals the important

role that satisfaction plays in developing tourist behaviours related to destination loyalty, including revisiting a destination and spreading positive word of mouth. This study also provided empirical evidence that satisfaction directly and positively affects tourist loyalty. Therefore, as satisfaction levels increase, the propensity to return and recommend increases, which are all critical for loyalty. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the tourism literature by being recognized. It reveals the important role that satisfaction plays in developing tourist behaviours related to destination loyalty, including revisiting a destination, as well as spreading positive word of mouth. This study also provided empirical evidence that satisfaction directly and positively affects tourist loyalty. Therefore, as satisfaction levels increase, the propensity to return and recommend increases, which are all critical for loyalty.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

There are several limitations to this study. First, 95.6 percent of the samples were Malaysian, and 4.4 percent were non-citizens. This is because international borders were closed due to pandemic COVID-19, the findings might only apply to specific community groups. Future studies should expand to include more international tourists as Malacca is the UNESCO World site, and the future research will benefit the Malacca stakeholders and the industry players. Second, this study has a limited number of willing respondents, as the questionnaires were distributed online from the MCO period in 2019 till 2020. Future studies should attempt to get higher numbers of respondents. It is interesting to note that online surveys tend to have a low response rate, and it was estimated to be 11 percent lower than any other survey platforms (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Third, this study used a snowballing sampling method, which may affect the number of potential respondents. This is because different age groups are not well represented as most group members were aged 21 to 30 years old.

This study will be a good reason for the researchers to suggest some future and potential research in order to assist the Stakeholders and promote Malacca, especially using the information that researchers gathered in this survey. We strongly believe that all the limitations and future research will gain betterment for the tourism industry in Malacca and Malaysia. Malacca is the historical destination and will be the the right theme for promotion.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study aimed to explore the variables related and investigate the relationship between destination image, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Findings from the study concluded that only five influencing factors, namely natural attraction, cultural attraction, price and value, affective image, and conative image, significantly influenced tourist satisfaction, and in return, they have higher tendencies to revisit Malacca. This study has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the results of this study cannot be applied reliably to other tourist destinations. This is because the population of this study is limited to tourists who have visited Malacca. Similar studies can be replicated in other places to generalize this study's findings. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were Malaysian citizens.

Thus, future research should enlarge the sample and balance the number of locals and foreigners so that a comparative study between the two groups can be carried out. Also, an attempt to identify the risk-seeking

and risk-avoiding groups of tourists should be undertaken. It would help tourism marketers design specific campaigns targeting those segments. It also recommended that the stakeholder, especially the Malacca Tourism should take better lead in promoting some attractive events in order to gain more tourist arrival especially the international tourist that have Portuguese and Dutch roots. Events that can inspire potential tourists from neighboring countries such as Batam, Indonesia, Singapore to explore Malacca as their destination either short trip or overnight. Malacca state has many attractive attractions and they can extend or combo-stay at Southern gates of Malaysia.

Finally, it would be beneficial to conduct in-depth research to differentiate the level of satisfaction, loyalty, and complaint among first-time and repeat visitors. The development of tourism will continue progressing and rapidly develop so that the government has an important role in maintaining, preserving, and building attractive worldwide tourism that can compete with other tourism. Creating a destination image and service quality in a particular place will help the government improve the revisit intention of tourists and form a perceived value that is useful to affect the revisit intention of tourists.

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## The Influence of Destination Image on Tourist Satisfaction in Mosque Tourism: A Case Study in Kuala Lumpur

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *This study aims to identify destination image and tourist satisfaction in mosque tourism.*

**Methods/Design/approach:** *This study focused on the mosques in Kuala Lumpur as the study area. A set of questionnaires was used for data collection and distributed to the tourists in Masjid Negara, Masjid Putra, Putrajaya, and Masjid Jamek, Kuala Lumpur.*

**Findings:** *This study discovered that the tourists felt that the mosque did not portray Islam as religious terrorism, and the tourists also felt the highest level of satisfaction towards mosque tourism. This study also found a significant relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction.*

**Implication/Limitations:** *The contribution of this study will help responsible authorities of the mosque to understand and boost the tourist satisfaction on the mosque tourism to encourage more tourists especially non-Muslim tourists, to visit the mosques in Malaysia.*

**Keywords:** *Destination Image, Islamic Tourism, Mosque Tourism, Tourism.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Malaysia is a country populated with multi-races and religions. The country's official religion is Islam. Approximately 63.7% of the Malaysian population are Muslims (Pew Research Center. The Global Religious Landscape, 2019). The mosque is a part of a typical scene in Malaysia whereby it is closely related to Muslim practices of performing obligatory prayer five times a day. Prayer done in the mosque is more praiseworthy, although it can be done at home. The men are expected to perform in the mosque while women are welcome, but it is better to perform at home instead. Usually, aside from providing prayer halls separating males and females, many mosques also provide multiple facilities such as public halls, meeting rooms, classrooms, pantries, and kitchens.

Aziz et, al (2016), said the sacred places may have been visited by some tourists due to curiosity level is high. Moreover, mosques in Malaysia have contemporary Islamic designs of architecture and landscape. Therefore, mosques in Malaysia have attracted people to visit the mosques more than for religious and spiritual purposes. Tourists are coming to visit the mosques because the mosque functioned as a place for religious activities and has interesting features that attracted a larger scale of tourists (Aziz, et al. 2016). A new form of tourism called mosque tourism has emerged from these activities.

Other than Muslim travelers, some Westerners were interested in the mosques; for Western travelers, curiosity and understanding of Islam itself justified in making mosque visitation as one of their tourism itineraries (Zain et, al. 2016). It can be seen that both Muslim and Western tourists showed a tremendous interest in mosques which for new kind of tourism called mosque tourism.

It is evident that the tourism industry is responsible for developing tourism activities in mosques. Faisal and Umar (2019), noted that the mosque is an interesting place to visit from people outside the country. This is in line with Malaysia as one of the famous tourist destinations for Muslim tourists. Malaysia has the potential to attract more Muslim tourists due to the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities, mainly mosques.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Mosque Tourism**

The mosque is a place of worship for Muslims and has significant meaning to the Muslim communities. The primary purpose is for five times prayers obligated to Muslims. As many Muslim communities lived, there are many mosques built more than any other place of worship with different styles and functions (Kessler, 2015). As the symbol of Islam, mosques have played a significant role in promoting Islam to others.

Mosques also serve as the core for communities to run religious activity in a city, especially for huge, iconic, and heritage mosques. However, some other features such as architectural design, heritage value, unique characteristics, and accessibility caused many tourists to visit (Aziz, et al. 2016).

Faisal and Umar, (2019) have explained that the mosque is one of the tourism destinations that is well received by international tourists, regardless of Muslim or non-Muslim. This is supported by Kuo (2007) noted that tourists visit the mosque due to the few factors that influence them to visit, such as suggestions from friends or relatives, curiosity and desire to learn about Islam and the mosque, and finding out the internal environment of the mosque.

Mosque tourism represents a form of religious tourism (Mansor, Ariffin, Nordin & Salleh, 2015). According to Norhanim (2015), “mosque tourism is one of the niche areas in the field of Islamic tourism that is expanding rapidly, the presence of mosques with outstanding historical, heritage, and aesthetic values have attracted foreign and domestic tourists to visit, appreciate, and experience these Muslim places of worship.” Meaning that mosques are welcoming all people worldwide to visit for tourism purposes.

Kamaruddin and Ismail (2012) said that a travel agency planning a trip to Muslim countries would include a visit to the mosque as one of the focus tourist destinations. Therefore, nowadays, mosques have become a tourism product in promoting Islamic tourism, especially in Kuala Lumpur. Zain et, al. (2016) have agreed that mosques are tourism products that not only portray the attractiveness of the architectural design. Moreover, they explained that mosques are not only a place of worship but also the center for society and humanity.

### **Mosques in Kuala Lumpur**

Malaysia is an Islamic country which majority of the communities are Muslim. Islam is the constitutional religion of the country, although Malaysia has multi races and religions. Malaysians live harmoniously in practicing their religion without force. The mosque is a vital element in the Muslim community, and mosques in Malaysia are included. Furthermore, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s capital city, is famous as a tourist attraction among local and international tourists.

Due to the majority of Muslim communities occupying Kuala Lumpur, the mosques are available not only for religious purposes. The mosques are also encompassing the social life of the Muslim communities. Nevertheless, mosques in Kuala Lumpur have attracted and been visited by tourists. Zain, et al. (2016) said that the tourists are desire to explore and understand the uniqueness of Muslim community life, Islamic culture, and the worship of Muslims is through mosques. For that reason, they make the mosque one of the tourist destinations they need to visit. From a non-Muslim tourists’ viewpoint, Ahmed and Eddy-U (2016) explained that non-Muslim tourists are motivated to visit the mosque is to experience the mosque decoration, symbol, and activities. Aziz et, al. (2016) also agreed that mosques that display its unique architecture and history attract tourists worldwide to visit. Many mosques in Kuala Lumpur have demonstrated the uniqueness of its architecture and history and many tourists came for that purpose including tourists from outside the country.

According to the website of Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), there are about 53 mosques included in ‘Mosque Trail in Malaysia’ (Table 2.1) in promoting the mosques for tourism purpose all over the country (ITC, 2018). The researcher chose three of seven mosques located in Kuala Lumpur in ‘Mosque Trail’ for this study, specifically Masjid Negara, Masjid Putra, Putrajaya, and Masjid Jamek, Kuala Lumpur.

## Destination Image

The destination image concept in tourism studies has been introduced since the early 1970s for more than four decades (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). Numerous studies on the destination image helped to navigate other researchers such as Echtner and Ritchie (1991), Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil (2007), Wang and Hsu (2010), Aksoy and Sule (2011), Zhang, Fu, Cai and Lu (2012), Rajesh (2013), and many more authors. Image is believed to have been a robust existence for the destination to sustain. According to Fakeye and Crompton (1991), the image is a mental schema developed by tourists based on a few impressions selected from a flood of all impressions.

Destination image is defined as the perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Meanwhile, Kim and Richardson (2003) defined destination image as a totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings accumulated toward a place over time. Generally, both authors have the same view in describing the destination image by emphasizing the compilation of the state of mind of the tourists experienced towards the destination.

Aksoy and Sule (2011) also explained that destination images usually change according to tourist perceptions. The tourists' different holiday experiences and uncertainty in their behaviours result in a different image for each destination according to their demands and necessities. This is because tourists feel the degree of pleasure is worth in order in terms of fulfilling their needs and wishes, and that also includes the service quality and activities offered by the destination (Hernandez-Lobato, 2006). Thus, these tourist perceptions must have also affected the destination's image, whether it could be positive or negative. Aksoy and Sule (2011) stated that the tourists' view related to the destination's image is more important than the actual condition of that place, and it shows that image helps destinations promote, which can differentiate one destination from another.

Though there are many empirical and conceptual studies regarding the meaning of destination image, it is also essential for this study to be straightforward in measuring the destination image. Charlotte and Ritchie (1991) listed about 34 attributes consisting of two main components: functional that is more tangible and psychological that is more abstract or characteristic used to measure Destination Image. It is required for the researcher to find out about the relationship between both variables to gain further understanding about the destination image and tourist satisfaction.

Generally, it is essential to measure the tourist satisfaction with the attributes in the destination image because the level of satisfaction of tourists may influence the overall satisfaction towards the destination. For almost two decades, the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction has been a popular case study for researchers to investigate (Puh, 2014). Castro, Armario, and Ruiz, (2007) identified that numerous studies had been done widely regarding the destination image. This has created better insight other than the standard measurement to evaluate satisfaction, such as the effect on the tourist decision-making process and predicting future behaviour. Previous studies have proved that the destination's image positively influences tourist satisfaction (Hernandez-Lobato, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Therefore, more positive images can lead to higher satisfaction levels.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

With the focus on mosque tourism attraction, which is located in Kuala Lumpur, this study collects data by distributing an online questionnaire to tourists who have already visited and experienced mosque tourism in Kuala Lumpur. The quantitative methods used were best to obtain feedback and information needed. The data collected were analyzed using the statistical software that generated descriptive and correlational output.

### Sampling

The population for this study is international and local tourists who have experienced mosque tourism in Kuala Lumpur. There are only three chosen mosques located in Kuala Lumpur: Masjid Negara, Masjid Putra, Putrajaya, and Masjid Jamek, Kuala Lumpur as the researcher wants to know the destination image and tourist satisfaction in mosque tourism, particularly in Kuala Lumpur.

The total number of respondents of this study is 133. The sampling technique used for this research is a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling. The samples were approached through a series of screening questions, and they voluntarily answered the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher selected convenience sampling because it is an appropriate non-probability sampling method due to low cost, convenience to reach respondents fast, and save time for respondents to answer in the questionnaire only.

### Instruments for Data Collection

The questionnaire has three sections: section A, section B, and section C. Section A consist of the demographic respondents. From this section, the researcher is able to collect profiles of respondents that have been to one of the three chosen mosques. Meanwhile, in section B, the researcher includes the independent variable Destination Image. Then, section C includes the dependent variable, which is Tourist Satisfaction. The materials in this section can measure the level of satisfaction of the tourists towards the mosque after they have visited and experienced it.

## FINDINGS

The findings of this study explained that most of the tourists strongly agreed that the incident that happened at Christchurch, New Zealand, has opened the opportunity to show that Islam is not a terrorist religion ( $M = 4.639$ ,  $S.D. = 0.711$ ).

Based on the Table 2, the survey result on the Destination Image section was compared. As depicted in the table, most of the items have slight differences.

Nevertheless, the *DI10* was about the incident in Christchurch, New Zealand incident that created an opportunity to show that Islam is not promoting terrorism had the highest rating ( $M = 4.639$ ;  $S.D. = 0.711$ ).

This was followed by item *DI3* about the architecture design of the mosque ( $M = 4.594$ ;  $S.D. = 0.537$ ) and *DI9* on the critical role of the mosque between Muslims and non-Muslims ( $M = 4.459$ ;  $S.D. = 0.793$ ).

*Table 2: Level of Destination Image*

No	Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Level
DI1	I think this destination is popular	4.323	.702	7
DI2	This mosque has a diversity of cultural and historical attractions	4.270	.708	9
DI3	The architecture design of the mosque attracts me (e.g., calligraphy, geometric patterns, use of Quranic quotations)	4.594	.537	2
DI4	This mosque as a medium for the Islamic Tourism market	4.376	.755	5
DI5	This mosque has succeeded as an attraction of Islamic heritage	4.436	.667	4
DI6	This mosque successfully positioned Malaysia as a country of Islamic Tourism	4.301	.769	8
DI7	The attractiveness of this mosque is different from other mosques	4.263	.797	10
DI8	The ideal destination for tourists who seek new spiritual experience	4.369	.701	6
DI9	The mosque plays a vital role in mediating the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim	4.459	.793	3
DI10	Do you think the incident in a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand creates an opportunity to show that Islam is not a terrorist religion?	4.639	.711	1

### Level of Tourist Satisfaction (TS)

*Table 3: Level of Tourist Satisfaction*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	0	0	0	0
	Intermediate	21	15.8	15.8	15.8
	High	112	84.2	84.2	100.0
	Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Based on the table above, the table shows the level of tourist satisfaction towards mosque tourism ranging from low to high. Overall, more than one-third of the respondents responded with high satisfaction, 84.2 percent. However, about 15.8 percent of the respondents have stated intermediate as their level of satisfaction. Fortunately, no respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the experience they got from the mosque they visited.

## Correlation between Destination Image and Tourist Satisfaction

*Table 4: Correlation between Destination Image and Tourist Satisfaction*

		Tourist Satisfaction	Destination Image
Tourist Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	133	133
Destination Image	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	133	133

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

Based on the table above, the table shows the correlation between the destination image and tourist satisfaction in mosque tourism. A Pearson product-moment Correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the destination image and the tourists' satisfaction or the opposite.

By referring to the above table (Table 4), there is a positive correlation between destination image and tourist satisfaction ( $r = .0468$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between both variables. This finding supports the research objective of investigating the significant relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction in mosque tourism.

## CONCLUSION

The current research revealed that most of the tourists had a high level of satisfaction after visiting the mosque. The findings clearly show that tourists care about mosque image before planning their trips. There is a positive correlation between the destination image, which affects tourist satisfaction in mosque tourism.

Generally, most non-Muslim tourists are hesitant to visit the mosque due to the rumors spread worldwide about islamophobia. However, since the incident happened in the mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, most tourists strongly agree that they no longer feel Islam is a terrorist religion. In addition, the mosque management is also influential in explaining the truth about Islam during their visit to the mosque.

From these findings, it is recommended for the higher authorities that are involved in managing the tourism activities in the mosques to maintain the positive image of the mosque and promote more tourists to visit mosque. Further study can be conducted in other mosques in another area using the qualitative method of data collection, such as interviews or observation.

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## Tourists Experience on Islamic Architecture and its Influence on Destination Loyalty

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This paper investigates tourists' experience from the encounter with Islamic architecture and how it influences the formation of loyalty towards the visited destination, focusing on Islamic architecture in Putrajaya.

**Methods/Design/approach:** This study employed a convenient sampling approach targeting domestic tourists in Malaysia. Self-administered online questionnaires were distributed through social media platforms, including Whatsapp, Telegram, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The distribution of questionnaires on Facebook was done through social groups, such as 'Kaki Cuti', 'Bercuti di Negara sendiri', 'Jom Melancong'. A total of 265 samples were collected and data were analysed through descriptive analysis and statistical tests.

**Findings:** The findings shows that aesthetic experience, emotional experience, and engaging experience are significant predictors of destination loyalty, with aesthetic experience as the strongest predictor. This means tourists experienced strong visual aesthetic stimulation in engaging with Islamic architecture, which resulted in significant influence on destination loyalty. Tourists also experience a significant level of emotional stimulation due to the special connection of religious bonds.

**Implication/Limitations:** This study focused only on the perspective of domestic tourists due to the current scenario of COVID-19 pandemic. Future research is to look into the perspective of international tourists on Islamic architecture in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Architecture Tourism, Islamic Architecture, Tourists Experience, Destination Loyalty

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## INTRODUCTION

Attractive signature architecture creates a one-of-a-kind aesthetic that improves the perception and image of a tourism destination. Destinations with recognisable and distinctive architecture have grown in popularity, particularly among architecture and history lovers, who are drawn to travel to self-witness the beauty of buildings and monuments. Between 1997 and 2014, architecture tourism, also known as 'architourism,' became a new trend in the tourism industry when individuals travelled around to see iconic building structures and monuments as works of art (Nash, 2015). Buildings are believed to provide joy, peace, amazement, remembrance, melancholy, and more to these folks, and architecture is supposed to provide them with a variety of sensations, meanings, and experiences. This is because, within architecture, it embodied the hidden essence of society, politics, history, and culture of a place (Izadi Najafabadi et al., 2019).

Architecture has grown in popularity and has a significant role in the growth of tourism destinations. Thus, tourism authorities or practitioners must develop strategies to preserve and upgrade architectural sites that support local residents and visitors. This is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which emphasises the importance of city planning and management practices to provide people with a comfortable, safe, and resilient environment. Additionally, this aim emphasises the importance of cities as centres for philosophies, commerce, tradition, and community development, enabling people to progress socially and economically (Yabanci, 2022). Regarding architourism, it can create numerous employment and business opportunities for the local community while offering positive and meaningful experiences for visitors through their interaction with the architecture and social surroundings such as tour guides (Scerri et al., 2019).

The concept of architectural value in tourism is very much concentrated on the placemaking of the city area (Abdul Rahman et al., 2021). As some city areas are rich with culture and heritage, iconic historical and architectural buildings and monuments can easily capture visitors' attention and trigger curiosity and engagement. In Malaysia, several researches highlighted the importance of the architectural value of historical and traditional monuments and buildings in providing a form of unspoken cultural symbol and identity capable of rejuvenating a dull city area (Abdul Rahman et al., 2018; Cheong et al., 2021). Not only significant for physical buildings, but the architectural value of interior space also plays a huge role in educating visitors on the socio-cultural character displayed (Maharimi & Mohd Razali, 2021).

From the perspective of urban tourism, a city can often offer diverse experiences to meet the varied preferences of city visitors due to its cultural, historical, and political richness. Diverse experience offering would attract the interest of city lovers, contribute to a satisfying tourist experience, and make the place more appealing and viable for potential visits to experience the other diverse niches offered. A positive experience is a significant factor in tourist satisfaction. When tourists are happy, they are more likely to exhibit positive behavioural responses that result in revisit intention or destination loyalty. Positive, unique experience gained from destination interaction would instil value in the whole travel journey (Qu & Kangli, 2017). In this case, the distinctive value would be gained from meaningful interaction with the architecture. This experience was generally classified into three dimensions by past researches, aesthetic experience; emotional experience; engaging experience (Turki & Amara, 2017; Vukadinovic, 2011; Willson & McIntosh, 2007).

It is generally known that destination loyalty is contributed by combining different experiences encountered upon environmental interaction. As architecture is often associated with aesthetic value, the aspect of experience stimulation from tourists' architectural encounters is vital to be explored. Despite the importance of understanding experience formation, clarification on tourists' experience specifically for architecture tourism is crucial for better development of the tourism industry (Qu & Kangli, 2017), especially from an economic perspective. Increased destination loyalty among tourists may indirectly lead to more significant economic benefits to the region (Bhat & Darzi, 2018). Thus, it is critical to define the idea of destination loyalty by examining the most meaningful tourist experience that motivates tourists to return to the same destination (Sangpikul, 2018). For this case, it is not only to unveil how architectural features influence experience formation but also to know how this different stimulation may lead to loyalty towards a destination. By gaining a deeper understanding of tourists' experiences at architectural sites, this study would fill a void in understanding tourists' experience stimulation from architectural interaction.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Islamic Architecture

Architecture is generally defined as the art of designing buildings and intertwined with human local cultural values (Yusof, 2011). It is closely connected to the act of modifying the current natural environment to suit the need for human well-being and comfort. The designing process often encompasses several stages, such as town planning, urban design, and landscape architecture (Yılmaz et al., 2018).

Islamic architecture, in the meantime, consists of the combination of Islamic values into the architectural elements of buildings and monuments. Grounded by the Islamic principles within Al-Quran and As-Sunnah, Islamic architecture often incorporated the mentioned principles throughout the designing and development process (Yusof, 2011). The emergence of Islamic architecture ignited from the combining thought of physical and spiritual values to create functional spaces in line with Islamic teachings (Mahmoud & Elbelkasy, 2016; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). In other words, Islamic architecture is a comprehensive expression that incorporates functional, physical, and religious needs. Based on the Islamic Tawhid worldview, any structure constructed is not only intended to meet human needs but also to aid, stimulate, develop, and strengthen Muslim's faith and facilitate the execution of ibadah. This thus elevates Muslims to a higher dignity than the rest of creation and living honourably as Allah's Khalifah (Yusof, 2011).

With time, due to the spread of Islamic teaching worldwide, Islamic architecture has come to be broadly described as building constructed in Muslim countries that incorporates architectural aspects connected with Islam and traditional Islamic architecture, such as minarets, arches, and domes (Mahmoud & Elbelkasy, 2016; Yusof, 2011). Islamic architecture is generally distinguishable from several unique characteristics, especially the colours, concepts and ornamentations (Itewi, 2007). For instance, Itewi (2007) indicated the square, circle, and triangle are widely applied designs in Islamic architecture details because they correspond to mental notions. Additionally, it is highlighted that Islamic architecture is centred on the concepts of unity, balance, and harmony, which are regarded as the foundations of Islamic principles. These concepts are visualised through the central points structure such as Kaaba or fountain that can be seen in many mosque aisles.

Despite the underlying solid spiritual concept, Islamic architecture is mainly designed and detailed in a way that satisfies both aesthetic and practical requirements. The contemporary Islamic architectural style is characterised by prominent ornamental elements such as Arabic calligraphy carved on walls and stones, oriels, Muqarnasat (hive-shaped motifs), and sculptures (Itewi, 2007). As for Islamic architecture in Putrajaya, these characteristics are visible in many governmental buildings, public spaces and community mosques. Most of the buildings and monuments with Central Asian and Middle Eastern architectural appearance can be identified as having the Islamic architecture value. Those buildings include Putra Mosque, Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin Mosque, The Place of Justice and Moroccan Pavilion in Putrajaya (Mohd-Rasdi et al., 2020).

### **Tourists Experience Development and Destination Loyalty**

Tourists travel for a variety of motivations. Due to the subjective nature of the tourist experience, each tourist has a different level of travel satisfaction and feels a distinct sense of attachment to the place visited. Therefore, it is critical to grasp the experiential perspective of the tourist, as it is a significant component in determining destination loyalty (Rahman, 2014). Tourist experience refers to the interaction between the individual tourist and the tourism system from all different angles of perspective, including physical, social, environmental, psychological, etc. (Larsen, 2007; Mossberg, 2007). For an interaction to be registered as a significant experience in a tourist's mind, the encounter between the individual and the system must be regarded as essential (Larsen, 2007). This process is highly associated with the psychological phenomenon of the individual itself. In this regards, sensory stimulation is the key to the psychological process and the way tourist response is depends on its interception with the phenomena such as personality traits, affective state, attitude, value system etc. (Cohen, 1979; Larsen, 2007).

The psychological nature of tourist experience makes it susceptible to positive and negative experience development, depending on the quality of stimulation received upon the travel encounter. Regardless of the uneasily predictable tourists experience, what concerns them most is the magnitude of its impact on tourists' loyalty towards the destination. Besides bringing economic benefits to the destination, loyalty is an exact indicator of the quality of the destination experience offering, which reflects tourist travel satisfaction (Bosque & Martín, 2008; C. G. Chi, 2012). Especially in the dynamic and competitive environment with a variety of travel destinations to be chosen, securing tourists' loyalty is highly challenging. The destination manager could only ensure it by understanding tourist expectations of travel experience and offering more than expected (Gursoy et al., 2014).

O'Dell (2007) argued that experiences are intangible, subjective, continuous and highly personal phenomena. The word 'experience' itself can be defined as the daily experience and the evaluated experience that depends on reflection and prescribed meaning (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Another study revealed hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement and knowledge as the main components of the tourist experience (Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015). Tourist experiences can generate benefits, such as positive "psychological outcomes" and "the ultimate value that people place on what they believe they have gained from participation in a certain leisure activity" (Schänzel & McIntosh, 2000, p. 37).

Senses play a significant role in tourist experience development, especially during tourists' encounters with the physical environment. Specifically for attractions with visual value, such as arts, customs, and heritage,

tourists often anticipate the uniqueness and authenticity of the subjects. Viewers expect the genuineness of the visuals, which gives value to the site (Rames et al., 2021), including the authenticity and genuineness of architectural value. Architecture relies on decoration and ornamentation and embeds the native customs such as carving, painting, tales, and associated with folk everyday life (Yi et al., 2018). Not only that it provides a sense of validity by the viewers on the authenticity of the architecture, its origination, but also the stories behind it can be used as emotional and knowledge stimulation (Rames et al., 2021; Willson & McIntosh, 2007; Yi et al., 2018). This means the appreciation of unique architecture does not stop at its aesthetic value, but it can be extended to emotional connection and engaging experience (Willson & McIntosh, 2007). These are the value, if being presented effectively, would draw the viewers back to rerun the entire classical architectural journey. It is mainly because a strong psychological connection to the destination signifies tourists' attitudinal loyalty (Han et al., 2011; Jeong & Kim, 2019).

### **Aesthetic Experience**

Aesthetic experience is referred to as appreciating the beauty, artistic value and nature of a subject such as art, design, landscape, architecture etc. (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018). Specifically in this study, it is referring to the value of Islamic architecture. From a tourism perspective, aesthetic experience is associated with tourist gaze, involving the process of tourist experiencing the pleasant aesthetic environment that captures tourist attention (Willson & McIntosh, 2007). Though tourists would mutually agree on the presence of aesthetic value within architecture, the way the individual tourist perceives and experience it sometimes may differ significantly due to the different personal and cultural perspective (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; Güzel, 2014; Willson & McIntosh, 2007). For Islamic architecture, Muslim visitors might experience stronger internal is it internal or spiritual connections due to their religious background. In contrast, non-Muslims might appreciate the buildings due to their visually pleasing and unique design. As architecture is an art by itself, visitors often regard it as the main attracting factor that motivates visitation to the architectural site. At the same time, for some, the excitement comes from the idea that architecture represent the spirit of a city that unique and only to be found at that specific place (Vukadinovic, 2011).

Experience of visual value was believed to significantly influence tourist loyalty as it elevates the level of travel satisfaction. Places with appealing visual elements give tourists a more satisfactory experience, leading to positive post-travel behaviour, including stronger revisit intention (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018). The aesthetic value portrayed from unique architecture able to capture a broader public interest leads to the development of a stronger sense of place (Scerri et al., 2019). It can also maximise the economic benefits by optimising the utilisation of old and abandoned buildings for economic generation (Scerri et al., 2019). Other than leading to travel satisfaction, this form of visual stimulation would contribute towards immediate attachment of the visited place, as it commonly consistent with what is expected by tourists before the visit (Yeh et al., 2012). The aesthetic visual value stimulates tourist senses significantly and gives a sense of enjoyment to have a first-hand experience of the architecture, hence motivating tourist loyalty either in the form of revisit intention or spreading word-of-mouth (Jeong & Kim, 2019). In other words, the aesthetic experience felt by tourists from architecture encounter affected tourists travel satisfaction and loyalty due to the authenticity of the artistic value presented (Genc & Gulertekin Genc, 2022). Thus, following the discussion made, the below hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Aesthetic experience influences tourists' destination loyalty.

## Emotional Experience

As architecture represents the culture and value of a particular social community, its encounter would quickly form an emotional connection with the viewers, especially when there are cultural similarities. The emotional experience can be referred to as the experience that enriches personal meaning in a diverse perspective. Emotional experience is defined as experience closely related to physical, intellectual or spiritual commitment that gives emotional implication upon consumption (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Turki & Amara, 2017; Vukadinovic, 2011). Some researchers argue that emotional connection on heritage-related architecture due to the lack of feeling and soul in the modern design, thus with the encounters of architecture from a past civilisation, it fills in the gaps in the present life and serve a sense of belonging (Scruton, 2013; Tannock, 1995; Willis, 1999). Cultural and heritage-related architecture conveys nostalgic experiences that carry personal reflections, allowing viewers to reminisce personal memories, either associated with the culture or the place itself (Willson & McIntosh, 2007). Likewise, Islamic architecture carries spiritual values within the ornament, carves and calligraphy design. Muslim tourists that visit Islamic architecture site often experience emotional connection as the design evoke a sense of admiration and closeness to God (Chye et al., 2017; Farahdel, 2011; Turki & Amara, 2017).

By establishing a personal connection, tourists' enjoyment of travel destination does not only confine to the satisfaction of physical encounters but also includes emotional satisfaction. For 'emotional tourist' that travels with the motivation of gaining meaningful emotional values and life experiences, the satisfaction of emotional stimulation is vital in achieving travel satisfaction (López-Guzmán et al., 2019). It is a travel that motivated by the yearning of past events or memories that the individuals have never experienced, and this experience can be clearly differentiated from the other either in the context of pleasure, entertainment, curiosity or stimulation (Lv et al., 2020; Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018; Yeh et al., 2012). Through the cultural and personal connection between the architecture and the individual tourists, it would draw to stronger post-travel memories and contribute to loyalty to the place (Larsen, 2007). Equally, individual emotional experience in the sense of religious affiliation significantly affects destination loyalty by developing a stronger place dependence among tourists that visit places associated with their faith (Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Woosnam, et al., 2020). With the significant value engraved within the architecture, the emotional stimulation is the antecedent to tourist on-site and post-travel response and behaviour, including travel satisfaction, revisit intention and spreading word-of-mouth (Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2016). Tourists who encounter historical buildings and monuments develop a more profound sense of emotion, leading to a higher level of satisfaction and loyalty. This is mainly due to cultural recognition and obligation to preserve the architecture and historical site related to human history and civilisation (López-Guzmán et al., 2019). Accordingly, with the above discussion, hypothesis number two is proposed:

H2: Emotional experience influences tourists' destination loyalty.

## Engaging Experience

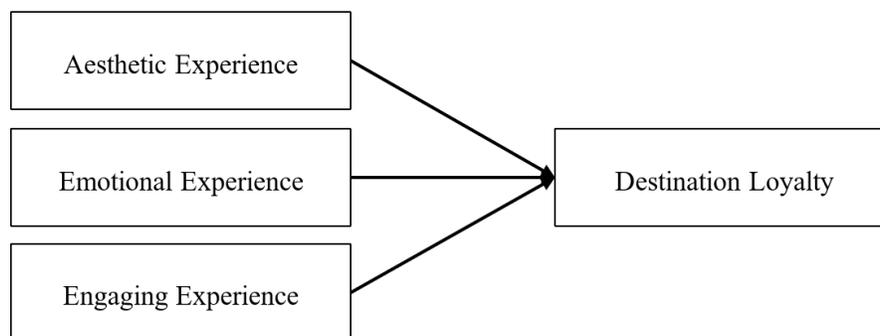
Engaging experience is referred to as any form of stimulation that allows someone to understand better and discover the physical, social, and environmental surroundings of the destination (Turki & Amara, 2017). The engagement enables tourists to immerse and involve themselves in the context, either through instilling knowledge development, behavioural awareness, or emotional empathy. With the engaging experience, tourists could respond and interact accordingly at the destination, and most importantly, ensure tourists are

mindful and have constant interest and curiosity towards the subject (Moscardo, 1998). Engaging experience often in an educational perspective, especially for cultural and heritage-related sites. The informative guiding and story-telling, the recreational sightseeing, the first-hand involvement are the activities that lead to tourists' sensory stimulation and better destination engagement (Vukadinovic, 2011; Willson & McIntosh, 2007). For some, the new knowledge and exploration were regarded as the experience of self-discovery and self-development that offer tourists a new perspective upon travel to a destination (Souza et al., 2020). Not merely creating excitement, but this engaging experience gives actual value to the trip made. As it is related to sensory stimulation, engaging experience is distinctive and customised based on individual tourists' responses (Verleye, 2015), which is different based on time and place.

Besides fulfilling personal interests and preferences, tourists often seek new knowledge and experience upon travel. Knowledge factor is one of the main travel motivations among some tourists that bring a different purpose and meaning to the travel made when satisfaction is achieved (Nguyen & Cheung, 2016). With more knowledge and experiential consumption during travel, tourists are perceived to be more satisfied and more loyal to the destination (C. F. Chen et al., 2016; Nguyen & Cheung, 2016). The reality is that tourists seek knowledge and intellectual enrichment in selecting travel destinations, including revisiting past destinations (Turki & Amara, 2017). As the heritage and cultural tourism site are embedded with a meaningful social, cultural and artistic value, tourists tend to have a deeper connection with the tangible and intangible elements. Visitor engagement at these categories of destination is higher to unveil the cultural meaning and therefore trigger satisfaction and loyalty of the place (Alrawadieh et al., 2019). A destination with a higher level of engagement resulted in tourists higher level of cultural context and understanding, thus leading towards memorable tourism experience and loyalty (H. Chen & Rahman, 2018). With the engagement and experience co-creation offered by certain destinations, the meaningful value gained from the positive experience influences tourists' decision-making process (Gursoy et al., 2014). The memories of the wonderful, engaging experience may psychologically persuade tourists to re-experience the travel excitement (Larsen, 2007). With the discussion made, hypothesis number three is therefore proposed:

H3: Engaging experience influences tourists' destination loyalty.

Figure 1 Proposed conceptual framework of tourists experience and destination loyalty at Islamic architectural destination



*Figure 1: Research framework*

## Islamic Architecture in Putrajaya

Putrajaya's architectural construction is listed as Malaysia's largest project and one of the largest in South-East Asia, with a final cost of approximately US\$8.1 billion (RM33.29 billion) (Kaur, 2019). From one perspective, the government has invested a substantial sum of money in the development of Putrajaya, including the architectural design of all important buildings within the area. Yet, it is believed that the buildings' utilisation has not been optimised and explored to their maximum potential for tourism-related purposes, especially in attracting new and returning domestic and international visitors (Abdul Aziz et al., 2016).

Islamic architecture is among the preferred architecture to be looked into during travel, either among Muslim or non-Muslim travellers. Many countries, especially those in the Middle East, saw a surge in visitors to Islamic architectural sites. For instance, Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque received approximately 6.6 million visitors in 2019, including 879049 visitors from India, 704680 from China, 234849 from Russia, and 193234 from Germany (Moghavvemi et al., 2021).

Putrajaya's role as the administrative centre for Malaysia makes it a popular architectural spot either for local or international tourists due to the magnificent architecture of government buildings that embeds Islamic elements. Despite a low record of tourists arrival in Putrajaya, as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, some of the buildings and attraction within Putrajaya are identified as 'Instagram-worthy' spots, due to the architectural uniqueness. Putrajaya's architecture is reported to be custom-designed with a blend of Malay and Arab elements, offering visitors a multicultural experience. Additionally, Putrajaya is dubbed the architectural expression of Malaysia due to its "Malaysian-Islamic" architectural characteristics (Joni et al., 2016; Mohd-Ali, 2007).

The annual domestic tourist's arrival in Putrajaya increased significantly from 2009 until 2019 (refer to Figure 1). However, despite the administrative role of Putrajaya and its renowned Islamic architecture, Putrajaya received an insignificant amount of domestic tourist arrival annually in comparison to the other state. In 2020, Putrajaya was the state with the second-lowest domestic tourists' arrival, as shown in Table 1. This scenario is probably due to the size of its land area and the diversity of activities offered.

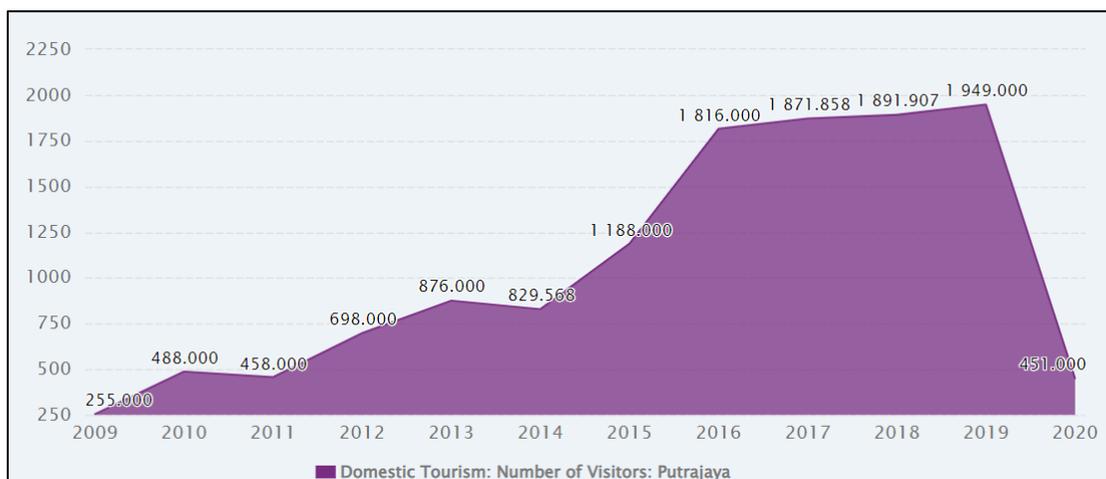


Figure 2. Putrajaya domestic tourists arrival in 2009 until 2020 by Department of Statistics Malaysia.

*Table 1. Domestic tourists arrival by states in 2020 by Department of Statistics Malaysia.*

<b>States</b>	<b>No of domestic tourists arrival ('000)</b>
<b>Pahang</b>	5,214.50
<b>Perak</b>	4,890.60
<b>Selangor</b>	4,693.20
<b>Johor</b>	3,988.60
<b>Kuala Lumpur</b>	3,684.50
<b>Kedah</b>	3,486.90
<b>Kelantan</b>	3,318.30
<b>Melaka</b>	2,859.50
<b>N. Sembilan</b>	2,848.20
<b>P. Pinang</b>	2,749.60
<b>Terengganu</b>	2,670.10
<b>Sarawak</b>	2,627.00
<b>Sabah</b>	2,456.40
<b>Perlis</b>	410.9
<b>Putrajaya</b>	283.6
<b>Labuan</b>	76.8

Understanding the scenario in Putrajaya and its significant increase of domestic tourist arrival annually, it is relevant to have a good look at visitors' architectural experience there. With the distinctive emotional impact received from tourists' encounters with the architecture, it is critical to study the quality of tourists' experience from this encounter, specifically for architectural buildings and monuments in Putrajaya, to understand their satisfaction loyalty further. Not only that it is crucial for an in-depth understanding of tourists' experience development, but simultaneously beneficial to aid in future product creation, tourism promotion, and marketing activities that significantly enhance the number of tourists and motivate revisitation to Putrajaya.

## **STUDY METHODOLOGY**

Acknowledging and optimising the public trend sharing their experience in social media, this research employed an online questionnaire survey as its survey strategy in approaching the respondents. In this regard, the selection of respondents was narrowed down to domestic tourists that engage in social media. A total of 265 respondents participated in this research.

### **Measurement Instruments**

As this study employed an online survey strategy, a self-administered structured questionnaire approach was adopted in the design process of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of multiple-choice and 5-point Likert scale questions, with one (1) as strongly disagree to five (5) as strongly agree. The questionnaire was structured into three (3) main sections; 1) tourist profile and travel behaviour, 2) tourists

experience, and 3) destination loyalty. Section 2 tourists experience was further divided into three parts; 1) aesthetic experience, 2) emotional experience, and 3) engaging experience.

The first section captured tourist profile and travel behaviour consisting of six questions, with three regarding social profile; gender, marital status, age, and occupation. Meanwhile, the remaining were related to travel behaviour; frequency of visitation and places visited. This section is critical in examining the Putrajaya tourists market motivated by the Islamic architecture concept. All of the questions were in the form of multiple choice answers.

Tourists' experience in section two consists of the three different aspects of the experience were evaluated; (1) aesthetic experience, (2) emotional experience and engaging experience, (3) stimulated from the Islamic architecture engagement. The assessments of all the experiences were adopted from past researches, aesthetic experience consists of seven measurement items (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; Güzel, 2014; Turki & Amara, 2017), emotional experience consists of eight items (Chye et al., 2017; Farahdel, 2011; Nguyen & Cheung, 2016; Turki & Amara, 2017), and engaging experience consists of eight items (Qu & Kangli, 2017; Turki & Amara, 2017). The items in this section were measured using a five-point Likert scale with one (1) indicating 'strongly disagree' to five (5) indicating 'strongly agree'.

The last section focused on assessing destination loyalty looked into assessing tourists' revisit intention and recommendation intention. These assessments evaluated tourists' desire to revisit Putrajaya and their willingness to recommend it to family and friends. In this section, six items were adopted from past researches to assess respondents' loyalty towards Putrajaya (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; C. G. Q. Chi & Qu, 2008; Jeong & Kim, 2019; A. K. Kim & Brown, 2012; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Similar to the previous section, this section was measured using a five-point Likert scale. One (1) indicated 'strongly disagree' to five (5) indicated 'strongly agree'.

## **Sampling Technique and Procedure**

The sample for this research was selected through a convenient sampling technique. The questionnaire surveys were distributed online, and respondents voluntarily participated in the survey. Individuals that have visited Putrajaya was set as the sample criteria for this research. These criteria were written in the survey instruction and respondents were self-select based on their consideration of the criteria fulfilment.

The execution of the online survey was done through several commonly used social media platforms, mainly 'Facebook', 'Instagram', 'Twitter', 'Whatsapp' and 'Telegram'. The questionnaire survey link was posted as a status on the researcher's related social media accounts together with a brief explanation of the survey and an attachment of a cover letter. This allowed the potential respondents to participate in the research voluntarily. Specifically for 'Facebook', the questionnaire was posted as a status in several public social groups. It is an online community-oriented social media platform. The online community groups include 'Kaki Cuti', 'Bercuti di Negara Sendiri', 'Jom Melancong', 'Putrajaya and Cyberjaya community' and 'Putrajaya and Cyberjaya Business Community'.

The potential respondents were also approached directly and invited to participate in the survey to increase the response rate further. Individuals and members of the groups who posted status related to visitation to Putrajaya in any social media platforms mentioned were approached through a private messaging system

to answer the questionnaire. Through this effort, potential respondents were more aware of the research. They were being approached personally and encouraged to respond to the survey.

## Reliability analysis

A pilot survey was conducted on 15 respondents to test the questionnaire structure as well as to run a reliability test on the constructs. It was recommended by (Sheatsley, 1983) to run a test survey on at least 12 to 50 people prior to performing full-scale distribution. Cronbach's alpha was employed to test the internal consistency of the measurement items for variables aesthetic experience, emotional experience, engaging experience and destination loyalty. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value for aesthetic experience was .74 (seven items), the emotional experience was .86 (eight items), the engaging experience was .80 (eight items), and destination loyalty was .75 (six items) (refer Table 2). Depending on the nature of the scale, Cronbach's alpha value is commonly recommended to be .7 and above (Pallant, 2005). Therefore, all of the constructs used in this study are reliable.

*Table 2. Cronbach's alpha value for constructs reliability test*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>Items</b>
Aesthetic experience	.74	7
Emotional experience	.86	8
Engaging experience	.80	8
Destination loyalty	.75	6

## Data Analysis

Multiple linear regression was the method of data analysis employed in testing the hypotheses. The regression was runned to test the predicting capacity of aesthetic experience, emotional experience, and engaging experience on destination loyalty based on the respondents encounter of Islamic architecture. The relationship was verified through the coefficient of tourist experiences and destination loyalty

## RESULTS

### Respondents' demographic profile

The total number of respondents who participated in this research was 265. Table 3 below displays the statistics of respondents' profiles and travel behaviour.

Of the 265 respondents, 74.3% were females and 25.7% were males. The majority were below 50 with the highest frequency in the age group of 20 to 29 years old (84.5%) and only 3.4% were 50 years and above. Respondents mainly were single individuals, 78.5% and the rest 21.5% were married. As the respondents were mainly aged below 30, it is relevant that most of them were still students (67.9%), while the rest consisted of employed individuals (27.2%), unemployed (3.0%), and retirees (1.9%).

Looking at respondents' travel behaviour, the majority has visited Putrajaya more than three times (71.3%), which makes them the frequent visitors of Putrajaya. For the visited attraction, Putra Mosque (82.6%), Dataran Putra (81.9%), Moroccan Pavilion (71.3%), Tuanku Mizan Mosque (66.8%) and The Palace of

Justice (50.2%) were among the most visited places in Putrajaya out of the total eight Islamic architecture-related attraction listed in the questionnaire. The remaining attractions were visited by less than 50 per cent of the respondents.

*Table 3: Respondents profile and travel behaviour*

<b>DEMOGRAPHY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	197	74.3
Male	68	25.7
<i>Total</i>	265	100
<b>Age Group</b>		
<19	6	2.3
20 - 29	224	84.5
30 - 39	13	4.9
40 - 49	13	4.9
50 >	9	3.4
<i>Total</i>	265	100
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	208	78.5
Married	57	21.5
<i>Total</i>	265	100
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed	72	27.2
Unemployed	8	3.0
Retired	5	1.9
Student	180	67.9
<i>Total</i>	265	100
<b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>Frequency of visitation</b>		
Once	16	6.0
2 - 3 times	60	22.6
> 3 times	189	71.3
<i>Total</i>	265	100
<b>Places visited</b>		
Putra Mosque	219	82.6
Dataran Putra	217	81.9
Moroccan Pavilion	189	71.3
Tuanku Mizan Mosque	177	66.8
The Palace of Justice	133	50.2
Perdana Putra	94	35.5
Tabung Haji Complex	37	14.0
Nasyul Quran Complex	22	8.3

## Level of Experience on Islamic Architecture in Putrajaya

In having a brief understanding of respondents' experience on engagement with Islamic architecture in Putrajaya, descriptive analysis was done to look into the mean value for each item under the three experiences measured. Table 4 below shows the mean score for aesthetic experience, emotional experience and engaging experience.

*Table 4: Descriptive analysis of mean value for respondents' experience*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S. D</b>	<b>Overall mean</b>
Aesthetic experience	<i>AE1</i> : I enjoyed seeing the Islamic architectural styles of buildings in Putrajaya	4.66	0.561	4.534
	<i>AE2</i> : I have positive experience with the beauty of the architecture of this place	4.57	0.624	
	<i>AE3</i> : The beauty of the architecture enhanced my travel experience	4.57	0.637	
	<i>AE4</i> : I am interested with the architecture of this place	4.56	0.613	
	<i>AE5</i> : I visited this place because the design is aesthetically pleasing	4.50	0.769	
	<i>AE6</i> : I visited this place because it has fascinating architecture	4.34	0.886	
	<i>AE7</i> : I think Putrajaya represents the national "Islamic" identity of architecture	4.31	0.872	
Emotional experience	<i>EE1</i> : This place has stimulated my positive emotions	4.43	0.741	4.064
	<i>EE2</i> : The architecture invokes a sense of awe in me	4.40	0.773	
	<i>EE3</i> : I did something meaningful during my visit to this place	4.18	0.941	
	<i>EE4</i> : I am interested in visiting Islamic architectural sites as it reflects my faith	4.12	1.04	
	<i>EE5</i> : I experienced a sense of being close to God when visiting Islamic architectural sites	4.09	1.071	
	<i>EE6</i> : I am very attached to this place	3.86	1.166	
	<i>EE7</i> : This place reminds me of personal memories	3.79	1.209	
	<i>EE8</i> : I have a special connection with this place	3.63	1.157	
Engaging experience	<i>EgE1</i> : I gained knowledge or information in this kind of place	4.17	0.832	3.713
	<i>EgE2</i> : I experienced something new from my visit to this place	4.16	0.83	
	<i>EgE3</i> : I visited this place for recreational purpose	3.96	1.033	
	<i>EgE4</i> : I feel a sense of welcoming with people around this place	3.88	1.005	
	<i>EgE5</i> : This place allows me to make interaction with new people	3.59	1.07	
	<i>EgE6</i> : I learned new skills from my visit to this place in Putrajaya	3.38	1.162	
	<i>EgE7</i> : I built a friendship(s) from my visit to this place	3.28	1.285	
	<i>EgE8</i> : I got so involved with the activities that I forgot anything else	3.28	1.243	

Results in Table 4 shows that upon engagement with Islamic architecture-related attractions in Putrajaya, respondents gain a stronger aesthetic experience and emotional experience, with an overall mean value of

4.534 and 4.064, respectively. The engaging experience was less felt by respondents with only a 3.713 mean value.

Looking specifically into an aesthetic experience, respondents collectively agreed that they enjoyed the beauty of Islamic architecture in Putrajaya, with all of the items valued 4.31 and above. While for the emotional experience, respondents agreed that Islamic architecture sparks spiritual senses, yet has a varied opinion on the engagement's ability to instil personal attachment, shown by the mean scale below 4 of measurement items *EE6*, *EE7* and *EE8*. The engaging experience was weak in the mentioned attractions, either in the form of physical or social engagement. Despite being excited about the visual experience obtained, these places do not offer a satisfactory engagement, proven by the low mean value (below 4) of most measurement items (*EgE3* to *EgE8*).

## Hypotheses Testing

In testing the hypotheses, a multiple linear regression was calculated to predict destination loyalty based on the tourist aesthetic experience, emotional experience, and engaging experience upon the encounter of Islamic architecture. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 261) = 68.533, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .441 (refer Table 5).

*Table 5: Coefficients of Tourist Experiences and Destination Loyalty*

Hypotheses	Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF	Decision
H <sub>1</sub> : Aesthetic experience > Destination Loyalty	.328***	4.497	.000	1.786	Accept
H <sub>2</sub> : Emotional experience > Destination Loyalty	.222***	3.571	.000	2.640	Accept
H <sub>3</sub> : Engaging experience > Destination Loyalty	.193***	3.605	.000	1.858	Accept

*Note: F-value: 68.533\*\*\*;  $R^2 = .441$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .434$ ;  $p$ -value < 0.001\*\*\**

H1 proposed that aesthetic experience from Islamic architecture influence tourist loyalty towards destination. The result of the test indicated aesthetic experience positively and significantly influenced loyalty with a  $p$ -value .000 ( $\beta = .328, p < .05$ ). Thus, from the result H1 is accepted. Similarly, in H2, it was proposed that emotional experience influence tourist destination loyalty. From the result, emotional experience also positively and significantly influenced loyalty, with a  $p$ -value of .000 ( $\beta = .222, p < .05$ ). Hence, H2 was accepted. Finally, for H3, it proposed there is a significant influence of engaging experience on destination loyalty. The result of  $p$ -value .000 ( $\beta = .193, p < .05$ ) proven the positive and significant influence of engaging experience upon encountering Islamic architecture on tourist destination loyalty. H3 was also being accepted.

All three experiences were concluded to be the significant predictors of destination loyalty, with aesthetic experience as the strongest predictor. These findings support all the hypotheses that agree that aesthetic experience, emotional experience, and engaging experience from Islamic architecture encounters significantly influence tourist destination loyalty, in this case loyalty towards Putrajaya. The summary of the coefficient of tourist experiences and destination loyalty is shown in Figure 2.

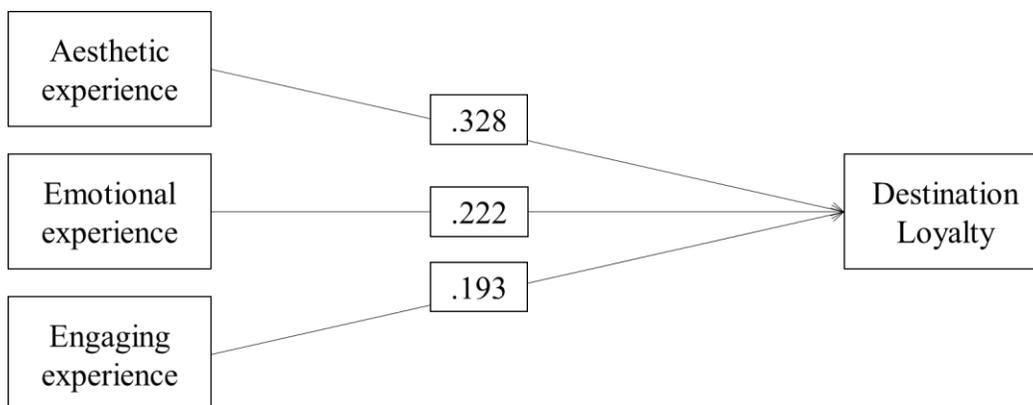


Figure 2: Summary of coefficients of tourist experiences and destination loyalty

## STUDY DISCUSSION

This paper is directed to improve knowledge related to the impact of Islamic architectural encounters on different aspects of the tourist experience. Given that experience formation is psychological in nature and highly affected by tourist sensory stimulation, the paper also questions the extensive influence of tourist experiences from Islamic architecture encounter on destination loyalty. Hence this paper enlightens the relationships between different aspects of experience and loyalty and understanding the predictors of loyalty, specifically tourist loyalty towards Islamic architecture sites. It looked into three aspects of tourist experience; aesthetic experience, emotional experience, engaging experience; which are closely related to the formation of experience from stimulation of different senses (Turki & Amara, 2017; Vukadinovic, 2011; Willson & McIntosh, 2007).

The study employed a self-administered questionnaire survey with online social media as its distribution platform. As the Malaysian administrative centre with several Islamic concept buildings being constructed, Putrajaya was selected as the study area. Analyses show that majority of the respondents visited Islamic architectural sites due to the aesthetically pleasing design of the buildings, which enhanced their travel experience. In other words, visitation was made to Islamic architectural sites due to the aesthetic experience offered. This finding supports the idea that people travel to a place for aesthetic visuals offered by a place, and architecture value is one of the important aspects that form unique experience upon physical tourist encounter at destination (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; Güzel, 2014; Lv et al., 2020; Turki & Amara, 2017; Vukadinovic, 2011).

In addition, it was found that the value and meaning embedded and represented within the Islamic architecture are able to stimulate positive emotions within visitors upon physical and visual engagement with the buildings and monuments. For some, it may also reflect a sense of faith and attachment or closeness to the Supreme being. In simpler words, due to the spiritual values associated with the design, the visitors' emotional experience was stimulated. This is in line with statements from past research that highlighted that upon interaction with building with architectural value, tourists would gain emotional experience (Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Payini, et al., 2020; Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Woosnam, et al., 2020; Willson &

McIntosh, 2007), hence strengthen individuals attachment and loyalty towards the visited place (B. Kim & Chen, 2021).

This research also unveils that physical encounter with Islamic architectural buildings and monuments offers new knowledge and experience to visitors. The visually appealing architecture not only satisfies visitors' visual needs but also perceived as creating a conducive environment to perform recreational activities. Incoherent with the past research, educational elements during travel such as historical knowledge, exploring a new place, and recreational activities, would enable the tourist to immerse in engaging experience (Qu & Kangli, 2017; Willson & McIntosh, 2007). Nevertheless, despite the new experience and visual value offered, the stimulation is not enough to facilitate visitors in experiencing a sense of belonging to the place. Islamic architectural value per se is insufficient to ensure a strong engaging experience among the visitors. Nevertheless, visitors' significant level of engaging experience would highly contribute to destination loyalty. This requires the intervention of effective destination interpretation planning and design, which can prolong visitors' engaging experience by instilling curiosity and excitement throughout visitation.

The results from analyses supported the presence of positive influence of different tourist aspects of experiences from Islamic architectural encounters on destination loyalty (H1, H2, H3) and show aesthetic experience as the strongest predictor compared to emotional experience and engaging experience. Consistent with past studies which indicated aesthetic experience as the primary influence to loyalty (Bhat & Darzi, 2018; Breiby & Slåtten, 2018; Chiu et al., 2016; Jeong & Kim, 2019; Rahman, 2014; Willson & McIntosh, 2007; Yeh et al., 2012), unique and appealing visual value provide satisfaction to visitors and resulted in future revisit intention or simply said as loyalty (Willson & McIntosh, 2007).

As the encounter with architecture is grounded by recognising the local social and cultural value, tourists develop admiration, and salient memories of the destination visited. Not just remembering the memories, tourists' attachment and loyalty towards these socio-cultural related destinations are evident by the way they identify and associate themselves with the destination. Tourists of the same religion develop an emotional attachment to spiritual belief and faith, particularly in terms of the spiritual environment; therefore, they perceive the encounter to be more meaningful and develop loyalty in the form of appreciation (Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Woosnam, et al., 2020). For monuments and buildings with Islamic architecture such as mosques, the magnificent architecture and artistic design bring pleasure to the sensory and instil a sense of humbleness among tourists, especially Muslims (Moghavvemi et al., 2021). Hence, without any doubt, it can be summarised that Islamic architecture does lead towards a stronger destination loyalty due to its socio-cultural value and religious affiliation.

## **IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION**

The implication of this study is mainly the practical contribution of its finding that served better understanding of aspects of tourist experience that are stimulated upon encounter with architectural elements, and to what extent it is able to nurture destination loyalty. From this understanding, the destination management organisation (DMO), including the tourism authority and tourism businesses, are able to plan and develop more effective promotion and marketing strategies appropriately. Other than promoting the visual offering of the unique Islamic architecture available in Putrajaya, DMO should focus on highlighting

the knowledge and information that the place is able to be offered simultaneously. Citing back the findings from this study, aesthetic experience per se is not enough to nurture a sense of attachment, and it requires engaging experience that can be in the form of activities, knowledge development etc.

The abovementioned implication leads to the second practical implication, which provides insight for better destination planning and management. What to be highlighted is the importance of better design and planning of destination interpretation, such as digital information, information posters, exploration activities etc. With these efforts, visitors can experience the aesthetic value and appreciate the insight gained through the emotional and engaging experience. Nevertheless, aesthetic value is the key to the satisfactory experience for Islamic architectural sites, which is the antecedent to visitors' loyalty. Hence, inserting the preservation knowledge and effort as a part of simultaneous destination management and visitors' engagement activities would be effective in gaining visitors' satisfaction.

The outputs from this study have to be interpreted with caution because of the limitation in scope and sampling. Firstly, this study specifically focuses on the scenario of the Islamic architecture site in Putrajaya. Secondly, the study focused on domestic tourists as the target group mainly due to the least number of domestic tourists visiting Putrajaya compared to the other destination in Malaysia, despite it being a known destination with Islamic architectural monuments and buildings. The evaluation of destination loyalty was conducted on this target group as past researches shown that domestic tourists' loyalty to a destination required the establishment of a long-term relationship between the tourists and the destination, and often portrayed in the form of attitude instead of the desire to revisit, unless if the destination offers a significant amount of tourists involvement (Kwenye & Freimund, 2016; Mechinda et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2021). In addition, due to interstate travel restrictions during the COVID19 outbreak, sampling focused on domestic tourists as the target group.

The dimension of the study was only confined to assessing the aspects of experience that are closely related to visual stimulation. Therefore, future research is suggested looking into several Islamic architecture-related sites to better compare tourist experiences. It is also recommended to include the perspective of other tourist segments, such as international tourists from a different region, interstate tourists, and tourists from the surrounding community, better to see the differences in experience, especially the attachment. The researcher would also recommend the expansion of tourist experience scope, such as to include service experience, to have a more holistic and inclusive assessment of experience stimulation upon Islamic architecture encounter.

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## Travelling for Pahang Heritage Food: An Analysis of Food Consumption Model

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### ABSTRACT

*Purpose:* This study examines the impact of domestic tourist consumption values on heritage foods on behavioral intentions.

*Methods/Design/Approach:* Quantitative design was used to distribute questionnaire surveys on online platforms. Pearson's analysis of the correlation and multi-regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between the variables.

*Findings:* Data collected from 161 domestic tourists in Malaysia aged 18 years and older who consumed and experienced heritage food in Pahang during their travels. The findings show that epistemological, quality, and emotional values have a significant relationship to behavioral intent. The epistemological value was the highest value that contributed to the behavioral intention of local tourists.

*Implication/Limitations:* This study is important for developing food tourism and is putting more effort into preserving heritage food. This study's main limitation is that heritage food is only examined based on a single state, Pahang. Heritage food of other states has not been reviewed in this study.

*Keywords:* Behavioural intention, Consumption values, Heritage food, Malaysia

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## INTRODUCTION

Food travel is a well-known activity, with different terms being used to describe food tourism, gastronomy tourism, or culinary tourism. The Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (CTC) has defined gastronomy tourism as a form of tourism activity that focuses on authenticity, traditional and/or innovative culinary experiences, as well as other related activities such as visiting local producers, attending food festivals, and cooking classes (Nazari et al., 2018). According to a study by Guzel and Apaydin (2016), gastronomy tourism is a new trend in the world. Several destinations have become very popular with their cuisine and attracted many tourists, including Italy, France, and Thailand (Karim & Chi, 2010). Malaysia is no exception to that. This study chose Pahang as it is the largest state on the Malaysian Peninsula and offers many traditional foods considered heritage foods. Heritage foods highlighted in this study include *Gulai Tempoyak Ikan Patin*, *Gulai Asam Rom*, *Gulai Opor Daging*, *Sambal Hitam*, *Laksa Pahang*, and any other dish eaten by tourists. Figure 1 shows pictures of some of the selection of Pahang's food heritage.



Figure 1. Pahang Heritage Food (source: Google Images)

Although other states in Malaysia offer similar or equivalent dishes, the taste of the real dishes from the region differs according to recipes and how they are prepared and cooked.

*Gulai Tempoyak Ikan Patin* is also popular in the state of Perak, for example. It is hard to identify the difference between variations of *Gulai Tempoyak* from Pahang and Perak. Nordin (2008) said that *Gulai Tempoyak* originated in Pahang, particularly in Temerloh, with a wild *ikan patin* coming from the river. This type of fish is highly recommended to be cooked in *Gulai Tempoyak* because of its fat content. The flesh is soft and easily absorbs the *tempoyak* aroma. On the other hand, Perak's *Gulai Tempoyak* is sometimes made with *ikan terubuk* cooked in a pot for a more natural taste. The dish is then mixed with orange cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*), which is large in size and has a light brown colour. In the case of catfish, the fish is first slightly roasted so that it does not break down during the cooking process. *Gulai Tempoyak* is also suitable for cooking with other fish types, especially freshwater fish. The differences between these dishes in both states have been discussed by a food blogger (Nordin, 2008).

However, one of the challenges faced by typical heritage foods is that food presentations are not attractive enough. In the example of *Sambal Hitam*, it is tasty and unique, but it is plain black. This sambal's black colour originates from a fruit called *belimbing buluh* as the main ingredient, which is then mixed with secondary ingredients such as dried anchovies or dried shrimp with other spices. People will usually consume food made by locals if they have relatives from the older generation. Most commonly, those from younger generations have less knowledge and do not appreciate the value of heritage food despite its modernisation. They are more attracted to trendy foods, such as fast food. Furthermore, due to the rapid development and changing environment, some of the heritage foods are almost forgotten, while others are heavily modified. Previous research has shown that travelling for hipster food is more popular than travelling for heritage food in the worst-case scenario. Malaysian food is considered tasty and delicious, but food does not rank high among visitors, according to the latest survey by YouGov (The Star Online, 2019). In the report, popular celebrity chef Datuk Redzuawan Ismail said, "Malaysian food may not have as much of a global footprint as ubiquitous Thai and Vietnamese cuisine."

The main challenges in consumption values affect attitudes and behaviours such as price, health, prestige, and the value of interaction based on the issues highlighted (Hussain et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study examines the quality, emotional, and epistemological value of the relationship that affects tourists' behaviour. To promote heritage food, this study provides food tourism marketers with the current status of heritage food consumption values and domestic tourists' intention to consume Pahang's heritage food. Consequently, this study intends to explore consumption values, which mainly affect behavioural intention. Therefore, the main research objective is to examine whether Pahang's heritage food consumption values impact the behavioural intentions of domestic tourists.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Heritage Foods in Malaysia

Heritage can refer to traditions or features that have been handed down over the years from one generation to the next (Saad et al., 2021); thus, the food reflects the culture and way of life. In Malaysia, the Department of National Heritage (JWN) is the governing body under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture with the task of ensuring that heritage foods remain part of Malaysia's culture and that they can be consumed by current and future generations. According to JWN, food heritage is categorised into two categories: raw and cooked food. Grilling, steaming, and frying are examples of cooking food after having been marinated or fermented, whereas some food can be eaten raw.

Preservation initiatives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a series of 17 global objectives to provide a framework for better and more sustainable future planning for 2030 and were set by the United Nations in 2015 (International National Trusts Organization, 2018). The blueprint addressed the world's challenges, and this study identified the following sustainability pillars, which are relevant to the conservation of heritage:

- i. Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
- ii. Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
- iii. Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals

Heritage foods are very close to the cultural values that reflect the lifestyles of the social community. It is essential to recognise and preserve food traditions' heritage to preserve the originality of older generations for new generations over time (Omar et al., 2015). An attempt was made in the Klang Valley to study Malaysia's consumer awareness of heritage food origins. Based on the findings, the respondents considered the food heritage to be traditional foods. The respondents understood the food heritage's description, the characteristics, and styles of traditional foods associated with food identity (Ramli et al., 2017).

## **Behavioural Intention**

The Committee on Communication for Behavior Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2002, p. 31) described behavioural intent as the perceived likelihood or subjective likelihood of an individual's engaging in a particular behaviour. According to Ajzen (1991), the intention is to capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour; it indicates how hard people are willing to try and how much effort they plan to put into it. Generally, the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely one is to do so. However, it should be noted that behavioural intent can only provide expression to a behaviour if the behaviour is voluntary.

Intent emerges as the core and the spirit of the action itself. It will be impossible for an action to be revealed without any intention. For this reason, Imam Abu Zakariya Yahya (1977) emphasised the importance of intentions and *Ikhlās* (sincerity) in human actions. In his book *Riyadh Shalihin*, he provided Qur'anic verses that highlight such intentions: "Verily, We have revealed the Scripture unto you (Muhammad) in truth, so worship Allah and make religion pure for Him [only]." (Az-Zumar, verse 2); "He is the Living One; there is no God save Him; so, pray unto Him, making religion pure for Him [only]; praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds." (Ghafir, verse 65). It is shown from the above statement that intention is one of the critical predictors of halal food consumption. Similarly, findings by Danner, Aarts, and Vries (2008) in their study revealed that intentions play a role in confirming the usual goal-oriented behaviour. Other researchers such as Chatzisarantis et al. (1997), Cooke and Sheeran (2004), and Rhodes and Dickau (2012) also support these notions.

## **Model of Consumption Values**

Sheth et al. established the Gross Model of Consumption Values in 1991. The theory identifies five consumption values that influence consumers' choice behaviours: functional value; social value; emotional value; epistemic value; and conditional value. Sheth et al. (1991) proposed this model for investigating and explaining consumer purchase intentions across a wide range of product types. The model has recently been adopted by Chakraborty and Paul (2022) and Qasim et al. (2019).

## **Past Findings on Heritage Foods in Malaysia**

Five research databases were searched for this study, namely Emerald Insight, Scopus, Taylor & Francis, Cambridge, and ProQuest, which were used as primary references in screening research databases related to the topic of food heritage tourism. This study discovered only two Malaysian studies that discuss food heritage out of eight articles published in Southeast Asia since 2000. The studies were by Fam et al. (2020), and Ting, Tan, and John (2017). Fam et al. (2020) examined factors that influence tourists from China, Europe, and Malaysia (non-Sabahans) to consume Kadazan-Dusun foods. However, the study did not

highlight the cuisine names of the Kadazan-Dusun ethnicities since the author only focused on the factors that influence tourists' desire to consume the foods. Aside from that, the article by Ting, Tan, and John (2017) looked into ethnic foods from the perspective of Dayaks, as the research was conducted in Sarawak. Several Dayak traditional foods have been mentioned in their article, including paku kubok (fern), *tuak* (alcoholic drink derived from rice), and *ayam pansuh* (chicken dish cooked in bamboo).

## Emotional Value

Emotional value refers to the emotions of an individual as Sheth et al. (1991) described emotional value as perceived effectiveness derived from an alternative ability to stimulate emotions or emotional states. The alternative gains emotional value when it is associated with specific feelings, precipitating or perpetuating certain feelings. eHeddyt al. (2016) in their study found that the participants experienced a shift in understanding toward more scientifically accepted concepts of genetically modified food (GMF), their emotions became more optimistic and less harmful. Heddy et al. (2016) found that emotions are associated with conceptual and attitudinal alteration, which also relates to behavioural intent.

Sthapit et al. (2017) investigated the effects of food consumption, memories, location and behaviour among tourists. The authors stated that consumption emotions are a collection of emotional reactions created directly while using a product or experiencing consumption. They argue that emotion is essential when tourists consume food products at their destination. The study provided evidence of significant food-consumption emotions in terms of memories, behavioural intentions, and location attachments. In another study focusing on green products, Khan and Mohsin (2017) studied consumer choice behaviour involving consumer values with emotional value as a mediating variable. Their research revealed that emotional value significantly reduces consumption and consumer choice of green products. All perceived values, except for conditional and epistemological values, positively impact consumer behaviour toward green products.

Correspondingly, Saidani et al. (2017) studied the purchase intention involving perceived quality, brand image, and emotional value in East Jakarta. A questionnaire survey was conducted, and the outcome showed that perceived quality, brand image, and emotional value had a significant and simultaneous impact on purchase intention. From their study, backpack users' intention to decide on and purchase products was affected. A recent study by Juodeikiene et al. (2018) found a clear relationship between certain sensory and emotional perceptions during a product's assessment. Emotional, behavioural, and sensory data influence attitudes and behavioural intentions toward food products. Personal interviews were used as a tool to gather information for their study. Apart from that, they also experimented by requiring respondents to taste an entire food sample in 15 seconds. Using the Noldus Face Reader, respondents reacted using hand gestures and had to imagine the sample's taste experience using facial expressions. As a result, the scholars found that food has gender-related and age-related emotional effects on respondents. Food can change moods and invoke sentimental values, especially for aged individuals, reminding them of home, family, and friends.

The presented literature review shows that emotional value has had an impact on behavioural intent. Thus, the following hypothesis is assumed:

*H1: Emotional value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intentions towards heritage foods of Pahang.*

## Quality Value

The quality standard of services is crucial to meeting the demands of customers as it has a strong relationship with their satisfaction (Jusoh et al., 2020). Product quality was identified as an important influencer in online purchases, which significantly enhanced overall customer trust and loyalty (Prasetyo et al., 2021). In the case of island destinations, the experiential quality dimensions of the islands had a positive and significant effect on perceived value, happiness, and behavioural intention when expectations were met with the quality of services offered by the tourism providers (Haji et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the freshness, taste, and appearance of food were used to determine the quality value of food from a cross-national perspective (Petrescu et al., 2020).

By exploring consumers' attitudes and preferences, Masoom et al. (2015) looked at factors affecting decisions to purchase perishable foods. Focusing on perishable foods, i.e., VFM (vegetables, fish, and meat), their study found that taste was one of the elements considered to be of significant quality for consumers' purchasing decisions while buying fruits and/or vegetables. In the same year, Altintzoglou et al. (2015) researched tourists' purchasing behaviour in the context of food souvenirs in Norway. Several independent variables, including the value of taste and the quality of food souvenirs, were assessed in the research. One part of the study's questionnaire survey asked random tourists from different countries on cruise ship sessions about the factors affecting food choices during holidays and their purchase behaviour towards food souvenirs. The result showed that tourists with a high level of creativity were more eager to buy food souvenirs that they did not know about.

Yan et al. (2015) conducted customer review research into restaurant intentions by reviewing online customer reviews. The study examined the aspects of food quality, service quality, atmosphere, price, and value. From the reviews, it was established that all aspects were an antecedent of the customers' intention to revisit certain restaurants. It also affected customers' satisfaction as they experienced decent food quality, service, atmosphere, price, and value in those restaurants. Most of the customers were satisfied and gave positive reviews of restaurants and hotels, indicating their intention to revisit them in the future. A similar study in green restaurants in the US indicated that the sustainability of local food chains influences tourists' food experiences and destination branding (Alsetoohy et al., 2021). The study proved that the sustainability of local food chains is positively correlated to the majority of tourists' consumption values by the perceived quality of local food and tourists' purchasing intention. Alsetoohy et al. (2021) measured tourists' consumption values based on emotional, epistemic, health, and quality that led to pleasure, excitement, and relaxation with the quality of local dishes at tourist destinations. Based on the literature review, this study postulates the intention of tourists as the following hypothesis:

*H2: Quality value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intentions towards heritage foods of Pahang.*

## Epistemic Value

Epistemic value is defined as a desire for knowledge that leads to motivation by intellectual curiosity or willingness to experience and meet the expectations and satisfaction of such knowledge (Cranmer et al., 2020). Ashton et al. (2020) discovered the desired knowledge through epistemic value gained from cultural destinations such as customs, culture, lifestyle, and novelty that provide new experiences and satisfaction.

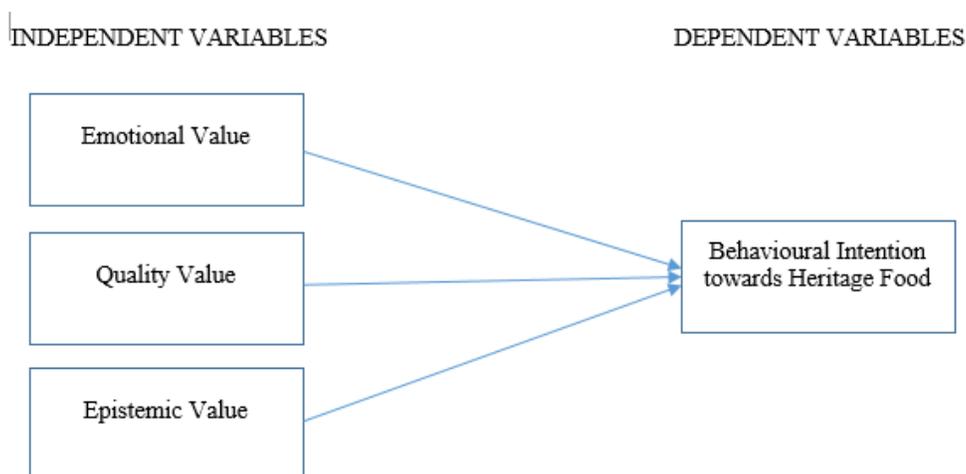
A study by Hartini et al. (2020) found that epistemic value is correlated with self-risk congruency. The result showed that the strong relationship between self-risk congruency and the epistemic value indicates that the greater the suitability of the visitors' self-concept of the risk of adventure tourism destinations, the higher the perceived epistemic value of the visitors will also be.

A study by Wu and Li (2017) on 427 tourists in Macau attempted to define experiential quality dimensions and analyse inter-relationships in terms of experiential quality, perceived value, heritage image, and experiential satisfaction with heritage tourists' behavioural intentions. Based on the results, quality was identified as the primary dimension of the experiential quality perceived based on the results. Therefore, the scholars revealed the relationship between heritage management and a better understanding of the impact of heritage image on experiential quality and behavioural intentions.

Rahman et al. (2018) observed tourists' preferences for local food selections based on an embedded model of perception and behaviour. Their study examined tourists' quality values and behavioural intentions based on satisfaction. The result shows a significant positive relationship between the perceived quality of local food and tourists' purchasing intentions. Based on the literature review, this study assumes the following hypothesis:

*H3: Epistemic value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intentions towards heritage foods of Pahang.*

Consequently, based on the Model of Consumption Values and the presented literature, the current study's research framework is shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Model of Consumption Values*

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach since it is served an effective method for examining the effect of the value of domestic tourists' and travellers' food consumption heritage in Pahang on behavioural intentions.

## Population and Sample

Malaysian domestic visitors and travellers were the study's target audience. In 2019, the total population of Malaysia was 32.6 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). Pahang's tourism statistics recorded 13,992,313 tourists visited the state in the same year. This study was conducted on visitors and travellers who consumed Pahang's heritage dishes. Due to the fact that the current study does not know the exact number of people that travelled to Pahang for food, a sampling size of 384 was used based on Krejcie and Morgan's findings (1970). Purposive sampling has the advantage of providing a generalising sample for the researcher to study, regardless of whether those generalisations are theoretical, analytical, or logical in nature. Questionnaires were distributed through WhatsApp Messenger and Telegram platforms within two months period.

## Measurement Instruments

The study adopted and adapted question items from Choe and Kim's (2018) study variables. In the meantime, the questions for the dependent variable came from Aprile, Caputo, and Nayga (2015), as well as from Choe and Kim (2018). A pre-test activity was carried out at two levels to ensure the validity of the items in question. Seven lecturers from the Department of Tourism and the Department of Malay, Kulliyah of Languages and Management (IIUM), were approached to validate the first draught questionnaire. Translation into Bahasa Melayu was crucial to the suitability of domestic tourists in this study. A pilot study had been carried out before the actual mass data collection process commenced. A total of 29 data items were analysed to check the reliability of the items. Results showed that all translated items achieved an acceptable Cronbach's alpha and internal consistency value (see Table 1).

*Table 1. Result of Cronbach's Alpha for the Variable Items*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>
IV 1: Emotional Value	0.935	5
IV 2: Quality Value	0.868	5
IV 3: Epistemic Value	0.812	5
DV: Behavioural Intention	0.896	9

## Data Collection Procedure

The study used an online survey that distributed questionnaires through social networking systems such as WhatsApp Messenger and Telegram. The approach was used because the survey questionnaire could be easily disseminated and was easier to reach the target respondents. The survey took about two months to complete the data collection, from 13th October 2019 to 13th November 2019.

## RESULTS

### Sample Profile

The total number of responders was 164, representing a response rate of 43%. Three respondents were non-Malaysians, and their responses were omitted from the analysis. Nearly 42% of respondents were Pahang residents who travelled for heritage food (see Table 2 for details of this profile).

*Table 2: Sample Profile*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	31	19.3
Female	130	80.7
Total	161	100.0
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
18 - 24	126	78.3
25 - 34	27	16.8
35 - 44	2	1.2
45 - 54	3	1.9
55 and above	3	1.9
Total	161	100.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Malay	153	95
Chinese	1	0.6
Indian	3	1.9
Others	4	2.5
Total	161	100
<b>State of Origin</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Pahang	67	41.6
Terengganu	8	5
Kelantan	18	11.2
Johor	4	2.5
Melaka	2	1.2
Negeri Sembilan	3	1.9
Selangor	26	16.1
Kuala Lumpur	10	6.2
Perak	7	4.3
Perlis	0	0
Penang	2	1.2
Kedah	8	5
Sabah	4	2.5
Sarawak	2	1.2
Total	161	100

Of the 161 respondents, 80.7% were female. The majority age group was the 12 to 24-year-old segment (78.3%). Most of the respondents were Malay (95%), and the remaining 5% consisted of Chinese (0.6%), Indian (1.9%), and others (2.5%), respectively. Respondents from Pahang appeared to be the largest group (41.6%), followed by Selangor (16.1%), Kelantan (11.2%), Kuala Lumpur (6.2%), Terengganu and Kedah (both 5%), Perak (4.3%), and Johor and Sabah (both 2.5%). Negeri Sembilan recorded 1.9%, while Melaka, Penang, and Sarawak recorded the least percentage (1.2%), respectively. Hence, there was no respondent (0%) from Perlis.

The majority of the respondents (99.4%) agreed that heritage food consumption is one way to preserve the culture. About 98% answered “Yes” to the idea of commercialising heritage foods of Pahang to other destinations. Meanwhile, the researcher also wanted to know which region in Pahang mostly has heritage foods. The respondents were allowed to tick more than one region. From respondents’ opinions, the region with the largest percentage was Temerloh (73.9%), followed by Kuantan, Pekan, Jerantut, Lipis, Raub, Bentong, Rompin, Maran, Bera, Cameron Highlands, and Kuala Krau.

## RESULTS

### Reliability analysis

Cronbach’s alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the scales. The minimum Cronbach’s alpha of 0.70 is considered acceptable (Devellis, 2003; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha estimate for emotional value was 0.923 (four items), the quality value was 0.896 (four items), and the epistemological value was 0.912 (five items). According to Pallant (2010), Cronbach’s alpha values of less than 0.5 and less than 10 items are common. Briggs and Cheek (1986) recommended reporting inter-item correlations for scales with low alpha scores. The inter-item correlation of para-social interactions, as recommended, was found to be between 0.3 and 0.5. As shown in Table 3 below, all constructs are reliable.

*Table 3. Descriptive Statistics*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Emotional value	5.14	.912	.921
Quality value	5.16	.847	.896
Epistemic value	5.08	.961	.912

### Correlations

Correlation analysis was used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between four variables, namely emotional value, quality value, epistemological value, and behavioural intent. As shown in Table 4, emotional and quality values have a strong relationship with R’s value, being 0.715 and 0.683, respectively. Meanwhile, the epistemological value indicates a strong relationship based on the value of 0.835.

Table 4. Correlation

	Emotional Value	Quality value	Epistemic value	Behavioural Intention
Emotional Value	1			.715**
				.000
Quality value		1		.683**
				.000
Epistemic value			1	.835**
				.000

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

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test whether emotional value, quality value, and epistemological value predicted behavioural intent (see Table 4). The causal relationship between the emotional value constructs and behavioural intention was investigated. The hypothesis is supported as the result showed the emotional beta value to be 0.115 with a significant p-value of 0.000. The subsequent analysis of the quality values also supports the hypothesis. The beta value for quality value towards behavioural intention was 0.196 with a p-value of 0.000. Further regression analysis on the third hypothesis showed that the relationship between epistemic value and behavioural intention is also supported. The beta value obtained for employee performance was 0.630, with a significant p-value of 0.000.

In the regression analysis, the beta coefficients explain the relative importance of the three independent variables in contributing to the variance in behavioural intention. Based on the results, epistemic value ( $B_3 = 0.630$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) carried the heaviest weight, followed by quality value ( $B_2 = 0.196$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and emotional value ( $B_1 = 0.115$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). All three hypotheses are accepted. Refer to Table 4 below.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Standardized parameter est.	Sig.	Conclusion
H1: Emotional value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intention towards heritage food in Pahang	.115	.000	Supported
H2: Quality value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intention towards heritage food in Pahang	.196	.000	Supported
H3: Epistemic value positively affects domestic tourists' behavioural intention towards heritage food in Pahang	.630	.000	Supported

## DISCUSSIONS

Travel patterns are changing, and food tourism is on the increase, both globally and locally. Food tourism is an industry that actively contributes to economic growth in many countries, including Malaysia. The results of this study represent nearly 70% of the consumption values that affect the increase in visits and consumption of Pahang's Heritage Foods, and this data will provide some insights for tourism marketers.

The epistemological values for this study are consistent with those by Choe and Kim (2018). One possible reason for a positive attitude towards heritage foods in terms of quality value is their significance to tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. Besides, it may contribute to the recurrence of tourists to their destination in the future. It also satisfies the value for money that tourists spend. This is due to the ingredients used to prepare and cook heritage foods and the unique flavours that may attract tourists to consume heritage foods in Pahang. Accordingly, based on the high percentage shown in the analysis section, this study generalises that quality is as essential as consumption values. Many respondents share recommendations to preserve the quality of heritage foods.

The result shows that most respondents agreed that quality value has an impact on the consumption of Pahang's heritage foods for their own behavioural purposes. The aspects examined under quality value included the variety of ingredients used, good quality ingredients, attractive flavouring, and a high standard of quality for heritage foods. The findings of the quality values suggested in this study are consistent with the findings by Alsetoohy et al. (2021), Bjork and Kuppinen-Raisanen (2015), Choe and Kim (2018), Prasetyo et al. (2021), Rahman et al. (2018), and Yan et al. (2015). The quality value is positive and significant, which has an impact on tourists' behaviour towards local food.

In this study, emotional values were lower than epistemological and quality values, and the findings revealed that domestic tourists who participated in the survey mostly agreed that Pahang's heritage foods provide emotional values, happiness, positive moods, fascination, and excitement. These four values have a powerful influence on their behavioural intentions. In short, tourists have the potential to recommend heritage foods, visit food tourism destinations, and consume heritage foods in the future. The positive and significant results are linked to past research, such as that by Choe and Kim (2018) and Dagevos and Ophem (2013). The elusive element in the value of food consumption refers to a sense of well-being linked to the ideals of experience, entertainment, and personality, having an impact on tourists' behavioural intentions towards local food. The result of emotional value is also consistent with those of Asshidin et al. (2016) and Sthapit et al. (2017), indicating that the experience of eating at the destination provides positive and negative emotions that lead to the behavioural intention of the tourists to repeat their visit in the future.

### Implications

This study's findings address several important implications for domestic tourists' behavioural intentions in the consumption of heritage foods in Pahang. People involved in the preparation, manufacture, or sales of heritage foods should be advised to focus on providing the best food products because experience affects the consumer's intention to eat the food again. The study may be replicated in other local food states to confirm the results.

Cooperation between government bodies, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MoTAC), stakeholders, and private organisations is important for maintaining the quality of heritage food products. Preserving the uniqueness and authenticity of heritage foods is very important in this modern age. This study proposes that the initiatives promoting the sales of Pahang's heritage food products should include an effort to entice foreigners with food tasting or sampling in booths located at Malaysia's main entrances, such as in the lobby of the international airport and the boarding areas. The emphasis on food packaging should be appropriate and exclusive for tourists to bring home as souvenirs, so food presentation must also be improved. Local airlines travelling to Kuantan should also introduce heritage foods on board as an appetiser that will easily familiarise passengers with Pahang's heritage foods.

Aggressive marketing efforts must be pursued as they contribute to the emotions of tourists coming to Pahang. With active promotions, there will be more opportunities for tourists to explore other products of tourism in Pahang. In view of the role of emotional value among the major contributors to the behavioural intention towards heritage foods in Pahang, local businesses need to stress that heritage foods can generate enjoyment, pleasure, and positive moods. From then on, the epistemological value will help increase tourists' interest in exploring the local culture. At least once they consume Pahang's heritage foods, tourists can learn about the origin of a dish or the recipe behind its unique taste. In any case, the experience of the tourists will be enhanced. In this study, domestic tourists benefited from the epistemological value, which means that the same effort must be made to ensure that international tourists can enjoy the same benefits. Indirectly, local culture is promoted.

## **CONCLUSION**

All of the variables studied in this study had a significant positive relationship with domestic tourists' behavioural intentions. The results show that the value of consumption has enhanced tourists' experiences and their appreciation of eating food again in the future. In particular, quality, emotional, and epistemological values have been shown to have a direct impact on consumers' satisfaction and loyalty. The potential to transform Pahang's heritage foods into a tourist attraction must be established based on conservation principles and practises and organised around public-private cooperation schemes (Rinaldi, 2017). The SDGs' objectives can be achieved if Pahang's heritage foods have the cultural and heritage value that people need; local food conservation can be done in their region through modernisation. It, therefore, serves as an effort to preserve the history and authenticity of local foods. In conclusion, efforts to sustain heritage foods can benefit economic development in Pahang and Malaysia as a whole, where sustainable development aims to balance economic, environmental, and social needs, which will enable current and future generations to thrive.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Several limitations have been identified in this study. The limitations of this study are addressed as guidance and recommendations for future research. First, the scope of the study is somewhat limited. This study only looked at the impact of consumption values on domestic tourists' behavioural intentions who came to Pahang to experience heritage foods. From an international tourist's perspective, future studies may be extended to gather more responses. The critical view of heritage food consumption dimensions is linked to

the food's location and image destination. In line with this, to encourage in-depth gastronomic experiences in terms of consumption values, future studies are suggested to use mixed-method research designs by adding a qualitative approach to those who have never tried Pahang's heritage foods. Future study is also invited to duplicate findings in other geographic regions and populations, or to compare and repeat tourists domestically and internationally for the first time, in order to increase understanding of heritage food consumption. Therefore, strategies need to be well planned to approach and gather as many respondents as possible to make research more reliable and valid.

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## Muslim Youth Experience and Satisfaction with Halal Foods in Penang

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research seeks to determine the Muslim youth's satisfaction with Halal food at tourism destinations in Penang. This study identifies two descriptive analyses 1) the Muslim youth experience on halal food 2) Muslim youth satisfaction with the halal food at a tourist destination in Penang, and inferential analysis of 3) investigates the relationship between Muslim youth experience and their satisfaction with halal foods.

**Methods/Design/approach:** This study used a quantitative approach and convenience sampling to collect the data. Two hundred fifty respondents have participated in this research. Muslim youth have experience with Halal food and are satisfied with the Halal food at a tourist destination.

**Findings:** The result showed that Muslim youth experience moderately correlates with satisfaction. This study will assist the tourism industry, especially restaurant marketers, improve their Halal food services.

**Implication/Limitations:** This research has implications for theory and practice, showing that Muslim youth's experience with Halal food can bring tourists' intention to revisit and satisfy the elements of halal food.

**Keywords:** Halal food, Muslim youth's experience, satisfaction, tourism destination

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a relevant segment in this era of globalization because it contributes significantly to the national economy. Travelling is essential because it can improve human life in terms of happiness and relieve stress. Besides, travelling also helps to reduce the causes of mental health, especially in this era. Based on UNWTO, tourism is related to persons travelling to and staying outside their usual environment for leisure, business, and other purposes for not more than one consecutive year. According to Islamic perceptions, travelling is encouraged to allow people to travel to see the beauty of God's creation and learn about the culture and history of the people left behind (Lina Munirah & Hairul, 2013)

The concept of Islamic tourism is not clearly defined and still ambiguous. Travelling may also be called "ibadah" in Islam. Lina and Hairul (2013) refer to people who travel from one location to another and prevent wrongdoings while receiving God's blessing. Besides, Islamic tourism can also be known as religious and spiritual tourism and cultural tourism. A few Islamic tourism characteristics are flexible, rational, simple, and balanced (Laderlah, Rahman, Awang, & Man, 2011). A few considerations that should be emphasized when promoting Islamic tourism include prayer times, shariah enforcement services, and Halal food. All the factors can influence Muslim tourists to travel. Islam is very concerned about Halal food, and Muslims must consume the food that is permissible (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). This is because human wellness and behaviour will be boosted by food consumption (Krishnan, Omar, Zahran, Syazwan, & Alya, 2017). Moreover, a halal food business strategy is needed to encourage Muslim tourist satisfaction (Ningsih Caria, R Nuraeni, 2019). Therefore, this research is done on Islamic tourism, focusing on Halal food by identifying the experience and satisfaction among Muslim youth nowadays towards Halal food.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Muslim Youth Satisfaction

Satisfaction can be declared as the pre-consumption expectation and post-consumption experience (Quee Ling & Shahrin et al, 2010). Tourist satisfaction is critical because it can affect tourist destination selection, product and service use, and the decision to return to the tourism destination. According to Suanmali (2014), there is a difference between tourist satisfaction and tourist expectations and the actual perceived value. Furthermore, assessing tourist satisfaction may provide information about a destination's ability to meet visitors' needs and assist destination marketers in improving the quality of goods or services. (Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal, 2008). However, according to Sindhu, Saputro, Wardi, and Abror (2018), if a person is comfortable with the services he gets, he is likely to be satisfied. There are a few measuring customer satisfaction concepts that can be used. Examples of customer satisfaction concepts include overall customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction dimension, confirmation of expectation, interest revisit, willingness to recommend, and customer dissatisfaction.

It is imperative to identify tourist satisfaction because the satisfaction of the attributes can lead to the overall destination's satisfaction (Suanmali, 2014). Satisfaction can also be considered an important variable due to its high effects on customers' future behaviour and their attitude about the products and services mentioned in (Al-ansi, Olya, & Han, 2018). Also, tourists satisfaction will revisit the tourism destination while also recommending the place to others. According to Meng, Tepanon and Uysal (2008), nine theories

have introduced customer satisfaction: expectancy disconfirmation, assimilation or cognitive dissonance, contrast, assimilation contrast, equity, attribution, comparison level, generalized negativity and value percept. Overall, tourist satisfaction can be essential in determining the effective delivery of each product and service. The tourist's satisfaction can influence others to experience it and improve the quality of products and services offered at a tourism destination.

## **Muslim Youth Experience**

Experience is subjective, intangible, and continuous. Referred to Mossberg (2007), experience is blended with many elements and involves consumers emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually. The concept of experience, also known as servicescape, is a complex mix of environment features around the services that can influence internal responses and behaviour. Mossberg (2007) has highlighted that tourists regularly like to experience something different from daily life. Ningsih and Taufiq (2021) notified that food identity, good experience, and exploration of halal food positively influence Muslim tourist motivation. Quan and Wang (2004) mention in Mossberg (2007) that the tourist experience is recognized as a peak experience and is regarded as the extension of daily experiences to their journeys such as accommodation, food, and transport mostly ignored.

Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012), as cited in Park and Santos (2017), have identified seven components of travel experience that facilitate the formation of memorable tourism experience: hedonism, refreshment, and local culture meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty. Meanwhile, in the same article cited by Tung and Ritchie (2011), positive emotions and feelings are related to experiences like excitement are the critical components of a memorable tourism experience. However, based on tourist experience, they will also remember both positive and negative emotions and feelings. Also, according to Park and Santos (2017), MacCannell (1973) cited that most travelling tourists will tend to recollect the incredible experience they face.

## **Relationship between Muslim Youth Experience and Muslim Youth Satisfaction**

When the tourist sector faces many problems, tourism for young people is a critical market segment, serving as a source of change and innovation. According to Ghețe (2015), youth play a crucial role in bringing new visitors to the destination. If the tourism sector is to thrive, it must cater to the various demands of youthful visitors. This is because their satisfaction with the experience will impact the business.

The holistic tourism experience can determine the overall level of tourist satisfaction with a blend of essential factors and related satisfaction regarding acquired and consumed services. Generally, the experience's standard is more subjective, while the quality of services is often more objective (Mendes, Oom do Valle, Guerreiro, & Silve, 2010). In that article, they mentioned that it is essential for the destination manager to consider tourists' satisfaction and reaction to the destination's experience. It can help in improving their products and services. According to the research, satisfaction is determined by tourist experience, and it is vital because it can influence the destination choices, products, services consumption and the decision to return.

Furthermore, the experience is determined by the value of the visited destination, and the experience has a functional value which visitors can pay the fee for attractions. Still, the experience they gain is not the same

value as the money spent. Besides, the experience can be defined as a crucial factor that affects customer satisfaction. The article has discussed tourist satisfaction with the tourism product, which is that tourists will be satisfied when they perceive the product's superior value. Meanwhile, the experiences encountered by tourists influence an evaluation of and satisfaction. Tourists are expected to be satisfied when their unique experiences create functional and emotional values (Song, Lee, Park, Hwang, & Reisinger, 2015).

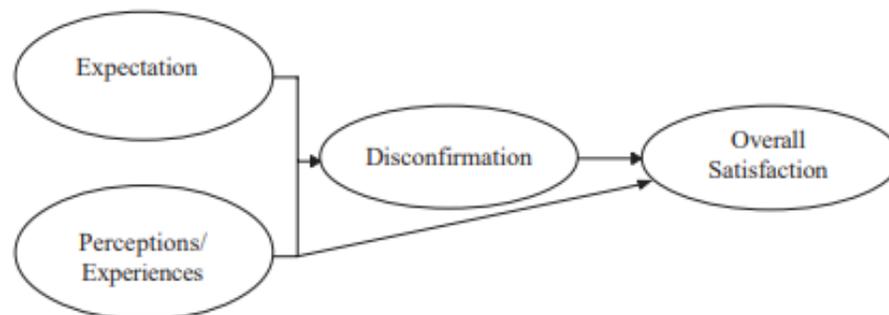
On the other hand, the customer experience in different situations such as staff service, environment, and the product's procedure can directly influence customer satisfaction (Pei, Guo, Wu, Zhou, & Yeh, 2020). Besides this, different product situations significantly moderate the relationship between the consumer experience with the environment, product experience, and customer satisfaction. The author also discusses six factors that mainly affect customer satisfaction: service values, personal value, product value, image value, currency, and non-currency cost. Moreover, the product experience can also boost customer satisfaction, attention to the product, and brand reliability.

In their article, Xiang, Schwartz, Gerdes & Uysal (2015) discussed the relationship between the experience and satisfaction of hotel guests. It generally can be related to the topic of this study. The authors have considered that satisfaction on the customer who has experience with the services is as reasonable as it should be. Besides, satisfaction is also related to the interaction between consumers' pre-purchase expectations and the post-purchase evaluation result. Therefore, customer expectations can be connected to satisfaction in pre-purchases or after purchasing the product or services.

Lastly, Neal, Sirgy and Uysal (1999) have discussed that satisfaction with leisure life is more insignificant. Therefore, the tourist may perceive the travel and tourism experience as a "substitute" for leisure life. Based on the discussion of the result from that article, the authors have mentioned that the tourism trip experiences directly impact tourists' overall life satisfaction. It also found a significant positive relationship between the experience in tourism products or services and the satisfaction of using the products or services provided.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the study of tourist satisfaction

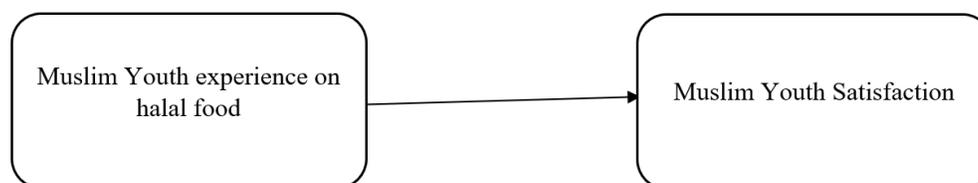


Source: Aziz, Ariffin, Omar & Yoon (2011)

*Figure 1: Theoretical Framework*

This model framework reflects the consumer's expectations and perceptions or experiences. In this part, there is a comparison between the tourist satisfaction and their experience after tourists visited and the expectation before they visited the destination. According to Churchill and Suprenant (1982), as cited in Aziz, Ariffin, Omar and Yoon (2011), satisfaction with services is something that is related to the size and also the direction of the confirmation or disconfirmation experience, which, in turn, it will be affected by the consumer's initial expectations. Cronin and Taylor (1992) mentioned that predicting overall satisfaction and outperforms is suitable for using perception to measure service quality. Using the perception indication already causes respondents to compare perception and expectation; in other words, the estimation of perceptions or experiences already includes a perception minus expectation mental process (Llosa et al. 1998) cited in (Aziz et al., 2011).

This theory is adopted in completing this research. However, this study is only focusing on the experience and the satisfaction. The experience with halal food (IV) relates to this study by referring to the theory. Generally, this study is to determine Halal food's Muslim youth's satisfaction with tourism destinations and their experience with halal food. Therefore, the conceptual research framework is as below:



*Figure 2: Research Framework*

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a quantitative approach. Quantitative data can be defined as the value of data in the form of numbers put into a few categories to make it easy. According to Apuke (2017), quantitative research explains an issue or any phenomenon by gathering data in numerical form. The quantitative approach also uses systematic tools and standardized data collection such as questionnaires and surveys. For this study, the statistical data was computed through IBM SPSS version 22. This software assist the researcher with the complied data through various tests such as descriptive analysis, reliability, and correlation. In addition, the data are collected from a series of questionnaires adapted and adopted from previous studies.

The sampling technique is the method of randomly choosing the number of respondents from the total population, known as a sample. In this study, the target population is Muslim youth in Malaysia. The National Youth Development Policy of Malaysia defines youth as people aged between 15 and 40 years. It stipulates further that the main focus of youth development programmes and activities in the country should be young people aged 18 to 25 years (MOYS 1997). The sample size used for this study is based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size decision was condensed and presented in a table based on the population size. The total youth in Malaysia is approximately 15,101,000. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of more than 100 000 was 385. Therefore, it is essential to consider this sample size to accurately the research findings.

## Research Instrument

*Table 1: Structure of questionnaire*

Section	Question Items	Author/Year
Section A: Demographic	1-6	Self- Developed
Section B: Muslim Youth Experience on Halal Food at tourism destination in Penang	7 - 19	Quee Ling, Shahrim Ab Karim, Otham, Mohd Adzahan, Ramachandran (2010) Ahmad, Abaidah, & Yahya (2013) Mannaa (2020)
Section C: Muslim Youth Satisfaction about the Halal food at tourism destination in Penang	20 - 30	Quee Ling, Shahrim Ab Karim, Otham, Mohd Adzahan, & Ramachandran (2010) Al-ansi, Olya, & Han (2018) Shamimi, Khuzairi & Faiz (2019)
Section D: Comment and Suggestion	31	Self- Developed

This research aims to determine the Muslim youth's satisfaction towards Halal food in tourism destinations in Penang. A Likert scale from 1 to 5 was provided from strongly disagree to strongly agree in the questionnaires. There are 30 questions, and all of these questions are based on this study's independent and dependent variables. In brief, all of the instruments' questions are adopted and adapted from previous studies and research.

The data was collected in April 2021 using Google Form, and the link was shared with the target respondents, Muslim youth. Given the current condition of Covid-19 and no physical meeting, the collected data was conducted online. According to Nayak and Narayan (2019), computer-administered surveys, electronic mail surveys, and online surveys are three common ways to collect survey data electronically. Social media is a platform used to share and spread the Google Form link. Muslim youth are the target respondents to answer this questionnaire.

## RESULT

This study targeted 385 respondents who have experienced halal food in Penang. A total of 250 respondents participated in the online survey within two weeks of data collection, resulting in a 65% response rate.

The respondents of this study consist of 61 males (24.4%) and 189 females (75.6%). It shows that females are the majority of the sample (n) that have experienced Halal food in Penang. As for the age group, most of the respondents are between 21-25 years old (66.4%). Then followed by respondents aged between 26-30 years old (20.4%), after that, 15-20 years old (8.8%) and 31-35 years old (7%). Lastly, only four respondents were from 36-40 years old (1.6%). Most respondents are single 209 (83.6%) and 41 (16.4%) respondents are married in terms of marital status. Then for the education level, the majority of the respondents have a degree with 167 (66.8%), followed by a diploma with 49 respondents (19.6%). Then, STPM and SPM with 15 (6.0%) respondents and 14 respondents (5.6%) respectively. After that, others' education level is three respondents (1.2%) and PMR/PT3 with two respondents (0.8%).

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Question Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	61	24.4
	Female	189	75.6
Age Group	15-20	22	8.8
	21-25	166	66.4
	26-30	51	20.4
	31-35	7	2.8
	36-40	4	1.6
	Marital Status	Single	209
	Married	41	16.4
Education Level	PMR/PT3	2	0.8
	SPM	14	5.6
	STPM	15	6.0
	Diploma	49	19.6
	Degree	167	66.8
	Others	3	1.2
	Frequency Visit to Penang	Once	117
Twice		41	16.4
Three Times		25	10.0
More than three times		67	26.8
Area Visited	Penang Island	78	31.2
	Penang	149	59.6
	Others	23	9.2

The next aspects focus on the frequency of visits to Penang after 12 months. Most respondents have visited Penang once after 12 months which 117 (46.8%) respondents. Sixty-seven respondents (26.8%) respondents have visited more than three times, followed by twice with 41 respondents (16.4%). Lastly is three times visited, which are 25 respondents (10.0%). Furthermore, the results of are visited area in Penang which is majority respondents have visited Penang Island area with 149 (59.6%) respondents, then followed by Penang area which 78 respondents (31.2%) and lastly is others with 23 respondents (9.2%).

Table 3 lists all things under the independent variable (Muslim Youth Experience) and dependent variable (Muslim Youth Satisfaction). Most of the items in independent variables have a mean score of 3.00 above. Meanwhile, dependents variables have a mean score of above 4.00 above. This indicates that most of the respondents neutral and agreed with the item's statement in each variable.

## Hypothesis Testing

In this study, an alternate hypothesis conducted to test whether it is supported or not. The hypothesis is:

H1: Muslim youth experience on Halal food in Penang has a positive influence on Muslim youths' satisfaction.

Table 3: Summary of Means and Standard Deviation of Items According to Variable

Variables		Mean	Std Deviation
<b>Muslim Youth Experience (IV1)</b>			
TE 1	The premises are hygienic	3.71	0.744
TE 2	The food on the premises is clean and safe to consume	3.81	0.685
TE 3	The premises provide comfortable eating surroundings	3.84	0.742
TE 4	The premises are selling the mixture of both halal and non-halal food	2.51	1.318
TE 5	The Halal food premises located at a strategic location as key of attraction	4.28	0.783
TE 6	The food is prepared by Muslim workers	4.11	0.782
TE 7	Workers apply proper hygienic practice such as wearing gloves while preparing the food.	3.46	0.905
TE 8	Food providers are friendly towards tourists	3.94	0.848
TE 9	The premises offered limited choices of Halal food	2.80	1.289
TE 10	The premises offered reasonable price of food	3.88	0.867
TE 11	The premises apply Halal Logo and certification	3.90	0.900
TE 12	The ingredient of food preparation is Halal	4.05	0.817
TE 13	Halal Logo is not important as long as the ingredients are free from pork or alcohol	2.26	1.391
<b>Muslim Youth Satisfaction (DV)</b>			
TS 1	I think Halal food contributes to the quality of my visiting experience	4.30	0.814
TS 2	I am pleased to consume halal food	4.71	0.620
TS 3	I think that consuming halal food is a good for health	4.77	0.608
TS 4	I think eating halal food adds to my visiting enjoyment	4.56	0.711
TS 5	The Halal food experience in Penang meets my expectation	4.28	0.739
TS 6	I experienced the culture of Malaysia through the Malaysian halal food in Penang	4.26	0.817
TS 7	I have experienced the good hospitalities at the Halal food premises	4.20	0.737
TS 8	I think the price charged is reasonable	4.00	0.869
TS 9	I am satisfied with the quality of food, price and staff behavior towards Halal food	4.00	0.843
TS 10	I am satisfied with the overall element of Halal (Halal Logo, hygienic of premises and no mixture food with non-Halal)	4.02	0.821
TS 11	I am satisfied with my overall experience of being a consumer of halal food	4.24	0.747

### Correlation Among Variables

The relationship between the independent variables (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) is examined using Pearson's analysis in this report. Muslim youth experience with Halal food was used as an independent variable, while Muslim youth satisfaction was used as a dependent variable to measure the relationship between the variables.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis Between IV and DV

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Muslim Youth Experience on Halal Food	Muslim Youth Satisfaction 0.499

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

Table 4 illustrates the relationship between independent and dependent variables. According to Cohen (1998) (as stated in Table 12), the r-value from 0.30 to 0.49 shows a moderate relationship. Hence, table 13 highlighted Muslim Youth Experience (IV) has a moderate relationship with Muslim Youth Satisfaction (DV) with r value of 0.499. The correlation of both variables is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The r value shows that when the independent variables' value increases, the dependent variable's value also increases.

## DISCUSSION

According to the analysis of the result in Table 2, the Muslim youth experience; most of the respondents have an experience halal food in Penang. The respondents have experience in terms of environments, location of food premises, services, and the essential elements needed in Halal food. This is supported by the previous study that mentioned that the experience is blended with many elements and involves the consumers emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually. This experience concept can also be known as a servicescape that can influence internal responses and behaviour, a complex mix of environment features around the services (Shaw and Ivens, 2002), as cited in Mossberg (2007). From the result of this research, the halal food premises located at a strategic location as a key of attraction are higher mean on independent variables. Therefore, it can be seen that the Muslim youth have experience with Halal food according to the few elements that have been provided

Besides, the Muslim youth satisfaction result in Table 2 also showed that most of the respondents are slightly satisfied with the Halal food in Penang because some of the elements of Halal food meet their needs related to the Halal terms. According to Quee Ling, Shahrin Ab Karim, Othman, Mohd Adzahan, & Ramachandran (2010) have mentioned that satisfaction can be indicated as the yield of the pre-consumption expectation and post-consumption experience. Satisfaction is essential because it can influence tourist destinations, consumption of certain products, and their decision to return to a tourism destination. As the result of respondents' satisfaction, the higher satisfaction is respondents thinking that consuming halal food is good for their health. This result shows that Muslim youth have their expectation of Halal food before consuming and their satisfaction after having experience with it.

In the inferential analysis to answer the research objective, the result has highlighted that Muslim youth experience Halal food has a moderate relationship with Muslim youth's satisfaction with r value of 0.499.

This situation reflected a statement by Mendes, Oom do Valle, Guerreiro, and Silve, (2010) that the destination manager needs to consider tourists' level of satisfaction and their reaction to the destination's experience. In brief, the relationship between Muslim Youth Experience and Muslim Youth Satisfaction on Halal Food in this study can be supported by Song, Lee, Park, Hwang, and Reisinger (2015), which is about the experiences encountered by tourists influence an evaluation of and satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

Penang is one of the well-known destinations of choice for tourists who love food. Penang is famous for the variety of street foods and different cultures. This study investigates the satisfaction of the Muslim youth about the Halal food in Penang. Then, based on the problem statement, the researcher proposed a framework and developed a hypothesis to investigate Muslim youth experience and their satisfaction with Halal food in Penang. The result shows positive relationships, and this study is significant and fully supported.

On a side note, for future research, this study can also be conducted with an interview or field study. It focuses not only on questionnaires as it can obtain more accurate results. The field research can be performed by interviewing the respondents to get to know the authentic experience of the tourist and how they are satisfied with halal food's experience.

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## Which Shariah-Compliant Hotel Attributes Matter? An Investigation from Youth Travellers' Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *This research aims to ascertain the youth travellers' stances towards Halal certification in general and identify their perspectives on Shariah-compliant Hotel attributes.*

**Methods/Design/approach:** *A Quantitative research design was used. A questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the data. A total of domestic 269 youth travellers were involved in this research.*

**Findings:** *Muslim travellers had a high perspective towards Halal certification. Overall, among the attributes of Shariah-compliant hotels, most respondents agreed that facilities were the essential attribute in Sharia-compliant Hotel, followed by food and beverage.*

**Implication/Limitations:** *This research contributes to a clear understanding of youth travellers' perspectives towards the Islamic concept of Shariah-compliant hotels and encourages them to use or experience Shariah-compliant hotels. This study only focused on youth generation, and future research can use another sample unit such as generation Z or adult.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Tourism, Hospitality, Muslim travellers, Shariah-compliant Hotel*

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## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is known as one of the popular destinations for Muslim tourists, especially Middle East (Othman et al., 2015). Various Islamic countries are being involved with the Islamic concept, which is influenced by the increasing number of the Muslim population, which is expected to increase to 2.2 billion by 2030 (Putri, et. al 2019) Malaysia is one of the countries that want to be a part of the famous Islamic tourism destination globally (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2017). Malaysia consists of multiple races and religions, adopt the new planning and implementations for this Islamic tourism in many essential products and services, particularly in Shariah-compliant on accommodation such as hotels and resorts. Moreover, this will become a new source of revenue for economic development and infrastructure improvement for Malaysia's tourism sector.

The term of Islamic concept is very wide and still has no exact or specific definition. However, according to the United World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes". Henderson (2010) stated that "Islamic tourism is all product development and marketing efforts designed for and directed at Muslims". Moreover, Ala-Hamarneh (2011) indicated Islamic tourism as "an economic, cultural and religious (conservative) concept". Generally, Islamic tourism can be understood as tourism that comprises Islamic principles and applies tourism products and services in management to satisfy and deliver experiences to tourists. Most of these tourists were refers to Muslim tourists. For instance, some Sharia-compliant hotels were adopted Islamic principles to attract the demand of Muslim as well as non-Muslim tourists. Hence, Islamic tourism has become an essential earning in Malaysia's economic development, there will be continuous improvement in products, services, and other tourism components such as facilities, transportation, food and beverage, etc. Overall, this study will focus on identifying Sharia-compliant attributes on hotels, based on the perspective of youth travellers. Malaysia is one of the popular destinations of Muslim tourists from foreign countries, especially the Middle East (Othman et al., 2015).

As the number of Muslims recently increased in the global area, this becomes a sign for other cooperate tourism sectors to prepare the demand and cater of all Muslim travellers at the same time offering more tourism products and services according to Islamic requirements. Sharia-compliant in hotels here is one the best example that develops to fulfil this growing market. Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism and Culture has announced that the government will promote the Muslim market and collaborate with many organizations such as Islamic Tourism Centre and International Islamic University Malaysia. This collaboration will become an important role of the Organization of Islamic Countries members by conducting programs and events such as World Islamic Conference in Kuala Lumpur in 2008 and hosting the first OIC Global Islamic Tourism Conference and Exhibition in 2008 (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015).

Sharia-compliant has become the current trend for tourism study (Rahayu & Zuhriatusobah, 2021). However, the emergence of Sharia-compliant hotels in Malaysia can still be considered at the infant stage due to a small number of hotels applying this concept in their establishment. Ahmat et al. (2015) found out that only 3-star hotels and a few 4-star hotels serve basic facilities to fulfil the needs of Muslim tourists in Malaysia, while the upscale 4 to 5-star hotels are owned by outside operators such as Hilton, Starwood, and InterContinental hotels group. Furthermore, rebranding and implementing Sharia-compliant hotels is not easy because it consumes a lot of money and risks (Geyfman & Grandzol, 2020) as proper planning by the experts is needed and applying for a license.

The increasing awareness of parties to strengthen the implementation of Shariah-compliant needs proof and support from the demand side. Hence, a study regarding the essential Shariah-compliant hotel attributes from the Muslim travellers' perspective needs to be done. Unmatching attributes provided by the industries with the consumers' expectations can lead to miscommunication. Moreover, it becomes an ineffective tourism marketing and fails to achieve tourists' satisfaction (Nurazizah & Rahmafritria, 2021). In the last ten years, youth travellers also become a considerably group and become a very potential market in tourism marketing (Caber et al., 2020). With the strong exposure of technology and their power to influence social media, youth travellers' perception toward the importance of Shariah-compliant attributes cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is vital to examine the Shariah-compliant attribute in the hotel, which is considered important from the perspective of Muslim youth travellers. This study is expected to answer the consecutive questions about what is the youth traveller's attitudes toward Halal certification and towards Shariah-compliant hotels attributes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview on Shariah-compliant

Abdullah (2010) defines Shariah-compliant as an Arabic word that means the way or path, refer to Islamic law and the totality of the Islamic way of life. Shariah deals with many things, including politics, economics, banking, business, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues. The word Shariah usually refers to the law derived from Quran and Sunnah as the main sources of law in Islam. While in general, compliance means conforming to a rule, such as a specification, policy, standard, or law. Shariah law prohibits any practice against Islamic law, such as gambling, drinking alcohol, eating banned animals, etc. Shariah law determines what is Halal (acceptable) and what is Haram (unacceptable). The law also applies when Muslims travel anywhere; the Muslims should obey according to Shariah law and regulation (Kamaruddin, et, al. 2020). Ahmad (2000) highlighted that Shariah practice must be based on four philosophic foundations: tawhid, rububiyah, khilafah and tazkiyyah.

According to Al Sari (2010), Shariah-compliant are to fulfil basic human necessities: religion, life, property, intellect, and posterity. Therefore, it can be concluded that Shariah-compliant comprises all aspects of human life and basic necessity that a person must have to perform perfect life. When applying with tourism and hospitality industry, it focuses on providing basic needs and what should have as Muslim to fulfil the obligation and prohibit anything against Islamic principle. Furthermore, Shariah-compliant in hospitality deals more with financial matters and investment that the whole operation should base on and follow the Shariah (Othman, et al.,2015). In Islam, traveling focuses not only on performing Hajj and Umrah but also on other purposes, such as education, medical, and so on. Thus, Muslims can develop their minds and ponder these creations for their benefit. Shariah-compliant as overall is not only focusing on law, education, and economy but also on tourism and hospitality. However, Muslim Friendly and Shariah Compliant is a very different concept, and this has led to conditions by many people. According to Islamic Tourism Malaysia, Muslim Friendly could be defined as products or services in the travel and tourism industry guided by Shariah requirements that provide facilities for Muslim travellers, prohibition of alcohol, and any illegal activities against Islamic rules. In contrast, Shariah-compliant in hospitality is more straightforward, any activities should be exactly practiced as stated in the Shari principle. Shariah practice is not only by

providing Musolla or other worship facilities for Muslim but applying the whole operation of the tourism and hospitality industry.

### **Aspects That Have Been Discussed in Shariah-compliant**

Previous studies on Shariah-compliant in the tourism industry have not much provided as it is still at the early stage and more research needs to be conducted (Khan, 2018; Khatib et. al, 2022). In general, Shariah Compliant commonly refers to investment and financial matters. Moreover, it has been focused on a law aspect, which means to be a guidance of any action and referred to Shariah principle as derived from two primary sources, the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW. In Malaysia's tourism industry, Shariah-compliant is still under progression within Islamic tourism development of government and mainly to attract Muslim tourists from the Middle East (Samori, & Sabtu, 2014). On the other side, Muslim-Friendly has been implemented around Muslim countries, including Malaysia, to provide basic facilities and necessities for Muslim travellers to perform obligations such as Musolla, Qibla, Quran, segregation male and female in hospitality, and even Halal food consumption.

### **Shariah-compliant Attributes in Malaysia Context**

The demand for Islamic tourism is increasing nowadays among travelers due to the availability of Halal products and Shariah-compliant practices (Othman et al., 2015b). Some efforts have been made by the government and private sector in promoting Malaysia as Islamic Tourism destinations. For instance, Islam Hadhari or Islamic Civilization that introduced by the previous Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi, then The Halal Master Plan through the establishment of Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) by Tourism Malaysia in 2009, and the organizing of the first OIC Global Islamic Tourism Conference and Exhibition and World Islamic Conference in Kuala Lumpur (Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015).

Along with that, Malaysia's government also provides Islamic services in other aspects, such as Islamic banking and investment for business purposes and the Islamic Spa concept that emerge with Shariah Compliant in Malaysia (Othman, et al., 2015). The other concept, such as Halal Food and basic facilities such Musollas, Qibla, Quran, and so on, exists in many hospitality services to cater to Muslim travellers. Still, these only fulfil the Muslim-Friendly concept mentioned earlier even though there is no proper standard to call Shariah Compliant to any tourism and hospitality in terms of certification, guideline or related to it in Malaysia except to those classified services. The current investigation found that Malaysia is now focusing on implementing the Shariah-compliant hotels' concept to fulfil Muslim tourists' demand.

### **Shariah-compliant in Hotels Attributes**

Mahamod et al. (2015) explicitly outlines the Shariah-compliant hotel as an accommodation that offers products, services, and financial transactions that fully obey Shariah principles. The services include serving halal food and beverage, implementing Islamic values in health, safety, and environmental aspects, and benefiting humankind regardless of race, faith, or culture. Shariah-compliant hotels can also be referred to as the accommodations that provide services in the Shariah principles, which serve Halal food and drink and ensure the entire hotel management operates under the Shariah principles (Samori & Rahman, 2013). The hotel operators cannot put the sign or tagline "Muslim-Friendly hotel" to attract customers because this

act may lead to confusion and misinterpretation among the customers about the actual concept between what really mean by Shariah-compliant and Islamic hotels.

Despite there are available hotel consider as Shariah-compliant and Muslim-friendly such as De Palma hotel, Grand Blue Wave, and PNB Darby Park but there is a need for more. This due to increase number of Muslim travellers and the continue of market globally. Malaysia is the potential to be one of the good competitors to penetrate the Muslim market in this case. Due to that, destination marketers must develop tourism products based on Islamic religious obligations (Battour & Ismail, 2014; Battour, 2018).

The researcher, authority, and private agencies have started to set proper guidelines, characteristics, and attributes for Shariah-compliant hotels with the collaboration of knowledge and sharing experience. To make a clear understanding, there is an example of the attribute provided that every hotel should follow to operate as Shariah-compliant hotels (Henderson, 2010b; Suhaiza et al., 2011). The attributes cover halal food, provide Quran and direction of Qibla, with the details below:

- i. Halal food and no alcohol to be served on the premises or hotels.
- ii. Having the Holy Book Quran, prayer mat, and arrow that indicates the Qibla direction.
- iii. Bed and toilets positioned not to face the Qibla.
- iv. Prayer room available on the premises and hotels.
- v. No inappropriate entertainment.
- vi. Predominantly Muslim staffs with a proper Islamic dressing code.
- vii. Separate salon, recreational facilities, and swimming pool for men and women.
- viii. Separate room or floor for an unmarried couple between male and female.
- ix. Tourists dressing code.
- x. No gambling and alcohol drinks in the hotel lobby or restaurants.
- xi. No prohibited foods and beverages in the hotel fridge.
- xii. Islamic funding.

Instead, Henderson (2010) has suggested numerous attributes need to be addressed to make Shariah-compliant hotels fully implemented and guided by the Islamic law founded from the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Most of these guidelines are acceptable by industry players in the accommodations of hotels. This also gives hotel operators advantages to add competitiveness and promote a healthy lifestyle in attracting local and foreign tourists, whether Muslim and Non-Muslim, especially from the Middle East, West Asia, and Islamic countries. It also ensures that the whole hotel system is operated and fully implemented according to Islamic principles from operation and design to financial systems. Besides, Malaysia's government has also provided a guideline specifically focusing on Muslim-Friendly hospitality services for accommodations, tour packages, and tour guides. The policy became the first standard of Islamic tourism developed by the Department of Standard Malaysia (DSM) to cater to Muslim travellers. It is known as MS2610.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using quantitative data. The data was collected through an online survey, a questionnaire survey. The current study adopted the questionnaire based on Albattat, Pitra, Mahendran, Azmi (2018) “Shariah-compliant Hotel: Identifying its Service Quality on Muslim Customers” and on Jais & Marzuki (2018) “Proposing a Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Regulatory Framework Using Systems Approach”. The questionnaires were modified to fit the research objectives. At the end of data collection and questionnaires, these data are analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). SPSS is one of the standards and famous computerized systems for transferring data and analysing the collected data.

For the sampling, this research is involved on 269 youth traveller sample. The sample is determined by using Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) method regarding this research. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling.

## FINDING

### Demographic

Two hundred sixty-nine sampled were collected in this study, and they were purposely selected. In terms of their gender, the percentage of the male is 22.4% (n=60) while 77.7% (n=209) for female youth traveller. The demographic characteristics of sample are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 Demographic Characteristic of sample Based on Gender*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Male</b>	60	22.3%
<b>Female</b>	209	77.7%
<b>Total</b>	269	100%

From Table 2, most of the respondents came from Selangor, which is 21.9% (n=59), followed by the second-highest, Kuala Lumpur, 14.1% (n=38). The third highest came from Johor with 12.6% (n=34), and least were from Patani (Thailand) and Jakarta (Indonesia), which are 4% (n=1) the same number for both.

Based on Table 3, most of the respondents travelled a year more than twice, which is 32% 86 (N=86) compared to the second-highest in travelling, which is more than three times a year 29.7% (N=80). Lastly, only a few respondents travelling three times a year at 11.5% (N=31) number answered.

### Muslim Youth Travelers Perspectives Toward Halal Certification in General

The information presented in this section answers the first research question: “What are the youth traveller’s perspectives toward Halal certification in general. To find out the answer, the respondents were asked to answer all the 17 items in the questionnaire. Results in Table 5 describe the Muslim youth traveller’s perspectives toward Halal certification in general to answer the first research question of the research.

*Table 2 Demographic Characteristic of Samples based on Place of Origin*

<b>Place of Origin</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	2	0.7
<b>Jakarta</b>	1	0.4
<b>Johor</b>	34	12.6
<b>Kedah</b>	17	6.3
<b>Kelantan</b>	13	4.8
<b>Kuala Lumpur</b>	38	14.1
<b>Melaka</b>	12	4.5
<b>N.Sembilan</b>	6	2.2
<b>P.Pinang</b>	2	0.7
<b>Pahang</b>	17	6.3
<b>Patani</b>	1	0.4
<b>Penang</b>	10	3.7
<b>Perak</b>	14	5.2
<b>Perlis</b>	3	1.1
<b>Sabah</b>	3	1.1
<b>Sarawak</b>	6	2.2
<b>Selangor</b>	59	21.9
<b>Terengganu</b>	29	10.8
<b>Thailand</b>	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Table 3: Demographic Characteristic of Samples based on Frequency of Travelling*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
x1	72	26.8
x2	86	32.0
x3	31	11.5
More than x3	80	29.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The first item in important aspect in hotel industry, acquired 65.4% (n=176) number who respondents strongly agree, 26.0% (n=70) were only agree, 6.7% (n=18) of them is neutral and the rest of 0.7% (n=2) disagree and strongly disagree 1.1% (n=3). Secondly, the respondents were highly or strongly agree at 62.5% (n=168) of numbers on Halal certificate signifies food quality compared to agree 28.6% (n=77), 5.6% (n=15) of neutral and least at strongly disagree 1.5% (n=4) respectively. Thirdly, signifies trust and being hygienic acquired 71.0% (n=191) and 67.7% (n=182) for strongly agree which the highest number compared to others respectively.

Next, significant conformance to Halal standard got 75.1% (n=202), also the highest number amongst other options and the least is only strongly disagreed 7% (n=2). While, most of respondents also strongly agree that this give positive impact on customer satisfaction stated at 61% (n=164) and only 27.1% (n=73) agree, 10.4% (n=28) neutral, 4% (n=1) disagree and strongly disagree 1.1% (n=3). Moreover, Halal

certification stated strongly agree of 66.2% (n=178) number by the majority of respondents for increasing demand from the Muslim customers while for non-Muslim was neutral 38.3% (n=103). Both increase confidence levels among the Muslim and non-Muslim customers in Halal certification received the highest number for strongly agree 71.1% (n=191) and 34.6% (n=93), respectively. 63.6% (n=171) strongly agreed that providing customers with peace of mind during the visit in Halal certification and the same goes with is a trademark in the establishment which 42.8% (n=115) respondents.

Respondents also strongly agree with the number of 56.5% (n=152) that Halal Certification can attract the tourism market, act as a marketing strategy tool 4.76% (n=128), and gives a competitive advantage over non-certified Halal hotels 44.6% (n=120) represent the highest one of number as well. Moreover, most respondents feel and strongly agree that Halal certification is a way to increase the number of customers by 4.68% (n=126) and add value to their hotels 55.0% (n=148). All the perspectives in Muslim Youth toward Halal certification, in general, reveal that most of them possessed high-level perspectives toward it, ranging between 4.68 to 3.68.

Overall mean, the signifies conformance to Halal standard and increased demand from non-Muslim customers received the same mean which stated at 4.68 while the second place of highest represented for increase confidence level among the Muslim customer which the mean at 4.63. However, increased demand from non-Muslim customers standing the last position with the mean at 3.68.

*Table 5: The Muslim Youth Traveller's Perspectives Toward Halal Certification in General*

Item	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	M	SD
	Item	Item	Item	Item	Item		
<b>1. Important aspect in hotel industry.</b>	3	2	18	70	176	4.54	.750
	1.1%	.7%	6.7%	26.0%	65.4%		
<b>2. Signifies food quality.</b>	4	5	15	77	168	4.49	.809
	1.5%	1.9%	5.6%	28.6%	62.5%		
<b>3. Signifies trust.</b>	2	2	18	56	191	4.61	.713
	.7%	.7%	6.7%	20.8%	71.0%		
<b>4. Signifies being hygienic.</b>	2	8	17	60	182	4.53	.803
	.7%	3.0%	6.3%	22.3%	67.7%		
<b>5. Signifies conformance to Halal standard.</b>	2	1	12	52	202	4.68	.649
	.7%	.4%	4.5%	19.3%	75.1%		
<b>6. Positive impact on customer satisfaction .</b>	3	1	28	73	164	4.46	.784
	1.1%	.4%	10.4%	27.1%	61.0%		
<b>7. Increase demand from the Muslim customers</b>	1	1	23	66	178	4.56	.697
	.4%	.4%	8.6%	24.5%	66.2%		
<b>8. Increase demand from non-Muslim customers</b>	8	14	103	74	70	3.68	1.011
	3.0%	5.2%	38.3%	27.5%	26.0%		
<b>9. Increase confidence level among the Muslim customer.</b>	-	1	19	58	191	4.63	.631
	-	.4%	7.1%	21.6%	71.0%		
<b>10. Increase confidence level among the non-Muslim customer .</b>	6	8	80	82	93	3.92	.980
	2.2%	3.0%	29.7%	30.5%	34.6%		
	-	2	24	72	171	4.53	.688

<b>11. Provides customers with peace of mind during the visit.</b>	-	.7%	8.9%	26.8%	63.6%		
<b>12. Is a trademark establishment.</b>	-	9	38	107	115	4.22	.811
	-	3.3%	14.1%	39.8%	42.8%		
<b>13. Attract the tourism market</b>	-	6	33	78	152	4.40	.788
	-	2.2%	12.3%	29.0%	56.5%		
<b>14. Act as a marketing strategy tool</b>	-	9	39	93	128	4.26	.829
	-	3.3%	14.5%	34.6%	47.6%		
<b>15. Gives competitive advantage over non-certified Halal hotels</b>	8	5	58	78	120	4.10	.998
	3.0%	1.9%	21.6%	29.0%	44.6%		
<b>16. As a way to increase the number of customers</b>	-	12	44	87	126	4.22	.876
	-	4.5%	16.4%	32.3%	46.8%		
<b>17. As adding value to their hotels.</b>	-	4	39	78	148	4.38	.785
	-	1.5%	14.5%	29.0%	55.0%		

## The Muslim Youth Traveller's Perspectives Towards Shariah-compliant Hotels in Attributes

The attributes of Shariah-compliant hotels, most of the Muslim youth chose more on facilities number 1 in ranking with mean 4.570 and followed by food and beverage with mean 4.484. Third ranking representing the financial by mean at 4.345 and the second last with the mean at 4.269 for interior design. Last but not least, the operation standing at last place with the mean at 3.996, yet all these attributes are important to highlight.

*Table 6: Overall Muslim Youth Traveller's Perspectives Towards Shariah-compliant Hotels in Attributes*

Attributes	Std Deviation	Mean	Rank
<b>Food and Beverage</b>	.591	4.484	2
<b>Facilities</b>	.589	4.570	1
<b>Financial</b>	.730	4.345	3
<b>Interior Design</b>	.739	4.269	4
<b>Operation</b>	.889	3.996	5

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this research explain that respondents strongly agree that Halal Certification can attract the tourism market, act as a marketing strategy tool. In Shariah-compliant hotels attributes, most of them were more focused on facilities than the other attributes even though it has shown that males and females have not many differences in perspectives and yet overall mean is still high. The first objective of the research is to identify the Muslim youth traveller's attitudes toward Halal certification in general already been answered.

Regarding identifying the Muslim youth traveller's perspectives towards Shariah-compliant hotels in attributes, the result shows that all agree or strongly agree with all Sharia-compliant hotels attributes in terms of food and beverage, facilities, financial, interior design, and operation. It proves that Henderson's (2010) statement aligned with respondents' perspectives that Sharia-compliant hotels should follow provided standards or guidelines. This result has also been supported by the article of Ahmad et al. (2013), which discusses customer awareness and acceptance of Sharia-compliant hotels. The paper concludes that most customers began to accept Shariah's concept and practices as long as the hotels addressed its positive perception. However, the Shariah-compliant hotels that offer Islamic attributes had very low awareness due to lacking publicity and minimal literature (Othman, et. al 2020). Customer acceptance level will highly have influenced by their understanding of the concept and practices (Ahmat et al., 2015). Perhaps the Malaysian government, specifically the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), could set a comprehensive strategy to promote the Shariah-compliant hotel concept and practices in its policymaking, practice, and information as this could provide a niche to the country's tourism industry.

## CONCLUSION

As conclusion this research revealed that most of this research explain that respondents strongly agree that Halal Certification can attract the tourism market, act as a marketing strategy tool. In Shariah-compliant hotels attributes, most of them were more focused on facilities than the other attributes even though it has shown that males and females have not many differences in perspectives and yet overall mean is still high and five important attributes or Islamic attributes: food and beverage, facilities, financial, interior design, and operation. Generally, all the respondents were high in perspectives through Halal certification in general. It can be seen among the attributes of Shariah-compliant hotels. Most of the Muslim youth chose more on facilities that are number 1 in ranking. This research contributes to a clear understanding of youth travellers' perspectives towards the Islamic concept of Shariah-compliant hotels and encourages them to use or experience Shariah-compliant hotels. This study only focused on youth generation, and future research can use another sample unit such as generation Z or adult.

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## Muslim Youths Satisfaction with Islamic Attributes in Shariah-Compliant Hotels in Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study aims to determine Muslim youths' satisfaction with Islamic attributes in Malaysia's Shariah-compliant hotels. The aim of this study: 1) To investigate Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia, 2) To investigate Muslim youths' satisfaction towards Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia and, 3) To investigate the relationship between Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia and Muslim youths' satisfaction towards the Islamic attributes.

**Methods/Design/approach:** This study applied a quantitative approach and used convenience sampling to collect the data.

**Findings:** The results showed some of the Islamic attributes present in Shariah-Compliant hotels are the availability of prayer facilities, gender segregation, and others; most respondents are satisfied with the availability of Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels. The satisfaction among Muslim youth having the highest mean, followed by Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia. Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels have a strong relationship with satisfaction among Muslim youth. The findings of this study will assist the tourism industry, especially the hotel industry sector, in recognizing the Islamic attributes available in Shariah-compliant hotels in Malaysia.

**Implication/Limitations:** The establishment of a Shariah-Compliant hotel can meet the needs of Muslim travellers, as the demand for halal products and services that adhere to Shariah principles continues to grow. Different hotels offer tourists varying degrees of Islamic attributes. This research has implications for theory and practice, showing that Islamic attributes in Shariah-compliant hotels significantly affect tourist satisfaction, proving the theory.

**Keywords:** Islamic attributes, Shariah-Compliant hotels, satisfaction

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## INTRODUCTION

The number of Muslim tourists is increasing day by day. The group of tourists travels worldwide, bringing a significant economic impact on all countries. Realizing this, Malaysia has stepped out the efforts to attract a group of Muslim tourists. Islamic tourism is a holistic philosophy of life aimed at maximizing enjoyment when travelling and incorporating tourism practice eternal satisfaction (akhirah). Islamic tourism refers to a combination of religious, cultural, and other forms of tourism as long as the practices are aligned with Islamic principles and beliefs (Suid, Nor & Omar, 2018). In Islam, travelling should be a necessity and give advantages. The advantages will indirectly make Islamic tourism precious by maintaining the Islamic principles while travelling, and Muslim tourists can have fun simultaneously. In this context, Islam allows its Muslim community to travel away from their familiar environment for various purposes, such as shopping, medical, sports events, visiting friends and relatives, and many more (Suid, Nor & Omar, 2018).

According to data from travel consultant Crescent Rating Halal Friendly Travel (Singapore) and Dinar Standard (United States), in 2011, global Muslim tourist expenditure was 126 billion dollars, and this figure is predicted to rise to 192 billion dollars by 2020 (Adirestuty, 2019). In Japan, the size of the Muslim population and the number of Muslim travellers have increased significantly (Saville & Mahbubi, 2021). With this data, it is clear that Muslim tourists are one of the essential variables to consider in developing the tourism sector. As a result, Malaysia should seize this opportunity to take the lead and explore market needs by improving travel services and facilities. Hence, more facilities cater to tourists' needs while travelling. In this context, while Muslim tourists and travellers travel away from their usual environment, they will opt for places or destinations that comply with Shariah laws. A destination that complies with Shariah laws will indirectly ease them to carry out their duty as a servant of Allah S.W.T. Islam encourages us to travel and journey as long as the action of travelling follows Shariah principles. Allah SWT has asked us to move across the world to learn the lessons He gives us from His creation (Al-Quran 29:20). Moreover, it can be seen as a medium to develop and promote Islamic tourism activities (Diyana et al., 2019). Establishing ITC and destinations that comply with Shariah laws will indirectly attract Muslim travellers to travel to different tourism destinations for different needs, including religiosity.

Before that, one of the tourism products that had been recognized in the tourism market is the introduction of Shariah-compliant hotels. Shariah-Compliant hotel is a hotel which offers services according to Shariah's principles. The hotel's concept focuses on Halal food and beverages and ensures that the hotel's operations comply with Islamic law (Samori & Abd Rahman, 2013). Different Islamic attributes provided in Shariah-Compliant hotels will attract Muslim travellers from all over the world. Hence they will have different satisfaction with it. Further exploration is needed to expand the concept that must be adapted to the needs and expectations of Muslim consumers (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Muslim Youths Satisfaction

The youth generation, born between 1980 and 2000, is now included in the definition used in this study. Because of their intimate relationship with technology and excellent digital capabilities, this generation is constantly connected to the world and peers. They are natural travellers who need new experiences, reject

uniform products and humanitarian and ecological ideals, and search for novel solutions and exceptional practices that elicit emotions (Staffieri & Cavagnaro, 2018). Most tourists from Muslim countries are part of the millennial generation. Millennials are probably educated and fluent in technology (Abror et al., 2021). According to Qu and Ping (1999); Battour, et. al. (2014), tourist satisfaction is closely related to their travel needs. Therefore, having a clear image of motivation that responds to various levels of satisfaction is vital. As destination marketers, we need to know what motivates happy visitors during their stay at the Shariah-Compliant hotel, such as the availability of Islamic attributes. Undoubtedly, satisfaction is recognized as a critical component of marketing research. In this context, tourist satisfaction is essential to successfully market tourism destinations (Devesa et al., Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zabkar et al., 2010). This is because it connects the selections of destination, product and services consumption, and revisit intention (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

### **Islamic Attributes in Shariah-Compliant Hotels**

The concept of Shariah-Compliant hotel began in Islamic countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia because most Muslim travellers are from these countries (Stephenson, Russell, & Edgar, 2010). According to Muhammad (2009), a Shariah-Compliant hotel is a hotel that serves halal foods and beverages and complies with parameters of environment and protection that fit humanity, such as religion, race and culture. Yusuf (2009) defines a Shariah-Compliant hotel whereby the hotel provides services according to Shariah principles. The services provided are no different from the conventional hotel, but Battour (2015) also mentioned that the Shariah-Compliant hotel was concerned about the conditions and needs of Muslim visitors to fulfil their religious duties. To conclude, a Shariah-Compliant hotel can be seen as a hotel that provides services according to Shariah principles (Yusuf, 2009). As Battour (2015) mentioned, this kind of hotel is concerned about the services the needs of Muslim tourists to perform their religious duty.

Attributes can be seen as obsessed with the quality or attractiveness of the tourist destination and the quality of beauty that affects tourists' satisfaction with their destination (Boit & Doh, 2014). To be specific, Islamic attributes can be seen as Islamic features that make the needs of Muslim tourists simpler while travelling. Often, if those characteristics are missing, Muslim tourists may not choose a specific tourism destination, so the Islamic aspect of tourism activities needs to be taken into account. A study conducted by Battour et al., (2011) showed that Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels consist of tangible and intangible aspects. Eid & El-Gohary (2015) divided Islamic attributes into physical and non-physical attributes. The tangible aspects are the availability of prayer facilities such as mosques or prayer rooms, the availability of Quran and Qibla and Muslim-friendly toilets, as well as halal food. Meanwhile, the intangible aspects include Islamic entertainment, Islamic dress code, Islamic morality and the sound of azan. On the other point of view, the physical attributes are prayer facilities, Halal food, Quran and Muslim-friendly toilet, while the non-physical attributes are segregated services, Shariah television channels, Sharia entertainment and arts that are allowed in Islam.

Another study conducted by Battour et al., (2013) shows that at tourism destinations, there are four facets of Islamic characteristics: worship facilities, halal-ness, alcohol and free gambling, and Islamic morality. As proposed by Din (1982) as cited in Usman, Sobari, and Hasan (2020), there are basically several crucial facilities in Islamic hotels, which are the existence of prayer rugs, Quran, prayer beads and the sign of Qibla direction. In this context, the hotels are also forbidden from providing alcohol, unmarried couples are prohibited to stay together and no consumption of drugs allowed in the hotel.

Apart from that, there are also another statement proposed by Henderson (2010) about the facilities shall be provided in Islamic hotels, also known as Shariah-Compliant hotel. The facilities, namely the service of alcohol is banned, Halal food, Quran and prayer mat in each room, bidets are available in the bathroom, prayer room or mosque, Islamic entertainment and gender segregation for recreational facilities such as a gymnasium. By referring to past studies and research, most researchers point out the similar attributes that need to be provided in Shariah-Compliant hotel to cater to the needs of Muslim tourists nowadays. All of the attributes are indeed a medium to attract more Muslim tourists travel to Islamic countries and act as an economic generator simultaneously.

### **Relationship Between Islamic Attributes and Muslim Youths Satisfaction**

According to research by Julaimi and Talib (n.d.), the intention of revisiting among tourists can be seen from tourists' satisfaction. In this context, tourists will become more interested in revisit whenever they feel satisfy during the visit. Battour and Ismail (2014) explain that the application of Islamic customs satisfies Muslim travellers. In the simplest form, Muslim travellers will feel contented as if the Islamic attributes are present at any hotels that they stay. Meanwhile, a research carried out by Emir and Kozak (n.d.) claims that a hotel's Islamic attributes affect tourist satisfaction, either to stay back at that hotel. Halal products must be found in the daily life of Muslims, and it is very important to ensure that Islamic values are maintained (Hussin, 2021).

From the other point of view, Saputo, Wardi, and Abror (2018) mentioned that Islamic attributes' availability is crucial because it will lead to tourists' satisfaction. A study conducted by Saputo et al. (2018) showed that the existence of mosques, worship facilities, the sound of Adzan, prayer rugs, and the Quran indirectly make the tourists satisfied with the hotel they are staying in. There is also a positive correlation between the availability of Islamic attributes and tourist satisfaction. The better the presence of Islamic attributes, the higher the tourists' satisfaction with Shariah-Compliant hotels. Saputo et al., (2018) also asserted that Islamic attributes could influence tourists' satisfaction at a particular Shariah-Compliant hotel because they will be more satisfied with the better Islamic attributes. In addition, Saputo, Wardi, and Abror (2018) assert that the state of facilities also became a factor in determining satisfaction among tourists. Before that, a study conducted by Zailani (2016) showed that the presence of worship facilities such as mosques and prayer rugs could affect the satisfaction among tourists because they can carry out their religious duty.

In addition, Adirestuty (2019) asserted that for hotel managers, it is essential to understand the relationship between the services and facilities provided by the hotel and the level of tourist satisfaction. This is because whenever they are satisfied with the services and attributes provided during their stay, they will have the intention to revisit in the future. For instance, all of the attributes provided at a particular hotel will make the tourists feel comfortable. Hence, they will satisfy with their decision to spend money there.

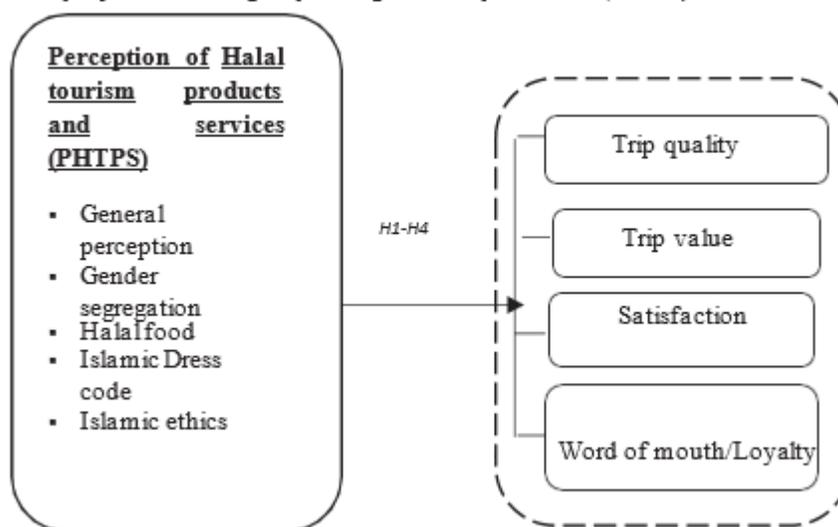
Another study by Usman, Sobari, and Hasan (2020) explains that if the Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels affect tourists' experience, they will also affect their satisfaction with the Islamic attributes provided in that particular hotel. This situation will be more suitable for Muslim tourists who are obedient to religious teaching because they can carry out their religious duty. Consumer perceived value consists of two components: utilitarian value and hedonic value. The utilitarian value is obtained from the fulfilment of certain obligations, while the hedonic value is represented through practical benefits as a result of feelings

of pleasure and joy. By recognizing these values, stakeholders can foster satisfaction and intention among millennials, specifically in today's digital era (Juliana et al., 2021).

Lastly, Islamic facilities have an important impact on the level of satisfaction among tourists (Wardi et al. 2018 as cited in Rahman & Rana, 2019). Here, they will feel satisfied whenever the tourists feel comfortable and able to utilize all of the facilities and attributes provided by the hotel. Guest satisfaction, when given security services, is also by guest knowledge about cleanliness and products (Trinanda & Sari, 2021).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Theory of Brand Equity Proposed by Aaker (1991) & Keller (1993)*



*Source: Rahman & Rana (2019)*

*Figure 1: Theoretical Framework*

The figure 1 refer to Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) firstly anticipated the brand equity theory. According to Keller (2008), brand quality is the differential effect of brand awareness on customer reaction to that brand's marketing. As mentioned by Bianchi et al., 2014; Shafaei, 2017; Boo et al., 2009; Pike, 2010), five important brand equity dimensions are widely used in tourism research for instance brand awareness, brand image, brand quality, brand value and brand loyalty or word of mouth. Before that, a study conducted by Rahman and Rana (2019) suggested four brand equity dimensions based on the review related to tourism studies. The four brand equity dimensions are trip quality, trip value, satisfaction and word of mouth or loyalty. They might be influenced by non-Muslim tourists' perception of halal tourism products and services towards halal (PHTPS) destinations. Nevertheless, non-Muslim tourists' PHTPS significantly impact those four brand equity dimensions.

The theory of brand equity is adopted in completing this research. However, this study only focuses on one brand equity dimension: satisfaction. By referring to the theory, gender segregation, halal food, Islamic

dress code, and Islamic ethics are this study's Islamic attributes (IV). Generally speaking, this study is to determine tourists' satisfaction with Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels and all of the attributes will lead to tourists' satisfaction. The research framework is as below:



Figure 2: *Research Framework*

## METHODOLOGY

This study applied a quantitative approach because the quantitative approach's sample size is significant and represents the population. Moreover, the quantitative approach adopts systematic tools and standardized data collection such as questionnaires and surveys. The required data are collected systematically and based on the research objectives. In this study, the statistical data will be computed through SPSS. This software will assist the researcher with the compiled data through several testing, for instance, descriptive analysis, reliability test and correlation test. The data are collected from a series of questionnaires that were adopted from past studies. In this study, the target population is Muslim youths, given the total youth population is 15,101,000. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), to determine the sample size, a sample size of 384 is needed to show a cross-section. The researcher needs to consider the sample size to have accurate research findings. There are two types of sampling methods which are probability and non-probability sampling. This study used non-probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the main concern is identifying and hiring participants. This study enables the researcher to choose whichever individuals to be the respondents because they are easy to access and are very convenient too. Due to the pandemic, the researcher accesses the respondents by sharing the link of a google online form via a platform like WhatsApp and social medias such as Facebook and Instagram. The questionnaire investigates how Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels affect Muslim youths' satisfaction. The questionnaire was distributed for about two weeks and took about two weeks to get 385 respondents.

## RESULT

This study targeted 385 respondents who had stayed in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia. Within two weeks of data collection, 206 respondents participated in the online survey. The respondents of this study consist of 118 females (57.3%) and 88 males (42.7%). It portrays that females are the majority of the sample size (n) that stayed in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia. Next, as for the age group, most respondents aged between 21-25 stand for 52.9%. Then, respondents were between 26-30 years old (21.6%) and 14 respondents were between 15-20 years old and 31 – 35 years old (6.8%). There were only four respondents the age of 36 – 40 years old (1.9%). Regarding marital status, most of the respondents are single, 145 (70.4%), and only 61 (29.6%) are married. In addition, as for the educational level, most of the respondents

are degree holders, with 91 (44.2%) respondents, followed by 44 (21.4%) respondents who have a diploma. A total number of 42 (20.4%) respondents who are STPM students and 20 (9.7%) of the respondents are SPM students. Lastly, 9 (4.4%) of the respondent's votes for others can be seen as PhD students, Master's students, or students from Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia.

Furthermore, to assess their experience in staying at Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia, the respondents were asked to answer three questions. All respondents had stayed in Shariah-Compliant hotels in Malaysia at 100%. According to the survey, 77 (37.4%) of the respondents stay at Shariah-Compliant hotels once a month, followed by 57 (27.7%) who stay at Shariah-Compliant hotels more than six times a year. Furthermore, 47 (22.8%) respondents stayed at the hotel three times in six months and only 25 (12.1%) of the respondents stayed three times in a month at a Shariah-Compliant hotel. Finally, the third question discusses on Shariah-Compliant hotels stayed by the respondents. The majority of the respondents, 66 (32%), stayed in De Palma Hotel, including De Palma Hotel Shah Alam and De Palma Hotel Ampang. Next, 64 (31.1%) of the respondents stayed in Adya Hotel Langkawi. As for Grand Blue Wave Hotel, 26 (12.6%) of the respondents stayed at the hotel, followed by 25 (12.1%) staying in Tabung Haji hotel and PNB Perdana Hotel Kuala Lumpur.

*Table 1: Demographic Profile*

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Question Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	88	42.7%
	Female	118	57.3%
Age Group	15 - 20	14	6.8%
	21 - 25	109	52.9%
	26 - 30	65	31.6%
	31 - 35	14	6.8%
	36 - 40	4	1.9%
Marital Status	Single	145	70.4%
	Married	61	29.6%
Educational Level	PMR/ PT3		
	SPM	20	9.7%
	STPM	42	20.4%
	Diploma	44	21.4%
	Degree	91	44.2%
	Others	9	4.4%
Have you been staying in Shariah-Compliant hotel?	Yes	206	100%
	No		
How many times do you visit Shariah-Compliant hotel?	1 time in a month	77	37.4%
	3 times in a month	25	12.1%
	3 times in 6 months	47	22.8%
	More than 6 times in a year	57	27.7%
Please choose the Shariah-Compliant hotel that you have been stayed	Adya Hotel Langkawi	64	31.1%
	De Palma Hotel	66	32%
	Tabung Haji Hotel	25	12.1%
	Grand Blue Wave Hotel	26	12.6%
	PNB Perdana Hotel Kuala Lumpur	25	12.1%

All of the items under the independent variable (Islamic Attributes in Shariah-Compliant Hotels in Malaysia) and dependent variables (Satisfaction Among Muslim Youth) are presented in Table 2. Most of the items have a mean score of 4.00 and above. This indicates that most of the respondents are agreed with the item's statement in each variable.

Table 2: Summary of Means and Standard Deviation of Items According to Variable

Variables		Mean	Std Deviation
<b>Islamic Attributes in Shariah-Compliant Hotels in Malaysia (IV)</b>			
IV 1	The hotel provides appropriate facilities/ places of worship.	4.48	0.538
IV 2	Prayer mats are provided in each room or at the front desk	4.36	0.704
IV 3	The hotel provides food and drink that is Halal certified.	4.42	0.641
IV 4	The hotel provides Al-Quran in a hotel room properly.	4.06	1.003
IV 5	The hotel provides toilets that are following Sharia rules (squat toilets, clean water and bidets).	4.38	0.708
IV 6	The hotel provides services that separate men's and women's places according to Shariah rules.	4.04	0.837
IV 7	The hotel provides television channels that are compliant with Shariah rules (no pornography).	4.15	0.791
IV 8	The hotel provides entertainment following Shariah rules such as Islamic music, religious teaching activities.	3.95	0.839
IV 9	The hotel installed art or painting that according to Shariah rules.	4.18	0.747
IV 10	The hotel indicates prayer time (azan or announcement)	3.98	0.952
IV 11	The Qibla direction is clearly shown in each room.	4.49	0.599
IV 12	The hotel is an alcohol-free and gambling-free destination.	4.19	0.783
IV 13	The hotel promotes Islamic ethics.	4.21	0.721
IV 14	Toilets and beds do not place in the direction of Mecca.	4.23	0.772
IV 15	The hotel does not have bars and night clubs.	4.34	0.746
IV 16	The position of the door is not facing Qibla.	4.35	0.701
IV 17	There is a space for tourists to perform prayer in the room.	4.51	0.599
IV 18	The bed in the room is not blocking the direction of Qibla.	4.42	0.699
IV 19	There is a provision of an ablution tab in the bathroom, with the necessary height.	4.32	0.780
<b>Satisfaction Among Muslim Youth (DV)</b>			
DV 1	The atmospheric of tourist places are comply with Islamic rules	4.37	0.671
DV 2	The social environment of tourists places is comfortable.	4.37	0.602
DV 3	My overall experience in the hotel is good	4.40	0.583
DV 4	It is easy and convenient to access a mosque or prayer room.	4.33	0.660
DV 5	Halal facilities are widely offered in the hotel.	4.34	0.678
DV 6	Separate male and female facilities are offered.	4.17	0.779
DV 7	The availability of Islamic attributes attracted me to visit Shariah-compliant hotel.	4.37	0.625
DV 8	The staff are well aware of the products and services that follow Islamic rules.	4.29	0.693
DV 9	I am satisfied with the products and services	4.38	0.587
DV 10	I am satisfied with the level of quality of services provided by the hotel.	4.39	0.613
DV 11	I will choose this hotel in the future.	4.43	0.626
DV 12	I like to tell others that I am a customer of the hotel.	4.38	0.627
DV 13	I want to recommend the hotel to my family and friends.	4.44	0.604
DV 14	The hotel that I stay in give me a sense of pleasure.	4.49	0.590

## Hypothesis Testing

In this study, there is a hypothesis conducted to test either it is supported. The hypothesis is:

*H1: Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotel has a positive influence on Muslim youth's satisfaction.*

## Correlation Among Variables

*Table 3: Correlation Analysis Between IV and DV*

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotel	Satisfaction among Muslim Youth
Pearson correlation	0.643

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

Table 3 illustrates the relationship between independent and dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988), the r-value from 0.50 to 1.00 shows a strong relationship. Hence, Table 3 highlighted Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotel (IV) has a strong relationship with satisfaction among Muslim youths (DV) with r value 0.643. The correlation of both variables is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The r value shows that when the independent variable's value increases, the dependent variable's value also increases.

## CONCLUSION

Through rapid globalization, there are an increase in demand for Islamic tourism. This is because of increase in number of Muslim tourists, specifically Muslim youths around the globe. With that, the establishment of the new hotel concept, Shariah-Compliant hotels, is the initiative to cater to the demand from Muslim youths. Next, Islamic attribute in Shariah-Compliant hotels is the element that Muslim tourists search for because the attributes make the needs of Muslim youths simpler while they are travelling outside their usual environment. It is apparent in the study that Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels influence the satisfaction among Muslim youths towards the attributes.

The availability of Islamic attributes in physical and non-physical forms is considered very important when a Muslim decides to buy tourism products (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). The sample size of 206 respondents mostly agreed on the presence of Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels and were satisfied with those attributes. Some attributes that Muslim youth always look for are Halal food, Halal facilities, places of worship, gender separation, toilets in accordance with Shariah rules and others. Halal labelling strategy results in high satisfaction, commitment and loyalty for Muslim consumers (Rahman et al., 2021). To conclude this study, Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels (IV) strongly correlate with Muslim youths' satisfaction (DV). The result of the hypothesis is proved by using two types of analysis: descriptive analysis and correlation analysis. In other words, Islamic attributes in Shariah-Compliant hotels greatly contribute to Muslim youths' satisfaction.

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# THE EMERGING TRENDS OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL IN **MALAYSIA**

The Book on *The Emerging Trends of Tourism and Travel in Malaysia* provides practical materials on tourism and travel, based on current researches of the authors. The chapters have been arranged thematically from the broad area in tourism to specific niches. With the focus to highlight the recent research trends in Malaysia tourism industry, this book is expected to serve as reading materials for researches and students in the filed of travel and tourism.

This book is prepared as a collaborative project between the Department of Tourism, Kulliyyah of Languages and Management International Islamic University Malaysia and the Tourism Educators Association Malaysia, as an initiative to lift up quality research works done by the students and the academic staffs.

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