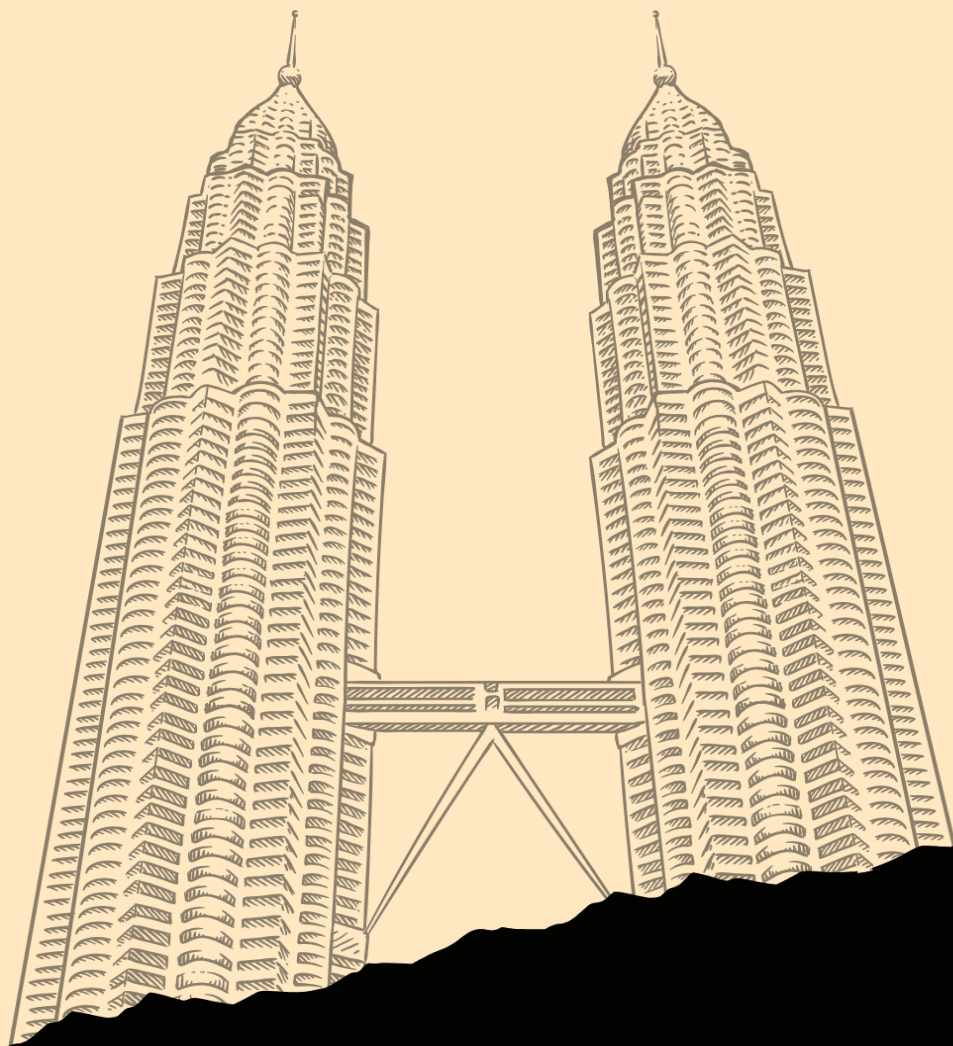


CONTEMPORARY YOUTH TOURISM IN MALAYSIA

MOTIVATIONS, PERCEPTIONS,
AND TRAVEL EXPERIENCES



Editor

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PREFACE

Research methodology plays a vital role in developing competent and reflective tourism graduates. In tourism studies, where human behaviour, perception, and experience are central, the ability to conduct systematic and reliable research is essential. This eBook, Research Method Pilot Test in Tourism Studies, documents the early-stage research efforts of Bachelor of Tourism Management students, with a specific focus on the pilot testing phase.

Pilot testing is a critical yet often overlooked stage in research. It allows researchers to evaluate the clarity, reliability, and consistency of research instruments before conducting full-scale data collection. Through this process, students gain practical experience in refining questionnaire design, identifying potential issues, and ensuring the validity of their measurements. The studies presented in this eBook demonstrate how theoretical knowledge in research methodology is translated into empirical practice.

The chapters explore current tourism issues such as digital influence, electronic word-of-mouth, safety awareness, and Muslim-friendly tourism. These themes reflect the evolving nature of the tourism industry, particularly in relation to Generation Z travellers and their changing expectations. By engaging in pilot studies, students are exposed to real-world research challenges while developing analytical and critical thinking skills.

Although the findings presented are preliminary, they provide valuable insights and direction for future research. More importantly, this eBook highlights the importance of experiential learning in strengthening research competencies among students.

This volume is intended as a reference for students, educators, and beginner researchers who wish to understand the role of pilot testing in quantitative research. It is hoped that this work will encourage a more rigorous and reflective approach to research in tourism studies.

Siti Yuliandi Ahmad, PhD
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SYNOPSIS

This eBook presents a collection of pilot test studies conducted by Bachelor of Tourism Management students, focusing on contemporary issues in tourism research within the Malaysian context. The primary purpose of this volume is to document and showcase the application of quantitative research methods at the undergraduate level, particularly emphasizing instrument development, pilot testing, and preliminary data analysis.

The studies compiled in this eBook explore diverse themes including youth tourism behaviour, safety awareness in adventure tourism, destination image in educational tourism, and Muslim-friendly tourism perceptions. Each study adopts a structured methodological approach, utilizing survey instruments, Likert-scale measurements, and statistical analysis techniques such as Cronbach's Alpha, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis. The pilot test phase plays a crucial role in assessing the reliability, clarity, and internal consistency of the research instruments before full-scale data collection.

By engaging in pilot testing, students are able to critically evaluate their research design, refine questionnaire items, and ensure that their instruments are both valid and reliable. This process not only strengthens the methodological rigour of their studies but also enhances their understanding of empirical research practices in tourism.

This eBook serves as a practical reference for students, educators, and novice researchers who seek to understand the importance of pilot testing in quantitative research. It demonstrates how theoretical concepts in research methodology are translated into real-world academic practice. Furthermore, the findings from these pilot studies provide preliminary insights into emerging tourism trends among Generation Z, particularly in relation to digital influence, safety perception, and cultural engagement.

Overall, this collection highlights the role of structured research training in developing analytical, critical thinking, and methodological competencies among tourism students. It is hoped that this eBook will support future research endeavours and contribute to the continuous improvement of tourism education and research practices.

FACTORS INFLUENCING GENERATION Z'S INTENTION TO VISIT DREAM FOREST LANGKAWI

By Ilham Furqan Binti Taufik

ABSTRACT

This study explores what factors influence intention to visit among Gen Z at Dream Forest, Langkawi. It focuses on factors such as social media influence, electronic word of mouth, and exposure to folk narratives. A quantitative research approach was used, with a questionnaire survey, and all data were collected and analysed using SPSS. The findings indicated that electronic word-of-mouth was the strongest influence on overall factors that influenced Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi. While the exposure to folklore narratives appeared to be the weakest factor influencing Generation Z visit intention. In short, the study contributes to tourism literature by providing insights into youth travel behaviour in folklore-based attractions and offers practical implications for destination marketers and attraction managers in designing more effective digital and storytelling-based promotional strategies.

Keywords: Generation Z, folk narrative exposure, electronic word-of-mouth, social media influence, visit intention, Dream Forest Langkawi

Introduction

This chapter focuses on exploring the factors influencing Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi. As the tourism industry continues to grow, cultural heritage resources become the key to

achieving sustainable tourism, and social media and folklore history have become an important part of tourists' travel experience—often shaping tourists' intention to visit certain destinations (Wang & Lahad, 2025; ZShao et al., 2025). The chapter outlines the background of the research; the problem statement, research questions, objectives, scope, and the significance of the study, provides a comprehensive overview of the study.

Research Background

Tourism plays a crucial role in the economy, contributing substantially to international tourism (Feng, 2025). According to Tourism Malaysia (2025), 38 million tourist arrivals were recorded in 2024. In Malaysia, tourism is a vital sector, directly generating over RM 291.9 billion, contributing 15.1% to the economy in 2024 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). Among the various forms of tourism, cultural heritage tourism is the main driver of visitor arrivals to those destinations and attractions.

Cultural tourism is considered the earliest and most traditional form of tourism. It has become a growing sector with great potential to boost the economic sector of countries and regions worldwide (Lyngdoh & Dr, 2024). Folklore is also part of cultural and heritage, which was once passed down from generation to generation via oral tradition (Saad et al., 2024). Many places in Malaysia are known for their rich cultural folk-based tourism attractions. Langkawi is one of those places that are recognised by its rich folklore and legendary history.

Moreover, these cultural elements make Langkawi not only a beach destination but also a place rich in heritage and storytelling. Despite

its significance, there are still gaps in understanding what drives Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi. Previous study has identified several influencing factors, such as social media influence, electronic word-of-mouth and folk narrative exposure (IJMRA, 2024; Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025). However, the extent to which these factors shape Gen Z's intention to visit remains underexplored.

Problem Statement

Tourism is a key driver in many countries, and folklore-based tourism is a key attraction for achieving sustainable tourism (Tadesse, 2022). Dream Forest Langkawi is one of the places that offers folklore-based attractions with immersive technology and storytelling integration, including local legends to raise visitors' awareness. Despite the growing popularity of such attractions, there remains a limited empirical understanding of the factors influencing Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi.

Generation Z is known for being strongly influenced and active with social media, especially for travel inspiration and decision-making (Wang & Lahad, 2025). However, exposure to tourism content on social media does not always indicate actual visit intention. Many attractions invest quite heavily in digital marketing, yet it remains unclear how social media influence, especially among Generation Z, affects their intention to visit cultural attractions like Dream Forest Langkawi.

Although folk narratives are believed to enhance emotional engagement, cultural appreciation, and destination uniqueness (Chronis, 2022). Not all Generation Z tourists may feel connected to traditional legends or cultural stories. As for that, there is still limited

research on whether exposure to folk narratives truly influences their motivation and intention to visit folklore-based attractions like Dream Forest Langkawi.

Research Objective

The study is conducted to fulfil the following objectives:

RO1: To determine the level of Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi.

RO2: To analyse the relationships between social media exposure, electronic word-of-mouth, folk narratives exposure and Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation Z's Intention to Visit

Intention to visit refers to an individual's likelihood or willingness to visit a destination in the future. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is the most direct predictor of actual behavior which means that the stronger a person's intention, the more likely they are feeling like visiting (J.Pan et al., 2022).

Recent studies also suggest that Generation Z's travel intention is shaped by experiential value, digital exposure and emotional engagement, as well as cultural authenticity rather than traditional tourism features alone (Sujood et al., 2022). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z prefers an interactive and creative way with technology enhanced tourism experiences, which makes attractions like Dream

Forest Langkawi highly relevant to this group. However, their intention to visit is not automatic and depends on multiple influencing factors which include online information, peer opinions, and cultural appeal.

Social Media Influence

Social media has become one of the most powerful tools in tourism marketing, especially for Generation Z who strongly influenced and relies on social media—TikTok, Instagram, and more. Visual content, short videos, and influencer posts play a crucial role in shaping how young tourists perceive destinations before visiting. Previous studies show that social media can positively influence tourist intention by enhancing destination image, developing curiosity, and generating excitement (Wang & Lahad, 2025).

However, exposure to attractive social media content does not always lead to actual visitation, showing that other factors such as trust, credibility, and personal interest also matter. In the context of Dream Forest Langkawi, social media visuals of light installations, immersive storytelling, and folklore-based experiences may attract Gen 's attention, but further understanding is required on how strongly this influence translates into real visit intention.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) refers to online reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations shared by previous visitors on digital platforms. Compared to traditional advertising, e-WOM is generally perceived as more trustworthy because it reflects real visitor experiences. Research indicates that positive e-WOM can significantly

increase tourist intention, while negative reviews may discourage potential visitors (Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025).

For Generation Z, online reviews on Google, TikTok comments, and travel platforms are especially influential in shaping travel decisions. In the case of Dream Forest Langkawi, mixed reviews or unclear feedback could create uncertainty among young tourists, which clearly shows how important it is to examine the e-WOM effects to the visitor's intention.

Folk Narrative Exposure

Folk narrative exposure refers to tourist' interaction with local myths, legends, and traditional storytelling in tourism has been found to enhance emotional engagement, cultural appreciation, and destination uniqueness (Lyngdoh & Dr, 2024). Previous research suggests that exposure to folklore can help tourists feel more connected to local culture, which makes their visit more meaningful rather than purely entertainment based (Wu et al., 2025).

Moreover, Dream Forest Langkawi also uses such immersive technology to bring local legends into life, and it may increase curiosity and develop the guest's interests. Not all Generation Z tourists may be equally interested in traditional folklore.

Conceptual Framework

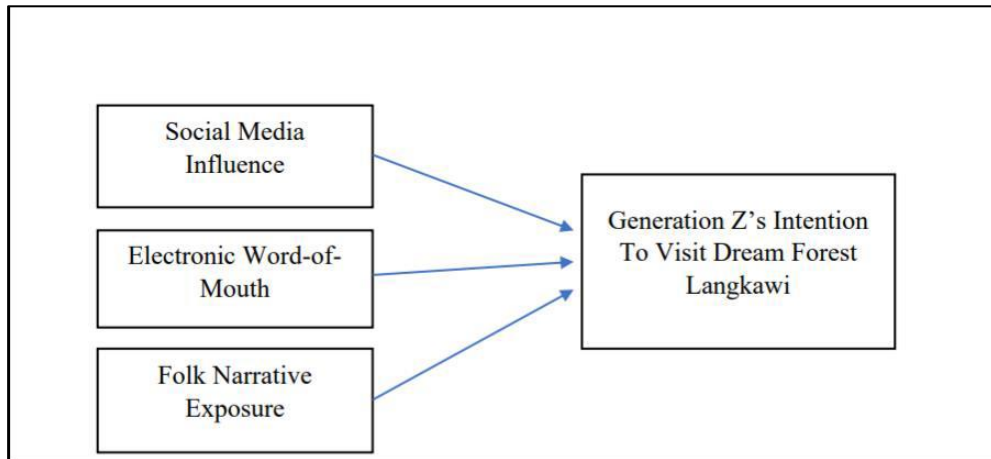


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

In this study, there are three variables that will be explained. Firstly, social media influence (IV1), which is the impact of tourism-related content shared on social media platforms. There is also electronic word-of-mouth (IV2) that involves online reviews, comments, and shared experiences from other visitors. Moreover, folk narrative exposure (IV3), which represents Generation Z's engagement with local legends, storytelling, and cultural narratives presented through immersive experiences at Dream Forest Langkawi. Lastly, Generation's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi is the dependent variables.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative and cross-sectional research design to examine how digital influences (social media and e-WOM) and cultural factors (folk narrative exposure) affect Gen Z's intention to visit Dream

Forest Langkawi. A cross-sectional survey was used because it allows data to be collected at a single point in time to understand respondents' perceptions and behavioural intentions efficiently (Setia, 2022). The questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms.

The population for this study comprises Generation Z individuals aged 18–26 in Malaysia, as this group is the most active in using social media and is highly responsive to digital tourism content (UNWTO, 2022). In this study, the random sampling technique was used to select participants as it provides a fair and unbiased way to select respondents. Each participant has an equal chance of being chosen, which helps to minimize researcher bias during data collection. This method also simplifies the process, as it does not require complex classifications or grouping.

The questionnaire consists of six parts: part A, B, C, D and E. The first part A was based on socio demographic such age, gender, nationality, educational level, have the respondents even visited Langkawi, heard Langkawi and have they ever visited Dream Forest Langkawi. Next, part B focuses on the independent variable, which is the social media influence. Part C is E-word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Part D is Folk narrative exposure. Meanwhile, part E focuses on dependent variables and visit intentions. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale to measure the social media influence, eWOM, folk narrative exposure and visit intention among gen-z. The Scale was from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree' and 5 indicating 'strongly agree'. For the pilot test, a total of 30 respondents were selected. The response was then analysed for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha. It is widely used to assess

the consistency of responses across multiple items in questionnaires.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile Respondents

Thirty student respondents from various educational levels participated in this study. The demographic profile indicates diversity among the participants, offering insights into their gender, age, and education level and questions such as have they visited Langkawi before, have they ever heard about Dream Forest Langkawi, and have they ever visited Dream Forest Langkawi. Many of the respondents were female (83.9%), while the remaining were male with only 16.1%. The respondents were primarily aged between 18 to 20 years (77.4%). While 21 to 25 only reached 22.6%. Most participants held a bachelor's degree (71%), followed by diploma (12.9%) and others (16.1%).

In terms of questions that were asked, most of the respondents were recorded that they had visited Langkawi before with 64.5% and that same goes to respondents that said yes whether they have ever heard about Dream Forest Langkawi (41.9%). Meanwhile, data recorded that most of the respondents have yet visited Dream Forest Langkawi (83.9%).

Descriptive Analysis

The detailed analysis of social media influence reveals that respondents frequently answered that they trust information about tourism-attraction on social media, with an item score of 4.29. Highlights a strong intention to engage with social media during travel. On the other hand, statement of "I often encountered posts about Dream Forest Langkawi on social media" happened to record the lowest rates of 3.68 only among

respondents shows that they are not fed enough content of Dream Forest Langkawi as most of them seem unaware of the place.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

To investigate the relationship between social media influence, electronic word of mouth, folk narrative exposure with Generation Z's intention to visit, Pearson correlation was conducted. The null hypothesis for each variable stated that there is no significant relationship between the respective independent variable and Generation Z's intention to visit Dream Forest Langkawi.

CONCLUSION

Future studies should include other variables such as destination image, perceived value or even price sensitivity and accessibility to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's travel intention. Moreover, researchers are also encouraged to conduct comprehensive studies between Dream Forest Langkawi and other cultural attractions in Malaysia to determine whether similar patterns exist. Additionally, future research could include qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into how Gen Z perceives folklore-based attractions.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that e-WOM is the most influential factor in shaping Generation Z's intention to visit certain places or in this study is Dream Forest Langkawi. Also followed by social media influence and folk narrative exposure. The findings highlight the importance of digital credibility and peer recommendations in modern tourism marketing, particularly for young tourists. Meanwhile folklore and

storytelling contribute in term of destination uniqueness, and their impact is strengthened by online review and engaging social media content. Therefore, tourism stakeholders should prioritize reputation management, digital engagement, and innovative storytelling to attract Generation Z effectively. Overall, this study contributes such valuable insights into the role of digital and cultural factors in shaping travel intention and offers practical implications for enhancing the competitiveness of folklore-based attractions in Malaysia.

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SAFETY AWARENESS AMONG GENERATION Z ADVENTURE TOURISTS IN SUNGAI LEMBING, PAHANG

By Rohadatul Aisy Binti Md Hafiz

ABSTRACT

This study examines safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing, Pahang. However, inconsistent safety management readiness, like weak regulations and poor implementation in destinations contribute to accidents and affects tourists' safety awareness. Therefore, this research aims to determine which factor most significantly influences safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing. A survey of 30 respondents was analyzed in the study, which utilized statistical methods to analyze the data. The findings show that safety management readiness is the strongest variable that has a significant relationship with safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing, followed by risk perception; tourists' experience plays a smaller but still significant role. This study provides useful insights for businesses, policymakers and tourist operators to improve Malaysia's adventure tourism. Future research should focus on different places and other factors that can cause accidents while joining adventure activities.

Keywords: Safety Management Readiness, Risk Perception, Tourists' Experience, Safety Awareness, Generation Z, Adventure Tourism

Introduction

This research seeks to identify the strongest factors that influence safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing. This chapter will provide several sections: a research background, which defines adventure tourism, and a problem statement that defines the gap in adventure tourism research. Based on these issues, the research objective, research question, study framework and hypotheses are constructed in the next section. The researcher also provides the significance of this study and then defines key terms, which are found in the last section of this chapter.

Research Background

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (n.d.), tourism is the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal, business, or professional purposes. It plays an important role in the national economy, creating employment opportunities and promoting local culture and heritage. In Malaysia in 2023, tourism's contribution to the Malaysian economy increased to 15.1%, and local residents also spent RM78.7 billion on domestic tourism (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024).

Among the various types of tourism, adventure tourism has gained popularity among Generation Z and young travelers seeking new and thrilling experiences, including hiking, caving, and river activities (Popsa, 2024). Adventure tourism is a tourism activity that relies on the natural environment and offers challenging, stimulating, and exciting experiences (Yang et al., 2022).

Despite its popularity, tourists' safety at the activity site is a crucial aspect that needs to be considered, making it a relevant site for

studying risk perception in adventure tourism. When it comes to adventure activities, safety is the primary concern because they involve risks and physical challenges. Visitors' awareness of safety guidelines will affect their overall experience and risk exposure. Sungkalird (2022) emphasises that adventure activity providers are obliged to ensure that all safety equipment is in good condition and meets established standards to reduce the risk of injury.

Problem Statement

Adventure activities involve higher risk, where tourists' safety is an important factor in the experience and the development of responsible tourism. According to Mata et al. (2022), accidents during outdoor activities often occur at the site due to poor safety management, inadequate safety training, poor equipment, and the absence of standard safety protocols. Furthermore, Sungkalird (2022) highlights the need for a more robust security framework, noting that the adventure tourism industry in Thailand has experienced numerous accidents due to inadequate safety regulations and unqualified personnel.

Other than that, tourist behaviour becomes a matter of risk perception, where safety awareness determines preventive measures against danger (Zhang et al., 2025). Even though studies on safety and risk perception exist, research on the level of safety awareness among tourists, especially Generation Z in Malaysia, remains limited. Ding and Wu (2022) said that the lack of safety awareness increases accident risk, affects tourists' experience, and has a negative impact on tourism destinations' reputation. Although there are many studies on risk perception and safety management worldwide, there is a

shortage of specific research on the level of safety awareness among Malaysian Generation Z tourists.

Research Objective

The study is conducted to fulfil the following objectives:

RO1: To assess the current level of perceived safety management readiness, risk perception, tourist experience, and safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing.

RO2: To examine the relationship between safety management readiness, risk perception, tourists' experience, and safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Safety Awareness

Safety awareness refers to the level of tourists' sensitivity and awareness of danger, as well as their tendency to take precautions and comply with safety procedures when travelling. Xie et al. (2025) state that tourist safety actually includes physical, psychological, and ontological dimensions, not just physical aspects. In the study, tourists who have a "secure attachment" (basic sense of security) show a higher level of safety compliance and involvement in safe behavior. This shows that safety awareness is not only dependent on information or regulations, but also depends on tourists' sense of confidence and safety towards the destination and how activities are managed.

Furthermore, Kamran and Dastgeer (2025) found that when tourists see a destination or travel provider as serious about taking safety and health measures, such as hygiene protocols, safe equipment, and flexible policies, their confidence and safety awareness levels increase significantly (high positive correlation). In this context, safety awareness is not just a subjective perception of risk but also trust in the destination's safety system. Therefore, for Gen Z adventure tourists in destinations such as Sungai Lembing, factors such as safety provision and procedural clarity can play a large role in shaping their level of safety awareness before, during, and after the activity.

Safety Management Readiness

Safety management readiness refers to the level of readiness of operators or activity providers in implementing safety procedures, including the provision of equipment, staff training, compliance with safety standards, and the implementation of risk mitigation measures before and during adventure activities. Previous studies have shown that the level of preparedness of operators plays an important role in shaping the safety of tourists. Zainudin (2022) emphasized that systematic risk management in small adventure tourism businesses in Malaysia can increase the level of security and customer confidence. Similarly, in the study "Operator Readiness towards Adventure Tourism Safety Procedure during COVID-19" in Gopeng, Perak, it was found that operators who implement safety procedures well, including SOPs for COVID-19, can reduce the risk of injury and increase safety awareness among rafting participants (Miskam, 2022).

In addition, a study on risk management in trekking in Nepal shows that operators who are prepared in terms of training, equipment preparation, and risk mitigation procedures can improve the safety of tourists and reduce unwanted incidents (Rijal, 2024). Based on these studies, it is clear that safety management readiness is a critical factor that affects the level of safety awareness of tourists, including Gen Z, who participate in adventure activities in destinations such as Sungai Lembing. In other words, the higher the operator's level of preparedness, the greater the likelihood that tourists will be aware of safety measures and act responsibly during activities.

Risk Perception

Risk perception refers to how individuals assess potential dangers and uncertainties when participating in adventure activities. Risk perception influences tourists' decisions to take precautions, follow safety instructions, and use protective equipment. A study by Dinolan et al. (2025) in Apo Island showed that tourists with a high level of risk perception tend to be more compliant with safety procedures and more responsible during adventure activities. These findings emphasize that risk perception is not only about knowing potential dangers but is also closely related to the safety behaviors practiced by tourists.

In addition, risk perception has a dynamic nature and can change according to the actual situation of the activity. Feng et al. (2022) found that tourists in Tibet adjust their risk assessment based on environmental conditions and their own level of experience. This shows that education, safety information, and actual experience play an important role in forming an accurate risk perception. Sharma and

Singh (2023) show that individuals who are well aware of risk are more likely to take self-protection measures, especially for those who have additional risk factors, such as tourists with health problems.

Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2025) emphasized that high risk perception among tourists motivates them to adopt better safety behaviors. In the context of Gen Z who often participate in extreme activities, the level of risk perception becomes an important factor to increase safety awareness. Young tourists who are sensitive to danger tend to pay attention to safety instructions, use protective equipment, and take the necessary precautions. Therefore, risk perception not only affects individual safety, but also shapes the level of safety awareness among Gen Z adventure tourists in destinations such as Sungai Lembing.

Tourists' Experience

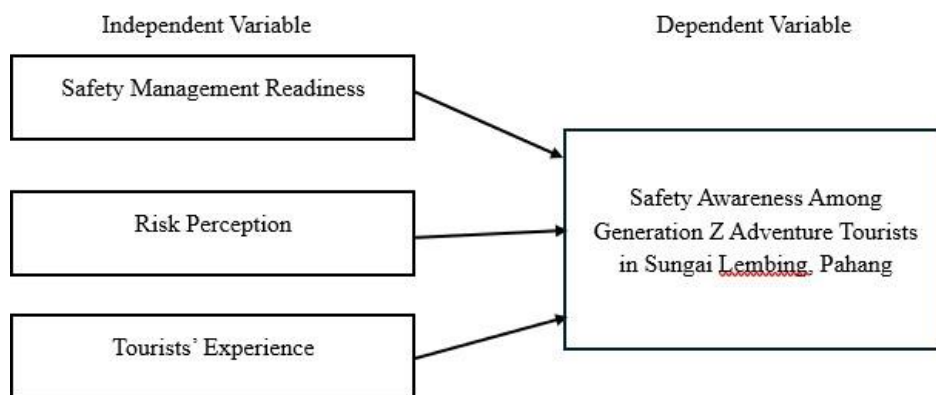
Tourist experience refers to the overall interactions, activities, and perceptions individuals have while participating in travel in a destination. These experiences not only shape tourists' memories and satisfaction but also play an important role in increasing their safety awareness and risk perception. A study by Julyastini et al. (2024) showed that positive tourist experiences, such as clear safety information and organized services, can influence tourists' intention to return to the destination and increase their attention to safety procedures. This emphasizes that the tourist experience is not just entertainment, but also an educational medium that increases safety awareness.

In addition, the study by Roman et al. (2022) on Polish tourists' perceptions of extreme tourism and adventure found that repeated

experiences and active involvement in extreme activities can increase tourists' sensitivity to risk and encourage more responsible safety behavior. Experiences involving physical challenges or well-controlled risks allow tourists to learn to identify potential hazards and adapt appropriate preventive measures.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Research Framework



There are three independent variables that will be explained in this research paper. Safety Management Readiness (IV1), which is the provision and completeness of an organization in carrying out and responding to safety measures. At the same time, Risk Perception (IV2) which focuses on feelings and thoughts about the dangers and Tourist Experience (IV3) are something that tourists learn from doing an activity. In other hand, the dependent variable in this research is safety awareness.

Methodology

In this study, a quantitative research design is used to explore the factors influencing safety awareness among Generation Z adventure tourists in Sungai Lembing, Pahang. The study focuses on safety management readiness, risk perception, and tourist experience as key variables. The data gathered through surveys will be analyzed using statistical software (SPSS), ensuring the findings are grounded in measurable outcomes. Furthermore, the study will examine the strength and direction of these relationships, ultimately identifying the most significant.

The target population of this study is Generation Z, aged 13 to 28, who have experienced an adventure activity at Sungai Lembing. Stratified sampling ensures proportional representation across age groups, while random sampling reduces bias and enhances fairness in respondent selection. The primary instrument for data collection in this research was a survey questionnaire adapted and adopted, using a five-point Likert scale. This instrument covers safety management readiness, risk perception, and tourists' experience.

To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire underwent expert validation and a pre-test to improve clarity and relevance. A pilot test involving 32 respondents was conducted to assess consistency, with Cronbach's alpha results showing excellent reliability for most variables and good reliability for tourists' experience. For data analysis, SPSS will be used to conduct reliability tests, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. These analyses aim to summarize patterns, examine relationships among variables and identify the strongest factors affecting safety awareness

among Generation Z adventure tourists.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile Respondents

32 student respondents of various ages participated in this study. The majority of respondents were aged between 18 years old to 21 years old, which accounts for about 56.3%, reflecting a younger demographic group. Most of them are female (81.3%), while the remaining are male (18.8%). All the respondents had joined adventure activities in a year and most of them went camping (33.3%), hiking (30.4%) and jungle trekking (27.5%), while the least popular activities are caving and 4WD off-road adventure.

62.5% of respondents joined adventure activities once a year, 31.3% participated in adventure activities two to three times a year and 6.3% of them joined more than three times a year. 68.8% of the respondents attended a safety briefing before joining an adventure activity and 46.9% of them experienced an accident while doing activities.

Descriptive Analysis

The detailed analysis of safety management readiness reveals that respondents frequently assess safety management at adventure activity sites and strong intention among respondents to promote safety awareness. The respondents feel confident in recognizing unsafe conditions during an activity and they believe accidents are more likely to happen when there is inadequate preparation before engaging in adventure activities. Tourists' experience played lesser importance as a decision-making factor for adventure tourists.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

To investigate the relationships between safety management readiness, risk perception and tourist experience with safety awareness, Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted. All variables leads to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis, and it can be concluded that safety management readiness, risk perception and tourists' experience significantly influences safety awareness of Generation Z adventure tourists.

Conclusion

Future research should explore factors influencing safety awareness among Generation Z, how safety management readiness, risk perception and tourists' experience vary across different places, especially in Malaysia, to tailor adventure tourism strategies more effectively. This addresses the need for a larger, more diverse sample to better understand different places. Additionally, further studies should investigate other factors that can reduce accidents during adventure activities at tourism sites and make the activity sites more sustainable. So, it can focus on Malaysia, identify factors that reduce accidents, and provide more insights specific to Malaysia.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing safety awareness among Generation Z, reducing accidents on adventure sites, it has some limitations. One limitation is the small sample size, due to time and resource constraints. This affects the diversity of responses.

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DETERMINANTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE INDUCE EDUCATIONAL TOURISM INTENTION AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By Aisyah Najihah Kamarulzaman

ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors of destination image influencing educational tourism intention among Malaysian university students. By recognizing the pivotal role of destination image induce educational tourism, the study investigates how electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), social media marketing and perceived safety and security shape students' intention to pursue educational opportunities especially for abroad. Therefore, a survey was conducted with 58 respondents from all over Malaysia, and the data were analysed using IBM SPSS to determine descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlations and multiple linear regression which in resulting that perceived safety and security are the most significant factors influence educational tourism intention among students. This study offers valuable insights for universities, tourism stakeholders and policymakers in aiming to improve and develop a favourable destination image as an educational tourism destination. Future research is recommended to explore more additional determinants of destination image while broadening the sample size to include diverse student populations internationally.

Keywords: Destination Image, Educational Tourism Intention, Malaysian University Students, e-WOM, Social Media Marketing, Perceived Safety and Security

Introduction

Throughout history, educational tourism already becomes a significant segment of international mobility which was driven by the increasing desire among university students to seek cross-country's knowledge, cultural exposure and enhancing career opportunities in their future. Educational tourism can be referred as a mode of travel to various destinations aimed at acquiring knowledge and experiences of an educational, professional or personal nature in areas such as history, culture, social

or language learning (Franco et.al, 2022). This chapter provides a comprehensive overview in several parts consists of research background, problem statement, research objectives, and significance of the study.

Research Background

Academic mobility between and within countries has evolved significantly in recent years, meanwhile, foreign students in educational institutions have become increasingly common in a globalized world (Franco et.al, 2022). The statistic of Malaysian students participated in educational tourism has expanded rapidly with a total of 59,144 (Malaysia - Education and Training, 2022). Academic mobility is on the rise with 6.9 million students studying away from their home country which a number that has tripled since 2000 (UNESCO, 2025).

One of the most important reasons considered by students when they decided to choose a destination for international educational tourism, concerns the attractiveness of the destination, pointed to the destination image (Suciu et al., 2022). Existing tourism literatures examine that external factors and destination image are considered key influencers of tourists' visiting a particular tourism destination and this translates to a significant impact on tourists' intention. For instance, destination image has been used to give details on individuals' feelings, attitudes, and holistic impressions of a destination. Therefore, destination image is considered as a critical element in predicting behaviour of tourists, mainly their intention to visit the destination (Yang et al., 2022).

This study will explore the significant factors of destination image induce educational tourism from the past research. The factors include electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), social media marketing and perceived safety and security attributes, act as independent variables in this study.

Problem Statement

Students' intention for studying abroad and involving in educational tourism are increasingly shaped by destination image. Limited understanding of how factors shape intention to study abroad based on destination image (Dina et.al, 2024). This

suggests that destination branding may play a more decisive role than educational reputation in motivating educational travel decisions. Despite this trend, empirical research examining how destination image factors influence students' intention to engage in educational tourism abroad remains limited (Yang et al., 2024).

Therefore, this gap highlights the need to investigate the factors influencing destination image as destination image is a major determinant that influences intention to participate in international education tourism (Samia El Sheikh et al., 2023). This study examines how electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), destination marketing communication, and perceived safety and security influence destination image induced educational tourism intention among Malaysian university students.

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the destination image's factors that influence educational tourism intention among Malaysian university students by using quantitative method.

Research Objective

The research objectives of this study as follows:

1. To explore how e-WOM, social media marketing and perceived safety influence destination image towards a particular education tourism spot.
2. To investigate the relationship between destination image and students' intention to join in educational tourism abroad.
3. To examine which factor is the most strongly prove destination image induce educational tourism intention among Malaysian university students.

Literature Review

Destination Image Induced Educational Tourism Intention

Past studies consistently highlight destination image as a critical determinant of students' intention to engage in educational tourism, often outweighing academic reputation. Studies on international destination image stated that a favourable image could increase interest and attraction towards a destination, while an unfavourable or negative image could disconnect and scare away tourists (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022).

Destination image is a mental representation that is formed through the information received from people, media or advertising (Jimenez-García et al., 2025). Students can be considered as a part of the tourist group in the context of educational tourism. However, according to W. C. Chan et al. (2022), despite its importance, the factors of destination image also can influence different aspects of the tourist's experience, especially the students, that shape their intention to choose and visit a destination.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

E-WOM is defined as positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about products or companies that are usually available to many people and institutions via the internet (Putri & Widyastuti, 2023). Destination image will influence tourism in decision making to visit while having a positive influence on tourist visits through social media, where potential visitors can interact and share their experiences so that there is an exchange of information (Silaban et al., 2022).

This is known as e-WOM concept, directly shaping destination image influencing students' educational tourism intention. Prior studies indicate that online discussions, peer reviews, and shared experiences significantly shape how tourists and students perceive destinations. According to Eratne and Malkanthie (2022), research examining 80% of consumers only purchase decisions after going through reviews shared by previous users. This concept can be applying the same to this research context, which the factors influence students' intention to participate in educational tourism.

Independent Variable 2: Social Media Marketing

Social media, as a supporting platform for destination's digital marketing, also plays a vital role in developing promotions in the tourism sector (Putri & Widyastuti, 2023). Social media marketing plays a strategic role in promoting destinations as attractive educational tourism spot, by communicating experiential, cultural, and lifestyle-related attributes. All these attributes are regarded as a segment of destination image, easier for organizations in planning their destination's marketing. Literature by Abbasi (2022) highlights social media communication channels play a prominent role in heightening intention and awareness of specific places among potential tourists and social media use in educational tourism contexts reveal that students' interactions with destination-related content in various applications of social media induce the overall destination image.

Furthermore, the content generated on social media extends how tourists influence by destination image. Through promotional video postings, trendiness, and e-WOM, social media act as a marketing tool for destinations and an interplay that influences tourist intention. Thus, there must be a comprehensive discussion within Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) regarding the development of effective tourism marketing strategies encompasses the study of tourists' intentions and behaviours to engage in educational tourism (Wilopo & Nuralam, 2024).

Independent Variable 3: Perceived Safety and Security

Perceived safety and security are repeatedly identified as one of the fundamental destination attributes influencing international students' mobility decisions (Omonova et al., 2025). Prior research by Solarin et al. (2025), emphasizes that safety infrastructure, measured by student safety indices, reflects the level of safety for international students when it comes to participate in educational tourism. This includes campus security, crime rates and social stability factors that influence where students and their family will decide to study.

Countries with high safety standards and support systems for international students tend to attract more students once spread positive perceptions among the

students towards destination image (Dudley et al., 2024). Safety perceptions significantly affect students' intention and confidence in engaging in educational tourism and shape their overall destination image (Awais-E-Yazdan et al., 2025). Despite this, safety and security are often discussed as part of broader destination attributes, but with limited research isolating their direct influence on destination image induced educational tourism intention.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework of this study as follows:

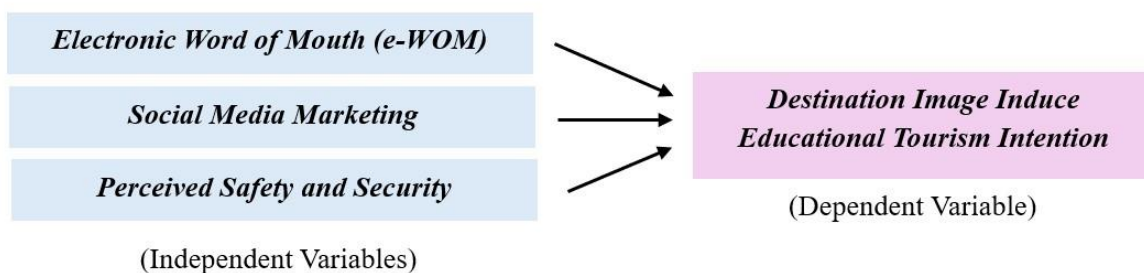


Figure 1. Conceptual Model Framework

In this study, there are dependent variable (DV) and independent variables (IV) were mentioned. The factors of destination image in this study act as independent variables which are electronic word-of-mouth (IV1), social media marketing (IV2), and perceived safety and security (IV3) meanwhile the content and context of this study which is 'destination image induce educational tourism intention' act as a dependent variable.

All the variables discussed regarding determinants of destination induce educational tourism intention among students have been explored and learned. Various articles from different scholars have successfully helped in proving this chapter become more acceptable. Despite that, this literature review chapter helps to get deeper understanding of the study to avoid any misunderstanding.

Methodology

The research design of this study is to explore the relationship between destination image factors and educational tourism intention among students as it is explanatory in nature. The research approach begins with theory used in this study and directly derived a testable hypothesis. It will be tested using research approach and according to Taherdoost (2022), several approaches were introduced to collect data in research methodology context. This study's approach has been used a quantitative research method to have a systematic data collection and a structured survey. The target population of this study consists of Malaysian university students from different institutions includes both public and private universities across Malaysia. This population represent the most primary market segment for educational tourism either inside or within countries.

This study will employ a convenience sampling technique, a type of non-probability sampling, where respondents are selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. Literature from Golzar et al. (2022) mentioned that convenience sampling techniques can be defined as a data collection process that is effortlessly reachable by the researcher from a targeted population. The final sample size for this study comprises 58 respondents which deemed sufficient for analysis and reliability testing.

Data will be collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to Malaysian university students. The instrument has 5 sections, which are section A as demographic questions, section B helps to analyse dependent variable as the questions related to destination image induce educational tourism and section C, D and E consist of questions related to the independent variables. The independent variables sections are used to evaluate the educational tourism intentions and relationship between destination image and its factors. All items employing five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Then, the items from the instrument are available for researcher to check the reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and the values has been proven that the measurement items were reliable for further analysis in educational tourism context.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

Profile of respondents are collected from demographic sections in the instrument among the target population. The demographic section shows diversity among the participants through their gender, student's status, type of university, level of study and question such as have they ever participated in an international education tourism program before.

Most of the respondents are male, which is 82.8%, meanwhile 17.2% are female respondents and all the respondents are currently being a university student. Most of them are from the group of public-type institution with 89.7% and private-type institution just reach 10.3%. Since this study is using university students' population, most respondents are currently a bachelor's degree students (86.2%) followed by diploma studies (13.8%). Almost half of the respondents have already experienced educational tourism outside from Malaysia (58.6%) and all of them have been in Indonesia.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 below displays the calculated means of all items based on the variables. According to the summary, the Destination Image Induce Education Tourism has the highest mean score of 3.623, indicating that Malaysian university students are neutral towards the items. Meanwhile, the average mean for electronic word of mouth and perceived safety and security is 3.520 and 3.530. This indicates that most respondents agreed with most of the questions listed in both variables. Meanwhile, social media marketing as the factor of destination image influence students' intention gained the lowest mean summary with 3.414.

Variables	Mean
Destination Image Induce Education Tourism Intention (DV)	3.623
Electronic Word of Mouth (IV 1)	3.520
Social Media Marketing (IV 2)	3.414
Perceived Safety and Security (IV3)	3.530

Table 1. Summary of All Variables

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The purpose of this part was to determine the relationship between the independent variables of this study, which are electronic word of mouth, social media marketing, perceived safety and security attributes and destination image induce educational tourism intention among Malaysian university students. The Pearson Correlation analysis explored relationship between the measured variables and to determine large correlation or vice versa is displayed below. The perceived safety and security (IV 3) have the largest correlation with destination image induce educational tourism intention (DV), with the value of 0.815. Moreover, social media marketing (IV 2) and E-WOM (IV 1) has also produced the same result, which are large correlation with destination image induce educational tourism intention (DV) with the value 0.742 and 0.694.

Variables	Correlation Value	Sig.
Electronic Word of Mouth	.694**	<.001
Social Media Marketing	.742**	<.001
Perceived Safety and Security	.815**	<.001

Table 2. Pearson Correlation

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide several important implications from both practical and theoretical perspective. From a practical perspective, destination marketers and educational institutions should prioritize safety and security strategies to enhance destination image since safety is the results students attracted to a particular

educational destination while promoting the place to a wider audience systematically. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the educational tourism literature by empirically confirming the importance of safety perceptions which in resulting to assist policymakers and higher education stakeholders in designing more effective strategies to strengthen a nation's competitiveness of the destination image as an educational tourism destination.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study used a small sample size of 58 respondents for educational tourism context, which limits the generalizability of the findings and focused only on Malaysian university students only, which may not fully represent the perspectives of university students all over the world. Additionally, variable used in this study are not fully influence students' intention since there must be other variables that will bring this study to achieve more positive results. Therefore, future studies should consider incorporating additional variables, such as cost considerations, institutional quality or cultural attractiveness to provide a more holistic understanding as well as broaden the sample size.

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MUSLIM'S PERCEPTION OF MFAR ACCOMMODATION IN MALAYSIA

By Afryna Damia Binti Mohd Isham

ABSTRACT

The growth of Muslim-friendly tourism has increased demand for accommodation that meets Islamic requirements, particularly in Malaysia. MFAR certification was introduced to enhance trust and service consistency; however, awareness and understanding among Muslim tourists remain limited. This study examines the influence of MFAR awareness, tourist satisfaction, and perceived quality assurance on Muslim tourists' perceptions of MFAR-certified accommodation in Malaysia. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, a quantitative approach using questionnaires among Muslim youth will be employed. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings are expected to provide insights for strengthening MFAR implementation and service quality.

Keywords: Muslim-friendly tourism, MFAR certification, tourist satisfaction, perceived quality assurance, tourist perception, MFAR attributes

Research Background

Muslim-friendly tourism has grown rapidly as Muslim travellers increasingly seek accommodations that meet their religious needs. Malaysia has maintained its top position in the Global Muslim Travel Index for the ninth consecutive year (GMTI, 2024), reinforcing its leadership in this sector. In response, the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) programme was introduced to standardise Muslim-friendly hospitality practices; however, awareness of MFAR among local Muslim travellers remains limited due to insufficient promotion and a relatively small number of certified accommodations (Yahya et al., 2025).

MFAR operates as a star-rating system approved by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture to assure compliance with Islamic quality standards. Key Shariah-compliant features, including prayer facilities, halal food, and gender-segregated amenities, significantly influence tourist perceptions, satisfaction, and accommodation choices (Yahya et al., 2025; Mohd Yousoof et al., 2023).

Despite the expanding Muslim tourism market, empirical evidence examining the combined effects of MFAR awareness, perceived quality assurance, and tourist satisfaction on Muslim tourists' perceptions remains limited.

Problem Statement

It was found inadequate of awareness among Malaysians about the presence of MFAR procedures (Tarmizi et al., 2025). Therefore, it remain vague among local Muslim' tourists regarding their apprehension on MFAR certification attributes.

Despite the increase number of MFAR-certified accommodations in Malaysia, local Muslim tourists currently facing low awareness of this certification (Yahya et al., 2025). The consequences may affect how the tourists perceived key MFAR attributes, such as prayer facilities, halal food, assurance, and room amenities, which previous studies identify as important for Muslim travellers (Mohd Ahid et., 2022).

In result, there's a necessity to examine how MFAR awareness, tourist satisfaction, and perceived quality assurance influence Muslim tourists' perceptions of MFAR accommodation attributes in Malaysia.

Research Aim

The objectives of this research are as follow:

RO1: To determines the awareness on MFAR certificate, tourist satisfaction, perceived quality assurance, and Muslim tourists' perception of MFAR accommodation attributes among local Muslim tourists in Malaysia.

RO2: To examine the relationship between the awareness on MFAR certificate, tourist satisfaction, perceived quality assurance, and Muslim tourists' perception of MFAR accommodation attributes among local Muslim tourists in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Awareness on MFAR certification

According to Yahya et al. (2025), Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) acknowledged the potential growth of the Muslim tourist market and

emphasized this segment as a primary driver of future economic growth, so the application of Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) program was initiated as a primary initiative. Due to Muslim-friendly hotel (MFH) highlighted as pull factors for guests to visit, the awareness among the hospitality services on Muslim-friendly tourism like MFH is demanded to implement these practices accordingly (Ruzulan et al., 2022, as cited in Yahya et al., 2025).

As stated by Tarmizi et al. (2022), “However, there is still a dearth of awareness among Malaysians about the existence MFH procedures” (p. 3). The lack of awareness about the establishment of Muslim-friendly hospital procedures had existed among local tourists.

Tourist Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as “overall feeling or attitude that a customer has towards a product after it is bought” (Darmawan, 2019, as cited in Mohd Yousoof et al., 2023). In different words, a tourist’s overall satisfaction with their trip is the cumulative result of their positive evaluations of all the separate products and services encountered during the leisure (Haber & Lerner, 1999; Pizam, 1994;Teare, 1998, as cited in Yüksel A. & Yüksel F., 2008). Islamic values are the primary influence on Muslim tourist satisfaction, demonstrated most clearly by Halal physical qualities and non-physical features, quality perception, and emotion perception, whereas price and social perceptions have no measurable impact (Isa et al., 2018, as cited in Osman et al., 2025).

Achieving the best outcomes and ensuring tourist satisfaction necessitates excellent service and hospitality from both industry implementers and the local community, emphasizing satisfaction not just as a goal, but as the precursor to repeat visitation and future travel to the destination (Makiya et al., 2016; Rasit, 2016, as cited in Mazlan et al., 2023).

Perceived Quality Assurance

Perceived quality is simply the consumer's evaluation of a service's overall excellence or superiority (Snoj et al., 2004, as cited in Marakanon L. & Panjakajornsak V, 2017.) While quality assurance (QA) is a management approach comprising all systematic, planned activities necessary to ensure a product, service, or result meets specified quality requirements and is appropriate for its intended use (Storey et al., 2000). When combined, "perceived quality assurance" refers to the external evidence that convinces customer that the company's internal quality assurance is robust and reliable so, to simply put, a company would suffer loss of trust if they fail to showcase evidence of the quality of their product despite possessing a flawless internal quality assurance.

To promote positive consumer perspective, Muslim-friendly accommodation service providers need to expand a complete overall Muslim-friendly image, emphasizing the associated perceived values (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019, as cited in Osman et al., 2023). They added, MFAR will have the ability to foster a loyal customer base and nurture long-term bonds with their clients.

Muslim's Perception

The definition of perception is a process experienced by someone in filtering, structuring, and interpreting information used to generate a perspective of something (Kotler & Keller, 2016, as cited in Nalindah et al.,2022). According to Mohamad et al. (2020), as a Muslim, being a personal identity means not just what one is but what one believes and what one must do according to the Islamic perspective.

Their deep-seated faith, core values, and moral duties act as the central compass that shapes how they see themselves and how they choose to

engage with the world. These studies emphasizes Muslims view their identity as dual commitment which they must constantly balance their spiritual and religious responsibilities with the realities and challenges of modern life.

Conceptual Framework

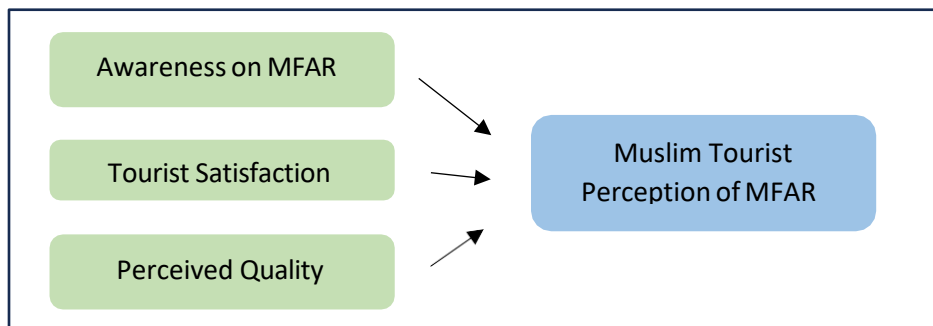


Figure 2.0 The conceptual Framework

Firstly the study will be focusing on awareness on MFAR certification by providing relevant articles written-by past researchers. Next, the elements of the tourist satisfaction will be discussed based on previous relevant studies. Moreover, it will also give the literature meaning of perceived quality assurance and the understanding of the aspect. Lastly, the Muslim tourist perception of MFAR accommodation in Malaysia will be examine based on relevant previous articles from past-researchers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research design using a survey method, as it is suitable for measuring attitudes, perceptions, and relationships among variables. A structured questionnaire was utilised to collect data from Muslim youth in Malaysia, who were selected as the study population due to their growing role in shaping tourism trends and decision-making. Simple random sampling was applied to ensure equal selection opportunity, and a total of 30 respondents were included in the study, considering time and resource constraints.

The research instrument consisted of five sections covering sociodemographic information, Muslim tourists' perception, awareness of MFAR certification, tourist satisfaction, and perceived quality assurance. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The questionnaire items were adapted from established literature to ensure content relevance. Instrument validation was conducted through expert review to assess clarity and appropriateness, while a pilot test was carried out to evaluate reliability. The results of the reliability analysis indicated acceptable Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs, demonstrating strong internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondent profiles and variable distributions, while Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between independent variables and Muslim tourists' perception while multiple linear regression analysis was then applied to identify the strongest predictor influencing perception of MFAR-certified accommodation. Overall, the methodology was designed to ensure systematic data collection and robust analysis to support the study's research objectives.

Table 1 showcased the Cronbach Alpha's result.

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Muslim's Perception	5	0.920
Awareness on MFAR certification	7	0.784
Tourist Satisfaction	5	0.897
Perceived Quality Assurance	5	0.850

(Afryna Damia, 2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the pilot study and statistical analyses conducted to examine Muslim tourists' perceptions of MFAR-certified accommodation in Malaysia. The analysis focuses on respondents' demographic profiles, descriptive statistics of key variables, and inferential analyses using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression to determine relationships and predictive strength among variables.

Profile of Respondents

A total of 30 Muslim youth participated in the study, with females comprising 80% of respondents. Most were aged 18–23 years (86.7%), and all were Malaysian Muslims. Half of the respondents travelled domestically two to three times per year, and 80% had previously stayed in Muslim-friendly or MFAR-certified accommodation. However, only 53.3% reported being aware of MFAR certification, indicating a gap between accommodation experience and formal certification awareness among young Muslim travellers.

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

The descriptive results indicate generally positive perceptions across all variables. Respondents strongly agreed that MFAR-certified accommodations provide adequate prayer facilities, maintain high cleanliness standards, and offer suitable amenities for Muslim travellers, with prayer and hygiene emerging as the most important attributes. While respondents demonstrated strong understanding of MFAR's purpose and halal compliance, awareness of the MFAR logo and exposure through digital media remained limited, suggesting weak promotional visibility. Tourist satisfaction was consistently high, particularly regarding religious comfort and cleanliness, though service quality showed slightly lower ratings. Perceived quality assurance received strong agreement overall, with respondents associating MFAR certification with Islamic compliance, safety, and trustworthy service standards, reinforcing its role as a credible quality assurance mechanism.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed that MFAR-certified awareness, tourist satisfaction, and perceived quality assurance were all positively and significantly related to Muslim tourists' perceptions of MFAR accommodation. Perceived quality assurance showed the strongest relationship, followed by tourist satisfaction, while MFAR awareness demonstrated a moderate but significant association, indicating that trust and experience are more influential than awareness alone.

Discussion

Perceived quality assurance emerged as the strongest and only significant predictor of Muslim tourists' perceptions, indicating that trust in Islamic compliance, safety, and service consistency is more influential than awareness or satisfaction alone. Although Muslim youth generally held positive views of MFAR-certified accommodations particularly regarding

prayer facilities, hygiene, and religious compliance promotional visibility of MFAR remained limited. Overall, the findings confirm that while awareness and satisfaction are important, trust-based quality assurance plays the most critical role in shaping positive perceptions of MFAR-certified accommodation.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of MFAR-certified awareness, tourist satisfaction, and perceived quality assurance on Muslim tourists' perceptions of MFAR-certified accommodation in Malaysia, finding that although basic awareness of halal standards exists among Malaysian Muslim youth, recognition of the MFAR brand remains limited. While all three factors positively influenced Muslim perception, perceived quality assurance emerged as the strongest determinant, highlighting the critical role of trust in Islamic compliance, safety, and service consistency over awareness or satisfaction alone. However, the study is limited by its small sample size and youth-focused scope, which may restrict generalisability; thus, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, compare local and international Muslim tourists, and examine additional factors such as pricing, religiosity, and brand image. Overall, the findings contribute to Muslim-friendly tourism literature by reinforcing the central importance of trust-based quality assurance, while practically suggesting that accommodation providers prioritise visible Islamic compliance and consistent service quality, and policymakers enhance MFAR promotion, digital visibility, and monitoring to strengthen its credibility as a national standard.

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Relationship Between AI Chatbot Attributes and Travel Experience Among Malaysian Youth Tourists

By Syafiqah Amani Fadhil Fahmy

INTRODUCTION

In today's information-driven environment, travellers increasingly depend on digital tools to support their decision-making before and during travel. Timely, relevant and reliable information is now essential in shaping travel experiences, especially in unfamiliar destinations. The ongoing evolution of technological solutions continues to influence how services are delivered and consumed. The tourism sector has progressively adopted digital innovations to meet travellers' need. In Malaysia, youth constitute a highly engaged group of digital users who frequently rely on online platforms during travel. Understanding how emerging digital solutions contribute to their travel experience is an important area of inquiry in contemporary tourism research.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Digital transformation has become a major global force shaping how industries operate, communicate and deliver services. This shift plays a crucial role in the tourism industry as tourists can now effortlessly access information about destinations and resources, make reservations, purchase tickets, and plan their trips (Antón-Maraña et al., 2023). These advancements in technology have enhanced the tourism industry by providing tourists with tons of access to information, booking services, and immersive experiences (Bilan et al., 2024). Moreover, the transformative power of technology expands beyond convenience, reshaping societal structures to ensure that travel and tourism are not just limited to leisure activities but also as a pathway for social impact, inclusivity, and empowerment (Kye & Hao, 2024).

As digital transformation accelerates, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a key technology in shaping the modernization of the tourism industry. AI-driven technologies transform the tourism industry by delivering tailored experiences, improving resource management, and providing insights into traveler preferences, ultimately promoting a more sustainable and effective tourism sector (Badouch et al., 2025). AI has completely changed customer service and operations in the tourism industry with solutions such as chatbots that provide travellers with real-time information and assistance (Sharma & Sharma, 2025). According to Balcombe (2023), AI chatbots are advanced conversational computer systems that can think, learn, and perform tasks independently. The chatbots use big data, natural language processing (NLP), and machine learning (ML) algorithms to enhance their abilities, such as responding instantly, operating 24/7, and offering personalized assistance. These abilities help to position them as a valuable component of the smart tourism experience.

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the most digitally active demographic group is the youth. This generation often relies on smart devices and online platforms while travelling to look for information, obtain recommendations, make reservations, and plan itineraries. Nearly 9 in 10 Gen Z internet users engage with AI tools, reporting not only increased efficiency but also improvements in leadership, empathy, and confidence (Yu, 2025). Their high digital literacy enables them to acquire these resources efficiently. Nowadays, most of the tourism providers have integrated the use of AI chatbots into their websites, applications, and systems, initially making the youth traveller as one of the most frequent users of these digital assistants.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although the rapid digitalisation has transformed how travellers seek information, plan their trips and experience the destination. There is still a lack of studies that have been conducted on the impact of AI chatbot attributes towards the tourist travel experience, especially among Malaysian youth. While chatbot systems are starting to integrate into tourism websites and applications, there are still questions remaining about their

effectiveness in enhancing tourists' experiences. Most of the previous study focusing on examining how digital tools and technology shapes the tourism industry. However, the focus is usually related to the overall satisfaction, intention to use, or decision-making (Jeyakumar, 2025; Orden-Mejía et al., 2023; Melián-González et al., 2021). This indicates that there is a lack of research on the specific quality, responsiveness, and usefulness of AI chatbots, as well as their impact on the travel experience. Therefore, this presents a gap in understanding whether the chatbot interactions have an influence towards the positive travel experiences or not.

Furthermore, there is no empirical data on how Malaysian youth view and engage with AI chatbots during the travel process, including pre-trip preparation and on-site help, even though they are among the most engaged digital consumer groups in the tourist industry. Without this knowledge, tourist service providers run the danger of underutilizing AI chatbots' ability to improve travellers' decision-making, convenience, confidence, and general travel experience. Thus, this study aims to explore the connection between Malaysian youth tourists' travel experiences and AI chatbot qualities, particularly information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness. By filling this knowledge, the study hopes to offer insights that help guide the creation of more efficient, user-centered chatbot systems, which will ultimately lead to better digital tourist services and more enjoyable travel experiences.

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness as attributes of AI chatbots on the travel experience of Malaysian youth tourists. Analysing how these factors shape the overall experiences while measuring the relationships between these variables.

The study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

RO1: To determine the information quality, responsiveness, perceived usefulness and the travel experience among Malaysian youth tourists.

RO2: To measure the relationship between information quality, responsiveness, perceived usefulness and the travel experience among Malaysian youth tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Travel Experience

Tourist experience when travelling to holiday destinations often influenced by many factors including economics considerations, safety, service quality, culture, activities and destination image (Mohamed et al., 2024). While these factors have long been the focal point of tourism research, recent studies have shown interest in seeing how technologies like AI chatbots influence their travel experience (Mohammad Shawal et al., 2023; Reddy et al., 2024). Recent studies also started to conceptualise tourist travel experience as a technology-enhanced experience, where smart tourism technologies like AI chatbot influence how tourist feel, evaluate, and enjoy their trips (Pai et al., 2021).

Information Quality

According to Tyrväinen et al. (2023) information quality is defined as the features of the information that fit consumers' expectations and expand a great influence their persuasiveness and decision-making process. In digital environments, high-quality information is fundamental to foster user trust and sustained engagement (Ngo et al., 2025). Their research explored what it means to trust digital technology in hospitality and tourism and created ways to measure how this trust affects people.

The results showed that when tourists find information reliable and helpful, they're more likely to trust digital platforms which leads to stronger loyalty and a lasting connection. (Lee et al., 2025). A study by Qian et al. (2022) also proved that Tourists can make informed and efficient decisions through chatbot attributes that provide an accurate and relevant information.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is defined as the ability of a system or service to provide a timely and easy access of interactions that meet user needs (Muhammad et al., 2025). In the context

of AI chatbots, responsiveness allows tourists to receive an immediate support, providing solutions, and enhancing their overall travel experience. Additionally, AI chatbots can do more than just answer questions. They make things easier and faster for customers. For instance, a chatbot can quickly share tracking details, product links, or payment options, letting people handle everything right from their screen. This kind of automated help means customers get what they need with less hassle and more convenience (Chen et al., 2022). As a result, users feel more comfortable and valued through fast and easily accessible chatbot (Shabbir et al., 2025)

Perceived Usefulness

According to Lun et al. (2024), perceived usefulness is the user's perception of the organization and convenience provided by a product, service or system. Chatbots are seen as a useful digital technology by both consumers and travel agency managers According to (Pillai and Sivathanu, 2020). The travel agency manager can save manpower and additional costs. Meanwhile, for customers it makes it easier to make reservations or plan their travel itineraries.

Zhu et al. (2023) found that control, reactivity, and personalization are critical for chatbots to be deemed useful. Customers expect to oversee their reservation procedures, get timely responses, and receive individualized care. Previous study also mentioned that when it comes to chatbots, the perception of usefulness can affect the probability of how a user will use and value them positively (Orden-Mejía et al., 2025)

Conceptual Framework

Based on the past literature review, the finding supports that accurate information, fast responses and useful chatbot functions help to shape the user's perception and experience in using the AI chatbot. Thus, a conceptual framework was developed to conduct this study, consisting of three independent variables and one dependent variables. Information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness were used as the independent variables in this study. Meanwhile, tourist travel experience among

Malaysian youth in using AI chatbot while travelling was used as the measure of the study, serves as the dependent variables.

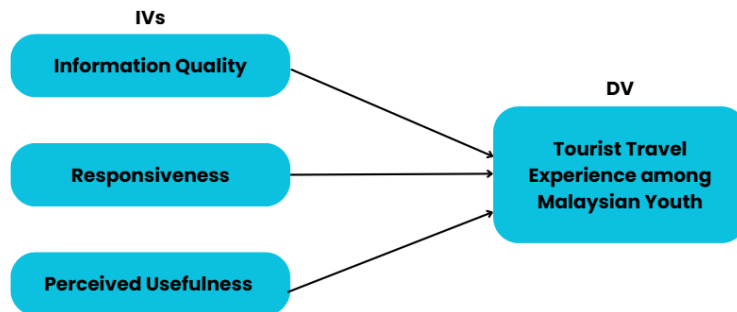


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to evaluate the impact of information quality, responsiveness and perceived usefulness on the travel experience among Malaysian youth. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, comprising five sections that include demographic data, three independent variables and one dependent variable. The use of standardized questions ensures the collection of accurate and systematic numerical data (Zyoud et al., 2024). The tools used to collect the data are through Google Forms, an online survey platform that facilitates efficient distribution and real-time response tracking.

The population of this study consists of Malaysian youth aged 18-30. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula. At a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, resulting in a minimum required sample size of 385 respondents using a conservative p-value of 0.5. However, due to time constraints, the research involved 30 respondents (N=30). The respondents were selected using a simple random sampling approach, ensuring that everyone had an equal chance of being selected as the respondent. Consideration was given to age, travel frequency, AI chatbot usage and

demographic diversity to ensure the sample truly reflects the population of Malaysian youth tourists.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot test was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the data. The instrument was administered to 30 respondents. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the consistency of questionnaire items, according to the following reliability scores.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha

Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Information Quality	5	0.816
Responsiveness	5	0.867
Perceived Usefulness	5	0.880
Tourists Experience	5	0.892

INSTRUMENT

The instruments were adapted and adopted through previous study. Each variable consists of 5 items that have been validated by an expertise lecturer before the pilot test was conducted.

Table 2. Instrument

Variables	Items	Adapted/Adopted
Information Quality	5	Zhang et al., 2022
Responsiveness	5	Kakiya et al. 2020

Perceived Usefulness	5	Bolodeoku et al.,2022
Tourists Experience	5	Coelho et al., 2018

RESULTS

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 3 summarizes sample profiles based on demographic characteristics. The sample indicates female respondents as the dominant group with (73.3%), followed by male respondents with (26.7%). For the age distribution, the highest percentage is the 18-20 age group (66.7%). The educational level presents most respondents are taking bachelor's degrees (86.7%). Nearly half travelled 3-4 times (46.7%), followed by 1-2 times (43.3%) in the last 12 months. Most of them travelled domestically within Malaysia (90.0%) and only a small percentage of people travelled outside the country (10.0%). About a third used AI chatbots while travelling, the highest percentage goes to sometimes (33.3%), indicating moderate usage overall.

Variables	Item	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	20	66.7
	21-23	10	30.0
	24-26	1	3.3
Gender	Male	8	26.7
	Female	22	73.3
Educational Level	Diploma	4	13.3
	Bachelor's Degree	26	86.7

Travel frequency in last 12 Months	1-2 times	13	43.3
	3-4 times	14	46.7
	5 or more times	3	10.0
Type of travel	Domestic	27	90.0
	International	3	10.0
Experience of using AI Chatbots for travel	Never	3	10.0
	Rarely	5	16.7
	Sometimes	10	33.3
	Often	8	26.7
	Always	4	13.3

Table 3. Demographic

DESCRIPTIVES STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

Table 4 presents respondents' perceptions of the information quality provided by AI chatbots for travel-related purposes. The highest mean score was recorded for "Chatbot answers are clearly presented and easy to understand" ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.747$), followed by "The AI Chatbot provides relevant information for my travel-related questions" and "The AI Chatbot offers helpful information for better decision-making" ($M = 4.03$). "I can trust the reliability of the information from the AI Chatbot during travel" showed a moderate mean ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.022$). The lowest mean is "The information provided by the AI Chatbots is accurate" ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.938$). Overall, respondents perceive AI chatbots as clear and useful sources of travel information.

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Information Quality (IV1)			
IQ 1	The information provided by the AI Chatbots is accurate	3.50	0.938
IQ 2	The AI Chatbot provides relevant information for my travel-related questions	4.03	0.718
IQ 3	The AI Chatbot offers information that is helpful, enabling me to make better decisions	4.03	0.765
IQ 4	Chatbot answers are clearly presented and easy to understand	4.17	0.747
IQ 5	I can trust the reliability of the information from the AI Chatbot during travel	3.70	1.022

Table 4. Summary of Means

Table 5 recorded respondents' perceptions regarding the responsiveness of AI chatbots in travel-related contexts. The highest mean score was recorded for "The AI Chatbot responds quickly to my questions about travelling" (M = 4.23, SD = 0.774), presenting strong agreement on chatbots response speed. Next, both "The AI Chatbot is available whenever I need help" and "When the chatbot cannot answer my questions, it provides other alternatives or human support" recorded mean scores of 4.10. This was followed by "The interaction with the chatbot feels conversational and interactive" (M = 4.03, SD = 0.964). The lowest mean was observed for "The response time of the AI Chatbot meets my experience (M = 3.97, SD = 0.890). Overall, the findings indicate that respondents perceive AI chatbots as highly responsive, particularly in terms of speed and availability.

Table 5. Summary of Means

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Responsiveness (IV2)			
Response 1	The AI Chatbot responds quickly to my questions about travelling	4.23	0.774
Response 2	The AI Chatbot is available whenever I need help	4.10	0.923
Response 3	The response time of the AI Chatbot meets my experience	3.97	0.890
Response 4	The interaction with the chatbot feels conversational and interactive	4.03	0.964
Response 5	When the chatbot cannot answer my questions, it provides other alternatives or human support	4.10	0.845

Table 6 summarizes respondents' perceived usefulness of AI chatbots while traveling. The highest mean score is for “Using the AI Chatbot saves me time when searching for travel information” (M = 4.13, SD = 0.730), showcasing chatbots reduce time consumption when searching for travel information. The second highest mean was for “Overall, AI Chatbots are useful tools when planning or used during my travel” (M= 4.03, SD = 0.928). Followed by “The AI Chatbot provides me timely recommendations that enhance my travel experience” (M = 3.97, SD = 0.809) and “The AI Chatbot provides valuable assistance for on-site activities” (M = 3.87, SD = 0.937). Lastly, the lowest mean score was “I find chatbots helpful for discovering new travel options or deals” (M = 3.80, SD = 0.925).

Table 6. Summary of Means

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived Usefulness (IV3)		
Usefulness 1	The AI Chatbot provides valuable assistance for on-site activities (e.g. directions, attractions, transport)	3.87
0.937	Usefulness 2	Using the AI Chatbot saves me time when searching for travel information
4.13	0.730	Usefulness 3
3.80	0.925	I find chatbots helpful for discovering new travel options or deals
Usefulness 4	The AI Chatbot provides me timely recommendations that enhance my travel experience	3.97
0.809	Usefulness 5	Overall, AI Chatbot are useful tools when planning or used during my travel
4.03	0.928	

Table 7 recorded mean for tourist travel experience as the dependent variable in this study. The highest mean score was for “The AI Chatbot helped me solve several problems during my trip” (M = 4.13, SD = 0.819), indicating a positive influence of AI chatbot in providing convenience during travel. Next, “The information and assistance from chatbots improved my pre-trip planning experience (e.g. create itinerary, booking process)” (M = 4.03, SD = 0.809). Followed by, “Overall, my travel expectations were met or exceeded when I used chatbots” (M = 4.00, SD = 0.788) and “Interacting with the AI Chatbot made my overall trip more enjoyable and convenient” (M = 3.97, SD = 1.033). The lowest mean was for “I felt more confident making travel decisions with the AI Chatbot assistance” (M = 3.83, SD = 1.053).

Table 7. Summary of Means

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Tourist Travel Experience (DV)			
Experience 1	The information and assistance from chatbots improved my pre-trip planning experience (e.g. create itinerary, booking process)	4.03	0.809
Experience 2	Interacting with the AI Chatbot made my overall trip more enjoyable and convenient	3.97	1.033
Experience 3	I felt more confident making travel decisions with the AI Chatbot assistance	3.83	1.053
Experience 4	Overall, my travel expectations were met or exceeded when I used chatbots	4.00	0.788

Experience 5	The AI Chatbot helped me solve several problems during my trip	4.13	0.819
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Table 8 summarizes the calculated means of all variables used in the study. This table indicates high levels of information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness as a positive perception of the AI chatbot.

Table 8. Summary of all means

Variables	Means
Information Quality (IV1)	3.87
Responsiveness (IV2)	4.08
Perceived Usefulness (IV3)	3.96
Tourist Travel Experience (DV)	3.99

PEARSON CORRELATION

Table 9 presents the Pearson Correlation between all independent variables, (information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness) towards the tourist travel experience of using AI chatbots. The data were obtained through correlation analyses, conducted using SPSS. All variables showed significant positive relationships with travel experience: information quality ($r= 0.723$, $p= 0.001$), responsiveness ($r= 0.696$, $p= 0.001$), and perceived usefulness ($r= 0.785$, $p= 0.001$).

Table 9. Pearson Correlation

Independent Variable	Significant Value (P)	Pearson Correlation	Dependent Variable

Information Quality	0.001	0.723	Tourist Travel Experience using AI Chatbot
Responsiveness	0.001	0.696	
Perceived Usefulness	0.001	0.785	

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the first objective of the study was addressed through mean analysis, the responsiveness variables indicate the highest level of mean of 4.08. According to Jeyakumar (2025), the tourist experience is greatly enhanced by its efficiency and speed. This is mostly because during travel, tourists often required immediate information for decision-making related to navigation, transportation, accommodation, and activities to ensure a smooth travel journey.

Furthermore, to investigate the relationship between all variables, a Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted. The results showed all independent variables (information quality, responsiveness, and perceived usefulness) had significant relationship with the tourist travel experience using AI chatbots. Information quality had significant positive relationship with the dependent variable ($p = 0.001$, $r = 0.723$). According to a study by Kim et al. (2023), when chatbots deliver accurate, relevant, and timely information, users tend to form more favourable attitudes toward the service. Responsiveness was also significantly associated with the travel experience of Malaysian youth tourist ($p = 0.001$, $r = 0.696$), suggesting that youth tourist value a quick and relevant response from chatbots (Shabbir et al., 2025).

Finally, perceived usefulness demonstrated the strongest relationship with tourist travel experience ($p = 0.001$, $r = 0.785$) which indicates that the functionality of chatbot offers an immersive experience towards the tourists. Therefore, correlation analysis shows that all independent variables have a significant positive relationship with tourist travel experience as the significant value demonstrate a p-values below than 0.05, following the

conventional statistical standards. These findings suggest that better chatbot performance will improve the experiences among Malaysian youth during travel.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study successfully examines the influence of information quality, responsiveness and perceived usefulness on the travel experience of Malaysian youth tourist, thereby achieving both research objectives. The findings indicates that perceived usefulness exhibited the strongest correlation, reflecting tourist positive experience and perceptions of perceiving chatbot as a functional tool that provide timely information, support decision-making, and reduce uncertainty when navigating challenges or unfamiliar environments. The information quality and responsiveness were also considered as an important factor that enhanced tourist experience, as they contributed to the accuracy, relevance and speed of information delivery, which ultimately increased tourists' trust, satisfaction and overall confidence when relying on chatbot services for travelling. Overall, the results suggest that AI chatbots perceived as useful, informative, and responsive play a crucial role in enhancing tourists' travel experience.

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