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Preface

In the name of ALLAH, Most Gracious, Most Merciful and Muhammad S.A.W., the last prophet.

First and foremost I would like to congratulate the editorial board and authors of the *Borneo Akademika* journal on their success in producing this journal. This achievement is actually the result of their tireless effort in contributing thoughts and ideas to produce papers on current issues and challenges in multi-disciplinary research. To the best of my knowledge, efforts to produce a home-grown UiTM Sabah journal actually started ten years ago, and today we see the fruits of our labour and patience. This shows us that total commitment from the academic community is required in the journey towards academic publication so that joint research efforts can be enhanced.

This journal consists of twelve peer-reviewed articles based on current research topics of interest. Each topic is unique by way of its research methodology and findings in various related fields. The papers in this journal are useful to fellow researchers who share a similar interest in the field or those who are directly involved in exploring multi-disciplinary research. We hope that this publication can be a reference for academicians and students alike, particularly those in UiTM as well as the general public.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of our editorial board and invited/field editors who have in one way or another contributed to the successful publication of this journal. My gratitude goes out to all the authors who contributed articles to this publication because this journal would not have become a reality without them.

Thank you.

Datuk Dr. Hj. Abdul Kadir Hj. Rosline
Chief Editor

Prakata

Dengan Nama Allah Yang Maha Pemurah Lagi Maha Mengasihani. Salam dan Selawat ke atas Junjungan Besar Nabi Muhammad SAW rasul akhir zaman.

Pertamanya saya ingin mengucapkan setinggi-tinggi tahniah kepada sidang penyunting dan penulis artikel jurnal Borneo Akademika yang menyumbang tenaga dan idea dalam isu dan cabaran terkini kajian pelbagai-bidang. Penerbitan jurnal ini adalah kesinambungan usaha lampau yang kurang aktif semenjak hampir sepuluh tahun lalu. Jurnal ini menggambarkan keperluan komitmen yang jitu daripada warga akademik bagi megembang kesignifikanan usaha-usaha dalam penyelidikan.

Jurnal ini mengandungi dua belas artikel yang dinilai oleh penilai jemputan/bidang berasaskan kajian semasa. Setiap tajuk yang dibincang mempunyai keunikan tersendiri yang metodologi dan dapatannya dikupas berdasarkan bidang kajian yang dibuat. Usaha ini amat memberi manfaat kepada penyelidik-penyelidik terutamanya mereka yang terlibat secara langsung dalam kajian terkini pelbagai-bidang. Tambahan pula, kami berharap agar penerbitan ini akan menjadi sumber rujukan kepada ahli akademik dan pelajar terutamanya di UiTM dan juga kepada orang awam lain.

Akhirnya, kami ingin mengambil kesempatan untuk merakamkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan kepada semua ahli sidang penyunting dan penyunting jemputan atas sumbangan yang merupakan satu lagi cara menyumbang kepada kejayaan penerbitan jurnal ini. Terima kasih khas ditujukan kepada semua penulis yang menyumbang artikel untuk tujuan penerbitan ini kerana tanpa sumbangan mereka penerbitan ini tidak mungkin dapat dijayakan.

Terima kasih.

Datuk Dr. Hj. Abdul Kadir Hj Rosline
Ketua Penyunting

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DESTINATION IMAGE AS A DETERMINANT OF TOURIST SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

Rapid development in the tourism industry has created new challenges for tourism marketers. In the climate of growing competition, one of the major tasks for destination marketing specialists lies within the area of building an effective destination positioning strategy and the core element of this positioning mechanism is creating a positive image of the destination. Therefore, an understanding of what constitutes destination image that leads to tourist satisfaction and loyalty can help the nation to formulate marketing strategies and better position itself as a competitive destination. The purpose of this paper is to conceptualise the underlying dimensions of destination image that can influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Theoretically, this paper contributes to the body of knowledge by emphasising key antecedents affecting tourist behaviour. Practically, the research findings are of suggestive value to image building and destination planning for Malaysian tourist destinations.

Keywords: Destination image; tourist satisfaction; destination loyalty

ABSTRAK

Pembangunan pesat dalam industri pelancongan telah mewujudkan cabaran baru bagi pemasar pelancongan. Dalam suasana persaingan yang semakin meningkat, salah satu tugas utama untuk pakar pemasaran destinasi adalah membina strategi kedudukan destinasi dan elemen teras pula adalah mewujudkan imej positif terhadap destinasi. Oleh itu, pemahaman tentang imej destinasi yang membawa kepada kepuasan dan kesetiaan pelancong akan membantu negara untuk merangka strategi pemasaran yang lebih kompetitif. Tujuan kertas kerja ini adalah untuk mengetengahkan konsep asas imej destinasi yang akan mempengaruhi kepuasan dan kesetiaan pelancong. Secara teorinya, kajian ini akan menyumbang kepada pengumpulan ilmu dengan memberi penekanan kepada latar belakang utama yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku pelancong. Secara praktikalnya, hasil penyelidikan akan menjadi nilai yang penting untuk membina imej dan perancangan destinasi pelancongan di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Pemasaran destinasi; kepuasan; kesetiaan pelancong

1.0 Introduction

The global tourism industry is prospering at an unprecedented rate and exceeding expectations of leading tourism organisations. In its long-term forecast, The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has stated that international tourism will continue to grow in a sustained manner for the next two decades (2010 – 2030) with the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide increasing at an average of 3.3% a year. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2009) forecasts that by 2018, global tourism will exceed \$10.8 trillion in tourist expenditures and there will be 296.2 million jobs created. These figures simply demonstrate the vast potential of the tourism sector that will expand further in coming years. In the climate of growing competition, one of the major tasks for destination marketing organisations (DMO) lies within the area of building an effective destination positioning strategy and the core element of this positioning mechanism is creating a positive image of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Due to the economic rewards to be earned from tourism, many state and local communities have attempted to use different types of tourism (such as cultural, heritage, natural, and health tourism) in order to revitalise local economies. In the case of Malaysia, tourism also has an important part to play in fostering development and fighting poverty. Over the past twenty years, the Malaysian tourism industry has acquired a positive growth of tourist receipts. In 2014, Malaysia welcomed 27.44 million foreign tourists, with international tourism receipts of RM72 billion (Tourism Malaysia, 2015). This was an increase of 10% from RM65.44 billion in 2013. Tourist arrivals grew by 6.68% or 27.44 million compared to 25.72 million in 2013. Together with rapidly developing economies involving various natural resources (such as petroleum and gas, palm oil, rubber, and timber), tourism has always been foregrounded to further diversify its economic base. It is one of the major economic sectors in Malaysia and functions as the primary source of foreign exchange earnings, a source of attracting investments and an employment provider.

However, a major issue of concern is that even though Malaysia is located in the same geographical region and shares similarities with other ASEAN nations in terms of natural resources, tourism infrastructure, culture, traditions and hospitality (Badaruddin, 2009), Malaysia still lags behind other leading competitive destinations in the region in terms of international tourism receipts (Mohamad, Abdullah, & Mokhlis, 2011). For this reason, an understanding of what constitutes destination image that can lead to tourist satisfaction and loyalty can help Malaysia to formulate marketing strategies and better position itself as a competitive destination.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to conceptualise the underlying destination image dimensions that can influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty. In the context of destination management, the findings of this paper are expected to provide a decision-making framework to build a firm and consistent image of tourism destinations and avoid contradictory and randomly changing perceptions and identities. This can help the country to build a good reputation and create a prosperous business climate.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Destination as a product

The American Marketing Association (1960) suggested that product can be defined as the bundle of attributes for which the exchange or use primarily concerns the physical or tangible form. This is in contrast to a service, in which the seller, buyer, or user is primarily interested in the intangible. The term for tangible products is 'goods', and it should be used with services to make the tangible-intangible pair, as subsets of the term product. In this context,

tourism products are not only tangible in terms of physical plants, but also comprise intangible elements such as services, personalities, hospitality, and communication between tourists and locals. As conceptualised by Framke (2002), destinations are geographic locations to which tourists travel and consist of a combination of tangible and intangible components (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000). Thus, to gain a better understanding of destination as a product requires a brief review of concepts and definitions.

2.2 Definition of destination and destination image

In tourism literature, various definitions of destination are applied due to the varied use of terms according to the researchers' priorities. Murphy et al. (2000, p. 43) defined *destination* as "an amalgam of products and services available in one location that can draw visitors from beyond its spatial confines", while Gunn's (1988) model of tourism system denotes *tourism product* as a complex consumptive experience that results from a process where tourists use multiple travel services during the course of their visit which includes information, transportation, accommodation, and attraction services. From another point of view, Medlik and Middleton (1973) conceptualised tourism product as a bundle of activities, services and benefits that constitute the entire tourism experience. They identified a five-component model of tourism product, which includes attraction, facilities, accessibility, image, and price. Middleton (1989) further suggested that the component model exists at two different levels: (1) *specific*, referring to individualistic services or tourism opportunities offered by the tourism business entity (e.g., a room at a hotel or a meal at a restaurant), and (2) *total*, referring to a complete experience that a tourist goes through. From this perspective, often the *destination mix approach* is adapted, which concerns the interdependency among components of services and places of attractions offered to tourists. Therefore, it has been proposed by Smith (1994) that an input (resources, facilities, services) to output (experience) model of tourism production emphasises on process rather than product. He further suggested that a destination should possess four elements of the physical plant, namely service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement.

In summary, a tourism destination consists of a complex body of elements that are interdependent and differs in terms of size, physical attraction, infrastructure, and socio-cultural dimensions (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). In spite of the diversity of definitions, a commonality seems to emphasise the idea of experience. Every tourist destination provides a touristic experience rather than the product per se and this is supported by other intangible elements that enhance the attractiveness of a destination such as hospitality, satisfaction, value, and quality.

Specifically in tourism studies, empirical research investigating image evolved in the 1970's. Notable researchers include Leven (1972) who focused on visitors' image, followed by Hunt (1975) who measured the images of four states in the United States. Subsequent researchers continued the efforts to examine images of various types of tourist destinations at regional and national levels (Ahmed, 1991; Baloglu, 1999, 2001; Crompton, 1977; Dadgostar & Isotalo, 1992; Goodrich, 1978; Pearce, 1982).

According to Gallarza et al. (2002), there are almost as many definitions of *destination image* as there are scholars devoted to its conceptualisation. Destination image was conceptualised based on the level of abstraction starting with a holistic range of mental and affective images, followed by general impressions and finally a detailed elaboration of the destination's physical attributes or cognitive elements (Azlizam & Nurul Amirah, 2011). For example, as mentioned by Hunt (1971), destination image is the impression that a person or persons hold about a state (destination) in which they do not reside in. Crompton (1979) defined destination image in greater detail as the aggregate sum of beliefs, ideas, impressions,

and expectations that a tourist has about a tourist destination area. Numerous studies (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Ibrahim & Gill, 2005; Santos, 1994; Xiao & Mair, 2006) have attempted to define destination image as a concept of mental representations of attributes, benefits, knowledge, and feeling towards a destination. Their study also suggested that *affective image* is a function of cognitive images and travel motivations. However, so far, no consensus has been reached about the definition of destination image. Many of these definitions are quite vague and may not even be explicitly stated. As claimed by Echtner and Ritchie (2003), destination image is frequently described as simply impressions of a place or perceptions of an area and it becomes evident that the majority of these researchers are conceptualising destination image in terms of considering the attribute-based and not the holistic-based components of image. Next, this discussion reviews previous studies related to destination image components.

2.3 Components of destination image

Recent evidence has suggested that destination image is a combination of cognitive and affective images (Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Martin & del Bosque, 2008), and that it influences tourists' destination choices (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The cognitive image is about how much people know about the destination and the affective image is about how people feel about the destination. In other words, the tourists' cognitive images are formed by their knowledge about the site (e.g., landscape, house, building, and artefact) and the affective images are formed by their feelings about the site, such as emotions and moods. In line with this, Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) also suggested that two components of cognitive and affective images might better explain how a tourist generates a destination image. Prayag (2008) also supported this by saying that destination images should include affective images. Martine and del Bosque (2008) indicated that tourists' cognitive images directly influence their affective images.

However, there is limited research in the literature (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Uysal, Chen, & Williams, 2000) that employs both cognitive and affective components in evaluating destination image. The influence of both cognitive and affective images on tourist behaviour is seen as relevant because it can be examined further to determine which component is a good predictor of tourist behaviour. Due to this reason, this paper suggests that tourists will use both image dimensions to form their impression and evaluate the eventual destination in their final decision-making process.

2.4 Destination image of Malaysia

The Malaysian government takes a proactive approach in diversifying the country's tourism industry. It is now a popular destination for meetings, conventions, and exhibitions in Asia. Since gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia has taken advantage of its tangible assets (such as natural resources and abundant cheap labour) as well as intangible assets (such as macroeconomic stability, a liberal trade regime, and a conducive legislation system) to bring in profitable business ventures.

The government often alters its tourism image promotion abroad (Badaruddin, 2009). For the 1990 Visit Malaysia Year (VMY90) campaign, Malaysia started to promote its extensive natural resources with slogans such as 'To know Malaysia is to love Malaysia' and 'You Will Be Fascinated'. Due to this strategy, the tourism industry performed considerably better. It was reported that the campaign opened various new tourism products like nature tourism, adventure tourism, and agro-tourism, which resulted in 7.45 million tourist arrivals in 1990 (Badaruddin, 2009). Subsequently, Malaysia continued to diversify its tourism products and

promoted a positive image to target and attract a larger number of travellers. For this reason, Tourism Malaysia, as the country's promotional arm, carried out a promotional campaign starting in 2009, which portrayed Malaysia as a country of nature and culture, under the theme 'Malaysia Truly Asia'. This global brand captured and defined the essence of the country's unique diversity. It summed up the distinctiveness and allure of Malaysia that makes it an exceptional tourist destination. It also celebrated diversity in order to energise the tourism industry and provided the enabling framework for attracting and increasing tourist arrivals.

Hence, Tourism Malaysia launched a campaign called 'Visit Malaysia Year 2014 (VMY2014)' in January 2013 to maximise the potential of the country's tourism industry with the theme 'Celebrating 1Malaysia, Truly Asia – VMY2014, We are the Host'. The campaign was in line with the aspirations of turning the event into a national mission involving all parties in order to achieve the target of 28 million tourist arrivals by the year 2014 (BERNAMA, 2013). In 2012, Malaysia was voted the 9th Most Visited Country by UNWTO and as the 4th Best Shopping City in the World, after New York, London and Tokyo, by CNN Travel. Forbes Online also chose Malaysia as the 10th Friendliest Country in the world while Dinar Standard voted it as the Top Tourist Destination for Muslim tourists. These accolades show that Malaysia is recognised as a well-known destination among international tourists. Evidently, the promotional efforts of 'Malaysia Truly Asia' and the annual 'Visit Malaysia Year' programme have contributed tremendously to the increase in the number of tourists to the country as well as enhancing Malaysia's destination image.

3.0 Destination Image and Its Effect on Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty

One of the crucial elements of successful destination marketing is tourist satisfaction (Dmitrovic et al., 2009), which influences the choice of destination and the decision to return (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, enhancing customer satisfaction should be one of the primary functions of market destinations (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Pearce, 1982; Seaton, 1997) and a prerequisite for the development of a strategy leading to a destination's enhanced attractiveness and its competitive positioning (Dmitrovic et al., 2009).

Similarly, loyalty has always been important to destinations since it can bring practical benefits by increasing repeat-patronage and save marketing costs by using the word-of-mouth promotional tool and most importantly, as an indicator of successful destination development (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Research into brand loyalty or consumer loyalty has more than 40 years of history. According to Oppermann (2000), loyalty research is a relatively recent phenomenon in the area of tourism, hospitality, and recreation leisure, which dates back approximately 10 years. Therefore, the concept and degree of loyalty has become one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of marketing strategies (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Previous research has highlighted that destination image is the antecedent of satisfaction, which in turn has an influence on destination loyalty. According to Chi and Qu (2008), destination image exercises a positive influence on quality and satisfaction, which inadvertently affects tourists' behavioural intentions. More favourable images will lead to a higher likelihood of returning to the same destination. Chi and Qu's model proposed that destination image is an antecedent of satisfaction and satisfaction in turn has a positive influence on destination loyalty. Their findings confirmed that tourist loyalty is enhanced by a positive destination image and high satisfaction. Numerous studies (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Mohamad et al., 2011; Prayag 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012) have supported the view and indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between destination image and satisfaction; and satisfaction and destination loyalty.

However, the relationship between destination image components (cognitive and affective), satisfaction, and loyalty have been relatively less explored and it can be argued that a positive relationship exists between them. Previous studies have also reported that the intention to return to the same destination or the 'revisit intention' and the positive word-of-mouth to friends and relatives have been considered as adequate measures for tourist loyalty assessment (Bigné, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Thus, it is crucial to investigate why tourists are loyal to a destination and what drives their satisfaction and loyalty, especially to Malaysia's tourism destinations. This can help to clarify the relationships among these constructs and determine the best predictors of loyalty, which is highly relevant for a destination's reputation.

4.0 Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT)

The expectancy-disconfirmation theory (EDT) by Oliver (1977, 1980) has received the widest acceptance among satisfaction-based theories because it is broadly applicable (Huh & Uysal, 2004). Oliver's study has presented a theory of customer satisfaction in which satisfaction is a key determinant of repurchase intentions. Expectation is defined as a set of pre-exposure beliefs about the product (Olson & Dover 1979) while disconfirmation is the discrepancy between expectations and actual experiences. Better-than-expected outcomes lead to positive disconfirmation and worse-than-expected outcomes lead to negative disconfirmation. The causal flow shown in Figure 1 illustrates the formation as follows: (1) exposure to information about the characteristics of product performance leads to the formation of product-specific beliefs or expectations of the consumer (Olson & Dover, 1979); (2) a cognitive comparison between expectations and actual experiences leads to a subjective calculation of disconfirmation (Oliver, Balakrishnan, & Barry, 1994), and (3) a combination of expectations and disconfirmation determines the satisfaction level that, in turn, influences repurchase intentions. Based on the assessment of customer satisfaction by researchers, it is concluded that tourist satisfaction is important for successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of the eventual destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). For the purpose of this paper, EDT is used as a guide in which destination image components of cognitive and affective images are treated as a set of pre-exposure beliefs about the tourism product that will lead to customer satisfaction and eventually determine the repurchase intention.

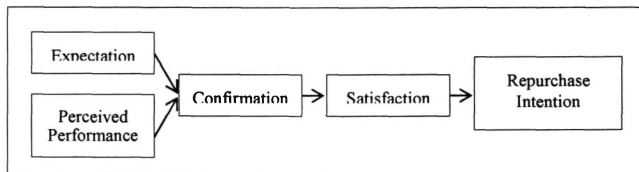


Figure 1: Expectation Disconfirmation Theory, EDT (Oliver, 1977, 1980)

This paper has described the empirical background of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. This literature review has drawn the conclusion that further investigation on antecedents of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty with special focus on influence of destination image components is highly relevant to the Malaysian tourism industry.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

The paper is practical and important since image building is a manageable process through marketing and management efforts plus destination planning. In this context, the findings of this paper are of value to image building and destination planning for Malaysian tourism destinations as well as for the formulation of competitive strategies of other overseas destinations. This paper has helped to identify and evaluate the image factors that contribute towards tourists' favourable attitude and future decisions on holiday destinations. The understanding acquired from this paper can help destinations to design and implement appropriate image promotion strategies and enable destinations in this endeavour to manage their limited resources more effectively. More specifically, from a practitioner's point of view, further action plans can be formulated. Policy makers can also be guided to improve and enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty. It is also expected to provide a strategic focus on competitive advantage and how to bond with key audiences.

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