

## Appraising the role of memorable tourism experience between the relationship of destination image and Melaka domestic tourists' revisit intention

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### Abstract

The actual nature of tourism experience is mainly associated with delivering satisfaction to tourists. However, the concept of tourism experience has been continuously developed and is going beyond purveying tourist satisfaction as time passes by. This is in line with the concept of memorable tourism experience that is now gaining traction. Melaka was chosen as setting of the study due to competition from other destinations that have received UNESCO recognition such as Cambodia, Myanmar and Indonesia. As compared to Melaka, these destinations recorded higher growth rate of tourist arrivals. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how Melaka's image can contribute to positive memorable experience that can increase domestic tourist arrivals. This study seeks to examine the influence of destination image on tourists' revisit intention with the mediating role of memorable tourism experience. Questionnaires were distributed to domestic tourists in Melaka through the convenient sampling method. This study reveals that both cognitive and affective components of destination image have positively influence domestic tourists' revisit intention to Melaka. Memorable tourism experience was also found to mediate this relationship. On top of contributing to the body of knowledge, the finding of this study is expected to help destination managers in developing measures to maintain or enrich the image of Melaka.

### Keywords:

Destination image, memorable tourism experience, revisit intention, Melaka, tourism Melaka

## 1 Introduction

Tourism experience has become one of the leading and important areas to be studied since 1960s and up until now (Cohen, 1979; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Filep & Pearce, 2014; Jauhari, 2017; Zatori, Smith & Puczko, 2018). As time passes, tourism experience keeps getting new conceptualization and development of its basis from the very basic of delivering satisfaction and quality and recently up to providing memorable tourism experience to the tourists (Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Kim, 2018; Zhang, Wu & Buhalis, 2018). Studies have proven that memorable tourism experience or tourism related experiences that is reminisced influences tourists' behavioural aspects such as their satisfaction of a trip, intention to recommend and intention to revisit either directly or indirectly (Mahdzar, Shuib, Ramachandran & Afandi, 2015; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017; Kim, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

The concepts of memorable tourism experience has gained interest among scholars (Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012; Rahmani, Gnoth & Mather, 2014; Halim & Mokhtar, 2016; Kim & Chen, 2018). A number of studies have attempted to explore the causes that contribute to the formation of memorable tourism experience and tourists' behaviour. Mahdzar et al. (2015) suggests that the attributes or characteristics of a destination significantly influence the tourists' revisit intention and this relationship is mediated by memorable tourism experience. In a more recent study by Zhang et al. (2018), tourists' intention to revisit a destination is influenced by both country and destination image, with memorable tourism experience mediates the relationship between the constructs. It is posited that the aspects of the destination itself will directly or indirectly determine the behavioural consequences of tourists (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Mohamad, Ali & Ghani, 2011; Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017). As destinations become more competitive from time to time (Li & Petrick, 2008; Kim, 2014; Shariff, 2015), it is vital for destination managers to offer a distinct feature as an effort to make a particular destination look outstanding or unique (García, Gómez & Molina, 2012; Kim, 2014). Distinctive image of a destination will lead to a positive memorable tourist experience and behaviour (Lee, Lee & Lee, 2005; Zhang et al., 2018).

Melaka is chosen as the study setting due to its popularity as one of the top tourists destinations in Malaysia (Er, 2013; Alam, Er, Begum, & Alam, 2015). Melaka faces competition in terms of number of tourist arrivals from the other UNESCO-recognized destinations such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Indonesia (Tung, Noor & Azila, 2016). In particular, domestic tourists in Melaka are specifically chosen as the target population of the study due to the fact that domestic tourists contribute majorly in the number of tourists' arrival (Tourism Melaka, 2017). Statistics from Tourism Melaka recorded 16.79 million of tourists' arrival in 2017, comprising of 11,049,328 domestic tourists and 5,745,140 foreign tourists (Tourism Melaka, 2017). Since the recognition of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) towards Melaka as one of the World Heritage Sites (WHS) in July 7th 2008 (Teo, Khan & Rahim, 2014), Melaka shows a significant booming in its tourist influx from the past ten years up until now.

As tourists' behaviour and tourism experience and destination image will remain as crucial areas to be studied in the tourism context (Mohammad, 2014; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Kani, Aziz, Sambasivan & Bojei, 2017), this study therefore sought to analyze the influence of destination image (cognitive and affective) as the antecedents to revisit intention of tourists with the mediating role of memorable tourism experience from the perspective of domestic tourists in Melaka.

## **2 Issues in the Context of Study Setting**

Intention to revisit among tourists has long been considered as one of crucial aspects to be studied in the context of understanding tourists' behaviour (Shirazi & Mat Som, 2011; Mohammad, 2014). This is because revisit intention is considered as a result of a tourist's satisfaction towards a destination (Wu, Ai, Yang & Li, 2015), plus tourism businesses opt for revisiting tourists because they will continuously generate tourism businesses profit and contribute to income stabilization (Steen, 2016). However, with the increasing competitiveness among destinations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kozak, 2002; Li & Petrick, 2008; Mohamad, Ali & Ghani, 2011; Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016; Kim, 2018) and the changing nature of tourists' preferences and perceptions over the years (LaMondia, Snell & Bhat, 2009), it is important for each destination managers to create images that will make a destination favourable, stand out, unique or distinct from the others (Lin, Morais, Kerstetter & Hou, 2007; García et al., 2012; Aliman, Hashim, Wahid & Harudin, 2016; Kim, 2018) so that it will influence the memory of a tourist towards the trip's experience at a destination (Jauhari, 2017) and eventually triggers the intention to revisit the destination among tourists (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017). This is supported by Kim (2018) who also asserted that providing memorable tourism experience will positively influence the tourists' behaviour in terms of recommendation and revisit intention.

In the case of Melaka, Tung, Noor and Azila (2016) found that Melaka is also facing competition from the other new and emerging destinations. Although Melaka shows a significant increase in its tourist arrivals since the recognition by UNESCO, recent statistics shows that the number of domestic tourist arrivals is decreasing from the last two years in which the year 2015 recorded 11,270,392 number of tourists and decreased to 11,222,455 in the year 2016 and again dropped to 11,049,328 number of tourists in the year 2017 (Tourism Melaka, 2017).

It is recognized in the news that the government seems to boast about the increasing number of tourists in Melaka by focusing mostly on attracting international tourists (Zaidan, 2018) despite the fact that international tourists only contribute to a smaller number of tourist arrivals as compared to the domestic tourists. Although the number of international tourists continues to increase from year to year (Tourism Melaka, 2017), it is still far behind in contributing majorly to the number of tourists visitation. Hence, it is crucial for the government and tourism bodies to draw a little more focus on these domestic tourists as they are the ones who contributed 65% to the statistics of tourist arrivals in Melaka. Furthermore, these domestic tourists are also the

ones who have the convenience and better accessibility to go for repeat visitation in Melaka as compared to the foreigners. However, some of the recent issues are seemed to making things worse. The issues reported in the news such as the deleterious clogged drain in Melaka, nude revellers partying on the Melaka riverside and the incident of a tourist from Langkawi accidentally fell off into the Melaka river while taking a 'selfie' are becoming worrisome to the government that the image of Melaka as a tourism destination might be tarnished that it will affect their tourism experience and eventually become reluctant to revisit Melaka (Bernama, 2018; Murali, 2018).

In terms of the academic gap, the latest study done by Zhang et al. (2018) posited the significant role of country image and destination image in contributing to the formation of memorable tourism experience and revisit intention. However, in measuring the role of destination image, the authors did not include the affective component of destination image whilst both cognitive and affective images are significant as a whole in overall image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Lin et al., 2007; Styliadis, Shani & Belhassen, 2017). Plus, the studies of destination image of Melaka with memorable tourism experience as the mediating effect towards revisit intention is scarcely found due to the fact that the concept of memorable tourism experience has just recently caught the scholars' attention (Kim et al., 2012; Rahmani et al., 2014; Halim & Mokhtar, 2016; Kim & Chen, 2018). Therefore, this study is done in responding to the call for filling in the research gaps mentioned.

### **3 Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Destination Image**

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) stated that destination image influences someone's choice over a destination to visit. In addition to the notion, Kock, Josiassen and Assaf (2016) mentioned that it is vital to have an understanding of one's mental representation in regards to the perception formed towards a destination. This is because recognizing one's perception of destination image will greatly help in determining their intention to revisit a destination (Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017). Crompton (1979) defined destination image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination". Most scholars have asserted that destination image comprises of two components which are cognitive and affective (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Martín & Bosque, 2008).

In pursuing the success of marketing a destination and tourism business, it is noted by Jamaludin, Mokhtar and Aziz (2018) that the concept of destination image acts as a significant factor which has been described by the authors as "powerful, integral and influential". Plus, they also added that destination image is widely accepted to play an important role in forecasting the future behaviour of a tourist. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2016) highlighted that the topic of destination image has become one of the central attentions among researchers in tourism studies.

### 3.1.1 *Cognitive Image*

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) defined cognitive image as “the beliefs or knowledge a person has of the characteristics or attributes of a tourist destination”. Most studies have only considered cognitive component when measuring destination image (Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). This is because considering cognitive image is far more accepted to be observable, describable and measurable in representing a destination’s uniqueness (Walmsley & Young 1998). The notion is supported by a study from Artuger & Cetinsoz (2017) which found that only cognitive image which associates with the attributes of a destination to influence repeat visitation of a tourist to a destination instead of affective image.

### 3.1.2 *Affective Image*

The affective component of image is defined as “the individual’s feelings toward the tourist destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Although the cognitive component is commonly found in measuring destination image, there are scholars who took into account the affective image component when measuring the total image of destination (Martín & Bosque, 2008; Phillips & Jang, 2010; Yacout & Hefny, 2015; Liew, 2015; Soltani, 2015; Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017). Following the notion, researchers have always adopted the scales developed by Russel, Ward and Pratt (1981) in measuring affective component which consists of scales representing the level of ‘pleasant, relaxing, arousing and exciting’ a destination possesses. In contrast to studies proving the significance of cognitive image, a study by Jamaludin et al. (2018) managed to affirm that affective component to be the most significant influencer on tourists’ visitation to a destination.

## 3.2 **Memorable Tourism Experience**

The concept of tourism experience is acknowledged that it will continuously develop its basis (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Back then, tourism experience was mainly associated with purveying satisfaction and quality to customers but recently the concept of memorable tourism experience is now getting into the trend (Kim, 2014; Kim, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). This is because; for destination to survive in the market that is highly competitive, delivering memorable experience becomes a crucial factor, plus experience that is also invaluable and unforgettable acts as a significant indicator that forecasts customers’ future behaviour (Kim, 2014).

Memorable tourism experience can be defined as “tourism experiences that are positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred” (Kim et al., 2012). Consequently, Kim et al. (2012) became the first to develop a scale which measures memorable tourism experience and they managed to come out with seven structures of memorable tourism experiences which are hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty. This is followed by the study of Kim and Ritchie (2014) which confirmed the seven dimensions of memorable tourism experience in cross-cultural context.

It is highlighted that studies which are focusing on the antecedents of memorable tourism experience found to be limited (Zhang et al., 2018). In addition, there is an increase of research that found memorable tourism experience to impact the outcome of tourist's future behaviour (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Tsai, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). Among the studies that pointed out the antecedents of memorable tourism experience is a study by Mahdzar et al., (2015) which found that positive perception of destination qualities, specifically the qualities of Mulu National Park will contribute to memorable tourism experience and consequently influence tourists' intention to revisit.

### **3.3 Revisit Intention**

In studying tourists' behaviour, there are three stages involved which are pre-visit, during the visit and post-visit (Chen & Funk, 2010). Intention to revisit is a notion that a tourist wants to visit again the same destination after the previous visit (Butler, 2006). Chan (2018) operationalized intention to revisit as "visitor's intention of future behaviour that refers to the corresponding visitor assessment to return to the same purpose and their willingness to recommend it to others".

In both academic and industry, revisit intention is positioned as a very significant topic to be continuously studied due to the nature of intention that changes as time passes by (Jang & Feng, 2007). Understanding tourist's revisit intention also helps in determining market competitiveness of a destination (Mat Som, Marzuki, Yousefi & Abukhalifeh, 2012) and tourist's behaviour (Shirazi & Mat Som, 2011; Mohammad, 2014). It is acknowledged that revisit intention of a tourist plays a crucial role in contributing to the survival of a business and the development of tourism industry (Pratminingsih, Rudatin & Rimenta, 2014). This is because, revisiting tourists aid in saving of marketing expenditure and increasing revenue (Jang & Feng, 2007). Moreover, there are destinations that depend heavily on revisiting tourists (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984). Basically, destination image has been recognized as one of the prominent factors that sparks a tourist's intention to revisit the same place (Mat Som et al., 2012; Kim, Hallab & Kim, 2012; Pratminingsih et al., 2014; Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Kim, 2018).

### **3.4 Domestic Tourism in Melaka**

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) defined domestic tourism as "visitation by residents of a country to their own country". In the case of Melaka, statistics obtained from Tourism Melaka (2017) shows that domestic tourists contributed 65.8% to the state's total tourist arrivals. Meanwhile, the number of international tourists was not even reaching half of the total tourist arrivals. The vast number of domestic tourist arrivals may associate with factors that shape the locals in a country to travel which are the increase of personal income and disposable time, the growth of population, better education, development of transport and communication (Archer, 1978). Moreover, Amir, Osman, Bachok and Ibrahim (2014) claimed that Melaka is suitable for escapism which refers to the convenience of domestic tourists to reach the destination, given the fact that the state is accessible via the PLUS North-South Highway and the Melaka International

Airport (Ang, 2015). The notion is strengthened by UNWTO (2010) who posited that most countries received higher number of domestic tourists compared to the international tourists. However, the trends of these domestic tourists are distinctive of each other in regards to their attributes such as sex, destination and so on (Suganuma, Morichi & Hibino, 2011).

In regards to the evidences, it further supports the fact that domestic tourists in Melaka are the backbone of the state's tourism industry. The statement is strengthened by the statistics of tourists' arrival in Melaka which recorded domestic tourists as the major contributor since the past ten years, although it has been slowly dropping within these two years. The Table 1 below represents the comparison of number of arrivals between domestic tourists and international tourists in Melaka from the year 2007 until 2017.

Table 1: Melaka Tourist Arrivals Statistics

Year	Domestic	International
2007	4,857,248	1,366,063
2008	6,004,105	1,201,387
2009	7,293,762	1,611,511
2010	8,177,869	2,176,792
2011	9,070,901	3,094,965
2012	10,198,855	3,512,279
2013	10,366,594	3,946,123
2014	10,846,706	4,185,324
2015	11,270,392	4,466,467
2016	11,222,455	5,059,626
2017	11,049,328	5,745,140

Source: *Tourism Melaka (2017)*

#### 4 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the literature, the hypotheses applied in the study in analysing the influence of destination image on tourists' revisit intention with the role of memorable tourism experience as a mediator are portrayed as follows:

**H1:** Destination image has a direct positive influence on tourists' revisit intention

**H1a:** Cognitive image has a direct positive influence on tourists' revisit intention

**H1b:** Affective image has a direct positive influence on tourists' revisit intention

**H2:** Destination image has a direct positive influence on memorable tourism experience

**H2a:** Cognitive image has a direct positive influence on memorable tourism experience

**H2b:** Affective image has a direct positive influence on memorable tourism experience

**H3:** Memorable tourism experience has a direct positive influence on tourists' revisit intention

**H4:** Memorable tourism experience mediates the influence of destination image on tourists' revisit intention

**H4a:** Memorable tourism experience mediates the influence of cognitive image on tourists' revisit intention

**H4b:** Memorable tourism experience mediates the influence of affective image and tourists' revisit intention

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework in understanding the influence of destination image on memorable tourism experience and revisit intention of tourists.

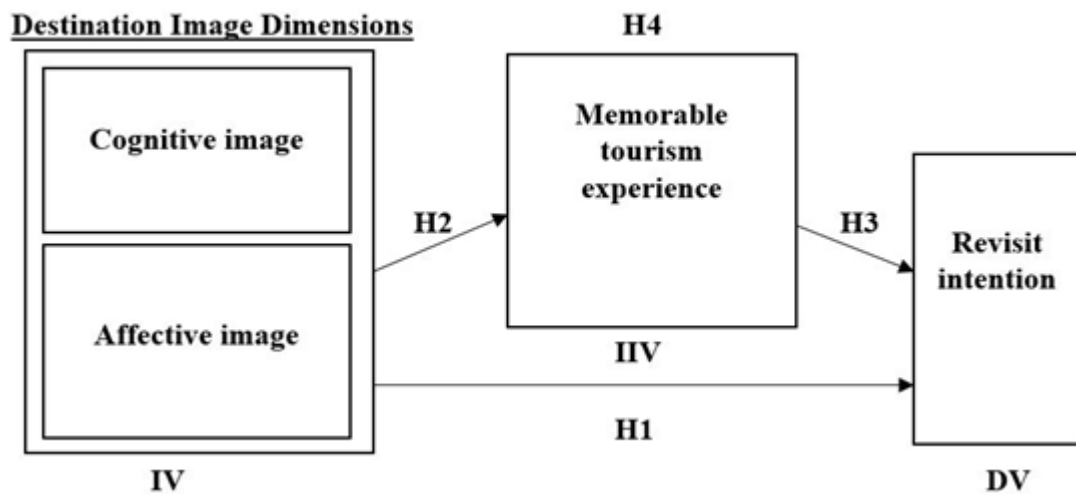


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

## 5 Methodology

### 5.1 Research Paradigm

Causal research is best used in describing the design of the study conducted. According to Kumar, Talib and Ramayah (2013), causal research is a research approach where the researcher inspects the cause and effect relationship between variables in a study. Particularly, this study was conducted on cross-sectional basis as the data was collected just once (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). On the other hand, convenient sampling and individuals as the unit of analysis were used for this study. According to Kumar et al. (2013), convenient sampling includes choosing up any available set of respondents convenient for the researcher to have. Data then were collected from 400 domestic tourists in Melaka at famous tourism spots such as Bandar Hilir, Masjid Selat Melaka, Melaka Zoo, Taman Buaya Melaka and Ayer Keroh. All respondents selected had already stayed at least one night in Melaka regardless of travelling purposes to be considered as a tourist (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009) and to ensure they already have a tourism memory



towards Melaka even if it is just a one-night memory. All in all, data collection process took approximately 20 days as a result of an average of 20 questionnaires distributed per day (Ittig, 2000).

## **5.2 Analysis of Data**

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 was utilized to analyze all data obtained from usable questionnaires. The first analysis conducted was analysis of frequencies in which it was used to analyze the demographic data of respondents. Next, the reliability of the instruments was tested and determined using Cronbach's coefficient of alpha. As stated by Mahmud (2008), reliability of a measure indicates the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept. Lastly, the causal relationships among variables in accordance to the proposed hypotheses of the study were analyzed through linear regression analysis. According to Kumar et al. (2013), linear regression analyses the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable. After that, mediation analysis also took place through examining the after-effect (strength of Beta coefficient and significance level) when mediating variable was introduced into the proposed direct relationship between variables.

## **6 Findings**

### **6.1 Demographic Profiles Analysis**

Initially, 400 sets of questionnaires were distributed to sample respondents. Considering factors such as the presence of unanswered questions and unreturned questionnaire sets, 386 usable questionnaires from sample respondents were finally received in return. Out of total respondents, the majority of them were female which contributed to 71.8 per cent (n=277) while the rest of 28.2 per cent (n=109) were male. As for the age of respondents, those who were within the range of 20-29 years old contributed the largest by accumulating to 86 per cent (n=332) out of total respondents, followed by 30-39 years old which were 7.8 per cent (n=30), 40-49 years old which were 3.6 per cent (n=14) and the least which were 2.6 per cent (n=10) where it comprises of those who were in the range of 50 years above. Going further, it was revealed that 81.1 per cent (n=313) of total respondents were single in relation to marital status. Meanwhile, 18.9 per cent (n=73) of them were already married.

Next, it was found that the Malays became the largest respondents by contributing 90.7 per cent (n=350) out of total respondents, which subsequently followed by the Indians which were 3.6 per cent (n=14), the Chinese which were 3.4 per cent (n=13) and other races (2.3 per cent, n=9). As for the education level, the majority of respondents possessed at least a bachelor's degree which contributed to 56 per cent (n=216) out of total respondents, followed by STPM, matriculation or diploma holders which were 22.3 per cent (n=86), SPM holders which were 17.4 per cent (n=67) and master's degree or doctorate level being the least by contributing only 4.4 per cent (n=17) of total respondents.

The frequency analysis also included travel characteristics of respondents which were portrayed in questions such as ‘have you ever visited Melaka before?’, ‘who accompanied you to Melaka?’ and also their mode of transportation while travelling to Melaka. Unsurprisingly, 96.6 per cent (n=373) of respondents admitted that they have visited Melaka before while the rest of the total respondents being the first timers (3.4 per cent, n=13). Next, majority of the respondents who travelled to Melaka were accompanied by their family (54.9 per cent, n=212), followed by their friends (31.9 per cent, n=123), being alone (7 per cent, n=27) and those who came with their partner being the least of which were only 6.2 per cent (n=24) of total respondents. As for mode of transportation used, it was revealed that those who travelled to Melaka by their own vehicle being the majority of 81.9 per cent (n=316), followed by those who took public transportation (11.7 per cent, n=45), rental vehicle (6.2 per cent, n=24) and via airplane which only took by 0.3 per cent (n=1) of respondents. With that, Table 2 depicts the analysis of demographic profiles of the respondents:

Table 2: Demographic Profiles

Items		N	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	109	28.2
	Female	277	71.8
Age	20-29 years	332	86.0
	30-39 years	30	7.8
	40-49 years	14	3.6
	50 years above	10	2.6
Marital Status	Married	73	18.9
	Single	313	81.1
Race	Malay	350	90.7
	Chinese	13	3.4
	Indians	14	3.6
	Others	9	2.3

## 6.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach’s coefficient of alpha was used to determine the reliability of instruments with minimum cut-off value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). After conducting the test of reliability to instruments of each variables involved in the study which are cognitive image, affective image, memorable tourism experience and revisit intention of domestic tourists in Melaka, results yielded that every variable involved possessed the value of Cronbach’s coefficient of alpha within the range of 0.81 to 0.96, indicating good to excellent internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). Hence it can be deduced that all instruments in the study are good in terms of the internal consistency of scales used. Table 3 below summarizes the value of Cronbach’s coefficient of alpha for cognitive image, affective image, memorable tourism experience and revisit intention:

Table 3: Reliability Analysis of Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
Cognitive Image	0.81	Good
Affective Image	0.90	Excellent
Memorable Tourism Experience	0.96	Excellent
Revisit Intention	0.94	Excellent

### 6.3 Regression Analysis

In answering the proposed hypotheses of the study, linear regression analysis was conducted. This is in line with Kumar et al. (2013) who posited that linear regression analysis can be used to analyse the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variable(s). Meanwhile, Sekaran and Bougie (2016) emphasized that regression analysis is used when one independent variable is hypothesized to affect one dependent variable which fits to the objectives of this study. Based on the result, it was found that the predictor variable which is destination image, explained only 36.8 per cent ( $R^2=.368$ ) of the variance in revisit intention among domestic tourists in Melaka. Meanwhile, the positive value of  $\beta=.607$ ,  $p<0.001$  indicated strong positive destination image of Melaka as predictor of revisit intention among domestic tourists in the state. Hence, hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported where it is in parallel with a study by Kani et al. (2017) in their attempt to find out the formation of destination image towards behavioural and revisit intention of tourists to Malaysia. The finding of their study confirmed that destination image leads to a tourist's revisit intention to a destination.

Going further, the first sub-hypothesis for H1 which is H1a revealed that cognitive image as a predictor, explained 29.8 per cent ( $R^2=.298$ ) of the variance in criterion variable which is revisit intention. Meanwhile, the positive value of  $\beta=.546$ ,  $p<0.001$  marked a strong positive influence of cognitive image of Melaka as a predictor on revisit intention among domestic tourists in the state. Thus, hypothesis 1a (H1a) is supported. On the other hand, result of H1b showed that affective image described 39.3 per cent ( $R^2=.393$ ) of the variance in revisit intention among domestic tourists in Melaka. Furthermore, the regression coefficient showed a significant positive value of  $\beta=.627$ ,  $p<0.001$ , indicating strong direct positive influence of affective image on revisit intention of domestic tourists in Melaka. In other words, this result confirmed that hypothesis 1b (H1b) is supported. Table 4 displays the results for hypothesis 1 and its sub-hypotheses.

As for the second main hypothesis (H2), it was found that destination image explained 61 per cent ( $R^2=.610$ ) of the total variance in memorable tourism experience. Furthermore, the positive regression coefficient showed a value of  $\beta=.781$ ,  $p<0.001$ , marking a strong positive influence of destination image as a predictor of memorable tourism experience. Thus, hypothesis 2 (H2) is supported. In line with the notion, this finding is supported by studies from Mahdzar et al. (2015) and Zhang et al. (2018) where they highly posited that cognitive image or destination attributes are supposed to affect one's tourism experience to be memorable. In line with this outcome, its first sub-hypothesis (H2a) yielded that cognitive image described 52.6 per cent ( $R^2=.526$ ) of the variance in memorable tourism experience. Moreover, the value of  $\beta=.725$ ,  $p<0.001$

indicated strong positive influence of cognitive image as a predictor towards memorable tourism experience. Hence, hypothesis 2a (H2a) is supported. Meanwhile, the second sub-hypothesis (H2b) showed that affective image explained 56.4 per cent ( $R^2=.564$ ) of the variance in memorable tourism experience. Plus, the positive value of regression coefficient  $\beta=.751$ ,  $p<0.001$  indicated a strong positive influence of affective image as a predictor on memorable tourism experience. Thus, hypothesis 2b (H2b) is supported. Table 5 depicts the results of analysis for hypothesis 2 and its sub-hypotheses.

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 1, 1a and 1b

Predictors	Model 1 Std. $\beta$
Destination Image Dimensions	.607***
$R^2$	.368
Adj. $R^2$	.367
$R^2$ Change	.368
F-Change	224.016***
Cognitive Image	.546***
$R^2$	.298
Adj. $R^2$	.296
$R^2$ Change	.298
F-Change	162.727***
Affective Image	.627***
$R^2$	.393
Adj. $R^2$	.392
$R^2$ Change	.393
F-Change	248.801***

\*Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Table 5: Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2, 2a and 2b

Predictors	Model 1 Std. $\beta$
Destination Image Dimensions	.781***
$R^2$	.610
Adj. $R^2$	.609
$R^2$ Change	.610
F-Change	601.133***
<b>Cognitive Image</b>	.725***
$R^2$	.526
Adj. $R^2$	.525
$R^2$ Change	.526
F-Change	425.939***
<b>Affective Image</b>	.751***

$R^2$	.564
Adj. $R^2$	.563
$R^2$ Change	.564
F-Change	496.225***

\*Dependent Variable: Memorable Tourism Experience, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Moving on to the third main hypothesis (H3), it was found that memorable tourism experience explained 55.7 per cent ( $R^2=.557$ ) of the variance in revisit intention. Furthermore, the positive value of regression coefficient  $\beta=.747$ ,  $p<0.001$  yielded that memorable tourism experience is a strong positive predictor on revisit intention of domestic tourists in Melaka. Thus, hypothesis 3 (H3) is supported. In addition, this finding was found to be heavily supported by several scholars who conducted studies with the same objective. Most of them posited that memorable tourism experience is one of the best determinants of a tourist's future behaviour, specifically the intention to revisit (Rahmani et al., 2014; Mahdzar et al., 2015; Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). This circumstance can be associated with the fact that tourists nowadays are heavily depending on consuming experiences rather than merely buying a product (Kim et al., 2012). Table 6 below presents the result of analysis for hypothesis 3.

Table 6: Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Predictors	Model 1 Std. $\beta$
Memorable Tourism Experience	.747***
$R^2$	.557
Adj. $R^2$	.556
$R^2$ Change	.557
F-Change	483.572***

\*Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

#### 6.4 Mediation Analysis

In order to answer the research's last main hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses, analyses of mediation were carried out. The analyses conducted followed traditional four steps and procedures by Baron and Kenny (1986) as they are known to be widely used among researchers when conducting mediation analysis (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The four steps of mediation analysis begin with determining the effect of predictor variable on mediating variable which should be significant, followed by ensuring the significance of effect of mediating variable on criterion variable, the significance of direct effect of predictor variable on criterion variable and lastly, conforming the effect of predictor variable on criterion variable which should be reduced or non-significant when mediating variable is introduced. Based on the procedures, it was revealed that the direct effect of destination image on tourists' revisit intention was significant

( $\beta=.607$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). However, when memorable tourism experience was introduced into the relationship, the effect of destination image on tourists' revisit intention was highly reduced to  $\beta=.061$ ,  $p<0.262$ , showing non-significant effect. Hence, it can be deduced that there is full mediation of memorable tourism experience on the effect of destination image on tourists' revisit intention. Therefore, hypothesis 4 (H4) is supported.

Going into the first sub-hypothesis, it was revealed that the direct effect of cognitive image on tourists' revisit intention was significant ( $\beta=.546$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). However, after memorable tourism experience entered the relationship, the effect of cognitive image on tourists' revisit intention was highly reduced to only  $\beta=.009$ ,  $p<0.859$ , showing non-significant effect. Hence, it can be deduced that there is full mediation of memorable tourism experience on the effect of cognitive image on tourists' revisit intention. Therefore, hypothesis 4a (H4a) is supported. On the other hand, for the last sub-hypothesis, it was found that there was significant influence of affective image on tourists' revisit intention ( $\beta=.627$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). However, when memorable tourism experience was introduced to the model, the strength of the influence of affective image on tourists' revisit intention was highly reduced to  $\beta=.152$ ,  $p<0.01$ . Since the influence of affective image on tourists' revisit intention mediated by memorable tourism experience was still significant, it can be deduced that there was a partial mediation. Therefore, hypothesis 4b (H4b) is partially supported. With that, Table 7 displays the results of mediation analysis conducted.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis

Predictor	Memorable Tourism Experience Std. $\beta$	Criterion Variable	
		Revisit Intention (Without Memorable Tourism Experience) Std. $\beta$	Revisit Intention (With Memorable Tourism Experience) Std. $\beta$
Destination Image	.781***	.607***	.061 ( $p=0.262$ )
$R^2$	.610	.368	.559
Adj. $R^2$	.609	.367	.557
$R^2$ Change	.610	.368	.559
F-Change	601.133***	224.016***	242.581***
Cognitive Image	.725***	.546***	.009( $p=.859$ )
$R^2$	.526	.298	.557
Adj. $R^2$	.525	.296	.555
$R^2$ Change	.526	.298	.557
F-Change	425.939***	162.727***	241.192***
Affective Image	.751***	.627***	.152**
$R^2$	.564	.393	.568

Adj. $R^2$	.563	.392	.565
$R^2$ Change	.564	.393	.568
F-Change	496.225***	248.801***	251.290***

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

## 7 Implications of the Study

Aside from meeting all objectives proposed, this study managed to come out with findings that may contribute to the enrichment of both theoretical and management perspectives in hospitality and tourism industry, specifically in Melaka. By examining the influence of destination image from cognitive and affective views on tourists' revisit intention, also when memorable tourism experience was introduced as a mediator, this study further confirms the findings of previous researches by other scholars.

On top of that, this study managed to address the vital role of affective image per se in shaping a memorable tourism experience of tourists which in turn influences their revisit intention. This finding can be considered as one of the ways in adding to the body of knowledge in the field of destination image and its consequences. Although most scholars have achieved consent that destination image comprises of cognitive and affective components, it is well-understood that most of researchers only and commonly focus on cognitive image, neglecting the role of affective component (Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017).

In addition, this study also offers contributions to the real-world industry of tourism. Findings of this study can be fathomed and taken as a driving tool by destination managers to draw a more effective and efficient planning in maintaining Melaka's image as a tourism destination. This includes managing the physical attributes of the destination and taking advantage of existing best-performing tourism components to tackle more existing tourists and might as well, potential tourists. Nevertheless, the affective image of the state should not be overlooked. Despite working hard on maintaining physical attributes of the state, it is of need to ensure the destination to portray the right mood or emotion since this study revealed that affective image has a great influence on tourists' behaviour.

In line with the notion, as tourists nowadays are becoming heavily concerned on the quality of experience consumed, tourism managers should emphasize more on creating programs which include intense involvement of tourists and delivering products or services that are novel and new so that each time a tourist revisits, they will always get something new to make it memorable regardless of how many times they have visited that place. Nevertheless, tourism promotional board such as Tourism Melaka needs to draw a little more focus on attracting domestic tourists by applying proper advertising, promotion or campaign that would catch their interest and eventually make Melaka as one of top destinations in their bucket list to revisit. This will give better destination competitiveness to Melaka. Since the country of Malaysia has many states in which each of them possesses its own uniqueness, it is of best for Melaka to always ensure its image stands out in the eyes of domestic tourists. By right, it is undoubted that tourism

managers or authorities need to consistently work hard in maintaining all those measures to continuously encourage tourist arrivals to the state.

## **8 Limitations and Conclusion**

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of destination image of Melaka on domestic tourists' revisit intention to the state, with the presence of their memorable tourism experience as a mediator. After procedures following the discipline of research methodology were conducted, it is of pride to acknowledge that the study managed to grasp its desired objectives through answered research questions and supported proposed hypotheses. However, it is of the researcher's knowledge that this study still possesses some limitations or drawbacks. First of all, the limitation is in terms of its contextual setting and sample respondents. Since this study only took the state of Melaka as its setting, the finding of the study may not be generalized to other states or countries. This is because, each destination has its own identity which may drive different perceptions of people towards each different destination. Therefore, the findings of this study need to be treated carefully. Moreover, this study only took up domestic tourists or the citizens of Malaysia as its contextual sample respondents—another drawback that may affect the generalizability of the result. Hence for future research, it is recommended that the same study which aims for the same objective to be conducted, but on different destination or sample context. It is interesting if the next researcher could target the international tourists to figure out their perceptions towards the topic.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to highlight again the crucial role of destination image from both the perspective of cognitive and affective components in the creation of one's tourism experience to be memorable which will influence their desire to revisit a destination. Specifically, in the case of Melaka, it can be concluded that when domestic tourists are influenced by the positive image of Melaka, it will lead to a positive intention to revisit the state. On top of that, when a domestic tourist possesses a positive memorable tourism experience, it will also lead to a significant positive revisit intention. Therefore, maintaining Melaka's image as a way to boost a domestic tourist's memorable tourism experience will remain as one of important concerns to trigger a vast number of tourist arrivals.

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