

## Tourism Images and the International Tourists Response Behaviour: A Case of Langkawi Island, Malaysia

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### Abstract

Image of a destination is one of the important determinants that influence tourists in making decision to choose a specific holiday destination. The most positive image a destination has the highest chances for it to be chosen by the tourists. This paper empirically investigates the causal relationship between Tourism Images and the international tourists' response behaviour using Langkawi Island, Malaysia as study contextual setting. The insight of this study is obtained through questionnaire surveyed with 384 the international tourists. Through the Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) a strong relationship between tourism images and response behaviour appeared. A country, destination and hotel image have strong impacts on international tourists' response behaviour which relate to word of mouth, recommendation and revisit intention. The good feedback and the promising insights from the viewpoint of the international tourists is giving varying consequences, repercussion and implication to central and state tourism authorities.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Images, International, Tourists, Response, Behaviour

### Introduction

As one of the leading service industries in the global economy and the impetuous movement tourism industry is continually hastening the globalization and support the income generating to the most countries (Ekanayake & Long, 2012; Esmail, 2016; & Ranabhat, 2015). According to World Travel and Tourism Council (2016), the total contribution of travel and tourism industry to the global economy was USD 7.17 trillion in 2015 which made up an average of 9.8% of the gross domestic product. This stated record proved that tourism represents one of the profitable industries and wealth creation. In fact, other than generating considerable foreign exchange revenues, this industry contributed to the overall outputs of the socio-economic development and employment of many countries (Giap, Gopalan & Ye, 2016; Nurbaeti, Damanik, Baiquni & Nopirin, 2016). The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2015) worldwide visitor arrivals exceeded one billion in 2017, driven by increases in

population, life expectancy, migration and changing in family structures. The expansion of the middle class countries in emerging economies notably in China and India has fuelled the tourism growth. With these changes, the effects on the nature of travel consumption as well as opportunities and challenges for the tourism industry are apparent (WTO 2016). In particular, the demand for tourism has increased and new tourist destinations have emerged, and competition in the tourism sector has intensified (Crouch, 2011; Getz & Brown, 2006).

While tourism is said to have a vital role in every nation's economic and development, the Malaysian tourism industry especially in the last two decades has contributed significantly to the country's economy with the gradual inbound flow of the international tourists from many countries especially China. The global expenditure by Chinese tourists have grown from USD 43.7 billion in 2009 to USD 292 billion in 2015 (Achilov, 2017). Malaysia also received tremendous number of tourist arrivals from China and experiencing the positive growth and welcomed around 1.8 million of Chinese travellers in 2013. In fact, Chinese tourists are one of the targeted markets for the development of tourism industry in Malaysia.

Despite this, the missing of Malaysia Airline flight MH370 and the hit of flight MH17 in 2014 really has given a bad hit or a negative impact to Malaysian tourism industry. Both incidents in a period of four months have resulted in a huge drop in the tourists coming to this country. Due to the disappearance of MH370 flight, at least 30,000 potential tourists from China have cancelled their holiday bookings to Malaysia until 2015 (Achilov, 2017). Although the circumstances of the two incidences are markedly distinct, it complicates the efforts to repair Malaysia's image since perception is a main key in branding. Malaysia is considered fortunate as after three years of the incidences, this country gradually able to attract millions of tourists. The clear evidence can be seen at the 2016-year end whereby Malaysia recorded around 26.8 million tourist arrivals and Langkawi Island is recorded the highest number of the international tourist receipts (Tourism Malaysia, 2017)

With regard to tourism in Langkawi Island, since 2015 the number of the international tourist receipts to this Island has steadily risen from 3.06 million to 3.62 million while investment rose from RM5.08 billion to RM11.9 billion (Langkawi Development Authority [LADA], 2013). Langkawi has been voted as the 6th hottest tourism destination in 2017 alongside Bali, Hawaii, and Mauritius. According to LADA (2018), after 2016 Langkawi has received around 2.4 million of local visitors and more than 1.5 million international visitors and continuously becoming more competitive in the international arena. The increase of international tourists' arrival since 2015, LADA and the central government continuously and aggressively developed this Island with modern infrastructure and accommodation facilities. This eventually has transformed Langkawi into a modern tourism Island (Leman, Ghani, Komoo & Norhayati, 2007) and becoming internationally competitive tourist destination (Jaafar & Maideen, 2012). Some said this Island is nothing less than the superlatives but incredible, phenomenal, outstanding, exceptional, incomparable, inspiring and triumphant unrivalled. In short, with the continuous marketing efforts and initiatives Langkawi Island has successfully sustained its tourism destination image.

### ***Problem Statement***

In line with the preceding notion, it has also been widely acknowledged that destination images affect tourists' subjective perception, consequent behavior and destination choice (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001; Chon 1990, 1992; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Milman & Pizan, 1995;). Many researchers modeled images as a function of marketing information or other external stimuli (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1972). For example, in one of the first conceptualisations of the destination image, Gunn (1972) proposed that destination images are formed from the types of information that tourists received. It is argued that destination images are divided into two levels: 1) organic and 2) induced images. In tourism, tourists develop a more complex and differentiated image from induced image throughout the actual visitation experience (Gallarza, Saura & García, 2002). In other word, destination images represent the effects of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has on destination (Tasci & Gartner, 2007).

Due to that, tourists' behavioral intention is expected to be partly conditioned by the images that they have in the destinations. The images will influence tourists in the process of choosing a destination, the subsequent evaluation of the trip and in their future intentions or known as response behaviour. Destination images exercises a positive influence on perceived quality and satisfaction. A positive image deriving from positive travel experiences would result in a positive evaluation of a destination (Gallarza et al., 2002; Tasci et al., 2007). Tourist satisfaction will improve if the destination has a positive image and destination image also affects tourists' behavioral intentions. Paskaleva-Shapira (2007) on the other hand contended that more favorable image would lead to higher likelihood to return to the same destination as long as it is free from any destruction or environmental turbulences. Oliver (1997) initially stated that destination images might influence the customer's response behaviour. In this sense, he posited that response behaviour is closely associated with likelihood to engage in certain behaviour and this also dealing with an attitude of consumers' intentions to repertoires a service or product after having experienced it. Many researchers confirmed that intention to repurchase and recommending behaviours or word of mouth are the two main consequences of response behaviour (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Based on the literature review, the available studies on tourists response behaviour were mainly focused on the relationship between customer satisfaction, trust and destination loyalty (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Lin & Ding, 2006), customer tourism and branding bonding (Mitchell & Orwig, 2002), destination selection and image (Chaudhary, 2000; Chen & Hsu, 2000; Elliot, 2007; Galarza et al., 2002), destination performance and tourist intended loyalty (Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Petrick & Backman, 2001). Nevertheless, there are still lack of studies centrally focus on causal relationships between tourism image and revisit intention towards a specific destination (Chaudhary, 2000; Chen & Hsu, 2000; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Elliot, 2007; Gallarza et al., 2002; Lin & Ding, 2006; and Mohammed et al., 2014). Out of these, Mohammed et al. (2014) found that the destination image of United Arab Emirates had a slight impact on the international tourist's revisit intention to that country.

Using Mohammed et al. (2014) study as a fundamental basis, this study brings forth three components of tourism images that are hotel image, destination image and country image and using Langkawi Island, Malaysia as a contextual setting. This is particular important

as Langkawi Island is a major tourist destination in Malaysia, well-known for its destination and hotels among the international tourists. As Langkawi is also under the control of central government it is therefore imperative to it from country perspective. With that, this study investigates the causal relationship between Tourism Images and the international tourists' response behaviour. This objective is testing through one main hypothesis and three sub hypotheses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Tourism Image and Response Behavior

H1.1 There is a significant relationship between Country Image and Response Behavior

H1.2 There is a significant relationship between Destination Image and Response Behavior

H1.3 There is a significant relationship between Hotel Image and Response Behavior

## **Literature Review**

### ***Tourism Image***

The perception formed within the mind of tourists on a particular tourism destination is a very important matter for the tourism service provider as it could influence the intention and action of the tourists. Positive image associated with certain tourism destination will most likely to correlate with positive intention to visit such destination. Thus, having a good tourism images will certainly help to place such destination in more favourable spot in tourist's mind. In the current study, the manifestation of tourism images is represented by three underlying dimensions which are: i) country image, ii) destination image and iii) hotel image.

### ***Country Image***

Understanding the image of the nation is important. It predicts direct supportive behaviours of the nation, politically and economically as well as purchase intentions of the product from the country-of-origin and visit intentions as tourists (Elliot et al., 2011; Heslop & Papadopoulos 1993; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992). According to Grunig and Hung (2002), nation image is the outcome of perceived attributes (object-attribute representation) and objects (object-object representation) associated with the nation and the perception of the behaviour of the people and organizations from the nations (behavioural representation). Image communication conducted by nation branding and public diplomacy has been understood as a tool to enhance the image (Dagyt & Zykas, 2008). Although the full spectrum of country image is the outcome of a combination of image communication, extant studies have not captured the holistic picture of the image. In proposing the concept of country image, the spectrum of image is revisited; dimensions of the cognitive and affective components defined in the extant studies in country image and public diplomacy are synthesized in conceptualizing current country image.

Country image has been examined conceptually as place image at the nation level. The term place denotes diverse types of geographic locale. As opposed to similar terms (e.g.,

areas, regions, and locations), place is used when perceptual functions and experiences of individuals are the focus (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt, & Watts, 2011). The term incorporates diverse scopes: it is discussed at the nation, region or city, or other local levels. Place also is used as the most general term which comprises diverse sectors including tourism. As “place” is a broad term, place image also includes many related concepts such as nation image or destination image. Despite such a broad scope of place image, the term has been used interchangeably with destination image (Selby & Morgan, 1996; Trauer & Ryan, 2005) or in the context of place marketing (Avraham & Ketter, 2008).

Since Schooler (1965) first suggested the impact of origin country images on forming product biases, research on country image and related topics has developed into a history spanning fifty years (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Table 3.1 summarizes the major studies of country image, including the concepts used in each study. First, research on country image began from the concept of country-of-origin, which indicates the manufacturing country where the product is “made in” (Nagashima, 1970). Before globalization, this country-of-origin concept simply indicated a single country where the product was “made in,” by associating the product-country as “Ford from the United States” or “Toyota from Japan” (Han, 1989). In the country-of-origin era, the meaning of country image was rather limited to the image of the “products” made in a particular country (Nagashima, 1970). For example, Nagashima (1970) viewed country image as consumers’ beliefs about a particular country’s product attributes, such as price, value, and quality (Nagashima, 1970). Han (1989) also defined country image as the generalized belief about the overall quality of the country’s products (i.e., either good or bad).

However, in later research conducted from 1980-1990s, researchers began understanding country image as a more general image toward a particular country, such as consumers’ perception of a country’s total scope of economics, technology, people, products, etc. (e.g., Josiassen et al., 2013; Laroche et al., 2005). Table 3.1 describes how various terms of country image, country-of-origin, etc. have inconsistently been used across studies.

Pappu, Quester, and Cooksey (2007) explained that a broader concept of country image represents a macro approach that studies the total descriptive beliefs about a particular country, while the old country-of-origin concept presents a micro approach focusing only on the product images of a given country. Figure 3.1 describes such differences between the past country-of-origin concept and today’s country image principle. Pappu et al. (2007) argued that the later, broader country image concept is more desirable in measuring a comprehensive country image, as it captures both macro (e.g., the country’s economics, people, society products, etc.) and micro (i.e., the country’s products) aspects. Thus, in this study, the recent comprehensive concept of country image is used to refer to the overall beliefs that consumers hold toward the multi-facets of a particular country, such as the country’s economics, people, technology, and products (Josiassen et al., 2013). This comprehensive concept of country image has thus been broadened into the research stream of place branding or country branding, which promotes the overall image of places/countries created by their culture, environments and people, not only by the products (Heslop & Papadopoulos, 1993).



### ***Destination Image***

The concept of destination image and its importance in travel and tourism was acknowledged in the early 1970s in tourism literature. Destination image has been a popular topic of study in tourism due to its practical importance for destination management, marketing, branding, and its great contribution to the understanding of tourist behaviour. The significance of destination image has been recognized by several scholars in tourism-related fields. Despite the increasing interest in destination image, most of the studies related to this area are insufficiently theory based and there is a lack of solid conceptualization.

Previous research on destination image can be categorized into destination image formation (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Phelps, 1986), the meanings of destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Dann, 1996; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gartner, 1994; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007), the assessment of destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Jenkins, 1999; Lee, 2009; Prayag, 2009), and factors influencing destination image (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Martin & Bosque, 2008; Milman & Pizan, 1995).

Gunn (1972) and Hunt (1975) were the first researchers that introduce the concept of destination image in tourism studies. The most approved definition of destination image was provided by Crompton (1979) as the accumulation of beliefs, ideas and impressions that an individual has of a destination. Meanwhile, Phelps (1986) defined destination image as individuals' preference, perceptions or impressions of a place. Destination image is valuable to tourism because it is the link between a destination and a tourist, and it influences tourist's destination choice (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000).

Several researchers (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007) attempted to provide an overview of destination image studies. Echtner and Ritchie (2003) reviewed and analysed 15 studies on destination image during 1975-1990. They suggested that the methodologies used to identify the components of destination image cannot be exclusively structured or unstructured. The existing literature on destination image studies has been divided into three categories: (1) conceptualization and dimensions of the destination image construct; (2) destination image formation; and (3) measurement of destination image.

### ***Hotel Image***

Based on a study by Nguyen & LeBlanc and (2002), it is now established that there are five elements that serve as the backbone of hotel image which is: i) physical environment, ii) contact personnel, iii) quality of services, iv) corporate identity and v) accessibility. Besides, Heung (1996) and Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000) offer empirical evidence showing that hotel image is an important factor among loyal customers. Other studies as found in Back (2001) used social and ideal social self-image congruence to test customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, whereas Sirgy et al. (1997) tested a new method of measuring actual self-image congruence through six studies.

In the same study, Sirgy et al. (1997) also measured self-image congruence and consumer behaviour using four self-concepts: 1) actual self-image, 2) ideal self-image, 3) social self-image, and 4) ideal social self-image. Moreover, image-congruence is argued to influence preference, purchase intention, ownership, usage and loyalty to specific products as consumers prefer or search for products which have images compatible with their perceptions of self (Ericksen, 1996; Landon, 1974; Mehta, 1999). In most studies, repeat

intention is proposed as the outcome and a positive correlation was found between image and intention. The findings were quite consistent in studies related to consumer behaviour and tourism (Court & Lupton, 1997; Mayo, 1973; Reibstein, Lovelock & Dobson, 1980).

### ***Response Behaviour***

The consumers' actual behaviours are strongly predicted by their response behaviour or behaviour intention is found in Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). Howard and Sheth (1969) asserted that intention is a rendering of a consumer's attitude, confidence and anticipation about a certain purchase plan that inhibits the effect of attitude and confidence while it is conceived as a position of a consumer who deliberates about purchasing a product during an anticipated time frame. Scholars like MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986); Mullen and Johnson (1990) have applied intention as a proxy measure for purchase behaviour with the assumption that favourable results from consumers' internal processes in response to a product and this will lead to their purchase of that product (Kim & Richardson, 2003). It has also been established that the actual behaviour is more closely related to response behaviour than attitudes, beliefs or feelings (Granbois & Summers, 1975; Reibstein, 1978; Warshaw, 1980). Thus, response behaviour should yield the most accurate prediction of future behaviour (Warshaw & Davis, 1985).

Oliver (1997) defined response behaviour as an affirmed likelihood to engage in certain behaviour. It is an attitude that is strongly related to consumers' intentions to repurchase a service or product and to engage in word-of-mouth communication (Ryu & Han, 2011) based on previous experience or even based on prior information (Oliver, 1997). Because response behaviour is easier to measure than actual, they are often used to evaluate consumers' likely future behaviour. It has been well established that two main consequences of the actual behaviour and in the context of present study that is: 1) intentions to repurchase and 2) recommending behaviours. Invariably, favourable response behaviour may come by way of purchasing the product for the second time or saying positive things about the service and recommending the service to others (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

In the tourism perspective, the impact of previous visitation experience on future destination choice or repeat visitation was investigated by scholars like Gitelson and Crompton (1984); Chon (1990) and Mansfeld (1980). The findings of Gitelson and Crompton (1984) affirmed that repeat visitors are seeking relaxation while new visitors are more interested in seeking variety while people with a mundane and unexciting daily routine will seek novel trip with high arousal and the case different those with a hectic and fast-paced life who prefer familiar environments that provide relaxation. On the other hand, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) posited that tourists developed a more complex and differentiated image of a destination after the first actual visitation during which there is an image change whereas subsequent repeat visits tend to reconfirm the previously-formed images.

Risk reduction and satisfied with particular destination, risk reduction or find same kind of people, emotional attachments to particular destination, further exploration of destination and show destination to other people are the factors influencing tourists return to a particular destination (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984). This is in fact consistent with theories

of risk aversion that past satisfactory holiday experiences also determining the repeat destination choices (Ryan, 1995). The importance of previous experience on the destination choice process has been stressed by many scholars (e. g. Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Familiarity with a destination help potential repeat visitors to either select or reject it and it is contingent upon their past experience and in so doing, they may not even look for information on other destinations for their next destination choice if they chose to re-visit.

In the context of this study, the tourist response behaviour is about planning to revisiting and recommending the same destination to friends and relatives. Boulding et al. (1993) developed a multiple-dimensional measure of response behaviour; repurchase intentions and willingness to recommend. The six-item scale was used to measure response behaviour in their study involving service quality at an educational institution. As such, it comprised education-specific items such as intent to contribute money to the class pledge and intent to recommend the school to employers as a place to recruit. Loyalty to the company, propensity to switch, willingness to pay more, external response to a problem and internal response to a problem are the dimensions of post purchase behaviour or response behaviour identified by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994). Likelihood of paying a price premium, remaining loyal to a company even when its prices go up, intention of doing business with the firm in the future, and complaint intentions when service problems occur are the response received in testing the post behaviour intention (Zeithaml et al. 1996). These items were later grouped into dimensions of willingness to pay more, propensity to switch, loyalty to company, external response to a problem and internal response to a problem.

In testing the causal relationships between destination image, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention using the United Arab Emirates as a case study, Mohammed et al. (2014) revealed that destination image significantly contributed to the prediction of the international tourists' satisfaction. Second, tourist satisfaction had an impact on their revisit intention and third, satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image and international tourists' revisit intentions. Thus, they suggested that providing excellent internal and external services by all parties to the international tourists respectively with memorable experiences and overall satisfaction will evoke a set of image, thus creating intention to revisit behaviour. Similar results were initial and later obtained by many other researchers either in marketing and consumer purchase behaviour (Lee, Petrick & Crompton, 2007; Bendall-Lyon & Powers, 2004; Castro, Armario & Ruiz, 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Tian-Cole et al., 2002; Um, Chon & Ro, 2006).

## **Methodology**

### ***Sampling and Instruments***

A causal research design using a quantitative approach through a cross sectional study and self-administered survey questionnaire was applied. As this study was specifically looking at the Langkawi Island as study contextual setting, the population and the units of analysis were the individual's international tourists who visited the Langkawi Island. The individuals of the international tourists believe to be suitable in the context this study as they are fit to evaluate the investigated issue compares to the local tourists which are more familiar with the island. With that, the survey was planned be undertaken at the Langkawi International



Airport before the international tourist depart to other destination or going back to their country as they had experienced most of the elements in the island.

The survey instrument comprised three major sections of which section A is solicited the demographic information of the respondents which included gender, age, marital status, household income, occupation and level of education. Forty-six (46) items were used in section B in measuring the destination image which consisted of three dimensions: 1) the country image (16 items), 2) the destination image (10 items) and 3) the hotel image (18 items). Section C used eleven (11) items to measure tourist response behaviour. The seven-point Likert scale is used to measure respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement which a score closer to 7 would mean a very strong attitude in favour of the statement while a score closer to 1 would mean a very strong attitude against the statement. A pilot study was conducted to verify and confirm the reliability and validity of the items used before a final version of the questionnaire is confirmed.

### ***Data collection***

As previously mentioned, it was intended to collect the data at the Langkawi International Airport (LIA) prior to the tourists' departure. Thus, before carrying out the survey, the LIA management was contacted to obtain permission for undertaking the survey. After one week, a follow-up phone call was carried out and the LIA management agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the survey inside the satellite building and the departure hall within a three-week period. Before administering the actual survey, the researcher checked the flight schedules (check-in and departure times) for every flight to plan the most suitable time for survey to be conducted. Based on the information, it was decided to conduct the survey between 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. every day based on stipulated period.

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and three assistants from Tourism Malaysia, Langkawi. Respondents were approached and briefed on the purpose of the survey and seeking them to participate. During the survey, most of the international tourists gave full cooperation and commitment, however there were several difficulties encountered by the researcher. For instance, on the first day of the survey the international tourists were first approached by the researcher around the check-in counter. Unfortunately, it was hard to approach them in this area as majority of them after check-in their luggage rushed to the departure hall. Owing to this difficulty, the survey was then conducted inside the departure hall area where most of the international tourists were waiting for their flight. Despite this difficulty, the researcher managed to survey around 25 to 30 international tourists per day. In light of the positive feedback and the absence of any obvious problem with either the instrument or the process, good responses with a total of 432 questionnaires were distributed and only 384 were usable questionnaires due to excessive missing data.

### **Analysis and Results**

#### ***Respondents Profile***

Based on frequency test, 51% (n= 197) of the respondents were female respondents, as opposed to 49% (n= 187) male. 30.5% (n=117) were in the range of 30 to 39 years old and similar percentage (30.5%, n=117) in range 40 to 49 years old (30.5%). 8.6% (n=6) of them is 60 years old and above whereas 7.0% (n=27) between 50-59 years old while 6.8% (n= 26) in

the range of age less than 20 years old. 33.9% (n=130) of the respondents are single, 24.5% (n=94) are married without children, 30.5% (n=117) are married with children whereas about 11.2% (n=43) were widowed or divorced. 31.8% (n= 122) having a household income in the range of US40, 000 to US59, 000, 26.3% (n=101) earned between US60,000 – US79,000 yearly, 19.3% (n=74) having yearly income between US20,000 – US39,000, 14.1% (n=54) earning less than US20,000 whereas only 8.6% (n=33) of the respondents indicated that their household income is around US80, 000 and above. 34.1% (n=131) of the respondents are self-employed, followed by 24.0% (n=92) among the professional workers, 21.1% (n=81) are among other occupation. 13.0% (n=50) among the student and finally 7.8% (n=30) were among the retiree. On educational level, 37.8% (n=145) of the respondents possessed postgraduate qualification, 31.0% (n=119) having a bachelor's degree qualification, 17.7% (n=68) holding a diploma, 9.4% (n=36) completed the high school and 4.2% (n=16) completed the junior high school.

### Descriptive Statistic

#### Country Image

A descriptive analysis was undertaken on the independent variables and the dependent variable. Table 1 shows the results of the descriptive analysis relating to country image. The average value of all items was in the range of 4.51 to 5.50. This indicated that the respondents slightly agree with all the items. Also, majority median values for the indicators in variable were 5.00. It is indicating that more than half of the respondent's response to slightly agree with the instruments associated with these variables indicators.

Table 1

*Descriptive for Country Image*

Code	Description	Mean	S.D	Median
<b>Country Image</b>				
cim1	Malaysia has a high standard of cleanliness	5.17	1.16	5.00
cim2	Malaysia has natural scenic beauty	5.34	1.03	5.00
cim3	Lodgings properties in Malaysia are easy to find	5.31	1.01	5.00
cim4	Restaurants in Malaysia are of good quality	5.20	1.07	5.00
cim5	Prices product and services in Malaysia are affordable	5.22	1.05	5.00
cim6	Good tourist accommodation in Malaysia is readily available	5.27	1.03	5.00
cim7	In Malaysia, there are many places of interest to visit	5.34	1.04	5.00
cim8	A visit to Malaysia is a real adventure	5.31	1.05	5.00
cim9	Food in Malaysia is different from mine	5.35	1.10	6.00
cim10	There are restful and relaxing place to visit in Malaysia	5.34	1.04	5.00
cim11	Malaysia has a good nightlife	5.18	1.11	5.00
cim12	The weather in Malaysia is pleasant	5.26	1.07	5.00
cim13	The standard living in Malaysia is high	5.25	1.03	5.00
cim14	Local architecture styles in Malaysia are different from mine	5.34	0.99	5.00

cim15	In general, it is a safe to visit Malaysia	5.39	0.98	6.00
cim16	Everything in Malaysia different and fascinating	5.30	0.92	5.00
cim17	Hygiene standards in Malaysia are high	5.13	0.95	5.00
cim18	Local people in Malaysia are friendly	4.93	1.18	5.00

Scale: 1= Totally disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= Neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= Totally agree

### ***Destination Image***

Table 2 report the descriptive statistic undertaken on destination image. The magnitude of the mean scores is ranging from 5.04 to 5.42 indicate that respondents slightly agree with all item used in this section. As such they slight agree with cleanliness, natural scenic beauty, lodgings, restaurants, price, places of interest and restful and relaxing place. Besides these, all the median values for this variable indicator were 5.00 which clearly indicating that more than half of the respondents slightly agree with all items.

Table 2

#### ***Descriptive for Country Image***

Code	Description	Mean	S.D	Median
<b>Destination Image</b>				
dim1	Local standard of cleanliness is high	5.25	1.17	5.00
dim2	It has natural scenic beauty	5.41	1.12	6.00
dim3	Lodgings properties are easy to find	5.37	1.11	6.00
dim4	Restaurants are of good quality	5.32	1.12	5.00
dim5	Prices are affordable	5.33	1.08	5.00
dim6	Good tourist accommodation is readily available	5.37	1.10	5.00
dim7	Many places of interest to visit	5.42	1.04	6.00
dim8	A visit to Langkawi is a real adventure	5.39	1.07	6.00
dim9	There are restful and relaxing place to visit	5.04	1.18	5.00

Scale: 1= Totally disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= Neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= Totally agree,

### ***Hotel Image***

Table 3 shows summary result of the descriptive statistic for Hotel Image variable. The average value or magnitude of the mean scores was in the range of 5.07 to 5.47. This indicated that, the levels of agreement for this variable was at the slightly agree. Also, majority median values for all items were at 5.00. This manifestly indicating that more than half of the responses slightly agree with all items relate to hotel image.

Table 3

#### ***Descriptive for Hotel Image***

Code	Description	Mean	S.D	Median
<b>Hotel Image</b>				
him1	The standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high	5.21	1.22	5.00
him2	The hotel is located in an area natural scenic beauty	5.23	1.18	5.00
him3	The hotels are easy to find	5.07	1.29	5.00

him4	Restaurants at the hotel are of good quality	5.26	1.24	5.00
him5	The hotel rates are affordable	5.31	1.17	5.00
him6	Good hotel is readily available	5.32	1.15	5.00
him7	The hotel is in the proximity to places of interest	5.47	1.11	6.00
him8	A stay in the hotel is a real adventure	5.42	1.09	6.00
him9	Food served at the hotel is excellent	5.39	1.05	6.00
him10	There are restful and relaxing atmosphere in the hotel	5.31	1.12	5.00
him11	The hotel provides good nightlife	5.25	1.26	5.00
him12	The ambiance of the hotel is pleasant	5.28	1.20	5.00
him13	The standard of hospitality is high	5.34	1.12	5.00
him14	Local architecture styles of the hotel are exotic	5.26	1.21	5.00
him15	In general, it is a safe to stay at the hotel	5.27	1.21	5.00
him16	Everything about the hotel is different and fascinating	5.26	1.19	5.00
him17	The hygiene standards of the hotel are high	5.22	1.15	5.00
him18	The frontline employees of the hotel are friendly	5.19	1.11	5.00

Scale: 1= totally disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= Neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= Totally agree,

### **Response Behaviour**

Table 4 show the result of descriptive analysis on response behaviour which is the dependent variable of the study. This response behaviour comprises of three elements that are revisit intention, word of mouth, and recommendation. The magnitude of the mean score is ranged from 4.86 to 5.29. The median values for all items were at 5.00. This clearly signifies that respondents were slightly agree with all item probed in this section.

Table 4

#### *Descriptive for Response Behaviour*

Code	Description	Mean	S.D	Median
<b>Response Behaviour</b>				
Reb1	I will revisit Langkawi as my dream destination	5.29	1.01	5.00
Reb2	I will consider Langkawi Island as my first choice destination for next visit	5.26	1.01	5.00
Reb3	I will patronize Langkawi trip more often in the future	5.26	0.94	5.00
Reb4	I will say positive things about Langkawi Island	4.86	1.05	5.00
Reb5	I will spread positive word-of-mouth about Langkawi	4.74	1.10	5.00
Reb6	I will attempt to influence my friend and family not to visit Langkawi again	5.29	1.09	5.00
Reb7	I will convince my friends & family to visit Langkawi	4.92	0.83	5.00
Reb8	I will strongly recommend Langkawi to my friend and family	4.88	0.84	5.00
Reb0	I will recommend Langkawi to someone who seeks my advice and information about this destination	4.86	0.79	5.00

Scale: 1= Totally Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly disagree, 4= Neither, 5= Slightly Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Totally agree,

### ***Partial Least Square (PLS)***

According to Hair et al. (2014) the evaluation of the measurement model has to be reviewed first before the structural model can be evaluated when PLS-SEM statistical method is used. The key aspects to determine the quality of the measurement model is through assessing the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011). In the convergent validity, a criterion such as indicator loadings, Cronbach Alpha reliability ( $\alpha$ ), Composite reliability ( $\rho$ ), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used. In addition, two types of discriminant validity assessment, Fornell-Larcker and Cross-loading assessments were also performed to evaluate the discriminant validity of the measurement models. The measurement model specifies the relationships between unobserved or latent variables.

After three set measurement models the results indicated that all the indicators in this measurement model were above the recommended stringent threshold loading value which was more than .707. Therefore, all indicators in this model were valid from aspect of this analysis and no indicators were removed. Besides that, the results confirmed that each indicator was able to share for at least 50.0% (.707<sup>2</sup>) of the explained variance to explain the latent construct measurement (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2009). Also, all the indicators in this measurement model were significantly loaded towards their respective latent construct, because the observed t-value for each indicator were significantly more than 99% critical value of t-statistics (i.e. Observed t-value > 2.58). Therefore, it can conclude that, about 99% level of confidence that all the indicators that had been used in this measurement model were correctly measuring their respectively latent construct.

The assessment of the AVE for each construct in this measurement model was also performed. The analysis indicated that each latent construct AVE value was above the minimum cut-off value suggested by Ringle et al. (2013) and Hair et al. (2014), which was above .50, where the range of the AVE value was .678 to .822. It leads to the conclusion that, the minimum total amount of the indicators variance were highly shared to their respectively latent construct rather than other latent constructs which were 67.8% of explained variance. All indicators that had been used in the third order measurement model have an adequate degree of the convergent validity and unidimensionality criterion.

With regards to discriminant validity through Fornell-Larcker discriminant approach, the result confirms that all the indicators were highly loaded towards their respective latent construct compared to other latent constructs. Based on this discriminant assessment, the loadings of the indicators were separated across the latent variables as theorized in the theoretical model. Therefore, the discrimination situation for each latent construct in the third order measurement exist which is consistent with the Fornell-Larcker discrimination analysis results. As a conclusion, all approaches for measuring the third order measurement model were satisfied. Hence it can be concluded that all indicators in this measurement model were valid. In other words, this measurement model has good level of convergent and discriminant validities.



### Path Coefficient Evaluation

The next assessment of the PLS-SEM structural model was based on the path coefficient in the both structural models. In this assessment, the important aspects that need to be evaluated were the path coefficient signs and also the significance of the path coefficients (Astrachan et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2013). According to Hair et al. (2014), the signs of the path coefficients must follow the theoretical foundation of the direction of the path, whereas bootstrapping procedure was performed to measure the significance of the path coefficients by evaluating the observed t-value and also 95% bootstrap confidence interval. In this study, 5000 subsamples (i.e. 5000 bootstrap samples) were performed to assess the significant path coefficients of the structural model (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2013).

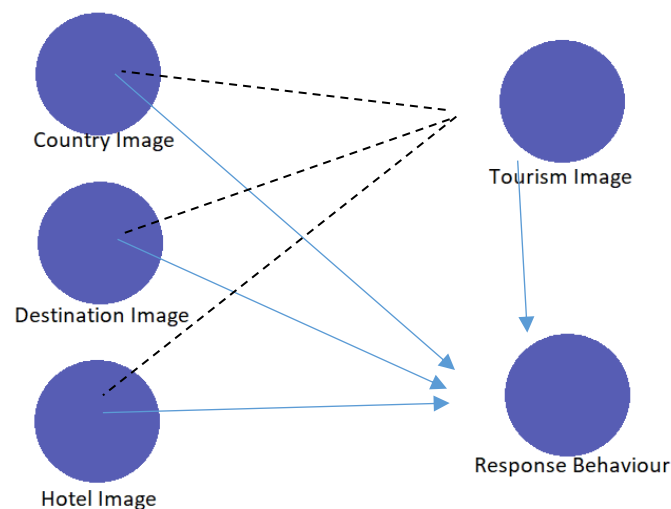


Figure 1: Coefficients of structural model

Table 5

*Path coefficients of structural model*

Path	Path Coefficient	Observed t-value <sup>a</sup>	Significance 2-tailed	95% Bootstrap Confidence Interval	
				Bootstrap Percentile	Bootstrap-t
TI → RB	.402	6.485**	<.001	(0.130, 0.370)	(0.171, 0.412)
CI → RB	.196	2.815**	.005	(0.061, 0.333)	(0.060, 0.333)
DI → RB	.149	2.899**	.004	(0.062, 0.263)	(0.048, 0.249)
HI → RB	.118	2.032*	.043	(0.002, 0.263)	(0.004, 0.231)

Note: TI = Tourism Image; CI = Country Image; DI = Destination Image; HI = Hotel Image; RB = Response Behaviour

Table 5 shows the results of the path coefficients in the proposed structural model. The results indicated that only three path coefficients (i.e. TI → RB, CI → RB, and DI → RB)

were significant for at least at 99% level of confidence interval since the observed t-value for each path coefficient was bigger than the critical value of t-statistics (i.e. t-value > 1.96), whereas another paths (HI → RB) was found to be statistically significant since the observed t-value was larger than for at least 95% critical value of t-statistics (t-value > 1.96).

To summarize, it was also found that Country Image ( $\hat{\beta} = 0.196, t = 2.815, p < .01$ ), Destination Image ( $\hat{\beta} = 0.149, t = 2.899, p < .01$ ), and Hotel Image ( $\hat{\beta} = 0.118, t = 2.032, p < .05$ ) has simultaneously and positively significant direct effect towards Response Behaviour, Therefore, it can be concluded that, if the Country Image, Destination Image, and Hotel Image were high, then the average value of Response Behaviour will be high. In the simultaneous concept, it was also found that Tourism Image ( $\beta^* = 0.402, t = 6.485, p < .01$ ) has simultaneously and positively significant direct effect towards Response Behaviour.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This research finding showed a strong relationship between tourism images and response behaviour. Specifically, country, destination and hotel image on having a strong impact on the international tourists' response behaviour. They specifically relate to word of mouth, dissemination of information and revisit intention. This is in fact consistent with the notion that tourists travel to be correlated with products and images and actual travel experience to a country to have influence tourists' evaluations of that country's products and images. Some scholars argued that image-congruence influence preference, purchase intention, ownership, usage and loyalty to specific products as consumers prefer or search for products which have images compatible with their perceptions of their own self. In this sense, country, destination and hotel image through physical environment, products and services, accommodation, contact personnel, corporate identity and accessibility somewhat influence the international tourists post behavioural toward the Langkawi Island as contextual setting of the study.

With this promising indication, the central and state tourism authorities through the marketing department needs to continuously and increase what they have already done to promote Langkawi as a land of fascinating island life, adventure attraction, and diverse culture to the international tourists. Various marketing tools likes world wide web, overseas promotional campaign, brochures, pamphlets, internet ads, television, commercial and social networking not only should be made known but more effective and reach their potential target market. The combination of the conventional and modern approaches of the marketing tools would at least if not all make Langkawi attractions and activities not only attracting the local but increasing it recognition among the international tourists at the same time enhancing and uplifting it destination image. An aggressive promotion should be able to induce positive image among potential visitors by providing adequate information on the Island as a tourist destination. Finally, all the related authorities should together lend their hands in sustaining and constantly improving the existing tourism products which will uplift the image of Langkawi as tourist destination in the eyes of the international tourists. Failure to develop such a commonality of approach may lead to meaningless effort even though there are thousands of glorious and wonderful tourism products in that particular country could be offered.

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