# Determinants of Tourist Loyalty: Empirical Insights from Langkawi, Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between destination image, food image, and trip quality toward the tourist loyalty in Langkawi, Malaysia. To achieve these goals there are few variables and factors that had been figured out. These variables are destination image, food image, and trip quality. The quantitative research approach was used and 384 respondents that are currently travel in Langkawi; Malaysia were involved in this research. The result revealed that there is a significant effect of destination image, food image, and trip quality toward the tourist's loyalty whereby tourist's loyalty was influenced primarily by destination image, followed by food image and trip quality was significantly lower. This study aids tourism industry participants in better understanding the problem and improving their ability to develop and implement more effective promotions that utilize the services and deliver the best possible experience to Langkawi.

**Keywords:** Destination image, food image, trip quality, tourist loyalty

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry has become more important and is considered as one of the largest businesses in the world (Sofronov, 2018). It is still growing worldwide and plays an important role in the economic sector (Sinta et al., 2023; David, 2014; Liu et al., 2012). Tourism is the activities of people travel to places outside their usual environment for business, leisure or other purposes for not more than one consecutive year. The tourist industry in Malaysia is also a key contributor to the country's economic growth, particularly in terms of foreign exchange revenues and employment generation. This rise happens as a result of the large number of international and local tourists who have selected Malaysia as a tourism destination (Puah et al., 2021).

This can be proven when Malaysia received more than 26 million foreign tourists with the value of expenditure recorded to reach RM86.14 billion, increasing one and 2.4 percent respectively in 2019 compared to 2018 (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). Statistics for 2020 show that ASEAN countries remain the largest contributor of international tourists to Malaysia by welcoming a total of 4,576,636 tourists with a share of 7.8 percent, equivalent to 2,868,359 tourists.

However, in 2020, Malaysia was shocked by the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), which hit Malaysia and the whole world. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Malaysia's tourism sector has lost a billion dollars in the first six months of this year (Hamid et al., 2021). The outbreak also shook the tourism industry, which was dealing with dwindling visitor numbers, a lack of product innovation, and a reluctance to convert to digital operations as a result of the epidemic. In actuality, the Visit Malaysia 2020 Year campaign's goal of attracting 30 million international tourists has yet to be realized. As a result, the government has set out on a quest to repair and reinvigorate the tourism industry, which includes Malaysia's famous island of Langkawi.

Degradation of natural resources and land structure, detrimental tourism activity, modification of flora and fauna life, pollution, poor infrastructure, water shortages, and ferry service problems all contributed to the declining visitor arrival trend (Lam-González et al., 2022; Rosello et al., 2020). As a result of these difficulties, Langkawi's UNESCO Global Geopark classification has been revoked, putting the island's tourism business in jeopardy. To make matters worse, little has been done to address the problems and update the island's infrastructure, adding to the stress on an already vulnerable ecosystem.

Tourism performance report by Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) revealed that the numbers of tourist visiting Langkawi reflected declining pattern in 2018. The island's tourist arrivals in 2018 fell by 1.4% from 3.68 million to 3.63 million visitors in the previous year (Langkawi Development Authority, 2018). The slight decline of tourist arrival was probably due to the fact that Langkawi island's fragile ecosystem and social is destroying as a result of the rapid development of tourism industry. Some of the issues faced include degradation of destination image, natural resources and land structure, alteration of flora and fauna life, pollution, inadequate infrastructure, water shortage and ferry services problem (Suhaimi, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2018).

Despite the importance of tourist loyalty in sustaining economic benefits, especially in fragile destinations like Langkawi, there remains a limited understanding of the key determinants that influence repeat visitation in such contexts. Existing studies have often explored destination loyalty in general terms but lack focus on how specific elements such as destination image, food image, and trip quality jointly contribute to loyalty in ecologically sensitive destinations. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how these three variables influence tourist loyalty in Langkawi.

This study examined three variables which are destination image, food image and trip quality that influencing the tourist loyalty. There are connections between the visitor's choice and visitor loyalty to experience again the products. The tourists' loyalty in Langkawi are very important that will lead to increase the economy of tourism. Thus, this study intents to investigate the factors that influence the tourist loyalty in Langkawi which is destination image, food image and trip quality. All of these variables were analyzed to see their relationship towards the tourist loyalty. The content of the paper is organized in the following structure. First, a summary of the underlying theory; second, a review of the literature on destination image, food image, trip quality and tourist loyalty. Then, the research method applied is described. The empirical results and discussion come further. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Underlying Theory

A lot of models had been developed in order to understand and investigate how travellers remain loyal to a destination (Murphy et al., 2000; Park and Nunkoo, 2013). This study decided to use the Theory of Consumer Behavior that was developed by Howard (1977). This theory is a knowledgeable integration of the various social, mar-keting influences and psychological on customer choice into a logical sequence in pro-cessing information. It targets to explain the consumer behavior in terms of cognitive functioning and also provide testable depiction of such behavior and its result (How-ard, 1977).

This theory is essentially included some elements and therefore especially perti-nent to our field. In tourism, most of the activity is actually about delivering service such as providing transportation, accommodation and food and beverage to the cus-tomer which is the tourist. The service evaluation by the tourist actually gives a huge impact to the number of visitors. When a good service is provided, then the tourist will have a positive thinking about that destination or area. They are confidence to that destination and also lead to high level of satisfaction by the tourist. This will make them have intention to revisit that destination again.

The next element identified in the theory is about quality. This element can be re-lated to variable which is trip quality. Basically, the tourists have their own expecta-tion about that tourism destination or area. They are maybe expecting for a good qual-ity during their trip such as expecting for great experience and joyful. In this case, the tourists hope for enjoyment during their travel. A disturb problem maybe can spoil the mood of the

tourist. If the perceived quality by the tourist is good, means that their ex-pectation fulfilled. This will lead to tourist high satisfaction and can encourage them to revisit that destination again in the future. Researchers such as Baker et al. (2002) and Petrick & Backman (2002) had mentioned that quality is an antecedent of perceived value.

**Tourist Loyalty**

One of the most used definitions of loyalty is that described by (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973). For their information, loyalty can be defined as "a biased behavioral response expressed over time by a decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and being a function of psychological processes". In other hand, the definitions of the concept have been proposed by Chegini (2010). He said that loyalty is "theory and guidance leadership and positive behavior including, repur-chase, support and offer to purchase which may control a new potential customer". According to Pan et al., (2012) who make one of the most current definition, loyalty is the degree of customers' commitment towards a product, brand or service provider and the intention of re-buy the same product or service consistently in the future. Gaining loyalty of existing customers and establishing relationships with them rather than having new customers become the main focus of service provides. It is because maintaining the existing customers' loyalty brings benefits for service providers.

In tourism sector, tourist loyalty plays an important role and giving impact in the development of tourism sector. The tourist who was satisfied with the quality of their travel will have intention to revisit that country or destination again in the future. They are also may recommended the country or destination to other people and also bring together their family or friends when they are revisiting the destination. In other side, the tourist may share the information about the destination and their experience through the media social such as Facebook and Instagram. These helps spread the in-formation about the destination or country faster as now many people have access to the internet.

The study conducted by Wu and Zheng (2014) on the influence of tourism image and activities appeal on tourist loyalty investigated the relationship between activity appeal, tourism image and satisfaction towards the tourist loyalty. For the factor of tourism image, the researcher had divided the image factor into 4 categories, which is ecology, urban environment, culture and history, and local attractions. By using these constructs to measure the tourism image of Tainan city, it'll be more effective and re-liable. Then, for the factor of appeal activity, the researcher stated that tourists can be attracted by the unique local activity. The researcher also chooses to measure the ap-peal of tourist activities by festivals and group activities. Next, for the third factor which is experiential value, the researcher stated that based on the work of Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Schmitt (1999), the study had identified emotional experience, sensory experience and quality as the constructs of the experiential value. The last factor is satisfaction that have been discussed in this case study had defined that how traveler assess the experience and overall sights of a destination, based on 5 constructs which is friendliness, scenery, accuracy, culture and overall satisfaction. In summary, image, activity appeal and experience are all closely linked.

In addition, the research studied by Tefera and Govender (2017) on service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty investigated in hotel and hospitality industry focusing in Ethiopia. The results revealed that service quality is considered to be indirect influence customer loyalty, as the service offerings helps customers determine their own satisfaction (Kandampully et al., 2015; Hashim et al., 2022). The study also found that there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. A more recent work in Malaysia by Mohamad et al. (2011) also indicate that the more favorable the destination image is, the more positive the loyalty intention. This finding is supported by Yasamorn and Phokha (2012) who found a positive relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.

**Destination Image**

The early literature is summarized by Baud-Bovy and Lawson (1977), stated that destination image is the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place. Destination image is also described as well-defined

geographical areas such as a country, an island or a town (Hall, 2000). Chi and Qu (2008) define that destination image as an individual's mental representation of the knowledge, feelings, and overall perception of a particular destination. Tasci et al., (2007) further suggest that destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination. Thus, an overall image is formed as a result of interactions between cognitive, affective and cognitive elements (Lin., 2007; Gart-ner, 1993).

Study by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) is more well known. They describe destination image as the perception of destination features or attributes that is known as cognitive images. Tourist's decision-making in travel, satisfaction levels of cognition and behavior at a destination and rephrase of experience could be influenced by destination image. Chi and Qu (2008) suggest that tourist's satisfaction could increase through positive destination image and has an influence on tourist behavioral intentions.

However, this statement had been argued by Baker and Crompton (2000) that after exposure to the experience or opportunity, tourism satisfaction might be the emotional state of. The range of destination image definitions used in tourism literature has been so large that image has evolved to be a marketing jargon. However, although there is growing research interest experienced in this field, numerous criticisms as void of conceptual framework and purely theoretical are faced by destination image studies (Prayag, 2008). Therefore, there is a comprehensive consensus that destination image is a composite construct which comprises of interlinked cognitive and affective evaluation woven duly to entire impression (Pike, 2004). Understanding tourist expectations will provide meaningful clues on developing the tourist destination further and offering better goods and services. The study in Langkawi by Aliman, Hashim, Wahid & Harudin (2016) found that tourists are generally satisfied with their visits to the island. The overall image of Langkawi as a tourist destination is positive. Langkawi offers good natural scenic beauty, reliable transportation and accommodation facilities and other travelling services. Consequently, many tourists profess their intention to revisit Langkawi in the future.

## Food Image

Image has been defined as referring to the beliefs, attitudes, ideas, and impressions a person holds about something (Nelson, 2016). The concept has been widely applied to the conceptualisation of tourist destination in the form of destination image (Beerli & Martín, 2004). Recently, food tourism has received more attention in academic research (e.g. de Jong & Varley, 2017; Tsai & Wang, 2017). Destination food image research is however still lacking. Scholars such as Karim and Chi (2010), Lertputtarak (2012), Nelson (2016), Peštek and Činjarević (2014) have extended the concept of destination image to apply to destination food image. The perception of local food by tourists and its relationship with other factors such as destination image, food consumption, destination satisfaction and loyalty have been examined (Choe & Kim, 2018; Lertputtarak, 2012; Promsivapallo & Prathana, 2019).

According to Henderson (2009), food is an important element on tourists' choice of destination. Foods image is one of the main elements which give the main reason for tourist to visit or travel to another destination (Sims, 2009). On the other hand, differences in the inspiration of food give an experienced that attributes between first time and repeat visitors was also overlooked. Food image show a culture of a religion or traditional. The food image can explain an effective way of using food images to at-tract prospective tourists. The level of foods image is to assist a specific destination to differentiate the foods according to their culture. Image is directly linked to both behavioral and evaluative variables as well (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990). On the other hand, Karim, Chua, and Salleh (2010) identify dimensions of food image relating to the food image of Malaysian cuisine from an international tourist's perspective. The authors concluded food images in line with those of Lertputtarak (2012) about the food and the place it is offered. Four dimensions of food image were identified based on a factor analysis of 18 aspects of food image. These four dimensions included the food and the service experience, comprising dining atmosphere, accessibility, convenience, quality and value of food, and culinary tourism products.

## Trip Quality

Tourist loyalty and the perception of trip quality might have a relationship. The meaning of trip quality is an assessment, feelings and perception of the tourists about the trip. According to Ferns and Walls (2012), trip

quality is the overall perception of the tourists about the destination based on fulfilling their expectations about the entire trip. Meanwhile, some other scholars also define trip quality as a full assessment of the products and services of any particular destination (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Cong, 2016). A lot of studies had examined quality as the aspects in customer's perception of value and also an antecedent of perceived value (Ching-Fu Chen & Chen, 2010; Yoon et al., 2010). Among many factors that had been rise, researcher had identified that high quality service is successfully influence customer satisfaction at high rate (H. Kim & Richardson, 2003). Perceived quality can influence satisfaction and customer behavioral intention, which manager in tourism industry should pay full attention to it (Chun-Fu Chen et al., 2012; Clemes et al., 2011). Petrick et al., (2002) has stated that quality is effective on customer behavioral intentions. Which means that improve ser-vice quality can essentially influence the tourist's intention to revisit (Petrick et al., 2001). Tourist will be more likely to revisit the destination if their expectations are met and satisfy with what service they receive (Atilgan et al., 2003; K. Kim et al., 2013).

## Relationship between Destination Image and Tourist Loyalty

Based on Lee et al., (2005) said that individuals who perceived a positive destination image will lead to higher satisfaction and intentions of behavior. (Chi and Qu, 2008) suggest that the destination image is the antecedent of satisfaction which in turn affects the loyalty of the destination. A study conducted by Nor Khasimah Aliman (2014) had stated that the three predictors which is perceived quality, destination image and tourist expectation had a positive relationship in order to perceived value and customer satisfaction. Which means it does support the theory that destination image, food image and trip quality can also lead to a positive relationship on tourist's satisfaction and loyalty. The destination image is used as the most important antecedent of tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Nor Khasimah Aliman, 2014; Patwary et al., 2023).

Other than that, Mahadzirah Mohamad (2011) also stated that destination loyalty will affect by the antecedent of tourist satisfaction. In the findings it found that destination image has a significant effect on tourist's revisit intentions and spread positive word of mouth. As tourist would like to ensure the destination image can meet their expectation before the actual visit, so it's important that the host country shape image on the tourism destination.

## Relationship between Food Image and Tourist Loyalty

Food image in a destination has become a unique concept to branding a destination, as food has been seen as a part of the local culture and represent people in the destination themselves. To gain more understanding about the use of food images, it's important to analyze the basic dimension and component in a destination (Yu & Huang, 2009). However, the study has found that the information in Malaysia is limited. Chi et al. (2013) had referred that Malaysia is a place that can easily find out of many types of recipe and taste, it also can contribute the tourism industry. Based on the result of journal "Malaysia as a culinary tourism destination: international tourists' perspective", "the most influential food image on the tourists' overall satisfaction was 'core food value' ($\beta = 0.23$), followed by 'features of Malaysian food' ($\beta = 0.22$), 'Malaysian specialty' ($\beta = 0.19$), and 'food and dining atmosphere' ($\beta = 0.15$). There was a positive and moderate correlation between food images and overall satisfaction".

Based on journal "Tourist perception towards Kelantanese food image" by Hanif and Zuliah (2017), food tourism element and the destination and food image that influence visitors visiting the tourism destination of Kelantan. Besides that, in journal "The Relationship between Destination Image, Food Image, and Revisiting Pattaya, Thailand" in year 2012, Lertputtarak (2011) said that the results shows the positive relationship of destination image and image of Thai food can attract the tourist intention to revisit. According to journal "Multi-dimensional scale to measure destination food image: case of Korean food" by Seo and Yun (2015), the dimensions of "food quality" and "health benefits of food" are related to the utilitarian perspective of food.

## Relationship between Trip quality and Tourist Loyalty

Trip quality in a destination has becoming unique concepts to branding destinations while quality can be considered to bring the feeling of joy to the tourists. Besides that, perceived value and perceived quality are the

element from cognitive aspect of the behavior. Cognitive and affective aspects can measure the satisfaction level of tourists and conative aspects are used to measure their revisit intention. The "cognitive-affective-conative" framework can show that how the satisfaction level of tourist can influence their revisit intention via the effect of quality. These results are in line with Jr. and Taylor (1992) result and showed that tourist's satisfaction level can-not be predicted without behavioral responses. The model of this study are include perceived value and perceived quality and destination image tourist satisfaction, which can truly show the tourist intention to revisit. As a result, Chen and Tsai (2007) research show that the quality didn't have the direct relationship with satisfaction level and behavioral intentions.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was sent as a private message to the chosen online local tourism groups on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram in order to gather the data. A population is a group of individuals from which samples are drawn in order to conduct statistical research. As a result, a population might be defined as a group of people who have similar characteristics (Stratton, 2021). Tourists from Malaysia who are from the local population are part of the study's target population. About 131.66 million domestic visitors visited Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) determined that 384 samples adequately represented the population. 390 questionnaires were successfully disseminated to the study's respondents. The data for the study were gathered using a convenience sample technique. The researcher individually contacts each of the respondents to accelerate the procedure and make it easier for them to complete the surveys. A total of 384 of the 390 distributed questionnaires, with a response rate of 98.7%, were useful for data analysis.

## Demographic Data

The total number of respondents for male was 218 respondents while the number of females was 166 respondents. There were 384 respondents in different categories of age which are 16 to 25 years old (86 respondents), 26 to 35 years old (128 respondents), 36 to 45 years old (80 respondents), 46 to 55 years old (63 respondents) and 56 years old and above (27 respondents) had responded to the questionnaire. There were 384 respondents who consist of Malay (241 respondents), Chinese (52 respondents), Indian (64 respondents) and others (27 respondents) had responded to the questionnaire. Majority of the respondents who arrived the destination were frequently visit for holiday with 278 respondents and followed by education (43 respondents). There were 34 respondents) with business and 29 respondents from others.

## Research Design

The elements related to tourist loyalty in Langkawi were examined in this study using a quantitative research design. The quantitative approach, also known as the descriptive study, was adopted to determine and characterize the features of the variable of interest in the circumstance. Descriptive research aims to describe the phenomenon's pertinent traits that interest the researcher from personal, organizational, business-focused, or other angles. Since of its approach, this study strategy is employed because it is more systematic and comprehensive.

Table 1: Reliability of Scale (Analysis)

| Variables | Items | Value of Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Tourist loyalty | 5 | 0.985 |
| Destination Image | 5 | 0.977 |
| Food Image | 5 | 0.988 |
| Trip Quality | 5 | 0.984 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 displays the independent and dependent variable's Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values for this study. We may infer from the table that every variable was greater than 0.977. As a result, the outcome is credible and suitable for inclusion in this study (Hair et al., 2003). To measure how loyal local tourists with Langkawi, five questions were employed. According to Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha for the questions in this section was 0. 985, which was outstanding. As a result, the coefficient found for the personal variable's questions was accurate. The following five questions assessed the destination image variable that is related to local tourists' destination image with their travel to Langkawi. This section's Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is displayed, is 0.977, which is regarded as being very good. As a result, the coefficient found for the destination image variable's questions was reliable. The food image factor that affected tourists' loyalty among local visitors was measured using five questions. The questions in this section had an exceptional Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.988. As a result, the coefficient found for the food image variable's questions was reliable. Last but not least, five questions were utilized to evaluate the trip quality variable connected to local tourists' loyalty with their travel to Langkawi, and the Cronbach's Alpha score for this section's question was 0.984, which indicated excellent. As a result, the coefficients found when measuring the dependability variable for this question were also reliable. Since the variables' Cronbach's Alpha charges were greater than 0.9, the study can move on because it demonstrates how highly reliable questionnaires are. According to the dependability of the questionnaires, the respondent clearly understood the questions, indicating that the questionnaires were appropriate for this study.

Table 2: Overall Descriptive Statistics (n=385)

| Variables | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Tourist loyalty | 7.59 | 2.25 |
| Destination Image | 6.95 | 2.68 |
| Food Image | 7.47 | 2.37 |
| Trip Quality | 7.44 | 2.41 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2 shows the number of respondents and the mean and standard deviation of independent and dependent variables. For the independent variables, the highest mean was tourist loyalty, which is 7.59, followed by safety was 7.47 and reliability was 7.44. Lastly, the mean of promotion was 6.95.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Destination Image (n=385)

| Item Description | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Friendly host community of Langkawi. | 7.10 | 2.73 |
| Spectacular scenery and natural attractions in Langkawi. | 6.73 | 2.93 |
| Large selection of restaurants in Langkawi. | 6.83 | 2.79 |
| No language barrier for visitors and host community in Langkawi. | 7.03 | 2.78 |
| Terrific place for recreation activity in Langkawi. | 7.03 | 2.88 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 3 revealed that the mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents for the independent variable which was destination image. Items number one scored the highest mean value, which was 7.10, where the respondents agreed that friendly host community of Langkawi would increase destination image. The lowest mean was item two with the mean value of 6.73, where the respondents somewhat agreed that spectacular scenery and natural attractions in Langakwi would affect destination image. For the data set from 384 respondents with the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more disperse. The standard deviation of most of the values in the data set from 385 respondents was more than 1, indicating that the values were more dispersed.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Food Image (n=385)

| Item Description | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Langkawi foods are well-known. | 7.65 | 2.46 |
| Food in Langkawi has affordable price. | 7.48 | 2.51 |
| Langkawi foods has their own distinctive flavors. | 7.38 | 2.48 |
| The food in Langkawi is unique and deliciousness. | 7.37 | 2.50 |
| Langkawi's food presentation is attractive. | 7.45 | 2.51 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4 showed the mean and standard deviation analysis on the independent variable which was Food Image. The highest mean value was item one which was 7.63, where respondent agreed that Langkawi foods are well-known. The lowest mean value was item four which was 7.38, where the respondents slightly agreed that the food in Langkawi is unique and deliciousness. For the data set from 384 respondents with the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more disperse.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Trip Quality (n=385)

| Item Description | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Price of accommodation in Langkawi is reasonable. | 7.52 | 2.55 |
| Food and beverage of accommodation in Langkawi is satisfied. | 7.40 | 2.49 |
| Accessibility of public transport for tourists in Langkawi Is well-prepared. | 7.42 | 2.53 |
| Langkawi's parking facilities and space is enough for tourists. | 7.40 | 2.45 |
| Langkawi's general infrastructure is good enough for tourists. | 7.40 | 2.53 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 5 revealed the mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on the independent variable which was Trip Quality. Item one scored the highest mean value which was 8.60; where the respondents agreed that price of accommodation in Langkawi is reasonable. The lowest mean was item two, four and five with the mean value of 8.50, where the respondents somewhat agreed that food and beverage of accommodation in Langkawi is satisfied, Langkawi's parking facilities and space is enough for tourists and Langkawi's general infrastructure is good enough for tourists. For the data set from 384 respondents with the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more disperse.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Tourist Loyalty (n=385)

| Item Description | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| I enjoy travel in Langkawi. | 7.60 | 2.32 |
| I have intention to revisit again to Langkawi. | 7.54 | 2.36 |
| I will recommend Langkawi as a tourism destination to others. | 7.65 | 2.30 |
| I will consider myself as a loyal visitor of Langkawi 's tourism destination. | 7.57 | 2.42 |
| I will consider Langkawi as a first destination choice. | 7.56 | 2.36 |

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 6 showed the mean and standard deviation analysis on the dependent variable which was Tourist Loyalty. The highest mean value was item three which was 7.65, where respondents agreed that they will recommend Langkawi as a tourism destination to others. The lowest mean value was item two which was 7.54, where the respondents slightly agreed that they have intention to revisit again to Langkawi. For the data set from 384 respondents with the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more disperse.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis for destination image and tourist loyalty in Langkawi

| | | Tourist Loyalty | Destination Image |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tourist Loyalty | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | 1<br><br>385 | .770**<br>.000<br>385 |
| Destination Image | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | .770**<br>.000<br>385 | 1<br><br>385 |

(Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed))

Table 7 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value, and the total number of cases which was 385. The p-value was 0.000, which was less than the 0.01 level of significance. The correlation value of 0.770 indicated a high positive correlation between destination image and tourist loyalty in Langkawi.

Table 8: Correlation analysis for food image and tourist loyalty in Langkawi

| | | Tourist Loyalty | Food Image |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tourist Loyalty | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | 1<br><br>385 | .924**<br>.000<br>385 |
| Food Image | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | .924**<br>.000<br>385 | 1<br><br>385 |

(Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed))

Table 8 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value, and the total number of cases which was 385. The p-value was 0.000, which was less than the 0.01 level of significance. The correlation value of 0.924 indicated a very high positive relationship between food image and tourist loyalty in Langkawi.

Table 9: Correlation Analysis for trip quality and tourist loyalty in Langkawi

| | | Tourist Loyalty | Trip Quality |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tourist Loyalty | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | 1<br><br>385 | .924**<br>.000<br>385 |
| Trip Quality | Pearson correlation<br>Sig. (2 tailed)<br>n | .924**<br>.000<br>385 | 1<br><br>385 |

(Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed))

Table 9 illustrated Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value and the number of cases which was 385. The p-value was 0.000, which was below than the significance level of 0.01. The correlation coefficient of 0.924 demonstrated a very high positive association between trip quality and tourist loyalty in Langkawi.

## DISCUSSIONS

According to the analysis done, it was discovered that there is a strong correlation between food image and trip quality with tourist loyalty (r = 0.924, n = 385, p0.01). The findings imply that there was a positive and significant relationship between food image and tourist loyalty. To date, food is a basic need for human to survive, but this basic need becomes very critical in the tourism industry. In tourism industry, create a good service and positive food image is very important. Food image can be said as a mental perception and feeling

of a person have to ward the food. The findings are supported by Ab Karim (2006) that said eating out is one of the activities that can bring the feeling of pleasure and enjoyment for people who are travelling and considered as a crucial part of the journey. Tourism organizations such as restaurant, resort and hotel have to offer different and various kind of high-quality food in order to compete in this industry.

On the other hand, the findings imply that there was a positive and significant relationship between trip quality and tourist loyalty. Zygiaris et al (2022) has stated that service quality can be divide to 2 dimensions which is technical and operational. First, the technical dimensions refer to service outcomes (what the customers will receive), while the operational dimensions are refers to the service providing process (who are the customers to receive these services). As a result, perceived service quality is "the sequence of customers viewpoint on the dimensions of a service package with regard to 2 technical and operational (responsibility) dimensions and operational quality cannot be measured the same as technical quality." On the other hand, SERVQUAL, which is the model that mostly used to evaluate service quality, are proposed in the 1980s (Ali et al, 2021). However, in the 2000s, SERVQUAL are basically used in service industries (Hashim et al., 2022; San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008). Based on Quintal and Polczynski (2010) research, this model are also received some criticism in the recent years. SERVQUAL is a model that evaluate the 5 service dimensions which is tangibles, empathy, reliability, assurance, and responsiveness (San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008). When it's used alone to evaluate the provided services, some important factor of service in destination such as cultural experiences, tourist attractions and others will be overlooked. Therefore, most tourism researchers are chosen to use the features of service products to evaluate the quality of tourism products.

In addition, there is a positive and substantial correlation between destination image and tourist loyalty. Therefore, it can be seen that destination image is the factor that play an important role in affecting the tourist loyalty. This finding seems close to a previous study which only the cognitive component of a destination image is considered. Recent studies jointly have captured both cognitive and affective dimensions to assess destination image and argued that the coexistence of both components may more accurately explain destination image (Kim & Richardson, 2003; San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that the destination image component has a significant impact on how tourist loyal to Langkawi.

Finally, destination image showed a positive, substantial correlation with loyalty, reinforcing arguments that cognitive and affective evaluations jointly shape revisit intentions. Comparable destinations present convergent evidence: affective and cognitive image components in *Jeju Island* significantly predicted both satisfaction and future behavioural intention (Park & Njite, 2010), while work at *Seminyak Beach, Bali* reports that perceived image, mediated by satisfaction, directly enhances loyalty intentions (Amadeus et al., 2024). Studies at *Kuta Beach* further reveal that perceived service quality enriches destination image, indirectly boosting loyalty (Ansetti & Widjaja, 2025). Placing Langkawi's results alongside these cases strengthens the generalisability of the destination-image–loyalty nexus within small-island tourism markets.

**Inferences drawn from the Study**

The study's findings demonstrated and supported a robust positive association between food image and trip quality with tourists' loyalty to Langkawi. Still, this relationship between destination and tourist loyalty was only moderately strong. According to the study's findings, tour operators must efficiently manage the advertising, safety, and dependability offered by their services to improve tourist loyalty, particularly focusing on promoting the food image and trip quality of Langkawi.

# CONCLUSION & LIMITATIONS

This study contributed widely to the body of knowledge on the factors of destination image, food image and trip quality towards tourist loyalty to Langkawi. This research aids tourism industry participants in better understanding the problem and improving their ability to develop and implement more effective promotions that utilize the services and deliver the best possible experience to Langkawi. Like any other study, this research work does have its limitations. This study only examines the relationship between destination image, food image and trip quality towards tourist loyalty to Langkawi. Hence, future research may explore determinants, such as transparency factors, to test their discovery.

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