TOURISM IMAGES AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR: A CASE OF SABAH, MALAYSIA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MCO	Movement Control Order
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
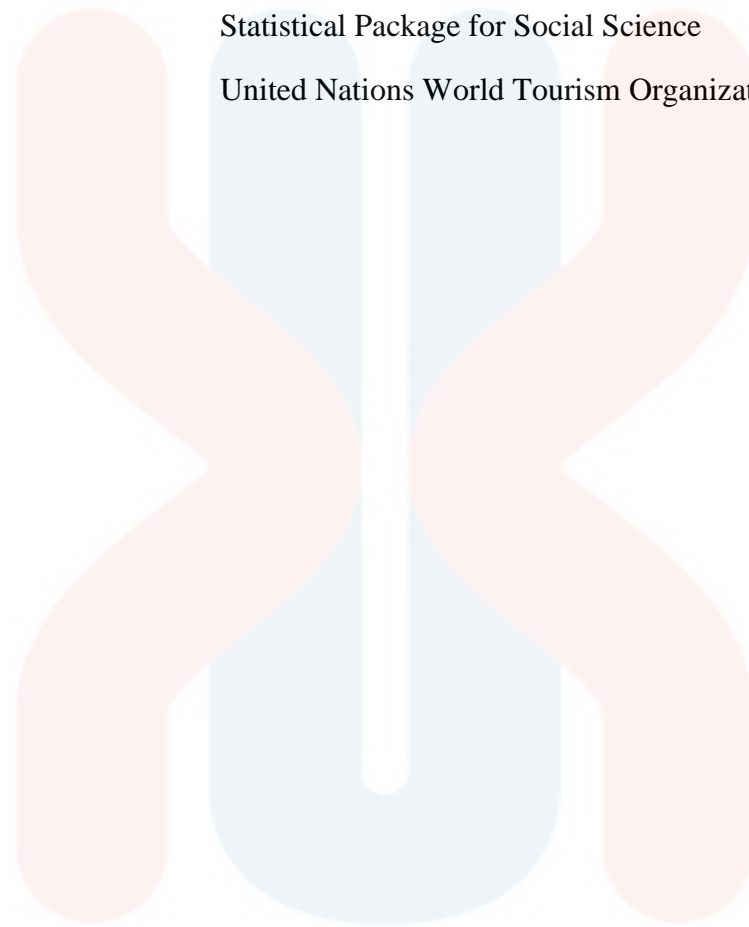
ABSTRACT

The country image is one of the components that can influence a tourist to revisit a destination. The tourism image is the first thing a tourist will see before travelling to a country, and it can directly reflect a country's positive and negative attributes. Thus, this study investigates the country, tourism and hotel image component that affects the response behaviour of tourists in Sabah, Malaysia. A Google form survey is distributed to 215 respondents. Later, data is analysed by using SPSS. Data gathered are tested using descriptive, Cronbach alpha, and correlation test. The result revealed that country image, destination image, and hotel image influence tourist response behaviour. This study is believed to provide a great contribution towards tourist destination, particularly tourism Sabah and related parties, in improving the destination image, services, and facilities in the tourism industry in Sabah, Malaysia.

Keywords:

Tourism Image, Response Behaviour, Country Image, Destination Image, Hotel Image

ABSTRAK

Imej negara adalah salah satu komponen yang boleh mempengaruhi pelancong untuk melihat semula destinasi. Imej pelancongan adalah perkara pertama yang akan dilihat oleh pelancong sebelum melancong ke sesebuah negara, dan ia secara langsung dapat mencerminkan sifat-sifat positif dan negative sesebuah negara. Oleh itu, kajian ini menyiasat komponen imej negara, pelancongan dan hotel yang menjejaskan tingkah laku balas pelancong di Sabah, Malaysia. Kaji selidik borang Google diedarkan kepada kepada 215 responden. Kemudian, data dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS. Data yang dikumpul diuji menggunakn deskriptif, alpha Cronbach, dan ujian korelasi. Hasilnya mendedahkan bahawa imej negara, imej destinasi, dan imej hotel mempengaruhi tingkah laku tindak balas pelancong. Kajian ini diyakini dapat memberi sumbangan besar ke arah destinasi pelancongan, khususnya pelancongan Sabah dan pihak berkaitan, dalam meningkatkan imej, perkhidmatan dan kemudahan destinasi dalam industry pelancongan di Sabah, Malaysia.

Kata Kunci:

Imej Pelancongan, Tingkah Laku Tindak Balas, Imej Negara, Imej Destinasi, Imej Hotel

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of an overview of the study. This chapter begins with a discussion on the study background that would explain the study in general. Next, it discussed the issues in the problem statement alongside the purpose, objective, and research question. Next in line, the study explained the significance of the study. Subsequently, the definition of the term, limitation of the study stated next. Finally, the study summary wrapped up this chapter.

1.2   BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Tourism refers to visitors' activities that took placed in the visitor economy (Stainton, 2019). The tourism industry has become one of the economic backbones of every country in the world (Khan, Bibi, Lorenzo, Lyu, & Babar, 2020). According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020), tourism was the world's

largest growing industry and one of the strongest drivers of world trade and prosperity (Joun & Kim, 2020). Among the economic benefits for the host, destinations include foreign exchange earnings and numerous direct and indirect employment (Mihalic, 2014).

Most countries depend on the tourism industry due to its contribution to the country's economy. This could have been proved when 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2019, globally. The 4% increase in the previous year, which is also forecast for 2020, confirms tourism as a leading and resilient economic sector, especially given the current uncertainty (UNWTO, 2020).

In Malaysia, the tourism industry was the third-largest contributor to Malaysia's gross domestic product, after manufacturing and commodities. In 2018, the tourism industry sector contributed approximately 5.9% of the gross domestic product (Hirschmann, 2020). In recent years, the tourism industry in Southeast Asia have had experienced tremendous growth, and Malaysia wants to take advantage of this trend. The "Visit Truly Asia Malaysia 2020" campaign was launched in Malaysia to attract tourists in the hope of achieving the ambitious target of 30 million visitors and 100 billion Malaysian ringgit in tourism acceptance for 2020. However, the breakup of COVID-19 had led to the cancellation of this campaign. The global spread of the COVID-19 virus has had virtually ground the tourism industry in Malaysia to a halt, resulting in severe financial losses due to country lockdowns and stringent travel restrictions implemented to curtail the spread of the virus (Foo, Chin, Tan, & Phuah, 2020).

In addition, the spread of COVID-19 had influenced the destination image. This is proved when previous research (Karim, Haque, Anis, & Ulfy, 2020) stated that such pandemic has had negatively impacted the destination images. Tourists naturally tended to avoid some of the destinations that mostly have a higher risk (Matiza, 2020). Thus, the tourist destination has had to create an attractive strong image as it was one of the main points to attract tourists. Having a strong image helps the destination build up its own destination identity, which helps the destination to differentiate itself from its competitor (Saraniemi, 2011). By taking COVID-19 and destination image into deliberation, this research was design to further study the influence of the tourism image of Sabah, Malaysia, towards tourist behaviour.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia used to have been the favourite destination among international tourists when they visit Southeast Asia. However, due to the loss of the Malaysia Airlines flight which was MH370 and the hit of flight MH17 in 2014, Malaysia was no more favoured by tourists (Zainuddin, Zahari, Radzi, Hanafiah, & Ishak, 2018). Due to the loss of flight MH370, at least 30 000 prospective tourists from China had cancelled their holiday bookings to Malaysia until 2015 (Zainuddin et al., 2018). In 2016, Malaysia slowly restored its image and gradually managed to capture more tourists. However, in 2020, the COVID-19 had put Malaysia under pressure back as they had to deliver a severe blow to economic tourism activities (Foo et al., 2020).

The negative image of Malaysia has had also affected the state of Sabah. Many incidents happen to Sabah that affects tourist intention to travel to Sabah. Among the well-known issues include the kidnapping incident in Sipadan Island, Sabah in 2001 (Norizawati & Tarmiji, 2014). The following year, the 9/11 tragedy raised more fears about the threat of terrorism in Malaysia. Since the incident, Malaysia has had reportedly detained more than 100 Islamic militant suspects, most of whom are Jemaah Islamiyah members.

There was also a series of kidnapping tourists in Sabah, which affected the destination image of Sabah. In November 2013, a Taiwanese man was killed, and a group of unidentified gunmen has abducted his wife after being attacked at the Pom Pom Island resort, which is located outside of Semporna, east coast of Sabah. The Taiwanese tourist was rescued by Philippine security forces on December 20, 2013 (Som, Aun, & AlBattat, 2015). The abduction of tourists occurred again on April 2, 2014, in which Chinese tourists and Filipino hotel workers from Singamata Reef Resort in Semporna, Sabah were abducted. This incident caused a dramatic decrease in the arrival of Chinese tourists to Sabah where it also affected the image of Sabah destination as a tourist destination.

Apart from these issues, Sabah also faced a new crisis in 2013 when more than 100 armed groups suspected of being militants had landed in Lahad Datu. Known as the Royal Army of the Sulu Sultanate, this group claims Sabah as their own country. This invasion claimed almost a hundred lives of militants and 10 Malaysian officers, of whom eight were police, and two were soldiers (Norizawati & Tarmiji, 2014). The event has

negatively impacted Sabah's tourist growth, with hotels and travel agencies receiving cancellations from tourists. These incidents affected the destination image, country image, and hotel image of Sabah to be one of Malaysia's most visited state. This was proved when in December 2014, the number of arrivals tourist decreased by 12.8 per cent compared to November 2014 (Som et al., 2015).

The recent COVID-19 also has affected the image of Sabah which Sabah is one of the states with the highest number of cases. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Sabah has lost many travellers when the State Government has stopped accepting direct flights from a lot of countries, including Chinese and Koreans. Both countries have been active contributors to the state's international tourist arrivals (Frank, 2020). This has been proved when Sabah has faced the highest losses right after Kuala Lumpur which is 33 679 cancellations of hotel's booking during this COVID-19. This has made Sabah's government lose about RM 11.79 million in March 2020 (Karim et al., 2020). This outbreak has somehow influenced Sabah's destination image, which affected tourists to travel to Sabah.

A lot of studies have been done by the researcher to determine tourist response behaviour that is influenced by the destination image. However, only a few scholars study the impact of destination image on Malaysia's tourist behaviour, particularly in the Sabah context. For instance, Som, Marzuki, and Yousefi (2012) study on factors influencing visitors' revisits behavioural intentions: a case study of Sabah, Malaysia and also Zain, Zahari, Hanafiah, and Zulkifly (2016) studies the core tourism products and destination image: a case study of Sabah, Malaysia. Thus, this research was conducted to investigate

Tourism Images and The Tourists Response Behavior: A Case of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study investigates the causal relationship between Tourism Images and the tourists' response behaviour. This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

RO1: To identify the connection between country image towards tourist's response behaviour.

RO2: To identify the connection between destination image towards tourist's response behaviour.

RO3: To identify the connection between hotel image towards tourist's response behaviour.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTION

Following are the important questions posed towards discovery and direction in conducting research:

RQ1: Does country image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?

RQ2: Does destination image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?

RQ3: Does the hotel image have any connection in determine tourist's response behaviour during COVID-19?

1.6 SIGNIFICANT OF STUDY

It is believed that the findings of this present study would significantly contribute to both theoretical aspects which were of interest to the academic and practical aspects which were relevant to tourism image and tourism behaviour.

1.6.1 ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

From the academic perspective significant, additions to the existing body of knowledge contributed by this study through hypotheses testing and further relating the findings to empirical evidence drawn from the extant literature. This study contributed to new resources of material in the academic field. In addition, it also provided an overview of the current situation in the tourism industry. Destination images influence a tourist's travel decision-making, cognition, and behaviour at a destination as well as satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience. (Jenkins, 1999), and from the result of the study especially to the new scholar showed what things influenced the tourist to go to travel.

1.6.2   PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

From the practical perspective of the industry, in hotel management, this study gave a benefit to them as a guide to improve their standard operating process and the way improve the satisfaction among tourist especially during pandemic COVID-19 This part also affected the confidence level of tourists about cleanliness and compliance of tourist for the hotel industry.

Additionally, the results generated from this study helped to contribute knowledge to the government on the solution of prevention this pandemic in Sabah affected the country image toward tourists. Based on the increase in pandemic COVID-19 cases, the government has made a movement control order (MCO) to control the spread of the epidemic to become more serious. According to Gossling, Scott, and Hall (2020), international, regional, and local travel restrictions immediately affected national economies, including tourism systems, i.e. international travel, domestic tourism, day visits, and segments as diverse as air transport, cruises, public transport, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, conventions, festivals, meetings, or sports events. With international air travel rapidly slowing as a result of the crisis, and many countries imposing travel bans, closing borders, or introducing quarantine periods, international and domestic tourism declined precipitously for weeks.

1.7   DEFINITION OF TERMS

Definition of terms is consider as a term or phrase used to describe an item or to convey an idea, especially in a specific sort of language or field of study.

1.7.1   TOURISM IMAGE

Tourism image is the perception formed within the mind of tourists on a particular tourism destination. It is an essential thing in tourism because it can influence the intention and action of tourists before they want to travel.

1.7.2   COUNTRY IMAGE

Stock (2009) stated that country images in product evaluations were significant extrinsic indications. They evoke comparisons, and they affect purchasing choices. A positive country image created a positive perception of a whole group of products. For example, the success of a country in creating a favourable reputation for a certain line of products or services can be used for branding. In the following citation Fan (2006), there was a connection between countries that generate strong brands and brands that are powerful. The following citation country 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 organisations from the nations (behavioural representation) (Grunig & Hung, 2002).

1.7.3 DESTINATION IMAGE

Destination image is an essential factor in the promotion of tourism destinations because it can separate one destination from another (Carballo et al, 2015). According to Lawson and Richie (1993), it defines the idea of the destination images as the representation of any person or group's empirical experience, prejudices, creativity, and emotional thoughts about a specific location.

1.7.4 HOTEL IMAGE

According to Nguyen and Leblanc (2002), it was now established that five elements serve as the backbone of hotel image which is: i) physical environment, ii) contact personnel, iii) services quality, iv) corporate identity and v) accessibility. It 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 (Sirgy et al, 1997).

1.7.5 RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

According to Howard and Sheth (1969) asserted that the aim is to make the mood, trust, and expectation of a consumer about a sure purchasing graph that inhibits the effect of mentality and self-assurance as it was conceived as a position for a customer who in the planned time frame deliberates on buying a product.

1.8 LIMITATION OF STUDY

This research focused on the response behaviour of tourists to the tourism image in Sabah. This is because tourism influenced any internal and external factors in economics, politics, and other issues. This study showed the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic and evaluates the impact of destination image in Sabah. However, Kota Kinabalu was the highest COVID-19 area in Malaysia. The solution to prevent this pandemic in Sabah helped us increase tourists' revisit intention after this pandemic was completely resolved. It also focused on the incursion of Sulu's followers in Lahad Datu in 2013. This issue showed Sabah's safety and the way to protect local and foreign tourists by the government of Malaysia. The government took action to increase tourists' confidence level, also one of the parts we evaluated in this research.

1.9   SUMMARY

In conclusion, this chapter described the tourism image affected the tourist's behaviour in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. The tourism industry had already become one of the sources of income for every country globally and the third-largest contributor to Malaysia. Tourism image affected the revisit intention and response behaviour in Malaysia. However, issues happened in Malaysia, such as the loss of flight, kidnapping incident and spread of COVID-19, lack of security and safety, and the increasing case of COVID-19 after the finish of state election was held in Sabah. That problem that happened in Sabah has influenced the tourism image directly. Thus, this research intended to explore the tourist's behaviour of tourism image among tourists in Sabah, Malaysia. This chapter described the relationship between country image, destination image, and hotel image towards tourist's response behaviour in Sabah. This study is believed to provide a reasonable and accountable contribution to related sectors in the tourism and hospitality industry, so this study is worthwhile to implement.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines similar and relevant literature relating to the research carried out. According to Fink Arlene (2014), this section is surveyed books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works concerning the research problem being investigated. Other than that, a literature review is intended to give a review of sources on the study investigated while exploring a specific theme and field of the study.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 TOURISTS RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

Tourist behaviour or consumer behaviour in the field of tourism implies all internal and external factors related to the decision process, activities, ideas, or experiences that meet the needs and wants of consumers (Zainuddin et al., 2018). In addition, tourist response behaviour also means a plan to revisit and recommend the same destination tourists visit with friends and relatives (Zainuddin et al., 2018). Tourist behaviour is important because it is involved with customer loyalty, which is an important issue in any business that can be seen in terms of repeat purchases, recommendations, and issuance of positive words. Customer loyalty is one of the most important indicators for the success of marketing strategies as agreed by most marketers, and this theory also applies to tourism products (Bayih & Singh, 2020).

From tourism perspectives, tourist response behaviour showed that tourists develop a more complex and different image of the destination after the first actual visit where there is an image change whereas subsequent repeated visits tend to re-confirm previously formed images (Zainuddin et al., 2018). Furthermore, tourist response behaviour was also important for the tourism industry because managers in the tourism industry evaluate their management strategies based on tourists' willingness to recommend their products and share positive words about their experiences (Bayih &

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Singh, 2020). The intention of a tourist to revisit a specific destination depends on tourist response behaviour.

Tourist response behaviour was very important for every country because the opinions and views of every tourist when travelling to a country reflexed the good name of that certain country (Bayih & Singh, 2020). Therefore, this tourist response behaviour influenced by 3 main things which are country image, destination image, and also hotel image.

2.2.2   COUNTRY IMAGE

Country image is the most generic construct in the model and is defined as the total of all descriptive beliefs, inferences, and information about a particular country (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005). The country image can be classified as a generic construct that is unrelated to a particular context shows that this construct has many aspects, which should be included in the measurement scale (Cotirlea, 2015). The concept of national image is not only a common denominator but can also be described as a source of images for national product-related associations. Country image is also created in consumers' minds, taking into account the cultural and psychological characteristics of individuals and add to this, products from that country also influenced a country image (Cotirlea, 2015).

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Products were not included in the definition of country image, but a country image associated with a particular product. Furthermore, it was very useful for marketers to understand the country image at this stage because the level of variability can vary a lot of product category (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005). Country image is very important for product manufacturers in the market because when a country has a very good image, then the products produced by a certain country will be well received in other countries. This happens when China is one of the countries with a very good image, and their market products are also accepted by various parties.

Studies have dominated some literature reviews on the effect of the country image on consumers by looking at its effects on product perception, evaluation, and choice (Charette & d'Astous, 2020). Effects of the country image are more important as it is about consumer perception than buying intention. However, the country's image changed as a result of various events, such as the arrivals of terrorist attacks on tourists, or it could be because of a product withdrawal crisis (Charette & d'Astous, 2020). Therefore, it is logical to think that the decision of the state to impose protective measures that affected the image of the user in the targeted country will form to improve the country's image.

In addition, this shown that country image is important either for the tourism industry or for sell of a product (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005). This is because the country's image influenced sell of a product and if a country did not have a great image, it will be difficult for a country to produce some of the product and market it worldwide (Charette & d'Astous, 2020).

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2.2.3 DESTINATION IMAGE

The concept of destination image and its importance in travel and tourism was recognised in the early 1970s in tourism literature (Zainuddin et al., 2018). Destination image has become a popular research topic in the field of tourism because of its practical importance for destination management, marketing, branding, and its great contribution to understanding tourist behaviour. The importance of the purpose image has been recognised by several scholars in the field related to tourism. Despite the high interest in the destination image, most studies related to this field are not based on theory and there is a strong lack of concepts (Zainuddin et al., 2018).

Destination image is defined to include the feature image of a destination which in turn influences the decision of tourists to visit certain holiday destinations (Phau, Shanka, & Dhayan, 2010). In the literature, the purpose of destination image which is often described as spot effect or area perception, commonly believed to be as a result of previous tourist experiences, marketing efforts, or words mouth and is often used as a holistic concept, and it is sometimes broken down by some dimensions or list of attributes (Pan, Rasouli, & Timmermans, 2020). Furthermore, destination image analysed from different perspectives and with different individual perceptions related to the attributes of the product or services (Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013).

Destination image influenced the tourist decision-making process as a tourist tending to reconsider alternative destinations (Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013). Destination image also influenced directly to tourist's behavioural intention, which affected tourist's revisit intention to a certain country. When tourists have a positive perception or specific perspective of a destination, they tend to choose that destination that they want to. A positive destination image increases the chances of visiting any of tourist favourite destinations and helps make decisions about a particular destination (Mohaidin, Wei Koay, & Ali Murshid, 2017).

Therefore, this destination image is important to influence people in the tourism industry. This is because if a country did not have a great destination image, it affected the tourism industry in a certain country. Therefore, the image of the destination is proposed to influence the intentions of tourists during the selection of the destination (Pan et al., 2020).

2.2.4 HOTEL IMAGE

Hotel image is one of the main important that will influence tourist response behaviour. Hotel images are used as a link between experiences, opinions, feelings, beliefs, and user's knowledge of corporations. The image of the hotel is an emotional perception developed by a customer in response to the company and its activities (Qoura

& Khalifa, 2016). Therefore, this perception of the hotel image is subjective. The formation of the image and identity of the hotel, such as hotel capabilities and hotel responsibilities is reduced transaction costs. Leaders play a key role in managing the hotel image (Qoura & Khalifa, 2016).

Hotel image is believed to play an important role in a customer's decision when the customer wants to use the hotel. Therefore, customers' experience with hotel services is considered the most influential factor in determining a hotel's pictures (Nikou, Bin, Che, Yusoff, & Malekalketab Khiabani, 2016). Based on the customer services provided for customers at a hotel, this influenced tourist response behaviour when the tourist stays at a certain hotel. Hotel image influenced by customer services and this was one of the important factors to maintain hotel image when used by the tourist.

Several studies on hotel image use the emotional dimension to measure hotel image and conclude that hotel image is a precursor to customer satisfaction that ultimately affects customer loyalty (Lai, 2019). Instead, some scholars use operational-based dimensions, namely, physical facilities, interior design, staff performance, and reputation to measure the customer postal experience as a hotel reputation and gain high customer satisfaction and enhance hotel reputation (Lai, 2019). In addition, some identify the quality of service as the two antecedents of the hotel image.

However, the hotel image influenced tourist response behaviour when tourists use services from the hotel when travelling. Several studies have examined how hotels' image and reputation influence different attitude factors that ultimately influence guest loyalty

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in the hotel sector (Nikou et al., 2016). Furthermore, this study determined the main factors of the hotel image that influenced tourist response behaviour.

2.3   HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis of this study will be the connection or relationship between the variables. This study examined the causal relationship between destination image, country image, and hotel image with the tourist response behaviour.

2.3.1   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTRY IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

The various study has shown that there is a relationship between tourist response behaviour and country image. The previous study about Thailand country images stated that activity attractions, price and value, and perceived image and satisfaction, and national system have been found they are a significant influence on the behavioural intention of Chinese tourists(Yao, Suwannarat, & Sonthiprasat, 2020). Furthermore, the study on a country image in the United States also had positively affected tourist travel

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intention. A significant moderating effect of destination familiarity is also found on the relationships between country image and intention to visit (Chaulgain, Witala, & Fu, 2019). Moreover, the country image has been proven which adds knowledge of the relationship between the original image and potential tourist's visit intention (Zhang, Xu, & Leung, 2016). Based on the discussion above, the author suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Relationship between country image and tourist response behaviour.

2.3.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESTINATION IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

A lot of studies have shown that the relationship between destination image and tourist response behaviour. The previous study about the behavioural intention on destination image at international events shown that certain aspects of the event image impacted cognitive destination images. Theoretical and practical implications are provided for event and destination marketers (Kaplanidou, 2009). According to the study destination image in Taiwan from the perspective of Hong Kong, affective destination image also plays a mediating role in the relationship between cognitive image and behavioural intention. Hence, an effective image is an important intangible quality for today's destinations (Xu, Chan, & Pratt, 2018). The previous study showed that these

results indicate that the variable destination image directly affects tourist intention to visit by 11.3%. Variable destination image has a direct and significant influence on the decision to visit by 37.5% (Rahmanita, Setarnawat, & Satyarini, 2017). Based on the discussion above, the author suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Relationship between destination image and tourist response behaviour.

2.3.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOTEL IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

Various past studies have shown that there is a relationship between the hotel image and tourist response behaviour. Based on the study about green hotels that represent a positive hotel image on the tourist intention, the study found a positive and significant relationship of green hotel attributes and intention to stay at green hotels among tourists. This implies that tourists who have a greater interest in green hotels are more likely to identify which hotels conduct a higher degree of green practices (Mohd Noor, Shaari, & Kumar, 2014). Furthermore, the past study has shown a result the indicates that hotel image is an antecedent of hotel reputation, and all the above factors play a significant role in building customer loyalty that influences the response behaviour (Wai Lai, 2019). Next, based on the previous study about the hotel responses shown that the results reveal that providing a service recovery response to negative online reviews enhanced hotel image, attitude, and hypothetical intent to stay at the hotel (Meng,

Dipietro, Gerdes JR, Kline, & Avant, 2018). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Relationship between hotel image and tourist response behaviour.

2.4   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2.1 below shows that there are independent variables: country image, destination image, and hotel image, and dependent variable, which is tourist's response behaviour.
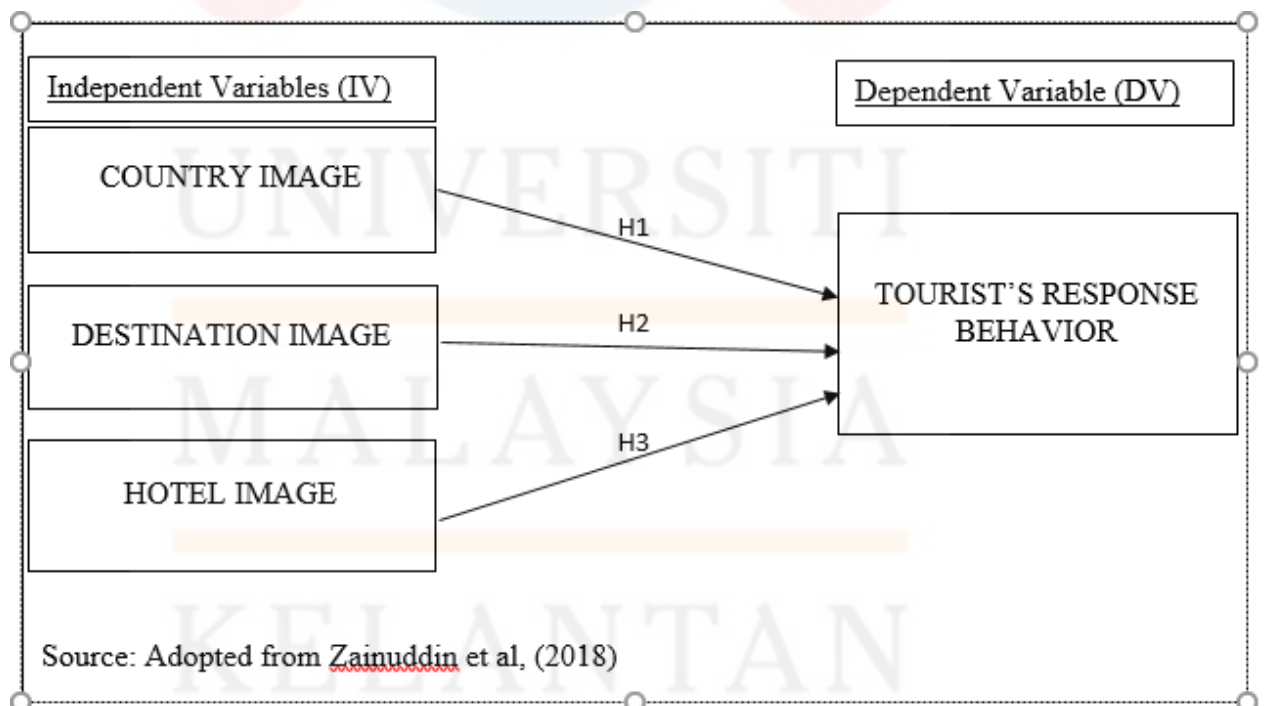
Figure 2.1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates what through our study we hope to discover. For our study, it describes the related variables and maps out how they might contribute to each other (Bas Swaen,2015). The conceptual framework suggested, as illustrated above, is based on work in 2018. Zainuddin et al, (2018) showed that tourism image and response behaviour in Malaysia. Figure 2.1 portrays both independent variables (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) of this research. The independent variables are different kind of tourism image affected response behaviour. There are three independent variables in this study: country image, destination image, and hotel image. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (DV) is the response behaviour of UMK students and tourists who visited Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The figure above shows the connection between country image, destination image, hotel image, and the response behaviour by UMK students and tourists.

2.5   SUMMARY

In conclusion, the variable was given an extraordinary name that just applies to trial examinations. One is known as an independent variable and the other is a dependent variable. The independent variable is the variable the experimenter changes or controls and is assumed to have a direct effect on the dependent variable (Mcleod, 2019). In this research, the independent variables involved including destination image, hotel image, and country image. On the other hand, the dependent variable is to revisit intention. The researcher has constructed a conceptual framework for this study to see the relationship

between independent and dependent variables. In addition, all the variables related to the destination image in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The summary of these research questions and the hypotheses were presented in the table below. The following chapter will the methodology applied in this study.

Table 2.1 shows a summary of the research questions and hypothesis in this study.

Research Question	Description	Hypotheses
RQ1	Does country image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?	There is a significant relationship between country image and tourist response behaviour.
RQ2	Does destination image affect the behaviour during COVID-19?	There is a significant relationship between destination image and tourist response behaviour.
RQ3	Does the hotel image have any connection in determine tourist's response behaviour during COVID-19?	There is a relationship between hotel image and tourist response behaviour.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter described the research methodology that is used in the research that would be conducted. This research methodology contains a research design, population, sample size, sampling method, data collection procedure, research instrument, data analysis, and summary of this chapter. The authors ensure that the methodologies used were suitable to achieve the investigation's objectives, and it also should have been possible to replicate the methodologies used in other similar research.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design can be defined as the idea, formation, and approach of the idea and study of the research to obtain ensured to find out the question of the research and control the variance of the research (Noor, 2008). After research have had been done by the researchers, researchers must form a research design. A research design was

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reasonable when a conclusion was specific and research design was the conceptual blueprint when the researchers conduct research design.

Primary data from a research design can be created by 3 basic research designs which are exploratory, descriptive, and causal research. For this research, researchers have chosen to use descriptive research. Descriptive research systematically identifies the facts and attributes of a given population or area of interest (Dulock, 1993). Descriptive research design is most functional for describing how little is known or for recognising the new or emerging fact. Unlike experimental research, the researcher does not manipulate any of the variables, but the researcher just has to observe and measure this research to ensure that the variables are suitable for this research.

In addition, there are two types of study in this descriptive research, which are a cross-sectional study and also longitudinal study. For this research, the **researcher used a cross-sectional study**. A cross-sectional study is sometimes carried out to explore associations between risk elements and the result of the interest (Levin, 2006). Contributors in this kind of study are chosen base on the specific interest variables. The data that the researcher gathered at a given time will only enable the researcher to answer the research questions. The data may be collected for this kind of cross-sectional analysis for over a few days, weeks, or maybe months.

There are two types of study which are qualitative and quantitative study. Qualitative research is an exploratory study. Qualitative procedures are used to answer questions about events, meaning, and viewpoints which most often come from the

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research participant (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & Lacey, 2016). The qualitative research method includes small group discussions for investigating trust, perspective, and descriptive behaviour concepts. Besides the qualitative study, a quantitative study is also one of the methods used by the researchers in research design. Quantitative research is also known as statistical research. Quantitative methods involve the processes of accumulating, examining, explaining, and writing down the study results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In quantitative research, samples' observed behaviours are acquired through statistical data collecting based on the samples' observation behaviours (Abdullah & Raman, 2001). In this research, researchers used a **survey research method, a quantitative study** to collect data for this research.

The benefit of using this quantitative research is that quantitative research tends to specified to a whole population or a sub-population because it requires a larger sample that is randomly selected (Rahman, 2016). Furthermore, the use of quantitative research can reserve time and resources. This is because by using this quantitative research, the data that has been collected can be done by using a computer through the use of a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) (Eyisi, 2016). Thus, this research is to explore whether there were any influences of destination image that affect tourist response behaviour.

3.3   POPULATION

A population can be defined as the entire collection of structures that needs to be understood or, more formally, about which one is needed to draw an inference (Persaud, 2010). Therefore, it is clear that the population is a basic part of research design because this population dictates the range of the inferences resulting from the research effort. This study's population is related to tourist response behaviour, which can be influenced by the tourism image.

A population is also an absolute set of people with a specialised set of elements and also a sample is a component of the population (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). It is normal to define a study population in descriptive studies and then examine a sample taken from it. Study populations may be clarified by geographic location, age, and gender with some additional definitions assigned to a specific nature such as occupation, religion, and ethnic group.

For this study, the population had a familiar **tourist who has the intention to visit Sabah**. Until July 2018, there were almost 3.9 million tourists visited Sabah (Ramamoorty, Abdullah, & Zenian, 2020). That population was targeted as the population would be the right respondent to answer this research questionnaire. The reason is this student may know more about the destination image that might influence tourist response behaviour. The target population element is based on gender, age, level of education, and ethnic background (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). This population was one of the pointers for further study in this research.

3.4   SAMPLE SIZE

This study has determined the size of unknown population samples using Roscoe's rules of thumb. A sample larger than 30 ensures the researcher the benefit of a central limit theorem. Regulations for determining sample sizes between more than 30 and less than 500 are acceptable for studies and should be less than 30% of the population(Roscoe, 1975).

Therefore, according to sample size, He et al., (2010) emphasises that a sample size of at least 200 has provided reliable results in factor analysis. Similarly, previous scholars who have investigated destination image also shared a similar population. For example, within two week period, Md Zain, Mohd Zahari, Hanafiah and Zulkifly, (2015) managed to collect a total of 256 questionnaires from respondents about a case study in Sabah. Other than that, Lee, (2009) used a total of 179 questionnaires to measure destination image, tourist attitudes, motivation, satisfaction, future behaviour, tourism attributes and background information. Futhermore, Som, Marzuki and Yousefi, (2012) the researcher decide to distributed 150 questionnaires to the respondents at Kota Kinabalu International Airport in Sabah. From those, a final sample of 105 valid responses was obtained after eliminating all the questionnaires in which any question had been left blank. Mohaidin, (2017) only have a total of 161 questionnaires were returned when the questionnaires were distributed via self-administered and online self-completed to tourists who have emails. However, only 159 questionnaires were valid. Moreover, Hernández-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena and Sánchez-García, (2006) use a simple

random sample which has to get the researcher total of 140 respondents when the researcher distributed the questionnaire. Based on this information, the targeted usable sample size for this study would be set at a minimum of 200 respondents, which is deemed appropriate. Based on the previous research, the researchers have set up 200 respondents because it seems appropriate and suitable with this research.

3.5   SAMPLING METHOD

This study used **non-probability sampling** to collect data. Non-probability can be defined as the sample is selected based on non-random criteria, and not every member of the population has a chance of being included. The non-probability is very suitable to be used in the study. It proven in recent years, the number of web-based surveys being employed to answer international agricultural and extension education research questions has increased dramatically with non-probability sampling becoming much more common. Access to the Internet and the relatively low cost of conducting web surveys are contributing to the proliferation of surveys being conducted online(Lamm & Lamm, 2019).

This study used **convenience sampling**. Convenience sampling is one of the most commonly used sampling procedures in second language acquisition studies, but this non-random sampling procedure suffers from a lot of problems including the inability of

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controlling for initial differences between experimental and control groups(Farrokhi, 2012). The various study explained convenience sampling, this study stated Convenience is a type of nonprobability or non-random sampling were members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility(Etikan, Abubakar Musa, & Sunusi Alkasim, 2015).

Convenience sampling is used in every type of research, it would be superlative to use the whole population, but in most cases, it is not possible to include every subject because the population is almost finite. This is the rationale behind using sampling techniques like convenience sampling by most researchers(Etikan et al., 2015). In addition, a standard way to summarise survey performance is by comparing response rates among various survey modes. By "survey mode" (sometimes called response mode), we mean the mode by which the survey itself is conducted: Web, e-mail, mail, and so on (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002).

3.6   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In data collection, the researcher has distributed the questionnaire to tourist who has experience travel to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The researcher also focused on the survey on local tourists that have also experience travel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The introductory letter has been indicated first the respondent's enhancement of the

explanation and the importance of this study. Other than that, the objective and subject of the inclusion will explain to the respondent. Next, the questionnaire has been given to the target respondent. We will select the respondent who has experience travel to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah to gain an accurate response useful for the study. The respondent also has complete fifteen minutes to reach the review and when they finish, the researcher has gathered the survey. It is to avoid an unreciprocated survey. The assembled information has broken down with the selected method. However, due to the pandemic COVID-19, the researcher has decided to use google form and distribute the google form link to the target respondent. We provide the google form on an online platform like the Facebook Page of Tourism Malaysia, Instagram, WhatsApp and Telegram. The researcher can also collect the questionnaire quickly.

3.7   RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research instruments are measurement tools such as questionnaires, tests, or scales designed to help researchers obtain data on the topic of importance from research subjects. Research instruments including information for example the population addressed, the purpose of the instruments, and the variable measured. There are different types of measurement such as surveys, case studies, or questionnaires that researchers can use for their study depending on the nature of research that can be carried out (Umoh, 2019).

This study used the **questionnaire** to collect data, the question will provide in a duo language which is English and Malay. This is because there is a probability of various types of a respondent to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire is separated into three sections (Section A, Section B, and Section C). For section, A is about demographic segmentation. Demographic segmentation is the process of dividing the population based on the variable. thus demographic segmentation has its variables such as ethnicity, age, gender, income, religion, and education Hitesh, (2020). Section B focused on all the independent variable provided by researchers such as country image, destination image, and hotel image. And section C focused on the dependent variable that is tourist response behaviour.

Table 3.1: Research Instrument

Section	Factors	Content	Questions	Reference
A	Demographic profile	Gender	● male ● female	Hitesh, (2020)
		Age	● Below 20 years old ● 21-30 ● 31-40 ● 41-50	Hitesh, (2020)

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			● 51-60 ● Above 61 years old	
		Race	● Malay ● Indian ● Chinese ● Other	Hitesh, (2020)
		Marital status	● Single ● Married	Hitesh, (2020)
		Occupation	● Students ● Government sector ● Private sector ● Others	Hitesh, (2020)
		Marital status	● Single ● Married	Hitesh, (2020)
		Income	● Below RM 2000 ● RM 2001 – RM 3000 ● RM 3001 – RM 4000 ● RM 4001 – RM 5000 ● Above RM 5000	Hitesh, (2020)

B	Independent variable	Country image	1. Sabah has a high standard of cleanliness	Zainuddin et al. (2018)
			2. Sabah has natural scenic beauty	
			3. Lodgings properties in Sabah are easy to find	
			4. Restaurant in Sabah are of good quality	
			5. Prices product and service in Sabah are affordable	
			6. Good tourist accommodation Sabah is readily available	
			7. In Sabah, there are many places of interest to visit	
			8. A visit to Sabah is a real adventure	
			9. Food in Sabah is different from mine	

			10. There are a restful and relaxing place to visit in Sabah	
			11. Sabah has a good nightlife	
			12. The weather in Sabah is pleasant	
			13. The standard of living in Sabah is high	
			14. Local architecture styles in Sabah are different from mine	
			15. In general, it is a safe to visit Sabah	
			16. Everything in Sabah different and fascinating	
			17. Hygiene standards in Sabah are high	
			18. Local people in Sabah are friendly	
		Destination image	1. Local standard of cleanliness is high	Zainuddin et al. (2018)

			2. It has natural scenic beauty	
			3. Lodgings properties are easy to find	
			4. Restaurants are of good quality	
			5. Prices are affordable	
			6. Good tourist accommodation is readily available even during pandemic COVID-19	
			7. Many places of interest to visit	
			8. A visit to Sabah is a real adventure	
			9. There are a restful and relaxing place to visit	
		Hotel image	1. The standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high	Zainuddin et al. (2018)

			2. The hotel is located in an area of natural scenic beauty	
			3. The hotels are easy to find	
			4. Restaurants at the hotel are of good quality	
			5. The hotel rates are affordable	
			6. Good hotel is readily available	
			7. The hotel is in the proximity to places of interest	
			8. A stay in the hotel is a real adventure	
			9. Food served at the hotel is excellent	
			10. There are a restful and relaxing atmosphere in the hotel	

			11. The hotel provides good nightlife	
			12. The ambience of the hotel is pleasant	
			13. The standard of hospitality is high	
			14. Local architecture styles of the hotel are exotic	
			15. In general, it is a safe to stay at the hotel	
			16. Everything about the hotel is different and fascinating	
			17. The hygiene standards of the hotel are high especially during COVID-19	
			18. The frontline employees of the hotel are friendly	

C	Dependent variable	Tourists response behaviour	1. I will revisit Sabah as my dream destination	Zainuddin et al. (2018)
			2. I will consider Sabah as my first choice destination for my next visit	
			3. I will patronise the Sabah trip more often after pandemic COVID-19	
			4. I will say positive things about Sabah	
			5. I will spread positive word-of-mouth about Sabah	
			6. I will attempt to influence my friend and family not to visit Sabah again	
			7. I will convince my friends & family to visit Sabah	

			8. I will strongly recommend Sabah to my friend and family 9. I will recommend Sabah to someone who seeks my advice and information about this destination	

Table 3.1 indicated the questions in the questionnaire which is contributed to the respondent. The table content has 3 sections, Section A, Section B, and Section C. Section A consisted of the demographic profile of the respondent. The first demographic is gender. As usual, gender use in research is male and female. The next is age, the age of respondents started from 21 until 60. After that is occupied, the occupation has divided into 4. Student, government sector, private sector, and others. Others in occupation referred to other jobs such as businessman, part-time worker, or self-employment. And the last is about marital status whether single or married.

Section B contained the independent variable which are country image, destination image, and hotel image. For the first variable, the country image has 18 questions, the second variable, the destination image has 9 questions and the third variable have 18 questions. Each question is adopted from the study conducted by Zainuddin et al.(2018). Section C contained the dependent variable. This section consisted of tourist

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response behaviour. There have 9 questions in this section. Each question also adopted from a study conducted by Zainuddin et al.(2018).

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

This section clarifies the scientific apparatuses utilised in transferring raw data into important numbers. In interpreting the primary data, the researcher had used the computer software, **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS**) to compiled, sorted, edited, classified, and coded the data from the questionnaire. This computer software will help the researchers in decreasing the time taken to compute information and encourage quantitative investigation quicker and less demanding. The detailed method of data interpretation is descriptive analysis, reliability test, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The researcher used descriptive analysis to analyse the variables and describe the respondent's biographical information. Reliability statistics had performed a significant relationship among the variables in the study. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to investigate the independent variable, and the dependent variable had used the frequency analysis to analyse the data. (Bewick et al., 2003)

3.8.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistic analysis had supported the data collected. Descriptive statistic outlines the whole esteem that makes up the component and explains it into a descriptive message (Eiselen, Uys & Porgieter, 2005). Frequency distribution, rate distribution, and calculating mean are some trivial inquiry utilised by the researcher. It can use in this study to summarise the data collected with the questionnaire. Descriptive Statistic analysis had used to determine the average value of each variable.

Together with simple illustrations investigation, it shapes the premise of practically every quantitative examination of information (William M.K. Trochim, 2006). Descriptive statistics are used to view reasonably formed quantitative representations. Descriptive statistics are mathematical amounts such as mean, median, standard deviation, and decipher the properties of an arrangement of the sample. Descriptive statistics allow one to sensibly summarise a lot of details. Each descriptive statistic reduces a lot of data into a simpler description (Pablo Subong et al., 2005). In our research, we have shown the outcomes made in table form.

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3.8.2   RELIABILITY TEST

The reliability of a test indicates the degree to which it is without bias and guarantees predictable cross-sectional calculation over time and the various items in the instrument along these lines. The purpose of leading reliability test is to search the constancy and immovability of the research data (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006). This is conduct reliability analysis to ensure the dependability of the questionnaire. A reliability test is a metric to prove that it is the demand to be perfect to use a reliable instrument as a means for obtaining data for the instrument. Reliability measurement is managed by obtaining on a scale the degree of intentional variety, which should be achievable by determining the relationship between the scores obtained from separate scale administrations. To assess the authenticity of the respondent's comments, reliability analysis is used (Jansen et al., 2003). Concerning of evaluation of the reliability, we utilised Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient as an estimation instrument Matkar (2012) stated the principles of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient as table underneath.

Table 3.2: Rule of Thumb Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

Source: Matkar (2012)

3.8.3   PEARSON CORRELATION

The researchers have decided to use Pearson Correlation to analyse the data that have been obtained. Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis is one of the important analyses which can measure the strength of the linear relationship between the independent variables (IV) and dependent variable (DV). Pearson Correlation Coefficient, (r) evaluates the degree to which two indicators have a direct relationship. It is used to illustrate the association between two variables. A positive relationship reflects a propensity in one variable for a high reward to be associated with a high incentive in the second. A negative correlation represents an inclination in one variable for a high incentive to be associated with the second to a low incentive. Results are between -1 and 1. The (+) and (-) signs indicate whether the relationship between the two factors X and Y is positive or negative. Suppose that X and Y have a strong positive linear correlation when r is close to +1, while when r is close to -1. X and Y have a strong negative association. A result of -1 means that there is, by all means, a perfect negative association between the two measures. In contrast, a result of 1 means that the two variables have a perfect positive correlation (Adam Lund et al., 2018). A result of 0 means that the two variables have no linear relationship. This analysis is to identify if the correlations exist between the independent variables (IV), which are country image, destination image and hotel image and dependent variable (DV) which is the response behaviour of tourists in Sabah. If the correlation has existed, the researchers have to decide the strength and direction of association between the independent variables (IV) and dependent variable (DV).

3.9 SUMMARY

In conclusion, this chapter explains the research methodology for the research by hand over of accumulating the data that has been used. Researches have defined research methodologies, including population, samples, and data collection instruments used in the study, and strategies used to ensure ethical standards and reliability in this study. The target population for this researches is a tourist who has the intention of a visit to Sabah. From the data of tourists who have the intention of a visit to Sabah, a researcher has decided to choose 200 tourists as respondents. Researchers have decided to use non-profitability sampling, such as convenience sampling to edge the researchers for the data assortment in this study. The data would be obtained as the key data compilation of two components by surveys using questionnaires. Researchers have analysed the data using descriptive statistics, reliability tests, and Pearson correlation in this study.   Following are a summary of research questions and data analysis that has been used in the study:

Table 3.3 shows the summary of research questions and data analysis that has been used
in the study

Research Question	Data Analysis
RQ1: Does country image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?	Pearson correlation
RQ2: Does destination image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?	Pearson correlation
RQ3: Does the hotel image have any connection in determine tourist's response behaviour during COVID-19?	Pearson correlation

CHAPTER 4

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data analysis, which includes the response rate, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, and spearmen's correlation tests. Each inquiry was interpreted and fearless the research questions, while the descriptive analysis has been depicted the respondent's demographic profile. Validity and reliability are essential to assess whether the samples gathered are legitimate and predictable. Hence, Cronbach's alpha method was utilised for the reliability test. The Pearson's correlation test was utilised to analyse and explore the relationship between the variables additionally.

4.2   RESPONSE RATE

A whole amount of 215 questionnaires were distributed online. This questionnaire has been calculate by using Google Form since there has been constraints due to Covid-19. From 215 questionnaires collected from the targeted respondents, all of amount 215 questionnaires were usable. These 215 questionnaires were collected from online respondents.

The accuracy of a research survey based on a questionnaire is less obvious, but it can have good response rates and accuracy. The response rate, or the percentage of survey respondents who meet the quality criteria, is often used as a measure of how widely the survey results can be shared.

Table 4.1: Total Number of Questionnaire

Number of questionnaires distributed	215
Questionnaires returned and useable to be analysis	215
Response rate	100%
Questionnaire used for analysis	215

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)

4.3   RESPONDENT'S DEMOGRAPHIC

A total of 215 questionnaire sets were assigned via the online portal. This section included the respondents' contextual profiles. This section focuses on the demographic profile and experience of the respondent, including gender, age, race, marital status, occupation and income.

Table 4.2: Respondent Demographic Profile – Gender

Respondent's Profile	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Male	48	22.30%
Female	167	77.70%
Total	215	100%

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)
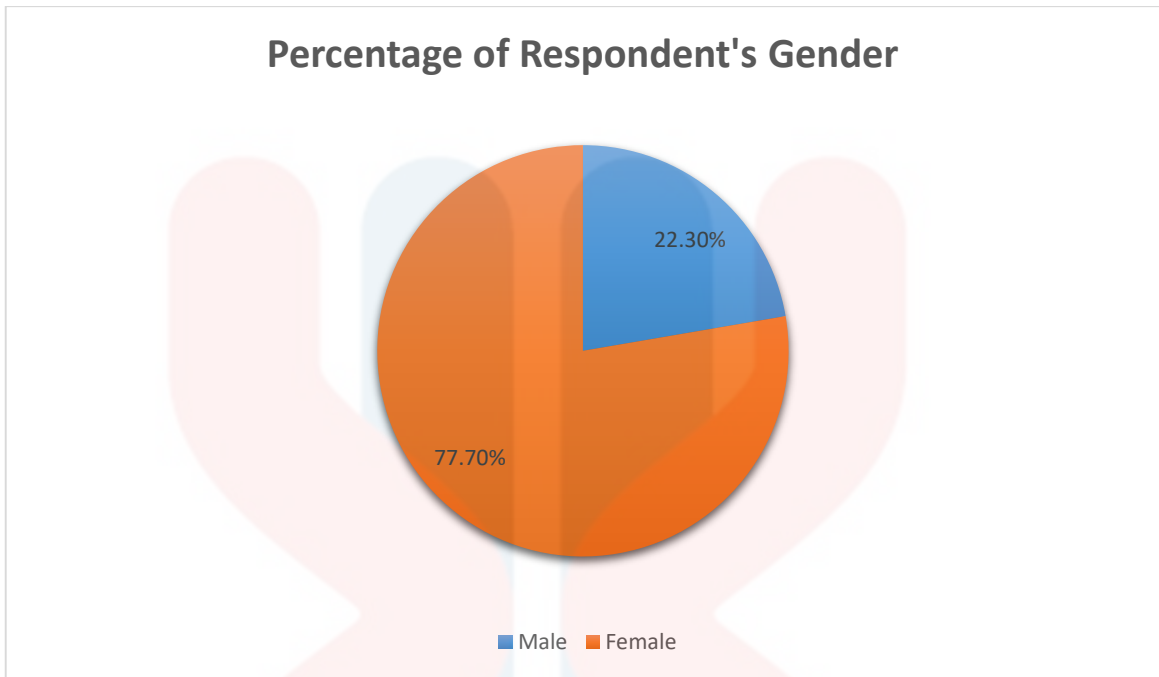
Figure 4.1: Percentage of Respondent's Gender

Table 4.2 displays common of the respondents are female with 77.70% (n=167)

related to 33.30% (n=48) are male.

Table 4.3: Respondent Demographic Profile – Age

Respondent's Age	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Below than 20 years old	6	2.80%
21-30 years old	203	94.40%

31-40 years old	1	0.50%
41-50 years old	3	1.40%
51-60 years old	2	0.90%
Total	215	100%
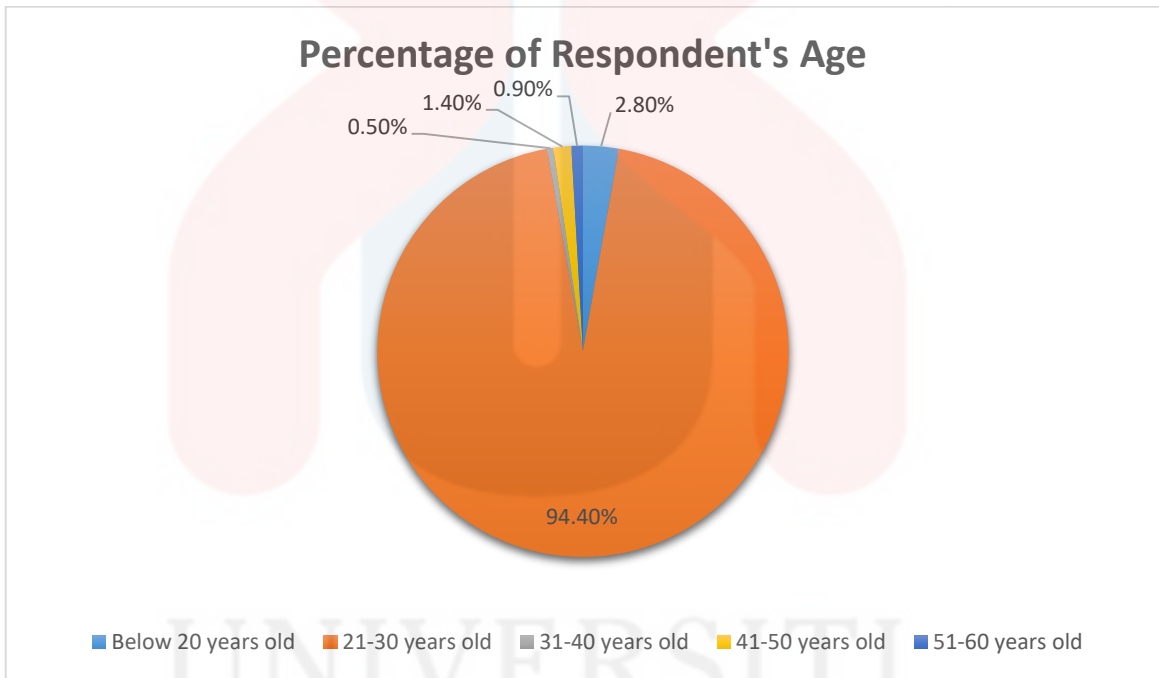
Figure 4.2: Percentage of Respondent's Age

In table 4.3, respondents who responded to this survey are obscenely aged between 21-30 years old with the frequency of 203 respondents (94.40%). This is observed by respondents below 20 years old with the frequency of 6 respondents (2.80%),

31-40 years old with only 1 respondent (0.50%), 41-50 years old with 3 respondents (1.40%) and 51-60 years old with 2 respondents (0.90%).

Table 4.4: Respondent Demographic Profile – Race

Respondent's Race	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Malay	166	77.20%
Chinese	37	17.20%
India	2	0.90%
Brunei	1	0.50%
Bugis	1	0.50%
Bumiputera Sabah	2	0.90%
Dusun	2	0.90%
Iban	1	0.50%
Kadazan	1	0.50%
Orang Asli	1	0.50%
Rungus	1	0.50%
Total	215	100%

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)
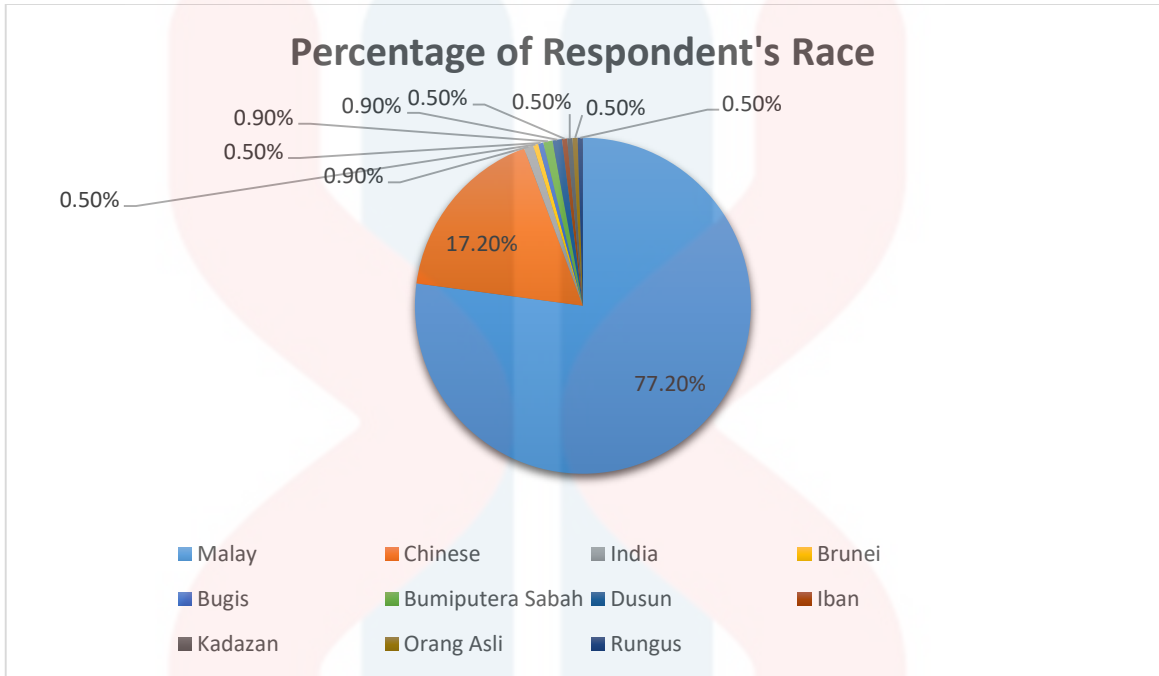
Figure 4.3: Percentage of Respondent's Race

Table 4.4 showed most of the respondents in the race are Malay with 166 respondents (77.20%). Followed by Chinese with 37 respondents (17.20%), from India, Bumiputera Sabah and Dusun respectively have 2 respondents (0.90%) and lastly, from Brunei, Bugis, Dusun, Iban, Kadazan, Orang Asli and Rungus respectively has 1 respondent (0.50%).

Table 4.5: Respondent Demographic Profile – Marital Status

Respondent's Marital Status	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Single	201	93.50%
Married	14	6.50%
Total	215	100%

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)
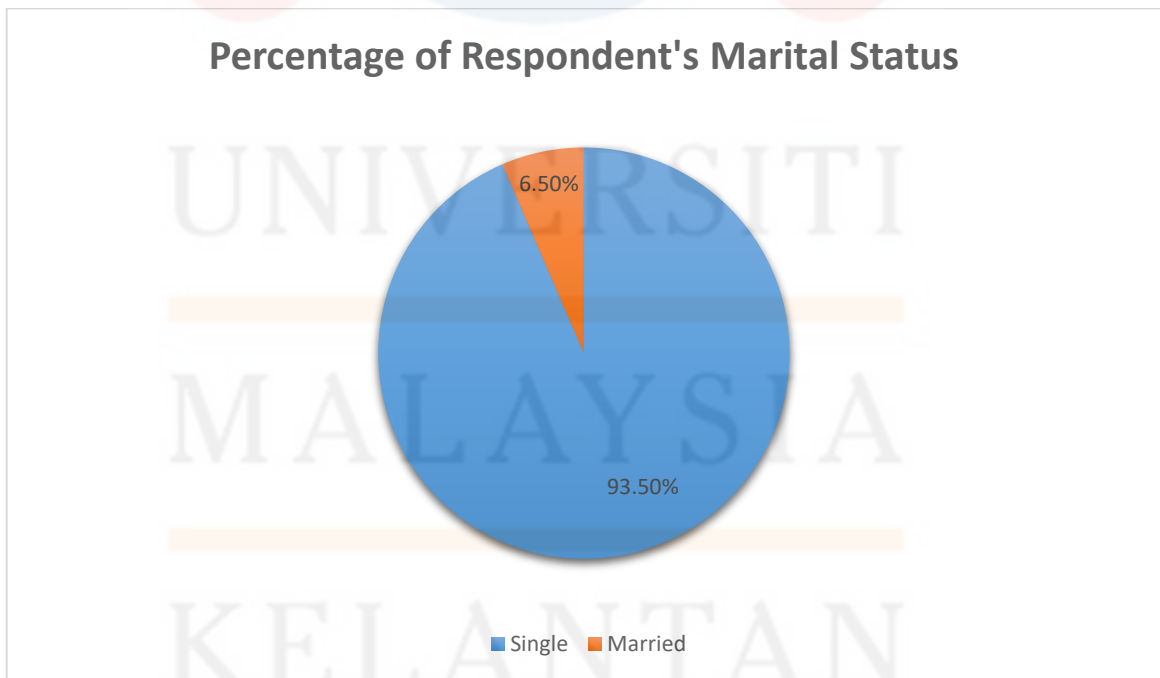
Figure 4.4: Percentage of Respondent's Marital Status

Table 4.5 shows the percentage of respondent's marital status which most of the respondent's marital status are single with 201 respondents (93.50%) and followed by respondent's marital status which is married to 14 respondents (6.50%).

Table 4.6: Respondent Demographic Profile – Occupation

Respondent's Occupation	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Student	188	87.40%
Government Sector	5	2.30%
Private Sector	16	7.40%
Housewife	3	1.40%
Business	1	0.50%
Babysitting	1	0.50%
Self-work	1	0.50%
Total	215	100%

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)
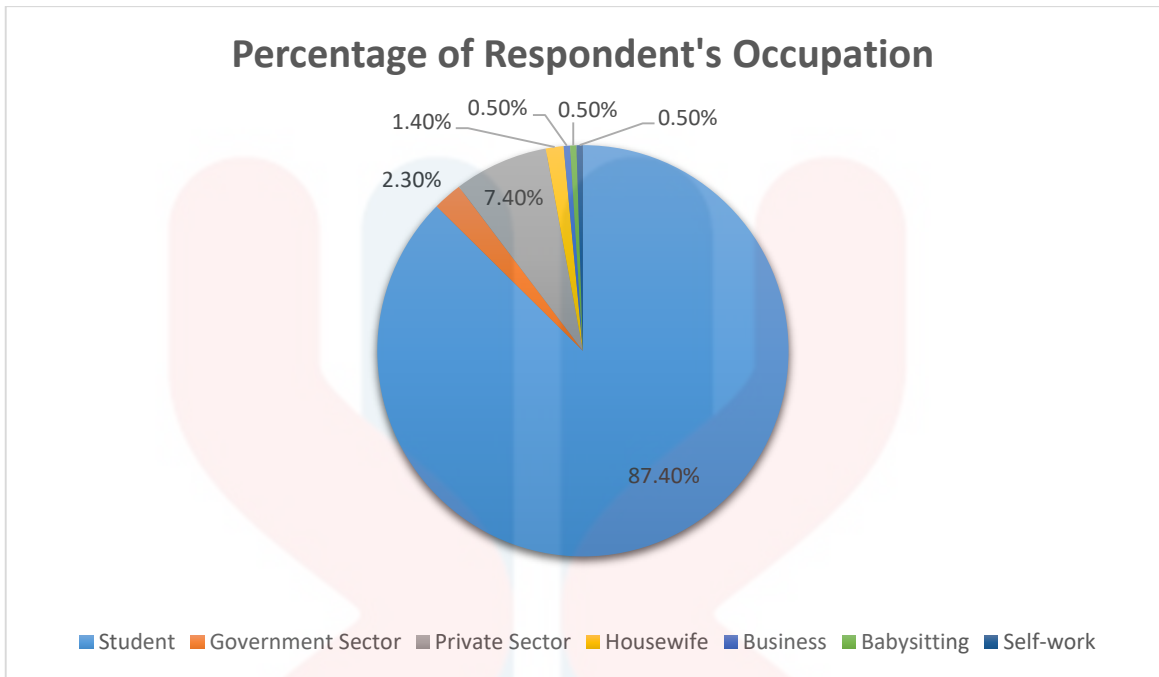
Figure 4.5: Percentage of Respondent's Occupation

Table 4.6 showed the percentage of respondent's occupation which most of the respondent's occupation are a student with 188 respondents (87.40%) followed by respondent's occupation which is in the private sector with 16 respondents (7.40%). Furthermore, respondent's occupation which under government sector has 5 respondent (2.30%), housewife with 3 respondents (1.40%), followed by respondent's occupation which are in business, babysitting and self-work respectively with 1 respondent (0.50%).

Table 4.7: Respondent Demographic Profile – Income

Respondent's Income	Frequency N= 215	Percentage (%)
Below RM 2000	203	94.40%
RM 2001-3000	8	3.70%
RM 3001-4000	1	0.50%
Above RM 5000	3	1.40%
Total	215	100%

Source: Fieldwork Study (2021)
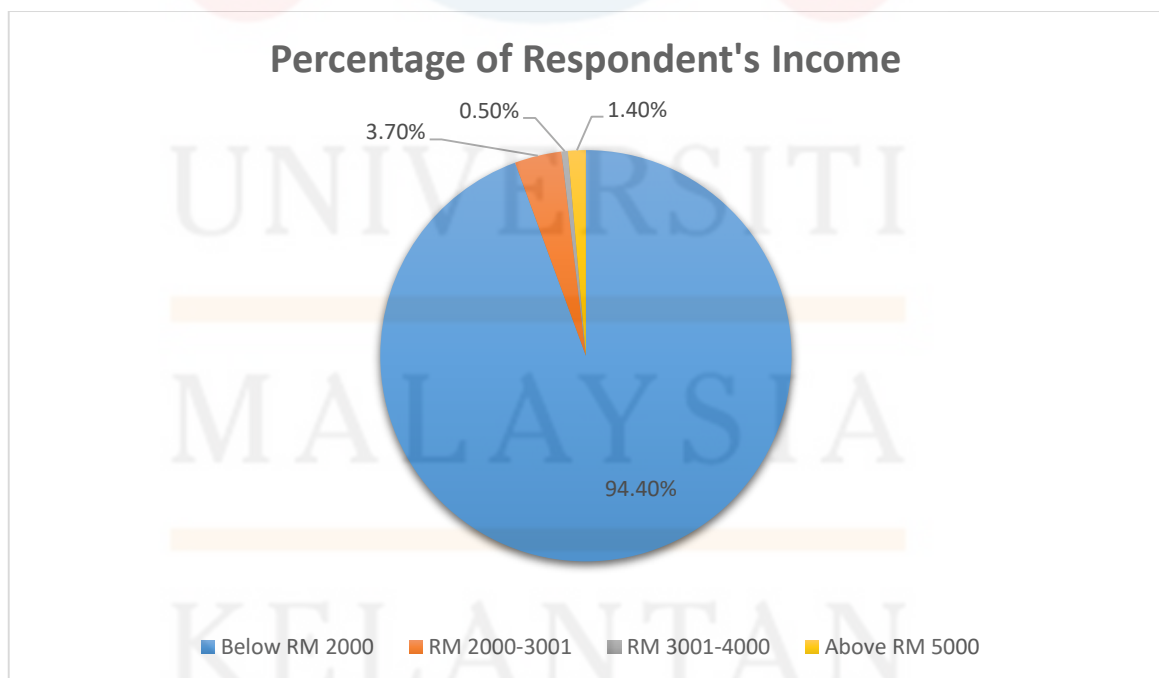
Figure 4.6: Percentage of Respondent's Income

Based on table 4.7 shows the average income of the respondents. Most of the respondent's income is below RM 2000 with 203 respondents (94.40%), RM 2001-3000 with 8 respondents (3.70%), followed by respondents with income above RM 5000 with 3 respondents (1.40%) and lastly respondent with income RM 3001-4000 with 1 respondent (0.50%).

4.4   RESULTS OF RELIABILITY TEST

The reliability coefficient is a method for determining the internal accuracy of a scale. As a result, the data was examined using the Cronbach's Alpha study as a guide to determine the degree of accuracy. Cronbach's Alpha must be greater than 0.7 for all variables. Table 4.8 below shows the Rules of Thumb of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient size according to Matkar (2012).

Table 4.8: Rule of Thumb Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

Source: Matkar (2012)

Table 4.9: Result of Reliability Coefficient Alpha for the Independent Variable and

Dependent Variable

Variable	Number of items	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
Country Image	18	0.916	Excellent
Destination Image	9	0.884	Good
Hotel Image	18	0.959	Excellent
Tourists Response Behaviour	9	0.831	Good

Table 4.9 of the SPSS findings showed the importance of both independent and dependent variables in this analysis. According to Table 4.9, 2 of the variables were over 0.900 meanwhile 2 of the other variables were over 0.800. The questionnaire was approved and 18 questions were used to access the country image variable. The Cronbach's Alpha result for the country image variable questions is 0.916 and has been proven to be excellent. The coefficient obtained for country image variable questions was also accurate.

Other than that, for measuring the destination image variable, 9 questions were used and the result of the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.884, which indicated as good. Hence, the coefficient obtained for these questions in the destination image variable were reliable.

Then, 18 questions were used to calculate the hotel image variable and the Cronbach's Alpha outcome is 0.959 which also indicated as excellent. The coefficient obtained in the aesthetic variable for this hotel image variable was accurate.

Finally, 9 questions were used to calculate the tourist's response behaviour variable towards tourism image and the Cronbach's Alpha outcome was 0.831 which was indicated as good. The coefficient obtained for these questions in the tourist's response behaviour variable was reliable.

4.5   RESULT OF DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic characteristics of data in research. They provide a simple summary of samples and metrics. Together with simple graphical analysis, they form the basis of almost all quantitative data analysis. This study has been conducted to analyse the mean and standard deviation for Section B and Section C of the questionnaires.

4.5.1   OVERALL MEAN SCORE FOR VARIABLES

This segment information showed the mean score attained as of the descriptive analysis. Overall mean score and standard deviation of variables and sub-variables were designed based on 5 points Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). The overall mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each variable and measurement are exposed as indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.10 showed that independent variables verified moderate mean score (M=4.1646, SD=0.74415). altogether the dimension variables also scored a moderate mean score where country image 4.1706 (SD=074189), destination image 4.1989

(SD=0.73378), hotel image 4.1244 (SD=0.75678). Besides, the dependent variable verified the middle mean score (M=4.1089, SD=0.83378) where the sub variable named tourist response behaviour gained 4.1089 (SD=0.83378).

Table 4.10: The Overall Mean Score on Each Variable and Dimension

SECTION	DIMENSION	N	M	SD
PART 1	Country Image	215	4.1706	0.74189
PART 2	Destination Image	215	4.1989	0.73378
PART 3	Hotel Image	215	4.1244	0.75678
PART 4	Tourist Response Behaviour	215	4.1089	0.83378

Source: Fieldwork study (2021)

4.5.2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (IV), TOURISM IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR OF SABAH, MALAYSIA

Table 4.11: Descriptive Analysis for Independent Variables – Country Image

Country Image	N	Mean	SD
Sabah has a high standard of cleanliness.	215	3.86	0.692
Sabah has natural scenic beauty.	215	4.64	0.570
Lodgings properties in Sabah are easy to find.	215	4.05	0.750
The restaurant in Sabah is of good quality.	215	3.79	0.760
Prices product and service in Sabah are affordable.	215	3.71	0.865
Good tourist accommodation in Sabah is readily available.	215	4.29	0.749
In Sabah, there are many places of interest to visit.	215	4.54	0.660
A visit to Sabah is a real adventure.	215	4.38	0.713

Food in Sabah is different from mine.	215	4.38	0.757
There is a restful and relaxing place to visit in Sabah.	215	4.51	0.690
Sabah has a good nightlife.	215	4.26	0.758
The weather in Sabah is pleasant.	215	4.31	0.704
The standard of living in Sabah is high.	215	3.69	0.825
Local architecture styles in Sabah are different from mine.	215	4.20	0.802
In general, it is safe to visit Sabah.	215	4.10	0.794
Everything in Sabah different and fascinating.	215	4.33	0.765
Hygiene standards in Sabah are high.	215	3.90	0.752
Local people in Sabah are friendly.	215	4.13	0.748

Source: Fieldwork study (2021)

Table 4.11 showed the number of respondents, mean and standard deviation of the first independent variable (IV) which is food price. Based on Table 4.11, country image makes up of eighteen (18) questions. The mean score of the eighteen (18) questions in social capital ranges from 3.69 to 4.64. The query with the highest 'Sabah has natural scenic beauty' (M=4.64, SD=0.570) followed by 'In Sabah, there are many places of

interest to visit' (M=4.54, SD=0.660), 'There are restful and relaxing place to visit in Sabah' (M=4.51, SD=0.690), 'A visit to Sabah is a real adventure' (M=4.38, SD=0.713), 'Food in Sabah is different from mine' (M=4.38, SD=0.757), 'Everything in Sabah different and fascinating' (M=4.33, SD=0.765), 'The weather in Sabah is pleasant' (M=4.31, SD=0.704), 'Good tourist accommodation Sabah is readily available' (M=4.29, SD=0.749), 'Sabah has a good nightlife' (M=4.26, SD=0.758), 'Local architecture styles in Sabah are different from mine' (M=4.20, SD=0.802), 'Local people in Sabah are friendly' (M=4.13, SD=0.748), 'In general, it is a safe to visit Sabah' (M=4.10, SD=0.794), 'Lodgings properties in Sabah are easy to find' (M=4.05, SD=0.750), 'Hygiene standards in Sabah are high' (M=3.90, SD=0.752), 'Sabah has a high standard of cleanliness' (M=3.86, SD=0.692), 'Restaurant in Sabah are of good quality' (M=3.79, SD=0.760), 'Prices product and service in Sabah are affordable' (M=3.71, SD=0.865) and 'The standard living in Sabah is high' (M=3.69, SD=0.825).

Table 4.12: Descriptive Analysis for Independent Variables – Destination Image

Destination Image	N	Mean	SD
The local standard of cleanliness is high.	215	3.97	0.757
It has natural scenic beauty.	215	4.51	0.676
Lodgings properties are easy to find.	215	4.18	0.688
Restaurants are of good quality.	215	4.10	0.703

Prices are affordable.	215	3.94	0.765
Good tourist accommodation is readily available even during pandemic COVID-19.	215	3.93	0.814
Many places of interest to visit.	215	4.39	0.746
A visit to Sabah is a real adventure.	215	4.33	0.754
There is a restful and relaxing place to visit.	215	4.44	0.701

Source: Fieldwork study (2021)

Table 4.12 showed that the number of respondents, the mean and standard deviation of the destination image, which is the second independent variable (IV). There are nine (9) items for destination image which is part 3 in the questionnaire section B. The mean score of the nine (9) substances ranges from 3.93 to 4.51. the highest to lowest score was stated as 'It has natural scenic beauty' (M=4.51, SD=0.676). 'There is a restful and relaxing place to visit (M=4.44, SD=0.701), 'Many places of interest to visit (M=4.39, SD=0.746), 'A visit to Sabah is a real adventure' (M=4.33, SD=0.754), 'Lodgings properties are easy to find' (M=4.18, SD=0.688), 'Restaurants are of good quality (M=4.10, SD=0.703), 'Local standard of cleanliness is high' (M=3.97, SD=0.757), 'Prices are affordable' (M=3.94, SD=0.765) and 'Good tourist accommodation is readily available even during pandemic COVID-19' (M=3.93, SD=0.814) as shown at table 4.12 above.

Table 4.13: Descriptive Analysis for Independent Variables – Hotel Image

Hotel Image	N	Mean	SD
The standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high.	215	4.08	0.744
The hotel is located in an area of natural scenic beauty.	215	4.29	0.706
The hotels are easy to find.	215	4.00	0.739
Restaurants at the hotel are of good quality.	215	4.12	0.749
The hotel rates are affordable.	215	3.97	0.767
A good hotel is readily available.	215	4.12	0.700
The hotel is in proximity to places of interest.	215	4.18	0.736
A stay in the hotel is a real adventure.	215	3.86	0.861
The food served at the hotel is excellent.	215	4.12	0.720
There is a restful and relaxing atmosphere in the hotel.	215	4.20	0.750
The hotel provides good nightlife.	215	4.21	0.698
The ambience of the hotel is pleasant.	215	4.19	0.734

The standard of hospitality is high.	215	4.10	0.788
The local architecture styles of the hotel are exotic.	215	4.08	0.858
In general, it is safe to stay at the hotel.	215	4.16	0.777
Everything about the hotel is different and fascinating.	215	4.18	0.785
The hygiene standards of the hotel are high especially during COVID-19.	215	4.17	0.773
The frontline employees of the hotel are friendly.	215	4.21	0.737

Source: Fieldwork study (2021)

Table 4.13 showed the number of respondents, mean and standard deviation of the last independent variable (IV) which is hotel image. According to Table 4.13, hotel image has eighteen (18) questions. The mean score of the eighteen (18) questions in hotel image range from 3.86 to 4.29. The highest to lowest score was reported as 'The hotel is located in an area natural scenic beauty' (M=4.29, SD=0.706), 'The frontline employees of the hotel are friendly' (M=4.21, SD=0.737), 'The hotel provides good nightlife' (M=4.21, SD=0.698), 'There are restful and relaxing atmosphere in the hotel' (M=4.20, SD=0.750), 'The ambiance of the hotel is pleasant' (M=4.19, SD=0.734), 'The hotel is in the proximity to places of interest' (M=4.18, SD=0.736), 'Everything about the hotel is different and fascinating' (M=4.18, SD=0.785), 'The hygiene standards of the hotel are high especially during COVID-19' (M=4.17, SD=0.773), 'In general, it is a safe to stay

at the hotel' (M=4.16, SD=0.777), 'Food served at the hotel is excellent' (M=4.12, SD=0.720), 'Good hotel is readily available' (M=4.12, SD=0.700), 'Restaurants at the hotel are of good quality' (M=4.12, SD=0.749), 'The standard of hospitality is high' (M=4.10, SD=0.788), 'Local architecture styles of the hotel are exotic' (M=4.08, SD=0.858), 'The standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high' (M=4.08, SD=0.744), 'The hotels are easy to find' (M=4.00, SD=0.739), 'The hotel rates are affordable' (M=3.97, SD=0.767) and 'A stay in the hotel is a real adventure' (M=3.86, SD=0.861).

4.5.3 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE (DV), TOURISM IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR OF SABAH, MALAYSIA

Table 4.14: Descriptive Analysis for Dependent Variables – Tourist Response Behaviour

Tourist Response Behaviour	N	Mean	SD
I will revisit Sabah as my dream destination.	215	4.40	0.722
I will consider Sabah as my first choice destination for my next visit.	215	4.25	0.787

I will patronize the Sabah trip more often after pandemic COVID-19.	215	3.79	0.953
I will say positive things about Sabah.	215	4.25	0.697
I will spread positive word-of-mouth about Sabah.	215	4.30	0.707
I will attempt to influence my friend and family not to visit Sabah again.	215	3.13	1.423
I will convince my friends and family to visit Sabah.	215	4.26	0.776
I will strongly recommend Sabah to my friend and family.	215	4.30	0.758
I will recommend Sabah to someone who seeks my advice and information about this destination.	215	4.30	0.681

Source: Fieldwork study (2021)

Table 4.14 showed the number of respondents, mean and standard deviation of the dependent variable (DV) which is the tourist response behaviour of Sabah, Malaysia. Referring to Table 4.14, there are nine (9) items under tourist response behaviour. The most highly rated outcome was 'I will revisit Sabah as my dream destination' scored (M=4.40, SD=0.722) followed by 'I will strongly recommend Sabah to my friend and family' (M=4.30, SD=0.758). 'I will recommend Sabah to someone who seeks my advice and information about this destination' (M=4.30, SD=0.681). 'I will spread positive

word-of-mouth about Sabah' (M=4.30, SD=0.707). 'I will convince my friends and family to visit Sabah' (M=4.26, SD=0.776). 'I will say positive things about Sabah' (M=4.25, SD=0.697). 'I will consider Sabah as my first choice destination for next visit' (M=4.25, SD=0.787). 'I will patronize Sabah trip more often after pandemic COVID-19' (M=3.79, SD=0.953) and 'I will attempt to influence my friend and family not to visit Sabah again' (M=3.13, SD=1.423). This indicates that most respondents consider that tourist response behaviour is revisiting Sabah as the dream destination in this research.

4.6   RESULT OF PEARSON's CORRELATION

Pearson's correlation coefficient is the test statistics that measures the statistical relationship, or association, between two continuous variables. In other simple words, the Pearson Correlation calculates the effect of change in one variable when another variable change. The purpose of using Pearson Correlation to test whether the statistically significant linear relationship between height and weight and to determine the strength and the direction of the association.

This study used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the country image, destination image and hotel image with the tourist response behaviour.

4.6.1 RESULT BETWEEN COUNTRY IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

The result of the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the country image and tourist response behaviour. The result determined the degree to which a relationship between the two variable.

Table 4.15: Result of Pearson Correlation between Country Image and Tourist Response Behaviour

		Tourist Response Behaviour	Country Image
Tourist Response Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.757"
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	215	215
Country Image	Pearson Correlation	.757"	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	215	215

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the result of Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between country image and tourist response behaviour. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variable, $r = .757$, $N = 215$; the relationship between the two variable was significant *(p = .000)* at the level of 0.01 (2-tailed). The improvement of the country image will appear to be associated with the tourist response behaviour. It is shown that the country image is an important factor in determining or setting the rate of tourist response behaviour toward travel destination in the country.

4.6.2 RESULT BETWEEN DESTINATION IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

The result of the Pearson correlation coefficient will determine the relationship between the two variable which is destination image and tourist response behaviour. The image of the tourist destinations is important since it influences not only the choice of the destination by tourists but also their level of satisfaction. Tourist may base their perception of a destination on the general travel environment and reputation for safety, along with what the destination has to offer in terms of natural attractions, entertainment value, and relaxation.

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Table 4.16: Result of Pearson Correlation between Destination Image and Tourist

Response Behaviour

		Tourist Response Behaviour	Destination Image
Tourist Response Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.761"
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	215	215
Destination Image	Pearson Correlation	.761"	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	215	215

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the result of the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between destination image and tourist response behaviour. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variable, $r = .761$, $N = 215$; the relationship between the two variable was significant *(p = .000)* at the level of 0.01 (2-tailed). The good increment of destination image will appear to be connected with the tourist response behaviour. Destination image can provide the opportunities to enhance the visitor experience and the destination identity enclose with the brand expression. The destination economic development is a driving force to archive wider tourism economic development goals in Sabah.

4.6.3 RESULT BETWEEN HOTEL IMAGE AND TOURIST RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

The result of the Pearson correlation coefficient will calculate and dictate the relationship between hotel image and tourism response behaviour. The hotel image gives out the indication of tourism industries. The extend of the tourism industry alongside the hospitality industry has emerged as one of the prime growth factors in the value of tourism industries.

Table 4.17: Result of Pearson Correlation between Hotel Image and Tourist Response

Behaviour

		Tourist Response Behaviour	Hotel Image
Tourist Response Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.728"
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	215	215
Hotel Image	Pearson Correlation	.728"	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	215	215

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the result of Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between hotel image and tourist response behaviour. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variable, $r = .728$, $N = 215$; the relationship between the two variable was significant *(p = .000)* at the level of 0.01 (2-tailed). The magnification of hotel image will emerge to be correlated with the tourist response behaviour. The good reputation of hotel image will raise the branding in the hospitality industry that can build credibility and giving the tourist a valid reason to consider as the best accommodation provided to gain the reputable brand. Boost a hotel reputation can lead to increased customer loyalty.

4.7   SUMMARY

The study found that all of the studies in this study is accepted. All independent variables' correlation coefficient shows different value shows the different value: 0.757 for country image, 0.761 for destination image, and 0.728 for hotel image. The results of the correlations answered the research questions whether there is a relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. To conclude, there was a significant relationship between country image, destination image and hotel image.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the overall research that has been done. The recapitulation, the discoveries and the discussion about the tourism image could affect the tourist's behaviour in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah will be discussed as well. And it also explores and highlights the results which support the main objective of the analysis.

5.1.1   RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective is as follows:

1)   To identify the connection between country image towards tourist's response behaviour.

2)   To identify the connection between destination image towards tourist's response behaviour.

3)   To identify the connection between hotel image towards tourist's response behaviour.

To meet the exploration targets, the accompanying inquiries will be defined:

1)   Does country image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?

2)   Does destination image affect the behaviour of tourists during COVID-19?

3)   Does the hotel image have any connection in determine tourist's response behaviour during COVID-19?

At last, to support the future of the study, the discussion on the limitation will be discussed in this chapter.

5.2   FINDINGS

This chapter will describe the main findings of this study. In the previous chapter, the purpose of this study has been presented. This is the result of the outcome that we can formulate based on the objectives of this study. The reprise of of the result based on the research objectives is as state below:

5.2.1 DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 1

Table 5.1: Discussion on Objective 1 (Country Image)

Research objective 1	To identify the connection between country image towards tourist's response behaviour.
Research question 1	Does country image affect the behaviour of tourists during Covid-19?
Hypothesis 1	There is a strong positive relationship between country image and tourist response behaviour.

It is stated in chapter 1 that the first objective of this study is to identify the connection between country image toward tourist's response behaviour. Based on the data collected and output in chapter 4, it shows that there is a significant relationship between country image and tourist's response behaviour with a strong positive relationship between those two variables. The first independent variable is the country image on the effect toward the tourist's behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic. The result of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable indicates the reflection by hypothesis 1. Most of the respondent's response collected agree on the good image of Sabah with safety and complete facilities make them have the intention to revisit Sabah as their first choice destination to visit and will recommend to their friend and family. This also stimulates their curiosity with excitement to visit increase their knowledge and experience. An improvement in the overall image of a place held by an individual

enhances his or her intention to return and recommend it in the future (Bigne et al., 2001). They specifically relate to word of mouth, dissemination of information and revisit intention, tourist travel to be correlated with product and image and actual travel experience to a country to have influence tourist evaluation of that country product and image (Zainuddin et al., 2018). The country image also gives depth in the context of the first perception about the country that can provide an immersive experience for the consumers or tourist visiting the tourist destination. the country image has been proven which adds knowledge of the relationship between the original image and potential tourist's visit intention (Zhang, Xu, & Leung, 2016).

5.2.2 DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 2

Table 5.2: Discussion on Objective 2 (Destination Image)

Research objective 2	To identify the connection between destination image towards tourist's response behaviour.
Research question 2	Does destination image affect the behaviour of tourists during Covid-19?
Hypothesis 2	There is a strong positive relationship between destination image and tourist response behaviour.

The second research objective focuses on identifying the connection between destination image toward tourist's response behaviour. The data analysis in chapter 4 shows that there is a strong positive relationship relates to the tourist's response behaviour. The outcome of the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable indicates the reflection of hypothesis 2 with computed the significant relationship between those two variables. The majority of the respondents agree that Sabah provides good tourist accommodation with readily available even during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents also agree that the destination stated has natural scenic beauty with the good local standard cleanliness. The respondents acknowledge that Sabah has a good quality image and will spread positive thing about Sabah. They also will recommend Sabah to someone who seeks advice and information. A tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction is correlated to the evaluative of an individual tourist pre-visit expectation of a destination and perception outcome from information (Chon, 1992). The image of a destination is becoming more and more important and understanding the dimensions that influence image is becoming crucial for destination marketing (Puh, 2014). Destination image directly affects tourist intention to visit and revisit. Destination image has a direct and significant influence on the decision to visit or revisit the destination(Rahmanita, Setarnawat, & Satyarini, 2017).

5.2.3 DISCUSSION ON OBJECTIVE 3

Table 5.3: Discussion on Objective 3 (Hotel Image)

Research objective 3	To identify the connection between hotel image towards tourist's response behaviour.
Research question 3	Does the hotel image have any connection in determine tourist's response behaviour during Covid-19?
Hypothesis 3	There is a strong positive relationship between hotel image and tourist response behaviour.

The study's third objective is to identify the connection between hotel image towards tourist response behaviour. Based on the data analysis outcome in chapter 4, there is a strong positive relation between hotel image and tourist's response behaviour. The outcome stated the significant relationship between those two variables. It shows that hypothesis 3 reflects the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Most respondents felt like Sabah have a unique local architecture with the style of the hotel are exotic and everything about the hotel was fascinatingly different from any other hotel. The respondents also agree that the hotel in Sabah provided a good quality of hygiene standards of the hotel, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hotel image is influenced by service quality, which in turn influence the loyalty from the tourist or

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customers and service quality is an important influence of the image in the hotel industry (Kandampully et al., 2011). A good hotel image can enhance customers pre-experience thereby pleasurably driving customers emotionally to obtain a good value and reputation built from experience customers' emotionally bond with the hotel (Wai Lai, 2019). Providing a service recovery response to negative online reviews enhanced hotel image, attitude, and hypothetical intent to stay at the hotel (Meng, Dipietro, Gerdes JR, Kline, & Avant, 2018). Hotel image is an antecedent of hotel reputation, and all the above factors play a significant role in building customer loyalty that influences the response behaviour (Wai Lai, 2019).

5.3   LIMITATION

The researcher acknowledges that their research had several limitations. The first limitation is related to the sample size. This research's relatively limited sample confines to the respondents who only know about Sabah and have visited Sabah in their lifetime. The results of this research might be a little bit different from the expectation because the questionnaire has been distributed to some of the respondents who never experienced travelling to Sabah.

For the second limitation, the researcher only used Google Forms to distribute their questionnaire. This is because owing to the COVID-19, multiple obstacles hindered researchers from disseminating their questionnaires throughout the study. As a result, researchers would take a different approach, submitting their questionnaire via Google Forms and disseminating them via social media channels like Whatsapp.

For the third limitation, the researcher also faces some the lack of communication with the respondents. This is because due to the COVID-19, the researcher just can distribute the questionnaire through social media and the researcher cannot see the reaction of the respondents when respondents answer the questionnaire. This would make the researcher feel difficult to know if there is something wrong with the questionnaire that has been distributed.

To overcome this limitation, subsequent similar studies will need to expand the sample size and more closely test this report on tourism images and tourist response behaviour to provide a more refined study result.

5.4   RECOMMENDATION

Based on the previous chapter, some empirical factors that determine Sabah's tourism image and tourists' response behaviour during COVID-19 have been identified. Therefore, some recommendations can help researchers improve the results for future research purposes.

The first recommendation in this study is that future researchers can collect the data from respondents face to face to improve the accuracy of the data in our research. For future researchers, they can collect the data from respondents at specific locations such as airports, tourist attractions and hotel to obtain more accurate information, thereby enhancing the relationship between the tourism image of Sabah and tourist response behaviour for Sabah and another country. For example, they can cooperate with airport administrators and travel agencies to collect the response behaviour of tourists during tourists visit the place.

Furthermore, future researchers can increase the channels for collect the data of respondents. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we only can collect the data of respondents from google form in the online platform and it will affect the opinion of respondents during fill this google form. The problem for our research is we cannot explain the details of the questionnaire to our respondents and the main respondents for our research are those who have experienced travelling to Sabah. However, we cannot do this survey at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) during this pandemic happen. We hope future researchers can do this survey in KLIA after this pandemic has passed.

It is necessary to use more samples of people from different cultural backgrounds for further research to have a deeper understanding of the tourism image in the tourism field. Future research may use a larger sample size to verify the scale used in this research to expand the scope of future research. This method can help future researchers discover other factors in future research besides tourism image.

Researchers can also develop a method and conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of tourism image in research events. Although methodologically challenging, it would be helpful to conduct some long-term research to measure the relationship between tourism image and tourist response behaviour. This study can help future researchers understand the advantages and disadvantages of Sabah's tourism image during COVID-19, and can provide a reference for our research to find the best plan to meet the needs of future tourists.

5.5   SUMMARY

This study has used a framework from Zainuddin et al, (2018) shows that there are independent variable: country image, destination image, hotel image and dependent variable, which is tourist's response behaviour. The outcomes give an outline of the influence level of the independent variable on the dependent variable. According to the findings, it is shown that this is three independent was influencing the tourist behaviour to travel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah during COVID-19 among tourist.

Summary of the liable knowledge, the whole objective of this research has been answered. Almost all respondent responded that they want to come to travel to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah after COVID-19 following the experience they gained mainly based on country image, destination image and hotel image. They have also agreed the standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high. Also, they will convince her or his family and friend to visit Sabah after COVID-19.

The relatively limited sample of this study confines to the respondent who frequently or has travelled to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. But in this research, the tourist who travels to Sabah can provide accurate information and reach many target respondents in a short time. Besides, not much data or research about this study. So that, this study can contribute to new resources of materials in the academic fields and also can provide an overview of the current situation in the tourism industry. And in the practical perspective,
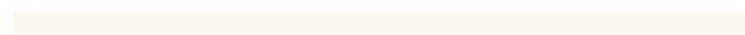
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this study can give a benefit to industry players as a guide to improve their standard operating and the way improve the fulfilment among tourist particularly during pandemic COVID-19.

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Dear respondent,

We are doing an academic research entitled:

Tourism Images and Tourists Response Behaviour: A Case of Sabah, Malaysia.

We are students of Bachelor of Entrepreneurship (Tourism) with Honors in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. We are currently conducting a survey on the Tourism Images and Tourists Response Behaviour: A Case of Sabah, Malaysia. Financially, it will not cost you anything and you will not be paid anything. However, your participation can help us find out the main objective of this research which are to identify the connection between country image towards tourist's response behaviour. This research is also to identify the connection between destination image towards tourist's response behaviour. Furthermore, this research is conducted to identify the connection between hotel image towards tourist's response behaviour.

Your personal details will not be exposed to the public as it is strictly used for the research academic purpose only.

Thank you for your assistance in completing this questionnaire.

Prepared by,

Muhammad Faizul Hakimi Bin Kamaruzzaman   H18A0257

Noorsyuhadah Binti Shahrel   H18A0311

Nur Aliah Binti Abdul Shukor   H18A0349

Wong Hao Jun   H18A0668

Bachelor of Entrepreneurship (Tourism) with Honors, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK).

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Section A consists of 6 questions. In this section, the researcher will ask about simple respondent's demographic information. Please tick (√) in your answer.

1. Gender:

☐Male ☐Female

2. Age:

☐ Below 20 years old   ☐ 41 – 50 years old

☐ 21 – 30 years old   ☐ 51 – 60 years old

☐ 31 – 40 years old   ☐ Above 61 years old

3. Race:

☐ Malay   ☐ Chinese

☐ Indian   ☐ Other:_____

4. Marital status:

☐ Single   ☐ Married

5. Occupation:

☐ Student   ☐ Private Sector

□ Government Sector □ Others:_____

6. Income:

□ Below RM 2000   □ RM 4001 – 5000

□ RM 2001 – 3000   □ Above RM 5000

□ RM 3001 – 4000

SECTION B: TOURISM IMAGES AND TOURISTS RESPONSE

BEHAVIOUR: A CASE OF SABAH, MALAYSIA

Based on your opinion, please indicate the most appropriate response with the scale given below. You can tick (√) your sincere response anyway between 1 and 5.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Country Image

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Sabah has a high standard of cleanliness and					
2.	Sabah has natural scenic beauty					
3.	Lodgings properties in Sabah are easy to find					
4.	Restaurant in Sabah are of good quality					

100

5.	Prices product and service in Sabah are affordable					
6.	Good tourist accommodation Sabah is readily available					
7.	In Sabah, there are many places of interest to visit					
8.	A visit to Sabah is a real adventure					
9.	Food in Sabah is different from mine					
10.	There are a restful and relaxing place to visit in Sabah					
11.	Sabah has a good nightlife					
12.	The weather in Sabah is pleasant					
13.	The standard of living in Sabah is high					
14.	Local architecture styles in Sabah are different from mine					
15.	In general, it is a safe to visit Sabah					
16.	Everything in Sabah different and fascinating					
17.	Hygiene standards in Sabah are high					
18.	Local people in Sabah are friendly					

Destination Image

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Local standard of cleanliness is high					
2.	It has natural scenic beauty					

101

No.	Statement					
3.	Lodgings properties are easy to find					
4.	Restaurants are of good quality					
5.	Prices are affordable					
6.	Good tourist accommodation is readily available even during pandemic COVID-19					
7.	Many places of interest to visit					
8.	A visit to Sabah is a real adventure					
9.	There are a restful and relaxing place to visit					

Hotel Image

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The standard of cleanliness of the hotel is high					
2.	The hotel is located in an area of natural scenic beauty					
3.	The hotels are easy to find					
4.	Restaurants at the hotel are of good quality					
5.	The hotel rates are affordable					
6.	Good hotel is readily available					
7.	The hotel is in the proximity to places of interest					
8.	A stay in the hotel is a real adventure					
9.	Food served at the hotel is excellent					

10.	There are a restful and relaxing atmosphere in the hotel					
11.	The hotel provides good nightlife					
12.	The ambience of the hotel is pleasant					
13.	The standard of hospitality is high					
14.	Local architecture styles of the hotel are exotic					
15.	In general, it is a safe to stay at the hotel					
16.	Everything about the hotel is different and fascinating					
17.	The hygiene standards of the hotel are high especially during COVID-19					
18.	The frontline employees of the hotel are friendly					

SECTION C: TOURISTS RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

Based on your opinion, please indicate the most appropriate response with the scale given below. You can tick (√) your sincere response anyway between 1 and 5.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Tourist Response Behaviour

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I will revisit Sabah as my dream destination					
2.	I will consider Sabah as my first choice destination for my next visit					
3.	I will patronize the Sabah trip more often after pandemic COVID-19					
4.	I will say positive things about Sabah					
5.	I will spread positive word-of-mouth about Sabah					
6.	I will attempt to influence my friend and family not to visit Sabah again					
7.	I will convince my friends & family to visit Sabah					
8.	I will strongly recommend Sabah to my friend and family					
9.	I will recommend Sabah to someone who seeks my advice and information about this destination					

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