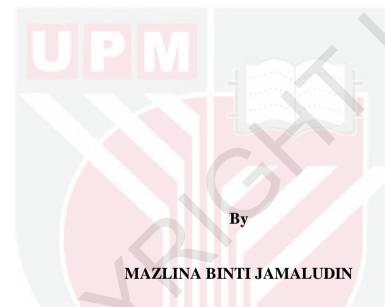# UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

INFLUENCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON DESTINATION LOYALTY AMONG DOMESTIC MILLENNIALS IN PULAU PANGKOR, MALAYSIA

MAZLINA BINTI JAMALUDIN

FH 2018 21

**INFLUENCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON
DESTINATION LOYALTY AMONG DOMESTIC MILLENNIALS
IN PULAU PANGKOR, MALAYSIA**

By

MAZLINA BINTI JAMALUDIN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

My mother Maheran, my father Jamaludin, my husband Yahya and my three kids Akmal, Iffah and Ilyas.

With love, respect, patient and a bunch of memories
Indeed, we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

INFLUENCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON DESTINATION LOYALTY AMONG DOMESTIC MILLENNIALS IN PULAU PANGKOR, MALAYSIA

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MAZLINA BINTI JAMALUDIN

September 2018

Chairman : **Associate Professor Azlizam Aziz, PhD**
Faculty : **Forestry**

The travel and tourism industries are getting stronger and lucrative among tourism organisations and entrepreneurs. Domestic millennials travellers using the user-generated contents (UGC) via the social media platforms are predominant. The present study is undertaken to examine the effects of destination loyalty among the domestic millennial travellers using the newly developed destination loyalty model. The study is guided by the theory of motivation on the '*push and pull factors*' and the theory of satisfaction '*expectancy disconfirmation*'. The aim of the study is to fill the void between the casual relationships on UGC, visitors' motivation, destination image, visitors' satisfaction and destination loyalty. A structured questionnaire was developed using the comprehensive literature review, open-ended questions and short interviews. A pilot test was run for reliability and validity to ensure the questionnaire was appropriate before launching the actual survey. The actual data were collected at Dataran Jetty Pulau Pangkor, Malaysia from 246 domestic millennialss visitors, using purposive sampling via google form. All parameters were analysed by means of partial least squares via Smart PLS 3.0. Common method variances using Herman's single factor test and marker variables were used. Result confirmed that there was no existence of biasness using the single-sourced data. The measurement model revealed that the construct reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were achieved according to the requirements. The structural (inner) model result showed that UGC was positively significant and had a direct relationship with visitors' motivation, destination image and visitors' satisfaction. Visitors' motivation was positively significant and had a direct relationship with destination image and visitors' satisfaction. The direct relationship between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty was positive but the relationship was insignificant. Destination images and visitors' satisfaction had direct, positive and significant relationship towards destination loyalty. The specific indirect effect of bootstrapping technique exhibited

both mediating constructs which were destination image and visitors' satisfaction which proved to be positively significant. The study suggested both H7 and H8 hypotheses were mediated between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty. UGC and visitors' motivation contributed 47.2% variance of destination image (R^2 = .472) and 40.4 % variance of visitors' satisfaction (R^2 = .404), while UGC contributed a small portion of variance at 24.4% on visitors' motivation (R^2 = .244). The destination loyalty endogenous variable contributed 60.6% of variance from destination image, visitors' satisfaction and visitors' motivation (R^2 = .606) proving that the three constructs were very strong. This was due to the fact that destination image and visitors' motivation were modelled as a higher order construct. The study made further advancement in travelling and tourism by presenting the casual relationship of the structural model using the partial least squares. The findings would assist destination managers on the social media UGC as a cost saver, while at the same time, cultivating positive mind-set among repeat visitors and future visitors to Pulau Pangkor. Furthermore, the millennials love sharing through UGC experience thus, extends their recommendation by sharing destination information to encourage repeat visits at low cost, and counter-acting any negative views. Furthermore, UGC can pin motivational interests through images, videos, audios and photographs which should create re-pins on the destination such as Pulau Pangkor. UGC con also be the primary marketing tools among the millennials to ensure effective and less costly at the destination. These efforts in matching specific needs and interests should garner higher visitors' loyalty to any destination.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGARUH KANDUNGAN PENJANAAN PENGGUNA
TERHADAP DESTINASI KESETIAAN DIKALANGAN MILENIA
DOMESTIK DI PULAU PANGKOR, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

MAZLINA BINTI JAMALUDIN

September 2018

Pengerusi   :   **Profesor Madya Azlizam Aziz, PhD**
Fakulti   :   **Perhutanan**

Industri pelancongan dan kembaraan semakin kukuh dan menguntungkan dikalangan
organisasi pelancongan dan usahawan. Pengunjung domestik milinia berbanding
generasi lain melalui kandungan penjanaan pengguna (UGC) terutamanya melalui
platform media sosial adalah menakjubkan. Kajian ini ingin mengenalpasti kesan
konstruk kesetiaan destinasi dikalangan pengunjung domestik melinia dengan
menggunakan model kesetiaan destinasi. Teori motivasi *'penolakan dan penarikan'*
dan teori *'ketaksahan jangkaan'* telah digunakan sebagai panduan bagi kajian ini.
Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk memenuhi jurang kajian perhubungan kausal diantara
kandungan penjanaan pengguna (UGC), motivasi pengunjung, imej destinasi,
kepuasan pengunjung dan kesetiaan destinasi. Soal-selidik berstruktur telah
dibangunkan dengan menggunakan kajian literature, soalan terbuka-tertutup dan
temuduga pendek. Ujian pilot telah dijalankan untuk mendapatan pengesahan dan
keesahan soal-selidik yang telah dibangunkan sebelum melancarkan soal selidik yang
sebenar. Data yang sebenar telah dijalankan di Dataran Jeti Pulau Pangkor, Malaysia
keatas 246 pengunjung melinia domestik menggunakan persempalan bertujuan
melalui penggunaan borang google. Semua parameter telah dianalisa menggunakan
'partial least squares' meggunakan perisian Smart PLS 3.0. *'Kaedah persamaan
variasi' (CMV) dengan menggunakan 'ujian faktor tunggal Herman'* and *'marker
variables'* telah digunakan. Kedua-dua ujian telah membuktikan bias tidak wujud
apabila menggunakan sumber data tunggal. Ujian pengukuran (luaran) model telah
membuktikan bahawa konstruk reliabiliti, keesahan konvergen dan keesahan
diskriminan telah berjaya mencapai tahap yang ditetapkan. Model ujian berstruktur
(dalaman) membuktikan UGC adalah positif signifikan dan wujud perhubungan
langsung dengan motivasi pengunjung, imej destinasi dan kepuasan pengunjung.
Motivasi pengunjung adalah signifikan positif dan wujud perhubungan langsung
dengan imej destinasi dan kepuasan pengunjung. Perhubungan langsung diantara

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motivasi pengunjung dan destinasi kesetiaan adalah positif namun, perhubungannya adalah tidak signifikan. Imej destinasi dan kepuasan pengunjung mempunyai perhubungan langsung yang positif dan signifikan terhadap kesetiaan destinasi. Kesan spesifik tidak langsung menggunakan teknik *'bootstrapping'* membuktikan bahawa kedua-dua konstruk imej destinasi dan kepuasan pengunjung adalah positif dan signifikan. Kedua-dua hipotesis H7 dan H8 adalah penengah antara motivasi pengunjung dan kesetiaan destinasi. UGC dan motivasi pengunjung menyumbangkan 47.2% varian imej destinasi ($R^2 = .472$) dan 40.4% varian kepuasan pengunjung ($R^2 = .404$) dengan UGC menyumbang bahagian kecil (24.4%) varian keatas motivasi pengunjung ($R^2 = .244$). Variable endogenus bagi kesetiaan destinasi menyumbangkan 60.6% varian daripada imej destinasi, kepuasan pengunjung dan motivasi pengunjung ($R^2 = .606$) membuktikan bahawa ketiga-tiga konstuk ini adalah sangat tinggi. Ini adalah disebabkan imej destinasi dan motivasi pengunjung di modelkan sebagai konstruk aras tinggi. Kajian ini menyumbangkan pengetahuan dalam pelancongan dan pengembaraan dengan mengemukakan perhubungan kausal menggunakan *'partial least squares'* model berstruktur. Penemuan kajian ini adalah diharapkan membantu pengurus destinasi untuk menguna pakai kandungan penjanaan pengguna (UGC) dalam aplikasi media sosial bagi penjimatan kos disamping menanamkan minda yang positif dikalangan bakal pengunjung dan pengunjung ulangan ke Pulau Pangkor. Ini disebabkan milinia menyukai perkongsian pengalaman justeru, cadangan pengkongsian maklumat destinasi bagi mengalakkan ulangan kujungan dengan kos yang dikurangkan dan dapat menangkis pandangan negatif. Tambahan, UGC berkemampuan untuk *'pin'* keinginan motivasi melalui imej, video, audio, dan gambar yang akan membawa kepada tindakan *'repin'* keatas destinasi. Malah, UGC boleh menjadi alat pemasaran utama dikalangan milinia bagi memastikan keberkesanan dengan kos yang rendah. Keupayaan ini mampu menyesuaikan keinginan dan keperluan yang mampu menambahkan kesetiaan ke destinasi.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 7 September 2018 to conduct the final examination of Mazlina binti Jamaludin on her thesis entitled "Influence of User-Generated Content on Destination Loyalty Among Domestic Millennials in Pulau Pangkor, Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
- this thesis is my original work;
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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance Based Structural Equation Model
CR	Composite Reliability
DI	Destination Image
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations
IPMA	Important Performance Matrix Analysis
LOY	Destination Loyalty
MOT	Visitors' Motivation
PLS- SEM	Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model
SAT	Visitors' Satisfaction
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UGC	User-Generated Contents
VAF	Variance Accounted For
VIF	Variance Inflammation Factor

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of tourism in Malaysia

Tourism in Malaysia, regarded as the second largest foreign exchange earner in 2016 (Tourism Malaysia, 2016), is one of the economic pillars that assisted the country's economic recovery. In 2015, tourism industry recorded as the second largest private investment contributor at MYR 24.5 billion and the third largest gross national income (GNI) contributor at MYR 67.1 billion (Department of Statistics, 2016). However, in 2017, the industry in Malaysia showed a down trend of tourists' arrivals. There were decresed of tourist arrivals of -3.0% to 25.95 million in 2017, compared to 26.76 million in 2016. Despite that, tourism still remained pivotal to the nation's economic transformation. During the global economic crisis, the government of Malaysia put up strong initiatives through Strategic Government Incentive programmes to help tourism industry grow (PEMANDU, 2015).

Before, tourism in Malaysia did face major challenges by international promotions and campaigns on "Visit Malaysia Year 2014". However, the industry managed to re-strategize quickly by extending the promotional campaign aggressively in "Year of Festivals (MyFest) 2015". Subsequently, among some other achievements, Malaysia ranked as the top halal friendly destination, ahead of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, a rating by Crescent in 2015 (Card, 2015), the World Golf Awards 2015 in Asia for the second year running the World's Top 10 Food Destinations by Cable News Network (CNN) with Georgetown and Penang being nominated as one of the top 10 best destinations in 2016, in the television series, "Lonely Planet". Malaysia also ranked 4th in the world's top retirement havens in 2015 as rated by International Living (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2016). It was evident that promoting an affordable travel to international and domestic tourists was the coherent strategic plan after years of struggle.

In 2014, there were evidences in the decrease in tourist arrivals. It was due to the MH570 and MH017 air crafts disasters which tarnished the country's image and significantly affected international tourist arrivals (PEMANDU, 2014).   While in 2015, the haze phenomenon that razed the sky affected the country's air quality, thus affecting tourist arrivals to the region (PEMANDU, 2014).   In 2017, Malaysia recorded an increase of 26.76 millions tourist arrivals. However, it saw static revenue of MYR 82.1 million in tourist earnings (Table 1.1) for that year. These were some of the scuffles that the tourism industry had faced and it required continuous improvement in strategic planning.

The average length of stay continuously swung negatively from 6.8 nights (2013) to 6.6 nights (2014), to 5.5 nights (2015) and to 5.9 nights (2016) due to an unavoidable world economic crisis. Regardless of the tourism crises in 2014 and 2015, the average per capita spending of tourists continued to grow slightly from MYR 2,545 in 2013, to MYR 2,624 in 2014 and to MYR 2,687 in 2015. A tourist was found to have spent MYR 768.6 (2013), MYR787.2 (2014) to MYR 841.1 (2015) on shopping. It was expected that tourists' spending would continuously increase, taking the advantage of the fall in value of the Malaysian ringgit. For the past five years, shopping was a major component of tourist expenditure in 2015 with 31.3% as compared to accommodation which was recorded at 25.45%. In contrast, expenditure obtained from organized sightseeing tours dropped to 5.8% (Department of Statistics, 2017). Despite the situation, destination managements and tour guides continued to focus on improving the industry.

Table 1.1 : Tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia

Year	Arrivals (million)	Receipts' (Billion RM)
2017	26.76	82.1
2016	25.95	82.1
2015	25.70	69.1
2014	27.44	72.0
2013	25.72	65.4
2012	25.03	60.6
2011	24.71	58.3

(Sources: Tourism Malaysia, 2016, 2018)

The most obvious characteristic of Malaysia's inbound tourist was relatively their short stay. Consequently, this resulted in lower yield compared to neighbouring countries like Singapore and Thailand. The yield per tourist was recorded at MYR 2,260, a rate much lower than Singapore (MYR 3,106) and Thailand (MYR 3,785) (PEMANDU, 2014). It was a challenge to Malaysia as tourism competitors were within the region. The significantly low average length of stay (Malaysia = 10 days, Thailand = 14 days), low spending per day and the predominantly dependent on short-haul travel markets were among the factors of low tourist earnings faced by our tourism industry. Although Malaysia had attracted more tourists than Singapore and Thailand, the growth in earnings was relatively low (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2016). The ratio for tourist arrivals and earnings was 1:3 for both Thailand and Singapore, while for Malaysia it was 1:2.

Tourism industry was expected to expend three times its current size, targeting 36 million tourists in 2020, bringing in MYR3 billion income per week (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2016). This proved that past campaigns such as "Cuti-Cuti 1 Malaysia", "Visit Malaysia Year 2007", "ZOOM! Malaysia" and "Yours Truly Asia" were a success. The highlights made by the government to enhance the country's

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tourism industry and to promote a strong and positive image of Malaysia in the eyes of the world were justified.

The tourism industry has expanded and grown into an intensely competitive scenario to attract visitors due to better quality of life, especially among the middle-class income earners. More people tend to save money to spend quality times with family members for their holidays and travel due to an increase in disposable income (Jang & Feng, 2007; Frederick & Sasser, 1990). Travelling has become a life style amongst Asian and European communities due to an increase in income per capita, better health care, longer life expectancy and higher quality of life. This has created a significant mark on business opportunity in tourism market globally. The industry is increasingly resilient due to the sudden influx of inbound and outbound tourists from western and Middle Eastern countries and they are looking for (1) a package product/service worth spending, (2) a favourable climate all year round and (3) safety while travelling. These are some of the significant factors that attract tourists to visit a country. At present, Malaysia faces stiff competition from several neighbouring countries, namely Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. With the reasons mentioned, repositioning of marketing strategies targeting for specific group segments on loyalty is crucial and vital for future success.

Tourism industry is at present potentially seen as a strong booster for economic expansion in Malaysia. Previously, tourism was known only to contribute towards employment opportunities and enrichment of related industries (Martin, & Bosque, 2008). With the improvement in local infrastructure, Malaysia is one of the countries that has benefitted from the tourism industry in boosting her economy (Turner, 2016). Improvement in transportation network, technology and information systems have brought closer rivalry among Asean countries which have tourism products such as climate, resources, infrastructure, culture, traditions and hospitality packages (Jamaludin, Johari, Aziz, Kayat, & Yusof, 2012; Matos, Mendes, & Valle, 2012). Therefore, the Government of Malaysia has strongly pushed the tourism industry as the main contributor to socio-economic growth of the nation and thus marketing Malaysia as a preferred tourist destination in the world (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017).

Besides holiday packages, tourism Malaysia has since consistently promoted the country through showcases in Europe and the Middle East, taking advantage on country's unique tropical forests and attractions such as meetings, medical tourism, conventions and exhibitions. Tourism Malaysia's vital goal has been to increase the number of foreign as well as local tourists by extending the average length of their stay and increasing their spending. For the year 2018, Malaysia's tourists arrivals have been targeted at 31.8 million with and expected earnings at MYR118 billion (Mytourism data 2017). The high broadband penetration rate in Malaysia has also contributed to the growth of online travel information usage and online travel booking and purchasing (Bremner & Grant, 2014). Currently, the popular sources of information used by visitors to travel in Malaysia were as follows; (1) own experience

(64.5%); (2) through family and friends (54.6%); and (3) internet (46.2%) (Tourism Malaysia, 2017).

Despite the fact that using the internet is a convenient source to search travel and tour information mainly among the millennialsss generation, it is still considered moderately low in usage. The highest rank of usage was; (1) search engine (31.5%); (2) website (22.0%); (3) travel review (15.9%); (4) online travel provider such as trivago and expedia (14.3%); (5) social media such as facebook and twitter (8.3%); and (6) travel blog such as trip travel (3.0%). They listed as very useful among visitors (Tourism Malaysia, 2017). It is hoped that the high usage of online services creates a stronger e-word-of-mouth effect and stimulates the industry better for the future.

1.1.1 Domestic tourism

Domestic tourism continues to play an important role in Malaysia's overall tourism promotion. Over the years, the government had focused mainly on the promotion of domestic tourism. Currently, it has developed in tandem with the advances made in international promotion. A domestic tourism survey conducted by the Department of Statistic, Malaysia (2018) recorded a very positive growth on domestic tourism. A total of 189.3.9 million visitors recorded in 2016 increased to 205.4 million visitors in 2017. Meanwhile, the number of trips made by travellers increased by 8.8% from 253.9 million trips in 2016 to 276.1 million trips in 2017. Majority of the domestic visitors comprised the age group of 25 to 39 years at 39.1%. This was trailed by domestic visitors aged 40 to 54 years comprising 26.3%, 15 to 24 years 19.6% and 55 years and above at 15.0%. Domestic visitors by household income class between MYR 1,001 and MYR 3,000 per month recorded the highest share at 34.7%. This was followed by visitors earning between MYR 3,001 and MYR 5,000 per month at 23.4% and MYR 10,001 and above per month at 22.5%.

The number of domestic tourists expenditure recorded MYR 83,103 million in 2017 as compared to MYR 74,773 million in 2016, an increase of 11.1%. In 2017, shopping contributed the highest expenditure components among domestic visitors 36.3%, automotive and fuel 15.2%, food and baverages 13.8%, house hold visits 11.4% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). This data indicated a sustainable positive and stable growth for domestic tourism in Malaysia in the future.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, (2018), nearly 90% of domestic travels were of leisure trips. The number comprised travels of 50 km or more with at least one overnight stay. Generally, a typical Malaysian tourist is a resident from urban areas. Domestic tourism among city dwellers rose from 15.5% in 2014 to 21.6% in 2015 among Malaysians. These figures showed that domestic tourism in Malaysia played a vital role in local economic growth and the influence of Malaysians spending on travelling was becoming popular. Domestic tourism revenue has been forecasted to increase and the number of trips is set to rise yearly at the rate of 6% or more. In

terms of growth, domestic tourism is heavily propelled by shopping habits, cheap automotive fuel and good culinary services. Higher portion of tourists' expenditure was observed to have spent on automotive fuel and shopping while, excursionists preferred to spend on shopping, food and beverages.

The present scenario suggests that domestic tourism has become an essential component in Malaysia's tourism industry compared over the past decades. It also indicated that local income had increased to help cushion the impact of any slowdown in international tourist arrivals. Domestic tourism has become more affordable compared to travelling abroad. The domestic tourism segment is likely to grow in the year 2018 as the decline in the value of ringgit makes overseas travel more expensive for the average Malaysians. Report on the travel and tourism industry on Malaysia Economic Impact in the year 2017 proved that domestic travel spending generated 48.3% of direct travel and the Growth Domestic Profit to 51.7% from foreign tourists (Turner, 2017). This proves that domestic tourism is playing a very strong role to boost the economy of the country. Martinez Gonzalez, Parra-Lopez and Buhalis (2016) reported that the global economic and political stability favoured domestic tourism. Therefore, it is recommended to take domestic holiday vacation as it is safer and more economical.

Local travel patterns have changed significantly over the last ten years. In line with the economic development of the country, domestic tourism has become robust due to a higher disposable income among travellers. There is a growing preference for a healthy work life and life style. Local residents who are in their 50s and senior citizens are found to have more time and money to spend on travel (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017).

For the past five years, drastic changes in travel patterns and habits have been observed especially among domestic young travellers when travelling domestically. Access to public transportation was reliable and convenient due to improvement on basic infrastructure launched by the government. Private cars and public buses have been the most preferred forms of domestic travel followed by air and rail (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Further, the accessibility in low cost carriers had further reduced the cost of travelling within the country for domestic tourists (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). Advancement of low cost carriers at economical prices also helped open up more opportunities to travel domestically, even for lower income earners. Passionate travellers would increase their travel frequency. Local Malaysian tourists were motivated by group travel, mainly accompanied by family and friends. School holidays and festive periods have been the preferred seasons of choice for holiday among Malaysians. Those in the millennials' group, comprised the largest group of travellers, who would mostly prefer short weekend getaways.

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The above phenomenon has led to a noticeable increase in the number of people travelling within the country for weekend holidays and short breaks. Some of the strategies made by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia to enhance domestic tourism were focused on;

(1) establishing close working relationships with industry players,
(2) implementing smart partnership towards creating holiday packages,
(3) using tactical advertising and publicity,
(4) disseminating information through Tourism Information Center and Telecom Malaysia Call Canters' (TMCCs), state local promotion bodies and consumer promotions (Tourism Malaysia 2016).

Table 1.2 : Expenditure of domestic tourism 2008-2017

Expenditure	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Expenditure of domestic visitors (MYR million)	42,346	47,778	54,016	62,151	67,842	74,4773	83,103

(Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017, 2018)

1.1.2 Tourism in Perak

The State of Perak is situated in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia neighbouring Selangor in the south, Kedah in the north and Pahang in the east. It is the second largest state in Peninsular Malaysia covering an area of about 21,000 square kilometres. Ipoh, the capital city of Perak, is two hours away from the Klang Valley, and is the gateway for the city dwellers of the nation's capital, Kuala Lumpur. Perak is blessed with rich natural resources, deep in history and abundant with its flora and fauna. It is a state full of wealth and prosperity that can be traced back to its past glory as the world's richest producer of tin ore. At present Perak is known for its beautiful scenery of limestone hills. Perak tourism products include nature, adventure, culture, heritage and cuisine.

At present, Perak is no longer focusing on tin mining activities as its main economic product but more on tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, trade and commerce as well as construction. In 2017, Perak tourism slogan chosen "World of Wonders" as the tag line to promote the state. This campaign was expected to create better selling proposition. It was launched to create awareness on the attractions of Perak besides encouraging Malaysians to prioritize local holiday destinations and travel during the holiday season and off-peak season.

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Table 1.3 shows the steady increase in the number of domestic tourists from 2,016,463 in 2012 to 2,081,122 in 2013. In 2014, the number swelled to 3,617,170. In 2015, there were 176.9 million domestic visitors. Selangor, Perak, Sabah and Sarawak were the main travel destinations for domestic tourism (Department of Statistics, 2016). This indicated that Perak was capable to earn good income from domestic tourism. Pulau Pangkor is a destination that appears to be popular among tourists (Kerajaan Negeri Perak, 2014). This was projected from the promotions created by the agencies, and not from the experiences of tourists (Tasci, 2006).

Local administrative authorities are consistent in promoting domestic tourism campaign. The campaign is carefully developed using information technology mainly through the social media. It is one of the many ways that local authorities are keen to gauge and craft authentic feelings to buoy up repeat visits among domestic tourists especially the millennials who are proactive, aggressive, fun, adventurous and always on the move (Marine-Roig & Anton, 2016). The millennials are online seekers that access to information anywhere they go with tablets or mobile phones (Rushton, 2016). These generations are in favour of UGC social media information for travel decision (Jamaludin, Aziz, & Mariapan, 2018; Kennell & Rushton, 2015). Therefore, Tourism Perak, the agency responsible to promote tourism in Perak in collaboration with few other agencies such as Tourism Malaysia and travel agencies, have launched attractive ground and online packages in early 2017 to attract tourists to Perak, thus, taking advantage of the strategic geographical location between Penang and Selangor.

Table 1.3 : Hotel guests in the state of Perak, 2012-2016

State of Perak	Domestic	Foreigner	Total
2012	2,016,463	411,252	2,427,715
2013	2,081,122	302,059	2,383,181
2014	3,617,170	3,230,399	6,847,569
2015	2,308,445	265,794	2,574,239
2016	2,325,974	267,517	2,593,491

(Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2016, 2017 ; Kerajaan Negeri Perak, 2014)

In order to develop and boost tourism in Perak, a primary task for administrative superiors, retailers, vendors, marketers is necessary to recognize factors that contribute to create a favourable visitors' image. This will definitely put Perak as a more popular destination compared to the other states in the country. Previous studies and reports have indicated that little empirical research have been conducted on the behaviour of tourists' decisions on Pulau Pangkor. The number of local tourists continued to increase annually from the year 2012 until 2014, thus, making this research imperatively important.

1.1.3 Tourism in Pulau Pangkor

Pulau Pangkor has the appeal as a small island state in a tropical setting that has all the potential attractions to attract tourists all over the world since the 16th century (figure 1.1). Pulau Pangkor is a public owned island and attracts numerous visitors travelling to Perak on a budget holiday. The number of local revisiting tourists keeps on increasing (Table 1.4). Most visitors are energetic back-packers seeking for short and cheap holidays. It is the nearest island from the city of Kuala Lumpur when compared to Langkawi and Penang Island. The island is about three hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur and about one hour from Ipoh. Pulau Pangkor is a small size island of 18 km land area and most of population live in Pangkor town and the surrounding villages. Known for its serenity and beautiful sandy beaches, Pangkor Island acts as a buffer defending and sheltering the coral reefs and ecosystem for the southern coastline of Perak.

Geographically, Pangkor Island is the main island surrounded by many small islands with fantastic beaches such as Nipah Beach and Coral Beach. Visitors can experience sun, sea, and sand with a variety of recreational activities such as snorkelling, diving, parasailing, kayaking and many other water activities. Wildlife is surprisingly plentiful on the island. There is also a lot of fascinating bird species like the hornbill, called locally as 'Burung Enggang' which fly to the island as certain seasons. Bird watching is a common and enjoyable hobby that tourists can experience. There are a few exquisite species of hornbills on the island. Pulau Pangkor is high in biodiversity, flourished with water-based activities, while fishing-based activities forms the second main industry besides tourism. Investments have been allocated for the purpose of developing Pangkor Island to ensure that its development does not destroy its natural ecosystem and ensure small businesses to grow (Ivan, 2014). However, there are still a lot of eco-tourism potential sites that have yet to be developed. These attractions should be fully advertised through various communication channels such as the social media using UGC to trigger economic growth on the island to attract repeat visits.

Over the years, Pangkor Island receives a very large number of local and foreign tourists and the number keeps increasing. Data obtained from the Manjung City Council (2017), showed (table 1.4) the total number of ferry riders recorded an average increase from 984,679 million in 2012, 1,001,415 million in 2013. In 2014, the number surprisingly dropped to 835,794 visitors. But, in 2015, the number of ferry riders increased to 901,886. Ever since then the increase kept on escalating as in 2016, the number was recorded as 941,407, 2017 at 943, 169 (Majlis Perbandaran Manjung Perak, 2018). Tourist arrival is believed to be one of the most significant and dominant factors that will affect positive attributes to the island. By 2019, it is expected that the West Coast Expressway (WCE) will be completed and is anticipated to experience a 15% growth per annum in tourist arrivals within three years. It is evident that the image of Pulau Pangkor is gaining recognition globally.

YTL Cooperation Berhad, a local investor, has taken the risk to invest money and develop the island. Star online dated 2nd July 2017 reported that, YTL Cooperation Berhad is now developing Pangkor Resort World which comprises an integrated hotel, residential and commercial project that had began its constructions back since 2012. The development covered 53.5 acres at Pasir Bogak beach and Sungai Pinang forest reserve (Ho, 2017). This proves that Pulau Pangkor is highly in demand by local investors and is seen as having a bright tourism future ahead due to its proximity to Kuala Lumpur. Pulau Pangkor therefore, gives better options to other islands such as Langkawi and Penang.

This research aims to collect survey from respondents who have visited Pulau Pangkor. The island consists of residents who mainly rely on tourism by offering water related activities as their source of income besides fishing. Considering the importance of this study on destination tourism, it is vital for the relevant state authorities to identify the reasons tourists repeatedly visit Pulau Pangkor as a vacation destination prior to any actual promotion using user-generated content as the main sources of pre-advertising campaign.

Table 1.4 : Ferry riders to Pulau Pangkor

LOCATION	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pulau Pangkor (Department of Marine ferry riders) Million	984,679	1,001,415	835,794	901,886	941,407	943,169

(Source: Majlis Perbandaran Manjung Perak, 2018)

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Figure 1.1 : Map of Pulau Pangkor, Malaysia

1.2 Problem Statement

Tourism industry extremely hinges on information through communication technology (Hossein et al., 2015). Tourism retailers, operators, and travellers use heavily on the social media to support services, organize, and share their travel memories and experiences through blogs (e.g., Blogger and Twitter), online social networks (e.g., Facebook, RenRen, and Trip Advisor), media sharing websites (e.g., Flickr and YouTube), social bookmarking websites (e.g., Delicious) and other ways available (Leung et al., 2013). The use of social networking sites (SNSs) to make travel arrangement including transportation, accommodation and tour package were experienced by 58.6% shoppers in 2015 (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2016).

By one single touch, a tourist can access, read, view, scroll, and interact instantly any information published online using UGC created by the public. In mere seconds, emotional news can spread the responses of a tourist's true experience globally. Information that is being posted online using UGC can go viral, either by discouraging potential visitors and smudging the image of the island or on the positive end bringing in repeat loyal visitors to the island. UGC helps them to share their opinions freely and is accessible through any online platforms, namely the social media websites (e.g. blog posts, wikis, videos, and comments). These shared contents are highly trusted and highly credible by viewers and are accessible through the use of new mobile technologies that have become user friendly and affordable to the public by posting text, downloading and uploading digital photos, audio, images with little or no filters. However, little is known on the empirical impact of UGC towards destination loyalty.

Further more, when looking into visitors' market segments, most groups that use the social media heavily are the millennials generation and Z generation. Therefore, it would be of great interest for marketers to understand how the use of UGC among the millennials has an impact on destination loyalty. On the contrary, generation Z naturally demands for a comfortable and friendly technology to interact on social media websites. They too will definitely demand for higher quality in services and new tourism product lines. This scenario will eventually lead to some intensely salient reasons that may influence tourist's behaviour of destinations loyalty, especially among local visitors and ultimately, their decision making as their preferred destinations.

A review from previous literature reveals that understanding the consensus on destination loyalty formation linking with UGC and visitors' motivation leaves a gap among the these generations especially the millennials. According to literature research, developing trust by visitors through UGC using website 2.0 and to create loyalty engagement in island tourism is still blur and is still at stake among destination marketing researchers (González, Eduardo, & Dimitrios, 2015). To fill this gap, this research would like to incorporate visitors' satisfaction and destination image. The researcher hopes this study to instil a better understanding in sustaining online tourism in the retail market.

Shared UGC can potentially be negative in nature and can ruin the reputation of the island. Alternatively, if these shared contents are positive, the island will eventually enjoy growth and prosperity. Thus, these shared opinions using UGC need to be sensibly used. It can be a powerful digital marketing tool that can be viewed by so many readers openly for collective knowledge and information sharing before purchasing travel services (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, 2016). The high power of trust using user-generated content as a source of filtering decision making (Baber et al., 2016) in selecting destination tourism has not been investigated as part of its destination loyalty model. It is a cheap medium that is very powerful for a marketing tool as a breakthrough in a new age market.

Pulau Pangkor, a well-known domestic tourist destination has suffered more than any other tourism destination in the mainland and often resulted in severe negative repercussion on destination loyalty. Most researchers conducted in western countries would select well known destinations which have high international tourist demands instead of expecting domestic visitors.

Based on the above suggestion, this study proposes to fill the gap by investigating the dynamic nature of the role of trust in user-generated content and the mediation role of visitors' motivation towards visitors' satisfaction and destination image either directly or indirectly on destination loyalty. These factors affect more comprehensively than the existing destination loyalty model formation. It is hoped that this research is able to gauge the effect and the strength of theoretical development of the relationship amongst constructs.

1.2.1   Destination Loyalty model needs Improvement

Destination loyalty model formation proposed by Chi & Qu, 2008 was not comprehensive enough to address factors that influenced present tourists to visits any selected destination. The starting point of pre-trip construct on the source of information was left out. Instead, destination image was used as the starting point of the model formation which contradicted with Baloglu and McCleary, (1999). Destination image in the model was framed as a single dimension instead of two dimensions which consisted of affective image and cognitive image. Further, destination loyalty construct was measured as a single item. Visitors' motivation considered as a psychological factor of individual was also left out from the decision making. Multiple mediation constructs were the causes that determined the permanence of the relationship converge namely, visitors' satisfaction and destination image which were not tested simultaneously in the model. Higher order construct was not used to properly give a theoretical gap for further research. Thus, the current research aims to probe deeper into the relationship of higher order construct which was lacking in the previous model. Further, the present research will shed new light on the mediating role of visitors' satisfaction and destination image. It is hoped that the findings using these variables will provide an alternative explanation for the divergent results in previous work on destination loyalty model formation be more concise.

1.2.2   User-Generated Contents (UGC)

A review from previous literature reveals that understanding and consensus on the destination loyalty formation linking with UGC and visitors' motivation are unclear. According to the literature, developing trust by visitors through UGC using website 2.0 and creating loyalty engagement in island tourism is still blur and is at stake among destination marketing researchers (Martinez Gonzalez et al., 2015). Therefore, by incorporating visitors' satisfaction and destination image, it would instil a better

understanding for destination marketing organization to be sustainable in the tourism online retail market.

In one single touch, a tourist can access, read, view, scroll, and interact instantly any information published online using UGC created by a public user. In mere seconds, emotional news can spread the responses of a tourist's true experience globally. Information that is being posted online using UGC can go viral, either by discouraging potential visitors and smudging the image of the island or bringing in repeat loyal visitors to the island. UGC helps them to share their opinions freely and is accessible through any online platforms, namely the social media websites (e.g. blog posts, wikis, videos, and comments). These shared contents are highly trusted and credible by viewers and are accessible through the use of new mobile technologies that have become user friendly and affordable to the public by posting text, downloading and uploading digital photos, audio, images with little or no filters.

1.2.3   Lack of empirical study on millennials

Millennials, also known as the net generation, are technologically savvy. They form a group of people who are incredibly sophisticated, wise in technology and are segmented purchasers to create repeat visits. They are the generation that likes travelling and prefers moderate travel services. This generation has become one of the fastest growing market segments of tourism. They prefer uniqueness and are high in experience and are eager to explore. However unique and how much do these millennials would like to experience while taking vacations, remain unclear. Because of this character and demand, it can be concluded as the generation that are difficult to understand travel motivation desire. Thus, this remains a huge research gap for further investigation.

When looking into visitors' market segment, most groups that use UGC social media are from the millennials generation. Therefore, it would be of great interest for marketers to understand the millennials' segment by looking into UGC feedback in this rearch. Millennials are a group of people who are incredibly sophisticated, wise in technology and are segmented purchasers to create repeat visits. Millennials are different as compared to other generations who demand for '*comfortable*' technology. Millennials prefer to interact actively and remain conected on social media websites. They too will definitely demand for higher quality in services and new tourism product lines. This scenario will eventually lead to some intensely salient reasons that may influence tourists' behaviour of destination loyalty, especially among local visitors and ultimately, on decision-making as the preferred destinations.

It was recorded that individuals in Malaysia between the ages of 20-40 were the highest age group to use UGC on the social media such as online purchasing (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commissioner, 2016). Munar (2011) stated that millenials generation was predominantly inclined to use online social media

and UGC than the other age groups due to its flexibility and being user friendly when web applications was embeded. However, research is still lacking to investigate the behaviour of millennials in Asian countries and domestic tourists who require attention by tourism researchers.

These shared UGC contents, can potentially be negative or positive in nature, and are capable of ruining the reputation of the island. Alternatively, if these shared contents are positive in nature, the island will eventually enjoy growth and prosperity. These shared opinions using UGC is a powerful digital marketing tool that can be viewed by so many readers openly for collective knowledge and information sharing before purchasing any travel services (Bilgihan et al., 2016). However, not much research focus on the trust of using the capabilities of UGC. The trust and credibility using UGC as a source of filtering decision making (Baber et al., 2016) when selecting destinations have not been investigated in depth as part of destination loyalty model among the millennials. It is a cheap medium that is very useful as a marketing tool for a new age market. Based on the above problems, research objectives were developed.

1.3   Research Objectives

The general objective of the present study is to develop a destination loyalty model based on the following criteria tourism among millennials domestic visitors on Pangkor Island. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the effect of user-generated contents on visitors' motivation, visitors' satisfaction and destination image to travel among the millennials.
2. To examine the effect of visitors' motivation to travel on destination image, visitors' satisfaction and destination loyalty among the millennials.
3. To examine the mediating effect of destination image between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty among the millennials.
4. To examine the mediating effect of visitors' satisfaction between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty among the millennials.
5. To examine the effect of destination image and satisfaction on destination loyalty among the millennials.

1.4   Research Hypothesis

The research of the study is guided based on the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive effect of user-generated contents on visitors' motivation.
H2: There is a positive effect of user-generated contents on destination image.
H3: There is a positive effect of user-generated contents on visitors' satisfaction.
H4: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on destination image.

H5: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on visitors' satisfaction.
H6: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on destination loyalty.
H7: There is a mediating effect of destination image between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty.
H8: There is a mediating effect of visitors' satisfaction between visitors motivation and destination loyalty;
H9: There is a positive effect of destination image on destination loyalty;
H10: There is a positive effect of visitors' satisfaction on destination loyalty.

Table 1.5 : Summary table of research objectives and research hypothesis

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS
1.To examine the effect of UGC on visitors' motivation, visitors' satisfaction and destination image among the millennials.	H1: There is a positive effect of UGC on visitors' motivation. H2: There is a positive effect of UGC on destination image. H3: There is a positive effect of UGC on visitors' satisfaction.
2.To examine the effect of visitors' motivation to travel on visitors' destination image, visitors' satisfaction and destination loyalty among the millennials.	H4: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on destination image. H5: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on visitors' satisfaction. H6: There is a positive effect of visitors' motivation on destination loyalty.
3.To examine the mediation effect of destination image between visitors' motivation and visitors' satisfaction among the millennials	H7: There is a mediation effect of destination image between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty.
4.To examine the mediation effect visitors' satisfaction between destination image and destination loyalty among the millennials.	H8: There is a mediation effect of visitor' satisfaction between visitors' motivation and destination loyalty.
5.To examine the effect of destination image and satisfaction on destination loyalty among the millennials.	H9: There is a positive effect of destination image on destination loyalty. H10: There is a positive effect of visitors' satisfaction on destination loyalty.

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1.5   Significance of the study

This research contributes new findings on destination loyalty model. This forms the most important element of information sources using UGC, including the main factor that drives the millennials to various destinations repeatedly. The results also prove that destination image and visitors' satisfaction are important mediators found to enrich that model and trigger the millennials to repeatedly visit Pangkor Island. These findings provide new paradign of decision making, surrounded by UGC, the social media and communication technology to create wider understanding about millennials generation travel behaviour.

1.6   Definition of Key Terms

Millennials: Visitors in this study are the individuals born between 1985 and 1999 (Estela Marine-Roig & Clavé, 2016) also known as the Nexus generation.

Visitors: Referring to travellers taking a trip to a main destination outside his /her usual environment for not more than 12 months, but spending at least an overnight stay (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016).

Domestic visitors: Individuals who stay at least one night at Pulau Pangkor including residents or those living in Malaysia for at least a year (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016).

User-generated contents (UGC): The operational definition of UGC is evaluated in this research based on "search for information and trust on UGC".

Visitors satisfaction: The operational definition of visitors' satisfaction is evaluated in this research based on "for value for money; meets my expectation; wise decision; and satisfied visit".

Destination loyalty: The operational definition of destination loyalty is evaluated based on "recommend to others; encourage   other people to visit; and revisit".

Destination Image: Destination image is a second order constructs consisting of two first-order construct, namely (i) cognitive image, and (ii) affective image.

i.   **Cognitive image:**   The operational definition of cognitive images was evaluated based on, "natural sceneries [beach, hill, lake, ocean], recreation activities; accommodations available, historical sites; hospitality services nightlife and entertainment; serene environments and; man-made attractions".

ii.   **Affective image:**   The operational definition of affective images was evaluated based on "Unpleasant – Pleasant; Sleepy - Arousing; Distressing – Relaxing; Gloomy - Exciting".

Visitors' Motivation: Visitors' motivation is a second order constructs consisting of two first-order construct, namely (i) push motivation, and (ii) pull motivation.

i.   **Push motivation:**   The operational definition of push motivation is evaluated based on "seeking relaxation; seeking enjoyment; seeking family ties and friendship; and seeking life experience".

ii.   **Pull motivation:**   The operational definition of pull motivation is evaluated based on "seeking water activities; seeking sun, sand, and sea; and seeking unique experiences".

1.7   Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research topic by discussing the overview of tourism in Malaysia, domestic tourism in Malaysia, millennials tourism in Malaysia, the problem statement, the research objectives, the hypothesis, the theoretical and practical significances, the definitions of the terms identified.

Chapter two describes the literature review of the research consisting of theories of motivation and satisfaction, destination image and destination loyalty models, research gap, research framework and finally research hypothesis for this thesis.

Chapter three describes the research methodology. It consists of research process that is developed in three phases. The first phase consists of (a) research problem, (b) operational constructs, (c) reviewing of the models and theories, (d) formulating research objectives and hypothesis. The second phase discusses (a) research design, (b) instrument development, (c) site data collection (d) data screening and cleaning research instrument.   The third phase describes the types of analyses that are conducted. The analyses are divided in three parts, and they are the (a) measurement model, (b) structural model, and (c) interpretation of data using SEM-PLS using SMART PLS 3.0 online software.

Chapter four describes and reveales the analyses of the research based on the data collected. Data are screened for missing values, outliers and normalities. Normality test are conducted on the data for univariate and multivariate. Mahalanobis Distance, Mardias's multivariate skewness, kurtosis, Komogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk result are included in the chapter. Common method variance is tested using Harman's one factor test and marker variables. The analyses are using the SMART PLS3.0.

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Assessment of measurement model is included and consists of ; (a) Internal Consistency and (b) Discriminant Validity. Internal Consistency was tested using four testing results consisted of (a) Rho_A; (b) Cronbach Alpha; (c) Composite Reliability; and (d) Average Variance Extracted. Discriminant Validity is tested using three tests consisting of (a) Fornel and Larcker's; (b) Cross loadings; and (c) Heterotrait-Monotrait ration of correlations (HTMT). Next section consists of the assessment structural model which includes; (a) Lateral Collinearity (inner & outer); (b) Path coefficient (β); Significance [t-value & p-value]; (c) Predictive Accuracy (R²) Coefficient of determination; (d) Predictive Relevance (Q²); and (e) Effect size. Finally, research objectives from 1 to 5 are revealed and hypothesis results are discussed according to the objectives.

Chapter five describes the analysis of the research which relate to the model results. Findings of direct relationships and indirect relationships are discussed. The contributions of research are discussed based on (a) theoretical contribution, (b) practical contribution and (c) methodology contributions. The implications and limitations are discussed according the model results. Future directions for other researchers are recommended to fulfill other notable aspect of the industry.

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