

**THE PULL MOTIVATION FACTORS OF
DOMESTIC TOURIST TO PENANG**

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THE PULL MOTIVATION FACTORS OF DOMESTIC TOURIST TO PENANG

by

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FAKTOR TARIKAN MOTIVASI PELANCONG-PELANCONG DOMESTIK KE PULAU PINANG

ABSTRAK

Pelancongan domestic merupakan elemen penting dalam melestarikan sektor ini, terutama sewaktu dalam waktu krisis seperti dalam pandemikn COVID-19 baru-baru ini. Sehubungan itu, adalah imperative bagi pemegang-pemegang taruh pelancongan untuk memahami sepenuhnya komposisi demografi, karektor, dan motivasi-motivasi asas pelancong-pelancong ini untuk melawati destinasi mereka. Tanpa pemahaman komprehensif terhadap pelawat-pelawat mereka, penyediaan produk-produk local serta servis mungkin gagal untuk memenuhi jangkaan pasaran yang boleh menghasilkan ketidakpuasan dengan pengalaman melancong mereka. Seterusnya, pengurus-pengurus destinasi perlu memahami keperluan dan perlakuan pelawat-pelawat untuk merangka strategi-strategi promosi yang berkesan. Kajian ini melibatkan sampel 504 orang pelancong domestik yang pernah melawat Pulau Pinang. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan profail demografi pelancong-pelancong domestik dan mengenalpasti factor-faktor penarik yang menarik mereka ke Pulau Pinang. Data dari kajiselidik ini dianalisa menggunakan statistik asas untuk mengenalpasti, antara lainnya, takat penilaian ke atas atribut-atribut dan kategori yang menarik pelawat domestic ke negeri ini. Dapatan kajiselidik ini mengesahkan status Pulau Pinang sebagai destinasi ulung negara ini untuk pelancongan warisan, budaya, dan makanan. Hasil kajian ini akan menyediakan pemegang-pemegang taruh tempatan maklumat untuk meningkatkan produk dan perkhidmatan kepada pelancong-pelancong domestic, yang seterusnya akan memaksimakan kepuasan dan merangsang hasrat mereka yang lebih tinggi untuk kembali ke Pulau Pinang.

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ABSTRACT

Domestic tourism constitutes a important element in the sustenance of the sector, particularly during periods of crisis as evidenced by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, it is imperative for tourism stakeholders to thoroughly grasp the demographic compositions, characteristics, and underlying motivations of the tourists visiting their destinations. In the absence of a comprehensive understanding of their visitors, the provision of local products and services may fail to align with market expectations, potentially resulting in dissatisfaction with the travel experience. Concurrently, destination managers are required to understand visitors' needs and behaviours in order to formulate effective promotional strategies. This investigation engaged a sample of 504 domestic tourists who had travelled to Penang. The primary objective of this research is to elucidate the demographic profile of domestic tourists and to identify the pull factors that entice them to visit Penang. The data obtained from this survey underwent fundamental statistical analysis to reveal, among other aspects, the levels of assessment regarding selected attributes and categories that draw domestic visitors to this state. The findings of this survey affirm Penang's status as the nation's foremost destination for heritage, culture, and gourmet tourism. This study's results will provide local stakeholders with insights to improve products and services for domestic tourists, thereby maximising satisfaction and fostering a greater intention to return to Penang.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Tourism is one of the biggest and fastest-growing businesses on the planet (Cooper & Hall, 2008). It contributes significantly to the economy, bringing new jobs and businesses. For the tourism industry to keep up or improve, its present status is subject to tourists' movement choices and fulfilment to motivate them to travel. The core pillar of sustainability of the tourism sector lies in the continuous repeat visitation by tourists, especially by the local niche segment. Motivation is the main reason people choose to visit one destination over another. The purpose of this study is to examine domestic tourists' reasons and motivations to visit Penang. This study aims to investigate the travel patterns and behaviour of domestic visitors to Penang. At the same time, it also investigates the factors that influence the activities of domestic tourists while visiting Penang.

Domestic tourists are individuals who travel within their country of residence, who travel to a destination outside of their usual residence for a temporary period of time less than one year, without gaining any financial benefits from the place visited. This definition is expanded by this study to include expatriates working in Malaysia but stay outside Penang, while excursionists (day trippers) are excluded. Section 2.3 gives further definitions and sphere of domestic tourists.

1.2 The Growth of Global Tourism

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) projected that tourism will experience a moderate annual growth of 3.3% by 2030. Over 1.8 billion tourists, including domestic tourists, will travel, which is expected to increase four times. In

terms of tourist spending, it is estimated that domestic tourist spending contributes between 71% and 75% of total travel spending worldwide (Nyaupane et al., 2020)

Interestingly, wars, epidemics and fear of terrorist attacks have not hindered the increase in the number of tourists, with Asia and the Pacific receiving the highest number of new arrivals. Specifically, South Asia is among the fastest-growing sub-regions, with a 6.0% annual growth (Osei, 2022). The Asia Pacific region is expected to have 535 million domestic tourists by 2030. This rise is fuelled by more sophisticated low-cost air travel and travel liberalisation (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021).

The emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020 through early 2022 had literally stopped global tourism activities. COVID-19 has yielded a significant impact on the tourism and hospitality industries. When the news of COVID-19 spread, many travelers cancelled or postponed their travel plans. This quickly became a global crisis, severely harming the tourism industry (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020).

COVID-19 spread to every country in the world because people traveled from one country to another. As a result, every country's government was forced to impose travel restrictions and limitations. To prevent the spread of the infection, many countries, including Malaysia, have restricted borders and closed travel routes (Kusumaningrum & Wachyuni, 2020; Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020).

Collins-Kreiner & Ram (2020) discovered that the spread of COVID-19 affected countries' economies and imposed restrictions on global tourism. This affected the national tourism sector, encouraging it to adopt emerging trends, changes, and innovations to mitigate the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic. The WTO recommends that countries develop tourism strategies and take precautions against

COVID-19 and other future diseases to retain business as it was before an adverse event.

Tourism in Malaysia was also among the initial sectors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and has been facing challenges in restoring its pace. The reopening of Malaysia's international borders on 1st April 2022 has provided some hope for the tourism industry in this region, leading to an increase in the volume of international visitors. Throughout the duration of the COVID-19 ordeal, domestic and local tourism emerged as the saviour of the tourism industry in the absence of international visitors. Recognizing this, the federal and state authorities implemented diverse incentives for tourism stakeholders, local tourists, and residents to explore and spend in their respective areas whenever travel restrictions were lifted.

1.3 Domestic Tourism in Malaysia

Domestic tourism activities in Malaysia continue to grow at a steady pace. It helped Malaysia' tourism sector during the pandemic and the total removal of lockdown has opened again attractions across Malaysia for public consumption. In the post COVID-19, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) reported that Malaysia witnessed a surge in its domestic tourism expenditures, amounting to RM24.1 billion, signifying a robust recovery within this sector in the initial quarter of 2024,. The number of domestic travel engagements saw a notable escalation to 58.6 million trips in 2023, reflecting a year-on-year expansion exceeding 19%. According to DOSM, the escalation was attributed to a substantial increase in excursionists or day trippers. Furthermore, the report disclosed that the expenditure on domestic travel

in 2023 amounted to RM84.9 billion, from RM64.1 billion in 2022 (Ainul,2024). One of the popular states among international and domestic tourists is Penang.

1.4 Domestic Tourism in Penang

Domestic tourism has been increasingly significant in the Penang economy, experiencing a gradual growth over the past two decades. Penang, together with Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, and Langkawi, is a highly sought-after location for domestic travel. George Town, an urban area, was granted the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage site designation in 2008, elevating its position on the international tourism landscape. Penang attracts around 9 million tourists annually (as of 2019) who are drawn to its rich cultural heritage, delectable cuisine, picturesque beaches, natural beauty, and various other attractions. This city, known as the Pearl of the Orient, has also been a well-liked destination for mooring cruises in the surrounding area. According to Salman et al. (2021), the number of domestic tourists visiting Penang has increased since 2017.

A survey of 4170 local and foreign tourists in Penang indicated that travellers had a remarkably favourable and remarkable experience. The study suggests that there will be a rise in the number of tourists in the future due to positive developments (Omar et al., 2015). In addition, the report suggests that tourists had a more favourable experience compared to prior years and expressed satisfaction with the services and amenities in Penang. The primary tourist attractions include coastal beaches, the bustling urban centre, and the vast expanse of the ocean. The surge in tourism activities generates augmented revenue for the tourism sector and makes a substantial contribution to the state's GDP. Put simply, the growing influx of tourists has a substantial impact on the economic development of Penang.

Various elements were identified as influencing the intentions of tourists while selecting tourism sites. The essential components are one's environmental disposition and drive. The main driving factors for domestic tourists to engage in tourism were their inclination towards nature, ecotourism, and the allure of beach resorts. Conversely, overseas tourists were primarily driven by cultural heritage and historic landmarks, especially in destinations such as George Town in Penang.

Following the success of Visit Malaysia campaigns, the number of tourists visiting Penang increased, particularly in 1990 and 1994. Upon its listing as a World Heritage site, tourism in Penang experienced a boom. The listing also boosted George Town's hotel industry and other tourism related industries. After the COVID-19 hiccup, Penang tourism is projected to recover fully by 2024.

According to Kwong and Mohamed (2018), the number of visitors or tourists to George Town, Penang, has increased yearly and there was a shift in tourist activity away from the Tanjung Bungah-Ferringhi stretch and toward the inner city of George Town, lured by the wonderful street arts and also street foods. Penang later launched Experience Penang Malaysia 2020: The Diversity of Asia to further entice greater visitations by potential and regular travellers. The campaign aims to encourage both domestic and international tourists to travel inside the country. However, this campaign was again hampered by the spread of COVID-19 (Wen et al., 2020).

As shown in Table 1.1, the number of international tourists to Penang grew steadily from 2017 to 2023 before the pandemic hit. In 2018, Penang received 3.02 million international tourists (based on the number of beds booked). These arrivals, however, could be much higher, as the Penang Tourist Survey (2014-2018) noted that 30% more visitors stayed at non-hotel establishments such as homestays, bed and breakfast, or stayed at friends' and relatives' houses.

Table 1.1 The Growth of International Tourists to Penang

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
International Arrivals	2,910	3,020	2,850	562	1,130	4,249	6,979

Note: Numbers in thousand Source: Tourism Malaysia (2024), Penang Global Tourism (2024)

1.5 Domestic Tourists in Penang

Penang is well recognised as a famous destination among local Malaysians, as indicated above. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Penang received more over 3 million visitors per year, as well as millions of day-trippers. According to the data presented in Table 1.2, the number of domestic tourists visiting Penang significantly declined in 2020. Following the relaxation of state boundaries post-COVID-19, there has been a consistent rebound in domestic arrivals, with projections indicating that the number of visitors will reach 3.61 million. The primary destinations for domestic travellers visiting Penang, as indicated by the Penang Tourist Survey 2018, include Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Kedah, and Johor (Penang Global Tourism, 2019).

Table 1.2 Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Penang

Year	Arrivals (in millions)	Growth%
2010	2.94	
2011	2.96	0.7
2012	3	1.3
2013	2.64	-13.6
2014	3.62	27.1
2015	3.47	-4.3
2016	3.47	0.0
2017	3.47	0.0
2018	3.64	4.7
2019	3.54	-2.8
2020	2.33	-51.9
2021	2.85	18.2
2022	3.47	17.9
2023	3.54	2.0

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2021)

*projection by Petase (2021)

Despite not being featured in the top five domestic attractions by the DOSM (DOSM, 2024), stakeholders in Penang's local tourism sector have contended that the state continues to be favoured by domestic tourists, casting doubt on the methodology employed by the DOSM. Ch'ng Huck Theng, the chairman of the Association of Tourist Attractions Penang (ATAP), highlighted that local tourists are enticed by the cuisine, favourable climate, sandy beaches, the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve, and the enchanting street arts of George Town.

Table 1.3 Travel Characteristics of Domestic Tourists to Penang

▪ Transportation to Penang: Car/Personal vehicles 59.6% ▪ Median stay: 3 days ▪ Average expenditure per trip: RM 674.34 ▪ Biggest age group: 18-25 (58.6%) ▪ Repeat visitors: 47% ▪ Been to Penang 2-5 times: 50% ▪ Major purposes of visit: Leisure & recreation, cultural heritage, visit friends and relatives. ▪ Major activities in Penang: Experiencing local food, sightseeing in city, visiting historical sites. ▪ Major sources of visitors: Selangor, W.P Kuala Lumpur, Kedah, Perak, Kelantan* ▪ Top sites visited: Queensbay Mall, Batu Feringghi, Bukit Bendera, Gurney Plaza, KOMTAR*

Source: Penang Tourists Survey 2018 (2019), *DOSM (2024)

According to the data presented in Table 1.3, the majority of domestic visitors tend to focus their attention on the core city and nearby areas such as Ferringhi Beach and Penang Hill. Penang periodically hosts a diverse range of festivals that attract certain interest groups. The region is increasingly becoming recognised as a favoured location for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE). Lately, there has been a significant increase in tourism initiatives expanding from the main city to other parts of the region, particularly Seberang Jaya, Balik Pulau, and Butterworth, which are well-known for their ecotourism and agro-tourism attractions. Additionally, there has been an increase in the popularity of culinary tourism among travellers, namely for dishes like as Nasi Kandar, Chow Kway Teow, and the famous Penang durians from Balik Pulau.

A study conducted by Yeap et al. (2019) found that the taste value of Penang's food had the greatest influence on people's attitude towards Penang street food. Emotional value was the second most influential factor. Additionally, the study revealed that place attachment played a role in mediating the relationship between attitude and the intention to revisit Penang specifically for its street food. A study by Fan et al. (2024) confirms that satisfaction of a place would influence his or her satisfaction. The motivations of international tourists to Penang include the desire to seek knowledge and innovation, especially engaging in cultural and historical past of Penang (Dulhamid et al., 2022), domestic travelers, on the other hand, love things that are viraled, instagrammable photo spots and trendy cafes. For this purpose, Kampung Agung and the street arts found in George Town fit the offering.

1.6 Problem Statement

Tourism is regarded as one of the largest and fastest-growing industries or sectors. According to Camilleri (2017), tourism is one of the most important business sectors for increasing economic activity and profits. Travel is about experiences and fond memories. Thus, tourist expectations must be met by the tourism products that are delivered to lure more and repeat visits. Otherwise, it may become difficult for the tourism industry to entice repeat visitors or attract new customers. Organisations or service providers are responsible for providing effective and satisfactory facilities to their customers to make travel memorable.

Before embarking on any marketing strategy, a destination must fully understand its tourist composition, characteristics and needs. Different market segments have distinctive characteristics and behaviours. International tourists often

behave differently from their domestic counterparts. While the international tourist market is important, the significant role of domestic tourists must not be overlooked. Experience during the recent COVID-19 outbreak demonstrated the crucial role played by domestic tourism.

For the past so many years, domestic tourists are regarded as the second fiddle to the international tourists. Domestic tourism is regarded as a remedy for local economies impacted by global crises, such as the recent pandemic, during which various destinations implemented, among other measures, fiscal assistance programs aimed at promoting domestic travel (Cvelbar & Ogorevc, 2020)

For this reason, Penang needs to have a comprehensive knowledge of its domestic tourist segments, as the Penang Tourism Master Plan (Petace, 2021) showed that domestic travelers made up about 50% of the visitors to the state and are crucial during times of need. An in-depth comprehension of visitor motivation is essential for several reasons, as it immediately influences the efficacy of tourism marketing, the advancement of tourist locations, and the overall contentment of tourists. Understanding the underlying reasons why tourists select specific places enables marketers to customise their advertising tactics in a more impactful manner, guaranteeing that the main messages connect with potential visitors (Baleiro, 2022)

By understanding the factors that drive tourists to choose a certain area or destination, businesses and destinations may customize their products and services to align with the motivations and needs of their visitors. This improves visitor satisfaction and promotes return visits. Comprehending the underlying reasons behind people's actions and behaviours enables marketers to create more focused and impactful marketing strategies. They have the ability to emphasize specific features of a location

or activity that correspond to the interests and desires of potential travelers, thereby enhancing the probability of attracting a greater number of visitors in the future. It aids in effectively distributing resources, such as the building of infrastructure, the provision of hospitality services, and the organization of cultural and leisure programs. Investing money in enhancing the features that visitors value most can help maximize the return on investment.

Identifying the underlying reasons behind people's actions can help encourage the adoption of sustainable practices in the tourism industry. Destinations can enhance their ability to regulate visitor flows, safeguard natural resources, and conserve cultural heritage by comprehending the desires of tourists. Gaining an understanding of the tourist demographic background gives a distinct advantage in competition. Destinations and enterprises that comprehend and accommodate tourist objectives are likely to distinguish themselves in a saturated tourism industry, enticing a larger number of tourists and producing favourable economic effects. Understanding the reasons why tourists choose to visit certain places enables destinations and businesses to design more significant and gratifying experiences for guests, while also promoting sustainable development in the tourism industry. By tailoring their offerings to meet the needs and desires of different types of tourists, businesses can attract a diverse range of visitors and create lasting memories. Additionally, by putting a priority on sustainable practices, destinations can guarantee that the environment and the local community benefit from tourism, which will boost the sector's long-term success. Ultimately, a deep understanding of the tourist demographic background not only sets businesses apart from their competitors but also paves the way for a more prosperous and responsible tourism industry.

Moreover, different market segments have different customer-facing characteristics and behaviours. International tourists could act oppositely to their domestic counterparts. Furthermore, Penang has increased its domestic customer reach and attracted half of the total tourists due to its comprehensive knowledge of its domestic tourist segments (Ghaderi et.al, 2012).

Karim et al. (2020) stated that COVID-19's spread was affecting countries' economies and imposing restrictions on global tourism. As a result, it was necessary to manage the business conditions and ensure sustainability. The tourism industry was severely impacted, and various tourism and hospitality organisations faced massive losses in 2020. As a result, it was necessary to take some manageable steps to mitigate the risks of COVID-19.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the travel characteristics of domestic tourists when visiting Penang and to analyse the pull motivational factors influencing domestic tourists to visit Penang. Penang tourism stakeholders need to understand the needs and behaviours of tourists so that the state understands the expectations and offers relevant products for this important segment of the domestic tourist market. Baloglu and Uysal (1996) mentioned the necessity of utilising destination marketing to comprehend the link between the push and pull motivations of prospective domestic tourists.

Understanding the push and pull factors could facilitate success in branding, positioning and marketing of destinations. At the same time, it could shrink the gap between expectations and quality of services received by domestic tourists. Penang should consider utilising these strategic elements to increase domestic tourists, fuel its tourism industry, and persist in this increasingly competitive industry.

A conducive tourism ecosystem is also crucial. When the environment is competitive, Hudson and Ritchie (2009) mentioned the need to establish an identity (or image) that is unique from the rivals. In this context, Penang's most significant competitors for the domestic markets are top local destinations in Malaysia, including Genting Highland, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, and perhaps Sabah. Both Crompton (1992) and Lovelock (1991) indicated that as a key criterion of purchasing a tourism product, attributes should be applied in the formation of superior uniqueness. In this context, we can define superior uniqueness as a quality product or product that offers value for money.

Ibrahim and Gill (2005) suggested using domestic tourists' satisfaction with product attributes assessed from their travelling experience to motivate them to choose or revisit a destination. In gaining knowledge of the competitive marketing situation, Srivastava, Leone, and Allan (1981) proposed using market structure analysis in strategic decisions. Furthermore, Valle et al. (2006) noted the variance in tourists' socio-demographic backgrounds, which impacts tourists' satisfaction with the product attributes of different destinations. As such, in determining the prospective target domestic tourists within the context of Penang, using socio-demographic variables is appropriate and recommended.

In order to revitalize Penang after the effects of COVID-19, it is crucial for the state to improve its product offerings by introducing items or products that are in high demand among visitors to the region. In order to develop more appealing and satisfactory products for tourists to enjoy, it is essential for the state to comprehend the motivations, key features, needs and primary activities of Penang tourists. Gaining insight into the desires of tourists would also enhance their perception and contentment, hence fostering repeat trips in the future.

1.7 Research Gaps

Numerous academics in the past have studied Penang's tourist and leisure characteristics. The majority of research on what motivates visitors from other countries to visit Penang focuses on foreign travellers; the local market has not received as much attention. Dulhamid, Mohamed, and Sazali (2022) conducted a study on the motivational variables that influence international tourists' journey to Penang. Yousefi & Marzuki (2015) have previously concentrated on the push and pull motivational aspects of foreign visitors to the state. Shahrin & Marzuki (2018) also examined the reasons behind foreign visitors' long-distance trips to Penang. Additionally, researchers look into how satisfied visitors—both domestic and foreign—are with Penang.

Omar et al. (2015 & 2017) examine the satisfaction of travellers when they vacation in Penang, whereas Ghaderi, Som, and Henderson (2012) studied tourism crises and their effects on the island using Penang as a case study. Salman et al. (2021), conducted additional study on the COVID-19's effects on Penang inhabitants in the post-pandemic period. Regarding domestic tourism, Yeap et al. (2019) made an effort to comprehend the youthful visitors to Penang who are looking for Penang street food.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to better understand the perception and experience of its visitors and improve the delivery of tourism products and services, the state of Penang, through its marketing division Penang Global Tourism, had commissioned the annual study on tourist profiles, satisfactions, and motivations. The survey's results were shared among the tourism industry's players and made available online, but they were not published in scholarly journals, which make this study crucial and necessary. An important criterion for a sustainable destination is the destination's capacity to

maintain its conventional market and preserve a high level of revisit intention, indicating a high level of satisfaction. Although the research utilized in this study may not be extensive enough to require verification of the conclusion, it does attempt to conduct a preliminary examination on the intentions of domestic travelers to revisit Penang in the future. Therefore, it allows for additional examination by employing appropriate methods to establish a connection between on-site experience, revisit intention, and post-visit behaviours.

1.8 Research Questions

Based on the issues discussed above, research background, general literature, and problem statement, the present study established the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the demographic profile of domestic tourists to Penang?

RQ2: What are the travel characteristics of domestic travellers when they visit Penang?

RQ3: What is the level of revisit intention of domestic tourists to Penang?

RQ4: What are the significant pull motivations that attract tourists to travel to Penang?

1.9 Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate the travel characteristics of domestic tourists when visiting Penang, as well as the motivational factors that influence domestic tourists to visit Penang. This study also investigates the pull and push factors that influence the activities of domestic tourists while visiting Penang. The current study seeks to achieve the following goals based on the established research questions:

1. To analyse the demographic profile of domestic tourists to Penang.
2. To examine the travel characteristics of domestic tourists when travelling in Penang.
3. To evaluate the revisit intention of domestic tourists to Penang.
4. To rate the pull motivations of domestic tourists to Penang.

1.10 Significance of the Research

The tourism industry is undeniably a significant source of economic benefits to the state's coffer. Domestic tourism has been crucial in sustaining this sector, as proven by the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to attempts and efforts made by various cities and states to attract domestic tourists. Thus, understanding why local tourists visit certain domestic attractions and not others is important. In this regard, the motivation of local tourists to visit a given destination will facilitate the survival or revival of the destination in today's competitive environment.

The current study delves into the pull motivations that drive domestic travelers to Penang. The domestic market has played a vital role in the tourism sector of numerous countries and regions worldwide, Penang included. Consequently, Penang has prioritized efforts to attract a larger number of local and domestic tourists to its vicinity, both presently and in the future. The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic introduces a highly competitive tourism landscape, with each Malaysian state vying for a larger share of the domestic tourism sector. Recognizing this reality, Penang must grasp the key attractions and elements that entice and encourage tourists to choose the state as their destination. Through a comprehensive understanding of travel patterns, behaviours, and intentions to revisit, Penang can bolster its offerings and strengths while addressing the weaknesses highlighted by its visitors. This research is poised to

act as a valuable resource for private tourism entities and tourism authorities in shaping their strategies and enhancing their tourism offerings.

1.11 Scope and Limitations of the Research

This study conducted a survey to gather the perspectives of domestic visitors who have visited Penang as tourists. The sample population was restricted to individuals who had already visited Penang. This study specifically examines the pull motivational aspect of push and pull motivations, disregarding other travel motivational variables previously explored by scholars. The data gathering was restricted to online methods primarily because a significant portion of the data collecting period coincided with the Covid-19 lockdown. It is acknowledge that data collected on site may result in slightly different from the one captured by this survey.

The data analysis employs basic descriptive analysis to elucidate the demographic characteristics of the survey participants. Although there are several statistical tools available to assess associations, such as correlation, this study opts to use the basic cross tab approach to examine the connection between satisfaction and revisit intention. This choice is made because the link between these variables is not the primary focus of the investigation.

One major limitation the study faces is the lack of reliable data on Penang tourism, precisely the data on arrivals of domestic tourists and those on tourists' expenditure; both types of data are essential for tourism-related decision-making. Nonetheless, data sources on general tourism activities are available, but they are typically highly segmented and were gathered for specific users only. For example, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) that provides data on arrivals of

international and domestic tourists only supplies data based on the number of occupied hotel rooms, entry of tourists at Penang International Airport, and entry of tourists at the Penang port.

Furthermore, the available statistics show gaps and overlapping data. Moreover, there is a lack of dependable data sources that show the actual background of domestic tourists that come to Penang, as reported in Penang Global Tourism. As such, more dependable and integrated data on the number of tourists visiting Penang is needed. Using surveys as a collection tool, data will be obtained from domestic tourists, particularly those visiting attractive places in Penang.

1.12 Organisation of the Thesis

This study has five chapters, including the present chapter (Chapter 1), which introduces it. Chapter 2 reviews the literature, covering the theories that provide the basis of the research, the research framework, and the research hypotheses. Further, Chapter 3 details the methodology chosen for research execution. Specifically, the chapter discusses the research instruments, the survey questionnaire outline, and the analysis method. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive discussion of the results and findings, while Chapter 5 provides additional reflection on the findings and the study implications regarding the Penang state government.

1.13 Key Terms

i. Travel motivations

The underlying reasons or factors that motivate individuals to travel and investigate various destinations are referred to as travel motivation. These motivations are subject to significant variation among individuals and can be influenced by a variety of personal, social, cultural, and economic factors. Relaxation, exploration, adventure, cultural enrichment, social interaction, retreat, celebration, business, health and wellness, and others are among the most prevalent travel motivations.

ii. Domestic tourists

Tourists are individuals who visit a place for temporary leisure, sightseeing, and experiencing change. They must be away from home for less than a year and spend money on the place they visit without earning it. Domestic tourists, on the other hand, travel within their own country for leisure or recreational purposes, contributing to the local economy and offering a resilient customer base. In this study, domestic tourists visit Penang for purposes other than work, conducting activities within the state border, and spending at least one night there (more discussion in Section 2.3).

iii. Push and pull factors

In tourism and migration studies, push and pull factors are frequently employed to identify the factors that influence individuals' decisions to relocate or depart from a specific location. Push Factors are the factors that compel individuals to abandon or

temporarily leave their current location or home country. They typically involve negative aspects or circumstances that render staying undesirable, such as a busy lifestyle, tension, boredom, and a desire for attention and greater status. In contrast, pull factors are those that entice individuals to visit a specific location. Pull factors are typically positive and enticing characteristics that render a destination desirable. Natural beauty, scenic landscapes, or a pleasant climate are examples of draw factors in tourism.

iv. Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is crucial for destination success, especially in the context of tourism. It can lead to loyalty, which benefits destination management and generates profits. Satisfied tourists are more likely to recommend the destination to others. In the context of Penang, food, history, and culture are significant pull factors, while dissatisfaction can discourage others from choosing the destination. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of each tourist group is essential for tourism bodies and marketers to cater to them effectively and generate the highest revenue (More discussion in Section 2.9).

v. Tourist Loyalty

Tourist loyalty is crucial for marketing and destination management, as it is six times more costly to attract new tourists than to retain existing ones. Organizations must provide satisfactory facilities to make trips memorable. Understanding tourist composition and needs is essential for marketing strategies. Loyal tourists can promote

destinations through word of mouth and online reviews, bringing additional revenue and reducing marketing costs. Positive experiences from loyal tourists are positively correlated with satisfaction.

1.14 Conclusion

Understanding tourist motivation and travel characteristics of tourist markets is a basic step for effective tourism planning and marketing. This chapter covers background information about the research issues and topic, which is crucial in positioning one destination among competing destinations. It forms the basis of the whole thesis, spelling out the key terms, problem statements, and main research questions and objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of key definitions, findings, terminology, and concepts concerning travel incentives as indicated in previous research. It examines the realm of internal tourism and fundamental components of travel motivations, specifically the propelling and attracting factors. Although the primary emphasis of this investigation lies in the pull factor, an examination of the push factors is also incorporated due to their association with the pull factor. Furthermore, this segment evaluates earlier scholarly works on the intention to revisit and its correlation with prior experience in a specific destination.

2.2 The Scope of Tourism

Tourism relates to the act of travelling for recreation and business purposes and providing services to cater to such an act. Those who travel and stay within a given place external to their typical environment for not more than one successive year for leisure, business and other purposes separate from the exercise of an activity recompensed from within the place visited are referred to as tourists (WTO, 1995). In this regard, the distance between both places is inconsequential. Equally, tourism encompasses a service industry containing some tangible and intangible components.

Tangible components include transport systems (e.g., land, air, water, and space), hospitality services (e.g., tours, accommodation, foods, and beverages), and related services (e.g., safety and security, money exchange, and insurance). Meanwhile, culture, adventure, and new and different experiences are examples of intangible components or products. For many countries, the travel expenditure by

foreigners is significant. These travel expenditures become a source of tax and income for the businesses that sell (export) services and products to the tourists. In this regard, it is common for affluent tourists to visit distant places for purposes including experiencing diverse cultures, food, and places or witnessing great buildings or other works of art.

2.3 The Definition of Domestic Tourist

Smith (1989) defines a tourist as an individual who visits a place away from home for temporary leisure to experience a change. McIntosh et al. (1995) elaborated on this by stating that a tourist is a person who visits a particular place for sightseeing, visits friends and relatives, and takes a vacation to participate in various psychological and physical experiences. To be a tourist, according to Morley (1990), a person should satisfy two conditions, i.e. being away from home for less than a year and spending money on the place they visit without earning it there. Additionally, a domestic tourist, refers to individuals who travel within their own country for leisure or recreational purposes (Agius, 2022). According to Anderson & Moipolai (2023), domestic tourists are those who travel within their own country for various purposes, contributing to the local economy and offering a resilient customer base, especially in times of global disruptions like the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Domestic tourism refers to journeys and visits inside an individual's homeland, according to Singh (2009). On the other hand, in national accounts, domestic tourism relates to the activities of resident tourists in and outside the country of reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips (WTO, 2008). WTO (1995) defines domestic tourists as those who live in a country and travel to a place within that country beyond their typical environment for a duration that is no longer than 12 months. For the purpose of this study, domestic

tourists visit Penang for purposes other than work, conducting activities within the state border, and spending at least one night there. Some scholars employ the term 'local tourists' to denote domestic travelers in an interchangeable manner. In their study in Lampung, Indonesia, Subandi, et.al, (2019) used the term local tourists to be individuals who visit tourist destinations within their own country but in the context of this study, domestic tourists shall be used consistently throughout the thesis as the term local tourists is often related to those residing in Penang.

2.4 Tourists' Decision Making

Travellers select places depending on aspects such as geographical and cultural proximity, attitudes, motivations, behaviours, and digital influences from online sources, social media, and booking systems. Pradhani and Hendijani (2023) conducted a study on domestic visitors in Indonesia and emphasised that places had an inherent experiential quality, which poses a challenge for travellers to assess them before to going. This underscores the necessity of efficient information sources to assist in the process of making decisions. According to McCabe et al. (2015), conventional models of tourist decision-making are founded on the presumption that tourists are rational decision-makers. Nevertheless, these models frequently neglect to consider the intricacies of real decision-making processes, especially as tourism markets undergo changes.

According to Vila et al (2024), tourists' decisions on where to go are impacted by a combination of elements, such as digital technology, social media, and the characteristics of the destination itself. However, tourists are still able to make their own decisions independently. Comprehending these components is essential for tourism experts seeking to allure tourists. The essential destination qualities, according