

## The Psychographic Analysis of Malaysian Domestic Travelers

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*After years focusing on international markets, stakeholders in Malaysian tourism sector now realize that in order to sustain the sector, domestic fundamentals must be strong and local travels must be encouraged. Various international crises like the Tsunami, the terrorist attacks, the spread of diseases have shifted the trend, now domestic tourism is becoming the main focus of attention and Malaysians are now encouraged to take holidays and spend longer at home destinations. While analyzing the trends in domestic travelers, this paper clusters Malaysian travelers into several groups along the psychographic line. It is based on results of a survey funded by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), from the Ministry of Education. The analysis shows that there are three prominent types of tourists among Malaysian domestic travelers, expecting different products and traveling differently. This paper calls for better understanding towards promoting better strategies to prepare better products that suit the demands and their behaviors.*

**Key words:** Malaysia, domestic, travel behavior, travel trends

### Introduction

Understanding the needs of domestic tourists is crucial in generating specific and right promotions of destinations. For many countries, domestic travelers have been the backbone to the survival of their tourism sector. Despite the fact that Malaysia has been focusing on the arrival of international visitors, the Malaysian Tourism Ministry (formerly Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) acknowledged that domestic tourism receipts were rising at an estimated 15% a year. Surveys done by the tourist office indicated that over 50% of hotel bed-nights were occupied by domestic tourists (Cockerell, 1994). Weaver and Oppermann (2000) highlighted that the number of domestic tourists taking vacations is massive compared to international tourists in most countries and even on global scale. Despite arguments there is no widely accepted definition of domestic tourist (Inskeep, 1991), the WTO defines a *domestic tourist* as any person or resident of a country visiting his own country or traveling to a place within his country other than his usual residence for a period of not less than 24 hours or one night but less than one year for the purposes of recreation, leisure, holidays, sport, business, meetings, conventions, study, visiting friends or relatives, health, mission work or religion (Chadwick, 1994). A report by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (1999, p.1-3) proposed a domestic tourist to be “any person residing in Malaysia regardless of his/her nationality who travels to a place at least 40 kilometers away

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(one way) from his/her usual place of residence for at least one night or less than one night for any reason other than following an activity remunerated at the place visited". This definition will be temporarily used for this study.

Tourism industry in Malaysia has been traditionally concentrated and promoted towards international markets since its infancy stage in 1960s. Domestic tourism has been perceived to be less important for most of national governments including Malaysia since it does not involve much-valued foreign exchange into the country (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000). The term 'tourists' often referred as 'international tourists' by the authority reflecting continuous inclination of priority towards the international markets. However, despite the importance of alluring more international travelers to visit Malaysia, the domestic front cannot be overlooked for their vast benefits and numerous untapped potentials. Realizing that tourism is a fragile sector and after a string of crises that affect international arrivals on recent years, the Malaysian government has only recently started to give attention to the local market.

The tourism industry in Malaysia has suffered an eroding numbers of international tourist arrivals since the economic downturn that hit Asian countries recently, with killer epidemics such as SARS and bird flu spread and the latest, the giant Tsunami that hit Aceh and several parts of Malaysia. Due to stiff competition and uncertainty in the world economy particularly in major markets such as USA, Japan, Europe and Australia, it is important to promote the growth of domestic tourism. Improved economic conditions have led to increase leisure time for the population at large and Malaysian government is supporting and increasing allocation to build budget hotels and promotions to meet the needs of domestic tourists (Cockerell, 1994). As in other developing destinations like Malaysia, the Federal Government plays the leading role in promoting and developing tourism. The newly formed Ministry of Tourism in March 2004 realizes that domestic travels and products for local tourists must be developed and diversified. Therefore, various promotions, festivals, and new products will be developed to meet the growing demand of domestic travelers. The declaration of holidays for the public service for the first and third Saturday of the month effective January 1, 1999 and February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 respectively had a tremendous effect on domestic tourism. Ticket-less travel finds its way when Malaysian Airline System (MAS) introduced its application in 2000 on domestic routes to further enhance the domestic tourism. The introduction of the no-frills Air Asia has complemented Malaysian Airlines and given boost to the domestic tourism industry with its slogan "Now Everyone Can Fly". Thanks to Air Asia, flying which used to be a luxury item for only the privileged few and is made to be more affordable to the general class. Continuous promotions and festivities have been carried out throughout the country all year round to spur domestic spending and holidaying. These promotional strategies seem to result in positive domestic tourism development as more unique products are introduced and developed. This paper discusses the behaviors and traveling characteristics of Malaysian domestic travelers based on the Plog's psychographic theory and model. It is based on findings of a fundamental research funded by the Malaysian government to develop psychographic clusters of Malaysian domestic travelers.

## **The Evolution of Domestic Tourism in Malaysia**

Most of international Malaysian travels during the early sixties and seventies were to Singapore and to Mecca to do the pilgrimage. The departures took place at Port Klang and Penang Port where relatives and friends bid the pilgrims goodbye on board their ships for the 3 months' journey. Friends and relatives went on chartered buses and stayed at budget hotels or at friends or relatives' houses nearby, or even at mosques. The remnant of past businesses

such as heritage hotels and hostels can be traced at Lebuah Aceh in Penang, used to be the port of embarkation to Mecca for Malaysia's northern pilgrims. Over the years, crowd started to be seen around the international airport in Subang, Kuala Lumpur when Malaysian Airlines System Berhad (MAS) began its inaugurated pilgrimage charter to Mecca in 1974 (Going Places, 2000). In the 70's, tourism was perceived negatively by the society. The sector was blamed for the spread of drug and other social problems. Parents would not allow their children to join tourism industry, especially the hotel industry, or to study tourism simply fearing that their children would become social outcasts. There was also no proper infrastructure for tourist purposes. Traveling for leisure purpose was almost non-existence. Malaysians mainly travel to visit friends and relatives and this trend has served the Malaysian tourism industry even until today. Top destinations among Malaysians have been the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, the heritage cities of Melaka and Penang, the hill resorts of Cameron Highlands and Genting Highlands, and the island beach resorts of Pangkor, Redang and Langkawi. Most travelers were excursionists who traveled within their own state. They mainly used public transportation especially bus. Recently, trips by students and graduates are also gaining popularity. In the early years, must visit locations when visiting Kuala Lumpur were the National Mausoleum (Tugu Negara), the National Mosque, the National Museum, the National Zoo, the Lake Garden and the Parliament Building. The end of the 80's saw Malaysians stopped going to Singapore because of stronger Singapore dollar and started to venture into the northern towns of Haatyai, Takbai, Padang Besar and Danok in Thailand. It was once reported that Malaysians spend over 2 million Ringgits a month in Thailand. Today, visitors to the Klang Valley (where Kuala Lumpur and the new government center of Putrajaya are located) have more diversified choices. While the busy Petaling Street and Tuanku Abdul Rahman Street are still popular among the lower and middle class travelers, there are many mega shopping complexes, the formerly world's tallest building of the Petronas Twin Towers, and new Putrajaya center to be visited.

The traveling seasons for Malaysians mainly circle around the school holidays. Other major holidays are religions or ethnic based festivals such as the Eids, Chinese New Year, and Deepavali. These festivals reflect the multiculturalisms of Malaysians, which has been promoted worldwide in the commercial "Truly Asia" slogan. During peak season as shown below, majority of domestic travelers will visit popular destinations in Malaysia such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Langkawi. Successive public holidays in May also give a long break for Malaysian. This is almost equivalent to the popular Japanese 'Golden Holiday', however, unlike their Japanese counterparts, Malaysians travel domestically in general. Holidays in Malaysia often see massive exodus of travelers from big city centers, causing highway jam and long queues at the toll lines. Since the 80's, various themes and campaigns have been used to promote domestic travelers. Examples of the campaigns are the "*Cuti-Cuti Malaysia*" (Malaysian Holidays) and the open houses fiestas that often staged in conjunction with big festivals like the Chinese New Year, the Eid and Christmas. The objectives of these campaigns are to inculcate the travel culture amongst Malaysians and to get Malaysians to change their mindset and to regard holidays as part of life. The campaigns also aim towards creating a planned holiday culture amongst Malaysians.

### **The Psychographic Analysis of Travelers**

Psychographics is one of the several generic methods to segment the market. Other segmentation methods include demographic, geographic, and product usage. Psychographics segmentation divides the market into groups based on lifestyle and personality characteristics. It is a market segmentation approach in which people are grouped according to their attitudes, beliefs, interests, opinions, or values (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998). It is based on the

assumption that the types of products and brands an individual purchases will reflect that person's characteristics and patterns of living. The primary segmentation analysis is typically performed using demographic data. Although demographic is useful in profiling travelers, psychographic approach is better to understand and predict how travelers will behave and choose their destination (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998). This information is often useful in developing a destination positioning and in the execution of creative strategies to capture the exact traveler group. Psychographics also is one of the approaches to the study of understanding the motivation of traveler behavior. Psychographics can explain the underlying motivations for travel and answers several important questions about the how, what, and why of travel (Plog, 1994). Psychographic research analyze consumers according to their psychological traits such as values, attitudes, perceptions, interests, motivations, opinions, needs, beliefs, activities and daily life routine which attempts to identify the characteristics of consumers that may affect their response to various products, advertising and promotional efforts (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2003).

### **Plog's Psychographic Model**

Based on the reviews of extensive materials derived from journal articles, academic books and related papers, the study suggests that there are two ways when looking at Plog's psychographic model. First, from the planning perspective and another is based upon the tourist typology and motivation. Both perspectives are inter-related and showing a significant relationship relating to understand the tourist and the destination of preference. Murphy (1985) classified Plog's psychographic model under the cognitive-normative models in grouping the tourist typologies. The cognitive-normative models stress the tourist motivation when traveling. Murphy further pointed out that there is strong link between tourist motivation and the structure of destination areas, therefore, the same destination does not necessarily appeals to all set of travelers.

There are many reasons for tourism planning and one of these relates to the destination life-cycle concept as defined by Plog. Plog's hypothesis is that destination areas tend to rise and fall in popularity according to the whims of those in this predominate psychographic groups to which they appeal at different stages in their development histories. It relates to certain personality profiles to the destination area's stages of growth (Mill & Morrison, 1992, p.359). The Plog's model is two-fold, i.e. the importance of the tourism planning of the destination and to capture the characteristics of travelers that visit the destinations. Mill and Morrison is concerned with destination planning associated with Plog's psychographic model. Obviously, the model represent two dimension i.e. destination and tourist characteristics, which influence each other.

According to Plog (1991), Psychocentric based on "*psyche*" referring to the self and "*centric*" i.e. the centering of much of one's thoughts or concerns on the small problems in one's daily life. The Psychocentric person is rather self-inhibited and non-adventuresome. On the other hand, allocentrics comes from the root word "*allo*" in Latin, which means varied in form, i.e. someone whose interest patterns is rich and varied. While "*centric*" for this basis, refers to the centering of personal interests on a broad diversity of pursuits and challenges. Plog introduced the psychographic dimension of allocentrism to psychocentrism, which has normal distribution and represents a continuum ranging from allocentric on the right to near-allocentric, midcentric, and near-Psychocentric and finally psychocentric on the other end. The psychographic scale is also important to recognize the relationship between travel personalities and destination selection and to understand the psychology of travel – why some people travel and others do not. The psychographic classification was an approach to study traveler's motivation. Plog suggest that tourist destinations are attractive to different types of

travelers as the destinations evolve from unknown discoveries to populated locations following the traveler arrival (Murphy, 1985). Plog also sought to categorize tourists in terms of their attitude towards their trip, expectations and experiences.

## **Research Methodology**

As mentioned above, this research has been funded by the Ministry of Education under the FRGS grant scheme. A questionnaire was developed and nationwide survey has been conducted since March 2004. The questionnaire contains four parts namely travel planning, travel choice, travel opinion and preference, and demographic. Questions on travel opinions and preferences are derived from past research especially by Plog (1991, 1994), Murphy (1985) and Luzar, et al. (1998). A pilot study was also conducted to test the questionnaire. The preliminary test managed to secure 25 respondents and a more refined questionnaire was then developed from the suggestions and comments from the respondents. The questionnaire was prepared in both Malay and English. The survey employed self-administered questionnaire, distributed and monitored by field surveyors. The field surveyors were instructed to approach every other traveler found at designated locations. The locations include popular spots like beaches and waterfalls, embarkation spots like jetties and airports, and highway stopovers.

This paper reports on partial findings of the survey covering 984 respondents. It is based on questionnaire collected by Mac 2005 at major destinations in Malaysia like the Malaysia National Park, Kuala Lumpur (including at Kuala Lumpur International Airport), Langkawi, Penang, and the hill resort of Genting Highland. Disproportionate stratified random sampling method was employed for this study. Extensive data editing and cleaning were undertaken before the final data can be analyzed using the SPSS program. A Factor Analysis with extraction method of Principle Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation (cut-off point of 0.4) was firstly carried out to analyze the underlying factors of the statements, followed by Cluster Analysis (K-Means) to uncover clusters of travelers based on their travel interest, opinions and preferences.

## **Results**

### *Demographic Background*

The respondents consist of 46.8% male and 53.2% female, with an average age of 28 years old. The majority of the respondents are below 31 years old. They mainly worked in public sector (46.8%), 37.3% worked in the private sector, while another 15.9% were on their own. Their average monthly income was RM 2886.28 (equivalent to USD 756). The sample consists of 73.3% Malays, 11.7% Chinese, followed by Indians and others. This was because many of the field assistants for this survey are Malays and they must have been more inclined to distribute the survey forms to the Malays. The majority of the travelers are single (67.2%) and more than half of them have tertiary education or higher.

### *Travel Characteristic Profile*

The main purpose of travel was mainly for leisure or holiday (77.2%), followed by for business and convention purposes (21.8%) and for visiting friends and relatives (23.3%). (Note: Respondents are allowed to choose more than one answers) (Table 1).

**Table 1** Main Purposes of Travel

| Purpose of travel                           | No. of respondents | Percentage   |
|---|--------------------|--------------|
| Leisure/recreation/holiday                  | 760                | 77.2         |
| Business/professional/convention/conference | 229                | 23.3         |
| Visit friends/relatives                     | 215                | 21.8         |
| Shopping                                    | 195                | 19.8         |
| Balik Kampung                               | 128                | 13.0         |
| Sporting tournament/event                   | 52                 | 5.3          |
| Others – Study/education                    | 19                 | 1.9          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>1598</b>        | <b>162.3</b> |

\*Note: N=984. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers

The survey discovered that the majority of respondents (84.6%) planned their trips. Today, planning the trips has been deemed necessary, especially during school and public holidays. Despite this, over 44.4% of them did not make any real reservations. Most of Malaysian travelers trust the words of mouths from friends and relatives (49.8%), followed by magazines and newspapers (32.8%)\*. The television and radio as well as travel brochure and the Internet are also important sources of information for them. About 39% of the respondents traveled with their friends, while 34.2% traveled with family or relatives. Only 8.3% were traveling alone. They spent an average of four days and three nights at destinations, majority visited the places between 1-3 times. The survey also discovered that attractions of the destination, unspoiled nature, leisure and recreational facilities attract them to visit the place. This study also found that private vehicle (41.5%), public vehicles (39.0%), and airlines (34%) were used as main modes of transportation from the places of origin to destinations.

**Table 2** Main Activities during Travels

| Activities                              | No. of respondents | Percentage   |
|---|--------------------|--------------|
| Shopping                                | 744                | 75.6         |
| Sightseeing in cities                   | 524                | 53.3         |
| Dine at café or restaurant              | 480                | 48.8         |
| Visiting heritage/historical sites      | 344                | 35.0         |
| Amusement/theme parks                   | 296                | 30.1         |
| Museum/art gallery                      | 295                | 30.0         |
| Swimming/sunbathing                     | 278                | 28.3         |
| Visiting national parks                 | 249                | 25.3         |
| Visiting small towns and villages       | 245                | 24.9         |
| Environmental/ecological excursions     | 243                | 24.7         |
| Water sport (diving, rafting, kayaking) | 226                | 23.0         |
| Rock climbing/caving                    | 176                | 17.9         |
| Attend traditional cultural performance | 153                | 15.5         |
| Golfing/tennis/popular sports           | 131                | 13.3         |
| Attend concert/theatre/musical          | 118                | 12.0         |
| Visiting Orang Asli settlement          | 97                 | 9.9          |
| Disco/night clubs                       | 67                 | 6.8          |
| Visiting casinos/gambling               | 42                 | 4.3          |
| Others                                  | 41                 | 4.2          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>4749</b>        | <b>482.9</b> |

Note: N=984. Respondents are allowed to choose multiple answers

The majority of the respondents stayed at hotels (41.2%) and resorts (24.9%) followed by at their friends' or relatives' houses (21.1%). This reflects a wind of change on term of preferred places of stay during travels, from looking for friends' or relatives' house to a proper type of tourist establishments, especially at hotels between 2 to 4 stars. Malaysians in general, the Malays especially, are avid urban shoppers and bargain hunters. As shown in Table 2, shopping was one of the major activities done by over 75.6% travelers during their holidays, followed by city sightseeing (53.3%) and dining (48.8%). The findings also indicate that Malaysian domestics do not really like to engage in adventurous activities or to visit remote places or small villages. The main items they purchased were souvenirs at tourist bazaars (47.2%), clothes, bags or shoes (45.1%), followed by chocolate or sweets (37.1%).

### Clusters of Malaysian Travelers

Before Cluster Analysis was carried out, a Factor Analysis with Principle Component Analysis extraction method and Varimax rotation method was conducted. The purpose of the Factor Analysis was to reveal underlying factors within the responses to the statements on their preferences (Table 3).

**Table 3** Factor Analysis of Travel Interest, Opinions and Preferences

| Travel interest, opinion & preferences   | Component   |             |             | Communalities |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
|  | 1           | 2           | 3           |               |
| (1) I prefer destination with familiar atmosphere like my hometown   |             |             | <u>.694</u> | .486          |
| (2) I prefer local residents to use standard Bahasa Melayu rather than their own dialect                     | .150        |             | <u>.752</u> | .588          |
| (3) I like buying souvenirs or common items sold at tourists shops   | <u>.487</u> |             | .350        | .360          |
| (4) I'd like to participate in adventurous activities like scuba diving, rock climbing, jungle trekking etc. | .439        | <u>.477</u> | -.159       | .446          |
| (5) I prefer to travel in a big group or with tour guide   | .216        | <u>.477</u> | .147        | .296          |
| (6) I frequently went for travels during childhood and my school years                                       |             | <u>.627</u> | -.114       | .415          |
| (7) I prefer and enjoy returning to the same and familiar destinations                                       | -.178       | <u>.577</u> | .226        | .416          |
| (8) I like to discover new places where people don't usually go  | <u>.398</u> | .352        | -.200       | .322          |
| (9) I prefer this destination because it's nearby  | -.143       | .444        | <u>.482</u> | .450          |
| (10) I am looking for native crafts or arts which rare to find   | <u>.630</u> |             |             | .400          |
| (11) I enjoy meeting people from different background and culture  | <u>.639</u> | .106        |             | .422          |
| (12) When travel, I always stay at proper accommodation with full services & facilities                      | <u>.527</u> | -.121       |             | .300          |
| (13) I always curious & participate in local cultural performances or customs                                | <u>.594</u> | .224        |             | .409          |
| Variance (%)   | 19.3        | 11.9        | 9.7         |               |

The factor analysis produces three main factors. The first factor consists of statements number (3), (8), (10), (11), (12) and (13). This factor suggests communality on preferences toward meeting new people and places. Factor number 2 consists of statements number (4), (5), (6) and (7) which mainly deals with preference towards traveling in a bigger group and returning to familiar places. The third factor contains three statements and focuses on familiar environments. It has statement number (1), (2) and (9) loaded onto it.

**Table 4 Cluster Analysis of Malaysian Travelers**

| Travel interest, opinion & preferences   | Cluster            |           |                   |
|--|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|
|  | Comfort Discoveres | Explorers | Passive Observers |
| (1) I prefer destination with familiar atmosphere like my hometown   | 3.177              | 2.598     | 1.846             |
| (2) I prefer local residents to use standard Bahasa Melayu rather than their own dialect                     | 3.783              | 3.125     | 2.459             |
| (3) I like buying souvenirs or common items sold at tourists shops   | 3.867              | 3.037     | 3.320             |
| (4) I'd like to participate in adventurous activities like scuba diving, rock climbing, jungle trekking etc. | 3.967              | 2.615     | 3.855             |
| (5) I prefer to travel in a big group or with tour guide   | 3.720              | 2.507     | 3.172             |
| (6) I frequently went for travels during childhood and my school years                                       | 3.390              | 2.552     | 3.846             |
| (7) I prefer and enjoy returning to the same and familiar destinations                                       | 3.393              | 2.943     | 3.115             |
| (8) I like to discover new places where people don't usually go  | 3.860              | 3.127     | 3.837             |
| (9) I prefer this destination because it's nearby  | 3.403              | 2.737     | 2.423             |
| (10) I am looking for native crafts or arts which rare to find   | 3.927              | 3.008     | 3.483             |
| (11) I enjoy meeting people from different background and culture  | 4.133              | 3.227     | 3.810             |
| (12) When travel, I always stay at proper accommodation with full services & facilities                      | 4.140              | 3.516     | 3.858             |
| (13) I always curious & participate in local cultural performances or customs                                | 3.883              | 2.700     | 3.323             |

The Cluster Analysis results in three major clusters (Table 4). The first cluster carries characteristics of mixed-centric (a combination of allocentrics and psychocentrics). It has patterns of mass travelers who prefer local host to use standard language, buy common souvenirs, travel in big groups, and prefer to stay at proper accommodation with full services and facilities. However, at the very same time, the members of this group are rather active, seek adventurous activities like scuba diving, and rock climbing, jungle trekking and so on. They enjoy discovering new places, enjoy meeting people and look for native crafts. This group, with 300 members, may be referred as 'Comfort Discoveres'. Cluster three on the other hand, do not really prefer familiar destinations, and do not really concern whether locals communicate in standard language. They enjoy active activities, and traveled more during their childhood. This group enjoys discovering new places and does not necessarily look for



nearby destinations. This cluster can be called 'Explorers'. There are 331 members belong to this cluster. The second cluster travels in small groups, but they did not travel much during their childhood. They also do not like to participate in adventurous activities during their travels. Unlike the other two clusters, the members do not really like to participate in local cultural performances or customs. This cluster can be called the 'Passive observers'. There are 353 members belong to this group.

## Research Implications

Nowadays, a greater number of Malaysians travel for leisure purpose. A large number of them are female. This also perhaps reflects the high level of safety, convenience, and affordability among Malaysian females to travel alone. The average age of domestic travelers is 28 years old reflects the normal age for traveling as Malaysian at this age would have steady job and disposable income. Many Malaysians are having tertiary and higher education at this age, providing them with necessary knowledge and life experience to indulge in traveling experience. Improved economic situation has helped more Malaysians to secure jobs in the private sector or to do their own business, apart from working in government sector. Increase in disposable income as well as leisure days have also promoted domestic travel in general.

The study discovers that Malaysians are taking more holidays, recreation or leisure pursuits. The reasons lie in several factors, which include lesser working days for the government servants, more private companies adopt flexible working hours, and more holidays have been granted based on improved working hours. Despite the belief that Malaysians prefer to engage in *balik kampung* travels, this study, however, observes that only a small number of Malaysians considered *balik kampung* as their traveling purpose. Malaysian domestic travelers did not regard *balik kampung* as their way of getting away from their usual environment. Most Malaysians planned their trip prior to the journey. This scenario shows that Malaysians are less willing to take a chance and risks of not having accommodation at the destinations. Malaysians rely heavily on their friends or relatives' word of mouth in recommending the destinations to go.

Despite planning the trips, Malaysians do not make any reservations especially if they plan to stay at their friend or relative's houses, where majority of Malaysians still like to do. However, since there are more affordable budget hotels of 3 to 4 star rating available throughout the country, more Malaysians choose to put a night at the hotels. Malaysians prefer to drive their own personal vehicle from their place of travel origin to the destination, and when going around at the destination. The next major transportation used is by bus or coach, especially the interstate buses, which has grown tremendously because better highway system. Since they drive on their own, the majority of Malaysians do not buy any travel packages. Ministry of Tourism has acknowledged this trend and has encouraged travel agency companies to be creative and to do more promotions to target the domestic travelers to buy travel packages. Malaysians like to buy common items sold at tourist bazaars, which can be seen all over Malaysia. The analysis uncovered three distinct groups within Malaysian domestic travelers, namely 'Comfort discoverers', 'Explorers' and 'Passive observers'. The result realizes that Malaysians in general are adventurous in nature and like to explore and engage in adventurous activities. However, they are not truly allocentric type of explorers as Malaysians demand a little bit of comfort during travels, such as seeking comfortable accommodation. Standard conventional hotels are still the favorite place of stay compared to specialized resorts. Despite enjoying the nature and would love to visit nature related areas, they stop short of trekking deep into the wilderness, or kayaking into the open sea, or perhaps camping out in the wilderness.

## Concluding Remarks

This study suggests that alternative tourism like ecotourism, agro tourism and river tourism have much potential to attract the participation of local tourists. Malaysians enjoy nature as much as their foreign counterparts do. They (Malaysians) however, display a kind of insecurity and discomfort with basic accommodation and look for standard accommodation facilities. This perhaps explains the popularity of places like the Mat Chincang cable car (in Langkawi) and many water falls with short trekking routes and the fall of places like the Tok Senik Resort (also in Langkawi), which is located in rubber plantation, as well as the Hosba Valley Resort in Kedah. The exotic Kilim River in Langkawi which offers ecotourism experience is very much popular among the foreign explorers but not among the locals. As mentioned before, while nature based destinations have been the prime spots for Malaysians, they are mainly visited the places for viewing purpose but not to engage with adventurous activities. Continuous promotions on domestic tourism, coupled with development of more interesting tourism products have promoted domestic traveling in Malaysia towards a boom. While Malaysians in the past traveled for other purposes than leisure, potential today's Malaysians start to realize the value of getting away from their homes and seeing new faces and places. While there are still remnants of past trends such as putting up at friends' and relatives' houses, Malaysians are seen to be more practical in traveling nowadays, valuing the privacy of both themselves and the hosts and opting for hotels or resorts nearby. This also reflects a greater affordability among them. This research will continue to uncover many other aspects of Malaysians as travelers, including typical requirements and their psychographic backgrounds, in order to gain better understanding and to plan better products to suit their needs.

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