

Factors Influencing Visitors' Revisit Behavioral Intentions: A Case Study of Sabah, Malaysia

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Abstract

Revisit intention has been highlighted as an important research topic in competitive market of tourism destinations. Despite the considerable number of research on repeat visitors, it remains unclear why people undertake repeat visits and what kind of characteristics hold repeat visitors. This research aims to identify factors influencing repeat visitors to Sabah, Malaysia. The results of this study indicated that "destination image" and "relaxation and recreation" were the most important destination attributes and travel motives for repeat visitors to Sabah. Concerning their perception on destination loyalty, the study revealed that respondents were loyal to Sabah, intent to revisit and recommended Sabah as a holiday destination.

Keywords: revisit behavioral intentions, destination loyalty, relationship marketing, Sabah

1. Introduction

Tourism scholars have concentrated on repeat visitation as an antecedent of destination loyalty. Some empirical studies have acknowledged that many tourist destinations rely seriously on repeat visitors (e.g., Darnell & Johnson, 2001; Jayaraman *et al.*, 2010). In this sense, previous researches have examined factors influencing tourist behavior towards a repeat visitation. In tourism, major antecedents of revisit intention such as *satisfaction* (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Petrik *et al.*, 2001; Yuksel, 2001; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003; Fallon & Schofield, 2003; Li & Carr, 2004; Jang & Feng, 2007), *novelty seeking* (Jang & Feng, 2007), *perceived value* (Petrik *et al.*, 2001; Um *et al.*, 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Bigne *et al.*, 2009), *past vacation experience* (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Petrik *et al.*, 2001), *safety* (Chen & Gursoy, 2001), *cultural differences* (Reisinger & Turner, 1998; Chen & Gursoy, 2001), *image* (Ross, 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008), *motivation and satisfaction* (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), and *destination attributes* (Akama, 2003; Chi & Qu, 2008; Zabkar *et al.*, 2010) have been identified by various researchers.

Chen & Tasi (2007) assert that "by understanding the relationships between future behavioral and its determinants, destination tourism managers would know better on how to build up an attractive image and improve their marketing efforts to maximize their use of resources" (p. 1116). Study on repeat visitation is vital for tourism businesses from the economic perspective. Attracting previous customers is more cost-effective than gaining new ones (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). In tourism, the promotional costs of attracting repeat visitors are less than first time visitors (Weaver & Lawton, 2002; Lau & Mckercher, 2004). Moreover, preserving loyal customers is a crucial contributor to the profitability of business (Hsu *et al.*, 2008). According to Mat Som *et al.* (2011, p.178), "previous studies show 2% increase in customer retention has the same effects on profits in terms of cost cutting by 10%".

From Jang and Feng's perspective (2007), repeat visitors are significant in increasing revenue in tourism destinations and in saving marketing dollars. Similarly, Jayaraman *et al.* (2010) mentioned that repeat visitors to Malaysia are imperative for increasing revenue of tourism industry. Hence, the critical analysis and in-depth study on the factors influencing repeat visitors may provide the ground to improve the Malaysian tourism market for repeat visitors. The purpose of this study is to identify the key factors that affect repeat visitors in Sabah. First, this paper presents a brief review of literature regarding revisit intention and destination loyalty from relationship marketing perspective. Second, it outlines the research methodology, and finally the findings of the research is presented.

2. Relationship Marketing

“The globalization of markets, competitive pressure, brand multiplication and, above all, the ever-changing lifestyles and consumer behavior have forced companies to develop strategies to keep their clients and create consumer loyalty programmes and thus carry out relationship marketing” (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005, p. 55). “The definition of marketing has changed from purely transaction driven to being process driven. The transaction-focused view of marketing is being challenged because: (i) the short term focus of many marketing practices has failed to serve customers’ best interests, and (ii) corporate self-interest has not been served because attraction is more expensive than retention” (Nwakanma *et al.*, 2007, p.57).

Marketing is no longer simply about developing, selling, and delivering product, it is more concerned with the development and maintenance of mutually satisfying long-term relationship with customers (Buttle, 1996). The new definition realizes the value of lifetime customer and the importance of preventing customer defection. “In this new perspective, both transactional and relational qualities are combined and strive to establish, maintain, and enhance mutually beneficial relationship with customers so as to satisfy the objectives of all parties” (Nwakanma *et al.*, 2007, p.57).

Relationship marketing is acknowledged by academics and practitioners as “a competitive strategy aimed at the creation, maintenance and development of successful relationship with customers, and it is currently considered a management approach to cover all marketing activities and generate important advantages in its implementation, both in firms and for customers” (Casielles *et al.*, 2005, p. 83). In tourism, “relationship marketing is regarded as an apt strategy and coherent approach to building a continuous relationship among all key elements (e.g., stakeholders, host community, tourists) in tourism destination to gain competitive advantages”(Mostafavi Shiazhi & Mat Som, 2010, p.48). “Building a strong customer relationship offers a significant competitive advantage due to difficulty of direct imitation by competitors” (Sherrell & Beju, 2007, p. 4).

Fally *et al.* (2003) mention that “with increasing global competition owing to newly-emerging destinations, tourists becoming more exacting in their choice and desire for a variety of options; relationship marketing arguably offers considerable potential to achieve advantage” (p. 645). It is important to note that the primary goal of relationship marketing is loyalty and sometimes even equated with relationship marketing concept itself (Boonajesevee, 2005). Significantly, the benefits of relationship marketing in competitive market are recognized as: gaining competitive advantages, preparing long-term profitability, reducing market research, and creating loyal customers (Lovelock *et al.*, 1996). It is important to note that relationship marketing is considered as a competitive strategy aimed at creating long term relationship and improving corporate performance through customer loyalty (Mostafavi Shirazi & Mat Som, 2011). In competitive market of tourism destination, the focal point of relationship marketing that has been highlighted is creating loyal visitors for future action intention (ibid).

2.1 Destination Loyalty

Destination loyalty has received considerable attention from academics and practitioners as an important benchmark for developing useful business strategy (Shanka *et al.*, 2010). Scholars have paid attention to the distinctiveness of different concepts for destination loyalty, the ways of its measurement and the influence on the ultimate result (Lee *et al.*, 2004). Understanding the antecedents of loyalty allows destination operators to concentrate on factors which leads to visitors’ retention over the time. Reviewing more than 25 empirical studies, Shanka *et al.* (2010) found that different authors used more than 30 factors in different research settings as antecedents or evaluative factors for loyalty. Lee *et al.* (2004) showed direct relationship between *service quality and satisfaction* and identified satisfaction as antecedent of loyalty. In another study on Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh, *perceived satisfaction* was found as the main antecedent of destination loyalty (Shanka *et al.*, 2010). In Campo & Yague’s study (2008), *price* was identified as the antecedent of quality, quality as antecedent of satisfaction, and satisfaction as the antecedent of loyalty.

Yoon & Uysal (2005) assert that “in an increasingly competitive marketplace, the success of marketing destinations should be guided by a thorough analysis of tourist motivation and its interplay with tourist satisfaction and loyalty” (p.45). In their model, motivation is divided into push and pull factors. Push factors are socio-psychological needs which relate to intrinsic motivators, while pull factors are external forces that relate to attractiveness and specific features of the destination. Their results showed that both push and pull factors affect destination loyalty. They argued that motivation in behavioral researches need further domains other than examining tourists’ wants and needs.

In Prayag & Ryan' view (2011, p. 3), "it is generally accepted that pull factors are measured via lists of destination attributes that represent place perceptions". Moreover, a critical relationship between push/pull motivation and destination loyalty in terms of revisit intention and recommendation has been underlined by previous studies (e.g., Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In reviewing literatures, "revisit intention" and "positive word of mouth recommendation" have been recognized as indicators of loyalty in many studies (Bigne *et al.*, 2001; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Niininen *et al.*, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008).

2.2 Revisit Intention

From consumption process's perspective, tourists' behavior is divided into three stages including: pre-visitation, during visitation, and post visitation (Rayan, 2002; William & Buswell, 2003). Chen & Tsai (2007) stated that tourists' behaviors include choice of destination to visit, subsequent evaluations, and future behavioral intentions. The subsequent evaluations are the travel experience or perceived value and overall visitors' satisfaction, whereas the future behavioral intentions refer to the visitor's judgment about the likeliness to revisit the same destination and willingness to recommend it to others.

Several studies identified *satisfaction with travel experience* as the major antecedent of revisit intention (Oppermann, 2000; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Petrik *et al.*, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Jang & Feng, 2007; Alexandris *et al.*, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008), and positive satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' repurchase intention (Gotlieb *et al.*, 1994). In contrast, Um *et al.* (2006) found that satisfaction was insignificant in affecting revisit intention to Hong Kong for European and North American tourists. Beigne *et al.* (2009) argued that in competitive market even satisfied customer may switch to rival because of the opportunities to achieve better results. In another view, Cronin *et al.* (2000) state that perceived value may be a better predictor of repurchase intention than either satisfaction or quality.

Zabkar *et al.* (2010) explored complex relationship between main constructs and behavioral intentions. Based on their model, destination attributes affect perceived quality which then affects satisfaction, the latter lead to revisit intention. From Jang & Feng's perspective (2007), novelty seeking is highlighted as an antecedent of revisit intention. They examined the effects of tourists' novelty-seeking and destination satisfaction on revisit intentions in short-term, mid-term, and long-term. They found that satisfaction influence tourists' intention for revisit in short-term, while novelty-seeking influence tourists' intention for revisit in mid-term, and long term. Petrik (2002) suggested that "novelty seeking" play an important role in tourists' decision making process. Pearson (1970) described novelty seeking as the level of contrast between current perception and past experience. In tourism, novelty seeking is also investigated as an enhancer for tourist's satisfaction (Crotts, 1993).

Mostafavi Shirazi & Mat Som (2010) examined the effect of destination attributes on revisit intention in Penang. They found repeat visitation as an indicator of loyalty in tourist destination that is strongly affected by destination attributes. In their study, diversification of attractions has been found as one of the necessary conditions for explaining repeat visitations (ibid). Many studies have pointed out the relationship between image and destination loyalty (Rittchainuwat *et al.*, 2001; Ross 1993; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2011). In this sense, Chi & Qu (2008) underlined 'destination image' as an antecedent of destination loyalty.

It is generally accepted that destination image has influenced tourist behaviors (Lee *et al.*, 2005; Bigne *et al.*, 2001). In many studies, destination image is distinguished as a destination attribute and is considered as an effective tool to attract tourists (Kneesel *et al.*, 2010). Bigne *et al.* (2001) and Lee *et al.* (2005) have emphasized that destination image plays two crucial roles in behaviors: first, influence the destination choice decision-making process, and second, influence conditions after decision-making behaviors (intention to revisit and willingness to recommend).

According to Lee *et al.* (2005), individual with a more favorable destination image perceived higher on site experience, that led to higher satisfaction and the more positive behavioral intentions. Chen & Tsai (2007) tested the relationship between destination image, evaluative factors (e.g., trip quality, perceived value, satisfaction) and behavioral intentions. They found that destination image and satisfaction were two important variables that influenced visitors' behavioral intention. Their study revealed that destination image influenced behavioral intentions directly and indirectly.

2.3 Recommendation to Others

Shanka *et al.* (2002) confirm the positive effect of word of mouth information for destination selection. Recommendation to other people is one of the most often sought types of information for people interested in traveling" (Chi & Qu, 2008, p. 625). Word of mouth recommendations are especially critical in tourism

marketing because they are considered to be the most reliable, and thus are one of the most sought-after information sources for potential tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Similarly, Wong & Kwong (2004) mentioned that repeated visitors increase word-of-mouth and such recommendation effects on potential visitors. Notably, Hui *et al.* (2007) argue that tourists who were satisfied from the whole trip were likely to recommend the destination to others rather than to revisit it in the future. Although a number of studies have been conducted to identify antecedents of destination loyalty (revisit intention and recommendation), there is no general agreement among scholars regarding the antecedents of revisit intention.

3. Research Methodology

A self-administered survey questionnaire was developed to identify factors influencing repeat visitation to Sabah. The target population of this study was international tourists. The survey instrument was mainly aimed at identifying the underlying dimensions of visitors' revisit intention. A convenience sampling approach was employed to collect data in April 2011 at both terminals of Kota Kinabalu International Airport in Sabah. Among 150 self-administered questionnaires distributed, a total of 105 usable questionnaires were obtained representing 70% of response rate. A five-part self-administered survey focused on travel characteristics, destination attributes, travel motives, tourists' perception on destination loyalty, and demographic variables of the respondents. The first part posed questions on travel characteristics including number of visits, purpose of visits, length of stay, travel companion, source of information, transportation, type of accommodation, and tourism type. In the second part, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements about destination attributes to revisit Sabah. The attribution items were assessed, using a 5-point Likert scale from 5= strongly disagree to 1= strongly agree. In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements describing their motives for revisiting Sabah. Likewise, in the subsequent part, respondents' perceptions on destination loyalty were assessed. The last part posed questions on respondents' background; the demographic profiles included age, gender, marital status, income, education, and occupation. Data were analysed using SPSS version 17.0 in three steps. First, the findings were profiled by socio-demographic and travel characteristics. Second, a factor analysis using principal component method with Varimax rotation was run to identify underlying dimensions of each set of 19 destination attributes and 23 motivational items. Finally, descriptive statistics were used to compute the mean scores for each of tourists' perceptions on destination loyalty items.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were males (61%), married (57.1%), between the age of 21 to 30 years old (29.5%), bachelor degree holders (36.2%), and professional (59.6%). Most of respondents declared to earn less than 80,000 USD per annum (66.9%).

Table 1. Demographic profiles of respondents

Variables	Descriptions	Percentage
Gender	Male	61
	Female	39
Age	20 years and below	2.9
	21 - 30	29.5
	31-40	28.6
	41-50	15.2
	51-60	17.1
	Over 60	6.7
Marital Status	Single	28.6
	Married	57.1
	Widowed	2.9
	Others	11.4
Annual Income (USD)	Less than\$ 20,000	16.5
	\$ 20,001 – 40,000	18.4
	40,001 – 60,000	13.6
	\$ 60,001 – 80,000	18.4
	\$ 80,001 – 100,000	19.5
	> \$ 100,000	13.6

Education level	Secondary school	11.4
	Diploma	22.9
	Bachelor	36.2
	Master	20
	PhD	6.7
	Others	2.8
Occupation	Professional	59.6
	Government employee	5.8
	Private sector employee	13.5
	Self employed	4.8
	Business owner	1
	Retiree	3.8
	House wife	2.9
	Student	1.9
	Others	6.7

4.2 Travel Characteristics

The results of travel characteristics revealed that 42.9% of respondents visited Sabah for the second time, used internet to obtain information about Sabah (62.2%), stayed in Sabah more than one week (46.5%), and the main purpose of their visit was leisure (70.5%). The findings also showed that most of the respondents were eco-tourists (64.8%), travel to Sabah by air (92.3%), with their spouse (41.9%), stayed at 4-5 stars hotels/resorts (55.8%), and used air plane to travel within Malaysia (see Table 2).

Table 2. Travel characteristics

Variables	Descriptions	Percentage
Number of visits	2 times	42.9
	3 times	14.3
	4 times	8.5
	5 times	3.8
	More than 5 times	30.5
	Purpose of visit	Leisure
Business		11.7
Visiting friends/relatives		8.7
Others		7.8
Length of stay		1 night
	2 nights	6.7
	3 nights	5.7
	4 nights	5.6
	5 nights	1
	6 nights	10.5
	More than a week	65.7
	Travel companion/s	Alone
With my spouse		41.9
With my family		13.3
With friends		7.6
With relatives		3.8
With business associates		3.8
With a tour group		6.7
Others		1
Source of information	Pervious trip(s)	47.6
	Internet	58.1
	Brochures	14.3
	Travel guidebooks	41
	Travel agencies	14.3
	Tourist information centers	4.8

	Words of mouth	33.3
	Travel expo/exhibitions	1.9
	Others	3.9
Transportation	Air	92.3
	Sea	1
	Road	6.7
	Train	
Transportation within Malaysia	Air plane (premium airline(s))	60.6
	Air plane (low cost airline(s))	36.5
	Private car	11.7
	Rented car	15.3
	Bus/Coach	33.6
	Van	8.8
	Train	8
	Taxi	49.6
	Cruise ship	2.2
	Motorcycle	2.2
	Others	10.2
Type of accommodation	High range hotel/resort (4-5star)	55.8
	Mid-range hotel/resort (3 star)	22
	Low cost hotel/resort (1-2 star)	4.8
	Serviced apartment/condominium	1
	Guest house	7.7
	Home stay	5.8
	Others	2.9
Tourism type/s	Ecotourism/Nature tourism	64.8
	Highland tourism	6.7
	Event tourism	2.9
	Rural tourism	18.1
	Urban tourism	25.7
	MICE tourism	100
	Agro tourism	2.9
	Heritage tourism	27.6
	Sport tourism	7.6
	Island/coastal tourism	46.7
	Cultural tourism	28.6
	Medical tourism	1.9
	Adventure tourism	25.7
	Educational tourism	5.7
	Others	6.7

4.3 Factor Analysis of Destination Attributes

To identify the underlying dimensions of destination attributes of repeat visitors, a principal component factor analysis was carried out to group the destination attribute items with common characteristics. The Barlett's Test of Sphericity shows statistical significance with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .835, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Hair *et al.*, 1995). Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated to test the reliability and internal consistency of each factor and a cut-off point of 0.4 was used to include items in interpretation of a factor.

Table 3 reports that the factor analysis of 19 destination attributes resulted in three factor groupings, which accounted for 68.68% of variance. The factor groupings of destination attributes were "destination image", "modern environment", and "weather & natural attractions". "Destination image" was the most important destination attribute for repeat tourists which explained 44.13% of the variance (eigenvalue is 5.29).

Table 3. Principal components of destination attributes

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Cummunalities</i>	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Destination Image</i>			5.29	44.13%	3.84	.679
Malaysia as a “Truly Asia” destination	0.674	.539				
Friendly local people	0.809	.748				
Rich diversity of local food	0.855	.743				
English is widely spoken among local people	0.755	.643				
Good value for money destination	0.673	.622				
<i>Modern Environment</i>			1.85	15.43%	3.52	.683
Economically developed country	0.788	.743				
Modern and advanced country	0.798	.726				
Progressive Islamic country	0.756	.629				
Country with excellent transportation system	0.778	.628				
<i>Weather & Natural Attraction</i>			1.09	9.11%	3.96	.768
A tropical destination	0.739	.685				
Country with pleasant weather & climate	0.820	.768				
Rich in mega diversity of natural resources	0.823	.767				
Total Variance	68.68%					

4.4 Factor Analysis of Motives

The same procedure was applied for 23 motivational items to delineate underlying dimensions associated with repeat tourists' motives. All factors had an eigenvalue greater than one. The composite reliability test indicated that the reliability coefficient for motive factors stood at 0.74. Table 4 reports that factor analysis of 23 motives items results in 5 factor groupings, which accounted for 70.26% of the variance. The factor grouping of motives factors are “relaxation & recreation”, “enhance relation”, “enhance social”, “fulfilling prestige”, and “escaping from the daily routine”. “Relaxation & recreation” was the most important motive to revisit Sabah. This factor explained 28.44% of variance (eigenvalue is 5.12).

Table 4. Principal components of motives

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Cummunalities</i>	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Relaxation & Recreation</i>			5.12	28.44%	3.39	.790
To relax physically	.608	.558				
To relax spiritually	.809	.749				
To participate in new activities	.832	.740				
To find thrills and excitement	.669	.662				
To sightseeing touristic spots	.726	.688				
To appreciate natural resources	.711	.699				
<i>Enhance Relation</i>			2.90	16.16%	3.05	.810
To meet new people	.750	.692				
To enhance communication with local community	.755	.671				

To visit freind and relatives	.806	.756				
To exchange custom and traditions	.734	.621				
To live or stay temporarily with local community	.655	.607				
<i>Enhancing Social</i>			2.07	11.45%	2.18	1.02
To increase my social status	.880	.854				
To visit a destination that would impress my friends and family	.878	.805				
<i>Fullfilling Prestige</i>			1.39	7.76%	3.32	.847
To satisfy the desire to be somewhere else	.666	.626				
To fulfill my dream of visiting a foreign land/country	.705	.736				
To have enjoyable time with my travel companion(s)	.691	.735				
<i>Escaping from the Daily Routine</i>			1.14	6.35%	2.69	.966
To be away from home	.845	.752				
To seek solitude in a foreign land	.770	.698				
Total Variance		70.26%				

4.5 Descriptive Statistic Analysis of Tourists' Perception on Destination Loyalty

A descriptive statistic analysis was applied to identify the most important dimensions of tourists' perception on destination loyalty. As showed in Table 5, the statement of "Im willing to return to Malaysia in the future" obtained the highest mean value (4.15), followed by "I am willing to recommend Malaysia to family and friends as a holiday destination" (4.03). It can be concluded that respondents of this study intend to revisit and recommend Malaysia to family and friends as a holiday destination in future. According to literature, both revisit intention and recommendation are indicators of destination loyalty. This study also revealed that the image of Malaysia was identified as an important dimension for repeat visitors with the mean score of 3.96.

Table 5. Mean value of tourists' perception on destination loyalty

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am wiling to return to Malaysia in the future.	4.15	.743
I am willing to recommend Malaysia to family and friends as a holiday destination.	4.3	.919
I have wonderful image of Malaysia as a holiday destination.	3.96	.819
I visit new destinations other than those that I previously visited in Malaysia.	3.66	.926
I feel I am very loyal to Malaysia as a destination choice.	3.60	.915
Compared to my last visit, I spend more money in this current visit.	3.43	.921
Compared to my last visit to Malaysia, I stay longer period in the current visit.	3.32	1.02
I always return to the same destinations that I previously visited in Malaysia.	2.85	.934
Compared to my last visit, I come with bigger companions in the current visit.	2.61	1.08

5. Conclusions

This paper has investigated and presented the influential factors of repeat visitors in East Malaysia, Sabah. The empirical results of this study highlight the key factors influencing repeat visitors to return to Sabah. It provides the ground to understand what motivates repeat visitors regarding revisit intention. Destination attributes that reflect Sabah as a tourist destination were examined. In this sense, "destination image", "modern environment",

and “weather & natural attractions” were underlined as the main factors to revisit Sabah. “Destination image” was the most important factor for repeat visitors of Sabah. In other words, it seems friendliness of local people, ability to communicate with local community, local foods as well as good value for money (destination image) are the main destination attributes that manifest Sabah’s image as a tourist destination. Hence, destination managers should improve destination image of Sabah which affect repeat visitors’ loyalty. Chen and Tsai (2007) pointed that “endeavors to build or improve the image of a destination facilitate loyal visitors revisiting or recommending behaviors...” (p.1121).

With regards to repeat visitors’ motives to Sabah, “relaxation & recreation”, “enhance relation”, “enhance social”, “fulfilling prestige”, and “escaping from the daily routine” were identified as imperative factors for revisit intention. “Relaxation & recreation” (to relax physically, to relax spiritually, to participate in new activities, to find thrills and excitement, to sightsee touristic spots and to appreciate natural resources) were found as significant motives for repeat visitors. This is because Sabah is rich with resources and attractions in terms of nature, culture, adventure and beautiful beaches that provide destinations for relaxation and recreation.

In terms of destination loyalty, this study reveals that repeat visitors intend to revisit as well as recommend Sabah as a holiday destination in future. Previous research has shown that “tourists’ positive experience of service products and other resources provided by tourism destination could produce repeat visits as well as positive WOM effects to friends and/or relatives” (Chi & Qu, 2008, p. 625). For this reason, appropriate marketing strategies should be intensified to further develop this market segment. Consequently, destination managers should consider destination attributes that suggest Sabah as a repeat tourism destination to enhance destination loyalty and achieve competitive advantages. As this study only focused on international repeat visitors, it is suggested that future research examine domestic repeat visitors to identify factors that influence their revisit intention.

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