

E-PROCEEDING HOTWEC 7.0

**SUSTAINABLY NURTURING
TOURISM,
HOSPITALITY AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY
FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW**

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PERCEPTION OF KUALA TERENGGANU AS AN ISLAMIC TOURISM DESTINATION AMONG THE PEOPLE THAT HAD BEEN IN KUALA TERENGGANU

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ABSTRACT

This study is about tourist perception who visit Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination. Perception is one of the important factors considered by tourist in visiting a destination beside motivation attractiveness, spiritual experience, culture attribute, religion and accessibility. Therefore, this research is to examine the relationship between brand image and tourist perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism destination. Second, to examine the relationship between spiritual experience and tourist perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination. Lastly, to examine the relationship between cultural attributes and tourist perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination. The quantitative method used in this research is questionnaires. About 327 respondents which is domestic and international tourists who went and experience in Kuala Terengganu chosen in this study.

Keywords: Tourist Perception, Islamic Tourism

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the perception of tourists visiting Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination. It examines the relationship between brand image, spiritual experience, culture attribute, religion, and accessibility. The research uses questionnaires to gather 327 domestic and international tourists. Kuala Terengganu is a developing city with diverse cultures, rich heritage, and friendly locals. The Terengganu State Museum, located in Kampung Losong, is one of Malaysia's largest museums. The results show that spirituality, destination branding, and cultural characteristics strongly influence tourists' perception of Kuala Terengganu. The opinions of visitors are significant as they will influence future tourists. The study highlights the importance of understanding tourists' perceptions of destinations and implementing measures to boost tourism revenues and protect tourism-related characteristics.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study has many consequences. This study uses a quantitative methodology to generalize conclusions and findings. The results of this study serve as a standard to guide Tourist Perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination. This study focuses on tourists' views. It addresses three main research questions: What are people's perspectives about Kuala Terengganu being an Islamic tourism destination? How far do people understand the history of Islam in Malaysia? What are the postulated characteristics of the Islamic tourism destination transpiring in Kuala Terengganu? Visitor satisfaction is one of the most important elements that guarantee future business growth. Today, many businesses use visitor happiness as a critical metric to measure the effectiveness of their operations. According to the tourism literature review, the destination's ability to satisfy visitors is an important consideration when choosing a location. If visitors are satisfied with their trip to the site, they may recommend it to others or return it themselves. (Site, Abbasi et al. 2019)

LITERATURE VALUE

IV₁: Brand Image

The brand image serves as the foundation of a framework that has a variety of consequences on customer reactions to tourism industry marketing. Given the significance of brand image for the tourist sector, during the past ten years, the sector has been working to build a conceptual framework for brand image, and, from the viewpoint of the travel sector, improve a sweet impression on customers. For the travel and tourist industry, the conceptual framework recognizes both the moderators and the antecedents of brand image. In actuality, the antecedents and moderators of brand image are latent factors whose function is to establish and uphold a brand image in the minds of customers. The conceptual underpinning of the tourism industry's brand image will be crucial in this regard given the existing state of tourism marketing. One of the key elements of customer-based brand equity that supports views of a travel brand and is communicated by the brand associations ingrained in a customer's memory is the conceptual framework of brand image (Keller, 2008). As a result, it is understood that the conceptual framework of brand image for the tourism industry plays a key role. As a result, it is recognised that the conceptual framework for the tourism industry's brand image plays a significant role as antecedents and moderators of brand image, allowing the industry to remain in customers' memory for a long time.

IV₂: Spiritual Experience

Three new, essential components of spirituality are highlighted by a synthesis of numerous viewpoints: Conscious attention to God, the Supreme Being, or the High Spirit comes first, followed by an awareness of oneself and others (Mitroff, 2003; Piedmont and Leach, 2002). Mitroff (2003) upheld the idea that spirituality is connected to God, a High Spirit, or a Supreme Being by referring to God as the controlling force behind the universe. According to Piedmont and Leach (2002), who concur that humans have always sought to connect with some great and sacred truth, which has been a constant force in humanity, spirituality is tied to God. This reality is described as a "non-delimited formless form of the unseen" by Sufi Rumi, according to a quotation from him "(Rustom, 2008, p.4)

IV₃: Cultural Attribute

Learning about, exploring, experiencing, and consuming both real and intangible cultural attractions and products in a trip destination are the main goals of cultural tourism. In addition to literature, music, the creative industries, living cultures with their unique ways of life, value systems, beliefs, and traditions, arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, arts and architecture, these attractions/products are linked to a variety of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional characteristics of a society.

DV: Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination

The phrase Islamic tourism arose from a debate at an Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in 2000, which recommended the practice of travel inside Islamic nations to produce cash and help countries grow (Lina Munirah & Hairul Nizam, 2012; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). However, the 9/11 tragedy in 2001 spurred the rise of secular thought connected with Islam with terrorism, leading to the establishment of Islamic tourism to overcome Islam's image crisis (Norlida Hanim et al., 2010). Since then, debates have centered on the definition of Islamic tourism. As this tourist idea should be regarded in various aspects, the clear definition of Islamic tourism is still vague, as is the outcome itself. Thus, additional discussion in this work contributes to a more specific understanding of the idea of Islamic tourism, including participants, activities, sites, goods, dimensions, value, and Islamic tourist management.

Research Hypothesis

The analysis of the available literature revealed that independent factors such as brand perceptions, spiritual encounters, and cultural characteristics affected how visitors saw Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination. As a result, the research methodology examines the relationships between the variables. Researchers assert that the antecedents and moderators of brand image components within the context of the proposed conceptual framework of brand image, spiritual experiences, and cultural attributes for the tourism industry would have a potential for developing a strong tourism brand in the contemporary environment of tourism marketing because they can offer helpful managerial implications that will aid the tourism brand managers. Thanks to many of the ideas presented in this suggested conceptual framework, the reader will have a deeper understanding of how the tourism sector may establish and sustain a brand's reputation, spiritual experiences, and cultural characteristics. According to researchers, the tourism sector will be able to forge a strong brand identity and turn consumer connections into a competitive marketplace with the support of social media. With the aid of the conceptual framework they have developed, researchers think the tourism sector will be able to create a strong brand identity and turn consumer connections into a competitive marketplace.

Research Framework

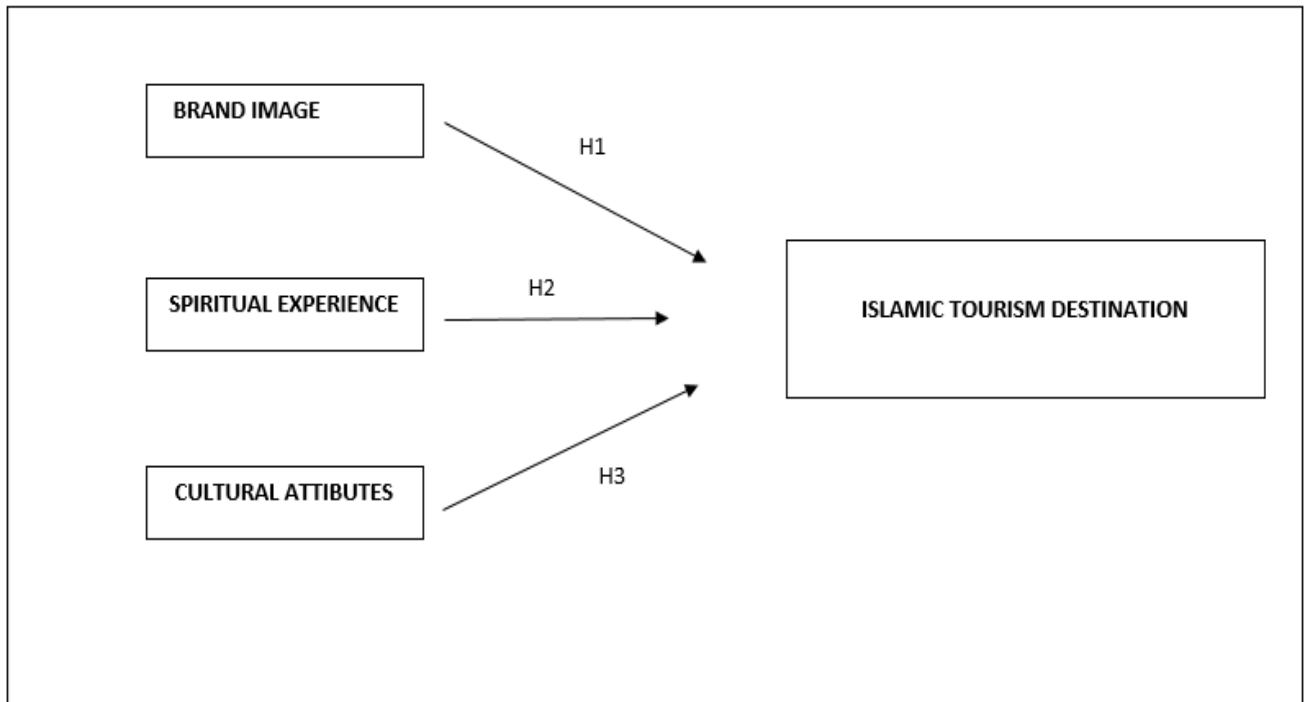


FIGURE 2.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK INDEPENDENT VARIABLE AND DEPENDENT VARIABLE
SOURCE

METHODOLOGY

It is defined as using research information while applying something to a planned outcome. The research process, data collection techniques, sampling plan, and presented work form a large part of the analytical approach. From the above statement, it can be concluded that what conveys the definition of research is a methodical and objective effort with the aim of gathering or collecting correct and useful facts. The process of reviewing and researching studies systematically and fairly is known as methodology.

Research Design

This study uses several research models to propose a conceptual model that can fully explain the perception of quality destinations in tourism satisfaction. In addition, the important thing to consider is that between gender and the frequency of visits will have an impact on the relationship and these factors.

Data Collection

The research study will collect data using primary data, which is information gathered directly from sources by researchers via an online survey GOOGLE FORM. In this study, primary data was collected using

questionnaires, which were distributed to respondents. The questionnaire will be distributed via an online survey, also known as an online questionnaire. The purpose of this analysis was stated in the link included with the form that was distributed to the respondents. As a result, respondents can understand the motivation and purpose of this study, allowing them to generate more accurate data. The questionnaire was distributed to 131 respondents regarding tourist perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination.

Sampling

This random sampling method refers to the collection of information to participate in research studies from members of the population (Sekaran, 2009). Therefore by using random sampling the number of people is large which will include all individuals. A random sampling method was used for sampling in this study. This study simulates the relationship between brand image, spiritual experiences, and cultural attributes and looks at the extent to which tourist perception Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination. Since cluster sampling has been a common approach in market research, this type of sampling can save a lot of time, money, and effort. It is used when researchers cannot obtain information about the entire population but can gain information about specific clusters.

Data Analysis

This study simulated the factor affecting tourist perception while traveling in Kuala Terengganu or tourists that have an experience in Kuala Terengganu. The findings revealed that brand image, spiritual experiences, and cultural attributes factor influenced tourist perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourism destination.

FINDINGS

Demographic Analysis

This item measuring the chosen research constructs were adopted from prior related research in the field of tourist that had been in Kuala Terengganu.

Table 1: Measurement Items

Measurements	Number of Items in the Questionnaire	Scales Used
Section A: Demographic Information	7	Adapt
Section B: Perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination (DV)	5	Adopt
Section C: Relationship between Brand Image and Perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination (IV ₁)	4	Adopt
Section D: Relationship between Spiritual Experience and Perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination (IV ₂)	4	Adopt
Section E: Relationship between Cultural Attribute and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination (IV ₃)	3	Adopt

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Scale

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	42
	Male	58
Age	18-23 years old	73.3
	21-25 years old	0.8
	24-29 years old	19.1
	30-35 years old	3.8
	36-40 years old	2.3
	41 years old and above	0.8
Race	Chinese	3.8
	Indian	2.3
	Malay	93.1
	Siamese	0.8
Level of Education	Diploma	13.7
	Degree	74.8
	Master	0.8
	SPM	9.2
	No Education	1.5
Occupation	Government Staff	2.3
	Private Sector Staff	10.7
	Self-employed	5.3
	Student	78.6
	Unemployed	3.1
Income	No Income	77.1
	RM1001-RM1500	4.6
	RM1501-RM2000	4.6
	RM2001-RM2500	2.3
	RM2501-RM3000	1.5
	RM3001 and above	3.8
Status	Single	92.4
	Married	7.6

Table 2 presents an overview of the responder profile. A total of 55 female respondents, compared to 76 male respondents, completed the survey. The age group from 18 to 23 years old had the highest percentage of respondents (73.3%), followed by the age group from 24 to 29 years old (19.1%), the age group from 30 to 35 years old (2.3%), and last but not least, the age groups from 21 to 25 years old and 41 years and over (0.8%).

There were 120 respondents who answered the questionnaires, including 122 Malay respondents, 3 Indian respondents, 5 Chinese respondents, and 1 Siamese respondent. Malay respondents made up the majority with 93.1%, followed by Chinese respondents with 5%, Indian respondents with 3%, and Siamese respondents with 0.8%.

The degree of education is next. Degrees account for the responder population's greatest level of education (74.8%). With 13.7%, Diploma comes in second. SPM comes in second with 9.2%, and No Education is third with 1.5%. Master comes in last but not least with 0.8%.

The occupation is next. Students made up the response group with the highest percentage (78.6%). The private sector workforce has the second-highest share with 10.7%. Self-employed people come in third with 5.3%, followed by the jobless with 3.1%. Government employees had the lowest number among the respondents (2.3%).

Then comes the respondents' income. With a percentage of 77.1%, those with no income have the highest percentage of income. The next greatest percentage, 4.6%, is found in the range of RM1001 to RM1500 and RM1501 to RM2000. The following percentage is 2.3% for RM2001 to RM2500. The lowest percentage of income, or 1.5%, is between RM2501 and RM3000.

The status of the respondents is not the least important. The percentage of respondents who are single is the largest (92.4%), followed by the percentage who are married (7.6%).

Descriptive Analysis

This study has analyzed the mean and standard deviation for section B, C, D, and E of the questionnaire

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Average of N	Average of Mean	Average of Standard Deviation
Perceptive of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination	130	1.7	0.864
Brand Image	128	1.61	0.801
Spiritual Experience	124	1.60	0.794
Cultural Attribute	128	1.7	0.810

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation analysis for the independent and dependent variables. The perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination is the dependent variable in this study, whereas brand image, spiritual experience, and cultural attributes are the independent variables. The component where respondents agreed more with each other, with a higher mean value of 1.7, was respondents' perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination and cultural attributes. The respondents in this survey agreed that Spiritual Experience had the lowest Mean Value for that measure, which is only 1.6. The data set that has more dispensing values has a Standard Deviation of more than 1 out of 120 respondents.

Reliability Test

A reliability test is used to assess a systems overall stability and performance over a particular period under various testing situations. The pilot test was conducted with 120 people via internet survey.

Table 4: Result of Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Strength of Association
Perception of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination	5	0.713	Good
Brand Image	5	0.773	Good
Spiritual Experience	4	0.441	Poor
Cultural Attribute	4	0.633	Moderate

Table 4 displays the independent and dependent variables' Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values. The table above shows that the majority of the variables were more than 0.6. As a result, the drawn conclusion can be trusted and used in this investigation. Five questions were used to gauge how persons who had visited Kuala Terengganu perceived it as an Islamic tourist destination; the Cronbach's Alpha result for this section question was 0.713, which is good. As a result, the coefficients calculated for these questions in assessing how persons who had visited Kuala Terengganu perceived it as an Islamic tourist destination were also trustworthy. Since variables exceeded the Cronbach's Alpha charge, it can be inferred that surveys are very reliable and that the study can move on.

Five questions were used to measure the Brand Image variable, which affected how people who had visited Kuala Terengganu perceived it as an Islamic tourist destination. The Cronbach's Alpha result for these questions was 0.773, which was favorable. The computed coefficients for the Brand Image variable questions were therefore accurate.

As a result of the four questions used to assess how Spiritual Experience affected people's perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination, the result was a poor 0.441, which is regarded as inadequate. The coefficient calculated for the Spiritual Experience variable was unreliable as a result.

Finally, four questions were used to evaluate the Cultural Attributes variable, which affected how people who had visited Kuala Terengganu perceived it as an Islamic tourist destination. The result was 0.633, which is regarded as moderate. The coefficient estimated for the Cultural Attributes variable was accurate as a consequence.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

One of the most important analyses that examined the linear relationship between the two variables was the Pearson Correlation Analysis. The goal of this study was to ascertain whether Kuala Terengganu's perception as an Islamic tourism destination and the independent variables of brand image, spiritual experience, and cultural characteristics were correlated in any way. If the relationship is significant, the researchers must determine what degree of connection strength is acceptable.

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There is relationship between Brand Image and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among people that had been in Kuala Terengganu.

Table 5: Correlation Coefficient for Brand Image and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among the people that had been in Kuala Terengganu

		IV ₁	DV
IV ₁	Pearson Correlation	1	0.926**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	131	131
DV	Pearson Correlation	0.926**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	131	131

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

Hypothesis 2

H₂: There is significant relationship between Spiritual Experience and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among people that had been in Kuala Terengganu

Table 6: Correlation Coefficient for Spiritual Experience and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among the people that had been in Kuala Terengganu

		IV ₂	DV
IV ₂	Pearson Correlation	1	0.376**
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	131	131
DV	Pearson Correlation	0.376**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	131	131

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

Hypothesis 3

H₃: There is significant relationship between Cultural Attributes and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among people that had been in Kuala Terengganu

Table 7: Correlation Coefficient for Cultural Attribute and Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic Tourism Destination among the people that had been in Kuala Terengganu

		IV ₃	DV
IV ₃	Pearson Correlation	1	0.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.126

	N	130	130
DV	Pearson Correlation	0.130	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.126	
	N	130	131

To ascertain the linear relationship between the two variables that were designated as the study's purpose, researchers employed correlation analysis. The correlation analysis's findings, which are presented in Table 8, demonstrate a substantial correlation between brand image, spiritual experience, and cultural attributes. Additionally, among those who have visited Kuala Terengganu, there is a significant correlation between Brand Image, Spiritual Experience, and Cultural Attributes.

Discussion & Recommendation

The study examined the connections between Kuala Terengganu's brand image, spiritual experience, cultural characteristics, and perception of it as an Islamic tourist destination. This study's goal is to ascertain the relationship between brand image, spiritual experience, cultural characteristics, and visitors' perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination.

This study only takes into account the three factors—brand image, spiritual experience, and cultural attributes—that affect how people who have visited Kuala Terengganu see it as an Islamic tourist destination. However, it's possible that this study is ignoring other significant factors that have an impact on how visitors to Kuala Terengganu perceive it as an Islamic tourist destination. As a result, future researchers might suggest adding more variables.

The target population of this study may be determined using the 120 samples that were used. Higher sample sizes might be used to analyze millions of Malaysians if the amount is sufficiently dependable. Consequently, future researchers should increase their sample size in order to enhance the validity and reliability of their studies.

Future studies should be conducted to stay current on factors that could affect how Kuala Terengganu is perceived as an Islamic tourist destination with a distinctive brand, spiritual experience, and cultural characteristics. It is possible to evaluate the elements that affect people's perceptions of Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination, which could help company owners employ more effective marketing strategies. In the future, academics might develop a special framework for assessing how people who have visited Kuala Terengganu with the tourism business perceive the region as an Islamic tourist destination. Regional surveys must be done to determine how positively people perceive Kuala Terengganu as an Islamic tourist destination because people's perceptions are diverse.

Instead of asking respondents to fill out a scaled online survey questionnaire, an interview method is used to create open-ended questions for them. Interviews may yield a high response rate for researchers, allowing them to immediately explore any uncertainties or partial answers. Thus, these strategies will do away with misinterpretation and greatly enhance research outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to investigate how visitors to Kuala Terengganu saw it as an Islamic tourism destination. Brand image, spiritual experience, and cultural characteristics are the

influencing factors (independent variables), and Islamic tourist destinations among domestic and international visitors to Kuala Terengganu are the dependent variables. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the researcher employed a Google Form with 131 respondents who travelled to and visited Kuala Terengganu to receive the questionnaire's responses. Additionally, the researcher only uses quantitative techniques to gather data and information. Additionally, the researcher reached respondents across Malaysia by using Google Forms as a platform. This is so that respondents can more easily complete all of the surveys by utilizing this Google form. Additionally, it can enable researchers to cut expenses and time.

The outcomes of the questionnaire survey were examined using a variety of techniques, including frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis. The results from the preceding chapter as well as all of the data from the questionnaire were then examined using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software application. The researchers choose this program because it makes it easy to access all the findings. Finally, depending on the data analysis, a summary and recommendation. For this investigation, all of the stated hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4) are accepted. Additionally, there are certain restrictions and suggestions that could be used to future research in this study.

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