



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**Social Media as a Promotional Tool Towards Tourist Behaviour in
Sarawak Tourism Campaign**

Nurul Amalina Binti Hamnan

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Social Media as a Promotional Tool Towards Tourist Behaviour in Sarawak Tourism Campaign

Nurul Amalina Binti Hamnan

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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Signature

Name: Nurul Amalina Binti Hamnan

Matric No.: 18020188

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Date:

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ABSTRACT

There is no denying that the world is transitioning from traditional media to new media. The increased use of social media suggests a potentially powerful new advertising platform. A new method of advertising has emerged along with the new era of communication. Social media use has increased significantly globally over the years, as predicted, to keep up with the changes and be relevant in various industries. Social media is used by almost everyone globally including both young people and older people. The purpose of this study is to examine how Sarawak tourism campaigns uses social media platforms to influence tourist's behaviour. A combination of questionnaires and interviews with selected respondents are employed as mix methods for data collection. Based on the findings, social media is considered as an important promotional tool that acts as a dynamic platform connecting tourists with destinations, experiences, and businesses in Sarawak. The outcomes of this study provide valuable insights for tourism agencies who aim to make use of social media's promotional potential in the tourism campaigns.

Keywords: Social media, tourism industry, tourist behaviour, social media campaigns.

Media Sosial Sebagai Alat Promosi Terhadap Gelagat Pelancong Dalam Kempen Pelancongan Sarawak

ABSTRAK

Tidak dapat dinafikan bahawa dunia sedang beralih daripada media tradisional kepada media baharu. Peningkatan penggunaan media sosial sebagai platform pengiklanan baharu yang sangat berpotensi. Kaedah pengiklanan baharu telah muncul seiring dengan era komunikasi baharu. Penggunaan media sosial telah meningkat dengan ketara secara global sejak beberapa tahun, seperti yang diramalkan, perubahan tersebut menjadi semakin relevan dalam pelbagai industri. Media sosial digunakan oleh hampir semua orang di dunia, termasuk orang muda mahupun yang tua. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana kempen pelancongan Sarawak menggunakan platform media sosial untuk mempengaruhi tingkah laku pelancong. Kombinasi di antara soal selidik dan temubual dengan responden yang terpilih digunakan sebagai kaedah campuran untuk pengumpulan data. Berdasarkan dapatan, media sosial dianggap sebagai alat promosi penting yang bertindak sebagai platform dinamik yang menghubungkan pelancong dengan destinasi, pengalaman, dan perniagaan di Sarawak. Hasil kajian ini memberikan pandangan berharga untuk agensi pelancongan yang bertujuan untuk memanfaatkan potensi promosi media sosial dalam kempen pelancongan.

Kata kunci: *Media sosial, industri pelancongan, tingkah laku pelancong, kempen media sosial*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CANFF	Culture, Adventure, Nature, Food, Festival
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
e-WOM	Electronic Word-of-mouth
MCO	Movement Control Order
MTPB	Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board
SM	Social Media
SMI	Social Media Influencer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STB	Sarawak Tourism Board
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation of Malaysia
UCG	User-generated content
VM2020	Visit Malaysia 2020
WOM	Word-of-mouth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter will provide an overview of the impact of social media as a promotional tool in measuring the tourist behaviour towards Sarawak Tourism Campaigns. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the background of social media research, which is followed by a discussion of the issue of using media as a promotional tool. At the end of this chapter, the reader will be introduced to the research problem, research questions, research objectives, significant of research, key concepts, and definitions of terms used.

1.2 Background of Study

In recent years, among the most crucial social bridges for getting new experience for the consumer has been social media. Marketers are turning to social media to satisfy two equally urgent needs as businesses battle to recuperate lost sales in the event of the epidemic, provide short term outcomes with focused performance marketing strategies and develop creative digital experiences that gain long-term loyalty by adding fresh discovery, connection, and enjoyment to the consumer experience.

Social media trends change when social media platforms update their algorithms and introduce new features. Social media has a significant role in modern society. Using web-based online technologies, people can now discover and learn new information, exchange ideas, and connect with new people and organisations. It has also changed how people live today and made communication much easier.

Social media has played a significant role in modern society by allowing people to discover new information, exchange ideas, and connect individuals and organizations through web-based technologies. It will affect a person's behaviour, including what they buy, how they spend their money, and the places they visit. Social media has allowed people all over the world to express themselves and interact with one another by exchanging ideas, opinions, and thoughts.

Furthermore, technology enables individuals to build bonds with strangers, one that has been done for thousands of years. Through direct or indirect effects, recent advancements in communication technology have had an impact on the economic performance of those emerging countries. Even though consumers have moved back to the centre of the corporate world due to web-based social networking, business sees great prospects and is keen to profit in on the trend.

A remarkable achievement in social media is the impressive user base of platforms like Facebook, which boast over 1.3 billion active users, representing more than half of the world's population. Twitter, a scaled-down blogging platform, sees an average of 225 million users publishing 500 million tweets per day. You tube attracts over 1 billion users monthly, who collectively watch more than 6 billion hours of video. Additionally, there are estimated to be over 181 million blogs worldwide (Manyika et al., 2016).

Today, social media plays a crucial role in how customers interact and make decisions. The leadership process related to social media marketing is closely tied to consumer behaviour and influenced by the availability and clarity of information. Each social media platform contributes to the global dissemination, an acceptance, and exchange of knowledge from both internal and external sources. According to research by Gupta

(2020), a person's engagement and prior knowledge influences the person's behaviour which customers are most likely to exhibit when making decisions.

Technological advancements had a significant impact on the tourism industry, with social media playing a vital role in decision-making and data research to determine customer preferences. During the initial phase of holiday planning, tourists often focus their attention on social media for decision-making, including the journal appraisal of social media potential for information, knowledge exchange, and cooperation. Additionally, information posted by users on social networking sites aids travellers in making these decisions. To better understand consumer preferences, the tourism sections need to analyse comments and viewpoints on online forums such as TripAdvisor.

Travel review sites like TripAdvisor have become reliable sources of tourism information on social media, with over 150 million travel reviews and opinions submitted by more than 260 million users worldwide each month, seeking advice for their travel plans from approximately 4 million businesses. The substantial utilization rate highlights the significant impact of social media on trip planning (Bay, 2018).

1.3 Problem Statement

The use of social media in the Sarawak tourism industry utilizes social media as a promotional tool, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While it is essential to identify the specific social media tools employed in Sarawak tourism campaigns and analyse the multifaceted factors influencing tourist behaviour, there is a critical need to develop a

structured framework that delineates the relationship between the impact of social media and tourist behaviour.

This research seeks to address these gaps by identifying the social media tools used in Sarawak tourism campaigns, analysing the factors influencing tourist behaviour, and ultimately proposing a comprehensive framework that guides the effective use of social media in Sarawak tourism promotion efforts. It aims to enhance the overall tourist experience and contribute to the sustainable growth of the local tourism industry. The effect of social media as promotional platforms on tourism behaviour is a promotional method that the Sarawak tourism board should utilize to achieve its goal of promoting the Sarawak to the rest of the world.

The accessibility of consumers has increased, as have their media-related responsibilities. Consumer participation leads to the creation of user-generated content that relies on the latest advertising data. Participation from consumers leads to user-generated content that uses latest and current advertising data (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2022). A new scene with a new framework for personal connections has been developed because of the rise of social media. As Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Sarawak said, Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah “We require a strong digitalization strategy to maintain our resilience as we align with the Sarawak government's digital economy agenda. The utilization of Big Data collected from our digital platforms enables us to analyze traveller behaviour and trends thereby contributing to the enhancement of our service delivery.” (Digital Initiatives, 2022)

The problem statement acknowledges the growing role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and explores how it specifically impacts the tourism industry. By

investigating how social media promotion affects tourist behaviour and decision-making processes, researchers and practitioners can better understand the potential benefits and challenges of using social media to promote tourist destinations and attractions. This, in turn, can inform more effective marketing and promotional strategies for tourism businesses and organizations.

1.4 Research Questions

There are three main research questions that are used in this study as follow:

- i. What are social media tools used in promoting the Sarawak tourism campaigns?
- ii. What are the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting a tourist destination?
- iii. How can social media be used as a tool to promote Sarawak Tourism Campaigns more effectively towards tourist behaviour?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

In the process of this research, several objectives should be considered as research guidance. The purpose of the objectives is to determine the direction of the study. Among the objectives identified are as stated below:

- i. To identify social media tools used in the Sarawak tourism campaigns.
- ii. To analyse the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting tourist destinations.

- iii. To propose a framework on the relationship between social media impact towards tourist behaviour when promoting Sarawak Tourism Campaigns.

1.6 Significant of the Study

The findings of this study will be useful to tourists and serve as an eye-opener to audiences, particularly in the tourism industry. The information gained from this discovery and knowledge will provide locals and government representatives with a roadmap for enhancing and advancing Sarawak's digital economy. By utilizing the promotional tool, the Visit Sarawak Campaign, which was last promoted in 2019, will gain a fresh perspective for a better future. Additionally, this study will benefit researchers or relevant parties for the upcoming Visit Sarawak campaign with the slogan "More to Discover." Thus, promoting Sarawak can boost national development and spread Sarawak appeal not only throughout Malaysia but also globally.

1.7 Definition of Term/key Constructs/concepts

This study contains key concepts and construct that are related to the main topics of research. Although these constructs are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, they are briefly introduced in this early Chapter of the thesis to allow the reader to make sense of what is presented in the subsequent Chapters.

1.7.1 Tourism

The term "tourism" refers to the actions of tourists, or people who visit and stay in other countries for up to a year for various reasons, such as business, pleasure, or religious purposes.

- a. International: i. inbound, ii. Outbound: may include overnight stay(s) in country of residence
- b. Domestic (in country of residence).

In tourism industry, its establishments providing services and goods to visitors, including:

- c. Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, etc)
- d. Transport
- e. Tour Operators and Travel Agents, Attractions
- f. Additional economic sectors that cater to tourists (some of these may also offer a sizable volume of services and commodities to non-visitors, and the percentage of revenue vary. The number of visitors is crucial when assessing tourism revenue (Theobald & Theobald, 2012).

1.7.2 Social Media

Social media use, or Web 2.0 as it is more popularly known, is fundamentally changing how tourists and travellers find, read, and trust information about travel attractions and companies. Users can participate in all organizational operations with the use of Web 2.0 applications, including social networks, multiplayer online social games, and group trip planning tools (e.g., marketing, new service development). Travel experiences are consequently co-produced, co-designed, co-marketed, and co-consumed by visitors. Using social media, travellers co-produce and share two types of knowledge: user-generated content (UGC) and/or social intelligence. The latter is beneficial and has a big impact on

how travellers behave and make decisions, but it can also be used to share information and boost operations' efficiency (Sigala et al., 2012).

1.7.3 Tourist Behaviour

It is also useful to connect and distinguish the material from the broader yet clearly distinct literature addressing consumer behaviour by using the term "tourist behaviour." "Consumer" is another word that commonly appears in literature that is relevant to this volume. It describes those who are involved in the purchase and use of goods in both the public and private sectors. There are many parallels between consumer and tourist behaviour, and universities frequently offer specialized courses on this topic. Unfortunately, the word "consumer" carries certain negative connotations. Studies on consumer behaviour and the term "consumption" in general have often disregarded ethical business practices, deep community relationships, and socially responsible activities. Mainstream consumer behaviour research tends to pay little attention to sustainability issues (Pearce, 2005).

1.8 Thesis Organization Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the importance of recognizing the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in tourism to provide a better explanation for the study's problem statement. Furthermore, the research objectives and research questions are formulated to address the main issue of the study's topic. Achieving these research objectives is essential to establish the relevance of this study.

Chapter 2 focuses on reviewing relevant literature related to the research topic. Commonly referred to as the literature review chapter, it plays a crucial role in establishing

the context, theoretical framework, and gaps in existing knowledge that the research aims to address. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, explaining how the researcher conducted the study and gathered data. This chapter is critical because it details how the research questions and objectives were addressed.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the findings from Chapter 3. This chapter is often referred to as the results chapter, and its primary purpose is to present the data findings that emerged from the data analysis. It displays the research outcomes in an organized and coherent manner, often utilizing tables, figures, charts, graphs, and other visual aids to effectively present the data.

The final chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Frequently referred to as the Discussion and Conclusion chapter, its primary goal is to give readers a deeper understanding of the findings reported in chapter four by placing them within the context of the larger body of research and offering insights and inferences.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Over the past few years, several scholars have asserted that social media is changing how travellers act and select their destinations due to the development of Web 2.0 and the subsequent rise in social media use (Liu et al., 2020). Despite the enormous popularity of social media, limited research has been conducted on how various influencing factors, including social media indicators, affect tourists' behaviour. Researchers can build upon or expand upon earlier work in this chapter to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and address existing knowledge gaps. This chapter provides a broad range of theories and literary sources that support the research topic.

Social media has undergone a transformative evolution, progressing from early online forums and bulletin boards to the emergence of pioneering platforms like Friendster, Myspace, and Facebook, which redefined social networking by emphasizing real identities and user profiles. Subsequent innovations, such as Twitter's microblogging's, Instagram's focus on visual content, and Snapchat ephemeral messaging, catered to changing user preferences and communication styles (Grover et al., 2022).

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, transforming the way people communicate, share information, and engage with one another. This literature reviews aims to explore the evolution of social media, highlighting key advancements, trends, and their impacts on individuals and society (Damota, 2019). The emergence of social media discusses the early platforms, such as Friendster and Myspace, which laid the foundation for subsequent developments. Researchers analysed the technological and

cultural factors that facilitated their growth and popularity, as well as the initial motivations for individuals to engage in online social networking (Edosomwan, 2011). Furthermore, the expansion and popularization focused on the widespread adoption of social media platforms like Facebooks, Twitter and Instagram. Studies explore the factors contributing to their rapid growth, such as improved usability, mobile access, and the rise of smartphones.

The literature also examines the role of user-generated content, viral marketing, and network effects in shaping the popularity and influence of these platforms (Grover et al., 2022). As social media matured, new platforms emerged to cater to different needs and demographics. Scholars investigate the rise of specialized platforms such as LinkedIn for professional networking, Pinterest for visual content sharing, and snapchat for ephemeral messaging, (Gretzel, 2018). The first known instance of social media was a handwritten series of electronic dots and dashes sent via telegraph on May 24, 1844 (Cialdini, 1987). The development of social media has been fuelled by both human desire for communication and advancements in digital technology. Social media virtual spaces have replaced direct electronic information sharing. With more than 5 billion people using mobile devices worldwide, social media is now home to a wide range of companies competing for their attention. Facebook was founded by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. It currently has about 1.7 billion users, including 69% of American adults. 22% of Americans used Twitter in 2020. As a platform for microblogging, Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and others founded Twitter in 2006. Stanford alumnus Kevin Systrom founded the photo-sharing website Instagram in 2010, and Facebook purchased it in 2012 (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Email, message boards, and live online chatting were among the first forms of digital communication. In 2001, Friendster was the most widely used social network among digital

users, attracting millions of users and offering basic networking and email address registration capabilities. In 2002, a networking platform tailored to career-minded professionals, LinkedIn was created. As of 2020, LinkedIn boasts over 675 million users worldwide, serving both job seekers and HR professionals as a valuable social media channel (Boyd & Ellison, 2010)

The emergence of social media networking sites in the early 2000s led to a significant surge in the popularity of social media. These platforms revolutionized interactions between people and organizations sharing common interest in friendship, music, education, and film. Notable sites such as LunarStorm, Six Degrees, Cyworld, Ryze, and Wikipedia were launched during this time (Edosomwan, 2011).

Social media's targeted advertising and influencer partnerships have enabled reaching a broad audience, while algorithms suggest tailored travel options. Additionally, it serves as a feedback loop, allowing destinations to improve based on user reviews. In summary, the promotional power of social media lies in its ability to inspire, inform, and engage travellers, revolutionizing how tourism is marketed and experienced (Kayumovich, 2019). Thus, the evolution of social media plays a very important role in boosting tourism by raising awareness of travel destinations through user-generated content and captivating visuals. In addition, with the emergence of digital technology especially social media, most people can now share their real-time experiences, engage with destinations organizations, and receive personalized recommendations for tourism purposes.

2.2 Social Media as a Promotional Tool

Social media allows for two-way conversations with an entire market, a reality that would have been considered the innovative. Social media has a significant impact on the internet due to the enormous amount of information it provides. Social media is a 21st century term that encompasses a range of technologies and interactive platforms that leverage the social aspects of the internet for communication, interaction, and creative expression (Ostic, 2021).

According to (Dwivedi et al., 2021), social media, also referred to as consumer-generated media, has significantly impacted customer communication and transformed the tools and techniques for communication. Social media has greatly enhanced marketers' ability to connect with consumers, and they have swiftly adapted. With the rise of social media, marketing professionals now have unprecedented access to crucial, actionable data regarding consumer demographics, purchasing patterns, and more (Handerson, 2020).

Cohen (2013) outlines three primary characteristics and elements of social media. First, social media encompasses online tools, apps, platforms, and media centered on information technology for social interaction. Second, social media serves as peer-to-peer communication channels that enable user to create, collaborate, and exchange content on the interactive web, leading to substantial and widespread changes in how business, communities, and individuals communicate. Finally, social media users connect with one another across platforms to form a virtual community that influences people's behaviour in real life.

Social media is often regarded as a set of tools or means of communication that enable individuals to transmit, connect with others, and exert influence. Examples of social

media include long-distance interpersonal contact sites, shopper review platforms, content-sharing communities, wikis, online forums of web-based media. By combining data and communication technologies, social media has emerged as the primary more through which humans connect socially. It represents a complete online ecosystem driven by user contributions and interactions, rather than just another communication medium. Consequently, people from all corners of the globe are drawn to this phenomenon (Pietro et al., 2021). Figure 2.1 illustrates the research framework developed by Ramayah and Hua (2017).

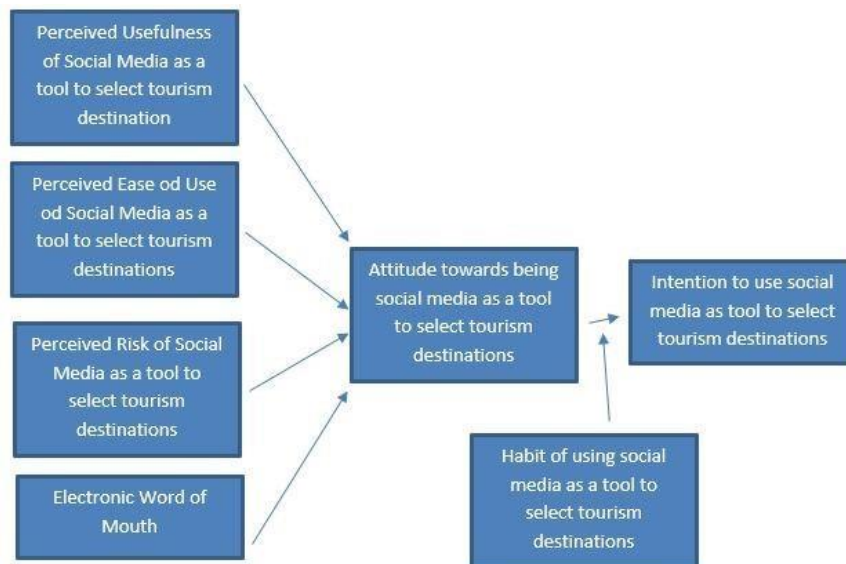


Figure 2.1: Social Media as a tool to assist in the selection of Tourism Destination: The Case study of Malaysia (source: Ramayah & Hua, 2017)

According to Ramayah and Hua (2017), tourists view on using social media as a tool to select travel destinations are influenced by several factors, including the perceived usefulness of social media, perceived ease of use, perceived risk associated with using social media, and electronic word of mouth. Their research findings suggest that incorporating online media into the marketing process enables travellers to access relevant and essential information. Furthermore, positive tourist attitudes can be shaped by receiving favorable

feedback on convenience. Customers are more likely to revisit social media platforms that consistently provide helpful and valuable content.

Their study discovered that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) communication plays a pivotal role in shaping both perceptions of convenience and attitudes towards the use of web-based media as a powerful tool for determining travel destinations. Additionally, they found that public relations efforts in web-based media strongly predict consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions. Consequently, users' intentions to utilize social media as a tool for selecting tourism destinations can be discerned. However, the central theme of the framework lies in the practice of choosing tourism destinations through social media. The framework by Ramayah and Hua (2017) serves as a guideline for empirical data collection in this study. In 2015, Fotis stated that people use social media to communicate and share their thoughts ideas, and opinions with others.

The interaction between electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) communication, as highlighted in Ramayah and Hua's (2017) study, and (Fotis, 2015) perspective on social media as a platform for communication and sharing thoughts provides a compelling argument for the influential role of online interactions in shaping perceptions and behaviours related to travel destinations. The study by Ramayah and Hua emphasises the importance of e-WOM in affecting perceptions and attitudes prior to decision making for travel destinations. Fotis (2015) views supplement this by emphasising social media's transformative role in breaking down time and geographical barriers present in traditional communication. This shows how e-WOM through social media platforms can be a very significant tool of communication among the travellers.

The largest social networking platform in the world, Facebook, boast 2.4 billion users. Other social media platforms, such as YouTube and WhatsApp, each have more than one billion users. These staggering numbers highlight that there are 7.7 billion people on the earth, and 3.5 billion of us use the internet. This indicates that more than two-thirds of internet users and one-third of the world's population utilize social media platforms. Social media has significantly how we form relationships, access news information, and mobilize for political change (Ospina, 2018).

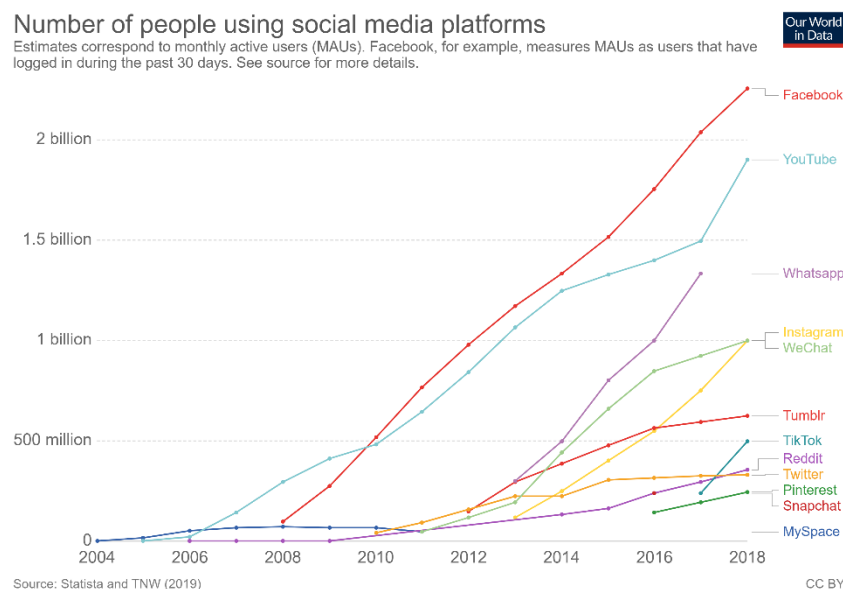


Figure 2.2: Number of people using social media platforms (Source: Our World in Data, 2019)

With 2.3 billion users, Figure 2.2 above illustrates that Facebook is currently the most widely recognized social networking platform. The following three platforms, each with over a billion followers, include YouTube, Instagram, and WeChat. Additionally, Tumblr and TikTok are both platforms with over 500 million members (Ospina, 2018). Based on previous literature on the use of social media as promotional tools, the dominance of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and WeChat with their massive user bases is evident in

Figure 2.2. Furthermore, the annual rankings in the bar graph below, as analysed by Ospina in 2018, provide valuable insight into the dynamic landscape of social media platforms over the years.

2.3 Impact of Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Both academicians and marketers have a keen interest in the significant development of social media (SM). Research has explored the effects of social media marketing (SMM) on various variables, including consumer-based brand equity, purchase intentions, attitudes, and other factors. However, there is limited research that has investigated how SMM influences brand experience.

In a study conducted by (Beig and Khan, 2018), interaction and content sharing have been identified as two critical marketing practices used by businesses in online communities. According to Khadka and Marhajan (2017), the quality of information, system quality, and the quality of services offered through the platform are fundamental building blocks for success and more advanced strategies. As a result of these factors, users may transition from being frequent customers to loyal users.

According to (Chung & Austria, 2021), social media is a virtual network that empowers users to express their opinions, interact with others, and share content, all while maintaining control over the timing and dissemination of messages. The changes in communication settings brought about by social media represent a revolution that was taking place in the global communication industry at the time. It is crucial to underscore the highly interactive and interconnected nature of social media, which results in increased exposure. Based on (Chung & Austria, 2021), discussion of social media's revolutionary effect on international communication, virtual network dynamics have spread to a number of

industries in addition to changing how people engage with one another. Social media's effect on the tourism industry includes destination promotion. Social media platforms have become crucial in influencing opinions and spreading information, as (Chung & Austria, 2021), emphasises their highly dynamic and interconnected personality.

The promotion of destination offers is a standard technique in the tourism industry aimed at conveying a specific image to the target audience in relation to the added value of the destination. Although it may involve higher costs, tailoring the destination's promotional mix to meet international tourism criteria ensures effective destination positioning. Managing the essential components of the promotional mix is characterized by both the uniform provision and the general perception of the destination, as well as the complete opposite of a differentiated offer and the general perception of the destination (Šerić, 2019).

One may argue that social media has created a paradigm shift in destination promotion through changing communication settings. According to Šerić's criteria for international tourism, social media platforms offer tourism organisations a unique opportunity to not only reach a worldwide audience but also to precisely develop and distribute messages at the right time. Thus, social media's interconnectedness enhances destination positioning strategies' efficacy by providing a more sophisticated and focused strategy than traditional marketing strategies. In order to highlight how communication in the tourism industry is changing, this literature review will examine how social media dynamics and destination promotion intersect. The sections that follow will go into further detail about particular instances and empirical research.

Destination branding and social media strategy can be significant and powerful marketing and promotional tools for destination marketers. Today's tourism industry has

been profoundly influenced by the proliferation of social media platforms. Apart from serving as a valuable source of information, these technologies enable visitors to engage with each other and provide them with tailored and personalized offers. These actions can ultimately lead just increase in destination brand equity (Alizadeh & Isa, 2015). In this modern era, social media is a potent tool for promoting various aspects, including the travel and tourism industry. It is also considered one of the latest assets and social trends in the market. The next sections of this review of literature will look into particular instances and empirical research that discusses on the usefulness of utilising social media for destination promotion in the tourism industry. This review aims to offer a thorough grasp of the changing destination promotion landscape by investigating the complex interactions between social media and tourists' behaviour.

2.4 Tourism

Tourism is often portrayed as a type of gateway primarily focused on self-enjoyment, many of its forms and experiences appear to suggest otherwise on the surface (Franklin & Netlibrary, 2003). Tourists do exist, necessarily in the way we typically perceive them. In fact, we often overlook the fact that the terminology and frameworks employed by visitors to analysed their own and others activities can be both problematic and full of meaning. To establish meaningful engagement with tourists within the sociology of tourism we must acknowledge the cultural and interactional contact in which we interact with our target audiences (McCabe, 2005).

Tourism relies on people's willingness to explore destinations beyond their immediate surroundings, and the choices they make are not random. The stability and characteristics of nature, including a consistent climate with regular seasonal weather and healthy ecosystems, play a crucial role in mass recreational tourism. Purpose-built attractions

played a significant role in the transformation of beach resorts into popular tourist destinations during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Similar to agriculture, tourism is an economic sector that heavily depends on stable weather and environmental conditions (Behsudi, 2020).

Tourism is the activity of spending time away from home for leisure, pleasure, and enjoyment while utilizing commercial services. With its roots tracing back to Classical antiquity and its emergence dating to the 17th century in Western Europe, tourism is a product of modern social institutions. For example, pilgrimage has connections with various other activities, interest, and processes, giving rise to new markets, such as corporate, sports, and medical tourism (Westcott & Anderson, 2020).

Tourists are individuals who travel to and temporarily reside in places that are not typically part of their daily lives, either for leisure, work, or other purposes. Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt to changing customer desires and needs regularly, given its strong emphasis on customer satisfaction, safety, and enjoyment (Camilleri, 2017). This definition highlights the presence of four key element in the concepts of tourism.

Firstly, tourists, who are either consumers or individuals who travel to a different destination for specific purposes. The second category includes businesses, which supply goods or services to meet visitor demands within the tourism industry. The third category involves government entitles, such as those responsible for sustaining the economy through host income or revenue from incoming tourist. Finally, there are host, individuals directly engaged with the chosen destination while preserving the culture of the destination community.

According to Van (2012), tourists often have diverse motivations that drive their travel choices. Some tourist travels to ass excitement to their lives, while others embark on journeys to relax and discover themselves. These varying motivations influence a person's decision to travel and shape their desire to explore different destinations and experiences. For examples, those who perceive life as fleeting are inclined to engage in various activities and visit hard-to reach destinations, while others may travel to visit friends and family or simply for entertainment. The reason behind their trips contribute to the development of distinct tourist groups and types within the travel and tourism sector. As we examine the many aspects of tourism in this study, it becomes clear that the industry's complexities are not only historical and structural, but also intricately connected with the individual motivations that drive decisions to travel. Understanding this connection is essential for recognising the changing environment of tourism and its impact on both tourists and the destinations they visit.

The concepts of tourism are one that many people are familiar with, and at times, it is considered insignificant and unworthy of serious study. Travelling is an activity that individuals often engage in for leisure and relation during their time off work or in retirement. Undoubtedly, hundreds of millions of people embark on billions of tourism-related journeys each year, and many of these journey's results in enjoyment able experiences stories to share with friends and cherished memories (Robinson et al., 2020).

With the establishment of the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism on May 20, 1987, the Tourism Development Corporation of Malaysia (TDC) was transferred to this new ministry, becoming the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) under the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board Act 1992. It is widely recognized domestically and internationally as Tourism Malaysia (2021). Tourism Malaysia represents an organised effort to fully utilise

the potential of tourism as a significant driver of domestic and international economic and cultural development.

2.4.1 Malaysian Tourism

Tourism has undergone significant transformation in Malaysia throughout the years, emerging as a crucial contributor to the nation's economy. Its historical progression has been influenced by governmental policies and strategic milestone, resulting in a broadening of attractions that span from cultural heritage sites to pristine natural landscape (Mosbah, 2014). The tourism sector holds a pivotal position within Malaysia's economy, and the country's diverse population, encompassing Malays, Indians, Chinese, and various other ethnics groups, coexist harmoniously. Malaysia's commitment to pluralism is evident through the hosting of a wide array of vibrant festivals, showcasing how Malaysians thoroughly enjoy celebrating and socializing. As per Tourism Malaysia (2019), there are five distinct types of tourism in the country, cultural heritage tourism, adventure tourism, beach tourism and agricultural tourism.

COVID-19 was first discovered in China in December 2019 before spreading to other countries. The outbreak has had a significant impact on Malaysia's tourism sector, especially the airline and hotel industries. The Malaysian government is also working to ensure the long-term viability of the country's tourism industry. The COVID-19 outbreak has revealed a significant risk to the Visit Malaysia 2020 (VM2020) campaign, as 50% of visitors to Malaysia come from China and Singapore. Numerous tours have been cancelled due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in both countries, leading to significant decrease in the number of tourists visiting Malaysia. Since an increase in COVID-19 cases was expected, Malaysia's Prime Minister announced four phases of the Movement Control Order (MCO) to contain the virus entirely (Prime Minister's Office, 2020). Strong efforts to support

stakeholders are needed because the restrictions put in place during the MCO will further impact Malaysia's tourism industry (Foo et al., 2020). The vibrant tourism industry in Malaysia is closely linked to the unanticipated difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlights the potential vulnerability and agility of the nation's economy. Before the pandemic, Malaysia's tourism sector was booming and displayed through colorful festivals and a commitment to diversity and how well its diverse people lived together. The arrival of COVID-19, however, brought with it never-before-seen disruptions, especially to Malaysia's tourism landscape, which is heavily dependent on the airline and hotel sectors.

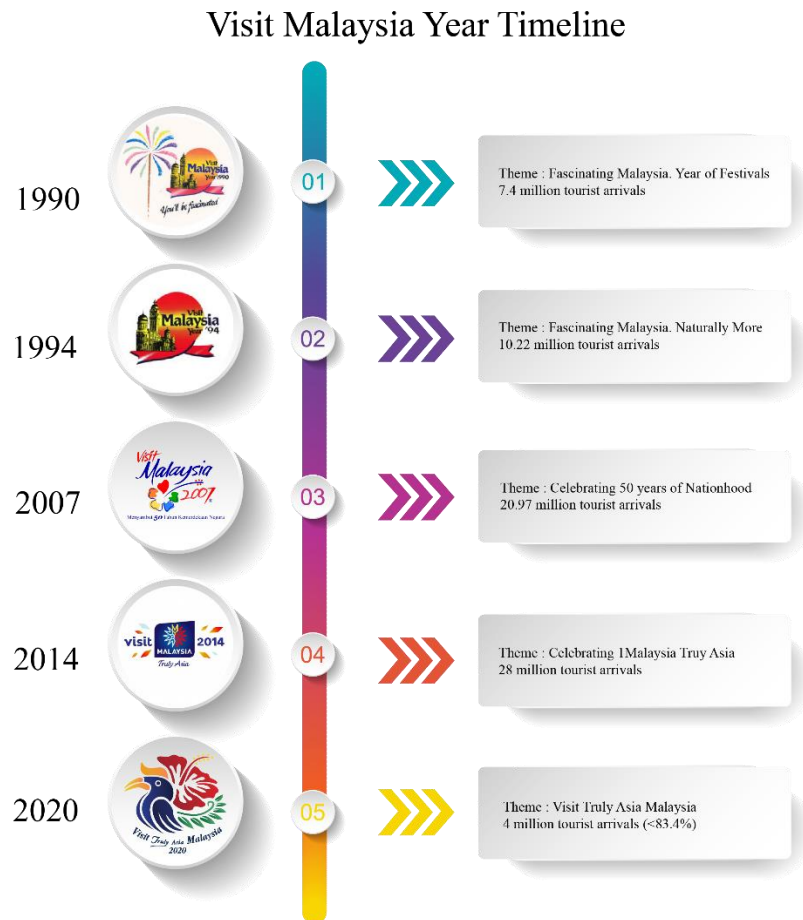


Figure 2.3: Visit Malaysia Year Timeline (Source: Tourism Malaysia Website)

Figure 2.3 above shows the timeline for Visit Malaysia Year which started from 1990 to 2020. Malaysia receives around 25 million tourists each year, primarily to the diversity of our country, which is a valuable gem with many facets. Tourists are drawn to our tranquil beauty as well as our thrilling activities. The "Visit Malaysia Year" is an annual event that highlights all of Malaysia's amazing attractions, solidifying the country's position as Asia's top tourist destination.

As we can see, the arrival of tourists for Visit Malaysia Year in 2020 decreased by 84%. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysia has closed its borders as of 18th March 2020 which has resulted in a significant decline in foreign visitor visits. Several states

in Malaysia have started their own initiatives to attract tourists to visit their own countries in response to the Visit Malaysia Year theme. Generally, all Malaysian states have also come out with their own themes and concepts to boost their tourism industry.

Sarawak tourism is one of the categories under which travel to other countries is subdivided in Malaysia. The impact of tourists coming to Malaysia has not only affected West Malaysia's tourism industry but also Sarawak. Despite being part of Malaysia, Sarawak has additional rules and regulations that all tourists must adhere to before entering. These specific regulations are outlined by the Sarawak State Government under the State Disaster Management Committee. Further elaboration on Sarawak Tourism is discussed in the next section.

2.4.2 Sarawak Tourism

Travel and tourism have always been among the most vital sectors for people. It is a labour-intensive industry that can significantly improve the standard of living for individuals and the communities it touches. From socioeconomic development perspective, it holds the potential to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality while also enriching communities and societies. According to (Behsudi, 2020) an expansion in the tourism industry can benefit not only the tourism sector but also agriculture and other service industries. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had a big impact on the global tourism industry, leading to a drastic decrease in the number of tourists.

Sarawak state, known as the "Land of Hornbills," was chosen as the study for this research since it is Malaysia's biggest state. Sarawak has a total land area of 124,450 square kilometres. This state is located on the island of Borneo, neighbouring nations like as

Indonesia and Brunei. In 2019, the state has a total population of 2.8 million people (Tourism Quick Facts 2020, Sarawak). The state has a youthful population, with 1.25 million people aged 15 to 9, and 46.4 percent of the population engaged in different areas. The population distribution of Sarawak is as follows 59.9 percent live in urban regions, while 40.1 percent live in rural areas. (Sarawak Economic Planning Unit, 2020).

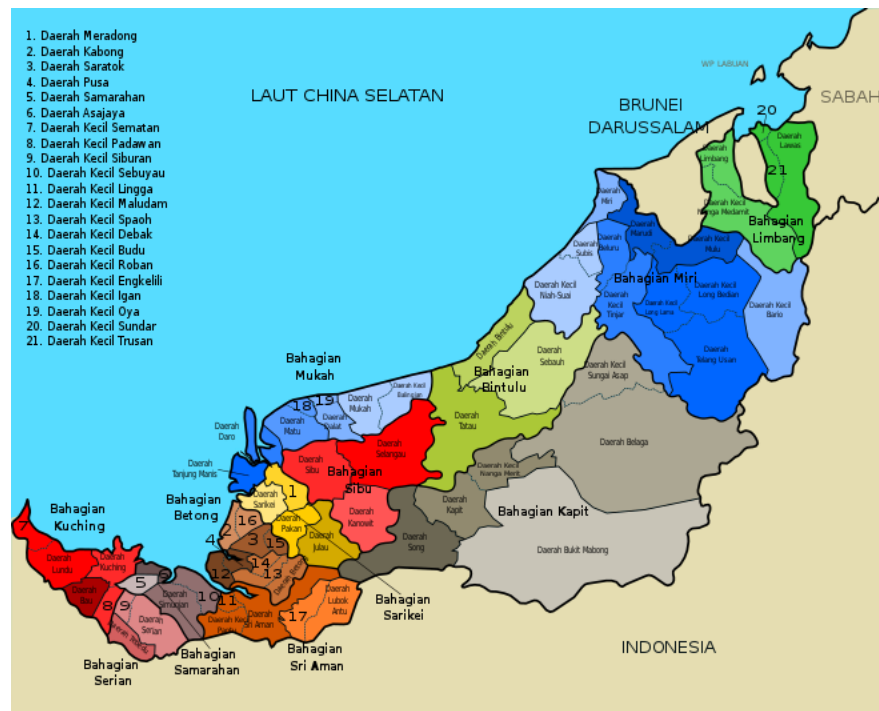


Figure 2.4: Maps of Sarawak (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Sarawak Tourism was established on November 12, 1994, under the Sarawak Tourism Board (Incorporation) Ordinance. The Sarawak Tourism Board was established with the goal of making Sarawak the world's preferred tourism destination. The motto for Visit Sarawak is 'More to Discover,' and travellers visiting Sarawak will find a wide variety of sits and activities. The Sarawak Tourism Board is currently working to improve its existing strategy and programs. According to the CEO of tourism board, 'having set a target of five million tourists for Sarawak, they are confident that the aggressive marketing and

promotional efforts in locals' markets and the ASEAN region will be effective (Tourism Board, 2019).

The goal of the Sarawak Tourism Board is to develop and market Sarawak as a travel destination. Instead of just ten activities, Sarawak offers hundreds, if not thousands.

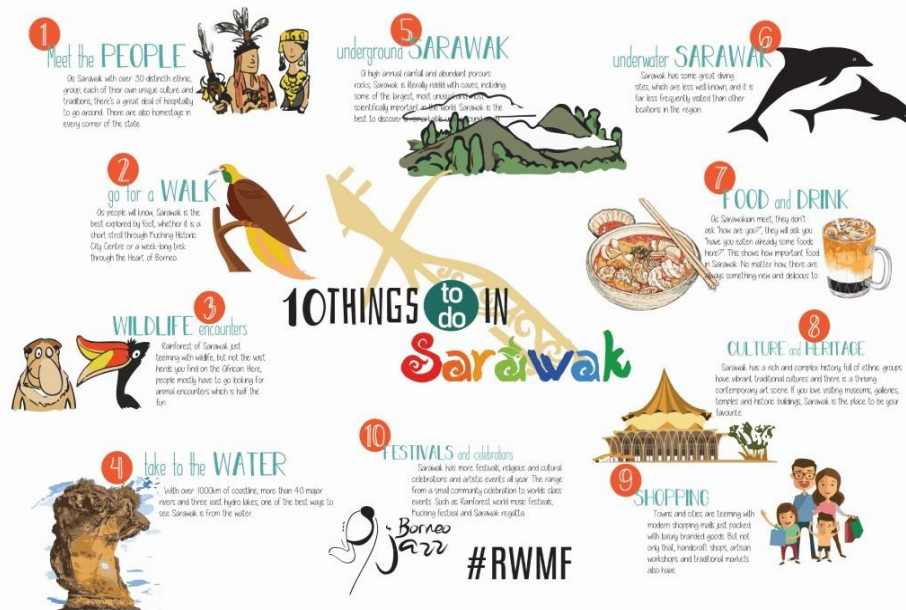


Figure 2.5: 10 Things to do in Sarawak (Source: Sarawak Tourism Board)

CANFF is one of Sarawak's constants as a tourist destination (culture, adventure, nature, food, and festivals). Together, these elements make Sarawak a special place that can help tour operators give their clients outstanding experiences.

2.4.3 Sarawak Tourism Campaign

In 2019, the campaign Visit Sarawak was launched. It is Visit Sarawak Year, with the campaign pushing "Sarawak More to Discover," a slogan emphasising the destination as a profusion of culture, adventure, nature, food, and festivals found nowhere else in the world. With the launch of the campaign, there has never been a better moment to visit this

magnificent and exotic location, which has 7 national parks, 14 natural reserves, 5 animal sanctuaries, hundreds of attractions and activities, and a rich history of culture and tradition (Tan, 2018).

By promoting Sarawak as the top tourist destination in Southeast Asia, the state aims to welcome five million visitors this year and earn an estimated RM8.79 billion in tourism revenue. Describing this campaign as the ‘mother of all tourism campaign’, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah emphasizes that the launch marked a significant development in the history of Sarawak’s tourism sector (Bong, 2019).

To boost the state's tourism efforts and activities in 2020, the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) introduced the "Sia Sitok Sarawak" Intra-State Tourism Campaign. The scheme will enable residents of Sarawak and people from other countries who have work permits to discover and enjoy the natural beauty that Sarawak has to offer at significant savings of up to 50%. “We are constantly cognizant of the COVID-19 scenario while we carry out this campaign.” As a result, we will prioritize destinations in cured regions and green zones, while guaranteeing tight SOPs and regular enforcement to ensure complete compliance from tour operators and industry stakeholders,” said STB Chief Executive Officer Pn Sharzade Datu Haji Salleh Askor (Bernama, 2020).

Visitor numbers decreased 74% from 4,662,419 in 2019 to 1,199,872 in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor arrivals decreased by 74% from 4 66 419 in 2019 to 1 199 872 in 2020. 2020 was a terrible year for the state's tourism industry, down 75% from 2019, to barely RM2.88 billion, with a projected loss of RM8.69 billion, according to Sarawak Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk

Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah. Nevertheless, he is hopeful that things will improve in 2019. (Bernama, 2020).

To promote Sarawak's culture, a variety of social media campaigns are used. Since 2018, Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube have been the three most popular social media platforms to promote Sarawak.

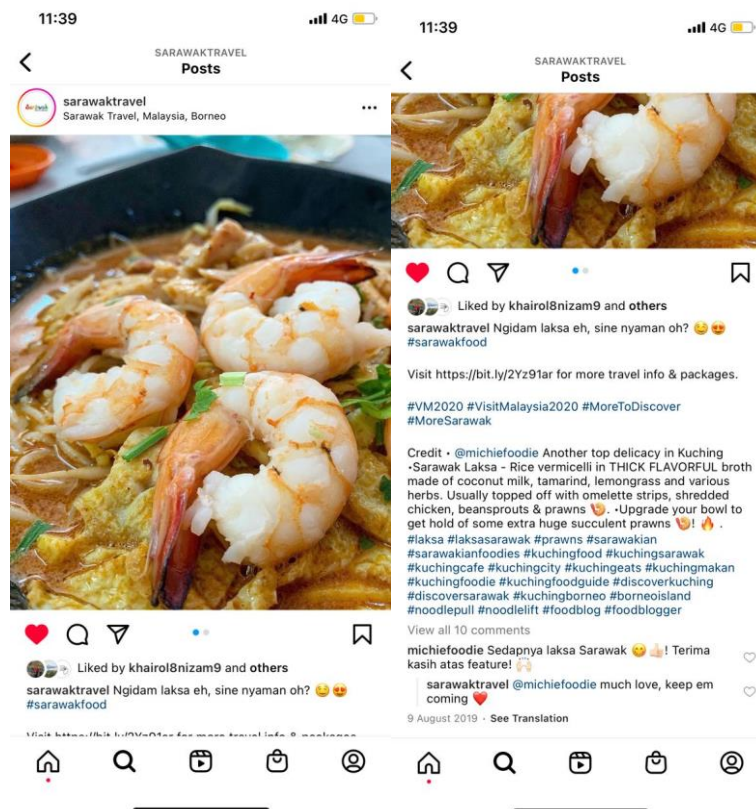


Figure 2.6: Promotion through Instagram (Source: sarawaktravel Instagram)

Figure 2.6 shows a promotion created on Instagram on August 9, 2019, with the caption "Ngidam laksa eh, sine nyaman oh?" #VN2020 #VisitMalaysia2020 #MoretoDiscover #MoreSarawak. Therefore, from this posting, we can conclude that this social media platform uses hashtags when posting.



Figure 2.7: Promotion “Visit Sarawak Campaign” through Facebook (Source: Sarawak Travel, Malaysia, Borneo Facebook)

Figure 2.7 shows that on November 7, 2018, the Sarawak Tourism Board revealed its Visit Sarawak Campaign 2019 in London as a sneak peek ahead of its official launch in January 2019. The Visit Sarawak Campaign will be launched at the Kuching Waterfront on December 29, 2018, the day after the next posting, which is for the New Year's Countdown for 2019. We can see from the posting that they used the hashtags #MoreSarawak #NewYearCountdown #Kuching #thisissarawak.

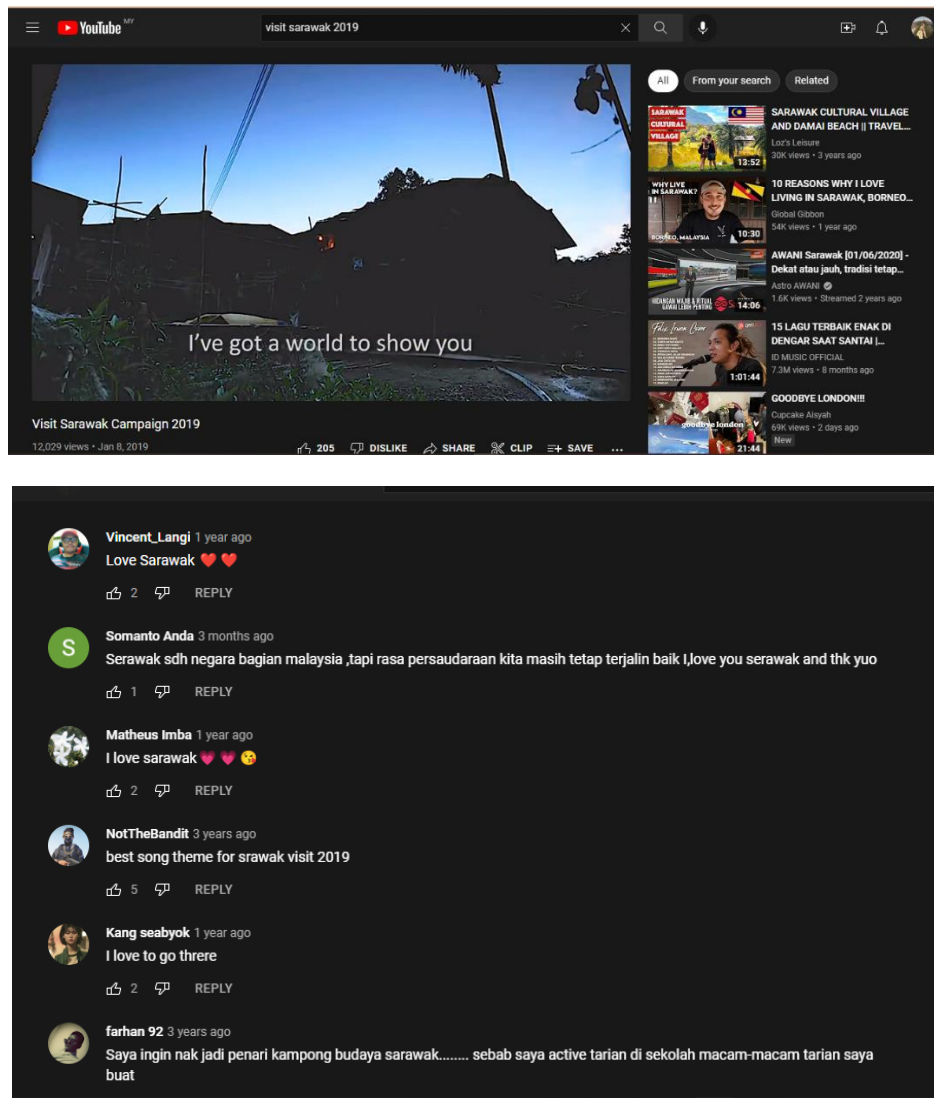


Figure 2.8: Promotion through YouTube (Source: Karuna Web Design Youtube Channel)

The official Visit Sarawak Campaign 2019 video was actively promoted on YouTube by the Sarawak Tourism Board. Figure 2.8 shows the YouTube promotion from 8 January 2019 to current. There are 12,029 viewers who have watched this video since it was posted under the title Visit Sarawak Campaign 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly decreased the number of visitors to Sarawak even though social media marketing campaigns were used to promote Visit Sarawak Year 2019.

2.4.4 Impact of Social Media on Tourism Industry

Social media marketing is the term used in a particular industry to describe how a business uses sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to achieve its marketing goals. The plan comprises and supports higher-level initiatives that provide business and consumer data for the formulation and adjustment of organisational strategy (Gohil, 2015). The main organisation in charge of promoting Sarawak tourism around the world is the Sarawak Tourism Board. The impact of social media is increasing web-based methods to make it more engaging for both attendees and potential engagement, as can be shown by looking at how Madhya Pradesh (one of a state in India) uses social media (Gohil, 2015).

Social media drastically changes how tourists discover and assess information about tourist attractions and destinations. Tourists may now easily post text-based updates, photos, and live videos from their trips on social media. Through word-of-mouth (WOM), tourists can focus on a range of tourism experiences, grow interested in them, and effectively interact with other tourists who serve as trustworthy information sources. According to (Arica et al., 2022) there is still lack of research in the cruise sector tourism. As a result, the researcher investigates the influences of social media-sourced travel information on customers purchases intentions, using WOM (WOM praise and WOM actions) as a moderating factor.

The growing impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on the tourism industry is gradually changing consumer behaviour in addition to the attractions and destinations that attract tourists. Trust is a key theme in influencer and tourism marketing since it is essential to the creation and maintenance of strong, lasting connections between companies and their customers. In research conducted by (Pop et al., 2021), The customer journey theory was utilized to explain how SMI trust influences customer travel decision-making. The main goal was to comprehend how customer journey constructs—such as desire, information search,

evaluating alternatives, purchase decisions, satisfaction, and experience—interact with SMI trust and the various customer journey dimensions.

2.5 Tourist Behaviour

Behaviour is any activity taken by an individual with the intention of changing the environment in which it exists or its own circumstances in connection to it. Behaviour can be divided into two levels: sensorimotor actions (combinations of perceptions and motions) and ideational internalizations, which are actions that transcend into the realm of mental operations and are found in human intelligence (Juvan et al., 2017).

Consumer behaviour in the context of purchasing, utilising, and discontinuing travel services is known as tourist behaviour. Tourist behaviour is a significant indication of the quality, effectiveness, and suitability of labour used in tourism and other activities. This is true whether the consumers are in tourism or other contexts of consuming. Both before and after their trip, when they get back home, tourists engage in certain behaviours. The tour operator of the location must be aware of the many types of behaviour at each stage to evaluate the relevance of its operational and marketing strategies to the development, promotion, and execution of tourism activities (Juvan et al., 2017).

Tourist behaviour refers to the context in which tourists purchase, use, and discontinue using tourist services. Services are more challenging to sell since they are seen as intangible. They are further complicated by the fact that they are frequently located outside of locations where consumer behaviour occurs. Tourist behaviour is the use of both common and uncommon goods and services outside of one's usual area. To have an objective, reliable, and practical understanding of tourist behaviour, one must be able to

identify the key characteristics that set it apart from other types of behaviour (Md Khairi, 2021).

According to Cohen (2013), there are nine key concepts that are related to tourist behaviour that are identified in these studies of tourists:

- i. Decision-making
- ii. Values
- iii. Motivation
- iv. Self-concept
- v. Expectations
- vi. Attitude
- vii. Perception
- viii. Satisfaction
- ix. Trust and loyalty

The most significant aspect and a key factor in persuading customers to purchase a product is how a consumer acts or behaves in response to changes in his environment, particularly when marketing a product or commodities. Prices, promotion, marketing strategies, and package modifications frequently have an impact on customer behaviour. No matter how satisfied they are, consumers will still buy and try the products. If the consumer is satisfied, they will repeat the act to buy the item every time they need it. One that

consumers say is when they themselves will decide for the purchase of the goods they need (Cohen, 2013).

According to (Alam et al., 2011) consumer activities are influenced by their observation and selection of market behaviours such as relationships with sellers, media and the influence of advertising, information and decision making. Human mentality in which an individual acts and behaves in deciding or plan of choice that is best for himself based on certain goals and strategies that have been set by them. Abdul Hamid (2003) have categorized thinking skills in decision making as critical thinking and they have defined it as making choice based on reasoned judgment. They give synonyms of decision making by judging, choosing, selecting. In addition, there are two categories in decision making. The first result is the programmed result. These are situations that occur often enough to allow decision-making rules to be built and applied for the future. Furthermore, it is designed to deal with persistent issues in an organisation. The second outcome is an unforeseen outcome. It has to do with responding to situations that are distinct or ambiguous and have an organisational continuum. Figure 2.8 shows conceptual framework for tourist behaviour by Cohen (2013).

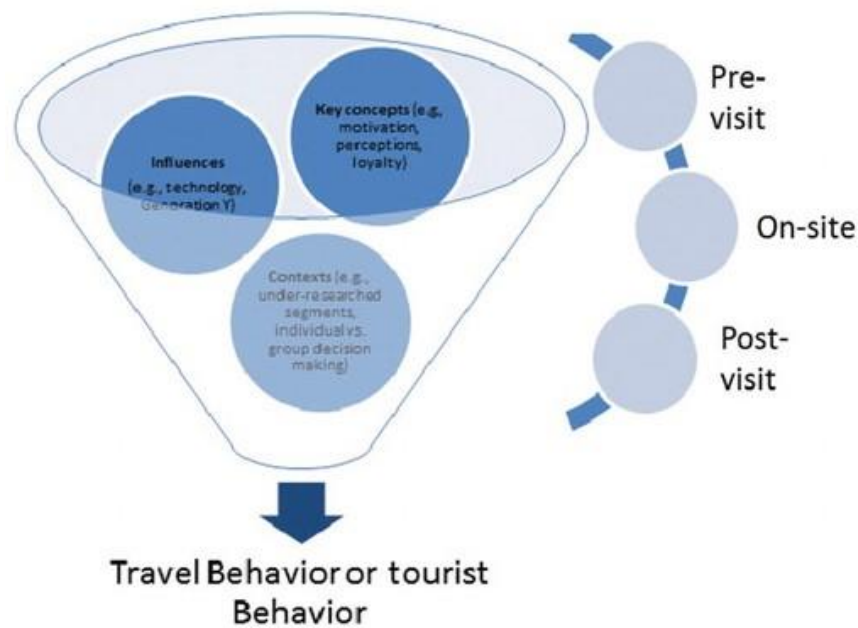


Figure 2.9: Conceptual model of link between concepts, influences and research contexts (Source : Cohen 2013)

Figure 2.9 shows the conceptual model by Cohen (2013) on the behaviour that can be seen in three stages which are before visiting, during visiting and after visiting. There are three factors that influence the tourist behaviour which are the concepts, influence, and contexts. Cohen (2013) also stated that decision making, values, motivations, self-concept and personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, and trust and loyalty are the most important components in tourism customer-based research. Another study by Kaplanidou & Gibson (2010) found that specific decisions include one or more behavioural intentions based on the requirement to act in a particular way in highly specific settings. To predict travel behaviour, one must comprehend how an individual's special traits combine with the circumstances at hand as well as the positive and negative evaluation factors that affect travellers' travel decisions (Van Vuuren, 2012).

Researchers have discovered several elements that affect how tourists behave when travelling, including characteristics that influence the tourist's motivation to travel, attitude,

various situational variables, and environmental variables that affect the tourist's personal significance (Sirgy & Su, 2000). When a visitor seeks to fulfil a need or want, their motivations become apparent, and this will be viewed as a significant factor in relation to their travel decisions and, consequently, the outcome of satisfaction (Van & Slabbert, 2012). For them to have a direct influence on the decisions tourists make, it is crucial to understand and have sufficient knowledge of the motivations affecting tourist behaviour (Sirgy & Su, 2000). Tourist behaviour is considered very significant in this study as the conceptual model by Cohen, 2013 works as antecedents which include factors such as influences, key concepts and context of the traveller's behaviour. These antecedents are believed to influence or precede the decision to visit desired destinations especially Sarawak. In terms of travel behaviour, it is important to learn more about the travel destinations that are part of the decision-making process. Thus, tourism campaigns are one of the aspects that tourists usually look into before making a decision on a travel destination.

2.6 Tourism Campaigns

Tourism promotions are inevitable when it comes to promoting travel packages or getaway offers to a specific location or even an entire country. They are viewed unfavourably since it might be difficult to develop compelling and attention-grabbing advertisements. As a result, many categories frequently appear during the tourism promotion process. Most nations and cities have recognisable landmarks that may help people remember them. Rome and Paris, for instance, are well known as romantic destinations that may attract tourists to visit once in a lifetime (Mason, 2016).

On the other hand, Huang and Lin (2017) conducted research on the effects of travel slogans on public awareness, specifically at 10 important Asian cities, including China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Macau, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, and

Indonesia. In this study, a questionnaire is used to assess slogan awareness, destination recognition, and the effects of various variables. It concludes that it is evident that China and Hong Kong have the most memorable slogans to market their destinations, whereas Indonesia has the least memorable ones. In a similar manner, China and Taiwan ranked the highest in terms of slogan recall, whereas Thailand and Macau performed poorly.

In addition to tourism campaigns, it is indeed important to investigate other elements that influence visitors to a destination such as local culture, accessibility, accommodation options, and the overall safety and security of the area.

2.7 Visit Sarawak Campaign

Visit Sarawak Campaign was launched on 31 December 2018, along with the New Year celebration at Kuching Waterfront. The Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth, and Sports, Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, mentioned that they are already given a preview of this campaign in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and London to get people interested in it. This campaign will continue throughout the incoming year. Since it is the first tourism campaign in Sarawak, Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah was satisfied by the campaign success so far and hopes to achieve their target by the year end of 2019.

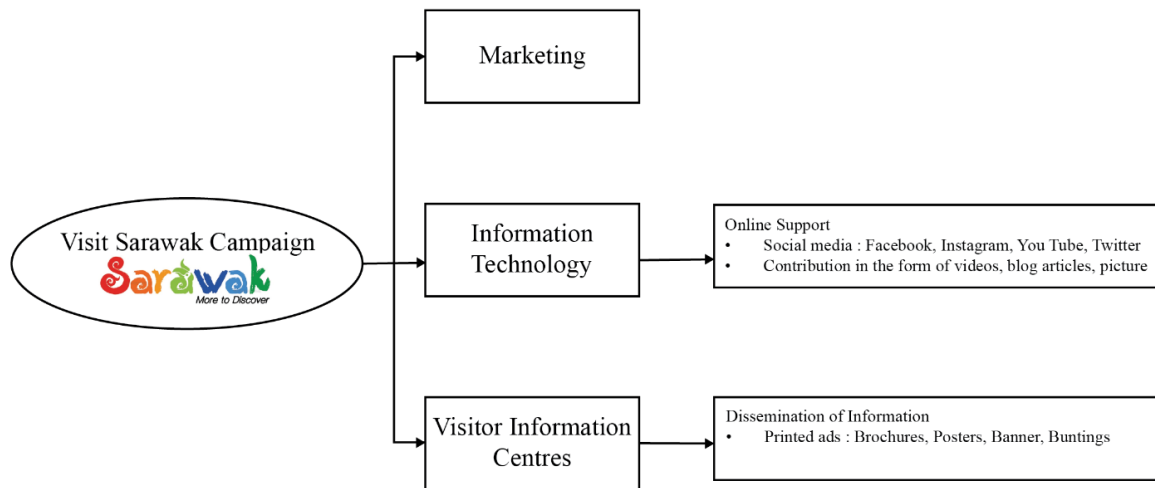


Figure 2.10: Simple illustration from Sarawak campaign 2019 (Source from STB website)

By referring to the Figure 2.10, it shows that Visit Sarawak Campaign used the social media tools to promote the campaign. As the campaign began in 2019, we can see that one of the strategies used to promote the campaign is information technology. It demonstrates that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter were used to promote Sarawak Tourism's campaign. Given that this is Sarawak's inaugural tourism campaign, they also use printed advertisement to disseminate information.

2.8 Tourist Attraction When Visiting a Place

According to Gany (2017), a destination attraction is a place that can encourage visitors to stay for some time and has appealing qualities. In other words, the destination's attractions need to have features that are appealing enough to draw tourists there. Nair (2013) on the other stated that a destination's attractiveness has drawn visitors to a tourism destination even when the location isn't always supposed to inspire them to travel there.

As a result, it can be said that an attraction's major draw depends on the degree of satisfaction and advantages received by visitors. The magnetism that pulls visitors to the location is its unique and distinctive attraction. Tourists are more inclined to visit places that have attractive natural features. Attraction has a closely related meaning when a motivated tourist decides to leave the residential area or original residence and travel to a desired destination. The situation can be considered to receive influence from the base of the attraction to reach a destination area.

Tourist destinations can be influenced by points of interest and frequently attract visitors who are connected to or interested in the cultural activities or shows. This also relates to a location that was created with the intention of provide entertainment options and a richness of historic value. Activities are a component of attractions to some extent. While visiting a tourist destination, they might engage in activities that are relevant to their interests. For example, rafting or diving to get a cooling off condition or the sunbathing by relaxing on the beach area in the sunshine.

Elements of tourist attraction can consist of several locations or areas such as natural location's natural locations or features or man-made structured areas which contains special attractions for tourists as well as locals. In most destinations, there are special attractions that play a role in motivating and the main actors of attraction for tourists to visit the destination of their choice. In fact, these components are an important element in the tourism system. Tourism today is also seen as an individual's leisure activity.

Tourists will also be attracted to the beauty or uniqueness of a place that is rich in artistic value. There are also activity-based attractions such as sports and challenging adventure activities. Tourists will get a valuable experience in addition to the holiday filled

with beneficial activities. Attractions are also often associated with the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists. According to (Fan et al., 2012), he has studied the factors that influence the perception and loyalty of tourists towards the harmonious environment in the cultural heritage of China. The results of the study showed that the perception of a harmonious natural ecosystem is influenced by three factors, namely the understanding of the environment, social relations system, and cultural ecosystem. In addition, the loyalty of tourists is determined based on their perception of a harmonious environment.

In 2002, Ang conducted a study to determine the factors that influence the foreign tourists when choosing Penang as their destination. The author also suggested that decision-making is influenced by travel preferences, pull factors, push factors, and the perception of a destination. In another research by Ang (2006), the author conducted a study to examine the impact of travel restrictions on Iran's tourism to popular tourist destinations. The results of the study indicate that the vacation location is influenced by the destination. Iran can attract tourists from other countries because to its strong currency and affordable travel costs. In addition, Ang (2006) research also focused on the satisfaction and fidelity of Chinese tourists to Korea. In 2018, Sangpikul conducted research on Iranian tourism, and the findings show that visitor satisfaction is crucial and significantly influences travellers' loyalty to a destination. Additionally, the level of satisfaction among visitors was influenced by every aspect of their journey. These include the beach's population, facilities, and tourist safety in addition to the island's attractions.

Based on the literature on tourist attractions, it has been discovered that visitors' loyalty to the places they have visited is influenced by a variety of factors, not limited to the attractions available to each destination. These factors encompass the overall quality of the visitor's experience, the level of customer service they receive, the cultural and historical

significance of the locations they form during their visit. Additionally, factors such as the range of amenities the uniqueness of the activities offered, and the perceived value for the cost also play a crucial role in shaping visitors' loyalty. This underscores the complex interplay of elements beyond mere attractions, emphasizing the holistic nature of fostering lasting connections between tourist and the destinations they explore.

Visitor loyalty in tourism is influenced by a myriad of factors, including overall experienced quality, customer service, cultural significance, accessibility, personal connections, amenities, unique activities, value for cost, and more. In summary, visitor loyalty is complex outcome influenced by multiple factors that together shape the overall visitor experience. Destinations excelling in these areas are more likely to foster lasting connections with tourist and enjoy the benefits of repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotions.

The research gap related to this study could involve a deeper and more focused investigation onto the factors influencing visitor loyalty in tourism, their interplay, measurement, long-term effects, and how they vary across different destinations and tourist segments. The literatures found in this research play very important role in determining the relationship between the topic of research and the expected outcome of his research. Thus, the next section discusses the research gap of this research.

2.9 Research Gap

There have been numerous researchers that are related to social media and the tourism industry across the globe. The increase numbers of social media users around the world have increased tremendously since the outbreak of Covid-19. However, there have

been declining numbers of tourists to visit Malaysia generally and Sarawak specifically. Figure 2.11 below shows the research gap between the social media and tourist behaviour research that has not been considered in the tourism campaigns. In this study, the significance of addressing the knowledge gap becomes apparent by considering two theoretical models, one from social media (Ramayah & Hua, 2017) and another one from the perspective of the tourist behaviour (Cohen, 2013).

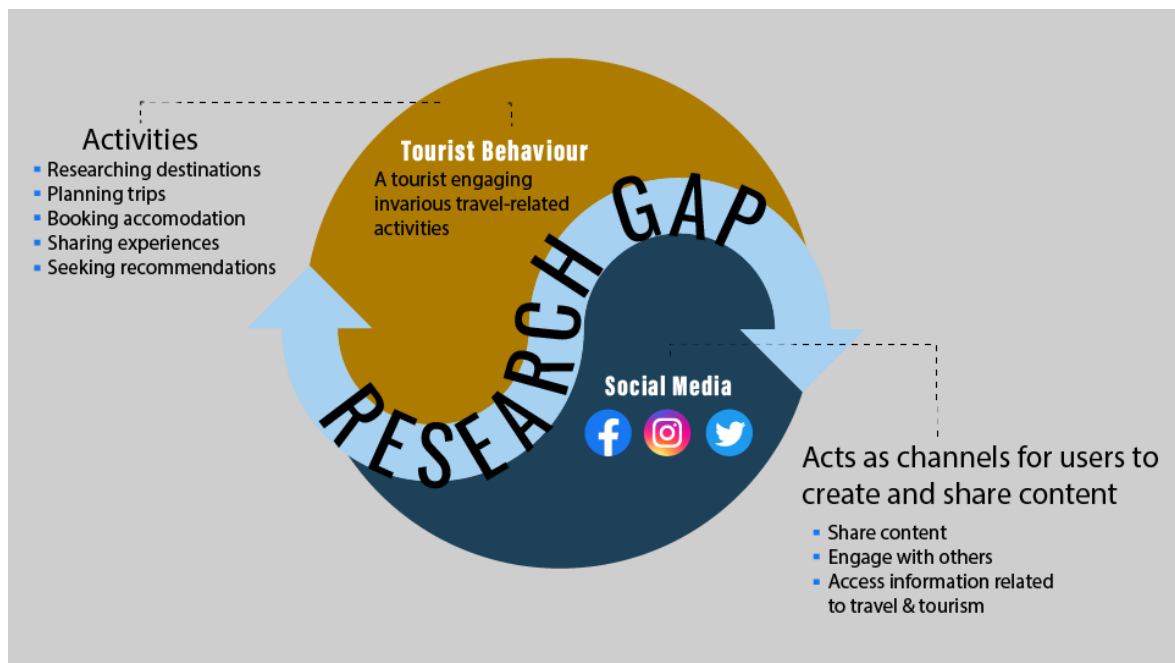


Figure 2.11: Research Gap between Social Media and Tourist Behaviour (Researcher's Illustration)

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, interact, and gather information. Its impact on various industries, including tourism, has been widely acknowledged. However, despite the growing importance of social media in shaping tourist behaviour, there is a noticeable research gap in our understanding of the complex relationship between the two. This literature review aims to identify and examine key studies that highlight the existing research gap and provide directions for future research in this field.

The importance of examining the veracity and dependability of information provided on social media platforms in the context of tourism has been highlighted by several studies. For instance, Gretzel (2018) discovered that travellers frequently doubt the veracity of information they find online, resulting in information overload and difficulty making decisions. Future studies should examine how visitors assess and interpret content they find on social media, considering elements like source legitimacy, user feedback, and recommendations.

The influence of the media on travel decisions has drawn the attention of researchers. Gretzel (2018) stated that traveller decisions are influenced by social media websites like Instagram and TripAdvisor. Additional research is required to properly understand how social media influence compares to other factors, such as traditional marketing channels and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Social media has the power to influence visitors' actions when travelling, yet little research has been done in this area. Social media platforms, according to (Liu et al., 2020), may have an impact on visitors' trip plans, destinations they choose to visit, and day-to-day activities. Future studies could use quantitative methods like data mining and sentiment analysis to study the connection between social media usage and travel behaviour patterns to fill the research vacuum.

Although more research is needed to determine its impact on satisfaction levels, social media encourages interaction and information exchange, which enhances the experiences of tourists. According to (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015) social media has an

impact on how tourists assess the quality of their experience and their expectations, which ultimately affects how satisfied they are.

In the social media age, privacy issues have become a major problem, yet it is still unknown how they affect traveller behaviour. Privacy has been highlighted as a key element influencing how tourists use social media and share information, according to (Fan et al., 2012). Future studies could dive into how visitors view privacy, examine the trade-offs between privacy issues and social media use, and investigate management techniques for privacy-related difficulties in the context of tourism.

This literature study has highlighted the research void that exists between social media and visitor behaviour. Further research is needed in the following areas: information trustworthiness, impact on travel behaviour, influence of destination choice, tourist satisfaction, online social influence, peer impacts, privacy concerns, and social media use.

2.10 Chapter Summary

Due to Web 2.0's development and recent increase in social media usage, a number of scholars have suggested that recent years have seen a change in social media's influence on traveller behaviour and destination choice. The goal of this study is to further understand this influence. Despite social media's immense popularity, research on the changing visitor behaviour which includes a thorough set of driving structures and social media indicators is limited. Additionally, there is some historical data gathered from past research.

This chapter also focus more on the subject matter based on previous publications and articles. To better grasp the issue or close any knowledge gaps, researchers can improve

or improvise on prior research in this chapter. This chapter provides several theories and literatures that supports the study. Tourism campaigns are inevitable when it comes to encouraging vacation to a certain location, or even an entire country. They are referred to be bad since it might be difficult to create eye-catching and compelling campaigns. Keeping this in mind, there are numerous categories that commonly appear during the tourist promotion process. There are other techniques to create a promotional tourist campaign that go beyond this wonderful montage. Apart from that, it is also important to look into the tourist behaviour framework and also the social media impact towards tourist which relates with the research methodology chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research's methodology used in this study. This research technique includes a research plan, important documents that served as the primary source of data, a research tool, criteria for information analysis, data collecting or procedure, and data analysis. Additionally, it describes how social media functions as a marketing tool to advertise Sarawak tourism. The empirical component of the investigation will be covered in the following chapter. This chapter discusses the importance of primary data collection that helps to contribute to the findings of this study. The research design of this study helps to determine the significant data that are related for this research since the data were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2 Research Design

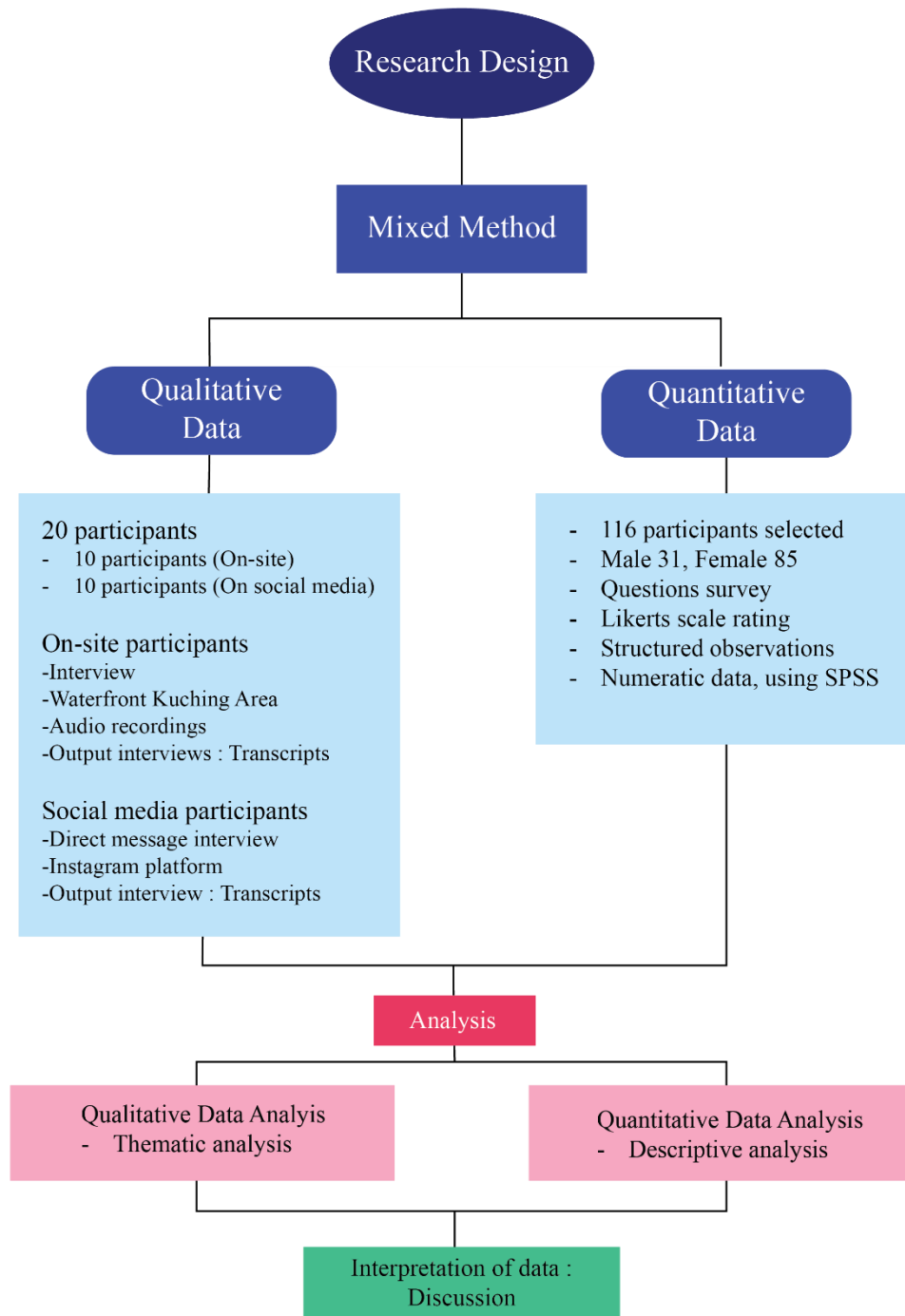


Figure 3.1: Research Design Selection (Illustrated by researcher)

Figure 3.1 is an illustrated version of the research design selection that is essential for this study. The objective of research design is clearly defining the objective of this study. For example, researcher wants to investigate the impact of social media on tourist behaviour, such as travel decision-making, destination choices, and travel experiences. The study demonstrates that the selection of the research design is influenced by a detailed examination of the problem statement, research questions, conceptual/theoretical framework, and review of the relevant studies. Statistical procedures can be thought of as filters, or methods for sifting through noise to find information. For all or even the majority of research questions, no one strategy is appropriate. The research design and data processing technique that is most appropriate for each study determines how well we comprehend the information in our data (Myers & Well, 2003). Research must be systematic and methodological in its approach and techniques as well as adhere to the necessary rules and criteria for reliability and validity.

This research adapts descriptive research design with the goal of accurately describing and portraying a certain event or topic. It entails monitoring and noting a group, population or situation traits, tendencies, or trends without interfering with or changing them. Within the realistic restrictions of space, time, resources, and the researcher's availability, the research design's primary attention is on the objectives, purposes, intentions, and plans (Hakim, 2000). The research design reflects the researcher's thoughts. The new knowledge and theoretical perspectives that researchers bring to any inquiry must be evaluated by the researchers themselves. According to (Creswell, 2021), researchers must take into account the ways in which the strategies they intend to employ in their study which influence the methods they select.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, or averages, are frequently used to summarise and understand the results of descriptive investigations. These

can offer insightful information and act as a basis for more in-depth investigation or the creation of actions or policies. This study intends to investigate the effects of social media as a marketing tool on visitor behaviour in Sarawak through mixed methods research.

Hence, the research design employs both qualitative and quantitative methods which is focusing on the primary tourism campaign, the Visit Sarawak Campaign which is one of the promotional strategies devised by the Sarawak Tourism Board. The purpose of this research is to investigate further into key elements that affect traveller behaviour and how social media can be used more successfully to encourage traveller behaviour. To validate the suggested aims and conceptual model, data collection was conducted through questionnaire and interview.

3.3 Research Approach

Plans and processes for research are called research approaches, and they cover everything from broad assumptions to specific techniques for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. Numerous choices are involved in the strategy, and they must be made in the most logical order. A research approach is chosen based on the audience, the audience's needs, and the nature of the research topic or issue being addressed.

Instead of being seen as opposites, inflexible classifications, or dichotomies, qualitative and quantitative techniques should be seen as complementary. However, the majority of research either favours qualitative over quantitative methods or the opposite. Mixed method research is positioned in the middle of this continuum since it incorporates components from qualitative as well as quantitative methods. The use of words in qualitative research as opposed to numbers in quantitative research, or the use of closed-ended questions

in both types of data collection, represent the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2021).

Thus, this research takes into account the needs into conducting the mix methods as part of gathering the data. The steps in the data process in research include constructing research questions, gathering data, which is typically done with participants, inductive data analysis, which moves from general to detailed themes, and the researcher's interpretation of the significance of the data. Quantitative research is a technique for examining the relationship between variables and testing the theories. These variables can be measured, frequently with the aid of instruments, in order to evaluate the numerical data using statistical analysis method. Mixed methods research, on the other hand, is a type of research that gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, obtaining two sets of data, and uses a variety of models that might include philosophical assumptions and/or theoretical framework.

3.4 Population and Sampling

This section discusses the population and the study sample determined in the study. First, the target population and the appropriate sample were identified. Examine the attributes of the tourists you aim to investigate, including factors like age, gender, nationality, and travel preferences. This methodology can be applied using various approaches, such as convenience sampling, random sampling, or stratified sampling, depending on available resources and research objectives, it is necessary to choose a subset of participants to address the research inquires, as collecting data from all instances is improbable. Thus, it is vital to define the selection process for the specific respondents targeted in this study. In the realm of social sciences research, adopting the same sampling methods as those employed in extensive surveys is unfeasible (Lune & Berg, 2017).

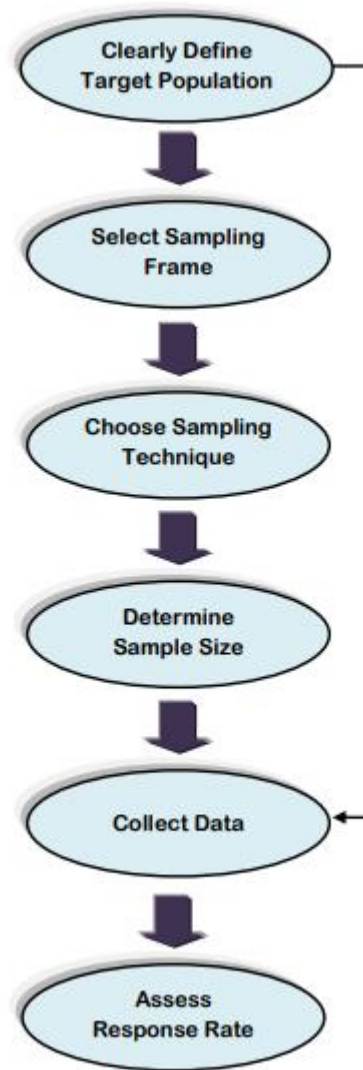


Figure 3.2: Sampling Method in Research Methodology (Adapted from Taherdoost, 2016)

As can be seen in Figure 3.2, the first stage in the sampling process is to clearly identify the target population. People commonly equate a nation's population with its resident population. The second step, or sampling frame, consists of a list of the case studies from which the sample will be taken. The frame should be reflective of the population. Probability or random sampling and non-probability or non-random sampling are the two primary categories of sampling techniques. We must choose a general sample technique first

before deciding on a specific type. The various types of sampling methods and strategies are described in this study. This study's target population will concentrate on respondents from other countries and Malaysians who have access to the social media usage from different platforms.

Sampling is the process of choosing a part of the population or a predetermined sampling frame. Sampling can be used to generate inferences about a population or to generalize from an existing assumption. In essence, this depends on the sampling strategy utilised. This sampling techniques are divided into two categories:

- i. Probability or random sampling
- ii. Non-probability or non-random sampling

It is necessary to choose a broad sampling technique before settling on a particular type sample strategy. The various sampling techniques are shown in Figure 3.2.

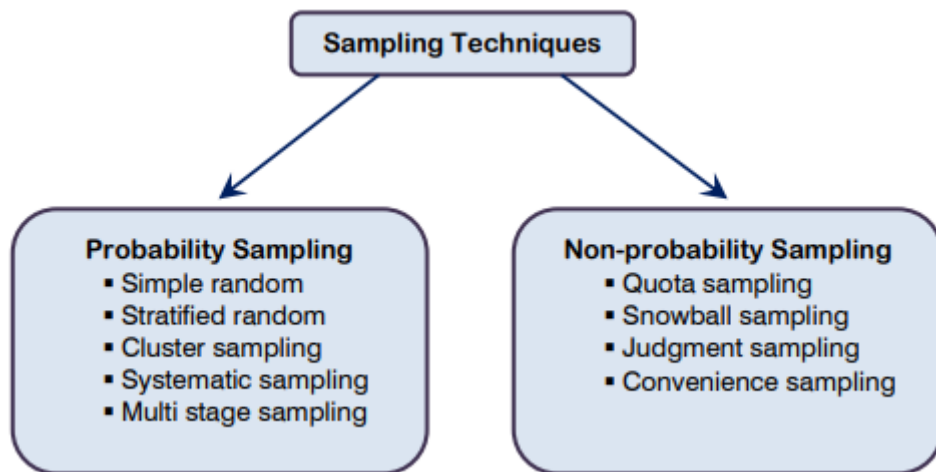


Figure 3.3: Sampling Techniques (Source : Taherdoost, 2016)

Probability sampling techniques was selected for this study to ensuring that each population has a known and non-zero chance of being included in the sample. Probability

sampling facilitates valid comparisons between different groups with the population. The results can be more confidently generalized to other setting or time periods, increasing the study external validity. By using probability sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. One method to do random sampling is to create a sampling frame first, and then use a computer programme that generates random numbers to select a sample from it (Zikmund et al., 2003).

The selection of simple random sampling (SRS) indicates that each population case has an equal chance of being included in the sample. In this research, social media platform is used to distribute surveys for questionnaires at random, and interview respondents are also chosen at random. Simple random sampling is commonly employed sampling technique in quantitative research that involves survey instruments. It is argued that, this method is advantages when dealing with populations that are homogeneous and uniformly selected. In this sampling approach, every individual has a equal chance of being included in the study, as the selection process is entirely based on chance. While simple random sampling offers advantages such as ensuring an unbiased representative sample with an equal probability for each member of the population, it also has its downsides. These drawbacks include being potentially cumbersome, often lacking a readily available population list and presenting challenges when dealing with heterogeneous and widely dispersed population (Noor et. el, 2022)

3.5 Data Collection Methods/Instruments

Data collection is a methodological procedure for gathering and analysing information to analyse results and provide answers to the research questions. It focuses on discovering all there is to know about a specific subject/topic (Creswell, 2021). Based on the stages, a well-structured survey has been meticulously designed to gather quantitative

information on various aspects, providing a comprehensive view of the subjects under investigation. The survey includes queries related to the use of social media, travel patterns, factors influencing decision-making, and the overall quality of travel experiences. The researcher administered this survey both online and on-site locations.

In addition, when a researcher or another person gathers data from respondents for the specific goal of a study, that information is considered to derive from a primary source. These include questionnaire administration, observation, and interviewing. Secondary sources are any other sources where the material is already available, such as government publications, reports, and prior research (Kumar, 2021). Thus, for this research, the data collection process which was adapted from Kumar (2021) are as illustrated in the Figure 3.4 according to the three phases below:

- a. Pilot Study
- b. Questionnaire Design and distribution
- c. Interview

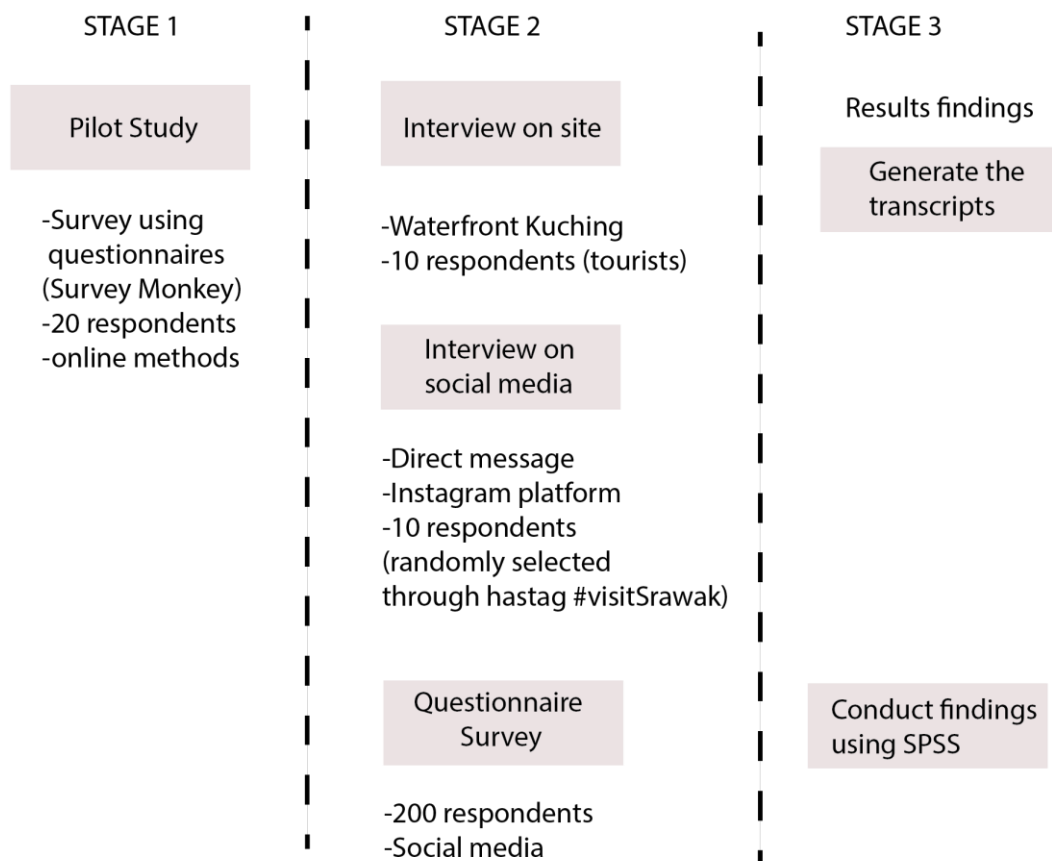


Figure 3.4: Stages of data collection from this research (Illustrates by researcher)

3.5.2 Pilot Study

The first phase started with a pilot study which was conducted from August - September 2019. Pilot studies are commonly carried out to assess the viability of protocols, methodologies, questionnaires, and interviews as well as how they interact in certain situations. They can also reveal any ethical and practical issues that might obstruct the main study. A feasibility study or pilot study is research that is conducted to determine its feasibility. It is typically conducted when a researcher wants to clarify a subject matter about which she knows little knowledge of. To determine whether it is appropriate to conduct a thorough research, a small-scale study needs to be conducted first (Kumar, 2021). The pilot

study for this research was conducted with 10 participants which was selected randomly using #Sarawak on the most popular social media platform Instagram. The data collected from this pilot study were then analysed using cross tabulate quantitative results.

3.5.3 Questionnaire Design

During the second phase of data collection, a set of questionnaire distribution was design and distributed November 2019 – January 2020. The questionnaire, which has 15 questions, was created using Survey Monkey. The questionnaire begins with a brief introduction that describes the purpose of the study and what respondents can expect. A total of 30 questions about "social media" and tourist behaviour were measured through the survey. The purpose of the questions was to learn more about the respondents' perceptions on Sarawak tourism, particularly their trip experiences. Multiple-choice questions were utilised to determine their visit time using social media to obtain travel information to learn more about their trips and social media usage behaviour.

The questionnaire design started with the demographic questions such as gender, occupation, age, and education level which were asked at the beginning of questionnaire. Additionally, another segment of the questionnaire covers topics related to social media, social media impacts on tourism, and tourist behaviour. Participants rated all items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with endpoints ranging from “very dissatisfied” to very satisfied” and “never” to “always”. The final survey was refined based on insights gathered from the pilot test and feedback received from respondents.

3.5.3.1 Distribution of questionnaire

Distributing a questionnaire effectively is a critical step in gathering valuable data for research, surveys, or feedback purpose. The questionnaire is distributed on social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp. the target audience for the survey consists of people who use these mediums. The questionnaire is also well-structured with clear and unbiased questions. It is designed to be concise without any issues and has been improved from previous questionnaires.

3.5.4 Interview

To gather qualitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected tourists, offering a deeper understanding of their experiences, motivations, and the influence of social media on their travel choices. In addition, the pilot study, questionnaire survey, and interviews were employed as data collection method to gain more comprehensive insights on tourist behaviour. These interviews were conducted through two distinct approaches utilizing a social media platform and conducting on-site interviews. Specifically, social media interviews were carried out with ten randomly selected participants via Instagram's direct messaging feature. This choice of utilizing social media as an interviewing tool departed from the more traditional methods such as phone and email interviews.

It was motivated by the recognition that digital platforms and data can significantly enhance social inquiry by immersing in the dynamic interaction facilitated by social media in interview context (Gangneux, 2019). Face-to-face interviews, on the other hand, were carried out with a total of ten individuals at the Kuching Waterfront which was chosen as the setting for the on-site personal interviews. A typical qualitative strategy for communicating with respondents and gathering more information about it includes asking open-minded questions during the interview. It was carried out around the end of the year

due to an increase in tourists at the end-of-year school break in Malaysia generally and Sarawak specifically.

3.6 Data Analysis

Both online and offline sources of data were collected and analysed. Most of the information was gathered through an online questionnaire and published on social networking websites like Facebook and Instagram as well as the mobile app WhatsApp. Due to a lack of funds, this technique is inexpensive and does not increase costs because it is implemented online. Other factors contributing to the popularity of online data collection include the ease with which people can be contacted online, their flexibility in answering the questionnaire at a time that is convenient for them, and the significance of participant anonymity. Generally, the process of data collection began in November 2019 and ended in January 2020.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter overall described the methodology applied to conduct the research and how data are collected for analysis. Use appropriate statistical techniques to analyse your data. Quantitative data can be analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, or other relevant methods. Qualitative data can be subjected to thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns. The selection of mix methods is used based on the research questions and objectives suggested for this research. The selected data collection methods and instruments will help to determine the reliability and validity of the findings of this research. The findings and conclusions are then evaluated and formulated based on the results. The connection of researcher's discoveries and relevant existing literature are established in the discussion for both academic community and the industry.

Detail elaboration on the interpretation of data from primary data will be discussed further in the Findings and Analysis chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview

The results of the mixed method—a quantitative and qualitative approaches are explained in this chapter, along with the impact of social media as a marketing tool on the tourist behaviour. The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS), version 25 for Windows, was utilised in this study's approach for quantitative data analysis, while qualitative analysis tools using thematic analysis were used to examine the data from in-depth interviews with the key informants.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The analysis of quantitative data acquired from the questionnaire are discussed further in the next section based on the respondents' demographic background responses and questions asked about the social media platforms used in the tourism campaign and industry.

4.2.1 Background of respondents

With a primary focus on the platforms Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, this study relies on responses from users and influential figures in the social media and advertising fields. By looking at their social media profiles, the researcher was able to identify users who were active participants and asked them to participate through phone. Out of 200 respondents, 116 completed questionnaires were successfully filled out and returned, allowing for an analysis of the respondents' demographic information, including their gender, age, education level, employment status, ethnicity, and marital status.

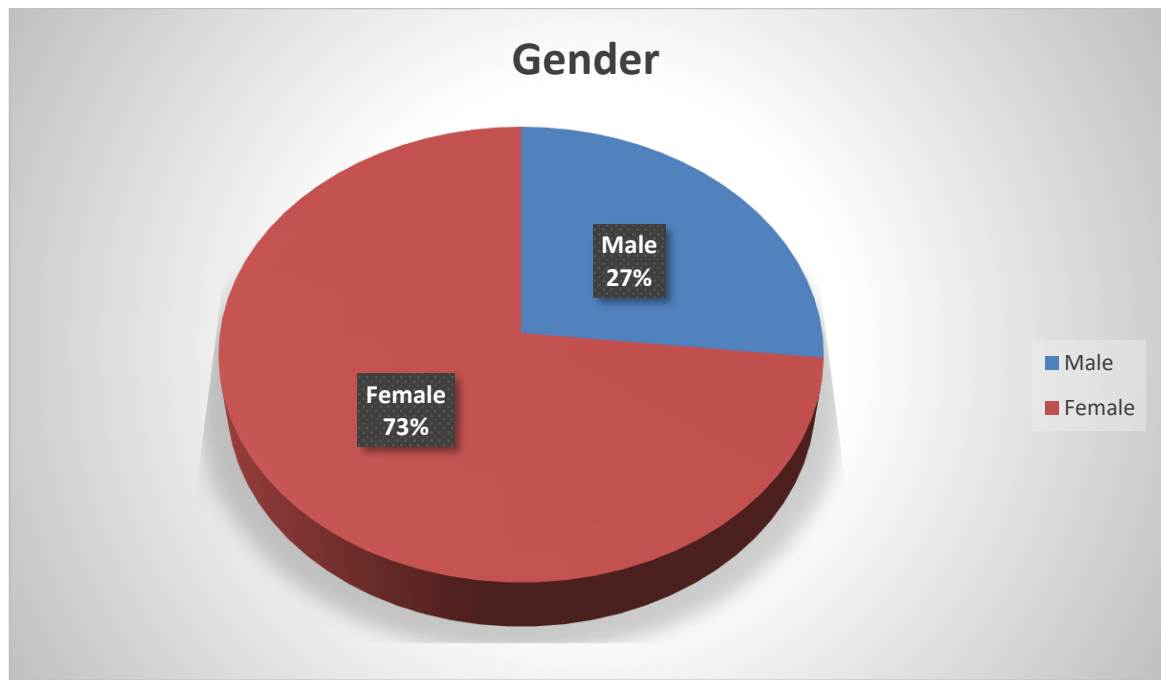


Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of background respondent

The background gender distribution of respondents is shown in Figure 4.1. Based on gender, it was discovered that 85 respondents (73%) are female, and 31 respondents (27%) are male. This indicates that female responded at a higher rate than the male.

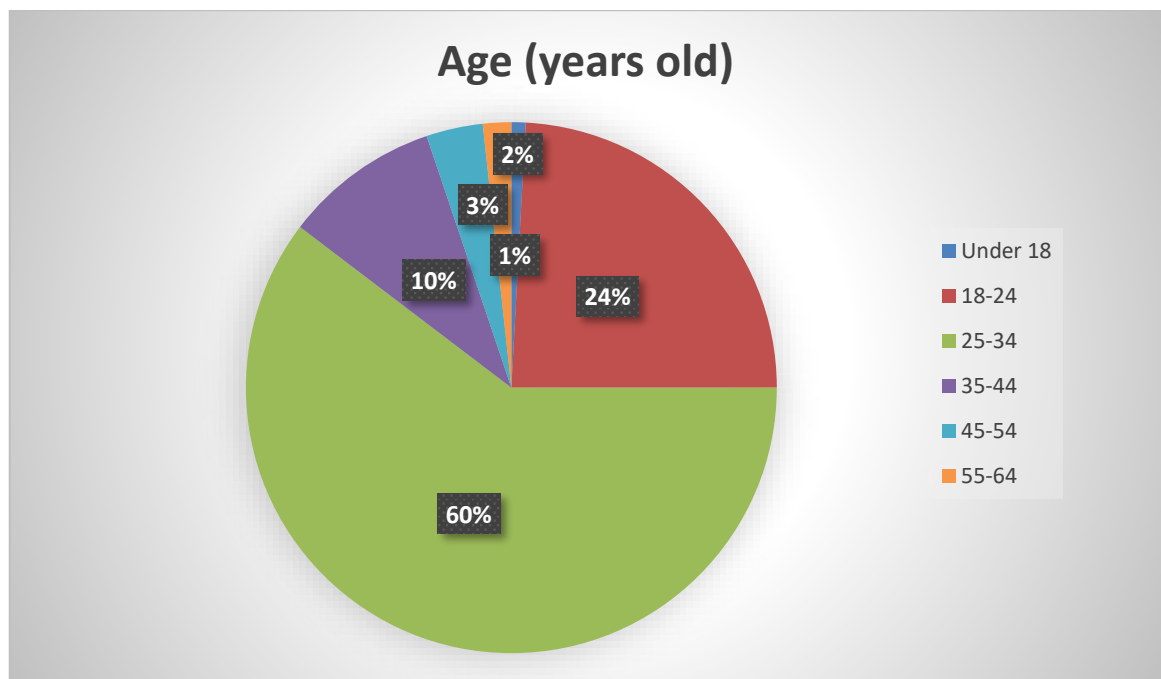


Figure 4.2: Age distribution of background respondent

In addition, based on age, it was found that 1 respondent, or 0.9%, was under the age of 18, followed by 28 respondents, or 24.1%, for those between the ages of 18 and 24, 70 respondents, or 60.3%, for those between the ages of 25 and 34, and 11, 9.5%, 4, 3.4%, and 1.7%, respectively, for those between the ages of 35 and 44, and for those between the ages of 45 and 64. According to this, the majority of responders are between the ages of 25 and 34, while the minority are under the age of 18.

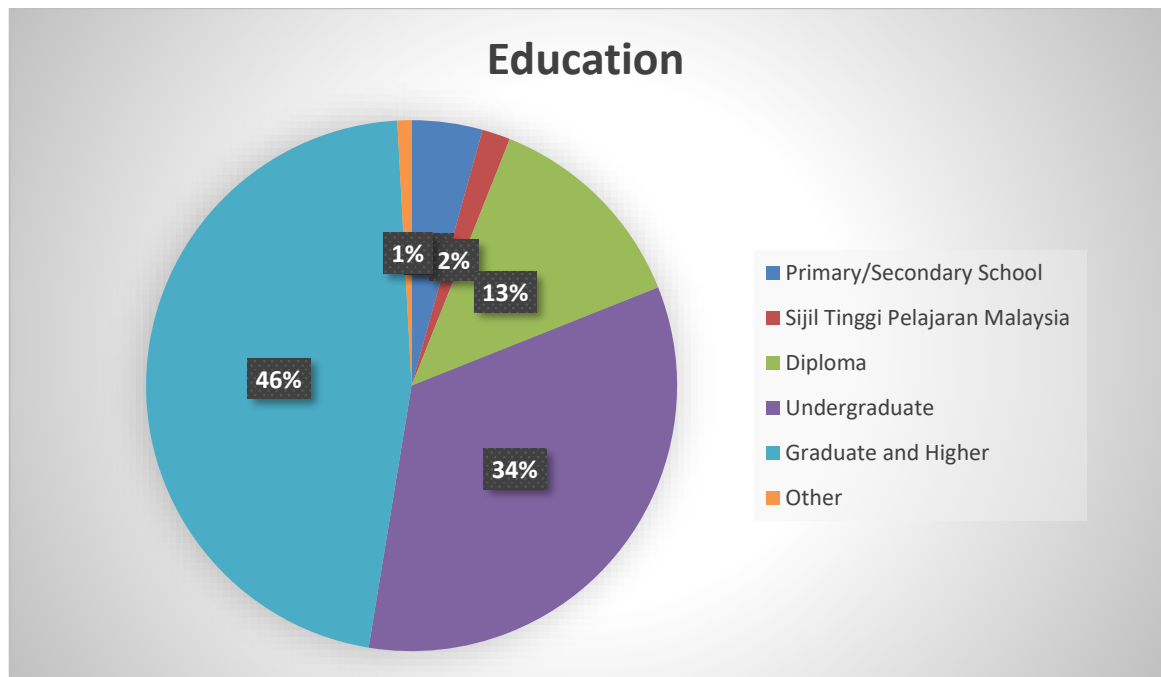


Figure 4.3: Education distribution of background respondent

Next, the education section revealed that 5 respondents, or 4.3%, were in secondary school, followed by 2 respondents, or 1.7%, who attended Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia, 15 respondents, or 12.9%, had diplomas, 39 respondents, or 33.6%, undergraduate degrees, 54 respondents, or 46.6%, and 1 respondent, or 0.9%, had graduate degrees or higher. This showed that respondents with doctorate degrees and higher made up the highest percentage of respondents, while respondents with lower levels of education made up the lowest percentage.

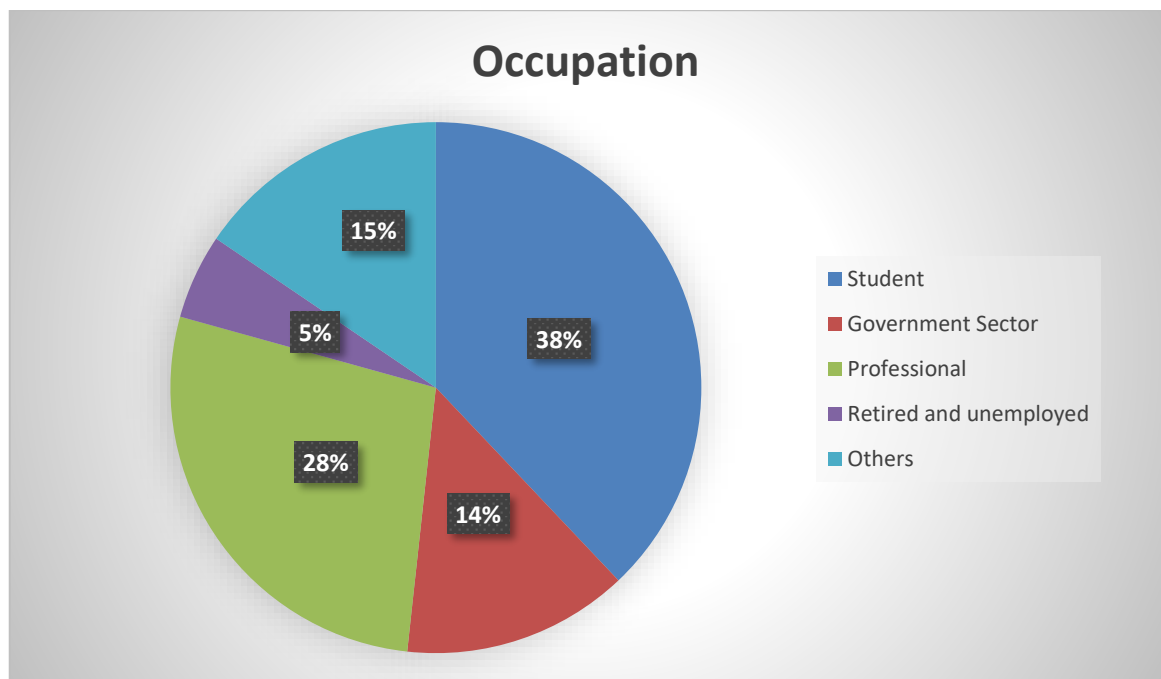


Figure 4.4: Occupation distribution of background respondent

The occupation data showed that 44 respondents, or 37.9%, were students, 16 respondents, or 13.8%, worked in the government, 31 respondents, or 27.6%, were professionals, 6 respondents, or 5.2%, were retired and jobless, and 18 respondents, or 15.5%, were others, including housewives, part-timers, and those working in the private sector. Students made up most respondents in this research, while the unemployed and retired individuals represented the least number.

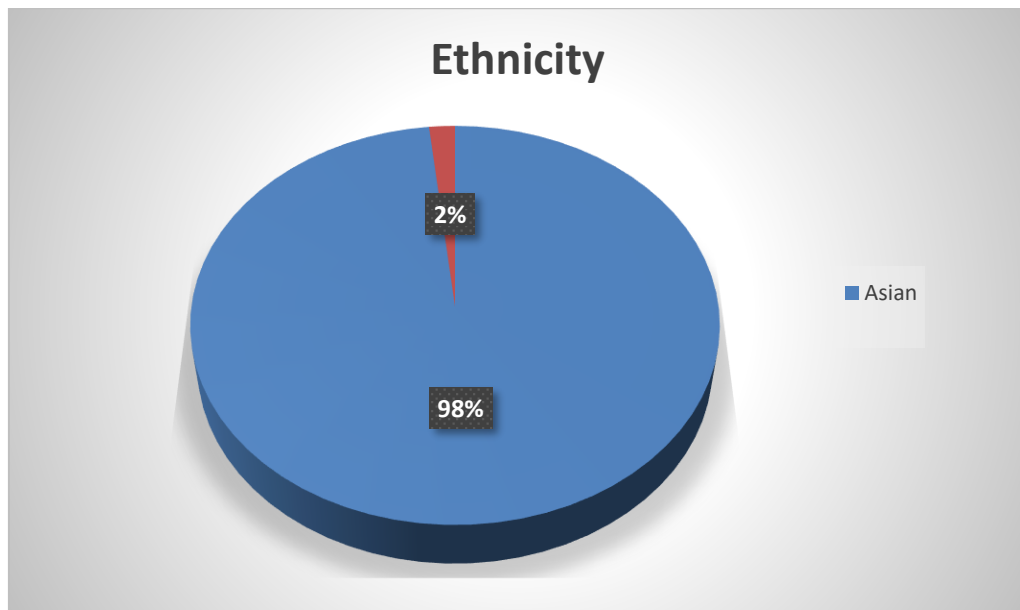


Figure 4.5: Ethnicity distribution of background respondent

According to ethnicity, 114 respondents, or 98.3%, identified as Asian. The remaining 2 respondents, or 1.7%, identified as Iranian or Persian.

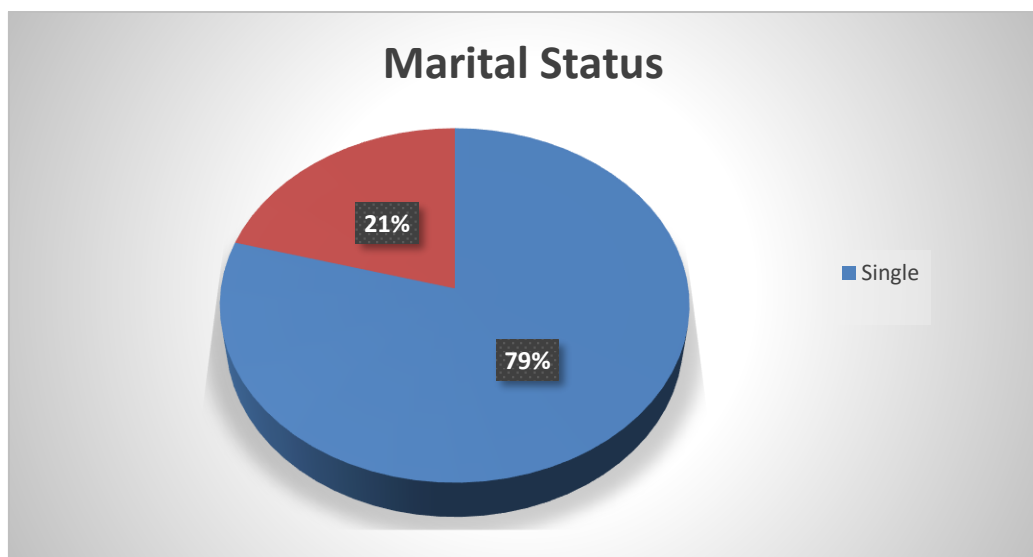


Figure 4.6: Marital status of respondents

Finally, a breakdown of the respondents' marital status revealed that 24 respondents, or 20.7%, were married, making up most of the respondents (92, or 79.3%).

4.2.2 Types of preference of social media

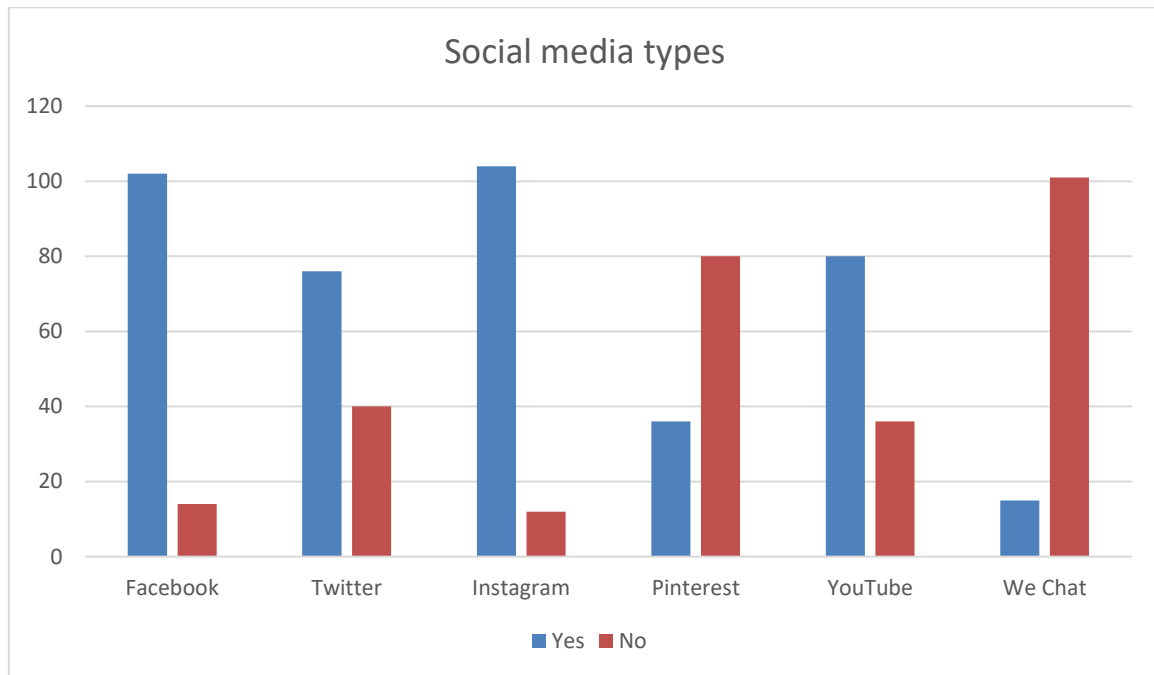


Figure 4.7: Social media types

The impact that social media will have been shown in Figure 4.7. According to the results, most respondents (104, or 89.7%) chose Instagram as their preferred social media platform, followed by Facebook (102, or 87.9%), YouTube (80, or 69%), Twitter (76, or 65.5%), and Pinterest (36, or 31%). With 15 respondents, or 12.9% of the total, We Chat is used by a minority of respondents.

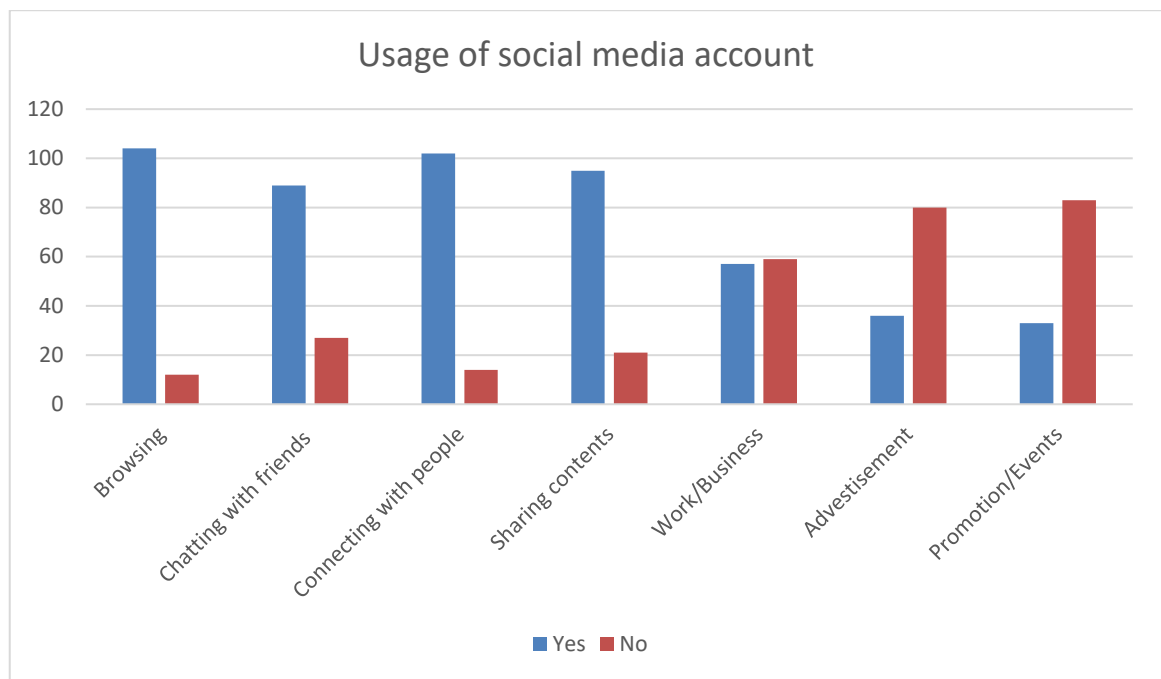


Figure 4.8: Usage of social media account

The social media account usage is shown in Figure 4.8. According to the results, most respondents (104, or 89.7%) use the internet primarily for browsing, followed by 102, or 87.9%, for connecting with people, 95, or 81.9%, for sharing contents, chatting with friends 89, or 76.7%, for work/business, and 57, or 49.1%, for advertisements. With 33 responses, or 28.4% of the total, the minority of respondents use social media for promotions/events.

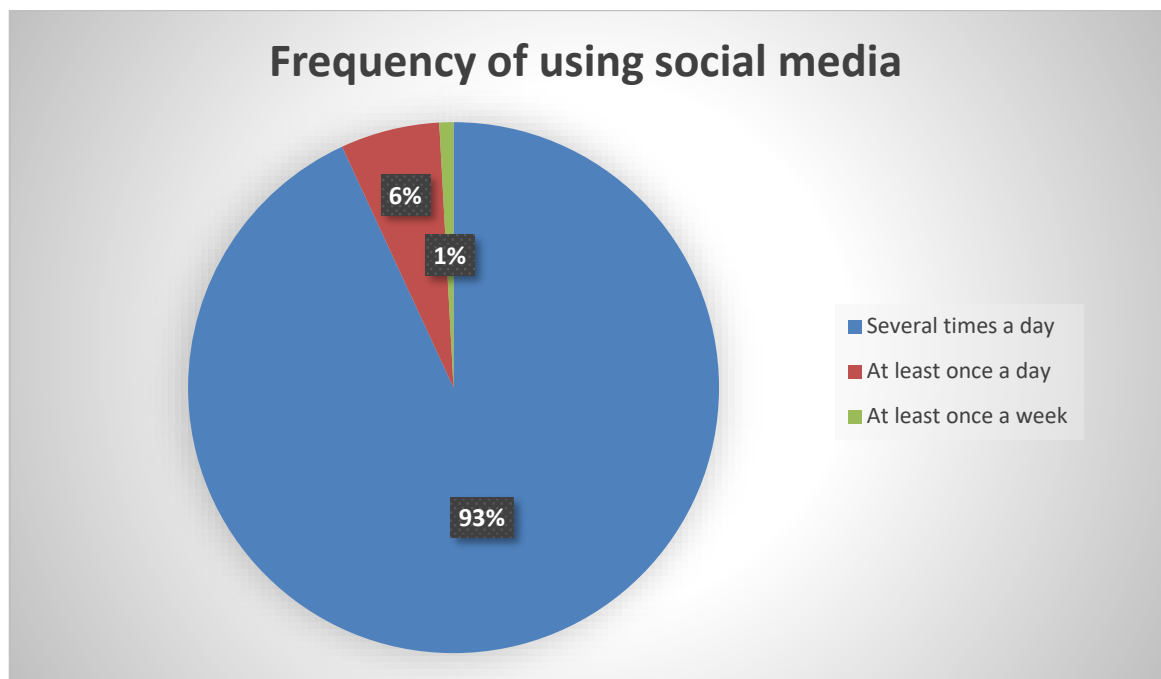


Figure 4.9: Frequency of using social media

The results of those who frequently use social media are showed in Figure 4.9. Based on the results, 108 respondents, or 93.1%, use social media frequently, with at least once per day being used by 7 respondents, or 6% of the total. A small percentage of respondents, or 0.9%, however, converse often with one another at least once every week.

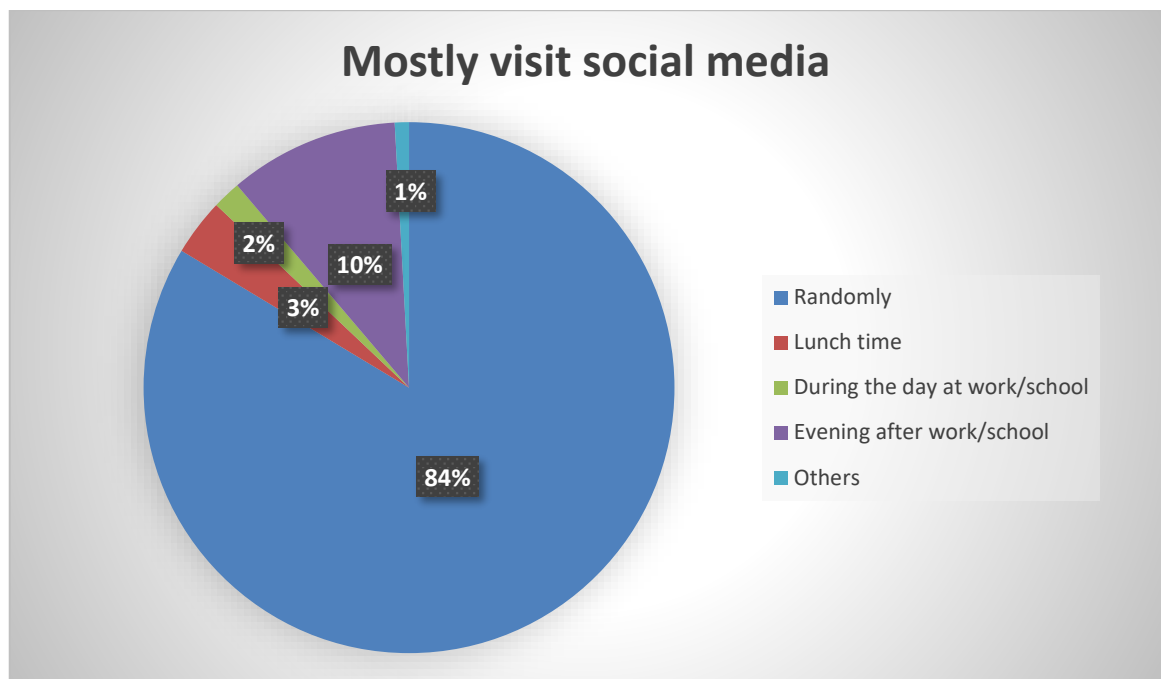


Figure 4.10: Mostly visited social media time

The data for those who primarily use social media were shown in Figure 4.10. The results show that 97 respondents, or 83.6 percent, of the respondents visit at random, followed by lunchtime (4 respondents, or 3.4 percent), the evening after work or school (12 respondents, or 10.3 percent), and the afternoon at work or school (2 respondents, or 1.7 percent). However, one respondent (or 0.9%) picked a different time.

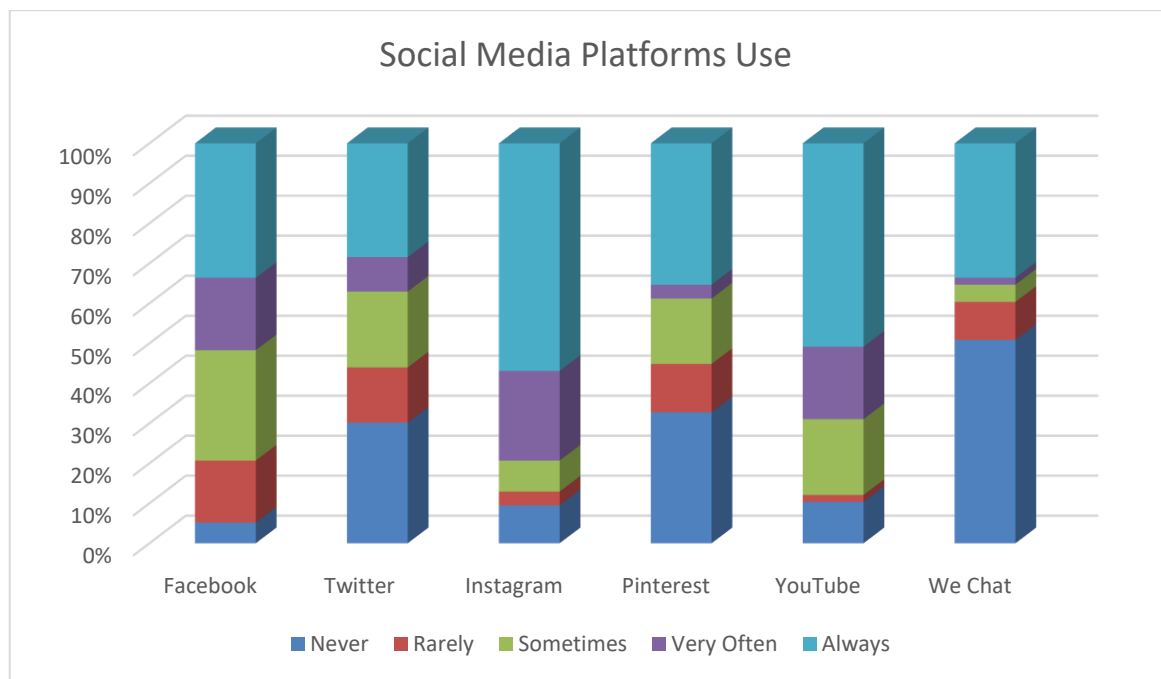


Figure 4.11: Mostly visited social media platform

Figure 4.11 shows the distribution of the social media platforms that are being used. Many respondents (56.9%) stated that they always use Instagram, followed by YouTube (50.9 %). However, the respondents who never use "We Chat" are about 50.9 % out of the overall respondents. The respondents' opinions on using social networking websites differed, as seen in Table 4.6. The highest mean suggested that respondents frequently cited "Instagram." The least significant mean (mean 2.577, SD 1.828) showed that respondents hardly ever mentioned "We Chat."

4.2.3 The detail of social media in tourism

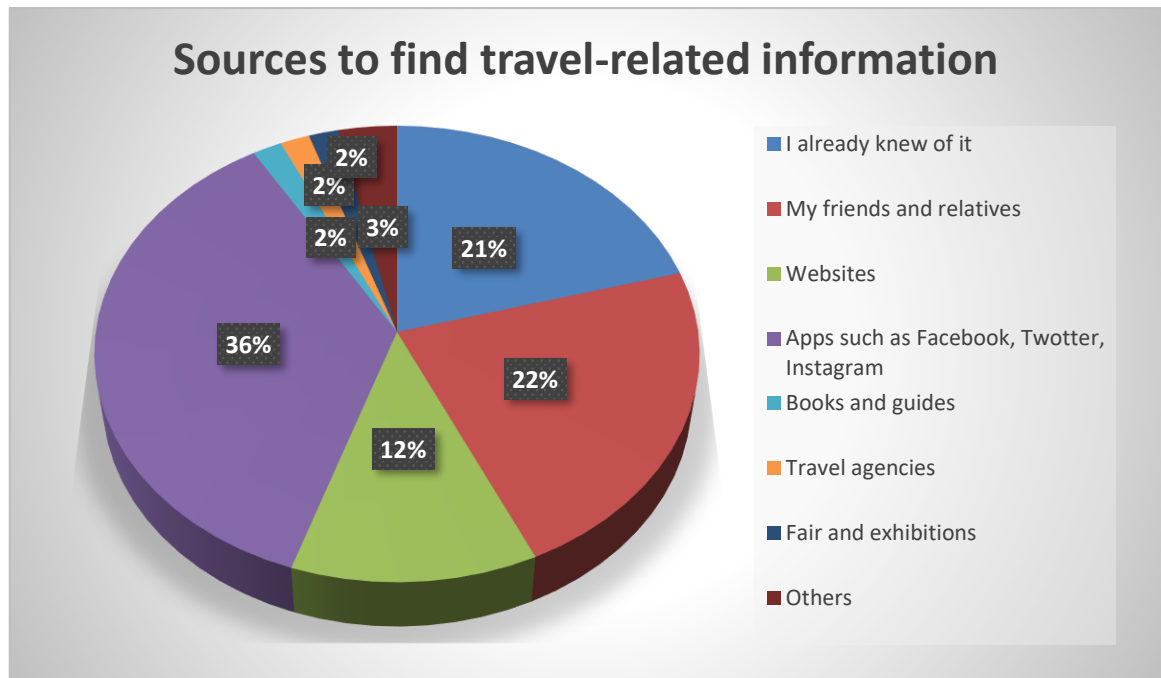


Figure 4.12: Sources to find travel related information

The results of the sources used to find the travel-related information are presented in Figure 4.12. According to the findings, 42 respondents, or 36.2%, of the respondents get their information from apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This is followed by friends and family, with 26 respondents, or 22.4%, people who already knew about it, with 24 respondents, or 20.7%, and websites, with 14 respondents, or 12.1%. With 2 respondents, or 1.7% of the total, the minority of respondents acquire their information from books and guides, travel companies, and fair exhibitions.

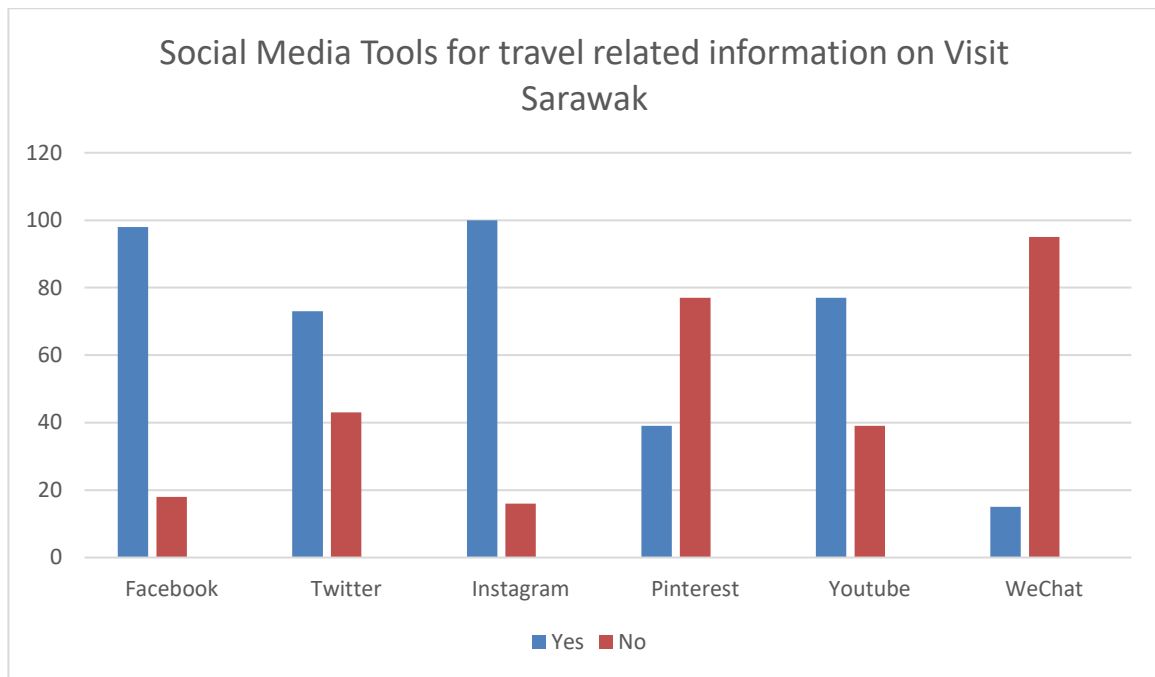


Figure 4.13: Social media tools for travel related information on Visit Sarawak

Figure 4.13 represents the social media channel to search travel related information about Visit Sarawak Campaign. According to the results, 86.2% of respondents used Instagram, followed by 98.5% of respondents using Facebook, 77.4% of respondents using YouTube, 73.9% of respondents using Twitter, and 33.6% of respondents using Pinterest. With 15 respondents, or 12.9%, of the total respondents, We Chat is used by the minority.

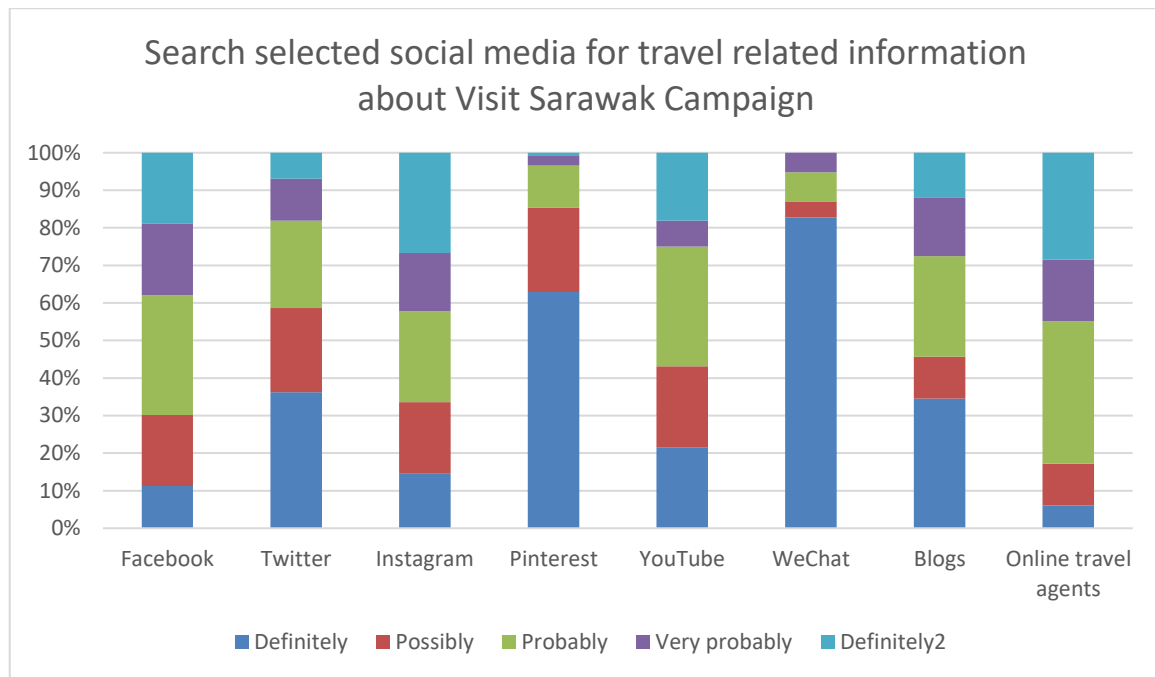


Figure 4.14: Search selected social media for travel related information about Visit Sarawak Campaign

Figure 4.14 shows the distribution of how frequently people searched for travel-related information on the Visit Sarawak campaign in 2019 on a few different social media platforms. We Chat (82.8%) and Pinterest (62.9%) are not used by the majority of respondents. The use of "Online travel agents" (37.9%) is also common among the respondents. As shown in Table 4.9, the respondents had a range of responses to the 2019 Visit Sarawak campaign's frequent social media searches for travel-related information. Respondents' opinions on "Online travel brokers" were likely shown by the highest mean. (With a mean of 3.5, SD=1.19) The respondents were not interested in "We Chat," according to the lowest mean (1.353, SD = 0.836).

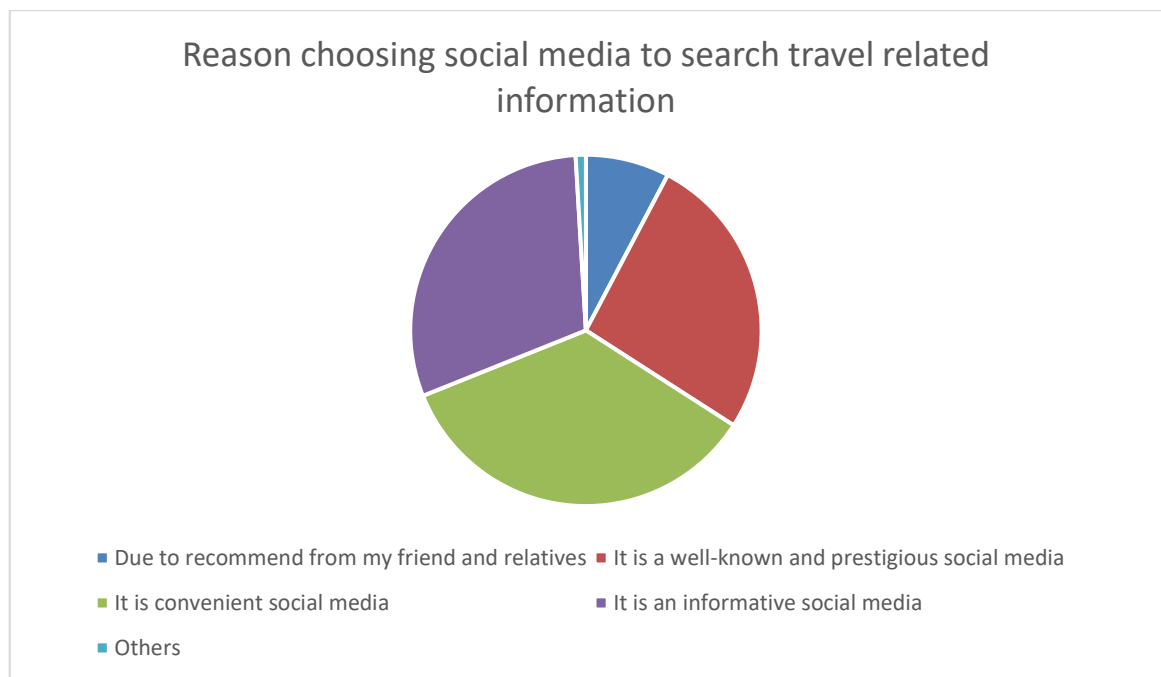


Figure 4.15: Reason choosing social media to search travel related information

Figure 4.15 presented the results of the study on why people used social media to look for information about the Visit Sarawak campaign. According to the results, most respondents (31.9%) stated that “social media is convenient, followed by informative social media (32.6%), well-known and prominent social media (28.1%), and due to recommendations from friends and family (18.5%). Meanwhile the minority of the respondents choose others reason with 1 respondent or 0.9%.

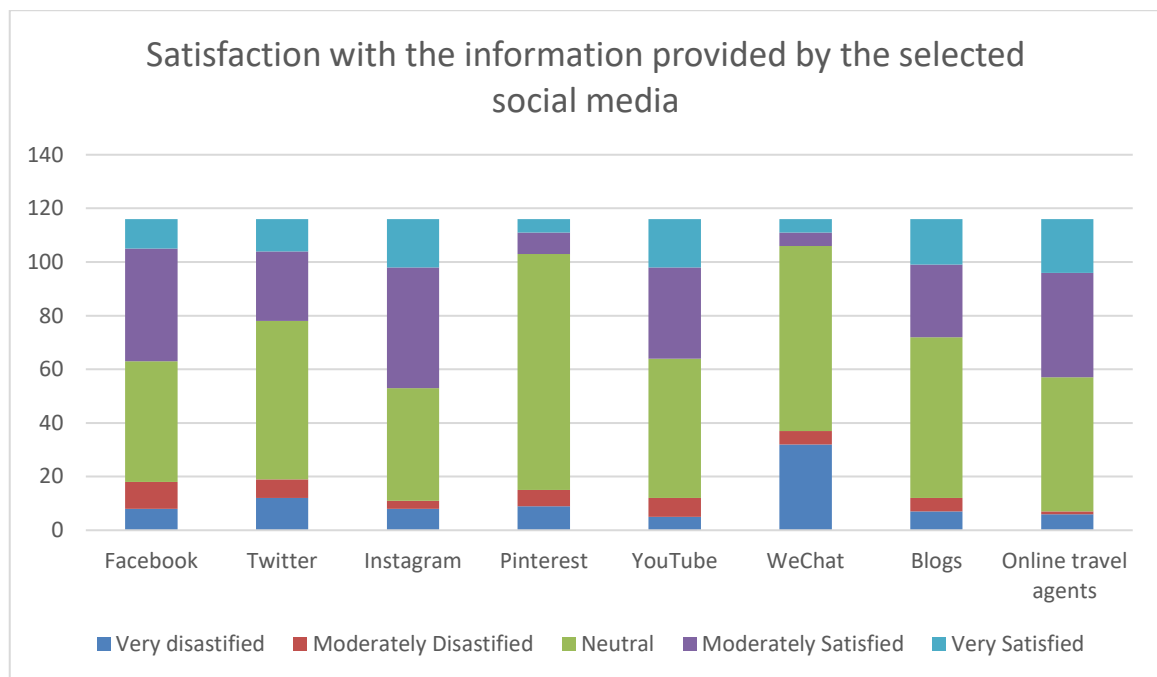


Figure 4.16: Satisfaction with the information provided by the selected social media

The satisfaction levels with the data delivered by the selected social media are shown in Figure 4.16. WeChat (59.5%), blogs (51.7%), and Pinterest (74.9%) were the three responses that received the most of the respondents' neutral choices. Both "Facebook" (36.2%) and "Instagram" (38.8%) are used by the respondents to a moderate degree of satisfaction. Table 4.11 shows the respondents' various responses regarding how satisfied they were with the information given by the chosen social media. According to the highest mean (3.569, SD=0.962), respondents had a neutral opinion of "Online travel agents." With a mean of 2.534 and a standard deviation of 1.074, the lowest mean revealed that the respondents were only slightly dissatisfied with "WeChat."

4.2.4 Tourist behaviour

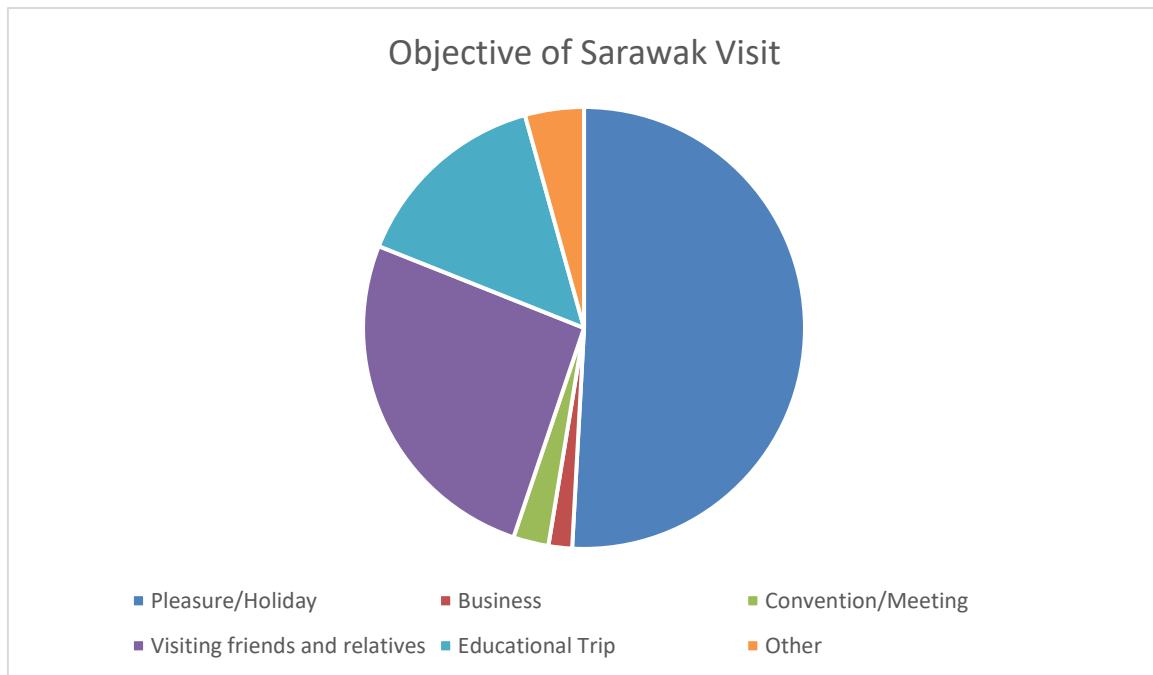


Figure 4.17: Objective of Sarawak visit

Distribution of tourist behaviour is shown in Figure 4.17. It was found that 59 respondents, or 50.9%, were visiting Sarawak for leisure or holidays, followed by 30 respondents, or 25.9%, for visiting friends and relatives, 17 respondents, or 14.7% for educational purposes, and 5 respondents, or 4.3%, for unspecified or other reasons. This outcome showed that pleasure/holiday received the most respondents, while business received the least.

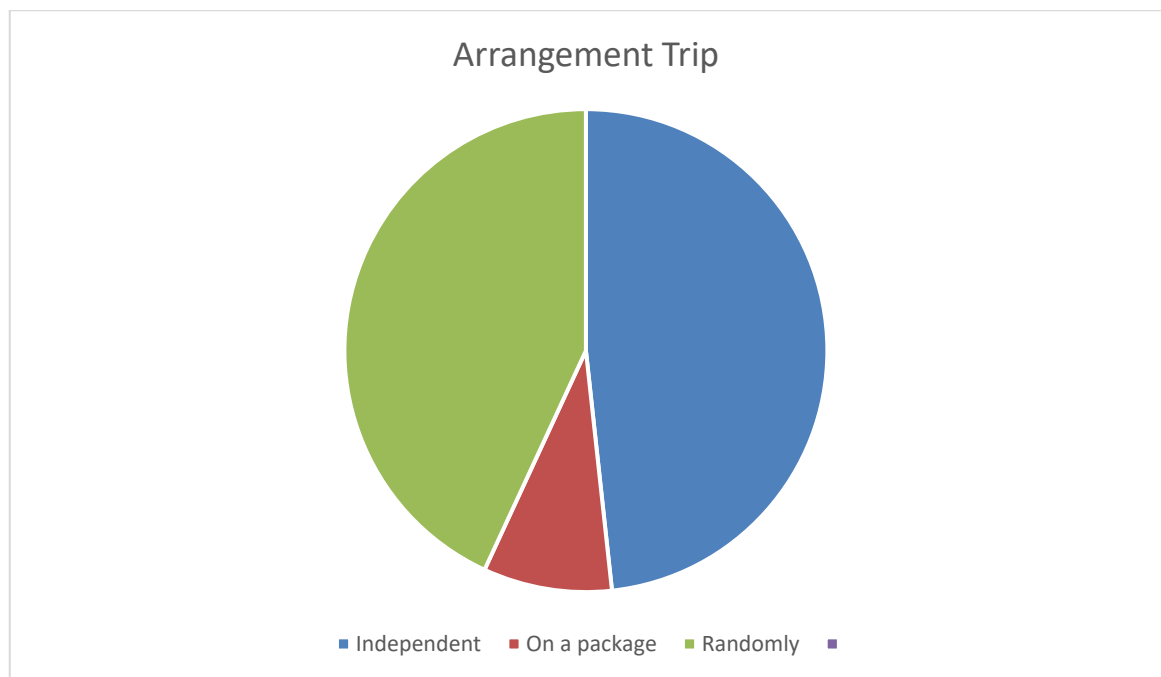


Figure 4.18: Arrangement trip

Next, according to the trip's arrangement in Figure 4.18, 56 respondents, or 48.3%, are independent, followed by 10 respondents, or 8.6%, on a package, and 50 respondents, or 43.1%, at random. According to this finding, most respondents are independent, while the minority are part of a package tour.

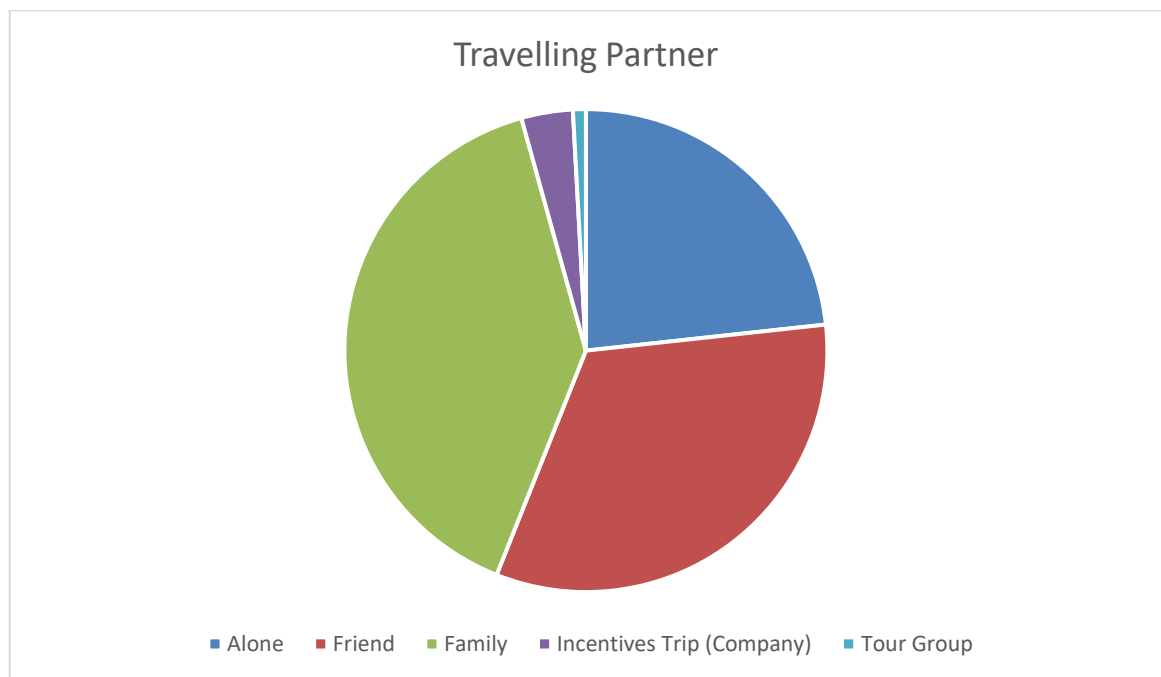


Figure 4.19: Travelling partner

Besides that, Figure 4.19 shows majority of the respondents travelling with family by 46 respondents or 39.7% followed by 38 respondents or 32.8% travelling with friends, alone by 27 respondents or 23.3% and incentives trip (company) by 4 respondents or 3.4%. Meanwhile the minority of the respondents travelling with tour group was only 1 respondent or 0.9%.



Figure 4.20: Times visit Sarawak

Based on the question that was related to frequency of visits to Sarawak, it is found that 19 respondents, or 16.4%, were first timers, followed by 10 respondents, or 8.6%, for visits of two or more times, and 87 respondents, or 75%, for visits of three or more times. Figure 4.20 illustrates the highest percentage of respondents visited Sarawak more than three times, while the lowest percentage only visited the state twice.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Tourist Behaviour before Visiting Sarawak

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean	SD
I do research about Sarawak on social media before visiting there	2 (1.7%)	7 (6%)	37 (31.9%)	32 (27.6%)	38 (32.8%)	3.836	1.012

Table 4.1 continued

I do believe will get reliable information on social media about Sarawak which I am planning to visit	0 (0%)	5 (4.3%)	43 (37.1%)	36 (31%)	32 (27.6%)	3.819	0.89
The information on the social media about Sarawak, where I am planning to go I trust the information if it is written by one of the other visitors	0 (0%)	5 (4.3%)	48 (41.4%)	41 (35.3%)	22 (19%)	3.689	0.827
The information on the social media about Sarawak, where I am planning to go, I trust that information if it is written by one of the Sarawak Tourism Management	1 (0.9%)	7 (6%)	46 (39.7%)	35 (30.2%)	27 (23.3%)	3.689	0.927

Table 4.1 continued

Advises on the social media about the destination, where I am planning to go, I trust that advises if it is written by the people who know them before	1 (0.9%)	9 (7.8%)	48 (41.4%)	28 (24.1%)	30 (25.9%)	3.663	0.977
The advises on the social media about Sarawak, where I planning to go, I find them important if it is written by someone who is popular/influences on the social media	2 (1.7%)	8 (6.9%)	52 (44.8%)	32 (27.6%)	22 (19%)	3.551	0.935
I prefer to go to the destinations where I like and follow on the social media	0 (0%)	4 (3.4%)	34 (29.3%)	43 (37.1%)	35 (30.2%)	3.939	0.857

Table 4.1 continued

Social media sites are suitable tools for the consumers who want to communicate with company/places/destination	0 (0%)	2 (1.7%)	27 (23.3%)	37 (31.9%)	50 (43.1%)	4.163	0.843
I participate to events that organized by Sarawak Tourism	25 (21.6%)	23 (19.8%)	44 (19.8%)	11 (9.5%)	13 (11.2%)	2.689	1.232

An open-ended question was also asked; “If you have a chance to persuade your friends, colleague or relative to visit Sarawak, would you like to recommend them to do so?” Majority of the respondents choose sometimes about “*The advice on the social media about Sarawak, where I planning to go, I find them important if it is written by someone who is popular/influences on the social media*” (44.8%). Besides that, respondents choose always about “*Social media sites are suitable tools for the consumers who want to communicate with company/places/destination*” (43.1%).

The responses to the behaviour before to travelling to a destination were varied, as shown in Table 4.13. The highest mean (with a mean of 4.163, SD=0.843) showed that respondents commonly mentioned that "Social media sites are ideal tools for the consumers who want to engage with company/places/destination." While the lowest mean (with a mean of 2.689, SD=1.232) revealed that respondents rarely mentioned "I participate to events that are organised by Sarawak tourism."

Table 4.2: Distribution of tourist behaviour after visiting Sarawak

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean	SD
If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I share it on the my own social media	1 (0.9%)	4 (3.4%)	30 (25.9%)	29 (25%)	52 (44.8%)	4.094	0.959
If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I share it on social media page	6 (5.2%)	7 (6%)	30 (25.9%)	29 (25%)	44 (37.9%)	3.844	1.154
If I am not interested with the destination where I go, I share it on social media page	22 (19%)	24 (20.7%)	35 (30.2%)	16 (13.8%)	19 (16.4%)	2.879	1.326
If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I recommend to the other social media users to visit here	27 (23.3%)	21 (18.1%)	36 (31%)	17 (14.7%)	15 (12.9%)	2.758	1.316
If I am not satisfied with the destination where I go, I recommend to the other social media users not to visit here	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.2%)	31 (26.7%)	26 (22.4%)	51 (44%)	4.017	1.038

Majority of the respondents choose always about “If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I share it on my own social media” (44.8%) and “If I am not satisfied

with the destination where I go, recommend to the other social media” (44%). Besides that, respondents choose sometimes about “If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I recommend to the other social media users to visit here” (31%) and “If I am not interested with the destination where I go, I share it on social media page” (30.2%). As seen in Table 4.14, the respondents showed various reactions towards the behaviour after visiting a destination. The highest mean showed respondents frequently about “If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I share it on my own social media” (with a mean of 4.094, SD=0.959) While the lowest mean showed the respondents rarely about “If I am satisfied with the destination where I go, I recommend to the other social media users to visit here” (with a mean of 2.758, SD=1.316).

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

To engage participants in conversation and gather data for the study, the researcher conducted direct-message interview using social media platform and on-site personal interviews with open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted to gather more in-depth interactions with the participants. The analysis for the interview questions is summarized based on the respondents' background information and thematic analysis extracted from the interview data transcript both from direct message interview via Instagram and personal interview at the site. Thematic analysis is used to analysed data from both interview methods. The themes derived from both sources are transcribed and are discussed accordingly.

4.3.1 Background information of respondents for Instagram (Direct Message Interview)

The background information of 10 respondents were analysed based on their basic demographic information. The data collected from the Instagram direct message were based on their social media posts on Sarawak, which are listed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.3: Demographic profile and travel information of each respondent

No.	Accompany (Total No.)	Age	Duration of stay (day)	Gender	Place of Residence	Time of visit
1	3	35	4	Female	Kuala Lumpur	During School Holiday
2	2	29	2	Female	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah	First time
3	2	32	10	Female	Canada	First time
4	2	25	6	Female	Poland	First time
5	6	26	4	Female	Indonesia	One every in a year
6	1	43	5	Male	Miri, Sarawak	Every event that happening in Sarawak

Table 4.3 continued

7	2	29	3	Male	Sabah	Every event that happening in Sarawak
8	2	50	4	Male	Sabah	Depend on event in Sarawak
9	20	33	7	Male	Italy/Singapore	First time
10	4	28	3	Male	Indonesia	Every event that happening in Sarawak

4.3.2 Thematic analysis for Instagram (Direct Message Interview)

Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves reading through a data set that researcher used in this research. To analyse the categories, it derives from framework that divided by themes. A thematic analysis was therefore appropriate to use and was carried out to describe and compare the main findings. Themes was extracted by data and divided into 3 main themes.

4.3.2.1 Tourist perception trip

Table 4.3 shows that repeat visits to Sarawak exceeded the first-time tourists. Tourist were also keen on exploring the city because of the multitude of exciting activities planned for their trip month. Consequently, their itinerary and journey were meticulously organized. In contrast, when it came to first-time visitors, the majority of those surveyed indicated that

they had no specific plan in mind, likely preferring a more spontaneous approach to their trip. They are most likely just wanting to visit the city and explore Sarawak on their own time. The “event,” “free exploration,” “local food,” “sightseeing,” and relax” themes were used to characterize the vacation experience. According to the information provided by these tourist respondents, they took a lot of photos throughout their vacation to Sarawak. Tourists say that getting about Sarawak is simple, and that most of the places they wish to see are also close by. As a result, most respondents predicted a calm journey thought out their vacation. They had also compiled a list of foods that their friends had recommended on social media.

Sarawak Laksa, Mi Kolo and Kek Lapis are the most popular foods or meals, according to their feedback, and are generally suggested by their social media channels. Six of the respondents also mentioned that photography is one of the reasons they want to visit Sarawak. They stated that they travelled to Sarawak because of the activities taking place in the area. In terms of their Instagram images, they not only represent their experience of their journey promote Sarawak to other international visitors.

4.3.2.2 Local food

During their travels, all the visitors expressed their impressions of the many varieties of Sarawak food. They dined on a wide variety of Sarawakian delights. Their photo caption received a lot of great feedback. One of the respondents says, “laksa is the most authentically Sarawakian dish”. *Sambal belacan*, sour tamarind, garlic, galangal, lemon grass and coconut milk make up the basis. Served with omelette pieces on top. Chicken strips, prawns, coriander, and lime, if desired. Non-traditional ingredients like fried tofu or other seafood are occasionally used. Another commenter said, “Not only that, Laksa Sarawak is so wonderful like that.”

4.3.2.3 Events

Numerous significant events occur in Sarawak, such as AIFFA, the Sarawak International Festival of Music, the Rainforest Music World Festival (RWMF), and the Borneo International Kites Festival, although RWMF is the most renowned among them. Typically, attendees participate in these mentioned events.

Respondent 2 shared, "We first learned about the Rainforest World Music Festival from my friends. However, we didn't make plans to attend until I came across numerous Instagram stories enthusiastically promoting it. After checking out their Instagram page and even seeing ticket pricing on someone else's Instagram post, we made the decision to go. It was my inaugural experience, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I eagerly anticipate attending again next year. The festival was unlike anything I had experienced before and truly lived up to international standards."

Respondent 9 reflected on their recent trip to Borneo, saying, "Last weekend's journey to Borneo was an emotional rollercoaster! It marked my first visit to Sarawak, where I had the opportunity to witness one of the world's most magnificent primates, the 'Orangutans,' often referred to as the 'humans of the jungle.' Additionally, I participated in the Spartan Beast Race, covering a challenging 21 kilometres through one of the world's least explored rainforests. It was an experience that I believe is truly worth living for! Lastly, I had an incredible time with the friends I travelled with and all the new acquaintances I made."

4.4 Background respondent for personal interview at Waterfront, Kuching

There are 10 respondents selected randomly at the site location, Waterfront Kuching. Table 4.4 summarizes the demographic profiles of each respondent and the relevant

information on their trips. As data was collected at Waterfront Kuching because it is the main places that the tourist visits after they arrive to Kuching.

Table 4.4: Demographic profile and travel information of each respondent

No.	Accompany (Total No.)	Age	Duration of stay (day)	Gender	Place of Residence	Time of visit
1	2	55	4	Male	Kuala Lumpur	First time
2	2	53	4	Female	Kuala Lumpur	First time
3	2	52	3	Male	Kota Kinabalu. Sabah	First time
4	2	46	3	Female	Penampang, Sabah	First time
5	4	59	3	Male	Selangor	5 times
6	4	27	3	Male	Selangor	2 times
7	4	50	3	Female	Selangor	First time
8	4	26	3	Female	Selangor	First time
9	2	29	6	Male	Netherland	First time
10	2	28	6	Female	Romania	First time

Since most of the respondents were visiting Sarawak for the first time, each respondent was likely to have a personal reaction to their first visit to Sarawak. They all

came to Sarawak with their families. Their ages ranged from 26 to 59 years old. They are mostly in Sarawak for three days.

Surprisingly, most respondents had no plan in mind. Furthermore, tourists prefer to go and see the city on their own. Most tourists and respondents will come in Kuching initially because it is Sarawak's capital. As a result, they regarded Kuching as a large city worth exploring. The themes of the trip were "free exploration," "quiet," "local food," "sightseeing," "social media review," and "relax."

4.4.1 Thematic analysis from on-site personal interviews

The themes extracted from the on-site interviews derived from four main themes emerged from the conversations with the participants around Kuching Waterfront. Themes was extracted by data and divided into four themes:

4.4.1.1 Free exploration

Some respondents prefer to explore the city on their own. From here, they discovered that many destinations that were not advertised on social media were intriguing from the moment they arrived. (Respondent 1) "Right now, we're still looking for a hotel near the masjid." We don't want to book a hotel first since we want to walk into a hotel near the city." (Respondent 2) We also carry a map that we just got from the airport."

Most tourists bring a map from Kuching Airport as well as some pamphlets from there. The brochures are very convenient for them, so that some of the tourist explore Kuching by themselves.

4.4.1.2 Calm city

“The town seems like not too busy we already like been here.” (Respondent 10) for the first time arrive here, they thought that Kuching is not busy city maybe it is because they arrive during school holiday and not the working hours. The respondent also relaxing themselves sit at the food court at the Waterfront and site seeing behaviour around them. While (Respondent 4) in another opinion because *“This morning there someone with knife walk around India street it makes we worry. We are afraid that people hurt other people. We think that he is insane. Just now, we just try to look for things that goods for sale, the seller treats us roughly. We don’t know what’s wrong with her. Then we walk away. Maybe it’s because we are not Sarawakian.”* She faced some bad behaviour while visiting here and it make her feel scared sometimes to walk around the Waterfront.

4.4.1.3 Local food

Sarawak has delicious food and unique fruits that you can’t easily find where else. The list below includes both popular dishes enjoyed by locals and ones that tourists should try. *“Sarawak laksa is delicious n the best of all laksa in Malaysia. For me if you want to comment on what brand is the best, must try all laksa brands that are available in Sarawak. It’s not accurate if you just try one brand and then you said that is the best laksa. In Sarawak, we have more than 10 brands of laksa. So, try all and then make your comment. The most Malaysian like it, that should be the best laksa.”* (Respondent 10)

1. *Sarawak Laksa*
2. *Kolo mee*
3. *Midin*
4. *Ayam pansuh*
5. *Kek Lapis Sarawak*

6. *Manok kacangma*
7. *Terung dayak*
8. *Dabai*
9. *Belacan bihun*
10. *Fried oyster pancake*
11. *Kompia*

This is the list that tourist should try and there also many foods was not listed in the list. *“We loved the food. I ate so much kek lapis.”* (Respondent 10).

4.4.1.4 Social media review

As we all know, we are living in an era where everyone uses social media. If you were surfing Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter and noticed a comment on this place, we bet you automatically wanted to respond to that person and inquire what happened. Most of the respondents use social media and Google to search about Sarawak and to know more about it. (Respondent 9) *“Yes. We do research from Google what did people in Sarawak do and the food that we found is amazing we going to try it later.”* (Respondent 3) *“We always use Google to know about Sarawak. Also, from Facebook and my friends.”* (Respondent 7) *“I did! I think I used Google and Instagram.”*

They chose to follow it based on the reviews they read on social media, as well as the photos taken, the locations, and the food.

4.4.2 Social media platforms comparisons

The way people travel, organise their travels, and interact with destinations has been greatly influenced by social media platforms. There are a few similar ways that social media platforms affect traveller behaviour, even if they each have unique features and target various

user demographics. There are some comparisons between the top social media platforms been used by travellers.

Table 4.5: Comparisons for social media platforms

Instagram	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter
-Focused on visual content, making it popular for sharing travel photos and experiences. -Inspires wanderlust and influences travel choices through carefully curated and aesthetically pleasing images. -Promotes destinations discovery, especially using location tags, hashtags, and geotagging.	-Provides a platform for users to share travel experiences, photos and recommendations with friends and followers. -Allows tourist to connect with local communities, join travel groups and get advice from fellow travellers. -Enables destination marketing through targeted advertising and sponsored content, influencing travel decisions.	-Offers video-based content, allowing users to watch travel vlogs, destination guides and hotel reviews. -Influences travel behaviour through visual storytelling, providing immersive experiences and insights into various destinations. -Enables content creators to monetize their travel-related videos, which may impact tourist choices.	-Enable real-time communication, making it useful for seeking immediate travel information and updates. -Facilitates engagement with travel brands, airlines, hotels and tourism boards, allowing tourist to ask questions and get quick responses. -Allows users to share brief thoughts, recommendations, and travel tips using hashtags and mentions.

It is important that these platforms can both positively and negatively impact on tourist behaviour. On one hand, they provide a wealth of information, inspiration, and opportunities for engagement. On the other hand, they can also contribute to over tourism, the spread of misinformation and the pressure to showcase idealized travel experiences. Ultimately, the impact of social media platforms on tourist behaviour depends on how users engage with and interpret the information presented, as well as the extent to which they rely on these platforms for their travel decisions.

4.5 Comparative analysis between qualitative data and quantitative data

This section summarizes the comparative analysis between qualitative data and quantitative data involves examining the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of these two types of data in research and analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data serve different purposes and have distinct features, making them suitable for various research questions and methodologies. Here is the comparative analysis of both methods:

Table 4.6: Comparative analysis between qualitative data and quantitative data social media as a promotional tool towards tourist behaviour

Issue	Qualitative Methods	Quantitative Methods
Overall aim	Qualitative data consists of non-numerical information that describes qualities, attributes, and characteristics. It is typically textual or visual data and includes narratives, observations, interviews, and open-ended survey responses.	Quantitative data is numerical in nature, representing measurable quantities. It includes counts, measurements, and statistics, often collected through structured surveys, experiments, or observations.

Table 4.6 continued

Amount of data	Large amount of textual raw data	Small amount of numerical data
Data Collection Methods	Interview face-to-face, easy but costly and time consuming, depends on weather forecast at Kuching.	Large scale surveys using questionnaires that distributed on social media, low response, less costly and less time consuming.
Analysis Techniques	Using thematic analysis & population sampling	Using SPSS
Data Presentation	Presented using narratives, quotes, and diagrams They are less numerical and more focused on conveying insights and themes.	Typically presented using tables, charts, graphs, and numerical summaries. They provide precise numerical information and allow for comparisons and trends to be easily discerned.
Generalizability	Focuses on depth and context rather than large-scale representation. Findings are context specific.	Can be used to generalize to larger populations through statistical inference.

In conclusion, the choice between qualitative and quantitative data hinges on research objectives, inquiry characteristics and available resources. Many research projects option for a combination of both data types, known as mixed methods, to gain more comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation. This study employs both approaches to achieve a deeper insight into the research topic.

Quantitative data yields numerical insights, such as statistical patterns and trends, while qualitative data delves into tourist motivations, perceptions, experiences, and the

nuances of social media strategies. By incorporating mixed methods, this research enhances data quality through triangulation, facilitating a more holistic exploration of the topic. By harnessing the advantages of both data types, it not only yields statistical insights but also reveals profound insights into tourist behaviour and social media strategies, leading to a more robust and comprehensive dataset for analysis.

4.6 Chapter Summary

As discussed in this chapter, social media as a promotional tool is highly useful for tourists because it addresses a range of problems such as accommodation, flights, and places to visit. The findings indicate that social media as promotional tools influence tourist behaviour and that businesses should adapt a special manner of engaging with social media users to employ certain social media platforms. Based on the findings and data analysis, it is found that tourist behaviour and social media tools used in promoting tourism destinations are important factors that can support this study. The researcher will provide recommendations and draw conclusions about the study in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The topic of "Social media as a promotional tool towards tourist behaviour in Sarawak tourism campaign" was addressed in this thesis. This chapter will provide an in-depth review of the findings from Chapter 4. The discussion will also provide an in-depth evaluation of the relationship between the study's research objectives. As a concluding remark and future recommendation, a greater understanding of how word-of-mouth and social media in Malaysia influence consumers' purchasing decisions will be discussed.

5.2 Discussion

Social media has changed every part of our life, including how we communicate. These advancements have had a significant impact on us. Tourism, one of the world's most active economic sectors, is surely a part of all of these. As a result, this section analyses the relationship between each research objective and the findings that are analysed. The research questions developed for this study serve as the basis for each of the objectives. According to the research design employed, the overall findings and data collected are pertinent to the research problem. The recommended framework will then be provided to contribute to future tourism campaigns using social media tools that can be employed by the policy makers. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this research employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods to further investigate the relationship between tourist behaviour towards social media tools used in tourism campaigns.

Table 5.1: Connection between Research Questions and Research Objectives

No.	Research Questions	Research Objectives	Data collected	Data Collection Tool	Data Analysis Tools
1	What are the social media tools use in the Sarawak Tourism Campaign?	To identify social media tools of Sarawak Tourism Campaigns	Social media tools used in Sarawak Tourism campaigns	Questionnaire Surveys- social media users (types of respondents)	SPSS
2	What are the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting a tourist destination?	To analyse the factors that influence tourist destination?	Behaviour that influences tourist to visit Sarawak	Questionnaire Surveys, Interview – random tourist selected at Waterfront Kuching Area	SPSS & thematic analysis

Table 5.1 continued

3	How can social media be used as a tool to promote Sarawak Tourism Campaign more effectively towards tourist behaviour?	To propose a framework that acts as a guideline on the relationship between social media impact towards the tourist behaviour when promoting Visit Sarawak Campaigns	Connection between social media tool and tourist behaviour	Past year research, Questionnaire Surveys & Interview	SPSS & thematic analysis
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5.2.1 Research Objective 1: To analyse the impact of social media as tool on Visit Sarawak Campaign

The questionnaire was developed and analysed to obtain the data needed for the first objective. The respondents who use social media as a communication tool were primarily chosen at random to get the data. Additionally, this objective is derived from the model developed by Ramayah and Hua (2017). The questionnaire was designed based on the use of social media tool when selecting tourism destinations.

According to survey conducted in this research, there are six different types of social media that are currently popular with individuals, including Facebook, Instagram for content communities, YouTube, and Twitter. As a result, TikTok is currently the most popular social

media platform for content that many people use to learn more about destinations and other topics. Although the number of social media platforms varies, their primary purpose is to encourage users and travellers to post and share their travel stories, observations, and opinions by making them a resource for other users.

Social media continues to have an impact on communication, either positively or negatively, depending on the subject and style of communication. To deliver a competitive on-service experience, social media requires the integration of all marketing operations and the use of persuasive advertising. Marketers must understand electronic word of mouth to best promote consumer relationships.

5.2.2 Research Objective 2: To evaluate the factors that influence tourist behaviour when visiting tourist destinations

To collect data for the second objective, the conceptual framework by Cohen (2013) on the tourism behaviour was employed. The method that was used was through interviews both via social media platform and the on-site interviews. The results show that the increased sales and recommendations to other users are evidence that social media is a crucial tool for analysing tourist opinions. To lessen ambiguity and form some expectations about what they will discover at a destination, tourists need to know how their experiences will be like from reliable sources. Consumers can influence other consumers more and more with their own thoughts and experiences as social media gets more outspoken.

Based on the findings, the information offered by social media was highly rated by tourists, which leads us to the conclusion that this objective was achieved. Tourists' interest in visiting Sarawak stems from their desire to explore its diverse culture. The study's several components—culture, food, destination, and shopping—all played a significant role in

influencing tourists to choose Sarawak as a historic, culturally diverse, and distinctive tourist destination. There are six main themes emerged from the data collected through both Instagram interviews and on-site interviews: tourist perception trip, local food, event, free exploration, calm city and social media review. These themes are then integrated into the framework suggested as the outcome of this research.

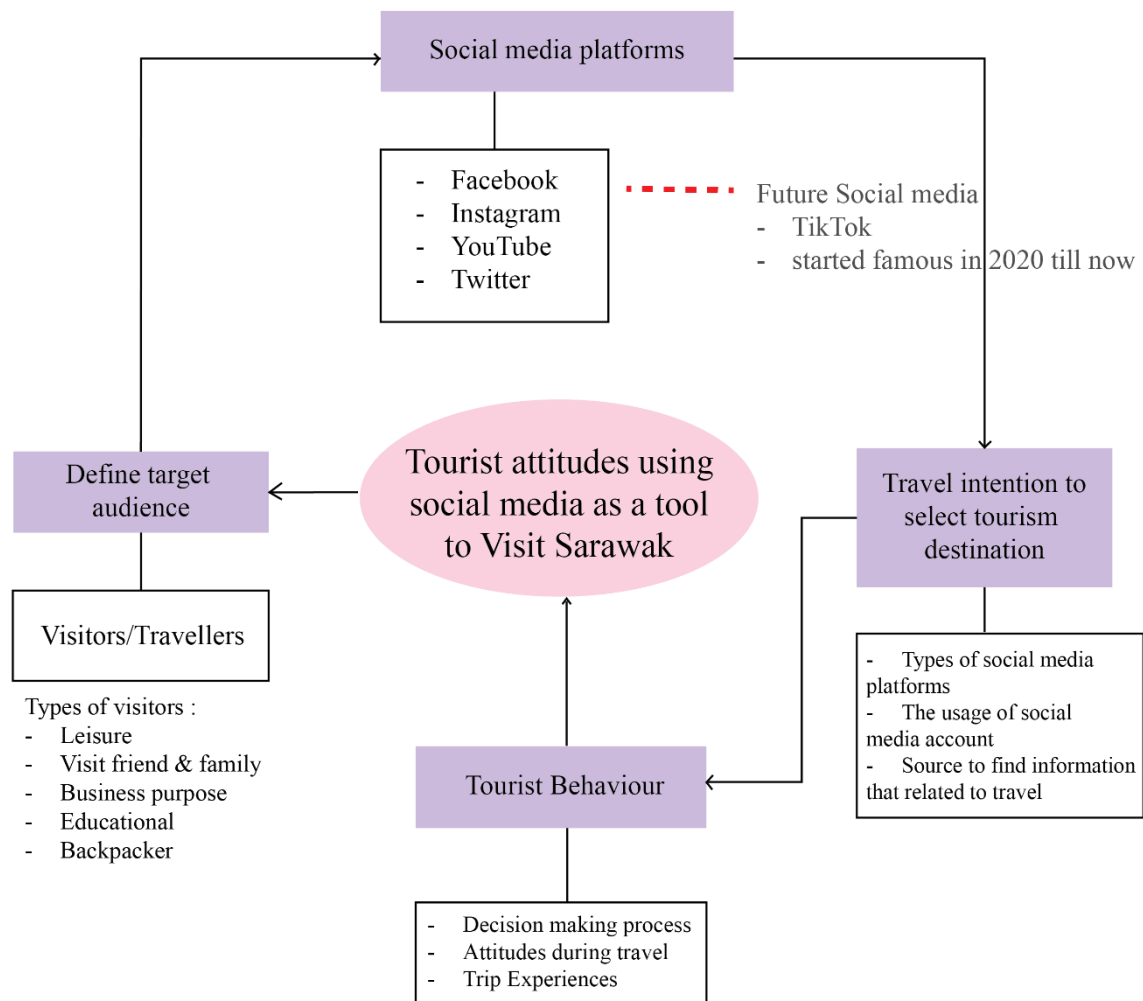
5.2.3 Research Objective 3: To propose a framework that acts as a guideline on the relationship between social media impact towards the tourist behaviour when visiting Sarawak

Throughout time, the tourism industry has become known as one of the fastest-growing worldwide industries. Social media is an effective instrument for networking that is deeply integrated in both social and economic spheres of the real world. Tourism operators are paying close attention to the use of digital technology in the process of discovering destinations for visitors. According to the results and data analysed for objectives one and two, social media platform is one of the tools that influences tourist behaviour when choosing their travel destinations. Thus, the framework proposed are adapted from two models found in literatures which emphasized on Tourist Behaviour by Cohen (2013) and social media Tools to Assist in the Selection of Tourism Destination: The Case Study of Malaysia by Ramayah and Hua (2017) as discussed in Chapter 2.

Figure 5.1 shows the illustrated version of proposed framework which derived from the data analysed from this research. There is a significant relationship between tourist behaviour and the use of social media when choosing Sarawak as the travel destination. The framework is proposed to serve as a guideline for future Visit Sarawak Campaign implementation to the potential stakeholders and our tourism industry can refer to use it for increase visitor numbers, encourage positive reviews or enhance engagement with local

attractions. Besides, it is also can identify the target audience, such as adventure travellers, families, or cultural enthusiasts. Understanding the audience will help to build the social media effectively.

The selection of social media platforms is the main medium that can align with the target audience and objectives. Common platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube were use when tourist need to refer something and also may affect on their behaviour. For example, in this research we can see highest social media user's platform are Instagram and followed by Facebook. Instagram is highly visual and popular among younger demographics, including millennials and Gen Z. It is ideal for showcasing stunning travel imagery, providing glimpses into unique experiences, and promoting visually appealing destinations, activities, and accommodations. Instagram focus on hashtags and influencer culture also makes it valuable for user-generated content campaigns. When choosing social media platforms, consider the demographic characteristics, preferences, and behaviours of the target audience.



Notes :

----- Represent to add for future research

Figure 5.1: Proposed framework on impact of social media as promotional tool towards tourist behaviour (Researcher's own illustration)

5.3 Recommendation for Future Research

The framework, which is derived from the findings is outline in Figure 5.1 and presented along with the results and contextual elements that affect tourist behaviour. Thus, several study gaps are found, and directions for future research are suggested that take the

context into account. We now have a better understanding of a variety of social media influencer marketing-related issues, but we still know little about the many types of influencers that are most effective in which situations and for which objectives. More research is needed on potentially important interactions using the social media platforms. A deeper understanding of this complex process will therefore further improve its external validity and marketing implications. TikTok is one of the trending social media apps that is increasingly popular since the COVID-19 pandemic. Nowadays, an increasing number of content creators use TikTok as a tool for commercial or personal marketing campaigns. Further research needs to be conducted to evaluate the social media content and influencers that are currently in trends in promoting places of interest around the world. Future research might analyse the mechanism underpinning peer impacts, identify social media network's opinion leaders and investigate the social norms that influence tourist actions and decisions to fill the knowledge gap.

5.4 Conclusion

Due to the development of mobile technology, social media channels have the advantage of being more convenient and cost-effective than traditional marketing methods. The audience can participate and give immediate comments. As a result, consumers now have more power. Consumers now play an active role rather than just being a passive listener as they once did. Making use of social media for marketing is essential for success. A good understanding of customer mindset can be gained from the study conducted to see how people respond to social media marketing and word-of-mouth advertising regarding purchase intentions. More researchers should concentrate on tourists from Malaysia and other countries, the majority of whom currently utilise social media.

Significant insights from the gathered data can be summarised in terms of the general demographic and validated against data made public by other sources. From the respondent age group, those between the ages of 18 and 50 have the highest frequency of using the smartphones according to the age distribution. 116 respondents who are active all the time keep themselves updated on social media sites, and they can do this easily with smartphones wherever they are.

As a conclusion, it is hoped that this research has provided a clear insight of how the advancement of technology has changed the use of word-of-mouth advertising to promote tourism. Additionally, being updated with trends and technology will have an impact on the social and economic context. Therefore, collaboration between the government and private sectors is necessary for achieving greater economic growth in the tourism industry. This research has also contributed to the enhancement of using digital platforms such as social media apps as a medium of communication for data collection compared to the conventional approaches such as emails and phone calls. As digital technology develops, researchers should stay up to date and always be aware of the trends.

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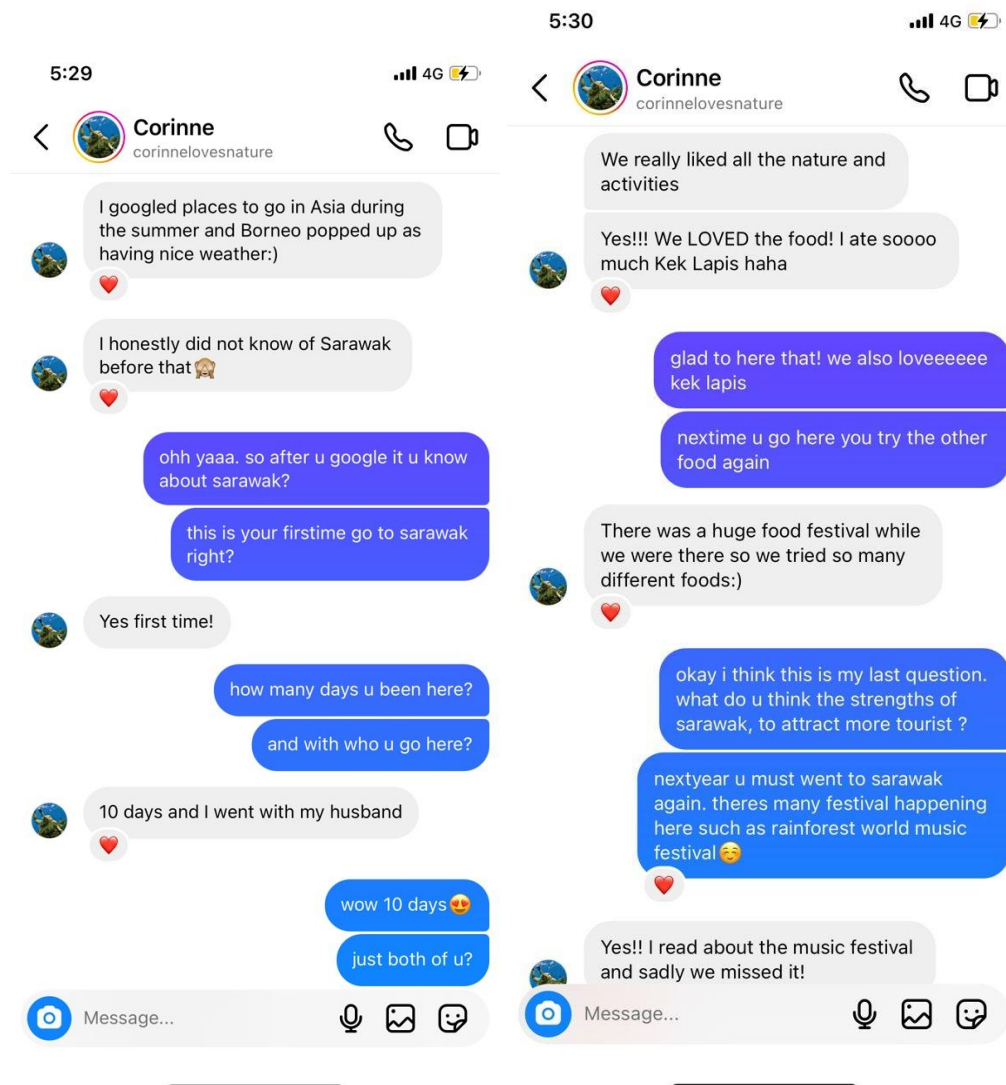
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APPENDICES

Journal Publication

1. Hamnan, N. A. (2020). The impact of social media towards visit sarawak year 2019 as tourist destination. *International Journal of Applied and Creative Arts*, 3(1), 31-42.
<https://doi.org/10.33736/ijaca.2284.2020>

Extract from interview (direct message Instagram)



Questionnaires

29. Any suggestion to improve the upcoming Visit Sarawak Year? *

Maintain the appropriate facilities such as toilets, convenient parking spaces, the right events for each cities, locals and the government should support or involve more individuals to events and such.

30. In future, would you like to revisit Sarawak? (Yes/No) Please specify. *

Yes of course. Nothing beats home.