

MALAYSIAN SOUVENIRS AND  
TOURISTS' BEHAVIOUR TOWARD AUTHENTICITY  
AS AN IMPORTANT SOUVENIR ATTRIBUTE

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*To My Beloved Mak and Pak*

*xoxo*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of authenticity, as an important factor in the souvenir purchase behaviour of Malaysia's international tourists. Demographic characteristics (gender, age, origin and annual income) have major influence on the preference of souvenir categories and importance of souvenir attributes. The three most preferred souvenir categories among international tourist are respectively "clothing & accessories", "food, drink & chocolates" and "handicraft". The authenticity attribute ranked second among most important factors following physical attributes in the souvenir purchase behaviour of Malaysia's international tourists. The survey result shows international tourists tend to find traditional & cultural meaning and Malaysian made product, as the most important souvenir authenticity attributes. 85% of survey tourists' respondents are willing to pay more for local made souvenirs made compare to the imported products. According to the results of Pearson correlation tests, older tourists have higher tendency to purchase local made souvenirs compare to younger tourists. Cross tabulation tests shows tourists from Europe, America, Africa and Oceania are more concerned about authenticity attributes compare to Asian and Middle Eastern respondents who are more concerned about Aesthetic Attributes and Value Attributes. Majority of international tourists are relatively satisfied with the Malaysian souvenir market.

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji kepentingan ‘*authenticity*’ sebagai factor utama dalam tingkah laku pembelian cenderamata terhadap pelancong antarabangsa di Malaysia. Ciri demografi (jantina, umur, kewarganegaraan, dan pendapatan tahunan) mempunyai pengaruh pemilihan katogori utama cenderamata dan kepentingan pencirian cenderamata. Cenderamata yang menjadi keutamaan kepada pelancong antarabangsa adalah pakaian & aksesori, makanan, minuman & coklat dan kraftangan. Faktor pencirian ‘*authenticity*’ merupakan faktor terpenting kedua selepas kepentingan faktor pencirian fizikal. Kajian mendapati pelancong antarabangsa mementingkan makna tradisional & kebudayaan dan produk Malaysia sebagai pencirian ‘*authenticity*’ terpenting. 85% daripada responden sanggup membayar lebih bagi mendapatkan barangan buatan tempatan berbanding barangan luar negara. Menggunakan kaedah ‘*Pearson correlation test*’, kajian mendapati pelancong yang berumur mempunyai kesanggupan yang lebih tinggi untuk mendapatkan barangan tempatan berbanding pelancong golongan muda. Penggunaan ‘*Cross tabulation test*’ pula mendapati pelancong yang berasal dari benua Europe, Amerika, Afrika dan Oceania lebih mementingkan percirian ‘*authenticity*’ berbanding pelancong daripada benua Asia dan Timur Tengah yang mengutamakan pencirian estetik dan nilai. Majoriti pelancong antarabangsa mencapai tahap kepuasan sederhana baik terhadap pasaran cenderamata di Malaysia.

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## **CHPATER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter is to introduce Malaysian Souvenirs and Malaysia tourists' behaviour toward authenticity as an important souvenir attributes. The chapter is divided into ten subchapters which are namely, background of study, statement of research, research questions, research goal, research objectives, importance of research, scope of research, research chart flow and expected findings.

#### **1.2 Background of study**

Among the most prominent issues which are currently under investigation in tourism studies, particularly those which deal specifically with shopping and

retailing, are motivations, satisfaction, customer behaviours, shopper typologies, spatial travel patterns, the production and consumption of handicrafts and other souvenirs, purchase intentions, and authenticity of product and experience lifestyle of the local society (Bloom, 2002).

Authentic crafts and souvenirs that truly represent the destination are essential to provide a memorable experience for tourists. In addition, providing authentic products would be a good opportunity for tourism businesses to become more successful (Wicks, et al., 2004). Among all types of souvenirs attributes, authenticity may be the most important factor that affects tourists' buying intentions (Wicks, et al., 2004).

### **1.3 Statement of research**

This study aims to identify tourists' behaviour toward authenticity as an important attribute in purchasing Malaysian souvenirs. Field studies, survey and literature review are some of the steps of this research which were taken to identify the authentic Malaysia souvenirs. To achieve this aim, the tourists' behaviour toward purchasing souvenirs will be studied. Tourists' behaviour comprises the mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires (Wilkie, 1994).

Based on the tourists' behaviour toward purchasing souvenirs, an analysis is needed to be done to see which types of souvenirs are most favourable souvenirs for the tourists and to what extent authenticity is an important factor which affects tourists' buying intentions.

## **1.4 Research questions**

This study seeks to find answers to the below six research questions which illustrate the frameworks of this study. Each question has its own scope which should be studied. These are the following research questions:

Question Number 1 – What is the relationship between international tourists' demographic characteristics and their favorable souvenir categories and attributes?

The first step of analysis part is to determine the relationship between international tourists' demographic characteristics and their favorable souvenir categories and attributes. In other words, this question seeks for potential relationships between the international tourists' demographic characteristics and their tendency to purchase certain categories of souvenir and their preferences about the souvenir attributes. This part will help further researchers to determine which souvenirs categories should be considered for further promotion, according to the different groups of tourists with different demographic backgrounds.

Question number 2 - Which souvenirs categories are the most favourite among international tourists?

In this part of research it will be sought to identify the most favourite souvenir categories for the international tourists of Malaysia. Findings of this part of research will aid marketers, souvenir market stakeholders and producers and tourism planning organizations to better understand the needs of tourists in concept of their souvenir purchase and adjust their production and marketing activities based on the preferences of their target market.

Question number 3 – What are the most important attributes of souvenir for the international tourists of Malaysia?

The respondents' behaviour toward different attributes of a souvenir, namely, authenticity, aesthetic, physical and values attributes will be studied and the most important souvenir attributes will be identified. Consequently, it will be explained which souvenir attributes are mostly concerned by international tourists of Malaysia during their purchase decision making process.

Question number 4 – To what extent, authenticity of a souvenir is an important factor for Malaysia's international tourists?

This study tries to explain to what extent, the authenticity of a souvenir, is an important factor for the foreign tourists who visit Malaysia. For the purpose of answering this research question, the behaviour of Malaysia international tourists toward the authenticity factors will be studied and compared with other ranges of attributes, namely, physical, value and aesthetic attributes.

Question number 5- Among the several authenticity attributes, which attribute(s) are the most important one(s) for the Malaysia's international tourists?

Authenticity in concept of souvenirs may have different meanings for various individuals and can be reflected through several souvenir attributes. This research seeks to understand what is the most important authenticity attributes for Malaysia's international tourists. In other words, how Malaysia's international tourists interpret authenticity and through what attributes, the international tourists of Malaysia's find a souvenir, authentic.

Question number 6- To what extent, Malaysia's international tourists are satisfied with the current situation of Malaysia's souvenir market, in terms of price range, variety and quality.

As the last part, this research will try to identify to what extent, Malaysia's international tourists are satisfied with the price, variety and quality of Malaysia's souvenir market.

### **1.5 Research goal**

“To evaluate the role of authenticity, as an important factor in the souvenir purchase behaviour of Malaysia's international tourists”

### **1.6 Research objectives**

This study comprises five main objectives in order to achieve the research goal, which is to evaluate the role of authenticity, as an important factor in the souvenir purchase behaviour of international tourists in Malaysia. The objectives are following below:

1. To define the relationship between international tourists demographic characteristics and their favorable souvenir categories and attributes;



2. To recognize most favorable souvenir categories of international tourists;
3. To identify souvenir purchase behaviour of international tourists, in terms of the importance of souvenir attributes and; to find to what extent those attributes are important and influential in their purchase decision:
  - a. Authenticity attributes
  - b. Aesthetic Attributes
  - c. Physical Attributes
  - d. Value Attributes
4. To identify the importance of “authenticity” as an important factor for international tourists in Malaysia
5. To identify the most important authenticity attributes for the international tourists of Malaysia
6. To determine international tourists satisfaction of Malaysian souvenir market.

## **1.7 Importance of research**

Since shopping is an important tourist activity, to determine the important factors about souvenirs and the current market situation may help producers to develop souvenirs and create new products (Nomura, 2002). Retailers within the

souvenir trade should be familiar with tourists' travel motivations to provide a souvenir mix that has appealing attributes in an appealing store environment based on these motivations (Swanson & Horridge, 2006).

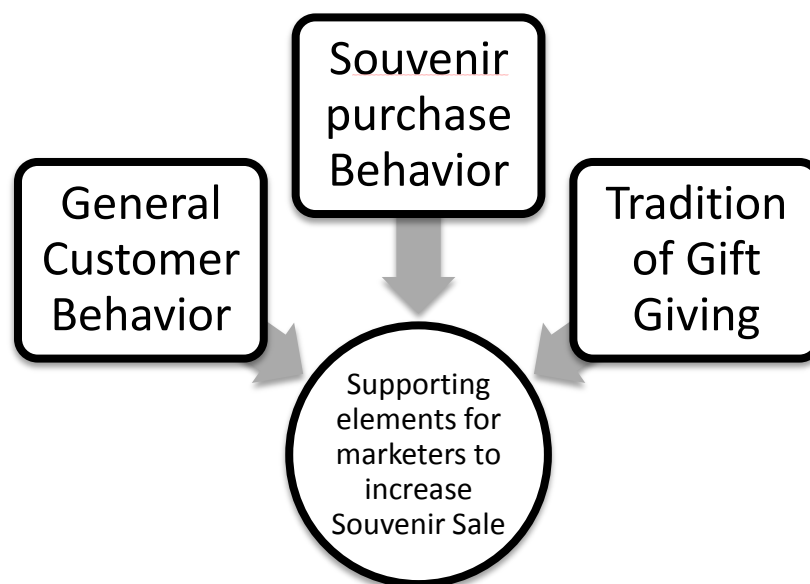


Figure 1.1: Supporting Elements for marketers to increase Souvenir Sale (Nomura, 2002)

Learning general consumer behaviour, souvenir purchase behaviour, and the tradition of gift giving could support marketers in the sale of souvenirs (Figure 1.1) (Nomura, 2002). Without understanding the customers, souvenir retailers will not be able to address the marketing needs and remain viable in today's competitive souvenir marketplace environment (Damrongpipat, 2009). Results of an academic study has shown that, most of souvenir retailers had wrong understanding on the concept of marketing and they operate business without identifying target customers and they did not search for customers' needs (Damrongpipat, 2009). Therefore, tourists may be disappointed when they find little selection or nothing to buy at a destination (Nomura, 2002). In addition, providing authentic products would be a good opportunity for tourism businesses to become more financially successful. (Wicks, et al., 2004).

## **1.8 Scope of research**

In order to reach the goal of the research, which is to evaluate the role of authenticity, as an important factor in the souvenir purchase behaviour of Malaysia's international tourists, the following areas will be studied:

1. Souvenir Market: To further understand the elements of Malaysian souvenir market including the price range, souvenir categories and the attributes.
2. Souvenirs Categories: To identify the available categories of souvenirs which are currently being offered to the tourists in Malaysia.
3. Foreign tourists: To understand the behaviour of tourists from overseas and to find how the local authentic souvenirs can meet their satisfaction.
4. Tourist souvenir purchase behaviour: The process of tourist decision making toward purchasing their souvenir.

### 1.9 Research chart flow

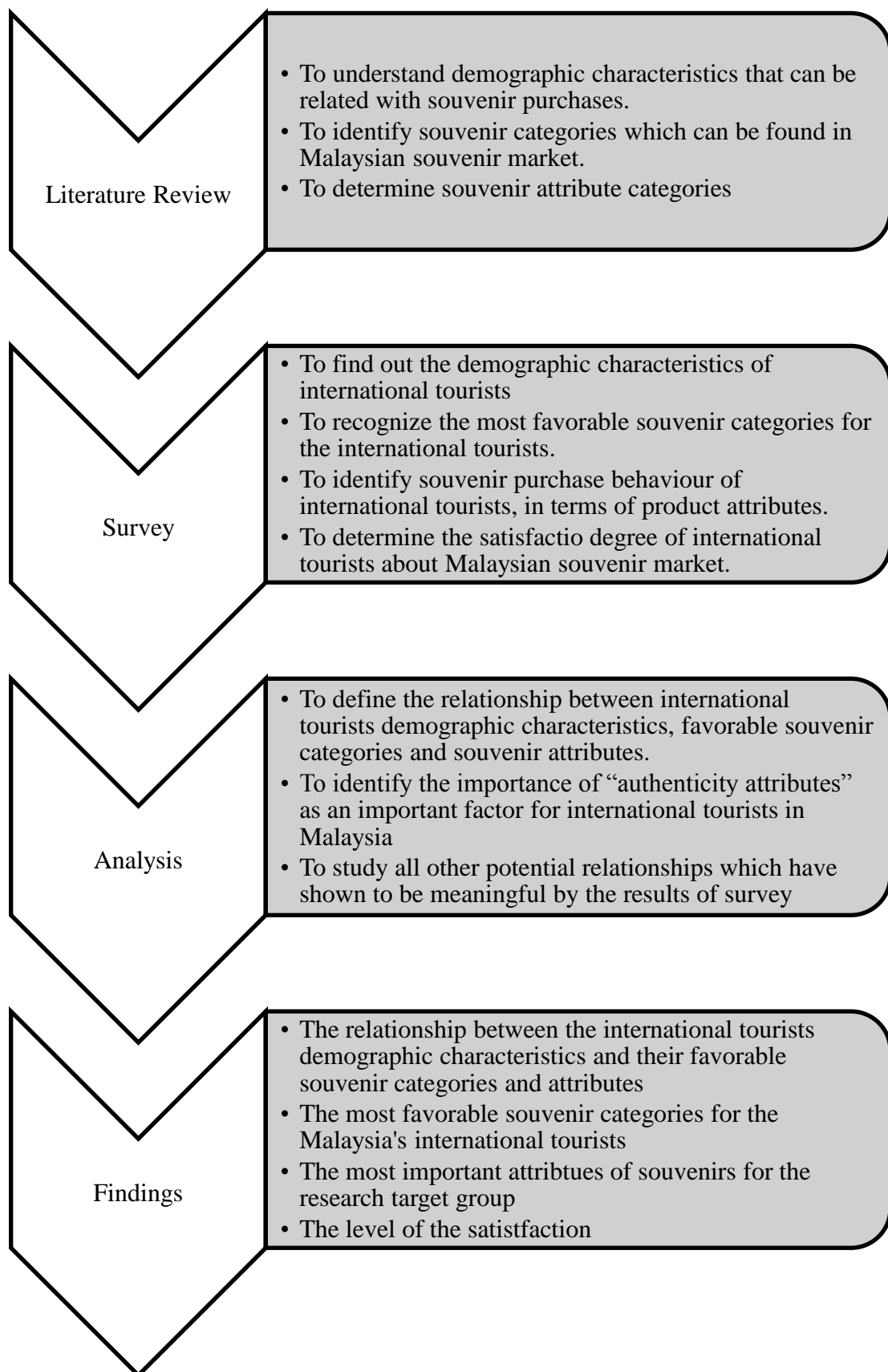


Figure 1.2: Research Flow Chart

### **1.10 Expected findings**

The expected result of this research is to evaluate the role of authenticity, as an important factor in the souvenir purchase behaviour of Malaysia's international tourists. In other words, it will be sought to find out to what extent authenticity is an important attribute for the international tourists of Malaysia.

Other expected results of this research are to find out the relationship between the international tourists demographic characteristics and their favourable souvenir categories and attributes, the most favourable souvenir categories for the Malaysia's international tourists and the tourist satisfaction of Malaysian souvenir market.

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