

The Role of Lifestyle in Creating Tourists' Destination Image and Destination Loyalty

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Abstract

Recently, the issue of causal relationship between destination image and destination loyalty is a crucial subject across the scholars in the topics of tourism area, particularly to clarify positive image and positioning of destinations. The objectives of this study are to scrutinize causal relationships between destination image and destination loyalty as well as the lifestyle of tourists as a novel contribution in psychographics, especially by illustrating the mediation role of lifestyle. Also, the administrated questionnaires have been distributed in the survey. For sampling frame, probability approach is employed by regarding random sampling from 232 out of 258 tourists participated on-site of Kuala Lumpur. The employed approaches for testing causal relationships are Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) features. Both construct reliability and validity are established for the proposed model (i.e. Destination Image-Lifestyle-Destination Loyalty). The findings disclose that destination image significantly associates to lifestyle and destination loyalty. While lifestyle is partially mediated the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. Finally, the researchers realized that if the destination management could fulfill tourists' desires which are adapted on their lifestyles, it leads to create a positive image and positioning as intentions to visit or recommend the destination.

Keywords: Destination image; destination loyalty; lifestyle; mediating effect; SEM

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Image and positioning of destination are crucial issues in attaining a positive destination image and destination loyalty. In this vein, the tourism industry in Malaysia is expected to be a significant export with tremendous growth potential (Kamil, 2010). Hence, the importance of image and positioning in Malaysia is a disputable subject in this study, particularly for tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur. The tourists' feelings, attitudes and beliefs are signs of their image and intentions in tourist behaviour (i.e. decision-making process, evaluation, and behavioural intention). In addition, the attributes, hospitality, facilities and infrastructures of the destination need to be evaluated in order to describe destination image and destination loyalty based on the tourists' experience. However, little is known on the causal relationship between destination image and destination loyalty due to lack of studies in this area. In line with this motivation, this study is aimed to examine the mediation role of lifestyle on the destination image-destination loyalty relationship of tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur as the capital of Malaysia.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destination Image

From an optimistic perspective, destination image is an interesting topic of discussion on tourist behaviour (Byon & Zhang, 2010; Alcaniz, E. B., Garcia, I. S., and Blas, S. S, 2009). The study of Chi and Qu (2008) confirmed that destination image contributes to identifying tourist behaviour and plays a significant role in decision-making process. Destination image is an evaluation of destination in different ways, situations or conditions, which specifically focus on the purchasing services and perceptions of tourists. Beerli and Martin (2004) believed that a strong, coherent, differentiated and identifiable image creates a favourable opinion or attitude towards the destination. This opinion or attitude would be as a light of pharaohs to distinguish the right strategy at the right time and space.

The destination image concept was introduced by Hunt (1975) as 'the perception potential visitors hold about a destination'. This concept has been discussed broadly in the literature by different scholars such as Byon and Zhang (2010), Wang and Hsu (2010) and Baloglu and McCleary (1999). Although this issue has received great attention among scholars on tourist behaviour for over three decades, there is lack of consensus on the destination image concept. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) viewed destination image as the attitude of tourists which is integrated by opinions and images from experienced tourism products and services at the destination.

According to Echtner and Ritchie (1993), destination image is the effect of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) analysis of the destination by the tourists. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) stated that destination image is developed from different fields and disciplines based on economical, social and psychological views. Bigne *et al.* (2001) developed the destination image concept based on the studies of Fakeye and Crompton (1991), Phelps (1986) and Hunt (1975). They viewed that destination image is the sum of perceptions or impressions from the tourism place or destination. Bigne *et al.* (2001) perceived destination image as the subjective interpretation of the visiting or visited destination based on the tourists' experience.

2.2 Destination Loyalty

Although the significance of loyalty has been discussed broadly in the marketing literature, the topic has received little attention in the tourism context (Oppermann, 2000). In general, loyalty refers to repurchasing intention, recommendation, on-going and increasing purchase of products and services (Oppermann, 2000). In the tourism context, revisit and recommend intentions are vital concepts of loyalty. Loyalty is a key factor in tourism research models and is the concept of utmost importance. Loyalty has been much disputed in terms of consumer behaviour. However, it is found that there are only a few studies devoted on tourist loyalty, loyalty intention and destination loyalty (Kozak, 2001; Oppermann, 2000). In this regard, Oppermann (2000) discussed loyalty intention, tourist loyalty and destination loyalty from the tourists' views.

Measuring loyalty in terms of desire is a better predictor of actual behaviour because it assists in understanding retention (Chi and Qu, 2008). The retention of tourists offers advantages such as profit generation (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990), declining costs (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987) and free WOM advertising (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999). According to Jacoby (1994), the benefits of loyalty include: 1) growth of revenue and increase in market share due to the customer's repurchase and promotion willingness, 2) reduction of costs and 3) increase in employees' work satisfaction. Measurements of loyalty assist in developing proper strategies and competitive advantage strategies (Craft, 1999). Hence, "attitudinal measurement, including repeat purchase intentions and WOM recommendations are commonly used to infer customer loyalty, and are found to be a pertinent measure" (Hawking *et al.*, 1989; Jones and Sasser, 1995). It has been shown that loyal customers are highly motivated to repurchase a product or service in the future (Hughes, 1991; Pettrick *et al.*, 2001; Sonmez and Graefe, 1998). In addition, loyal visitors are more motivated to recommend the product or service to friends or relatives (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999). Revisit Intention (RVI) and Recommend Intention (RCI) are strongly inter-correlated, and they are proper indicators of destination loyalty (Taylor, 1998).

According to Mohamad *et al.* (2011) and Yoon and Uysal (2005), destination loyalty is attributed to behavioural intentions such as RVI, RCI and telling a good experience about the destination. Bigne *et al.* (2009) stated that satisfaction is the main antecedent of loyalty. There are cases in which an unsatisfied customer may continue purchasing from the same provider, whereas a satisfied customer may switch to other companies to gain better results. Hence, variety-seeking and novelty may cause loyal tourists to switch to other companies or destinations, indicating that there is a relationship between variety-seeking and loyalty. However, the diverse categories of people result in different variety-seeking and hence, dissimilar loyalty. The loyalty programme diminishes from the market whenever marketers are unaware of their loyal and disloyal customers (Berne *et al.*, 2001). When marketers are aware of their loyal customers, they will continuously improve their services to increase the number of satisfied customers and use the best strategies to reduce variety-seeking. Novelty and variety-seeking play a key role in tourists' behaviour and behavioural intention (Barroso *et al.*, 2007). In general, tourists will be satisfied if they have good travel experience, and therefore they will provide positive images and relate their good travel experience to others. Satisfied tourists will not only assist stakeholders in reducing costs to attract other tourists, but also encourage revisit intention to the destination. Hence, Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and stakeholders should implement the most appropriate strategies at the right time and place in order to grasp loyal tourists.

2.3 Lifestyle

Scaling lifestyle refers to psychographic traits (Gonzalez and Bello, 2002). Psychographics is the mode of lifestyle in terms of construct-pattern, and the psycho traits may vary from one community to another (Baharun *et al.*, 2011). The trace of values and lifestyle in consumer behaviour is presented in terms of psychographic constructs. The results show that the concepts reflect the psychological views of consumers, whereby the psychographic traits represent the purchasers' attitudes with respect to themselves and their environment (Baharun *et al.*, 2011).

Since attitude is a result of the evaluation of a lifestyle trait, it is believed that attitude is an informational process for decision-making of the cognitive and affective systems. Cognitive refers to the evaluation of attributes of a destination whereas affective refers to the tourist's feelings regarding the destination. Hence, attitude is basically a disposition to evaluate goods and services by ranking like-dislike, satisfying-unsatisfying, favour-disfavour or good-bad bipolar lines (Yeoh, 2005). In general, people determine positive or negative feelings regarding the purchase of goods and services when they use attitudes, beliefs and preferences towards products and services. According to Gonzalez and Bello (2002), attitude is the capability of an action or reaction with respect to a stimulus which occurs in the mind of the consumer to influence his or her responses. Preferences, beliefs and opinions influence the decision-making process as portions of attitude (Yeoh, 2005). In this study, it is believed that attitude is a holistic result of lifestyle scaling, in which the lifestyle of tourists can be measured by Activities, Interests and Opinions (AIO). The activities of the tourists are contingency plans which can be changed by the tourists when they reach their destination. It is perceived that the tourists' activities vary from one culture to another, as well as from one nationality to another.

Most tourists prefer to travel in terms of their inner urge that will initiate travel demand (Cooper *et al.*, 1998). This phenomenon is due to differences in an individual's attitudes, perceptions, images and motivations. These factors are crucial in tourism studies as they influence the decision-making process (Abd Aziz and Arrifin, 2009). Also, Schul and Crompton (1983) proposed that describing tourist behaviour in terms of the tourists' lifestyle or personality is more reliable than demographic traits. According to Gonzalez and Bello (2002), lifestyle provides greater knowledge of variables in influencing tourist behaviour.

According to Gonzalez and Bello (2002), travel is due to the motivation of the tourists, which is based on lifestyle, while motivation is attributed to the desires of the tourists. In turn, desires are a consequence of the needs of the tourists. Hence, fulfilling tourists' desires in

terms of lifestyle is more likely to increase RVI or RCI to a particular destination. There is indeed a relationship between lifestyle and travel motives (Abd Aziz and Arrifin, 2009). Since motivation is the antecedent of destination image (Correia *et al.*, 2009), it is believed that there is a correlation between destination image and lifestyle, even though there is lack of the linkage between them in the tourism context.

Brunso *et al.* (2004) argue on models which depict the relationship between lifestyle, personality and behaviour of customers. They believe that lifestyle is a system of individual differences in the habit of declarative and procedural knowledge structures that intervene between abstract goal states and situation-specific perceptions and behaviours. Gonzalez and Bello (2002) propose a relationship that correlates lifestyle and tourist behaviour, and the results confirm that the correlation between lifestyle and behaviour is significant. They segment tourists with respect to their lifestyle and the tourists' behaviour is analyzed. By regarding the above discussion, three hypotheses are deduced as the following:

H1: Destination image positively influences lifestyle.

H2: Lifestyle positively influences destination loyalty.

H3: The relationship between destination image and destination loyalty is significantly mediated by lifestyle.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Instrument for Destination Image

One of the main concepts in tourism is destination image. Although numerous studies have used a variety of scales to measure the cognitive image of destination, few studies have investigated the reliability and validity of the scales. In addition, there is a lack of theoretical and conceptual support for the scales (Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Beerli and Martin (2004); Grosspietsch (2006)). According to Beerli and Martin (2004) and Grosspietsch (2006), Echtner and Ritchie (1993) conducted a study that supports this concept using theoretical and conceptual techniques. Hence, the study of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) is considered as the essence of various studies such as Chen (2001), Obenour *et al.* (2005), Grosspietsch (2006) and Alcaniz *et al.* (2009).

Table 1 provides the items for destination image based on the question, 'How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Kuala Lumpur?' The items listed are specifically constructed for tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur by using a 5-point Likert scale. A score of 1 equals strongly disagree, whereas a score of 5 equals strongly agree. The attributes are considered based on the tourism attractions of Kuala Lumpur, in which the tourists are requested to rate their expectations and experience by comparing the attractions in Kuala Lumpur against those in their home country.

Table 1 Items for destination image

Variables	Items	Variables	Items
DI1	Providing accommodation	DI11	Internet and facilities
DI2	Tourism facilities	DI12	Local transportation
DI3	Shopping centers	DI13	Accessing tourism places
DI4	Tourism activities	DI14	Quality of transportation
DI5	Tourism programs	DI15	Friendliness
DI6	Cleanliness and hygienic	DI16	Quality of restaurants
DI7	Providing tourists' safety	DI17	Reasonable price
DI8	Urbanization	DI18	Quality of accommodations
DI9	Traffic	DI19	Cultures and nationalities
DI10	Gastronomy	DI20	Quality of services

3.2 Research Instrument for Lifestyle

According to Hawkins *et al.* (2001), lifestyles are pattern behaviours and the AIO approach shows how an individual lives in general, and in this case, the tourists describe their attitudes regarding their travel. Gonzalez and Bello (2002) used lifestyle coupled with the AIO approach in order to gain an understanding on the tourists' characteristics pertinent to their behaviour. In this study, lifestyle is measured using a scale adopted from Gonzalez and Bello (2002). The questions are tailored to address the tourists' lifestyle during their visit to Kuala Lumpur using a 5-point Likert scale. A score of 1 equals strongly disagree whereas a score of 5 equals strongly agree. Table 2 presents the dimensions of lifestyle and the position of its items within the instrument.

Table 2 Items for lifestyle

Variables	Items	Variables	Items
AIO1	Programming of traveling	AIO15	Internet, swimming pool and restaurants in accommodation
AIO2	Quality of traveling	AIO16	Applicable souvenirs
AIO3	Traveling for comparing culture and religion	AIO17	Finding tourism information
AIO4	Decreasing the costs	AIO18	Comparing countries with economics, social, and cultural information
AIO5	Environmental interacting	AIO19	Participating tourism programs
AIO6	The importance of traveling for the family	AIO20	Studying about tourism countries
AIO7	Memorable trip	AIO21	Luxury accommodations and places
AIO8	Going out	AIO22	Visiting historical places
AIO9	Culture and influencing individuals	AIO23	Participating conferences/exhibitions
AIO10	Relationship of job/income with traveling	AIO24	Participating in celebrating/carnivals
AIO11	Experiencing new destinations	AIO25	Hiking/walking in the nature
AIO12	Interesting of visiting new cultures and nations	AIO26	News from media
AIO13	Comfortable place	AIO27	Using sports facilities golf/swimming/aerobic
AIO14	Local food	AIO28	Shopping

3.3 Research Instrument for Destination Loyalty

The tourists' commitment with regards to a specific destination is of particular importance to understand tourist behaviour. Commitment refers to destination loyalty, which can be interpreted as the tourists' intentions or attitudes in the future. Hence, tourists' loyalty is a crucial topic in order to identify how to retain tourists as customers. Hence, destination loyalty is scaled by 'revisit', 'revisit intention', 'referral WOM', 'telling good experience' and 'encouraging others to travel to the destination'. 'RVI', 'RCI' and 'telling good experience' are used as the instrument for destination loyalty. Mohamad *et al.* (2011) scaled destination loyalty by four items, namely, 'RVI', 'RCI', 'telling good experience' and 'encouraging others', in which its composite reliability is 0.86. Chi and Qu (2008) found that the construct reliability for destination loyalty is 0.9, and the construct comprise 'RVI' and 'RCI'. Lee *et al.* (2011) measured tourist loyalty by three indicators, namely, 'RVI', 'RCI' and 'telling good experience' and its Cronbach's alpha is found to be 0.875. The above items are used in this study, similar to those implemented by Baker and Crompton (2000), Noe (1987) as well as Van Raaij and Fracken (1984). In this study, the items for destination loyalty are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Items for destination loyalty

Variables	Items	Reference
RV11	Revisit Intention	Adopted from Chi and Qu (2008)
RV12	Recommend Intention	
RV13	Telling a Good Experience	Adopted from Lee <i>et al.</i> (2011)

3.4 Data Collection and Research Design

The sampling frame is determined via travel agencies located within Kuala Lumpur. The questionnaires are administered and the data are collected from the sample, consisting of tourists in Kuala Lumpur who are accommodated by travel agencies. The sample consists of seven locations or groups, and the data are gathered from June to July 2012 (two months). Several meetings are conducted with the managers from the relevant travel agencies prior to data collection, in which the distribution of questionnaires among tourists within the allocated period is discussed. The managers are helpful and they contact the tourists travelling via their travel agencies during their spare time. Multivariate analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are used to investigate the relationship of the constructs within the tourism context. Descriptive statistics and SEM are used for data analysis in order to support or refute the hypotheses. The measurement and structural models are tested using the rules given by Hair *et al.* (2010). The study of Hair *et al.* (2010) specified the conditions to analyze the construct reliability and construct validity of the fitting models. SEM and multivariate analysis will be further detailed in the following section.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 16.0 and Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 16.0 software are used for data analysis. AMOS is powerful software to analyze SEM, whereas SPSS is equipped with features and techniques for data analysis. Central

tendency determines the level of dispersion at the scales. The mean is useful as a measure of central tendency while standard deviation is a useful measure of variability to describe each item in the various constructs. The descriptive statistics on the scales and subscales for a sample size of 212 are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics on scales and subscales (N=212)

Scales and Subscales	No.of Items	Mean	SD
DIMG1, Functional	5	3.86	0.71
DIMG2, Mixed	8	3.79	0.76
DIMG3, Psychological	7	3.53	0.75
Overall score of Destination Image	20	3.73	0.74
LIF1, Opinions	10	4.03	0.71
LIF2, Interests	11	3.89	0.75
LIF3, Activities	7	3.86	0.78
Overall score of Lifestyle	28	3.93	0.75
RV11, Revisit Intention	1	3.79	1.00
RV12, Recommend Intention	1	3.87	0.96
RV13, Telling a Good Experience	1	3.75	0.98
Overall score of Destination Loyalty	3	3.80	0.98

*SD: Standard Deviation

The reliability of the instrument is measured by Cronbach's Alpha in order to determine the internal consistency between the dimensions, constructs and questionnaire. Table 5 shows that the Cronbach's alpha for the instrument is $\alpha = 0.94$ and the subscales exceed 0.7 (Nunnally, 1987; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 5 Cronbach's Alpha for constructs and their dimensions

Constructs	Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Destination Image		20	0.92
DI1-DI5	Functional	5	0.84
DI6-DI13	Mixed	8	0.86
DI14-DI20	Psychological	7	0.91
Lifestyle		28	0.94
AIO1-AIO10	Opinions	10	0.87
AIO11-AIO21	Interests	11	0.91
AIO22-AIO28	Activities	7	0.94
Destination Loyalty		3	0.87
Questionnaire		51	0.94

4.2 Unidimensionality Analysis & Construct Reliabilities (CR)

The data for destination image and lifestyle are categorized in terms of the mean for each case by transferring the data to the scale type (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test is notable (MSA=0.83) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant. Following this, unidimensionality analysis and construct reliability and validity are carried out (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) and the results show that the total explained variance (communality variance) for the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 is 71.15% for the three factors. Unidimensionality is investigated by examining the standardized residual covariance matrix and it is found that only three values are greater than 2.58 (Cov (DIMG1, RV13)= 2.6; Cov (DIMG3, LIF3)= 3.16; Cov (DIMG2,LIF3)= 4.761). The remaining values are less than the cut off value of 2.58 (Anderson and Gerbing., 1988; Fornell, 1983; Bagozzi, 1983). Hence, unidimensionality is established for each factor. The CR values are obtained to be 0.85, 0.84 and 0.88 for destination image, lifestyle and destination loyalty, respectively. The unidimensionality analysis for the overall model is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Unidimensionality analysis for the overall model

Items	1	2	3
DIMG1	0.638		
DIMG2	0.844		
DIMG3	0.778		
LIF1		0.761	
LIF2		0.799	
LIF3		0.693	
RV11			0.839
RV12			0.855
RV13			0.782

Measurement Model Results & Goodness of Fit (GOF) Indices

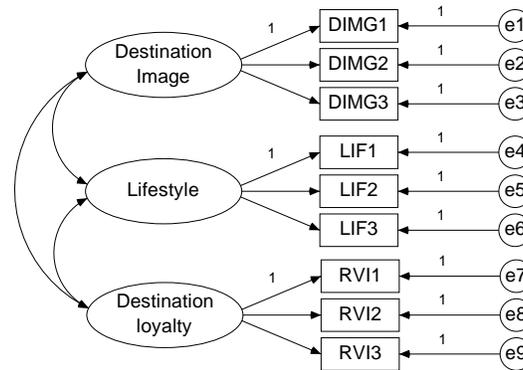


Figure 1 Measurement model of main constructs

The Goodness of Fit (GOF) indices are calculated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in order to determine how well the model fits with the sampled data. The fitting indices are used to identify whether the measured items of the construct are consistent with factor of that construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, items with a factor loading less than 0.5 will be eliminated from the model. CFA is performed for the overall measurement model and it is found that the factor loadings for all items are significant, whereby the items have a factor loading above 0.5. The GOF indices are obtained to be $\chi^2 = 169.34$, $\chi^2 / df = 1.8$, RMSEA= 0.06, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, GFI = 0.91, SRMR= 0.057 and RMR = 0.04. The Normed Chi-square test ($\chi^2 / df = 1.81$) confirms that there is a considerable difference between the observed and estimated data. The GFI value of 0.91 indicates that the model fits well with the sampled data. The values of RMSEA (0.06), RMR (0.04) and SRMR (0.057) represent Badness-of-Fit indices (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The results indicate that there are no problems in fitting the model with the sampled data. Incremental indices used to compare the default, independent and saturated models show that the proposed model is acceptable. Since the complexity of the model results in weakness of the incremental indices, parsimony indices are used to overcome this drawback. The factor loadings and error variances of the items are tabulated in Table 7.

Table 7 Factor loadings and error variances of items

	F	E	F	E	F	E
Destination image						
DIMG1	0.64	0.30				
DIMG2	0.69	0.30				
DIMG3	0.81	0.20				
Lifestyle						
LIF1			0.66	0.29		
LIF2			0.90	0.10		
LIF3			0.51	0.45		
Destination loyalty						
RV11					0.93	0.14
RV12					0.90	0.18
RV13					0.68	0.52

*Note: F=Factor loading, E=Error variance

4.3 Structural Model & Testing Hypotheses

The relationship between three constructs, namely, destination image (3 items), lifestyle (3 items) and destination loyalty (3 items) is found to be significant. The aim of this section is to analyze the mediating effect of lifestyle on the destination image-destination loyalty relationship. Two models (with and without direct effect) are used to determine the mediator role of lifestyle. CFA is carried out on both models, and the relationship between destination image, lifestyle and destination loyalty is shown in Figure 1. The labelled arrow (R1) indicates the direct effect, while the difference between both models is represented by the direction of R1. According to (Hair et al., 2010), the role of lifestyle has a partial mediating effect if both models exhibit difference and that the SCDT test is significant.

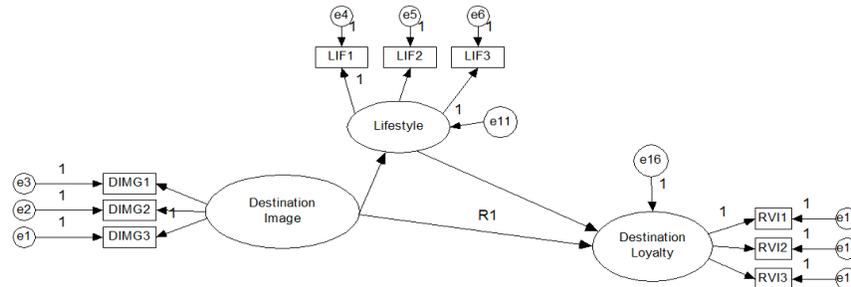


Figure 2 Destination image-lifestyle-destination loyalty relationship

The proposed models are examined using AMOS 16.0, in which the first model (without R1) and second model (with R1) are run in order to determine the GOF indices. SCDT test is used to compare both models. From Table 8, it can be seen that both models fit well with the sampled data.

Table 8 CFA for destination image-lifestyle-destination loyalty

Model Element	Model without Direct Effect	Model with Direct Effect
Model Fit		
Chi-square (χ^2)	96.39	80.22
Degree of Freedom (df)	25	24
Probability (P.)	0	0
RMSEA	0.116	0.105
CFI	0.907	0.927
Standardized Parameters Estimates		
Destination Image \longrightarrow Lifestyle	0.44 (Sig.)	0.38 (Sig.)
Lifestyle \longrightarrow Destination Loyalty	0.44 (Sig.)	0.26 (Sig.)
Destination Image \longrightarrow Destination Loyalty	No Estimated	0.35 (Sig.)

The directions for both models are significant, particularly for the direct effect (R1). Hence, hypotheses H1 and H2 are supported. The value of the total effect changes upon addition of the direct effect. From Table 9, it can be seen that the total effect increases from 0.192 to 0.451, which indicates that full mediation is not present due to the significance of the direct effect.

Table 9 Assessment of direct and indirect effects in the model

Standardized Effects of	Only Indirect Effects	Indirect and Direct Effects
DIMG \longrightarrow DLOY		
Total Effects	0.192	0.451
Direct Effects	0	0.35
Indirect Effects	0.192	0.101

Note: DIMG: Destination Image, DLOY: Destination Loyalty

The results of the SCDT test are $\Delta\chi^2=16.162$, $\Delta df=1$, and $p=0$. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the SCDT test reveals that there is no full mediation in this model. The destination image-lifestyle-destination loyalty path is found to be significant. Hence, the mediator role of lifestyle supports hypothesis H3, with partial mediation.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The image and position of Kuala Lumpur are issues which are worthy of investigation, and this study highlights that there is a significant causal relationship between destination image and destination loyalty among tourists who visited Kuala Lumpur. The key finding of this study is the relationship between destination image, lifestyle and destination loyalty. A closer examination of the marketing efforts and activities presented in this study may provide more detailed information and useful sources for managerial applications due to the fact that incorporation of marketing concepts and competitive development strategies will facilitate in enhancing destination loyalty. It is believed that excellent service, quality of service encounters, provisions, implementing the right strategies (in terms of tourists' lifestyle patterns), increasing tourist attractions of the destination, creating a positive image, as well as integrating a positive role of service encounters will increase the number of loyal tourists. Hence, development of an appropriate target market and strong destination image, tourism promotions and implementation of the right strategies at the right time will enable tourism destinations to fulfil the tourists' demands and desires.

Another key finding in this study relates to the role of DMO in tourism. The role of DMO is particularly important for tourism in the long term and DMO should consistently check the received feedback from tourists regarding the image and position of a particular destination. The findings of this study emphasize that appropriate destination management efforts and marketing may assist in creating and integrating tourism attractions, products, and resources, which results in projecting a positive image and position for the destination. It is professed that DMO, stakeholders and tourism planners should collaborate on developing the main attractions and resources (in particular, uniqueness of the destination) in order to attain loyal tourists.

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