When Central Asian Prefers Langkawi Island: Understanding Luxury Travel Motivations and Behaviour

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Abstract
This study investigates luxury tourists' outbound travel motivation and how it influences their tourism destination selection, satisfaction, and future revisit intention. Two hundred and fifty-six (256) respondents participated in this study. The online survey link was shared using social media platforms where the snowball technique spread the questionnaire links to the respondents that fit the study's inclusion. Partial-Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test and confirm the study model and hypotheses. Combining two theoretical underpinnings, Maslow's theory of motivation and push and pull motivations theory, this study's findings depict two major antecedents of luxury-driven experiences: social value and destination uniqueness. The results demonstrate that luxury tourists' push and pull travel motivation predictors emerged as significant antecedents for their destination satisfaction and willingness to return. Furthermore, the mediating effect confirms that satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the pull motivation and revisit intention inter-relationship. The findings of this study provide empirical support for understanding the psychological aspects of luxury travellers while offering insights for destination managers to develop niche marketing strategies for attracting luxury tourists. The present research also provides luxury tourism destination managers with a clear comprehension of the underlying mechanism of the luxury tourists' loyalty generation process.

1. Introduction

The luxury tourism industry is the most dynamic tourism sector. It has been growing at an unprecedented rate in the last few years due to increasing spending power, a growing middle-class population, debouching luxury trends, and expanding luxury hotels (Straits Research, 2023). As a result, the luxury tourism market size has been valued at USD 20 billion in 2022. It is projected to grow at over 15 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2023 to 2032, mostly driven by a growing demographic of affluent consumers in the Asia Pacific (Global Market Insight, 2023). As a result, tourism researchers globally highlighted the growing importance of luxury tourism competitiveness,

which prompted a surge in exploratory studies to contribute more thorough insights into tourists' motivational behaviour (Japutra et al., 2022; Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Morando & Platania, 2022).

The competitiveness of luxury tourism destinations refers to their ability to attract and retain high-end travellers based on various factors such as the quality of the accommodations, services, and amenities offered, the reputation of the destination or business, and the overall travel experience (Japutra et al., 2022; Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Yi et al., 2021; Morando & Platania, 2022). Seebaluck et al. (2015) suggested that destination countries looking to boost their tourism luxury identity should identify the capabilities of their current and emerging target markets and personalize their image development and placement efforts to specific socio-demographics demand. In addition, researchers claimed that analysing and understanding luxury visitor perceptions, preferences, and experiences is crucial to enhancing destination planning and management and ensuring long-term competitiveness and sustainability (Correia et al., 2020; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022).

Studying tourist travel motivation is important for understanding why people travel, which can help develop effective marketing strategies and design more satisfying travel experiences. The literature review has unlocked several theoretical frameworks commonly used to study tourist travel motivation. One of the most widely used frameworks is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which suggests that individuals travel to fulfil basic physiological and psychological needs (Yousaf et al., 2018). Another influential framework is the Push-Pull theory, which suggests that individuals are motivated to travel by push factors, such as dissatisfaction with their current environment, and pull factors, such as the destination's attractiveness (Uysal et al., 2008). On the other hand, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) suggests that individuals' travel intentions and behaviours are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Hsu & Huang, 2012).

Even though travel motivation is popular in tourism literature, most researchers overlook niche luxury tourists' travel perspectives. Despite the considerable volume of research in the area of luxury tourism, a limited understanding was found of how to travel motivation factors influence luxury travel behaviour (Correia et al., 2019; Correia et al., 2020; Iloranta & Komppula, 2022). Most research posed a similar theoretical question: how are tourist behaviour and destination characteristics intertwined? In addition, do these tourists' "push and pull motivations" influence their destination satisfaction and future travel intentions? This creates a deficiency of studies focusing on why luxury tourists travel outbound and prefer to visit a specific destination. However, besides the current theories that elaborate upon luxury consumption are based exclusively on luxury products, past literature illustrates a limited understanding of luxury tourism demand and variability, which are distinct from physical products (Correia et al., 2020; Han & Hyun, 2018; Kim, 2018; Shim et al., 2017; Yang & Mattila, 2016). Besides, even though generally luxury travel products attract large numbers of tourists, luxury tourism within the island context is an under-researched segment (Correia et al., 2020; Han & Hyun, 2018; Iloranta, 2022; Seo et al., 2021).

The study setting is the Central Asia market comprising Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan tourists visiting Langkawi Island, Malaysia. Since 2010, Malaysia has aggressively attracted the Central Asia market through its promotion agency, Tourism Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia Annual Report, 2015), by selling its nature and island tourism products (LADA, 2018; 2019). As a result, according to the Malaysia Tourism Performance Report (2019), the number of Central Asia tourists who visited Malaysia increased by 17.3% (35,931 tourists) from 30,623 tourists in 2018 (Malaysia Tourism Performance Report, 2019). Notably, their destination selection behaviour is unique as most prefer Langkawi Island to other popular tourism destinations in Malaysia (Puvaneswary, 2019). This is consistent with other studies' proposition that Central Asia tourists are primarily fascinated by warm sunny beach recreation, particularly with luxury island tourism destinations (Ismagulova et al., 2020). Still, there is a lack of understanding of why they prefer Langkawi Island to other nearby island destinations within the

Southeast Asia region and whether they perceive Langkawi as a luxury island destination compared to other Malaysian-based island.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are two Central Asian countries with growing economies and increasing middle-class populations, which have been associated with rising demand for luxury travel experiences (Seitz, 2019). Notably, due to the recent political, social, and economic changes, their demand for outbound travel has escalated since 2010 (Kantarci, 2007; The World Data Bank, 2019). However, the quality and nature of public services in these two countries vary significantly due to a range of factors related to their society, politics, history, and culture (Ključnikov et al., 2022; Potluka et al., 2023). Therefore, the importance of studying the unique tourist behaviour and motivations of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan visitors to Malaysia lies in the potential to enhance the Malaysian tourism industry's marketing strategies and improve the quality of services. Based on this rationale and context, the researchers formulate the following questions: i) Do Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan's push-pull luxury travel motivations influence their destination selection?; ii) What is the inter-relationship between push-pull luxury travel motivations and post-travel behaviour?

The study findings significantly contribute to luxury tourism marketing research, especially in a niche market. This study also explains how luxury destinations can create the demand for prerequisites by facilitating the luxurious tourism service experience. Specifically, the research findings are expected to assist tourism agencies in producing customized marketing and advertising campaigns, illuminating areas involving luxury tourists' motivations, and positioning them as a superior tourist destination. Practically, the findings give supplemental ideas to destination managers on formulating marketing strategies appropriate for developing destination image that suits the niche luxury tourism market. Additionally, the findings can help tourism stakeholders in Langkawi Island and other Malaysian destinations develop targeted marketing campaigns and tailor their products and services to meet luxury travellers' specific needs and desires. Readers also can benefit from gaining insights into the behaviours and preferences of luxury travellers from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and how they differ from those of tourists from other regions. This study offers a deeper understanding of the luxury travel market, identifying potential opportunities for business development and growth in Langkawi Island and Malaysia as a whole and gaining insights into Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan travellers' unique cultural and social characteristics.

The following section reports the relevant literature review and study hypothesis development. This is followed by elaborating on the study methodology, including study population inclusion criteria, sampling technique and survey instruments. Subsequently, the hypotheses testing assessment was described and reported. Finally, the paper summarises and discusses the study findings, implication, future research, and limitations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Luxury Tourism

Luxury tourism is often defined by extravagant tourism products and hospitality services ranging within an integrated memorable travel experience (Yang & Mattila, 2016) that aligns with specific elevated purchasing power travellers (Shim et al., 2017) and unique escapism needs (Correia et al., 2020). From the consumer perspective, luxury means consuming extravagant products and experiences – which highlights how luxury has transformed from materialism (old luxury) towards experience and aspirations (new luxury) (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018). These luxury travellers prefer real, unique, authentic experiences to stimulate them physically and intellectually, adding novelty to their lives (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2018). These include experiencing luxury travel, fine dining, and pampering services (Kim, 2018), which are common in luxury tourism destination

experiences (Thirumaran & Raghav, 2017). The increase in luxury travellers attracted the attention of academics and industries willing to understand their behaviour towards destination selection. However, recent research on luxury in the tourism context has diversified substantially either focus on luxury destination attributes or tourist behaviour (Iloranta, 2019). Notably, past studies have noted luxury customers' expectations are constantly evolving, which creates challenges for service providers to continually enhance their services based on their modern customers' expectations of 'luxury'. Besides, numerous studies only focuses on star-rated hotels and cruises experience, with a limited investigation of luxury island settings.

According to a study by Bazi et al. (2020), luxury travel motivations can be categorized into three dimensions: hedonic, social, and cognitive. Hedonic motivations refer to the desire for sensory pleasure, relaxation, and escapism, while social motivations involve the desire for social recognition and status. Cognitive motivations are associated with learning, exploration, and personal development. The study found that hedonic and social motivations were more prevalent among European luxury travellers than cognitive motivations. In terms of luxury travel perceptions, a study by Novotná and Kunc (2019) found that European luxury travellers perceived luxury travel as an indulgent experience that provided them with relaxation, rejuvenation, and escape from everyday life. European luxury travellers also perceived luxury travel as a form of self-reward and self-pampering, which helped to enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence. Furthermore, a study by Cetin and Walls (2016) found that European luxury travellers valued authentic and personalized experiences and were willing to pay a premium for unique and exclusive experiences tailored to their preferences and interests. The study also found that European luxury travellers valued social responsibility and sustainability highly, and they expected luxury travel providers to demonstrate their commitment to these values.

On the other hand, luxury travellers in the other parts of the world are motivated by several factors, including seeking unique experiences, social status, and personal fulfilment (Iloranta, 2022; Correia et al., 2020). According to Iloranta (2022), luxury travellers seek "immersive, authentic, and transformative" experiences that allow them to create lasting memories. Yang and Khoo-Lattimore (2021) found that luxury travel is also used to display social status and prestige and that luxury travellers seek to satisfy their personal needs for self-esteem, self-actualization, and personal growth through travel. Specifically, luxury travellers in the USA have certain perceptions of what luxury travel entails. For example, they perceive luxury travel as exclusive, high-end, and personalized (Yang & Khoo-Lattimore, 2021). Additionally, luxury travellers in the USA perceive luxury travel as being associated with high-quality service, amenities, and experiences (Iloranta, 2022; Correia et al., 2020).

On a similar note, most luxury travellers value privacy, security, and comfort (Correia et al., 2020). A study by Kauppinen-Räisänen et al. (2019) found that luxury travellers have become more health-conscious and safety-conscious since the pandemic began and are more likely to prioritize destinations with implemented strict health and safety protocols. Additionally, the pandemic shifted their luxury travel preferences, with luxury travellers showing an increased interest in luxury-based nature-based tourism and remote destinations (Ritter, 2022). As such, it appears evident that a need exists in the modern literature to develop a complete understanding of luxury tourists' behaviour. Notably, further understanding the expectations of luxury tourists would bring new value to the practical and academic discussion of what constitutes luxury tourism (Iloranta, 2019; Novotná & Kunc, 2019).

2.2. Travel Motivation

Moutinho and Vargas (2018) determine motivation as a psychological state of need that guides a person to develop specific behaviours. Since it reflects intrinsic needs, motivation is the foundation of tourists' behaviour. Numerous tourism experts have attempted to understand the complexity of needs by introducing the concept of pull and push travel motivational factors (Chen & Chen, 2015; Kanagaraj

& Bindu, 2013; Prayag & Hosany, 2014; Zhang & Peng, 2014; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2012). Researchers argue within the luxury consumers realm that two intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive those who seek luxury products, services and experiences. Intrinsic motivations refer to a search for self-fulfilment and pleasure in individuals. In contrast, extrinsic motivations refer to seeking unique social and interpersonal (social status, prestige) needs and want (Gallarza et al., 2017; Gavurova et al. 2023).

Maslow's theory of motivation and push and pull motivations theory grounds this study framework development. Maslow's theory of motivation is a psychological theory that explains how human needs drive behaviour. The theory suggests that people are motivated to fulfil basic physiological and safety needs before moving on to more advanced needs, such as self-actualization (Yousaf et al., 2018). Five levels of the pyramid often represent the hierarchy of needs. The first is physiological needs which are the basic biological needs of the body, such as food, water, shelter, and warmth. Second is the need for security and protection, such as personal safety, financial security, and stability. Third is the need for social interaction, relationships, and a sense of belonging; the fourth is the need for self-esteem, self-respect, and the respect of others. Finally, the fifth includes the need for personal growth and self-fulfilment, such as creativity, self-expression, and personal goals.

On the other hand, the push and pull motivations theory is a framework that explains how people make decisions about travel and mobility (Uysal et al., 2008). The theory suggests that people are motivated to travel for two main reasons: push factors, which are negative motivations that drive people away from a place, and pull factors, which are positive motivations that attract people to a place. Push factors include crime, pollution, and high cost of living, which can make people want to leave a place. On the other hand, pull factors include job opportunities, good weather, and cultural attractions, which can make people want to move to a place. The push and pull motivations theory is often used to understand how different factors influence people's mobility patterns and to identify potential barriers to mobility.

2.2.1. Push Motivational Factors

The "push" and "pull" motivations proposed by Dann (1977) have been the most widely accepted theory in the travel motivation literature. Push factors are internal and emotional attributes leading to travel decisions. Most travel to relax, participate in stress-relieving activities, prestige, or interact with family or friends (Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015). Researchers defined push factors as internal forces connected to psychological needs that encourage people to travel (Chen & Chen, 2015; John & Larke, 2016). This includes the desire to escape from daily routine, unwind, experience new things, socialize, knowledge searching and ego improvement (Aquino et al., 2019; Dean & Suhartanto, 2019). Yousefi and Marzuki (2015) propose novelty and knowledge-seeking. Meanwhile, Sastre and Phakdee-Auksorn (2017) highlight that the most important motivational factors were getting away from daily schedules and relaxing while appreciating nature.

On the other hand, Chang and Sung (2016) and Nikjoo and Ketabi (2015) found escapism and ego enhancement were the most important push motivation factors for tourists to travel. Notably, feeling safe is significant for international tourists when dealing with unfamiliar environments, diverse cultural backgrounds, and language barriers. Their decisions are heavily influenced by their perception of destinations' safety and security. Therefore, the risk involved with safety and security levels would influence tourist motivation and travel decisions (Chetthamrongchai, 2017). Hence, most of the tourists typically avoid certain places in favour of safer vacation spots.

Looking at the coastal and island tourism realm, Yoon and Uysal (2005) point out that "Push" factors comprised excitement, relaxation, knowledge, achievement, family togetherness, education, escape, safety, fun and being away from home. Looking at the Medes Islands (Catalonia, Spain), Palau-Saumell et al. (2019) propose that personal escape influence behavioural intention towards island tourism. On the other hand, Güzel et al. (2020) identified six push factors: curiosity, relaxation, escape

and active life, extravagance, and bragging as essential elements for tourists visiting the Mediterranean coast. Similarly, Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2018) highlighted rest and relaxation, nostalgia, escape, novelty, prestige, family relationships, and social interaction as the main reasons tourists visit Mauritius Island. As such, most researchers argued that push motivational factor can be reflected via travellers' perception of knowledge, relaxation, escape, and safety dimensions.

2.2.2. Pull Motivational Factors

Pull motivation are the travel-generated forces consisting of tangible and intangible attributes of a tourism destination (Aquino et al., 2019; Chen & Chen, 2015; Rice & Khanin, 2019). The most common pull factors are historical places, natural beauty, culture, safety and security, weather, shopping, affordable prices, and cleanliness. However, in terms of island destinations, attractions and facilities such as physical and intangible features, beaches, natural views (Augustine, 2017), and affordable accommodation (Salimon et al., 2019) are important characteristics that draw tourists to visit and revisit a tourism destination. Also, tourism infrastructures, safety, and environmental equity are major factors attracting tourists to island destinations (Quintal et al., 2017). Past studies also highlighted that natural scenery and landscapes and the hospitality and kindness of the people were the most important pull motivators among British tourists (Sastre & Phakdee-Auksorn, 2017).

Meanwhile, Zaytseva (2017) discovered that tourists sought prices, personal safety, and destination quality. Notably, the cost of travelling, including food and transportation, lodging, and entertainment expenses, influences tourists' decision-making. Notably, some tourists prefer to revisit a destination because they refuse to spend more money visiting a new tourist spot (Jarvis et al., 2016). On the other hand, natural products of coastal and island tourism are the main reason for tourists to visit. For example, due to its natural beauty and various attractions, visitors are attracted to visit Australia's Great Barrier Reef (Jarvis et al., 2016), Sipadan Island (Tiung & Suriani, 2010), Langkawi Island (Ibrahim et al., 2019), and Tsitsikamma National Park (Carvache-Franco et al., 2018). On the other hand, cultural aspects offer tourists a unique experience, a critical decision-making criterion. Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2018) identified the local culture and tradition, which are part of the heritage factor, as vital tourists' motivations to the island of Mauritius. Hence, based on the literature, pull travel motivation can be reflected via travellers' perceptions of economic, natural and cultural dimensions.

2.3. Hypotheses Development

This study hypothesised that push and pull travel motivation predictors emerged as significant antecedents for their destination satisfaction and post-travel behaviour, combining two theoretical underpinnings: motivations theory and Theory of Planned Behaviour. Most recent studies found a significant link between push motivational factors and tourists' satisfaction and future behaviour (Japutra et al., 2022; Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Morando & Platania, 2022). Notably, tourists revisit intention are affected by their satisfaction level (Battour et al., 2017; Kock et al., 2018; Schaller et al., 2017; Pearce, 2016) and decide based on their initial motives (Kock et al., 2018; Xu & Chan, 2016; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015).

Based on the motivation theory, Battour et al. (2017) surveyed Malaysian tourists where they found that push motivational factors such as knowledge, relaxation, escape, and safety positively influence their satisfaction. Meanwhile, Quintal and Polczynski (2010), in their study in Australia, discovered that perceived attractiveness (nature and culture) and economic condition (pull motivation) positively affect satisfaction and future travel intention. Similarly, Jarvis et al. (2016) claimed that emotional and economic investments influence Australian travellers' satisfaction with a destination and revisit intention. Finally, Meawnhile, Kim and Thapa (2018) surveyed international tourists who visited

Jeju Island, South Korea and found that outbound travel motivation could influence tourist satisfaction. As regards the above argument, the following hypotheses were formulated:

> H_1: *Outbound push motivation factors influence destination satisfaction.*
> H_0: *Outbound push motivation factors do not influence destination satisfaction.*
>
> H_2: *Outbound pull motivation factors influence destination satisfaction.*
> H_0: *Outbound pull motivation factors do not influence destination satisfaction.*

On the other hand, researchers also acknowledge the significance of expectations in the satisfaction behaviour process based on the theory of planned behaviour. Notably, expectations, like demands, are strongly linked to tourist satisfaction. For example, de Vos (2019) study surveyed respondents visiting the city of Ghent, Belgium and suggested that personal satisfaction has an important effect on both travel satisfaction and travel behaviour. Meanwhile, Wang et al. (2017) found that most Danang, Vietnam tourists repeatedly return to a few of their favourite destinations that provide them with the most fulfilling experience. Specifically, whether luxury or budget tourists, previous literature highlighted that visitors with more pleasant experiences are more likely to return (Kim & Graham, 2012; San Martin et al., 2013). Similarly, other researchers found a significant relationship between consumer satisfaction and behavioural intention (Kim & Thapa, 2018; Plunkett et al., 2019). As regards the above argument, the following hypotheses were formulated:

> H_3: *Destination satisfaction influences future travel intention.*
> H_0: *Destination satisfaction does not influence future travel intention.*

Tourism researcher has often explored the destination loyalty concept to generate more repeat visitors to a destination (Kim & Brown, 2012; Cong, 2016) based on the idea that visitors' satisfaction plays a significant role in the formation of destination loyalty. Based on the Australian setting, Jarvis et al. (2016) acknowledged that repeat travellers strongly drive tourism; hence, destination satisfaction is vital. However, other researchers argued that the real challenge is converting satisfied visitors to loyal customers (Ali et al., 2016; Han & Hyun, 2018). Furthermore, it can also be time-consuming to build customer loyalty (Meleddu et al., 2015). According to Guzman-Parra et al. (2016), recent empirical studies in Mediterranean-based destination marketing literature support the view that satisfaction explains destination loyalty, which generates the desire to revisit. Nonetheless, several researchers argued that some might not return to a destination despite higher satisfaction because of monetary considerations (Li & Cai, 2012; Sangpikul, 2018; Sun et al., 2013). As regards the above argument, the following hypotheses were formulated:

> H_{4a}: *Destination satisfaction mediates the outbound push motivation and future travel intention inter-relationship.*
> H_0: *Destination satisfaction does not mediate the outbound push motivation and future travel intention inter-relationship.*
>
> H_{4b}: *Destination satisfaction mediates the outbound pull motivation and future travel intention inter-relationship.*
> H_0: *Destination satisfaction does not mediate the outbound pull motivation and future travel intention inter-relationship.*

Figure 1 represents the research framework based on how the study hypotheses have been framed. The conceptual model evaluates the relationship between push-pull travel motivation, satisfaction, and future travel intention.

Figure 1. **Research Framework**
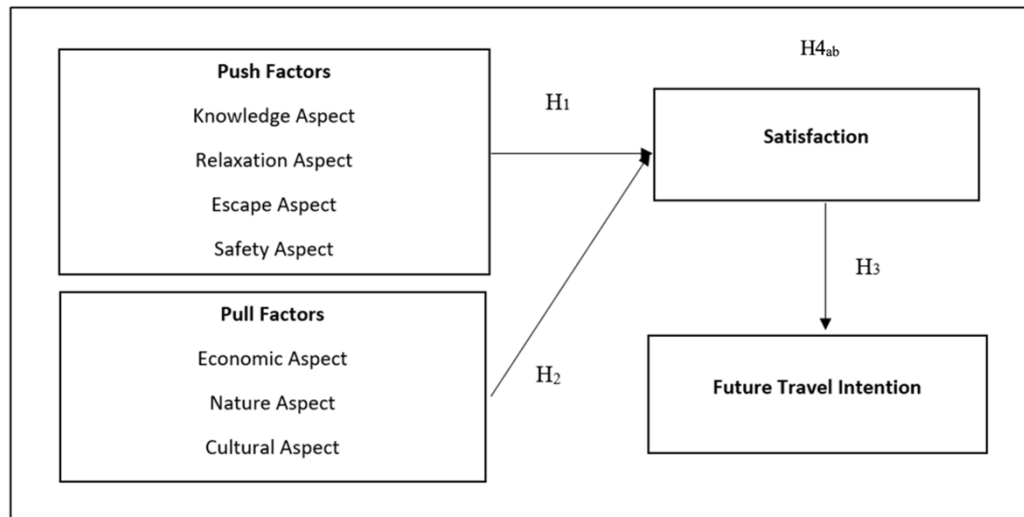
Source: Author's proposition

3. Methods

This study investigates luxury tourists' outbound travel motivation and how it influences their tourism destination selection, satisfaction and future revisit intention. This study adopted the positivism paradigm and utilized the cross-sectional survey. Only Central Asia luxury tourists from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were purposively sampled. In terms of sample selection, only those tourists (i) who visited Langkawi within five years and (ii) who experienced luxury hotel stays and took luxury tour packages in Langkawi were selected as samples. The GPower 3.1 software was used to determine the minimum sample size based on the type-1 error probabilities set to 0.05 (N>92) (Kang, 2021).

The survey instruments were adapted from previous studies. For example, items measuring push and pull outbound motivation dimensions were adapted from Dean and Suhartanto' (2019), while the destination satisfaction and revisit intention constructs were adapted from De Vos's (2019) study. The survey items are presented in Appendix I. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used. The survey instruments were pre-tested by a panel of academia, and they suggested minor changes to augment the questionnaire's reliability and study setting validity. Next, based on their recommendation, the questionnaire items were pilot-tested (30 respondents). The pilot test confirms that the construct reliability for all items was more than the suggested value of 0.70.

As this study was conducted among Central Asia's tourists and based on the researcher's experience, the survey was translated into Russian through a professional translator where the instrument underwent backward and forward translation. The online survey form (GoogleForms) link was shared through the assistance of the Tourism Malaysia Almaty office and their outbound travel agents. The snowball technique was chosen by selecting a small group of a representative sample to spread the questionnaire links to acquaintances that fit the study inclusion criteria (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). All the participants who agreed to participate in the study were asked to complete the survey in person. The data collection process was accomplished within two months, starting in October 2021.

The screening questions: "Have you visited Langkawi Island via luxury packages (>USD500 per day) for the past five years? "and "Did you stay at Five-star hotels and resorts in Langkawi Island?", ensuring that only valid luxury respondents are included in this study.

This study utilized Partial-least Squares-Path Modelling (PLS-SEM) due to the study's exploratory nature (Hanafiah, 2020). As the data for the study were not normally distributed, Hair et al. (2016) propose the usage of PLS-SEM for non-normal distribution studies (Hair et al., 2016). This research employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive and symmetrical analysis. Next, the data were analyzed in SmartPLS 3.1.1 in two steps: the measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2016). The data were subjected to Common Method Bias (CMB) assessment through Harman's single-factor approach (Fuller et al., 2016). The single-component total variation was 41.5%, less than the 50% cut-off figure established by Podsakoff et al. (2012), meaning CMB issues can be ruled out. The path analysis will be utilized to reject or accept the hypothesis based on the significance level of 0.05 or 0.01, which means that the probability of rejecting a true null hypothesis is no more than 5% or 1%, respectively.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The valid responses amounted to 256 responses were recorded where the majority of the respondents are between 26 to 41 years old (n-148; 77.3 percent), male (n=167; 65.2 percent), married (n=152, 59.4 percent), and earning more than USD50,000 annually (n=163; 63.6 percent). Most of them stayed in Langkawi for six to nine days (n=221; 86.3 percent) and depended on travel agents (n=125; 48.8 percent) for travel booking and information.

In terms of outbound push motivation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan tourists travel outbound to experience different cultures (M=4.75, SD=0.597), broaden their knowledge horizons (M=4.69, SD=0.724) and enrich their life (M=4.63, SD=0.772). They also travelled to feel refreshed (M=4.55, SD=0.911) and keep themselves well-informed (M=4.52, SD=0.933). For outbound pull motivation, they were attracted to experiencing different cultures and ways of life (M=4.57, SD=0.812) and enjoyed the scuba diving experience (M=4.44, SD=0.978). Moreover, they were attracted to rural historical attractions (M=4.57, SD=0.812). In addition, they were also attracted to the airline's promotion (M=4.21, SD=1.202) and the tax exemptions on Langkawi's products or services (M=4.17, SD=1.174).

Most of them were satisfied with the hospitality and services of accommodation staff on Langkawi Island (M=4.70, SD=0.584), tourist sites' attractiveness (M=4.69, SD=0.641) and the tourist site ambience (M=4.65, SD=0.680). They were also satisfied with Langkawi's touristic activities (M=4.63, SD=0.719) and tourist site conditions (M=4.53, SD=0.757). Regarding their revisit intention, they claimed they were pleased with their decision to visit Langkawi Island (M=4.80, SD=0.526) and would like to recommend to their friends to visit Langkawi (M=4.78, SD=0.618). They also plan to revisit Langkawi (M=4.76, SD=0.694) and recommend Langkawi to their relatives (M=4.67, SD=0.634). Finally, the respondents agreed that their visit to Langkawi Island exceeded their expectations (M=4.65, SD=0.717).

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

The PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the study hypotheses in two stages which include: i) the assessment of the measurement model (outer model) and ii) the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) (Hair et al., 2016). The assessment of the measurement model aims to establish the validity and reliability of the constructs' items. As this is a perception-based study, the reflective

measurement model was used. The assessment of the reflective measurement model includes i) internal consistency reliability, ii) individual indicator reliability, iii) convergent validity of the measured construct, and iv) discriminant validity (Hanafiah, 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2014). The assessment aims to ensure the reliability and validity of the construct measures. Figure 2 and Table 1 present the reflective measurement model assessment scores.

Figure 2. **Measurement model**
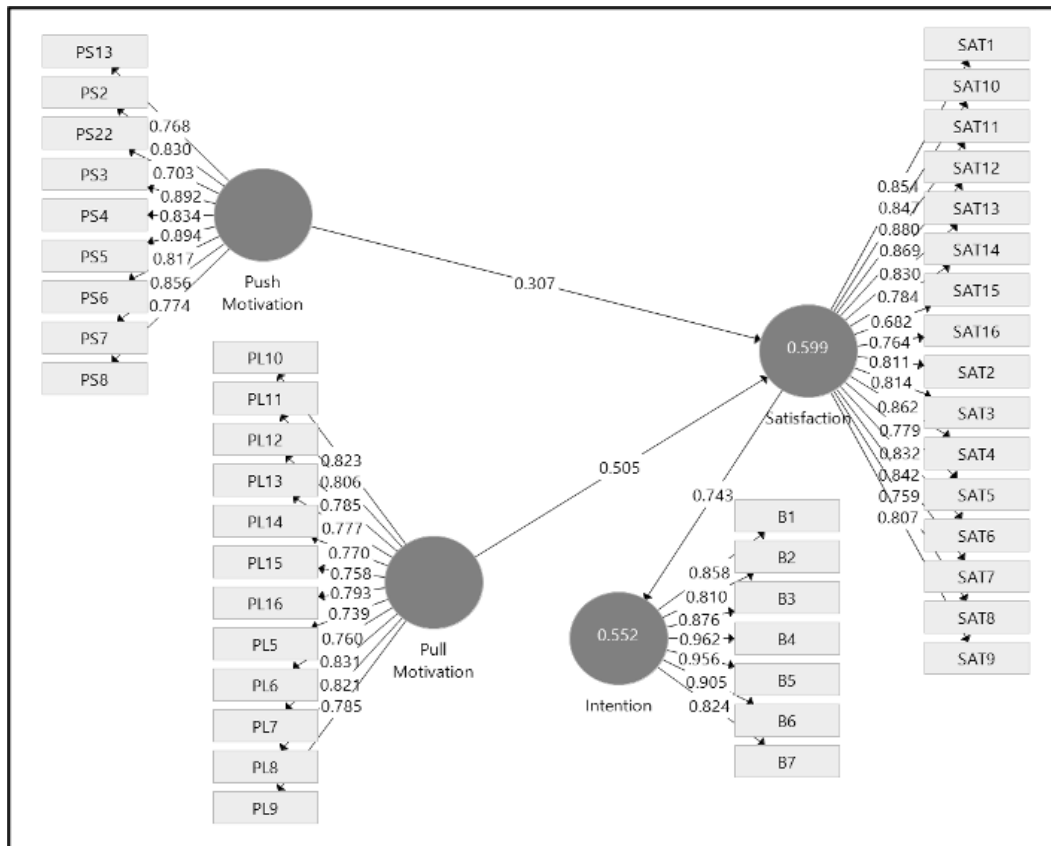
Source: Authors

Table 1. **Reflective measurement model assessment**

Code	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Mean	SD
Piush Motivation		*0.939*	*0.949*	*0.673*		
PS2	0.832				4.38	.953
PS3	0.892				4.51	.898
PS4	0.834				4.63	.772
PS5	0.894				4.35	1.088
PS6	0.817				4.69	.724
PS7	0.856				4.52	.933
PS8	0.774				4.51	.933
PS13	0.784				4.75	. 597
PS12	0.703				4.55	.911
Pull Motivation		*0.944*	*0.951*	*0.621*		

PL5	0.739			4.44	.978
PL6	0.760			4.10	1.324
PL7	0.831			4.10	1.222
PL8	0.821			4.17	1.174
PL9	0.785			4.21	1.202
PL10	0.823			4.31	1.027
PL11	0.806			4.03	1.228
PL12	0.785			4.19	1.131
PL13	0.777			4.41	.943
PL14	0.770			4.57	.812
PL15	0.758			4.58	.858
PL16	0.793			4.49	.993
Satisfaction	*0.966*	*0.969*	*0.665*		
SAT1	0.854			4.38	.953
SAT2	0.811			4.44	.829
SAT3	0.814			4.33	.978
SAT4	0.862			4.51	.758
SAT5	0.779			4.70	.584
SAT6	0.832			4.59	.735
SAT7	0.842			4.49	.831
SAT8	0.759			4.24	1.060
SAT9	0.807			4.56	.764
SAT10	0.847			4.53	.791
SAT11	0.880			4.53	.757
SAT12	0.869			4.53	.740
SAT13	0.830			4.65	.680
SAT14	0.784			4.69	.641
SAT15	0.782			4.75	.597
SAT16	0.764			4.63	.719
Behavioural Intention	*0.954*	*0.962*	*0.786*		
B1	0.858			4.80	.526
B2	0.810			4.81	.497
B3	0.876			4.65	.717
B4	0.962			4.78	.618
B5	0.956			4.76	.634
B6	0.905			4.76	.694
B7	0.824			4.60	.863

N=256

Source: Authors

Looking at the indicator and construct reliability, the indicator loadings scores are between 0.739 and 0.962, which exceed the recommended value (0.7), suggesting a satisfactory degree of reliability. Next, the composite reliability value for the four constructs was between 0.949 and 0.969, exceeding the acceptable value of 0.7. In addition, the Cronbach Alpha value for all constructs was between 0.939 and 0.966, which also exceeded the recommended value of 0.7. Thus, the internal consistency of the items used in this study was adequate and confirmed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). On the other hand, the AVE scores were between 0.621 and 0.786, higher than the minimum acceptable AVE of 0.50, indicating a satisfactory convergent validity. Subsequently, there is a need to assess the discriminant validity to ensure the construct does not correlate with other constructs. Henseler et al. (2012) propose the usage of HTMT compared to the cross-loadings criterion Fornell-Lacker. Table 2 reports the HTMT test results.

The HTMT results reflect no discriminant validity problems (HTMT<0.85 criteria). The results reflect no collinearity issues, supporting the constructs' discriminant validity. Once satisfied with the measurement model results, the next step in evaluating the structural model involves testing the research hypotheses (Hair et al., 2016). The structural model has four main criteria used in the evaluation, including i) estimation of path coefficient (β), ii) determination coefficient (R2), iii) effect size (f^2), and iv) predictive relevance (Q2) (Chin, 2010). Before assessing the structural relationships, collinearity must be examined to ensure the results are not biased before assessing the structural relationships (Hair et al., 2016). The VIF values were between 1.0 and 1.905, indicating no strong indication of multicollinearity. Since collinearity is not an issue, the next step is to evaluate the statistical significance of the relationships in the structural model. Table 3 presents the structural model's β-value, T-Statistics, and p-value.

Table 2. **Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) results**

	Future Travel Intention	**Pull Motivation**	**Push Motivation**	**Satisfaction**
Intention				
Pull Motivation	0.586			
Push Motivation	0.647	0.852		
Satisfaction	0.771	0.779		

Source: Authors

Table 3. **Path Coefficient (β), T-Statistics, and the p-value of the structural model**

	β	**T-Statistics**	**P-values**	f^2	R2	Q2	**Hypothesis**
Direct Effect							
Push Motivation -> Satisfaction	0.314***	2.796	0.005	0.023	0.552	0.392	*Accept*
Pull Motivation -> Satisfaction	0.505***	5.299	0.000	0.084			*Accept*
Satisfaction -> Intention	0.750***	16.696	0.000	1.231	0.599	0.365	*Accept*
Indirect Effect							
Push Motivation -> Satisfaction-> Intention	0.013	1.149	0.112				*Reject*
Pull Motivation -> Satisfaction-> Intention	0.126***	4.459	0.000				*Accept*

Notes: p<0.01***

Source: Authors

The first hypothesis (H1) states that travel push motivation directly influences satisfaction. The results show that outbound push motivation significantly influences travellers' satisfaction (β = 0.314, t = 2.796**). Hence, the first hypothesis is accepted. Similarly, the results support the second hypothesis (H2), i.e., outbound pull motivation positively influences travellers' satisfaction (β = 0.505, t = 5.299***). Lastly, the path analysis supports the third hypothesis (H3) that tourist destination satisfaction significantly influences travel intention (β = 0.750***, t = 16.696). Thus, it can be suggested that pull motivation is the most influential factor in determining tourist satisfaction, and satisfaction is an essential attribute leading toward favourable future travel intention. Regarding the mediating role of destination satisfaction, it emerged that it mediated the relationship between push motivation and future travel intention (β = 0.223, t = 3.442***) and pull motivation and future travel intention (β = 0.572, t = 4.227***).

The mediating effect was executed through bootstrapping analysis. It is considered a powerful empirical method to check the mediation effect, suggesting researchers should refer to specific indirect effects results rather than total indirect effects when testing multiple mediators. This study discovers satisfaction mediates the relationship between pull motivation and future travel intention (β = 0.126; t =4.459). Meanwhile, satisfaction exhibited no mediation effect on the relationship between push motivation and future travel intention (β = 0.013; t = 1.149). Based on the findings, the hypothesis of H_{4b} is accepted, while H_{4a} is rejected due to the 95% confidence interval.

The next assessment examined the coefficient of determination (R^2), the effect size (f^2) and the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the PLS path model. The R^2 shows how much the exogenous construct explains the endogenous construct. On the other hand, the effect size (f^2) measures whether the changes in a particular exogenous substantially impact the endogenous constructs. Meanwhile, Q^2 evaluates the PLS path model's predictive accuracy (Henseler, 2012). The result shows that travel motivation can explain 59.9 percent of the tourist satisfaction dimension. The model also indicates that tourist satisfaction could explain 55.2 percent of the travel intention construct. In terms of effect size, destination satisfaction has a large effect (1.231) size on the future travel intention dimension.

Meanwhile, the outbound pull motivation changes possessed a small effect (0.023) on destination satisfaction. Similarly, the travel push motivation has less impact on destination satisfaction than outbound pull motivation (0.084) (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4, the results show the Q^2 value for Travel intention is 0.392, and the Q^2 value for destination satisfaction is 0.365. The endogenous construct Q^2 values are greater than 0.25, indicating a moderate predictive relevance of the model used in this study.

5. Discussion

This study investigates luxury tourists' outbound travel motivation and how it influences their tourism destination selection, satisfaction and future revisit intention. This study contributes to luxury tourism research by presenting the luxury destination features and tourist behaviour tenets through a functional behavioural approach, where its antecedents and behaviours are depicted empirically. First, this study added to the existing knowledge domain of luxury travel motivation as proposed by the Dann (1977) "push" and "pull" motivations theory. The researchers also expand the utilization of the theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1991), wherein the researchers contextualize how these luxury tourists' attitudes and psychological tendencies can be expressed by positive or negative evaluations of their engagement in certain behaviour. This study confirms that luxury tourists' destination satisfaction is significantly influenced by their outbound push and pull luxury travel motivational factors.

This research builds a robust theoretical framework explaining Central Asia luxury tourists' loyalty formation by considering the interrelationships between travel motivations and traveller satisfaction. Overall, the research framework assessment explicates the complex psychological process of Central Asia luxury tourists' post-travel behaviour. The findings confirm the inter-relationship between luxury tourism destinations' features and tourists' behaviour (Chen & Chen, 2015; Kanagaraj & Bindu, 2013; Prayag & Hosany, 2014). This confirms that luxury tourists share similar travel motives and destination choices (Chang & Sung, 2016; Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015; Sastre & Phakdee-Auksorn, 2017). However, the behaviour of luxury tourists from Central Asia may not necessarily apply to luxury tourists from other regions or backgrounds. Perhaps, it would be important to note that the extent to which these similarities hold across different tourist backgrounds may vary.

This study argues that luxury tourist motivations may vary between countries due to cultural values, economic development, and historical background differences. Based on the literature, luxury travel in Western countries is mostly associated with the desire for status and exclusivity, whereas Asian countries, were more associated with experiences and personal growth. In addition, luxury travel may

be more popular in countries with a high economic development, as people in these countries have more disposable income to spend on luxury travel. Cultural values also influence luxury travel motivations, as different cultures have different attitudes towards material possessions and luxury goods. Perhaps, the findings on luxury tourist motivations would likely differ between countries. Considering these cultural, economic, and historical factors would be important when researching luxury tourism in different regions.

6. Study Implication

This study identifies two key factors that drive luxury tourism experiences: social value and uniqueness. These findings are consistent with a previous study by Prebesen et al. (2013), which highlighted the important role of push motivation in determining perceived value. Luxury tourists prefer high-end and popular attractions, 5-star hotels, and superior tourism services. The study found that most tourists from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan visited Langkawi Island to experience its unique beaches and natural resources and viewed the island favourably for its natural beauty, sporting events, hospitality, and accommodation. This is likely due to Langkawi Island's branding as a luxury destination with exceptional natural and cultural attractions. The study's results are in line with similar studies conducted in different regions on luxury tourists' motives for visiting island destinations (Correia et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2019; Iloranta, 2022; Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2019; Pantouvakis & Patsiouras, 2016; Ritter, 2022). Overall, the study highlights the importance of social value and uniqueness in luxury tourism experiences and underscores the significance of attractive natural and cultural attractions in promoting luxury destinations.

In such a challenging market situation, the present research provides luxury tourism destination managers with a clear comprehension of the underlying mechanism of the luxury tourists' loyalty generation process. This study confirms explicitly the pull factors are the major external cues that prompt luxury tourists to make travel decisions. This result is far different from other studies' findings (Devesa et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2017) that have reported a strong influence of pull motivation factors on satisfaction. However, this study also confirms that push motivation strengthens the visitors' experience quality and perceived value. Thus, this study stresses that the push factors are a key driver in developing the visitor behavioural intention besides the pulling factors. However, it is important to note that the impact of both push and pull motivation factors on customer behavioural intention may vary across different types of attractions in the tourism industry.

As luxury tourists are much more complex, luxury destinations should enrich the luxury tourist's experience into a memorable one in order to generate favourable post-travel behaviour. This study suggests that luxury tourism destinations must provide luxury tourists an enriched and memorable experience to encourage positive post-travel behaviour. The implications of the findings are particularly relevant for luxury tourism stakeholders in Langkawi Island and Malaysia as a whole. While Langkawi has attracted more local tourists than foreign tourists, other regional islands have successfully attracted international tourists who contribute significantly to their countries' tourism economies. Therefore, applying a one-size-fits-all strategy to attract tourists may be ineffective, as destinations should offer various products and services that appeal to specific travellers.

The study suggests that modern-day travellers are attracted to luxury experiences with personal and social advantages. In addition, the research highlights the demand for inaccessible luxury experiences sought by the upper class and accessible luxury experiences desired by the middle class. Travellers nowadays are attracted to the luxuries that bring them personal and social advantages. Recent studies have highlighted the potential of inaccessible luxury that the upper socioeconomic class seeks and the demand for accessible luxury among the middle socioeconomic classes. By understanding the Central Asia tourists' outbound travel motivation forces, DMOs may carefully develop attractive

packages and design specific campaigns targeting these tourists through travel agents. Since this study found a significant influence in knowledge aspects under the push factor, we recommend that Langkawi Island DMOs, especially LADA, increase the cultural elements of Langkawi Island. If these aspects are adequately developed and properly positioned, they can provide a unique tourist experience. Superior cultural activities involving unique festivals or celebrations, authentic cuisine, events, music, and local cultural lifestyle can help elevate Langkawi Island's reputation and image as a unique cultural experience for Central Asia tourists.

On top of that, destination service providers in Langkawi Island should learn how to provide adequate service skills, memorable experiences, and personalized services to create customer loyalty. This, in turn, can help destination marketers to attract more tourists through effective marketing strategies, niche-specific campaigns, and social media platforms. The study also recommends that tourism events and fairs should be held regularly to promote affordable tour packages that highlight the island's unique cultural and natural experiences. Integrated marketing communication is also suggested as an effective approach to promote Langkawi Island as a preferred tourist destination for Central Asian travellers. Overall, the study underscores the importance of providing high-quality services, engaging in targeted marketing efforts, and leveraging various communication channels to attract and retain luxury tourists in Langkawi Island.

7. Conclusion

The study highlights that social value and uniqueness are two key factors that drive luxury-driven experiences for tourists from Central Asia. Luxury tourists prefer high-end attractions, 5-star hotels, and superior tourism service delivery. The study provides insights into the underlying mechanisms of luxury tourists' loyalty generation process. It emphasizes the importance of push factors, in addition to pull factors, in developing visitor behavioural intention. The study also suggests that luxury destinations should aim to enrich the luxury tourist's experience to generate favourable post-travel behaviour. The findings offer practical suggestions for luxury tourism stakeholders in Langkawi Island and Malaysia, such as developing cultural elements of Langkawi Island and providing adequate service skills and personalized services to create customer loyalty. Additionally, the study recommends using productive marketing strategies, such as social media, niche-specific tourism campaigns, and regular tourism events or fairs, to attract more tourists and promote Langkawi Island as the preferred destination among Central Asian travellers. However, it is important to note that the impact of push and pull motivation factors on customer behavioural intention may vary across different types of attractions in the tourism industry.

The study established a framework of factors to identify luxury tourist motivations from a niche market perspective from a theoretical perspective. This study confirms that the proposed behavioural intention model within the luxury tourism setting is a good fit. The outbound push luxury travel motivation factors (knowledge, relaxation, escape, and safety) and outbound pull luxury travel motivation factors (economic, nature, and cultural) are satisfactorily captured. This study depicts two major antecedents of luxury-driven experiences: social value and uniqueness. The findings address practitioners' and academics' concern that complex luxury travellers' physiological are quite similar to other tourist markets. They possessed strong pull and push motivators and a high level of destination satisfaction aligned with the island's unique 'luxurious' characteristics. This adds significant implications to the travel motivation and behaviour literature. Conceptually, this finding significantly extends the literature on experience quality as well as on visitor behaviour in the luxury tourism realm. Subsequently, recommendations were made for DMOs to tap the potential to offer inaccessible luxury elements that the upper socioeconomic class seeks while providing accessible luxury services for the middle or working class.

It is essential to mention that any empirical studies were undertaken without limitation. Thus, it warrants an explanation. First, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic influences the data collection process, whereby the researcher cannot reach all the potential respondents in Central Asia. Therefore, for future research, data collection could be done face-to-face if conditions permitted, which would obtain more accurate data for the study, thus producing much more robust, comprehensive, and truthful findings. Also, future studies may extend the current research and examine the moderating factor that consumers' personality traits (e.g., big personality traits) could exert in luxury-driven consumption behaviour in tourism. Since this study focused only on the Central Asia tourists who have visited Langkawi Island, it can also be expanded in the future by looking at the different stakeholders' perspectives. Perhaps, comparison studies can also be conducted on diverse island destinations or attractions in the future.

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Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Ethics statement

With the submission of this manuscript, I would like to undertake that all authors of this research paper have directly participated in this study's planning, execution, or analysis. The contents of this manuscript are not now under consideration for publication elsewhere. In addition, there are no directly related manuscripts or abstracts, published or unpublished, by any authors of this paper.

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APPENDIX I

Push Travel Motivation
1. *Experience new/different lifestyles*
2. *To seek intellectual enrichment*
3. *To expand my knowledge*
4. *To learn new things and enrich my life*
5. *To gain a learning experience*
6. *To broaden my horizon*
7. *To keep myself well-informed*
8. *Visiting historical places*
9. *To experience beautiful scenery*
10. *To experience natural sites*
11. *To experience cultures different from mine*
12. *Meeting new people*
13. *Being free to act how I feel*
14. *Doing nothing at all*
15. *Getting a change from a busy job*
16. *Getting away from the demands at home*
17. *To gain a sense of achievement or accomplishment*
18. *To feel privileged or important*
19. *To escape from the stress of daily*
20. *To escape from my routine*
21. *To give myself a treat*
22. *To make the most of my free time while I can*
23. *To feel refreshed*
24. *To get a sense of security*

Pull Travel Motivation
1. *To enjoy beaches/sea*
2. *To get close to nature*
3. *To enjoy mountain*
4. *To enjoy scuba diving*
5. *To enjoy snorkelling*
6. *To experience nightlife*
7. *To attend sporting events*
8. *Low tax on products/service*
9. *Cheap flight*
10. *Duty-free shops/products*
11. *Low exchange rate*
12. *Promotion offers*
13. *To enjoy rural historical attractions*
14. *To experience different cultures and different ways of life*
15. *To experience the local products*
16. *To attend cultural events that I don't have at home*
17. *To enjoy the island landscape*

Travel Satisfaction
1. *Quality of local transport to and within tourist attractions*

2.   *Cleanliness of the Langkawi tourist site*
3.   *Cleanliness of eating places*
4.   *Quality of accommodation*
5.   *Hospitality & services of accommodation staffs*
6.   *Availability of quality and variety food*
7.   *Prices of food and beverages*
8.   *Public toilets/amenities*
9.   *Tourist information available at the touristic site/destination*
10.   *Internet connectivity/WIFI/telephone services*
11.   *Condition of the tourist sites*
12.   *Safety and security at tourist sites*
13.   *Ambience/the surrounding/of the tourist sites*
14.   *The attractiveness of the tourist sites*
15.   *The hospitality of the host community at the destination*
16.   *Variety of touristic activities*

Future Travel Intention
1.   *I am pleased with my decision to visit Langkawi Island*
2.   *I will say positive things about Langkawi Island*
3.   *The visit to Langkawi Island exceeded my expectations*
4.   *I would like to recommend to my friends to visit Langkawi*
5.   *I like to recommend to my relatives to visit Langkawi*
6.   *I like to re-visit Langkawi again*
7.   *Langkawi will always be my destination choice for my future travel*