

## Motivation in Food Tourism in Penang

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### ABSTRACT

Food is the most important component in tourism and as a critical fascination while people are travelling. Food tourism is also one constituent of the tourism marketing strategy. This paper examines food tourism motivation in Penang, Malaysia. The main objective is to determine the relationship between motivation factors with food tourist satisfaction. This paper uses a quantitative method by collecting data through questionnaires with a sample size of 300 respondents. Data collected are examined using SPSS software and SmartPLS method. Results show that the pull factors appear to have contributed to attracting tourists to Penang, particularly in terms of the destination and psychological factor. However, the pull factors, indicate non-significant relationships to tourist satisfaction.

*Keywords: Food, Push factor, Pull factor, Motivation, Tourism, Penang*

### INTRODUCTION

Foods have often become an important attraction in destination marketing and development (Anderson et al. 2017). Food is a vital tourist spot in a variety of structures and upgrades or is a key to the guest encounter (Henderson, 2009). Tourism destinations are competing to promote food tourism, as an emerging important segment in the tourism industry (Mohd. Nazri et. al., 2018) As such, understanding consumer purchasing behaviour is a key in undertaking advertising administration (Kotler, 2018), and in a tourism setting, consumer behaviour supports all market activities.

Penang is known as the most popular destination in Asia that has the reputation of being the 'food paradise'. According to the CNN, the region offers a diverse and exotic mix of Malay, Chinese and Indian cuisine which known as a multicultural mix of the city, and the city is single out as Asia's best street food (The Star, 2017). Penang specifically George Town was ranked 12th in the New York Times' Frugal and Food Category in 2009. Penang Assam Laksa was ranked 7th in the list on 2011 in 'CNN's World's 50 Most Delicious Foods'. Penang was ranked in CNN Go's Asia's 10 Greatest Street Food Cities and 3rd place by Virtual Tourist as the Best Street Food in 2012. This paper will evaluate the motivations of food tourism in Penang, in terms of the push and pull factors that motivating tourists to visit Penang.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Maslow (1943) expressed that individuals are motivated to accomplish certain needs and that a few needs take precedence others. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model provides a conception of tourist behaviour conduct, in relations to the purpose behind the choice to travel and motivation to pick a certain destination. Crompton (1979) first looked to distinguish two groups of thought processes; push factors and pull factors. Since the study by Crompton in 1979, many reviews have likewise attempted to explore further the push and pull factors in diverse setting including Mohammad and Som (2010), Yousefi and Marzuki (2012), and Dolinting (2014).

Previous studies reveal that customer loyalty is influenced by tourist satisfaction (Bitner, 1990; Dick and Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999) and satisfaction is affected by travel motivation (Mannel and Iso-Ahola, 1987; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Tourist satisfaction is important to effective destination promoting because it influences the decision of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the intention to revisit is influenced by tourists' satisfaction as it is important to successful destination marketing (Kozak & Rimming, 2000). Yoon and Uysal (2005) examines the structural, causal relationships among the push and pull tourism motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty.

### The Push Factor of Food tourism in Penang

Generally, push factors are seen as crucial in starting travel desire, while pull factors are seen as more decisive in clarifying destination decision (Crompton, 1979, Bello and Etzel, 1985). Dolinting (2014) defines push factors as desires or necessities that exist in a person that arrange and lead a tourism decision making to be carried out while pull factors are characterized as elements that lead an individual to pick one destination over another. Push factors are characterized as internal forces that cause tourists to seek activities to lessen their needs, while pull factors are destination generated forces and the information that tourists hold about a destination (Gnoth, 1997). Intellectual factors concern with the respondent's motives to know, to discover or to learn something new. They wanted to fulfil their curiosity and at the same time trying to expand their knowledge on anything. Curiosity is related to the feeling of wanting to know new things. McClelland (1985) in his work on the need for affiliation proposed that one of the greatest human being needs is to feel a sense of involvement and belonging within a social group. In relations, the engagement of food tourism by the tourists also treats the vacation as a time for social contact with others. Relationship and friendship also can be improved while travelling as you will spend your time and do activities together, make acquaintances by meeting new and different people and most important is to be out of the daily routine (Dolinting, 2014). Hence, the following hypotheses are developed:

**H1a:** *Intellectual factor has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction on foods in Penang.*

**H1b:** *Social factor has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction on foods in Penang.*

**H1c:** *Curiosity factor has a significant relationship with tourists' satisfaction on foods in Penang*

## The Pull Factor of Food tourism in Penang

Pull factors rise because of the attractiveness of a destination, including beaches, recreation facilities and cultural attractions (Uysal and Jurowski, 1994, Kim and Kleenosky, 2003). Fakeye and Crompton (1991) identified six pull factors domains from 32 attribute items using a sample of visitors to a well-known winter destination in Texas. The pull factors identified included 'social opportunities and attractions', 'natural and cultural amenities', 'accommodations and transportation', 'infrastructure, foods, and friendly people', 'physical amenities and recreation activities' and 'bars and evening entertainment'. As for Penang, multiple attractions from foods to history, entertainment and good beaches are offered and Penang is described as a modern state, safe and with good accessibility (Mohammad and Som, 2010). This northern state attracts 4.5 million tourists in 2015 (Tourism Malaysia 2015) and is among the top tourist destinations in Malaysia.

According to Cohen (2004) on international tourism stated that people would experience pleasant trips as long as the destination has some similarities with their origin namely, food or another person from their country. Therefore, even though they were travelling a thousand miles away from their countries to Penang, there will be more likely that tourists perceived Penang as feels like home. As such, promotions about Penang including the food attraction should be very important. Dolinting (2014) emphasized that using the right media, and the use of effective communication strategies or a promotional campaign such as advertising and social media. As such, when sufficient information reached to the potential food tourists, their visitations are expected. This creates psychological factor (Maslow, 1943) that can influence tourists on Penang foods, in terms of the variety of foods and authenticity etc. In addition, as mentioned earlier, Penang is known as one of the most popular destinations in Asia that has the reputation of being the 'food paradise' and has won many international awards.

As such for the current study, the three components of pull factors are psychological, destination and promotion factors. Hence, the following hypotheses are postulated:

**H2a:** *Psychological factor has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction on foods in Penang.*

**H2b:** *Destination factor has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction on foods in Penang.*

**H2c:** *Promotion factor has a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction on foods in Penang.*

## RESEARCH METHOD

Questionnaires are developed, using previous scales and questionnaires (such as in Yoon and Uysal, 2005, Kozak & Rimming, 2000). Respondents were asked the extent they agree that the reasons they visited Penang are factors related to intellectual, social, curiosity, psychological, destination and promotion (Table 1). The dependent variable is tourist satisfaction, represented by 4 scales (Table 1). The Likert scales from the scale of 1= Strongly disagreed and 5=Strongly agreed are used (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Construct and Scale

Construct	Scale	No of items
Intellectual	To learn about things around me	4
	To explore new ideas	
	To expand my knowledge	
	To discover new things	
Social	To build a friendship with others	4
	To develop close friendships	
	To meet new and different people	
	To share my thoughts, feelings or physical skills to others	
Curiosity	To satisfy my curiosity	4
	To visit a place that my friends have been to	
	To experience new and different lifestyles or traditions	
	To experience the quality of its tourist places	
Psychological	The variety of food	4
	Penang is a popular place for unique food	
	The food is delicious	
	The food is authentic	
Destination	It is a developed state	4
	The place is suitable for family-oriented tourist	
	The place is safe	
	The place is accessible	
Promotion	Attracted to the promotion of food	4
	The promotion is successful	
	My friends and family suggest my visit	
	The local culture is attractive	
Tourist satisfaction	I am very satisfied with the foods	4
	The food meets my expectations	
	I intend to revisit in future	
	I will recommend the food to others	

## RESULTS

A total of 300 respondents have agreed to participate in the interview (Table 2). Tourists are met in various places of attractions in Penang. The respondents of the study comprised of 84.5% local tourists and 15.7%, international. Majority of the respondents are unmarried, and the younger generation with age between 20 to 29 years of age. As such in terms of income, the majority belongs to a lower-income group of RM3000 and below.

As shown in Table 3, the tourists expressed food is the most important reason they visited Penang (mean 4.46). When asked what push factors that motivate them to visit Penang, intellectual and curiosity mean scores are higher than 4.0 level, but the social factor is lower. As for the pull factors, all variables; promotion, Psychological and destination score higher than 4.0 mean level. The psychological factors which include items such as the variety of food and Penang's foods are unique, has the highest mean score of all variables.

**Table 2:** Respondent Background

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency (n=300)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Nationality</b>		
Malaysian	253	84.3
Non-Malaysian	47	15.7
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 19	5	1.7
20 - 29	223	74.3
30 - 39	38	12.7
40 - 49	10	3.3
above 50	24	8.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	121	40.3
Female	179	59.7
<b>Education Level</b>		
High School	24	8.0
Certificate	11	3.7
Diploma	37	12.3
Degree	199	66.3
Master	21	7.0
PhD	8	2.7
<b>Occupation</b>		
Government Servant	16	5.3
Private Sector	74	24.7
Self-Employed	36	12.0
Student	155	51.7
Retiree	6	2.0
Unemployed	13	4.3
<b>Monthly Income (RM)</b>		
1500 and under	181	60.3
1501 - 3000	52	17.3
3001 - 5000	35	11.7
5000 and above	32	10.7

**Table 3:** Descriptive result

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
<b>Push Factors</b>				
Intellectual	5	4.12	0.77	0.916
Social	6	3.97	0.83	0.863
Curiosity	3	4.26	0.72	0.874

<b>Pull Factors</b>				
Psychological	1	4.46	0.65	0.901
Promotion	4	4.23	0.69	0.828
Destination	2	4.27	0.66	0.851
<b>Tourist Satisfaction</b>		4.45	0.66	0.906

\*the ranking for the most important reason to visit Penang is based on the mean score.

### Reflective Model and Discriminant Validity

SmartPLS was used to analyse the hypotheses of the study. The data was initially tested in terms of reliability and convergent validity. The score for factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) for all the variables are as shown in Table 4. The factor loadings scores are more than 0.8, showing the strengths of the measurements used and Cronbach's alpha scores also have high consistency.

**Table 4:** Reflective Measurement Model: Factor Loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR)

Item	INT	SOC	CUR	PRO	PSY	DES	SAT
C1	0.877						
C2	0.911						
C3	0.910						
C4	0.881						
C5		0.859					
C6		0.831					
C7		0.852					
C8		0.824					
C9			0.838				
C10			0.831				
C11			0.852				
C12			0.885				
C13				0.851			
C14				0.844			
C15				0.745			
C16				0.802			
D1					0.874		
D2					0.867		
D3					0.890		
D4					0.882		
D5						0.818	
D6						0.842	
D7						0.801	
D8						0.859	
E1							0.889

E2							0.899
E3							0.845
E4							0.901
AVE	<b>0.801</b>	<b>0.708</b>	<b>0.725</b>	<b>0.659</b>	<b>0.772</b>	<b>0.690</b>	<b>0.781</b>
CR	<b>0.941</b>	<b>0.907</b>	<b>0.914</b>	<b>0.885</b>	<b>0.931</b>	<b>0.899</b>	<b>0.934</b>

AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability; INT (Intellectual), SOC (Social), CUR (Curiosity), PRO (Promotion), PSY (Psychological), DES (Destination), SAT (Satisfaction).

Discriminant validity is the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure distinct concepts by examining the correlations between the measures of potentially overlapping constructs. Items should load more strongly on their construct in the model, and the average variance shared between each construct and its measures should be greater than the variance shared between the construct and other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Compeau et al., 1999). Based on Table 5, the values in the diagonal which was bolded, are higher than other values either in row or column. The results concluded that all the measurements in this study have good discriminant validity, (Fornell and Lacker 1981).

**Table 5: Discriminant Validity**

	INT	SOC	CUR	PRO	PSY	DES	SAT
INT	<b>0.895</b>						
SOC	0.620	<b>0.842</b>					
CUR	0.735	0.614	<b>0.852</b>				
PRO	0.601	0.566	0.733	<b>0.812</b>			
PSY	0.441	0.338	0.485	0.597	<b>0.878</b>		
DES	0.437	0.382	0.546	0.581	0.650	<b>0.830</b>	
SAT	0.403	0.312	0.498	0.593	0.803	0.668	<b>0.884</b>

Diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE of the reflective scales while the diagonals are the correlations between constructs; INT (Intellectual), SOC (Social), CUR (Curiosity), PRO (Promotion), PSY (Psychological), DES (Destination), SAT (Satisfaction)

## Structural Model

The structural model involves the assessment of the relationship between latent constructs and other latent constructs, which is also where the hypotheses are tested. It can only be analysed after the measurement model has sufficient convergent validity and discriminant validity. In PLS, there are five steps to evaluate the structural model n (Figure 1) including collinearity and path coefficient. The results of the lateral collinearity test show the VIF scores (Table 6) for each construct, which is below the threshold value of 5 (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, it can be concluded that there are no lateral collinearity issues with the data.

**Table 6:** Lateral Collinearity Assessment

Constructs	VIF
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b>	2.461
<b>SOCIAL</b>	1.855
<b>CURIOSITY</b>	3.254
<b>PROMOTION</b>	2.757
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>	2.013
<b>DESTINATION</b>	2.007

VIF<3.3; The set was tested on a dependent variable of food tourist satisfaction

Moreover, Path coefficient results which are to justify if there is a relationship between two latent constructs (Table 7) shows that several relationships are significance, while others are not significant. Based on Table 7. H2a, H2b and H2c are supported with t-value greater than 1.96 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The results meant that the pull factors; promotion, and destination factors have contributed to food tourist satisfaction. On the other hand, hypothesis H1a, H1b and H1c, which are related to push factors are rejected with t-value less than 1.96 ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). As such intellectual, social and curiosity factors are found to have no relationships with tourist satisfaction.

The results for the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ) and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) are also found to be satisfied. According to Hair et al. (2014),  $R^2$ , also commonly known as co-efficient of determination, represents the amount of variance in the endogenous construct that can be explained by all the exogenous constructs associated to it. The blindfolding results show that intellectual, social, curiosity, promotion, psychological and destination factor had the predictive ability on the satisfaction of food tourists in Penang.

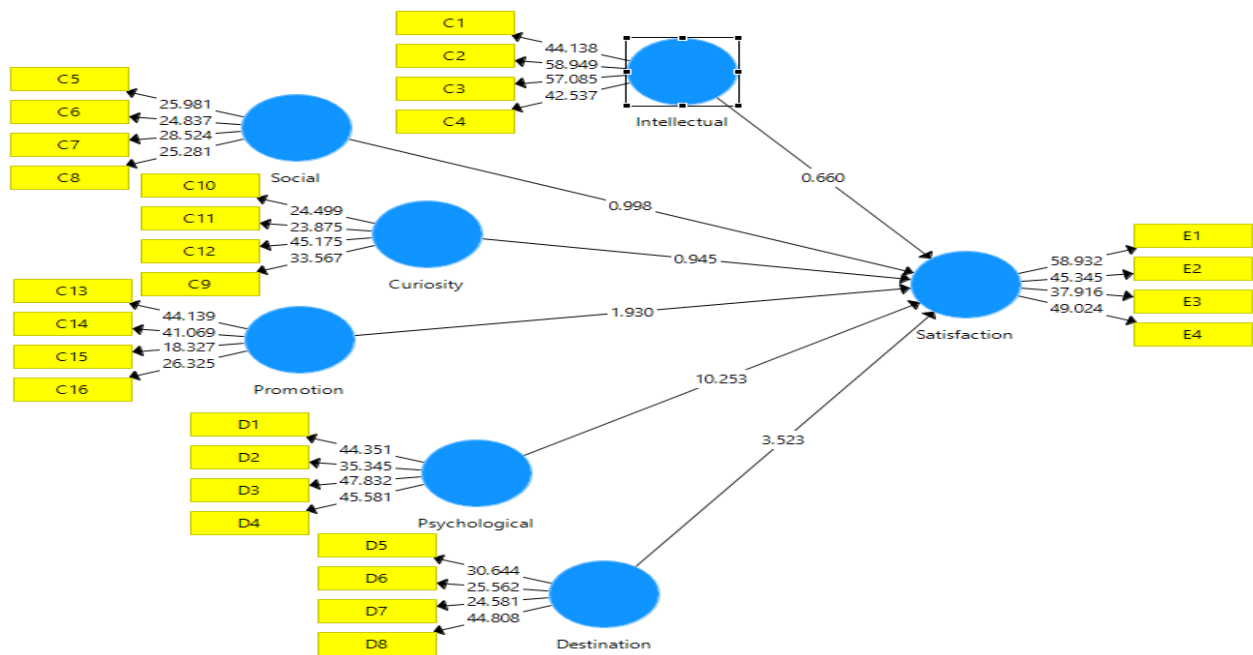
**Table 7:** Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta (a*b)	Std. Error	T-value	P-Values
H1a	<b>0.895</b>				
H1b	0.620	<b>0.842</b>			
H1c	0.735	0.614	<b>0.852</b>		
H2a	0.601	0.566	0.733	<b>0.812</b>	
H2b	0.441	0.338	0.485	0.597	<b>0.878</b>
H2c	0.437	0.382	0.546	0.581	0.650

INT (Intellectual), SOC (Social), CUR (Curiosity), PRO (Promotion), PSY (Psychological), DES (Destination), SAT (Satisfaction);  $p \leq 0.05$



Figure 1: The Structural Model



## DISCUSSIONS

This study focuses on the motivation factors of food tourism in Penang. The respondents are asked the extent they agreed that the factors given, motivate their visits to Penang. It appears the top most important factor is psychological about the foods. As such, the respondents' thought about foods offered by the state, is the most important factor for their visit and the least important factor is social. As such, the results clearly state that Penang's food is a major attraction of Penang. The lower rank results include social and intellectual factors. Perhaps the respondents found these qualities are also available in other states of Malaysia, as such these factors are the least important that push them to visit Penang. Most of the visitors are not the first-timers, as they had come before to Penang. As such, being curious, to learn new things or to get to know new people are not their main reasons to come to Penang.

Another part of the study is the relationship between the independent factors and dependent factor, the push and pull factors are the independent factors and tourist satisfaction is the dependent factor. There is not enough evidence to accept the push factors; intellectual, social and curiosity, contribute to tourist satisfaction. Therefore, H1a, H1b and H1c are rejected. The three pull factors to Penang are psychology, destination and promotions are found to be significantly related to tourist satisfaction. As such, H2a, H2b and H2c are accepted. Human psychology is about how good the foods in Penang. As such, it is evidence that food does contribute to tourist satisfaction. Promotions about Penang including the food attraction is certainly very important. Therefore, food promotion pulls tourists to visit the state and the state efforts in promotions are proven rewarded. By doing promotion, domestic, as well as international tourists' arrivals are expected to continuously increase. Therefore, this can lead to economic boost through enhancement of international exchanges as well as continuity to employment opportunities.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In this study, it is evidence that Penang does offer great foods and as such, this is the main attraction for tourists. Although Penang, is an established tourist destination, promotion is still very important. Therefore, promotion must be continuously implemented by the destination managers. In this study, the pull factors are the key to tourist motivation in visiting Penang. As such, the sustainability of Penang food's reputation is important to maintain the destination attractiveness and uniqueness.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Research in food tourism is growing due o the importance of foods as a tourist attractions. In limitation, it is impossible to include all factors related to the pull and food factors that contribute to tourist satisfaction. Future researcher could address related issues in food tourism including the behaviour of repeat visitors and also the impacts of food tourism towards social and economic sustainability of the local people.

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