

Exploring the Interplay Between Perceived Destination Image, Government Tourism Campaigns, and Domestic Hotel Tourism Growth: Insights from Post-COVID-19 Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper explores the interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth in the context of Malaysia's post-COVID-19 recovery. The study emphasizes the critical role of destination image in shaping tourist perceptions and behaviors, alongside the effectiveness of government-led promotional efforts in revitalizing the domestic tourism sector. Drawing on existing literature, this paper proposes a conceptual framework that highlights the theoretical relationships between these variables. The findings aim to provide valuable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders to enhance marketing strategies, mitigate post-pandemic challenges, and promote sustainable growth in Malaysia's hotel and tourism sectors. The study concludes with recommendations for future empirical research to validate the proposed framework, particularly in examining the moderating and mediating effects of perceived risks and social media influence on domestic tourism behavior.

KEYWORDS: perceived destination image, tourism campaign, hotel tourism, post covid

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the global tourism and hospitality sector, leading to unprecedented disruptions. In Malaysia, the industry faced significant challenges due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. However, recent data indicates a robust recovery, with global tourism expected to fully rebound by the end of 2024, as most regions have already surpassed 2019 arrival numbers in the first nine months of the year (UNWTO, 2024).

A critical factor in this recovery is the perceived image of tourism destinations. Destination image encompasses tourists' beliefs, feelings, and overall perceptions of a place, significantly influencing their travel decisions (Seabra et al., 2020).

A positive destination image can enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty, thereby driving tourism growth. Government tourism campaigns also play a pivotal role in revitalizing the sector. Strategic marketing initiatives can effectively reshape and enhance a destination's image, attracting both domestic and international tourists. For instance, the "Pesona Indonesia" campaign targeted domestic tourists to boost local tourism (Wikipedia, 2024).

Similarly, Malaysia's tourism campaigns have been instrumental in promoting domestic tourism, contributing to the industry's recovery. Understanding the interplay between perceived destination image and government tourism campaigns is essential for formulating effective strategies to stimulate domestic tourism growth. This study aims to explore these relationships within the context of Malaysia's post-COVID-19 hotel industry, providing insights that could inform policy and marketing strategies to sustain and enhance tourism development.

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted Malaysia's hotel industry, causing significant challenges in the post-pandemic period. The industry experienced a sharp decline in key performance indicators, such as average occupancy rates (AOR) and average daily rates (ADR). For instance, in 2022, the industry achieved an AOR of 52.4% and an ADR of RM247, slightly lower than the 2019 figures of 54.1% (AOR) and RM258 (ADR) (The Edge Malaysia, 2023). These declines were exacerbated by the slow return of foreign tourists from traditionally strong markets, further straining recovery efforts. Moreover, the hospitality workforce suffered substantial losses during the pandemic, with the number of workers dropping from 233,800 in 2019 to 208,500 in 2020 (World Tourism Organization, 2022). The Malaysian Association of Hotels estimates that about half of the workforce left the industry, many transitioning to other sectors or self-employment (The Edge Malaysia, 2023). Financial losses also plagued the industry, with the sector recording an estimated RM3.29 billion in total losses during 2020 and up to 30% of hotels projected to shut down temporarily or permanently (MIDA, 2020).

The challenges faced by Malaysia's hotel industry extend beyond financial losses and workforce shortages. A notable shift in tourist demographics has occurred due to international travel restrictions, with a heightened reliance on domestic tourism. While this shift presents opportunities, it also brings challenges in understanding and catering to the preferences of domestic tourists. Domestic tourism is seen as a critical factor in aiding the sector's recovery, as it supports numerous businesses and jobs. However, addressing the diverse needs and expectations of domestic travelers requires targeted strategies and interventions (Loh & Dahesihari, 2021). Additionally, the lack of comprehensive studies evaluating government policies and strategies to support the tourism industry during the pandemic creates a gap in understanding the sector's recovery dynamics (Asia-Europe Institute, 2021).

Given the challenges outlined, there is a pressing need for theoretical exploration of the factors influencing domestic tourism growth in Malaysia. The interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel performance warrants attention, particularly in the post-pandemic context. Studies have highlighted the importance of understanding tourist behavior and preferences in fostering domestic tourism (Loh & Dahesihari, 2021). Furthermore, there is limited research on the effectiveness of government campaigns in stimulating domestic travel and supporting the recovery of the hotel industry (Asia-Europe Institute, 2021). By

examining these theoretical aspects, this paper aims to provide insights that can help policymakers and industry stakeholders formulate effective strategies to drive domestic tourism growth and support the resilience of Malaysia's hotel industry in the post-pandemic era.

The objective of this research is to explore the relationship between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and hotel tourism growth. Understanding these interconnections is crucial for developing effective strategies to enhance domestic tourism, particularly in the post-COVID-19 context.

Perceived destination image refers to tourists' overall impression and perception of a destination, influencing their travel decisions and behaviors. A positive destination image can significantly boost tourist arrivals and, consequently, hotel occupancy rates. Wei et al. (2024) highlight that a favorable destination image positively impacts tourists' nostalgia emotions and local attachment, which in turn enhances their revisit intentions.

Government-led tourism campaigns play a pivotal role in shaping and promoting a destination's image. Such initiatives aim to highlight the unique attractions and experiences a destination offers, thereby attracting tourists and stimulating economic growth. For instance, the "Wonderful Indonesia" campaign launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Tourism emphasizes the country's natural beauty and cultural richness, leading to increased tourist arrivals.

The growth of the hotel sector is closely linked to both the perceived image of the destination and the effectiveness of government tourism campaigns. A positive destination image attracts more tourists, leading to higher demand for hotel accommodations. Simultaneously, successful government campaigns can boost tourist numbers, directly impacting hotel occupancy and revenue. In Spain, for example, government efforts to promote high-end tourism have led to increased investments in luxury hotels, positively affecting the hospitality sector.

The interplay between these factors suggests that enhancing a destination's image through targeted government campaigns can lead to significant growth in the hotel industry. By understanding and leveraging these relationships, stakeholders can develop strategies that not only attract tourists but also ensure sustainable growth in the hospitality sector.

This research enriches the existing body of knowledge by examining the interconnectedness of perceived destination image, governmental promotional efforts, and the growth of domestic hotel tourism within the specific context of post-pandemic Malaysia. Such an exploration is timely, considering the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global tourism dynamics. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of destination image in influencing tourist trust and satisfaction. For instance, Jebbouri et al. (2022) found that a positive destination image significantly enhances tourist trust, mediated by tourist satisfaction. Additionally, Musa et al. (2024) discussed the critical role of government initiatives in rebuilding Malaysia's tourism industry post-pandemic, emphasizing the need for strategic revival strategies. By integrating these perspectives, the current study offers a comprehensive framework that addresses a gap in the literature concerning the synergistic effects of destination perception and governmental campaigns on domestic tourism growth.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study provide actionable insights for both policymakers and industry stakeholders aiming to rejuvenate the tourism sector in Malaysia. Understanding how tourists perceive a destination enables the development of targeted marketing strategies that resonate with potential travelers' expectations and preferences. Moreover, the effectiveness of government-led tourism campaigns can be assessed and optimized based on empirical evidence, ensuring that promotional resources are allocated efficiently. Ha My and Tung (2024) emphasized the significance of factors such as past travel experiences and healthcare systems in shaping tourists' intentions to revisit destinations in the post-pandemic period. By considering these factors, policymakers can design comprehensive campaigns that address tourists' concerns and enhance their overall experience. Furthermore, industry stakeholders, particularly in the hotel sector, can leverage insights into domestic tourism trends to tailor their services and offerings, thereby fostering sustainable growth in a recovering market.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Perceived Destination Image

Perceived destination image refers to the overall impression, beliefs, and feelings individuals have about a tourist destination. It is a multifaceted construct comprising three main dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative. The **cognitive dimension** involves tourists' beliefs and knowledge about a destination's attributes, such as attractions, infrastructure, and cultural offerings. For instance, Sun et al. (2021) highlighted that cognitive evaluations include tangible aspects like the environment, atmosphere, and services. The **affective dimension** pertains to the emotions or feelings a destination evokes, ranging from excitement to relaxation, which are integral to forming an overall destination image (Sun et al., 2021). Lastly, the **conative dimension** reflects behavioral intentions, such as the likelihood of visiting or recommending the destination. Jebbouri et al. (2022) emphasize that conative image represents action-oriented responses based on cognitive and affective evaluations.

The perceived destination image plays a pivotal role in shaping tourist behavior and preferences. It influences various stages of the decision-making process, such as destination choice, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. A positive destination image attracts tourists by aligning with their preferences and expectations, making it a critical factor in destination choice. Wei et al. (2024) found that destination image significantly impacts tourists' decisions to revisit, indicating its influence on both initial and repeat visitation. Moreover, a favorable destination image enhances tourist satisfaction and trust. Jebbouri et al. (2022) demonstrated that destination image formation positively affects tourist satisfaction, which in turn builds trust in the destination. Additionally, it influences tourists' intentions to recommend and revisit the destination. Wei et al. (2024) observed that a strong destination image and local attachment increase the likelihood of revisit intentions.

Understanding the components and impacts of perceived destination image enables destination marketers and policymakers to craft strategies that enhance positive perceptions. This, in turn, influences tourist behavior

favorably, contributing to the sustainable growth of tourism and hospitality sectors, especially in the post-pandemic recovery period.

B. Government Tourism Campaigns

Government tourism campaigns are pivotal in shaping a nation's tourism landscape, influencing both international and domestic travel behaviors. This discussion delves into the theoretical foundations of tourism marketing campaigns and examines the role of government initiatives in promoting domestic tourism, supported by recent scholarly references.

Tourism marketing campaigns are grounded in various theoretical frameworks that guide their design and implementation. One such framework is the **Destination Marketing Triangle (DMT)**, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of three dimensions: destination leaders, tourism service providers, and tourists. This model suggests that close collaboration among these stakeholders enhances visitor experiences and solidifies destination branding (Prakash et al., 2024).

Additionally, the **holistic, multi-organization view of marketing** underscores the importance of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in coordinating efforts across various partners to achieve successful marketing outcomes. This perspective highlights that the effectiveness of marketing activities depends on the collective efforts and plans of tourism suppliers and other entities (Sotiriadis, 2021).

Governments play a multifaceted role in tourism development, encompassing support, regulation, and direct involvement in tourism planning and policy formation. Their influence extends through both passive and active roles, impacting the industry's growth via legislation, infrastructure development, and direct investment in tourism projects. This comprehensive involvement is crucial for fostering a sustainable and competitive tourism sector (The Tourism Institute, 2023).

In the context of domestic tourism, government initiatives have been particularly significant. For instance, the **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** has highlighted the potential of domestic tourism to drive economic recovery, especially in the aftermath of global disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments are encouraged to implement policies that promote domestic travel, recognizing its capacity to sustain the tourism sector during challenging times (UNWTO, 2020).

Furthermore, promoting domestic tourism is not just a temporary solution to a crisis but a strategic approach to sustainable economic growth. Focusing on the potential within borders can build a resilient tourism industry. Investing in domestic tourism promotion is an investment in a country's economy, culture, and people (Tourism India Online, 2023).

The theoretical foundations of tourism marketing campaigns provide a structured approach to understanding how marketing efforts can be optimized through stakeholder collaboration and strategic planning. Simultaneously, government initiatives play a crucial role in promoting domestic tourism, offering support and

creating an environment conducive to sustainable growth. The interplay between these theoretical frameworks and practical government actions is essential for the development and resilience of the tourism sector.

C. Hotel Domestic Tourism Growth

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the global hotel industry, including domestic tourism in Malaysia. However, the industry is witnessing a gradual recovery, driven by key factors and emerging trends. One critical factor is the implementation of effective marketing strategies tailored to domestic markets. Benzaghar and Ktiri (2024) emphasize that understanding consumer needs and adapting offerings can enhance the attractiveness of local destinations. Additionally, government initiatives have played a pivotal role in driving domestic tourism growth. STR (2023) reports that in the Asia-Pacific region, domestic demand has surged, with hotel occupancy rates reaching over 90% of pre-pandemic levels, largely due to promotional campaigns encouraging local travel.

Effective pricing strategies have also been instrumental in recovery. For example, hotels in Latin America experienced a 12.2% year-over-year increase in pricing from 2023 to 2024, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, driven by a growing middle class, stabilizing inflation, and strong labor markets (Lighthouse, 2024). In Malaysia, similar trends reflect a broader strategy to balance affordability with profitability in domestic markets.

Post-pandemic recovery trends further underscore the industry's evolution. Traveler preferences have shifted toward personalized and private experiences, prompting hotels to offer more autonomous and home-like environments (Odetunde, 2025). Technological integration has accelerated, with innovations such as remote check-ins, digital room keys, and personalized communication tools becoming standard, enhancing guest satisfaction and operational efficiency. Sustainability and local engagement have also gained prominence, with many hotels embracing eco-friendly practices and collaborating with local artisans to support community development (McCarthy, 2025).

Business travel, while transformed, is showing signs of recovery, with a growing focus on domestic trips and increased group travel bookings. Small and medium-sized enterprises are driving this trend, with clients securing dates years in advance to ensure availability (Reuters, 2024). Together, these factors highlight the resilience of the hotel industry and its capacity to adapt to new consumer behaviors and market demands. By leveraging these insights, stakeholders in Malaysia's tourism sector can navigate the post-pandemic landscape and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Perceived destination image significantly influences tourists' decision-making processes, affecting their choice of destination and accommodation. A positive destination image enhances tourist satisfaction, leading to increased visitation and, consequently, hotel occupancy and growth. Jebbouri et al. (2022) found that a favorable destination image positively impacts tourist trust and satisfaction, which are critical determinants of their intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others.

Furthermore, a comprehensive literature review by Huang et al. (2021) emphasizes that destination image is a key factor influencing tourist behavior, including destination selection and future travel intentions. The study highlights that a well-perceived image can lead to competitive advantages for destinations, thereby benefiting local hotels through increased demand.

Government tourism campaigns play a pivotal role in shaping tourism behavior and enhancing hotel performance. Effective marketing strategies and supportive policies can stimulate domestic tourism, especially crucial in the recovery phase following a pandemic. A study by Panjaitan et al. (2020) indicates that government policies directly affect hotel performance, with economic support measures positively influencing outcomes. The research suggests that strategic government interventions can enhance competitive advantage and operational efficiency in the hotel sector.

Additionally, research by Zaremba et al. (2021) explores the impact of government interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry. The study reveals that while certain restrictions negatively affected hotel operations, targeted economic support policies helped mitigate adverse effects, underscoring the importance of balanced government actions in crisis situations.

A positive perceived destination image and strategic government tourism campaigns are instrumental in driving hotel growth and performance. Understanding these relationships is essential for stakeholders aiming to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of the hospitality sector in post-pandemic Malaysia.

III. METHODOLOGY

The proposed model explores the relationships between **Perceived Destination Image (PDI)**, **Government Tourism Campaigns (GTC)**, and **Domestic Hotel Tourism Growth (DHTG)**, highlighting their interconnected roles in post-pandemic tourism recovery. Perceived destination image refers to tourists' cognitive and emotional impressions of a destination, which significantly impact their travel decisions, satisfaction, and loyalty. As García-Fernández, Pérez-Gálvez, and Castañeda-García (2022) explain, a positive destination image is crucial for encouraging domestic travel and boosting hotel bookings.

Government tourism campaigns are another key driver in this model. These campaigns are designed to create awareness, address safety concerns, and promote destinations through targeted messages. Brouder (2023) emphasizes the importance of government-led initiatives in fostering domestic tourism demand, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Campaigns that showcase cultural experiences, affordable travel packages, and safety protocols can significantly influence travelers' perceptions and decision-making processes.

The final component, domestic hotel tourism growth, reflects the overall performance of the hotel sector, including occupancy rates, revenue, and guest satisfaction. Factors such as perceived safety, affordability, and effective promotional efforts play an essential role in sustaining this growth (Sigala, 2022). The interplay among these components is bidirectional: while a strong destination image encourages domestic tourism and supports

hotel growth, government campaigns can further enhance the destination image by emphasizing unique attractions and addressing potential concerns.

The conceptual relationships can be summarized as follows: Perceived Destination Image directly impacts Domestic Hotel Tourism Growth, while Government Tourism Campaigns serve as a mediator that influences both the destination image and hotel growth. These interdependencies are vital for understanding how to strategically position tourism destinations and support the recovery of the hospitality industry in Malaysia post-pandemic.

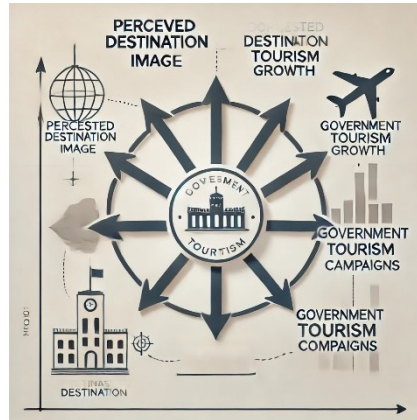


Figure 1. Propose Model

This study focusing on theoretical exploration and model development to understand the interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth in Malaysia's post-pandemic context. Conceptual research is a methodology that aims to build frameworks or theories rather than rely on empirical data collection and analysis (MacInnis, 2011). This approach is particularly suitable for addressing novel or evolving phenomena, such as the recovery of the tourism sector following the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Jaakkola (2020), conceptual papers play a crucial role in advancing theory by synthesizing existing literature, identifying research gaps, and proposing new relationships between variables. This paper aligns with Jaakkola's perspective by integrating theoretical insights to propose a conceptual framework that links perceived destination image, government campaigns, and hotel tourism growth.

Further, conceptual model development is emphasized as a vital step in providing a theoretical foundation for future empirical studies (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015). This paper employs model development to visually represent the hypothesized relationships among the key constructs, drawing upon relevant literature to ground these propositions in theory.

By focusing on theoretical constructs, this study contributes to the academic discourse on tourism and hospitality recovery strategies. It offers practical insights into how government-led campaigns and destination branding can foster domestic tourism growth, especially in regions heavily impacted by the pandemic.

IV. FINDINGS

The interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth in post-COVID-19 Malaysia offers significant theoretical implications and enriches existing frameworks in tourism and hospitality studies. Firstly, the perception of a destination's image plays a pivotal role in shaping tourist behavior, particularly their intention to revisit. Recent studies highlight that factors such as past travel experiences, healthcare systems, and crisis management positively influence tourists' attitudes toward returning to a destination (My & Tung, 2024). This underscores the need to integrate these variables into theoretical models predicting tourist behavior in the post-pandemic context.

Government tourism campaigns also play a critical role in driving domestic tourism, particularly in times of crisis. In Malaysia, targeted initiatives by the government, such as campaigns to encourage domestic travel, have been instrumental in reviving the tourism sector. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (2020) identified these efforts as crucial for the industry's recovery. This demonstrates the necessity of including government interventions in theoretical frameworks to better understand domestic tourism dynamics.

Moreover, the pandemic has heightened tourists' awareness of health and safety, necessitating the incorporation of perceived health risks and the effectiveness of a destination's healthcare system into existing tourism and hospitality frameworks. As My and Tung (2024) suggest, these additions provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourist decision-making in the current era. Additionally, the ability of destinations to manage crises and communicate effectively during such periods has become a critical factor influencing tourist perceptions. Malaysia's recovery efforts underscore the importance of integrating crisis management strategies into theoretical models, as highlighted by Musa et al. (2024).

Finally, the shift toward domestic tourism as a resilience strategy during international travel restrictions is another valuable contribution to existing frameworks. This approach emphasizes domestic tourism's potential as a sustainable recovery pathway, as noted by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (2020). Collectively, these insights contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing tourism and hospitality recovery and growth in the post-pandemic era.

The interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth in post-COVID-19 Malaysia provides important practical insights for both hotel management and policymakers. For hotel management, enhancing the perceived image of the destination is crucial. Hotels can collaborate with local communities to offer authentic and unique experiences, which help improve the destination's overall appeal. According to Jebbouri et al. (2022), local community participation significantly enhances tourist satisfaction and trust, which can lead to repeat visits. Furthermore, hotels can align their marketing strategies with government tourism campaigns to maximize outreach and effectiveness. Musa et al. (2024) highlight that Malaysian government initiatives have played a vital role in positioning the country as a top travel destination, creating opportunities for collaboration between the public and private sectors. Additionally, given the rise in domestic tourism, hotels should prioritize tailoring their services to meet the preferences of local

travelers. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (2020) emphasized that domestic tourism has emerged as a key pathway to reviving the tourism industry post-pandemic.

From the perspective of policymakers, developing strategic tourism campaigns that emphasize safety, healthcare infrastructure, and unique cultural offerings can significantly enhance the perceived destination image. My and Tung (2024) found that robust healthcare systems and effective crisis management strategies positively influence tourists' attitudes and encourage revisits. Policymakers should also consider providing financial incentives and support to hotels to facilitate their recovery and growth. Musa et al. (2024) note that several government initiatives have been implemented in Malaysia to accommodate tourist demands and promote domestic tourism. Lastly, promoting domestic tourism through subsidies or discounts can stimulate local economies and ensure sustainable growth. ERIA (2020) identified domestic tourism as a critical driver for the quick recovery of the tourism industry in Malaysia, emphasizing its role in building resilience in the sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Malaysia's tourism sector, introducing both unique challenges and opportunities for recovery. Among the key challenges, economic losses and business closures were particularly severe. Many hotels and travel agencies faced financial strain, leading to closures and widespread job losses. According to *The Edge Malaysia* (2020), the tourism industry came to a grinding halt, resulting in massive economic setbacks and an uncertain future for many operators. Even as restrictions eased, local tourism operators struggled to regain pre-pandemic levels of business due to reduced consumer confidence and lingering health concerns. *Malay Mail* (2022) highlighted that many businesses continued to face recovery challenges long after lockdowns and border closures were lifted.

Conversely, the post-pandemic era also presents significant opportunities for innovation and growth in Malaysia's tourism sector. Government initiatives have been instrumental in driving recovery efforts, with strategic collaborations aimed at restoring travel confidence and boosting domestic tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, for instance, introduced a comprehensive recovery plan that involved partnerships with airlines, hospitality services, and transportation providers to revitalize the sector (*Tourism Malaysia*, 2020). Furthermore, digital transformation has become a cornerstone of Malaysia's recovery strategy. The National Tourism Policy 2020–2030 emphasizes smart tourism through the adoption of technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and data analytics to enhance visitor experiences and attract tech-savvy tourists (*IEEE*, 2022). Projections for Malaysia's tourism rebound are also optimistic, with a target of 23.5 million international tourists and RM77 billion in receipts by 2025. This promising outlook, supported by improved infrastructure, strategic location, and tourist-friendly visa policies, underscores the sector's potential for recovery and growth (*MarketersMEDIA*, 2024).

The Malaysian tourism sector continues to navigate the complex challenges brought on by the pandemic, strategic initiatives and a focus on digital transformation offer a path toward resilience and long-term sustainability. These efforts position Malaysia as a competitive and innovative destination in the post-pandemic era.

V. CONCLUSION

the interplay between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth is pivotal for the recovery and development of Malaysia's tourism sector in the post-COVID-19 era. The way tourists perceive a destination significantly influences their travel decisions. A positive image can enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty, leading to increased visitation and economic benefits. Furthermore, strategic marketing initiatives by the government play a crucial role in shaping and promoting the destination's image. Effective campaigns not only highlight the destination's unique attributes but also address potential concerns, thereby attracting more tourists. This synergy between a favorable destination image and impactful government campaigns can stimulate growth in the domestic hotel industry, resulting in higher hotel occupancy and increased revenue.

The interdependence among these variables underscores the need for coordinated efforts between government bodies and industry stakeholders to craft compelling narratives and marketing strategies that resonate with potential tourists. As highlighted by Huang et al. (2021), a well-crafted destination image is essential for attracting tourists and sustaining growth in the hospitality sector. Similarly, Sun et al. (2021) emphasized that aligning government-promoted images with tourists' perceptions is crucial for enhancing tourist experiences and promoting sustainable tourism. Hamdy et al. (2023) further demonstrated that both extrinsic motivations, such as government campaigns, and intrinsic motives significantly influence perceived destination image, which in turn affects tourism growth. These insights reinforce the importance of the relationship between perceived destination image, government tourism campaigns, and domestic hotel tourism growth, offering theoretical and practical implications for Malaysia's post-pandemic tourism recovery.

Future research should focus on several key areas to empirically validate the proposed conceptual framework. First, studies could investigate the alignment between the destination image projected by Malaysian National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) and the image perceived by domestic tourists. This alignment is critical for designing effective marketing strategies (Sun, Tang, & Liu, 2021). Additionally, researchers should explore how the perceived image of Malaysian destinations influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty, providing valuable insights for destination management organizations to enhance tourist experiences (Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015).

Another important area is assessing the effectiveness of government-led tourism campaigns in shaping domestic tourists' perceptions and behaviors. Such evaluations can help optimize promotional strategies to boost domestic tourism. Furthermore, the role of perceived risks in influencing tourists' decisions to revisit destinations, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery context, is worth examining. This understanding can assist in developing strategies to mitigate perceived risks and encourage repeat visits (Wei, Zhou, & Li, 2024).

The integration of social media in destination image formation also presents an interesting avenue for research. Exploring the impact of user-generated and NTO-generated content on domestic tourists' perceptions can provide critical insights into the digital aspects of destination image management. Finally, longitudinal studies

tracking changes in domestic tourism growth, destination image, and the effectiveness of government campaigns over time would offer valuable data on the dynamics of Malaysia's tourism recovery. By addressing these areas, future research can provide empirical support for the conceptual relationships proposed in this study and deliver practical insights for stakeholders in Malaysia's tourism industry.

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