UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

ANTECEDENTS OF RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR AND INFLUENCE OF INTENTION ON MARINE PARK DESTINATION CHOICE AMONG MILLENNIAL TOURISTS IN MALAYSIA

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SPE 2020 31

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By

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2020

This is dedicated to those who believed in me… even when I did not.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2020

Chair   : Associate Professor Zaiton Samdin, PhD
Faculty   : School of Business and Economics

Due to the rising global concern over environmental pollution, ecotourism in protected areas such as marine park islands has been identified as one of the mitigation strategies. Besides promoting sustainable tourism, ecotourism is a key contributor to the country's economy. However, over the years, there has been a continuous increase in the numbers of visitors to these marine park islands, alongside the growing tourist activities and the irresponsible behaviours of the visitors that threatens the marine ecosystem. Hence, in keeping up with the environmental pressures and the demand for ecotourism activities, many have turned their attention to the millennial generation. Millennial tourists are growing due to their exponential population size, spending power and distinctive characteristics. Despite the numerous efforts that have been made to gain an in-depth understanding of millennial tourists' behaviours, there is still limited knowledge on the underlying factors that drive their environmental behaviours especially in marine park islands and how this would lead to their holiday destination decisions. This study applied an extended Model of Responsible Environmental Behaviour (REB) with the inclusion of Consumption Values Theory (CVT) and Tripartite Model of Destination Image (TDI). The objective of this study is to examine the antecedents of responsible environmental behaviour of millennial tourists and to determine the effect of behaviour intention in predicting millennial tourists' pro-environmental behaviours and their destination choice. The antecedents of environmental knowledge and consumption values were formatively constructed and tested empirically with attitude and destination image in the extended framework. Additionally, overall affective and cognitive destination image were applied to predict the conative effect towards responsible environmental behaviour and destination choice among the millennials. Using purposive sampling to represent the local and international millennial tourists accordingly, a total of 427 data were analysed from tourists who had recently visited a marine park island in Malaysia. The face-to-face survey was conducted at six jetties located in Malaysia, at exit points of the marine park islands. After

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the data collected was screened and analysed using descriptive statistics, the reliability and validity of the measurement model were determined using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Results revealed that consumption values were the main predictor of behaviour intention followed by environmental knowledge and attitude. This indicates that millennial tourists' behaviour intention is highly value-driven, rather than just a rational or altruistic decision as anticipated in earlier theories. Additionally, responsible environmental behaviour was empirically proven to have a more significant effect on destination decision compared to the destination image. The role of intention as a mediator was also strengthened in this study. However, one of the limitations of this study is it only focuses on marine parks. Due to the environmental issues that are constantly evolving and more critical, predicting tourist behaviours is increasingly complex which may render more variables to be included in the study. Other methodological limitations and data collection constraints were addressed. Overall, this study was able to empirically support the extended REB framework to effectively explain and predict responsible environmental behaviour and destination choice among millennial tourists. It also contributed to the body of knowledge on millennial tourists that could assist marketing and ecotourism practitioners in attracting the right market segment towards sustainable tourism development of marine park islands in Malaysia. Based on the results, it is suggested that millennial tourists' consumption values can be heightened if practitioners develop unique eco-tour programs and promote eco-friendly practices using targeted marketing communications. Millennial tourists who are more engaged in responsible environmental behaviours would display higher tendencies in choosing marine park islands as their next holiday destination. In terms of policy contributions, courses in environmental management can be offered to increase the knowledge of millennials and upgrade their skills on relevant strategies to protect the natural environment. Besides, marine parks' destination image can be enhanced by highlighting the underwater marine life to promote responsible behaviours in the marine park islands effectively.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MENDORONG TINGKAH LAKU BERTANGGUNGJAWAB TERHADAP ALAM SEKITAR DAN PENGARUH NIAT TERHADAP PILIHAN DESTINASI TAMAN MARIN DI KALANGAN PELANCONG-PELANCONG MILENIAL DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

SITI INTAN NURDIANA WONG BINTI ABDULLAH

Jun 2020

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Zaiton Samdin, PhD
Fakulti : Sekolah Perniagaan dan Ekonomi

Dengan meningkatnya keprihatinan global terhadap pencemaran alam sekitar, ekopelancongan di kawasan lindungan seperti pulau taman laut telah dikenal pasti sebagai salah satu strategi mitigasi. Selain mempromosikan pelancongan lestari, ekopelancongan adalah penyumbang utama ekonomi negara. Namun, saban tahun, terdapat peningkatan berterusan jumlah pengunjung ke pulau-pulau ini, di samping aktiviti pelancongan yang semakin meningkat dan tingkah laku tidak bertanggungjawab pengunjung yang mengancam ekosistem laut. Oleh itu, bagi menyaingi tekanan sekitar dan permintaan kegiatan ekopelancongan, ramai yang telah mengalihkan perhatian mereka kepada generasi milenial. Pelancong milenial makin bertambah kerana saiz populasi dan kuasa belanja yang eksponen serta sifat tersendiri mereka. Walaupun terdapat banyak usaha yang dilakukan untuk memahami dengan mendalam tingkah laku pelancong milenial ini, masih kurang pengetahuan tentang faktor-faktor yang mendasari tingkah laku alam sekitar mereka terutamanya di pulau taman laut dan bagaimana ia mempengaruhi keputusan destinasi percutian mereka. Kajian ini menggunakan Model Tingkah Laku Alam Sekitar Bertanggungjawab (*Responsible Environmental Behaviour, REB*) yang diperluas dengan memasukkan Teori Nilai Penggunaan (*Consumption Values Theory, CVT*) dan Model Tripartit Gambaran Destinasi (*Tripartite Model of Destination Image, TDI*). Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji anteseden tingkah laku alam sekitar bertanggungjawab pelancong milenial dan untuk menentukan kesan niat tingkah laku dalam meramalkan tingkah laku pro-alam sekitar pelancong milenial dan pilihan destinasi mereka. Anteseden pengetahuan alam sekitar dan nilai penggunaan dibangunkan secara formatif dan diuji secara empirik dengan sikap dan gambaran destinasi dalam kerangka yang diperluas. Selain itu, gambaran destinasi afektif dan kognitif keseluruhan digunakan untuk meramalkan kesan konatif terhadap tingkah laku alam sekitar bertanggungjawab dan pilihan destinasi di kalangan generasi milenial. Dengan

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menggunakan pensampelan tujuan untuk mewakili pelancong milenial tempatan dan antarabangsa, sejumlah 427 data dianalisis daripada pelancong yang telah mengunjungi mana-mana pulau taman laut di Malaysia. Tinjauan bersemuka ini dilakukan di enam jeti yang menjadi pintu keluar beberapa pulau taman laut di Malaysia. Setelah data yang dikumpulkan disaring dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, kebolehpercayaan dan kesahan model pengukuran ditentukan dengan menggunakan Model Persamaan Berstruktur-Kuasa Dua Terkecil Separa (*Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling, PLS-SEM*). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa nilai penggunaan adalah peramal utama niat tingkah laku diikuti dengan pengetahuan alam sekitar dan sikap. Ini menunjukkan bahawa niat tingkah laku pelancong milenial sangat didorong oleh nilai dan bukan hanya keputusan rasional atau altruistik seperti yang dijangkakan dalam teori sebelum ini. Selain itu, tingkah laku alam sekitar bertanggungjawab terbukti secara empirikal mempunyai kesan yang lebih signifikan terhadap keputusan destinasi berbanding gambaran destinasi. Peranan niat sebagai pengantara juga diperkukuhkan dalam kajian ini. Namun begitu, salah satu batasan kajian ini ialah ia hanya memberi tumpuan kepada taman laut. Disebabkan isu-isu alam sekitar yang sentiasa berkembang dan lebih kritikal, aktiviti meramal tingkah laku pelancong kini semakin kompleks yang mungkin memerlukan lebih banyak pemboleh ubah dimasukkan dalam kajian. Batasan metodologi dan kekangan pengumpulan data lain telah ditangani. Secara keseluruhan, kajian ini dapat menyokong kerangka REB yang diperluas secara empirikal untuk menerangkan dan meramalkan dengan berkesan tingkah laku alam sekitar bertanggungjawab dan pilihan destinasi pelancong milenial. Ia juga menyumbang kepada pengetahuan tentang pelancong milenial yang dapat membantu pengamal pemasaran dan ekopelancongan dalam menarik segmen pasaran yang tepat ke arah pembangunan pelancongan lestari pulau taman laut di Malaysia. Berdasarkan hasil kajian, nilai penggunaan pelancong milenial dapat ditingkatkan jika para pengamal membangunkan program ekopelancongan yang unik dan mempromosikan amalan mesra alam menggunakan komunikasi pemasaran bersasar. Pelancong milenial yang lebih terlibat dalam tingkah laku alam sekitar bertanggungjawab akan menunjukkan kecenderungan yang lebih tinggi dalam memilih pulau taman laut sebagai destinasi percutian mereka yang berikutnya. Daripada sudut sumbangan polisi, kursus pengurusan alam sekitar dapat ditawarkan untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan generasi milenial dan meningkatkan kemahiran mereka sebagai strategi yang relevan untuk melindungi persekitaran semula jadi. Selain itu, gambaran destinasi taman laut dapat diperhebat dengan menonjolkan hidupan bawah laut untuk mempromosi dengan berkesan amalan bertanggungjawab di pulau-pulau taman laut.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the blessings and love from Allah SAW, this chapter has finally come to an end and a new story awaits. This is definitely one of the most unforgettable journey of my life and I am grateful to many individuals who have made it more meaningful. To my main supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Zaiton Samdin who gave me endless guidance and invaluable support throughout my entire journey while accepting all my weaknesses. Mostly, for not giving up on me even when sometimes I was on the verge of giving up on myself. Without you, I will not be where I am today and from you, I have learnt so much. As my role model, you have taught me that humility and care are the true characteristics of a successful supervisor. I am forever indebted to you and you will remain as one of the most special person in my heart. You are my constant in this roller-coaster ride.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisory committee members – Associate Professor Dr. Ho Jo Ann and Associate Professor Dr. Serene Ng Siew Imm for both of your constructive feedback and ruthless comments. Both your expertise and upheld standards have contributed to my resilience and the overall improvement of this thesis. A special mention also to Professor Ramayah Thurasamy for your patience in guiding me in statistical analysis and Dr. Evelyn Lim who gave me invaluable advice. Not forgetting, Professor Nirwan Idrus and Mei Fern for their continous moral support from afar.

I am blessed to have understanding parents and sister who stood by my side unfailingly. To my dear parents, Wong Khek Seng and Tan Peik Lee, thank you for all your sacrifices and for helping me to take care of my 'Do-re-mi' whenever I am away attending workshops, classes, meetings and conferences. Not forgetting, my husband, as this would not have been possible without your prayers, especially your help during the data collection stage. To our three heroes – Danial, Rayyan and Mikhail (Do-re-mi), who travelled all over with me to collect data, now mommy is finally done and we can spend more time together!

Thank you to my partners-in-crime (Phuah and Bernard), who never stopped encouraging me and constantly pushed my boundaries, whether it is in writing papers or joining competitions. Together, we have made many happy memories. To my dear friends and colleagues – Roberto, Varun, Klara, Sukjeet and Ah Huai, who never failed to cheer me up whenever they see my face turn into serious PhD-mode. I am truly blessed to have all of you. For those who participated in this study, my gratitude goes out to you and I am glad we met. If I hadn't embarked on this journey, I wouldn't have had the chance to meet so many great people from all walks of life. This has been an extraordinary and crazy experience and now, I am ready for the next chapter!

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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This is to confirm that:
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BEI	Behaviour Intention
CA	Cronbach's Alpha
CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling
CBT	Community-based Tourism
CC	Carrying Capacity
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CMV	Common Method Variance
CO	Conditional Value
CR	Composite Reliability
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Comma Separated Value
CVAL	Consumption Values
DC	Destination Choice
DI	Destination Image
DMPM	Department of Marine Park Malaysia
EAS	Environmental Action Skills
EAT	Environmental Attitude
EBI	Ecological Behavior Intention
ECCB	Ecologically-Conscious Consumer Behaviour
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EK	Environmental Knowledge
EKGI	Environmental Knowledge Global Indicator
EM	Emotional Value
EP	Epistemic Value
ESB	Environmentally sustainable behaviour
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
EU	European Union
EV	Environmental Values
FPA	Fisheries Prohibited Area
FV	Functional Value
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEB	General Ecological Behavior
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HOC	Higher Order Construct
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
KAS	Knowledge of Action Strategies
KATS	Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources
KMO	Kaiser- Mayer-Olkin
KOI	Knowledge of Issues
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change
LV	Latent Variables
LVS	Latent Variable Scores
MASEM	Meta-analysis and Structural Equation Modelling
MCSD	Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability
MOFI	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia
MPA	Marine Park Area

NAM	Norm Activation Model
NEP	National Ecotourism Plan
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
NRE	Natural Resources and Environment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling
PV	Perceived Value
REB	Responsible Environmental Behaviour
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRCB	Socially Responsible Consumption Behaviour
SV	Social Value
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TARP	Tunku Abdul Rahman Park
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TCV	Total Customer Value
TDI	Tripartite Model of Destination Image
TM	Tourism Malaysia
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
US	United States
VBN	Value-Belief-Norm
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
VR	Virtual Reality
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WYSE	World Youth Student and Educational
YSEALI	Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the tourism industry as the intended research area and discusses the pertinent issues that exist within the context of marine park islands. This is followed by some highlights on the millennial generation that constitutes as the largest and most influential tourist segment in Malaysia. The research gaps and problem statements that propelled this study are also discussed. Subsequently, the research questions and research objectives are presented, followed by a discussion on the expected contributions of this study. A list of key terms and their definitions are included at the end of this chapter.

1.1   Tourism Industry in Malaysia

The tourism industry plays a critical role in any nation by generating income and providing employment opportunities for the citizens. International tourist arrivals had globally increased by approximately 6% in 2018, which contributed USD 1.6 trillion worldwide, in terms of travellers spending their money on food, products, and other forms of services (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2019). In terms of its contribution towards employment, the tourism sector created one out of five new jobs globally in 2017 and is identified as an income source for many developing countries (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018).

In Malaysia, the tourism sector is positioned as a major source of economic growth as it surpasses other economic sectors, namely manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and financial services (Bank Negara, 2017). As the third highest contributor to the nation's economy, the tourism sector continues to play an imperative role in the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) to secure Malaysia's position as a high-income nation by 2020 (Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, 2016). Tourism not only contributes directly towards the economy, the various tourism activities have also increased employment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, growth in infrastructural improvements, and generate income for other supporting services, such as hotels, airlines, and retailers.

Table 1.1: Total Contributions of Travel and Tourism to Malaysia's GDP (2012–2028)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2028 (Forecast)
Direct	49.1	54.7	60.0	59.6	63.7	65.7	68.3	105.5

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contribution to GDP (MYR billion)								
Indirect contribution to GDP (MYR billion)	64.4	71.7	78.4	77.6	82.7	85.4	89.1	140.6
Induced contribution to GDP (MYR billion)	22.2	25.0	27.7	27.8	30.0	30.4	32.0	50.2
Total contribution to GDP (MYR billion)	135.7	151.5	166.1	165.0	176.3	181.4	189.3	296.3
Growth (%)	6.4	11.6	9.7	-0.7	6.9	2.9	4.3	4.6

Source: World Travel & Tourism Council (2018)

Table 1.1 shows that the travel and tourism industry in Malaysia has been a key direct contributor to the GDP, with MYR 68.3 billion in 2018, it was an increase of 28.1% compared to in 2012. Based on this long-term outlook, the tourism sector will continue to be an important contributor towards the nation's economic growth. By 2028, the total contribution to GDP is predicted to grow by 4.6% to MYR 296.3 billion (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Given the remarkable projected contribution of this sector, the main challenge for the nation is in ensuring its stable and sustainable growth.

In line with the economic contribution of this sector, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) has developed 12 entry point projects in 2014 to boost Malaysia's position as one of the top destinations for tourists by 2020. These projects were grouped into five themes and highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between private sectors and government agencies. To support this goal, MOTAC's marketing division, Tourism Malaysia (TM), has segmented Malaysia into eco-travel, culture and heritage, beaches and islands, and highland attractions, which are expected to draw tourists through the 'Cuti-Cuti 1Malaysia' campaign (Yusof, 2014). With its famous tagline 'Malaysia, Truly Asia', strong financial supports were given to aggressively promote Malaysia as a top tourist destination and to attract more inbound tourists.

Malaysia's tourism sector faced some setbacks during 2014 and 2015 due to exponential factors, such as haze, flood, coastal security issues, and the unfortunate tragedies that befell the Malaysia Airlines airplanes where one crashed and another was shot down. Consequently, Malaysia suffered a

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decline of 6.3% of tourist arrivals in 2015, with a total of 25.7 million tourist arrivals (The Star Online, 2016). This decline resulted in a slight decrease of the tourism sector's total contribution to the nation's GDP in 2015. In response, Tourism Malaysia (TM) heightened its marketing efforts by exploring new markets and revitalising advertising and promotional campaigns, which emphasized on digital and social media marketing strategies (Tourism Malaysia, 2016). With the help of digital marketing, online applications and the growing trend of sharing economy, Malaysia recorded a significant increase of 6.8% in domestic tourists in 2017 (Tourism Malaysia, 2017). In 2018 and moving forward under the administration of the new government, Malaysia continues to capitalise and optimise the digital trend to promote diverse and value-for-money attractions (ITB Berlin, 2019). According to the previous MOTAC minister, Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi, he is optimistic that Malaysia can be among the top 10 tourist destinations in the world and achieve the target of 30 million tourist arrivals in 2020 (Ganesan, 2018).

There are many tourist attractions in Malaysia because of its abundant natural resources, and richness in cultural and historical heritage sites. Malaysia is also blessed with a number of tropical islands, including Langkawi, Redang, Tioman, Pangkor, Perhentian, and Sipadan that are touted as top island getaways (Tourism Malaysia Annual Report, 2017). With pristine beaches and a variety of activities, Malaysia is the perfect destination for local and international tourists who are seeking to escape from their busy routine. As more and more tourists edge towards experiential travel, the demand for unique ecotourism destinations would increase.

As tourism is positioned as one of the key contributors to the nation's economy, the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016–2020) stressed great importance on sustainability and was developed based on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). One of the key focal strategic thrust identified to address the nation's challenge and opportunity is in pursuing green growth for overall well-being (Sustainable Development Goals National Review, 2017). This move has given rise to a re-emerging wave of ecotourism. Subsequently, the growing preference for ecotourism has led to a greater demand for protection of these natural areas. Malaysia's reputation as an ecotourism destination is further recognised with the listing of Kinabalu Park as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) world heritage site in 2000 and Langkawi as UNESCO's geopark in 2007 (Lu, 2017). To support the Eleventh Malaysia Plan to achieve greener growth, the National Ecotourism Plan (2016-2025) was introduced. The NEP is recognised as a guideline for ecotourism development in Malaysia that aims to position ecotourism as a tool for conservation while contributing to the nation's economy (National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025, 2017). In foresight, the Malaysian government continuously promotes conservation through the establishments of national parks, wildlife centres, and marine parks as ecotourism destinations. The proposed Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021-2025) that has been formulated is also mapped to the SDGs, and environmental sustainability is one of the three dimensions focusing on key issues such as

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marine litter and integrated water resource management (Economic Planning Unit, 2019).

These parks were established to preserve their natural environment, while providing access to visitors for recreation and conservation educational activities. The management of the parks are segregated, whereby the national parks that are located in Peninsular Malaysia are under the management of the Forestry Department of Malaysia and the marine parks are managed by the Department of Marine Park Malaysia (DMPM). All national parks in Sabah are managed by Sabah Parks, and the parks in Sarawak are managed by the Forest Department of Sarawak. Due to the ambitious target to position Malaysia as one of the leading holiday destinations for tourists, it is at the forefront of every stakeholder's concern on how to manage the tourism sector in a more sustainable manner. Promoting environmental-friendly behaviours in ecotourism destinations has turned into a catalytic strategy to mitigate the negative impacts and manage these areas sustainably. The following section provides an overview of ecotourism in Malaysia, specifically in the marine parks.

1.2   Ecotourism in Marine Parks

Pulau Redang in Terengganu was the first in Malaysia to be identified and declared as Fisheries Prohibited Area (FPA) to promote sustainability of the surrounding areas (Department of Fisheries, 1996). Marine parks were established in the 1980s with a two-fold purpose. The first is the realisation of the need to preserve marine resources. The establishment of these marine parks play a vital role in sustaining protected zones for marine life and prevent endangered species from going extinct. Marine parks have been identified as globally important areas of biodiversity, with a wide variety of exotic coral reefs and different species of fish (Coral Cay Conservation Limited, 2000). The second part of this country's effort to promote sustainable ecotourism growth is by supporting sustainable fishing and ecotourism development. The carrying capacity of the marine parks is monitored and public awareness programmes are launched (Department of Marine Park Malaysia, 2017). Thus, marine parks are not only important to protect the biodiversity and marine ecosystem, but they have also became attractive destinations for ecotourism activities. Table 1.2 lists the 112 islands that are gazetted as marine parks throughout Malaysia, which are located in six states, namely, Kedah, Terengganu, Johor, Pahang, Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan, and Sabah.

Table 1.2: Total Number of Marine Parks in Malaysia

States	Gazetted Marine Parks	Islands nearby the Marine Park	Number of Marine Parks	Total Size (km sq)
Kedah	Pulau Payar Pulau Kaca Pulau Lembu	-	4	188.13

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	Pulau Segantang			
Terengganu	Pulau Perhentian Kecil Pulau Perhentian Besar Pulau Susu Dara Pulau Lang Tengah Pulau Redang Pulai Lima Pulau Ekor Tebu Pulau Pinang Pulau Yu Besar Pulau Yu Kecil Pulau Kapas Pulau Tenggol Pulau Nyireh	Pulau Rawa, Pulau Serenggeh, Pulau Teku Burung, Pulau Tokong Kemudi, Pulau Tokong Kemudi Barat, Pulau Ling, Pulau Kerengga Besar, Pulau Kerengga Kecil, Pulau Paku Besar, Pulau Paku Kechil, Pulau Cupak, Pulau Gemia.	13	568.69
Pahang	Pulau Chebeh Pulau Seri Buat Pulau Sembilang Pulau Tioman Pulau Tulai Pulau Labas Pulau Tokong Bara Pulau Gut Pulau Sepoi	Pulau Tasu, Pulau Raja, Pulau Renggis, Pulau Tumok, Pulau Soyak.	9	676.61
Johor	Pulau Goal Pulau Harimau Pulau Mensirip Pulau Hujung Pulau Tengah Pulau Besar Pulau Rawa Pulau Tinggi Pulau Mentinggi Pulau Sibu Pulau Sibu Hujung Pulau Aur Pulau Pemanggil	Pulau Kelabang, Pulau Bukit Tikus, Pulau Ibol, Pulau Penyembong, Pulau Simbang, Pulau Nanga Besar, Pulau Nanga Kecil, Pulau Apil, Pulau Lanting, Pulau Sibu Kecil, Pulau Papan, Pulau Dayong, Pulau Lang, Pulau Pinang.	13	765.65
Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan	Pulau Kuraman Pulau Rusukan Besar Pulau Rusukan Kecil	-	3	158.15
Sabah	Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Pulau Tiga Park, Turtle Islands Park, Sipadan Island Park, Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Tun Mustapha Park.	-	70*	8987.62
Total			112	11,344.85

Source: Department of Marine Park Malaysia (2018); *The Sabah Parks (2017)

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In Peninsular Malaysia and in Labuan, 42 islands were declared and gazetted as marine parks, inclusive of the surrounding islands, known as marine park areas (MPA) between 1985 until now (Figure 1.1). In terms of its administration, MPA were originally set up under the Fisheries Act 1985. However, in 2004, the Marine Park Section was moved to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) from the Department of Fisheries. Up until now, it was known as the Department of Marine Park Malaysia (DMPM) since 2007 (Department of Marine Park Malaysia, 2017). As of March 2020, DMPM is currently under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MOFI), which also oversees the Department of Fisheries (Department of Fisheries, 2019). The amendment to Fisheries Act 1999 also provides protection to endangered marine life species such as dugong, whale sharks and dolphins (Department of Fisheries, 2019).

Figure 1.1: Marine Park Islands in Malaysia
Source: Department of Marine Park Malaysia (2018)

There are currently 70 islands gazetted under the marine parks area in Sabah. Among them, the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park (TARP) is the most popular MPA that consists of five clusters of islands (Gaya Island, Manukan Island, Sapi Island, Sulug Island, and Mamutik Island). The latest addition is the Tun Mustapha Park, which was proposed by the Sabah State Government in 2003 and gazetted on 19 May 2016, making this the largest MPA with more than 50 islands. The marine parks in Sabah (except Labuan Marine Park) are managed

by the Board of Trustees of Sabah Parks. A total of RM60 million will be required to operate and maintain the largest marine park during its first five years (2017 to 2021). However, the estimated economic contribution from ecotourism activities in Tun Mustapha Park is expected to be RM343 million for the next 20 years (Coral Triangle Initiative, 2013). This long-term economic return provides a clear justification for undertaking the conservation and protection approach towards ecotourism in these marine parks.

Ultimately, marine park areas (MPA) have not only benefitted the local fishermen, they have also attracted nature lovers and researchers. The move for gazetting MPA was applauded by many stakeholders as it has become the stepping stone towards the development of sustainable tourism. The marine parks in Malaysia are famous ecotourism destinations among local and international tourists for their sandy beaches and water-based activities, such as snorkelling, diving, swimming, nature walks, and other nature-based recreations (Touropia, 2017). Moreover, tourism activities are one of the major income generators for the local people. As such, various infrastructures were built in MPA to provide lodging and other facilities, such as souvenir stalls, food outlets, and public washrooms, which would accommodate the growing number of visitors through the years. Though these infrastructure provided the visitors with convenience and comfort, these developments often come with some adverse effects on the natural setting and disruption to the flora and fauna that exists on these islands.

Table 1.3 shows the total number of visitors from 2010 to 2017 to all the marine park islands located in Peninsular Malaysia. Data provided by DMPM only shows the breakdown of local and international visitors and there are no further breakdowns based on age provided by DMPM (Department of Marine Park, 2018). Data shows that total visitors have generally increased between 2010 and 2016, but a decline can be observed for 2017. Among these five states, marine park islands in Terengganu and Pahang have received the highest number of visitors, especially among the locals. This is because these two states host a number of marine park centres that are well-known locally and globally, such as Pulau Redang, off the coast of Terengganu, and Pulau Tioman in Pahang. Between 2010 and 2017, there was a decrease in the total number of local visitors to Kedah's marine park in Pulau Payar, Langkawi. However, the top choices of marine park islands among international tourists are in Terengganu and Kedah, namely, Pulau Redang, Pulau Perhentian, and Pulau Payar, making tourism the main economic activity in these islands.

Table 1.3: Total Number of Visitors to Marine Parks from 2010–2017

States / Year		Kedah	Terengganu	Pahang	Johor	Labuan	Total	Grand Total
2010	Local	26,429	130,174	170,580	35,839	-	363,022	606,155
	Foreign	69,668	86,230	63,343	23,892	-	243,133	
2011	Local	25,410	109,331	121,660	40,185	-	296,586	584,934

Year	Type							Total
	Foreign	72,162	98,378	91,020	26,788	-	288,348	
2012	Local	38,294	115,738	146,587	49,452	-	350,071	626,605
	Foreign	80,402	95,274	67,890	32,968	-	276,534	
2013	Local	43,933	153,190	163,103	116,753	-	476,979	793,359
	Foreign	95,907	82,686	68,999	68,788	-	316,380	
2014	Local	40,159	198,096	170,104	158,104	-	566,463	861,136
	Foreign	82,716	63,998	70,553	77,406	-	294,673	
2015	Local	35,275	176,651	164,027	153,842	-	529,795	822,498
	Foreign	76,475	68,111	67,211	80,906	-	292,703	
2016	Local	33,702	177,766	187,584	137,921	725	537,698	862,791
	Foreign	91,730	93,181	61,716	78,000	466	325,093	
2017	Local	28,594	255,352	66,460	106,362	441	457,209	736,839
	Foreign	82,129	107,442	23,720	65,588	751	279,630	
Total	Local	271,796	1,316,295	1,190,105	798,458	1,166	3,577,820	5,894,317
	Foreign	651,189	695,300	514,455	454,336	1,217	2,316,497	

Source: Department of Marine Park Malaysia (2018)

To help with the upkeep of these marine park islands, visitors are required to pay the Marine Park Conservation Fee, whereby foreign tourists pay RM30 for adults and RM15 for senior citizens and children, while local visitors pay RM5 for adults and RM2 for children. For research activities, camping, and other commercial purposes, such as diving, the fees are between RM10 and RM500 (Department of Marine Park, 2018). Tourist arrivals at the Tunku Abdul Rahman marine parks in 2016 alone reached 450,000 visitors (Sabah Parks, 2019). In 2017, Sabah Parks had also announced that they were increasing the entrance fees by 2018 to ease overcrowding issues. Starting on 1 January 2018, Sabah Parks imposed the aforementioned fee hike and the entrance fee for an adult is now RM5 for locals and RM20 for international visitors (Sabah Parks, 2019). However, studies found that visitors are willing to pay higher conservation fees as long as they can visit the islands (Emang, 2016; Ahmad, 2009; Yacob, 2009).

Over the years, researchers, scientists, and environmentalists have highlighted their concern on the negative social and environmental impact of overcrowding on the islands' ecosystem in Malaysia, such as in Perhentian Island (Rasoolimanesh, 2017), Tioman Island (Hanafiah, 2013) and Mabul Island (Rozelee, 2015). Although tourists are warmly welcomed to these marine parks, the growing number of visitors brings about great environmental concern (Fredrickson, 2016). The number of turtle landings in Labuan marine parks has dropped by 33% in 2016, as well as reported cases of deaths due to illegal fishing and being hit by boat engines (Clean Malaysia, 2018). It is feared that there will be a continuous decline, and pertinent to this is the rise in both local and international tourists' irresponsible behaviours when visiting Malaysia (Brown, 2017; Mok, 2015; World Wildlife Fund Malaysia, 2014). An example of such cases was of irresponsible tourists dumping large amounts of garbage into the sea in Pulau Redang (David, 2016) and Pulau Gaya (Daily Express, 2015). An avid traveller had also recounted her own experience with the misbehaviour of groups of tourists stepping on corals and harassing the fishes in Pulau Perhentian (Pages, 2015). There was also an incident where a group of tourists removed corals and sea creatures from their habitat in Semporna, Sabah for the sake of taking pictures (Ruxyn, 2016). In the wake of all these

misdemeanours, warning signage with marine park regulations are displayed at numerous public areas around the islands. The marine park regulations have clearly stated that offenders can be fined not exceeding RM20, 000 or imprisonment of not more than 2 years, or both. It is hoped that clear regulations would deter the aforementioned irresponsible acts of visitors (Ezekiel, 2018), so that Malaysian can continue to emerge as the top ecotourism destination that is sought by tourists from all over. The responsibility to conserve these marine parks not only rest in the hands of the park authorities or relevant government departments, but equally rested on the shoulder of both the local and international visitors to behave responsibly.

Table 1.4 below shows that Malaysia is one of the top ten countries globally that has the highest plastic marine debris with 0.37 million metric tons per year in 2018 (Nova Chemicals, 2018). The plastic marine debris and the floating of plastics in the sea threatens not only the marine life, as well as the image of the islands in Malaysia.

Table 1.4: Top 10 Countries' Plastic Marine Debris (2018)

Rank	Country	Plastic Marine Debris (million metric tons per year)
1	China	3.53
2	Indonesia	1.29
3	Philippines	0.75
4	Vietnam	0.73
5	Sri Lanka	0.64
6	Thailand	0.41
7	Egypt	0.39
8	Malaysia	0.37
9	Nigeria	0.34
10	Bangladesh	0.31

Source: Nova Chemicals (2018)

1.3   Millennial Tourists

Generational studies have existed since the 1900s, whereby Strauss and Howe were the first to identify the generation cycle in their book titled 'Generations' (Howe & Strauss, 1992). Strauss and Howe (1992) defined a social generation as the aggregate of all people born over a span of roughly twenty years. They contended that there were four main generational groups. The first generation is known as the Silent Generation (born 1925-1942), followed by the Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960), Generation X (born 1961-1981), and Generation Y (1982-2002).

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In 2000, Strauss and Howe published 'Millennials Rising' and named the Generation Y who are born from 1982 to 2002 as the Millennial Generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials, also referred to as the millennial generation, or Generation Y, is a common phrase used to generally describe individuals who have reached adulthood in the early 21st century (Deloitte Insights, 2020). As such, these terms millennials and Generation Y are often used interchangeably. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term 'Millennials' generally refers to the generation of people born between the early 1980s and 1990s.

Although no precise birth years exist for when the millennial generation starts or ends, researchers typically use birth years beginning in the early 1980s and ending in the mid-1990s to 2000 (Rudolph et al., 2018). Various past studies have classified the years that millennials are born as being between 1977 and 1996 (Valentine & Powers, 2013), 1982 and 2003 (Carver & Candela, 2008), 1984 and 2000 (Garikapati et al., 2016), 1980 and 1994 (Cavagnaro et al., 2018), and 1982 and 2002 (Novak & Levy, 2008; Pandergast, 2010; Gotardi et al., 2015). While the United States Census Bureau (2016) defined millennials as the demographic cohort born between 1985 and 2002. Based on the current report, United States Securities and Exchange Commission (2020) defined millennials as those born between 1982 and 2002. Currently, the millennials will encompass those who are aged 18 to 38 years old.

Millennials make up a large portion of tourists in Malaysia and they are the fastest growing segment in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016). Based on a report released by the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation (2016), millennial travellers represent 20% of total international travellers. Figure 1.2 shows that millennials international arrivals globally in 2020 have increased more than double compared with 10 years ago to 336 million currently (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2020).
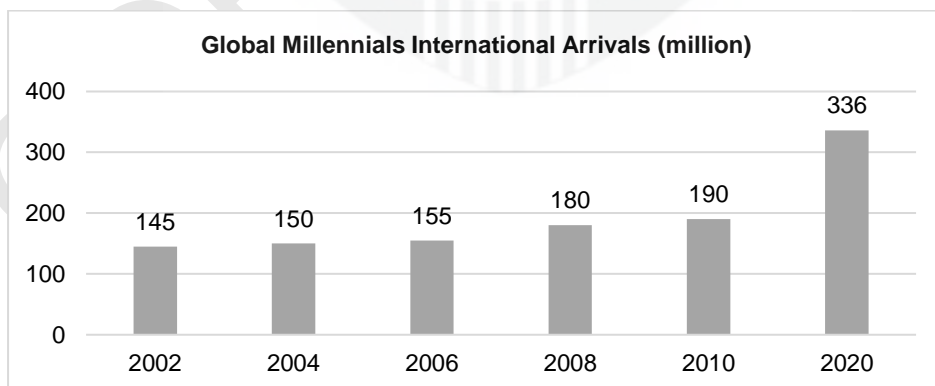
Figure 1.2: Total Global Millennial International Arrivals (2002 – 2020)
Source: WYSE Travel Confederation (2020)

Millennials are said to travel for the purpose of studying, visiting friends, back-packing or even for volunteering (Moisă, 2010; Farahani & Sukmajati, 2011). Based on a survey conducted in Australia by a research agency, Roy Morgan in 2018, results presented in Figure 1.3 indicates that 73.6% of millennials have higher intention to go for a holiday in the coming year compared to the other generations.

Intention to take a holiday in next 12 months (%)

Generation	Percentage
Millennials	73.6%
Generation X	72.4%
Baby Boomers	69.2%
Silent Generation	53.0%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0% 80.0%
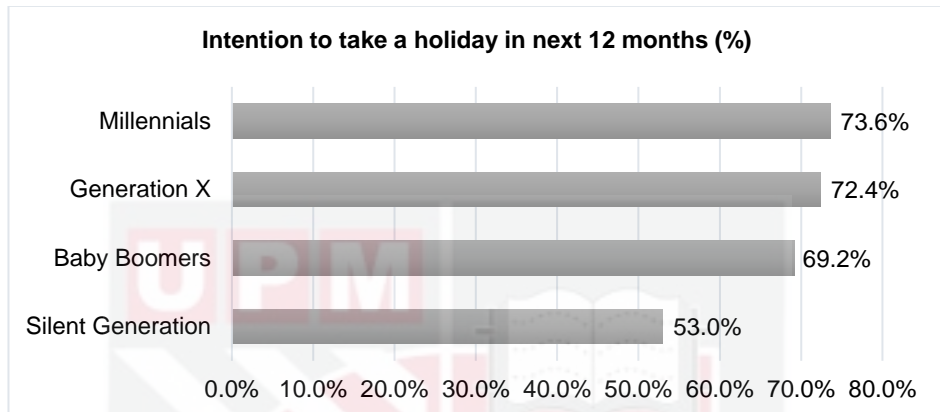
Figure 1.3: Intention to Travel in the Next 12 months
Source: Roy Morgan (2018)

Millennials are the most important tourism contributor economically (Cohen et al., 2013). They are the most appropriate segment to observe in this study due to their growing number, increasing discretionary income and love for travelling. The Asian millennials' expenditures on international travel are expected to reach $340 billion by 2020, spurred by the income growth (Malaysian Digest, 2016). With increasing personal disposable incomes among millennial tourists, Malaysia remains one of the most attractive and affordable ecotourism destinations (UNWTO, 2017). According to Nielsen's global survey of consumer confidence and spending that was conducted for the second quarter of 2016, Malaysians youths make up nearly 45.5% of the total population and they spent the highest amount of their spare cash on holidays and vacations compared to new clothes and gadgets. Millennials also spend more per trip than any other generation (The Nielsen Company, 2018). WYSE Travel Confederation's research indicated that millennial tourists spent an average total of EUR 2,867 (MYR 13,822; EUR1 = MYR 4.82) on their holiday, in comparison to the average of EUR 1,035 (MYR 4,990; EUR1 = MYR 4.82) for all international tourists globally (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2018).

When it came to travelling preferences, millennial tourists are said to be more knowledgeable and adventure-seeking (Agoda Travel & Tech Study, 2017). In a study by Mostafa (2007) conducted among university students in Egypt, it was found that knowledge of environmental issues influenced their REB. Millennials have been said to have the desire to learn about other people's cultural background and seek to enrich their experiences (Sullivan, 2004). A global online study conducted by Nielsen (2014) found that 51% of millennials

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were willing to pay more for environmentally friendly goods and services. The study also indicated that the majority of millennials would check the packaging for eco-labels and preferred to work for a sustainable company. Numerous evidences support the proposition that millennials would most likely support environmentally responsible destinations (Benckendorff & Moscardo, 2013; Pennington-Gray & Blair, 2010; Buffa, 2015). This observation is incongruent with the discovery of Cheah et al. (2015) on a group of Malaysian millennials that preferred to travel to quiet areas, and seek rest and relaxation, while learning new cultures and mingling with the locals. These days, the majority of Malaysian millennial travellers are highly interested in alternative tourism such as ecotourism compared to mass tourism, which encompasses visiting ecological and natural landscapes, as well as visiting parks and gardens (Mohamed, 2010). More than any other market segments, millennials are paving the way for sustainable tourism development (UNWTO, 2011). As such, research attention should focus on the need to attract more responsible millennial tourists to ecotourism destinations, such as the marine park islands. This next section highlights some of the research and practical gaps that were found from the numerous past studies reviewed in Chapter 2.

1.4   Problem Statement

Evidences have indicated that irresponsible tourist behaviours have become a serious issue that has yet to be resolved or fully understood (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2016). The increasing number of tourists in nature-based destinations, especially the rising numbers of millennial tourists and uncontrolled tourism activities have resulted in serious pollution, littering of plastic bottles, and wastage of energy resources (Shaalan, 2005; Behrens et al., 2009; Ngai Weng, 2009; Othman et al., 2012; Garau-Vadell et al., 2014, Ng et al., 2017). Anthropogenic pressures such as marine debris and plastic pollution as presented in Table 1.4 earlier caused by tourist activities and rapid coastal development in the marine park islands is a growing concern (Lukman et al., 2017).

Negative environmental impacts stemming from tourism would include greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation and lodging, food and water wastage, poor waste management, destruction of biodiversity including coral reef bleaching, depletion of coastal wetlands, forests, and mountainous areas, disruptions towards local communities, and loss of historical cultural heritage (UNWTO, 2005). For instance, the increasing numbers of tourists, divers, and human activities are threatening the health of the coral reefs, especially in marine parks that have large numbers of resorts, such as Pulau Redang and Pulau Tioman (Coral Cay Conservation Limited, 2004). The degradation of the environment may cause the number of visitors to decrease and threaten the tourism industry (Jarvis et al., 2016). An annual reef health survey is conducted by Reef Check on 212 sites in Malaysia, among them inclusive of popular tourist destinations such as Perhentian, Redang, Sibu, Tinggi, Tenggol, Payar, Tioman, Rawa and Lang Tengah, Sipadan and Tun Sakaran Marine Park islands. Below Table 1.5 shows the average coral health

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check results for year 2015 to 2019. Although the results indicated that the average coral reefs in Malaysia are considered by Reef Check to be in a "fair" condition, it clearly shows a declining trend of live coral from 45.94% in year 2015 to 40.63% in 2019.

According to Reef Check Malaysia's Annual Report (2019), the declining trend of live coral could be caused by the threats arising from the increase in tourism activities that appeals to the younger generation, including diving, snorkelling and boat outings especially in the marine park islands located in Peninsular Malaysia. Achieving sustainability seems to be every nation and industry's concern including Malaysia, which has remained elusive (Hezri, 2004). Under the National Policy on Biological Diversity 2016-2025, it is the shared responsibility of everyone to protect the ecosystems for future generation (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2016).

Table 1.5: Malaysia's Average Coral Reef Health Check (2015-2019)

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Live Coral (Hard+Soft)	45.94%	43.70%	42.53%	42.42%	40.63%
Recently Killed Coral, Rock, Sand and Others	54.06%	56.30%	57.47%	57.58%	59.37%

Source: Reef Check Malaysia (2019)

There is a growing availability of literature on millennials globally, but it remains difficult to gain an overview on the behaviour of this sophisticated segment of tourists that are said to differ by region and by country (McKinsey & Company, 2014). Over the past decade, studies on attitudes and behaviour related to ecotourism destination have focused more on understanding Baby Boomers (Eagles & Cascagnette, 1995; Muller & Cleaver, 2000; Cleaver et al., 2000; Cleaver & Muller, 2002; Patterson, 2002; Powell, 2005; Glover & Prideaux, 2009; Wilson, 2015) and Generation-X (Lotter et al., 2014; Tierney et al., 2011; Laitamäki, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Beverland, 2001), rather than on millennials. Given the demand for ecotourism, many organisations are interested to capitalise on capturing the millennial market (TravelRave, 2014). Even though millennials are a significant market due to its exponential growth, related literature on generational cohorts, especially millennial tourists' behaviour, are still limited (Han et al., 2017; Pennington-Gray et al., 2003). The rapid changes in the taste of millennial tourists and the complexity of this generation's travelling behaviour towards ecotourism destinations require continual effort to understand and attract them (Bremner, 2013). In short, this study addresses this inadequacy by providing meaningful findings, especially on the millennial tourists' behaviour, to develop specific marketing strategies and appeal to this highly attractive market segment. Furthermore, the growing change in environmental issues could also play a part in influencing the perspective of millennial tourists towards behaving more sustainably.

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Studies on tourists in marine parks had mainly focused on examining their motivational factors to visit the destination, based on factors such as satisfaction towards the service offerings or service quality, with the aim of attracting more tourists to the destination (Salleh et al., 2012; Shukor et al., 2017; Tonge et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the effects of knowledge, attitude, and consumption values on responsible environmental behaviour (REB) have only been used separately in a handful of studies on general issues, such as pollution (Cottrell, 1993; Stefănica & Butnaru, 2015; Wahid & Abustan, 2002), recycling (Guàrdia-Olmos et al., 2010; Saripah & Mohd Shukri, 2012; Wai Yee, Hassan, & Ramayah, 2016), environmentally friendly products (Aertsens, et al., 2014; Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015; Follows & Jobber, 2000; Tanner & Kast, 2003), other conservation practises in hotels, such as energy or water saving (Azila et al., 2014; Gadenne, Sharma et al., 2011; Mokhtar Azizi et al., 2015), and environmental management policies (Beaumont, 2011; Higginbottom & Scott, 2008; Padín Fabeiro et al., 2013). However, results from a past study revealed that the predictors of attitude and knowledge can only explain 37% of variance in environmental behaviour intention (Chao, 2012). This indicates that there are other factors that have yet to be explored in predicting behaviour intention.

Moreover, environmental knowledge as an antecedent towards intention is commonly studied from a single perspective of tourists' general knowledge towards environmental issues (Zheng et al., 2018). General knowledge of environmental issues may be insufficient for tourists to take any form of conservational action (Kim et al., 2018). Consequently, it is challenging to achieve sustainable tourism in marine parks due to the limited knowledge on the antecedents of tourist responsible environmental behaviour intention, which seems to hinder their support for conservational efforts (Budeanu, 2007; Carrigan, Moraes, & Leek, 2011; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012; Ramdas & Mohamed, 2014). Millennials have been said to possess high knowledge of general environmental issues such as plastic and water pollution (Mostafa et al., 2007). The overall knowledge of environmental issues should reflect general knowledge and more complex knowledge in order for behaviour to take place. However, not much is known about the more complex level of knowledge, such as if they know the right action strategies when dealing with specific environmental issues such and if they have the required skills to take the action to overcome it. For example, millennials may have obtained information regarding the increase in plastic waste problems from news or social media, but knowing the right strategies on what are the actions that they can do contributes to being able to help reduce the environmental problem (Sadik & Sadik, 2014). Findings from previous studies related to tourism have warranted that tourists' consumption values, such as personal, social, and conditional values, have significant influence on their choices but these values have rarely been tested together with other factors to examine the effect on behaviour intention in a specific context such as the marine parks (Denys & Mendes, 2014; Komppula et al., 2016; Line et al., 2017). Thus, this study contends that there is gap in understanding the influences of key antecedents on tourists' behaviour from consumer's benefit point of view. The weaknesses in earlier models like TPB and Hines' model of REB is the focus on rational

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decision making and lacking in consideration that tourists could be value-driven.

Previous empirical studies have attempted to understand the factors influencing millennial's holiday destination choice, yet there has been little progress in gaining deeper understanding on the relationship between destination image, responsible environmental behaviour towards their decision to visit marine parks located in developing countries, such as Malaysia (Abdullah et al., 2015; Nasir, Ibrahim, Mahamod, & Othman, 2017). Ecotourism literature on developing countries have often highlighted that the main factors for destination choice are cost (Chang & Wildt, 1994; S. Choi & Ng, 2011; Masi, Karatu, Kamariah, & Mat, 2015), and visitors' willingness to pay (Arabamiry et al., 2013; Rusli Yacob et al., 2009; Samdin et al., 2013; Togridou et al., 2006; Yau, 2012). Destination images are often used as a positioning tool to attract tourists and perhaps to create some feelings of loyalty (Saqib, 2019; Lin et al., 2007). Studies on understanding the formation process of destination image especially in tourism context has identified three elements – affective, cognitive and conative (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993). The cognitive and affective image related to a specific destination may influence tourists in a different manner (Cham et al., 2020). However, not many studies were found have included the conative element of destination image, which is also known as the behavioural outcome. To the best knowledge of the researcher, although destination image was found to play a major influencing role in destination decision, it has yet to be applied in explaining the responsible environmental behaviour of visitors (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Kennedy, Beckley, McFarlane, & Nadeau, 2009). Morever, the relationship between how overall image of the destination would influence behaviour is not yet been confirmed especially in marine park setting (Agapito et al., 2013). Thus, more study can be done to examine whether tourists' who have positive overall destination images of a marine park island would affect their conative behaviours such as REB and their destination decision.

Finally, although numerous studies have focused on millennials to seek answers to their intentions and behavioural gaps, these studies were within specific responses towards organic food, 'go-green' programmes or support for recycling campaigns (Bezzina & Dimech, 2011; Rezai, et al., 2011; Kaufmann, et al., 2012; Goetzke, 2014; Hosseinpou, et al., 2015). In these past studies, the relationship between intention to behave and demonstrating actual environmental behaviour has often rendered to inconsistent findings due to the context of studies (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Marcinkowski, 2001; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). These studies commonly stop short at measuring the precursors and behavioural intentions as the final outcome without exploring further the relationship between intention and behaviour itself. On the surface, millennials say that they support and intend to behave sustainability but studies have found that this sometimes does not lead to action (Wendt, 2018). For example, in a study conducted by White et al. (2019), they found that although 65% of the millennials mentioned that they intended to buy environmental-friendly products, yet only around 26% of them actually bought. This clearly highlights the existential gap between intention and action that

many reserchers have tried to unearth. In the context of ecotourism, the sustainability of ecotourism destinations relies heavily on attracting and retaining the right market segments that have the intention and would actually behave responsibly. Past behavioural theories have rendered that intention is an important mediator of actual behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Seeing that intention may play a mediating role in responsible environmental behaviour, it would be meaningful to investigate whether tourists who have higher intention would lead to positive behaviours. As such, the investigation of behavioural intention as a mediator is deemed important to explain the relationships between the antecedents and responsible environmental behaviour. Based on this gap, this study seeks to add empirical findings to support the link between behavioural intention and responsible environmental behaviour to the literature. The underpinning research questions and research objectives are presented in the following sections.

1.5 Research Questions

In view of the previously discussed research gaps, this study has strived to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the key antecedents of responsible environmental behaviour intention and how do they affect the intention of millennial tourists?
2. To what extent do destination image and responsible environmental behaviour influence destination choice among millennial tourists?
3. Does behavioural intention mediate the relationships between the key antecedents and responsible environmental behaviour among millennial tourists?

1.6 Research Objectives

The following objectives were used to guide this study:

General objective:
To investigate the relationships between the antecedents of behaviour intention and their influences on responsible environmental behaviour towards choosing marine park among millennial tourists.

Specific objectives:
1. To examine the influence of environmental knowledge, environmental attitude, consumption values towards behaviour intention of millennial tourists.
2. To determine the relationships of behaviour intention and destination image towards responsible environmental behaviour among millennial tourists.
3. To examine the influence of responsible environmental behaviour and destination image on destination choice among millennial tourists.
4. To investigate whether behavioural intention mediates the relationships between the key antecedents (environmental knowledge, environmental attitude, consumption values) and responsible environmental behaviour among millennial tourists.

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1.7   Significance of the Study

This section presents the significance of this study. It will first discuss the theoretical significance before discussing the practical and the policy contributions of this study.

1.7.1   Theoretical Significance

This study supports the on-going and growing body of studies conducted to understand the behaviour of millennial tourists towards ecotourism island destinations. Warnick (1993) argued that different generations' travel patterns must be documented to better understand their specific behaviours and preferences. As each generational cohort behaves contrarily and there are incongruent research findings on the travel behaviour of millennials, this study is significant in addressing this paucity. Most importantly, it is hoped that the findings would contribute to the literary work of other scholars and academics by addressing the gap in the knowledge of millennial tourists' responsible environmental behaviour and their support for marine parks as an ecotourism destination in Malaysia.

The significance of this study is heightened by the use of an underutilised Model of Responsible Environmental Behaviour (REB) by Hines (1986-87) to empirically examine the antecedents of millennial tourists' behavior intention. More specifically, this study is contributing to the limited empirical studies that applied the REB model by Hines et al. (1986-87) to overcome some of the limitations of TPB framework. To the researcher's best knowledge, the REB model has been only used once after 20 years of its conception in a study conducted by Bamberg and Moser (2007), who found no significant relationship between knowledge and REB. With the addition of attitude as a direct influence (rather than a sum of personality factor) as proposed in TPB, it is hoped that this study will improve the prediction of behaviour intention. In a study by Chao (2012), the variables postulated in REB model can only explain 37% of variance in environmental behaviour intention, which indicates that there are other factors that most likely would drive behaviour intention. This study intends to fill this gap by adding to the body of knowledge to improve the REB model of Hines et al., (1986-87) and TPB (Ajzen, 1991).

Due to the complexities of predicting sustainable consumption of tourists, the Consumption Values Theory (Sheth et al., 1991) is included in this study in hope to improve the predictive power of the REB model by Hines (1986-87). The components of responsible behaviour intention towards sustainability in the general sense may have been been explored by various studies (Mohr et al., 2001; Webb et al., 2008; Caitlin & Wang, 2013; Lee et al., 2015). Yet, very few have investigated the roles of environmental knowledge, environmental attitude, destination image, and consumption values on the intentions of responsible environmental behaviour in a single framework. According to Stern (2000), any new models on environmental behaviours should encompass

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personal attitudinal value-related variables, personal capabilities (knowledge and skills), and contextual factors (social, emotional and physical environment). As such, the Consumption Values Theory (CVT) that includes social, functional, emotional, epistemic and conditional values by Sheth et al. (1991) is added in this study alongside the Model of REB (Hines etal., 1986-87). Tourists who participate in have visited ecotourism sites or participated in nature-based recreation activities can strengthen their sense of engagement and loyalty towards the destination (Lee et al., 2015). Moreover, the theoretical and methodological contribution of this study is in the establishment of an extended REB model that consists of higher order constructs, which are still limited in the past and only slowly gaining acceptance in tourism studies (Mendola & Volo, 2017). According to Miculic and Ryan (2018), many SEM based tourism research have misspecified formative constructs as reflective. When specified correctly, the usage of formative constructs in tourism-related models suggests that dimensions or indicators can contribute differently to the underlying construct and improve the overall explanatory power of the model (do Valle & Assaker, 2015). In this study, the consumption values and environmental knowledge variables from Model of REB by Hines et al., (1986-87) are established as higher order constructs (HOC) in this study using structural equation modelling technique. By examining these factors in a single model, the theoretical foundation can be laid for explaining responsible environmental behaviour of millennials in a more comprehensive manner. Commonly, reflective measures are used to represent a single dimension that seeks to measure the construct entirely (Edwards, 2011). Formative measures refers to the different dimensions or a multidimensional view of the latent variable (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). The application of HOC in this study will be able to address some of the limitations of current models that have commonly misspecified the constructs as a reflective model (Jarvis et al., 2003).

The importance of the relationships between responsible environmental behaviour, destination image, and destination choice is noteworthy. Destination image is established as an important visual influence that helps tourists to make travel decisions and choice of destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin et al., 2007). Earlier studies have generally concluded that overall image are formed based on tourists' affective and cognitive evaluations (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Based on Gartner's (1993) tripartiate model of destination image, the inclusion of the conative element could contribute to the existing knowledge by shedding light on how overall destination image could influence responsible environmental behaviour and also significantly impact on tourists' decision in visiting the destination. This study highlights the usage of the individual tourist's destination image to influence the conative elements, which are REB and destination choice.

Past studies that have focused on understanding how destination image was formed concluded that destination image is the overall affective and cognitive evaluations. This study contributes to the body of knowledge concerning the influence of destination image and responsible environmental behaviour on tourists' destination choice. Research on the effect of destination image on

destination choice are available, but the spill-over effect of responsible environmental behaviour towards destination choice lacks clarity (Kennedy et al., 2009). Empirical findings on responsible environmental behaviour have not dedicated enough attention to the resulting destination choice (Lam and Hsu, 2006).

Since it is crucial to validate a more concise measurement of the constructs that can be used to better explain responsible environmental behaviour, this study would make a significant contribution to the existing studies on millennial tourists by further establishing the mediating role of intention while reaffirming the relationship between intention and behaviour itself. As such, this study would contribute towards closing the gap between intention and action by providing a more in-depth understanding. The results for the mediating role of behavioural intention could provide valuable insights for other researchers. This study proposes two new formative antecedents, namely, environmental knowledge and consumption values. Thus, the mediation effect of intention on the relationships between these antecedents and responsible environmental behaviour could be studied to heighten or reduce its effects on responsible environmental behaviour.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

As discussed in earlier section 1.3, there are 336 million millennial travellers currently and Malaysian youth makes up nearly 45% of the total population. It is every nation's objectives towards sustainability need more responsible behaviour from millennial tourists and not depend only on private organisations (Hansen & Schrader, 1997). To promote the millennial segment in the tourism sector in a macroscopic view, this study would provide new insights for marketers and other industry practitioners to further understand this growing segment in Malaysia and globally, which is currently untapped and neglected (Cohen et al., 2014). By understanding the need and motive for behaving responsibly and choosing to visit marine parks, the marketing efforts of Tourism Malaysia (TM) can reap more fruitful benefits. Customising advertising messages and promotional materials by using effective unique elements according to the attributes of the marine park destination valued by responsible millennial tourists can help the local firms and government agencies to attract the right segment of local and international tourists, thus, reducing marketing inefficiencies, while improving overall conservational efforts.

In addition, enhancing responsible consumption behaviour is a key step towards sustainable development, as both the environmental needs and social welfare are taken care of to obtain long-term economic growth for the nation (OECD, 2008). Ecotourism, being a resource-dependent industry, thrives on this. In terms of the scope, past environmental behavioural studies were concentrated more on national parks rather than marine parks (see Daud & Rahman, 2011; Halpenny, 2010; Imran et al., 2014; Jaafar et al., 2013). Thus, by specifically focusing this study on marine parks, local small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have limited financial resources and expertise to

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partake in large-scale green efforts can provide specific services, such as food, accommodation or nature-based activities that would attract the ecotourist segment (Go et al., 1992). As such, this study would contribute useful information to ecotour providers, with the intention to implement ecotourism effectively in the marine parks around Malaysia, by deciphering the antecedents of tourists' responsible environmental behaviours. For example, these ecotour companies can offer eco-friendly tour packages that are focused on conservation efforts, such as bird watching programmes or marine life awareness activities to boost pro-environmental behaviours among tourists. This combination of educational and interactive nature-based leisure activities would embed a sense of respect for this resource-dependent ecotourism industry.

Every effort to comprehend how to manage ecotourism has been debated inconclusively. For many years, ecotourism has been the main agenda of discussion at national and international forums as it is seen as both the answer to sustainable development and the cause of environmental crises. In pursuing the financial objectives of the national economic agenda, environmental protection and conservation are often overshadowed. Indeed, the growing number of tourists would help generate income for the locals, investors, and the nation. However, there are also adverse effects on the socio-cultural heritage of the local community and deterioration of the natural environment that threatens the very existence and attraction of the destination to future tourists (United Nations Environment Programme, 2012). Thus, the success of the marine parks should not just be measured by the number of tourists, but ultimately by their ability to instil environmentally responsible attitude and behaviour among visiting tourists. The likely knowledge contribution of each dimension in this study would offer valuable information to the industry practitioners towards improving pro-environmental behaviour among visitors of marine parks. A good understanding of how attitude, consumption values, and destination image could influence tourists' decisions in choosing specific ecotourism destinations will enable practitioners and managers to design more value-added holiday packages that could engage them in environmentally responsible behaviour when visiting marine parks. The use of serene sunset images, clean beaches, and unique marine ecosystem in communication tools, such as social media platforms, would not only heighten the importance of nature, but would also make the marine park islands an unforgettable ecotourism destination among tourists.

1.7.3   Policy Significance

Past studies that examined responsible environmental behaviour among tourists found them to be largely from developed nations, such as the United States, Australia and in Europe (Han & Kim, 2010; Han et al., 2012; Sirakaya-Turk et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2010), while many chose to concentrate more on the booming ecotourism market in China (Awuni & Du, 2016; He, 2011; Su, Wang, & Wen, 2013; Sun, Geng-Qing Chi, & Xu, 2013; Yuxi & Linsheng, 2017). It is hoped that this study could provide inputs for policymakers, such as the DMPM and MOTAC to develop sustainable tourism growth in Malaysia, and

to bring the nation to the next level that is both progressive and mindful of its scarce resources. This would be aligned to our National Ecotourism Plan (2016-2025) and the fore-coming Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021-2025). For example, knowledge exchange programmes between Malaysia and environmentally superior developed countries in the Scandinavian region can be established to discuss environmental policies. Perhaps, through this study, DMPM can gain more insight on the levels of environmental knowledge among tourists. In return, this insight would call for the attention and collaboration between DMPM and other ministries to invest and provide knowledge training in resource conservation among their staff so that these skills can be taught to the visitors of the marine parks. Besides, environmental education is important in which the Ministry of Higher Education may also consider the implementation of an environmental education courses or certification programs for millennials to improve the knowledge levels on environmental issues and to teach specific action skills that can be taken to reduce harmful behaviours in protected areas.

1.8   Scope of Study

Ecotourism in protected areas such as marine park islands is projected to be one of the key strategies to achieve sustainable tourism development in Malaysia. In response, a plethora of studies have been conducted over the years to better understand the behavioural aspect of tourism, with the aim of achieving sustainable tourism development (see Cheng et al., 2013; Chiu et al., 2014; Horng et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Lee & Jan, 2015; Lita et al., 2014; Mohammed et al., 2018). For the ecotourism sector, rapid growth of uncontrolled tourism activities is elevated by irresponsible tourist behaviours that lead to numerous negative impacts on the environment. Thus, the scope of this thesis is to empirically investigate the key antecedents of responsible environmental behaviour (REB) from the perspective of millennial tourists focusing on marine park islands located in Malaysia. The coverage of the marine park islands would be those located in the north, south and west of Peninsular Malaysia and also one in East Malaysia. As it is not possible to cover each and every one of the marine park islands in this study due to geographical, financial and time limitations, only six jetties leading to the more commonly visited islands is included in the data collection site. Since millennials are one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry that are more environmentally conscious and prefer to travel to ecotourism destinations, this study hopes to uncover the various factors to predict REB and their destination choice by applying the structural equation modelling technique. The purpose is not to compare the millennial tourists with other groups of consumers and far from blaming the millennials for the negative impacts of tourism. In fact, milllenials are studied because they are the hope of the ecotourism sector. As such, this study focuses on understanding the millennials tourists (born between 1982 and 2002) who have recently visited marine park islands in Malaysia in terms of their behaviour towards conservational activities and their destination decision for the next holiday. Thus, the outcome of this study is expected to establish an enhanced model that could better explain millennial tourists' responsible behaviour and how they choose their ecotourism holiday destination. With relevant research findings

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from this study, recommendations can be developed and proposed to assist marine park authorities, tourism marketing practitioners and policymakers to improve their destination marketing strategies and to promote conservation among millennial tourists.

1.9   Operational Definition of Key Terms

The operational definitions of the key terms for this study are listed in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Definition of Key Terms

Key terms	Operational Definition
Affective element	The emotions or feelings that one associates with the destination (Gartner, 1993; Lin et al., 2007).
Cognitive element	An image comprising of what one knows and thinks about a destination (Gartner, 1993; Pike & Ryan, 2004).
Conative element	The individual's actual behaviour or action towards the destination (Agapito et al., 2013; Pike & Ryan, 2004)
Conditional value	The utility that arises from the eco-friendly action or purchase of product or service's as a result of a specific situation that the person who is making a preference at that moment (Sheth et al., 1991; Khan & Mohsin, 2017).
Destination choice	The preference of visiting a place (Lam & Hsu, 2006).
Destination image	It is an impression and a set of features that visitors have about the destination (Lin et al., 2007).
Emotional value	The utility derived from the feelings or affective states from the eco-friendly action or the product /service generates (Sheth et al., 1991).
Environmental action skills	Individual's perceived ability to take effective action towards environmental issues (Lin & Hsu, 2015).
Environmental attitude	The internal psychological tendency and the collection of beliefs a person holds that determines the degree of one's favourable or unfavourable feelings towards the environmental issues or activities (Dunlap et al., 2000).
Environmental consumption values	Subjective beliefs about desirable ways to attain personal values that includes functional, emotional, social, epistemic and conditional values as a result of making environmental conservation action or purchase (Sheth et al., 1991; Phau et al., 2014).
Environmental knowledge	Information of facts, concepts, and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems (Hines et al., 1986-87).
Environmental knowledge of action strategies	Individual's concrete knowledge of the solutions towards environmental issues (Hines et al., 1986-87).
Epistemic value	The utility acquired from the eco-friendly action or purchase of product/service's to arouse curiosity, provide novelty or satisfy a desire for new knowledge (Sheth et al., 1991; Phau et al., 2014).
Functional value	The utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the eco-friendly action or purchase of

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	product/service (Sheth et al., 1991).
Knowledge of issues	Individual's cognitive understanding towards environmental quality and how the ecological systems function (Hines et al., 1986-87).
Millennials	Demographic cohort comprising of youths born between 1982 and 2002, which are also known as Generation Y. (United States Securities and Exchange Commission, 2020).
Responsible Environmental Behaviour Intention	The reflection of individual's intent or commitment towards the likelihood to take specific actions to protect the environment (Hines et al., 1986-87).
Responsible environmental behaviour	Individual's site-specific environmental conservation actions or practices that promote conservation or contributes to sustainable tourism (Hines et al., 1986-87; Chiu et al., 2014).
Social Desirability	The need for individuals to obtain social approval and acceptance, and the belief that it can be attained through culturally acceptable and appropriate behaviours (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964).
Social value	The utility derived from the eco-friendly action or purchased product/service's ability to enhance social self-concept (Sheth et al., 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

1.10   Thesis Organisation

This thesis comprise of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of this study, followed by the provision of the underlying research problem, research questions, and corresponding objectives, which ends with a discussion on the practical and theoretical contributions and definitions of the main key terms. Chapter 2 explains the definitions of the relevant concepts and rationale of the theories revolving this study. Various aspects of ecotourism, as well as the theoretical facets of responsible environmental behaviour, are described thoroughly based on a wide range of literature. Then, Chapter 3 explains the main variables, proposes a conceptual framework that guides this study, and the subsequent rationalisation behind the hypotheses development, which outlines the relationships between the variables being studied. Next, Chapter 4 gives a detailed description of the research methodology adopted for this study, which includes the research design, the development of measurement items, sampling design, data collection methods, and the statistical analytical techniques applied in this study. Results of the descriptive and inferential assessments and outcomes of the hypotheses are presented in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 deliberates on the findings of this study based on the research objectives, as outlined alongside past studies. This chapter will also discuss the implications of the findings and the limitations, followed by some recommendations for future studies. A conclusion summarising the highlights of this study is presented at the end of this chapter.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Born on 24th June 1981 to a pair of humble parents who are school teachers, I have always aspired to one day walk in their shoes. My primary and secondary school days were in my quiet hometown, Seremban. In 1998, I pursued my first degree in Business Administration from University of Hertfordshire, offered at INTI International University, Nilai. Fresh from my graduation in 2002, I landed my first job in Samsung Electronics Display (M) Sdn Bhd, Senawang where I met my husband and settled down. There, I continued to work for 3 years in Sales and Marketing Department and upon being promoted, I transferred to the Procurement Department to widen my horizons in supply chain management. After a total of 5 years in Samsung, I realised that in order to remain relevant, I had to obtain a higher education qualification. This motivated me to step out from the industry and into the academic line. So, I pursued my Master in Business Administration (MBA) in a part-time mode at Universiti Putra Malaysia while working full time as a program officer in INTI International University, Nilai and also as a wife and mother of 3 boys. My calling came during the 2nd year when I was entrusted with the golden opportunity of becoming a lecturer. I grabbed the opportunity as I have always enjoyed teaching and sharing my industrial experiences with students. Upon my MBA graduation, I joined Berjaya University College, Kuala Lumpur and there, I was exposed to writing research papers. Eventually, I decided that it was time to challenge myself further to sharpen my research skills and pursue my PhD at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Concurrently, I returned to contribute to my alumni at INTI International University after 5 years at Berjaya. Currently, I teach a variety of marketing and business management subjects while supervising MBA students' projects at INTI International University. I continue to have the passion and drive for teaching, research and consultancy.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Abdullah, S. I. N. W., Zaiton, S., Ho, J.A., Ng, S.I. & Phuah, K.T. (2020). Sustainability of Marine Park Ecotourism in Malaysia: Predicting Environmentally Responsible Behaviour among Millennial Tourist, *International Journal of Environmental Technology and Management*. *22*, 432-455.

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