

## **Determinations of Tourist Outbound Travel Intention in Sarawak: Does Gender Really Matter?**

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### **Abstract**

Travel decision making has been studied comprehensively. Many travelers have expanded their range of choices, which preferred to travel to abroad instead of local destination. The aim of the study is to discover the significant determinants that leading outbound travel intention. Besides, the study also investigate the moderating effect of gender on outbound travel intention in Sarawak context. The current study employed Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a theoretical foundation to test the determinants of outbound travel intention. The primary data and hypotheses were examined using SmartPLS. The study proposes 10 hypotheses, of which the data support 4. A person-administered questionnaire consisting of multiple item scales was developed. A quantitative survey was conducted at four selected entry points, namely Miri Airport, Kuching Airport, Bintulu Airport, and Sibu Airport. Individual travelers have been the focus of the research study. Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling strategies were utilized. A total number of 358 respondents took part in this study. Results indicated that online marketing communication, personal involvement, and novelty and knowledge had a direct influence on outbound tourism intention. A significantly negative relation between life satisfaction and eWOM and outbound travel intention. These significant determinants were played important parts in shaping the outbound tourism flow from Sarawak. Surprisingly, the study found that gender is only moderate the relationship between eWOM and outbound travel intention. The paper extends the existing literature regarding new responses variables which are associated with outbound tourism intention. It also provide a better understanding of outbound tourism behavior among the Sarawakian. Additionally, it provides insightful implications especially for Ministry of Tourism in Sarawak, Sarawak Tourism Organization, and tourism operators. Some theoretical and practical implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are highlighted in this study.

Keywords: Motivation, Outbound tourism, Sarawak

### **Introduction**

The Malaysian outbound tourism market had been renowned as an emerging consumer demand (Mohd Hafiz Mohd Hanafiah, Zulhan Othman, Muhammad Izzat Zulkifly, Hazmal Ismail, & Mohd Raziff Jamaluddin, 2010). Evidently, outbound travel percentage is forecasted to increase 3.5 percent a year and reach approximately 14.2 million trips by 2021 (Choong &

Hedrick-Wong, 2017). According to the report of Tourism Satellite Account 2018, expenditure abroad among Malaysia travelers are increased from RM38.9 billion in 2017 to RM41.3 billion in 2018 (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2019). Today's many Malaysians' have a strong desire for outbound travel. This is due the combination of holidays and multi interesting packages of abroad travelling offered by travel agents during Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents fairs (MATTA). Besides, low-cost and premium carriers has become general travelling method of transportation to all of us. Consequently, to travellers, travelling is at its most accessible ever and more affordable then it was before.

Travel behavior is very unique. Although in Malaysia is full with tourism activities, but it is an interesting to study why Malaysian travelers are likely to have outbound travel instead of travel locally (Mohd Hafiz Mohd Hanafiah et al., 2010). There is little is known about the travelers' intentions to travel abroad. Aziz and Ariffin (2009) commented the important of exploring the study on how people make their travel decisions and what they enjoy during the travelling. Therefore, the current research study intent pursues the following objectives: (i) to identify the most significant determinant that influencing outbound travel intention among Sarawakian; (ii) to determine the positive relationship between life satisfactions, online marketing communication, eWOM, personal involvement, and novelty and knowledge and outbound travel Intention, and (iii) to investigate the moderating effect of gender between chosen variables on outbound travel intention among the local people.

## Literature Review

### *Travel Intention*

Travel intention is an opportunity of travelling to a destination (Ahn, Ekinci, & Li, 2013), which is based on attitudes, choices (Kim & Kwon, 2018; Chen, Shang, & Li, 2014; King & Grace, 2013), psychological and the changes between motivation and action (Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009). Travel intention is also acknowledged as the result of individual perceptions from previous experiences (cognitive and emotion). In the context of Taiwan culinary tourism, International tourists were preferred to go night market to taste the different flavor of foods and experience the local unique culture (Tsai, 2015). The study of Yiamjanya and Wongleedee (2014) found that the desired foods and attractive traditional market in Thailand were significantly drive a tourist to visit the Thailand. In the context of this study, outbound travel intention is referred to likelihood of an individual to travel to tourism destinations. The more powerful the determination of individuals to visit travel destination, the more probable they visit that location (Lu, Hung, Wang, Schuett, & Hu, 2016). Subsequently, it is essential to investigate travel intention and comprehend its influence on the tourist behavior (Su & Huang, 2019).

### *Life Satisfaction*

Life satisfaction is acknowledged as an individual who had a good feeling of well-being, meaning, and fulfilment (Chen, Lehto, & Cai, 2013). It reflected the degree of an individual's needs, goals, and aspirations are fulfilled (Bai, Hung, & Lai, 2017). In others words, it is comprehended as an individual's level of favorable evaluation of the overall quality of life (Veenhoven, 1996). As noted in the literature, a sense of happiness also can be understood as an individual's overall enjoyment of life (Tsaur, Yen, & Hsiao, 2013). Travelling has been found as one of the leisure activities that increase happiness, reduces stress, and create healthier lifestyle (Dillette, Douglas, & Martin, 2018). It contributed to psychological health as a part of

life satisfaction by providing opportunities to pursue a social interest, rest, and prevent boredom and depression (Chen, Petrick, & Shahvali, 2014). A previous study has confirmed between life-satisfaction and people intention to move aboard (Ivlevs, 2015). This implies how life satisfaction has influenced the intention to travel of tourist.

### ***Online Marketing Communication***

Marketing communication via online is growing rapidly. It is a process of message transmission associated with the promotion and defined as the fourth marketing mix component (Angelopulo, 1996). The instruments for marketing communication include advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations. All these communication instruments are used to reach the communication messages to the targeted audience in the specific market. As for tourism product, it is consisted of tangible and intangible products (Krippendorf, 1987), such as, travel, accommodation, and services provided. As such, marketing communication served as an important communication tool that entail the transmission of destination image, accommodation, and service provided by the service provider that led to travel intention. The use of celebrity endorsement as the advertisement were highly influenced destination choice especially Gen. Y (Chan, Lee, & Wong, 2018). Good quality of travel agency results in the intention to revisit the destination (Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018). The communication message of public relations also had been found to influence travel destination intention (Jain, 2014).

### ***Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)***

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as a physical conversation with a non-commercial practice (Arndt, 1967). Conversely, the advent of the Internet has extended this principle to online context and known as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). EWOM is easier to reach a wide targeted market (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2013). The uses of social networking, namely, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others had made extensive use of e-WOM in the tourism industry (Singh & Srivastava, 2019). This, in turn may drive intense communication among the tourists, travel agencies, government, the hotels, and other service providers who involved in online networks (Amalia, et al., 2018). Moreover, visitors can definitely to update and upload their travel activities, write stories, share their travel photo and sharing their past experiences. All these shared information are important source of information to travels (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007), reference for other tourist's future destination (Pabel & Prideaux, 2016), and as estimation of the costs or benefits of travel destination (Chen, Shang, & Li, 2014). Positive experienced visitors in services, products, and other sources are able to contribute revisit intention and spread positive e-WOM concerning destination amongst tourists (Amalia, et al., 2018). Evidently, the reviews message of Facebook friend had found to influence the hotel booking itself (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015).

### ***Personal Involvement***

Personal involvement is described as an interest in a product caused by a specific situation with driving characteristics (Rothschild, 1984). It also describes an attitude that formed by individual differences and self-experience (Madrigal, Havitz, & Howard, 1992). In tourism context, personal involvement is referred to a state of inspiration that caused by a connection between a positive attitude and self-concept (Johnson & Eagly, 1989). For travel intention, it involves a high personal involvement as the individual who will invest more efforts and time to search and plan for the vacation. The principle of involvement changed from consumer

behavior toward leisure behavior, which is related to long-term involvement (Hulusic & Rizvic, 2013). This long-term involvement lead to individual's experience, image, and visit intention (Shih, 2009). Evidently, an individual tourist who has high personal involvement at the pre-tour research will certainly suggest greater destination verifications (Li, 2014). It is therefore to confirm that tourists who has extraordinary personal involvement will inspire individual intention to travel.

### ***Novelty and Knowledge***

Novelty is the sources of enjoyment, surprise, ease of dullness (Crompton, 1979), and experience, such as finding a nature-based attraction, events and activities, and attention from others (Park, Mahony, & Kim, 2011). Seeking novelty is known as curiosity-driven, feeling seeking, and exploratory driving (Jang & Feng, 2007). Novelty and knowledge is one of the components that influence the travel intention of tourists. It is an intrinsic impulse that influences the individual to observe, explore, control, and question (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Tourists are preferred to go for familiar destination or s/he may choose to experience the unfamiliar destination. This implied that individual tourist has different preference to choose their destination (Elsrud, 2001). Consequently, novelty is important in tourism decision-making (Cohen, 1979) as novelty is natural by tourists, and the search for numerous types of the novelty will influence many leisure tourists to travel.

### ***Gender (as moderator)***

A review of literature illustrated that study of gender differences had been unnoticed in tourism behavior study (Carr, 1999). Thus, exploring the role of gender in outbound travel intention is therefore the focus of this study. Gender is not only biologically identified, but it is socially and culturally constructed (Okazaki & Hirose, 2009). Gender played a moderating role in the relationship between overall satisfaction and individual's revisit intention (Han, Hsu, & Lee, 2009). As noted, males and females are responded differently to hotel service experiences when making satisfaction judgement (Suki, 2014). The study of Frew and Shaw (1999) revealed that males and females were used different online tools (online & mobile Internet) to search travel information in most of the tourist attraction destination. Furthermore, a study had confirmed that females have influence of psychological image on tourist expectation was significantly more powerful than male tourists (Wang, Qu, & Hsu, 2016).

### ***Underlying Theory***

Understanding how attitude affect travelers' behavior is the main focus in the tourism and hospitality research (Zhang, Li, Yang, & Zhang, 2018). Thus, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the most significant theory to study human act. Generally, TPB is an extension of the well-known Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which concentrating the promising factors that affecting individual intention and behavior. As noted in TPB literature, attitude toward behavior and subjective norms are create impact on intention (George, 2004). Moreover, control beliefs are reinforced behavioral control. These three main beliefs are used to measure human action, namely behavioral belief, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 2002). Thus, perceived behavioral control is therefore enacted as alternative measure of actual control and confidence in an individual's ability (Armitage & Christian, 2003). For TPB, intention are assumed to capture the motivational factors that lead to an individual's behavior and behavioral is depended on a person's motivation (intention) and his ability (behavioral control) (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, when there is an opportunity to act, a person's intention may result in

behavior. In the current study, an individual's performance of behavior (a traveler's intention to travel) is a function of intentions and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991) and determined by his or her intent to perform that particular behavior.

### ***Hypotheses Development***

#### ***Life satisfaction***

Ajzen and Madden (1986) revealed that an individual act is used to predict an intention (Jamaludin, Sam, Sandal, & Adam, 2016). Several studies had tested the relationship between life satisfaction and their decision on activities to be chosen (Diener, Kanazawa, Suh, & Oishi, 2015; Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014). The study of Graham and Markowitz (2011) found that life satisfaction contributed to intention to stay at the similar destination (Jamaludin et al., 2016). Subsequently, the following hypotheses was formulated:

H1: Life satisfaction is positively related to tourists' outbound travel intention.

#### ***Online Marketing Communication***

In this social-networking era, people can use variety of networks to link up, such as, Facebook, Instagram, etc. As stated, the tourism and hospitality industry is highly influenced by the use of social media (Hur, Kim, Karatepe, & Lee, 2017). An interactive media allows two way communication, which e-marketers can effectively communicate with their prospective travelers. According to Verbeke, Viaene, and Guiot (1999), marketing communication influence attitudes and in turn it create an impact on individual's behavior (Thaichon & Quach, 2016). For example, online advertisement can strengthen an individual behavior meanwhile it may reduce unwanted behavior. It is therefore to conclude that the importance of online marketing communication on tourism had been widely because especially in this worldwide adoption of internet technologies. Based on above discussion, the researcher has proposed the following propositions:

H2: Online marketing communication is positively related to tourists' outbound travel intention.

#### ***eWOM***

EWOM is an imperative information source that influencing tourists travel decision and choice of travel destination (Chen, Dwyer, & Firth, 2015; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Yun & Good, 2007). This eWOM is referring to online reviews or messages sharing by e-consumers. A favorable eWOM can lead to tourist's willingness to stay with the destination but also can attract more potential travelers (Liu, Li, & Kim, 2015). The study of Zhou and Lai (2009) revealed that online reviews and the tourists' blogs are significantly related to tourists' reception population (Meysam Fakharyan, Mohammad Reza Jalilvand, Mehdi Elyasi, & Mehdi Mohammadi, 2012). Hence, online traveler reviews are important information sources to all travelers. Hereby, the researcher has made the following hypotheses:

H3: eWOM is positively related to tourists' outbound travel intention.

#### ***Personal Involvement***

Involvement, generally, is acknowledged as personal connection with a particular event and the strategic approach to influence an individual person (Koo & Ju, 2010). Personal involvement is used to examine temporary personal feeling of intense involvement (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003) and predict an individual attitude and behaviors (Havits & Dimanche, 1990, as cited in Prayag & Ryan, 2012). It is an ongoing commitment on the part of an individual with regard to thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses to travel (Ferns & Walls, 2012). The

study of Shih (2009), the persistent involvement were significantly affected an individual revisit intention (Li, 2014). Hence, the fourth hypotheses are as follows:

H4: Personal Involvement is positively related to tourists' outbound travel intention.

#### *Novelty and knowledge*

Understanding of novelty seeking action is core element to define tourists' choice and their travel destination intention (Szivas & Riley, 2004). In the context of travelling, novelty is used to explain new experience to explore a travel destination (Crompton, 1979). According to Ratchford (2001), pre-formed knowledge permit consumers to evaluate a product's attribute and benefits (Sharifpour, Walters, & Ritchie, 2012). In fact, novelty seekers on average traveled are higher comparing to average travelers and familiarity seekers (Chark, Lam, & Fong, 2020). The more familiar tourists were with a particular destinations, the less likely they were search for information about it (Sharifpour et al., 2012). Moreover, the empirical research study of Phillips, Asperin, and Wolfe (2013) discovered that subjective knowledge led to tourists' attitude toward Korean foods. Based on an ample body of literature, the researcher posits that the following hypothesis:

H5: Novelty and knowledge is positively related to tourists' outbound travel intention.

#### *Gender as Moderator*

Men and women are varying in terms of their thought, which caused by social, cultural, psychological, and environmental elements (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Evidently, based on a survey analysis on 75,000 travelers, a significant gender influence had be found on individual destination choice (Krishnapillai & Kwok, 2017). As reviewed in literature, male and female had varied information search behavior (John & Sujana, 1990). Besides, the study also found that male are novelty seekers comparing to female (Weaver et al., 2009). According to Li (2006), men are more information-driven, however, women are more engagement approaches (McMahan, Hovland, & McMillan, 2009). Furthermore, Dittmar, Long, and Meek (2004) discovered that men are differed from women in the respect to eWOM messages and their shopping behavior (Abubakar, 2016). In line with this, Harrant and Vaillant (2008) also found that women are reluctant to take risks comparing to men. Based on the existing findings, outlined above, gender are expected to moderate the relationship between life satisfaction, online marketing communication, eWOM, personal involvement, and novelty and knowledge and outbound travel intention, hence the hypotheses include:

H6: Gender moderate the relationship between life satisfaction and tourists' outbound travel intention.

H7: Gender moderate the relationship between online marketing communication and tourists' outbound travel intention.

H8: Gender moderate the relationship between eWOM and tourists' outbound travel intention.

H9: Gender moderate the relationship between personal involvement and tourists' outbound travel intention.

H10: Gender moderate the relationship between novelty and knowledge and tourists' outbound travel intention.

## **Methodology**

To collect the primary data, quantitative survey method had been used. The researcher is personally distributing the questionnaire to target respondents in selected four entry points,

Miri Airport, Kuching Airport, Bintulu Airport, and Sibu Airport. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher will ask several filter questions to confirm the right respondents and avoid invalid responses. During the survey, if respondent is meeting the requirements of the study, the respondent will be given a complete set of questionnaire to fill. The population of interest in this study is Sarawakian who are travelling abroad for enjoyment in the past three months. A total of 500 questionnaire sets were distributed to respondents who travelled to the oversea. Out of the 411 returned questionnaires, 53 responses were discarded due to incomplete responses and excessive missing data. Roscoe (1975) suggested that sample sizes that are in the range of 30 to 500 are acceptable (Sekaran, 1992). All these representative respondents are drawn from different ethnic groups, occupations, education levels, age, with the condition that they fulfill all the basic requirements. Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling strategies were utilized as there are the most appropriate techniques to respondents who can provide valid information in turn to address the research questions. In total, 358 useable responses were collected, achieving a 71.6 percent response rate. The unit of analysis of the study is at the individual level.

To purify the measures, a pretest was conducted before the actual data collection. Responses from a convenience sample of 30 respondents were used to test the wording. Pre-test permits the research to identify unclear wording which may lead to amendments and ensure that all designed measurement items, indicate types of difficulties in completing the questionnaire, and, if possible to return the questionnaire immediately. This step was to uncover any potential problems. A questionnaire was then compiled based on the pretest. The questionnaire for the present study was divided into two main sections. The first sections contained measurement items to measure each construct and all these items were adapted from previously validated instruments. The construct travel intention was measured with the scales from Li and Cai (2016) and Bhattacharjee (2000), modified so that the focus was on the tourists' outbound travel intention. Measure of personal involvement is adapted from Prayag and Ryan (2015) and measured by five items. The dimension of online marketing communication was made up of five indicators and extracted from the study of Wongpitakroj (2017). The dimensions of life satisfaction and novelty and knowledge was generated predominately from Li and Cai (2016) and Jang and Wu (2006). Moreover, eWOM attributes were drawn from Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, and Manzari (2012). The second section of the questionnaire consisted of questions regarding respondents' demographic characteristics. The research model had seven constructs, each having items that are gauged by Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

To achieve objective, SmartPLS had been utilized as it is a commonly used statistical analysis method for latent variables. Reasons to use the PLS technique is that it is known as a sustainable method to estimate cause and effect relationships in complex models with large number of constructs (Gudergan, Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2008) and makes practically no assumptions about underlying data (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Additionally, PLS approach does not require a normal distribution (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2012).

## Findings

### *Respondents' Demographic Characteristics*

The researcher utilised descriptive statistics to obtain the general information of the respondents. A complete demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. Of the total number of respondents, female recorded 196 (54.7 percent) and males stood at 162

(45.3 percent), 244 respondents were still single and 114 were married. As for ethnicity compositions, Chinese were the largest group of respondents in this research, represented by 251 samples (70.1 percent), Malays were 18.7 percent (n=67) followed by others (n=39). This others are predominantly made up of Iban, Melanau, Kayan, and Kenyah. In terms of respondents' age, majority were 21 to 30 (n=189, 52.8 percent) followed by 31-40 (n=97, 27.7 percent). This discovered that today's young Sarawakians' attitude towards holiday making are positive. The sample also consisted of 39 respondents (10.9 percent) from 41-50 years old group. Academically, the highest percentage were degree holders (n=210, 58.7 percent) followed by Diploma holders (n=86, 24 percent), and secondary school holders (n= 45, 12.6 percent). Next, the majority of respondents recorded an average income from RM3501-RM5000, while 32.1 percent (n=115) were within the range of the range of RM2001-RM3500. For the employment rate, Most of the respondents were full time employees (n=239). The second largest was others, which recorded 57 respondents.

**Table 1 Demographic Information of Respondents**

<b>Respondent (n=358)</b>			
<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Gender of Respondent</b>	Male	162	45.30
	Female	196	54.70
<b>Age Category</b>	20 and Below	28	7.80
	21-30	189	52.8
	31-40	97	27.10
	41-50	39	10.90
	51-60	3	0.80
	61 and Above	2	0.60
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Malay	67	18.70
	Chinese	251	70.10
	Indian	1	0.30
	Others	39	10.90
<b>Average Monthly Household Income</b>	RM2000 And Below	81	22.60
	RM2001-RM3500	115	32.10
	RM3501-RM5000	131	36.60
	RM5001 And Above	31	8.70
<b>Highest Education</b>	Primary School	1	0.30
	Secondary School	45	12.60
	Diploma	86	24.00
	University Degree	210	58.70
	Postgraduate Degree	14	3.90
	Others	2	0.6
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	244	68.20
	Married	114	31.80
<b>Employment Status</b>	Full Time	239	66.80
	Part-Time	23	6.40
	Self-Employed	39	10.90
	Others	57	15.90

Source: Author

### ***Travel Characteristics***

General travel characteristics of respondents were also analyzed as presented in Table 2. Approximately, 36.41 percent of the respondents were recorded visiting other Asian countries (such as, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and India), 125 respondents are visited neighboring countries (such as Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Philippines), and 9.73 percent visited Oceania countries. Of the sample, a significant number, 212 respondents were traveled with partner. In terms of purpose of visit, 70.79 percent of respondents (n=286) were likely to go for holiday instead of business trip (12.13 percent) and visiting friends and relatives (8.91 percent). This research also found that Sarawakian travel were preferred to travel by own arrangement.

**Table 2 General Travel Information of Respondents**

General Travel Information	Category	Frequency	Respondent (n=358)	
			Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Where are you visit destination?</b>	Neighbouring Countries	125		31.17
	Other Asia Countries	146		36.41
	Oceania Countries	39		9.73
	Western Countries	91		22.69
<b>Who are you travelling with?</b>	Along	29		6.86
	Partner	212		50.12
	Family Members	74		17.49
	Friends and Relatives	108		25.53
<b>What is your purpose of visit?</b>	Holiday	286		70.79
	Business	49		12.13
	Medical	15		3.71
	Visiting Friends and Relatives	36		8.91
	Honeymoon	6		1.49
	Others	12		2.97
<b>Are you taking any holiday package for this trip?</b>	Yes	133		37.20
	No	225		62.80

Source: Author

### ***Assessment of Measurement Model Results***

The measurement model assessment identifies the causal relationship between the observed variables and latent variables. Convergent validity was assessed by factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As tabled in Table 3, as expected, the cross-loading for all items measured were loaded highly on its own construct than any other constructs. Table 4 presented that the item loadings range for each construct was 0.675 to 0.860, which exceeded the cut-off value of 0.50 as suggested by (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Thus, the internal consistency is achieved. As shown in Table 4, the AVE of each model construct exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Despite loadings and AVE, all constructs results of CR fulfilled the recommended value, 0.3, as recommended by Hair et al. (2008) and 0.7, as suggested by Gefen et al. (2000). Therefore, it can be inferred that the model's construct was good and sufficient for the research study.

**Table 3 Loading and Cross Loading**

	Life Satisfaction	Marketing Communication	eWOM	Personal Involvement	Novelty and Knowledge	Travel Intention
life_sat_1	<b>0.757</b>	0.289	0.195	0.245	0.206	0.210
life_sat_2	<b>0.730</b>	0.180	0.277	0.147	0.168	0.153
life_sat_3	<b>0.743</b>	0.114	0.307	0.241	0.179	0.169
life_sat_4	<b>0.733</b>	0.195	0.221	0.255	0.200	0.181
M_com_1	0.226	<b>0.675</b>	0.397	0.375	0.249	0.324
M_com_2	0.269	<b>0.732</b>	0.302	0.393	0.206	0.336
M_com_3	0.221	<b>0.817</b>	0.292	0.407	0.342	0.385
M_com_4	0.164	<b>0.858</b>	0.226	0.403	0.380	0.371
M_com_5	0.163	<b>0.764</b>	0.192	0.292	0.316	0.303
ewom_1	0.199	0.281	<b>0.739</b>	0.183	0.360	0.194
ewom_2	0.280	0.319	<b>0.807</b>	0.354	0.364	0.249
ewom_3	0.304	0.429	<b>0.748</b>	0.305	0.280	0.251
ewom_4	0.212	0.219	<b>0.790</b>	0.315	0.334	0.233
ewom_5	0.223	0.242	<b>0.728</b>	0.267	0.283	0.169
ewom_6	0.290	0.171	<b>0.797</b>	0.302	0.343	0.229
personal_inv_1	0.273	0.288	0.273	<b>0.730</b>	0.395	0.577
personal_inv_2	0.270	0.284	0.295	<b>0.739</b>	0.409	0.507
personal_inv_3	0.219	0.343	0.326	<b>0.781</b>	0.413	0.490
personal_inv_4	0.178	0.405	0.235	<b>0.793</b>	0.407	0.559
personal_inv_5	0.204	0.524	0.308	<b>0.721</b>	0.315	0.503
novelty_k_1	0.131	0.306	0.379	0.439	<b>0.835</b>	0.428
novelty_k_2	0.201	0.366	0.328	0.467	<b>0.855</b>	0.441
novelty_k_3	0.246	0.282	0.399	0.315	<b>0.681</b>	0.304
novelty_k_4	0.252	0.279	0.270	0.394	<b>0.783</b>	0.418
travel_int_2	0.218	0.255	0.339	0.529	0.384	<b>0.686</b>
travel_int_3	0.173	0.279	0.160	0.444	0.264	<b>0.699</b>
travel_int_4	0.151	0.385	0.155	0.539	0.401	<b>0.800</b>
travel_int_5	0.206	0.428	0.238	0.619	0.476	<b>0.860</b>

Note: Bold values are loadings for items that are above the recommended value 0.5.

Source: Author

**Table 4 Results of Measurement Model**

	Measurement Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>	life_sat_1	0.728	0.757	0.829	0.548
	life_sat_2		0.730		
	life_sat_3		0.743		
	life_sat_4		0.733		

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<b>Marketing Communication</b>	M_com_1	0.828	0.675	0.880	0.595
	M_com_2		0.732		
	M_com_3		0.817		
	M_com_4		0.858		
	M_com_5		0.764		
<b>eWOM</b>	ewom_1	0.862	0.739	0.896	0.591
	ewom_2		0.807		
	ewom_3		0.748		
	ewom_4		0.790		
	ewom_5		0.728		
	ewom_6		0.797		
<b>Personal Involvement</b>	personal_inv_1	0.809	0.730	0.868	0.568
	personal_inv_2		0.739		
	personal_inv_3		0.781		
	personal_inv_4		0.793		
	personal_inv_5		0.721		
<b>Novelty and Knowledge</b>	novelty_k_1	0.800	0.835	0.869	0.626
	novelty_k_2		0.855		
	novelty_k_3		0.681		
	novelty_k_4		0.783		
<b>Travel Intention</b>	travel_int_2	0.761	0.686	0.848	0.585
	travel_int_3		0.699		
	travel_int_4		0.800		
	travel_int_5		0.860		

**Note:** a. Composite Reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / {(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (square of the summation of the error variances)}

b. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / {(summation of the square of the factor loadings) + (summation of the error variances)}

Source: Author

Discriminant validity is used to ascertain the extent of dissimilarity between the intended measures and the measures used to designate the different constructs (Hung & Petrick, 2012). To identify discriminant validity, both the Fornell and Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio were reported. Based on Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, the value of AVE is square rooted and it testifies against the inter-correlation of the construct with other constructs in the research model. As indicated in Table 5, the correlations for each of the constructs was less than the average variance extracted (in bold) by the indicators. Thus, this indicated that these underlined constructs were of adequate discriminant validity, which is based on the suggestions of Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). Further, HTMT Ratio was also tested to confirm discriminant validity. In HTMT, there are two criteria to follow in order to conclude that there is no problem of discriminant validity. These are the HTMT value that should not be greater than the HTMT<sub>0.85</sub> value of 0.85 (Kline, 2011) or the HTMT<sub>0.90</sub> value of 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001). HTMT is below 0.9. As demonstrated in Table 6, all the values exceeded the HTMT criterion which indicating that the discriminant validity has been established.

**Table 5 Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity of Constructs**

	<b>Life Satisfaction</b>	<b>Marketing Communication</b>	<b>Novelty and Knowledge</b>	<b>Personal Involvement</b>	<b>Travel Intention</b>	<b>eWOM</b>
<b>Life Sat</b>	<b>0.741</b>					

<b>Marketing Communication</b>	0.270	<b>0.772</b>				
<b>Novelty and Knowledge</b>	0.256	0.390	<b>0.791</b>			
<b>Personal Involvement</b>	0.304	0.488	0.516	<b>0.753</b>		
<b>Travel Intention</b>	0.244	0.448	0.508	0.703	<b>0.765</b>	
<b>eWOM</b>	0.331	0.365	0.426	0.379	0.292	<b>0.769</b>

Source: Author

**Table 6 HTMT Criterion for Discriminant Validity of Constructs**

	<b>Life Satisfaction</b>	<b>Marketing Communication</b>	<b>Novelty and Knowledge</b>	<b>Personal Involvement</b>	<b>Travel Intention</b>	<b>eWOM</b>
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>						
<b>Marketing Communication</b>	0.339					
<b>Novelty and Knowledge</b>	0.342	0.477				
<b>Personal Involvement</b>	0.389	0.596	0.634			
<b>Travel Intention</b>	0.325	0.554	0.635	0.886		
<b>eWOM</b>	0.420	0.428	0.523	0.450	0.356	

**Note:** HTMT < 0.85 (Kline, 2011), HTMT < 0.90 (Gold et al. 2001)

Source: Author

### **Assessment of Structural Model Results**

Once the measurement model was validated, the structural model was then to be tested by analyzing the inner model. To test path analysis and hypotheses, the researcher used the bootstrapping technique to determine the significant t-statistic. Bootstrapping approach with 500 samples with 0 cases per sample to test the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ). The estimated standardized structural coefficients for the hypothesized relationship between constructs and their significance are revealed in Table 8. As illustrated in Figure 1, four out of 10 hypotheses tested are supported. The findings revealed that online marketing communication ( $\beta=0.119$ ,  $t=2.699$ ), personal involvement ( $\beta=0.567$ ,  $t=11.933$ ), and novelty and knowledge ( $\beta=0.183$ ,  $t=3.945$ ), and eWOM\*gender ( $\beta=0.089$ ,  $t=1.922$ ) are positively significant in relation to tourists' outbound travel intention, supporting H2, H4, H5, and H8. Nonetheless, life satisfaction ( $\beta=0.005$ ,  $t=0.100$ ), eWOM ( $\beta=0.049$ ,  $t=0.928$ ), life satisfaction\*gender ( $\beta=0.011$ ,  $t=0.301$ ), online marketing communication\*gender ( $\beta=0.016$ ,  $t=0.326$ ), and personal involvement\*gender ( $\beta=0.039$ ,  $t=0.697$ ), therefore H1, H3, H6, H7, H9, and H10 are rejected. The variation inflation factor (VIF) values are also been reported in Table 7. Overall, the VIF

values are ranged from 1.253 to 1.718, which are less than 10 (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005). It is therefore to conclude that there is no multicollinearity exists among the constructs.

$R^2$  can be assessed to obtain the predictive power of the structural model (Chin, 2010). The thumb of rule of  $R^2$  endogenous LVs was 0.67 (substantial), 0.33 (moderate), followed by 0.19 (weak) (Chin, 1998). In this study, the  $R^2$  value of this model was 0.543. In this sense, the interaction were able to explain 54.3 percent of the variance of travel intention. Despite  $R^2$ , the researcher now to access  $Q^2$ .  $Q^2$  value can be assessed through cross-validated communality and cross-validated redundancy. According to Chin (1998), if a cross-validated redundancy reaches  $Q^2 > 0$  or the cut-off value of  $Q^2 > 0.5$ , it implies that the model of study has predictive relevance, whereas, if  $Q^2 < 0$ , then it means that it is a lack of predictive relevance (Barroso, Carrión, & Roldán, 2010). The results of  $Q^2$  was 0.597, which is more than zero value. Therefore, this study obtained a highly predictive model. The formula of predictive relevance is shown below:

$$Q^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_D E_D}{\sum_D O_D}$$

The results revealed a GoF value of 0.415 ( $R^2$  was 0.543, average AVE was 0.585). For the research model, which exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of  $R^2$  ( $GoF_{small} = 0.1$ ,  $GoF_{medium} = 0.25$ ,  $GoF_{large} = 0.36$ ) (Aker, D'Ambra, & Ray, 2011). Hence, the researcher can confirm adequate support to validate the PLS model globally (Wetzels, Schroder, & Oppen, 2009). The calculation of GoF was as follow:

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$$

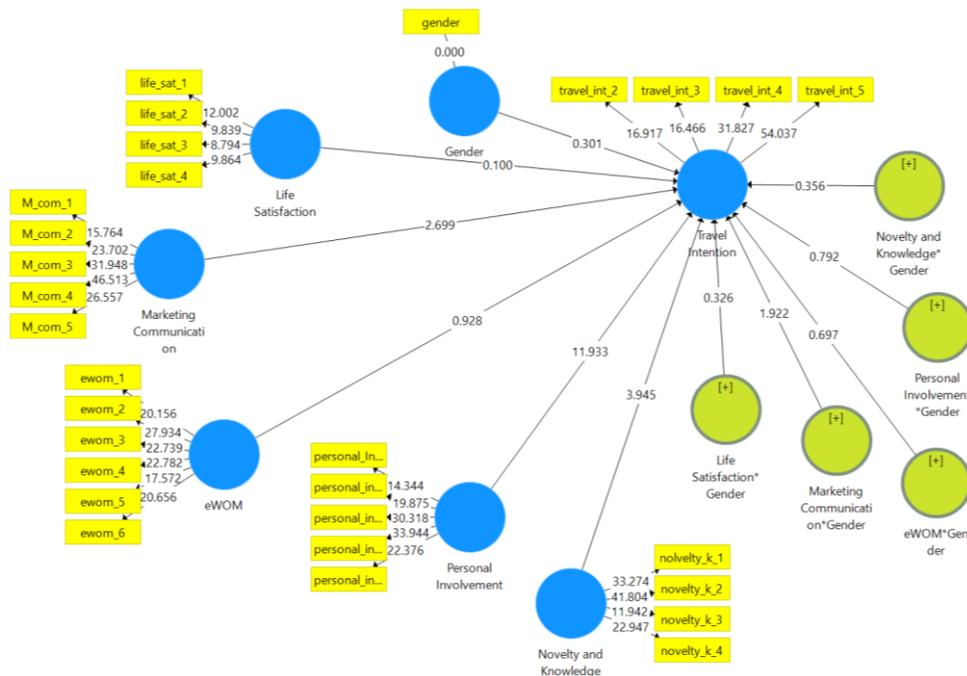


Figure 1: Research Model with t-values

**Table 7 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

H	Relationship	$\beta$	t-value	Supported	VIF	f <sup>2</sup>
H1	Life satisfaction is positively related to travel intention	0.005	0.100	Not Supported	1.253	0
H2	Online marketing communication is positively related to travel intention	0.119	2.699	Supported	1.476	0.021
H3	eWOM is positively related to travel intention	-0.049	0.928	Not Supported	1.430	0.004
H4	Personal involvement is positively related to travel intention	0.567	11.933	Supported	1.673	0.420
H5	Novelty and knowledge is positively related to travel intention	0.183	3.945	Supported	1.551	0.047
H6	Gender moderated the relationship between life satisfaction and travel intention	-0.011	0.301	Not Supported	1.272	0
H7	Gender moderated the relationship between online marketing communication and travel intention	-0.016	0.326	Not Supported	1.457	0.012
H8	Gender moderated the relationship between eWOM and travel intention	0.089	1.922	Supported	1.451	0.002
H9	Gender moderated the relationship between personal involvement and travel intention	-0.039	0.697	Not Supported	1.718	0.002
H10	Gender moderated the relationship between novelty and knowledge and travel intention	0.041	0.792	Not Supported	1.554	0

Note: *t*-value >1.96 (*p* < 0.05\*); *t*-value >2.58 (*p* < 0.01\*\*)

Source: Author

## Discussion

The findings from the analysis have raised several important points for discussion in this section. The purposes of the study were to investigate the influence of life satisfaction, personal involvement, online marketing communication, eWOM, and novelty and knowledge on travel intention in Sarawak context. Besides, researcher also explored the moderating effects of gender on all selected exogenous variables. Ten hypotheses were proposed and subsequently tested in the context of outbound tourism with 4 of them being supported and six of them being rejected (see Table 7).

As expected, the findings indicated that personal involvement yield the greatest significance for the element of personal involvement (*t*=11.933), novelty and knowledge (*t*=3.945) followed by online marketing communication (*t* = 2.699) on tourist' outbound travel intention in Sarawak. This is perhaps a tourist with more personal involvement at the pre-tour research will certainly suggest greater destination verifications. This in turn may generate inner interest trough their pre-tour research and willingness to give intention to further understand and search relevant information (Thomas, 2012, as cited in Li, 2014). Despite personal involvement, novelty and knowledge were significantly contribute to outbound travel intention. The result was in line with Jang and Feng (2007), that novelty seeking contributed revisit intention. This is in fact high novelty seeking tourists are more curios to search the relevant information and willing explore in turn to gain the experiences (Hsiao & Yang, 2010). In the travel context, traveler may search, convert, process, and memorize the searched information for their travel journey (Lee, Chua, & Han, 2016). Faison (1977) stated that a novel travel is

characterized by new and unfamiliar experiences (Jang & Feng, 2007). According to Plog (2001), adventures are always motivated by curiosities and individual desire to explore new things. Thus, novelty is essential to tourism decision making (Cohen, 1979). Apart from that, this study also indicated that online marketing communication led to outbound tourism intention among the Sarawakian. This is perhaps, the comments or review by travelers were easily to influence the new travelers to make travel intention. In sum, online marketing communication can be served as a marketing communication medium and a significant strategy to attract people to travel.

Unfortunately, life satisfaction and eWOM were insignificantly predict outbound travel intention among the Sarawakian although EWOM used as information sources for tourists. This current finding is similar with the finding of Oliveira and Huertas (2015) that life satisfaction was not lead to intention to use Facebook. This findings were also confirmed by the study of Jamaludin et al. (2016) that life satisfaction were not contribute to destination loyalty intention. This is, in fact, an individual person has different set of standard to judge and evaluate life satisfaction (Sam, 2001). Another reason could be due to the fact that life satisfaction was measured based on overall view without considering special tourists' cohort. Despite life satisfaction, the finding of Abubakar (2016) also discovered that eWOM didn't contribute to travel intention among the tourists in Cyprus.

A somewhat surprising result disclosed by the path coefficients is gender failed to moderate the relationship between life satisfaction, online marketing communication, personal involvement, novelty and knowledge and outbound tourism intention. Yoo and Zhao (2010) illustrated that gender played a no difference on convention travel decision (Ramirez, Laing, & Mair, 2013). Results of the study were contrary with study of Weaver, Mcclery, Han, and Blosser (2009). They found that gender and education levels are significantly influence the US residents to visit Japan and Australia. Perhaps, majority of respondents (tourists) of this study are from similar cohort, they are in the age range of 21-30 years old. Li and Yang (2015) depicted that gender had no moderating effect on visitor's behavioral intention among the tourist in Macao. Venkatesh and Morris (2000) found that gender are equally attentive to social cues. Additionally, results of Maduku's study also exposed that gender have no significant moderating effects on social. The study of Wong, Yap, Turner, and Rexha (2011) designated that gender had no significant difference on adopter categories for email (Kim, 2015). It is however important to recognize that gender moderated the relationship between eWOM and tourist outbound travel intention. As noted, women are more relied on WOM comparing to men (Garbariono & Strahilevits, 2004). The finding of this study is concurrent with the study of Abubakar (2016) that gender moderated the relationship between eWOM and intention to travel among the people from Cyprus. Thus, we cannot deny that eWOM is always affect individual's travel intention regardless of gender.

## Conclusions

One of the novel findings of the present study is online marketing communication, personal involvement, and novelty and knowledge had a direct influence on outbound tourism intention in the context of Sarawak. In term of indirect relationship, gender is only moderate the relationship between eWOM and outbound travel intention among the local people (tourists). Overall, the study highlights the importance of significant variables that predicting the Sarawakian outbound travel behaviour. It also offers valuable insight to Ministry of Tourism and Arts which could lead to develop their tourism attraction strategies and improve the

marketing promotions in order to attract local people to visit locally. To attract and market the local people to travel locally, local tourism managers should identify that local people are considered to use online forum and often will not reserve without seeking online advices on tourism destination. Moreover, it is important for destination marketers to understand the drivers of tourist outbound travel intention because the cost to remain a tourist is much lower comparing to a new tourist (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). The findings also contribute to local government and its related policy makers and legislative authorities need to address the outcomes of this study in a way that reflects positively on controlling outbound and inbound tourism and at the same time encourages domestic tourism. Additionally, results also are highly advisable to destination marketing managers and travel agencies to utilize the social media in informing Sarawakian as Sarawak has countless of tourism destination. In summary, to promote local tourism, it is crucial to understand local peoples' travel behavior or motives (explicit and implicit), as such an understanding offers a better explanation of the motives behind tourists' behavior and thus allows tourism planners to foresee tourists' actions.

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