

# Social Media Influence Youth Destination Choice To Visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah

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**Abstract:** Social media is not an optional extra in the tourism industry and tourism companies, the tourism companies must participate in other social media sites in order to succeed in today's highly competitive business environment. The influence of social media is a marketing term that indicates the individual's ability to dominate the thinking of others in the social online community. The aim of this research is to look over the social media influence youth destination choice to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. The expansion of social media within tourism has provided further motivation towards destination information search and image evaluation. The objective of this research is mainly to identify if social media has made any influence in youth destination choice to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. Pulau Langkawi has been gazetted by the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and has a great opportunity in the tourism industry which has yet to be fully exploited. Results of this research show that the usefulness of social media is to enhance the attraction place. Furthermore, most of the respondents agree that positive or negative comments on social media do have an effect to their destination choice decision. Besides that, social media sources are wide to choose from, thus leaving them with so many choices of social media to help them make decisions. Finally, the respondents agree that social media can actually make them consider travelling to a place they never thought they would. Hence, social media does have an influence to the youths as the objectives have been achieved.

**Index Terms:** Social Media, Youth, Types of Social Media, Usage Habits of Social Media, Usefulness of Social Media, Pulau Langkawi

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of social media is a marketing term that indicates the individual's ability to dominate the thinking of others in the social online community (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). The more influences one has, the more demand that individuals need to other companies or individuals who want to promote a place (Porter & Kramer, 2019). Being the future of communication, social media has become a platform that increase and enhance the sharing of information among the users. This new sort of media makes the transfer of messages, photos, audio, videos, and knowledge primarily increasing fluid among internet users (Panahi, et. al., 2016). According to Malik, et. al. (2016) the result of sharing information with others through online media contributed an enormous amount of information that can be easily shared, searched, promoted, disputed, and created. Emphasizing that crisis communication has become an increasingly important role in social media, and consideration has been given to the use of social media population during the crisis (Panagiotopoulos, et. al., 2016). Social media required minimum effort of individuals to make an influence attempt due to the already large number of people using them to deliver much information, and the minimum effort required for them to make an influence attempts (Katz, Lazarsfeld, & Roper, 2017). The study also revealed that social media is necessary for the tourism industry and consider that like other companies, tourism companies also must involve in these platforms in order to become successful in nowadays increasing competitive business environment (Kirářová, & Pavlířeka, 2015). Due to the many diverse attractions that offered to families, ranges of age and mainly youths, Pulau Langkawi has become an ideal tourist hotspot (Md-Zain, et. al., 2015). The existing of legends that impressed tourist, duty-free island, and beautiful beaches with the richness of flora and fauna, and world class infrastructure become the many reasons tourists came to Pulau Langkawi (Berger, 2015). The tourists will find a link to all such great local tours through

social media or tourism page under the section of 'Related Articles'. Pulau Langkawi is moderately populated and visitors will rarely see human beings on the main roads.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Social Media Influence

Influence is defined as an individual who has authority over the decision to purchase followers. People that influence others are not only becoming marketing tools, but they are very important for brands to achieve their goals in marketing (Djafarova, & Rushworth, 2017). There are four categories that have been determined to understand the kind of influences. First and foremost is directly related to a celebrity, using the same function which they maintain the efficiency in terms of affecting customers' decisions to purchase a particular brand. The second category that has been classified is industry experts. These experts can be a journalist, academics, industry experts or professional advisors. The third category is usually known as bloggers or content creators. Bloggers are very influential because they know how to approach and put trust among themselves with their readers (Baka, 2016). The last category is called micro-influence, which are the new generation of influences. Every day, this generation will share their knowledge of products and services online only on the social media (Cui, et. al., 2018).

### 2.2 Types of Social Media

An array of context types for handling four types of social media information such as recommendations, events, friends and media elements. The research shows that consumers chose to look upon the recommendations by location and environment background, events by location and temporal background, contacts by location and identity background and lastly the list of media elements by environment and identity background. The most commonly used social media platforms, Facebook offers a variety of communication opportunities and less than half of the assessed programs reported creating content that was specific for their communication via social media. The most commonly shared content types were information-based content and videos, followed by images. Some programs also used for online games, consumer

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recruitment, social posts, widgets and paid advertisements (Shawky, et. al., 2019). Twitter is more complicated with its continuous updates and mix of both professional and private talk, serious arguments and small-talk, self-promoting and attention seeking, yet at the same time more significantly, providing an easy access to seemingly hard metrics. In addition, Twitter can be seen as both social networking platform and a circling information stream, in which all the users' pieces of information might seem irrelevant, while the validity and significance to the users actually came from the communication as a whole (Oeldorf-Hirsch, et. al., 2018). The youths' social commitments towards the society they belong to, or other individuals in the same society and social environment affect their social behaviour. This application allows users to post media content, use various filters to beautify the pictures, and instantly share the content with other Instagram users (Chen, 2015). Instagram is different from Facebook in different approach such as Instagram has no status, it allows users to post new media content, Instagram has varieties of filters to choose from and lastly, in comparison to Facebook, it is common for users to keep their Instagram profile public, thus enabling other users to follow, view, like and comment on photos of people they do not know personally (Trub and Rosenthal, 2015).

### 2.3 Usage Habit of Social Media

According to Lee & Kwon (2011), user habit can forecast the consumers' loyalty and repurchase pursuit and it is results as certain to the continuous use of the modern technology. Besides that, some research also adopted the habit as the preliminary to intention (Koskelainen, 2018) and as a pacifier to examine the relationship between intention and usage of social media (Barlow, et. al., 2018). 40% of youths mentioned that it will be difficult to stop using social media. On the other hand, only 28% said it would be difficult to stop using social networks over the last four years. 68% of the youth reported they were Facebook users and three quarters of them stated that the daily network they use is Facebook. However, almost 75% of the youth population reported that they are indeed a platform user of Facebook and in comparison, the Instagram app is categorized as the third highest used by youth which is at 35% (Palacin-Silva, et. al., 2018).

### 2.4 Usefulness of Social Media

They stated that the fact that consumers are far in distant with the service provider, they might not have a clear objective information on the service quality, and that social media for business like tourism may serve nicely to better determine the potential effect of the consumers' act of these social networking sites and a way to deal with them. In the tourism industry, consumers mainly wanted to know the judgments of other travelers because such comments and review will help them decide whether to purchase or reject the service (Hua, et. al., 2017; Popa, Soto Acosta & Loukis, 2016). Social media helped in building product awareness within the industry and therefore leading to a competitive advantage. Thus, a basic element for marketers to be successful in the future can be from a broad understanding of social media usage to increase the traveler's intention to purchase their product and the ability to perceive the travellers. Without much sharing and visiting stories or experiments, the on-hand sources of travel information are limited to official tourism sites and it has to be

pointed out that prior to the incorporation of social media within the tourism industry, the sources are important (Xiang, et. al., 2017).

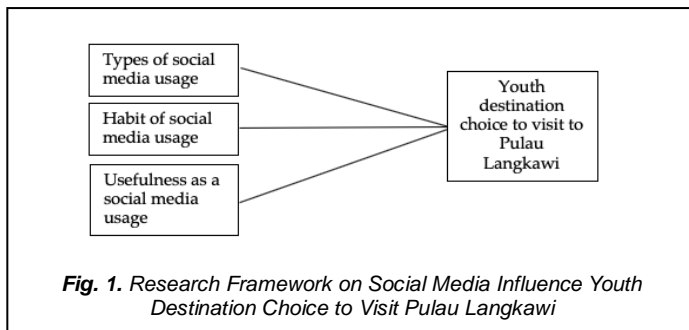
### 2.5 Youth Generation

This generation is classified as a group of individuals who were born in the same period of life, and thus, formed by the same social science norms with their values. It says that individuals in the same group can develop and develop the same trait, behaviours like beliefs, values and traits (Cheung, et. al., 2017). The use of the majority of Instagram individuals is a woman between the ages of 18 and 30 (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). A study from 2016 has stated that 8 out of 10 children aged two years, have been using technology and internet and use a third tablet on a daily basis. 98% of all children in the age of six years use technology and two out of three are connected to the internet network on a daily basis. Furthermore, research found that 98% of all eleven-year-olds had their own Smartphone (Boulton, et. al., 2016). This group relies heavily on and depends on input and feedback from others. Through social media, they attempt to find any information and manage their decision base in inputs from retrieving information (Krishen, et. al., 2016). The concept of eWoM and the influence of social media phenomena play an important role in most uses for social media youth life (Sherman, et. al., 2018). Based on Media Defy teens is more likely to introduce themselves and relate to the influence of social media than for celebrity athletes or idols. By emphasizing the difference between generation Y and Z generation, marketers have found a more in-depth user behavioural ideology towards choosing process and appealing.

### 2.5 Pulau Langkawi

Pulau Langkawi is one of the many islands exists in Malaysia and it is well-known as The Isles of Legends which situated in Kedah, Malaysia. It is consisting of a cluster of 99 islands altogether. Whether it is from local or international tourist, all of them came to experience their best moments on the island. On the other hand, massive changes in the physical features of the landscapes can significantly implicate the natural setting of the island. Thus, the application of ecotourism practices is seen to benefit both environment and quality of life. Consideration in practicing more ecotourism developments at Pulau Langkawi would help sustain the natural heritage for humanity, culture, social and economic importance. Pulau Langkawi is well-known by their mesmerizing beaches, giving visitors an exceptional beautiful view from Pantai Cenang, Pantai Buray Bay and Pantai Kok. Appropriate with the activities such as snorkeling and scuba diving, the island offers a crystal clear and prosperous with marine life. Other than many various places that tourists can have a visit to in Pulau Langkawi, these places have become an exceptionally important source of income in the tourism sector of the country. Improvements and making plans to attract visitors must be planned with a high quality as possible, until it had benefit on the economy (Begum, et. al., 2014).

## 2.6 Research Framework



## 3 METHODOLOGY

This study designed to use descriptive analysis and quantitative research method. This research associated with the use of computational, statistical, and mathematical tools for researcher to acquire the results of this study. This study's objective is conducted by quantitative research to identify the relationship between the independent variable which are types of social media, the usefulness of social media and the usage habits of social media with the dependent variable which is a youth destination choice to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. As this study was particularly looking at Pulau Langkawi and the youths, the population and the units of analysis were focused on youth who age between 15 to 32 years old, targeting university students from Management and Science University (MSU), Shah Alam, UNISEL Shah Alam, UiTM Shah Alam and UiTM Puncak Alam. A carefully defined target population is essential for researcher to ensure a proper and correct source of data collection. This research uses the convenience sample method to choose a specific number of respondents based on Krejcie & Morgan sampling technique. Hence, giving that the statistic number of students from the universities are 172,000, using the Krejcie & Morgan sampling techniques, this study sample size will be 384. In addition, this study also conducted using simple random sampling, or referred to as random sampling. This is because it is the authentic and the most genuine probability sampling strategy. It is also the most popular technique for deciding among a sample population for a broad dimension of purposes. The data collection method for this research is questionnaires. Information collected primarily from respondent and was first-hand information such as questionnaires, was a primary data use for this study. The questionnaires use in this study contains four sections to measure the variable. Often, to make it easy for the results to be interpreted.

**TABLE 1**  
SECTIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	TOTAL NO. OF QUESTION
A	General Information	Tee Yee Teng, 2018	6
B	Demographic Profile	2018	5
C1	Usefulness of Social Media	Shyle, 2015	5
C2	Usage Habits of Social Media	Souza & Machado, 2017	5
C3	Types of Social Media	Magill, 2017	5
D	Youth Destination Choice	Dillon, 2016	5

positive correlation between the items. It is also stated by Nunnally (1978) that alpha coefficients of more than 0.70 will

be considered reliable and acceptable. The importance of the reliability statistic table is to provide the actual value for Cronbach's Alpha.

**TABLE 2**  
RESULTS OF CRONBACH'S ALPHA ANALYSIS FOR EACH VARIABLE OF THE STUDY

VARIABLE	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Usefulness of Social Media	0.895
Usage Habits of Social Media	0.648
Types of Social Media	0.704
Youth Destination Choice to Visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah	0.857

## 4.2 Respondent Background

The demographic characteristics are divided by gender, age, marital status, education level and occupation in the study to provide general information about the respondents.

**TABLE 3**  
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

ITEM	FREQUENCY	(%)	
Gender	Male	147	36.8
	Female	253	63.2
Age	Below 18	3	0.8
	18 – 22	220	55.0
	23 – 27	167	41.8
Marital Status	28 – 32	10	2.5
	Single	382	95.5
	Married	18	4.5
Education Level	Diploma	95	23.8
	Degree	295	73.8
	Master	8	2.0
Occupation	PhD	2	0.5
	Student	400	100

The percentage of females are higher than the male, which is at 63.2%, meanwhile male is at 36.8%. The majority of respondents age between 18-22 years old, which is at 55%, followed by respondents who aged 23-27 years old (41.8%), 28-32 years old (2.5%) and below 18 which is at 0.8%. The marital status of respondents is majority single (95.5%), followed by married (4.5%). The majority of the respondents were in degree (73.8%), followed by a diploma (23.8%), master which is only at 2.0% and PhD (0.5%). The occupation resulting in 100% for student as this study only focuses on the university students.

## 4.3 General Information of Respondent

Based on the table shown below, 297 out of 400 respondents have visited Pulau Langkawi, Kedah, which is at the percentage of 74.3%, and a majority of 223 (55.8%) of them has an intention to visit the destination in the near future. Meanwhile, respondents prefer to go for an independent travel rather than travel package, which the percentage of majority is at 72.5%. The majority of respondents know Pulau Langkawi from social media (49.0%), they always use Instagram (49.3%) and the majority of respondents often spend 4 – 6 hours a day on social media, which is at the percentage of 41.8%.

**TABLE 4**  
**GENERAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**

ITEM		FREQUENCY	(%)
Have you ever visited Pulau Langkawi, Kedah?	Yes	297	74.3
	No	103	25.8
Do you have any intention to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah, in the near future?	Yes	223	55.8
	No	62	15.5
When you are going for a trip, which one do you prefer?	Maybe	115	28.7
	Travel Package	110	27.5
	Independent Travel	290	72.5
From where did you know about Pulau Langkawi, Kedah?	Social Media	195	49.0
	Website	16	4.0
	Word of Mouth	175	43.8
	Others	13	3.3
What kind of social media do you always use?	Facebook	155	38.8
	Instagram	197	49.3
	Twitter	41	10.3
	Others	7	1.8
How often do you spend your time on social media per day?	Less than 3 hours	85	21.3
	4 – 6 hours	167	41.8
	7 – 10 hours	106	26.5
	More than 10 hours	42	10.5

### 4.3 Usefulness of Social Media

The table below shows that most respondents answered “Agree” to each of the questions in the first independent variable related question. The highest percentages of respondent answered for each question are mostly between 38.3% to 46.8%.

**TABLE 5**  
**USEFULNESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The content or information on social media is useful for making a decision to travel.	1.3% (5)	1.8% (7)	3.5% (14)	18.5% (74)	46.8% (187)	28.2% (113)
2	The online information on the website facilitates decision-making processes.	0.5% (2)	1.8% (7)	4.8% (19)	23.3% (93)	46.3% (185)	23.5% (94)
3	Social media is easy and functional for decision making process.	0.3% (1)	1.8% (7)	6.0% (24)	25.3% (101)	41.8% (167)	25.0% (100)
4	Social media can enhance an attraction place.	0.3% (1)	0.5% (2)	2.8% (11)	13.8% (55)	41.4% (166)	41.3% (165)
5	Social media is useful and less time consuming.	0.5% (2)	1.8% (7)	4.3% (17)	19.3% (77)	38.3% (153)	36.0% (144)

### 4.4 Usage Habits of Social Media

Respondents were asked about their usage habits of social media. Most questions are related to how they respond to the social media itself. Results in table below shows that most respondents answered “Agree” to each of the questions in the second independent variable related questions. The highest percentages of respondent answered for each question are between 26.3% to 49.5%.

**TABLE 6**  
**USAGE HABITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Did positive or negative comments from social networks affect your travel destination choice?	0.8% (3)	1.5% (6)	5.3% (21)	24.0% (96)	49.5% (198)	19.0% (76)
2	Did you take a trip simply because you attract on the tourism packages published on social networks?	2.0% (8)	12.8% (51)	14.2% (57)	29.5% (118)	33.5% (134)	8.0% (30)
3	Would you feel panicked or paranoid if you were to go on without social media?	5.3% (21)	15.0% (60)	17.5% (70)	26.0% (104)	25.0% (100)	11.3% (45)
4	If you were to post pictures to your social media account, did you post it right away?	6.3% (25)	13.0% (52)	21.3% (85)	24.8% (99)	26.3% (105)	8.5% (34)
5	When travelling, do you feel the need to post about it?	5.0% (20)	6.3% (25)	14.2% (57)	28.7% (115)	33.3% (133)	12.5% (50)

### 4.5 Types of Social Media

In this section of third independent variable related question, respondents were asked about the types of social media that influence them and how they react to the posts by other users. Results in table below shows that most respondents answered “Agree” to each of the questions in the third independent variable related questions. The highest percentages of respondent answered for each question are between 34.5% to 42.3%.

**TABLE 7**  
**TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Did positive or negative comments from social networks affect your travel destination choice?	0.8% (3)	1.5% (6)	5.3% (21)	24.0% (96)	49.5% (198)	19.0% (76)
2	Did you take a trip simply because you attract on the tourism packages published on social networks?	2.0% (8)	12.8% (51)	14.2% (57)	29.5% (118)	33.5% (134)	8.0% (30)
3	Would you feel panicked or paranoid if you were to go on without social media?	5.3% (21)	15.0% (60)	17.5% (70)	26.0% (104)	25.0% (100)	11.3% (45)
4	If you were to post pictures to your social media account, did you post it right away?	6.3% (25)	13.0% (52)	21.3% (85)	24.8% (99)	26.3% (105)	8.5% (34)
5	When travelling, do you feel the need to post about it?	5.0% (20)	6.3% (25)	14.2% (57)	28.7% (115)	33.3% (133)	12.5% (50)

### 4.6 Youth Destination Choice

The table below shows the respondents respond to the questions of dependent variable related questions which is how social media affect the youth’s destination choice to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. The majority of respondents answered “Agree” to each question. The highest percentage that answered agree are between 33.3% to 43.0%.

**TABLE 8**  
**YOUTH DESTINATION CHOICE**

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Did you ever made an oversea travel decision based on social media?	3.0% (12)	8.8% (35)	9.8% (39)	21.0% (84)	38.3% (153)	19.3% (77)
2	Has social media made you consider travelling to places you never thought you would?	0% (0)	1.8% (7)	5.5% (22)	25.0% (100)	43.0% (165)	26.5% (106)
3	You often use social media to make a destination choice.	0% (0)	3.3% (13)	11.5% (46)	24.8% (99)	36.0% (144)	24.5% (98)
4	You change your plan by the content observed on social media.	1.0% (4)	2.3% (9)	13.0% (52)	29.0% (118)	33.3% (133)	21.0% (84)
5	Comparison of changes made to trip plans due to influence of social media content.	0.5% (2)	2.0% (8)	8.3% (33)	23.5% (94)	41.0% (164)	24.8% (99)

### 4.7 Descriptive Statistic

Based on the table below, the result shows the highest mean which is 5.1950 represents “enhance attraction place”, under the category of the usefulness of social media. This indicated that social media is useful in enhancing an attractive place. Meanwhile, the lowest mean which is 3.6725 indicates the “social media portrays reality” under the section of types of social media. The table also shows the standard deviation in the item statistic, to measure the dispersion of respondent’s

scores on the item based on the questions.

**TABLE 9**  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC ANALYSIS

Factor/Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information is useful	4.9250	.98070
Online information facilitates decision making process	4.8350	.93271
Easy and functional for decision making process	4.8150	.95291
Enhance attraction place	5.1950	.84187
Useful and less time consuming	5.0100	.98097
Positive or negative comments affect travel destination choice	4.7700	.91881
Taking a trip simply because you are attracted on tourism package advertised	4.0375	1.22058
Panicked or paranoid to go on a trip without social media	3.8425	1.38835
Did you post pictures right away?	3.7725	1.36028
Feel the need to post about it when traveling	4.1650	1.28526
Social media portrays reality	3.6725	1.39467
Do you feel jealous seeing traveling photographs posted by another user	4.0200	1.42114
You value trust in information on social media	4.4575	.93829
You follow travel blogger on social media to keep track of trip	4.1275	1.27880
Social media sources are wide to choose	4.7775	.99522
You made an oversea travel based on social media	4.4050	1.30777
You consider travelling to places you never thought you would	4.8525	.93431
You often use social media to make travel destination choice	4.6700	1.06721
You change plan by the content observed on social media	4.5475	1.08890
Comparison of changes made to trip plans due to influence of social media content	4.7675	1.01044

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

This research has found out the factors characterizing the social media influence in destination choice in a group of youths to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. By affair this research, it is a classy that the influence of social media in the destination choice has generated 400 respondents. The key of outcomes has intensified the need for dependent to be a primary consideration in examining social media influence youth. Social media is not just an optional extra platform, but has been an important role in promoting tourism. Tourism businesses that do not use or fail to use these social features to increase their efficiency may not survive long in the industry. Nowadays, social media is more efficient and reliable compared to other traditional communication channels. This concludes that social media is one of the most influential and effective tools in youth's destination choice to visit Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. In the future, other researchers can focus more on specific parts of Pulau Langkawi, Kedah such as Pulau Dayang Bunting, Kuah, Dataran Helang, and many other attractions that available in Pulau Langkawi, Kedah. Besides that, researcher would suggest on focusing more towards one specific population to make it easy for other researcher to find respondents. Last but not least, further researcher can focus more toward web content based specialized or focus on tourism such as Trivago, Trip Advisor, Kayak, Smart Travel, Traveloka and Blogspot.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to extend their appreciation to Management and Science University for the opportunity and financial support which made this study and paper possible.

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