

## **THE CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS BASED ON CULTURAL ACTIVITIES- BASED SEGMENTATION: THE CASE OF PENANG, MALAYSIA**

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This study evaluates the perceptions of cultural tourists regarding the importance and performance of Penang's attributes. Both activities-based analysis and importance-performance analysis were used. The former was applied to identify cultural tourists from all international tourists to Penang; whereas the latter evaluated their perceptions concerning Penang's attributes. The findings reveal that Penang's cultural tourists primarily perceive the image of Penang according to its World Heritage Site status.

Additionally, Penang's cultural and historical uniqueness were the second most important attributes, having satisfactory performance, ranking just after the island's image.

A discussion of the results and suggestions for further studies are presented.

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**Keywords:** cultural tourist, international tourist, Penang, activities-based segmentation, importance-performance analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Penang is one of Malaysia's leading cultural heritage destinations. Although the island had placed itself as a "sun, sea and sand" (3S) tourism destination (Cairns, 2002), the state government is also promoting cultural heritage as an alternative tourism theme (Hamzah, 2004). Nevertheless, the cultural heritage attributes of Penang have been neglected and overshadowed by the demand for 3S tourism. In recent years, Penang started to realise that it has lost the title 'Pearl of the Orient' which was assigned to this island in the 1960s. The island's charm is slowly diminishing and quickly losing out to emerging destinations such as Phuket, Bali and other Indo-China countries regarded as more exotic in the eyes of many Western tourists (Hooi, 2006). Following the economic recession of the late 1990s, Penang began to focus on cultural heritage tourism to sustain the developing tourism sector. The declaration of George Town as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site in 2008 has paved the way for Penang to rejuvenate its ailing tourism industry. As a World Heritage Site, the uniqueness of George Town lies at the cross-roads of religious pluralism, historic townscape and living heritage. Consequently, 'novelty and knowledge seeking' and 'cultural and historical attractions' have been the most important push and pull motives for international tourists who are thinking about visiting Penang (Yousefi&Marzuki, 2012). The changes in visitor types to World Heritage Sites are also inevitable. As noted by Ho (2009):

...the heritage award has been linked to the much discussed 'culture-heritage tourism' sector, believed to carry great potential for driving the future growth of Penang tourism industry. This is in line with the growing numbers of global travellers seeking a different kind of holiday that is not packaged as a rushed shopping/sightseeing tour trip. Not surprisingly, many countries that heavily depend on tourism are increasingly gearing their tourism industry to cater for these 'culture-culture' travellers, who are deemed a more profitable and sustainable market (p.7).

In parallel with the rising interest in cultural heritage tourism and the global influx of alternative tourists, the number of tourist arrivals in Penang has steadily increased over the past decade. Penang State

Tourism Development & Culture (2011) reported that the total number of tourist arrivals to Penang in 2008, with the exception of those who visited by cruises, day trips and stopovers to friends and relatives, had shot up to 6.32 million tourists as compared to 5.19 million tourists in the previous year. Moreover, the total number of tourists in 2009 and 2010 was also close to 6 million, followed by 6.02 and 6.09 in 2011 and 2012, respectively. The increasing number of tourist arrivals has led to subsequent increases in related local industries; such as food and beverage, hotel, handicrafts, transportation, travel agencies and real estate businesses.

Since retaining existing cultural tourists in Penang is as important as attracting new ones, it is important to understand how these tourists perceive Penang in order to develop appropriately targeted marketing strategies. Tourists are more likely to hold destinations in high regards when their expectations have been met (Pritchard & Havitz, 2006). Therefore, the perceptions of cultural tourists with regards to the importance and performance of Penang's attributes are evaluated, which forms the gist of the paper. The activities-based segmentation method is used to identify those tourists who specifically rated cultural activities as essential to moderately important reasons for visiting Penang. After identifying those satisfying the first criterion, importance-performance analysis is used to identify both the importance and the performance of Penang attributes from the international tourist's perspective.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Cultural Tourist**

Cultural enthusiasm and a passion to learn and experience new cultures are among the crucial factors that motivate individuals to travel to new places. Culture has been considered as one of the major destination attributes and motivational factors to affect the destination choice process (Kozak, 2002). For some tourists, culture is the main reason for a trip, and for others, it might be a part in a parcel of many intentions for a trip. Hence, the level of involvement and interest in cultural activities and products may differ from one to the other (Richards, 2007). Nevertheless, cultural tourism is thought to be one of the most globally significant and fastest growing components of tourism (Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development, 2009). Indeed, previous research observed that cultural tourists spend most of their time and money at a given destination (Silberberg, 1995). Due to this fact, many countries have placed considerable efforts into developing cultural tourism in order to cater to this segment of the market.

To identify cultural tourists, it is first necessary to define what cultural tourism is and to classify the activities related to it. The Dictionary of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality (Medlik, 2003) defined cultural tourism as a general term referring to leisure travel motivated by one or more aspects of the culture of a particular area. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (as cited in Csapo, 2012) provided a broad definition of cultural tourism:

...cultural tourism can be defined as that activity which enables people to experience the different ways of life of other people, thereby gaining at first hand an understanding of their customs, traditions, the physical environment, the intellectual ideas and those places of the architectural, historic, archaeological or other cultural significance which remain from earlier times. Cultural tourism differs from recreational tourism in that it seeks to gain an understanding or appreciation of the nature of the place being visited (p. 204).

Based on ICOMOS's definition, the main purpose of cultural tourism is to gain knowledge regarding new customs, traditions, etc. Richards (2001a) defined cultural tourism as "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" (p. 37). He emphasised the idea, 'intention to gather new information', to explain the cultural tourism phenomenon. However, other researchers defined cultural tourism based on the motives to visit places of historical, artistic and lifestyle interests (Alzua, O'leary & Morrison, 1998).

The distinction between an intended cultural tourist and those who inadvertently become cultural tourists is subtle. Nevertheless, exposure to the cultural aspects of a destination is a common motivation in any trip, and some tourists select specific destinations purely for their cultural attractions. These are the tourists that Richards (2001b) categorised to be with the intention to satisfy their cultural needs. He explained:

...cultural tourism therefore covers not just the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the way of life of a people or region. Cultural tourism therefore has seen as covering both ‘heritage tourism’ (related to artefacts of the past) and ‘arts tourism’ (related to contemporary cultural production) (p. 7).

Furthermore, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (as cited in Csapo, 2012) proposed two definitions of cultural tourism, referred to as the wide and narrow definitions. The wide definition:

...all movement of persons...because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters (p. 205).

Whereas, the narrow definition:

...movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages (p. 205).

## **2.2 Classification of Cultural Tourists**

Though cultural tourists constitute one segment of the tourism industry, this faction is comprised of different groups. A homogenous group of tourists might perceive various motivations, reactions and behaviours or seek to derive different benefits from consuming the same products and services (Söllner & Rese, 2001). The importance of categorising the market into different segments or groups is only meaningful if it helps to better match the products with the target market (Mitchell & Wilson, 1998). To identify the various groups of cultural tourists, some researchers have used demographic variables (Richards, 1996). Another approach included the segmentation method which categorised various factions in the market based on the benefits they seek in participating in an activity or purchasing a product (Frochot & Morrison, 2001). Others assume cultural tourism to be an undifferentiated segment of tourists who are highly motivated to seek out deep cultural experiences. However, Mckercher (2002) argued that “the importance (or centrality) of cultural tourism can be the main reason someone chooses a destination, but it also can play a lesser role” (p. 32). Therefore, cultural tourists can be categorised based on how they prioritise

culture and cultural activity in their decision-making process and their selection of activities on site (Silberberg, 1995; Mckercher, 2002). This notion can be empirically articulated to evaluate the different levels of tourist engagement in cultural activities (Mckercher&Cros, 2003). Activities-based segmentation differentiates tourists depending on the various types of activities that appeal to different types of cultural tourists. It defined groups of tourists by tracing their behaviour and cultural patterns (Mckercher, Ho, Cros& So-Ming, 2008). In this paper, cultural tourists were defined as those who rate cultural activities at the destination as being of essential to medium priority.

Importance-performance analysis (IPA) was also applied to understand tourists' perceptions toward Penang's attributes. Applying the IPA method to segmentation provides help in better understanding the market (Bruyere, Rodriguez & Vaske, 2002; Wade & Eagles, 2003). Martilla and James (1977) suggested using IPA to assess products and services based on two components: the importance of the products or services, and the performance of the products and services. IPA is an accepted measurement tool used to assess consumer satisfaction, and it emphasises the importance and performance of products and services (Bruyere et al., 2002). In this paper, IPA was used to evaluate the cultural tourists' perceptions with regards to Penang's attributes.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

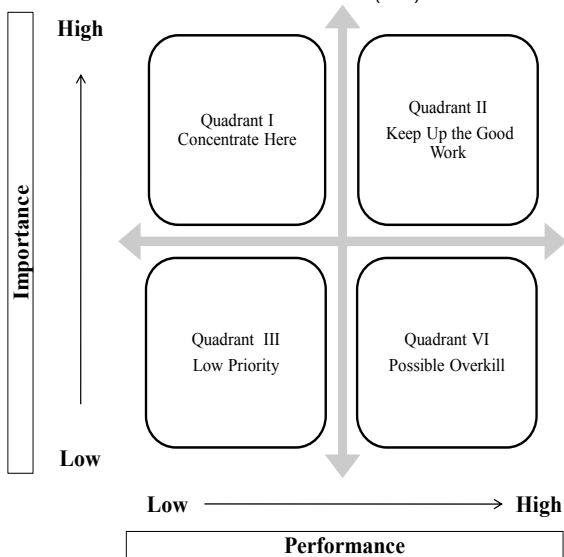
This study utilised a questionnaire as a primary data collection instrument. The attributes of Penang used in the survey were discussed and finalised by a panel consisting of tourism stakeholders such as hotel managers, travel agents, airline officials, airport staff and tourist attraction representatives. The questionnaire contained 31 items and was arranged in four parts. The sections were related to travel planning followed by travel expenditure and shopping, travel preferences and opinions and demographic background. In section three, participants ranked 12 attributes of Penang based on their importance and performance. Participants were asked to rate the attributes based on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important). Similarly, destination performance was rated from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

The study sample included international tourists, aged 18 and above, who visited Penang in 2012. The survey was conducted either by face-to-face interviews with the respondents using assigned enumerators or by self-completion at selected tourist hotspots in Penang. Data collection sites included the departure hall at Penang International Airport, Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal, Penang tourism information centres on Acheen Street and Beach Street, Chulia Street, Penang Hill, Ferringhi beaches and Homestay Jalan Baharu, BalikPulau. Enumerators asked screening questions at the beginning of the survey to verify whether the respondents were international tourists and not transient tourists. They approached respondents on a convenience basis and data collection was conducted between August and November 2012.

For the purpose of this study, respondents who rated cultural activities as their essential to medium priority were extracted from the main data set. 341 respondents were accessed. These respondents were chosen depending on activities-based segmentation in which tourists in the market were classified by the activities they had undertaken (Mckercher et al., 2008). Visiting museum/art galleries, attending traditional cultural performance, visiting heritage/historical attractions and experiencing local food were their essential to medium priority activities while visiting Penang. Data analysis occurred over two stages. In the first stage, frequency and cross-tabulation analysis were conducted to interpret the respondent's demographic and travelling characteristics. In the second stage, the importance-performance analysis IPA was performed to determine how the international cultural tourists rated the importance and performance of Penang's attributes. A reliability test was conducted for each of the 12 items of Penang's importance and performance, respectively, in order to test the stability of the variables. Variables with coefficients equal to or greater than 0.70 were accepted as being reliable indicators and measurement variables. The Cronbach's Alpha for the 12 items of destination importance was 0.874 and 0.879 for the 12 performance indicators, suggesting a strong homogeneity of the items.

The next step of the analysis was the importance-performance analysis, as described by Martilla and James (1977). IPA is a well-documented and reliable tool giving service providers and managers reliable information on the level of satisfaction and efficiency of

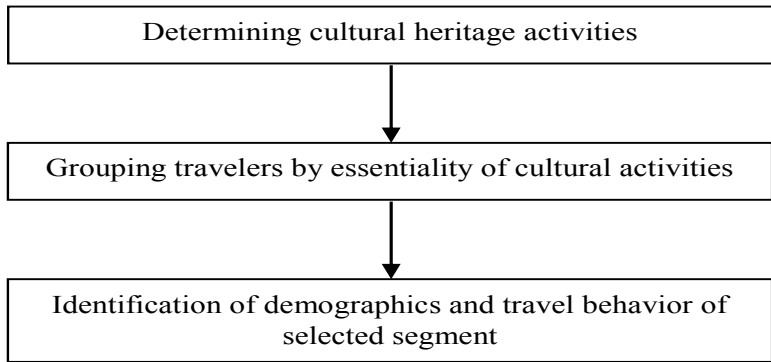
resource allocation (Wade & Eagles, 2003). IPA was employed to determine how the international cultural tourists rated the importance and performance of Penang's attributes. Survey participants were asked two questions regarding each of Penang's attributes: (1.) How important is this attribute? (2.) How well did this attribute perform? This was followed by the mean scores for both importance and performance variables which were calculated and illustrated in a two-dimensional grid where the importance values (Y-axis) was plotted against the performance values (X-axis). The data was depicted on a grid where each variable plotted was in line with its perceived importance and performance (Figure 1). Graphically illustrating the data in this manner required that each of the variables be assigned to one of four quadrants. Quadrant I was the most important categorisation as it represented the elements which failed to satisfy the customers' perceived expectations. The factors that fell into this quadrant indicated weaknesses which required immediate consideration. The attributes in Quadrant II indicated the industry's success in meeting the customer's standard for satisfaction. Factors indicating minor weaknesses were placed in Quadrant III. While improvements in these areas were desirable, they were not essential and, therefore, did not require immediate attention. Quadrant IV was reserved for attributes indicative of high performance (Wade & Eagles, 2003; Azzopardi & Nash, 2013). In addition to the IPA, a paired sample *t*-test was performed to determine whether any significant difference existed between the perceived importance and performance attributes of Penang from the cultural tourist's point of view.



**Figure 1.**Importance-performance analysis grid

#### **4. RESULTS**

The process used for conducting the activities-based segmentation was outlined in Figure 2. First, essential cultural attractions and activities were identified based on the list of activities undertaken by tourists in Penang as follows: (1.) experiencing local food; (2.) visiting heritage and historical sites; (3.) attending traditional cultural performances; and (4.) visiting museums and art galleries. The second stage involved grouping tourists by the essentiality of the selected cultural activities. In the third stage, the demographic and travel pattern of this segment of the market was identified.



**Figure 2.** The process of activities-based segmentation

#### **4.1 Demographic and Travelling Characteristics of Respondents**

Based on the selected 341 respondents, travellers from Southeast Asian countries accounted for 21.8% of the sample, followed by 19.6% from Europe, 18.4% from Eastern Asia, 11.3% from Western Asia and 9.5% from the Americas. Therefore, respondents from Southeast Asian and European countries accounted for almost half of tourists who were primarily interested in cultural activities. The result of cross-tabulation between the respondents' region of residence and their gender revealed that the ratio of male to female respondents was almost equal, except for those from Western Asia, Southern Asia and Africa, in which male travellers were dominant (Table 1). The respondents ranged between 19 to 73 years old; however, the largest age group were youths. The age description for 'youths' (i.e., 18 to 35 years old) was based on studies by Sullivan (2004) and Carr (1999, 2001). The average age of respondents was 33 years old. Travellers at this age would have likely had a steady job and a disposable income. The majority of Western Asian respondents were married and preferred to travel in small groups of two to five people. By contrast, more than half of the single travellers from the Americas preferred to travel with two to five people. Other regions reported a balance of single and married travellers, while the average number of individuals travelling

together was three. Most of the respondents were educated and were involved in white-collar professions. Many of the respondents had undertaken tertiary education (46.5%) and 43.8% were higher degree holders. This finding was consistent with that of Ho (2009) and Yousefi and Marzuki (2012), in which Penang attracts more educated and novelty tourists who possess higher expectations of the cultural and historical attractions. The majority of the respondents were independent travellers; however, 64.9% of Western Asian respondents were travelling as part of a package tour. Half of the respondents did not have any specific duration for their travelling activities.

**Table 1.** Demographic and travel characteristics of survey respondents

Background	Region of Residence								
	S outh- east Asia ( N=71)	W estern Asia ( N=37)	E astern Asia ( N=60)	O ceania ( N=17)	E urope ( N=64)	A mericas ( N=31)	S outh n Asia ( N=24)	A frica ( N=22)	
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	4	6	4	4	4	58	8	6	
Female	2.9%	3.9%	5.0%	7.1%	8.4%	.1%	3.3%	3.6%	
	5	3	5	5	5	41	1	3	
	7.1%	6.1%	5.0%	2.9%	1.6%	.9%	6.7%	6.4%	
<b>Age</b>									
18-35 years	7	6	7	2	7	74	7	7	
36-54 years	5.7%	2.2%	0.0%	3.5%	5.0%	.2%	0.8%	2.7%	
>55 year	2	3	2	5	2	19	2	2	
	2.9%	2.4%	8.3%	8.8%	0.3%	.4%	5.0%	7.3%	
	1	5	1	1	4	6	4	0	
	.4%	.4%	.7%	7.6%	.7%	5%	2%	.0%	
<b>Marital Status</b>									
Single	5	2	4	2	5	54	4	4	
Married	4.9%	4.3%	8.3%	9.4%	9.4%	.8%	3.5%	0.9%	
Divorcee/widowed	4	7	5	5	3	38	5	5	
	5.1%	0.3%	0.0%	2.9%	7.5%	.7%	6.5%	9.1%	
	0	5	1	1	3	6	0	0	
	.0%	.4%	.7%	7.6%	.1%	5%	0%	.0%	
<b>Education</b>									
Higher degree	4	5	3	2	4	25	6	6	
Tertiary education	2.3%	6.8%	7.3%	3.5%	5.3%	.8%	6.7%	3.6%	
	4	4	5	4	4	71	2	3	
Secondary education	5.1%	0.5%	9.3%	1.2%	2.2%	.0%	5.0%	6.4%	
Primary education	9	2	3	2	1	3	8	0	
	.9%	.7%	.4%	3.5%	2.5%	2%	3%	.0%	
No formal education	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	
	.4%	.0%	.0%	.9%	.0%	0%	0%	.0%	
	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	
	.4%	.0%	.0%	.9%	.0%	0%	0%	.0%	
<b>Trip mode</b>									
Independent traveller	7	3	7	7	8	83	1	8	
On package	3.2%	5.1%	1.7%	6.5%	5.9%	.9%	00.0%	1.8%	
	2	6	2	2	1	16	0	1	

tour	6.8%	4.9%	8.3%	3.5%	4.1%	.1%	0%	8.2%	
<b>Travel companion</b>									
Alone	9.7%	0.8%	3.3%	0	1	16	4	2	
2 person	2	4	4	5	5	25	2	3	
3-5 person	6.8%	0.5%	3.3%	8.8%	3.1%	8%	0.8%	1.8%	
6-10 person	4	2	3	3	2	38	3	3	
11-29 person	2.3%	9.7%	5.0%	5.3%	0.3%	.7%	3.3%	1.8%	
>30 Person	8	1	3	5	3	16	0	1	
	.5%	3.5%	.3%	.9%	.1%	.1%	0%	3.6%	
	1	5	5	0	4	3	0	0	
	.4%	.4%	.0%	.0%	.7%	2%	0%	.0%	
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	0%	0%	.0%	
<b>Usual travel season</b>									
December-	4.1%	.4%	1.7%	1.8%	.3%	6	6	2	
February	0	2	1	0	0	9	8	0	
March-May	.0%	.7%	.7%	.0%	.0%	7%	3%	.0%	
June-August	4	3	6	5	2	38	4	2	
September-	.2%	2.4%	.7%	.9%	3.4%	.7%	2%	2.7%	
November	9	1	2	3	2	9	1	1	
No specific	.9%	3.5%	8.3%	5.3%	1.9%	7%	6.7%	3.6%	
season	7	4	4	4	4	35	6	4	
	1.8%	5.9%	1.7%	7.1%	8.4%	.5%	6.7%	0.9%	

Most of the respondents had visited Penang for leisure or recreation (58.7%), followed by education and visiting friends or relatives (11.1%) (Table 2). Most had researched information prior to travel using the Internet (32.3%) or knew about Penang by way of word-of-mouth from friends and relatives (20.8%). Advertisements or write-ups in magazines, newspapers and guide books (16.3%) also played an important role in informing the traveller. Most of the respondents had planned their trip in advance. Half had planned their trip over a month before setting out on their travels. The average length of stay was rather short with 16.5% of respondents staying between 1 and 2 days at their destination, while 56.5% spent 3 to 7 days. Almost half of the respondents preferred to stay at more upmarket accommodations such as hotels or resorts, while 23.0% had opted for budget accommodation, such as motels, inns, chalets, guest houses and hostels. Only 3.0% of the sample used homestay accommodation. Homestays offer affordable accommodation while also providing travellers with an opportunity to interact more closely with locals, experiencing local culture, customs and lifestyles. Public transport (i.e., buses and taxis) constituted the major mode of transportation for travellers visiting Penang (60.8%). As previously mentioned, the four essential cultural activities undertaken by the respondents involved experiencing local food (15.3%), visiting

heritage and historical sites (11.2%), attending traditional cultural performances (7.0%) and visiting museums and art galleries (6%).

**Table 2.** Travelling pattern of survey respondents

<b>Travelling Pattern</b>			
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Source of information</b>	<b>%</b>
Leisure/Recreation/holidays	58.7	Internet	32.3
Education/study/teaching	11.1	Friends/relatives/word of mouth	20.8
Visit friends/relatives	11.1	Magazine/newspaper/guide book	16.3
Business/professional	5.0	Past experience	12.0
Honeymoon	4.4	Television/radio	5.9
Health treatment	2.6	Travel agency/tour company	5.1
Shopping	2.1	National government tourist office	2.6
Convention/conference/trade show	1.8	Airlines directly	2.3
Incentive travel	1.8	In-flight information systems	1.3
Religion/pilgrimages	0.6	Expo/exhibition/tourism fair	1.2
Government affairs/official mission	0.3	Others (University etc.)	0.3
Sporting tournament/event			
<b>Length of stay</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>%</b>
1- 2 days	16.5	Hotel/Resort	47.2
3 -7 days	56.5	Motel/inn/chalet/guest house/hostel	23.0
8 – 14 days	11.6	Friend or relative's house	12.5
15 – 30 days	8.1	Timeshare/apartment	6.2
31 – 60 days	1.1	Rest house/bungalow/villa	5.0
> 60 days	6.3	Homestay	3.0
Average	15	Cruise ship	2.0
Maximum	days	Campsite	1.0
	360		
	days		
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Lead time to decide trip</b>	<b>%</b>
Public transport (bus, taxi etc.)	60.8	A week before the trip	14.3
Rented vehicle (car, motorcycle)	18.7	A month before the trip	24.8
Personal vehicle (friend's car etc.)	12.2	1 to 3 months	25.5
Company vehicle	3.5	More than 3 months	24.8
Trishaw	3.5	Not sure	10.5
Walking	1.2		

The tourism image of Penang as perceived by respondents was World Heritage Site (22.7%), local cuisine (20.3%), sandy beaches (18.8%) and multicultural society (17.6%) (Table 3). This finding affirmed that Penang has greatly benefited from George Town's World Heritage Site endorsement by UNESCO. As illustrated in Table 4, the majority of respondents were satisfied with their visit to Penang. The average satisfaction score was 7.5 (out of 10-points). Respondents who were satisfied with their travel experiences tended to revisit and recommend the destination to their friends and relatives. Only a small number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their trip to Penang.

**Table 3.** The image of Penang as perceived by respondents

<b>Image of Penang</b>	<b>%</b>
World heritage site	2
Local cuisine	2.7
Sandy beach	2
Multicultural society	0.3
Shopping paradise	1
International events	8.8
Health services	1
Folkdance/cultural performance	7.6
Others (education centre, national park and business)	8
	.7
	5
	.3
	3
	.5
	2
	.9
	0
	.2

**Table 4.** Tourists' satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation

Satisfaction score		Revisit intention		Recommendation	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Not at all satisfied	2	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
	3	0.0%	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%
	4	0.9%	0.6%	0.9%	0.6%
	5	8.6%	1.5%	9.9%	0.3%
Moderately satisfied	6	9.5%	1.8%	10.8%	0.6%
	7	16.0%	2.2%	17.9%	0.0%
	8	29.2%	3.4%	32.4%	0.3%
	9	16.9%	1.5%	18.5%	0.0%
Completely satisfied	10	6.5%	0.0%	6.5%	0.0%

## 4.2 Importance-Performance Analysis

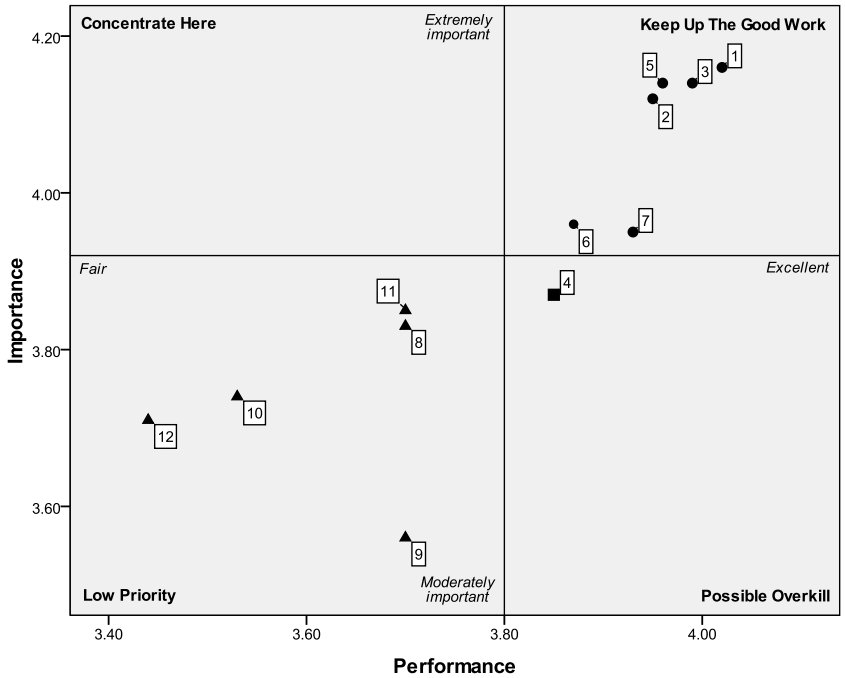
The first stage in performing IPA involved calculating the mean scores for the attributes' importance and performance. These mean values were presented in a two-dimensional grid with the importance

values (Y-axis) plotted against the performance values (X-axis). Table 5 indicated the mean scores for the 12 destination attributes of Penang as perceived by the respondents according to their importance and performance. The data plotted in the IPA grid was illustrated in Figure 3, where the X-axis depicted the performance scores and the Y-axis represented the importance scores relating to the same attributes. The mean importance for the plotted data was 3.92 and the mean performance rating was 3.80.

**Table 5.** Twelve features of the importance-performance analysis

o	Attribute	Mean Importance	Mean Performance	Diffe rence
	Image of destination	4.16	4.02	-0.14
	Variety of tourism attractions	4.12	3.95	-0.17
	Cultural and historical uniqueness	4.14	3.99	-0.15
	Value for money	3.87	3.85	-0.02
	Safety and security	4.14	3.96	-0.18
	Accessibility to the destination	3.96	3.87	-0.09
	Friendliness of the people	3.95	3.93	-0.02
	Availability of information	3.83	3.70	-0.13
	Ease of communication	3.56	3.70	0.14
	Cleanliness of destination			
0	Accommodation services	3.74	3.53	-0.21
1	Local transport services	3.85	3.70	-0.15
2		3.71	3.44	-0.27
	Total	47.03	45.64	-1.39
	<b>Central line</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.80</b>	

The result of the IPA grid analysis for the sample was shown in Figure 3. As presented in the following figure, ‘image of destination, variety of tourism attractions, cultural and historical uniqueness, safety and security, accessibility to the destination and friendliness of the people’, were grouped into the ‘Keep up the Good Work’ quadrant. ‘Value for money’ was assigned to the ‘Possible Overkill’ quadrant and ‘availability of information, ease of communication, accommodation services and local transport services’ fell into the Low Priority quadrant.



**Figure 3.** Importance-performance analysis grid of Penang's attributes as perceived by respondents

## 5. CONCLUSION

Activities-based segmentation and importance-performance analysis are both tools that help marketers categorise a market based on preferred activities and evaluations of destination attributes. Activities-based segmentation was based on the assumption that different types of tourists will have an affinity for different types of tourism experiences. By analysing the pattern and preference of tourists' activities, the subjects who took part in cultural activities were extracted. Furthermore, analysis of frequencies and IPA were applied to distinguish the unique features within this segment. According to the focus group of cultural tourists, none of the Penang attributes were highly important, with relatively poor performances.

This result indicated that all the attributes that were perceived as important also performed well. Not surprisingly, 'image of destination' scored as the most important attribute with relatively high performance ('Keep up the Good Work'). The image of Penang was largely based on 'World Heritage Site', 'local cuisine' and 'sandy beaches'. This result indicated that cultural travellers recognised Penang predominantly through its cultural attributes. In addition, 'safety and security', 'variety of tourism attractions', 'accessibility to the destination' and 'friendliness of the people' were important factors that satisfied cultural tourists the most. Five attributes fell into the 'Low Priority' quadrant: 'availability of information', 'ease of communication', 'cleanliness of destination', 'accommodation services' and 'local transport services'. Although, these five were perceived as low in importance, being the main products and services of the destination, their improvement should not be neglected. 'Value for money' was the only item that was perceived as 'Possible Overkill' which showed that efforts to keep Penang as an affordable place to visit was successful.

Using Penang as a case study, the international tourists who selected cultural activities as being essential to medium priority activities during their visit were extracted. Rather than simply engaging in cultural activities, this segment also perceived the image of Penang by its World heritage site and cultural and historical uniqueness; therefore, scoring these features as the most important. However, this group was not selected based on their visit intention, as suggested by some researchers (Silberberg, 1995), but was according to others who argued that cultural tourists should be recognised based on the activities that they partake in (Mckercher et al., 2008).

The results of this study can be used to develop a more accurate plan for cultural tourists, enabling tourism marketers to develop strategies to target tourists more effectively. Our profile of cultural tourists indicated that they tend to be relatively young adults (18–35 years old) who are independent travellers, travelling year round and not seasonally. Therefore, tourism marketers can rely on this segment more than seasonal travellers (e.g., during school holidays). Moreover, due to their interest in cultural heritage, they are potentially more sustainable tourists; as emphasised by previous studies (Silberberg, 1995). This insight may also assist heritage

stakeholders in designing new products and services focused on attracting this particular group of tourists. Furthermore, these findings enable destination marketers to identify and prioritise the importance and performance of Penang's tourism features. Further study within this segment can help to better comprehend the sub-segments within this market. In addition, comparing cultural tourist segments with other segments of Penang's international travellers would provide a clearer and more complete picture of the tourism market.

This study used activities-based segmentation to identify Penang's cultural tourists. Importance-performance analysis helped pinpoint what these tourists perceived as the most important attributes of Penang, as well as, the performance of these attributes. The results revealed that cultural tourists primarily perceived Penang based on its World Heritage Site status, with the cultural and heritage uniqueness of Penang being the second most important attribute. According to the cultural tourists questioned, none of the 12 attributes had low performance. Meanwhile, the uniqueness of Penang's cultural and heritage attributes scored as a very important item that also performed well. This indicated that, from a cultural tourist's point of view, cultural activities are not the only factors that brought them to Penang, their pre-formed image of the destination was also important. Overall, the results indicated that Penang can rely on its World Heritage Site status, as well as, featuring its other cultural products to cater to the whims of cultural tourists when designing future promotional plans for this target group. Analysing the perception of quality for each segment of the market will provide destinations with more insight in regards to future directions for moving forward. Future studies should focus on other segments of Penang's domestic and international tourists, while considering variables such as the motivations for their trip.

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