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# To Examine the Factors Influencing Tourist Intention to Revisit to the Maldives with the Use of Social Media Marketing as the Moderating Influence

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#### Abstract

This paper presents a study on "to examine the factors influencing tourist intention to revisit to the Maldives with the use of social media marketing as the moderating influence." This research will be examining tourist's intention to revisit towards Maldives and what is the moderating influence by social media marketing. There are four main research objectives set out to achieve they are to determine the influence of social media as a marketing factor on the tourism industry, to examine the factors influencing tourist revisit intention, to examine the influence of social media on marketing and to determine the influence of novelty, adventure, social contact, relax and escape on tourist's intention to revisit. The aim of the study is to improve and give a better recommendation to the main industry in Maldives, which is tourism. As it is the main reason for tourist visit can be put under the five individual variables as novelty, adventure, social contact, escape and then relax. The methodology used in this paper is quantitative and hence a survey approach was acquired.

Keywords: Business, Impacts, Influence, Revisit, Social Media, Tourism

#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction to problem

Maldives in South East Asia is recognized as a 'paradise on earth' glorified for it is scattered green islands, white beaches and under water beauty. Current economy of this island national with lesser natural resources is predominately depend on the tourism industry, playing a decisive enterprise, in earning foreign exchange revenues and accommodating employment opportunities in the tertiary sector. Regrettably, even though scope is immense

and some promotional events are held to attract tourists annually, there is still a huge gap present between the strategies adopted and the optimum outcome (Kundur, 2012).

One of the strategies adopted to promote tourism industry in Maldives is social media. Prevalent social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp aids tourists in simply digitizing moments (Munar & Jacobsen 2014). According to Naafiz (2017), social media plays a significant role in tourist decision to some extent.

However, the problem lies with using the best possible social tool to its full capacity and at the same time a good marketing strategy are what ensures the success of tourism destination. Island based countries similar to Maldives like Seychelles, Mauritius, use emerging new technologies like social media to advertise not only their natural and man-made resources. They advertise their unique traditions, food and culture through social media (Naafiz, 2017).

The main challenge in promoting Maldives tourism sector is the narrow marketing focus of the service providers. This includes focusing only on promoting white sandy beaches and the beautiful reef fishes of the sea (Naafiz, 2017). The tourist requires more than these reasons, hence there is a need to explore new aspects which can be used to promote Maldives tourism industry using the social media.

According to Larson (2011) there can be several other reasons to why a tourist can decide to revisit. The normal American travelers spend about fourteen days or less on an excursion in any one territory. There is a whole other aspect to an outing than simply the landscape of a country. A vacationer must choose what experience they need. They therefore need to prioritize depending on the experience they require. Which means a vacationer who needs to unwind and lay by the sea may have to pass up opportunity to visit historical places in the territory - this may require another outing (Larson, 2011).

The objectives of this paper are to find the factors influencing tourist intention to revisit Maldives with the use of social media marketing as the moderating influence.

This paper aims to determine the influence of social media on marketing for tourism, to examine the factors influencing tourist revisit intention, to examine the influence of social media on marketing and to determine the influence of novelty, adventure, social contact, relax and escape on tourist's intention to revisit.

#### 1.2 Literature review

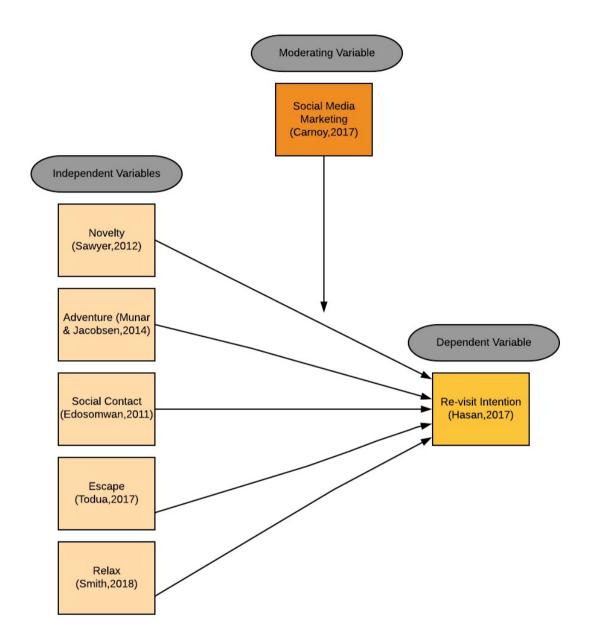
People have a full trust on what people post on their social media's like Facebook, Instagram, blogs, snaps, etc. People share online their own travel experiences and special moments, their opinions about the accommodation, hotels, restaurants, airlines, or even car rental services of the place (Kazak, 2016). In a world of digital connectivity, these social media platforms are an effective, extensive way of advertising and marketing the tourism industry (Jashi, 2015).

When booking travel, 89% of millennial plan travel activities based on content posted by their peers online. Travel agencies are not obsolete they are still responsible for 55% of all airline bookings, 77% of cruise bookings, and 73% of package bookings. But many agencies have shifted their focus from in-person to online experiences as they adapt to new technology and market trends (Carnoy, 2017).

There are many successful social media marketing conducted. Iceland had a successful campaign in 2010, where visitors to their website could explore a-ö of journeys, tastes and living in Iceland, with rich features on the Northern Lights, ice climbing or birch syrup ((Durrenberger, 2015). In 2013, South Africa had a hashtag campaign using "#MeetSouthAfrica", collaborated with 14 international travel bloggers, a usual strategy in other marketing discipline. This generated more than 9,000 tweets, 77.8 million Twitter impressions, and more than 1000 photos shared on Instagram (Office, 2017).

Even though Maldives tourism industry is marketed, there is no research done on the area of how social media have affected the marketing of tourism industry in Maldives. Nor there has been a research done on the factors

influencing the revisit intention of tourists to visit Maldives. Therefore, the outcome of this study will help the policy makers in making policies with regards to the use of social media techniques to boost tourism sector of the country.



#### 1.3 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the main platforms referred in "social media" in the study. It includes Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram which is the most commonly used platforms in Maldives. The framework further depicts a relationship between social media and tourism sector; however, the study will further prove whether the relationship is negative or positive. Hence, according to the framework social media where's tourist revisit intention is the dependent variable. The moderating variable is social media marketing.

The independent variables are novelty, adventure, social contact, escape and relax. According to Cohen (1972), travelers tour in a quest of novelty; yet, most of them need to remain in their relief region or "environmental bubble" in order to completely experience the experience (Mak, 2015). Adventure skill a type of tourism involving tour to far off or distinguished locations in order to take section in physically challenging out of doors activities.

By social contact there is a need to want for people to interact with people, it may additionally be in the shape of talking, smiling, shaking fingers etc. Social contact serves the common or higher correct to ensure the sustainability of the gadget in question and shield the persons within it. As such, the social contact normally guides moral behavior. In Escape this type of vacationer has a pretty clear notion the place he needs to go and he is not touring away from his domestic (such as it is the case with escape), he is journeying towards a constant destination. Cultural tourism is primarily based on the thought of search and it now and again consists of non-secular or non-secular experiences. Relax is where the vacation is mostly leisure travel. This is the place the predominant motivation is to take a holiday from day-to-day life. Leisure travel is often characterized with the aid of staying in pleasant motels or resorts, relaxing on seashores or in a room, or going on guided excursions and experiencing local traveler attractions (Hasan, 2017).

The two hypothesis explored in this paper are "null hypothesis" that there is no influence of social media on marketing for tourism, there are no influence on the tourist intention to revisit, there is no influence of social media on marketing, there is no influence in novelty, adventure, social contact, relax and escape on tourist intention to revisit. Alternative Hypothesis is that there is influence of social media on marketing for tourism industry, there are influence on tourist's intention to revisit, there is influence of social media on marketing, there is influence in novelty, adventure, social contact, relax and escape on tourist intention to revisit.

#### 2. Method

#### 2.1 Research approach

The research approach used for this paper is Epistemology, which is referred to the "the nature and forms [of knowledge], how it can be acquired and how communicated to other human beings" (Saunders, 2012). The research philosophy used for the paper is positivism, as its best works on quantifiable observations (GuhaThakurta, 2016) this research requires statistical evaluation as well. Furthermore, exploratory research is carried out when a topic needs to be understood in depth, especially if it hasn't been done before (Bhat, 2018). Thus, exploratory research design was chosen for this research as it is imperative to study perceptions and opinions on social media in marketing tourism in Maldives and exploratory design will be able to draw out the thoughts and opinions of respondents.

#### 2.2 Sample size

As per the Tourism Ministry Annual Report (2018), more than 1,000,000 tourists visited Maldives in 2018 and in order to determine the sample size the highest value in the Population category was selected; 1,000,000 (Sekaran, 2016). According to Sekaran (2016), the sample size was determined to be 384. For this research pilot testing was done with 10 tourists. Both hard and soft copies were disseminated to 10 resorts (40 questionnaires per resort) and resort agencies, to be filled by guests on vacation. Out of the 384 questionnaires, 304 questionnaires were filled, which is response rate of 76%.

#### 2.3 Research method

The questionnaire was designed based on a scholar of Su & Huang (2018) the title, how does perceived destination social responsibility impact revisit intentions: the mediating roles of destination preference and relationship quality. Second article was from, Andajani (2016) title international tourists motivations and revisit intention to Indonesia, and then the last school is from Lee, Chen, Liou, Tsai & Hsieh (2018) it is about evaluating international tourists perceptions on cultural distance and recreation demand. The questionnaire includes questions to test the research questions and the conceptual framework.

#### 2.4 Research Design

The methodology used for this research is quantitative, as numbers provide a better perspective to make important business decisions (Neuman, 2015). Non-probability sampling was used in this research, whereby survey was conducted among tourists, however the members of the population do not have equal chance of being selected in

this type of method (Saunders, 2012). The questionnaire used to survey the population were made in English in order to make it easier for tourists to comprehend.

#### 2.5 Data analysis

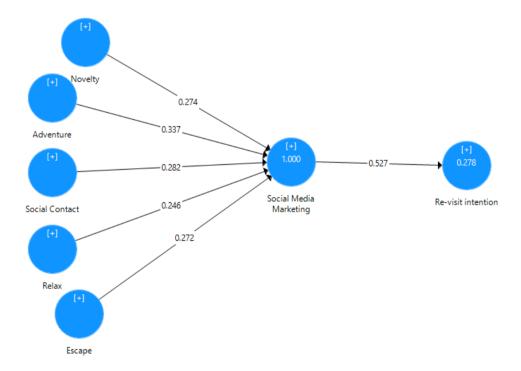
The data analyses method that will be used for this research is SmartPLS 2019 (latest version). The "statistical package for the social sciences" (SPSS) is a package of programs used for manipulating, analysing and presenting data; the package is widely used in the social and behavioural sciences (Flynn, n.d).

The correlation coefficient was used to measure the degree of correlation between the dependent and independent variables. Pearson correlation coefficients applied in testing the impacts of green marketing on consumers purchase intention. The correlation between two random variables, X and Y, is a measure of the degree of linear association between the two variables. The population correlation, denoted by  $\rho$ , can take on any value from one to one (Ezirim and Nwokah, 2019).

#### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Algorithm Test

Figure 2: Shows the relationship between the variables.



Algorithm test reveals the relationship between the Independent Variable (IV)s and Dependent Variable (DV) and it shows the regression "r" value. The "r" value will always be in between +1 and -1, if the value comes near to +1 then the relationship between IVs and DV are stronger, conversely if the value comes near to -1 then the relationship between IVs and DV are negative.

In reference to Figure 2, the relationship between "novelty" and "social media marketing" the "r" value is 0.274, indicating that association between "novelty" and "social media marketing" is positive but weak as it is below 0.5. About "adventure "and "social media marketing "the "r" value is 0.337, indicating that association between "adventure" and "social media marketing" is positive but weak. The variable "social contact" and "social media marketing" the "r" value is 0.282, indicating that association between "social contact" and "social media marketing" is positive but weak. The fourth variable "relax" and "social media marketing" the "r" value is 0.246, indicate a positive but weak. The last variable "escape" and "social media marketing" the "r" value is 0.272. which

is same as rest, positive but weak. To depict the "social media marketing" and "re-visit intention" the "r" value is 0.527 which indicates a positive and strong relationship.

To sum up, as there was no indication of a negative value, hence it can be concluded that all variables demonstrates a positive relationship with one another, meaning as one variable increases, the other also increases. However, some of the values were below 0.5 hence determining a weak relationship (Landau, 2017).

First of all, according to figure 2 considers that the bootstrapping algorithm analyses the significance of relationships. That is, whether the effect of a certain IV on a certain DV is significant. The strength of the relationships can be obtained by applying the PLS algorithm. Thereby, the path coefficients indicate to which extend an IV affects a DV (the bootstrapping indicates whether these relationships are significant). The R<sup>2</sup> value (coefficient of determination) is only applicable for DVs. It indicates how well all IVs explain this DV. For instance, a value of 0.4 indicates that 40% of the variance in the DV is explained by the IVs (Landau, 2017).

Accordingly, this primary way to compare the strength of relationships is looking at the path coefficients. Furthermore, this could calculate the effect strength f<sup>2</sup> for each IV, which indicates to which extent this IV contributes to the explanation of a DV (Landau, 2017).

#### 3.2 Bootstrapping test results

Figure 3: Bootstrapping Test Results

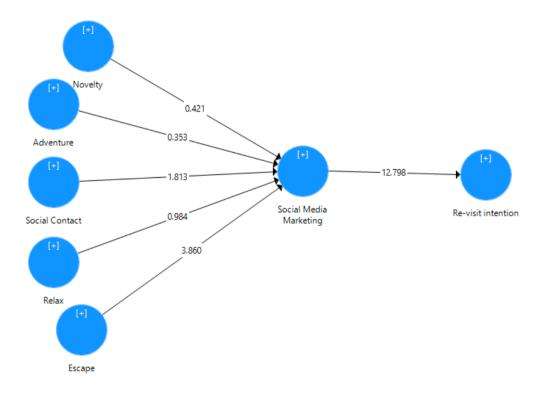


Table 1: Statistics (Path Coefficients)

	T Statisti	cs P Values	%
	( O/STDEV )		
Adventure -> Social Media Marketing	0.353	0.724	72.4%
Escape -> Social Media Marketing	3.860	0.000	0%
Novelty -> Social Media Marketing	0.421	0.674	67.4%
Relax -> Social Media Marketing	0.984	0.326	32.6%

Social (	Contact -	> Social Medi	a Ma	rketing	1.813	0.070	7%	
Social	Media	Marketing	->	Re-visit	1.798	0.000	0%	
intention								

Bootstrapping test result indicates the significant level between the variables and this test is run at 95% confidence level. From the above diagram the path coefficient value indicates the T-statistics values and from the above table (1) shows the p-values. If the p-values are more than 5% then accept alternative hypothesis and reject null hypothesis, conversely if p-value is more than 5% then accept null hypothesis and reject alternative hypothesis.

Looking into more details from the above Figure 2 and Table 1 the significance level, between "adventure" and "social media marketing", it indicates that the "t-statistic" value and "p value" as 0.353 and 0.724 respectively. Since the p-value is more than 5%, then there is no significant association between "adventure", "novelty", "relax", "social contact" "re-visit intention" and "social media marketing" indicating that accepting the null hypothesis and rejection of alternative hypothesis.

However, between "escape" and "social media marketing" the "t-statistic" value and "p value" as 3.860 and 0.000 respectively. Since the p value is less than 5% then there is a significant association between escape and social media marketing indicating that rejection of null and acceptance of alternative hypothesis Therefore, this concludes that social media marketing is a significant factor that influence escape only.

#### 3.3 Ancillary Analyses

According to Chahoud, Chahine, Salameh & Sauleau (2017) "Discussions of validity usually divides it into several distinct "types". However, a good way to interpret these types is that they are other kinds of evidence—in addition to reliability—that should be taken into account when judging the validity of a measure" (Chahoud, Chahine, Salameh & Sauleau, 2017).

Table 2: Reliability and credibility test results

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Adventure	0.689	0.711	0.812	0.524
Escape	0.705	0.704	0.836	0.629
Novelty	0.659	0.677	0.797	0.499
Re-visit intention	0.914	0.918	0.924	0.392
Relax	0.634	0.632	0.804	0.577
Social Contact	0.701	0.748	0.831	0.625
Social Media Marketing	0.838	0.844	0.868	0.282

Table 3: Internal model residual correlation

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Adventure	0.689	0.711	0.812	0.524
Escape	0.705	0.704	0.836	0.629
Novelty	0.659	0.677	0.797	0.499
Re-visit intention	0.914	0.918	0.924	0.392
Relax	0.634	0.632	0.804	0.577
Social Contact	0.701	0.748	0.831	0.625
Social Media Marketing	0.838	0.844	0.868	0.282

An internal consistency test was performed focusing on Cronbach's alpha, Rho\_A, Composite Reliability and then Average Variance extracted (AVE) as depicted in Table 3.

Table 4: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)

	Adventure	Escape	Novelty	Re-visit intention	Relax	Social Contact
Adventure						
Escape	0.519					
Novelty	0.790	0.463				
Re-visit intention	0.425	0.521	0.318			
Relax	0.768	0.523	0.476	0.444		
Social Contact	0.476	0.403	0.514	0.602	0.465	
Social Media Marketing	1.052	0.837	0.992	0.582	0.943	0.827

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) is a new method for assessing discriminant validity in partial least squares structural equation modelling, which is one of the key building blocks of model evaluation (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013). The interpretation of the finding on Table 4 is that the discriminant validity is achieved for the study. Since there is no negative value and also no lower values.

#### 4. Discussion

The aim of this study is to examine the factors influencing tourist intention to revisit to the Maldives with the use of social media marketing as the moderating. The overall objective of this thesis is to check on the mediating effect of tourism destination and moderating influence of tourism culture on the relationship between social media marketing and tourist revisit intention to Maldives.

The independent variables are novelty, adventure, social contact, escape and relax. The moderating variable is social media marketing and then dependent variable is revisit intention. The results generated depicted a negative regression coefficient. A path loading from X to Y it is the predicted increase in Y for a one-unit increase on X holding all other variables constant (Anglim, 2013), in the results X had increased and Y is predicted to decrease.

The findings of the research conclude that social media marketing had no significant impact on the independent variables including adventure, novelty, relax, social contact and revisit intentions. Hence, this concludes that the hypothesis was contradicted for the mentioned variables (Table 1).

However, social media marketing had a strong impact on the independent variable "escape" (Table 1). Meaning that the hypothesis "there is an influence between escape and social media marketing" were supported.

Even though most of the hypothesis were rejected, this demonstrates that the policy makers at Maldives should focus more on social media marketing of novelty, adventure, social contact, escape and relax as a reason to visit the country again. In the Maldives, like many developing nations, tourism play a major economic role, hence due to the delicate nature of the country, to sustain the industry, its management is vital. Although, tourism in Maldives have been sustainably managed, there are many problems for which the country has to find appropriate solutions. The major problem is unavailability of tourism inputs within the country. As a result, tourism balance is not very favorable and the linkages with other sectors of the economy and tourism are very limited.

If social media is not used in the promotion of tourism industry of Maldives, the country is going to lag behind in the development of the sector. In addition to this, destination revisit intention has been, viewed as an important research topic both in academia and the tourism industry. It is important to observe tourists' revisit intentions from a time perspective because the intention often changes over time.

The findings of this research can be beneficial for the policy makers, academicians who would like to do more research on the tourism industry of Maldives as well as the resort owners. The data collected during the process of this research study is unique in its contribution to this field of knowledge. Looking at to the significance of the study, this study is one of its kind in Maldives as there is no research done in this area. Therefore, the outcome of this study will help the policy makers in making policies with regards to the use of social media techniques to boost tourism sector of the country. Furthermore, as per the researcher knowledge there has not been any research done on this discipline in Maldives therefore this study will be used a reference material for the future academics.

Though tourism and social media technology is a thoroughly researched area, this study brings novelty as it is the first social media marketing analysis study conducted on the Tourism Industry of Maldives. This study will be beneficial and is expected to become a reference material for future researchers conducting studies on similar context.

The limitations in conducting this research includes time constraint, limited resources, lack of support given by resorts and language barrier as not all the tourists were familiar with the English language. As the sample size was large, the limited time did not accommodate for the provision of a proper response time, hence the research results could have been better/enhanced if more response time was provided. Moreover, this research is conducted by using questionnaire survey only as a research instrument. Questionnaires, can be focused on some other areas like from senior tourist's managers or interview can be directed to tourists to obtain deeper knowledge from them or do an observational survey for the tourist's actions.

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#### Appendix A Questioners Form

To examine the influencing factors to tourist revisit intention to the Maldives with social media marketing as the moderating influence.

Dear Respondents,

I am Rana Ahmed Hameed, a final year student in Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) at Mantissa College Malaysia.

I am currently conducting my final year thesis on a mediating effect of tourism destination and moderating influence of tourism culture on the relationship between social media marketing and tourist revisit intention to Maldives.

I would appreciate if you could spare some time to complete this questionnaire as it would only take 10 to 15 minutes of your time. Please note that all information will be kept confidential and it will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you so much for your time, have a nice day.

		N 1 - DEMOGRAPHICS	
		ill the following)	
1.		nder	_
	a.	Male	
	b.	Female	
2.	Age	e range	
	a.	Below 25	
	b.	26 - 35	
	c.	36 - 45	
	d.	46 and above	
3.	Edı	ication level	
٥.	a.	Primary	
	b.	Secondary	П
	c.	Undergraduate	
	d.	Postgraduate	
	e.	Doctorate	
4.	Rac		_
	a.	Asian	
	b.	European	
	c.	Australian	
	d.	American	
	e.	African	
	f.	Others (please specify)	Click or tap here to enter text.
5.	Sala	ary Range in USD (per month)	
	a.	Less than 500	
	b.	501 - 1000	
	c.	1001 - 2500	
	d.	More than 2501	
	Dag	oon fou tuorel	
6.		son for travel Holiday	
	a. L	Conference	
	b.	Medical	
	c. d.	Education	
	u. e.	Others (please specify)	Click or tap here to enter text.

7.	Number of days a. 0-7 days b. 8-14 days c. 15-30 days d. More than 3	·	es					
8.	Accommodation  a. Budget  b. 1 - 3 star  c. 4 - 5 star  d. 5 star and al							
SEC	CTION 2 – PERSO	ONAL INTERE	STS					
9.	Through which			cover Maldive	es?			
	<ul><li>a. Instagram</li><li>b. Facebook</li><li>c. Twitter</li><li>d. Snapchat</li><li>e. Pinterest</li></ul>							
10.	f. TripAdvisor g. Internet h. None of the	above	al Madian		15 1 heine	1		
10.	Rate the follow favorite.	ing type of soci	ai Medias	on a scale of	1-3, 1 being	least lavorite	and 5 being	liiost
	Platform		5	4	3	2	1	
	Instagram							
	Facebook							
	Twitter							
	Snapchat							
	Pinterest					☒		
	TripAdvisor			☒				
	Tumblr							
11.	1. Rate your social media interaction level for the following.							
		Continually throughout the day (5)	3-5 times a day (4)	Once a day (3)	Monthly (2)	Weekly (1)	Never (0)	
	General social media interaction							

Social media interaction when abroad			
Taking pictures as a priority when abroad			

#### 12. How often do you use the following means to arrange your accommodation?

	Always (4)	Mostly (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
In person				
Through travel agency				
Internet				
From a person in Maldives				
Directly from resort				
Others (please state)	Click or tap here to enter text.			

#### **SECTION 3 - SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

#### 13. Novelty: I visit Maldives because

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
To attend events that I have never attended before (e.g.: sport events, carnivals, cultural activities and festivals)				
Of the desire to explore destinations I have not previously visited				
I like to understand and discover unfamiliar things				
To travel and enjoy a dynamic and verified lifestyle				

#### 14. Adventure: I visit Maldives because

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I like to discover something new				
I want to get close to nature				
I want to experience unfamiliar destination				
To do something challenging				

#### 15. Social Contact: I visit Maldives because

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
To make friends with people who are exciting and unexpected				
To interact with other tourists, as it is exciting				
To try home stay with a local family during my travels				

#### 16. Escape: I visit Maldives because

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
To get away from home				
To experience different lifestyles				
To do something about my boredom				

#### 17. Relaxation: I visit Maldives because

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree
To rest				
To relieve stress and tensions				
To gain experience in a simple lifestyle				

#### **Section 4 - Re-Visit Intention**

### 18. Social responsibility of Destination: The management organization and service providers of Maldives

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Environmentally responsible				
Give back to the local community				
Successful in generating and allocating their tourism revenues				
Treat their stakeholders well				
Act ethically and obey all legal obligations to fulfill their social responsibilities				

#### 19. Destination preference

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Maldives would be my first choice for a journey				
Maldives is more attractive than any other destination				
I am more interested in visiting Maldives than any other destinations				
I intend to visit Maldives, even if other destinations offer a better tourism experience				

#### 20. Tourist satisfaction

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Overall, I was satisfied with my visit to Maldives				
Compared to my other experience, I was satisfied with my visit to Maldives				
Compared to an ideal situation, I was satisfied with my visit to Maldives				$\boxtimes$

#### 21. Tourist destination identification

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I am very interested in what others think about Maldives				
Maldives success is my success				
When someone says positive things about Maldives, It feels like a compliment to my self				
When someone criticizes Maldives, I would feel embarrassed				

#### 22. Intentions

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
I intend to revisit Maldives again				
It is very likely that I will revisit the destination in the future				
The likelihood of my return to the destination for another travel is high				

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