CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

9.0 Introduction
This chapter summarises the present study and draws conclusions derived from the various analyses undertaken in the study. The chapter starts with an overview of the study before presenting the main findings and conclusions that can be drawn from the results based on the research questions posed in Chapter One. It then continues with stating the implications of the study and ends with suggestions for further research.

9.1 Overview of the Study
This study was motivated by the premise that tourism has become an extremely important industry in Malaysia and that it is a major source of revenue and contributor to the socio-economic development of the country. The tourism industry in Malaysia is the country’s second largest economic contributor after manufacturing and it is regarded as a very important source of employment for the nation’s population. The growth of the tourism sector has opened up new employment opportunities across diverse industries, such as retail, food and beverage, accommodation, transport, etc.

One of the ways to ensure that the tourism industry remains as a lucrative source of income for the nation is through tourism marketing. In tourism marketing, promotion is considered the centre of all activities. Promotional texts, for instance, can play a crucial role in influencing potential tourists in deciding their holiday destinations. An indispensable tool used in promoting tourism is advertisement. Web-mediated advertorials, which is a form of advertisement, is considered a tool of mass
communication where it can reach a huge target audience. Such web-based promotional materials are more well-received because of their immediacy, interactivity and their ability to support communication with and between various participants. Thus, it is vital that such texts need to be produced and communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and also to convey a positive image of the tourism product or service as well as its provider or advertiser.

In relation to this motivation, the main aim of this study was to examine web-mediated tourism advertorials which promote Malaysia and its various destinations to potential tourists. In order to fulfil this aim, the study sought to analyse the generic structure and various contents of tourism homepages along with the rhetorical structure of online tourism advertorials to determine their communicative purposes and multimodal features in producing effective online tourism advertorials to attract tourists to visit Malaysia.

Recently, scholars and researchers of rhetoric, linguistics, and information sciences have begun to explore the relationships between new media and socio-contextual genre theories. However, these researchers have expressed concerns about the appropriateness of traditional genre theory for new media communication. Some linguists have argued that since genre theory was originally developed to describe written texts, the theory needs to be modified to account for non-linguistic communication because the traditional genre analysis is not sufficient to address non-written communication (Kress, 2003: 109), and that traditional written genre theory does not appropriately address the complexity of visual features and multi-modality of new media genres format (Miller and Shepherd, 2004; Askehave and Nielsen, 2005). Rhetoricians and information scientists have also pointed out that new media genres
may develop and formalize more quickly than traditional written genres. They argue that the digital homepage is functioning as a new and discrete genre, suggesting that homepages “have no obvious paper equivalent” (Dillon and Gushrowski, 2000). Additionally, recent work in new media genre theory has explored how new communication technologies permit forms of genre hybridity where several related genres are re-mediated into a unique new media genre (Spinuzzi, 2003).

This study has attempted to address the concerns of these scholars and researchers by examining the data from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. The study has also adopted a multi-perspective and multidimensional research procedure to genre-based analysis of online tourism advertorials, which draws on several types of analytical data. This study has undertaken a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of online tourism advertorials that went beyond the textual data to include the investigation of a number of socio-pragmatic aspects of construction, use and interpretation of the discourse or promotional text, based on Bhatia’s (2004) multidimensional analytical framework. This study draws on the textual data by treating genre as a reflection of discursive practices of the disciplinary communities; on the ethnographic data to observe the genre in action and grounded in narrated insightful experiences of expert members of the community of practice; on the socio-critical and institutional data as structurally grounded accounts of the patterns of language and conditions under which systems of the genre is constructed and used by expert members of the disciplinary cultures to achieve their typical goals within the construct of their everyday professional activities; and on the socio-cognitive data to survey how the genre is interpreted by the recipients of the genre and if it meets their acceptability standards (Bhatia, 2004). This multidimensional investigation which uses
a multi-perspective analysis with a qualitative-quantitative approach provides a thick description of the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre.

It can be concluded that this study has succeeded in meeting its objectives laid out in Chapter One. The analyses carried out on the sixteen tourism homepages and forty-nine online tourism advertorials, the interviews with seven specialist informants, and the sixty tourists’ responses to the questionnaire have answered the research questions of the study.

9.2 Addressing the Research Questions

This section addresses the four research questions of the study as posed in Chapter One of this thesis, and presents the main findings and conclusions derived from the various analyses undertaken in the study. The present study attempted to answer the research questions as presented in Chapter One.

9.2.1 Research Question 1

The first research question: What are the communicative purposes of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials and whether these purposes are the factors that influence the shaping of the generic structure of the web genre?, sought to discover the communicative purposes of web-mediated tourism genre from two types of data, tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials.

This research question was generally addressed by the findings gathered via the interviews with the specialist informants who provided information from the
ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives as presented in Chapter Five. Other than to inform, the main intention of the institutional and disciplinary discourse community is to promote and persuade. These communicative purposes of the tourism homepages are also realised by the genre characteristics and elements that make up the tourism homepage genre, which include the contents, forms, and functionalities. These elements have been identified in Chapter Six of the thesis, and they can be categorised into the following seven communicative purposes:

- Creating a positive image,
- Introducing the organisation,
- Introducing the destination,
- Introducing and offering tourism products and services,
- Strengthening the relationship with the potential tourists,
- Giving information about the tourism website, and
- Advertising business and job opportunities.

The micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials has also identified the detailed communicative purposes of the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre. The findings from the analysis of rhetorical structures of the online tourism advertorials show that there are fourteen move structures of varying significance which relate to the communicative purposes of the tourism advertorials. They are:

- Attracting reader’s attention,
- Targeting the market,
- Identifying and introducing the destination or tourist attraction,
- Describing and detailing the destination or tourist attraction,
- Appraising and indicating the value of the destination or tourist attraction,
- Justifying the need for visiting the destination or tourist attraction,
• Establishing credentials,
• Locating the destination or tourist attraction,
• Endorsing the destination or tourist attraction,
• Offering incentives,
• Using pressure tactics,
• Calling for action and establishing contact,
• Giving related information, and
• Reinforcing the message at the end/closing.

From the analyses of moves and images, the communicative purposes of online tourism advertorials have been identified, namely to introduce the country and its destinations, to inform readers of the places of interest and tourist attractions, to establish the image of the country and its tourism industry, and to promote Malaysia and its places of interest. The analyses show that online tourism advertorials are partly informational and partly promotional. These purposes have also shown to be the motivating factors in shaping the structure of the web-mediated tourism genre. It can be concluded that other than to disseminate relevant and reliable information to potential tourists, the main communicative purpose of the web-mediated tourism genres is to promote the destinations and their tourist attractions with the hope of increasing tourist arrivals.

9.2.2 Research Question 2
This sub-section addresses the second research question of the study: What are the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and the principal rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials?
The findings and information on the genre characteristics of tourism homepages, which include the content, form, functionality and purpose that have been analysed and discussed in Chapter Six, have also identified the elements that constitute the generic structure of the tourism homepages. The characteristics and elements that make up the tourism homepage genre have been summarised in Table 6.1 of Chapter Six on pages 234 to 239.

The major elements and contents that have contributed to the generic structure and appears in at least 50% of the tourism homepages analysed in the study are the masthead, contact information, descriptions or advertorials on the destination and tourist attractions, utility links, visuals, accommodation packages, taglines and slogans, copyright information, map links, links to relevant tourism information and service providers’ websites, trademarks in the form of logos and emblems, icons, videos, affiliations, events calendar, links to a description about the tourism organisation, sitemaps or website index, disclaimer, links to social networking sites, and statistics on visitors to the website. The capabilities that are afforded by the new media include hyperlinks; multimedia; animation and transition of visuals, graphics and text; interactivity and email abilities for enquiries and feedback; updates on RSS which is a content delivery method that brings automatically updated information straight to the viewer's desktop; and calculation of hits or visitors to the tourism website.

The micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials has identified the preferred principal rhetorical move structures of online tourism advertorials. The more significant move structures which appear in more than 50% of the tourism advertorials are:

Move 1: Attracting reader’s attention,
Move 3: Identifying or introducing the destination or tourist attraction,
Move 4: Describing and detailing the destination or tourist attraction,
Move 5: Indicating the value of the destination or tourist attraction,
Move 13: Giving related tourist information,
Move 12: Establishing contact with potential tourists,
Move 8: Locating the destination or tourist attraction, and
Move 6: Justifying the need for visiting the destination or tourist attraction.

The first five rhetorical structures above (Moves 1, 3, 4, 5 and 13) appeared in all the online tourism advertorials analysed in the study, while the move of ‘Using pressure tactics’ (Move 11) is the least significant structure as reflected in the online tourism advertorial data of the study. The findings on the significance of the moves or rhetorical structure further reveal that the main communicative purposes of the online tourism advertorials are to disseminate relevant and reliable information to tourists and to promote the destination and its tourist attractions in order to persuade potential tourists to visit the destinations and experience the tourist attractions.

The findings on the rhetorical structures or moves from the micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials can assist tourism organisations and writers of such informative texts with a promotional intent, to effectively produce advertorials that can persuade prospective tourists to visit the country and its tourist destinations, and consequently increase tourist arrivals.
9.2.3 Research Question 3

The analyses of the web-mediated tourism genre of the homepages and advertorials have shown the importance of both verbal and visual elements in achieving the genres’ promotional objective. The verbal factor plays a fundamental role in providing essential information and unfolding the rhetorical structures of the genres. However, the visual elements and multimodal features also contribute as vital factors in the online tourism genres, and help to achieve the purpose of promoting a destination and its tourism products and services.

The third research question of the study is: How do the non-linguistic and multimodal features support the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials? The study has attempted to answer this third research question by analysing the non-linguistic and multimodal features of the layout and visuals related to the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2006) framework on compositional meaning of page layout and visual communication.

The findings and discussion on the multimodal compositional meaning of the visual social semiotic resources found in the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials have been presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis. The four resources of the compositional metafunction are information values, framing, salience and modality. The findings from the multimodal analysis of the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials have shown that the four compositional meaning resources with their various degrees of the factors are important in achieving the desired effects. The compositional meaning resources as displayed in the data have principally concurred with Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2006) framework on compositional meaning of
page layout and visual communication, although the textual data conveys a varied account of the left and right compositional structure to adhere to the given and new meaning potentials of the information values. However, this diversity is justified by the purposes, capabilities and salience of the textual and visual information of the text as explained in Chapter Seven. The compositional structure and meaning potentials may also follow the direction that the culture writes and reads (van Leeuwen, 2005: 201). Some societies, such as in Malaysia which is predominantly a Muslim country, traditionally read from the right to left as opposed to the western culture which reads from the left to right. The effects of the other resources are created by the different degrees of the factors that interact.

The findings on the multimodal features and visual social semiotic resources as presented in Chapter Seven have shown that visual elements and multimodality are vital components of the online tourism genre in achieving the communicative purpose of promoting the destinations and tourist attractions in order to attract tourists to visit the destinations. The compositional meaning of the visuals and multimodal characteristics has contributed to a better understanding of the online discourse. The pertinent meaning potentials realised by the multimodal features also play their roles in helping to achieve the purposes of providing relevant tourism information and promoting the destinations and their tourism products and services online.

9.2.4 Research Question 4

The last research question of the study is: What are the communicative features of the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials that attract potential tourists to and in the country?
The findings and implications presented in Chapter Eight have shown that there are certain communicative features and types of information that are preferred and required by prospective tourists in the Malaysian online tourism websites in general and the advertorials in particular. Findings on the types of information that tourist respondents would like to obtain from the Internet concerning a destination or country that they intend to visit, show that 90% of the respondents would like information regarding the places of interest in the country or state. The second most important information that the tourists want is information on the local cuisine (76.7%); followed by forthcoming local events (73.3%); the local weather (70.0%); the local people (60.0%); and information on the nature distinctive to the country (41.7%).

The form of online tourism information that the tourist respondents would expect most is pictures of places of interest, tourist attractions, local festivals and events, the local cuisine, etc. Nearly all the respondents (95.0%) have indicated that they expect to see pictures on online tourism websites. This high expectation proves the importance of visuals in attracting potential tourists to the destination or to take part in the activities or events as illustrated in the webpages. The pictures will enable the prospective tourists to visualise the place, activity or event that they will get to experience when they visit the destination. Textual descriptions on the places of interest, local festivals and events, cuisine, etc. ranks as the second type of information that the tourist respondents (93.3%) expect to obtain from online tourism websites. These two types of information are ranked very high in the tourists’ expectations because prospective tourists would like to read about those descriptions of places of interest, local festivals and events, and local cuisine, as well as view those descriptions in other non-linear, more concrete forms such as in the form of photographs that depict those descriptions. In the travel industry,
pictures especially in the form of photographs are very effective in arresting readers’ attention and selling attractions to potential tourists. The photographs would show the viewer details of places, people and activities, while further information would be given in the accompanying text.

The tourists’ expectations of other information on tourism websites are the local facilities (81.7%), reviews and ratings by past tourists (76.7%), and geographical information of the target destination (75.0%) are also quite highly ranked. Such information would also contribute to the potential tourists’ choice of destination to visit. This is because in selecting a potential destination to visit, information on the convenience and suitability in terms of the infrastructure facilities and the local public transportation are needed. Tourists would prefer to select a place that offers at least some basic convenience of the aforementioned, especially if they have to spend a sum of money to visit the place.

As revealed in the findings from the questionnaire, the respondents, especially foreign potential tourists, would expect to read reviews from past tourists. This is because the price of visiting a foreign country is higher than visiting a local destination. Furthermore, the reviews and ratings by past tourists will further confirm their selection and make them feel more assured that they have made a correct choice or decision.

Geographical information of the destination, which includes the natural physical features and weather conditions, is also required by the respondents. This information will allow them to prepare the essential personal necessities, such as suitable clothing, shoes, etc. when they visit the place or take part in the tourist activities and events.
The tourist respondents have affirmed that they expect to find some form of visuals related to a destination in tourism websites. This further confirms the importance of pictures in promoting a tourist destination, which is why all the tourism websites analysed in the study contain at least a few pictures. It is evident from the findings that visuals or pictures have the highest capability of attracting potential tourists’ attention. The use of visuals adds variation to the monotony of an only written description. This also corresponds with Cook’s (1992) view on the equal importance of both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources, such as visual images, sound, and others, in contributing to communicative purposes. It also concurs with Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) who assert that there is a common belief now that written information is not necessarily the most important form used for the construction and interpretations of meaning, and that multimodality plays equal importance in its construction and interpretation.

In terms of the respondents’ preferences of the types of pictures pertaining to a destination on the tourism website, 91.7% of them stated that they favoured colourful pictures that are true representations of the places of interest, local festivals, events and cuisine, etc. A genuine illustration of the destinations means that what they see on the website can be witnessed when they arrive at the destinations. This will eliminate the anxiety of false promotion, and instead make the website more reliable and dependable. In doing so, future tourists will be more confident in the informative contents of the tourism website and consequently have more faith in the services and information published on the website.

The layout and online interface of a tourism website is also important in drawing the attention of the tourist respondents. A tourism website should be presented in a
systematic layout that is easy for obtaining varied information. The ease of finding information is related to how the information is arranged within the website. If the prospective tourist finds it difficult to obtain certain information from a website due to the haphazard and disorganised layout, he/she will abandon his/her search for information from that website and thus will not be exposed to the persuasive contents of the tourism website, regardless of how informative it may be. Consequently, prospective tourists will not be persuaded to visit the destination or country.

The information and advertorials provided in the official Malaysian tourism organisations’ websites have, on the whole, met the acceptability standards and needs of the current and potential tourism industry clients in that they have generally attracted tourists to the country. However, the NTOs can further enhance their tourism websites by including other types of information as identified in Chapter Eight that can further cater to the needs of potential tourists since shaping an effective tourism homepage genre is mutually constructed by the NTO and its audience.

The findings in Chapter Eight can also be beneficial to NTOs in improving the types of information that they intend to communicate online to their website audience, especially potential tourists. They can also serve as suitable information for NTOs to describe their products/services in catering to potential tourists’ various needs. In short, these findings can assist tourism organisations and industry players in providing and enhancing the kinds of information needed by tourists in order to attract even more prospective tourists to Malaysia via the country’s official tourism organisations’ websites on the Internet.
9.3 Implications of the Study and Recommendations

The present study has proven that web-mediated tourism advertorials, which is a form of advertisement, is considered an effective tool of mass communication where it can reach a huge target audience. David Ogilvy who founded and built Ogilvy & Mather into one of the biggest and most successful advertising agencies in the world stated in his 1983 book, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, in favour of long copy advertisements, that making advertisements look like editorial pages namely advertorials will attract more readers. Many of the best and successful advertising and marketing experts in the world such as David Ogilvy, John Caples and Gary C. Halbert have quoted readership studies which prove that material that appears to be editorial tend to get five to six times more readership than material that is obviously advertisement, particularly when the prospective customer needs to spend a lot of money on the product or service, such as tourism. The real prospective customers should be given enough information because they want to know as much as they can in order to make a sound decision on a purchase.

Therefore, it is vital that such texts need to be produced and communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and in the context of the present study also to convey a positive image of the tourism products or services as well as its provider or advertiser. The information and findings gathered from the specialist informants interviewed in the study have also shed light on the best practices in their discipline and to produce effective promotional materials such as online tourism advertorials. Their views on advertorials have been incorporated in developing the following guideline as recommendations for producing effective promotional materials, specifically online advertorials that can achieve the objectives of promoting, advertising, and marketing or selling a product, brand or service. The online tourism advertorials should consider among others, the following factors:
1. **Headline or title**

There should be a catchy headline or title to attract the attention of the readers or online users. A brief selling message can be put into the headline and sub-headings. The first paragraph of the advertorial should also capture the reader’s attention. The headline and subheadings will act as a brief message for readers to glance through the advertorial, while the complete message that includes the pertinent and specific facts is in the advertorial. The sub-headings should summarize the main points of the message so that the message will be communicated even if the whole advertorial is not read all the way through. The sub-headings will also make the advertorial easy to read.

2. **Personal experience**

The writer of the advertorial needs to be knowledgeable in what he/she is writing about. One way of being knowledgeable is to experience the product or service personally. The writers, in the case of the present study, should go to those places that they are writing about to gather information and experience the places or activities. Upon visiting and experiencing the respective places themselves, they can also write better with feelings and passion.

3. **Unique selling point**

The advertorial should highlight the unique selling point (USP) of the product, brand or service (PBS) because that will differentiate the PBS from its competitors and give it an advantage over the rest. The USP has to be one of the first things which the promotional text viewers or potential consumers can notice. In the context of the present study, there should be more promotion on the niche tourism areas, and in the
case of Malaysia, more descriptions about nature tourism and eco-tourism in Malaysia.

4. **Indicate the value and justify the need**

The advertorial should contain all the strongest and most persuasive reasons for the potential tourist to visit the destination and experience the tourist attractions. It should motivate the readers and bring about the desired action in the potential tourists. This can be achieved by connecting the advertorial to the tourists’ interest and presenting the consumer benefits that the trip will bring them. Justifying the need for a product or service by giving significant and compelling reasons to do so is probably the most powerful way to persuade potential customers to take action and move towards consuming it.

5. **Active web links**

An important online media capability that should be utilised and built-into the online tourism advertorials is an active web link, which is also known as hyperlink. The hyperlinks will enable Internet users to navigate or browse hypertexts in order to make references that the readers can directly follow. The hyperlinks can directly provide the prospective customers or tourists the convenience of gathering further relevant information regarding the product/service/PBS, and in the case of the present study the destination with just a click of the mouse. The easier it is to navigate inter- and intra-text, the more likely it is that potential customers/tourists will want to come back to get relevant information, not just for the first purchase/trip, but perhaps for a repeated purchase/trip as well.
6. **Updates on the information and details**

The descriptions and information on events should be updated periodically. An up-to-date online advertorial or website will reinforce the integrity, validity and reliability of the information provided in the website. Hence, potential tourists will have more confidence in the information and descriptions that are presented in the tourism website and consequently be persuaded to visit the country and its tourist attractions. In turn, this will also increase tourist arrivals to the country.

7. **Modes of contact**

The advertorials or somewhere within the webpage should also include the publishers’ and service providers’ contact information, such as the physical address, telephone, fax and email or a *Contact Us* link to enable readers to contact the website owners or service providers for further information. The contact information can also tell potential tourists where and how to make reservations. The *Contact Us* link, which includes email capabilities, will enable readers to contact the NTOs immediately via the Internet for further information. An interactive online helpdesk to answer any queries that online readers or potential tourists may have is also important. The new media affords this ability to send an enquiry and get feedback from tourism organisations, and a channel to send an email via the ‘contact us’ link easily and quickly. Hence, communication with a tourism organisation is now much easier with this online medium. The offline contact information is another option for potential tourists who lack confidence and ability to contact online and prefer a more personal mode of offline communication. The provision of the contact information can also enhance the readers’ confidence in the tourism products and services described in the advertorials because this information demonstrates accountability of
the advertiser or NTO for their willingness to take responsibility and answer questions related to the published materials.

8. **Legible and appealing**

It is recommended that the advertorial pageview to be in full colour, with legible fonts and a suitable font size, citing the **Vernada** as a preferred font for the tourism websites analysed. The page layout should also not be cluttered so as to ensure easy and pleasant readability. Just as the findings from the socio-cognitive or recipients’ perspective of the web-mediated genre indicate, pictures should be included where possible, so that the advertorials are not only textually informative but also visually dynamic. In selecting the accompanying visuals, the most current images which do not exaggerate the message must be ensured. The visuals or images should also create illustrations that best compliment the concept and message that the tourism organisation wants to be communicated to the potential tourists. Video footages can also be included as an option for potential tourists who may be interested in viewing the videos.

The advantages of publishing advertorials on the Internet have also been discussed in the study. The perceived influence and benefits of tourism organisations in having a web presence and publishing advertorials online are plentiful. They include the following factors and their justifications:

1. **Ease of Use**
   
   - Availability of updated information
   - Easy navigation to relevant information within and across websites
   - Prompt online purchasing and reservations
• Prompt feedback to enquiries

2. Ease of Comparison of the Product/Service and Price
   • Able to obtain competitive and useful information regarding product/service
   • Easy product/service comparison from several vendors
   • Easy price comparison from several vendors
   • Possibility of getting the lowest price for product/service purchased

3. Ease of Information Access and Exchange
   • Increase in speed of information gathering from vendor
   • Increase in speed of information dissemination

4. Reduction in Time and Monetary Costs
   • Reduction in purchase processing time
   • Reduced purchasing costs

Therefore, both tourism service providers and tourists can reduce time and overall cost of the purchase or procurement process, either in terms of money, time, and in many other ways through the basic and advanced knowledge of Internet use. Consequently, online influence on the tourism purchases can help tourism organisations and businesses gain a competitive edge in today’s and also future tourism marketplace.

9.4 Suggestions for Further Research
This section presents some suggestions for future research which can be carried out to investigate on other issues pertaining to online tourism advertorials.
It is recommended that comparative studies be conducted in which Malaysian online tourism advertorials can be compared with online tourism advertorials of other countries’ tourism organisations. It will be noteworthy to know how other NTOs publish their promotional materials online in order to persuade prospective tourists to visit their countries, and the effects of the tourism promotional texts in relation to their number of tourist arrivals.

Further investigation can also be conducted on the multimodal features and visual images of the advertorials from the other two metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics, the representational meaning and interactive meaning. The findings can enhance the findings of the present study and provide a complete analysis of all the metafunctions. The multimodal features of the online tourism advertorials from all the metafunctions of multimodal discourse analysis will then have been analysed to account for the other semiotic perspectives, and provide an even more comprehensive description of the genre.

Finally, it is recommended that research on other visual elements such as videos, theme songs that are synchronized with the videos, colour and typography can also be carried out to identify their characteristics in the online tourism homepages and advertorials, and their effects on the recipients. The findings can further enhance the findings of the present study.
9.5 Conclusion

The study is a comprehensive analysis of the Malaysian online tourism advertorials. It started with an analysis on the ethnographic, socio-critical and socio-cognitive perspectives of the genre to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the genre through examining the practitioners’ advice, and how the physical situation affects the construction and reception of online tourism advertorials as a genre. The study then examined the online advertorial genre from the textual perspective by investigating the elements, forms and functions of the official Malaysian tourism homepages before identifying the rhetorical structures as well as the visual components present in the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials, and then describing how these components are placed in their layout. The genre analysis is enhanced by the description of the layout and visual images as they have not been widely researched concurrently in a text analysis within the Malaysian tourism context. Finally, the study ends with a brief guideline on how to produce online advertorials that can effectively promote a destination or tourist attraction so that potential tourists will be persuaded to visit the destination.

The study’s focus on a critical genre analysis and multimodal analysis of web-mediated tourism advertorials is opportune with the expansion of the Internet as a preferred contemporary communication technology. The new media has made these texts even more multimodal. This shows that apart from language, visuals play an important role in present day communication and promotional texts. The presence of visuals in web-mediated texts such as online tourism advertorials makes them an important source of meaning making besides language. Therefore, there is a vital need to include visual analysis of web-mediated texts to give visuals their proper recognition in forming meanings in such promotional texts. This study has therefore, contributed pertinent
information about the Malaysian online tourism advertorials and has enhanced knowledge specifically in the areas of genre analysis and multimodality, and online communication in general, as these areas are continually evolving in this era of globalisation.

Advertising texts may have been examined. However, not much research has been conducted with regards to web-mediated tourism advertorials. As such, it is hoped that the findings of this study can contribute to a better understanding of web-mediated tourism advertorials in terms of their elements, forms, purposes, and layout; and how these factors conform to demonstrate the generic integrity of the texts. It is also hoped that these findings will be useful as a reference for advertisers and text producers in designing online advertorials that can effectively persuade viewers and potential consumers. This study, therefore, has made important contributions in the fields of advertising and tourism communication.

Pedagogical implications can also be derived from the study, whereby the findings of the study can be modified for a language for specific purposes course in the disciplines of advertising and tourism to incorporate both the verbal and visual language. The findings of the present study and the guideline for producing effective promotional texts as proposed in this chapter will be beneficial to language instructors of the advertising and tourism programmes in helping their students learn ways of producing effective web-mediated promotional materials.

In general, the study contributes to the disciplines of applied linguistics, professional and institutional communication, and web marketing. It offers insights into different
ways of designing appealing and effective advertorials and websites not only in the tourism industry but also other key industries of Malaysia’s economy.