Satisfaction in Tourism Operations

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Purpose of study: The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the values in participating in adventure tourism operations and to examine the relationship between values and satisfaction. Tourist participation in adventure tourism is very important in other parts of the world. Similarly, activities such as hiking and mountain climbing received great attention in Malaysia, as the country offers tremendous places for these adventure experiences including rivers, mountains and national parks. Previous research found that the high participation in these tourism activities can be explained in the good values gained among the adventure tourists, namely the thrill value, emotional value, and social value. Adventure tourism research also studied the roles of tangible and intangible factors. **Methodology:** Fieldwork involved a total 300 respondents who were interviewed using questionnaires. Data was analysed in SmartPLS and SPSS software. **Result:** The outcomes revealed that thrill value and emotional value are the significant factors to influence satisfaction among in adventure tourism operations. There is not enough evidence to accept that social value and satisfaction has a significant relationship. The findings of this study also include the intangible factors in tourism operations that are related to tourist satisfaction and, this satisfaction is also found to be related to behavioural intention.

Key words: *Tourism operations, Perceived Values, Adventure Tourism, Satisfaction, Malaysia.*

Introduction

The adventure tourism market has seen tremendous growth, particularly from the outbound travellers from Europe, North America and South America (Adventure Tourism Association 2013). Tourist participation in adventure tourism in Malaysia, that includes activities such as hiking and mountain climbing, has also been overwhelming. According to Mohammad et al. (2010), the youth who were interviewed have the highest interest rate in visiting ecological

and natural excursions. Adventure Tourism (2013) also recorded as high as 42 percent of travellers in their study reported adventure activity as the main activity of the respondents. The success stories of Malaysian climbers reaching the peak of mountains such as the Mount Everest and Mount Kinabalu could have stimulated a lot of interests in hard adventure activities. Young Malaysians have made it onto the news too, such as the youngsters who climbed the "Ipoh" signboard (eg. Nuradzimah 2017; Farah 2017) and buildings (eg. Muhammad Hafiz 2017). As such, the height of adventure tourism in Malaysia needs further investigation to understand their profile as well as the youth's motivations and values in participating in these dangerous activities. As such, the objectives of this paper is to analyse participation in tourism operations in adventure environment setting, and examine the relationship between the values, satisfaction and behavioural intention.

Problem Statement

Adventure tourism (e.g Buckley 2007; Page, Bentley and Walker 2005; Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie and Pomfret 2003; Weber 2001; and William and Soutar , 2009) is becoming an important research area. However, very few have focused on the youth market, especially in a developing country such as Malaysia. Visitor's values in participating in tourism operations and the tourism satisfaction in Malaysia has not been investigated before. As such, the current study is very timely and appropriate. Furthermore, Malaysia has an abundance of adventure tourism sites and adventure tourism operations, so this is very pertinent to the success of the adventure tourism experience.

Literature Review

Malaysia received 26.8 million tourists in 2016 and tourism receipt contributed RM82.1 billion to the country's revenue. Tourists tend to stay slightly longer in the country as the average length of stay has increased by 0.4% in 2016 to 5.9 nights. Adventure tourism is often demanding and discerning consumers while on holiday, and consumers often travel to some of the most remote, extreme environments of the world to satisfy their needs for emotional highs, risk, challenge, excitement, and novelty. Malaysia sets as a perfect destination for adventure tourism. Malaysia is a land of incredible biodiversity and natural beauty, and possesses many wild jungles, mountains peaks and national parks. The destinations offer ample activities that are challenging and dangerous. Some examples are jungle trekking, rock climbing and wild life expedition. Malaysia's National Parks offers hiking holidays, river rafting, wildlife-watching and exploration both above and below the ground. Adventure tourism operations however should not just be aware of the ecosystem. The activities such as trekking in theBelum Forest, Mountain climbing in Sabah, rock climbing in Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and abseiling in Kuala Kubu Baru, also demand an understanding about the important values of each participant. Adventure

recreation experience is a scan for capability with a valuation of hazard and danger. Value is a critical thing in consumer's consumption and decision-making behaviour (e.g. Zeithaml, 1988; Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991; Bolton and Drew, 1991; Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson, 1999; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). According to Sweeney and Soutar (2001), emotional value and social value are the useful accepted inputs from the heart or affective states in order to build product or services.

Hypothesis Development

Adventure recreation experience is a scan for capability with a valuation of hazard and danger. Value is a critical thing in consumer's consumption and decision-making behaviour (e.g. Zeithaml, 1988; Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991; Bolton and Drew, 1991; Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson, 1999; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

Thrill value is defined as a trip categorized by something new, that distinguish it from a lifestyle element (Faison, 1977 as cited in Bello and Etzel, 1985). Thrill value is about tolerance, or diminishing rewards, from continuing exposure to an addictive behaviour (Buckley, 2012, 2014a), Cronin, Brady & Hult (2000), (cited by Paul & Geoffry, 2009). Previous research also claimed there was a significant relationship between quality, value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. From a psychological research perspective, many adventurers are addicted to engaging in these activities. Addiction to the thrills obtained through adventure recreation can therefore provide a large pool of potential subjects. Other than that, the thrill can trigger satisfaction. According to Buckley (2012) the value of thrill shows that there is a significant relationship with satisfaction.

H1a: Thrill value and satisfaction have a significant relationship.

The relationship between emotional value with satisfaction is quite substantial. This is because a person in stable emotion can have a good response from the satisfaction. In contrast, for those not in stable of mood, they are made to feel uncertainty and are unable to show the satisfaction. It means mood influences emotion in order to feel the satisfaction. Sometimes emotions will influence by what activity we do in several levels which are easy, medium and difficult. This emotion can control or overcome pressure, tension, and problem. Studies in tourism, Bigne et al., (2005); Yuksel & Yuksel, (2007), (cited by Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013) confirm a relationship between emotions and satisfaction. Positive emotions such as joy Faullaant et al., (2011), (cited by Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013) happiness, excitement and pleasure Grappi & Montanari, (2011), (cited by Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013) have a favourable influence on satisfaction.

H1b: Emotion and satisfaction have a significant relationship

The reason that tourists get involved with adventure tourism usually related with they want to make more friends or to have bonding time with their adventurous lover. Furthermore, they also want to fulfil of social need in order to fill leisure time or be a part of hobby. Other than that, in general this value wants to fulfil reasonability to the people, environment and society. The result is supported by the past research, as Sweeney and Soutar (2001), (cited by Paul & Geoffry, 2009) stated that social value was beneficial and was accepted from the product's features the increase in social self-concept. According to Sweeney and Soutar (2001), the emotional value elements was of super crucial thinking in assuming intention to purchase something or the use of services, at the same time opinion of quality had every single tendency on people's guess of problems. Totally, the quality and emotional value were more crucial in defining opinions.

H1c: Social values and satisfaction have a significant relationship

According to Bitner, et al (1992), the tangible aspects of the service provision may have been found to have little or no significant effect on quality perceptions for three reasons. First, services research to date has focused mainly upon service encounters of relatively short durations, such as those in travel agencies, banking, insurance, dry cleaning, pest control, fast-food restaurants, and public utilities (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999). Wakefield & Blodgett (1994), however, argues that tangible physical environment is relatively unimportant. In the same line, Bitner, et al (1992) suggests that tangible aspects of the service provision may have been found to have little or no significant effect on quality perception.

H2a: Tangible factor and satisfaction have no significant relationship

According to Kim (1994), the daily pressures of delivering the intangibles may lead to service managers overlooking or foregoing long term fixed investments in more tangible aspects of service quality, such as the relocation or renovation of the physical facilities. The value of intangible factor usually totally related with service quality. For instance, in terms of how well the trip is organized, handling manners by the staff and the benefits gained when participating in adventure tourism. Service quality is perceived by customers primarily on the basis of intangible factors such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and less on the tangible aspects of the physical environment (Parasuraman et al. 1988).

H2b: Intangible factor and satisfaction have a significant relationship.

Impact of Participation in Adventure Tourism

Satisfaction refers to the perceived inconsistency between earlier desire and the execution after utilization – when the execution varies from the original desire, disappointment occurs (Oliver, 1980). It can be characterized as to how much one trusts that an experience will have positive sentiments. (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Loyalty and post-behaviours (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bignie, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chen, 2008; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Choi & Chu 2001; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; De Rojas). In te tourism context, satisfaction is primarily referred to as a function of pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences. Past studies have suggested that the perceptions of service quality and value affect satisfaction, and satisfaction furthermore, affects behavioural intentions; if a tourist will visit the destination again (Camarero, 2008; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1980; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Tam, 2000). There is a strong consensus in the tourism industry that positive word of mouth recommendations and repeat purchases are important stimulants for future business (De Ruyter, Wetzels & Bloemer, 1997)
2009)

H3 There is a significant relationship between satisfactions and behavioural intention.

Having discussed the literature as above, six hypotheses were established and tested in this study. These are shown in the following conceptual framework.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model
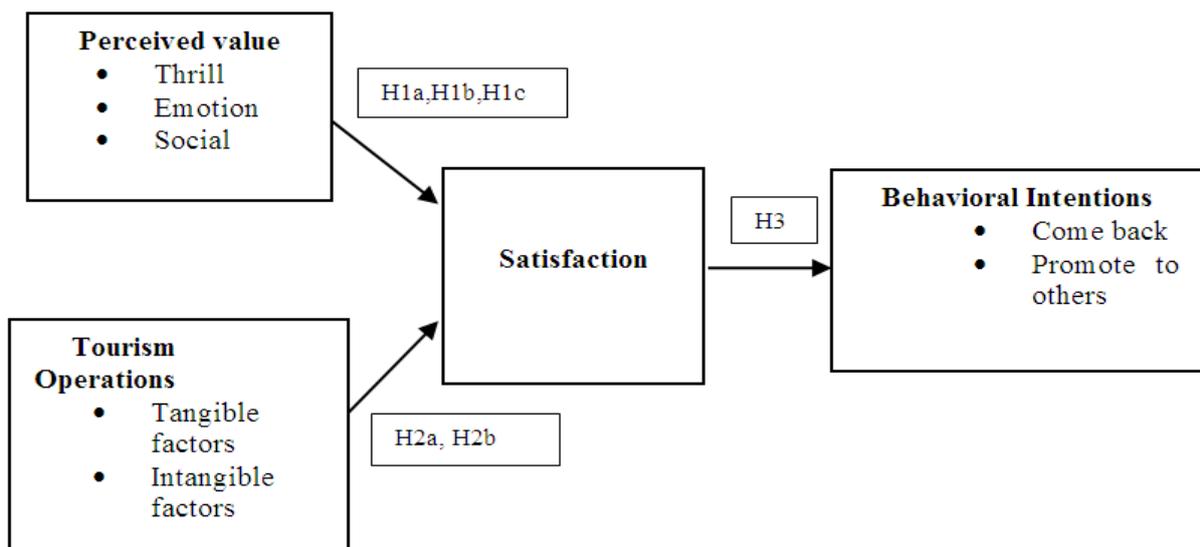
Methodology

Questionnaires were developed and scales used were adapted from previous studies (Table 1).

Table 1: Measurement used

Construct	No. of scales	Reference
Thrill Value Emotional Value Social Value	6 4 4	Bello D.C & Etzel M.J. (2001) Sweeney & Soutar (2001)
Tangible Factor Intangible Factor	5 6	Sweeney & Soutar (2001)
Satisfaction Behavioural Intention	4 3	Oliver (1997) Babakus & Boller (1992)

Likert scales from the scale of 1=Strongly Disagreed to 5=Strongly Agreed are used in each question. Questionnaires were developed and distributed to 300 respondents. Students from six faculties of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Serdang, Malaysia, were involved. Participants had admitted their involvement in adventure tourism in Malaysia and other countries. The SPSS Version 20 and SMART PLS were used to run data analysis. SmartPLS was applied to analyse the reflection measurement model, convergent validity of reflective model, discriminant validity, goodness of the fitness, structural model, collinearity, path coefficient, R Square, F square and the Q square.

Results and Discussions
Respondents' Background

A total of 300 respondents had been involved in the interview. Majority of the respondents identified as Malaysian and they are largely bachelor degree students in UPM (Table 2). The respondents are from various programs in UPM and are largely from the Malay ethnic group. In terms of age, more than 80% are young from the age group of 18-25.

Table 2: Respondents' background

		Frequency (N=300)	(%)
Age	18-25	248	82.7
	26-30	36	12
	31-40	16	5.4
Gender	Male	189	63.0
	Female	111	37.0
Origin	Malaysia	290	97.0
	International	10	3.0
Education	Economics and Management	69	23.0
	Ecology	25	8.3
	Engineering	24	8.0
	Education	54	3.7
	Food Technology	11	6.0
	Agriculture	18	33.0
	Others	99	
Level of	Foundation	20	6.7
Education	Degree	251	83.7
	Master	19	6.3
	PhD	10	3.3

Participation in Adventure Tourism

The descriptive result shows that jungle trekking is the most popular activity, based on the highest percentage of self-response of their participation (Table 3). Respondents were allowed to give more than one response. Hiking and back-packing came in second and third place. The least popular activity is paragliding, as shown in the following table.

Table 3: Participation in adventure tourism

	Adventure Activity	%
1	Jungle trekking	78.7
2	Hiking	76.7
3	Back-packing	60.3
4	Mountain Climbing	37.7
5	River Rafting	32.7
6	Diving	28.3
7	Mountain biking	19.7
8	Paragliding	19.3

Another part of descriptive analysis is the variables that represent the factors that influenced the respondents' experience in adventure tourism. Values in tourism operations are identified as thrill, emotional and social values. The highest mean was emotional value (3.98), followed by Social Value (3.644) and lastly thrill value (3.61). The satisfaction level and intention to return to the destination are high, both at 3.8. (Table 4).

Table 4: Descriptive result

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Thrill Value	300	1.00	5.00	3.6178	0.85649
Emotional Value	300	1.00	5.00	3.9808	0.78436
Social Value	300	1.00	5.00	3.6433	0.85159
Tangible	300	1.00	5.00	3.4927	0.81118
Intangible	300	1.00	5.00	3.6967	0.72733
Satisfaction	300	1.00	5.00	3.8517	0.78930
Behavioural Intention	300	1.00	5.00	3.8789	0.77862

Relationship analysis using Smart PLS

Prior to accepting the results of the relationship analysis, several tests are done, including, validating the reflective measurement model (Figure 2). The test results for convergent validity test (Table 5) and discriminant validity test (Table 6) are produced. Convergent validity is the assessment in which multiple items are measured against the same concept and are in agreement. Factor loadings of the items, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) are used to assess convergent validity of the data (Hair et al. 2010) and the results are shown in Table 5.

According to Hair et al (2014), sufficient convergent validity is achieved when the factor loadings is more than 0.7, CR value is more than 0.7, and AVE value of a construct is more than 0.5. Table 5 shows the values of loading, composite reliability and average variance extracted in reflective measurement model. The result shows that the loadings values and composite reliability value for the thrill, emotional and social, value for tangible factors and intangible factors, satisfaction, and behavioural intention were bigger than 0.7. Furthermore, the result also has sufficient convergent validity, as the average variance extracted value were also bigger than 0.5.

Table 5: Reflective Measurement Model: Factor Loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR).

Item	TV	EV	SV	TF	IF	SAT	BI
T 1	0.799						
T 2	0.847						
T3	0.881						
T4	0.841						
T5	0.895						
T6	0.883						
E1		0.892					
E2		0.936					
E3		0.853					
E4		0.911					
S1			0.918				
S2			0.923				
S3			0.932				
S4			0.911				
T1				0.790			
T2				0.874			
T3				0.877			
T4				0.892			
T5				0.897			
I1					0.832		
I2					0.856		
I3					0.838		
I4					0.755		
I5					0.771		
I6					0.774		
S1						0.901	
S2						0.929	
S3						0.908	
S4						0.895	
B1							0.889
B2							0.881
B3							
0.894							
AVE	0.737	0.808	0.848	0.752	0.649	0.825	0.789
CR	0.944	0.944	0.957	0.938	0.917	0.950	0.918

Note: AVE= Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability; TV (Thrill Value), EV (Emotional Value), SV = (Social Value), TF = (Tangible Factor), IF = (Intangible Factor), S = (Satisfaction), BI = (Behavioral Intention).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure the distinct concepts by examining the correlations between the measures of potentially overlapping constructs in the model. The average variance is shared between each of the

constructs and its measures should be greater than the variance shared between the constructs and other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, Compeau et al. 1999). The criterion for the assessment of the discriminant validity is that values in the diagonal should be higher than all other values in the row and column.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity using Fornell and Fornell and Lacker (1981).

	BI	EV	IF	SAT	SV	TF	TV
B1	**0.888**						
EV	0.567	**0.899**					
IF	0.605	0.485	**0.805**				
SAT	0.734	0.629	0.667	**0.908**			
SV	0.516	0.611	0.477	0.524	**0.921**		
TF	0.499	0.455	0.672	0.512	0.481	**0.867**	
TV	0.546	0.594	0.487	0.602	0.560	0.400	**0.858**

Note: Diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE of the reflective scales while the diagonals are the correlations between constructs; TV (Thrill Value), EV (Emotional Value), SV = (Social Value), TF = (Tangible Factor), IF = (Intangible Factor), S = (Satisfaction), BI = (Behavioral Intention)

Based on Table 6, the values in the diagonal which was the bolded numbers were higher than other values either in row or column. The result concluded that all the measurement in this have sufficient discriminant validity.

Figure 2. Measurement Model
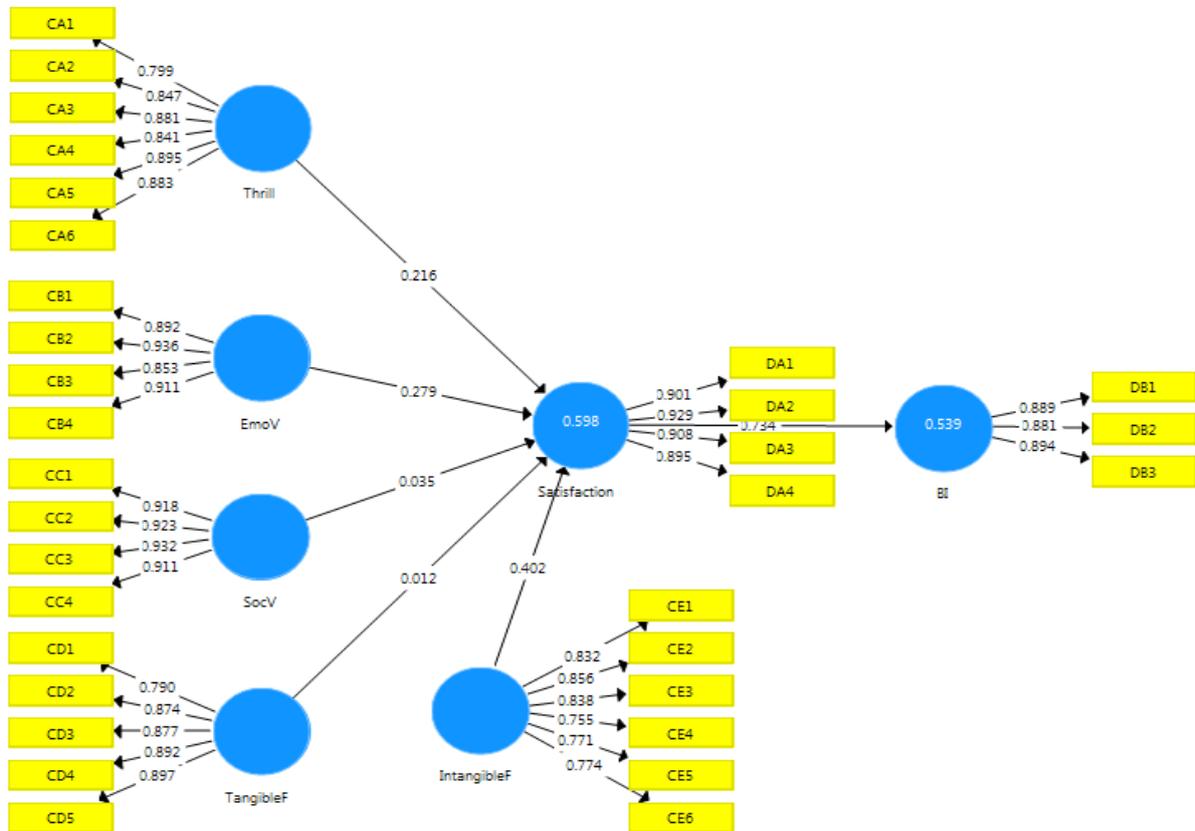
Analysis of Structural Model

The structural model involves the assessment of the relationship between latent constructs and other latent constructs, which is also where the hypotheses are tested. Having done the prior tests above, the structural model (Figure 3) is further analysed by presenting the collinearity results (Table 7) and path coefficient (Table 8).

Collinearity

As shown in Table 7, the VIF scores are below 5 as mentioned by Hair et al. (2014) that for each individual construct should be below the threshold value of 5.

Tables 7: Lateral Collinearity Assessment

Constructs	VIF
Thrill Value	1.76
Emotional Value	1.96
Social Value	1.89
Tangible factors	1.96
Intangible factors	2.08
Satisfaction	1.00

Note: VIF <5; The set was tested on the dependent variable of behavioural intention.

Path Coefficient

Path coefficient can be used to justify and know whether there is a relationship between two latent constructs, which is also, the hypotheses result of this study (Table 8). The relationship between two latent constructs, can be justified using the t-value. For 1-tail test, if the t-value is greater than 1.645, it is significant at least at the 0.05 level of significance ($p \leq 0.05$), and if the t-value is greater than 2.33, it is significant at least at the 0.01 level of significance ($p \leq 0.01$). For 2-tail test, if the t-value is greater than 1.96, it is significant at least at the 0.05 of significance ($p \leq 0.05$).

Of the three values, only thrill and emotional value have relationships with satisfaction, while there is a lack of evidence to accept that social value is related to satisfaction (Table 8). Therefore, H1a and H1b are accepted, while H1c is rejected. The respondents who were largely involved in the adventure tourism activities all enjoyed the trips very much in terms of having a thrill and being emotionally attached with the activities. The results are similar to Cronin, Brady & Hult (2000), however in terms of social values, the result is not consistent with past research. Social experience including, 'It gives social approval from others' and 'It makes me feel acceptable to others', are not contributing factors to satisfaction.

Table 8: Path Coefficient Result

| Constructs	Relationship	Beta(a*b)	Std. Error	T-Value	Result
H1a	TV-SATIS	0.219	0.053	4.105	S
H1b	EV-SATIS	0.273	0.075	3.741	S
H1c	SV-SATIS	0.036	0.060	0.579	NS
H2a	TF-SATIS	0.011	0.055	0.213	NS
H2b	IF-SATISF	0.402	0.080	5.000	S
H3	SATIS-BI	0.736	0.042	17.428	S

Note: **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$

TV (Thrill Value), EV (Emotional Value), SV = (Social Value), TF = (Tangible Factor), IF = (Intangible Factor), S = (Satisfaction), BI = (Behavioural Intention)

S=(Satisfied) NS=(Not Satisfied)

The results also show, the tangible factor (H2a) is rejected while the intangible factor (H2b) is found to be related to satisfaction. Since the intangible factors in this study include the services provided by tourism operators are important, they are contributed to overall satisfaction. When tourists are satisfied, they are also willing to show positive behaviour (H3). They are more likely to come back to the destination and promote the destination to others, through the tangible factors, including matters such as travel activities, and facilities availability. Hypotheses 1d stated that tangible factors and satisfaction have no significant relationship, and the results are not accepted (Table 8). As the result is not accepted, there are more likely tangible factors that are important that contribute to satisfaction.

Figure 3. Structural Model
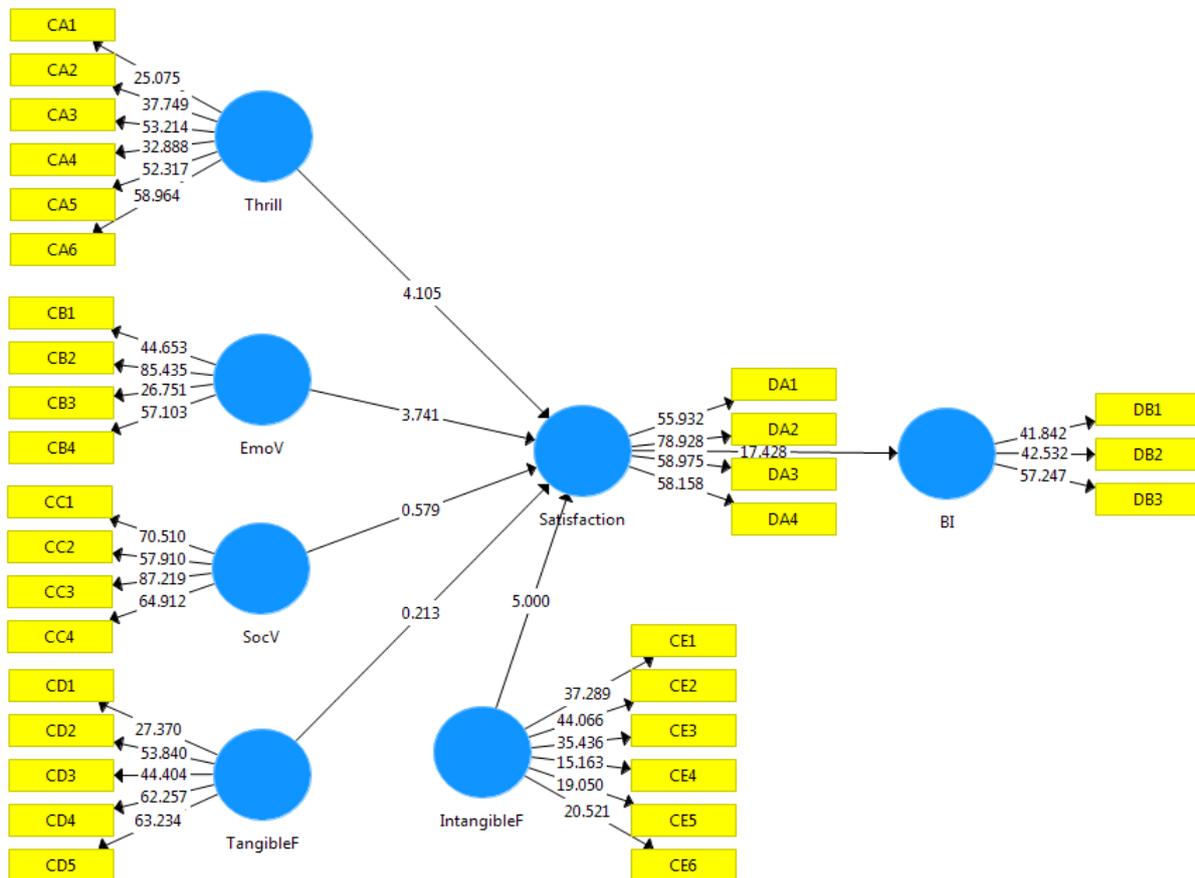
Conclusion

Adventure recreation experience is a scan for capability with a valuation of hazard and danger, and the activity has attracted a large number of participants. Malaysia is one of the destinations in the world that offers a great experience for tourists in adventure recreation. In this study, 300 respondents were all interviewed and the main objective of this study was to

analyse the roles of values (thrill, emotional and social), in contributing to the satisfaction of participating in the adventure activities. The results revealed that only social values are not related to satisfaction. In terms of the tangible and intangible factors in contributing to satisfaction, it appears that both are important. Consistent with previous research, satisfaction is found to be positively related to behavioural intention.

This study provides evidence to tourism operators for the need to place emphasis on thecore values including thrill and emotional values, as these variables are related to satisfaction. Operators need to also focus on improving the tangible factors in order to improve satisfaction. However, tourism operators also should explain to visitors that they have to accept the minimal facilities in outskirt areas where adventure tourism occurs. In addition, activities related to improve social interactions among participants should be further improved. The findings of this study also implies that in tourism operations, the service provider needs to emphasize on efficiency & quality experience for them to enjoy (intangible factors) and also facilities such as a toilet and track (tangible).

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