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## Article

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# Values and perceptions of customers on behavioral intentions in hard adventure tourism in the Mountain and rural areas: a comparison between Asian and Western tourists

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined tourists' behavioral intentions toward hard adventure tourism in mountain and rural areas by investigating the impact of customer value, in addition to assessing the impact of perceived risk factors, self-congruity, and switching costs. The study uses multidimensional theoretical frameworks for customer value dynamics as the basis for model proposals and research hypotheses, using SEM models to analyze data from 503 surveys collected from tourists who have participated in hard adventure tours in the mountain and rural areas before. The results showed that customer value and actual self-image both positively impact satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while perceived risk has the opposite effect and rejects the influence of ideal self-image and switching costs. The study also found differences in behavioral intentions between Asian and Western tourists, and between different income groups. The research results are expected to make practical contributions to the tourism industry in general and travel businesses in particular, thereby having solutions to increase the satisfaction and behavioral intentions of tourists in the future with discovery tourism products.

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The Tourism Industry;  
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Tourism Management

## 1. Introduction

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is transitioning to a new state and all activities have gradually returned to their original trajectory. The tourism industry has also witnessed a rapid recovery and the global tourism trend has also changed compared to previous years. After a long period of being locked up, tourists are now looking for different experiences, new destinations and outdoor activities. According to Grand View Research (2022), adventure tourism has grown, becoming one of the most interesting, preferred and chosen tourism trends among many travelers worldwide. Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the growth of adventure-based vacation experiences (Williams et al., 2017). The global adventure tourism market size was valued at USD 282.1 billion in 2021 and the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is expected to reach 15.2% from 2022 to 2030. This has shown great potential and competitive advantages of this type of tourism.

Adventure tourism is a type of journey that offers genuine experiences combined with physically demanding activities at various levels (Buckley, 2011; Muller & Cleaver, 2000; Swarbrooke et al., 2003). It is classified into two types "soft" and "hard" (Beedie & Hudson, 2003; Hudson, 2003; Mu & Nepal, 2016), and they should be considered separately due to differences in risk levels and different skill and physical requirements (Bui & Kiatkawsin, 2020). Hard adventure tourism involves high-risk activities that often require more strenuous physical exertion (Hudson, 2003), with typical activities including rock climbing, hiking or caving (Cater, 2006). Therefore, this form of tourism is leading mainly in primitive areas (Kastenholz et al., 1999), which include mountain and rural areas. Moreover, discoveries in tourism and hospitality research in recent years focusing on tourists have been approached from various perspectives,

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for example, the congruity (Abdallat, 2012), motivation (Correia et al., 2013), or expectation-perception gap (Chan et al., 2019), etc. However, these aspects have been mostly studied independently, and since consumer behaviour in tourism is considered complex and long-term (Li & Cao, 2022), this is not sufficient to assess satisfaction and future intentions. This study examined adventure tourism intentions in the mountain and rural areas in more detail and aimed to exploit some gaps in previous literature by combining different perspectives.

First, the study pointed out the necessity of using a multidimensional value framework to assess the relative impact of customer value on satisfaction and behavioral intentions in a tourism context (Holbrook, 1994; Petrick, 2002; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Williams & Soutar, 2009). This allows for a more in-depth analysis of consumer perceptions and provides more clarity into the perspectives of adventure tourism consumers, and the selected context is tourists who have traveled to mountain and rural areas. Second, with the characteristics of the type of hard adventure tourism with a higher level of risk, perceived risk is assessed to have an influence on satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Tourists' perception of risk and safety is one of the key factors in deciding to visit a particular location (Chew & Jahari, 2014), particularly in hard adventure tourism. As a result, the perceived risk element is included to improve predictability and tie the model to reality. Third, tourists are reported to prefer tourism destinations/products whose images are consistent with their self-perceptions, and the stereotypical representation of the kind of individuals that frequently travel to a particular location is referred to as the destination image (Abdallat, 2012). The study focused on two types of self-congruity (ideal self-image and actual self-image) in the context of adventure tourism tourists in mountain and rural areas, aiming to clarify whether satisfaction and behavioral intentions be influenced by the similarity in the image that they envision of themselves. Finally, as market rivalry intensifies, travel companies must constantly find ways to retain customers. Many studies have found that switching costs play an essential part in explaining behavioral intentions (Burnham et al., 2003; Jen et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2000; Liu et al., 2005), and if companies can raise these barriers, customers are less inclined to switch to other providers. Considering to switch service providers can involve different behavioral and psychological costs (Jones et al., 2000), the inclusion of switching costs in the study's model would help to fulfill the behavioral purpose of adventure tourists.

The research aims to explore the complexity of tourists' perceptions and values and their influence on satisfaction and behavioral intentions with hard adventure tourism in the mountain and rural areas. In addition to factors related to tourist value, factors about self-congruity will be tested. And with the desire to separate this type of tourism from other types, the study hopes to explore factors that can become barriers in travel behavior. So that, the research questions addressed are "What perceptions and values might have an impact on satisfaction and behavioral intentions?" and "Does perceived risk and switching costs influences satisfaction and behavioral intention?". Furthermore, there is an ongoing discussion on whether or not to standardize services. While some believe that global customers' and consumers' demands and desires, others believe that the world's markets are getting more dynamic and changing rapidly. The standardization debate has not yet received much empirical research in the adventure tourism context (Williams et al., 2017), especially the "hard" category. The study aims to contribute to the standardization literature by comparing the behavioral intentions of Asian and Western tourists, known to have cultural differences, in the context of hard category. So that, another research question pointed is "Is there a difference in behavioral intentions between Asian and Western tourists?".

## 2. Conceptual background to the study

### 2.1. Dimensions of customer value to satisfaction and behavioral intentions

Numerous professionals and organizations point out that customer value is the "key driver" in developing a unique and competitive market position, regarded as the basis of a successful tourism marketing strategy (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2020). Customer value is considered a trade-off between the benefits gained and the sacrifices, such as money, time, or effort to obtain it (Weinstein, 2020). It is contended that evaluating a service experience via comparisons of quality and pricing is insufficient, given the risks and uncertainties that consumers face (Petrick, 2002), requiring a multidimensional approach. In the mountain and rural areas, adventure tourism is recognized to have enormous development potential, which leads to analyzing tourist

behaviors is essential (Basariya & Ahmed, 2019; Dawadi & Upadhayaya, 2013; Nagaraju & Chandrashekara, 2014; Vujadinovic et al., 2013). Several hard activities, such as hiking and trekking, mountaineering, caving, paragliding, skiing, motor biking, and others, can be organized here due to the difference and diversity of terrain and nature (mountains, forests, passes, fields, caves, etc.). As mentioned about the higher physical demands (Hudson, 2003), hard adventure tourists tend to have different value drivers compared to the traditional type of tourism. This study applied the multidimensional value framework of Williams et al. (2017), which has been demonstrated to have an impact on the satisfaction and behavioral intentions of adventure tourists, encompassing functional value, price value, emotional value, social value, and novelty value.

### **2.1.1. Functional value**

Functional value is defined as a consumer's overall assessment of a product's utility based on perceptions of what is received and what is provided (Zeithaml, 1988). Similarly, Monroe (1990) proposed that functional value in buyers' perceptions represents a trade-off between the perceived quality or benefit of a product and the sacrifice they feel by paying the price. Basically, functional value in tourism refers to the actual or technical benefits tourists can derive by experiencing the service. Overall convenience in services also plays a crucial role in the main functions of travel service (Chou, 2014). Tourist satisfaction depends on the quality of services provided (Al-Ababneh, 2013; Beqiri et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2013), thereby increasing their awareness of the intention to return (Artuger et al., 2013; Rajesh, 2013). It can be seen that functional value plays a significant role in determining tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis formed for the study is:

H1: Functional value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **2.1.2. Price value**

From the customer's point of view, price is something that is given up or sacrificed to obtain a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988). Price value, also known as economic value (Lee et al., 2012), refers to the utility gained from a product due to cost-related perceptions (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Jani and Han (2011) argued that customers are influenced by their viewpoint through comparison, which indicates that higher prices lead to increased expectations of quality. Customer satisfaction is directly influenced by price perception while indirectly through perceived price fairness (Herrmann et al., 2007). Price value has been confirmed as one of the core factors that have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Lee et al., 2007; 2012). Therefore, the hypothesis is developed as follows:

H2: Price value has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction.

### **2.1.3. Emotional value**

Customers always have emotions, and consumption is an act of emotional attachment (Barlow & Maul, 2000). Emotional value refers to different emotional states or sentiments (pleasant, excitement, disappointment, etc.) associated with consuming stages. Consumers use their emotions to identify needs and take behaviors that will satisfy them (Robinette & Brand, 2001). In tourism, emotional value is defined as the utility offered by the potential to elicit a feeling or emotional state, and it is frequently measured against the tourists' emotional "profile" in relation to the destination (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004). A sense of belonging or being in the right place increases tourist satisfaction and also the intention to return (Yuksel et al., 2010). Toyama and Yamada (2012) confirm that tourists can be satisfied with pleasant experiences. Emotional value is an essential part of value drivers and has a significant impact on tourists satisfaction (Lee et al., 2007; Yuan & Wu, 2008). Thus, the hypothesis is created as follows:

H3: Emotional value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **2.1.4. Social value**

Social value is the benefit of a product or service that is intended to satisfy one's desire to gain social recognition or pride (Sheth & Mittal, 2004). It includes prestige, status and common sense, not merely economic measures (Hessami & Yousefi, 2013). Social value is directly associated with social status and is

used to enhance social status and self-esteem of service consumers. In tourism, famous places and destinations create a higher image and are respected by people (Mahika, 2011). Many previous studies have confirmed that social value has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Gan & Wang, 2017; Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011), the more the tourists' perception of social value, the greater the satisfaction obtained. Therefore, the hypothesis formed for the study is:

H4: Social value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **2.1.5. Novelty value**

In previous studies of tourism, novelty value was used to describe new and different experiences (Crompton, 1979; Mitas & Bastiaansen, 2018), considered unfamiliar by tourists and contrasting with previous experiences (Bello & Etzel, 1985; Pearson, 1970), including thrills, changes from routine, reduction in boredom and surprise (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Even in travel determinism, variety-seeking has been replaced by novelty, which has been found to be particularly important in relation to travel destinations (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Feng & Jang, 2004). The novelty value is associated with tourist satisfaction by tending to seek experiences with newness (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Mitas & Bastiaansen, 2018). Besides the emotional value, the novelty value is also claimed to play a vital role in the satisfaction of adventure tourists (Williams et al., 2017). Thus, the hypothesis is created as follows:

H5: Novelty value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### **2.1.6. Customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions**

Customer satisfaction is fundamental to all marketing activities, often reflecting the reaction to the experience, in which customers set their satisfaction criteria before they decide whether or not to use the service (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004; Kotler, 2000). Tourism satisfaction is considered the relationship between expectations and experiences, and a favorable experience leads to positive behavioral responses (Zeithaml et al., 1996). As for behavioral intention, its beneficial aspect often indicates customer loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010). In fact, measuring loyalty is difficult, thus most researchers employ "behavioral intention", which means that the tendency to loyal behavior forms a compromise of actionable loyalty (Yang & Peterson, 2004). In tourism contexts, inheriting the point of Williams et al. (2017), loyalty has been operated as a repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth and increased share of wallet expenditure. Many previous studies have found a relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Yen et al., 2020; Zeng & Yi Man Li, 2021). Reisinger and Turner (2003) found that tourists with high satisfaction may have behaviors such as revisiting a destination, recommending it to others, or making positive comments about that destination. And hence the hypothesis is:

H11: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on behavioral intentions.

## **2.2. Perceived risk and customer satisfaction**

Perceived risk in tourism is referred to tourists' impression of whether a travel event surpasses their acceptable level (Reichel et al., 2007), or their probability of misfortune during a trip or at a destination (Sohn et al., 2016). In addition, it is also understood as tourists' perception of negative outcomes, or uncertainties that may occur from the trip (Tseng & Wang, 2016). Tourists perceive different risk concerns as a result of variances in geography, culture, psychology, and travel experiences, which impact their behavioral intentions in different ways (Hasan et al., 2017). More specifically, perceived risks in tourism related to crime, natural disasters, sanitation, traffic, time, language and communication (Emami & Ranjbarian, 2019; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Kozak et al. (2007) found that countries' tourism and hospitality industries are affected by poor safety and security.

Perceived risk is a threat to the success of marketing, as it focuses consumers on the possibility of losing resources (Salam et al., 2003). The findings of several studies suggest that perceived risk has an impact on tourist satisfaction (Chen et al., 2017; Sohn et al., 2016). There is a significant relationship



between perceived risk and negative consumer emotions, which have a direct affect on satisfaction (Chaudhuri, 1997). Perceived risk is proven to have a negative impact on tourist satisfaction (Eid, 2011; Johnson et al., 2008; Viet et al., 2020). Thus, the hypothesis is created as follows:

H6: Perceived risk has a negative impact on customer satisfaction.

### **2.3. Self-congruity to satisfaction and behavioral intentions**

Self-congruity originates from self-image, which relates to all of a person's ideas and feelings about themselves when viewed as an object (Rosenberg, 1979). Self-congruity has been suggested to influence tourism motivation and destination travel (Sirgy, 2014). It is shaped by the type of person one believes they are and what they are capable of Liu and Chen (2015), which includes the actual and ideal self (Landon, 1974). Consumers were supposed to choose products with images that match their perception of themselves. The self-congruity theory investigates why people choose certain brands and relate them to their self-image by utilizing them. It has a multifaceted aspect: ideal self-image is "how the consumer would like to be" and actual self-image is "how consumers perceive themselves" (Sirgy & Su, 2000). When there exists an identity between the tourist's self-congruity/self-image and the destination, tourists are more likely to establish a feeling of attachment, which induces positive behaviors after the visit (Cifci, 2022).

In tourism and hospitality contexts, the influence of tourists' self-congruity on destination satisfaction has been demonstrated (Abdallat, 2012; Chon & Olsen, 1991; Zhou et al., 2022). Based on consumer psychology studies, the better a brand image reflects a buyer's self-concept, the more advantageous the brand's post-purchase interaction (Graeff, 1996). Follow-up studies have shown that self-congruity has a positive impact on tourist visit intentions (Beerli et al., 2007; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Pratt & Sparks, 2014). Meanwhile, Kastenholz (2004) failed to prove its relationship to recommendation intention. Thus, the robustness of self-congruity's effects needs to be examined by more research based on various contexts. We propose the following hypothesis:

H7: Ideal self-image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

H8: Ideal self-image has a positive impact on behavioral intentions.

H9: Actual self-image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

H10: Actual self-image has a positive impact on behavioral intentions.

### **2.4. Switching costs and the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions**

Switching costs are defined as costs or sacrifices that may arise when customers change to suppliers, including monetary and non-monetary costs (Dick & Basu, 1994). Monetary costs include actual financial costs and loss of financial benefits (Aydin et al., 2005), whereas non-financial costs are mainly related to time, and psychological costs refer to perceived risk, which represents uncertainty and adverse consequences of purchasing a product, service from a new brand in consumer perception (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). Switching cost is an intangible cost but plays a very important role in the development strategy of a company, the ultimate goal of building a switching cost strategy at businesses is to make customers feel more disadvantaged when switching to using products or services from other suppliers, thereby creating competitive advantages for their own businesses.

The concept of high switching costs can offer a passive cause for customers to choose to stay with the current supplier (Fullerton, 2003). Furthermore, even if they are not entirely pleased or when service quality is inconsistent, customers will get tied into their current provider relationships when the switching costs are high (Jen et al., 2011). In fact, the positive effect of customer satisfaction on purchase intentions increases as supplier switching costs are greater (Vázquez-Casielles et al., 2009). The association between customer satisfaction and their behavioral intentions is influenced by switching costs, including vendor acquisition or switching behavior (Jones et al., 2000). Thus, the hypothesis is created as follows:

H12: Switching costs play a moderating role in the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

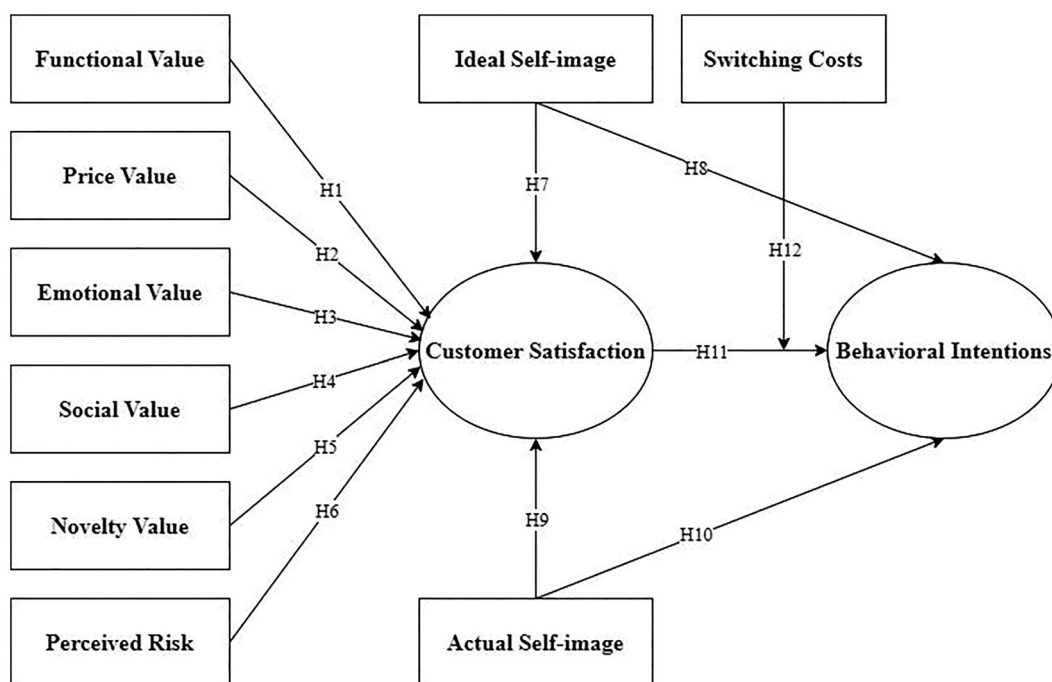
The conceptual model is depicted in Figure 1.

### 3. The proposed model and method

The proposed model and research hypotheses were developed based on reliable literature in the context of tourism in general and adventure tourism in particular, which was searched and reviewed on Google Scholar, as well as EBSCOhost, ProQuest databases. Cross-sectional research design was used with the desire to prove the assumptions in the research context, with the aim of enhancing the understanding of different concepts related to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. The proposed model is shown as follows:

To obtain the most honest and objective data, the study used quantitative research methods through questionnaire surveys to empirically investigate customer values, perceived risk, self-congruity and switching costs on their satisfaction and behavioral intentions towards hard adventure tourism in mountain and rural areas. Measurement scales used in this study were adapted from the existing literature, and implemented in the context of hard adventure tourism in the mountain and rural areas - the main research object of the survey. Customer value factors are applied from research on adventure tourism by Williams et al. (2017); measurement items to measure perceived risk were adapted from the scales used by Viet et al. (2020); measure self-congruity by the scale used by Abdallat (2012); and measure switching costs by the scale used by Jen et al. (2011). On top of that, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions scales were adapted from the study of Williams et al. (2017). All the variables and items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with anchors of "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". Accordingly, the general description for the scale is shown in Table 1.

A total of 44 items were used in the official scale of the study. In order to reflect the context and purpose of this study, modifications were made to the scales and item phrasing. The questionnaire was tested by sent to 20 respondents including tourists, and personnel working in the field of tourism and marketing, to ensure that the questions are not confused before the official survey. Through receiving



**Figure 1.** The proposed model.  
Source: Researchers' summary results.



**Table 1.** Scale description.

Sign	Construct	Number of Items	Source
FV	Functional value	4	Williams et al. (2017)
PV	Price value	4	
EV	Emotional value	4	
SV	Social value	4	
NV	Novelty value	4	
PR	Perceived risk	4	Viet et al. (2020)
IS	Ideal self-image	4	
AS	Actual self-image	4	Abdallat (2012)
SC	Switching costs	3	
CS	Customer satisfaction	5	Jen et al. (2011)
BI	Behavioral intentions	4	

Source: Researchers' summary results.

opinions from respondents to make model and scale modifications with the desire to show the highest clarity and accuracy in the survey process, thereby obtaining the most rigorous and meaningful conclusions.

After being completed, the questionnaire was sent to tourists who participated in hard adventure tours in the mountain and rural areas, covering Asian and Western tourists (including Europe, the Americas and Australia) to obtain data consistent with the research goals and scope. Respondents are assured that their participation is completely voluntary and private and that the information provided will be for research purposes only and will not be used for any other purpose. This commitment was clearly stated to all participants in writing in a separate opening section of the survey, and only when they agreed was it carried forward to the main survey. As a result, 503 valid responses were collected through non-profitability sampling methods, including convenience sampling and snowball sampling. We used SPSS 26 and AMOS 24 software to analyze data by running Cronbach's Alpha to review the reliability of the scale; EFA, CFA and SEM factor analysis to verify the relationships between variables in the model. In addition, we also examined the role of regulatory variables and verified differences between identity variables, with the desire to find new findings related to the "behavioral intentions" of tourists in a multicultural context, thereby increasing the significance of the study. The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics. The Ethical Committee of the Banking Academy of Vietnam, Vietnam has granted approval for this study on August 2023 (Ref. No. 2500/HD-HVNH-VNC1).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 reveals that, out of 503 valid answers, 50.7% of the participants are male, 45.5% are female and another is 3.8%. Asia accounts for the highest proportion (46.3%), followed by Europe (19.3%), Australia (17.7%), and finally America (16.7%). In terms of age distribution, the concentration is on tourists from 26-35 years old (41.7%), followed by 18-25 years old (32.6%), from 36-45 years old (17.9%) and finally have the lowest rate is over 45 years old (7.8%). It can be seen that the participants mainly focus on young people. Regarding occupation, office workers (all ranks) accounted for the majority (51.1%) of respondents, followed by freelance workers (17.3%), college/university students (14.7%), particular jobs (7.6%), other occupational groups (6.4%) and engineers/scientists (3.0%). Regarding participants' income, mainly tourists had an average income of \$2000-4000 (41.7%) and less than \$2000 (37.4%), higher income levels had fewer, specifically \$4000-6000 has 16.5% and over \$6000 only accounts for 4.4%.

For multiple choice questions, when asked about the type of tourists who have experienced in the mountain and rural areas, mountaineering, hiking and trekking options dominated with 83.5% and 81.3% of respondents having participated, respectively, followed by caving (37.4%), motor biking (22.3%), sky-diving/paragliding/hang-gliding (22.1%), skiing (21.7%) and other (7.4%). In particular, Asian tourists chose relatively few higher-risk options such as paragliding, or skiing, but only focus on mass options such as trekking or climbing. Tourists were the most likely to choose this type of tourism to travel with

**Table 2.** Description of the research sample.

	Characteristics	Quantity	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	255	50.7
	Female	229	45.5
	Other	19	3.8
Age	18–25 years old	164	32.0
	26–35 years old	210	35.9
	36–45 years old	90	18.4
	Over 45 years old	39	13.6
Continent	Europe	97	19.3
	Asia	233	46.3
	Australia	89	17.7
	America	84	16.7
Occupation	Office Worker (all ranks)	257	51.1
	Particular Jobs (Doctor/Teacher/ Police,...)	38	7.6
	Engineer/Scientist	15	3.0
	Freelance Worker	87	17.3
	College/University Student	74	14.7
	Other	32	6.4
Income	Less than 2000 USD/month	188	37.4
	From 2000 to 4000 USD/month	210	41.7
	From 4000 to 6000 USD/month	83	16.5
	More than 6000 USD/month	22	4.4

Source: Researchers own survey, 2023.

partners (friends, group of friends, lovers, etc) with 84.3% of respondents, followed by family (68.8%), colleagues (19.5%), alone (11.5%) and other (6%). In addition, tourists knew about these tours through posts or reviews on blogs, groups, fanpages about travel the most with 85.7% of people choosing them, followed by mass media (57.1%), recommended by relatives and friends (56.3%), website of travel agencies (39%), travel events and exhibitions (21.7%) and other (10.9%).

According to Table 3, the means of the observed variables range from 3.80 to 4.45, showing that in general, tourists evaluate their values and perceptions at a neutral level or higher. Among them, the evaluation of novelty value reached the highest means, ranging from 4.35 to 4.45, showing that hard adventure tourism has a very high novelty and makes them excited. On the contrary, the switching cost reached the lowest means, only from 3.80 to 3.85, showing that tourists will not find it too difficult to change their current service provider.

#### 4.2. Assessment of measurement model

The study obtained relatively positive results when the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of all scales reached values greater than 0.8 (Table 4), and the total correlation value for all observed variables is greater than 0.3. Thus, all scales achieve very high reliability.

We used indices including AVE, MSV, and Square Root of AVE values to test the validity of all variables in the model as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The results from Table 4 show that there are no concerns regarding convergent validity as all AVE values exceeded 0.5 and all CR values greater than 0.7. In parallel, the discriminant validity for all variables is assured by all MSV values being smaller than AVE (Table 4); concomitantly, as shown in Table 5, the Square Root of the AVE values of each construct is greater than the correlations between the pair of variables tested within each construct.

The KMO value reached  $0.922 > 0.5$ , and the Sig Bartlett's value reached  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that the data was consistent, the total cumulative deduction variance reached  $78.577\% > 50\%$ , represented correlational significant observational variables and explained 78.577% of the data variation of the 44 observed variables participating in the EFA. EFA results for 44 observed variables were classified into 11 factors and no bad variables, so the scale reached convergence values (Williams et al., 2010).

Moreover, the Pearson correlation coefficients of the relationships between the independent variables IS-PV, IS-NV, IS-SC, PR-SC, reached p-value  $> 0.05$ , showing no correlation and no capable of multicollinearity; the relationships between IS-BI and IS-CS reached p-value  $> 0.05$ , showing that Ideal Self-image likely has no impact on the dependent variables. The remaining relationships have p-value  $< 0.05$ ,

**Table 3.** Statistics of the mean and standard deviation of observed variables.

Variable	Sign	Sentences	Mean	Std. Deviation
Functional value	FV1	This tour was organized with consistent quality	4.21	0.706
	FV2	This tour was done well	4.32	0.690
	FV3	This tour has reached an acceptable standard of quality	4.28	0.703
	FV4	This tour was well organized	4.32	0.678
Price value	PV1	This tour gave me a good return for money	4.15	0.769
	PV2	This tour gave me value for money	4.14	0.826
	PV3	This tour was a good one for the price paid	4.17	0.812
	PV4	This tour has reasonable price	4.17	0.799
Emotional value	EV1	This tour brought a feeling of well-being	4.26	0.733
	EV2	This tour became one that I enjoyed	4.26	0.757
	EV3	This tour made me feel good	4.31	0.703
	EV4	This tour made me feel relaxed	4.37	0.728
Social value	SV1	Joining this tour gives me social approval from others	3.96	0.935
	SV2	Joining this tour makes me feel acceptable to others	3.90	1.001
	SV3	Adventure tours improve the way a person is perceived	4.03	0.944
	SV4	Joining this tour gives me a good impression of other people	4.07	0.938
Novelty value	NV1	This tour made me feel adventurous	4.35	0.643
	NV2	This tour satisfied my curiosity	4.39	0.682
	NV3	Joining this tour was an authentic experience	4.42	0.657
	NV4	We did a lot of things	4.45	0.660
Perceived Risk	PR1	I'm worried about food safety on hard adventure tours	4.27	0.863
	PR2	I'm worried about crime on hard adventure tours	4.24	0.847
	PR3	I'm worried about traffic accidents on hard adventure tours	4.26	0.861
	PR4	I'm worried about the increasing price of food and accommodation during peak season	4.30	0.862
Ideal self-image	IS1	The typical visitor or tourists to mountains and rural areas reflect the type of person who I like to be	3.96	0.882
	IS2	I like to see myself as a typical tourist visiting mountains and rural areas	4.00	0.876
	IS3	I like to be known as mountains and rural areas' tourist	4.03	0.903
	IS4	Mountains and rural areas are a reflection of my ideal image and holiday destination	4.03	0.878
Actual self-image	AS1	The typical visitor to mountains and rural areas reflects the type of visitors who I am	4.16	0.847
	AS2	The typical visitor to mountains and rural areas is similar to me in terms of my actual image	4.15	0.847
	AS3	The typical visitor to mountains and rural areas is very much like me	4.19	0.867
	AS4	Mountains and rural areas are appealing to my actual image as a visitor	4.17	0.835
Switching Costs	SC1	It would be a hassle for me to get information about other companies	3.85	0.920
	SC2	For me, it would take a lot of costs to travel by other coach companies	3.85	0.958
	SC3	For me, it would be a high risk to travel by other coach companies	3.80	0.991
Customer satisfaction	CS1	This tour was exactly what I needed	4.18	0.714
	CS2	I truly enjoyed this tour	4.26	0.708
	CS3	I was satisfied with my decision	4.28	0.726
	CS4	Joining this tour was a wise choice	4.15	0.780
	CS5	It was a good experience	4.28	0.746
Behavioral intentions	BI1	I'll recommend this tour to others	4.29	0.737
	BI2	I'll go on other tours in the future in mountains and rural areas	4.33	0.699
	BI3	I'll go on other hard adventure tours in the future in mountains and rural areas	4.31	0.715
	BI4	I'll go on other day trips while on holiday in the future in mountains and rural areas	4.40	0.715

Source: Researchers processed data.

**Table 4.** Testing the reliability of the scale and the validity of the variables.

Sign	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	MSV
FV	Functional value	0.897	0.898	0.687	0.385
PV	Price value	0.914	0.915	0.729	0.403
EV	Emotional value	0.900	0.901	0.696	0.403
SV	Social value	0.925	0.925	0.756	0.329
NV	Novelty value	0.855	0.855	0.596	0.345
PR	Perceived risk	0.942	0.942	0.802	0.106
IS	Ideal self-image	0.906	0.906	0.708	0.027
AS	Actual self-image	0.938	0.938	0.790	0.238
SC	Switching costs	0.903	0.904	0.758	0.289
CS	Customer satisfaction	0.891	0.891	0.621	0.488
BI	Behavioral intentions	0.885	0.885	0.659	0.488

Source: Researchers processed data.

**Table 5.** The Square Root of AVE of every multi-item construct.

	CS	AS	PR	SV	IS	PV	BI	NV	EV	FV	SC
CS	<b>0.788</b>										
AS	0.438***	<b>0.889</b>									
PR	0.110*	0.268***	<b>0.895</b>								
SV	0.507***	0.367***	0.155**	<b>0.869</b>							
IS	0.028	0.146**	0.166***	0.109*	<b>0.841</b>						
PV	0.596***	0.462***	0.229***	0.490***	0.057	<b>0.854</b>					
BI	0.698***	0.382***	0.200***	0.373***	0.036	0.425***	<b>0.812</b>				
NV	0.587***	0.351***	0.188***	0.574***	0.081	0.517***	0.558***	<b>0.772</b>			
EV	0.597***	0.488***	0.326***	0.458***	0.113*	0.635***	0.558***	0.572***	<b>0.834</b>		
FV	0.548***	0.455***	0.176***	0.454***	0.143**	0.620***	0.502***	0.532***	0.549***	<b>0.829</b>	
SC	0.537***	0.372***	0.055	0.465***	0.057	0.360***	0.387***	0.307***	0.379***	0.372***	<b>0.871</b>

\*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \* =  $p < 0.05$ .

Source: Researchers processed data.

Pearson coefficient fluctuates between 0.101 - 0.623 < 0.7, showing that the correlation is not too strong and multicollinearity is less likely to occur (Dormann et al., 2013). In order to verify the correlation between factors, we conducted a factor analysis to confirm CFA and obtained good results, specifically CMIN/df reached 1.992 < 3; CFI reached 0.951 > 0.9; GFI scored 0.868 > 0.8; RMSEA is 0.044 < 0.06, reflecting that the pattern is consistent (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

#### 4.3. Structural model and hypotheses testing results

Table 6 demonstrates all customer value drivers has an impact on satisfaction with a  $p$ -value < 0.05, specifically novelty value has the strongest impact ( $\beta = 0.293$ ), followed by emotional value ( $\beta = 0.237$ ), price value ( $\beta = 0.156$ ), functional value ( $\beta = 0.147$ ) and finally social value ( $\beta = 0.974$ ). Conversely, the perceived risk has a negative impact on satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.074$ ,  $p$ -value < 0.05). Furthermore, actual self-image demonstrated a direct impact on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.075$ ,  $p$ -value < 0.05) and behavioral intentions ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $p$ -value < 0.05), while these relationships did not occur in the case of ideal self-image ( $p$ -value > 0.05). Satisfaction also noted a significant impact on behavioral intentions ( $\beta = 0.627$ ,  $p$ -value < 0.05).

In the proposed model, customer values with perceived risk and self-congruity are shown to have an indirect impact on behavioral intentions through satisfaction. Performing an Indirect Effect test with a 95% confidence standard, the results showed that most factors have an indirect impact on behavioral intentions. However, social value and actual self-image did not have an indirect impact on behavioral intentions through satisfaction ( $p$ -value > 0.05).

Our results were assumed to have a moderator role of variable switching costs in the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The result was a CS\*SC  $p$ -value of 0.3703 > 0.05, which means that switching cost did not have a role in regulating the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This confirms that, as long as tourists feel satisfied, their future behavioral intentions will naturally be higher, regardless of the impact of switching costs. Thus, the H12 hypothesis was rejected as well.

#### 4.4. Differential inspection

As mentioned in the study's objectives, an exploration of differences in multicultural contexts is essential. And the paper compared differences in behavioral intentions between Asian and Western tourists (including Europe, the Americas and Australia). The results after the One-Way ANOVA test showed that there are differences in behavioral intentions between Asian and Western tourists. Specifically, tourists from Europe (4.4794) exhibited the highest likelihood of acquisition and word of mouth, followed by Australia (4.3539), the Americas (4.3333) and Asia (4.2639) exhibited the lowest average levels (Figure 2).

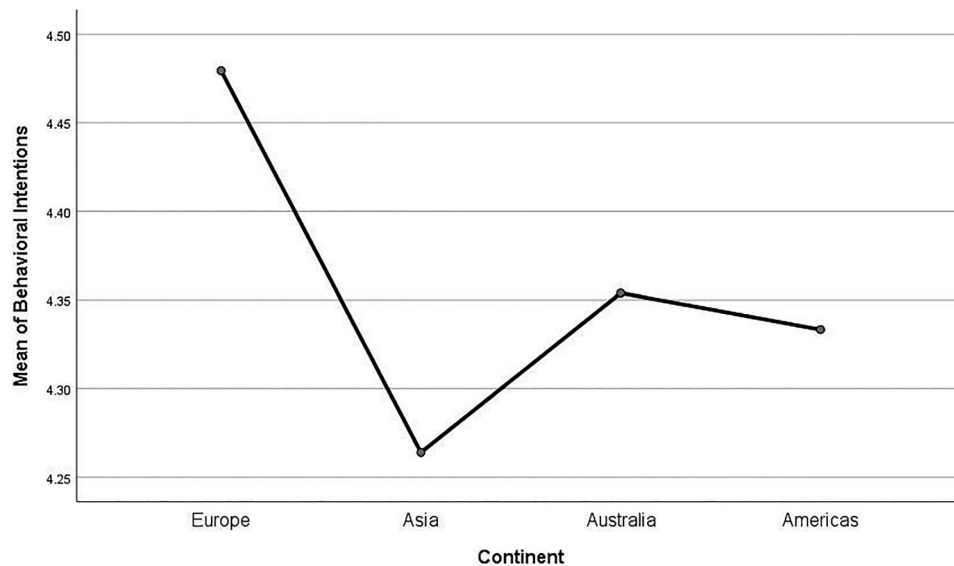
In addition, the paper discovered differences in behavioral intentions between different income groups. In other words, tourists' behavioral intentions are also partly influenced by their income, or ability to pay. Specifically, incomes from \$4000 to 6000 (4.4548) recorded the highest likelihood of redemption and word of mouth, followed by over \$6000 (4.432), from \$2000 to 4000 (4.3571) and below \$2000

**Table 6.** Results of testing the research hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Statement of hypothesis	Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Remark
H1	Functional value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.147	0.014	Accepted
H2	Price value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.156	0.003	Accepted
H3	Emotional value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.237	***	Accepted
H4	Social value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.074	0.029	Accepted
H5	Novelty value has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.293	***	Accepted
H6	Perceived risk has a negative impact on customer satisfaction	−0.074	0.014	Accepted
H7	Ideal self-image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	−0.045	0.128	Rejected
H8	Ideal self-image has a positive impact on behavioral intentions	0.005	0.852	Rejected
H9	Actual self-image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	0.075	0.032	Accepted
H10	Actual self-image has a positive impact on behavioral intentions	0.064	0.044	Accepted
H11	Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on behavioral intentions	0.627	***	Accepted

*P*: significance level; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Researchers processed data.

**Figure 2.** Differential Inspection in behavioral intentions between Asian and Western tourists.

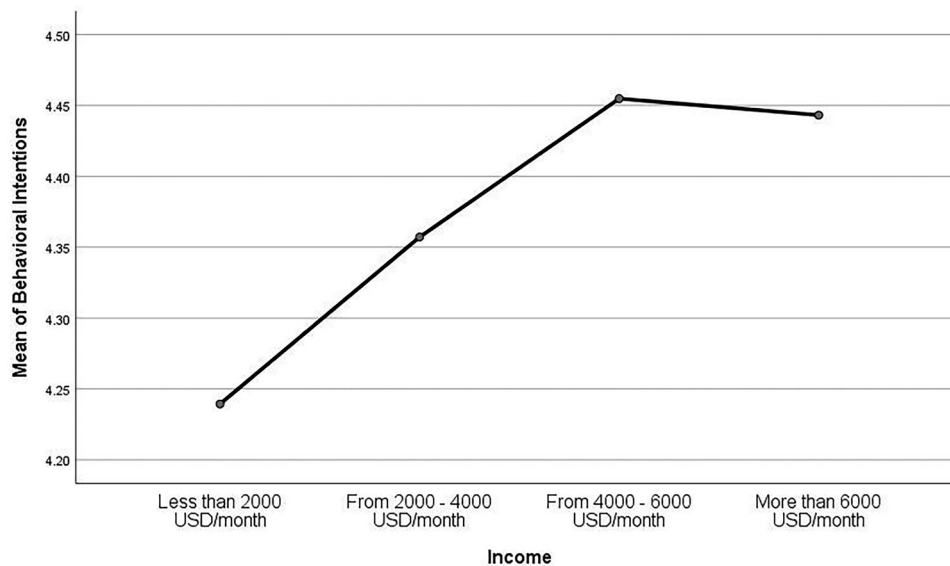
Source: Researchers processed data.

(4.2394) the lowest (Figure 3). In general, higher earnings lead to higher repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth.

## 5. Discussion and implications

The proposed model includes 11 factors and 12 hypotheses. After the analysis, relatively good results were obtained, and on the basis of the analysis, the specific criteria studied were completely consistent with reality. 09/12 hypotheses proposed by the research were accepted. The research results show some agreement with previous literature, at the same time adding new and more complex aspects related to tourists' perception, and focusing on exploiting this type of "hard" adventure tourism in the mountain and rural areas, instead of general.

Previous literature has developed perspectives on customer values in travel behavior, but emphasized that with adventure tourism, the "hard" category has almost been ignored (Holbrook, 1994; Petrick, 2002; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Williams et al., 2017; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Agreeing with the previous opinion, novelty value and emotional value play a particularly important role in adventure tourism (Williams et al., 2017), and in the context of "hard" type, this no change. It is shown that these two factors have the strongest impact on satisfaction, which leads to higher behavioral intentions. This shows the importance of building novelty and creating sublime emotions for tourists. Specifically, when tourism products



**Figure 3.** Differential Inspection in behavioral intentions between different income groups.  
 Source: Researchers processed data.

meet tourists' desire for adventure, curiosity, and love of experiences, they will feel satisfied with that experience. Besides, when the adventure gives tourists a feeling of happiness and relaxation, satisfaction will also increase and lead to higher behavioral intentions. Therefore, a tourism program needs to be designed with many diverse activities, creating a true sense of adventure. The results show that, in mountainous and rural areas, the activities that tourists experience are mainly hiking, trekking and mountain climbing, but many other activities that can be exploited such as caving, paragliding, motor-bike riding, etc. In addition, the programs need to be associated with local culture to stimulate tourists' curiosity, through the introduction of interesting specialties, or unique traditional activities. Along with novelty value, customer emotions need to be promoted through proactiveness and flexibility. Kim (2014) identified important attributes including infrastructure (transportation and meals), friendliness and hospitality, helpfulness, and the distinctive local culture associated with enhancing emotional value. An adventure experience should not be "fixed" but should be flexible for each customer. This requires tourism professionals to research customers to design appropriate itineraries. Tour guides and local people welcome tourists in a friendly manner, showing hospitality; as well as taking care of suitable transportation, living, and dining facilities.

As assessed in the research objectives, the use of a multidimensional framework is necessary. And this really pays off in showing the complexity of customer value, which is not simply measured through one or two dimensions. Along with the novelty and emotional aspect, other values (price, functional and social value) also play an important role in increasing tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Adventure tours often cost more than mass tourism, because of the complexity of the service delivery process, related to issues such as safety insurance, transportation, experienced guides, scenic fares, personal belongings, etc. To optimize the price paid for the trip, businesses can offer tourists options such as joining groups, buying land tours to minimize costs, or finding ways to provide more "value" for them. In addition, increasing the linkage with related service providers (restaurants, garages, hotels, etc) is also an effective solution. And a reasonable price should go hand in hand with guaranteed service quality. Enterprises can set service quality standards to control, evaluate and adjust adventure tours organized, especially those related to tourism personnel. Moreover, it is necessary to develop appropriate communication strategies and programs by meeting the social value needs of target customers. In particular, including showing the achievements that tourists can reap when participating in the adventure, such as practicing bravery, honing skills, conquering nature, learning culture, etc. All will create the image of customers who love experience, desire to conquer nature and are eager to learn and explore. Thereby creating excitement for customers, giving them a feeling of being viewed positively, feeling confident and comfortable when sharing about their trip.



The research has also added to the literature other aspects when approaching from the customer side. Most previous studies only focused on favorable factors, but did not mention adverse barriers in their awareness. Different from other types of tourism, adventure tourism is characterized by its risk (Hudson, 2003), and with the hard category, this becomes even more obvious. It promotes experience and adventure, thus requiring participants to meet health requirements, as well as certain experience and skills to ensure safety. But previous literature suggests that the risk aspect is not enough to capture adventure tourism behavior (Cater, 2006; Holm et al., 2017; Kane & Tucker, 2004; Varley, 2006). The research results have shown the opposite when it comes to the negative influence of perceived risk on tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The lower the perception of risk, the higher the satisfaction of the tourist experience. However, this is also assessed by Varley (2006) as being controllable by tourism professionals. Information including the destination, route, guides and drivers, essential and important items, especially information about expenses should be clearly shown to tourists. In addition, professionals also need to show the commitment to ensuring the safety by providing insurance to tourists before the trip, information on how to prevent injuries, necessary skills, as well as ensuring food hygiene and safety for meals.

The results also noted that ideal self-image, or perception of oneself before an adventure, had no impact on a tourist's satisfaction or behavioral intentions, but actual self-image did. This adds to previous literature on the complexity of tourists' psychological developments. While the value drivers assessed previously were mainly formed after tourists had actually experienced this type of tourism, tourists' psychological developments can even be formed before they participation, about how they will think about themselves and the destination (Abdallat, 2012). The study applied this perspective and the results showed that satisfaction and behavioral intention only really increased when actual self-image was perceived. However, it shows the opposite of Abdallat's research when he pointed out that the ideal perspective has an impact on satisfaction, but the actual aspect has not. So, assessments of customer perceived complexity and value are further reinforced. Based on a review of current research, this further emphasizes the importance of the tour program being well organized so that customers can feel their image is associated with the adventure and with the destination, increasing their satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

In the multicultural context, differences in behavioral intentions of Asian and Western tourists were found, as well as differences between different income groups. Western tourists are more individualistic and are more price sensitive (Williams et al., 2017), while tourists from Asia often choose less risky options. This is also partly reflected in the choice of the study sample, as Asian travelers are more likely to choose more popular activities such as hiking, trekking and climbing, while Western travelers have a wider range of options, including higher-risk options such as paragliding or skiing, etc. On the other hand, tourists with the highest income levels did not have the highest behavioral intentions for this type of tourism. This may explain that high-income tourists may love or be interested in other types of tourism such as leisure tourism, or may require adventure tours with more luxury criteria. This underlines the service process's flexibility in order to provide customers with the most relevant and high-quality adventures to satisfy all tourists.

## 6. Conclusion and future research

The research objectives have been completed and there have been both theoretical and practical contributions. The results confirm that customer value factors including functional value, price value, emotional value, social value and novelty value all have an impact on satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Thereby confirming the significance of applying multidimensional models to solve problems related to cognition, values and behavior. Williams et al. (2017) argue that novelty value and emotional value are the two strongest determinants of tourist satisfaction and behavior in adventure tourism. Placed in the context of strenuous adventure tourism in mountainous and rural areas, this is shown even more firmly. Besides, the differences in this type of tourism also bring different perspectives in the psychological evolution of tourists. The results show that actual self-image is also an important factor affecting tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while perceived risk will be a relatively large barrier that makes tourists feel dissatisfied with the adventure and reduce future behavioral intentions. On the other hand,

“switching costs” have no impact on the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention. The study also added important cross-cultural knowledge by pointing out the differences between the behavior of Asian and Western tourists. In comparison, Asian tourists seem to be the most shy about adventurous experiences.

The study still has limitations that need to be addressed in the future. Firstly, as mentioned, individual psychology is relatively complex and difficult to grasp, requiring more related experiments along with perspectives corresponding to other multidimensional models. In fact, customer value is also approached from many different aspects. For example, Lee et al. (2007) approach customer value through two dimensions: hedonistic value and utilitarian value. Or based on differences in customer characteristics, Eid (2015) points out that for Muslim travelers, their satisfaction is also influenced by the “Islamic attribute value” derived from their own religion. Further research can expand and explore other aspects of customer value for specific types of customers, as well as for other types of tourism. In addition, there are many other variables that are able to moderate the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions in tourism such as subjective knowledge, variety-seeking, etc, so that further studies can examine the model with new regulatory variables. Secondly, the assessment of cross-culture in the research article only stops at Asian and Western cultures, which can be expanded or more specific. The scope of research can be deployed on a broader scale, thereby becoming global; or narrow it down to specific countries to have the most realistic recommendations for each region or country. Finally, some aspects may have been overlooked. Most typically, previous studies have shown that adventure tourism is a type of tourism associated with nature and locality (Beedie & Hudson, 2003; Mason et al., 2018). Aspects related to social responsibility should be mentioned. On the other hand, sustainable tourism models or green tourism can be inseparable aspects to exploit. Sustainable tourism or green tourism are also the most concerned tourism issues and trends today, but have not been deeply explored for the current research topic. Further research may focus on exploring this topic to find friendly and sustainable development solutions for the “smokeless industry” of the world.

## Authors distributions

Authors Ms. Ha Nguyen-Van and Mr. Loi Duc Nguyen contributed significantly to the conception and design of the work, interpreted the data, drafted the article and revised it critically for intellectual content, and were responsible for final approval of the session version that will be published. Co-authors Mr. Anh Hai Le, Ms. Hanh Thi My Nguyen and Mr. Quoc Nam Dang participated in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and assisted in the design and drafting of the work. Ms. Ha Nguyen-Van and Mr. Quoc Nam Dang also asked for the funding for this paper. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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## Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Abdallat, M. M. (2012). Actual self-image, ideal self-image and the relation between satisfaction and destination loyalty. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 1(4), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-0269.1000102>

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