

Title:

**The influence of Malaysian students' travel motives on their intentions to discover new places and things**

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# **The influence of Malaysian students' travel motives on their intentions to discover new places and things**

## Abstract

*According to the WTTC (2015) Economic Impact Report on Malaysia, outbound tourism expenditure in 2014 was Malaysian Ringgit 37.3 billion Malaysian Ringgit (approximately USD 9 billion). It is expected to reach Malaysian Ringgit 78.7 billion Malaysian Ringgit by 2025 (approximately USD 19 billion). The reported growth rate of 7% in outbound travel expenditure reflects the significance of the Malaysian outbound tourist market. This study adapts the Leisure Motivation Scale to investigate the travel motives of Malaysian university students. A theoretical model is proposed with seven hypotheses. Four hypotheses test the relationship between constructs pursuing challenge and exploration, relaxation and building relationships with experiencing adventure. The fourth tests the relationship between experiencing adventure and the intention to discover new places and things. The model also tests the mediating effect of the experiencing adventure between the three constructs and intention to discover new places and things. Structural Equation Modelling with maximum likelihood method is used to test all relationships simultaneously from the 569 responses using Amos 20.0. Findings from the study suggest that pursuing challenge and exploration, relaxation and building relationships on vacation influence the perception of the importance of experiencing adventure. Additionally, the positive effect of the perception of the importance of experiencing adventure on the intention to discover new places and things was also verified. The mediating effects of experiencing adventure were not significant. The study also has implications for tourism industry practitioners. From a marketing perspective, new and unexplored markets present potentially uncontested opportunities and therefore significant profit potential for tourism destinations struggling to gain an edge over competitors. The new insights generated from these test findings are unique as they reflect on an unexplored market segment in the ASEAN Region.*

## Keywords:

*Travel motives, students, adventure, Malaysia, leisure motivation.*

## Introduction

Exploring new markets and studying travel motives continue to be areas of interest to investigate for both tourism researchers and practitioners. Determining the travel motives of university students as potential travellers from these markets, should provide new insights about their specific interests and travel motives. Previous studies found that the travel behaviour of this segment is complex and unique (Limanond, Butsingkorn and Chermkhunthod, 2011; Kim, Hallab and Kim, 2012; Chen, 2012; Xiao, So and Wang, 2015). Some findings suggest that even short study trips can influence their attitudes and perceptions towards travel (Peggy, 2011; Eom, Stone, & Ghosh, 2009; Bywater, 1993; Carr, 2005; Hobson & Josiam, 1992). Significant reductions in the cost of travel, discounted tour packages and the travel motives of students including international student exchange programmes all exert a positive influence on the travel motivation of students. Studies have determined that past travel experiences and perceptions about a destination impact upon travel motives (Bonn, Joseph and Mo, 2015; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Chon, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Xiao et al, 2015). Hence, investigations into new markets and their travel trends, perceptions about destinations, travel motives and specific interests in touristic activities are important to sustaining tourism growth. Findings from such studies add to the body of literature and provide valuable intelligence to destination marketers developing targeted strategies. Malaysia is one such example of an unexplored market in relation to New Zealand as its target destination. The current study therefore seeks to answer the following questions whilst exploring the travel motives of Malaysian university students as potential travellers:

- (a) What is the relationship between pursuing challenge, exploration, and relaxation and building relationships while on vacation with experiencing adventure?
- (b) What is the impact of experiencing adventure on intention to discover new places and things?
- (c) Does experiencing adventure mediate the relationship between pursuing challenge, exploration, relaxation, building relationships and intention to discover new places and things ?

The student travel segment, and particularly the heterogeneous characteristics of student motivations to travel from different geographical locations, remain relatively unexplored within the body of research (Xiao et al, 2015; Bicikova, 2014). So, what drives students to travel and how unique is their travel behaviour? Researchers have found that ego influences the inner drive to travel (Chhabra, 2012) and that the travel behaviour remains complex and unique (Kim, Hallab & Kim, 2012; Chen, 2012). There are a limited number of studies that explore the travel behaviour of students from different locations (Grigolon, Kempermann & Timmermans, 2012). Travel as part of a formal study programme enhances students' understanding of global issues, events, other cultures and the world around them (Ballantyne, Gannon, Berret, & Wells, 2012). The literature suggests that multinational corporations value any international education, work or travel experience in prospective employees. Such experiences lead to better acculturation into diverse environments (Ballantyne et al., 2012). Significance and expansion of students' travel is attracting new destinations and new

experiences to explore. Deresiewicz (2009) finds that American students are now heading towards destinations such as China, India, Kenya, Nicaragua and Kenya instead of Europe. This represents an important shift and opens opportunities for global destinations beyond Europe. The current tertiary student cohort is presented with ever-increasing opportunities for study-related travel abroad, international study programmes and internships, reduced and competitive airfares and an acquired need to travel. Several studies investigating students' travel behaviour and interest have been published, but these are mostly limited to few selected nations; Deresiewicz (2009) and Chen (2012) studied American students; Xu, Morgan, and Song (2009) studied students travel behaviour from the UK and China; Shoham, Schrage, and Eeden (2004) investigated students' travel behaviour from the US, South Africa and Israel; Phau, Shanka, and Dhayan (2009) students travel intention with regard to Mauritius; Wiers-Jensses (2003) with regard to Norway; Wang and Davidson (2008) studied Chinese students; Shan, Shah and Suat (2013) studied international students perception of Malaysia; and Bicikova (2014) studied British students travel behaviour. Bicikova (2014) states in her study that despite general perceptions of a lucrative student traveller market, relatively little is known about their holiday behaviour. Though research continues in the West and in some Asian Nations on student travel market, largely Malaysian students' travel market remains under-researched. Significance of this market is evident from the WTTC (2015) Economic Impact Report on Malaysia. The report suggests that tourist outbound expenditure in 2014 was Malaysian Ringgit 37.3 billion Malaysian Ringgit (approximately USD 9 billion). It is expected to reach Malaysian Ringgit 78.7 billion Malaysian Ringgit by 2025 (approximately USD 19 billion). The report suggests a growth rate of 7% in outbound travel expenditure which reflects the significance of the outbound tourist market from Malaysia. Tourist destinations interested in taking a slice of this market would do well to analyse and understand the travel motives and behaviours of the student travel segment.

## **Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development**

The current study attempts to fill gaps in the literature by providing insights into the travel motives of students from Malaysia. The growth of travel and tourism in Malaysia, (both existing and potential) is evident from Blanke and Chiesa's report (2013). The importance of the Malaysian market as a generator of outbound tourists is also evident from the WTTC (2015) Economic Impact Report. However, the dearth of literature investigating Malaysian's travel motives generally and their interest in tourist destinations such as New Zealand specifically, is almost non-existent; hence the impetus to analyse the segment. The emerging ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) market segment of university students represents potential travellers expected to enjoy careers with above average incomes and ample means for leisure/vacation travel. This study therefore proposes a theoretical model that adds to the literature on the student travel segment within the context of Malaysia. The model does so by testing the importance and relationship of constructs such as pursuing challenge, relaxation and building relationship while on vacation with experiencing adventure. The model further proposes and tests whether 'experiencing adventure' mediates the

relationship between the above constructs and the ‘intention to discover new places and things’. These constructs are based on the variables drawn from validated sources such as the Leisure Motivation Scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1983) its modified version used by Ryan and Glendon (1998) and other published studies which have used touristic attractions of New Zealand to gauge interest of potential travellers (Mohsin 2005, Mohsin and Ryan 2007, Mohsin and Alsawafi 2011). These and other studies have assessed student travel behaviour and motives from different countries as stated earlier. However, a gap remains in the literature within the context of Malaysian students’ travel behaviour and motives. The proposed model is unique being the first such attempt to gauge their interest and motives as potential travellers.

The following hypotheses have been developed to test and propose implications from this study.

Different studies have suggested that tourists look for different experiences in planning their holiday and that this is linked to their stage in life. It also regulates their travel need and type of experience they seek (Kim, 2007; Dotson, Clark, & Dave, 2008). Travellers such as university students, are usually attracted to risk-taking and sensation-seeking activities. This shapes their travel motives and influences their destination selection (Pizam, Jeong, Reichel & van Boemmel, 2004). The literature however, does not fully explore holiday motives of the university students generation from the ASEAN Region generally and Malaysia specifically. The question arises: does the pursuit of satisfaction gained from challenges and exploration, with regard to Malaysian students, have any relationship with the perceived importance of experiencing adventure? The growth outbound tourism from Malaysia (WTTC, 2015) and the potential reflected by university student travellers has helped to generate the following hypothesis:

*H1: the more Malaysian student tourists pursue challenge and exploration on their vacations, the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure.*

Authors have researched and debated that travel motives are multiple and vary from person to person and segment to segment (Correia, Valle & Moco 2007; Jonsson & Devonish, 2008; Kim, 2007; Meng & Uysal, 2008). Tourist relaxation for example, is impacted by attractive natural and environmental resources (Trunfio, Petruzzellis, & Nigro, 2006). The relationship between experiencing adventure and pursuing relaxation within the context of Malaysian Students is explored via the following proposed hypothesis:

*H2: the more Malaysian student tourists pursue relaxation on their vacations, the lower they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure.*

Beard and Ragheb’s (1983) ‘Leisure Motivation Scale’ suggests that building relationship, making new friends and social interactions are amongst the motives for

holidaying. This Scale has been used by several authors who continue to demonstrate its utility and its validity (Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Loundsbury & Hoopes, 1998; Newlands, 2004). Does the pursuit of building relationships while on vacation impact the perceived importance of experiencing adventure on Malaysians? To test this relationship, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3: the more Malaysian student tourists pursue building relationships on their vacations, the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure.*

The intention is further enhanced if it involves experiencing adventure through activities which lead to new experiences and new things to discover while on a vacation (William & Soutar, 2000; Crompton, 1979; Pizam et al., 2004). Other studies suggest that the trend to discover new adventures and experiences is growing (Bentley, Page, & Laird, 2003; Heung & Leong, 2006; Xu et al., 2009; Bicikova, 2014). Hence, when it comes to Malaysian university students, the relationship between experiencing adventure and the intention to discover new places and things is tested through the following hypothesis:

*H4: the more Malaysian student tourists perceive the importance of experiencing adventure, the higher their intention to discover new places and things.*

Examining the role of experiencing adventure is important in understanding the relationship amongst the constructs used in this study. In testing this unique relationship within the context of Malaysian university students, we also analyse the mediating effect of experiencing adventure on pursuing challenges, relaxation, building relationships and the intention to discover new places and things. Though several studies have highlighted the role of exploration, relaxation and building relationships and experiencing adventure (Kim, 2007; Dotson, Clark, & Dave, 2008; Pizam et al., 2004, Correia, Valle & Moco 2007; Jonsson & Devonish, 2008; Kim, 2007; Meng & Uysal, 2008; Trunfio et al., 2006; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Loundsbury & Hoopes, 1998; Newlands, 2004; William & Soutar, 2000; Crompton, 1979; Bentley, Page, & Laird, 2003; Heung & Leong, 2006; Xu et al., 2009; Bicikova, 2014), this study investigate the mediating effect of experiencing adventure on the three constructs and the intention to discover new places and things. To test this mediating effect the following three hypotheses are proposed within the context of Malaysian university students:

### ***Mediating hypotheses***

*H5: the perception of importance of experiencing adventure mediates the relationship between the pursuit of challenge and exploration on vacations and the intention to discover new places and things.*

*H6: the perception of importance of experiencing adventure mediates the relationship between the pursuing relaxation on vacations and intention to discover new places and things.*

*H7: the perception of importance of experiencing adventure mediates the relationship between the pursuit of building relationships on vacations and intention to discover new places and things.*

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**Insert Figure 1 about here**

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In summary, our hypotheses propose to test the relationships shown in the conceptual model (Figure 1) within the context of Malaysian university students. Their travel motives are tested to examine the relationship between pursuing challenges, relaxation, building relationships and experiencing adventure. Further, the presence of any mediating effect of experiencing adventure between the three constructs and the intention to discover new places and things is also tested.

## **Methodology**

### ***Sample and Data Collection Procedure***

The sample for the current study comprises 569 Malaysian tertiary level students. The students were chosen as they represent a segment with high potential to travel. Appendix 1 displays the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. Convenience sampling has been used to collect data, the method helps to gather information which is representative of the population (Malhotra, 2010).

A structured survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was written and administered in the English language as this is the standard language used in the respondents' university education. The questionnaire was developed after an extensive review of relevant literature and advice from two senior academic experts in the field. Churchill's (1979) recommendation of seeking experts' advice to assess content validity was adopted.

To obtain credible responses help was obtained from colleagues and senior student volunteers to administer the survey. Students were approached in public places around the university campuses and were requested to answer the questionnaires. Any questions from the respondents were addressed by the survey administrators. The administrators were appropriately briefed about the survey and informed that participation was absolutely voluntary. Responses from the complete sample of 569 participants were collected over a period of three months.

## ***Development of Measures***

The structured survey questionnaire consisted of three sections. The measures used in the first section of the questionnaire were largely based on the Leisure Motivation Scale (Beard & Ragheb, 1983) and its modified version used by Ryan and Glendon (1998). The other measures relating to touristic activities offered by a destination as stated in Table 1 were adapted from the work of Mohsin (2005), Mohsin and Ryan (2007) and Mohsin and Alsawafi (2011). The authors have used touristic activities offered by New Zealand in their studies. These comprised the second section of the questionnaire. Other studies which helped to develop measures and gauge perceptions about travel and touristic activities of Malaysian students in the second section of the questionnaire included Kim (2007), Dotson, Clark, and Dave (2008), Pizam et al. (2004), Correia, Valle and Moco (2007), Jonsson and Devonish (2008), Kim (2007), Meng and Uysal (2008), Trunfio et al. (2006), Ryan and Glendon (1998), Loundsbury and Hoopes (1998), Newlands (2004), William and Soutar (2000), Crompton (1979), Bentley, Page, and Laird (2003), Heung and Leong (2006), Xu et al. (2009), and Bicikova (2014). The third section collected demographic information about the respondents.

All measures were assessed on a 7-point Likert Scale which ranged from 1 (of no importance) to 7 (extremely important). Table 1 provides examples of variables used in the survey questionnaire.

## **Analysis and Results**

### ***Reliability and Validity***

We followed the procedure proposed by Gerbing and Anderson (1988) to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model. We started by evaluating the psychometric properties of the five constructs involved in the conceptual model. We initially performed exploratory factor analyses (EFA), computed item to total correlations, and calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs. After this initial analysis all our measures were considered uni-dimensional and showed accepted reliability levels with all coefficient alphas equal or above 0.70 (Cronbach, 1951).

In the next step discriminant validity, convergent validity, and scale reliability with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were assessed based on the procedure suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988) and O'Leary-Kelly and Vokurka (1998). Tables 1 and 2 display the results obtained from the estimation of the CFA model. The results obtained from the estimation of the CFA model indicate that the overall chi-square for this model was 452.137 ( $p < 0.001$ ) with 159 degrees of freedom (df). Four measures of fit were examined: the comparative fit index (CFI=0.922), Tucker-Lewis fit index (TLI=0.908), incremental fit index (IFI=0.923), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA=0.066). The results of the CFA model also show that the items employed to measure the constructs were both valid and reliable. More specifically, convergent validity is evidenced by the large and



significant standardized loadings ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < .05$ ) of the items on the respective constructs. Discriminant validity, on the other hand, was assessed by observing the construct inter-correlations. These were significantly different from 1, and the shared variance between any two constructs (i.e. the square of their inter-correlation) was less than the average variance explained in the items by the construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 2).

Regarding the reliability test, all constructs present desirable levels of composite reliability as presented in Table 1. The lowest composite reliability scores was *pursue building relationships* (CR=0.71) and the highest was *experience adventure* (CR=0.89), meaning that all composite reliability scores fell well above the cut-off point established by the literature (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In terms of variance extracted, all constructs exceeded the recommended level of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), except for *building relationships* (0.46). Therefore, we can conclude that for all constructs the indicators were sufficient and adequate in terms of how the measurement model was specified.

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**Insert Table 1 about here**

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**Insert Table 2 about here**

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### ***Testing of Hypotheses***

We applied structural equation modelling using AMOS 20.0 (maximum likelihood method) to estimate the research model and test the hypothesized relationships. The results indicate a good fit of the specified model. The overall chi-square for the model was 363.302 with 125 degrees of freedom. Based on the large sample size (569), we decided to apply other fit indices. RMSEA is a correction measure for the tendency of  $\chi^2$  to reject models in big samples (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). We also used other measures to examine the structural diagnosis for relative global fit following the paradigm suggested by Bollen (1989). All four measures were within the recommended threshold established by the literature: RMSEA 0.058; CFI=0.943; TLI=0.930; IFI=0.943 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2001; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). Thus, the model was deemed acceptable. The relationships proposed in the model follow and the standardized path coefficient estimates are presented in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Consistent to H1, the results indicate that the more Malaysian student tourists pursue challenge and exploration on their vacations, the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure (0.458;  $p < 0.01$ ). This strong and positive result confirms our

expectation that there is an influence of students' willing to pursuing challenge during their vacation on experiencing adventure.

The relationship between pursuing relaxation on their vacations and the perceived importance of experiencing adventure was negative and significant, providing support for H2 (-0.118;  $p < 0.05$ ). That result reveals the more Malaysian student tourists pursue relaxation on their vacations, the lower they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure.

Supportive findings for H3 reveal the more Malaysian student tourists pursue building relationships on their vacations, the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure (0.224;  $p < 0.01$ ).

The results for H4 which are supportive, extend the scope of the previous three hypotheses by suggesting that those Malaysian student tourists who perceive the importance of experiencing adventure present a higher intention to discover new places and things (0.157;  $p < 0.01$ ).

In addition to testing those four direct effects, we specified three hypotheses to analyse the mediating role of *experience adventure* between the independent constructs *pursue challenge and exploration*, *pursue relaxation and pursue building relationships*, and *intention to discover new places and things*. We tested whether the mediating variable *experience adventure* accounts for a proportion of the relationship between the predictor variables (*pursue challenge and exploration*, *pursue relaxation and pursue building relationships*) and the criterion variable *intention to discover new places and things*. The mediating variable is employed to reveal the existence of a significant intervening effect of the mediating variable (*experience adventure*) between the exogenous and dependent variables. We applied the bootstrapping method to test the mediating effect because it provides a higher level of power and control over Type 1 error compared to Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach (Cheung & Lau, 2008). Table 4 shows the results of total, direct and indirect effects of *pursue challenge and exploration*, *pursue relaxation and pursue building relationships* on *intention to discover new places and things* through experiencing adventure.

As a necessary precondition for testing the mediating role of *experience adventure*, the direct effects of *pursue challenge and exploration*, *pursue relaxation and pursue building relationships* on *intention to discover new places and things* must be significant. That precondition was not met by two of the independent variables in model. The direct effects of *pursue challenge and exploration* (-.117;  $p > 0.10$ ) and *pursue building relationships* (-.110;  $p > 0.10$ ) on *intention to discover new places and things* were not significant. Those results fail to provide support for hypotheses H5 and H7.

According to the mediating results we can argue that the relationship between *pursue relaxation and intention to discover new places and things* is partially mediated by *experiencing adventure*. This can be concluded based on the fact that the initial condition of

direct effect of pursue relaxation on intention to travel was met when the mediating variable was not present in the model (.170;  $p < 0.01$ ) and the same path coefficient remained significant (.311;  $p < 0.01$ ) when then the mediating variable was included in the model. Thus, hypothesis H6 was partially supported.

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**Insert Table 3 about here**

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**Insert Table 4 about here**

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**Insert Figure 2 about here**

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## **Discussion and Implications**

The significance of studies like this one, which explore new tourism markets, lies in understanding the motives and characteristics of those markets, and determine their potential in generating outbound tourists. Such studies add to the literature and help destination marketers to develop customised and targeted market strategies. From this perspective, the current study adds value by investigating travel motives of the young university students from Malaysia, a market which had not yet been explored.

The current study investigates Malaysian university students' travel motives, their interest in touristic activities offered by destinations such as New Zealand and their interest to discover new places and things. A conceptual theoretical model with 7-hypotheses is proposed (see Figure 1). The model in testing relationships between *pursuing challenges*, *exploration*, *relaxation* and *building relationships* with *experiencing adventure* specifies the travel motivations of the university students from Malaysians. The survey instrument gauged their interest in *challenging their abilities*, *using physical skills*, *using imagination*, *avoiding hustle and bustle of daily life*, *building relationships with family and friends*. The study further investigates if *experiencing adventure* mediates their intention to discover new places. As part of adventure their interest was sought in activities such as *water skiing*, *rafting*, *kayaking*, *bungy jumping* etc. The literature indicates that the student market lacks homogeneity (Hallab, Price and Fournier 2006, Kim, Jogaratnam, and Noh 2006, Kim, and

Jogarathnam 2003, Morgan and Xu 2009, Richards 2002, Xiao et al 2015, Bicikova 2014) in terms of travel motivation and preference of activities, hence exploring the Malaysian students market provides new insights. The testing of the construct *pursuing challenge and exploration* and its relationship with *experiencing adventure* results of **H1**, suggest that the more Malaysian student tourists pursue challenge and exploration on their vacations, the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure. It is a new insight about this market segment, and is consistent with other studies (Xu et al., 2009; Chaipinit, and Phetvaroon, 2011, Zhang & Peng 2014). The implications of this finding is that it provides tourism destination managers/marketers an opportunity to understand that Malaysians would be keen to experience adventure through some touristic activities which could challenge their physical ability. Such activities could range from soft to hard adventure and could be used in the promotional campaigns.

Since the travel motives vary from market to market or even from person to person, literature suggests that exploring travel motives helps to determine travel interest and patterns (Shields, 2011; Correia, Valle & Moco, 2007; Jonsson & Devonish, 2008; Kim, 2007; Meng & Uysal, 2008). Some studies suggest that with regard to the university students' relaxation and sensation seeking impacts their travel motivation (Dan 1977, Fodness, 1994, Pizam et al 2004, Carr 2005, Field 1999). Hence if the Malaysian university students were to pursue relaxation on their vacation what would they be pursuing? Findings as part of **H2** of the current study reveal that they will not seek any adventure activity. The result suggests that the more Malaysian student tourists pursue relaxation on their vacations, the lower they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure. This is consistent with general observation that the Asians usually do not relate adventure to relaxation as opposed to Europeans who identify adventure activities as a relaxation activity. This adds another new insight within the context of the Malaysian students' travel motives.

Further, the current study explores how building relationships on vacations affects this market segment's perception of the importance of *experiencing adventure*? Doing things with family and friends has shown significance in the study undertaken by Moscardo, Pearce, Morrison, Green, and O'Leary (2000), Xu et al. (2009). In the context of Malaysian students, results of **H3** reveal that the more Malaysian students pursue *building relationships* on their vacation the higher they perceive the importance of experiencing adventure. In other words, experiencing adventure can be promoted to this segment as a family or group holiday package. The literature, by suggesting that the trend to discover new adventures and experiences is growing (Bentley, Page, & Laird, 2003; Heung & Leong, 2006; Chi and Qu 2008, Xu et al., 2009; Tung and Ritchie 2011, Bicikova, 2014) raises the question: how are Malaysian university students' responding to this growing trend? The analysis of responses tests the relationship between *experiencing adventure* and *intention to discover new places and things* as part of the **H4**. The results provide another new insight: Malaysian student tourists who perceive the importance of experiencing adventure present a higher intention to discover new places and things. Hence promoting adventure activities such as water skiing, rafting, kayaking, bungee jumping ballooning etc would have a positive impact on their intention to discover new places and things.

The second stage of the model tested whether *experiencing adventure* mediates the effect of *pursuing challenge, exploration, and relaxation* and *building relationships* on intention to discover new places and things. The literature informs about the role of exploration, relaxation and building relationships and experiencing adventure through several published studies (Sung, Morrison, and O’Leary 1997, Kim, 2007; Dotson, Clark, & Dave, 2008; Pizam et al., 2004; Correia, Valle, & Moco, 2007; Jonsson & Devonish, 2008; Kim, 2007; Meng & Uysal, 2008, Meng 2006; Trunfio et al., 2006; Ryan & Glendon, 1998; Loundsbury & Hoopes, 1998; Newlands, 2004; William & Soutar, 2000; Crompton, 1979; Bentley, Page, & Laird, 2003; Heung & Leong, 2006; Xu et al., 2009; Bicikova, 2014). We specified three hypotheses to analyse the mediating role of *experiencing adventure* between the three constructs *pursue challenge and exploration, pursue relaxation* and *pursue building relationships* and *intention to discover new places and things*. The direct effects of pursue challenge and exploration and pursue building relationships on intention to discover new places and things were not significant as per results of **H5** and **H7**. This finding suggests that experiencing adventure does not mediate Malaysian university students’ intention to discover new places and things when their travel motive is to pursue challenge or use vacation to build relationships. The new insight here suggests that discovering new places and things is of interest to this market segment. With regard to the mediating role of *experiencing adventure* between *pursuing relaxation* and *intention to discover new places and things* as part of the **H6**, results indicate statistical significance. It could be argued that according to the mediating results, relationship between *pursuing relaxation* and *intention to discover new places and things* is partially mediated by *experiencing adventure*. This argument is based on the fact that the initial condition of direct effect of pursue relaxation on intention to travel was met when the mediating variable was not present in the model and the same path coefficient remained significant when the mediating variable was included in the model. Thus, it could be argued that largely the effect of *experiencing adventure* as a mediating construct between the constructs *pursue challenge and exploration, pursue relaxation* and *pursue building relationships* and *intention to discover new places and things* is not significant. The three constructs are capable on their own to generate a positive impact on the intention to discover new places and things within the context of young Malaysian university students. The implication here is that the Malaysian students are prepared to explore, relax and build relationships with an intention to discover new places irrespective of whether it provides an adventure experience or not. This is a new contribution to the literature within the context of travel attitudes of young Malaysians.

To summarise, findings suggest both theoretical and practical implications. The testing of seven hypotheses, has shown the relationships between *pursue challenge, exploration, relaxation, building relationships* and *experiencing adventure* to be significant. It indicates that the Malaysian university students’ travel motives include challenge and exploration, relaxation and building relationships, and some form of adventure activities. Further, the mediating effect of experiencing adventure between the three constructs stated above and intention to discover new places and things is somewhat insignificant.

***So what is the significance and implications of this study?***

The uniqueness of this study resides in its findings which provide new insights in to the travel motives of young Malaysian university students. Research on Asian students' travel motives is generally scarce when compared with equivalent studies of the travel behaviour of students from the Western countries. The current study with its focus on an Asian Nation therefore makes a significant contribution to the literature on travel motivations of Asian students. The theoretical conceptualisation and contribution is through the model which tests relationship between pursuing *challenges, relaxation, building relationships* and *experiencing adventure* and if *experiencing adventure* has any mediating effect on Malaysian students' *intention to discover new places and things*. The new insights generated from these test findings are unique as they reflect on an unexplored market segment in the ASEAN Region. From a marketing perspective, new and unexplored markets present potentially uncontested opportunities and therefore significant profit potential for tourism destinations struggling to gain an edge over competitors. The practical significance of this study emerges from its findings providing significant information as to what tourist destinations needs to consider when developing promotional strategies for an Asian nation which is part of the ASEAN region. Hence, the study has implications which are both significant and real, for tourism industry practitioners.

Like any study, the current one has limitations such as the subjectivity of responses provided by interviewees. This precludes a claim of outright conclusiveness and the results should be considered in light of this limitation. However, this study provides value through its findings for other researchers undertaking comparative studies. It also paves the way for further research with a larger sample size, and foci on cultural and other leisure-related issues.

**Table 1**  
**Constructs Measurements Summary**  
**Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Scales Reliability**

Constructs and items	Regression Weights	Standardized Loading	t-value
<b>Intention to discover new places and things</b>	Set to 1	1	
<b>(CR* = .81; AVE** = .52; Alpha*** =.808) Pursue challenge and exploration</b>			
S1_12 To challenge my abilities	Set to 1	,833	
S1_13 To use my physical abilities/skills in sport	,969	,723	17,362
S1_11 To gain a feeling of belonging with places	,873	,702	16,808
S1_10 To use my imagination	,761	,630	14,886
<b>(CR = .75; AVE = .50; Alpha = .741) Pursue relaxation</b>			
S1_03 To avoid the hustle and bustle of daily life	,783	,598	11,761
S1_05 To be in a calm atmosphere	,945	,711	12,819
S1_04 To relax physically	Set to 1	,801	
<b>(CR = .71; AVE = .46; Alpha = .704) Pursue building relationships</b>			
S1_09 To build relationships with my family	Set to 1	,581	
S1_14 To build relationships with close friends	1,164	,757	11,182
S1_07 To have a good time with existing friends	1,063	,681	10,909
<b>(CR = .89; AVE = .55; Alpha = .895) Experiencing adventure</b>			
S2_26 To experience water skiing	Set to 1	,746	
S2_08 To experience rafting	1,041	,796	18,852
S2_02 A chance to go canoeing/kayaking	1,098	,826	19,589
S2_11 To experience skiing	,985	,722	16,995
S2_27 To experience bungee jumping	,901	,604	17,201
S2_03 A chance to go for ballooning	1,041	,789	18,668
S2_04 To satisfy a sense of adventure	,820	,677	15,859

***Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the Confirmation Factor Analysis***

Chi-square (df) = 452,137 (159);  $p < 0,001$

RMSEA = 0.066; CFI= 0.922; TLI= 0.908; IFI= 0.923

Note:

\*Composite reliability (CR) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988)

\*\*Average Variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981)

\*\*\*Alpha (Cronbach, 1951)

**Table 2**  
**Correlation between Constructs**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Challenge and exploration	<b>4.67</b>	<b>1.36</b>	.72				
2. Relaxation	<b>5.25</b>	<b>1.23</b>	.39	.71			
3. Building Relationships	<b>5.30</b>	<b>1.21</b>	.54	.43	.68		
4. Adventure	<b>5.03</b>	<b>1.40</b>	.53	.16	.34	.74	
5. Intention to discover new place and things	<b>5.79</b>	<b>1.25</b>	.25	.34	.22	.23	<i>1</i>

Note: the diagonal is the square root of the AVE

**Table 3**  
**Coefficients of Structural Relationships and Goodness-of-fit Indices of the Structural Model**

<b>Linkages in the model</b>	<b>Standardized Estimates</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Hypothesis result</b>
<b>Hypotheses</b>			
H1: Pursue challenge and explore → Experiencing adventure	.458	7.232***	S
H2: Pursue relaxation → Experiencing adventure	-.118	-2.179**	S
H3: Pursue building relationships → Experiencing adventure	.224	3.536***	S
H4: Experiencing adventure → Intention to discover new places and things	.157	2.958***	S

**Goodness-of-Fit Indices**

Chi-square (df) = 363.302 (125);  $p < 0.001$

RMSEA = 0.058; CFI= 0.943; TLI= 0.930; IFI= 0.943

\*  $p < .10$

\*\*  $p < .05$

\*\*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 4**  
**Standardized direct, indirect and total effects on Intention to discover new places and things<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Direct Effects</b>	<b>Indirect Effects</b>	<b>Total Effects</b>
H5) Pursue challenge and exploration	-.117 <sup>ns</sup>	.020***	-.027 <sup>ns</sup>
H6) Pursue relaxation	.188***	.057***	.172***
H7) Pursue building relationships	-.110 <sup>ns</sup>	.008***	-.073 <sup>ns</sup>

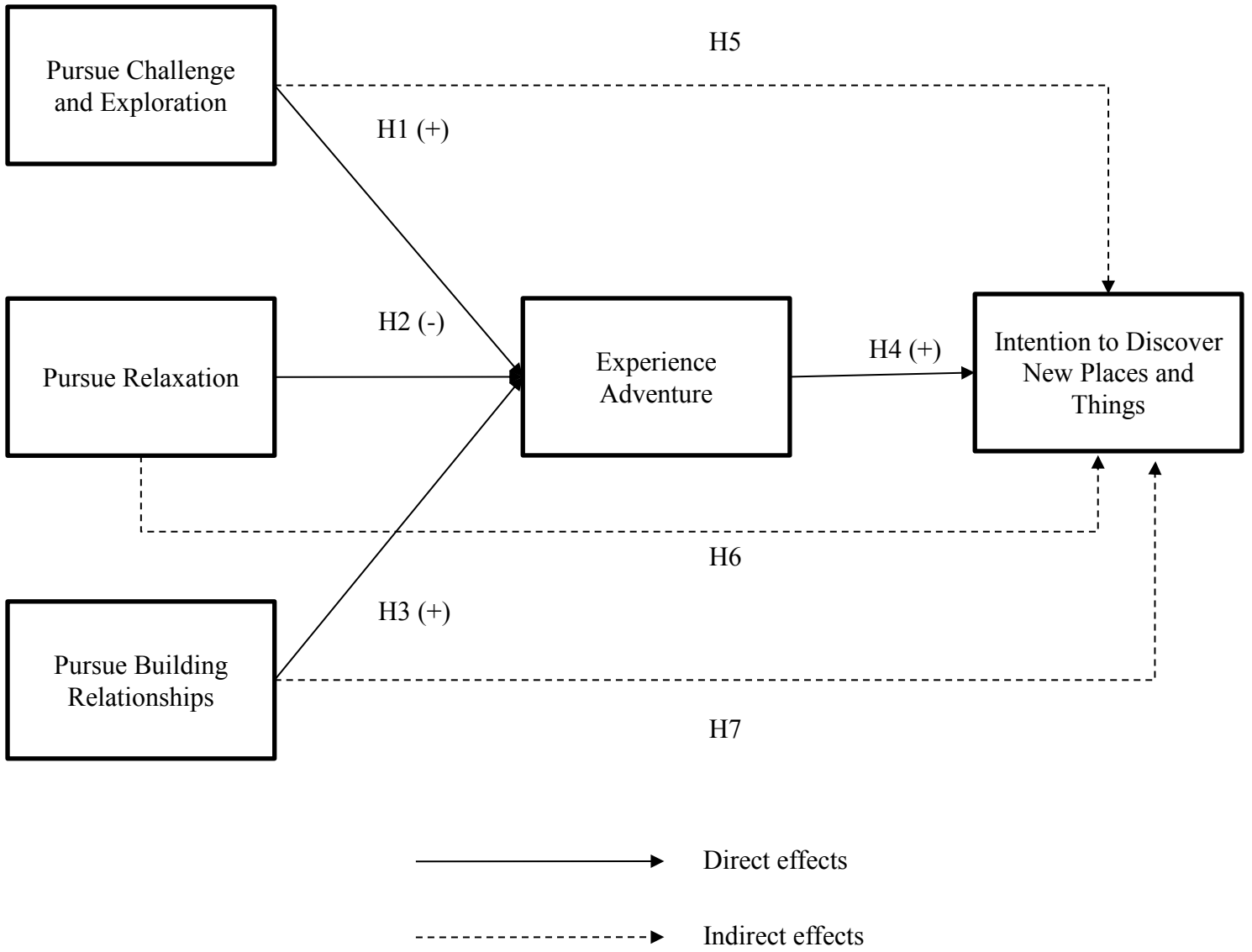
ns: non-significant

<sup>a</sup> Bootstrap bias-corrected confidence interval based on 2000 bootstrap subsamples.

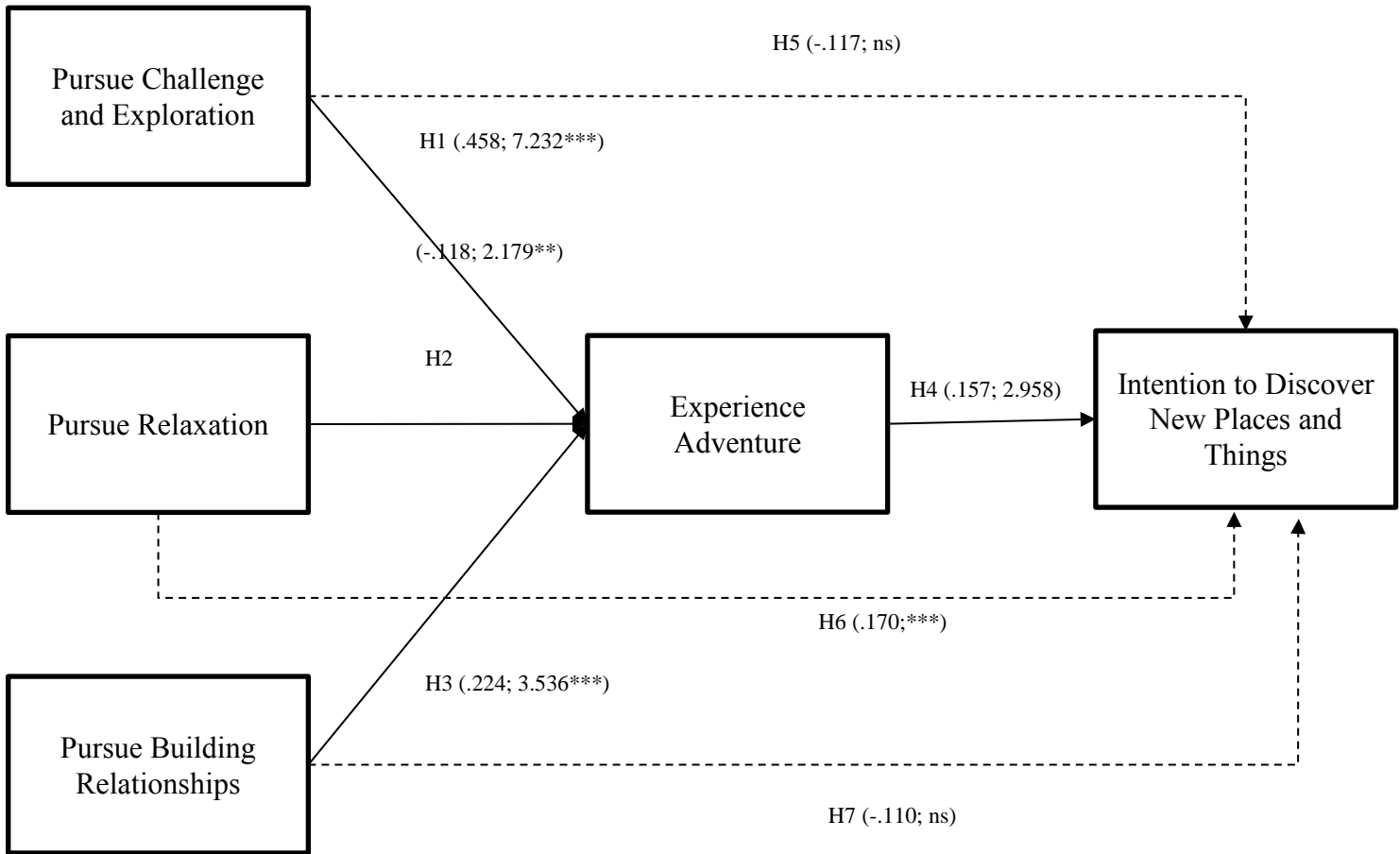
\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



**Figure 1**  
**Conceptual Model**



**Figure 2**  
**Final Results**



\*  $p < .10$   
 \*\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .01$

—————▶ Direct effects  
 - - - - -▶ Indirect effects

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Appendix A  
Sample Characteristics

Student Characteristics	Frequency (n)	%
<b>Age</b>		
20 – 29 years	475	83.5
30 – 39 years	75	13.2
40 – 49 years	9	1.6
50 - 59 years	7	1.2
60 – and above	3	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	268	47.1
Female	301	52.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Not married	425	74.7
Married	144	25.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Children</b>		
Yes	132	23.2
No	437	76.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Income Level</b>		
Not declared	28	4.9
Below average	238	41.8
Average	229	40.2
Above average	50	8.8
High	24	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100</b>