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Research paper



The Influence of Sensation Seeking, Travel Motivation and Social Media Networks towards Risk Perception among Malaysians to Travel Internationally

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of social media networks, travel motivation and personality traits in shaping the perception of risk among Malaysians intending to travel internationally. An online survey questionnaire was used to collect the data by sending an invitation to several travel websites. A total of 384 completed responses were considered valid to test the hypotheses through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) by assessing the measurement approach and the structural model. The results indicated that competency or mastery factor and stimulus avoidance factor under travel motivation are perceiving risk positively while one could be risk aversion and another is risk seeker. And social media exerts significant positive relationship towards perceived risks; crime, health epidemics, political unrest, terrorism and disasters when travelling abroad. The findings in this study found that the 'outbound' traveler is not influenced by their personal traits towards perceived risk to travel abroad, but the influence of social media is undoubtedly a significant attribute in shaping their risk perception. The core drawback of this study is the use of online survey that restricted to respondent's resources to reach IT access. The factor of sensation seeking appeared to be adversely related to travel risk perception. This result is distinct from the findings from previous studies that demonstrated and supported another possibility between this relationship.

Keywords: *Perceived risk, travel, sensation seeking, travel motivation, social media networks.*

1. Introduction

Tourism recognised as one of the world's largest economic sectors is growing at a much faster rate than any other industry sector (WTTC, 2015). However, despite being one of the primary contributors to most of the economies globally, tourism remains fragile and sensitive to the macro environment. Baker (2014) stated that many countries are concerned about the risks that cause social-economic problems, where more recently given the changes occurring globally, physical risks have now caught the attention of many countries and travellers given the escalation of terrorism, crime, disease, political instability and other deliberate acts causing life-threatening events (Gray & Wilson, 2009; M. Sharifpour, Walters, & Ritchie, 2014). Throughout the years, researchers have strived to understand the underlying reasons and psychological factors of people and how they perceive risk. In fact, researchers could better predict and explain the behaviour of tourists during a crisis compared to any other event. According to Um and Crompton (1990), travel risk perception is influenced by both internal and external factors. Lepp and Gibson (2003) accorded travel as novelty seeking, identifying the role of the tourist and later associated travel with sensation seeking, as a personality trait in influencing the perception of travel risk (Lepp & Gibson, 2008). However, debate and has continued towards explaining the relationship between these factors as the majority of evidence remains questionable, with some researchers proposing further study in this area given the level of interpretation and complexity involved (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Pizam et al., 2004; Mona Sharifpour, Walters, & Ritchie, 2013).

In addition to the vast influence of the psychographic factors regarding the perception of risk, the effect of external factors such as the media is incontestable and is agreed by most researchers (Baker, 2014; Cahyanto, Pennington-Gray, Mandala, & Schroeder, 2016; Fuchs, Uriely, Reichel, & Maoz, 2013; Lepp & Gibson, 2008). However, the number of studies, combining both the external and internal factors able to influence and determine travel risks, is limited. Despite this gap, several researchers have conducted studies in Penang, Malaysia (Zainol & Mohd Shariff, 2007), Sabah's eastern coast (Yang, Sharif, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015) and Kuala Lumpur (Amir, Ismail, & See, 2015). These studies sought to investigate the perception of foreign tourists regarding travel safety in these specific locations. Although, limited research has been conducted involving the residents in these locations who may wish to travel abroad. (outbound traveller). Importantly, these studies highlight the enormous potential in Malaysia for the outbound travel market. Malaysia is ranked among the top 3 countries behind China, South Korea and Japan in the number of outbound trips made in 2014 by people (Choong & Hedrick-Wong, 2014). Therefore, this justifies that the intrinsic relationship between travel risk and outbound travel requires fur-

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ther examination which will undoubtedly affect these results and the propensity to travel abroad.

2. Literature review

2.1. Travel risk perception

In tourism, the perception of risk is continually changing and varies depending on the characteristics of the individual (E. Cohen, 1972; Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002), their preferences, personality (Plog, 1994), attitude (Williams & Baláž, 2013) and lifestyle (Wahlers & Etzel, 1985). Due to the complexity in examining the factors that influence risk perception, it is essential to construct a framework to define these risks.

Based on the study by Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) investigating the relationship between travel risk perception, travel anxiety and the intention to travel to foreign countries, it was found that terrorist threats are the most dominant risks that tourists are concerned about, followed by health, financials and lastly, social, and cultural risk. Again, it is confirmed that from among all the risks associated with travel, that the safety aspect of the travel destination, its political stability, its healthy environment that is free from epidemic disease, were the largest concerns which played a vital role in affecting the tourist's perception of risk. While, in comparing these results to the concerns of several decades ago, Mona Sharifpour et al. (2013) asserted a different categorisation of risks and ranking which is consistent with the global situation of today, where terrorism and crime have created substantial fear and anxiety amongst travellers, compared to the risk of equipment failure of which was the largest concern of people several decades ago. Hence, research should be undertaken on an on-going basis on the role of travel, risk perception and the travel behaviour of tourists as this may over time, be influenced by other external factors.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the dimension of risk, with a specific focus on physical travel risk as asserted by M. Sharifpour et al. (2014). Notwithstanding these risks include; terrorism, political instability, health, crime and accident risk which is in parallel to the present issues worldwide, such as terrorist attacks, the occurrence of crime in tourist locations and health epidemics. As mentioned, these are acknowledged as global issues and are of a major concern to most Malaysians intending to travel abroad. Despite identifying and constructing the risk perception framework, previous researchers have suggested that tourists' socio-demographic and psychographic factors are closely related in their perception of risk (Aschauer, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2013; Gray & Wilson, 2009; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992; Mona Sharifpour et al., 2013; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Williams & Baláž, 2013; Yang et al., 2015). Therefore, to further examine the factors influencing risk behaviour several factors are examined forthwith.

2.1.1 Sensation seeking

The investigation of human personality is highly complex which is evidenced by the diversity of attempts and studies of previous scholars to understand its features and functionality. According to Zuckerman (1979), "Sensation seeking is a trait defined by the need for varied, novel and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience" (p. 10)**.** The first factor associated with sensation seeking is Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS) which refers to the pursuit of adventurous sensations, often experienced through extreme sports and activities. Next, is Experience Seeking (ES) which covers the human senses and mind in experiencing novelty experiences through a non-conforming lifestyle. Third, is Disinhibition (Dis) which refers to the seeking of social stimulation not restricted by social norms, while the final factor is Boredom Susceptibility (BS) which refers to routine, and things that are foreseen to happen.

The past literature examining sensation seeking is mainly associated with explaining behaviour, with only a few studies discussing risk perception. Pizam, Reichel, and Uriely (2001) investigated the relationship of sensation seeking tourist behaviour through analysing the effect of the Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS) on tourist activities and preferred travel arrangements. The results indicated that high sensation seekers are more likely to engage with adventurous sport and prefer to make their own travel arrangements. The research associated the travel behaviour of TAS with Butler's model where it was found that TAS prefer primitive destinations and will avoid or forgo visiting more mature and developed tourist attractions for "authentic" experiences.

To further support the utilisation of the SSS in predicting tourist behaviour relating to risky or dangerous activities, Pizam et al. (2004) carried out a study of 1,450 university students from different nationalities to investigate the effects of combining risk-taking sensation seeking (RSS) to tourist behaviour and preferred tourist activities. The results demonstrated that socio-demographics do not present a significant impact while gender and nationality showed a noteworthy influence in RSS. Further, Lepp and Gibson's (2008) asserted an additional perspective, finding that there is no significant relationship between perceived risk and sensation seeking, as both low and high sensation seekers perceive the risk level to be similar. Mona Sharifpour et al. (2013) resisted this idea instead, investigating the mediation effects of sensation seeking on risk perception. Their result was found to be consistent with Fuchs (2013), in that, sensation seeking is correlated with perceived risk and high sensation seekers, thereby showing more tolerance towards physical risk, concerning physical harm, illness or death while at a destination.

Therefore, based on the discussion and the literature review, sensation seeking is one of the personality traits that have been widely adopted by scholars in examining tourist behaviour and risk perception. Although as evidenced in the discussion, debate and controversy remain, therefore requiring further research to be undertaken due to their complex nature of this issue.

The following hypotheses are postulated in justifying the research:

H1: TAS negatively influences towards travel risk perception.

H2: ES negatively influences towards travel travel risk perception.

H3: Dis negatively influences towards travel travel risk perception.

H4: BS negatively influences towards travel to travel risk perception.

2.1.2 Travel motivation

Motivation has often related to an inner state that directs and stimulates human behaviour (Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009). In relating travel motivation and risk perception, Dann (1977) postulated that travel to risky destination may get a feeling of achievement and social prestige as a kind of reward. Therefore, it is interesting to understand tourist travel motivations especially for the risk perception of leisure traveller where they are free to choose to go for safer destinations whereas the reasons and motivation behind to tolerate high-risk destination worth for investigation.

As refer to Maslow's (1954) hierarchical Theory of needs that places on a hierarchy of importance. He believes that motivation is the result of needs or goal but not of drives, which means that people are pulled towards the aim, not pushed away from an unwanted state (Perrett, 2007). Later, Pearce (1988) has established a travel motivation theory that called travel career ladder (TCL) base on Maslow's theory. This theory refers to the changing motivation and travel pattern through a person's lifetime and the decision-making on travel destination may influence by previous travel experience (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). However, Dann (1977) suggest an attention to put on push and pull factors (Crompton, 1979). And it seems to be generally accepted theory in the travel motivation literature (Goossens, 2000; Jang & Cai, 2002; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Push factors are considered as sociopsychology needs or motivations that affect an individual to travel while pull

factors is the one that attract the individual to a specific destination once the push factors have initiated. They then added that, push factors act as the internal part of a person and pull factor is the external part to that individual.

Beard and Ragheb (1983) established the Leisure Motivation Scale (LMS) which derived from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954) and pull and push factors, classified the motivation into four subscales, which are intellectual, social, competence-mastery and stimulus-avoidance.

The first component is intellectual, which is similar to cognitive that evaluates the degree to which respondent that is motivated to engage in leisure activities (Ryan and Gleon, 1998). The following component is competence or mastery. In this category, travellers are likely "to see what my abilities are" and "to develop physical skills and abilities". Lastly, stimulus avoidance motive refers to the desire to escape and get away from their daily life and looking for solitude and calm condition where they could rest and obtain something new including items such as "to be in a calm atmosphere" and "to avoid the hustle and bustle of daily life".

This study lend support from the above literature in investigating the correlated relationship between travel motivation and travel risk perception with below proposed hypothesis:

H5: Intellectual factor negatively influences towards travel risk perception.

H6: Social Factor negatively influences towards travel risk perception.

H7: Competency or mastery factor negatively influences towards travel risk perception.

H8: Stimulus avoidance negatively influences towards travel risk perception.

2.1.3 Social media

Through the evolution of digitalisation, the importance of social media in disseminating and sharing information is undeniable. Traditional paper printed materials such as newspapers and magazines are quickly being eradicated and becoming redundant, while the benefits of digitalisation and emergence of the information age are noticeably more efficient in both cost and time. However, this can act as a double-edged sword. While social media can disseminate both positive and negative information in electronic form, it can also make a tremendous impact. Many tourism researchers have recognised the importance of media especially in creating and promoting destination images and in shaping peoples' perceptions. Lepp and Gibson (2008) explain that risk perception is influenced by media as illustrated by both high and low sensation seekers. Fuchs et al. (2013) echoed this point, in that the overexposure of news will create misperception and adverse impressions towards a destination. Hence, research has been carried out to measure the effect of using social media by searching for travel information. Cahyanto et al. (2016) determined that searching for travel information and the sharing of travel experiences are significantly related to the usage of social media. Therefore, besides the internal factors of the psychographic construct, the author has included the external factor of social media usage by incorporating the external and internal factors in designing a more comprehensive study to investigate the relationship between these variables with the proposed hypothesis:

H9: Social media positively influences towards travel risk perception.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This research was posited as descriptive research in fulfilling the objective of identifying the relationship between the variables. Accordingly, this type of research aims to provide a group profile describing the relationship through verbal or numerical explanation (Brotherton, 2008). Therefore, this approach is suitable for this research which intends to investigate the relationship between the sensation seeking, travel motivation dimensions and social media towards shaping travel risk perceptions. Figure 1 illustrates the research framework for this study. A survey approach was chosen to collect data as its recognised as a standard approach by many researchers and academics and is frequently used to collect empirical data by most tourism researchers (Brotherton, 2008; Finn et al., 2000). Notably, this approach has many advantages in surveying large numbers of respondents, is relatively cheap to implement and is quick compared to other types of research design. As the objective of this research is to investigate the psychographic factors of social media, using this method was considered to be the most appropriate in collecting quantitative data through utilising a questionnaire.

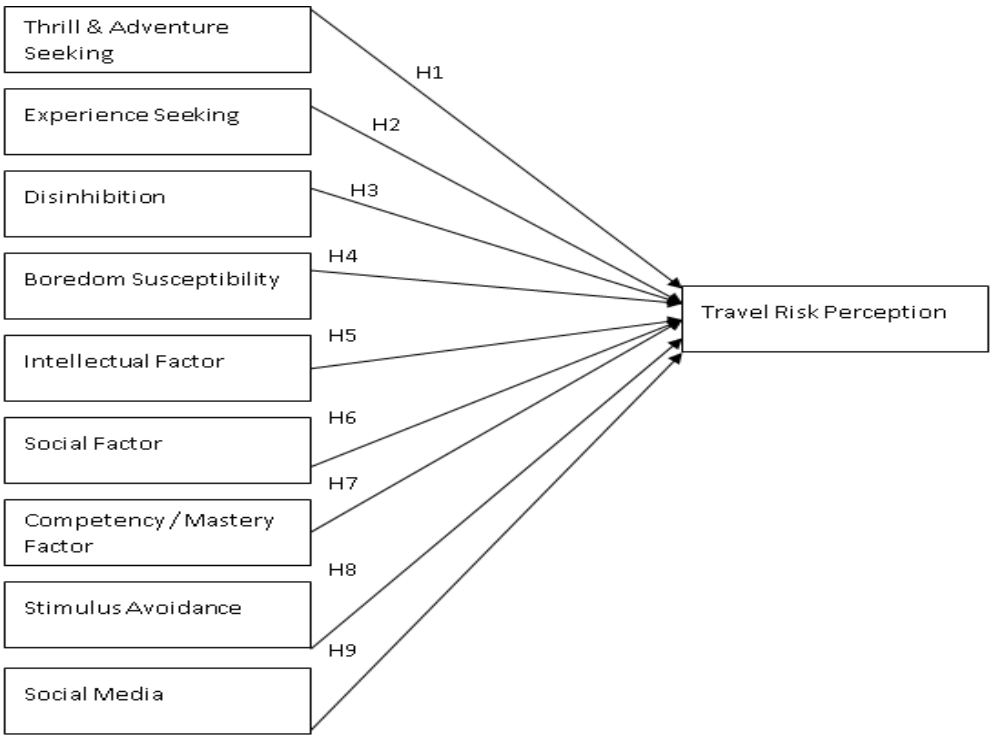

Fig. 1: Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

A self-administrated questionnaire was used as the research instrument and operationalised as an online survey to collect data via social media networking sites such as Facebook. The scales used to measure the three primary variables for the research; sensation seeking, travel motivation and social media were constructed based on previous research and reliability of the items. Table 1 displays the sources contributing to the development of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Questionnaires Source

Construct Measured	Scale	Items
Sensation Seeking	5-point Likert Scale	Items adapted from Zuckerman (1979): Thrill and Adventure seeking, Experience Seeking, Disinhibition and Boredom Susceptibility
Travel Motivation	5-point Likert Scale	Items adopted from Beard and Ragheb (1983)'s Leisure Motivation Scale (LMS): Intellectual, Social, Competency/Mastery and Stimulus Avoidance.
Social Media	5-point Likert Scale	Items adopted from Fotis, Buhalis, and Rossides (2012): frequency of using social media, pupose of using social media for travel information
Travel Risk Perception	5-point Likert Scale	Items adapted from (M. Sharifpour et al., 2014): terrorism, political instability, crime, health and accident.

The online survey tool 'Survey Monkey' was used to convert the conventional questionnaire that was created for this study into an online survey form. The respondents were provided with the URL address to locate and access the survey questionnaire. Before activating the online survey, a pilot test was undertaken with 15 respondents to ensure that the online survey was easy to use, comprehensive and to discover any issues that may occur in answering any of the questions. It was important to the researcher to ensure that any issues identified were resolved quickly and effectively before formally using the survey. Further, if any sections or features of the questionnaire could be enhanced or modified, this was considered essential for the researcher to change before it was formally published for use by the target respondents. A period of three months, between December 2016 and Feb 2017 was allowed for the respondents to complete the survey. The response rate was 84.6 % representing a total of 384 completed surveys used for the data analysis.

3.2 Analysis data

Accordingly, a total of 384 completed responses were found to be valid for testing the hypotheses in this study. The raw data was downloaded from the online survey site into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) programme. Next, the descriptive statistic was utilised to plot the sociodemographic data and travel characteristics. The relationship between the variables was measured using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The PLS-SEM was chosen due to its ability to provide more valuable and extensive insights and information as compared to traditional statistical analysis utilising formative and reflective models (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive analysis

The demographic profiles of the respondents are displayed in Table 2. Most respondents were female, 62.8 %, with the major age group between 25 to 34 years of age, representing 44.3 %. Most respondents were highly educated with 64 % of respondents with a tertiary education bachelor's degree (46.3 %) and Master's/Doctorate degree (17.6 %). The two main groups comprised of students and professionals accounting for 30.8 % and 27.6 % respectively. The income represented as the primary income group ranged from RM 2,000 to RM 3,999 (26.1 %). Apart from the basic demographic information, the travel characteristics of each respondent were also collected. Indeed, many respondents were not frequent travellers, travelling once or twice a year (54.3 %) and those that rarely travelled represented 30 %. Most respondents travelled with friends, (61 %) and family members (67.7 %) with trips lasting anywhere between 9 to 14 days, which accounted for 22.6 %.

4.2 Assessment of the measurement model

In evaluating the measurement model, a path model was created to illustrate the relationship between the latent variables as shown in Figure 2. Four measurement criteria were needed to be assessed which were the internal indicators of reliability, convergent validity, consistency reliability and discriminant validity as suggested by Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, and Memon (2016) with the results shown in Table 4.

Table 2: Profile of Respondent

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	127	37.2
	Female	214	62.8
Age	18 - 24	99	29.0
	25 - 34	151	44.3
	35 - 44	52	15.2
	45 - 55	25	7.3
	55 and above	13	3.8
	Missing	1	0.4
Education Level	High school level	43	12.6
	Diploma	79	23.2
	Bachelor's degree	158	46.3
	Master's / Doctorate degree	60	17.6
	Missing	1	0.3
Occupation	Management occupations	45	13.2
	Professional occupations	94	27.6
	Sales and administrative support related occupations	45	13.2
	Skilled blue collar	25	7.3
	Semi-skilled and unskilled	8	2.3
	Student	105	30.8

	Unemployed	19	5.6
Income	below RM2000	64	18.8
	RM2001 - RM3999	89	26.1
	RM4001 - RM5999	47	13.8
	RM6001 - RM7999	34	10.0
	RM8001 - RM9999	11	3.2
	RM10 000 and above	20	5.9
	No income	74	21.7
	Missing	2	0.5
No. times travel to overseas for holiday	1 - 2 times	185	54.3
	3 - 4 times	36	10.6
	more than 5 times	16	4.7
	I rarely go to travel	103	30.2
	Missing	1	0.2
Travel with whom	Alone	79	23.2
	Family members	231	67.7
	Friends	208	61.0
	Tour group members	21	6.2
	Friends met during the journey	16	4.7
	*Note: respondent can choose more than one answer		
Longest holiday trip in the past 2 years (2015&2016)	less than 3 days	29	8.5
	3 - 4 days	57	16.7
	5 - 6 days	54	15.8
	7 - 8 days	63	18.5
	9 - 14 days	77	22.6
	15 - 21 days	35	10.3
	22 - 30 days	11	3.2
	more than 30 days	14	4.1
	Missing	1	0.3

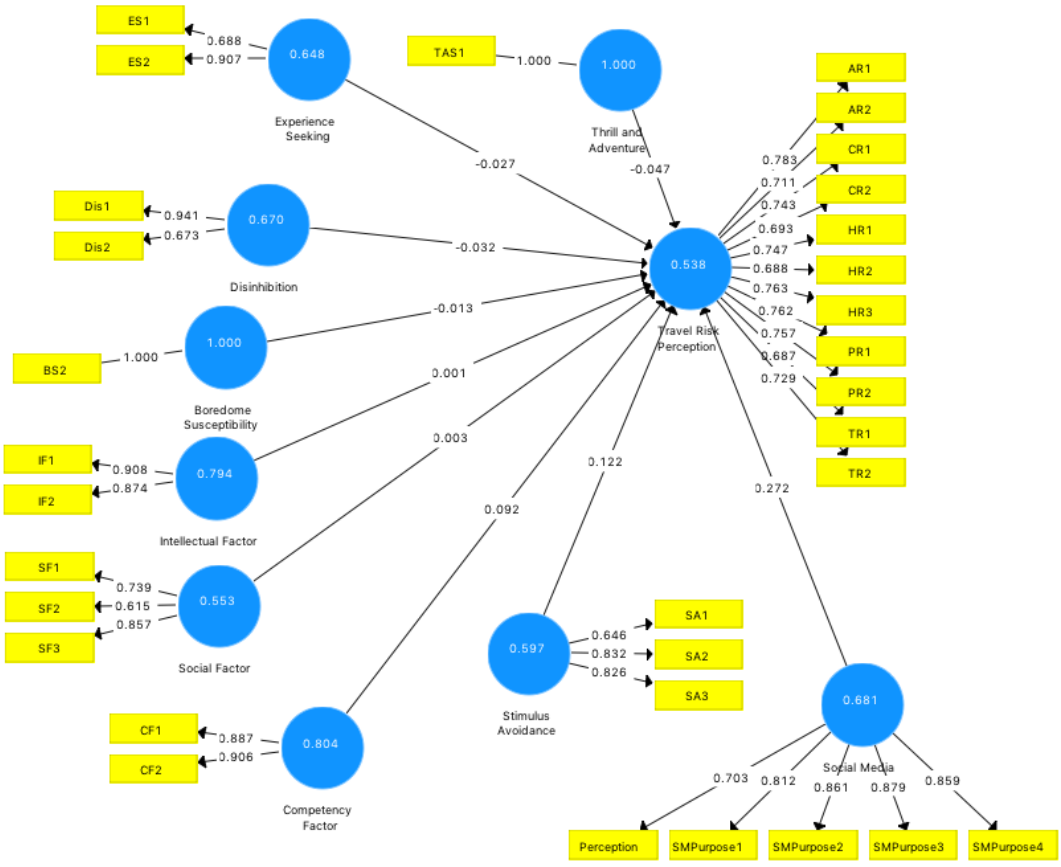

Fig. 2: Measurement model

Convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). All the items listed in Table 3 exceeded the threshold of 0.6 as suggested, after dropping TAS2, ES3, BS1 and SM Usage due to low loadings (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Ramayah et al., 2016). Although it is recommended to have loadings of > 0.708, in this case, the limit was set to be > 0.6 as those items which were below the limit scored high in AVE and CR (Ramayah et al., 2016). The value of AVE for all items listed in Table 4 exceeded the threshold value of 0.5, and the value of CR was above the recommended value of 0.7, ranging from 0.781 to 1 which could explain more than half of the variance of its indicators. Therefore, convergent reliability was achieved (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014).

Table 3: Results of the measurement model

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Thrill and Adventure	TAS1	1	1	1
Experience Seeking	ES1	0.688	0.648	0.783
	ES2	0.907		
Disinhibition	Dis1	0.941	0.67	0.798
	Dis2	0.673		
Boredom Susceptibility	BS2	1	1	1
Intellectual Factor	IF1	0.908	0.794	0.885
	IF2	0.874		
Social Factor	SF1	0.739	0.553	0.785
	SF2	0.615		
	SF3	0.857		
Competency Factor	CF1	0.887	0.804	0.891
	CF2	0.906		
Stimulus Avoidance	SA1	0.646	0.597	0.814
	SA2	0.832		
	SA3	0.826		
Social Media	SMPurpose1	0.812	0.681	0.914
	SMPurpose2	0.861		
	SMPurpose3	0.879		
	SMPurpose4	0.859		
	Perception	0.703		
Travel Risk Perception	TR1	0.687	0.538	0.928
	TR2	0.729		
	PR1	0.762		
	PR2	0.757		
	CR1	0.743		
	CR2	0.693		
	HR1	0.747		
	HR2	0.688		
	HR3	0.763		
	AR1	0.783		
	AR2	0.711		

Note: TAS2, ES3, BS1 & SMUsage are dropped due to low loading

The discriminant validity was assessed using a Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) (Ramayah et al., 2016). Table 5 presents the result of the HTMT and all items listed were below the value of the $HTMT_{.85}$ value of 0.85 (Kline, 2011) and the $HTMT_{.90}$ value of 0.90 (Gold & Arvind Malhotra, 2001). Therefore, the data fulfilled the criteria employing methods and discriminant validity was obtained.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity of constructs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. BS										
2. CF	0.345									
3. Dis	0.416	0.364								
4. ES	0.270	0.509	0.43							
5. IF	0.305	0.711	0.221	0.509						
6. SF	0.300	0.855	0.485	0.395	0.723					
7. Social Media	0.127	0.358	0.132	0.262	0.402	0.361				
8. SA	0.193	0.344	0.142	0.223	0.277	0.365	0.337			
9. TAS	0.168	0.294	0.438	0.311	0.072	0.169	0.05	0.158		
10. Travel Risk Perception	0.080	0.207	0.078	0.086	0.181	0.200	0.354	0.256	0.085	

4.3 Assessment of the structural model

The VIF values presented in Table 5 indicated that all values were below 5, which according to the guideline by (Hair Jr et al., 2016) indicates that lateral collinearity issues were not observed in this study.

Table 5: Lateral Collinearity Assessment

Construct	Travel Risk Perception (VIF)
Thrill and Adventure	1.212
Experience Seeking	1.18
Disinhibition	1.34
Boredom Susceptibility	1.209
Intellectual Factor	1.59
Social Factor	1.61
Competency Factor	1.869
Stimulus Avoidance	1.131
Social Media	1.236

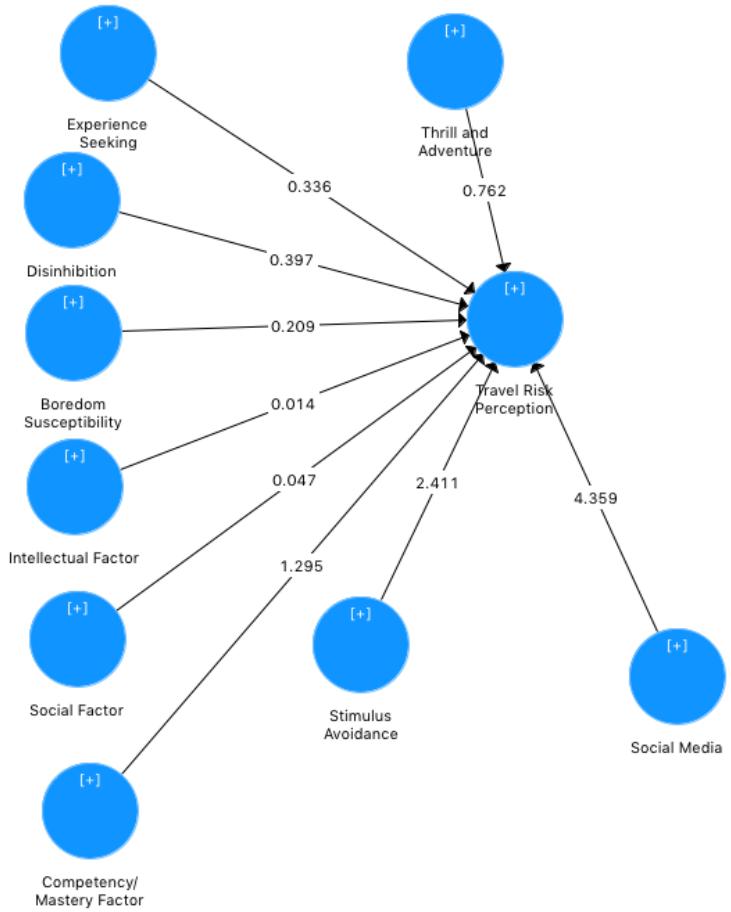

Fig. 3: Structural Model

Next, the structural model was assessed and the results are presented in Table 6 based on the path model shown in Figure 3. By undertaking the assessment, it was determined that three out of nine hypotheses were supported at above 80% confidence level. Competency Factor (β = 0.092, p<0.1), Stimulus Avoidance (β = 0.122, p<0.01) and Social Media (β = 0.272, p<0.01) are positively related to Travel Risk Perception hence hypothesis H7, H8 and H9 were supported. Thrill and Adventure, Experience Seeking, Disinhibition and Boredom Susceptibility although possessed a negative value of standard beta indicated their negative relationship towards Travel Risk Perception which was match with the proposed hypothesis of H1, H2, H3 and H4, the t-value is too low to provide sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis. It was same to Intellectual Factor and Social Factor which failed to support hypothesis H5 and H6.

The R^2 value of 0.131 indicates that the model able to explain 13.1% of the variances in Travel Risk Perception and the value has exceeded the scale suggested by J. Cohen (1988) of 0.13 that indicated as moderate model. After that, the effect size was assessed by examine on f^2 value. According to Ramayah et al. (2016), the value of f^2 was equally important as p-value which not only indicates its significance level but also its size of effect. This value was examining according to J. Cohen (1988) guideline and Social Media (0.069) was above 0.02 threshold and indicated as small effect in producing the R^2 for Travel Risk Perception.

Furthermore, the predictive relevance of the model was assessed using blindfolding which is a sample reuse technique that neglect some part of the data and uses the model to estimate the missing part. Q^2 value was the measurement to evaluate the productiveness, if Q^2 was above 0, in this case, Q^2 of Travel Risk Perception was 0.06, hence indicate that the model has sufficient predictive relevance (Fornell & Cha, 1994; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

Hypoth-esis	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Deci-sion	f^2	R^2	Q^2
H1	Thrill and Adventure -> Travel Risk Perception	-0.047	0.062	0.762	Not Supp-orted	0.002	0.131	0.06
H2	Experience Seeking -> Travel Risk Perception	-0.027	0.08	0.336	Not Supp-orted	0.001		
H3	Disinhibition -> Travel Risk Perception	-0.032	0.08	0.397	Not Supp-orted	0.001		
H4	Boredom Susceptibility -> Travel Risk Perception	-0.013	0.06	0.209	Not Supp-orted	0		
H5	Intellectual Factor -> Travel Risk Perception	0.001	0.059	0.014	Not Supp-orted	0		
H6	Social Factor -> Travel Risk Perception	0.003	0.061	0.047	Not Supp-orted	0		
H7	Competency Factor -> Travel Risk Perception	0.092	0.071	1.295*	Supp-orted	0.005		
H8	Stimulus Avoidance -> Travel Risk Perception	0.122	0.051	2.411**	Supp-orted	0.015		
H9	Social Media -> Travel Risk Perception	0.272	0.062	4.359**	Supp-orted	0.069		

Note: **p<0.01(2.33), *p<0.1 (1.28) based on one-tailed test

5. Discussion and conclusion

In the investigation of relationship between travel motivation and travel risk perception, the findings proved that Competency or mastery factor is positively related to travel risk perception and showing consistent result with existing literature. In that travel motivation was discussed broadly, it is associated with perception of risk particularly regarding challenging tourist activities such as mountain climbing and diving (Fuchs, 2013; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Under this circumstances, challenging one's self was a push factor to go beyond the comfort zone and exist of risk element which sees as a source of excitement could enhance one's experience in personal testing and accomplishment (Pomfret, 2006).

Second factor of stimulus avoidance which showing positive relationship towards travel risk perception is congruent with existing literature. In this context, people look for relaxation and escapism from routine life tend be risk aversion and this finding lent support from Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) that those who seek for calm condition will avoid risk. It is interesting to see both competency factor and stimulus avoidance factor were perceiving risk positively while one could be risk aversion and another was risk seeker.

In the context of competency, people recognize the risk and understand the risk that they going to encounter and hence provide the sense of challenges and skill testing environment which push and motivated themselves in undertaking such risk behaviour. Contrary, people who are motivated by stimulus avoidance and seeking for a relax peaceful vacation were highly concerned on risk too as they are highly risk aversion and the purpose to go for holiday is to release stress hence risk element could be the deterrent for them to change their travel plan. Therefore, it could be plausible to conclude that travel motivation was associated with travel risk perception as the purpose of people travelling could have influence towards their level of perception risk. As asserted by Reisinger and Mavondo (2005), although perceived risk could bring negative impacts, it could be part of the motivation too.

Surprisingly, as suggested earlier, sensation seeking appears to be negatively related to travel risk perception showing a lack of evidence to significantly support the hypothesis. Indeed, the standard beta value indicated the negative relationship between the two variables, but the significant effect was too low to prove the relationship. The findings from the study suggested that the possible explanation could be due to the respondents being less sensitive to sensation seeking. Further, the data collected was unable to demonstrate high sensation seekers due to the characteristics of the travel pattern. Notably, 54 % of respondents were not frequent travellers (travelling only once or twice a year), and 30 % of respondents rarely travelled. Indeed, this proved to be one of the possible reasons for the negative finding. Ruch and Zuckerman (2001) described that the sensation seeker likes to travel and actively prefers to explore less familiar places as portrayed in (Fuchs, 2013)'s study on backpackers. The researchers further found a negative correlation between sensation seeking and travel risk perception among backpackers as they were characterised as high social stimulus seekers and loved to travel off the beaten path and were less concerned about social risk (Pizam et al., 2004).

Furthermore, from among all the sensation seeking dimensions including TAS, ES, Dis and BS, all the results failed to support the proposed hypothesis, but instead showing a negative relationship except for BS that showed a very weak positive relationship. Accordingly, the findings could be interpreted by saying that there is a possibility that a negative relationship exists between the two variables. However, further research is required to provide sufficient evidence to support the said relationship. Among the findings, social media appeared to be the most significant variable related to travel risk perception and was shown to support the hypothesis that, social media is positively related to travel risk perception. Notably, questions were asked of the respondents, such as their use of social media for searching information during the planning stage for a trip, and the influence of the social media content towards their perception of travel risk. In this case, the findings were consistent with the previous literature in that social media plays a vital role in a tourist's decision-making process and in influencing consumer behaviour (Maser & Weiermair, 1998; Murphy, Mascardo, & Benckendorff, 2007). In Kim, Choi, and Kim (2013)'s study on the usage of social networking sites among college students, information seeking ranked as one of the most important motivators for students to use as a tool to search for travel-related information before making any decision and to reduce any uncertainty and perceived risk. This is proven to be the same case in this study.

In conclusion, the interpretation and findings in this study, support the assertion that based on the relationship between these factors, travel risk perception requires further investigation due to the level of complexity involved. While the relationship between the variables, as explored in this study could provide empirical data and information regarding tourist psychology and the influence of social media regarding the perceived risk to travel internationally.

6. Implications and future research

This study provides empirical data that contributes to the existing literature regarding the perception of travel risk among Malaysian social media users. One of the unique features of this study is the combination of psychographic factors of sensation seeking and the external influence of social media which is said to be limited. Therefore, it could serve as a reference for future research studies that could analyse the type of risks using different samples. Furthermore, regarding sensation seeking and its relationship to risk perception, the findings provided different evidence. The majority of findings indicated negative relationships which could contribute and support the fact that sensation seeking was not negatively related to travel risk perception at all times, while at other times it might portray no relationship. Also, the study on sensation seeking might be useful for other research specific to other countries. While from a Malaysian perspective the results of this study may be considered limited, in fact, the results could importantly serve as a case study for future research. Further, as some of the factors in this study may not be relevant for the lifestyle and culture found in Malaysia, it is recommended though, to adapt the scale in this study and to adjust some of the items to suit the culture of the country being studied. Notably, this study has contributed towards gaining greater awareness and understanding, thereby demonstrating the further possibility to investigate travel behaviour and psychological factors from different perspectives and dimensions.

Indeed, social media could be utilised as an effective tool in delivering messages and in promotional activities. For instance, it could help a tourist destination to recover from experiencing a crisis or other adverse situation or event through sharing positive information and images through social media to ensure the reputation of the destination is not severely impacted. Indeed, this was evidenced by the crisis during 2011 caused by the Great East of Japan Earthquake (Fujita (2016). In this case, using mass media such as social networks, blogs, newspapers and magazines appeared to be an effective and vital tool towards the recovery of local tourism. This was especially effective in marketing the destination after the event. As such, the relationship between the variables as explored in this study could help to provide empirical data and information for future research regarding tourist psychology and their decision-making process towards these issues which could help to extend the work further in future studies.

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