

White-Water Rafting Tourism: Questioning the Role of Destination Image, Destination Personality, Novelty-Seeking, and Perceived Value in Determining Visit Intention

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Abstract

A plethora of tourist behaviour studies have investigated white-water rafting in the existing literature. However, the factors that cause visit intention used in this study still need to be found. For this reason, this study examines the effect of destination image, novelty-seeking, and perceived value on visit intention. The destination of white-water rafting is a river with a certain level of hardness and route length, as offered by the organizers. There were 224 participants, and they were selected using the convenient sampling method. Data analysis used exploratory factor analysis and structural equation models. This study found a significant effect of destination image on novelty-seeking and perceived value. In addition, novelty-seeking significantly affected visit intention and perceived value, whilst perceived value substantially influences visit intention.

Keywords: *Destination Image, Destination Personality, Novelty-Seeking, Perceived-Value, White-Water Rafting Tourism, Water-Based Tourism.*

Introduction

For indigenous people, the river is a source of life where they can earn a living in its stream. It differs from modern society; economic activity over river flow is slowly changing. Companies providing tourism services to communities living along the river use the river for recreational and tourism activities called white-water rafting. Collectively, white-water rafting tourism is an adventure tourism type involving travelling using rubber boats on rivers with fast and winding currents. With an experienced rafting guide, tourists are usually in groups who help control the rafting. It ensures tourists' safety; white-water rafting offers an exciting and challenging experience by facing different natural challenges depending on the difficulty level of the chosen river. Tourists can also enjoy the beautiful natural scenery around the river and undertake experiences that involve direct interaction with nature. White-water rafting tourism is well known in various countries, such as in Africa (Giddy et al., 2017; McKay, 2014), Asia (Chaiyasain & Tirasattayapitak, 2019), Australia and New Zealand (Bultjens & Gale, 2006; Collins, 2022; O'Hare et al., 2002), and the United States (Albayrak & Caber, 2018). Tourists who seek a unique and challenging adventure experience are often attracted to this rafting activity.

Several studies explore the impact of the development of white-water rafting tourism on community development (Massiera & Schuft, 2010; Tirasattayapitak et al., 2015). Furthermore, white-water rafting reveals another side of the community living along the river. According to Nelson (2011), the entrepreneurial spirit relates to adventure tourism activities which would depend on river developments, for example, dams, and the state's role in making regulations that support and market activities in communities. Some studies argue that white-water rafting tourism is addressed for water conservation (Beatie & Fosnaught, 1998; Rankin & Orchard, 2019). Several other studies explore tourist behaviour related to white-water rafting tourism (Albayrak & Caber, 2018; Lee & Tseng, 2015; Wang & Wang, 2018).

Although researchers have conducted various studies on white-water rafting tourism, limited studies address the factors that affect tourist intentions to visit a destination related to white-water tourism. For

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this reason, this study examines the impact of destination image, novelty-seeking, and perceived value on visit intention.

Indonesia is an excellent destination for white-water rafting, according to recent studies. These studies, conducted by various researchers, focused on different regions and rivers in Indonesia, highlighting their potential and characteristics for rafting tourism. For example, Suprayogi et al. (2020) examined the Saba River in Buleleng Regency, Bali, and found that it had the proper slope, flow rate, and water levels for rafting activities. Similarly, Nurlaila et al. (2021) highlighted the unique attraction of the Cipeles River in Citepok village, including its grade 2 rafting path and beautiful rock cliffs. The studies also emphasised sustainable tourism practices, safety measures, and supportive policies to promote rafting tourism as a viable and attractive option for domestic and international tourists. For instance, Azizah and Wulandari (2021) analysed the benefits of river ecosystems in Indonesia for human welfare and biodiversity conservation through river ecotourism management, highlighting the importance of sustainable tourism practices in river ecotourism. Rohmah (2019) assessed the safety and security of tourists participating in Songa Rafting and identified the need for better adherence to standard operating procedures and regulations related to white-water rafting tourism.

Moreover, the research highlighted the need to diversify tourism offerings, create optimal tour packages, and adhere to standard operating procedures and regulations related to white-water rafting tourism. Wirakusuma (2018) examined the opportunities for water-based tourism, including white-water rafting, river tubing, snorkelling, and boating, in West Java Province and emphasised the need for the government to create policies that support the development of secondary tourist attractions. Listyawati (2022) developed sports tourism-based travel packages using SWOT analysis and identified the elements of attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary as essential for creating optimal and attractive tour packages.

Literature Review

Destination Image

A destination image concept is a personal or collective idea about a specific destination (Jenkins, 1999; Lopes, 2011). As a result, many factors affect the images and these include personal experience, media information, public opinions, government promotions, and many other factors (Molina et al., 2010). The destination image is crucial in the tourism industry because it can give a sense of confidence and purpose to individuals when choosing a destination (Kim et al., 2019; Musa & Qamari, 2020).

Various scholars use destination image to determine the perceived value (Candra et al., 2020; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Cheng & Lu, 2013; Mahasuweerachai & Qu, 2011; B. Wang et al., 2017), trip quality (Chen & Tsai, 2007), satisfaction (Mahasuweerachai & Qu, 2011; B. Wang et al., 2017), visit intention (Suhud et al., 2021; Suhud & Allan, 2022), revisit intention (Herstanti et al., 2014), and loyalty (Mahasuweerachai & Qu, 2011; B. Wang et al., 2017). However, this study sets destination images to verify novelty-seeking and perceived value.

Destination Image and Novelty-Seeking

Prior studies investigate the impact of destination image on novelty-seeking (Abubakar et al., 2017). For example, Abubakar et al. (2017) examine the effect of perceived value, satisfaction, destination image, and novelty-seeking tendency on revisit intention. The above study discussed tourists visiting the Harbourfront Centre in Singapore. They report the role of destination image in strengthening the novelty-seeking tendency. Cheng and Lu (2013) postulate that destination image is the fundamental element that causes novelty and hedonics, and the impact of novelty itself is the main dominant factor.

Destination Image and Perceived Value

Previous studies have shown the power of destination image in creating perceived value (Aliman et al., 2014a, 2014b; Allameh et al., 2015; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Cheng & Lu, 2013; Mahasuweerachai & Qu, 2011;

B. Wang et al., 2017). For example, in the study of Chen and Tsai (2007), the destination image is used to predict the role of trip quality, perceived value, and tourist satisfaction in developing tourist intentions to visit a destination in Taiwan. They reported the destination image determines the strength of the perceived value. In addition, Aliman et al. (2014a) employ destination images to measure tourist expectations, tourist loyalty, tourist satisfaction, perceived value, and perceived quality. They claim one hypothesis (destination image) is responsible for forming perceived value.

From the findings of the previous studies above, the two hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H1 – Destination image will have a significant influence on novelty-seeking

H2 – Destination image will have a significant influence on perceived value

Novelty-Seeking

Novelty-seeking is the tendency or behaviour of an individual to seek new experiences, stimuli, or situations (Bello & Etzel, 1985). This behaviour is often associated with personality traits in relation to preferences for variety, excitement, and risk-taking (Chang, 2011). With this behaviour, individuals desire to explore and engage in challenging or new activities.

Novelty-seeking personality can have both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, novelty seekers may be more creative, adaptable, and open to change (Gocłowska et al., 2019). They may also be more likely to find new interests and passions. On the negative side, excessive seeking for novelty can lead to impulsivity, risk-taking behaviour, and difficulty maintaining long-term commitments or relationships (Myrseth et al., 2012). Also, a novelty-seeker strongly desires to seek unique experiences, stimuli, or situations (Carretero-Dios & Ruch, 2010). Such individuals are motivated to explore and engage in challenging or new activities. So they often have a level of high curiosity. According to Nguyen et al. (2020), novelty-seeking can comprise relaxation-seeking, experience-seeking, arousal-seeking, and boredom-alleviation, and this factor might affect the satisfaction of tourists.

Jang and Feng (2007) use novelty-seeking to see short-term, mid-term, and long-term revisit intentions. Several other studies link novelty-seeking with tourist satisfaction and revisit intention (Agustina & Artanti, 2020; Swastuti & Pudjiarti, 2018; Vo Thanh et al., 2018). Otherwise, several studies link novelty-seeking with tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Jeong et al., 2020). In the study of Maghrifani et al. (2022), novelty-seeking is one of four dimensions of travel motivation, along with escape-seeking, assurance-seeking, and interaction-seeking. The four dimensions test the destination image and visitor image congruity, respectively. In several other studies, novelty-seeking places a moderator variable (Hung et al., 2021; Ji et al., 2016; Ju & Koh, 2018). However, this current study links novelty-seeking to visit intention and perceived value constructs.

Novelty-Seeking and Visit Intention

There are still relatively few studies that specifically focus on the impact of novelty-seeking on visiting intentions. However, several studies provide insight into this matter. For instance, Jang and Feng (2007) explored the effects of tourist novelty seeking and destination satisfaction on visiting intentions measured in the short, medium, and long term. Their research results show that novelty seeking is a significant antecedent of visit intention in the medium and the long period of time.

Otherwise, the study of Kumbara et al. (2020) tested the effect of tourist motivation and travel experience on the intention to return tourists to West Sumatra, mediated by the novelty search variable. They found that novelty seeking had no significant role in increasing revisit intention.

In addition, Maghrifani et al. (2022) attempted to understand the motivation-intention relationship from an image formation perspective in the context of potential and repeat Australian visitors to Indonesia. The

search for novelty is one dimension of motivation. They found that the influence of novelty-seeking motivation on destination image was stronger for prospective visitors than for repeat visitors.

Finally, Thanh et al. (2018) examined the role of mediating satisfaction between destination image and destination loyalty, novelty seeking, and destination loyalty. They found that search novelty influenced the intention to revisit. These studies show that there is still much to learn about the relationship between novelty seeking and intention to visit in the tourism context. When interpreting these results, it is crucial to consider the context and sample characteristics.

Novelty-Seeking and Perceived Value

Studies in tourism linking novelty-seeking to perceived value still need to be available. A bank consumer behaviour study conducted by Prodanova et al. (2019) at least examines the impact of perceived entertainment, m-banking ubiquity, and novelty-seeking on perceived value. They document the power of novelty-seeking to alter consumers' perceived value. Although the effect of novelty-seeking on perceived value has received little attention, Cheng and Lu (2013) use novelty to understand the role of perceived value. They note that there is a significant effect of novelty on perceived value.

The studies above lead to the following two hypotheses.

H3 – Novelty-seeking will have a significant influence on visit intention.

H4 – Novelty-seeking will have a significant influence on perceived value

Perceived Value

Perceived value is the subjective view of tourists regarding the quality and benefits of a tourist destination or the experience it offers (Jin et al., 2015; Sanchez et al., 2006). Perceived value in tourism relates to the construction of tourists' impressions or perceptions of tourist objects, services, facilities, security, and cleanliness, offered by these tourist destinations (Jeong & Kim, 2019; Rajesh, 2013). Tourists will evaluate whether the value attained from the visit is worth the costs incurred, such as transportation costs, lodging, and food (Bajs, 2015; He & Song, 2009). If tourists feel that the attained value is larger than the incurred costs, they will feel satisfied and inclined to recommend the destination to others or visit again.

Perceived value has been used in past studies to predict satisfaction (Aliman et al., 2014a; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Fitri, 2021; Mahasuweerachai & Qu, 2011; Suhud & Wibowo, 2016), memorable tourism experience (Candra et al., 2020), behavioural intention (Chen & Tsai, 2007), and revisit intention (Cheng & Lu, 2013; Herstanti et al., 2014; Suhud & Wibowo, 2016). However, the current study links the perceived value to visit intention.

Perceived Value and Visit Intention

In forest-based ecotourism, Perera and Vlosky (2013) examine the effect of previous visits, trip quality, perceived value, and satisfaction on future behavioural intentions. They state that perceived value cannot be relied upon to increase tourists' visit intentions. In contrast, Chen and Chen (2010) show different results. They assess the factors influencing behavioural intention related to heritage tourism by including experience quality, perceived value, and satisfaction as predictors. They found that tourists' perception of the value they receive when visiting a destination can strengthen their intention to visit that destination.

In the light of the previous studies, this hypothesis will be formulated as follows:

H5 – Perceived value will have a significant influence on visit intention.

Figure 1 shows the proposed research model. This model links the destination image to novelty-seeking and perceived value. In addition, we link novelty-seeking to visit intention and perceived value and perceived value links to visit intention. On the whole, we will test five hypotheses.

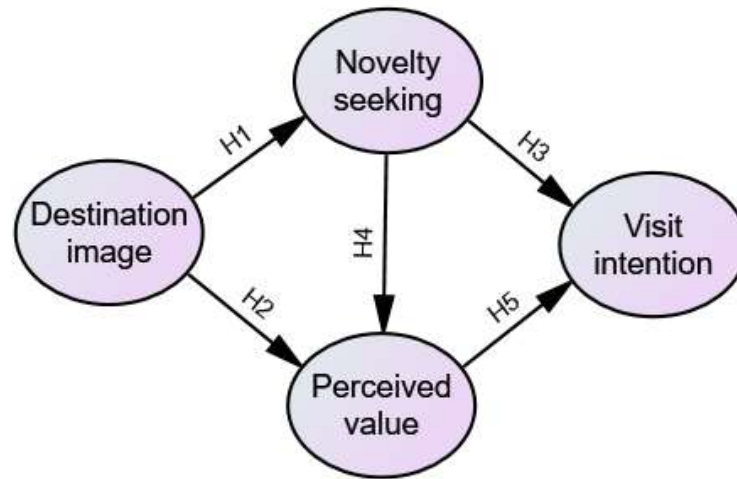


Figure 1. The Proposed Research Model

Methods

Measures

This study used indicators adapted from previous studies to measure the four variables (destination image, novelty-seeking, perceived value, and visit intention). Hosany et al. (2007) provided indicators for destination image. The indicators of novelty-seeking came from Lee and Crompton (1992). Kumar and Nayak (2018) provided indicators for perceived value, and Khan et al. (2017) provided indicators for visit intention. All were measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. We tested the validity and reliability of the data using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach’s alpha score, and structural equation modelling. Our results support all five hypotheses tested, which were statistically significant.

Data Analysis Methods

Through our quantitative data analysis, we underwent several phases to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. First, we used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to test the data validity, which allowed us to determine whether a variable has dimensions. We declared each indicator is valid if it has a minimum loading factor of 0.4. Second, we tested the reliability of the data using Cronbach’s alpha score. A construct is declared reliable if a minimum alpha score is 0.7. After conducting these tests, we then proceeded to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to simplify indicators that were not valid. Finally, we tested the hypotheses using a structural equation model (SEM). Using four criteria, probability, CMIN/DF, CFI, and RMSEA, as shown in Table 1, we established a structural fit model. A hypothesis is acceptable if it has a critical ratio (CR) score of at least 1.98. We used SPSS version 29 to test the validity and reliability of the data and AMOS version 29 to test the hypotheses. Based on the results of this study, all five hypotheses tested had a CR score greater than 1.98. Thus, it shows that they are statistically significant and support our research findings.

Table 1. Criteria of A Fitted Model

Fit measure	Good fit indices	Sources
Probability	$0.05 < p \leq 1.00$	Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003)

X ² /DF	0 ≤ X ² /DF ≤ 2.00	Tabachnick et al. (2007)
CFI	0.95 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	Hu and Bentler (1995)
RMSEA	0 ≤ RMSEA ≤ 0.05	Browne and Cudeck (1992)

Results

Participants

The Participants of the current study were tourists who have travelled out of town in the last three months. They were selected using the convenient sampling method. When asked about their experience rafting on the river, 106 participants (47.3%) said they had such experience. Of 224 participants, 142 were females (64.4%) and 82 were males (36.6%). Concerning age, 163 participants (72.8%) were aged between 21 and 24 years old. In terms of occupational status, there were 133 of the study cohort (59.4%) as employees. In addition, 204 participants (91.1%) revealed they were single, and 142 participants (63.4%) suggested they had a university degree.

Table 2. Profile of Participants

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	82	36.6
	Female	142	63.4
	Total	224	100.0
Age	17-20	12	5.4
	21-24	163	72.8
	25-29	45	20.1
	30-34	1	0.4
	35-39	2	0.9
	45-49	1	0.4
Occupational status	Employed	133	59.4
	Unemployed	63	28.1
	Self-employed	28	12.5
Marital status	Unmarried	204	91.1
	Married	20	8.9
Level of education has been completed	Less than high school	6	2.7
	Diploma	18	8.0
	Postgraduate	4	1.8
	Undergraduate	142	63.4
	High school	54	24.1

Validity and Reliability Tests

Table 2 presents the results of data validity and reliability tests. Destination image developed two dimensions. The first dimension had five indicators with an alpha score of 0.925. Whereas the second dimension maintained four indicators, with an alpha score of 0.814.

Table 3. Results of Data Validity and Reliability Tests

	Variables and Indicators	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
	Destination Image (1)		0.925
D9	Boring/Interesting.	0.901	

D3	Ugly/Pretty.	0.885	
D4	Gloomy/Exciting.	0.884	
D1	Unpleasant/Pleasant.	0.851	
D2	Distressing/Relaxing.	0.776	
	Destination Image (1)		0.814
D5	Noisy/Quiet.	0.935	
D8	Isolated/Readily accessible.	0.682	
D6	Overcrowded/Sparse	0.674	
D7	Cold/Friendly.	0.596	
	Novelty seeking		0.834
Ns3	I want to experience new and different things while on vacation.	0.805	
Ns5	I think the ideal vacation is when I get involved in things I have never experienced earlier.	0.772	
Ns6	I love travelling to adventurous places.	0.757	
Ns2	I like to find myself in a destination where I can explore new things.	0.731	
Ns4	I enjoy changing environments that allow me to experience something new while on vacation.	0.709	
Ns1	I am seeking an adventure while on vacation.	0.697	
	Perceived Value (1)		0.882
Pv5	White water rafting will make me more socially acceptable.	0.928	
Pv4	White water rafting will improve my way of being perceived by others.	0.918	
Pv3	White water rafting will make me feel more socially accepted.	0.876	
Pv6	White water rafting will allow me to impress others.	0.856	
Pv1	White water rafting tourism will represent 'value for money'.	0.557	
Pv2	Rafting tourism will have an acceptable quality standard.	0.479	
	Perceived Value (2)		0.784
Pv9	White water rafting will make me feel adventurous.	0.867	
Pv7	Rafting tourism will provide an authentic experience.	0.859	
Pv8	White water rafting tourism will satisfy my curiosity.	0.789	
Pv10	The service fee for rafting tourism will be reasonable.	0.589	
	Visit Intention (1)		0.933
V3	I intend to visit this destination in the next three years.	0.990	
V6	I want to visit in the next three years.	0.987	
V9	I will probably visit this destination in the next three years.	0.938	
V5	I want to visit this destination in the next two years.	0.746	
V8	I will probably visit this destination in the next two years.	0.693	
V2	I intend to visit this destination in the next two years.	0.667	
	Visit Intention (2)		0.894
V1	I intend to visit this destination within the following year.	0.917	
V4	I desire to visit this destination within the following year.	0.885	
V7	I will probably visit this destination within the following year.	0.876	

Hypotheses Tests

Figure 2 demonstrates the equation model that has been tested and has achieved fitness according to the four criteria above. This model reaches a probability score of 0.224 and a CMIN/DF score of 1.088. In addition, this model has a CFI score of 0.995 and an RMSEA score of 0.020.

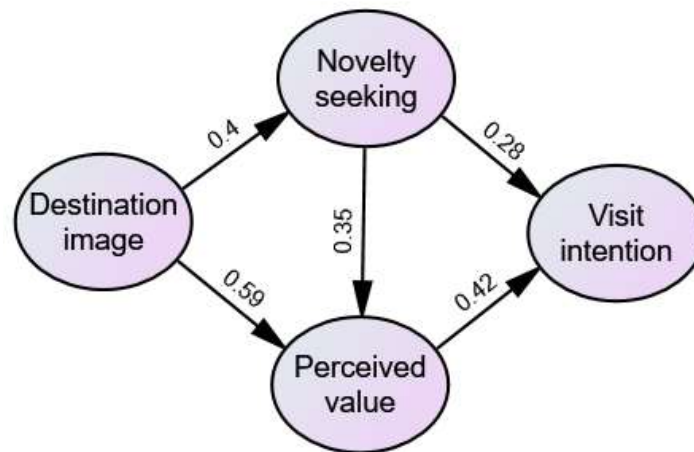


Figure 2. Structural Model Of The Hypotheses Testing

Table 3 contains the results of the hypotheses testing. The four hypotheses achieved a CR score larger than 1.98, and it indicates that all hypotheses were accepted.

Table 3. Results of the Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Paths	C.R.	P	Results
H1	Destination image > Novelty seeking	3.976	***	Accepted
H2	Destination image > Perceived value	4.452	***	Accepted
H3	Novelty seeking > Visit intention	2.537	0.011	Accepted
H4	Novelty seeking > Perceived value	3.078	0.002	Accepted
H5	Perceived value > Visit intention	3.111	0.002	Accepted

Discussion

The research results provide important insights into the relationship between destination image, novelty seeking, perceived value, and visit intention in the context of white-water rafting tourism. These findings support the proposed hypotheses and have relevant practical implications in the development of rafting tourism.

First, the finding shows that destination image significantly affects novelty seeking. The first hypothesis reached a CR score of 3.976, and it indicates a positive and attractive destination image can trigger individual interest in seeking new and unique experiences when joining rafting activities. A fascinating destination image can create high appeal and trigger consumers' desire to try a different experience than what they are used to. Abubakar et al. (2017) stated that destination image enhances novelty seeking.

Second, the results of the study showed that destination image also has a significant effect on perceived value. The second hypothesis reached a CR score of 4.452. A positive destination image can provide high-value perceptions for tourists, such as valuable experiences, natural beauty, and good service. It can affect tourists' perceptions of the benefits that they get from participating in rafting tourism. Mahasuweerachai and Qu (2011) demonstrated a significant influence of destination image on perceived value.

Third, the study findings show that novelty-seeking affects visit intention significantly. The third hypothesis had a CR score of 2.537. The high level of novelty seeking shows the interest and motivation of tourists to visit rafting tourism destinations. Tourists urged to seek new and unique experiences are inclined to have a higher intention of visiting rafting destinations. Allameh et al. (2015) and Cheng and Lu (2013) reported a significant impact of novelty-seeking on tourists' visit intention.

Fourth, the study findings show that novelty seeking also affects perceived value significantly. The fourth hypothesis achieved a CR score of 3.078. Tourists seeking new and unique experiences are inclined to have a higher perceived value in rafting tourism. Different and exciting experiences can increase tourists' perceptions of the benefits and benefits they get from participating in these activities. Zhang et al. (2020) claim that novelty seeking is one key to successfully forming perceived value.

Fifth, the results of the study show that perceived value has a significant effect on visit intention. The fifth hypothesis reaches a CR score of 3.111. Perceived high value from the rafting experience can influence tourists' visit intention to the destination. Tourists who feel that they get valuable benefits and advantages from participating in rafting tourism are more likely to have a solid visit intention to the destination object. According to Cheng dan Lu (2013) and Prodanova et al. (2019), perceived value is vital for shaping tourists' visit intention to a specific destination.

Conclusion

Based upon the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the perception or image of a white-water rafting destination significantly influences novelty seeking and perceived value. It means that the destination viewpoint of individuals directly affects their desire to find new and challenging experiences while participating in this activity and their perception of the value or benefits derived from it. In addition, the research findings show novelty seeking contributes to one's intention to visit white-water rafting destinations. Otherwise, the perceived value of white-water rafting influences the visit intention.

The findings of this study provide clear theoretical insights into the factors that affect a person's interest and intention to visit white-water rafting destinations. Specifically, the study highlights the importance of destination image, novelty seeking, and perceived value in shaping tourists' perceptions and motivations. The role of destination image in influencing novelty seeking and perceived value contributes to our understanding of adventure tourism. Otherwise, the effect of novelty seeking on visit intention and perceived value sheds light on the psychological factors that motivate tourists to seek unique experiences. Finally, the study shows the significant influence of perceived value on visit intention. It emphasizes the importance of promoting the value and benefits of white-water rafting activities in attracting tourists. We can exploit these insights to develop effective marketing and promotional strategies to increase interest and participation in white-water rafting tourism.

This study offers valuable insights for tourism industry practitioners in developing effective marketing strategies and increasing participation in white-water rafting activities. White-water rafting destination managers must focus on building a positive image to attract potential tourists. Communicating the uniqueness and appeal of white-water rafting can help increase tourist interest in seeking new and challenging experiences. When tourists have a unique and fascinating experience, improving their visit intention and perceived value is crucial. Destination managers can consider innovation in arranging rafting routes, providing experienced guides, or integrating technology that enhances the interaction and excitement of the experience. Tourists must perceive high value in their participation in white-water rafting to increase their visit intention. Destination managers can achieve this by providing a comprehensive travel package, including reasonable prices, friendly service, guaranteed safety, and a satisfying quality experience. Collaboration between white-water rafting destination managers, travel agents, travel companies, and the media can help promote rafting activities and enhance the destination's image. Joint marketing campaigns, compelling promotional content, and special events that engage potential travellers can expand marketing reach and increase the attractiveness of white-water rafting.

It is essential to consider the limitations of this study, which may impact the generalizability and accuracy of the findings. For instance, the study might have a sample bias, as the data collected may be limited to a specific group of participants or geographic region. Future studies could aim for more diverse and representative samples to overcome this issue. Another area for improvement is using a cross-sectional design, which cannot establish causal relationships between the variables studied. Future research could consider employing longitudinal studies or experimental design. This study also relied on self-reported

measures, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability or recall bias, to understand these relationships better. Future studies could consider incorporating a broader range of measures, including objective measures, enhancing the reliability and accuracy of the data.

Finally, this study only focused on specific factors related to white-water rafting tourism and did not consider other potential factors that could influence tourist behaviour. Future studies could explore additional factors to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of white-water rafting tourism. Future studies could consider longitudinal studies, comparative studies, qualitative research, experimental designs, and exploring contextual factors such as environmental sustainability practices and the role of social media to address these limitations and improve our understanding of white-water rafting tourism.

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