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## THE LANGKAWI ISLAND MARKET POTENTIAL FOR EXTREME OUTDOOR SPORTS TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

*Today, the idea of sporting activities bears a resemblance to the symbol of a postmodern sports which are also identified as adrenaline rushing sports. Many younger individuals are turning away from the more traditional activities and participating in these "next-generation" activities. Tourist motivation is crucial for host destinations to identify the preference of extreme outdoor sports as it can improve the brand of destination and its engagement with tourist satisfaction and loyalty. This study focuses on the factors of perceived quality, destination image, and perceived value that motivate tourists to select Langkawi as an extreme sports tourism destination. Questionnaires were distributed to 384 extreme sports tourists. Findings shown that extreme sports tourists focus primarily on the perceived quality component in selecting Langkawi Island as their sports destination. They also take into consideration the factors related to destination image and perceived value. Results of Independent Sample t-Test revealed that the male tourists put in extra thought on the quality of merchandise and the quality of tourism product in deciding Langkawi Island as their tourism destination. Furthermore, the male tourists believed that Langkawi Island is a good destination to kill their loneliness. It is advisable for future researchers to focus on other socio-demographic variables for a better understanding of tourist's decision making in selection of extreme sports tourism destinations. These findings could be of reference to the related organisations of sports tourism industry and to the academic field of study in extreme sports tourism.*

## **1. Introduction**

Extreme sports have changed dramatically since its inception in 1995. In-line cycling, snowboarding, mountain biking, extreme skiing, rock climbing, skateboarding, and ultra-endurance racing are examples of extreme outdoor sports which are of interest among extreme sports athletes. This trend is of preference for people seeking brand new encounters to test its boundaries. Furthermore, individuals who love nature tend to spend more time in natural environments (Calogiuri et al., 2018) increased their chance to participate in recuperative experiences of interest, besides maintaining mental health. In keeping pace with this trend of global sporting activities, the development of sports tourism sector in Malaysia has expanded its scope to include extreme outdoor sports tourism. This opportunity has boosted the growth of Malaysia tourism industry. In related to tourism, Arijs et al. (2017), Brymer and Schweitzer (2017), and Holmbom et al. (2017) have used the term extreme for research on particularly high-risk, and high-skill activities. Also branded as shock tourism, extreme outdoor sports tourism is an exclusive niche area of the tourism industry that generally comprises travel to a risky or dangerous destination to take part in adrenaline-packed sporting activities. These destinations can range from rugged mountainous regions, cave sea arches and sea stacks, drop stones, and thick mangrove swamps and forests.

Recently, extreme outdoor sports tourism has been gaining momentum in Langkawi Island, officially known as Langkawi, the jewel of Kedah. Surrounded with natural and challenging landscape, Langkawi Island offers many sporting activities organized at its adventure and extreme park, waterfall and deep-water cave, dive site, mangrove Geopark, and open sea. At Langkawi Island, sports tourists can experience the thrill of a lifetime as they engage in challenging adrenaline-packed sporting activities organized around the natural and challenging landscape. The Langkawi Adventure and Extreme Park is in the beautiful forest of Kilim, an accorded World Heritage Geo-Park Site by UNESCO. Altogether, the Langkawi Adventure and Xtreme Park offers 12 fun and challenging extreme outdoor sporting activities that push the dose of adrenalin rush among the extreme outdoor sports tourists (Langkawi Adventure and Xtreme Park, 2022).

Seasoned and alternative extreme rock climbers could try the free deep-water soloing climbing, also known as "psicobloc" at Jong Island, Dua Island, and Gubang Darat Island. The thrill of climbing onto the limestone, followed by grab hold of big pockets on the rock face, and scaling up the sea cliffs before plunging into the deep ocean blue of the Andaman Sea creates a memorable adrenaline-pumping experience for the extreme outdoor sports tourists. Meanwhile, Langkawi Island is a paradise to be explored year-round for water divers. Diving is accessible at the Pulau Payar Marine Park and the local sites around the Cenang area. Extreme outdoor tourists who prefer venturing into deeper water, exploring a coral encrusted wreck, or try drift diving could do so around the island. For mangrove kayaking, along the way, kayakers can enjoy the local flora and fauna, such as the sea eagles, kingfishers, herons, mudskippers, fiddler crabs, and monitor lizards.

For skydivers, the tandem skydiving provides adrenaline-pumping experience at the 10,000 feet thrill, and the enjoyment of the beautiful sight of Langkawi Island's beaches and coastlines. Sports tourist could also enjoy a magnificent bird's eye view of Langkawi Island by participating in parasailing. While being attached to a parachute-resembling parasail wing towed behind a boat moving at high speed, the parasailer will be lifted to the skies. For a lower push of the dose of adrenalin rush, extreme outdoor sports tourists could try the sea rodeo which includes banana boat, crazy donut, and sofa float towing behind a high-speed moving boat. In the open sea of Langkawi, extreme outdoor sports tourists could also speed jet ski in open waters.

## **2. Literature Review**

As identified by Aldebi and Aljboory (2018), destination service quality is a key tool that could be used to safeguard tourist satisfaction. There is a statistically significant impact of service quality as well as its dimensions on tourist satisfaction (Bader et al., 2018). As so, the knowledge of high levels of perceived satisfaction is essential for the lasting success of a sports tourism operation. Destination service quality, according to Tsaur et al. (2016), denotes the difference between a tourist's expected and actual level of service experience. It was revealed that service quality is reflected by the outcome that represents a psychological state of a customer in related to his satisfaction or disappointment with service experience. According to Buckley (2018), the intensity of adrenaline rush experienced by tourists in outdoor extreme sports varies considerably between individuals and events. It is most likely that participants' most intense emotion of thrill is related with the experience of the extreme sports. If the real experience of extreme outdoor sports participation is higher than the perceived expectation (cost), extreme outdoor sports tourists become satisfied. Satisfaction reflects the psychological attitude of a customer, and therefore according to Feng et al. (2019), service operators should focus on this matter.

The status of quality services provided by an organization depends on the customers' assessment on the benefits gained from using the products or services, with high levels of quality leading to high satisfaction level. As stated by Yang et al. (2017), a tourist is satisfied if he gains positive experience, and disappointed if he experiences negative results of destination service quality. Tourist satisfaction was measured in several prior studies by asking tourists to express their feelings or satisfaction degree with dimensions related to service quality such as satisfaction with accommodation price, local people, climate, restaurants, employees, environment cleanness, local transportation, and local culture (Sangpikul, 2018).

In a sports scenario, the personal reactions and feelings portrayed by tourists towards an event symbolized the quality of the sports event. Since product quality is a strong antecedent of customer satisfaction as revealed by Lin et al. (2018) and Gök et al (2019), understanding of sports tourists' perceptions of quality towards extreme outdoor sports will be beneficial for extreme outdoor sports practitioners to adopt quality management programs which aim at improving the quality of their products and marketing processes

Destination image is another influential factor towards tourists' decisions to select a holiday option. It has been globally recognized as a key tool for the tourism industry in gaining competitive advantage of the target market. In a study on the push and pull motivation factors, Tinakhat (2020) found that tourists satisfaction and the intention to visit a destination rely on their perceptions about the destination image, rather than their needs. When tourists have strong perception towards the attractions, features, or attributes of a destination, they will have greater satisfaction towards this unique destination, as well as higher consideration in selecting this destination for future holidays. As related by Foroudi et al. (2018), destination image effects tourists' behaviour, an implication that destinations with powerful positive images stand a better chance to be considered and probably selected in the process of assessing a travel destination. It can be classified as a mental image of a destination that can change depending on the demand trend of sports in the country (Heere et al., 2019).

According to Malchrowicz-Mosko and Poczta (2018), sports events influenced destination image by generating positive impressions on the place and event. Image production is also known as mental structure, which according to Stylos et al. (2016) plays a key role in influencing the impact on tourists' intention to visit a destination. Factors that stimulate the desire of tourists to select a

destination may serve as a guide for the efficient positioning of destinations. Specifically, a destination image directly influences satisfaction (Vegara-Ferri, 2018), as well as upcoming intentions (Prayaq & Grivel, 2018). The experience of satisfaction is diverse between sports tourists due to personal intention of attending sporting events. Therefore, extreme outdoor sports practitioners must take note of this diversion in designing effective marketing and positioning strategy for the extreme outdoor sporting events.

For an organization, offering high valued customer service to maximize customer satisfaction is vital in a competition (Murali et al., 2016). As stated by Uddin (2013), perceived value significantly predicts satisfaction status, and superior customer value ensures higher customer satisfaction. As a key element in sports tourism marketing, perceived value is portrayed as a dynamic driving force behind all behaviour which directly influences overall satisfaction of a tourist vacation (Prebensen et al., 2014). Some recent studies (E.g., Hallak et al., 2018; Matsuoka et al., 2017; Sato et al., 2018) found that perceived value significantly affect tourists satisfaction. The results of the empirical study by Mohamad et al. (2019) on the impact of perceived value, destination service quality, and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty showed that perceived value influenced tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Chicu et al. (2019) added that customers are excited in getting valuable return for the money spent. In this study, perceived value is the state of fulfilment of what sports tourists expect from extreme outdoor sports participations at Langkawi Island, or its associated service and what they ultimately gain. It is of utmost value for practitioners of extreme outdoor sports destinations in Langkawi Island to understand sports tourists' motives to ensure sports tourists can obtain valuable adrenaline-pushing experiences during their visitation.

The present development high-tech has changed the lifestyle of individuals. Changes in social needs and wants are prevalent and so are the changes in satisfaction. Changes have also been observed in the marketing setting and it is a burden to ensure customer value and their satisfaction (Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019). The importance of customers in the sports tourism industry has encourage frequent and time-bound research to be conducted on sports tourists. For a better provision to meet the sports tourist's expectations, sports tourism researchers and practitioners must have a better understanding of the trend of tourist's purchase behaviour before, during, and after the consumption of tourism product. Significantly, the data and idea obtained can provide sports tourism marketers on collaborative marketing activities. This effort would provide marketers on the target customer at a certain time with a tailored designed sporting product that fulfil the sports tourist's specific desires. Thus, the effort to identify a sports tourist's behaviour should be preceded with understanding the tourist motivation to participate in sports tourism.

As stated by Wu (2016), a thorough understanding on tourists' loyalty towards a destination is an advantage for destination management to strategize the success in managing the tourism destination. For this reason, extreme outdoor sports practitioners must put in extra efforts to offer sports tourists with challenging adrenaline-packed sporting events at Langkawi Island. This thrill of a lifetime experience can enhance sports tourists' satisfaction and create customer loyalty, which could help in increasing sales and profit. Furthermore, in ensuring a successful promotion of extreme outdoor sports tourism product or service, studies of sports tourist motivations should be focused to understand the choices of people travelling to a given destination, and the reasons of their participation in some activities of preference. However, there seems to be a gap in the research of identifying the preference factors of individuals to engage in extreme outdoor sports activities. Even though studies have proposed that Langkawi Island is a significant destination of the sports tourism industry, to date there has been no research focus specifically to sports tourists at Langkawi Island with respect to their engagement in extreme outdoor sporting events. Thus, this study was conducted to acquire the factors of service quality, destination image, and perceived value that

positively influence sports tourists' decisions to select Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination.

### **3. Methodology**

As reported by Langkawi Development Authority, the statistics of tourist arrivals to Langkawi Island until August 2020 was 1,281,107. Referring to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the valid sample size for this population is 384. Therefore, this study involved 384 samples who were randomly approached at the four main event sites of extreme outdoor sports at Langkawi Island (Pantai Cenang, Kampung Kilim, Padang Mat Sirat, and Teluk Baru Jetty). The 384 (192 male and 192 female) respondents were sports tourists of Malaysia citizen who participated in extreme outdoor sporting events at Langkawi Island, while staying apart from their residential environment. Non-participants of Malaysia citizen sports tourists in extreme outdoor sporting events at Langkawi Island were not included in this study. Once a qualified sample is identified, he or she was briefed on the related information and instructions before given a questionnaire to complete.

The questionnaire consisted of three dimensions: (i) service quality; (ii) destination image; and (iii) perceived value. Items related to service quality (reliability value of 0.93) and perceived value (reliability value of 0.84) were extracted from questionnaire developed by Kim et al. (2012), while items related to destination image (reliability value of 0.70) were adopted from questionnaire developed by Khan et al. (2013). These 29 items were evaluated by a 5-point Likert scale (1 "Strongly Disagree – 5 "Strongly Agree). The questionnaires were manually distributed randomly to the participants of water-based extreme sports activities and parasailers at Pantai Cenang, participants of extreme sports activities, divers, and kayakers at Kampung Kilim, skydivers at Padang Mat Sirat, and "psicobloc" climbers at Teluk Baru Jetty in Langkawi Island. No self-identification was documented in the questionnaire. The Independent Sample t-Test (significance level  $p < .05$ ) was used to assess the differences between gender groups on the three variables that influence sports tourist's decision to select Langkawi Island as a destination for engagement in extreme outdoor sporting activities.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The choice of destination and events positively influence sports tourists to engage in extreme outdoor sports events. This study acquires the motivating factors of perceived service quality, destination image, and perceived value that influence sports tourists' decisions to select Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination. The descriptive results of the variables and their items (Table 1 to Table 3) indicated that the extreme outdoor sports tourists generally consider the perceived value, perceived quality, and destination image in their selection of Langkawi Island as a destination for engagement in extreme outdoor sporting activities, emphasising high scores in the the perceived value ( $M = 3.64$ ), perceived service quality ( $M = 3.48$ ), and the destination image ( $M = 3.47$ ). As identified in previous tourism study, there was positive influence of sport tourists' perception of perceived value (Allameh et al., 2015), perceived quality (Jeong et al., 2019), and destination image (Hsu, 2016) on their satisfaction and consideration to return to a destination.

#### ***Factors of Perceived Value that Motivate Sports Tourists to Participate in Extreme Outdoor Sports Events at Langkawi Island***

A thorough understanding on tourists' loyalty towards a destination is an advantage for destination management to strategize the success in managing the tourism destination Besides aiding the destination managements to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their destination,

the assessment of tourists perceived value towards a destination provides reference for helping the destination management operators to identify tourists' behavioural intentions and providing critical insights for managing and developing tourist destinations (Wu, 2016). In sports tourism, a destination with a recognizable image and a positive perception of tourists has a better advantage to be selected. Since awarded the UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2007, Langkawi Island has become an attractive tourist destination in the world with its natural beauty. Furthermore, to be competitive in the tourism market, destinations should have their unique identities for their destination brand differentiation. With its natural and challenging landscape, Langkawi Island is famous for its adrenaline-packed sporting activities organized at its adventure and extreme park, waterfall and deep-water cave, dive site, mangrove Geopark, and open sea. This value strongly boosts extreme outdoor sports tourists to list Langkawi Island as their choice of extreme outdoor sports tourism destination, as according to Huang (2017), perceived value positively influence behavioral intention of a customer.

Studies found that the motivations of sports tourists' participation will affect their experience at the destination. As revealed by the extreme outdoor sports tourists, the reason they selected Langkawi Island as a tourism destination is because of the good experience gained. An individual's intention to attend sporting events at a specific destination, according to Cho et al. (2019), is a consequence of satisfaction experience with the quality of the event. Travel experience of tourists have a positive impact on the perceived value (Huang, 2017), and according to Prebensen et al. (2014), if the experience gained by tourists is consistent with their motivation of participation or even higher, then the perceived value will be higher and more positive. At Langkawi Island, the extreme outdoor sports tourists were satisfied with the good experience gained, possibly from social interaction, cultural interactive, social identities, personal meaning, achievement, and hedonic pleasures. As the experience provided extreme outdoor sports tourists with significant customer value, it directly brings higher customer satisfaction which positively related to the behaviour of selecting Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports tourism destination.

Table 1

*Statistics of the Factors of Perceived Value That Influence Sports Tourists' Decisions to Select Langkawi Island as An Extreme Outdoor Sports Destination*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Place wanted to travel	3.75	4.00	.448
Good experiences	3.71	4.00	.447
Good results	3.64	4.00	.489
Right decision	3.62	4.00	.526
Resonably priced	3.47	2.00	.644
Overall	3.64		

### **Factors of Perceived Quality that Motivate Sports Tourists to Participate in Extreme Outdoor Sports Events at Langkawi Island**

Perceived quality represents a customer's assumption towards the service provider and its services and reflects the general respond towards the organization (Tsaur, 2016). The status of quality services provided by an organization, as revealed by Yang et al. (2017) varies with the response of customer on the pleasure gains from consuming the products or services, whereby tourists are satisfied if they experienced pleasure desire, and frustrated if they experienced undesirable results of destination service quality. This study reveals that the high-quality service provided by the extreme outdoor practitioners at the sporting events destination is the main



motivating factor that influences sports tourists' decisions to select Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination. As related by Žabkar et al. (2010), the service quality offered at a destination is causally linked to tourists' happiness and behavioural intention, and tourists' happiness is a sign of satisfaction that mediates commitment to a venue (Jeong et al., 2019). Destination service quality, according to Tsaur et al. (2016), denotes the difference between a tourist's expected and actual level of service experience. It was revealed that service quality is reflected by the outcome that represents a psychological state of a customer in related to his satisfaction or disappointment with service experience. As stated by Yang et al. (2017), a tourist is satisfied if they gain positive experience, and disappointed if they experience negative results of destination service quality.

The extreme outdoor sports tourists are highly in favour of the quality lodging facilities at Langkawi Island. As noticed by Sangpikul (2018), there are significant differences in the way each sports tourist decides on quality lodging facilities. It generally includes not only the room area and age of the property, but also amenities and facilities such as hotel restaurants, pools, and fitness centres. Specifically, lodging facilities are found to be more important to event, and the cost of lodging is one of the strongest influences on the decision to travel to a sporting event. For the younger sports tourists, Katsoni and Vrondou (2016) noticed that they prefer an independent traveling mode and prefer technology-based information rather than through personal communication.

Besides that, food quality and merchandise items were also key attributors for attendance of extreme sports tourists at Langkawi Island. As revealed by Al-Tit (2015), food quality is a significant characteristic for a destination, as food quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction and customer retention. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) assumed that the sensory variables of the setting and the variations of emotional experience between individuals affect the emotional responses to the environment itself. This model explains the effect of environmental signals towards individuals' internal states and their external responses. In the case of this study, the perceived quality of the environment cleanliness and quality of extreme outdoor sporting events are the stimuli that motivate sports tourists to participate in the extreme outdoor sporting events at Langkawi Island.

From the extreme outdoor sports tourist's opinion, staffs' individualities such as respectful, understanding, reliable, easy to contact, honest, timely manner, good listener, and competent are among the key elements to be considered in selecting Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor destination. Communication and staffs' relations with customers, according to Kim et al. (2015), are fundamental elements to be well-thought-out in any sports and tourism service. The staffs of the organisation are key human capital in providing service, to the extent that their roles are the main factor that influence consumer opinion, satisfaction, and the re-patronage of sports tourists (Ma & Kaplanidou, 2018). It is important to mention that the choice of an extreme outdoor sports destination can be changed by the visitation experience. As so, the satisfaction and product quality throughout the travelling experience will influence the final step of the image formation of a destination.

Table 2  
*Statistics of the Factors of Perceived Quality That Influence Sports Tourists' Decisions to Select Langkawi Island as An Extreme Outdoor Sports Destination*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
High quality destination	3.73	4.00	.461
Quality lodging facilities	3.68	4.00	.488

Quality of food	3.64	4.00	.484
Clean environment	3.59	4.00	.537
Quality of tourism product	3.57	4.00	.535
Quality of merchandise	3.53	4.00	.552
Respectful staffs	3.50	4.00	.605
Understanding staffs	3.45	4.00	.640
Reliable staffs	3.45	4.00	.615
Easy to contact staffs	3.42	4.00	.674
Honest staffs	3.41	3.00	.611
Timely manner staffs	3.28	3.00	.687
Staffs who listen carefully	3.27	3.00	.647
Competent staffs	3.25	3.00	.706
Overall	3.48		

### **Factors of Destination Image that Motivate Sports Tourists to Participate in Extreme Outdoor Sports Events at Langkawi Island**

In a competitive sports tourism setting, destination image is considered an important element to be considered as image is a decisive element in tourists' destination selection. The intangibility of the tourism destinations and its service limit the tourist's knowledge prior to actual purchase and experience. Destination image has effect on tourists' perceived service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction, whereby both perceived service quality and perceived value acting as mediators between destination image and satisfaction (Cham et al., 2021). Each destination has its own image that develops within tourists which will influence tourists' decision making, their behavior towards a destination, and their satisfaction levels. It is generally assumed that a high positive image could attract higher consideration of a destination and the final decision of acceptance. Hence, to stay competitive in the tourism market, destinations should have their unique identities for their destination brand differentiation (Tinakhat, 2020).

According to Malchrowicz-Mosko and Poczta (2018), the image of a destination increases the value to the sporting event and upsurge a tourist's satisfaction during visitation. The choice of selecting Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor destination is mainly based on the attractive elements at the destination. Precisely, Langkawi Island is suitable for tourists from all walks of life. Langkawi Island provides sports tourists with pleasurable feeling towards the capacity of their travel experience to fulfil their wishes, expectations, and needs relating to extreme outdoor sporting experience.

As identified, the list of extreme outdoor sports event is one of the main attractions at Langkawi Island. Sports tourism will be likely to become a strategic factor once the tourism related managers initiate to market, promote, or package the extreme outdoor sporting event as an element of the attraction mix of Langkawi Island. As destinations that aim to create meaningful relationships with tourists should fulfil their needs concerning their social identity by communicating images that are relevant to tourists, Foroudi et al. (2018) suggested that using the destination website would be the best option. To qualify for marketing, a sports event must be attractive to specific target segments, high in quality, and priced right. The varieties of extreme outdoor sporting events at Langkawi Island are of choice to different sports tourist segment and this advantage helps in creating and maintaining Langkawi Island as a favourable image in differentiation from rival destinations and thus, developing a potential competitive advantage. Sports tourists of all ages can enjoy the escapade of a lifetime with challenging engagement in adrenaline-packed outdoor sporting activities of interest, organized around the natural and challenging landscape.

Moreover, good infrastructures and reliable transportations help in providing a pleasant environment to travel around in Langkawi Island, as stated by extreme outdoor sports tourists. As revealed by Nguyen (2019), local transportation provides positive contribution towards tourist satisfaction and loyalty, as some tourists would like to experience local lifestyle. Developing a good transportation infrastructure network or improving connectivity between the network and tourist facilities can improve a tourist destination's accessibility (Nguyen & Shimizu, 2017).

Table 3

*Statistics of the Factors of Destination Image That Influence Sports Tourists' Decisions to Select Langkawi Island as An Extreme Outdoor Sports Destination*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Suitable for everyone	3.65	4.00	.552
Comfortable	3.63	4.00	.518
Sporting events attracted my interest	3.57	4.00	.567
The image is well kept	3.56	4.00	.540
Convenient in moving around	3.54	4.00	.578
Conducive environment	3.51	4.00	.534
Know this place through sporting events	3.46	4.00	.655
Information provided by media	3.37	4.00	.748
Feel less lonely	3.29	3.00	.798
Fast public transportation	3.13	3.00	.802
Overall	3.47		

***Differences on the Gender's Perception on the Motivation of Sport Tourists to Participate in Extreme Outdoor Sports Events at Langkawi Island***

The results of Independent Sample t-Test failed to identify significant differences on the perceptions of perceived value between the male and female sports tourists in their decisions to select Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination. In this context, the male and female sports tourists, selecting Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor destination is a correct choice. To the tourists, spending money, time, and physical strength in extreme outdoor sports participation is worth their experience. For them, Langkawi Island is a paradise for sports lovers who are interested in experiencing memorable adrenaline-packed outdoor sporting activities at a reasonable price. Destination where travel costs are low having most opportunity to seize sports tourism market. There are also opportunities for cross-selling, as most sports tourists will also be attracted to other tourism activities, such as short trips to the main touristic attractions (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). As a free-duty island with many attractive sight-seeing attractions, Langkawi Island is one of the best places to visit in Malaysia.

In relation to the dimension of destination image, the results of Independent t-Test discovered a noteworthy difference between the male and female extreme outdoor sports tourists' insights in considering Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination. The associated item is "Feel less lonely",  $t(382) = 2.533, p = .012$  (Male:  $M = 3.31$ , Female:  $M = 3.10$ ). At Langkawi Island, tourists are kept busy with the activities available from sunrise till sunset. For the male extreme outdoor sports tourists, Langkawi Island is a lively destination with activities that make them fully occupied. On the contrary, the male and female sports tourists reveal the same sensitivities towards Langkawi Island image as a destination of adrenaline-packed outdoor sporting activities in related to

conducive and well-kept environment, media's good publicity, extreme sporting activities of interest, everyone's friendly destination, and convenient mobile public transportation.

On the perspective of perceived quality dimension, significant differences were observed between the male and female extreme outdoor sports tourists' perceptions for items associated to "Quality of merchandise",  $t(382) = 2.217, p = .027$  (Male:  $M = 3.52$ , Female:  $M = 3.37$ ), and "Quality of tourism product",  $t(380) = 1.997, p = .049$  (Male:  $M = 3.62$ , Female:  $M = 3.51$ ). The main reason for selecting Langkawi Island as an extreme outdoor sports destination by the male sports tourists was because of the quality of the adrenaline-packed outdoor sporting activities and the merchandise extreme outdoor items available at Langkawi Island. Conversely, both gender groups have similar primary values on the perceived service quality provided by competent, caring, reliable, timely mannered, honest, understanding, respectful, and easy to contact staffs. Besides that, both the male and female extreme outdoor sports tourists also reported alike perceptions towards the clean environment, quality of food, and quality of lodging facilities. In general, all these quality services are the key elements which make the Langkawi Island a high-quality destination for extreme outdoor sports tourists.

## **5. Conclusion**

Extreme outdoor sports tourism continues to grow all over the world, contributing to the development of a destination. As domestic tourism is gaining importance in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic with extremely limited international travel, marketing extreme outdoor sports tourism at Langkawi Island can be a good deal in the recovery of the tourism industry in Malaysia. This study provides an overall perceptions of sports tourists on their preference in selecting Langkawi Island as extreme outdoor sports destination. Regardless of gender groups, sports tourists decision to engage in extreme outdoor sports at Langkawi Island was based on the consideration of the perceived value, perceived quality, and destination image dimensions. These major considerations were the main explanations of sports tourist's preference to select Langkawi Island as their extreme outdoor sports destination. Indeed, the perceptions of extreme outdoor sports tourists towards the dimensions of destination image and perceived quality were different for a few factors.

The findings of this study shed new insights for a thorough exploration of Langkawi Island as a market potential for the extreme outdoor sports. This research contributes to the existing research to consumer behaviour by focusing on the extreme outdoor sports tourism. Better understanding of extreme outdoor sports motivations could be of reference to destination planners in identifying the changing trend of tourists' behaviour and ways these changes have progressed over the years. This could be of guidance in planning of proper long-term approaches to marketing strategies to remain competitive in the sports tourism competition. Future studies should include other destinations in Malaysia. Furthermore, the findings of this research should be documented in other dimensions of sports tourism (e. g., events, water based). Moreover, demographics, as well as other social factors could serve as variables in considering selection of destination by extreme outdoor sports tourists in future study.

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