

# Investigating the perceived quality of a special event and its influence on perceived value and behavioural intentions in a special event in Thailand

Perceived  
quality of a  
special event

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The aim of this study is to examine the impact of perceived special event quality on perceived value and behavioural intentions. Specifically, it was proposed that attendees' perceived special event quality has direct and indirect effects on behavioural intentions through the mediating role of social value, economic value and emotional value.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A self-administered, onsite survey was deployed to gather the data to formulate the hypothesised relationships in this study. Data collection also included event-intercepted panel surveys, conducted with actual consumers who attended the Agricultural and Cultural Fair. The surveys were distributed and conducted during the afternoon and early evenings at the event area and exit point of the event. In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed to domestic visitors and 176 respondents completed the survey.

**Findings** – The study found the perceived quality of the special event directly impacted social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions. The results also indicated that social value and emotional value had significant effects on behavioural intentions. Further, this study found that both social value and emotional value components mediated the relationship between perceived quality of the special event and behavioural intentions. These results confirmed the existence of a perceived-quality-value-behavioural intentions chain.

**Research limitations/implications** – There are some key limitations including the sample size in this study was relatively small and all the respondents were domestic attendees, providing findings specific to one culture only. In term of implications, the results offer event organisers holistic insights into elements to be adopted as the foundation for special event consumption. It helps event organisers to build upon customer choice behaviour, which can be employed to effectively cultivate more attendees for the special events.

**Originality/value** – This is the first study that examined the extent to which attendees' perceived quality of a special event influenced their perceived values in Agricultural and Cultural Fair which is a special event held each year in the major city of Khon Kaen in the northeast region in Thailand.

**Keywords** Special event, Perceived quality, Perceived value, Behavioural intentions

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Special events, such as major agricultural festivals, are a crucial issue in the service sector and are catalysts for fostering destination visitation, bolstering visitation in off-peak seasons, developing a destination's image and improving destination development (Carlson *et al.*, 2016; Yoon *et al.*, 2010). However, both developed and developing countries have been faced with intensifying competition as special events are becoming more popular and increasing in number every day (Yürük *et al.*, 2017). Event organisers are striving to survive and remain competitive by improving customer relationships with their special event long-term connections (Lee and Beeler, 2009) – hereafter, we will use the term *attendee* for this specific type of customer. Delivering superior quality and value to attendees is a critical issue for the



special event industry in today's highly competitive marketplace. Providing a high level of quality and value is particularly important for service and tourism industries, because a number of special event and tourism market segments have reached saturation (Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Patrick *et al.*, 2013), and tourists are increasingly more demanding (O'Cass and Sok, 2015). Given this, organisations need to understand their attendees' expectations and attempt to respond to their needs and wants (Han and Hyun, 2017).

Delivering superior quality and value becomes a critical challenge for special events to differentiate them from their competitors and increase tourist loyalty (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018; Osti *et al.*, 2012; Yoon *et al.*, 2010). Because of the nature of special events, which consist of both tangible and intangible service products, consumers often have difficulty in assessing the quality of a special event even after its conclusion. These challenges and other critical issues highlight the attention needed by special events in association with understanding the superior quality of a special event consumption experience. Additionally, building long-term consumer/special-event relationships is one of the primary strategic weapons for improving a successful special event's competitive market position.

Perceived-quality-value-behavioural-intentions chain research suggests that there are direct relationships between tourism service quality, value and tourist behavioural intentions (e.g. revisit intention and positive advocacy) (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000). The perceived-quality-value-behavioural-intentions chain indicates that the perception of service quality increases perceived value which will generate customer loyalty. This perspective is consistent with the argument that in an intensified competitive environment, destination-marketing organisations have to illustrate that they are able to translate strategies, such as providing superior quality and special event value propositions, into results (i.e. perceived high quality and value-in-use from tourists). While the successful translation of strategies into results in special events depends on a range of factors, Yoon *et al.* (2010) argue that in special events, event quality attributes and the environment surrounding delivering are assessed by tourists which impact post-visit perceptions.

While the interest in boosting marketing strategies in special events is growing, scholarly research on this domain has not kept pace. So far, previous research has predominantly focused on understanding motivational factors affecting consumer behaviour in special events (e.g. Kirkup and Sutherland, 2017; Savinovic *et al.*, 2012; Smith *et al.*, 2010). Some service marketing literature recognises that product quality has an effect on perceived value which in turn contributes to customer loyalty (Caruana and Ewing, 2010; Čater and Čater, 2010). This implies that the relationship between quality, value and loyalty is indicated as a critical issue of research. However, research has seldom investigated links among quality, value and loyalty in the areas of special events and festivals. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature and to provide more understanding of the key issues in the consumer evaluation of special event experiences.

Drawing on previous streams of empirical research in consumer behaviour and special events, this study advocates three relevant determinant components: (1) perceived special event quality, (2) value perception of the attendee consumption experience with a special event and (3) attendee attitude toward the special event. These components were used to examine what influenced attendees to engage in their behavioural intentions to special events in the future using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in the context of an agricultural and cultural fair in Thailand. The following section presents the theoretical framework of the study. Following this, the theoretical framework and hypotheses are demonstrated with supporting arguments. A rational explanation of the research methodology adopted, data analysis and findings are then presented. The final section discusses the practical and theoretical contributions along with the limitations and directions for future research.

2. Literature review

Attendees of events often seek benefits beyond those related to features, experiences, functions, socialisation, emotions and pricing, such as easy access to products and rapid responses to their queries (Carlson *et al.*, 2019; Mittal and Sheth, 2001). Consumption values theory suggests that consumer choice is the result of multiple functional and emotional assessments deriving from a special event experience (Carlson *et al.*, 2019; Sheth *et al.*, 1991; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). As demonstrated in Figure 1, this study postulated that an attendee's perceived value was formed by social, economic and emotional dimensions that were determined from attendee–event interactions. In a special event context, researchers have proposed that attendees aspire to receive value from the superior quality of special events. Specifically, the perceived value of special event and festival offerings is considered an important factor for developing long-lasting relationships with attendees (Lee *et al.*, 2011; Yang *et al.*, 2011). A high level of event quality will contribute to satisfied attendees who perceive a greater level of experience value and are more likely to have revisit intentions and advocate positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (Wu *et al.*, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, scholars also believe that behavioural intentions such as revisit intention remain crucial indicators of successful event organisation. Event organisers should be aware of the key issues influencing the post-consumption evaluation of event experiences in order to encourage longer-term relationships that will increase repeat visits (Wong *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, this study described the hypothesised relationships that identify the quality of special events and its influence on attendee's perceived value and behavioural intention outcomes.

2.1 Perceived quality of special events

The concept of service quality was originally based on the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991). Interestingly, service quality is a relatively global value judgement and it depends on a customer's experience with the focal object (Molinari *et al.*, 2008; Ngo and O' Cass, 2013) across a wide range of service marketing, hospitality and tourism areas (Chen and Chen, 2010; So *et al.*, 2014; Wu *et al.*, 2018; Zabkar *et al.*, 2010). According to the literature, scholars suggest that service quality is determined by a comparison between the customer's expectation and the perception of service performance (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991). The related literature has represented several

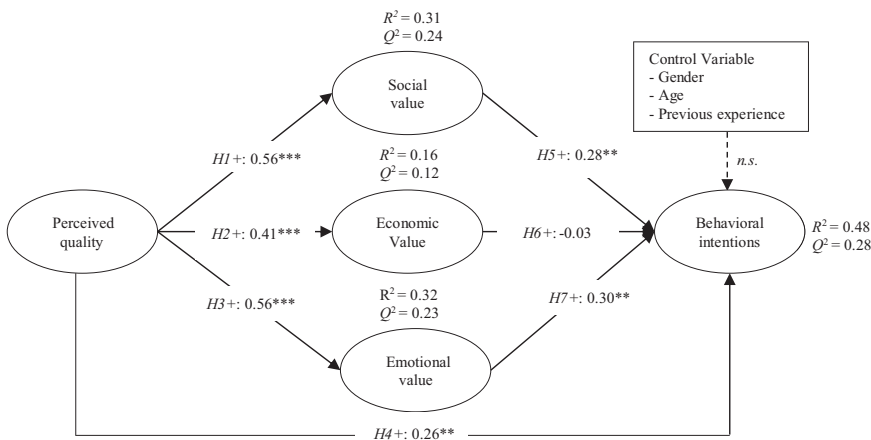


Figure 1. Results of the path analysis

conceptualisations of service quality. For example, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) developed the SERVQUAL scale to measure and assess the performance quality of a service or product as identified by the five underlying components of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible use. Some scholars conceptualise service quality as the perception of post-consumption evaluation (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Grönroos, 1984). Specifically, Grönroos (1984) identifies service quality measurement as two components, technical quality and functional quality. Both technical quality and functional dimensions are believed to impact customers' perceptions of a service. Later, Cronin and Taylor (1994) developed a service quality measurement from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) and conceptualised it as "unidimensionable", because they did not identify a scale structure. The measurement of Cronin and Taylor (1994) is a more concise service-performance-based scale.

Relying on the notions of service quality performance and experiential quality (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Wu *et al.*, 2018), Lee *et al.* (2007) contributed to understanding the distinctions between the quality and satisfaction dimensions. While quality performance is conceptualised as service quality attributes under the direct control of a provider, experiential quality, termed "satisfaction", is referred to as an affective state influenced by both quality attributes and extraneous factors (e.g. mood and enjoyment) experienced by attendees. That is, quality performance is obtained from the attendees' perceptions of the provider's performance, while quality of experience is an emotional and psychological post-consumption evaluation of attendees' experiences. Consistent with the definition of perceived service quality proposed by Zeithaml *et al.* (1990), the quality dimensions in this study are conceptualised as an attendee's assessment of a special event's overall excellence or superiority.

Importantly, the quality of performance for a high-quality special event is likely to increase the value to customers by the trade-off of their monetary sacrifice with the perceived emotional quality and the benefits that they perceive, such as their achieved social bonding. For example, the research of Dodds *et al.* (1991) and Yoon *et al.* (2010) indicate that quality increases the level of perceived value of special events and festivals. Importantly, with the high quality of special events, attendees perceive more sacrifice for which they pay, and the special event value is more favourably evaluated. This adopts the premise of Yoon *et al.* (2010) and Wu *et al.* (2018) that quality is a key driver of the perceived value of consumers and embedded in their experiences.

## *2.2 Perceived value in a special event*

Understanding consumer perceived value is important in the service industry as it is one of the primary objectives of various organisations and the means to maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Prebensen *et al.*, 2013). Also, consumers' perceived value has emerged as a pillar of service marketing theory (Plewa *et al.*, 2015). A scrutiny of the literature shows that perceived value has been explained as a dynamic construct based on experience before purchase and what is perceived from experience, at the time of use and after use (Sánchez *et al.*, 2006).

Previous research has investigated the concept of perceived value to understand consumer behaviour in various contexts, such as branding, service, hospitality and tourism (Chen and Chen, 2010; Petrick, 2004). Prior empirical research focused on perceived value as the assessment of the post-consumption evaluation regarding tourism experience and its relationship with future intentions (Petrick, 2004; Williams and Soutar, 2009). Few scholars have applied the notion of perceived value in the tourism context especially in the special event domain. For example, Williams and Soutar (2009) found that five elements of value (functional, value for money, emotional, social and novelty aspects) had a positive effect on traveller intentions in their adventure tourism study. Also examining perceived value,

Gursoy *et al.* (2006) found that hedonic value explains festival attendance better than utilitarian value in the festival and special event field. Bradley and Sparks (2012) used perceived value as a construct reflecting increasing complexity in dimensionality. They argue that perceived value is multidetermined in which consumers anticipate and derive value through many sources, including product search, marketing messages, WOM advice, product purchase and direct experience and usage, amongst others. Therefore, the current study investigated perceived value as a multidimensional construct with three dimensions: social value, emotional value and monetary value (Dong *et al.*, 2015; Eid and El-Gohary, 2015; Prebensen *et al.*, 2016; Williams and Soutar, 2009) that enhance behavioural intentions positively.

### 2.3 Behavioural intentions

Behavioural intentions have been essential factors for management (or organisers) to comprehend the actions of customers (or tourists). Behavioural intentions are expressed in various ways, such as repurchase intentions, WOM and loyalty (Wu *et al.*, 2018; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). In general, behavioural intentions have been categorised into two groups: favourable and unfavourable intentions. Favourable behavioural intentions include loyalty, willingness to pay more and switching intentions. In contrast, unfavourable intentions are customer (or tourist) complaints which are multifaceted, such as voice responses, private responses and third-party responses. Furthermore, behavioural intentions are often represented as consumer's loyalty. Also, it can be divided into two different types: (1) behaviour factors and (2) attitude factors (Altunel and Erkurt, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2011). The first factor stems from strong loyalty and repeat purchase. The latter factor includes brand preference, commitment and intention to buy. Loyal consumers are more likely to recommend friends and other potential consumers to a special event by acting as advertising agents (Chen and Chen, 2010; Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999). In this line, the contribution of such determinants as perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction can form the nature of behavioural intentions in a special event context.

## 3. Relationship building between variables

As discussed in the previous section, understanding the determinants of behavioural intentions can help destination-marketing organisations focus on the major factors leading to consumer behaviour (e.g. advocacy and customer retention). Prior empirical research in the special event and festival literature has investigated the antecedents of behavioural intentions. In addition, the causal relationships among customer perceptions of service quality, perceived value and behavioural intentions have been established by prior research (Carlson *et al.*, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Pandža Bajs, 2015; Wu and Li, 2017). These studies have demonstrated that the relationship between a customer's perception of service quality and perceived value is a good predictor of the post-consumption evaluation of special event outcomes, such as behavioural intention and/or attendee loyalty (Wong *et al.*, 2015; Wu and Ai, 2016).

To advance the literature, however, this study sought to gain a better understanding of the customer experience and argues that the concept of perceived quality is more appropriate than service quality in the context of special events to predict customers' perceived value. Therefore, in this study, perceived quality refers to the judgement about a special event's overall excellence or superiority. Thus, perceived special event quality was adopted to replace service quality in the relationships among quality, value and behavioural intentions in this study. Therefore, this study investigated how the direct effect of perceived special event quality impacted perceived social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions. Social value is defined as social recognition from other people

(Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Economic value refers to the perceived personal utility of participating in a special event offering against its cost as compared to other opportunities in the market (Carlson *et al.*, 2015). Emotional value is defined as the utility that is derived from the feelings or affective states that are generated from the special event experience (Carlson *et al.*, 2015). Consistent with prior research, most components of perceived value have a positive effect on behavioural intentions (Carlson *et al.*, 2019; Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). Additionally, perceived value appears to be the direct antecedent of behavioural intentions (Ha and Jang, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, a conceptual relationship model for this study was proposed (see Figure 1), yielding the following hypotheses:

- H1.* Perceived special event quality is positively related to social value.
- H2.* Perceived special event quality is positively related to economic value.
- H3.* Perceived special event quality is positively related to emotional value.
- H4.* Perceived special event quality is positively related to behavioural intentions.
- H5.* Social value is positively related to behavioural intentions.
- H6.* Economic value is positively related to behavioural intentions.
- H7.* Emotional value is positively related to behavioural intentions.

This study intended to establish that a customer's perception of special event quality would positively impact behavioural intention, and the perceived value of the special event in turn would positively affect behavioural intention. The emerging literature in service marketing and tourism has also confirmed that perceived value has a mediating influence between perceived service quality and behavioural intentions (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018; Moreno *et al.*, 2015). Specifically, this study advances the literature on the quality-perceived value-intention links by demonstrating the impact of perceived quality on behavioural intentions as mediated by different perceived value dimensions including perceived social value, perceived economic value and perceived emotional value. Previous research has examined perceived value as a single dimension (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018; Moreno *et al.*, 2015). However, the mediating effects of the differentiated perceived value dimensions (perceived social value, perceived economic value and perceived emotional value) in the special event consumption context remains unclear. In a special event context, the increased perceived quality of a special event signals to the perceived value of special event offerings as a value assessment across a range of hedonic and utilitarian elements received from interacting special event offerings. More specifically, the increased perceived quality of a special event must address customer goals whereby customers may have specific consumption goals, such as maximising hedonic benefits (e.g. emotional value), increasing functional benefits (e.g. economic value or value for money) and enhancing relational benefits (e.g. social value). Based on this logic, it can be argued that the perceived value of a special event would fully mediate the relationship between the perceived special event quality and behavioural intentions. Thus, we proposed an additional hypothesis as follows:

- H8.* The relationship between the perceived quality of a special event and behavioural intentions is mediated by (a) social value, (b) economic value and (c) emotional value.

#### 4. Methodological approach

##### 4.1 Research setting

The Agricultural and Cultural Fair is a special event held each year in the major city of Khon Kaen in the Northeast region of Thailand. This event has an agriculture theme and provides

appropriate types of attractions (e.g. music, food and recreational activities related to livestock). The event features a variety of events and attractions including music concerts and competitions, a local food street, arts and crafts, a road show and flower garden decoration competition. The event has been held annually for 15 years and currently attracts nearly 570,000 visitors during the 8-days event. Income generated from the annual event benefits the local community with the fair recently generating around \$18 million USD in 2015 (Khon Kaen University, 2015). To test the hypotheses, a self-administered, onsite survey was deployed to gather the data to formulate the hypothesised relationships. Data collection also included event-intercepted panel surveys, conducted with actual consumers who attended the Agricultural and Cultural Fair. These participants were randomly selected and 18+ years of age. The surveys were distributed and conducted during the afternoon and early evenings at the event area and exit point of the event. In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed to domestic visitors and 176 respondents completed the survey. This study focused on the domestic market for several reasons. First, the domestic market plays a crucial role in Thailand's special event and tourism services because travelling in the country generated 87.8% of direct tourism GDP in 2016 versus 12.2% from business spending (DBS Group Research, 2017). This demonstrates the importance of tourism to the country's economy as a contribution to economic advantages from both domestic markets. From a theoretical viewpoint, it is critical to further understand the intricacies of domestic consumer behaviour as they often have different perceptions in comparison to international consumers (Bonn *et al.*, 2005; Prayag *et al.*, 2017). Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of respondents.

#### 4.2 Measurement

Items to measure the constructs of interest were received from existing scales found in the marketing, special event and tourism literature and were adapted to the specific context of the study. The perceived quality of the special event was measured by using three items which was adapted from So *et al.* (2016). The perceived event value was measured by eleven items that were adapted from a variety of previous research (e.g. Bradley and Sparks, 2012; Williams and Soutar, 2009). This dimension tapped three perceived value dimensions: social value (three items), monetary value (four items) and emotional value (four items). All value items were rated on a 7-point, Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much so). Eight 7-point Likert-type items (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) were adapted from previous research (Brocato *et al.* (2015); Su *et al.* (2016); VanMeter *et al.* (2015) and applied to measure loyalty to the event (electronic word-of-mouth [EWOM] and future intention). To control for attendee heterogeneity, the variables of age, gender, income and prior experience were included in the model to ensure that the empirical results were not due to covariance with other variables.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Measurement validation

To test multivariate normality, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) suggest that the scales in the constructs must satisfy the criterion of multivariate normality. As presented in Table 2, all constructs were performed the normality, namely mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis distance statistics. The results of the test of normality indicated no departure from normality (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Therefore, as normality was satisfied the criterion of multivariate normality.

To investigate the reliability of the constructs of interest, their internal consistency was interpreted applying both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Respondent characteristics ( <i>n</i> = 176)	%
<i>Past experiences</i>	
First time	22.70
Revisit	77.30
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	39.20
Female	60.80
<i>Age</i>	
Under 20	20.50
21–30	49.40
31–40	15.90
41–50	8.50
51–60	5.70
<i>Education</i>	
Primary School	4.00
High School	20.50
Vocational or technical education	4.50
Diploma	6.30
Undergraduate Degree	52.80
Postgraduate Degree	11.90
<i>Length of hour spent in the special event</i>	
Less 1 h	6.30
1 h	18.80
2 h	36.90
3 h	22.20
4 h	4.50
5 h	4.00
More than 5 h	7.40

**Table 1.**  
Sample Profile

Table 3 reports that the measurement internal consistencies exceeded the recommended benchmark with values above the common threshold of 0.70. The reliabilities were acceptable as were all composite reliabilities, ranging from 0.91 to 0.94. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs, ranging from 0.66 to 0.81, were above the 0.50 cut-off value. As shown in Table 4, the convergent validities of all the factor loadings were acceptable as the loadings of items on their corresponding construct were above the cut-off value of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Further, this study examined the discriminant validity of the key constructs. The discriminant validity, which determines whether the constructs are distinct, was confirmed when the Fornell–Larcker criterion was applied to each (see Table 5) (Jarvis *et al.*, 2003). Taken into account, these results illustrate satisfactory measurement validity for the data in the study.

### 5.2 Structural model

SEM using PLS was applied for analyse of the survey data. PLS-SEM is appropriate for research with smaller sample sizes (e.g. less than 500) (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, it is more appropriate to the exploration of relationships in a predictive, rather than confirmatory, fashion (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982), such as predicting the determinants of behavioural intentions for a special event. This study evaluated a structural model regarding the size and significance of the path coefficients and  $R^2$  values of perceived special event quality, social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions (see Figure 1 and Table 6)



	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Social</i>				
My event experience has enabled me to create a good social impression	5.09	1.06	-0.61	0.71
My event experience has enabled me to impress other people	4.94	1.08	-0.34	-0.03
Me event experience has made me feel more socially accepted	4.85	1.16	-0.13	-0.18
<i>Economic value</i>				
The price paid for this experience was reasonable	4.73	1.21	-0.48	0.21
The prices for additional services were acceptable	4.75	1.18	-0.33	-0.01
This experience represented "value" for money	4.78	1.20	-0.51	0.41
This event experience was correctly priced	4.78	1.17	-0.32	0.28
<i>Emotional value</i>				
This event experience gave me a feeling of well-being	5.08	1.22	-0.47	-0.06
This event experience gave me pleasure	5.22	1.11	-0.57	-0.01
This event experience was stimulating	5.03	1.24	-0.54	0.48
<i>Perceived special event quality</i>				
Very Poor . . . . . Excellent	5.12	1.10	-0.61	0.47
Inferior . . . . . Superior	5.43	0.97	-0.31	-0.40
Low Standards . . . . . High Standards	5.41	0.99	-0.20	-0.20
<i>Behavioural intentions</i>				
I posted photos or videos on social media about (event name) that I thought will be helpful to my friends' lives	5.03	1.24	-0.58	0.41
I pass along good stories about (event name) to my friends via social media	4.94	1.26	-0.55	0.27
I respond to friends or other people's questions / remarks about (event name) on social media	4.89	1.30	-0.59	0.36
I would like to come back to this event in the future	5.33	1.17	-0.41	0.02
I am willing to attend another (e.g. cultural and sporting) special event in the future in Thailand	5.19	1.14	-0.14	-0.53

**Table 2.** For value and quality and behavioural intentions variables

Latent variable	AVE	CR	$\alpha$
Social value	0.81	0.93	0.88
Economic value	0.78	0.93	0.91
Emotional value	0.79	0.94	0.91
Perceived special event quality	0.78	0.91	0.85
Behavioural intentions	0.66	0.91	0.87

**Table 3.** Internal consistency criteria of reflective latent variable constructs

**Note(s):** AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability,  $\alpha$  = Cronbach  $\alpha$

(Hair *et al.*, 2017). All the paths presented in Figure 1 were positively significant ( $t > 2.57$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, the relationship between economic value and behavioural intentions was not significant ( $t < 1.96$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, perceived special event quality explained 31% of the variance for social value, 16% of the variance in economic value and 32% of the variance in emotional value. Perceived value components, including social value, economic value, and emotional value, explained 48% of the variance in behavioural intentions. As such, the  $R^2$  values were satisfied, suggesting that the perceived special event quality explained a

Dimensions and manifest variables	Sample (n = 176)	
	Factor loadings	t-value
<i>Social value</i>		
My event experience has enabled me to create a good social impression	0.90	66.95
My event experience has enabled me to impress other people	0.92	73.56
Me event experience has made me feel more socially accepted	0.88	38.69
<i>Economic value</i>		
The price paid for this experience was reasonable	0.86	24.28
The prices for additional services were acceptable	0.90	49.86
This experience represented “value” for money	0.91	53.46
This event experience was correctly priced	0.86	30.08
<i>Emotional value</i>		
This event experience gave me a feeling of well-being	0.84	30.50
This event experience gave me pleasure	0.89	42.34
This event experience was stimulating	0.92	74.90
<i>Perceived special event quality</i>		
Very Poor. . . . .Excellent	0.91	60.96
Inferior. . . . .Superior	0.93	68.45
Low Standards. . . . .High Standards	0.90	59.66
<i>Behavioural intentions</i>		
I posted photos or videos on social media about (event name) that I thought will be helpful to my friends' lives	0.86	37.31
I pass along good stories about (event name) to my friends via social media	0.87	37.68
I respond to friends or other people's questions / remarks about (event name) on social media	0.83	26.87
I would like to come back to this event in the future	0.75	19.54
I am willing to attend another (e.g. cultural and sporting) special event in the future in Thailand	0.74	16.45

**Table 4.**  
Items and loadings of latent variable reflective construct indicators

Variable	M	SD	Correlation matrix							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Previous experience	0.01	0.05	1.00							
2. Gender	-0.06	0.06	0.04	1.00						
3. Age	28.33	0.07	-0.08	-0.14	1.00					
4. Social value	0.56	0.06	-0.07	-0.05	0.04	0.88				
5. Economic value	0.40	0.07	0.01	-0.02	0.13	0.56	0.90			
6. Emotional value	0.56	0.06	-0.02	0.00	0.10	0.41	0.63	0.88		
7. Perceived special event quality	0.25	0.08	-0.01	-0.05	0.09	0.56	0.67	0.69	0.89	
8. Behavioural intentions	0.28	0.09	0.00	-0.08	0.00	0.57	0.59	0.44	0.60	0.81

**Table 5.**  
Correlation matrix

substantial amount of the variance of the endogenous variables, social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions (Chin, 1998).

This study further formulated the predictive relevance of the structural model via the Stone-Geisser Q<sup>2</sup> criterion (see Figure 1). As suggested by Hair et al. (2017), the Stone-Geisser Q<sup>2</sup> criterion should exceed zero for social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions, supporting the predictive relevance of perceived special event quality. The results of the model-fitting test found that the standardised root mean square

**Table 6.** Mediator analysis results

IV	M	DV	Path coefficient				Mediation
			Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Condition 4	
PSPQ	PSV	BI	0.26*(0.07)	0.56* (0.05)	0.28* (0.08)	0.23 * (0.05)	Partial mediation
PSPQ	PEV	BI	Met condition 1	Met condition 2	Met condition 3	Met condition 4	Not met
			0.26* (0.07)	0.41* (0.07)	-0.03 <sup>(n.s)</sup> (0.07)	0.11* (0.08)	
PSPQ	PMV	BI	Met condition 1	Met condition 2	Condition 3 not met	-	Partial mediation
			0.26* (0.07)	0.56* (0.05)	0.30* (0.09)	0.24 * (0.05)	
			Met condition 1	Met condition 2	Met condition 3	Met condition 4	

**Note(s):** IV = Independent Variable; M = Mediator Variable; DV = Dependent Variable, PSPQ = Perceived Special Event Quality, PSV = Perceived Social Value, PEV = Perceived Economic Value, PMV = Perceived Emotional Value, BI = Behavioural Intentions. SE: Standard Error (in parentheses). All coefficients were significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level or better unless indicated *ns*

residual (SRMR) was well below the 0.10 threshold, SRMR = 0.09 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). In summary, the findings indicate that the formation of perceived special event quality had a positive direct effect on social value, economic value, emotional value and behavioural intentions, whereas social value and emotional value were found to have significant positive effects on behavioural intentions but not for economic value.

The PROCESS method proposed by Hayes (2017) was employed to test the results of the mediating components as presented in Table 6.

To test the mediating effects of social value, economic value and emotional value on the relationship between perceived special event quality and behavioural intentions, we followed the steps in Baron and Kenny's (1986) classic causal procedure. According to this approach, mediation effects would be present if four conditions are met:

- (1) the independent variable must have a significant relation with the dependent variable (with the mediating variable not included in the model);
- (2) the independent variable must have a significant relation with the mediator variable;
- (3) the mediator variable must have significant relation with dependent variable; and
- (4) full mediation is established if the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable when the mediator is controlled (whereas, it was significant in Step 3). If the independent variables remain significant but their influence is reduced, they are partially mediated.

Although full mediation was the standard according to Baron and Kenny (1986), more recent developments on mediation analysis (Iacobucci, 2008) note that "when all tests are properly conducted and reported, the majority of articles conclude with partial mediation" (p. 12).

Based on the extant literature, Table 6 shows that perceived special event quality had a significant positive influence on behavioural intentions ( $\beta = 0.26, p < 0.01$ ), satisfying the first condition of mediation. Furthermore, perceived special event quality had a significant positive influence on perceived social value ( $\beta = 0.56, p < 0.001$ ), perceived economic value ( $\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$ ) and perceived emotional value ( $\beta = 0.56, p < 0.001$ ), satisfying the second condition. In addition, perceived social value ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$ ) and perceived emotional value ( $\beta = 0.30, p < 0.01$ ) positively influenced behavioural intentions, satisfying the third condition. However, we found a non-significant relationship between perceived economic value and behavioural intentions with the path coefficient ( $\beta = -0.03, n.s.$ ), which did not

satisfy the condition (see Table 6). Thus, perceived economic value was rejected as a mediation impact on the relationship between perceived special event quality and behavioural intentions. Finally, a comparison showed that the positive effect of perceived special event quality on behavioural intentions was reduced after perceived social value ( $\beta = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ) and perceived emotional value ( $\beta = 0.24, p < 0.01$ ) entered the model. The changes in the path coefficients within the regression related to the third and fourth conditions were also examined. These results suggest that perceived social value and perceived emotional value partially mediated the effect of perceived special event quality on behavioural intentions. This might be because, in a special event setting, an attendee would expect to be loyal if he/she believed that sociability and pleasure as the dimensions of perceived quality included his/her perceived social and emotional values.

Finally, to provide a more robust test of our results, possible control variables were included as direct antecedents of behavioural intentions. The heterogeneity of attendees with regard to the included control variables (age, gender and previous experience) and their impact on the dependent variables (i.e. on behavioural intentions) were not critical issues. As such, our proposed conceptual model provides a reasonable explanation of the variance in behavioural intentions.

## 6. Discussion, implications and future research

The aim of the study was to examine the impact of the perceived special event quality on perceived value and behavioural intentions. The results of this study showed that an attendee's perception of special event quality had significant direct and indirect effects on behavioural intentions. Such effects were mediated by social value and emotional value. The results suggest that behavioural intentions are not always simply the direct consequence of the perception of special event quality. The direct effects of social value, economic value and emotional value on behavioural intentions were also examined to understand the facilitating role of perceived value in our conceptual model. The results also demonstrated that social value and emotional value had significant positive direct influences on behavioural intentions. However, the relationship between economic value and behavioural intentions was not significant. We were surprised to find that the economic value showed only a negligible negative direct impact on behavioural intentions. One explanation for this result might be due to various "expensive" products and services at the special events, while in addition, some aspects of the special event offerings were not developed according to the perceptions of the special event attendees. Therefore, the attendees may have felt that these product and service offerings at the special event were not reasonably priced.

The results also indicated that the direct effect of perceived event quality on behavioural intention was higher than that of the social, economic and emotional values. The findings serve to validate the thinking that an attendee's perceived quality of the event offering may represent a superior explanatory factor for behavioural intentions (i.e. revisit intention and E-WOM) for a special event. The perceived quality of the event may increase attendee form-favourable affects and attitudes towards the event. Although perceived quality is vitally crucial for building perceived value (social, economic and emotional) around the world for a highly competitive special event, a high perception of quality represents a stronger contributor for creating truly committed loyal attendees. The results of this study have shown the incremental explanatory power of the perceived quality of the event in predicting behavioural intentions, generating strong support for recognising the important role of perceived quality in predicting behavioural intentions such as revisit intention and E-WOM. With these results, this examination provides substantive theoretical and managerial contributions to the service marketing and attendee perceived value and tourist behaviour literature in the context of special events within the markets of emerging countries such as Thailand.

### 6.1 Theoretical contribution

This study makes contributions to the special event and hospitality literature in several ways. Even though the current research has some similarities with prior studies in special event settings that investigated the impact of the perceived quality factor on behavioural intention, our findings are uniquely different from prior research. First, the study adds to the expanding quality-perceived value-intention links discourse in the context of special events in emerging countries such as Thailand. This study established the relative significance of the perceived overall quality of special event offerings. Moreover, consumer behaviour studies, especially in the context of special events, remain scant. To address this gap in the literature, this study is among the first to apply the theory of consumption value in the special event industry, specifically in Thailand. Applying an existing theoretical concept to different backgrounds is beneficial as the concept can gain greater validity and reliability (Bacharach, 1989). As attending special events is emotionally driven consumption, this study extends consumption value theory by integrating the perceived overall quality aspect of consumption evaluations to better understand special event attendees' experiences with a focal special event. More specifically, this study replicates and extends the existing literature by explaining the relationships among the perceived quality of the special event, value and behavioural intention in the special event sector. The crucial aspects of this study are in its applications and extensions of the model for the special event sector.

Second, the significant mediating effects of social value and emotional value components illustrated in this study represent additional insights into the use-experience mechanisms through which the attendee's perceived special event quality influences behavioural intentions beyond the mediating role of satisfaction (Chen and Chen, 2010). Moreover, the significant role of social value and emotional value in behavioural intentions that was examined in this study offers not only a better understanding within the special event and hospitality literature but also in the service marketing literature in which the role of perceived values has already been studied in other contexts, such as its influence on tourist loyalty (e.g. Chebat and Slusarczyk, 2005; Prayag and Soscia, 2016) and service failure (e.g. Del Río-Lanza *et al.*, 2009; Smith and Bolton, 2002). Although the concept of perceived value in influencing behavioural intentions has received attention in the literature (Carlson *et al.*, 2019; Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018; Wu *et al.*, 2018), this study shows that a certain behavioural intention in the context of a special event played a more crucial role than the perceived value mediator. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the argument of Chen and Chen (2010) and Millar and Tesser (1986) that some behaviours are more cognitively driven by social value whereas others are more driven by emotions.

Third, scholars have called for empirical insights into strategies and performance metrics that capture how customers assess perceived quality in the special event context and the measurement of a customer's perception of quality that move beyond a "one-size-fits-all" approach and take into account the idiosyncratic nature of marketing channels and contextual settings (e.g. Chen and Chen, 2010). In response, this study examined the notion of perceived quality in a special event setting by using data from 176 special event Thai attendees. The results were consistent with past studies by Chen and Chen (2010) and Petrick (2004), except for the insignificance of the direct path between quality and behavioural intentions. These results imply that the importance of quality on behavioural intentions is recognised via the mediating effects of perceived value in special event contexts.

### 6.2 Managerial contribution

Managerial strategies can be utilised by event organisers (or operators) in designing and planning a variety of experiences for appealing events. The results of this study can assist event organisers in better understanding how the perceived overall quality of a special event

can contribute to perceived value, which in turn, affects behavioural intention. The present study helps event organisers who have observed that event attendees have become more demanding on the quality of a special event. The PLS-SEM findings of this study demonstrated that an attendee's perceived quality of a special event (i.e. excellent, superior or high standard of event performance) had contributions to all three dimensions of perceived value. Our findings can be beneficial to managing and organising special event resources (e.g. venue, staff, facilities and program) in order to increase event attendees' perceptions of unique special events and specific affective aspects (i.e. excitement and enjoyment), which is consistent with [Lee et al. \(2011\)](#).

The results indicated that the perceived quality of the special event had a direct effect on behavioural intention. With the hedonic nature of the special event experience, the role of the perceived overall quality of a special event performance had a positive appeal for behavioural intentions such as revisit intention and positive WOM marketing. To build upon both, the event manager could make an effort to improve the event quality in order to encourage attendees to share their experiences with others via social media accounts.

The results revealed that the relationship between perceived social and emotional values was significantly related to behavioural intentions. Such value-creating activities should then unlock attendee revisit intention and advocacy relation to a special event with practitioners. In terms of emotional value, managers have to focus on increasing perceived event quality, particularly, because emotional value was shown to be the strongest predictor of behavioural intentions. Therefore, event managers should develop the event performances such as service offerings and activities and facilitate opportunities for sharing attendees' experiences via social media that result in positive affective emotional aspects to foster behavioural intentions. In addition, the organisers should foster public participation (sometimes called social interactions) and positive emotional states and the feelings of visitors ([Carlson et al., 2015](#)). This could be administered through marketing communication and event promotions, especially on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others. In doing this, both strategies would maintain and improve positive impressions and social approval. Furthermore, the innovation and exploration of new event characteristics have currently become considerable factors that help event organisers satisfy attendees' needs for participating in various, unique experiences in special events in order to increase their social status.

### *6.3 Limitations and future research directions*

While the results of this study contribute knowledge and managerial implications, there are some key limitations and directions for future research. First, the sample size in this study was relatively small. As a result, it might not support the generalisation of the results to the entire population of the special event attendees. In addition, all the respondents were domestic attendees, providing findings specific to one culture. Future studies should examine the experiences of international attendees and re-test the research model with a sample of international attendees of the same special event or in special events in other regions and countries. Second, future studies can extend the research model by considering additional variables that might demonstrate antecedents and consequences of perceived quality of the special event. For example, [So et al. \(2016\)](#) suggest that customer engagement is a driver of perceived quality. This factor can be included in the research framework and tested in subsequent research to determine the relationship with perceived special event quality. Similarly, the literature suggests that the perceived quality of the tourism experience may influence other aspects, such as satisfaction, trust and corporate reputation ([Chen and Chen, 2010](#); [Wu et al., 2018](#)). To further advance special event management, future studies could examine the impact of the perceived quality of special events on these factors. Finally, future research should examine the components of process quality and outcome quality. As such, an

extension of this study could use a longitudinal approach to confirm causality and assess consequences of the research framework over time. A longitudinal perspective should emphasise the quality of the actual onsite experience at the special event and after the special event has concluded, which may ultimately represent more information about the levels of behavioural intention such as WOM behaviour.

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