
The Tourist Perceived Risk towards Travel Intention

**Zaimatul Awang¹, Nik Alif Amri Nik Hashim^{1*}, Derweanna Bah Simpong¹,
Mohd Ashraf Kamarul Zaman², Mursyda Mahshar³, Khairun Najihah Sabri⁴,
Nur Izzati Mohamad Anuar⁵ and Ruzanifah Kosnin¹**

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ABSTRACT

Past tourism scholars have identified the perceived risk effects on destination choices and travel behavior. The relationship between tourists perceived risk and tourists travel intention has not been explored much, especially in the Malaysian context, but existing studies suggest a close relationship between them. This chapter proposes to examine the influence of risks perception by tourists on their travel intentions to visit Malaysia. In addition, in the literature, it is stated that there is still not enough empirical evidence in explaining how the tourists risk perception affect the travel intention to visit Malaysia. The respondents of this study will be western tourists who have never visited Malaysia before. The data of this study will be analysed using the structural equation modelling partial least square (SEM-PLS). This study will benefit the authorities in improving weaknesses as well as changing the policies needed to develop a better tourism experience, especially for international tourists. This study will expand the knowledge of risks and travel intentions related to this study area in general and Malaysia in particular.

Keywords: Perceived risk; travel risk; international tourist; travel intention; Malaysia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the main contributors to the Malaysian economy. Malaysia received a total of 26.10 million of tourists and contributed MYR86.1 billion to national income in 2019 [1]. Malaysian tourism is the third largest foreign income earner after manufacturing and palm oil industry in Malaysia which accounting for over 7.0% of the country economy in 2016 [2,3]. In any case, tourist destinations compete based on their image over competitors. Whether travelers are planning a trip or visiting a destination, they tend to make decisions based on the risks they perceive [4,5,6,7]. No matter what the problem, perceived risk is a factor influencing the behavior of tourists with the presence of early purchases [8].

International tourist travel behaviours and motives are far different from domestic tourism. Domestic travelers can travel more frequently than international tourists and are more likely to undertake self-independent tours [9,10]. On the other hand, international tourists may have different travel motives and behaviors. International travelers are found to choose safe holiday destinations [11]. They show strong motives for relaxation and fun and prefer to visit natural landmarks and attractions, go shopping and sightseeing, learn about the country where they study, enjoy the sun, sea and sand, experience the local culture, taste the food local and explore new places [12,13]. However, such a trip is not without its risks. While there may be travel benefits for tourists and the tourism industry, international tourists may be vulnerable to the risks when traveling. Past travel scholars have highlighted the impact of perceived risk on destination and travel behavior [14,15,16,17,18,4,19].

¹Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

²Division of Administration and Finance, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Malaysia.

³Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah, Malaysia.

⁴Faculty of Food Science and Technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.

⁵Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: nikalifamri@gmail.com;

In Malaysia, there are several cases that occur that can affect the tourism industry in Malaysia, for example, crime, health and safety problems. The current issue of COVID19 pandemic, SARS virus outbreak in 2003, kidnapping and piracy problems in the east coast of Sabah in 2015 [20,21] and crime [22] which affect the tourism industry in Malaysia. Crime can occur in a variety of different areas and circumstances, crimes committed by locals against tourists, crimes committed by tourists against locals, crimes committed by tourists against other tourists and organized crime against tourist entities [23]. The issue of illegal immigrants, for example, becomes one of the social ills in Malaysia [24]. Illegal foreigners in Malaysia were found to be involved in criminal activities especially prostitution, kidnapping, robbery, human trafficking, and even murder [25]. For example, the murder of a kidnapped driver by a Myanmar resident in Selayang, Kuala Lumpur [26]. According to the Overseas Security Advisory Council ([27], Kuala Lumpur has been identified as a high threat location for criminal cases in Malaysia, and this will affect tourists' intentions to travel to the area.

Therefore, looking at these problems, it is very important to understand how the tourists' perceived risk affect their intention to visit to destinations with high security and safety concerns. In addition, little effort has been made to investigate the travel risks of international travelers who are perceived to be over health and safety or to investigate the impact of their travel characteristics and behavior on their risk perceptions. An understanding of a broader range of international tourists and the influencing factors is important as potential risks can be difficult to travel and are known to influence destination choices. Moreover, perceived risks have directly affected tourist intentions and are also cited as successful indicators in predicting actual behavior [18]. To overcome this gap, this chapter intend to understand the travel risk factors felt by international tourists. Such an approach can help develop targeted reduction and mitigation strategies and be more effective in response to potential risks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Perceived Risk Concept

The perceived risk concept was introduced in the area of economics in the 1920s used in decision making under economics, finance, and decision-making [28]. This perceived risk concept is important for many industries including the civil service economy, and the management industry. Especially in the context of travel and tourism, the risk is an important function in influencing the behaviour of tourists because tourism is a non-existent treatment that is vulnerable to potential risks and threats. Perceived risk has been identified as a key component of the buyer's behaviour [28]. The initial definition of perceived risk refers to a combination of uncertainty and seriousness of decision [29]. In addition, Cox and Rich [30] argue that perceived risk consists of two parts: uncertainty and consequences. According to Taylor [31], the basic problem of consumer behaviour is the situation of choice. Because election results can only be known in the future, users have to face the uncertainty or risk of the results.

In the view of other scholars, the risk is defined as 'exposure to possible injury or loss, danger or dangerous opportunity or potential loss of something of value' [32]. Moreira [33] defines risk as a 'perception of the future' and considers it a 'perception of a threatening scenario'. Although the concept of risk has been extensively studied over the past fifty years, it is difficult to define and manage [34,35,36]. However, it is generally acknowledged that perceived risk is based on two main components: uncertainty and negative consequences; and it is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept [29,37,17].

2.2 The Perceived Risk Dimensions

Since Bauer [29] introduced the concept of risk perception as part of consumer purchasing behavior, scholars have expressed concern about its status as "independent construct" and "non-standard construction" as well as its broad dimensional categorization [38,39]. In studies of perceived risk, even word dimensions are used interchangeably with terms such as features [40] or components [41]. In addition, there is a perceived inconsistency of labeling of perceived risk dimensions.

Many researchers have seen the effects of various perceived risk categories on consumer behavior. For example, Cheron and Ritchie [42]; Jacoby and Kaplan [43]; Kaplan, et al. [38]; Roehl and Fesenmaier [34] have agreed that perceived risks have been focused primarily on consumer behavior research where they are grouped into seven types; financial, performance, physical, psychological, social, satisfaction and time risks. Their research shows that social risk is not related to the perception of risk associated with the journey of pleasure. They also found that it was possible to identify differences between tourists in their perceptions of risk with some tourists more at risk than others. It is further recommended that the importance of each risk factor differ according to the specific person and situation [34]. In tourist areas, such risks can be classified into functional risks and psychological risks [44]. Moutinho [45] states that risks should be classified into functional risks, physical risks, financial risks, social risks, and psychological risks. Further, Dickson and Dolnicar [46] classify risk into four types; absolute risk, actual risk, desired risk, and perceived risk. However, such research only focuses on tourists who are at risk relevant to them [32].

Roehl and Fesenmaier [34] described in prior research and grouped them into seven groups, including equipment, finance, physical, psychological, satisfaction, social and time. However, no model is widely accepted to investigate individuals' perceived travel risks [47]. The methodology, framework and survey instruments adopted by past researchers are inconsistent, harm the ability to compare and contrast research results [47]. To formulate this study, the six main aspects of the risk that travellers perceive will review starting with physical, social, performance, psychological, financial and time risk. The previous description of perceived risk dimensions is varied, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of perceived risk related to tourism

Types of risk	Definitions
Time	The possibility that a trip will be a waste of time or will take too much time
Financial	The possibility that the trip will not give value for the money spent
Physical	The possibility of physical danger, injury or sickness while on a trip
Psychological	The possibility that a trip will not reflect the consumer's personality or self-image
Equipment/ Function	The possibility of mechanical, equipment or organizational problems while on a trip
Satisfaction	The possibility that a trip will not give personal satisfaction
Social	The possibility that a trip will affect others' opinion of them
Crime	The possibility of being robbed, becoming a victim of rape or murder
Health	The possibility of becoming sick while travelling or at the destination
Cultural	The possibility of experiencing difficulties in communicating with foreigners, cultural misunderstandings, inability to adjust to a foreign way of life and standards
Political	The possibility of becoming involved in the political turmoil of the country being visited
Terrorism	The possibility of being involved in a terrorist act whilst travelling

Source: Nik Hashim et al., [4]; Sharipour, 2014

3. METHODOLOGY

This study will use quantitative design research methods. The population of this study is the international tourist population over 18 years of age. Samples will be selected to meet certain criteria, for example, international tourists must be tourists who have never visited Sabah before. All participants must be ready to participate, 18 years of age and older, male or female and of all races. The data of this study will be analyzed using the structural equation modelling partial least square (SEM-PLS).

A four-part questionnaire will be designed to collect data from international tourists. Part A will ask about screening questions. Part B will relate to the perceived risk of destination and part C will ask about the travel intention. The last section D will ask about the demographic profile of the respondents. Perceived risk instruments and travel intentions will be adopted and adapted from Deng

and Ritchie [17], Nik Hashim et al. [4] and Chew and Jahari [48]. A seven-point Likert scale will be used for this item, ranging from (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

This study conducted a reliability and validity test before performing the actual data collection process. To increase reliability, there are four criteria that researchers will follow: (1) configure all constructs, (2) increase the level of measurement, (3) use some indicators, and (4) conduct a pilot study. As followed by the practical rules by Sekaran and Bougie (2010), reliability of less than 0.6 is considered bad, while 0.70 is acceptable and more than 0.8 is good. Scores for items below 0.70 will be removed or filtered.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data reflect high reliability standards for all measurements, which include the variables of Physical Risk (0.854), Social Risk (0.911), Time Risk (0.921), Financial Risk (0.722) and Travel Intent (0.966), all representing high internal stability. A coefficient of 0.60 or more is considered to have average reliability in the instrument (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). In short, questionnaires can be used as official inquiries in actual research in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

As this study is still under investigation, significant academic contributions to existing knowledge will be achieved by testing hypotheses and confirming whether the study is supported or rejected and linking the findings with empirical evidence taken from the literature. From a practical perspective, Tourism Malaysia and other tourism players such as hotels, travel agencies and airlines may be looking at such findings for example, by applying marketing strategies to help the tourism industry to produce good tourism pictures. In addition, this study will benefit the authorities in improving weaknesses as well as changing the policies needed to develop a better tourism experience, especially for international tourists

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Biography of author(s)



Zaimatul Awang

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

She is a tourism lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness (FHPK), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). She holds a Bachelor Science of Tourism Management minor in Hospitality and holds a Master's Degree in Tourism Management from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She has been involved in research projects and published numerous articles nationally and internationally. Her research interests are in Tourism Management, Tourism Technology, Tourism Crisis & Disaster Management, Tourism Heritage & Culture and Tourist Behaviour. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Tourism & Hospitality at public university in Malaysia.



Dr. Nik Alif Amri Nik Hashim

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

He is a lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness (FHPK), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). He holds a Bachelor Science of Tourism Management minor in Hospitality and holds a Master's Degree in Tourism Management from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). He has been involved in research projects and releases many articles nationally and internationally. Among his areas of expertise are Tourism and Hospitality Management, Tourism Technology, Culture & Heritage, Travel Risk Perceptions, Destination Destinations, Tourist Travelers and Intimate Adventures, Event Management in Tourism and Crisis & Disaster Management. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Tourism & Hospitality at the University of Queensland, Australia.



Dr. Derweanna Bah Simpong

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

She is currently a senior lecturer and a Deputy Dean (Research & Innovation) at the Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). She holds a Diploma in Culinary Arts and Degree in Food and Service Management from Mara University of Technology and had successfully completed a Master in Business Administration in year 2008 and she also completed her PhD in Doctor of Philosophy in Hotel and Tourism Management in year 2017. She has involved in several consultancy projects in indigenous tourism. Her research interests are hospitality management, food and service management and hospitality entrepreneurship.



Mohd Ashraf Kamarul Zaman

Division of Administration and Finance, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Malaysia.

He is an assistant secretary in the Division of Administration and Finance, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. He holds a Bachelor of Mechanical (Aeronautical) Engineering and a Master in Business Administration (MBA) from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Prior to joining public service, he has been actively involved in various consultation activities mainly for business proposal development in the field of advance manufacturing and technology, health and beauty industries as well as the tourism sector. Today, aside from being committed to his work in the public sector, he also actively provides assistance to several industry players within the tourism sector to review their business model to ensure survival in the post-Covid-19 era.



Mursyda Mahshar

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah, Malaysia.

She is a lecturer in the Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business and Management (FPP), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah. She holds a Bachelor Business Administration (Hons) Transportation and holds a Master's Degree in Master Business Administration from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). She has been involved in research projects and releases many articles nationally and internationally. Among her areas of expertise are Transportation Management, Operations Management, Management, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Project Management, Business Communications, and Entrepreneurships. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Business Administrations (DBA) at the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).



Khairun Najihah Sabri

Faculty of Food Science and Technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.

She is a student in the Faculty of Food Science and Technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She holds a Bachelor Science of Foodservice Management and holds a Master's Degree also in Foodservice Management from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She has been involved in research projects and releases many articles nationally. Previously she worked in food and beverage manufacturing industry for 8 years. Among her areas of working expertise are Quality Assurance, Quality Control, Halal, Food Safety, Supplier Audit, Lead Auditor and Research Development. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Food Management at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).



Dr. Nur Izzati Mohamad Anuar

Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

She is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. Previously, she was a lecturer at Putra International College. She earned a bachelor's degree in information management and master's degree in knowledge management, in 2010 and 2012 respectively from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia. She also holds a doctoral degree in management from University of Glasgow, Scotland. Her areas of expertise are organisational learning, organisational capabilities, information management and knowledge management especially in the context of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as internationalisation.



Dr. Ruzanifah Kosnin

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia.

She is a senior lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness (FHPK), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). She holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management and a master's degree in Business Administration from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). She had Bachelor of Science in Business Administration majoring in Finance from University of Colorado at Boulder, United States. She has been involved in industry for almost 20 years prior to becoming an academics. Her research interest in Gold Dinar, Islamic Finance, Entrepreneurship, and Islamic Tourism.

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