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RESEARCH LETTER



Daring routine: examining the tourists' risk perception attitudes through the characteristics of travel frequency and revisit frequency

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ABSTRACT

The turbulent times have led to increased research on risk perception by tourists. Our research aims to measure whether tourists' risk perceptions are also related to travel frequency, not just revisit frequency. Our study examined tourists with a representative sample (N=387). Pearson correlation and basic linear regression analysis were used to test hypotheses. The main finding of our study was that those who travel more often have lower destination risk perception, but it was not ultimately true that those who revisit the same destination more often have lower destination risk perception. The scientific novelty is that, along with the destination-based research logic, the 'legitimacy' of a tourist's travel frequency and the tourists' internal travel characteristics as a tourist-based research logic can be an accurate indicator in researches on risk perception.

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KEYWORDS

Destination risk perception; travel frequency; revisit frequency; tourist routine; advanced travellers

Introduction and discussion of literature

It is in the business interest of most tourist destinations for tourists to revisit while preserving the principles of economic and social sustainability (Torres-Moraga et al., 2024). Thus, all destinations are trying to present a good image, one element of which is the image of a safe destination, which has been increasingly valued in the turbulent times since 2019 (Naeem et al., 2023; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). Meanwhile it is also true that the more one travels, the more likely one is to revisit the destination, so a positive relationship exists between the two factors (Su et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2022).

The types of risk perceptions traditionally associated with purchasing behaviour have most often been performance, financial, social, time, psychological, and physical (Siegrist, 2021). The concept of perceived risk in tourism draws simultaneously on psychological, sociological, cultural, economic, and other disciplines (Cui et al., 2016). If threats to a destination cannot be reduced in the durable sense, tourists may avoid it in the long term for various reasons (Chemli et al., 2022). According to Adam (2015), performance risk in tourism consumption is when some mistake or misperformance happens to a destination or service provider.

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Due to the crises of recent years (COVID-19, wars, terrorist attacks), the impact of destination risk perception on travel behaviour has become a focus of academic research again (Ryu et al., 2022). Several studies have shown that as destination risk perceptions (violence risk, socio-psychological risk, cultural risk, terrorism, health risk, and travel inconveniences) increase, the likelihood of tourists revisiting a destination because they perceive it as dangerous decreases (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). However, there may be differences in the degree of risk perception regarding the number of times a subject has revisited a destination (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

These approaches have in common that, although the risk perception analysis revealed its effects on revisit behaviour, it started from the destination itself, focused on the tourist's relationship with the destination (Ryu et al., 2022). Since the frequency or intention to revisit mainly depends on the past performance or safety of the destination (Hasan et al., 2017). Although, the studies did not examine the tourist's travel frequency or quasi-travel routine in risk perception context as a tourist-based logic (Lee et al., 2022). Previous research indicated that the degree of hesitation in the travel decision (risk consideration) may be reduced by the knowledge and acquired skills of the tourist derived from his/her travel frequency to reduce potential risks (Neuburger & Egger, 2021). In the context of risk perception, it is worth looking at travel frequency, which is closer to a tourist-based logic rather than revisit frequency (Basaran et al., 2020). While maintaining the view that revisit frequency is negatively linked to risk perception (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020).

Our research aims to demonstrate that the internal characteristics of the tourist, in particular travel frequency (and the potential travel routine acquired from it), are a significant factor in lower risk perception and that the level of risk perception may not only depend on revisit frequency. In other words, travel frequency could reduce the risk perception level of a tourist. On the side, we also want to point out a positive association between travel frequency and revisit frequency as a control outcome to strengthen the basis of our results. This relationship is confirmed in previous studies, which can validate our main results (Sun et al., 2022).

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 contains the research methodology, which in our case is quantitative research method as all previous studies used quantitative research approaches in this theoretical contribution. Section 3 contains the results obtained, with hypothesis testing. Section 4 includes the main conclusions and policy implications for quickly disseminating based on theoretical and experimental results.

Research methodology

The scientific mission of this paper is to highlight that, along with the destination-based research logic, the 'legitimacy' of a tourist's travel frequency and the resulting travel routine can be an accurate indicator in research on risk perception as a risk reduction tool. The aim of the research is to measure the negative impact of travel frequency on destination risk perception, in addition to revisit frequency, which is a novel approach to the research topic. This possible relationship has only been hinted at by a few researchers (Basaran et al., 2020; Neuburger & Egger, 2021; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020), but in the context of this Research Letter we would like to verify the legitimacy of this approach. With this approach, we hypothesise that travel frequency is a strong risk reducing element in addition to revisit frequency. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated following the literature review:

H₁: Those who travel more frequently have a lower perception of destination risk.

H₂: Those who revisit the destination more often have a lower risk perception.

To verify our hypotheses, we interviewed a representative sample of 400 people in Hungary using the CATI survey method, of which 387 people were included in the final sample after data cleaning. We surveyed Hungarian citizens living in Hungary who had spent at least one night abroad between 2019 and 2023 and also travelled abroad for tourism at least once during the COVID-19 pandemic (1

March 2020 and 30 April 2021). The main criterion was that they had travelled abroad for tourism at least once in the summer of 2023 (between 1 May and 30 September). The survey was conducted in the late autumn 2023.

Quantitative research namely Pearson correlation and regression analysis were performed to test the hypotheses, in addition to descriptive statistics. Destination risk estimation was investigated using four validated items (Xie et al., 2020), from which a factor was constructed using CFA analysis (Confirmatory factor analysis), Maximum Likelihood method, and Promax rotation. Travel frequency and revisit frequency were measured on a continuous scale, while each included variable was standardised for analysis.

First, we created the Destination risk perception factor based on CFA analysis (Table 1). Then, we standardised all the used variables and conducted Pearson correlation and basic linear regression analysis to test hypotheses (Table 2 and Figure 1). We involved for analysis our three main variables: Destination risk perception factor, Travel frequency (standardised), Revisit frequency (standardised). Finally, we analysed the gap between travel frequency and revisit frequency to point out the break-point between the two variables based on the results of analysis (Figure 2).

Results

The final representative sample was 387 people. Their average age was 46.1 years (standard deviation 15.5 years). 51.7% were female and 48.3% male. 26.6% lived in the capital city, 19.1% in the county capital, 29.7% in the city and 24.5% in the village/village.

In 2019–2023, respondents travelled on average 4.6 times (with a standard deviation of 1.6) and revisited the destination 2.2 times (with a standard deviation of 1.3). The minimum frequency of travel was 3, i.e. those who travelled at least once between 2019–2023 and also during the COVID-19 pandemic period (from 1 March 2020 to 30 April 2021) at least once, and also in the summer of 2023, those who travelled at least three times in total between 2019–2023 based on the representative results.

In other words, those who travelled at least once during the coronavirus pandemic travel abroad on average nearly at least once a year. The characteristic that measures revisits to a given destination shows that 5.2% of respondents had not previously been to the same destination as the question, but the rest had been to the same destination at least once. The distributions are shown in Appendix 1.

Perceived risk of destination was measured using the validated scale of Xie et al. (2020) with four statements on a Likert scale of 1–7 (Table 1), where a value of ‘1’ meant strongly disagree and a value of ‘7’ meant strongly agree. Factor weights reached a minimum of 0.6 in all cases, and the explained coefficient of variance was also high (68.4%), as was Cronbach’s alpha (0.864). Although, on average, travellers tended not to perceive risk (the mean of all measured statements was below the mean [4]).

A benchmarking model based on the analyses was used to test the hypotheses. Our correlation and regression analysis show that travel frequency is negatively correlated with destination risk

Table 1. Destination risk perception factor.

Items by Xie et al. (2020)	Means	Std. dev.	Factor weights	Explained variance	KMO value	Cronbach's alpha
During travelling, I was worried about the possible violence happened in the destination.	2.4	1.6	0.893	68.4%	0.835	0.864
During travelling, I was worried about possible street crime happened in the destination.	2.5	1.7	0.879			
During travelling, I was worried about possible terrorist attacks happened in the destination.	2.2	1.6	0.774			
During the travelling, I was worried that some people in the destination are unfriendly to tourists.	2.6	1.7	0.754			

Table 2. Pearson correlation analysis results for hypothesis testing.

	Travel frequency	Revisit frequency	Destination risk perception
Travel frequency	1		
Revisit frequency	0.315***	1	
Destination risk perception	−0.145**	−0.039 ^{ns}	1

Note: *** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$; ns: non-significant.

perception (beta coefficient is -0.136), i.e. the more one travels, the less one perceives a destination as risky (Table 2 and Figure 1). Revisit frequency also has a negative directional coefficient associated with destination risk perception (beta coefficient is -0.072), but this is much smaller than for travel frequency and (barely) insignificant. Related to this, there is a positive, significant correlation (0.315) between travel frequency and revisit frequency, i.e. the more one travels, the more likely one is to revisit the destination. This also indicates that when measuring risk perception of a destination, it is not necessarily the revisit frequency that should be considered but the travel frequency because the more one travels, the less likely one is to perceive risk, which increases the probability of revisiting the destination.

However, it should be pointed out that the relationship between travel frequency and revisit frequency is not directly proportional. Instead, we see that there is a break (from around four travel units) where the gap between the two variables starts to open, i.e. the more one travels, the more one does not revisit the same destination proportionally more often, and the lower the revisit frequency rate is decreasing (Figure 2). In other words, the relationship between travel frequency and revisit frequency is not linear.

Summary and conclusions

Based on our results, we could accept the first hypothesis of the two hypotheses, namely that there is a significant association between those who travel more frequently having lower destination risk perception. The positive relationship between travel frequency and revisit frequency variables strengthens the validation of our research by confirming many times in the international literature (Sun et al., 2022; Nguyen Hasan et al., 2017; Viet et al., 2020). Although several previous studies (Basaran et al., 2020; Neuburger & Egger, 2021; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020) have suggested a relationship between travel routine and risk perception related to revisit [return], the results of this study both confirm the previous assumption and point to a more pronounced role of travel routine in reducing risk perception. The travel frequency is closely linked to the revisit frequency to the same destination despite this, travel frequency reduces risk perception to a greater extent than revisit frequency, which is an innovative result in this field.

The validity of our first hypothesis points to the fact that travel frequency is an essential characteristic in measuring risk perceptions besides the revisit frequency indicator used so far. A notable added value of the research is that it has made the difference between the risk perception resulting from the general travel frequency and the revisit frequency to the same destination more

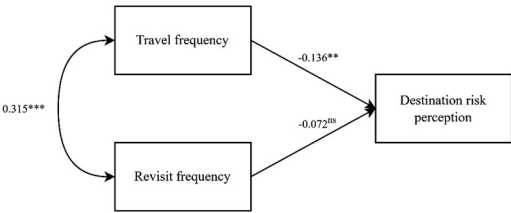


Figure 1. Results based on regression analysis. Note: *** $p < 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$; ns: non-significant. VIF values for collinearity statistics are more than 1.0. Durbin-Watson value is 1.989. R^2 value is 0.323.

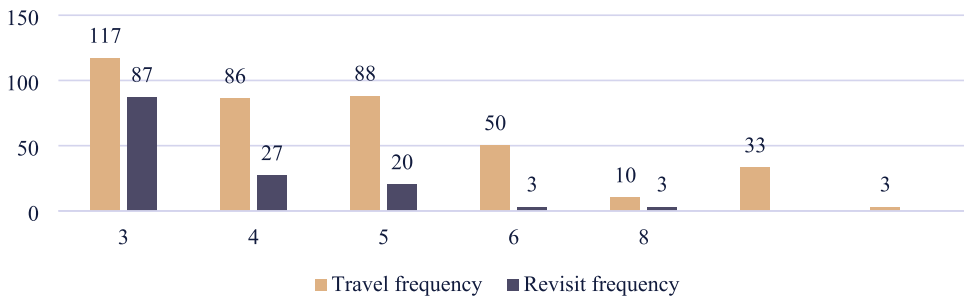


Figure 2. The open gap between travel frequency and revisit frequency quantities. Note: Based on our own research.

pronounced. This means that if we have two travellers, one who travels a lot and revisits to the same destination a lot and another who travels a lot but does not revisit to the same destination typically, both have lower destination risk perception compared to the other traveller segments, but of the two, we measured lower risk perception for those who do not revisit to the same destination. A significant added value of the research is that it has shown, for the first time, that destination risk perception based on the revisit frequency to the same destination is higher than that of those who choose more different destinations.

Thus, our study points in a new direction for future research on this topic and highlights novel nuances and approaches arising from the interrelationships of the three factors under investigation. Our results are also novel because our sample is representative and was surveyed after a security-sensitive period, and a lot of criteria had to be met to be included in the sample as Neuburger and Egger (2021) suggested it before. Our research findings suggest there may be a structural break (in our case, four trips) before which travellers become more routine and still seek out places they have been and revisit the same ones repeatedly. Then, after a specific frequency of travel (routine acquired), they feel fewer risk perceptions, become more confident and start exploring new places at a higher rate than they would if they had already been there.

By fitting tourists' travel frequency into the model, risk-perception measures would first start with the subject's internal capabilities and then continue with how the subject perceives the types of risk perception and how external factors (digital revolutions, health crises, physical atrocities, personal safety) shape the whole risk perception process (Pasquinelli et al., 2023). On the practical side, during the introduction of a new or objectively not exceptionally safe destination, including more experienced, advanced and frequent tourists may lead to a lower risk perception and cause higher satisfaction and positive suggestions from these types of tourists. For this reason, destination management organisations (DMOs) and tourist service providers may want to consider the type of messages they want to create and the faces and influencers' personality or travel experience they choose for face-to-face advertising or online promotional activities during their marketing campaign.

A limitation of our research is that we did not include those who had not travelled or were conceivably less courageous or perceived more risk and, even for this reason, did not travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. A further limitation, the details of subjects' travel frequency were not separately measure, i.e. to which destinations, to which distances, and for how long travel times, as these could also cause substantial variation in the acquired routine. Several other factors may influence the relationship between risk perception and travel frequency, revisit frequency variables such as the demographic background of the traveller (Viet et al., 2020), the quality of the places visited (Cui et al., 2016), the familiarity with the destination (Marinao Artigas et al., 2015), media information about the destination (Chemli et al., 2022) or the mode of travel (MacInnes et al., 2022). We have now investigated the phenomenon that, in addition to revisit frequency, which has been repeatedly presented in the literature, the use of other scales, in this case measuring travel frequency, may be relevant for understanding tourists' risk perception behaviour. It may be worthwhile following this

study to build a complex model incorporating this additional information. Finally, our results also suggest that it may be worthwhile to measure the tourism career pattern of travellers in more depth (MacInnes et al., 2022) to see where travelling frequency and revisit frequency diverge when someone becomes a routine or advanced traveller and where there is a break in the decline of risk perception in light of travelling frequency.

Statement of novelty

The travel frequency is closely linked to the revisit frequency to the same destination and despite this, travel frequency reduces risk perception to a greater extent than revisit frequency, which is an innovative result in this field. We have added a new paragraph when we have explicated the main innovative and notable added value of our research. The validity of our first hypothesis points to the fact that travel frequency is an essential characteristic in measuring risk perceptions besides the revisit frequency indicator used so far. A notable added value of the research is that it has made the difference between the risk perception resulting from the general travel frequency and the revisit frequency to the same destination more pronounced. This means that if we have two travellers, one who travels a lot and revisits to the same destination a lot and another who travels a lot but does not revisit to the same destination typically, both have lower destination risk perception compared to the other traveller segments, but of the two, we measured lower risk perception for those who do not revisit to the same destination. A significant added value of the research is that it has shown, for the first time, that destination risk perception based on the revisit frequency to the same destination is higher than that of those who choose more different destinations. Several other factors may influence the relationship between risk perception and travel frequency, revisit frequency variables such as the demographic background of the traveller (Viet et al., 2020), the quality of the places visited (Cui et al., 2016), the familiarity with the destination (Marinao Artigas et al., 2015), media information about the destination (Chemli et al., 2022) or the mode of travel (MacInnes et al., 2022). We have now investigated the phenomenon that, in addition to revisit frequency, which has been repeatedly presented in the literature, the use of other scales, in this case measuring travel frequency, may be relevant for understanding tourists' risk perception behaviour.

Ethical statement

We confirm all the subjects have provided appropriate informed consent and details on how this was obtained are detailed in the manuscript.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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