TOURIST BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS AMIDST CONFLICT: THE INTERPLAY OF DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS, TERRORISM RISK, AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES IN KASHMIR

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Abstract

Purpose – Tourists are in a dilemma when it comes to visiting conflict zones: How much will they risk to go to a place with the promise of the experience of a lifetime? As the study area, the study will use Kashmir region of India to examine how tourists manoeuvre through the risk perceptions and make decisions to visit the region despite various possible risks. In this study, the authors explored the association between the destination attractiveness and the behaviour intentions and the perceived risk of terror among the tourist taking into consideration the mediating effects of the perceived risk and the risk prevention effort. In addition, it also examines the moderating role of knowledge of risk-preventive strategies in these relationships.
Methodology/Design/Approach – The research will utilize a quantitative research approach, using Smart PLS-SEM, in order to realize the objectives of the research. Findings -The findings show that although destination attractiveness has a positive effect on future travel plans, the greater the perceived risk the lower the effect. There is a decrease in the level of confidence of the tourists in their precautionary actions in case of potential terrorist attacks. The conclusions indicate that there is a need to build a good relationship between locals and the tourists by promoting the community-based tourism projects to aid trust and toughness in the conflicted zones.
Findings – This research study suggests that tourism authorities can improve visitation and repeat travel through investing in community-based tourism projects. The destinations should incorporate the transparent safety measures and enhanced destination services that will create value and satisfaction to the travellers. These strategies reduce risk perceptions of tourists, as well as enhance resilience and global image of destinations affected by conflicts.
Originality of the research – The research provides important information to tourism authorities and service providers in general because it demonstrates how investing in safety measures, community-based tourism, and destination services are able to lower perceptions of risks and encourage repeat customers to visit, in spite of the fact that the study is limited only to Kashmir.
Keywords Destination Attractiveness, Terror Risk, Tourism, Kashmir.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence strategically is used in terrorism to create fear and achieve political goals (Sandler and Enders, 2004). Due to the international consequences of terrorism, it has become inevitable to implement tight safety and preventive controls. According to the Global Terrorism Index Report (2023), the number of terrorist incidents ranged at around approximately 66,000 all over the globe between 2007 and 2022; the rate of terrorist incidents was reduced by 28 per cent in 2022 with an accompanied adjustment in the fatality rate. India was ranked 13th, with a terrorism impact factor score of 7.175 that denoted low-level conflicts in various border areas. Past events like the 9/11 attacks, the massacre of the Olympic Games in 1972 and the 1997 bombing of Manchester have enhanced the academic interest in nexus between tourism and terrorism. It is true that the tourism industry is struggling with the extended effects of terrorism and political instability; however, the detailed study of the interaction between the two is scarce (Sönmez, 1998). To navigate these challenges, destinations employ strategic promotional efforts that target tourists' risk perceptions (Avraham, 2015). Understanding the various benefits of a de stination's appeal is essential, including its influence on tourist bewhavior and how people perceive risk in conflict zones.

The latest studies on the perceived attractiveness related to risk of terrorism keep evolving. The papers scrutinize the complex connections between tourist motivations, risk perception, and socio-political situation of the destinations, thus highlighting a number of central themes. As an example, there have been studies on the mediating effect of destination image in mediating terror- risk perception and important behavioural intentions (Nazir et al., 2021). The other stream that has been looked at is the joint impacts of perceived attractiveness, risk, tourist characteristics, and destination characteristic, including physical and human crowding, on tourist choices. Notably, Isaac (2021) found that there was a positive relationship between terrorism risk and the behavioural intentions of German tourists to Egypt. The study by Fuchs et al. (2013) discusses how travellers in terror-prone destinations experience heightened concerns from their families and friends, hinting at how cultural factors also shape

variations in risk perceptions. The militarization of tourist attractions, also referred to as "fortress tourism," examines how large-scale safety measures contrast with the desire for safety and peace that tourists seek (Trogisch & Fletcher, 2022), thereby offering a unique research opportunity to explore how safety narratives are employed to attract and secure visitors. Although war and unrests may attract some tourists, it lowers the general attractiveness of the destinations hence powerfully arguing why destinations can rebrand against the backdrop of these threats. This research examines how destination attractiveness influences behavioral intentions and perceived terror risk of tourists based on the mediating factor of perceived risk and risk prevention strategies and moderate factor risk-preventive strategies. Investigating these dimensions may provide a useful insight to the policymakers to allow practices to balance between risk and allure. In this manner, the paper will discuss the antecedents that elicit motivation to select a destination when perceived threats are involved, and the effect of risk-preventive strategies on the intentions of tourists.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 Tourism in Conflict Areas

The tourism industry is susceptible to risks and uncertainties, such as terrorist threats, natural disasters, political instability, and crime (Williams & Bal'aˇz, 2014), which makes travelers concerned about their safety and well-being. However, out of all these threats, terrorism is a paramount concern for many travellers (Asongue et al., 2019). The safety of tourists is therefore one of the primary responsibilities of destination managers, especially when risks and negative perceptions about such destinations hinder tourism prospects in these areas (Isaac, 2021**).** The consequences of the insecurity related to terrorism are likely to create a longer-lasting feeling of insecurity in tourists compared to the one caused by social or political turmoil (Lanouar & Goaied, 2019). There have been several empirical studies that have been conducted regarding the overlap between tourism and terrorism. Such issues as the effects of terrorism on tourism (Thompson, 2011), destination image during terror events (Carballo et al., 2021), destination choice in the presence of terrorism (Ara ña & Le'on, 2008), travel decision-making in the context of terror threats (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009), visitor behaviour (Lutz and Lutz, 2020; Saha and Yap, 2014), behaviour change in response to The findings demonstrate how the events associated with terror influence the decision-making processes, behavioural reactions and consumption patterns of the tourism sector amongst travellers.

1.2 Destination Attractiveness

Destination attractiveness concept (DA) is founded on the affective, cognitive, and evaluative aspects that are linked with particular destinations or geographic precincts that are defined by physical and administrative frontiers. These destinations offer tourists with unique goods and services hence increasing the perceived image of the tourists as well as their competitiveness in the market (Arici & Koseoglu, 2025). The concept of destination attractiveness has been given an ample amount of attention in the existing scholarship (Khairi and Darmawan, 2021; Markowski et al., 2019; Pratminingsih et al., 2022). DA is considered as well a motivational determinant that affects decision making of tourists. Besides, the notions of both DA and destination competitiveness (DC) are often used as substitutions (Raimkulov et al., 2021). Gherdan et al. (2025) argue that DC can demonstrate the ability of a destination to offer products or services that outsmart the competition. The phenomenon is supported by two major conceptual frameworks: the supply-driven and the demand-driven ones.

1.3 Destination Support Services

Facilities and services are one of the fundamental defining factors of destination attractiveness (Pilogallo et al., 2018). Meticulous planning, proper management, and sensitivity in terms of interests of the host community can help to achieve sustainable destination development (Khan et al., 2021). Places with a properly developed infrastructure make a conducive atmosphere where visitors will be free to explore. A destination has an intrinsic attribute comprising of accommodation, accessibility, recreation facilities and packaged tours which define the attraction of a destination. Entertainment features, including festivals, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), and events, enhance a destination's appeal (Getz & Page, 2016). Moreover, the tourist belt is composed of amenities, including the variety of accommodation facilities, communication facilities, host interactions, parks, and public spaces (Yu, 2024). Signage, road condition, closeness to destinations, safety and security have a significant impact on the appeal of a destination (Ariya et al., 2017). Other aspects like the exchange of currencies, security and the cost effectiveness are also definite. Specifically, the cost of destination, including the fees on guides, entry tickets, food, and transportation, is one of the salient factors when choosing the destination (Ariya et al., 2017). Value money influences total satisfaction of the tourists directly. Tourism as a sector is interactive and hence requires effective communication between the tourist and the locals (Wright et al., 2001). In turn, to ensure the development of a positive image of the destination, it is imperative to ensure positive communication with the locals, which should be friendly and hospitable (Muresan et al., 2019).

1.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

1.4.1 Relationship between Destination Attractiveness and Perceived Terror Risk

The innovative strategies and effective promotional methods applied mainly by Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) aim at improving destination visibility (Ulqinaku & SarialAbi, 2020). In this context, Nazir et al. (2021) have focused on the strategic marketing of conflict-based destinations through the systematic evaluation of the perceived risks and limitations. In the absence of such proactive efforts, the estimated risk factors due to the acts of terror and other threats can have a negative impact on the appeal of a destination and undermine its perception (Eldh & Zillinger, 2022). Unrelenting cases of unrest may scare off travellers owing to security concerns, hence, reducing the attractiveness of a destination (Saha and Yap, 2014). On the contrary, Isaac (2021) showed that positive previous travel experiences could be reinforced by perceived attractiveness, which implies that tourists can still be willing to travel to high-risk destinations even after positive experience.

H_1: Destination attractiveness negatively affects the perceived terror risk.

1.4.2 Relationship between Destination Attractiveness and Tourists' Behavioral Intentions

The motivation of the traveller and destination are interrelated and highly impact the demand and supply of tourism (Yu, 2024). Determination of the appealing elements of destination is crucial in understanding the target market and manipulating them into making travel decisions. Such knowledge will be important when developing long term sustainable tourism . Destination attractiveness is the key element to the viability of tourism in the different regions as it is the mainstay of tourism (Ariya et al., 2017). Present destination characteristics help travellers to rate their attractiveness, which consequently impact on spending choices, duration of stay, as well as product and service choices. Due to a strong relationship between destination attractiveness and intentions to revisit, destination attractiveness has a strong role in shaping the behavioural intentions of travellers in terms of destination preferences and intentions to reunite with a destination (Mihai et al., 2023). As a result, the hypothesis is outlined below.

H_2: Destination attractiveness positively affects tourists' behavioural intentions.

1.4.3 Relationship between Perceived Terror Risk and Tourists' Behavioural Intentions & Destination Attractiveness

Given that the decision to travel is strongly predetermined by the perceptions that reflect the actual state of affairs in the destination (Carballo et al., 2017), worries regarding the possibility of negative events impact tourists decision making. The literature contains several examples in which the perceived terror risk has a negative effect on the destination image and intentions to visit it, as demonstrated in the literature (Carballo et al., 2021; Jani et al., 2009). Likewise, Nazir et al. (2021) stated that the perception of risk also has a negative influence on the destination image and behavioural intentions of tourists. Similarly, Ara~na and Leon (2008) noted that there were notable changes in the behaviour of tourists that took place after terror attacks. Such conclusions are supported by the study by Bacon and Buzinde (2019), which proves that a significant number of travellers are still ready to travel to the regions with a terroristic threat even though the danger is significant. The travel intention of these tourists is affected by past experiences especially international traveling and in the event of another attack at the destination, these tourists might not change their plans.

H_3: Perceived terror risk significantly impacts tourists' behavioural intentions.
H_{2a}: Perceived risk mediates the influence of destination attractiveness on tourists' behavioural intentions.

1.4.4 Relationship between Risk Preventive Measures and Destination Attractiveness & Tourists' Behavioural Intentions

The perceived risks of a destination can be reduced by government efforts with strong success, but they can increase after being addressed in the media (Parrey et al., 2019). Isaac (2021) studied the effectiveness of preventive strategies in guaranteeing the safety of the tourists in conflict regions. The research found out that on-site measures like law-enforcement authorities presence and attendance at organised tours had a stronger impact than pre-trip measures. Tourists tend to shun neighbouring destinations or even regions because they see them as risky. However, Bacon and Buzinde (2019) have observed that travellers perceive both domestic and international risks as identical and in that regard, travel risks should be equated with risks that travellers face in their daily lives.

H_4: The perception of risk prevention measures affects tourists' behavioral intentions.
H_{2b}: Perceptions of risk prevention measures mediate the impact of destination attractiveness on tourists' behavioural intentions.

1.4.5 Moderating Effects of Risk Prevention Strategies on Destination Attractiveness, Perceived Risk, and Behaviour Intentions

A strong dichotomy is present between those who demonstrate the belief in their ability to act efficiently when terror threats are targeted (Bacon and Buzinde, 2019). The given people have an idea of preventive precautions and self-saving methods. Therefore, individuals with lower levels of such awareness and tourists who are not aware of the safety measures are more likely to experience

anxiety concerning the risks that may occur, thus shaping the decision-making related to the traveling. On the contrary, those who are well informed and knowledgeable tend to be less worried about the dangers of terrorism in case they travel. Having correct information and a thorough understanding of this fact will nullify the feeling of danger among these travellers (Parrey et al., 2019).

H_{5a}: The influence of destination attractiveness on the tourists' behavioural intentions differs between those with knowledge of risk-preventive strategies and those unfamiliar with self-rescue techniques.

H_{5b}: The influence of destination attractiveness on the perceived terror risk differs between people with knowledge of risk preventive strategies and those unfamiliar with self-rescue techniques.

H_{5c}: The influence of perceived terror risk on the tourists' behavioural intentions differs between those with knowledge of risk preventive strategies and those unfamiliar with self-rescue techniques.

H_{5d}: The influence of risk prevention measures on the tourists' behavioural intentions differs between those with knowledge of risk preventive strategies and those unfamiliar with self-rescue techniques.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

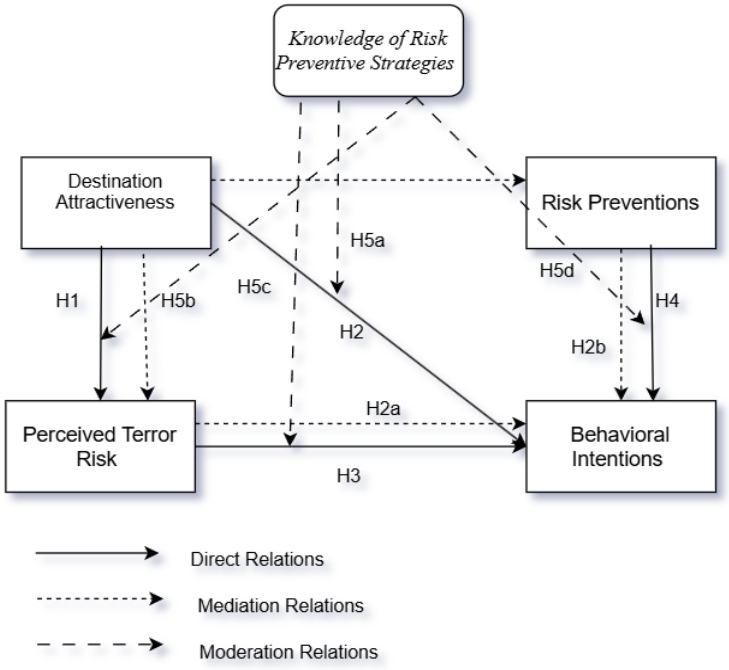
2.1 Sampling Techniques and Data Collection

The current study attempts to determine the appeal of conflict regions in Northern India by determining how tourists perceive Kashmir. The paper also examines the risk of terrorism in the region and how the attractiveness of a destination and their perceived risk influences the behavioural intentions of tourists. It also investigates the mediating role of risk-preventive measures that states implement on such intentions. To obtain a heterogeneous view of the participants, questionnaires that were self-administered were distributed to tourists who had spent Kashmir within the recent years. To increase the scope of the study, both convenience and snowball sampling designs were used, since they are regularly applied in the study of tourism and other social sciences, especially in cases when probability sampling is not viable (Etikan et al., 2016). The convenience sampling makes it easy to reach willing respondents quickly, and the snowball sampling builds a referral system among the hidden or dispersed groups (Naderifar et al., 2017). The survey was conducted online and through the traditional media. It made first contacts and was distributed by their hands in January 2022-2023. The potential respondents were contacted using the distribution points at the airports, railway stations, and popular tourist waiting areas. Large hotels and resorts were targeted as well where customers were issued questionnaires on check out. Out of 300 paper questionnaires that were administered, 257 questionnaires were sent back, which provided a response rate of 85 percent. This rate was further enhanced through the digital distribution through the social media. Out of a total of 345 submissions; 13 were excluded because of missing information, and therefore 332 valid responses were used in the final data analysis.

2.2 Construct Measurements

The questionnaire had constructs of Destination Attractiveness (DA), Perceived Terror Risk (Terror Risk), Risk Prevention Measures (RP), and Tourists Behavioral Intentions (BI) as it was constructed based on the existing literature. The indicators were rated by respondents using a five-point Likert scale with answers of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Destination Attractiveness consisted of four dimensions: Attractions, Environment, Supporting Services, and Marketing/Promotion where items were adopted out of the previous research (Alahakoon et al., 2021; Raimkulov et al., 2021; Nasir et al., 2020; Boivin and Tanguay, 2019). The treatment of DA items was as formative constructs, since they are non-interchangeable. Hair et al. (2017) observe that every indicator represents a different aspect of the domain of construct. The Perceived Terror Risk was measured using two reflectively assessed constructs including Physical Risk (Alvarez et al., 2020; Nazir et al., 2021) and Psychological Risk (Parrey et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Similarly, such dimensions as perceptions of the Risk Prevention Measures (Alvarez et al., 2020; Isaac, 2021) and Behavioral Intentions (Nazir et al., 2021; Carballo et al., 2021; Alvarez et al., 2020) were assessed in a reflective manner (Figure 1).

Figure 1: **Hypothetical Model**



2.3 Data Analysis

In addition to direct effects, the research investigated the possibility of mediation. Since DA and Perceived Terror Risk had many items, the complexity of the model required the establishment of HighOrder Constructs (HOC). They were based on latent variable scores of DA and Terror Risk, and four items were obtained for the former and two items for the latter. Only Lower-Order Constructs (LOC) were, however, used in analysing RP and BI. The usage of Smart PLS 4 was explained by the opportunity to work with the complex models with High 0 Constructs and formative measures making it appropriate in the framework of the analysis. The validity and reliability of the two constructs, LOC and HOC were confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Each formative construct consisted of only one item that was then analyzed to ascertain convergent validity of the formative scale. In this study, the PLS-SEM was considered the best choice compared to covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) due to the type of research objectives and the nature of constructs used, which is supported by Usakli and Kucukergin (2018).

The primary objective was to discern the influence of exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs, rather than merely confirming (as emphasized by Sarstedt et al., 2025), and to seamlessly convert formative constructs into High-Order Constructs (Diamantopoulos & Riefler, 2011; Hair et al., 2017). Initial analysis focused on the LOC model, and upon achieving requisite validity and reliability, the HOC model was similarly assessed. The Common Bias Method (CBM) was employed using the PLS algorithm factor test, which revealed a VIF value below 3, thereby confirming the model's resistance to CBM. Following model validation, hypotheses were tested. Mediation analyses employed Zhao et al. (2010) approach, which assessed both direct and total effects to discern the mediation effects of the constructs. Furthermore, the MICOM procedure was employed before implementing the PLS-Multi-Group Analysis (MGA), which facilitated an examination of differences between those familiar and unfamiliar with risk preventive measures.

3. RESULT

3.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

Smart PLS-SEM version 4 was used to analyze the data. Measurement model was also subjected to validation processes, including checking of convergent, collinearity, and statistical significance of weights (when the constructs were formative) and outer loading (when the constructs were reflective). To begin with, the measurement model of LOC models was checked. Table 1 indicates the weights, the significance level, and VIF of the formative measurement of LOC to TDA. Out of all indicators, TDA3 (0.321, $p < 0.001$) had the greatest weight, followed by the DE1 (0.480, $p < 0.001$), DMP2 (0.446, $p < 0.001$), and SS2 (0.470, $p < 0.001$) in their corresponding constructs. The statistical significance of all indicators ($p < 0.05$) except those of DE4 and SS5 were achieved. However, due to the fact that the outer weights of the indicators were above 0.50 and statistically significant, such items were considered in the model. Also, the multicollinearity observed in the DA items was zero and VIF was less than 3. (Hair et al., 2019). A redundancy analysis of DA was conducted using a single global item (see Annexure A), which served as an alternative measure and confirmed construct validity. The convergent validity surpassed the 0.70 value, which is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1: **Assessment of Formative Construct for LOC & HOC**

Construct	Item	Outer Weights	p v	Outer Loadings	VIF
Tourist Destination Attractions	TDA1 → TDA	0.179	0.006	0.595	1.275
	TDA2 → TDA	0.284	0	0.583	1.169
	TDA3 → TDA	0.321	0	0.692	1.290
	TDA4 → TDA	0.293	0	0.609	1.186
	TDA5 → TDA	0.264	0	0.564	1.163
	TDA6 → TDA	0.292	0	0.613	1.187
Destination Environment	DE1 → DE	0.480	0	0.780	1.260
	DE2 → DE	0.232	0	0.571	1.201
	DE3 → DE	0.250	0	0.485	1.101
	DE4 → DE	0.102	0.178	0.522	1.257
	DE5 → DE	0.374	0	0.674	1.222
	DE6 → DE	0.144	0.008	0.461	1.136
Destination Marketing & Promotion	DMP1 → DMP	0.341	0	0.616	1.149
	DMP2 → DMP	0.446	0	0.690	1.160
	DMP3 → DMP	0.335	0	0.622	1.136
	DMP4 → DMP	0.450	0	0.609	1.053
Supportive Services	SS1 → SS	0.242	0	0.747	1.842
	SS2 → SS	0.470	0	0.859	1.765
	SS3 → SS	0.195	0.004	0.773	2.013
	SS4 → SS	0.354	0	0.772	1.549
	SS5 → SS	0.015	0.821	0.556	1.530
Destination Attractiveness	DA → DA	0.285	0	0.874	2.864
	DE → DA	0.208	0	0.847	2.480
	DMP → DA	0.258	0	0.877	2.863
	SS → DA	0.397	0	0.877	2.049

Note: Italic constructs are for the HOC model, DA (Destination Attractiveness), TDA (Tourists Destination Attractions.), DE(Destination Environment), DMP (Destination Marketing & Promotion), SS(Supporting Services)
Source: Authors' Work.

Convergent validity of the four reflectively measured constructs was tested by examining outer loading, which consistently exceeded the traditional standard of 0.70, except an exception of a BI indicator that reflected 0.7. Also, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each of the constructs, BI (0.535), PhR (0.682), PsY (0.607), and RP (0.565) all exceeded the 0.50 mark (Hair et al., 2019). No collinearity issues were detected, as the VIF values were under three. The "internal consistency reliability" criterion was satisfied, as indicated by rho_A values exceeding 0.70 for all constructs. Discriminant validity was ascertained using the HTMT ratio (Sarstedt et al., 2025). All construct HTMT values remained under 0.85, except for RP constructs, which neared 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2019). The HTMT scores of BI and PR were close to 0.90, which might be reasonably explained by the similarity of the phrasing of items; however, they were within the acceptable levels of the discriminant validity. After the validation of the LOC measurement model, we studied the outer loading, weights, reliability and validity of the HOC model. The results revealed that all formative-formative HOC indicators had statistically significant outer weights, and the value of VIF were always less than 3 (Table 1).Additionally, both Perceived Risk item outer loadings were statistically significant. Cronbach's alpha and Cr values surpassed the 0.07 threshold, while the calculated AVE exceeded 0.5 (Table 2). The discriminant validity of HOC constructs was confirmed through cross-loadings and HTMT results. After HOC model validation, the structural measurement was analyzed.

Table 2: **Assessment of Reflective Construct**

								HTMT			
Construct	**Item**	**Outer Loading**	**VIF**	**CrA**	**RhoA**	**CR**	**AVE**	**PhR**	**PsR**	**RP**	**BI**
Behavioural Intentions	BI1 ← BI	0.634	1.268	0.781	0.788	0.851	0.535	0.109	0.155	0.928	
	BI2 ← BI	0.730	1.532								
	BI3 ← BI	0.766	1.596								
	BI4 ← BI	0.797	1.696								
	BI5 ← BI	0.720	1.453								
Physical Risk	PhR1 ← PhR	0.861	2.117	0.845	0.858	0.896	0.682		0.700	0.121	
	PhR2 ← PhR	0.776	1.506								
	PhR3 ← PhR	0.808	1.939								
	PhR4 ← PhR	0.856	2.546								
Psychological Risk	PsR1 ← PsR	0.758	1.641	0.79	0.838	0.86	0.607			0.092	
	PsR2 ← PsR	0.826	1.613								
	PsR3 ← PsR	0.836	1.712								
	PsR4 ← PsR	0.687	1.511								
Risk Prevention	RP1 ← RP	0.749	1.414	0.744	0.745	0.839	0.565				
	RP2 ← RP	0.745	1.430								
	RP3 ← RP	0.742	1.392								
	RP4 ← RP	0.772	1.452								
Perceived Risk	PhR ← Risk	0.778	1.471	0.723	1.049	0.864	0.762			0.102	0.142
	PsR ← Risk	0.958	1.471								
*P<=0.0001											

Note: The table displays the mean scores for the observed items, item loadings, and validity statistics, including AVE (Average Variance Extracted), CrA (Cronbach's Alpha), CR (Composite Reliability), HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations), and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor). Additionally, the table presents the following variables: BI (Behavioral Intentions), PhR (Physical Risk), PsR (Psychological Risk), and RP (Risk Prevention).
Source: Authors' Work.

3.2 Assessment of Structural Model

Following the measurement model validation, the R^2, Q^2, and model fitness were exclusively assessed for the HOC model. The most significant factors, variance, and effect size were also calculated. As shown in Table 4, the BI explained 69 per cent of the variance in the hypothesized model. The StoneGeisser Q^2 was used to test the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the outcome variables and it produced values that were not zero. Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were used to test the model. The SRMR 0.064, below the 0.08 mark means that the data fits the model.The NFI values approached 0.09 (Sarstedt et al., 2025).

Table 3: **PLS-predict**

Items	**PLS-RMSE**	**LM-RMSE**	**Q^2_predict**
BI3	0.667	0.666	0.377
BI2	0.607	0.609	0.331
BI1	0.708	0.709	0.258
BI4	0.612	0.615	0.471
BI5	0.711	0.716	0.327
RP3	0.687	0.69	0.314
RP2	0.7	0.703	0.271
RP4	0.718	0.716	0.377
RP1	0.682	0.686	0.347
PsR	1.007	0.998	0.01
PhR	1.006	1.004	0

Source: Authors' Work.

PLS Predict was also employed to denote the out-of-sample predictive power of the proposed model (Shmueli et al., 2019). Results showed that all endogenous items surpassed the most naive benchmark, as the indicators produced Q^2 predict values above zero. Subsequently, prediction errors were analyzed. Comparison of PLS-RMSE and LM-RMSE values showed a symmetric error distribution, confirming medium predictive power of the model.Table 3 illustrates that LM-RMSE generated more significant prediction errors for most indicators than PLS-SEM, indicating the research model's medium predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 4: **PLS-SEM results and hypothesis testing Direct Effects**

					Conf. Intervals					
Hypothesis	**Direct Effect-Path**	**Coeff**	**SD**	**P-value**	**2.50%**	**97.50%**	**F^2**	**R^2**	**Q^2**	**S/N**
H1	DA → Terror Risk	-0.009	0.068	0.898	-0.111	0.146	0	0	0.002	N
H2	DA → BI	0.686	0.048	0	0.589	0.779	0.62			S
H3	Terror Risk → BI	-0.064	0.034	0.06	-0.12	0.021	0.013	0.696	0.365	N
H4	RP → BI	0.177	0.050	0	0.079	0.275	0.041			S

Source: Authors' Work.

Table 5: **PLS-SEM results and hypothesis testing: Mediation Effects**

					Conf. Intervals		
Hypothesis	**Mediation Effect- Path Relation**	**Coeff**	**SD**	**P-value**	**2.50%**	**97.50%**	**S/N**
H2a	DA → Terror Risk → BI	0.001	0.004	0.899	-0.01	0.008	N
H2b	DA → RP → BI	0.137	0.039	0	0.062	0.214	S

Source: Authors' Work.

3.3 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 showcases the hypothesis test results for direct relationships. Destination attractiveness did not significantly influence perceived risk ($\beta = -0.009$, $p > 0.05$), so H1 was not supported. However, it has a positive impact on Behavioral Intentions ($\beta = 0.686$, $p < 0.001$, H2 supported). Two more antecedents of BI were assessed. Terror risk ($\beta = -0.064$, $p > 0.05$) had no significant effect on behavioural intentions, so H3 was not supported. In contrast, risk preventive measures ($\beta = 0.177$, $p < 0.001$, H4 supported) have a positive and significant influence on tourists' behavioural intentions. Additionally, Table 5 elucidates the mediating effects of perceived risk and risk preventive measures on the relationship between exogenous constructs and behavioral intentions. Following Zhao et al. (2010), both direct and indirect effects were assessed; results showed that only risk preventive measures significantly mediated the relationship between DA and BI ($\beta = 0.137$, $p < 0.001$, H2b supported). In contrast, perceived terror risks showed no significant mediation effect ($\beta = 0.001$, $p < 0.001$, H2a not supported) between destination attractiveness and behavioural intentions.

Moreover, to assess the moderating value of the previous knowledge on risk prevention strategies, the two groups (Yes/ No) underwent a measurement-invariance study using the MICOM procedure as explained by Henseler et al. (2015). In this analysis, a three-step MICOM process that used 5,000 sample permutations was included. We applied the same approach to establish configural invariance between the two groups. Subsequently, the results from step II (refer to Table 6) indicated that all correlation c values were significantly uniform, confirming compositional invariance (Henseler et al., 2015. However, we observed significant differences between the two groups when evaluating the mean values and variances of the composites in MICOM steps 3a and 3b. Despite this, steps I and II support the establishment of variance measurement invariance (Henseler et al., 2015). As a result, we proceeded with the PLS-MGA to assess group differences.

Table 6: **MICOM Results**

MICOM Step-2	**Original Correlation**	**Correlation Permutation Mean**	**5.00%**	**Permutation p-Values**
BI	0.999	0.999	0.997	0.448
DA	0.995	0.991	0.976	0.597
RP	0.998	0.999	0.996	0.252
Terror Risk	0.996	0.858	0.282	0.8

Source: Authors' Work.

Table 7: **Results for Multi-Group Analysis for Two Groups**

Hypothesise	Path Relations	Original (No)	Original (Yes)	Path Coefficients-diff (NO - YES)	2- tailed (No vs Yes) p-value	BOOTSTRAP MGA P-value
H5a	DA → BI	0.723	0.655	0.068	0.494	0.495
H5b	DA → Terror Risk	0.217	-0.189	0.407	0.002	0
H5c	Terror Risk → BI	-0.137	-0.007	-0.13	0.034	0.034
H5d	RP → BI	0.215	0.169	0.046	0.643	0.643

Source: Authors' Work.

The PLS-MGA (See Table 7) and permutation results found differences across the groups. The behavioural intentions were significantly influenced by perceived Terror risk ($\Delta \beta = -0.130$, $p = .034$) across the two groups, and the influence of destination attractiveness ($\Delta \beta = .407$, $p = .002$) on perceived risk for the two groups of tourists was significantly different. However, destination attractiveness does not significantly influence behavioural intentions or the perception of risk preventive measures for people with/without prior knowledge about the risk. The results reveal that people with knowledge of risk preventive measures are more likely to revisit intentions triggered by their perceived risk than those without prior knowledge. However, the influence of their perception of destination attractiveness on behavioural intentions is not statistically different between the two groups.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that when the attractiveness of destinations is high, tourists are more prepared to pay the destination a visit even in case of terror threats, though they lose confidence in the absence of visible safety provisions. The research explains the formation of the behavioural intentions of tourists to risk prone areas. It also looks at the importance of tourist facilities at a destination, which is a determinant of attractiveness. Ease of access and the quality of other supporting services, which includes transport, accommodation, and hygiene is another major influencing factor in destination attractiveness. The results are consistent with those of Chaudhary and Islam (2020), who underline the cultural attractions, activities, transportation, accommodation, food, hygiene, cleanliness, cost, and the presence of tourist amenities as destination attractiveness characteristics. We have established that other attributes such as quality accommodation facilities, availability of authentic cuisine and transport infrastructure also increase destination attractiveness. Marketing and promotional efforts especially those focusing on safety measures and genuine cultural experiences are found to be critical to counter the reluctance of tourists to travel to conflict zones. Also, despite the immense importance of destination environment factors in the literature, the same factors were found to play a small role in the overall attractiveness. Nonetheless, on the other hand, the things that were more significant to the attractiveness were local community-related factors.

The paper has also examined the perceived physical and psychological terror risks influencing the intentions to behave as a tourist in Kashmir and points how travellers are having large apprehensions regarding the perceived dangers of a terror attack. Unfavorable media images increase the sense of threat, and it decreases the willingness of the tourists to travel to the conflict zones (Baker, 2014). Cultural context influences the perception of risk among the tourists- e.g. tourists in conflict prone areas might consider Kashmir safer as compared to tourists in stable areas. Tourists in regions of frequent political violence might opt to perceive Kashmir as safer than a tourist in a more peaceful environment. The other factors like the general travel experience and media coverage, affect the experience resulting in various decisions. This issue explains why destinatio managers need to use customized messages to various cultural markets. The analysis revealed the greater effect that induced fear has on the visitation intentions of the tourists as compared to augmented risk perception. The other study with the findings is that perceived physical risk is triggered by safety concerns, discomfort in traveling, and overcrowding as shown by Najar et al. (2020). The paper has pointed out the sensitivity of tourists to political, physical, socio-psychological and financial risks, which affect the general risk perception of tourists. Nonetheless, the perceived risk in the region of Kashmir is relatively lower and therefore many tourists perceive that the area is relatively safe. The implication of these findings is that enhancing the perception of the destination image, such as through transparent communication and community-driven interaction, can help eliminate the fear of terrorism in tourists, which will consequently increase the number of people who consider returning to the destination and the positive word-of-mouth (Parrey et al., 2019). The results also underline the need to make sure that tourists are informed and adequately prepared to counter terrorist.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The study is an innovative study of tourist perceptions of conflict zones, and it addresses the manner in which the tourists manage to strike a balance between destination attraction and risk perceptions. Although the situation was in Kashmir, the model applies to any delicate situation or dangerously inclined place. Territories that are hampered by the acts of terrorism, civil conflicts, or crisis also tend to be at risk, as the tourists attempt to evaluate the risk/benefit of the destination. The model can thus be of useful perspective in which to view the behaviour of tourists in fragile situations. Although the current literature has broken down the different facets of the interaction between terrorism and tourism, including the impact of terrorism on tourism (Thompson, 2011), destination imagery (Carballo et al., 2021), visitation levels (Lutz and Lutz, 2020), travelling behaviours (Seabra et

al., 2013), and changes in tourist spending habits (Isaac and Velden, 2018), our research offers a new perspective. This is in contrast to the past ventures where we concentrate on the intersection point between the perceived riskiness of the tourists and the attractiveness of the destination. We analyse the importance of destination attractiveness attribute, and effect on perceived risk of terror and behaviour intention in conflict areas. We have uncovered governmental counter-terror perceptions of tourists and the attraction of a destination location and how these perceptions affect future behavioural tendencies. In addition, the study focuses on the importance of preventive actions in risk, which are intermediaries between destination attractiveness and travel risks. These results point out the importance of governmental and local organizations in reducing risks in the conflict areas and their major effect on the tourism industry. The scope of our investigation expands the current body of literature because, even being classified as the high-risk region, the area continues to attract a significant number of domestic and international tourists annually. The model of the proposed hypothesis well supported by a vast amount of data opens the door to further academic research. This study is intended to provide a theoretical model that will allow relating destination appeal, perceived terror threat, and behavioral intention of tourists in a conflict-prone area, i.e. Kashmir. This framework is considered the contextual impacts on tourism in post-conflict with the use of both formative and reflective constructs. Also, the proposed framework takes into account the integration of preventive risk measures as a mediating variable, which provides a reflection on policy makers in order to both increase tourism growth and maintain safety and security. The framework itself is malleable, and tourism can be one of the possible mechanisms in tourism planning in post-conflict.

5.2 Practical Implications

This research shows that destination attractiveness, as well as risk-prevention can positively influence tourist behavior intentions, which can inform policymakers, tourism organizations, and providers with viable information to enhance the tourism experience of destinations in conflict areas. In order to intensify branding of the destination, as well as to encourage the repeat visitation, destination organizations may focus on the advancement of connectivity infrastructure, the enhancement of accommodation facilities, the promotion of destination-local gastronomy, and the sophistication of systems that would help travelers to get digital information about the destination. The tourism authorities should ensure accountability and compliance in important visitor services, such as information centers, portability of water in provisioning, medical services, and sanitation. The risk-preventive measures have a positive effect on the intention of the tourist to pay a visit to any particular location implying that properly defined security measures, access control systems, evacuation plans, and the overall risk-management systems may have a net impact of reducing uncertainty. Organized media campaigns, both social and traditional, will be needed to reach out to tourists with real-time updates on their safety and provide exemplary stories to ensure the trustworthiness of the destination. CBT can be used as a tactical intervention in conflict-prone areas. CBT has a significant potential of engaging the local communities (such as women, young people and artisans) in direct contact with the tourists as tourism service providers and thus increasing the levels of trust and authenticity in the tourist experience. Behavioral intentions that are travel-related can be influenced by the appeal of culturally authentic experiences, yet CBT models introduce low-risk possibilities of immersive experiences; food festivals, homestays, handicraft productions, and local storytelling can be integrated into a business model, with the help of CBT. Public-private integration can better meet the environmental demands of the built environment through the use of utilization of resources, efficiency of resource utilization and transfer of skills to the built environments. Frequent disaster-risk management, thorough preparation, and hospitality training in conjunction with local tourism stakeholders may help instill the feeling of safety, professionalism, and readiness to visit the area in visitors. Digital kiosk or mobile survey systems would be installed so as to provide the unceasing feedback to allow the tourism managers to make timely adjustments in services to suit the needs of the visitors. Furthermore, ethical and respectful tourism actions carried out in the framework of CBT as the use of local guides, provision of trauma-informed experiences, and promotion of responsible tourist activities are important to make sure that the local community can be happy and is not exploited. On the whole, these initiatives create a unique tourism ecosystem in the context of the sensitive environment of Kashmir, where the renewal of the community is consistent with the delivery of tourist satisfaction.

Additionally, gastronomy has been increasingly recognized as a key driver of tourism and a significant travel motivator. Therefore, for a gastronomic destination like Kashmir, the presence of unique food traditions, such as *wazwan* (a multi-course Kashmiri meal), saffron-based dishes, and artisanal teas, can substantially enhance destination attractiveness by differentiating the region from competing destinations. The study by Chen et al. (2024) furthermore established how gastronomy shapes tourists' perceptions of authenticity and enhances the symbolic value of destinations. More recently, Rojas- Rivas et al. (2025) explored the topic of gastronomic destinations in Mexico and concluded that food heritage as an inseparable part of the identity of the region is a key factor in creating destination image as well as in improving tourism positioning. Gastronomic tourism can be used in conflict-prone regions to reverse negative media coverage by preempting heritage, creativity and community sustainability. In addition to Kashmir, the results, which can be generalized to other environments, which are faced with a security dilemma, can be applicable elsewhere. The nations of the Middle East region, certain parts of Africa, and the environment after disaster or post-pandemic can potentially use similar methods of transparent communication, higher service quality, and smart community marketing to re-earn the trust of travelers. Particularly by focusing on security and training the travellers to have real cultural experiences, these destinations will be able to challenge the narratives that are circulated by the negative media and to establish themselves as legitimate options in the eyes of the resilient, modern or desirable global tourist. The opportunities and suggestions herein have extended implications that are not just limited to Kashmir region only but also to other risky destinations which have similar impacts. However, this opportunity can be observed in countries throughout the Middle East,

some parts of Africa, or in post-disaster/post-pandemic situations. The frameworks that were developed during this research, including the idea of clear communication, the increase in the levels of service, and trust in the context of community-based tourism, can help to restore the trust of the travelers. Similar frameworks may be implemented in destinations in conflict zones like Myanmar, Sri Lanka or in post-conflict environments: risk communication to specific cultural markets, more generalized community-based tourism management with local stakeholders involved, visible safety infrastructure, or offering authentic cultural experiences. The approach to community-based tourism, food heritage, and ethical attitude is universally applicable to conflict-related settings. By balancing the issue of security with genuine cultural experiences, in addition to working together with the stakeholders of the local community, destination managers will be equipped to overcome the negative media representations and be seen as viable tourism destinations in terms of resilient tourism. The inertia created by the sense of safety can be affected by culturally relevant communications, commitment to the local community, and emphasis on heritage and authenticity, thus reaching out to visitors across the globe immensely.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Like every other study, this exploratory study has a number of limitations which should be taken into consideration in future studies. First, the research only targets one conflict zone in the country, thus leaving out other areas because of the methodological limitations. Second, data is also limited to tourists that have visited the area before, hence excluding the opinions of prospective tourists, whose behavioural intentions have the potential to provide further details. Third, the study focuses excessively on the measure of destination attractiveness as the main independent variable, and other measures like destination image and marketing strategies are not investigated but may have a wide range of valuable information. Lastly, risk perceptions used in this study are only categorized into physiological and psychological, other forms of risk, like terrorism risks or domestic issues, may provide a deeper insight into the risk perceptions. Furthermore, the current research paper does not capture the views of potential tourists, whose segment of the population has never travelled to a destination impacted by conflicts. They have their perceptions, which are largely influenced by what they see in the media as well as general secondary information and this is likely to differ greatly in terms of their behavioural intentions relative to more experienced visitors. The gap in the literature should be resolved in future studies by proposing the impact of the interventions like community-based tourism and responsible media involvement on reducing perceived risks and destination appeal. It seems reasonable that potential tourists may have different behavioural intentions than experienced visitors and thus there is an empirical gap that requires further empirical research to fill this gap. Specific survey tools, focus-group sessions and experimental designs might shed light on the differences between pre-visit risk perception and post-visit risk perception. The research may be based around scenario-based designs or virtual reality simulations as well to give the future tourists a chance to make their responses first before they delve into the travel-decision making process. However, in spite of these shortcomings, this study contributes a great deal to the literature on tourism in war-afflicted areas in India. Future research might redefine this model to measure the behaviour of tourists in other risk or conflict prone areas in terms of destination attractiveness and perceived risks. Future studies might explore further vital destination factors including brand and image and their marketing implications. Comparative tourism study to various conflict zones provides practical information. This research offers a baseline on which scholars can establish with the key points of consideration that should be taken seriously by researchers in future investigations in the domain.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

In preparing this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) & Grammarly to enhance the readability and language of the review of literature. All intellectual content, interpretations, and conclusions are the work of the authors who reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the manuscript.

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