

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RISK AVOIDANCE AND NOVELTY SEEKING BEHAVIOUR IN DESTINATION DECISION MAKING¹

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry makes great contribution to the countries' economies. At the same time, it helps to balance regional income distribution. Tourist spending has multiplier effect on the host country's economy apart from the direct revenues. However, there are significant fluctuations in demand in the tourism sector. This situation can adversely affect destinations which are largely dependent on tourism revenues. One of the important factors affecting demand related to destinations is the risk perceptions of the tourists. The main aim of this study is to determine the effect of risk perception on destination choice behaviour. For this purpose, the study was carried out to understand how potential domestic tourists perceive the risks related to security and respond to them in terms of destination decision making. The survey which was conducted in the form of a structured questionnaire was applied to 163 participants. The result of the study reveals that the different psychographic groups would exhibit differences in novelty seeking behaviour. It was determined that the novelty seeking behaviour in terms of destination choice was low among the potential tourists who would not define

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themselves as risk-taker or seldom the first person to try anything new, and not happy with having holiday at unfamiliar destination. For those persons, when the risk aversion increases, the novelty seeking behaviour decreases.

Key Words: Tourism, Marketing, Risk Perception, Novelty Seeking Behaviour

DESTİNASYON KARAR VERME SÜRECİNDE RİSKTEN KAÇINMA VE YENİLİK ARAMA DAVRANIŞI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

ÖZ

Turizm endüstrisi ülkelerin ekonomilerine büyük katkı sağlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, bölgesel gelir dağılımının dengelenmesine de yardımcı olmaktadır. Turizm harcamaları doğrudan gelirler dışında ülkelerin ekonomisi üzerinde çarpan etkisine sahiptir. Ancak, turizm sektöründe talepte önemli dalgalanmalar olmaktadır. Bu durum turizm gelirlerine büyük ölçüde bağlı destinasyonları olumsuz yönde etkileyebilmektedir. Destinasyona yönelik talebi etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biri turistlerin risk algılarıdır. Bu çalışmanın ana amacı destinasyon seçiminde risk algısının etkisini belirlemektir. Bu amaçla, çalışma potansiyel yerli turistlerin güvenliğe ilişkin riskleri nasıl algıladıkları ve destinasyon karar verme sürecinde nasıl tepki verdiklerini anlamak için gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma yapılandırılmış anket şeklinde 163 katılımcıya uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucu farklı psikografik gruplarda yenilik arama davranışının farklılıklar göstereceğini ortaya koymuştur. Kendini risk alan biri olarak tanımlamayan ya da nadiren yeni bir şeyi deneyen ve daha önce tanımadığı bir destinasyonda tatil yapma fikrinden mutluluk duymayan potansiyel turistler arasında destinasyon seçimi bakımından yenilik arama davranışının düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu kişiler için riskten kaçınma arttıkça, yenilik arama davranışı azalmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turizm, Pazarlama, Risk Algısı, Yenilik Arama Davranışı

1. INTRODUCTION

The traveller's behaviour in the destination decision making is always associated with the travel risks (Henderson, 2007). For tourism, which is a recreational event, it can be said that a safe destination perception is one of the most important factors affecting holiday decisions. Because security needs are at the beginning of people's most basic needs. The need of safety and security become the main factors while choosing a travel destination (Hall, Timothy & Duval, 2003). Rogers' (1975) Protection Motivation Theory has been used to explain travel intentions associated with perceived risk. The protection motivation theory proposes that in a risky decision process the individuals' intention of adopting protective behaviour, such as risk avoidance. That is, individuals engage in protective behaviour when the severity of the

outcome of a threat is high (e.g. loss of life), the chances of occurrence are high, and the means to remove a threat are effective (e.g. choosing an alternative destination), and individuals can control the consequences (e.g. time and money for alternatives are available) (Rogers, 1975, cited by Kapuscinski.2014). Safety and security threats mostly serve as deterrents to tourists especially in the context of international tourism. Destinations usually perceived to be risky are avoided by tourists and travel to such destinations are affected negatively (Adam, 2015).

2. LITERATURE

With the increasing expenditure households spent on travel, risk research is of vital importance within the tourism discipline (Yang et al. 2015). A common finding in tourism literature is that the presence of risk, no matter if real or perceived, influences the travel decision-making process. As a form of protective behaviour, travellers can alter their destination choices (Sönmez, Apostopoulos, & Tarlow, 1999; Green, Bartholomew & Murrmann, 2003, Amara, 2012, Garg, 2015).

As emphasised in the studies of Garg (2015) and Cavlek (2002) that safety and security are the primary conditions for tourism development of a destination. Unsafe destinations are unable to successfully compete with safe destinations, even despite efforts to promote high quality natural and contrived attractions. Risk perceptions significantly influence the intention to travel. Furthermore, risk perceptions seem to have a great effect on avoidance of geographic regions and destinations (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). Thus, if the potential tourist perceives that the risk of encountering terrorism at a destination is high, then the individual may seek other destinations for their vacation (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b). International tourists' safety and security perceptions include political crises (Pennington-Gray & Schroeder, 2013) apart from terrorism threats.

For instance, in 2016, German visitors, the largest group coming to Turkey, dropped by 35 percent, as a result of the suicide bombing that took place on January 12, 2016 near 3,500-year-old Egyptian obelisk in Istanbul's most prominent historical tourist attraction Sultan Ahmet Square, where German tourists were killed. The high risk perception of the potential tourists because of the terrorism along with threats against Germany and crises around the surrounding region of Turkey had an impact negatively on inbound flow to Turkey. British tourists followed Germans with approximately 31 percent drop.

In terms of Russian tourism market, in 2015 Turkey has faced a 30 percent drop in visitors from there as a result of the economic downturn in Russia. In that year, 3.649 million Russian tourists visited Turkey. Turkey experienced a dramatic decrease in the number of Russian visitors in 2016 which was more than 80 percent drop from the previous year. The number of Russian tourists declined to 866 thousand in 2016 due to the crisis that occurred on November 24, 2015, when Turkey downed a Russian jet for violating the borders of Turkish airspace.

Among four tourist types “the organized mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer, and the drifter” identified by Cohen (1972) based on tourists’ preference for novelty or familiarity, the organized mass tourists match most prefer the greatest amount of familiarity. They prefer package tours and stay mainly within their ‘environment bubble’ of the familiar throughout the trip (Qi et al., 2009). Lepp and Gibson’s (2003) study also revealed that mass tourists who seeks familiarity were the most risk averse.

Although Kapuscinski & Richards (2016) state that when judging the risk involved in visiting a country subject to a terrorist attack, tourists may be less sensitive to information about the characteristics of the event and draw conclusions mainly on the fact that the event took place, for potential tourists it is necessary to include visual or verbal messages related to the location of high risk areas for reducing the destination perceived risk because perceived risk intensifies information seeking (Witt & Moutinho 1995). Wong and Yeh (2009) examined the effect of tourist risk perception, tourist information about destination and hesitation on tourists’ decision making process of buying. According to the results of the research, the information that the tourist has about the destination increases or decreases the effect of the destination risk perception on the hesitation (Albuz et al. 2017).

It is important to note that as Yang & Nair stated (2014), there is distinction between perceived risk and perceived uncertainty which have the different impacts on travel decision making process. Perceived risk is used when the probability is known, otherwise, perceived uncertainty is more appropriate. Therefore, war and political instability, health concerns, crime, terrorism and natural disasters are critical tourism risk factors (Gray et al. 2011) that can be triggered by an event with known probability. However, functional (organizational), satisfaction, and time risks which stem from intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and inseparability characteristics of tourism are much more related to perceived uncertainty. Specific customer expectations regarding the level of service are intangible because the actual service encounter cannot be experienced in advance (Bilgin et al. 2016). The customer does

not have the opportunity to test or experience many aspects of the product, such as its price, quality, quantity, and duration (Mitchell & Greatorex, 1993, Kapoor et al. 2011). The perceived risk (PR) and perceived uncertainty (PU) have the different impacts on travel decision making process (Quintal et al. 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Sample Data Collection Method and Measures

The purpose of this study is to discover whether high risk perception leads consumers to the novelty seeking behaviour when they decide on a destination for their holiday. The survey was conducted in the form of a structured questionnaire. 163 travellers participated in the study. Convenience sampling was used for the data collection method. Because of the time and cost constraints the data was gathered by using online. The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first section, there are two scales and 5 items for each scale that measure risk avoidance (Sharma, 2010) and novelty seeking behaviour (Arslan, Yılmaz & Boz, 2018). Scales were 5-point Likert-type, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). In the second part of the questionnaire, there are 3 questions about participants' age and gender status.

3.2. Findings

Table 1 shows the results of principal component analysis (PCA). A principal component analysis identifies the underlying structure within a set of observed variables (Wold, S., Esbensen, K & Geladi, (1987; Cooper & Schindler, 2001). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v20) software was used in the assessment of validity of the data obtained from the scales. Risk aversion dimension (Factor 1) loaded on 5 variables and Novelty seeking behaviour dimension (Factor2) loaded next 5 variables. After principal component analysis reliability analysis of data obtained from scales was performed. According to the results of the reliability analysis Risk Aversion dimensions's Cronbach Alpha value $\alpha=0,788$ and Novelty Seeking Tendency dimensions's Cronbach $\alpha=0,803$.

Table 1. Principal Component Analysis

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
Risk Aversion1	0,627	
Risk Aversion2	0,764	
Risk Aversion3	0,789	
Risk Aversion5	0,698	
Novelty Seeking Tendency 1		0,823

Novelty Seeking Tendency 2		0,752
Novelty Seeking Tendency 3		0,741
Novelty Seeking Tendency 4		0,695
Novelty Seeking Tendency 5		0,746
Eigen Values	2,086	1,567
% of Variance	52,157	56,618
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	0,731	0,802

Before the analyses, it was checked whether the values obtained from the scales were normally distributed. Values of skewness and kurtosis were checked to check the normal distribution of the data. Skewness and kurtosis values of each item are between -3 and 3. According to the values of skewness and kurtosis, the data obtained from the scales are normally distributed (Corrado, 1996). Due to this reason Pearson correlation have been used to test relation between variables.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

	Novelty Seeking Behavior
Risk Aversion	-,238**
	p ,002

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the correlation analysis there was a statistical negative correlation between risk aversion and novelty seeking behaviour ($r=-0,238$, $n=163$, $p=0,05$) intention of potential tourist. According to the research results, as the perception of the risk towards the destination increases, the novelty seeking behaviour decreases.

A simple linear regression was conducted to predict participant's novelty seeking behaviour based on risk avoidance. Results of the regression indicated that risk aversion significantly predicted novelty seeking behaviour $\beta=0,42$, $t=(163)=3,115$, $(F=1,162)= 9,705$, $p< 0,05$). Regression equation was found $(F=1,161)= 9,705$, $p< 0,05$) with an R^2 of 0,05. According to the regression results risk aversion of the participants effects their novelty seeking behaviour.

Table 3 shows the distribution of risk avoidance and novelty seeking tendency according to genders. According to the results of analysis, women tend to have more novelty seeking tendency. Moreover, it is seen that women tend to avoid risk more than men.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Dimension		n	Mean
Novelty Seeking Tendency	Female	102	4,2564
	Male	61	4,0000
Risk Aversion	Female	102	3,9404

Male	61	3,8770
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4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

If the foreign tourists flocking the same destination annually such as Russian tourism demand to Turkey for seaside resorts along its Aegean and Mediterranean Sea coasts feel high perceived risk on Turkey, this may force them to seek different destinations as happened in 2016. This situation is associated with the risks of political instability and terrorism. In addition to these risk types, the tourism product is threatened by elements such as epidemics and natural disasters. All these factors which increase the perceived risk level are naturally expected to trigger the novelty-seeking behaviour among the potential tourists.

As mentioned in the studies of Fuchs & Reichel (2006) and Artuğer (2015), due to its unique characteristics such as intangibility, inseparability, perishability, variability, tourism is more prone to risk perceptions than other products. A tourism destination could be promoted like a product, it is not like other products which could be tried out in advance (Chiu & Lin, 2011). These features of the tourism product leads satisfaction and past experience to have a significant influence on tourist loyalty to a destination and intention to re-visit a destination (San Martin et al. 2013). A study examined Gulf Arabs' decisions of European holiday destinations and 80 percent of the respondents indicated the major reason for their choice was familiarity of destination (Hales & Shams, 1990). Out of Roehl and Fesenmaier's (1992) seven types of risks, especially financial risk (the possibility of not receiving value for the money spent), satisfaction risk (the possibility of not being satisfying) and time risk (the possibility of wasting or consuming too much time) are related to the nature of the touristic products. These type of risks related to the perceived uncertainty about the new products may decrease the novelty seeking behaviour among the tourists. In this situation, tourists would maintain a relationship with a particular service provider or destination.

The interaction with unknown cultures, increased uncertainties associated with self-organised travel, or visiting 'off-the-beaten-track' areas, allocentrics, as opposed to psychocentrics, would be expected to be less sensitive to risk. (Kapusinski, 2014). In this study, statistical negative correlation was determined between risk aversion and novelty seeking behaviour. When the perception of the risk towards the destination increases, the novelty seeking behaviour decreases among the potential tourists. When the items such as *I would not describe myself as a risk-taker* and *I am seldom the first person to try anything new* in the scale of risk avoidance are taken into consideration, this result seems to be in accordance with

the fact that the different psychographic groups would exhibit differences in the extent to which they perceive risk.

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