



INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY OF THE TOP 10 U.S. DESTINATIONS



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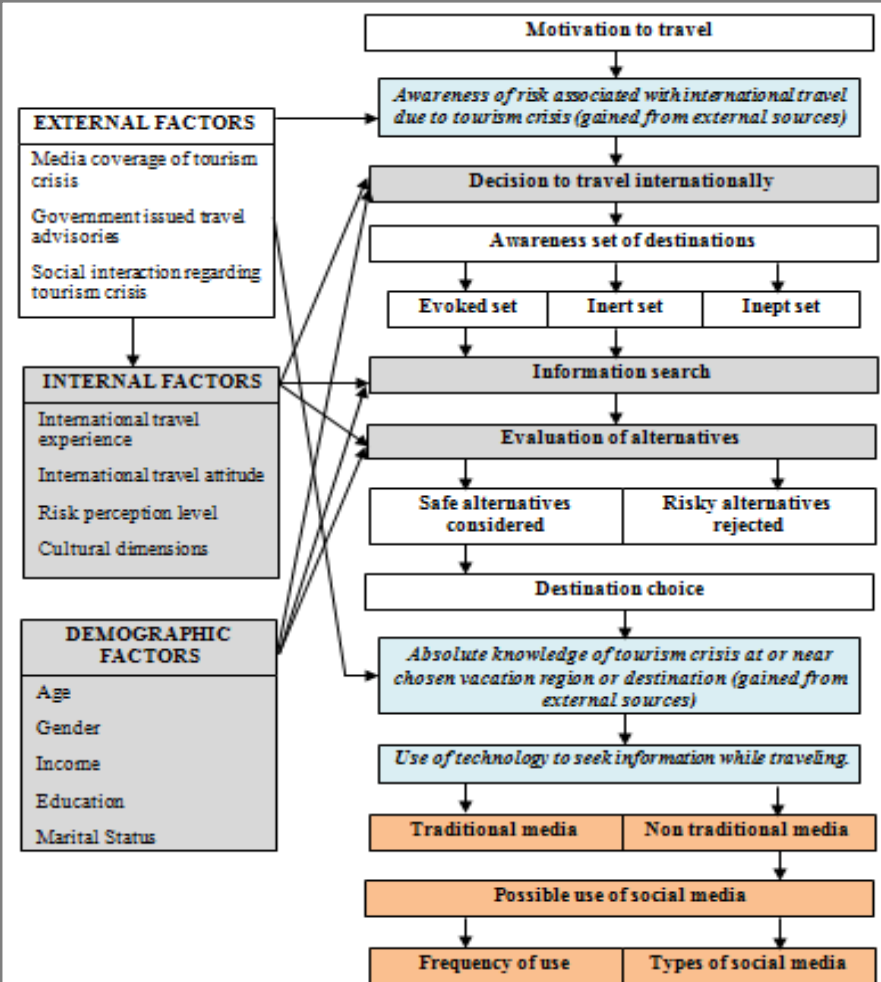
INTRODUCTION



- Demand for international travel at an all-time high (UNWTO, 2012)
- Increase in the occurrence and intensification of global crises (Drabek, 2009)
- Destinations need to better understand their international markets, as well as their risk perceptions and risk-related behaviors
- Survey of international travelers to U.S.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Model of International Tourism
Decision-Making Process,
Adapted from Sönmez & Graefe, 1998



LITERATURE REVIEW

- Safety is a primary concern during travel (Poon & Adams, 2000)
- Types of perceived risk vary by destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1996)
- Risk perceptions are an influential factor in important decision-making phases (Maser & Weiermair, 1998; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a)



LITERATURE REVIEW



- Factors that may influence risk perceptions:
 - Past travel experience (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a, b)
 - Cultural backgrounds (Kozak et al., 2007; Seddighi et al., 2001)
- When perceptions of risk are high, tourism demand at a destination is likely to decrease (Sönmez et al., 1999)
- Understanding risk perceptions critical for destinations



PURPOSE OF STUDY

- To better understand international travelers' perceptions of safety of the top 10 state tourism destinations in the United States
- To explore the factors that may influence international travelers' perceptions of safety of the top 10 state tourism destinations in the United States

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between cultural differences and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
2. What is the relationship between past international travel experience and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
3. What is the relationship between the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring during an upcoming trip to the U.S. and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4. What is the relationship between age and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
5. What is the relationship between cultural differences and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S., when controlling for the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring?
6. For each culture, how does the degree of the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring during an upcoming trip to the U.S. impact the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?

METHODS: SAMPLE

- 2,416 participants
- International travelers from each of the top 5 growth markets of inbound-travelers to U.S., as identified by the U.S. Department of Commerce
 - Australia (n = 475)
 - Brazil (n = 483)
 - China (n = 479)
 - India (n = 500)
 - South Korea (n = 479)



METHODS: OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTS

Perceptions of safety

- Please rate the states below according to how safe you feel traveling within the following states, using a 5 point scale, where 1=very safe, 2=safe, 3=neither safe/nor risky, 4=risky, 5=very risky, 6=don't know.
 - California, Florida, Texas, Nevada, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C.



METHODS: OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTS

Cultural differences

- Country of origin
 - Australia, Brazil, China, India, South Korea

Past international travel experience

- How many international trips to the U.S. have you taken in the past 12 months?
 - Only 1 trip, 2 trips, 3 or more trips

Age

- 18-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-65, 65+



METHODS: OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTS

Perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring

- Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=very much unlikely, 3=neutral and 5=very much likely, please think about your next or upcoming leisure trip within the United States and rate your perception of the likelihood that the following crises may occur.
 - Terrorism, crime, natural disasters, disease, food safety, financial, health, physical, equipment failure, weather, cultural barriers, political
 - Index groups for 12 crisis types: low, neutral, high

METHODS: STATISTICS

1. What is the relationship between cultural differences and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
 - **One way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**
2. What is the relationship between past international travel experience and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
 - **One way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

METHODS: STATISTICS

3. What is the relationship between the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring during an upcoming trip to the U.S. and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
 - **One way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**
4. What is the relationship between age and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
 - **One way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

METHODS: STATISTICS

5. What is the relationship between cultural differences and the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S., when controlling for the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring?
 - **Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA)**
6. For each culture, how does the degree of the perception of the likelihood of a crisis occurring during an upcoming trip to the U.S. impact the perceptions of safety of the top 10 state destinations in the U.S.?
 - **One way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Perceptions of safety varied by country

	India	Australia	Brazil	S. Korea	China	Total	F	Sig.
FL	3.01	3.12	2.99	2.94	3.06	3.02	1.21	.306
CA	3.00	3.09	2.75	3.21	2.70	2.96	14.26	.000
NV	2.93	2.66	3.07	3.44	2.69	2.96	30.89	.000
NJ	3.89	3.02	2.36	2.58	2.64	2.88	131.01	.000
TX	3.01	2.77	2.96	2.45	3.05	2.86	13.54	.000
MA	3.15	2.99	2.58	2.68	2.73	2.83	14.50	.000
IL	2.98	2.44	2.39	2.82	2.64	2.66	17.16	.000
HI	3.06	2.30	2.57	2.52	2.48	2.59	27.54	.000
NY	2.54	2.38	2.18	2.71	2.38	2.43	19.85	.000
D.C.	2.20	2.41	2.41	2.15	2.30	2.29	7.20	.000

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Those who took only 1 trip generally perceived destinations to be safer

	1 trip	2 trips	3+ trips	Total	F	Sig.
FL	2.71	3.32	3.38	3.02	69.56	.000
CA	2.73	3.22	3.23	2.96	49.88	.000
NV	2.64	3.29	3.25	2.96	71.81	.000
NJ	2.72	3.10	2.95	2.88	20.04	.000
TX	2.44	3.24	3.41	2.86	132.64	.000
MA	2.61	3.17	3.00	2.83	36.63	.000
IL	2.64	2.79	2.61	2.66	2.60	.075
HI	2.33	2.89	2.83	2.59	59.04	.000
NY	2.27	2.65	2.54	2.43	34.48	.000
D.C.	1.97	2.61	2.58	2.29	135.96	.000

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Those with lower risk perceptions perceived destinations to be safer

	Low	Neutral	High	Total	F	Sig.
FL	1.65	2.91	4.47	3.02	1714.91	.000
CA	1.74	2.84	4.36	2.96	1864.37	.000
NV	1.66	2.82	4.28	2.96	1408.29	.000
NJ	1.76	2.93	3.93	2.88	737.34	.000
TX	1.64	2.61	4.53	2.86	1794.63	.000
MA	1.65	2.96	4.63	2.83	1247.29	.000
IL	1.60	2.84	4.47	2.66	1038.91	.000
HI	1.54	2.42	3.92	2.59	1355.10	.000
NY	1.50	2.17	3.38	2.43	1374.35	.000
D.C.	1.50	2.07	3.33	2.29	1392.11	.000

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 4

65+ year olds perceived destinations to be safer

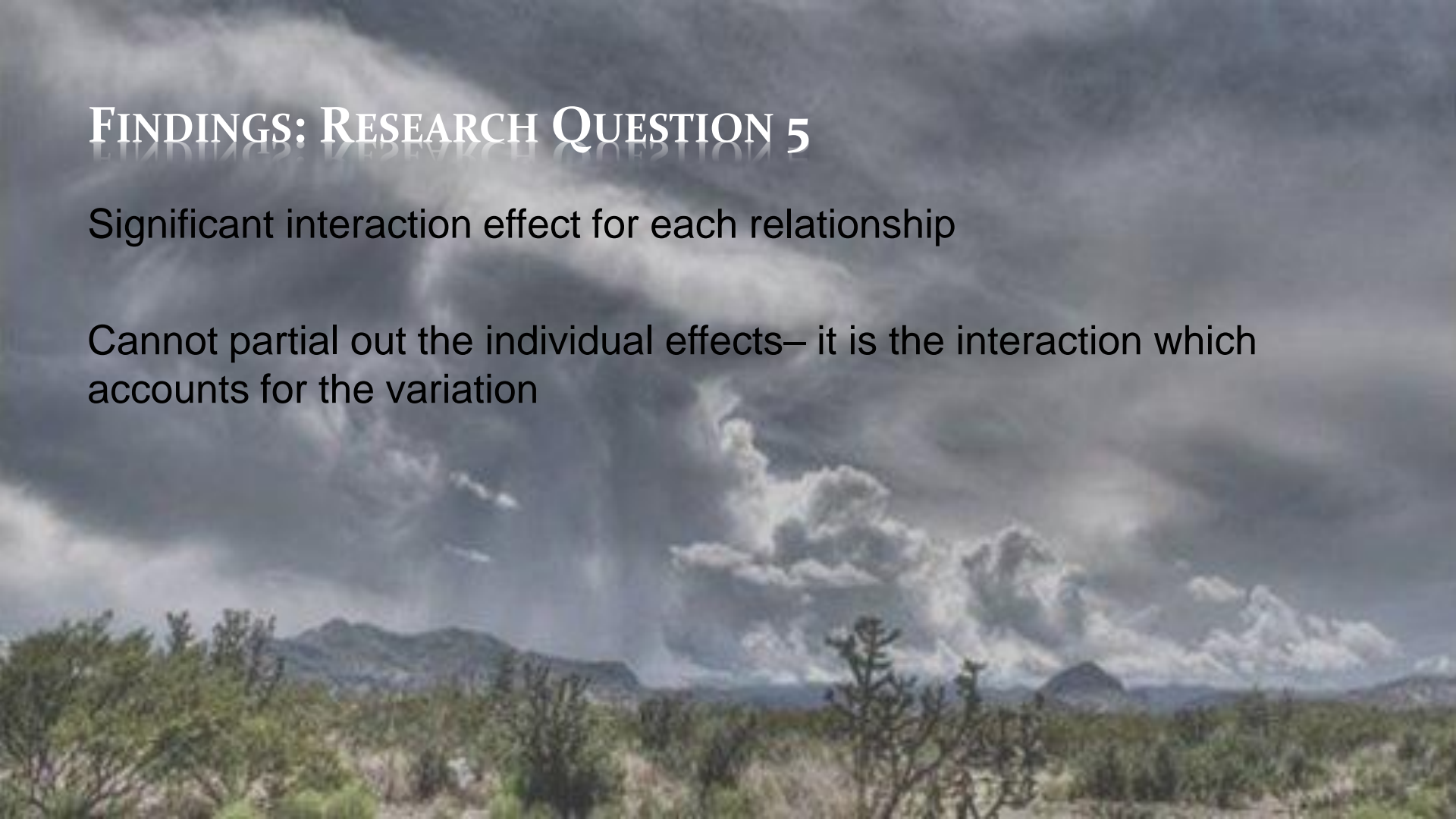
41-50 year olds generally perceived destinations to be riskier

	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-65	65+	Total	F	Sig.
FL	2.68	2.82	3.66	3.35	1.62	3.02	69.03	.000
CA	2.73	2.74	3.52	3.20	1.76	2.96	56.82	.000
NV	2.68	2.70	3.54	3.27	1.62	2.96	63.58	.000
NJ	2.64	2.70	3.30	3.22	1.81	2.88	42.27	.000
TX	2.55	2.56	3.48	3.34	1.71	2.86	67.18	.000
MA	2.50	2.63	3.38	3.40	1.52	2.83	67.91	.000
IL	2.41	2.58	3.27	2.85	1.64	2.66	41.03	.000
HI	2.33	2.34	3.14	2.92	1.57	2.59	64.12	.000
NY	2.21	2.25	2.93	2.57	1.57	2.43	66.04	.000
D.C.	2.05	2.04	2.73	2.67	1.52	2.29	83.17	.000

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 5

Significant interaction effect for each relationship

Cannot partial out the individual effects— it is the interaction which accounts for the variation



FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION 6

		CA	FL	TX	NV	HI	MA	IL	NY	NJ	D.C.
INDIA	Low	1.47	1.54	1.49	1.62	1.56	1.58	1.54	1.48	2.13	1.45
	Neutral	2.45	2.34	2.36	2.64	2.59	3.12	2.56	2.07	4.20	1.95
	High	4.45	4.49	4.49	4.67	4.80	4.98	4.80	3.63	5.00	3.67
AUSTRALIA	Low	2.01	1.70	1.62	1.42	1.52	1.68	1.56	1.44	2.07	1.57
	Neutral	2.89	3.20	2.45	2.27	2.08	3.16	2.80	2.21	3.11	2.22
	High	4.34	4.53	4.50	3.82	3.39	4.84	3.82	3.09	4.10	3.19
BRAZIL	Low	1.67	1.61	1.75	1.74	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.50	1.45	1.52
	Neutral	3.00	2.93	2.77	3.32	2.54	2.51	2.57	1.82	2.26	2.21
	High	4.56	4.21	4.41	4.96	3.96	4.23	3.92	3.24	3.65	3.89
S. KOREA	Low	1.95	1.59	1.54	2.04	1.50	1.74	1.68	1.57	1.65	1.47
	Neutral	3.16	2.57	2.55	3.29	2.58	3.02	3.52	2.64	2.73	1.93
	High	4.48	4.64	4.33	4.78	3.55	4.30	5.00	3.66	3.23	3.04
CHINA	Low	1.57	1.83	1.79	1.44	1.63	1.74	1.69	1.51	1.60	1.49
	Neutral	2.70	3.53	2.90	2.50	2.28	3.03	2.84	2.14	2.37	2.01
	High	3.97	4.74	4.91	3.74	3.64	4.50	4.13	3.21	3.87	3.17

DISCUSSION



- International tourists have different perceptions of safety associated with the top U.S. destinations
- Those who only visited the U.S. once generally perceived the top U.S. destinations to be safer; those who visited twice generally perceived the top destinations to be riskier
- Those with lower perceptions of risk perceived the top U.S. destinations to be safer

DISCUSSION



- International travelers who were 65+ perceived the top U.S. destinations to be safer; those in peak-earning age perceived the top U.S. destinations to be riskier
- Interaction effects found between culture and risk perceptions – thus, not possible to partial out individual effects; perceptions of the likelihood of a crisis occurring moderates the relationship between culture and perceptions of safety

IMPLICATIONS

- Understanding how international travelers perceive different destinations within the U.S. is of critical importance to the message a destination designs to differentiate itself from the competition
- Help DMOs to design effective, trustworthy messages which mitigate perceptions of risk
- Highlights need for a strategic communication plan to combat misperceptions



SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



- Other factors that influence perceptions of safety (i.e. media exposure; past exposure to crises while traveling)
- Explore perceptions of safety of other destinations
- Extend study to other cultures

A dramatic, dark, and stormy sky with heavy, grey clouds dominates the upper two-thirds of the image. Below the sky, a landscape of green trees and shrubs is visible, with a range of mountains in the distance under a lighter, hazy sky. The overall mood is one of potential crisis or danger.

**TCMI IS DEDICATED TO PREPARING
THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR BOTH
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