The Influence of Chinese Tourists' Risk Perception on Outbound Travel Intention in the Post-Pandemic Era: The Mediating and Moderating Effect

LIJUAN JIN[1,2], SHIDA IRWANA OMAR[1,*], MINGZHU PAN[3],
NURWATI BINTI BADARULZAMAN[1]
[1]School of Housing, Building and Planning,
Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Penang, 11800,
MALAYSIA

[2]School of History, Geography and Tourism,
Shangrao Normal University,
Shangrao, 334001,
CHINA

[3]School of Physical Education,
Shangrao Normal University,
Shangrao, 334001,
CHINA

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: - In the post-pandemic era, the risk perception of Chinese tourists is an important factor affecting their outbound travel behavior, which may be influenced by their trust in destinations and previous travel experience. This study constructs a moderated mediation effect model to explore the relationships among risk perception, destination trust, previous travel experience, and outbound travel intention. A total of 480 valid questionnaires were distributed through social media, travel forums, travel agencies, etc. SPSS22.0 and Lisre 8.5 software were used for data analysis. The study found the following results: the risk perception of Chinese tourists has a significant negative impact on their outbound travel intention. Trust in destinations plays a partial mediating role between risk perception and outbound travel intention. Previous travel experience negatively moderates the negative relationship between risk perception and outbound travel intention. Additionally, previous travel experience negatively moderates the mediating effect of risk perception on outbound travel intention through destination trust. The findings highlight the need to enhance destination trust and address risk perceptions to encourage outbound travel among Chinese tourists in the post-pandemic context.

Key-Words: - Risk perception; Outbound travel intention; Destination trust; Previous travel experience; Post-pandemic era; The Mediating and Moderating Effect.

Received: April 24, 2024. Revised: September 26, 2024. Accepted: February 11, 2024. Published: April 1, 2025.

1 Introduction

As the world's largest outbound tourism source market, China suffered a major "trauma" during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a decrease of 99.72% in outbound tourism. In 2019, the number of outbound tourists organized by Chinese tourism agencies reached 62.8806 million, which decreased to 3.4138 million in 2020 and 0.94 million in 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, both decreasing by more than 90 percent year-on-year, [1]. With the end of the pandemic and the world entering the "post-pandemic era", China's outbound tourism began to gradually recover, further promoting the revival of the global tourism market. According to the Annual Report on China's Outbound Tourism Development (2023-2024) released by the China Tourism Academy, the number of outbound tourists exceeded 87 million in 2023, and the number of outbound tourists is forecast to reach 130 million in 2024, [2]. However, although the popularity of

outbound tourism continues to rise, many Chinese tourists still feel "unsafe" under the ongoing prevention and control measures for the COVID-19 pandemic, [3]. As a once-in-a-century global public health event, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on global tourism development. In the post-pandemic era, in addition to the variants of the new coronavirus, people will also face some unknown mutated viruses, which makes many tourists perceive a certain level of risk in tourism, thus affecting their willingness to travel abroad.

Outbound tourism intention is a key factor in decision-making, directly reflecting tourists' attitudes and expectations towards travel. In the post-pandemic era, Chinese tourists' risk perception—encompassing health, safety, economic, social, and psychological concerns—has gained significant influence on outbound travel behavior. With COVID-19 reshaping these perceptions, risk factors now play a more prominent role in tourists' travel decisions, [4]. Previous studies confirm that risk perception is a crucial element influencing outbound travel intentions, [5]. Additionally, tourists' past travel experiences and trust in destinations are impactful. Research indicates that past travel experiences shape both travel choices and intentions [6], [7], while destination trust also directly affects travel intentions, [8].

Existing studies have extensively discussed the relationship between tourists' risk perception and travel intention, but there is still room for further improvement, [9]. Previous studies have primarily examined the direct relationship between risk perception and travel intention, but have not considered the comprehensive effect of other influencing factors simultaneously. Although the effects of previous travel experience and destination trust on travel intention have been explored separately, the mechanisms of their interrelationship have not been investigated. Therefore, this study takes Chinese tourists as the subject to study the impact of their risk perception on outbound travel intention in the post-pandemic era, focusing on the mediating effect of destination trust and the moderating effect of previous travel experience. The aim is to provide empirical support and a theoretical basis for promoting the development of tourism in China and globally. In the process of promoting the recovery of outbound tourism, it is necessary to fully consider the risk perception factors of tourists, formulate targeted policies and measures, and develop market strategies to enhance tourists' confidence and sense of security, thereby stimulating their outbound tourism behavior.

2 Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Tourists' Risk Perception

Risk perception is a concept within the field of psychology. Risk perception refers to an individual's perception and cognition of various objective risks in the external environment, emphasizing the role and influence of an individual's subjective feelings and intuitive judgment on cognition, [10]. As early as the 1960s, risk perception was recognized for its feature of "subjectivity". Some researchers have incorporated consumer behavior into the concept of risk perception, defining it as the subjective judgment risk caused by the possibility of uncertainty and the consequences of wrong decisions, [11]. Since then, Researchers has refined the concept, describing risk perception as the perception of uncertainty and its consequences, [12]. Risk perception as the perception of uncertain results and notes that tourism risk perception arises from the internal perception of the product, the place and method of purchase, economic and social psychology, and tourists' own experience, [13]. Risk perception primarily encompasses the management of activities, mobility, human capital, market dynamics, and other factors, thereby influencing an individual's evaluative judgment, [14].

In the context of tourism, risk perception can be understood as an extension of the general concept of risk perception, meaning that when risks occur in tourism destinations, tourists form subjective judgments and feelings based on existing risk characteristics and information. The five-dimensional concept of risk perception, [15]. Building on this, combined with the risk loss theory, risk perception was divided into six dimensions: economic risk, functional risk, physical risk, psychological risk, social risk and time risk, [16]. These six dimensions explain 88.8% of consumers' perceived risk, [17], [18]. In the field of tourism, Tourism risk perception into six dimensions: physical risk, facility risk, psychological risk, cost risk, social risk, and service risk, based on the characteristics of tourists and the tourism industry, [19]. Physical risk refers to the possibility of physical harm to tourists during their journey, mainly due to natural disasters, diseases, accidents, health issues, public security, and other factors. Facility risk pertains to risks caused by equipment, facilities, and transportation involved in tourism, [20]. Psychological risk involves the potential damage to tourists' psychology or self-perception

when visiting unfamiliar destinations. Cost risk refers to the loss incurred when tourists spend more time and money on tourism products or services that fail to meet their expectations. Social risk is the risk that tourists may struggle to gain recognition from others when choosing to travel. Service risk is the risk that the services provided by the destination fail to meet tourists' expectations, [21]. This study discusses the impact of Chinese tourists' risk perception on their outbound travel behavior across six dimensions: physical risk, facility risk, psychological risk, cost risk, social risk, and service risk.

2.2 Tourists' Risk Perception and Outbound Travel Intention

Outbound travel intention refers to tourists' expectations and tendencies towards outbound tourism activities [22], which are directly related to tourists' decision-making processes and behavior implementation. In this study, outbound tourism behavior is defined as the activity of tourists leaving their own country to visit other countries. The behavioral intention of outbound tourism refers to a psychological state in which tourists align their interests, body, and mind with outbound tourism after perceiving possible risks and evaluating tourism safety. It also encompasses the subjective intention, preference, and belief in outbound tourism behaviour, [23]. In the post-pandemic era, the influence of socioeconomic transformations on tourism is significant, with these changes serving as a catalyst for business specialization. Travel agency managers engaged in this specialization process take into account specific travel motivations—such as adventure, new experiences, and cultural exploration—as well as economic shifts reflected in purchasing power, [24].

In the post-pandemic era, risk perception, as a key factor affecting tourists' decision-making, has a significant impact on outbound tourist behaviour [25]. When tourists have a high-risk perception of outbound tourism, they may worry about health and safety problems, and the uncertainty of service quality during the journey, which reduces their willingness to travel abroad. Conversely, if tourists have a low perception of risk or believe that risks can be effectively mitigated, their willingness to engage in outbound travel may increase. After the COVID-19 outbreak, the world has entered a post-pandemic era. For Chinese tourists, various uncertainties such as pandemics, diseases, health risks, equipment and facility risks, psychological damage from unfamiliar destinations, financial loss from unmet expectations, and social recognition issues can affect their outbound travel intention, [26]. Therefore, this study proposes the following research hypothesis:

H1: Risk perception has a significant negative effect on outbound travel intention.

2.3 Mediating Effect of Destination Trust

To fully understand the relationship between tourists' risk perception and their outbound travel intention, it is essential to explore other potential influencing factors and mediating variables. Trust is a positive expectation that can bring respect, recognition, and other positive feelings to individuals, reduce transaction risks, lower information search costs, and improve information acceptance, [27]. Destination trust refers to the trust relationship between tourists and destinations, which is a perceived state where tourists are still willing to take corresponding risks even when aware of a crisis at the destination, [28]. A significant negative correlation between individuals' trust levels and risk perception levels, suggesting that increased risk-related knowledge could enhance trust, whereas heightened risk perception could diminish trust, [29]. Similarly, risk perception and trust are inversely related, [30]. This negative correlation between risk perception and trust was confirmed through the Japanese General Social Survey, [31]. Additionally, destination trust has been shown to enhance tourists' willingness to travel abroad, [32]. Therefore, destination trust is a critical factor: when tourists have a high level of trust in a destination, they may overlook some potential risks and increase their willingness to travel abroad. Consequently, destination trust can mitigate the impact of tourists' risk perception on their outbound travel intention. Tourists generally have extensive past experience, and when their trust in a destination decreases, their perception of risk intensifies, further diminishing their willingness to travel abroad. This indicates that destination trust can mediate the effect of tourists' risk perception on their outbound travel intention. In the post-pandemic era, Chinese tourists' risk perception significantly impacts their outbound travel behavior, and this impact may be mediated by destination trust. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Destination trust has a mediating effect between risk perception and outbound travel intention.

2.4 The Moderating Effect of Previous Travel Experience

Past tourism experience encompasses the knowledge and sentiments accumulated by tourists from their prior engagement in tourism activities. It involves tourists' cognition and evaluation of destinations, tourism services, activities, and other aspects, significantly impacting their decision-making process and behavioral intentions. The past experience of mainland visitors to Hong Kong was positively correlated with the likelihood of their return visit, [33]. Similarly, tourists' domestic travel experiences can predict their future outbound travel needs, [34]. As tourists accumulate travel experiences, their horizons expand, prompting them to consider traveling abroad, [35]. As tourists gain more travel experience, their perception of risk decreases, [36]. In essence, the travel experience instills confidence in tourists regarding future travels, despite potential risks, thereby enhancing their destination trust and willingness to travel abroad, [37]. Moreover, tourists tend to form positive evaluations and trust in destinations where they have had pleasant experiences in the past. This trust may diminish the negative impact of risk perception on outbound travel intentions, allowing tourists to maintain a high willingness to travel abroad despite perceived risks, [38]. Therefore, previous travel experience plays a crucial role in moderating tourists' risk perception, destination trust, and outbound travel intention. Specifically, the stronger the previous travel experience, the weaker the negative relationship between perceived risk and outbound travel intention. Additionally, the stronger the previous travel experience, the weaker the mediating effect of destination trust on the relationship between risk perception and outbound travel intention. This study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Previous travel experience negatively moderates the negative relationship between risk perception and outbound travel intention.
H4: Previous travel experience negatively moderates the mediating effect of the relationship between risk perception and outbound travel intention.

The model diagram of the research hypothesis is shown in Figure 1 (Appendix).

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Model Building

In order to explore the effect of the risk perception of Chinese tourists on outbound travel intention in the post-pandemic era, the hierarchical regression analysis model and Bootstrap were used to test, and the following benchmark model was constructed:

$$Yi,t=\beta 0+\beta 1Xi,t+\theta Cj,i,t+ei,t$$

CPi,t represents the i^{th} tourist's outbound travel intention at the t^{th} time; Xi,t represents the tourism risk perception of the i^{th} tourist at the t^{th} time; Cj,i,t are a series of control variables; β_0 is the intercept term; ei,t is the error term.

3.2 Survey Instrument and Variable Measurement

The dependent variable is outbound tourists' travel intention (Y). Drawing from the measurement items [39], outbound travel intention is assessed across three levels: "weak", "medium", and "strong". The independent variable is risk perception (X). Risk perception is assessed across six dimensions: physical risk, facility risk, psychological risk, cost risk, social risk, and service risk [19], as depicted in Table 1 (Appendix).

Mediating variable: Destination trust (Me) is measured using items adapted, [40]. The measurement items for destination trust include: 1. "I believe that this country and city are trustworthy"; 2. "I believe that the people in this country are worthy of my trust"; 3. "I believe that this country and city are full of development prospects"; 4. "I believe that this city is the safest city in the country", and 5. "I believe that the government can take effective measures against the pandemic".

Moderating variable: Previous travel experience (Mf) include: 1. "I have many travel experiences in the past"; 2. "I have a rich understanding and understanding of tourism activities"; 3. "I am usually able to deal with various problems in tourism"; 4. "I like to try new travel destinations and activities"; 5. "I think my travel experience will be helpful for future travel decisions", [36].

Control variables: According to previous studies, demographic characteristics such as gender, age, income, and education level of tourists may affect their risk perception, destination trust, and outbound travel intention. Therefore, these factors were included in the analysis as control variables in this study. In the specific measurement, gender is treated as a dichotomous variable, where 1

represents male and 0 represents female. Age is categorized into segments such as "under 18 years old", "18-30 years old", "31-40 years old", and so on. Income is measured as a continuous variable, with tourists directly reporting their monthly income. Education level is captured using ordered variables, including "junior high school and below", "high school/technical secondary school", "undergraduate/junior college", and "Master's degree and above", [37].

3.3 Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

In this study, a questionnaire survey was used to collect data. Based on the aforementioned variable measurement items, the questionnaire was published on an online platform to conduct a broad survey of tourists with outbound travel experience. To ensure the representativeness and validity of the data, questionnaires were distributed through multiple channels, including social media, travel forums, and travel agencies, to attract tourists of various ages, genders, incomes, and educational backgrounds.

During the data collection process, we established several screening conditions to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the samples. First, participants were required to have at least one overseas travel experience to ensure they had a practical understanding and experience with outbound travel. Second, we checked the completeness and logical consistency of the questionnaires, excluding any that were incomplete or evidently illogical. Finally, we cleaned and organized the collected data to exclude duplicate or invalid responses, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the samples. The questionnaire was distributed from 25 February 2024 to 10 March 2024. A total of 480 valid questionnaires were collected.

The statistical characteristics of the final sample are as follows: Regarding gender, 61.25% of the respondents were male, while 38.78% were female. In terms of age structure, 5.42% were under the age of 18, 34.38% were between 18 and 30, 26.04% were between 31 and 40, 18.75% were between 41 and 50, and 15.41% were over 50. Regarding income levels, 10.83% had a monthly income of less than 3,000 yuan, 27.08% earned between 3,001 and 5,000 yuan, 31.25% earned between 5,001 and 8,000 yuan, 18.75% earned between 8,001 and 10,000 yuan, and 12.08% earned more than 10,000 yuan. In terms of education level, 10.42% had completed junior high school or below, 22.92% had completed senior high school or secondary school, 43.75% had attained an undergraduate or junior college education, and 22.92% had a master's degree or above. The sample includes tourists of various genders, ages, incomes, and education levels, providing good representation.

3.4 Statistical Analysis Methods

In this study, LISREL 8.5, SPSS 22.0, and the PROCESS macro plug-in were used for data analysis. In the first step, LISREL software was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis of the variables in the model. A comparative analysis was conducted between the research model and a competitive model to explore the discriminative validity of the variables. Additionally, SPSS was employed to perform a descriptive statistical analysis of the variables to preliminarily explore their correlations. In the second step, hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses H1 and H3 to verify the direct and moderating effects within the model. The mediating effects related to hypothesis H2 were tested using a cross-validation method. In the third step, the PROCESS software was utilized to test hypothesis H4, specifically to verify the mediated effects proposed in this study.

4 Research Results

4.1 Scale Reliability and Validity Test

Confirmatory factor analysis for X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, Me, and Mf was conducted. The model fitting results were as follows: absolute fit index RMR=0.059 (<0.08), RMSEA=0.027 (<0.08), GFI=0.910 (>0.9), χ^2/df=1.744 (<2); PNFI=0.612 (>0.5), PGFI=0.569 (>0.5); incremental fit indices CFI=0.918, IFI=0.925, NFI=0.958, all greater than 0.9. These results indicate that the measurement model fits well. The reliability and validity test results of the scale showed that the corrected CITC was greater than 0.5, the Cronbach's α value of all scales was greater than 0.8, the standardized factor loadings of observed variables were greater than 0.70, and the composite reliability (CR) value of all scales was greater than 0.8. Average variance extracted (AVE) values were all greater than 0.5. These results demonstrate that the scale has good reliability and convergent validity. The square root of the average variance extracted for each latent variable was greater than the correlation coefficient, indicating good discriminant validity for the scale.

4.2 Common Variance Deviation Test

In this study, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) method was used for testing using the Harman

single-factor test. The principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to obtain four factors. The explanatory variance of the first factor is 33.33%, and the total variance explained by all factors is 73.10%. The explanatory variance of the first factor is less than half of the total variance. This data indicates that the common method bias in this study is within an acceptable range and does not significantly affect the accuracy of the analysis results. Additionally, to further eliminate common method bias, this study also employed the potential unmeasured method factor approach to test for common bias. The results are shown in Table 2 (Appendix). The results indicated that the model fitting indices RMSEA, NFI, and IFI did not change significantly after the inclusion of method factors, thus confirming that there was no serious common method bias in this study.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 (Appendix) presents the mean, standard deviation, and variable correlation coefficients for each variable. Risk perception shows a positive correlation with destination trust ($r=0.60$, $p<0.01$), previous travel experience ($r=0.54$, $p<0.01$), and outbound travel intention ($r=0.56$, $p<0.01$). Destination trust is also positively correlated with previous travel experience ($r=0.50$, $p<0.01$) and outbound travel intention ($r=0.38$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, previous travel experience is significantly positively correlated with outbound travel intention ($r=0.54$, $p<0.01$). These analysis data are consistent with the predicted theoretical relationships, providing preliminary data and theoretical support for the subsequent hypothesis testing.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1 Main Effect Test

The core issue of this study is to examine the impact of Chinese tourists' risk perception on their outbound travel behavior in the post-pandemic era. By exploring variables such as tourists' age, gender, income, and education level, this study aims to understand the influencing factors of outbound travel intention, with these variables considered as control variables. A regression analysis of risk perception on outbound travel intention was conducted, accounting for these control variables. The standardization coefficient β was 0.495, $p < 0.01$, and the R-square value of the model was 0.245. From these data, it is inferred that there is a positive relationship between risk perception and outbound travel intention. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is verified.

4.4.2 Mediating Effect Test

In the analysis of mediating effects, the coefficient c represents the total effect. The coefficient a denotes the effect of risk perception on tourists' outbound behavior intention, while coefficient b indicates the effect of destination trust on outbound travel intention, accounting for the influence of risk perception. Coefficient c' represents the direct effect of risk perception on outbound travel intention when considering the influence of destination trust. Residuals are denoted by e1 to e3. The mediating effects are detailed in Table 4 (Appendix).

Risk perception exhibited a significant negative effect on outbound travel intention ($c=-0.325$). Additionally, risk perception significantly impacted destination trust negatively ($a=-0.368$). Destination trust demonstrated a significant positive effect on outbound travel intention ($b=0.229$). When destination trust is considered as the mediating variable, the previously observed negative effect of risk perception on outbound travel intention becomes insignificant ($c'=0.299$). Subsequently, the mediation effect of this study was tested. The mediating mechanism explored in this study is "risk perception => destination trust => outbound tourist behavior intention". The total effect was significant ($c=-0.325$, $p < 0.01$), with an intermediary effect ($a*b=-0.016$, $p < 0.01$), and a direct effect ($c'=0.154$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis H2 is further supported. Risk perception significantly diminishes tourists' outbound travel intention, while destination trust partially mediates the relationship between risk perception and outbound behavior intention (Table 5, Appendix).

4.4.3 Moderating Effect Test

In this study, the moderating effect was tested using SPSS. The hierarchical regression method was employed to verify the moderating influence of previous travel experience on risk perception and outbound travel intention. Specific data results are presented in Table 6 (Appendix), following the centralization of variables.

Model 3 demonstrates that, after controlling for the main effect, the interaction term between risk perception and previous travel experience significantly impacts outbound travel intention ($r=-0.83$, $p<0.01$). This indicates a substantial moderating effect of past travel experience between risk perception and outbound travel intention. To examine the direction and trend of this moderating effect, the process method was utilized to depict the

moderating influence of previous travel experience on outbound travel intention. As depicted in Figure 2, at higher levels of previous travel experience, the negative correlation between risk perception and outbound travel intention weakens, indicating an increase in moderating effect and a slowdown in the decline rate. Conversely, at lower levels of previous travel experience, the slope decreases, intensifying the negative correlation between risk perception and outbound travel intention. Consequently, previous travel experience assumes a negative moderating role between risk perception and outbound travel intention, implying that lower levels of previous travel experience amplify the reduction in tourists' willingness for outbound behavior due to risk perception.

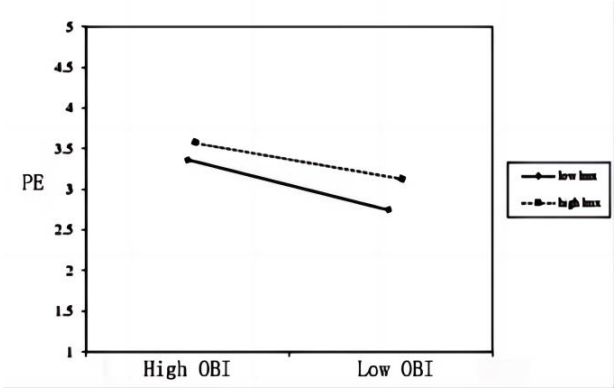

Fig. 2: Moderating effect diagram

4.4.4 Regulated Mediating Effect Test

In order to verify whether there is a moderation in the mediation effect, the bootstrap method was used to test the degree of model fit of the study as a whole by putting the mediating and moderating variables into the analysis. This method can provide more accurate confidence interval estimation and still has high statistical power when the sample size is small. Using the bootstrap method, we conducted an interaction analysis on the mediating variable (destination trust) and the moderating variable (previous travel experience) to test whether the mediating effect was influenced by the moderating variable, as shown in Table 6 (Appendix).

Table 7. Indirect effects of outbound travel intention on different levels of previous travel experience

PE	Indigo effect	BootSE	confidence interval
low level	0.0564	0.05	-0.03, 0.15
Medium level	0.1061	0.42	0.04, 0.20
High level	0.1493	0.05	0.61, 0.27

In Table 7, we can observe that the indirect effect of the mediating variable on the dependent variable gradually strengthens as the level of previous tourism experience increases. Specifically, at low levels of previous tourism experience, the indirect effect of the mediating variable on the dependent variable was not significant, and its 95% confidence interval was [-0.03, 0.15], indicating that the moderating effect of previous tourism experience was not obvious at this level. However, when the previous tourism experience is at a moderate level, the indirect effect of the mediating variable is significantly enhanced, and its 95% confidence interval is [0.04, 0.20], which indicates that the influence of the mediating variable on the dependent variable begins to appear under a moderate level of previous tourism experience. Furthermore, under a high level of previous tourism experience, the indirect effect of the mediating variable is further enhanced, and its 95% confidence interval is [0.61, 0.27], which indicates that the effect of the mediating variable on the dependent variable is more significant under a high level of previous tourism experience.

In summary, we can conclude that previous tourism experience plays a moderating role in the mediating effect, and this moderating effect is more significant at medium and high levels of previous tourism experience. This may be because tourists with more previous travel experience have a higher degree of trust in the destination, so they are not easily affected by risk perception, which in turn affects their outbound travel intention, [38], [39].

In real life, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is profound. In the post-pandemic era, many Chinese tourists have a greater risk perception of the destination, which reduces their trust in the destination. Tourists with higher travel experience have higher trust in the destination and also improve their outbound travel intention. On the contrary, the lower the previous travel experience, the less they can reduce the perceived risk, which will continue to reduce the destination trust and ultimately reduce the outbound travel intention. Therefore, when developing marketing strategies, tourism destinations should pay special attention to potential tourists with higher previous tourism experience, enhance their trust in the destination, and reduce their risk perception, so as to improve their outbound travel intention, [40].

5 Discussions and Conclusions

This study reveals that the risk perception of Chinese tourists significantly negatively influences

their intention to engage in outbound travel in the post-pandemic era. Furthermore, destination trust serves as a partial mediator between risk perception and outbound behavioral intentions, while prior travel experience negatively moderates the adverse relationship between risk perception and these intentions. Additionally, it diminishes the mediating effect of risk perception on outbound travel intention through destination trust. In essence, during the post-pandemic period, heightened risk perceptions regarding destinations led to diminished trust in those destinations. However, tourists with greater previous travel experience tend to enhance their trust in destinations and subsequently increase their intention for outbound travel. Conversely, lower levels of prior travel experience hinder individuals' ability to mitigate perceived risks, thereby perpetuating reduced destination trust and ultimately diminishing their intent for outbound travel. Through empirical investigation, this study elucidates the interrelationships among risk perception, destination trust, prior tourism experience, and intentions for outbound tourism behavior—providing significant theoretical foundations and practical insights for the recovery and advancement of the tourism industry.

The significance of this study lies in examining how Chinese tourists' risk perception affects their intention to travel abroad in the post-pandemic era, with a focus on the mediating role of destination trust and the moderating role of prior travel experience. This research aims to provide empirical support and a theoretical foundation for promoting the growth of both Chinese and global tourism. To enhance Chinese tourists' intention to travel abroad, several steps are recommended. First, the Chinese government should boost tourism promotion, establish strategic partnerships with destination countries, strengthen destination branding, and increase tourists' sense of trust. Second, emphasis should be placed on potential tourists with higher levels of prior travel experience, aiming to reduce their perceived risks by enhancing trust in destinations. Tourism enterprises could also develop personalized tourism products and services tailored to tourists' past travel experiences to encourage outbound travel. Finally, strengthening risk management at tourist destinations is essential to improve their safety image. This includes enhancing public security and health oversight, as well as providing timely updates on tourism safety information to reinforce tourists' sense of security.

The limitations of this study are as follows: while it uncovered relationships between risk perception, destination trust, prior travel experience, and the intention to engage in outbound travel, several potential constraints remain. First, the data primarily relied on questionnaire responses, which may lead to issues of sample limitation and underrepresentation. Additionally, this study focused on the outbound travel behavior of Chinese tourists; tourists from different countries and cultural backgrounds may exhibit varying behaviors and characteristics. Furthermore, this research primarily examined the effects of risk perception and destination trust on outbound travel intentions, yet the tourism decision-making process is likely influenced by a wider range of factors, including the personal characteristics of tourists, the attractiveness of destinations, and the cost-effectiveness of tourism products. Future research should aim to further refine the model of how tourists' risk perceptions influence their outbound travel intentions by incorporating these additional factors.

Despite its limitations, this study offers valuable theoretical and practical insights. It deepens our understanding of the role of tourists' risk perception and trust in the tourism decision-making process and provides important guidance for the recovery and growth of the tourism industry. Additionally, the findings offer direction and ideas for future research, serving as a useful reference to further advance academic studies and drive practical innovation in the field of tourism.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors wrote, reviewed and edited the content as needed and they have not utilized artificial intelligence (AI) tools. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

References:

[1] Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. (2020). 2019 National Travel Agency Statistics Report by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, [Online]. https://zwgk.mct.gov.cn/zfxxgkml/tjxx/202012/t20201204_906493.html (Accessed Date: November 29, 2024).

[2] The Beijing News. (2024). The number of outbound tourists in 2024 is expected to reach 130 million, with the recovery of the supply chain accelerating (in Chinse), [Online]. http://travel.china.com.cn/txt/2024-02/05/content_116986906.shtml (Accessed Date: November 29, 2024).

[3] Meng, Y., Khan, A., Bibi, S., Wu, H., Lee, Y., & Chen, W. (2021). The effects of COVID-19 risk perception on travel intention: Evidence from Chinese travelers. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 655860. DOI: 10.3389/FPSYG.2021.655860.

[4] Dang, Q. (2022). Research on the Impact of Media Credibility on Risk Perception of COVID-19 and the Sustainable Travel Intention of Chinese Residents Based on an Extended TPB Model in the Post-Pandemic Context. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(14):8729-8729. DOI:10.3390/SU14148729.

[5] Rate S, Ballantyne R, Kerr F, Moutinho L (2017). *Marketing communications in tourism and hospitality: Trends and implications of an online environment*. The Routledge Handbook of Consumer Behaviour in Hospitality and Tourism. DOI: 10.4324/9781315659657-43.

[6] Cheah S T, Lim K C, Kayat K (2015). Travel mode choice: effects of previous experience on choice behaviour and valuation. *American Journal of Tourism Management*, 4(2), 40-42. DOI: 10.5367/000000003101298240.

[7] Dila M, Joanne S, Liu F (2024). Personal values and travel motivations: the moderating effects of visit experience, gender and age.*Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 7(5), 3091-3109. DOI: 10.1108/JHTI-07-2023-0458.

[8] PerićSandra G, Conić S (2021). The impact of Serbian tourists' risk perception on their travel intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Business European Journal of Tourism Research*, 1, 1-15. DOI: 10.54055/ejtr.v27i.2125.

[9] Zorlu, K., Tuncer, M., & Taşkın, G. A. (2023). The effect of COVID-19 on tourists' attitudes and travel intentions: an empirical study on camping/glamping tourism in Turkey during COVID-19. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 947–965. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-02-2022-0069.

[10] Terpstra T (2011). Emotions, trust, and perceived risk: Affective and cognitiveroutes to flood preparedness behavior. *Risk Analysis*, 31(10):1658-1675. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-6924.2011.01616.x.

[11] Bauer R A (1960). *Consumer behavior as risk taking. In: R, S. H. Dynamic Marketing for a changing world.* Chicago: American Marketing Association, 389-398.

[12] Cunningham. S. M. (1967). The Major Dimensions of Perceived Risk. In: Cox, D.F., Ed., Risk Taking and Information Handling in Consumer Behavior, Harvard University Press, Boston, MA, [Online]. https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=1899731 (Accessed Date: September 10, 2024).

[13] Moutinho L. (1987). Consumer behaviour in tourism. *European Journal of Marketing*, 21(10), 5-44. DOI: 10.1108/EUM0000000004718.

[14] Koiu L., Korbi A (2022). The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic Situation on the Perception of the Type of Risks Albanian SMEs Face (Case Study -- SME's in the Southern Region of Albania). *WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics*, vol.20, pp.318-327. https://doi.org/10.37394/23207.2023.20.30.

[15] Jacoby, J. and Kaplan, L.B. (1972). The Components of Perceived Risk. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research*, Chicago, 10, 382-393, [Online]. https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=1471959 (Accessed Date: September 10, 2024).

[16] Peter, J. P. and Tarpey, L. X. A (1975). Comparative Analysis of Three Consumer Decision Strategies. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(1), 29-38. DOI:10.1086/208613.

[17] Stone, R. N., Gronhaug, K (1993). Perceived risk: further considerations for the marketing discipline. *European Journal of Marketing*, 27(3), 9-50. DOI: 10.1108/03090569310026637.

[18] Ghaudhuri, A (1998). Product class effects on perceived risk: the role of emotion. International *Journal of Research in Marketing*, 15(2), 157-168. DOI: 10.1016/S0167-8116(97)00039-6.

[19] Zhu H, Deng F M (2020). How to Influence Rural Tourism Intention by Risk Knowledge during COVID-19 Containment in China: Mediating Role of Risk Perception and Attitude. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(10), 3514. DOI: 10.3390/ijerph17103514.

[20] Fuchs G, Reichel A (2011). An exploratory inquiry into destination risk perceptions and risk reduction strategies of first time vs. repeat visitors to a highly volatile destination. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 266-276. DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.012.

[21] Karamustafa L, Fuchs G, Reichel A (2013). Risk Perceptions of a Mixed-Image Destination: The Case of Turkey's First-Time

Versus Repeat Leisure Visitors. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22(3), 243-268. DOI: 10.1080/19368623.2011.641709.

[22] Huang S S, Xiang W (2018). Chinese outbound travel: Understanding the socioeconomic drivers. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(1), 25-37. DOI: 10.1002/jtr.2150.

[23] Tepavcevic J, Blesic I. (2021). Personality Traits That Affect Travel Intentions during Pandemic COVID-19: The Case Study of Serbia. *Sustainability*, 13(22): 12845. DOI: 10.3390/su132212845.

[24] Mihajlovic I (2020). The Impact of Socio-Economic Changes in Tourism on the Business Specialization of Travel Agencies. *WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics*, 1, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.37394/23207.2020.17.35.

[25] Alexa D., Graham C., Taru J (2022). The're-norming' of working from home during COVID-19: A transtheoretical behaviour change model of a major unplanned disruption. *Transport Policy*, 127, 15-21. DOI: 10.1016/J.TRANPOL.2022.08.007.

[26] Handler I, Tan C S L (2024). Impact of Japanese travelers' psychographics on domestic travel intention during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 30(1), 166-185. DOI: 10.1177/13567667221122108.

[27] Ansarinasab M, Ssghaian S (2023). Outbound, Inbound and Domestic Tourism in the Post-COVID-19 Era in OECD Countries. *Sustainability*, 15(12), 9412. DOI: 10.3390/SU15129412.

[28] Tanyatip K, Weerapong K, Warunya C (2024). Generation Z's COVID-19 risk perception and socially responsible behaviors influencing intentions to participate in the tourism stimulus campaign. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, 7 (4).1699-171*. DOI: 10.1108/JHTI-10-2022-0481.

[29] Roehl W S, Fesenmaier D R (1992). Risk perceptions and pleasure travel: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(4), 17-26. DOI: 10.1177/004728759203000403.

[30] WouterPoortinga, Nick F (2003). Exploring the Dimensionality of Trust in Risk Regulation.*Risk Analysis*, 23(5), 961-972. DOI: 10.1111/1539-6924.00373.

[31] Juheon Lee (2020). Post-disaster trust in Japan: the social impact of the experiencesand perceived risks of natural hazards.*Environmental Hazards*, 19(2), 171-186. DOI: 10.1080/17477891.2019.1664380.

[32] Liang J, Ma H Y (2020). Interpersonal injustice and perceived legitimacy of authority: The role of institutional trust and informational justice. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 31(2): 184-197. DOI: 10.1002/casp.2492.

[33] Huang S S, Hsu C H (2009). Effects of travel motivation , past experience , perceived constraint, and attitude on revisit intention. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48 (1), 29-44. DOI: 10.1177/0047287508328793.

[34] Chen C C, Lin Y H (2012). Segmenting Mainland Chinese Tourists to Taiwan by Destination Familiarity: A Factor-cluster Approach. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(4), 339-352. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.864.

[35] Yang Y, Wu X (2014). Chinese Residents' Demand for Outbound Travel: Evidence from the Chinese Family Panel Studies. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(10), 1111-1126. DOI: 10.1080/10941665.2013.844180.

[36] Sonmez S F, Graefea R (1998). Influence of terrorism risk on foreign tourism decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(1), 112 -144. DOI: 10.1016/s0160-7383(97)00072-8.

[37] Wilks, J. & Page S (2006). Current status of tourist health and safety. *ISBT Science*, 3-18. DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-08-044000-2.50006-7.

[38] Lepp A, Gibson H (2003). Tourist roles, perceived risk and international tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(3), 606-624. DOI: 10.1016/S0160-7383(03)00024-0.

[39] Io Man U, Peralta R L (2022). Emotional well-being impact on travel motivation and intention of outbound vacationers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Leisure/Loisir*, 46(22), 543-567. DOI: 10.1080/14927713.2022.2032809.

[40] McAllister, Daniel J. (1995). Affect and Cognition Based Trust as Foundations for Interpersonal Cooperation in Organization. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 38(1), 24-59.

APPENDIX

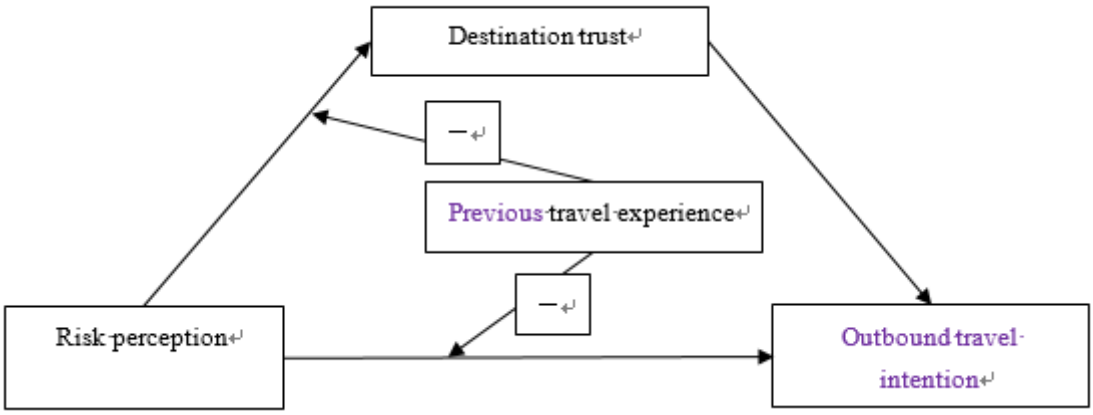

Fig. 1: Schematic diagram of the research model

Table 1. Independent variable measurement items

Dimension	Question item
Physical Risk (X1)	1. Traveling abroad can cause an uncontrollable disaster.
	2. Traveling abroad may encounter public safety accidents.
	3. Traveling abroad may lead to exposure to infectious diseases.
Facility Risk (X2)	4. Foreign public service facilities have potential safety risks.
	5. Safety risks exist in foreign tourism infrastructure.
	6. Traffic congestion and inconvenient traffic abroad.
	7. Unreasonable identification in foreign cities, leading to potential safety risks.
Psychological risk (X3)	8. The thought of traveling abroad worries me.
	9. If I travel abroad, I will feel unhappy.
	10. Traveling abroad can make me feel nervous.
	11. I will feel anxious if I travel abroad.
Cost Risk (X4)	12 A pandemic may lead to an increase the cost of travel.
	13. The pandemic may lead to low-cost performance for tourism.
	14. Due to the pandemic, more time may be spent planning tourism.
	15. Due to the pandemic, travel may take more time.
Social Risk (X5)	16. The pandemic has led to reduced support from my family and friends for my international travels.
	17. My decision to travel abroad during the pandemic may elicit negative perceptions from others.
	18. Traveling abroad during the pandemic may subject me to criticism from others.
Service Risk (X6)	19. Due to the pandemic, tourism abroad may not achieve the desired effect.
	20. Due to the pandemic, the quality of foreign tourism products and services has declined.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis (N=480)

model	X^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	IFI	SRMR
Single-factor: RP +DT+PE+OBI	12.58	0.15	0.80	0.84	0.08
Two factors: RP, DT + PE + OBI	8.24	0.11	0.83	0.89	0.07
Three factors: RP, DT, PE + OBI	6.36	0.11	0.87	0.93	0.05
Four factors: RP, DT, PE, and OBI	5.25	0.07	0.99	0.99	0.03
Four factors + method factors	2.64	0.07	0.99	0.99	0.02

Note: RP stands for Risk perception; DT indicates Destination trust. PE indicates Previous travel experience. OBI indicates Outbound travel intention. "+" indicates that two factors are combined into one factor

Table 3. The mean value, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient of each variable

Value	Mean	Sd.	Age	Sex	Edu	Income	RP	DT	PE
Age	1.54	0.68							
Sex	1.40	0.60	-0.03						
Edu	2.91	0.70	-0.16**	0.10*					
Income	2.39	0.89	0.63**	-0.11*	-0.05				
RP	2.81	1.33	0.01	-0.05	-0.09*	0.03			
DT	2.48	0.91	0.07	0.01	-0.12**	0.08	0.60**		
PE	3.18	0.97	-0.02	0.01	-0.06	-0.02	0.47**	0.50**	
OBI	3.20	0.98	0.06	-0.08	-0.06	0.13**	0.56**	0.38**	0.54**

*Note: *, ** indicated significant correlation at 0.05 and 0.01 levels (double-tailed), respectively.*

Table 4. Analysis of mediating effects

	Y	OBI	Y
Con	-0.625** (-3.145)	1.642** (7.559)	-1.067** (-5.396)
Age	0.119* (2.419)	-0.036 (-0.659)	0.111* (2.355)
Sex	0.022 (0.429)	0.049 (0.929)	0.263** (8.866)
Edu	0.021 (0.836)	-0.026 (-0.975)	0.029 (1.209)
Income	0.125* (8.063)	0.168* (5.510)	0.153* (5.540)
RP	-0.325** (-1.720)	-0.368** (-0.018)	0.495** (7.223)
DT	0.121** (8.719)	0.144** (2.727)	0.299** (8.588)
OBI			0.229** (8.281)
N	480	480	480
R^2	0.473	0.232	0.518
Adjust R^2	0.467	0.223	0.510
F	*F* (13,1033)=71.41 6,*p*=0.000	*F* (13,1033)=24. 036,*p*=0.000	*F* (16,1030)=69.143, *p*=0.000

*Note: *p< 0.05, **p< 0.01. All variables in the table are brought into the regression equation using the mean value (t value in parentheses) (the same as below)*

Table 5. Summary of results of mediation effect

item	c	a	b	a*b	a*b (Boot SE)	a*b	a*b	a*b (95% BootCI)	c'	Conclusion
Risk perception => destination trust => outbound travel intention	0.325**	0.368**	0.229**	0.016	0.006	2.591	0.010	0.004 ~ 0.027	0.154**	Partial mediation

Table 6. Analysis of the moderating effect

	OBI		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.24*	0.01	0.02
Sex	-0.10	-0.07	-0.03
Edu	-0.11	-0.04	-0.03
Income	0.11	0.14*	0.11
RP		0.09**	-0.15
PE		0.09**	-0.05
RP*PE			-0.83**
N	0.06	0.42	0.44
R^2	0.04	0.40	0.42
Adjust R^2	0.06	0.36	0.02
F	2.97**	99.97**	9.77**

Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

The authors equally contributed in the present research, at all stages from the formulation of the problem to the final findings and solution.

Sources of Funding for Research Presented in a Scientific Article or Scientific Article Itself

This work was sponsored in part by Shangrao Normal University Optional Research Project (SRSK202304).

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.