

# **Students' perception of risk in leisure travel**

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## **Abstract**

International tourism is nothing extraordinary for neither the broad population nor students anymore. Because going abroad in general, but especially on long haul trips is considered with various risks regarding made investments and safety of the individual, it is all the more interesting to know which determinants play a role in risk perception. Literature suggested destination image and different tourist characteristics as gender, the degree of novelty seeking, travel experience, and language proficiency to play a role in risk perception and in turn risk perception to determine the travel purchase decision. In this study, 90 students from mostly Germany and the Netherlands participated. They were distributed in two conditions where they were asked to evaluate risks of each one fictional destination – a favorable and an unfavorable destination – presented in a text frame. However, literature findings could only be partially confirmed. Namely travel experience, destination image, and to a certain extent novelty seeking seemed to play a role. Interestingly, some additional correlations were observed, indicating risk perception itself to be an interwoven construct. Finally, strengths and weaknesses of this research as integration of a fictional destination, as well as future research recommendations are discussed.

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## **Introduction**

Vacationing, but especially long-haul trips are products related to various risks for the traveling individual. For the most people in the western world, international tourism is nothing extraordinary anymore. To give only one example, 72% of all holiday trips booked by the Germans in the year of 2017 were meant to go abroad (Sonntag & Schrader, 2017). However, despite the considerable financial effort one has to make, the travel experience is something that cannot be pre-tested by the customer (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2017). Someone who books a holiday has certain expectations and wishes towards that holiday. If these expectations are not met, prepaid expenses, like the stay at a hotel, local activities, or the journey itself, cannot be redeemed. Consequently, tourists are at the mercy of financial risks (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a).

Another argument comes from Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017). They emphasize that research on the topic of travel risk has gained popularity because of a greater occurrence of tourism crises. The sensitivity of this topic is supported by further literature which alerts the volatility and fragility of this sector (Artuğer, 2015; De Sausmarez, 2007). It is argued that tourism is more affected by undesirable incidents than other economic areas, regardless whether those incidents are of man-made or natural origin. Incidents may not only threaten the national economy of where they take place, but may also put lives of the tourists present in danger (De Sausmarez, 2007).

Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017) highlight the relevance of this consideration, not only because of the crises occurrence itself, but because those crises, regardless their form and origin, receive more international attention through modern media, including social media or the internet in general. As such incidents are framed in an unfavorable way, it enhances tourists' risk perception (Kapuściński & Richards, 2016). This again may lead the individual to avoid the risk by making other plans as delaying or even cancelling the trip. Indeed, statistics indicate repeatedly that adverse incidents in or related to a certain region cause declines in tourist arrivals in that region. Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017) make various incidents as the SARS epidemic in 2003, the 2004 tsunami and more recent political and military incidents responsible for temporary sharp incisions in tourist arrivals in Thailand.

Focusing on recent development regarding German tourists, similar patterns are observable. Comparing arrivals of German tourists in Turkey in the year of 2015 with 2016, a decline of more than 20% is reported (Sonntag & Schrader, 2017). In that time, various incidents gained media attention in Germany as in July 2016, a military coup in Turkey took place (Polke-Majewski, Steffen, Enders, & Biermann, 2016) and diplomatic tension became

stronger between the German and the Turkish government (Wulf & Helm, 2017). Furthermore, declines in arrivals in France (-15%) and Northern Africa (-29%) are mentioned where terrorism is made responsible for this development (Sonntag & Schrader, 2017).

Literature points out the importance of young travelers. They are seen as seeking for novelty (Cohen 1973; Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2017) making them naturally looking for new experiences which possibly can be found in foreign travel destinations. This is interesting by all the risks they have to take upon them when it comes to international travel. Not surprisingly, Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017) found that even novelty seekers only prefer novel destinations over familiar as long as they perceive it as not too risky.

Richards and Wilson (2004) found students to be frequent travelers who are experts in long haul traveling as they usually have already a lot of travel experience with longer trips outside of their world region. Their desire to travel is mostly reflected in a desire to make experiences as exploring other cultures. Nevertheless, Richards and Wilson (2004) found these motivations to vary with travel style and destination. Interestingly, they also found students motivations to be distinguishable from other young travelers, indicating students to be separable from peers in this case. However, despite this distinguishability of travel motivation, actual travel behavior was indicated to be similar to that of peers.

For this research, the focus will be on college and university students as a relatively homogeneous group of young people. The aim of this study is to find variances and similarities among students predicting and evaluating their risk perception in international leisure travel. A starting point of possible factors playing a role in this evaluation process can be found in the literature where variables as destination image, demographics, and the trait of novelty seeking have been discussed extensively.

## **Literature Review**

### **Risk Perception, Destination Image, and Tourist Characteristics**

In the research field of tourism, destination characteristics, risk perception, and traveler characteristics have gotten particular attention since they have been frequently considered key variables in predicting travel behavior (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Han, 2005).

Speaking about travelers in general, literature found that when tourists perceive a destination as too risky to visit, they will not go there, even if they have past visit experience. (Sönmez & Graefe; 1998; Han, 2005; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Kozak, Crofts & Law, 2007; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Fielding and Shortland (2011) found clues in

their research on tourism in Egypt that tourists may not necessarily stay at home when a destination appears risky to them, but rather travel elsewhere. Fielding and Shortland (2011) reported that in a period of incidents in the Israel and Palestine region, foreign tourism in Egypt did increase. Interestingly, the statistics of German international tourists provided by Sonntag and Schrader (2017) show that while Turkey recorded a heavy decline in arrivals, its neighbor Greece recorded a plus of 18% in German tourist arrivals in the same year. Although this is rather a correlation than causality, it is in line with the observations made by Fielding and Shortland (2011).

### **The Definition of Risk Perception**

To better understand risk perception in this context, risk perception itself should first be defined. Slovic and Weber (2002) mention the existence of multiple conceptions of risk. They emphasize that judgements about risks may vary drastically between experts and laypeople. Experts' judgements, according to Slovic and Weber (2002), correlate highly with technical evaluations of annual fatalities. Opposing to this, laypeople relate their judgement to more categorical risk characteristics as its novelty, voluntariness of exposure, or fatality of consequences. This explained variances as in Slovic (1987) where college students evaluated nuclear power as the riskiest technology, while experts ranked it twentieth.

Slovic and Weber (2002) pointed out that many characteristics of a risk seem to be related to each other. Hazards in which exposure was rated as voluntary were also rated as well-known or controllable. Slovic, Fischhoff, and Lichtenstein (1979) found that laypeople's judgement about risks was related to four factors, where dread risk was protruding the most. In other words, when people perceived a potential hazard as dreadful, uncontrollable, with fatal consequences, or among other things inequitable regarding potential benefits, they perceive it as very risky and want it to be reduced (Slovic & Weber, 2002). In the context of leisure travel and its risks, this could mean that some risks may be seen as particularly adverse because of their unpredictable or fatalistic nature.

### **Risk Perception in the context of leisure tourism**

Han (2005) comprehensively examined risk perception and travel intention. In his study he found seven dimensions of perceived risk in international leisure travel which influence the intention to travel internationally. These variables are communication risk, value risk, health risk, psychological risk, social risk, terrorism risk, and equipment risk. Although earlier

literature found up to 10 dimensions (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a), the dimensions of Han will be inherited for this study as he integrated dimensions from older studies into his work.

To give meaning to the earlier mentioned eight dimensions of risk perception, these will be defined in the following. In his review, Han (2005) emphasizes that previous literature has found language to be an important factor influencing travel destination choice (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; Hsieh, O’Leary, & Morrison, 1994; Yavas, 1987). Basala and Klenosky (2001) further argued that a lack of tourists’ fluency in the local language can act inhibiting in international travel. This risk dimension is labeled as communication risk.

The second dimension value risk consists of time and financial risks (Han, 2005). Time risk was defined as “the possibility that the trip to a particular destination will take too much time or be a waste of time” (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992, p. 18). Financial risk is about whether the product is worth the expenditure (Roehl, 1988).

The third dimension health risk has been defined by Han (2005) who integrated physical risk into this construct. Physical risk has been defined by Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) as “the possibility that the trip to a particular destination will result in physical danger, injury, or sickness (p.18).

The fourth dimension psychological risk has been defined by Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) as “the possibility that the trip to a particular destination will not reflect an individual’s personality or self-image” (p.18).

Following, the fifth dimension social risk is about peer perception. Reimer (1990) found that vacationing style may impress peers as traveling during winter to a sunny destination may be a symbol of success.

Regarding the sixth dimension terrorism risk, it is to mention that there is no single accepted definition of terrorism (Schmid, 2011). According to a script of the German parliament (Deutscher Bundestag, 2009), people are defined as terrorists when they illegally try to enforce political or religious objectives by the means of violence. Sönmez and Graefe (1998b) found that perceived risk of terrorism was negatively associated with international tourism.

Related to terrorism risk is the dimension of political instability risk. The latter dimension has been defined by Hall and O’Sullivan (1996). They described it as “a situation in which conditions and mechanisms of governance and rule are challenged as to their political legitimacy by elements operation from outside of the normal operations of the political system” (p. 106). Although terrorism and political instability both could be considered as being politically motivated, the main difference seems to be that political

instability is directly affecting the government. Furthermore, Hall and O'Sullivan (1996) only emphasize abnormality in the political situation.

Han (2005) argued that some earlier found dimensions may either measure the same construct, or can be put into one construct. The same counts for political instability risk as it was found not significant by Han (2005). Nevertheless, Han (2005) argued that this might be due to the fact that the destinations he examined, Australia and Japan have been generally perceived as politically stable by his respondents. Han (2005) added that, if a political unstable destination had been examined, significant findings for this dimension could have appeared. For consistency reasons, the dimension of terrorism risk will be named political violence risk in the following.

Finally, the seventh dimension equipment risk has been defined by Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) as "the possibility of mechanical, equipment or organizational problems while on vacation" (p.18). A further definition was made by Tsaur, Tzeng, and Wang (1997) as they stated "the dangers arising from the unavailability of equipment or its malfunctioning, such as insufficient telecommunication facilities, unsafe transportation, and break-down of vehicles" (p.799) to be equipment risk.

### **Destination Image**

In past research, perceived risk has been handled as being part of destination image (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). However, more recent literature found destination image and risk perception to be distinct constructs (Chapuis, Le Falher, & Gonzales, 2015; Chew & Jahari, 2014).

To give meaning to the term of destination image, the definition in Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017) is adopted that destination image refers to attitude, impression and total beliefs, a traveler has towards a defined destination. It consists of a cognitive component, as well as an affective component. The former component relates to beliefs and knowledge of a destination, involving information a traveler possesses about a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). The latter is composed by feelings the traveler has about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004). Chew and Jahari (2014) found that perceived socio-psychological and financial risks had influence on affective, as well as cognitive destination image. Furthermore, destination image has been reported to mediate the relationship between perceived socio-psychological and financial risks on revisit intention.

### **Tourist Characteristics**

One of the most influential works on tourist characteristics has been made by Cohen (1972). According to him, international tourists can be put into four different categories: Organized mass tourist, individual mass tourist, explorer, and drifter. Simplistically, it can be said that the organized mass tourist has the highest need for familiarity in vacationing, whereas the drifter is interested in novel destinations and leaving the mass tourists paths.

However, categorizing tourists is difficult for several reasons. First, research found that non-institutionalized tourists as explorers and drifters may vary in travel motivation (Loker-Murphy, 1996) and perception of novelty and risk (Carr, 2001; Elsrud, 2001; Riley 1988; Scheyvens, 2002; Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002). Second, in the case of backpackers, tourists were found to be heterogeneous in terms of their attitudes (Reichel, Fuchs & Uriely, 2007). Third, Williams and Baláž (2013) pointed out that tourists may identify with more than one tourist type, making a clear distinction impossible.

Williams and Baláž (2013) found people with higher travel experience and frequency of countries outside of Europe to be less deterred by tourism hazards. Furthermore, Han (2005) found the characteristics of novelty seeking and language proficiency to be lowering risk perception. In these terms, literature has found familiarity seekers to be older (Snepenger, 1987) and novelty seekers, particularly drifters to be younger as drifter tourism decreases with age (Cohen 1973; Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). This suits the earlier mentioned finding of Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017) who found their young German respondents to be rather novelty seeking. Basala and Klenosky (2001) found that considering language differences was more important for familiarity seekers than for novelty seekers. Regarding language, this suggests not only novelty seekers to be more resilient to potential risks, but also that they simply do not perceive a certain risk as much as their counterpart does. Lepp and Gibson (2003) have another argument for this; they suggested that what appears to be a risk for some tourists might be a thrill factor for the novelty seeking tourist.

In accordance with Han (2005), Lepp and Gibson (2003) found familiarity seekers to be more sensitive to health risks, political instability and terrorism. Furthermore, they found men to perceive less health risk than women. Similar to this, Reichel, Fuchs, and Uriely (2007) found female backpackers to be more concerned with food safety and diseases, which agree with the categorization of health concerning risks.

However, research has also found being either female or male not to have influence on a person's risk perception (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b) in traveling. This might make gender a

controversial factor. Other research however supports the influence of gender (Enloe, 1989; Hawes, 1988; Wearing and Wearing, 1996).

### **The Protection Motivation Theory in Travel Risk**

The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) by Rogers (1975) will be briefly introduced into this research as it could be assisting in explaining risk perception. It focuses on fear-appeals which influence the protection motivation, and finally the behavioral choice of an individual in a particular situation. The theory consists of two pathways, a threat appraisal pathway and a coping appraisal pathway, opposing each other and predicting the protection motivation. The threat appraisal pathway deals with the maladaptive behavior. It is illustrated as an equation of the perceived possible rewards of the maladaptive behavior by the perceived severity and vulnerability of the occurrence of undesired outcomes. The coping appraisal pathway, however, subtracts the perceived response costs of coping behavior from the perceived efficacy, an individual possesses to respond. Although the PMT has historically found frequent application as a framework for health education interventions (Boer & Seydel, 1996) it has also been applied in the context of driving safety, prevention of nuclear war, safe use of pesticides, and more (Floyd, Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, 2000).

In the context of Travel Risk perception, the threat appraisal pathway could be translated into traveling into a risky destination, opposing the coping appraisal pathway, traveling elsewhere or staying at home. As this research focuses primarily on risk perception, application of the PMT in this context puts emphasis on the threat appraising pathway, rather than on the protection motivation as a whole. Severity and vulnerability thus could be operationalized regarding a specific travel risk, as exempli gratia a potential threat by terrorism. The perceived reward on the other hand could depict the expectation of having a recreational, worthwhile vacation.

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

Based on literature findings, it is suggested that personal differences in novelty seeking determine one's risk perception. Furthermore, it is said that women are more risk perceptive, and experienced tourists are less risk perceptive. By these means, the following research questions will be examined:

“To what extent do destination image, novelty seeking, language proficiency, gender, and travel experience determine the risk perception and travel purchase decision of students in leisure travel?”

To answer this question, 6 hypotheses are formulated.

Support for novelty seeking to correlate with health risk and political as well as terrorism risk comes from Lepp and Gibson (2003), and Han (2005). Therefore the first hypothesis is:

1. People high in novelty seeking are less health and political violence risk perceptive.

Higher language proficiency has been found to indicate lower risk perception (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; Han, 2005). The second hypothesis is therefore claims:

2. Higher language proficiency correlates with lower overall risk perception.

As Lepp and Gibson (2003) reported, females are more concerned with health risks than men. This lead to the following third hypothesis:

3. Males are less health risk perceptive than females.

Williams and Baláž (2013) found people with higher travel experience to be less responsive to tourism hazards, therefore:

4. Travel experience correlates with lower overall risk perception.

As Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2017), as well as Chew & Jahari (2014) indicate, risk perception seems to be lower in a destination with favorable image:

5. Overall risk perception is lower in a favorable environment.

Finally, to examine whether risk perception is in correspondence with actual travel behavior, the sixth hypothesis has been formulated as the following:

6. People who perceive more overall risk are less likely to decide to travel.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

As the first of the defining criteria for participation was being a student, the first requirement for recruitment as a participant was being currently matriculated at either a University or a University of Applied Sciences. The second criterion was being in the age of 18 or older because of ethical concerns regarding adulthood of the participant. The third and final criterion was to be capable of a sufficient level of English because the whole questionnaire was in the English language. However, a sufficient level was not further defined or tested.

Respondents were approached via convenience sampling. The survey was available for participation in May 2018. Besides the possibility of participating via the online platform SONA, which was exclusively for students of the University of Twente, there has also been spread an anonymous link which led the participants to the online questionnaire. The spread of this link succeeded mostly via the researchers and his acquaintances' social media, where it was not further monitored.

Of all participants that could be recruited, 90 people eventually completed the questionnaire. Hereby, 49 (54.4%) were female, and 41 (45.6%) were male. Further, the respondents were between 18 and 31 years old, with a mean of 21.99, thus almost 22 years. Regarding nationality, 72 respondents indicated to be German (80%) and 12 to be Dutch (13.3%), while 6 respondents (6.7%) mentioned to be of other nationality. Furthermore, the majority reported that they did not move to another country for their current study (N=55, 61.1%) while 17 (18.9%) did, but didn't learn the local language, opposing to 18 respondents (20%), who did move to another country and also learned the local language.

Finally, 67 respondents (74.4%) reported to be University students, while 23 respondents (25.6%) mentioned to be either a student on HBO or Fachhochschule. Again 67 respondents (74.4%) said to be undergraduate students, opposing to 23 respondents (25.6%) indicating to be graduate students at the point of measurement.

### **Design**

The study was designed as a true experiment with only a posttest measurement. The independent variables were besides the demographic and psychographic variables gender, travel experience, and the degree of novelty seeking, the two conditions to which respondents were assigned. The control condition was a relatively risk-free environment. Therefore, it was characterized with a favorable destination image (Appendix D). Opposing to this, there was the experimental condition: A high-risk environment designed with an unfavorable

destination image (Appendix E). The dependent variables were overall risk perception and travel purchase decision.

Assignment to one of the two conditions succeeded via the randomizer function of the online survey tool of the Qualtrics software. A roughly equal distribution was observable over the two conditions in a ratio of 48 respondents in the favorable destination image condition and 42 respondents in the unfavorable destination image condition.

### **Procedure**

When a participant clicked on the link that led to the questionnaire (either via the spread on social media or the SONA platform), he was shown an informed consent (Appendix A), right at the beginning of the survey. Only when he accepted this consent, he was allowed to proceed. In the following, demographic variables were collected. Eventually, a degree of novelty seeking was estimated by the scores the participant reached on the novelty seeking scale developed by Lee and Crompton (1992).

After completion, the respondent was exposed the text frame of either the favorable or the unfavorable destination image condition. Then, the respondent was asked to indicate his perception of risk on each dimension, where the questionnaire of Han (2005) was applied for. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate their likeliness to travel to the shown destination if they had the opportunity. Data collection, however, only succeeded when the respondent confirmed this in the very last window. At this point, also a debriefing took place with the provision of the purpose of the research, as well as the opportunity to take a look at both conditions. The whole questionnaire can be found in the Appendix (A-H).

### **Instruments**

For this study, a questionnaire was created and conducted with help the software Qualtrics. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part was the report of the necessary demographic and psychological variables of the respondents. The second part consisted of the novelty Seeking questionnaire (Appendix C) developed by Lee and Crompton (1992) which has been used in various researches before. Novelty seeking has been defined to consist of the following four dimensions: thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation, and surprise (Lee & Crompton, 1998). In this questionnaire, 21 statements on novelty seeking in the context of leisure travel were presented in a 5-point-likert-scale, on which the respondent had to indicate his approval. The questionnaire addressed the four earlier mentioned dimensions. It measured

thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation, and surprise as underlying constructs. A reliability analysis indicated internal consistency to be high for the whole scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ), as well as in each subscale (Thrill:  $\alpha = .84$ , change from routine:  $\alpha = .75$ , boredom alleviation:  $\alpha = .77$ , surprise:  $\alpha = .79$ ). The third part was meant to measure risk perception on the seven defined dimensions communication risk, value risk, health risk, psychological risk, social risk, political violence risk, and equipment risk. The risk perception questionnaire (Appendix F) was highly leant on the risk perception questionnaire developed by Han (2005). Only few items were adjusted to fit the context of this research. In this questionnaire, 3 statements were shown per dimension. A reliability analysis was conducted and revealed high reliability for the whole scale ( $\alpha = .91$ ), as well as moderate to high reliability for each subscale (Value risk:  $\alpha = 0.82$ , health risk:  $\alpha = .88$ , political violence risk:  $\alpha = .63$ , equipment risk:  $\alpha = .73$ , communication risk:  $\alpha = .76$ , social risk:  $\alpha = .73$ , psychological risk:  $\alpha = .92$ ).

Besides the questionnaire, the two text frames as the conditions have been developed. The first text frame was the control condition whereas the second text frame was the experimental condition. The two text frames were meant to manipulate destination image by including passages about all earlier approached risk dimensions. Apart from a short introducing paragraph that played no role for the analysis, the text frames described a fictional dimension with emphasis on various potential tourism risks. The text frames were constructed solely based on either how the literature defined, respectively on how the risk perception questionnaire developed by Han (2005) covered those risks. To give an example, the few sentences about equipment risk contained information about telecommunication facilities, or the (un-)availability of equipment (and its resupply), as Tsaur et. al. (1997) emphasized. Only four of the seven dimensions were manipulated: political violence risk, equipment risk, language risk, and health risk.

To make a clear distinction between these dimensions, the sentences regarding the manipulated risks covered the same topics, but indicated the level of these risks as different as possible. As an example concerning communication risk, the favorable destination image condition contained the following sentence: "The national language is English. Thus locals, as well as all authorities speak and use that language to communicate." In the unfavorable destination image condition however, the respective passage was: "The national language is a language you do not speak. Although there are some people, staff in public areas rarely speaks English, the same counts for the Police and other officials." The remaining three dimensions value risk, social risk, and psychological risk where exactly the same over both text frames and therefore, the sentences regarding these dimension were the same, too.

Finally, one last question was asked concerning the travel purchase decision. This item was also scaled ordinally on a 5-point Likert-scale (Appendix G).

### **Analysis**

Before the analyses could be conducted, reversed items in the questionnaire had to be rescaled. Nevertheless, this only applied for the first of the three items measuring political violence risk. After this, means had been calculated for the novelty seeking scale, its subscales, as well as for the risk perception scale, and its' subscales.

In total, 6 hypotheses had to be tested. The first hypothesis was meant to measure two mean scores, therefore, a one-sided Pearson correlation has been chosen. The second hypothesis was intended to measure the existence of a correlation between the mean of overall risk perception and language proficiency. Since the latter construct was measured ordinal, a one-sided Spearman correlation analysis was applied. For the very same reasons, hypothesis 4 and 6 were also measured via a one-sided Spearman. In these cases, travel experience, respectively travel purchase decision were as well ordinal scaled.

The third and the fifth hypotheses were each tested by the means of a one-sided between groups t-test. To conduct the t-tests, the residuals of overall risk perception predicted by gender and condition have been computed. The residual plot has shown that the residuals were distributed normally. This, again, allowed the suggestion of a normal distribution and thus the application of parametric tests as the t-test.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Value risk	90	1.00	4.33	2.34	.97
Health risk	90	1.00	5.00	2.88	1.17
Political violence risk	90	1.00	5.00	3.24	1.00
Equipment risk	90	1.00	4.67	2.71	.92
Communication risk	90	1.00	5.00	3.22	.97
Social risk	90	1.00	4.33	2.04	.88
Psychological risk	90	1.00	5.00	2.42	1.15
Overall risk	90	1.14	4.10	2.69	.73
Travel Purchase Decision	90	1.00	5.00	2.61	1.20

The scores of the dependent variables as the various risk perception dimensions, the overall risk perception, and the travel purchase decision are illustrated in Table 1. As can be seen, the mean scores varied for some respondents from 1.00 to 5.00 in certain dimensions, saying that some respondents scored the lowest possible on some scales, while some scored the highest possible. The average score for all however was rather moderate. Nevertheless the mean drifted between 2.04 in social risk to political violence risk with 3.24. Finally, overall risk perception was assessed by calculating the average of the mean scores of each category.

### Inferential Statistics

To answer the research question, the formulated hypotheses will be examined in the following paragraphs. Regarding the research question “To what extent do destination image, novelty seeking, language proficiency, gender, and travel experience determine the risk perception and travel purchase decision of students in leisure travel?” 5 hypotheses were tested.

The first hypothesis, on whether people high in novelty seeking are less health, and political violence risk perceptive was examined with help of a correlational analysis. Findings revealed novelty seeking only to correlate significantly with political violence risk [ $r(88) = -.184, p < .05$ ]. Focusing on health risk, no correlation was found [ $r(88) = .02, p = .42$ ]. These findings only suggest retaining the second part of the hypothesis.

The second hypothesis, if language proficiency correlates with a lower overall risk perception was also tested via a correlational analysis. However, analysis revealed no significant findings [ $r_s(88) = -.14, p = .10$ ]. Therefore, the hypothesis will be discarded.

The third hypothesis was concerning gender differences in health risk perception. The analysis however revealed no significant differences between the two genders [ $t(88) = .39, p = .70$ ], suggesting that there were no differences in health risk perception. For this reason, the third hypothesis will be rejected.

The fourth hypothesis emphasized the correspondence between travel experience and overall risk perception. Statistical analysis showed that indeed higher travel experience negatively correlated with risk perception [ $r_s(88) = -.24, p = .01$ ].

To test the fifth hypothesis which focused on the risk perception in different destinations, a t-test was applied. In this case, analysis could show that respondents in the high risk environment scored significantly higher on overall risk perception than their counterparts [ $t(88) = -8.00, p < .001$ ].

Finally, the sixth hypothesis, whether people who perceive more risk are less likely to decide to travel, was tested with another correlation analysis. Indeed, analysis showed that the level of overall risk perception significantly correlated with the travel purchase decision [ $r_s(88) = .818, p < .001$ ]. The higher the level of risk perception, the less likely someone was to decide in favor of buying a ticket to the destination.

### **Additional Analyses**

Although they were initially not part of the hypotheses and are therefore theoretically of no interest in answering the research question, some other significant correlations could have been observed. The partial rejection of the first hypothesis already suggested: novelty seeking does not correlate negatively with all dimensions of risk perception. However, subscales of novelty seeking did correlate (partially strongly) with sub dimensions of risk perception. To give an example, scores on the novelty seeking subscale surprise correlated negatively with the perceptions of political violence risk [ $r(88) = -.26, p = .01$ ] and psychological risk [ $r(88) = -.20, p = .03$ ]. Similar observations could be made regarding the novelty seeking subscale change from routine and value risk perception [ $r(88) = -.30, p < .001$ ], social risk perception [ $r(88) = -.19, p = .04$ ], and psychological risk perception [ $r(88) = -.26, p = .01$ ].

Other observations were possible regarding some respondents' attributes. In this study, estimated language proficiency correlated positively with abroad experience [ $r_s(88) = -.26, p = .01$ ]. Moreover, the novelty seeking subscale change from routine correlated strongly with

the travel purchase decision [ $r_s(88) = -.34, p < .001$ ], indicating that this might have been the most important factor motivating respondents to travel. Both, the Pearson and the Spearman correlational tables can be found in Appendix I.

## **Discussion**

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this research was to emphasize students' determinants of risk perception in the context of leisure travel. Literature suggested novelty seeking (Han, 2005; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2017), gender (Enloe, 1989; Hawes, 1988; Wearing & Wearing, 1996), language proficiency (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; Han, 2005) destination image (Chew & Jahari, 2014), and previous travel experience (Williams & Baláž, 2013) to have an influence on risk perception. Furthermore, it was examined whether risk perception had an influence on the travel purchase decision.

Results showed that people higher in novelty seeking perceived less political instability risk, furthermore, higher travel experience correlated with lower overall risk perception. Additionally, risk perception was indeed lower in a more peaceful environment, and higher risk perception seemed to be equal to the degree of unwillingness to travel to the respective destination.

However, health risk perception did not seem to differ between genders. Similarly, language proficiency was not found to be associated with lower risk perception. Considering these findings, this research only partial supports earlier defined variables that determine risk perception and travel purchase decision.

### **Explanations**

Risk perception seems to be a construct where the interaction of various factors plays a greater role than the simple causality to distinct variables. Regarding novelty seeking, some for the understanding of risk perception influential correlations could be found. Although correspondence over the broader dimensions was weaker, some other bounds that appeared to be of explanatory value were observable. So could the earlier mentioned correlation between surprise and political violence risk, respectively psychological risk possibly be explained by

the suggestion that high scorers on surprise are more flexible in reaction on certain issues, as the definition of surprise by Lee and Crompton (1992) already suggests.

No significant correlation between language proficiency and risk perception was observable, neither in overall risk, nor in the communication risk subscale. Despite literature suggesting communication issues to be a factor in risk perception (Basala & Klenosky, 2001; Han, 2005), it could not be found in this research. However, methodological flaws are possibly accountable for this finding. One possibility is that the item intended to measure language proficiency was not really suited to assess the possibility of communication issues. Although respondents were asked to guess their degree to which they are capable of language processing, it could still be that they would try to prevent communication issues by other means as e.g. dictionaries. Another point: as communication risk was a variable manipulated over the conditions, only about the half (N=42) of the respondents were facing a high communication risk environment. The other respondents (N=48) probably have not indicated a high communication risk simply because there was none. The analysis, however, was concerning the whole sample, and not only the 42 respondents in the unfavorable destination condition. This error should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Nevertheless, due to the sample size, reporting correlations for only one condition would be regarding a small sample of fewer than 50 people troublesome. Because this might as well lead to unreliable results, it has not been considered in this research.

In terms of the variable gender, this study could not find significant differences regarding health risk perception. Actually, literature has been quite diverse about this construct, with some emphasizing gender to play a role (Enloe, 1989; Hawes, 1988; Wearing and Wearing, 1996), and other literature pointing out it does not (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b). However, it is possible that character traits and gender roles might be the more influential part on this than simply the gender itself. This could account for similar observations as in the degree of experience travelers are possessing.

Travel experience has been found to correlate significantly with a lower overall risk perception. Interestingly, no significant correlations for political violence risk perception, health risk perception, or equipment risk perception were found. However, significant correlations have been found for value risk, as well as social risk and psychological risk perception (Appendix I). It might be possible that experienced travelers still might perceive risks similar to their unexperienced counterparts, but that they value these dimensions in a different fashion. In terms of psychological risk, it is possible that this variable is a demonstration of the interconnectedness to other risk dimensions. The items for these

constructs contained statements which addressed experienced worry or well-being (Appendix F) when thinking about vacationing in the destination. Experienced travelers might perceive similar to unexperienced travelers a certain danger in e.g. bad health conditions, but it might fill them with less distress, resulting in lower psychological risk perception. As Slovic and Weber (2002) emphasized, risk perception seemed to be lower when the risk was known by the exposed. When experienced travelers have made similar experiences in the past, they might feel less risk in risky situations.

The finding that people perceived less risk in a favorable environment is an indication that manipulation and distribution over the conditions worked. However, because the conditions were created ad-hoc and not further tested, it is possible that the unfavorable destination image condition was exaggerated. Thus, it could have made too strong impacts on the respondents' choices. This remark on the conditions however will be discussed in the section about strengths and limitations of this study.

As a last point, the finding that a higher overall risk perception was in correspondence with a negative travel purchase decision suits the idea that risk perception indeed determines the travel purchase decision. This in turn, allows the assumption that determinants of travel risk perception are determinants of travel purchase decision as well. However, these findings speak for the population of students as a whole. There may still be exceptions for some individuals, regarding some traits that were not taken into account in this research, either not well enough or not at all. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that, similar to the earlier described concerns, an exaggerated manipulation might as well have been too influential in this regard, too. As mentioned earlier, even novelty seeking tourists only prefer novel destinations as long as they are not too risky (Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun, 2017). In the following, this will be discussed, too.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The current study did not focus on attractiveness of a destination by means of economic interests. It was rather meant to investigate risk perception in correspondence with variables of the individual traveler.

The research has some strong points. It focused on a well-defined population, namely college and university students, mostly of German and Dutch origin, which were to a great extent in their 20s. Another important consideration was the application of fictional destinations. As destination image has been described to consist of affective, as well as cognitive components (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun; 2017) this research manipulated under very controlled circumstances the cognitive component of the destination image that the

traveler, or in this case the respondent, holds. In real life scenarios and in research that addresses real existing destinations, people are already primed to destinations for various different reasons, because they most likely heard about that destination before in contexts that are outside of control for researchers. By creating fictional destinations, all respondents have the same input and the same starting point in developing their destination image.

However, there are two sides of this coin. A fictional destination could come with some restrictions. First, it asks the respondent for a certain degree filigreed imagination. People who can think more vividly of a terroristic attack might be more intimidated than those who cannot. Here is to mention that this is not necessarily applicable as a determinant which could affect risk perception in real circumstances, and therefore, it might be a source of bias. The second constraint of a fictional destination however might be even more influential. It is entirely possible that respondents thought of a real existing destination when reading the text frames, so they could relate the information to something and create a more conceptualized picture of their condition. By this, again, the respondents' destination image would experience a bias.

Besides this, there are some more limitations. The sample size of N=90 seemed to be big enough to conduct parametric tests for the purposes of answering the research question. However, a bigger sample had allowed more generalizable utterances. Furthermore, with more respondents, more analyses, e.g. regarding educational institution or preferred travel style, or correlations within one condition could have been executed. With more analyses, a better defined picture of the response patterns could have been made. In fact, as it can be seen in the Appendix, more analyses were originally planned. However, the plans were scrapped for reasons as underdevelopment of the items or exaggerating the scope of this research to a too big extent. Therefore, they remain topic for future research.

### **Suggestions for Future Research and a Final Statement**

It became apparent that risk perception in the context of leisure travel is a complicated construct, probably related to very many determinants.

The creation of fictional destinations was a new approach to this topic. A deeper and broader development might help in the future to develop models and psychological theories, tailored to risk perception in international tourism. Because in this study, the development was not tested a priori, it is entirely possible that in the unfavorable destination image condition, circumstances were so strong that a ceiling effect in risk perception did not really underline the correspondence of personal traits as novelty seeking and demographics, or characteristics as language proficiency with risk perception. For a better elaborated approach,

future research should perhaps first take a step back to explorative studies, conceptualizing more comprehensive fictional destinations. These, in turn, could be again used for researches like this.

Another point, because of constraints regarding the scope of this research, some questions of the risk perception survey have not found consideration in the analysis. Originally, the two variables of the protection motivation theory (Rogers, 1975) severity and vulnerability should as well have been analyzed. Motivation for this was the idea to what extent those two variables determined the actual risk perception, and thus to what extent this could help for a better understanding of risk perception. Besides this, tourist role, which appears as an item in the questionnaire, too, has found no regard either. It has been decided to delete this item from analysis because it probably was too ill-defined. Literature already criticized that tourists might identify with more roles simultaneously (Williams and Baláz; 2013). However, it could be interesting in the future how respondents vary in their risk perception if assignment to a tourist role was a condition of that research.

Moreover, travel motivation should find more recognition in future research. Already this study found indicators that different motivations correspond to different degrees of risk perception (E.g.: Change from routine had significant negative correlation with value risk, indicating a greater acceptance of financial and time risk for people high on this trait, Appendix I). The same could count for other variables. Maybe risk perception could be a pull factor in some destinations, rather than a travel inhibitor for some people, depending on their need for thrill. Richard and Wilson (2004) also mentioned that students seem to be mostly motivated by their desire to experience things as exploring other cultures, although they already mention that there still is a variety in these motivations when linked to travel style and destination.

To summarize, this study could partially replicate what earlier research has found as determinants in risk perception. This is an important discovery to that extent that discoveries made for the broad population could be replicated on a student sample. Additionally, this study has taken new steps with the integration of fictional destinations although there is room for improvement. All in all, despite risk perception in tourism having been a research topic for decades already, there seemingly are many things still to discover.



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# Appendix

## A: Informed Consent



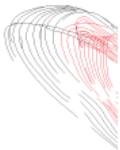
Dear Reader! You made it into my research! Thank you for that.  
The study aims risk perception of students in leisure travel. In this research you are asked to read a text about a fictional travel destination. Afterwards, I would like you to evaluate some statements about various scenarios, regarding that travel destination. Because it is your opinion that counts, there is no right or wrong! However, please be honest in your evaluations.  
Besides this, you will be asked to answer some questions about yourself. The participation offers no risks to you that go beyond risks of everyday life.

All information that will be collected in this survey is of course confidential and anonymous. You will not be asked to mention your name or any personal information that could reveal your identity. Your individual responses will only be seen and processed by the researchers involved in this project. If you don't feel good about participation anymore or want to stop for any reason, you can do so anytime by simply quitting the tab / window. Your responses will only be saved when you completed the whole questionnaire.

Participation will take about 15 minutes and is of course voluntary. Please read each question and the text you are shown carefully to make your answers valid.

After your participation, you will have the opportunity to access some more detailed information about the research.

Please keep in mind that you need to be a matriculated student and in the age of 18 or older.



Please declare your agreement with the information gained above before you can proceed.

I agree about the research and want to proceed

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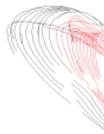


# C: Novelty Seeking Questionnaire



Please read each statement and indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement by using the scale below.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I sometimes like to do things on vacation that are a little frightening.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy doing "daring" activities while on vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes it is fun to be a little scared on vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy experiencing a sense of danger on a vacation trip.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to be on a raft in the middle of a wild river at the time of the spring flood waters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy activities that offer thrills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I seek adventure on my vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to find myself at destinations where I can explore new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to experience new and different things on my vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On vacation, I want to experience customs and cultures different from those in my own environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On vacation, I enjoy the change of environment which allows me to experience something new.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My ideal vacation involves looking at things I have not seen before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I want there to be a sense of discovery involved as part of my vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to travel to adventurous places.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a powerful urge to explore the unknown on vacation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to travel to relieve boredom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to go on vacation from time to time to avoid getting into a rut.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to travel because the same routine works bores me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I don't like to plan a vacation trip in detail because it takes away some of the unexpectedness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like vacations that are unpredictable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to take off on a trip with no pre-planned routes in my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## D: Favorable Destination Image (Condition 1)

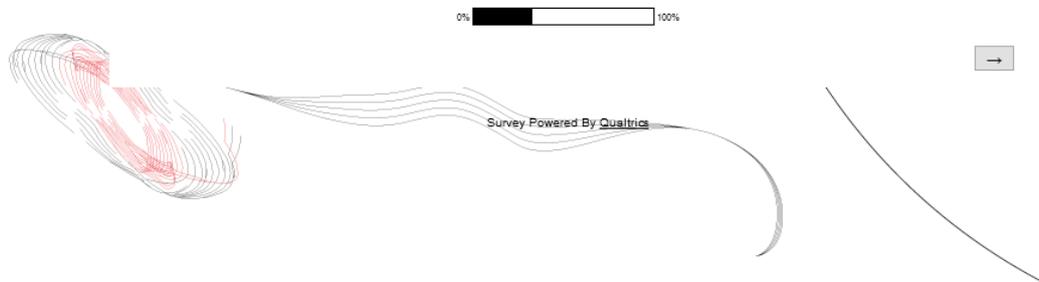


Think of a fictional country. From your knowledge, it offers everything you regard as attractive for traveling there (Think of entertainment, landscape, culture, etc.). The tourism agencies' offer is huge and varies from hike tracks and camping sites on the one hand to fancy hotels by international chains on the other.

The country is per constitution a parliamentary democracy. Although demonstrations are legal, they seldom occur. Terroristic incidents didn't appear for years and are unlikely to happen. The country's infrastructure is on a high standard. The public districts in bigger cities appear clean, and so do the suburbs and even the provinces. Public transport is reliable, mobile phone network and sewerages are in good condition, and many stores are known to offer travel equipment as tents, backpacks, hygiene products, etc.

The national language is English. Thus locals, as well as all authorities speak and use that language to communicate. The country's hospitals are known as being in good conditions. The tap water is clear and restaurants have to go through checks before legally selling products. Supermarkets, too, are regularly checked for their quality. The price for a journey to that country would be neither too expensive, nor cheap. Prices are about comparable to your home country. Getting there would require you by plane about a day.

Finally, it is to say that the country doesn't appear in the news very frequent. You don't know friends or relatives who have been there or heard a lot about that country before. You can't tell yet whether all your expectations about the cultural, natural, and recreational offers the destination makes can be satisfied, but from what you have heard, it sounds rather promising.



## E: Unfavorable Destination Image (Condition 2)

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Think of a fictional country. From your knowledge, it offers everything you regard as attractive for traveling there (Think of entertainment, landscape, culture, etc.). The tourism agencies' offer is huge and varies from hike tracks and camping sites on the one hand to fancy hotels by international chains on the other.

The country is per constitution a parliamentary democracy. However, corruption, election fraud, and rise of populist parties have a long history for already a few decades. Due to this, it comes to demonstrations which once already escalated into a riot, involving police and demonstrators of various societal origins. Acts of Terrorism have been an issue for some time now. Although the political violence appears mostly between local groups, incidents sometimes appear in touristic agglomerations, too.

The country's infrastructure is poor. The public districts in bigger cities appear clean, but the picture changes drastically in the suburbs as well as in the countryside. Public transport is dirty and not always reliable, mobile phone network and sewerages sometimes even don't exist. There are few to no known shops for travel equipment as tents, backpacks, hygiene products, etc.

The national language is a language you do not speak. Although there are some people, staff in public areas rarely speak English, the same counts for the Police and other officials. The country's hospitals are in very mixed conditions. The tap water might sometimes be drinkable, but sometimes it better should not be drunken. Restaurants and supermarkets officially get checked by authorities, however corruption and sloppy practices undermine this. The price for a journey to that country would be neither too expensive, nor cheap. Prices are about comparable to your home country. Getting there would require you by plane about a day.

Finally, it is to say that the country doesn't appear in the news very frequent. You don't know friends or relatives who have been there or heard a lot about that country before. You can't tell yet whether all your expectations about the cultural, natural, and recreational offers the destination makes can be satisfied, but from what you have heard, it sounds rather promising.



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## F: Risk Perception Questionnaire



### Value Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It would be a bad way to spend my money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather spend money on purchases at home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will be a waste of time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements about Value Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

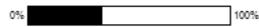
Very invulnerable    Somewhat invulnerable    Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable    Somewhat vulnerable    Very vulnerable

How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe    Somewhat non-severe    Neither non-severe nor severe    Somewhat severe    Very severe



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Health Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I may become sick from eating food or drinking water.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a possibility of contracting infectious diseases.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential health problems are a concern.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements about Health Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

Very invulnerable    Somewhat invulnerable    Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable    Somewhat vulnerable    Very vulnerable



How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe    Somewhat non-severe    Neither non-severe nor severe    Somewhat severe    Very severe





Political Instability Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would not let political instability keep me from vacationing here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will be intimidated by terrorism when vacationing here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terrorism will influence my decision to vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements over Political Violence Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

Very invulnerable    Somewhat invulnerable    Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable    Somewhat vulnerable    very vulnerable



How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe    Somewhat non-severe    Neither non-severe nor severe    Somewhat severe    Very severe



Equipment Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It may result in mechanical or equipment problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telecommunication systems (phone, fax, etc.) will be inconvenient to use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My baggage may be misplaced or delayed (by airline or hotel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements over Equipment Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

Very invulnerable    Somewhat invulnerable    Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable    Somewhat vulnerable    very vulnerable

How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe    Somewhat non-severe    Neither non-severe nor severe    Somewhat severe    Very severe



Communication Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would feel more safe when I would speak the language of people I meet or might depend on (Officials, Locals, Tour guides) during my vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have concerns about having possible communication problems during my vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will have problems in communication with others whom I meet during my vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements over Communication Risk scenarios:



How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

Very invulnerable    Somewhat invulnerable    Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable    Somewhat vulnerable    very vulnerable

How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe    Somewhat non-severe    Neither non-severe nor severe    Somewhat severe    Very severe



Social Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Having a vacation here will negatively affect others opinion of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends and relatives will disapprove of my vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be concerned what people whose opinion was of value to me, would think of me, if they considered my vacationing here a bad choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements over Social Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?



Very invulnerable      Somewhat invulnerable      Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable      Somewhat vulnerable      very vulnerable

How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe      Somewhat non-severe      Neither non-severe nor severe      Somewhat severe      Very severe





Psychological Risk

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The thought of purchasing a vacation here makes me feel uncomfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The thought of purchasing a vacation here fills me with anxiety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry about purchasing a vacation here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Regarding these three statements over Psychological Risk scenarios:

How vulnerable would you rate yourself being to this risk?

Very invulnerable     Somewhat invulnerable     Neither invulnerable nor vulnerable     Somewhat vulnerable     very vulnerable



How severe would be exposure to this risk?

Very non-severe     Somewhat non-severe     Neither non-severe nor severe     Somewhat severe     Very severe



# G: Question on Travel Purchase Decision



If I had to decide upon the risks I would face when I soon travelled to that region, ...

- I would definitely go there
- I would rather go there
- Can't decide yet
- I would rather not go there
- I would definitely not go there



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## H: Debriefing



Dear participant, thank you for your completion of this survey. You did help me a lot in this research!

This research aimed perception of travel risks. With the results, it will hopefully help to better understand psychological factors in travel behavior and choices individuals make.

In total there were two different versions of the text you were shown above. However, which text was shown to you was a matter of chance. One of the texts described a relatively 'safe' travel destination, while the other showed an 'unsafe' destination. It is expected that participants who were shown the 'unsafe' destination will score higher on the perceived risks, namely on "Political Violence Risk", "Equipment Risk", "Communication Risk", and "Health Risk", as these dimensions differed from each other in the fictional travel destinations.

Furthermore, you did answer some questions about "novelty seeking" in the context of traveling. It is expected that participants scoring higher in that questionnaire will be less risk sensitive than others.

The two conditions:

"Safe" condition:

Think of a fictional country. From your knowledge, it offers everything you regard as attractive for traveling there (Think of entertainment, landscape, culture, etc.). The tourism agencies' offer is huge and varies from hike tracks and camping sites on the one hand to fancy hotels by international chains on the other.

The country is per constitution a parliamentary democracy. Although demonstrations are legal, they seldom occur. Terroristic incidents didn't appear for years and are unlikely to happen. The country's infrastructure is on a high standard. The public districts in bigger cities appear clean, and so do the suburbs and even the provinces. Public transport is reliable, mobile phone network and sewerages are in good condition, and many stores are known to offer travel equipment as tents, backpacks, hygiene products, etc.

The national language is English. Thus locals, as well as all authorities speak and use that language to communicate. The country's hospitals are known as being in good conditions. The tap water is clear and restaurants have to go through checks before legally selling products. Supermarkets, too, are regularly checked for their quality. The price for a journey to that country would be neither too expensive, nor cheap. Prices are about comparable to your home country. Getting there would require you by plane about a day.

Finally, it is to say that the country doesn't appear in the news very frequently. You don't know friends or relatives who have been there or heard a lot about that country before. You can't tell yet whether all your expectations about the cultural, natural, and recreational offers the destination makes can be satisfied, but from what you have heard, it sounds rather promising.



"Unsafe" condition:

Think of a fictional country. From your knowledge, it offers everything you regard as attractive for traveling there (Think of entertainment, landscape, culture, etc.). The tourism agencies' offer is huge and varies from hike tracks and camping sites on the one hand to fancy hotels by international chains on the other.

The country is per constitution a parliamentary democracy. However, corruption, election fraud, and rise of populist parties have a long history for already a few decades. Due to this, it comes to demonstrations which once already escalated into a riot, involving police and demonstrators of various societal origins. Acts of Terrorism have been an issue for some time now. Although the political violence appears mostly between local groups, incidents sometimes appear in touristic agglomerations, too.

The country's infrastructure is poor. The public districts in bigger cities appear clean, but the picture changes drastically in the suburbs as well as in the countryside. Public transport is dirty and not always reliable, mobile phone network and sewerages sometimes even don't exist. There are few to no known shops for travel equipment as tents, backpacks, hygiene products, etc.

The national language is a language you do not speak. Although there are some people, staff in public areas rarely speak English, the same counts for the Police and other officials. The country's hospitals are in very mixed conditions. The tap water might sometimes be drinkable, but sometimes it better should not be drunken. Restaurants and Supermarkets officially get checked by authorities, however corruption and sloppy practices undermine this. The price for a journey to that country would be neither too expensive, nor cheap. Prices are about comparable to your home country. Getting there would require you by plane about a day.

Finally, it is to say that the country doesn't appear in the news very frequent. You don't know friends or relatives who have been there or heard a lot about that country before. You can't tell yet whether all your expectations about the cultural, natural, and recreational offers the destination makes can be satisfied, but from what you have heard, it sounds rather promising.



If you still have any questions, suggestions, or complaints about this research, you are welcome to contact me via my e-mail:

[j.t.pohlmann@student.utwente.nl](mailto:j.t.pohlmann@student.utwente.nl)

By clicking on the arrow below, this survey will end and your responses will be recorded.

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# I: Full Correlation Tables

## a. Pearson correlations

Correlations		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N = 90														
1. Overallrisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	1												
2. Noveltysee king Mean	Pearson Correlation	-,15	1											
3. Political violencerisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,62**	-,18*	1										
4. Healthrisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,84**	,02	,43**	1									
5. Thrill Mean	Pearson Correlation	-,10	,70**	-,23*	,02	1								
6. ChangeFro mRoutine Mean	Pearson Correlation	-,20*	,66**	-,07	-,03	,45**	1							
7. BoredomAl leviation Mean	Pearson Correlation	,03	,71**	,04	,14	,27**	,34**	1						
8. Surprise Mean	Pearson Correlation	-,20*	,70**	-,26**	-,10	,30**	,30**	,22*	1					
9. Valuerisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,61**	-,25**	,26**	,34**	-,11	-,30**	-,17	-,16	1				
10. Equipment risk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,75**	-,04	,43**	,68**	,02	-,04	,05	-,13	,25**	1			
11. Communica tionrisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,72**	-,09	,36**	,63**	-,12	-,11	,01	-,06	,29**	,51**	1		
12. Socialrisk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,65**	-,02	,23*	,48**	,08	-,19*	,09	-,09	,39**	,40**	,27**	1	
13. Psychologic al Risk Mean	Pearson Correlation	,83**	-,20*	,41**	,60**	-,16	-,26**	,00	-,20*	,52**	,51**	,52**	,56**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

## b. Spearman correlations

Correlations		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
N=90		1,000																	
Spearman's rho		1,000																	
1. Language proficiency																			
2. Travel experience		,26**	1,000																
3. Overall risk Mean		-,14	-,24*	1,000															
4. Noveltyseeking Mean		,19*	,46**	1,000															
5. Political violence risk		-,09	-,04	1,000															
6. Health risk Mean		-,05	-,08	1,000															
7. Travel purchase decision		-,19*	-,23*	,82**	-,24*	,47**	,61**	1,000											
8. Age		-,12	,01	-,08	,07	-,19*	-,13	-,09	1,000										
9. Thrill		,27**	,33**					-,16	,09	1,000									
10. Change from Routine Mean		,36**	,46**					-,34**	,09	1,000									
11. Boredom/All evit		,04	,23*					-,12	,00	1,000									
12. Surprise Mean		-,02	,34**					-,13	,02	1,000									
13. Value at risk Mean		-,29**	-,42**					,63**	,17	1,000									
14. Equipment risk Mean		,05	,05					,50**	-,12	1,000									
15. Communication risk Mean		-,13	-,01					,57**	-,08	1,000									
16. Social risk Mean		-,10	-,32**					,55**	-,06	1,000									
17. Psychological Risk Mean		-,04	-,28**					,77**	-,04	1,000									

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).