

## Decision Making : A Tourism Perspective in North Karnataka

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### Abstract

This paper is all about tourist's experiences and decision making, which are central to understand of tourist behavior. Tourists usually travel to places with lots of pre discussion which finally leads to the choice of destination, which is definitely a complicated decision-making process. The safety concerns and security may influence individuals' destination choice. People gather information from various sources and different forms of media, from friends and relatives, with a perception of a particular destination. This is an attempt of quantitative study conducted in North Karnataka with respondents who participated in this research. The study found that most holiday makers perceive safety from natural calamities or terrorist activities, probable diseases etc. The results of the study suggest that safety, peace and stability are major concerns for any traveler with respect to choice of destination.

**Key Words:** North Karnataka Tourism, Tourism perceptions, Tourism behaviour, tourism risk, travel decision making

### INTRODUCTION

Tours & traveling is the major part of the life of any human race since ages, and to the Nation via creating GDP, revenues, jobs, grating nations culture. There are many ancillary industries that show collision in this travel relations with the growth of the tourism industry; the hotels & lodging industry, food and beverage industry, travel agencies, tour operators and which are dealing with real estate, finance and insurance. (Goeldner, Ritchie, and McIntosh, 2006). The developments in technology and transport infrastructure such as bullet trains, super highways, jumbo jets, low cost airlines and other more accessible transport systems have made many types of tourism more affordable. Tourism contributes in many ways to the life of human population, such as generating revenues, jobs, supporting culture and entertainment. Although tourism industry has become fastest growing industry, it also has some obstacles due to the world crime activities such as terrorism and war, the spreading of the epidemic diseases, world natural disasters and recession crisis in the world's economy. These obstacles are giving big impact for the tourism growth and make it one significant term which is travel risks (Murthy, 2008).

The traveler's behavior in the decision making towards destination decided will always tie up with the travel risks (Henderson, 2007). The global tourism industry due to various disasters like natural or man-made disaster will lead to cancellation of air/rail tickets and hotel bookings leading to slowdown in the hotel and tourism industry (Gar g, 2010). This leads to temporary unemployed; countries get deprived of foreign exchange; and tour operators, airlines, taxi owners and all those dependent on tourism to earn livelihood suffer serious financial crises (Garg, 2010; Oluwole & Olufemi, 2011). However, few tourists will consider these implications in determining their choice of destination (Oluwole & Olufemi, 2011). Because of the inherent characteristics, the tourism industry is particularly vulnerable to crisis not confined to any geographical region, ranging from natural disasters to epidemics, and from mismanagement to security concerns. Travel research provides ample evidence for the fact that the tourism experience is associated with risk (Bentley et al. 2001). Tourists are

generally both more likely to take certain risks while travelling, and more susceptible to hazard and uncertainty in an unfamiliar environment (Amara, 2012). According to Sonmez and Graefe (1998), 77% of tourists only choose safe locations to travel. In comparison with backpackers, tourists traveling with tour group are safer and secured during most of the time. Package tour lessens the risks of tourists accidentally getting into a dangerous place (Chiu, 2010). Risk is an inherent component of travelers' product and destination choice. Individuals have different perceptions of possible destination choices, and tend to be risk-averse or risk-taking to different degrees (Amara, 2012). Destinations differ in many respects; their location, historical experience, to political instability, ethnic conflicts and crime. Given these differences, the analysis of destination risk and its components is of substantial interest (Amara, 2012). Tourists might have bad impressions to a tourism destination or its near areas where there are reports by media or tourism alert by government about local tourism crimes.

### Research Objective

This study is an attempt to explore and find the effect of risk and calculated risk perception on traveler decision making (TDM) on their choice of destination.

1. To understand the relationship of tourist risk perception and their decision making process.
2. To examine whether risk perception have an influence on tourist's decision making.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Awareness of travel risk

Awareness of travel risk refers to tourists' concern, attention and reaction to safety. According to Zheng (2003), the main reason to endanger travel security is the weakness of travel risk awareness. The concern for travel security relates to the demographic characteristics as well. If a tourism destination is considered unsecured, the female and the elderly tourists tend to cancel travel plans while the younger tourists tend to keep their planed trips. Tourists with high incomes or those traveling with families prefer to cancel travel plans (Zheng & Zhang, 2002). There are tourists who deliberately seek thrill and perceive fear, a common expression attached to safety and security, as a positive emotion (Mura, 2010). They prefer of f-beaten routes and actively participate in adventure tourism activities (Lepp & Gibson, 2008).

#### Cultural Differences

A cultural difference is a national difference in attitude and/or behavior that is the result of group differences in stable social structures and/or longstanding values (Weber & Hsee, 1999). The differences in social structures and longstanding values may have been shaped by group differences in geography, climate, history, economics, politics, and the way of coping with such environmental differences. All cultures are known to have their own beliefs that define values for that particular culture. Education, social standing, religion, personality, belief structure, past experience, affection shown at home, and a lot of other factors will affect human behavior and culture. The events on the past certainly formed the moods and opinions of people living in that specific country.

#### Impact of Media on Travel Decision Making

The media has a very vital affiliation with tourism as it has a substantial influence on the image of prospective tourist destinations and thus destination choice (Amara, 2012). Today people live in the information age, media tools such as internet, newspaper, television, radio, magazines and many more influence the way of living (Paletz,

Owen, & Cook, 2011). Social media influence several components of consumer behavior such as awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, but also purchase behavior and post-purchase communications and evaluation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Today people live in the information age, media tools such as internet, blogs, newspaper, television, radio, magazines and many more influence the way of living. Mass media plays crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion, connecting the world to individuals and reproducing the self-image of society (Spencer, et al., 2012). Continuous media coverage of political rebellion, military coups, strikes, protestation or regional wars can deter tourists from choosing to travel to specific destinations or even entire regions (Amara, 2012). The general public relies to a vast degree on media accounts for an understanding of terrorists’ motives, the implication of aggressive actions, and the essential details of any critical situation the destination may be facing, which as a result may affect tourists’ attitudes towards holiday destinations (Amara, 2012).

The influence of media is responsible for structuring people’s daily routine lives and thoughts (Garg, 2013) The problem is if media receives inaccurate information, then the public opinion supports a wrong cause (Garg, 2013). Media has an effect on the risk perception shown when the negative impact of dramatic news (particular events) released by the media sources (Chan & Chan , 2012; Saunders & Goddard, 2002; Bartlett, 2005). If the dramatic part is edited out, people’s recall of the news becomes more accurate and probably a higher dramatic news story could have stronger effects on risk perceptions. The stronger is the message of one particular destination’s image security problems released by the media, the stronger risk perception of the tourist generated and also can be result in the changes of the attitude (Garg, 2013).

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

A structured questionnaire was distributed and collected 174 respondents who were the tourists. The questionnaire has five sections, consisted of demographical information, about cultural differences and media influence questions, section with questions related to their risk perception and finally questions related to tourists’ decision making process. Likert scale was used for the responses with 5 point grade. The scale consisted of the following statements: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral/Undecided, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree. The data analysis tools used were SPSS, used for correlation analysis, regression analysis and descriptive analysis.

**Research Hypothesis**

- H1: Social and Cultural factors have a positive influence on tourist perception of risk.
- H2: Media has a positive influence on the risk perception of the tourists.
- H3: Tourists’ Perception of Risk has a positive influence on their final decision while deciding on the choice of destination.

**DATA & DISCUSSION**

The table 1 below elicit that the sample size being 174, with male respondents were 52.87% while 47.13% were female. Majority of the respondents were single (61.3%). 34.48% of respondents were of the age group 26 to 35, 31.61% are in the age group 18 to 25 while above 35 age are 23.56%.

The 34.48% are graduates, 35% masters or doctorate holders followed by 30% are diploma holders with respect to different streams. It is observed that the respondents were professionals (35.46%) and students (31.61%). The annual income of the respondents less than 3 lacs (50.57%) , 3 to 7 lacs (27%) and 8-12 lakhs (16%). According to the travel response, most of the respondents go for vacations once

(34.5%) or twice (32.1%) in a year and for most of the respondents they preferred to stay in a hotel. Majority of the participants of the survey preferred to go for vacations with their family (52.3%).

Table 01:

	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	92	52.87
Female	82	47.13
Total	174	100
<b>Education Level</b>		
Diploma	53	30.46
Degree	60	34.48
Masters	52	29.89
Doctorate	9	5.17
Total	174	100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Professional	62	35.63
Self-employed	14	8.05
Business	24	13.79
Managerial	19	10.92
Student	55	31.61
Total	174	100
<b>No. of Tours per year</b>		
Once	60	34.48
Twice	6	32.18
Thrice	25	14.37
More than Thrice	33	18.97
Total	174	100
<b>Hotel Preference</b>		
Hotel/Motel	71	40.8
Guest House	34	19.54
INN's	32	18.39
Resorts	37	21.26
Total	174	100

	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	107	61.3
Married	67	38.7
Total	174	100
<b>Age</b>		
Below 18	18	10.34
18 – 25	55	31.61
26 – 35	60	34.48
Above 35	41	23.56
Total	174	100
<b>Annual Income (Rs.)</b>		
Less than 3,00,000	88	50.57
3,00,001 - 7,00,000	47	27.01
8,00,001 - 12,00,000	28	16.09
Above 12,00,000	11	6.32
Total	174	100
<b>Travelling Partner</b>		
Alone	16	9.2
Colleagues	12	6.9
Family	91	52.3
Friends	55	31.61
Total	174	100

**Regression Analysis**

Table.2a shows that the regression analysis was used having ‘Risk Perception’ as the dependent variable and ‘Culture Differences and Media Influence’ as the independent variables while the Table 2b displays ‘Tourist Decision Making’ as the dependent variable and ‘Risk Perception’ as the independent variable.

From table 2a it is evident that there is a negative correlation with R2 of 0.028, F value of 2.334 and p value of 0.165 for culture differences and p value of 0.195 for media influence at the significance level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . It was found that ‘Culture Differences ( $\beta=0.110$ )’ and ‘Media Influence ( $\beta=-0.102$ )’ exerts negative effect on ‘Risk Perception’ level of the respondents, thus making Hypothesis H1 and H2 to be Rejected. This shows that the two factors, culture differences and media influence, does not have any impact on the risk perception of the respondents.

**Table 2a. Regression Analysis**

**Dependent variable: Risk Perception**

Independent Variables	$\beta$	t- value	p- value	Hypothesis
Culture Differences	0.110	1.395	0.165	H1 - Rejected
Media Influence	0.102	1.302	0.195	H2 - Rejected

Notes: R2 = 0.028, F = 2.334,  $p \leq 0.05$

The table 2b indicate that R2 was 0.084 and F value at 15.159.  $\beta$  value for ‘Risk Perception’ was 0.289 and the p value was 0.000 at the significance level of  $p \leq 0.05$ , this illustrates that H3 was also accepted and thus shows that ‘Risk Perception’ significantly influences the Tourist Decision Making process while deciding on their destination of travel

**Table 2b Regression Analysis**

**Dependent variable: Tourist Decision Making**

Independent Variables	B	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis
Risk Perception	0.289	3.893	0.000	H3-Accepted

Note: R2 = 0.084, F = 15.159,  $p \leq 0.05$

**Correlation Analysis**

The correlation analysis was conducted between Risk Perception & Culture (Table 3a) and Media Influence and Risk Perception (Table 3b), where culture and media influence were dependent variables and risk perception was the independent variable. Further correlation analysis was also conducted between Risk Perception and Decision Making (Table 3c) and with risk perception as dependent variable and decision making as independent variable. It was found that both culture and risk perception and media influence and risk perception were related as the correlation found was 0.078 and 0.099 respectively. On the other hand, correlation between risk perception and decision making was 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.01 as shown in table 3c which demonstrates that there is a relation between Risk Perception and Decision Making and the respondents accepts that risk perception influences their decision making while choosing a travel destination whereas the respondents have rejected any relationship between culture, media influence and risk perception.

**Table 3a. Correlation Analysis**

Scales	Culture	Risk Perception
Culture	1	0.078
Risk Perception	0.078	1

**Table 3b. Correlation Analysis**

Scales	Media Influence	Risk Perception
Media Influence	1	0.099
Risk Perception	0.099	1

**Table 3c. Correlation Analysis**

Scales	Media Influence	Risk Perception
Risk Perception	1	0.000
Decision Making	0.000	1

**CONCLUSION**

Basically respondents disagree with the saying ‘culture and media plays important role in influencing people’s risk perception’ but at respondents have a feeling that risk alerts and impact the decision of choice of destination place of travel.

According to primary data, Age, gender or marital status have no significant difference towards perception of risk influences their decision making process while traveling. Safety and security are the primary conditions for normal traveling. On perception mounted by tourist a location is RISKY, it will have serious implications on Tourism GROWTH and the development at the specific destination. The importance of the travel safety and affects in tourist behavior/decision making are part of this study.

The Hotel Industry should also ensure that tourist complexities, star hotels and restaurants must upgraded and improved security systems. The apparent limitations of this study are the sample size, which was small. Another limitation was that only culture and media influence was used to estimate the respondents’ perception of risk while other factor like demographics also play crucial role to study the reception of risk.

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