Fear of Travelling After Covid-19: The Moderation Effect of Social Distancing

Anh Dao Kim[1], Phi Hung Truong[1] and Sinh Duc Hoang[1,2]
[1]Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Faculty of Management and Economics, The Czech Republic
[2]Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages – Information Technology, Vietnam

kim@utb.cz
ptruong@utb.cz
sinhhd@huflit.edu.vn

Abstract: COVID-19 has caused unparalleled public dread, which will most certainly impede tourist business recovery once the epidemic is gone. This research investigates the causes of the general public's epidemic travel anxiety, as well as how individuals impose self-protection, coping, and resilience with travel. The study blends theories such as protection motive theory, coping theory, and resilience theory to achieve the research goal. The primary data came from an online poll of 322 Southeast Asian travelers. According to the findings, the magnitude and vulnerability of the danger might induce "travel dread," which leads to protection motivation and precautionary travel behaviors during the pandemic. The findings also demonstrate that social distancing has memory consequences. In other words, individuals who willingly engaged in social separation during the pandemic are more likely to continue doing so in the post-COVID period since their long-term behavior has been influenced.

Keywords: Post covid-19, Fear of travelling, Protection motivation theory, Social distancing

1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019, referred to as COVID-19, is an illness caused by a virus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease was first identified during an outbreak of respiratory illness in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Initially, the disease was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), and later, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. The disease has had a lot of negative impacts, especially on the world's economic growth and other aspects of society. The virus has caused a global pandemic, with over 60 million cases in 191 countries worldwide and resulting in over 2 million deaths. Due to the implications and public health risks of the pandemic, many governments have imposed significant measures that citizens can use to ensure that the virus does not spread. Measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, travel bans, and quarantine were used by many governments to prevent the spread of the disease.

However, these restrictions have resulted in the reduction and slowing down of the economy. The environment and the field of tourism have experienced the most significant impact after the pandemic outbreak, mainly due to the travel bans that were implemented in most countries. For example, many flights and bookings were canceled, and many hotels and restaurants that depend on crowds had to close. Additionally, many sites of attractions were closed to avoid crowding, as the virus was noted to be most circulated in crowded areas. With the virus in mind, the travel and tourism sectors have frequently suffered great losses since the pandemic was declared an emergency. During lockdowns and the closure of some services, the sectors have been trying their best to regain their customers by implementing possible measures to control the spread of COVID-19 (Zheng et al., 2021).

In relation to the tourism sector, the total GDP of the economy and businesses drastically experienced a loss of up to $2.5 trillion. With the measures being implemented, stakeholders in the travel and tourism sectors were advised to invest more in controlling the virus by implementing measures such as ventilation and reducing crowds. Throughout this paper, we will explore how the tourism and travel sectors have adapted and continue to adapt to COVID-19. We will examine different theories, such as the protection theory, which examines consumers' views and appraisals of the pandemic's effects on the tourism, travel, and other attraction sites within a country. We will also focus on the severity of the disease and the perceived susceptibility to contracting it. After the pandemic, most travel and tourism sites are expected to increase measures to protect consumers from the virus. Success will be achieved by implementing possible measures that governments and the WHO have introduced to control the spread. The tourism sector should consider having fewer crowds and enforcing social distancing, which is the ultimate way to control the spread of COVID-19.

The pandemic has been recognized as a unifying force that brought countries together to overcome and control the disease. However, even after the reduction and control of the disease, there is still a lot of fear among people

about traveling or visiting tourism sites due to the high death rate that was reported during the pandemic. The rapid spread of the disease also contributes to tourists' and visitors' reluctance to make trips. In this research, we will explore how advanced technology has been implemented in controlling and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Citizens were educated on the various signs and symptoms related to coronavirus, and they were advised to report any such symptoms to the authorities immediately (Zenker et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Fear of the Pandemic by Tourists

To any pandemic is stated as an occurrence that is said to be widespread for an infectious disease like the described one for the COVID-19 to which had crosses borders, countries and continent boundaries. The pandemic that was identified in the year 2019 and to which brought about great effects and most of them being the negative impact towards the economy and development of the countries that were affected. In the most areas that bring the countries or the government's revenue were affected in one way or another like the marketing and sales sector. In this research paper we will focus on the most important sector in a country that tend to bring in to about 70% of the revenue and participate in wealth development for the country. During the pandemic encounter government in normal occasion usually implement some measures that are said to be mandatory like restrictions to travelling, restrictions and banning of crowded places, closure of schools quarantine and total lockdown of the country (Apaolaza et al., 2022).

Due to the virus outbreak most the countries banned the tourist services and activities in many countries in order to avoid foreign and most of it to avoid crowded places. The research has been able to identify on the fear by the people based on their reaction especially on the social media platforms as well as through observations on their reactions on physical and through responses. In this research, there are various responses that will be provided especially for the tourists based on the disaster response that will be focused on the perception for the risk on the post problems for travelling. There are some studies that have focused on the short period risks on the fear of travel for the tourists after the pandemic and however in this study, we will be focusing on the psychological effects and the fear on the travelling aspects after the pandemic (Matiza & Kruger, 2021). Lucky enough to most of the countries, came out with the solutions to which would be able to protect and control the spread of the virus where they generated of different vaccines that would be able to fight with the viruses in a human body.

However, a large number of tourists who had not been vaccinated during and after COVID- 19 tend to fear travelling because their bodies are weak and are prone to such viruses. Most of the travelers and tourists have continued to experience the anxiety that something might go wrong where they tend to believe that there might have a new strain of the virus that could appear on travelling or any time of any season. The tourists are well has the fear that their test might not be accepted on the border of foreign countries. From the data that is collected in the centers for disease control and protection, we learn that during the virus outbreak there are more infections when people travel from one country to another.

2.2 Protection Motivation

On the protection motivation concept, we will be focusing on the aspect where people are able to assess a specified threat and relatively be able to conduct more reasonable protective measures to the threat. The cognitive measures of threat control and protection will include the perspective of different people based on the perceived threat and the perceived vulnerability, perceived severity of the threat and the response of the affected victims. These concepts in the protection motivation are able to provoke the way individuals are able to identify different threats and pandemics like the COVID- 19 and how they are well prepared to response to the threat which will be on the adaptive measures of protection where this is described as the point where individuals and their respective actions are expected to protect against threat as well as implementing another behavior like the maladaptive measure to which will involve the avoidance by the people based on the engagement of the certain threat protection measures (Luo & Lam, 2020).

In such a situation, the protection motivation will refer to as the intention of an individual based on the adoption to certain behaviors based on protection to themselves as well as to others against to the pandemic where they will include the way people will be living with the pandemic where health measures such sanitization and masking up will help in controlling the spread of the virus. The other protection measure that the people will have to consider is the vaccination uptake where all individuals who are infected and those that are not infected will have to be vaccinated to increase the body immune and increasing the fight against the virus and the pandemic (Shah Alam et al., 2022).

Additionally, in ensuring that all the tourisms services are well secured and all the pandemic prone are well controlled, there are public awareness that are created through the government using the advanced technology where individuals are educated on how well they should be able to protect and control the spread of the pandemic. This will help in increasing safety and protection motivation where after the pandemic most of the tourists will have reduced anxiety of infecting the virus and can courageously be able to travel from one place to another regarding the review of the protection measures. Through the outbreak, there were measures to which individuals were encouraged to protect themselves in one way or another against the pandemic and this resulted to the hypotheses described in Figure 1.
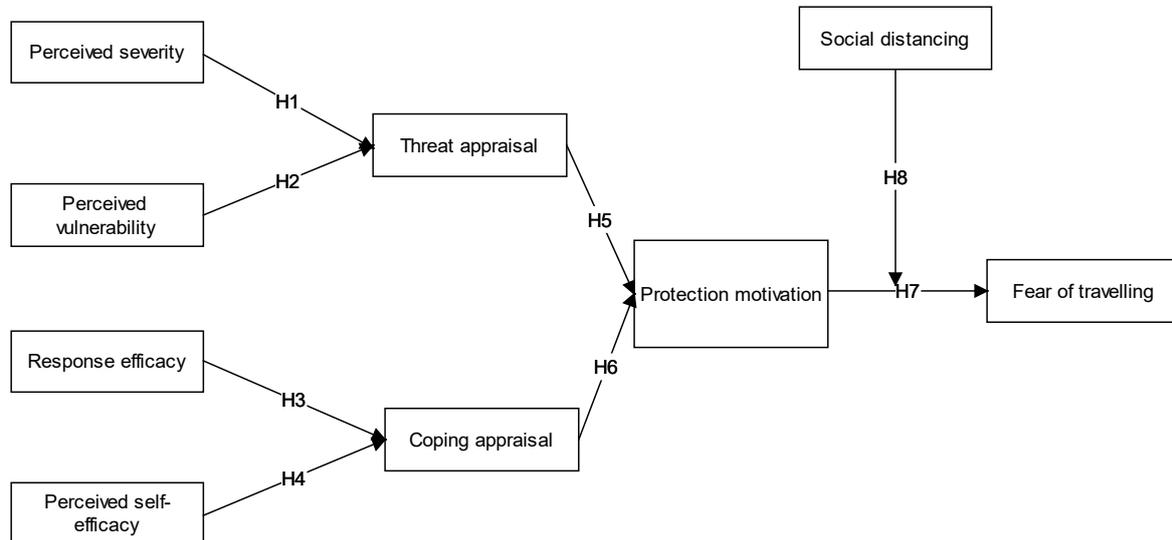
Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework. Source: Authors' Work

Perceived severity in the perspective of the pandemic describes the seriousness of the pandemic basically towards an individual. However the COVID- 19 pandemic was too way very serious to a point a lot of activities were put into hold and could not continue by any chance due to the severe effect of the pandemic. However, towards the threat appraisal the perceived severity is relatively significant in that I helps in the understanding of the motivating factors towards the prevention and control of the disease for an individual.

H1: Individuals' perceived threat severity positively affects individuals' threat appraisal

When we talk about perceived vulnerability we describe it as perceived susceptibility, perceived likelihood and the perceived probability. The hypothesis is in a position to which will be able to reflect on an individuals' beliefs about the likelihood of occurrence of a health crisis and most part being of a pandemic. In this hypothesis, an individual is able to identify on the possibilities to which the pandemic might occur in the region or in one's body. The hypothesis on the effects on the threat appraisal states that the prevention and protection against the diseases is based on the probability of occurrence. In general if an individual is able to identify how the pandemic might occur or even know how they may be infected, they are likely to prevent all the possible ways of infections through different ways.

H2: Individuals' perceived vulnerability positively affects individual's threat appraisal

In general, the response efficacy is described as an individual's beliefs as to whether the recommended action step will actually be able to prevent or control the threat in this case the pandemic. After the declaration of the pandemic as an emergency to the lobe there were measures that were as well announced that can be used to prevent the spread of the virus which included social distancing. The way an individual will believe on the measures and the response they will develop towards the measure will be of effect on the coping appraisal which is the general process of controlling and coping with the effect.

H3: Individuals' response efficacy positively affects individuals' coping appraisal

H4: Individuals perceived self-efficacy positively affects individuals' coping appraisal

Threat appraisal is described as the combination of perceived severity which is described as the degree to which there will be a harm and the perceived vulnerability which is based on the perception on the occurrence and possibility of a chance of occurrence of a threat or the pandemic regarding the situation. In order to increase

the protection motivation with the combination of the two hypothesis, the threat appraisal hypothesis will help in controlling and developing concepts that will actually control the spread and the infections in different threats like the COVID- 19 pandemic (Itani & Hollebeek, 2021).

H5: Individuals' threat appraisal positively affects individuals' protection motivation

Coping appraisal is described one factor that is on the protection motivation theory which has been in the line of describing on how individual human being is able to learn and respond on to the fear appeals and on this is the fear of travelling after COVID- 19. It is through the protection motivation theory that there are different proposes to which people are able to protect themselves against the fear after the pandemic. However for the coping appraisal, it is a combination of the response efficacy which is described as a belief in the effectiveness of the recommended behavior in preventing and controlling of a disaster and well made up of the self- efficacy to which is described as the belief that tone has and can have and can enact based on behavior or control actions recommendations.

H6: Individuals' coping appraisal positively affects individuals' protection motivation

As described earlier, the protection motivation is described as the perspective to which an individual is able to handle on their fears based on different concepts on psychological terms. The hypothesis states that the protection motivation is positively related to tourists travel intentions after there were invention of the COVID-19 vaccination. The protection motivation as well is in a position to examine the role of fear based on the threat severity vulnerability and protection motivation concepts where individuals are able to eliminate the fear they have based on traveling after COVID- 19 through which they have been able to control the spread (Kim & Yu, 2022). Similarly, social distancing has been the most applicable measure where this could be used in reducing the fear of travelling and the fear of spread of virus.

H7: Individuals' protection motivation positively affects individuals' fear of travelling

H8: Social distancing moderates the relationship between individuals' protection motivation and individuals' fear of travelling.

3. Methodology

Throughout the research the most used method is the quantitative research methodology to which was used to test the hypothesis model. Most of the data were acquired from already published journals and studies based on the responsible topic in order to ensure the validity and enough content. there were ways to which were applied in order to measure how people feel on travelling after the COVID- 19 pandemic and after all the restrictions were place and when the restrictions were completely lifted and one could be able to travel from one point to another, how did the travelers and tourists feel based on this aspect. There were selection of the main concepts that are in relation to measure of the feeling of travel which include; anxious, fearing and nervous where in testing individuals will select on what or how they feel.

The primary data source was as a result of the polls and online surveys that were conducted of 322 travelers from the southeastern Asian travelers and all of them had different aspects and feelings of travelling based on the fear and anxiety. Additionally, they as well had in mind the measures to which can be accomplished to regard on the coping and control of the anxiety and fear of the travelling after pandemic. The online surveys were as well distributed to other online respondents and travelers who could share their feelings through the polls and the questionnaires on the survey. In order to achieve and acquire the study applied the quota sampling approach where the first quota was calculated based on the social demographics to which will be focusing on the age, gender or ever race of the traveler who is the respondent of the survey.

4. Result

4.1 Profile of Respondents

In this part, there were different and most varying results to which different respondents had different answers and views on the study. The actual survey was at 5% deviation from the quota. We made a conclusion that the respondents were 55% males and 45% were females from the total sample of the surveys conducted within the different regions and the total polls of the survey administered. Different individuals with different ratings, reviews some of them thinking that they have no fear of travel and other think they have total anxiety as to why they should not travel due to the effects brought about by the pandemic.

The pandemic impacted both positive and negative impacts in people's lives. The study as well was able to survey not only the travelers from the southeastern Asian travelers but also the travelers from other different geographical areas within the Asian continent which include; south Asia, Eastern Asia, Northern Asia, southwest, northwest and the middle for the accurate data collection. The respondents were mostly base on the southeastern Asian travelers who initially had more than 1000 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 infections and we encountered like 52% responses.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The results in Figure 2 showed that a people who were surveyed and responded to our survey were inclined to feel frightened (*M=3.0, SD=1.2),* nervous (*M=3.2, SD= 1.13)* and anxious (*M=2.8, SD= 1.17)* when they travel across to various countries after the COVID- 19 pandemic. The ANOVA results found that people were nervous in travelling after the pandemic and this differed across the groups into low-, average-, and high- COVID- 19 infected areas ($F=5.0$ $p<0.05$). It was however noted that there were no large or significant difference between groups based on the anxious and frightened feeling. People that tend to come from the most infected areas is said that the intensity of their nervous emotion is at low compared to those respondents that come from an average infected areas (M=2.9 vs. 3.0, $p<0.05$). For the low infected groups the nervous of the respondents (M=2.8) and anxious (M=2. 5) were lower while the frightened emotions (M=2.90) which was on to the most infected areas.
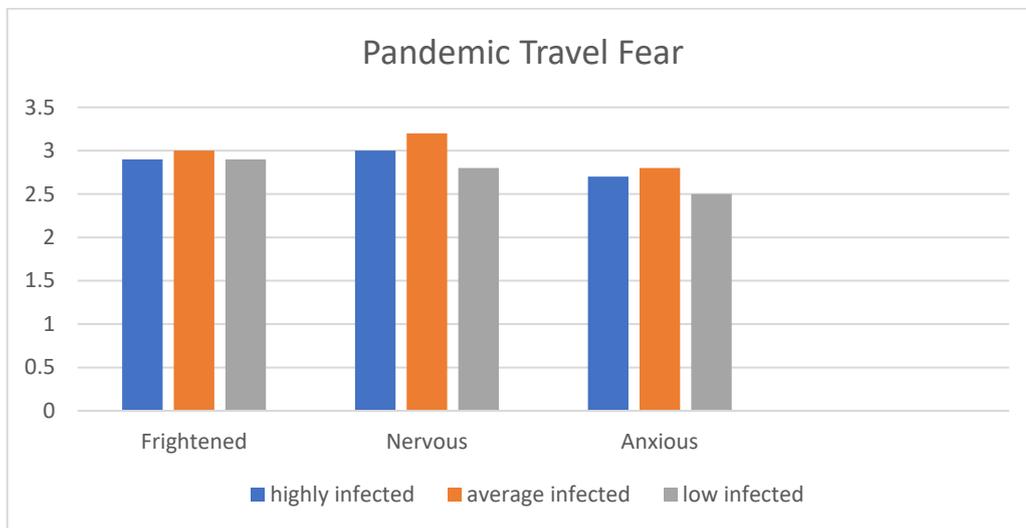

Figure 2: Pandemic Travel Fear. Source: Authors' work

By comparing the different emotions and feelings based on the high pandemic travel fear and the low pandemic travel fear there were observed of a statistical difference where there were a difference based on ($p<0.05$). From the results we could make conclusions that most people from the surveyed area tend to travel on the range between four to seven months after the governments removed the national restrictions on the control of the pandemic after the outbreak. After the outbreak, about 80% of the travelers decided on the self- drive tours other than having public tours and this could have helped in controlling further spreading of the pandemic despite of the restrictions being lifted.

4.3 Structural Model and Path Analysis

The structural model of the study was evaluated based on the collinearity, predictive relevance, effect size, coefficient of determination and the path coefficients. The value that represents the root mean was 0.07 hence suggesting that there is a good approximate of the model fit. The values in the variance inflation are basically less than 5. The structural based model assessment is basically on the hypothesis declared throughout the figure 3 and table 1, 2, 3.
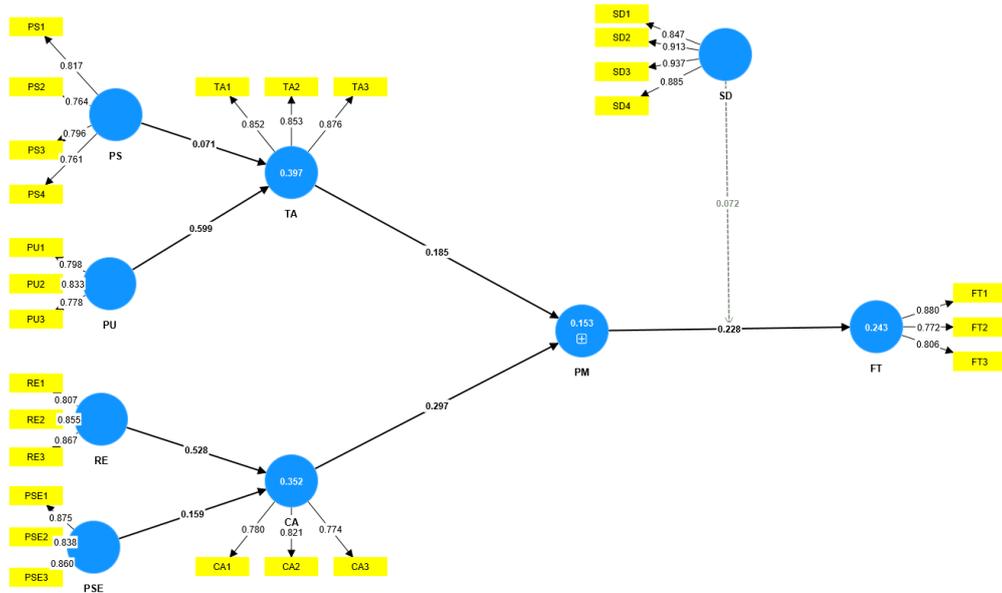
Figure 3: The Estimated Model. Source: The Authors' Work

Table 1: Path Coefficients. Source: Authors' Work

	Path coefficients
CA -> PM	0.297
PM -> FT	0.228
PS -> TA	0.071
PSE -> CA	0.159
PU -> TA	0.599
RE -> CA	0.528
SD -> FT	0.354
TA -> PM	0.185
SD x PM -> FT	0.072

Table 2: Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity. Source: Authors' Work

	Cronbach's alpha	CR(rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
CA	0.703	0.703	0.835	0.627
FT	0.757	0.770	0.861	0.674
PM	0.812	0.818	0.869	0.570
PS	0.793	0.796	0.865	0.617
PSE	0.823	0.840	0.893	0.736
PU	0.725	0.727	0.845	0.646
RE	0.799	0.815	0.881	0.712
SD	0.920	0.954	0.942	0.803
TA	0.825	0.827	0.895	0.740

Table 3: Summary of Hypothesis Testing. Source: Authors' Work

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
CA -> PM	0.297	0.300	0.040	7.342	0.000
PM -> FT	0.228	0.231	0.043	5.263	0.000
PS -> TA	0.071	0.073	0.037	7.456	0.000
PSE -> CA	0.159	0.162	0.037	4.300	0.000
PU -> TA	0.599	0.600	0.031	19.168	0.000
RE -> CA	0.528	0.529	0.029	18.410	0.000
SD -> FT	0.354	0.355	0.038	9.283	0.000
TA -> PM	0.185	0.184	0.044	4.185	0.000
SD x PM -> FT	0.072	0.070	0.042	8.124	0.000

5. Discussion

COVID-19 has created massive fear and panic among human beings since its declaration as a global pandemic. As mentioned earlier in the study, the disease is airborne and can be contracted by inhaling infected air or by touching infected surfaces. The pandemic has had negative impacts on various sectors of the economy, such as the travel and tourism industry, where a large number of tourists were afraid to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, many could not travel due to lockdowns and other restrictions that governments from different countries had imposed to control the spread of the virus.

Based on different views and aspects of the pandemic, there is a wealth of knowledge that contributes to our understanding of individuals' views on the post-pandemic effects. Through this study, effective contributions have been made to provide adequate content. The study has utilized health-related and psychological sources, which will integrate theories on protection motivation, coping, social distancing, and fear of travel after the COVID pandemic. This study explores the relationships between coping, protection motivation, fear, resilience, and travel behavior in the context of the public health crisis. Through this research, we can learn about the situation where a fear of traveling has developed and how people are working to solve and cope with this fear of travel based on their perception of self-protection, coping, and resilience towards the pandemic's fear of travel.

Initially, the study is able to introduce the concepts for the pandemic fear of travelling which is during and after the pandemic and illustrate that the pandemic can destroy the feeling on how people feel about travelling especially after the restrictions were lifted. From the journals, the authors reveal that the tourists became more anxious and reluctant to travel especially in the areas and regions that from the statistics tended to be more infected with the virus. However, not all the infected places within the regions that made the tourists develop a high level of travel fear but some of them according to the fear and threat appraisal theory conducted in the region, there was an assumption that due to the increased certainty and coping with the COVID- 19 pandemic there were reduced anxiety and fear to travel even after the pandemic.

From the study we could learn that in the areas that perceived or was infected more by the pandemic, they tend to instill fear to travelers and to the tourists who like to travel. The study as well was able to find out that people who are achieving the high travel fear are more likely to travel to a rate of 2-4 months after the removal of the restrictions that were set on to the countries due to the pandemic unlike during the pandemic where the research showed that people were more focused on travelling on the short range and short distance travels after the outbreak. The study was focusing on the impact of the pandemic during and after infections on to the travelling and the tourism sectors and how well individuals and travelers were able to cope and control effectively the effects as in fear and anxiety caused by the outbreak.

The study as well has found on the results that the people's threat severity and threat susceptibility of travelling after the pandemic has been in a position to trigger the fear of travelling to which has been able to show and apply the protection motivation theory in controlling the same. The study in this part does not focus the traveler or the tourist being in a risk or threat but focuses on the role of fear in the relation between the perceived threat

and the protection motivation. Additionally, the study shows the personal efficacy on the pandemic protection in the travelling to which in one way or another has been able to improve the protection and control of the emotions on the travelling after COVID- 19 pandemic. The study has discussed into deep details on how one is able to protect themselves against the declared pandemic where social distancing has been encouraged especially in places where there are possible crowds and also ensuring that you take into action the possible measures of protection.

The study has been able to fulfill the research gap where there has been investigations on how different people view the pandemic and how they have been coping with the threat and fear of travel and more so how the residents of the investigated areas are able to cope with the negative emotions that they arouse based on the pandemic. The research study has been focusing on regaining the trust on the tourism sector where people can travel from one place to another with no fear of travel especially after the virus. The COVID- 19 pandemic has resulted to as many negative implications within the infected regions where most of the activities were put in to hold and they could not perform various services like the travelling services (Orîndaru et al., 2021). The pandemic resulted to total lockdown, restriction, school closure and travelling restrictions to which may have impacted the sectors in a negative way where there were no revenues developed on this period of infections. Based on the dread and panic that has been caused by the COVID- 19 outbreak it is relatively important to adopt on the strategies that will be able to relief on the public's fear and improve the safety for the tourists and travelers based on the post pandemic. One of the main insights to addressing this is understanding the fear of the travelers and their emotions based on different views for the pandemic and after the virus and after the restrictions were lifted.

Acknowledgements

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