RELIGIOUS TOURISM POST-COVID-19 IN THE CONTEXT OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES: DESTINATION IMAGE, PERCEIVED VALUE, INTENTION TO REVISIT MAKKAH AND HEALTH RISK AS MODERATOR

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Abstract: This research aims at broadening the religious tourism literature. It empirically discovers the links among the destination's image, perceived value, and a revisit intention to Makkah city and the role of a health risk as a moderator in these ties post-Covid-19. PLS-SEM techniques were used to determine the causal relationship of a sample of 147 visitors who had visited Mecca for Umrah. The results demonstrate that two out of five hypotheses were supported. This research broadens the theories of planned behavior and perceived consumer risk, mainly in times of crisis (e.g. Covid19) in the setting of Muslim countries. This study also may be the first attempt to combine the role of a perceived health risk as a moderator in religious tourism studies. The present study shows that either the destination image or the perceived value is a key antecedent of the intention to revisit Makkah. Managers and marketers should continue working on the image and value of the Makkah destination to improve the travel environment. This study may be the first study to estimate the behavior of tourists (pilgrims) in post-Covid-19 to Makkah. The results of the research are also useful in the field of Islamic marketing and religious tourism.

Key words: COVID-19, destination image, perceived value, health risk, intention to revisit

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is seen as one of the world's largest industries. Even so, it is one of the most vulnerable sectors to disasters and crises (Farzanegan et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020). Tourism plays a central role in the economic systems of countries, in particular the general gross domestic product (Al-Gasawneh and Al-Adamat, 2020). It is a source of foreign exchange, an essential part of export diversification, and a key component of poverty reduction in developing countries as well (Al-Adamat et al., 2020; Al-Salaymeh and Alkhawaldeh, 2019; Goffi et al., 2019). Tourism is really an economic, social, and cultural phenomenon; it is the main driver of a countries' socio-economic growth. Indeed, the tourism industry has lately become one of the fast-growing global business activities and its first type is religious tourism, which has begun since the dawn of history (Koshim et al., 2021; Rasul et al., 2016). Religious tourism refers to tourism to religious places. Battour et al. (2017) acknowledged that religion is significantly correlated with tourism in terms of a tourist-host relationship. Jaelani (2017) also conceded that spiritual and religious motivation for tourism has increased dramatically. In recent years, it has become common and has occupied a considerable percentage of international tourism. Rasul et al. (2016) emphasized that religious tourism creates value for tourists and enhances the government revenue of local authorities. Nevertheless, recent studies report that religious tourism activities are one of the less explored types in tourism studies (Battour et al., 2017; Jaelani, 2017). In Islamic travel contexts, Makkah is still the most renowned holy city on earth. Muslim people from different regions in the world visit this destination in Saudi Arabia in order to fulfill their religious duties such as Hajj or Umrah and to make religious tourism to other places inside the kingdom.

Briefly, tourists travel to visit Makkah, undoubtedly due to its religious importance. Gannon et al. (2017) insisted that traveling to Islamic destinations such as Makkah and the behavioral intentions of visitors to revisit this city, or suggesting such trips to others, have still proved to be an attractive field of study. In this context, previous studies observed that the destination's image could play a crucial role in terms of tourists' behavioral revisit intention and recommendation of this journey to other friends (Gannon et al., 2017; Jiayu et al., 2019; Cham et al., 2021). Of equal importance, Hsiao-Ching (2018) believed that a perceived value of consumers would also generate purchase intention. Furthermore, several researchers have already discovered that the perceived value of tourists is significantly correlated with their revisit intention of the specific destination they have visited (Albayrak et al., 2016; Allameh et al., 2015; Cham et al., 2021). Conversely, researchers lately noted that the destination image (Endah et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2019) and perceived value (Chang et al., 2014; Waheed and Hassan, 2016) have not influenced the revisit intention. Past findings were interestingly diverse, inconsistent, and mixed; the relationship between them remains open to research. Hsiao-Ming et al. (2020) indicated the need to explain the image and value of destinations and the behavior of religious tourism.

Moreover, there is a new amount of research implying that the link between image and value with revisit intention is impacted by moderators (Dedeoğlu et al., 2016; Tosun et al., 2015). The moderator interacts with an independent variable

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in order to affect the strength or direction of the association between this variable and the dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986). In Hasan et al.'s (2017) view, the main factor in the decision of tourists to revisit a destination seems to be the perceptive risk to that place, such as the health risk. Health risk experiences could have a major impact on travelers' plans and potential future travel habits (Sigala, 2020). Indeed, health risk also played a moderate role in the decision-making process (Cui et al., 2016; Hasan et al., 2017; Tavitiyaman and Qu, 2013). Along with the aforementioned studies, Hasan et al. (2017) reported that despite the importance of perceived risks in tourism studies, little real attention has been paid to health risks with revisit intentions. Yu et al. (2020) reported that only a few studies explicitly investigate tourism and health-related crises. Nowadays, coronavirus (COVID-19) has been identified as a health risk global epidemic, affecting many aspects of life such as traveling and tourism (Bakar and Rosbi, 2020; Hasanat et al., 2020; Lau et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2020). Sigala (2020) reported that it will be vital to analyze the phenomenon associated with tourism, risk perceptions, and future travel plans amid fundamental changes occurring through COVID-19. Obviously, it should be noted that the health risk of COVID-19 affected religious rituals like Hajj and Umrah in Makkah (Mujallad and Khoj, 2020; Mubarak and Zin, 2020). Thus, understanding the risk and safety challenges that religious tourism will be facing is crucial (Korstanje et al., 2018). Consequently, this work was planned to clarify, extend and fill gaps in established literature by undertaking an empirical analysis of the combined position of the destination's image and perceived value to a revisit intention of Makkah city and the role of a health risk as a moderator in those ties post-Covid-19. This work aims in particular to focus on tourists who have previously made a voluntary journey to Umrah to Mecca. The crux of the matter is predicting the behavior of tourists (pilgrims) post-Covid-19 to Makkah. This would help policymakers develop plans and strategies to further improve related sectors in Makkah as well as encourage religious tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Religious tourism

Most noteworthy, religious tourism is one form of international tourism, and it has lately become popular (Akhmedenov, 2020; Akhmedenov and Idrisova, 2021; Jaelani, 2017). Religious tourism can be defined as "Visiting religious 'tourist attractions' because they are sacred" (Griffin and Raj, 2018, p4). Therefore, it is travel-focused on the spiritual or faith (Huang et al., 2020). In addition, it is a multipolar phenomenon that relates to specific tourism activities including worship, fact-checking as well as cultural heritage, and sightseeing by religious and laypersons (Raj et al., 2015). Further, it has a major commercial and scientific interest besides the religious side. It is critical that it is an economic activity in any case, and has facilitated economic growth in many countries (Antić, 2020; Moufahim and Lichrou, 2019). Rasul et al. (2016) conceded that religious tourism is extremely essential, as it is a revenue generator for a government.

In the context of religious tourism, Mecca is the most famous holy city in the world. It is located in Saudi Arabia's Hejaz region. It hosts around eight million visitors a year and contributes about twelve billion dollars to the economy (Ahmed and Memish, 2020; Gannon et al., 2017). People visit this destination to satisfy their religious obligations; these include the compulsory duty of Hajj or the voluntary Umrah (Rasul et al., 2016). Islamic tourism research is still in its infancy (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). Kim et al. (2020) highlighted the key related domains of religious tourism and declared it to be considered worthy of studies by researchers from various disciplines. The COVID-19 epidemic is a massive worldwide health crisis, which has changed people's behavior (Sigala, 2020; Van Bavel et al., 2020). According to Ahmed and Memish (2020) and Mubarak and Zin (2020), the COVID-19 health risk is one of the research aspects that affects religious tourism and visit intention to Makka in which people seek to escape spiritual mass gatherings.

2. Revisit intention

Notably, revisit intention was identified as an important research topic in the market of tourism destinations (Chien, 2017; Som et al., 2012). Revisit intention is noted as "visitors being willing to revisit the similar place, for satisfactory experiences, and suggest the place to friends to develop the loyalty" (Chien, 2017:45). Undoubtedly, revisiting a location is a key determinant of profitability (Allameh et al., 2015). Customers' priorities are changing and often emerge with diverse perspectives. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) argued that predicting and explaining human behavior like revisiting intention is crucial in consumer behavior research. Hence, the study of previous visitor re-visiting intentions is vital as it contributes to actual behavior (Huang and Hsu, 2009). In short, the willingness to visit a destination again is the intention to revisit it. Recent scholarly work has revealed that there are different and multiple motivating factors to visit or revisit intentions that lead persons toward a religious journey such as religious conviction and spiritual growth (Zhen et al., 2019), perceived value (Uslu and Karabulut, 2018) and destination image (Chew and Jahari, 2014) among other factors. Additionally, travel destination is affected by the risks (Hasan et al., 2017), especially during COVID-19 (Ahmed and Memish, 2020; Mubarak and Zin, 2020; Sigala, 2020; Van Bavel et al., 2020). This leads the marketers of destinations to understand the tourist's intention to revisit, as the cost of maintaining re-tourists is now much lower than the price of bringing new tourists (Abubakar et al., 2017).

3. Destination image

Image is a vital factor that leads to a growing relationship (Alkhawaldeh et al., 2018, 2020). Destination image is a key factor that influences the decision of tourists to select a destination (Allameh et al., 2015). The destination image is viewed as a person's mental image of the tourism location attributes. These features of a travel destination encourage tourists to visit and provide a positive travel experience (Chew and Jahari, 2014). Theoretically, the literature showed that destination image is mostly studied in cognitive and affective images. The cognitive side is individuals' belief and awareness of the locative; the affective side is people's feelings or connection to the destination (Alkhawaldeh et al., 2015, 2016; Kim and

Yoon, 2003). It is really known as a person's overall impression of a specific location (Phelps, 1986). Therefore, in this research, a destination image is defined as an overall mental image linked with the tourist's destination.

Amazingly, the impact of perceived destination image in forming destination choice is undoubtedly complicated, specifically in the area of Muslim culture and it is still under investigation (Gannon et al., 2017). However, few studies have explored the religious destination image (Cheng and Chen, 2014; Terzidou et al., 2018). In a competitive environment, Koçyiğit (2016) argued that the destination image viewed by people who came for religious tourism purposes might encourage more travelers. Liu et al. (2018) revealed the effect of an image of the destination on visitors' intent to revisit the same venue. Gannon et al. (2017) regarded the image of a destination as a driver to travel to Mecca. Given the severe and long-lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is indeed necessary to study tourism in times of crisis, such as the image of the destination and the travel intentions (Sigala, 2020). Briefly, the image of the destination leads to revisiting intentions of the destination (Allameh et al., 2015; Jiayu et al., 2019; Cham et al., 2021), with some contrary results (e.g. Endah et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2019), and ironically they have always left the relationship open. Therefore, the present work suggests the following hypothesis based on previous arguments:

H1: There is a significant relationship between destination image and revisit intention.

4. Perceived value

Perceived value is linked to sacrifices made by tourists such as time, cost, threat, and effort in order to achieve possible financial, social, and personal benefits (Al-Adamat et al., 2020). In relationship with the marketing context, it is one of the main marketing activities (Oh, 2003). Um and Yoon (2020) pointed out the role of perceived value in judging future possible intentions of tourists. Wang et al. (2017) also noted that perceived value is crucial to fostering long-term relationships with tourists. It is interesting to note that perceived value can be described as a customer's perspective of a value they have after purchasing (Zeithaml, 1988). In this work, perceived value is defined as an overall assessment of potential benefits associated with a visitor's destination. Consumer's decisions are in line with the benefits provided. In the same time, maximizing value contributes to positive behavioral outcomes. Even so, the value can change depending on aspects like the current situation and time (Şen et al., 2020). Although many studies have examined perceived customer value, a value of Muslim tourism destinations has been neglected (Eid and El-Gohary, 2015; Isa et al., 2018). The significant link between perceived value and re-visit intentions was supported (Albayrak et al., 2016; Cham et al., 2021). It was contrary to the outcome of Chang et al. (2014). In addition, Waheed and Hassan (2016) pointed out that there is no correlation between perceived value and revisit intention. Based on the above debate, the recent following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived value and revisit intention.

5. Health risk

Risk is a key aspect of the perception of customer behavior. It relates to the issues that any traveler may encounter at any phase of a trip (Perpiña et al., 2021). Health risk is the probability of getting ill while travelling, and it is a critical factor when people choose a tourist destination. Meanwhile, reducing traveler's risk perceptions can also raise traveler behavioral intent (Tavitiyaman and Qu, 2013). Safety is a key element when travelers decide to visit a place (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009). The tourism sector is rapidly affected by various events such as disease outbreaks (Çetinsöz and Ege, 2013; Yu et al., 2020). Previous studies reported that real or perceived health concerns at a specific destination have a direct bearing on the formation of negative perceptions, which in turn negatively affect the selection of destination (Tavitiyaman and Qu, 2013; Perpiña et al., 2021). In general, only few studies examined the link between health hazards and consumer intentions (e.g. Cocosila et al., 2007), in addition to perceptions of health risks of destinations, such as epidemics (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009), natural disasters (Mansfeld, 2006) and terrorism (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). However, a study of the impact of perceived health risks on future travel behavior of tourists is essential (Chew and Jahari, 2014; Hasan et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2020). Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) stressed that the health risk of travel is negatively correlated with safety and with the intention of a visit. Sönmez and Graefe (1998) discovered that the safety of places has been a major element in neglecting a trip to a destination viewed to be dangerous. In the same vein, Hasan et al. (2017) and Çetinsöz and Ege (2013) asserted that risk and safety is a major obstacles to travel decision-making.

It should be noted that several studies illustrated the decisive moderating role of risks. For example, Tuu et al., (2011) argued that perceived risk is an obstacle to the formation of loyalty with a negative moderating effect on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship. Tavitiyaman and Qu (2013) confirmed that the low perceived risk of disasters leads to a higher positive image of their destination and has more intentions than others. Perpiña et al. (2021) preserved that perceived risk should be assessed with the perceived image in order to assess their impact on travel behavior. Risk and image integration is vital since perceptions of a tourist destination include a combination of both negative and positive at the same time (Isaac and Eid, 2019). Tam (2012) also stated that, even though the perceived risk is high, customers would continue to return to the same service provider when they have a high value. This study is concerned about the risk to health after Covid19. Raj et al. (2018) highlighted the risks and safety challenges that religious tourism is facing. Health risks of Covid-19 will affect travel and booking plans and tourists will therefore need to live with this illness. Thus, future tourism research should analyze health risks on how humans act, live, and deal with severe or lifestyle-related diseases (Sigala, 2020). Health risk may play a role in moderating the link between the destination image, value, and intention to revisit. If a perceived risk is low, a destination image and value may not lead directly to the same destination being re-visited. To date, the absence of empirical studies examining the role of health risk in moderating the relationship between the image as well as the value and intent to revisit the same destination. Thus, based on past debate, the next hypotheses are proposed:
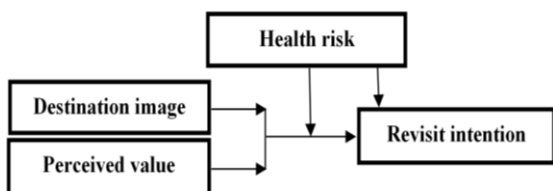
Figure 1. Proposed model

H3: There is a negative relationship between health risk and revisit intention.

H4: Health risk moderates the effect of destination image on revisit intention.

H5: Health risk moderates the effect of perceived value on revisit intention.

Based on the hypotheses mentioned previously, the theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.

METHODOLOGY

Makkah is a suitable research context as it is the most popular religious tourist destination in the world and has lately been impacted by COVID19. Due to lack of time and quarantine issues during the COVID19 crisis, this research occurred from 13 June to 19 June 2020 and targeted 147 Jordanian tourists (pilgrims) who had visited Makkah in the past. According to Hair et al. (2014), a sample of ten times the number of constructs is sufficient for factor analysis. VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007) recommended that the ratio of predictor constructs to sample size be at least 1:15. Sekaran (2003) also stated that 30% response rate is adequate for surveys. This study focused on Jordanian tourists (pilgrims) who had visited Makkah in the past in the Al-Mafraq governorate in Jordan. This study used systematic sampling via a mall intercept survey to select participants who had previously visited Makkah in Jordan's Al-Mafraq governorate. Because of the COVID19 situation, the sample was selected face to face in the mall, and an online link was delivered via Facebook and WhatsApp to all participants instead of a written questionnaire. The flowchart method is shown in Figure 2.

In order to gain the main goal of this research, a survey instrument consists of 17 items (See table1), which have been developed and modified on the basis of previous research using well-established scales, including Jalilvand et al. (2012) for destination image; Sweeney and Soutar (2001) for perceived value items; Tuu et al. (2011) for health risk items; and Huang and Hsu (2009) for revisit intention items. Moreover, data were analyzed using Smart PLS 2.0 software.
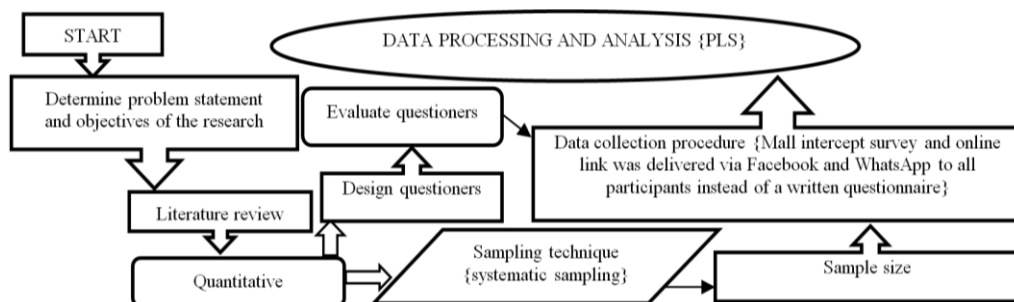

Figure 2. The flowchart method

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher utilized partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed relationship between the variables. PLS-SEM, according to Hair et al. (2019), provides solutions for small sample sizes and the absence of data distributional assumptions. Undoubtedly, the results of the convergence and discrimination tests in Table 1 and Table 2 exceeded the recommended threshold value of prior studies (e.g. Bagozzi et al., 1991; Hair et al., 2020; Hulland, 1999; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Besides, R Square (R^2) for revisit intention was (0.401); it is regarded as substantial (Cohen, 1988). Additionally, the study tested bootstrapping and the path coefficient results of causal relationships. As shown in Table 3 below, the results indicated that hypotheses 1 and 2 were endorsed, while hypothesis 3 was not accepted. As well, Table 3 shows that the moderating effect was not accepted in assumptions 4 and 5. In short, the results endorsed two out of five hypotheses.

Table 1. Convergent validity

Construct	Items	Loading	AVE	Alpha	CR
Destination image (DI)	Mecca is a secure place. Makkah has spiritual attractions. Makkah is a very exciting and interesting place to visit. Makkah has an excellent spiritual value as a religious tourist destination. Mecca is characterized by an attractive spiritual climate.	0.756 0.856 0.841 0.807 0.811	0.665	0.873	0.908
Perceived value (PV)	Visiting Makkah is something that you are enjoying. Once you visit Makkah, you feel emotionally relaxed. Visiting Makkah is a pleasure for me. Visiting Makkah would make me feel spiritually good. Visiting Makkah makes me want to visit it again.	0.852 0.833 0.786 0.831 0.824	0.681	0.883	0.914
Health risk (HR)	I would say traveling to Makkah is still a health alpha-risk due to Covid-19. I would say that Makkah is still an unsafe place to travel because of Covid-19. If I were to tell a friend about traveling to Makkah, I would describe Makkah as a risky place due to Covid-19.	0.960 0.894 0.884	0.834	0.917	0.938
Revisit intention (RI)	You intend to revisit Makkah in the next two years You plan to revisit Makkah in the next two years You desire to visit Makkah in the next two years You probably will revisit Makkah in the next two years	0.823 0.871 0.879 0.712	0.679	0.841	0.894

Note: AVE= variance accounted for, CR= Composite reliability

DISCUSSION

This study found that there is a significant relationship between the destination image and the intention to revisit Makkah. This goes in line with the predictions of past studies (e.g. Jiayu et al., 2019; Cham et al., 2021). In addition, the perceived value has a significant relationship to the intention to revisit Makkah. This finding is also consistent with previous revisions (e.g. Albayrak et al., 2016; Cham et al., 2021). This study results in confirmed aspects of a planned behavior theory, which suggests that perceptions will lead to the intention to revisit (Ajzen, 1991). The findings from this research correlate with observations of Al-Gasawneh and Al-Adamat (2020) and Al-Adamat et al. (2020), who stated that tourist perceptions (e.g. image; value) contribute to the traveler's intentions. This supports hypotheses 1 and 2 as well. Consequently, image and value are critical factors in tourist decision-making processes and drawing visitors to a destination. Tavitiyaman and Qu (2013) argued that lowering travelers' perceived risk could boost travelers' behavioral intent. Similarly, Chaudhuri (2000) reported that visitors with less perceived risk were more likely to come back or definitely recommend to relatives than high-risk visitors. As opposed to our expectations, this analysis found that there was no significant relationship between the health risk and the revisit intention. This finding is in contrast to others (e.g. Çetinsöz and Ege, 2013; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005). Moreover, in terms of moderating the role of health risk, there is no support between the image as well as value and the intention to revisit Makkah. Having remarkable outcomes, this implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the graphs of strong and weak health risk in the destination image-the intention to revisit the Makkah connection, as well as the perceived value-the intention to revisit Makkah. However, a low effect size does not indicate that the key moderating role is unimportant (Chin et al., 2003). Repeat visitors are destination-conscious visitors who are more knowledgeable about the variety of hazards at their destination than first-time visitors. Importantly, another plausible explanation is that, given the importance of the spiritual value of Makkah as a religious tourist destination in the Muslim religion, health risks do not play a significant role in the attempt of revisiting it.The Hajj and Umrah are the dreams of the Islamic people, and many of them want to die in holy places and see that as a gift (Ebrahim and Memish, 2020).

However, according to Chin et al. (2003), a small effect size does not always imply that the underlying moderating effect is insignificant. "Even a small interaction effect can be meaningful under extreme moderating conditions, if the resulting beta changes are meaningful, then it is important to take these conditions into account" (Chin et al., 2003:211).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	DI	PV	HR	RI
DI	0.815			
PV	0.710	0.825		
HR	-0.050	-0.068	0.913	
RI	0.563	0.600	-0.098	0.824

Table 3. Path coefficient of Hypotheses

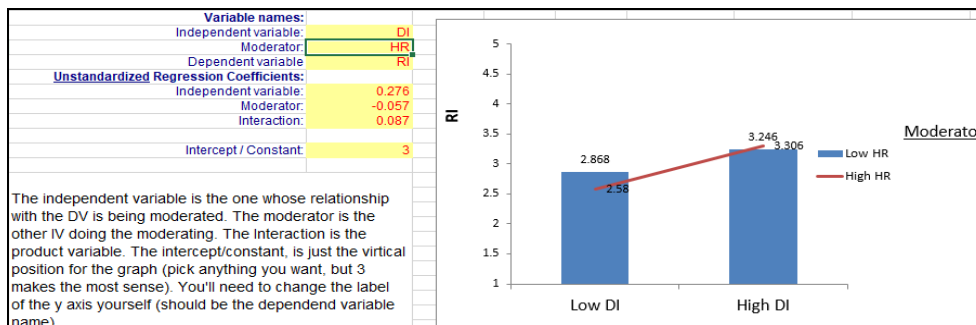| H	Relationship	Std. Beta	Stander Error	t-Value	P-value
H1	DI -> RI	0.276	0.130	2.116	0.018
H2	PV -> RI	0.400	0.131	3.061	0.001
H3	HR -> RI	-0.057	0.086	0.663	0.254
H4	DI* HR -> RI	0.087	0.587	0.148	0.441
H5	PV* HR -> RI	0.241	0.541	0.445	0.329

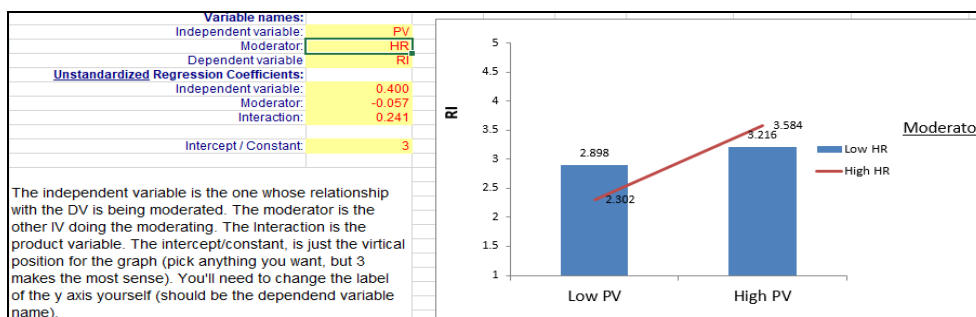Figure 3. The moderating effect of health risk (HR) on the destination image (DI) - revisit intention (RI) relationship

Figure 4. The moderating effect of health risk (HR) on perceived value (PV) - revisit intention (RI) relationship

The first potential cause of this result may be the influence of the culture of society where people do not trust the source of information presented to them on diseases (Hofstede, 2011; Van Bavel et al., 2020). Oluwaseyi et al. (2020) believed that people sometimes distrust the information presented by governments during the Covid 19 Pandemic. The second possible reason may be that repeat visitors are more informed about the set of hazards at their destination. Rittichainuwat et al. (2009) revealed that repeat visitors could differentiate between actual and imagined risks at the destination.

Implications

This study brings unique theoretical and practical contributions to religious tourism research in-depth. Theoretically, this research broadens the theories of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and perceived consumer risk theory (Taylor, 1974), mainly in times of crisis (e.g. Covid19) in the setting of Muslim countries. According to the literature review, there appears to be a knowledge gap regarding religious tourism studies in times of crisis in Muslim countries, particularly in terms of health issues.

Thus, this study may be the first attempt to combine the role of a perceived health risk as a moderator in religious tourism studies. Regarding the practical implications, the present study reveals that either the destination image or the perceived value is a crucial antecedent of the intention to revisit Makkah. Managers and marketers of the Makkah destination should continue working on the destination image and the value of the Makkah city, such as improving the efficiency of the travel environment and infrastructure that encourages people to visit the site that is definitely recommended to others. As stated by Chin et al. (2003), the moderator's small effect size is significant and should not be ignored. As a result, perceived health risks associated with potential harmful Covid19 to revisiting Islamic sites should be reduced. Thus, managers and marketers must take a different approach to increase security and safety to encourage post-Covid-19 religious tourism. The findings will help practitioners develop religious tourism strategies in times of crisis, especially when it comes to health concerns.

Limitations and Recommendations

There were some limitations on sample size, number of constructs, and sampling. Future work is expected to address these deficiencies. Therefore, this framework should be extended by adding additional variables and consideration should be given to the impact of mediation. Particular attention needs to be paid to other religious destinations using other methods with large sample size. Upcoming research is necessary in the Islamic context as well as in other religious contexts within and out of times of crisis.

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