THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR IN DETERMINING FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' TRAVEL INTENTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

After more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all worldwide industries, particularly tourism, have been affected by it. Tourism demand dropped as destinations and travel-related enterprises were constrained. This study looked at the elements influencing tourists' travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study considered additional elements that might influence travel plans, such as perceived risks, knowledge, and word of mouth. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett Tests, Principal Axis Factor, Promax Rotation and multiple regression tests were used. According to the findings based on 1,568 usable questionnaires obtained through online convenience sampling, all of the factors were found to affect tourist intention to travel during the pandemic. Despite their relatively small effect sizes, perceived behavioral control was the most important variable, followed by subjective norm, word of mouth, and attitude. The conclusions could help policymakers and industry experts in developing the optimal tourist strategy for winning public trust and generating revenue for the host destination.

Keywords: Tourism, Knowledge, Theory of Planned Behavior, COVID-19 pandemic, Word of mouth.

JEL classification: D190, D910

1. INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism are two of the most pleasant and enjoyable things for individuals. Tourism benefits host destinations in many ways including foreign exchange earnings, job opportunities, facilities development, and other economic development. Throughout this time, international tourism has been gradually expanding. International tourist visits totalled 1.5 billion in 2019, according to statistics, representing the tenth straight year of growth (UNWTO, 2020). According to the United Nations (United Nations, 2017) news, around 1.8 billion people are estimated to travel globally by 2030. Undoubtedly, tourism is one of the world's most important economic sectors; regrettably, it is also one of the most vulnerable to crises and natural disasters (Pforr and Hosie, 2008). Faulkner (2001) noted that a growing number of disasters and crises, ranging from natural to human-caused calamities, were harming tourism-related industries. Terrorist attacks, political instability, economic crisis, biosecurity issues, and natural disasters, to name a few, have all had an impact on the tourism industry in the last ten years. The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new pandemic that has caused a recent respiratory ailment outbreak in Wuhan, the capital of the Republic of China's Hubei province. After a year, as of March 28, 2021, Malaysia has recorded a total of 341,944 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,255 deaths due to the virus, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021). To curb the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) has advised a physical distancing policy. According to this guideline, while individuals are outside, they must preserve physical distance, avoid congested areas, and refrain from gathering. In certain countries, lockdown or movement restriction laws have been enacted. Only food and health-related companies and industries are allowed to operate during this critical period. As a consequence of the government's preventive measures such as lockdowns, quarantines, and border closures (Goodell, 2020), almost every business has suffered. The tourism industry, in particular, felt the negative effects. In the crisis aftermath, the tourism and hospitality sectors emerged as the greater losers (Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2020). Closed borders prevented flights from arriving while quarantine restrictions restricted travel options (Nicola et al., 2020).

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, various articles addressed this unusual occurrence, including revealing the pandemic impact on overall life on Earth, as well as the travel and tourism industry in particular (Cheam and Wan Ya'Acob, 2021; Brouder et al.,

2020,). The majority of studies (Goodell, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020) focused primarily on the existing effects and negative implications across a variety of economic sectors, including tourism. Some studies focus on the supply side, assessing the harm caused and predicting the impact of shifting and remodelling tourist offerings (Gössling et al., 2020). Because it was still relatively new and unexpected in terms of economics and infection risk, demand-side research is sparse (Zencker and Kock, 2020). Only a few studies have looked into the early signs of market recovery and willingness to renew holidays (Ivanova, Ivanov, and Ivanov, 2021; Enger et al., 2020; Collins, 2020).

When COVID- 19 hit Malaysia, the then Human Resources Ministry reported that 99,696 Malaysians had lost their jobs following implementation of the movement control order (MCO) from March till November 2020 (Tan et al., 2020). Tourism, entertainment, food and beverage industries (particularly restaurants) were all affected by this pandemic (Martin et al., 2020). Aside from the economic implications, the pandemic period has had a societal impact on nearly every element of life. In the tourism industry particularly, certain studies discovered that some tourists may have changed their opinions, tastes, and attitudes toward travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on health and the economy (Peters, Peters, and Peters, 2020). As the world's infection rate has fluctuated over time, policymakers have begun to devise policies to reintroduce travel and economic development (Fakhruddin, Blanchard, and Ragup, 2020; Collins, 2020). In this light, the goal of this study was to see how the 2019 COVID-19 outbreak affected respondents' travel intentions, as well as other variables. This study is unique in that it looks at both cognitive (knowledge) and non-cognitive (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived risk, and word of mouth) factors that influence Malaysian tourists' travel intentions.

Since the tourism industry is well-known for its vulnerability to natural disasters and pandemic, this research also added to existing knowledge by allowing for quick comprehension of a real-time pandemic, with the goal of determining whether domestic tourist travel intentions will change as a result. This is especially important considering the dire circumstances in which the global tourist and hospitality industry is working, with lives lost, businesses closing, and the public on high alert. Understanding what influences these individuals' decisions will help policymakers create welcoming and comfortable policies for tourists. This is not only a good strategy to assist tourism practitioners and policymakers in developing unique,

successful strategies to improve tourist confidence following the COVID-19 pandemic, it can also restore and stabilize travel and economic growth, allowing the achievement of long-term development goals.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourists' intention, in the tourism context, is a psychological state that emerges as a result of evaluative views, subjective standards, and other situational circumstances that emerge during the early phases of travel preparation (Moutinho, 2000). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a component of the Theory of Reasoned Action, is extremely useful in characterizing a person's purpose to visit. This theory predicts and explains a person's behavioral intention based on mood, perceived behavioral control, and social norms (Ajzen, 1991). TPB is a useful framework for investigating people's travel preferences and behaviors (Han et al., 2020). Some research used TPB to reveal tourist intentions during global health crises, including COVID-19 (Li, Nguyen, and Coca-Stefaniak, 2021; Seong and Hong, 2021; Han et al., 2020). In different contexts, the impact of attitude, perceived behavioral control, and social norm would differ, according to Ajzen (1991). Therefore, this study used TPB, as well as perceived risk, knowledge, and word of mouth, to predict tourists' travel intentions in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attitude refers to the psychological predispositions shown by a person's positive or negative judgements. In a number of studies, travellers' attitudes have been utilized to predict their intentions toward tourist sites (Chaulagain, Wiitala, and Fu, 2019; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Ajzen, 1991). Attitude is regarded as one of the most important indicators of tourist behavior toward any site in the context of cultural tourism (Xu, Jin and Lin., 2018; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012). TPB identifies attitude as a key aspect in establishing a person's behavioral purpose, alongside subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Surprisingly, a tourist's positive attitude toward a destination is directly related to his or her desire to visit that location (Lee, 2009). According to Soliman (2021), and Huang, Chang, and Backman (2018) and attitude has a significant influence on behavioral intention to return to a tourism site. Similarly, attitudes influenced travelers' future behavioral intentions in the post-pandemic period (Pahrudin, Chen and Liu, 2021; Rahmafitria et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020). Meanwhile, an increased risk aversion attitude reduces travel intention, as previously shown by

Sánchez-Caizares et al. (2021), Zhu and Deng (2020), and Han et al. (2020). It is unknown what tourists' attitudes are during pandemic, which may influence their visit intentions. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is: Ha1- Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic are positively influenced by their attitude.

Subjective norm denotes how society influences a person's decision-making. In terms of the disposition of any activity, it refers to a person's awareness of the ideas of persons significant to them (Ajzen, 1991). In travel and tourism research, the subjective standard has been proven to be a crucial influence on tourists' intention to visit any place. Subjective norm is the most important element influencing Taiwanese tourists' intention to visit Hong Kong, according to Lam and Hsu (2006). Similarly, Beerli and Martin (2004) discovered that a person's travel intention is influenced by his or her immediate family members' opinions. While some studies reveal no relationship between subjective norm and behavior intention (Pahrudin et al., 2021; Huang, et al., 2018), others argue that subjective norm influences tourism intention during COVID-19 (Rahmafitria et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). Can the subjective norm still have a favorable impact on tourists' intentions to visit Malaysia or Malaysians' intentions to visit other countries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic? Thus, the proposed hypothesis is: Ha2- Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic are positively influenced by their subjective norm.

The degree to which persons believe their behavior is under their control is referred to as perceived behavioral control (Trafimow et al., 2002). People are more likely to act when they have the money, time, chance, or opportunities to do so. In the tourism industry, research has shown a strong link between perceived behavioral control and the behavioral intentions of tourists going on vacation abroad (Su, Huang and Hsu, 2018; Lam and Hsu, 2006). The TPB hypothesis including Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control has a significant relationship with Intention and has been assessed and extended in tourist and consumer behavior studies (Hwang et al., 2020; Kim and Hwang, 2020; Wu, Tsai and Lee, 2017). Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a link between perceived behavioral control and behavior intention was identified (Pahrudin et al., 2021; Rahmafitria et al., 2021; Han et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). To determine the third variables in TPB, thus, the proposed hypothesis is: Ha3- Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19

pandemic are positively influenced by their perceived behavioral control.

In the tourism context, Mansfeld (2006) described perceived risk as an individual's judgment of the chance that his/her behavior will expose him/her to risk, and that this will have a negative impact on the decision to travel beyond specific boundaries. The extent to which individuals perceive risk is critical in tourism since it has the capacity to affect their travel decision to a specific location (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). The attitudinal connotation of cognition is influenced by the degree of perceived risk for something, resulting in a positive behavioral intention (Quintal and Polczynski, 2010; Lepp and Gibson, 2003). Tourists' opinions of a site are influenced by their risk beliefs, according to studies (Loureiro and Jesus, 2019; Khan et al., 2017). These threats frequently affect safety and security, as well as health Health risk in tourism refers to the possibility of injury to a tourist's health and well-being when participating in travel and tourism activities (Olya and Al-ansi, 2018). In today's travel and tourism climate, tourists' perceptions of health risk are one of the most important factors in their decision-making process (Huang, Dai, and Xu, 2020). Travelers are more likely to cancel their trip plans to visit a destination if they believe the risks of infectious disease, terrorism, or natural catastrophe are high, because personal safety is the most important aspect to consider in destination selection (Hsu, Tsai and Wu, 2009; Kozak, Crotts and Law, 2007). Tourists who perceive more risk may have decreased travel intention, according to research done by Bae and Chang (2021), Neuburger and Egger (2021), Hotle, Murray-Tuite, and Singh (2020), and Zhu and Deng (2020). Thus, the proposed hypothesis is: Ha4 - Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic are negatively influenced by their perceived risk.

Knowledge is the amount of information kept in one's memory (Tan, 2011). Tourists' knowledge of a destination as an internal resource can be linked to a variety of factors, ranging from assessing the destination's quality to obtaining new information at a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999) as well as the status of COVID-19 there. In general, tourists who are made aware of the COVID-19 status for an intended destination are more likely to travel. Several findings have been made, including travel intention is negatively influenced by knowledge of COVID-19 risks, perceived risk, and risk aversion attitude. People who have travelled since the outbreak's start are more inclined to travel again. This finding is consistent with Das and Tiwari (2020), Ivanova et al. (2021), and

Turnšek et al. (2020). Furthermore, increased risk knowledge can diminish respondents' propensity to travel, which is consistent with the findings of Han et al. (2020) and Hotle et al. (2020). In terms of risks, tourists' behavior is heavily influenced by perceived knowledge (Han et al., 2020). When people are at risk, they attempt to lessen the danger by adopting reasonable measures such as complete or partial avoidance (Zhu and Deng, 2020). Despite high levels of knowledge having been connected to behavior (Traore, 1998; Wilson, 1996), there was no evidence of a correlation between these variables in several studies (Stofferahn, 2009; Schneider and Francis, 2006; Winter and Lockwood, 2005). Because the study is about COVID-19 risk knowledge in the host destination, it is proposed that: Ha5- Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic are negatively influenced by their knowledge.

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is commonly acknowledged as having a substantial impact on customer perceptions and behaviors (e.g., Xia and Bechwati, 2008; Sen and Lerman, 2007). As the Internet has been more widely used, digital exchanges between tourists have become increasingly prevalent (Litvin et al., 2008; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2008). A rising number of people are seeking information on the Internet and through online services (Gursoy and McCleary, 2004). As a result, WOM has been found as a strong influence on behavioral intention (Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Chang, Backman and Huang, 2014; Canny, 2013; Žabkar, Brenčič, and Dmitrović, 2010; Alegre and Cladera, 2009; Cronin et al., 2000; Baker and Crompton, 2000). According to Compete (2007), one-third of potential tourists visited a message board, website, or online group before completing an online travel purchase. They did so because they believed that reading online reviews would assist them in making a more informed purchase decision.

Furthermore, a study found that a positive WOM not only draws more potential tourists, but it also demonstrates a desire to preserve a positive relationship with a specific destination (Liu et al., 2015). Similarly, Gretzel and Yoo (2008) discovered that over 70% of consumers consider interaction and internet feedback from experienced travellers to be important sources of knowledge when it comes to leisure and travel. This finding was backed up by Forrester's (2006) assertion that word of mouth is a critical factor for travellers. Aside from Bashar (2020) who discovered a positive relationship between WOM and tourist intention in Jordan and Qadri (2021) in Batam, Albarq (2014) found that electronic WOM also has a positive

impact on tourist intentions and attitudes toward destination selection. Can WOM impact on Malaysian tourists' intentions to travel in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is: Ha6- Malaysians' intentions to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic are positively influenced by word of mouth.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study was a quantitative research on the factors influencing tourist intention to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, when travel is allowed. To investigate the stated hypotheses, a questionnaire was randomly sent to participants via WhatsApp application. In December 2020, convenience sampling yielded a total of 1,638 completed questionnaires. After screening for blank and straight lining responses as well as outliers, however, the full scale study was able to use only 1,568 responses. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographics, travel preferences, and 25 questions about the subject. Finally, main study factors such as intention, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived risk, knowledge, and word of mouth were evaluated using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It is believed that using a 7-point Likert-type scale improves the scale sensitivity, resulting in better response stimulus. Table 1 lists the sources of research instruments in the study.

TABLE 1
Sources of Research Instruments

Variables	Sources
Intention	Luo and Lam (2020); Kim and Kwon (2020)
Attitude (Att)	Li et al. (2020); Kim and Kwon (2020), Chen and Tung (2014) and Wang and Ritchie (2012).
Subjective Norms (SN)	Li et al. (2020), Chen and Tung (2014) and Wang and Ritchie (2012).
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	Li et al. (2020), Chen and Tung (2014) and Wang and Ritchie (2012).
Perceived Risk (Prisk)	Luo and Lam (2020)
Knowledge	Bults et al. (2011)
Word of Mouth (WoM)	Bashar (2020)

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test was used to determine whether the data were suitable for factor analysis and whether there were any significant KMO findings that indicated that factor analysis should be performed. Factor analysis is one of the most useful tools for examining and assessing the internal structure of instruments (Henson and Roberts, 2006; Kieffer, 1999; Pedhazur and Schmelkin, 1991; Nunnally, 1978). The instruments were investigated using the Principal Axis Factor and Promax Rotation, followed by a reliability test. Prior to regression analysis, seven multiple regression assumptions were evaluated, including normality, normality of the error term, linearity, multicollinearity, constant variance, outliers, and autocorrelation. Finally, bootstrapped multiple regression was used to look at the impact of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived risks, knowledge, and word of mouth on respondents' intention to travel.

4. FINDINGS

This section goes into great detail about the studies performed and the results obtained. For the proposed hypotheses, the study data were subjected to factor analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, multiple regression assumptions, and regression analysis. The following Table 2 gives the sample profile.

TABLE 2
Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
male	426	27.2
female	1142	72.8
Age		
<=20	327	20.9
21-30	1003	64.0
31-40	88	5.6
41-50	97	6.2
51-60	39	2.5
>60	14	0.9
Marital status		
single	1248	79.6
married	283	18.0
divorced/widowed	37	2.4

TABLE 2 *(continued)*

	Frequency	Percentage
Education		
primary	11	0.7
secondary	111	7.1
certificate	109	7.0
diploma	550	35.1
bachelor	720	45.9
master	53	3.4
doctorate	10	0.6
others	4	0.3
Employment		
student	929	59.2
government	209	13.3
private	240	15.3
self-employed	108	6.9
unemployed	62	4.0
retiree	15	1.0
others	5	0.3
Monthly income		
<=2000	1222	77.9
2001-5000	225	14.3
5001-8000	76	4.8
8001-11000	18	1.1
11001-14000	9	0.6
14001-17000	10	0.6
17001-20000	8	0.5

Table 2 illustrates the basic demographics of the 1568 participants, with females accounting for 72.8% (n = 1142) and males accounting for 27.2% (n = 426). A majority of them (64%; n = 1003) were between the ages of 21 and 30. Furthermore, an astounding 79.6% (n = 1248) was single [most of the respondents have tertiary education either at diploma, bachelor, master or doctorate level, 85.3% (n = 1337). The majority were students, 59.2% (n = 929), 15.3% (n = 240) private sector employees, 13.3% (n = 209) government sector staff, and so on, whereby 77.0% (n = 1222) earned less than RM2000 in contrast to (0.5%; n = 8) earning 17001 and over.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) test was used to determine data acceptability for factor analysis, and a result of 0.944 was obtained, suggesting a desirable index. In the same way, Bartlett's test shows a significant reading. The data were found to be suitable for factor analysis, as evidenced by

these findings. Meanwhile, Anti-image Correlation Matrix was computed in SPSS by looking at the diagonal value next to each value with the 'a' letter (Table 3). All 25 variables were found to produce values greater than 0.5, as required by the measures of sampling adequacy (MSA). Hence, all of the study variables were considered viable for further factor research.

In the current literature, several variables have been described as influencing tourist intention to travel. As a result, the goal of Exploratory Factor Analysis in this study was to notify the system of the presence of seven variables in the data set; however, did the SPSS program agree with the seven factors? The factor analysis was utilized to create seven variables using Principal Axis Factoring and Promax rotation, indicating that the loading (i.e. correlation between the items and the construct) and cross loading were both more than 0.5 (Table 3).

Because their communality values were less than 0.5, seven of the mentioned problematic items (were deleted from the list. As a result, only 25 items remained from the original 32 in the questionnaire, with all communalities exceeding the cut-off value of 0.5. Table 3 also shows the percentage of variance that was eliminated by reducing the 25 items to seven variables. The analysis was only able to keep 71.85% of the original 100%, indicating a loss of around 28.15 percent. The number of factors extracted aligns with the hypothesis that they may influence tourist intention to travel (see the literature review section), resulting in a total of seven factors in the factor analysis.

The independent and dependent variables in the data set were used to establish the items belonging to which factors. Items Att1 to Att6 were then loaded onto Factor 1, while Prisk3, Prisk4, Prisk5, and Prisk6 were loaded onto Factor 2. In the meantime, items WoM1 to WoM4 were loaded onto Factor 3, items Intention2 to intention4 were loaded onto Factor 4, items knowledge3 and knowledge4 were loaded onto Factor 5; Pcb1, Pcb2, and Pcb4 were loaded onto Factor 6, and items SN1 to SN3 were loaded onto Factor 7. Factors 1 - 7 were defined and suggested to be labelled as attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour regulation, perceived risks, knowledge, and word of mouth respectively, after an observation of the items loading on each factor.

Then, for each of the seven variables (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, perceived risks, knowledge, word of mouth, and intention to travel), reliability tests were conducted. The

reliability of existing scales should be about 0.8-0.9, according to Nunnally (1978). Both Cronbach's alpha values obtained in this analysis were greater than 0.80, according to the results of the research (Table 3).

Then, to gain insight and determine the relationship between tourist intention and its independent variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was used. Table 4 shows that, with the exception of perceived risk, all independent variables are positively correlated.

The normality of error terms was then determined using a histogram and a normal Probability-P plot. The residuals of the dependent variable were generally normally distributed, according to the histogram analysis, with mean (-4.25E-15) and standard deviation (0.998) values near to 0 and 1. (Appendix 1). Meanwhile, the standard Probability P-Plot revealed that some of the points were extremely close to the line, while others were directly on the line, indicating that the errors were normally distributed (refer Appendix 1). A partial regression plot between the dependent and independent variables was also used to assess linearity; both graphs were random and without any identifiable patterns (Appendix 3). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was also used to determine the multicollinearity, which yielded values less than 3.4. Furthermore, in collinearity diagnostics, the largest condition index was 23, which was less than 30, and the variance proportion for all independent variables was less than 0.9. As a result, the data were discovered to be multicollinearity-free (Table 5). In the meantime, the distributions in the regression residual and regression standardized residual scatter plots were evaluated to check for any constant variance (homoscedasticity). The variance could then be determined to be stable, indicating that the constant variance problem had been solved (Appendix 2). Last but not least, autocorrelation was 1.978 based on the Durbin-Watson value; literature says that autocorrelation is not an issue as long as the number is between 1.5 and 2.5.

After the multiple regression assumptions were met, the next step was to examine the six variables of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, perceived risk, knowledge, and word of mouth in predicting tourist intention to travel. ANOVA result, $F_{(6,1568)} = 359.191$, $p<0.01$, indicated that the model is statistically relevant and that one could be produced. The $R^2 = 0.583$ value indicated that all six independent variables together could explain 58.3 percent of the difference in tourist intention to travel, leaving 41.7 percent unexplained.

Table 5 shows that all variables are significant predictors of intention to travel. In particular, attitude (B = 0.192, t(1568) = 6.361, p<.01, BCa 95% CI [0.147, 0.278]), subjective norm (B=0.217, t(1568)=7.695, p<.01, BCa 95% CI [0.169, 0.284]), perceived behaviour control (B=0.321, t(1568)=10.928, p<.01, BCa 95% CI [0.267, 0.384]), and word of mouth (B=0.149, t(1568)=6.835, p<.01, BCa 95% CI [0.139, 0.252]) were positively related to intention to travel during Covid-19 pandemic. Contrastingly, perceived risk (B=-0.089, t(1568)=-4.480, p<.01, BCa 95% CI [-0.165, -0.065]) and knowledge (B=-0.052, t(1568)=-2.513, p<.05, BCa 95% CI [-0.131, -0.016]) were negatively linked to intention to travel. Overall, all of the variables measured were statistically significant. In the meantime, all of the variables' effect sizes (F2) were small. Among the small effect sizes, perceived behavioral control has the highest value, followed by subjective norms, word of mouth, attitude, perceived risk, while the least went to knowledge.

TABLE 3
Results of Factor Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Communalities	Anti-image Correlation
Att1	0.829	-0.050	0.012	0.019	-0.034	-0.071	0.058	0.697	0.962[a]
Att2	0.875	-0.078	0.014	-0.015	0.079	-0.052	0.021	0.753	0.961[a]
Att3	0.680	0.046	-0.035	0.026	-0.102	0.047	0.109	0.599	0.981[a]
Att4	0.925	-0.010	0.022	-0.015	-0.014	-0.006	-0.097	0.752	0.966[a]
Att5	0.849	0.021	-0.047	0.020	-0.008	0.001	0.038	0.738	0.976[a]
Att6	0.779	0.063	0.034	0.015	-0.041	0.044	-0.037	0.658	0.975[a]
SN1	0.332	-0.010	-0.010	-0.041	0.068	0.053	0.645	0.793	0.957[a]
SN2	0.283	0.025	0.026	0.026	0.001	-0.016	0.712	0.852	0.946[a]
SN3	0.358	0.001	0.012	0.013	0.039	0.025	0.595	0.791	0.963[a]
PBC1	0.303	-0.034	-0.042	-0.047	-0.004	0.683	0.050	0.808	0.958[a]
PBC2	0.248	-0.047	-0.018	-0.003	-0.009	0.719	-0.005	0.800	0.955[a]
PBC4	0.318	0.006	0.034	0.048	0.017	0.591	-0.022	0.781	0.967[a]
PRisk3	0.085	0.637	0.034	-0.085	0.183	0.040	-0.042	0.615	0.885[a]
PRisk4	0.133	0.542	0.042	-0.043	0.229	0.101	-0.144	0.565	0.890[a]
PRisk5	-0.089	0.901	-0.028	0.062	-0.096	-0.061	0.078	0.715	0.779[a]
PRisk6	-0.036	0.939	-0.002	0.032	-0.082	-0.044	0.036	0.802	0.787[a]
Knowledge3	-0.066	0.022	0.054	0.000	0.837	-0.016	0.040	0.745	0.818[a]
Knowledge4	-0.036	0.027	-0.053	0.042	0.846	-0.032	0.042	0.677	0.804[a]
Intention2	0.133	-0.055	0.040	0.650	0.080	0.130	-0.039	0.718	0.963[a]
Intention3	0.079	0.030	-0.049	0.934	0.026	-0.013	-0.012	0.896	0.922[a]
Intention4	0.067	0.015	0.018	0.909	-0.031	-0.071	0.020	0.858	0.922[a]
WoM1	0.089	0.014	0.702	0.028	0.042	-0.009	-0.036	0.604	0.952[a]
WoM2	0.041	0.029	0.762	-0.026	-0.018	-0.072	0.012	0.553	0.938[a]
WoM3	-0.071	0.024	0.906	-0.084	-0.013	0.011	0.016	0.721	0.916[a]
WoM4	-0.004	-0.073	0.680	0.136	-0.029	0.052	0.037	0.587	0.958[a]
Cronbach alpha	0.929	0.867	0.852	0.926	0.837	0.917	0.928		
Eigenvalue	11.091	3.902	1.124	0.913	0.606	0.540	0.506		
% of Variance	42.657	15.009	4.324	3.512	2.330	2.077	1.946		

TABLE 4
Correlation Analysis

	Attention	Subjective Norms	Perceive Behavioural Control	Perceived Risk	Knowledge	Word of Mount	Intention
Attitude	1						
Subjective Norms	0.764**	1					
Perceive Behavioural Control	0.778**	0.741**	1				
Perceived Risk	-0.010	-0.014	-0.029	1			
Knowledge	0.082**	0.034	0.076**	0.525**	1		
Word of Mount	0.491**	0.421**	0.485**	0.313**	0.420**	1	
Intention	0.671**	0.661**	0.694**	-0.062*	0.023	0.460**	1

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

TABLE 5
Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis		Unstd. Beta	Std. Error	Std. Beta	t-value	p-value	LL	UL	VIF	f^2
H1	Attitude	0.212	0.033	0.192	6.361	P< .001	0.147	0.278	3.369	0.026
H2	Subjective Norms	0.227	0.029	0.217	7.695	P< .001	0.169	0.284	2.937	0.038
H3	Perceive Behavioural Control	0.326	0.030	0.321	10.928	P< .001	0.267	0.384	3.199	0.077
H4	Perceived Risk	-0.115	0.026	-0.089	-4.480	P< .001	-0.165	-0.065	1.464	0.014
H5	Knowledge	-0.074	0.029	-0.052	-2.513	0.012	-0.131	-0.016	1.559	0.005
H6	Word of Mouth	0.195	0.029	0.149	6.835	P< .001	0.139	0.252	1.765	0.031

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

At the time of writing, the tourism industry in Malaysia has yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on Malaysian tourists' intentions and employed a demand-side strategy. Policymakers and practitioners need to listen to the viewpoints of tourists and consider altering the necessary travel demand in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) was used, together with perceived risk, knowledge, and word of mouth, to analyze Malaysians' tourist intentions during the pandemic. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett Tests, Principal Axis Factor, Promax Rotation and multiple regression were conducted. Based on 1568 respondents, all of the factors were found to significantly affect tourist intention. The effect sizes for all the variables were relatively small, however, and this was most likely because the country is still suffering from the spread of COVID-19 at time of writing and the curve of reported COVID-19 positive cases has yet to flatten.

The main goal of TPB is to anticipate and explain a person's behavioral intention, perceived behavioral control, and social norms (Ajzen, 1991). The idea was used to determine tourist intention to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. Tourist intention to travel was positively related to the variables in the theory of planned behavior, namely attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control. According to Lee (2009), a tourist's optimistic attitude toward a destination is highly related to his or her desire to visit that destination, which is consistent with Pahrudin et al., (2021); Rahmafitria et al. (2021) and Han et al., (2020). It has also been discovered that a person's travel intention can be influenced by the perceptions of his or her close family members and relatives. This is consistent with the findings of Rahmafitria et al. (2021); Han et al. (2020); Li et al. (2020); Lam and Hsu (2006), and Beerli and Martin (2004). Aside from that, the study discovered that tourist intention to travel had a significant relationship with perceived behavioral control, a finding that has been supported by Pahrudin et al. (2021); Rahmafitria et al. (2021); Han et al. (2020); Li et al. (2020); Halpenny, Kono, and Moghimehfar (2018), and Su et al. (2018) and Lam and Hsu (2006). To summarize, during the COVID-19 pandemic, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were found to positively influence Malaysian tourist intention to travel, which was comparable to the situation pre- pandemic.

Perceived risk was reported to have a negative impact on tourist intention to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is consistent with the studies by Bae and Chang (2021), Neuburger and Egger (2021), Zhu and Deng (2020), Hotle et al. (2020), Khan et al. (2017), and Loureiro and Jesus (2019). Tourists' perceptions of a destination are influenced by their perceptions of risk. Travelers show an intention to visit if the perceived risk is low. Likewise, they would have their travel plan intention change if the risk perception of the destination is high. Tourists are more inclined to seek out areas with well-developed infrastructure and high-quality medical services as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. As a consequence, in order to promote domestic and international tourism, local governments must first stabilize the local COVID-19 pandemic situation. Only then will they be able to show their ability to protect tourists, allowing the tourists to relax and enjoy themselves in the host destinations. Apart from this, the local government must plan adequate facilities to counter emerging or current COVID-19 pandemic so that tourists can travel with confidence and experience less stress in host destinations. Besides, it is important to think about hygiene, disinfection, and a safe health system when making a travel decision (Çelik and Dedeoğlu, 2019; Wijaya et al., 2018); tourists should get vaccinated from time to time and get travel insurance while planning vacations to ensure that they are protected in the event of illness, such as COVID-19.

According to this study, word-of-mouth (WOM) has a positive impact on tourist intention to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, consistent with Qadri (2021), Bashar (2020) and Albarq (2014). It can be assumed that as a tourist's WOM of a particular destination grows, so does his or her intention to pick, revisit, and suggest that destination to others (Mohaidin, Wei and Murshid, 2017; Mohd Isa and Ramli, 2014; and Prebensen, Skallerud and Chen, 2010). As a result, WOM plays an important role in informing potential tourists about a specific destination. Similarly, Albarq (2014) discovered in his online tourism analysis that electronic WOM has a positive effect on tourists' intention to select a destination. During a pandemic, some timely reviews are even more critical and helpful for tourists to learn about the actual issue and situation in the destination's hotels, attractions, and restaurants.

This study, on the other hand, discovered that knowledge had a negative impact on tourist intention to travel following the COVID-19 pandemic, which is similar with the findings of Han et al. (2020) and Hotle et al. (2020). Tourists are less likely to visit a destination if

they are aware of the outbreak. Talking about knowledge, thanks to developments in information and communications technology and social media networks, tourists can get accurate, trustworthy, and real-time information about a specific region. They can also gain quick access to information on the areas' resources, policies, and infrastructures. As a result, they will have a better understanding of the destination information, which will influence their decision to visit.

The tourism industry is struggling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this event, it is critical that the company listens to 'consumers' and understands their shifting lifestyle and travel demands. This study helps tourism businesses/industries develop and adapt their service to meet the changing demand due to the pandemic by exploring tourist intentions to travel. The predicted findings suggest that Malaysians' travel behavior during the pandemic period could be similar to that of people all over the world, suggesting that the findings may be generalized to tourists from other states and foreign tourists. Understanding what factors affect these people's decisions can aid policymakers in developing accommodating and convenient policies for tourists during the present COVID-19 pandemic or any future crisis. This is not only a smart strategy for assisting tourism practitioners and policymakers, but it also has the potential to restore and stabilize travel, tourism earnings and economic growth, enabling achievement of long-term development targets.

This study's main limitation is that it is biased toward single female respondents aged 21 to 30. Though this is consistent with The Malaysia Reserve report that women make up more (62%) of the undergraduate population than men (Azuar, 2022), it should be improved. Future research should focus on diverse age groups with varied backgrounds to assess people's actual travel behavior following the pandemic to establish its determinants. Next, the study used convenience sampling via the WhatsApp application to collect data during the pandemic's peak. Future studies should utilize the right sampling strategy to enhance the representativeness of the intended population to ensure the applicability of the findings.

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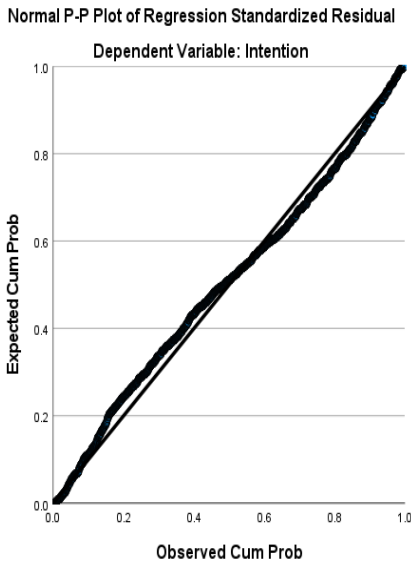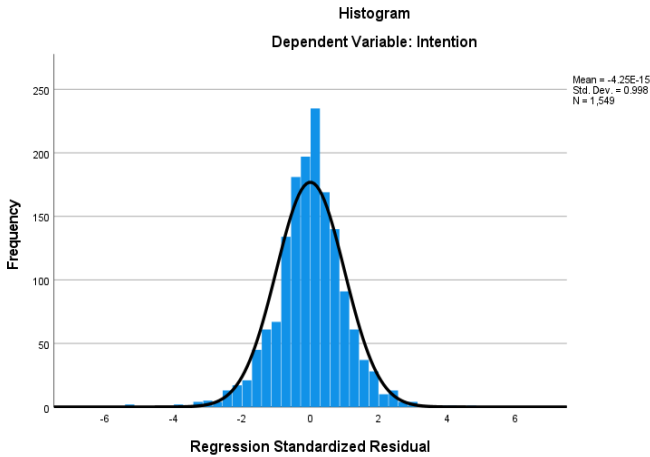
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APPENDIX 1
Normality Error Terms

Histogram
Dependent Variable: Intention

Mean = -4.25E-15
Std. Dev. = 0.998
N = 1,549

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: Intention

APPENDIX 2
Constant Variance

Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: Intention

APPENDIX 3
Linearity

Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: Intention

Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Intention

Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Intention

Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Intention

Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: Intention

Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: Intention