

Strengthening information-seeking behavior toward international destinations among young travelers in Vietnam after the pandemic

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ARTICLE INFO

DOI: 10.46223/HCMCOUJS.
econ.en.14.3.2969.2024

Received: April 12th, 2023

Revised: June 26th, 2023

Accepted: June 28th, 2023

JEL classification code:
M30; M31

Keywords:

information-seeking behavior;
mass-media coverage;
perceived uncertainty;
resilience; travel constraints;
value-added attribute

ABSTRACT

This study examines how psychological and external factors, including perceived uncertainty, resilience, value-added attribute, mass-media coverage, and travel constraints, affect perceived arousal, and lead to the behavior of seeking information about international destinations of young travelers. The study underlines the use of the protection motivation theory and is supported by the theory of reasoned action to explore the perspectives of seeking behavior in the tourism sector. In addition, perceived arousal mediates the relationship between these variables and the information-seeking behavior of travelers. This study was conducted in Vietnam during the post-Covid pandemic, using quantitative and convenience sampling methods to collect data from 256 valid respondents. Structural equation modeling will be used to examine the extent to which the six factors above are connected to the outcome variable (information-seeking behavior). The findings reveal the impact of resilience and media coverage on perceived arousal among tourists and then positively significant to their seeking behavior. Finally, this study is empirically valuable to contribute important literature to the tourism industry and Destination Marketing Organizations, especially concerning the post-pandemic recovery.

1. Introduction

The expansion of the tourist industry has a profound influence on the economic prosperity and development of a country, and as tourism plays a crucial role in the economies of many nations all over the world, there is no denying its importance (Sinclair, 1998). Exclusively, tourism among young people is rising rapidly over the world, yet this demographic is distinct from others in its travel habits, environmental consciousness, and environmental outlook. Over the course of the past several years, an increasing number of young people, particularly those who are enrolled in higher education institutions, have begun traveling with friends as a means of relieving stress and as an opportunity to develop closer relationships with those individuals (Bae & Chick, 2016). Recently, these target-potential groups tend to travel to countries around the world to have more hands-on experiences with different cultures (Han, Kim, & Kiatkawsin, 2017; Kara & Mkwizu, 2020; Zhu, Gao, Zhang, & Jin, 2020). In general, tourism is a phenomenon that is mostly linked to activities that are associated with enjoyment and leisure. According to Chien, Sharifpour, Ritchie, and Watson (2017), traveling, like any other human

activity, carries with it the possibility of danger and always does so with some degree of risk. This is true regardless of the precautions that are taken.

Several key knowledge gaps can be identified as follows. First, most current studies have investigated tourist behavior in travel-restricted contexts during the early period (Liu, Shi, Li, & Amin, 2021; Ren et al., 2022; Zhang, Huang, Chen, & Zhao, 2022). According to these studies, the changes in visitor behavior are due to travel restrictions and the risk of the pandemic affecting their health. However, yet to our knowledge, there is little research investigating how Covid-19 changes the information-seeking behavior of travelers, especially during the recovery and post-consequences of the tourism industry. Second, prior tourists searched for all the information about their destination, including transportation, accommodation, attractions, restaurants, and destination activities, before deciding to travel (Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004) in the past. However, in the context of the recovery pandemic and the ending of a public health crisis, people are not only looking for the above-listed sources of information but also need to acquire more information such as visas, the current epidemic situation of the destination, whether three vaccinations are required or not, check for any travel restrictions, quarantining and testing requirements in their local area and all places they are planning to travel and what policies do they have to follow (UNICEF, 2021). Third, despite the important role of understanding how travelers obtain travel information before and during their holidays, little research articulates the relationships between destination information-seeking behavior and tourist's decision to travel. In different social contexts and situations, the behavior of individuals in search of tourist destination information will be different (Adhikary & Adhikari, 2019). Therefore, there is a need to understand the factors that can influence people's travel behavior during the post-pandemic recovery, especially how the behavior of young Vietnamese people searches for information about international destinations.

To address the above-mentioned gaps, the purpose of this study was to determine how the following variables affected the post-pandemic travel intentions of Vietnamese tourists: perceived uncertainty, resilience, value-added attribute, mass-media coverage, travel constraints, perceived arousal, and information-seeking activity during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study attempts to contribute important contributions to the literature of tourism information-seeking behavior and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), especially concerning the post-pandemic recovery. First, it reveals the mechanism through which the evaluation of personal concerns and media exposure of public health crises influence Vietnamese tourists' seeking behavior towards related information. Second, this study provides the evidence and facts for the applicability of the combination of the Theory of Reasoned Action and Protection Motivation Theory to explore online activities regarding seeking behavior in the new context of post-pandemic and especially, high awareness and cognition of health and safety concerns. In line with this vision, this study necessarily aims to answer these research questions (1) How the psychological concerns impact the intention to seek information from young Vietnamese travelers towards international destinations? (2) Does online information on social media strengthen travelers' information-seeking behavior after the pandemic? And (3) How does information-seeking behavior reinforce the improvement of tourism businesses and practitioners?

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

First, Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) developed the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model referring to consumers' behavior and determining their behavioral tendencies, which are part of the attitude towards the behavior. The TRA is based on the premise that human beings are inherently rational and that they acquire knowledge through logical, methodical procedures (Ajzen &

Fishbein, 2000). It indicates that the person's basic feelings of liking or disliking are the driving force behind their behavior. The other part is subjective norms; that is, the influence of others also leads to their behavior and attitudes. The subjective perspective measures consumers' feelings towards those who influence their behavioral trends, such as family, children, friends, and colleagues who support or reflect on their decision. Through the mediation of behavioral intention, the TRA presupposes that attitudes and subjective norms have a direct causal effect on conduct (Song, Chen, Zeng, & Kim, 2021). In addition, Koo and Lee (2019) show that attitudes are a general measure of (un)favorability toward engaging in a particular behavior. According to Ajzen (2015), attitudes can be summarized as a psychological object's evaluation along the dimensions of good and bad, harmful and beneficial, pleasant and unpleasant, and likable and dislikeable. In the context of information-seeking behavior, this approach does work. Travelers find information related to the destination because they want to explore and experience international destinations or because they are influenced by external factors such as family and friends.

Second, Rogers (1975) developed Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) to describe how individuals are driven to respond in a self-protective manner to a perceived health threat. According to this theory, people's perceptions of risks were evaluated through two cognitive processes - "threat assessment" and "coping evaluation" - which arouse their desire to defend themselves (Rogers, 1983). According to the PMT, in order for humans to defend themselves from potential danger, they engage in both threat appraisal and coping appraisal. The perceived severity of a threat as well as an individual's assessed sensitivity to that threat are both factors that go into the threat appraisal process (Alhemimah, 2023). Moreover, the term "coping appraisal" refers to how people react to a threat. It includes perceived response efficacy, which is the belief that taking a particular action will eliminate the threat, and perceived self-efficacy, which is confidence in one's own ability to carry out the action with the desired outcome. The fundamental of this theory predicts that stakeholders have a motive or intention to protect themselves from harm that is enhanced by four perceptions related to (1) Severity of the risk; (2) vulnerability to risk; (3) self-efficacy in implementing risk-reducing behavior; and (4) the response effectiveness of risk reduction behavior. This theoretical framework has been widely used in the study of climate change and natural disasters (Gumasing, Prasetyo, Ong, & Nadlifatin, 2022; Ong et al., 2021); consumption-related intention (Kim, Yang, Min, & White, 2022; Kothe et al., 2019; Milaković & Miocevic, 2023). Moreover, the majority of studies have examined PMT in tourism contexts to investigate how travelers self-protect themselves from potential health problems during travel-related activities (Rather, 2021; Ruan, Kang, & Song, 2020; Wang, Liu-Lastres, Ritchie, & Mills, 2019). For instance, travelers will steer clear of a given location if they believe there are risks and safety threats there. Also, the use of PMT is commonly executive in the decision-making framework for dealing with different threats (Maddux, 1993; Qiao, Ruan, & Pabel, 2022).

2.2. Information-seeking behavior

The term "information-seeking behavior" refers to how humans understand the necessity and desire to acquire and use information (Case & Given, 2016). In most cases, customers will gather information and formulate their goals prior to making a final purchase (Capriello, Mason, Davis, & Crofts, 2013). When individuals become aware of the need to receive contextual information and consciously take action to satisfy that need, they engage in the social behavior known as information seeking (Agarwal, 2017). The selection of a destination, much like the selection of any other consumer good, requires the gathering of relevant information in order to make informed choices regarding things like lodging, modes of transportation, and activities while there (Alhemimah, 2023; Kambele, Li, & Zhou, 2015; MacSween & Canziani, 2021). Information

is a critical component in the decision-making process for vacationers; hence, travelers require information that is pertinent, comprehensive, and easily available (Oshriyeh, Ghaffari, & Nematpour, 2022). In most cases, a person will consult a variety of information sources in order to fulfill a particular information requirement (Capriello et al., 2013). There are various forms of information that enable to sharing and seeking such as opinions, suggestions, and answers to questions that others have asked (Rafaeli & Raban, 2005). People all around the world are currently researching the pandemic by regularly following the news in order to gather information about the current state of the pandemic in the community as well as a glimpse into the future of what may lie ahead (Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li, & Xiang, 2020; Superio et al., 2021). Customers were able to easily get answers to their questions and tell others about their experiences because of developments in information technology, such as mobile apps and social media (Lee, Lee, & Jeong, 2021). While tourism is an information-rich industry since the majority of its goods and services are intangible and cannot be appraised prior to making a decision. Travelers rely on information to decide what to do on vacation, therefore accurate, thorough, and easily accessible travel information is essential (Kambele et al., 2015). The younger generation now frequently uses social networks to find and share information, which is the main activity in online communities, thanks to the advancement of technology (Mirzaalian & Halpenny, 2019). To determine what makes for efficient mobile advertisements, Tseng and Wei (2020) examined the impact of media richness on customers' actions throughout the attention, interest, search, action, and sharing stages.

2.3. Antecedences of UGC toward tourism recovery

2.3.1. Value-added attribute

Tourists often remarked on how much the guides' positive demeanor, expertise, and practical experience improved their trip. As a major contribution to the base of best values, every location that welcomes tourists ought to offer experiences that are worthwhile to those visitors in the form of their goods or services (Geng, Liu, & Liao, 2021; Sotiriadis, 2015). Satisfiers and delighters are classified as positive asymmetrical attributes (Anderson & Mittal, 2000). They exhibit the opposite nature of dis-satisfiers and frustrations (Füller & Matzler, 2008). That is, satisfiers are considered value-added attributes that cause satisfaction when fulfilled. Delighters are perceived as extreme satisfiers, so tourists feel delighted when these attributes are provided (Raihan & Tuspekova, 2022). When the performance of these attributes is higher, satisfiers generate more satisfaction, while delighters induce intense satisfaction to the extent of feeling delight. In the study of Seyitoğlu (2020), the common statements expressed by travelers include the notion that the guides were responsible for creating an unforgettable experience including "memorable", "more enjoyable", "truly wonderful", "made the tour a relaxing experience", and "made sure we had the best experience". There are some examples of value-added attributes that many hotels use to attract customers. The first example, according to Lee, Fakfare, and Han (2020), the hotel offers a variety of complimentary recreational facilities for travelers (i.e., spa, gym, sports activities, swimming pool) or dedicated date night events are sure to leave a lasting impression (i.e., batik painting, cooking class, and private romantic excursions). Furthermore, to create an expressive honeymoon experience, providers catering to couples on their honeymoon frequently include several unique benefits such as free meals with nice decoration, a honeymoon cake, surprise romantic events, private spa treatments, discount offers, and tours in their packages (Anderson, 2016). Therefore, when hotels provide these value-added services, travelers will have a greater sense of excitement about traveling, because they get more than what they expect. In this way, it encourages the behaviour of travelers to seek out information on tourist destinations. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H1: Value-added attribute has a positive impact on perceived aroused

2.3.2. Resilience

Resilience, which refers to a person's capacity to flourish despite adversity in the past or present, is one of the positive personality traits in positive psychology (Singh & Yu, 2010). According to studies, psychological resilience is ubiquitous and has protective effects on people's physical and mental health while dealing with or enduring adversity (Lee, Choi, & Chiang, 2017; Ntounis, Parker, Skinner, Steadman, & Warnaby, 2022). Many previous studies have used resilience to investigate how destinations and tourism respond to disasters and crises (Cartier & Taylor, 2020; Mondal & Samaddar, 2022; Romão, 2020) and community resilience to rural tourism development in Malaysia (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015). Furthermore, Powell et al. (2018) also investigated how community resilience could aid sustainable tourism development in Vietnam's Dong Van Geopark. But not much is known about how tourists build and use psychological resilience to deal with changes and problems while traveling (Prayag, Spector, Orchiston, & Chowdhury, 2020; Traskevich & Fontanari, 2023). For Covid-19 pandemic, it is impossible to overcome the psychological strain on patients, healthcare workers, and the general public, which raises the chance of them developing various psychological issues such as anxiety, fear, depression, and insomnia (Li, Wang, Xue, Zhao, & Zhu, 2020). Tourists have increased levels of tension and anxiety as a result of the consequences or changes brought about by post-Covid-19 since they are unsure whether or not the destination is experiencing any impacts related to Covid-19. As a result, this hypothesis is validated as a variable that affects the tourist stimulus in terms of discovering information on international destinations throughout the recovery time. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H2: Resilience has a positive impact on perceived aroused

2.3.3. Mass-media coverage

The mass media and para-social interactions on social media can influence people's subsequent actions, including the perception of risks in tourist destinations (Garg, 2013). People's subsequent activities can be influenced by the mass media, which serves as a channel for this purpose (Qiao et al., 2022; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2022). Moreover, the terms mass media, social media (with a focus on para-social interactions), and destination websites are the three types of media that are used to evaluate engagement (Bhati, Mohammadi, Agarwal, Kamble, & Donough-Tan, 2021). In the realms of health and medicine, researchers have examined how the media affect people's intentions to prevent or protect themselves from issues like obesity and skin cancer (Qiao et al., 2022). The public looks to the media for timely and relatively reliable information during a big health crisis like a pandemic, so they may make informed decisions in the face of great uncertainty (Cheng, Mitomo, Otsuka, & Jeon, 2016). These various media message depictions from both supplier and user-generated perspectives help tourists form an impression of the destination and give it meaning, ultimately affecting their perceptions (Bhati et al., 2021; Koo, Joun, Han, & Chung, 2016). Numerous fields, including psychology, communications, marketing, and advertising, have conducted extensive research on the function of media (Tran, Le, Bui, Le, & Vu, 2023). It has been found that consumers' thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors can be influenced by either positive or negative verbal communication or non-verbal communication from the media. For example, it has been demonstrated that consumers' thoughts can be influenced either positively or negatively by non-verbal communication from the media (Muhoho-Minni & Lubbe, 2017). Perception is influenced by media interactions, particularly those that occur through social media, interactive websites, and traditional media (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Both positive and negative information is contained in the coverage provided by the mass media (Qiao et al., 2022). The dissemination of

positive information has the potential to encourage viewers to behave positively in response to the potential threat by providing effective behaviors for coping with the threat. On the other hand, negative information can potentially increase a viewer's anxiety and other negative emotions in response to a threat (Bae & Chang, 2021). Since the outbreak, Covid-19-related information has become a dominant part of people's lives (Qiao et al., 2022). There has been a significant increase in the need for accurate information about the pandemic, particularly in owned and traditional media. The general public relies on mass media outlets to receive news coverage about a pandemic when a significant health event occurs because it provides them with timely and relatively accurate information even when there is a great deal of uncertainty (Cheng et al., 2016). As a result, the hypothesis is established to measure the impact of mass media on travelers' perceived arousal when they want to find information about a destination in the post-crisis period. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H3: Mass-media coverage has a positive impact on perceived aroused

2.3.4. Travel constraints

The notion of travel constraints was first presented in the literature under the heading of leisure restrictions. Hung (2015) defines travel restrictions as conditions that make it difficult or impossible for people to travel frequently. The concept of travel constraints or restrictions was first developed in the academic discipline of leisure studies, but it has since been used extensively to many different aspects of tourist purchase behavior (Nadirova & Jackson, 2000; Neuburger & Egger, 2021). Travel constraints, as defined by the leisure constraint theory, are things that limit one's ability to travel (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993) and alter one's preferences for the kinds of experiences one has while on the road (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jian, Lin, & Zhou, 2021). Limitations on time and energy are the standard explanation for the difficulties that senior citizens and those with physical impairments have while attempting to travel (Dale & Ritchie, 2020; Huber, Milne, & Hyde, 2018). In the body of leisure constraint literature, constraints are divided into three dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). At the intrapersonal level, inhibitors are linked with individuals' psychological conditions, such as stress, skill level, and fear (Crawford et al., 1991). The next level of interpersonal constraints refers to interactions between a potential leisure participant and others, including social interactions with friends and family. Structural constraints may include time, money, facilities, and a lack of information at the final level of constraints (Alexandris, Funk, & Pritchard, 2011). Similarly, financial difficulties, time restraints, health issues, social ineffectiveness, safety concerns, perceived lack of self-skill, lack of an appropriate travel partner, difficulty of access, inconvenient facilities, family life cycle, and regulatory barriers are all examples of potential tourism constraints that influence the decision-making process of tourists (Ahmad, Harun, Khizar, Khalid, & Khan, 2022; Matiza, 2022; Schiopu, Hornoiu, Padurean, & Nica, 2022). Constraints can also vary a lot from one situation to the next, indicated as studying constraints before starting new leisure activities is possible. It is also possible to study travel constraints and how they affect tourism activity participation while traveling (Lyu, Oh, & Lee, 2013). Consequently, travel restrictions do not prevent an individual from traveling, but they may lead people to travel in a different way than they would otherwise, influencing their information-seeking behavior for destinations. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H4: Travel constraints have a negative impact on perceived aroused

2.3.5. Perceived uncertainty

Events that are ambiguous, unpredictable, unfamiliar, inconsistent, or lacking information cause uncertainty (Mishel, 1984). This notion refers to a state of mind that happens when a person

is aware that they do not know something. People's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by how aware they are of their ignorance (Anderson & Sanga, 2019). The terms risk and uncertainty are often used interchangeably. Risk, on the other hand, is an evaluation of the likelihood that undesirable occurrences will occur, whereas uncertainty is the result of insufficient information to make an informed choice (Karl, 2016). Moreover, uncertainty affects how people anticipate different fearful outcomes that make them anxious when they make the threat seem more significant. Also, a sudden event like a disaster or pandemic can cause uncertainty because not enough is known about what happened, how long it will last, if there is a solution, or how it will end (Omar, Nazri, Ali, & Alam, 2021). Additionally, a recent study discovered empirical evidence that more people will become anxious during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis due to more significant uncertainty (Chua, Al-Ansi, Lee, & Han, 2021; Golets, Farias, Pilati, & Costa, 2021). To a substantially greater extent than mental wellness was able to predict attitudes toward foreign travel and temporal avoidance behavior, perceived uncertainty was able to strongly predict short-term avoidance behavior (Chua et al., 2021; Golets, Farias, Pilati, & Costa, 2023). One's travel plans can be significantly altered by the fear and uncertainty surrounding the novel coronavirus, for example, by making people avoid crowded areas (Wang & Ackerman, 2018). Various disaster and crisis typologies are combined in Covid-19 (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019), creating exceptionally high uncertainty levels (Golets et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be assumed that the travel motivations may have changed during the pandemic because crises frequently change them (Gnoth, 1997). Therefore, this hypothesis is established as a variable to test its impact on travelers' behavior during the pandemic recovery period. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H5: Perceived uncertainty has a positive impact on perceived aroused

2.3.6. Perceived aroused

Perceived aroused can be seen as a mediator variable of the tourism information-seeking behavior of young people, according to (Russell & Mehrabian, 1977). Additionally, an individual's sense of stimulus, energy, or excitement is referred to as their perceived arousal (Menon & Kahn, 2002). Studies have described that perceived arousal is the neurophysiological basis for all human body processes, from sleeping to getting excited. It determines how we feel, what drives us, how we process information, and how we act (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999). Besides, a person's level of perceived arousal indicates how stimulated, energized, or excited they feel (Menon & Kahn, 2002). Consumers' product assessments and message processing may be influenced by arousal, according to prior studies (Caber, González-Rodríguez, Albayrak, & Simonetti, 2020; Cheng & Huang, 2022; Güzel, Sahin, & Ryan, 2020). As a consequence of this, heightened arousal might improve consumers' attention and make it easier for them to elaborate as information is being processed (Martin, 2005). Consumer product assessments and message processing may be affected by arousal, according to studies (Caber et al., 2020; Cheng & Huang, 2022). The variety of individual preferences and the degrees of individual arousal is different. This affects the degree to which people respond physically and psychologically, as well as how much influence there is on emotions and behavioral changes. Therefore, arousal levels play an essential role in individual emotional and behavioral changes (Wirtz, Mattila, & Tan, 2000). There has been a lot of previous research on how arousal affects tourism, most is related to the impact of emotional arousal in tourism destinations (Hadinejad, Gardiner, Kralj, Scott, & Moyle, 2022). However, little is known about how perceived arousal impact information-seeking behavior in tourism. As a result, individual emotions and behavior can be varied depending on which degree of perceived arousal is impacted by other factors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are made:

H6: Perceived aroused have a positive impact on information-seeking behavior

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and sampling

According to Malhotra (2020), a research design is a blueprint or framework for a marketing research effort. The question of collecting data from respondents (for example, through a survey or an experiment) must be addressed. A questionnaire and a sample plan must be designed to select respondents for the study. Questions such as “who,” “how much,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “how many,” and “how” can be answered through the use of numerical data and the application of specific statistical techniques (Apuke, 2017). Data is collected and then analysed using statistical methods in accordance with a hypothesis or assumption. Each of the five major dimensions is analysed here using a quantitative method to determine their relative importance: Value-added attribute, Resilience, Perceived Uncertainty, Mass-media coverage, and Travel constraints to the mediator which is Perceived arousal that influences the dependent variable which is Information sharing/Seeking behavior. Participants are chosen for convenience sampling because they are generally readily available. When compared to other sampling procedures, convenience sampling is typically chosen by students since it is affordable and simple (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Many of the constraints of research can be solved via convenience sampling. A convenience sample consists of people who are most available to the researcher and who may be able to provide the information that the researcher requires (Emerson, 2015). The target group of the population for the survey is focused on the attributes of Vietnamese Internet users between the ages of 18 and 30 who are active on social media platforms like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram or are part of travel and sharing communities in Vietnam. Also, they know something about tourism through their previous travels. They may even be avid enthusiasts who have taken at least a few leisure tours and read extensively about tourism-related topics on the web. They might share some of their experience or read reviews on travel groups. Finally, users should be able to recognize various sources of content that relate to tourism knowledge illustrated in a range of forms such as written-based, photo-based, video-based, or even media-based combination forms.

3.2. Questionnaire design

A research strategy is a comprehensive plan for carrying out a research investigation. A research strategy directs a researcher’s study planning, implementation, and monitoring. While the research strategy is helpful at a general level, it must be supplemented with research methodologies that may lead the study effort to a more comprehensive level. As a result, a research strategy provides high-level advice, but a research method can be thought of as a technique or tool for carrying out a given activity (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014) including primary data which can collect primary data through observation, using semi-structured, group interview and questionnaires (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009) by online survey questionnaire; and secondary data, including tourism reports and data from statistics. The questionnaire was designed including Value-added attributes with 06 items, Resilience with 04 items (Bermes, 2021), Perceived Uncertainty with 06 items by Han, Chua, and Hyun (2020); and Quintal, Lee, and Soutar (2010), Mass-media Coverage with 07 items (Qiao et al., 2022), Travel Constraints with 08 items (Xie & Ritchie, 2018), Perceived arouse with 04 items Russell and Mehrabian (1977), and Information seeking behavior with Komiak and Benbasat (2006); and Bock, Zmud, Kim, and Lee (2005). All of the mentioned constructs were measured by the five-point Likert Scale, in which 1 = “Strongly disagree”; 2 = “Disagree”; 3 = “Neutral”; 4 = “Agree”; 5 = “Strongly agree”.

3.3. Measurement

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a set of statistical methods for analyzing the interrelationships between a group of continuous or discrete independent variables and a set of constant or discrete dependent variables (Ullman & Bentler, 2012). According to Bowen and Guo (2012), SEM allows for estimating the elements in the overall model simultaneously, and estimate the causal relationship between the latent concepts (Latent Constructs) through indicators that combine both measurement and structure of the theoretical model, measuring stability (recursive) and non-recursive relationships, measuring direct and indirect effects, including measurement error and residual correlation. Therefore, in this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to examine the extent to which factors including Value-added, Resilience, Perceived Uncertainty, Mass-media coverage, and Travel constraints are connected to the outcome variable (information-seeking behavior). IBM SPSS AMOS 23.0.0 was used for the SEM analysis.

4. Data analysis, finding, and discussion

4.1. Respondents' demographic

Analyzed data based on data collected from 256 valid questionnaires. The sample demographic information is summarized in the following table:

Table 1

Sample demographic

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	85	33.2
	Female	171	66.8
Geographical area	Binh Duong	147	57.4
	HCMC	79	22.7
	Binh Phuoc	19	13.3
	Dong Nai	11	6.6
Age	18 - 22 years old	129	50.39
	23 - 26 years old	113	44.14
	27 - 31 years old	14	5.47
Income	Under 05 million/month	63	24.6
	Above 10 - 15 million/month	63	24.6
	Above 15 - 20 million/month	28	10.9
	Above 20 - 25 million/month	8	3.1
	Above 25 million/month	10	3.9
	From 05 - 10 million/month	84	32.8
Education	University	151	59
	Post-graduate	15	5.85
	Others	90	35.15
Social media usage time	Less than 03 hours	30	11.70
	From 03 to 05 hours	86	33.60
	From 06 to 08 hours	98	38.30
	More than 08 hours	42	16.40

For online interactive platforms and sites, each respondent can choose many different platforms that they often use to find information about tourism. Social media platforms account for the most proportion of users who review tourism information, in particular, Facebook has the highest number of users, which is 233 for 91%; followed by YouTube and Instagram, which are 173 for 6.7% and 167 for 6.5%, respectively. In contrast, travel websites are less used. Specifically, Tripadvisor accounts for 36 as 1.4% of users, and Traveloka only has 01. It is clear that people nowadays are easily influenced by social networking and sharing sites for interaction and communication.

4.2. Validity of model measurement

The reliability of internal consistency is used to examine how well performance holds up across a number of items, as well as the homogeneity of those items. Table 2 shows all observed variables have Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.6, even greater than 0.9, achieved the threshold (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2014) also suggested that a scale that ensures unidirectionality and reliability. Thus, the scale is reliable and good for being used in CFA and SEM testing.

Table 2

Factor analysis of all measurement items

Construct	Code	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Value-added Attribute (VA)	VA1	0.691	0.836	0.814	0.522
	VA2	0.719			
	VA3	0.633			
	VA4	0.83			
	VA5	0.527			
	VA6	0.537			
Resilience (RS)	RS1	0.534	0.819	0.819	0.531
	RS2	0.62			
	RS3	0.591			
	RS4	0.811			
Mass-media Coverage (MC)	MC1	0.618	0.878	0.879	0.509
	MC2	0.780			
	MC3	0.781			
	MC4	0.629			
	MC5	0.756			
	MC6	0.722			
	MC7	0.709			

Construct	Code	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Travel Constraint (TC)	TC1	0.915	0.972	0.973	0.819
	TC2	0.905			
	TC3	0.887			
	TC4	0.908			
	TC5	0.909			
	TC6	0.882			
	TC7	0.908			
	TC8	0.914			
Perceived Uncertainty (PU)	PU1	0.859	0.914	0.915	0.642
	PU2	0.742			
	PU3	0.770			
	PU4	0.849			
	PU5	0.783			
	PU6	0.801			
Perceived Aroused (PA)	PA1	0.876	0.842	0.843	0.574
	PA2	0.696			
	PA3	0.697			
	PA4	0.716			
Information-seeking/sharing behavior	ISB1	0.549	0.867	0.867	0.521
	ISB2	0.669			
	ISB3	0.524			
	ISB4	0.731			
	ISB5	0.811			
	ISB6	0.725			

As presented in Table 2, the factor loading of the majority of items is above 0.7, even greater than 0.9, and the lowest loading is 0.524 which is a good quality observation variable (Hair et al., 2014). The concept of convergent validity refers to how well one measure correlates with others that are also used to measure the same construct (Clark-Carter, 1997). The result shows that Cronbach's Alpha ranged from 0.819 to 0.972, which is a good level used to signify the reliability of the scale. The Composite Reliability (CR) is between 0.814 to 0.973, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, the AVE value of each construct is from 0.521 to 0.819, which is above the AVE threshold of 0.5. Thus, the measurements in the study are proven to be reliable and ensure consistent convergence validity.

Table 3

Discriminant validity and correlation matrix

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	TC	MC	PU	ISB	VA	PA	RS
TC	0.973	0.819	0.118	0.973	0.905						
MC	0.879	0.509	0.37	0.88	-0.068	0.713					
PU	0.915	0.642	0.118	0.918	0.344***	0.153*	0.801				
ISB	0.867	0.521	0.37	0.869	-0.033	0.608***	0.335***	0.722			
VA	0.814	0.522	0.439	0.815	0.155*	0.480***	0.326***	0.522***	0.722		
PA	0.843	0.574	0.341	0.844	0.042	0.485***	0.230**	0.581***	0.477***	0.757	
RS	0.819	0.531	0.439	0.819	0.186*	0.416***	0.282***	0.454***	0.663***	0.584***	0.728

Note: Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), and Squire root of AVE in bold on diagonals.

Discriminant validity refers to the extent of dissimilarity between the intended measure and the measures used to indicate different constructs (Clark-Carter, 1997). Our study examined the discriminant validity of the scale through the square root of AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to the result in Table 8, all the inter-correlations between the constructs are lower than the square root of AVE. All the values satisfied the condition AVE greater than MSV. For this reason, the findings ensure discriminant validity.

4.3. Structural equation model

The examination of SEM analysis was to validate or invalidate the hypothesized causal relationships within a study model. Initial focus was given to the requirements for the model’s compatibility with the survey data. The criteria for assessing whether SEM or CFA best fits the data are identical. These criteria are as follows: CMIN/DF < 5 (n > 200) or CMIN/DF < 3 (n < 200), CFI > 0.9, GFI > 0.9, TLI > 0.9, and RMSEA < 0.08.

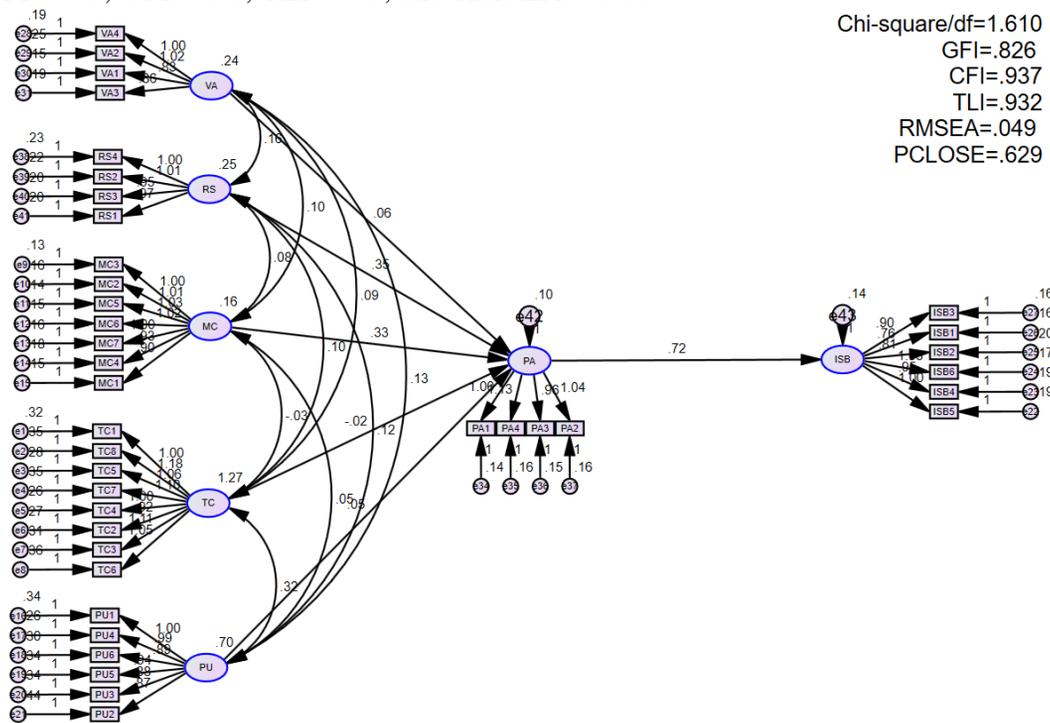


Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling result after adjusting theoretical model

The model of SEM has the Chi-square/degree of freedom is 1.610 lower than 3. The other indexes as GFI = 0.826, CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932. While GFI is lower than 0.9, CFI, and TLI are greater than 0.9 and RMSEA is 0.049 below the 0.08 standard. Therefore, the relevance of the model with measured data can be acceptable.

Table 4

SEM - Regression Weights

	Casual paths		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Estimate
PA	<---	VA	0.063	0.085	0.74	0.459	0.073
PA	<---	RS	0.353	0.085	4.142	***	0.411
PA	<---	MC	0.327	0.079	4.143	***	0.311
PA	<---	TC	-0.025	0.023	-1.072	0.284	-0.065
PA	<---	PU	0.048	0.033	1.448	0.148	0.094
ISB	<---	PA	0.724	0.09	8.045	***	0.635

Note: ***p values = 0.000

Using the 95% confidence standard, the significance of VA affecting PA is $0.459 > 0.05$, which means that the variable VA has no effect on PA; the significance of TC affecting PA is $0.284 > 0.05$, so the TC variable has no effect on PA; the significance of PU acting on PA is $0.148 > 0.05$, so the variable PU has no support on PA. The remaining variables all have a significance equal to 0.000, so these relationships are all significant. Thus, there are 02 variables affecting PA including RS and MA. Finally, the mediate variable PA has an impact on the outcome variable ISB. Consequently, for the six hypotheses, we reject H1, H3, and H5 and accept the remaining hypotheses.

4.4. Discussion

Table 4 shows Resilience has a positive impact on Perceived aroused with the greatest weight (0.411). This result is consistent with the finding of Smith and Emerson (2017). They suggested that resilience may protect individuals from the negative effects of stress and/or facilitate a speedy recovery from acute behavioral and psychological distresses. Mass media coverage positively affects Perceived aroused is supported and this links with the previous study (Zillmann, 1971). The study believes that people's degree of arousal can be rapidly triggered by exposure to engaging media content, which can then be transferred to subsequent experiences to heighten emotional responses to those experiences. Interestingly, Value added, has no significant influence on the Perceived aroused. The results of this investigation are inconsistent with the basis of the prior studies (Al-Debei, Dwivedi, & Hujran, 2022; Litvin, 2008). It says that when destinations can give visitors novelty experiences, it may lead increase in the level of travelers' arousal about seeking experiences that provide new sources of stimulation. Travel constraints presented by H4 do not impact the Perceived aroused. This result is inconsistent with the previous research (Lehto, Douglas, & Park, 2008). The study of Lehto et al. (2008), discovered that emotional reactions to pleasure, arousal, and dominance are greatly impacted by a natural disaster. This means that an infectious pandemic like Covid-19 can negatively affect people's mental well-being and stimulate travel. Nevertheless, this study found that there are so many problems related to travel obstacles that tourists are no longer interested in traveling after the

epidemic, so the search for destination information is also limited. Next, H5 proposes that perceived uncertainty factors do not affect on perceived arousal. This finding is inconsistent with the result of FeldmanHall, Glimcher, Baker, and Phelps (2016). Accordingly, psychological uncertainty associated with not knowing the probability of an outcome (ambiguity) elicits greater arousal than risk uncertainty. Lastly, Perceived arousal presented by H6 impacts positively Information-seeking behavior. This result is consistent with the finding as well as the conclusions of previous studies (Wang, Xie, Huang, & Morrison, 2020). A person's cognitive ability and behavioral responses may be influenced by their level of arousal, so, the level of arousal significantly influences subsequent behavior (Wang et al., 2020).

5. Conclusions

This paper was written in response to the need for contingency plans of recovery in times of tourism-related crisis. The results confirm the identification of perceived uncertainty, resilience, value-added, mass-media coverage, and travel constraints have influential associations with perceived arouse and further lead to seeking behavior of travel information towards international trips.

5.1. Implications for theory and practice

The findings of this study can make a few contributions to the existing literature on the information-seeking behavior of travelers. First, most prior studies have focused on information-seeking behavior related to the medical sector (Dadaczynski et al., 2021; McMullan, Berle, Arnáez, & Starcevic, 2019; Soroya, Farooq, Mahmood, Isoaho, & Zara, 2021), there are still limit studies on tourism areas. Furthermore, this study is the first to investigate the connection between pandemic-related concerns (such as Covid-19 worries and uncertainty), the media, value-added, resilience, and international tourist destination information-seeking behavior following the recovery pandemic phase. Realizing that knowing the elements that drive travelers' information-seeking behavior about a place can provide tourism policymakers and service providers with extensive literature to aid the recovery of the global tourism industry following the pandemic. Second, this research examines if traveler psychological factors (perceived uncertainty and resilience), external factors (value-added, mass-media coverage, and travel constraints), and perceived arousal, affect the behavior of seeking information about international destinations of young travelers. In addition, this research was conducted with the mediating variable perceived arousal as a relationship between perceived uncertainty, resilience, value-added, mass-media coverage, and travel constraints to stimulate visitors' information searching. Some researchers have claimed that the above-mentioned psychological elements and external factors strongly influence the information-seeking behavior of tourists. However, relatively little research utilizes perceived arousal as a meditative measure to examine the accuracy of the hypothesis that psychological and external factors stimulate tourists to seek information, especially in the post-pandemic context. Therefore, the empirical evidence regarding the indirect effect of these variables on the relationship between perceived arousal on information-seeking behavior becomes a major contribution of the study to the travelers' behavior literature. Third, previous studies indicate that visitors' plans to visit a destination following the Covid-19 epidemic may relate to how much information they believe to have been obtained from social media (Bhati et al., 2021; Su, Yang, Swanson, & Chen, 2021; Zhu, Zhao, & Wang, 2022). The current study provides empirical evidence regarding the significance of social media platforms in motivating travelers to seek out tourism-related information. The findings clarified that travelers were more likely to search for information about travel opportunities across a variety of social media outlets. This also indicates that providing credible information

from the media, whether traditional media or alternative media, is vital in the tourist decision-making process. This study supports the findings of prior research (Qiao et al., 2022), which indicate that mass media have a considerable influence on people's attitudes. The timely provision of information on the Covid-19 pandemic by the mass media, whether positive or negative, also affects tourists' information-seeking behavior. Finally, this study also found that an individual's psychological resilience greatly influences decision-making to seek information about tourist destinations. When travelers have psychological resilience, they easily adapt to unexpected events that occur during travel, and they also quickly process feelings of fear during the trip (Rodriguez-Llanes, Vos, & Guha-Sapir, 2013; Xie, Zhang, & Huang, 2022), so tourists who are not psychologically resilient will feel fear towards international travel even if the pandemic is officially over. Moreover, this research established a connection between mass-media coverage and the resilience of visitors after the post-pandemic calendar. As shown in the findings, Gaffar, Tjahjono, Abdullah, and Sukmayadi (2022) reveal that media value is positively correlated with public perception of a country and also to keep increasing promotion on social media to raise interest in a natural tourist spot by interactions through like, tag and share. Thus, the more positive the media coverage is, the more favorable the public's image of a country will be, and their psychological resilience will be greater than if they were exposed to bad media coverage.

This present study has some significant implications for practice. First, as indicated in our research findings, mass-media coverage and resilience are important factors that induce perceived arousal in information-seeking toward travel destinations. Our analysis reveals that there is a lot of positive information about the pandemic situation of the destination on social networking platforms that can resilience the psychology of tourists after a long period of crisis. Furthermore, Mass media can be leveraged to keep the public informed during pandemics, since its importance in our daily lives is growing. In the event of a pandemic, the public's reliance on the media for pandemic information, influences their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (Cheung, Ting, Cheah, & Sharipudin, 2021; Tsai & Bui, 2021). Specifically, young people rely on social media platforms as their primary source of information. Having a thorough understanding of the media's effect on the situation might be beneficial for advancing public health communication strategies and reducing people's anxiety (Bohr & Memarzadeh, 2020; Liu, Liu, Yoganathan, & Osburg, 2021). Thus, DMOs in different countries in the world should pay attention to these factors to create successful marketing strategies to attract travelers to visit foreign destinations after the recovery period. Second, people frequently feel that by providing additional services, such as cooking classes, romantic vacation packages, and free outdoor activities, they will be able to attract more tourists. However, the findings of this study showed that travelers were not motivated to seek out information about specific tourist destinations by these supplemental values. It is possible that the existence of these aspects, which are frequently unexpected by tourists, will increase the visitors' level of satisfaction or enjoyment rather than prompt them to seek additional information about the tourist sites they are seeing. Therefore, in addition to improving service quality in tourist destinations, policymakers and service providers should adopt strategies to alleviate public fear by providing detailed positive news regarding the country's recovery from the pandemic. Third, even though the present pandemic crisis is still occurring globally, the success of urging individuals to receive the full dose of the vaccine has lowered the number of fatalities and serious cases, even if the virus is still spreading continues to evolve. As a result of the return to normal following the pandemic, travel has grown easier. Visitors shared their vacations abroad on several social networks during the pandemic recovery,

which reduced uncertainties about the destination and increased the majority of young Vietnamese tourists' enthusiasm to travel. Therefore, marketers could build groups to share vacation experiences, update more positive information about locations, including outbreaks, and implement appropriate marketing strategies.

5.2. Limitation and recommendation

Although this research provides significant contributions, it has certain limitations that should be pointed out. Firstly, the data for this research were collected by an online survey from residents in areas around Binh Duong Province which may limit the generalizability of the findings. It is possible that some people will actively avoid participating in a social media survey. Furthermore, its short duration and small sample size also make it unlikely that its findings are representative of young travelers generally. Future studies can apply face-to-face surveys and launch investigations in larger sample sizes that cover a wider geographical area, including major urban centers like Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and Danang to increase the reliability of the data. Secondly, this research is that the data were collected using a cross-sectional self-reporting method, which could introduce some bias into the conclusions. As a result, future researchers ought to concentrate their efforts on conducting experimental studies to further study the relationship between the variables. For generalizing the findings, it is also required to do a replication of the study in a different country. Furthermore, this study applied quantitative analysis to explore the relationship between value-added, resilience, mass media coverage, perceived uncertainty, travel constraint, perceived aroused, and information-seeking behavior. A mix-method approach or qualitative analysis can be used in future studies to better explain the theoretical framework, which is necessary due to the complexity of the model (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). Finally, translation restrictions can also be challenging. Foreigners can easily comprehend an English question, but when translated into Vietnamese for a survey of Vietnamese individuals, the question's meaning may alter significantly, causing respondents to misunderstand the meaning of the question and give unreasonable answers. This diminishes the precision and dependability of the survey data. It is advisable to examine the language and terminology attentively, or to conduct a preliminary poll to determine if persons understand them.

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