
TOURISM TRAVEL POST-PANDEMIC: DRIVERS AND VALUE CO-CREATION

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the factors that affect people's attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic. Additionally, it aims to examine how attitude affects people's intentions to travel for tourism as well as to engage in value co-creation based on their experiences. This study used a deductive approach with a single cross-sectional survey using a structural questionnaire to test the proposed model. Data was collected from a random sample of Egyptian travelers and resulted in 251 usable questionnaires. Partial least squares-structural equation modelling was used to analyze data. Results indicate that safety measures, social media involvement and destination health risk are significant factors. The results also show that perceived risk mediates the relationship between social media involvement and attitude toward travel. Additionally, attitude has a significant impact on travel intentions as well as value co-creation. This study fills a research gap by developing a well-integrated model to study the variables that affect post-pandemic travel for tourism purposes, as well as what leads customers to assume a more active role through engaging in value co-creation with travel destinations, which is something seen as especially important now, for the recovery process of the tourism sector.

Keywords: *Tourism Travel, Consumer Behavior, Post-Pandemic, Value Co-Creation, Egypt*

Introduction

One of the sectors that has been largely hit by the pandemic is the tourism sector. Even though the pandemic is almost over, it is believed that a quick return to pre-COVID-19 levels in the tourism industry is unlikely to happen since people's health concerns are likely to stay, resulting in a continued aversion to travel, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Shin et al., 2022). Travel and tourism are not constraint free, and especially now as people are still recovering from the stresses caused by the pandemic over almost three years (Nghiem-Phu, 2022). Traveling for tourism has been particularly impacted as people still prioritize travel for important family or business matters rather than for recreation and relaxation.

The tourism industry is largely dependent on the consumer's confidence in the travel process. Several travel concerns may prevent people from traveling including health risks and the possibility of catching an infectious disease, travel restrictions, safety issues, among others (Rončák et al., 2021; Srivastava et al., 2022). These travel concerns impact people's intention to travel as well as their choice of destinations. Researchers have given a lot of attention to the effect of the pandemic on the tourism industry. A lot of these studies focused on travel during the pandemic with still scant literature on tourism-based travel post-pandemic and the factors that need to be addressed in order to help the tourism sector recover (Srivastava et al., 2023). Encouraging tourism travel post-pandemic is important in order to help revive the tourism industry and to compensate for the losses made during the pandemic. Also, investigating what leads customers to take a more active role through engaging in value co-creation with travel destinations, is something seen as especially important now, for the recovery process of the tourism sector. Thus, it is particularly relevant to post-pandemic travel.

This research aims to fill this gap by testing a well-integrated model, based on the theory of planned behavior, observation and discussion with stakeholders, to study the factors that affect people's intentions to travel for tourism post-pandemic, as well as to contribute to tourism development through value co-creation. The theory of planned behavior was seen as relevant to this study as it captures the attitude-intention-behavior component that this study aims to examine. However, both subjective norms and behavioral control, were

not brought up as relevant factors when authors, at the outset of this research, investigated the factors that are relevant for this context of study. Based on both observation as well as detailed discussions and chats with several Egyptians who travel both domestically as well as internationally, the authors were able to identify factors that were repeatedly mentioned. These factors were related to safety of travel, risks associated with travel, destination image, communication on travel destination on media platforms, as well as travelers' state of mind and mental well-being. Authors examined these factors along with literature that covered travel during and post-pandemic (Jiang & Qin, 2022; Chebli et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022). Additionally, when asked about what might encourage travelers to provide feedback to travel destination and be more active in co-creation of content, authors found that attitude about travel as well as post-pandemic travel intentions were mentioned as main factors. Thus, this study proposes that there is a link between having a positive intention to travel post-pandemic and engaging in value co-creation.

This research has two key objectives as follows:

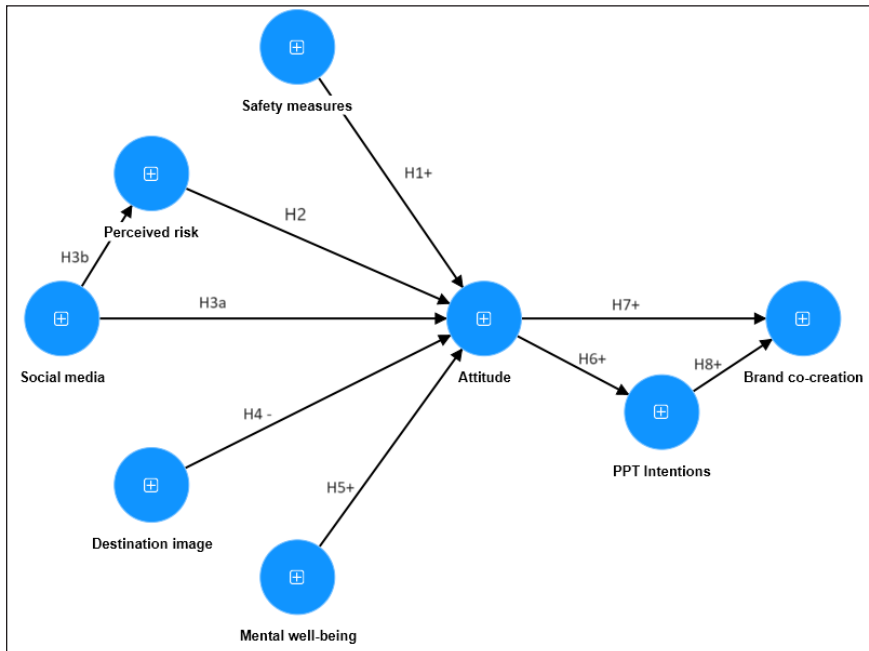
- Examine the impact of safety measures, perceived risk, social media involvement, destination image and mental well-being on attitude, which in turn impacts people's intention to travel for tourism post-pandemic. The mediation effect of perceived risk between social media involvement and attitude is also examined in this context.
- Examine the impact of attitude and post-pandemic leisure travel intention on tourism development through value co-creation.

This research contributions are two-fold. First, it examines the impact of several key factors including safety, risk, destination image, mental well-being as well as social media involvement on attitude and intention to travel for tourism post-pandemic and thus it provides important insights for tourism-based travel intentions post-pandemic. In addition, it measures the mediation effect on the relationship between social media involvement and attitude toward travel. Second, it provides insights about what leads travelers to participate in constructive feedback and discussion on their destination experience, thus contribute to tourism development through value co-creation. Additionally, it focuses on Egypt, a country with rich tourism profile, as the context of study and thus extends the fast-growing research on post-pandemic travel and tourism to an emerging market context. The following section discusses the theoretical background.

Theoretical Background and Model Development

The research model adopted in this study is developed based on three sources; previous literature, observation and detailed discussions with Egyptian travelers, as well as the theory of planned behavior the basic theory being examined. The model covers diverse factors affecting attitude toward tourism travel and resulting behavior. The basis for theorizing here is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), that proposes that a person's attitude toward something impacts one's intention to act and consequently behavior. Additionally, a person's subjective norms and perceived behavioral control also impact one's behavior (Ajzen, 1991). However, in this research both subjective norms and behavioral control were not seen as relevant to context of this study, and they were not brought up as relevant factors affecting intention to travel, when investigating the topic with Egyptian travelers at the outset of this research. Additionally, this research seeks to examine the attitude-intention-behavior component of the TPB. The TPB is a widely used psychological model in predicting human behavior and that has been applied in different contexts, including the tourism sector (Chaulagain et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020b). This research proposes that five variables namely, safety measures, perceived risk, social media involvement, destination image and mental well-being are expected to have an impact on attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic. The relationship between social media involvement and attitude is mediated by perceived risk, as social media exposure can be either positive or negative impact on attitude depending on the type of exposure (Mohamed et al., 2023; Tapsall et al., 2022). It also proposes that attitude is expected to have an impact on post-pandemic travel intention, as well as value co-creation. This proposed relationship between attitude and value co-creation aims to explore a relatively new and unexplored area. Previous research indicates that co-creation activities intensified during COVID-19 (Sharma, 2021) in various contexts. The Tourism industry is one of those, whereby research indicated that tourists' attitudes positively affected brand co-creation during COVID-19 (Rather, 2021). This research aims to explore this relationship further in the context of leisure travel.

Fig. 1 depicts the research model, and the following sections provide an explanation of the variables used in this research.



*H3c: Social media -> Perceived risk -> Attitude

Fig. 1: Research Model

Safety Measures

Safe travel is considered to be one of the most fundamental factors in travel (Roncak et al., 2021). Ensuring safety is crucial for deciding on the destination to visit as well as the type of activities to do especially in unknown or non-previously visited locations (Teng et al., 2014). Safety measures through lockdowns during pandemics help in reducing the number of infected people and spreading the pandemic. COVID-19 has resulted in social distancing and control measures to limit the virus (Shin et al., 2022). Safety measures are important for all types of travel including leisure travel as they reduce the stresses caused by travel (Nghiem-Phu, 2022).

The safe travel issue has tremendously increased especially after the COVID-19 pandemic since travelers became more concerned about their hygiene, safety, and health, especially in accommodation places, means of transportation, touristic activities, as well as restaurants (Rončák et al., 2021;

Sigala, 2020). Hence, travelers carefully investigate safety measures taken in any potential country to decide on the safest destination to travel to (Wen et al., 2020). The lack of safety measures is directly related to perceived risk (Silva Lopes et al., 2021). Thus, travelers will probably shift from a country that suffers from safety risks or lack of serious safety measures to a safer option (Rončák et al., 2021). Against this backdrop, it is expected that;

H1 Intensive safety measures is expected to have a positive significant impact on attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic.

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk refers to people's perception of risk attributes and their level of severity (Chen et al., 2023). Thoughts about risk are thus related to people's perceived vulnerability and severity (Yang & Wibowo, 2022). Perceived risk in the tourism context might refer to travelers' worry about catching a disease while traveling (Wang et al., 2022). Travelers avoid traveling to high-risk destinations especially those associated with terrorism, pandemics, or natural disasters (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Perceived risk has a negative impact on attitude toward travel which in turn adversely affects intention to travel (Hanafiah et al., 2021). Jiang and Qin (2022) indicate that perceived risk has proven to have a negative effect on travel intention, as they are associated with negative thoughts about traveling. A similar result was reached by Ye et al. (2024) who found that perceived risk of COVID-19 was a direct deterrent of travel intentions. Travelers' risk perceptions do affect their travel intentions (Casidy & Wymer, 2016). Research indicated that during the pandemic, tourist's perceived risk was high (Matiza, 2022). Additionally, even after the pandemic, research indicated that there is a significant effect of perceived risk on travel decisions, including choice of travel destinations, when to travel and how to travel (Zhong et al., 2023). This was even more evident with more vulnerable groups like seniors and people with disabilities, who did not return to their normal travel levels even after the pandemic was over (Peng et al., 2024).

H2: Perceived risk of travel post-pandemic is expected to have a negative significant impact on attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic.

Social Media Involvement

Social media has a critical role in the field of tourism since it is a trusted method for obtaining data about destinations whereby travelers share their stories, pictures, and videos that impact other tourists' decisions about traveling

(Javed et al., 2020). Social media has a strong impact on travel intention since it is a major source of information (Javed et al., 2020). Customer engagement on social media has proved to have significant impact on travel intention (Rather, 2021).

There has been recent focus in literature on the impact of social media involvement on people's attitude towards tourism and repeat visits (Bae & Chang, 2021). Good content on social media about a destination is thought to have an important impact on people's desire to visit that destination (Tsai & Hsin, 2023). Previous research indicates that social media exposure during the pandemic has played an important role in shaping people's risk perceptions (Lokmanoglu et al., 2023). The pandemic exposure on social media platforms has largely influenced tourists' risk perceptions which affected their attitude toward travel (Bhati et al., 2021). According to Lim and Chang (2024), social media influences travelers' emotional responses and thus impacts their intention to travel. Social media may have positive or negative impact on people's attitudes during major health threats, for example, it was found to have a positive effect on people's protective behavior during the pandemic (Mohamed et al., 2023). According to Azhar et al. (2023), sharing travel news, information and travelers' reviews on social media has had a positive effect on travel intentions post-pandemic. However, exposure to social media and online news during the pandemic did not necessarily result in positive thoughts about travel, as negative things communicated led to fear and anxiety about travel (McClinchey & Dimanche, 2023). Even when traveling post-pandemic, or what some researchers called "the new normal", risk perceptions still had a negative impact on people's attitude toward travel (Srivastava et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023).

Based on the above, it can be argued that:

H3: Tourism based social media involvement is expected to have a significant impact on a) attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic, b) perceived risk associated with post-pandemic travel.

Considering the direct effect of the perceived risk on the attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic, the indirect relationship between the social media involvement and attitude can be hypothesized as follows:

H3c Perceived risk is expected to mediate the relationship between social media involvement and attitude toward travel post-pandemic.

Destination Image

Destination image is a key factor that influences travel plans, travelers' views of a place, choice of a destination, as well as satisfaction with a trip (Tavitiyaman et al., 2021). Tourism destination image has a strong impact on travel intention and destination choice among young people (Le et al., 2023; Shandilya & Srivastava, 2024). It also impacts travelers' perception of risks posed by different destinations when traveling post-pandemic (Zheng et al., 2021). Many countries around the world have relied on COVID-19 certificate as a tool to reopen and revive the tourism sector, as well as reduce health risk to travelers (Chebli et al., 2022).

The pandemic has reshaped the perceptions of destinations, particularly those with high infection rates (Zenker & Kock, 2020). For instance, China being considered as one of the highly affected destinations during the early phases of the pandemic, has had a severe impact on its image as a destination (Lu & Atadil, 2021). Tourism destinations that are highly crowded areas are perceived as less safe in terms of health risks posed. Thus, tourism operators must determine the best way to manage tourist experience, especially in the phase post-pandemic (Wen et al., 2020). It is important to study destination image in the post-pandemic phase as it will provide important insights for the recovery of the industry (Lu & Atadil, 2021). Based on the above, it can be argued that;

H4: Destination based health risk image is expected to have a negative significant impact on attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic.

Mental Well-Being

The World Health Organization defines mental well-being as “a condition in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the usual demands of life, can work successfully and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2005). According to Fredrickson (2009), keeping a broad mind, thinking positively, and shutting off fear thoughts, can have a positive impact on your mental well-being.

COVID-19 pandemic has lowered people's wellbeing by causing them to experience more unpleasant feelings like worry, fear, and loneliness, due to lack of physical contact and changes in careers, which negatively affected their social and mental wellbeing (Yurcu, 2022). According to Aebli et al. (2021) primary travel motives during the pandemic included socio-psychological needs for mental wellbeing, social connectedness, as well as relaxation.

Several studies found a significant relationship between fear of COVID-19 and mental well-being (Ahorsu et al., 2022). According to Wang and Gao (2022), travel well-being, mood and travel satisfaction are three related variables, especially post-pandemic. Additionally, according to McDermid et al. (2022), COVID-19 had a significant negative influence on people's mental health and their capacity to travel due to the long-term lockdown, multiple flight changes, anxiety related to health concerns, and lack of financial support. This is confirmed by Wdowicka et al. (2024), who indicated that the pandemic has created stress level that affected travelers' well-being, even after the pandemic is over. Moreover, it was found that a significant relationship exists between fear of COVID-19 and travel intention (Gajic et al., 2021). Based on the above, it can be argued that,

H5: Mental wellbeing is expected to have a positive significant impact on attitude toward tourism travel post-pandemic.

Attitude

Attitude serves as a good indicator of behavior, participation, and satisfaction (Zarabi et al., 2019). People are expected to have positive travel intentions when they have a pleasant attitude regarding travelling (Shen et al., 2019). Several studies investigated the relationship between attitude and travel intentions during COVID-19 and significant relationships were found (Shin et al., 2022). Previous research also shows that there is a positive impact of attitude and travel intentions post-pandemic (Li et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant to tourism travel, which is not mandatory travel but a choice that people make at their own luxury, and thus attitude plays an important role in this shaping people's behavior in this context (Azhar et al., 2023). According to Kusumawati et al. (2024), creating a brand personality for the tourism destination is critical post COVID, as it impacts travelers' experience and attitude toward the destination.

Attitude is related to behavior as indicated by the Theory of planned behavior, and customer value co-creation behavior is no exception (Kwon & Namkung, 2022). Consumers' attitudes affect their participation in service interactions and whether they are active or passive (Tommasetti et al., 2015). A more positive attitude toward services encourages customers to engage in value co-creation through sharing experience, providing feedback and/or participating in discussions (Grönroos et al., 2015).

The relationship between tourists' attitude and their intention for value co-creation had also been explored and it was found that positive attitude toward

travel encourages active participation and value co-creation activities (Zu et al., 2022). Travelers who have a more positive attitude toward travel post-pandemic are more expected to engage in value co-creation by participating and sharing information about their travel experiences with other visitors (Alzaydi & Elsharnouby, 2023). Prior research provided evidence that co-creation activities intensified particularly during COVID-19 (Sharma, 2021). Additionally, research provided evidence that tourists' attitudes had a positive effect on brand co-creation in the tourism industry during COVID-19 (Rather, 2021).

Based on the above, it is expected that:

H6: Favorable attitude towards tourism is expected to have a positive significant impact on intention to travel for tourism post-pandemic.

H7: Favorable attitude towards tourism is expected to have a positive significant impact on value co-creation.

Post-Pandemic Tourism Travel Intentions and Value Co-Creation

Travelers' attitudes and value co-creation dramatically affect people's travel behavior and support for tourist destinations that are attempting to recover after the pandemic (Duong et al., 2022). According to Campolo et al. (2024) the intention to travel among younger age groups and the willingness to spend longer vacations was seen to increase post-pandemic in comparison to during the pandemic. Additionally, according to Chan et al. (2015), behavioral intentions are linked to co-creation experiences that include sharing positive or negative experiences through word-of-mouth, complaints or recommendations. Similarly, Rather (2021) indicates that customer engagement has a positive impact on co-creation and revisit intention. Moreover, Sengel et al. (2023) indicate that travelers' anxiety about the pandemic had a negative impact on their travel behavior even after the pandemic.

Value co-creation studies have discussed how consumers are becoming more active in developing the services and goods they consume rather than choosing from predetermined options (Prebensen et al., 2013). Co-creation, from a business perspective, entails considering tourists as participants in the design, production, and consumption of travel experiences. The level of tourist participation in this process determines the essence of this encounter. According to Xu et al. (2022) sharing insightful travel tips and stories with people, enhances travelers' emotional connections with a place, ultimately raising their level of engagement. According to Seifollahi and Ghahnavieh

(2022), tourist locations should depend on value co-creation through social media platforms to allay tourists' worries and perceptions of risks as well as to shape their perception of the destination. To support tourism, marketers and tourism stakeholders can use social media to impact travelers' interaction with brands, boost participation, and ultimately affect behavioral intentions and the joint creation of brand value and re-intention (Seifollahi & Ghahnavieh, 2022). Based on the above, it can be argued that;

H8: Post-pandemic tourism travel intentions are expected to have a positive significant impact on value co-creation.

Method

In order to test the model, this study used a deductive approach with single cross-sectional survey using a structural questionnaire. All variables were measured based on existing scales. Items of each variable were adopted from previously valid and well-established scales and adapted to the tourism context. A five-point Likert scale was used. The research model was tested using Structural equation modelling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS).

Measures

The first part of the questionnaire measures the dependent variables; post-pandemic travel intentions and value co-creation. Post-pandemic travel intentions was measured using three statements being: I intend to travel for tourism as soon as I can, I am planning to travel for tourism in the coming short/medium term, I intend to do so; I will invest time and money to travel for leisure in the coming short/medium term. Value co creation was measured four statements being; I am interested to participate in this co-creation experience, I intend to be actively involved in this co creation experience, I have used my experience from previous visits to arrange for this trip and I have the intention to discuss this co creation experience with the service provider.

The second part covers independent variables followed by the demographic questions. Sources of scales from literature are as follows: post-pandemic travel intentions (Sánchez-Cañizares, 2021); value co-creation (Rather, 2021); safety measures (Agag et al., 2020); perceived risk (Tavitiyaman et al., 2013); social media involvement (Rather, 2021); mental well-being (Golets et al., 2021); destination health risk image (Carvalho, 2021); attitude (Quintal et al., 2010).

Population and Sample

The research population includes Egyptians who travel for tourism purposes inside or outside Egypt. A filter question was used at the outset of the questionnaire to know if respondents have traveled for tourism purposes during or post-pandemic. The sample size was determined based on a number of factors namely; nature of research, number of variables examined, as well as method of analysis (Malhotra et al., 2013). According to Hair et al. (2019), the minimum sample size for conducting (PLS-SEM) is at least 10 times the maximum number of exogenous variables per endogenous variable. A random sample of tourism travelers was used in this research. Data collection was done online from a consumer panel with the aid of a data collection company, and took three months from March 2022 to May 2022. The sample targeted through this online panel included Egyptians who reside in Cairo and Alexandria. The reason why these two cities were chosen to be part of the survey is that they are the most densely populated cities in Egypt representing around 30% of Egypt’s population in 2022. Also, these two cities include residents who are more financially capable to travel than other areas in Egypt that are more rural areas, and thus were deemed to encompass respondents targeted for this research. A total of 290 surveys were collected out of which 251 were usable surveys. Table 1 illustrates the sample characteristics.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent	Variable	Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent	
Cities	Cairo	188	74.9	Employment	Searching for a job	20	8.0	
	Alex	63	25.1		Part time job	45	17.9	
	Total	251	100.0		Full time job	119	47.4	
Gender	Male	125	49.8		Student	10	4.0	
	Female	126	50.2		Retired	57	22.7	
	Total	251	100.0		Total	251	100.0	
Age	18–30	63	25.1		Purpose	Holiday	144	57.4
	31–40	63	25.1			Business trip	9	3.6
	41-50	63	25.1			Family/ friends	19	7.6
	51-60	39	15.5	Other		79	31.5	
	Over 60	23	9.2	Total		251	100.0	
	Total	251	100.0					

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent	Variable	Categories	Frequency	Valid Percent
Education level	High school	46	18.3	Education level	Master's degree	9	3.6
	Bachelor's degree	187	74.5		Doctoral degree	9	3.6
	Total	251	100.0				

Data Analysis

Common Method Bias (CMB)

One sampling unit at one point of time, using one instrument, was used to collect the data, thus, the shared variance between the measurement items may exist. To check the absence of the CMB, two approaches have been followed: Harman's one factor, and full collinearity assessment. Using exploratory factor analysis and pooling all measurement items of the latent variables in the questionnaire, the first extracted factor (Harman's one factor) allocates 31.16% out of 69.21% of total extracted factors' variance, which is less than 50% (Jordan & Troth, 2020). Therefore, CMB is not of concern here.

Table 2: Variance Inflation Factor for PLS-CMB

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variables							
	Attitude	Brand Co-Creation	Destination Image	Mental Well-Being	PPT Intentions	Perceived Risk	Safety Measures	Social Media
Attitude		2.159	2.237	2.142	1.584	2.209	2.216	2.140
Brand co-creation	1.559		1.621	1.610	1.615	1.620	1.638	1.409
Destination image	1.512	1.525		1.539	1.527	1.527	1.364	1.429
Mental well-being	1.241	1.241	1.266		1.266	1.158	1.258	1.264

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variables							
	Attitude	Brand Co-Creation	Destination Image	Mental Well-Being	PPT Intentions	Perceived Risk	Safety Measures	Social Media
PPT intentions	1.266	1.781	1.795	1.779		1.795	1.800	1.792
Perceived risk	1.365	1.392	1.402	1.280	1.391		1.344	1.391
Safety measures	1.565	1.591	1.412	1.585	1.598	1.524		1.586
Social media	1.973	1.801	1.934	2.088	2.062	2.031	2.070	

Additionally, the full collinearity assessment can be applied with Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), by assigning each variable as the sole endogenous variable in the model and all other variables should have effects on that variable. Following a rotation method, all variables are assigned in the sole endogenous position. Then, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) between each possible pair of exogenous variables is less than 3.3 (Hair et al., 2019) as in Table 2. Therefore, it can be confirmed that no CMB exists.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM, using Partial Least Squares (PLS), was conducted to test the proposed relationships in the current conceptual model as it gained its widespread in Tourism (Sarstedt et al., 2022), and Marketing (Sarstedt et al., 2022) research disciplines. A two-stage approach was followed to apply the PLS-SEM. While the first stage aimed to validate the measurement model, the second stage focused on testing the structural model (Hair et al., 2020). To this end, the PLS-SEM was performed using Smart PLS v.4.0.9.6 (Becker et al., 2022).

In terms of the measurement model, Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA) steps were followed (Hair et al., 2020). The first step included assessing measurement items' reliability. In this regard, the outer loadings of all items were above 0.708 except for risk 3, which has a loading of 0.635. This loading, however, is higher than 0.4 and all other measurement items' loadings of at the same construct are above 0.708, which can substitute for the

lower loading of risk 3 and thus it can be retained. In addition, the construct reliability assessment via Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) criteria proved the reliability presence since each construct had a value of 0.7 at least for each measure. Moreover, the convergent validity of each construct is established as each construct had Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.5 as a minimum (Hair et al., 2021). Finally, the Heterotrait-Multitrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations of each construct was less than 0.85, which indicates that discriminant validity exists. This has been proven by the Fornell-Larcker criterion as the correlations between each construct and all other constructs are less than the square root of its AVE (Henseler et al., 2015) as is shown in Table 3. The measurement model can be validated without removing any weak or cross loaded items; thus, the structural model can be assessed. With regards to the structural model, the first step is to check the multicollinearity issue among the exogenous variables. It can be seen that the VIF between each pair of exogenous variables was less than 3 (Hair et al., 2021), which proves the lack of multicollinearity, as can be seen in Table 4. Overall, the model is well-fitting as the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.055 which is less than 0.08. However, it is worth noting that the Goodness of Fit indices use in PLS-SEM is still underdevelopment (Guenther et al., 2023). With regards to the mediation analysis, it is expected that social media involvement affects traveler’s perceived risk which in turn affects their attitude toward travel. Thus, social media involvement impacts attitude towards travel but through perceived risk, which mediates the relationship. Structural equation modeling was conducted to help examine the causal connections between social media involvement and attitude toward travel but through perceived risk, the mediator.

Table 4: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for Structural Model Assessment

Exogenous Variables	Endogenous Variables			
	Attitude	Brand Co-Creation	PPT Intentions	Perceived Risk
Destination image	1.502			
Mental well-being	1.229			
Perceived risk	1.360			
Safety measures	1.522			
Social media	1.452			1.000
Attitude		1.752	1.000	
PPT intentions		1.752		

Table 5: Path Coefficients Assessment (one-tail test)

H	Path	Beta	F ²	t-Calculated	P Values	5.0% (2.5% Two-Tail)	95.0% (97.5% Two Tail)	Decision
1+	Safety measures -> Attitude	0.204	0.042	2.398	0.008	0.062	0.345	Supported***
2	Perceived risk -> Attitude	0.143	0.023	1.808	0.071	-0.023	0.289	Not supported
3a	Social media -> Attitude	0.468	0.231	6.452	0.000	0.316	0.603	Supported****
3b	Social media -> Perceived risk	0.368	0.156	5.762	0.000	0.24	0.492	Supported****
3c	Social media -> Perceived risk -> Attitude	0.052		1.707	0.088	-0.008	0.113	Supported*
4-	Destination image -> Attitude	-0.090	0.008	1.452	0.073	-0.184	0.019	Supported*
5+	Mental well-being -> Attitude	-0.083	0.008	1.308	0.095	-0.164	0.038	Not supported
6+	Attitude -> PPT Intentions	0.655	0.752	13.944	0.000	0.574	0.729	Supported****
7+	Attitude -> co-creation	0.474	0.159	5.491	0.000	0.331	0.615	Supported****
8+	PPT Intentions -> co-creation	-0.055	0.002	0.620	0.268	-0.201	0.089	Not supported

To this end, the path coefficients can be assessed as in Table 5. It is worth noting that the effect size should be explained with the path coefficient since the significant path coefficient does not guarantee strong effect size. Accordingly, the F^2 of 2%, 15%, and 35% indicates weak, moderate, and strong effect sizes, respectively (Becker et al., 2022).

Results Discussion

As is shown in Table 5, five out of the eight hypotheses were found to be significant. Safety measures showed a significant positive impact on the attitude by 20.4% with 4.2% effect size at confidence level 99%. Therefore, H1 is supported. Results show that safety measures taken during travel and by travel destinations positively impact people's attitude towards travel post-pandemic. This is similar to previous research findings that indicate that safety measures are significantly related to travel intentions during the pandemic (Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2021). As for perceived risk, a significant positive impact on attitude by 14.3% with 2.3% effect size at confidence level 95% was found. Therefore, H2 is not supported. Although contrary to many researches that indicated that a negative relationship exists, whereby higher risk has a negative impact on attitude toward travel (Hanafiah et al., 2021), the result here is similar to other researches that found that a positive relationship exists between perceived risk and attitude toward travel (Litvin & Guttentag, 2022). This finding might indicate that there is a group of travelers who are more encouraged to travel when there is a higher level of risk, such as adventurous travelers and those likely to be involved in dark tourism (Marton et al., 2020). Additionally, social media involvement has significant positive impact on attitude by 46.8% with moderate effect size by 23.1% at confidence level 99.9%. Therefore, H3a is supported. This indicates that social media has an important impact on forming people's attitude towards tourism travel. This is similar to other research findings that indicate that a positive relationship exists (Bae & Chang, 2021; Bhati et al., 2021). In order to measure the mediation effect of perceived risk, H3b measured the impact of social media involvement on perceived risk and a significant positive relationship was found by 36.8% with moderate effect size by 15.6% at confidence level 99.9%, thus, H3b is supported. H3c measured the full relationship between social media involvement and attitude adding the mediator perceived risk and also a significant positive impact by 5.2% at confidence level 90% was found and thus H3c is supported and this confirm that perceived risk acts as a mediator between social media involvement and attitude. This is aligned with previous research findings that indicate that exposure to social media can be either positive or negative depending on the information shared and this in

turn impacts travelers' perception of risk and accordingly their attitude toward travel (McClinchey & Dimanche, 2023).

Similar to previous research findings (Golets et al., 2021), this research found that destination image health risk has a significant negative effect on attitude but only by 9.2% with a weak effect size of $F^2= 0.9\%$ at confidence level 95%. Therefore, H4 is supported at a confidence level of 90%. Additionally, mental wellbeing was found to have a significant negative effect on attitude by only 8.3% with very weak effect size of $F^2= 0.8\%$ at confidence level 95%. Therefore, H5 is rejected. Mental well-being has not been directly studied in previous research in terms of its relationship with intention to travel during COVID-19. Previous research focused on effect of COVID-19 on mental well-being and its impact on anxiety, stress and vulnerability (Beck & Hensher, 2020; Wen, et al., 2021).

As for attitude, a significant positive effect on the post-pandemic travel intentions (PPT) by 65.5% with very strong effect size of $F^2= 75.2\%$ at confidence level 99.9% was found. Thus, H6 is supported. This indicates that the more positive attitude people have towards travel, the more likely they are to travel for tourism post-pandemic. This is aligned with previous research findings that indicate that attitude is positively related to travel intentions post-pandemic (Li et al., 2021). Additionally, as can be depicted from Table 5, attitude has a significant positive effect on brand co-creation with moderate effect size of $F^2= 15.9\%$ at confidence level 99.9%. Therefore, H7 is supported. This indicates that the people who have more positive attitude towards travel are more likely to be actively involved in making comments, sharing their travel experiences, as well as spreading word of mouth about the travel destination. In doing that, they are actually helping in developing the tourism destination brand further through co-creation. This is a new angle of looking into the relationship between attitude and tourism brand co-creation that hasn't been studied before in literature. Finally, post-pandemic tourism travel intentions (PPT) was found to have a non-significant relationship with brand co-creation by only 5.5% with very weak effect size of $F^2= 0.2\%$ at confidence level 95%. Therefore, H8 is rejected.

To this end, the whole model predictive ability can be assessed via the predictive power (R^2) and its significance when the results of the PLS-SEM and Linear modelling (LM) are compared (Sarstedt et al., 2020; Becker et al., 2022). In this regard, the R^2 of 0.25, 0.5, and 0.75 reflects the weak, moderate, and strong predictive power (Hair et al., 2019). Also, when the Root Means Square Errors (RMSE) of the all major, minor, none measurement items in

the PLS-SEM are less than their counterparts in the LM confirms, partially confirms, weakly, or none confirms the predictive ability of the model.

Table 6: Structural Model Predictive Ability

Endogenous Variables	Measurement Items	PLS SEM_ RMSE	LM_ RMSE	PLS SEM - LM
Attitude R ² = 0.346	Att1	0.981	1.006	-0.025
	Att2	0.950	1.005	-0.056
	Att3	0.985	1.041	-0.055
Brand co-creation R ² = 0.193	Co1	1.011	1.028	-0.018
	Co2	1.035	1.020	0.015
	Co3	1.070	1.059	0.012
	Co4	1.042	1.033	0.010
PPT intentions R ² = 0.429	Int1	1.051	1.068	-0.017
	Int2	1.027	1.052	-0.025
	Int3	1.049	1.108	-0.059
Perceived risk R ² = 0.135	Risk1	1.135	1.177	-0.043
	Risk2	1.165	1.155	0.010
	Risk3	1.373	1.342	0.031

As is shown in Table 6, the model can predict the change in attitude by 34.6%, brand co-creation by 19.3%, PPT intentions by 42.9%, and perceived risk by 13.5%. While the predictive power of the attitude and PPT intentions have been fully confirmed, the brand co-creation and perceived risk are weakly confirmed.

Research Implications

Theoretical Implications

Five out of the eight proposed hypotheses were supported in this research. Safety measures, destination health risk, and social media involvement were found to have significant relationships with attitude. Additionally, perceived risk was found to mediate the relationship between social media involvement and attitude toward travel. Moreover, attitude was found to have a significant positive effect on both post-pandemic travel intentions as well as on value co-creation. These findings contribute to existing theories that focus on examining attitude-intention-behavior relationship like the Theory of Planned

Behavior (TPB), which was used as the basis of this study. This research has extended the TPB application by studying three new relationships in the context of tourism travel, as well as two additional constructs. The three new relationships explored are; social media involvement impact on attitude, the mediation impact of perceived risk on the relationship between social media involvement and attitude, and the impact of attitude and value co-creation. These three relationships represent an extension to TPB study, that have not been explored before in the context of tourism travel, and all three were found to be significant relationships. The two additional constructs that were added to TPB are social media involvement and value co-creation, which provides a new angle of studying TBP and represents a contribution to theory.

Practical Implications

At the practical level, this research provides important insights to tourism practitioners, such as travel agencies, as they develop their strategies to help recover quickly from losses made during the pandemic. In particular, it is important to communicate as well as have in place properly set safety measures to encourage customers to do tourism and to be less anxious about health-related safety matters. Adding pictures on social media of destinations featuring luxurious and relaxed set up can be of benefit in this context. Additionally, since social media involvement was found to have a significant impact on attitude toward tourism travel, practitioners need to focus on social media strategies that can trigger positive results. One idea could be to build online communities focused on shared travel interests and to trigger discussion on different destinations and travel services provided. Moreover, since perceived risk was found to mediate the relationship between social media involvement and attitude toward travel post-pandemic, tourism practitioners need to communicate information to help reduce perceived risk such as measures taken in during travel and within travel destinations. Using social media to respond to questions and concerns related to travel and to professionally respond to any negative feedback, maybe also useful here. Travel practitioners also need to develop strategies to encourage travelers to be more active in sharing their experiences with other people. In order to achieve that, a reward system can be developed such that travelers who are more active in sharing their experiences can be rewarded through promotional offers, for example, on their next trip. Moreover, since attitude was found to be a significant factor affecting travel intentions as well as brand co-creation, tourism practitioners should have clear strategies for creating more favorable attitudes toward their destinations. This could be through virtual experience of the destination, videos of travelers' featuring happy/adventurous moments, sharing useful tips about travel, using bloggers to spread positive word of

mouth about destinations as well as applying a reward system for travelers who share their experiences.

Some limitations of this research are that it focuses on a single context, which makes the findings not easily generalizable. Various contexts could be considered in future research and results can be compared. Additionally, more countries can also be studied to explore if the same factors will be found significant, which will help in understanding better factors affecting tourism travel post-pandemic. Moreover, future research can consider examining the moderating effect of culture, which is a relevant factor when studying various countries.

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