



Article Title

Tourists' risk perception of risky destinations: The case of Sabah's eastern coast [Summary]

Citation

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Abstract

This study investigates tourists' risk perception towards a risky destination. The eastern coast of Sabah, Malaysia was chosen as the study site for its recent high-risk status as a result of a series of abductions and political turmoil. Using t-test and partial least squares-structural equation modelling analysis, the impacts of travel experience, prior experience with risk, travel motivation, novelty preference, gender, age, and nationality on tourists' risk perception were examined. The results of this study indicate that tourists do perceive Sabah's eastern coast to be high risk but this negative perception of Sabah's eastern coast as a marine destination does not affect their perception of other coastal areas in Malaysia – tourists remain optimistic of other coastal areas within Malaysia. The effects of various determinants on risk perception are reported. The study has provided timely analysis and implications to the tourism industry in Sabah, which can also serve as a reference to destinations with similar risk background.

Summary:

The findings have pointed to the likelihood of travel experience having an impact on risk perception. This probability hinges on the types of travel experience. For instance, it has been found that tourists with more marine travel experience perceive lower risk towards Sabah's eastern coast while there is no significant relationship between international travel experience and risk perception of the study site. Some of the possible explanations for this result might be associated with tourists' typology and travel motivation. As presented in Table 1, most of the respondents considered themselves as adventure tourists and a considerable number of them were

divers. Moreover, the findings on travel motivation show that people who travel to marine destinations for diving perceive lesser risk. It is therefore plausible to conclude that experienced marine tourists and frequent divers perceive lesser risk compared to inexperienced conventional tourists due to different travel motivations. Further work is encouraged to consolidate this proposition.

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