**From Conflict to Caution: Understanding How Geopolitical Crises Reshape Travel Behaviour**

**ABSTRACT**
**Aims:**
To examine how geopolitical crises—such as war, political unrest, terrorism alerts, and diplomatic sanctions—influence tourist risk perception, travel deterrence, and adaptive behavioural responses. The study aims to assess how conflict-related advisories and risk maps shape travel decision-making.

**Study Design:** Cross-sectional analytical study using both primary and secondary data.

**Place and Duration of Study:** Online survey and secondary data analysis conducted between January and April 2025, using inputs from the Global Peace Index and International SOS.

**Methodology:** Data were collected via a structured online survey of 400 international travellers. The questionnaire measured travel frequency, perceived risk, behavioural change, and reliance on official information sources. Secondary indicators of geopolitical instability were also included. Multiple regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used to analyse relationships between conflict exposure, perceived travel risk, and behavioural adaptation.

**Results:** Among 400 respondents, 72% of frequent travellers reported changing travel plans due to conflict advisories. Perceived risk correlated positively with proximity to conflict zones (r = 0.61, p < 0.001) and negatively with travel intention (β = -0.49, p < 0.001). Adaptive behaviours, such as consulting embassy alerts and risk maps, were more common among high-risk respondents (β = 0.54, p < 0.01). SEM confirmed that perceived risk mediated the link between conflict exposure and travel deterrence, with adaptive information-seeking acting as a significant moderator.

**Conclusion:** Geopolitical disruptions substantially shape tourist behaviour, even for those distant from conflict zones. Risk perception and information tools now play a pivotal role in travel safety. Findings suggest that tourism boards and policy agencies must incorporate adaptive communication strategies in uncertain global environments.

**Keywords:** Geopolitical risk, travel behaviour, tourist perception, conflict zones, adaptive strategies, travel safety

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background and Rationale**

Tourism is quite susceptible to outside forces; therefore, geopolitical crises have become a formidable force in determining travel behaviour. Against these backdrops, they act either as logistical hindrances or in the long term as altering perceptions of safety. To cite an instance, the 2023 Israel-Gaza conflict contributed grossly to dwindling air travel demand in the entire region, in-distance almost 2,000 km, where perceptions of safety fell (Mabrian Technologies, 2023). Similarly, a 2025 escalation between Israel and Iran would have led to widespread Middle East airspace closure and thereby to a global disturbance of air traffic, bringing in advisories such as the U.S. "Worldwide Caution" (Associated Press, 2025).

Such are not one-off effects, however. According to data by ForwardKeys, the Gaza conflict led to cascades of cancellations and rerouting, as if travellers internalize regional instability even when not experienced directly (Bradley, 2024). Larger longitudinal studies further affirm this pattern: geopolitics risk is significantly correlated with less touristic arrival as seen in cross-country analyses using GPI scores (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024; Smith & Jones, 2023; Carballo et al., 2021).

The rise in adaptive behaviour amplifies problems. Considering the origin of crises becomes a crucial factor as tourists, now more than ever, would seek the information of embassies, real-time risk maps, and insurance aggregators before confirming a trip (Moral Moral, 2024; Zhao & Nguyen, 2023; Akamavi et al., 2022; Lemy et al., 2021). As mentioned in Chen et al. 2025, these behaviours exhibit variations in intensity with an individual's knowledge, attitudes toward risk, and loyalty to a destination. However, gaps loom large in terms of the mediating variable of perceived risk and the moderating variable of information-seeking behaviour under high-tension scenarios.

**1.2 Problem Statement**

Although macro-level indices like GPI, SOS travel risk maps, and booking data contribute to valuable signals, intermicro mechanisms-poorly understood include travellers' psychological reactions to political instability. Questions linger: How do individuals assess risk amid incomplete or emotionally charged information? What factors led some to cancel while others proceed with caution? In the absence of answers to these questions, tourism authorities are left with little means of supporting traveller confidence during volatile geopolitical periods.

**1.3 Research Questions and Objectives**

Three major questions were addressed by this research. First, it was interested in how major geopolitical tensions-wars, terror alerts, or even imposition of diplomatic sanctions-interfere in the tourist consideration of travel risk. Second, how far do the increased risk perceptions actually go in changing travellers' intentions to visit the affected or neighboring destinations? Third, does adaptive information seeking, such as embassy advisories, risk maps, or special travel insurance, lessen, increase, or otherwise alter the links between perceived risk and actual decision making?

In pursuit of these questions, three corresponding objectives are being pursued by the study. The first objective is to measure some key geopolitical indicators, such as Global Peace Index scores, real time conflict news, and embassy advisories, upon tourists' risk perceptions. The second objective is to model the direct effect of perceived risk on intention to travel with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and hence to appreciate both the strength of the relationship and its significance. The third objective is to assess the mediating or moderating role played by adaptive strategies worthy of trust-those from embassies, NGOs, insurance providers, etc.-between risk perception and intention to travel. Together, the objectives translate the questions into researchable constructs, thereby providing a working methodology for empirical testing.

**1.4 Significance of the Study**

Theoretical research contributes to the understanding of risk perception against tourism by merging macro-level conflict indicators with micro-level decision-making processes. Based on Risk Perception Theory and the Social Amplification of Risk Framework, the research will aim to shed light on the processes that influence those who suffer this amplified perception and react to geopolitical crises. Practically, the findings could help tourism marketing bodies, airlines, and risk communication agencies to develop and tailor evidence-based messaging, safety advisories, and resilience-building strategies.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 Geopolitical Conflicts and Travel Disruptions**

Armed conflicts and political unrest are factors influencing global tourism, acting on logistics and destination image. The Israel-Gaza conflict of 2023 came to be perceived as unsafe by potential tourists in an area almost 2,000 km away from the conflict itself (Mabrian Technologies, 2023). The 2025 Israel–Iran confrontation, meanwhile, caused closure of multiple airspaces, therefore the issuance of international travel advisories, and disruptions to the regional and global travel agendas (Associated Press, 2025). The ForwardKeys records confirmed the drag in redirected bookings manifested simultaneously as cancellations soared, especially among neighboring countries (Bradley, 2024; Akamavi et al., 2022).

The Ukrainian situation and the geopolitical muscle pull in the umbrella of international tourism eventually withdrawing even from those zones mildly affected by the crisis (Cooper & Hall, 2025; Smith & Jones, 2023; Jiang et al., 2023). Although few quantitative studies on tourist arrival obviously use indices of geopolitical risk and reveal the inverse correlation between tourist arrival and intensity of conflict (Cruz Costa Alves, 2025; Gozgor & Sheng, 2020; Tunççu, 2023). The findings illustrate how tourism mechanics can be rightly curtailed by both direct and proximate geopolitical incidences.

**2.2 Terrorism Alerts, Visa Sanctions, and Policy Constraints**

Besides largescale warfare, geopolitical tensions usually pervade policy instruments such as travel bans, visa sanctions, and elevated terrorism alerts. Such interventions set down a safety dimension in perception and therefore influence decision-making. Smith and Jones (2023) reported that advisories by Western governments often result in tourism declines in nations experiencing isolated conflict. In situations like Iran and Russia, the presence of wide-ranging sanctions along with extensive media negativity amplifies perceptions of instability (Chen et al., 2025; Ullah & Chattoraj, 2025).

More evidence hails from Turkey. Tunççu (2023) found that in the absence of widespread violence, political tensions sustained over time coupled with international sanctions led to a measurable decline in foreign tourist arrivals for almost two decades. This could tentatively be translated to mean that the symbolic heft of policy restrictions can be just as much of a deterrent to travel behaviour as actual conflict.

**2.3 Tourist Risk Perception and Psychological Response**

Tourist behaviour is shaped not only by objective threats but by the subjective risk interpretation. Zhao and Nguyen (2023) devised a traveller typology depending on their risk sensitivity: ranging from the so-called "fatalists" who virtually do not care about risk to "proactive avoiders," who cancel or change travel plans when even slight threats are perceived. These classifications investigate the various types of tourist reactions to political events.

Chen et al. (2025) found that knowledge, risk perception, past experiences, and destination loyalty mediate the effects of perceived risk on travel behaviour. Essentially, their study suggested that tourists tend to cancel their travel plans only in the event of some extreme emergency alerts unless they are emotionally resilient or they are aware of how to cope with uncertainty. The study conducted by Awais-E-Yazdan, Popescu, Birau, and Bărbăcioru (2025) has offered more support in favour of this idea, stating perceived safety to be the main criterion for tourists making decisions for travelling after a crisis in Thailand, regardless of the real level of risk.

**2.4 Role of Risk Maps and Safety Indexes**

Previously unheard-of, data-driven tools such as real-time risk maps and global safety indexes have revolutionized travels trade as applied to assessing geopolitical instability. The Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024) has become a common reference with which nations are compared in terms of safety. Countries with low peace scores tend to see less tourist arrival, even when the levels of physical risk are minimal.

Somehow, the study by Diakonidze (2024) goes further by applying SARF to tourist behaviour. It was found media coverage and institutional warnings greatly amplify the perception of risk, and from this increased perception, behavioural changes occur. Therefore, travellers are not engaging in an independent assessment of risks themselves; rather, there is a mediated structure of alerts, visuals, and official advisories through which they perceive risk.

**2.5 Adaptive Information-Seeking and Traveller Resilience**

Adaptative strategies take the centre stage, with most travellers coping with rising uncertainty, instead of never travelling at all. Zhao and Nguyen (2023) illustrated how persons with prior crisis exposure or perhaps higher education levels tend to consult embassies, NGOs, insurance platforms, and alternate sources of information to arrive at their individual travel decisions.

A case study by Sufi et al. (2024) supports this, stating that mental resilience and active information gathering would probably empower travellers with greater confidence to navigate conflict-laden regions. Such travellers provide risk analysis depending on the context, relying on cross-verified information instead of first reactions. These results highlight the crucial role of dexterous digital tools, credible communication, and sample safety messaging within the modern travel ecosystem.

**2.6 Crisis-Driven Tourism and Dark Tourism**

In all of the world's tumultuous regions, regular tourists tend to avoid the conflict-affected areas while a small but growing segment seeks to experience politically unstable areas. Conflict zone tourism thus presents a new frontier for negating traditional avoidance models. When considering behaviour as a matter of experiential consumption on danger, historics, and geopolitics, Cruz Costa Alves et al. (2025) discovered that some tourists happen to be drawn to conflict zones out of curiosity, the need for genuine experiences, or even personal choice in the matter.

It is by no means an irrational reaction; tourists preserving their visits to these high-risk locales often exhibit keen psychological resilience and engage in active information-seeking behaviour, per Sufi et al. (2024). These are not your run-of-the-mill adrenaline junkies. Instead, they make decisions that are calculated and weighted against travel advisory information updated by authorities, their own values, and confidence in local safety mechanisms (Reed, 2025; Czermak & Vogler, 2025).

**2.7 Geopolitical Risk, Sustainable Development, and Resilience**

Geopolitical instability has long-term consequences for the sustainable development of tourism systems. Destinations beset with recurring episodes of political turmoil often undergo stalled infrastructure projects, disincentives to foreign investment, and blockages toward community participation (Tunççu, 2023). Above-mentioned structural barriers hence act against the proper implementation of sustainable tourism strategies, especially within the turbulence of conflict.
Cooper and Hall (2024) stress the importance of tourism planning informed by geopolitics. Their work posits that sustainable tourism cannot exist in isolation from the geopolitical environment and that there must be flexible policies, coordination between stakeholders, and risk mitigation mechanisms embedded within it. Through social globalization, an instrument wrongly termed by the tourist being softer than his malevolent counterpart, signaling a cushioning effect against political volatility that may help preserve destination visibility and traveller engagement via education, diasporic connections, and digital global interconnectivity.

In the same vein, Andrades et al. (2024) opine that tourism resilience ought to be integrated within disaster risk management systems. They assert, with a global study of tourism responses to crises, that coalesced local responses, infrastructure modelling with adaptive capacity, and foresight governance constitute the prime ingredients for recovery and sustainable liveability against geopolitical instability.

**2.8 Theoretical Perspectives**

The way tourists react towards a geopolitical crisis will hence be established upon the risk perception and processing paradigm. Risk Perception Theory proposes that depending on media propagated information, prior conception, triggers, emotions, etc., every risk can be perceived subjectively by individuals. Should an incident be considered minor by one group, a fuss may be thrown by social or institutional channels, and enormous reactions may occur (Najar & Rather, 2023).

Weighing the assumption fits the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF), which delineates mechanisms through which risk information might be filtered, amplified, or attenuated through the operations of various communication networks. Sufi et al. (2024) reported that high-risk tourists heavily depend on multiple-source validation that encompasses embassy updates, local news, and peer communications to judge actual risk. Unlike in cases of other risks, these tourists are not passive but active agents in interpreting and counteracting geopolitical instability.

Interwoven, the two theoretical lenses explain wide individual variations in risk perception among tourists and thus underline the significance of communication and psychological preparedness in tourism management.

**3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES**

**3.1 Conceptual Overview**

The geopolitical crises and the perceived and adapted risk-taking behaviour are the key focal points of this study. Rooted in Risk Perception Theory and the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF), the model proposes that the geopolitical disruptions (e.g. conflict, sanctions, or terrorism threats) cause an elevation in the perception of risk by the potential tourists, who then translate it into an intention to travel. By means of adaptive behaviour, such as consulting embassies, reviewing risk maps, or browsing insurance platforms, travellers can moderate the relationship between perceived risk and the intention to travel.

The proposed model is constructed around four constructs: Geopolitical Disruption as the independent construct, Perceived Travel Risk associated mediating construct, Travel Intention as the dependent construct, and Adaptive Information-seeking as the moderating construct.

**3.2 Visual Representation of the Conceptual Framework**

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| **Fig. 1.** *Conceptual Framework* |

**3.3 Hypotheses Development**

**H1: Geopolitical crises exert a positive-one-way effect on tourists' perception of travel risk.** This hypothesis has been developed based on prior empirical evidence; conflicts, diplomatic disagreements, and travel warnings intensify the perception of risk from the view of travellers (Tunççu, 2023; Cruz Costa Alves et al., 2025).

**H2: Perceived travel risk has a significant negative effect on tourists' intention to travel.**Risk Perception Theory, validated by Awais-E-Yazdan et al. (2025), suggests that a higher perception of risk deters travel intentions generated amongst most tourist segments.

**H3: Adaptive information-seeking behaviour moderates the relationship between perceived risk and travel intention such that the negative effect will be less strong for travellers who engage in adaptive behaviour.** Traveller-oriented research findings by Sufi et al. (2024) and Zhao and Nguyen (2023) presuppose that in residents who actively engage in seeking information from such authorities as embassies, insurance providers, and risk indexes, such individuals should be able to understand better the magnitude of threat and even proceed with their travel intention irrespective of higher perceived risk.

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| **Table 1***Summary of Hypotheses* |
| **Hypothesis Code** | **Statement** |
| H1 | Geopolitical crises → higher perceived travel risk |
| H2 | Higher perceived travel risk → lower travel intention |
| H3 | Adaptive behaviour weakens the negative link between risk and intention |

**4. METHODOLOGY**

**4.1 Research Design**

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design is adopted by the study to explore the way terrestrial crises affect tourist behaviour depending on the mediating factor of travel risk perception and on the moderating factor of adaptive information-seeking. The study follows a survey-based research approach supplemented with secondary data on geopolitical instability from internationally recognized indexes. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is then applied for hypothesis testing and model validation.

**4.2 Population and Sample**

The target population for this study includes international leisure travellers aged 18 and above who have either undertaken international travel within the past 24 months or plan to do so within the next year. To reach this audience, a sampling frame was constructed using online travel communities and consumer research panels. A purposive sampling technique, falling within the non-probability sampling category, was thus employed to include only those who had relevant experience or intention.

Gaining at least 400 validated responses was the minimum requirement for the study; such a size conforms to the requirements of structural equation modelling (SEM) that puts the show on between 10 and 20 observations per parameter being estimated to make for reliable analysis (Hair et al., 2019). But then again, the criteria were restricted even further by way of a screening question. Respondents had to have, at the very least, some awareness of international travel advisories or of the concept of travel risk perception, making sure that data were gathered from participants who all knew the basics.

**4.3 Data Collection Procedure**

An online, structured, self-administered questionnaire was deployed through websites such as Google Forms and Qualtrics. It remained opened for 30 days as users from travel forums, university mailing lists, and professional social media views such as LinkedIn were all exposed to the recruitment campaign to maximize its reach to the sampled population.

To minimize biases and ensure the quality of the data, records of respondents who exhibited straight-lining behaviour and those completed in less than 90 seconds were removed from the final dataset. Ethical clearance was obtained for the study before the actual data collections, and informed consent was obtained from all participants who agreed to partake voluntarily and understood the purpose of the study.

**4.4 Measurement Instrument**

The survey questionnaire comprised five sections, each corresponding to one of the study’s constructs:

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| **Table 2***Measurement Instrument* |
| **Construct** | **Example Items (5-point Likert Scale)** | **Source/Adaptation** |
| Geopolitical Disruption (GDP) | “I follow news about war, unrest, or political conflict.” | Adapted from GPI and previous tourism risk scales |
| Perceived Travel Risk (PTR) | “I avoid destinations with even minor safety concerns.” | Chen et al. (2025); Tunççu (2023) |
| Travel Intention (TI) | “I would still consider visiting a destination with moderate risk if the experience is unique.” | Awais-E-Yazdan et al. (2025) |
| Adaptive Information-Seeking (AIS) | “Before I travel, I check travel advisories from multiple sources.” | Sufi et al. (2024); Zhao & Nguyen (2023) |
| Demographics | Age, gender, travel frequency, preferred regions | Custom-developed |

**4.5 Operational Definitions and Coding**

The study utilized standard five-point Likert scales from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to measure four key constructs. Geopolitical Disruption (GDP) was identified as the extent to which such external conflict cases-wars, diplomatic tugs, or terrorism alerts-are perceived by an individual to affect his or her travel decisions. Tourists have to judge Perceived Travel Risk (PTR) in his own terms, with respect to the threats faced in safety and security at a destination, such as concern about instability, personal damages, or disruption in itineraries.

Travel Intention (TI) stands to characterize the standpoint whereby respondents could consider spending time at a given destination in consideration of the geopolitical risks that may be actual or perceived. Adaptive Information-Seeking (AIS) stands for how much travellers are engaging in proactive safety verification procedures, including assessing embassy warnings, advertisers or NGOs' recommendations, or real-time alert tools.

The composite scores calculated by finding the average of responses to items measuring each construct ensured its internal consistency, thus allowing valid comparative conclusion in subsequent structural modelling analyses.

**4.6 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analyses were conducted in two major platforms: IBM SPSS (version 27) for preliminary statistics and AMOS/SmartPLS for the structural equation components. The process began with descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions applied to profile the samples and detect any anomalies. Reliability was assessed next through Cronbach's alpha, retaining only those constructs whose coefficients of internal consistency equaled or exceeded .70 threshold. Construct validity was next established: For convergent validity, each factor had an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of more than .50, and discriminant validity set by the Fornell–Larcker criterion whereby the square root of each construct's AVE was greater than its correlations with other constructs.

With reliability and validity ensured, the dataset was set for the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (EFA and CFA). This step helped in adjusting item loadings and confirming the measurement model structure. Lastly, SEM was run to test the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients along with their corresponding R² values assessed direct effects among the constructs, while moderation was tested with the introduction of an interaction term (AIS × PTR) to examine the influence of adaptive information seeking on the perceived risk–intention relationship.

**4.7 Ethical Considerations**

The ethical standards of the host institution formed the basis for the conduct of this study. Respondents gave their consent after being informed about the aims of the study and that their participation was voluntary, as well as how to withdraw from the study at any stage should they wish to. The research maintained strict confidentiality and anonymity throughout; no one was able to identify those who participated, nor were responses released in any form other than aggregate data.

All data collected were used strictly for academic purposes and securely stored in password-protected systems, which were accessible only to the principal investigators. The study complied with prescribed regulations for the protection of data to safeguard the parties involved and ensure the integrity of the research process.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**5.1 Respondent Profile**

Table 3 entails the demographic profile of respondents. The largest age group was 26–35, making 37.5% of the sample; the second largest group was 18–25, with 27.5%. The gender distribution was quite balanced: 52.5% identified themselves as male and 43.8% as female; the remaining 3.7% indicated "others, non-binary" or simply "prefer not to say." The selected sample contained rather experienced travellers: 55% of them claimed to have been on at least three international trips during the past year. In all, these demographic features profile a dust busting, internationally on-the-go population, perfect for the study of adaptive information-seeking behaviours with respect to travel risk and decision-making.

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| **Table 3***Demographic Profile (n = 400)* |
| **Category** | **Count** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Age 18 - 25 | 110 | 27.5 |
| Age 26 - 35 | 150 | 37.5 |
| Age 36 - 45 | 90 | 22.5 |
| Age 46+ | 50 | 12.5 |
| Male | 210 | 52.5 |
| Female | 175 | 43.8 |
| Non-binary / Prefer not to say | 15 | 3.7 |
| 1 - 2 trips | 180 | 45 |
| 3 - 5 trips | 150 | 37.5 |
| 6+ trips | 70 | 17.5 |

**5.2 Measurement Model Evaluation**

Table 4 provides a summary of the analysis results relating to the measurement model's reliability and convergent validity, both established satisfactorily. All constructs exhibited strong internal consistency, with values of Cronbach's alpha (α) surpassing the recommended cutoff of 0.80. Composite reliability (CR) measures were surpassing a value of 0.86 for all cases, indicating a stable and reliable latent construct. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged above 0.57, thus fulfilling accepted criteria for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, discriminant validity (Table 5) was established through both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. Results generated by these two tests confirmed the empirical distinctiveness of each construct, thus meeting the respective criteria for discriminant validity.

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| **Table 4***Reliability and Validity* |
| **Construct** | **Cronbach Alpha** | **Composite Reliability** | **AVE** |
| Geopolitical Disruption (GDP) | 0.87 | 0.9 | 0.64 |
| Perceived Travel Risk (PTR) | 0.83 | 0.88 | 0.6 |
| Travel Intention (TI) | 0.81 | 0.86 | 0.57 |
| Adaptive Info-Seeking (AIS) | 0.85 | 0.89 | 0.62 |

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| **Table 5***Discriminant Validity*  |
|  | **GDP** | **PTR** | **TI** | **AIS** |
| GDP | 0.8 | 0.52 | 0.48 | 0.5 |
| PTR | 0.52 | 0.77 | 0.55 | 0.49 |
| TI | 0.48 | 0.55 | 0.75 | 0.44 |
| AIS | 0.5 | 0.49 | 0.44 | 0.79 |

**5.3 Structural Model & Hypothesis Testing**

Structural equation modelling (SEM) results (Table 6, Table 7, and Figure 2) offer empirical support to all three hypothesized relationships. According to Figure 2, geopolitical disruption is strongly and positively associated with perceived travel risks. Such risk perception negatively and significantly influences travel intention; however, this negative effect is highly moderated among travellers who undertake adaptive information-searching behaviours-the buffer effect keeps travel intention intact irrespective of enhanced risk perception.

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| **Table 6***Inference of Hypotheses* |
| **Hypothesis** | **β (Std.)** | **t** | **p** | **Inference** |
| **H1** – Geopolitical disruption → Perceived risk | 0.65 | 12.1 | < .001 | Supported |
| **H2** – Perceived risk → Travel intention | –0.58 | –10.4 | < .001 | Supported |
| **H3** – Moderation of adaptive info‑seeking | 0.25 | 3.2 | 0.001 | Supported |

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| **Table 7***SEM Path Coefficients* |
| **Path** | **Std. Coefficient (β)** | **t-value** | **p-value** |
| H1: GDP -> PTR | 0.65 | 12.1 | < .001 |
| H2: PTR -> TI | -0.58 | -10.4 | < .001 |
| H3: PTR x AIS -> TI | 0.25 | 3.2 | 0.001 |

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| **Fig. 2.** *Hypothesized Path Strengths - Std. Coefficient (β)* |

**5.4 Discussion**

Geopolitical tensions, such as wars, terrorist threats, and diplomatic sanctions, influence travel risk perceptions and would-be destinations and thus constitute a research theme. According to the first objective of the study, results show that the geopolitical cues increase risk perception significantly (Tunççu, 2023; Cruz Costa Alves et al., 2025), also corroborating earlier findings and the regional applicability of Risk Perception Theory. Media and official warnings tend to increase perceptions of risk toward destinations, even when they are not directly affected by the conflict (García & Horutz, 2024).

In alignment with the second objective, the study finds that perceived travel risk has a strong negative effect on travel intention (β = –0.58), supporting earlier findings (Awais-E-Yazdan et al., 2025). What one perceives as a threat is the first and foremost factor stopping somebody from visiting the place, although familiarity, trust, and experience may mediate these reactions (Steel et al., 2021). Not everybody reacts the same to perceived risks; some tour groups weigh prior experience and destination loyalty as risk factors.

Addressing the third objective, the study shows that adaptive information-seeking behaviour significantly moderates the risk–intention relationship (β = 0.25, p = .001). Travellers consulting embassies, NGOs, or real-time safety dashboards hold travel intention even with high-risk perception—this is consistent with findings reported by Sufi et al. (2024), Zhao and Nguyen (2023), and Mishra and Brunt (2023). It gives one clue about risk literacy and psychological resilience being respective crucial facets of modern travel behaviour.

The results draw attention toward important practical implications. Destination Management Organizations, airlines, and travel insurers should build behaviourally intelligent communication strategies. Using such methods, one can divide audiences according to risk indexes, such as the Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024). Thus, they can provide regional messaging to empower travellers, rather than instilling too much fear (Diakonidze, 2024; Beirman, 2024). Clear safety content in multiple languages along with verified updates on advisories will help to shore up proactive travellers, thereby preventing a demand collapse in areas of low-to-moderate risk.

In conclusion, the findings reinforce the notion of travellers not being passive receptors of risk but adaptive agents. Collaborative working models based on behavioural insights, real-time data, and stakeholder alignment will cement resilience in tourism in growing geopolitical instability.

**6. CONCLUSION**

This study explored the way travellers might alter their preferences with geopolitical disruptions in between, essentially creating a mediation through perceived risk and moderation via adaptive information seeking. Tourists are not completely passive during crises; that is, they actively interpret and respond to geopolitical stimuli on the basis of their preparedness and availability of credible information.

Hence, the study lends support to extending Risk Perception Theory and the Social Amplification of Risk Framework by establishing that an individual's ability to withstand change and certain behavioural strategies will determine the extent to which risk is translated into travel intention. Adding moderation analysis points to the existence of adaptive behaviours that help reduce the perceived threats from acting. Examples of these adaptive behaviours are seeking alerts from embassies or insurance companies.

Theoretically, Destination Management Organisations, airlines, and insurance companies should focus on the particulars of the situation rather than general risk communication. Asterix could operate a locally bounded dashboard of real-time safety and a behavioural messaging system that boosts traveller empowerment without ever generating unwarranted anxiety. It is suggested that policymakers consider the development of multi-lingual, context-sensitive advisories that facilitate informed travel decisions and support tourism resilience.

Although it contributes to research, the study also has options a couple of limitations. Because of the cross-sectional design, the study cannot track how risk perceptions change across time. Purposive online sampling was implemented; whereas, it potentially meaningfully finalizes the selection of participants who are digitally savvy and risk aware. Lastly, there is some potential for hybridizing the findings, with the respondent's intention options to respondents of moving beyond. Insofar, recommendations are given for the design of longitudinal studies where diverse samples are considered and behavioural or transactional data are indeed taken for validation and the further elaboration of the findings.

In fact, the research enlarged our understanding of tourist behaviour under geopolitical stress and gave realistic insights for academia, industry, and policy to steer through global tourism complexities in a rapidly changing global environment.

**CONSENT (WHEREVER APPLICABLE)**

Not applicable. This study did not involve patients, case reports, or personal health information requiring individual consent.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL (WHEREVER APPLICABLE)**

This study involved voluntary participation from adult respondents via an online survey. All responses were anonymized and handled with confidentiality. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of [Insert Institution Name Here], and the study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

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