



The Relationship Between Employees' Avoidance Coping Behaviors and Work-Related Risks in the Hospitality and Tourism Business

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Keywords

Risk perception; avoidance coping behaviors, risk attitude; work risks, risk aversion, victimization experiences, hotels; travel agencies.

Abstract

Employees' avoidance coping behaviors have an ultimate significant role in mitigating and responding to potential risks. In light of JD-R theory, this paper seeks to understand the constructs that determine the perception and avoidance coping behaviors of employees about work-related risks in hotels and travel agencies and examines the mediating role of risk perception. This study used survey approach to collect data from Egyptian independent hotels and travel agencies, yielding 372 completed surveys. Importantly, the employees' characteristics were found to positively impact their risk perception. The findings revealed that risk perception mediates the relationship between individual characteristics in terms of employees' previous victimization, awareness, risk aversion, and their avoidance coping behaviors. Notably, in this study, new insights have been adhered to by considering the vertical job classification and investigating the case of subordinates.

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1. Introduction

Despite tourism and hospitality being risk-linked to modernization-related environmental issues (Khalifa & Mewad, 2017; Elshaer et al., 2022_b). However, many individuals worldwide work in the tourism and hospitality industry. Tourism and hospitality are risky sectors, according to many experts and researchers, and are vulnerable to internal as well as external threats compared to other sectors (Elshaer et al., 2022_a; Kozak et al., 2007). Consequently, within the field of tourism and hospitality industry, most of the labor are exposed to some kind of work-related risks every day. Based on Hale et al. (2005), risks are defined as 'high consequence, little likelihood, confusion, and decision-making time pressure,' and as such, they are seen as a possible source of harm to the environment, properties, or people's safety (Kuo et al., 2008). In a broad meaning, risks can be depicted as any situation or series of activities that expose individuals, groups, an organization, or even the whole industry to a trajectory downward if not properly controlled (Hale et al., 2005).

In this regard, Quintal et al. (2010) identified a conceptual confusion with the term "risk" used in tourism studies, as the differences among the terms (e.g. perceived emergency, risk, hazard, threat, danger, worry, and fear) are vague and then used interchangeably leading to definitional and operational inconsistency (Quintal et al., 2010). However, according to the Oxford Dictionary, all the terms contain situations that bring negative consequences. So, this paper could use the terms interchangeably to refer to risks that can negatively impact the tourism and hospitality industry.

Such vagueness of the potential risks of the hotel industry and travel agency sector increases with the broad set of services and products inspired by market dynamics, changes in customer preferences (Khalifa et al., 2024), and breaks in trends linked to various hazards and risks (Wang & Ritchie, 2013), which distinguish tourism and hospitality from other industries. Hence, in today's competitive environment, no prudent management can afford to mitigate business interruptions, be it a short one or a long one without properly managing human assets. Possessing the ability to accurately evaluate the hazards in a scenario, or resulting from a set of actions/behaviours, is dependent upon an employee's risk perception and attitudes, which require understanding and analyzing the psychology of the workforce (Elshaer et al., 2022_a). Specifically, businesses are intricately dependent on the performance of the people in the organization, as the development of human capital is one of the main success factors for any component of the tourism industry (Ruizalba et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding the role of variables and factors that constitute perceptions and attitudes of workers and employees towards their work-related risks is crucial as the mindset of an individual can change notably when making choices on safety issues (Selart, 2010), even if risks is "far" and "potential". This awareness enables the organisation to maintain its investment, resulting in a more secure future. Especially since very few tourism individuals are prepared to manage hazardous events (Elshaer, 2019; Gates et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, the risk typology employed in tourism literature was formulated for significant risk events broadly and not specifically for the sector's inherent risks or those associated with the work environment. The psychology of risk has been

examined solely in relation to unsatisfactory travel experiences and the destination's self-image (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). The literature predominantly concentrated on examining the effects of risk perception on travel behaviour and the complexities of travel decision-making in the face of risk (Williams & Baláž, 2013), particularly concerning safety and security threats, including terrorism, political unrest, and crime (Yang et al., 2015). Furthermore, a significant portion of the data from previous research pertained to particular areas or specific incidents, such as floods or acts of terrorism (Williams & Baláž, 2013). Concurrently, they continued to examine the perspectives and attitudes of visitors, residents, students, and the general public, neglecting input from service providers. Moreover, the risk typologies utilised in these investigations are derived from different fields without including more pertinent classifications (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). Consequently, previous academic research originating from non-travel-related studies suggests that “standard risk inventories may not serve as the optimal foundation for perceived-risk studies within tourism research” (Dolnicar, 2005). The absence of recognised theories and risk sources in tourism has resulted in a constrained comprehension of risk perception and attitudes (Korstanje, 2011; Williams & Baláž, 2013).

In light of the identified gaps, the current study builds upon prior research in three significant aspects. Initially, it encompasses employees' perceptions and attitudes towards risks that endanger the work environment. A second advantage of this research is its use in real-world scenarios, namely at several destinations for tourism in Egypt that have previously faced numerous dangers and concerns. The present study employs individuals' perceptions of risk as a mediator between several dimensions and the respondents' avoidance coping behaviours.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Demands-Resources Theory

This study can be contextualised within the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R), which asserts that specific job demands and individual traits within any workplace interact to influence the experience of perceived risk and other outcomes, such as avoidance coping behaviour. Work-related risks are elements of employment that necessitate specific person traits and may therefore result in the aforementioned beneficial results. Individual characteristics refer to the attributes of employees that facilitate the attainment of work objectives and promote business expansion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Recently, the model has included the importance of personal resources, including prior victimisation, self-awareness, and risk aversion, which are linked to resilience. These personal traits may elucidate the individual variances in wellbeing among individuals exposed to identical occupational hazards (Bauer et al., 2014). The work-related dangers have significantly heightened perceived risks, which, according to recent research, have adversely affected staff welfare (e.g., Lai et al., 2020). Not all individuals will be impacted uniformly; individual traits may significantly influence this variation.

2.2 Work-Related Risks in Hospitality and Tourism

Tourism and hospitality industries are considered the largest source of employment for many countries, which have thus become fairly dependent on the industry (Elshaer, et al. 2022c; Abou-Shouk & Khalifa, 2017; Elshaer et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the tourist business is characterised by its high susceptibility to risks and dangers (Elshaer et al., 2022b; Huber & Scheytt, 2013), which in turn generated a certainty that either destinations or work environment will inevitably experience danger (Gates et al., 2012). Therefore, the operations of businesses are threatened by a variety of operational, physical, and natural risks, and so on (Abdelaal & Elshaer, 2020). Natural hazards, terrorist attacks, health risks, new technologies, fire, robbery, falling/ sliding, and injuries - all of these signify hazards and risks in each worker's life, with some encountered every day and others infrequently, if at all. Certain dangers pose a harm to persons, some to the whole property which ends up destroying the entire business. Natural or man-made, risk events can have a long-term impact on the tourism industry in affected areas, with ramifications that affect all stakeholders (Kozak et al., 2007; Neumayer, 2004). Therefore, it is possible that risk studies are crucial to the field of tourism. Since it is impossible to erase risks, it may be hoped that work-related risks can be reduced if a relevant understanding of individuals' risk perceptions and attitudes can be obtained. Nevertheless, the economic literature has examined the idea of risk most frequently in order to manage production lines (Korstanje, 2011), while, in the hospitality and tourism sector, the discussion of risk in the tourism industry began increasingly since the 1990s, and the peak only came after 9/11. Since then, 'risk' has become a prevailing topic to be considered by tourism academics. Table 2 presents the previous studies that addressed the tourism industry-related risks from 1970 till 2017.

Table 2. Tourism Risk in the Context of Pandemics and Global Crises (2020 - Present)

Authors/Year	Study Context	Research Path
Plog (1973)	A theoretical discussion for rising and falling of vacation destinations areas in popularity in light of emergency events and situations.	Effects on specific travel destinations.
Atherton & Wilks (1994)	Examining health and safety of marine facilities in Australia considering social, medical, and legal factors.	Effects on specific travel destinations.
Sirakaya et al. (1997)	Examining the effect of perceived safety at a given tourist destination.	The effects of perceived risk.
Sheng-Hshung et al. (1997)	An analytic hierarchy process to measure tourist threats from an epistemology perspective.	
Maser & Weiermair (1998)	This paper investigated perceived risk through an empirical analysis.	
Sönmez & Graefe (1998)	Assessing future travel behaviour based on previous travel experiences and perceptions of danger and safety.	Managerial and public official response.
Sönmez et al. (1999)	A theoretical analysis based on terrorism events, aimed to create a restricted crisis management system for tourist destinations.	
Milman et al. (1999)	An empirical study investigating the impact of safety devices on the perceived safety of tourists.	The effects of perceived risk

Pizam (1999)	A qualitative analysis based on a limited number of cases targeting crime and violence categorization in tourist destinations.	Specific travel destinations.
Dickson & Dolnicar (2004)	Exploring previous literature on risk in the scope of consumer behavior.	The effects of perceived risk.
Pizam et al. (2004)	Analysing the effects of the risk-taking and sensation-seeking psychological characteristics on travel behaviour.	
Kim & Gu (2004)	Examining how the return and risk factors of the airline interests have changed since the 9/11 events.	Effects on specific travel destinations
Reisinger & Mavondo (2005)	Examination of the influence of cultural and psychographic elements on risk perception and travel tendencies overseas.	The effects of perceived risk.
Bergesen & Han (2005)	Studying perceived risk relationships in Australia and Japan considering the individual factors, knowledge of the destination, and travel purchase decisions.	
Law (2006)	Examining both the perceived likelihood of occurrence of emergency, and the perceived usefulness of a set of measures.	
Simpson & Siguaw (2008)	Studying the relationship of ten tourist-specific threats and demographic features through a content analysis of more than 2000 responses.	
Lepp & Gibson (2008)	Exploring the role of personality in determining travel patterns and preference of destination.	
Korstanje (2011)	Reviewing the approaches and constraints of the risk-perception concept in light of psychoanalysis and the secure-base model.	
Williams & Baláz (2013)	Analyzing the impact of risk tolerance and risk-related skills on the way that travelers organize their tourism using behavioral economics.	Managerial response.
Becken & Hughey (2013)	Exploring how stakeholders perceive tourism's role in current and future disaster risk management activities.	
Clayton et al. (2014)	Recognizing risk by assessing the psychological factors' influences on possible risk response based on a theoretical basis.	The effects of perceived risk
Yang et al. (2015)	Examining visitors' danger perception about the eastern coast of Sabah, Malaysia.	
Sarman (2016)	This study addresses tourists' risk perception, their hazard-induced travel behavior and the role of individual traits in decision-making.	
Karl & Schmude (2017)	Based on reviewing and synthesizing literature from tourism research and other risk disciplines, a risk framework (perception) for deciding a destination process is developed.	Effects on specific travel destinations
Wang et al. (2020)	The study examines how tourists perceive risk during severe COVID-19 epidemics and how risk perception affects destination attachment and visit intention.	Place image depicted in anti-epidemic videos
Chang et al. (2022)	Investigating the extent to which commitment HRM strategies established before the COVID-19 outbreak alleviate employees' adverse cognitive assessments and attitudes during the crisis.	Commitment HRM's impact on crisis-related cognitive and emotional responses
Golets et al. (2023)	Tourist behavior amid health emergencies, specifically on the impact of perceived health risks and uncertainties on travel intentions.	How health risk perception and uncertainty intolerance affect travel intentions in 2020 and 2021.

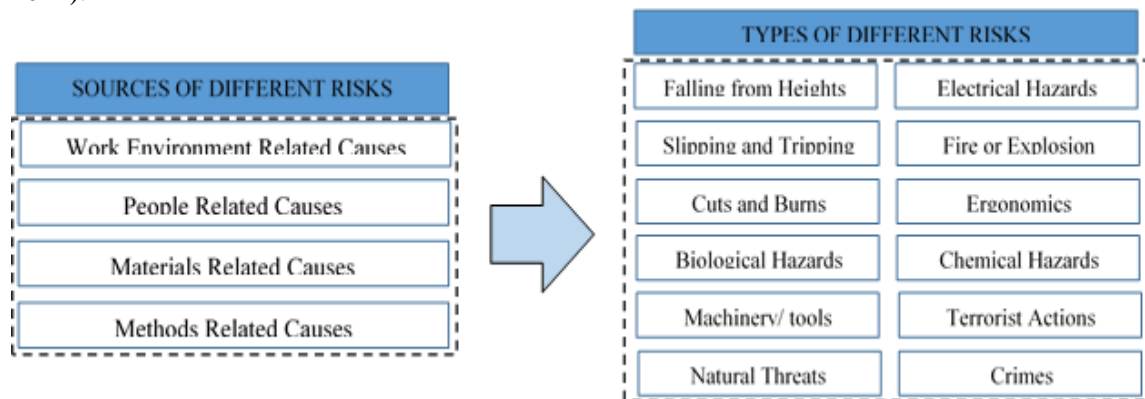
Table 2 presents a summary of research on risk perception in tourism, emphasising significant topics and developments in the field. Initial research (1970s–1990s) emphasises theoretical frameworks (e.g., Plog, 1973) and risks related to destinations (e.g., crime, terrorism). The 2000s highlight psychological variables (e.g., risk-taking characteristics, cultural effects) and methodological progress (e.g., analytic hierarchy processes). With recent studies focusing on the impacts of COVID-19, behavioural economics (Williams & Baláž, 2013) and risk management (Becken & Hughey, 2013) have gradually been included into research since 2010. The table also illustrates the shift from broad theoretical discussion to in-depth analyses of personal behaviour, crisis management, and international health emergencies, highlighting how vulnerable tourism is to environmental and sociopolitical disruptions.

2.1 Risks within the tourism and hospitality industry

All activities entail possible losses and refer to risks (Brearley, 2023). Work activities are no exception; the degree of risk depends on various factors including the nature of work, the complexity of operations and machines offered at work, the environment and work area, and so on. Risks in the hospitality and tourism industry stem from two main sources; firstly, the sensibility of the industry to threats and risks. Such an idea has been asserted theoretically and empirically in past studies that argued that the vulnerability of hospitality and tourism sectors to many different threats is very high (Kozak et al., 2007). For example, hospitality properties are regarded an agglutinative target for terrorists' actions because of different factors, including easy, 24-hour open accessibility, many public spaces and entrances, several meeting rooms, various conferences conducted, and encounters with international tourists (Elshaer et al., 2019; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004). In addition, the nature of the product relies on the local environment's intrinsic properties and suburban destination areas – coastal regions for example near areas that are highly exposed to both human -made emergencies such as terrorism actions, and also environmental threats, including volcanic activity, storm surges, tsunamis, and rising sea level (Byrd, 2007). Secondly, tourism and hospitality services are intangible, heterogeneous, perishable, and inseparable, making operations vulnerable to a wide range of troubles and risks (March & Woodside, 2005; Mitchell & Greatorex, 1993). Henderson (2008) concluded that tourism and hospitality industries have a complex structure and offer experiential goods that require several individuals, leading to possible problems of fragmentation and control.

Within the hotel industry, mechanical, chemical, and physical are the main sources of threats and hazards associated with lodging properties. Fire/explosion, malfunctions of machines and tools, struck by falling objects, sliding, and others (e.g. low oxygen levels in cramped areas and lightning strikes, etc.) can be categorized under physical risks (Selart, 2010). It's argued by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work Organization that occupational accidents as well as cuts and burns constitute the greater share of the risks. In the same line, Hassanain (2009) asserted that fire hazard is a significant form of emergency affecting the hotel industry. He added that hotels can be classified as a high-risk property type concerning this hazard. Figure 1 summarizes the common causes of hazards to health and safety in the hotel industry.

Figure 1: Causes for health and safety hazards in hotel industry (Adapted from Rajini et al., 2012).



The tourism and hospitality industry faces a wide range of risks that can significantly affect its operations, reputation, and profitability. These risks range from economic and political instability to environmental, technological, and health-related threats (Jia et al., 2012). As the industry continues to grow and evolve, businesses must adopt proactive risk management strategies to mitigate these threats and ensure resilience. Effective risk management not only protects the interests of the organization but also helps in maintaining employee well-being, customer satisfaction, and long-term sustainability (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005).

2.2 The Formation of risk perception and attitudes

Although the repercussions of disasters are inevitable (Ritchie, 2004), they can be mitigated, and lives and property can be preserved (AlBattat & Mat Som, 2013) by understanding individuals' perceptions of emergency risks and their management of exposure to hazardous activities (Andersson, 2011). In a relevant setting, individuals' perceptions and attitudes influence the preparedness for and reaction to possible hazards (Elshaer et al., 2022b; Hystad & Keller, 2008).

The variation in perceptions of risk indicates that certain persons are more prone to engage in hazardous circumstances or endanger others. Slovic et al. (2004) shown that individuals perceive dangers variably. Consequently, risk perception has been characterised in several manners; it is defined as “the subjective evaluation of the likelihood of a specific risk materialising and the degree of concern regarding its consequences” (Sjöberg et al., 2004). As stated by Slovic et al. (2004), risk perception refers to the subjective assessment made by humans while analysing and appraising hazardous behaviours and circumstances. Elshaer et al. (2022b) characterised risk perception as an evaluation of the likelihood and consequences of an adverse outcome. Similarly, Bonem et al. (2015) characterised it as an individual's evaluation of the risk associated with a behaviour. The predominant definition is provided by Pidgeon (1998), who characterises risk perception as “people’s beliefs, attitudes, judgements and feelings, as well as the wider social or cultural values and arrangements that individuals adopt, towards hazards” (p. 89).

Yao (2017) identified three prevalent elements influencing risk perception: psychological approaches (heuristics and cognition), sociological perspectives (culture theory), and transdisciplinary aspects (social reinforcement of the risk framework). Consequently, the perception of danger transcends individual experience, including a social and cultural context that reflects values, consciousness, history, and ideology (Kasperson et al., 2003). Consensus exists about the interpretation of risk, defined as the perceived

likelihood of an individual encountering or evading danger, influenced by their experiences, beliefs, awareness, and socio-demographic factors.

According to Weber (2003), risk attitude constitutes stable personality traits derived from subjective risk perception, although others argue that people's attitudes fluctuate across many domains (e.g., Bonem et al., 2015; Weber et al., 2002). This perspective suggests that individuals differ in their risk approaches and exhibit diverse risk behaviours, including preventative measures or treatment preferences. Consequently, individuals exhibit varied responses when confronted with perceived risk; they may seek to evade the adverse outcomes of the scenario or endeavour to control the event, maybe considering its exploitation to their advantage. An individual with a proactive risk-taking disposition might assume greater risks than one who exhibits risk aversion. Risk-taking behaviour may be referred to as risk-seeking or the tendency towards risk aversion (Rohrmann, 2008). Classifying individuals as risk-averse or risk-seeking is challenging due to their varying behaviours in different contexts. Some regard risk attitude as a context-specific notion. Thus, risk attitude may be elucidated by the one participating in and making decisions regarding it.

3. Hypotheses Development

3.1 Victimization experiences and risk perception

Victims may perceive dangers differently than non-victims, thereby influencing their attitudes. There are instances of a negative correlation between prior victimisation and risk perception (Halpern-Felsher et al., 2001; Truman, 2007), as well as cases of non-significant relationships (Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2006). Numerous studies suggest that prior victimisation is a significant predictor of perceived danger. Rountree (1998) said that risk perception differed based on the nature of victimisation. Individuals with a lacklustre trip experience, for instance, do not dread assaults and political instability (Abdel-Azim, 2010). Research indicates that direct prior victimisation markedly elevates expectations regarding the probability of future criminal victimisation (Lee & Ulmer, 2000; Mesch, 2000). McNeeley and Stutzenberger (2013) discovered that previous victimisation affects individual behaviour via the mediating impact of risk perception. It has been asserted that the extent of victimisation must be taken into account regarding work-related dangers in tourism and hospitality. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

H1: Victimization experiences significantly impact risk perception.

H1a: Risk perception mediates between victimization experiences and avoidance coping behaviour.

3.2 Awareness and risk perception

Previous studies have demonstrated that there is a connection between being aware of risk factors and having a comprehension of them. It was observed by Galizzi and Tempesti (2009) that individuals' safety awareness is increased when they are aware of something. According to Galizi and Tempesti (2009), the Fishbein multi-attribute model is a fundamental theory on the creation of attitudes towards an issue. This model proposes that an attitude is dependent upon the awareness of the topic and the attributes of the problem. The possibility that people's awareness does not directly correspond with the likelihood of participating in a particular activity is what motivates academics to investigate risk perception as a characteristic that acts as a mediator between awareness and avoidance coping action.

Consequently, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Awareness is a significant predictor of risk perception.

H2a: Risk perception mediates between awareness and avoidance coping behaviour.

3.3 Risk aversion and risk perception

Individuals vary in their risk tolerance, with risk aversion serving as a variable that reflects one's attitude toward risk (Baz et al., 1999). Some scholars argued that risk aversion can affect their decision-making styles (Baz et al., 1999; Sun, 2014). Employees exhibiting low-risk aversion perceive ambiguous situations as less threatening, whereas those with high-risk aversion experience greater apprehension. Havlena and DeSarbo (1991) illustrate that individuals' sensitivity to risk impacts their risk assessment. Given that prior research has not explicitly investigated the influence of risk aversion on perceived risk, these findings should significantly enhance the existing literature. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Risk aversion is a significant predictor of risk perception.

H3a: Risk perception mediates between risk aversion and avoidance coping behaviour.

3.4 Risk perception and avoidance coping behaviors

Avoidance coping behaviour occurs when an individual faced with stress and danger refrains from taking action (Long, 1990). Koopmann et al. (2016) suggest that individuals facing negative work incidents often utilise heightened preventive methods, resulting in avoidance coping practices (Amponsah et al., 2020; Bartone et al., 2015). Previous studies have shown that environmental cues can directly provoke behavioural responses, including avoidance coping behaviours. Numerous research demonstrate a clear correlation between risk perception and employee behaviour (Koo & Kim, 2019; Murray-Webster & Hillson, 2016; Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Another study on risk perception indicated that risk attitudes differed significantly among respondents according to their risk perception (Pennings & Wansink, 2004). Shafi et al. (2011) similarly established that avoidance coping behaviour is significantly influenced by risk perception. Consequently, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: Risk perception is a significant predictor of Avoidance coping behaviour.

This study consequently proposed the following hypothesis – see Figure 2 - based on the prior discussion.

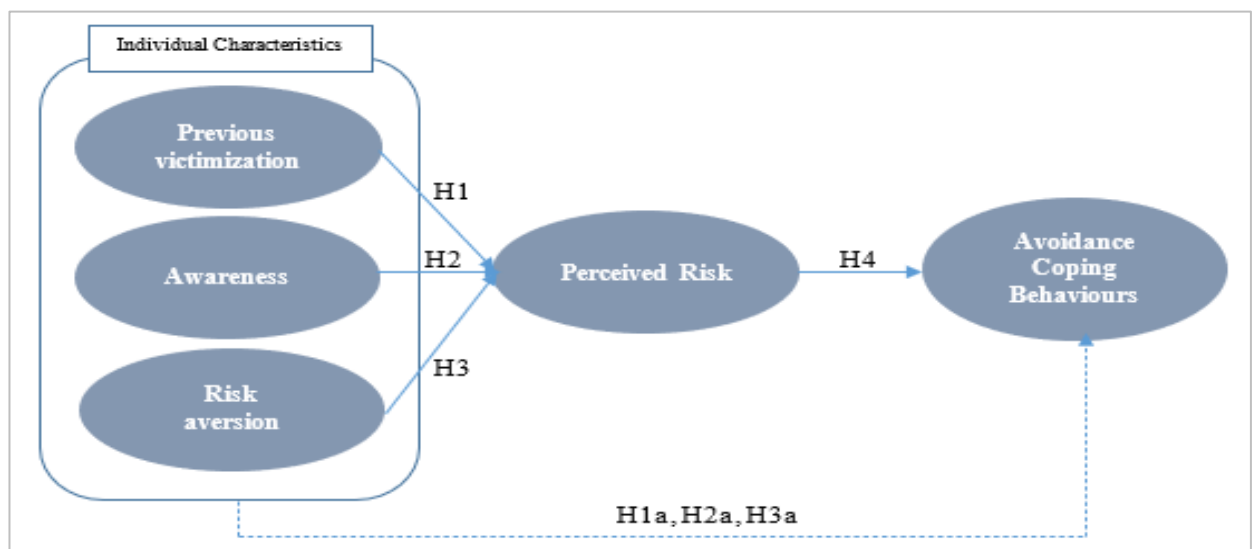


Figure 2. Research Conceptual Framework

4. Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive analytical approach in which they tried to describe employees' avoidance coping behaviors in response to work-related risks in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry since it is the most appropriate approaches to describe the phenomenon in question, in which the researchers are trying to describe the subject of the study, analyze the data, and compare, explain, and assesses hoping to reach meaningful generalizations to increase and enrich the knowledge on the subject.

4.1 Data Collections and Participants

This research employed a survey methodology to gather data from independent hotels and travel agencies, which are acknowledged as a significant element of the industry. The Egyptian hospitality sector is anticipated to reach a valuation of USD 3.78 billion in 2024 and USD 4.65 billion by 2029, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.25% during the forecast period (2024-2029) (Hospitality Market Research, 2024).

Nineteen independent hotels and 27 travel companies in Greater Cairo and Sharm El-Sheikh were selected. Small businesses associated to tourism and hospitality, such as independent establishments and travel agencies, were selected for their significant susceptibility to diverse risks (Elshaer et al., 2022). Travel agencies are typically vulnerable to external hazards, such as insufficient financial systems, changing tourist preferences, and employee theft and fraud (Penela & Serrasqueiro, 2019). Caponigro (2000) highlighted a significant difference in emergency responses between large organisations and privately-owned entities, such as hotels or travel agencies, asserting that larger organisations are more prone to possess risk structures than their smaller counterparts, influenced by factors such as size, financial conditions, employee expertise, and awareness. Moreover (Caponigro, 2000) clarified that with limited finances, emergency plans are less necessary for small organizations as they feel that they will not be affected by emergencies or will run their company without an arrangement.

Occupational, routine, service, supervision, and management jobs indicate vertical diversity in surveyed hotels and travel agencies. Supervisory and management levels were removed because managers have adequate power (awareness, expertise, and authority) to protect business flow. Data was gathered online using an online questionnaire. The researchers administered the questionnaires. Given the small population, the sample size had to be determined using a statistical formula. According to Adam (2020), the sample size could be calculated using the Yaro Yamani Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = sample size; N = population; 1 = constant term; e = margin of error

Therefore, 500 surveys were distributed in privately held properties (250 for hotels and 250 for travel agents' personnel) to individuals in subordinating positions (e.g., vocational, routine, and service jobs). 372 valid replies were analysed. Since working with equipment and software requires hard skills (Laker & Powell, 2011), our sample category is hard skilled. These groups of routine production and operations employees make up most of the tourism and hospitality workers, and they are more likely to respond to emergencies faster than top-level representatives.

4.2 Questionnaire Design and Pilot Study

The questionnaire started with an initial screening question to figure out if respondents had encountered work-related dangers. It subsequently evaluated three threats: natural catastrophes (e.g., Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2006), terrorist activities (Byrd, 2007), and primarily, risks associated with normal operations. The questionnaire comprises two main sections: the first gathers demographic data from respondents, such as age, gender, educational qualifications, employment status, and income, while the second investigates critical aspects pertinent to the study, including prior victimisation, awareness, risk aversion, perceived risk, and avoidance coping behaviour.

The first scale for assessing the vulnerability to certain occupational risk, informed by previous victimisation and its effects on job performance, was developed based on the works of Sarman (2016) and Yang et al. (2015). It is measured as a descriptive scale that facilitates the assessment of the risk associated with certain categories. The second variable was derived from the synthesised review (e.g., Oztekin, 2018) assessing the degree to which employees possess awareness pertinent to mitigating or managing their work-related risks. Risk aversion quantifies an individual's inherent tendency to avoid risk (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Four items were selected to evaluate this concept. Risk perception was chosen based on extensive literature study (e.g., Rundmo & Iversen, 2004; Weber et al., 2002). Avoidance coping behaviour was evaluated using seven questions as employed in other investigations (Holahan et al., 2005; Long, 1990).

5. Results

5.1 Respondent profile

Of the 372 respondents, approximately one-third (n = 202) were female, while 54.30% were male (n = 170). Half of the respondents (n = 188) were under 40 years of age, and 36.02% were under 30 years old (n = 134). About two-thirds held bachelor's degrees (n = 229), whereas a minority of 9.13% (n = 34) possessed master's or doctoral degrees. Additionally, 46.77% (n = 174) were engaged in service activities, 43.81% (n = 163) participated in routine production activities, and 9.42% (n = 35) were classified as craft and operative workers. The majority of respondents reported an income of less than 5000, accounting for 48.92%, followed by those earning between 5000 and 7000, comprising 40.86% (Table 3).

Table 3: Respondents' profiles

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	202 54.30%
	Female	170 45.70%
Age	Less than 30 years	134 36.02%
	From 30:40 years	54 14.52%
	More than 40 years	184 49.46%
Education	Secondary school	109 29.30%
	Bachelor degree	229 61.56%
	Postgraduate	34 9.14%
Job activities	Vocational duties	35 9.42%
	Routine production	163 43.81%
	Service jobs	174 46.77%
Income	Less than 5000	182 48.92%
	From 5001:7000	152 40.86%
	More than 7000	38 10.22%

Figure 3 depicts respondents affected by types of work-related risks (e.g., natural disasters, violent actions, and routine operational risks). Twenty-five percent of respondents experienced natural disasters, whereas seventy-five percent did not. Fifteen percent indicated being impacted by violent actions, whilst eighty-five percent had no effect. Sixty percent of respondents were impacted by daily operational risks, whereas forty percent remained unaffected. The findings indicate that daily operational risks represent the predominant work-related risk, while violent actions are the least significant.

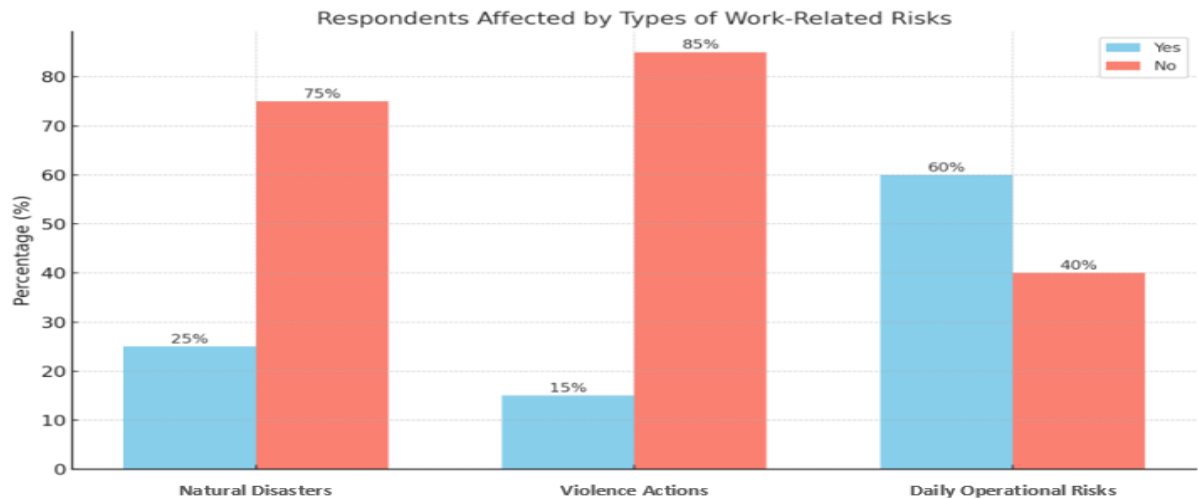


Figure 3. Types of work-related risks.

Travel agencies and hotels have unique hazards stemming from their divergent business structures and operational practices. Travel agents are susceptible to variations in commission-based revenue, supplier disruptions, and geopolitical instability impacting travel demand. They also encounter risks of fraud, booking inaccuracies, and regulatory modifications (Wei, 2021). Conversely, hotels face high operating costs, fluctuations in seasonal demand, property damage, and liability issues related to visitor safety. Furthermore, hotels face reputational risks arising from negative reviews and cybersecurity threats related to guest data (Kolodiziev et al., 2024). Despite both businesses operating within the tourism industry, their risk environments differ due to distinct service frameworks and customer interactions.

5.2 Model Measurements

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Smart-PLS3 was utilised. The analysis evaluated the reliability and validity of the study's variables to examine the model's measurement (Hair et al., 2017). The study's results demonstrate that Cronbach's Alpha values and composite reliability metrics above the suggested threshold of 0.7 (Kline, 2010), indicating robust internal consistency. Moreover, the trustworthiness of the indicators is affirmed. The load above the advised threshold of 0.5 for all items (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4: Factor loading mean, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, AVE

	Item	Factor Loading > 0.5	A >0.7	CR >0.7	AVE >0.5
Previous Victimization	PV1	0.852	0.802	0.863	0.557
	PV2	0.870			
	PV3	0.666			
	PV4	0.938			
	PV5	0.869			
	PV6	0.759			
Awareness	AW1	0.765	0.712	0.837	0.651
	AW2	0.851			
	AW3	0.836			
Risk Aversion	RA1	0.807	0.904	0.928	0.728
	RA2	0.891			
	RA3	0.912			
	RA4	0.851			
Perceived Risk	PR1	0.689	0.778	0.804	0.611
	PR2	0.814			
	PR3	0.722			
	PR4	0.842			
	PR5	0.811			
Avoidance Coping Behaviour	ACP1	0.721	0.855	0.901	0.664
	ACP2	0.749			
	ACP3	0.753			
	ACP4	0.789			
	ACP5	0.667			
	ACP6	0.683			
	ACP7	0.711			

Convergent validity is achieved. Consequently, for all constructs, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) surpasses the stipulated threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, it satisfies discriminatory validity. Consequently, the square roots of the AVEs of the diagonals exceed the correlations among variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the HTMT values remain below 0.85 (Kline, 2010).

Table 5: Discriminant validity

	Fornell Larcker criterion					HTMT					
		PV	AW	RA	PR	ACP	PV	AW	RA	PR	ACP
Previous Victimization	PV	0.912									
Awareness	AW	0.532	0.807				0.485				
Risk Aversion	RA	0.593	0.632	0.753			0.475	0.705			
Perceived Risk	PR	0.614	0.443	0.540	0.811		0.197	0.427	0.582		
Avoidance Coping Behaviour	ACP	-0.510	-0.392	-0.463	0.217	0.715	0.187	0.311	0.472	0.411	

5.3 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses testing results in Figure 4 and Table 6 show that there are positive interactions among the studied variables. The findings reveal significant correlations between individual characteristics in terms of (previous victimization, awareness, and risk aversion) and perceived risk ($r = 0.406, p < 0.01$; $r = 0.372, p < 0.01$; $r = 0.612, p < 0.01$). Additionally, perceived risk demonstrates a significant positive correlation with avoidance coping behaviour ($r = 0.051, p < 0.01$). Mediation analysis, as proposed in H4, examined whether perceived risk mediates the connection between (previous victimization, awareness, and risk aversion) and perceived risk ($b = 0.075; p < 0.01$; $b = 0.163; p < 0.05$; $b = 0.215; p < 0.01$). The beta values and corresponding p values indicate mediation, thus corroborating H1a, H2a, H3a.

Table 6: The structural model results for hypothesis testing

Variables	Perceived Risk	Avoidance Coping Behaviours
<i>Direct Effect</i>		
Victimization experiences→	0.406 ($p < 0.01$)	
Awareness→	0.372 ($p < 0.01$)	
Risk aversion→	0.612 ($p < 0.01$)	
Perceived Risk→		0.051 ($p < 0.01$)
<i>Indirect Effect (Simple Mediation)</i>		
Victimization experiences → Perceived Risk →		0.075 ($p < 0.01$)
Awareness → Perceived Risk →		0.163 ($p < 0.05$)
Risk aversion → Perceived Risk →		0.215 ($p < 0.01$)
Note(s): * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$		

The R-squared (R^2) values in the graphic represent the proportion of variance elucidated by the model for each dependent construct. The R^2 value for Perceived Risk is 0.748, signifying that about 74.8% of the variation in perceived risk is explained by the independent factors, including prior victimisation, awareness, and risk aversion. At the same time, avoidance coping behaviour has an R^2 value of 0.660, meaning that Perceived Risk accounts for almost 66% of the variance in this construct. Since values above 0.5 often indicate significant explanatory power in social science research (Benitez et al., 2020), the R^2 values demonstrate a robust model and effectively explain the variance in both perceived risk and avoidance coping behaviour.

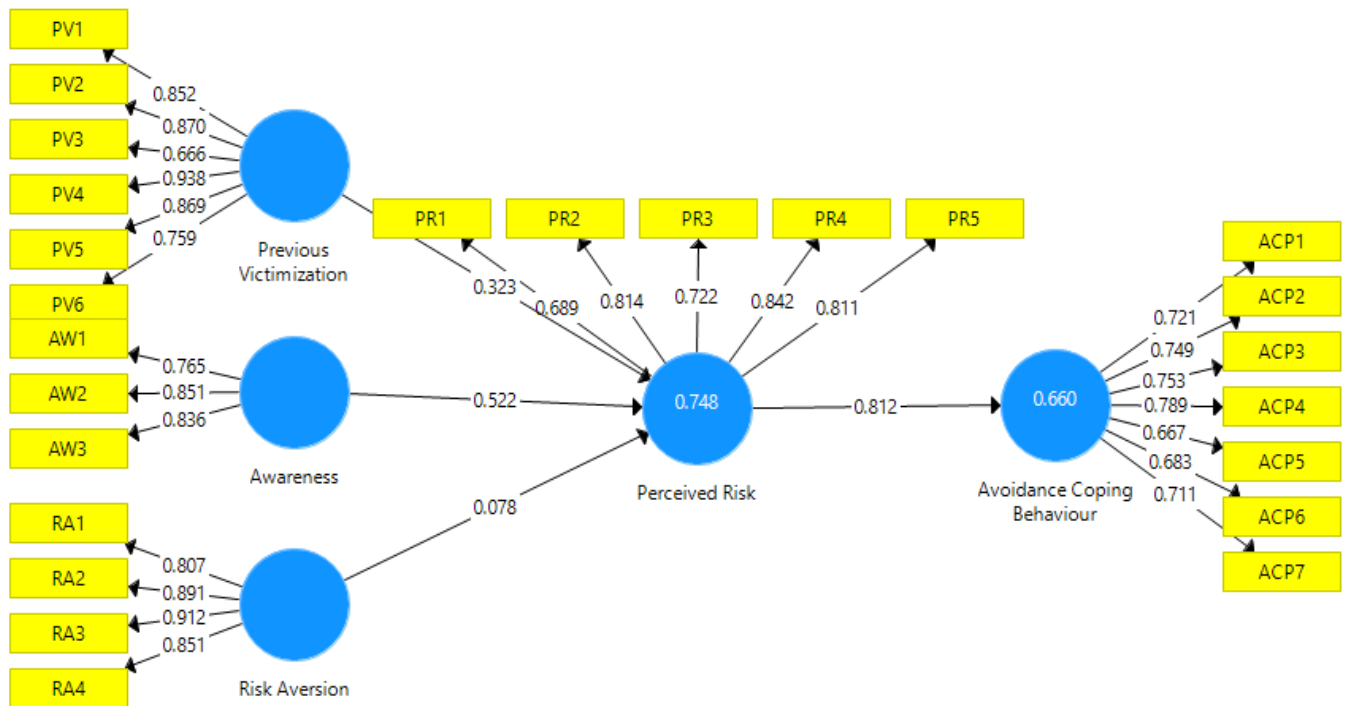


Figure 4. PLS algorithm results.

6. Discussion

This study aimed to elucidate the factors influencing employees' perceptions that subsequently inform their avoidance coping behaviours in managing work-related risks within Egyptian hotels and travel agencies. It assessed prior victimisation, identified the role of awareness in this context, and explored risk aversion in relation to shaping risk perception. Furthermore, in the following phase, their risk perception was examined to see whether it serves as a mediating factor between employees' characteristics (prior victimisation, awareness, and risk aversion) and their avoidance coping strategy.

The findings indicated that previous victimisation, awareness, and risk aversion strongly predict employees' risk perception, accounting for around 74.8% of the variance in their risk perception. A comprehensive body of literature indicates that victimisation is substantially associated with an individual's risk perception, positing that those who have personally encountered risk perceive themselves to be at an elevated risk of subsequent victimisation (i.e. Abdel-Azim, 2010; Elshaer et al., 2022b; McNeeley & Stutzenberger, 2013; Mesch, 2000). The findings of this study align with those of other researchers (e.g., Halpern-Felsher et al., 2001; Truman, 2007; Viscusi & Zeckhauser, 2006). Halpern-Felsher et al. (2001) revealed that prior victimisation negatively correlates with RP. Rountree (1998) asserted that peaceful experience for instance has no substantial impact on risk perception. The discrepancy in the researchers' perspectives may thereafter be attributed to the sort of victimisation (violent or peaceful event).

Similar to previous victimisation, awareness has been demonstrated to affect RP. The study findings corresponded with the Fishbein Multi-attribute Model, indicating that attitudes are shaped by comprehension of the issue and its characteristics (Galizzi & Tempesti, 2009), as increased awareness amplifies safety consciousness among individuals. Consequently, it seems that the individuals' beliefs and awareness elucidate their risk perception, rather than their prior victimisation associated with the tourism and hospitality work environment, which becomes irrelevant in this context.

Additionally, the findings indicated that employees' perception of risks is reflected in their level of risk aversion; those who are less risk averse are less anxious, whereas those who are more risk averse perceive ambiguous situations as more dangerous (Baz et al., 1999; Sun, 2014). Employees' sensitivity to risk affects their risk assessments, which is crucial when making decisions, particularly in situations where there is uncertainty, claim Havlena and DeSarbo (1991). The relationship between risk aversion and perceived risk has been studied and established by hypothesis H3, which suggests that risk aversion is a significant predictor of risk perception, even if these concepts have been explored in previous research.

Furthermore, avoidance coping behaviour transpires when individuals, confronted with stress or peril, abstain from taking response (Long, 1990). Koopmann et al. (2016) propose that individuals facing negative work incidents frequently apply preventative methods, resulting in avoidance behaviours (Amponsah et al., 2020; Bartone et al., 2015). According to earlier studies, there is a direct link between employee behaviour and risk perception, and environmental stimuli can cause behavioural responses including avoidance coping behaviour (Koo & Kim, 2019; Murray-Webster & Hillson, 2016; Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Furthermore, it has been determined that risk perception functions as a mediator in the relationship between avoidance coping activity and personal characteristics including awareness and past victimisation (Pennings & Wansink, 2004; Shafi et al., 2011). By showing that employees' risk assessment, which is impacted by their knowledge and past victimisation, has a major impact on their avoidance coping strategy, this study supports these findings. This emphasises how important it is to assess individual characteristics during hiring and training to improve risk management and lessen possible risks. In the tourist and hospitality sector, where human resources are essential, comprehending employees' risk perception and personal characteristics is vital for facilitating safe and effective decision-making (Pizam et al., 2004; Hystad & Keller, 2008). Research indicates that effective risk management, including safety decision-making, significantly depends on comprehending employees' risk perceptions, thereby safeguarding organisational investments and securing a stable future (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004; Selart, 2010).

7. Conclusion and Implications

The stability of employment affects both employee commitment to the organisation and the efficacy of its operations. Managing the risks associated with work-related threats necessitates a planned, systematic approach that begins with comprehending how individuals perceive and address these risks. This involves identifying hazards and assessing risks to ascertain potential harm, the likelihood of occurrence, the severity of the risk, and the appropriate attitudes and procedures to implement for risk mitigation. Egypt, specifically, has encountered several adverse circumstances in the chosen two domains. Consequently, comprehending the factors that influence risk perception and attitudes of workers and employees in hotels and travel agencies in these two regions is essential to ascertain what induces feelings of anxiety or discomfort in potentially hazardous situations.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the expanding understanding regarding the significance of enhancing risk perception, particularly by recruiting personnel with exceptional personality traits. This study formulates a theoretical framework to enhance and advocate for employees' safety coping strategies in hotels and travel agencies. Firstly, the study found that individual traits of employees are a crucial predictor of risk perception, and their influence on avoidance coping behaviour has been established. Utilising the results from the PLS algorithm, this study examined the influence of prior victimisation, awareness, and risk aversion on employee risk perception, thereby establishing a theoretical foundation for analysing these three distinct individual characteristics in enhancing employee risk perception and coping behaviour.

Secondly, the risk perception variable was demonstrated to function as hypothesised, exerting a mediating impact. This study investigated and confirmed the impact of risk perception on avoidance coping behaviour among independent hotels and tourism businesses in Egypt. The results demonstrate that the conceptual model provides an adequate understanding of the perceived work-related risks and avoidance coping behaviour variables connected to workplace risks. Moreover, the study's findings enhance the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) by validating that particular job demands and individual characteristics (prior victimisation, awareness, and risk aversion) within any workplace interact to affect the perception of risk and other outcomes, including avoidance coping behaviour.

7.2 Practical Implications

The tourism and hospitality sector has been profoundly impacted by several crises. Research on managerial strategies and operational procedures is limited, and this study may aid in the development of diverse resources and abilities that distinguish employee management. Hotels and travel firms must implement management procedures focused on risk reduction and enhance employees' avoidance coping skills by concentrating on two aspects: improving individual traits and increasing risk awareness.

Decision-makers must focus on shaping employees' risk aversion and increasing their knowledge to facilitate effective work execution while reducing risk exposure in highly sensitive areas susceptible to both natural and anthropogenic hazards. Managers must provide sufficient safety information and guidance to employees, establish a secure work environment, and allocate suitable resources to improve employee safety performance. To augment their distinct attributes, managers must concentrate on self-awareness, previous experience, and the development of risk aversion. They ought to exemplify optimal risk perception and avoidance coping strategies for employees, while also enacting safety management policies that encompass the establishment of safety behavioural patterns, the monitoring of employee safety performance, and the rectification of hazardous behaviours. To enhance employees' optimistic outlooks and reduce avoidance coping strategies, managers in hotels and travel agencies must provide constructive feedback about workers' risk concerns. They must provide employees with objective and accurate information to improve their risk perception and awareness. It is essential to formulate risk training programs, particularly when independent firms have limited financial resources, resulting in lower people feeling unaffected.

7.3 Limitations

In the same way that any other academic research is subject to certain limitations, this study is also subject to some limitations. To begin, the sampling area is not sufficiently large to allow for the generalisation of findings. Therefore, it is recommended that future research expand the sample to include other communities in Egypt by using more representative and nationally diverse samples of participants. Every single person who participated in this study was an Egyptian. The second point is that additional studies should be conducted in the future to shed light on other issues, such as the influence of job familiarity, work motives, or the role of friends and family in the workplace. It is reasonable to anticipate that for certain workers and employees, these and other potential factors might determine their views and attitudes towards the dangers that are associated with their profession. Thirdly, there is a need for additional research to be conducted on the managerial level.

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المحتوى متاح على بنك المعرفة المصري EKB

مجلة المنيا لبحوث السياحة والضيافة

رابط المجلة <https://mjthr.journals.ekb/>



العلاقة بين سلوكيات تجنب المخاطر المرتبطة بالعمل والتعامل معها في قطاع الضيافة والسياحة

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المستخلص

تلاعب سلوكيات تجنب الموظفين والتعامل مع المخاطر دورًا مهمًا للغاية في التخفيف من المخاطر المحتملة والاستجابة لها. وفي ضوء نظرية JD-R، تسعى هذه الورقة إلى فهم العوامل التي تحدد إدراك الموظفين وسلوكيات تجنبهم للتعامل مع المخاطر المرتبطة بالعمل في الفنادق ووكالات السفر، وتخصص الدور الوسيط لإدراك المخاطر. استخدمت هذه الدراسة نهج المسح لجمع البيانات من الفنادق المستقلة ووكالات السفر المصرية، مما أسفر عن 372 استبيانًا مكتملاً. ومن المهم أنه تم الوصول إلى أن خصائص الموظفين (التعرض للمخاطر سابقًا، والوعي، والنفور من المخاطر) تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على إدراكهم للمخاطر. وكشفت النتائج أيضاً أن إدراك المخاطر يتوسط العلاقة بين الخصائص الفردية للموظفين وسلوكيات التأقلم مع تجنب المخاطر. والجدير بالذكر أنه في هذه الدراسة، تم الالتزام برؤى جديدة من خلال النظر في التصنيف الرأسي للوظائف والتحقيق في حالة المرؤوسين.

الكلمات الدالة

إدراك المخاطر؛ سلوكيات التأقلم مع تجنب المخاطر؛ موقف المخاطرة؛ مخاطر العمل، النفور من المخاطرة، تجارب التأقلم مع تجنب المخاطرة، الفنادق؛ وكالات السفر.