An Empirical Study on the Impact of Peace in Tourists' Country of Origin on Their Travel Behavior

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Abstract : In a world of increasing mobility and global risks, terrorism has, in a perverse way, capitalized on contemporaneous society's growing interest in travel to explore a world whose national boundaries and distances have decreased. Terrorists have identified the modern tourist flows originated from the economically more developed countries as new appealing targets so as to: i) call attention to the causes they defend and ii) destroy a country's foundations of tourism, with the final aim of disrupting the economic and consequently social fabric of the affected countries. The present study analyses sensitivity towards risk and travel behaviors in international travel amongst a sample of 600 international tourists from 49 countries travelling by air. Specifically, the sample was segmented according to the Global Peace Index. This index defines country profiles regarding the levels of peace. The indicators used are established over three broad themes: i) ongoing domestic and international conflict; ii) societal safety and security; and iii) militarisation. Tourists were segmented, according to their country of origin, in different levels of peacefulness. Several facets of travel behavior were evaluated, namely motivations, attitude towards trip planning, quality perception and perceived value of the trip. Also factors related with risk perception were evaluated, specifically terrorism risk perception during the trip, unsafety sensation as well as importance attributed to safety in travel. Results contribute to our understanding of the role of previous exposure to the lack of peace and safety at home in the international tourists behaviors, which is further discussed in terms of tourism management and marketing implications which should particularly interest tourism services and destinations more affected by terrorism, war, political turmoil, crime and other safety risks.

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