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INVESTIGATING REVISIT INTENTIONS OF RELIGIOUS TOURISTS TO NATURAL DISASTER-AFFECTED RELIGIOUS DESTINATIONS

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Religious tourism represents a significant market segment of the tourism industry with dynamic growth of billions of dollars. However, natural disasters in religious destinations can incur great loss to such a vibrant industry. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to study the behavior patterns of religious tourists relating to revisit intentions to disaster-affected religious destinations. Considering the lack of research in this area, this study investigated the revisit intentions of religious tourists to natural disaster-affected religious destinations using the push–pull motive theoretical framework. The results from the data collected on revisit intentions confirmed religious faith, gratitude, and peace and relaxation as main push factors responsible for religious tourists revisiting disaster-affected religious destinations. Subsequently, disaster awareness through media and personal safety were found as key pull factors that significantly moderated the relationship between peace and relaxation and revisit intentions. Findings indicate that religious tourists who are driven by religious faith and gratitude are not significantly impacted by external pull factors compared with those who visit for seeking peace and relaxation.

Key words: Religious tourists; Revisit intentions; Religious destinations; Natural disasters

Introduction

Religious tourism is defined as “contemporary patterns of visitation to places of religious importance or pilgrimage sites where visitors aim to fulfill

religious needs and recreational needs” (Shinde, 2015, p. 180) and is considered a new niche in the tourism industry and a growing, increasingly diverse economic driver of the global tourism market (Iliev, 2020). It represents a significant market

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segment of the tourism industry, with dynamic growth of billions of US dollars (Albayrak et al., 2018). Approximately 300–600 million people are estimated to visit religious tourist destinations each year (Iliev, 2020; Olsen & Timothy, 2006). Although extant research observes a continuous growth in religious tourism, it has been noticed that religious tourists' revisit intentions can be adversely influenced by natural disasters, leading to significant economic loss (Chen, 2011; Raj et al., 2018; Tirca & Stanculescu, 2011). Natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, landslides, and cyclones) can greatly affect the behavior pattern of tourists in general and religious tourists in particular, whose behaviors are more uniquely characterized by their revisit intentions to a particular religious destination and destinations because of sentimental attachments and strong religious beliefs (Kujawa, 2017).

In the tourism literature, many studies either explore tourists' intentions to revisit religious sites during "normal" times (i.e., when no natural disasters have occurred; Chang & Backman, 2016; Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011) or intentions to visit disaster-affected secular destinations (Walters et al., 2015; Wang, 2017). However, to our knowledge, no studies specifically examine religious tourists' behavior patterns and revisit intentions to religious destinations post-natural disaster. To resolve this gap in the literature, this study investigates various factors that potentially influence religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations.

The previous literature on disasters has used the "push and pull framework" (Dann, 1981) in the context of postdisaster tourism (Biran et al., 2014; Le & Pearce, 2011); thus, the current study uses the same framework to explore relevant push and pull factors influencing religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. This study has two main objectives. First, it examines the key push and pull factors that influence religious tourists' revisit intentions. Second, given that religious tourists' visit intentions are unique compared with those of secular tourists, it examines whether external pull factors moderate the relationship between religious tourists' internal push motives and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. Thus, the study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First,

it extends the push and pull motivation framework in the context of religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations, which the extant literature has not explored. Second, by investigating the key push and pull factors and their interplay, this study may assist researchers and policymakers with formulating effective strategies and enhance global religious tourism in the event of such disasters.

Theoretical Background

Revisit Intentions to Religious Destinations

Revisit intentions can be defined as a postconsumption behavior, wherein a visitor repeats an activity, such as acts of religious worship or rituals, by revisiting a destination (Cole & Scott, 2004). The revisit intentions construct can be viewed as an extension of customer loyalty and is a powerful indicator of success in the tourism industry (Patwardhan et al., 2020). Revisit intentions for religious destinations can be explained as religious tourists' readiness and desire to return to the same religious tourist destination; this intention predicts the subsequent decision to revisit (Han & Kim, 2010).

Role of Push and Pull Theoretical Framework

Push and pull factors theory has been widely used in extant literature concerning tourists' revisit intentions. It is grounded in the assumption that people are pushed or pulled into making travel decisions (Baniya et al., 2017; Dann, 1981). Push factors are internal, emotional, or sociopsychological drivers that create the initial motivation to travel (Klenosky, 2002). They are intrinsic motivations, such as the desire for peace, escape, relaxation, and social interaction, whereas pull factors are external and refer to a destination's functional attributes, such as safety and accessibility, tourism infrastructure, recreation facilities, value for money, and market image (Biran et al., 2014). The justification for underpinning our study design using a push and pull factors theoretical framework is as follows. Primarily, this theory provides a robust framework to investigate the key internal and external factors that drive religious tourists to revisit religious

destinations post-natural disaster. Religious tourists' revisit intention behaviors are so unique that they have a place attachment to visit the same destinations regularly due to interplay of a different set of motivational factors (Kujawa, 2017); thus, the push and pull factors framework provides the opportunity to understand the internal emotional and destination functional attributes that are exclusive to religious tourists. Further, by bringing push and pull factors together within the same theoretical framework, the theory enables us to deeply explore the relevance of both these factors together in the context of religious tourism post-natural disaster. More significantly, this theory offers great opportunity to critically evaluate the extent to which external pull factors, such as destination and functional attributes, are relevant for religious tourists, who may be generally led by strong internal religious beliefs and other sociopsychological push factors.

Considering the lens of this theory, it may be further argued that, although both push and pull factors are considered to influence the intention of tourists to visit destinations (Ashton, 2018; Liro, 2021; Wang et al., 2016), the same cannot be stated in the context of religious tourists' revisit intentions, with special reference to pull factors. Past literature indicates that tourists in general are driven by pull motivation or external factors, such as value for money, safety, and tourist destination infrastructure, which influence tourists' intention to visit, loyalty, recommendations to others, and satisfaction (Xu & Chan, 2016; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). However, this may not necessarily be true for a typical religious tourist. Normally, a tourist who seeks a vacation will be ready to forego a trip if they foresee a threat to personal safety or security (pull factor) when deciding to visit or revisit a destination that has been affected by a natural disaster. However, this may be different for a religious tourist, whose motives may be largely driven by inner factors, such as emotional and religious beliefs (push factors), when deciding to revisit a religious destination after a natural disaster. Given these strong internal push factors, religious tourists may be willing to face risks to revisit, even if the travel is not good value for money or the destination infrastructure (pull factors) is not as suitable after a natural disaster.

Considering this argument against the backdrop of this theory, it may be worthwhile investigating

whether pull factors such as external attributes affect religious tourists' revisit intentions to religious destinations after a natural disaster. Hence, in this study, pull factors were treated as key moderators, while internal push factors were considered independent variables and revisit intention was the dependent variable within the push and pull factors theoretical framework. Moreover, in agreement with Ramkissoon and Mavondo (2015), we argue that positing push and pull factors as either moderators or mediators for investigating tourists' revisit intentions has scope to further refine the theoretical relationships among the construct of tourists' revisit intentions, and hence may contribute to further theory development in religious tourism. In particular, the idea of investigating pull factors as moderating factors gains much credence, as this moves studies beyond the idea of direct relationships, allowing a more accurate description of the strength of the relationship between predictors and outcome variables (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012).

Push and Pull Factors in Religious Tourism

Push Factors. Push factors are psychological needs that tend to create a desire to travel (Crompton, 1979). Generally, religious tourists are motivated by their religious faith, need for relaxation, transcendence, expression of gratitude, desire to escape, and need for other emotional experiences (Ashton, 2018; Iliev, 2020; Lois-Gonzalez & Santos, 2015; Shinde, 2015). According to the literature, religious tourists' intentions to visit a religious destination are mainly closely tied to their religious faith, their seeking of peace and relaxation, and their gratitude (Amaro et al., 2018; Liro, 2021; Rashid, 2018). Religious faith can be defined as belief in a set of religious doctrines (Cohen, 2006). Liro's (2021) study on religious tourists' revisit intentions and motivations indicated that internal drivers related to religious reasons are significant in religious tourists' destination choice. Liro (2021) also found that the push factors associated with emotional drivers do not necessarily imply spiritual experiences of prayer and pilgrimage, but entail internal drivers for emotional experiences, such as peace and relaxation. Similarly, religious tourists have the advantage of emotional value—for example, seeking peace and relaxation while visiting

religious destinations (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). The hedonic value derived from visiting religious destinations thus offers religious tourists strong satisfaction (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019).

Visiting religious destinations also provides individuals with the opportunity for self-transformation, which can influence their feeling of happiness (Kim & Kim, 2019). Religious destinations can transcend the spiritual attributes to the feeling of gratitude and other emotional experiences related to feelings of peace, calmness, and tranquility. In a recent study, Patwardhana et al. (2020) indicated the significant role of emotional experience as closely attached to religious tourist destinations. One such emotional experience is a sense of gratitude. According to Raj (2012), religious tourists are driven by an inner emotional sense of gratitude, which is a “positively valenced emotion that can arise when another person a benefactor does something kind for the self” (Algoe et al., 2016, p. 658). According to Wong et al. (2013), visiting a religious site and offering thanks to the divine is considered one way of expressing gratitude. Therefore, viewed through the lens of the push factors framework, the religious tourism literature shows that religious faith, seeking peace and relaxation, and gratitude are potential inner emotional drivers that influence religious tourists’ motivations.

Pull Factors. Pull factors are destination-generated forces and the knowledge tourists have about a destination (Dann, 1981; Gnoth, 1997). Predominantly, pull factors are related to tourism resources or the tangible aspects of a place, such as natural and cultural attractions, destination and market image, value for money, previous visit satisfaction, recreation activities, accessibility, and safety (Biran et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 2002; Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). The studies on pull factor motivations in religious tourism report far fewer external factors that encourage religious tourists to visit religious destinations. Few studies have investigated cultural heritage, religious art, festivals, architecture, and the media as relevant pull factors in religious tourism (Liro, 2021; Terzidou et al., 2018). For example, Wang et al.’s (2016) study on the pull factors of religious tourists identified that religious tourists are attracted by circumstances

of particular places, which is referred as cultural enjoyment, such as religious art, festival events, customs, and the style of religious architecture. Researching the pull factors of religious tourists, Terzidou et al. (2018) termed media as a pull factor because the media often creates ideology-fueled religious images of attractive or meaningful places and mobilizes action. Recently, Liro (2021) confirmed that objects of worship, cultural events, and cultural heritage are some pull factors for religious tourists. Significantly, Wang et al. (2016) asserted that there are more internal factors (push) than external factors (pull) affecting religious tourists’ motivation. This was confirmed by Terzidou et al. (2018), according to whom motivation in the religious tourism context is driven more by strong, deeply held personal beliefs and embodied performances that are related to everyday religious practices and emotional experiences. In line with this, Zoltan and Masiero (2012) considered push factors as antecedents to pull factors in the context of religious tourism because, Dann (1981), appraising tourist’s motivation, affirmed that push is a motivational factor important for the decision to travel and all other specific attractions of the destination (pull factors) may induce the traveler once the decision has been made to travel. Based on the existing literature, it is evident that there are no significant pull factors in religious tourism, except for the specific cultural element.

Considering that this study focused specifically on understanding religious tourist motivations to revisit a destination after a natural disaster, we also examined the postdisaster destination tourism literature to determine some of the relevant pull factors. A key study on the consumption of postdisaster destinations by Biran et al. (2014) highlighted four pull factors for visiting a disaster-affected tourist destination: safety and accessibility, tourism infrastructure, value for money, and postdisaster media image. These are significant to determine the pull factors for religious tourists’ revisit intentions for disaster-affected tourist destinations. Extending the findings of Biran et al. (2014), we propose personal safety and disaster awareness through the media as two moderating pull factors that may alter the relationship between religious tourists’ push motives (religious faith, seeking peace and relaxation, and gratitude) and revisit intentions for

disaster-affected tourist destinations. The rationale for choosing personal safety and disaster awareness through the media was twofold. First, personal safety is a key factor that no tourist wishes to compromise (Seabra et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to ascertain whether this has any bearing on religious tourists, whose visit intentions are generally anchored by religious faith and dependence on supernatural power and protection (Terzidou et al., 2017). Second, in the social media age, news about disasters spreads rapidly around the world and shapes destination images and subsequent travel decisions (Palen & Hughes, 2018). Thus, it is critical to investigate whether disaster awareness through the media regarding disaster-affected religious destinations prompts religious tourists not to revisit such places. We posit that personal safety and disaster awareness through the media are two significant variables that cannot be ignored in the context of religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations.

Hypotheses Development

Push Factors and Revisit Intentions

Religious Faith and Revisit Intentions. Religious tourists' experiences are often considered in the literature as collection of dynamic yet intrinsically complex performances wherein both a human and nonhuman meeting takes place in a sacred location (Wearing et al., 2016). Several studies have posited religious faith as the primary push factor motivating religious tourists (Amaro et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2020; Liro, 2021), and nearly all religions encourage followers to visit religious destinations to experience the greatness of God (Terzidou et al., 2017). The potential for religion to enable people to confront problems in everyday life was affirmed by Pargament et al. (2001) and Phillips et al. (2004). Visits to religious destinations foster a sense of connection and togetherness (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Religious travels hold a certain value, based on the likelihood of feeling comfortable, a sense of kinship, and religious and ideological harmony. Visitors often feel accepted in the company of those who share common beliefs, customs, and norms (Granger et al., 2014; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Mahalati, 2011). While assessing whether religious faith

will drive religious tourists to revisit a disaster-affected religious destination in the future, we rely on extant research that reports religions' potential to enable and empower people to confront everyday problems (Phillips et al., 2004). We strongly argue that this empowerment offers a sense of safety and protection, self-belief, and reliance on supernatural power to undertake visits to disaster-affected religious destinations. Moreover, religious tourists have an inherent belief that visiting a religious destination brings blessings and healing (Wiśniewski, 2018). Just as greater effort equals greater reward, religious tourists may assume that visiting a disaster-affected religious site may allow them to experience a greater blessing, healing, or miracle. Rashid (2018) reaffirmed this point: "people may even travel more for religious purposes when things get tough" (p. 154). Based on the above, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Religious faith will be significantly related to religious tourists' intentions to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations.

Gratitude and Revisit Intentions. Gratitude is a key push factor in religious tourism. It features an affective component derived from positive personal outcomes, such as receiving an object or appreciating something positive in the world, in other people, or in one's personal life (Wood et al., 2008). This appreciation of other people can transfer to an appreciation of supernatural forces, such as God (McCullough, 2002). Largely, religious tourists who undertake visits for religious reasons also strongly believe that such visits bring prosperity. Therefore, they are encouraged to revisit to express gratitude (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2013).

Experience, expression, and responding with gratitude are considered moral obligations that are emphasized by all religions as beneficial to both individuals and society (Bono et al., 2004). Individuals may experience gratitude because of supernatural blessings received in their life and visiting a religious site and offering thanks to the divine is considered one way of expressing gratitude (Wong et al., 2013). McFadden (1999) and Wirtz et al. (2014) stated that religious and spiritual experiences provide a unique context that may

influence developmental outcomes, such as gratitude. Regarding the question of whether gratitude is a driving factor for religious tourists to revisit a disaster-affected religious destination, the answer lies in the counterquestion: Would a visit to a disaster-affected religious site not be a great and noble way to show gratitude to the divine power for the blessing received? Krause et al. (2015) argued that grateful people have greater confidence and are therefore in a better position to deal with an uncertain future. More importantly, people who are grateful to God believe that God, who has provided blessings in the past, will continue to help them in future situations, however challenging those situations may be (Krause et al., 2015; Ouellette & Wood, 1998). Hence, grateful individuals are more able to cope with stressful events and keep their problems in perspective by viewing stressors in conjunction with the positive experiences that evoked their gratitude (Krause et al., 2015). In light of these arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Gratitude will be significantly related to religious tourists' intentions to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations.

Peace and Relaxation and Revisit Intentions. Visiting religious destinations offers peace and relaxation because these places often feature environmental conditions offering peacefulness and tranquility (Bond et al., 2015). The environmental conditions of religious destinations also create favorable experiences because spiritual nature and landscapes induce calmness and serenity (Lopez, 2013). According to Majeed and Ramkissoon (2020), any perceived goodness of therapeutic landscape or destination not only improves the health and well-being of tourists, but also encourages tourists' attachment to such locations, encouraging revisits. Experience of therapeutic wellness can create a sense of place attachment, which is characterized as place identity, dependence, and social bonding, resulting in revisit intentions (Chen et al., 2014; Majeed & Ramkissoon, 2020; Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). Likewise, journeys to religious destinations are conducive to certain emotional experiences that can lead to peace, tranquility, and

relaxation (Lopez, 2013). Given that a primary motivation of religious tourists is to gain restorative benefits (Bond et al., 2015; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005), it can be argued that prior experience of these benefits would strongly influence place attachment and revisit behavior, regardless of whether the destination recently experienced a natural disaster.

As noted previously, religious tourists are motivated more by inner drivers with religious and spiritual elements that extend beyond attaching peace and relaxation to comfort, ambience, or beauty. According to planned behavior theory, an individual's intention is a consequence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Chang & Backman, 2016; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). More specifically, attitude, as an antecedent of behavioral intention, is formed after an individual has conceptualized their evaluation of past behavior (Li & China, 2014). In light of this theory, we argue that religious tourists' attitude to finding peace in a particular destination arises from their evaluation of prior behavior closely tied to religious and spiritual experiences, rather than to comfort, aesthetics, or beauty alone. Thus, while understanding that religious tourists' way of finding peace and relaxation differs from that of secular tourists, we argue that a natural disaster occurring in a tourist destination would not affect religious tourists' intentions to revisit. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Peace and relaxation will be significantly related to religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations.

Moderating Role of Personal Safety and Disaster Awareness Through Media

Park and Reisinger (2008) identified how natural disasters influence travelers' risk perception. Kozak et al. (2007) pointed out that images of safety and risk associated with a particular destination have a strong effect on tourists' perceptions of a destination and future travel behavior. Many studies have posited that tourists' risk perceptions of their personal safety heavily influence their intention to visit or revisit certain destinations (Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008; Seabra et al., 2013). The study by Chew and Jahari (2014) examined postdisaster

risk perception and intentions to revisit following Japan's Fukushima natural disaster (Chew & Jahari, 2014), and noted perceived travel risk as a key factor affecting revisit intentions. Moreover, studies on tsunamis' influence on emotional states (Lehto et al., 2008) and optimal timing of tourism recovery after natural disasters (Okuyama, 2018) explored risk perception and its negative effects on revisit intentions to tourist destinations after a natural disaster. Natural disasters significantly influence affective responses in the brain's arousal and pleasure domains, suggesting that perceived risks are highly likely to directly influence a destination's image (Lehto et al., 2008). Therefore, perceptions of safety and security are clearly important determining factors in tourists' decision-making processes regarding certain destinations (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

Moreover, the media can increase tourists' sense of perceived risk, leading them to form a negative impression of a destination. Information obtained from the media is used extensively in individuals' travel planning processes and has an immense effect on the way individuals plan their travels (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Given the experiential nature of tourism products, potential tourists rely on others' experience shared in the media for their own decision-making (Litvin et al., 2008). According to Ghaderi et al. (2012), media

exposure contributes to a destination's safety perception. Although mass media and online social networks effectively report on and help manage disasters (Faulkner, 2001), the media has been criticized for exaggerating the extent and harmfulness of events by sensationalizing them, making the "image recovery" process more difficult for disaster-affected destinations and adversely affecting decision-making in tourists (Mair et al., 2016). Recent studies have observed that, while personal fear prevents tourists from visiting disaster-hit destinations, media awareness can play a significant role in discouraging or encouraging tourists to revisit these destinations (Bhati et al., 2021).

Both these pull factors—personal safety and disaster awareness through the media—make sense in the context of secular tourism, where tourists may be hesitant or cautious to revisit disaster-affected destinations. Safety concerns, such as contaminated food, terrorism, sociocultural risks, and natural disasters (Nagai & Tkaczynski, 2014; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006; Wang et al., 2019), have a negative effect on tourists' intention to travel. However, referring to our earlier arguments about push factors in religious tourism, we argue this may differ for religious tourists for two reasons. First, personal safety may not be a matter of great concern for religious tourists, whose inner drivers are based on spiritual and religious beliefs

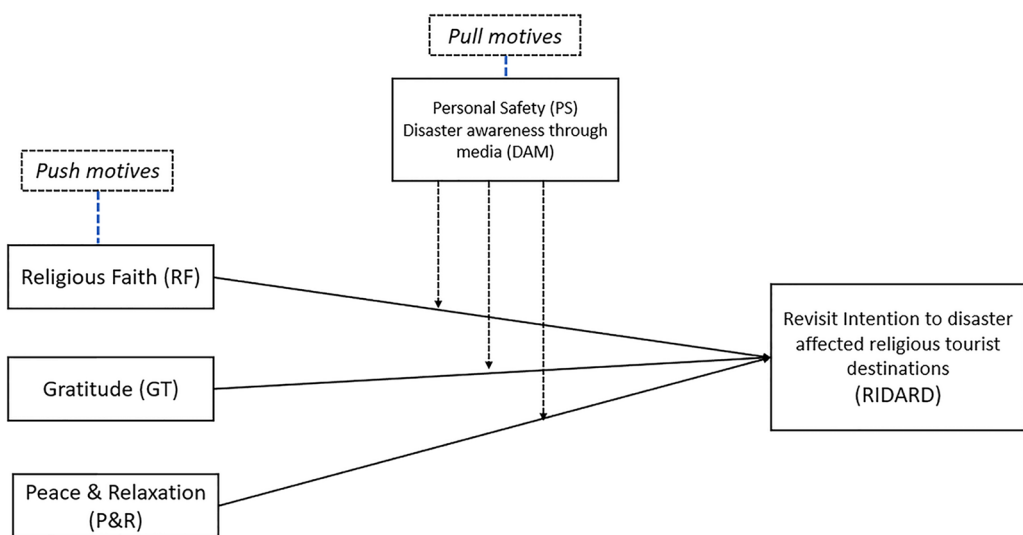


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

and reliance on supernatural powers (Rashid, 2018; Wiśniewski, 2018). Second, media coverage of disaster-hit religious destinations only makes religious tourists more resolute to visit them out of loyalty to spiritual or supernatural powers and a noble desire to express gratitude (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2013). Hence, we posit that the pull factors of personal safety and disaster awareness through the media may not significantly influence religious tourists' revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. We thus propose the following hypotheses:

- H4:** Personal safety will not significantly moderate the relationship between (a) religious faith, (b) gratitude, (c) peace and relaxation, and religious tourists' intentions to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations.
- H5:** Disaster awareness through the media will not significantly moderate the relationship between (a) religious faith, (b) gratitude, (c) peace and relaxation, and religious tourists' intentions to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations.

Figure 1 depicts the study's conceptual model regarding push and pull factors.

Methodology

Measures

The data for this study were collected using seven measures. Religious faith (RF) was measured via a seven-item scale adapted from Bosnjak et al. (2011), with responses provided on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items included: "My religious faith is extremely important to me" and "I look to my faith as a source of comfort." Peace and relaxation (PR) was measured via a four-item scale adapted from Albayrak et al. (2018), with responses provided on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items included: "When previously visiting a religious site . . . I felt removed from the stresses of everyday life" and "I felt I was able to relax and wind down." Gratitude (GT) was measured via a three-item scale adapted from McCullough (2002), with responses provided on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 =

strongly agree). Sample items included: "I have so much in life to be thankful for" and "If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list."

Revisit intention for a disaster-affected religious destination (RIDARD) was measured via a two-item scale adapted from Cummings et al. (2015), with responses provided on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items included: "In the event of a natural disaster in a religious destination that you regularly visit . . . it is likely that I will return to the natural disaster-hit religious tourist destination on any near future vacation." The moderators of personal safety (PS) and disaster awareness through the media (DAM) were each measured via a two-item scale. Sample items included: "In the event of a natural disaster in a religious destination that you regularly visit . . . I feel my physical health will be compromised while visiting the natural disaster-hit religious tourist destination in the future" (PS) and "How aware are you about the natural calamities that hit various religious tourist destinations reported through mass and social media?" (DAM). Respondents rated both using a 7-point Likert scale: 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* for PS, and 1 = *least aware* to 7 = *most aware* for DAM.

Sample and Data Collection

The empirical data were collected via random sampling in four of the southern states of India: Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Chennai. According to Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995), a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria or a combination of both should be specified to delineate a sample universe. Inclusion criteria are attributes that participants must possess to qualify for the study (Patton, 1990). Given that the focus of this study is on revisit intentions of religious tourists, only participants who had earlier visited religious destinations or religious tourists were included in the study. A paper-based survey is a survey using pen-and-paper rather than electronic devices. This was specifically chosen so that research assistants could meet respondents and distribute the survey questionnaires in person to ensure that respondents met the inclusion criteria. We thought that an online or telephone survey might restrict us from

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	<i>n</i> (%)
Gender	
Female	258 (38.5%)
Male	300 (46.1%)
Age	
25–30	214 (31.9%)
31–40	122 (18.2%)
41–50	84 (12.5%)
51–60	72 (10.7%)
61–70	40 (6.0%)
71–80	26 (3.9%)
Total	558 (100.0%)
Place of residence	
Karnataka	125 (18.6%)
Chennai	144 (21.5%)
Telengana	125 (18.6%)
Kerala	164 (24.4%)
Education	
0–10 standard	82 (14.7%)
11–12 standard	54 (9.7%)
Diploma	52 (9.3%)
Bachelors	262 (46.9%)
Masters	95 (17.0%)
Other	13 (2.3%)

imposing the inclusion criteria of this study. The research assistants informed respondents about the nature of the study and guaranteed their anonymity. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants who showed interest and met the inclusion criteria were provided with a self-administered questionnaire to complete.

A study sample size should adequately represent the population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The population of the south Indian states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu is 230,861,482 (Statistics Times, 2018). For a confidence level of 95% (proportion = 0.5; confidence interval = 0.05; standard error = 0.02551), the sample size for this population was determined to be 385. Hence, 750 paper-based questionnaires were distributed, and, of those that were returned, 558 were valid. Table 1 details the respondents' demographic information.

Results

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was considered a suitable data analysis

method (Hair et al., 2012). PLS-SEM is advantageous because it enables prediction of relatively complex models and can analyze non-normally distributed data without meeting the requirements of distribution assumptions (Hew et al., 2018). PLS-SEM analysis involves two steps: (1) inspecting the measurement model prior to testing the structural model, and (2) evaluating and reporting on the model's predictive power, common method bias, and mediation (Hew et al., 2018).

Measurement Model

According to Hair et al. (2014), both reliability and validity should be fulfilled during inspection of the measurement model. Reliability can be established if the composite reliability is greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2012) for convergent validity; therefore, the average variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.50 (Hew et al., 2018). As shown in Table 2, both reliability and convergent validity were fulfilled by all constructs in this study. Discriminant validity can be demonstrated through cross-loadings of the indicators and Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. Interconstruct correlations in Fornell and Larcker's criterion must be less than the square root of the AVE for each construct. As noted in Table 3, this criterion was satisfied: the indicators showed that each construct had higher loading values compared with other constructs. The discriminant validity of the constructs was thus established.

Examining the Structural Model

The next step was to examine the structural model. SmartPLS was used for this analysis because it requires minimal restrictions on measurement scales and residual distributions (see Chin, 1998). PLS is considered a suitable method for exploratory studies (Chin, 2000). A bootstrapping procedure with 1,000 subsamples was performed with SmartPLS 3 to generate *t* values. In a PLS model, the focus is on model predictive ability, rather than model fit statistics (Chin, 2010). PLS uses R^2 values in the dependent constructs to assess the explanatory power of a structural model. Tables 4 and 5 provide the R^2 values.

Table 2
Indicator Loadings and Cross-Loadings

Constructs/Items	Loadings	<i>M (SD)</i>	Composite Reliability	AVE
RF		5.514 (1.278)	0.946	0.661
RF1	0.758			
RF2	0.738			
RF3	0.834			
RF4	0.822			
RF5	0.770			
RF6	0.834			
RF7	0.840			
RF8	0.856			
RF9	0.852			
PR		5.573 (1.134)	0.897	0.684
PR1	0.838			
PR2	0.85			
PR3	0.838			
PR4	0.782			
GT		5.406 (1.088)	0.899	0.749
GT1	0.866			
GT2	0.896			
GT3	0.832			
RIDARD		5.704 (1.190)	0.846	0.733
RI1	0.823			
RI2	0.888			
PS		5.601 (1.106)	0.908	0.831
PS1	0.916			
PS2	0.908			
DAM		5.439 (1.147)	0.887	0.797
DAM1	0.889			
DAM2	0.897			

Note. RF, Religious faith; PR, Peace and relaxation; PS, Personal safety; GT, Gratitude; RIDARD, Revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations; PS, Personal safety; DAM, Disaster awareness through media; AVE, Average variance extracted.

As presented in Table 4, in the model with PS as the moderator, only hypothesis 4c (PR × PS → RIDARD) was not supported. Therefore, only PS significantly moderated the relationship between PR and RIDARD. R^2 values were above the moderate level at 0.391 and 0.455 for the model without PS and the model with PS, respectively. The

difference between the R^2 values was used to assess the moderator general effect size of PS between PR and RIDARD. The f^2 was 0.117, which is considered medium.

As presented in Table 5, with DAM as the moderator, hypotheses 5a (RF × DAM → RIDARD) and 5c (PR × DAM → RIDARD) were not supported.

Table 3
Fornell and Larcker's (1981) Criterion

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Peace and relaxation (PR)	0.827					
Gratitude (GT)	0.781	0.865				
Religious faith (RF)	0.774	0.774	0.813			
RIDARD	0.617	0.653	0.750	0.856		
Personal safety (PS)	0.718	0.729	0.791	0.685	0.912	
Disaster awareness through media (DAM)	0.724	0.649	0.780	0.657	0.676	0.893

Note. RIDARD, Revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations.

Table 4
Personal Safety (Moderator)

	Model Without PS		Model With PS		Hypothesis Supported
	Path Coefficient	t Statistic	Path Coefficient	t Statistic	
H1: RF → RIDARD	0.752*	38.625	0.557*	10.848	Yes
H2: GT → RIDARD	0.654*	28.184	0.329*	6.753	Yes
H3: PR → RIDARD	0.625*	23.543	0.268*	5.019	Yes
H4a: RF × PS → RIDARD			0.033	1.191	Yes
H4b: GT × PS → RIDARD			0.036	1.131	Yes
H4c: PR × PS → RIDARD			0.12*	3.7	No
R ² (PR)	0.391		0.455		
f ² (PS – PR)	0.117				

Note. PR: Peace and relaxation; GT: Gratitude; RF: Religious faith; PS: Personal safety; RIDARD: Revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. Effect size $f^2 = [R^2 \text{ (with moderator)} - R^2 \text{ (without moderator)}] / [1 - R^2 \text{ (with moderator)}]$.

* $p < 0.05$.

The R^2 values for RF were above the moderate level at 0.565 and 0.579 for the models without DAM and with DAM, respectively. Similarly, the R^2 values for PR were above the moderate level at 0.391 and 0.502 for the models without DAM and with DAM, respectively. Although Model 2 in Table 5 showed a significant moderation effect of DAM on RF and RIDARD, the difference between the R^2 values, which were used to assess the size of the general effect (f^2), was 0.033, which is considered small. Conversely, the moderator effect size of DAM on PR and RIDARD was higher ($f^2 = 0.22$), as shown in Table 5. Thus, DAM clearly moderated the relationship between PR and RIDARD.

Conclusion

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, or fires in any destination can create fear among visitors, which affects the destination image and thereby alters any decision to revisit affected places (Huan et al., 2004; Wang, 2017). Against the backdrop of this view in the literature, the main purpose of this study was to empirically investigate the relationship between key motivational factors and religious tourists' revisit intentions to destinations after a natural disaster, and additionally investigate other key moderating factors influencing this relationship. Based on the push and pull theoretical framework employed in this study, the results

Table 5
Disaster Awareness Through Media (Moderator)

	Model Without DAM		Model With DAM		Hypothesis Supported
	Path Coefficient	t Statistics	Path Coefficient	t Statistics	
H1: RF → RIDARD	0.752*	38.625	0.608*	11.236	Yes
H2: GT → RIDARD	0.654*	28.184	0.393*	8.372	Yes
H3: PR → RIDARD	0.625*	23.543	0.308*	5.526	Yes
H5a: RF × DAM → RIDARD			0.119*	3.668	No
H5b: GT × DAM → RIDARD			0.061	1.72	Yes
H5c: PR × DAM → RIDARD			0.147*	4.497	No
R ² (RF)	0.565		0.579		
R ² (PR)	0.391		0.502		
f ² (DAM – RF)	0.033				
f ² (DAM – PR)	0.223				

Note. PR: Peace and relaxation; GT: Gratitude; RF: Religious faith; PS: Personal safety; RIDARD: Revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. Effect size $f^2 = [R^2 \text{ (with moderator)} - R^2 \text{ (without moderator)}] / [1 - R^2 \text{ (with moderator)}]$.

* $p < 0.05$.

largely support this study's research hypotheses and offer new insights into this underresearched area. As shown in Table 4, religious tourists' push motives—religious faith, seeking peace and relaxation, and gratitude—were significantly related to revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. First, a significant relationship between religious faith and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations highlights that religion and faith help people cope with unexpected occurrences or the uncertainties of life (Wirtz et al., 2014). In this regard, the findings yield new insights into a similar relationship discussed by Božić et al. (2016) and Terzidou et al. (2017). Further, the results affirm that emotional value and a high level of satisfaction derived from visiting religious destinations (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019) create place attachment (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015) among religious tourists, urging them to revisit destinations even after a natural disaster.

Further, the close relationship between gratitude and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations (see Table 4) suggests that religious tourists who feel grateful have a greater ability to cope with stressful situations (Krause et al., 2015). Such a coping mechanism may stem from deeper meaningful connections with a higher power, as individuals with a deep sense of gratitude tend to be more religious (Wirtz et al., 2014). Hence, religious tourists may consider the opportunity to revisit a disaster-affected destination a profound way to express gratitude to a spiritual power. Thus, the findings support earlier studies that have highlighted gratitude as a key motivation for religious tourists to revisit religious destinations (Krause & Ellison, 2009; Krause et al., 2015). Additionally, the positive relationship found in relation to gratitude reaffirms the notion that individuals' emotional connection to a destination dominates religious tourists' revisit intentions (Amaro et al., 2018; Liro, 2021) even after a natural disaster.

Moreover, the significant positive relationship between peace and relaxation and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations indicates that religious tourists' feelings of peace and relaxation are not limited to their external environment, as in the case of secular tourists, but involve their experience of internal peace caused by their deeper

attachment to religious artifacts and elements, such as relics, lithographs of deities, and sacred buildings (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). This aligns with Majeed and Ramkissoon's (2020) assertion that therapeutic landscapes and designs may encourage tourists' emotional attachment to such places, encouraging revisits. Thus, the results confirm those of earlier studies on the relationship between peace, relaxation, and religious tourists' intentions to revisit religious destinations (Devereux & Carnegie, 2006; Lois-González & Santos, 2015; Shuo et al., 2009).

Significantly, the moderation results (see Table 4) reveal that the pull factor of personal safety did not significantly moderate the relationship between the push factors of religious faith, gratitude, and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. This indicates that personal safety as a pull factor may not be of great concern for those whose revisit intentions are driven by push factors, such as religious faith or expressing gratitude in sacred places. Another possible explanation for this is that individuals who are grateful tend to be deeply connected to a supernatural power (Aghababaei & Tabik, 2013; Raj, 2012; Sandage et al., 2011; Wirtz et al., 2014) and this connection may create a sense of protection among religious tourists, leading them to overlook concerns related to personal safety. However, the moderating effect of personal safety appeared significant between peace and relaxation, and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. This can be attributed to the assumption that, although religious tourists prefer to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations to find peace and relaxation, this is not a sufficiently compelling reason to make a travel decision that could risk personal safety. Regardless of their past therapeutic and positive wellness experiences during previous visits, tourists who travel to religious destinations solely for peace and relaxation would remain conscious of personal safety, given the lack of perceived protection from religious belief or connection with a supernatural power. Therefore, this finding aligns with similar studies on risk perception and revisit intentions (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Lehto et al., 2008; Okuyama, 2018; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

Regarding the moderating effect of the pull factor of disaster awareness through the media, the

results suggest that disaster awareness through the media moderates the relationship between peace, relaxation, and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations. Conversely, the moderation effect of disaster awareness through the media on religious faith does not seem significant, given the small effect size of the moderator, as explained in the results section (see Table 5). Similarly, the results show no significant moderating effect of disaster awareness through the media between gratitude and revisit intentions. Therefore, religious tourists who intend to visit destinations for peace and relaxation may be easily swayed by media information. This may occur because, in general, the pervading influence of the media is keenly felt during times of natural disaster (Milo & Yoder, 1991). One classic example is the forest fire disaster in Kelowna. Hystad and Keller (2008) found that a positive change in media portrayals of this disaster altered the travel decisions of potential tourists. Therefore, the media greatly influences consumer behavior elements, including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, decision-making processes, and travel choices. Particularly in the absence of a religious focus during previous visits, it is unsurprising that tourists who visit religious destinations for peace and relaxation feel disinclined to revisit following alarming media information on disasters. However, our findings contradict those of Wang et al. (2019), who found travel intentions after floods were not influenced by media information.

Finally, the moderation results also indicate that religious belief in a higher supernatural power (Terzidou et al., 2017) mitigates fear caused by alarming media information about a disaster-affected religious destination. We believe that deeper attachment to supernatural power leads to place attachment in a unique sense that is intertwined with religious experiences and personal emotional bonding with the location, which persuades religious tourists to revisit disaster-affected religious destinations. Considering the strong correlation between religious faith and adaptive coping strategies found in past studies (Ross, 1990), it is unsurprising that neither of the two moderators (pull factors) in this study had any significant effect on religious faith and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations.

Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

This study is unique in linking two prominent areas of tourism research: religious tourism and disaster tourism. One of its key contributions to the religious tourism literature is the use of a pull-push motive framework. Applying this framework to disaster destination religious tourism, religious faith and gratitude (internal factors) were found to be key motivators (push factors) that influence revisit intentions. This framework helps clarify that pull factors (external factors), such as media attention and personal safety issues at the destination, may have less influence on the push motives of religious tourists compared with secular tourists. Additionally, instead of treating identified push and pull factors as independent variables to investigate religious tourists' revisit intentions, this research posed the identified pull factors as moderators in the relationship between push factors and revisit intentions, thus creating ample scope for further theory development in the field of religious tourism. This novel perspective has the potential to assist researchers, marketers, and policymakers in undertaking further research investigations, using promotional marketing campaigns, and formulating effective strategies for enhancing global religious tourism for disaster-affected tourist destinations.

This study also has several practical implications. Internal factors such as religious faith and gratitude are push motives that drive religious tourists to revisit religious destinations following a disaster. However, the role of key pull factors, such as personal safety and media coverage of a disaster, cannot be underestimated in light of the significant moderating effect on peace and relaxation noted in our study. A key criticism of the media is that it sensationalizes natural disaster events and creates difficulty with the image recovery process in visitors' minds (Walters et al., 2015). Therefore, this study stresses the importance of collaborating with key stakeholders, including the media, to effectively monitor the media both during and after a natural disaster to instill confidence in religious tourists. Reviewing COVID-19 pandemic effects on tourism, Majeed and Ramkissoon (2020) shared a similar view in encouraging destination marketers and policymakers to invest further efforts

in promoting the destination image, which also applies to religious tourism, after a natural disaster. Therefore, a multistakeholder approach involving governments, businesses, and other coactors (such as local residents) should be employed in the destination image-building process and revitalizing place attachment among tourists (Kreiner & Ram, 2021; Ramkissoon, 2020; Ramkissoon & Sowamber, 2020). Similar to other studies in disaster management (Ghaderi et al., 2012), this study strongly recommends that religious tourism sites create crisis communication centers, at the sites themselves and in religious centers/branches (such as temples, churches, or mosques) at the state/province level. These centers can effectively monitor media activities to ensure that misleading information is avoided (Mair et al., 2016; Wang, 2017). They may also enable tourists to access reliable and accurate information on rebuilding and recovery efforts.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has found that religious tourists who are primarily motivated by inner emotional drivers, such as religious faith and gratitude, are not significantly affected by external factors (pull motives), such as personal safety or negative media coverage of a destination or its recovery process following a natural disaster. However, the study is not without its limitations. It relied on self-reported quantitative data, meaning that a more in-depth and nuanced behavioral analysis is required to investigate the highlighted issues further. Arguably, case studies could also provide a more realistic evaluation of the phenomenon (Tilley & Pawson, 1997). A case-based study of a religious tourist destination that has successfully recovered from a natural disaster and effectively retained regular visitors may facilitate understanding of the practical components of the model proposed in this study. We suggest that holistically investigating other tourists' push and pull motives and revisit intentions for disaster-affected religious destinations requires a multimodal research design, including qualitative and quantitative methods.

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