Case Study

Hong Kong protests and tourism: Modelling tourist trust on revisit intention

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Abstract

Drawing on prospect theory (the subgroup of behavioural economics) and information integration theory, this study proposes and empirically tests a research model exploring the influence of tourist trust on tourists' revisit intention through the mediating effect of attitudes in the Hong Kong (HK) protest context. A series of protests commenced on 3 April 2019 against the Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement have severely impacted the HK tourism industry as the destination may deem to be unsafe by tourists to revisit. This study is important because HK protests happened at least 10 protests per month from April to December 2019, which have brought an adverse impact on the tourism industry. Using a survey method, we collected 176 data from those who had prior experience visiting HK, and data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling. Overall, the findings demonstrate that attitudes mediate the effect of tourists' trust on revisit intention, but no direct effect of trust on revisit intention ascribe to hazard protests. Recognizing greater uncertainty arises following reports from media that prominently inform tourists' decision-making, and how self-perceived trust influences attitudes on hazards offers intriguing managerial and practical implications for managers and policymakers. Besides, theoretical implications and directions for future research are presented.

Keywords

Hong Kong, protests, revisit intention, tourism, trust, uncertainty

Introduction

In Hong Kong (HK), the share of tourism industry in Gross Domestic Product was 4.5% in 2018 (Tourism Commission, 2020). Tourism stimulates HK's economic diversification, provides impulsion to the growth of related industries, and creates employment opportunities. HK enjoys its sovereignty under the 'one country, two systems' principle. Known as the pits crisis event in HK by the central government of China, a series of HK protests commenced on 3 April 2019 against the Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement, which intends to oppose the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill proposed by the Chinese

sovereignty (BBC News, 2019, June 9). More recently, the acts of anti-government protests continue and tensions mount in busy districts in Central, Hong Kong Island and Kowloon to oppose both the national anthem bill debate and the proposed national security legislation in May 2020. Descending from peaceful rallies into violent chaos, the 2019 HK protest has intensified to a

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life-threatening level (The Guardian, 2019), with an escalating number of injury cases of protesters, police, and the public. This study is important because HK protests happened at least 10 protests per month from April-December 2019 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_protests_in_Hong_Kong). The ongoing protests with no signs of abatement have affected the HK tourism industry detrimentally. As political unrest persists and turns violent, visitor arrival growth has plummeted 80.9% year-on-year in 2020Q1 (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2020). As the world transport hub, Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) becomes the key protest target. Hitting a nadir in mid-August with the cessation of HKIA and mass gathering at HKIA resulted in the cancellation of departing flights for days (Regan et al., 2019).

Tourism and trust come together at various intersections. Prior research shows trust drives several fundamental constructs in travel choices, including tourist visitation (Su et al., 2014), revisiting intention (Abubakar et al., 2017), and attitudes towards a destination (Chen and Phou, 2013). Recently, studies have investigated the correlation between tourists' perceived trust and revisit intention in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hassan and Soliman, 2021). While the relations between tourists' trust and revisit intention have been assessed in the extant literature, no known study has explored these relations during the context of protests.

Trust depletes with uncertainty (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Uncertainty is enunciated in safety and security, episodic political, economic events, and natural hazards (Williams and Baláž, 2020). Uncertainty of trust poses superfluous challenges in tourism where tourists have imperfect personal tacit knowledge (Williams and Baláž, 2015). Contrary to Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, 1998b) that tourists avoid risk allied with potential political instability, and choose to visit safe destinations (Silva et al., 2010), some tourists revisit unsafe destinations regardless of risks (Fuchs and Reichel, 2011; Li et al., 2010). This has underlined the prominence of trust in realizing revisit intention (Sannassee and Seetanah, 2015), particularly on festival visit motivation.

Borrow the similar analogy of COVID-19 causes fear and anxiety worldwide (Reznik et al., 2020), it may be apparent that geopolitical uncertainty and social unrest in HK can cause a feeling of fear among the tourists, which may change their attitudes and behaviour in deciding whether to revisit HK. To the best of our

knowledge, limited studies assessing the mediation impact of attitudes on the relation between tourists' trust and revisit intention in the protests research framework. To fill the gaps, this study examines the key determinants influencing tourists' revisit intention in the hitherto protests context. Specifically, this study aims to: 1) assess the role of trust in influencing tourists' revisit intention to HK in the aftermath of a series of protest incidents; 2) test the influence of trust on attitudes and revisit intention; and 3) investigate the mediating role of attitudes in the relationship between trust and revisit intention decision.

This study contributes a novel perspective of the body of knowledge and practices in three ways: 1) It contributes to the scarce study arena of trust in the tourism destination aversion literature; it provides insights on tourism trust for a destination, which answers whether tourism behaviour is liable to the domain trust components; 2) It adds to the literature that outlines tourist behaviour during the time of political unrest (i.e., protest) period and provides managerial guidelines for tourism authority and agents; 3) We assess the mediating role of attitudes towards a destination in the relations between tourist trust and revisit intention, which has not been recced in the HK protest chaos context; and 4) This area lacks clarity in the literature whether attitudes can be explained by tourist trust to predict revisit behavioural intention in the protest scenario.

The structure of the paper is as follows: We first present a literature review on tourist trust, attitudes, and revisit destination intention. Section 3 outlines the methodology, samples, and measures. Section 4 elucidates the data analysis and discussion. Section 5 concludes with academic theoretical and managerial implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Prospect theory

Prospect theory is a theory of behavioural economics. The application of the theory of behavioural economics in conceptualizing the application of trust to tourists' revisit behavioural intention was originated from Tversky and Kahneman (1974). Behavioural economists differentiate between uncertainty (unknown risks) and known risk (Knight, 1921). When

people favour known risks to unknown uncertainty, this is called the Ellsberg paradox (Ellsberg, 1961), Prospect theory analyses decision-making under risk, notably how people value gains and losses differently, disfigurements in estimating the odds of unusual events (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). In the context of tourism, prospect theory is particularly applicable in explaining tourists who are loss averse and prefer tourism experience with known risk instead of huge uncertainty (Avineri and Chorus, 2010; van Wee, 2010). Risk aversion has been associated with revisit motivation (Bongkosh et al., 2008). Tourists deciding whether or not to revisit HK depends on the propensity to bear uncertainties and the acceptance of the associated tacit knowledge of deviations of the 'normal' situation in HK. Some travellers may acquire extensive information processing to reduce risk and uncertainty (Osti et al., 2009). All these lies at the heart of trust (Williams and Baláž, 2020) and trust operates as rational individual behaviour (Murphy, 2006). Rational tourists elect to visit a tourist spot based on its attributes, subject to experience. People change their attitudes when they perceive contradiction (Heider, 1946), and maintain their attitudes following their perceptions.

On the other hand, some tourist attractions are festival motivated (Lee et al., 2004; Mohr et al., 1993) or food motivated (Sims, 2009) – the gastronomy tourism (Kivela and Crotts, 2006). Culture has an impact on perceptions (Poon and Yong, 2005). The cultural dimension remains a crucial factor in shaping decision-making on tourists' destination selections. In tourism, two types of culture are classified by Qian et al. (2018), namely the tourists' self-culture (where a tourist's cultural background shapes a destination selection and the evaluation of the subsequent travel experience) and culture of the host (the pull factor that attracts tourists to visit a destination). HK is famous for its art festivals, classic or modern performances, and food festivals, and these festivals have made HK a unique glimpse into traditional Chinese and living culture. Among those festivals that have attracted tourists worldwide are parading Dragon and Lion Dance Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese New Year, Mooncake Festival, Arts Festival, and Chinese Opera. Trust related to repeating visits to HK may pertain to those who are desired for excitement and adventure curiosity (Formica and Uysal, 1998).

Information integration theory

Risk perception refers to the subjective evaluation of the risk, which can shape an individual's behaviour (Weinstein, 1988). In tourism, risk perception is connected with the valuation of endangering condition to make travel decisions (Maser and Weiermair, 1998; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005). Past studies examine tourists' risk perception in the reverberation of health crises (Cahyanto et al., 2016; Floyd and Pennington-Gray, 2004), including how COVID-19 influences risk perception and travel behaviour (Bae and Chang, 2020; Neuburger and Egger, 2020). HK protest is categorized as travel health risks because HK protest has threatened the safety of tourists exposure to blood, injury, and violence (WHO, 2012), and endangered travellers and local communities. Because of these known risks, which most tourists learned from media, tourists might form negative well-being travel attitudes and avoidance to HK temporarily (Chua et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2018). This has in turn induced a low trust level on revisit intention. According to Anderson (1981), this circumstance of risk perception can be theoretically explicated by information integration theory, which describes how a person integrates information from different sources to make an overall judgement. In our context, information integration theory suggests that a tourist's travel decision process whether to revisit HK is decided based on the risk- (or safety) related information received and the perception of risk probability (Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1992). Risk perception in our protests context means the tourists' perception of the probability that action may endanger them that ultimately prompt travel decisions if the perceived hazard is beyond an acceptable tolerance level. Tourists, who feel at risk of contracting a crowd within any protest groups, may avoid travelling. Furthermore, tourists who value an avoidance of health risks will not revisit HK, particularly in the unfamiliar current situation.

Trust in tourism

Trust is defined as a person's affection for security and willingness to have faith in other people or things (Chung and Kwon, 2009). There are three strands of literature on tourist trust: 1) organizational trust (e.g., trust in government and travel agencies, Nunkoo et al., 2012); 2) interpersonal trust (e.g., trust in residents and tour guides, Ouyang et al., 2017); and 3) organizational and

personal trusts (Liu et al., 2019). The majority of trust concepts central themes of attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behaviour (McKnight and Chervany, 2001), with broad convergence consider trust to be a reaction to uncertainty engrossing the willingness of a trustor's beliefs to bear vulnerability about the positive expectations on the perceived benevolence, competence, and integrity of the trustee (Rousseau et al. 1998; Williams and Baláž, 2020). Rousseau et al. (1998) differentiate trust among psychology (as internal cognition), economics (as economics cost of risk), and sociology (as embeds socially). Having this typology of trust, this study deliberates how situational factors (protests, chaos, or hazards) manifest trust in the tourism ground.

Tourist behaviour is diverse due to its intangibility, inseparability, and heterogeneity. Therefore, it makes more sense to use a multidimensional tourist trust scale, considering diverse stakeholders in the tourism destination (Wang et al., 2014). According to McCole (2002), trust dimensions include availability, competence, consistency, promise, discreteness, fulfilment, fairness, loyalty, integrity, and openness. Liu et al. (2019) develop a more comprehensive six-dimensional tourism destination trust scale with 22-measurement items, encompassing trust in a scenic spot, destination agency, destination residents, destination employees, administration, and other tourists at the destination. In this study, we adopt a comprehensive and multidimensional scale developed by Liu et al. (2019) to measure tourist trust in a tourism destination because this six-dimensional scale of tourist trust embracing all stakeholders, such as residential, organizational, institutional, staff, and consumer levels. Moreover, this scale has been validated by both qualitative analysis and quantitative testing. The six dimensions of trust in relation to protests are justified as follows.

Scenic spot covers from travel destinations offer, the quality of landscaping, environment, and attractions to sound traffic management, convenient, adequate facilities, safety issues, and a transparent and customized pricing policy (Liu et al., 2019). Trust in a scenic spot underlines tourists' perception of the target scenic location. This measurement is a relevant premise for predicting tourists' attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Trust in the administration measures the competency of the local government or authority in providing operative policies that help the public (Wong et al., 2011). Trust dimension in administration exposes the benefits tourists perceive from sound effectual government policies, such as traffic congestion, the cleanliness of the public areas, the public trust in the government, competency of the government, effective security management, and sound organization for its employees (Liu et al., 2019; Nunkoo et al., 2012).

Trust in agency dimension features the ability of destination's travel agency or service providers meeting the needs of tourists, which include the accuracy of the advertisements, reasonable pricing, or trustworthy quality of goods and services, clear and precise tourist transactional items, value for money customized travel package, and reliable service offerings by the destination's agency (Oh, 2003).

Trust in employees dimension embodies tourists' pronouncement of what wage-earners say and do during their interaction with the workers. Solo tourists always seek help from the people in the destination, and they are mostly employees. From the social psychology perspectives, tourists gain trust in the destination employees who reveal good virtues and good characteristics, including reliability, honesty, integrity, friendliness, helpfulness, knowledgeability, proficient language skills, courtesy, appearance, and professionalism to tourists (Moorman et al., 1993; Poon and Low, 2005).

Trust in other tourists dimension at the destination shows tourists' views of the attitudes and behaviours of other tourists they encounter in the travel path. Tourists may have interactions with other tourists during a trip/tour, in which they build trust (Rosen et al., 2011).

The aspect of trust in residents portrays tourists' insight into the host's communication quality. The observation towards the residents envisages a general destination image (Artigas et al., 2017). Honesty, reliability, hospitality, and rapport are the significant components for tourist trust in destination residents.

Trust and revisit intention

Trust levels can affect repurchase intention (Chiu et al., 2012). Trust can be associated with a significant relationship with revisit intention (Abubakar et al., 2017; Arici and Gucer, 2018), repurchase intention in the airline industry (Saleem et al., 2017) or revisit in the context of medical tourism if tourists trust the healthcare formation (Han and Hyun, 2015). Previous studies have probed reasons for the antecedents of revisit intention. Among the antecedents of repeat

visitation, are, but not limited to (1) importance of earlier visit purpose (Rittichainuwat et al., 2008), (2) satisfaction effect (Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Petrick et al., 2001), (3) value for money (Um et al., 2006), (4) cultural difference, (5) perceived quality (Chen and Gursoy, 2001), and (6) destination image (Bigne et al., 2001). Tourists are prone to visit places that they deem trustworthy and dependable (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

> **H1**: Trust in a) scenic spot, b) administration, c) destination agency, d) destination employees, e) other destination tourists, and f) destination residents has a significant positive and direct effect on revisit intention.

Attitudes and revisit intention

Behavioural intention is associated with attitudes. This study emphasises revisit intention in the context of HK protest hazard. One of the major risks for visitors is political issues (Giusti and Raya, 2019) such as protests or demonstrations. Addo et al. (2020) attest that human behaviour regularly changes based on perceived risk. Perception of risk significantly impacts tourists' revisiting intention (e.g., Fuchs and Reichel, 2011; Li et al., 2018). According to Steimer (2002), tourists may express adaptive behaviours and avoid the source of risk. Souiden et al. (2017) measure attitudes using three items, namely whether the visitors like the destination, whether he/she has a favourable opinion of the destination despite the hazard incident, and whether visiting a specific destination is a wise decision. Some studies find no significant association between attitudes-behavioural intention (Lam and Hsu, 2006), while others find connections between attitudes-intention (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **H2**: Attitudes towards a destination has a positive and significant direct effect on revisit intention.

The mediating role of attitudes

Trust affects attitudes (Wu and Chen, 2005) and tourists' attitudes steer a significant influence on visitation intention (Huang et al., 2014; Mansfeld, 1992). Studies observe that attitudes have mediating effects on the association between trust and behavioural intention in different contexts. For instance, Zainal et al. (2017) show that

attitudes towards electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) mediate the relationship between trust and intention in e-WOM. Similarly, Agag and El-Masry (2016) observe that tourist intention to acquire travel online is first influenced by attitudes and that attitudes are influenced by trust. Attitudes mediate between trust and intention to adopt social networking platforms (Naqvi et al., 2020). Environmental concern is an influential predictor of tourists' attitudes and behaviours (Wurzinger and Johansson, 2006). Attitudes influence revisit intention and concomitantly impacts by trust. Attitudes affect revisit intention, and it plays a mediating role between trust (as an exogenous variable) and revisits intention (as an endogenous variable). We argue that trust may have both direct and indirect effects (via attitudes) towards revisit intention. Trust might not directly lead to revisiting intention to HK, it may first influence people's attitudes towards HK, which subsequently affect their tendency to revisit HK in the future. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis in our context as follows:

> **H3**: Trust in a) scenic spot, b) administration, c) destination agency, d) destination employees, e) other destination tourists, and f) destination residents has a significant direct positive influence on attitudes.
> **H4**: Attitudes mediates the relationship between trust in a) scenic spot, b) administration, c) destination agency, d) destination employees, e) other destination tourists, and f) destination residents and revisit intention.

Conceptual framework

Figure 1 depicts the research model that shows direct and indirect links between the latent constructs as discussed in the literature review. Hypotheses 1 (H1a–H1f) suggest that the trust dimensions have a positive influence on revisit intention. Hypotheses 2 (H2a–H2f) suggest that attitudes influence revisit intention, while Hypotheses 3 (H3a–H3f) suggest that attitudes have a positive influence on revisit intention. Hypotheses 4 (H4a–H4f) test whether attitudes are a mediator to connect tourists' trust and revisit intention.

Methodology

Samples and a brief profile of respondents

This study used a survey approach to understand the influence of tourist trust on tourists' intention
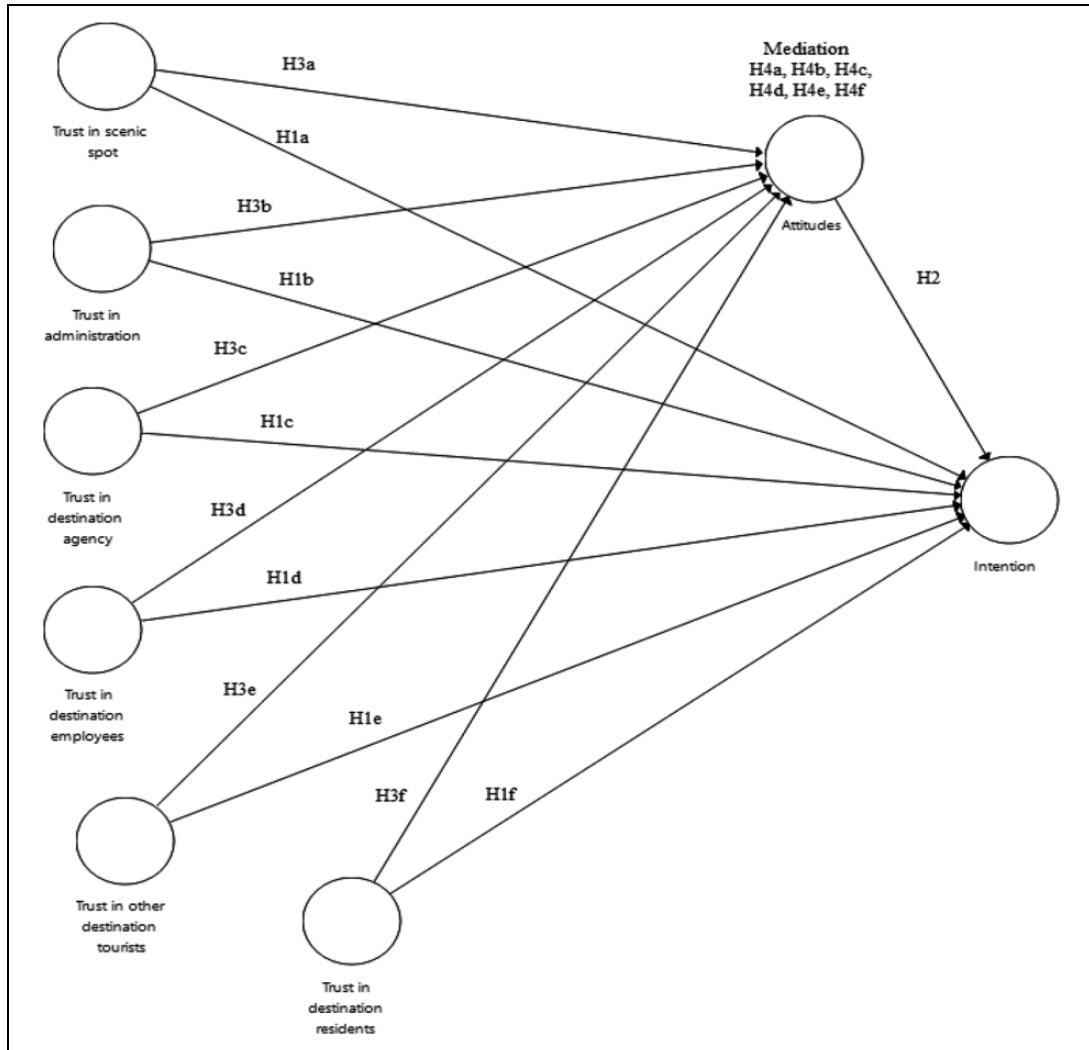
Figure 1. Research model.

to revisit HK after the protest incident. Two screening questions were included in the questionnaires to identify the right target. First, they must have visited HK at least once in the past years before a series of protests to have the necessary knowledge to evaluate statements asked regarding HK in the questionnaire. Second, they must have heard of the protest incident that happened in HK. Data collection took place in a private university in Malaysia from 7 October 2019 to 21 November 2019. We stopped the data collection up to that point because the Coronavirus outbreak can indirectly hinder tourists' intention to revisit HK, a situation that we want to avoid. A total of 176 usable data were collected. The samples comprised of 17 (9.7%) Malays, 128 (72.7%) Chinese, 11 (6.3%) Indians, and 18 (10.2%) others. 89.2% of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25.

Measures

We measured tourist trust using the scale developed by Liu et al. (2019). It is a multidimensional construct with six dimensions, namely trust in i) scenic spot (four items), ii) administration (three items), iii) destination agency (four items), iv) destination employees (three items), v) destination residents (four items), and vi) other destination tourists (four items). The scale was modified to suit the context of HK. The latent construct measurement model was conceptualized as a reflective-formative construct so that we can test the overall impact of tourist trust on revisit intention through attitudes. A three-item scale by Souiden et al. (2017) was employed to measure attitudes towards revisiting HK. An example item includes 'Visiting Hong Kong is a good decision'. To measure intention, we used a seven-item scale

proposed by Souiden et al. (2017). An example item includes 'I will avoid visiting Hong Kong in the very near future'. All scaled items were developed using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from totally disagree (unfavourable) to totally agree (extremely favourable).

Data analysis

This study employed partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to validate the research model. According to Hair et al. (2017), PLS-SEM has several advantages over co-variance-based structural equation modelling. First, it is suitable for studies focusing on theory development rather than theory confirmation. This study is not a theory confirmation research but we attempt to explore how tourist trust influences intention to visit HK after the protest incident. Second. PLS-SEM is relatively flexible on data assumptions. Third, PLS-SEM performs well on small sample data. Lastly, PLS-SEM provides latent variable scores which can be very useful for subsequent analysis. We used the two-stage approach to model tourist trust as a reflective-formative construct using the latent variable scores of the lower-order construct dimensions as formative indicators for the higher-order construct. This study followed the two-stage analytical approach to verify the model. First, the measurement model was evaluated, followed by the structural model.

Common method variance

Given that our data were collected from the same respondents using a survey method, we conducted Harman's one-factor test and a full-collinearity test to overcome the issue of common method bias (CMB). We conducted Harman's one-factor test by inserting all measurement items into the exploratory factor analysis and the results showed a variance of 34.916% from the first factor, which is less than 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, a full-collinearity test was performed by creating a model where all latent variables pointing at the dummy variable (Kock, 2015). None of the VIF values was greater than 3.3. Based on the evidence above, we can conclude that the data is free from CMB.

Measurement model

In this study, internal consistency was ascertained as the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all the constructs were above 0.7 (Table 1). Furthermore, convergent validity was examined by checking the factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). To achieve convergent validity, factor loadings should be above 0.7. However, items with factor loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 can be retained subject to their respective construct's AVE was greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). One item (BI3) was deleted due to having a negative factor loading. Overall, Table 1 shows that convergent validity was not an issue of concern. Discriminant validity was another measurement model assessment criterion to ensure distinctiveness between constructs in a given model. Following Hair et al.'s (2017) recommendations, we assessed discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker criterion and HTMT criterion. Table 2 shows that the square root of AVE of each construct (diagonal) was larger than the correlation estimate of other constructs (off-diagonal), suggesting discriminant validity was not a problem. With regard to the HTMT criterion, the HTMT ratio should be lower than 0.9 between two reflectively measured constructs. As shown in Table 3, all the HTMT values were lower than 0.9. Furthermore, the standardized root means square residual (SRMR) value of the model was 0.064, indicating the data fit the model well (Henseler et al., 2016).

Structural model

A bootstrapping analysis procedure with a resample rate of 5000 was performed to obtain p-values, t-values, and bootstrapped confidence intervals. As shown in Table 4, trust in administration, destination agency, destination residents, and destination employees, surprisingly, were found to have no significant impact on revisit intention. Although trust in other destination tourists was significant to revisit intention, the effect was negative, contradicting with our proposed positive relationship. Hence, H1a to H1f were not supported. Furthermore, attitudes were found to have a significant effect on intention, supporting H2. Support was found for H3b, H3d and H3e as trust in administration, destination employees, and other destination tourists were found to have a significant positive influence on attitudes. However, H3a and H3f were not supported indicating trust in scenic spot and destination residents were not important to attitudes. Lastly, trust in destination agency was found to have a negative impact on attitudes as opposed to the proposed positive direction, thus H3C was not supported.

Table 1. Measurement model.

Constructs	Items	Measurement items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Attitudes	ATT1	I love HK.	0.885	0.884	0.928	0.812
	ATT2	I have a favourable opinion of HK, despite the protest incident.	0.923			
	ATT3	Visiting HK is a good decision.	0.894			
Intention	BI1	It is very likely that I will visit HK again, after the protest in HK.	0.838	0.847	0.887	0.572
	BI2	I actively seek information about HK before visiting it, especially after protest incident.	0.549			
	BI4	I would consider HK for my future destinations. in the next 6 months.	0.619			
	BI5	I would consider HK for my future destinations in the next 1 year.	0.757			
	BI6	I will definitely visit HK again.	0.860			
	BI7	I will recommend friends and /or relatives to visit HK.	0.858			
Trust: Administration	TA1	HK implemented tourism-friendly policy.	0.865	0.822	0.893	0.735
	TA2	HK managed the traffic well.	0.861			
	TA3	HK provided good and convenient facilities for tourists.	0.845			
Destination agency	TAG1	HK agency provided comprehensive and customized service offerings for me.	0.801	0.892	0.925	0.756
	TAG2	The service offered by HK agency was reliable (service reliability).	0.906			
	TAG3	The tourism package/product offered by the HK agency was worth the value (reasonable price).	0.852			
	TAG4	HK agency provided good service quality for me.	0.915			
Destination employees	TE1	HK workers were reliable and honest to me (integrity).	0.884	0.908	0.943	0.846
	TE2	HK workers were hospitable and friendly to me (friendliness).	0.944			
	TE3	HK workers provided professional services for me (professionalism).	0.929			
Other destination tourists	TOT1	The other tourists in HK were friendly to me (Friendliness of other tourists).	0.810	0.866	0.909	0.713
	TOT2	The travel behaviour of other tourists in HK was civilized (Civilized travel behaviours of other tourists).	0.847			
	TOT3	The other tourists in HK were willing to help me (Helpfulness of other tourists).	0.874			
	TOT4	I had great interpersonal interactions with other tourists in HK (Interpersonal interactions of other tourists).	0.845			
Destination residents	TR1	HK people were honest to me (honesty).	0.863	0.907	0.935	0.781
	TR2	HK people were reliable to me (reliability).	0.926			

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Constructs	Items	Measurement items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
	TR3	HK people were hospitable to me (hospitality).	0.883			
	TR4	I have a relationship of mutual understanding or trust and agreement with local people in HK (rapport).	0.862			
Scenic spot	TSS1	HK had a transparent pricing policy.	0.566	0.778	0.848	0.589
	TSS2	HK managed the traffic well.	0.767			
	TSS3	HK had a good quality of the landscapes and general environments.	0.897			
	TSS4	HK provided good and convenient facilities for me.	0.802			

Table 2. Fornell and Larcker criterion.

	ATT	BI	TA	TAG	TE	TR	TOT	TSS
Attitudes (ATT)	0.901							
Intention (BI)	0.776	0.757						
Trust:								
Administration (TA)	0.409	0.307	0.857					
Destination agency (TAG)	0.322	0.274	0.475	0.870				
Destination employees (TE)	0.603	0.525	0.425	0.548	0.920			
Destination residents (TR)	0.517	0.446	0.425	0.506	0.715	0.884		
Other destination tourists (TOT)	0.439	0.271	0.337	0.466	0.457	0.598	0.844	
Scenic spot (TSS)	0.361	0.307	0.607	0.511	0.376	0.431	0.396	0.767

The square root of AVE of each construct (diagonal); correlation (off-diagonal).

Table 3. HTMT criterion.

	ATT	BI	TA	TAG	TE	TR	TOT	TSS
Attitudes (ATT)								
Intention (BI)	0.862							
Trust:								
Administration (TA)	0.468	0.354						
Destination agency (TAG)	0.361	0.332	0.558					
Destination employees (TE)	0.670	0.585	0.488	0.608				
Destination residents (TR)	0.571	0.501	0.489	0.558	0.787			
Other destination tourists (TOT)	0.501	0.315	0.394	0.530	0.515	0.672		
Scenic spot (TSS)	0.383	0.343	0.806	0.633	0.431	0.497	0.459	

The mediating effects of attitudes on the relationship between various dimensions of trust and revisit intention were tested by checking the confidence interval values (Nitzl et al., 2016). Table 5 shows that only H4d was supported because confidence intervals did not contain a value of zero. However, H4a, H4b, H4c, H4e, and H4f were all not supported. The results indicated that attitudes only mediate the relationship between trust in destination employees and revisit intention.

Post-hoc assessment

We also conducted a post-hoc analysis to better understand whether trust as a whole plays a role in influencing revisit intention via attitudes (Figure 2). We first saved the latent variables scores of the six lower-order construct dimensions of tourist trust. Next, those latent variables scores formed the formative indicators of the higher-order construct of tourist trust. Hence, it is required to

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results (direct effect).

		Path coefficient	Std Error	t- values	p-values	f^2	Supported
H1a	Trust (scenic spot) → Intention	0.060	0.063	0.954	0.170	0.005	No
H1b	Trust (administration) → Intention	−0.062	0.062	0.992	0.161	0.006	No
H1c	Trust (destination agency) → Intention	0.019	0.073	0.259	0.398	0.001	No
H1d	Trust (destination employees) → Intention	0.072	0.075	0.969	0.166	0.005	No
H1e	Trust (other destination tourists) → Intention	−0.159	0.068	2.330	0.010	0.039	No
H1f	Trust (destination residents) → Intention	0.091	0.080	1.138	0.128	0.009	No
H2	Attitudes → Intention	0.752	0.056	13.432	0.000	0.852	Yes
H3a	Trust (scenic spot) → Attitudes	0.077	0.089	0.863	0.194	0.006	No
H3b	Trust (administration) → Attitudes	0.154	0.091	1.694	0.045	0.024	Yes
H3c	Trust (destination agency) → Attitudes	−0.163	0.094	1.743	0.041	0.026	No
H3d	Trust (destination employees) → Attitudes	0.479	0.097	4.942	0.000	0.177	Yes
H3e	Trust (other destination tourists) → Attitudes	0.185	0.095	1.951	0.026	0.036	Yes
H3f	Trust (destination residents) → Attitudes	0.048	0.092	0.519	0.302	0.002	No

Table 5. Hypothesis testing results (indirect effect).

|		Indirect effect	Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected	Std Error	t- values	p-values	Supported
H4a	Trust (scenic spot) → Attitudes → Intention	0.058	[−0.072, 0.181]	0.066	0.876	0.381	No
H4b	Trust (administration) → Attitudes → Intention	0.116	[−0.021, 0.248]	0.069	1.675	0.094	No
H4c	Trust (destination agency) → Attitudes → Intention	−0.123	[−0.271, 0.017]	0.073	1.684	0.092	No
H4d	Trust (destination employees) → Attitudes → Intention	0.360	[0.200, 0.508]	0.078	4.642	0.000	Yes
H4e	Trust (other destination tourists) → Attitudes -> Intention	0.139	[−0.003, 0.280]	0.073	1.920	0.055	No
H4f	Trust (destination residents) → Attitudes →Intention	0.036	[−0.093, 0.180]	0.069	0.520	0.603	No
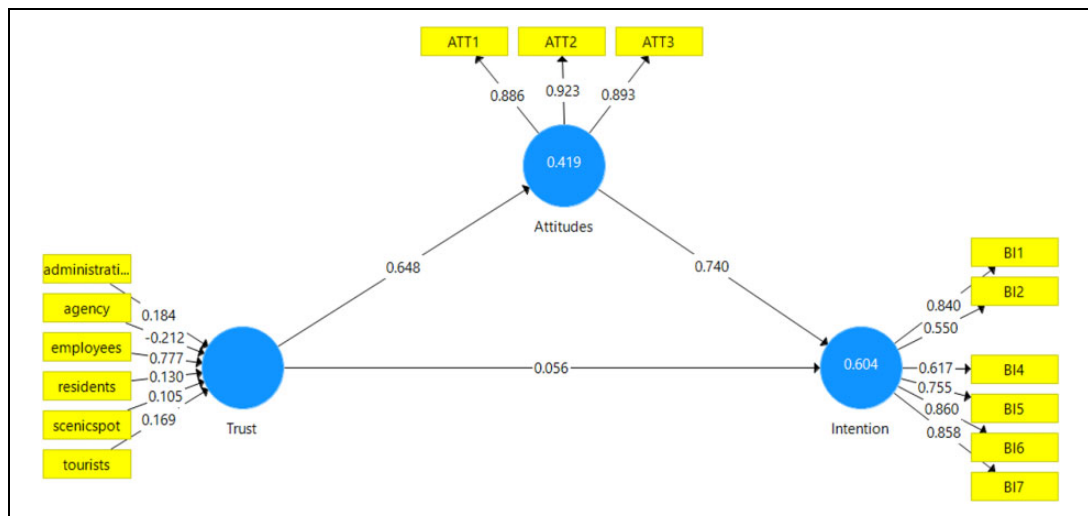
Figure 2. Structural model (post-hoc).

Table 6. Measurement model (post-hoc).

Construct	Formative Indicators	Outer Weights (Outer Loadings)	t-values	p-values	VIF values
Trust (Reflective-Formative)	Administration	0.184 (0.591)	1.266	0.206	1.758
	Agency	−0.212 (0.503)	1.433	0.152	1.802
	Employees	0.777 (0.948)	5.238	0.000	2.292
	Residents	0.130 (0.804)	0.828	0.408	2.599
	Scenic spot	0.105 (0.521)	0.793	0.428	1.846
	Tourists	0.169 (0.605)	1.172	0.241	1.672

Construct	Reflective Indicators	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Attitudes (Reflective)	ATT1	0.886	0.884	0.928	0.812
	ATT2	0.923			
	ATT3	0.893			
Intention (Reflective)	BI1	0.840	0.847	0.887	0.572
	BI2	0.550			
	BI4	0.617			
	BI5	0.755			
	BI6	0.860			
	BI7	0.858			

Table 7. Results of structural model (post-hoc).

	Direct effect	95% Confidence interval	Std error	t-values	p-values	Supported	f^2
Attitudes → Intention	0.740	[0.643, 0.837]	0.059	12.446	0.000	Yes	0.803
Trust → Attitudes	0.648	[0.538, 0.714]	0.051	12.749	0.000	Yes	0.722
Trust → Intention	0.056	[−0.088, 0.169]	0.077	0.726	0.234	No	0.005

		One-tailed test				
	Indirect effect	95% Confidence interval	Std error	t-values	p-values	Supported
Trust → Attitudes → Intention	0.479	[0.367, 0.596]	0.059	8.125	0.000	Yes

Two-tailed test

evaluate the construct based on the formative measurement model assessment. First, we checked whether tourist trust violated the multicollinearity issue by checking the variance inflated factor (VIF) values. As shown in Table 6, all the VIF values were lower than 5, suggesting no issue of collinearity. Next, we assessed the significance and relevance of the formative indicators. Table 6 shows that only trust in destination employees is a significant formative indicator of tourist trust. Although other formative indicators were not significant, their outer loadings were above 0.5, meaning their relative contribution to the construct might be less significant but their absolute contribution is still substantial. As for attitudes and intention, they have no issues with reliability and convergent validity. The model has no discriminant validity

issue too based on the Fornell and Larcker criterion and HTMT criterion.

Similarly, a bootstrapping procedure (5000 resamples) was conducted to test the significance of path coefficients. As shown in Table 7, trust did not have a significant direct effect on intention ($\beta = 0.056$, $p > 0.05$), but the relationship was mediated by attitudes (indirect effect = 0.479, $p < 0.05$).

Predictive power

PLS-SEM is superior when it comes to prediction. A model's predictive capability should be tested based on its in-sample prediction and out-of-sample prediction. The in-sample prediction uses the model estimate to predict observations from

Table 8. Predictive relevance.

	R^2	R^2 adjusted	Q^2	Q^2 predict
Attitudes (Full model)	0.433	0.412	0.312	0.313
Intention (Full model)	0.624	0.608	0.317	0.086
Attitudes (Post-hoc)	0.419	0.416	0.310	0.315
Intention (Post-hoc)	0.604	0.600	0.313	0.104

the existing data whereby the out-of-sample prediction uses the model estimate to predict new observations from a holdout sample to prevent overfitting. As shown in Table 8, both models had a strong in-sample predictive capability as the R^2 adjusted values were 0.412 and 0.608 for attitudes and intention respectively for the full model, and 0.416 and 0.600 for attitudes and intention respectively for the post-hoc model. Furthermore, for out-of-sample prediction, we conducted a blindfolding procedure to obtain the Q^2 values for both models. The results showed that Q^2 values for both models were greater than 0, indicating predictive relevance (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). Besides, this study also reported Q^2 predict, a measure developed by Shmueli et al. (2016) to compare the prediction errors of the PLS-path model against simple mean predictions. The Q^2 predict values were 0.304 and 0.088 for attitudes and intention respectively for the full model, and 0.315 and 0.104 for attitudes and intention respectively for the post-hoc model, indicating both PLS-path models provided better predictive performance with lower prediction errors against simple mean predictions.

Conclusions and discussion

This study aims to assess the role of trust in influencing tourists' revisit intention to HK in the aftermath of a series of protest incidents, and examine the mediating roles of attitudes between tourist trust and revisits intention decision. Overall, the empirical results support that tourist trust has a direct effect on attitudes towards a destination and indirect effects to revisit intention. The effect of tourist trust on revisit intention is mediated by tourists' attitudes. We underline the worth of integrating future development of operative positioning stratagems for building trust and image restoration in hazard destinations. This study emphasizes the importance of managing tourism fear by postulating promotion via segmentation of the travel market. Without knowing the type of specific trust to a tourist

destination, conventional strategies for boosting of revisiting intention may be less convincing in persuading tourists to revisit hazardous destinations. From this research, theoretical and managerial implications can be derived.

Out of the six dimensions of trust to attitudes, only three trust dimensions (i.e., administration, destination employees, and other destination tourists) are significant and have a direct effect in influencing the attitudes. Therefore, in the context of protests, our results do not show that trust crises within a destination travel agency spoil trust (e.g., mismatch of service quality as advertised, Lien et al., 2015, unfair pricing for services, and fraud transactions, Oh, 2003).

Attitudes have a positive impact on revisit intention in the context of protests. Results reveal the fact that the ongoing state of geopolitical uncertainty or social unrest in HK forms a sense of fear within tourists, which could subside their eagerness to revisit HK.

It is noteworthy that trust has no significant direct effect on revisit intention in the context of protests. This result contradicts with Abubakar and Ilkan (2016) and Abubakar et al. (2017) who exhibit that trust has a positive impact on revisit intention. However, our results show a mediating role of attitudes between trust in destination employees and revisit intention. From the six dimensions of trust to revisit intention, attitudes only mediate the relationship between trust in destination employees on revisit intention.

Managerial implications

This study has several important practical contributions to comprehend how tourists make visiting decision associated with a protest. First, the HK economy has direct negative social externalities of the touristic phenomenon following protests. When tourists judge there is an odds of uncovering the unsafe situation due to protest incidents, their risk perception is alerted, which in turn worsens perceived uncertainty. Therefore, tourism authorities should focus on ensuring that the dimensions of trust (i.e. administration and employees) are well-deployed, commit to safeguarding tourists' safety to easing their perceived uncertainty is of utmost priority to encourage tourist flows. Even if crises or incidents happen, well-managed action plan potency builds a favourable impression and reinforces trust (Yang et al., 2018).

Translating this into practices, communication strategies should specify the measures taken

transparently by HK authorities to reinforce HK is safe to enhance tourists' trust in the context of a demonstration. It is also important to consistently communicate updated messages of the safety measures to the world and make known to the tourists, through the media. This effort could eventually improve HK's safety image, minimize the negative perception of safety issues, and enhance individuals' perceived trust towards revisiting HK.

Coordination effort among tourism administration (i.e., the authority) and employees is needed to develop a more sensible campaign in promoting HK for enhancing destination positioning, particularly in the aftermath of protest periods. For example, positioning Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, and/or avoid Central areas during the weekend. A segmentation approach in formulating the right communication strategies could be employed to managing travel fear by providing safety specific knowledge in the HK travel market for each city based on their scenic site (Golden Bauhinia Square), kid attractions (HK Disneyland, Ocean Park), culture and heritage attraction (Lantau Island –The Big Buddha architecture), arts and performance (7 Mallory Street, HK Film Archive), business and investment (International Finance Centre, Exchange Square, The Center), nightlife (Lan Kwai Fong), events or festivals (horse racing, food expo), luxury shopping, and counterfeit products shopping (The Ladies Market, Temple Street Market, Stanley Market).

The findings prove the mediation role of attitudes that positively affected the connection between trust in destination employees and revisit intention. Consequently, the positive dimension of trust in the destination employees on attitudes underscores the destination employees operating the business in HK should heed to promotion strategies, accommodate the needs and wants of the tourists, and sincerely deliver high-quality service to enhance tourist trust, while simultaneously ensure efficient deployment of safety requirements to regain numbers on international tourist arrival.

The results suggest that trust in other destination tourists has an influential impact on attitudes. Mainland China is Hong Kong's most prominent source market, which accounted for 77% of arrivals in 2019.[1] As the HK tourism industry applauded the record growth, the growing presence of Chinese tourists has engendered more complaints among Hongkongers on mainland Chinese tourist behaviour because their

lives have been intensely disrupted by them since the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge opened in October 2019. Such social externalities include some common uncivilized behaviours, such as spitting, public urination, queue-jumping, and talking loud in public places when travelling (Johnson et al., 1994; Sheng, 2016), which are related to sustainable de-growth as a path to societal well-being (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Sharpley, 2020). These are the signs of the appearance of domestic anti-tourism sentiment. We could not change human behaviours, but we can alter the environment around us. The Chinese economy has a lower Gross Domestic Product growth this year. Chinese luxury shoppers may return their lavish spending sprees of the past or may stay away from HK after the resumption of the city's anti-government protests. Tourism as a fundamentally economic sector in HK is justified within the economic growth paradigm. The authorities should focus on the development of sustainable tourism. Retail-related businesses might need to change their approach to survive, such as showcase home-grown designers and Hong Kong Tourism Board may establish a recovery task force and launch campaign creates unique events available only in HK to entice tourists back to HK.

Theoretical implications

This study attempts to contribute to the existing tourism literature by illustrating to the existing knowledge to understand tourists' revisit intention in a country with protest (or social unrest) that has caused cataclysm in society. This study is the first attempt to investigate the extent to which attitudes mediate between trust and revisit intention of visitors in the hitherto protests context.

We propose and test a comprehensive determinant model of revisit intention supported by two theories, namely prospect theory and information integration theory. This study harnesses the concept of information integration theory to illuminate a novel behavioural pattern among tourists to revisit a country with prolonged series of protests. This theory posits that whether or not a tourist decides to revisit HK is ascertained by the content and amount of information received. In particular, this study indicates a 'new trend of tourism behaviour, which satisfies tourists' remain desire to travel even in the aftermath of protests while keeping the risks to the minimal. Second, this study uses prospect theory not only

to confirm the mediating role of attitudes between trust and revisit intention in the hypothesized structural relationships, but also to provide insights on tourist behaviours during protests, chaos, or hazards in the future. We test the conditions of attitudes on the determinant model of revisit intention using the mediator analysis. Once more, we found that the effects of the determinants of revisit intention varied with different trust factors on attitudes. These findings provide fresh insight into the influence of attitudes on tourists' decisions to revisit a destination with high geopolitical risk such as protests. The insights obtain form this study postulates tourist avoidance mechanism in a time of HK protest and develops resurgence strategies to cope with the impact of chaos and hazards.

Limitation and future research directions

This study has some limitations. While this study shed some light on an integrative approach to grasp tourist trust and revisit intension, the usable sample size of 176 repeat tourists may not demonstrate the views of the total number of tourists revisit HK. The fact that the data were collected over a short period due to the occurrence of COVID-19 is a limitation, since revisit intention may be influenced by unexpected events like this. The generalization of findings should be made with caution. Moreover, this study focuses on tourists who have already visited HK before a series of protests. Future research can explore the behavioural intention of first-time visitors, and /or perform a comparative analysis of both first-time and repeat tourists. Future research can build on a longitudinal basis with a larger sample size to improve the generalization results. Further research can investigate the mediating role of perceived risk in other countries with different cultures.

Author contributions

Wai Ching Poon: Conceptualisation, Data collection, Implications, Write, review and edit. Kian Yeik Koay: Methodology, Data Analysis, Write, review and edit.

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Note

1. https://www.imtj.com/news/hong-kong-open-july-chinese-tourists/.

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