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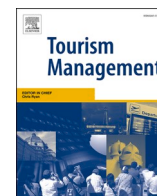*San Jose State University*, yinghua.huang@sjsu.edu

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Tourism Management

How does destination crisis event type impact tourist emotion and forgiveness? The moderating role of destination crisis history ☆

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on attribution theory and situational crisis communication theory, this study investigates how destination crisis events impact tourist sympathy, anger, and intentions of forgiveness in four experiments. It also examines the moderating effects of destination crisis history (none vs. similar vs. dissimilar). The results of Study 1 and Study 2 revealed that external crisis events cause more sympathy and tourist forgiveness than internal ones, but less anger. They also indicated that sympathy and anger play a mediating role in destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness. The results of Study 3 and Study 4 revealed that destination crisis history predicts the impact of crisis events on tourist emotion and forgiveness. In particular, when there is no destination crisis history or similar crisis history, an external crisis event will garner more sympathy and forgiveness than an internal crisis event. These findings provide theoretical and practical implications for destination crisis management.

1. Introduction

In recent years, many tourism destinations have experienced crisis events such as natural disasters or public health crises (Aliperti et al., 2019; Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). Due to the uncertainty and vulnerability of tourism activities (Aliperti et al., 2019; Farmaki, 2021; Pan, Shu, Kitterlin-Lynch, & Beckman, 2021), such events may dramatically affect the tourism industry (Aliperti et al., 2019; Jin, Qu, & Bao, 2019), related industries, and regional economies around the destination (Aliperti et al., 2019; Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Rosselló, Becken, & Santana-Gallego, 2020). Most research literature on destination crisis events focuses on the impact of destination crisis events (Aliperti et al., 2019; Rosselló et al., 2020), crisis management and recovery (Corbet, Efthymiou, Lucey, & O'Connell, 2021; Cró & Martins, 2017; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019; Rosselló et al., 2020; Wearing, Beirman, & Grabowski, 2020; Wut, Xu, & Wong, 2021), and the possibility of achieving the sustainable development of tourism (Pan et al., 2021; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019; Rosselló et al., 2020). Destination crisis events negatively impact tourism development because they change tourists' perceptions of the destination and travel decisions (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Rosselló et al., 2020), weaken their sense of connection to the destination

(Majeed & Ramkissoon, 2020; Pan et al., 2021; Ramkissoon, 2021; Rosselló et al., 2020), increase their sensitivity to subsequent crisis events (Cró & Martins, 2017; Rosselló et al., 2020), and consequently lower revenue from tourism in destinations (Cró & Martins, 2017). Tourists' responses to crisis events are thus key to avoiding such impacts (Rosselló et al., 2020).

To reduce or eliminate the negative effects of destination crisis events, it is necessary to explore the root causes and mechanisms of these effects (Pan et al., 2021; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Although the research on destination crisis events continues to grow (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Farmaki, 2021; Pan et al., 2021; Zenker & Kock, 2020), few studies explore how destination crisis events affect tourists' responses from a psychological perspective (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Pan et al., 2021; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) suggests that tourists' responses will be distinct based on whether they see the locus of causality as internal or external. Tourists see internal crisis events as caused by factors such as personality, abilities, attitude, or organizational operation via management, capabilities, and goodwill (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). They see external crisis events as caused by factors out of the individual's or organization's control such as natural disasters (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Ramkissoon, 2022). Researchers

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have generally considered it likely that this distinction could drive the outcomes of destination crisis events (e.g., Chung & Lee, 2021; Coombs & Holladay, 2005), and an examination of public opinion following a destination crisis event in Thailand suggested that it does (Xie, Zhang, Huang, Chen, & Morrison, 2022). Therefore, the impacts of destination crisis event types on tourists' responses to crisis warrant further investigation.

Internal and external attribution may affect tourists' emotional responses to crisis events (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002; Muhammad & Gul, 2020; Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Yang & Hu, 2021). Forgiveness, a key consumer emotional response (Fedorikhin, Park, & Thomson, 2008; Wei, Liu, & Keh, 2020; Yang & Hu, 2021) that drives consumers' reactions to brand/product crises (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015; Wei et al., 2020; Yang & Hu, 2021). It is considered an antecedent for rebuilding tourist trust and strengthening tourist-destination relationships after a crisis (Sinha & Lu, 2016; Xie & Peng, 2009). The marketing literature has shown that consumer forgiveness captures consumers' emotional responses, providing a relational perspective to understand consumers' reactions to brand/product crises (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015; Wei et al., 2020; Yang & Hu, 2021). However, no studies have examined the levels of forgiveness destination crisis events can trigger among tourists (Lee, 2004; Moon & Rhee, 2012).

As emotion plays an important role in crisis communication (Schoofs & Claeys, 2021), research has suggested the value of distinguishing emotions such as anger, sadness, sympathy, and depression in tourists' behavior (Coombs, 2007; Jin, 2013; Schoofs & Claeys, 2021; Weiner, 1979). Jin (2013) argues that making such distinctions in studying the spectrum of negative and positive emotions will provide useable insights for communication with the public in a crisis. In particular, research shows destination crisis events can provoke anger and sympathy among tourists and that these emotions can impact their behaviors (Berger, 2012; Su, Jia, & Huang, 2022). Attribution theory holds that the public will respond negatively and with anger if it perceives an organization as responsible for a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Weiner, 1979). It also holds that the public will respond positively and with sympathy if it perceives an organization as not responsible for the crisis it faces (Coombs, 2007; Weiner, 1979). However, no studies have explored the mediating effects of sympathy and anger on the destination crisis event and tourist forgiveness.

According to situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), destination crisis event types are not the only determinant of tourists' emotional and behavioral responses; destination crisis event history also plays a role. Indeed, the public may rely on crisis history to assess an organization's degree of control over a crisis (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018) and to judge crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2007; Weiner, 1985). Recurring crises of a similar nature may elicit the sense that the organization should, at a minimum, know enough to act to address the problem (Martinko, Douglas, Ford, & Gundlach, 2004), which can increase the attribution of crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2004) and thus anger rather than sympathy (Coombs, 2004). Yet, in the absence of any crisis history, the current crisis will play the major role in determining the public's emotional response (Coombs, 2004; Wei & Wei, 2011). Marketing research shows that consumers' willingness to forgive brands is different under different crisis history situations, and that this affects the repair of consumer brand relations (Wei & Wei, 2011). However, previous studies have only focused on the impact of no crisis history and similar crisis history (Coombs, 2004). These studies do not examine tourists' emotional and behavioral responses in depth, and they ignore crisis histories that may be dissimilar to the current crisis (Coombs, 2004, 2007). Therefore, this study is the first to verify the moderating role of destination crisis history in the relationship between destination crisis events and tourists' responses.

To fill in the knowledge gaps mentioned above, this study proposed and tested a conceptual model that investigates how external vs. internal destination crisis events impact tourists' emotional and behavioral responses—that is, how the perception that the factors causing a crisis are (or are not) under the control of the organizations serving tourists in the destination drives tourists' responses (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016). The model was also used to study the moderating effects of destination crisis history, distinguishing between no history, similar history, and dissimilar history. This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends the destination crisis research by distinguishing the crisis event types and identifies its emotional and behavioral outcomes. Given no prior studies have investigated how tourists develop forgiveness towards a destination after its crisis events, this study is the first to reveal how different types of crisis events can trigger various levels of tourist forgiveness. Second, while previous studies primarily focus on either positive or negative emotional responses to crisis events, this study expands the body of knowledge by examining two discrete emotions (i.e., sympathy and anger) simultaneously, as well as identifying their mediating roles between the relationship between destination crisis event and tourist forgiveness. Third, unlike prior studies focusing on the impacts of similar crisis history, this study distinguished three types of crisis history (i.e., no history, similar history, and dissimilar history) and examined their interactive effects with destination crisis events on tourists' emotions and forgiveness. Through integrating attribution theory and SCCT, this study advances the literature by revealing the moderating role of destination crisis history on the relationship between crisis event and tourists' responses. Findings can help destination management organizations (DMOs) choose coping strategies in the face of crisis events. It will also help researchers continue to develop destination crisis management theory.

2. Theoretical foundation and literature review

2.1. Attribution theory

Attribution is a retrospective evaluation of event responsibility (Coombs, 2007; Roseman, 1991; Stephens & Gwinner, 1998). Attribution theory has been widely applied to the influence of public emotions and behavioral tendencies after crisis events (Chung & Lee, 2021; Coombs, 2007; Gelbrich, 2010; Jin, 2013; Kim & Yoon, 2020; Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013). Weiner (1985) pointed out that, after a crisis event, the public spontaneously forms a psychological motivation to judge and interpret the causes of the crisis, and tends to analyze the causes of the crisis from the three dimensions of responsibility attribution, controllability, and stability (Coombs, 2007; Weiner, 1985). Responsibility attribution refers to the analysis of whether the crisis has an internal or external cause and who should assume responsibility (Lee, 2004; Weiner, 1985); controllability refers to the perceived extent to which the crisis can be controlled (Utz et al., 2013; Weiner, 1985); stability refers to whether the cause of a crisis event will persist, and it affects the public's prediction of the probability of repetition (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018). There are differences in the degree of influence of the above three dimensions on public emotions and attitudes in the attribution process (Weiner, 1985). Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) argued that locus of control attribution influences public emotions and attitudes more than the other two dimensions. If consumers believe that uncontrollable external factors led to the crisis event in a company, they are more likely to review the organization as a victim and sympathize with the company. On the contrary, if consumers believe that internal factors such as the ability and attitude of the organization itself leads to crisis events, they would feel anger and reduce their purchase intention (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Coombs, 2004, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Lee, 2004; Su, Gong, & Huang, 2020).

2.2. Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT)

SCCT suggests that people look for potential explanations for negative events so that they can maintain a sense of control over their lives (Coombs, 2007; Salem, Elkhwesky, & Ramkissoon, 2022; Weiner, 1985). According to SCCT, people distinguish stable events, which occur

frequently and regularly, from unstable events, which do not occur after a history of similar events (Weiner, 1985). Thus no crisis event history or a dissimilar crisis event history will trigger an assessment that a current crisis is unstable and the organization not responsible (Eaddy & Jin, 2018; Yuan, Ren, Liu, Li, & Sun, 2021). Conversely, if an organization has similar crisis history, they will hold it responsible for the current crisis, believing that a long, unresolved problem caused the crisis to recur (Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 2004; Kelley & Michela, 1980). Information about past crises can drive the judgment of an organization's crisis management (Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Eaddy, 2021; Yuan, Ren, Liu, Li, & Sun, 2021). The public is more tolerant of instability crises than of repetitive crises (Folkes, Koletsky, & Graham, 1987; Kim, Yi, & Choi, 2019). In other words, similar destination crisis history can strengthen the attribution of responsibility for the current destination crisis event (Coombs, 2004), so that the tourists' negative reaction is stronger. In the context of dissimilar crisis history and no crisis history, the past will not affect the public's perception of the current destination crisis event because it will view the current destination crisis event as unstable (Coombs, 2004, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005).

2.3. Destination crisis event

Destination crisis events have been a research focus of tourism scholars for a long time (Farmaki, 2021; Mcphetr & Stronge, 1974; Pan et al., 2021; Zenker & Kock, 2020). Sönmez, Backman, and Allen (1994) defined destination crisis events as any event that may threaten the normal operation of the tourist destination, the operation of tourism enterprises, and the behavioral decisions of tourists. Other scholars have emphasized the impact of destination crisis events on tourists (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Jin et al. (2019) defined destination crisis events as any unforeseen event that affects tourists' confidence in the destination and endangers the continued normal operation of the tourism industry in that place.

Due to the wide differences in the connotation of the term destination crisis event (Aliperti et al., 2019; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019), the existing literature lacks a unified standard and framework for the classification of destination crisis events (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019; Zenker & Kock, 2020). Votolato and Unnava (2006) attribute crisis events to insufficient organizational capabilities (competence crisis events) and immorality related to organizational value orientation (moral crisis events). Coombs (2007) divides crisis events into three types according to their nature and main forms: victim cluster, accidental cluster, and preventable cluster. Faulkner (2001) divides tourism crises into two categories: natural crises and man-made crises. Based on the attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), we divide destination crisis events into internal and external types (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Lee, 2004; Weiner, 1985). Internal crisis events would include bad service attitude, arbitrary price increases, or congestion. External destination crisis events would include natural disasters and COVID-19 (Chi, Ekinci, Ramkissoon, & Thorpe, 2022; Ramkissoon, 2022). Different types of destination crisis events (see Table 1) have significant differences in terms of tourists' emotional and behavioral responses (Lee, 2004).

2.4. Sympathy

Sympathy comes from the cognition of other people's emotions. It is the cognitive acknowledgement of other people's misfortune, worry, and sadness (Escalas & Stern, 2003). It makes reference to others' emotional state or condition and their well-being (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Kim & Yoon, 2020). Iyer and Oldmeadow (2006) define sympathy as when people realize the misfortunes of others, stating that people have sympathy in particular when they feel that such misfortunes are unjust. Witnessing the suffering of others may stimulate sympathy (Jin, 2013). Although sympathy involves understanding victims' feelings (Escalas & Stern, 2003), it also involves disengagement from the situation (Iyer & Oldmeadow, 2006). Individuals need to keep a certain psychological

distance from the victim and distinguish themselves from the victim in order to feel sympathy for the victim (Jin, 2013). Therefore, sympathy is also a common emotion after a crisis event (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jin, 2013). Individuals who have not experienced the crisis directly are likely to feel sympathy (Jin, 2013). Research by Coombs and Holladay (2005) shows that the types of crisis events influence customer sympathy, and this emotional response will affect subsequent consumption decision-making (Coombs, 2007; Jin, 2013). For example, it leads to positive behaviors (Jin, 2013) and intent to forgive the organization that experienced the crisis event (Finkel et al., 2002; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). In the context of a tourist destination, after a crisis event occurs, tourists will form unusual emotional responses and special concerns to disasters and victims, which will significantly affect the tourists' follow-up behavioral tendencies (Coombs, 2007; Jin, 2013). Sympathy is one of these special emotional concerns (Berger, 2012). Therefore, the role of sympathy in a crisis deserves further study (Coombs & Holladay, 2005), especially in the field of tourism. But it has received little attention (Kim & Yoon, 2020).

2.5. Anger

Anger arises when people accuse a specific agent (such as an individual, group, or organization) of breaking the law or being unfair (Iyer & Oldmeadow, 2006; Kim & Yoon, 2020). It is a retrospective emotion (Gelbrich, 2010; Kim & Yoon, 2020; Roseman, 1991; Weiner, 1985). This external attribution occurs when people blame others, rather than themselves, for unpleasant situations (Gelbrich, 2010). Therefore, anger is considered to be the most common emotional response of consumers in crisis situations (Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Gelbrich, 2010; Jin, 2013; Kalamas, Laroche, & Makdessian, 2008; Lindenmeier, Schleer, & Pricl, 2012), because the occurrence of the crisis shows that the behavior of the company is contrary to consumer expectations of the company (Gelbrich, 2010). As the awareness of crisis responsibility deepens, anger will increase (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jin, 2013). Crisis events that occur under high certainty and controllable risk situations will generate more anger (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jin, 2013). Experiencing anger can have a significant impact on social relationships and individuals themselves (Lazarus, 1991). After the crisis, people experiencing anger judge things more emotionally. They deal with their own negative emotions by eliminating the factors that trigger anger (Lazarus, 1991), or produce negative behaviors (Bolton, Warlop, & Alba, 2003; Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Gelbrich, 2010), such as negative word-of-mouth (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Harrison-Walker, 2019; Tan, Balaji, Oikarinen, Alatalod, & Salo, 2021) and reduced forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997). In addition, in the process of moral judgment, people usually express anger against cheating or unfair behavior (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008), as a way to punish those who violate the social psychological contract (Jin, 2013). Accordingly, tourists express anger when media reports about poor service quality and bad service attitudes in tourist destinations (Su et al., 2022). Anger is regarded as one of the important predictors of tourists' behavior (Gelbrich, 2010). Thus, the role of anger in destination crisis event deserves further study (Coombs & Holladay, 2005).

2.6. Tourist forgiveness

Forgiveness refers to a willing to give up one's resentment, condemnation, and subtle right to revenge against a person who committed an unjust act while cultivating the qualities of undue sympathy, generosity, and even love for others (Enright & Group, 1991). McCullough et al. (1997) believe that forgiveness is essentially an individual's active release of internal negative emotions, and it is a pro-social behavioral tendency of active choice. Finkel et al. (2002) defined forgiveness as an individual abandoning destructive interaction patterns such as revenge and alienation after being offended, and instead showing a positive and constructive behavioral tendency toward

Table 1
Relevant studies of crisis event communication in marketing and tourism fields.

Authors (Year)	Independent variable	Mediator	Dependent variable	Moderator	Findings	Research context
Su et al. (2022)	Negative event types	Perceived betrayal	Tourism boycott	Relationship quality	Compared with competence negative events, moral negative events have a stronger negative impact on perceived betrayal and tourism boycott.	Tourism destinations
Xie et al. (2022)	Crisis types, Crisis communication sources	Heuristic processing, Perceived safety	Tourists' travel intentions		Crisis type had a matching effect on the impact process of crisis communication sources on tourists' travel intentions.	Tourism destinations
Rasoolimanesh, Seyfi, Rastegar, and Hall (2021)	Trust, crisis management, health care system, solidarity		Willingness to support a destination, travel intention	Past experience	The strong and positive effects of trust and healthcare system on behavioral intention of respondents without past experience to visit a destination, whereas the effect of solidarity on behavioral intention was identified much stronger for the prospect tourists with past experience of visiting a destination.	Tourism destinations
Yang and Wong (2020)	Perceived discrimination in COVID-19	Anxiety	Well-being	COVID-19 worries, social media participation	Worries over COVID-19 trigger ruminative responses to the depressive symptoms and exacerbate discrimination-induced anxiety, whereas active social media participation serves as a means of distraction to buffer the negative effects of psychological distress.	Tourism destinations
Rosselló et al. (2020)	Natural disasters		Tourist arrivals		The occurrence of different event types change tourist flows to varying degrees.	Tourism destinations
Xu, Niu, Li, and Bai (2020)	Perceived image in crisis	Word of mouth, Psychological distance	Behavioral intention		Word-of-mouth plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived image and behavioral intentions. Tourists' sense of psychological distance significantly mediates the relationship between perceived image and behavioral intention.	Tourism Destinations
Corbet, Efthymiou, Lucey, and O'Connell (2021)	Crisis event		Price, demand		The share price response was immediate and substantive.	Airlines
Pan et al. (2021)	Travel constraints, Perceived crisis management	Negativity bias, Attitude-trust	Post-crisis intention		Travel constraints negatively influence behavioral intention through negativity bias, perceived crisis management positively affects behavioral intention through attitude-trust.	Cruises
Comyns and Franklin-Johnson (2018)	Crisis history	Crisis response strategy	Post-crisis reputation	Crisis setting	Organizations with a history of similar crises adopt defensive strategies and communicate much later compared to organizations which adopt accommodative strategies. Contrary to the individual case, in a collective crisis accommodative strategies result in more negative reputational damage and a higher burden of responsibility.	Businesses
Tsarenko and Tojib (2011)	Brand transgression severity	Repurchase intention	Consumer forgiveness	Firm response, consumers' CSR awareness	Consumers' prior awareness of the firm's CSR initiatives significantly differentiates apologia from apology, with the effect of apology on consumer forgiveness being more apparent when brand transgression severity is mild, and consumer forgiveness mediates the effect of brand transgression severity, firm response, and consumer awareness on repurchase intentions.	Businesses
Jeon and Baeck (2016)	Types of brand crises		Consumer's attitude, Behavioral responses	Brand associations, Brand-customer relationship strength	Consumers' responses were more favorable in the corporate ability (CA) crisis than in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) crisis. In addition, consumers with high brand-customer relationship strength and brand associations showed more favorable responses to a brand crisis related to CA than to that related to CSR.	Brands
Dutta and Pullig (2011)	Crisis type, Response strategies		Brand confidence, Brand attitude, Brand consideration		The relative effectiveness of response strategies depends on the nature of the brand crisis.	Brands

the offender. These definitions reflect the three characteristics of forgiveness: (1) the original negative emotions become positive emotions; (2) the original condemning thinking becomes neutral or supportive; (3) the original destructive actions become positive behavioral orientation.

In the field of marketing, after a product or brand crisis, insight into when consumers will forgive the brand is crucial for companies to win the hearts and loyalty of consumers (Sinha & Lu, 2016; Tan et al., 2021; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015). The concept of forgiveness will provide a relationship focus for understanding consumers' responses to the brand/product crisis, and provide new insights into consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral experiences (Chung & Beverland, 2006). Consumer forgiveness can be divided into two types (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). Emotional forgiveness is the psychological state of consumers who are truly willing to tolerate and forgive. Decisional forgiveness is the behavioral choice not to evade or retaliate after the crisis occurs, to behave as they had before, but feeling anger (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). That is, consumer forgiveness can be psychological or behavioral (Muhammad & Gul, 2020; Xie & Peng, 2009).

Forgiveness has attracted increasing attention in fields such as psychology (North, 1987), sociology (Finkel et al., 2002; McCullough et al., 1997), and marketing (Harrison-Walker, 2019; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015), and tourists are increasingly forming a closer relationship with destinations (Su et al., 2022). Yet research on tourist forgiveness is limited. The concept of forgiveness provides us with a relational perspective to understand tourists' response to the destination crisis, and helps researchers to gain insight into tourists' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral experiences when tourists forgive a destination after crisis (Chung & Beverland, 2006). Forgiveness is the key to rebuilding trust in a destination after a crisis and it is the foundation of relationship repair (Sinha & Lu, 2016; Xie & Peng, 2009). It is necessary to study the forgiveness of post-crisis tourists, but the research in this field is very scarce at present. Drawing on the related definition of forgiveness, this study defines tourist forgiveness as an occurring when a tourist who has been offended and hurt by a destination crisis event abandons negative behaviors and negative feelings towards the destination, even in some cases experiencing positive feelings towards it (Chung & Beverland, 2006; Enright & Group, 1991; Finkel et al., 2002; McCullough et al., 1997; Xie & Peng, 2009).

2.7. Destination crisis history

Consumers may judge the stability of an organization based on past crises and behavioral patterns (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Frequent events are considered stable events. When few crises occur and they will be considered unstable and abnormal (Coombs, 2004). According to SCCT, the public tolerates unstable crises more than stable crises because they consider the latter a sign of ongoing failures (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018). At the same time, the history of crises shows that an organization has an ongoing problem to be solved (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018; Kelley & Michela, 1980). Thus, an organization must not only consider the current crisis events, but also pay attention to the crisis history (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). Similar crisis history strengthens the sense of responsibility for the current crisis (Coombs, 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Thus it increases blame and both direct and indirect damage from a current crisis (Coombs, 2004, 2007). Therefore, crisis history complicates crisis management, and efforts to avoid a crisis history are well spent (Coombs, 2004).

Coombs (2004) only distinguished similar crisis history from a lack of having a similar crisis history. However, dissimilar crisis history can occur, and may have an impact different from a lack of any crisis history. To address this reality, the existence of crisis history means that the current crisis is similar to the past crisis history, while the non-existence of crisis history means that there is no crisis similar to the current crisis in the past. It cannot be ignored that in real life, there are situations in which the past crisis is not similar to the current crisis, and this influence

of the history of the crisis is worth studying. In addition, there is still a gap in the literature on the historical impact of destination crisis. On the basis of the relevant research on the history of crisis, this study defines destination crisis history as any known crisis event in the tourist destination in the past (Coombs, 2004) and distinguishes similar crisis history from dissimilar crisis history.

3. Hypothesis development

3.1. The relationship between destination crisis event and sympathy

People usually feel sympathy for the victims in a crisis (Chi, Friedmann, Chen, Tsai, & Yuan, 2020; Kogen & Dilliplane, 2019). However, they may become less sympathetic when they crisis is self-inflicted (Schneider & Castillo, 2015). According to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), external crises could arouse stronger sympathy because consumers see the organization in crisis as a victim (Chi et al., 2020; Coombs, 2004) while internal crises are less likely to elicit sympathy (Kim & Yoon, 2020; Xie et al., 2022). Jorgensen's (1996) research on consumer sympathy following crises found that it was greater when consumers saw the enterprise or organization as less responsible for the crisis. Research on brand 0 crisis shows this dynamic as well: consumers make more accountability inferences about problems that they believe a company could control (Comyns & Franklin-Johnson, 2018; Lee, 2004). In the context of a brand crisis, they see as controllable by the company, consumers will make more accountability inferences. The greater the attribution of the crisis responsibility, the more it will inhibit consumers' sympathy (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005). In the tourism context, external destination crises are negative events outside the control of the destination management organizations (DMOs), while internal destination crises are considered as preventable or controllable by DMOs. Xie et al. (2022) examined online public opinions on a tourism crisis occurred in Thailand and suggested that when tourists attribute the crisis event to external causes, they are more likely to show sympathy and tolerance to the destination. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H1. External destination crisis events cause more sympathy than internal ones.

3.2. The relationship between destination crisis event and anger

According to attribution theory, internal crises will enhance the attribution of responsibility for the crisis, because the organization intentionally puts stakeholders at risk (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). Lee (2004) pointed out in his research that crisis events caused by internal controllable factors will induce a deeper negative impression of the enterprise in consumers, while crisis events caused by external uncontrollable reasons will not have a great negative impact on consumers. When tourists attribute the reasons for the crisis to internal factors such as the tourism destination's lack of ability, integrity, or goodwill (Mayer et al., 1995), they will blame the tourism destination (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Votolato & Unnava, 2006), which further increases the negative emotional pressure of tourists (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Gelbrich, 2010) and results in greater anger (Choi & Lin, 2009). On the contrary, if they attribute the destination crisis event to external uncontrollable reasons they will be less likely to attribute responsibility to the tourist destination (Weiner, 1985), and thus feel less anger (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). Therefore, this article proposes hypotheses:

H2. Internal destination crisis events cause more anger than external ones.

3.3. The relationship between destination crisis event and tourist forgiveness

According to attribution theory, customers will naturally begin the attribution process after a corporate crisis event (Weiner, 1985). The

attribution process accompanies the forgiveness process, and consumers will choose whether or not to forgive the company at that time (Moon & Rhee, 2012). Weiner (1979) pointed out that the result of forgiveness changes when attribution changes. Specifically, when the responsibility is attributed to forces outside the organization, the public is more likely to forgive the organization (Moon & Rhee, 2012). This suggests that when tourists attribute crises in tourist destinations to forces outside the control of the destination, they will feel forgiveness and loyalty (Lee, 2004; Moon & Rhee, 2012). However, if the incident is considered an internal crisis and the responsibility is attributed to the destination, this is more likely to lead to destructive behavior of tourists and reduce forgiveness (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Moon & Rhee, 2012). From this, we hypothesize:

H3. External destination crisis events cause more tourist forgiveness than internal ones.

3.4. The mediating roles of sympathy and anger

Stakeholders' attribution of responsibility for a crisis will generate emotions towards the organization (Coombs & Holladay, 2005), and these emotions affect their future behavior (Gelbrich, 2010). Anger and sympathy are considered to be the core emotions of attribution theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Weiner, 1995). When a person is judged responsible for a crisis, this causes anger and negative behavior (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). In the opposite scenario there is sympathy and positive behavior (Gelbrich, 2010). Coombs (2007) called for attention to the influence of stakeholder emotions on behavioral orientation in crisis situations. Research shows emotion is a predictor of support or punishment behavior (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Jin, 2013; Septianto, Tjiptono, & Kusumasondjaja, 2020). In line with the attribution perspective (Weiner, 1985), anger is positively correlated with antisocial behavior and negatively correlated with prosocial behavior, while sympathy is positively correlated with prosocial behavior and negatively correlated with antisocial behavior (Struthers, Eaton, Ratajczak, & Perunovic, 2004). People who feel anger but no sympathy are unlikely to help (Jin, 2013); if there is sympathy but no anger, positive behaviors may result (Iyer & Oldmeadow, 2006). Negative emotions narrow individuals' attention to support specific behavioral tendencies (such as negative word-of-mouth; Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016), while positive emotions broaden people's attention, thinking, and behavioral choices (such as forgiveness; Iyer & Oldmeadow, 2006).

At present, the research on the relationship between destination crisis event, anger, and tourist forgiveness is very limited, but market research offers relevant evidence. When consumers are faced with negative events such as product crises or service failures, they will show anger (Choi & Lin, 2009), thereby becoming motivated to hurt and retaliate against the offender (Gelbrich, 2010), and reduce the tendency to forgive (McCullough, 1997). Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

H4. Anger plays a mediator role in destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness.

Positive emotions play an important role in crisis communication because they have an important influence on subsequent behaviors (Coombs, 2007; Jin, 2013). As Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, and Larkin (2003) mentioned, positive emotions have a welcome effect in crisis, and can be used as a positive and effective response component in crisis communication. Strong sympathy can make it easier for organizations to generate potential supportive behaviors from stakeholders after a crisis event (Jin, 2013). In a crisis that triggers more sympathy than anger, the public is willing to provide help (Jin, 2013) and will exhibit more positive behavior (Iyer & Oldmeadow, 2006; Yang & Hu, 2021). Tsarenko and Tojib (2011) found that the strength of consumers' positive feelings towards providers predicts their tendency to show mercy, patience, and tolerance to businesses' offensive behaviors, thereby weakening or transferring the psychological pressure and forming the willingness to

reconstruct the relationship. Therefore, we propose:

H5. Sympathy plays a mediator role in destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness.

3.5. The moderating role of destination crisis history

Crisis history directly affects consumers' emotional attitudes (Eaddy & Jin, 2018) and behavioral tendencies (Wei & Wei, 2011), and the public tends to use crisis history as important reference information to evaluate the current crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). The history and nature of the crisis together shape the public's perception of the current crisis (Mayer et al., 1995; Weiner, 1985). When there is a similar crisis history, the public's attribution of responsibility for external crises is weak (Lee, 2004), because the organization is always the victim of such crises (Coombs, 2004). When studying and comparing anger and sympathy in crisis situations from the perspective of achievement motivation, Hareli and Weiner (2002) found that uncontrollable conditions are more likely to cause emotions related to sympathy; that is, irresponsible judgment leads to sympathy (Chung & Lee, 2021). Therefore, we believe that in an external destination crisis event, the crisis is attributed to external factors such as uncontrollable, unforeseeable, and environmental impact (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016), and consumers will feel the destination bears little responsibility for the crisis (Coombs, 2004). In such case tourists' negative emotional stress is more easily alleviated and released (Hattula, Herzog, Dahl, & Sven, 2015), so this kind of crisis always elicits sympathy from tourists. Therefore, we propose:

H6a. When there is a similar destination crisis history, external destination crisis events cause more sympathy than internal ones.

H6b. When there is a dissimilar destination crisis history, sympathy does not vary by whether the destination crisis event is external or internal.

H6c. When there is no destination crisis history, external destination crisis events cause more sympathy than internal ones.

Anger comes from the judgment of responsibility (Jin, 2013) and perception of lack of effort to prevent or mitigate a crisis (Weiner, 1985). According to SCCT, a similar crisis history is likely to increase the sense of organizational responsibility, especially when consumers perceive the crisis as caused by internal and controllable circumstances (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Combs, 2007). Thus, when the destination crisis event is internal, a similar crisis history will significantly increase tourist anger (Coombs, 2004). Because the destination made many foreseeable mistakes and did not use its knowledge of previous crises to avoid a recurrence (Otoo & Kim, 2018; Weiner, 1985), putting visitors in potential peril (Coombs, 2004), tourists may feel intense anger (Coombs, 2004). However, previous crisis events that have no significant correlation with the current crisis will not increase tourist anger (Coombs, 2004) regarding what they will see as an unstable event (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Tourists will evaluate the crisis history and the current crisis separately (Weiner, 1985). When there is no destination crisis history, tourists' propensity for anger will depend primarily on the nature of the current crisis, such as whether it is internal and thus perceived as preventable (Coombs, 2004, 2007). Therefore, we propose:

H7a. When there is a similar destination crisis history, internal destination crises events cause more anger than external ones.

H7b. When there is a dissimilar destination crisis history, there is no significant difference in the anger that external and internal destination crisis events create.

H7c. When there is no destination crisis history, internal destination crisis events cause more anger than external ones.

Enterprises experiencing crisis always hope to get out of the shadow of the crisis as soon as possible in order to rebuild brand trust (Wei et al., 2020; Xie & Peng, 2009). This process depends on consumer forgiveness

(Chung & Beverland, 2006; Finkel et al., 2002). Crisis historical information may affect consumers' willingness to forgive the brand, and thus their future purchase intention (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018).

No research has addressed directly the impact of destination crisis history on tourists' forgiveness, but past research does provide clues about the relationship. For example, previous studies show that internal crises are less forgivable than external crises because they are seen as controllable and stable (Lee, 2004; Moon & Rhee, 2012). Thus it seems likely that when there is no destination crisis history tourists forgiveness will largely depend on the impact of current destination crisis events (Coombs, 2004, 2007). However, in the case of similar destination crisis history, as the tourism destination bears greater management responsibility for the internal crisis (Coombs, 2004), the tourists will have a greater negative impression (Lee, 2004), and their forgiveness will be significantly reduced (Moon & Rhee, 2012). Alternatively, if there is a dissimilar crisis history, tourists will judge the two crises separately (Coombs, 2004; Weiner, 1985). We thus propose:

H8a. When there is a similar destination crisis history, tourist forgiveness is more likely in the case of an external destination crisis event than an internal one.

H8b. When there is a dissimilar destination crisis history, tourist forgiveness will not differ significantly based on whether a destination crisis event is external or internal.

H8c. When there is no destination crisis history, tourist forgiveness will be more likely in the case of an external destination crisis event than an internal one.

3.6. Overview of the experimental studies

Based on the above hypotheses, this study proposed a conceptual model (Fig. 1) and tested it using four experimental studies. Fig. 1 presents the key concepts and hypotheses in our conceptual model. First, Study 1 examined the main effects of destination crisis event types (external vs. internal) on tourist sympathy, anger, and forgiveness, testing H1 through H5 using a sample of Chinese college students. Then, Study 2 tested H1 through H5 again with a different sample of real tourists. Study 2 adopted different stimuli materials for manipulating the destination crisis event types. Thus the external validity of our research was enhanced by cross-validating the results of Study 1 and

Study 2 with different samples and experiment stimuli (Su et al., 2022). Next, Study 3 investigated the moderating effects of crisis event history on the relationships between crisis event type and tourists' responses, testing H6 through H8. Furthermore, in order to verify the generalizability of Study 3's findings, Study 4 replicated Study 3 to test hypotheses H6–H8 again with a new sample of real tourists. Table 2 summarized the samples and experimental design of each study. The different experiment stimuli and multiple data sources employed here improve the robustness of our research findings, avoiding the inherent weaknesses of a single method or data source (Su et al., 2022).

4. Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate the impacts of destination crisis event types on sympathy, anger, and tourist forgiveness (H1, H2, and H3) using a sample of college students. It also examined the mediation effects of sympathy and anger on the relationship of destination

Table 2
Overview of the four experiments.

| Experiments	Hypothesis Testing	Destination crisis event manipulation (External vs. internal)	Samples	Data collection Approach
Study 1	H1 through H5	Flooding vs. compulsory shopping (see Appendix 1)	146 undergraduates and graduate students	Online
Study 2	H1 through H5	Earthquake vs. price gouging (see Appendix 2)	143 real tourists	Online
Study 3	H6 through H8	Earthquake vs. price gouging (see Appendices 2 & 3)	312 undergraduates and graduate students	Laboratory
Study 4	H6 through H8	Earthquake vs. price gouging (see Appendices 2 &3)	397 real tourists	Online
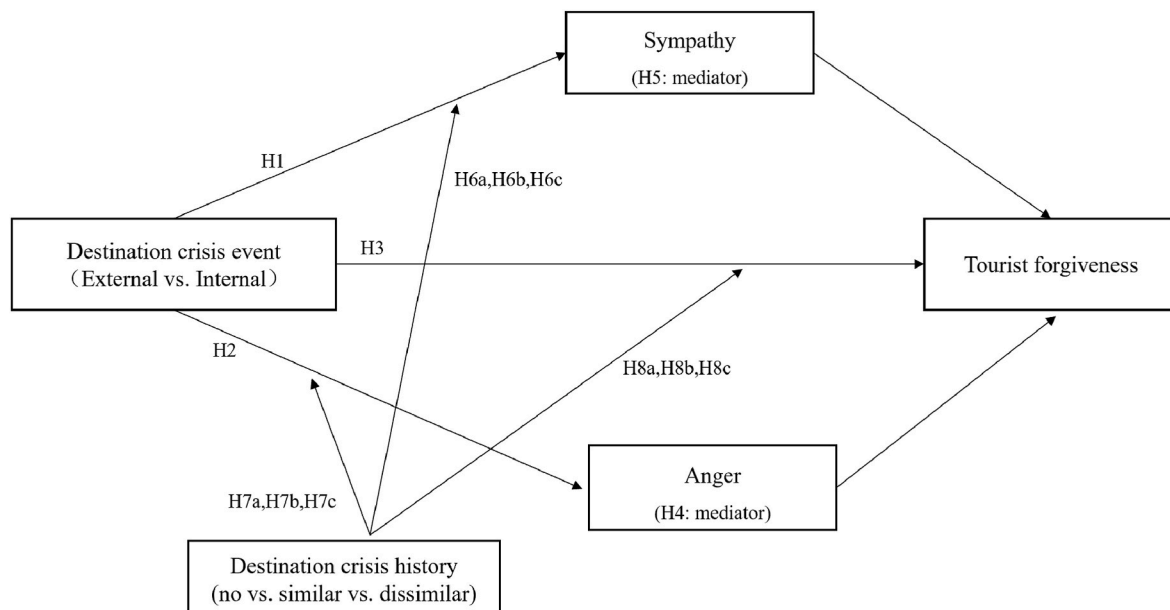
Fig. 1. The theoretical model.

crisis event types and tourist forgiveness (H4 and H5).

4.1. Data collection

In this study, we examined the relationship between the types of destination crisis event (external vs. internal) and tourists' emotions (sympathy and anger) and behavioral tendency (forgiveness) for cultural tourism destinations. Participants consisted of 146 undergraduates and graduate students, 73 each men and women. All were in China and recruited through online social platforms such as WeChat. Almost 80% (79.5%) of participants were 18–24 years old and the rest were 25–44. They were randomly assigned to one of the two groups ($N_{external}$ = 75, $N_{internal}$ = 71). They read a brief summary of the purpose of the research and a description of a destination crisis event that occurred in a fictitious destination (i.e., Scenic Area A) based on real news events and scenarios used in previous studies of crisis events (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Su et al., 2022); Appendix 1 provides the scenarios.

First, we asked each respondent to indicate whether the above-mentioned situation may occur in real life, to measure the authenticity of the situations (Su, Gong, & Huang, 2020). The majority (85.1%) of the participants chose yes, and no differences emerged between the two scenarios. The participants then completed the manipulation check: "Based on the materials reporting events in Scenic Area A, do you agree that 'the recent flooding in Scenic Area A is an external (internal) tourist destination crisis event'?" Then, sympathy and anger were measured by asking participants to complete this sentence: "What happened in Scenic area A made me feel": (a) "angry, irritated, annoyed'' or (b) "sympathy, concern, compassion'' (Jin, 2013). The five-item forgiveness scale by Xie and Peng (2009) was adopted, including two reverse-coded items (i. e., "I would disapprove of Scenic Area A" and "I would blame Scenic Area A") and three non-reversed counterparts (i.e., "I would think favorably of Scenic Area A," "I would forgive Scenic Area A," and "I would sympathize with Scenic Area A.") All items used a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Reliability analysis found that all scales were reliable (sympathy α = 0.815, anger α = 0.980, forgiveness α = 0.853). The average score was used for subsequent analysis. The questionnaire ended with demographic data (age and gender).

4.2. Results

Independent-sample t-tests are used to check the operation. The external type had significant differences in the two types of crisis events in tourist destinations ($M_{external}$ = 5.60, $M_{internal}$ = 2.55, t = 12.647, p < 0.000). The difference between internal crisis events in the two types of tourist destinations was also significant ($M_{external}$ = 3.13, $M_{internal}$ = 5.76, t = −11.188, p < 0.000). This analysis indicates the stimulus was successful and suitable for the research.

G* Power 3.1 was used to calculate the power value of the sample size (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). One-way ANOVA was selected. When the number of groups was 4, the population effect size (f) was 0.4, and the significance level was 0.05, and the power value of the sample size of 146 was 0.99. Above the basic level of 0.80, the valid questionnaire had statistical testing power. A one-way ANOVA was used to test H1, H2, and H3. The results showed significant differences in sympathy between the types of destination crisis event (F $_{(1,142)}$ = 43.926, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.236). In particular, participants' sympathy response was stronger following an external destination crisis event ($M_{external}$ = 4.880; SD = 1.414) than an internal destination crisis event ($M_{internal}$ = 3.354; SD = 1.275). There were also significant differences in anger between the two groups (F $_{(1,142)}$ = 110.860, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.438). In the event of an internal destination crisis event ($M_{internal}$ = 5.094; SD = 1.174), the participants' anger was stronger than that of an external destination crisis event ($M_{external}$ = 2.716; SD = 1.423). Finally, there were significant differences in tourist forgiveness between the different types of destination crisis event (F $_{(1,}$

$_{142)}$ = 130.240, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.478). In an external destination crisis event ($M_{external}$ = 4.637; SD = 0.711), the participants' forgiveness was stronger than the internal tourist destination crisis event ($M_{internal}$ = 2.910; SD = 1.022). These results confirm H1, H2, and H3.

Bootstrapping (Model 4 shown in Hayes, 2013) was used to test the sympathy and anger construct regarding its mediating role in the conceptual model (see Fig. 2). A 95% confidence interval (CI) of the parameter estimates was obtained by bootstrapping (n = 5000), running the samples 5000 times. Both sympathy (β = −0.362, SE = 0.124; 95% CI: −0.627 to −0.145), and anger (β = −0.652, SE = 0.128; 95% CI: −0.914 to −0.418) served as mediators between destination crisis event and tourist forgiveness. Additionally, the direct relationship of types of destination crisis events on tourist forgiveness were significant (β = −0.680, SE = 0.169; 95% CI: −1.013 to −0.347). The results supported the idea that sympathy and anger play a partly mediating role between types of destination crisis event on tourist forgiveness. This provides support for H4 and H5.

4.3. Discussion of study 1

The findings of Study 1 indicated that external (vs. internal) destination crisis events could elicit more sympathy and reduce anger, which in turn enhance the likelihood of tourist forgiveness. It also found that sympathy and anger play a mediator role in destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness. However, Study 1 has several limitations. First, the natural tourist destination described in the scenario may produce different results than other types of tourist destination. Second, other types of destination crisis events may have different impacts, even if they are external and internal. Third, the experimental subjects are student samples, and results may not be generalizable to other tourists. Therefore, we decided to conducted Study 2 to address these limitations.

5. Study 2

Study 2 sought to verify the findings of Study 1 using a sample of real tourists and different experimental stimuli (see Appendix 2). The experimental procedure was similar to Study 1, and the hypotheses H1 through H5 were tested again.

5.1. Data collection

A total of 143 real tourists were recruited from the Chinese social media platform WeChat. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire through an online survey platform, which randomly assigned the participants to one of the two experimental conditions ($N_{external}$ = 72, $N_{internal}$ = 71). Table 3 reports the demographic characteristics of participants. A new scenario of an earthquake disaster was used as the stimulus for external crisis event, while a scenario of price gouging was adopted for internal crisis event (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire adopted the same scales for key constructs in Study 1, and these scales also demonstrated good validity in Study 2 (Sympathy: Cronbach's α = 0.806; Anger: Cronbach's α = 0.971, Forgiveness Cronbach's α = 0.803).

5.2. Results

The results of independent-sample t-tests show that participants could distinguish between external destination crisis events ($M_{external}$ = 5.81, $M_{internal}$ = 2.58, t = 11.202, p < 0.000) and internal destination crisis events ($M_{external}$ = 2.88, $M_{internal}$ = 6.03, t = −11.935, p < 0.000) based on the given stimuli.

G* Power 3.1 was used to calculate the power value of the sample size (Faul et al., 2009). One-way ANOVA was selected. With four groups, the population effect size (f) was 0.4, and the significance level was 0.05; the power value of the sample size of 143 was 0.99. Exceeding the basic level of 0.80, the valid questionnaire has statistical testing power. A one-way ANOVA was used to test hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. The
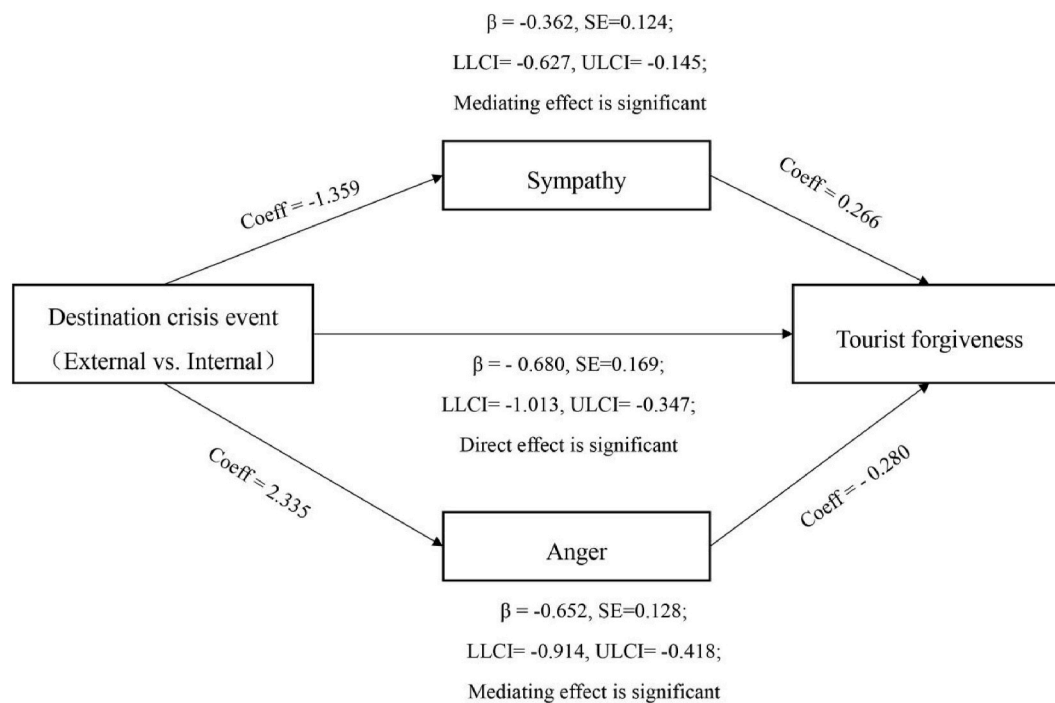
$\beta = -0.362$, SE$=0.124$;

LLCI$= -0.627$, ULCI$= -0.145$;

Mediating effect is significant

Fig. 2. Mediating roles of sympathy and anger.

Table 3
Study 2 sample characteristics.

	n	%		n	%
Gender rowhead			**Monthly income**		
Male rowhead	58	40.6	< ¥2000	29	20.3
Female rowhead	85	59.4	¥2000-2999	38	26.6
Ages rowhead			¥3000-4999	20	14
18-24 rowhead	76	53.1	¥5000-7999	19	13.3
25-44 rowhead	54	37.8	≥¥8000	37	25.9
45-64 rowhead	13	9.1	**Occupation**		
65 and older rowhead	0	0	Corporate staff	33	23.1
Level of education rowhead			Government staff	15	10.5
Less than high school rowhead	3	2.1	Professional worker	9	6.3
High school and technical school rowhead	6	4.2	Students	69	48.3
Undergraduate/associate degree rowhead	63	44.1	Retiree	1	0.7
Postgraduate degree rowhead	71	49.7	Other	16	11.2

results show that there were significant differences in the sympathy ($F_{(1, 139)} = 100.176$, $p < 0.000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.419$), anger ($F_{(1,139)} = 96.717$, $p < 0.000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.410$), and forgiveness ($F_{(1,139)} = 137.156$, $p < 0.000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.497$) of tourists according to the type of destination crisis event. Participants were less sympathetic with destinations experiencing an internal crisis event ($M_{external} = 5.148$; SD $= 1.096$) than an external crisis event ($M_{internal} = 3.291$; SD $= 1.266$). Forgiveness showed the same pattern ($M_{external} = 4.969$; SD $= 0.846$; $M_{internal} = 3.225$; SD $= 0.944$). Internal events elicited greater anger than external events ($M_{external} = 2.384$; SD $= 1.481$; $M_{internal} = 4.662$; SD $= 1.214$). These results further supported H1, H2, and H3.

5.3. Discussion of study 2

The procedure for testing mediation is similar to Study 1 and produced similar results. Sympathy ($\beta = -0.637$, SE $= 0.157$; 95% CI: -0.969 to -0.348) and anger ($\beta = -0.465$, SE $= 0.157$; 95% CI: -0.813 to -0.206) played a mediating role in the impact of type of crisis events, as did tourist forgiveness ($\beta = -0.685$, SE $= 0.193$; 95% CI: -1.065 to

-0.304). Therefore, the results of Study 2 (see Table 4) were consistent with Study 1. The impacts of destination crisis event types on tourists' emotions and forgiveness, as well as the mediation effects of sympathy and anger were confirmed.

6. Study 3

Study 3 was a 2 (external destination crisis event vs. internal destination crisis event) × 3 (no crisis history vs. similar crisis history vs. dissimilar crisis history) between-subjects laboratory experiment using a group of college students. Students who participated in Study 1 were excluded from Study 3 to avoid learning effects across different conditions (Charness, Gneezy, & Kuhn, 2012). Study 3 examined the moderating effects of destination crisis history in the proposed model, testing H6 through H8 (see Table 2).

6.1. Data collection

A total of 312 college students participated in Study 3 and completed a questionnaire in person. There were six versions of stimuli materials for this 2 × 3 experimental design, and participants were randomly assigned to one of the six versions. They were also each assigned to one of three history conditions: no crisis history (n = 100), similar crisis history (n = 105), and dissimilar crisis history (n = 107). Participants read the experimental materials used in Study 2 to describe the types of destination crisis event and a written description of destination crisis history (see Appendix 3). Then they completed scales related to sympathy, anger, and forgiveness, and answered demographic questions (gender and age).

After reading the specified scenarios (Appendices 2 & 3), the same procedures used in Study 1 and Study 2 to determine the authenticity of the scenario were employed. Almost all subjects (91.7%) reported that they considered the scene provided realistic. Manipulation inspections included asking interviewees to indicate 1) whether the destination crisis event in Scenic Area A is external or internal; 2) whether there is a crisis history in Scenic Area A; and (for the groups where there was a destination crisis history) 3) whether the current crisis event and historical crisis event in Scenic Area A are similar events (1 = Strongly

Table 4
Coefficients for the mediation model.

Independent Variables		Sympathy (Mediator)				Anger (Mediator)				Tourist forgiveness (Dependent Variable)		
		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p
Constant	i_1	6.654	0.516	0.000	i_2	−0.586	0.606	0.334	i_3	4.276	0.499	0.000
Type of destination crisis event	a_1	−1.968	0.197	0.000	a_2	2.273	0.231	0.000	c	−0.685	0.193	0.005
Sympathy		–	–	–		–	–	–	b_1	0.324	0.056	0.000
Anger		–	–	–		–	–	–	b_2	−0.205	0.048	0.000
Covariate (emotional state)		0.199	0.064	0.002		0.053	0.075	0.481		0.025	0.044	0.571
Covariate (risk appetite)		−0.030	0.073	0.679		0.102	0.086	0.237		0.023	0.048	0.627
Total, direct, and indirect effects						Effect	SE		LLCI		ULCI	
Total effect of destination crisis event on tourist forgiveness						−1.102	0.261		−1.651		−0.641	
Direct effect of destination crisis event on tourist forgiveness						−0.685	0.193		−1.065		−0.304	
Indirect effect(s) of destination crisis event on tourist forgiveness through sympathy						−0.637	0.157		−0.969		−0.348	
Indirect effect(s) of destination crisis event on tourist forgiveness through anger						−0.465	0.157		−0.813		−0.206	
		$R^2 = 0.424$				$R^2 = 0.426$				$R^2 = 0.479$		
		$F_{(3,139)} = 34.147, p = 0.000$				$F_{(3,139)} = 34.384, p = 0.000$				$F_{(5,137)} = 18.39, p = 0.000$		

Note: SE = standard error; LLCI = lower limit of confident interval; ULCI = upper limit of confident interval.

disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Participants' sympathy, anger, and forgiveness were measured using the same scale as in Study 1, and results showed good validity (sympathy: Cronbach's α = 0.798, anger: Cronbach α = 0.962, forgiveness: Cronbach α = 0.742). Participants were 51.6% male and 48.4% female and 88.1% 18–24 years old. The average value was used for subsequent analysis.

6.2. Results

The results of independent-sample t-tests show that participants could distinguish between external destination crisis events ($M_{external}$ = 4.71, $M_{internal}$ = 2.43, t = 10.341, p < 0.000) and internal destination crisis events ($M_{external}$ = 3.69, $M_{internal}$ = 5.71, t = −9.606, p < 0.000) based on the given stimuli. Manipulations of no crisis history (M_{yes} = 5.75, M_{no} = 3.70, t = 11.505, p < 0.000), similar crisis history, and dissimilar crisis history were also successful ($M_{similar}$ = 4.88, $M_{dissimilar}$ = 2.12, t = 13.064, p < 0.000).

G* Power 3.1 was used to calculate the power value of the sample size (Faul et al., 2009). One-way ANOVA was selected. When the number of groups was 6, the population effect size (f) was 0.4, and the significance level was 0.05; the power value of the sample size of 312 was 0.99. Above the basic level of 0.80, the valid questionnaire has

statistical testing power. Taking destination crisis event and destination crisis history as independent variables and sympathy, anger, and forgiveness as dependent variables respectively, a 2×3 factorial between-subjects design was utilized. The analysis showed a significant interaction between destination crisis event and destination crisis history in predicting sympathy ($F_{(2,304)}$ = 11.319, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.069). In no crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 4.7, $M_{internal}$ = 3.553, $F_{(1,96)}$ = 22.794, p < 0.000) and similar crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 4.921, $M_{internal}$ = 3.320, $F_{(1,101)}$ = 39.414, p < 0.000), the occurrence of an external destination crisis event has a stronger impact on sympathy than an internal destination crisis event. When there is a dissimilar crisis history to those in tourist destinations, there is no significant difference in sympathy ($M_{external}$ = 3.927, $M_{internal}$ = 3.865, $F_{(1,103)}$ = 0.103, p > 0.05). Therefore, H6a, H6b, and H6c were confirmed (Fig. 3).

The interaction with anger as the dependent variable is equally significant ($F_{(2,304)}$ = 11.272, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.069). With no crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 2.833, $M_{internal}$ = 4.507, $F_{(1,96)}$ = 55.715, p < 0.000) and similar crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 3.121, $M_{internal}$ = 4.973, $F_{(1,101)}$ = 42.143, p < 0.000), the occurrence of an internal destination crisis event had a stronger impact on sympathy than an external destination crisis event. When the crisis history was dissimilar from the present event, there was no significant difference in sympathy according to event type
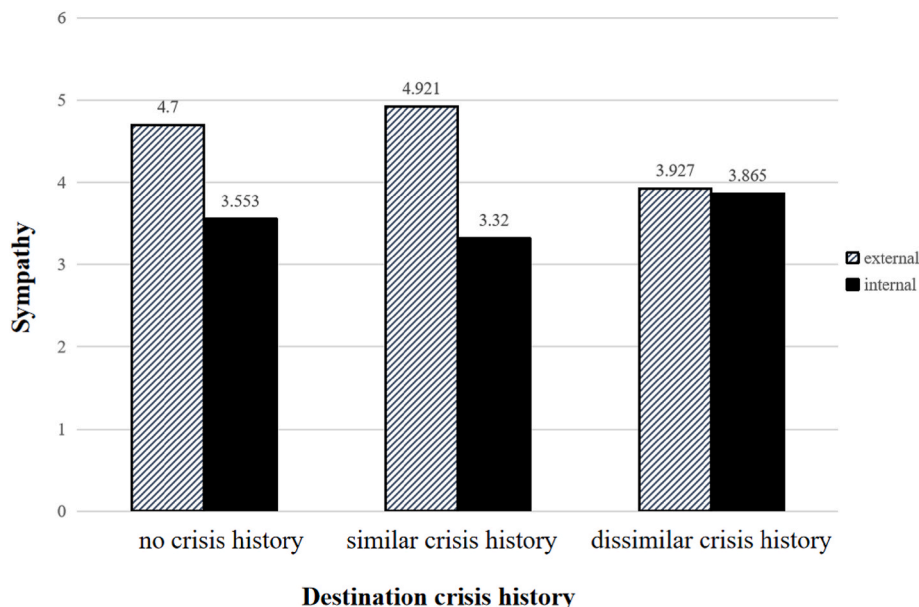

Fig. 3. Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on sympathy.

($M_{external}$ = 4.272, $M_{internal}$ = 4.558, $F_{(1,103)}$ = 1.153, p > 0.05). Therefore, H7a, H7b, and H7c were confirmed (Fig. 4).

Finally, the interaction of destination crisis event and destination crisis history on forgiveness was also supported ($F_{(2,304)}$ = 15.465, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.092). When there is no crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 4.452, $M_{internal}$ = 3.568, $F_{(1,96)}$ = 29.367, p < 0.000) or similar crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 4.473, $M_{internal}$ = 3.268, $F_{(1,101)}$ = 49.189, p < 0.000), the occurrence of an external destination crisis event had a stronger impact on sympathy than an internal destination crisis event. When the crisis history was dissimilar from the present crisis, there was no significant difference in sympathy ($M_{external}$ = 3.571, $M_{internal}$ = 3.608, $F_{(1,103)}$ = 0.099, p > 0.05). Therefore, H8a, H8b, and H8c were supported (Fig. 5).

6.3. Discussion of study 3

Study 3 preliminarily validated H6 through H8. That is, it showed that the impact of destination crisis event on tourist emotion and forgiveness varies depending on the destination crisis history. However, given Study 3 is a laboratory experiment using student samples, the generalizability of its results warrants further verification. Therefore, we conducted Study 4 to further validate the findings of Study 3.

7. Study 4

Using a different sample of real tourists recruited from a Chinese online survey platform, Study 4 duplicated Study 3 to test H6 through H8 again. This cross-validation process with different samples and data sources enhanced the external validity and generalizability of this research.

7.1. Data collection

A total of 397 real tourists participated in this 2×3 between-subjects experiment. Table 5 shows their demographic characteristics. Tourists who participated in Study 2 were excluded from Study 4 to prevent learning effects across different conditions (Charness et al., 2012). The subjects were randomly assigned to two destination crisis event types. They were also each assigned to one of three history types: no crisis history (n = 139), similar crisis history (n = 123), and dissimilar crisis history (n = 135). The stimulus and experimental procedures of Study 4 are the same as in Study 3.

7.2. Results

The results of independent-sample t-tests show that participants could distinguish between external destination crisis event ($M_{external}$ = 4.79, $M_{internal}$ = 2.57, t = 10.665, p < 0.000) and internal destination crisis event ($M_{external}$ = 3.46, $M_{internal}$ = 5.92, t = −13.528, p < 0.000) based on the given stimuli. Manipulations of no crisis history (M_{yes} = 5.79, M_{no} = 3.23, t = 15.9, p < 0.000), similar crisis history, and dissimilar crisis history were also successful ($M_{similar}$ = 5.72, $M_{dissimilar}$ = 2.19, t = 19.547, p < 0.000).

G* Power 3.1 was used to calculate the power value of the sample size (Faul et al., 2009). One-way ANOVA was selected. With six groups, the population effect size (f) was 0.4, and the significance level was 0.05; the power value of the sample size of 397 was 0.99. Exceeding the basic level of 0.80, the valid questionnaire had statistical testing power. Taking destination crisis event and destination crisis history as independent variables and sympathy, anger, and forgiveness as dependent variables respectively, a 2×3 factorial between-subjects design was utilized. The analysis shows a significant interaction between destination crisis event and destination crisis history in predicting sympathy ($F_{(2,389)}$ = 15.373, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.073). In no crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 5.053, $M_{internal}$ = 3.738, $F_{(1,135)}$ = 46.598, p < 0.000) and similar crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 4.825, $M_{internal}$ = 3.344, $F_{(1,119)}$ = 31.373, p < 0.000), the occurrence of an external destination crisis event had a stronger impact on sympathy than an internal destination crisis event. A dissimilar crisis history to those in tourist destinations implied no significant difference with respect to sympathy ($M_{external}$ = 3.918, $M_{internal}$ = 3.919, $F_{(1,131)}$ = 0.001, p > 0.05). Therefore, H6a, H6b, and H6c were confirmed (Fig. 6).

The interaction with anger as the dependent variable was equally significant ($F_{(2,389)}$ = 30.679, p < 0.000, partial η^2 = 0.136). In no crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 2.290, $M_{internal}$ = 4.624, $F_{(1,135)}$ = 118.795, p < 0.000) and similar crisis history ($M_{external}$ = 3.044, $M_{internal}$ = 5.038, $F_{(1,119)}$ = 54.180, p < 0.000), the occurrence of an internal destination crisis event had a stronger impact on sympathy than an external destination crisis event. When the crisis history was dissimilar from the current crisis, type of event did not predict a difference in sympathy ($M_{external}$ = 4.185, $M_{internal}$ = 4.191, $F_{(1,131)}$ = 0.026, p > 0.05). Therefore, H7a, H7b, and H7c were supported (Fig. 7).
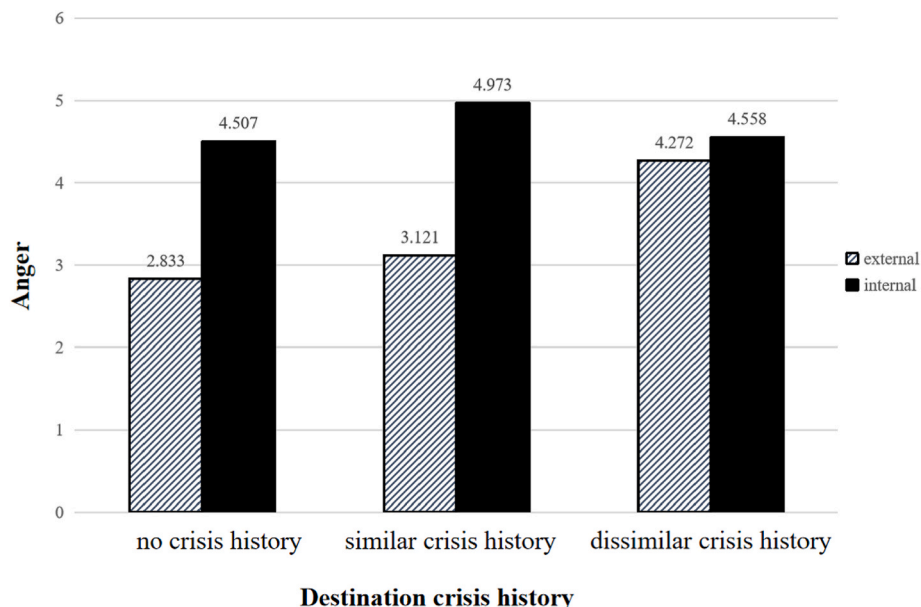

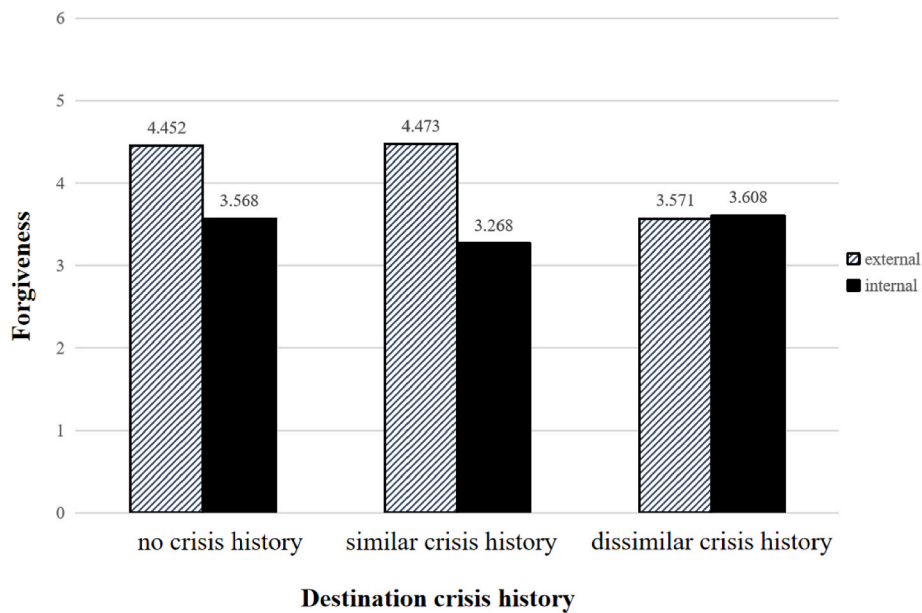**Fig. 4.** Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on anger.

Fig. 5. Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on tourist forgiveness.

Table 5
Study 4 sample characteristics.

	n	%		n	%
Gender			**Monthly income**		
Male	163	41.1	< ￥2000	135	34
Female	234	58.9	￥2000-2999	73	18.4
Age			￥3000-4999	48	12.1
18-24	249	62.7	￥5000-7999	60	15.1
25-44	135	34	≥￥8000	81	20.4
45-64	12	3	**Occupation**		
65 and older	1	0.3	Corporate staff	75	18.9
Level of education			Government staff	46	11.6
Less than high school	7	1.8	Professional worker	24	6
High school and technical school	6	1.5	Students	213	53.7
Undergraduate/associate degree	179	45.1	Retiree	4	1
Postgraduate degree	205	51.6	Other	35	8.8

Finally, the interaction of destination crisis event and destination crisis history on forgiveness was also confirmed. $F_{(2,389)} = 26.065$, $p < 0.000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.118$). With no crisis history ($M_{external} = 4.777$, $M_{internal} = 3.303$, $F_{(1,135)} = 85.215$, $p < 0.000$) and similar crisis history ($M_{external} = 4.475$, $M_{internal} = 3.042$, $F_{(1,119)} = 62.310$, $p < 0.000$), the occurrence of an external destination crisis event had a stronger impact on sympathy than an internal destination crisis event. When there was a dissimilar crisis history to those in tourist destinations, there was no significant difference in sympathy ($M_{external} = 3.557$, $M_{internal} = 3.534$, $F_{(1,131)} = 0.029$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H8a, H8b, and H8c were confirmed (Fig. 8).

7.3. Discussion of study 4

Simulating the travel decisions of real tourists in the living environment, Study 4 verified the impact of destination crisis history on destination crisis event and tourists' emotions and forgiveness, proving the applicability of the research results.

8. Conclusion

Drawing from attribution theory and situational crisis communication theory, the present study proposed and tested a conceptual model to investigate how destination crisis events influence tourist sympathy, anger, and forgiveness. Specifically, Study 1 and Study 2 indicated that when a destination crisis event was external, rather than internal, tourists tended to have more sympathy and develop greater intention to forgive the destination. Furthermore, we demonstrated sympathy and anger are partial mediators among destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness. Studies 3 and 4 explored the moderating role of destination crisis history on the relationship between destination crisis event and tourist responses (i.e., sympathy, anger, and forgiveness). Findings indicate that with dissimilar destination crisis history, there were no significant differences in the tourists' responses to the two destination crisis events. However, external destination crisis event could strengthen tourist sympathy and forgiveness while an internal destination crisis event could strengthen tourist anger if there was no destination crisis history or similar destination crisis history.

8.1. Theoretical implications

This study is the first to verify the impact of different types of destination crisis events on tourists' emotional and behavioral responses. According to attribution theory, the attribution of public responsibility for crisis depends on whether a crisis is internal or external (Mayer et al., 1995; Weiner, 1985), which causes widely distinct perceptions (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Chung & Lee, 2021). Tourists react to different types of events differently (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Lee, 2004). Although some studies have investigated the negative impact of destination crisis events on tourists (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Karl, Kock, Ritchie, & Gauss, 2021), in-depth discussion of the impact of different types of destination crisis events has been scant (for an exception see Faulkner, 2001). This study finds that tourists have more positive reactions (sympathy and forgiveness) to external destination crisis events, and are more negative (angry) following an internal crisis event. Our findings expand knowledge of destination crisis events by distinguishing its types and identifying its outcomes. They also advance understanding of attribution theory by applying it to destination crisis management. Our findings reveal the validity of tourist forgiveness as a key behavioral response to destination crisis events (Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Wei et al., 2020; Yang & Hu, 2021). They develop the antecedents of tourist forgiveness and diversify the outcomes of crisis event studies (Chung & Beverland, 2006;
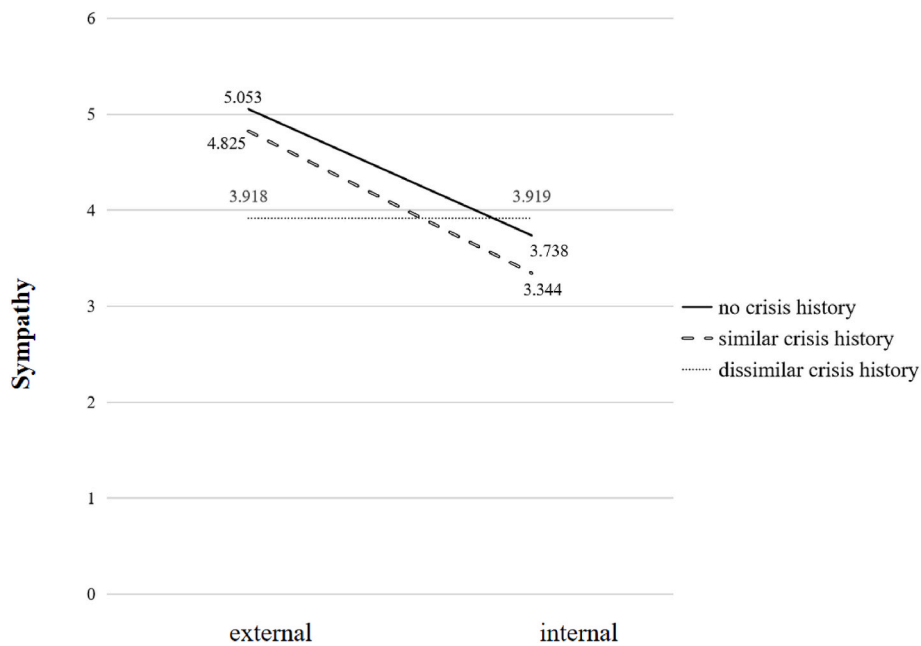
Fig. 6. Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on sympathy.
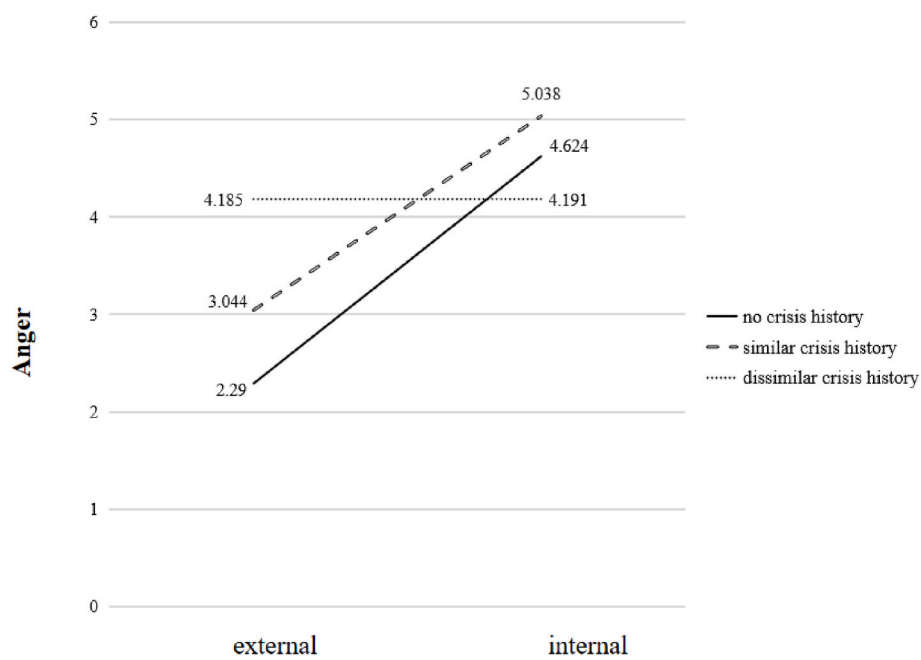

Fig. 7. Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on anger.

Jin & Cameron, 2007; Moon & Rhee, 2012; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015).

This study's examination of the mechanism of emotion in crisis events also contributes to the literature. Emotions are often associated with subsequent behavioral decisions (Jin, 2009; Karl et al., 2021), and hence scholars call for the exploration and understanding of emotions in crisis events (Farmaki, 2021; Schoofs & Clay, 2021). Past research rarely put positive and negative emotions in the same framework in response to crisis events (Jin, 2013), but the importance of discrete emotions is worth exploring (Schoofs & Claeys, 2021). This study adds to the body of knowledge by revealing mediating roles of sympathy and anger between destination crisis events and tourist forgiveness. Although previous studies have explored the impact of crisis events on emotions and public behavior (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jin, 2013), no studies have

explored the relationships among destination crisis event and tourist emotional and behavioral responses together. Therefore, the current study develops a new framework incorporating these three factors and emphasizes the key mediating roles of the two discrete emotions (i.e., anger and sympathy) in tourists' response to a destination crisis, expanding the existing literature of tourist emotions in destination crisis events. Moreover, this study makes a first attempt to reveal how tourists make emotional and then behavioral responds to destination crisis events, revealing the internal mechanism between destination crisis event and the tourist forgiveness.

This study for the first time verifies that destination crisis history moderates the impact of destination crisis events on tourists' emotional and behavioral responses. In the study of crisis events, although scholars
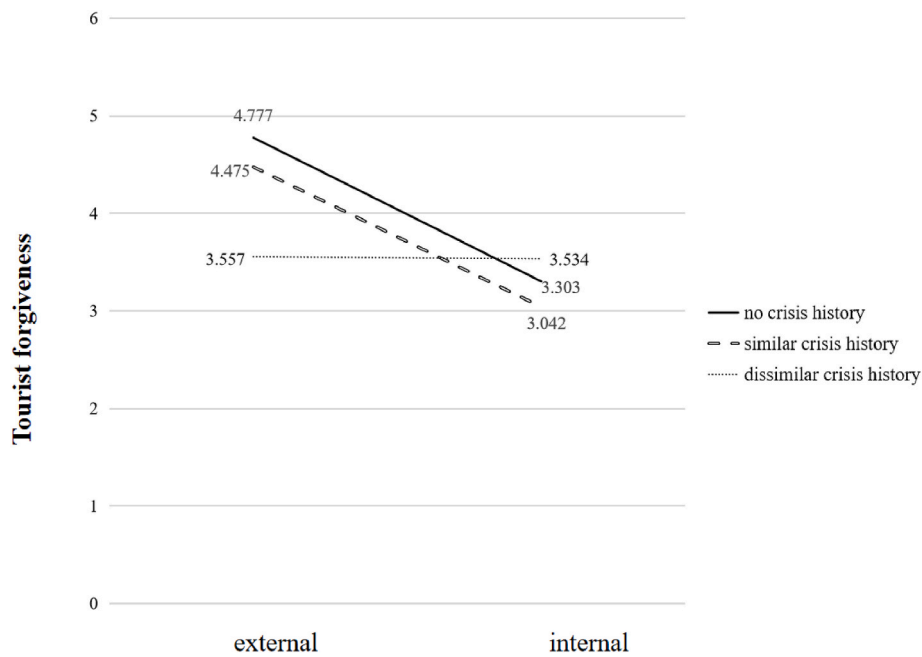
Fig. 8. Interactive effect of crisis event type and crisis history on tourist forgiveness.

are paying attention to the role of crisis history as the reinforcers of crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2004; Eaddy & Jin, 2018), no research has addressed the impact of destination crisis history on destination crisis events. Likewise previous studies have not distinguished no crisis history from dissimilar crisis history (Coombs, 2004, 2007), obscuring a scenario that is not necessarily uncommon. This study finds that dissimilar crisis history attenuates the effect of destination crisis type, and thus contributions to a comprehensive understanding of crisis management and offers significant insights to guide destinations.

8.2. Managerial implications

DMOs must learn how to handle all kinds of crisis events appropriately, striving for tourist forgiveness after a crisis (Aliperti et al., 2019; Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Jin et al., 2019; Rosselló et al., 2020). The findings of this study suggest that DMOs should work harder to prevent internal crisis events because of the negative impacts on the destination. They should regularly monitor the internal factors influencing the destination's tourism industry, trying to solve internal problems to prevent crises.

At the same time, DMOs should establish a good crisis warning and response mechanism for external crisis events, better predicting natural disasters and reducing disaster risk strategies, so as to minimize harm. This would include securing equipment and providing emergency training and preparedness to key stakeholders (Rosselló et al., 2020; Huang, 2018). As for the internal destination crisis event, destination managers should strengthen staff training, knowledge, skills, and quality (Su et al., 2022). They should adopt policies that promote good relationships between employees and customers and reduce conflicts so as not to adversely affect their business. At the same time, destination operators should improve rules and regulations, pay attention to unreasonable price increases of tourism products, support quality control, and prevent exploitation and harm to tourists' interests.

Moreover, DMOs should recognize the role of emotions in crisis communication. They should quickly, actively and sincerely take targeted measures to reduce the negative emotions of tourists and promote forgiveness and future visit intention after crises. When tourists are angry due to misunderstanding of the destination crisis event, the destination should take immediate measures to apologize and explain

the causes of the crisis so as to avoid further retaliatory actions such as negative word of mouth and tourism boycotts (Su et al., 2022). Well-designed communication may help to dissolve hostile emotional reactions. DMOs should restore their image through various publicity platforms, protect their reputation assets, and reconnect with tourists with sincerity and enthusiasm, so as to stimulate positive emotions in tourists and promote positive tourist behaviors.

Finally, crisis history is always an important reference for tourists to evaluate destinations, and similar crisis history is an enhancer of the negative impact of the current crisis. Destination managers should draw lessons from previous management failures and establish preventive and early warning mechanisms in time to prevent mistakes from happening again. When destination has a history of crisis, the managers should cherish and try his best to recover the image damage caused by the previous crisis, take the initiative for social responsibility, or carry out tourism product promotion, which is an important means of repairing the old friendship with tourists. At the same time, the destination can establish the destination dynamic management information database with the help of scientific and technological means, which can be used to collect the management failure experience of other tourist destinations and listen to the feedback of tourists, so as to maintain the good operation of the destination and achieve sustainable development.

8.3. Research limitations and future research directions

The research has four limitations. First, it divides destination crisis events into internal and external types based on attribution theory, and further explores the impact on tourists' responses. In future research, researchers can use other classification methods to classify the types of destination crisis event, such as natural destination crisis events and human-caused destination crisis events, moral destination crisis events, and competence destination crisis events. This would explore the mechanism of the impact of destination crisis event on tourists' responses in a more detailed, comprehensive, and in-depth manner.

Second, this study only focused on the two discrete emotions, sympathy and anger. Tourists' emotional responses to crisis events are complex, and may include frustration, helplessness, empathy, hope, sadness, gloating, etc. Future researchers should investigate these emotions, potentially bifurcating them according to level of emotional

arousal.

Third, the tourist forgiveness that this research focuses on is regarded as positive and constructive. It is also a pro-social behavior that tourists actively choose after the destination crisis event (e.g., Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). Future research can focus on destructive interaction patterns such as tourist retaliation and alienation from a destination crisis event, such as tourist boycotts. Finally, the research on the destination crisis history in this article lacks discussion of the number, intensity, and interval of crisis history. Future research might include more detail on these impacts and might provide further insights.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Acknowledgements

Appendix 1

The condition of external destination crisis event

Scenic area A is a National AAAAA level tourist attraction in China, where the scenery is unique and beautiful. Recently, a flood caused by a very heavy rain caused serious damage to Scenic Area A. After the flood, the historical buildings in the scenic area were washed out, the ancient bridges were broken, and the distinctive ethnic style and cultural landscape were seriously damaged. The popular scenic spots in Scenic Area A were flooded and had to be closed for repairs. It is estimated that the annual visitor arrivals will be reduced by 40%.

The condition of internal destination crisis event

Scenic area A is a National AAAAA level tourist attraction in China, where the scenery is unique and beautiful. Managers manipulated tour guides to arrange forced consumption. The tour guides added shopping items to tourists' bags without authorization, and tourists who did not spend money were verbally abused by tour guides. Tourists were not allowed to leave unless they had spent at least 10,000 yuan on souvenirs. This compulsory shopping has aroused great social concern, and the annual visits to Scenic Area A are expected to decrease by 40%.

Appendix 2

The condition of external destination crisis event

Scenic area A is a National AAAAA level tourist attraction in China, where the scenery is unique and beautiful. Recently, a major earthquake caused serious damage to Scenic Area A. After the earthquake, the scenic area's landslides and the carefully crafted flower beds died out; the clear lake became turbid, and the river was blocked by broken branches of dirt and trees, causing the river to dry up; several large cracks up to 1 m wide were cracked on the road, which became impassable. Scenic area A was severely damaged and had to be closed for repairs. It is estimated that annual visits will be reduced by 40% following reopening.

The condition of internal destination crisis event

Scenic area A is a National AAAAA level tourist attraction in China, where the scenery is beautiful and pleasant. Recently, tourists who traveled there said that they ordered three home-cooked dishes when dining in Scenic Area A, and the costs were as high as 2000 yuan at the time of checkout. A plate of small yellow croaker cost 1000 yuan, a small farmer's fried chicken was 688 yuan/plate, and homemade tofu was 312 yuan/plate. Tourists were forced to pay for these unreasonably expensive dishes. Objections to prices aroused great social concern, and the annual visitor arrivals of Scenic Area A is expected to decrease by 40%.

Appendix 3

The condition of no crisis history

[Respondents who read one of two destination crisis events in Appendix 2 were presented the following description of similar crisis history.]

It is understood that there has never been a similar crisis in Scenic Area A in history.

The condition of similar crisis history

[Respondents who read the scenario describing an external destination crisis event in Appendix 2 *were presented the following description of similar crisis history.]* A similar earthquake occurred in Scenic Area A three years ago. After the earthquake, Scenic Area A collapsed, the ground cracked, and the viewing facilities broke and collapsed. There were broken roots and leaves everywhere, and important scenic spots were seriously damaged. Scenic area A had to be closed down and reopened after the restoration was completed.

[Respondents who read the scenario describing an internal destination crisis event in Appendix 2 *were presented the following description of similar crisis history.]* A similar incident of compulsory shopping has been found in the history of Scenic Area A. Three years ago, tourists ordered a plate of small sea crabs priced at 70 on the menu at Scenic Spot A, but the price was 70 yuan per piece instead of 70 yuan per catty at the checkout. A plate of small sea crabs was as high as 1200 yuan. This incident had a bad impact on Scenic Area A, and the number of tourists dropped sharply in a short period of time.

The condition of dissimilar crisis history

[Respondents who read the scenario describing an external destination crisis event in Appendix 2 *were presented the following description of dissimilar crisis history.]* A different incident of compulsory shopping has been exposed in the history of Scenic Area A. Three years ago, tourists ordered a plate of small sea crabs priced at 70 on the menu at Scenic Spot A, but the price was 70 yuan per piece instead of 70 yuan per catty at the checkout. A plate of small sea crabs was as high as 1200 yuan. This incident had a bad impact on Scenic Area A, and the number of tourists dropped sharply in a short period of time.

[Respondents who read the scenario describing an internal destination crisis event in Appendix 2 *were presented the following description of dissimilar crisis history.]* A different incident, an earthquake, occurred in Scenic Area A in the past. Three years ago, after the earthquake, Scenic Area A collapsed, the ground cracked, and the viewing facilities broke and collapsed. There were broken roots and leaves everywhere, and important scenic spots were seriously damaged. Scenic area A had to be closed down for repairs, but it has reopened.

Appendix. BSupplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104636.

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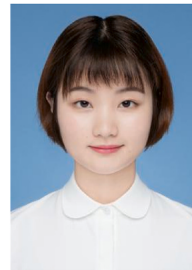
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