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Rami K. Isaac, Vanessa Velden,

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The German source market perceptions: how risky is Turkey to travel to?

Rami K. Isaac and Vanessa Velden

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to get a better understanding of the influence of terrorism on risk perception and attitudes of the German travel behavior toward Turkey as a destination in crisis, which has been considered one of the biggest losers for 2016.

Design/methodology/approach – The research process involved an online self-administered method created with one of the leading research and web-based survey tools called Qualtrics. This tool has been considered useful to reach a wider target, the questionnaire filled in by 305 respondents.

Findings – The findings revealed a strong tendency of a low safety perception among the sample toward Turkey. Furthermore, a large proportion indicated a strong unlikelihood of traveling to the country within the upcoming 12 months independently of a past travel experience. In addition, Turkey and Egypt were the countries perceived as most unsafe among the mentioned destinations.

Research limitations/implications – The majority of the respondents of the study were aged between 50 and 59 years and were employed as commercial employee, office or administration workers. The outcomes might be different for a higher sample size with a tendency of various demographic characteristic such as age and profession. Furthermore, the study should be repeated while focusing on respondents with accompanied children on holidays, which only made up a minority for the present research study.

Originality/value – To the best of the knowledge, this is the first study to examine the influence of terrorism on risk perception and attitudes of the German travel behavior toward Turkey and their risk reduction strategies/preventive measures.

Keywords Terrorism, Turkey, Safety, Risk, Travel behaviour, German market

Paper type Research paper

Rami K. Isaac is a Senior Lecturer at the Academy for Tourism, NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands; and an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem, Palestine.

Vanessa Velden is a Lodging Content Associate at Expedia, Inc., Bellevue, Washington, USA; and is at NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands.

Introduction

International tourism is extremely sensitive to safety and security issues (Pizam and Mansfeld, 1996). It is indeed one of the undertakings most vulnerable, changes in the world stage that may yield changes in consumer behavior (Coshall, 2003; Dimanche and Leptic, 1999; Levantis and Gani, 2000; Pizam and Mansfeld, 1996; Seabra *et al.*, 2013). Safety and security fears strongly impact tourists' decision-making processes (Beirman, 2003; Crompton and Ankomah, 1993; Fesenmaier, 1988; Moutinho, 1987; Woodside and King, 2001; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Nowadays, the tourism industry is confronted with an increasing amount of global risks (Seabra *et al.*, 2013), and if tourists feel insecure at a specific destination, an overall negative impression is expected to result (George, 2003). Accordingly, tourists who perceive a destination as unsafe will be replaced by safer ones (Beirman, 2003; Gu and Martin, 1992; Mansfeld, 1996; Sönmez, 1998). Tourists' risk perception about their personal safety has a major influence on consumption patterns of tourism. Safety and security are significant issues at a destination level and, therefore, should be considered by DMOs as one of the most influential conditions for the development of a tourism destination (Fletcher and Morakabati, 2008). Risky or dangerous destinations may have difficulties to attract tourists and visitors (Beirman, 2003; George, 2003; Prideaux, 1996; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998b) and as a result, there may be a drop in the local tourism industry by a reduction of tourist arrivals (Sönmez *et al.*, 1999). Several scholars tried to examine the connections between risk perceptions, safety concerns and tourist behavior. Specifically, there

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are studies on the effects of terrorism in the tourism decision-making process (Bonham *et al.*, 2006; Coshall, 2003; Floyd *et al.*, 2004; Goodrich, 2002; Neumayer, 2004; Pizam and Fleischer, 2002; Ritchie, 2004; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a; Sönmez *et al.*, 1999), the impact of risk and safety on travel behavior (Goodrich, 1991; Hunter-Jones *et al.*, 2008; Irvin and Anderson, 2006; Kozak *et al.*, 2007; Lepp and Gibson, 2008; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992; Seabra *et al.*, 2013; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998b) and the influence of various elements on risk and safety perception (Barker *et al.*, 2003; Lennon *et al.*, 2001; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Liu *et al.*, 2016; Reisinger and Crotts, 2009; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006). However, scarce research has been carried out on the linkages between terrorism risk perception, and attitudes of tourism demand. The choice of destinations typically influences the perceptions of risk and safety that tourists might associate with it, with each destination being affected by various types of risk in distinct ways. Chew and Jahari (2014) call for attention to the fact that this denotes a substantial weakness for the tourism industry and for many DMOs in particular, since tourist travel choices are frequently based on perceptions rather than reality. Arana and Leon (2008, p. 300) state “despite numerous case studies being conducted on the impact of tourism and terrorism, the impact of terrorism on tourism demand is still under-researched.” Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, no study has so far been published with a focus on the impact of perceived risk of terrorism and attitudes of the German travel behavior toward Turkey. The intension of this study is to help close this gap in literature. It is also important to analyze the influence that the perceived risk of terrorism may have on the decision to travel to Turkey. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to get a better understanding of the influence of terrorism on risk perception and attitudes of the German travel behavior toward Turkey, which has been considered among one of the big losers for 2016. The German travel segment has been chosen as the source market for the present study due to its importance as western market for Turkey’s tourism. According to Özen (2016), Germany has always been the largest for Turkish tourism among western markets, making up 15.4 percent of the total incoming foreigners.

Following this introduction, this paper will define concept of tourism and terrorism, risk perception and risk perception of international travelers, and how these have been explored in the literature, followed by a brief section on Turkey’s political unrest. This discussion then moves to a description of the methodology, the presentation of the findings and the implications for tourism destinations.

Literature review

Terrorism

Early research about terrorism and risk has been conducted by Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, b) who investigated the influence of such risk on foreign tourism decision.

As a general definition, political instability refers to “the propensity of a government collapse and involved sociopolitical turmoil” (Alesina *et al.*, 1996, p. 2). Terrorism is defined as “premediated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against civilians and unharmed military personal by subnational groups” (US Department of State, 1996). Although those components might seem unrelated at first sight, closer examination underlines the fact that “terrorism can be the manifestation of political crisis” (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a, b). This statement implements that in several examples, terrorist activities have resulted from political unrest.

The threat accompanying with terrorism deters more visitors than any other human or natural disasters (Sönmez, 1998). The tourism industry in a specific destination, such as Tunisia, for example, suffers from terrorist attacks since it affected the perceptions of the destination’s safety. Much of the studies conducted in the terrorism arena accomplish that terrorist activity in a particular place increases the level of perceived risk and uncertainty and thus has negative effects on tourism demand and behavior, reflecting a drop in visitation patterns (Bar-On, 1996; Blake and Sinclair, 2003; Enders and Sandler, 1991; Gartner and Shen, 1992; Mansfeld, 1996; Pizam, 1999; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992; Sönmez, 1998; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a, b; Wahab, 1996).

The increasing attention is given to the risk of terrorism associated with a steadily increasing number of empirical studies and publications on the topic both within generic and applied fields (Wolff and Larsen, 2017). Besides the research studies mentioned above, some other research focuses on how tourists perceive the risk of terrorism. Nevertheless, the impacts of terrorism on risk perceptions are not as extensive as could be expected from the above-mentioned studies (Wolff and Larsen, 2017). For example, Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) revealed risk perceptions to be correlated with travel anxiety, while Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, b) found that risk perceptions influenced destination choice. Sjöberg (2005) stated that perceived terrorism risk was rather low in a Swedish sample. Various research studies such as Fuchs *et al.* (2012) and Uriely *et al.* (2007) showed that tourists might disregard governmental travel advisors and travel to destinations threatened by terrorism.

Recent research of Jordan as MENA region conducted by Liu *et al.* (2016, p. 296) suggested that “for most MENA destinations, terrorism and political turmoil have developed into a sustained tourism crisis that has negatively affected the perception held by many source markets” (see also Avraham, 2013, 2015). Furthermore, it has been stated that destinations under political instability or involved with terrorism activities usually experience declines in tourist arrivals. Nevertheless, this claim appears to be highly dependent on the type of destination and the safety perception of a diverse range of travelers. Due to increased mobility, political instability and terrorism can expand from an internal and domestic to a regional or global level with the ability to negatively influence surrounding states and countries and hinder tourism development (Liu *et al.*, 2016).

One of the most recent studies of tourism and terrorism has been conducted by Liu and Pratt (2017) investigating tourism’s vulnerability and resilience in terrorism. The authors argued that the mind-set of international tourists fundamentally changed. The authors stated that most studies until now focused on the impact of terrorism on tourism. Other studies found that while destinations can recover from individual incidents, the continued reinforcement of a destination as a constant trouble spot slowly deteriorate the destination’s image (Buckley and Klemm, 1993).

An additional remarkable point has been made by Saha and Yap (2014, p. 509) who found that “terrorist attacks actually increase tourism demand in low to moderate political-risk countries.” A linkage has been made to the trend for dark tourism demand or political-oriented tourism (Isaac, 2010; Isaac and Ashworth, 2012) implementing the desire of tourists to visit terrorism-impacted destination in a low-political-risk country.

Likewise, as the findings of Liu and Pratt pointed out, Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009, p. 416) found in their research that “perceived terrorism risk only discourages tourist in the short run but do not have a long-term impact on tourist’s decision to travel internationally.”

Despite numerous case studies on tourism and terrorism, the impact of terrorism on tourism demand is still under-researched (Arana and Leon, 2008).

Risk perception

Consumer behavior is an act of risk, which was first introduced by Bauer (1967), because any individual action of consumption is linked with uncertainty, implying unanticipated – and possibly unpleasant – consequences (Seabra *et al.*, 2013, p. 503).

Throughout tourism literature, it is commonly accepted that tourist’s risk perceptions can be classified into various categories and types of risk. Nevertheless, a lack of consistency exists particularly in tourism in the definitions, methodologies and measurement techniques of perceived risk of destinations by tourists (Fuchs and Reichel, 2006a). Risk perceptions are specific to each situation (Dowling, 1986), and should consequently be assessed using measurement tools appropriate to the tourist behavior context. Buying tourism services, in which tourism is a service, implies a high level of perceived risk (Hugstad *et al.*, 1987).

Several scholars (Dolnicar, 2005; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998b) argue that the relationship between risk perceptions and travel behavior are travel specific and context dependent, demanding elaborated scales for their evaluation. Generally spoken, risk perception has been considered as influential factor for decision making with regard to the

purchase of tourist products. Similar to other studies, Fuchs and Reichel (2006a, p. 84) make a link to the existence of different levels of perceived risk in tourism ranging from “disappointment in relation to expectations or promised experience, to inappropriate facilities through severe injury and even death.” In consumer behavior literature, perceived risk has been defined as “a consumer’s perception of the overall negativity of a course of action based upon an assessment of the possible negative outcomes and the likelihood that those outcomes will occur” (Mowen and Minor, 1998, p. 176). There exists a consistent literature on risk typology cited in different contexts of research, but for classical consumer behavior area as defined by Solomon (2002) and Shiffman and Kanuk (1997), some risks are more often cited. This is possibly because of the issue mostly used for risk analysis applied to different categories of products situations. It is clear, though, that there is no consensus in the literature on the general types of perceived risk that influence consumer behavior. Therefore, the main types of perceived risk used in the literature related to consumer behavior.

Risk perception of international travelers

In accordance with the findings of Liu *et al.* (2016) concerning spillover effects, Kozak *et al.* (2007, p. 240) suggested that “a single act of terrorism, natural disaster and spread of disease may sometimes lead to forming overall negative image of all the neighborhood countries, resulting in a global devastating impact in the region.” While Liu *et al.* (2016) considered demographic characteristics to be an unstable predictor of individual risk perception, Kozak *et al.* (2007) defined age as a stable predictor, stating, “Elderly people are less likely to change their travel plans if risk threat occurs.”

Furthermore, the study of Kozak *et al.* recommend that travelers’ risk perception decreased while their experience increased which is in accordance with the findings of other studies (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998b; Liu *et al.*, 2016).

As a valuable component of the research, the authors concluded that “travellers risk perceptions differ from one geographical region to another” and that each traveler perceives regions in different ways. Segmentation and clustering travelers in different risk groups might therefore be a useful tool for DMOs to better understand their target markets and set up better positioning strategies in the future.

As several theories previously mentioned underlined the complexity of risk perception, numerous factors deal as influential factor such as cultural background, past travel experience (PTE), sociodemographic factors and the overall level of perceived risk. Clustering and segmentation will therefore be considered for the present study to draw conclusions, which will be valuable for various stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Destination risk perception

Previous research has also identified internal personal factors that determine how strongly an objective risk is perceived by a person and these expose a diversity of relevant factors such as personality traits (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992); culture and nationality (Hofstede, 1983; Hurley, 1988; Kastenholz, 2010); past experiences, where experienced tourists feel less risk (Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a, b); demographics (Gibson and Yiannakis, 2002; Lepp and Gibson, 2003); gender (Lepp and Gibson, 2003); and income and education (Floyd and Pennington-Gray, 2004; Mitchell and Vassos, 1997).

Research conducted in tourism segmentation approaches of the tourist market is based on risk perceptions (Dolnicar, 2005, 2007; Floyd and Pennington-Gray, 2004; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992).

Fuchs and Reichel (2006b) explored the concept of destination risk perception by applying it to a highly risky destination namely Israel. The authors’ overall assumption is that each destination is characterized by both an overall risk perception and by specific categories or items. As already stated previously, the authors agree accordingly that a study of tourist destination risk perception during these times of international insecurity including terrorism and other far-reaching global uncertainties can be considered a valuable tool for dealing with unwelcoming and hostile environments. Another point addressed in their study is that they

demonstrated that “destination risk perception is a multidimensional concept.” As defined in the Oxford Dictionary, the term “multidimensional” implies “of or involving several dimensions.” In their research, Fuchs and Reichel proved this statement in relation to risk perception by showing that each type of risk mentioned in the literature is composed of subcategories. Next to an overall destination risk perception, each dimension is comprised of several questions or issues. In the case of Israel, the authors found that the risk perception of this tourist destination is composed of six risk types or factors namely human-induced risk, financial risk, service quality risk, socio-psychological risk and natural disaster and car accidents and food safety and weather. Finally, those findings go beyond identified types of risk and demonstrate the complexity and multidimensionality of the risk perception concept.

Recent investigation into source market perception conducted by Liu *et al.* (2016) made attempts to scrutinize individuals’ safety perception and travel intention associated with a destination located in a conflict-ridden region namely Jordan. Located in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) and bordered by other conflict-ridden regions, the country experienced several conflicts discussed with concerns by western media and resulting in negative perception and tourist’s hesitation to visit MENA destinations. An interesting point has been addressed concerning spillover effects, implementing individual’s cluster destination based on geography. Therefore, any event that takes place in one MENA destination naturally could affect tourist’s perceptions associated with another MENA country (Drakos and Kutun, 2003).

To fill an existing knowledge gap in the context of tourism and travel literature, the authors utilized the risk perception attitude (RPA) framework dealing as theoretical approach to classify individuals into four groups based on levels of perceived risk and efficacy beliefs: indifference group, proactive group, avoidance group and responsive group. The intended aim was to inspect the impact of terrorism-related RPAs on individual’s travel decisions.

The authors in addition found that the majority of the respondents did not perceive Jordan as being a safe destination and are very unlikely to visit the destination within the next six months. As previous studies suggested, the study of Jordan confirms that demographic characteristics cannot be considered as stable predictors of individual risk perceptions (Floyd and Pennington-Gray, 2004, Liu *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, PTE can, therefore, be considered as stable predictor, as tourist’s knowledge of a destination with in turn increases the familiarity and sense of confidence with a destination.

Segmentation by travel-related risk: integrated approach

Ritchie *et al.* (2017) took an integrated approach toward traveler risk segmentation by including psychological and behavioral variables.

In accordance with other researchers, Ritchie *et al.* (2017, p. 275) agreed that “in recent years, the number of travel health and safety risks has increased considerably.” Nevertheless, the authors claimed, “people continue to travel to certain destination despite travel warnings issued by government advisories,” indicating that perceived risk levels vary among travelers.

In their research, the authors consider risk reduction strategies, which can be defined as “the processes used by tourists to reduce uncertainty and dissatisfaction related to their travel experience” (Lo *et al.*, 2011, p. 243). Some of the commonly used RRS are gathering information from independent travel reviews and consulting with the travel agent/tour operator. Furthermore, it was found that the type of RRS used differs by individual tourists and group travelers and by first-time visitors, light repeat visitors and heavy repeat visitors (Fuchs and Reichel, 2006a, 2010).

Finally, it should kept in mind that the study of Ritchie *et al.* (2017) focused on a broad set of risks rather than particular types of risks such as terrorism or infection diseases. As Kozak *et al.* (2007) found that travelers from different national cultures may have varying degrees of the perceived risk, the study of Ritchie *et al.* (2017) might only be generalizable to a limited extent as it focused on the Australian citizens. Therefore, the study should be proven by applying it to a different country/source market.

A model presented in by Sönmez and Graefe (1998a, b) suggest that decisions by tourists are influenced by several factors as they progress through a sequence of stages. Several of these factors have been considered potentially useful for the current study.

As can be retrieved from the model, external factors considered as influential for the awareness of risk associated with international travel due to terrorism and/or political instability have been media coverage of terrorism/political instability, government issued travel advisories and social interaction such as negative word-of mouth regarding terrorist threat.

Internal factors considered were international travel experience, international travel attitude, and risk perception level and traveler personality type. According to the theory developed by Plog (1974), travelers may be classified into psychocentric (risk averse) and allocentric (risk taking) personality types. While allocentric individuals have been characterized as self-confident, adventuresome and prefer novel experiences, psychocentric are conservative, seek safety and prefer the familiar. Nevertheless, this theory seems to be limited for generalization as recent studies presented several ways on how to segment travelers according to their risk perception (Ritchie *et al.*, 2017; Kozak *et al.*, 2007; Liu *et al.*, 2016).

Concerning the information search, travel professionals, literature and advisories, as well as various other sources, might be consulted at this stage (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a, b). The extend of information search has been considered to be dependent on previous experience, risk perceptions and the importance of the vacation. Interestingly to consider, the authors underline the fact that potential tourist may acquire information about terrorism or political problem at or near the stage of booking the vacation from media coverage, travel advisories or social interaction. All those sources have the potential to impact the decision which finally may lead to cancellation or choosing a different destination. Finally, the level of perceived risk may also dictate the amount of information research, which has been identified as a risk reduction strategy undertaken by the potential tourist (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998a, b; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992).

Turkey as a tourism destination

With an area of approximately 800,000 km², Turkey is one of the largest countries in Europe and the Middle East (Yolal, 2016). Due to its unique geographic location, it has the advantage of being located close to the European, Russian and Middle Eastern tourism markets (Egresi, 2016). Being blessed with a coastline of more than 8,300 km surrounded by three seas, attractive Mediterranean climate and beautiful beaches, "Turkey possesses the necessary resources for sun-sea-sand (3s) tourism" (Alvarez, 2010). In addition, the country offers numerous natural resources and historical and cultural heritage.

From the economic perspective, the tourism industry can be considered as an important sector for Turkey. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2016 was 87.9bn and making up 4.1% of the GDP." A rise of 2.0 percent is forecasted for 2017. Important to notice is that the direct contribution primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation. In addition, it includes activities of the restaurants and leisure activities directly supported by tourists.

Terror attacks and political unrest

Since 2015, terrorist attacks in Turkey have repeatedly occurred, some of which specifically targeted foreigners. According to *The New York Times* (2017) "more than 400 people have been killed in major attacks throughout the country."

One of the first targets of terrorist attacks has been a police station in the tourist hub of Sultanahmet on January 6, 2015, when a female suicide bomber blew herself up killing one police officer. Next to the popular tourist district Sultanahmet, several other places have been targeted for attacks and explosions in 2015, such as a police station on the Sultanbeyli district of Istanbul on August, 10, causing a fire that spread to nearby buildings and seven people injured (Al Jazeera, 2017).

Nevertheless, the terror attack on the peace rally in the capital city of Ankara on October 10, 2015, has been considered “the deadliest terror attack in Turkey’s history” (Letsch and Khomami, 2015). As reported by Letsch and Khomami (2015), two explosions “targeted hundreds of people who had gathered to protest against violence between authorities and the Kurdish militant group, the PKK,” leaving at least 95 people killed and around 250 wounded.

On January 12, 2016, another suicide bombing took place at the popular tourist district Sultanahmet in Istanbul. This time, a suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of a German travel group close to the Hagia Sophia monument and the blue mosque. According to Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (ZEIT Online, 2016), “eight Germans have been killed during the suicide bombing, and nine have been seriously injured.”

Followed by multiple terror attacks in Ankara and surroundings targeting mainly the police and military, a triple suicide bombing at Europe’s third-busiest airport Atatürk in Istanbul occurred on June 28, 2016. According to Tuysuz *et al.* for McKenzie and Sanchez (2016) “three men arrived by taxi at the international terminal and launched their horror armed with rifles and suicide bomb vests.” The death toll is 41, with an additional of 239 people wounded.

Furthermore, a failed military coup attempt took place on July 15, 2016, in Turkey with the aim to overthrow the government (McKenzie and Sanchez, 2016).

After two violent years for Turkey enduring a string of high-profile bombings and much political unrest, another terrorist attack occurred on January 1, 2017. During the New Year’s Night, “the gunman entered Reina, a club on the Bosphorus that has long been favourite of tourists” (Shaheen, 2017), killing 39 people.

Despite terror attacks, political instability, the weakened relationship with the EU and a higher safety and security travel advices, Turkey has experienced higher demand. With more than 600,000 tourists per month, Russian makes up the highest market for Turkey (Focus Online, 2017).

Methodology

The research setting

Many studies analyze the concept of perceived risk in tourism (Moutinho, 1987; Rohel and Fesenmaier, 1992). Risk, in addition, is identified as a fundamental concern of international travelers (Yavas, 1990). Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the influence of terrorism on risk perception and attitudes of the German travel behavior toward Turkey as a destination in crisis. As the preliminary research questions require the collection of standardized information of a large sample size, the main research method was based on quantitative information gathering through an online survey in a form of self-administrated questionnaire. This research method was intended to give the authors the possibility to draw valuable conclusion based on a high respondents’ rate to present a realistic and clear level of awareness of the issue.

Survey instrument

The study employed scales previously established in the literature to develop the questionnaire, (Liu *et al.*, 2016; Sönmez and Sirakaya 2002) combining effects of likely predictors, e.g., information sources used, socio-demographics factors and other variables such as PTE and familiarity (Kozak *et al.*, 2007). Both consumer behavior and tourist decision-making literature suggest that personal experience is integrated into decision making as a passive or internal information search (Crompton, 1992; Evans and Berman, 1993; Um and Crompton, 1990). It has been suggested that future travel behavior may be influenced by the nature as well as extent of PTE (Mazursky, 1989). Past experience is also important as it can create awareness and knowledge of potential risks and may impact travel intentions (Sharifpour *et al.*, 2013). The appeal of Turkey as a destination was operationalized as a single-item five-point Likert scale/question (In general, how appealing is Turkey to you as a tourist destination?) ranging from 1 = very unappealing and 5 = very appealing.

The present research study did include demographic variables including age, gender, educational level, profession, income, marital status to provide additional background on

the respondents. As Seabra *et al.* (2013) point out, elements such as culture, nationality, past experiences, income and education and travel motivations are determinant in one's interpretation of what is considered risky or unsafe. In addition, the variable "children in the household" serves as essential and inevitable for the case of the risk perception of the German tourist segment toward Turkey as the destination particular popular for families due to "its climate, good value for money spent and high food quality" (Özen, 2016).

Specific question to safety and security topic was included in the survey. Primarily, "the overall importance of safety when booking a holiday at the moment?" ranging from 1 = not important to 5 = very important was measured among respondents. Subsequently, the importance of additional aspects was investigated when going on holiday, such as price, weather, hospitality and relaxation in order to put the safety aspect in the context.

Travel behavior was examined as the extent of travel to a destination. Respondents were asked "Has your travel behavior been influenced by the recent terror attacks?" based on Liu and Pratt (2017) claiming that people get used to a heightened risk threats around the globe and "continue to travel to certain destinations despite travel warnings issued by government advisories" (Fuchs *et al.*, 2012; Uriely *et al.*, 2007; Ritchie *et al.*, 2017). Likewise, the type of information search among respondents has been adapted to the survey. These aspects included questions investigating the participants' opinion of the security advice published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the level of expertise of tour operators and most trustworthy information sources. General intension for future travel was gauged through one question "In the next 12 months, how likely are you going to travel to Turkey?" (1 = very likely to 5 = very unlikely). Spillover effects were considered as an interesting aspect to investigate, as it has been claimed that individual's cluster destinations are based on geography (Liu *et al.*, 2016).

Perception of safety: the survey questions asked respondents to assess their level of risk perception of safety for several countries, starting with Germany followed by an additional six popular holiday destinations some of which have been a target of terror attacks in the past: Spain, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Italy, France, from Liker scale 1 = very unsafe to 5 = very safe.

Preventive measurements and their effectiveness to increase the sense of security have been included in the survey and adapted partially by research of Liu *et al.* (2016). Several measures were taken prior to travel such as registering with the embassy, searching for more information online or in travel guides about how to stay safe while others focused on measurement to be taken at the destination itself such as increased police presence or to adjust respectfully to the local and cultural conditions. Once again, all items were measured using the five-point Likert-type scale, from 1 = ineffective to 5 = very effective (Ritchie *et al.*, 2017).

A pre-test was conducted with sample of 11 people, from the age groups of 18-29, 30-39, 50-59 and 60-69, whose results were used to further refine the questionnaire.

Data collection

The research tool for the present study has been based on a self-administered survey method created with one of the leading research and web-based survey tools called Qualtrics. This tool has been considered useful to reach a wider target. The data for this study were collected in the end of August 2017 until early September 2017. During this period, 340 responses have been collected. Due to missing data of partial responses, 305 valid questionnaires were finally included in the sample. It took approximately one and half weeks to collect all the responses. The sample of this study was German citizens over 18 years. Consequently, snowball sampling has been used and the questionnaire has been privately sent to people on the social media platform, Facebook, and published into several groups and has been forwarded by friends and family. Important to notice is the relevance of the topic giving the current situation of the country such as the Turkish presidential election, the countries relation with the EU and latest tourist attacks all together resulting in the immense amount of media coverage through television, radio channel and media newspaper online and offline. Intentionally or unintentionally, people are being confronted with the situation in Turkey, which may alter their risk perception or simply lead to feelings such as anger, frustration or defiance.

Results

Overall, 305 valid respondents have been collected. Most participants were between the ages of 50 and 59 years (30.8 percent, $n = 94$) (which is representative to the age category of German sample) followed by those between 18 and 29 years (26.9 percent, $n = 82$). The remaining respondents were either between the ages of 40 and 49 years ($n = 76$), 30 and 39 years ($n = 26$) or 60 and 69 years ($n = 23$). Only a small percentage was 70 years or older (1.3 percent, $n = 4$). Moreover, more than half of the respondents were female (54.4 percent, $n = 166$) and remainder were male (45.6 percent, $n = 139$).

When it comes to the educational level of the sample, it can be stated that the majority of respondents had received at least a high school degree which in German terms is referred to as “*Realschulabschluss*” (23.0 percent, $n = 70$), “*Fachhochschulabschlusss*” (23.6 percent, $n = 72$) or “*Abitur*” (18.7 percent, $n = 57$). Furthermore, 15.4 percent of the sample ($n = 47$) hold a bachelor degree and an additional 14.1 percent ($n = 43$) a master degree. The minority of respondents had a lower educational level “*Hauptschulabschluss*” (5.2 percent, $n = 16$).

Based on the dominating age groups, more than half of the respondents were employed (71.7 percent, $n = 218$) and an additional 9.9 percent ($n = 30$) were students. Overall, most people were employed as commercial clerks, office or administration workers (54.1 percent, $n = 118$). An additionally 11.0 percent ($n = 24$) were employed in the service or sales sector, hold an academic profession (7.3 percent, $n = 16$) or worked as public official (5.0 percent, $n = 11$). Of the total sample, 5.3 percent were self-employed ($n = 16$). Other professions mentioned varied among the tourism industry including hotel and fair, gastronomy, IT and insurance.

Concerning the annual household income, 79.7 percent of the respondents ($n = 243$) stated their income category, while 19.0 percent ($n = 58$) did not want to specify or did not answer the question (1.3 percent, $n = 4$). Nevertheless, of the 243 respondents, a majority (25.1 percent, $n = 61$) had an annual income of €60,001 or more. The others were nearly equally divided between the categories of €40,001 and 50,000 (13.6 percent, $n = 33$), €20,001 and 30,000 (11.5 percent, $n = 28$), €10,001 and 20,000 (12.8 percent, $n = 31$) and finally 13.6 percent ($n = 33$) with an income of €5,000 or less.

When it comes to the marital status of the sample, the majority of respondents were either married (48.2 percent, $n = 146$), in a relationship (25.7 percent, $n = 78$) or single (19.5 percent, $n = 59$). Most respondents (76.0 percent, $n = 231$) had no children under the age of 18 years. Still, the remaining 24.0 percent ($n = 73$) had children between the age categories of 0 and 5 years (6.9 percent, $n = 21$), 6 and 10 years (6.6 percent, $n = 20$), 11 and 14 years (7.5 percent, $n = 23$) or 15 and 18 years (10.2 percent, $n = 31$). Finally, 88.9 percent ($n = 64$) stated to have accompanying on holiday trips while the remaining 11.1 percent ($n = 8$) did not travel with their children. Noticeable was that the majority of those children were between the ages of 15 and 18 years (Table I).

Table I How important do you consider safety when booking a holiday at the moment? × Age cross-tabulation

			Age						Total
			18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	
How important do you consider safety when booking a holiday at the moment?	Unimportant	Count	2	1	1	2	0	0	6
		% of total	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.0
	Less important	Count	8	4	2	4	1	1	20
		% of total	2.6	1.3	0.7	1.3	0.3	0.3	6.6
	Important	Count	23	6	25	19	4	1	78
		% of total	7.5	2.0	8.2	6.2	1.3	0.3	25.6
	Very important	Count	31	7	20	54	10	2	124
		% of total	10.2	2.3	6.6	17.7	3.3	0.7	40.7
	Extremely important	Count	18	8	28	15	8	0	77
		% of total	5.9	2.6	9.2	4.9	2.6	0.0	25.2
	Total	Count	82	26	76	94	23	4	305
		% of total	26.9	8.5	24.9	30.8	7.5	1.3	100.0

When it comes to the overall importance of safety when booking a holiday at the moment, the results show a strong tendency to a high level of importance among respondents varying among either important (25.6 percent, $n = 78$), very important (40.7 percent, $n = 124$) and extremely important (25.2 percent, $n = 77$). Only a minority of the sample considered safety to be either "less important" (6.6 percent, $n = 20$) or "unimportant" (2.00 percent, $n = 6$).

Furthermore, it has been found that the majority of respondents aged between 40 and 49 years (9.2 percent, $n = 28$) considered safety to be extremely important, while most of the sample between the ages of 50 and 59 years considered safety to be very important (17.7 percent, $n = 54$) (see Table II).

An important point of analysis is the fact that 6.6 percent ($n = 20$) considered safety to be less important. The majority of this category was found to be between the ages of 18 and 29 (2.6 percent, $n = 8$) followed by those aged between 30 and 39 years of age (1.3 percent, $n = 4$) and 50 and 59 years (1.3 percent, $n = 4$). The remaining four participants were either between the ages of 40 and 49 years, 60 and 69 years or 70 years or older. Of the 20 respondents, 11 were male (3.6 percent) and 9 were females (3.0 percent).

From the 2.0 percent of respondents considering safety to be unimportant, two respondents were between 18 and 29 years and two between 50 and 59 years, the remaining two were between the ages of 30-39 and 40-49. None of the respondents from the age categories of 60-69 or 70+ considered safety unimportant. From the six respondents, three were male and the other three females.

Safety appeared to be very important for the majority of respondents with a child under the age of 18 years. Only a minority of two respondents with accompanied children between the ages of 0 and 5 years considered safety to be less important. In addition, one of those respondents indicated to be less likely to travel/fly abroad, while the other claimed not be influenced by current terror attacks.

Furthermore, two respondents with children between the ages of 15 and 18 years considered safety less important/unimportant, while one child did accompany the respondents on holiday trips and the other did not.

Overall, safety appeared to be more important for female respondents in comparison to male. Of the 124 respondents who considered safety to be very important, 26.2 percent ($n = 80$) were females while 14.4 percent ($n = 44$) were male. Nevertheless, among those considered safety to be less important, respondents were nearly equally divided among male and female and age category despite a small tendency of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 years. Therefore, age and gender are not deemed stable predictor in the present study.

When asked the most important aspects when choosing a holiday, the answers were nature, landscape and surroundings (69.8 percent, $n = 213$), followed by a good value for money (67.2 percent, $n = 205$) and safety (62.0 percent, $n = 189$). Likewise, weather (57.0 percent, $n = 174$)

Table II How important do you consider safety when booking a holiday at the moment? × Children of the age category 0-5 years old cross-tabulation

			Children of the age category 0-5 years old	Total
How important do you consider safety when booking a holiday at the moment?	Less important	Count	2	2
		% of total	9.5	9.5
	Important	Count	3	3
		% of total	14.3	14.3
	Very important	Count	8	8
		% of total	38.1	38.1
	Extremely important	Count	8	8
		% of total	38.1	38.1
Total			Count	21
			% of total	100.0

and relaxation (51.5 percent, $n = 157$) have been deemed important holiday attributes. Less than half of the respondents did consider attributes such as hospitality (44.3 percent, $n = 135$), cultural attractions (43.0 percent, $n = 131$) and discovering new things (42.3 percent, $n = 129$) to be important when choosing a holiday.

In contradiction, nightlife and entertainment have only been considered by a minority (9.8 percent, $n = 30$), including mostly respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 years ($n = 16$).

Interesting to notice is that of 305 respondents, 38.0 percent ($n = 116$) did not consider safety to be an important aspect when choosing a holiday. Furthermore, nature, landscape, surroundings, and a good value for money have been considered by a higher percentage of participants compared to safety.

The influence of recent terror attacks on travel behavior

One of the key questions of the present study focused on the influence of current terror attacks in countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Belgium, France and Spain on the travel behavior of German holidaymakers. While nearly the entire sample did agree with a change in their travel behavior (80.0 percent, $n = 244$), a minority (20.0 percent, $n = 61$) claimed not to be influenced by terrorism.

As can be seen from the cross-tabulation, the majority of those 20.0 percent were either between 18 and 29 years (6.9 percent, $n = 21$) or 50 and 59 years (6.2 percent, $n = 19$). Gender wise, respondents with a changing travel behavior were nearly equally divided into 44.3 percent ($n = 135$) female and 35.7 percent ($n = 109$) male participants. Likewise, of the 61 respondents who disagreed with a changing travel behavior, 10.2 percent ($n = 31$) were female and 9.8 percent ($n = 39$) were male (Table III).

Despite a relatively small percentage of people with an unchanged travel behavior, the outcomes showed that the majority (68.9 percent, $n = 210$) tend to avoid visiting destination in/close to troubled countries. An additional 29.8 percent ($n = 91$) of the sample only visit safe countries according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' travel advice. Still 27.9 percent ($n = 85$) avoid all destinations with recent safety issues and 24.9 percent ($n = 76$) are more concerned about the safety of their accompanied family members and friends. Nevertheless, only a minority (10.5 percent, $n = 32$) was less likely to travel/fly abroad.

Additional aspects mentioned by respondents were the avoidance of big cities and crowded public places (18-29 years). Nonetheless, most statements focus on the avoidance of

Table III Age \times Has your travel behavior been influenced by the recent terror attacks and intensified security situations? cross-tabulation

			<i>Has your travel behavior been influenced by the recent terror attacks and intensified security situations?</i>		
			Yes	No	Total
Age	18-29	Count	61	21	82
		% of total	20.0	6.9	26.9
	30-39	Count	18	8	26
		% of total	5.9	2.6	8.5
	40-49	Count	64	12	76
		% of total	21.0	3.9	24.9
	50-59	Count	75	19	94
		% of total	24.6	6.2	30.8
	60-69	Count	22	1	23
		% of total	7.2	0.3	7.5
	70 +	Count	4	0	4
		% of total	1.3	0.0	1.3
Total		Count	244	61	305
		% of total	80.0	20.0	100.0

Islamic and Arabic regions of participants among the ages of 18-29 and 40-49 years. Finally, one comment highlighted the political situation in Turkey by stating the need of not wanting to financial support "dictatorship." Those aspects become particularly important for the present case study of Turkey. Although safety seems to be an important aspect for the majority of respondents when going on holiday, a great majority (92.1 percent, $n = 278$) of the sample have not canceled a trip due to safety concerns in the past compared to a remaining minority of 7.9 percent ($n = 24$).

On the question on the relevance and level of importance of the travel and security advice published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16.8 percent respondents ($n = 51$) confirmed a usage prior to going on holiday, another 18.8 percent ($n = 57$) claimed to not check those advices. Of those respondents, the majority were between the ages of 18 and 29 years (7.6 percent, $n = 23$), followed by 4.0 percent ($n = 12$) aged between 40 and 49 years and an additional 4.0 percent ($n = 12$) between the ages of 50 and 59 years. Nevertheless, most of the respondents of the sample (64.4 percent, $n = 195$) stated that it depends on the destination whether checking those advices is appropriate and necessary.

However, in comparison to other information sources about a destination and its safety situation, the travel and security advice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been deemed helpful by a great majority (71.1 percent, $n = 217$) followed by online research (61.6 percent, $n = 188$).

While an additional 43.6 percent ($n = 133$) found tour operators and travel agencies to be useful, 42.0 percent ($n = 128$) trust their family and friends. Less likely considered information sources among the sample were travel reviews (26.6 percent, $n = 81$) and social media (21.6 percent, $n = 66$). The minority of respondents (9.2 percent, $n = 28$) use travel magazines/books and movies for their information search about a destination and/or its safety situation. Finally, the majority of respondents follow the travel and security advice published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deemed as a useful information tool about destinations and their safety situation.

PTE in the MENA region

In order to gain a better insight into the PTE in the MENA region of respondents, the sample was asked to indicate if they have ever visited the following destinations: Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Tunisia.

From all MENA regions mentioned, the majority of respondents have visited Turkey (55.4 percent, $n = 168$) in the past. Other noticeable regions were Tunisia (30.1 percent, $n = 90$), Egypt (23.2 percent, $n = 69$), the United Arab Emirates (15.1 percent, $n = 45$) and Morocco (13.4 percent, $n = 40$). Of the remaining seven regions, the majority of respondents had little or no PTE.

Respondents with a PTE in Turkey (55.4 percent, $n = 168$) were asked to indicate how often they spent a holiday in the country. While most respondents visited Turkey one time (40.5 percent, $n = 68$), 28.0 percent ($n = 47$) visited the country twice and another 31.5 percent ($n = 53$) have spent already three or more holidays in the country.

On the question how likely of traveling to Turkey in the coming 12 months, it appeared that the most common agreement among all respondents is the unlikelihood of traveling to Turkey in the upcoming 12 months. Of the entire sample, a great majority (82.0 percent, $n = 250$) indicated to be very unlikely to visit Turkey, followed by 7.9 percent ($n = 24$) who are unlikely and 5.9 percent ($n = 18$) considering to be rather unlikely. Contrarily, only 1.6 percent ($n = 5$) were likely and 2.6 percent ($n = 8$) were very likely to travel to Turkey in the upcoming 12 months.

It becomes particularly interesting to make a distinction between those respondents with a PTE in Turkey and those who never visited the country before. Remarkably, the findings indicated that respondents with a PTE in Turkey tend to have a very low travel intension to visit the country in the upcoming 12 months.

Overall, of 55.4 percent participants ($n = 168$) with a PTE in Turkey, 43.2 percent ($n = 131$) indicated to be very unlikely to travel to the country in the upcoming months. More precisely,

of 40.5 percent participants ($n = 68$) with a one-time experience, 32.1 percent ($n = 54$) were very unlikely or unlikely (5.4 percent, $n = 9$). Only one participant of this category (0.6 percent) stated to be likely to travel to Turkey again. The same counts for those having a two times experience. Of 28.0 percent participants ($n = 47$), again the majority (22.6 percent, $n = 38$) indicated a very low travel intension (Table IV).

In agreement with the two other groups, the majority of participants who already spent three or more holidays in Turkey (31.5 percent, $n = 53$) showed a very low travel intension (23.2 percent, $n = 39$). However, seven respondents (4.2 percent) stated to be very likely to go on holiday to Turkey again.

A conclusion can be that of the eight participants of the entire sample with a high travel intension for Turkey, seven had a PTE of three times or more in the country. Of the remaining 135 respondents with no PTE (44.6 percent), a strong tendency of unlikelihood to travel to Turkey was noticeable (38.9 percent, $n = 118$). In conclusion, it can be stated that more than half of the sample had a very low travel intension for visiting Turkey, independently of a PTE.

As additional supporting justification, a low/moderate negative correlation with significance at the 0.05 level has been found between PTE and travel intension. For the general understanding, it should be noted that the variable "Turkey" is divided in those respondents with a PTE (Value 1 = yes) and those who never visited the country before (Value 2 = no). A negative correlation between yes (1) and travel intension has been interpreted as an underlined fact that the majority of respondents who spent time in Turkey in the past have the intension not to travel again in the upcoming 12 months due to increased political unrest and terror attacks.

Perception of safety

The respondents were asked to indicate their perception of safety for the following popular holiday destinations some of which have been a target of terrorist attacks: Spain, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Italy and France. Among all six countries, Turkey and Egypt were considered the least safe countries. For the case of Turkey, 44.7 percent of the sample ($n = 136$) had a very low safety perception, followed by an additional 39.1 percent ($n = 119$) considering Turkey to be unsafe. Only a minority (3.3 percent, $n = 10$) considered the country to be safe. Analysis showed that four of those respondents also considered overall safety to be less important and one participant to be unimportant. Furthermore, a tendency of an unchanged travel behavior was noticeable for those respondents ($n = 5$). Nevertheless, PTE does once again not seem to play a major role in the perception of safety (see Table V). Of 136 respondents (44.7 percent) with a very low safety perception of Turkey, 24.5 percent ($n = 74$) had a PTE in the country compared to 20.5 percent ($n = 62$) with no PTE in Turkey. An additional of 20.9 percent ($n = 63$) of the respondents with a PTE considered Turkey to

Table IV How likely is it that you will go on holiday to Turkey in the upcoming 12 months? × How often have you spent a holiday in Turkey? cross-tabulation

			How often have you spent a holiday in Turkey?			
			One time	Two times	Three times or more	Total
How likely is it that you will go on holiday to Turkey in the upcoming 12 months?	Very unlikely	Count	54	38	39	131
		% of total	32.1	22.6	23.2	78.0
	Unlikely	Count	9	4	4	17
		% of total	5.4	2.4	2.4	10.1
	Rather unlikely	Count	4	4	4	10
		% of total	2.4	2.4	1.2	6.0
	Likely	Count	1	1	1	3
		% of total	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8
	Very likely	Count	0	0	7	7
		% of total	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.2
Total		Count	68	47	53	168
		% of total	40.5	28.0	31.5	100.0

Table V Perception of safety Turkey × Turkey cross-tabulation

			Turkey		Total
			Yes	No	
Perception of safety Turkey	Very unsafe	Count	74	62	136
		% of total	24.5	20.5	45.0
	Unsafe	Count	63	54	117
		% of total	20.9	17.9	38.7
	Relatively safe	Count	23	16	39
		% of Total	7.6	5.3	12.9
	Safe	Count	7	3	10
		% of total	2.3	1.0	3.3
Total	Count		167	135	302
	% of total		55.3	44.7	100.0

be unsafe. A high perception of safety was only noticeable for 2.3 percent ($n=7$) of the respondents with a PTE. Four of those respondents have already spent three or more holidays in the country.

Turkey – popularity as a holiday destination

In order to gain a deeper insight into the perception and image of Turkey as a holiday destination among respondents with PTE and those who never visited the country, the respondents were provoked with three statements dealing with potential external and internal factors influencing the image. On a scale of five-point Likert, respondents could either strongly disagree to strongly agree. Overall, 37.0 percent ($n=113$) did not perceive Turkey as an appealing tourism destination. Contrarily, a minority (16.4 percent, $n=50$) and an additional 7.2 percent ($n=22$) had a good image about the country in terms of tourism. Once again, PTE could be noticeable as a weak influential factor among respondents. Of the 22 respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, 6.6 percent ($n=20$) had a PTE in Turkey, followed by 11.6 percent ($n=35$) of the 49 respondents who agreed that they visited Turkey in the past. Nevertheless, of all respondents with a PTE in Turkey, still the majority (17.2 percent, $n=52$) strongly disagreed with the statement.

These findings need to be understood within the context of the current political situation of the country. At first glance, it seems obvious to conclude that for those with a PTE and a familiarity with the country, Turkey appears to be an appealing holiday destination. In contradiction, those respondents without ever spending a holiday in the country before can only judge based on perception and are most probably affected by media or simply not interested in visiting a country like Turkey.

Respondents, in addition, were asked whether the current political situation in Turkey and the updated travel advice published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discourage to spend a holiday in the country. Based on a clear outcome, 65.9 percent of the sample ($n=201$) strongly agreed the statement and an additional 16.4 percent ($n=50$) agreed likewise.

Thus, it can be concluded that the political situation is regarded as great influential factor for the travel behavior of German holidaymakers to Turkey. Only a minority (6.2 percent, $n=19$) strongly disagreed. The respondents in this case were equally divided between having a PTE and never visiting the country before. Once again, the majority of disagreeing respondents with a PTE had visited the country three times or more (3.0 percent, $n=5$). Nevertheless, a great majority of (39.3 percent, $n=119$) respondents with a PTE strongly agreed with the current political situation being an influential factor.

By taking a closer look to the answers of those respondents (6.2 percent, $n=19$), five people considered safety to be less important and for an additional three respondents safety appeared to be unimportant. Overall, 12 respondents likewise disagreed with a change in their travel behavior due to current terror attacks. In addition, a tendency of a relatively safe perception of

Turkey was noticeable among the majority of those respondents. This is highly important to keep in mind, as those respondents differ strongly in the opinion of the great majority of the sample.

The respondents were confronted with the statement that frequent holidays in the country have the potential to increase travelers' sense of security. As can be seen in Table V, opinions varied strongly among respondents. While 17.7 percent ($n = 54$) agreed with the statement, contrarily another 17.0 percent ($n = 52$) strongly disagreed. Nevertheless, a dominating percentage of 32.1 percent ($n = 98$) rather disagreed. Attention catching was the fact that still 10.9 percent ($n = 33$) with a PTE strongly disagreed with an increased sense of security due to frequent holidays, followed by 17.2 percent ($n = 52$) who rather disagreed and only 3.0 percent ($n = 9$) with a PTE in Turkey who strongly agreed with an increase sense of security due to frequent holidays.

Overall, the outcomes of this statement disprove the overall hypothesis among various academic literature stating that frequent holidays and familiarity with a country increase the sense of security and decrease the risk perception of travelers. Once again, Turkey as a case study needs to be understood in its current political situation and other factors dealing with the relation between Turkey and Germany. Furthermore, the tendency of disagreement with this statement among PTE respondents can deal as a good justification. Finally, while the majority of the respondent had little to no PTE in the MENA region besides Turkey, Egypt, UAE, Morocco or Tunisia, the geographic region was found to be perceived rather unsafe due to political unrest and terror attacks.

Effectiveness of preventive measures

The sample was asked to rate the effectiveness of several preventive measures to increase their sense of security. It should be noted that of seven preventive measures, four were to be taken prior to a holiday while the remaining three preventive measures were to be taken at the destination itself.

Overall, the three preventive measures most commonly considered to be effective were "searching for more information on the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published travel advice" (44.5 percent, $n = 134$), "increased police presence in tourist areas" (39.2 percent, $n = 118$) and "to adjust respectfully to the local and cultural conditions" (35.7 percent, $n = 107$). An additional 21.3 percent ($n = 64$) considered latest to be very effective.

Of all preventive measures to be taken prior to a trip, the travel and security advice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was deemed either effective (44.5 percent; $n = 134$) or very effective (15.6 percent, $n = 47$). In addition, searching for more information online about how to stay safe prior to travel has still been considered by 30.2 percent ($n = 91$) to be effective, while the majority (46.5 percent, $n = 140$) considered it to be partly effective. However, a tendency of ineffectiveness was noticeable for the measurement of searching for more information in travel guides on how to stay safe (28.2 percent, $n = 85$).

In the case of the registration with the German embassy at the destination, a discrepancy was noticeable among respondents. While 19.9 percent ($n = 60$) found this measurement to be effective, an additional 18.2 percent ($n = 55$) considered it to be ineffective. Overall, a majority (36.8 percent, $n = 111$) deemed the registration with the embassy to be partly effective. Interesting to keep in mind is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advises German holidaymakers even during short-term stays to register in a so-called crisis prevention list (*Krisenvorsorgeliste*) of the embassy.

The majority of respondents have deemed all the preventive measures at the destination itself effective. Particularly, increased police presence (39.2 percent, $n = 118$) and to adjust respectfully to the local and cultural conditions (35.7, $n = 107$) count among the most effective preventive measurements. Contrarily, traveling with organized tours was still considered rather ineffective by 24.6 percent ($n = 74$) and ineffective by an additional 13.0 percent ($n = 39$), in comparison to only 2.0 percent ($n = 6$) for the two other measurements.

To conclude, most preventive measures, disresponsible of those prior to a trip or during the holiday itself, showed a strong tendency of partial effectiveness. As the formulation implies, those actions are only "preventive" without ensuring an absolute safety. Especially in the light of

the present situation around the world with increased incidents of terrorism, travelers are aware of the fact that there is no such of preventive measures, which ensure full protection, but only deal as preventive actions.

In addition, the respondents had to indicate whether they consider traveling with a tour operator as safer rather than a self-organized tour. Outcomes showed that the majority of respondents disagreed with the statement (63.25 percent, $n = 191$), while the remaining 36.75 percent ($n = 111$) considered traveling with a tour operator as safer rather than a self-organized trip. This outcome is in accordance with the fact that traveling with organized tours has been considered rather ineffective by 24.6 percent ($n = 74$) and by an additional 13.0 percent ($n = 40$) as ineffective. In addition, respondents had to indicate whether they believe that tour operators have sufficient expertise on safety issues related to tourist destinations. Outcomes show a large discrepancy among respondents. While 51.97 percent ($n = 158$) agreed with the statement, the remaining 48.03 percent ($n = 146$) disagreed.

Conclusion, discussion and implications

German citizens over 18 years have been the population of the study. Next to general demographics such as age, gender, educational level, profession, income, marital status and accompanying children, the questionnaire focused on the overall importance of safety and the influence of terror attacks and intensified safety situation on the travel behavior of the sample. In addition, the usefulness of several information sources and preventive measurements were tested. PTE in the MENA region played a central role, followed by the perception of safety of various popular holiday destinations. Finally, the overall popularity of Turkey and the samples' travel intention have been included in the survey.

Overall, the most important outcomes of the present research study demonstrated a strong tendency of a low safety perception among the sample toward Turkey followed by a strong unlikelihood of traveling to the country within the upcoming 12 months independently of a PTE. Only a very small percentage indicated to be likely to travel again to Turkey in the upcoming months and found the country to be relatively safe. Among those, the majority visited the country already three times or more and did not seem to be influenced by the current political situation.

Linking back to main aspects of the literature review, the study likewise found safety to be an important destination attribute (Liu *et al.*, 2016) among German holidaymakers participated in the survey. Only a minority considered safety less important and indicated an unchanged travel behavior despite terrorism. Contrarily, the majority of respondents state to avoid troubled destination. In spite of the apparently continuous occurrence of terrorist attacks in popular tourism destination around the world (Liu *et al.*, 2016), only a small percentage was found to be less likely to travel abroad. This finding is similar to the trend highlighted in the ITB Travel Trend Report 2016/2017 (Buck *et al.*, 2016) stating that political unrest and terror attacks did not affect the overall volume of foreign trips but certainly the choice of destination. Nevertheless, safety did not appear to be the most important aspect when choosing a holiday. Next to safety, nature, landscape, surrounding and the price were highly considered destination aspect when choosing a holiday for the majority of German holidaymakers participated in the survey.

The main findings gathered through adapted research methods proposed by Liu *et al.* (2016) found that the majority of their study had little to no PTE in the MENA destinations. As expected, most people had a PTE in Turkey, which is a popular tourism destination among the German market. Most importantly however, PTE was to be a weak predictor of travel intention and perception of safety for the case of Turkey from the German perspective. This finding is contrary to the hypothesis claimed by Liu *et al.* (2016) who found that PTE acted as stable forecaster of one's perception of safety and travel intention. Most commonly and independently of a PTE, a great majority of the present study perceived Turkey as an unsafe destination and was very unlikely to visit the destination in the upcoming 12 months.

One of the central points highlighted in the present study is the political situation of Turkey as influential factor on the German travel behavior. The case of Turkey as a tourism destination from the perspective of the German travel segment needs to be understood within the current political

context and can therefore be regarded as unique example. Several comments of respondents participated in the survey underlined an overall defiance and dislike of the current political situation in Turkey by describing it as kind of “dictatorship.” In addition, the statement of Buckley and Klemm (1993) can be supported who stated that though destinations can improve and recover from individual occurrences, the continual support of a destination as constant trouble spot gradually deteriorate the destination’s image. In the context of Turkey, this has been the case since the last two years, Turkey has been perceived as a constant trouble spot discussed highly by several media channels. Only a small percentage of the sample found Turkey to be an appealing tourism destination and perceived it as relatively safe. Of this minority, a strong tendency of a three times PTE in Turkey was noticeable among respondents.

Furthermore, updated travel and security advices published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were found by the respondents to be a useful and trustworthy information tool among the majority of the sample. While the Ministry calls for increased caution among tourist going to Turkey due to an intensified political situation, there is no travel warning for Turkey.

For the upcoming period, it will be highly interesting what will happen to Turkey’s tourism industry, which is obviously somewhat dependent on the political situation. According to Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009), perceived terrorism risk only deters visitors in the short run but not have a long-term effect on the tourists’ decision-making process to travel internationally. Overall, this study found that most people were likely to travel abroad due to terrorism. Finally, it will remain relatively unclear whether there is a real “terrorism risk” among German holidaymakers for Turkey or rather a current “dislike due to the current political situation.” When comparing the perception of safety between popular tourism destination such as Turkey, Egypt and Spain, a strong tendency of a low safety perception was noticeable for Turkey and Egypt. The measurement of risk and safety perception of tourists will remain a complex type of research as it might vary strongly among types of risk, types of travelers and destinations and therefore needs detailed investigation. This study underlined the fact that Turkey as a popular holiday destination is counted among the most unsafe countries next to Egypt at the present state. Furthermore, PTE appeared to be a weak predictor of safety perception and travel intension mainly caused by political unrest.

Generally spoken, tour operators and travel agencies have to follow the travel and security advices published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As long as there is no travel warning for Turkey, holidays will always be offered.

Given the already complexity of the tourist’s decision-making process, a high-risk perception associated with an event that should be pleasant is problematic (Taylor, 2006). Consumer behavior is influenced by safety and risk that individuals hold about a destination (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998b). Different levels of security and safety concerns may influence the assessment process and, therefore, the decision-making process.

The present study has both practical and theoretical implications. From a theoretical perspective, to our knowledge, no study exists with a focus on the impact of perceived risk of terrorism on the German source market toward Turkey as a tourism destination. The intension of this study is to help close this gap in literature. In addition, the current study adds insight into the preventive measures or risk reduction strategies, when planning a trip (prior to travel), their information search behavior) and behavior during holidays to limit potential risks (Deng and Ritchie, 2018). As noted earlier, most previous studies examined statistical data indicating reduced tourist demand after an act of terror (Mansfeld, 1999). Nevertheless, the current research study focused on German risk perceptions and behavior, contributing to our knowledge in the literature. In addition, this quantitative analysis yielded interesting findings related to the German context.

From a managerial perspective, the DMO in Turkey must pay attention to the country’s image as a safe and secure destination. The reality of having a safe and secure destination for holidaymakers may not translate into positive perceptions about the same place since image is so subjective (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997). For example, Turkey is being seen as a “dictatorship” or violates human rights issues can have an impact of whether Turkey is viewed as a safe and secure destination. Sirakaya *et al.* (1998) in their results of an experiment study contended that inaction as decision makers continually reassessed their decisions on obtaining

new information. Their evidence recommends that decision makers are very sensitive toward issues of safety and security at a destination. Thus, destination marketers' contest is how to manage destination's image that would eventually result into a positive behavioral intentions and outcomes in a climate of several terrorists' attacks.

When destination marketers understand how German consumers react to safety, and risk perception regarding terrorism, they can create a more effective marketing campaign to influence consumers' expectations and decision makers. DMOs and destination managers should be aware that safety is nowadays a key attribute that a destination can offer. Therefore, it must be considered very seriously and taken into account when choosing a destination. Accordingly, these could be improved by creating security and preventive measures such as increased police presence at touristic sites and resorts.

Destination marketers must, therefore, be concerned about minimizing the risk of terrorism and about the impact of terrorist incident activities on their image, which requires a careful marketing strategy. Eventually, investment in good marketing strategy with all involved stakeholders who are trustworthy helps in reducing the perception of risk. This study can help in creating more differentiated marketing and promotional campaigns for types of German tourists varying not only by socio-demographic variables but also importantly by risk and uncertainty affinities.

The authors suggest crisis and perception management plan, implying the need for DMOs to identify the major issues and keep an on-going research agenda of source markets. In the case of high perceived risk, DMOs need to educate visitors on ways to stay safe (Cahyanto, 2013; Schroeder, 2015). To ensure the credibility of a destination, on-going messages from a variety of sources are an essential part of perception management. Finally, clustering travelers in different groups according to their level of risk perception and PTE has been considered useful for DMOs.

Karl (2018, p. 144) "suggest a strategy seen with the promotion of group tours with specially trained tour guides that partly transfers the responsibility for tourists' safety to the tour operator, thereby reducing the level of perceived risk and uncertainty for the tourist." Tour operators have to keep on promoting the main assets of Turkey as a popular tourism destination, with a focus on the countries price sensitiveness as one of the most important aspects when choosing a holiday for the German travel segment. In addition, the study showed that the majority of respondents who were likely to visit Turkey had already spent three or more holidays in the country and can be regarded as good target group for tour operators.

Limitations and future research

As with every research, the present study needs to be understood within the context of its limitations. First, the majority of the respondents of the study were aged between 50 and 59 years and their professions were as a commercial employee, office or administration workers. Outcomes might be different for a higher sample size with a tendency of various demographic characteristics such as age and profession. Furthermore, the study should be repeated while focusing on respondents with accompanied children on holidays, which only made up a minority for the present research study. A future study could also focus at crisis management and recovery marketing. As Heath (1998, p. 26) states "crisis management is as much about dealing with human perceptions about the crisis as it is about physically resolving the crisis situation."

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Corresponding author

Rami K. Isaac can be contacted at: Isaac.r@nhtv.nl

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