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Coronavirus disease and human health: Postpone your tourism plans

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to analyze the factors influencing visit intention during Covid-19 crisis. The factors influencing visit intention are awareness about the disease (Covid-19), attitude towards health and safety, level of concern and governmental efforts to control the disease. Hodophile behavior has been used as a moderator in this study. A total of 159 respondents were selected and analyzed using multiple regression analyses. The findings demonstrate that level of concern is the main factors that influence tourists' visit intention during desperate times. All the factors had a negative relation with visit intentions except governmental efforts to control disease. Additionally, Hodophile behavior moderated al the relations significantly. This study provides useful insights for tourism marketers and government officials for policy making.

Keywords: Intentions to visit tourism destinations, awareness about Covid-19, attitude towards health and safety, level of concern, governmental efforts to control the disease, Hodophile behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is currently one of the hardest-hit by the outbreak of COVID-19, with impacts on both travel and tour supply and demand (UNWTO, 2020). This represents an added downside risk in the context of a weaker world economy, geopolitical, social and trade tensions, as well as uneven performance among major outbound tourism and travel markets. Considering the evolving nature of the situation, it is too early to estimate the full impact of the COVID-19 on tourism nationally and internationally. For its initial assessment, different organizations (e.g. United Nations World Tourism Organization) are taking the SARS scenario of 2003 as a benchmark, factoring in the size and dynamics of global travel and current disruptions, the geographic spread of COVID-19 and its potential impacts on global tourism (UNWTO, 2020).

The tourism industry was one of the world's greatest markets; until the world met with COVID-19 in 21st century (Naciye & Adem, 2020). Furthermore, Naciye et al. (2020) explore that the tourism sector is easily affected by global crises and visit to tourism destinations decreases very rapidly. Travelers usually decide to cancel or delay their trips, with the spread of the any pandemic (e.g. Covid-19) news. Due to this reason it is a do or die situation for the tourism industry. Besides huge decline and losses to the tourism industry due to Covid-19, a very few number of studies can be found exploring the determinants of visit to tourism destinations during Covid-19. Therefore, tourism marketers and governments need to identify major factors behind decline of tourism during pandemics.

Because of the alarming situation for the tourism industry, the industry needs quality research to determine how it can be uplift again form a severe downfall. Pakistan is not the only country which is facing a decline in the tourists' visit to tourism destinations but the whole world. For example, according to a report of UNWTO, only China will experience a loss of about 1.6 million visitors this year (2020) whereas Pakistan faced $18 million loss due to Covid-19 in 2020 (Kiran, 2021). Current study tries explore some of the important factors affecting tourism demand by primary study on the tourists from Pakistan. Some influential factors have been studied in current research paper like knowledge of covid-19, governmental factors and Hodophile behavior. Many researchers like (Almutairi, Helih, Moussa, Boshaiqah, Alajilan, Vinluan & Almutairi, 2015) argue it's the awareness and governmental control on the spread of disease are

the main factors which lead tourists' decision making with their attitude towards the health when a pandemic disease spreads in any country. Travel motivation is related to many necessities that make a traveller decide to participate in the tourism industry like travelers' Hodophile needs (Butowski, 2017; Masiero et al., 2015). As current study explores above stated main factors, therefore, it can be very useful for the policy makers and tourism marketers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Awareness about Covid-19 disease and intentions to visit tourism destinations during Covid-19

Travelers' perceived awareness and the serious concern of the safety, social and environmental issues of tourism destinations have long been important concepts to explain their behaviors regarding visit to tourism destinations (Boo & Park, 2013). The perceived knowledge, which is a cognitive variable, indeed plays a crucial role in tourists' destination choices in the international tourism industry (Chan, 2014). In the tourism sector, the perceived awareness about any pandemic disease restricts someone from travelling to tourists destinations (Myung, 2018). Travelers tend to avoid a situation where their knowledge to direct their specific actions is not sufficient (Han, 2017). In other words, travelers are likely to reduce the possible uncertainty by not practicing the action when their knowledge is not enough to guide a certain type of action (Verma, 2019). Individuals often think their perceived level of knowledge about an object/product/event/issue is high when they believe that they know/understand it better compared to others (Chang, 1998). The existing empirical studies indicated that travelers' perceived knowledge as a critical cognitive factor is an important determinant of the attitudinal and the social variables in their decision formations and behaviors (Chan, 2014). In-line with the evidence from these studies, tourists' perceived knowledge of COVID-19 can be the essential driver of their subjective norms and attitudes to generate an approachable decision for safer international tourism destination (Boo & Park, 2013).

H1: Awareness about Covid-19 has a negative impact on intentions to visit tourism destination.

2.2 Attitude towards health and safety and intentions to visit tourism destination during Covid-19

The attitude toward the behavior is undoubtedly a salient determinant of travelers' intentions (Kim & Hwang, 2020). This concept indicates individuals' general assessments regarding whether a particular behavior is either positively or negatively valued (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). The attitude towards health and safety critically predicts travelers' behavioral intentions towards tourism negatively if there prevails any pandemic (e.g. Covid-19) situation (Song, Lee, Reisinger & Xu, 2017). The subjective norm refers to an individual's perception of social pressure to or not to perform a particular behavior (Song et al., 2017). The perceived behavioral control is also a crucial determinant of the traveler intention. This non-volitional factor indicates an individual's perception of their capability to or not to be involved in a particular behavior (Song et al., 2017). The positive associations among the attitude, the subjective norm, the perceived behavioral control, and the behavioral intention have long been tested and demonstrated in the extant studies of tourism and consumer behavior. These studies empirically supported the conceptual justification of the TPB by Ajzen (1991), which the customer's behavioral intention for a specific action develops based on the influence of a positive attitude toward the action, the perceived social pressure, and the perceived ability to carry out the action.

H2: Attitude towards health and safety has a negative impact on intentions to visit tourism destination.

2.3 Health concerns and intentions to visit tourism destination during Covid-19

The intersection between health concerns and travel is especially apparent during disease outbreaks. Disease outbreaks in regions of the world typically frequented by vacation or leisure travelers may be problematic from an economic standpoint if travel to such destinations is avoided, which is precisely what is recommended by public health officials. Most tourists visit destinations within their own region and avoid going outside due to pandemics (UNWTO, 2020). Arrivals in the Pakistan decreased by 6% due to Covid-19 as tourists are health conscious (UNWTO, 2020). Covid-19 remains a worldwide concern as people travel to/from popular destinations that are within impact zones; one recent example was concern over travel to the 2016 Olympic Games. Health when traveling has been a long discussed topic which has received attention from the travel industry, health professionals, and marketers. In recent years the growth in travel across the Pakistan has intersected the Covid-19 outbreak currently being experienced.

H3: Health concerns has a negative impact on intentions to visit tourism destination.

2.4 Government efforts to control disease and intentions to visit tourism destination during Covid-19

The role of government to support local economies have varied across countries. The tourism industry needs credible measures from governments to generate market confidence and reduce the risk from this virus which will increase tourists' visit to tourism destinations (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020). Overall, the role of governments should evolve over time during this crisis (Assaf et al., 2020). They should move quickly from the first stage of subsidizing for liquidity to incentivizing sustainable recovery and innovation. Following suit with what some countries have already done (or are planning to do), by offering interest-free loans, guaranteed loans, flexible mortgages, creative financing options and non-refundable subsidies which will enhance recover tourism by attracting tourists (Assaf et al., 2020). Furthermore, they said that these can benefit all tourism or other related firms (e.g. hotels, restaurants, cruise lines, airlines). Provide funding for promoting tourism destinations (e.g. vouchers to residents which can subsidize demand). Lifting or easing of visa regulations for countries as they recover from the outbreak to boost international tourism flow. Allowing local governments to implement regulations – no heavy-handed rules/regulations from the central level. Introduction of a Pigouvian tax to partially internalize the pandemic a sort of 'COVID-recovery' tax. Control of possible predatory investors to protect those enterprises that became weak because of the crisis (Assaf et al., 2020). They concluded that, government can win trust of the citizens to visit tourists' destinations safely.

H4: Government efforts to control disease has a positive impact on intentions to visit tourism destination.

2.5 Hodophile Behavior as a moderator

Hodophile is the Greek word for "love for roads," and is an adjective that describes someone who likes to walk or travel around (World Bank Blogs, 2019). Hodophile is also a noun for a person who travels from one place to another or moves around a lot (Otto, 1946). Wanderlust may reflect an intense urge for self-development by experiencing the unknown, confronting unforeseen challenges, getting to know unfamiliar cultures, ways of life and behaviours or may be driven by the desire to escape and leave behind depressive feelings of guilt, and has been linked to bipolar disorder in the periodicity of the attacks (Freud, 1973). Dissatisfaction with the restrictions of home and locality due to pandemics (e.g. Covid-19) may also fuel the desire to travel. Among tourists, sociologists distinguish sunlust from wanderlust as motivating forces the former primarily seeking relaxation, the latter engagement with different cultural experiences even during pandemics situations (Robert & Ernest, 1925). Hence it can be hypothesized that:

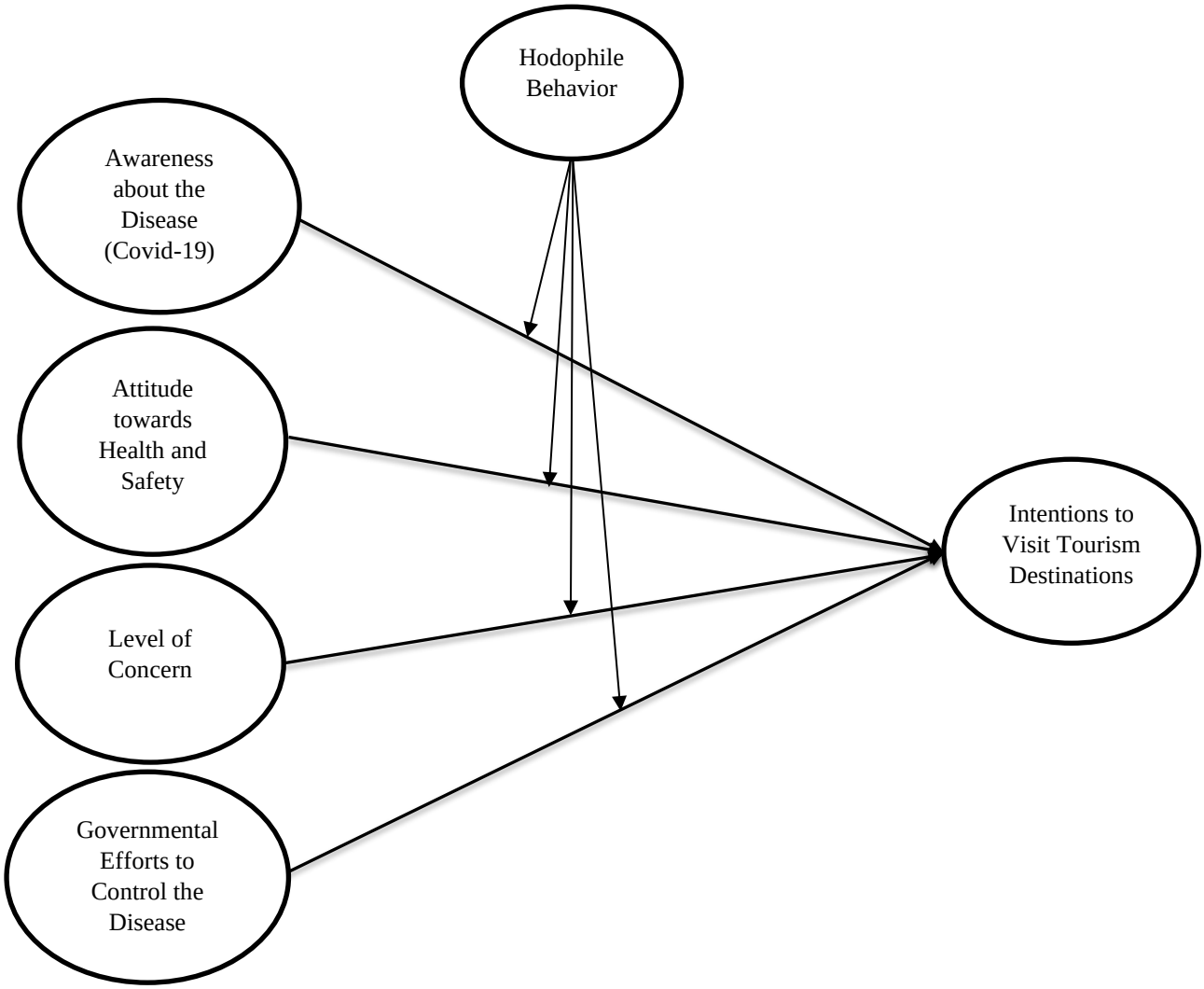
H5: Hodophile behavior moderates the relationships between visit intentions and its predictors.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants and procedures

This study was conducted on the tourists from northern areas of Pakistan. Cities situated in southern areas of Pakistan comparatively hotter than the northern areas. A huge temperature difference makes northern areas of Pakistan attractive to the visitors for the local people usually from April to July each year. During this period of time a great number of visitors including individuals, families and corporate customers visit these sites. These areas are not only famous for beautiful locations but also for recreational activities, official conferences, sports, cultural events and seminars. This study has focused only those tourists who visited northern areas of Pakistan last year. A quota sampling technique has been utilized in this study to recruit the subjects. Quota sampling is considered a useful technique when the population is not documented and the subjects are difficult to approach and when a non-probability sampling technique is required for a better representation of the overall population (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It has utilized Web-based survey to collect data. The survey developed on the adopted scales from previous studies and was distributed among 310 tourists who visited tourists' destinations last year in different tourists' destinations in Pakistan.

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework



Total 167 responses were received from which 8 responses were discarded due to incomplete and vague answers. Therefore, final analysis performed on 159 valid responses. List of travel and tour providers in Pakistan was obtained from Google.com and Trips.pk. Different tourism and travel agents were approached using Web-mails and social networks (Facebook & Instagram) A five pint Likert scale is used to measure the responses (e.g. 1-Strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree). The survey asked about overall awareness of the disease like "The cause of the disease is virus" "The main cause of the disease is immunodeficiency"," the disease is infectious and can spread from person to person. Similarly, level of concern was also measured on adopted scale containing questions like "we should avoid leaving our homes nowadays" and "the government should restrict travel from and to the areas of the disease to avoid spread of disease". In addition intentions to visit tourists' destination during Covid-19 was also measured on a five point Likert scale containing items like "the likelihood of visiting tourists' destination during Covid-19 is high", if I were going to visit tourists' destinations, I would consider visiting during Covid-19", "my willingness to visit tourists' destinations is always high", "I will prefer visiting tourists' destinations after the Covid-19 ends" etc. Rest of the constructs were also measured using such adopted scales. For further assessment, validity and reliability of the scales have been provided in a table below.

Table 1: Composite Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Constructs	Means	SD	CR	AVE	MSV
Awareness about the Disease (Covid-19)	1.167	.286	.773	.601	.372

Attitude towards Health and Safety	2.264	.615	.653	.868	.412
Level of Concern	1.512	.415	.864	.745	.541
Governmental Efforts to Control the Disease	1.233	.326	.666	.702	.654
Intentions to Visit Tourists' Destinations	1.424	.387	.776	.861	.336
Hodophile Behavior	2.331	.525	.831	.617	.481

If a construct measure what it is meant to measure, it is considered as a valid construct (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Discriminant and convergent validities are very important for the fitness of overall measurement model. The degree to which a construct is reflected by its items is known as (Churchill, 1979). A construct with a satisfactory weight ($\lambda > 0.5$) to its items can be considered as fit for convergent validity (Wixom & Watson, 2001). In addition, if the average variance explained (AVE) of any construct is above 0.5 then this also justifies convergent validity of the construct. Table 1 values for AVEs of the constructs of current study and from results it can be observed that all the values are within the threshold level. Furthermore, whether the constructs are different form each other or not is checked by the discriminant validity (Burns & Bush, 2000). Churchill (1979), has explained if the values of MSVs are less than the values of AVEs the discriminant validity is established. In this study all the constructs fulfil the criteria therefore, all the constructs can be considered different from each other.

3.2 Methods

Travel agents were approached using emails, phone calls and via direct messages on social networks. They were requested to provide list of their customers who visited tourists' destinations last year (2019) using their services. They were assured about the privacy customers' data and were explained about the usage of data in detail. After agents satisfaction about the usage of customers' data they provided us lists of their customers containing their email address, phone numbers and they also suggested us to visit their (agents') Facebook pages for contacting their customers as the pages have a huge number of followers. After the first phase of contacting travel and tourists' agents, in the next phase customers of these agents were contacted directly through Facebook direct messages, emails and phone calls. After inquiring about their availability, the theme of the research was explained to each of the respondents in detail and they were also guaranteed about the use of their data. The questionnaire was sent to all the respondents using above explained internet based sources. Response rate (53.87%) was satisfactory to be used for the analyses and it took about 46 days after sending many reminders to collect 159 valid responses. The table below shows detail of the respondents.

Table 2: Respondents' Profile

Measure	Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	102	64.15
	Female	57	35.84
Age	18-30 Years	70	44.02
	31-40 Years	35	22.01
	41-50 Years	30	18.86
	>50 Years	24	15.09
Marital Status	Single	91	57.23
	Married	68	42.76
Income Level	20k-40k	24	15.09
(In Pak. Rupees)	41k-60k	43	27.04
	61k-80k	70	44.02
	>80k	22	13.83
Level of Education	Intermediates	35	22.01
	Bachelors	58	36.47
	Masters	60	37.73
	Others	6	03.77

IV. ANALYSES AND RESULTS

4.1 Test of direct relationships

Before the validation of the structural and measurement model, an initial test of the data was conducted. In the first phase, missing were removed using approaches applied by Flatten, Engelen, Zahra, and Brettel (2011) as well as by Newman (2003). The full information maximum likelihood methods (FIML) has been used to access the missing values.

The values for the direct effects are stated in Table 3. First four hypotheses present direct paths. The results of the study support all the hypothesis from H1 to H4 that awareness about disease, attitude towards health and safety, level of concern and governmental efforts to control the disease have a direct significant effect on intentions to visit tourists' destinations. Regression coefficients show that the direct effect of awareness about the disease on intentions to visit tourists' destinations was significant but relatively weaker (β = -0.025, p< 0.01) followed by the effect of attitude towards health and safety on intentions to visit tourists' destinations (β = -0.240, p< 0.01). In addition, regression coefficients shows that level of concern have a very strong negative relation with intentions to visit tourists' destinations (β = -0.545, p< 0.01). Furthermore, governmental efforts to control the disease was also found significant in predicting intentions to visit tourists' destinations (β = 0.245, p< 0.01). All the constructs had a negative direct relation with intentions to visit tourists' destinations except Governmental efforts to control disease.

Predictor (X)	Outcome (Y)	B	t	P-Value	Hyp.	Result
Governmental efforts to control disease	Intentions to visit tourism destinations	.245	13.51	0.000	H1	Supported
Level of concern	Intentions to visit tourism destinations	-.545	.14	0.020	H2	Supported
Awareness about disease	Intentions to visit tourism destinations	-.025	12.92	0.007	H3	Supported
Attitude about health and safety	Intentions to visit tourism destinations	-.240	17.37	0.000	H4	Supported

Table 3: Model coefficients for directs effects.

4.2 Test of conditional direct effects

Results for conditional direct effects of this study are reported in Table 4. Hypothesis H5, stating that "Hodophile behavior moderates the relation of governmental efforts to control disease with intentions to visit tourists' destinations" is supported (β = 0.160, p< 0.01), indicating that at higher values of Hodophile behavior the moderating effect does remain significant. Similarly, H6 which states that "Hodophile behavior moderates the relation of level of concern with intentions to visit tourists' destinations" was also significant but positive this time with moderator (β = .288, p<.01). In addition, H7 which states "Hodophile behavior moderates the relation of awareness about disease with intentions to visit tourists' destinations" was significant but negative in nature (β = −0.034, p<0.05). The last hypothesis H8 stating "Hodophile behavior moderates the relationship of attitude towards health and safety with intentions to visit tourists' destinations" found significant (β = 0.124, p<0.01).

Table 4: Model coefficients for conditional direct effects.

Predictor (X)	Moderator	Outcome (Y)	B	t	p	Hyp.	Result
Governmental efforts to control disease	Hodophile behavior	Intentions to visit tourists' destinations	.160	13.905	0.000	H5	Supported
Level of concern	Hodophile behavior	Intentions to visit tourists' destinations	.288	12.328	0.000	H6	Supported
Awareness about Covid-19	Hodophile behavior	Intentions to visit tourists' destinations	-.034	7.921	0.011	H7	Supported

Attitude towards Health & Safety	Hodophile behavior	Intentions to visit tourists' destinations	.124	8.875	0.000	H8	Supported

V. Discussion and conclusions

Pakistan's has become a top priority for international tourists for the year 2020 (Tribune.com.pk, 2019). In addition, British Backpackers Society (BBS) ranks Pakistan as the third best tourism destination for 2020 (Ahmed, 2019). Therefore, this study has been conducted to know basic factors behind tourists' indentations to visit tourism destinations in Pakistan. Where there are many studied which give an insight towards determinants of intentions to visit tourists' destinations, relatively, a few studies can be found discussing impact of Hodophile behavior in such relationships. Especially this study has discussed how COVID-19 has impacted the tourists' intentions to visit different tourists' place in Pakistan. Current study examines the moderated relationships of four predictors and a moderator (Hodophile behavior) with intentions to visit tourists' destinations.

Findings of the study provides useful provide useful directions to the academics and to the marketers of tourism industry. As per the direct results are concerned, governmental efforts to control disease is positively linked with the intentions to visit tourists' destinations which confirms the already available literature on the relationship (Assaf et al., 2020). Interestingly, the association between level of concern and intentions to visit tourists' destinations found to be the strongest but negative in nature, which demonstrates that customers who have high level of concern for the current pandemic disease (COVID-19) are less intended to visit tourists destinations during coronavirus spread. The results seems logical as those people who are very much concerned and focuses on the disease too much were expected to delay their visits to the tourists' places as already found in some previous studies (UNWTO, 2020).

Similarly, analysis of direct relationships discovered that awareness about the disease is negatively associated with intentions to visit tourists' destinations. This finding shows that customers who are well aware of the current epidemic have low intentions to visit destinations during current season. As the coronavirus is deadly and the people who know this fact will obviously avoid and postpone their tourists' plans. No one want to risk their life for the sake of adventure. Ethical marketers should not hide any information related to coronavirus or any other pandemic from the customers. The results support the previous studies. Surprisingly, opposite to our expectations, the association between attitude towards health and safety and intentions to visit tourists' destinations is positive and statistically significant. Normally, people having a positive attitude towards health and safety show low intentions attached with visit to adventurous places (Song et al., 2017). But in current study it was found that even with a positive attitude towards health and safety does not lower their intentions to visit tourists' destinations. Some lines of logic can be given to support current unique result. In Pakistan, the peak tourism period lasts only a few months normally starting from April to July.

Pakistan is a developing country and people get very low chances to visit the place they love. Therefore, whenever they get chance, they try to avail it and visit tourists' places even though they care about their health and safety. Less chance plays the role of motivation for them to instead of being careful especially during the time of a pandemic attack, they intend to visit northern areas of Pakistan. This implies that a positive attitude towards health and safety may not necessarily stop tourists from visiting the tourists' destination. Therefore, marketers should not be worried about the positive attitude of the tourists.

Findings related to the moderating role of Hodophile behavior also provide interesting insights. Results show that Hodophile behavior has positively moderated the relationship of governmental efforts to control disease with intentions to visit tourists' destinations. It is therefore implied that marketers should utilize the concept of Hodophile behavior in their promotional activities because this type of behavior has huge impact of on the customer intentions to visit tourists' places. Surprisingly, the moderated impact on the relationship of level of concern and intentions to visit tourists' destinations was positive. Previously, it was negative before the moderation was applied. It implies that even having a high level of concern regarding the pandemic disease, customers having a Hodophile behavior will always tend to go for the adventure. Therefore, once again this makes Hodophile behavior a very important element for the marketers to incorporate in their promotional activities. In addition, awareness about the disease was still negative even after the application of moderator (Hodophile behavior) but the strength was a bit changed. Therefore, awareness about the disease have same implications as in the unconditional impact. Finally, attitude about health and safety once again found significant having a positive relationship with intentions to visit tourists'

destinations after moderation was applied. Therefore, it can be presumed that a positive attitude towards health and safety is not a hurdle for the tourists for visiting tourists' destinations.

Therefore, findings of this study suggest that, marketers should focus on governmental efforts and Hodophile behavior more than rest of the factors as these factors plays important role in changing intentions to visit tourists' destinations even in the time of deadly pandemic. They should promote Hodophilic personality traits in their commercials and motivate customers by convincing them that they are safe because government is working hard for the tourists. For this they can market governmental policies regarding tourists' security from all type of dangers like pandemic diseases and other threats if applicable.

VI. LIMITATIONS

This study is not without limitations. First, current study used only visitor arrivals to measure tourism demand. Future research could also explore other tourism demand proxies such as tourist expenditures or hotel revenues to help policy makers to establish effective marketing and investment strategies. The second limitation of the study is the sample population is taken from Pakistan only. A more appropriate approach would be to consider multiple destinations that provide similar tourism services. Another limitation is of the sample size which is a bit low. Big sample may reveal better output also longitudinal study can be conducted to check the long-term validity of the study. Besides all these limitation, the study have wide range of applications for both the tourism industry marketers and for the government for policy making.

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