

Determinants and implications of travel motivations: international travellers visiting Cappadocia

Faruk Seyitoğlu and Özgür Davras

Abstract

Purpose – *This paper aims to explore the determinants and implications of travel motivations of international tourists visiting the Cappadocia destination.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The quantitative research method focusing on numerical data was used to test the proposed hypotheses, and the survey technique has been used to collect data. The research participants consisted of 363 international tourists visiting the Cappadocia region/Turkey and spending at least one night there. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the AMOS 22 package program to ensure the scales' construct validity. Then, the structural equation model was established to test the study's hypothesis, and these hypotheses were tested with the help of path analysis.*

Findings – *As determinants of travel motivations, while electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a positive effect on travel motivation dimensions, the impact of travel risk perception is negative. Moreover, from the dimensions of travel motivations, novelty/learning and socialization positively affect destination loyalty. However, the influences of escape and relaxation and self-development are meaningless. Besides that, travel risk perception strongly impacts eWOM.*

Practical implications – *Destination managers and practitioners must maintain a higher level of tourist motivation and reduce tourists' travel risk perception levels to improve destination competitiveness by constituting a more loyal customer profile. Moreover, eWOM platforms should be used efficiently.*

Originality/value – *This study points to a functional multidimensional model that contributes to the literature and guides destination managers and practitioners. The proposed framework of determinants and consequences of tourists' travel motivation can also be applied in other service contexts.*

Keywords *Travel motivations, eWOM, Destination loyalty, Travel risk perception, Cappadocia*

Paper type *Research paper*

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1. Introduction

In the tourism literature, the concept of motivation is mainly associated with explaining the reasons for tourist choices and desires towards tourism destinations and products (Rita *et al.*, 2019; Shi *et al.*, 2019). Travel motivation is crucial in identifying travellers' expectations and needs which pave the way to provide the right attributes or activities (Kim and Lee, 2002; Otoo *et al.*, 2020), and it is also an indicator of destination image and loyalty (Hosany *et al.*, 2020; Wen and Huang, 2019).

According to Crompton (1979), there are seven socio-psychological motives: escape, relaxation, prestige, social interaction facilitation, self-exploration, kinship-relationship enhancement and regression. He stated that education and novelty are two strong cultural motives to attract travellers (Crompton, 1979). Moreover, Kassean and Gassita (2013) indicated that the main motivations of tourists visiting Mauritius are beaches, climate and weather, landscape and scenery, and rest and relaxation. According to Yiamjanya and

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Wongleedee (2014), learning new things, learning new cultures, adventure, relaxing in a foreign land, enjoyable activities, good weather, interest in culture, traditional markets and local food were the main motivations of travellers visiting Thailand. As seen from the statements mentioned above, various motives may affect travellers' interest in a particular destination or tourism product.

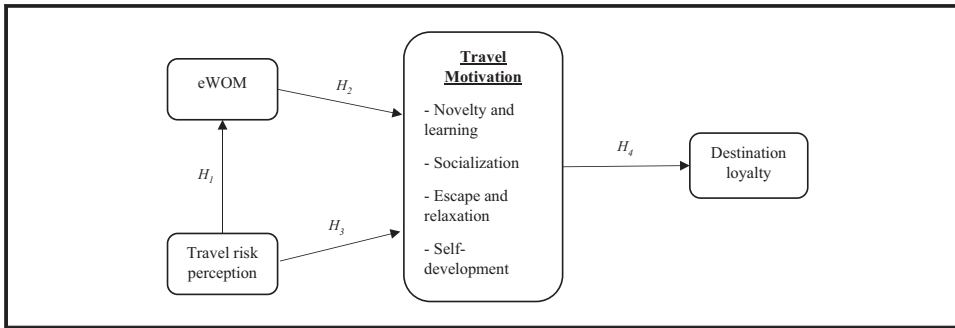
Owing to its potential to affect destination choices, travel activities and tourism services (Kong and Chang, 2016), travel motivation is fundamental in tourism development. Thus, managers' knowledge of travel motivation is significant in developing comprehensive and beneficial destination marketing strategies (Rita *et al.*, 2019). In this regard, knowing the variables that may affect travel motivation and finding out the implication of specific motivations on tourist behaviours are crucial issues for tourism destination planners and managers. In this context, this study focuses on the Cappadocia region, which is a famous and important authentic destination that attracts both international and domestic tourists.

As it is a famous and important destination, Cappadocia is also an attractive destination for tourism academics. Various studies have investigated different subjects such as residents' perceptions related to tourism impacts (Tosun, 2002), tourism development (Tosun, 2006), sustainable cultural tourism (Tucker and Emge, 2010), destination attraction and its relationship with satisfaction and destination loyalty (Coban, 2012), tourist shopping experiences and satisfaction (Tosun *et al.*, 2007), destination management (Coban and Yildiz, 2019) and the effects of tourist motivation on satisfaction and destination loyalty (Seyitoglu, 2020) related to the region. On the other hand, travel motivation, which is the main factor in participating in tourism activities and an important determinant of tourist behaviours, has been investigated in the literature in terms of its effect on tourist loyalty (Brandano *et al.*, 2019; Wen and Huang, 2019; Seyitoglu, 2020), on travel intention (Jang *et al.*, 2009; Hosany *et al.*, 2020; Junaedi and Harjanto, 2020), destination choice (Yiamjanya and Wongleedee, 2014) and its relationship with the travel experience (Prebensen *et al.*, 2013; Kong and Chang, 2016). However, no previous study has been conducted on determinants and implications of tourist motivations. Thus, considering a multi-dimensional perspective, this study proposed a model (Figure 1) investigating the relationship of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), travel risk perception, travel motivations and destination loyalty in the context of international tourists visiting Cappadocia destination.

In the tourism context, travel motivations are mostly associated with tourist preferences towards destinations and tourism products (Cohen *et al.*, 2014; Rita *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, people are generally motivated by their psychological and physical needs (Mill and Morrison, 2002). Thus, it is vital to know travellers' motivations to provide the right products to potential travellers, which will help create an advantage in the competitive tourism market (Zoltan and Masiero, 2012). Moreover, novelty, learning, socialization, escape, relaxation and self-development are among the most crucial motivation dimensions of tourists, especially those seeking history and culture (Pearce and Lee, 2005; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Chiang *et al.*, 2015). Thus, as the Cappadocia destination has a reputation of being a historical and cultural destination, these motivation dimensions have been considered for the study context.

The present study is structured as follows. According to the current study's aim and research model, Section 2 includes the theoretical framework, which explains travel motivations, eWOM, travel risk perception and relationships. Section 3 presents the methodology that consists of hypotheses, variables, data collection and analysis. In Section 4, the results of the developed model and hypotheses are provided. Finally, Section 5 closes the paper by discussing the findings and presenting the contributions, implications, limitations and future research directions.

Figure 1 Conceptual model of the study



2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Travel motivations, destination loyalty and electronic word of mouth

Motivation is defined as a need that directs people to different actions (Beerli and Martín, 2004). In tourism, motivation is the source of travel reasons (Jang *et al.*, 2009). Travel motivation is considered a mental or psychological drive and underlying intrinsic motive that forces a person to look for a leisure engagement (Pearce and Lee, 2005). People have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds that differ (Prayag and Ryan, 2011). Thus, each individual is likely to have different motivation sources such as learning, relaxing, being entertained, socializing, etc. (Brandano *et al.*, 2019) in terms of traveling.

It is stated by Crompton (1979) that motivation can be a push (intrinsic) that is referred to the needs and desires of tourists or pull (extrinsic), which is associated with destinations' attributes (Do Valle *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, push and pull motivations are strongly related to loyalty (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Loyalty is mainly associated with revisit intention and willingness to recommend a specific product, firm or destination to other potential consumers (Wen and Huang, 2019). There are various factors such as satisfaction (Jarvis *et al.*, 2016), destination image, destination attributes, image and positive WOM (Park *et al.*, 2019) that may affect destination loyalty. In this regard, travel motivation is a significant element that can determine tourists' behaviours and choices, which are crucial in terms of destination loyalty (Farmaki *et al.*, 2019). According to the study of Yoon and Uysal (2005), motivations have a direct and positive influence on destination loyalty. Thus, it is considered necessary to understand the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty that may be useful for destination managers and practitioners in the context of Cappadocia destination. Therefore, for the present study, to explore the influence of travel motivation on destination loyalty it is suggested that: *Travel motivation influences destination loyalty.*

On the other hand, before the wide use of Internet, the conversations related to a product or service between consumers named WOM was popular (Sen and Lerman, 2007). However, after the widespread and broader use of internet, online platforms for sharing comments about the services or products started to be more popular. This situation has created the term eWOM (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011). The term eWOM can be defined as statements made by consumers, which are available to numerous institutions and people worldwide (Moliner-Velázquez *et al.*, 2019). Travel journals, blogs, media sharing sites, social networking sites and review sites such as TripAdvisor are examples of eWOM platforms for the share of reviews or comments related to tourism products or services (Zhou *et al.*, 2020).

Related to eWOM, the use of user-generated content (UGC), which enables consumers to create their own experiences and read experiences of others (Chiu *et al.*, 2014), is gradually increasing by travellers. In the tourism and hospitality context, travellers express their

experience, satisfaction or dissatisfaction related to a specific service or a product through UGC (Ukpabi and Karjaluoto, 2018). Thus, UGC contents are vital sources for travellers to benefit from while making their decisions, and they can also be considered eWOM sources. eWOM is a vital communication marketing tool (Kanje *et al.*, 2020) that provides information for destination marketing and travellers decisions (Jacobsen and Munar, 2012). It contains sources about destinations and recommendations for travellers that make it helpful to reduce the level of uncertainty (Kanje *et al.*, 2020) related to a service, product or destination. Additionally, since internet is accessible for all people worldwide, eWOM platforms enable to reach a large number of potential consumers in a short time (Abubakar, 2016).

Studies on eWOM in the tourism literature are related to various factors such as travel intentions (Doosti *et al.*, 2016), destination choices (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012) and factors motivating tourists to involve eWOM (Bronner and de Hoog, 2011). However, no study investigating the effect of eWOM on travel motivation was found in the current literature. The only exception in this aspect is that Llodra-Riera *et al.* (2015) revealed in their study that the information sources in Web platforms about tourist destinations determine travel motivations. Since Web-based information sources are part of eWOM, in this study (Llodra-Riera *et al.*, 2015), the effect of eWOM on travel motivation was indirectly investigated. Therefore, the present study explores the direct impact of eWOM perception of international tourists visiting Cappadocia on their travel motivation and fills this gap. Thus, the hypothesis is developed as *eWOM influences travel motivation*.

2.2 Travel risk perception and its relationships with electronic word of mouth and travel motivation

The term risk is defined as the uncertainties that consumers encounter when they cannot anticipate the consequences of purchase behaviours (Park and Reisinger, 2010). Recently, risk has become a significant subject, especially in terms of international tourists, because travellers are likely to avoid the destinations they perceive risky; thus, they may choose safer destinations (Qi *et al.*, 2009). The way tourists perceive risk may have a critical influence on travel decisions (Adeloye and Brown, 2018). Moreover, the risk perception of tourists might be affected by various factors such as personality, knowledge and risk acceptance, socio-demographic characteristics, cultural background, situational factors, religion (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006; Qi *et al.*, 2009; Williams and Baláz, 2013; Adeloye and Brown, 2018), past experiences (Choi *et al.*, 2019), information sources and search and nationality (Kozak, *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, each tourist may perceive the same risks at different levels (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006).

There are different risk types in the tourist behaviours literature: physical risk, equipment risk, health, psychological risk, financial risk, social risk, food, satisfaction risk, natural hazards, terrorism, cultural barriers, functional, political instability, accident risk, environmental risk and time risk (Carballo *et al.*, 2017; Larsen *et al.*, 2011; Fuchs and Reichel, 2011; Qi *et al.*, 2009; Cioccio and Michael, 2007; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). In this regard, safety, peace and calmness are great attraction tools for tourists visiting any destinations (Qi *et al.*, 2009).

Travel risk perception is likely to cause fear and anxiety, which result in negative purchase behaviours (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006). Moreover, if travellers feel nervous during their visits, they won't feel safe and, accordingly, may not want to revisit the same destination (Xie *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, any negative factor such as unfriendly locals, lousy weather, crime or disease may increase tourists' perceived risk level (Fuchs and Reichel, 2011), especially the perceived risk of international travels (Sönmez and Graefe, 1998). In this aspect, tourists are willing to increase their knowledge and decrease potential uncertainty (Becken *et al.*, 2017). Thus, it is evident that perceived risk may have a relationship with information search (Jeuring and Becken, 2013). It is stated in the literature that information

plays a crucial role in decreasing the level of risk perception (Byzalov and Shachar, 2004) because the information level of consumers indicates the level of uncertainty (Fuchs and Reichel, 2011). In this regard, this study aimed to investigate the effect of travel risk perception on eWOM in the context of international travellers visiting Cappadocia destination. Thus, a hypothesis is developed as *travel risk perception influences eWOM*.

On the other hand, although travel motivations are significant factors, understanding travel motives may not bring success in understanding tourist behaviours because travel motivations do not guarantee that traveling will happen (Pearce, 1993). Various factors may be effective to indicate travel behaviours and travel motivations as well. Thus, multidimensional knowledge is necessary to understand what factors influence travel motivation and behaviours. For instance, health issues, costs, security concerns, etc., may be significant barriers to prevent tourists from travelling (Sellick, 2004). Therefore, travel risk perception may be an effective tool to determine motivations. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between travel risk perception and travel motivations. For this study, one of the leading hypotheses is developed as *travel risk perception influences travel motivation*.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research hypotheses

According to the literature review and the purposes of the present study, the research hypotheses are created as given below:

- H1. Travel risk perception influences eWOM.
- H2. eWOM influences travel motivation.
 - H2a. eWOM influences novelty and learning.
 - H2b. eWOM influences socialization.
 - H2c. eWOM influences escape and relaxation.
 - H2d. eWOM influences self-development.
- H3. Travel risk perception influences travel motivation.
 - H3a. Travel risk perception influences novelty and learning.
 - H3b. Travel risk perception influences socialization.
 - H3c. Travel risk perception influences escape and relaxation.
 - H3d. Travel risk perception influences self-development.
- H4. Travel motivation influences destination loyalty.
 - H4a. Novelty and learning influence destination loyalty.
 - H4b. Socialization influences destination loyalty.
 - H4c. Escape and relaxation influences destination loyalty.
 - H4d. Self-development influences destination loyalty.

3.2 Variables of research

The quantitative research method that focuses on numerical data was used to test the proposed hypotheses, and the survey technique was used to collect data. The questionnaire of this study consists of five sections. In the first section, the (eWOM) scale adopted from Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011), including six statements, was benefited to measure the participants' perception of online reviews. Travel motivation that

contains the dimensions of “novelty and learning,” “socialization,” “escape and relaxation” and “self-development” and measured with 12 items (developed by [Seyitoglu, 2020](#)) takes part in the second section. The travel risk perception scale consisting of seven items is included in the third section and adapted from [Sellick \(2004\)](#). The items of destination loyalty scale (four in total) in the fourth section were taken from the study of [Do Valle et al. \(2006\)](#). In the last section of the survey, nine questions are used to reveal the research participants’ demographic characteristics. Items belonging to all scales used in the research were measured with a seven-point Likert scale (1: Totally disagree to 7: Totally agree). Some of the questions regarding demographic characteristics of participants are formulated as open-ended questions, while others are closed-ended questions. After completing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 70 tourists to check the questionnaire and ensure that the statements are comprehensible.

3.3 Study area: Cappadocia region

The present study focuses on the Cappadocia region, which has an authentic and unique landscape ([Tucker, 2003](#)) that contains rocky lands and “fairy chimney” rock formations. Cappadocia region is mostly covering the area of Nevşehir, Niğde, Aksaray, Kayseri and Kırşehir cities of Turkey. However, the fairy chimney rock formations are mostly located around Göreme, Avanos, Ürgüp, Ihlara, Uçhisar and Derinkuyu that are towns of Nevşehir city ([Özel and Kozak, 2017](#)). Cappadocia is a famous region and destination for tourists seeking cultural and religious aspects ([Erdogan and Tosun, 2009](#)) and a significant internationally recognised destination that attracts domestic and foreign tourists ([Seyitoglu, 2020](#)). Moreover, Cappadocia enables an authentic experience environment for travellers ([Tucker, 2002](#)).

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The targeted participants of the research were international tourists visiting the Cappadocia region/Turkey and staying for at least one night. A convenience sampling method was used to obtain the data. International tourists visiting the famous places in the Cappadocia region were approached, and their permission was taken to participate in the study. First, the aim of the study was explained to tourists, and the tourists who agreed to participate and fill out the questionnaire forms were involved in the study. The data were gathered in famous touristic places in Cappadocia (e.g. Avanos town, Ürgüp town, Göreme town, Uçhisar town, Göreme Open Air Museum, Uçhisar Castle) during several weekends in May and June 2019. In total, 392 tourists filled the questionnaire. However, owing to insufficiency, 29 of the questionnaire forms were excluded from the assessment, and the remaining 363 survey forms were assessed for data analysis.

As the expressions of the benefited scales in the questionnaire were taken from the relevant studies and used in their original form, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using the AMOS 22 package program to ensure the scales’ construct validity. Then, the scales’ reliability, descriptive statistics and demographic distributions were determined. In the last stage, after the structural equation model (SEM) was established to test the hypotheses of the study, these hypotheses were tested with the help of path analysis.

3.5 Testing the scales

To reveal the construct validity of the scales in the research model, the first level CFA for the travel motivation scale and one-factor CFA for the other scales (travel risk perception, eWOM and destination loyalty) were performed. As the values obtained were not among the acceptable values, the measurement model fit had to be enhanced ([Hair et al., 1998](#)). As suggested by the result of the modification indices in the AMOS software, two items from the travel risk perception scale and one item from the destination loyalty scales were

removed because their path coefficients are less than 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Error correlations were also added between some items in all scales except for the destination loyalty scale, and then a second CFA was performed.

The CFA results show that the fit of the revised measurement model is significantly improved and is acceptable based on the four indices for all scales. Table 1 provides the construct validity of all scales. The factor loadings, means and reliability coefficients of the items belonging to all these scales are given in Table 2.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all scales range between 0.806 and 0.958 (Table 2). As these coefficients are among the acceptable values, the scales are also shown to be reliable. Also, it is seen that the factor loadings of each scale items are above 0.500. According to the averages of the variables, the participants' destination loyalty is high. The travel risk perceptions have the lowest averages. Moreover, among the travel motivation dimensions, the highest average belongs to "novelty and learning" with the value of 4.96, and "socialization" has the lowest average (4.36).

4. Findings

According to the findings (Table 3), almost an equal number of male and female tourists participated in the study (Male: 48.2% and Female: 51.8%). The majority of participants are single (55.9%) and mostly between 28 and 32 years old. The fact that 78.2% of the participants have undergraduate and graduate education levels shows that they are well educated. In terms of nationality, 12.4% were Chinese and 9.4% were British. These nationalities were followed by American, Spanish, Belgian, German, Italian and Thai people. The remaining 51.2% constitutes the "Other" group, and it can be seen that tourists from various countries are visiting the Cappadocia region. This may be because Cappadocia is an attractive historical and cultural destination (Seyitoğlu, 2020). Cappadocia can be described as an international tourist attraction. The majority of the participants (48.8%) spent one week or less in Cappadocia. 66.1% of the participants came to Cappadocia for the first time, and the remaining 33.9% had visited two or more times. Finally, 39.9% of the participants had an income of US\$1,000 or less, and 28.4% of them between US\$1,001 and US\$2,000.

SEM analysis was performed to test the proposed model in the research. However, before testing the model, correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between the variables included in the model (Table 4). According to the correlation analysis, there are significant and positive relationships between all variables, which shows that the interactions between variables can be predicted.

The SEM has been created to test the hypotheses of the research (Figure 2). As the obtained values were not among the acceptable values, four items from the travel risk perception scale and one item from the eWOM scale were eliminated to strengthen the model fit (as suggested by the result of the modification indices in the AMOS software). As a result of these processes, four goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) for the theoretical model were within an acceptable range: $\chi^2/df = 2.92$, RMSEA = 0.073, CFI = 0.951, GFI = 0.876.

Table 1 Goodness-of-fit indices for the scales

Variables	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Travel risk perception	41.893	13	3.223	0.968	0.987	0.078
eWOM	16.656	6	2.776	0.986	0.994	0.070
Travel motivation	152.474	46	3.315	0.935	0.979	0.080
Destination loyalty	0.482	1	0.482	0.999	1.000	0.000
Good fit values*			≤ 5	≥ 0.85	≥ 0.95	≤ 0.08

Source: *Meydan and Şeşen (2015, p. 37)

Table 2 Factor loadings, means and reliability coefficients of the scales

Scales		Items	Factor loadings	Means	Reliability
Travel risk perception	eWOM	My holiday might not be personally satisfying	0.893	3.71	0.944
		My holiday might not give me good value for money	0.891		
		Some people may get a negative opinion of me for taking such a holiday	0.889		
		Problems might occur in travel arrangements or in getting to my destination	0.885		
		Problems might arise with some of the amenities or facilities provided during my holiday	0.859		
		I might be put in danger or get hurt	0.783		
		I might become ill while on holidays	0.682		
		I often consult other tourists' online travel reviews to help choose an attractive destination (like Cappadocia)	0.916		
		I frequently gather information from tourists' online travel reviews before I travel to a certain destination (like Cappadocia)	0.900		
		If I don't read tourists' online travel reviews when I travel to a destination (like Cappadocia), I worry about my decision	0.793		
		To make sure I choose the right tourism destination (like Cappadocia), I often read other tourists' online travel reviews	0.782		
		When I travel to a destination (like Cappadocia), tourists' online travel reviews make me confident in traveling to the destination	0.771		
		I often read other tourists' online travel reviews to know what destinations make good impressions on others	0.700		
		Travel motivation	Novelty and learning		
...to develop my knowledge of this place	0.905				
...to see a new place	0.882				
Escape and relaxation	...to learn more about nature and other cultures		0.881		
	...to relax mentally		0.932		
	...to get away from the routine of everyday life		0.922		
Self-development	...to get refreshed		0.909		
	...to learn more about yourself		0.940		
	...to think about who you are		0.910		
Socialization	...to do exciting things together		0.906		
	...to build friendship with others		0.953		
	...to meet people with similar interests		0.851		
Destination loyalty		I would like to visit Cappadocia again	0.877	5.70	0.806
		I would recommend Cappadocia to my friends and family members	0.870		
		My expectations are met	0.575		

According to the results of the path analysis carried out through the AMOS 22.0 statistics package program, standardized β coefficients, standard error, p values and results of the hypotheses are provided in Table 5. The obtained p values show that while 11 hypotheses that the standardized beta coefficient statistically significant were accepted, two hypotheses that the standardized beta coefficient statistically insignificant were rejected.

5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Summary of findings

This study aimed to examine the determinants of travel motivation of tourists visiting Cappadocia destination and reveal the effects of travel motivation on destination loyalty. In

Table 3 Demographic profile of participants

<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Male	175	48.2	Married	160	44.1
Female	188	51.8	Single	203	55.9
Total	363	100	Total	363	100
<i>Length of stay</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>
1 week or less	177	48.8	US\$1,000 or less	145	39.9
7–13 days	88	24.2	US\$1,001–2,000	103	28.4
More than two weeks	98	27	US\$2,000–3,000	44	12.1
Total	363	100	US\$3,000 and above	71	19.6
			Total	363	100
<i>Education</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Number of visits</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>
High school	79	21.8	Once	240	66.1
Postgraduate	198	54.5	Twice	67	18.5
Graduate	86	23.7	More than twice	56	15.4
Total	363	100	Total	363	100
<i>Nationality</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Chinese	45	12.4	16–22	36	9.9
British	34	9.4	23–27	92	25.3
American	20	5.5	28–32	114	31.4
Spanish	19	5.2	33–37	53	14.6
Belgian	17	4.7	38–42	35	9.6
German	15	4.1	43 and above	33	9.1
Italian	14	3.9			
Thai	13	3.6			
Others	186	51.2			
Total	363	100	Total	363	100

Table 4 Correlation matrix of variables

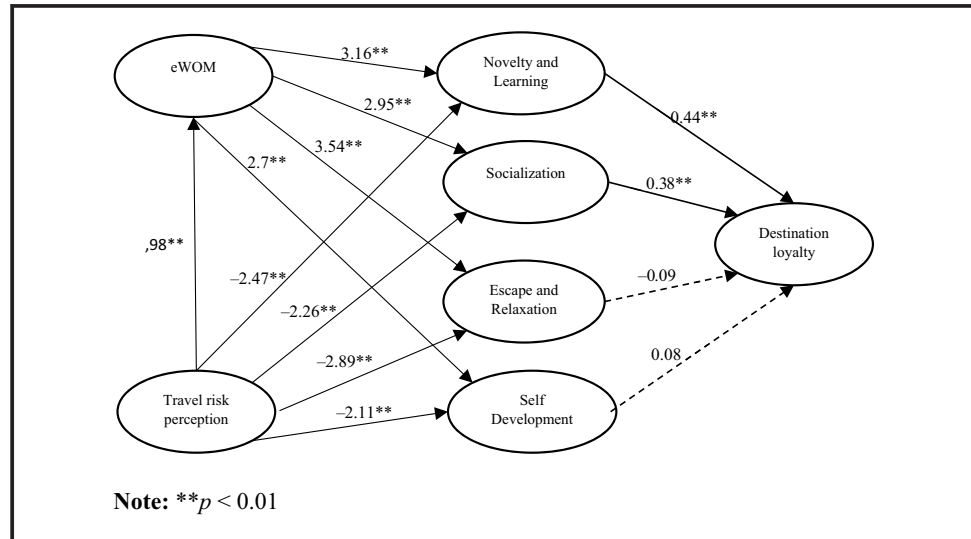
<i>Variables</i>	<i>eWOM</i>	<i>Travel risk perception</i>	<i>Novelty and learning</i>	<i>Escape and relaxation</i>	<i>Self-development</i>	<i>Socialization</i>	<i>Destination loyalty</i>
eWOM	1						
Travel risk perception	0.670**	1					
Novelty and learning	0.661**	0.428**	1				
Escape and relaxation	0.668**	0.445**	0.831**	1			
Self-development	0.661**	0.447**	0.804**	0.779**	1		
Socialization	0.560**	0.462**	0.660**	0.648**	0.772**	1	
Destination loyalty	0.368**	0.247**	0.549**	0.535**	0.459**	0.425**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

this context, the proposed conceptual model comprises the interactions between travel motivation, which consists of the dimensions of novelty/learning–socialization–escape/relaxation–self-development, and the variables of travel risk, eWOM and destination loyalty. Hypotheses were created and validated for the determinants and consequences of travel motivation in the following three different cases:

1. the effect of travel risk perception on travel motivation;
2. the effect of eWOM on travel motivation; and
3. the effect of travel motivation on destination loyalty.

One more hypothesis has been proposed regarding the effects of travel risk perception on eWOM. The model that includes the hypotheses created was analysed by SEM, and all

Figure 2 Estimated structural model**Table 5** Results of the hypotheses

Hypotheses	β	SE	CR	p	Results
H1 Travel risk perception → eWOM	0.98	0.097	11.84	***	Accepted
H2a eWOM → Novelty and learning	3.16	0.774	4.54	***	Accepted
H2b eWOM → Socialization	2.95	0.771	4.77	***	Accepted
H2c eWOM → Escape and relaxation	3.54	1.00	4.17	***	Accepted
H2d eWOM → Self-development	2.70	0.715	4.15	***	Accepted
H3a Travel risk perception → Novelty and learning	-2.47	0.928	-3.48	***	Accepted
H3b Travel risk perception → Socialization	-2.26	0.853	-3.59	***	Accepted
H3c Travel risk perception → Escape and relaxation	-2.89	1.21	-3.33	***	Accepted
H3d Travel risk perception → Self-development	-2.11	0.857	-3.20	0.001	Accepted
H4a Novelty and learning → Destination loyalty	0.441	0.112	3.24	0.001	Accepted
H4b Socialization → Destination loyalty	0.376	0.097	3.09	0.002	Accepted
H4c Escape and relaxation → Destination loyalty	-0.091	0.103	-0.678	0.498	Rejected
H4d Self-development → Destination loyalty	0.076	0.079	0.800	0.424	Rejected

hypotheses were supported, as summarised in Table 5. The results revealed that while eWOM has a positive effect on the dimensions of travel motivation, the impact of travel risk perception is negative. Moreover, novelty/learning and socialisation positively affect destination loyalty; however, the influences of escape and relaxation, and self-development are meaningless. Travel risk perception also has a strong impact on eWOM.

5.2 Contribution and implications

According to the results of the present study, destination loyalty has causal relationships with travel motivation and travel risk perception and eWOM. Besides, not only pull motivations but push motivations are also the determinants of destination loyalty. Although destination loyalty has been accepted as an essential and extensively discussed subject in the literature, this study is the first to examine the structural relationships of travel risk perception, eWOM, travel motivations and destination loyalty.

The findings of this research contribute to the relevant literature in several ways. First, the current study proposed and validated an integrated framework of determinants and implications of tourists' travel motivation, which could be applied in other service contexts. We termed the framework as "determinants and implications of tourists' travel motivation" because eWOM and travel risk perceptions are the two significant factors influencing the travel motivations in the model. Thus, we considered these two variables as "determinants" of travel motivations. Furthermore, as travel motivation influences destination loyalty, we named this relationship as "implications of travel motivation." The proposed model revealed that eWOM and travel risk perception are the most important determinants of travel motivation. These issues should thus be considered in the strategic management and planning of Cappadocia as a destination.

Secondly, travel risk perception negatively affects travel motivations. This result contradicts [Lin et al. \(2012\)](#), who revealed that the travel risks perceived by students had a positive effect on their motivation. However, the result of the present study can be explained according to the level of uncertainty and its decreasing effect on travel motivation because travel risks are associated with the uncertainties that consumers encounter when they cannot anticipate the consequences of purchase behaviours ([Park and Reisinger, 2010](#)). As it was the first time that most tourists (66.1%) visited the region, they were likely to have travel risk perceptions that may decrease their travel motivation. This can be overcome with the help of knowledge about the destination. In this regard, it can be suggested to people from the destination management and marketing side to use promotional activities sufficiently to reduce the uncertainties about the destination. In this regard, the destination promotion and information should focus on stressing that the travellers visiting Cappadocia won't have any safety and security problems by providing detailed information sources (e.g. videos, direct experience of previous travellers or similar effective tools).

Furthermore, tourism entrepreneurs should use eWOM platforms efficiently (e.g. for a hotel: answering the question of their guests, addressing their concerns and try to find a solution or offer an option to vanish their dissatisfaction from their websites, their TripAdvisor, or similar platforms that they are using) and, of course, spend an effort to provide quality service and experience that can create positive eWOM reviews because eWOM platforms are significant sources of information that travellers trust ([Pandey and Sahu, 2020](#)). eWOM platforms are also beneficial for destination managers and practitioners ([Jacobsen and Munar, 2012](#)) to explore their weaknesses and strong aspects that may help them to provide high-quality services and experiences.

Thirdly, although the effect of travel risk perception on travel motivation is negative, it has been revealed that eWOM has a positive impact on all travel motivation dimensions. This finding supports [Llodra-Riera et al.'s \(2015\)](#) suggestion that information sources such as social media and Web platforms have positive effects on the motivation of tourists to visit a place. Also, it partially coincides with the study result of [Junaedi and Harjanto \(2020\)](#), which revealed that the more WOM is used, the better the relationship between motivation and tourists' intention to revisit exists. According to these results, it can be concluded that tourists' reading online reviews about destinations is likely to increase their travel motivation towards the destinations.

Fourthly, as expected, travel risk perception strongly affects eWOM. Because when the risk is high, consumers tend to benefit more from marketing communication tools to collect more information about products or services ([Öztürk, 2015](#), p. 17). In other words, as the perceived risk has a relationship with the information source ([Jeuring and Becken, 2013](#)), destination managers and entrepreneurs should concentrate more on internet information resources to reduce possible risk perceptions. Finally, another theoretical outcome of the study is that from the travel motivation dimensions, novelty/learning and socialization increase tourist loyalty to the destination. Although no study investigating the relationship between novelty/learning, and socialization motivations and destination loyalty has been

found in the literature, novelty/learning and socialization are considered among the most important motivations of tourists, especially tourists seeking cultural characteristics (Pearce and Lee, 2005; Chiang *et al.*, 2015). However, this result is partly consistent with the study of Yoon and Uysal (2005), which has revealed that the push motivation that consists of relaxation, family togetherness and safety influences destination loyalty.

Cappadocia is a significant attraction for tourists interested in nature and culture with its unique geological formation and fairy chimneys consisting of geographical events (Seyitoglu, 2020). For these reasons, most tourists visiting Cappadocia destination may likely be tourists seeking new cultural aspects and wanting to socialize. Thus, when their expectations are met, these tourists will probably be willing to revisit the destination and recommend it to other people. In this regard, destination managers and practitioners are suggested to provide touristic activities that contain cultural aspects and address the demand of travellers.

From the travel motivation dimensions, escape/relaxation and self-development have no significant effect on the destination. As cultural and nature tourism is the priority feature of Cappadocia destination, it is not surprising that these two aspects do not influence the destination loyalty perception of foreign tourists. Moreover, there may be many destinations for escape/relaxation and self-development motivations. However, cultural and authentic aspects are unique to a specific destination and hard to be found in other places. Therefore, tourists may want to visit the same destination to experience the unique features of Cappadocia again because they cannot find the same aspects in another destination.

On the other hand, to succeed in the destination loyalty of tourists having escape/relaxation and self-development, destination managers and practitioners may create and organize different attractions to meet these tourist types' expectations. However, as an initial step, they must explore the expectations of these tourist typologies to create proper attractions for them. Additionally, in the proposed model, travel motivation is seen as a mediating structure between destination loyalty with travel risk and eWOM. As a result, destination managers must maintain a higher level of tourist motivation to improve destination competitiveness by constituting a more loyal customer profile.

It is suggested for destination managers and practitioners that travel risk perceptions and the effects of eWOM, which are influencing factors and can be considered the determinants of tourists' motivations, should be well scrutinized and understood. However, travel motivation is positively affected by eWOM, whereas it is negatively affected by travel risk. Therefore, destination managers should reduce tourists' travel risk perception levels to increase travel motivation which plays an important role in destination loyalty. In other words, the perception that a destination does not contain any uncertainty for tourists should be created.

To conclude, the current study has revealed and confirmed the existence of a critical relationship between the determinants of travel motivations, travel motivation dimensions and destination loyalty. This finding would be beneficial for destination managers and practitioners to develop the right strategy for destination marketing success.

5.3 Limitations and future research recommendations

The current study has several limitations and suggestions for future research. Firstly, the sample of this study consists of international tourists visiting Cappadocia; thus, the sample cannot represent all types of destinations. Therefore, a generalization of the proposed model in the study is suggested in other settings with different attributes. Such studies can provide opportunities to evaluate the extent and direction of travel motivation as tourists relate degrees of travel risk and eWOM to destination loyalty. Furthermore, this study does not include the experience dimension in the model. Thus, further research may be

conducted to examine both the motivations and tourists' experiences visiting the destination.

As travel motivation was found to be a mediator between destination loyalty and antecedents (travel risk and eWOM) in this study, future work may consider the relationship between travel motivation and other variables such as travel experience, tourist worries, destination image and satisfaction. Lastly, as the present research was conducted before the current pandemic, it does not address the travel risk perceptions related to COVID-19. Further studies may consider the current situation and develop different research models which test different variables such as travel risk perceptions related to the pandemic, eWOM, travel motivations, future travel behaviours, etc.

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