

The Study of Travel Willingness in the Post-epidemic in Taiwan -Mediating Variables of Perceived Health Risks and Favorable Tourism Factors

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Abstract:

Background: *This study intends to explore the effect of the post-epidemic period on travel intentions from the perspective of people's own health perception risks and favorable factors of the external environment. Based on the status of one's own perceived situation on the willingness to travel, and taking health perceived risks and favorable factors of travel as the intermediary factors, we can further understand the interaction between them.*

Materials and Methods: *Using hierarchical regression analysis and bootstrap method, the research results show that the perceived situation has a significant impact on the willingness to travel, and the health perceived risk and favorable factors of travel have a mediating effect on the perceived situation and the willingness to travel.*

Results: *From the results of the study, perceptual context has a direct and significant negative impact on travel willingness and favorable factors of tourism, and perceptual context has a significant positive impact on health perception risks. Health perceived risk has a significant negative impact on travel intention, while tourism favorable factors have a significant positive impact on travel intention.*

Conclusion: *The results of this study hope to understand the status of people's willingness to travel after the pandemic, and provide reference for further measures for relevant businesses.*

Key Word: *Perceived situation; travel intention; post-epidemic.*

Date of Submission: 08-03-2023

Date of Acceptance: 21-03-2023

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the global economy, and it is estimated that by 2023, the global economy will suffer an unexpected loss of about US\$8 trillion (Nation U., 2022). According to statistics from the United Nations, the global tourism industry will lose about US\$2 trillion in revenue in 2021. Moreover, in the short-term and long-term situations of the epidemic, the crisis may continue to threaten the ability of the tourism industry of various countries to revive (Goel, 2021). What's more, countries that rely on tourism appear to be the hardest hit by the epidemic and may take longer to recover after the crisis (Assaf, 2020). In fact, in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic, the continuous blockade of tourism in many countries has led to rising unemployment, economic recession, and many social problems. Therefore, all countries are developing appropriate action plans to adapt to the unprecedented persistent impact of COVID-19.

In order to save the worsening economic crisis, most countries have considered reopening their tourism industry despite still health-related risks, and have adopted a wide range of practical measures to stimulate tourism demand and increase destination capacity to meet the post-epidemic era tourism the expectations of readers (Huynh, 2022). At the beginning of 2022, the global tourism business will return to about 61% of 2019, and it is expected to have a significant revitalization by the end of 2022, as restrictions are gradually lifted in various regions of the world (UNWTO, 2022). Specifically, 45 countries, including 14 in Asia, have lifted or eased COVID-19-related restrictions since early June 2022. These results will be considered an opportunity to promote the recovery of the global tourism industry.

While the recovery in tourist destinations around the world is encouraging, key questions remain about the extent to which tourists will be willing to travel and support destination recovery in post-pandemic conditions. Likewise, unpredictable conundrums remain as to whether the COVID-19 pandemic is over, and whether tourist destinations can ensure their safety and respond effectively to future resurgence crises in a more resilient manner. Therefore, this study attempts to explore tourists' willingness to travel after the pandemic, and explore the impact of tourists' health risks and favorable factors on tourists' willingness to travel.

II. Literature review

Perceptual situation

Perceived context refers to people's perception of the COVID-19 epidemic. In many respects, the COVID-19 pandemic has made border controls in many regions complicating business for the tourism industry (Baum & Hai, 2020; Günay et al., 2020). Since the emergence of the COVID-19 epidemic, it has become an important factor affecting global travel intentions (Gibbs et al., 2020; Hiselius & Arnfalk, 2021; Bae et al., 2022), because the epidemic affects people's psychological and spiritual conditions (Abbas, 2020; Maqsood et al., 2021a, Maqsood et al., 2021b), many business and leisure travelers are forced to re-examine their travel plans (Borkowski et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 epidemic has triggered fear, anxiety, and uncertainty among tourists, exacerbating the hesitation to travel abroad (Luo and Lam, 2020; Zheng et al., 2021), which is attributed to Tourism destinations raise a cascade of health and safety concerns (Zhu & Deng, 2020; Sukaatmadja et al., 2022; Dedeoğlu et al., 2022). The tourism industry is regarded as one of the key drivers of the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic (Qiu et al., 2020). Even if the travel industry has taken relevant health protection measures, it still cannot attract tourists' interest (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Covid-19 has had severe economic impacts as countries close their borders to limit the spread of the coronavirus (Albattat et al., 2020; Connor, 2020; UNWTO, 2020). When the COVID-19 crisis eased somewhat, the recovery of the tourism industry was correlated with communication and public perception (Beirman, 2003). And it is critical to keep travelers informed about the crisis and provide a realistic assessment of potential risks without causing stress and anxiety (Boin & McConnell, 2007). Studies have also proved that mass communication tools play an important role in destination image and tourists' willingness to visit, as well as risk perception (Gartner, 1993; Gartner & Shen, 1992; Govers et al., 2007).

Willingness to travel

From a consumer perspective, investigations into post-COVID-19 crisis recovery should include factors relevant to travel decisions and should assess whether these factors are likely to change significantly post-COVID-19 crisis. If these factors do not show significant differences, general economic and travel safety theory can be applied to post-COVID-19 travel scenarios. Since travel intention is a typical representative of travel decision-making, this study reviews and incorporates factors influencing travel intention, which include motivation, constraints, subjective norms, and behavioral control.

Desirability is defined as an individual's planned or performed future behavior that represents the individual's expectation of that behavior at a given time or environment, and the likelihood that that behavior can be manipulated (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Much of the research on travel intentions is based on Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which holds that behavioral intentions contain the results of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB provides a clear framework for examining intentions systematically, as the more favorable an individual's attitude towards behavior is, the more strongly an individual adopts that behavior or supports those behaviors; at the same time, the more individuals feel that they can control these behaviors, the more they may engage in such behaviors (De Leeuw et al., 2015; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

In addition to applying the TPB framework, many studies have looked at motivation as a factor influencing travel decisions and destination selection. Motivation is seen as guiding human behavior (Dann, 1981) and has been widely accepted in the travel motivation literature (Jiang et al., 2019). Motivational factors are represented by seeking new knowledge, self-esteem, self-improvement, social interaction, and rest and relaxation. Among them, seeking new knowledge is considered to be an important factor that can induce travel intentions (Jiang et al., 2019). In some studies, motivation is regarded as one of the most critical factors in tourism marketing, and the influence of motivation on tourism intention may not be so consistent (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Li et al., 2010). Many studies have confirmed that travel restrictions are an important factor affecting travel intentions, especially in outbound travel (Jin & Sparks, 2017; Li et al., 2011; Sparks & Pan, 2009). Therefore, based on the above literature review, this study proposes the research hypothesis as follows:

H1: Perceived situation has a negative impact on travel intention

Health Perceived Risks

The continued escalation of the COVID-19 outbreak has led to lockdowns, quarantines in various regions, and because of the quarantine, people worry, feel anxious, and think they are at risk of contracting COVID-19. Perceived risk to health refers to an individual's assessment of the probability and consequences of adverse outcomes (Sjöberg, 2000). Risk is a complex, psychologically oriented, socially constructed phenomenon influenced by factors such as probability, severity, controllability, fear, potential catastrophe, and unfamiliarity with danger (Renn & Rohrman, 2000; Slovic, 1987). A person's subjective perception of risk can influence their behavior in the context of new, unobservable and unpredictable hazards such as COVID-19. If

people perceive themselves to be at risk of contracting a disease with potentially serious health consequences, they have the ability to adapt to the situation (Slovic, 1987). For example, the perception of risk can motivate them to adopt preventive behaviors, including staying home, avoiding public gatherings, maintaining physical and social distance, and maintaining personal hygiene (Yıldırım, Geçer, Akgül, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 epidemic, studies have shown that risk and anxiety, worry will affect daily life (Kwok et al., 2020), and fear of infection with COVID-19 behavior and health status, life satisfaction and socioeconomic status. There is some correlation (Yıldırım et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020; Gerhold, 2020; Cao et al., 2020).

The protective motivation theory states that people tend to protect themselves based on their perceptions of the severity of threatening events, perceived danger, response efficiency, and self-efficacy (Floyd et al., 2000; Rogers, 1975). A cost-benefit analysis is performed simultaneously for preventive measures, and more specific preventive measures are taken during the COVID-19 epidemic due to the perceived high risk (Sutton, 1982; Wise et al., 2020). So as long as you try to avoid putting yourself in a risky situation (Leppin&Aro, 2009). Therefore, based on the above literature review, this study proposes the research hypothesis as follows:

H2: Perceived context has a positive impact on health perceived risk

Health Perceived Risk and Travel Willingness

To help travel operators be more confident in implementing preventive measures during the pandemic, it is imperative for travel operators to understand the relationship between the importance of preventive measures taken by customers during the pandemic and their willingness to travel. From previous research literature, it is known that health awareness is positively related to customers' behavioral intentions. For example, Dipietro et al., (2016) pointed out that customers with high health awareness prefer operators to provide relevant information. Choi & Zhao (2010) believe that customers' perceptions of the importance of health behaviors will affect their choice of destinations. Therefore, it is hypothesized that when the behavior of tourism operators meets their expectations, then customers will have a higher willingness to go out.

Travel intentions depend on one's attitudes and preferences toward a particular product or brand (Khoa, 2021; Shin, 2022; De Vos, 2022). According to Khoa (2021), tourist behavior is also influenced by coherent and emotional context. In other words, psychological and physical issues are intertwined factors that often influence destination behavior, leading to travel intentions (Xu, 2022; Chinazzi, 2020; Villacé-Molinero, 2021).

Personal risk in tourism refers to the possibility of personal danger or injury to people or tourists during travel, some personal risks that may occur, such as tourists becoming victims of terrorism or natural disasters at the location, but few studies have included disease Potential for physical and mental risk as a travel plan (Oshriyeh, 2022; Tergu, 2022; Lee, 2021). Since the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a global pandemic in February 2020, tourists worry about contracting the disease while traveling (Gupta, 2021; Chan, 2022; Lee, 2021). Therefore, this study puts forward the research hypothesis:

H3: Health perceived risk has a negative impact on travel intention

Favorable factors of tourism

Empirical insights are becoming increasingly available as researchers begin to understand the direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 on various types of travel, given that the pandemic has resulted in dramatic changes in consumer choice behavior. Hang, Aroean& Chen (2020) found that crisis communication about shared emotions will build emotional attachment, which in turn increases tourists' willingness to visit, especially after three doses of vaccines, the relaxation of entry and exit controls in various countries, and the number of confirmed cases is no longer an influence on tourism.

Pardo &Ladeiras (2020) used a series of virtual forums to explore the views of travel and tourism experts from around the world on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected regional or national tourism activity, and how they can prepare for the recovery of the tourism industry. Some researchers believe that tourism authorities in various regions should prioritize deregulation, enhanced tourism intelligence, and new control measures for the epidemic. Pardo &Ladeiras (2020) believe that culture and natural resources are unique elements with the potential to attract tourists, and in the post-pandemic and increasingly competitive tourism market, the design and introduction of novel experiences, as well as the wisdom of investing in the tourism industry Specialization will increase tourists' willingness to travel.

Based on the above information, this paper defines the favorable factors of tourism as deregulation of tourist destinations, enhanced tourism information, new control measures for the epidemic, unique elements with potential to attract tourists, and the establishment of shared emotions with tourists. Therefore, based on the above literature review, this study proposes the research hypothesis as follows:

H4: Perceived situation has a negative impact on tourism favorable factors

H5: Favorable factors for tourism have a positive impact on tourism intention

H6: Favorable factors of tourism have a mediating effect on perceived situation and tourism intention

The Mediating Effect of Health Perceived Risk on Travel Intention

In general, perceived risk can be defined as the perception of the possibility of negative consequences arising from uncertainty (Oglethorpe & Monroe, 1987). In the case of communicable diseases, physical health problems are considered a risk to the individual (Law, 2006; Lepp& Gibson, 2003; Maser &Weiermair, 1998; Sönmez&Graefe, 1998). In the current study, perceived risk was used to assess people's fears about the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 and the likelihood that the disease would cause serious physical harm. People who believe that the risk of COVID-19 is low tend to believe that COVID-19 will not have too much adverse effect on them; Affected by the implementation of precautionary measures by the industry. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H7: Health perceived risk has a mediating effect on perceived situation and travel intention

III. Research methods

Research framework and assumptions

This study mainly explores whether people's willingness to travel will be affected by perceived health risks and favorable factors of travel after the pandemic. Based on the research purpose and relevant literature, the research framework (see Figure 1) was proposed, and the Pearson correlation analysis (Pearson correlation) was used to understand the relevant situation, as well as the perceived situation, health perceived risk, and The correlation between tourism favorable factors and various aspects of tourism intention. Then, using the PROCESS software developed by Hayes (2013), using Model 4 in the plug-in model to conduct bootstrap analysis (Bootstrap) repeated 5000 times of sampling analysis, in order to carry out the mediation effect of health perception risks and tourism favorable factors on tourism intentions. Among the research variables, the independent variable is the perceived situation, the intermediary variable is the perceived risk of health and the favorable factors of tourism, and the dependent variable is the willingness to travel. The research structure diagram is shown in Figure 1 below.

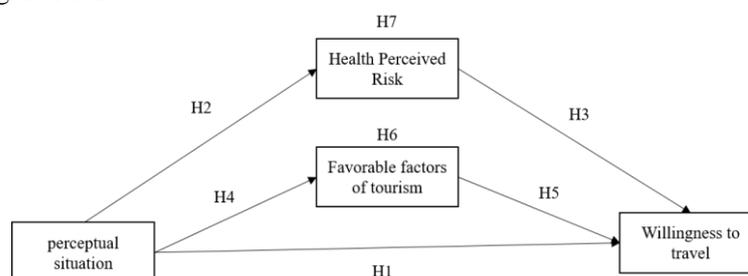


Figure 1 Research Architecture Diagram

Sources of data

In order to explore the people's willingness to travel after the pandemic, this study designed a questionnaire and distributed it in the form of a Google form. In order to strengthen the randomness of the sample, it was divided into three times, from March 2 to March 15, 2022, respectively. From 30 April to 15 May, and from 5 June to 20 June. A total of 378 questionnaires were recovered, and the incomplete copies were deleted. There were 373 valid questionnaires in total, and the effective rate of the questionnaires was 98.7%. The ratio of male to female in this data sample is 38.9% to 61.1%; the age is mainly over 50 years old (56.8%); the marriage relationship is mainly married (70.2%); the education level is mainly university (39.1%), followed by For high school (21.4%); the main occupation is military public education (24.1%), followed by the service industry (23.1%); the monthly income level is mainly 30,000 to 50,000 yuan (35.1%), followed by 50,000 to 70,000 million (29.8%).

3. Reliability and validity analysis.

Based on the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, this study thoroughly reviewed the previous literature, adopted the relevant theoretical framework of previous studies, and selected key theoretical components suitable for the research background and research scope to form the content of the questionnaire. This study adopts the questionnaire survey method, which has four parts. The first part is the perceived situation, the second part is the perceived risk of health, the third part is the favorable factors of travel, and the fourth part is the willingness to travel. Among them, the measurement items of perceived situation and favorable factors of tourism refer to the data of Cahyanto et al., (2016) and Lee et al. (2012). Health perceived risk was measured using seven items from Floyd and Pennington-Gray (2004) and Wolff et al. (2019). For tourism intention, refer to Sebastian (2019). Through exploratory factor analysis on the scale data, after deleting inappropriate items, the Cronbach α values of all dimensions were higher than 0.8 (perceived situation = 0.831, health perceived risk = 0.905, tourism favorable factors = 0.865, tourism intention = 0.857), indicating that its internal consistency is good and belongs to high reliability.

This study uses SPSS software to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on 373 sample data. The results show that the Bartlett spherical test values corresponding to each dimension have reached significance at the level of 0.001, and the overall KMO value of the measurement scale is greater than 0.5, indicating that this study The data are suitable for factor analysis. At the same time, the accumulated variance explained by the common factors extracted by each facet is greater than 50%, which proves that the sample data has good construct validity. However, due to the item measuring perceived situation "I think it is easy to catch COVID-19 after the epidemic" and the item measuring willingness to travel "If COVID-19 does not spread again in the destination where I travel, I would The factor loads of the two items and the four factors of "willing to travel locally" do not exceed 0.5, so these two items are removed, and the convergent validity is improved after re-analysis. The factor standard loadings of all other measurement indicators on their respective latent variables are between 0.7171 and 0.954, all of which are greater than the requirement of 0.5, indicating that the scale has good convergent validity.

IV. Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Table 1 is the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of each variable, and the mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient and so on of the main variables are obtained. Perceived situation has a significant positive correlation with health perceived risk, and a significant negative correlation between perceived situation and tourism favorable factors, as well as travel intention. Health perceived risk has a significant negative correlation with tourism favorable factors and tourism intention. There is a significant positive correlation between tourism favorable factors and tourism willingness. Therefore, the significance of the correlation between the variables selected in this study is consistent with theoretical expectations, indicating that the mediation effect can be further carried out. From the analysis results in the table, it can be seen that the perceived situation has a significant negative impact on the willingness to travel, thus supporting the research hypothesis H1; the perceived situation has a significant positive effect on the perceived risk of health, thus supporting the research hypothesis H2; the perceived risk of the health and the willingness to travel have an The significant negative impact supports research hypothesis H3; the perceived situation has a significant negative impact on tourism favorable factors, thus supporting research hypothesis H4; tourism favorable factors have a significant positive impact on travel intentions, thus supporting research hypothesis H5.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients (n=373)

	Means	Standard deviations	Perceptual Situation	Health Perceived Risk	Favorable Factors of Tourism	Willingness to Travel
Perceptual Situation	4.0239	.72952				
Health Perceived Risk	3.9925	.74386	.687**			
Favorable Factors of Tourism	3.6818	.79433	-0.156*	-0.28**		
Willingness to travel	3.2920	.7648	-0.134**	-0.257**	0.557**	

Note: Two-tailed test, ** means $p < 0.01$, * means $p < 0.05$

Linear regression analysis

Next, a stepwise linear regression analysis was carried out with the perceived situation, perceived health risks and favorable factors of tourism as independent variables, and the willingness to travel as the dependent variable. After the aforementioned data analysis and processing, this study then uses hierarchical regression analysis to further confirm whether the correlation between variables is significant. Demographic variables in this study include gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation as control variables, perceived situation as independent variable, travel intention as dependent variable, health perceived risk and favorable factors of travel as mediating variable, and stratum regression analysis is carried out. The analysis results are shown in Table 2.

As shown in the hierarchical regression analysis in Table 2, perceived situation ($\beta = -0.134$, $p < 0.005$) has a significant negative correlation with travel intention, and health perceived risk ($\beta = -0.257$, $p < 0.001$) also has a significant negative correlation with travel intention. Favorable factors for tourism ($\beta = 0.557$, $p < 0.001$) have a significant correlation with the willingness to travel.

Analysis of the mediating effect of perceived health risks and favorable tourism factors on perceived situation and tourism intention

This study uses module 4 (Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2017) in the SPSS PROCESS macro to calculate the confidence interval obtained by the bootstrap method 5,000 times as the calculation and verification of the mediation effect, and analyze the hypotheses H6 and H7 of this study to predict health perception Risk and tourism favorable factors will mediate the relationship between perceived situation and tourism intention. The results obtained are shown in Table 3. Health perceived risks and favorable factors of tourism have significant indirect effects on perceived situation and willingness to travel. The intermediary variables (healthy perceived risks and favorable factors of tourism) do not contain 0 in the 95% confidence interval, respectively, CI = [-.0185, -0.022], and CI = [-.151, -0.024], showing that health perceived risk and tourism favorable factors have a mediating effect on the perceived situation and tourism intention, thus supporting hypotheses H6 and H7.

Table 2: Regression analysis of perceived situation on travel intention (n=373)

Research variable	Demographics	Willingness to travel				
		A Independent variables	B Mediator variables	A*B Interaction	C Mediator variables	A*C Interaction
Control variables						
Gender	-0.032	-0.079	-0.028	-0.028	0.026	0.026
Age	-0.259**	-0.031**	-0.223**	-0.233**	-0.178**	-0.179**
Marriage	0.023	-0.245	0.040	0.024	-0.018	-0.018
Education	0.044	0.036	0.051	0.048	-0.033	-0.033
Occupation	-0.012	-0.011	-0.016	-0.019	0.011	0.011
Independent variables						
Perceptual Situation		-0.134*		0.081		-0.048
Health Perceived Risk			-0.257**	-0.313**		
旅遊有利因素					0.557**	0.550**
R ²	0.069	0.018	0.066	0.070	0.311	0.313
Adj-R ²	0.056	0.015	0.064	0.065	0.309	0.309
F	5.427**	6.776**	26.258**	13.832**	167.16**	84.245**
ΔR		0.128	0.109	0.130	0.423	0.002

Note: Two-tailed test, ** means p<0.01, * means p<0.05

Table 3:Mediation analysis of health perceived risk and tourism favorable factors on perceived situation and tourism intention

Mediating variables	Mediation Effect	Standard Error (BootSE)	Lower Bound Confidence Interval(BootLLCI)	Upper Bound Confidence Interval(BootULCI)
Health Perceived Risk	-0.104	0.042	-0.185	-0.022
Favorable Factors of Tourism	-0.088	0.033	-0.151	-0.024

V. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

This study takes the people's willingness to travel after the COVID-19 pandemic as the research goal. After the aforementioned statistical analysis, the research results are summarized in Table 4:

Table 4: Results of research hypothesis testing

Hypothesis Testing	Result
H1 : Perceived context has a negative impact on travel intention	Accepted
H2 : Perceived context has a positive impact on health perceived risk	Accepted
H3 : Health Perceived Risk Has a Negative impact on Travel Intention	Accepted
H4 : Perceived Situation Has a Negative impact on Tourism Favorable Factors	Accepted
H5 : Favorable factors for tourism have a positive effect on tourism intention	Accepted
H6 : Favorable factors of tourism have a mediating effect on perceived situation and tourism intention	Accepted
H7 : Health perceived risk has a mediating effect on perceived situation and travel intention	Accepted

From the results of the study, perceptual context has a direct and significant negative impact on travel willingness and favorable factors of tourism, and perceptual context has a significant positive impact on health perception risks. Health perceived risk has a significant negative impact on travel intention, while tourism

favorable factors have a significant positive impact on travel intention. From the above results, we can see that the research hypotheses H1~H7 are all established after various verification and analysis.

Management Implications and Suggestions

According to the statistical analysis results of this study, the following three management implications and suggestions are put forward:

Perceived Situation and Health Perceived Risk: after the pandemic, the people has a deeper understanding of the epidemic. Therefore, the perceived situation of the epidemic, as shown in the research results, has a positive relationship with the perceived risk of health, indicating that although the public has a high willingness to travel, the health aspect The risk is still a priority consideration, which is consistent with the research of Dipietro et al. (2016), because consumers with high health awareness prefer operators to provide relevant information, so it is suggested that operators should make relevant information about tourist destinations more Only transparency can increase people's willingness to travel to the place.

Perceived Situation, Favorable Factors and Travel Willingness: this study found that when the awareness of the epidemic is higher, there is a significant negative correlation with favorable factors for tourism and willingness to travel, indicating that even if there are favorable factors for tourism, people will still reduce their willingness to travel due to the impact of the epidemic. This result it can echo the research conclusions put forward by Jin & Sparks (2017), which pointed out that the restriction of people's travel is an important factor affecting the willingness to travel. Therefore, in order to increase people's willingness to travel, in addition to the relevant favorable policies of the government, it is suggested that the industry should also use the unique elements of local culture and natural resources to attract tourists (Pardo &Ladeiras, 2020), and gradually restore the economic scale of tourism.

Perceived health risks and favorable tourism factors have a mediating effect on perceived situation and tourism intention:finally, in the hypothesis established with health perceived risks and favorable factors of tourism as intermediary factors, the research found that perceived risks of health and favorable factors of tourism have an indirect mediating effect on the perceived situation and the willingness to travel, and the direct effect value of the perceived situation on the willingness to travel is 0.048, while The indirect mediation effect values are -0.104 and -0.088 for health perceived risk, which shows that people's perceived health risk or favorable factors in the external environment will indirectly affect their willingness to travel. It is suggested that the relevant units should use the public media to force publicity to stimulate people's willingness to travel.

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Kao-Shan Chen. "The Study of Travel Willingness in the Post-epidemic in Taiwan -Mediating Variables of Perceived Health Risks and Favorable Tourism Factors." *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, Vol.25, No. 03, 2023, pp. 01-10