

Threat and Coping Appraisal for Protection Motivation towards Healthy Business Travelling Behaviours

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Abstract

A psychological paradigm known as protection motivation theory (PMT) explains why people feel compelled to defend themselves against possible dangers. When used in conjunction with healthy business travel practices, PMT can be a powerful tool in motivating people to take the necessary safety measures to protect their health and well-being when they are on business traveling. This paper aims to review the past studies on threat appraisal and coping appraisal which are used mainly in the PMT model. This is crucial before suggesting to business organizations how threat appraisal and coping appraisal could be used as a guideline and motivational tool towards adopting healthy behaviors amongst their talents. The review may also lead to crafting possible interventions in the form of a working model that can be applied for appropriate actions with selected collaborators.

Keywords: PMT, Threat Appraisal, Coping Appraisal, Business Travel Behaviours.

Introduction

Parallel with the Malaysian government's efforts to attract more foreign investments, many multinational organizations have made Malaysia their regional hub as their operational headquarters, international procurement centers, regional distribution centers, global operation hubs, treasury management Centres, and principal hubs (MIDA, 2021). MIDA has approved a total of 347 global and regional projects worth RM469 billion and a total of 36,693 high-value job positions created in Malaysia since the year 2006 until March 2020(MIDA, 2021).

Travel was the No.1 top component for Export from the year 2010 to 2019 and for Import, it was either top 1 or top 2 component from the year 2010 to 2019 (Department of Statistics, 2021). This indicates how important the travel industry is for Malaysia to bring in more businesses and recovery to the socio-economy of the country. The slow positive recovery of Malaysia's economy was due to the reopening of more business activities during the

Movement Control Order (MCO) 2.0 which saw less stringent orders than the first MCO that was imposed in March 2020 last year. The recovery was also the result of various stimulus economic packages from the Government which helped to navigate the economic recovery overall.

It is so important for Malaysia to look into the safety and health protocols of business travels and reinforce more numerous, better protocols to lessen travelers' danger while traveling for work in and out of Malaysia. It is hoped that by better understanding the importance of duty of care, Malaysian businesses engaged in foreign activities will be able to address it for the immediate benefit of their operations. Industry experts also emphasize the importance of communication for travelers to make safer travel decisions and practice safe traveling behaviors.

Hence, the business travel industry in developing countries like Malaysia needs to study and strategize effective practices and action plans to support economic recovery measures while mitigating the impact of possible diseases and environmental disruptions on employment, society, and the economy. Accordingly, this study is looking at these gaps in the business travel segment in the Malaysian context. Specifically, this research intends to look into the effect of threat appraisal and coping appraisal on protection motivation, and healthy traveling behavior as well as the moderating role of government efforts in the relationship between protection motivation and healthy traveling behavior.

Materials and Methods

PMT is a framework that has been empirically tested in a variety of situations (Floyd et al., 2000). Threat appraisal and coping appraisal are different evaluation procedures that result in adaptive and maladaptive responses. The threat appraisal represents the disparity between perceived rewards and perceived threats (Wang et al., 2019). Threat appraisal, according to Milne et al (2000), is the method of assessing the elements of a message that are important to an individual's assessment of how endangered he or she feels. In a nutshell, the PMT factors that represent threat evaluation are perceived vulnerabilities, seriousness, and fear arousal. Perceived vulnerability establishes an individual's vulnerability to the danger that has been presented (Milne et al., 2000).

On the other hand, coping appraisal is a subjective opinion of one's capacity to adapt to a challenge based on "reaction efficacy," "self-efficacy," "internal reward," and "response costs." Individuals desire to participate in health-promoting behavior if they perceive it will assist them in neutralizing a threat, if they are capable of doing so, and if they believe it is desirable and has minimal cost (Milne et al., 2000; Rogers, 1983).

According to two early meta-analyses of PMT studies (Floyd et al., 2000; Milne et al., 2000), a rise in severity, sensitivity, reaction, and self-efficacy significantly alters coping appraisal, resulting in a larger likelihood of adapting responses. Milne et al. (2000) similarly found that threat appraisal variables had a stronger association with dependent variables (i.e., intents and behavioral patterns) than coping appraisal variables. According to Yan et al. (2014), coping appraisal is defined as the difference between perceived efficacy and perceived cost.

The study's goal can be split into four categories: exploration, description, testing hypothesis, and case study basis. Because of the essence of exploration, such type of study is based when there is very little knowledge or when the concerns are dealt with historically, whereas a description study is done to characterize the qualities of constructs within an environment. Hypothesis-testing research is utilized for studies that focus on predicting and clarifying correlations between variables in the context, whereas case studies are frequently used for studies that focus on acquiring specific information from organizations, individuals, or communities (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The research goal for this study is descriptive and hypothesis-testing. This is because the study's major goal is to look at the effect of determinants of healthy travel behavior. To forecast and analyze the association between the factors in the conceptual framework, hypotheses are also formed. The result would be used as a basis for intended interventions by organizations towards developing a guideline of motivational tools for adopting healthy travel behaviors.

The research framework is summarized in the following Figure 1:

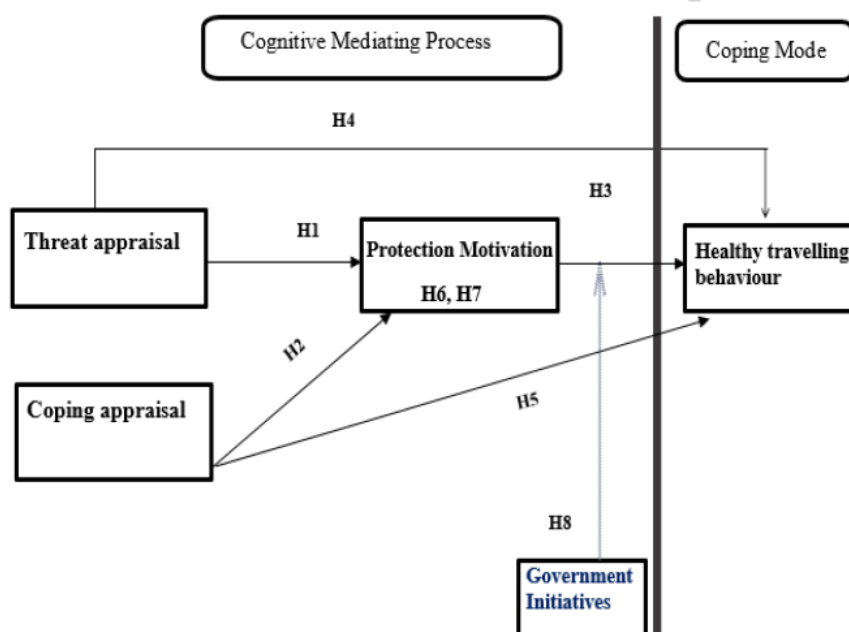


Figure 1: Research Framework

Result and Discussions

As the study is still a work in progress, the anticipation on the result would be more of the validation of our intended proposed conceptual framework based on the collected data from business travelers in Malaysia. According to Cavana et al (2001), one of the major characteristics that could influence the study's conclusions is the degree and level of researcher involvement, which is largely decided by how much intervention the researcher applied to the natural flow of research. The amount of researcher interference is governed by the study's goal and the style of investigation, which can be hypothesis-testing, descriptive, exploratory, correlational, or causal. The level of researcher influence is minimal in this study because the objective and style of investigation are respectively hypothesis-testing and correlational techniques. Data is gathered through the distribution of survey questionnaires to the respective respondents and this study is being carried out among

business travelers in Malaysia, specifically in the cities of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Johor, and Penang Klang Valley and in natural settings.

Conclusion

In the PMT model, individual and contextual conditions can encourage or discourage people from engaging in certain behaviors, and these elements' effects are mediated by individual cognitive processes (Rogers, 1983). Both threat appraisal and coping appraisal elements are important to better understand human behaviours using the PMT model. The possible interventions to business organizations could range on many possible healthy travelling behaviours as follows:

- Risk Perception: Understanding potential threats motivates travelers to take protective measures.
- Self-Efficacy: Belief in one's ability to take protective actions leads to healthy behavior adoption.
- Response Efficacy: Confidence in the effectiveness of protective measures encourages their use.
- Fear Management: Proper management of fear through information.
- Behavioral Intentions: PMT leads to engaging in healthy travel behaviors.
- Improved Outcomes: Adopting healthy behaviors results in better health and safety outcomes.
- Education and Awareness: To educate travelers about risks and protective measures.

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