



A systematic literature review of risk and gender research in tourism



Elaine Chiao Ling Yang^{*}, Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, Charles Arcodia

Griffith Business School, Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management, Nathan Campus, Griffith University, 170 Kessels Road, Nathan, Brisbane, Queensland 4111, Australia

HIGHLIGHTS

- This study provides a systematic review of risk and gender research in tourism.
- Existing risk and gender literature is found to be Western-dominated.
- A majority of existing studies have favored a positivist and quantitative method.
- Gender- and risk-focused research and theoretical discussion are lacking.
- Recommendations for future tourism research in gender and risk are provided.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11 March 2016

Received in revised form

13 October 2016

Accepted 17 October 2016

Keywords:

Risk

Gender

Tourism

Systematic quantitative literature review

ABSTRACT

Resonating with a growing sense of uncertainty recently, an increasing number of studies have been dedicated to travel risk because risk and tourism are intrinsically connected. However, existing tourism risk literature was criticized for lacking theoretical foundations, which has resulted in fragmented understandings, including contradictory opinions regarding the effect of gender on risk perception. In response to these criticisms, this study systematically investigates tourism risk literature from a gender perspective, with an aim to map out what is known about the gendered travel risk and what needs to be explored further. The review findings suggest that a majority of existing risk and gender studies have prioritized the experience of Western travelers. The findings indicate a lack of a gender- and risk-focused investigation and theoretical framework, and a dearth of an interpretive and reflexive approach. A plethora of evidence of gender difference in tourist risk experience has been identified.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

1.1. The growing awareness of risk in tourism

Rapid modernization and secularization have taken place since the end of World War II, and have led to substantial changes in labor division, family structure, and gender norms (Lupton, 2013). These unprecedented social transformations portray the questioning and breakdown of traditions and grand ideologies promised in early modernity and have resulted in the decline of trust and social cohesion (Giddens, 1991). Reflecting the growing sense of uncertainty and insecurity emerging against this social background, Beck (2006) dubbed the contemporary society as the *risk*

society. Indeed, the term “risk” has been increasingly incorporated in contemporary linguistic structure; “risk” has become a widely quoted term in scholarly research, mass media, and everyday life (Lupton, 2013). A similar situation is found in the field of tourism, where the growing presence of tourist risk research is observed. This growth has been most noticeable after the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001, followed by a myriad of tragic incidents at both global and regional scales, such as the SARS outbreak in 2003, Indian ocean tsunami in 2004, Arab Spring uprisings in 2010, and the recent Paris attacks in 2015 and Istanbul Atatürk airport attack in 2016. These incidents have all caused severe impact on international and regional tourism (Avraham, 2015; Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011; Mullen, 2016; Newton-Small, 2015). Since then, tourism scholars have recognized the impact of risk perception on travel behavior and decision, because tourists are likely to avoid destinations with greater perceived risk (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007).

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: elaine.yang@griffithuni.edu.au (E.C.L. Yang), c.khoo-lattimore@griffith.edu.au (C. Khoo-Lattimore), c.arcodia@griffith.edu.au (C. Arcodia).

1.1.1. *The intricate relationship between risk and tourism*

Risk and tourism are inseparable, because the decision to travel itself implies risk and uncertainty, as it involves corporeal travel to unfamiliar places and social environments (Chang, 2009). In addition, tourism, resembling other service products, is intangible, inseparable, heterogeneous, and perishable, which renders risk an essential aspect of the tourist experience (Mitchell & Grotto, 1993; Williams & Baláz, 2013). In certain tourism settings, risk contributes to the sense of excitement and adventurousness in travel experience (Cater, 2006; Dickson & Dolnicar, 2004; Quintal, Lee, & Soutar, 2010).

1.1.2. *Problems with existing risk research in tourism*

Considering the relevance and influence of risk on tourists and the industry, a considerable body of tourism risk literature has been developed, especially in the past two decades (Yang & Nair, 2015). Nevertheless, a systematic review of risk literature in tourism is absent, which is indicated in Noel Scott's consolidated list of review papers in tourism posted on 3 March 2015 on TRINET¹. Along with the development of this tourism sub-field, a criticism arises in relation to the lack of a theoretical framework in tourism risk research, which has resulted in fragmented, inconsistent, and superficial understandings of tourist risk experience (Korstanje, 2009; Williams & Baláz, 2013). One of the issues noted is the contradictory opinions regarding the influence of gender on travel risk (Yang, Sharif, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015). One school of thought is of the opinion that the influence of gender on travel risk is insignificant because risk is mediated by many other factors besides gender, such as tourist role and cultural background (Carr, 2001; Lepp & Gibson, 2003). On the contrary, other scholars have argued that travel risk is essentially gendered (Elsrud, 2001; Gustafson, 1998).

1.2. *The influence of gender on risk and tourism*

1.2.1. *The gendered risk*

Gustafson (1998) suggests that women and men may perceive risk differently because some risks are imposed on women by men, such as the risk of sexual violence, which is a manifestation of male dominance over women. Adding to this understanding of the gendered risk perception, other scholars demonstrate how risk-taking behavior is received differently by society as far as gender is concerned. In general, women's risk-taking behavior is more likely to be negatively evaluated compared to men's, because risk taking is associated with the construction of masculinity, whereas risk aversion is a desirable value of femininity (Elsrud, 2001; Laurendeau, 2008; Olstead, 2011). Prior tourism research has lent support to this interpretation of the gendered risk. For instance, in the realm of adventure tourism, Elsrud (2001) investigates the negative connotation associated with adventurous women or the *adventuresses*. The value-laden connotation is indicated in a number of English dictionaries which define *adventuress* as "fem. adven'turess (chiefly in bad sense)" (Elsrud, 2001, p. 614) or "a woman who seeks social or financial advancement by dishonest or unscrupulous methods" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Elsrud's (2001) argument is further supported by empirical data, which reveal the dilemma that female adventure tourists face in their gender identity constructions because their risk-taking behavior is inconsistent with the social

expectations of femininity. Essentially, what is considered as a risk in one society may be perceived differently in another (Green & Singleton, 2006; Lupton, 2013).

1.2.2. *The gendered tourism space*

A number of studies reveal gender differences in tourist risk perception and risk-taking behavior. Specifically, female tourists were found to be more sensitive and vulnerable to certain types of risk, such as physical risk (e.g., sexual harassment and assault), when using the tourism space (Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009), a space which has been identified as gendered and sexualized (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). From a historical perspective, tourism has a masculine origin when the term, "tourist" became increasingly prominent in the mid-18th century (Graburn & Jafari, 1991). A tourist used to denote a person who explores the exotic unknown for pleasure and excitement, which accords with the characteristics of masculinity (Enloe, 1989). Although women's participation in tourism is now comparable to men (Harris & Wilson, 2007), the contemporary tourism space is still subject to criticisms for being highly masculinized and privileging men's travel experiences, which are reflected in sex tourism and tourism advertisements where female bodies are commonly objectified and sexualized (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000; Wilson & Little, 2008). Furthermore, the tourism space is often imbued with sexual implications and sexual permissiveness due to its perceived liminality (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Reichel, Fuchs, & Urieli, 2007; Wilson & Little, 2005). Therefore, when female travelers wander in this masculinized and sexualized space, their bodies are subjected to a certain degree of gender-induced risk.

1.3. *Aims and significance of the review*

In response to the growing awareness of risk in tourism, the inconsistent opinions of the influence of gender on travel risk, and the intricate relationship among risk, tourism, and gender, this study sets out to review existing tourism risk literature from a gender perspective. Specifically, this study systematically investigates and synthesizes the extant literature concerning travel risk and gender, with an aim to map out what is known about the gendered travel risk and what needs to be explored further. The review investigates how risk has been studied in prior research in terms of the research topic, type of risk, research method, and theoretical framework. The context, sample, and geographical location of the research are also considered. More importantly, this review analyzes the gender difference/similarity in tourist risk perception and risk-taking behavior reported in the extant literature, and the explanations provided. By doing so, this review addresses the incongruent opinions voiced in past studies. An agenda for future research is then proposed based on the issues identified in the review.

The significance of this review is threefold: First, despite the fact that the impact of risk on tourism has been widely recognized, a systematic review of risk literature in tourism is long overdue. Hence, this review is timely in contributing to the knowledge void. In particular, it provides an overview of the development and landscape of travel risk literature from a gender perspective. By mapping what is known, this review lays the groundworks, and identifies gaps and opportunities for future research to build upon. Second, this review advances existing understanding of gender and risk respectively, as well as a synergy between the two in the field of tourism. Despite the inconsistent views concerning gender and travel risk, the significance of risk on women's travel experience is articulated or inferred in many women-focused tourism studies (Elsrud, 2001; Wilson & Little, 2008), and is listed in the top ten

¹ TRINET is an online discussion group that connects international tourism research and education community.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5108712>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5108712>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)